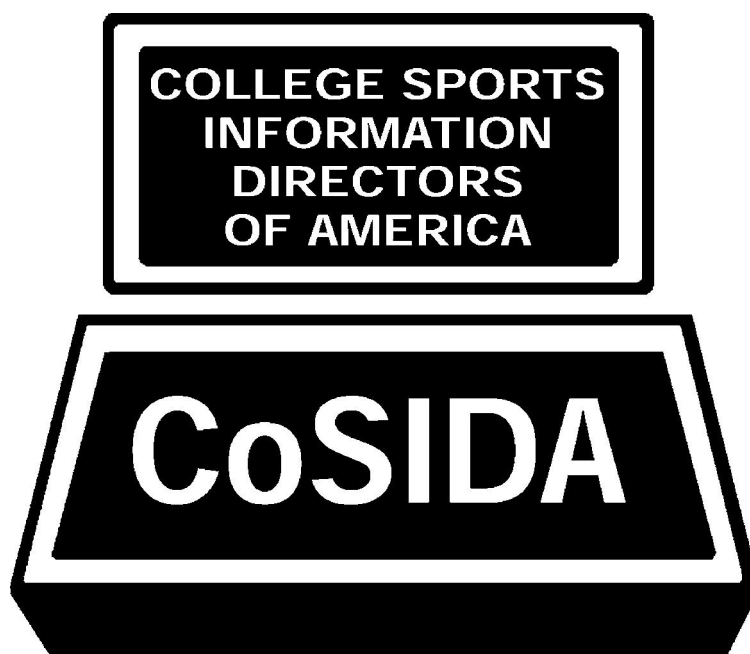


CoSIDA NEWS

Intercollegiate Athletics News from Around the Nation



February 9, 2007

Posted on Wed, Feb. 07, 2007

NO. 5 UNC AT NO. 16 DUKE

Success a big seller for UNC, Duke coaches

KEN TYSIAC
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High above the ground, players cheered on the chartered plane as North Carolina returned from its basketball victory at Arizona.

The Tar Heels players were watching a replay of the game's telecast, but they weren't cheering for a dunk or 3-pointer. They were seeing coach Roy Williams' national TV advertisement for Coca-Cola for the first time.

On the commercial, Williams explains he grew up without much money. His mother ironed clothes to make extra money so he would always have a dime to buy a Coke with his friends after school.

The story is so personal Williams choked up the first time he saw the commercial. As his players cheered on the plane, he raised his hand in gratitude, a school official said.

Williams and North Carolina basketball had just become national advertising icons. The following week, General Mills announced North Carolina basketball would be depicted regionally on the cover of Wheaties boxes.

Two years ago, Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski preceded Williams with ads for American Express, General Motors and Allstate Insurance. This intersection of Madison Avenue's advertising with Tobacco Road's basketball demonstrates the two coaches and programs are the most recognizable names in their game.

"They are salesmen," Charlotte-based sports marketer Steve Luquire of Luquire George Andrews Inc., said of the coaches. "They are merchandisers, marketers, PR men, and they're terrific coaches. They're a lot of things rolled into one."

Coach K's card

Krzyzewski set his national marketing in motion after declining to leave Duke for the Los Angeles Lakers in July 2005. He had been in demand for years as a motivational speaker. His profile on the Washington Speakers Bureau's Web site lists his appearance fee as at least \$40,000.

Instead of speaking once for a company, he wanted to create comprehensive partnerships with selected companies. He would do public speaking and participate in corporate executive leadership seminars.

The commercials were the most public aspect of the partnerships.

His American Express commercial -- the most poignant of his ads -- created a backlash during the NCAA Tournament. They show Krzyzewski at cozy Cameron Indoor Stadium and proclaim he's more than a basketball coach -- he's a leader.

The commercials aired frequently during the 2005 NCAA Tournament, and some coaches resented them.

"To be honest, I'm not sure it's the right thing," Illinois coach Bruce Weber said Monday. "I don't think it's great for college basketball overall. ... I'm sure there are agents involved of the (coaches), and you're talking quite a bit of money and sponsorship and all that stuff. I just hope it doesn't get out of hand."

At the 2005 Final Four (before North Carolina won the NCAA title), NCAA President Myles Brand said conference commissioners and athletics directors had complained the ads created a recruiting advantage.

Brand said anti-trust laws probably would prevent the NCAA from limiting coaches' income by banning commercials. He said he was pleased for TV spots promoting the positive impact college athletics can have on young people and society.

Krzyzewski said college coaches' endorsements can advance the "brand" of the college game in a marketing world dominated by NBA athletes.

"It's a good idea and I'm glad that other people are doing it," Krzyzewski said Monday. "We took a lot of flak for it. Obviously no one else will get flak from now on, but when you do something for the first time, a lot of times you get that. But I think it was well worth it."

Rare airtime

When Duke met North Carolina at Cameron in 2004, ESPN aired its first on-site "College GameDay" preview show for basketball.

Last season at Cameron, ESPN debuted its college "full circle" coverage for Duke-North Carolina. It aired a traditional broadcast on ESPN; an above-the-rim angle on ESPN2; and a split-screen on ESPNU, with cameras trained on the Duke student section.

As the most anticipated rivalry in college basketball, Duke-North Carolina has been a launching pad for those ESPN concepts.

"It's such a big event that you want to do whatever you can to get the attention of as many people as possible," said Ilan Ben-Hanan, director of programming and acquisitions for ESPN.

The "GameDay" format, long a staple of ESPN's Saturday college football coverage, will air from nine on-campus basketball sites this season. The full-circle coverage has been replicated for two college football games and one NBA playoff game.

With the "full circle" in action, North Carolina at Duke drew a 3.5 Nielsen rating (representing 3.9 million households) on ESPN and a 0.7 on ESPN2 for the above-the-rim coverage.

ESPN's average rating for college basketball games last season was a 1.1.

"It speaks to the hard-core college basketball fan," Ben-Hanan said of the rivalry, "but to the casual sports fan as well."

Of Mayberry, Middle America

Max Muhleman, a sports marketer who is president of Private Sports Consulting in Charlotte, said UCLA, Florida and Kentucky have potential to equal the national media presence of Duke and North Carolina. He said it takes a dynasty to become a force in national advertising.

"And dynasties aren't built overnight," Muhleman said. "... These things take awhile to burn in. But there will be some other dynasties."

No other program is party to the rivalry that advertising executives say elevates Duke and North Carolina. It's compelling that schools 11 miles apart excel on the court and have charismatic coaches.

To an advertising executive, their location among whispering pines in the state that inspired Andy Griffith's Mayberry makes them easy for Americans to identify with.

"Tobacco Road is more believable than Madison Avenue," Luquire said. "It plays better to the country than Madison Avenue. And that's why Madison Avenue looks for another street."

That street is the stretch of U.S. 15/501 between Duke and North Carolina. At the Chapel Hill end of that street, Williams imagined the production company would bring one camera and one guy to hold the microphone to shoot his Coke commercial.

Instead, a crew of 55 commandeered the Smith Center and wanted five hours with Williams. He consented to about half that time because the commercial is only 28 seconds long.

But those precious seconds are powerful for Williams and North Carolina.

"It was something that's a true story, something that's emotional for me at times. ... It came off better than I expected, because I expected it would never make the TV, to be honest."

He should know better. If it involves Duke or North Carolina basketball, it's going to make it on TV.

| 9 p.m., Cameron Indoor Stadium, WBTV (Ch.3) | **Note:** ESPN telecast blacked out in most Carolinas' markets

Ruling Rivals

Today is the 138th straight meeting in which at least one of the schools is ranked in a national poll. The streak dates to Feb. 25, 1955.

1, 2

UNC and Duke are Nos. 1 and 2 in the ACC in wins, ACC regular-season wins, ACC tournament wins and NCAA tournament wins.

24

Times UNC has won the ACC regular-season title, including in 2004-05. Blue Devils are second with 18.

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COLLEGE RECRUITING

Zook: 'The worst I've been around'

Illinois coach irate over allegations of wrongdoing, writes Teddy Greenstein

By Teddy Greenstein

February 9, 2007

At Florida he was a human pinata.

Maybe because he was hired only after Mike Shanahan and Bob Stoops turned down the job, Ron Zook took shots from all sides. Even some Gators fans wanted him to fail.

"I fought negative recruiting before I landed in Gainesville," Zook said. "There was FireRonZook.com. And I took it. But I always knew where it was coming from.

"All of a sudden I've come to the University of Illinois, and it's the worst I've ever been around. It's unbelievable."

Zook actually does know where it's coming from this time. Or he thinks he does.

He won't publicly name the school, but it might be located 90 miles east of Chicago. The one where Rockne coached.

Notre Dame?

"I'm not going to say that," Zook said. "I'm not going to name names and point fingers. It's over."

Or is it? Zook won't pretend he wasn't stung by a New York Times story in which former Michigan State coach John L. Smith wondered how a school that went 4-19 over the last two seasons could attract top-notch recruits. "Where there's smoke, there's probably fire," Smith told the paper.

Then, Zook said, the Sun-Times piled on with the giant back-page headline: "Zook: I'm not a crook."

"Does it bother me?" Zook said. "Yeah, it bothers me. When you've never had your integrity questioned and had success in recruiting everywhere you've been . . . for people to come out and say things, how do you defend it?

"I know this: I can look in the mirror and know we've done nothing wrong. But when people question your integrity, your honesty, your word, that's all you have in life. So does it bother me? Yeah, it bothers me. What can I do about it?

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/chi-0702090217feb09,1,1089851.print.story?coll=chi-sportsnew-hed> 2/9/2007

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Gemstones
& Gold

FILENE'S BASEMENT

Event ends Saturday,
February 17th,
Selection varies by store.

Where
Bargains
Were
Born

Probably nothing."

Zook came to Chicago on Thursday for a one-day media tour. He did Mike North's WSCR-AM morning show, met with various news crews and print reporters and appeared on Comcast SportsNet's "Chicago Tribune Live."

The day was arranged before he met G. Gordon Liddy, ordered the Watergate break-in or fed his dog, Checkers.

"I don't like to be compared to Richard Nixon," he said.

Zook doesn't want to seem, uh, paranoid, but it's clear he believes Notre Dame played a role in the Times' story. He believes the timing of the piece--it ran on national signing day--was intended to hurt Illinois' recruiting efforts.

