

The Drake Group

A Voice for Faculty Charged with Educating College Athletes

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WHAT:

Response to the National Basketball Association (NBA) Collective Bargaining Agreement, specific to the new 19-year old age limit for incoming first year players.

NOTES:

The Drake Group feels it is necessary to respond to new NBA collective bargaining agreement (CBA), specifically regarding the 19-year old age restriction on first year players. The Drake Group believes that this is another graphic example of colleges and universities continuing as semi-professional farm teams for the professional leagues. TDG believes that higher education can be for everyone, but that it does not always have to be at the age of eighteen. College can come later, if desired, and athletes should have an opportunity to capitalize on their athletic vocation *without* jeopardizing academic integrity and the mission of an institution. The lack of comment on this vital topic by the NCAA national office and membership is disturbing.

Allowing athletes in the sport of men's basketball to enroll in college just to compete short-term is against the spirit and role of higher education, and should not be allowed. With this age restriction in place many athletes, once certified initially eligible by the NCAA Clearinghouse, can play basketball and drop out of school after the season without attending a single class. Some will say that just exposure to college is an education, but under the aforementioned scenario, the athlete is not even remotely exposed to anything other than athletics. Sadly, many of the college coaches and NBA officials in response to the CBA cited only the advantages for the athlete of gaining maturity, enhancing playing ability for the next level, and increasing chances to win for college teams. The mention of access to a true college education was notably absent.

Situations like this lend validation to our seven-point plan, especially in the area of academic disclosure and a one-year residency requirement for incoming freshman prior to varsity competition. We believe that if an athlete enrolls in college, he/she must be a matriculating student, who attends class, and plays sports as an extra-curricular activity. There are many that can make the jump directly from high school to the pro ranks who do not desire to attend college. These individuals, as well as those who may not have the skills to make the jump, should have other opportunities to develop as a player aside from institutions of higher learning. We commend NBA Commissioner David Stern on the development of the NBDL as a minor league system, but it does not go far enough and should be an alternative option for those who do not want to attend college. If an athlete is good enough to leave college early to compete in the pros, we encourage that, but while in college an athlete must be an actual college student and not a one-year ringer that benefits the profit-driven enterprises of the NCAA and NBA. If access to a college education cannot be done now, let them come to college later, and use continuing education benefits available via the NBA front office.

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The mission of The Drake Group (TDG) is to help faculty and staff defend academic integrity in the face of the burgeoning college sport industry. The Drake Group's national network of college faculty, staff, and concerned individuals lobby aggressively for proposals that ensure quality education for college athletes, supports faculty whose job security is threatened for defending academic standards, and disseminates information on current issues and controversies in sport and higher education. The Drake Group seeks to form coalitions with other groups that share its mission and goals.

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A Voice for Faculty Charged with Educating College Athletes

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WHAT:

Dr. B. David Ridpath, Ed.D., Executive Director of The Drake Group, set to speak to the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics on Tuesday, November 8, 2005 in Washington DC

NOTES:

The Drake Group is pleased to announce that Executive Director, Dr. B. David Ridpath, currently an Assistant Professor of Sport Administration at Mississippi State University, is representing TDG at the upcoming meeting of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics in Washington DC at the historic Williard Hotel on November 8, 2005.

Ridpath is presenting on a Faculty Panel to Discuss Academic Reform Proposals and Athlete Well-Being Issues. Percy Bates, the Faculty Athletics Representative at the University of Michigan, and Virginia Shepherd, co-chair of the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics (COIA), and a Professor of Pathology at Vanderbilt University joins him on the panel. This panel will discuss NCAA reform issues and alternative academic reform proposals from COIA and TDG.

The Drake Group continues to advocate its seven-point plan for comprehensive reform and academic integrity in Intercollegiate Athletics. The plan includes academic disclosure of all classes and majors, a return to the one-year residency requirement (freshman ineligibility), a return to the five-year scholarship, and a 2.0 grade point average for athletic eligibility. Information on these and the other TDG proposals can be found at www.thedrakegroup.org.

Ridpath is the third TDG Executive Director to speak to the Knight Commission. TDG founder, Jon Ericson, Provost Emeritus at Drake University spoke to the commission in 2003, and former director, Linda Bensel-Meyers of the University of Denver, followed in 2003. The Knight Commission will also hear presentations on NCAA Certification issues and an update on the NCAA's Academic Progress Rate (APR). More information on the upcoming meeting can be found at www.knightcommission.org.

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