DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 376 384 CG 025 734

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TITLE

The Implementation of an Academic Advising Program To

Prepare the High School Student Athlete for

College.

PUB DATE

Feb 94

NOTE

67p.; Master's Practicum, Nova Southeastern

University. Appendix B contains broken print and will

not reproduce well.

PUB TYPE

Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE

MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS

*Achievement Gains; Adolescents; *Athletes; College Entrance Examinations; *College Preparation; Course Selection (Students); *Educational Counseling; Grades (Scholastic); Higher Education; High Schools; *High

School Students; *Study Skills

ABSTRACT

This program was developed and implemented to help prepare the members of a high school football team for the academic expectations of college admission. The program had three goals: (1) to insure that student athletes took proper college preparatory classes during high school; (2) to provide evaluation and tutoring for the students; and (3) to insure that student athletes were prepared for the SAT. First, an appropriate academic program for each member of the team was created, through a series of small group and one-on-one meetings between the student athletes and the school counselor, with NCAA (National Collegiate Athletic Association) admissions criteria used as the foundation. Second, an early morning study hall was implemented for all athletes with a grade point average below 2.5, with a teacher and students present to provide tutoring with the goal of raising the average GPA to 2.5; the goal was surpassed with a team average GPA of 2.8. Third, junior and senior athletes attended a 9-week SAT preparatory class. Fourth, the students' academic progress was monitored each week through the use of forms completed by their teachers. Only one player was lost to inadequate grades at the end of the first marking period. Teachers reported that the student athletes as a group improved their academic and social skills during the 9-week implementation. In summary, the program's major objectives were met with dramatic improvement in the area of academic achievement. Includes 5 appendixes providing information and sample forms on NCAA requirements, individual transcript evaluation, weekly progress report, and student athlete contract. Contains 21 references. (CC)



by

Brent Goldman

A Practicum Report

submitted to the Faculty of the Center for the Advancement of Education of Nova Southeastern University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science

The abstract of this report may be placed in a National Database System for reference

February/1994

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THE IMPLEMENTATION OF AN ACADEMIC ADVISING PROGRAM TO PREPARE THE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ATHLETE FOR COLLEGE

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Abstract

The Implementation of an Academic Advising Program to Prepare the High School Student Athlete for College.

Goldman, Brent. 1994 Practicum Report: Nova Southeastern University, Abraham S. Fischler Center for the Advancement of Education.

Descriptors: Student Athletes/Academic Tutoring/Peer Tutoring/Scholastic Aptitude Test/High School Athletes/Athletes Education/Proposition 48/At Risk Students/College Athletics

This program was developed and implemented to help prepare the members of a high school football team for the academic expectations for college admission. The program had four major goals. One goal focused on the creation of an appropriate academic program for each member of the team. This goal was met through a series of small group and one-on-one meetings between the student athletes and the school counselor. NCAA admissions criteria were used as the foundation for each academic plan. The second goal utilized an early morning study hall as the vehicle to reach the goal of increasing the student athletes' average grade point average from 2.3 to 2.5; the goal was surpassed with a team average G.P.A. of 2.8. The strategy to reach the third goal, increase the test taking skills of the student athletes, was met through a nine week SAT preparatory class. Students' academic progress was monitored each week through the use of a form completed by the student athletes' teachers. One hundred percent of these forms were completed. Forty two of the forty three student athletes met the academic requirements after the first report card. Teachers reported that the student athletes, as a group, improved their academic and social skills during the nine week implementation. In summary, the program's major objectives were met with the most dramatic improvement in the area of academic achievement.



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Chapter I

Purpose

The myth that the only job of the high school football coach is to win games is over. A coach's winning percentage is no longer the measuring tool to determine the efficacy of the coach. The 1990's coach has to be the student athlete's father, guidance counselor, and frequently best friend. A large majority of high school students live in single parent homes with no real father figure. The coach has inherited this job by default. As a result, the coach's job does not end with "x's" and "o's."

In 1994, the number one duty of the high school football coach is to prepare his student athletes for college. In order to comply with N.C.A.A. regulations, the coach has to develop a complete four year academic plan for his players. This plan includes placing all football players on a four year college preparatory curriculum (unless the student is a slow learner). The second step is a tutoring system that ensures that the student athlete keeps an acceptable Grade Point Average. The final step of this academic tree is proper S.A.T. preparation.

The writer chose this topic because of the dire need to solve this problem in his roles as high school teacher and coach. This is the writer's third year at



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this school. He has both been a teacher and a football coach during this time period.

The school that was studied is in an urban high school in the Southeastern United States. The school has 1745 students in grades 9-12; 1378 of the students are White and 367 of the students are African American (Academic Profile; 1992.) The school being studied is unique in the fact that it is a public school that attracts students from all over the county. The school has a solid reputation for being one of the finest schools in the county. Students must be placed on a waiting list in order to attend this school. Many parents place their children on this list the day their children are born. This school is popular with African Americans because they view the school as an opportunity to give their children a better education than the education provided in their neighborhood school. Because this is not a neighborhood school, a large percentage of the student population is bussed in. Instead of being on a normal high school schedule of 7:30-3:00, the school being studied is on a bell schedule of 9:30-4:30.

The school being studied is very academically oriented. Competition among students for grades is high. Being placed into Honors or Advanced Placement classes is considered the norm for many students. Membership in the National Honor Society is high. The debate and academic teams are ranked in the state. The above reasons help explain most of the teachers' attitudes in the



school. A majority of the teachers frown upon the student athletes in the school because they perceive them to be trouble makers and low achievers in the classroom. The writer felt that by emphasizing academics more to his football players, the teachers in the school would be more supportive to the players.

A typical school day for a player on the writer's football team is arduous. Most of the players are bussed to school. For some, this could mean up to an hour bus ride each morning. School ends at 4:30. Football practice begins promptly at 4:45 and lasts until 7:00 p.m. There is no activity bus at the school which means many of the players have to take the public bus home or wait for their parents to get off work. For many of the players it is 10:00 p.m. by the time they have finished dinner. It is extremely difficult for these student athletes to motivate themselves to finish their homework at this time. The student athlete at this school must be put on a structured program to make him as much of a student as an athlete.