"I've taken a lot of criticism," he said. "All I ask is that people be fair. If we need to be bashed, bash us. I don't have a problem with that."

But he has a major problem with rival coaches whispering that he and his staff used illegal inducements in signing blue-chippers Arrelious Benn and Martez Wilson.

Asked how he keeps Illinois boosters away from recruits, the coach replied, "I don't think [booster involvement] has been insinuated here. What has been insinuated is that our coaching staff has done things. I know what's being said to our recruits."

Illinois and Notre Dame battled for Benn, Wilson and Hubbard running back Robert Hughes.

The Washington Post reported that long after Benn committed to Illinois, Irish assistant Peter Vaas, since let go, continued to call him and leave him text messages.

Zook saw where Irish coach Charlie Weis said the word "commitment" needs to be redefined in recruiting.

It is believed Hughes gave Illinois a "silent" commitment before settling on Notre Dame.

Zook wouldn't confirm that but did say of Weis, "One of those kids that committed to him committed to me before he committed to him. Do I cry about that?"

Through a university spokesman, Weis could not be reached for comment.

Does Zook wish Illinois could play Notre Dame? You know, settle things on the field?

"Right now here's what I want to do--get our program to where it's supposed to be," he replied. "I'm not going to worry about those people. I have enough to say grace over."

Illinois went so far as to hire a law firm to investigate charges that it had supplied cars to Benn and quarterback Juice Williams.

The allegations came from anonymous letters sent to university officials.

When Illini athletic director Ron Guenther told Zook about the investigation, the coach initially was steamed.

"Here's your boss and it seems like he's questioning you," Zook said. "But he wasn't. His job is to protect the university and he knew there was nothing going on."

The major issue, according to Zook, is that certain rival schools have not accepted that Illinois football is on equal footing.

"What we're doing is changing the landscape," he said, "and people resist change.

"[Basketball coach] Billy Donovan went through the same thing when he got to Florida. He got all these players, so all of a sudden they have to be cheating. But no one says anything about that anymore. The same thing's happening with us. I know we're going to get through it."

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U of I to review sports-gambling links

Car-giveaway ad spotlights whether schools should promote state lottery, take casino sponsorship dollars

By TOM WITOSKY
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

University of Iowa athletic officials will wrestle today with whether they want to continue to promote the sale of Iowa Lottery products and accept sponsorship money from casinos.

Records obtained from the lottery by The Des Moines Register show the state agency has spent \$348,232 since 2004 on advertising and promotions tied to Iowa's four NCAA Division I athletic departments - the U of I, Iowa State, Northern Iowa and Drake.

Debate has simmered recently because of a controversial advertising campaign in which the lottery will give away a Dodge Caliber SXT car customized with Hawkeye colors and logos at halftime of the Iowa-Illinois men's basketball game on March 3.

Officials will discuss the issue today at the regular meeting of the university's Presidential Committee on Athletics - an advisory group made up of faculty, students and alumni.

Gary Barta, U of I athletic director, told the Register on Wednesday that Hawkeye officials should not have approved the commercial for the giveaway in particular. And Elizabeth Altmaier, a psychology professor and U of I faculty athletic representative, said Hawkeye athletics should stop partnering with, and accepting money from, gambling interests.

"Gambling goes against the core values of intercollegiate athletics and our institution," Altmaier said. "I believe the decision to form these kinds of promotional partnerships and to continue them is wrong."

Mary Neubauer, vice president of external relations for the Iowa Lottery, said the Hawkeye car promotion is expected to be as popular as two promotions in which the lottery gave away motorcycles customized with Iowa State and U of I colors and logos. Those promotions generated 434,000 entries, she said.

Neubauer defended the car promotion, contending that the U of I has had a long relationship with the lottery and that most lottery proceeds are used to help finance K-12 and higher education in the state.

"The lottery promotions are great examples of the partnerships the lottery has had with local businesses," Neubauer said.

Altmaier pointed out that such advertising and sponsorships are not accepted at National Collegiate Athletic Association-sponsored events, such as the Division I Final Four basketball tournaments.

NCAA officials have described such lottery advertising and promotions in the past as "an undesirable activity to have linked in any way to intercollegiate athletics."

Barta said he supports the athletic department's relationship with the lottery in general, at least partially because of



YOUTUBE.COM PHOTOS

The commercial opens with a Hawkeye fan ad-libbing words to the tune of the University of Iowa fight song as he scratches a game card at what appears to be an Iowa basketball game.

What the NCAA says

The following is from the NCAA Advertising and Promotional Standards, updated in November 2006:

"Understanding the realities and challenges that commercial entities face in attempting to reach their objectives, the NCAA believes, at a minimum, that advertisements, advertisers and others who wish to be associated with NCAA events should not:

- Cause harm to student-athlete health, safety and welfare.
- Bring discredit to the purposes, values or principles of the NCAA.
- Negatively impact the best interests of intercollegiate athletics or higher education.

As part of the update, the standards specifically describe as impermissible companies:

"Organizations or companies primarily involved in gambling or gaming business activities (e.g., publications, Web sites, products, services). This includes horse/dog racing tracks, off-track betting and state-run lotteries."

the insistence that Hawkeye athletics pay for itself.

"It's healthy to have a discussion about this," Barta said. "But the university has charged Hawkeye athletics to be self-sustaining - to generate all of its own revenue, whether it is ticket sales, television and radio, or corporate sponsorships. I am comfortable with the relationship."

Barta said if blame belonged to anyone related to perceptions of the recent commercial being over the top, it would be Hawkeye officials, not the lottery. "We have full right of review and refusal, and we let this one slip through last fall," he said. "And so going forward, we will be more diligent in what we approve."

Gambling opponents criticized the U of I last fall for accepting a contract with Riverside Casino & Golf Resort, one of Iowa's newest casinos that operates 12 miles south of Iowa City. Advertisements for the casino inside Kinnick Stadium called the facility the "Riverside Hotel & Golf Resort," replacing the word "casino" with "hotel."

Riverside also holds a \$165,000, three-year lease of a Kinnick Stadium suite.

The Iowa Lottery paid Hawkeye Sports Properties, a division of Learfield Sports Inc., \$14,400 for the current Dodge promotion, but has spent about \$215,000 on promotions and advertising tied to Hawkeye athletic events over the past three years.

Television commercials for the promotion that ended Sunday appeared to be set inside Carver-Hawkeye Arena and used athletic department logos and the Iowa fight song. Contestants qualified by entering non-winning Diamond Mine scratch tickets online. Officials are now selecting 10 semifinalists, who will be at the drawing for the car.

Last July, Learfield agreed to a 10-year, \$55 million contract for the right to sell advertising related to all U of I athletic events. The athletic department received \$4.8 million for the current academic year, according to the contract.

Lottery officials provided the Register a list of 15 states - including Minnesota, Nebraska and Missouri - where lotteries spend money on sponsorships, promotions or advertising with athletic departments.

Altmaier said she believes the U of I's athletic policy should be the same as the NCAA's, because a recent NCAA survey showed "high levels of gambling and sports wagering among student-athletes on all divisional levels."

"Current NCAA standards would suggest that leasing suites to casinos and accompanying the leasing with promotional activities at events would be wrong," she said.

Reporter Tom Witosky can be reached at (515) 284-8522 or twitosky@dmreg.com

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Hotshots: So young, so foolish

February 7, 2007

BY DREW SHARP

FREE PRESS COLUMNIST

The prima donna seed is planted long before the ink dries on the first multimillion-dollar deal. It starts with a sudden growth spurt at age 12 or 13, when a parent or a coach envisions the potential for something special.

But what's rarely developed is an equally strong sense of balance and perspective.

That's why too many star athletes grow up believing the rules that govern the rest of us don't apply to them. They grow accustomed to the spotlight, and it spawns a feeling of entitlement.

There's something grossly out of whack about 18-year-olds holding nationally televised news conferences to announce where they will play college ball. It makes about as much sense as the increased number of nationally televised high school basketball games, intended to market the next generation of college stars.

That's why it shouldn't surprise anyone that O.J. Mayo -- perhaps the country's premier high school basketball player -- believes his celebrity status gives him a special exemption from the rules that apply to others who play high school sports in West Virginia.

Mayo, who plays for Huntington High, was ejected from a Jan. 26 game after receiving two technical fouls in the fourth quarter. Videotapes show Mayo approaching referee Mike Lazlo after getting the second technical and apparently bumping Lazlo, knocking the referee down.

There have been conflicting accounts, suggesting the referee deliberately stopped so Mayo would bump him. But that's independent of the technical fouls.

The state's rules are clear. There's a minimum two-game suspension for any player disqualified for two technical fouls. But a Huntington judge granted Mayo a temporary injunction, enabling him to play in Huntington's next game against another top-ranked prep team -- one from California -- that was scheduled for ESPN at Duke's Cameron Indoor Stadium.

Mayo is awaiting a hearing Friday on whether there will be a reprimand.

How could there not be?

But the message already is clear to this 18-year-old regardless of the ruling. He can massage any personal responsibility to his own liking, with the so-called adults who surround him lighting the path.

Today is national high school football signing day -- one of the high holy days for those who equate recruiting newsletters with the family Bible. There will be a mythical national champion crowned from analysts applying a formula that makes the BCS process seem logical.

If any three of these seven programs -- Michigan, Ohio State, Notre Dame, USC, Florida, LSU and Texas -- are recruiting a player, he's automatically among the nationally elite, otherwise why else would those seven want them?

It's insane because there's no way anybody can predict who will succeed at the major-college level based on what they've seen them do against other teenagers. But that hasn't stopped Football Signing Day from becoming one of the five biggest days on the annual sports

calendar -- behind Super Bowl Sunday, the first two days of the men's NCAA basketball tournament and baseball's Opening Day.

I'll be at Michigan State this afternoon when new coach Mark Dantonio unveils his first recruiting class. And I'll be honest with you -- I have no idea who these young men committing to the Spartans are. And the same is true with the Michigan recruiting class.

I spoke with a passionate MSU devotee a couple of days ago, and he gushed about how the Spartans got a verbal assurance from a talented kid out of Detroit Mumford. And my response was "So what?"

All I see is an 18-year-old who, despite what everyone is probably telling him, doesn't know jack about anything. Don't get me wrong. These young men and women richly deserve the college opportunities they've earned through their athletic skill. You hope they will take full advantage of these opportunities.

