

# It's Really Hard To Ignore How The NCAA Tournament Is Pimping Black College Athletes

Twitter users had plenty on their minds about how the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is exploiting Black college athletes, as tip off for the Sweet 16 round of March Madness was scheduled for Thursday night.

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A debate about whether college athletes should share in the huge profits they generate for the NCAA and their schools has raged for years. The basketball tournament makes up roughly 80 percent of the NCAA's \$1.1 billion in annual revenue, according to [Bloomberg News](#).

Meanwhile, the TV network broadcasting the tournament will have [one camera dedicated](#) to following Duke University's **Zion Williamson**—what's been dubbed a "Zion cam." That's to make sure viewers can see every move he makes on the court and to boost the network's ratings. Williamson, however, won't get a single dime of the ad revenue.

That debate has swung in favor of the athletes this year, Bloomberg said. The NCAA finds itself under pressure to reform its model because of legal challenges, athletes demanding change, and shifting public opinion.

The view that the NCAA and colleges are pimping athletes is especially sensitive to African-Americans, many of whom easily make the connection to the nation's history of exploiting Black labor. To many, the relationship is similar to plantation owners getting wealthy from their Black slaves.

Color of Change, a Black activist organization, [posted an online petition](#) titled End the NCAA exploitation of Black athletes, in which it points out the financial hardships of the players who often fail to graduate.

"Because of the NCAA's strict rules, many student-athletes often go hungry or have difficulty paying rent. And because of the rigorous demands the NCAA puts on Black athletes to generate revenues – many find it impossible to earn a degree while they play," the statement said. "In fact, Black student-athletes are significantly less likely to graduate than their fellow white student-athletes. Not only are the NCAA's rules denying Black athletes fair compensation, they're robbing players of a chance to get a degree."

Public opinion has long been on the NCAA's side of the debate. Many have argued that receiving a scholarship is fair compensation to student athletes. A 2017 Seton Hall Sports Poll found [60 percent](#) of people held that view, which represented a sharp decline from 2013 when 71 percent of people said scholarships are enough.

At the same time, 40 percent of people believe athletes are exploited by not sharing in the profits they generate—the highest number in the poll's 10-year history.

Some folks have said on Twitter that top Black student athletes should

take their services to historically Black colleges and universities (HBCU) to at least help those financially struggling schools. Others were quick to point out that racism underlies the views of those who argue that the athletes do not deserve to share in the profits.

Scroll down to see some of the social media discussion.

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