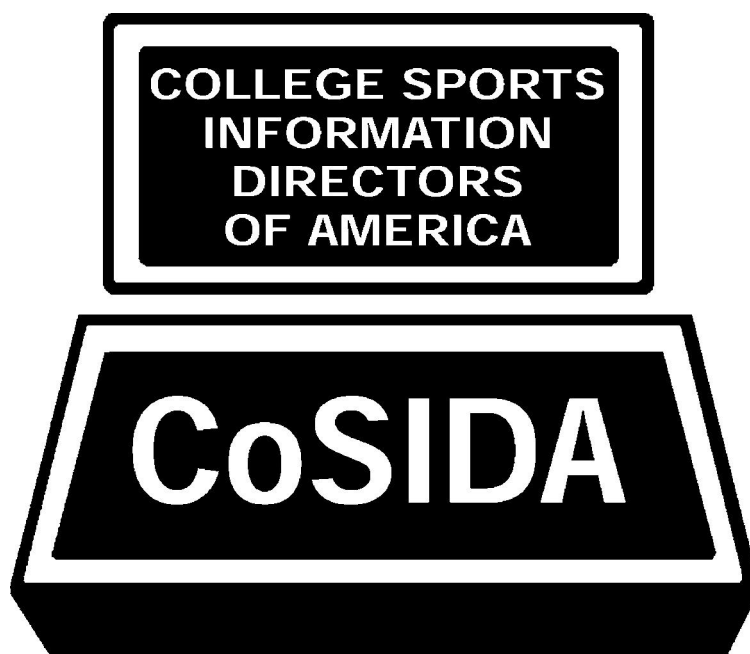


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March 13, 2007



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MARCH TO ATLANTA

Selection boss deflects slap at play-in game
'Shocked' Niagara coach says team's 'disrespected'

By [TONY BARNHART](#)
The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
Published on: 03/12/07

Taking criticism, some of it loud and passionate, is in the job description of the chairman of the NCAA selection committee for the men's basketball tournament. But on Monday Gary Walters had to handle a very loud and angry complaint from a team that DID get into the 65-team field.

Niagara, which won Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference Tournament, said it felt "disrespected" because it was put into the first-round game with Florida A&M Tuesday night in Dayton, Ohio.

Niagara (22-11), which started the season 1-6 because it had suspended several players, felt it should not be in the Tuesday night game because there were other teams in the tournament with lower rankings than its 134 in the RPI.

"I think it was shocking," coach Joe Mihalich told the Associated Press. "I think everybody was shocked and maybe some people were insulted by it. But that's good. That's fine with us."

Walters dismissed the suggestion that asking teams to play in Tuesday's game cheapens their NCAA experience.

"There are 260 teams that would love to be playing in the opening round game tomorrow night," Walters said in a conference call with reporters Monday afternoon.

The tournament field expanded from 64 to 65 teams in 2001 because the number of conferences that received automatic bids grew to 31. The larger conferences wanted maintain the 34 at-large bids that had previously existed so the play-in, or opening round, game between two of the lower seeds was created. It is not always reserved for the two lowest seeds in the tournament.

Walters conceded that there has been sensitivity not to put two representatives of the Historically Black Colleges and Universities (MEAC, SWAC) into the opening round game. With Florida A&M, the MEAC champion, in Tuesday's game this marks the sixth straight season that a team from one of those two conferences has been in the Tuesday game.

'Backdoor way in'

<http://ajc.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Selection+boss+deflects+slap+at+play-in+ga...> 3/13/2007

"(It's) a backdoor way into the tournament," Hampton President William R. Harvey told the Washington Post in an article published on Sunday, the day the NCAA field was announced.

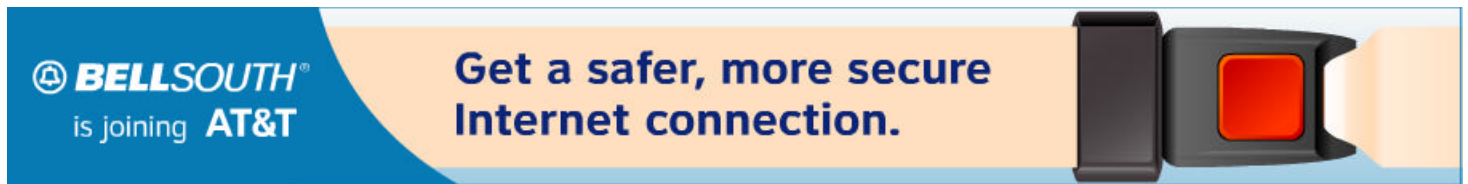
Walters said he had no knowledge of the article and that it had no impact on the decision to put Niagara in Tuesday night's game.