But it's easy to see how so many of them swell full of themselves due to the circus atmosphere that cultivates a "me first, superstar" mentality -- one that goes unchecked by those closest to them.

The best graduation gift they could receive upon leaving high school is having both feet firmly planted on the ground.

Contact **DREW SHARP** at 313-223-4055 or dsharp@freepress.com.

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Feb. 9

No Sacred Cows

By [Maravene Loeschke](#)

My decision to eliminate the football program at Mansfield was the most difficult decision of my 38-year career in higher education. There was no joy in it; no feeling of accomplishment; no feeling of victory. Instead there was a deep sense of loss and sadness. As a president of six months, there could be few more challenging situations to face. In the reaction to the decision, it is clear that many people in higher education believe it's either impossible or foolish to eliminate a football program. I share my experience not because I want to urge others to eliminate their programs, but because colleges can't be places where anything besides academics can be permanently off the table. There are institutions and circumstances where football must be on the table — and where it can be eliminated, even by a woman president.

For Mansfield, the issue started with our budgets. The costs of football had been escalating for several years and the university's attempts to keep up with them were diverting resources from the academic program. It was clear that Mansfield was too small an institution to support any longer a Division II football team.

Once I started to raise questions about these issues, I was warned that football was a sacred cow and eliminating the program could never be an option. I was warned to be prepared for the wrath of football alumni, and for criticism that I did not appreciate football because my background academically and professionally was the theatre, and that as a woman I had no appreciation of football. "She is an actress. What can she know about athletics? How can we know she isn't acting when she speaks to us?" I was warned about every possible negative outcome from such a decision including the loss of enrollment, revenue, diversity, community and alumni support. None of the warnings changed the reality facing the university: We could no longer afford football without cutting academic programs and academic support services. That I would not do. That was the absolute that made my decision firm.

Mansfield University is a member of the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference (PSAC) Division II in all of its sports, including women's soccer, men's and women's basketball, baseball, softball, women's field hockey, and men's and women's cross country and track and field, and football. We are competitive in almost all of these sports and are taking steps to enhance our remaining sports programs. The president's cabinet explored several options — including moving to Division III, to an independent conference, and putting the program on hiatus. Still, the reality we faced was that the cost of football had become too great for us to bear.

There was never a question about the value of football. A football program is an important asset to any institution, so long as the institution can afford the program. The athletes learn skills such as ensemble building, problem solving, focus, strategic thinking, work-ethic, commitment, responsibility, courage and determination — skills that enhance a liberal arts education. The program often provides access to students who might not otherwise go to college. The games also add to the vitality of campus life. Our team has not done well in recent years — we did not win a game this past season and won only twice in the last three years. But my decision was not based on our record. It was in large measure a budgetary decision.

There comes a time in the life of many small institutions when the question must be asked, “What can we afford to do well and what can we no longer afford to do well?” There can be no sacred cows in such a discussion. The institution must examine the cost of academic, athletic, and academic support programs, determine priorities and reallocate resources to serve the priorities. And it must be committed to act on those findings.

The funding issues. Mansfield provided approximately \$383,000 a year to football; student activity fees and supplemental funding provided another \$76,000. Scholarships cannot be funded from state money or student fees; they must be funded from private gifts, usually from football alumni. Mansfield was able to provide only \$56,000 a year in scholarships, the lowest in our conference. Additionally, the university had the poorest facility in the conference. The field needs extensive work, the field house and stands are dilapidated and the press box is even worse. None of these costs could we afford. And, if football remained, Title IX compliance would mean additional women’s sports would need to be added.

Mansfield is a small liberal arts institution, 3,200 full-time equivalent (FTE), with strong professional and graduate programs. We are committed to student leadership development and a liberal arts education. Students select Mansfield because the education is based on individual work with exceptional faculty and staff and high academic standards. The feel of a Mansfield education is much like a private college but at an affordable public price. As a small rural institution, our enrollment will likely always remain between 3,000 and 4,000 students. Our students are often first generation college, from a rural area and from low to middle income families. State support is mainly based on enrollment. In order to bring the institution into fiscal alignment in the FY 2008 budget, it became clear in September of 2006 that we needed to make major reallocations to support established academic priorities and to provide stronger support for the other sports.

Making and communicating the decision. The decision was made by the president’s cabinet with the support of the Council of Trustees. Although we did our best to inform everyone in an orderly manner that respected individual investment, I am convinced that there is no good or right way to communicate well such a consideration and decision. Anyone who was not among the first to hear about the issue first felt that communication was poor; anyone who heard first felt the issue was sprung on them. The time line and process for communication was complex, but there were some critical communication strategies that I believe relieved much tension and provided clarity for those most affected.

1. I visited individually with each member of the Council of Trustees prior to the decision in order to explain the rationale, hear their opinions and determine whether or not they could support such a decision. The chancellor, the PSAC commissioner, and a former Mansfield president, who was also the former football coach of the institution, were also consulted prior to the decision. Key campus leaders, the athletic director, the head football coach, the directors of the marching band, and the faculty advisor to the cheerleader squad were consulted. All of these, although sad to lose football, saw advantages to the decision. This communication effort took place over a five-day period of time; each person was asked to maintain confidentiality. However, after five days, word was out on campus that the elimination was under consideration.

2. The football team members were told. As president, I attempted to visit each player individually to explain the decision, field their questions and provide support.

3. We formally announced to the campus and alumni that elimination was under consideration and requested responses from faculty, staff, students and alumni.

4. We gave the coaches’ union the mandatory two weeks to respond and considered their response.

5. I responded to every e-mail and written response, with the exception of two that were especially uncivil.

6. The cabinet, staff, alumni, and development offices did the same.

7. The Student Affairs Office worked with students to provide them an opportunity to understand the decision, to ask questions and discuss.

The final decision was made two weeks later with the stipulation that a task force of football alumni would be formed to determine the conditions under which reinstatement of a football program could be considered sometime in the future.

What was gained by the decision? The institution has made a cut in expenditures that will help balance our budget in FY 2008 and beyond. As enrollment and retention increase, funding will be reallocated to academics. Student activity fees and scholarships have been reallocated to the other 13 sports that have not been adequately funded in the past. The institution will likely be Title IX compliant.

What was lost? The value that the game can teach young athletes about life and personal development; the vitality that the game provides on Saturdays. For the institution, it may mean a possible temporary drop in enrollment, a possible drop in gender balance, a likely drop in alumni giving and disengagement by football alumni. In my mind, the most serious loss, and the most difficult to restore, may be the loss of diversity. We are vigorously looking at ways to restore the level of campus diversity provided by football and we are taking steps to minimize the other possible negative outcomes.

One of the reasons the decision was made in the fall semester was to ensure that any athlete who wished to transfer could do so in time to sit out the semester to be eligible to play in the fall. All student athletes who remain with us, and there are several, will retain their scholarships through their four years of eligibility.

What was the reaction to the decision? Understandably a number of football alumni are devastated and some are angry. Although many football alums would dispute the statement, I appreciate and respect those feelings and the accompanying anger. Having never played the sport, I can only imagine what it is like to see a program you love disappear. I believe I understand when I make an analogy to the loss of a theatre program, a decision already made at Mansfield last year. There are a number of football alums who understand the decision and feel that if we cannot afford to support the team well, we should not have a team at all. Most of the students, faculty and staff were saddened, but accepted and understood the decision. Many expressed support that the institution was prioritizing academics and making tough decisions. The local community, with few exceptions, was supportive of the decision.

The football athletes and coaches conducted themselves with professional behavior and understanding. We all can learn from them about character. The PSAC conference leadership was understanding and helpful. There were no demonstrations; the last game was played without incident; I was not accosted by students; my car was not pelted with eggs; my house was not wrapped in toilet paper; commencement was conducted with dignity. The students could not have done more to honor the dignity of the game. But I will never forget standing in the rain, in the stadium during the last two minutes of the last Mansfield game, the score 41 to 0 and feeling the weight of responsibility and loss. I have rarely felt sadder or more alone in a crowd. I knew that a 115-year legacy was ending on my watch.

Where does that leave us at Mansfield? We are an institution whose top priority is clear: In good financial times or bad, it will always be academics first. As the spring semester begins we are left with sadness at the loss of something valuable, but hopeful that its return can occur somewhere in the future.

This December was my first commencement ceremony as a university president. One of the football team leaders was graduating. I expected that he might not want to shake my hand when receiving his diploma. I did not want to force him to do so. I wanted to respect his feelings. I will never forget my feeling when instead of rejecting my handshake he wrapped his huge arms around me and said, "It's all right."

Maravene Loeschke is president of Mansfield University of Pennsylvania.

The original story and user comments can be viewed online at <http://insidehighered.com/views/2007/02/09/loeschke>.

Posted on Thu, Feb. 08, 2007

Athletes may get to blog at Games

The International Olympic Committee said Wednesday it is considering whether to let athletes post personal diaries on the Internet.

Under Olympic rules, athletes, coaches and other team officials are barred from functioning as a "journalist or in any other media capacity" during the game. This is meant to protect the rights of accredited media.

But athletes' commissions discussed the matter with the IOC and expressed "support in principle" for blogging.

The IOC acknowledged that some athletes may have blogged during the Winter Olympics in Turin, but it was "unofficially" and on a limited scale without rules. There will be a much greater push for blogs at the more visible Summer Games in Beijing.

A subgroup of the IOC press commission recently concluded that blogging by athletes would not violate Olympic rules.

It proposed that athletes be allowed to blog, on condition they receive no payment, post their entries as a personal "diary or journal" and do not use photos, video or audio obtained at the games.

"Athlete blogs bring a more modern perspective to the global appreciation of the games, particularly for a younger audience, and enhance the universality of the games," the press group said.

Bob Ctvrtlik, a former U.S. Olympic volleyball gold medalist, said privacy remained a major concern.

"We don't want the village turned into a reality TV show during the Olympics," he said. "We also want to protect rights that have been sold to sponsors. As of yet we don't have a clear consensus on it."

| *The Associated Press*



<http://www.latimes.com/sports/football/nfl/la-sp-nfl9feb09,1,1131564.story?coll=la-headlines-sports>

Bullet proof

The NFL seems immune to effects of negative publicity, even after yearlong flood of player arrests. NBA, baseball aren't so fortunate.

