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FRESHMAN

SOPHOMORE

WIN WIN

ALL FOUR

JUNIOR

SENIOR

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EXCEL U focuses on key principles that were created by founder, former NBA player, Willie Burton. His foundation of - Learn. Play. Win Together. - fulfills a need to provide students and student-athletes to have personal and professional skills and exposure to become successful. EXCEL U curriculum, works to discover students hidden talent with the lessons taught in EXCEL U.

The programs diversity expands to include all student-scholars from elementary through high school. Our internal and external supporting team is comprised of former student-athletes and student-scholars who have dedicated themselves to help prepare today's students to excel in any field of their choosing, including athletics. In today's education foundation, a variety of systems have been created to allow what is known as healthy competition. As the educational system progresses students, athletes, and institutions will become even more competitive, and the need for effective methods of teaching will increase.

Our vision is focused on providing curriculum that guides schools, communities, and families in methods and strategies needed to promote academic success and personal wellness in athletes, students and beyond.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Michael Kostoff, M.A. Ed.

Michael Kostoff, M.A. Ed., had coached football at all levels including high school and college levels since 1990. His college experience includes coaching at Adrian College (NCAA D3) and The University of Findlay (NCAA D2). His recruiting experience has given him a solid understanding of the recruiting at both the NCAA and NAIA. He has encountered a number of gifted and talented athletes who were lost, confused and unaware of the realities of the college recruiting process. These athletes couldn't get the opportunity to fulfill their college athletic dream because they were not taught and failed to understand recruiting is a four year process.

Educationally, Mike graduated from Eastern Michigan University with a BS in psychology in 1992. After a few years working as a Drug Counselor and Prevention Specialist, he returned to EMU to earn his teaching certificate. He has taught at a high schools across Michigan. In 2003, he accepted a position at The University of Findlay where he completed his Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership. Mike has been in the classroom since 1997 and has also worked as an intervention specialist and the Director of College and Career Readiness.

In 2017, Mike wrote WIN ALL FOUR, the only NCAA/NAIA eligibility guide and workbook. WIN ALL FOUR lead to the creation of Total Student Athlete. The mission of Total Student Athlete is to educate all students and parents the truths of becoming a college student athlete. WIN ALL FOUR and the Total Student Athlete will teach the truth that becoming a college recruit is a four year process. It begins the first day of your freshman year and continues throughout your four years in high school. The first question asked by every recruiter is "What is the player's GPA?" The higher your GPA and class rank, the greater the number of athletic opportunities made available to you; conversely, the same is true – the lower your GPA and class rank, the fewer the opportunities. Unfortunately, a common mistake made by high school athletes is not being academically successful in their freshmen and sophomore years.

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9th GRADE

"Mom and dad I got a recruiting letter from Anytown University," is a phrase spoken thousands of times every year by junior high school athletes across America. The athlete is flattered and the parents are hopeful. For the athlete it is exciting to know someone at the "next level" has noticed his or her skill. The parents have visions of financial relief of tuition. The initial excitement of recruitment gives way to questions of "what next?" Before the recruit asks this question, he or she needs to look to the past. The recruit's athletic skill may have gotten them noticed, however being recruited is as much about the athlete's history in the classroom as it is on the field. Once recruiters gain relevant information pertaining to grades, attendance, and character...

The Recruiting Process Begins

The purpose of this workbook is to assist high school athletes with the recruiting process and achieve one's dream of becoming a college athlete. Recruiting is a complicated, detailed and drawn out process. At times, it is also very confusing. There are many misconceptions and misunderstanding which have a negative impact on many recruits around the country. Every year there are countless high school seniors with athletic ability good enough to earn athletic scholarships, who are discouraged by the complexities and misunderstandings of college recruiting.

Becoming a college recruit is a four year process. It begins the first day of your freshman year and continues throughout your four years in high school. Your high school transcript writes the narrative of your work and success as a student. This document determines whether you will be a college recruit or not. The first question asked by every recruiter is "What is the player's GPA and class rank?" The higher your GPA and class rank, the greater the number of athletic opportunities made available to you; conversely, the same is true – the lower your GPA and class rank, the fewer the opportunities. Unfortunately, a common mistake made by high school athletes is not being academically successful in their freshmen and sophomore years. One hundredth of a point can cost you thousands of dollars.

