



What Happened to College Athletics?

BY: Mindy Rader, Rockland Post Contributor

There was a time when you went to school and athletics was part of the extracurricular activities along with all the other programs. There were Debate Clubs and Chess Clubs and Drama Clubs, Art Clubs and Athletics. The major emphasis was education. Getting out and being a better person and able to function in the world. It was a pathway for many students to obtain a college education where they may not be able to afford one. It was amateur athletics. It was something you did because you enjoyed it and maybe hoped at one day it becomes your career. It's not unlike going to college and going to medical school, or law school or any other profession. We don't pay students to do that. We don't pay scholars. We only pay athletes that make the schools money. There was a time when Jim Thorpe was stripped of his medals for accepting \$50 to play summer baseball hence making him ineligible for Olympics in those days.

Fast forward to today. College athletics have become a multi-million-dollar revenue generator for the schools. Players are a commodity who can get paid for their playing, for their likeness and for their image. It no longer is an amateur endeavor but either pro or semi-pro depending on how you look at it. Schools have lucrative television contracts and multi-million-dollar stadiums to support. So, the question really is, why do schools do this?

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This type of program degrades the college experience. No longer do students go to a college because of the best academics but rather where will they have the better chance of making money. This makes college athletics in my mind professional rather than amateur. Should high schools adopt this as well? At what point does education become the most important component of the college experience?

Colleges are greedy. As student loans became available, they just raised their tuition. They use the sports to pay millions of dollars to coaches and administrators. It makes no sense to me because the losers in all of this are the students who very often come out uneducated and with no future. They take these kids and make them cannon fodder. The Supreme Court has made a huge error in granting these kids the right to use their image and likeness for economic purposes. And congress now wants to grant the NCAA an anti-trust exemption. This is all ludicrous. Education is education. Professional sports are professional sports. Colleges should be forbidden from accepting huge lucrative tv deals. Sports in colleges should be just what they are, amateur sports. Go root for your team. Go root for your college. No betting on the games. And let those who succeed at the sports move on to be professionals. But let these kids get the education they signed for. Its probably more important in the long run than money right now. I know this will be an unpopular opinion but what has happened to college athletics is wrong on so many levels; Colleges have become overpriced, one sided, with over paid administrators, overpaid coaches and producing education that is one sided and not preparing their students for life in the real world.