By Sam Farmer and David Wharton

Times Staff Writers

February 9, 2007

MIAMI — When an ESPN show called "Playmakers" hit the airwaves a few years back, depicting a fictional pro football team rife with drug use, gunplay and outlandish behavior, the NFL quickly flexed its muscle.

League executives, worried that images of off-the-field havoc might turn fans away, got the cable network to cancel the much-discussed series.

Yet at Super Bowl XLI last weekend, two days after Commissioner Roger Goodell vowed to hold players accountable for their actions, the Chicago Bears started a defensive tackle who had been under house arrest on gun charges and needed a judge's permission to leave the state of Illinois. On Saturday, the Pro Bowl will feature a linebacker who recently failed a drug test.

This caps a year in which at least 35 players were arrested, nine of them on the Cincinnati Bengals.

Amid the negative publicity — headlines that might have sent pro baseball or basketball scrambling for cover — football has continued to thrive at the box office and in television ratings.

NFL fans, it seems, don't mind if their favorite playmakers act like "Playmakers" — so long as they continue to make plays.

"It's a gladiator sport," said Todd Boyd, a USC professor who has written extensively about the sociology of big-time athletics. "People may give a certain amount of slack to football players because there's this unspoken sense that, in order to play the game well, you need an edge.

"That's what people want in a football player," Boyd said. "Someone who's crazy and mean."

This fall, the NFL set a regular-season attendance record by averaging more than 67,000 fans a game. The Indianapolis Colts' victory over Chicago in the Super Bowl drew 93 million viewers nationwide, making it the third most-watched telecast in history.

The lack of outcry from the public or media stands in contrast to what other major sports have experienced.

Baseball has struggled with reports of alleged steroid use among some of its biggest stars. The response was such that Congress held hearings.

"I think baseball probably has been held to a higher standard," Dodgers General Manager Ned Colletti said. "It's examined more closely."

Basketball has endured a similar crisis after two brawls.

When the Indiana Pacers and Detroit Pistons fought two years ago, Commissioner David Stern imposed lengthy suspensions. After a fight between the Denver Nuggets and New York Knicks in December, he added more long suspensions and \$500,000 fines for both teams.

Pacers fans on Wednesday booed one of their own players accused of getting into a bar fight and there has been negative reaction to the league's perceived hip-hop culture. Players suspect they are more closely scrutinized than their football brethren.

"When something happens off the court with us, it's like 'Oh, another basketball player got into trouble,'" Clippers center Chris Kaman said. "I just think it's not the same thing in the public eye."

Pro football has escaped significant controversy in part because none of its troubles — save for failed drug tests — are directly connected with what happens on the field.

Still, observers of the game note how little criticism the NFL has received.

"The league obviously benefits from some sort of Teflon coating," said Paul Swangard, managing director of the Warsaw Sports Marketing Center at the University of Oregon.

Experts point to several reasons for the discrepancy between football and other sports.

Baseball and basketball players, expected to act more civilized, must perform in full view of the public. Fans can see their every gesture and facial tick.

"If a player gets in trouble, it's usually one of a starting five, viewed by a camera that replicates the best seat in the house, and unadorned by hats or helmets," said the NBA's Stern. "That's the good news and the bad news — it's what comes from having players who set the standard for their visibility."

Apart from the NFL's superstars, most football players are afforded the relative anonymity of pads and face masks.

"We don't get to know them as well because they're in body armor," said Jim Kahler, a former NBA marketing executive who now heads the Center for Sports Administration at Ohio University.

Fans aren't as likely to take offense at the conduct of an athlete they recognize only by name or number, whose face they might never have seen, experts say.

This dynamic extends to the manner in which the sports have been marketed.

During the 1980s, Stern revitalized the NBA by putting a spotlight on Magic Johnson, Larry Bird and Michael Jordan. Baseball has operated to large extent by a star system too.

The NFL, meanwhile, has focused more on promoting the sport, a notion bolstered by the success of the team-oriented Colts and New England Patriots.

"More than any other sport, you have fans of the game itself," said Shawn Bradley, chief operating officer of the Bonham Group, a Denver marketing consultant to teams in numerous leagues. "Because of that, it's a larger image ... less susceptible to damage."

Lakers guard Maurice Evans wonders if NBA players get treated differently because their average salary is approximately \$5 million.

Baseball players earn an average of \$2.7 million and football players \$1.4 million.

"All of my football friends that I know that play professional football, they think that we have it better, so we should be scrutinized more than they should," Evans said.

Consider a partial list of football's recent player problems:

- Bears defensive lineman Tank Johnson, granted permission to play in the Super Bowl by a Cook County judge, has been arrested three times in 18 months. Johnson violated probation in December when police found six guns — including two assault weapons — and more than 500 rounds of ammunition in his home. Two days later, Johnson was at a nightclub when his friend and bodyguard, Willie B. Posey, was gunned down.
- San Diego Chargers linebacker Shawne Merriman tested positive for steroids and was suspended four games this season. He still wound up making the AFC team for the Pro Bowl.
- On a team where so many players ran afoul of the law, Bengals receiver Chris Henry was arrested four times in 14 months. His charges included marijuana possession, drunk driving and providing alcohol to a minor.
- Bears cornerback Ricky Manning Jr. was involved in the beating of a UCLA student at a Westwood restaurant last summer. Manning, who is alleged to have uttered homophobic and anti-Semitic slurs during the attack, pleaded no contest to felony assault charges.
- Chargers linebacker Steve Foley was shot by a policeman during an incident in which he was subsequently arrested on suspicion of drunk driving. Safety Terrence Kiel pleaded guilty to shipping a codeine-based cough syrup often used to enhance other drugs. In December, Kiel was cited for urinating in public.
- Kansas City Chiefs defensive end Jared Allen was arrested for drunk driving twice in five months.

Even when Baltimore Ravens linebacker Ray Lewis was arrested in connection with a double murder in 2000, the outcry was relatively short-lived.

Lewis pleaded guilty to misdemeanor obstruction of justice and testified against two co-defendants. Within a few years, he was a finalist for the NFL's humanitarian award, presented each year to the player who best exemplifies dedication to "team, community and country." He now has lucrative endorsement deals with Gatorade and Nike, and is the only defensive player to be featured on the cover of EA Sports' Madden video game.

For all the forgiveness — or indifference — shown by fans and sponsors, Swangard says an accumulation of incidents can ultimately sink a team if not a sport.

The marketing expert cites the Portland Trail Blazers, a team that went from the NBA's best small-market franchise to a financially struggling punch line — they were known as the "Jail Blazers" — after a string of player arrests.

"There's a good portion of the fan base out there that's going to get sick and tired of millionaire players playing by a different set of social and moral rules," Swangard said.

The NFL seems to be getting the message. The league is considering a ban on postseason awards and Pro Bowl appearances for players who fail drug tests — a change that would require approval by the players' union. Goodell called for a reevaluation of programs already in place to advise

players, including a mandatory weeklong rookie symposium.

Gene Upshaw, executive director of the NFL Players Assn., supports assembling a focus group of his members during the off-season to address behavior problems.

"We've seen what has happened in other sports when you get to a level where the fans turn you off," Upshaw said. "We don't want to read like a police blotter. We want to talk about the yards, the passes."

Even players are beginning to speak out. Miami Dolphins defensive lineman Jason Taylor voiced his displeasure that a documented steroid user — Merriman — was allowed to participate in the Pro Bowl. Bengals quarterback Carson Palmer felt compelled to publicly reprimand his arrested teammates.

"Enough is enough," Palmer said at a recent awards presentation. "It's something we're definitely not proud of.... From here on out, guys just need to make better decisions."

Still, experts suspect that in the immediate future, the NFL will continue to enjoy a latitude not afforded other leagues. Boyd talks about NBA star Ron Artest, whose image suffered when he climbed into the stands during the Pacers-Pistons brawl.

"You could see the facial expression on Artest," said Boyd, the critical studies professor at USC's school of cinematic arts. "It was frightening. You could see it in his eyes."

"Hidden behind a helmet, it's not as threatening. If Ron Artest were a defensive back instead of a basketball player, his career might be different."

Times staff writers Michael Hiltzik, Bill Shaikin, Jason Reid and Mike Bresnahan contributed to this story.

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(INFOBOX BELOW)

Pattern of arrests

Nine Cincinnati Bengals players have been arrested since January 2006.

This list contains arrests and charges regardless of the resolution of the cases. Dates given are of arrest and/or when charges were filed:

Jan. 28 — Chris Henry

- Possession of a concealed firearm, improper exhibition of a firearm, aggravated assault with a firearm

June 3 — Chris Henry

- Driving under the influence

June 3 — A.J. Nicholson

- Burglary, grand theft, vandalism

June 14 — Chris Henry

- Providing alcohol to three underage females

June 21 — Frostee Rucker

- Vandalism, spousal battery

July 22 — Matthias Askew

- Disorderly conduct, resisting arrest, failure to comply with a police officer's order, obstructing justice (acquitted Aug. 24.)

Aug. 5 — Eric Steinbach

- Boating under the influence

Sept. 25 — Odell Thurman

- Driving under the influence

Dec. 3 — Reggie McNeal

- Resisting arrest, drug possession

Dec. 9 — Deltha O'Neal

- Driving under the influence

Jan. 22 — Johnathan Joseph

- Drug possession

Source: Los Angeles Times News Services; News Reports; Cincinnati Enquirer

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NATIONAL FOOTBALL SIGNINGS

Success is hard to predict

Recruiting experts fuel fans' desire for news and analysis, but the unforeseen is inevitable

By David Wharton

Times Staff Writer

February 8, 2007

The excitement and hype that have grown up around college football recruiting nearly killed Tom Lemming the other day.

Lemming is one of those recruiting experts whose every word the most-rabid fans devour at this time of year. He was driving through upstate New York to visit a high school prospect when a blizzard trapped him on a rural stretch of road.

"I was there 12 hours," he said. "I didn't even have a hat or gloves. I'm thinking this is the end of me."

During the football signing period, which started again Wednesday, the annual recruiting wars can seem as grim as life or death. Fans want to know how many five-star players their team wooed, where their alma mater ranks among the top incoming classes.

Lemming, editor of Prep Football Report and an analyst for CSTV, offers this advice: "It's a good indicator but don't take it as gospel," he said. "Take it as fun."

