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NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Final Four

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**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, ST. PAUL: ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA: DEPARTMENT
OF KINESIOLOGY AND HEALTH STUDIES**

NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Final Four

**A GRADUATE PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts Degree in Sport Management**

**by
Patrick Rydeen
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Dedications

For Jenny, Dave and Brenda. Thank you for all of your support throughout my time as a student. I would not have reached this point without all of your encouragement over the years.

Abstract

The Capstone project analyzed and presented insight into the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament, including a view of the financing, marketing, event management, while also giving a view of a major ethical dilemma that the NCAA faces. The tournament has evolved in the over 75 years it has been played to become a leading event for the NCAA and a major factor in the infrastructure of the organization as a whole. The nature of the event, namely the size and the rotating venues, created a major need for a strong risk management plan to ensure the safety of everyone involved. Despite the student athletes not being paid to play basketball, the NCAA Tournament is a big business venture that has also required a marketing plan to capitalize on the popularity of the event to solidify the financial standing of the NCAA. Along with the financial standing of the NCAA, the NCAA Tournament can also affect the financial standing of the coaches involved. Success in the tournament can force schools to find creative ways to retain their services through compensation. The success of the tournament has also led to a boom in betting on the event, which has created an interesting ethical situation for the NCAA on how to handle it. The NCAA Tournament featured nearly all of the major elements of sports management as it is an iconic event for the largest intercollegiate sports association of the world.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) has functioned as a governing body of athletics at the collegiate level for over 100 years since their formation in 1910 (Smith, 2000, p.12). The NCAA has seen their organization grow to three divisions as the number of affiliate schools has grown over the years (Smith, 2000, p 12). Over the past few years, the yearly revenue of the NCAA has skyrocketed to nearly a billion dollars as the NCAA has seen growth every year dating back to 2001 (Alesia, 2014). Much of that boom in revenue is credited to the increase in revenue of the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament as around 80 to 90 percent of the total yearly income of the NCAA (Alesia, 2014). The massive value of the event makes March Madness far more valuable than the rest of the NCAA Championships at all levels combined.

The NCAA was originally put in place when President Theodore Roosevelt stated in 1905 that college football needed to be regulated or the rule would have to be abolished due to the health concerns and concerns of cheating (Smith, 2000, p. 12). By 1910, the NCAA was formed to apply rules to the various intercollegiate sports and formulate regulations to ensure safety and fairness (Smith, 2000, p. 12-13). The NCAA has morphed and grown with the growth of intercollegiate athletics over the years since its inception but still strives to fulfill that purpose. Today, the NCAA stands by a collection of "core values" which they are committed to fulfilling.

The NCAA Core Values (NCAA Executive Committee, 2004, p. 3) are stated as follows:

The Association - through its member institutions, conferences and national office staff - shares a belief in and commitment to:

- The collegiate model of athletics in which students participate as an avocation, balancing their academic, social and athletics experiences.
 - The highest levels of integrity and sportsmanship.
 - The pursuit of excellence in both academics and athletics.
 - The supporting role that intercollegiate athletics plays in the higher education mission and in enhancing the sense of community and strengthening the identity of member institutions.
 - An inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes and career opportunities for coaches and administrators from diverse backgrounds.
 - Respect for institutional autonomy and philosophical differences.
 - Presidential leadership of intercollegiate athletics at the campus, conference and national levels.

These values create a culture of balance between all aspects of college athletics. College athletics goes beyond the results on the court or in the field to in the classroom and in the community. The NCAA strives for a well-rounded environment that is welcoming to all people and creates a positive experience for all involved. Inclusivity is a strong tone in the core values as the values look to use college athletics as a positive influence in the community and on the campus. Part of that comes into play with the respect of institutional autonomy as the rule signifies that schools of many different backgrounds and set of beliefs are able to work under the umbrella of the NCAA. The NCAA also strives to be at the forefront in all of these goals as the leader of all the institutions under their control.

Men's college basketball has held a national tournament for the last 76 years with the first tournament being held in 1939 (NABC, 2014). The first tournament was held in Evansville, Illinois with eight teams playing at the Northwestern Fieldhouse and resulted in Oregon defeating Ohio State (NABC, 2014). The tournament was set up by the National Association of Basketball Coaches and was viewed as a successful event with great potential moving forward despite the fact that the tournament resulted in a net loss of \$2,500 (NABC, 2014). The next year the tourney made a profit of \$9,500, but the NABC decided hand over the reins to the NCAA because they felt they did not have enough time outside of coaching to manage the event (NABC, 2014). A deal was struck that ensured free tickets for all NABC coaches to attend the finals and left a seat on the tournament committee for a member of the NABC (NABC, 2014).

The NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament originally began as an eight-team tournament, but grew steadily in size until reaching 65 teams in 2001 (History.com Staff, 2009). The latest expansion added three more teams to bring the total to 68 teams starting in 2011 (Katz, 2010). This growth has come, at least in part, as a result in the increase of television coverage of the tournament. Television coverage first began in 1969 with NBC airing a total of seven games (Haggar, 2012). The coverage has increased along with the increase in the size of the tournament as CBS and Turner Broadcasting now hold the exclusive broadcast rights with a 14-year deal which began in 2011 and airs every game on their family of networks ("CBS Sports, Turners Broadcasting, NCAA reach 14-year agreement", NCAA Release, 2010).

With such a massive part of the financial standing tied into the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament, a deeper look into the event itself provides a look into the organization of the NCAA as a whole. The tournament gives an inside look at how decisions are made, budgets are created, events are staffed, revenue is distributed, media and marketing are handled, along with

many other factors involved in the process. With an average of 11.3 million viewers for every tournament game, the tournament provides the most public view of the biggest collegiate athletic organization in the world, making the event a very compelling event to analyze (“2015 NCAA Tournament has highest average viewership in 22 years”, NCAA Release, 2015).

Chapter Two: Event Introduction

The NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament is a unique event in the sense that the event features rotating venues that change every year. Furthermore, the event is unique because the Final Four generally takes place at venues that are not even originally meant to host basketball games. With the event becoming highly popular and drawing massive crowds, the popularity has forced the event to be hosted by huge stadiums that are generally home to NFL franchises. AT&T Stadium, the home of the Dallas Cowboys, played host to the event in 2014 and Lucas Oil Stadium, home of the Indianapolis Colts, was the site of the 2015 Final Four. The latest Final Four in Indianapolis took place from April 4-6 with the Duke Blue Devils defeating the Wisconsin Badgers to claim the title. Having a different host site every year creates a different feel with every tournament, making for a new experience every year.

The NCAA Tournament has another unique attribute with region tournaments at other neutral sites in which the first four rounds take place. This requires another process of selecting venues with their own specifications necessary to determine proper facilities.

The NCAA ("Division I Men's Basketball site selection begins", NCAA Release, 2014, para. 3-6) stated about the early round selection process:

The committee will use evaluation criteria when selecting the sites and the hosts for the championship rounds including lodging options, airline service, previous history hosting NCAA championships and attendance potential. Each city must have an adequate number of full service hotel rooms within reasonable proximity to the competition venue, with the most competitive rates to accommodate teams, officials and the media. The cities must

have appropriate airline service, with consideration given to sites with the highest frequency of daily arrivals and departures.

The committee will consider attendance figures, net receipts and the host's financial management from previous championships, and consideration may be given to a host or venue that has not hosted the tournament most recently. Host facilities must hold a minimum of 10,000 fans in order to be considered. Newly-constructed venues must be fully operational by May 2015 in order to host the 2016 championship, and by November 2015 to be eligible to host the 2017 or 2018 championships.

As the national tournament to determine the NCAA Division I men's basketball champion, sites will continue to be selected regionally across the country. Two sites from the East, South, Midwest and West regions will be chosen to host second- and third-round games, while one host from each region will be selected to host Sweet 16 and Elite Eight games.

These qualifications fall well short of the qualifications required to host the Final Four. This allows smaller cities or locations that are not considered acceptable as Final Four sites to still have the opportunity to be a part of the tournament and host games. With so many different locations being used, it means that most cities with suitable facilities get a chance to host fairly often in region games.