The following is an example of this maxim:

Joe Tee is a senior football player being recruited to play Division II football. He has a 3.5 GPA. Sam Bee is also a senior football player being recruited to play DII football and has a 3.49 GPA. Both players are offered an athletic scholarship to cover tuition but not room and board at Anytown University. Anytown University has a tuition cost of \$19,000, books and fees cost \$1,000 and room and board cost \$10,000. Joe Tee is also awarded a \$10,000 academic scholarship because at Anytown University students earning a 3.5 GPA or higher are awarded an academic scholarship which can be added on top of an athletic scholarship. Sam Bee cannot be offered the same academic scholarship because his GPA is only a 3.49. This means Sam Bee will need to pay for room and board and Joe Tee will have his tuition and room and board covered. (It is more complex when a school is offering a partial scholarship with athletic and academic money than it appears in the example. There are specific rules and regulation to follow when putting scholarship packages together). Hence, the littlest things in academics, like in athletics, make a big difference. The difference below is a \$4,000 student loan for Joe compared to a \$44,000 loan for Sam over four years.

Anytown University		Joe Tee	Sam Bee
Tuition	\$19,000	Athletic scholarship = \$19,000	\$19,000
Books and Fees	\$ 1,000	Academic scholarship = \$10,000	
Room and Board	\$10,000		
Total Cost	\$30,000	\$1,000	\$11,000

Recruiters use class attendance to understand the level of commitment one has toward the classroom. A large number of absences are a red flag. If you are not committed or responsible enough to attend school, it will not miraculously change in college. Student-athletes who are unreliable or irresponsible are bad investments for recruiters. A college coach's job security depends on the quality of the recruit he or she can bring onto campus. Too many bad investments in recruiting will cost most coaches their job.

Thus, the rules for any potential recruit are simple:

- 1. Go to school.**
- 2. Be on time.**
- 3. Work hard in the classroom.**

Being a student/athlete in college is a full-time job and your high school transcript is your resume. This single piece of paper tells recruiters a plethora about you as a person, a student, as well as your dedication and work ethic. This all-important document in the hands of a recruiter, is the determining factor regarding a scholarship offer and fulfilling ones dream of being a college athlete.

This workbook looks at the importance of your entire high school career.

Freshman year – You begin to build your resume for a college scholarship.

- o You need to start off strong academically. We refer to this as the 3+ Project. A 3.0 GPA plus.
- o It's easier to maintain high academic success than to try to work your way up.

Sophomore year – You begin to formulate a game plan for getting recruited as a student-athlete.

- o Some elite athletes have already started getting recruited because of their athletic skills and accomplishments. Keep your focus in the classroom.
- o Summer preparation before your junior year is critical in your sport and for the ACT/SAT exam coming your junior year.

Junior year – You put your plan into action.

- o ACT/SAT preparation should continue weekly.
- o Your name should appear on recruiting lists and schools might start contacting you.
- o Varsity performance will increase or decrease your opportunities.

Senior year –

- o Should be successful and productive in competition.
- o Your academics need to be in-line.
- o Complete all the recruiting tasks to put yourself in the best possible position to be recruited.
- o Your dreams of becoming a college student athlete are achieved.

I worked for a college head coach who made this statement every year to his recruits, **“The choice of college and those next four years is preparing you for the next forty years of your life.”** This statement sums up the importance of a college education.

Individuals who are college student athletes experience more professional opportunities upon graduation than most students. College athletes acquire a unique work ethic and time management skills companies around the world are seeking in their employees.

“Is the commitment worth the possible reward?” is the question every prospective college athlete needs to ask themselves before beginning the recruiting process.

Athletic Scholarship = A Plateau, Not the Summit

For a number of senior athletes, simply signing a scholarship is the goal. This is far from the reality of becoming a scholarship college player. The truth of the matter is becoming a college athlete is a full-time job as well as being a full-time student. Signing a scholarship is only a plateau of an athletic career, and the game gets much harder, and more demanding than the game has ever been in the athlete's career.

Think back to the question, “is the commitment worth the reward?” High school student athletes need to understand becoming a college student athlete means they are accepting two full-time jobs. The NCAA allows 20 hours a week for in-season athletic competition. This amount of time contains hours of practice and games. Add more time spent in preparing for competition including film study, study table, lifting and rehabilitation in the training room. This is time required to be an athlete.

Now add in the time to fulfill the requirements of being a student. All students (except those graduating) are required to take 12 academic hours, being a full-time student. Add 2 hours for every credit for homework and now there's 36 hours a week spent on academics. This doesn't include time spent working on group projects, additional research and time spent with tutors since a large number of college athletes are missing class to travel to away games.

The above scenario is for most college athletes' in-season. Things don't get easier when the season is over. This is the time where most college athletes will experience things like 6 AM workouts, strength and speed training. Total up the hours required to be student athletes one is looking at two full-time jobs. Moreover, all of these requirements are mandatory. College athletes don't miss practice especially those on scholarship. Signing a scholarship isn't the summit; it's a plateau in ones' career of being a student athlete. Signing a scholarship simply means the work will be harder and the accountability much more demanding. Consider this when you read the role of the college recruiter: every college recruit is directly related to the job security of not only the institution's head coach but also his or her recruiter.

