

- S1 00:11 Welcome to the Sports Medicine Podcast; brought to you by The Sydney & J.L. Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine & Human Performance in the department of Health & Kinesiology at Texas A&M University. At The Huffines Institute, we're always working to facilitate, apply, and bring you the most up-to-date coverage of the wide world that is Sports Medicine and Human Performance - all in a language you can understand and share with your friends. And now, here's our host, The Director of The Huffines Institute, Dr. Tim Lightfoot.
- S2 00:40 Hello, and welcome to the weekly edition of The Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine & Human Performance Podcast. I'm your host, Tim Lightfoot, with you again this week with another interesting person in the world of Sports Medicine and Human Performance, sometimes just General Health- and today it's going to be Sports Management. We have Dr. Shane Hudson with us today, here from Texas A&M. Shane, welcome to the podcast.
- S3 01:00 Tim, thank you and thank you for having me.
- S2 01:01 You're more than welcome. It's a long time coming, but we're glad we got you here. Let me tell the audience a little bit about you and why we're talking today and we'll just go from there. Shane has a bachelor's and master's degree from Oklahoma State University- where he play football, by the way. We were always talk about that- and he has a PhD in Human Resource Development from here at Texas A&M. He currently is the Director of the Laboratory for the Study of Intercollegiate Athletics in our Division of Sports Management. And he has been in the past the associate and assistant director for the Center of Athletic Academic Services here at Texas A&M. So not only was he an athlete but he also has worked in helping athletes fulfill the student-half of what they do.
- S3 01:42 That's correct.
- S2 01:42 A couple of honor awards which really are kind of cool, he was named a Professor of Excellence here at Texas A&M in 2009 and was Teacher of the Year in the same year in the Division of Sports Management. 2009 was good for you, wasn't it?
- S3 01:56 2009 was a pretty good year. I need to step up my game again.
- S2 01:58 [laughter] Yeah. I asked Shane to come on today because last week one of our speakers from the Huffines Discussion- we broadcast that video from the Huffines Discussion 3, which was in November, Coach Mark Johnson- Hall of Fame coach, baseball coach- came and talked to the university about how sports are the front porch of the University and why we need sports in the University. Given that Shane is the director of the Laboratory for the Study of Intercollegiate Athletics, who also does a big annual award- which we will talk about a little bit later- I want you to come back to this topic a little bit. There's so much talk about the cost of athletics and people say, 'Well, geez. We could use that to hire faculty or whatever.' Let's just open up the conversation with, why do we have sports in a University?

S3 02:42

Well Tim, I think what you have is you have faculty and then you have athletic administrators and boosters and others that are kind of on two sides of that argument. I came from a school, Long Beach State- where I transferred from Oklahoma State who did not have a budget- so every sport that we had at Cal State Long Beach was considered non-revenue. The football team didn't make money, the basketball team didn't make money, all the way down. When it came time to get rid of a sport because of lack of budget, they simply targeted football because it was the largest money drain. They got rid of football and the administrators explained to me that it was either that or get rid of four or five smaller sports, so they took the one big sport. Now, the bigger Universities don't have that problem. Texas, for example, makes money. Their revenue sports are football, of course, and men's basketball. But all other sports on this campus are considered non-revenue, so they don't make money. Football just happens to make enough money for everyone. So, when it comes time to recruit certain athletes to play those sports- student athletes if you will,- I'm still a little bit concerned. Walter Byers came up with that term- the NCAA. Walter Byers came up with that term quite sometime ago- 'student athlete'. And working in that field and being one of those, I was always a little bit concerned that sometimes it wasn't always student athlete. Sometimes, it was athlete student and it can actually put a lot of pressure on a particular student depending on where you come in to the circle at. Say, Texas A&M University, the average SAT score here, I believe, is about 1200, something like that, and if you come in well below that, it can be very difficult to do well, academically here. You have the faculty and then you have athletic administration and boosters, coaches and there are sort of on opposite sides of what they want for the university. Is collegiate sports good for a college or university? I think so. I think it gives a young man an opportunity to grow. The problem with that is that--

S2 05:17

Or a young woman.

