



Unwinding Madness: What Went Wrong with College Sports—and How to Fix It

Gerald Gurney, Donna A. Lopiano, Andrew Zimbalist

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A critical look at the tension between the larger role of the university and the commercialization of college sports

Unwinding Madness is the most comprehensive examination to date of how the NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) has lost its way in the governance of intercollegiate athletics—and why it is incapable of achieving reform and must be replaced. The NCAA has placed commercial success above its responsibilities to protect the academic primacy, health and well-being of college athletes and fallen into an educational, ethical, and economic crisis.

As long as intercollegiate athletics reside in the higher education environment, these programs must be academically compatible with their larger institutions, subordinate to their educational mission, and defensible from a not-for-profit organizational standpoint. The issue has never been a matter of whether intercollegiate athletics belongs in higher education as an extracurricular offering. Rather, the perennial challenge has been how these programs have been governed and conducted.

The authors propose detailed solutions, starting with the creation of a new national governance organization to replace the NCAA. At the college level, these proposals will not diminish the revenue production capacity of sports programs but will restore academic integrity to the enterprise, provide fairer treatment of college athletes with better health protections, and restore the rights and freedoms of athletes, which have been taken away by a professionalized athletics mentality that controls the cost of its athlete labor force and overpays coaches and athletic directors.

Unwinding Madness recognizes that there is no easy fix to the problems now facing college athletics. But the book does offer common sense, doable solutions that respect the rights of athletes, protects their health and well-being while delivering on the promise of a bona fide educational degree program.

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