

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42112-6 — Big-Time Sports in American Universities
Charles T. Clotfelter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

BIG-TIME SPORTS IN AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES

For more than a century, big-time college sports has been a wildly popular but consistently problematic part of American higher education. The challenges it poses to traditional academic values have been recognized from the start, but they have grown more ominous in recent decades, as cable television has become ubiquitous, commercial opportunities have proliferated, and athletic budgets have ballooned. Drawing on new research findings, this book takes a fresh look at the role of commercial sports in American universities. It shows that, rather than being the inconsequential student activity that universities often imply that it is, big-time sports has become a core function of the universities that engage in it. For this reason, the book takes this function seriously and presents evidence necessary for a constructive perspective on its value. Although big-time sports surely creates worrisome conflicts in values, it also brings with it some surprising positive consequences.

Charles T. Clotfelter is Z. Smith Reynolds Professor of Public Policy and Professor of Economics and Law at Duke University and a research associate in the National Bureau of Economic Research. His research has covered the economics of education, public finance, and state lotteries; tax policy and charitable behavior; and policies related to the nonprofit sector. His previous books on higher education are *Unequal Colleges in the Age of Disparity* (2017), *Buying the Best: Cost Escalation in Elite Higher Education* (1996), and (with Ronald Ehrenberg, Malcolm Getz, and John Siegfried) *Economic Challenges in Higher Education* (1991). He is also the editor of the volumes *American Universities in a Global Market* (2010) and (with Michael Rothschild) *Studies of Supply and Demand in Higher Education* (1993). In addition, he is the author of *After Brown: The Rise and Retreat of School Desegregation* (2004), *Federal Tax Policy and Charitable Giving* (1985), and (with Philip Cook) *Selling Hope: State Lotteries in America* (1989). Professor Clotfelter has taught at the University of Maryland and spent one year at the US Treasury's Office of Tax Analysis. At Duke he has been a faculty member in the Institute of Policy Sciences and Public Affairs, now the Sanford School of Public Policy; the economics department; and the law school. He has served as Vice Provost for Academic Policy and Planning, Vice Chancellor, and Vice Provost for Academic Programs.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42112-6 — Big-Time Sports in American Universities
Charles T. Clotfelter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Big-Time Sports in American Universities

SECOND EDITION

CHARLES T. CLOTFELTER

Duke University



CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42112-6 — Big-Time Sports in American Universities
Charles T. Clotfelter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

32 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013–2473, USA

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107004344

First edition © Charles T. Clotfelter 2011

Second edition © Charles T. Clotfelter 2019

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2011

Second Edition 2019

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Names: Clotfelter, Charles T., author.

Title: Big-time sports in American universities / Charles T. Clotfelter, Duke University.

Description: New York : Cambridge University Press, [2018] | "First published 2011" – T.p. verso. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018014948 | ISBN 9781108421126 (hardback : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: College sports – United States.

Classification: LCC GV351 .C56 2018 | DDC 796.04/30973–dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018014948>

ISBN 978-1-108-42112-6 Hardback

ISBN 978-1-108-43139-2 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party Internet Web sites referred to in this publication and does not guarantee that any content on such Web sites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42112-6 — Big-Time Sports in American Universities
Charles T. Clotfelter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

For J.H.C., the Varsity, and Grant Field

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42112-6 — Big-Time Sports in American Universities
Charles T. Clotfelter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	<i>page ix</i>
<i>List of Tables</i>	xi
<i>Preface to the Second Edition</i>	xiii
<i>Preface</i>	xix
<i>Glossary of Abbreviations and Terms</i>	xxvii
PART I. COMMERCIAL SPORTS AS A UNIVERSITY FUNCTION	
1. Strange Bedfellows	3
2. Priorities	29
3. The Bigness of “Big Time”	55
PART II. THE USES OF BIG-TIME COLLEGE SPORTS	
4. Consumer Good	89
5. Commercial Enterprise	115
6. Life of the Party	170
7. Institution Builder	201
8. Identity	237
PART III. RECKONING	
9. Ends and Means	261
10. Prospects for Reform	298

