

Why Are Student Athletes Funding Your Future? No More Excuses: Pay Me!

Ernest E. Cutler Jr.

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A well-reasoned and heavily researched discourse breaks down why the NCAA should pay kids to play.

From courtrooms to television sets to barstools, arguments rage over whether or not college athletes should be paid. Ernest E. Cutler Jr.'s contribution to the ongoing debate pulls no punches, right from the title: *Why Are Student Athletes Funding Your Future? No More Excuses: Pay Me!*

An academic piece of writing born from Cutler's doctoral dissertation at Northcentral University, the book uses extensive data collecting (online surveys of athletic administrators, and focus groups and face-to-face interviews with student-athletes) to support the conclusion that college athletes should receive stipends to cover gaps in their athletic scholarships. That supplemental income, Cutler writes, would also help mitigate scandal on athletic campuses by reducing the illegal exchange of money and favors between boosters and athletes.

Colleges contend that participating in intercollegiate athletics is part of a student's overall educational experience. Proponents of the status quo argue that college athletes already receive a free education, training table meals, additional academic support, and other perks that regular students do not receive. Cutler throws his research into the other side of the argument, which stresses that executives are getting richer while some of the athletes that play the games don't have enough money to attend an off-campus social event or buy a bus ticket home for a family emergency.

With an extensive overview of the research process at the beginning of the book and a bulky (yet valuable) appendix at the end, the gist of *No More Excuses: Pay Me!* comes in a thirty-four-page "Findings" chapter and the ensuing nine-page chapter titled "Implications, Recommendations, and Conclusions."

In the latter, Cutler recommends not only that the National Collegiate Athletic Association—the nonprofit association that regulates the athletes at more than 1,200 member colleges and universities—distribute some of its \$871 million in revenue to the athletes in the form of "small gifts," but also that it allow the athletes to capitalize on their own "images and namesakes" without risking their eligibility.

Further, Cutler endorses supplementary stipends for athletes based on cost of living in their specific local economy. A former chief petty officer in the United States Navy, Cutler compares this recommended program to the US Military Basic Allowance for Housing policy that "allows military members the ability to financially survive within each local economy while at their current duty stations."

Because of its academic presentation, *No More Excuses: Pay Me!* may not be the kind of page-turning sports book that Joe Fan will take on summer vacation. But those interested in learning more about Cutler's assertion that the NCAA should "change problematic policies that infringe upon the rights of current, former, and future student athletes" will find his book to be a well-reasoned and heavily researched discourse presented in a highly professional package.

RICH REZLER (April 21, 2016)

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