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The Nature of Competition: A
Comparative Analysis of Collegiate
Athletics in Portugal and the
United States of America

Doctoral Thesis in Sport Sciences, in the branch of Sport Management,
supervised by Prof. Doctor Raul A. Martins, and submitted to the Faculty
of Sport Sciences and Physical Education of the University of Coimbra

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UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA

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ABSTRACT

Collegiate athletic competition and Higher Education have maintained a unique and positive relationship with both the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and their governing academic institutions in the United States. The present study will discuss the advantages and the disadvantages of collegiate athletics competition in young people by teaching them physical skills, as well as by helping them develop structure, discipline, and confidence while also having impact on their social integration. The effects of collegiate athletic participation on people's lives after graduation will all be studied and will also be discussed. Finally, this work will also compare the collegiate athletic models in both the United States, and Portugal. The rationale behind the comparison is to introduce the possibility of Portugal changing over their current collegiate athletic model to a Division III collegiate athletic model currently being used in the United States. Interviews and questionnaires were conducted in each country in order better understand the different perspectives on both competition and collegiate athletics, with the results showing the need for competitive athletics at the collegiate level in Portugal. The results suggest that the institutions of higher learning in Portugal would benefit by competing athletically against other institutions in Portugal while affording their student-athletes the opportunity to experience athletic competition, and the valuable lessons that come along with that. It will be an education-based model that connects athletics and education.

Keywords: Portugal; United States; NCAA; Division III; Higher Education; Collegiate athletics.

RESUMO

A competição desportiva universitária e o ensino superior têm mantido uma relação única e positiva com a National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) e com as instituições académicas nos Estados Unidos. O presente estudo discutirá vantagens e desvantagens da competição no desporto universitário. Também serão discutidos os efeitos da participação desportiva universitária na vida das pessoas depois de terminada a formação universitária. Finalmente, este trabalho irá ainda comparar os modelos desportivos universitários nos Estados Unidos da América e em Portugal. O objetivo passa por considerar a possibilidade de Portugal mudar o seu modelo de desporto universitário atual para um modelo semelhante ao da Divisão III universitária atualmente em uso nos Estados Unidos. Questionários e entrevistas foram conduzidos em cada país de modo a compreender melhor as diferentes perspectivas quer sobre a competição, quer sobre os modelos de desporto universitário, com os resultados a mostrarem a necessidade de existência de quadros competitivos regulares a nível universitário em Portugal. Os resultados sugerem que as instituições de ensino superior em Portugal beneficiariam por competirem desportivamente contra outras instituições, ao mesmo tempo que proporcionariam aos seus alunos-atletas a oportunidade de experimentar a competição desportiva e dela retirar lições valiosas, num modelo de base educativa que liga o desporto e a educação.

Palavras-chave: Portugal; Estados Unidos da América; NCAA; Divisão III; Ensino Superior; Desporto Universitário.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Preamble

The research question for the present work centers on varsity athletics and the lack of an organized varsity athletic program currently at the university level in Portugal. There will be a full study of the current collegiate athletic model in the United States, and more specifically, the Division III collegiate athletic model, which embraces and celebrates the student-athlete while offering no athletic scholarships. In fact, the role of the competition will be analyzed within these models, as also the extremes of competition.

The question that is posed is whether Higher Education institutions in Portugal can implement a varsity athletic program that resembles the current Division III Model in the United States. An athletic program that would afford the students in Portugal the opportunity to experience competition in order to help broaden their understanding of what it actually means to have athletic competition against others, while also complementing the theory and research that is being received in the classroom.

Through the many conversations and interviews, there was an overwhelming consensus from students, staff and faculty regarding wanting to have some form of intercollegiate athletics for both the purposes of competition and school spirit. Many of the students I spoke to, particularly at the University of Coimbra, also stated that they would be willing to pay a fee in order to participate in a varsity athletic program.

The present proposal researches the benefits of Division III athletics and the pros and cons of competitive athletics. It also analyzes how university varsity

athletics would benefit students and universities in Portugal both mentally, physically, and holistically.

1.2. Research questions

The reason for the pursuit of this work was to understand the competitive athletics that is currently available at the collegiate level in Portugal. Actually, interviews with faculty, staff and students showed to desire to have competitive athletics in place and the Division III collegiate athletic model currently being used by colleges and universities in the United States are proof that non-scholarship athletic programs can both exist and flourish with a healthy balance of academics and athletics.

Therefore, the purpose of this investigation is to show both the administrations in Higher Education and FADU that an investment in competitive collegiate athletics is one that should be pursued and something that will give back in many ways to their student population and their overall campuses. It will also connect with students academically, as they will have the ability to apply the theory they are learning in the classroom with the competition they will engage in outside of the classroom. This will also better prepare graduating students for positions in the sports industry, as coaches, trainers, administrators, etc.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The beginning of this research will discuss motivation and particularly why people are motivated to participate in competitive athletics and how it affects their mental state. There will also be an explanation about how motivation affects both an individual and a team and how each is impacted. The research will analyze the connection and impact that motivation has on athletes and how it may positively and negatively influence their respective teams.

The next part of the present research will try to uncover the meaning of competition and the positive and negative aspects of what competition is and what it represents. The research on competition will transcend athletics and discuss that competition has a place in people's everyday life.

2.2. Nature of competition

The concept of competition is both intriguing and complex. The idea that a group of people that has never met could come together playing for one common goal, and led by one individual, is extremely fascinating. From the age of thirteen through my current age, I have been involved in athletics by way of being an athlete, coach, and administrator, and it has played an integral part in shaping my life. I have been able to work and relate to athletes on many different levels.

Competition is a fascinating word that can mean different things to many different people. The dictionary defines competition as “the act of competing, as for profit or a prize; a rivalry; one that competes; a rival” (American Heritage College Dictionary, 1997). This definition of competition, however, is just not comprehensive enough, does not truly capture the exact essence of what competition really stands for.

The idea of competition, in fact, is embraced by some and feared by others. In America, the main priority of varsity athletics is centered on winning. Where there is a winning team, there is also a losing team. The premise that you have to be better than the next person, and that the other team is your *enemy* is very commonly preached by many coaches in the United States.

In recent decades, there has been a noticeable attack on the evils of competition. In kindergarten, children have been taught to control aggressiveness and learn cooperation. In high school, students are encouraged to work for self-development and not for grades. In college, there are undergraduates that have turned away from competitive sports, preferring those experiences, which enlarge friendships rather than engage enemies (Michener, 1976, p.420).

In sports, the idea over competitiveness has been debated vigorously by many. Vince Lombardi became the high priest of competition while coaching the Green Bay Packers in the National Football League in the 1950's and 1960's. He achieved immortality with his summation of the competitor's creed: “winning isn't everything; it is the only thing.”

Coach Lombardi felt that a commitment to excellence and to victory is what life was all about. He also felt that in order to compete at a high level, you had to hate the opponent, he once said, “To play this game you must have a fire in you, and there is

nothing that stokes a fire like hate. Lombardi truly believed that every time you win, you are reborn, and every time you lose, a part of you dies” (Michener, 1976, p. 432).

Competition seems to be a natural component of human life. Therefore, some have argued that it is best when one competes against oneself rather than against another human being whom one wishes to destroy (Michener, 1976).

The decisive moment is certain in the life of the great competitor. Those who excel will typically have a higher than average potential for coming to grips with reality. Successful athletes are achievement-oriented people and they derive personal satisfaction from their striving. The successful athlete can be at his or her best when the odds are slightly against them. Great athletes rarely dwell on their failures, but typically focus more on the part of their performance that limited their excellence (Michener, 1976).

Not everyone is a great athlete and those who are not competitive athletes can receive a comparable benefit from recreational or intramural sports. People can achieve their own sense of accomplishment by performing up to their own standards (Michener, 1976). In reality, in order for life to be meaningful, there must be competition, either external or internal, which is not just about hurting or killing someone for the sake of sport. Actually, one has to applaud creative competition that encourages the human being to be better than he or she might otherwise have been. This is very different from the day-to-day competition that we all go through at our jobs on a sometimes-daily basis.

2.3. Sports training methods: the motivational factor

Motivation is a very interesting word that needs to come from within. The dictionary defines motivation as "the act or process of motivating. The state of being motivated, something that motivates; an inducement" (American Heritage College Dictionary, 1997, p.187).

Being raised by two conservative Portuguese parents, hard work was preached to my sisters and me at a very young age; hard work is the very staple with which I have lived my entire life. I grew up watching my parents work multiple jobs in order to provide for their family, and making certain that their family was always their first and only priority. Early on in my life, this is what I saw as motivation: the ability to not make excuses and unselfishly put the needs of others ahead of yourself.

People from all lifestyles have their own definitions of what the word motivation means. In my own experience as an athlete, a coach, and an athletic administrator and I have seen many levels of motivation, both in-group and individual settings. I have seen talented athletes with outstanding ability, but with almost no self-motivational skills, and I have seen athletes with minimal talent work harder and with better preparation than athletes who are superior and more naturally skilled. Self-motivated athletes are typically the better-prepared athletes, and while some athletes require feedback, encouragement and positive reinforcement, self-motivated athletes are typically mentally and physically ready to compete against others and against themselves.

Motivation does not always need to come across verbally; it can come in other forms as well. As a coach, sometimes it is required to motivate players based on their needs, giving motivational speeches when needed, and being stern when deemed it necessary. Motivation cannot come in the same boring form day in and day out. Instead, it

needs to be uplifting, and as a coach it is paramount that you are able to relate to your athletes at all times, and on many different levels, as this also helps to develop a trust and a bond between the coach and their athletes.

My track and field coach in college once told me that motivation is the desire and drive inside to reach a goal. He also stated that motivation is the force that drives athletes to practice and their ability to work harder than anyone else. He also stated that it is important to remember that the preparation of an athlete is only complete when the coach is no longer needed. He always stated that it was the coach's job to prepare athletes for games, and it was the player's job to remember what he or she has learned and to execute the appropriate game plan.

During one of my first coaching positions, I came across a poem entitled "Why We Play Division III College Athletics", and I felt that it summed up what motivation represents. I made copies and distributed it to all of my players. I found that each of them could relate to it because of their experience of being athletes, regardless of the skill level that each had. As their coach, I know that playing for a Division III institution means that athletic scholarships did not exist. These young student-athletes were student-athletes because of their love for their respective sports. Being a Division III collegiate athlete means being dedicated, committed and having a true understanding of what it means to balance athletics and academics.

