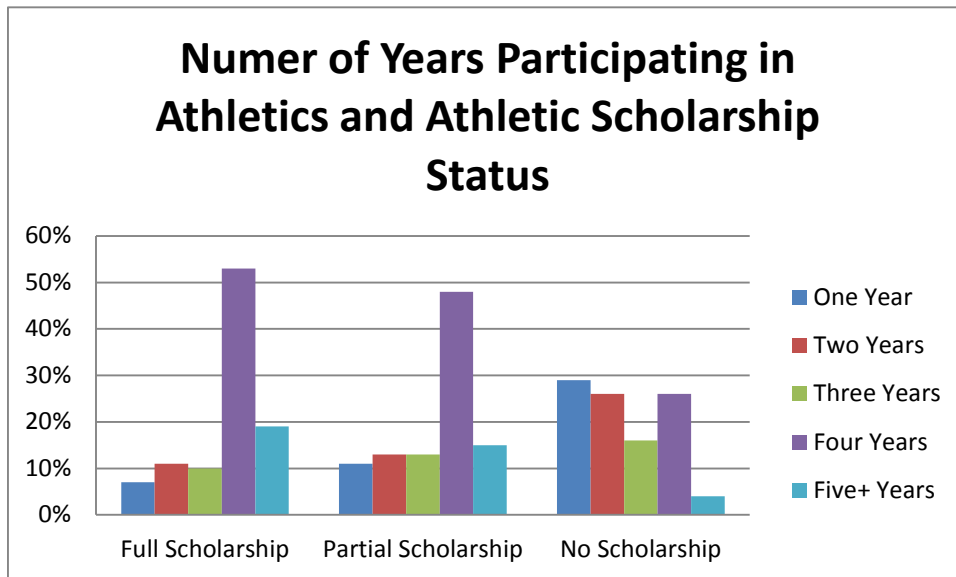


## SCORE Study: Athletics Experiences of Former Division II Student-Athletes

### Athletics Profile of Division II SCORE Respondents

More than 5,400 former Division II student-athletes who were college freshmen in 1999 or 2000 responded to the Study of College Outcomes and Recent Experiences (SCORE) survey. They represent 21 sports; nearly all indicated that they played at the varsity level, and approximately 15 percent indicated that they played a second sport while in college. Three-quarters of the respondents reported that they were recruited by a coach before attending their institution, and 72 percent indicated they received an athletics scholarship (19 percent full scholarship, 53 percent partial scholarship). There was a good deal of variation in the number of years respondents reported participating in athletics. As Figure 1 below demonstrates, receipt of an athletics scholarship was related to how long a student-athlete stayed with his or her team.

**Figure 1: Number of years participating in athletics as a function of athletics scholarship status**



In total, approximately 46 percent of respondents stopped participating in athletics before exhausting their eligibility. More than one-third (37 percent) of those who did not exhaust their eligibility were student-athletes in the sports of men’s and women’s basketball and football. Former student-athletes who played one of those three sports were most likely to report stopping their participation early because of an injury or medical reason. Student-athletes in the other sports, on the other hand, were more likely to cite academics as their primary reason for discontinuing their participation (see Table 1).

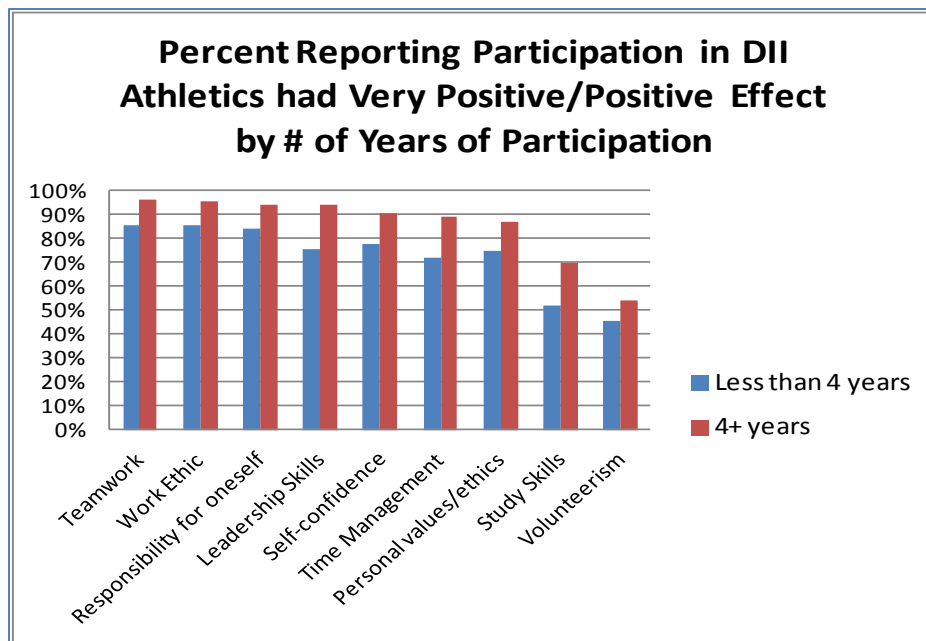
Table 1: Primary reason student-athlete stopped competing prior to exhausting eligibility