Do You Want a Scholarship? Why not an ACADEMIC SCHOLARSHIP? By now, you should understand an athletic scholarship is not a guarantee. It's the simple rule of supply and demand. The demand of high school seniors seeking a Division I, Division II, or NAIA college athletic scholarship greatly outnumbers the number of athletic scholarships available. An **ACADEMIC Scholarship** is a **guaranteed scholarship** on most college campus in our country. Colleges have certain qualifications for these scholarships based on each student's GPA, ACT/SAT scores, leadership activities and service learning/community service work. Earn the money through

your academic success. It is mindboggling the number of student athletes demanding scholarships but not willing to earn them through their academic work.

Individual scholarships are open to qualified students to apply yearly. These scholarships are limitless and can also open MORE college athletic opportunities by making certain colleges more affordable. The Ultimate Scholarship Book is a yearly publication consisting of 800 pages of scholarships. This book can be purchased on-line or at any book store. Your school, your community, web sites like fastweb.com are good sources for numerous scholarships as well as talking with your guidance counselor. This research should be a summer job during the summer entering the senior year. You will find Scholarship Worksheets at the back of this book to help you keep track of any academic scholarship you find. (p. 59)

The WHY? There are myriad reasons you need school, but for the sake of recruiting the following reasons are paramount:

1. You need the credit to graduate.
2. The grade you earn will become part of your GPA.
3. What you learn is on the ACT/SAT test.

Every core class you take in high school prepares you for the national standardized test (ACT or SAT), which are the gateways to college admission. Win every day you are in school. Earn the highest GPA possible above a 3.0 GPA. Prepare for the test every day. Your need to have the attitude of investing in your dream every day in school, every class you attend. Don't count your days. Make your days count.

There isn't a RESTART button on your Transcript. Modern high school students have become the "restart generation." Today's students are video game savvy, and today's video games allow the player to control every aspect of the game, whether choosing the teams or controlling the environment – the player is in charge. A standard practice when the game isn't going well is to hit the "restart" button. This mentality is carried over into everyday actions. High school students, with a college dream, need to understand there isn't a "restart" button on their transcript. In fact, they are competing against hundreds of students for the same position from across a region and country. There are also scenarios of competing against foreign students in certain sports.

EARN A 3.0+. The most important message of Total Student Athlete is to encourage every student athlete to earn a 3.0 GPA or higher every marking period. Fulfilling a college athletic dream is less about ability and more about affordability. Earning a 3+ GPA will open more opportunities to a number of institutions others will not qualify. A 3+ GPA might open a more affordable financial package and allow one to fulfill their college athletic dreams. A 3+ GPA will also lower the required score for the ACT or SAT NCAA DI sliding scale (p.30) and DII one coming in 2018. Lastly, remember the most important marking period in your high school career is the 1st semester of your ninth grade year.

The NUMBERS GAME

The 3+ Project is the approach and attitude you, the student athlete, will go to school every day committed to fulfill your dream of a college career. Remember, your high school transcript is your resume to college, to your dream. Every day you will either invest into your dream or your will hurt your chances. It is important for you to understand and accept each day of high school has a purpose and the purpose is to win "The Numbers Game."

The 3+ Project is half of what Total Student Athlete calls "The Numbers Game." The most important game you play in high school. It is why you win in the classroom every day you attend school. Your cumulative HS GPA (3.0 and higher) and your ACT/SAT test are the "Numbers Game." The number of credits you earn in each subject and your class rank is part of The Numbers Game. Remember, you are competing against a large number of other student athletes for the same spot on each college team. Not only do you need to fulfill the eligibility

requirements by the NCAA and NAIA but you must also fulfill the admissions recruitments at each school you are interested in attending. Just being a NCAA full qualifier is not a guarantee a specific school will admit you.

ACT/SAT Test Prep: Your ACT/SAT test score plays a big part in the numbers game. This test score is used for the NCAA and NAIA athletic eligibility as well as the admissions to each school. Every core class you take is preparation for the test. Remember, the "why am I taking this class?" because it's on the test! I suggest purchasing a practice CD, on-line test prep service (Total Student Athlete is a licensed supplier of Method Test Prep) or workbook. You should begin to practice for the test during your sophomore year and continue until you reach your desired score. Service like Method Test Prep offer full exams students can complete before taking the official exam. These test are predictable so they can be practiced.

"He who is not courageous enough to take risks will accomplish nothing in life."

Muhammad Ali