The poem "Why We Play Division III Athletics" was written by an unknown author and it reads as follows:

It is not about getting a scholarship, being drafted, or being on television. It is a deep need in us that comes from the heart. We need to practice, to play, to lift, to hustle, to sweat. We do it all for our teammates and for the student in our calculus class that we do not even

know. We do not practice with a future major league first baseman; we practice with a future sports agent. We do not lift weights with a future Olympic wrestler; we lift with a future doctor. We do not run with a future Wimbledon champion; we run with a future CEO. It is a bigger part of us than our friends and family can understand.

Sometimes we play for 2000 fans; sometimes 25. However, we still play hard. You cheer for us because you know us. You know more than just our names. Like all of you, we are students first. We do not sign autographs. Nevertheless, we do sign graduate school applications, MCAT exams, and student body petitions. When we miss a kick or strike out, we do not let down an entire state. We only let down our teammates, our coaches and fans. However, the hurt is still the same. We train hard, lift, throw, run, kick, tackle, shoot, dribble, and lift some more, and in the morning we go to class, and in that class we are nothing more than students. It is about pride in ourselves, in our school. It is about our love and passion for the game, and when it is over when we walk off that court or field for the last time, our hearts crumble. Those tears are real. However, deep down inside, we are very proud of ourselves. We will forever be what few can claim ...college athletes.”

After reading this poem, the athletes who read it all agreed that it truly mirrored their thoughts of being a student-athlete. They all stated that this poem truly captured the essence of Division III athletics and what it represented. Many of them referred to the purity of Division III and how it was the only level that did not allow athletic scholarships. They also referenced how challenging it was to juggle academics and athletics on a daily basis, but how gratifying it was to play sports for the sheer love of it and the pride involved in representing their institution.

Regarding motivation, a player's level of motivation can change dramatically. "The Reversal Theory suggests that an individual's psychological state or framework of mind

shifts spontaneously between metamotivational states which exist in pairs of opposites". These pairs are shown in the Tables 1 and 2 and include the following (Apter, 1982, p.27):

Table 1. Pairs of opposites from the Reversal Theory.

State	Opposite
Telic State	Para-telic State
Negativistic	Conformist State
Mastery State	Sympathy State
Alloic State	Autic State

Table 2. States of framework of mind and the individual's experiences.

State	Experience
Telic	Goal oriented, serious, plan for future, low level of felt arousal.
Para-telic	Impulsive, prefer high levels of felt arousal, no purpose other than enjoyment, non-competitive, no predetermined goal.
Negativistic	Rebellious, break rules, do not like authority, does not follow rules.
Conformist	Concerned with others and team unity.
Mastery	Concerned with mastering sport, always in competition.
Sympathy	Concerned with feelings of others.
Alloic	Concerned with others and gain pleasure from watching others succeed, example: spectator.
Autic	Concerned with self and their performance.

Often, the Reversal Theory is used to explain an athlete's motivational state at the current time of examination. However, the individual or athlete may interpret the same

experience differently depending upon which metamotivational state is operative. These states do not determine one's motives but rather how one experiences their motives. The following are clear examples of people instantly switching metamotivational states.

Telic to Para-telic

Joe, a competitive golfer has trained very hard to qualify for today's golf tournament. He has checked out all of his golf clubs and is sure he will win. Suddenly, while at the first hole, he realizes that he has forgotten one of his clubs. Immediately, Joe knows he cannot win the golf tournament. A reversal takes place, in which, Joe switches from telic state to the para-telic state. He no longer feels pressure to win the tournament and laughs aloud at his mishap.

Para-telic to Telic

It is a beautiful day and Carol wants to take advantage of her day off. She decides to take her jet ski on the ocean for a fun, relaxing day. After a few hours, she maneuvers her jet ski to head back home when suddenly, the jet-ski tips over and Carol ends up in the water. This event now sparks a reversal in Carol's metamotivational state from para-telic to telic. She is now in the cold water fighting with the capsized boat and has switched emotional gears from playful to very serious.

Three factors are believed to trigger a reversal in motivational states: a contingent event, satiation and frustration. As mentioned earlier, Sarah's boat sprung a leak during her boat race. Her metamotivational state reversed because the leak was the contingent event

that triggered her reversal. Often, athletes become frustrated with themselves when they cannot obtain satisfaction in their performance. An athlete may easily transform from a conformist to a negativistic by the simplest of circumstances.

Conformist to Negativistic

Tom, a professional baseball player is competing in his third World Series. Although he is a well-rounded player, he heavily relies on his speed and his keen sense of defense in order to keep batters guessing. Normally, this player at bat is a conformist and follows all of the rules. However, to his dismay, the opposing player adjusts to his defense and hits the ball over Tom's head. Tom cannot understand what he did wrong and is losing his cool. This has never happened in Tom's baseball career. Now, completely frustrated, Tom throws his glove on the ground, disregarding all of the rules and regulations for the baseball game. He is emotionally drained and reverses from the conformist state to the negativistic state, all within a matter of minutes.

A person who has been in one metamotivational state for a period of time, like Tom, is more likely to experience a reversal due to satiation (Kerr, 1997, p.25). One may become bored and feel the need to challenge oneself. For example, two friends have decided to take a run. One runner is more experienced than the other but chooses to slow her pace so her friend can keep up because she is sincerely concerned for her friend and in the sympathy state. After thirty minutes, the superior runner slips into the mastery state and suggests that the two pick up their pace to the finish line. Even though the weaker runner digs deep to find some extra energy, the experienced runner is now in the mastery state operative and leaves her partner behind to secure the win.

People in general, not just athletes, may place themselves in situations that will increase the possibility of a reversal in emotion (Kerr, 1997, p.30). After a long day of work, a group of employees may try to relieve some stress by meeting up at a bar for a change of scene. Music, alcohol, and people are contingent factors that will increase the likelihood of a person reversing their metamotivational state.

Arousal

Arousal is the level of motivation for an individual at any given time (Kerr, 1997, p.34). Each state has a preferred level of arousal. When there is a disparity between the levels of preferred and felt arousal, unpleasant feelings may produce high levels of stress or even boredom.

Table 3. Levels of arousal (Table 2.4 Motivation and Sport, pg. 17).

	Para-telic State	Telic State
High Arousal	Unpleasant (anxiety)	Pleasant (excitement)
Low Arousal	Pleasant (excitement)	Unpleasant (boredom)

With many players on one team, it is extremely difficult to determine where each player is emotionally. If a player is in the alloic operative, the player genuinely receives pleasure and satisfaction from seeing the other members of the team succeed. This is the ideal situation, and if every player experienced the alloic state, many teams would work well together and as a result, success may follow (Apter & Desselles, 2001).

If a player is in the autistic state, he or she may be only concerned with their performance, such as how many hits they got in a game, not necessarily whether or not the team won or not. A player with this attitude is likely to break down any team unity or cohesion (Apter & Desselles, 2001).

Team Cohesion

Cohesion has been defined as "the total field of forces, which act on members to remain in the group" (Festinger, Schachter, and Back, 1950). These individuals are held together by a common goal which may make them more successful. However, if a player's needs and goals are not met, the attraction to the group declines and it may be difficult to keep players on the team. If a team member anticipated playing for a highly successful team and throughout the season, the team consistently loses, again, it may be difficult for coaches to keep everyone on the same page. There are times when losing has a negative effect on both social and task cohesion while winning will sustain both social and task cohesion. Winning goes hand in hand with cohesion, and team chemistry, which is necessary for success. One of the challenges for a coach is to keep everyone on the roster but also to keep everyone motivated. At Lesley University, a Division III institution, the female student-athletes are not on an athletic scholarship and not necessarily recruited, and it can be very challenging to keep teams intact. Many of the student-athletes at Lesley have had peaks and valleys regarding their emotions about Lesley Athletic program. Some feel that they are too good, some not good enough, and many lack the time to commit to a varsity athletic program. As a coach and former athlete at a Division III school, I sometimes struggle to understand

their lack of motivation at times. I view athletics as a commitment, something that should be taken seriously.

Helplessness

Despite many of my attempts to bring out the "competitors" in my athletes, it is very difficult to reach all of your athletes on one particular team. Lesley University did not have a solid reputation for being a successful athletic program. Before I was hired as the Director of Athletics, many considered the athletic department at Lesley as an over glorified intramural program, a program without a winning history or tradition. There was a tradition of apathy at Lesley University regarding the athletic program.

Some athletes believe that they have little or no control over their athletic success. If the team does, by chance, win an occasional game or two, it is thought to be luck. Players start to make up excuses such as "we just got lucky," or "the team we played was a weaker opponent." In this case, athletes do not afford themselves the opportunity to truly develop their skills because they feel they will never get the result that they desire. If this "attitude" or behavior goes undetermined by the coach, the player may be seen as "lazy" and will receive little or no playing time. It is important for both the player and the coach to be on the same "page" and working together on the same goals in regards to expectations and accountability. The remaining teammates may resent this "helpless" type of player because they will feel that he or she is not working as hard as the rest of the team and is potentially holding the team back from the overall team success.

In order to encourage athletes to turn a bad situation into an opportunity, coaches should always encourage players to learn from their mistakes. This can be done by

stopping practices and pointing out mistakes constructively, a coach can also video tape games and practices to work on corrections. Winning cannot happen overnight, many things need to be executed in order for a team to have success. One of the first things involved in winning is setting reasonable and realistic goals that a team can work towards. The athletes need to feel that these goals are achievable. It needs to be the responsibility of the coach to help each player set personal goals, as well and to provide them the opportunity to attain them. It is important for players to see results in order to keep motivated. Coaches can follow up with regular testing to help the players while also providing positive reinforcement rather than negative criticism.

Overachiever

Many teams will also consist of a few especially motivated, self-directed and dedicated players known as overachievers. These players fully commit themselves to their respective programs, but the harder they work the more they expect to be rewarded (Pate, Rotella, McClenaghan, 1984). Working hard does not always produce victories, but the overachiever is relentless in his or her pursuit of success while never giving up and continuing to work toward the team's goals. They know that someday through hard work their efforts will pay off.