The hunger for recruiting news and analysis has spawned a cottage industry of Internet sites and publications in the last 20 years. As UCLA Coach Karl Dorrell says, "It's a lot different now than it has ever been. There are so many services out there."

Yet for all the attention devoted to the subject, predicting a team's future by way of its incoming freshmen can be tricky.

Consider the top-10 classes on two major sites — Scout.com and Rivals.com — over the last five years.

The lists were populated by programs that have enjoyed tremendous success on the field, teams such as Florida, USC, Texas and Louisiana State.

But the difference between a top-10 class and a top-10 finish in the polls can be one close loss, one key injury over the course of a season.

Oklahoma signed highly ranked classes in each of the last three years only to struggle with injuries to tailback Adrian Peterson and the loss of starting quarterback Rhett Bomar, dismissed from the team last summer after allegations that he received improper benefits.

Florida State has failed to compete for a national championship despite a similar string of recruiting victories.

Allen Wallace, the national recruiting editor at Scout.com and publisher of SuperPrep magazine, says that stringing together three or more talented classes is key, but there might be a better indicator.

"Fans should focus on coaching, because it's really more important than the recruiting classes," he said. "You see coaches go into situations where they markedly change a team without changing the talent."

So predicting success for any given prospect can be difficult.

Over the last five years, the experts saw greatness in Vince Young, Ted Ginn Jr., JaMarcus Russell and Calvin Johnson.

But Greg Biggins, the national recruiting editor for StudentSportsFootball.com, recalls when he and others tabbed Whitney Lewis as the star of USC's 2003 class, rating him above Reggie Bush and LenDale White.

Biggins and other experts say they are satisfied with a .500 to .600 batting average when it comes to identifying which high school players can perform at the next level.

"You'd think we could do better because we do so much homework," Wallace said. "But there are so many things you can't see."

While most services rely on a staff of reporters scattered across the nation, Lemming still drives five or six months each year, trying to visit the top 1,500 prospects.

Many college coaches and their assistants have consulted with him over the years or, at the very least, have stopped by his house to look at the high school game film that he gathers.

"That's how I learned to evaluate talent," he said. "I would ask questions. I learned a lot from these coaches."

Lemming knows to look for physical attributes and a knack for making big plays but still characterizes his rankings as an educated guess.

"The NFL spends millions of dollars dealing with 22-year-olds in the draft and makes a ton of mistakes," he said. "We're dealing with 18-year-olds who haven't reached their full potential."

Injuries, family problems, drugs and academic struggles — the list of potential stumbling blocks runs long.

"By far, the hardest thing is you have no idea how this kid is going to physically mature," Biggins said.

Still, college coaches say they scan the Internet sites for information on the prospects they are courting.

"We use it sometimes to watch plays on guys or get updates on their thoughts," USC Coach Pete Carroll said. "You get stuff all the time."

And the uncertainties of recruiting have not seemed to temper fans' anticipation of signing day.

By 9 a.m. Wednesday morning, Wallace was already tracking last-second machinations, noting that Notre Dame had lost two prized recruits to other schools.

"Is it an exact science? Certainly not," he said. "But generally speaking, if your school can sign four- and five-star guys instead of three-star guys, that's what you want."

Times staff writers Gary Klein and Lonnie White contributed to this report.

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COLLEGE SIGNINGS, D9

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Friday, February 9, 2007

RICK BOZICH

An inside look at Selection Sunday

INDIANAPOLIS -- At 12:07 yesterday morning, when you were still debating if the University of Kentucky men's basketball team could hang another 95 points on Florida tomorrow or if the University of Louisville could hang 95 points on *anybody*, this is what I was doing:

Finishing my 11th hour sitting inside a first-floor conference room at NCAA headquarters in downtown Indianapolis, surrounded by enough computers to fly a 747 and enough statistics to choke an accountant. I was debating the fairness of shipping UK to the San Jose Regional of the 2007 NCAA Tournament as a No. 3 seed.

I was one of 20 members of the United States Basketball Writers Association doing something I have often tweaked the NCAA Tournament Selection Committee for doing -- picking the 65-team field. At the NCAA's invitation, of course.

Good thing we weren't picking the real field. Otherwise the first four seeds would have been Lesley Stahl, Andy Rooney, Morley Safer and another face from "60 Minutes," because we missed our deadline for the start of our imaginary CBS Selection Show by more than an hour.

Somebody remind me to be pleasant to the real committee next month. We'd still be arguing if some of the group didn't have flights to catch.

Advertisement For the first time, the NCAA provided an outside group unlimited access to its research materials -- computer rankings, statistical comparison programs, staff, even the snacks the committee prefers (popcorn, M&Ms and vanilla ice cream served promptly at 9 p.m.)

They gave us guidance on how to select, seed and bracket the field, just the way the committee will do it March 11 -- Selection Sunday.

And they gave us all the time we needed.

How much did we need?

This would be the perfect time to say: No comment.

David Worlock, associate director of the Division I men's championship, brought the group to order around 1:30 p.m. Wednesday. I believe that Greg Shaheen, NCAA senior vice president for business and basketball strategies, dismissed us at 1:43 yesterday morning after we had taken 28 ballots and -- gasp -- awarded Alabama the final at-large bid.

Actually that time is inaccurate. At 1:43 at least three members of the basketball-obsessed group were still arguing about the fairness of sticking Marist College with a 15 seed.

I'll eventually get to the first question most of you have -- how did UK, U of L, Indiana University and Western Kentucky University fare? This was *pretend*. It will have no influence on the actual tournament field. But I will tell you what was said about the locals later.

'Demystifying the process'

Here's a more important question: Why would the NCAA do this?

Graciously surround us with 11 staff members, plus Gary Walters of Princeton, chair of the committee, who delivered an opening statement before departing? Share its ranking formulas, its war room equipment (one laptop and three additional computer monitors for every two writers) and a step-by-step walk through the journey?

"We're trying to demystify the process," Worlock said.

"We wanted to show this is a human process that is completed by human beings," said Shaheen, who knows bracketology the way Peyton Manning knows attacking the Cover Two.

After eight hours, and my sixth bottle of water, I was thinking the only humans qualified for this process were Lance Armstrong and Bill Gates.

It was fun. It was tedious. It was stimulating. It was exhausting. It was educational. It was overwhelming. It was a reminder that it's a lot simpler writing the field on a legal pad at the kitchen table than it is debating the genuine facts and credentials in a room of people who know their hoops.

I'll hesitate before I suggest the NCAA arranges first- or second-round matchups simply to titillate CBS cameras or sell tickets. We never considered it. I'll pause before I shriek the NCAA favored a particular league or coach. Never came up. No time. Too many credentials to compare. I discovered ticket sales aren't an issue when 88 percent of the seats are already sold.

We debated for hours. I learned you look at teams, not leagues. We set up juicy potential second-round games like teacher (Tom Izzo of Michigan State) against pupil (Tom Crean of Marquette) -- and didn't realize it until our board was complete.

"We tend to underestimate our bias while overestimating the bias of others," Walters said. "The interesting thing is the serendipity of the event itself. Things just happen." You bet.

And I learned you can argue about teams such as Alabama, Georgetown, Texas and Notre Dame from now until March 11, when CBS answers with its selection show. Eventually you have to vote -- and prepare for the tough questions.

Playing committee

I began with an instruction booklet the NCAA distributed last week. The 20 writers were grouped in pairs. My teammate was John Akers, editor of Basketball Times. Hypothetically we represented Tom O'Connor, the athletic director at George Mason University.

My favorite piece of information was the committee's Nitty-Gritty Report, which featured 16 sets of numbers, beginning with the official Rating Percentage Index computer ranking, and included the average RPI of every team's opponents.

But the NCAA has a better way -- the best way I've seen -- to compare teams. It has created a computer program that enables you to click a mouse four times and put the comparative numbers from three teams on the same monitor.

You can check head-to-head games, common opponents, victories against teams ranked in the top 50, top 100 -- all the good stuff.

You pick your teams with ballot after ballot after ballot, arranged to separate the teams the committee loves from the teams the committee likes from the teams the committee sort of likes from the teams without a prayer. That required at least five hours.

Then you seed the teams. Shaheen called that process the "Soul Train Scramble." The first four were relatively easy. Akers and I nailed UCLA, Florida, North Carolina and Wisconsin, in order.

Then the genuine fussing begins.

We debated Marquette and Pittsburgh for the final two-seed. We argued about Memphis deserving a two or three because of its ties to the unimposing Conference USA. We fussed about how to treat Tennessee, which lost three games while Chris Lofton was injured.

A few minutes past midnight NCAA executive vice president Tom Jernstedt excused himself because he had an early-morning flight to New York City. We kept debating -- and missed our self-imposed deadline of 12:15 by nearly an hour and a half.

In the end there was little debate about Kentucky, which was a solid three seed. Indiana was just as solid as a five. One writer asked if we should discuss Louisville. Nobody seconded that motion. Western Kentucky made the field, but only because Worlock said it won the Sun Belt Conference Tournament. Otherwise the Hilltoppers would have been absent.

"The process has been described as tedious with some necessary redundancy," Shaheen said.

You could say that again.

Reach Rick Bozich at (502) 582-4650 or rbozich@courier-journal.com. Comment on this column, and read his blog and previous columns, at www.courier-journal.com/bozich.

STORYCHAT

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To Cardfan,

I don't believe he contradicted himself there. What I gathered from that is that they were trying to figure out whether Memphis deserved a two or if its schedule was propped up a little bit due to its relatively weak conference.

The first comment you posted, to me implies more looking at teams such as Duke, who could be on the bubble this year. He's saying that they don't look at historical or preferential factors when deciding if a team is in or not, or what seed they deserve.

Posted: Fri Feb 09, 2007 8:31 am

Great insight.....but it sounded as if there were too many chefs in the kitchen.

The more people involved in the decision making process the more debate and arguments.

Not sure how many people are involved in the actual selection process during selection weekend.

Posted: Fri Feb 09, 2007 8:24 am

<<I'll pause before I shriek the NCAA favored a particular league or coach. Never came up. No time. Too many credentials to compare. We debated for hours. I learned you look at teams, not leagues.>>>

But then he contradicts himself...