Primary Reason Stopped Competing	Overall	Men's/Women's Basketball & Football	All Other Sports
Injury/medical problem	24.3%	28.0%	22.0%
Concentrate on academics	16.5%	12.0%	19.1%
Financial constraints	9.5%	11.0%	8.6%
No longer wanted to play	14.6%	15.9%	13.8%
Completed degree	7.8%	8.7%	7.3%
Other voluntary reasons (internship, other activity, etc.)	19.0%	16.2%	20.6%
Other involuntary reasons (academically ineligible, kicked off team, etc.)	8.4%	8.2%	8.5%

Perceived Effects of Athletics Participation

Athletics is a venue through which many life skills can be taught, including time management, teamwork and leadership. We were interested in learning what skills and values former student-athletes directly attribute to their participation in Division II athletics. As illustrated in Figure 2, the majority of former Division II student-athletes reported that participation in collegiate athletics had a positive effect on several life skills (endorsed *very positive* or *positive* on the survey). Approximately 90 percent reported it had a positive effect on teamwork, work ethic and responsibility for oneself. Study skills and commitment to volunteerism were endorsed less often, but still about one-half report participation in Division II athletics had a direct positive effect on these attributes.

Figure 2: Percent reporting skills learned through Division II athletics by number of years participating



Interestingly, former student-athletes who participated in athletics for four or more years were more likely to indicate that participation in Division II athletics had a positive effect on these attributes/skills.

### Sportsmanship

One of the six key attributes of the Division II strategic positioning platform is sportsmanship. Former Division II student-athletes were asked not only about their perceptions of their own sportsmanship, but also how they perceived the level of sportsmanship among their former college teammates and what role they believe the coach should play in creating an atmosphere of sportsmanship.

Overall, 47 percent of respondents indicated that they *strongly agree* that the lessons learned through athletics have made them a more ethical person. (Another 36 percent responded they *somewhat agree* with this statement.) When comparing responses among various groups, a few interesting findings emerged:

- Those with a strong athletics identity were more likely to report the highest level of agreement (*strongly agree*) that lessons learned through athletics have helped shape them as an ethical person (55 percent, compared with 33 percent among those with lower athletics identity).
- Length of participation also was related to reporting a positive effect of athletics on ethics. While 51 percent of those who participated in collegiate athletics for at least four years claimed they *strongly agree* athletics helped shaped their ethics, only 42 percent of those who participated three years or less responded similarly.
- Interestingly, the specific sport in which a person participated had no significant relationship with perception of the effect of athletics participation on ethics.

The former Division II student-athletes also described whether their former teammates demonstrated good sportsmanship, were willing to cheat in order to win and followed high standards of academic integrity. Three-quarters of former student-athletes gave their teammates an overall positive sportsmanship rating on these questions. There was a significant difference by sport group: student-athletes who played men's or women's basketball or football rated their former teammates as slightly less ethical than those in other sports.

Overall, one-half of former student-athletes disagreed that winning should be a coach's primary objective, while 30 percent stated that it should be. There were interesting differences among various demographic groups (see Table 2). While in every group no more than about one-third believe that winning should be the coach's top priority, males, those who have a high athletics identity, those who played a team sport, and those who played men's or women's basketball or football were more likely to have this belief.

