Much research has been conducted regarding the impacts of family background and educational institutions on academic achievement in elementary and high school. Recent studies have suggested that these implications can be extended to the college level (Jaynes and Williams, 1989). This article applies the previous work on background and institutional pressures specifically to collegiate athletes, comparing athletes in revenue- and non-revenue-producing sports, and their associated academic achievement. Socioeconomic status is important in the education process of a student as it determines parental resources, active school participation and household culture. Low socioeconomic status is most prevalent in African-American families, and 40% of athletes in Division I football and men’s basketball are African-American. Thus, there are racial implications for the levels of academic success of athletes. The rate of graduation for African-Americans is about half that of white students. In addition, large revenue-producing programs tend to have lower grades and graduation rates, due to greater institutional pressures and higher levels of competitiveness. The data used in this study was collected from the 1987-88 National Study of Intercollegiate Athletes.

Data/Model

Basketball/football player
Race: dummy variable (1 = black)
Race x basketball/football player
Background Attributes
  Level of parental education
  Family income
  High School GPA
  Importance of college degree
Institutional Pressures
  (Ln) Hours spent in sport
  (Ln) Hours spent preparing for class
  Difficulty getting help
  Difficulty managing time
  Intensity of basketball/football program
Controls
  Freshman
  Sophomore
Junior
Sex: dummy variable (1 = male)
First string
Constant

Data Sources:


