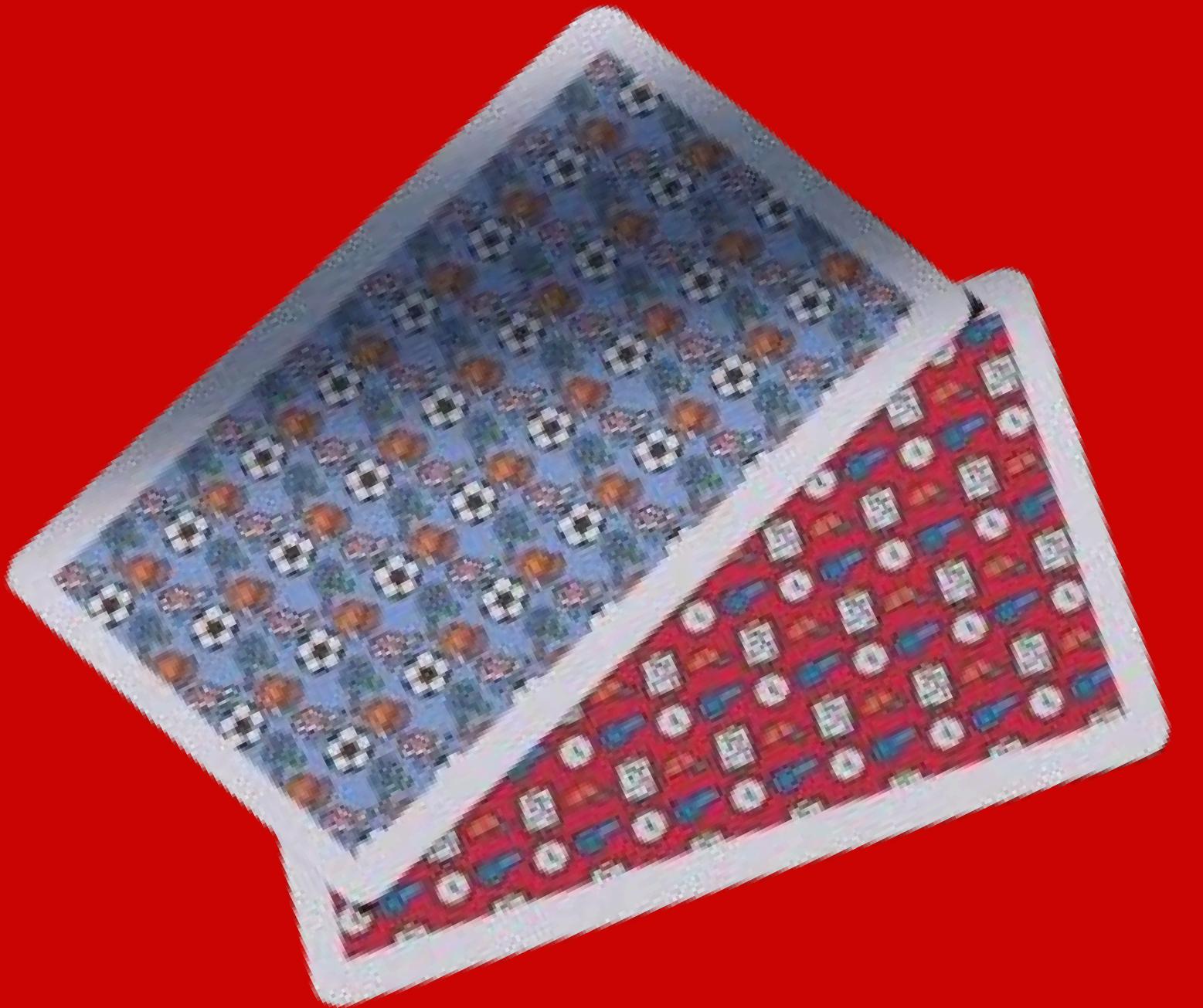


Empathy IS a contact sport, especially within collegiate athletics.

**FAIR SHAKE**



MDes  
December 2025  
Intro to Design Issues  
Betsaida Sanchez

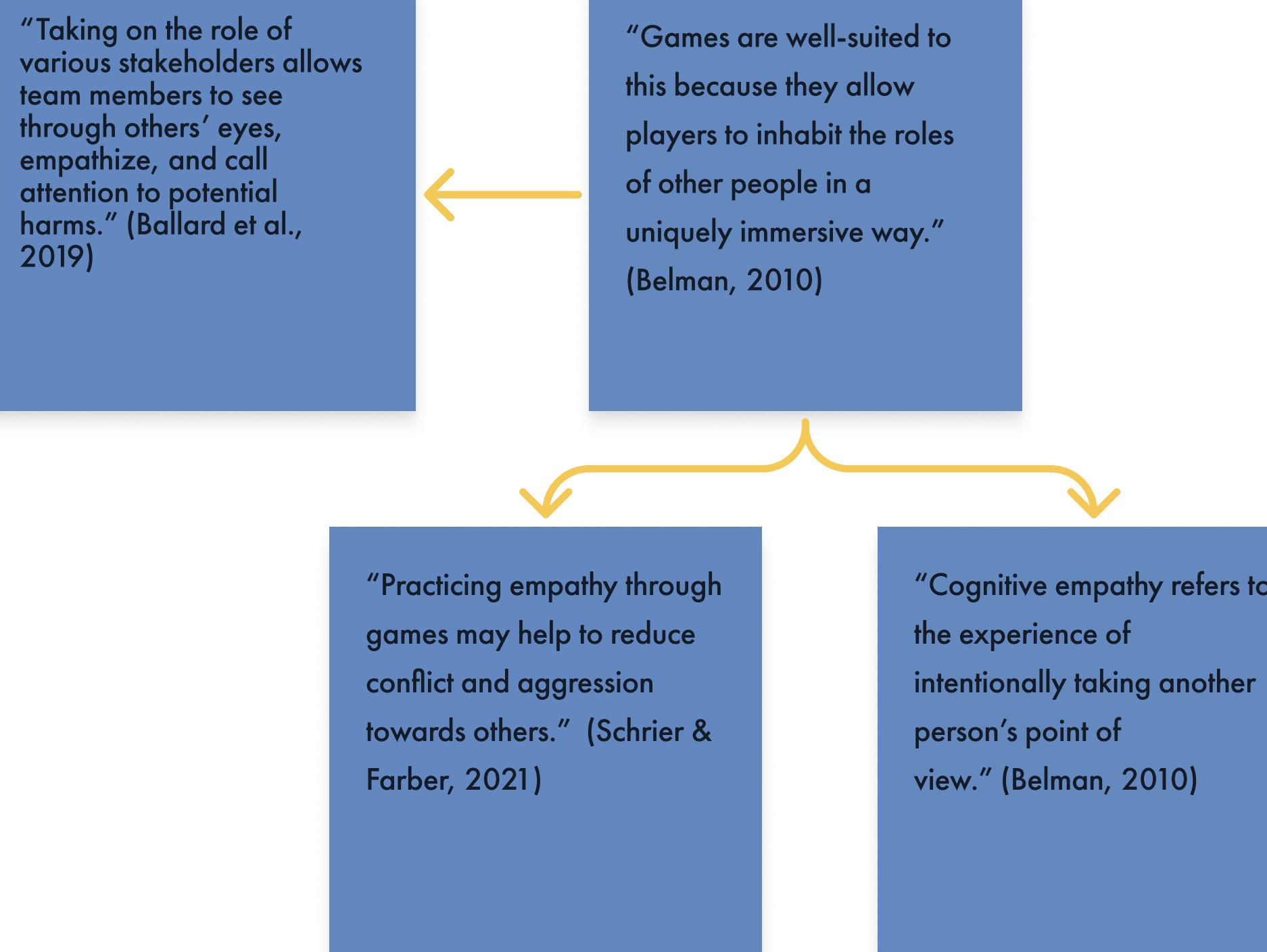
# The Inquiry

"Can role playing trigger a collaborative discussion that moves from passive learning to empathetic problem-solving regarding the issues facing student-athletes?



# Literature Review

## Methodology background



## College Athletics Insights

“The enhanced media attention of college sport has heightened the commercialization of the enterprise. In turn, pressure for coaches, athletics administrators, and ultimately student-athletes is at an all-time high to win in the athletics arena.” (Navarro, 2015)

“The rules and regulations of these agencies are designed to control athletes and athletics, but the athlete himself has no voice in their design.” (Renick, n.d.)

“Athletics department practitioners must continue to consider the specialized needs of a highly diverse 21st century student-athlete population as they make programmatic decisions.” (Navarro, 2015)



# THE GAME

# The Pre-Game



## Methodology Inspiration: Judgment Call

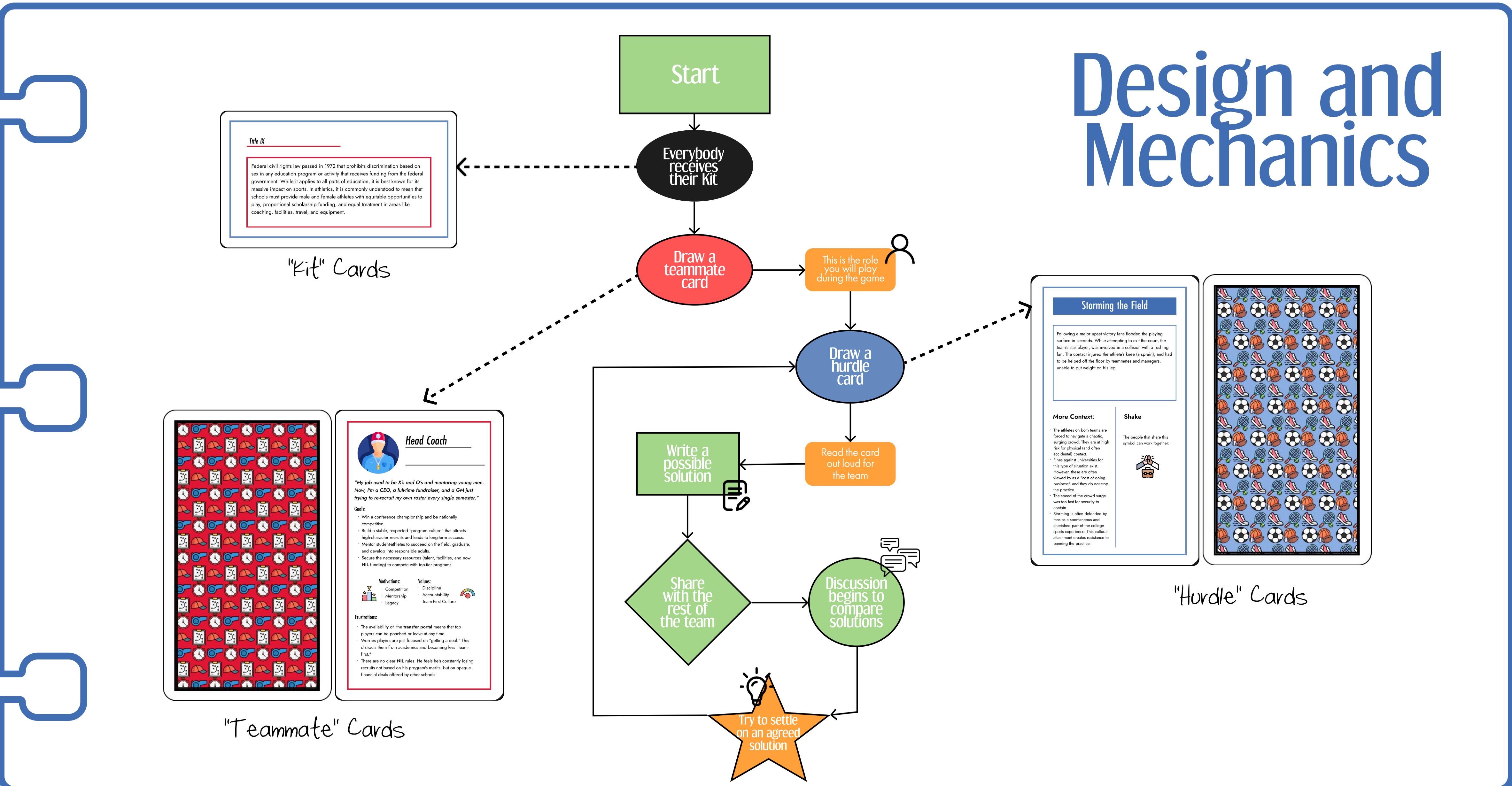
“While the idea of a game about ethics may be counter intuitive, we found that Judgment Call makes this serious and somewhat daunting topic fun and accessible.” (Ballard et al., 2019)

