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Calculating Risk: A Scoping Review of NCAA D1 Football Players' Motivations to Play and the
Correlation to Demographic Characteristics and Injury Experiences

by
Kathleen Donata Walsh

A thesis submitted to the faculty of The University of Mississippi in partial fulfillment of the
requirements of the Sally McDonnell Barksdale Honors College.

Oxford
May 2023

Approved by

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to investigate the motivations of National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division 1 (D1) football players for playing the game and how these motivations are associated with their socioeconomic status (SES). Further, the research aimed to investigate how the uncovered motivations were linked to injury experiences. The original project was designed as a survey-based mixed methods study on a national scale. However, issues with participant recruitment led to sidelining of that primary research. The research presented is a scoping review of the available literature pertaining to the research question: What is known from existing literature about how student athletes' motivations to play college football and their injury experiences are influenced by demographic characteristics (i.e., race and socioeconomic status) and the possibility of social mobility? A total of 41 sources were reviewed, and themes were generated based on the charting of each article. The results of the scoping review demonstrate that future primary research in this topic is necessary in order to fully answer the research question.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ACC	Atlantic Coast Conference
APA	American Psychological Association
BCC	Blind Carbon Copy
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
D1	Division 1
Football	American Football
I.e.	Example
NCAA	National Collegiate Athletic Association
NFL	National Football League
NIL	Name, Image, and Likeness
OHRP	Office for Human Research Protections
SEC	Southeastern Conference
SES	Socioeconomic Status
SSS	Subjective Social Status
US	United States of America

SECTION 1: SCOPING REVIEW

CHAPTER 1: SCOPING REVIEW PURPOSE AND PROTOCOL

Purpose

The use of scoping reviews has been studied and defined in recent literature to provide researchers with a formal understanding of the purpose and indication for this kind of review. Scoping reviews have been used in major research for many years as a way to understand currently available literature on a variety of research topics, but it was not clear why a scoping review might be used as opposed to a different review method. Over the past few decades, methodologists have invested resources into establishing a formal definition of scoping reviews and a clear framework for how to apply the definition. The JBI Scoping Review Methodology Group has led the majority of the research that led to a formal definition (Munn et al., 2022). In 2020, they produced the currently accepted definition that outlines scoping reviews to be “a type of evidence synthesis that aims to systematically identify and map the breadth of evidence available on a particular topic, field, concept, or issue...” (Munn et al., 2022).

A formal definition allows researchers to better align their research with the goals of the study design to ensure that it is the best method for their purpose. When preparing to conduct a literature review, determining the type of research synthesis method is very important to ensure that the research is done in an effective and useful way. A systematic review is the alternate approach to scoping reviews in most considerations. Systematic reviews have a deep focus on the quality of the research conducted on a subject with the general goal of identifying a research gap, trends in findings, or areas where uncertainty exists (Munn et al., 2018). Scoping reviews, on the other hand, aim to create an overview of the available literature pertaining to a subject

independent of the research quality (Munn et al., 2018). The most important consideration when deciding what method to use is how the researcher plans to apply the results. Scoping reviews do not inform practice, but rather identify more broad characteristics or trends in research related to the question (Munn et al., 2018).

The purpose of this paper is to assess the availability of literature pertaining to the research question and to identify where literature gaps remain for future research. Khalil et al. (2021), acknowledged the application of scoping reviews to this purpose and stated that they are generally most appropriate in emerging fields. Therefore, it was determined that a scoping review was the most appropriate method of literature review to utilize for this project.

Protocol

As methodologists worked to define scoping reviews, they also began to outline commonly accepted protocols for carrying out a full scoping review. In 2005, Arksey & O'Malley produced the first methodological framework pertaining to scoping reviews which gave them a more defined place in the world of research methods. In subsequent publications, many researchers have commented on the need for an updated framework, but it wasn't until 2010 when Levac et al. published that updates were introduced. The updated framework maintained the original six steps, but provided a clearer outline for how researchers could approach each step (Levac et al., 2010). In 2021, Khalil et al. published a list of proposed solutions to challenges that are frequently faced when conducting scoping reviews.

The original methodology contained five core steps with one optional step. These steps are: 1) identifying the research question, 2) identifying relevant studies, 3) study selection, 4)

charting the data, and 5) collating, summarizing, and reporting the results. The optional step is consultation with experts on the topic (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

Step 1 is crucial to the success of the scoping review because without a well-written research question to guide the review, the final work will lack focus and clarity. Key terms or phrases within the question must be given operational definitions (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). In general, scoping reviews function better with broader questions pertaining to the available literature (Khalil et al., 2021). Levac et al. (2010) recommended that integration of the research question with the study purpose would lead to clearer questions making the review more centered. In step 2, the scope of the review should be clearly defined with the help of individuals with methodological expertise (Levac et al., 2010). Step 3 is a circular stage where the researcher must review a search, then adjust the search criteria and perform a new search to ensure as comprehensive a review as possible. Lack of a clear scope or clear purpose will significantly affect success at this stage. Step 4 should be discussed prior to beginning the search process so the charting method is known and used consistently as new data is uncovered (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005). Levac et al. (2010) provided three clear steps that fall under step 5 which are: analysis, reporting the results, and considering meaning. Following these steps will help the researcher to successfully draw meaningful conclusions from the data they have collected. Finally, step 6 or the optional step, will depend on the resources available to the reviewer because this stage requires outreach to experts and stakeholders of the study topic (Arksey & O'Malley, 2005).

CHAPTER 2: SCOPING REVIEW FINDINGS

Methods

This scoping review was performed by an individual researcher with the help of a few others as resources due to their expertise in research methodology and public health. The updated scoping review protocol outlined by Levac et al. in 2010 was used for this research. Khalil et al.'s (2021) guidance on common pitfalls and solutions for them was also referenced throughout the review process.

The first step of this study was to identify the research question. The focus of this study is American football, henceforth referred to as football. The target population for the study is NCAA football players. The variables of interest were identified as motivations to play, injury experiences, and SES. These variables were then given operational definitions to guide the scope of the study. "Motivations to play" means any reason that a player identifies to be the rationale for why they desire to play college football. "Injury experiences" are defined as any physical harm that comes to the player as a direct result of their participation in the game of football and the events that succeed the injury. Finally, "socioeconomic status" is understood as an individual's perception of their social status, also known as subjective social status (SSS) (APA, 2015a). Social mobility is when individuals take action to raise their SES. SES is difficult to define in literature due to the subjective nature of its concepts, and in most literature SES and SSS are used interchangeably.

The research question for this review is: What is known from existing literature about how student athletes' motivations to play college football and their injury experiences are influenced by demographic characteristics (i.e., race and socioeconomic status) and the possibility of social mobility?

In order to answer this research question, literature reviews were completed predominately using Google Scholar. After completing a search there was a three-step review process completed to narrow down relevant sources: a primary review, secondary review, and tertiary review. These steps were completed for both rounds of literature review. Two rounds of literature pulls were completed. The first round included the use of searches on Google Scholar and the second round included sources pulled from the works cited pages of articles that made it to tertiary review in the first round. Any source not available for open access was obtained through the University of Mississippi Library.

The advanced search function on Google Scholar with the support of the University of Mississippi Libraries' One Search was used to complete the first round of literature review. No limitations were placed on the time of publication or place of publication because understanding the breadth of available research on the topic is the goal of this review. There were eight searches completed in the first round. Search 1 was generated based on key words from the research question. The subsequent five searches were completed by refining key words based on the results from previous searches. The article titled *Risks and Rewards of College Football: Who Would Accept a Scholarship Knowing the Chances of Physical Harm?* was returned by four of the first six searches. The seventh search used the "Related Articles" feature on Google Scholar to look for articles similar to the most popular result over the course of the first six searches. The eighth search was a regular Google search to gather any articles that were not a part of the Google Scholar database.

The primary review was completed by conducting a review of the title and the summary that appears underneath it on the Google Scholar results page. In order to be selected the article needed to contain the key words "college football" and pertain to at least one of the following

key words: injury, motivation, or “socioeconomic status.” Any article not in English and all books that resulted were excluded due to time constraints. A Microsoft Excel file was used to keep track of the completed searches and the articles selected after primary review. A link to the article, the title of the article, and the DOI if available were charted. The results of the first six searches were analyzed until the results being displayed were deemed irrelevant. Table 1 shows the key words that were used and how they were placed within the Advanced Search function on Google Scholar.

Table 1: Key Words used in the First Round of Literature Searches using Google Scholar Advanced Search Function

Search Number	Key Words
1	<i>with all of the words:</i> motivations for play college football <i>where my words occur:</i> anywhere in the article
2	<i>with all of the words:</i> college football injury motivations <i>where my words occur:</i> anywhere in the article
3	<i>with the exact phrase:</i> college football <i>with at least one of the words:</i> football motivation injury experience injury experience risk play <i>without the words:</i> rugby soccer <i>where my words occur:</i> anywhere in the article
4	<i>with all of the words:</i> "social mobility" "socioeconomic status" motivations injury <i>with the exact phrase:</i> college football <i>where my words occur:</i> anywhere in the article
5	<i>with all of the words:</i> motivation OR injury OR experience OR risk OR football "socioeconomic status" "social mobility" <i>with the exact phrase:</i> college football <i>where my words occur:</i> anywhere in the article

6	<i>with all of the words:</i> "socioeconomic status" "college football" <i>with the exact phrase:</i> subjective social status <i>where my words occur:</i> anywhere in the article
7	<i>related articles to:</i> “Risks and Rewards of College Football: Who Would Accept a Scholarship Knowing the Chances of Physical Harm?”
8	<i>regular google search:</i> Socioeconomic status and college football

The secondary review consisted of reading the abstract for each article. In order to be selected for tertiary review, the article needed to use American college football as the focus of the study. The secondary review criteria also included a requirement that the research goals or questions that were presented in the abstract pose a relationship between college football and either motivations to play, injuries, or SES. In the tertiary review stage, the full body of the remaining articles was read and reviewed for the following information: author, title, year of publication, purpose/ aims/ research questions, and main conclusions. This data was charted using Microsoft Excel.

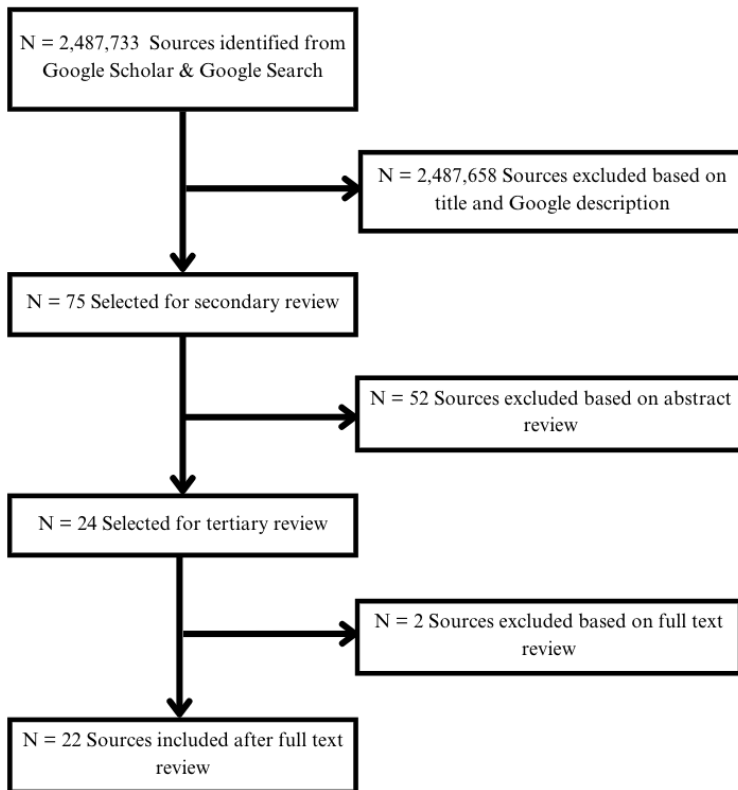
The second round of literature review was conducted in a very similar manner with changes only to the primary review process. In this round, only the title was used to analyze the relevance to the research question.

Results

The literature review for the scoping review was carried out in two parts with the initial use of Google Scholar searches and a second round of literature being produced from the works cited pages of the fully reviewed sources in the first round. The first round produced 24 sources for full review, and the results of each stage of the first round are summarized in Figure 1.

During the secondary review process 11 of the 75 sources reviewed were identified as repeats (occurring in at least one prior search). The secondary review process also found that many sources discussed “college football” but were referring to soccer due to the fact that they were written by European or Asian researchers. The tertiary review of the selected sources deemed 2 to be not relevant. This resulted in 22 total sources after the tertiary review.

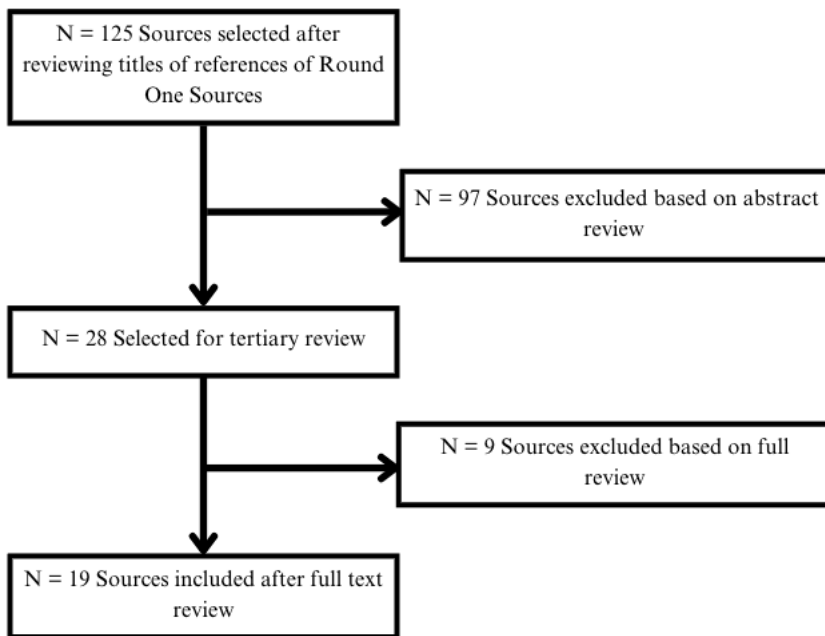
Figure 1: Summary of First Round of Literature Review



The second round of literature review produced 125 sources after the primary review of the titles. Following the secondary review of the abstracts there were 28 articles for tertiary review. Many of the articles were ruled out in the secondary review stage because they were not related to college football. They often focused on soccer, ice hockey, or rugby instead. In many cases, these sports were researched outside of the US which was criteria for elimination as this

study aims to focus on American football. The results of the second round of literature review are displayed in Figure 2. Many more articles were ruled out in the tertiary review stage of the second round than there were in the first round. This may be a result of the fact that the sources in the second round were much older than those of the first round with many dating back to the 1970's through the 1990's. This may also be because many of the sources in the second round were news articles rather than journal articles, theses, or dissertations. News articles have less descriptive titles and no abstract, so it was harder to determine their relevance from primary and secondary review. After tertiary review 19 articles were included.

Figure 2: Summary of Second Round of Literature Review



After each round of literature review was completed, themes were generated from the main conclusions that were charted during tertiary review. There were three themes identified from the 41 sources identified in both rounds of literature review. Table 2 includes the titles, authors, and research question/ aims/ purpose of each of the sources that were fully reviewed.

Table 2: Title, Author, and Year of Sources Included After Tertiary Review

Authors	Title	Year
Allison et al.	A comparison of hometown socioeconomics and demographics for black and white elite football players in the US	2018
Anderson, K	The effect of athletic participation on the academic aspirations and achievement of African-American males in a New York City high school	1990
Bachynski	No excuses: a brief history of playing through risk in college football	2021
Baugh et al.	Perceived coach support and concussion symptom-reporting: differences between freshmen and non-freshmen college football players	2014
Baugh et al.	Frequency of head-impact-related outcomes by position in NCAA division I collegiate football players	2015
Baugh et al.	College football players less likely to report concussions and other injuries with increased injury accumulation	2019
Baugh, Kroshus, Meehan, & Campbell	Trust, Conflicts of Interest, and Concussion Reporting in College Football Players	2020
Baugh, Kroshus, Meehan, McGuire, et al.	Accuracy of US College Football Players' Estimates of Their Risk of Concussion or Injury	2020
Beamon & Bell	Going Pro: the deferential effects of high aspirations for a professional sports career on African-American student athletes and White student athletes	2002
Beamon, K.	The effect of athletic participation on the academic aspirations and achievement of African-American males in a New York City high school	2008
Beamon, K.	Are sports overemphasized in the socialization process of African American males? A qualitative analysis of former collegiate athletes' perception of sport socialization	2009
Beamon & Bell	A dream deferred	2011

Bennett, M.	Former Patriot Martellus Bennett: We must let black boys believe sports are not their only hope	2019
Berry & Smith	Race, sport, and crime: The misrepresentation of African Americans in team sport and crime	2000
Brown, D.	Raiders' James Jones: Once-Homeless Receiver Returns Home to Give Back	2014
Butler, L.	Why Can't We Win? The Double-Edged Sword of Black Success in Sports	2015
Childs Jr., D.	Experiences of Division I Football Black Male Student-Athletes and Their Perceptions of Career and Professional Development	2021
Craig et al.,	Concussion disclosure: Fears presented by football student-athletes	2021
Davies & Bird	Motivations for underreporting suspected concussion in college athletics	2015
Eitle & Eitle	Race, Cultural Capital, and the Educational Effects of Participation in Sports	2002
Frieswyk, A.	First Generation and Low SES Student-athletes' Experience of Maintaining a College Scholarship	2019
Gilmore Jr, C.	Does A Student-Athletes' Socioeconomic Background Matter?	2018
Hanson, S.	He Didn't Want to Let His Team Down: The Challenge of Dual Loyalty for Team Physicians	2018
Harrison et al.	I am what I am? The Baller Identity Measurement Scale (BIMS) with a Division I football team in American higher education	2014
Jessiman-Perreault et al.	Playing through the pain: A university- based study of sports injury	2016
Jessop, A.	The Surprising Factors Driving College Football Recruits' College Decision	2012
Kerr et al.	Motivations Associated with Nondisclosure of Self-Reported Concussions in Former Collegiate Athletes	2016

Lamkin, J.	Perceptions of motivation of collegiate football student athletes: A thematic analysis	2016
Lee, B.	Knocked unconscionable: college football scholarships and traumatic brain injury	2017
Lininger et al.,	An exploratory study on concussion-reporting behaviors from collegiate student athletes' perspectives	2017
McMaster, M.	An exploratory investigation of three NCAA division I African-American athletes' aspirations of a career in professional football	2002
Milroy et al.,	Using the Integrated Behavioral Model to Determine Sport-Related Concussion Reporting Intentions Among Collegiate Athletes	2020
New, J.	Racial gaps in the power 5	2016
Ott et al.	Risks and Rewards of College Football: Who Would Accept a Scholarship Knowing the Chances of Physical Harm?	2018
Reclosado-Baclay, C.	The Relationship between Collegiate Football Players' Childhood SES and Their Knowledge and Attitudes toward Sports-Related Concussion	2018
Sack, A.	“Big time College football. Whose free ride?”	1977
Sack & Thiel	College football and social mobility: A case study of Notre Dame football players	1979
Shakib & Veliz	Race, Sport, and Social Support: A Comparison Between African American and White Youths' Perceptions of Social Support for Sport Participation	2012
Singer, J.	Benefits and detriments of African American male athletes' participation in a big-time college football program	2008
Tatum, K.	Rags to Riches: The Upward Mobility of Black Athletes	2020
Wayment et al.	Relationship of athletic and academic identity to concussion reporting intentions	2019

