

The Role of Social Media in Intercollegiate Athletics:

A Synthesis of the Research Literature

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this synthesis was to examine social media use in intercollegiate athletic departments, and the effect that social media has on colleges and student-athletes. Previous research shows that social media has not been a large presence in intercollegiate athletics until 2008 when schools started to realize that it can be a powerful tool to help with marketing strategies. Common themes that emerged through the critical mass were social media best practices at the intercollegiate level, the most commonly used platforms, the benefits of using social media for colleges and student-athletes, and the problems and potential problems of using social media for colleges and student-athletes. Future research is needed to address the ever-changing field of social media as the technology grows each year and new applications are formulated to increase the presence social media has on society and intercollegiate athletics.

*Keywords: Social Media and Sport, NCAA Social Media, Intercollegiate Athletics, Social Media*

## **Introduction**

Social media has become an important part of modern society, as it is accessible to anyone with an internet connection or cell phone. Social media has also been growing at a rapid rate, and as of 2018, 68% of U.S. adults are using Facebook on a regular basis (Smith & Anderson, 2018). Other forms of social media include websites and applications that are designed to allow people to share content quickly, efficiently, and in real-time (Hudson, 2018). Social media is a relatively new concept in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Facebook was the first of the major platforms, and was founded in 2004 (Carlson, 2010). The social sites all have one common goal, to connect the world and share content to the masses.

Social media has been a presence on college campuses since the creation of Facebook. College students are using various forms of social media on a daily basis, and colleges are using social media to attract future students, share student experiences, connect students with vital information about the school and campus events, and connect with alumni and donors (Ridley, 2018). College athletic programs are also users of social media, to attract potential recruits, report scores and news, share pictures of student athletes, show the core values that a school and athletic department has, and promote sporting events (Ohio University, 2018).

The significance of social media in collegiate athletics is that college athletics is a serious business, and social media is a part of that business. Athletes always need to be on their best behavior on social media, because they never know who is going to be watching and the content stays online forever (Hawley, 2014). Because social media is so new, there is a lot that is left unknown about how to best use various platforms and what the best practices are for each platform. It is something that colleges and athletic programs have to be informed about because as of a 2018 study, 98% of student-athletes have a Facebook account, 95% have a Twitter

account, 99% have an Instagram account, and 93% have a Snapchat account (DeShazo, 2018). This is a huge number of student-athletes and because this number has been growing so rapidly, college athletic programs need to be aware of the benefits and problems with social media.

Social media has had some great benefits for student athletes, like showing community service projects athletes participate in, attending school events for younger children within their towns/cities, and sharing team videos with their network. Social media also allows for the creation of a personal brand, and to allow the student athletes to promote themselves and their school to their following, which is great for them and their college/university.

Social media can also make or break an athlete's future. Pembroke academy basketball player Pat Welch of New Hampshire was stripped from his Player of the Year honor after posting an obscene tweet after his team's state championship win (Habib, 2014). Former University of Wyoming and current Buffalo Bills quarterback Josh Allen was projected to be the top draft pick in the 2018 NFL Draft, until NFL executives caught wind of a racially-insensitive tweet he posted when he was age 14 (Leccesi, 2018). Social media even cost one DI athlete his scholarship after he posted a YouTube video that included foul language and talked about him trespassing. He then received a call from Old Dominion University, a school he had been committed to for six months, and was told that his scholarship was revoked. The athlete in question, Shedrick McCall, tells student-athletes now, "please watch and understand that what you put on social media is there to stay" (Toler, 2017). Because of the potential problems many schools have enacted social media policies, and some programs have even banned social media for their student athletes.

Developing best practices is an important way of helping to find a balance in social media use. Some common guidelines include watch what you post, share consistent and positive

images of your brand, and support others on the team such as coaches, teammates, or other sports teams (Gaio, 2013). A negative incident or post on social media can tarnish an athlete's or a school's reputation in an instant but solid proactive guidelines, education about the possible benefits and pitfalls and agreed upon best practices can make social media a useful and positive tool in intercollegiate athletics.

**The purpose of this synthesis is to examine the literature regarding social media and intercollegiate athletic programs and to look at how social media is impacting colleges and universities and their student-athletes.**

### **Operational Definitions-**

**Social Media-** Primary internet or cellular phone based applications and tools to share information among people. Social media includes popular networking websites, like Facebook and Twitter; as well as bookmarking sites like Reddit. It involves blogging and forums and any aspect of an interactive presence which allows individuals the ability to engage in conversation with one another, often as a discussion over a particular blog post, news article, or event (Business Dictionary, 2018).

**Intercollegiate Athletics** - encompasses non-professional, collegiate and university-level competitive sports and games requiring physical skill, and the systems of training that prepare athletes for competition performance (USLegal.com, 2018).

**Best Practices** – A method or technique that has consistently shown results superior to those achieved with other means, and that is used as a benchmark (Business Dictionary, 2018).

**Division I** - Division I is the highest level of intercollegiate athletics overseen by the NCAA in the U.S. D-I schools comprise the major athletic powers in the college ranks and have larger

budgets, more advanced facilities, and more athletic scholarships than Divisions II and III or smaller schools, even those that are competitive in athletics. (Burrell, 2018)

**Division II-** Division II student-athletes might be just as skilled and competitive and those in Division I, but schools in Division II have fewer financial resources to devote to their athletics programs. Division II offers partial scholarships for financial aid. Students can cover their tuition through a mixture of athletic scholarships, need-based grants, academic aid, and employment. Division II schools have a minimum of 10 sports which are evenly split between men and women's sports. They also require students to maintain a 2.0 GPA and take at least 16 core courses to be eligible (Burrell, 2018)

**Division III -** Division III schools don't offer scholarships or financial aid to athletes for athletic participation, though athletes are still eligible for scholarships offered to any students who apply. Division III schools have at least five men's and five women's sports, including at least two team sports for each.

#### **Assumptions-**

- 1) It was assumed that all the questions were answered truthfully.
- 2) It was assumed that the data was collected fairly, and that participants did not alter any responses due to participation in the study.
- 3) It was assumed that all data collection methods were reliable and valid.

#### **Limitations-**

- 1) Social media is still a new field so research is somewhat limited.
- 2) Social media is changing rapidly.

- 3) College athletic programs are in the early stages of implementing and reporting on this technology.

**Delimitations-**

- 1) Articles were all gathered from 2008 to present.
- 2) All articles had to focus on intercollegiate athletics and social media.
- 3) All articles were peer reviewed, and appeared in scholarly academic journals

**Research Questions-**

- 1) How is social media used in athletics by colleges/universities? By athletes?
- 2) What are the benefits of social media to athletes and to colleges?
- 3) What are the problems + potential problems of social media to athletes and to colleges?
- 4) What are the best practices for social media use in collegiate athletics?

