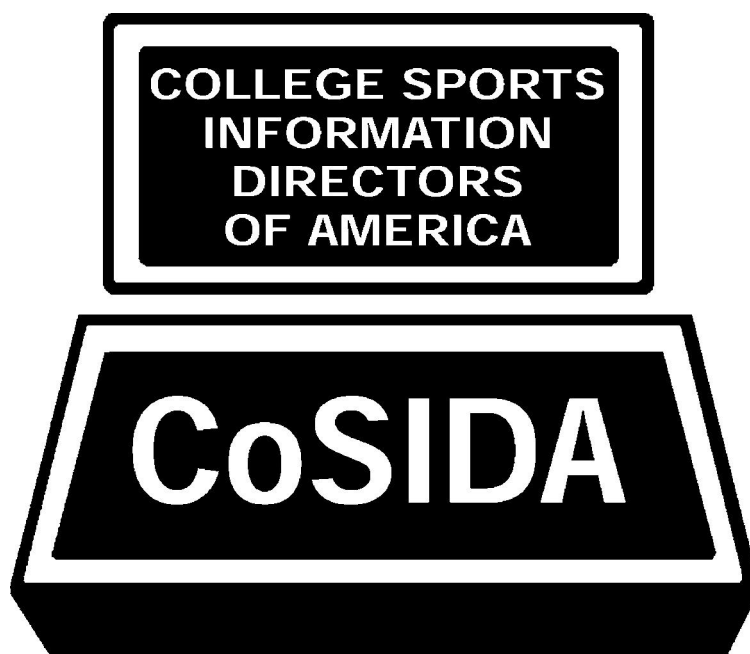


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Management's Misjudgement Gives JetBlue a Black Eye

Passengers Stranded Bruise Carrier's Customer-Service Reputation

By [Rich Thomaselli](#)

Published: February 19, 2007

NEW YORK (AdAge.com) -- In today's 24/7 media world even the best brands are only ever one horrible misstep away from a PR disaster. Just ask JetBlue.



Last week's debacle that stranded large numbers of passengers was a big blow to JetBlue's carefully cultivated marketing image.

Blow to reputation

The low-cost carrier built its brand not on ads, but on a brand experience that's epitomized by its mission statement: "Our promise: to continue to bring humanity back to air travel." But last week many passengers claimed to have suffered distinctly inhumane treatment, delivering

a big blow to the reputation of the airline, which was slammed in headlines such as "Jet Black and Blue."

A lapse in judgment during last week's winter storm on the East Coast has damaged a brand that for the most part has been an industry darling. JetBlue left 10 of its planes on the tarmac at New York's John F. Kennedy Airport, stranding passengers onboard for six hours or longer -- one flight for nearly 11 hours -- with no food, no adequate restrooms and no explanation for what was going on. The airline canceled half of its 571 flights Feb. 14 and compounded the problem by waiting nearly five hours to notify transit officials and request help in getting the passengers off the planes and back to the terminal.

Heavy media coverage

In the days following, the media was all over the debacle, with stories inescapable on TV news, online (with special attention

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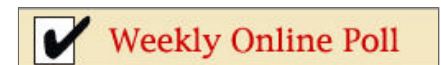
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from the Drudge Report) and in print (*The New York Post* devoted a spread to the tale).

"They blew it," said Steve Danishek, a Seattle travel-industry analyst. "Now it affects their brand. The cost they would have incurred to unload the planes, while high, they could have written off as goodwill. Now they have no goodwill."

JetBlue CEO David Neeleman admitted as much. "It was a horrible situation," he told CNBC. "It's going to certainly impact us, and it's going to be many millions of dollars that we're going to lose from this."

The 7-year-old airline has been immune from criticism for much of its existence, in part because of its low fares and in part for its service-oriented features that include leather seats and seat-back TVs. In fact, the airline was *Advertising Age's* Marketer of the Year in 2002.

But the bloom started to come off the rose last year when on-time percentages went down and complaints went up. Now this.

Damage control

The airline did its mea culpa, offering refunds and free future flights. A spokesman said JetBlue will assess the situation to make sure it doesn't happen again. But that might not be enough.

"I can't imagine that this is not going to cost them some bookings," said Dean Headley, a professor of marketing and entrepreneurship at Wichita State University in Kansas and co-author of the Airline Quality Review. "JetBlue flies into markets where people have other choices. Anytime you make a big promise on a service base like that and then not deliver, or at least violate that promise rather publicly, the fallout on that is so difficult to completely know. It's difficult from a PR standpoint to even control it."

Jonathan Bernstein, president of Bernstein Crisis Management in Sierra Madre, Calif., said JetBlue has already built up a good enough reputation to survive the fallout.

"If they do any advertising at all about this, it should be in the form of an advertorial, a CEO letter in publications that are well-read by their consumer base," Mr. Bernstein said. "TV ads have worked before, say for restaurants touched by the E. coli scare, for instance. But I believe editorial copy will be better received than a plain TV ad."

Assessing the fallout

For its part, JetBlue said it has no plans to do any marketing to defuse the situation until it has time to assess the fallout.

This isn't the first time something like this has happened. Northwest Airlines stranded thousands of passengers during a 1999 storm in Detroit; one flight sat on the tarmac for 11 hours. The airline now has a policy that passengers cannot be stuck on a grounded plane for more than three hours. Northwest rebounded and remains the country's fifth-largest airline.

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JetBlue wasn't the only airline to suffer problems last week. MSNBC talk-show host Joe Scarborough sat on a Delta Air Lines flight-41E, a center seat -- for nine hours trying to get from LaGuardia to Florida through Atlanta.