Although this type of player appears to be a coach's dream, the first to arrive to practice and the last to leave, the overachiever is a perfectionist and expects stellar results each time, with zero exceptions. This type of player may become a negative member of the team when they realize that they will never be perfect. To overcompensate for their perceived inability, they may over train themselves and eventually experience a burnout.

Underachiever

The middle-of-the-road player, the underachiever, has unlimited potential and talent, yet lacks the motivation and desire to improve. In my experience, I have coached many athletes that fits this very description. Underachievers by definition can be natural athletes that only do the bare minimum to get by and earn their spot on the team. They have no interest in improving and their attitude can leave a lot to be desired. Confronting these athletes can be challenging due to their lack of interest and overall attitude with the potential of bringing a team down in moral. Their responses are usually lifeless and without passion with the promise to do better “next time”. The next day comes in practice and it is as if the athlete is back to where they were before we had any conversation. The team recognizes that this athlete can physically help the team when he or she is engaged, which makes the situation even more frustrating. Team morale can also be affected by this.

Consistency is important with all athletes. Athletes will without question challenge most coaches and making certain that all athletes are treated the same is critical. Quality coaches will not accept mediocrity from their athletes, towing a hard and appropriate line with all athletes on your team will keep the respect of your athletes. The goal of any athletic team should start and end with respect for the sport, the coach, their teammates and their opponent.

Through my research and my own knowledge on this topic, motivation innately comes from within each of us. There should be no gray area with motivation. In a team setting, whether it is a sports team, or the workplace, or a classroom, there are people who can motivate themselves to be somewhere and to be present and engaged, and there are

people who need to be helped along in order to achieve their goals. A coach or teacher's job is very involved. Motivation is not something that you do once, it is done daily with both individual athletes and teams, and a coach needs to recognize when to address each or both. A coach needs to motivate him or herself along with the athletes, this takes patience and hard work. The most important thing to remember about team motivation is to remain in constant communication with your athletes. Your players need to believe in what you are teaching in order for it to translate into success both on and off the field.

2.4. Negative impact of competition

There are many critics of competition that claim that competition is either inherently immoral or that it has the effect of reinforcing other social values that are undesirable. It has been argued that there is an overemphasis placed on winning. There are people looking for a more relaxed attitude toward sports, especially at the amateur level. There is a moral value in sports. General Douglas MacArthur once stated that, "participation in competitive sports is a vital character builder that molds the youth of our country for their roles as custodians of the republic." (Simon, 1991, p.19)

When competition is brought up, a question that is inevitably asked is "what are the consequences of competition and how do they affect the people involved"? In each case, there can be both pleasure and pain. Other questions that may be asked might be, how are the practices run? Are coaches able to get the most out of their athletes? Above all else, competition should always be something that is enjoyed. There will be teams and individuals that win and lose, but along with hard work, sports need to be something that

one looks forward to and learns from. One can achieve great fulfillment from competition, while also learning quite a bit from both victories and losses.

As participation in youth sports continues to rise, a direct impact on injury rates, medical costs, family burden, and time away from sport has been observed. Accurate and comprehensive data on sporting injuries in young athletes have been difficult to obtain because of inconsistent definitions of sports injury, under-reporting of injuries by parents and athletes, and lack of professional oversight in record keeping. In addition to the physical consequences of injury, the psychosocial disturbances of mood swings, depression, and disconnection from their peer group are problematic and often require professional management. The National Center for Sports Safety in the United States reports that 3.5 Million children aged 14 years and younger receive medical care for sports related injuries each year, and of all the sports related injuries that are cared for in the emergency room at hospitals, two thirds involve injuries to children. It is estimated that two billion dollars are spent in the United States health care system each year on the management of sports injuries.

Although not all injuries can be prevented, it appears that the youth sport culture is falling short in minimizing both traumatic and overuse injuries in children (Merkel & Molony, 2012). Parents, coaches, sports medicine professionals, and organizers are all culpable. Despite the fact that 67% of injuries occur during practice sessions, many parents enforce fewer safety precautions during these times than during competition. At least half of all injuries sustained by young athletes result from overuse (Merkel & Molony, 2012). As with adult injuries, overuse injuries in the young athlete are the result of both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. Intrinsic factors are those that are physiologic and often nonmodifiable, whereas extrinsic factors can be altered by outside influences (Merkel &

Molony, 2012). Adults involved in youth sports have an important role in influencing extrinsic factors, which can lead to injury reduction or exacerbation.

The National Athletic Trainer's Association reported 50 fatalities due to sports injuries in young athletes in 2010. Despite multiple bills presented to state legislation in the last few years to prevent serious injuries, i.e., cardiac arrest, heat illness, and concussion, less than 10% have been passed into law. In an attempt to reduce the rising incidence of concussion in young athletes, 33 states require education for coaches, parents, athletes, and school personnel in the recognition, management, and prevention of concussion in youth sports. In 2012, the National Association for Sport and Physical Education published its "Shape of the Nation Report", illustrating the role of both federal and state government in developing regulations regarding recess and physical education for grades K through 12. Currently, there are no federal regulations regarding implementation of recess and physical education in the US school system. Seventy-five percent of the States mandate schools provide physical education in the elementary, middle, and high school curricula; however, only 12% of states include frequency and duration requirements throughout all grade levels. More than 80% of states require physical education at some time during grades K through 12. The report identifies differences in specific regulations on implementation of physical education between individual states.

"Experts indicate that there may be no direct and demonstrable connection between participation in competitive sports and desirable character development, there may be a subtler and indirect connection. While sports may not build character from scratch, participation in competitive sports may reinforce and encourage the development of preexisting character traits" (Simon 1991, p. 16).

From an Educational perspective, college athletics and higher education have not always coexisted. Before the 20th century, education was the sole purpose of a university, and after the 20th century, athletics in universities became prevalent and permanent, and there is no bigger example of this, than at Division I institutions. Although there is an excitement that typically goes along with attending a Division I institution, athletically speaking, there is also a different expectation from student-athletes, especially in comparison with their Division III counterparts. The balance of participating in Division I athletics and the educational responsibilities bestowed on student-athletes at this level can be very difficult to manage.

Today, the phrase ‘educational opportunity’ has become an ironic statement. Because of their participation in athletics, regrettably, student-athletes no longer receive the equal benefits of being both a student and an athlete. An article in the Chronicle of Higher Education published in January of 2015 by Brad Wolverton stated that the NCAA for academic fraud was investigating twenty institutions. Athletes are challenged to truly apply themselves to their education. The time constraints and increased expectations on college athletes can generate a negative effect on their education by potentially leading to more stress and lower grade point averages, showing that college athletics have become very demanding (Humphrey, 2000).

Although the NCAA mandates that student-athletes be limited to four hours a day and twenty hours per week during your varsity season and eight hours per week during non-traditional time, the schedules of a varsity athlete is still quite arduous. With extensive team travel, individual workouts, and intense practice times, it leaves student-athletes minimal time to study, socialize, and the ability to have access to activities that the everyday student has access to.

There is a book entitled *The Stress of College Athletics* (Humphrey, 2000) stating “95% of college male student-athletes and 86% of female student-athletes were stressed by such factors as tests and examinations. Humphrey goes on to explain that more than half of student-athletes admit that the demands of their sports are stress inducing, with the greatest stressor on them being the pressure to win (Humphrey, 2000). This control place over lives of student-athletes “limits their ability to sample the broad social, cultural, and educational opportunities that are part of a well-rounded college education” (Bilberry, 2000).

According to the NCAA (Funk, 1995), 38% of all student-athletes feel that faculty does not take their studies seriously. Meaning that student-athletes may feel this way in large part because professors believe that student-athletes are only in school ‘to play sports’, and do the bare minimum in order to stay eligible to participate in sports. 20% of collegiate NCAA student-athletes claim, “their sports participation had prevented them from majoring in what they really wanted” (Wolverton, 2007).

Collegiate athletics can give back so much to a college campus and its community members, but the pressures of major college sports and the business of making money has changed the face of what being a student-athletes is supposed to be. Major reform needs to happen and the NCAA and college administrators will need to be at the forefront of this initiative in order to implement true change. The emphasis of collegiate athletics needs to be placed on education.

“An American university seldom discusses intercollegiate athletics as part of its primary purposes of teaching, research, and service. The irony of this silence is that, for many universities, major athletics stand out as a central activity, a program likely to be protected and promoted” (Thelin, 1994).

William Bowen, the former president of Princeton University, and Sarah Levin published a book, *Reclaiming the Game* (2003), in which they document the results of athletic recruitment and college outcomes of athletes compared to non-athletes at 33 highly selective academic institutions. Relying on data from Ivy League schools, Seven Sister colleges, and other prestigious universities, Bowen and Levin expose the negative sides of college sport at schools that do not even offer athletic scholarships.

Some of the negative findings include the fact that athletes are four times as likely to gain admission to college as other students with comparable academic credentials. The data also showed that athletes are substantially more likely to be in the bottom third of their college class than students who do not play sports. Recruited athletes also tend to underperform academically in college compared to the predictions based on their test scores and high school grades. Of course, these are not the schools we think of when we think of big time college sport. It is rare when a team from Princeton, Harvard, or Yale contends at the national level.

In 2003, Robert Frank of Cornell University presented a report to the prestigious Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics. The report included an assessment of the effect of winning teams on applicants and on alumni donations. Citing a review of six studies conducted between 1987 and 2003, Frank reported that although there appeared to be several instances of small gains in admissions as measured by higher SAT scores, the increases were minor and not statistically significant.

Frank also reviewed more than a dozen studies that measured the effect of athletic success on alumni donations. Although most studies showed little effect at statistically significant levels, one study did show that appearances at football bowl games and basketball tournaments do positively affect donations. Frank's conclusion, however, was

that there is little empirical evidence to support the contention that it takes a winning program to secure alumni donations.

Perhaps people with certain character traits do tend to participate in competitive athletics, but then have those traits reinforced by participation to a greater extent, than otherwise would have been the case. Even if competitive sports have less impact on character development than many have claimed, they still may play a major role in expressing and illustrating those values. This might be called the expressive function of sports. For example, athletic competition may illustrate the value of dedication and teamwork by publicly manifesting the degree of excellence the cultivation of those traits can enable us to attain. Closely contested games can provide opportunities for the exhibition of such personal virtues as courage and loyalty. By welcoming challenges in sports, participants and spectators can potentially affirm and exhibit such virtues" (Simon, 1991, p.19).