## Methods of Data collection: Pre-Post Surveys + Contextual Inquiry

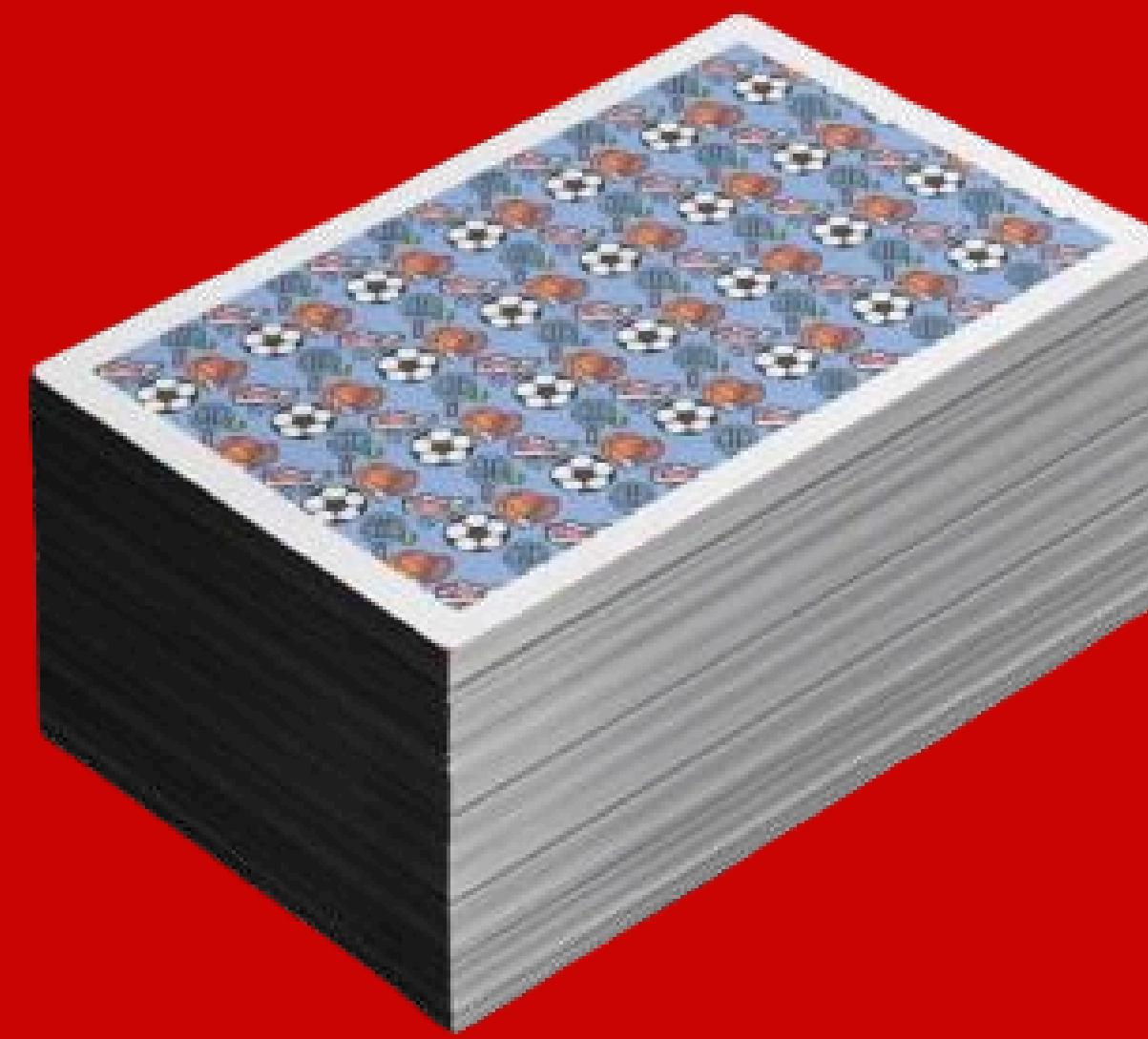
### What I am tracking:

- Can people get into the Role Play scenario?
- Do they take into account the athlete?
- What type of solutions arise from the problems presented?
- Did their knowledge about the subject change?

# Design and Mechanics



# THE RESULTS



# Pre Game

## Who were the players?

- Six Participants
- Different genders and ages
- Students of the Master of Design Program

## How was it played?

- 2 rounds of around 5-10 minutes each

How did they rate their knowledge previous to playing the game?



The world of College athletics



Sports in Collegiate Settings



Confidence to discuss and consider difficult topics



# Post Game

Organization  
**Authority** Team Dynamics  
**AWARENESS** Roles  
Challenges Motivators  
NCAA  
Title IX **Responsability**  
New Terms

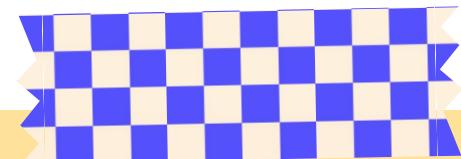
# Personal Reflections

## What I observed during the game

- At the start of the game, as participants were learning their roles, they spontaneously brought up sports.
- There was an immediate difference in engagement: some participants were quickly immersed, while others had difficulty connecting. However, their investment grew significantly as the game progressed and they learned more.
- During ideation and solution sharing, conversations between the game's roles led to the unexpected emergence of new ideas.
- For every problem posed by the "hurdle" cards, participants drew upon their personal beliefs and related real-life experiences, using these insights to guide their responses.

## What did I learn

On a personal level, I gained a new level of understanding and empathy for both the challenges faced by student-athletes and the difficult decisions made by stakeholders. As highlighted in the literature review and discussions with Dr. Jung, acquiring knowledge facilitates cognitive empathy, allowing us to relate to others.

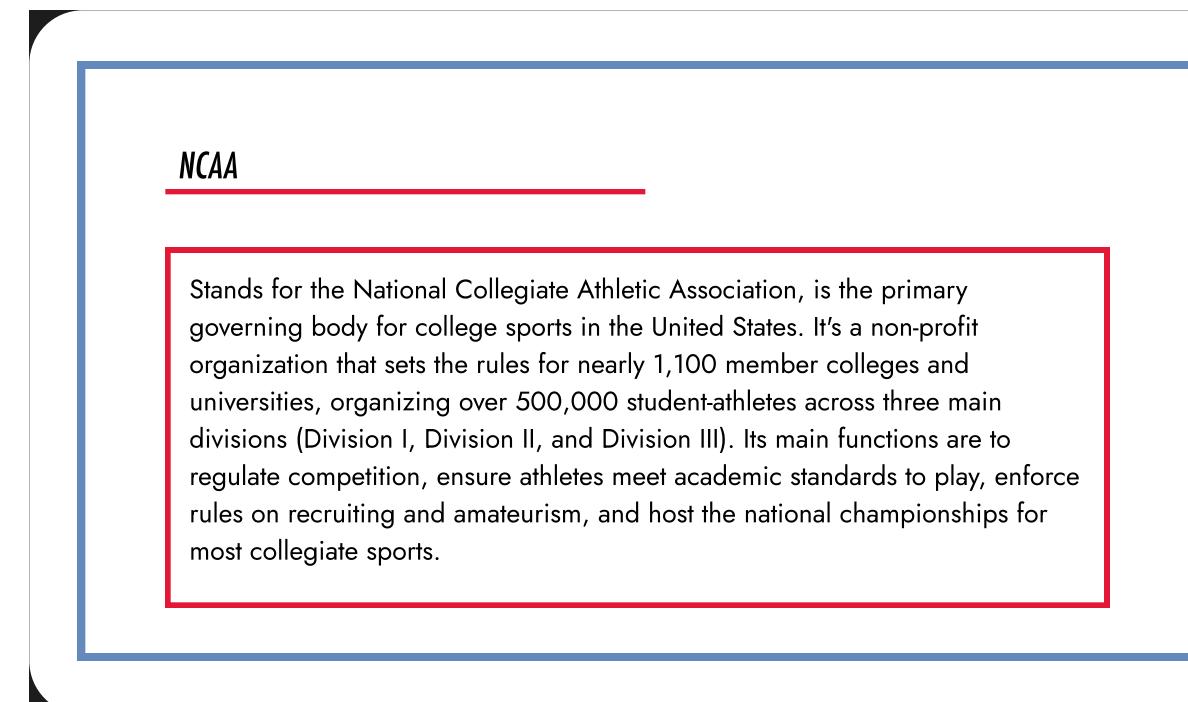


"Designers learn more about the concepts involved in their simulation or role-play than those who participate in it... 'encourages designers to first, view the system from above, and second, to work out the details.' (Douglas & Coburn, 2009)

