



Voice photo by Tiffinel Lee

Brittany Wilkins (21), junior guard, Makekea Suggs (20), junior forward, Jasmyn Trawick (10) freshman guard, SheQuitia Manning (44) junior forward, practices a three point shot, Ayksia Resper (15), sophomore guard, at the Capel Nov. 8 prior to Basketball Frenzy.

is NCAA Athletics. The NCAA was created in order to protect student athletes from frivolous injuries in college sports. That was before it was made mandatory for football players to wear helmets. In those times, the NCAA's sole purpose was to protect students in order to continue the practice of the sports at the universities. However, in the 21st century, university athletics have come a long way. The players are bigger; the game is faster and far more streamlined than in the 1950's. Shouldn't that be for the rules and regulations of the NCAA as well?

There are about 140,000 athletic scholarships available for college students. However, when you try to split that between well over 2 million high school athletes, the odds of coming out with a full ride are not likely.

It's not about whether or not student-athletes need to get paid, but at the same time there should be a fairer way to distribute the wealth generated by endorsements, and merchandise like jersey numbers and things associated with the individual players seeing that it is solely of their individual talents that those kinds of opportunities were presented to the university.

College athletes are being fined and punished for taking advantage of their college athlete status to earn extra money. Yet, the bigger problem is how those called student-athletes are not being compensated for endorsements and products that are designed after them.

Every year, the NCAA pulls in millions of dollars from endorsements and television contracts. More than 85 percent of their income comes from televised games and marketing and advertisement fees. And yet, athletes are not allowed to sign contracts for endorsement deals without the university's permission, which translates to the universities cut in the contract.

It is about branding, making investments, and making mon-

ey without adhering to academics.

Universities offer high school athletes top dollar scholarships to play for their institution. While this may seem harmless, this is the start of a mega branding bit. The athlete is made the face of the university to the nation and thus encouraging hundreds of high school athletes and other college athletes that they need to go to a particular school to be successful. While most of those students are not offered scholarships they pay out of pocket in the hopes that they will become the institutions next top athlete. Think about it. The University of Southern California had Reggie Bush, Auburn State had Cam Newton. And let's not forget the granddaddy of all university athlete "mascots," Michael Jordan for North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

These schools are known for their outstanding athletic programs, while the credit can be placed on coaches, people tend to forget that the only reason these schools have better programs is because they have more money, thus they can offer more scholarships for more money than those offered by division two universities.

It is no secret that athletic scholarships, though hailed as being the best deal to get into school for those who couldn't otherwise afford it, they are offered on conditional basis and most are only offered for one year at a time. This means that athletes have to try-out year after year to keep their scholarship, and prove year after year that they deserve to be on the team.

College athletes are not normal college students. With little to no time for extra activities participating in college athletics is considered priority.

Student-athlete is the term the NCAA uses to describe its athletes, but which is more important to the organization, being a student or an athlete? Student comes first but studies show that most college athletes take remedial courses and on

top of that they only have to have at least a 2.3 GPA to participate in most division one athletic programs.

According to the NCAA website, student-athletes have to pass at least six credit hours a semester in order to remain eligible. Six credit converts to only two classes. Not to mention that athletes are given five years of undergrad financial aid in order to complete their degrees.

An article in The Washington Post pointed out last year's NCAA basketball champions, Connecticut Huskies were well below the academic average they were supposed to have in order to compete, yet the NCAA didn't rule them out of the competition.

Student-athlete is the term used for those who go to school and participate in their schools athletic department. The term was created to "promote amateurism" according to the NCAA web site. But can these athletes really be called amateurs if they are the ones who generate enough public interest and funds for a multi-billion dollar industry?

This is even relevant in the way the schools are classified. On the NCAA website, division one and division two schools have different goals and eligibility requirements. While division two universities promote having a well-balanced program for students to focus on academics and athletics, division one does not share that motto. The website shows facts about student-athletes graduate at a higher rate than regular students, while the NCAA did not release any statistics on division one graduation rates. Could this mean that the culprit isn't the NCAA, but the top powerhouse schools?

It's gotten so out of hand, that even the NCAA president had a few words to explain the distance between the focus being on education and making money.

"That's become a status symbol," Mark Emmert said of the BCS. "We've created athletics as a proxy for academic status."