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42112-6 — Big-Time Sports in American Universities
Charles T. Clotfelter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

viii

Contents

<i>Appendix</i>	319
<i>References</i>	351
<i>Index</i>	363

Figures

2.1	Administrative units mentioned in university mission statements	page 38
3.1	The growth of college football: games and attendance	62
3.2	Revenue from the NCAA men’s basketball tournament, 1970–2013	71
3.3	Sports and non-sports stories in the <i>New York Times</i> , selected universities, 2007, 1967, and 1927	75
3.4	The drop in articles viewed in JSTOR after Selection Sunday, seventy-eight research libraries	81
4.1	Fans of college football (percentage who say they watch college football)	101
4.2	Attendance per 1,000 population at NCAA football games, by state, 2015	102
5.1	Average compensation of full professors, presidents, and football coaches in thousands of FY 2015–2016 dollars, forty-four public universities	132
5.2	The haves and have-nots of big-time college sports (relative to major powers = 100)	147
6.1	Nonrevenue athletes per student versus athletic revenue per student, 2009	198
7.1	Guests in presidential boxes, 2008 football season	224
8.1	Fan loyalties along the Michigan–Ohio border	248
8.2	Fan loyalties along the Oklahoma–Arkansas border	250
A2.1	Percentage Republican, selected groups of employees and stakeholders, thirty-four universities	323
A3.1	NCAA Division I men’s basketball annual attendance and games	325

x *List of Figures*

A6.1	Indicators of social and economic status of incoming freshmen in 2004, 115 public and private universities, by level of athletic competition	343
A6.2	Living arrangements of incoming freshmen in 2004, 115 public and private universities, by level of athletic competition	343
A6.3	Indicators of political and social attitudes of incoming freshmen in 2004, 115 public and private universities, by level of athletic competition	344
A6.4	Weekly time use of undergraduates, eight selective universities	345
A6.5	Undergraduate binge drinking, eight selective universities	345
A6.6	Overall ratings of college experience by undergraduates in eight selective universities and freshmen in public universities with enrollments of more than 10,000	346

Tables

1.1	Top 100 universities by expenditures on athletics, FY 2016	<i>page</i> 21
3.1	Televised football games, Chicago market, first Saturday in October, 1983, 1990, and 2016	68
4.1	TV advertising for the 2009 NCAA men’s basketball tournament	108
5.1	The pieces of the athletic department budget, public universities in FBS, 2008 and 2016 fiscal years	120
5.2	Business profiles for four types of big-time college sports programs	143
8.1	How some Florida motorists identified themselves: number of motorists paying for specialty license plates in 2016, by category	243
8.2	How some die-hard college fans were remembered: excerpts from obituaries	252
8.3	How die-hard fans were connected to their favorite college teams (percentage who attended the university or were ever a resident of the state)	254
A1.1	A ranking of the fifty top universities in the world, 2016	319
A2.1	Functions or administrative units mentioned in mission statements, fifty-two universities with big-time athletic programs	324
A3.1	Big-time college sports then and now: institutions ranked by football power in 1920, athletic spending in 2016	325
A3.2	Televised basketball games, Chicago market, first Saturday in February, 1983, 1990, and 2017	330
A4.1	Fans by gender and age	332
A4.2	TV commercials for the 2009 NCAA men’s basketball tournament, by product category	332

A5.1	Universities in the five richest conferences, 2017	334
A5.2	Illustrative benefits for donations to booster organizations	337
A5.3	Total compensation for faculty, presidents, and football coaches, forty-four universities, 1985–1986, 2009–2010, and 2015–2016	339
A6.1	Characteristics of incoming freshmen in 2004, 115 public and private universities, by level of athletic competition	347
A6.2	Estimated media event and partisan fan effects on number of articles viewed on JSTOR	349
A7.1	Changes in academic ranking, 1995–2010	350
A9.1	Graduation rates, fifty-eight universities with big-time athletic programs	350

Preface to the Second Edition

On September 25, 2017, a US attorney in New York City announced that charges would be brought against a handful of individuals, including assistant coaches for several Division I college basketball teams and a shoe company representative. Based on evidence collected in a two-year FBI investigation, federal prosecutors described patterns of corrupt behavior that would likely implicate more universities and, if proven, certainly besmirch college sports for years to come. This stunning announcement was only the latest in a series of developments over the previous six years – since the publication of the first edition – that illustrate the ongoing need for attention to the issues raised in this book. These developments included rapidly growing spending on college sports, lucrative new TV contracts to broadcast college games, a raft of realignments in college athletic conferences, legal challenges to established rules designed to maintain players' amateur status, a landmark Supreme Court ruling on sports betting, growing concerns about head injuries in football, and a series of other scandals predating these federal allegations of 2017.