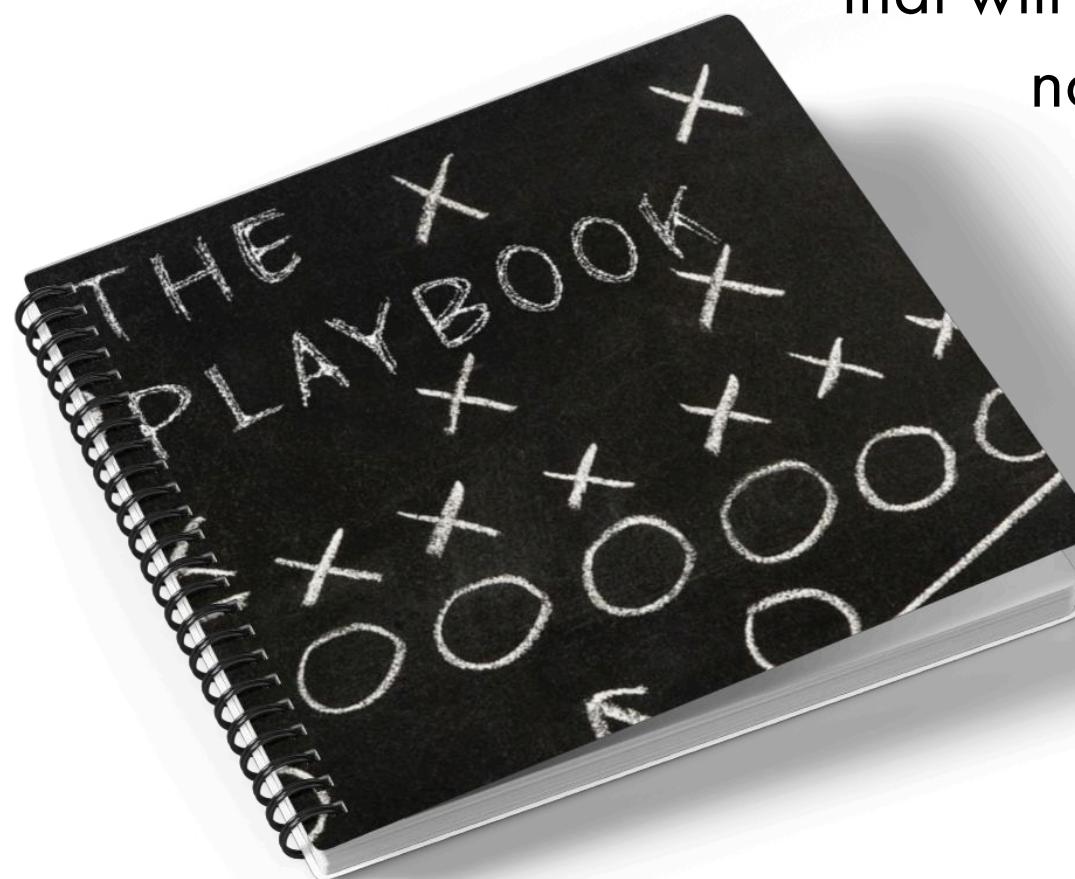
# THE CHANGES



## Kit to Playbook



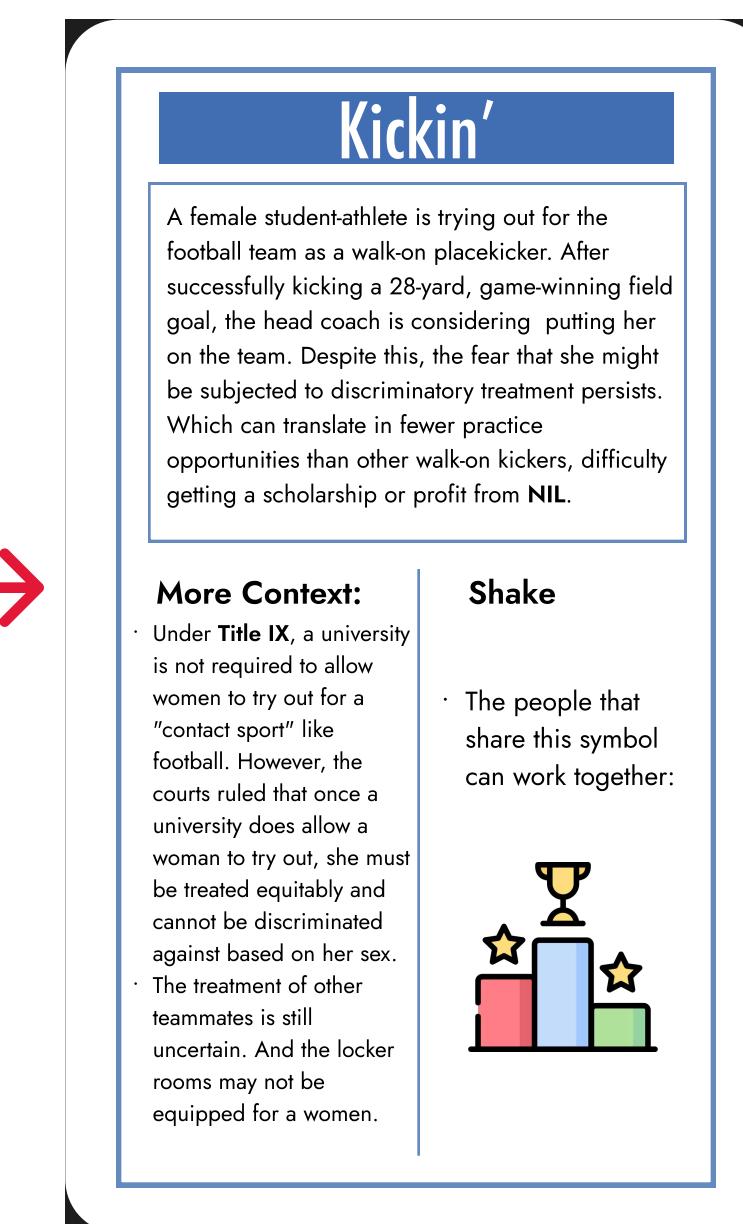
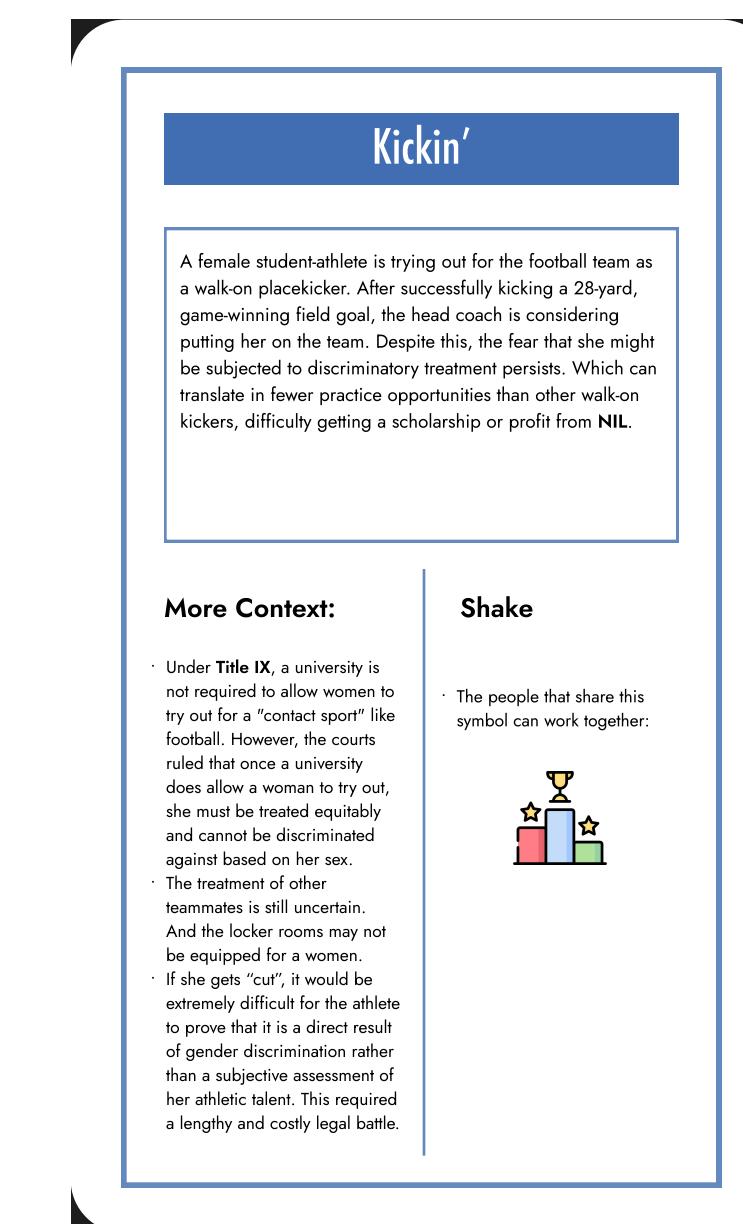
Instead of Kit cards, provide a playbook with the definitions and that will also allow them to take notes on their own



# Design Adjustments

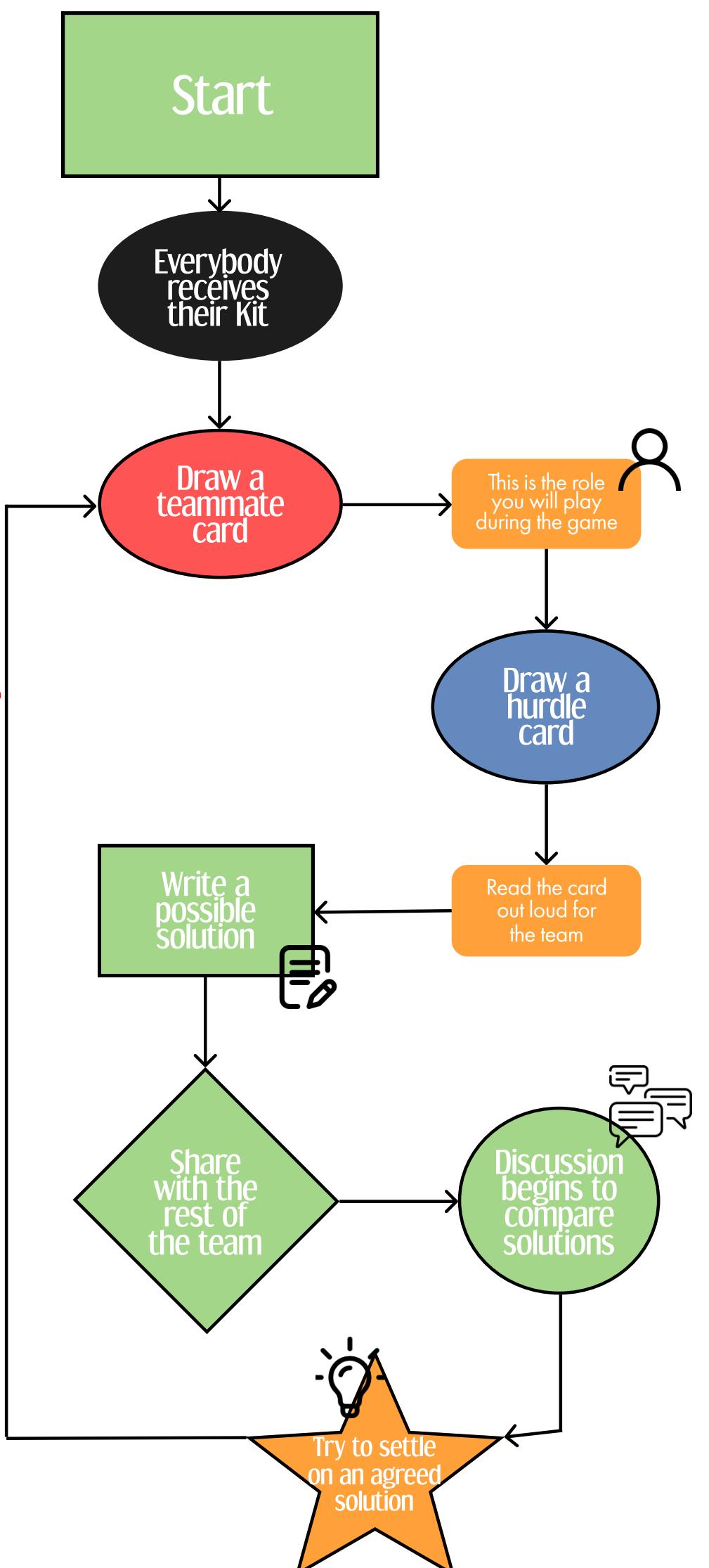
## Change size font

Increase the size of the font, for better readability

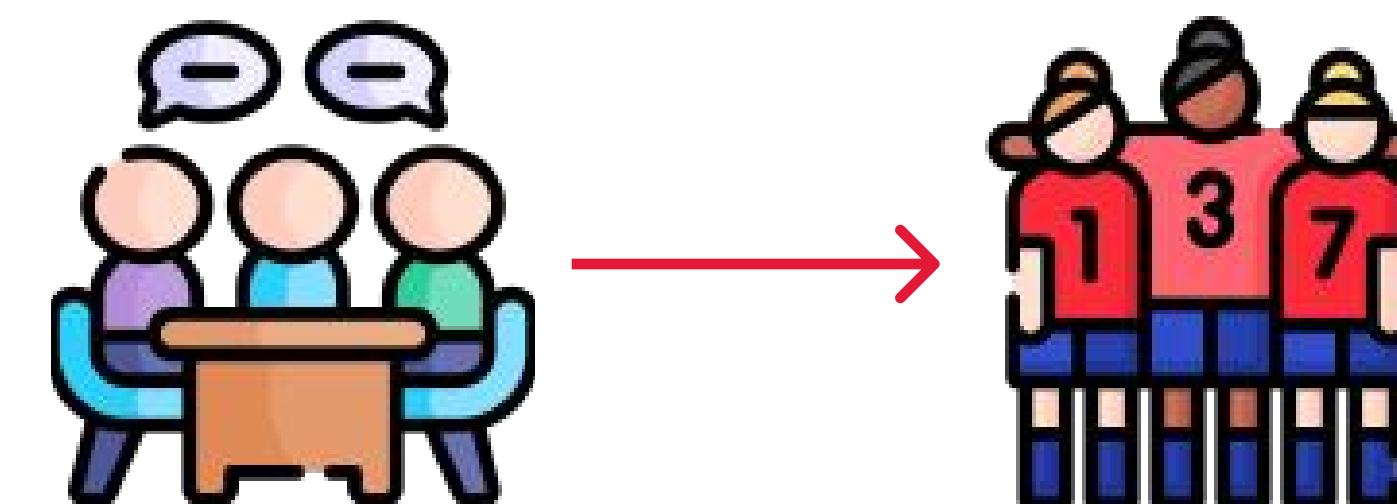


# Application Possibilities

Making the participants change roles in each round



Giving participants more time to discuss and find a solutions that all agree on



Testing with a group of people slight more knowledgeable in the subject. Like sports management students