"Hey, listen, stuff happens, and I try to be very zen about the whole episode," Mr. Scarborough said on his show. "But I've yet to get an apology from Delta, and, instead, I'm getting spin from a company that's refusing to take responsibility for one bad decision after another," he said. "I'm waiting for that apology and my own free round-trip tickets, or I may just find me another airline."

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Athletes share feedback on academics

University of Georgia

By Rebecca K. Quigley | rebecca.quigley@onlineathens.com | Story updated at 10:26 PM on Tuesday, February 20, 2007

Student-athletes at the University of Georgia say they have no excuse not to perform well in class with all the extra tutoring the UGA Athletic Association expects, make-ups that professors allow and new policies that dock students from competition for slacking off.

The University Council's Committee on Intercollegiate Athletics met with about a dozen student-athletes Tuesday from football, women's volleyball and swimming, and men's basketball and track and field teams.

The NCAA requires a faculty committee at each university to meet with student-athletes and their academic counselors once a year to make sure athletes are getting the academic support they need. Committee members asked the students how they balance sports and academics, how they relate to their professors and what the committee can do to help them succeed academically.

It's a wonder that many UGA student-athletes do as well in their classes as they do, considering their 4 a.m. to 10 p.m. non-stop schedule, committee members said at the end of the meeting.

Football players get up at about 4 a.m. three days during the week for hourlong athletic drills at 5 a.m., then go to tutoring sessions starting at 7 a.m., then classes, afternoon practice, and end their days with evening study halls or more tutoring sessions, said receiver Mikey Henderson and defensive tackle Kade Weston.

Committee chairman and math professor Malcolm Adams asked if athletes ever fall asleep or have trouble concentrating in class.

"That's a concern," Henderson said. "You can't stay up late at night. ... You have to eat healthy food."

If they aren't studying longer hours for extra projects or exams, a lot of athletes crash at about 10 p.m., said Weston and men's track and field runner Ross Ridgewell.

Athletes in other sports have similarly long days, they said, adding that many players put in 20 hours a week of required workouts for their sport, and at least 20 hours more for warm-up, travel, meetings and other responsibilities.

To keep student-athletes focused on academics, UGA Athletic Association officials last month started enforcing a policy that includes \$10 fines and suspending student-athletes from regular-season games if they miss too many classes or tutoring sessions.

The number of times student-athletes missed tutoring sessions dropped from 421 over a three-week period in September to 46 over a three-week period in January. In the same time periods, athletes missed class 82 times before the policy went into effect and 19 times after.

Athletes missed those classes and appointments because they didn't face consequences, said men's track and field thrower Nathan Rolfe.

"Coaches pretty much gave you a slap on the wrist," Rolfe said.

Ridgewell thinks the new policy will keep student-athletes on the ball.

"I'm not going to miss a tutoring session, because I don't have \$10 to give," he said.

Committee member and education professor Denise Mewborn asked if staff ever directs athletes to easier classes, and in a couple of months, the committee plans to discuss a report on what classes athletes take more of and how student-athletes' grades compare to their classmates in those classes.

"There's not any cushy classes that I've found," said Ridgewell, a transfer student from Australia.

With the new policy and specialized tutoring student-athletes receive, they said they think the athletic department is doing all it can to help them.

"This school is so much better at catering to what you need," said Rolfe, a transfer student from Kenmore, Wash.

The academic support programs focus on specifics, like making sure students get tutoring on specific topics, versus just putting in study hall hours, Rolfe said.

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NCAA's winning formula confounds ACC coaches

By Gary Lambrecht
Sun reporter

February 21, 2007



Nearly a year after getting stung on NCAA tournament selection day, Florida State men's basketball coach Leonard Hamilton is still smarting, still annoyed that his Seminoles missed out on the sport's main event.

After all, Florida State had won 19 games, finished 9-7 in the Atlantic Coast Conference and had beaten top-ranked Duke at home in early March after losing in overtime to the Blue Devils on the road. But, in the eyes of the NCAA selection committee, the Seminoles' weak nonconference schedule and lightweight power rating relegated them to the National Invitation Tournament.

A year later, with his Seminoles in the hunt for an at-large bid - and with the ACC poised to send a record number of teams to the tournament, after the league's weakest showing since the NCAA opened the party to 64 teams - Hamilton is still wondering what the NCAA wants as it forms the bracket.

"I'm a little confused about what goes into the evaluating process," Hamilton said. "It seems as though there has been a very aggressive attempt to place emphasis on nonconference schedules. In the last year or so, more emphasis has been placed on road victories. I hear this year [the selection committee] is going to place more value on postseason conference tournaments.

"In most years, if you went .500 or better [in the ACC], that was considered a positive. For whatever reason, in the last year or so, that's been devalued. [The criteria] seems to be a moving target."

Unless several teams, including ninth-place Florida State, fade badly down the stretch, the ACC should rectify last season's failure with a historic achievement next month. Currently, nine of the league's 12 schools - including sixth-place Maryland, which is trying to bounce back after two straight NCAA tournament misses - are in position to get the call on Selection Sunday.

That could portend a quantum leap from 2006, when only four ACC schools got to the NAAs. The one-third participation rate matched the lowest ever for the conference since the tournament expanded to 64 teams in 1985.

In 1999 and 2000, three of nine ACC teams appeared in the NCAA tournament. Since 1985, the league has sent six schools to the NAAs, its highest number ever, nine times. Each year, and most recently in 2004, the conference

consisted of eight or nine members.

The raw numbers point to the ascendance of the ACC in 2007, and it all starts with the Rating Percentage Index (RPI). That is the power rating system that mainly takes into account a team's winning percentage, its opponents' winning percentage and the winning percentage of its opponents' opponents.