During the writer's two years of coaching and teaching, he has observed a disturbing trend with the football team. Between 1991 and 1992 seasons, the football team has compiled a 13-7 record on the playing field. The 1991 team went 6-4. This particular squad had a first team All County defensive lineman. Unfortunately, this student athlete was inadequately prepared for college. He had a low S.A.T score and was not following the necessary college preparatory



curriculum. The 1992 season was one of the most successful in the school's thirty year history; the team finished 7-3. Three players on that team were selected first team All County. These three were also given All State Flonors (Miami Herald, 1992). Although these players excelled on the playing field, they were behind in the classroom. One of these players earned a Division I scholarship. He qualified for the scholarship by barely attaining the minimum S.A.T. score of 700. His 2.0 Grade Point Average just met the N.C.A.A. requirements. The other two stars of the team did not earn a Division I scholarship. Both of these players are capable of playing Division I football, but their academic deficiencies prevented them from competing.

Upon first glance, the outsider would consider this a first rate program. This program would be first rate if the football players' academic success measured up with their success on the playing field. The writer feels that this lack of balance between athletic success and academic success is an injustice to the student athletes who are sacrificing on the playing field. In today's age, it is the high school football coach's responsibility to get the same sacrifice in the classroom that the student athlete gives on the playing field. This writer's task was to develop a program which would enable each student athlete to reach strong levels of performance in both academics and athletics.



Problem Statement

The problem that the writer experienced is poor academic performance by his high school football players. The poor performance in the classroom war hindering the student athletes as they attempted to qualify for athletic scholarships and gain acceptance into college. This problem was further enhanced when the academic performance of the football team was compared to the entire student body.

The demographics of the high school being studied can be compared to most middle class high schools in the United States. The school has 1745 students in grades 9-12; 1378 of the students are White and 367 of the students are African American. The average Grade Point Average in the school in 1992 was 2.8. The average S.A.T. score for the class of 1992 was 934 (Academic Profile, 1992).

The varsity football team at the writer's high school had 44 players for the 1992 season. Thirty of these players were African American and the other 14 were White. The average Grade Point Average of the 1992 team was 2.3. The 1993 varsity football team had 53 players. Twenty eight of these players were African American and the remaining twenty five players were White. Their average Grade Point Average for the last nine weeks of the 1993 school year was 2.3. Five of these players had to attend summer school in order to be eligible for



the 1993 season. The average S.A.T. score for seniors on the 1992 team was 697. Six of the seniors on the team were enrolled in General Math Courses. Twenty of the forty-four players on the 1992 team were enrolled in General Math Courses. Twenty-one members of the 1993 team were enrolled in General Math classes (Transcript Analysis by School Counselors, 1993).

The football team, when compared to the rest of the student body, was behind academically. The senior players placed their scholarship possibilities in danger because their S.A.T. average of 697 had them below NCAA requirements. NCAA Bylaw 14-3, which is commonly known as Proposition 48, requires that incoming university freshman athletes have a Grade Point Average of 2.0 in their core high school classes and a S.A.T. score of 700. Effective August 1, 1995 the requirements will be raised. A student athlete will need a 2.5 Grade Point Average in his core classes along with a 700 on his S.A.T. A sliding scale will be implemented; if a student has a 2.0 Grade Point Average in their core classes then a score of 900 will be needed on the S.A.T. to be eligible for a scholarship and to play in his freshman year (NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete, 1992-93).

The large percentage of football players who were enrolled in General Math courses were put at a disadvantage in the math portion of the S.A.T. The math section of the S.A.T. covers algebra and geometry. By not taking these two



math courses, the high school student athlete will be at a disadvantage while taking the S.A.T. Effective August 1, 1996, course requirements for Division I will include four years of English, and the two year math requirement will include one year of algebra and one year of geometry (NCAA Initial Eligibility Clearinghouse, 1993).

The causes of this problem come from all realms of society. The first cause deals with a poor advising system for the student athlete. When youngsters enter high school, they are fourteen years old. They are very much children even though some of them look like adults. Most of these freshmen are not thinking about their futures. They are generally thinking about having a good time. Tyrus McCloud, a prep football star who earned a football scholarship to the University of Louisville was your typical freshman. "Back then I did not care about school," McCloud said. "I was doing dumb things. Fighting, stealing, not studying. Just your typical idiot freshman" (Southwest Plus, Sun Sentinel, p. 43). Freshmen need special guidance. Unfortunately, they are not receiving this. Unless the high school assigns a guidance counselor for its athletic teams, the student athletes' needs will be neglected. Guidance counselors have too many students to worry about. Because of this lack of guidance, the student athlete is unaware of the classes required for college. Parents need to be properly informed on what classes their children need, how to arrange for tutoring, how to prepare



for the S.A.T., and the entire financial aid process.

The second cause of this problem was that a 1.5 Grade Point Average is needed to participate in athletics in the writer's county. The county was expecting the minimum from its student athletes and that is exactly what they were getting. The issue of expecting the minimum from our student athletes disturbed the former tennis great, Arthur Ashe. He could not believe that the NCAA requirements of a 700 on the S.A.T. to receive athletic scholarships was deemed unfair by numerous coaches and educators. "They had to set a level that, even black athletes could pass, unquote. That stung more. That was one of the most disturbing things that I have heard in my entire life. I know black kids are just as smart as anyone else and if you expect more you will get it. Black educators were incensed at the proposal. I was incensed that they were incensed. because they said that the number was going to cut black athletic opportunities. They should have complained that the number was not higher" (Sports Illustrated, p. 25). One of the writer's major goals was not to accept the minimum from his student athletes. A 1.5 Grade Point Average in classes such as weightlifting, art, and woodshop was not going to cut it. A 2.5 Grade Point Average in classes such as algebra, English, history, and biology is what is needed.

The writer's goal included a three part process. The first step in solving



this problem was ensuring that the student athletes take proper college preparatory classes during their four years of high school. This four year plan was to be implemented by the high school guidance counselor who worked closely with the coaches. The second step in the program was evaluation and tutoring. Weekly grade checks by the coaches ensured that the athletes were being given help in subjects that were giving them problems. The final step in the program was S.A.T. preparation. This was accomplished by having an English teacher at the school work with the football players on vocabulary improvement and test taking strategy.