<<We argued about Memphis deserving a two or three because of its ties to the unimposing Conference USA. >>

LOL

February 8, 2007

Rejecting Stereotypes, Athletes Embrace Size

By JERÉ LONGMAN

NORMAN, Okla., Feb. 5 — The [University of Oklahoma](#) tells women's basketball fans a lot about Courtney Paris, the Sooners' 6-foot-4 center. They know that she ranks third in the country in scoring, second in rebounding and that her dream job is to be a novelist. That her best friend is her identical twin and teammate, Ashley Paris, and that her father, Bubba Paris, won three Super Bowls as a lineman for the [San Francisco 49ers](#).

But one piece of information about Paris is not made public by the university: her weight.

The weights of male athletes are widely publicized by college teams, but 35 years after passage of the gender-equity legislation known as Title IX, and 25 seasons after the [National Collegiate Athletic Association](#) began sponsoring women's basketball, the weights of amateur female athletes are almost never published, in basketball or any other sport.

Even as women are embracing their size and power, projecting the notion that a wide body can be a fit body, the idea of weighing female athletes is under vigorous debate. Some colleges weigh their basketball players regularly to guard against rapid weight loss or gain. Some weigh them infrequently, others not at all.

"It's a sensitivity about eating disorders," said Jody Conradt, the Hall of Fame coach who has led the Texas Longhorns for three decades. "We're dealing with a population that is vulnerable because it's a Type A personality, driven, the people that want to be perfectionists."

Female athletes still face the same enormous societal pressures that other women face to remain thin and to possess a body type that many find unrealistic, especially for sports. Some experts believe athletes feel even greater pressure, given the assumption — also debatable — that they can improve performance by lowering their weight and percentage of body fat. Thus, many become vulnerable to what is called the female athlete triad: eating disorders, interrupted menstruation and osteoporosis.

The N.C.A.A. recommends that women not be weighed on a regular basis, said Dr. Ron A. Thompson, a psychologist and eating-disorder therapist in Bloomington, Ind., who consults with the collegiate association. He said he opposed making weights public and the practice of weighing female athletes. Lining athletes up for weigh-ins is a form of "public degradation," Thompson said.

"Weighing doesn't accomplish anything, and it can cause undue anxiety and even trigger unhealthy weight-loss practices," Thompson wrote in an e-mail message.

The touchy issue of weight received prominent attention recently when the professional tennis star [Serena Williams](#) faced questions about supposedly being out of shape before the Australian Open. After she won the tournament, she

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/02/08/sports/ncaabasketball/08weight.html?_r=1&oref=slogin&ref=sports&... 2/8/2007

faced criticism for appearing to weigh more than a listed 135 pounds.

Williams has led an “in-your-face redefinition of what a strong woman should look like,” said Donna Lopiano, executive director of the Women’s Sports Foundation. Basketball and tennis courts provide an oasis of freedom for female athletes, she said, although she added that “90 percent of their lives is not lived in that oasis” and that women’s sports have “been burdened by a stereotypical view of women.”

Thompson said he tried to assist female athletes, not by focusing on their weight, but on their eating and how it is related to their emotions. Many teams have nutritionists and psychologists available. The trend in college is moving away from weighing athletes, Lopiano said. But colleges are left to make their own decisions.

The female basketball players at top-ranked [Duke](#) are weighed once a week, Coach Gail Goestenkors said; they are not given a target weight, but are monitored to guard against quick weight gain, she said. [Ohio State](#)’s players are also weighed regularly, Coach Jim Foster said, adding, “It’s a medical issue; putting your head in the sand is not an attractive alternative.”

At Tennessee, players are neither weighed nor measured for body-fat percentage, said Jenny Moshak, the university’s assistant athletic director for sports medicine. Instead, players are monitored for performance in such areas as speed, flexibility, vertical jump and weight lifting.

“Far more detrimental things occur when you try to micromanage body shape and size,” Moshak said.

At Texas, players are weighed and tested for lean mass two or three times a year, but always privately by sports-science experts. Coaches of women’s teams are not permitted to weigh players, set target weights or initiate a conversation about weight.

Some Oklahoma players are weighed up to twice a week during preseason, the strength coach Tim Overman said. During the season, they are weighed and tested for percentage of body fat about once a month, Overman said, adding that too much attention paid to weight loss during the season can lead to calorie deficiency and fatigue.

Courtney Paris’s father weighed more than 330 pounds when he was in the N.F.L. He was cut by the 49ers in 1991 when he failed to make their weight limitation of 325 pounds. Overman said he wanted Courtney Paris to lose about 15 pounds, from 240 to 225, so that she could lessen the stress on her body while extending her stamina and the length of her career.

Paris, a 19-year-old sophomore, said she did not generally care if people asked about her weight, saying, “It’s not like I can hide who I am.” She said she was proud and glad to be in game shape, but “being in shape and being conditioned well are things I really have to work on.”

Yet, it is not universally believed that lowering the weight and percentage of body fat of fit athletes will enhance their performance, said Thompson. Some studies indicate improvement, while others do not, he said.

If Paris lost weight, “she might not be as strong or she might be distracted by trying to maintain the weight loss and might not perform as well,” said Thompson, an Oklahoma graduate who said he did not know Paris.

Perhaps never have so many influential centers played on so many commanding teams in one season. Alison Bales, a 6-7 center for Duke, leads the nation in shot blocking, while 6-9 Allyssa DeHaan of [Michigan State](#) is second. Sylvia Fowles of Louisiana State, is 6-6 and anchors the country's top defense; 6-5 Jessica Davenport of Ohio State can play in the post and beyond the 3-point line; and 6-4 Candace Parker of Tennessee can play any position and has transformed the dunk from a novelty shot to a statement of authority.

"There are more centers of different types across the country than I've ever seen," said Sherri Coale, Oklahoma's coach. "You have graceful, powerful, fundamental, thick, long — all shapes and sizes. To me, that's the greatest evolution in that position."

And there is no more dominant center than Paris, who averages 23 points and 16 rebounds a game. Last season as a freshman she became the first collegiate player, man or woman, to collect at least 700 points, 500 rebounds and 100 blocked shots in a season.

"She's a female [Shaquille O'Neal](#)," said Kim Mulkey, who coached Baylor to the 2005 national championship. Kurt Budke, the [Oklahoma State](#) coach, said, "She's the best player in the country."

Because Paris has soft hands and a ravenous anticipation for rebounding, nearly 25 percent of her points have resulted from offensive rebounds — often from her own misses.

"She's got much better hands than [Terrell Owens](#)," said Foster, the Ohio State coach. "She's not going to lead the league in passes dropped."

Paris represents the evolution of a position that has grown more essential as players have become more skilled in the post and comfortable with their size.

Female players today have professional role models in the Women's National Basketball Association, undergo sport-specific weight training, practice regularly against male scout teams and wear baggy uniforms that allow them to be less self-conscious than athletes like volleyball players, gymnasts and swimmers who participate in more revealing outfits.

"We're women who are not apologizing for being bigger and being different or for being athletic," Paris said. "It's more acceptable in society. For my generation, it's really not a big deal."

Her twin sister, Ashley, a center-forward at Oklahoma, said that their mother, who is 6-1, told of slouching as a girl, and of buying shoes that were too small, in an effort not to stand out.

The difference today, at least in basketball, is that big women are more secure in being and playing big, said Goesten Kors, the Duke coach. She said that Bales, the Blue Devils' center, proudly wore three-inch heels, which made her 6-10, while the team was in Cancún, Mexico, in December. Bales said a photograph of her in heels on Duke's Web site had elicited several grateful messages from tall girls or their parents.

"Before, tall girls were all soft and finesse and didn't want contact," Goesten Kors said. "Now it's strong, physical, bring on the contact. Courtney epitomizes that."

Growing up in Piedmont, Calif., Courtney Paris developed her skills against four older brothers, who ranged from 6-4 to 6-8.

“Courtney and Ashley had an opportunity to see their father, who was big and winning championships, and have seen their brothers go off and play ball,” Bubba Paris said in a telephone interview. “In their mind, being big is good; it benefits you.”

That was evident Sunday when Oklahoma overcame an early deficit against Oklahoma State by inserting Ashley Paris in the high post to pass to her sister in the low post. Courtney scored 41 points, 2 below her career high, and grabbed 19 rebounds in a 78-63 victory.

“I think people have fallen away from the stereotype that big means slow and tall means clumsy,” Ashley said.

Adam Himmelsbach contributed reporting from College Park, Md.

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A grip on ethics. Major League Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig excitedly meets with fans after his keynote address last Friday.



History lesson. Selig, who aspired to teach history as a youth, reminisces about his Brewer days.

An Ethical Education

Brand, Selig keynote second annual Ethical Leadership Conference

Ken Leiviska

Posted: 2/7/07

Major League Baseball Commissioner Allan "Bud" Selig and National Collegiate Athletic Association President Myles Brand had plenty to say about the important improvements they have made for their respective widely popular sports organizations at Ripon College last week.

Great Hall played host to these two keynote speakers Feb. 1 and 2 for the Ethical Leadership Program's (ELP) second annual Ethics Conference. As well as the two well-known keynoters, three panels also took place during the conference.

Once the conference came to a close, mixed reviews emerged concerning the conference as a whole.

"The speeches were good, but I don't think they answered the tough questions thoroughly enough," says sophomore Daniel Rodriguez.

Despite some not so satisfactory reviews, Ethical Leadership Program Director David Seligman was confident that the conference was effective overall.

"Overall, we were exceedingly pleased with the conference, the keynoters, the panels and the audience interactions," says Seligman.

Seligman also comments that he and other members of the ELP will meet within the next few weeks to formally evaluate the conference.

Many students claim they enjoyed the portions of the conference they attended, especially Selig. Students say they felt more engaged listening to Selig than Brand.

"Selig was entertaining at least," says senior Nick Morse, who was picked out of the crowd by Selig because of the Yankee hat he wears. "He didn't read off a manuscript like Brand."

However, some students expressed concerns on the content of the keynote speeches.

"It didn't seem like [Selig] covered a lot of the ethical issues, which was the point of the conference," says junior Dave Czarnecki, an active member in the ELP this year.

Other students questioned the motivation behind the speakers.

"I didn't find much of either speech to be about ethics," says senior Matt Watkins, who attended both keynote speeches. "They each had their own agendas or personal stories."

