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Academics and Technology – Uniting as one to prove useful to all.

Technology is, no doubt, an integral part of everyday life. The athletics sector of higher education is no exception. In fact, technology is a critical component to the success of student-athletes. Student-athletes must balance a demanding workload within the classroom and on the court/field/pool/track/etc. Technology is the tool that unites the student-athlete with success in academics.

If there is one take away from the past year and a half of change it is the invaluable connection between technology and academics. Universities and colleges adapted over the course of the pandemic to find ways to create various learning

environments and communication avenues for students, faculty and staff, which includes athletics.

Technology in the form of Zoom, Proctor U, Teamworks, etc., has allowed universities and colleges to continually engage with students, faculty and staff when remote learning was the only option. In the pandemic's early stages there were many unknown variables that forced institutions to search for opportunities to solve the in-person restrictions. Later, there were choices presented about whether to take classes in-person or virtually. This hybrid e-learning environment has provided students, specifically, student-athletes, the flexibility never before offered in their structured schedule. The flexibility of time has allowed student-athletes to organize and prioritize classes, practices and other team activities. They also do not miss a beat when traveling for away competitions or other team activities. Further, with the advent of name, image and likeness opportunities, technology also helps these individuals grow their brand.

Transitioning away from the student-athlete and focusing on the staff piece, support staff and coaches have been able to connect more meaningfully in this new hybrid environment. Through the use of Zoom, Google Meets, Slack, etc., the communication channels between administration, support staff and coaches may have even improved. These platforms allowed for everyone to be on the same page even though they were in different zip codes.

The use of technology has allowed us to think outside the box, explore new avenues and expand current workflows. Additionally, technology has challenged the status quo within the academic field. Together technology and academics are moving universities and colleges into a new age that will prove to be invaluable for years to come.