Discussion

The literature that exists regarding the research question that this study proposes is limited and repetitive. There is a clear gap in the research regarding the relationship between student athletes' motivations to play football and their injury experiences of football. The majority of the research regarding motivations and injury focuses on concussion reporting and non-reporting. This is important; however, football players face many other injuries that they may choose to conceal or play through. In addition, much of the research on the subject, as exemplified by the second round of review, is outdated which was determined because research dated twenty or thirty years ago came to conclusions which were further investigated in newer publications. In the newer publications, alternate conclusions were identified. The nature of sociological research such as this is that it must evolve with people. In older reviews of sports and demographic characteristics such as race, there is a much greater focus on the benefits that African American athletes receive by becoming collegiate athletes. In contrast, newer research focuses on the double-edged sword that comes with being a student athlete and the overbearing expectations that are placed on college football players.

Following the tertiary review of literature pulled from both the first and second round of review, the conclusions of all the sources were examined and major themes were identified. Three themes were identified as follows: (1) *Black versus White Experiences*, (2) *Exploitation of Players*, and (3) *Concussions*. The first two themes relate to motivations to play while the third theme 'concussions' relates to injury experiences. Subthemes were identified for each major theme as demonstrated in Table 3.

Table 3: Themes and Subthemes Identified from Reviewed Sources

Themes	Black versus White Experiences	Exploitation of Players	Concussion Reporting
Subthemes	Socioeconomic Status	NCAA as an NFL ‘farm team’	Identity as an Athlete
	Sport Socialization	Player Compensation	Influence of Coaches/ Team Staff
	Career Goals	Academic Goals	Consequences of Reporting/ Not Reporting

The first subtheme under the theme of *Black versus White Experiences* is *Socioeconomic Status*. Nearly all available literature relating to why football players play sports is presented from a Black versus White perspective with little regard for other races. Statistically, the average Black college football player comes from a lower SES hometown than the national average while the opposite is true for white players (Allison et al., 2018). Much of the available research used this knowledge that being Black on average correlates to low SES as an assumption to guide their distinction between the experiences of Black versus White players. Student athletes who come from low SES often depend on their athletic scholarship because it is the only way that they are able to afford college (Lee, 2017). Players from low SES are known to believe that sports are a pathway for social mobility. To this point, Gilmore Jr. (2018) demonstrated that students from lower SES had a higher chance of going to the NFL. Black players believe this more so than White players, and White players identified that sports are the best route for Black players to achieve social mobility (K. Beamon & Bell, 2002). This is evidence that socialization for sport of Black individuals influences the mindset of not only Black athletes themselves, but also their peers.

The second subtheme under *Black versus White Experiences* is *Sport Socialization*. Lower SES leads to higher levels of sport socialization (Butler, 2015). In addition, Black players

are much more heavily socialized into sports (especially basketball and football) as compared to their White counterparts. Socialization of kids into sport within Black culture comes equally from family and non-family (Shakib & Veliz, 2012). Prior research has noted that within the African American community, there is a dearth of successful Black male role models for young kids outside of professional athletes (Bennett, 2019). Young Black children are more likely to develop the goal of becoming a professional athlete when the most visible Black men in popular culture are athletes. Socialization toward sports leads African American males to have lower academic goals and achievements because they focus so heavily on sports (K. K. Beamon, 2008). Depending on the environment they grew up in, some former players in a retrospective study noted that they had been taught to value sports above everything else from early childhood (Sack, 1977). When African American athletes are led to believe that sports are the most important thing in their life and that sports are their only option, they are much more likely to take on risk, such as concealing injury, than other racial groups in order to achieve success in their sport (Ott et al., 2018). Sport socialization is heavily correlated to SES and demographic characteristics such as race. This knowledge tells researchers that there is likely a large impact of SES and race on motivations to play due to the cultural and social influences that come with certain demographic characteristics.

The final subtheme under the first major theme is *Career Goals*. For many players, the dream of becoming an NFL player is their focus, but this dream only becomes a reality for a very small percent of players. Despite this, recruiting efforts focus on appealing to the hopes and dreams of young men (Jessop, 2012). Black male athletes frequently only consider alternative career options once football and the NFL are no longer an option (Childs Jr., 2021). The interplay of socialization with the career goals of young Black men shows that they feel much

greater pressure to play professional sports than their White counterparts (McMaster, 2002). The career goals and socialization of athletes are likely very strong motivating factors for them to keep playing football. Many NCAA teams take advantage of this socialization toward sports by emphasizing players' athletic identity over all else (K. K. Beamon, 2008). In interviews with former collegiate football players, it was discussed that they felt unprepared for life after football in large part due to the de-emphasis on school or career goals outside of football during their college careers (K. Beamon & Bell, 2011).

The second major theme identified was *Exploitation of Players*. This theme was again broken down into three subthemes. The first subtheme is the *NCAA as an NFL 'farm team'*. A farm team is the lower-level league that provides players for the professional league (NFL). Increasingly current literature discusses the unspoken requirement that football players must play in the NCAA in order to have a shot at playing in the NFL. Coaches in the NCAA expect that their players will act in accordance with their role as pre-professional athletes (Bachynski, 2021). This leads players to conceal injuries and act in other ways detrimental to their person in the name of supporting the team (Baugh et al., 2019). NCAA institutions make billions of dollars from their football teams while players are undercompensated and poorly supported as student-athletes (Lee, 2017). Without having played in the NCAA, the NFL is unattainable as every player selected in the official draft has played in the NCAA (Sack, 1977). Research demonstrates that players are led to expect that football will be their whole life, so it is the responsibility of the schools and NCAA to better prepare players for a future outside of football (New, 2016). The 'rags to riches' stories that are proliferated in the media lead young players to believe that sport is their best way out of low socioeconomic standing (Brown, 2014).

Player Compensation is the second subtheme under *Exploitation of Players*. Athletic scholarships are a collegiate football player's only form of compensation from the university that they play for. As the risk of physical harm and injury, especially concussion and brain injury, has become a popular research field the actual value of a college degree for football players has been called into question (Lee, 2017). Much of the reviewed research asks: how valuable is an education if a player's brain is too injured from playing to use it? Despite this question, athletic scholarships have continued to be emphasized through the recruiting process as a major draw for prospective players. In interviews former players have stated they feel "exploited" due to the over emphasis of their role as athletes by their university (K. K. Beamon, 2008). They were not able to fully take advantage of their free education while they were current students because of the number of hours every day players are expected to dedicate to football related activities (Singer, 2008).

The third subtheme under the second major theme is *Academic Goals*. As mentioned previously, many athletes are recipients of athletic scholarships. For some athletes, especially those from low SES circumstances, an athletic scholarship is the only way that players are able to access a college education. This leads athletes to pursue sport in order to obtain a degree (Frieswyk, 2019). One study found that the academic reputation of a school was the number one thing that football players considered while deciding what college to attend (Jessop, 2012). This indicates that players value the education that they have the opportunity to receive more than other literature indicates. The realities of the collegiate athletic world and the priorities that are forced on players may lead to a value shift away from education. This leads players to cut corners or focus on accomplishing the bare minimum to maintain NCAA academic eligibility (Sack, 1977).

The third and final major theme is *Concussion Reporting*. Its first major subtheme is *Identity as an Athlete*. Research shows that players maintain an athlete identity that they hold as extremely valuable, although not all players report that their athletic identity is their most important identity (Harrison et al., 2014). Players of low SES that believe sport to be their only option, tend to place a much higher value on their athletic identity. Further, these players are much more likely to knowingly assume risk and to choose not to report suspected concussions (Wayment et al., 2019). Many players willingly choose to resume play while injured, symptomatic, or in pain because they are heavily influenced by the culture of athletes and the notion that athletes must be tough (Jessiman-Perreault et al., 2016). There is significant discourse related to how team physicians can intervene and keep injured players on the bench, but they are battling very strong cultural influences as well as coaches or other team administrators that players often take more seriously than their own personal health (Hanson, 2018).

The *Influence of Coaches/ Team Staff* is the second subtheme under *Concussion Reporting*. Many of the young men that make it to the collegiate level of sport have it drilled into them throughout high school and lower levels of play that they must pay the utmost level of respect to their coaches. This can be a detriment to players when coaches place the team's success above the player's wellbeing. Coaches often persuade players not to report concussions or other injuries unless athletic performance is grossly hindered (Lininger et al., 2017). A similar issue arises where team physicians are forced to choose between loyalty to the team's success and ethical codes that promote the health of the player (Hanson, 2018). The system therefore fails athletes who trust their coaches to act in their best interest. Younger athletes are more likely to trust their coaches which demonstrates that learning occurs as players have negative experiences with coaches and staff (Baugh et al., 2014). In nearly every study regarding why

players choose not to report concussions, the influence of the coach or staff was highly ranked, as was not wanting to let the team down.

