EXTRA POINT
NCAA research to keep you in the game.

If I Could Change One Thing about My Student-Athlete Experience…

Recently we published a word cloud that displayed how a national sample of NCAA student-athletes described the best part of their college experience. The NCAA GOALS survey also included an opportunity for student-athletes to comment on the aspects of their college experience they would most like to change. The 75 most common words in their responses are shown in this word cloud.

The most frequently used word (largest in the cloud) was *time,* which was cited by nearly 1 of 5 respondents. *Time*-related comments most often referred to some aspect of time management difficulties or time demands (the GOALS survey showed the typical NCAA student-athlete spends 39 hours/week on academics and 33 hours/week on athletics in-season). References to *time* also included numerous comments about dissatisfaction with *playing time*.

Ten percent of respondents described some aspect of their *coach* or *coaches*. Such instances were more common among women than men and tended to express dissatisfaction with coaching quality or how they and/or their team were being treated by their coaches (for example, citing a lack of positivity, honesty, communication, engagement or respect). The impacts of such dissatisfaction are surely substantial. As shown in the GOALS study, coaches are a major factor in a student-athlete's college choice and in the setting of expectations for what life will be like at their chosen college. Coaches who are ethical and respectful tend to develop student-athletes who feel better about their college choice and their team environment.

The only other theme cited by more than 10% of student-athletes was related to changing *nothing* about their experience. As one respondent noted, "I wouldn't change anything… I am very content where I am. I'm getting a great education and playing golf for free. I feel as if I am one of the luckiest people on the planet."