Brand focused mostly on the impact that athletics has on college students. He delivered many statistics, claiming they never lie. He also gave real world examples of successful student athletes after college.

Brand talked about a new formula that the NCAA has devised known as the Graduation Success Rate (GSR), which typically demonstrates a higher graduation rate than the federal averages that are released at the end of each year.

"It is no surprise student athletes experience more success than the general student body," says Brand.

His numbers focused primarily on graduation rates of all student athletes in Division I-A athletics. The numbers are impressive, but the reality of the Division I-A student athlete in the two biggest moneymakers in the NCAA, football and basketball, is that graduation rates are much lower than the average student.

Brand boasted that 63% of all student athletes graduate college, which is higher than the national college graduation rate of 61%. What he did not mention was that the lowest graduation rates among student athletes are in men's basketball and football. However, those numbers are improving under Brand's leadership.

Brand did focus on one major ethical issue that many people queried about during the question and answer portion of the event - steroids.

Selig also addressed the issue during his speech, since it is an ongoing concern in MLB. He made his stance quite clear that steroids are not only wrong, but unethical altogether.

"The integrity of the sport is paramount...without integrity, we have no sport," says Selig.

MLB has banned the use of steroids and amphetamines that players use to build muscle and perform at higher levels. Selig stressed how big of a step this was, since baseball is such an important facet to American society.

"Baseball is a social institution and has great social responsibilities," he says.

Selig went on, calling baseball a "microcosm of American society."

The main focus of his speech was that baseball, just like America, has had its share of problems, but it is how those problems are handled.

Selig believes he is handling the situations that have arisen thus far in baseball.

Although the keynoters may have missed some of the ethical questions, the panels had another opportunity to bring ethics to the forefront.

"[Jack] Bennett was phenomenal [in the second panel]," says junior Adam Sonntag, who was present for the entire

conference. "He really did a great job engaging what was left of the audience."

Many say the second panel, titled "Athletes, Character, and Leadership," did a great job of discussing many of the ethical questions that exist in sports and America today.

Overall, students say they were very pleased with the topic of sports for this year's ELC.

"It definitely generated lots of interest in sports fans," says Watkins, an avid fan of many pro and collegiate sports.

Seligman and Executive Director of the ELP Todd Parker will discuss next year's conference in the near future and hope it can be even more successful than the first two.

Because sports attract so much interest, it may prove difficult to gather as much curiosity for the third annual ELC.

Seligman and Parker are confident that the ELC will only grow due to the recent success of the first two installments.

"Americans have an affinity for sports," says Brand. "Competition is part of our national DNA."

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NCAA bracket facts trump fiction

By [Vahe Gregorian](#)

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Friday, Feb. 09 2007

INDIANAPOLIS — In an enterprise to de-mystify and dispel what it considers myths or conspiracy theories about the making of the NCAA Men's Basketball Tournament, the NCAA on Wednesday shepherded 20 members of the U.S. Basketball Writers Association through a mock selection, seeding and bracketing exercise.

While compressing into 12 hours what has been a four-day marathon culminating a season's worth of work for the 20 committee members, the NCAA endeavored to make the experience as authentic as possible, from the vast information tools it can provide in seconds to the tedium of endless balloting; from the subjectivity of each member's approach to selecting and seeding to the ironclad rules that dictate bracketing; from the late-night ice cream break to assigning the roles of specific committee members to the media.

At moments, those roles were played more literally than liberally.

USBWA president Tom Shatel of the Omaha World-Herald co-played the role of committee chair Gary Walters.

"There are 10 great minds in here," he offered in his opening remarks and pep talk.

Which 10, of course, was another matter.

Just the same, all 20 embraced the experience that ended around 2 a.m. Thursday with a makeshift bracket based on games through Tuesday as well as concocted postseason tournament results designed to create further chaos and test the mock committee's resourcefulness.

To what degree the results are valid even a day later, let alone a month from now on Selection Sunday, is a matter of conjecture. Perhaps no lesson looms larger than the fluidity of the landscape.

But as the real Walters put it, "The integrity of the process always determines the integrity of the result."

And distorted as the novices' approach might have been, the elaborate method to the selection, seeding and bracketing in itself refutes most of the folklore about how March Madness is assembled.

"A lot of what is made of what goes on in the room is, quite frankly, impossible," said Greg Shaheen, NCAA vice president of Division I men's basketball.

Among the concepts debunked:

— The notion that a certain quota exists for certain conferences. Not once in the session did the topic arise of how many teams had made the field from any given conference or how many were deserving. Only when the final bracketing was being conducted was any count of a conference team's members given, and that was only to provide guidance for compliance with the principles and procedures of bracketing.

— The Ratings Percentage Index defines who gets in and who doesn't. Like the conference quota matter, RPI in itself never was discussed as a means of separating two teams or choosing who's in or who's out. Even though it lurks everywhere and thus must at minimum play a subliminal role in how teams are evaluated, it's a fallacy to believe that the number alone is used to make decisions. As with the actual committee, each mock member's own tastes helped define who gets in and where they are seeded. For some it could be the last 10 games, for others it might be strength of schedule. Still others might be guided by record against RPI top 50 or road record. That human factor, the NCAA says, is as crucial to the process as anything else.

— The committee makes it a point to create intriguing matchups. Given that the matchups only come together in the last few hours before the selection show, given the infinite considerations that must be made before teams are slotted, given that so much else must follow from where the top seeds are placed, there's simply no wiggle room for such contrivances.

Case in point from this mock bracket: If East Regional top seed North Carolina and No. 2 Kansas play true to their seeding, Tar Heels coach Roy Williams would face his old team to get to the Final Four.

But Kansas, considered the third-best No. 2 seed, was placed in the East only after ripples that began with the fact Ohio State — the top No. 2 seed — couldn't be sent to the Midwest Regional in St. Louis because Big Ten rival Wisconsin was assigned that regional as a No. 1 seed.

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Baseball's proposed partnership with DirecTV would shut out many fans

Advertisement

Posted 2/8/2007 12:10 AM ET

By Michael McCarthy, USA TODAY

Baseball fans potentially affected by Major League Baseball's proposal to move its pay-per-view package exclusively to DirecTV are voicing their frustration and unhappiness about the plan.

Sen. John Kerry, D-Mass., has called for the Federal Communications Commission to investigate the proposed \$700 million, seven-year deal that would shift the Extra Innings package, beginning this season.

Extra Innings offers up to 60 out-of-market regular-season games a week for \$179 a season. It is particularly popular with transplants who can follow their favorite teams from anywhere in the country. Households with digital cable or satellite TV have been able to get Extra Innings. There are 63 million homes with digital cable or satellite TV, says Brian Dietz, spokesman for the National Cable & Telecommunications Association. DirecTV now has 15.6 million homes.

The MLB-DirecTV deal is expected to include the rollout of a 24-hour baseball channel in 2009 that, combined with network and cable telecasts, could offer viewers more baseball viewing options than ever. MLB and DirecTV declined to comment on the impending deal. Past Extra Innings customers who don't have, can't get or won't get DirecTV are crying foul.

They note many housing developments and apartment complexes ban satellite TV dishes. Potential DirecTV customers also need a clear view of the Southern sky. If their view is blocked by trees or buildings, they can't receive the DirecTV signal.

"It's terrible. People like me are going to be penalized," says David MacGill, an 81-year-old retiree from Indianapolis. He says he has gotten Extra Innings through his cable operator because his community doesn't allow dishes.

If the deal goes through, current or potential Extra Innings customers have a fallback option: watching the games via MLB.com's broadband service at \$79 a year. Approximately 29 million U.S. homes have high-speed Internet connections, says the NCTA's Dietz.

Earl Praml, a 68-year old New Jersey native living in Hilton Head, S.C., says he'd prefer to watch the New York Mets on his 50-inch high-definition TV than his 19-inch computer screen. "Why create a monopoly when there isn't one?" he asks. "The FCC should do something about this."

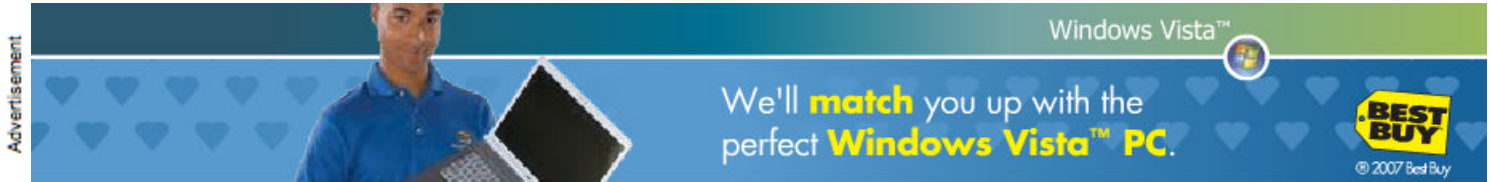
Kerry wrote to FCC Commissioner Kevin Martin last week, asking him to look into the proposed deal's implications for consumers. FCC spokesman Clyde Ensslin confirmed that Martin received the letter but declined to comment further.

Find this article at:

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Have globe-trotting prep basketball teams gone too far? Advertisement

Updated 2/9/2007 2:29 AM ET

By David Leon Moore, USA TODAY

LAKEWOOD, Calif. — Arriving at the big high school basketball game these days isn't as simple as hopping on the team bus and heading to a rival gym.

Before tip-off of a recent clash of nationally ranked teams at Duke's Cameron Indoor Stadium, Huntington (W. Va.) needed a court order for its suspended star, O.J. Mayo, to take the court — a case that continues with another hearing Friday.

The other team, Lakewood's Artesia, needed a coast-to-coast red-eye flight, part of a five-games-in-six-days ordeal — during final exams week. The players missed two days of classes.

Upon his return to class, Artesia guard Malik Story sat down to take an algebra final and "was about half-there mentally. ... I think I did bad. I tried to remember stuff, but I couldn't. I was so tired. I just wanted to go home and go to sleep."

PREP RALLY: [Share your thoughts on the direction of high school sports](#)

He got no sympathy from his algebra teacher. "I knew that was going to happen," Karen Woi says. "The coach should have realized that was going to happen. It was bad planning by the coach. I don't think they should have made that trip."

She's not alone.

