

Female Student-Athletes More Likely to Succeed in the Classroom

By Leigh Carter

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According to the graduation success rates posted on the National Collegiate Athletic Association Web site, female student-athletes are more likely to graduate than male student athletes in North Carolina public universities.

“When it comes to student-athletes being able to perform well both in sports and in the classroom both sexes are pushed equally as hard,” Kevin Schroeder, athletic training major at East Carolina University, said. “For some reason, though, the female student-athletes often do better academically than the male student-athletes do.”

The competition in the graduation rates between sexes is shown in the differentiation between female and male basketball graduation rates as well as in baseball and softball rates for either sex in North Carolina public universities.

“Student-athletes have a lot more on their plate than regular students do,” construction management major Ben Cozzi said. “They may not have part-time jobs or anything but they have a lot of people watching them, pressuring them to do well; that must be hard.”

The NCAA Web site also showed a rise in graduation rates for public universities in North Carolina overall, a promising development in the eyes of student-athletes who work hard to make the grade.

“When you are a student-athlete everyone expects you to be the best at both,” East Carolina University football player Khalif Mitchell said. “Sometimes it is hard but if you work at both equally you see much better results than if you just put one to the side.”

Topping the charts for the rise are both UNC Wilmington and Western Carolina, each with an 88 percent rate of athlete graduation.

“At UNC Wilmington we focus on three things,” Assistant Athletic Director for Academics Sandy Morrison said. “Advising, academic support and study enhancement are our key tools used to help our athletes do well both on and off the field.”

While many are raising the standards for athlete academic progress, some universities are falling behind. The NCAA web site shows that rates tend to be higher in Division I schools, while Division II schools are struggling to keep up.

Winston-Salem State had the lowest rate of graduation for Division II schools with only 16 percent of student-athletes graduating, while the lowest rate for Division I schools was held by N.C. Agricultural and Technical University in Greensboro, N.C., with a rate of 60 percent.

“When you are a student-athlete on a scholarship there are certain duties that you have to perform to keep that scholarship,” Mitchell said. “Student-athletes have to give up a lot of their freedom during their college career to stay on top; doing both jobs gets hard sometimes.”

According to the NCAA Web site, students that have the lowest rates of graduation in North Carolina public universities are those who participate in wrestling, basketball, baseball and football, while the highest rates for graduation are found in golf, softball and women’s basketball.

“Some of the best athletes are also the best performers in the classroom,” School of Communication professor at East Carolina University Festus Eribo said. “The university monitors them in the classroom very seriously in various aspects such as punctuality and attendance, pushing them further to succeed in both areas.”