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### **Challenges for Supporting Student-Athlete Development: Perspectives from an NCAA Division II Athletic Department**

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*Limited research has been undertaken to understand the Division II level of college athletics and the challenges confronting universities and athletic departments operating at this level. Of particular importance, there is a paucity research examining the level of support that athletic departments and universities can offer their student-athletes for their overall growth and development. The purpose of this exploratory study is to examine some of challenges for an NCAA Division II athletic department regarding its ability to support the overall growth and development of its student-athletes. To achieve this, I conducted a qualitative case study at a private Division II university to achieve an in-depth understanding of operations within the athletic department. The findings from this study revealed that limited resources coupled with the pressure to win presented substantial challenges for the athletic department to support and foster the development of its student-athletes beyond the athletic realm of competition. The implications for practice and future research are discussed.*

### **Introduction**

**T**here has been much research discussing the development of student-athletes. Scholars have suggested that student-athletes develop athletically, academically, and socially (Adler & Adler, 1991; Killeya-Jones, 2005; Miller & Kerr, 2003; Settles, Sellers, & Damas, Jr., 2002; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005). Scholars have long proposed that the intense time and energy demands of participating in college athletics has led to student-athletes neglecting their academic responsibilities and focusing primarily on their athletic development (Adler & Adler, 1991; Miller & Kerr, 2003, Settles, et al., 2005; Valentine & Taub, 1999). This is particularly problematic because the vast majority of student-athletes' competitive athletic careers will conclude once their eligibility expires. Research has suggested that student-athletes often face delayed career development (Murphy, Petipas, & Brewer, 1996) and difficulty leaving behind their athletic identity upon the conclusion of their playing careers (Adler & Adler, 1991; Baille, 1993; Drahotka & Eitzen, 1998; Kleiber, Greendorfer, Blinde, & Samdahl, 1987).

The importance placed upon athletics can be attributed to numerous factors, including; the time and energy demands of intercollegiate athletics (Adler & Adler, 1991; Valentine &

Taub, 1999), the positive affirmation received as a result of being a student-athlete on a college campus (Adler & Adler, 1991; Miller & Kerr, 2003; Murphy, et al., 1996; Simons et al., 1999; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005), family members' perceptions (Adler & Adler, 1991; Kimball, 2007; Woodman & Hardy, 2001; Woodruff & Schallert, 2008), university faculty and staff's perceptions (Adler & Adler, 1987; Baucom & Lantz, 2001; Yopyk & Prentice, 1993), and finally, the influence of coaches and athletic administrators (Adler & Adler, 1991; Kimball, 2007; Woodman & Hardy, 2001; Woodruff & Schallert, 2008). This has led many to scholars to question the benefits of intercollegiate athletics for universities and student-athletes alike (Eitzen, 2006; Gerdy, 2006; Sperber, 2000).

In response to the academic concerns with college athletics, in the 1990s the NCAA undertook an important initiative in which it began to require universities to foster the academic development of its student-athletes (Meyer, 2005). This trend continued into the early 2000s with the NCAA continuing to ratchet up their concern for the academic progress of student-athletes competing within their various divisions (Blum & Lederman, 2003b). This initiative was the catalyst to a trend that saw many universities investing large amounts of money in hiring academic support personnel and constructing athletic facilities with academic services housed within them. Thus, in the early 2000s, *USA Today* published a series of stories praising universities for these efforts and their concern for the academic growth of their student-athletes (Blum & Lederman, 2003a). Yet most of this action has occurred within the scope and spotlight of the high-profile Division I/FBS level of college athletics. Little attention has been paid (media or research) to the lower-profile NCAA divisions and the challenges for these universities concerning the development of their student-athletes. Though scholars have found that general operations within athletic departments may not differ based on NCAA classification (Cunningham & Ashley, 2001), there may, however, be certain unique challenges that affect Division II universities and their efforts to support the developmental needs of their student-athletes.

