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THE SCHOLARSHIP DIVIDE

Divvyng Scholarship Dollars Can Divide a Team

By **BILL PENNINGTON**

An athlete's worth to a college is often negotiated behind the closed door of a coach's office with the scholarship amount kept a guarded secret, like a salary in a workplace. But the figures have a way of eventually getting out, as they do in any office.

What happens next is not surprising: scholarship envy.

"It tends to come out when someone is either playing really well or really bad," said Jillian Loyden, a senior goalkeeper on the [Villanova University](#) women's soccer team. "If someone has a few really poor games, you hear girls during a bus ride saying: 'And she's on 75 percent scholarship. What is the coach thinking?'"

Joe Taylor, a standout member of the Villanova men's soccer team whose athletic aid represents more than half his college expenses, agreed. "Playing badly and getting a lot of money will usually lead to resentment," he said. "I guess it's normal, but it's not very good for the team concept."

Cortney Barry, a freshman swimmer at the [University of Delaware](#) who was granted an athletic scholarship worth \$10,000 annually, added: "Groups can divide a team based on the amount of money everyone is getting. People talk about it secretly. They'll say: 'I'm faster. Why is she getting more money?'"

Barry, who has had a spectacular first season, wondered if the disharmony might stem from the competitive pursuit of scholarship money that began when the athletes were young swimmers seeking the attention of college coaches.

"I knew girls who had grown to hate swimming and hated just getting into the pool," Barry said. "They wanted to quit, but they felt pressure from their parents, who had invested a lot in their swim careers. It was a means to eventually get college money. Some of those girls are at other colleges now, and you know, it's like it's still about the money — am I getting enough?"

"You can never win that way. The real reward is getting to do your sport in college."

Coaches do what they can to keep the money issue underground.

"We ask them to avoid the subject," said Joanie Milhous, Villanova's longtime field hockey coach. "But we have a lot of girls who are roommates. It's a long year — how many things do you keep from your roommate?"

Delaware's women's lacrosse coach, Kim Ciarrocca, said she worried most about scholarship envy when recruiting players from the same high school.

"You don't want them comparing offers, because one of them is most likely getting less," Ciarrocca said. "You ask them not to say anything, but if the kids are close, you know they will talk. It's the same on a team."

Several coaches said the parents of athletes also sometimes compared notes on financial packages, usually with disquieting results.

But there are some teams that seem to have developed a culture in which scholarship money does not come up too often.

"We're friends, and I wouldn't ask my friend what her family income was," said Katie Lee, a senior softball player at Delaware. "Although I have noticed that everyone comes onto campus thinking that everyone else is on full scholarship. I was the same way. You do find out pretty quickly that almost no one is on full scholarship. That gets out right away."

Stephanie Campbell, a Villanova field hockey player, said athletes were instructed not to discuss scholarship totals for good reason.

"It tends to rank us and define our worth," she said, frowning. "We're supposed to be one team."

Campbell, who received an athletic scholarship worth roughly half of Villanova's \$40,000-plus price tag, had another perspective on the inevitability of players comparing amounts. She said it motivated and humbled her.

"There were girls on the team doing all the same work as me — driving themselves to exhaustion — and I knew they weren't getting a lot of money," she said. "I had so much respect for them. I thought, 'Well, I can't let up.'"

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