

No rest for the weary

Student athletes deserve praise for balancing schoolwork with rigorous sports schedules

College sports can thrust athletes into the spotlight both in and out of season, making it hard for players to blend into a crowd.



ELIZABETH KOHL

Athletes have access to tutors, register before most other students and have their own advisers to attend to their needs.

However, because of restrictive practice schedules, athletes are limited when it comes to scheduling the classes they need during time they have available.

Michelle Royal, sophomore business major said, "With soccer in the afternoon, sometimes the only time I can take a course is 8 o'clock in the morning."

Some athletes find it difficult to schedule their labs and studio hours around the time constraints of their sports.

And away games always add to academic complication.

While the football team may play only on Saturdays, most other sports play twice a week, presenting demanding travel schedules.

For instance, the volleyball team will be playing on Wednesdays and Saturdays this season.

Midweek away games may cause these athletes to miss classes on Wednesday and return late that night.

Traveling can cause athletes to miss not only classes but exams as well. Away-game absences allow athletes to take their exams early or make them up, but either

When a student who played in last weekend's televised game walks into class, it is difficult not to drop the mental thought, "There goes an athlete."

Conversations can be found all over campus when new football or baseball gossip surfaces.

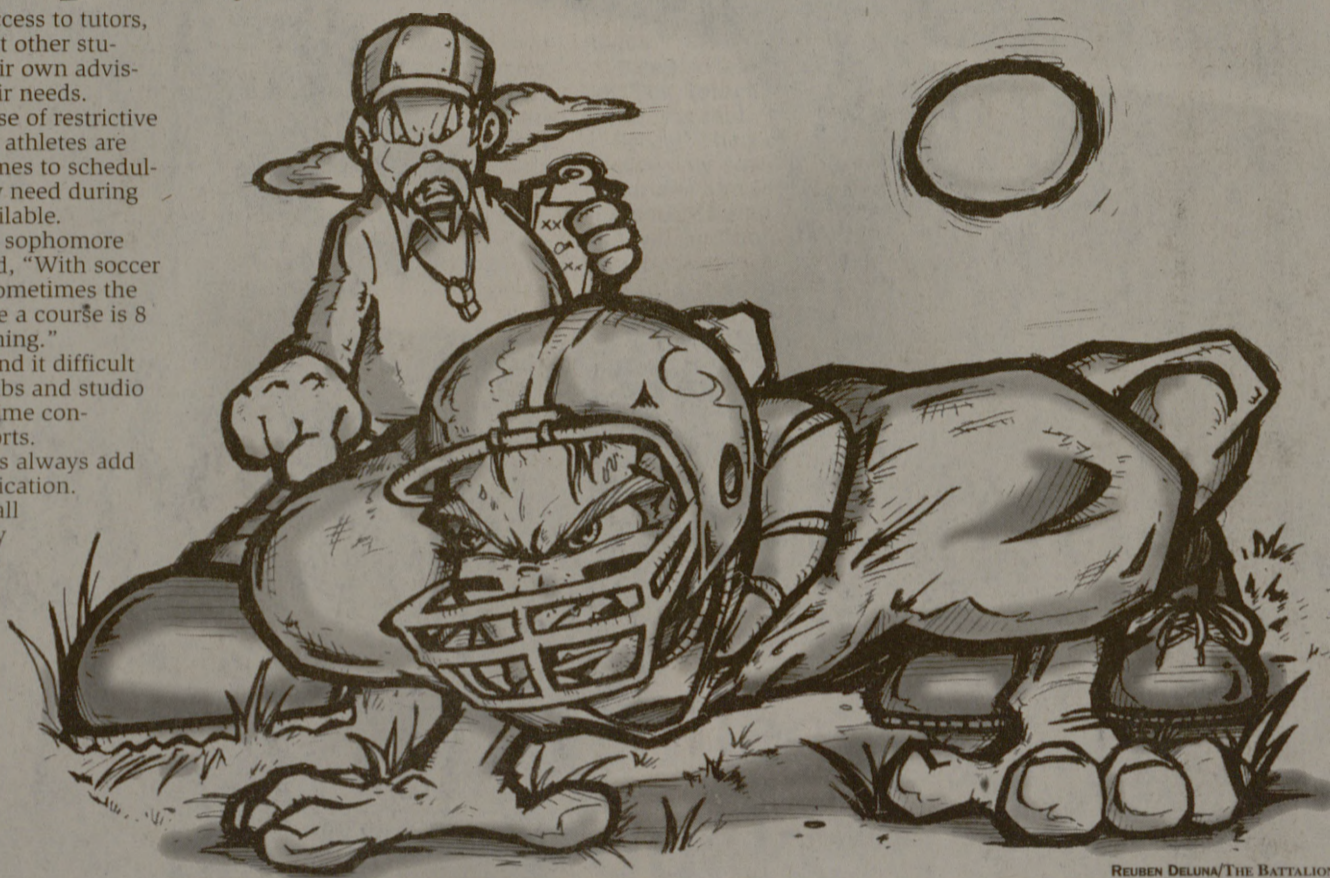
Despite their notoriety, athletes are students, just like anyone else. To maintain eligibility, an athlete must have a passing grade-point ratio (GPR) and be a full-time student.