This week, nine ACC schools rank in the top 50 of the NCAA's RPI rankings, more than from any other conference. Only North Carolina State, Miami and Wake Forest are out of the fold. The ACC also is rated the second-strongest league, just behind the Southeastern Conference, by CollegeRPI.com. The Sagarin computer rankings list the ACC as the most powerful conference.

But, as Princeton athletic director and Division I men's basketball committee chairman Gary Walters said, RPI will not tell the committee the entire story. As it seeks to separate tournament contenders that are bunched and tries to decide between strong mid-major schools and middle-of-the-pack members of the major leagues, the group will look at conference tournament results, strength and results of nonconference schedules, and how teams are performing late in the season.

Thirty-one teams receive automatic bids for winning conference titles. The other 34 schools are at-large selections. A 65th team and a play-in game were added in 2001.

"The RPI as a quantitative model is a tool. It's a useful tool, but it's not the only tool," Walters said. "Understand that the RPI is a general indicator of relative strength. It is not a precise indicator of absolute strength."

Maryland coach Gary Williams has seen his Terps (20-7, 6-6) rise from No. 35 to 19 in the NCAA's RPI rankings with a three-game winning streak over visiting Duke and at N.C. State and Clemson.

"There's facts out there that anybody can see, in terms of the league," Williams said. "We have some pretty good statistics to support the ACC this year. Hopefully, they'll speak for themselves."

Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski wants the whole season's performance judged equally.

"People who put emphasis on the last 10 games or conference [tournament] play, that's wrong. It's what a team has done over the entire year," Krzyzewski said. "I'm not saying just choose with the RPI. But the RPI does try to tell you what a team has done for the whole year. That RPI shows the ACC is the most powerful conference, and it has nine teams that could be eligible for the NCAA tournament."

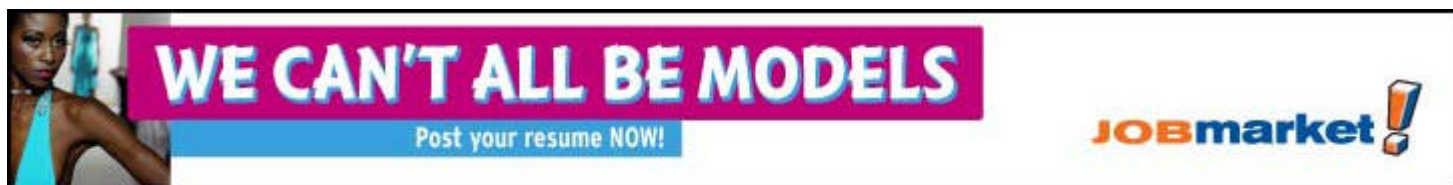
Jerry Palm, who operates CollegeRPI.com - which also has nine ACC schools ranked in the top 50 - sees at least six ACC teams getting into the NCAAs. Some schools could be eliminated through head-to-head competition in the coming weeks. For example, Maryland could damage Florida State's chances tonight in College Park.

"I think six is more like a minimum this year," Palm wrote in an e-mail response. "I doubt all nine potential teams will get in, but seven or eight could."

Coaches such as Hamilton and Georgia Tech's Paul Hewitt, who supports more play-in games to include more of the 336 Division I schools, want the NCAA committee to keep its eyes trained on the ACC's overall strength.

"Whenever you go on the road, it's such a tremendous atmosphere. In other leagues I've been in, there have been some games where the atmosphere wasn't as enthusiastic. That does not exist in the ACC," said Hamilton, who has coached in the SEC, the old Big Eight and the Big East.

"If you're not mentally ready to play at your best, you'll get your hat handed to you, regardless of where you are in the standings on that particular night. I'm not sure the nation or the committee appreciates that."



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MEN'S BASKETBALL

No football, less TV means uphill battle for mid-majors

Smaller conferences try to get exposure, dollars from TV, but they use other networks, Web, too.

By Kyle Nagel

Staff Writer

Wednesday, February 21, 2007

Mike Cusack, the Wright State University athletic director, has a family that extends across the country, from a brother on Long Island to another in California. Earlier this month, those siblings were able to watch the school's men's basketball team play against Detroit on ESPN2, a relative rarity for programs not part of college sports' six power conferences.

"So my brother calls from New York and says, 'You guys must be doing well,' " Cusack said.

Cusack's brother is like millions of college basketball fans across the country who in part gauge teams and conferences by major television appearances, which makes Wright State's nationally televised game — like the University of Dayton's a week before it — a small victory for the mid-major programs.

With less to offer at the bargaining table, the country's mid-majors are forced to the edges of availability on ESPN and ESPN2, considered college basketball's two main regular-season objectives. And because the basketball programs at these schools mean so much to the financial health of their athletic departments, promoting the teams remains on the front-burner, as the less-noticed Division I schools fight for recognition.

There isn't much room, however. The Bowl Championship Series conferences — the Atlantic Coast, Big 12, Big East, Big Ten, Southeastern and Pacific-10 — trump the mid-majors with big-time college football built in to their television contracts. Other conferences such as the Atlantic 10, Horizon League and Mid-American Conference can't match the desire for big-time football and find themselves with less time on college basketball's main stage.

"Football carries a big stick," said Mike Bobinski, the Xavier University athletic director.

Television, of course, can produce big-time money. Of the NCAA's \$500 million collected in revenue during the 2004-05 academic year, \$432.6 million came from television rights fees, according to tax records.

The conferences also face big gains. The ACC and Big 12 combined to bring in \$114.4 million from rights fees that year, or 47 percent of their total revenue. Meanwhile, the A-10, Horizon League and MAC listed \$2.3 million in

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revenue from television rights, or 12 percent of their total revenue.

