

# “Is It Not Time We Emancipate Our College Athletes?:” The Death Of Mississippi’s Unwritten Law

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This essay focuses on the travels of the 1963 Mississippi State Basketball Team. It discusses the effects of MS’s “unwritten law” - an informal policy forbidding intramural athletic competition - on past state basketball teams, as well as its effect upon segregationists. An examination of political influence in Mississippi College athletics is included. It tells the story of the team’s effort to play in the NCAA Tournament and the efforts to prevent them from competing. Most importantly, it argues that this issue galvanized moderates in MS to rally behind a “safe” cause, in contrast to the Meredith enrolment. At Ole Miss, it provided a basis for State’s peaceful desegregation.