Even without these recent developments, the central question raised by this book would remain a pressing one: why do so many American universities operate a spectator sports enterprise that has almost nothing to do with their traditional activities of research, teaching, and public service? I argue that, for these universities, the commercial sports business long ago became one of their core functions, now as deeply entrenched as any of the pursuits in that traditional trinity. This fact has taken on the status of an unspoken truth, and the failure to acknowledge it is deeply problematic. For universities, failing to acknowledge it leads them to depart from the path of candor, into the weeds of hypocrisy. For higher education researchers, the practice of ignoring commercial sports in their studies of universities stands in the way of a clear-eyed assessment of the costs and benefits

of the commercial sports enterprise. In my book I lean against those tendencies by giving big-time sports the attention their actual importance demands, rather than dismissing the subject as unworthy of scholarly research. To that end, I avoid ways of speaking about these operations that make them seem separate from the universities that sponsor them. For example, I view coaches who lead these teams as university employees, just as much as the professor of English or the manager of buildings and grounds. It is the university, not some autonomous athletic department, that signs the contract with a shoe company or agrees to be bound by a conference that directs the football team to schedule a game on a Thursday night.

Why write a second edition? I wrote this not because I see any fundamental change in the rationale or economics of big-time college sports. Rather, the rapid growth in the business and the new developments, such as those noted above, called for attention and updating. The reader will notice a number of changes from the first edition. To begin with, this second edition features new and revised figures and tables that document the developments and visually capture the economic value of the resources going into and being generated by these sports programs. More than half of the figures and tables in this edition are either new or revised versions of those appearing in the first edition. One of the new tables, which lists the members of the five richest conferences, reveals the remarkable degree of discombobulation that played havoc with conference membership rosters in just the few years since the first edition was published. Some of the revised figures and tables show other examples of breathtaking change. For example, the dizzying escalation of salaries for head coaches that I documented in the first edition hardly slowed over the subsequent six years, leading to ever more stunning disparities within universities. Some of the revised tables, however, reflect stubborn verities, such as the wide gulf that lies between the haves and have-nots in big-time college sports. In addition to the revised or added figures and tables, I have amended the descriptions in numerous places to reflect recent events and new quantities.

Besides this updating, the most visible addition to this second edition is a new chapter. Since writing the book I have become more and more aware of the strong personal connections that many fans have with their favorite team (and university). Thus Chapter 8 discusses fan identity, a role of big-time college sports that was only hinted at in the first edition, but one that I believe deserves to be considered alongside the others taken up before it – consumer good, commercial enterprise, source of campus entertainment,

and institution builder. This chapter presents new data to illustrate some of the aspects of this elusive function, including descriptions of fan devotion taken from obituaries, statistics on sales of specialty license plates, and evidence of sharp discontinuities along state borders. Although outside the orbit of things that universities can control, this role has a social and cultural importance too large to ignore. Fan affiliation is a good illustration of the degree to which big-time sports has become a phenomenon unlike anything else that universities are involved in.

The new edition also contains several substantive additions. The first is discussion of a representative handful of scandals that came to light after the first edition was written. In addition to the corruption charges announced in 2017, I highlight scandals at four universities: North Carolina, Penn State, Baylor, and Louisville. The details of each scandal have the capacity to make the reader cringe. Each episode serves as a distasteful but instructive illustration of how at least one basic principle governing the business of big-time college sports can tempt university officials to stray from the paths of righteousness. The second addition is a discussion of three new looming threats to the existing business model: the prospect of having to compensate players, the possibility that the sport of football may be causing significant long-term damage to some players, and the advent of legalized sports betting. The related discussions of these looming threats are necessarily tentative since the circumstances surrounding them seem to be constantly changing. The third noteworthy addition was necessitated by the new tax bill, passed and signed into law in the waning days of 2017, as I was putting the finishing touches on the manuscript. That law, dubbed the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, instituted one of the possible reforms described in the book's first edition – ending the deductibility of contributions that are made as a condition of getting favored treatment in buying tickets to games. It is too early to know what effects this new restriction will have, of course, but its effects are likely to be felt by universities who operate the biggest of the big-time college sports programs.

