Bryant University

HONORS THESIS

Effectively Influencing Personal Financial Management and Financial Preparedness Among Athletes

BY Darnel Shillingford

ADVISOR • John Fellingham

EDITORIAL REVIEWER • Hakan Saraoglu

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Table of Contents

ABSTRACT

Professional athletes live the dream of millions of people when they sign their first contract to be paid to play sports. For many athletes, they are coming into money that many have never seen before. Handling this money can prove difficult for athletes from a personal finance standpoint, and it is imperative for them to utilize the support systems around them. However, the support systems need to be readily available to the athlete for there to be a significant impact on the budgeting and investing practices of the athlete. Empowering an athlete to take full advantage of their time in college can help them prepare for a successful post-college career in what they do best.

INTRODUCTION

Athletes are held to a very high regard amongst the public, and everything they do, especially financially, is criticized (Neuman, 1988). This scrutiny causes the athlete to focus on portraying the best version of themselves on and off the playing field, distracting them from properly handling their finances (Neuman, 1988). The expensive taste that many athletes have may not seem extravagant when they are signing 30-million-dollar contracts, but there is often an end to the contracts. Once a contract is over, it's a real possibility that a team moves on from a player for a variety of reasons. The player could not be performing well enough, be demanding too much money, or be too much of a distraction. While the player could wait for another opportunity, a more unfortunate and likely, end to a career is due to injury (Benar et al., 2013). A player can anticipate when a team might be letting them go, but nobody plans on being injured. Even if the injury is not an end to a career, the time wasted recovering from an injury, or waiting for a new contract, is still time wasted with no income (Surujlal & Van Zyl, 2014). The injury period can also damage the mindset of a player and offset them from taking in consideration the potential end of their career (Surujlal & Van Zyl, 2014).

Often, a major problem is that many athletes have never experienced a need to budget their money (Cohen et al., 2019). For a majority of the athletes, budgeting was never seen as important, whether it was because of their financial situation or their overall attitude towards money. Budgeting is not the easiest task, and when athletes are given millions of dollars at the start of their careers, they expect to continue earning money at this rate for many more years (Cohen et al., 2019). To ask them to save for the future and perhaps even invest their money is an intense ask, especially if they have never done it before. However, once an athlete has experienced success in handling their personal finances, they are likely to continue to improve their financial literacy (Jessica et al., 2021) Getting an athlete to start budgeting may be difficult, but once they experience success, it can change their life (Cohen et al., 2019; Jessica et al., 2021).

Even if they do not go on to play a professional sport, in certain areas of the workforce, college athletes tend to make more money than their university counterparts who don't play sports (Henderson et al., 2006). College athletes often make substantial incomes following their collegiate careers. The mistakes of professional athletes with their finances are not a new problem in the sports world, but the problems are prevalent still. Teaching proper budgeting to professional athletes before the problem sets in could limit future financial mistakes (Brau et al., 2019).

The purpose of this study is to identify ways to improve the financial literacy of post-college athletes before they enter the workforce. About 10% of the general population filed for bankruptcy over the course of 25 years, and 37% of NFL players have admittedly never planned for their future (Cohen et al., 2016; Flynn, 2014). People are struggling to handle their financial responsibilities and college athletes have garnered skills over their lives that can help them avoid this struggle (Henderson et al., 2006). This study will use existing literature that analyzes the financial mistakes of professional athletes and the circumstances that bring them there (Cohen et al., 2019; Flynn, 2014; Surujlal, 2016). Considering these experiences, the study will explore how to effectively influence the financial literacy levels of athletes before they are making substantial incomes. Specifically, what can be done to influence college athletes to better budget their finances and understand the importance of it.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Professional Athletes Financial Mismanagement