"There were about 40 teams with 20 wins that didn't even get in the tournament," Walters said. "Nobody was out to punish anybody. I don't understand why there is concern about Niagara playing in the opening round game. It's an honor to play."

Find this article at:

<http://www.ajc.com/sports/content/sports/finalfour/stories/2007/03/12/0313sptsselectionchair.html>

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College Sports

March 10, 2007, 12:36PM

Mom fights NCAA academic rules

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press Writer
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PHILADELPHIA — A snapshot shows Michael Bowers towering over his petite mother in his prom tuxedo, the star athlete's future seemingly full of promise.

The 6-foot-7 Bowers had been actively recruited for his football prowess, and dreamed of playing for a Division I team.

But once coaches saw his transcript from Palmyra High School in New Jersey — where he battled a learning disability, but still ranked 52nd out of 90 in the class of 1996 — the phone stopped ringing. He was not likely to meet NCAA freshman eligibility rules because of his special-education classes.

"(One coach) was devastated when he looked at Michael's transcript because he knew he would never be cleared," said his mother, Kathleen Bowers.

Last month, a federal appeals court revived Bowers' 1997 lawsuit against the NCAA, saying Bowers might have been discriminated against under the Americans with Disabilities Act. But the long-sought victory is bittersweet for Kathleen Bowers.

Michael, her only child, died of a drug overdose in June 2002.

"He was so young. Twenty-four. He had his whole life ahead of him," Kathleen Bowers said recently from her tidy home in Palmyra, just across the river from Philadelphia.

She plans to pursue the suit, which her son initiated as a teenager, even though the NCAA nine years ago changed its procedures to better accommodate the learning disabled. She hopes winning damages would make the NCAA even more careful in its treatment of special-education students.

The defendants include Temple University and the University of Iowa, which argue that they stopped recruiting Michael Bowers over his football, not his academic, abilities.

Bowers' lawyer said the NCAA rules, though changed over the years, still make it hard for learning-disabled students to prove themselves college material. If they acknowledge taking special-education classes, they have to show they are equivalent to regular classes, she said.

"Why are you going to self-identify when you know that that identification may result in your being excluded or being forced to jump through certain other hoops that other people don't have to undergo?" asked attorney Barbara Ransom of the Public Interest Law Center in Philadelphia.

NCAA rules require student-athletes to complete a certain number of core high school classes, and obtain minimum grades and SAT scores, to compete freshman year at a Division I or Division II school.

The standards were created in 1983 to keep schools from recruiting star athletes who could not do college work. But critics soon charged that the NCAA lacked the expertise to evaluate coursework at schools across the country.

The Justice Department investigated and negotiated a 1998 consent decree that gave learning-disabled students more power to appeal or seek waivers. The NCAA also pledged to look at the content covered in a course, and not just its "remedial" or "special-education" label.

"Since the consent decree was entered, there have been no new lawsuits brought against the NCAA alleging that an initial eligibility decision failed to accommodate a learning disability," NCAA spokesman Erik Christianson said in an e-mail.

The NCAA approved all but 10 of 116 requests for disability waivers in the 2005-2006 academic year, he said.

But until 1998, waivers only could be sought by the recruiting college. So Bowers had little recourse when the NCAA certified just three of his high school classes, even though he would complete his Individualized Education Plan and earn a diploma.

"He had every reason to believe he had wonderful opportunities available to him at a university to pursue both his educational and his athletic interests," said Ransom. "To have those hopes

dashed so dramatically, it was devastating."

She remembers Bowers as a polite teenager who first came to her law firm in a suit and tie.

"When he testified at the preliminary injunction hearing, he was so impressive that the defendants, to a person, came up to him and shook his hand," Ransom said. But the injunction was denied, and Bowers fell into a tailspin, she said.

Chad Ganden, a former state champion swimmer from Illinois, also sued the NCAA in the late 1990s over its rejection of his special-education classes.