## Chapter 2

### Methods

The purpose of this chapter is to present the methods used to synthesize research pertaining to the use of social media in intercollegiate athletics by both the student athlete and the colleges and universities. This chapter will address the methods and procedures used for data collection and data analysis.

#### Data Collection

The studies gathered for this synthesis project were obtained by a computer database that contains peer-reviewed articles in scholarly journals. The main database used for this research was EBSCOHOST while Google Scholar was also used, but to a lesser extent. In order to be included in this synthesis paper's critical mass, the articles had to be data-based research published in a peer-reviewed journal after 2008. The following keywords were used in various combinations: (a) Social media, (b) college athletics, (c) Facebook, (d) Twitter, (e) Instagram, (f) intercollegiate athletics and (g) higher education.

The first search was found in the EBSCOHOST, under the SPORTDiscus search engine. The key words were *social media and college sports* which had 374 results. When limited to peer-reviewed articles, there were 180 articles left in the pool. This search allowed for three articles that could be used in the critical mass. A second search was done using the same search terms in Google Scholar. This search brought up 460 articles, however, when limited to post-2008, that dropped the search to 299 articles. Adding peer-reviewed to the search allowed for 107 articles remaining in the search. None of these articles were eligible to be included in the critical mass, as they did not pertain to the research questions.

The second search that was done also used the EBSCOHOST database and SPORTDiscus as the search engine. The key words used were *Social Media and College Athletes*. There were a total of 104 results that came from this search. When limiting the search to years 2014-2018, the results were limited to 64 articles. The reason the years were 2014-2018 is to narrow down articles to more recent scholarly publications. There were six articles found from this search that were eligible to be in the critical mass.

The last three articles were all found using the key words *Intercollegiate Athletics and Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram*. This was searched using the EBSCOHOST database and SPORTDiscus search engine. The results prompted 111 articles that were peer-reviewed. After limiting this search from 2014-2018, 73 articles remained. The three that were chosen all matched a specific research question.

In total, there were 55 articles that were saved in a desktop folder based on what research question they would best answer. After looking through the articles in this folder, 12 were selected that best met the criteria for this synthesis. The articles were all peer reviewed, they were all published post 2008, and each one addressed a specific research question. Two articles were applicable to research question one, four articles were applicable to research question two, two articles were applicable to research question three, and four articles were applicable to research question four. There were also about five to seven articles that were not peer-reviewed, but provided substantial substance to the rationale for the synthesis and shed light on the topic of social media and sport within intercollegiate athletics.

There were a variety of journals used to collect articles for this synthesis. The following were most helpful and used in the critical mass: *International Journal of Sport Management*, *International Journal of Sport Communication*, *Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics*,

*Qualitative Research Reports in Communication, Case Studies Sport Management, and Journal of Sports Media.*

### **Data Analysis**

An article grid was created to extract specific information from each article in an effort to better understand the application of the data to the research questions. In this article grid, the title, author, source, purpose, methods, analysis, findings, and recommendations were the categories that were utilized to gather information.

When breaking down each of the twelve articles in the critical mass, eight of the articles used qualitative methods while four of the articles used quantitative methods in the research.

The articles that used a qualitative approach used a variety of methods to gather data. One of those included semi structured interviews that were in a focus group style. Focus groups take a select group of participants and ask them questions in a manner that they can share open and honest opinions and answers. Another qualitative method that was used was a survey. The survey allows for anonymous responses, but still lets responders give open and honest answers. By sending this survey to Division I, II, and III schools, it allowed for a wider range of answers from different levels of competition. Another qualitative method involved analyzing documents produced from a few athletic departments and comparing the contents with other programs. Another study looked at different case studies on student athlete social media use and compared the case studies against each other to see similarities and differences. The final qualitative method looked at one specific Division I university, and reviewed the best practices that they have established as a result of gleaning information from other universities with similar practices.

For the quantitative articles, the first method used was cataloging an athlete's Twitter profile and putting them into a data-based system that allowed for a quick analysis of background pictures, biographies, cover photos, and general profile information. For another study, an exploratory sequential mixed methods approach was used that allowed for an examination of student athlete policies. The third quantitative method was looking at DI school's student-athlete handbooks and analyzing them for content, and then sorting that content using a coding scale. The final quantitative article involved examining the rate at which student athletes are using social media, and comparing that across divisions, by gender, and sport.

For the 12 articles that were chosen, there were a combined 150 schools that were involved in the process. There were also 810 student athletes that were involved in some way. All of the participants were student-athletes, and a vast majority of those student-athletes and a vast majority of the universities had some experience with social media.

## Chapter 3

### Review of Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to review the literature that was used as the foundation of this synthesis. In total, there were initially twenty-one articles that were selected from the searches. For the final analysis, there were twelve that met the appropriate criteria. The results are going to be reported across three different categories: (a) Social media and Colleges/Universities, (b) Social Media and Student-Athletes, and (c) Social Media Policies for Colleges/Universities and Student-Athletes.

#### **Social Media and Colleges/Universities**

For this section, the articles referenced the ways that social media is used and interpreted by colleges/universities. Examples of this are common uses of social media, methods of social media, and the difference in social media between NCAA divisions. There were a total of four articles that fell into this category.

The purpose of the first study by Black, Judson, & Beggs (2016) was to look at how social media is being used across athletic divisions to provide a baseline building their athletic branding and to build a virtual community around marketing efforts. The survey contained 45 questions that went out to DI, DII, and DIII NCAA colleges and universities. The questions were specific to social media platforms, highlighting Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and Instagram. The survey adjusted the questions based on the answers provided. For example, if a student was faced with a “Yes” or “No” they would get questions that would be tailored based on that yes or no response. In order encourage participation, students were offered the chance to win a \$50 Amazon gift card. Over 1,070 institutions were contacted, with 159, or 15% of the institutions responding. The analysis showed that new tools are emerging for marketers to use

such as Facebook ads, Twitter promotions, and social media campaigns, as well as tools like Hootsuite and Buffer that enhance the ability to grow a college athletic brand successfully. The student-athletes that are posting content are growing their individual brand, which is how they promote themselves, and they are also promoting the brand of the university of the school they are attending. The analysis also showed that athletic programs are taking a heightened interest in their online image, by spending time and financial resources growing their online identity, in an effort to appeal to prospective student-athletes, coaches, and other athletic staff. Overall, the study found that athletic programs are using social media to grow their identity and help facilitate recruiting. The study also found that the results were different by sport, with women's basketball having the highest usage of social media at 83.6%. The frequency of posting on social media was on average one to three times per day. The content that the student-athletes are posting is mostly user-generated, or content generated by coaches and the university. The final finding was that colleges are leveraging apps like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and YouTube, to create original content for their faculty, staff, and student-athletes to redistribute and reshare with those who follow them.

The second article involved how social media looks within a large DI athletic conference, known as the Big 10. The article by Hipke & Hachtmann (2014) explored the social media strategies of four athletic departments within the Big Ten conference and extracted similarities and differences that schools within the conference utilize to enhance their social media and share content. For this study, there was extensive interview and discussion from the school athletic communication directors, talking about how their school uses social media to enhance their athletic program. There were four Big Ten Conference athletic department officials that participated in this study. In depth interviews were conducted, which lasted roughly 23 minutes.

Participants were asked to answer a set of 16 open-ended questions, that were designed to target two specific research questions. The questions were “What did the participants experience in terms of social media-strategy in the context of their specific college athletic program?” and “What contexts or situations have typically influenced or affected their experiences of social media strategy in their specific athletic program?” The questions focused on the practices that these Big 10 athletic programs were using to advance social media for their respective schools. The researchers analyzed the data by looking at what each respondent said, and identifying significant statements and phrases that related to social media strategy within the Big Ten athletic conference. Among the findings, were that social media helps connect with the audience, there are different approaches to posting to connect with the target audience, the athletic departments are content gatekeepers, and there is a big push to generate revenue through social media. Another point of emphasis was that schools are focusing on building brand loyalty through engagement with social media, which schools hope will trickle down into other areas, such as merchandise sales. There were also challenges of “negativity”, as when a team is losing or struggling and fans take to social media to comment on that. The overarching strategy is to get fans to interact, and to share content with the community.

The third article by Watkins & Lee (2016) sought to look at how a large southern university is using social media in its athletic department. The researchers looked at a large university in the southern United States, to see how it communicated it’s brand identity through social media. A qualitative content analysis of Instagram and Twitter content produced by the department was analyzed. This was used to decipher brand associations and personalities that match with brands that are communicated to the public through social media. The findings showed that Instagram was the more popular choice, as it was used more to communicate than

Twitter was. There were also indications that star athletes of the school were much more marketable than the head coach or team performance. The school would leverage this information to share content through the athletes. There were also three brand-personality characteristics that the school leveraged, which are rebellious, open-minded, and conscientiousness. These three personality characteristics were used to show what mold the student-athlete falls into. The personality characteristics helped organize the data to show where student-athletes belonged based on their responses.

The fourth and final article in this section was by O'Hallarn, Morehead, & Pribesh (2016). The purpose of the study was to look at how Old Dominion University uses social media in their athletic department and to develop best practices that will allow other colleges/universities to learn from their successes and implement them into their own program. The study was conducted by looking at 40 social media pages run by Old Dominion's athletic department, and creating a best practices list for social media in intercollegiate athletics. All six ODU athletics social media deputies were interviewed individually, and the interviews were conducted on campus. There was also a focus group of ODU fans, who have supported the team for 10 years or more. They were asked questions on what they look for from ODU athletics and social media. This focus group took place during an alumni visit back to ODU's campus, and the fans were asked ahead of time if they were going to be in attendance. There were five recommendations that all sports organizations can take from ODU to make up the S-T-E-A-M framework. S is for "Steal". Sport organizations should take ideas from each other to generate more content. T is for "Team", which means that each sport should feed into one social media site, allowing for one common message from the entire team. "Engagement" describes ways in which fans or followers are engaging with content, and how to create a network with the fans and

followers. A is for “Analytics” to look at how followers are attracted to certain content, and to look at ways to gain more attention/followers as a result. Lastly, M stands for “Mavens” seeking out influencers or other fans to share and distribute content. This five acronym word S-T-E-A-M is considered a best practice according to the ODU athletic department officials, who all come from a diverse background in athletic communication.

These articles all touch on how social media is being used in college/university athletics, and what each school is doing to separate themselves from the pack. The studies also looked at how social media has opened doors for recruiting, networking, and brand recognition across their respective social media apps.

### **Social Media and Student-Athletes**

For this category, the focus was on how social media interacts and plays a role with student-athletes. Examples of this are benefits to student-athletes, problems and potential problems for student-athletes, and how student-athletes are using social media. There were a total of six articles that fell into this category.

The first article that fell into this category was by David, Powless, Hyman, Purnell, Steinfeldt, & Fisher (2018). The purpose of this article was to look at the impact that Twitter has on student athletes, and to examine how Twitter is being used by student-athletes on a daily basis. The research was generated with qualitative methods. The researchers were able to look at the experience that Division I athletes had while using Twitter and tie that into the group. A semi structured focus-group interview looked at all the responses, and helped uncover the needed information. To be eligible for the study, the student-athlete had to have an active Twitter account, and have used Twitter within 30 days of the focus group. The groups were comprised of

four to twelve athlete who had similar athletic backgrounds. The focus groups lasted 75 minutes, and the data analysis was a modified version of consensual qualitative research. The analysis found that there were five main domains that came from the data: #WhyWeTweet, #LetItGrow, #TweetInsideTheLines, #IDeclareTwitterWar, and #SportPerformanceImplications. The findings of this research were that student athletes engaged in responsible use of Twitter, however they could not completely avoid critical tweets directed towards them. There were also gender dynamics that came into play, with male and females being perceived differently on social media. It was perceived that men talked more about sport and who they were from an athlete perspective, whereas women talked more about feminism and life outside of sport. The study found that a vast majority of those studied use Twitter to past the time, as a venue for public feedback, an area for moral support, and to market themselves and the institution. It is a way to connect themselves with the school they attend, while also creating a brand of themselves through the platform.

The second article also touched on Twitter practices within the student-athlete community. The purpose of the article by Sanderson & Browning (2013) was to understand the message that student-athletes receive about Twitter from their athletic department and to better understand what training and assistance is given from their college or university in regard to understanding social media and the positives and negatives of using it. To conduct the study, semi-structured interviews with 20 student-athletes at a DI school took place. Participants had to have had a Twitter account for a minimum of 5 months, with some having accounts for as long as 5 years. Each of the participants had a range of followers from 137 all the way to 18,000. Interviews were conducted face to face on campus. The data was entered into a transcript for future breakdown and connected to the other student-athlete answers for comparison and

contrast. The data was analyzed by using a thematic analysis of the transcripts. The analysis shows that the Twitter messages the student-athletes were receiving from their athletic departments fell into three main areas: 1) a lack of training, 2) surveillance/monitoring of accounts, and 3) reactive training. The findings of the study were that student-athletes are responsible for their own social media and for interpreting right vs. wrong. The messages that they received from the coaching staff or other athletic officials fell into three main areas: non training, surveillance/monitoring, and reactive training. Most student athletes shared that they have no training on Twitter, and did not know the boundaries. The same student-athletes also shared they were only made aware of policies after an offense had taken place. Lastly, schools have implemented a system to monitor social media posts through software to flag key words that might be detrimental to a school or student-athlete.