While bankruptcy sounds like a very high-level of financial mismanagement that probably only happens to a few people, Flynn (2014) found that about 10% of Americans have filed for bankruptcy in the past 25 years. Although only 1.36 athletes per year filed for bankruptcy in the same 25 years, Flynn (2014) found numerous athletes who experienced some form of financial distress. In 2009, 78% of NFL players who had been retired for at least two years were either bankrupt or experiencing financial distress. After 5 years of retirement, 60% of NBA players are experiencing extensive financial issues (Flynn, 2014). The level of financial distress varies greatly, but nonetheless, athletes often experience problems handling their money (Samuel & Tenenbaum, 2011). Flynn (2014) investigated what time frame of the athlete's career they tend to file and found that about half the athletes file within their first 9 years of retirement, after their relatively short careers. A majority of athletes are only signed to 3-year contracts, according to the interviews of 193 players in a soccer Premier League in South Africa (Surujlal, 2016). With situations guaranteeing change almost every three years, there is immense uncertainty for athletes. Change is something athletes struggle with, specifically negative change-events such as injury, or authoritative criticism. These change-events can create negative emotions for athletes when thinking about their career potentially ending (Samuel & Tenenbaum, 2011).

In most jobs, there is standard communication between employer and employee before the termination of an employee's work. In a study on the length of an NFL career, it was found that the "very fickle" environment of the NFL is daunting on players, and forces them to focus on the present and ignore the future (Cohen et al., 478, 2019). In interviews with former and current NFL players, athletes explained how they always assumed the money they made during their NFL careers would be enough for retirement. Rather than worry about the future, the players tried to figure out how to stay in the NFL longer. Therefore, when their careers ended prematurely due to injury or unfavorable play, they were unprepared to handle their futures (Benar et al., 2013). If a player can harness the motivation to play longer and combine it with properly preparing for retirement, they can become very successful financially even before retirement. (Cohen et al., 2019; Surujlal, 2016). Cohen et al., (2019) found that many athletes simply have no experience with financial literacy. Many of those who found successful financial paths attributed them to their partners, who had backgrounds in personal finances, or other family members who did (Cohen et al., 2019). Having a partner or close circle who understands money management can be very beneficial. However, those without support systems may not have the same experiences with financial literacy (Cohen et al., 2019).

The NFL is not the only professional sports league where there is financial struggle for players. In the Premier Soccer League in South Africa, it is up to the organization the players are on to provide support for their financial management and retirement planning (Surujlal, 2016). Through interviews with 193 players in the league, it was found that the majority of the players have been playing professionally for 2-5 years and 68.5% of them had not received any kind of financial literacy training (Surujlal, 2016). Overall, about 75% of the players interviewed had no idea what their nest egg would be when they retired. Ultimately, players were unaware of how much they would have even made while playing once they reached a general retirement age. Therefore, athletes are unprepared financially not only when their career abruptly ends, but also when they retire on their own terms (Surujlal, 2016). However, proper data analysis could find the correlation between organizational support, financial management, and retirement planning challenges the unpreparedness of athletes. Similarly, the organizational support of the NFL athletes were their wives, who show a consistent stream of success in helping manage their husband’s finances (Cohen et al., 2019). For athletes who expressed that they did receive some form of organizational support, there was a strong relationship with understanding both their financial management and their retirement planning (Surujlal, 2016). If organizations can connect professional athletes with their support systems, professional athletes can be better off, but for this Premier League, only 25% of the athletes have benefited from the support (Benar et al., 2013; Surujlal, 2016).

Although the NFL does have financial support systems in place, the organization still experiences trouble getting players to participate, similar to the Premier Soccer League (Cohen et al., 2016). In a 2014-2015 survey of 763 former NFL players, 37.1% of them said they had not planned for the future at all and 34.5% said they had difficulty finding work after retirement (Cohen et al., 2016). With upwards of a third of players not even considering the future, when money stops coming in during a time of their life they never planned for, financial woes are understandable. Factoring in lavish lifestyles and paycheck consumption almost to the max, even if players are considering the future, they aren't making the most of their big contracts. In addition, the support systems in place for them are not reaching the minds of the players, which decreases the likelihood of the athletes being financially well off in their retirement (Cohen et al., 2019). Trying to bridge this gap between the financial motivations of players and the support systems provided by their organizations brings about the following research question:

RQ1: Why are organizational support systems failing to impact more athletes in their respective professional sport leagues?

<u>Personal Finance and Budgeting</u>

The most important factor that affects the investment patterns of individuals is their demographics, with economic situation and psychological attitude toward investing rounding out the top 3 (Kaur & Singh, 2018). Understanding player demographics can help understand limitations toward personal finance. A players' economic situation before becoming a professional plays a major role in their personal finance practices (Neuman, 1988). In addition, prior research has found there is a negative connotation towards budgeting that is similar to people's feelings toward paying taxes, budgeting, and making surprise payments (Kearney & Mohr, 2021). In the particular case of athletes, those who never experienced support in finances aside from their parents said they were in dire need of external support for their finances (Henriksen et al., 2021; Samuel & Tenenbaum 2011). Certain high-performance athletes reported that they struggled to cope with an inability to handle their finances, all who aligned with this feeling were ones who did not receive any financial literacy assistance from their organizations (Henriksen et al., 2021). Therefore, individuals understand the importance of budgeting their money despite being reluctant to do so but are mentally struggling with handling it on their own, as there is a higher likelihood of them doing something wrong (Henriksen et al., 2021; Kearney & Mohr, 2021). To add on to this negative feeling of a self-inflicted financial risk, Patwardhan et al. (2017), found that risk tolerance was also a major factor in people's investing and budgeting habits. Furthermore, combining the negativity of budgeting with uncertainty that comes with inexperience, the topic becomes a very fragile experience for athletes without any outside assistance.

However, if people are fortunate enough to reap benefits from financial allocations, they will respond well to it (Young, 2022). Former first round pick of the 1994 NBA Draft Grant Hill says he was constantly thinking about when he could no longer play, which caused him to budget accordingly (Young, 2022). Hill has gone on to more than double his career earnings since retiring from the NBA due to real estate investments made during his career (Young, 2022). He saw his father's Dallas Cowboys teammates struggle financially, and learned from their mistakes, similar to how the wives of some NFL players pick up on financial literacy tips from the wives of other players, and help their husband's accordingly (Cohen et al., 2019). Grant Hill was lucky enough to witness financial mismanagement at a young age, and it influenced both his budgeting and investing for the rest of his life (Young, 2022).

Being prepared for all of the financial situations and problems life can throw at any given moment is a liberating way of going about life. During college, most athletes are now forced to take on more financial responsibility, but until now might not have ever had support systems to actually help them through financial issues (Rubin et al., 2021). Nonetheless, experiencing any sort of financial obstacles has been found to positively affect an individual's ability to plan their upcoming financial situations (Brau et al., 2019). In a study of finance students at Brigham Young University, 38.67% of students who fully paid for their college tuition were able to predict and prepare for the spending habits over the course of a semester better than students whose parents paid their tuition or took out loans (Brau et al., 2019). Further, students who possess a credit card reportedly experienced success managing their semester finances, as well as students who make under $30,000 per year. Increased financial responsibility correlates to individuals being more prepared to handle finances in the future (Brau et al., 2019). This relates to athletes who aren't making millions of dollars in their contracts, the ones who might be NFL practice squad players or players in the NBA developmental league known as the G-League. Players in these leagues make substantial money for an individual but not comparable to the league. Yates (2017) argues that a $100,000 salaried player has more responsibility to manage their money than someone who makes more. Adjusting a player's salary to a 12-month scale even though they may not be paid monthly and splitting their salary among needs, wants, and savings makes the player's income easier to understand and helps them plan for when they are in their offseason. Elizabeth Warren and her daughter created the saving method of 50% for needs, 30% for wants, and 20% for savings in each check one receives (Yates, 2017). By compartmentalizing each paycheck, the individual can make better sense of how much money they need to put aside for necessary bills and for their later years. This prioritization of cash flows also helps the athlete to invest their money thoughtfully and be fully prepared when presented with the many investment opportunities brought upon them (Neuman, 1988).

People, even athletes, all have a tendency towards avoiding financial responsibilities (Kearney & Mohr, 2021). Athletes who are able to play at the collegiate level have endured enough personal responsibility to just reach this point, therefore they have the capabilities to budget wisely (Kearney & Mohr, 2021). Introducing budgeting finances and investing earnings to athletes before they reach a career, athletically or not, could prepare them best against unforeseen changes or ends to their career. and brings to light the following hypothesis:

H1: If athletes experience budgeting and investing from a younger age, they will be more adherent to it when they become professional athletes or enter the workforce.

<u>The College Athlete's Support Systems</u>
College can prove to be an incredibly influential environment for students. Although, in a study of 2-year institutions vs 4-year institutions and their football programs, it was found that support for managing personal finances and retirement planning for athletes were the two most unlikely support systems at these universities (Keim & Strickland, 2004). Football

coaches from several institutions were asked about certain services and if they were provided at their school, as it was deemed the football coach would and should have the best idea of the services in place. Keim and Strickland (2004) believed a coach is expected to be preparing the athlete to become a proud member of society, and not just a better athlete. Having resources at the ready can make these coaches do a better job of preparing athletes for all aspects of life (Keim & Strickland, 2004). Similarly, Surujlal (2016) found that if the organization of a Premier League Soccer player is effective in communicating personal finance plans to their athlete, it will positively affect their post playing career. Support of the organization, or the coach, matters at both levels but is sparser at the collegiate level. Only 27% of the coaches said they were aware of a managing personal finances support system at their school, and this study also included 2-year institutions who typically have more programs to help people in everyday life after attending than 4-year institutions (Keim & Strickland, 2004). The reasoning for this, according to the study's findings, is that people who attend 2-year institutions tend to be there for circumstantial reasons or hardships, not necessarily because they desired to go to a 2-year institution. Recognizing need for support is more important in the structure of 2-year institution compared to a 4-year institution (Keim & Strickland, 2004).

Support for an athlete in their current state is necessary, but additionally for what they will become as well. Playing professional sports aside, college athletes entering the workforce will earn higher salaries on average, compared to non-college athletes because they tend to be more goal-oriented, especially financially. However, on a median assessment of the salaries, non-college athletes make more money (Henderson et al., 2006). The skills college athletes acquire from participating in athletics have proven to help them excel in industries such as business, manual labor, and military jobs in terms of salary (Henderson et al., 2006). College athletes need committed support systems for them to realize this though, as found in athletes who were preparing to transition from college basketball to either professional sports or the workforce (Cummins & O'Boyle, 2015). Some players expressed how trying to reach the pros their whole life had consumed them mentally, and they were admittedly scared to think about life without basketball (Cummins & O'Boyle, 2015). Further, a majority of the athletes interviewed said that they wished their coach had helped them more in their transition once their basketball careers come to an end (Cummins & O'Boyle, 2015). The support system college coaches were most aware of on their campuses was providing career planning, which is present at 97% of the universities surveyed (Keim & Strickland, 2004). Career planning is nonetheless essential to career readiness, as there is a positive correlation between active career planning and a student athlete being ready for their career, as well as being decisive about their career (Lim & Yang, 2021). Coaches are more aware of career planning, and this support system is proven successful for athletes, meaning if coaches were aware of the supportive systems for managing personal finances, more athletes could be prepared for it (Keim & Strickland, 2004). The support systems are in place at the collegiate level for career planning but are not being reached by the athletes, which renders the support useless.

The college athlete has separated themselves from their non-sport playing counterparts in terms of their career hopes, as well as their goal-oriented mindset, resulting in more success for the athlete in certain professions (Henderson et al., 2006). This ideology is more of a realization though, and not an expectation. If the athlete is influenced by their support systems, they can be guided in directions that will benefit them (Keim & Strickland, 2004). Undoubtedly, the support system is a necessity for an athlete to flourish and could encourage them to trust in blossoming in wherever life takes them during and after college years (Cummins & O'Boyle, 2015). Using these realizations from the literature, the following hypothesis is offered:

H2: Encouraging college athletes to take ownership of what they are best at will inspire them to prepare for their future.

METHODOLOGY

Survey

The research will strive to study the relationship between athletes and their financial experiences and financial responsibilities. In addition, their successes in career preparedness as well as financial preparedness, or how they feel handling these aspects, will also be studied. A trend in more financial responsibility is expected to link to more financial preparedness (Brau et al., 2019). A quantitative analysis of the data collected on the financial influence the support systems of these participants had will be analyzed for trends. Comparing the experiences these athletes have had financially from an area of household incomes growing up, credit card usage, and overall financial responsibilities, financial literacy will be measured. Undertaking financial responsibility is an indicator of financial literacy (Brau et al., 2019).

The goal of this study is to interpret and analyze the financial literacy and financial experiences of collegiate, transitioning, and professional athletes. A transitioning athlete is one who is currently in the process of preparing themselves to become a professional athlete or to enter the workforce (Cummins & O'Boyle, 2015). The survey questions will be borrowed from various sources such as a Brigham Young study of finance students, a study of transitioning Division-I Men's Basketball player, as well as created based on the data that is needed (Brau et al., 2019: Cummins & O'Boyle, 2015). Those who are currently professional athletes will be asked about their league and organization and how they have helped or hurt them prepare their finances for everyday life as well as when their career comes to an end. College athletes will be asked how their institution has influenced them to prepare for their future. Transitioning athletes were a struggle to obtain data from compared to the others, so they were omitted from the study.

<u>Professional Athletes</u>

The professional athletes used in this research will have played in a professional league for at least one year, which will be the only criterion. There will be no limitation to the league they participate in, they just must receive pay in exchange for playing. Participants must also have attended college in order to gauge how college may have influenced their financial decisions once entering the professional league. Utilizing established connections in the sports world, professional athletes will be asked based on relations from past teams and similar school attendance. In addition, directly asking athletes to participate through messages over social media platforms such as Instagram and Twitter will be attempted as well.

College Athletes

The NCAA Division of participants is irrelevant to the study, as well as Junior College or NAIA. However, subjects who are currently in post-graduate schools cannot participate, as they are not considered NCAA athletes. The athlete can participate in the present study so long as they are playing a varsity sport at an institution that is recognized by the NCAA. Obtaining college athletes will consist of a convenience sampling based on athletes with a similar prior experience, as well as posting the survey on social media for only college athletes to participate in.

Measures

All participants will be asked to disclose the university they went to initially, then they will be asked whether they are a professional, transitioning, or college athlete. Each participant will be asked questions regarding the beginning of their credit card usage, their household income growing up, and how their school either was paid for, or is currently paid for (Brau et al., 2019). Additionally, each participant will be asked about how they feel their institution influenced their financial literacy (Cummins & O'Boyle, 2015).

Professional athletes will be specifically asked about if they budget their salary and where they learned this budgeting practice. They will also be asked about the programs provided by their league concerning financial literacy or retirement preparedness they currently use and find beneficial. Transitioning athletes will specifically be asked about the workforce they plan to pursue if they do not end up in the professional league they desire, and the programs they used in school to weigh their options. College athletes will be asked about the support systems at their school and how strongly they feel these programs impacted them as well as the salary they anticipate making in their desired field out of college, whether it be professional or in the workforce. All the questions to be asked can be found in the appendix, with their answer choices.

Results

Throughout the three months of data collection, 68 participants were acquired. Out of these participants, 50 of them were current college athletes and 18 of them were current professional athletes. 22 of the athletes either attended or are currently attending Bryant

University and there were 11 different professional leagues represented in the study, with some leagues being the NFL, XFL, WPF, and PLL. Of the 68 participants, 52 identified as male and 16 identified as female. The most popular majors studied in school were Finance and Sports Studies, with both representing 7 participants. The age range of participants was 18 to 28, but 21 was the most common age. Football and Baseball were the sports played by 40 of the participants, but many other sports were represented such as men's and women's basketball, lacrosse, and soccer.

Out of all the figures measured throughout the survey analysis, one of the more significant numbers that came about was about athletes worrying about their career length. Out of the 18 professional athletes, 79% of them said they were more worried about preventing the end of their career than preparing for the end. This figure aligned very well with what the research anticipated of most athletes being too consumed with staying in the league rather than properly handling their finances. While this number supports the research well, its not the number you want to see in terms of the financial well-being of the athlete. A positive number that was found from the survey is that 72% of Professional Athletes agree or strongly agree that they have a support system around them they can trust in relation to finances. Unfortunately, 33% of these athletes disagreed when asked if their league had useful organizations for budgeting. When asked about organizations for retirement, nearly 30% of the athletes disagreed or strongly disagreed with these organizations being useful. Nearly 40% of the athletes also disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that their league helped them prepare for surprise retirement.

Many different questions helped to figure out the financial responsibility of each participant. The most important aspects according to the research were an individual's credit card usage, if they were involved in their tuition payment, their household income growing up, and their exposure to investing at a young age. For the analysis of this research question, the participants were split up depending on if they were a College Athlete or a professional athlete.