The discrepancy in the writer's problem was between the football team and the rest of the student body. The average Grade Point Average of the 1992 student body was 2.8. The average S.A.T. of the upperclassmen in the entire high school was 938. The 1992 football team's average Grade Point Average was 2.3. The average S.A.T. of the senior football players was 697 (Academic Profile, 1992-93). The writer established outcomes for this practicum which closed the gap in the discrepancy between the current performance and the desired performance.



Outcome Objectives

Improving academic performance by the football players at the writer's high school will be accomplished if the following objectives were met.

- 1. All football players will meet with the guidance counselor who is working with the team during the first few days of summer football camp. Each football player's schedule will be adjusted to match NCAA guidelines for college admissions in 1996. A comparison will be made between the student-athletes' original schedules and their revised schedules using the NCAA guidelines as the success criteria.
- 2. All players must have weekly progress reports filled out by all of their teachers. These progress reports must be signed by the players' parents each week. Players who do not get their progress reports signed will not be allowed to play in that week's game. At least 95% of the progress reports will be completed each week.
- 3. All football players must attend study hall twice a week during the season. Except for school absences, football players will have 100% attendance at the study hall sessions.
- 4. All upperclassmen on the football team must attend S.A.T. prep courses twice a week. The school's average S.A.T. was 938; the



- senior football players averaged 697. The goal will be to close this gap to a 725 average for the football players.
- 5. The average Grade Point Average for the school was 2.8; the football players' G.P.A. was 2.3. The goal will be to close this gap to a 2.5 G.P.A. for the football players.



Chapter II

Research and Solution Strategy

In order to establish solution strategies for the problem of poor academic performance of the football players in the writer's high school, it was imperative to research the origins of the problem and discover what others have done to solve similar problems.

The problems of the student athlete and poor academic performance can be traced to early experiences in one's life. When a child first begins to excel in athletics, adults and the child's peers begin to place the youngster on a pedestal. The emphasis that athletics have on our society is seen by children as young as six years old. Lanning and Toye believe that athletes develop a sense of entitlement which leads to their failures in the classroom (Lanning and Toye, p. 62). The term "entitlement" can be defined as "that which I deserve by the nature of who I am." According to Lanning and Toye, the attitude of entitlement grows in young athletes and they soon believe they deserve special treatment for whom they are. This treatment might include teachers giving undeserved grades, coaches providing cars and monetary loans, and being given the opportunity to cheat on the S.A.T.





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O'Bryant believes that student and adult perceptions lead to the problems that student athletes have (Kirk, p. 14). She believes youngsters who begin competing in sports at the tender ages of five or six are damaged developmentally. These children are running, catching, and winning T-ball championships before they have even the slightest concept for the direction of their lives. By the time these children are teenagers, they may perceive themselves as exceptional whether they are or not.

The problem that African American student athletes have had adjusting to higher education relates to the problem identified by O'Bryant. Because of the large numbers of Black players on the writer's football team, it is important to examine the origins of their problem. The myth that Black athletes enhance their social mobility through sports is examined by Wyatt Kirk (Kirk, p. 102). This is a dangerous phenomenon, according to Kirk. By placing such a high value on athletics as the way out of poverty, many Black Americans have placed less value on their education. A paper presented at the annual National Conference of the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport addressed the myths and realities of upward mobility. The paper points out that athletic success for the Black male leads to social prestige, recognition, and status. College scholarships are awarded to the most gifted of these athletes. Unfortunately, over 75% of Black athletes playing NCAA Division I football never graduate and fewer than



1% sign a professional contract (Kirk, p. 102). Kirk believes it is the job of the academic institution to provide advising for the Black athlete. By investigating the Black student athletes' academic history, study habits, abilities, and attitudes, the academic advisor can help the Black student athlete succeed (Kirk, p. 105).

A study completed in 1982 by Purdy, Eitzen, and Hufnagel entitled, "Are Athletes also Students? The Educational Attainment of College Athletes," is very similar to this writer's study. It is interesting to compare the similarities between these two studies. The Purdy study was completed by the athletic department at Colorado State University. The writers were trying to prove that the student athletes at Colorado State University were deficient academically when compared to the rest of the student body. The average high school Grade Point Average for athletes was 2.9, while the average high school Grade Point Average for the rest of the student body it was 3.3 (Purdy, 1982). The average S.A.T. score for incoming athletes was 940, while for the rest of the student body it was 1024. An even more alarming statistic of the Colorado State study was that the average S.A.T. score for Black athletes was 753, while for White athletes the average score was 965 (Purdy, 1982). The above statistics are similar to this writer's statistics on the players on his high school football team. The Colorado State study has helped to establish the importance of an academic support system for high school athletes. Only 3% of the athletes admitted to Colorado State



University with a Grade Point Average under a 2.5 graduated from the university. Only 18% of those who scored under a 700 on their S.A.T. graduated from the university (Purdue, 1989). The findings of this study prove that more needs to be done on the high school level to prepare student athletes for college. Researching programs on counseling the student athlete will help the writer raise the academic achievement of his high school's student athletes.

A survey given to high school student athletes helps to prove why it is important to properly advise the high school student athlete. In this survey, a staggering 70% of high school student athletes expressed the belief that they would continue their athletic careers as collegians and professionals (Goldberg, 1991). This skewed reasoning by the high school student athletes leads to the necessity of proper advisement by coaches, counselors, and parents.

Three programs, the Academic Support Program at the University of Michigan, the PASS Program from Mill Valley, California, and the Student Services for Athletes program are model programs designed to enhance the academic proficiency of student athletes.

