

## Abstract

College football is unique in the consistency with which it generates a large amount of revenue for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA, 2009). The players are more or less the product presented to fans, yet little research has been done to discover why players spend their time the way that they do (Adler & Adler, 1991). The purpose of this study was to discover how Division-I football players prioritize and allocate their time in response to external and internal pressures for success in athletics, academics, and social interactions (Randall, 2010). Data were analyzed for general themes and specifically for differences in race/ethnicity or semesters in school.

Results from a combination of semi-structured interviews and an online survey reveal that players largely hold the same attitudes regardless of demographic factors. Data suggest the individuals from whom they feel pressure are extremely similar. Overwhelmingly, players feel the majority of pressure in the athletic aspect of their lives and subscribe to the attitude that football is the most important activity in their everyday life. Parents, coaches, and friends are the most likely sources of pressure with coaches frequently being the group with the most access. Football culture is shown in this study to promote athletic success regardless of individuality.

Among sampled football players this pressure suggests respondents become engulfed in their athletic role (Adler & Adler, 1991), with Black players more strongly identifying themselves as athletes than White players  $F(2,27) = 5.347, p < .05$ . While Black players are significantly more likely to identify themselves as “athletes, this study’s results reveal that all sampled college players feel pressured to pursue success in football at the expense of a balanced college life. When asked to rank-order football, academics, and social life in order of importance, the response was decidedly in favor of football. With 1 being most important and 3 being least important, football scored an average of 1.37 while academic and social life means were 2.30 and 2.33 respectively. Players also ranked athletic success as most important ( $M = 1.37$ ), with academic ( $M = 2.19$ ) and social success ( $M = 2.44$ ).

In addition to summarizing study results, in light of these findings, this paper offers conclusions and policy recommendations for college athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators concerned with the educational and social consequences of identified role engulfment.