# Analysis Improvements

## Gather more quantitative data for the surveys

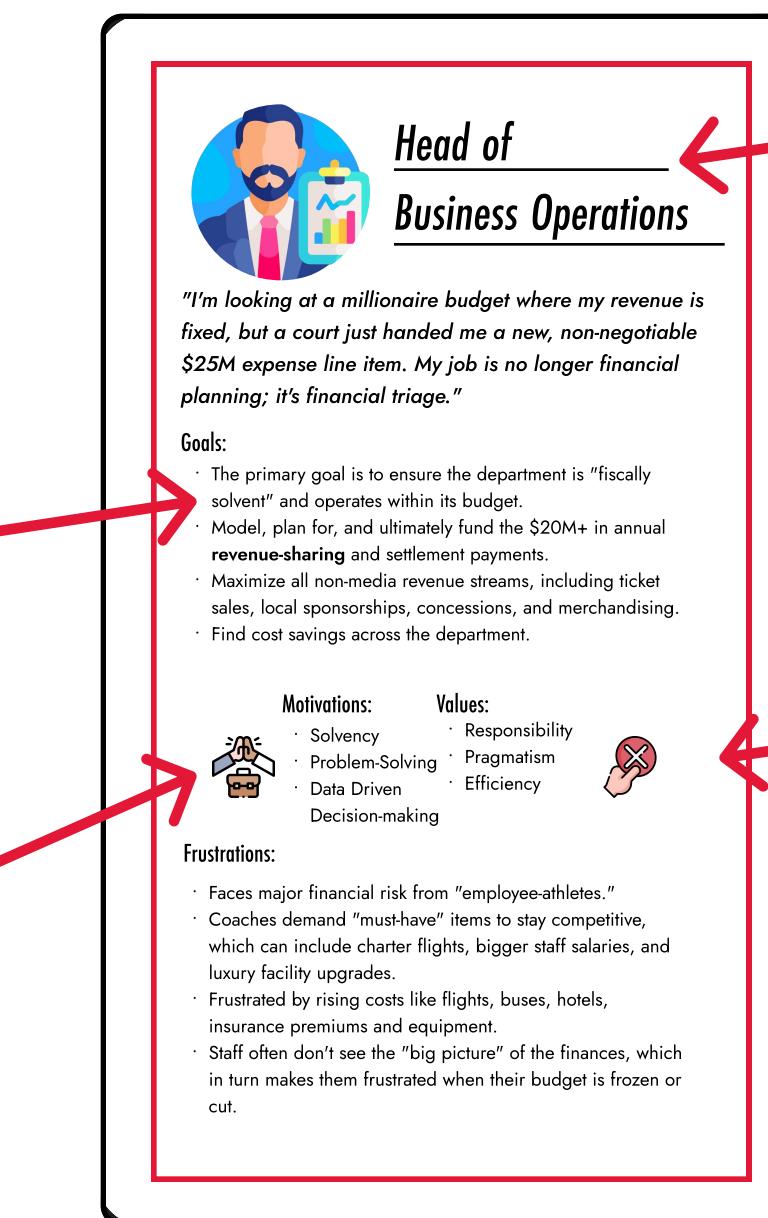
Surveys with scales, to be able to measure quantitatively the impact of the before and after of the game

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Agree	Strongly agree
	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3
	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3

## Analyze how people engage with the cards

How effective is the description?

Do people put attention to the symbols?

