

**The Role of the Entrepreneurial Coach-- Non-revenue Sport Survival within Big-time Collegiate Athletics**

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Presentation (25-minute)**

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Within the last decade, a trend of men's non-revenue sport cuts has swept the collegiate athletics landscape in the United States leaving few athletic programs unaffected. Particularly hard hit has been the sport of wrestling. Much of the blame for the program discontinuation movement has justifiably been levied at Title IX, and in particular its "proportionality" prong of the three-part compliance test. A growing body of literature, however, supports the conclusion that Title IX does not in any way require or support the cutting a sports (U.S. Department of Education, 2005), and the amount of cuts are due to irresponsible spending in big-time revenue producing sports and the 'arms race' that it's increasing the amount of expenditures are rapidly escalating rates (Knight Commission, 2004).

Due to the Title IX phenomenon, escalating costs and the subsequent losses in major sports over the last decade (NCAA, 2005) many athletic departments have significantly pinched the budgets of their non-revenue sports. Due to this squeeze, amid the ever looming threat of program termination, some coaches have taken the pursuit of increasing demand into their own hands. These coaches have become proactive in recognizing and exploiting value creating opportunities for their programs by sustaining funds and additional community support to supplement athletic department budget allocations. The purpose of this study is to explore this phenomenon; specifically, to examine the perceptions and influences of coaches in achieving sustained viability of Division 1-A wrestling programs.

Empirical analysis using a multiple-embedded case study with the use of two surveys was utilized within this inquiry. The first survey was generated and administered to the population of Division I-A athletic directors that currently support a wrestling program or have cut a wrestling program in the last 10 years. Response rates were 41% and 25%, respectively. The second survey was directed toward current Division I-A wrestling coaches, who responded at a rate of 58.5%. Subsequent to survey data analysis, case studies focused on clusters of data surrounding two successful wrestling programs at Big Ten institutions ensued. The case study data included interview, on-site observation, and document analysis. The survey and case study data was interpreted using a theoretical foundation based upon Adam Smith's classic economic theory which stands as the basis of the theory of resource allocations. Based upon the data analysis, the following three conclusions were developed:

1. It is becoming more important for coaches to be entrepreneurs for their program.
2. Coaches can enhance their programs chance vitality through "Complementary Entre-lationship Promotion."
3. Wrestling coaches should be held moderately accountable for their fan base and revenue.