Some people view sports as a war of all against all. Even though team sports involve competition between opponents, it also involves cooperation among members of the same team. Moreover, in many sports, even at the professional level, it is very common for opponents to provide encouragement, support and even instruction to each other in the off-season or even between contests.

Others sometimes view athletes as selfish individuals. They are thought of as being more concerned about individual statistics and accolades rather than the outcome of the actual game and whether or not their team is victorious. Selfish athletes in my opinion are in the minority. Most of the collegiate athletes that I have met prefer team success and place that well ahead of their own individual success. With all of the teams that I have coached during my career, I have always requested that the athletes on those teams write

down their athletic goals for that season before the first game is played. The consistent answer that is written are goals like wanting to win a championship, finishing first in the conference, and win more games than the previous year. Obligation to competitive fairness restricts selfishness in sports. What I mean by that statement is that as coaches we try to always coach with a team concept. Team needs to work as one functioning unit in order to have any real and sustained success.

Although it is essential to good competition that the competitors try as hard as they can to achieve victory, the principal value of athletic competition lies not in winning itself but in the process of overcoming the challenge presented by a worthy opponent. In fact, good competition presupposes a cooperative effort by competitors to generate the best possible challenges to each other. Each has the obligation to the other to try his or her best. Although one wins the contest and the other loses, each gains by trying to meet the challenge that each has voluntarily agreed to face. In this view, competition in sports should be regarded and engaged in not as if it were a zero-sum game, but as a mutually acceptable quest for excellence through challenge" (Simon, 1991, p.23).

Sports and recreation should be a fundamental part of children's lives, despite troubling signs in the youth sports culture. Sport provides a medium for physical activity, developing friendships, and learning developmental skills across all domains.

In the current environment of childhood obesity, fostering activity is vital to children's health and well-being. The multiple health benefits for children of all ages who participate in vigorous physical activity are well documented. Organized youth sports, when focused on fundamentals, facilitate physical activity while providing enjoyment for the young athlete. Fostering a positive youth sports experience is the accumulation of multiple factors, ie, matching the child's readiness with the demands of the sport, positive

behavior from coaches and parents, realistic goal setting, and appropriate methods in place for injury reduction and management. Reducing sports attrition is necessary for sustaining sports participation and facilitating physical activity into adulthood. The challenges faced by adults in the United States who recognize the need to facilitate change in the youth sport culture are significant, complex, and varied across ethnic cultures, gender, communities, and socioeconomic levels. It appears that an emphasis on having fun while establishing a balance between physical fitness, psychologic well-being, and life-long lessons for a healthy and active lifestyle are paramount for success.

2.5. Athletics related to job satisfaction

One of the goals of my study is also to investigate the effect of college sports participation on later job satisfaction of men and women. It is believed that the experiences gained through college athletic participation influence athletes in many areas of life, including job satisfaction and life satisfaction (Serbu, 1997). Sports have always been thought of as the method of teaching youth skills necessary for success in later life.

Most of the research which has examined the effect of athletic participation on life success has focused on various indicators of academic success (Serbu, 1997). The three indicators most often used are academic performance, graduation rates, and motivation to attend college, all of which are related to an individual's viability in the job market. Research on the relationship of athletic participation and academic performance has shown a significant difference between men and women. "Research on sports participation has shown: a negative relationship with academic performance for men and a positive relationship for women, a positive relationship on retention and graduation rates and a

higher motivation to earn a degree, the formulation of educational goals and enhanced prospects for attending college” (Serbu, 1997).

Overall life satisfaction is related in some degree to success in the work place. There have been two studies of the long-term effects of athletic participation on later job status and occupation success, both of which only studied male athletes. Dubois (1980) compared the occupational success of former male athletes to non-athletes and found no significant difference. In contrast, Lederman (1990) found that men who participated in college athletics were doing better economically than those who did not; he attributed this to the athletes having more self-motivation. Much of research addressing the relationship of athletic participation and women’s occupational success was conducted in the 1970’s and focused mainly on childhood games rather than college sports. Actually, researchers like Harragon (1977), Henning (1977), and Rosenberg and Moran (1963) concluded that women who participated in childhood sports and masculine games developed characteristics that contributed to later success in professional areas.

Athletic participation has not only changed my life, but it has shaped and molded who I am today. Much of what I am professionally is because of what sports has afforded me. Athletics taught me discipline, structure, and direction, while also showing me how to work hard both individually and with others, and how to also set and achieve goals. Therefore, it is expected similar impact on others.

There are many highs and lows throughout an athletic season and one needs to understand that regretfully not every team is destined to win a championship. One of the most important things that athletics taught me was patience, something that I believe is critical in working with athletes. The things that I have learned and the traits and characteristics that make me who I am today, are because of athletics. I competed in track

and field at a small NCAA Division III institution where athletic scholarships were not available. Collegiate athletics has many competitive levels, whether you are playing at an elite NCAA Division I level institution which is the highest level of collegiate athletics in the United States or if you are just part of an intramural program, sports and exercise is something that should be made available to all who want to participate. Some form of wellness and/or exercise is something that can add true value to one's life. "Competition in sports can be thought of as participation in sports contests with the intent or major goal of defeating an opponent. In such clear cases, competition seems to be a zero-sum game. The aim of defeating an opponent cannot be secured by all competitors, and its attainment by one precludes it's like attainment by the other in the same contest" (Simon, 1991, p.14).

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

To investigate the Nature of Competition, the research was collected with data via open-ended questions from interviews, conversations, and a questionnaire to faculty, staff, teachers and students at different institutions in both the United States and Portugal.

The objective of this chapter is to explain the experimental design, including the instruments, the participants, and the procedures of the data analysis.

3.2. Instruments and variables

The instrument used in this study was in the form of interviews and a questionnaire titled “Athletic Questionnaire”:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1RGT4NRHYhY3zt-bKKHzDOU4CNUGx2ib-paXKCKHAYHo/viewform>

The questionnaire was emailed to over 10 Division III institutions in the United States and multiple institutions in Portugal. It contained 10 questions, and was used by permission from athletic administrators to obtain specific data from only student-athletes regarding their perspectives on athletics, competition, academics, Division III and what it means to be a student-athlete. The questionnaire also has a section for any additional comments that student-athletes may want to share regarding athletics and/or competition. There is a link to the questionnaire above, along with the results from the questionnaire itself. There were 167 responses with the majority of students agreeing or strongly agreeing with all of the questions, as can be seen in the results section.

Questionnaire Questions

1. Do you understand Division III Athletics and its philosophy?
2. Do you believe in athletic competition?
3. Do you believe varsity athletics is an important part of Higher Education?
4. Do you feel supported by your administration as a student-athlete?
5. Are academics and athletics equally important to you?
6. Do you learn as much in the classroom as you did on the playing field?
7. Did participating in athletics help balance your academic responsibilities?
8. Did you learn life skills from participating in athletics?
9. Will you consider working out for the rest of your life because of your varsity athletic participation?
10. Did participating in varsity athletics better prepare you for the workforce?

3.3. Sample

This study was designed to identify trends of attitudes and opinions of student-athletes ($N=500$) coaches ($N=200$) and administrators ($N=100$) from nineteen colleges and universities in the United States and three colleges and universities in Portugal, which are listed below in 3.4. By noting the differences and similarities in the opinions, specific recommendations will be made to assist institutions in the potential delivery of athletic services to student-athletes. The researcher conducted a qualitative study by administering questionnaires with ten questions to five hundred student-athletes from different

institutions with 167 responses. The age range of the people interviewed for this study varied from traditional students between the ages of 18-22, to administrators and coaches between the ages of 25-65. There was well over one hundred interviews, but only twenty were used for this study. The student-athletes that were interviewed and that submitted questionnaires were between the ages of 18-22, and all participants in the questionnaire were students who held the status of student-athlete.

I had more success interviewing students in America as opposed to Portugal, which is reflective in my interview and questionnaire results of seventy five percent in the United States and twenty five percent in Portugal. Beyond the research, a major goal of the study was to explore the opportunity to introduce an athletic model, similar to the one used in the United States, to the institutions in Portugal with the purpose of implementing this model in order to help introduce and cultivate competitive athletics at the collegiate level amongst different institutions of Higher Education. The ultimate goal being the ability to start a league and/or conference that included different institutions with the objective of competing against one other in a variety of different sports with an end of the season championship as both a goal and motivation for all participants.

3.4. Procedures

Although the interviews and questionnaire used a population of student-athletes from several colleges and universities, the population was made up of student-athletes representing many sports at NCAA Division I and Division III institutions in the United States and student-athletes from different institutions in Portugal. The study included

institutions from mainly the East Coast of the United States, and mainly with several institutions that the researcher had contact with or was employed by. The list included, Lesley University, Harvard University, Brown University, Lasell College, Chatham University, Providence College, University of Rhode Island, Mount Ida College, Anna Maria College, Boston College, St. Joseph College of Maine, Simmons College, Bay Path College, Daniel Webster College, University of Pittsburgh, Johnson and Wales University, Community College of Rhode Island, Bunker Hill Community College, and Dean College. The study also included different institutions in Europe, specifically Portugal, and more specifically the University of Coimbra and the University of Lisbon. The topic of my dissertation actually came upon me during my first week attending the University of Coimbra. My conversation with faculty ($N=25$) staff ($N=50$) and students ($N=100$), (also reflected in my numbers above), at the institution quickly educated me on the fact varsity athletics did not exist at the collegiate level and athletic competition between other institutions did not exist as well. Much of my research regarding competitive athletics in Portugal and my interviews with student, staff and faculty in Portugal would take place over the next several months. The next two years were spent researching and interviewing staff, faculty and students in the United States to understand the history of competitive athletics and the structure, importance and seriousness of competitive athletics in the United States.

The researcher has over twenty years of work experience in the field of collegiate athletics and direct experience with four of the institutions involved in the study. The researcher has served as the Director of Athletics at two of the institutions and managed all aspects of a Division III athletic program. The researcher has also personally seen and experienced the benefits of athletic competition, not only for the student-athletes but for

what it can also bring to a college campus. The topics and questions posed were based on personal experience along with the reading and research.

