

Real March Madness: Rewarding Schools for Low GSRs
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Every March four regions of the country (representing thirty-one conferences and 315 schools) send sixty-five teams to the NCAA men's Division I basketball tournament. Each conference's share of NCAA basketball fund revenues is based on the participation and cumulative performance of their member teams over the six previous tournaments. In 2010, for example, based on the 2004 through 2009 tournaments, the Big East conference was projected to receive over \$23.1 million while six other less successful conferences were slated to receive slightly more than \$1.3 million each. In this brief research note, we compare for all schools in the annual men's NCAA college basketball tournament their basketball fund distribution (under the assumption that the conference money is split evenly among all member institutions) and their basketball program graduation success rate (hereafter GSR).

Basketball fund distributions by conference are annually reported by the NCAA at www.ncaa.org in their membership report under "Budget & Finances". GSRs, first introduced by the NCAA in 2005, modifies the federal graduation rate (all first-time full-time students who complete their degree within six years) by excluding students who leave the school in good academic standing (from the denominator) and including those who transfer in and graduate (in the numerator). GSRs for the men's teams in the NCAA Division I basketball tournament are from Lapchick (www.tidesport.org).

For each year (2008, 2009, and 2010), a school's overall basketball student-athlete GSR (*BBALL_GSR*) was regressed against the school's share of its conference basketball fund distribution, in hundreds of thousands of dollars (*DISTRIBUTION*) and the institution's overall student-athlete average GSR (*ATHLETE_GSR*). The average GSR for all student athletes