The *Consequences of Not Reporting/ Reporting* weigh heavily on players, and this is the final subtheme under *Concussion Reporting*. Depending on other social and cultural influences, players may be willing to fully accept any and all consequences of concussions in order to be able to play for their team (Davies & Bird, 2015). Offensive linemen were shown to be the position that takes the most frequent hits, fails to report, and plays through concussion most often (Baugh et al., 2015). Successive concussions are a popular area of research, and it is shown that the more concussions a player sustains the longer it takes to recover and the more permanent damage they sustain. An interesting area of research is what the perception of consequences are by either players or medical professionals. For players, being removed from the game is typically the worst-case scenario most of the time (Baugh et al., 2019). On the other hand, research shows that being removed from play is the proper protocol for concussions in order to decrease recovery time and long-term damage. Players know that reporting will lead to the outcome of having to sit out of play and thus are motivated to not report suspected injury (Baugh, Kroshus, Meehan, & Campbell, 2020). The athletic staff need to appeal to the player's long-term goals and their association with the athlete's current state of health in order to motivate reporting because educating players on the risks independently is not effective.

There was some information gleaned from the review that did not directly fit into any major theme or subtheme but was relevant to the research question. Lamkin (2016) noted that players felt motivated to continue playing football because of the comradery and sense of community they felt as members of the football team. Players in the study noted that they often felt they didn't belong in other social groups because of their identity as athletes and football

players (Lamkin, 2016). The struggle to fit in on campus outside of sports leads athletes to forego other educational and social opportunities. In addition to feelings of not belonging, African American players struggled more in just about every aspect of their lives, including: academic to social and financial sectors. Caucasian players did not face these challenges to the same magnitude (Singer, 2008). The struggle to adapt causes players to attach themselves to football in an even larger way because it provides stability due to the highly scheduled nature of college football programs.

Limitations and Recommendations

The findings of this scoping review should be considered in the context of the study limitations. It is always possible that relevant research was not uncovered during the review process. In this case, the researcher limited the search tool to Google Scholar which may mean that research which is available more readily on other search platforms may have been overlooked. In addition, none of the books that were part of the results for any of the searches were reviewed. These books likely contain a lot of relevant research which is not included in this study. The results of the study may not be generalizable to levels of football outside of college.

Further limitations to the study may have arisen because the research was carried out by a single researcher. It is likely that with multiple researchers more sources may have been deemed relevant or other themes may have been identified. Having multiple researchers limits bias and allows for checks and balances to ensure the relevance and accuracy of the research that is being performed. Any further literature review should be performed with multiple researchers in order to comply with best research practices.

Future researchers should adapt the research to include the role that “Name, Image, and Likeness” (NIL) deals have on the motivations of athletes. In July 2021, the NCAA changed its rules making it possible for athletes to monetize their NIL while they are current student-athletes (NCAA, n.d.). This policy change is likely to have had a big impact on the goals and motivations of players as they no longer need to make it to the NFL for the possibility of a large income. This research study was initiated prior to the policy change, so it assumed NIL was not a factor.

Conclusion

This scoping review aimed to answer the research question: What is known from existing literature about how student athletes’ motivations to play college football and their injury experiences are influenced by demographic characteristics (i.e., race and socioeconomic status) and the possibility of social mobility? Based on the reviewed articles, it is clear that there is a complex dynamic at play between the motivations of football players to continue to play and their attitudes toward injury.

The research very clearly delineates that Black athletes are more likely to be socialized into sports and are led to believe that sport is their best and/or only option for success and social mobility by multi-dimensional influences. These relationships should be further researched to understand how players of other races and ethnicities are influenced by sport socialization. In addition, motivations outside of player socialization are important to understand because not all Black players experience socialization. It is also possible that some White players may experience socialization into sport which was not found to be covered in any of the research examined as part of this review. It is shown that Black players experience socialization to a

greater degree than White players, but the extent to which White players are socialized to sport is not currently known.

The older research highlighted that gaining an education is not a high priority for many players, especially those of low SES or Black race. Newer research seems to be wavering on this issue as players seem to be demonstrating the knowledge that playing football is not the only option. On that note, research shows that players are starting to speak up about injustices related to compensation and their role as student athletes. More research is needed to identify how education may be influencing players' motivations to play and their willingness to take on risk of injury.

Overall, to thoroughly answer the research question, primary research needs to be conducted in order to garner player perspectives and fully understand their experiences. In order to have success in this research it should be conducted on a very large scale without a focus on any one league of the NCAA because all players are affected by motivations and injury experiences no matter what league or level of football they play.

SECTION 2: FUTURE RESEARCH STUDY

CHAPTER 3: INTRODUCTION AND LITERATURE REVIEW SUMMARY

Introduction and Literature Review

American football plays a significant role in the lives of hundreds of thousands of people across the United States (US) and beyond every year from about August until February. As an industry, football at both the college and professional levels has been on a consistent rise in popularity for the last decade bringing in millions of dollars every year (Smith, 2019). According to an article published by Forbes, in 2019 the top 25 most valuable NCAA D1 teams averaged a profit of \$1.5 billion annually (Smith, 2019). But it is important not to forget that football is an industry built on the brutalization of young men. A dichotomy exists between the glitz and glamor of the NCAA D1 football world presented on television and the realities of the players on the field. While many have some type of scholarship, these players are essentially working a full-time job playing football while attending school. They face injury and pain from the harsh nature of the game hoping to be good enough to make it to the NFL. It is also known that these burdens are not faced equally by players across demographic characteristics such as race and SES. This research hopes to understand why players are so willing to take on the risks associated with continuing to play football.

Colloquially, an avid football fan is likely to say based on player profiles often shown prior to football broadcasts that the potential to make millions that lures young men to keep playing. The NFL seems to be riddled with individuals who grew up with very little only to strike gold when they signed their first major contract which is a story touted by nearly every article on this topic. Kids see these individuals in pop culture and grow to idolize them (Allison

et al., 2018). The goal for many of these kids then becomes the use of sport for social mobility, although this dream is only achieved 1.6% of all college players according to the NCAA (2020). Despite the common perception of sport as a pathway to the American dream, very little is known about what motivates a player to keep playing despite all the challenges they may face. In many cases, these challenges are amplified for individuals from backgrounds with lower SES, non-White demographic characteristics.

The majority of research related to motivations to play and injury experiences looks at Black versus White rather than low versus high SES or other demographic characteristics. It is known that individuals who identify as Black are more likely to be from low SES, but this is not always the case (Noel, 2018). According to the US Census Bureau, in 2020 18.8% of the Black population in the US was living in poverty compared to only 7.3% of the non-Hispanic White population (Creamer, 2020). Every other race that is charted has a poverty rate between that of White and Black citizens (Creamer, 2020). Allison et al. (2018), showed that there is a relationship between a player's identity as Black or White and the demographic characteristics of their hometown as well as between these characteristics and a player's draft status. White et al. (2021) further showed that there are racial disparities in the high schools that Black versus White NFL players attended with Black players attending high schools averaging twice as much poverty as their White counterparts. While hometown and high school are shown in both cases to be a good indicator of SES, the best understanding of demographic characteristics such as SES comes from the players themselves. This indicates that there is a deeper connection to be explored related to the specific demographic characteristics of the individual players rather than their hometowns or high schools.

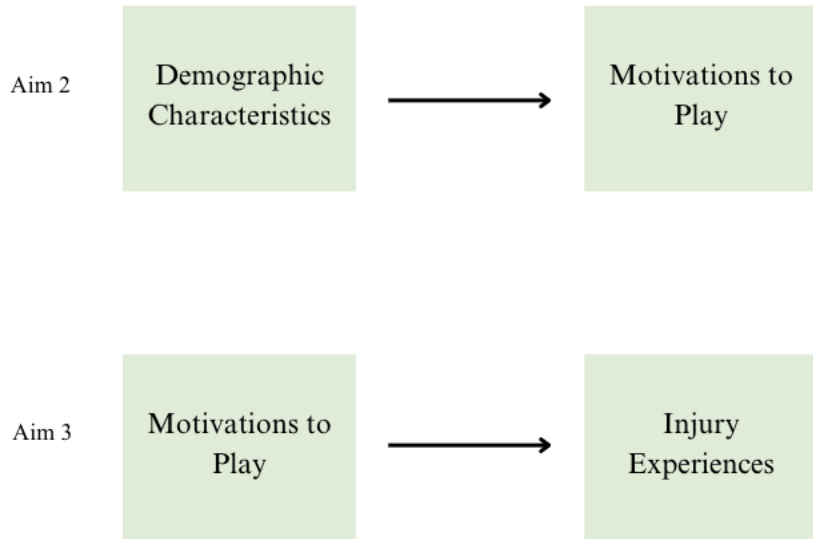
At baseline, advanced sport is hard on an individual's body. Countless hours of training and practice and competition take their toll no matter how outstanding an athlete's physical condition is (Baugh et al., 2015). Injury experiences can be mild or can have significant detrimental effects on the season or career of the player. Current research on the injury experiences of football players largely focused on head trauma and concussions. It is known that black adult men have a higher risk of previous head trauma than their White counterparts because of the overrepresentation of Black men in sports (Grano, 2020). Racial stacking also plays a role in predisposing players of color to higher risk (Siler, 2019). Racial stacking is the practice of strategically placing players in playing positions so that certain races are overrepresented in some positions and underrepresented in others (Siler, 2019). In 2019, Baugh et al. found that college football players become less and less likely to report their concussions or head trauma the more times they are injured. The current research is thorough in understanding why concussions may not be reported and in demonstrating the greater concussion risk in Black players. But how do other demographic characteristics influence the risk of concussion or other non-head trauma related injuries? And how do a player's motivations change the way they deal with these injuries?