Consequently, scholars have argued that research often overlooks athletics at the lower NCAA Division levels, especially Division II (Baucom & Lantz, 2001). This is significant because studies have indicated that student-athletes competing at these levels face similar academic challenges compared to their Division I counterparts (Baucom & Lantz, 2001; Richards & Aries, 1999; Robst & Keil, 2000). Recent data from the NCAA GOALS study indicated that athletics played a larger part than academics for many Division II student-athletes in deciding which institutions they would attend (NCAA, 2011). These approximately 100,000 Division II student-athletes ("Differences," n.d.) face similar time and energy requirements as their Division I counterparts. To illustrate, both Division I and Division II athletic teams must adhere to the "20 hour rule" in season and the "8 hour rule" out of season (see 2010-11 NCAA Division II Manual & 2010-2011 NCAA Division I Manual). It is important for scholars to be cognizant of the challenges facing the development of student-athletes at this level. Yet, there continues to be a paucity of literature specifically examining the important issues at the Division II level of athletics. Of particular importance, there is a dearth of literature examining the challenges for Division II universities and athletic departments to provide extensive support for the personal growth and development of their athletes.

Therefore, the purpose of this exploratory study was to examine some of the challenges for an NCAA Division II athletic department regarding its ability to support the overall development of its student-athletes. This study represents an important step in understanding some of the unique challenges confronted by administrators and athletic personnel at the

Division II level as they attempt to remain viable athletically while also addressing the developmental needs of their student-athletes. Though specific findings from this study may be contextually bounded, it still provides insight into the Division II level of college athletics. The broad research questions that guided this study included; what are some of the challenges of operating a Division II athletic department? How do these challenges affect the support that Division II athletic departments can provide for the overall development of their student-athletes?

## Research Setting

This study was conducted within the athletic program at a private NCAA Division II university in the southern portion of the United States. Currently, this athletic department houses 12 teams (baseball, men's & women's basketball, softball, volleyball, football, men's & women's track & field, women's soccer, men's & women's tennis, men's golf). The teams within this athletic department have traditionally excelled in athletic competition, winning almost twice as many conference titles as any other team in their conference since their initial admission. Further, the athletic department has produced 57 national championship teams, ranking in the top five in NCAA history. It should be noted that not all of the teams within this athletic department have enjoyed the same level of success. Many of the universities within this university's conference have become popular destinations for Division I and junior college transfer student-athletes. Though the winning traditions of the university would seemingly appeal to transferring athletes, the university has some of the most stringent academic standards along with a higher cost of attendance compared to its conference counterparts. Consequently, many transferring student-athletes struggle to qualify academically or simply cannot afford the cost of tuition to attend this university.

Careful examination of each of the university's websites revealed that this athletic department employs a similar number of administrative personnel as other athletic departments within its conference and also houses similar sports and programs compared to its conference peers. However, this university is one of only two private universities competing within this conference. All units of this university, including the athletic department, are influenced by its prominent religious traditions. Further, the athletic department suggests through its mission statement that it is highly concerned with the overall development of its student-athletes while also maintaining the religious mission and vision of the university.

## Method

To address the research questions for this study, I implemented a qualitative case study research design (see Berg, 2001; Stake, 2005). This approach allowed me to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives of their organizational setting (Berg, 2001). That is, participants were afforded the opportunity to expand upon the realities of trying to address the overall development of their student-athletes as an NCAA Division II university. Further, the case study design implements multiple data collection techniques within the research setting (Berg, 2001; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Stake, 2005), which allowed me to achieve a detailed depiction of the challenges of addressing student-athlete development within the NCAA Division II context. This study was reviewed by the Institutional Review Board to assure that proper protocol concerning protection of human subjects.

### *Data Collection & Analysis*

Primary data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews with members of the university's athletic department as well as members of the university's administration and faculty members (see Table 1). Each interview lasted approximately one hour and was audio-recorded. This technique allowed me to tailor the interview questions in a manner that was relevant to each of the participants' positions and perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Questions for these interviews were informed by a preliminary analysis of various athletic department budgets, personnel, and facilities; all of which are available online for most universities. Each of the participants in this study was asked to discuss their point of view on student-athlete development. Participants were then asked to expand on their roles in providing a favorable environment that fostered the overall development of their student-athletes. Then finally they were asked to expand on some of the factors that were instrumental in them providing that environment. Through these interviews, I was able to obtain a detailed perspective of some of the challenges presented to members of this athletic department in their efforts to foster student-athlete development.