During their seasons, many coaches require players to enroll in at least 15 hours.

In addition to what seems like a normal course load, athletes dedicate as much time to their sports as students working part-time jobs.

In-season practices can last up to four hours a day, 20 hours a week. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) requires that all collegiate athletes get one day off, and with some teams playing two games a week, one day is all coaches can spare.

When considering athletes' academic privileges, it may seem as though they have a smoother academic ride.



REUBEN DELUNA/THE BATTALION

option further clutters what little time athletes have during the week. Every sport at Texas A&M has some type of study-hall program to help its players acclimate to academic demands. Coach G.

Guerrieri requires the soccer players to attend study hall until they have a 2.5 or higher GPR. Even programs designed to help athletes can add to their busy schedules. "My freshman year, by the

time we got out of practice and ate dinner we had to go straight to study hall," junior soccer player Nicky Thrasher said. "When we finally got home, we were exhausted."

Collegiate sports provide entertainment for alumni as well as students, are a source of revenue and stimulate national interest in schools.

A winning football, baseball or basketball season can hardly tarnish a university's image.

Projected budgeted revenue for the Baylor vs. A&M football game this year is \$1.3 million. Without the talent and skill the players bring to the field, that figure would be a figment of the A&M accounting department's imagination. Visualize approximately 80,000 fans staring at the grass in Kyle Field for three hours.

Athletic scholarships allow universities to better their sports programs and give many students the opportunity to pursue an education they otherwise would not be able to afford.

However, unlike need or merit-based scholarships, athletic scholarships are based on the ability of each player. Since scholarships are put together as yearly contracts, it benefits athletes to stay physically healthy and keep performing well.

Athletes are similar to any other student on campus. They go to classes, hang out with friends and worry about their career plans, even if everyone else expects them to play professional sports.

The biggest difference is that they always face being part of yesterday's news. Compared to pre-season workouts, that might not be so bad.

Elizabeth Kohl is a junior accounting major.

MAIL CALL

Conformity makes groups more tight-knit

In response to Eric Dickens Sept. 1 column.

How convenient is it for a Battalion writer to throw down an article with anti-Greek sentiments prior to rush kicking off?

This year the battle cry for Eric Dickens is conformity. He makes me laugh.

What can you find at this great school that does not have a thin hint of conformity in it?

He points out Greeks dress alike. So does the Corps and they are a great component to this campus.

He points out Greek associations have a cost associated with them. Well, so do most student organizations, whether as dues or student fees.

We all operate in our own way, but within any student organization, one conforms to certain beliefs or acts in the name of the betterment of the group.

We are all told to get involved in the residence halls, stand at games and bow to the Corps.