Aims and Hypotheses

In combination with what is known about the role of SES and demographic characteristics in motivations to play football as well as what is known about injury experiences, the researcher developed three aims to fill the literature gaps. Aim 1 is to describe the motivations to play football among D1 NCAA athletes. Aim 2 is to analyze the relationship between demographic characteristics (i.e., race, SES) and motivation to play football. Finally,

aim 3 is to analyze the association between motivation to play football and injury experiences. A visual representation of the relationships that hope to be understood through aims 2 and 3 is shown in Figure 3. These two aims are the basis of the researcher’s three hypotheses as well.

Figure 3: Visual Representation of Aims 2 and 3 for Proposed Research Survey



Based on aim 2, two hypotheses were written. Hypothesis 1: Players who identify as non-White will more frequently identify motivations to play that are financial (earning) based as compared to their White counterparts. Hypothesis 2: Players who identify a lower socioeconomic status will identify motivations to play that are financial (earning) based as compared to those who identify a higher socioeconomic status. Houck et al. (2018) found that college football players compared to athletes in all other sports combined have the lowest maternal and paternal SES. This indicates that SES plays a powerful role in football and football players’ lives which should be investigated.

Aim 3 produced one hypothesis which is as follows: Players who identify a financial (earning) based motivation to play will be more likely to have negative injury experiences (i.e., Playing through injury, not reporting injury) than those who identify other primary motivations to play. With the knowledge that sport is frequently thought to be an avenue for social mobility, this aim and hypothesis beg the question of how far participants are willing to go to protect their chances of making it to a major league payday.

The proposed research aims were written to look specifically at demographic characteristics rather than Black versus White in order to get a more complete picture of the role of SES and other factors that contribute to it and their role in influencing a player's motivations to continue with the game of football. This choice was made as the majority of research focuses on Black versus White which overlooks multiple races which are represented in college football and have unique and important experiences based on their motivations and SES.

CHAPTER 4: METHODS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey Development

The proposed research uses a survey to gather information in order to analyze the hypothesized relationships. Most of the currently available research on what motivates college football players uses a quantitative methodology with answer choices. Players' voices are lost in surveys that prescribe answers and leave no room for the players' own thoughts. The proposed mixed methods survey allows players to fill in their own words regarding what motivates them to play as well as answering questions which use multiple choice, ranking, and Likert- scale answers.

Eligibility. In order to be eligible to take the survey, participants must be 18 years of age or older and be a current D1 NCAA football player. After answering the eligibility questions, the participants answer a series of questions to collect demographic information.

Demographic Characteristics. Asking a participant what they believe their SES to be is very subjective, so in order to make the data collection more objective various factors of SES are asked about individually. According to the APA, the factors that should be measured in order to understand an individual's SES are education, income, occupation, and family size and relationships (APA, 2015b). These measures give the researcher an understanding of relative poverty and SES as opposed to SSS or absolute SES (APA, 2015b). SSS is an individual's perception of their social status as compared to their peers which is often described with phrases like "working class" (APA, 2015a). Both relative SES and SSS are measured using demographic information. Basic information about the student athletes' class standing, primary position played, and scholarship status is collected next.

Motivations to Play. Following these informational sections, questions related to motivations to play football were asked. The first question asks the participant to write a sentence or two describing their motivations. The second question provides a list of four possible motivations based on current literature and asks the participant to rank them. The first option is “pressure from family.” Families play a large role in socializing children into sports (Allison et al., 2018). If a parent believes that football is a child’s best option due to social or cultural influences, then parents may encourage participation in football despite the risks (Boneau et al., 2020). The second option is “love of the game.” At its root, football is a sport that professional players have presumably been playing for most of their lives. It is feasible to assume that on some level what keeps players engaged is that they love playing football. It is well known that there are a lot of financial opportunities to be gleaned from participation in advanced levels of sports. The last two options are both financially focused. The third option is “receiving scholarships toward your education” and the fourth option is “future earning potential.” For about 75% of Americans a college degree is not attainable because of the enormous price tag (Young, 2022). The price tag becomes less of a barrier for about 57% of D1 NCAA football players because of scholarships they receive as rewards for their athletic talent (Marsh, 2022). Players may be motivated to continue to play in order to gain an education because it is the only way that they are able to. The average salary of NFL players is \$860,000 per season (Indeed Editorial Team, 2023). The opportunity to make such large sums of money may be very enticing and may motivate players to continue to play.

Injury Experiences. The final section of data collection within the survey is about injury experiences. Players who are determined to continue playing may not be willing to inform sports medicine staff about their injuries for fear of being pulled from play. The survey aimed to gather

information about both concussion and non-concussion related injuries as most of the currently available research is related to concussions. Baugh et al. (2019, 2020) has published multiple times regarding players' choice not to report concussions. It was identified that players likely know that a concussion diagnosis will result in having to sit out of practice, training, and competition (Baugh et al., 2019). Players who have a previous concussion diagnosis are less likely to report subsequent concussions in the future, likely due to learning about what the recovery process is like (Kroshus et al., 2020). The questions posed in this survey aimed to understand if there is a relationship between these tendencies to not report injury and the athlete's motivations for playing football.

Incentive Survey. The conclusion of the survey gave players the option to choose to take a very brief second survey to opt into an incentive. Participants who opted in were going to be entered into a raffle pool for the opportunity to win one of 10 Amazon gift cards. Funding for this was going to be provided by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Lab at the University of Mississippi. A secondary survey was generated rather than just adding questions to protect participant privacy and to ensure that there was no way to identify any individuals based on their answers.

IRB Process and Approval

The federal Department of Health and Human Services maintains a *Code of Federal Regulations* (CFR) which contains the rules a researcher must follow if they want to do research with human subjects (Office for Human Research Protections, 2009). 45 CFR 46 is the federal code that protects human participants from harm through participation in a research study by laying out the ethical regulations that researchers must follow including an Institutional Review

Board (IRB) (Office for Human Research Protections, 2009). An IRB is a panel of at least five individuals with diverse backgrounds who review proposed research to ensure it is compliant with ethical standards (APA, 2017). At every institution where research is carried out there is an IRB which must review the proposed research before the researchers can begin their study.

In this case, the proposed research is a survey which falls under the exemption rules for IRB approval. In Subpart A of 45 CFR 46, §46.101(b)(2) states that research using survey measures that does not allow for subject identification or use of responses outside of the proposed research which might place the subjects at risk is exempt from the IRB policy (Office for Human Research Protections, 2009). Therefore, because the proposed research is a survey, the IRB Application for Exemption was filled out as seen in Appendix A. It was then submitted to the University of Mississippi IRB along with a copy of the participant consent form (Appendix B), the email message to be used for recruitment (Appendix C), and the survey (Appendix D). IRB approval was received as shown in Appendix E.

Survey Recruitment and Distribution

Following IRB approval, the survey distribution process began with collecting the email addresses of the Director of Academic Affairs for Athletics (or equivalent role) for all 129 D1 NCAA football programs. These addresses were collected using faculty and staff directories on university and college websites. The recruitment email that can be read in Appendix C was then distributed via blind carbon copy (BCC) to all 167 collected email addresses. There are more emails than there are schools because some schools maintain multiple individuals in positions with the same title. No response was received from any of the individuals. It was determined that the BCC may have forced many of the emails to go to junk, so new emails were sent to every

individual (129 emails total). For schools with multiple contacts one email was sent to all the contacts.

Immediately after the second round of emails was sent, some automatic responses indicating that the email addresses were no longer active were received. For these schools, if more than one contact was already emailed, then no action was taken. If there was only one contact for the given school, then a second search was taken of the staff directory in order to identify a new contact person. New emails were sent to these individuals. Some automatic 'out of office' responses were also received, but none of these schools had only one contact so no action was taken. One contact responded that they were happy to include the survey in their athletics newsletter. No response was received from the remainder of schools. Of all the emails that were sent and individuals that were contacted, only one survey response was recorded.

Recommendations for Future Study

The design and execution of the original study included some flaws which can be addressed to make the execution of the proposed research more successful. Recruitment of survey participants is the biggest issue that needs to be addressed because the main goal of having people take the survey was not achieved. It is likely that the survey was never distributed to the target population, so in future studies a different method of distribution is necessary. It is possible that the hope of having the staff members distribute the survey is not reasonable, and it may be easier or more successful to ask them for the players' contacts in order for the researcher to send the survey directly. On the other hand, the lack of responses in general indicates that this plan is also flawed. It may be that the individuals that were contacted were not the best or most direct way to get in touch with the players. In this case, contacting the head coach may be a

better alternative. The largest barrier to survey distribution is likely that the target population is a protected group. NCAA D1 football players often have highly regulated and scheduled lives, especially during football season, which makes them very hard to get in touch with. They are also unlikely to take the survey of their own accord. Partnering with the NCAA or one of the D1 conferences (i.e., SEC, ACC) would allow access to the target population, and coaches might be willing to incorporate taking the survey into a team meeting if the survey was coming from the league rather than an individual student.

In this situation, the researcher performed the normal research steps out of order by starting with designing a mixed-methods study then pivoting to the scoping review. Now, after completing the scoping review, the researcher might consider some changes to the survey. For example, much of the reviewed literature relating to motivations to play utilized a framework to investigate intrinsic versus extrinsic motivations. Applying this framework to the survey that was presented may be a good way to establish research conclusions based on relevant theory. This would make the results stronger and more generalizable.

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APPENDICES

A. IRB PROTOCOL



The University of Mississippi
Office of Research and Sponsored Programs
Division of Research Integrity and Compliance - Institutional Review Board
100 Barr Hall - University, MS 38677
irb@olemiss.edu 662-915-7482

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION

Purpose: Many studies qualify for an abbreviated review, according to the federal regulations and university policy.