The Final Four features a much tougher set of specifications that limits the number of possible locations drastically. The NCAA ("Finalists for 2017-2020 Men's and Women's Final Four hosts named", NCAA Release, 2014, para. 9) stated, "For the Men's Final Four, venues must hold a minimum of 60,000 fans, and host cities or regions must be able to provide at least

10,000 full-service hotel rooms within reasonable proximity to the competition venue.” The process is a lengthy one as the bidding process for the 2017-20 NCAA Final Fours are already well underway.

In an NCAA release from January 2014, the NCAA laid out the following timeline for the final bid process:

Completed bids are due in May, with the respective committees and staffs spending the summer reviewing each bid before making site visits to each finalist city in August, September and October. Representatives from each finalist city will make in-person presentations to the respective committees during their annual fall meetings in early November 2014 in Indianapolis, followed by the announcement of the winning bids later that month. Prospective Final Four bid cities had until mid-October to submit a declaration of intent to bid, a draft budget, hotel rates and confirmation of adherence to the NCAA’s bid specifications by mid-November. The men’s and women’s basketball staffs and select committee members met with representatives of each city’s host committee last month and updated the men’s and women’s basketball committees at meetings in San Diego earlier this month (“Finalists for 2017-2020 Men’s and Women’s Final Four hosts named”, NCAA Release, 2014, para. 7).

These strict specifications were not always in place as basketball arenas were used as recently as 1996. The last time the tournament was held in an arena was at the Meadowlands Arena in New Jersey (Katz, 2012). These specifications have even eliminated other domed stadiums from contention because they increased the requirements for seating. Both Tropicana Field in St. Petersburg, Florida in 1999 and the Alamodome in San Antonio, Texas have played host to the Final Four three different times but are now considered too small (Katz, 2012). The

selection committee has also shown a tendency to shy away from using venues near either coast in order to have general equity in travel for all of the schools involved. This leads to cities like Dallas, Indianapolis, New Orleans, Minneapolis, Detroit, Houston, and St. Louis being strong candidates.

The 2015 Men's Final Four site fit all of these specifications as the event was hosted by Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis. The venue hosted its second Final Four after hosting previously in 2010. The 2015 edition of the tournament marked the 22nd time in the history of the tournament that it will be held in Indianapolis, dating back to 1940 (Lucas Oil, 2013). Because the NCAA office is located in Indianapolis, the city also serves as the annual backup site for the Final Four if issues arise with other locations (Alesia, 2014). The facility features 63,000 seats and stands on a 39 acre plot and spans 1.8 million square feet (NCAA, 2014). The stadium has hosted numerous major events including the 2010 Final Four, Big Ten Football Championships, Bands of America events, high school football state championships and many others in addition to Indianapolis Colts games. The stadium was named the 2009 Sports Facility of the Year by *Street and Smith's SportsBusiness Journal* (HKS, 2009).

The Lucas Oil Stadium website (2014) states:

Lucas Oil Stadium (LOS) is a multi-purpose facility that replaced the former RCA Dome and opened as the home of the NFL's Indianapolis Colts for the 2008 NFL season. LOS is a state-of-the-art, retractable roof, multi-purpose stadium featuring spectacular views of the Indianapolis skyline. In addition, the stadium has an infill playing surface, seven (7) locker rooms, exhibit space, meeting rooms, operable north window, dual-level club lounges, 139 suites, retractable sideline seating, house reduction curtains, two (2) large video boards, ribbon boards, spacious concourses, interior and exterior plaza space,

eleven (11) indoor docks and two vehicle ramps to the event level. LOS is connected to the convention center and twelve (12) hotels and entertainment options by a pedestrian connector. Tradeshows can take advantage of an indoor 30,000 square foot loading dock with eleven (11) bays, retractable seating and operable walls to utilize up to 183,000 contiguous square feet of space. Football games and band competitions can be played indoors or outdoors using the retractable roof and operable north window. The house reduction curtain system covers the entire Terrace Level seating, reducing capacity from 63,000 to approximately 41,000. Basketball and other mini-dome events have the option of playing in the round for up to 70,000 fans or in a much smaller configuration with a house reduction curtain system. Concerts may be played indoors or outdoors in a full stadium or reduced house configurations. Seating configurations range in size from 15,000 to over 70,000 (“About”, Lucas Oil Stadium, 2014, para. 2).

Hosting a basketball game in a football stadium creates a few issues in making the configuration work and be successful. Football fields are obviously far larger than basketball courts, which can leave a lot of space between the court and the lower level seating. There have been numerous different ways that facilities have worked to handle that issue and make the logistics of the layout work. Some venues choose to lay out the court the short way across the football field which means that seating would be in close proximity on three sides but would leave a lot of open space on the fourth side. Temporary seating on that side can be put in but it limits the use of the entire seating bowl and cuts out about 30% of the seating. This generally defeats the purpose of having the games held in large facilities as the main point was to make sure that more people were able to get into the door.

HKS Sports and Entertainment, the architecture firm, and Hunt Construction Group, the construction team, teamed up to eliminate that problem with their sights set on making the facility as conducive as possible for hosting the Final Four. HKS Sports teamed up with Hunt Construction to create a lower seating bowl that is retractable, which allows the seating to be adjusted as necessary depending on the event (Tyson, 2013). This was an ingenious plan that makes the facility a solid venue for just about any event. With the extended seating, the seats extend right up to the edge of the court and actually increased the amount of seating instead of decreasing it.

Lucas Oil Stadium holds several other features that help make the facility an excellent venue for the Final Four, one of which is the two large HD video boards and 360 degree ribbon boards. One negative of having basketball played in such a big venue is that the views of the court from the upper levels can make it difficult to make out what is going on. That is where the video boards really make an impact for the event. Having a pair of video boards helps ensure that people have a view of at least one of them from their seat.

Another major feature is the accessibility to vast amounts of exhibit space in the venue as well as at the Indiana Convention Center located next door that can be accessed through closed pedestrian walkways. The Final Four extends beyond just the games, as a big part of the event is external events such as the NCAA Experience. The NCAA Experience allowed for fans unable to attend the games for varying reasons to be able to see different exhibits and interact with past tournament participants. This, along with the massive amounts of media coverage and press conferences make it a requirement to have ample space for all of this to happen. Lucas Oil Stadium features 44,000 square feet of exhibit space, 12 meeting rooms along with the massive space of the recently expanded convention center (Lucas Oil, 2014).

The highest source of revenue for the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament is the massive TV deal with CBS/Turner that averages out to \$771 million annually. This number is not only the largest source of revenue for the event but the TV revenue represents about 76% of the NCAA budget as a whole. Every other source of revenue in the NCAA pales in comparison to the TV deal. The current deal spans 14 years for a total of \$10.8 billion that lasts through 2024. This source of revenue should be a consistent source that will not fluctuate which should make that source easy to project future revenue streams for the NCAA. An interesting factor with the TV deal is that the networks receive over \$1 billion in ad revenue which allows them to pocket a profit as well and makes the cost manageable (Berr, 2015).

The next highest source of income in terms of dollar amount comes from the ticket sales, which totals just over \$80,000,000. This number is a bit more variable as it pertains to revenue because ticket sales are dependent on the amount of seating and matchups in certain rounds. In 2014, the Final Four was held in AT&T Stadium in Dallas, home of the Cowboys, which holds over 80,000 fans, which led to an estimated \$20 million in revenue alone just for the Final Four (Jacobson, 2014). With rotating venues, those numbers will not always be consistent. Because each region uses several different venues that change every year as well, the use of different venues does add some more variability, but the averages should not change much from year to year as most venues have similar capacities for the regional games. Other streams of revenue for the NCAA come from sources such as net income on investments, non-basketball championships, media rights for other networks than CBS/Turner, marketing, and merchandise among other areas totaling over \$100 million (Alesia, 2014). The full list of revenue can be found in Table 1 and Figure 1.

Overall, the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament has grown so much in popularity that it is nearly impossible to see the tournament being shifting away from the mega-stadiums anytime soon. The tournament rakes in a total of just over 80% of the revenue that the NCAA brings in (Alesia, 2014). Cutting back on the available seats would result in a loss of revenue which would be an unwise decision. With stadium locations in place for the next seven years, the trend will continue for the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament as the event will continue to be held in venues not originally meant for basketball.

