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Show whom the money?

NCAA makes millions for everyone except amateurs

You're a star.
 You have something that makes everyone look up to you.
 You have abilities many dream to have, athletic abilities that make grown men weep, and children stare in awe.
 One catch.
 You're broke, no one cares, and those who want you to perform the most don't bother to help you.
 You're everything and nothing all at once.
 You are a student-athlete.
 You commit yourself by training hours daily, mixing weight training with class work, lifting with labs.
 When you go home, you scrounge for money to buy food, clothes, and pay the bills before your electricity gets cut off and you freeze to death.
 And in your spare time, you're helping to generate millions.
 How much exactly is millions you ask?
 The NCAA will make an estimated \$270 million this year alone.
 The NCAA has also signed a deal worth \$1.7 billion – that's no typo – with CBS. Nebraska made an easy \$2 million off licensing alone last year.
 Meanwhile, the student-athlete struggles under the very system that was created to protect them.
 A recent investigation by the Kansas City Star has revealed many things about the NCAA that may make you wonder where exactly all this money is going, and whether it should even be going there.
 The NCAA, through its officials who enforce the rules, is exploiting its own backbone, the athletes.
 If the fans of Nebraska think it would be great to be a Husker, they will be surprised to find many players are so broke they can't buy a cheeseburger or pay the phone bill to call home to their families.
 The scholarships which some receive – many are walk-ons – only provide enough to cover tuition, room and board at their university.
 The reason is very simple: The NCAA rules outline the attitude that an athlete does not have any unique needs. Despite all they do and endure, the NCAA bans "extra benefits" to student-athletes. Athletes can't get anything a normal student can't.
 Since these athletes are involved in "amateur athletics," the NCAA is considered a not-for-profit organization, meaning major tax breaks on revenues.
 A friendship with Grant Wistrom, the All-American senior rush end, has paid off for my little brother who has collected many autographs. Being the gentleman he is, Wistrom obliges to the autographs, even though he will never see a penny of the money I paid just for his picture.
 "I feel prostituted. I have no say in what is done," Wistrom said recently. "I realize I should be grateful for a scholarship, but the risk is minimal for the NCAA."
 Wistrom is a lucky gentleman, though. Unlike many student athletes, he will be able to make money off his athletic ability in the near future.
 Another athlete who will be making money off her athletic ability in the future is Nebraska shot putter Tressa Thompson, who finished 12th in the finals of the World Championships this summer in Athens, Greece.
 Thompson, like Wistrom, sees many shortcomings in the NCAA and the treatment of its athletes.
 "People think athletes have it made. We don't get the respect we deserve. Even some of my teachers are difficult with me, just because I

am an athlete," Thompson said.
 A typical day for Wistrom and Thompson can start at 8 a.m. for classes, practice, and studies, and end at 10 p.m.
 With a near 14-hour workday, it is impossible to even consider getting a job, which the NCAA doesn't allow for scholarship athletes. Even if they could work, it is very likely that classroom and athletic performance would diminish.
 Coaches can't let that happen, or they lose, too.

The coaches

Some coaches make out like bandits while their athletes wonder how they will pay for Christmas gifts for their family members.
 Steve Fisher, the former University of Michigan basketball coach, was receiving \$250,000 a year from Nike, as well as \$73,000 a year in basketball camp revenue and \$84,000 for TV and radio shows. This does not include what the University of Michigan was paying him.
 John Thompson, the Georgetown University basketball coach, owns or has options for an estimated \$4.2 million in Nike stock – some 80,000 shares – and will make \$368,000 this year alone from Nike, plus what Georgetown pays him.
 Even Lute Olson, head coach of last year's national champion, Arizona Wildcats said, "There is no question we are overpaid."
 Kit Morris, who is a member of The Knight Commission, which is trying to reform the NCAA, said, "coaches are selling something which does not belong to them, the university's name and image."

Over the next five years, Nike will give the University of Kentucky more than \$8 million, plus \$3 million in apparel and equipment, and three coaches will get \$6 million of it.
 There is no doubt this money will help a university's programs, but why is it so much goes to the coaches?

In defense of many coaches, not every college coach makes millions, especially those at smaller schools or those in the smaller sports. Most coaches at Nebraska – who are not among the nation's best paid – are compensated with a new vehicle leased for them from a local dealer and are only required to pay an income tax on it.

