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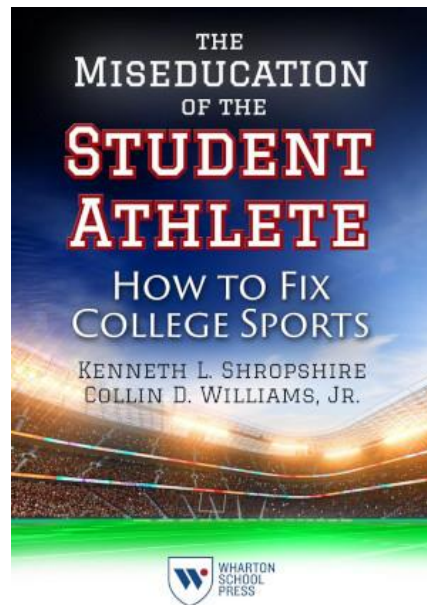
**Shropshire, K. L., & Williams, C. D. (2017). *The miseducation of the student athlete: How to fix college sports*. Wharton School Press.**

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**Reviewed by Rashard Fant**  
**George Washington University**  
**United States**

The industry of intercollegiate athletics has been embroiled in controversy for as long as it has been around. This controversy has shown itself in the form of pay equity between coaches and athletic administration staff, student-athlete compensation, graduation rates, academic or recruiting integrity, National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) rules and regulations, and Name, Image, and Likeness (NIL). Although none of these challenges have affected the revenue of intercollegiate athletics, the experience of those within intercollegiate athletics and the views and motivations of the industry have been affected. While some believe student-athletes should be paid or receive some form of compensation outside of their scholarship, many believe that should not be the case at all and that the problem is actually in the model that intercollegiate athletics currently has in place.



As a former collegiate athlete and current athletic administration professional, these are concerns I am consistently working to find solutions to. On July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021, the NCAA sought to address these issues by implementing an interim policy that allows all student-athletes to exercise their “name, image, and likeness” rights. Consequently, I was attracted to Kenneth Shropshire and Collin Williams’s *The Miseducation of Student Athlete: How to Fix College Sports* by as possibly an essential resource for anyone who is a part of the intercollegiate athletics industry and working to navigate the current waters. Kenneth L. Shropshire is the Adidas Distinguished Professor of Global Sport and CEO of Global Sport Institute at Arizona State University. In 2017 he closed out a 30-year career as an endowed full professor at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, where he was also director of the

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Wharton Sports Business Initiative, professor of Africana Studies, and academic director of Wharton's sports-focused executive education programs.

In *The Miseducation of the Student Athlete*, the authors aim to propose a reform and create a paradigm shift in intercollegiate athletics by introducing the "Meaningful Degree Model" and their reform plan, the "Student-Athlete Manifesto." The authors begin by providing the reader with a historical background of intercollegiate athletics and the NCAA, which are extremely important to understanding why they are proposing reforms and a new model. The authors also paint a picture of the moments when the NCAA got it wrong and how the American mindset of capitalism ultimately ruined something pure and simple created for enjoyment. Shropshire and Williams also discuss and highlight different possible models for intercollegiate athletics and the "Sports Power Matrix for College Sports" (p. 63), and how they may play a significant role in the future of the intercollegiate athletics.

Having called on Shaun Harper, a leader in the field of diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging (DEIB), provided helpful insight into the intercollegiate athletics business and its current state. The addition of research from Collin Williams's doctoral dissertation provided an important contribution to the context and shaping of this book. The addition of several first-hand accounts added needed context. In addition, Shropshire employed his Sports Power Matrix for College Sports from his previous book, *Sports Matters: Leadership, Power, and the Quest for Respect in Sports*. These contributions together provide a strong argument for a potential reform change, through their high level of education and research, as well as their understanding of intercollegiate athletics due to their positionality around this topic. This book focuses on many different aspects surrounding the industry of intercollegiate athletics. Some that will be highlighted in this review are the Student Athlete Manifesto (pp. 45-57), Meaningful Degree Model (pp. 33-34), Sports Power Matrix for College Sports (p. 63), and redirecting the conversation from paying student-athletes to improving their education.

Shropshire and Williams introduce their concept for reform in The Student-Athlete Manifesto and discuss the Meaningful Degree Model, which is the model they recommend to bring equity to all student-athletes. This model proposes the separation of revenue and non-revenue sports to create a Super Division for revenue sports that would have them operate under a different set of regulations. This would allow student-athletes to choose between focusing as a full-time student or taking a reduced course load to focus more on athletics, and then being able to utilize a lifetime scholarship option once their pursuit of a professional athletic career comes to an end. Before introducing this model, the authors discuss the issue of institutional inertia in intercollegiate athletics, which is the unwillingness to reform or make changes to the current industrial model. While Shropshire and Williams aim to introduce beneficial reforms, they are aware of the resistance of the industry to make any change because, in the eyes of those in control, this model has always been productive.