Ganden was deemed a partial qualifier, which allowed him to practice but not compete his freshman year at Michigan State.

"That's hard to recover from. I gained weight. I had a loss of endurance," said Ganden, who settled the suit and is now a high school coach in Aurora, Ill.

Although Bowers had trouble processing information, he had an above-average IQ and earned a 3.6 GPA as a commuter student at Temple in the spring of 1997, court documents show.

But he was struggling by that fall, having become addicted to painkillers following back surgery, according to his mother. At some point, he graduated to the cocaine and heroin that killed him.

Kathleen Bowers said she helped her son go through several drug-treatment programs. She thought he had the problem licked in 2002, when he completed the spring semester at American International University in Springfield, Mass., and participated in spring football drills. He hoped to make the team that fall.

"I had no idea. I thought everything was OK," his mother said.

Ransom believes things might have turned out differently if her client had won the preliminary injunction.

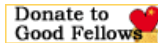
"I thought he felt hopeless," Ransom said. "He thought, 'I've done everything that everybody's asked me to. And I'm stuck out here with nothing.'"



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The Daily Californian

[How Title IX's Vision Got Left Behind](#)

UC Berkeley, Once a Leader for Gender Equality In Sports, Must Live Up to Its Progressive Legacy

BY [Donna De Varona](#)

Tuesday, March 13, 2007

As an Olympic swimmer, long-time sports commentator, member of several Presidential commissions on athletics and most importantly as a 35 year advocate of Title IX, I have witnessed incredible progress and increased opportunities for girls and women athletes over the last four decades. I was only 17 when I retired from competitive swimming because UCLA, like most universities in 1965, had no varsity or elite intercollegiate athletics programs for women. After winning two Olympic Gold Medals, setting 18 world records and world fastest times in swimming and capturing some 37 National Swimming Championships, my varsity sports participation in college was limited to driving football recruits to and from the airport.

Times have certainly changed. Just last year, nearly 180,000 women participated in our nation's intercollegiate programs. These opportunities came mostly as a result of the passage of Title IX, a landmark federal legislation that in 1972 banned sex discrimination in schools, whether in academics or athletics. Unfortunately, the latest statistics on the widening gender disparity in varsity athletics at UC Berkeley shows that hard fought gains can be derailed in just a few years.

UC Berkeley has always been close to my heart, both as an alumna of the UC system, and as the daughter of Dave de Varona, a UC Hall-of-Fame rower and All-American football player. In the 1990s, I was proud to see UC Berkeley lead in the development of women's varsity sports programs. By the most meaningful yardsticks available (participation by women athletes and dollars devoted to women's sports) UC Berkeley all but closed the gender gap. A number of senior women within the athletic department, including my friend and NCAA swimming community colleague Karen Moe Humphreys, an Olympic gold medalist who spent over 26 years on campus as an award-winning coach and administrator, provided strong leadership and served as role models to the young women and men in their charge.

In 2001, however, UC Berkeley's impressive track record in women's athletics began to unravel when the university installed a new athletic director and a new administration took over the department. For the next three years, the same yardsticks that had looked so promising suddenly showed an alarming and widening gap between participation and opportunity for men and women athletes. The campus-wide Gender Equity Committee, which had functioned since the early 1990s to help monitor Title IX compliance on campus, was disbanded. At the same time, many senior women administrators left the department, were fired or laid off. In fact, during this period, a UC Berkeley internal Title IX investigation found the athletic department to be a "hostile work environment for minorities and women."

How this sad situation could have developed at a major university that prides itself on diversity is a story that still needs to be told. The truth has only started to emerge through a gender discrimination lawsuit brought by Ms. Humphreys currently pending in federal court in San Francisco. Facts in this case reveal extremely troubling practices and steps that the university and athletic department administration pursued that seriously undermined the progress of the women's sports program.

In 2004 the university sought out and finally hired Sandy Barbour as Cal Athletics Director, a highly qualified and respected woman leader in collegiate sports as athletic director. But unfortunately, as of this date, university officials have refused to take any responsibility for the harm done by the previous athletic department administrators. nor has there been acknowledgement of the continuing substantial disparities that are a legacy of those years.

One would hope an institution which prides itself on its standards of excellence would take responsibility for its past wrongs, acknowledge the depth and damage of its errors and aggressively move forward to remedy them.

