*The Shame of College Sports*

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[*http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/10/the-shame-of-college-sports/308643/*](http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2011/10/the-shame-of-college-sports/308643/)

| PASSAGE FROM ARTICLE |  | WRITING ACTIVITY |
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| The United States is the only country in the world that hosts big-time sports at institutions of higher learning. This should not, in and of itself, be controversial. College athletics are rooted in the classical ideal of *Mens sana in corpore sano*—a sound mind in a sound body—and who would argue with that? College sports are deeply inscribed in the culture of our nation. Half a million young men and women play competitive intercollegiate sports each year. Millions of spectators flock into football stadiums each Saturday in the fall, and tens of millions more watch on television. The March Madness basketball tournament each spring has become a major national event, with upwards of 80 million watching it on television and talking about the games around the office water cooler. ESPN has spawned ESPNU, a channel dedicated to college sports, and Fox Sports and other cable outlets are developing channels exclusively to cover sports from specific regions or divisions.  With so many people paying for tickets and watching on television, college sports has become Very Big Business. According to various reports, the football teams at Texas, Florida, Georgia, Michigan, and Penn State—to name just a few big-revenue football schools—each earn between $40 million and $80 million in profits a year, even after paying coaches multimillion-dollar salaries. When you combine so much money with such high, almost tribal, stakes—football boosters are famously rabid in their zeal to have their alma mater win—corruption is likely to follow. |  | *Based upon the claim, “college sports has become Very Big Business,” determine the two pieces of textual evidence that provide support. Quote one piece and paraphrase the other.*  QUOTE   * Consider: What words or phrases should the author be noted for because they are unique or written in a way that paraphrasing could not appropriately capture? * Introduce your quote. * Do not quote more than 10 words.   PARAPHRASE   * What is the best information to support this claim? * First, change the structure of the sentence(s) – start and end in a different way. * Then, change the actual words to ensure that your thought is your own. * Check – do you have any groupings of words that match the original that could be changed and keep the meaning the same? |
| The debates and commissions about reforming college sports nibble around the edges—trying to reduce corruption, to prevent the “contamination” of athletes by lucre, and to maintain at least a pretense of concern for academic integrity. Everything stands on the implicit presumption that preserving amateurism is necessary for the well-being of college athletes. But while amateurism—and the free labor it provides—may be necessary to the preservation of the NCAA, and perhaps to the profit margins of various interested corporations and educational institutions, what if it doesn’t benefit the athletes? What if it hurts them? |  | PARAPHRASE THE PARAGRAPH:   * What is the most important idea/information in this paragraph? Start a sentence with your own words to describe that idea, and then elaborate or explain with one more detail. |
| **“The Plantation Mentality”**  “Ninety percent of the NCAA revenue is produced by 1 percent of the athletes,” Sonny Vaccaro says. “Go to the skill positions”—the stars. “Ninety percent African Americans.” The NCAA made its money off those kids, and so did he. They were not all bad people, the NCAA officials, but they were blind, Vaccaro believes. “Their organization is a fraud.”  …  “Scholarship athletes are already paid,” declared the Knight Commission members, “in the most meaningful way possible: with a free education.” This evasion by prominent educators severed my last reluctant, emotional tie with imposed amateurism. I found it worse than self-serving. It echoes masters who once claimed that heavenly salvation would outweigh earthly injustice to slaves. In the era when our college sports first arose, colonial powers were turning the whole world upside down to define their own interests as all-inclusive and benevolent. Just so, the NCAA calls it heinous exploitation to pay college athletes a fair portion of what they earn.  \*lucre: monetary gain |  | Explain the “plantation mentality” in your own words in the apace below (no statistics…just a basic description).  Write out the entire quote from Sonny Vaccaro, without the textual interruptions of the author.  Now quote Vacarro in your own sentence with an introduction and ending. Use only the “meat,” the most important part of the quote, in your sentence. |
| A deeper reason explains why, in its predicament, the NCAA has no recourse to any principle or law that can justify amateurism. There is no such thing. Scholars and sportswriters yearn for grand juries to ferret out every forbidden bauble that reaches a college athlete, but the NCAA’s ersatz courts can only masquerade as public authority. How could any statute impose amateur status on college athletes, or on anyone else? No legal definition of amateur exists, and any attempt to create one in enforceable law would expose its repulsive and unconstitutional nature—a bill of attainder, stripping from college athletes the rights of American citizenship.  For all our queasiness about what would happen if some athletes were to get paid, there is a successful precedent for the professionalization of an amateur sports system: the Olympics. ….The International Olympic Committee expunged the word *amateur* from its charter in 1986. Olympic officials, who had once disdained the NCAA for offering scholarships in exchange for athletic performance, came to welcome millionaire athletes from every quarter, while the NCAA still refused to let the pro Olympian Michael Phelps swim for his college team at Michigan.  This sweeping shift left the Olympic reputation intact, and perhaps improved. Only hardened romantics mourned the amateur code. “Hey, come on,” said Anne Audain, a track-and-field star who once held the world record for the 5,000 meters. “It’s like losing your virginity. You’re a little misty for awhile, but then you realize, Wow, there’s a whole new world out there*!*”  Without logic or practicality or fairness to support amateurism, the NCAA’s final retreat is to sentiment. The Knight Commission endorsed its heartfelt cry that to pay college athletes would be “an unacceptable surrender to despair.” Many of the people I spoke with while reporting this article felt the same way. “I don’t want to pay college players,” said Wade Smith, a tough criminal lawyer and former star running back at North Carolina. “I just don’t want to do it. We’d lose something precious.”  \*bauble – small trinket  \*ersatz – artificial substitute |  | In this section of text, Branch tackles a counterclaim. Paraphrase in your own words the counterclaim? *Remember, that Branch’s claim, in short, is that college athletes should be paid.*  A summary is a shortened version of a longer segment of text into one’s own words. Summarize these four paragraphs, which represent Branch’s argument against the counterclaim in two sentences. How do you summarize. Agree on the four main points. Write four short (not complex) sentences. Combine sentences. |

Reading & Discussing Models of Writing to Become a Better Writer

“Teaching a student to write is like teaching a student to play basketball. The student needs to see how “real” players dribble, pass, shoot, set screens, defend, rebound, and move their feet. Coaches who stand on the sideline and scream, “Pass the ball better!” are coaches who are not really helping their players develop. Coaches who step the practice, gather the players around, and demonstrate how, when passing, the ball should come off of the fingertips are coaches who help their players. Coaches who model the passing technique and *then have the players practice the skill twenty more times* are the coaches who help their players the most.”

Gallagher, K. (2011). *Write like this: Teaching real-world writing through modeling and mentor texts.* Portland, Maine: Stenhouse Publishers.

“Proponents of collaborative learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking. According to [Johnson and Johnson (1986)](http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JTE/v7n1/gokhale.jte-v7n1.html#Johnson&Johnson), there is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve at higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals. The shared learning gives students an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers ([Totten, Sills, Digby, & Russ, 1991](http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/ejournals/JTE/v7n1/gokhale.jte-v7n1.html#Totten, et al.)).”

Gokhale, A. A. (1995). Collaborative learning enhances critical thinking. *Journal of Technology Education 7*(1).

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“So we read to experience the mediocre and the outright rotten; such experience helps us to recognize those things when they begin to creep into our own work, and to steer clear of them. We also read in order to measure ourselves against the good and the great, to get a sense of all that can be done. And we read in order to experience different styles.

...Can I be blunt on this subject? If you don't have time to read, you don't have the time (or the tools) to write. Simple as that.”

Stephen King, 2009