

Restructuring College Sport to be a Catalyst for Improved Academic Success Among Male Student-Athletes

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Frequently coaches discuss frustration with academically ineligible athletes on their teams and look to academic support staff to assist these athletes. Most athletes are given a combined prescription of study hall, conversations with faculty, increasing attendance in classes, tutoring assistance, etc. While each of these methods may prove helpful in the short term, they do not address the underlying issue of low interest and engagement in academic success among male student-athletes. Research shows boys are failing at an alarming rate in our schools. Dr. Leonard Sax, MD, PhD, a renowned family physician and psychiatrist, suggests there are five critical factors driving the de-motivation of young American men in our society in his book, *Boys Adrift* (2007). This de-motivation can even be seen among highly successful collegiate athletes.

Using the qualitative research technique of observation, the principal investigator has spent the last 10 years crafting a coaching program to effectively motivate boys. The very essence of manhood has been compromised by our educational system. Our schools are not a comfortable place for the vast majority of boys to learn. Passive learning does not lend itself well to boys' educational development. As active, participatory, and kinesthetic learners, a high percentage of boys tend to succeed in sports, but not in the classroom. Coaches have the ability to improve this low academic achievement among their athletes. Sport programs can be structured to assist young men in their development and actively help boys regain a sense of purpose and interest in academic success.

A model for re-connecting boys to their lives and creating awareness of the potential they each possess has been created to assist coaches, parents, and administrators in developing high performing, competitive sport programs in addition to improving academic success. This presentation will focus on the model and how it can be applied to a variety of college sports.