"I think it's fair to say a majority of the work that comes out of the conference office is directly or indirectly related to getting our games on television," said Rick Chryst, the MAC commissioner. "Whether that's scheduling, marketing or anything else, the goal, ultimately, is to get on television."

Alternatives to ESPN

Before Wright State hosted Cal State-Fullerton last weekend as part of ESPN's BracketBusters event — the main opportunity for mid-majors to take the spotlight — WSU point guard DaShaun Wood didn't know much about the opponent.

"Actually," Wood said, "I didn't even know they had a basketball team."

Wood wonders if people in California are saying the same thing about Wright State. Just as Fullerton, a member of the Big West Conference, wouldn't be seen in Ohio, the Raiders' surprising season won't make a blip on the California radar unless they get on national television.

This season, ESPN and ESPN2 will air 252 men's college basketball games. Schools from BCS conferences will make almost three-fourths of those appearances, while the other 25 Division I conferences are left searching for ways to get their games to fans.

The Atlantic 10 this season turned to CSTV in a five-year contract that grants the network rights to all A-10 games not chosen by ESPN. The goal for CSTV — which mirrors other niche networks such as ESPNU and NFL Network — is to become a regular fixture with cable carriers. Currently, Time Warner Cable offers CSTV as part of a 12-channel package (including Speed Channel, NBA TV and Tennis Channel) for \$2.95 per month.

Last year, the Horizon League began the Horizon League Network, which streams all conference games on members' Web sites. Five of the nine conference schools, including Wright State, also broadcast their nonconference games, many times using the visual from their video boards and audio from their radio broadcasts.

With limited chances on television, the conferences had to look elsewhere.

"So many times necessity is the mother of invention," said Jon LeCrone, the Horizon League commissioner.

Other conferences are taking different chances. In December, eight D-I conferences — the Big South, Southern, Big West, Colonial Athletic Association, Big Sky, America East, Patriot League, and Atlantic Sun — signed a deal with the American Channel for broadcast rights to more than 200 games and matches per year. The channel, which according to its Web site is a "new network that tells the extraordinary stories of ordinary people," expects to launch this summer.

"For many conferences like us, basketball is our livelihood," said Linda Bruno, the A-10 commissioner. "We have to pay very close attention to that and get it to our fans, somehow."

Connecting to fans

When Ted Kissell was a budding athletic administrator at the University of Arizona, the school's basketball team played a game against Illinois on national television and lost by a significant margin. The next day, Kissell stopped by coach Lute Olsen's office to say some kind words.

"He told me, 'There's no such thing as a bad national TV game,' " said Kissell, now UD's athletic director.

The point, of course, is that any chance to gain mass viewership is a victory, even if the game itself is a monumental

loss. One of the battles that teams fight with television is recruiting.

Some coaches and administrators feel that name recognition helps almost as much as coaching philosophies and personalities when it comes to building the future rosters. With fewer chances on the national stage, the mid-major schools fear they'll lose more players to the major programs.

"It's nice to watch the team you'll be playing for when you're still in high school," said Brian Roberts, the UD junior guard. "But sometimes, when a team isn't on TV as much, you could want to go there to help them get more attention."

More and more, administrators say, that attention is coming from new forms of technology. CSTV, along with airing games on its own station, sells the television rights to other games, creates and controls team and conference athletic Web sites and works to stream games on Web sites.

Horizon League officials said their own Web streaming has been successful. Will Roleson, the conference's associate commissioner for communications and multimedia, said one Butler player had a relative watch a basketball game from Iraq.

Smaller conferences hope the Internet can continue different options for fans, aside from waiting for ESPN to call.

"Our goal is to connect college sports fans to their teams in more ways than anyone else," said Tim Perneti, CSTV's executive vice president for content.

Still, television remains the crown jewel of broadcasting, and ESPN rules that world. In all, the network will broadcast 796 games on one of its properties this season, including ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU, ESPN Full Court and ESPN360.

"I don't know how much more college basketball we can put on TV," said Bobinski, the Xavier AD. "There has to be a saturation point, but it doesn't seem like anything in our world goes backwards."

BCS at the top

There will be 502 individual team appearances from college basketball's 31 Division I conferences this season on ESPN and ESPN2. Teams from Bowl Championship Series conferences will make 372 of those 502 appearances (74.1 percent). Here are the number of appearances, by conference:

97 — Big East Conference

78 — Atlantic Coast Conference

76 — Big 12 Conference

69 — Big Ten Conference

40 — Southeastern Conference

26 — West Coast Conference

19 — Conference USA

17 — Missouri Valley Conference

15 — Atlantic-10 Conference

12 — Pacific-10 Conference

7 — Horizon League

6 — Western Athletic Conference

5 — Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference

4 — Colonial Athletic Association

4 — Mid-American Conference

4 — Mountain West Conference

3 — Patriot League

3 — Southern Conference

3 — Sun Belt Conference

2 — Big Sky Conference

2 — Big West Conference

2 — Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference

2 — Ohio Valley Conference

2 — Southwestern Athletic Conference

1 — America East Conference

1 — Big South Conference

1 — Ivy League

0 — Atlantic Sun Conference

0 — Mid Continent Conference

0 — Northeast Conference

0 — Southland Conference

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**ESPN.com:** Forde[\[Print without images\]](#)

Saturday, February 17, 2007

Broyles goes out as last of his kind

By Pat Forde
ESPN.com

Say goodbye to the Last Emperor.

A palace coup finally got Frank Broyles this weekend, ending what might be the most powerful run anyone has ever had in big-time college athletics. At the reported urging of boosters and trustees, the 82-year-old Arkansas athletic director announced his resignation Saturday, effective at the end of 2007 -- the 50th anniversary of his being named football coach in Fayetteville.

I'll assert that no collegiate athletic figure has controlled a campus and a state the way Frank Broyles has controlled Arkansas. And no college athletic figure ever will again.

Joe Paterno? Not the same length of time in charge -- and he's only a football coach. Bo Schembechler? Nope -- his tenure as AD was far shorter than Broyles'. Even Bear Bryant must take a back seat to Broyles in terms of longevity and scope.

Bryant, considered the ultimate Southern athletic icon, was the coach at Alabama for 25 years and died shortly after he retired. Broyles coached football for 20 years and has been the boss of a sprawling, striving athletic department for 33 (there was a three-year overlap when he was coach and AD). He was beloved as a coach, and also had the business acumen to oversee a multi-sport corporation in times of record prosperity.

Beyond winning a slice of the 1964 national title and coaching a game against Texas in 1969 that was so important the president of the United States flew in to attend, there was an entire second chapter as head Hog.

Broyles launched, altered and/or terminated dozens of coaching careers. He was a key player in the most significant conference shakeup in college history, helped hasten the demise of the Southwest Conference and the further empowerment of the Southeastern Conference by moving Arkansas from the former to the latter. He helped make the SEC more than just a one-team basketball league, as the Razorbacks became the first school from that league not named Kentucky to win a national title. He saw Arkansas develop into a track and field dynasty. He rounded up the money to make state-of-the-art facilities sprout like mushrooms all over campus. And he generally loomed, larger than life, over all things Razorback.

College football in the South was a lily-white enterprise when he took over as head coach of the Razorbacks in late 1957. Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus' resistance to federally mandated integration of Little Rock public schools had just occurred that fall, prior to Broyles taking over, and it would be many years thereafter before the Razorbacks had an African-American football player. Yet Broyles would ultimately make a ground-breaking diversity hire: naming Nolan Richardson his basketball coach in the mid-1980s, and seeing it pay off with a national championship in 1994.

In his spare time Broyles was ABC's lead college football analyst, his buttery Southern accent teaming with Keith Jackson on the national Game of the Week. He captained a \$1 billion capital campaign for the university at large. And he has the national award for the top college football assistant coach named in his honor.

He knew Bill Clinton personally. He hired and fired Richardson. Eddie Sutton and Lou Holtz called him boss. And he went through nine layers of



Frank Broyles has been with the University of Arkansas for a half century.

melodrama with Houston Nutt.

It was his relationship with Nutt and the Arkansas football players that finally drove Broyles off his throne, if you believe the talk. This all started with the fracturing of the Arkansas program in the midst of a breakthrough 10-4 season.

In the end, it appears that part of Broyles' undoing was what made him a one-man dynasty: his craving for control, his zest for hands-on leadership.

The Hogs' 10-win season ended in chaos: they lost their last three games, their first-year offensive coordinator, Gus Malzahn, and two star recruits -- quarterback Mitch Mustain and receiver Damian Williams, both of whom played for Malzahn at nearby Springdale High School. There was a stunning amount of acrimony at a program having such a successful season -- and Broyles wound up in the middle of it.



Broyles and Clinton would both be on an Arkansas version of Mount Rushmore.

In December, parents of three of the Springdale players met with Broyles to discuss the state of the football program. The fact that Broyles took the meeting was blow to Nutt's authority.

The Arkansas Democrat Gazette reported that Broyles told the parents Nutt was in charge of the football program -- but Broyles has a reputation for meddling, and this meeting only reinforced the perception that he's the backseat coach of the program he built to prominence.

Nutt still wound up getting a recent contract extension -- but latent dissatisfaction with Broyles bubbled to the surface amid the strife. For obvious reasons, many in Hog Nation believed Broyles had stayed beyond his time -- at 82 he was trying to do a job that can wear down a man half his age.

But as has been made abundantly clear on college campuses so many times, it's hard to herd an icon out the door before he's ready. Finally, somebody -- or some bodies -- in Arkansas got Broyles to agree: it's time.

Going out with a modicum of grace and an emphasis on good feelings seems important here, given the committed relationship between Arkansas and Broyles for half a century. He might have been forced out, but Frank Broyles is too important to the school and the state to be allowed to walk away angry.

In fact, if Arkansas were to construct its own 21st century Mount Rushmore, you could argue that the faces would be Clinton, Walton, Tyson and Broyles. He was that big, for that long.

He was the Last Emperor in college athletics.

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Basketball graduation rates are success story

By Gene A. Budig

Tuesday, February 20, 2007

The crazy season nears, or as most college basketball junkies call it, "March Madness."

It is fun really, especially as the past chancellor of Kansas University and the former president of West Virginia University. Zealots, and they are everywhere, seem to naively believe I might have a secret formula for winning basketball games.

The KU men's program entered the 2006-07 season with 1,873 wins, the third most among all Division I teams, while WVU had been victorious on 1,493 occasions to be 24th in the national standings.

Both the Jayhawks and the Mountaineers are having outstanding seasons in 2007.

My initial advice, with tongue in cheek, is to recruit replicas of the late Wilt Chamberlain and Jerry West, two of the greatest college basketball All Americans of all time and storied members of the college and professional halls of fame. Wilt and Jerry played for KU and WVU, respectively.

In truth, there are certain paths to follow in 2007.

Without question, most college and university CEOs lie awake at night worrying about athletic programs, stressed by the fiscal challenges of paying competitive salaries to directors of athletics and head football and men's basketball coaches, meeting the insatiable demands for new and improved facilities, and satisfying certain alumni.

And nothing is more important to today's president/chancellor and to an athletic program than hiring the right athletic director and head coaches, people of proven and unquestioned integrity and people who know and respect the rules as set forth by the NCAA. They must be involved, as never before, and be attentive to the bottom line.

