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HEADLINE: CHANCES OF GETTING SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP LESS THAN 1 IN 100

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Getting a college scholarship is the hope and dream of many young athletes.

Unfortunately, it is the hope and dream of too many pressuring parents, as well. They play out that last-second shot on the driveway as the basketball sails through the hoop. They call out the play-by-play as they make the game-winning touchdown. They play that favorite game of being the last batter with two outs, bases loaded and hitting the game-winning grand slam.

Can dreams become reality? What are the chances of getting a college scholarship? Less than 1 in 100. The odds are not favorable.

I did some research and found out that you have better odds of being born a twin in North America, or getting hemorrhoids. If those statistics don't depress you, did you know that there's a better chance of a celebrity marriage lasting a lifetime than there is of your child getting an athletic scholarship? There are 26 million youths (ages 6-17) who play a team sport each year.

There are roughly 151,000 athletic scholarships available at 326 NCAA Division 1 schools. This adds up to many kids who will eventually graduate from high school with the hope of receiving a scholarship from one of these schools.

Although the outlook appears grim, there is always the hope. I think it is so important that parents encourage, motivate and support their kids in this quest.

The key is to encourage without the pressure. Parents need to paint a realistic picture while supporting the dream. Being creative, real and encouraging, all at the same time, is not easy, but it is so necessary and important. It is crucial that "fun" be the primary motivation for the sport. If the young athlete did not enjoy the game, and the scholarship was the main motivating factor, it feels especially painful and disheartening when the goal is not realized.

Here is a short list of how to become one of the fortunate few:

- * Make the college coaches aware of you. As a college coach, I loved it when players called and pursued me. Periodic phone calls, faxes and e-mails are important.

- * Produce and send out game footage and highlights.

- * Get help from your high school coach. He/she needs to be involved.

- * Be persistent. This can make an impression as to your athletic style, as well.

- * Use scholarship search services, such as the National Scouting Association, recruitmenow.com and varsityedge.com.

* Be sure that you are making the grades to be accepted into college. If you are not accepted academically into the college, there is no scholarship no matter how good of an athlete you are.

* Don't limit your search to Division 1 schools. There are several smaller colleges that also give scholarships, especially when the athletic scholarships can be combined with academic ones.

* Pursue scholarships with diligence but never create false expectations.

Don't miss out on the fun you can have today!

If you have questions or comments for Tom Kuyper, e-mail him at Tomkuyper@athletesintraining.com. Listen to Kuyper on the Kids and Sports radio program from 6 to 7p.m. Tuesdays on XTRA Sports 910.