- Part I of this form screens for a brief review.
- Part II of this form completes the abbreviated IRB application.
- Part III of this form gives instructions for obtaining the required assurances.
- The IRB makes the final determination on whether you must fill out a full application.

Always download the most recent version of this form: <http://www.research.olemiss.edu/irb/protocol/forms>.

Prepare and send application form as a **Word** document. **E-mail the completed form and attachments (and forwarded email assurance if PI is a student) to irb@olemiss.edu.**

Note: Some class project studies may qualify for a classroom waiver of IRB Application. Instructors: see form [here](#).

PART I — Screening

1. Do any of the following apply to your study?

Research Methods:

- Clinical Treatment study Yes No
- Exercise Yes No
- X-rays Yes No
- Collection of blood, urine, other bodily fluids, or tissues Yes No
- Use of blood, urine, other bodily fluids, or tissues with identifiers Yes No
- Use of drugs, biological products, or medical devices Yes No
- Use of drugs, biological products, or medical devices Yes No
- Use of data collected in the European Economic Area (EEA)* Yes No

Targeted Subjects:

- Prisoners Yes No

Elements of Deception:

- The study uses surreptitious videotaping Yes No
- The study gives subjects deceptive feedback, whether positive or negative Yes No
- The study uses a research confederate (i.e., an actor playing the part of subject). Yes No

If you checked Yes to any of the above, STOP HERE and fill out the [FULL IRB APPLICATION FORM](#).

***Anonymous or Confidential?** Anonymous means (1) the recorded data cannot associate a subject with his/her data, and (2) the data cannot identify a subject. *Examples:* surveys with no names but with demographic data that can identify a subject (e.g., the only African-American in a class) are not anonymous.

***Sensitive Information?** Sensitive information includes but is not limited to (1) information that risks damage to a subject's reputation; (2) information that involves criminal or civil liability; (3) information that can affect a subject's employability; and (4) information involving a person's financial standing. *Examples:* Surveys that ask about porn use, illegal drug or alcohol use, religion, use of alcohol while driving, AIDS, cancer, etc. contain sensitive information.

***European Economic Area -** Collection of data in the European Economic Area (the 28 states of the European Union and Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland). Special considerations apply -if data are not 100% anonymous. See [GDPR Guidance](#) for more information

If using Qualtrics for anonymous surveys, [see guidance here](#).

2. The **ONLY** involvement of human subjects will be in the following categories (check all that apply)

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY: MUCH CHANGED WITH NEW REGULATIONS, JANUARY 2019

- 1) **Educational Research:** Research conducted in established or commonly accepted educational settings, involving normal educational practices. Research is not likely to adversely impact students' opportunity to learn required educational content or the assessment of educators who provide instruction. This includes most research on regular and special education strategies, and research on the effectiveness of or the comparison among instructional techniques, curricula, or classroom management methods.
- 2) **Surveys, Interviews, Educational Tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), Observation of Public Behavior (including video or auditory recording). AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MUST BE CHECKED**
- (i) Information recorded by the investigator cannot readily identify the subject (either directly or indirectly)
 - (ii) Disclosure of subjects' responses outside the research could **NOT** reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, educational advancement, employability, or reputation
 - (iii) Information recorded by the investigator includes identifiers and the investigator specifies strong security measures to protect the data (e.g., encryption for electronic data; multiple locks for paper data). Minors are **NOT** permitted under this sub-category
- 3) **Benign Behavioral Interventions (BBI):** Research involving interventions in conjunction with collection of information from an adult subject through verbal or written responses (including data entry) or audiovisual recording, if the subject prospectively agrees to the intervention and information collection.
- BBI is limited to communication or interpersonal contact; cognitive, intellectual, educational, or behavioral tasks; manipulation of the physical, sensory, social or emotional environment
 - Intervention Requirements:
 - brief duration (maximum intervention = 3 hours within one day; data collection may extend more hours & over days)
 - painless/harmless (transient performance task-related stress, anxiety, or boredom are acceptable)
 - not physically invasive (no activity tracker, blood pressure, pulse, etc.)
 - unlikely to have a significant adverse lasting impact on subjects
 - unlikely that subjects will find interventions offensive or embarrassing
 - no deception / omission of information, such as study purpose, unless subject prospectively agrees

AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOLLOWING MUST BE CHECKED

- (A) Recorded information cannot readily identify the subject (either directly or indirectly)
- (B) Any disclosure of subjects' responses outside the research could **NOT** reasonably place the subjects at risk of criminal or civil liability or be damaging to the subjects' financial standing, employability, educational advancement, or reputation
- (C) Information is recorded with identifiers and the investigator specifies strong security measures to protect the data (e.g., encryption for electronic data; multiple locks for paper data)

- 4) **Biospecimen Secondary Research:** Secondary Research for which consent is not required: use of identifiable information or identifiable biospecimens that have been or will be collected for some other 'primary' or 'initial' activity, if **ONE** of the following is met: (i) biospecimens or information is publicly available; (ii) information recorded by the investigator cannot readily, directly or indirectly identify the subject, and the investigator does not contact the subject or re-identify the subject; (iii) collection and analysis involving investigator's use of identifiable health information when use is regulated by HIPAA; or (iv) research information collected by or on behalf of the federal government using government-generated or -collected information obtained for non-research activities.
- 5) **Research and Demonstration Projects on Federal Programs:** The study is conducted pursuant to specific federal statutory authority and examines certain federal programs that deliver a public benefit [call IRB for details if you think your study may fit].
- 6) **Food Tasting/Evaluation:** Taste and food quality evaluation and consumer acceptance studies, (i) if wholesome foods without additives are consumed or (ii) if a food is consumed that contains a food ingredient at or below the level and for a use found to be safe, or agricultural chemical or environmental contaminant at or below the level found to be safe, by the Food and Drug Administration or approved by the Environmental Protection Agency or the Food Safety and Inspection Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

PART II — Abbreviated Application

3. Project Title: Fall 2022 College Football Study

4. Principal Investigator: Dr. Ms. Mr. **Kathleen Walsh**

Department: Health, Exercise Science, & Recreation Management **Department Chair's email (for cc of approval):** ford@olemiss.edu

Work Phone: 662-915-1630 **Home or Mobile Phone:** 781-315-7249

E-Mail Address: kdwalsh@go.olemiss.edu

If Principal Investigator is a student:

Graduate student:

- Dissertation Master's thesis
 Other graduate project

Undergraduate student:

- Senior thesis: SMBHC
 Croft Institute Other undergraduate project

Research Advisor: HANNAH ALLEN (required for student researchers)

Department: HEALTH, EXERCISE
SCIENCE, & RECREATION MANAGEMENT
E-Mail Address:
 HKALLEN1@OLEMISS.EDU

Work Phone: 662-915-1630

Home or Cell Phone: 484-753-1612

5. Funding Source:

- Is this project funded? Yes ⇨
 No

If Yes, is the funding:

- Internal:** **Source:** Dr. Allen (Research Advisor) Research Start Up Funding (Account #250222598A)
External: **Pending/Agency:** [Click to enter](#)
 Awarded/Agency: [Click to enter](#)

PI(s) on external funding: [Click to enter](#)

6. List ALL personnel involved with this research who will have contact with human subjects or with their identifiable data. All personnel listed here must complete [CITI training OR the Alternative to CITI \(ATC\) training](#) before this application will be processed*.

NAME	POSITION/TITLE	ROLE ON PROJECT	Training completed: CITI or ATC	
PI Kathleen Walsh	Undergraduate Student	Principal Investigator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advisor HANNAH ALLEN	Faculty/Staff	Co-Investigator	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Click to enter	Select	Click to enter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Click to enter	Select	Click to enter	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If space is needed to list additional project personnel, submit [Appendix A](#).

*See [Exempt Human Research Policy](#) for training exceptions

Research Methodology/Procedures

7. Check all procedures below that apply to your study:

<input type="checkbox"/> Pre-existing data or biological samples ⇒	<p>- Source of data: Click to enter</p> <p>- Do data/samples have identifiers? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes* <input type="checkbox"/> No</p> <p>- Describe how data will be secured (e.g., encryption for electronic data; multiple locks for paper data). Click to enter</p> <p>*Minors are NOT permitted under this sub-category</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Observation <input type="checkbox"/> Oral history <input type="checkbox"/> Interview ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ <input type="checkbox"/> Focus group ⇒ ⇒ ⇒	<p>Attach interview questions.</p> <p>Attach topic and questions.</p> <p>Attach questionnaire or survey.</p> <p>If online, describe platform (e.g., Qualtrics): Qualtrics</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Questionnaire or survey ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ <input type="checkbox"/> Audio recording or videotaping ⇒ ⇒	<p>Use and attach a release form if you plan to disseminate quoted comments or taped content. (This covers you and UM legally – Not for IRB purposes)</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> The study has misleading or deceptive: ⇒ (1) study descriptions; (2) procedure explanations; and/or (3) survey instructions/rationales.	<p>In the abstract, provide complete details and a rationale for employing misleading/deception information. Include Appendix D in your attachments.</p>
8. Consent Procedures:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Oral ⇒ ⇒ ⇒ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Sheet/Cover Letter ⇒ ⇒	<p>Attach script.</p> <p>Attach. (No subject signatures required, see example here: Go to Examples and Templates, then 'Sample Information Sheet')</p>
<input type="checkbox"/> Not applicable, Explain: Click to enter	

9. Project Summary

Briefly summarize your project using non-technical, jargon-free language that can be understood by non-scientists.

See <http://www.research.olemiss.edu/irb-forms> for abstract examples.

Give a brief statement of the research question supporting the reasons for, and importance of, the research: The aim of this study is to analyze the associations between demographic characteristics, motivations to play football, and injury experiences among Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) football players. We hypothesize that players who identify as non-white or who come from a low socioeconomic status will indicate financial motivations to play football and will have an increased likelihood of negative injury experiences.