S3 05:19

Or a young woman-- with title nine. As a matter of fact, talking about our laboratory, we have Monica Abbott, Olympian, coming to speak for our lecture series- so I want to give that a plug, that's going to be in late February. We're honored to have somebody with the Olympic status and the pro status that she has coming in here to Texas A&M.

S2 05:40

And for our listeners, we'll put the details of that on the show notes for this. So, if you want to get more information about how to come to see if you're in this area, we'll put that up for you to find out.

S3 05:50

And we're very excited to have her. But I think the proponents for athletics, the proponents for an academic institution, I think this is going to be an age long battle. If you look at the University of Chicago back in the late 1930's, they pulled their school out of the Big Ten Conference so this is not something new. They pulled them out of the Big Ten Conference in order to rescue them from athletics, if you will and now they have- I mean, it didn't hurt them any. They have a very prestigious university and I believe they are top five as far as being-- for selection, as far as incoming student body. So they're able to select great students and it didn't hurt them any not having an athletic program. But, certainly as you and I spoke the other day, you can see spikes in numbers when a visible team that gets a lot of television time does well. We see that in Texas A&M. The conversation is what is Johnny Manziel worth? Well, I've seen estimates in the \$750 million range and I believe Jason Cook came out not too

long ago and said you know maybe something as low as \$20,000. Regardless, Johnny Manziel brings a lot to Texas A&M; the recruiting of student athletes, the recruiting of incoming freshman to this university and the same as RG3 did at Baylor.

S2 07:19

There is so much in what you just talked about that we can unpack and really go to town on. I know one of the things, as you said, you and I were chatting briefly yesterday and it's been a little bit of an argument in some academic circles is what affect does athletics have on driving enrolment, for example. In the recent Sports Illustrated, they mentioned that Florida Gulf Coast University has had a 36.4% increase in the number of applications for admittance since their basketball team did so well last spring. Suddenly, it was like attention getting. The interesting thing for me is that I've been at a couple universities that did not have football and had chosen not to have football, never to establish it. They had all the other sports but it was because of the cost. And what's interesting is both of those universities over the last 15 years have put football in as opposed to dropping football. We've seen universities go in that direction. When I talk to the ADs there - the athletic directors - before I left and while they were thinking about doing it, they kept talking about the cost of football, how much it cost to put in. They were certainly very interested in that but there were other factors that seemed to overrule the concern with cost. What kind of factors are those? Why would a university bring in football especially in this day and time when everybody is so cost conscious?

S3 08:34

This day and age, Tim, and just to shed some light on what you're talking about, football- Division 1 Football- you are required of 85 full scholarships- so these aren't partials. I think you'll see with baseball and softball, you'll see partial scholarships and other sports as well.

S2 08:49

And those scholarships they just can't waive their wand and waive tuition at a public university. They have got to find money to pay for those things.

S3 08:57

You pay for those scholarships. And so you have 85 full scholarships. We have something now we call the facilities arms race where if you don't have great facilities, people don't want to come to your school. And so you have to build great facilities and they also want a great a coach, so they want a coach with a name and the name brand that goes behind that. So, the investment out front is a lot and I think you know whether or not you want to do that or not based on your booster support. A university can rarely support this kind of economic venture. They have to have boosters, have to have outside support. UTSA is a school right now, I think, that's getting a lot of outside support in the implementation of Division 1 Football and they're graduating a lot of people there. And so their fan base was actually, I think, a lot better and more supportive than what they even thought it would. I think they averaged around 35,000 per game last year which is, to me, astonishing for an upstart Division 1 program. So, I think from an Athletic Director standpoint, your boosters are the ones that are going to tell you and let you know can you support this? When I was at Long Beach, \$600,000 would have saved that program and we didn't have a booster that could step up with that kind of money. That's a drop in the bucket compared to what you need today. I actually spoke to their president at the time, about five years ago, what would it take to implement football back at Long Beach State? And I keep talking about that, because I have a lot of experience with that. And he said if somebody put \$20 million on his desk that

day that it would open up the conversation. So, it wouldn't guarantee it, but it would open up the conversation. So, you have to have a lot of money and I think that comes from outside sources typically.