Chapter Three: Marketing Plan

The NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Championship is the marquee event of the college basketball season. In 2014, the tournament generated an estimated \$194 million to be split up between the conferences across the country. The tournament creates such a lucrative market that the revenue results in just over \$250,000 for each tournament game appearance for a conference (Smith, 2014). The tournament has wrapped up the college season every year dating back to 1939, culminating with the "Final Four" to determine a champion ("Hidden gems of the Final Four", NCAA News, 2013, p. 1). The tournament is identifiable by two terms that have caught on over the years as names "March Madness" and the "Final Four" have become household names. Over the years, the tournament has provided numerous iconic moments from Magic Johnson and Larry Bird squaring off in 1979 to Lorenzo Charles' dunk at the buzzer to give Cinderella NC State a title in 1983. The results have created a larger-than-life feel that has exalted the stars of the games and turned the tournament into more of a professional feel. The tournament has established itself as an event that is broadcast to millions of people all across the globe.

The NCAA, meanwhile, focuses more on the balance of the student-athlete experience between being both a student and athlete. The core purpose says, "Our purpose is to govern competition in a fair, safe, equitable and sportsmanlike manner, and to integrate intercollegiate athletics into higher education so that the educational experience of the student-athlete is paramount" ("NCAA Strategic Plan", NCAA Executive Committee, 2004, p. 3).

Purpose

H.H. Friedman of CUNY Brooklyn (2011) stated:

The marketing plan is an important document used by companies for planning. It is a road map and surveys the business environment, describes problems, threats and opportunities in the industry, contains a marketing strategy, and has financial projections/budgets. Do not confuse a marketing plan with a business plan. A marketing plan is concerned more with strategy whereas a business plan is more concerned with financial information. The primary purpose of a business plan is to raise money from venture capitalists or bankers; the primary purpose of a marketing plan is to provide direction for a company. The marketing plan is an integral part of the business plan (Friedman, 2011, para. 5).

The purpose of the marketing plan for the NCAA Final Four is to re-focus the marketing plan to better fit the core values of the NCAA as well as to continue to increase revenues in ticket sales and TV ratings. The shift to community engagements, especially on the Division II and III levels, is a thing that should be continued as the shift helps accomplish the social and community aspect of the core values. Showing more of that experience to show the human side of the athletes will help show the balanced athlete. Focusing on the academic achievements of the athletes during the event will also help broaden the spectrum of people watching and break the misconceptions about athletes. While the changes should help target a wider range of people, it is still essential to learn to better reach the general target audience as well. There can be some gains in reaching a wider range of people but the biggest place to grow the numbers is by better reaching the target group.

The essential point of the purpose along with the core values of the NCAA that seem to be lacking in the current marketing and presentation of the event include the focus on balance between academic, social and athletic experiences and viewing athletics in a supporting role in

the higher education mission. As one of the biggest events for the NCAA, the Final Four could do a better job at bridging the gap between how they market the event now and what the NCAA values as an organization.

Product

The NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament has served as an essential part of the fabric of college athletics for a long period of time. The event raked in over 80% of the NCAA's revenue during the 2012-13 school year (Alesia, 2014). Without the event, the NCAA would look completely different and far less profitable than their current system. Because of this it is essential to look at the strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and potential threats the event may face. This event should be seen as an opportunity to showcase the NCAA and show the core values of the organization and show what they are all about.

Project Market

Strengths

- Brand: The NCAA and more specifically "March Madness" are internationally known
- Lack of competition: The NCAA has no real competitors at the collegiate level
- Star power: Some of the best amateur players in the country as well as some of the most famous coaches in the country are frequently playing in the tournament
- TV Contract: The NCAA was \$681 million by CBS/Turner to cover last season's tournament (Alesia, 2014)
- Advertising: The 2013 NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament generated \$1.15 billion dollars in ad revenue (Horovitz, 2014)

-Predetermined Location: Having the location of the championship decided ahead of time increases revenue

-Major International Media Coverage: The event has a large amount of exposure with nearly every media outlet in the United States and many across the globe

Weaknesses

-NBA Age Limit: The rule allows athletes declare for the NBA Draft, diluting the talent lowering the average age of players

-Impact on Host City: The average host city has seen a reduction in real income of \$44.28 million as a consequence of the event (Waldron, 2012)

-Lack of Focus on Student-Athlete “Balance”: It is not consistent with NCAA core values

-Rotating Location: This keeps the event from having the same staff for every event and does not allow a certain city to really take ownership of the event (like Omaha and the College World Series)

Opportunities

-Growth in TV Contracts: TV contracts for major sports have been on the rise

-Increase in Ad Revenue: Corporate sponsorships continue to grow

-Potential NBA Age Limit Increase: NBA commissioner Adam Silver has proposed increasing the age limit from 19 to 20 which would increase talent level in the college ranks (Reyes, 2014)

Threats

- O'Bannon Lawsuit: The NCAA is now required to pay athletes in some form for their likenesses in video games and merchandise (Berkowitz, 2014)
- Potential Unionizing of Players: This could eventually lead to players being paid and parity being hurt
- Potential for Major Programs to break off: Generally refers to college football but could also affect the college basketball landscape (less likely now with the recent changes to the power five conferences)

This information is crucial in developing a product placement as the information will show ways in which the event can improve as well as certain opportunities to do so. The big point that came up in the SWOT Analysis was increasing the visibility of the values of the NCAA. The Final Four does an excellent job in exemplifying the athletic side of achievement but leaves a lot to be desired when it comes to the academic and social sides of achievement.

Position

The NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament reaches their audience through strong name recognition. Terms such as "March Madness", "Sweet 16", "Elite Eight" and "Final Four" are easily recognizable for even those who are not generally sports fans. This brand recognition makes word-of-mouth marketing possible and effective as the amount of people talking about the tournament is significant. The NCAA also releases their logos for the Final Four far before the tournament begin which allows for the visual recognition of that logo to grow. Huffington Post pointed out that this combination "gets advertisers excited by the prospect of reaching a much larger, highly-engaged audience of fans and non-fans alike -- enabling them to leverage their marketing investment" (Kalb, 2015, para. 5).

Pick Players

TV ratings are likely a more holistic view of the full audience than ticket sales in the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament as TV ratings cover a global audience as opposed to just a local audience. The TV ratings in recent tournaments have seen similar increases which means it should be reasonable to set goals to continue increases going forward.

Sara Bibel of *TV by the Numbers* (2014) said:

Turner Sports and CBS Sports' exclusive presentation of the 2014 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball National Semifinals (Saturday, April 5) across TBS, TNT and truTV delivered the two most-watched college basketball telecasts in cable television history. The networks' collective coverage of Kentucky against Wisconsin grossed 16.3 million total viewers and an 11.0 HH coverage rating to become the most-viewed college basketball game of all time on a cable television network, based on Nielsen Fast Nationals. The telecast peaked with an average of 18.6 million total viewers and a 12.7 HH coverage rating from 11:00-11:30 PM, ET.

In addition to the record-breaking television audience, the National Semifinals delivered unprecedented growth across March Madness Live. The two games – including Connecticut against Florida as the first game of the doubleheader – netted 3.8 million live streams for an increase of 76% over last year. The doubleheader also combined to register more than one million hours of live video consumed, up 37% over 2013. According to Social Guide, the National Semifinals tallied more than 1.8 million tweets – that were seen by nearly 200 million followers – for a 36% increase over last year (Bibel, 2014, para. 1-2).

More specifically, the television viewers can be broken down into five major market segments. According to Experian Marketing Services, the five biggest market segments include the “dream weavers”, “enterprising couples”, “small town success”, “America’s wealthiest” and “America’s farmlands” (Schneider, 2011). Dream weavers are defined as “affluent, suburban professionals with school-aged children” (Schneider, 2011). The next group, the enterprising couples group, includes “married couples with and without children living in upper-middle class commuter communities” (Schneider, 2011). The small town success group is “college educated and white collar couples living in newer subdivisions outside of the nation’s beltways” (Schneider, 2011). America’s wealthiest group is self-explanatory in the sense that the group is comprised of the wealthiest people across the country. The final group comes from America’s farmland and includes “people with middle-class incomes living in older, single family homes in and around remote farming communities” (Schneider, 2011). In more general terms, men are more likely to watch the tournament than women by a ratio of 2.5 to 1 (Schneider, 2012).

