

“Pay to Play”: Competing for Athletic Scholarships

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As part of a national social science competition, a study was conducted exploring the perceptions of high school students attempting to gain an athletic scholarship and the significant sacrifices, both financial and ethical, made while trying to obtain this scholarship. A survey was developed using five categories: personal information, motivation, competition, expenditures, and training. It was hypothesized that student athletes perceived an athletic scholarship as feasible if they spent the time, effort and money for training, practice, and exposure.

The study found that high school athletes had a higher expectancy to compete in college than expected percentages determined by NCAA. The more an athlete spends, the greater the belief the high school athlete has that recruiters, private trainers, and coaches will help in obtaining an athletic scholarship. Athletes also perceived that an increased level of competition, time spent practicing, and amount of training received places them in the best position for an athletic scholarship. Athletes surveyed felt saving their family money through an athletic scholarship was more realistic than competing as a professional athlete.

This presentation will focus much discussion centered on what athletes pursuing an athletic scholarship are willing to do and pay for the opportunity in attaining an athletic scholarship. This presentation will provide information that may assist high school athletes understand what chasing an athletic scholarship incorporates while providing insight and direction to researchers and practitioners for future research investigating these variables.