The University of Michigan Academic Support Program is one that can be easily adapted to the high school situation. The University of Michigan is a school that has a solid reputation in both athletics and academics. Walter and Smith wrote an article examining the academic support system for football players



at the University of Michigan. Between 1981-1986, more than 100 football players were involved in the Academic Support Program at the University of Michigan. Of these 100 student athletes, only two have failed out of school (Walter and Smith, 1986). When freshman football players first enter the university, they take a six week study skills class. This prepares students for the proper way of studying at the university level. The most important aspect of Michigan's Academic Support Program is its mandatory study hall. This study hall is for all freshman football players. It meets Sunday through Thursday for two hours each night. Center staff are on hand for consultation on academic problems that might arise (Walter and Smith, 1986). An important aspect of the Michigan study hall is an assignment of a coach to monitor the study hall. By having a coach in the study hall, the academically at-risk player can see that the coach cares about the team's performance in the classroom. Michigan is that everyone is held accountable. "If the athlete fails in the classroom so does the coach" (Walter and Smith, p. 43).

The PASS Program founded by Joel and Susan Kirsch is another successful program that will help to enhance the athlete's academic performance. The PASS Program stands for Promoting Achievement in School through Sports. This is a project of the American Sports Institute in Mill Valley, California. The goal of the program is to help the athletes attain greater academic success, and



at the same time improve their performance on the field (Griffen, 1992). By also placing emphasis on athletic improvement, the PASS Program can keep the student athletes interested in the program.

The PASS curriculum has three major parts. The first part is to stress the student self concept and personal philosophy on life. This helps the student athlete create a vision for academic and athletic success. The second part of the program is to learn Fundamentals of Athletic Mastery (FAMS). The FAMS program focuses on concentration, balance, power, rhythm, flexibility, attitude, and instinct. These basic fundamentals are important both in the classroom and on the playing field. Students learn these FAMS through reading and discussing articles, and they experience the FAMS in a series of physical movement activities. The third element in the PASS Program is the personalized projects. Each student designs a personal academic and athletic project aimed at improving school and athletic performance. For example, a student might write out a plan with goals to have a "B" average and improve their 40 yard dash time (Griffen, 1992). PASS provides an alternative to the traditional tutor and rules centered approaches to improving athletes' academic performance. Instead, PASS focuses on creating personal responsibility, initiative, and effectiveness in athletes (Griffen, 1992).



The Student Services for Athletes is a comprehensive program set up in order to provide counseling for the special needs of the student athlete. The Student Services for Athletes is a program that believes the needs of the student athlete are special. Instead of focusing on one specific challenge facing the student athlete, the Student Services for Athletes favors a more comprehensive approach. This program is built along four major areas, 1) academic monitoring, 2) consultation services with the university community, 3) outreach through workshops and special programs and 4) personal counseling (Jordan and Denson, 1990).

The academic monitoring aspect of the Student Services for Athletes (SSA) does not include formal advisement or study halls. Academic monitoring ensures that student athletes are pre-registered for at least a minimum full time course load, are performing in satisfactory levels in their courses, and are making progress towards a degree (Jordan and Denson, 1990).

In the second part of the program, the SSA tries to establish a positive relationship with the faculty at the school. It is important for faculty to have a positive outlook on student athletes. Faculty members inform the staff of the SSA on both the failures and successes of the student athletes in the classroom (Jordan and Denson, 1990).



The third part of the SSA program is a series of workshops to help the student athlete cope with problems that they will encounter during their academic career. These workshops include programs on the transition from high school to college, career development, time management, and study skills. The SSA also sponsors an academic orientation at the beginning of each semester where athletes will learn about SSA services, eligibility requirements, and school rules (Jordan and Denson, 1990).

Finally, a personal counseling program is included in the SSA program. Student athletes are encouraged to consult with a member of the SSA staff to voice concerns that might not be comfortably addressed with teammates or coaches. These meetings between the student athlete and the SSA staff are confidential (Jordan and Denson, 1990). This service provides the student athlete a way to solve a problem that might be inhibiting his performance in the classroom and on the playing field.

Recent studies on the impact of peer tutoring and cross age tutoring have shown that students can actually learn while they are teaching another member of their peer group. Two alternative means of remediation for the student athlete are peer tutoring and cross age tutoring. The major benefit of these two strategies is that the tutor is learning as much or more than the student being tutored (Fantuzzo, 1989). In the traditional tutor/student relationship, the person



being tutored is not being an active learner. Being tutored by a member of their peer group will enhance the motivation of the students being tutored (Fantuzzo, 1989). Fantuzzo, Riggio, Connelly, and Dimeff completed a study in 1989 on the benefits of peer tutoring. Their program was called reciprocal peer tutoring. This procedure required students to assume both the tutor and the student role as they assist each other throughout the semester. The researchers studied undergraduates at California State University at Fullerton. Students were either paired in a structured or unstructured situation. The findings of this study lend support to peer tutoring. Students in a structured reciprocal peer tutoring setting evidenced both higher cognitive gains and lower psychosocial distress (Fantuzzo, 1989). Peer tutoring would work in this writer's situation. The writer could match his top notch students with those who are struggling in certain subjects. This should be especially successful in courses such as mathematics. Cross age tutoring between student athletes and at-risk children is a successful way to improve academic motivation.

Pairing student athletes with at-risk children in a tutoring situation would be beneficial. This program gives the student athletes an opportunity to help youngsters who have similar backgrounds as the student athletes. This feeling of empathy will give the student athletes an added boost of self-esteem. The cross age tutoring program was instituted by Connie Juel at the University of Texas.



In January of 1990, twenty student athletes at the University of Texas began tutoring twenty children at Campbell Elementary School. Juel believed if you really want to learn something then teach it (Juel, 1991). Each tutor worked with one child for 45 minutes, twice a week. As a general rule, the tutors were encouraged to plan three or four different activities during this time period (Juel, 1991). The student athlete was taught the importance of being organized and prepared for each session. This lesson could then be transferred to the student athlete's own academic preparation. This cross age tutoring program was a complete success. Children's test scores were raised and so was their confidence. At the same time, student athletes learned effective teaching strategies that would benefit their own education. The cross age tutoring program can be adapted to a high school situation. Elementary school children would enjoy having high school football players tutor them.

Programs such as the University of Michigan's Academic Support Program, PASS Student Services for Athletes, Peer tutoring, and cross age tutoring are all effective means of improving the academic performance of the student athlete.