The fourth addition worth mentioning here is description of several new statistical studies, each one establishing a causal link between an aspect of big-time college sports and outcomes that we care about. One study shows how football success at the University of Oregon affects students' academic effort and grades. Another, using data for many universities, shows that sexual assaults are higher on campuses and communities on weekends when the university's football team plays a game. A third uncovers an astounding link between Louisiana State football games and subsequent

decisions by judges in Louisiana courtrooms. Besides being fascinating, these studies advance our understanding of the effects of big-time college sports, taking us beyond intuition and correlation. This new research also represents a real break from the traditional scholarly aversion to studying big-time sports. It provides fresh and compelling reasons to take this university enterprise seriously.

There is a caveat that belongs somewhere, and here is as good a place as any. It has to do with the college sports teams not covered in this book – the so-called nonrevenue or Olympic sports. In my view, these sports occupy an entirely different category from the commercialized spectator sports to which I devote so much attention. Whereas I argue that the latter have little in common with the traditional functions of higher education, I would not make the same argument for the noncommercial side of college sports – the tennis, softball, wrestling, track, and volleyball teams at whose games, meets, and matches the players often outnumber the spectators. In these sports the athletes and their experiences, not the spectators, are paramount. What these athletes learn from coaches, the training, the playing together, the losing, and the winning – these are the predominant items of interest, not the revenue they raise. Most educators I have known would agree with me that, by offering students a chance to gain from such experiences, a university provides an activity that is wholly consistent with its teaching mission. To be sure, athletes who play one of the big-time spectator sports can also benefit in similar ways that are complementary to education, but this aspect is inevitably overwhelmed by commercial considerations in any evaluation of those sports. In sum, the nonrevenue sports have an educational importance worth serious consideration, but this book is not about them.

In undertaking the revisions that appear in this second edition, I had the benefit of able student research assistants, who allowed me to build on the work of those whom I thanked in the preface of the first edition. Assisting me in this second edition were Peter Cohen, Brittany Edwards-Franklin, Emily Eshman, Kendrik Isenhour, Christina Malliris, Marcella McClatchey, John McGinty, Kevin Mellin, John Prettyman, Corinne Santoro, Lisa Sapozhnikov, Amanda Sear, Allison Stolte, Danny Vinik, and Caroline Wang. And, from the beginning of my research on this topic in the early 2000s, I have gained immeasurably from scores of conversations about the issues raised in this book, conversations too numerous to remember or list. But I would especially like to single out individuals with whom I discussed this second edition and the research I have undertaken since the first edition: Leonard Beegley, Connie Buchanan, Nick Carnes,

Preface to the Second Edition

xvii

Mark Chaves, Jim Clotfelter, Kristin Goss, Frank Levy, Michael Malec, Todd Mesibov, Theresa Newman, and Kenneth Spenner. The reference staff of the Goodson Law Library at Duke provided invaluable assistance, as did the Sanford School of Public Policy. As a professor at Duke, I have had many advantages whose value cannot be expressed in words. To my colleagues in public policy, economics, law, and other departments, both academic and administrative, I express my thanks. It has been a privilege to work at such a place.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42112-6 — Big-Time Sports in American Universities
Charles T. Clotfelter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Preface

Several hundred of the largest American universities do something not seen in universities anywhere else in the world. They sponsor athletic programs whose revenues, media coverage, and notoriety give them a striking resemblance to professional sports franchises. This fact is as unremarkable to most adults who were raised in this country as it must surely be strange to a first-time visitor from abroad. As an American who grew up following football and basketball as a fan and high school sports editor, I accepted as part of the natural order of things that athletic teams sponsored by universities like Georgia Tech and Penn State would compete in highly publicized games and that people like me might become emotionally invested in the outcomes. Even during my college years, when I had a very brief stint as a sports writer, I found nothing out of the ordinary about either the size of the college sports enterprise or the widespread interest in it.

It was not until I became a faculty member that I began to think there might be anything remarkable about the phenomenon of big-time college sports. As I began a career working alongside scholars at two research universities that also operate prominent commercial sports programs, Maryland and Duke, I was surprised at each place not by the attention that the campus and city newspapers devoted to college sports, but by how many faculty and staff members also took a keen interest in the university's teams. The same faculty colleagues who discussed a recent research paper one day might chat about the basketball team's upcoming game the next. And in the first of several brief tours of duty I spent in Duke's academic administration, I was more than a little surprised to discover how thoroughly the offices of the university's top administrators emptied out on the Friday of the first round of the Atlantic Coast Conference basketball

tournament. Nor could I fail to notice the perpetual need to consult the basketball team's schedule before setting up a meeting of any significance.