The third article also relates to the first two, touching on the positives and negatives of student-athletes and Twitter. The article by Browning & Sanderson (2012) examined the positives and negatives of using Twitter from a student-athlete's perspective. The study was tailored to look into how athletes respond to critical tweets and how they are psychologically affected by what is said about and to them through Twitter. The study utilized semi-structured interviews with 20 student-athletes. Questions were centered around why the student-athlete got started on Twitter, negative tweet feedback, and motivation for tweeting. Interviews lasted roughly 25 minutes, and each was recorded. The focus was on what the student-athletes look to gain from Twitter, and how they can use it to their advantage to push their brand out, but also focused on the dangers of Twitter that student-athletes can get wrapped up in. The data was analyzed using the uses-and-gratifications theory which helped break the research into different sections. There were three ways that student-athletes used Twitter: keeping in contact with other

student-athletes and friends and family back home, communicating with followers, and accessing information like the news, sports, politics, and local, regional, national, and world events. The findings showed that Twitter appears to be the dominant sports profile, and Twitter is growing in popularity with student-athletes. Student-athletes are using Twitter to keep in touch with family and friends back home and to get news stories around the world. The student-athletes indicated that negative tweets did not have any effect on them, and that they tended to ignore those tweets and take them with a grain of salt. Lastly, in terms of responding to negative tweets, the student-athletes mentioned that they will delete and block the sender or just ignore it best as possible.

The fourth article discusses the student-athlete and inappropriate social media usage, which can be detrimental to their careers. The article by Han, Dodds, Mahoney, Schoepfer, & Lovich (2015) looked at examples of ways in which student-athletes are using social media inappropriately, and what measures are utilized to educate them on the dangers of inappropriate social media use. The study was conducted by looking at different case studies of student athletes and inappropriate use and the consequences of such actions. The research was gathered from a handful of peer reviewed articles as well as Division I athletic departments' web pages/social media. The data was analyzed using a qualitative collection method. The research showed that there have been numerous examples of inappropriate use of social media by student athletes such as posting profanities or racial slurs, inappropriate images, and harassment. The athletic department helped athletes avoid those mistakes by using smart social media practices like "watching what you post", better training from the athletic department, and helping student-athletes be better-informed on their social media usage. The authors found that social media can harm the reputation of the student-athlete, athletic program, and school if not regulated closely. They also found that colleges are using monitoring software to identify key words on social

media accounts that could harm the universities' image and reputation. In addition, the authors found that NCAA compliance may be impacted by student-athlete social media use, as a student-athlete might be receiving benefits that they receive because they are an athlete, which is against the NCAA rules.

The fifth article discussed how student athletes react and think about the social media training they have received. The article by Sanderson, Browning, & Schmittl (2015) examined student athlete perceptions of social media training, what training is being done, and how effective that training is in an athlete's development and understanding of social media. The methods used in this study were semi-structured interviews of 20 student athletes at a DI university. These athletes were from a wide range of sports. Each of the interviews were face to face on campus. Interviews were roughly 21 minutes in length. The studies used open ended questions to prompt a handful of tailored responses to help address the research questions. The data was analyzed using qualitative research method of grounded theory. While participants expressed a desire for social media education, the student-athletes indicated that most of the messages taught were forgettable and did not leave a lasting impact. The findings of this study were that student athletes need a new way to learn social media safety and they also showed skepticism towards monitoring. Student athletes desire social media training, and that is something that has often been lacking in their athletic program. There is also a lack of follow up in monitoring the athletes, with coaches and administrators not doing extensive check-ins on student-athlete social media usage.

The sixth and final article in this section also had to do with Twitter, and how student-athletes position themselves on social media. The article by Coche (2017) examined how student-athlete social media profiles are constructed, and what goes into putting together a

Twitter profile. The methods used in the study involved studying student-athlete's Twitter profiles from a quantitative perspective, that included looking at the profile, cover, background pictures, and biographies. The website Tweeting-Athletes.com was used to look at the athletes' profiles. Tweeting-athletes.com was used to gather information on the content, and it measured how much news was generated in a calendar year about the athlete. Then, pictures were coded based on criteria of how their profile picture looks. The coding was based on what the student-athlete was doing, who else was in their profile picture, what did their biography contain, who do they take pictures with, what are a majority of their photos/tweets about, and with what frequency are they posting. The data was analyzed using the quasi-experimental design theory. The data found that female athletes try to preserve and counter traditional gender roles and masculine hegemony in sports. Women tend to highlight femininity rather than sports contexts while men depict profile and background pictures that show them as athletes and masculine. More men mentioned their family, while more women mentioned their athletic careers. There was an additional focus that men were more worried about how they look performing the sport, and women wanted to focus on their legacy outside of their sport.

### **Social Media Policies for Colleges/Universities and Student-Athletes**

For this category, the focus was on social media policies for colleges/universities and student-athletes and how the policies of colleges/universities affect student-athletes. Examples of this are outlined policies, controversial policies, and how student-athletes are responding to social media policies set forth by their institutions. There were a total of two articles that fell into this category.

The first article discussed the role technology is having on the social media policies that are rolled out. The purpose of the article by Sanderson, Synder, Hull, & Gramlich (2015) was to

examine social media policies and their appropriateness for DI, DII, and DIII schools, and how well the policies support the changing dynamic of the modern student-athlete. The methods in this study involved an exploratory sequential mixed methods approach from the DI, DII, and DIII schools. A total of 244 student-athlete handbooks were analyzed across these divisions. Each policy was put into a Microsoft word document and scanned for specific social media platforms. Each document also looked at policies for language that contains rules and regulations around social media. Results indicated that student athletes felt that the policies were not fit for them, and did not allow them to express themselves adequately. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Pinterest were some of the top searches within the data. The data was sorted into four categories: (enabling, restrictive, neutral, or framing was absent.) Then, once in those categories, the results were sorted again: (positive future impact, negative future impact, neutral future impact, or discussion of future impact was absent.) The findings of this research indicated that policies from NCAA institutions are restrictive, and student athletes are shown conflicting messages about social media ownership. These policies also framed social media as having a negative impact on a student-athlete's future, and the majority of the policies emphasized the possibility of social media ruining future careers, endeavors, graduate school opportunities, and much more.