That is all great. But understand that while some might call it tradition, others just see it as conformity in itself. It is what starts us all on our path to believing in the institution we attend.

Dickens should not rip on a student organization by criticizing conformity, for by doing so, he tugs at the main thread that binds us all and makes us Aggies.

Tom Sullivan
Graduate Student

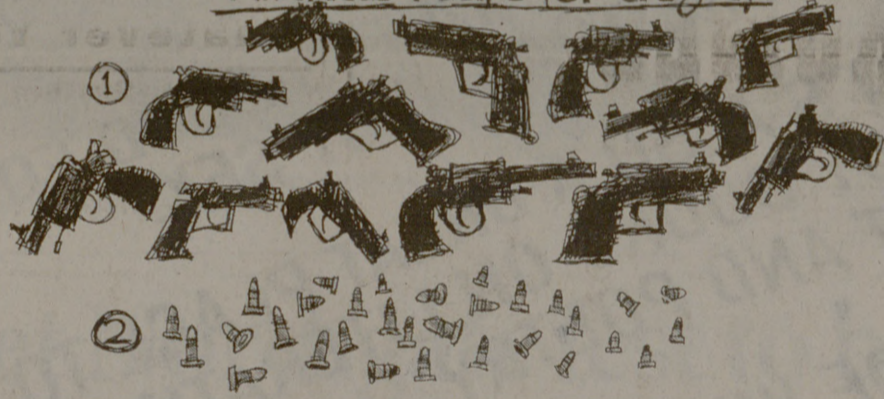
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The opinion editor reserves the right to edit letters for length, style, and accuracy. Letters may be submitted in person at 013 Reed McDonald with a valid student ID. Letters may also be mailed to:

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MIKE LUCKVICH
ATLANTA CHRISTIAN

Freshmen should take advantage of extracurricular opportunities

Since arriving at Texas A&M, incoming freshmen have constantly been bombarded with "howdy," Aggie tradition and advice from upperclassmen.

"Howdy" is an easy enough greeting to figure out. Getting excited about traditions is not too difficult either. However, many fish find themselves drowning in supposed words of wisdom from upperclassmen.

If a freshman scheduled a class in Wehner, followed by one at Zachry because someone said the buildings on campus are located in alphabetical order, by now he or she has surely realized this was sour advice.

As a freshman, having trouble distinguishing between the good and bad bull advice is normal. Here's a hint: Do as upperclassmen do, not necessarily as they say. And at A&M, what students do is take advantage of the "other education."

A&M has over 700 organizations. Surely, one of the 700 organizations at the MSC Open House has appeal for almost every student.

The organizations at this University are varied and offer plenty of leadership opportunities and experiences to appreciate.

The MSC Film Society, Corps of Cadets, OPAS, Students for a Free Tibet and Muster Committee are examples of the diverse and high-caliber programs offered at A&M. If the point of going to a university is to stay holed up in a dorm room studying, why not go to t.u.?

Taking part in the "other education" is a valuable part of being an Aggie. In fact, most students rank extracurricular activities as a priority between academics and finding a date for Midnight Yell. Organizations serve as welcome breaks from the monotony of lectures and assigned reading.

Cameron Franklin, fish camp counselor and junior business major, said if schoolwork is not balanced with other activities, a student can burn out soon.



MARIANO CASTILLO

"There's a lot more than an education to be gotten out of here," he said. "Student organizations allow students to take an active role in Texas A&M. Whatever it is you decide to go for, give it your all, that is what makes your effort worth it. What I find most rewarding is helping other Aggies."

Students who are involved gain benefits such as experience, opportunities to hear important speakers and a chance to make an impact not just on those around them, but on themselves as well.

Involvement is not limited to freshmen. Anyone can find something they already enjoy or try something new. College is supposed to be a life-changing experience, but changes can only occur if there is exposure to new and different environments.

Weilun Lin, a sophomore computer engineering major, decided to test his courage by signing up to take skydiving lessons from Aggies Over Texas.