Table 1 – *Interview Participants (n=13)*

<b>Position</b>	<b>Years w/ the University</b>	<b>Years of Involvement w/ Athletics</b>
Provost	4	20
University Vice President	40	15
Faculty Athletic Representative	45	>20
Department Chair	27	"lots"
Associate Professor	31	15
Athletic Director	16	16
Associate Athletic Director	19	19

Assistant Director of Operations	<1	10
Director of Academic Services	10	2
Head Football Coach	6	20
Head Men's Basketball Coach	6	36
Head Women's Basketball Coach	14	14
Head Volleyball Coach	9	9

Secondary data was also collected in order to enrich the findings from the semi-structured interviews. Specifically, this data was obtained from the university's student handbook, the NCAA Division II Handbook, and the university's and athletic department's websites through the process of document analysis (see Yin, 1994). Further, the lead author maintained a reflective journal throughout the entire study, which served as a working record of various patterns within the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The collection of secondary data provided data triangulation, which serves to enhance the trustworthiness of the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The primary data from this study was analyzed using an inductive approach for qualitative data analysis (Thomas, 2006). Initial steps in the data analysis included detailed readings of the interview transcripts and documents in order to locate specific data points that related to the purpose of this study. These relevant data were then categorized and coded in a manner that would reveal themes that addressed the research questions of this study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Marshall & Rossman, 1995; Thomas, 2006). Finally, the relevant findings from the data were reported.

To confirm the credibility and reliability of these findings, various techniques were implemented to ensure the trustworthiness of my interpretations. Initially, member-checking allowed the participants to clarify and confirm my interpretations of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Further, data triangulation served as another method for ensuring the credibility of the findings. As detailed previously, multiple data sources were used to substantiate my interpretations of the data (Fielding & Fielding, 1986; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, the entire research process along with my interpretations of the data were reviewed by separate auditors who were familiar with case study research and the data collected from this study to ensure that my findings were indeed accurate.

## Findings

To review, the purpose of this study was to understand the challenges for an NCAA Division II athletic program in regards to fostering the overall development of its student-athletes. Specifically, our data suggested that the participants believed that the athletic department had a responsibility to foster the development of its student-athletes. Similar to the findings of previous studies (Adler & Adler, 1991; Killeya-Jones, 2005; Miller & Kerr, 2003; Settles, et al., 2002; Yopyk & Prentice, 2005), the athletic department should operate in a manner that supports the physical, mental, and social development of its student-athletes. Further, the spiritual development of the student-athletes was emphasized because of the religious affiliation of the university.

By and large, the participants indicated that the athletic department was fairly successful in its development efforts in most of these areas. The athletic department had recently been able to upgrade many of their practice and workout facilities, which allowed them to better develop the physical aspects of their student-athletes and become more viable in athletic competition. All of the coaches and members of the athletic department had taken steps to ensure the social and spiritual development as well. These steps included volunteering for local charities, holding team and department wide chapel services, implementing prayer into their daily practices, and emphasizing relationship accountability among their teams.

However, despite the athletic department's best efforts to foster the entire development of its student-athletes, the athletic department faced significant challenges in regards to the academic development of its student-athletes. This is not to say that all of the student-athletes at this university struggled academically. In fact, the most recent presidential scholar at this university was a student-athlete. Further, the most recent NCAA Division II Academic Success Rate and Federal Graduation Rates report indicated that student-athletes at this university actually performed quite well in the classroom. Yet, the graduation rates for student-athletes at this university are less than the graduation rates of the average student body. Participants in this study acknowledged that their student-athletes do tend to perform fairly well in the classroom and that the cultures of many of the programs (especially the women's teams) keep the student-athletes accountable for their academics. Nonetheless, the participants of this study agreed that there are challenges in place that impede the athletic department's efforts in fostering the academic development of its student-athletes to the desired standards of the university and its stakeholders. Analysis of the data revealed two primary challenges, limited resources and the pressure to win, which have hindered the athletic department's ability to support the academic development of its student-efforts to the desired standard. Each of these themes will be discussed in detail.