In a recent interview, Barbour responded to the disparity in men and women student-athlete numbers by suggesting that men at UC Berkeley are simply more interested in playing sports than women.

Last year, two in every five high school girls, or 2.9 million girls nationwide, played varsity sports. If Cal, which recruits nationwide, mirrors these statistics, approximately 5,000 of its women undergraduates played varsity high school sports. I cannot believe that, of all these women athletes, only 370 (the number of female student-athletes at UC Berkeley this year) were interested in competing in intercollegiate athletics. A more likely explanation is that the opportunities for women athletes were simply not available because the damage done during the previous athletic department administration has yet to be corrected.

Title IX has opened the door for millions of women to participate in all areas of life including sports. The current gender gap at UC Berkeley, however, shows that much work remains to be done to fulfill its promise and vision.

Hopefully, UC Berkeley will rededicate itself to giving our sons and our daughters genuine equal access to the lifelong rewards of collegiate athletics. Hopefully dedicated individuals such as Ms. Humphreys will not become victims of a system gone wrong, but rather role models for generations to emulate.

Donna De Varona is an Olympic gold medalist and sports commentator. Send comments to opinion@dailycal.org.

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/sports/columnists/cs-070312myslenski,1,5860603.column?coll=chi-sportstop-hed>

Time for tuneup

With more quality teams left out, the cry to expand intensifies

Skip Myslenski
ON COLLEGES

March 12, 2007

Last fall, when asked if he favored expanding the NCAA tournament field, Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski said no.

"It's kind of like not moving out of Cameron (Indoor Stadium, the Blue Devils' hallowed home). This works so well. It's packaged so well," he explained.

With that sentiment he gave life to the belief of the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, who once wrote: "Every tradition grows ever more venerable ... [and] finally becomes holy and inspires awe."

But even earlier, way back in 1838, the essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson noted: "Men grind and grind in the mill of truism, and nothing comes out but what was put in. But the moment they desert the tradition for a spontaneous thought, then poetry, wit, hope, virtue ... all flock to their aid."

So, with due respect to Coach K, here's a thought as the smoke clears on the unveiling of the field for this year's NCAA tournament.

Expand now.

Expand by at least three teams, which would involve nothing more than having four play-in games instead of one. Or, if you desire a radical break with tradition, expand by 32, which would involve a bit more planning. But no matter what, the time for expansion is now.

Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim would certainly agree. At last year's Final Four, long before the selection committee snubbed his 22-10 Orange on Sunday, he pushed the issue to the front burner.

"This year, more than ever, has proved that there are teams (think George Mason) that might not get in, or might just barely get in, that can win games," he said. "In the past, there were always teams who wanted to get in, but you really knew they couldn't win any games if they did. But in college basketball today, the quality of teams has increased so much."

Another who would agree is Kansas State coach Bob Huggins, whose Wildcats were also snubbed despite going 22-11 overall and 10-6 in the Big 12, finishing fourth in the league.

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"The whole deal about whether we are in or not, it's ludicrous," he said Friday shortly after his team defeated Texas Tech, which did get an invite, in the Big 12 tournament.

"I mean, we've got two teams in our league (Kansas and Texas A&M) that are playing for a [No.] 1 seed. And Texas has got to be, what, a 3 or a 4 (it ended as a 4)? So then you're going to tell me ... the next best team in the league, which has been us, that we're not in the best 65 in the country? I felt like we were in before we played this game."

K-State certainly be in after closing out the regular season 11-4 and then beating the Red Raiders before narrowly falling to Kansas in a conference semifinal. Then there's Drexel, which had road wins over tournament teams Villanova and Creighton—as well as Syracuse—and Air Force, which stumbled late but had an RPI of 30 and wins over tournament teams Stanford, Long Beach State and Texas Tech.

That would expand the field to 68, which would be reduced to the magical 64 after the eight teams on the bottom two lines staged their play-in games Tuesday in Dayton. It would also reward more mid-majors, which received only six at-large bids this year after getting eight in '06, nine in '05 and 12 in '04.

"I see no reason not to expand," Texas Tech coach Bob Knight said last week. "It would reward the players, which is what this is supposed to be about."

"I might be in favor of adding three games. Test that ...," Krzyzewski said. "Actually, the 16th seed then would have a better chance of beating No. 1 after playing a game. So you're helping the quality of the tournament ... But the tournament doesn't need much help."

That certainly is true. But, as Emerson noted, more teams could use some hope of getting in, which they would receive with this radical suggestion. Expand to 96. Have the bottom 64 stage play-in games on campuses across the land on Tuesday and Wednesday. Tuesday's winners then move on to a Thursday-Saturday site and Wednesday's winners to a Friday-Sunday site.

Now you would have a larger number of mid-majors involved, which would add to the uncertainty of an already uncertain event. But that would also cheapen the worth of the regular season, endanger the top teams, who would sit by idly while the lower teams got a game under their belt, and, most important, reward teams who deserved no reward.

Oklahoma State would be one case in point. The Cowboys opened the season 15-1 and reached No. 9 in the polls, but then went dysfunctional and lost eight of the last 10. OSU did play well at the Big 12 tournament and finished 21-12 with an RPI of 50, which would surely get it into our field of 96. But the belief here is no team should be rewarded for truly playing only a half-season.

Or for beating up on mediocre teams, which is what Michigan did this season. The Wolverines would be in our field of 96 with their 21-12 record and RPI of 54. But they would be there after blowing every chance they had for a signature win, which is what they did against UCLA, Georgetown, Wisconsin and Ohio State (twice). That performance, like Oklahoma State's, deserves no reward.

But Drexel's does, as do Kansas State's and Air Force's and Bradley's and Missouri State's and West Virginia's.

So the way is clear. Heed Emerson. Abandon tradition. Give hope. Expand now.

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SPORTSDAY

**Colleges Columnist:
Brian Davis**

Brian Davis
Brian Davis writes
about college sports for
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Conradt's exit a tough loss for sport

Coach steps down after Texas misses NAAs for second straight year

01:29 AM CDT on Tuesday, March 13, 2007

brdavis@dallasnews.com

Judy Southard probably had no clue her committee's decision to keep Texas out of the women's NCAA Tournament would also trigger the loss of basketball icon Jody Conradt.

Yet that's what happened Monday night in a two-hour span.

Six Big 12 teams watched the NCAA Tournament selection show on ESPN and were excited about what lies ahead. In Austin, they wept.

In an emotional news conference, Conradt said "it's unacceptable" for Texas to miss the NAAs for two straight years. The coach who built UT into the nation's flagship school for women's basketball – heck, women's athletics in general – decided it was time to step down.

Southard, the NCAA tournament selection committee chairwoman, made it sound like the Longhorns weren't even close to getting in this season. The Longhorns were 18-14 but 6-10 in Big 12 play. They were 3-8 against top-25 teams and 3-7 in their last 10 games. It was the first time UT has missed two consecutive NCAA Tournaments in school history.

"When we got down to the last four lines, we had 18 teams on the board," Southard said. "Texas was in that conversation until the bitter end."

Before another reporter from a far-off locale could ask about some other team, Southard continued her thoughts on Conradt.

"Certainly I would be remiss if I didn't say on behalf of the committee that we will miss her in our game," she added.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/dws/spt/columnists/bdavis/stories/031307dnspodavis.3a5d80e....> 3/13/2007

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"We will sorely miss seeing her on the bench next season."

Oklahoma coach Sherri Coale wasn't all that enthused about what Southard did to the Sooners, either. OU is a No. 3 seed in the Dayton Region, easily the toughest of the four. Coale simply shrugged her shoulders and said, "You take what they give you and get to work."

But Coale was clearly thinking about Conradt late Monday.

"For our league to be without her, I'm sad," Coale said. "That's my immediate reaction. I'm just sad. She was so good to me. When I got the job here, she was one of the people I called. I thought nobody did it as thoroughly and completely as Texas."

Texas A&M coach Gary Blair, whose team landed a No. 4 seed in the Dallas Region, said Conradt "set the bar as far as doing things with class and doing it the right way."

"To lose [former Texas Tech coach] Marsha Sharp and Jody Conradt 12 months apart is not good for our game."

Conradt will be remembered for 900 career victories, but her biggest successes came on the NCAA Tournament stage. The Longhorns captured the 1986 national championship with an undefeated record. Conradt had 31 career NCAA Tournament victories in 21 appearances.

"It's hard to even begin to put into words what Coach Conradt has done for women's basketball," Tech coach Kristy Curry said. "She's been someone who so many of us have aspired to be like as a teacher, mentor and coach."

Conradt got women's basketball off the ground and launched it into a new stratosphere here in Texas. With UT leading the way, other schools made women's basketball a priority.

That's how Baylor ultimately won the 2005 national championship and landed a No. 6 seed in this year's NCAA field. UT-Arlington, TCU and Prairie View A&M are also still playing. Girls high school basketball is alive and thriving, too, probably through something Conradt did along the way.

The NCAA Tournament will go on without the Sharps and Conradts of the world. But women's basketball will never be the same.

deseretnews.com

Deseret Morning News, Thursday, March 08, 2007

BYU coach's handling of DUI case praised

*Suspension defused media interest in case***By Tad Walch**

Deseret Morning News

PROVO — The swarm of reporters that usually covers the legal missteps of Brigham Young University football or basketball players vanished after Rashaun Broadus was charged with drunken driving in January.

BYU men's basketball coach Dave Rose pre-empted the usual coverage of pending punishment from the Honor Code Office by immediately and independently suspending Broadus for the season.

With the question about his playing status resolved — the suspension in fact ended the senior point guard's college basketball career — media interest in Broadus disappeared.

A swoon by the team could have led to new stories about his absence, but the Cougars played just as well without him: BYU was 11-4 before his suspension and is 12-3 since with three wins over teams in the Top 25.

The Cougars open the Mountain West Conference tournament in Las Vegas today as the regular season champions and ranked No. 23 in the nation.

The success may explain why the conclusion of the review by the Honor Code Office earned no notice. BYU spokeswoman Carri Jenkins provided no details about his punishment but said Broadus will be allowed to finish the semester.

The decisiveness by Rose pleased Mothers Against Drunk Driving.

"He clearly sent the message drunk driving won't be tolerated," MADD spokeswoman Amy George said. "Clearly, the coach sees this as a serious issue and responded that way, and we appreciate that.

"This is kind of a rare response. We would like for other colleges and universities to take drunk driving and underage drinking seriously. We would like for them to be a lot stronger and swifter in their response to things like that."

The increased awareness of drinking problems on American campuses is leading some colleges, universities and high schools to make tougher stands.

In the wake of the death of a lacrosse player last year in an alcohol-related car accident, high school students who play sports in Virginia's Albemarle County now must sign a training pledge not to use alcohol, tobacco or drugs.



Rashaun Broadus

The rule prohibits alcohol use anywhere, at any time, and the first offense is an automatic full-season suspension.

A second strike leads to a suspension from all sports for one calendar year.

A third strike results in a ban from all sports for the rest of a student's high school career.

The school board will consider revisions to the strict rule next month, including the possibility of allowing parents to provide their children with a glass of wine at home under their supervision.

The rule is tougher than Virginia state law. When players run afoul of such rules, coaches can feel like they are in a no-win situation, said Peter Roby, director of the Center for Study of Sport in Society at Northeastern University.

"It's always tough for coaches, athletic directors and others in positions of leadership to find a balance between, on the one hand, doing what's fair and giving athletes due process and the presumption of innocence and, on the other hand, the risk of looking soft because the player is really good and it might appear the decision is based on wanting the player on the court," Roby said.

"You're damned if you do and you're damned if you don't when it comes to punishing athletes."

Roby cautions people against stereotyping athletes or coaches as being out of control. Instead, he believes the number of people getting in trouble in sports reflects society.

"Alcohol is so pervasive in the culture," Roby said. "Just like I wouldn't want people to have unfair expectations of athletes, coaches are human, too, and they make bad decisions at times."

"I think people deserve a second chance. I don't think there's a need to say, if you've made one mistake in your life, you're going to pay for it for the rest of your life."

The overall punishment of Broadus appeared to have that in mind. Effectively, it was a 15-game suspension, plus however far BYU goes in the conference and NCAA tournaments, but he was allowed to continue his education.

The severity of the suspension from the team was largely based on the fact that the arrest was a second strike for Broadus, who was suspended for one game last season.

"The impression (the punishment) left with me and maybe with others was a positive one in that it appeared to be a decision made based on values and team policy rather than university policy," BYU public relations professor Laurie Wilson said.

"Coach Rose said he had set standards for the team, the team knew what the standards were, that Rashaun was still under forgiveness for a previous violation, so he as the coach had no choice but to suspend him because the rules were clear."

