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An Analysis of Time Management as a Collegiate Student-Athlete

Owen Sammarone, Public Relations

Introduction

Balancing your time is a challenge faced by all individuals in our ever-changing world. The introduction and implementation of the valuable skills that assist someone in managing their time effectively is an issue that gets overshadowed. From the angle of a collegiate student-athlete, these unique characteristics that are thrown into the hectic lifestyle of balancing their rigorous course work, intense athletic sport, and the many other aspects of life that may come their way. Not all individuals enter a hectic lifestyle of balancing their rigorous college coursework, intense athletic sport, and other activities, however, in the end with confidence in time management, they will all experience success. In addition, it is imperative to note the amount of former student-athletes who have held experience in holding a CEO position for a highly reputable company. A few to name are, Jeffrey Immelt (General Electric), Samuel Palmisano (IBM), Meg Whitman ( Hewlett-Packard), Walter Robb (Whole Foods), Lynn Laverty (Sanisco), Brian Moynihan (Bank of America), Brian Roberts (Comcast), Daniel Akerson (General Motors) (Ellies, 2013). This provides the power of how a collegiate student-athlete experience can grow outside of the sport itself and how the skills and lessons mastered during their college years will push each of them to reach the top of their companies.

My research allowed me to conduct detailed discussions with each collegiate student-athlete, both current and former. I was granted the ability to take the conversation to topics that would explore thoughts relating to time management. The responses I received from each individual was very positive as it was amazing to witness the passion that flows through each athlete’s work when speaking about their previous experience as a collegiate athlete. After completing my research and interacting with numerous student-athletes, I am confident I possess the understanding that time management plays a crucial role in the success of a student-athlete career both during college and afterwards. By having confidence in one’s time management skills can serve as a gateway to open their mind to opportunities they would of never of thought to take on. It was a heartwarming experience to learn how these student-athletes are gaining valuable skills along with an education through their sport. It is clear student-athletes do prosper after their playing days close because they are confident about their ability to balance several tasks, responsibilities, jobs, etc. all at once.

Discussion & Conclusions

Another major question included in my discussions added great worth to my overall analysis. Who or what helps student-athletes learn and master their time management skills? The responses were similar and included coaches, teammates, advisors, and family. This response was very beneficial to my analysis because it provided a reasoning to who is in their lives that teaches them successful skills. I was able to see how these individuals play a pivotal role in their lives to succeed.

In my diligent efforts of research, I compiled the thoughts, understandings, discussions, and findings from over 100 interactions with current and former collegiate student-athletes along with responses from my survey. This research led to my analysis of time management as a collegiate student-athlete because it answered several big questions including:

- Do collegiate student-athletes establish time management skills in high school? (See Figure 1)
- Does the confidence level in their time management skills progress over the course of four years? (See Figure 2)
- Do they feel prepared for the professional work force after college? (See Figure 3)
- Who/what helped them learn and master their time management skills? (See Discussion)

My research and findings are beneficial to anyone involved with college student-athletes because this information is valuable to them as they develop their skills to be more successful as a professional athlete. In addition, coaches, parents, and other college-related individuals may find this information useful in helping student-athletes develop the skills to be successful as a professional athlete.

Methods

When conducting my research, I invested my project heavily on the priceless responses from current and former collegiate student-athletes to search through their personal experiences, challenges, and triumphs to ultimately understand their one-of-a-kind lives. The methods I took to generate my research and discussions were holding one-on-one interviews, daily conversations in-person and via phone call, a survey, and my knowledge from all of my lifetime interactions with college student-athletes.

These methods were beneficial to the success of my project because through my involvement with the URI athletic department, I have gained easy access to conduct research with student-athletes. This resource has allowed me the ability to begin conversations and produce healthy discussions with each of them on a daily basis. Every day, I interact with a different student-athlete and it is interesting to learn each unique life path and the struggles and accomplishments they have experienced. In addition, through my previous internship with a networking company, Athlete Network, I was able to use this resource to gain responses from my survey and connect with current student-athletes around the nation.

Specifically, my interactions with current and former collegiate student-athletes included athletes ranging from college freshmen to seniors as well as athletes playing on the professional level. The range of sports these athletes participated in, included: basketball, baseball, rowing, football, lacrosse, soccer, field hockey, volleyball, softball, tennis, and golf. I believe my methods helped produce transparent data and research for all individuals to comprehend and digest; whether you have an athletic background or not.

Research

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- Who/what helped them learn and master their time management skills? (See Discussion)

![Figure 1](image1.png) - After understanding the student-athletes background, I opened my interview, conversation, and survey with this question. I believed it was important to initially ask this question, because it would provide a foundation for my research to understand how many athletes felt they established time management skills prior to college. The results came to a close tie. This information was fruitful as I continued my research because I realized although a student-athlete may have established time management skills in high school, it was their years in college as an athlete where they truly understood the meaning of balancing time and being diligent and efficient with every minute in a day.

![Figure 2](image2.png) - My research allowed me to understand the progression of a college student-athlete’s confidence level in regard to their time management skills. Whether they had established skills or not, prior to entering college, the individuals spoke with responded with a consensus that by their freshman year they have 25% confidence. As I discussed their progression, it was clear by all participants that their confidence grew consistently over the course of their remaining three years in college. By the end of our discussion, nearly all collegiate student-athletes were 100% confident in their ability to understand and execute successful time management skills by the end of their college career.

![Figure 3](image3.png) - This was one of the last questions I asked because I felt it concluded the discussion well and proposed a thinking point for them to ponder after they left the interaction with me. I believe this thinking point would lead to helping them visualize their life after college and increase their self-esteem and confidence as they told themselves they are fully prepared for their next chapter. When I communicated with a senior athlete, I made sure to stress this question because they are the closest to reaching the professional work force; furthermore, 98% said they are 100% confident in their time management skills and are prepared for the professional work force.

The 2% that didn’t answer with a firm “Yes,” had a response that included reasoning that they needed to finish their current internship, a specific course, etc. to answer the question with an assertive “Yes.”

![Figure 4](image4.png) - There are 480,000 individuals who earn the opportunity to play a sport at the collegiate level, however, the opportunity to turn professional is very low. Therefore, balance is key to them to successfully achieve their goals and opportunities. My research allowed me to establish student-athletes can truly lead to helping them visualize their life after college and increase their self-esteem and confidence as they told themselves they are fully prepared for their next chapter. When I communicated with a senior athlete, I made sure to stress this question because they are the closest to reaching the professional work force; furthermore, 98% said they are 100% confident in their time management skills and are prepared for the professional work force.

![Figure 5](image5.png) - Another major question included in my discussions added great worth to my overall analysis. Who or what helps student-athletes learn and master their time management skills? The responses were similar and included coaches, teammates, advisors, and family. This response was very beneficial to my analysis because it provided a reasoning to who is in their lives that teaches them successful skills. I was able to see how these individuals play a pivotal role in their lives to succeed.

![Figure 6](image6.png) - It is imperative to note the amount of former student-athletes who have held experience in holding a CEO position for a highly reputable company. A few to name are, Jeffrey Immelt (General Electric), Samuel Palmisano (IBM), Meg Whitman (Hewlett-Packard), Walter Robb (Whole Foods), Lynn Laverty (Sanisco), Brian Moynihan (Bank of America), Brian Roberts (Comcast), Daniel Akerson (General Motors) (Ellies, 2013). This provides the power of how a collegiate student-athlete experience can grow outside of the sport itself and how the skills and lessons mastered during their college years will push each of them to reach the top of their companies.

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Literature Cited