### *Limited Resources*

*It's definitely, at our level, a resource issue. – Athletic Director*

The primary challenge that limited this athletic department's ability to support the academic development of its student-athletes was limited resources within the athletic department. That is, the athletic department faced budgetary constraints that limited their ability to implement programs, construct facilities, or even employ personnel to support the academic development of its student-athletes. The Athletic Director spoke to this,

The unique thing and what a lot of people don't realize is a large number of these Division I institutions, they've got the same number, or roughly the same number of student-athletes that we deal with on the Division II level, but they're handling things like compliance and academic services with five, six, seven-fold the personnel we have...it's definitely, at our level, a resource issue. We just don't have the finances to staff it at the level that most people would like.

Analysis of the 2009-2010 NCAA Membership Report indicated that the Athletic Director's estimations were not quite accurate (the report indicated that the average Division I university had approximately 500 student-athletes while the average Division II university had approximately 321 student-athletes). However, this does not negate the beliefs of participants within this athletic department that this university still does not employ an adequate number of staff members within the athletic department to support the non-athletic aspects of the student-athletes lives.

To expand upon this notion, examination of this athletic department's staff revealed that it only has one person in charge of compliance. Further, this university only has one staff member who serves primarily as an academic advisor. As a point of comparison, one private Division I university in the southern portion of the country that does not have a football program and a similar overall enrollment to this Division II university employs two people to manage compliance issues. Also, this comparable Division I university employs four academic support staff members. In regards to staffing, the Associate Athletic Director also spoke to the lack of resources,

Also, we have in our athletic department, we have our [Director of Academic Services], but if we had the funds, we could have her an assistant. We have our own [Director of Compliance] but again, if we had the funds we could get him a full-time assistant. So it's not a big thing, but it's just the idea of a little bit more funding could make us better at developing [our student-athletes].

The Assistant Director of Operations, who had spent time employed both at the Division I and Division II level of athletics offered a similar sentiment,

A mid-major Division I will have an assistant athletic director for student-athlete development and academics, and then they'll have three to five assistants...and you come to a Division II university like this and you have one [Director of Academic Services] that manages 350 student-athletes.

Interestingly enough, this university is one of only two universities in its conference that employs someone in an equivalent position to the Director of Academic Services. The Director of Academic Services within this university is meant to serve as an academic advisor to the student-athletes, but also the position is in charge of developing the NCAA reports of the academic progress of the student-athletes within the entire athletic department. In regards to the uniqueness of her position, the Director of Academic Services pointed out,

The only other Division II school in our conference [who has an similar position] is [a state school]...it's kind of unusual in Division II to have a full time person. A lot of the time, the compliance person or the coaches deal with [academic development issues].

The athletic director pointed out that they had only recently created this position in the athletic department to help with the academic development of their student-athletes. It should also be noted that other participants suggested that this position may have only been created to help student-athletes remain eligible because of the stringent academic requirements at the university. Further, the Director of Academic Services indicated that her primary duties, along with the Director of Compliance, revolved around the completion of reports for the NCAA. In regards to actually advising and aiding student-athletes in their academic progression, she offered the following,

I don't really get a chance or I haven't really had a chance to do the advising...not even the higher risk students, the ones that they really want to keep track of, 25 to 30 students across all sports. That's just impossible for me to have that and do my other duties as well.

So, even though the university and athletic department may have created this position to aid in the academic development of its student-athletes, other duties of this position often precluded the Director of Academic Services' ability to fully address the academic needs of the entire population of student-athletes at this university.

Therefore, most of the hands-on academic development efforts were left to the coaches and other members of the campus community. Ultimately, the coaches who participated in this study acknowledged that it was their job to ensure that their student-athletes were remaining eligible and progressing to graduation. This may indeed be common practice for most Division II universities; however, this could present many problems. Previous research has suggested that coaches tend to direct their attentions toward winning athletic competitions, leaving little time for them to focus on the academic development of their student-athletes (Adler & Adler, 1991; Singer & Armstrong, 2001). Though the lack of attention to academics by coaches is problematic at the Division I level, it is exasperated at the Division II level where athletic departments do not have the luxury of employing numerous academic support staff members. The lack of resources at this university required all members of the athletic department to perform duties outside of their prescribed employment positions. Though this may be fairly normal for lower NCAA division universities, ultimately the development of student-athletes may suffer because specific staff positions that support the academic endeavors of student-athletes are rare.