Package

The packaging for the NCAA Men’s Basketball Tournament is already somewhat set with the television contract with CBS/Turner that is set to last for another decade. That leaves just the ticket sales aspect of packaging. One aspect of the tournament that differs from most professional sporting events is that multiple games are generally blocked together with tickets sold for the full session. This allows for one ticket to give fans entries for two games instead of one. While part of the crowd may only be interested in watching a certain game in the session, the ticket packaging increases the chances that people stay for multiple games. The marketing plan moving forward should continue to use the system of selling tickets for sessions instead of specific games as long as the demand for tickets does not grow well higher than the capacity for

early round games. If that point is reached, then the ticket plan would be re-evaluated to see if changes were necessary.

Price

Tickets sales have been on the rise consistently in the recent past. With the Final Four specifically, sellouts are a virtual certainty. This means that the measure of “ticket sales” is through the prices of tickets on the secondary market. Obviously, this does not affect how much money the NCAA will make, but the measure does serve as an indicator of the popularity of the contest. TiqIQ showed that the 2013 tournament had a 203% increase from 2012 in average ticket secondary ticket prices (Lawrence, 2013).

Forbes reported a week before the 2015 NCAA Tournament that the original average ticket price for an all-sessions strip for the Final Four was \$1,363 with the lowest price at \$358, but had increased on the secondary market to an average of \$1,353 and a low of \$215 for just the semifinal games and an average of \$1,073 and a minimum of \$170 for the championship (Lawrence, 2015). Overall, the average price of tickets for the entire tournament registered in at \$344 (Lawrence, 2015). With prices on the consistently, the plan would call for the price to increase yearly at a small increase until attendance begins to level off or shrink. The 2014 attendance figures as shown by the NCAA for the entire tournament registered in at 739,189 for the 36 sessions for an average of 20,533 (“2014 NCAA Men’s Basketball Attendance”, NCAA, 2014).

Promotion

The plan for implementation has multiple layers to fulfill different aspects of the marketing plan. The first layer is implementing the community aspect of the plan. The NCAA

should, starting this upcoming year, implement the same system that is used at the Division II level with community engagement. This will require all participating teams to visit a local school during their stay in the host city and speak to the students about how to be a successful student-athlete. Instilling the importance of education in young kids is one of the best, easy ways to better fulfill the core purpose of the NCAA in the event.

The most obvious way to promote the core purpose is through the use of social media. The NCAA has already taken steps to do so but they should continue to improve on it. The recent hiring of a staff that has the sole responsibility of managing social media at events is a way in which that target demographic can continue to flourish. Last year's semifinal round netted 1.8 million tweets that reached nearly 200 million followers which means that visibility is massive on that platform (Bibel, 2014). Continuing to add content and interesting information via that platform will go a long way.

An effective way to improve the social media aspect of the implementation of the core purpose into the marketing of the event is to look to increase the number of staff in that department and bettering the social media product. There would not be any suggested immediate changes, but after this upcoming year the data of the next tournament would be reviewed before determining the necessary growth in staff. As of March 2015, the NCAA "March Madness" Facebook fan page had 749,000 fans, which does not include all of the fans of other pages such as the general NCAA page, the CBS Sports page as well as many other tournament-related pages (Kalb, 2015). The Twitter account also has over 250,000 followers and a YouTube search yields 529,000 results for "March Madness" (Kalb, 2015). This data makes it clear that advertising through social media is an extremely viable option for marketing major events.

The third part of implementation of the core purpose into the marketing plan would come through a few other types of advertising. Signage would be essential to cover both of the target changes. Placing billboards, signs or ads online celebrating the student-athletes who have excelled in the classroom could be a way to show that aspect of the plan. This should help broaden the spectrum of people watching as well as shift the focus of the event. The second type of advertising would help direct to the social media sites with mentions of the NCAA's hashtags as well as Twitter handle, Facebook page and Instagram. This should help further reach the 18-34 year old target audience.

One major advantage of the marketing plan for the NCAA is the fact that the tournament has pre-selected sites which allow for much more preparation and marketing. This allows for advanced advertising through local newspapers and locations to promote that event. The pre-selection of sites also allows for better community engagements and inclusion of local organizations ("Non-Predetermined Preliminary Round Host Information", NCAA, 2014, p. 1).

Place

Marketing of the tournament extends well beyond just the local sites in which the games are played as the tournament has a global reach. This means that ticket sales and efforts should not be limited to only being distributed and marketed locally but globally via the internet. Many attendees to any given game are not locals, which makes the plan for distribution and sales essential to reach them. The major demand for tickets along with the travel plans that may be required with buying tickets mean that tickets need to go on sale months before the event dates. While this system is not ideal considering that teams do not know where they are playing or if they are even in the tournament until the week leading up to the tournament, the early ticket

release still is important for the general fan that is not planning to see a specific team to make their travel plans early.

It is important for ticket buyers to have a variety of options in how they can receive their tickets. As is the case with many professional sporting events, the actual tickets can be received via mail, email or on-site through will call. Along with that, tickets should be available for purchase on the phone, online and on-site in the months leading up to the event. That accessibility is important to reach as wide of a demographic as possible.

On the side of viewing capabilities for those that are not on-site, it is also important to create as many possible avenues to gain access to the events.

Ira Kalb of *Huffington Post* (2015) points out how this has been done recently by saying: Media coverage has grown to four television networks (CBS, TNT, TBS and truTV) and numerous radio and online websites, such as cbssports.com and ncaa.com -- enabling fans to watch the games and interact with each other on their mobile devices. This year, March Madness is also coming to YouTube with its own channel - [YouTube.com/MarchMadness](https://www.youtube.com/MarchMadness). The NCAA also offers March Madness Live (MML) with over 150 hours of enhanced coverage. In 2014, March Madness Live had 64 million video streams -- a 40 percent increase over 2013. These produced a whopping 13.5 million hours of live streaming, which was a 7 percent increase in traffic over the previous year (Kalb, 2015, para. 5).

Promise: Evaluation of Strategy and Tactics

The key to evaluating the success of any marketing plan is to have measurable and attainable goals in the plan often referred to as SMART goals. *Gaebler Adventures* describes the

SMART method as creating a goal that is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timed (Lang, 2015). With the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament along with any other major sporting events can be somewhat difficult to evaluate success. The biggest factors of success that to evaluate would be ticket sales, merchandise sales, and television ratings. The goal for the plan is an increase in ticket revenue and an increase in TV ratings both locally in the United States and internationally in each of the next five years. These numbers can be easily accessed which helps them in being usable sources of data.

The tournament has reached a point where the event is easily recognizable all across the country even with those that are not generally sports fans. This makes marketing the event easy in the sense of that the tournament is well-known by a large percentage of the population, but difficult because of the huge scale in which the event is now marketed. If recent trends continue, the event will only grow more which will push the necessity for a strong marketing plan even more. The overall goal for the event is to keep growing the event moving forward and avoid seeing any leveling off or shrinking in popularity any time soon.

Chapter Four: Employee/Volunteer Planning

In the world of major college athletics, success is the driving force behind all hiring and retaining of staff members (Brady, 2012). The cut-throat, competitive nature of the job field creates for a massively high turnover rate with coaching staffs both with successful coaches looking to move up and struggling coaches getting let go (Brady, 2012). One of the biggest marks of the most successful programs in the country is the continuity of their coaching staffs (Brady, 2012). The question that many up-and-coming programs run into is how to retain their successful coaching staffs and keep their programs doing well (Brady, 2012).

This task can become especially difficult when programs reach the pinnacle of the sport and make it to the Final Four. Making a trip to the final weekend of the season can validate a program and elevate a head coach to a higher status (Brady, 2012). With such an influx of media attention during tournament time, coaches can see their value shift greatly depending on the outcome of their team, such as Shaka Smart at VCU (Brady, 2012).