Artesia's marathon hoops journey might be an extreme case. But increasingly, in a world of national rankings, including the USA TODAY Super 25, and games shown on ESPN channels, elite high school basketball teams are doing everything they can to seek exposure, revenue for their schools and maybe a better spot in the rankings. The question is: Who is willing to regulate this?

"We're blowing ... high school basketball totally out of proportion," says Len Elmore, a former college and NBA player who is a practicing attorney, an ESPN college basketball analyst and a member of the Knight Commission, a watchdog panel seeking reforms in college sports.

"It's not just ESPN. It's not just USA TODAY, and it's not just the various Internet sites that focus on high school sports and recruiting," Elmore says. "They're just contributory to the culture, this cult of celebrity that's now trickled down to the kids."

Loren Grover, the Artesia coach and a history teacher, says his administration didn't balk at the proposed trip despite the timing.

"I don't think it's excessive, not if we can compete at that level," says Grover, in his first year as head coach. "It's a good opportunity for these guys. Some of them have never flown in an airplane in their lives. How many of them will ever get the chance to play in Cameron Indoor Stadium?"

Grover adds, however, he probably won't schedule another week like last week.

"That was more a rookie mistake than anything. I'd at least try to get a day of rest in there."

By comparison, Artesia's schedule would not have been allowed in the NBA. The league limits teams to playing two games in a row — or, at the most, four games in five days, NBA spokesman Tim Frank says. And under the NBA's labor agreement, teams cannot play back-to-back games across more than two time zones.

The events surrounding the Artesia-Huntington game got a lot of people thinking of ways to regulate the increasing number of long road trips involving missed class time.

The National Federation of High School Sports says it's up to state or local federations to set restrictions on out-of-state travel.

"We have a policy within our federation that students should not be missing class time to play in these games," executive director Bob Kanaby says, "but we have no regulatory power over that."

The California Interscholastic Federation-Southern Section, the governing body for most Southern California schools, including Artesia, also has no restrictions on out-of-state trips. CIF-SS Commissioner Jim Staunton says a provision limiting out-of-state games or limiting missed class days would have to come from member schools.

"We would very seriously consider a bylaw to address that type of thing," he says.

The schools, for now, must decide how to balance athletic ambitions and academic requirements.

Schools jumping at dollar signs

The rise in showdown interstate games between hoops powerhouses, many shown on ESPN, ESPN2 or ESPNU, accelerated when LeBron James became a phenom at St. Vincent-St. Mary High School in Akron, Ohio, early this decade.

James had been on the cover of *Sports Illustrated* when ESPN showed his team's game against Oak Hill Academy of Mouth of Wilson, Va., on Dec. 12, 2002. That was the first regular-season high school basketball game ESPN had shown since 1989.

Now ESPN does about 10 such games a year. The next will be Feb. 22: Mayo, the best player in the country this year, and Huntington against St. Patrick High School (Elizabeth, N.J.), No. 1 in the USA TODAY rankings.

Burke Magnus, vice president and general manager of ESPNU, says his goal is to identify and focus on the top player in a given year.

He says he is concerned about schools missing class time to play in these games: "Had we been involved in the Artesia game, with their schedule, I certainly would have been uncomfortable with that kind of arrangement."

ESPN, though, leaves the matchmaking and business arrangements to outside organizers such as Paragon Marketing, which is arranging the Huntington-St. Patrick game at Marshall University in Huntington.

Rashid Ghazi, a partner at Paragon, says his firm pays the expenses of the traveling teams at such games. Each school also is guaranteed \$1,000 or a percentage of the gate — 33% for each school for one game, 20% for a doubleheader, with Paragon taking the odd share.

A big gate means a big payday. Ghazi says the game between Huntington and Hyattsville (Md.) DeMatha on Jan. 6 at Marshall netted each school "upwards of \$25,000."

"Money is now starting to creep into what's going on in high school sports," says Peter Roby, director of the Center for the Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University. "That's disturbing."

Rankings motivate teams

Some schools chase the money. Some chase a chance to move up in the rankings, particularly the USA TODAY rankings.

Was that a motivation for Artesia to take the game against Huntington despite the difficult schedule?

"Yes, absolutely," Grover says. "We were ranked pretty high. The only way you can really tell who's better than anyone else is if they play each

other. The only way that can really happen is if you have events like this."

Despite a strong basketball tradition at Artesia, Grover says he doesn't feel a lot of pressure to win or rise in the national rankings. "But I know a number of programs where there is a lot of pressure to win," he says. "They need to be nationally ranked every year. It's just one of those things, you know?"

Monte Lorell, USA TODAY's managing editor/sports, says the rankings were "never intended to lead schools to do some of the things they're doing in terms of scheduling or in adding pressures to win. It was really a way to give a broader national perspective.

"And we've never given up the aspect of covering the issues and trends in high school sports."

One school accustomed to being ranked every year, and certainly a willing participant in the proliferation of national-showdown games, is Oak Hill. Oak Hill played another school in the Super 25 rankings, Mater Dei, at the Duke doubleheader in which Artesia and Huntington played. (Like Artesia, Mater Dei played in California the night after the Duke event, but Mater Dei had gone three days without a game before playing at Duke and went two days without a game after the back-to-back games.)

The small Baptist school, No. 2 in the USA TODAY rankings, in southwestern Virginia has two varsity squads. Players on the gold team, usually stocked with transfers, rarely attend the school for more than two years en route to a top college program. Alumni include NBA players Carmelo Anthony and Jerry Stackhouse.

Players on the red team play a different schedule and rarely move up to the gold squad.

The gold team in the last eight seasons is 301-11. Four times it finished No. 1 in the USA TODAY Super 25, most recently in 2005. Last year it finished No. 2.

"The banner hanging in the gym says it all: 2006 national runner-up," Nolan Smith, the lone returning player, said at the start of the season. "It's a motivator for the upcoming season. ... When you put on the Oak Hill uniform, you are expected to win."

Discipline under scrutiny

Mayo was nearly kept out of uniform for his team's widely anticipated showdown against Artesia by the two technical fouls that triggered an automatic two-game suspension from the West Virginia Secondary School Activities Commission (WVSSAC).

But Mayo got a West Virginia circuit court judge to issue a temporary restraining order, allowing him to play and help Huntington beat Artesia 73-66.

Mayo's lawyer is expected to argue Friday that Mayo never should have received a second technical foul. Huntington Principal Greg Webb says the school has shared with the judge a home video that shows a different view than the video widely circulated last week on the Internet showing the referee issuing both technicals.

Webb says the school plans to discipline Mayo but, citing federal privacy rules, declined to discuss the details. He also says Mayo's family thinks it "deserves the right to be heard in court" because there is no appeals process in the state activities commission rules.

Elmore says he laughed when he heard a high school player was using the legal system to contest a technical foul. "That judge," he says, "ought to take a long look in the mirror."

Mike Hayden, the WVSSAC executive director, wasn't surprised Mayo and the school are contesting the suspension. "Unfortunately, it does happen," he says. "State associations have a problem with local courts making political decisions based upon their own communities rather than enforcing the rules that have been handed down."

Artesia is at home, getting ready for its playoffs, and the team's players have had a chance to catch up on their sleep, if not their grades.

Still, Story, who could barely stay awake during his algebra final, thinks the Duke trip was worth it.

"It was a great experience ... traveling, being on a plane," he says. "We felt like a college team, or an NBA team."

Contributing: Chris Lawlor, Janice Lloyd, Dick Patrick



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Mobile ESPN to relaunch through Verizon

Posted 2/8/2007 7:49 AM ET

By Bruce Meyerson, The Associated Press

NEW YORK — ESPN is relaunching its shuttered cellphone service through Verizon Wireless, this time delivering its flashy feed of sports scores, news and video highlights through a top industry player instead of competing for subscribers with its own full-blown wireless brand.

The multiyear agreement giving Verizon Wireless exclusive U.S. rights to offer the Mobile ESPN application on its V Cast phones was expected to be announced on Thursday, executives at both companies said on condition of anonymity because the deal had not yet been finalized.

The companies also planned to announce that a broadcast TV service for cellphones that Verizon plans to introduce will feature an ESPN channel with much of the same programming being shown on its sports cable networks. Verizon expects to offer the service over MediaFLO — a separate wireless network developed by Qualcomm that can broadcast up to 20 TV channels — in at least one market by the end of March.

The Mobile ESPN service, expected to launch in the coming months, is to be included free as part of the \$15 a month or \$3 a day charge for V Cast's assorted multimedia offerings, the executives said.

The Verizon relationship is the first example of the new strategy that ESPN executives promised last September in announcing they were pulling the plug on Mobile ESPN as a standalone cellphone company featuring its own handsets, calling plans, customer service and monthly phone bills.

That ambitious venture, launched in late 2005 by parent company Walt Disney, is believed to have signed up fewer than 30,000 customers despite drawing positive reviews for the sophisticated multimedia application that ESPN created to deliver its popular TV and Web content within the cramped constraints of a cellphone.

By contrast, Verizon Wireless has 59 million subscribers, a third of whom have phones compatible with V Cast.

"Not all people with V Cast-capable handsets use V Cast. We expect ESPN will drive additional adoption," the Verizon executive said.

The companies declined to disclose the financial terms or exact length of the deal, though one executive noted that a multiyear arrangement is lengthier than a typical wireless content agreement.

The Mobile ESPN application will be adapted to all phones compatible with V Cast, starting with perhaps a couple of models at the outset, the executive said.

Mobile ESPN offers real-time scoring updates, video highlights, short newscasts and news alerts. Many features can be customized around a user's favorite sports or teams. Participants in ESPN.com fantasy sports will be able to manage their teams via cellphone.

Verizon has been beefing up V Cast with marquis names in hopes of generating more revenue from non-voice services as it invests billions to

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upgrade its cell network for speedier data connections. In late November, the company reached deals to feature user-generated video from YouTube and Revver.com.

The shutdown of Mobile ESPN as an independent wireless carrier marked the first major bust in a rush of specialized cell ventures targeting niche audiences they contend are underserved by the Cingulars and Verizons of the world.

Last year, Disney said it had invested a combined \$150 million in developing Mobile ESPN and Disney Mobile, another so-called "MVNO," or mobile virtual network operator, that is still available. An MVNO doesn't have its own wireless network. Instead, it puts its brand on another wireless operator's service — whose name is hidden from the customer — and offers its own lineup of handsets and calling plans.

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