Meanwhile, my administrative service stimulated my own interest in doing research on the economics of higher education. Yet my reading of scholarly research in this area revealed a strange disconnect. Despite what I saw as abundant evidence of the larger-than-life presence of big-time college sports, serious academic research about universities rarely deals with the subject at all. For almost twenty years I was the convener of a working group on higher education at the National Bureau of Economic Research. In the thirty meetings of that group that occurred over this period, scholars presented 176 research papers on topics ranging from financial aid, rising costs, and preferential admissions to faculty retirement, doctoral training, and sponsored research. But only one paper during this entire period had to do with big-time college sports. References to athletics are similarly missing from most official mission statements crafted by universities. Solely on the basis of what is written by those who lead or study these institutions, one could easily conclude that college athletics is little more than a minor extracurricular activity, something that could be added or dropped with no real impact on the university's real work.

Yet my own observations contradicted this official view, suggesting instead that big-time college sports plays quite a big role in the everyday life of universities and the communities and states around them. Indeed, in some regions of the country, and for some Americans across the country, following a favorite college team is a life's passion. The depth of this passion and the bizarre forms it can sometimes take set the commercial sports enterprise apart from all the other activities that universities routinely pursue. Tailgating rituals, painted faces, and screaming fans are part of American higher education as surely as physics labs and seminars on Milton. And this activity is nothing if not prominent, with some college teams playing virtually every one of their games in front of television cameras. In all its colorful manifestations, this enterprise has become by far the most visible feature of many American universities. It was the disparity between this reality and the virtual silence on the subject from scholars and institutions themselves that first motivated me to write this book.

I became increasingly curious not only about the prominent role played by commercial college sports, but also about its remarkable staying power. Despite a steady cavalcade of news stories detailing unsavory aspects of big-time college sports, otherwise reputable and rational universities have

continued to operate their programs, striving for athletic success at the same time they pursue excellence in research, teaching, and public service. In the academic spirit of studying “ever-present but overlooked” aspects of everyday life, I decided to employ my skills as a social scientist to ask the same elementary question about big-time college sports that might be posed by a first-time visitor to this country. In fact, I came to find out that this was precisely the same question posed in a major national study published in 1929. If this basic question was being raised eight decades ago, one might think, surely by now we would know the answer. Indeed, if you put this question to the president or a trustee of one of the universities with a big-time sports program, you will get answers. The reasons they are apt to give for competing in big-time athletics might include the life lessons that athletes glean through competition, the donations generated from loyal alumni, the boost in student applications that comes from winning championships, or the school spirit that is created by intercollegiate competition. If you were to ask fans or others outside of universities, you might hear that a main reason for operating these kinds of athletic programs is the money they bring in. But my own experience inside universities made me suspect there was more to it than any of these ready explanations would suggest.

This is a book chiefly about higher education, not sports. In it, I address two questions about universities that operate big-time sports programs. First, why do they do it? What explains the survival and apparent vigor of highly visible and commercialized university-sponsored athletic enterprises? And second, what are the consequences for the universities that operate these enterprises? I believe answering the first question will not only help to temper our expectations regarding the possibility of reform, but also serve as a prism for gaining a better understanding of the ultimate purpose of universities. Answering the second question will be a necessary part of any full consideration of the future of American higher education, particularly as it relates to America’s declining global rank in educational attainment and the returns we should expect from our enormous investment in public and private universities.

The phenomenon I focus on is not college athletics in general, but merely the most famous manifestation, “big-time” college sports. I define big-time sports as the highly commercialized and widely followed competition in football and basketball that is undertaken by several hundred American universities. Featuring sizable revenues generated by ticket sales and television, this boils down to football in the NCAA’s Football Bowl Subdivision (FBS, formerly Division I-A) and basketball in Division I. I devote little attention to the remaining sports or the less competitive

levels of college competition because, although their effects are certainly worthy of attention, they generate neither the revenue nor the outsized problems that the revenue sports do. Nor do I deal with such important issues as gender equity or the general effects of students' participation in athletics.