35% of College Athletes strongly disagreed or disagreed that they felt exposed to investing from a young age, and 40% of Professional Athletes felt the same way. When asked what age the participant received a credit card, 54% of College Athletes said either age 18 or before, with 48% of Professional Athletes agreeing. 44% of Professional Athletes said they were in some way involved with their tuition payments as opposed to a loan or parents/guardians. For College Athletes, only 20% of them were involved with their tuition payment. When asked about their average household income growing up, 15% of the College Athletes were under 50K and 31% were under 100K. For Professional Athletes, 21% were under 50K and 42% were under 100K.

For the last hypothesis question discussing how effectively athletes are taking advantage of the support systems provided by their institution, the participants were looked at in whole. 50% of participants believe it is easy to find career preparedness organizations at their institution. 41% of participants agreed their institution helped them with financial knowledge. 58% of participants believe their institution helped guide them to a career path based on their skills. 79% of participants said they take in some form of public stock market material once a month or less.

LIMITATIONS

Some important limitations of the research conducted through the survey became apparent during the analysis of the data. One was that the athletes were asked about their awareness of organizations for things such as retirement and investing, not necessarily their usage. While knowing about organizations is better than not knowing, there is no guarantee there is any impact on the athlete outside of their awareness. Another limitation is the variety present of the data. About one-third of the study participants attended or are currently attending Bryant University. With the business school reputation Bryant has, it can be inferred that the institution’s students will typically have a better overall financial understanding. This correlation could be seen amongst participants who attended other schools, who more often than Bryant students never engaged in personal finance or stock market news on their own.

SURVEY CONCLUSIONS

From the data analysis of the first research question, in regard to why organizational support systems are failing professional athletes, there was a mixed reaction from the athletes on how useful the budgeting programs are. A mixed reaction isn't great, but the other types of organizations were not even as good as mixed. The athletes said their retirement organizations were not particularly useful at all. An important aspect to note from this is the types of leagues many of these athletes are participating in. A good portion of these leagues are in their first couple of years of operation and may be too focused on preserving the state of the league to provide retirement organizations for the athletes. Nonetheless, to preserve the product, the athlete, preparing them for retirement is important. What is more important is preparing athletes for surprise retirement, which these athletes said the leagues are doing a very poor job of. When a league quite literally could collapse any day, athletes need to be well prepared for this, which is not happening. This lack of preparation combined with almost 80% of the athletes feeling a stronger need to stay in their professional career rather than prepare for the end of it results in the very fickle situation many athletes find themselves in.

For the first hypothesis question, centered around budgeting and investing experiences, the athletes had a wide range of experiences in their lives. One generalization that could be made though is that the athletes possessed a significant enough number of qualities to be considered financially responsible. From what the research anticipated of many athletes, the ones in this study showed positive signs of being financially responsible. However, in the department of investment exposure, a significant number of the athletes did not feel as though they were exposed to it well at a young age. From an individual standpoint, College Athletes were more likely to possess a credit card before the age of 19 than the Professional Athletes. With tuition payment involvement though, the Professional Athletes were much more likely to be involved in this than the College Athletes, by 24%. With a further dive into this type of research, it could be interesting to see if there is a focused correlation amongst athletes having financial responsibility like paying for their school and if they go on to become Professional Athletes. The Professional Athletes also typically had lower household incomes, with 42% of participants being under 100K growing up, showing again the type of potential financial struggle these athletes could have endured.

Despite what was expected from the research, a significant number of the athletes are aware of the helpful organizations on their campus that help them prepare for their future financially and in terms of their career. As a result of this, a number of the athletes felt like their institutions were helping to guide them toward career paths that were related to their skills, and not just what would be easy for them. By participating in careers centered around intellectual success or genuine interest, an athlete will be likely to feel passionate about their career, leading to them making more money. While all this is great, a major issue is that athletes are not going the extra mile themselves and consuming market related media. 79% said they do things such as watch CNBC or read the WSJ once a month or less, meaning that the athletes have not truly taken it upon themselves to keep up with how the economy around them is changing.