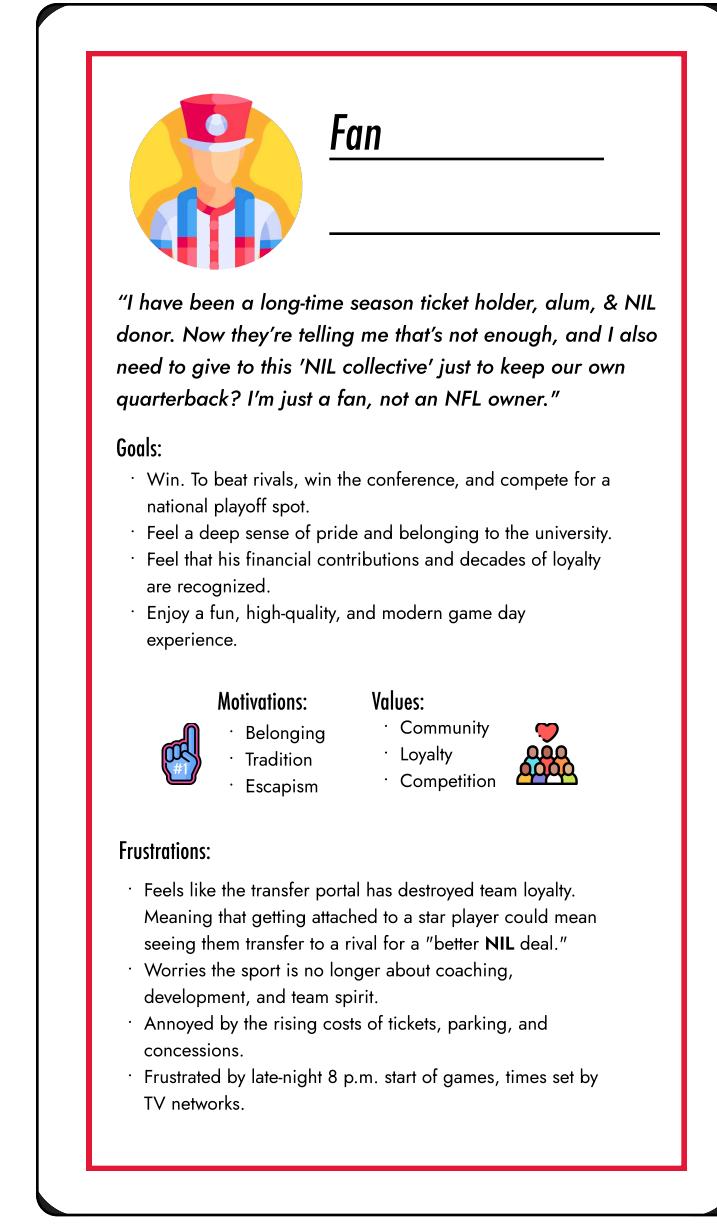
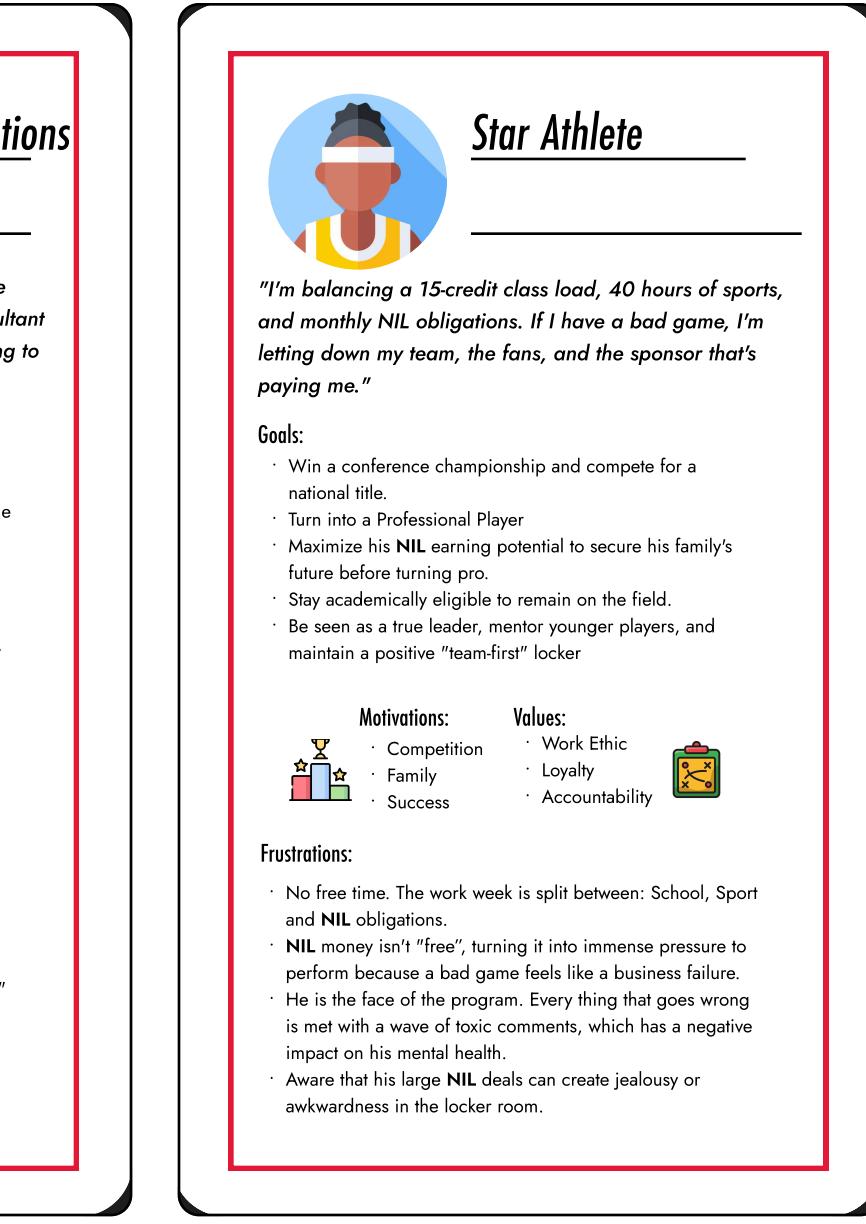
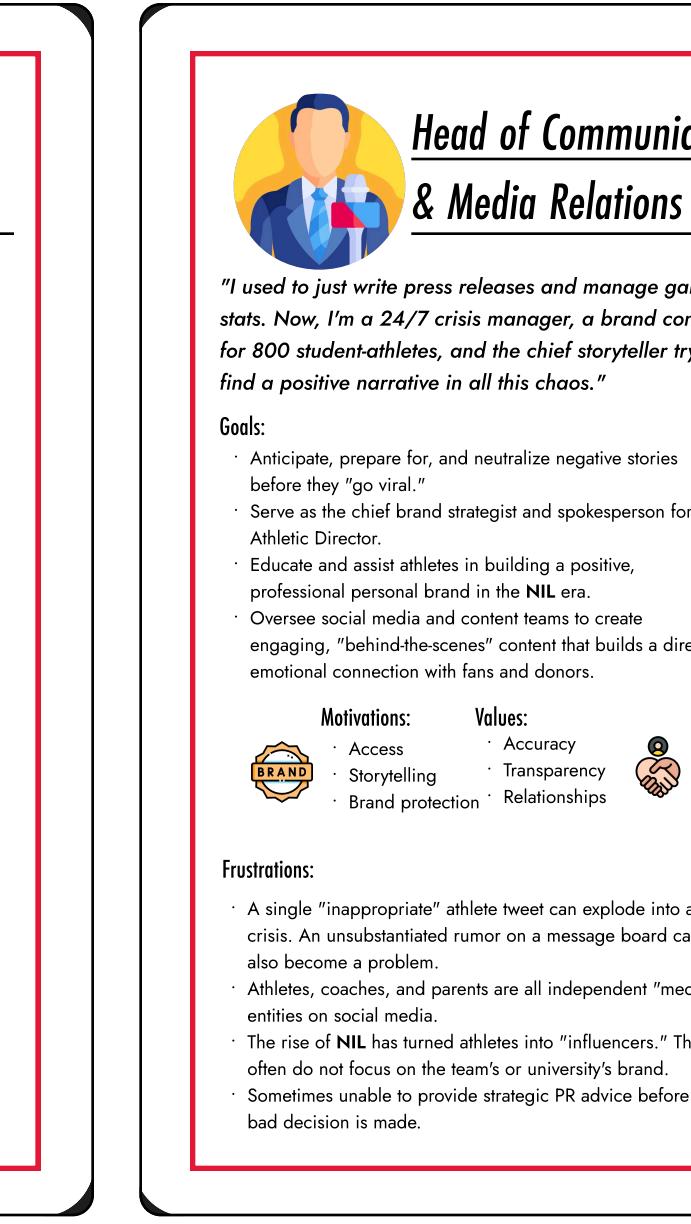
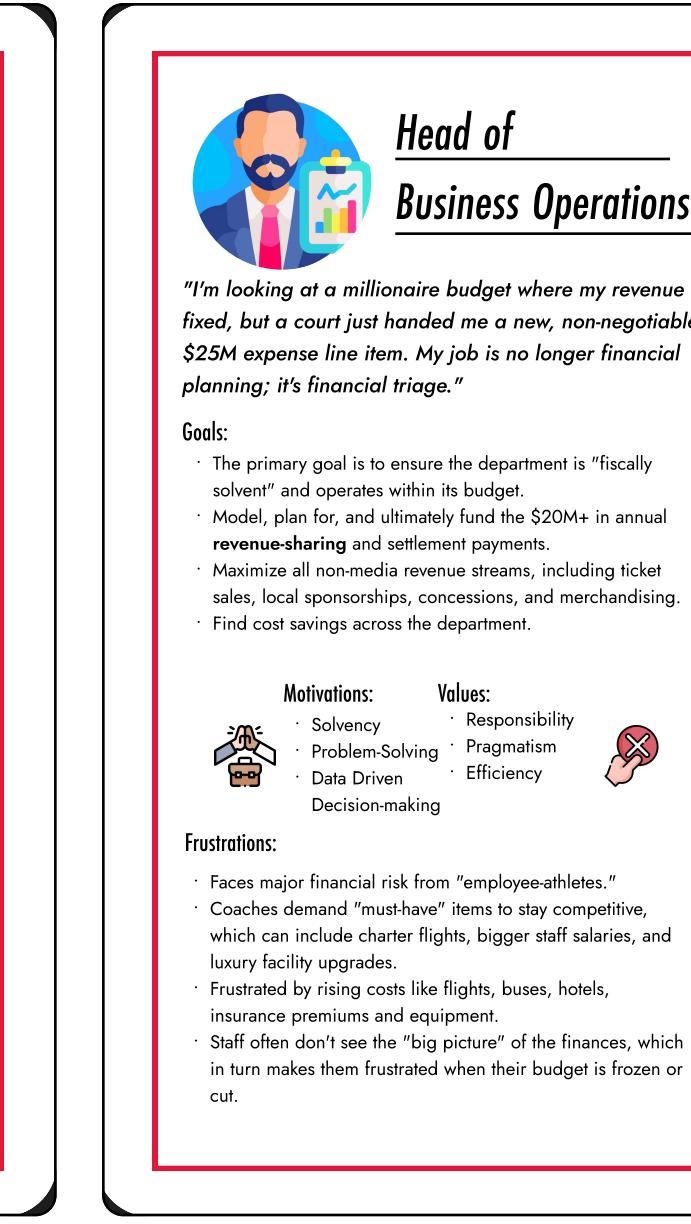
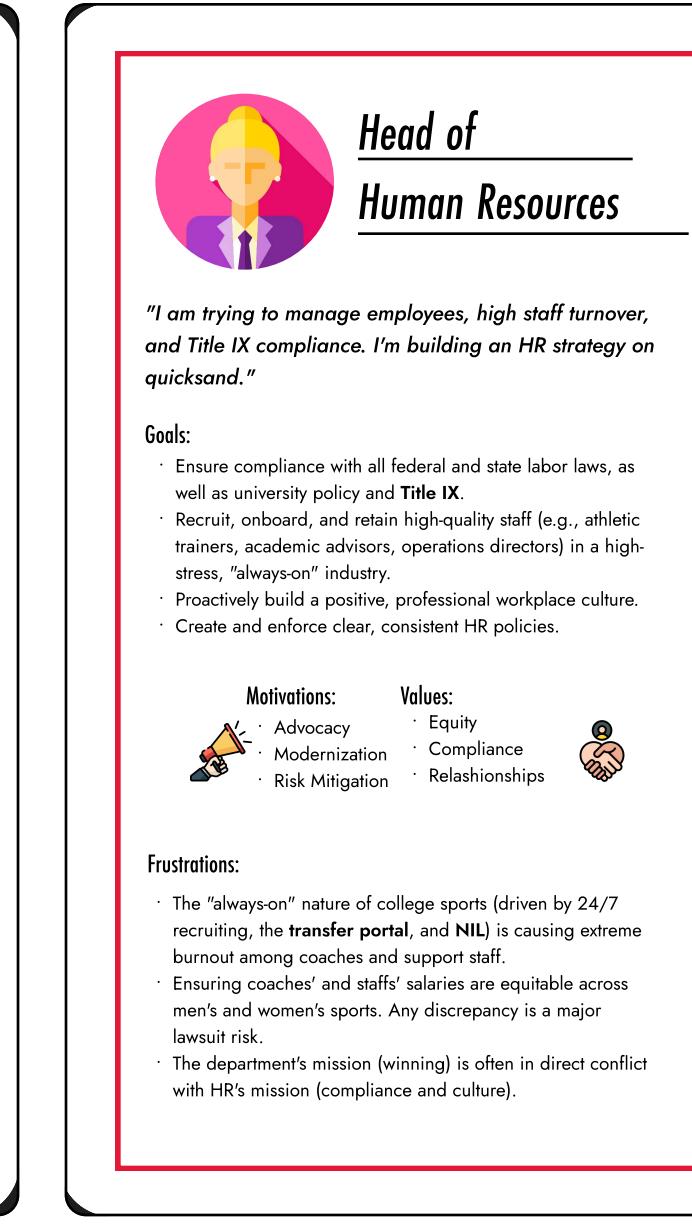