Describe the ages and characteristics of your proposed subjects and how you will recruit them (attach recruitment script or materials to the application): Participants must be 18 years old or older and currently enrolled as a student athlete on a Division I NCAA football team at a college or university in the United States. Both graduate and undergraduate students playing in the 2022-2023 football season are eligible to participate. A recruitment email (included with the attached application materials) will be sent to the Director of Academic Affairs for Athletics (or equivalent role) at the 131 universities and colleges in the United States with Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association football teams. The recruitment email will include a brief description of the project, the link to the anonymous Qualtrics survey, and contact information for the research team. If an athletic director would like to see the survey questions before sending to their student athletes, a copy of the survey will be provided to them.

For studies using only adult subjects, state how you will ensure they are 18+:

- First question on survey/interview
- Other:** [Click to enter](#)
- Not applicable

Briefly describe the research design AND carefully explain how your study will meet each of the requirements of the category criteria you checked on Page 2: We are conducting an online survey using Qualtrics of Division I NCAA football players in the U.S. To recruit participants, we will email the Director of Academic Affairs for Athletics (or equivalent role) at the 131 universities and colleges in the United States with Division I NCAA football programs. The email will include a brief description of the project, the link to the anonymous Qualtrics survey, and contact information for the research team. This email will also ask the athletic directors to distribute the survey link to their student athletes. The initial email will be sent in August 2022, with two reminder emails sent to athletic directors who have not yet responded to our request. The survey will remain open until an adequate number of participants have been recruited. Information regarding consent will be provided online prior to the beginning of the survey. Participants will have the opportunity to review the informed consent information and then indicate that they voluntarily consent to participate. They will be informed that they may print the consent form or contact the Principal Investigator for a copy. All data will be stored using password-protected files and computers. No one but the research team will have access to collected data, and once all survey responses have been downloaded to a computer, all online responses will be deleted. The initial survey will be anonymous, but participants will have the option to complete a second survey to provide contact information (name and email address) to be entered into a raffle to win one of 10 \$15 Amazon gift cards. Contact information for incentive purposes will be permanently deleted after incentives are distributed.

Give a detailed description of the procedure(s) subjects will undergo (from their perspective): As a participant in this study, you will be asked to complete a brief, anonymous online survey on the following domains of interest: demographic characteristics, motivations to play football, and injury experiences during your college football career. The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. You will receive information about the study and a link to participate via an email sent to your email account by a member of the athletics staff at your college/university. Contact information for the primary researchers will be provided,

and the first page of the survey will be an informed consent form. All survey responses will be anonymous. At the end of the survey, you will have the option to take an additional survey where you will enter your full name and email address to enter into a raffle to win one of 10 \$15 Amazon gift cards.

10. Appendix Checklist:

- A. Additional Personnel not listed on first page of application?**
 No Yes – complete [Appendix A](#)
- B. Will the research be conducted in schools or child care facilities?**
 No Yes – complete [Appendix B](#)
- C. Does your research involve deception or omission of elements of consent?**
 No Yes – complete [Appendix D](#)
- D. Will your research be conducted outside of the United States?**
 No Yes – complete [Appendix E](#)
- E. Will your research involve [protected health information \(PHI\)](#)?**
 No Yes – complete [Appendix F](#) if applicable

11. Attachments Checklist:

Did you submit:

- a. survey or questionnaires?
 Yes Not Applicable
- b. interview questions?
 Yes Not Applicable
- c. focus group topics?
 Yes Not Applicable
- d. recruitment email, announcement, or script?
 Yes Not Applicable: No subject contact
- e. informed consent information letter or script?
 Yes Not Applicable: No subject contact
- f. permissions for locations outside the University?*
- Yes Not Applicable

*if giving a survey, whether on or off campus, please ensure the person giving permission (e.g., the teacher of a class) has an explicit opportunity to see the survey before they give their permission for its distribution

- 12. If using class points as incentives, are there alternative assignments available for earning points that involve comparable time and effort?**
 Yes Not Applicable

13. If using an anonymous survey through Qualtrics and giving incentives in a separate survey, have you read and conducted the testing of the surveys according to the [procedures here?](#)
 Yes Not Applicable

PART III: ASSURANCES
Conflict Of Interest And Fiscal Responsibility

Do you or any person responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of this study have an economic interest in, or act as an officer or a director of any outside entity whose financial interests may reasonably appear to be affected by this research?

YES ⇒ ⇒ If Yes, please describe any potential conflict of interest. [Click to enter](#)
 NO

Do you or any person responsible for this study have existing financial holdings or relationships with the sponsor of this study?

YES ⇒ ⇒ If Yes, please describe any potential conflict of interest. [Click to enter](#)
 NO
 N/A

Principal Investigator Assurance

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSURANCE

I certify that the information provided in the application is complete and correct. As Principal Investigator, I have the ultimate responsibility for the protection of the rights and welfare of the human participants, conduct of the research, and the ethical performance of the project. I will comply with all UM policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of participants in human research, including, but not limited to the following:

- Informed consent will be obtained from the participants, if applicable and appropriate;
- Any proposed modifications to the research protocol that may affect its designation as an exempt (brief) protocol application will be reported to the IRB for approval prior to being implemented.
- Adverse events and/or unanticipated problems will be reported to the IRB as required.

I certify that I, and all key personnel, have completed the required initial and/or refresher CITI or CITI Alternative courses in the ethical principles and regulatory requirements for the protection of human research participants.

Kathleen Walsh

Typed signature/name of Principal Investigator

7/5/22

Date

RESEARCH ADVISOR'S* ASSURANCE (REQUIRED FOR STUDENT PROJECTS)

Email your Advisor with the following:

1. Email subject line: "IRB Advisor Approval Request from (your name)"
2. Your IRB submission materials as attachments
3. Copy and paste the statements below into the body of the email
4. Forward the reply email from your Advisor to irb@olemiss.edu along with your IRB submission materials attached.

***The research advisor must be a UM faculty member. The faculty member is considered the responsible party for the ethical performance and regulatory compliance of the research project.**

Please review my attached protocol submission. Your reply email to me will constitute your acknowledgement of the assurances below.

Thank you,
[type your name here]

As the Research Advisor, I certify that the student investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human participants and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular research in accordance with the approved protocol.

I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor research progress.

Should problems arise during the course of research, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.

I will ensure that the investigator will promptly report incidents (including adverse events and unanticipated problems) to the IRB.

If I will be unavailable, for example, on sabbatical leave or vacation, I will arrange for an alternate faculty member to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the IRB by email of such arrangements.

I have completed the required CITI course(s) in the ethical principles and regulatory requirements for the protection of human research participants.

B. PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title: College Football Study

Principal Investigator

Kathleen Walsh

Department of Health, Exercise Science, &
Recreation Management
215 Turner Center
University of Mississippi
kdwalsh@go.olemiss.edu

Co-Investigator

Hannah K. Allen, PhD

Department of Health, Exercise Science, &
Recreation Management
236 Turner Center
University of Mississippi
hkallen1@olemiss.edu

Description

We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are currently a Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) football player. The purpose of this research is to understand the motivations and experiences of Division 1 NCAA athletes. You will be asked to complete an anonymous online survey that asks about individual and family characteristics, motivations to participate in athletics, and your experiences as a student athlete.

Cost and Payments

The survey should take about 10-15 minutes to complete. You may choose to provide your name and email address to be entered into a raffle to win a \$15 gift card for participating in this study. Ten participants will be selected to receive an incentive. You will be responsible for any taxes assessed on this compensation.

Risks and Benefits

We do not anticipate any major risks or discomforts involved in participating in this research study, however there may be some discomfort when answering questions about your experiences with athletic injury. It is important to know that all responses will not be linked to any identifying information, and you may choose to skip any question you are not comfortable answering. There are no direct benefits to participating in this study. However, we hope that this research will inform future programming and allocation of resources for student athletes.

Confidentiality

Your responses will be anonymous. You will be assigned a unique ID number, and all data will be stored using password-protected files on a password-protected computer. No one but the research team will have access to collected data, and once all survey responses have been

collected and downloaded to a computer, all online responses will be deleted. If we write reports or articles about the findings from this project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your contact information will be collected from you if you choose to enter a raffle to receive an incentive. This information will not be linked in any way to the responses you provide on the survey.

Right to Withdraw

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.

If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the principal investigator:

Kathleen Walsh

Department of Health, Exercise Science, & Recreation Management
215 Turner Center
University of Mississippi
kdwalsh@go.olemiss.edu

IRB Approval

This study has been reviewed by The University of Mississippi's Institutional Review Board (IRB). If you have any questions, concerns, or reports regarding your rights as a participant of research, please contact the IRB at (662) 915-7482 or irb@olemiss.edu.

Statement of Consent

Your consent indicates that you are at least 18 years of age, you have read this consent form or have had it read to you, your questions have been answered to your satisfaction, and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You may print a copy of this consent information for your records.

If you agree to participate, please indicate so by answering the question below.

I have reviewed the informed consent information and consent to participate in this study.

- Yes, I agree/consent to participate
- No, I do NOT agree/consent to participate

C. RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Subject Line: Invitation for D1 NCAA Football Athletes to Participate in a Brief Survey

Hi,

My name is Kathleen Walsh, and I am an undergraduate student at the University of Mississippi. I am currently conducting a research study as part of my senior honors thesis on the motivations and experiences of Division 1 NCAA football athletes. I am reaching out to invite the current football players at your university to participate in this important research.