### *Pressure to Win*

*Our job is to win games. They're not going to keep me here if I'm winning five or six games every year. – Women's Basketball Coach*

In addition to the lack of resources, the importance of winning athletic competitions was found to present difficulties for the athletic department to spend significant time and resources on non-athletics focused endeavors. That is, the limited resources that the athletic department did possess were often used to enhance the athletic development of its student-athletes. For instance, the athletic department recently expanded their weight room and conditioning facilities instead of adding academic facilities such as a computer lab or study hall within the athletic building. Research over the years has suggested that the increased commercialism in intercollegiate sport has placed a greater emphasis on winning, which often precludes the academic development of student-athletes (Adler & Adler, 1991; Buer, 2009; Eitzen, 2006; Sperber, 2000). That is,



coaches are typically evaluated primarily on the number of games they have won and not the number of their student-athletes who have graduated (Adler & Adler, 1991; Buer, 2009). Though, at the Division II level, some have observed that winning is not always the primary evaluation criteria for coaches (Gorney & Ness, 2000), participants in this study did disclose that they felt their evaluation rested heavily on wins and losses. To this point, when asked what the primary criterion for his job evaluation was, the Head Football Coach succinctly stated,

You know, primarily would be wins and losses. I mean, at the end of the day, if we lose a bunch of games, I'm not going to get to stay.

Other participants in this study conveyed similar thoughts,

I mean, it comes down to it (wins and losses) and you know, that is my job. Our job is to win games. They're not going to keep me here if I'm winning five or six games every year." (parentheses added) – Head Women's Basketball Coach

"Well, I think without a doubt, you're still in a business where wins and losses matter, and so I don't know that is necessarily, I shouldn't say, any different, but I think there is still a bottom line to what you're measuring success by...And I'm fine with someone wanting to argue that wins and losses aren't the measurement for some evaluation of a coach or evaluation of a program. I'm fine for that argument, but the reality is that that doesn't continue for long. So I think wins and losses do play a part. – Associate Professor

Because again, if you wind up not ever winning here, you probably are going to get fired just like you are any place else because winning is part of the game. This is, after all, athletics. –Faculty Athletic Representative

As seen in statements made by the participants, winning was viewed as an important aspect on the evaluation of success in the university's athletic department. It should be noted that most of the participants also mentioned that winning was not the only criterion factored into this evaluation.

The emphasis of winning would not be particularly problematic if it did not detract from the academic development of the student-athletes. However, within the athletic department at this university (and I would argue is the case with most Division II universities) coaches bear the responsibility of ensuring the academic development of their student-athletes, despite the presence of the director of academic services. It is unreasonable to expect those who are evaluated primarily on wins and losses to detract from their focus on developing the athletic prowess of their student-athletes in order to engage in actions that are not necessarily instrumental in their employment status. Simply, coaches are less likely to get fired if they are winning than if all of their student-athletes are performing well in the classroom and they are losing athletic competitions.

It should also be noted that some of the participants in this study had differing opinions regarding the importance of winning in regards to evaluations of their performance. Notably, the head volleyball coach suggested,

...but I don't think that the campus as a whole or our teams or our student-athletes as individuals, feel like winning and losing is the only judge on their character, on their value, on their worth as a student-athlete. And I just don't think that that is the most important thing on this campus, I really don't. And I could be wrong; it could be like every other campus out there that all that really matters is winning and losing.

The faculty athletic representative also addressed this,

All of us like to win. I think virtually everyone would say we want to win and do the other things, but if we can only do one, the other things are more important. I think that would be the majority attitude.

These statements were seemingly in direct contrast to the viewpoints of other participants in this study. However, it should be noted that the faculty athletic representative did admit that winning is a primary consideration when assessing the success of coaches and athletic programs (also reflected in previous paragraphs). In conjunction with this, the head volleyball did ultimately acknowledge that she had always won at the university and that her viewpoints may be different if she was not winning as much. Thus, even these participants ultimately acknowledged that winning is an important aspect in the evaluation of a successful athletic program.

The lack of resources and the emphasis on winning combined to create substantial challenges for the athletic department to fully support the academic development of their student-athletes. Even though this university has been fairly successful in regards to the academic achievements of their student-athletes, they still perceived barriers preventing them from supporting the entire development of their student-athletes to their desired standards. This can be seen in one of the athletic director's statements,

Is it where I want it to be? No. I mean there's always some glaring opportunity out there that we haven't met or fulfilled. And so, that's probably one of the frustrating things is that we, due to resources, we have to pick and choose what we feel is going to be the best approach.