So does this mean coaches shouldn't be paid well if they are winning and are continually putting out – good citizens?

No, but why is there such a discrepancy between the rules on the coaches and those we enforce on athletes?

In actuality, the coaches are just a very small part of the pie. What about the people

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 NU coordinator of performance nutrition

A need for change

The NCAA continually finds ways to spend money on itself, and prevent money from going to the athletes.

If the NCAA is going to claim that they can't afford to give more money, then they need to look into trimming some of the fat.
 Namely themselves.

They claim it will cost them \$32 million to run their headquarters building in Kansas City. That is ridiculous. The NCAA is so guilty of exploiting its athletes they should consider themselves very lucky the American Civil Liberties Union is not after them.

It's time for the NCAA to start helping out its student athletes.

First, give more money with the scholarships, like a monthly stipend or wage, to help alleviate the costs of day-to-day living for the student-athletes. Room, board and tuition are not the only costs of college.

Second, quit breeding mediocrity and start adding more scholarships for student-athletes. There is constant talk of cutting scholarships, and tougher rules preventing a school from helping its athletes. They are cutting costs while revenues are skyrocketing.

Here at Nebraska, there is a training table in West Stadium. The Athletic Department could well afford to make the cost to eat there very cheap for all 700 of its athletes, but the NCAA will not let them – it's against the rules, a perk for student-athletes.

"It is a very, very sad time in the history of the NCAA. It's going in the opposite direction it should be," said Dave Ellis, the coordinator of performance nutrition for Nebraska. "I'm appalled at the direction of NCAA cost containment legislation and the negative impact it has had on support services for student-athletes."

Many have seen the success of the Nebraska athletic programs and see the support they offer their athletes in strength and conditioning, nutrition, sports medicine and academics. Hoping to have the same success, other schools attempt to emulate Nebraska. When they find the costs it would take, they decide to dismantle Nebraska, rather than mirror them.

After all, who is going to be sympathetic to a program that is win-

ning all the time?
 All this does is breed mediocrity among the NCAA. I believe the NCAA has an unwritten philosophy: Don't cure cancer, just infect everyone else with it, so it's fair.

The NCAA may not care, but Ellis does. His utopia would be to have food and money donated to feed athletes from 6:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m.

But the rules just won't let him do what he believes is right.

A third area in need of change is where the punishment falls for those who break the rules. Who is ultimately responsible for what goes on in a program, the athletes or the coaches?

If it's not the athletes, why do we continually punish them? How about seeing a school sue a coach or booster for costing them not only money, and scholarships for some prospective students, but for their reputation as an academic university?

I have never heard of a coach being held liable, all I hear is where they are going to go coach next.

Fourth: The NCAA needs to have a standard ratio for all schools to follow, on number of athletes versus number of trainers provided.

The NCAA was originally created in 1906 for the protection of student-athletes. A play in football called "The Flying Wedge" killed 18 players and injured 149 others. President Teddy Roosevelt had a son who was injured and he asked for colleges to band together and make sports safer. The result: the NCAA.

Health is not something they seem too concerned with anymore.

Just last year, a young man named Seth Dunscomb died during swim practice at the University of Kansas. In 1992, a young soccer player named Terrie Cate died at University of California at Irvine. In both instances, proper medical supervision over the athletes could have saved both.

Nebraska does well with six full-time trainers, six graduate assistants and 20 student trainers. Athletes may sometimes not realize how much better it is here than other places, but Nebraska is a minority.

What about those other places? How many more kids have to die? It even states in the NCAA's own constitution that colleges must "protect and enhance" the physical well-being of athletes. What is keeping them from getting more trainers?

The answer is simple: greed. The NCAA is a modern-day Teamsters Union.

Athletes are governed by rules that allow them to be exploited by their schools, coaches, athletic departments, corporations, and even by the group that is designed to help and protect them, the NCAA.

Of course no school will admit to exploiting its athletes. They will say they are sympathetic; but the fact remains the schools are just following the rules.

Now it is time for these schools to stand up for their athletes and put a stop to the trend of cutting support for athletes.

Student-athlete advisory boards, which represents the athletes, to make a commitment to change the NCAA. They must pressure the NCAA at its conventions, in public forums, even make house calls to complain.

If they ask for the fans' support and push for their cause, who knows how much better things would get.