The second article in this category also dealt with NCAA policies regarding the student-athlete. The article by Sanderson (2011) examined student-athlete handbooks and specifically looked at the language surrounding social media usage. The data was gathered through looking at DI schools and their websites for student-athlete handbooks. There were 159 total policies that were gathered and examined. These handbooks were submitted to a Microsoft Word document, which made it easier to examine and extract keywords. Then the policies were sorted into

different categories, restrictive, non-restrictive, and neutral. The data analysis of grounded theory showed that there were content restrictions, monitoring, risk, and dialectical tensions found in the student-athlete handbooks. The findings of this study indicated that there are many restrictions and prohibitions on social media but not enough best practices. There is also a lot of emphasis on external monitoring of accounts and profiles. There are content restrictions, as many handbooks outline what you can and cannot post. The last category was risk, which showed student-athletes if you post this, here is what happens. It shows and outlines the consequences for an offense and what can happen if something gets posted that you did not intend to share.

## Chapter 4

### Discussion

The purpose of this chapter is to answer the research questions presented in chapter one about what was found in regard to social media in college athletics. A critical mass of relevant articles was analyzed to answer the four research questions that follow.

#### **Research Question #1: How is social media used in athletics by institution, and by athletes?**

Social media is used in a variety of different ways by student-athletes, and the same can be said for how colleges/universities are using social media (Black, 2016). The article by Black (2018) concluded that athletic programs are primarily using social media to grow their identity and help facilitate recruiting. The same study also found that Facebook was the most popular tool with which to grow a brand. The study goes on to state that results were different by sport, with women's basketball having the highest usage of social media at 83.6%. Student athletes reported posting on social media was an average of 1-3 times per day. The content that student-athletes are posting is mostly user-generated, or content generated by coaches and the university, which can lead to higher enrollment numbers, stronger athletics, and higher national recognition.

Powless (2018) discussed ways in which Twitter is being used, and how Twitter is growing in athletics because of its ease of use and the number of users who are engaging with Twitter on a daily basis. The study concluded that colleges are using Twitter to engage with potential recruits, share information about accolades and awards, and promote the campus through a new lens. The student athletes are using Twitter to share information about their personal brand, and personal accomplishments. Student athletes are also using Twitter to talk to fans, family, and friends who they might not see on a daily or weekly basis.

The Powless (2018) study also touched on the darker side of social media and Twitter, which refers to negative tweets directed at student-athletes and colleges/universities. In this study, colleges and universities did not respond to critical tweets as often as student-athletes did. The reasons behind this were ignorance to tweets, tweet volume, and awareness of message. Student-athletes tried to avoid negative tweets as much as possible but did admit to responding to tweets if something triggered them.

Both of these articles showed that Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook are the two main forms for social media communication. Student-athletes are using Twitter and Instagram more often, while colleges and universities are using Facebook and Twitter to get their message across (Black, 2016). It is important to note that both parties are using social media as a venue for public feedback, an area for moral support, and to market themselves and the institution. It is a way to connect athletes with the school they attend, while also creating a brand for themselves through the various platforms.

### **Research Question #2: What are the benefits of social media to athletes and to colleges?**

The articles in this section addressed the positives behind social media, and how they will work to the advantage of the institution they serve, as well as advantages to the student-athlete who uses social media on a daily basis (Sanderson, 2015). The first benefit for both colleges and athletes is the open access available to all. Colleges and universities see social media as a great networking tool because they can get in front of a larger audience, which can help them with future growth of the institution. Student athletes see this as a benefit because more than 70% of student athletes surveyed in this study shared they would prefer to receive information with and communicate through social media (Watkins, 2016). Because social media applications are free

to use, they provide a great news source through which to share content and distribute information at a high volume to large numbers of people. (Coche, 2017).

The second benefit to social media to colleges is the content creation. There are so many tools that colleges and universities can use, such as Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator, and editor to help create visual images that will attract an audience (Sanderson & Browning, 2013). The tools can allow the school to share infographics, pictures from practices and games, as well as fun facts about the athletic program (Sanderson, 2011). By creating this content, student athletes are able to share it individually and spread the word about their brand and identity. Student-athletes are using social media to share videos about their performance and play, and to redistribute their focus to more visual aspects of social media like Twitter and Instagram provide (Sanderson & Browning, 2013).

The third benefit of social media to both the college and the athlete is branding and brand recognition. Social media allows colleges and universities to create a unique image that will be easily distinguished from the competition and provide a strong foundation for future branding initiatives that the school decides to pursue (Watkins & Lee, 2016). Some examples are rebranding a new logo, such as when Syracuse University changed from Otto the Orange to the “Block S” or when the University of Kentucky added a secondary logo of a side profile of a wildcat. This allows the school to sell more merchandise, create new marketing materials, and to reidentify the mission of the athletic department behind a new logo (O’Hallarn, 2016).

The fourth and final benefit of social media is creating a student following. Social media allows colleges and universities to follow students, and for students to follow them back. This allows for a transfer of content and can provide an open line of communication between the sender and receiver. From a student athlete’s perspective, having more followers creates

awareness about how good an athlete they really are and what they stand for from a “values” standpoint. The athlete can then promote the school, which will circle back and show friends and family how enjoyable the school is, hopefully leading to more positive press about the school or university (O’Hallarn, 2016).

These articles show that the benefits all lead to advanced exposure and information for both the college athletic departments and student-athletes. By using these benefits, this can lead to more positive publicity about the schools, and the student-athlete will also benefit because their personal social media will be associated with the school. This will allow for a more free flowing transfer of content, and unite the campus athletic community through social media.

### **Research Question #3: What are the problems and potential problems of social media to athletes and to colleges?**

The articles in this section addressed the problems and potential problems that social media poses to student athletes and to colleges. There were two articles that were similar in their findings.

The article by Browning & Sanderson (2012) concluded that student athletes can get in trouble in a handful of ways by using social media. One of the main ways would be inappropriate language/images that are shared. Over 78% of student athletes shared that they had put something on social media that they looked back on with regret. This can lead to bad publicity for the student athlete and the university. The image that student athletes are trying to portray is one of being a role model and social media is a great tool to do that, however, sometimes we forget that these are 19 year old kids who have been handed the keys to make their own decisions, and not all of them are being careful online (Coche, 2017).