"It sounded interesting, and then one day I just decided to stop thinking about it and just do it," Lin said. "After the first time I knew I had found something I liked."

What started out as a one-time thrill-seek for Lin has turned into a hobby he wants to continue in the future. He now packs parachutes to help fund his quest for free fall certification.

Students who do not get actively involved often cite lack of time or insecurity about how they will fare in a certain group, but laziness should not be an excuse. This is college — sleep is overrated. The people who insist eight hours of sleep every night is a minimum are the same people who will be losing key job positions to those who were involved.

It will also open a chance to be exposed to meeting people out of an immediate circle of friends.

The things learned from getting involved in college will be remembered always. The diverse student body, the endless resources, the sports fields and buildings that attract students to this campus are out of reach to those who just sit on their duff.

Mariano Castillo is a sophomore journalism major.

Watch Neo-Nazis warily

There is an old saying that "those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it." It is also true that people who do not study the past tend to lean toward actions that defy comprehension, no matter how many times they are repeated.



MARK PASSWATERS

The actions of many white supremacists, culminating in the horrific shooting of innocent children outside of a Jewish daycare center in Los Angeles, is grisly proof of this.

This action, as contemptible as it was, may simply be the tip of the iceberg. Many of these racists, either at home or in their "Aryan Churches," have brought back an old symbol of hatred.

The Swastika is making a comeback, and these racial terrorists want to bring back Adolf Hitler with it.

An increase in Neo-Nazi activity should concern all Americans, no matter what their creed, color or political affiliation. Using Hitler's demented logic as a basis, these people intend to cleanse America of those who do not fit their mold, just as Hitler tried to do in Germany a half century ago.

While this alone is obviously a frightening thought, it also points toward two reasons why Americans must stop their influence.

First of all, these people are actually misconstruing who Adolf Hitler really was and what he actually stood for even as they try to resurrect his views.

Secondly, this nation owes it to hundreds of thousands of men who died fighting the Nazis in World War II to stand up against these broadcasters of ignorance.

If Hitler saw what these people in Oregon, Montana, Ohio and New Jersey were doing, he and his henchman would probably laugh until they cried.

As these Aryan supremacists go around attempting to "purify" the nation of blacks and Jews as Hitler would have wanted, they are ignoring the words of Hitler himself.

In 1938, Hitler said in a speech to the Nazi Party Congress that the United States was "too justified and

negrified" to be considered an Aryan state.

In fact, he added that this problem, coupled with America's capitalist system, made them no match for Nazi Germany. These same beliefs led Hitler to declare war on the United States.

Over a half century ago, Adolf Hitler said the United States was already too far from the Aryan ideal to be saved.

Now, saying they are doing what Hitler would have wanted, these ignorant racists are targeting minority-member Americans, sometimes with violence.

So not only are these people using the dogma of a dictator and a mass murderer as justification, they are doing so incorrectly.

If this were not so serious a matter, it would be hilarious.

But it is indeed a serious situation, and fewer and fewer people understand what Hitler was truly

like. That is because the generation that sacrificed so much to keep the tyranny of Hitler from these shores is fading into oblivion.

Americans who lived through the second World War

put all that was important to them on the line to repel the greatest threat to freedom the world has ever seen.

Now, in their declining years, they are forced to see their fellow countrymen embracing a symbol they fought so hard to annihilate. They deserve better.

The people of the younger generation have so many possibilities lying before them.

In order to reach their full potential, they must always be vigilant to remember the sacrifices of their predecessors.

These racists are not only horribly wrong, but they are a tragic insult to those men that fought in Europe in World War II.

As a nation, we owe it to these old warriors to be outraged by these misguided racists.

These individuals and the entire nation need to be reminded of why we fought Hitler in the first place so we can quiet these voices of pro-Nazi sentiment and truly honor those who put that menace away so long ago.

Mark Passwaters is an electrical engineering graduate student.