3.5. Data analysis

Data collection was achieved through both in person and phone interviews. The interviews totaled well over fifty participants, and there were twenty cites in my work that brought to light the true essence of competition along with some of the obvious cultural differences between the United States and Portugal. The main question that was asked of all participants was their perspective on competition and what that meant to them, both as adults and as children growing up. They were asked about the importance of athletics and the benefits that they all received from it, and how it influenced and shaped their lives. The goal for the interviews was to obtain an in-depth look at why competitive athletics was so important to them and if playing competitive sports changed their lives in an intentional and positive way. A questionnaire was also emailed to over 10 athletic directors at all Division III institutions in the United States, along with administrators at institutions in Portugal for the purposes of distributing the questionnaire to their respective student-athletes. Complete anonymity was assured for all participants.

Questionnaires, coaching and student-athlete observation and interviews in both the United States and Portugal comprised a large part of my research. My work included the use of focus groups as a method of research, which allowed me to interview a group of people on the specific topic of competitive athletics. There was a real benefit in accumulating information from several people in one session. Qualitative research is by no means the only legitimate way to do research but it is one in which you can fully

understand what a person is experiencing which is not always achievable through the use of numbers. The world is comprised of people, and my work involved finding out how sport and exercise affects them.

Initially, my work was shaped around measuring the attitudes and beliefs of coaches and student-athletes around competition and their perspective of its benefits. The questionnaire was created in order to aid me in note collection and an interview protocol that helped in the interview structure. Multiple interviews were planned with each participant in order to provide more in-depth data collection and opportunities for follow-up. The goal was to interview administrators, coaches and student-athletes who embody a range of identity positions and who come from different institutions, communities, and countries. I worked with the administrations of different institutions from both the United States and Portugal to identify appropriate participants. All participants were requested to respond to a series of journal prompts over the course of the research that allowed them to provide a more detailed and longitudinal view of their daily lives along with their experiences, reactions, beliefs, and ideas about their roles and responsibilities as administrators, coaches and student-athletes.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Introduction

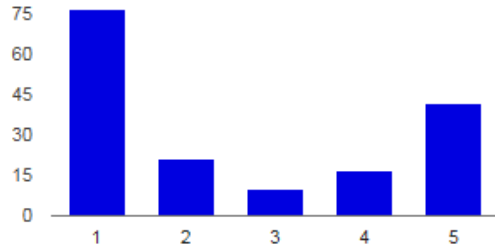
The research for this work was done with competition in mind and the perceived need and want for organized competitive athletics at the collegiate level in Europe, specifically in Portugal. The research that was compiled was what is currently being offered at the collegiate levels for varsity athletics in both Portugal and the United States.

The United States currently has different levels and classifications of varsity collegiate athletics that is broken down into different divisions while Portugal does not currently offer varsity athletics to their student population as an option. The overall goal of this study was to look at collegiate athletics in both Portugal and the United States to understand how each model works, and to research the overall benefits of competition and athletics. This study was also a way to assess the attitudes and opinions of student-athletes, athletic staff, and coaches concerning competitive athletics and the benefits that it can bring to a college community.

4.2. Results

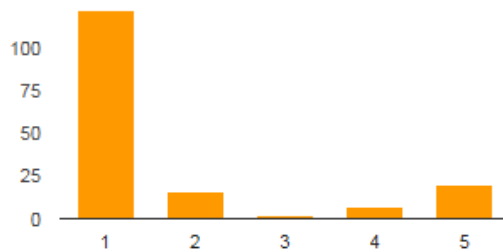
The main results point that there is very clear support for collegiate athletics and competition and the benefits that goes along with playing college sports, as illustrated by the next Figures corresponding to the ten questions of the questionnaire.

I understand the Division III philosophy



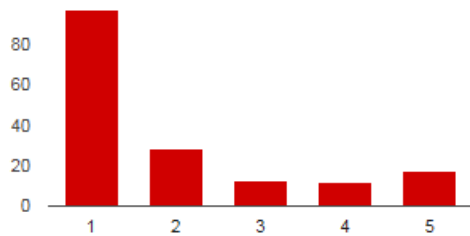
strongly agree: 1	77	46.1%
2	21	12.6%
3	10	6%
4	17	10.2%
strongly disagree : 5	42	25.1%

I believe in healthy athletic competition



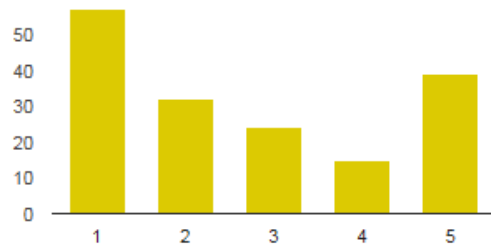
strongly agree: 1	122	73.1%
2	16	9.6%
3	2	1.2%
4	7	4.2%
strongly disagree : 5	20	12%

Varsity sports is an important part of Higher Education



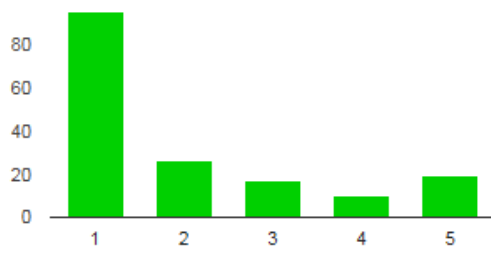
strongly agree: 1	97	58.1%
2	28	16.8%
3	13	7.8%
4	12	7.2%
strongly disagree : 5	17	10.2%

I feel supported by the administration



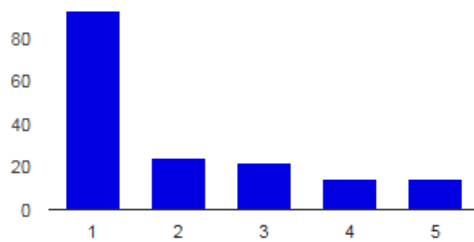
strongly agree: 1	57	34.1%
2	32	19.2%
3	24	14.4%
4	15	9%
strongly disagree : 5	39	23.4%

Athletics and academics are equally important to me



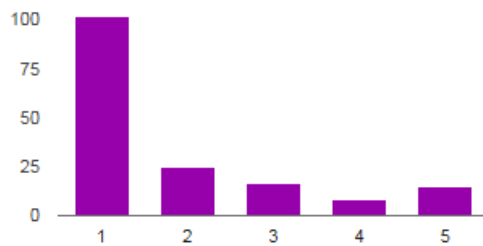
strongly agree:	1	95	56.9%
	2	26	15.6%
	3	17	10.2%
	4	10	6%
strongly disagree :	5	19	11.4%

I learned as much from my coach as I did in a classroom



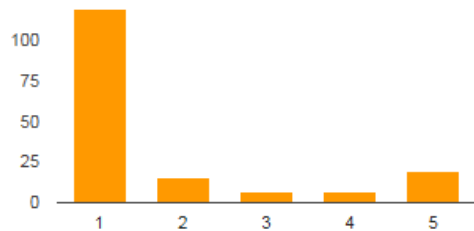
strongly agree:	1	93	55.7%
	2	24	14.4%
	3	22	13.2%
	4	14	8.4%
strongly disagree :	5	14	8.4%

Athletics helps me balance my academics



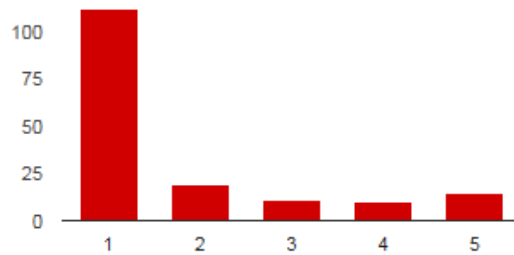
strongly agree:	1	102	61.1%
	2	25	15%
	3	17	10.2%
	4	8	4.8%
strongly disagree :	5	15	9%

I learned important life skills from playing a sport



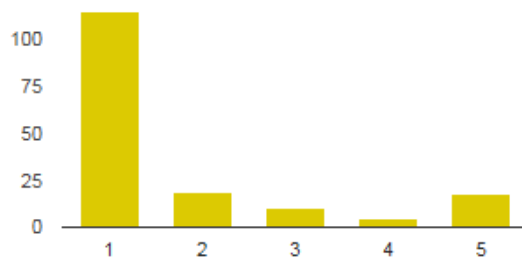
strongly agree:	1	119	71.3%
	2	15	9%
	3	7	4.2%
	4	7	4.2%
strongly disagree :	5	19	11.4%

I will work out for the rest of my life



strongly agree: 1	112	67.1%
2	19	11.4%
3	11	6.6%
4	10	6%
strongly disagree : 5	15	9%

I am more prepared for the workplace because of athletics



strongly agree: 1	115	68.9%
2	19	11.4%
3	10	6%
4	5	3%
strongly disagree : 5	18	10.8%

Through interviews with student-athletes, staff, coaches and administrators, I learned quite a bit about competition and the importance it holds for everyone involved. The main questions that I asked to everyone I interviewed was regarding their perspective on competition and the place and importance it had, both in their lives and in society. My questions were meant to see why athletic competition was so important and what benefits were gained by individuals and teams in their opinions. I have personally lived through the satisfaction that collegiate athletics gave me and the opportunities that it afforded me throughout my life. The other goals of the interviews were to confirm the passion people have for competitive athletics and the impact it had on their respective lives.

The message that I received from the student population in Portugal was their desire to adopt a competitive athletic model at the collegiate level. Student athletes in

Portugal have a deep passion and respect for both sports and competition, and they were very candid about their excitement in possibly adding varsity athletics to their institution. My most fascinating interview was with Tiago Mendonca, an international student from Faro, Portugal that was attending Providence College. Tiago recognized at a young age that he was not able to play professional soccer, but wanted to continue his playing career. He sought out an athletic scholarship in the United States and found one through the Head Men's Soccer Coach at Providence College who was scouting in Portugal for impact soccer players for his men's soccer program. Tiago openly stated that his desire was never to leave Portugal, and had there been a competitive athletic collegiate model in place like the United States, he never would have left. Many of my interviews with coaches and student-athletes in the United States centered on their passion for athletics and its importance in their lives.