FINAL CONCLUSIONS

To truly understand the habits and attitudes athletes have towards budgeting and investing, studying their financial history is imperative. Contrary to what the research anticipated; the athletes studied are prepared fairly well for their finances after school. Therefore, if athletes still experience trouble financially once in the workforce, it is more likely it is the fault of the institution. Forcing initiatives that combine the efforts of the athlete and the institution to prepare better for the workforce or post-playing careers is a likely quick fix.

FURTHERING THE RESEARCH

To take the research to the next level, asking athletes the questions in their freshman year and then again in their senior year would help to analyze how their institution could have potentially changed their financial experience. Presenting the research to some of the smaller sports leagues which were represented in the survey could be impactful. Athletes in these leagues have lower salaries and often need the budgeting and investing help more than players in bigger leagues. Lastly, the research will help to create a financial preparedness guide for incoming freshman, in the form of a fictional short story. If athletes read this book during their freshman year, they will ideally take better advantage of their four years in college and know how to handle finances better.

APPENDIX (SURVEY QUESTIONS)

For all participants:
What college did/do you attend?
What sport do you play?
What was your major in school?
Are you a professional athlete or are you a college athlete?
- Professional Athlete
- College Athlete

What was your average household income growing up?
- Under 50k
- 50k-100k
- 100k-200k
- 200k-300k
- 300k-400k
- 400k-500k
- 500k+

Approximately what portion of your schooling was covered through academic or athletic scholarship?
- 0%
- 25%
- 50%
- 75%
- 100%

If not 100%, how was the rest of your schooling paid for?
- Completely through parent/guardian
- Completely loaned
- Completely by myself
- Some myself, some loan
- Some parent, some myself
- Some parent, some loan
- Mine was 100%

When did you get your first credit card?
- Before 18
- 18
- 19
- 20
- 21
- 22
- 23

- 24
- After 24

How often do you check your account balances (credit card, checking, savings, investing) approximately?

- Once a month
- Twice a month
- Once a week
- Three times a week
- Everyday

When did you start playing your respective sport?

- Before you were 5
- 5-10
- 10-15
- 15-18
- 18+

You were effectively exposed to budgeting and investing before entering college:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You feel as though your institution has helped you improve your financial knowledge:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You feel confident in having a nest egg you could live off of when you retire:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You understand the basics of taxes:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree

- Strongly Disagree

You feel your institution helped guide you to a career path effective for your skills:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Career Preparedness organizations are hard to find at your institution:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Financial literacy training organizations are hard to find at your institution:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You actively set money aside for savings:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You actively set money aside for investing:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

Professional:
What professional sports team do you currently play for?
How long have you been a professional athlete?

- 1 year
- 2-5 years
- 5-10 years
- 10 years+

What is your annual salary?

- Under 50k
- 50k-100k
- 100k-500k
- 500k-1 million
- 2 million-5 million
- 5 million+

Do you have a plan to budget your salary?

- Yes
- No
- Yes, but I don't follow it
- No, but I feel the need for one

If so, where did you learn to develop this budget?

- From parents/guardians
- High School
- College
- Professional league support program
- Other

You are worried about your professional career ending soon:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You are more worried about preventing the end of your career rather than preparing for it:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You feel prepared to enter the workforce if your career ended today:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You have a career path you feel you could be successful in if your career ended today:

- Strongly Agree

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You feel confident understanding your incomes and expenses:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You feel confident in having a solid nest egg if your career ended today:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You have a strong support system who helps you make financial decisions:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You know of multiple, useful organizations in your league to help you budget your finances:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You know of multiple, useful organizations in your league to help you plan for retirement:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You had prepared a solid career path for yourself if you hadn't made it to a professional sport?
- Strongly Agree
- Agree

- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The support systems in your league are effective in helping players plan for expected retirement AND surprise retirement:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

College:
Your current grade in school?
- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- 5th year
- 6th year
- 7th year

Do you desire to be a professional athlete?
- Yes, no other option
- Yes, if the opportunity is there
- No, unless the opportunity is there
- No, I have a career path I desire
- No

You are actively trying to find the right career path for yourself:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You feel like you have plenty of resources to help you find the right career path:
- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

The support systems at your school are adamant on impacting athletes' plans for their future:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

There are support systems you are aware of at your institution to help prepare you financially:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You feel motivated to prepare for your future while at school:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

You value salary over a career you enjoy working:

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

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