Unfortunately, if the student athlete does not score a 700 on the Scholastic Aptitude Test, he will not be eligible for a scholarship or be able to compete during his freshmen year of college (NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student



Athlete, 1993-94). Many experts consider a 700 on the S.A.T. a rather inept score. There are others who feel this test is biased, especially to African Americans. William Sedlacek, in his study on the academic success of student athletes using the S.A.T. concurred that the S.A.T. has correlated well with freshman grades for White students, but have lower correlations for non-White and non-traditional students (Sedlacek and Gaston, 1992). He believes that S.A.T. scores should not be used in predicting the academic success of student athletes. The NCAA does not seem to be listening. Instead of lowering the minimum S.A.T. score of 700 or eliminating the use of the test, the NCAA is again raising its requirements. By August, 1995, a new sliding scale will be implemented. If a student athlete has a core G.P.A. of 2.0, they will need a 900 on their S.A.T. (NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete, 1993-94).

With the NCAA raising its standards, it is up to the high schools to prepare their student athletes for the S.A.T. A major hurdle in raising test scores is having student athletes take both algebra and geometry. Without knowledge of these two courses, the math section of the S.A.T. is almost impossible. Much of this problem will be alleviated in August, 1996, when the NCAA mandates that all student athletes take both algebra and geometry (Clearinghouse, 1993). Faculty support and tutoring services are needed in the high schools if student athletes are to be successful in these two classes.



S.A.T. classes must be established at high schools for use by the schools' athletes. These classes can be useful in teaching test taking skills and vocabulary improvement. An example of a successful S.A.T. class for student athletes has taken place at Cooper City High School in Cooper City, Florida. This class is taught by the head football coach who happens to also be a S.A.T. tutor. This class is mandatory for all football players. It takes place once a week during the off-season. The instructor uses a computer which illuminates onto a large screen in the classroom. The computer disc includes practice sections for the S.A.T. The football players complete each section individually. When the students complete the section, the instructor reviews each question. If there is a word in the question that anyone in the class does not know, the entire class is encouraged to look up that word in the dictionary. The word and the definition are added to a new word sheet in the student's notebook. This new word sheet will enhance the student athlete's vocabulary. This class meets for about an hour. This is effective because students can concentrate for this period of time (Schneider, 1993). S.A.T. classes such as the one used at Cooper City High School are easily adaptable to all high school situations.

Perhaps the last piece of the puzzle in helping student athletes improve their academics is having support from professional sports stars. A program by N.B.A. all-star Mitch Richmond is an example of how pro athletes can be



academic role models.

In an age when pro athletes claim they are not role models, there are a few exceptions. One of these is N.B.A. all-star Mitch Richmond. In 1992, Richmond founded a program called "Solid as a Rock" for student athletes in his hometown of Broward County, Florida. This program is for children ages 10-17 living in Broward County with at least a 2.75 Grade Point Average. When applying, applicants must include a copy of their most recent report card and an essay explaining why excellence in education is important to an athlete. Richmond's program includes career awareness workshops, S.A.T. classes, and symposiums on how to apply to colleges (Cash, 1993). Richmond's message to the club's members is simple. Use academics as your way out, not athletics. Programs such as "Solid as a Rock" by high profile athletes can inspire young student athletes to excel in academics.

Based on the works of the above sources, and creative ideas by the writer, a solution to the problem of poor academic performance by high school football players was implemented. The strategy for this practicum included the formation of a comprehensive academic support program for the football players at the writer's high school.

The first step of the program involved a school guidance counselor who has volunteered his services to the football team. During summer practice in



August, the school counselor met with all team members. These sessions were held with small groups of five players. In these meetings, the counselor explained to the student athletes NCAA requirements, and provided them with a four year academic plan which included the classes they should take before they graduate. Before the session began, the counselor had a meeting with all team parents explaining to them the academic issues which were shared with their children.

The second part of the program included academic monitoring. One component was the completion of weekly progress reports that each player must have signed by all of his teachers. A mandatory study hall was set up for all players on the team. This study hall took place two days a week during the season. Varsity players attended study hall two mornings a week from 8:15-9:15. Study hall sessions were monitored by coaches. All students who needed a tutor were provided one. The tutors were either students from the school's National Honor Society or academically talented students from the team.

The final part of this academic program included S.A.T. preparation.

Two mornings a week an English teacher from the school taught an S.A.T. prep

course to the players. In this class, student athletes learned test taking

strategies and vocabulary formation. This class was monitored by a coach.



This writer's academic support program led to academic improvement by his football players. The essence of this plan is for coaches to begin to emphasize academics as well as athletes. If this is accomplished, the student athletes' academic performance will improve.



Chapter III

Methodology

The success of this practicum depended on the support of the faculty and staff at the writer's high school. Without their support, the academic advising program would have never been implemented. Other than the writer, the most important people in the implementation of the academic support program were the head football coach, the school guidance counselor, the strength and conditioning coach, the English teacher, and the math teacher.

The head football coach's involvement was vital to the success of the program. This is his team. If he was not interested in improving the academic proficiency of his football players, the players' behaviors would have matched the expectations of the coach. The head coach was constantly stressing the importance of grades throughout the season. In every meeting and at every practice he made sure to mention something about academics. Another role the head coach played in the academic support was one of disciplinarian. He personally made sure that only players who attended study hall, S.A.T. class, and returned progress reports were allowed to participate in the football games. The head coach provided negative consequences for players who were misbehaving



in class. He felt if players were misbehaving they were obviously not paying attention to their school work.

We are fortunate to have a guidance counselor on campus who genuinely cares about helping student athletes. He volunteered his services and became an important part of the academic support team. His contribution began in August during our three-a-day practices. During breaks in practice, he had small group meetings which included every one of our varsity players. In these meetings, he evaluated each player's transcript. These evaluations included: what courses were needed for high school graduation; what courses were needed for an athletic scholarship according to NCAA requirements; and, recommendations on whether or not the student athlete should be placed in study hall (See Appendices A and B). These meetings were successful because they enabled the football players to understand that both academics and athletics were important to the football staff.

The second role the guidance counselor played was one of support. Being an African American, he related well to our African American players. He was a positive role model for them. The football staff made the guidance counselor an honorary coach. He was present at most of our practices and he stood on the sidelines at the games. This involvement helped the counselor to understand how hard the players worked on the playing field. At the same time the players saw that the coaches cared about their well being as athletes and students.