CEOs are demanding that more and more athletes, and especially minority ones, leave college with a degree, with something that will lead to lifetime opportunity. They keep a sharp eye on graduate rates.

Rule infractions can be career-wreckers for CEOs and coaches, and university support from alumni and the public can be put in serious jeopardy. Trustees can be unforgiving if their institutions are subjected to widespread and embarrassing media criticism as cheaters. This has never been truer with virtually all major colleges and universities depending on large sums of private support.

Contributors want to be associated with winners on the court and in the classroom and they resent those who ignore or bend established rules.

Reformer Myles Brand, president of the NCAA and a respected friend, agrees and sees reason to be optimistic on the graduation front. He told me:

"There is a perception that basketball student-athletes in Division I aren't graduating. It is broadly held, but it is wrong. Although much progress remains to be made, the graduate rate of college basketball athletes is nearly 60 percent when you consider transfer students in the calculation.

“But the real success story is among Division I African-American basketball athletes. Black basketball college athletes graduate at a rate of 42 percent, five points better than black males in the general student population. Over the last 15 years, the graduation rate of male African-American basketball student-athletes has increased 13 percentage points, while their counterpart in the student body has gone up only eight points.” And more reforms are in the works.

College basketball programs can build enormous loyalty among alumni and fans at-large.

Wilt Chamberlain once told me of his love for KU with these words: “It made me a better person for life” and “KU was filled with caring people.” His only regret from his playing days at Lawrence was that the Jayhawks lost to North Carolina for the national championship in 1957. “I always felt a little guilty about that,” he said.

Jerry West, who has a son on the current Mountaineer basketball roster, remembers Morgantown as “a place where people loved sports, and especially basketball.” He said most everyone in West Virginia knew his name “and went out of their way to be supportive.”

What basketball needs are more people like Roy Williams, my old coach at KU who now coaches at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and John Beilein, the current coach at WVU. Their initial recruiting message deals with academic life, not sports. Both are insistent on the importance of a college graduation, and clearly that unassailable theme has worked for them and their universities.

— *Gene A. Budig, past president of Major League Baseball’s American League, is the former president/chancellor of Illinois State University, West Virginia University, and Kansas University.*



<http://www.latimes.com/sports/highschool/la-sp-ethics18feb18,0,4210633.story?coll=la-home-headlines>

Where is sport steering youth?

Nationwide survey of high school students challenges the assumption that athletics build character.

By Lance Pugmire
Times Staff Writer

February 18, 2007

For generations it has been one of the great American axioms, accepted truth on diamonds, courts and gridirons everywhere: Sports builds character, instilling the values of teamwork and good sportsmanship.

But amid fresh headlines of alleged cheating in auto racing, continuing controversies over steroid use in baseball, track and cycling and ugly brawls among basketball players comes a nationwide survey suggesting a decidedly darker vision of sports.

"There is reason to worry that the sports fields of America are becoming the training grounds for the next generation of corporate and political villains and thieves," says Los Angeles ethicist Michael Josephson.

The latest two-year study of high school athletes by the Josephson Institute found a higher rate of cheating in school among student-athletes than among their classmates. It also found a growing acceptance of cheating to gain advantages in competition.

Josephson's report, based on interviews across the country with 5,275 high school athletes, concluded that too many coaches are "teaching our kids to cheat and cut corners."

The provocative findings were met with strong reactions from all sides — some acknowledging problems while others scoffed.

James Staunton, commissioner of the 565-school California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) Southern Section, which governs high school sports for most of the Southland, said he "hopes" ethical deviance hasn't "gone that far."

"What this points out to me is that we still have a tremendous amount of work to do with our athletes, parents and coaches," Staunton said. "For all the good things we talk about in sports, and the wonderful things we promote, we're fighting some societal pressures."

The commissioner acknowledged finding "that kids are powerfully motivated for the wrong reasons."

Some established Southland prep coaches dismissed Josephson's conclusions, including Chino Hills Ayala High's Tom Gregory, a 27-year veteran basketball coach. "I've used basketball as a tool for my players to become better people," he said.

The survey's conclusions may be open to some dispute. Josephson found, for example, that about 25% of teen athletes considered rule-bending and aggressive behavior in competition acceptable. A substantial majority did not find it acceptable, though the percentage who considered that behavior acceptable had risen since a previous survey.

Among other notable survey results were:

- At least 65% of athletes acknowledged cheating on an exam at least once within a year, compared with a 60% rate among a general student population.
- 72% of football players acknowledged cheating.
- 48% of baseball players believe it proper for a coach to order his pitcher to throw at an opposing batter in retaliation.
- 37% of boys think it is acceptable for a coach to motivate a player using personal insults and vulgarity.
- 43% of boys endorse trash-talk and showboating during games.
- 6.4% of male athletes acknowledged using performance-enhancing drugs in the last year.

"I'm not trying to fool people, or be an alarmist," Josephson said. "But I believe in looking at these numbers; there are so many kids learning to cheat that there is cause for great concern."

He said the survey did not pinpoint "whether this enhanced propensity to cheat is due to values that put winning over honesty or a reflection of pressures to stay [academically] eligible or simply manage their time given the high demands of sports."

But Josephson said: "The fact remains that for most kids, sports promotes rather than discourages cheating."

Barbara Fiege, commissioner of the CIF City Section in Los Angeles, called the survey results "amazing to me."

She speculated that positive values of high school sports may have been diminished in recent years by a diluted pool of experienced teacher-coaches. In the City Section, for example, 40% of coaches do not teach any classes at the school, not even physical education courses.

"When your coach has not gone through four or five years of college, does not have a degree in education and is not involved in the kids' grades or classes, there's going to be an inherent amount of drop-off in the effect they have on the kids," Fiege said.

Gregory, the coach at Ayala who disputes Josephson's findings about sports, nonetheless agrees that coaches make a big difference.

"When I see problems with undisciplined teams, many times there's a young coach on the bench," he said.

Higher incidents of poor sportsmanship can also be attributed to less-than-perfect "role models like Barry Bonds, violence in professional sports, the showcasing of kids as individuals in a team game, and parents becoming much more aggressive," Gregory said.

"It's cool now to be overly aggressive, taunting, boisterous," Gregory said. "Many kids don't want to be a yes man."

But warped values are not the fault of sports, he insisted. The failure rests on parents, teachers, coaches and role models.

Said Fiege: "Participating in sports still teaches kids the lessons of work, of working with a team, of conflict resolution, of learning to win and lose, and how to deal with a competitive world. But now there's a bigger influence on the need to win by coaches, with parents who are motivated to get their kids in the best club programs and to that elusive college scholarship.

"Now it's about more than just being a high school kid proud to be playing at your local high school."

With 660 victories and four Southern Section boys' basketball titles in 28 years of coaching, Glendora High's Mike LeDuc said his most troubling ethical concerns are the number of coaches engaged in recruiting players, the prevalence of amateur teams that displace high school team loyalties, and "illogical" parents.

Josephson "went too far if he's not saying the vast majority of players and coaches are OK," LeDuc said. "I still believe sports promotes winning, but not at all costs. We promote values ahead of success. We define winning as doing the best you can. I think you can have two winning teams on the same night."

Southern Section commissioner Staunton did not hesitate to embrace Josephson's survey.

"As kids grow and change and learn, if they're learning all along that cheating a little is OK, what will they do when they're at a greater level in life?" Staunton asked. "We have the facts of what these kids have reported to us. I can't deny this is happening. We need to do something about it.

"Sports should be the training ground to do things properly. These numbers tell us we have a ways to go, and it's on all of us — administrators, coaches, parents and athletes."

The Southern Section holds a series of one-day training sessions for coaches to examine ethical decisions and dilemmas, and requests ethical mission statements from athletic departments.

On March 8, its council members will vote on a measure to stiffen penalties for bad behavior by athletes — banning players for the remainder of any season in which they are ejected from two games. Two ejections now result in a two-game suspension.

"Our belief is to install more punitive measures," Staunton said. "Education is the answer. We want our athletes to accept that wrong is wrong, not to dismiss what they do as part of the game."

Sure penalties tend to deter cheating, according to the student survey, Josephson said. He credited NASCAR and the NBA officials with setting a good example. NASCAR removed driver Michael Waltrip's crew chief from Sunday's Daytona 500 after a banned fuel additive was found in his race car. The NBA imposed a 15-game suspension on Denver star Carmelo Anthony for fighting during a game.

"We have bad sports in athletics, in the political world and in the business environment," Josephson said. "These people are polluting it, and in some cases, they're corrupting it."

The City Section's Fiege commended Josephson's strong words.

"I'd venture to say he's saying these things to make the very strong point that this is a crisis," she said. "He might be going a little overboard to get people's attention, but this surely deserves attention, because whatever we've done to this point isn't working."

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(INFOBOX BELOW)

Unsportsmanlike conduct

The ethics and values of young athletes are often adversely affected by their sports experiences, according to a report by the Josephson Institute of Ethics. A look at some of the results:

Q. A coach orders a player to "attack" a preexisting injury of a top scorer on the other team.

Percentage of boys who think it's proper

Wrestling: 44%

Football: 39%

Tennis: 30%

Volleyball: 29%

Baseball: 27%

Overall*: 29%

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Q. Cheated on a test in high school in the past year

Boys who cheated at least once

Football: 72%

Hockey: 70%

Baseball: 69%

Basketball: 68%

Wrestling: 62%

Volleyball: 60%

Overall*: 65%

**

Girls who cheated at least once

Softball: 72%

Cheerleading: 71%

Basketball: 71%

Soccer: 68%

Track: 64%

Overall*: 65%

**

*Overall percentage for boys also includes cross-country, gymnastics, soccer, swimming, tennis, track and volleyball. Overall percentage for girls also includes cross-country, gymnastics, swimming, tennis and volleyball.

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Q. Used racial slurs or insults in the past 12 months

Boys

No: 48%

Yes: 52%

Girls

Yes: 29%

No: 71%

--

Percentage who think it's proper for a coach to instruct a player in football to fake an injury to get a needed time out

Boys: 37%

Girls: 20%

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Source: Josephson Institute. Graphics reporting by Lance Pugmire



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Business Insight - Crisis management: Having a crisis plan prepares for the unthinkable

The Salt Lake Tribune
Salt Lake Tribune

Article Last Updated: 02/18/2007 11:05:56 PM MST

Chris Thomas is owner of The Intrepid Group, a public relations firm.

A sudden crisis such as the Trolley Square killings is extremely rare. Still, emergencies happen, and they can test the survival skills of even the most sophisticated companies. Public relations professional Chris Thomas was the spokesman for the Elizabeth Smart family during its kidnapping ordeal and is a contributing author of the *Crisis Management Guidebook*. Here, he shares a few thoughts on what all businesses should do to prepare for the unthinkable.

Why should a company have a crisis management plan?

Typically it isn't the crisis but the poor response - or lack of response - that does the most damage to an organization. I have seen some of the most intelligent, rational executives blindsided by a crisis that severely impacted their ability to respond. Having a crisis plan provides a blueprint for making decisions and maintaining a high level of organization in a highly charged environment. The plan can be as simple as a two-page document or as complex as several volumes, depending on the inherent risks an organization faces. It should be practical, easy to execute and updated regularly.

What are a company's obligations when it is suddenly enmeshed in a tragedy such as the Trolley Square shooting?