In the United States, there is a disparity of resources and funding between the different divisions at the college level, but everyone that I spoke to in the United States agreed that competitive varsity athletics was something that belonged at the collegiate level. The interviews that took place Portugal with students also confirmed their desire to continue competitive athletics at the collegiate level, preferably against other institutions. The coaches and administrators that were interviewed in Portugal spoke more about the lack of a competitive culture that was existent at the collegiate level and some of the potential roadblocks that may come with trying to start competitive athletics. They cited administrative apathy and the fact that the current Portuguese government did not put an importance on Physical Education at any level. My interview with Filipa Godinho, the President of FADU, was a discussion about some of the projects that were currently in place, like the ability to increase participation in the National Athletics Championships,

and to also help change the fact that there are very few athletic training sessions in Portugal. President Godinho did acknowledge that although FADU organizes four annual Portuguese University Championships in Athletics, indoor and outdoor track and field, cross-country, and road races, there is not a culture of competitive athletics at the collegiate level.

In my opinion, the Division III collegiate athletic model in the United States could be a grassroots foundation for how to construct a competitive athletic program at the collegiate level in Portugal. The Division III athletic model places an emphasis on developing the student first and then the athlete, which is a similar philosophy that I experienced in Portugal. Without the pressure and financial obligation of athletic scholarships, a Division III athletic model could allow competition of varsity sports teams among other colleges and universities in Portugal, in order to offer the student-athletes the experience of athletic competition.

The feedback that was received from student-athletes was instrumental in learning the overall climate regarding both competition and athletics at the collegiate level in both countries. The students interviewed in Portugal were very consistent in their desire to have a varsity athletic program at the collegiate level. Many of the students participated in some fashion at the secondary school level and had a passion for competitive sports. They also stated that many were still participating on club teams through their respective areas and paying money in order to participate and would much rather pay the university in order to play, which again aligns with the Division III athletic model where the student athletes can pay a fee in order to participate on their respective athletic teams. The students interviewed in the United States were very consistent with their satisfaction for varsity athletics and their passion for competition, but their frustration came stemmed from a disparity of resources and support for their respective programs and institutions. There is a disparity in

facilities, resources and support from institution to institution, and athletes and coaches just want the best for their individual programs, but putting that aside, the passion that student-athletes have for their school and sport is something that is hard to put into words.

The data from the questionnaire revealed deep differences in satisfaction levels for the United States and Portugal. The ten questions from the questionnaire centered on Division III athletics and what that meant, competition, the role of a varsity athletic program, the responsibility of being a student-athlete, the benefits of competitive athletics, and how one benefited from participating in competitive athletics. The feedback can be directly tied to the philosophical differences that each country has regarding athletics and the emphasis or lack of emphasis that each country puts in the value of competition. The interviews conducted with the student athletes in Portugal signified a strong desire to experience competition at a collegiate level. The students in Portugal were frustrated with the lack of athletic opportunities at the collegiate level and the lack of athletic competition opportunities available. The interviews conducted with the student athletes in the United States confirmed the passion and desire for strong and competitive athletic programs between other institutions, but there was also a level of frustration with the lower Division III student-athletes regarding a lack of athletic facilities and resources in comparison with institutions that had more resources and were better funded.

5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Mandy Antoniaci, a writer for the Sports Business Analyst wrote an article in 2015 talking about the growth of the sports industry. She stated that the field of athletics and the sports industry is one of the largest growing industries in the world. In the United States alone, it is estimated that the sports industry is worth close to 500 billion dollars, and in Europe, the sports industry is estimated to be worth 350-450 billion Euros. Sports in Europe are both important and highly organized with many sports having professional leagues. Below is an overview of the estimated worth of the sports industry in both the United States and the world, as well as a chart that lists the economic importance of sport in all 27 European Countries (Table 4 and Table 5).

Table 4. Sports industry statistics and market size overview.

	Amount	Units	Year	Source
Estimated Size of the Entire Sports Industry, U.S.	498.4	Billion US\$	2015	PRE
Estimated Size of the Global Sports Industry	1.5	Trillion US\$	2015	PRE
Annual Company Spending for Sports Advertising, U.S.	34.9	Billion US\$	2015	PRE

The statistics presented in the Tables 4 and 5 show the growth of the sports industry and the direction that students are flocking towards in their studies. In the United States, statistics show that by the year 2020, jobs in the sports field will grow by 29%. People are drawn to sports and the idea of working in this industry is attractive, and a very viable option in today's society. Competing in collegiate athletics could only enhance this desire, especially when one talks about coaching and athletic training positions, and being able to

use that practical experience gained through competitive athletics and seeing that translate into getting a position in the sports field. There is also a real connection between competing in college athletics and working in the sports industry. According to the United States Women's Sports Foundation in 2015, 80% of the Fortune 500 female executives identify as being former student-athletes.

Table 5. Sports industry in both the United States and European Countries.

	Value added in million Euro	Employment in heads
Austria ²	10,730	242,968
Belgium	3,043	71,416
Bulgaria	223	55,843
Cyprus ³	310	7,600
Czech Republic	1,062	89,119
Denmark	3,719	69,287
Estonia	162	15,686
Finland	2,654	74,209
France	21,607	416,537
Germany	46,677	1,146,234
Greece	2,518	70,878
Hungary	778	55,577
Ireland	2,377	40,532
Italy	15,599	329,860
Latvia	136	17,077
Lithuania	161	16,178
Luxembourg	697	19,331
Malta	93	3,070
Netherlands	5,828	141,896
Poland ⁴	5,300	225,500
Portugal	1,534	72,101
Romania	790	161,248
Slovakia	472	49,910
Slovenia	521	28,576
Spain	10,407	336,177
Sweden	2,360	73,266
UK ⁴	39,860	632,400

Source: SportsEconAustria, Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, Meerwaarde Sport en Economie, Ministry of Sport and Tourism of the Republic of Poland.

My conclusions centers on a proposal where Portugal would implement a Division III collegiate varsity athletic model that is currently being used in the United States. This model focuses on maintaining the integrity of the student-athlete regarding their academic responsibilities, but helps enhance the development of the student, both mentally and physically, while affording students the opportunity to experience athletic competition.

5.1. The Proposal

Portugal could introduce a Division III collegiate athletic model that emulates the current model being used by the institutions in the United States. There is both an academic and athletic component to the benefits of adding this athletic model. From an academic standpoint, how can one expect a graduating sports management student to enter into the sports industry without having had any practical athletic experience in college? Although theory is important, it is less than a complete education without experience in athletic competition. In addition, the skills and benefits gained from competing in varsity athletics are invaluable.

Having worked in different levels of collegiate athletics and spending a majority of my career in Division III collegiate athletics, I have been witness to the purity of what Division III athletics represents. Without the pressure of athletic scholarships, Division III institutions can afford student-athletes the ability to balance both academic and athletic responsibilities with the appropriate support that can allow for success in both.

Building a Division III athletic program requires the recognition and incorporation of an institutional mission. All athletic programs should provide students with a wonderful

learning environment built on a solid academic foundation. The goal needs to be about developing a student-athlete both mentally and physically. Student-athletes should never be athletes first.

One of the real components of adding competitive athletic programs will be the ability to secure facilities in order for athletic teams to compete, whether it is on campus or off-campus at a shared facility. Funding for the necessary equipment and uniforms can be done through fundraising, and establishing a student fee that helps pay for some of the expenses that will be incurred, especially the initial costs. Donors and/or alumni can also be a big part of helping to fund athletics through donations. There is also the option of soliciting sponsorship from local companies and businesses to aid in subsidizing some of the money necessary to help start and sustain an athletic program. The appropriate coaches will need to be hired in order to recruit student-athletes for their respective programs, although many start-up athletic programs in the United States will secure the services of volunteer or part-time coaches in order to save on initial costs. An athletic staff will also need to be assembled in order to help run and manage the athletic department for the day to day operation of the program regarding issues like compliance, statistics, medical needs, just to name a few. Hiring student workers for the athletic department will also allow for very affordable support staff. In the United States, most collegiate athletic programs employ work-study students as game day staff for keeping statistics and other game day duties.

Former United States President Dwight Eisenhower once said, “Sports foster among the student body a feeling of loyalty toward the institution and a spirit of healthy and sportsmanlike competition. They develop the latent qualities of leadership, promote

practice of the essentials of teamwork, and are an important part of the maturing process of our young people”.

Athletics should provide a positive dimension to the overall mission of any institution. The presence of student-athletes at a university should provide a school pride and spirit that can be infectious throughout a university campus. Quality athletic programs can bring collaboration between a university and its surrounding community regarding attending different athletic events and the sharing of facilities. Good relations between students, community members and an institution can only help strengthen future enrollment and potential future donations to an institution.

Student-athlete recruitment would also undoubtedly help increase student enrollment, which would help bring in an infusion of new money to the institution, while also potentially bringing in a potentially more diverse student population. The lower maintenance Division III level would make the transition for institutions in Portugal much more attainable. The athletic department infrastructure already exists in Portugal at different institutions with already existing sports management programs and physical education programs. In addition, many institutions already have existing athletic facilities, which would make the process of adding particular sports much easier. The larger items that would need to be addressed immediately are the coordination of varsity teams, the appropriate personnel to help build the athletic department, equipment, uniforms, and a working athletic schedule in order for institutions to engage in athletic competition.

Organizing a meeting with FADU and all of the institutions in Portugal that currently offer sports in some capacity would be a starting point on how to lay down the foundation to fully implementing this new athletic model. The object of the meeting would be to start multiple conferences based on both geography, in order to avoid an expensive

travel budget, and to separate institutions based on size, to avoid unfair competition. The ultimate goal is to have institutions competing against one another that makes sense from both a financial sense and competitive standpoint, with the athletic goal of crowning a champion at the end of each sports season.

Division III is committed to what the NCAA refers to as the 3 “D’s”. First, student-athletes are encouraged to discover and pursue their interests both on the field and in the classroom. Second, student-athletes are given the opportunity to develop into well-rounded individuals. Third, they are expected to dedicate themselves to achieving their academic and athletic potential. This needs to be the foundation of what an athletic program is built on. Institutions cannot lose sight of the fact that athletes are students first and a Division III athletic program focuses on the well-rounded student-athlete that allows him or her the opportunity to get involved in multiple things during their collegiate career.

The NCAA has guiding principles for what they consider a model Division III athletic program. The first principle is integration and institutional control. A model Division III athletics program is integral to the educational mission of the institution, is fully integrated as an athletics department in the institution’s budget and management operations, and is committed to the principle of institutional control. The administration of an institution’s athletics program (e.g., hiring, compensation, professional development, certification of coaches) should be integrated into the campus culture and education mission, and strive to incorporate the core attributes of the Division III mission and philosophy.