Knowing this mindset is held by a majority of those in leadership positions, the authors take the approach of breaking down the historical issues of both the NCAA

and intercollegiate athletics. By doing this, they are able to paint a picture with facts throughout history that support the need for a change and how both the Meaningful Degree Model and Student-Athlete Manifesto can help bring about that needed change. Although most would agree that all universities should provide lifetime scholarships for student-athletes who leave college early for professional opportunities, Shropshire and Williams's case does not address how a separation of non-revenue and revenue sports would be beneficial. Rather, they only acknowledge that this could potentially create an unhealthy division and relationships among athletes due to the difference in how they are viewed being more public than ever. Additionally, it could unintentionally drive intercollegiate athletics towards more of a professional model due to the creation of a super division and athletes within that division being able to choose different paths.

Shropshire and Williams introduce the Sports Power Matrix for College Sports and how it is beneficial to understand it, for meaningful and effective change to take place in intercollegiate athletics. This matrix depicts that the power in college sports is primarily held by the NCAA, university presidents, conference commissioners, and athletic directors. Still, after these groups, student-athletes hold the most power. Today, we see that this is truer than ever, as student-athletes use their power to protest racial injustice, create mental health programs, advocate for more career preparation opportunities, and own the rights to Name, Image, and Likeness. The most important part of this section is the identification of what and who the NCAA genuinely are. The authors emphasize that although the NCAA is the face of intercollegiate athletics, they simply enforce the rules and regulations that are created by the member institutions – the universities – themselves. While I acknowledge that this statement is true, I do believe that there should be even greater emphasis placed on the NCAA due to their being the enforcing and governing voice of intercollegiate athletics. Additionally, I think it would have been beneficial to go more in-depth with how there is an opportunity for student-athletes, athletic directors, conference commissioners, and the NCAA to come together and come up with the best model for intercollegiate athletics.

Throughout the book, the main goal of Shropshire and Williams is the redirection of the conversation from paying student-athletes to first better educating them. "... and we contend education is the best compensation" (p. xiii). This statement was made at the book's opening, and I believe that it set the stage for the main issue they would be focused on in intercollegiate athletics. Although I agree that focusing on education equity in intercollegiate athletics is essential to properly reforming the industry, I have to disagree with this notion that the authors and many around the world of intercollegiate athletics have that free education should be enough compensation or the only compensation that matters. What makes that line of thinking hard to fully accept is, unlike regular students who are awarded full scholarships and have to keep a certain GPA and stay out of trouble, student-athletes must attend mandatory workouts, meetings, and practice, while also staying academically eligible. Also, regular students may hold jobs and have plenty of opportunities to partake in internship experiences, while student-athletes have difficulty being able to do any of those things. There are just too many differences in the lives and requirements of student-athletes, non-revenue or not, compared to

regular students. Therein one finds a plethora of reasons why education cannot be the only compensation that matters. It should be the compensation that matters the most for student-athletes, and I believe that is ultimately what the authors are wish to accomplish with this book, but it cannot be the only one.

As both an athletic administration professional and a former collegiate and professional athlete, I recommend this book for all stakeholders in the industry of intercollegiate athletics. The proposed models and reforms the authors offer may not be the answer to providing a better model for intercollegiate athletics, but they can be the flame that ignites the conversation about getting away from institutional inertia and bringing about changes that would benefit all student-athletes. Lastly, as the interim NIL policy has been put into place and talks about student-athlete employment continue to grow, I believe that now more than ever is the time to discuss the future of intercollegiate athletics and work toward finding the model that best suits student-athletes and can be implemented and rooted in a manner that allows student-athletes to thrive academically and athletically.

## References

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## About the Reviewer

Rashard Fant is currently the Assistant Athletics Director for Student-Athlete Development/DEIB at George Washington University. His responsibilities include: Developing leadership and career programming/initiatives for student-athletes, overseeing all departmental community engagement efforts, and leading all DEIB efforts for both student-athletes and staff, while supporting the culture and development of all staff and coaches. Rashard was born and raised in Atlanta, Georgia. He received his B.S. in public management in 2016 and his M.P.A. in public policy analysis in 2019 from Indiana University, where he was also a member of the university's football program. Rashard went on to play professional football for the Chicago Bears from 2018 to 2020, before working in collegiate athletics in the area of student-athlete development and support. He is currently a 4<sup>th</sup> year Ph.D. candidate in the Education Policy & Leadership program at Southern Methodist University.



  
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