Your help in distributing the project information and survey link is greatly appreciated. If you would like to review the survey questions prior to reaching out to your athletes, I am happy to provide a copy of the survey to you. Please reach out to me at kdwalsh@go.olemiss.edu or to my research supervisor Dr. Hannah Allen at hkallen1@olemiss.edu with this request or with any other questions. Thank you!

Below is sample text to be used when emailing student football players:

Dear Student Athlete,

As part of a research project on better understanding the motivations and experiences of Division 1 NCAA football athletes, you are invited to participate in a brief, one-time online survey that should take about 10-15 minutes to complete.

Participation is voluntary, and all of your responses will be kept completely anonymous. As a thank you for participating, you will have the chance to enter into a raffle to win ***one of 10 \$15 Amazon gift cards***. Data collection will close on October 11 so be sure to click this link now to start the survey!

<https://tinyurl.com/CollegeFootballStudy>

This research has been reviewed by the University of Mississippi Institutional Review Board. If you have any questions about participation in this study, please contact the principal investigator:

Kathleen Walsh

Department of Health, Exercise Science, & Recreation Management
215 Turner Center
University of Mississippi
kdwalsh@go.olemiss.edu

Thank you for taking the time to participate!

Best,
Kathleen Walsh
Hannah Allen

D. SURVEY

Thank you for taking the time to participate in the study on the experiences of Division I National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) football players. Please take a moment to review the informed consent information below. If you would like to keep a copy of this information, please print the informed consent form directly from this webpage or request a copy from the Principal Investigator.

[INSERT INFORMED CONSENT INFORMATION]

Your consent indicates that you are at least 18 years of age, you have read this consent form or have had it read to you, your questions have been answered to your satisfactions, and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. If you agree to participate, please indicate so by answering the question below.

1. I have reviewed the informed consent information and consent to participate in this study.
 - Yes, I agree/ consent to participate
 - No, I do NOT agree/ consent to participate (if selected, end survey)

Eligibility Screener

2. What is your current age (in years)? _____ (if less than 18 years, end survey)
3. Are you playing Division I NCAA football for the upcoming/current season during the 2022-2023 academic year?
 - Yes
 - No (if selected, end survey)

Demographic Information

The following section will ask you to provide information about yourself and your family. Remember that your responses are anonymous.

4. What is your race/ethnicity? Select all that apply.
 - African American/Black
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - Asian American/Asian
 - Hispanic/Latin(x)
 - Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander
 - Middle Eastern, Arab, or Arab American
 - White
 - Self- identify (please specify): _____
5. What sex were you assigned at birth, such as on an original birth certificate?

- Male
 - Female
6. Think back to your high school years, prior to college entry. How many people, including yourself, were living in your household? Include both children and adults. _____
 7. During your high school years, prior to college entry, what was your family's combined total annual income? Include income coming from all sources that contributed to household expenses. Make your best estimate.
 - Less than \$10,000
 - \$10,000 to \$14,999
 - \$15,000 to \$24,999
 - \$25,000 to \$34,999
 - \$35,000 to \$49,999
 - \$50,000 to \$74,999
 - \$75,000 to \$99,999
 - \$100,000 to \$149,999
 - \$150,000 to \$199,999
 - \$200,000 or more
 8. Which of the following best describes the adults in your household during your high school years, prior to college entry?
 - Single-parent/guardian household
 - Two-parent/guardian household
 - Multi-generational household (e.g., your grandparents lived with you)
 - Other (please describe): _____
 9. Think of your parent/guardian who completed the highest level of education. What level of education did they complete?
 - Less than a high school degree
 - High school degree or equivalent (e.g., GED)
 - Some college
 - Associate degree
 - Bachelor's degree
 - Graduate degree
 - Don't know
 10. Are you a first-generation college student (i.e., your parents did not complete a four-year college or university Bachelor's degree)?
 - Yes
 - No
 11. How would you describe your family's socioeconomic group during your high school years, prior to college entry?

- Lower class/poor
- Lower-middle or working class
- Middle class
- Upper-middle class
- Upper class/rich

12. How would you describe your financial situation during your high school years, prior to college entry?

- Always stressful
- Often stressful
- Sometimes stressful
- Rarely stressful
- Never stressful

13. How would you describe your financial situation right now?

- Always stressful
- Often stressful
- Sometimes stressful
- Rarely stressful
- Never stressful

14. On a scale from 0 (much poorer) to 10 (much wealthier), how do you think your socioeconomic status compares relative to other students at your college/university?

- 0 = I am much poorer than most students at my college/university
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 = I am average (about 50% of students are poorer and about 50% are wealthier than me)
- 6
- 7
- 8
- 9
- 10 = I am much wealthier than most students at my college/university

Student Athlete Information

The following section will ask you to provide information about your status as a Division I NCAA football player. Remember that your responses are anonymous.

15. What is your current class standing?

- Freshman
- Sophomore
- Junior

- Senior
- Graduate student

16. Enter the total number of seasons that you have played Division I NCAA football. Include the current season to be played during the 2022-2023 academic year. _____

17. Which team category does your current position fall under? Select all that apply.

- Offense
- Defense
- Special teams

18. Please write in the name of your current position. _____

19. What is your current athletic scholarship status?

- Full athletic scholarship
- Partial athletic scholarship
- No athletic scholarship

Motivations to Play Football

The following section will ask you to provide information about your motivations to play Division I NCAA football. Remember that your responses are anonymous.

20. Please describe your #1 or main motivation for playing Division I NCAA football.

21. Please rank the following in order from 1 to 4 with 1 being the most important reason that you play Division I NCAA football and 4 being the least important reason.

- _____ Pressure from family
- _____ Love of the game
- _____ Financial motivation- receiving scholarships toward your education
- _____ Financial motivation- future earning potential

Injury Experiences

The following section will ask you to provide information about your injury experiences while playing Division I NCAA football. Remember that your responses are anonymous.

For the following questions, please think only of your time as a Division I NCAA football player. Do not include experiences playing football at other times or in other contexts.

22. Do you feel that an injury would jeopardize your position on your current football team?
- Yes
 - No
23. Have you ever felt that your race/ethnicity influences the way that your coaches, trainers, or teammates respond to your injury experiences?
- Yes
 - No
24. In your career as a Division 1 NCAA football player, have you ever played through an injury **with** the coaches' or trainers' knowledge?
- Yes
 - No
25. In your career as a Division 1 NCAA football player, have you ever played through an injury **without** the coaches' or trainers' knowledge?
- Yes
 - No
26. In your career as a Division 1 NCAA football player, have you ever been diagnosed with a concussion?
- Yes, once
 - Yes, twice
 - Yes, three times
 - Yes, four or more times
 - No, never
27. During the previous season (played during the 2021-2022 academic year), how many times do you think you sustained a concussion?
- Once
 - Twice
 - Three times
 - Four or more times
 - Never
 - I did not play Division 1 NCAA football during the 2021-2022 academic year
28. During the previous season (played during the 2021-2022 academic year), how many times do you think you sustained a non-concussion injury?
- Once
 - Twice
 - Three times
 - Four or more times
 - Never
 - I did not play Division 1 NCAA football during the 2021-2022 academic year

29. In the current season (to be played during the 2022-2023 academic year), estimate how likely you are to do the following.

	Definitely Will Not	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Neither Likely nor Unlikely	Likely	Very Likely	Definitely Will
Report a suspected concussion to coaching staff or trainers							
Report a suspected non-concussion injury to coaching staff or trainers							
Sustain a concussion during the upcoming football season							
Sustain a non-concussion injury during the upcoming football season							

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey! Please click the link below to enter yourself into a raffle to win one of 10 \$15 Amazon gift cards.

[LINK TO SECOND SURVEY]

Incentive Survey

- As a thank you for participation, 10 participants will be randomly selected to receive a \$15 Amazon gift card. Would you like to enter yourself into this raffle?
 - Yes (if yes, go to #2)
 - No
- Please enter your full name and email address. This information will be kept confidential.

First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Email Address: _____

E. IRB APPROVAL

2/3/23, 9:40 AM

University of Mississippi Mail - IRB Exempt Determination of 23x-010 -NEW LANGUAGE!



Kathleen Walsh <kdwalsh@go.olemiss.edu>

IRB Exempt Determination of 23x-010 -NEW LANGUAGE!

irb@olemiss.edu <irb@olemiss.edu>
To: "kdwalsh@go.olemiss.edu" <kdwalsh@go.olemiss.edu>
Cc: Hannah Allen <hkallen1@olemiss.edu>

Mon, Jul 25, 2022 at 11:15 AM

PI:

This is to inform you that your application to conduct research with human participants, "Fall 2022 College Football Study" (Protocol #23x-010), has been determined as Exempt under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(#2). You may proceed with your research.

Please remember that all of The University of Mississippi's human participant research activities, regardless of whether the research is subject to federal regulations, must be guided by the ethical principles in The Belmont Report: Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research.

It is especially important for you to keep these points in mind:

- You must protect the rights and welfare of human research participants.
- Certain changes to your approved protocol must be reviewed and approved before initiating those changes. These changes include the addition of a vulnerable subject group (children, persons with disabilities, and prisoners), as well as the addition of research materials, such as the addition of surveys or interview questions and test articles, the addition of the use of deception, or any changes to subject confidentiality. Personnel amendments for exempt protocols are no longer required. Instead, PIs are responsible for keeping an up to date record of all active personnel and for ensuring that personnel have completed the necessary training to be on their protocol.
- You must report promptly to the IRB any injuries or other unanticipated problems involving risks to participants or others.
- If research is to be conducted during class, the PI must email the instructor and ask if they wish to see the protocol materials (surveys, interview questions, etc) prior to research beginning.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the IRB at irb@olemiss.edu.

Miranda L. Core

Senior Research Compliance Specialist, Research Integrity and Compliance