

COLLEGE ATHLETES

ON A PAY-

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by DEAN BERHOW-GOLL *design* ALEX HUS

Iowa State's athletic director Jamie Pollard is more than prepared.

Like a lawyer, his case is foolproof. Every possible question has an answer at the ready. He's been through this before.

When it comes to something like the topic of paying college athletes, Pollard has a concrete opinion that's well researched. He should, after all, following Sept. 25 and his string of tweets regarding the nationally covered issue.

He wants people to understand the other side of the issue about paying college athletes. Do athletes deserve it? Does their scholarship provide accessibility to a college degree, which could lead to success after graduation?.

So why aren't athletes given a chunk of the multi-million dollar pie that the NCAA reaps every year?

Pollard would argue that athletes are already paid — and he does it with substantial evidence.

"I could make the argument that we already have a payroll," Pollard said in his corner

office of the Jacobsen Athletic Building. "It's our scholarship bill and our academic assistance."

Last year, Iowa State spent "x" amount of dollars on each student athlete. What all goes into the final sum? Six items: books and academic support, out of state full scholarship tuition and room and board, sports medicine and medical support, strength conditioning and nutrition, uniforms and equipment and team travel.

So what is the average cost Iowa State spends on a student athlete every single year? That little "x" comes out to \$62,713. Over a four-year career as a student athlete that not-so-little-anymore "x" grows to nearly \$251,000.

Every student-athlete on Iowa State's campus has a job, and that's the sport they're a part of. The walk-ons aren't making any money from that job, only the ones on scholarship.

It's much deeper than just paying the players. If you install something like that, suddenly it's a whole different ball game. Now we're discussing things like employment laws, worker's comp, unemployment, union laws and agents.

If we're still technically calling this a job - what about hiring or firing students?

"Think about it - you didn't perform this week, so you're fired," Pollard said. "Or they're going to unionize, so who gets paid more money, the swimmer or the football player?"

A Huffington Post study done in August shows that four out of five kids work at least part-time to help pay their way through college. One

way Iowa State helps all students is with grants.

For athletes on a full ride, they're free to do whatever they please with that lump sum, whether that means putting it towards their education or using it to buy a brand new plasma screen TV.

Let's compare a student-athlete's perspective.

Take Jeremiah George - Iowa State's middle linebacker and the Big 12's current leading tackler. He's on the other side of the equation.

He's one of the potential faces of Iowa State's football program, which

brings in millions of dollars for the university and he believes athletes deserve a greater portion of that money to help deal with things like rent, clothes and food.

"There's got to be something more because there are guys around the country, guys on this football team who struggle and could use a little bit of extra help," George said. "That's why you hear the stories of guys selling their gear and getting in trouble. It's not that they're greedy, it's probably because they need more [money]."

Iowa State's scholarships cover room, board and books, but sometimes that's not enough for athletes. Even last summer while in Ames for training, Deon Broomfield and Jacques Washington had to make a little extra cash on the side by delivering pizzas at Pizza Ranch

right here in Ames.

But does Iowa State's football coach Paul Rhoads think college players are paid? Does he think Iowa State pays its players?

"We do, we pay them a full scholarship that in their time here amounts to at Iowa State anywhere from \$125,000 to \$150,000," Rhoads said. "That's a lot of scholarship. I'm paying for my son's education. That's a lot of money."



The biggest point Pollard makes is from an educational standpoint.

The biggest thing a scholarship offers to student-athletes is accessibility and affordability.

The scholarship is a gateway into college for some student-athletes. With that education, they have better odds in the workforce.

"The cost of education is so high, it's not accessible to everybody," Pollard said. "So when you think about it, college athletics is providing access and affordability to those that can least afford college

and would not have access to college had they not had a scholarship."

Simply cutting a check to every athlete isn't a solution, but right now it's universally understood that they need more help.

Neither side is there yet, but it's clear that Pollard has the well being of the entire body of student-athletes in mind, not just a select few.

"I think it should be need-based," Pollard said. "To me that's the crux of it. That keeps it amateur-based. That's where I envision something will happen — There will be more ways to help student-athletes."