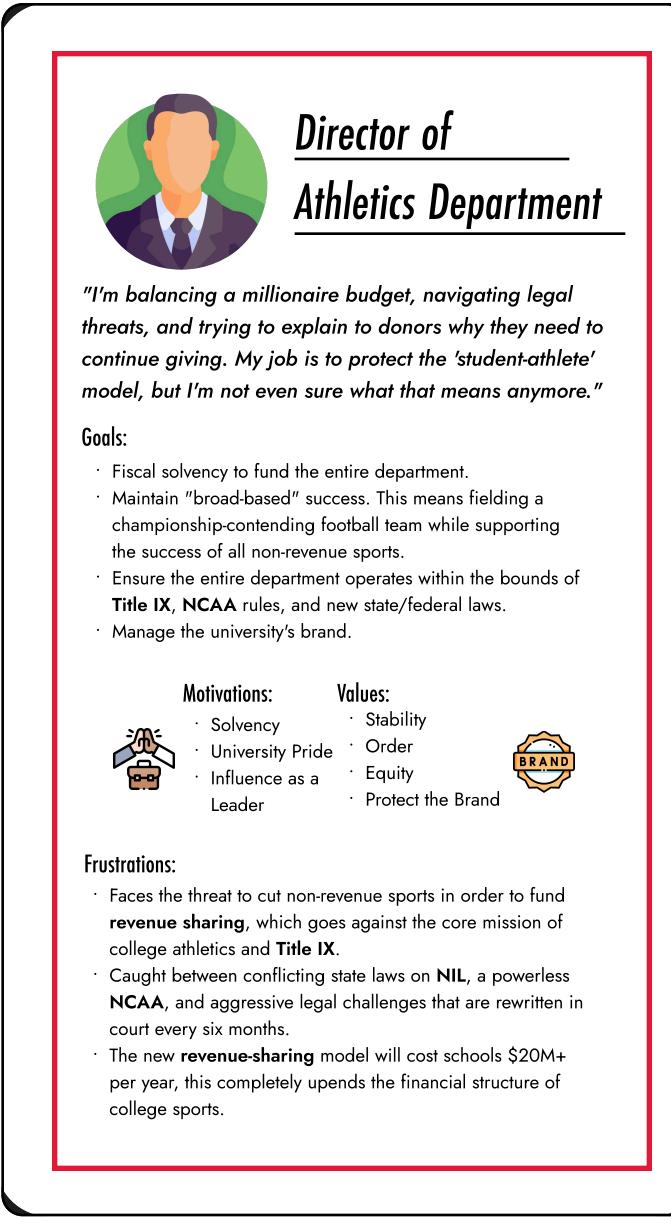
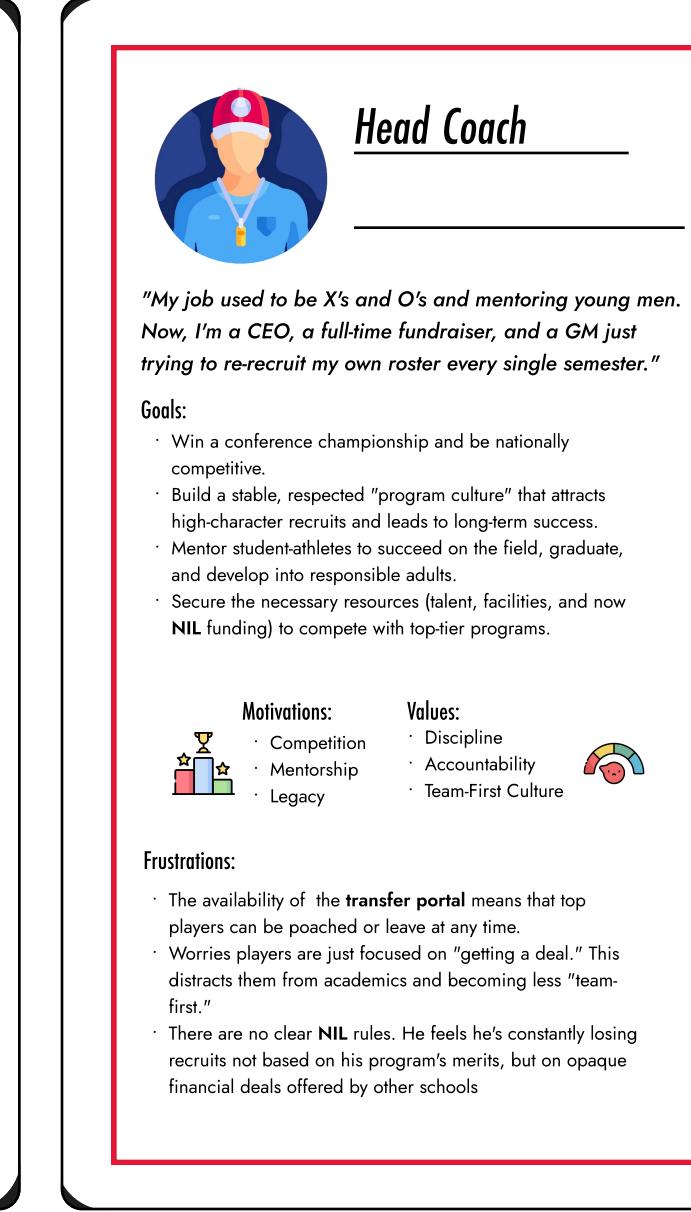
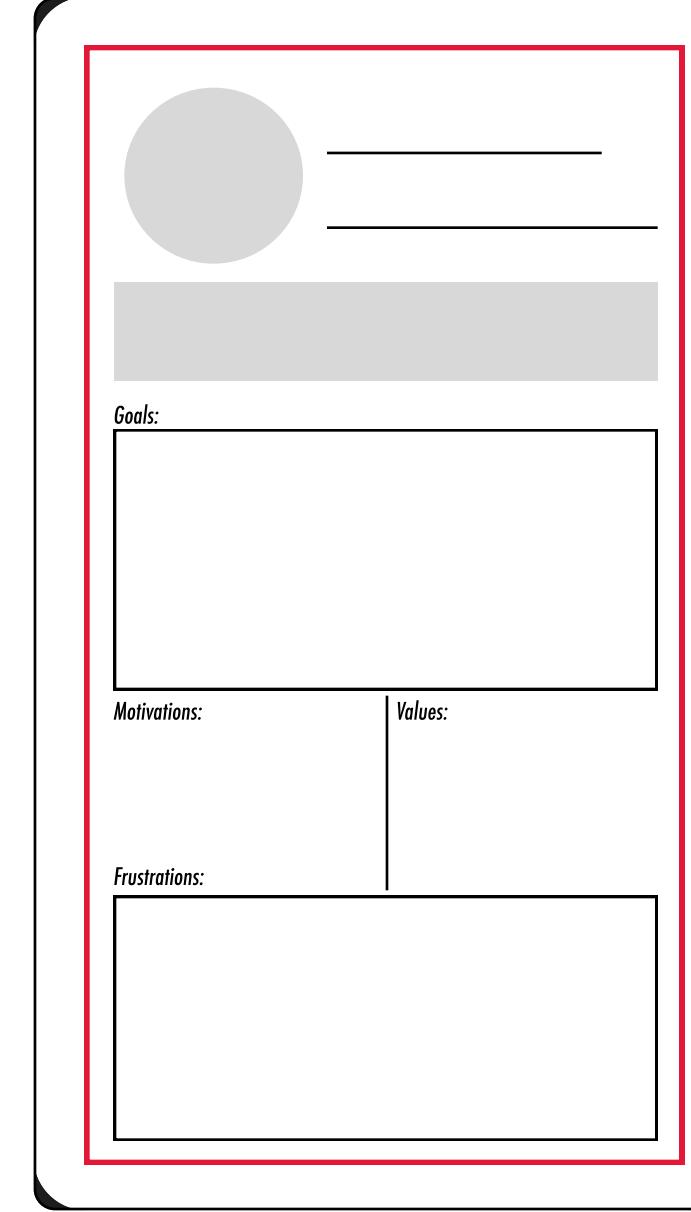
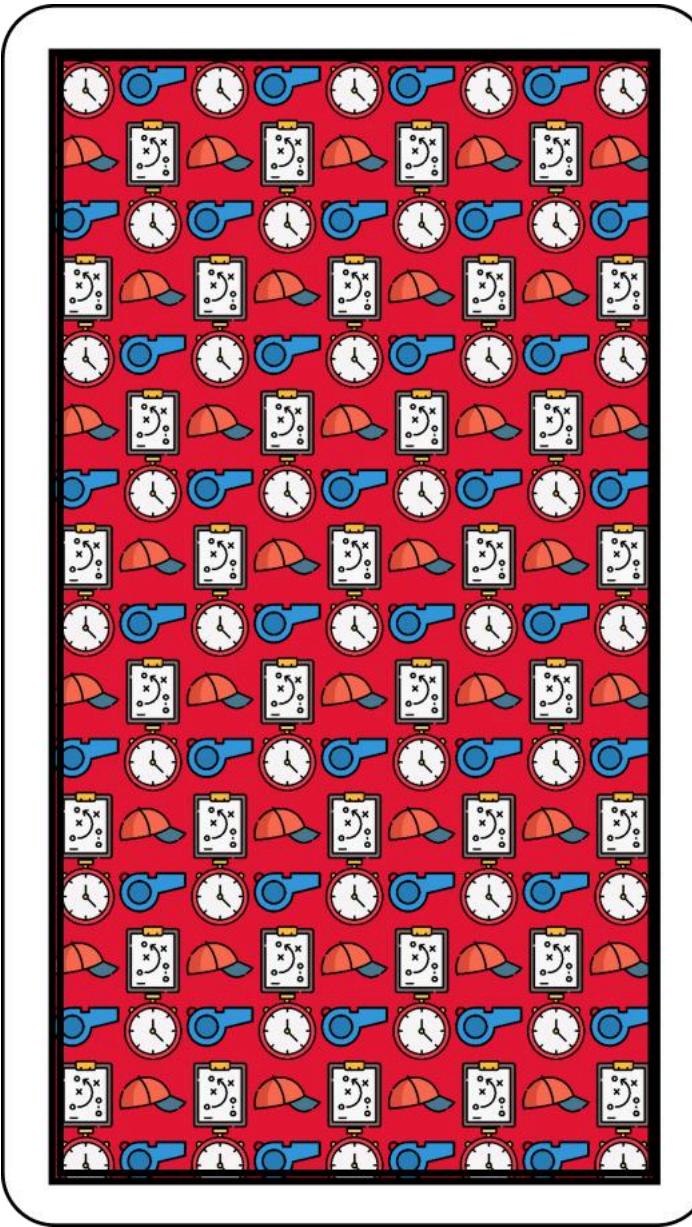