In general, companies embroiled in a crisis have no established obligations. Even so, a smart organization will be proactive in assessing the situation and its impacts. It will prioritize audiences (customers, employees, business owners, partners, the general public, investors) and tailor appropriate responses for each. Too often the focus is mostly on the media. Companies forget to talk to their internal audiences. If there have been injuries or fatalities, a responsible company will put people first. Any immediate financial concerns must come second. It also is imperative to cooperate with investigators, keep regulatory agencies informed, and open lines of communication to avoid learning about developments through the media.

Where is the balance between a company's desire to protect itself and the expectation that it will respond responsibly to employees and the public?

There are always competing interests. In the past, attorneys often advised companies to make little or no comment in order to prevent further exposure. In most cases, the silent company looked insensitive or guilty, which deepened the crisis impact. Fortunately, this pattern is changing. Lawyers are more attuned to the need for their clients to be represented in the court of public opinion. Striking a balance between legal and PR concerns requires a commitment to cooperation and compromise by all parties.

Any final thoughts?

No one could have foreseen the tragedy at Trolley Square. The way to mitigate the impact of such an unimaginable event is to have a crisis plan, update it regularly and practice, practice, practice. A growing trend is crisis simulations, which provide an opportunity to test planning and training. These activities include scenarios that test everyone. Some companies create simulations complete with photographers, former journalists and actors.

- Paul Beebe

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Athletes aren't taking our word for it

(<http://www.suntimes.com/sports/telander/256186.CST-SPT-rick14.article>)

February 14, 2007

BY [RICK TELANDER](#) Sun-Times Columnist

Lately we have been hearing a lot about the seamy side of college recruiting, with both high school athletes and college head coaches and their assistants taking lumps.

The recent innuendo-laden New York Times piece implying Illinois football coach Ron Zook *had* to have done something illegal to get a hot shot such as Washington (D.C.) Dunbar wide receiver Arrelious Benn to come to Zook's god-forsaken Champaign campus, after orally committing to Notre Dame, pretty much set the standard for finger-pointing.

When Simeon standout defensive end Martez Wilson, who also had been recruited by Notre Dame, signed with the lowly Illini, the flames of anger rose higher.

It is an axiom that no matter how good a coach is, he can't win without talent.

Thus, what jilted college coaches see, as their favored recruits slip off to somebody else's locker room, is simply the undermining of their own gridiron futures.

That is, when their teams lose, they will be fired.

Poof go their multimillion-dollar salaries.

Hence the tension.

The problem occurs when a player gives his verbal commitment to one school – a vocal promise that fills a coach with relief and morally should mean something but technically means zilch – and then reneges for any of a hundred reasons.

One of those reasons can be the continued, under-the-radar recruiting by another school – a breach of a gentleman's code, to be sure, but again, technically not illegal.

Orally committed players defect like crazy nowadays, and fellows like Zook are always there to benefit.

Or be stung.

The school-hopping recently reached its zenith, or nadir, when a quarterback who committed to Minnesota, Phil Haig, said he likely will sign with Illinois after an Illinois-committed quarterback, Clint Brewster, instead signed with Minnesota when his father, Tim Brewster, was named Minnesota's new head coach.

It's a flip-flop that almost makes sense.

That is, if your dad is the big boss, you might want to follow.

And, conversely, if your competitor's dad is the big boss, you better leave town.

It happens all over

All this stuff happens in Division I basketball, too, driving hoops coaches to the same distraction and, sometimes, double-dealing as their football counterparts.

Just ask Illinois coach Bruce Weber how he feels about Indiana coach Kelvin Sampson after Sampson snagged Illini-committed Indianapolis high school star Eric Gordon.

How good is Gordon?

What does his loss mean to Illini hoops?

Consider that Gordon recently hung 43 points on Michael Jordan's two talented sons while leading his North Central team to an 88-47 annihilation of then-undefeated Loyola Academy.

It's war, you could say.

And all's fair.

But the distressing part of this recruiting charade is that it exposes two sad elements of modern society – the money and power-seeking aspect of big-time, entertainment-driven college sport, and the devaluation of the spoken word and non-lawyered promises, whether written or stated, generally.

Athletic department boosters and TV networks and advertisers and ambitious coaches and the American viewing public all want to see college sport pushed to its physical and financial limits.

We know this.

And we know that it breeds mercenary frauds such as Alabama's Nick Saban lying and taking as much money as possible to utilize young men for profit.

But the language part is maybe more distressing.

If you're old enough, you likely have seen somebody do a handshake deal with someone else and state, in essence, "My word is my bond."

A contract.

A moral obligation to hold to a promise, regardless of change.

Nowadays the spoken word – the college oral commitment, if you will – means only, "Sounds good to me today."

And why should this be otherwise?

What's a word worth?

Marriage vows that state, "till death do us part," have come to mean "for the foreseeable future."

Our two most recent presidents have said a) I didn't have sex with someone, when I did, and b) mission accomplished, when the war was just getting going.

Words are things to be manipulated or disregarded when it suits us.

Even written contracts don't have much credence.

Coaches – it's always good to come back to them – are fired when they go 14-2 (the San Diego Chargers' Marty Schottenheimer) and hired when they're under contract to someone else and say they're not going anywhere (Saban, Gary Barnett, et al.).

When teenage kids breach promises, we may fret.

But what should we expect from youths who have seen adults weasel out of every responsibility, who have grown up with doublespeak gems such as uninvited guest, surgical strike, pro-choice, collateral damage, limited lifetime guarantee?

When a better situation comes along, when you have to lie to an institution that is built on deception, hey, you just do it. Words are irrelevant, if not silly.

It's buyer beware.

It's what we do.