The role of the team's strength and conditioning coach was a key to the success of the academic support program. His role was one of disciplinarian. His job was to carry out the negative consequences with the players who were not following certain aspects of the program. The football players respected him. They would rather spend an hour in study hall than do conditioning drills with him after practice. This concern to avoid the negative consequences in combination with the positive consequences improved attendance in the S.A.T. class and study hall, and helped the players remember to turn in their weekly progress reports.

The principal was kind enough to pay an English teacher at the school to teach the S.A.T. class to the football team. The English teacher is an experienced S.A.T. teacher. She also has experience working with football teams at other schools. Her major strength was her ability to relate to the football players.

At the school's first faculty meeting in August, the writer asked other teachers to volunteer their services as tutors for the team's study hall. The team was fortunate that a male math teacher volunteered. He attended study hall two mornings a week to provide his services. He helped the football players with their homework and other math related problems. The football staff's evaluation of the weekly progress reports showed that math was the subject that was giving



the players the most difficulty. The involvement of this math teacher had a significant impact on many of our players' grades.

The role of the writer in the implementation of this program was of facilitator and manager. He was present at all of the guidance counselor's small group meetings. He ran the study hall where he took attendance and provided the tutors. He attended every S.A.T. class and made sure the players behaved and paid attention. The writer also made sure the football players were provided with weekly progress reports to be filled out by their teachers.

The writer's academic support program for his football team included:

- 1. guidance counselor involvement
- 2. study hall
- 3. S.A.T. class
- 4. monitoring of progress reports

The first step in this program was the involvement of the guidance counselor. Much of this aspect of the program was already discussed while describing the guidance counselor. The writer divided the fifty-three players on the team into eight groups of six and one group of five. Each group met with the counselor for 35 minutes. These meetings took place over the course of three and a half days during breaks in the summer practice. In these group meetings, each player was given a copy of his transcript with a counselor recommendation



written on it. The players were encouraged to show the copy of the transcript to their parents and then return it the next day to the head coach. The head coach placed the transcript in each player's individual folder. These folders will be kept on the player as long as the player is with the program.

The guidance counselor also provided each player with a copy of the "1993-1994 NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete." The counselor reviewed for each group what the present NCAA requirements were and how they were going to change in the future.

The second part of the academic support program was a study hall. This study hall was for all players whose cumulative grade point average was below a 2.5. The study hall met Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 8:15-9:15 for nine weeks. The study hall was monitored by the writer and it met in the writer's classroom. Twenty one of the fifty three players on the team were required to attend study hall.

The rules presented to the players before the first session were straight forward. Each member was given until 8:25 A.M. to show up or he was marked absent. Absent players, without a viable excuse, were assigned extra conditioning after practice. Players were required to bring an hour's worth of work with them. If they were reading the newspaper or sleeping they were asked to leave the study hall. Those players also were assigned to extra conditioning after



practice. A math teacher was present at all sessions to provide tutoring. A National Honor Society student was also a regular tutor who helped with the tutoring of the players. The major purpose of study hall was to give the football players an added opportunity to finish their homework and study for upcoming tests. This study hall also demonstrated to the athletes that with proper time management they can be successful students.

The S.A.T. class met on Monday and Wednesday mornings from 8:15-9:15 in the classroom of the English teacher who was teaching the class. It was mandatory for all juniors and seniors on the team to attend this class. Forty-one players attended this class. The rules for this class were the same as study hall. Players who were not doing what they were supposed to do were asked to leave. Negative student behavior was a rare occurrence. Most of the players were well behaved and attentive during these sessions. The writer monitored each session to take attendance and to ensure that everything was going smoothly.

This S.A.T. class was geared to improve the players' vocabulary and test taking skills. Each session began with the learning of ten new words. The teacher grouped these words into themes in order to make them easier to learn. For example, one session the theme was "talkative" words such as "verbose" and "gregarious."



After reviewing these new words, the players were given practice sections of the S.A.T. These sections were timed in order to give the players experience with having a time limit. When completed, the teacher reviewed each answer. This S.A.T. class helped the football players prepare for a test that will help determine their futures.

The final part of the academic support program was academic monitoring by the coaches and the guidance counselor. This monitoring centered around weekly progress reports (See Appendix C). All fifty-three players were required to have weekly progress reports filled out by all of their teachers. Teachers were encouraged to write down the player's current grade, recent test scores, and class behavior. Progress reports were passed out to the players after practice two days before a game. The players had to return their progress reports before the next practice. Those players who were negligent in turning in their progress reports by game time were not allowed to play in the game. This exclusion from a game never happened because participation in the game was such a strong reinforcement for the players.

Each week the progress reports were evaluated by the writer and the head coach. The players with grade problems were spoken to. If these problems continued, a conference with the teacher was scheduled in order to see how we could solve the problem. The players with behavior problems were assigned to



extra conditioning after practice.

The implementation of this practicum went smoothly. The strategies used led to results which, in most cases, met or surpassed the criteria established for each goal. The results will be discussed in Chapter IV.



Chapter IV

Results

As stated in the outcome objectives, the 1992 football season for the writer's team was successful on the field, but a failure in the classroom. That particular team finished 7-3. The problems with that team had to do with academics. The 1992 team's average G.P.A. was 2.3. This was well below the school's average of 2.8. The G.P.A. for the 1992 football team also fell below the new NCAA requirements of a 2.5 G.P.A. The upperclassmen on the 1992 team had an average S.A.T. score of 697. This score fell below the NCAA requirements of a 700 to obtain an athletic scholarship. The football players' S.A.T. scores also fell well below the school's average of 938. The poor academic results were not completely the fault of the individual players. Much of the blame must go to their coaches who did not pay adequate attention to the academic side of the students' development.

The 1993 team was more successful than its predecessor. This particular team finished 9-3 and was ranked number sixteen in the state. The players on the 1993 team also showed a marked improvement in their academic achievement. This improvement was a result of hard work and dedication by both the coaches



and the players to improve not only on the field, but also in the classroom.

