

The Integrated View of Intercollegiate Athletics: College Coach Perspectives

Erienne A. Weight, University of North Carolina

Coyte Cooper, University of North Carolina

**Management/leadership
Abstract 2013-254**

**Saturday, June 1, 2013
9:20 AM**

**Poster
(Ballroom)**

This is an empirical study related to NCAA Division I college coach perspectives on an integrated view of intercollegiate athletics and their role as educators. Myles Brand, a vocal proponent of the educational value of intercollegiate athletic participation, believed the importance of intercollegiate athletics was significantly undervalued. He condemned the academy for its bias against bodily skills, non-art, and its view on athletics as an auxiliary to the university unworthy of subsidy (2006). This view, “the Standard View”, Brand argued, is at the root of many of the conceptual problems which have led to intense competitive pressure related to winning and the arms race of intercollegiate athletic expenditures (2006; Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, 2010). To overcome this bias, Brand suggested an integrated view of intercollegiate athletics wherein athletics would be treated as an academic unit similar to the performing arts such as music, dance, or theatre, which have very similar structures. This structural and philosophical change would lessen the competitive pressure and associated detriments to the system, and the educational foundation of intercollegiate athletics could resurface as the fundamental purpose of athletics within higher education (Brand, 2006; Bowen & Levin, 2003).

The educational value and purpose of intercollegiate athletics within the academy has been examined within the literature by several scholars (e.g. Adler & Adler, 1991; Bowen & Levin, 2003; Cooper & Weight, 2011; Irwin, Irwin, & Hays, 2011; Lapchick, 1987; NCAA, 2011; Vienna, 2001). Common findings suggest a potential (often untapped) for educational value through intercollegiate athletic participation including teamwork, dedication, sacrifice, leadership, and goal-setting, to name a few. Given the intimate knowledge of a college coach relative to the athlete experience and educational growth through participation, the purpose of this study was to build upon the existing literature by examining the perceptions of a population here-to-fore limited in the literature on educational values. Specifically, to study NCAA Division I college coach perspectives on an integrated view of intercollegiate athletics and their role as educators. Toward this end, the following research questions were pursued:

RQ1: How do collegiate coaches define “success” in their coaching role?

RQ2: What coaching roles are deemed most important in the pursuit of coaching “success”?

RQ3: What sport and/or character-building lessons are emphasized by college coaches?

RQ4: Would coaches support an academic-centered organizational structure wherein coaches are viewed as faculty and are held responsible for curricula?

Methodology

In order to facilitate inquiry into these critical issues, an instrument was developed based on a thorough review of literature. The survey was reviewed by a panel of experts (n=6) and pilot tested on a sample of five collegiate coaches in order to assess the validity of instrument content. Following review, the survey was sent via Qualtrics online survey software to the entire population of NCAA Division I coaches with available email addresses. After initial dissemination, a response rate of approximately 15% was attained providing a sample of (n=678) coaches with representative distribution between Division I sub-classifications and sports.

Data Analysis

Data analysis includes analysis of variance based on the dependent variables of personal and administrative “success” definitions, and organizational structure perspectives and independent variables of NCAA Division I classification, sex, sport, and coaching tenure. This quantitative data will be supplemented by analysis of supporting survey narratives. Themes throughout the narratives will be identified by two researchers and 20% of the responses will be independently qualified by two researchers and tested for inter-coder reliability utilizing Scott’s Pi.

2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2013)

Discussion

At the time of submission, data analysis is in-process. Early results indicate an overwhelming emphasis on the importance of recruiting and education in pursuit of success as a collegiate coach. Coaches nearly unanimously indicated a belief that it is an important part of their job to educate with dedication, leadership, and teamwork as emphases in this educational pursuit. Coaches were divided on their beliefs about organizational re-structuring in an effort to become more aligned with the academic structure of the university. These results will be further analyzed and discussed within the presentation. This data will provide an exploratory view into the perspectives of NCAA Division I coaches relative to an integrated organization of intercollegiate athletics. This research will add to the literature and help to provide an informed basis of discussion in administrative and governmental decision making related to the allocation of resources within this highly-scrutinized segment of the academe.