



Champion Coach Note: Academics and Athletics, Proper Prioritizing

The NCAA's guide for student-athletes reads: "Your participation as a student-athlete will complement your academic education while teaching you life skills not available in the classroom. Growing as a person, both on and off the field, and getting your degree should be your top priority." An athlete's number one priority should be to meet personal and academic obligations before devoting time and energy to athletics. Athletics should complement academics, and provide an environment for athletes to continue their learning and development – they should *not* take precedence over a quality education.

It is critical that student-athletes focus on obligations in the classroom before devoting time and energy to athletics. After all, they are student-athletes, not athlete-students. As a coach, it is vital that you focus on shaping the whole person through your sport. Therefore, faith, family, and academic obligations should take priority over athletic pursuits.

As teachers and coaches, help athletes develop qualities and virtues that will prepare them to achieve success in the future. Encourage your athletes to develop a healthy balance in their lives by having a discussion with them about their priorities. Schedule regular meetings with your athletes to discuss their academic progress and any concerns that they might have. Athletes at all levels have grueling schedules, as they must give up much of their time in order to train – in college, it is often the equivalent of a full-time job. As a coach, you share responsibility for these aspects of your athletes' lives. Help them onto the path to success today by working with them to develop time management and



"Catholic directors, staff and workers must consider themselves expert guides for youth, helping each of them to develop their athletic potential without obscuring those human qualities and Christian virtues that make for a fully mature person."

~ Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI

ATHLETE REFLECTION

Watch this [NCCA commercial](#):

Reflect on the following questions offered in a Notre Dame Scholastic article by Duke Preston, Program Director – Office of Student Welfare and Development at Notre Dame.

1. Who are you beyond your athletics and academic identity?
2. What's true in your values and beliefs?
3. What do you stand for?

organizational skills, and by teaching them the values of teamwork and discipline that will help them succeed in the classroom and beyond.

By emphasizing academics to your athletes today, you will be preparing them to be the intellectual, business, and political leaders of tomorrow. Athletics play a central role in shaping the whole person, in teaching skills and virtues that can be applied in different areas of life. Don't sell your athletes short: make sure academics are number one.