The results of this practicum were measured through examining each component of the writer's academic support program. The writer will explain why certain parts of his program worked, and why some parts did not. Attendance data in study hall and the S.A.T. class will be presented in order to relate these data with improved grades. Finally, the report cards from the first marking period of the 1993 school year will be analyzed and compared with last year's team and the entire school.

The guidance counselor's involvement with the academic support program was a huge success. All fifty-three players attended small group meetings with the counselor during pre-season football camp. By examining their individual transcripts, all members of the football team were able to see where they stood academically. Discussion also focused on the importance for each player, if he was capable, to schedule Algebra I and Geometry before he took the S.A.T. Without these two math courses, it would be nearly impossible to score well on the S.A.T. math section. The football players received the 1993-94 edition of "The NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student Athlete." These booklets gave the football players information on updated NCAA requirements. Attendance at these group meetings was measured by a contract each football player was required to sign (See Appendix D). By signing these contracts, the football



players agreed to follow the guidelines of the football team's academic support program.

The counseling part of the academic support program was successful for reasons other than academics. Players had at their disposal a qualified counselor to go to in times of need. By being there for the players, the counselor made it easier for the players to focus on their grades and the football season.

This counseling component of the program was by no means perfect. The largest problems arose over the scheduling of the small group meetings. The counselor was not provided with adequate time to cover all of his topics. In the future, these small group meetings will be spread out over five or six days instead of just three days. By spreading these sessions out more, make up time will also be provided that was unavailable this year. By operating on a shorter time schedule, the football players were not given enough time to have their individual questions answered by the counselor.

The second piece of the academic support program was the study hall. The success of this program was evaluated on the daily attendance of the players involved and the success of matching up the players in need of help with tutors. The average attendance for the nine week study hall program was seventy-three percent.



The study hall met Monday and Wednesday mornings from 8:15-9:15.

Twenty one of the fifty three players on the team were required to attend study hall.

Attendance at these sessions was exemplary except for one two week period before homecoming. During this period, thirteen participants in the study hall were involved in morning practice for various homecoming activities. The players were excused from study hall to take part in these activities.

The tutoring aspect of the study hall was not as successful as the writer had hoped. Having a math teacher at each session was instrumental in the improvements in many of the players' math grades. Unfortunately, he was the only teacher who volunteered his services as a tutor for study hall. In order for study hall to be more of a success, more faculty involvement is necessary. A teacher from every discipline needs to be involved.

The writer also hoped to implement peer tutoring as a part of study hall. The football players were not receptive to this technique of remediation. The writer hypothesizes that the mostly African American football players did not feel comfortable being tutored by the mostly White National Honor Society tutors. There were five examples during implementation where a player had one tutoring session yet did not wish to continue with the same tutor. To alleviate this problem, the guidance counselor who worked with the football team is recruiting



African Americans from the student body to act as peer tutors.

The study hall was a success because it gave the football players added time to finish their homework. The day for many of the players lasted from 7 A.M. - 10 P.M. These long hours made it difficult for them to complete their assignments. Study hall gave the players two extra hours a week to finish their studies. Study hall also taught these student athletes how to budget their time. Many of them learned to get up a little earlier and finish their homework in the mornings.

The results of the S.A.T. class can be measured by class attendance and the football players' S.A.T. scores. The S.A.T. class was mandatory for all Juniors and Seniors on the football team. Forty-five of the fifty-three members of the football team were also members of the S.A.T. class. The class met every Tuesday and Thursday for nine weeks.

Attendance for the S.A.T. class was always fairly steady. The average attendance for the nine weeks was 67%. The attendance figures can be somewhat misleading because of the high percentage of tardies at each session. These tardies can be attributed to the fact that the school being studied is not a community school. Most of the players are bussed to school and do not have their own cars. It was difficult for most of the football players to make it to school at 8:15 A.M. By not having everyone present at the beginning of each session, the



teacher was unable to cover all of the material she wanted to. This problem can be alleviated by providing a S.A.T. class to all students who are interested during the school day. A S.A.T. class is currently a part of the regular school curriculum, but a prerequisite of algebra and geometry are needed to take this class. Most of the football players are now caught in a "Catch-22" situation. Many of the players have not taken algebra and geometry, yet they all need to take a S.A.T. preparatory class. S.A.T. classes must be provided for all students in the public schools as long as colleges continue to use the tests as admission tools.

The true results of this component of the a demic support program will not be known until all of the players take their S.A.T. Their scores will help us conclude if this class was a success or needs to be retooled. The S.A.T. teacher was unable to give a complete practice S.A.T. test to the entire group. There were still aspects of this class that were successful. The football players learned ten new words each session which improved their vocabulary. The players were given practice S.A.T. tests at each session. These practice tests gave the football players an indication on how difficult the tests were, and what their individual strengths and weaknesses were. The football players were also taught certain test taking skills, such as not answering every question. This knowledge will help raise their S.A.T. scores.



Academic monitoring occurred during the entire ten weeks of the 1993 football season. Progress reports were given to each player two days before a game (See Appendix C). It was each player's responsibility to have these progress reports completely filled out by their teachers in order to play in the game that week. A goal was set for 95% of the progress reports to be turned in each week. Amazingly, the results exceeded the goal. 100% of all progress reports were turned in during the ten weeks of the season. This is a testimony to both the players and the teachers. The players proved that they were concerned about their grades and at the same time wanted to play in the games. The teachers made this a successful goal by filling out these reports for the nine week period.

Academic monitoring through the use of progress reports was the easiest and perhaps most successful aspect of this program. It was a help to the coaches because we constantly knew where each player stood academically. The utilization of these progress reports eliminated the surprise that most coaches have at the end of the marking period. The surprise arises when a key player becomes academically ineligible at the end of the marking period. This typical key player was telling the coach that he was doing "fine" in his classes. Without the use of progress reports, the coach has to go on the player's word. With progress reports, the coach can see each week how his players are achieving in the



classroom.