That doesn't mean Rose is shunning Broadus, however.

"I keep in touch with Shaun and just spoke to him a few days ago," Rose said on Wednesday. "He's doing fine, finishing school. He will graduate in April."

Broadus' roommate, Keena Young, also provided a favorable report.

"He's fine, he's still going to school and getting his school work done," Young said on Wednesday. "He's not coming down (to the Mountain West Conference tournament in Las Vegas) this week because he's got school work to get done. He still asks me about the team. He sees a lot of the guys around school and he expresses his concern and good luck."

Wilson said the way the story disappeared was impressive — but appeared to be based on coaching philosophy and not media strategy.

Roby said there are several ways schools deal with alcohol issues.

"One is to allow the school itself and its rules for student conduct to take over, where they might bring them up for violation of codes of conduct. There's usually a board that reviews those kinds of instances. In some cases, the school's policy supersedes the policy of any specific department.

"(The) other way is that the coach or athletic department has specific expectations around drug and alcohol use, and they deal with that based on an athlete handbook or other communication they've given their teams. It might even be in their scholarship letter, listing how they will comport themselves while on the team.

"In some cases, they defer to the local authorities. If a person is found in violation of laws, a coach or athletic director might say they won't take any action until the criminal justice system takes its course."

College athletes have a reason beyond fitness to be more vigilant than the rest of the student body — random drug testing.

"What we've always maintained at the Center for Study of Sport in Society is that people who play sports are no more or less immune to temptations or failings than other people in society."

E-mail: twalch@desnews.com

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March 10, 2007

Pay up, tune in

Specialty channels like Big Ten Network could force fans to pay higher price to see their favorite teams

By Mark Alesia

mark.alesia@indystar.com

March 10, 2007

During the next month, basketball fans across Indiana will plop down on the couch and exercise what has come to seem an inalienable right of every American: watching sports on TV.

It's a right they would do well to cherish, because it's one that could soon come with greater limitations, and cost.

With the advent of specialty sports stations like the NFL Network and Big Ten Network, plus Major League Baseball's new deal with DirecTV, sports events that once were easily accessible on networks or basic cable are increasingly requiring more exclusive -- and in some cases more expensive -- television access.

Nobody is predicting a pay-per-view Super Bowl or NCAA Basketball Tournament anytime soon. Yet this trend shows signs of escalating, and it has caught the attention of Congress and the Federal Communications Commission.

Their concern is over leagues selling the rights to "packages" of games to a satellite provider, shutting out cable viewers. That's one part of the new trend. The other is leagues getting into the TV business themselves and banking that fans will demand that cable companies carry the channel. That's what the Big Ten and NFL are doing.

Either way, the goal is simple: money.

The Big Ten Network, a 24-hour cable channel that launches in August in partnership with Fox, will bring \$7 million per year to each conference school, something the league says is needed to curtail or prevent dipping into general university funds.

But John Sweeney, director of the sports communications program at the University of North Carolina, said leagues and conferences will have to be careful not to push access issues too far.

That, he said, is because people expect sports to be easily available on television, and their taxes pay for venues such as Lucas Oil Stadium and for public schools such as Indiana University and Purdue. Politicians are likely to be just as mad as their constituents if games start to disappear.

"My guess is that this will be attacked on a political front," Sweeney said. "This won't be decided by cold economics or technology."

Televising IU since 1952

The Big Ten Network could pose the most immediate concern to Indiana sports fans.

For decades, fans of the IU and Purdue basketball teams have been able to see games on local broadcast channels if they're not on network television or a basic cable outlet like ESPN.

The best conference games will remain on traditional outlets. But starting next season, 105 men's basketball games and 35 football games will be controlled by the Big Ten Network, which is marketing itself to cable providers.

So far no deals have been announced. It's possible that some cable stations will want to make the new network part of a more expensive viewing package, a "sports tier." It's also possible that some won't pick up the network at all, which would mean their viewers wouldn't have access to certain Big Ten games unless they switch to satellite or go to a bar.

Many fans got a taste of that this season. When the Jan. 10 IU-Purdue game was on ESPN2, an offshoot of ESPN that's available on relatively few cable systems, fans of both teams flooded The Indianapolis Star with angry calls.

That also speaks to another aspect of the change: how quietly it's happening. With the television industry constantly in flux, viewers usually find out something is amiss only when they turn on the TV and a program isn't there.