The second potential problem that can arise with social media is the negativity that fans and non-members of the college/university can exhibit. In the article by Coche (2017), the conclusion was that student athletes and colleges frequently face negative criticism from outside parties. Overall, 82% of student athletes say they just ignore negative criticism and do nothing about it. The other 18% state they have responded to negative comments because the comments disrespect something personal (their sport, their team, their school, their family, etc.). The colleges and universities answered that 97% of the time they do nothing about negative comments. Responding to negative comments by the college can harm potential student recruitment efforts, deter new faculty from applying, and discourage alumni from visiting. Schools are in the business of soliciting donations and attracting enrollment, so they cannot jeopardize this by responding to negative comments on social media.

The third problem with social media is lack of training. The article by Sanderson (2011) concludes that student athletes feel there are many restrictions and prohibitions when it comes to social media, however, there is little training and guidance to show the right way to interact with social media. Student athletes seem eager for training, learning how to get in front of problems, and avoiding situations that could be detrimental to themselves and to the college. Many universities have some monitoring software in place that can detect key words that are not acceptable on accounts to flag it and take it down, however, this is something enacted after the post has been entered. College athletic departments also stated they need to offer more training when it comes to social media, because when a member of the school community is active on social media, there needs to be a consistent message and practice to ensure there is no defamation occurring (Coche, 2017).

There are many problems and potential problems as stated above that can lead to trouble for a school athletic program and the student-athletes involved. It is important to note that these can all be prevented with the proper training and attention. By understanding social media at the highest level, it can help deter potential threats to the college and student-athlete. The training will also allow for an advanced understanding, that can help to curb potential problems into a benefit for the school.

#### **Research Question #4: What are the best practices for social media use in collegiate athletics?**

The articles in this section addressed the best practices for social media in collegiate athletics. There were four articles in the critical mass that shared similar thoughts, and that contributed to the list of best practices.

The first study by O'Hallarn, Morehead, & Pribesh (2016) concluded that the S-T-E-A-M method was the best way for schools to generate content. S is for "steal" and they indicate that sport organizations should "steal" from each other to generate more content across the board. T is for "Team" and that each sport should feed into one social media site, allowing for one common message from "one team." E is for "Engagement" and that represents how the fans or followers are engaging with content and how to create a network with the fans and followers. A is for "Analytics" and that refers to analyzing how followers are attracted to certain content and to look at ways to gain more attention/followers as a result of promoting that context. Lastly, "Mavens" refers to seeking out influencers or other fans to share and distribute content about the program.

The second best practice is to share content created by others first, and share content created by yourself second. College generated posts are better than individual athlete posts, as they have a consistent message across the teams and athletic program. Sanderson, Browning, & Schmittel (2015) concluded that content that is generated in house by the college or university is three times more likely to be widely shared versus a single post by the athlete. This in-house generated content could be anything from an infographic, to a box score from a game or contest, or photos of student athletes doing things on campus. Having the athletic department marketing team handle this takes pressure off of the student-athlete to have to post something, and risk tarnishing their reputation/the college's reputation. Han, Dodds, Mahoney, Schoepfer, & Lovich (2015) share similar conclusions that student athletes should leave the creation of content to in house marketing teams because as these pictures, posts, and content are then crafted by people who have a background in it and better understand the response that will come from sharing that content.

The final best practice is highlighted in the study by Hipke & Hachtmann (2014). They concluded that each post has to have a tailored audience, and that over 30% of the posts that a college or university shares have to be "revenue focused." When a university is focusing on generating revenue through social media, they need to tailor campaigns and postings to best reflect the audience they want to reach, which would usually be the community, alumni, and members of the school community. This leads into a parallel point of emphasis, in that schools are focusing on building brand loyalty through social media, which they hope will trickle down into other areas like merchandise sales. The overarching strategy is to get fans to interact, communicate, and to share content with the community, which just creates a buzz around what they are doing. If there is no tailored audience, there is no measurable goal.

These best practices are going to grow and expand as social media changes, however in the present moment these are crucial for success. By using these best practices, it allows the colleges and student-athletes the opportunity to have a set of guidelines to follow and work off of, therefore eliminating most of the pressure that come with social media and knowing what to post.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion/Future Research

This section of the synthesis will discuss the conclusion of the critical mass articles as well as what future research can be done to better examine the role of social media on the student athlete, as well as the role of social media in athletic departments at colleges/universities.

#### Conclusion

The findings from these articles concluded that social media is a great tool for both student-athletes and colleges/universities to use for branding, promotion of academic and athletic programs, sharing statistics, stories, and alumni relations. Social media allows the schools/universities to have a real sense of school pride, and to connect with future student-athletes. More student-athletes of this generation are on social media than ever before, so schools need to be able to adjust their traditional marketing strategies and guidelines for use to accommodate this new shift.

The findings also showed that student-athletes feel there is not enough training for them in regard to social media and the best practices to use. Many student-athletes find themselves in trouble due to their actions on social media, and feel that the college/university that they attend does not give them the best training, if any, to help guide their social media actions. Because social media is such a new concept, many college administrators find it difficult to teach best practices around social media, because social media is new to them as well. Everyone involved is learning about social media as it grows; it is not something that can be grandfathered by university athletic officials to pass down to current student-athletes.

The final piece of the findings showed that there were a handful of best practices that evolved from current use of social media in athletics. Ideas such as resharing content that other organizations are posting, having multiple pages for the different teams a school offers, sharing news stories about the school and athletic conference that puts the school and student-athletes in a positive light, and hosting giveaways, prizes, and other posts that encourage fan engagement are all considered best practices. All of these are things that can help increase the brand and image a school is trying to portray, and connect the athletes and athletic program to a larger audience.

### **Future Research**

There were a few recommendations for future research. The first is that social media is always changing, so studies will have to be repeated or revised every few years to stay relevant and monitor changes in the social media world. Five years from now, much of social media will have changed and therefore, research will need to reflect the changing market and changing opportunities.

Another recommendation is to conduct these studies across more NCAA divisions. Many of the studies are only covering one level, such as Division I or Division III. It would take a bit more work, but the research could be more representative if there was input from Division I, Division II, and Division III schools. Having these three different levels will provide a different perspective on social media usage, as each division might be doing something different that the others could benefit from.

The third recommendation pulled from these studies was to have a clearer policy for student-athletes other than just the traditional student-athlete handbook that most colleges utilize.

With social media being so new, there is much to learn and understand. Colleges and universities should hold some type of informational session for student-athletes, reminding them of consequences of inappropriate use, and creating a social media educational program for student athletes to prevent violations of the policies.