The true measure of the success of this program consists of an analysis of the football players' report cards during the time this practicum was being implemented. During the final marking period of the 1992-93 school year, the average G.P.A. of the football players on the writer's high school team was 2.3. The discrepancy in the writer's problem was that the average G.P.A. of the entire student body during the same time period was 2.8. The writer hoped that his program would help close the gap and raise the football team's average G.P.A. to 2.5. The actual results exceeded the goal. The average G.P.A. for the writer's football team for the first marking period of the 1993-1994 school year was 2.8. This was an improvement of .5 over the last marking period. The football players are now more on par with the rest of the student body. Twentyfour of the fifty-three players on the team earned a G.P.A. of 3.0 or higher. This is an impressive accomplishment for a team that was also successful on the playing field. The 1993-1994 team finished 9-3 and was ranked in the top sixteen in the state. The team only lost one player to grades at the end of the first marking period. Only four players out of fifty-three on the team had a G.P.A. of 2.0 or lower. A player on this team was honored by being named first team All-State. To add luster to this award, this player earned a G.P.A. of 3.4 during the football season.



This program was a success for a number of reasons. The first reason is that something was actually done about a serious academic problem. In the past at a typical high school, all that was done was coaches talking about the need to improve their players' grades. While the coaches were talking, their inactivity led to poor grades, poor behavior and low S.A.T. scores. In addition, athletes who were gifted athletically could not qualify for a NCAA scholarship. The second reason this program was a success is the players clearly saw that their coaches cared about their academic performance. The players emulated the effort the coaches put into action with the academic support program.

The writer's 1993 football team proved that it is possible to be both a student and an athlete.



Chapter V

Recommendations

Today's headlines are filled with disturbing news about the student athlete: athletes skipping classes while flying around the country interviewing agents; athletes taking courses that keep them eligible, but do not keep them on track to attain their degrees; athletes graduating at rates well below the rest of the student body. These headlines reinforce the myth that athletes cannot be successful students. Many of the problems occurring in collegiate athletics today can be alleviated through proper academic support at the high school level. By teaching student athletes proper academic behavior at a young age, these student athletes will be more successful academically in college.

There are certain recommendations to be made in order to further improve the writer's academic support program. Expanding this program to all student athletes at the writer's high school would be a benefit to the entire athletic department. Parents need to become more involved with their children's education. The writer's academic support program can be expanded to provide parental workshops on S.A.T. tutoring, the college application process, applying for financial aid, and updates on NCAA requirements for athletic scholarships



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(See Appendix E). One of the major problems of this program was the amount of paperwork. This management problem can be alleviated in the future by computerizing the arta collection procedures. It would be much easier to computerize each student's progress reports than to have ten weeks worth of progress reports to sort through. The use of technology would make it easier to track each student athlete's progress with his school work.

This academic support program can also be improved within the school itself. The school must establish an S.A.T. preparatory course that all students can take. By limiting the present course to those students who have taken both algebra and geometry, the school is preventing the needy students from taking the course. The writer understands that the school feels that students cannot excel in this course without algebra and geometry. This class can also include the low achievers by providing remedial math and English programs that will alleviate the students' academic problems. The S.A.T. teachers need computers for each student in the class. These computers will make it easier for the teacher to instruct students of all grade levels. More faculty involvement will also improve the academic support program. If one teacher from each department can volunteer one hour of time per week, it will help raise the academic proficiency of the school's student athletes. The establishment of a peer tutoring club at the school would also be a benefit to the student athletes. This club's sole duty



would be to tutor needy students at the school. It has been proven through research that students respond positively to peer tutoring programs.

The long range goals for this academic support program include expanding the writer's ideas throughout the country. The writer hopes to share his findings with the coaching community. This can be accomplished by speaking at coaches' clinics and writing articles in coaches' magazines. The writer will share his program with the school board of his county, the county athletic director and the state athletic director. The writer anticipates that these people share his enthusiasm in trying to help high school student athletes improve their academic performance.

The critics claim that the true student athlete does not exist. The myth says that athletic programs can either be successful in the classroom or on the playing field, but not both. This writer has proven that with hard work the true student athlete does, in fact, exist.



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APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

NCAA REQUIREMENTS CORRELATED WITH INDIVIDUAL STUDENT'S NEEDS



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APPENDIX B

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APPENDIX C WEEKLY PROGRESS REPORT



APPENDIX C

WEEKLY PROGRESS REPORT

STUDENT NAME	WEEK ENDING
	pace provided, the progress of the above-named bring this progress sheet home to his/her parents.
Period 1	Teacher Comment
	Teacher Signature
Period 2	Teacher Comment
	Teacher Signature
Period 3	Teacher Comment
	Teacher Signature
Period 4	Teacher Comment
	Teacher Signature
Period 5	Teacher Comment
Period 6	Teacher Comment
	Teacher Signature
Period 7	Teacher Comment
	Teacher Signature



APPENDIX D STUDENT ATHLETE CONTRACT



APPENDIX D

STUDENT ATHLETE CONTRACT

August 16, 1993

Dear Nova Titan,

The Nova Titan Football team is instituting a new academic program this year. This program will help put each one of you on a better track towards college. This program includes a guidance counselor, study hall, S.A.T. preparation, and academic monitoring. Your meeting with Dr. Alexis will inform you about the following requirements:

- 1. Updated NCAA requirements
- 2. Information about the Clearinghouse
- 3. Personal transcript evaluation

By working hard in the classroom and on the playing field you will truly be a champion. Your signature on this letter will signify your understanding of what we are trying to do for you.

Sincerely,

Coach Dodaro

Player Signature



APPENDIX E 1993-1994 NCAA REQUIREMENTS



APPENDIX E
1993-1994 NCAA REQUIREMENTS

Core GPA	Minimum Required SAT	Minimum Required ACT
Above 2.500	700	17
2.500	700 700	17
2.475	700 710	17
2.450	720	18 18
2.430 2.425	720 730	18
2.400	740	18
2.375	7 5 0	18
2.350	760	19
2.325	770	19
2.300	780	19
2.275	790	19
2.250	800	19
2.225	810	20
2.200	820	20
2.175	830	20
2.150	840	20
2.125	850	20
2.100	860	21
2.075	870	21
2.050	880	21
2.025	890	21
2.000	900	21
Below 2.000	XXX	XX
Not Eligible	XXX	XX

^{* 1993-94} NCAA Guide for the College Bound Student-Athlete

