

In your opinion, are today's talented high school athletes thinking too much about earning athletic scholarships?

During the years 1992-1993, the NCAA handed out \$377 million dollars of scholarship money to athletes across all sports and divisions, but by the year 2000, that nearly quadrupled to \$1.5 billion dollars (Farrey, 128). This increase in money allocated to athletic scholarships has enticed talented high school athletes, but many of them do not know what athletic scholarships to college truly entail.

I remember playing sports throughout high school and just wishing to be able to play one in college. I played both basketball and softball and one of my dreams was to play in college, but unfortunately that was cut short by two knee injuries. I see that same passion in some of my high school athletes today. At the high school I teach at, I have a few talented basketball players that have come up to me and expressed high interest in college athletics.

I have a small and select population in my athletics program. Each of my athletes has a learning disability and we have a small population. There are a total of 90 students in our entire high school and about 11 girls and 15 boys participate in our high school basketball program. Recently, 5 athletes came to me to discuss their future in college athletics, which is a lot by my standards. They are all very talented and since I have been coaching at my school, they are the first group of athletes to want to participate in college athletics. I asked them why they wanted to play sports in college, and every single one of them said because it would help my family if I received a scholarship. I was ecstatic to here they wanted to go to college to further their education and they knew one of the ways to get them there was an athletic scholarship. Unfortunately we are a small independent school and we do not belong to any league, and we do not have a lot of exposure. But since they have come to talk to me I am going to call some select colleges or universities to see what the possibilities are for my athletes.

What the students have to understand though are all the exceptions and rules that go along with these scholarships given out. Farrey describes some of these stipulations in chapter 5. Most of the scholarships are partial, that cover no more than half or a quarter of an athlete's total cost, there are no more multi-year commitments, and "full rides" don't pay for everything (Farrey, 129). They pay tuition, room and board, and required books, but they do not pay expenses like transportation, clothing, and laundry, which can cost up to \$3,000 (Farrey, 129).

Another factor in this drive to earn scholarships I believe are the athlete's parents. As Farrey has discussed throughout his book, parents are entering their children into athletics earlier and earlier. Many of them believe the more exposure and practice their child has the more likely they will be able to receive a college scholarship or even better enter the

pros. I mean look at the example he gives with 6 year old Karley Aguirre and her parents writing a letter to the coach in the top girls hockey program, asking them if their daughter can join. They knew they were the best and they want their daughter in a program that has a high chance for her to receive a college scholarship (Farrey, 132) and the Assabet Valley girls' hockey program provides that. But I guess the question to ask is why are the parents so driven to receive athletic scholarships for their son or daughter? Is it really about their children or themselves?