In assessing the consequences for universities of operating commercial sports enterprises, I present all the relevant factual material I could locate or generate. I draw on previous studies by others and on my own new research using a variety of sources of data. For example, to illustrate the prominence and reach of big-time college sports, I examined and counted newspaper articles about major American universities. For those with commercial sports programs, articles about athletics vastly outnumbered those about any other aspects of these institutions. In the book, I also compare the number of Google hits for university presidents and their football and basketball coaches. I document the breathtaking growth in TV coverage for the two major college sports, to the point that the average basketball team in one of the major conferences now appears on television twenty-seven times a season. Thanks to larger stadiums and longer seasons, attendance at games has grown as well, rising over the past three decades at an average rate of 14 percent a decade in football and 20 percent in basketball, compared with just 10 percent a decade for the US population.¹ I also document the growth in spending on athletics, caused in part by a spectacular escalation in coaches' salaries. For example, the average pay for head football coaches at eighteen universities with big-time programs, expressed in constant 2009 dollars, increased from \$377,000 in 1981 to more than \$2.4 million in 2009.²

Drawing on detailed information of different kinds, I examine the business of running a big-time athletic department. I show that, despite the growth in TV revenues, the top programs rely heavily on the strong demand for tickets to games, as well as the willingness of affluent boosters to make tax-deductible gifts to secure the best seats and special perks. An annual donation of several thousand dollars a year can easily be required to obtain the privilege of buying season tickets for some of the

¹ Rates based on total NCAA football attendance for 1978 to 2008 and basketball for 1976 to 2008, *NCAA Attendance Records*; http://fs.ncaa.org/Docs/stats/football_records/DI/2010/Attendance.pdf, 5/23/18. Resident population of the United States from *Statistical Abstract of the United States 2006*, Tables 2 and 3, from 1976 to projected 2008 population; <https://www2.census.gov/library/publications/2005/compendia/statab/125ed/tables/pop.pdf>, 5/23/18.

² Author's calculations, based on information in Christine Brennan, "Who's No. \$1?," *Miami Herald*, May 23, 1982, and *USA Today*, <http://www.usatoday.com/sports/college/football/2009-coaches-contracts-database.htm?loc=interstitialskip>, 5/20/10.

most popular college football and basketball teams. At the comparatively impoverished end of the big-time college sports pecking order are universities with shorter histories, smaller crowds, and less expensive coaches. They must rely on mandatory student fees and institutional subsidies to pay the bills, in some cases using those sources to cover 70 percent or more of the athletic budget. For the universities whose teams seldom contend for championships but are lucky enough to be members of established conferences, the sports enterprise is sustained thanks to revenue shared by more successful conference members. Much of this shared revenue comes by way of television and advertising. I show that televised college games are saturated with advertising. Not only are commercials shown during timeouts, pitches for consumer products appear throughout game broadcasts as well.

I also collected new evidence on the connection between big-time sports enterprises and the academic work of the universities that house them. I utilize computerized records from digital archives used by students and other researchers to show how the pace of academic work responds to the schedule of games in the NCAA's annual basketball tournament, and specifically how work is affected at a university whose team wins or loses in the tournament. Students who enroll in universities with big-time sports programs are more affluent and politically conservative than those who go to other universities. And once they are there, they tend to spend less time studying and more time in organized activities, and they are more likely to engage in binge drinking. To see if big-time sports hurts a university's overall quality, I examine changes over time in indicators of quality that are used in *U.S. News* rankings.

The staying power of big-time college sports, and the fact that universities continue to come forward to start new programs of their own or move to a more competitive level, whetted my curiosity about how athletics might be used to bolster the political and financial support that universities constantly seek. To gain insight into this use of college sports, I present new evidence on the political affiliations of athletic boosters compared with other university stakeholders. I also make use of detailed information I gathered through open-records requests to various public universities for the lists of guests invited to sit in presidential boxes at football games, to see what they imply about the institutional uses of big-time football.

I do not neglect the much-debated topics of values and reform. Some of the most serious costs associated with big-time college sports arise when the values of commercial sports come into conflict with time-honored values of universities. Although these costs cannot be quantified, they are

an indispensable part of any university's full accounting of the pros and cons of running a commercial sports enterprise. I find, however, that there are some surprising positive entries as well in this value assessment. The book concludes by noting the prospects for reform without delving into the many detailed proposals that have been put forward. Although there is every reason to be skeptical about these prospects, I note several intriguing possibilities, including a change in federal tax policy and a proposal to spin off college teams as separate entities.