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**Appendix**  
**Data Analysis Coding Grid**

<b>Author</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Methods &amp; Procedures</b>	<b>Analysis</b>	<b>Findings</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
Black, Judson, & Beggs (2016)	Social Media and Athletics in Higher Education	<i>International Journal of Sport Management</i>	To look at how social media is being used across athletic divisions, and to provide a baseline for how colleges and universities are using social media to build their athletic branding, and to build a virtual community around their marketing efforts.	The survey contained 45 questions that went out to DI, DII, and DIII colleges and universities that were in the NCAA. These questions were generic, but then got more specific to social media platforms, highlighting Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Pinterest, and Instagram. The survey adjusted the questions based on the answers provided. In order to incite a response, students were	New tools are coming out for marketers to use, as well as how to grow a brand successfully. The student-athletes that are posting content are growing their brand and the brand of the university of the school they are attending.	That athletic programs are using social media to grow their identity and help facilitate recruiting. The study also found that the results were different by sport, with women's basketball having the highest usage of social media at 83.6%. The frequency of posting on social media was on average 1-3 times per day.	Increase the sample size to include more schools

				offered the chance to win a \$50 Amazon gift card, which increased responses. Over 1,070 institutions were contacted, with 159, or 15% of the institutions responding.		The content that the student-athletes are posting was mostly user-generated, or content generated by coaches and the university.	
David, Powless, Hyman, Purnell, Steinfeldt & Fisher (2018)	College Student Athletes and Social Media: The Psychological Impacts of Twitter Use	<i>International Journal of Sport Communication</i>	To look at the impact that Twitter has on student athletes	By using qualitative methods, the researchers were able to look at the experience that Division I athletes had while using Twitter. A semi structured focus-group interview looked at all the responses, and helped uncover the	There were five main domains that came from the data: #WhyWeTweet, #LetItGrow, #TweetInsideTheLines, #IDeclareTwitterWar, #SportPerformanceI	Student athletes engaged in responsible use of Twitter, however they could not completely avoid critical tweets directed towards them. There were also gender dynamics	This is a preliminary study, and there is a great need for additional research based on how social media is always changing and growing.

				<p>needed information. To be eligible for the study, the student-athlete had to have an active Twitter account, and have used Twitter within 30 days of the focus group. The groups were 4-12 people, who had similar athletic backgrounds. The focus groups lasted 75 minutes.</p>	<p>mplications</p>	<p>that come into play, with male and females being perceived differently on social media. The study found that a vast majority of those studied use Twitter to past the time, as a venue for public feedback, an area for moral support, and to market themselves and the institution. It is a way to connect themselves with the school they attend,</p>	
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						while also creating a brand of themselves through the platform.	
Sanderso n, Synder, Hull, & Gramlich (2015)	Social Media Policies within NCAA Member Institutions: Evolving Technology and its Impact on Policy	<i>Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics</i>	To examine social media policies and their appropriateness for DI, DII, and DIII schools	An exploratory sequential mixed methods approach was used from the DI, DII, and DIII schools. A total of 244 student-athlete handbooks were analyzed across these divisions. Each policy	Student athletes found that the policies were not fit for them, and did not allow them to express themselves . Facebook, Twitter, Instagram,	Policies from NCAA institutions are restrictive, and student athletes are shown conflicting messages about social media ownership. These policies also	Social media policies should be less about the negatives, and more about how student-athletes can benefit from social media and the technology around it.

				<p>was put into a Microsoft word document, and scanned for specific social media platforms. Each document was also looked at policies for language that contains rules and regulations around social media.</p>	<p>YouTube, MySpace, LinkedIn, and Pinterest were some of the top searches within the data. The data was sorted into four buckets: (enabling, restrictive, neutral, or framing was absent.) Then once in those categories, the results were sorted again: (positive future impact, negative future impact, neutral</p>	<p>framed social media as having a negative impact on a student-athlete's future, and the majority of the policies took the angle of social media ruining future careers, endeavors, graduate school opportunities, and much more.</p>	
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					future impact, or discussion of future impact was absent.)		
Hipke & Hachtmann (2014)	Game Changer: A Case Study of Social-Media Strategy in Big Ten Athletic Departments	<i>International Journal of Sport Communication</i>	To discuss the social media strategy between four athletic departments within the Big Ten conference	Discussion from the schools talking about how their school uses social media to enhance their athletic program. There were four Big Ten Conference athletic department officials that participated in this study. In depth interviews were conducted, which lasted roughly 23 minutes.	Interviews, looking at websites/social media	There were a few different findings, such as social media helps connect with the audience, there are different approaches to posting to connect with the target audience, the athletic departments are content gatekeepers, and there is a big push	Would be interesting to hear from the entire conference, as only four schools reported for this study.

				<p>Participants were asked to answer a set of 16 open-ended questions, that were designed to answer two research questions.</p>		<p>to generate revenue through social media. Another point of emphasis is that schools are focusing on building brand loyalty through engagements, which schools hope will trickle down into other areas like merchandise sales. There were also challenges of negativity, as when a team is losing or struggling, fans take to</p>	
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						social media to comment on that. The overarching strategy is to get fans to interact, and to share content with the community.	
Watkins & Lee (2016)	Communicating Brand Identity on Social Media: A Case Study of the Use of Instagram and Twitter for Collegiate Athletic Branding	<i>International Journal of Sport Communication</i>	To look at how a large southern university is using social media in its athletic department	The researchers looked at a large university in the southern United States, to see how it communicated its brand identity through social media. A qualitative content analysis of Instagram and Twitter content produced by	Conducting a survey to see brand loyalty to the football program through social media content	Instagram was the more popular choice, as it was used more to communicate than Twitter was. There was also significance that star athletes of the school were much more marketable than the	Doing this study with more than one institution to see if the same results occur

				the department was analyzed. This was used to decipher brand associations and personalities that match with brands that are communicated to the public through social media.		head coach or team performance. The school would leverage these talents to share content through them. There were also three brand-personality characteristics that the school leveraged, which are rebellious, open-minded, and conscientiousness.	
Sanderson & Brownning (2013)	Training Versus Monitoring: A Qualitative Examination	<i>Qualitative Research Reports in Communication</i>	To understand the message that student-athletes receive	Semi-structured interviews with 20 student-athletes at a	These messages occurred in 3 main areas: 1) lack of	Student-athletes are responsible for their own social media, and	Athletic administrators should look to find and put resources towards training and

	n of Athletic Department Practices Regarding Student-Athletes and Twitter		about Twitter from their athletic department.	DI school. Participants had to had a Twitter account for a minimum of 5 months. Interviews were conducted face to face on campus. The data was taken and put into a transcript for future breakdown.	training, 2) Surveillance/monitoring of accounts, and 3) reactive training	from interpreting right vs. wrong. The messages that they received from the coaching staff or other athletic officials came from three main areas: non training, surveillance/monitoring, and reactive training. Most student athletes shared they have no training of Twitter, and did not know the boundaries. The same student-	best practices for social media
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						athletes also shared they were only made aware of policies after an offense had taken place. Lastly, schools have implemented a system to monitor social media posts through a software to flag key words that might be detrimental to a school or student-athlete.	
Sanderson (2011)	To Tweet or Not to Tweet: Exploring Division I Athletic Departments' Social	<i>International Journal of Sport Communication</i>	To examine student-athlete handbooks to see policy on social media use	Data was gathered through looking at DI schools and their websites for student-athlete handbooks.	That there were content restrictions, monitoring, risk, and dialectical tensions	There are many restrictions and prohibitions, but not enough best practices. There also	Look at DII and DIII schools, and get their policies. It also might be a good idea to examine DI schools by conference (ex: SEC vs. Pac 12)

	Media Policies			<p>There were 159 total policies that were gathered, and examined. These handbooks were submitted to a Microsoft Word document, which made it easier to examine and pull keywords out of.</p>	<p>found in the student-athlete handbooks</p>	<p>is a lot of talk about external monitoring of accounts and profiles. There are also content restrictions, as many handbooks outline what you can and cannot post. The last part was risk, which showed student-athletes if you post this, here is what happens. It shows and outlines the consequences for an offense and what can happen if</p>	
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						something gets out that you did not want to share.	
Browning & Sanderson (2012)	The Positives and Negatives of Twitter: Exploring How Student-Athletes Use Twitter and Respond to Critical Tweets	<i>International Journal of Sport Communication</i>	To examine the positives and negatives of using Twitter	Semi-structured interviews with 20 student-athletes were conducted, and questions were centered around why the student-athlete got started on Twitter, negative tweet feedback, and motivation for tweeting. Interviews lasted roughly 25 minutes, and each was recorded.	There were three ways that student-athletes used Twitter: keeping in contact, communicating with followers, and accessing information.	Twitter appears to be the dominant sports profile, and Twitter is growing in popularity with student-athletes. Student-athletes are using Twitter to keep in touch with family and friends back home, and to get news stories that are happening around the world. The student-athletes also	Doing this study at DII and DIII institutions, and looking at how the student athletes are using Twitter over the course of time. The other consideration is to interview more female student athletes as well.

						<p>said that negative tweets did not have any effect on them, and that they tended to ignore those tweets and take them with a grain of salt. Lastly, in terms of responding to negative tweets, the student-athlete mentioned they will delete and block the sender, and just ignore it best as possible.</p>	
Han, Dodds, Mahoney, Schoepf	Regulating Student-Athlete's Inappropriate Social	<i>Case Studies Sport Management</i>	To look at how student-athletes are using social	By looking at different case studies on student athletes and	There have been numerous examples of	Locke found that social media can harm the	Hold some type of informational session for student-athletes reminding them of these

er, & Lovich (2015)	Media Usage		media inappropriately	inappropriate use, and the consequences of such actions. The research was gathered from a handful of peer reviewed articles, and also Division I athletic departments web pages/social media.	inappropriate use of social media by student athletes, and how to avoid those mistakes	reputation of the student-athlete, athletic program, and school if not regulated closely. She also found that colleges are using monitoring software to identify key words on social media accounts that could harm the universities' image and reputation. Locke found that NCAA compliance could have issues with student-athlete	consequences, and creating a social media usage educational program for student athletes to prevent violations of the policy.
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						social media use, as a student-athlete might be receiving benefits that they receive because they are an athlete, which is against the rules.	
Sanderson, Brownin g, & Schmitte l (2015)	Education on the Digital Terrain: A Case Study Exploring College Athletes' Perceptions of Social-Media Training	<i>International Journal of Sport Communication</i>	To examine how student athletes are using social media, by looking at student athlete perceptions of social media training	Semi-structured interviews of 20 student athletes at a DI university. These athletes were from a wide range of sports. Each of the interviews were face to face on campus. Interviews were roughly 21 minutes.	While participants expressed a desire for social media education, they indicated that most of the messages were forgettable	Student athletes need a new way to learn social media safety, and they also showed skepticism towards monitoring. The research also shows that student athletes desire social	Looking at this research from a DII and DIII perspective, and also understanding how this will impact the school as a whole

				The studies used open ended questions to prompt a handful of tailored responses to help address the research questions.		media training, and that is something that has lacked in their athletic program. There is also a lack of follow up to monitoring the athletes, with coaches and administrators not doing check in's on student-athlete social media.	
O'Hallan, Morehead, & Pribesh (2016)	Gaining S-T-E-A-M: A General Athletic Department Social Media Strategy	<i>Journal of Issues in Intercollegiate Athletics</i>	To look at how Old Dominion University uses social media in their athletic department	Looking at 40 social media pages run by Old Dominion's athletic department, and creating a best practices	Interviews with the six members of the ODU sports social media	Five recommendations that all sports organizations can take from ODU make up the S-T-E-	Use the S-T-E-A-M framework for all institutions to help grow and expand a program

				<p>list for social media in intercollegiate athletics. All six ODU athletics social media deputies were interviewed individually, and the interviews were constructed on campus. There was also a focus group of ODU fans, who have supported the team for 10 years or more. They were asked questions on what they look for from ODU athletics and social media.</p>	<p>department</p>	<p>A-M framework. Steal is that sport organizations should take from each other to generate more content across the board. Team is that each sport should feed into one social media site, allowing for one common message from one team. Engagement is how the fans or followers are engaging with content,</p>	
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						and how to create a network with the fans and followers. Analytics is to look at how followers are attracted to certain content, and to look at ways to gain more attention/followers as a result. Lastly, Mavens talks about seeking out influencers or other fans to share and distribute content.	
Coche (2017)	How Athletes Frame Themselves	<i>Journal of Sports Media</i>	To examine student-athlete social	Studying athlete's Twitter profiles from a	Tweeting-athletes.com was used to	Female athletes try to preserve and counter	Look at more of a sample size, as the research said there

	<p>on Social Media: An Analysis of Twitter Profiles</p>		<p>media profiles</p>	<p>quantitative perspective, that includes looking at profile, cover, background pictures, and biographies. The website Tweeting-Athletes.com was used to look at the athletes' profiles. Then coding the pictures based on criteria of how their profile picture looks.</p>	<p>gather information on the content, and it measured how much news was generated in a calendar year about said athlete.</p>	<p>the traditional gender roles, and masculine hegemony in sports rather than traditional media. Women tend to highlight femininity rather than sports contexts. Men depict profile and background pictures that show them as athletes and masculine. More men mentioned their family, while more women mentioned their athletic careers.</p>	<p>was limited profiles to gather from</p>
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