## **Discussion & Conclusion**

The findings from this study suggested that Division II universities likely face certain challenges in regards to supporting the overall development of their student-athletes. In particular, these findings revealed that a lack of resources and the emphasis placed upon winning detracted from the academic development of the student-athletes at this university. The lack of financial resources at this university has made it difficult for the athletic department to employ staff members to specifically support the academic endeavors of its student-athletes. This has resulted in coaches assuming the majority of the responsibility for fostering all aspects of their student-athletes' development. Despite previous research suggesting that the evaluation of Division II coaches is not solely based on winning (Gorney & Ness, 2000), the primary evaluation of the coaches in this study was based on wins and losses. Therefore, it is likely that they focus the majority of their efforts on developing the athletic prowess of their teams in order to maintain a level of job security. This is consistent with previous research that has indicated that even though coaches believe they have a responsibility to focus on the holistic development

of their student-athletes, the nature of the coaching profession, along with the time constraints of their jobs, precludes coaches from focusing their efforts away from the athletic development of their student-athletes (Adler & Adler, 1991; Cullen et al., 1990; Singer & Armstrong, 2001). Thus, a limited supporting staff to aid student-athletes in their academic development significantly disadvantages Division II student-athletes as they balance academic and athletic time requirements.

Though these findings may be contextually bounded, it is likely that many Division II and even lower-level Division I universities may face similar challenges and budgetary constraints as this particular university. Therefore, it is important for athletic departments to discover innovative approaches for addressing the developmental needs of their student-athletes. In particular, Division II athletic departments may find it beneficial to develop partnerships with academic services on campus. Scholars have suggested that partnerships between student affairs administrators and athletic personnel could be useful in addressing the developmental needs of student-athletes (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). This approach could prove useful because many academic centers employ numerous tutors and individuals who are capable of mentoring student-athletes. Further, it could also benefit student-athletes for the athletic department to work closely with career centers on campuses. This could provide opportunities for student-athletes to examine employment options once they are done competing for their universities. Future studies should further examine the utility of these types of partnerships.

Also, it could prove invaluable for the athletic department and individual teams to develop positive relationships with faculty members on campus and allow the faculty of the university to assist the athletic department in their development of the student-athletes (Howard-Hamilton & Sina, 2001). Scholars have suggested that university faculty and staff members should work in cooperation with athletic departments on their campuses in order to aid in the development of their student-athletes (Simons et al., 1999; Valentine & Taub, 1999). Indeed, research has suggested that student-athletes who have had positive relationships with their professors may indeed be more involved on their respective campuses, which could be instrumental in their development away from athletics (Schroeder, 2000; Simons et al., 1999). Despite research suggesting professors often view athletics negatively (Baucom & Lantz, 2001; Engstrom & Sedlacek, 1991; Engstrom Sedlacek, & McEwen, 1995; Sharp & Sheilley, 2008; Valentine & Taub, 1999), it is important for athletic departments to make efforts to educate faculty members and foster positive relationships with professors for the benefit of their student-athletes.

Future research into Division II athletics should further explore the involvement of university faculty and administrators with athletics and their involvement with the student-athletes. Because of the size of most Division II universities, it is likely that student-athletes have more contact with university members. These individuals likely have significant influence in the development of student-athletes beyond those at the Division I level. A final issue that warrants further investigation is the motivations of Division II coaches. Future research should investigate whether Division II coaches desire to remain within this division or are their aspirations to advance to Division I athletics or even the professional levels of athletics. The mobility of coaches has implications for student-athlete development, especially at the Division II level, because coaches are primarily responsible for attending to the academic development of their student-athletes. Athletic directors and administrators should be cognizant of student-athletes by factoring the career aspirations and motivations of coaches into the hiring process. Student-athletes at the Division II and lower levels of college athletics often face unique

challenges to their development. They face the same time constraints as Division I student-athletes, yet they are often not afforded the same level of support as their Division I counterparts. It is important to better understand the issues facing lower division student-athletes in order to ensure their developmental needs are being met.

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