Table 2: Level of agreement that winning should be coach’s top priority by various demographic groups

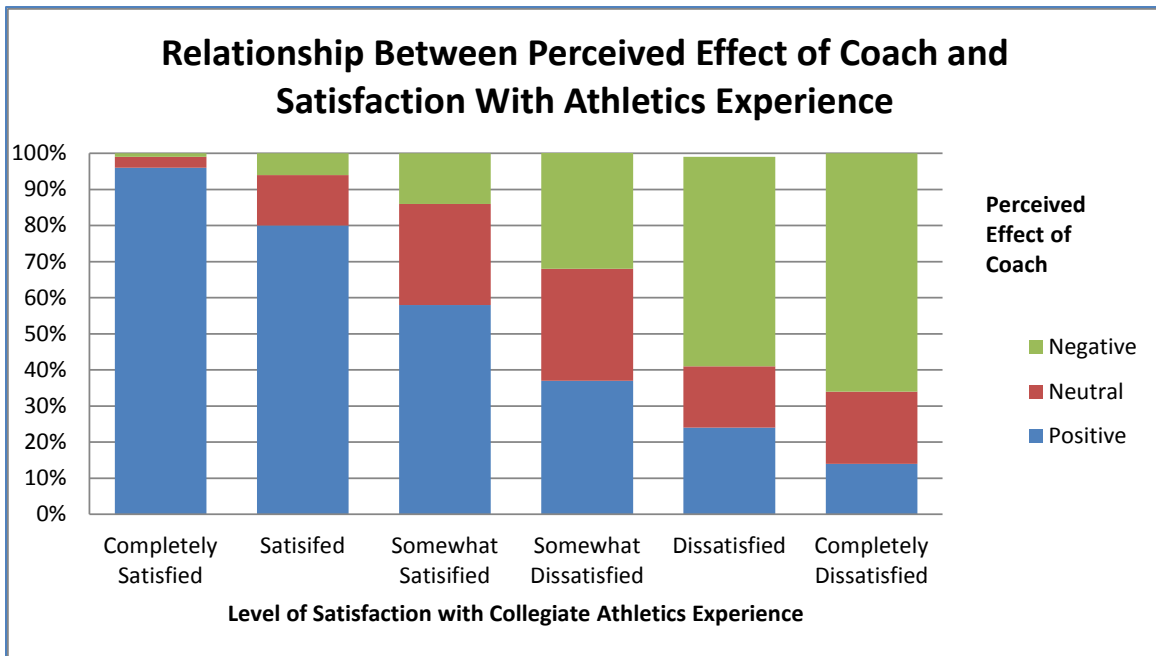
	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
<b>High athletics identity</b>	33%	21%	47%
<b>Low athletics identity</b>	25%	20%	55%
<b>Individual sport</b>	20%	18%	62%
<b>Team sport</b>	34%	21%	45%
<b>M/W Basketball or Football</b>	38%	20%	42%
<b>Other sports</b>	26%	20%	54%
<b>Females</b>	21%	17%	62%
<b>Males</b>	36%	21%	42%

All differences statistically significant, chi-square, p<.01

### Satisfaction with Athletics Experience

Overall, 64 percent of former Division II student-athletes reported that they are *completely satisfied* or *satisfied* with their college athletics experience, and another 19 percent reported they are *somewhat satisfied*. Seventy percent reported that they believe their college coach had a positive influence on their athletics goals, and as can be seen in Figure 3, there is a strong relationship between the perceived effect of the coach on the student-athlete’s athletics experience and overall satisfaction with the collegiate athletics experience. In other words, the coach may play a big role in the long-term satisfaction with the Division II athletics experience.

Figure 3: Percent reporting satisfaction with athletics experience by perceived effect of coach on athletics



### Summary

More than 80 percent of former Division II student-athletes who were college freshmen in 1999 or 2000 reported some level of satisfaction with their athletics experience, and coaches have a major impact on the satisfaction of their former players. The vast majority of former student-athletes believe that participation in college athletics helped them develop positive skills and attributes, such as teamwork, work ethic and leadership. Four in five reported that athletics contributed to their personal ethics, and those who most strongly identified themselves as athletes while in college were most likely to credit athletics with helping to shape them as an ethical person. About half of former student-athletes stopped participating in their sport before their eligibility expired, and those who participated for four or more years were most likely to report positive effects of athletics participation. (Participation for more than four years is possible when student-athletes only practice for a year or get an extra year due to early-season injury.)