- S2 10:57 And it's amazing how that number is growing quickly. I know because the last time I was having that conversation with another athletic director when they were thinking about doing it, was about five, six or seven years ago and they were talking about 12 million just to get started. And that comes back to the money issue which you started off with. I guess, just for the audience, are the sport ventures in the universities, are they in the university budget? Are they separate from the universities budget? How is that usually handled?
- S3 11:26 An athletic department is at 501(c)(3), so it's a non-profit organization. That's the way they operate.
- S2 11:36 And they all operate that way across the country?
- S3 11:39 Pretty much, yeah. I'm sure there are a few that don't but most of them are 501(c)(3)s and so they operate that way as well as the university. The problem is you have this huge money making entity and the NCAA gets lumped in that as well. So, at some point, are you a non-profit organization or are you a cartel? And I think-- [laughter]
- S2 12:03 That's an interesting podcast all in and of itself, isn't it?
- S3 12:09 It is. But it is an issue. But a lot of their money comes through private donations. The school I was at prior, Oklahoma State, although we played in the Big Eight and we played with schools that had a big financial impact, like Oklahoma and Nebraska, we were always lumped in with Iowa State. Oklahoma State and Iowa State was sort of at the bottom of that threshold as far as money is concerned. T-Boone Pickens comes in with hundreds of millions of dollars and changes the face of that program forever. I would say there are "have" schools and "have not" schools, he has made them a "have" school from that standpoint- from a financial standpoint. In my opinion, it has to do with outside sources- boosters- that can truly affect the game and that comes from a lot of private donations, sweet sales, private seat licenses and different things that can drive money for the university for that particular program.
- S2 13:20 I guess let's change gears a little bit, let's look at this from a different angle. Oftentimes you'll hear an argument for sports being at a university because some people will say it actually will augment the academic side of the university. What do you think about that argument? Do you think that's true or not? Whether it's money or just faculty being able to attract faculty because it's such a high profile university because of their sports? I think of University of Miami.
- S3 13:46 Right. You can use Miami as an example. Miami is a very small school, it's more academic in nature, and here this, now it becomes the "U". How do they do that? Well, there's a lot of great talent there in Florida and Howard Schnellenberger was able to keep those guys there locally and play great football. I think from that standpoint, you would almost have to-- and they've had some trouble in the past as well but you have to look at that as a positive. I mean, without this athletic programs, I'm not sure if anybody would know where the University of Miami is at.
- S2 14:24 Or Georgetown for basketball purposes.