The second principle is the chancellor or president oversight. A model Division III member institution’s chancellor or president should set forth a vision for the institution’s intercollegiate athletics program. The administration needs to ensure that adequate

resources exist for the athletic department to carry out this vision. There also needs to be an emphasis put on the importance of the institution's compliance system and the roles of various departments (e.g., financial aid office) in this system, while also ensuring that the athletic programs support the institution's educational mission by financing, staffing and controlling the programs through the same general procedures as other departments of the institution.

Third is the athletics direct report. At many Division III member institutions, the president or chancellor has designated oversight of intercollegiate athletics to another individual (e.g., vice president). Within a model Division III member institution that has this structure, the athletics direct report should be consulted for input on key institutional and conference operational and strategic issues facing the athletics program.

The fourth is the director of athletics. A model Division III athletics program shall feature a full-time administrator that takes responsibility for the academic and athletic success of the athletics department. As the department's manager, the director of athletics shall implement the institution's vision for intercollegiate athletics consistent with the institution's mission and philosophy. The director of athletics is also responsible for creating an environment that prioritizes sportsmanship and civility. The director of athletics should provide its staff members with professional development opportunities. Although not a requirement, as a best practice it is recommended that the director of athletics should serve as a primary athletics administrator and should not have other major responsibilities.

The fifth principle is the associate/assistant director of athletics. A model Division III athletics program should have at least one associate or assistant director of athletics.

This individual could have a variety of responsibilities ranging from compliance, budget management, and scheduling/facility oversight.

The sixth is the senior woman administrator (SWA). A model Division III athletics program shall include the active involvement of the senior woman administrator in decision making regarding key issues and in the general operations and management of the athletics department. The SWA is also a senior level administrator.

The seventh principle is the faculty athletics representative (FAR). A model Division III athletics program shall include the active involvement of the faculty athletics representative as the key institutional liaison to the athletics department. The involvement of the FAR should include eligibility or academic related duties. The FAR should also serve as a key contact for all student-athletes.

The eighth is the coach's role. A model Division III athletics program shall feature an environment where head coaches understand their responsibility in establishing a culture of compliance with conference and NCAA rules. The actions of coaches should exhibit fairness, openness, honesty in their relationships with student-athletes. A model athletics program also features a coach's policies and procedures manual.

The ninth principle is the athletic trainers. A model Division III athletics program shall feature an adequate number of certified athletic trainers who are able to provide for the safety and well-being of the student-athletes. A model athletics program also features athletic trainers who are integral to compliance with CPR, first aid and AED certification requirements. Best practices, procedures and policies should adhere to the NCAA Sports Medicine Handbook.

The tenth principle is the athletics communication director. A model Division III athletics program shall feature an individual responsible for promoting the institution's

intercollegiate athletics program and for building key relationships with the media and the community. This individual should work with the department in establishing web communication and social media strategic planning.

The eleventh principle is the student-athlete advisory committee (SAAC) Involvement. A model Division III athletics program shall feature an active institutional SAAC that represents the concerns and ideas of the institution's student-athletes in all sports and is committed to the overall well-being of the student-athlete. Every team should have at least one representative on the campus (SAAC). A model athletics program also should have a student-athlete handbook that clearly states what it means to be a student-athlete and the accountability that goes along with that responsibility.

The twelfth principle is continuing education and professional development. A model Division III athletics program shall be committed to sending its key personnel to educational events, and to the annual NCAA Convention to enhance the success of the institution and to further the professional development of coaches and administrators. In addition, the athletics department should look for regional and national seminars to send coaches and student-athletes for enhanced leadership skills and professional development.

The thirteenth principle is academic success. A model Division III athletics program shall be committed to the academic success of its student-athletes and ensures the academic performance of student-athletes is, at a minimum, consistent with that of the general student-body. A model program has regularly scheduled meetings with the director of athletics, admissions and financial aid directors to aid in monitoring the academic success of all student-athletes.

The fourteenth principle is admissions. A model Division III athletics program ensures that athletics recruitment complies with established institutional policies and

procedures applicable to the admission process. The institution should also ensure that admission policies for student-athletes comply with policies and procedures applicable to the general student-body.

The fifteenth principal is financial aid. A model Division III athletics program ensures that athletics ability, participation, or leadership are not considered in the formation of institutional financial aid packages and that athletic department personnel are not involved in the arrangement or modification of student-athlete financial aid packages. A model program has regularly scheduled meetings with the director of athletics, admissions and financial aid directors.

The sixteenth principal is diversity. A model Division III athletics program shall be committed to the principle of diversity. The athletics department shall promote an atmosphere of respect for and sensitivity to the dignity of every person. The department shall also value the opinions of all, initiate a leadership role on campus in this area, and, through diverse hiring pools, strive for gender and ethnic diversity in the institution's administrative and coaching positions.

The seventeenth principle is compliance. A model Division III athletics program shall feature a designated compliance coordinator whose primary responsibility is the oversight of the institution's compliance system, the coordination of the institution's rules education and the monitoring of all rules compliance. Although not a requirement, as a best practice it is recommended that the individual with compliance responsibilities should not have coaching responsibilities. The department should commit to a regular self-analysis or a regular external assessment to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the institution's compliance systems.

The eighteenth principle is citizenship/leadership/sportsmanship. A model Division III athletics program shall encourage all student-athletes, coaches and spectators to respect each other, practice civility, encourage teamwork and understand citizenship responsibilities during the conduct of intercollegiate practice and competitions. An athletics department should develop a policy on sportsmanship and fan behavior for home events. A model program will emphasize that a “family friendly” environment should exist at all athletics department events.

The nineteenth principle is game management. A model Division III athletics program shall have game-day operations and/or event management procedures. A designated person should have oversight responsibilities related to game management to create a positive atmosphere and ensure that individuals who violate the code must be held accountable.

The twentieth principle is finances and sports sponsorship. A model Division III athletics program shall be administered with prudent management and fiscal practices to ensure financial stability. Sufficient operating and travel budgets should be maintained to allow for the effective operation of the athletics department. The model program should also feature participation opportunities that are consistent with the institution’s mission and the interests of the institution’s student-athletes. The current Division III sports-sponsorship averages are 18 varsity sports per institution.

The twenty-first principle is fundraising. A model Division III athletics program provides for an individual with responsibilities in athletics fundraising and development. If that individual is the athletics director, an additional assistant athletics director may be necessary for the day-to-day operations of the department. If the function is handled

outside the athletics department, the institution's development office should provide for an individual for athletics fundraising and development.

The twenty-second principle is communication/campus relationships. A model Division III athletics program shall feature a communication strategy to keep other key campus departments (e.g. registrar, financial aid) up to date regarding any athletics department issues.

The twenty-third principal is having a strategic plan for intercollegiate athletics. A model Division III athletics program shall feature a strategic vision for an integrated athletics model that specifies the goals and objectives for the intercollegiate athletics experience and identifies how athletics enhances the mission of the campus.

The twenty-fourth principle is assessment. A model Division III athletics program shall feature an instrument (e.g., student-athlete exit interview) that is used as an assessment each year to measure the student-athletes' experience. In addition, the athletics department should feature annual performance evaluations for coaches and administrators.

The twenty-fifth and last principle is the institutional self-study guide. Each Division III institution shall conduct a mandatory comprehensive self-study and evaluation of its intercollegiate athletics program at least once every five years, using the NCAA's Institutional Self-Study Guide (ISSG).

The above principles are a template for institutions in Portugal to implement in order to ensure success and credibility in building a comprehensive athletic department. Structure and organization will also be very critical components when first starting varsity athletics teams.

Regulations in competition and time commitment is important to making Division III athletics less strenuous and binding when compared to Division I athletics. Making sure

there is an appropriate balance between academics and athletics is critical to the success of all student-athletes. Setting limitations to how many games and practices a team can compete in during one season, building in additional study hours with academic support, and making sure there are by-laws and legislation in place to help protect all student-athletes. This is where any governing body will play an instrumental role regarding compliance and organization. Student athletes will compete at the Division III level entirely per their own volition. In Division III, student athletes are expected to attend to academic responsibilities under the same conditions as the general student body, and they are expected to be responsible students whose academic performance reflects well on the athletics program.

Academically, Division I and Division III have different priorities. In Division I, typically, the athlete is expected to focus on prime athletic preparedness, and perform adequately in academics to meet NCAA academic eligibility minimums. Special support sponsored by the school or athletic department exclusively for athletes is a common practice. This can include such things as tutoring provided exclusively for athletes, facilities, and staff to work with faculty to facilitate the athlete's experience, and/or recommended courses. In Division III, athletes are expected to pursue their educations under the same general conditions as the rest of the student population, without any special exceptions. Division III athletes are also known to put much more of an emphasis on their academic experience than their Division I counterparts. Alumni of Division III institutions often attach a certain amount of prestige to their degrees, and expect current administrators to protect that prestige by rejecting special treatment for athletes, and holding athletes to the same academic conditions as the general student body. College authorities in Division III have chosen the Division III classification because they do not want conflicts between

strict academic priorities and sports competitiveness. Those authorities also expect coaching staffs to support those academic priorities. Simply maintaining NCAA academic eligibility minimums is typically not adequate to satisfy expectations Division III coaching staffs place on their athletes. In general, Division III athletes are expected to have a solid academic performance to support a positive image of their program.

The differences in Division I versus Division III requirements and financial regulation have led to some distinct differences in student life. Participation in school activities outside of intercollegiate athletics is much more common in Division III athletes, and they are more likely to see themselves as part of their college's community. Division III athletes are also known to put much more emphasis on their academic experience, including participation in on-campus research and extra-curricular activities. Not only is there more involvement, but Division III athletes have proven more successful in time management compared to non-athletes at the same institution. There are also differences in the student-athlete social experience. Division I athletes are more likely to just have friends who are exclusively part of their athletic team.

Division III athletes in general must lead a disciplined lifestyle to be successful, because they must undergo rigorous training to compete at the level expected of NCAA student athletes, and they must attend to their academic responsibilities on the same terms as the rest of the student population. The NCAA requires a C (2.0) grade point average to remain eligible to participate in varsity athletics, and having academic criteria is important when discussing accountability among the student-athletes, many Division III programs actually consider this unsatisfactory and request a higher GPA of their student-athletes. Many Division III coaches commonly conduct study tables and other team events to ensure athletes see their athletic ventures as tied to their academic responsibilities.

