

Abstract

American football as the most popular sport in the US higher education attracts millions of students to compete in various leagues under the supervision of the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Matches between the top university teams that are part of the Division I Football Bowl Subdivision belong to the most attractive and historical rivalries bring high fan support and media attention. However, this also comes with greater stress for competing student-athletes and thus the impact of losing on their psychological state outside the pitch should not be understated. Following previous studies about the impact of collegiate football, this analysis used data about 114 Division I-FBS teams across 13 years to examine the effect of football performance on the academic results of student-athletes. The results showed positive and significant effects of relatively successful season on the academic performance of players, whose mentality towards studying and socialization outside football improve in case of a successful season. This supports a phenomenon called “football chicken soup”, which states that success in extracurricular activities improve the students’ ability to adjust for college life and thus improve their academic results. Additionally, I found that a team’s financial situation has no effect on the academic results of their players, as they are possibly affected indirectly through investments into better coaching staff and infrastructure.