- S3 14:26 Georgetown, the [?] are the same way. So, I think this is an individual approach from the university standpoint. Some schools get involve with this, they're not ready for it. Some schools, it can truly help and launch them to that next level. So, I think athletic directors, presidents of universities really have to take precaution as they're adding sports, subtracting sports and they have to make very cautious decisions because I think there can be positive effects and there can be some negative effects depending on how you handle your business. And, let's face it, collegiate sports at the big time Division 1 level, is big business. There's no doubt about it, big business.
- S2 15:12 And when you have an operating budget of 80 million to 150 million dollars, that's not a small business anymore.
- S3 15:16 You look at right now Texas and Ohio State are sort of leading that right now. Roughly, both of them are in the 150 million dollar range, which is-- again, if you look at some of these smaller schools, you look at San Jose State, whose Division 1 as well, and I would compare that to Long Beach, they have probably a little less than a 20 million dollar budget. So, at some point, you are not comparing apples and apples, it's certainly apples and oranges.
- S2 15:44 Yeah, and I think this past year has shown us the importance of some of this because with schools, especially historically black universities like Southern, like Grambling, have had huge financial issues that have impacted their ability not only to perform on the field, but also practice facilities. We saw the Grambling players boycotted because of their poor, as they say, work conditions. That also affects the academic community as well. I mean there's real concern about whether or not those are going to be viable institutions.
- S3 16:12 Right. And at some point, the UNLV's, the San Jose's, the San Diego State, do those programs get drop as well? And then are we just playing-- is it just the Alabama's and the Oklahoma's and the Florida's playing each other? Is that what we want? A lot of times, people mention this, 'Well, let's pay the student athlete.' The problem with that, what I see is, Alabama can do it but can San Jose State afford to pay their male and female student athletes? Probably not. So that sort of weeds them out of the picture a little bit and to me, that's not the spirit of collegiate athletics, in my opinion. I like inclusion and that's why we have Title IX, right. We brought that inclusion in here and I think it's needed. We need to support the smaller teams as well. It can't just be about the big money program.
- S2 17:05 So we really threw a radical log on the fire here. So why not do away with what we call collegiate sports and let's just do intramurals? I mean we have intramural competitions within universities. I think that's one of the few places where we still play, the University of Texas is, in intramural competitions.
- S3 17:21 I like that, Tim and his research. The argument I would have with that is, if you're going to do something and you have the NFL and the NBA involved and that's basically what we have is an minor league system for the NFL and the NBA, you'd better include them. So, the thoughts that are being tossed around right now is a true minor league system. Think about the NFL and NBA right now, they use the collegiate system as their minor league system so they don't have to pay for anything. They're getting their talent for free, right? And so at some point, if you look at hockey - minor league hockey,- look at minor league baseball, they have a true minor league system where they formally exist and where they can

go and get their athletes from there and especially young kids that don't want to go to college and have that put on them- they can go there. You don't have that with the NFL and NBA and that's a problem. So, I think, not necessarily in a intramural, but let's look at a minor league system for the students that really don't want to be in college. We need a place for them because the worst thing to do is to show up as an athlete at one of these big schools and really not want to be in the classroom and I think that's a problem with young athlete or student athlete- as Walter Byers' term back in the 50s.

S2 18:47

Let's just throw another radical log on the fire and really blow this stuff up then. Why not then- and I know there's been some writing about this which I can't find a fault with actually and that is- why don't we have degrees in performance- in athletic performance? We have degrees in other performance type venues. If you want to be a singer, you can come to school and get a degree in music at a performance venue. There is a variety of those kinds of things that are out there, those kinds of degrees plans and people have no problem with those. But, once you start to suggest maybe we'll have a degree in athletic performance, people absolutely go nuts!

S3 19:19

I don't know if people necessarily go, from what I've seen, go nuts about it.

S2 19:25

Well you know, part of my role as host is you know is to be hyperbolic so-- [laughter].

S3 19:30

Yeah, I understand. Again, as an athlete, when you come to a college or a university, you have to buy into that college or university system which means you need to want to learn. Some of the students that are recruited, they do want that and that is a big part of their life. Some of them do not want to do that, and that's kind of what I was talking about with that minor league system. A lot of times, a coach doesn't necessarily know what kind of kid he is recruiting until he gets him on campus. You know a little bit, but you don't really know until you get them in here and so universities across the country have tracks that, a lot of times, they put students into and sometimes the students don't want to be in those particular tracks. But to me, from what I've seen in working in it, being a part of it, you need motivated students. And I think that's where we go back with the faculty versus the athletic administration. The faculty wants to recruit the best students they can find, the Athletics Department wants to recruit the best athletes they can find; is there a meeting place in the middle? Sure. But does it always work out? No, it doesn't. So, to me, that's the issue that we have. The faculty want to recruit high powered students, the Athletics Department wants to recruit high powered athletes and there some that are both? Yes, there are and that's great. But a lot of times, you're one or the other. And that can be very difficult, depending on the university you come to.

