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The tension between college academics and athletics is nothing new. Maintaining double standards for regular students and athletes dates back to at least 1869, when Rutgers beat Princeton with a football team that included three freshmen who were failing algebra. Early in the twentieth century, President Theodore Roosevelt, by no means adverse to strenuous physical activity himself, proposed outlawing intercollegiate football because he thought it corrupted scholarship.

Academics criticize current college athletic programs for a least five reasons. (1) Colleges routinely lower admission standards for athletes, who, in the Ivy League, have on average far lower SAT scores than the general student population. Many prestigious schools admit athletes with scores of only 820, almost 200 points below the national average, and even farther below their own standards. Some schools, such as Amherst and Williams designate a certain number of admission slots specifically for athletes (at Amherst 75 out of 450). One Middlebury student, whose entrance scores fell far below minimum standards, nonetheless gained admission by virtue of his prowess as a star hockey player. (2) Once in college, athletes often enjoy preferential treatment. Many schools have special tutorial programs aimed solely at helping athletes meet minimum standards. (3) Huge amounts of money are spent on athletic programs. More than a dozen coaches now earn over \$1 million a year. The University of Oregon spent \$80 million on a new stadium. This big money, critics assert, has turned campuses into sports franchises. (4) Many athletes do not attend college to learn, but rather, hope to use their collegiate experience to land positions on professional teams. (5) Elite athletic programs mean regular students have fewer opportunities to play in college sports.

Those who support maintaining the current practices in regard to intercollegiate athletics counter that: (1) winning teams increase alumni giving and therefore benefit academics in the long run. A consultant recently remarked that the best way for Utah Valley State College to increase alumni contributions would be to implement a high profile football program; (2) intercollegiate athletics is excellent public relations. A former Boston College student from the Midwest states that the only reason he knew about the school, and applied for admission, was the fact that a famous quarterback played there.

The Knight Commission, a panel composed largely of college presidents, concluded last summer that the academic standards for varsity athletes were "abysmal" and "disgraceful." Some schools are reevaluating their athletic programs. The Trustees of Swarthmore College recently concluded that athletic programs were inconsistent with the school's academic mission, and voted to abolish football and wrestling. Their actions, however, are unlikely to have any impact at schools that covet the public attention of fielding winning teams.