

# Role Socialization of the College Football Coach

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This paper examined how the role and occupational socialization of the college football coach was transformed over time by the rationalization of college football. First at Yale, then nationally, Walter Camp used the scientific management principles of industry to rationalize the game of intercollegiate football, increasing its planning, control, and efficiency. To make the game marketable, Camp and his colleagues enacted a series of changes for the game: the replacing of the rugby scrum with the football scrimmage, the introduction of a system of downs, a new system of scoring, the T formation and above all, the principle of broken play. From the 1870s to early in the 20th century, the game was marked by structural change, chosen to make the game financially rewarding for the institutions of higher education.

Correspondent with the organizational developments in commerce and federal government, process of the rationalization of intercollegiate athletics was represented by the historical development of the NCAA. This process was one of organizational rationalization, which spawned the need for an organizational nexus of coaches, assistant coaches, team managers, statisticians, technicians, trainers, recruiters, and a whole host of secretarial duplicates, thus determining the shape of the occupation of the college football coach.

The rationalization of the role of the college football coach traveled apace with the rationalization of the game itself. Originally the socialization of the college football coach was similar to that of the volunteer, as several of the major coaches during the beginning of the game were employed outside the institution. However, from the notoriety from Notre Dame's 1913 defeat of Army, a marked change occurred. Following this game coaches were seen as key instruments in victory and were sought after by several institutions which hoped to raise their level of athletic prestige and thus gain national attention.

By the middle of the 1930s college football continued to grow and develop. With radio increasing accessibility and popularity of the game, more efficient modes of travel such as the railroad and airplane, and the beginning of the Associated Press poll in 1936, the nation, in effect, became smaller and the possibility of national recognition for institutions, coaches, and players became available. In the 1940s, the search for football players occurred outside each institution's home state; therefore paid assistant coaches now appeared on the scene to assist in recruiting. Following World War II the introduction of veterans to college football programs affected the caliber of play. Therefore, the job of coaching football became more complicated.

Not everyone had the resources to expand facilities, coaching staffs, pay for recruiting and transportation costs, thus a two-tiered differentiation between institutions was created. This separation of NCAA football programs into two levels reflected the conflict in respect to amateurism and resource distribution. This separation led to the continuance of greater role differentiation within the occupation of the college football coach. By the mid 1950s the occupation could be compared by several dimensions: professional approach, staff interaction and selection, teaching techniques, scouting and film analysis, game strategies, complexity of facility organization, planning practices, scheduling, alumni relations, athlete's skill level, and recruiting organization. These measures suggested that the role for the low prestige coach has not changed, either being a volunteer or teacher coach; whereas in the higher part of the hierarchy, an occupational specialist has emerged.