Because the research for this book required collecting and analyzing many different kinds of data over the course of several years, I relied on the able assistance of a large number of bright, energetic, and well-trained students, most of whom were students at Duke. They included Rene Alarcon, Janeil Belle, Laura Brookhiser, Saidi Chen, Celeste Clipp, Ryan Fleenor, Alexis Kirk, Sam Lim, Robert Malme, Ryan Miller, Sara Pilzer, Holly Presley, James Riddlesperger, Jaime Rooke, Cullen Sinclair, Kevin Wang, Garth Weintraub, and Lila Zhao. I received invaluable assistance in gaining access to data sets and other information from a number of people: Mark Alesia, Anthony Broh, Molly Brownfield, Maureen Devlin, Joline Ezzell, Anne Fletcher, Tara Hofher, Deborah Jakubs, Han Kim, Amy Perko, Jill Riepenhoff, Amy Taylor, and Mark Thomas. I obtained restricted-use data from UCLA's Higher Education Research Institute, the National Survey of Student Engagement, the Consortium for Financing Higher Education, and JSTOR. I also used data collected and made available by *USA Today* and the *Indianapolis Star*. Financial support was provided by a grant from the Spencer Foundation.

For their comments, criticisms, suggestions, and helpful discussions, I am grateful to the following people: John Aldrich, Norm Arkans, John Blackburn, Doug Breckel, Christine Brennan, Keith Brodie, Ford Burkhart, John Burness, Hodding Carter, John Colombo, Paul Courant, Michael Cragg, John Drescher, James Duderstadt, William Friday, Dan Fulks, Malcolm Getz, Michael Gillespie, Craufurd Goodwin, Deirdre Gordon, Kristin Goss, Christoph Gutentag, Paul Haagen, James Hearn, Sherman James, Jim Johnson, Nan Keohane, Peter Lange, Keith Lawrence, Todd Mesibov, Carol Meyers, Robert Mosteller, B. J. Naedele, Roger Noll, Scott Parris, David Pervin, Joseph Quinn, Peter Rossy, Richard Schmalbeck, Michael Schoenfeld, James Shulman, John Siegfried, Orin Starn, Welch Suggs, Tim Sullivan, Bob Sweeney, Douglas Toma, Tallman Trask, Sue Wasiolek, Clifton Wharton, Bonna and Richard Whitten-Stovall, Steve Wieberg, Scott

Preface

xxv

Yakola, and Andrew Zimbalist. For his wise words about one sport and for the phrase “ever-present but overlooked,” which he used in a faculty newsletter, I acknowledge my late Duke colleague Irving Alexander. Finally, for her innumerable suggestions and unfailing encouragement, I thank my wife and expert editor, Theresa Newman.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-42112-6 — Big-Time Sports in American Universities
Charles T. Clotfelter
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

Glossary of Abbreviations and Terms

AAU	Amateur Athletic Union
ACC	Atlantic Coast Conference
ACE	American Council on Education
BCS	Bowl Championship Series
CTE	chronic traumatic encephalopathy
Division I	NCAA division incorporating about 300 hundred universities that play basketball at the most competitive level
Division I-A	term for Football Bowl Subdivision, the most competitive NCAA subdivision, before 2006
Division III	the least competitive NCAA division; no athletic scholarships are offered
FBS	Football Bowl Subdivision, the NCAA subdivision adopted in 2006 incorporating about 120 universities that play football at the most competitive level, previously called Division I-A
IPEDS	Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System; data collected by the US Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)
JSTOR	web-based digital archive of academic journals
LSU	Louisiana State University
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NC State	North Carolina State University
NSSE	National Survey of Student Engagement
Pac-10	Pacific 10 Conference
Pac-12	Pacific 12 Conference
SEC	Southeastern Conference
SMU	Southern Methodist University
SUNY	State University of New York

xxviii	<i>Glossary of Abbreviations and Terms</i>
SWC	Southwestern Conference
Title IX	provision of the Education Amendments of 1972 requiring gender equity in college sports
UAB	University of Alabama at Birmingham
UBIT	Unrelated Business Income Tax
UC	University of California
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
UNC	University of North Carolina
USC	University of Southern California
UT	most commonly, University of Texas; alternatively, University of Tennessee
UW	University of Washington; alternatively, University of Wisconsin