One way that programs can reward their coaches and keep them around after successful tournament runs is through pay incentives. Many of the major programs have bonuses in place that trigger when coaches lead their teams far into the tournament. The current Final Four has provided a great example of this as all four head coaches netted at least \$100,000 in bonuses for reaching the national semifinals (Smith, 2014). The biggest bonus was handed out to University of Kentucky head coach John Calipari. Calipari received \$100,000 for reaching the Sweet 16 and \$175,000 for reaching the Final Four (Smith, 2014). He also would earn \$375,000 more in incentives by winning the national championship (Smith, 2014). The importance of reaching the NCAA Tournament, especially the Final Four, is evident in the example of Kentucky because fans of the program generally thought that the team had a disappointing regular season with a

record of 22-9 heading into tournament action (Smith, 2014). This kind of reward system for successful coaches can make a big difference in keeping them happy as well as keeping them on board, but the system is far from the only technique programs use to keep their coaches.

Back in 2011, mid-major program Virginia Commonwealth made a historic run to the Final Four after being one of the last teams selected to the tournament field. The run turned a lightly regarded program with no national attention into a household name in a hurry. On the bench for the Rams was 34 year old head coach Shaka Smart. The rapid rise to relevance did not stop at just the program as Smart vaulted to the top of many major programs' wish list as their next head coach. VCU had their hands full trying to figure out a way to keep Smart from leaving to take another job. The way they were able to retain him was by getting creative and giving him a unique offer that he could not refuse. VCU kept his base salary the same, but offered him a major pay raise in supplemental salary and extended his contract through 2028 (Woody, 2013). They also added more incentives for both tournament success as well as national media coverage. In addition, Smart also received a number of other financial incentives for doing interviews as well as other media and community engagements (Woody, 2013). The most unique part of the offer was a clause that essentially guaranteed job support and kept VCU from being able to fire him based on performance (Woody, 2013).

In addition to the obvious financial incentives that helped retain Smart, VCU used two other effective tactics that help retain successful employees in any role. The first tactic is creating job security. Convincing quality employees that they do not have to look over their shoulder wondering if they are going to be fired goes a long way in keeping employees comfortable. The feeling of knowing that an employee's position is stable is a major reason why many people choose not to leave their current position. That uncertainty of not being guaranteed a spot is a

scary thing. College programs tend to do this by offering large buyouts for contracts to make it more difficult for them to decide to fire a coach. The buyout also ensures that coaches will be compensated well if they are let go.

The other major thing that VCU did was make Shaka Smart feel valued. The offer was more than just concrete benefits, the offer was an indicator that they valued him as a coach and they wanted him around. Employees who do not feel like their employers appreciate what they are doing for their respective company is much more likely to want to leave and go to a place where their hard work is noticed. Doing this as an employer is a little less practical in exactly how to do it, but simply acknowledging good work can have a major impact.

Another major way that programs can keep their successful coaches around, or bring in successful coaches from elsewhere, is making the program an attractive destination. The University of Minnesota men's basketball program hired a new head coach in the spring of 2013, and as a part of that process they promised some improvements to the conditions of the position. The Gophers built in a budget that allowed their head coach to make recruiting trips on a private jet as opposed to on commercial flights (Rand, 2013). The University of Minnesota Athletic Administration also announced the plans to build a new practice facility by 2021 to help both recruiting as well as increasing the comfort level for practice ("Gophers unveil athletic facilities needs assessment, plan", 2013).

Making the workplace a better and more enjoyable place to come can also convince a successful employee to stay. Whether that means offering a better office, a company car, or numerous other perks, the benefits can make it hard to leave. College coaching is a unique job field that requires many different strategies to maintain stability and continuity for both coach and program alike.

Chapter Five: Risk Management Plan

With an event like the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament that features 63 games played at venues all across the country, developing a sound risk management plan becomes an essential practice (Cotten & Wolohan, 2010, p. 283). The need for a strong risk management plan culminates in the Final Four as the last three games of the tournament have consistently been played in stadiums built for football with a portable court as well as portable seating that are used to alter the venue to make for a more fan-friendly experience. The risk management plan must take into account the game day staff, security, fans in attendance, as well as the participating teams to ensure the safety of everyone involved in the process. Because, primarily for the Final Four, these venues generally do not host basketball games, the logistics mean that these risk management plans must be, to an extent, developed from scratch.

The first place to start with a risk management plan is with an audit of the facility. "Development of a recreation facility risk management plan starts with a room-by-room inspection, where you try to anticipate the worst that could possibly happen" ("A risk management plan starts with a facility audit", Wolohan, 2006, para. 1). An audit requires the event manager to visit the site well in advance of the event to get an idea of the areas that could be of concern moving forward. The event manager must also return to inspect the facility in the time directly before the event begins to see if any other areas of concern have come up. Not all areas of risk can be identified until the venue is set up for the event ("A risk management plan starts with a facility audit", Wolohan, 2006).

A major example of risk that developed during event set-up occurred leading up to the Super Bowl in 2011 at Cowboys Stadium in Dallas. In setting up for the event, the staff was unable to finish securing all of the portable seating which led to 1,250 seats being deemed unsafe

for fans to use (Gray, 2011). As a result, 400 fans were unable to attend the game and were offered tickets to the Super Bowl in 2012 and refunded money three times face value of their tickets or a free ticket to a future Super Bowl of the fan's choice, plus compensation for travel and hotel (Gray, 2011). A group of angry fans that were denied entry eventually threatened to sue the league in addition to receiving their compensation (Gray, 2011).

Because of the similarities in the need to alter the set-up and add seating for the Final Four, the event managers of the event need to stay ahead of the game and ensure that ample time is available to avoid any issues like the 2011 Super Bowl. One step that the NCAA has taken to create a fallback plan if major issues arise is setting Indianapolis as the permanent backup site for the NCAA Division I Men's and Women's Basketball Tournaments as well as the NCAA Convention ("NCAA inks Indianapolis as Final Four fallback", NCAA, 2004). Butler University and Indiana University-Purdue University at Indianapolis, both located in Indianapolis, have been tabbed as the host schools if a situation was to arise ("NCAA inks Indianapolis as Final Four fallback", NCAA, 2004). In addition, the Horizon League and NCAA staff located at the national office in Indianapolis would be available to staff the events if necessary ("NCAA inks Indianapolis as Final Four fallback", NCAA, 2004).

At Lucas Oil Stadium, the home of the 2015 NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Final Four, there were a few areas of concern that stick out above the rest. The first area of concern was the elevated floor. The portable floor brought in for the event was elevated 29 inches above the normal playing surface in order to improve the sight lines for fans in attendance (Beard, 2015). The elevated floor presented the issue of player injury as players are at risk of sliding or falling off the edge of the court and injuring themselves. Because there is not really anything that can be done to completely eliminate that risk, the plan shifts to increasing the medical staff on

hand to deal with a potential injury stemming from that risk to avoid too much liability. The next major area of concern was the 7,000 portable seats that were put in place on field level near the floor (Beard, 2015). The issue with the portable seating was two-fold in that the portable seating increased risk of a potential malfunction or failure of those sections as well as added 7,000 more fans than normal for crowd management to handle. The plan for making sure that the portable seating is secure is a simple one. The event management staff needs to inspect the portable seating after the completion of set-up and again shortly before fans arrive for the event. As far as the crowd management aspect goes, the plan should call for additional crowd management staff, additional custodial staff, additional concessions areas and staff as well as additional security to ensure that the event and the crowd do not get out of hand. Because these sections are designated for students of the competing schools, the need becomes even more essential and requires an increase in staff.

While it is important to develop a risk management plan in advance of the tournament, two additional aspects of risk management must be considered. The development aspect represents the “D” in the D.I.M. process of risk management. *Law for Recreation and Sports Managers* states that “the D.I.M. process was developed as a tool to establish an effective risk management program” (Cotten & Wolohan, 2010, p. 283). Along with the “D” for developing a plan, the “I” stands for “implementing a risk management plan, and the “M” stands for “managing the risk management plan” (Cotten & Wolohan, 2010, p. 283).

After identifying risks in the venue such as the elevated playing surface, the portable bleachers and the additional fans in attendance, and developing a plan of action for how to handle those risks, those plans must be put into play in the implementation stage. Cotten and Wolohan (2010) said of the implementation of a risk management plan that “effective

communication is a key factor” (Cotten & Wolohan, 2010, p. 289). With the plan to limit the risk of the elevated surface being additional medical staff on hand, the implementation is ensuring that the additional staff is present for the events. The implementation of securing the portable seating sections is, as an event manager, finding staff to walk through the seating bowl to review the set-up on both occasions laid out in the plan. The crowd management aspect is implemented through training the staff and spreading out the respective staffs into the areas in which they are assigned to be working.