Division III athletics, which prohibits scholarships, can be a vital part of a student's education when properly developed and managed as part of the overall college mission. If competition and physical education are important goals for students, then athletics, properly guided and balanced as part of an institutional mission, can be a valuable part of programming. If competition and physical education are important goals for students, then scholarship-free athletics, properly balanced as part of an institutional mission, can be truly an invaluable experience.

The cost of starting athletic programs should be achievable; basic facilities can be provided through fund-raising and proper institutional overhead considerations. Coaches can serve as admission recruiters for students with proper educational credentials and motivations; counselors for athletes who need discipline, skill development and proper exercise and diets; tutors when students need assistance on academic subjects and study habits; and disciplinarians when student residential life becomes a challenge. In short, coaches should operate competitive teams that motivate and teach life skills and team building that are different from other skill sets traditionally found in academia.

Scholarship-free competitive sports should be integrated into the full life of a college or university and it should be balanced with fine arts, academic research pursuits, scholarship and other leadership training. When done properly, Division III athletics can be an integral part of a student's college experience.

5.2. Final discussion and conclusions

As a result, the following summary and conclusions can be drawn regarding competition and athletics at the collegiate level. There is a large gap between what is being offered for collegiate athletics in Portugal and what the student-athletes actually desire. There is also a real value in identifying exactly what can be done in order to provide the student-athletes with an opportunity to compete against other institutions for the purposes of athletic competition. Institutions with a desire to implement this new collegiate athletic model would be best served by addressing the areas with the largest challenges, starting with facilities, staffing and a working athletic budget.

One of the major differences in comparing American and European athletics was the total difference in philosophy. The European philosophy looks to focus on individual development of an athlete for a specific sport. In the United States, athletes are typically trained to be very aggressive, and to participate in multiple sports at a very young age. Even with some of these philosophical differences, competition is something that most people see and experience on almost a daily basis, so the very idea of not having competitive athletics available at the collegiate level is an opportunity that is being missed in Portugal, especially when discussing the life and educational lessons that organized athletics can offer. Institutions in Portugal could experience increased enrollment, a more engaged student population, and a spirit that would transform university campuses.

The other question that inevitably needs to be asked is regarding winning. Winning and competition need to be defined along with their relative importance. The proposal is not to insinuate changing a philosophy or the approach that Portugal has with their athletes regarding development, but it is the premise that competitive collegiate athletics would enhance the overall student experience at the university level in Portugal. By the very

definition of the word competition, one team has to win and one has to lose, and this concept is not foreign to Portugal, especially at the professional ranks, so why the hesitation to implement it at the collegiate level? "The paradigm of competition in sports is to be understood as the attempt to secure victory within the framework set by the constitutive rules" (Simon, 1991 p. 15). Good competition presupposes a cooperative effort by competitors to generate the best possible challenge to each other; each athlete has the obligation to one another to try his or her best. Although there can only be one winner in an athletic contest, each athlete will gain something by trying to meet the challenge that each has voluntarily agreed to face. "Athletes accept a quest for excellence through challenge"(Simon, 1991 p. 23).

Athletes are made through an evolution of self-development. You have to want to be better, you need to push yourself and have others push you as well. It is true that a team needs to work as a unit in order to become successful, but one needs to improve individually in order for his or her team to improve as well. The reality of athletics is that competition is the mechanism by which achievement is measured and determined, improvement is directly linked to achievement, and something that can benefit all who are involved.

The ideal role for intercollegiate athletics at the university level is an educational one. Intercollegiate athletics allows for development, reinforcement and expression of desirable states of character. Dedication, concern for knowledge of self and others, and courage are very important educational virtues. Playing in athletic contests as well as preparing for them, is itself educational in that it provides an almost unique opportunity for obtaining knowledge of oneself and others.

Universities are a place where standards of excellence are formulated, applied, and debated in the arts, sciences, and humanities. Competitive intercollegiate sports provide a clear institutional framework where the value of standards of excellence in meeting challenges is demonstrated and reinforced.

In the United States, major collegiate athletics has lost the connection of academics and athletics and how they are expected to meld together. The passion and work ethic will always remain at every level of competition, but a Division III model that allows student-athletes to become well-rounded people, while also affording them the opportunity to receive practical experience in what competition truly means can be such a gift. When taught and learned appropriately, athletics and sport have the ability to give back in a multitude of ways. Athletics is just an extension of the classroom and coaches are the teachers.

Support from both a coaching staff and fellow team members will help add to a young athlete's overall support when arriving at college. Coaches specifically can be there for their team members for support, from helping student-athletes through emotional slumps to encouraging their academic aspirations. Athletic and academic programs should be mutually supportive. Some studies have shown transition from high school to college to be much easier for student-athletes. Being a part of a team as soon as you arrive on campus can also jump-start the adjustment process. Participating in athletics affords not only the benefits of regular physical activity, but a motivation to learn about and practice good nutritional habits as well. Academic motivation is also put into place with the mandate of having to keep a certain grade point average by each institution in order for student-athletes to participate in varsity athletics.

Professional opportunities can also play a factor in becoming involved with athletics. Only a select few college athletes go on to play professional sports, but the social networks they can develop through participating in athletics, and the team building skills they learn from being on a varsity team can give young athletes a head start in their professional life. Being a team leader in college not only prepares a student for the business world, it says volumes to potential employers about a student's readiness for the professional community as leaders.

College stakeholders have different views of the ultimate goal of higher education. A college education produces tomorrow's leaders, people who make a positive, meaningful, and enduring difference in the world. Some of the leadership characteristics that an undergraduate education develops are, strategic and tactical planning, persistence, sensible risk-taking, resilience, self-discipline, time-management, a sense of fairness, teamwork, an understanding of one's adversaries, and sportsmanship. Participation in competitive athletics can truly be the essence of leadership development.

School spirit can come from many sources, but college athletics is near the top of the list. As a spectator at a collegiate varsity game on game day, thousands of people dressed up in school colors and packed into a stadium to cheer on their team is quite a spectacle. This kind of spirit and excitement can carry over to a whole institution, beyond the athletic fields. I believe this can make life on campus more exciting while boosting school morale and a feeling of institutional identification. It can also provide a sense of positive competitive spirit that can unify diverse stakeholders who otherwise may have rather different or conflicting agendas.

There is also enormous school pride that typically is felt with collegiate athletic teams. While there are other student activities that can inspire institutional connection, the pride for athletic teams is usually on a very different level.

Research over the past decade increasingly has shown the amazing correlation between lifetime fitness and better adult health and longevity. Mental decline, not just physical deterioration, has been tied to lack of physical exercise and healthy nutrition. Physical fitness should be one of the habits we acquire in college, and should be one of the behaviors we maintain over a lifetime.

Collegiate athletics is also a very big part of the recruitment process for prospective students. In general, college applications climb when their athletic programs have success, psychologists call this “availability heuristic.” That is, winning athletic programs gives colleges/universities a regional or even national visibility they would otherwise not have. Athletic facilities can also play a large role in determining what institutions potential students will be drawn to.

Although studying in college should be the priority, there needs to be more to the Higher Education experience. One of the critical things we learn about ourselves is that there is usually something that drives us as people. Focusing your college career on just academics can be incomplete. In order to help avoid such disappointment, people need to learn that life is constantly a balancing act and that people who find balance tend to be happier and more fulfilled. The college experience and participation in athletics can provide such a balance and fulfillment during what should be impressionable years.

Every college and university wants to build a loyal and involved alumni base that can serve the institution in many ways, especially financially. One of the most effective routes is to provide opportunities for alumni to serve as advocates and ambassadors,

helping create a positive reputation. College athletics tend to keep alumni tied to and involved with the college. An important byproduct of these connections is the ability of alumni to hire graduates and otherwise assist them as they navigate through their careers after graduation.

Another benefit of college athletics is in the area of advancement. Successful athletic programs typically translate into dollars for many institutions, and while not every team will win a championship every year, many alumni appreciate it when their program gives their best, regardless of whether they win or lose. College athletics can help in all areas of advancement by building loyalty, connections, and lifelong relationships.

The quality of an institution's brand can help determine the kind of students and faculty a college can attract, and the general reputation it experiences in the community, state, country, and world for that matter. For better or worse, college athletics typically forms part of that brand. Athletics can play a very big hand in the positive reputation of a school.

The traits that make a strong professional coach are certainly important in college athletics as well. However, the role of college coaches is a bit more complex, since their players are students as well and are limited to college careers of only four years of eligibility. Coaches should be assessed not just on their wins and losses, but also on their mentorship and development of student-athletes as both athletes and citizens.

The key to this consistent success is a college coach's effective mentoring of young athletes during their formative college years, during which they face academic challenges alongside adversity in their respective sports. Seeing collegiate athletes succeed allows us to forget just how old they really are, and that they are many times in need of guidance as they grow into young adults. Of course, college students are still adults and can make their

own decisions about their futures, but coaches will try to shelter their players from the outside pressures that come along with being a young collegiate athlete. Sports coaches often can become life coaches, as well as references for future jobs.

Perhaps there is no other time in a person's life when he or she can make friendships in quite the same way as during the college years. Friendships often form best when people participate together in activities that are engaging and fun, and athletics can and should be fun for the players and fans involved. Whether we are fans or athletes, the friendships we make at the athletic fields are often the ones that make a difference and the ones we call upon during critical points in our lives.

Finally, intercollegiate sports help make a university a community by providing fun, recreation, and a common sphere of interest for a substantial number of its members. In fact, on campuses that often are split along ideological and intellectual lines, sports can provide a common framework allowing for lines of communication to remain open to individuals of significantly distinct ideological, intellectual, ethnic, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. In the United States, athletics and especially collegiate athletics is a priority for both the administration and student-athletes that are participating, it is equal in importance to their academic pursuits. Competition is something that is taken very seriously. In regards to Portugal and the current model of athletics that is in place, the interviews and conversations with both the students and coaches led to believe that competitive athletics at the collegiate level is important. Many communicated that they would like to see an implementation of competitive athletics; the question is whether the administration deems it important enough to call a priority.

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