Shandon Goldman

Professor Stephanie Williams

Composition II

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Rhetorical Analysis

The debate of whether college athletes should be compensated financially by the school that they provide athletic success and profit for has been going on for ages. The author of this article, Maurice Peebles, sat down with ESPN analyst Jay Bilas to help fuel their opinion that college athletes should be paid. This article by Complex Sports online titled, “7 Common Sense Reasons Why College Athletes Should Be Paid (According to Jay Bilas)” gives the reader strong opinions and evidence to support their argument.

The intended audience for this article is probably common sports fans and definitely college basketball and football fans. The average fan can relate to this article because the college basketball tournament records massive viewers bringing in a large chunk of revenue from its season. Also it’s audience could be steered towards college officials or anyone that could be involved if college athletes were ever granted the right to be paid.

The majority of the article is quoting Jay Bilas and his seven reasons why athletes should be paid. Jay Bilas is one of the most credited college basketball analysts in the world and certainly one of the most recognizable. He also played college basketball so he has insight on the life of an everyday college basketball player. Not only did he play college basketball, he played at Duke University where he also graduated from law school. Duke is one of college basketball’s true blue bloods.

The simple claim made in this article is that college athletes deserve to be financially compensated. One of his biggest points in the article is that the ridiculous amount of revenue that the NCAA brings in far outweighs the compensation the players themselves receive. Bilas argues against the NCAA that, “They are making millions of millions of dollars. You have assistant coaches making millions of dollars now! And then you have the players that have been these 'amateurs' forever.” This shows that Bilas uses the fact of the NCAA’s revenue against them in the fact that the players are getting hardly anything in return based on their amateur status.

Perhaps the biggest form of reimbursement for student athletes comes in the full athletic scholarship most players receive. The majority of these scholarships covers an athletes full college tuition along with textbooks, meals on road-trips, hotels, and other small expenses. Bilas is far from approving this compensation, “When they talk about all of the expenses. Think about what the scholarship is. The scholarship is a dollar amount that is transferred from the athletic department to the school. So it’s the school paying itself. It’s like me paying myself for rent for my kids in my house. And then claiming I don’t have any money left because I paid myself rent for them.” He appeals to the logic of the situation with a scenario that puts the reader in a position that more can relate to making it easier to understand his point.

Two of the points in his article appeal to fans of college basketball specifically. A popular belief is that paying the players will hurt the quality of the games. Bilas believes these beliefs and opinions to be, “…lame doomsday scenarios in order to keep the status quo.” He believes that paying the players will not hurt the quality of college basketball as a whole and uses other past scenarios as evidence. "Same thing about the Olympics. When we let pros play in the Olympics, people said 'It’s over.' And now it’s more popular than ever.” This evidence appeals to the fans as he tries to prove to them that if college athletes were to be paid, it wouldn’t be as bad as some make it out to be. He commonly makes this effective appeal that the fans would still enjoy the game that they love if these changes were to be made.

Another point that Bilas directed to the fans was that he thinks paying college athletes won’t dramatically change the quality of the sports top teams and their best players. He makes the point that even though the bigger schools would be able to pay their players more, they already sign 95% of the nation’s top 100 players without paying them. This statement is a little far fetched in my opinion as time and time again we see multiple highly coveted athletes opting to play for the smaller to mid-major schools for numerous reasons.

The last point Bilas uses to prove his point is that he believes that good college basketball players would stay in school longer. “' If we really think it’s good for kids to stay in school, why shouldn’t we provide incentives for them to stay? It’s a good thing.” Granted, he states that the best players in the country wouldn’t likely be persuaded by this new incentive. “Now, you’re not gonna get the top pick. Like Kentucky’s not gonna get Karl-Anthony Towns to stay longer, but they may get some of the other guys to stay longer. They may decide, 'You know what, I’m making money here.” This could be a representation of the pathos used in his argument. Because a players value of a college education could change based on their skill level. Typically the more talented players leave college early to pursue professional contracts and opportunities. While the average player values his education more if playing basketball at a professional level might not present itself as a possibility. I think this is an accurate point to the argument because of these facts.

The timing of this argument is presented at a good time now that arguments for college athletes to be compensated are at an all time high. The strong use of rhetoric appeals, especially ethos, make it easy to trust the information that the audience is reading. Bilas and Peebles present accurate information, informed insight, and persuasive reasoning to their argument. Making it easy for any lover of college athletics to feel for the average student athlete.

Works Cited

Maurice Peebles Deputy Editor Complex Sports. Twitter. IG. "7 Common Sense Reasons Why College Athletes Should Be Paid (According to Jay Bilas)." Complex. N.p., 03 Dec. 2015. Web. 31 Jan. 2017.