The final aspect of a risk management plan comes through managing the plan itself. Since not every risk can be eliminated because of the nature of risk at events of this size, there needs to be an event management staff on site ready to handle any crises that come up during the event. With events of this magnitude, there are bound to be issues that crop up. Cotten and Wolohan (2010) pointed out that “even though many risks can be identified, classified, and treated, some hazards will still exist and accidents will occur” and that “it is impossible and unrealistic to expect a risk manager to eliminate all injuries and financial loss” (Cotten & Wolohan, 2010, p. 291). Risk managers need to be constantly on their toes and ready to alter a plan or react to an unexpected situation as the need occurs. Staying on top of managing the risk can make a major difference in limiting the damage that occurs with these situations.

For an event like the Final Four, security is a key part of the risk management plan. A good plan for how to utilize the risks involved with crowd management with over 70,000 people in an over-capacity venue is essential for avoiding dangerous situations. To ensure the safety of all that are attending, the NCAA has enacted strict security measures for fans entering the stadium. At Lucas Oil Stadium in 2015, the NCAA put in place a policy that prohibits any bags larger than a clutch purse unless the bag is a clear plastic bag (“2015 NCAA Final Four Security

Policies”, Lucas Oil Stadium, 2015). The security policy also states that animals, bottles, can and beverage containers of any size, alcoholic beverages, outside food, fireworks, firearms and weapons of any kind, laser pointers, noisemakers or noise-making devices of any kind, signs, flags on sticks or poles, or larger than one person can hold, video cameras, tripods, monopods and cameras with a lens longer than 4” as well as chairs, stools or other seating devices are all prohibited in the stadium (“2015 NCAA Final Four Security Policies”, Lucas Oil Stadium, 2015). This policy goes a step above standard bag search policies at most professional events to create as safe of an environment as possible.

A controversial policy that the NCAA has in place for the tournament is the no-alcohol policy. Despite hosting the Final Four at professional football stadiums that are equipped to sell alcohol, the stadiums are prohibited to sell alcohol at the event (Dickson, 2014). The policy also requires the stadium to remove or cover up any advertising for alcohol, cigarettes, or other products “that do not appear to be in the best interests of higher education” (Dickson, 2014, para. 5). The NCAA’s reasoning for the no-alcohol policy is the desire not to promote alcohol use for underage college students that are attending the events (Dickson, 2014). While some of the pushback from the public is that people will try to sneak in alcohol or drink beforehand as well as the fact that the alcohol ban results in a major loss of revenue, the NCAA still stands by their policy (Dickson, 2014). Even though there may still be drunken fans at the event, this policy still lowers that risk in the big picture and helps reduce the chance of crowd control issues.

Another crowd control measure that is in place to push fans as well as staff into the right areas and avoid confusion is credentialing. Populous, the company that helped design Lucas Oil Stadium along with several other venues that have hosted the Final Four helps the NCAA by creating a zoning plan for different types of credentials in events held in their facilities. Populous

states that “design of a successful event must include a plan for managing the access program for teams, staff, media, broadcast and spectators” and that “for the Final Four, this is particularly important and can be quite complex, as it includes managing a significant number of individuals, including athletes and coaching staff” (Klein, 2013, para. 5). With over 22,000 credentials being issued, the credentials help security easily identify individuals and make quick decisions about whether that individual has access to a given area (Klein, 2013). Not only does this help security monitor areas more easily, but credentialing also increases the ease of traffic flow and helps avoid blockages and overflow in certain busy areas of the stadium.

Along with credentialing, signage is a major factor in facilitating the crowd comes through signage. Because the venue is not set up the same as it is for football games, it is important to create clear, temporary signage that directs everyone in the right direction. It is a better strategy to over-communicate via signage than it is to under-communicate as over-communicating helps avoid confusion and chaos. Populous states, “The signage and way finding package is designed to ensure people can get from any point on the site to any of our venues or events without having to go to a central point for information” (Klein, 2013, para. 6). Fans are guaranteed to be unfamiliar with the layout considering the circumstances so the demand for signage will be especially high at the Final Four.

The final step in the plan is making sure that there is coverage for any accidents that may occur. One program that has been created through a partnership with Ascension Insurance, Mutual of Omaha and Summit America is the “NCAA Group Basic Accident Medical Program” (Peters, 2007). This plan was a part of a bigger initiative for the NCAA to “improve management of athletics risks in the college and university setting,” “increase safety in college and university athletics,” “reduce liability exposures and financial costs for higher educational institutions,” and

“increase protection of the higher educational institution’s overall reputation” (Peters, 2007, para. 7). This policy gives the NCAA and their participating schools coverage in case of catastrophic injuries, which is necessary coverage to have for all major events.

While it is impossible to negate all risk at an event like the Final Four, steps can be made to limit that risk as much as possible. In order for those steps to be taken, there needs to be a lot of preparation and work put into identify the potential risks. Once those steps are decided, event managers need to follow through and implement a system and puts the steps into action. Once all is done to prevent that risk, the event managers need to be ready to face any issues that may arise throughout the event. Cotten and Wolohan (2010) summed up the need for a good risk management plan well by saying, “by developing an extensive risk management plan, implementing the plan, and bestowing the authority to manage the plan upon a concerned risk manager, recreation and sport managers can diminish a number of dangerous risks” (Cotten & Wolohan, 2010, p. 291).

Chapter Six: Ethical Analysis

The NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament has long been one of the biggest sports gambling events in the United States. Every year, millions of Americans fill out brackets and pick the winners of the tournament and compete against co-workers, family members and even complete strangers in an attempt to fill out the best possible bracket. According to CNBC, pregame.com estimated that over \$12 billion was spent in bracket wagers last year alone (Koba, 2014). That \$12 billion figure includes nearly \$3 million in illegal wagers done through office pools (Koba, 2014). March Madness betting caters to the general public more than nearly any other event as filling out a bracket requires very little background knowledge to be successful. This past year, Warren Buffett even offered to pay anyone who filled out a perfect bracket a billion dollars. Gambling is clearly just as deeply engrained in college basketball's marquee event as the games that take place throughout the four weeks of action.

One institution that takes infractions in regards to March Madness brackets is the NCAA. NCAA Bylaw 10.3 (2007) stated:

The following individuals shall not knowingly participate in sports wagering activities or provide information to individuals involved in or associated with any type of sports wagering activities concerning intercollegiate, amateur or professional athletics competition: (Adopted: 1/8/07 effective 8/1/07)

(a) Staff members of an institution's athletics department;

- (b) Nonathletics department staff members who have responsibilities within or over the athletics department (e.g., chancellor or president, faculty athletics representative, individual to whom athletics reports);
- (c) Staff members of a conference office; and
- (d) Student-athletes.

The NCAA does not take this rule lightly as they offer a minimum suspension of one calendar year for any student-athlete who breaks this rule. There is risk in allowing student-athletes to bet on NCAA events, but the policy remains a highly debated policy. Athletes participating in a given sport should not be allowed to bet on the sport that they play, but what about every other athlete?

The ethical dilemma at hand is whether or not college athletes should be permitted to bet on college sports in which they are not participating. Looking at three different ethical theories, not all of these theories seem to line up with the same answer.

The first ethical theory is consequentialism. Sinnott-Armstrong in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2014) stated:

Consequentialism, as its name suggests, is the view that normative properties depend only on consequences. This general approach can be applied at different levels to different normative properties of different kinds of things, but the most prominent example is consequentialism about the moral rightness of acts, which holds that whether an act is morally right depends only on the consequences of that act or of something

related to that act, such as the motive behind the act or a general rule requiring acts of the same kind (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2014, para. 1).