S2 21:11

I have to say this is a brilliant podcast, because what you've also done- not only have you helped us process a little bit about what coach Johnson talked about last week in his talk- but you've done a great segway for our podcast next week, which is Adam Sargent who's the Academic Athletic Supervisor for Football at Notre Dame. And they are one of the few that graduate 100% of their football players every year. It will be interesting for everyone to listen to that talk to see how they do that and how they talk about that. I know that's not a topic that we really started to go into, but certainly given your background, I'm interested in your views. How do we make sure that the athletes that come here that are students- and right now they still are all students- how do we get them in

degrees that they're interested in, they're passionate about and they want to learn? And so, they can do that as well. I know it's tough to do both, but--

S3 22:02 Well, again, I think you have to look at-- that's an individual level. I have a good friend of mine, I won't mention his name, but he played ten plus years in the NFL. He was an agriculture major at Texas A&M, and he loves that degree. He raises cattle now, and that's his passion, that's his livelihood. Once you quit playing football in college and in the NFL, there is a life after that. So that is his passion and so my thing is that whatever that individual's passion is-- hopefully at Texas A&M- the size of the place that we have here- we would have a major that is at least close, or a degree that is at least close to what that student-athlete wants to pursue.

S2 23:00 And we would hope that the student-athlete, when they're looking at universities, they would pick a university that would have something that they're interested in.

S3 23:05 Absolutely. That's part of the process, is finding a place that you can call home. And having been recruited before, I think part of that is going to that campus, part of that is visiting with faculty and part of that is visiting with that athletic staff and coaches, obviously as well, and getting a feel for the holistic approach of what that university has to offer.

S2 23:33 It struck me as interesting that on the university campus, sometimes the most vocal critics of athletics are the ones that are in the the stands at the weekend hollering the loudest.

S3 23:42 Absolutely, the armchair code of that.

S2 23:45 Interesting dichotomy there. Well, Shane, thank you so much for being here and you've been a great guest because you've taken the 180 degree turns with us, with aplomb and grace. Thank you for that.

S3 23:56 Appreciate it, appreciate it.

S2 23:58 As we do with all of our guests, we'll give you an opportunity to give us a take-home message. What do you want the audience to remember from this podcast?

S3 24:05 I just want them to remember that, first of all, these young athletes are just kids. They are 18, 19 year old. Honestly, they are relying on the adults to make the decisions for them so at some point- and nobody seems to have this answer right now- but we need to help them and put them on the best situation possible. Obviously, that's going to come through the NCAA and maybe even the Knight Commission and other think tanks that are out there but right now, it's broken, we know that. The problem is, we're making so much money- or the universities' and NCAA are all making so much money- there's not a huge motivation to fix it. I guess my message would be that these are young athletes. Bringing them on to these college campuses, overall, to me, is a positive. It's a positive thing for them, and it's going to allow them to grow into young men.

S2 25:06 Certainly adds to the environment.

S3 25:07 Absolutely.

S2 25:08 Thank you again for being with us today. I enjoyed having you.

- S3 25:11 Appreciate it. Thank you.
- S2 25:12 And thank you all for listening, and taking the time to download us. Regular listeners of the podcast will know that it's at this point when we have our podcast question of the week. So, here today with our podcast question of the week is our producer, Ailand. Ailand, go to it.
- S4 25:26 Who came up with the term "student-athlete"?
- S2 25:29 Great podcast question so be the first one to send us the correct answer to that via the email address, huffinespodcast@hklm.tamu.edu and you'll win one of those nifty podcast T-shirts. Again, thank you for taking the time to download us. Shane, thanks for taking time before your class to be with us and I hope that all of you join us next week when we have another interesting person from the world of sports medicines, human performance, sports marketing, management, general health. We just cover the whole waterfront here. We pitch a big tent, as we say. So, until next week and until that podcast, we hope that you'll have an active and healthy week.
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