

# Graduation Rates Of Athletes at the University of North Carolina, 1889-1970

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College athletics today are besieged by instances of academic misconduct highlighted by the failure of athletes to graduate. While the National Collegiate Athletic Association has traditionally set general guidelines regarding enrollment, admission standards, and normal progress toward a degree, largely institutions are responsible for upholding the proper relationship between collegiate athletics and the educational missions of their institutions.

This study examined the graduation rates of male athletes at the University of North Carolina between 1889 and 1970. The overall rate of graduation was 79.64% with highs of 100% (fencing), 95.28% (lacrosse), 93.93% (swimming), and 91.52% (cross country) and lows of 66% (football) and 68.82% (baseball). Concerning years taken to graduate, the overall percentages were 5.10% for 3 years, 56.01% for 4 years, 13.63% for 5 years, and 4.91% for 6 years. Sports with the highest percentages for each of these years were track, fencing, cross country, and boxing respectively. Fifteen coaches had graduation rates in excess of 90% while eight others saw over 80% of their athletes graduate.

These data verify a consistently high rate of graduation by male athletes in 13 sports at the University between 1889-1970. Although two sports, football and baseball, had lower rates, these may be at least partially attributable to unavailable data rather than athletes' failure to graduate. While the majority of athletes completed their degrees in four years, this did not appear to be the best measure since over 18% later graduated.