To simplify this definition, consequences define whether or not an act is morally right. In the topic of college athletes betting on March Madness, the argument can be made that betting is okay. The potential negative consequences of allowing non-participating athletes to fill out March Madness brackets and enter into pools could be argued to be outweighed by the positives. Potential negatives include rigged pools that allow boosters to give athletes improper benefits to athletes and fellow athletes possibly convincing the players on a competing team to throw a game for financial benefit. Neither of these things seems very likely and could even be argued to be positive outcomes for someone to abide by this theory. The positive consequences of financial gain, joy of competing, and group camaraderie can be argued to outweigh those negatives and therefore justify betting on other sports being allowed by the NCAA.

The second theory is deontology. Deontology is quite a different view than consequentialism as the theory is defined by Alexander in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2012):

The word deontology derives from the Greek words for duty (*deon*) and science (or study) of (*logos*). In contemporary moral philosophy, deontology is one of those kinds of normative theories regarding which choices are morally required, forbidden, or permitted. In other words, deontology falls within the domain of moral theories that guide and assess our choices of what we ought to do (deontic theories), in contrast to (aretic [virtue] theories) that—fundamentally, at least—guide and assess what kind of person (in terms of character traits) we are and should be. And within that domain, deontologists—

those who subscribe to deontological theories of morality—stand in opposition to consequentialists (Alexander, 2012, para. 1).

Deontology strictly adheres to the rules and views them as the ultimate indicator of right and wrong. Seeing that the view flies in the face of consequentialism, so does the decision on the topic of college athletes betting on March Madness. Because the NCAA has rules in place that outlaw any sports gambling for college athletes, then it is clear that the deontology view would condemn the action of doing it. If there were to come a point in which that rule was to be abolished and betting would be allowed according to the rules, then betting would be okay in this theory.

The final theory is virtue ethics. Virtue ethics is defined by Hursthouse in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2013):

Virtue ethics is currently one of three major approaches in normative ethics. It may, initially, be identified as the one that emphasizes the virtues, or moral character, in contrast to the approach which emphasizes duties or rules (deontology) or that which emphasizes the consequences of actions (consequentialism). Suppose it is obvious that someone in need should be helped. A utilitarian will point to the fact that the consequences of doing so will maximize well-being, a deontologist to the fact that, in doing so the agent will be acting in accordance with a moral rule such as “Do unto others as you would be done by” and a virtue ethicist to the fact that helping the person would be charitable or benevolent (Hursthouse, 2013, para. 1).

This theory is not nearly as cut-and-dry as the other two theories on the topic of betting on March Madness because the theory allows for more of a judgment call than the other two. The

argument could be made that entering into a March Madness pool is a benevolent act that can result in financial gain that can be used to benefit, and that argument would be hard to debate. But ultimately, a virtuous person would most likely choose not to enter into a bracket pool simply because gambling is generally viewed as a non-ethical act that generally does not benefit people. While in some rare cases athletes could fill out a bracket with the intent to help others, those intentions are not likely to be the norm and therefore is not a good enough rationale for virtue ethics to be on that side.

The topic of college athletes participating in March Madness bracket pools is an open debate depending on value systems. Opinions are often split between the different views of consequentialism (Sinnott-Armstrong, 2014), deontology (Alexander, 2012), and virtue ethics (Hursthouse, 2013), which make this topic a clear ethical dilemma that is very much in question. Both sides of the argument can be easily argued depending on the ethical theory of choice of a given individual.

Chapter Seven: Personal Statement

Throughout my time in the Sport Management program at Concordia, I have learned a great deal about leadership and the characteristics that make a person a good leader. Coming into the program, my only real experiences with studying leadership came through witnessing the way that good leaders in my personal experience do things. The past two years have taught me what made those leaders great and have set the stage to help me develop my own leadership style in the future. I came into my time as a graduate student with very little idea of what my strengths were and very little idea of where I was headed upon graduation, but I find myself in much better position in both aspects than when I began. Moving forward, I have more of a vision of where I see myself in the next five years than ever before and I have my experiences over the last two years to thank for that. Some of the more helpful lessons I have learned in the topic of leadership have come over the past six weeks. Kouzes and Posner's *The Leadership Challenge* (2012) has been very beneficial in understanding what makes a leader successful and has given me a fresh perspective on what it takes to reach that point while Northouse's *Leadership: Theory and Practice* (2013) has shown me how many different forms leadership can take while providing a glimpse at a large number of styles. These two books have provided a solid cap to my learning experience throughout the program.

Originally, I decided that pursuing higher education was the best thing for me because graduate school gave me the tremendous opportunity to grow in my knowledge of the industry, both through learning as well as through experience. Upon graduating from Concordia with a bachelor's degree in Kinesiology with a Sport Management track, I was offered a position as a graduate assistant in the Sports Information Department at Concordia. I had worked for a year as an intern in the department and was thrilled at the opportunity to continue gaining experience in

the field. I also felt like I had just scratched the surface of learning in the classroom with my undergraduate studies and really looked forward to gain an advanced knowledge in that regard. Nobody in my family has ever pursued a degree beyond their bachelor's degree so it was uncharted territory for me. In the end, it was an extremely easy decision to move forward with my education.

Coming into the program, I had two main goals that I wanted to achieve with the experience. This first goal was to get to know other individuals in the program, both students and professors, and learn from their experiences in their careers. I was immediately excited to see that many of my classmates were older and have already has experiences working in the field before pursuing the degree. Having those early interactions only furthered my desire to learn from the experiences of those around me. The second major goal that I had was finding the specific track within the field that I wanted to pursue. My only personal experience before coming into the program was a little bit of coaching youth baseball and working as a Sports Information Intern for a year. I knew that I liked sports information a lot but I also wanted to dig deeper into my options and see what else I could do and what other options I had. When I saw the variety of the courses in the program, I knew the program would give me the opportunity to see a large number of different positions.

I've seen my personal leadership style change quite a bit over the last two years as I've been learning to adapt to the needs of my department. My time in the department and in the program has helped me develop where I need to be and where I hope to be going forward in my career. Part of the process of learning about my leadership style has extended beyond learning what my strengths are to also understand what areas I need to grow in to become a better leader.

Leaders need to be well-rounded and versatile and I definitely have a lot of room to grow in that area.

One of the more helpful evaluation tools for my leadership style came early in the course in looking at the skill approach. I found the three-skill approach to be a simplified analysis of what skills match up best with what leadership role. Northouse looked into the research of Robert Katz from *Skills of an Effective Administration* (1955) to show the value of the three skills, stating, “Based on field research in administration and his own firsthand observations of executives in the workplace, Katz suggested that effective administration (i.e., leadership) depends on three basic personal skills: technical, human, and conceptual.” Technical skill is defined as “knowledge about and proficiency in a specific type of work or activity. It includes competencies in a specialized area, analytical ability, and the ability to use appropriate tools and techniques (Katz, 1955, p. 34).” Human skill is defined as “knowledge about and ability to work with people. It is quite different from technical skill, which has to do with working with things (Katz, 1955, p. 34).” Finally, conceptual skill is defined as “the ability to work with ideas and concepts. Whereas technical skills deal with things and human skills deal with people, conceptual skills involve the ability to work with ideas.” One of the major positives of this leadership approach is the fact that skills can be developed and acquired. Unlike traits or many other subjects of leadership evaluation, skills evaluation gives a guide for leaders to see areas in which they can grow. This makes the skills inventory a motivator as opposed to something that might discourage a leader if they are lacking in a given area.

The results from my skills inventory (Northouse, 2013, p. 69) described fairly accurately what I would have guessed for myself. I scored highest in the human skill category with the technical skill category close behind while the conceptual skill category lagged behind the other

two by quite a bit. The assessment results line up directly with supervisory management, which is where I see myself headed in the immediate future. It is encouraging to see that I am well-equipped for that but I want to be looking further ahead at higher level positions that may become available to me. In order to best strive for higher roles I must learn to develop my conceptual skills. I often tend to back other people's ideas and work in support of decision makers and have rarely been the "idea" person myself. Because I am not in a position currently that allows for me to be that person, I want to practice those skills by thinking and constructing what decisions I would make and ideas I would come up with if I were in a higher position of leadership. That will be extremely beneficial in the long term as it will help me develop the conceptual skills, but it will also help me in the short term as it will keep me engaged with everything that is going on and will make me ready if my opinion is ever needed.

