Contestant: **V-1**

Many Americans claim that they are avid fans of college football, but at the same time will not hesitate to name an issue they find with the organization. CBS news legal analyst and sports correspondent Jack Ford recently explained the polarizing epidemic of reverence but also disdain Americans have towards college Athletics at the JEA 2016 convention in Indianapolis.

Ford noted that many of the problems Americans cite from college sports stem from the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). The NCAA is an organization that includes 12121 colleges and universities whose main goal is to ensure the well-being of student athletes. Many fault the NCAA for their lack of involvement with the universities, but Ford explained that the organization is not to blame.

“Most people think that the NCAA is the enormous structure that has the power to do whatever they want to do,” Ford said. “The NCAA is basically an umbrella organization...and it’s always been that the institutions themselves makes the rules.”

Another common misconception that most Americans associate with college athletics is that the student athletes are receiving a poor education. Ford revealed the statistics that prove this statement otherwise.

“The reality is that the graduation rate for Division 1 athletes is 86% as of last year,” Ford said. “You know what the graduation rate is for other students? 65% of the other students, who are not athletes, graduated within six years.”

Ford has acquired as impressive collection of feats from college athletes himself. HE graduated from Yale University in 1972 with an academic scholarship and as a football player at the school. In addition, both of his children played lacrosse at Yale University under scholarships. Ford explains how this personal connection to college athletics has allowed him to realize how many of the assumptions made towards it are false.

“To me, the opportunity to receive a free college education, to play a game that if I could I’d still be playing,.. That just so diminishes the idea of the value of the college education,” Ford said.

Ford further explained that a main issue people have with the NCAA is that they don’t feel that the organization fully compensates the athletes for all of their hard work.

“It’s all been sort of a false narrative,” Ford said. “It’s suggesting somehow that we’re forcing people to do something that they don’t want to do, and that the idea of getting a scholarship is an unfair means of compensation playing a game that (the student athletes) love to play.”

Ford has no affiliation to the NCAA. He has previously worked for CBS, NBC, ABC, ESPN, PBS and court TV. Currently, Ford is a CBS News correspondent for “60 minutes sports” and a co-host of “Metro Focus”.