

The uneasy and sometimes destructive co-dependence of US colleges and their billion-dollar sports programmes is approaching a showdown on equity and race, and experts predict it will either break the system or, with long-sought reform, save it. US colleges reap billions of dollars from sports but their mostly black athletes earn almost nothing beyond scholarships, while the mostly white coaching staff take salaries running into the millions of dollars. The inequity has been brought to a head by the coronavirus pandemic and Black Lives Matter movement and, as our North America editor Paul Basken reports, tensions are high. The National Collegiate Athletic Association has been fighting in court to keep limits on the education-related compensation that student athletes can receive, while relenting under pressure to let players make their own commercial advertising deals, as the sector faces huge losses because of the coronavirus. (F: THE 29.07.20)