Another leadership approach that really stuck out to me in the course was servant leadership. I found it intriguing to look deeper into because I am naturally more of a vocal leader who leads from the front but have found myself in a position where it is far better for me to take a back seat and lead by serving. Because I am not normally inclined to do so, I saw this as a great opportunity to see where I stand in that regard and see how I could improve in it. Northouse uses Robert Greenleaf's definition of servant leadership by saying, "[Servant leadership] begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve, to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. . . . The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant—first to make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served" (Greenleaf, 1970, p. 15).

The results of the Servant Leadership Questionnaire (Northouse, 2013, p. 245) were very telling in showing my strengths and weaknesses. My highest scores came in emotional healing and ethical behavior as I scored 24 in each category while I also scored relatively highly in

conceptual skills with a score of 21. I scored in the middle of the pack in empowering and scored at or below average in helping subordinates grow and succeed, putting subordinates first and creating value for the community. It was interesting to see the contrast from the three-skill approach where I scored much higher in the human skill category than the conceptual skill category.

The clear trend that I took from the questionnaire was that while I value the well-being of others and value things being done the right way, I do not value helping others advance and grow. I have always held strong standards of ethics and how I believe things should be done which is a definite benefit in the sense that I firmly know what I believe and will stick to it. I have also been gifted in the way that I am able to read people, which is a major benefit in my empathetic behavior. Being able to see when the individuals I am leading might need a break or a compliment or if they just need someone to talk to will serve me well in helping those I lead stay happy and productive.

The biggest conscious reason that I can come up with for the negative side of this trend stems from lack of experience. I have very little experience leading others in a professional setting which means that I do not give leadership much thought or care. I often am too concerned with making sure that my own standing in my department is secure and put my focus on that. This is a mentality that I want to look to change as soon as possible so it does not become a habit when I really am in a position to lead others. I need to understand more fully that putting other's interests ahead of my own will end up helping me as well because it will make the whole department look good. Right now, I can practice being a good servant leader by assisting those above me in any way possible. This mostly plays out through me attempting to volunteer to do anything extra in addition to what I am already doing and making sure that I am keeping my

schedule as flexible as possible to make room for any need that may arise. While I have a lot of responsibility on my own plate with my job, I never want to turn down an opportunity to help out those above me with their work if they need it. Working in that manner does not come naturally for me, but it will ultimately help me become a better and more diverse leader if I do so.

One major impact over the last few years on my leadership development has been my boss, Josh Deer. Josh is the head Sports Information Director at Concordia and has been working at the school for over 10 years. He has been a tremendous boss to work for over the past three years and I have learned a lot from him not just about my job but also about leadership in general. While Josh is strong in all of the “Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership”, he really shines in “Modeling the Way”. Kouzes and Posner said about modeling the way that “titles are granted, but it’s your behavior that earns you respect” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 26). They later add, “Exemplary leaders know that if they want to gain commitment and achieve the highest standards, they must be models of the behavior they expect of others” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 26). Josh has taught me how to excel at my job by first doing it himself. He is not afraid to get his hands dirty and put in the work to make sure that I would learn to do things the right way. Being a visual learner, it was very beneficial for me early on to see Josh work and see how he did things. He was, and still is always available to help me out if I do not know what I’m doing which makes me comfortable asking him for anything.

Another aspect of Josh’s leadership that I’ve learned from is his credibility. This is an especially important and admirable quality in a leader that is considered “the foundation of leadership” as they are “honest, competent and inspiring (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 40). Two of the three major characteristics in a credible leader are definitely in play as he is very honest and

competent. Seeing the positive influences that these characteristics have on his ability to lead, it has pushed me to pursue growing in those characteristics as a leader.

The process of evaluating my leadership skills has made it abundantly clear that I have a lot of improvement to make in the development process. The first step in the process is looking ahead to see where I could be and more importantly where I aspire to be. I need to be forward-looking and consider that even though I do not directly manage anyone now, I will most likely manage people in the not too distant future. The importance of this is emphasized in that “exemplary leaders are forward looking. They are able to envision the future, to gaze across the horizon and realize the greater opportunities to come” (Kouzes & Posner, 2012, p. 92).

I often tend to get stuck focus on the short term of what is directly in front of me at the moment which means being forward-looking is something that is a challenge for me. The first step for me is figuring out where I want to be in the next five years. Because I really enjoy my current job working as a Graduate Assistant Sports Information Director, the logical next step would be to work as a head Sports Information Director. To effective in looking ahead to that point, the best way I can do that is to put myself in the shoes of my boss and think about what decisions I would make in his position. These decisions include staffing of events, corresponding with media and others in the sports information industry, managing interns and a graduate assistant, developing or finding new ways to deliver the content to the readers along with many other responsibilities. He is also involved with bigger picture decision in the department as the athletic director and all of his assistants meet and discuss anything major. Practically, I can sit in on any meetings and ask a lot of questions pertaining to why my boss makes the decisions that he does to gain some insight into what goes into them.

In the realm of credibility-building, the biggest areas where I can increase my capacity as a leader are in my competency and my ability to inspire. While I've gained the knowledge of how to do most everything in my job, I have not fully mastered many of the skills. My goal over the next five years is that I can reach a point where all of the technical skills are second nature to me which will help me teach those under me how to do them. It is obviously very difficult to be a good teacher without having a full grasp on the content being taught. The biggest step in me becoming better at inspiring those I lead will come from growing in my desire for them to advance professionally. Being a servant leader who puts their needs above my own will help me immensely in being inspiring.

Looking back at my experiences over the past two years, the two goals that I had set at beginning of the program have been achieved. The job and life experience of the professors as well as my fellow cohort students have given me a much wider perspective of the world of athletics and have shown me the wide array of opportunities available. Being able to interact with people that have real experience in the industry has given me a peek into what actually goes on in a lot of different areas. The biggest takeaway for me was that I have gained more clarity in what I want to do moving forward. Gaining the added experience in my job along with learning more about other options has pushed me more towards the desire to stay in sports information for the long term. My job has been taxing and difficult with long hours at certain times, but I've constantly been interested in what I'm doing and have been excited to come to work every day. From what I've seen, having a career that I enjoy is something that is somewhat rare in the working world and I do not want to miss out on that.

Another major help for my future career has been the Capstone project. Taking an in-depth look into how the NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four is run has helped shape my views

of college athletics at the highest level and has shown me how things are done. It has been eye-opening and informative to compare and contrast what it looks like on that level with Concordia and the Division II level. Both through the Final Four and through D-II I've seen how important forward-looking really is in the industry. Plans need to be made for events five and even ten years in advance for them to come to fruition. Even at the Division II level, venues need to be prepped and nominated for championships years in advance.

While learning about the Final Four has been fascinating, the more beneficial aspect has been learning about the NCAA as a whole. Considering I work at an NCAA-sanctioned institution and plan to continue to do so in the future, it has been helpful to see the inner workings of the organization and how it is run. Seeing how decisions are made for the Final Four has provided a solid glimpse of how the NCAA works. Gaining that knowledge has helped me know who I'm dealing with when I've worked at various NCAA Championships for Concordia and has put a face on those I've interacted. I will continue to work with individuals from the NCAA throughout my career so this information is extremely valuable.

Leadership is a concept that I thought that I had a solid grasp on heading into the program, but I have learned so much more about the dynamics that make a great leader great. I never knew how much information was available on the topic of leadership and did not have any idea that it could be used to better myself as a leader. The increased understanding of leadership in general will go far in helping me become the best leader I can possibly be as I move forward in my career.

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APPENDIX

Table 1

Summary of Revenue Sources for the NCAA during the 2012-13 Academic Year

Source of Income	Income (Per Year)
TURNER/CBS TV CONTRACT	\$771,000,000
BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT TICKET SALES	\$82,300,000
NET INVESTMENTS INCOME	\$41,400,000
NON-BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS	\$28,300,000
MEDIA RIGHTS (ESPN)	\$24,500,000
SALES AND SERVICES	\$21,200,000
OTHER TV/MARKETING CONTRACTS	\$21,000,000
NCAA LICENSED MERCHANDISE	\$7,100,000
FACILITY CONTRIBUTIONS	\$7,000,000
BASKETBALL ANCILLARY FUNDS	\$6,100,000

Figure 1

2012-2013 NCAA Revenue Chart. This figure illustrates the percentage of revenues the NCAA receives from different sources.