Do they only focus on the title?

How do people interact with values, do they relate them to their own?

# APPENDIX

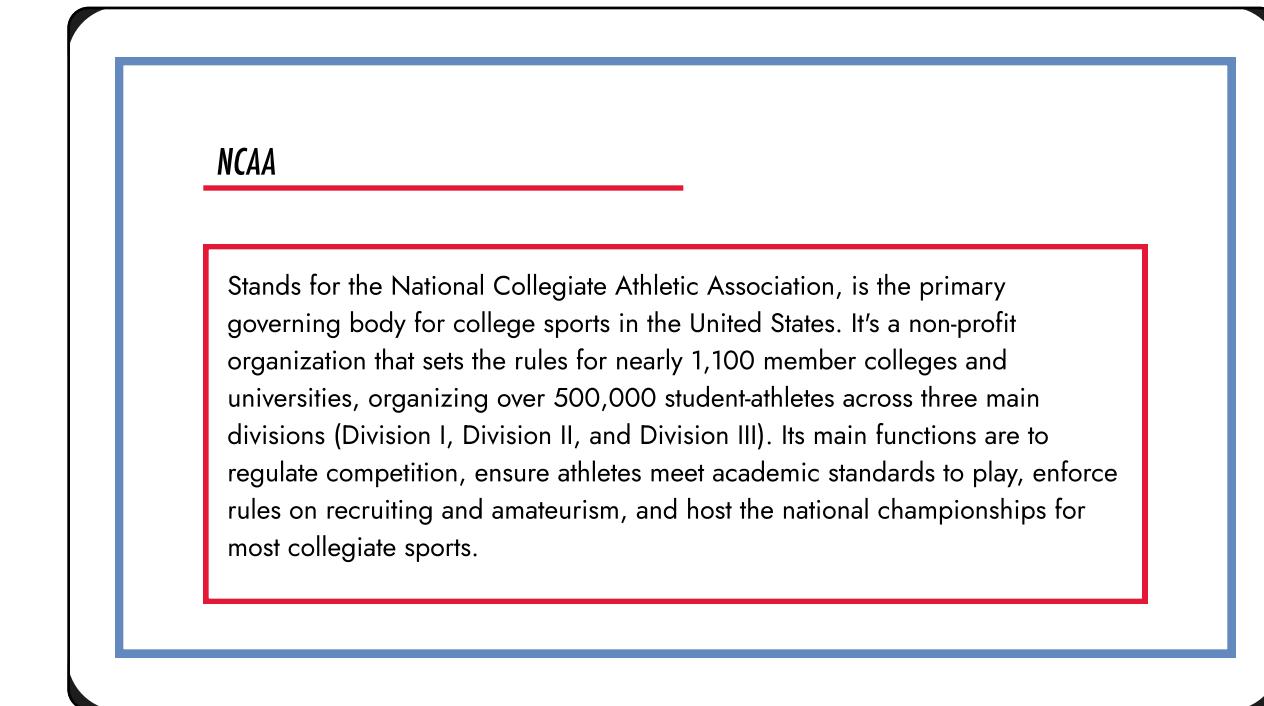
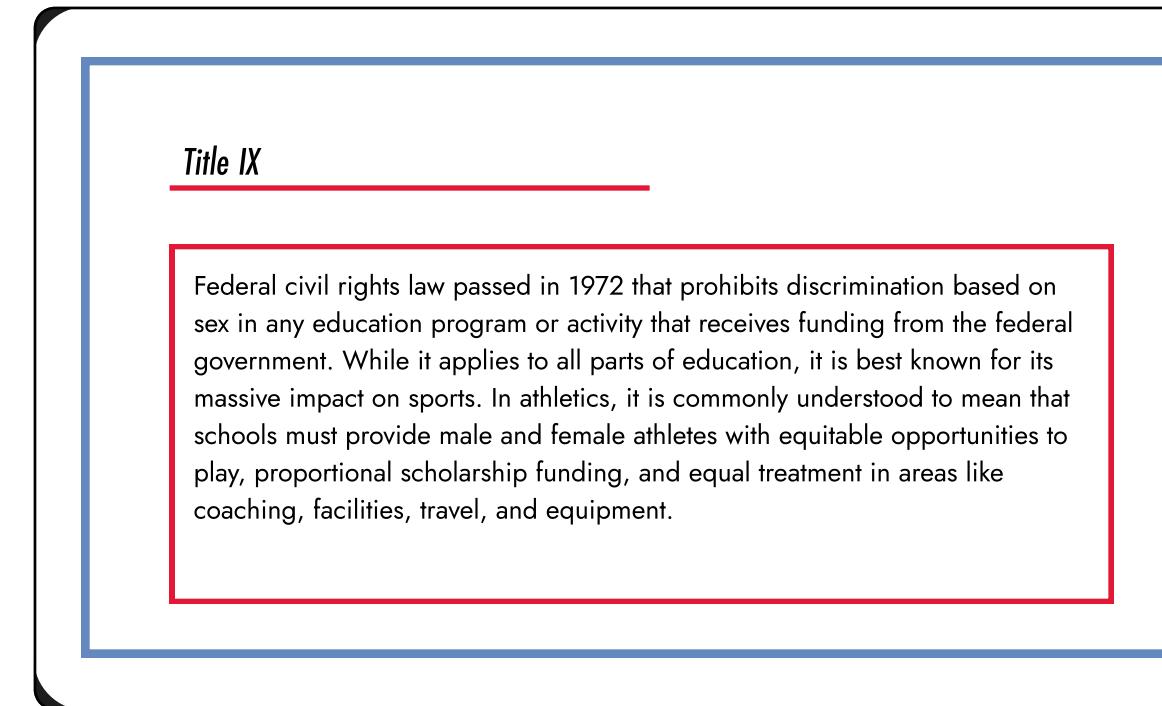
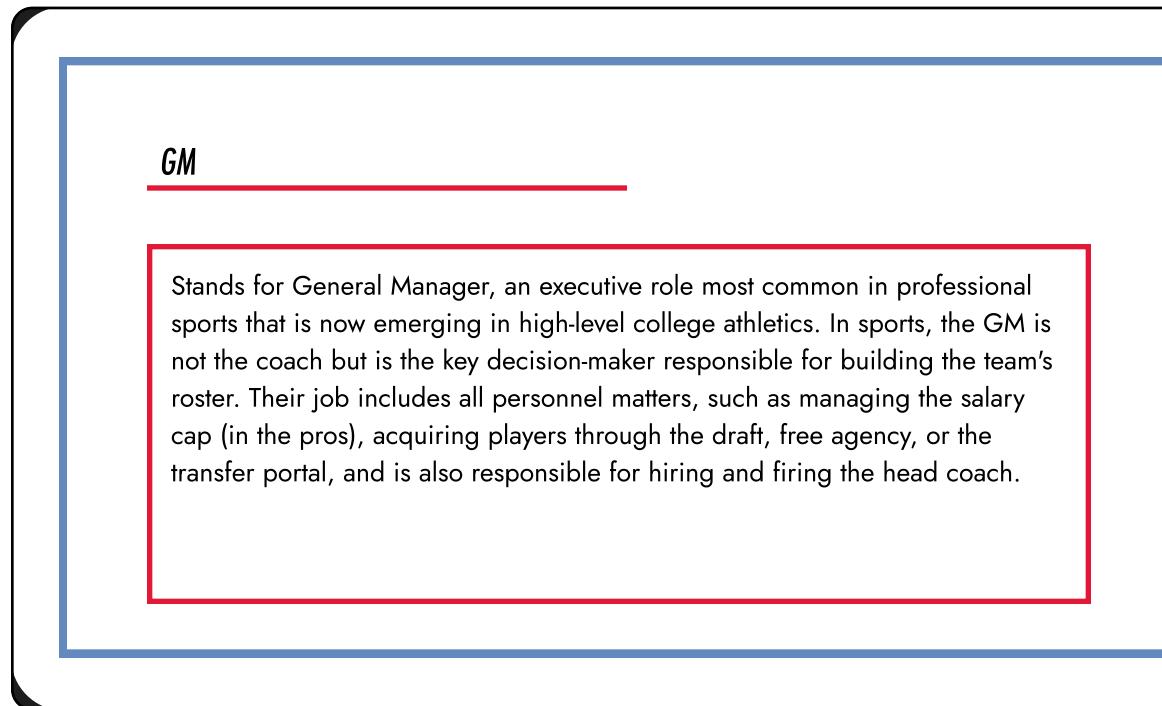
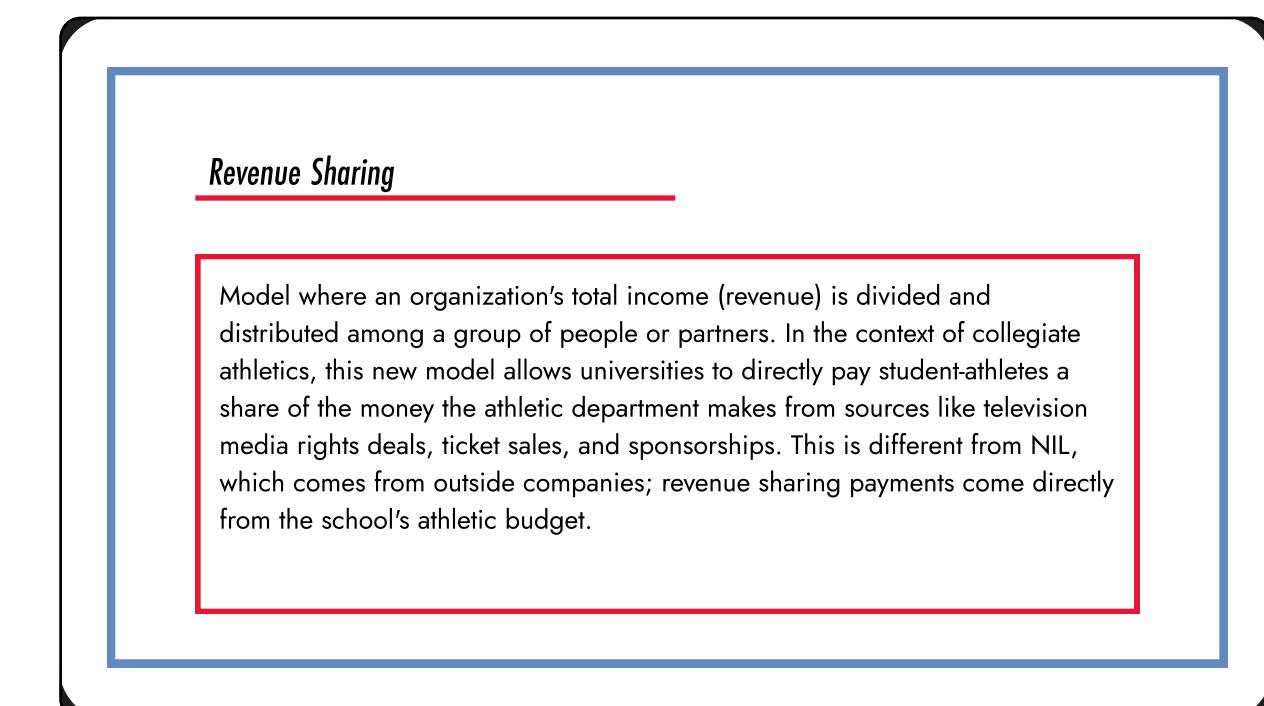
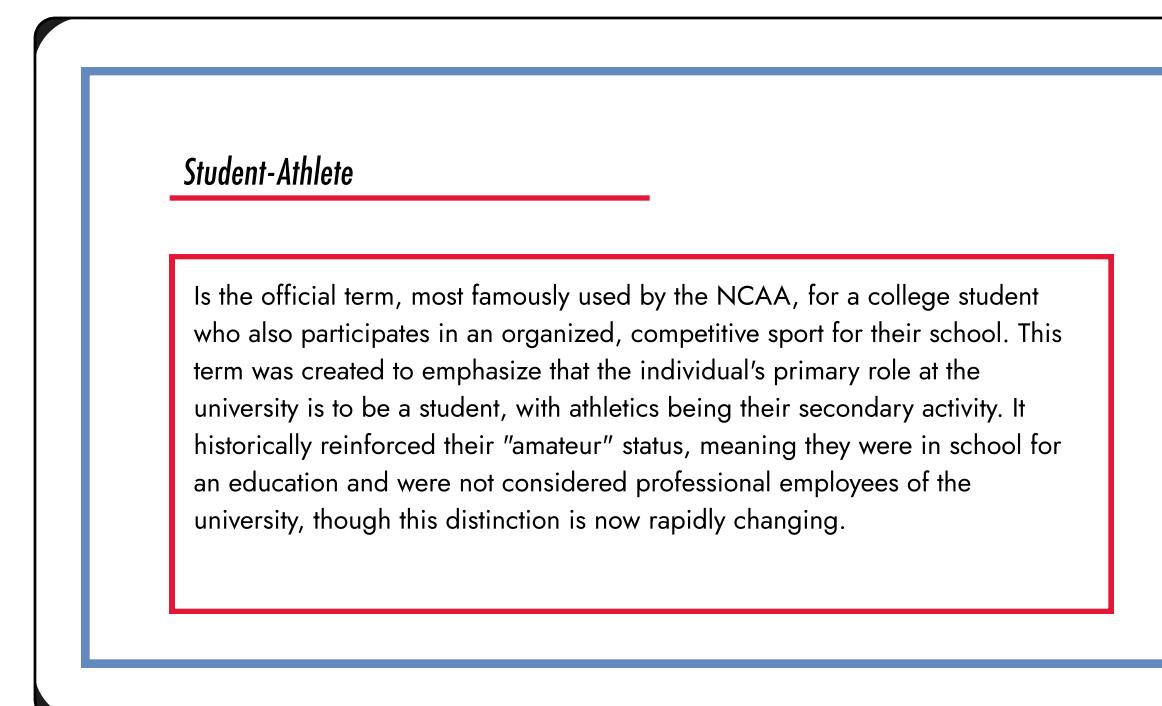
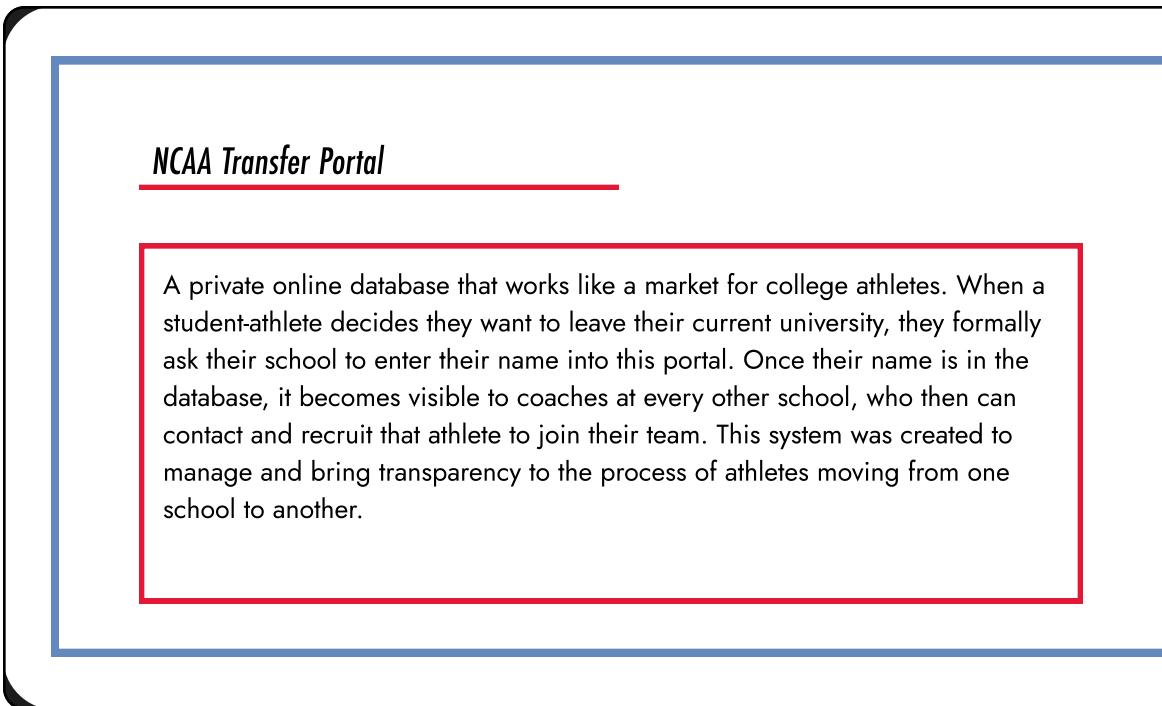
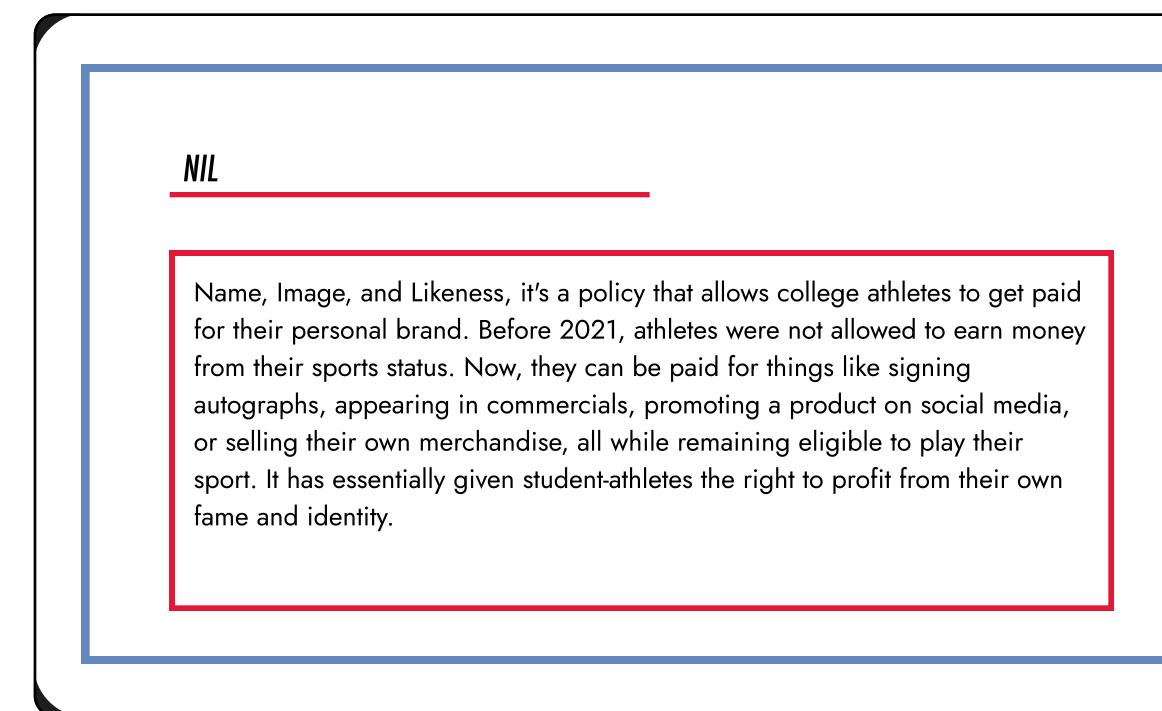
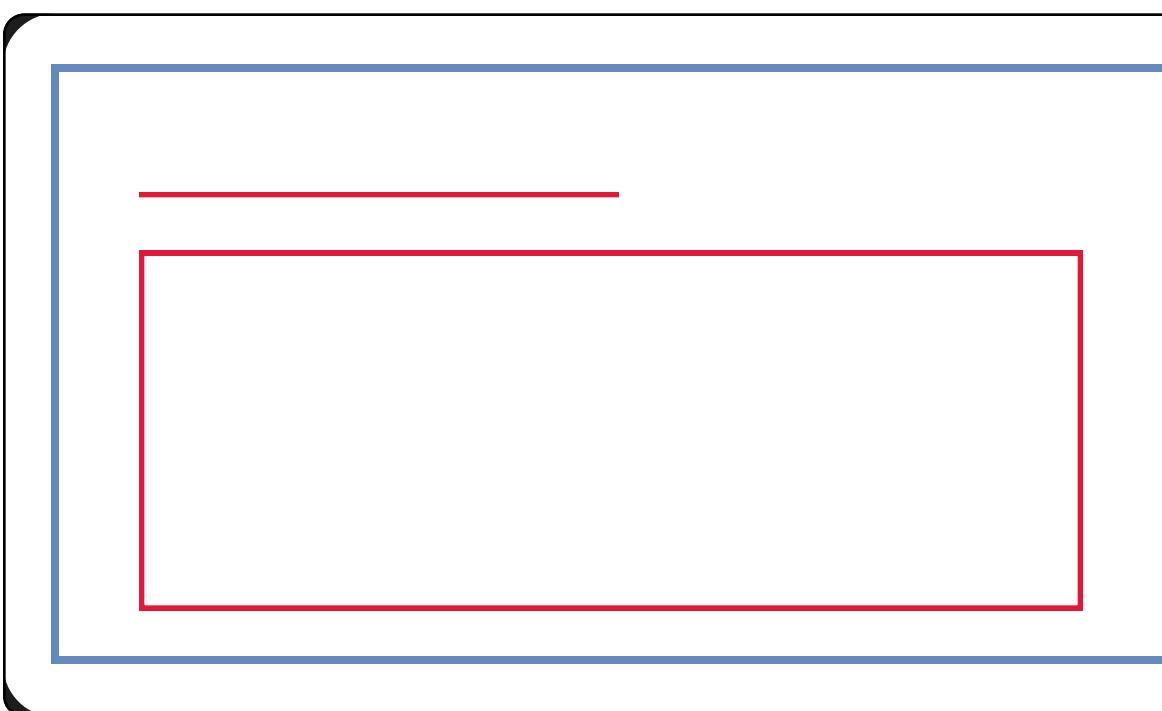
# Teammate cards



# Hurdle cards

	<p><b>Fish out of Water</b></p> <p>A transgender student-athlete has followed all existing <b>NCAA</b> rules for transgender athletes (one year of hormone suppression) before competing in the women's swim team. Upon competing in the women's category, she began having success in which created an intense, divisive debate, with some teammates and competitors arguing she retained an unfair physiological advantage from male puberty, while she and her supporters maintained she was simply following the rules to compete as her authentic self.</p> <p><b>More Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A significant portion of her team (though not all) and many competitors anonymously expressed that they felt the competition was unfair.</li> <li>The University and <b>NCAA</b> are facing immense political pressure and the threat of <b>Title IX</b> lawsuits from two sides: one arguing for the protection of the women's sports category and the other arguing for the civil rights and inclusion of a transgender athlete.</li> <li>The existing policies are not equipped to handle the specific nuance and public fallout of the case.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shake</b></p> <p>The people that share this symbol can work together:</p> 	<p><b>The Color of the Wind</b></p> <p>While competing in the <b>NCAA</b> Tournament, the women's basketball team, a diverse group including many women of color. They were out of town and while walking to dinner, the team was aggressively and repeatedly targeted by individuals in trucks. The assailants revved their engines, displayed Confederate flags, and yelled the N-word and other racial slurs directly at the players and staff. The harassment was so severe and intimidating that the team was left in shock and feared for their safety.</p> <p><b>More Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The event was deeply unsettling for the entire team, creating an environment of fear and distraction during the tournament.</li> <li>This was not a random or isolated encounter. The assailants returned and targeted the team a second time as they left the restaurant, indicating a deliberate act of racial intimidation.</li> <li>The only viable action was to move the entire team, to a different hotel mid-tournament, which was a significantly costly.</li> <li>The team could not remain in a location where they were being actively stalked and threatened.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shake</b></p> <p>If you have this symbol, you get to play the "bad guy" in your solution.</p> 			
<p><b>To Write, or Not to Write</b></p> <p>A tutor, employee of the athletic department's academic services, completed academic work for 12 <b>student-athletes</b> across the football, baseball, and softball programs. This is not simply "extra help"; the tutor completed assignments, quizzes, exams, and in one instance, an entire online course for a student-athlete. The athletes submitted this surrogate work as their own to maintain their grades and athletic eligibility, a direct violation of the university's honor code and <b>NCAA</b> rules.</p> <p><b>More Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The tutor stated expressed they felt the intense pressure directed to the academic support staff to do whatever it takes" to keep players on the field.</li> <li>This type of misconduct is incredibly difficult to detect. It relies on a secret arrangement. It only came to light because the tutor self-reported the violations to the university.</li> <li>The university had provided "extensive and comprehensive education on appropriate tutoring practices" to the tutor, which proved ineffective.</li> <li>Standard training and honor codes are often insufficient to stop individuals who are actively colluding.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shake</b></p> <p>If you have this symbol, you get to play the "bad guy" in your solution.</p> 	<p><b>Storming the Field</b></p> <p>Following a major upset victory fans flooded the playing surface in seconds. While attempting to exit the court, the team's star player, was involved in a collision with a rushing fan. The contact injured the athlete's knee (a sprain), and had to be helped off the floor by teammates and managers, unable to put weight on his leg.</p> <p><b>More Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The athletes on both teams are forced to navigate a chaotic, surging crowd. They are at high risk for physical (and often accidental) contact.</li> <li>Fines against universities for this type of situation exist. However, these are often viewed by as a "cost of doing business", and they do not stop the practice.</li> <li>The speed of the crowd surge was too fast for security to contain.</li> <li>Storming is often defended by fans as a spontaneous and cherished part of the college sports experience. This cultural attachment creates resistance to banning the practice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shake</b></p> <p>The people that share this symbol can work together:</p> 	<p><b>Kickin'</b></p> <p>A female student-athlete is trying out for the football team as a walk-on placekicker. After successfully kicking a 28-yard, game-winning field goal, the head coach is considering putting her on the team. Despite this, the fear that she might be subjected to discriminatory treatment persists. Which can translate in fewer practice opportunities than other walk-on kickers, difficulty getting a scholarship or profit from <b>NIL</b>.</p> <p><b>More Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Under <b>Title IX</b>, a university is not required to allow women to try out for a "contact sport" like football. However, the courts ruled that once a university does allow a woman to try out, she must be treated equitably and cannot be discriminated against based on her sex.</li> <li>The treatment of other teammates is still uncertain. And the locker rooms may not be equipped for a woman. If she gets "cut", it would be extremely difficult for the athlete to prove that it is a direct result of gender discrimination rather than a subjective assessment of her athletic talent. This required a lengthy and costly legal battle.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shake</b></p> <p>The people that share this symbol can work together:</p> 	<p><b>Juicing it</b></p> <p>A standout track and field athlete tested positive for a banned anabolic steroid. The positive test occurred at an <b>NCAA</b>-sanctioned college meet. The athlete is highly successful, holding national championship title and having placed seventh at the <b>NCAA</b> finals the previous season.</p> <p><b>More Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The athlete is 100% responsible for any banned substance found in their system, regardless of whether they intended to cheat or not.</li> <li>There is no evidence to suggest this was a team-wide or university-supported issue.</li> <li>Raises questions about the pressures high-caliber athletes face to maintain or enhance their performance.</li> <li>The most common defense is claiming accidental ingestion from an unregulated dietary supplement. This is extremely difficult to prove and requires the athlete to have the specific supplement batch tested to confirm contamination.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shake</b></p> <p>You get to change the values of your role with the person sitting to your right!</p> 	<p><b>Bet on it</b></p> <p>Three male student-athletes have conspired with outside bettors to "throw" games. An investigation, which began after a tip from another <b>student-athlete</b>, uncovered text messages on the players' phones. The messages showed the athletes planning to lose games by more than the betting spread. In one instance, a player instructed a teammate not to score any more points. The investigation confirmed the players manipulated their performance in seven different games to benefit themselves and the bettors.</p> <p><b>More Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This is not a passive violation (like betting on another team) but an active, deliberate corruption of competition.</li> <li>The athletes were not acting alone. They were in direct communication with known bettors, receiving payments in exchange for fixing the games.</li> <li>The investigation was built on a "digital paper trail." Text messages, phone imaging, and FaceTime calls provided undeniable proof of the conspiracy.</li> <li>Without the teammate's report, it is highly unlikely the university or <b>NCAA</b> would have detected the manipulation, as it can be disguised as simply "having a bad game."</li> </ul> <p><b>Shake</b></p> <p>The people that share this symbol can work together:</p> 	<p><b>Serious Time</b></p> <p>Two football players were arrested for the aggravated rape of an unconscious 21-year-old female student (a non-athlete) in a dorm room. The players carried the unconscious woman into the room and sexually assaulted her. The entire incident was documented by the players themselves, who took numerous photos and videos with their cell phones. Other teammates were also implicated in attempting to help cover up the crime after the fact.</p> <p><b>More Context:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This was a violent crime committed by fellow students. This highlights the dangers of a toxic, entitled subculture that may exist within a team.</li> <li>The crime was not reported by the victim (who had no memory of the event). It was only discovered by "pure chance" when a campus police officer, reviewing surveillance footage for an unrelated dorm issue.</li> <li>The perpetrators' decision to film and photograph their crime provided prosecutors with graphic, irrefutable evidence.</li> <li>Another player pleaded guilty to being an accessory after the fact, admitting he encouraged his teammates to destroy evidence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Shake</b></p> <p>Choose one of your values or motivations that seems more fitting and using it along side empathy for your answer.</p> 

# Kit cards



# Relevant Links

## Articles quoted in this deck:

- Ballard, S., Chappell, K. M., & Kennedy, K. (2019). Judgment Call the Game: Using Value Sensitive Design and Design Fiction to Surface Ethical Concerns Related to Technology. Proceedings of the 2019 on Designing Interactive Systems Conference, 421–433. <https://doi.org/10.1145/3322276.3323697>
- Belman, J. (2010). Designing Games to Foster Empathy. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Designing-Games-to-Foster-Empathy-Belman/8d48b3136fe4f0dcc686cd516474cb9b514f1d8f>
- Douglas, K., & Coburn, C. (2009). Students designing role-plays: Building empathy in law students. <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Students-designing-role-plays%3A-building-empathy-in-Douglas-Coburn/f510a12076510baeffb8541f027923edbed623c6>
- Navarro, K. M. (2015). Toward an Understanding of Best Practices in Student-Athlete Peer Mentorship Programs: Implications for Division I Higher Education and Intercollegiate Athletics Practitioners. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, 9(1), 12–28. <https://doi.org/10.1179/1935739715Z.00000000033>
- Renick, J. (n.d.). The Use and Misuse of College Athletics. *JOURNAL OF HIGHER EDUCATION*.
- Schrier, K., & Farber, M. (2021). A systematic literature review of 'empathy' and 'games.' *Journal of Gaming & Virtual Worlds*, 13(2), 195–214. [https://doi.org/10.1386/jgvw\\_00036\\_1](https://doi.org/10.1386/jgvw_00036_1)

Complete editable deck of cards

Notes and Insights

Extra documentation: Annotated bibliography, Surveys, Reference information for the cards