IU's game Friday night in the quarterfinals of the Big Ten Tournament might have been the last on WTTV (Channel 4), the venerable Indianapolis station that has been televising IU basketball since 1952.

"We're still kind of hoping the Big Ten Network comes to us and says, 'We need games on broadcast,'" WTTV general manager Jerry Martin said.

Then, knowing the landscape of sports television, Martin added, "I don't think that's likely."

Big Ten Commissioner Jim Delany has said the Big Ten Network will not syndicate games to local broadcast stations.

NFL vs. cable

The NFL already has stirred a controversy with its own channel, and it offers insights into the complexity of the issue.

Last season the league put regular-season games -- eight, including one on Thanksgiving -- on the NFL Network for the first time.

However, some major cable companies, such as Time Warner, refused to pick up the network because of disputes over which "tier" it would be placed on. The cable companies wanted it as part of a pay-extra "sports tier." The NFL, wanting more viewers for subscription fees and advertising, insisted that cable companies put the channel in an "expanded basic" lineup.

The league did allow the eight games to be broadcast by local stations in the teams' markets. Still, some fans missed out. On Dec. 21, large parts of Packers-crazy Wisconsin missed a Thursday night Green Bay game against the rival Minnesota Vikings.

Madison, Wis., for example, is about 140 miles from Green Bay. According to the Capital Times newspaper, it marked the first time since 1962 that a regular-season Packers game wasn't available in the Madison market on a broadcast network or major cable outlet.

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-Wis., who represents the La Crosse area, wrote to NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, calling the league "short-sighted" and saying the "hardworking and dedicated" NFL fans of his region deserved better.

The Indianapolis Colts didn't have any games on the NFL Network this past season. But it's likely to happen eventually, and if it does, it's possible some parts of Indiana wouldn't be able to watch.

Satellite only?

Another aspect of the NFL's television distribution has drawn congressional criticism.

In December, U.S. Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., convened a hearing of the Judiciary Committee at which he criticized the NFL's exclusive deal with DirecTV to carry the out-of-market package of games known as "Sunday Ticket." People with cable television have no access to the package.

Specter threatened to introduce legislation to repeal the NFL's antitrust exemption that

allows the league to strike television deals on behalf of all of its teams.

Major League Baseball faced similar scrutiny from the FCC for what it apparently intended to be an exclusive deal with DirecTV to carry its "Extra Innings" package of games. Earlier this week, though, baseball said it would give a competing satellite company and cable companies a chance to negotiate for the package.

The deal is for a reported \$700 million over seven years if DirecTV remains the exclusive carrier. Baseball also announced plans to launch the MLB Channel in 2009.

"I am concerned whenever consumers cannot purchase the programming they want or are forced to purchase programming they don't want," FCC Chairman Kevin Martin said.

As for the Big Ten Network, the conference has said it's actually increasing the availability of games by distributing them to a national audience of league alumni. But that would hardly mollify, say, a Purdue fan whose cable company chooses not to carry the network.

"I don't anticipate distribution issues getting to that point," said Mark Silverman, president of the Big Ten Network. "The fans should know they'll get all the games they're used to getting. They'll have that, and more. The time has come for this type of network."

Looking ahead

Neal Pilson, former head of CBS Sports and now a consultant, has seen his share of changes in the industry.

He sounds a cautionary note about overreacting to this one.

"I think there will still be a significant number of games available over normal distribution networks," Pilson said. Traditional television outlets "are going to continue to provide basic coverage and financing for the leagues. . . . I don't think they will ever walk away from that."

But, Pilson added, as leagues try to create new methods of making money from TV, "they want to have their cake and eat it."



<http://www.latimes.com/sports/college/basketball/la-sp-bcs13mar13,1,5178733.story?coll=la-headlines-sports>

IF THE BCS RAN COLLEGE BASKETBALL

BCS basket cases

It's hard to argue with an Ohio State-Kansas title-game matchup, but even when the system 'works' there is bound to be controversy, and demand for a playoff

By Chris Dufresne
Times Staff Writer

March 13, 2007

Editor's note: Imagine if conference commissioners ran college basketball the way they run football. If, instead of an NCAA tournament, in place of March Madness, there were a rankings system to determine the national title-game participants. No Sweet 16. No Final Four.

We imagined it by devising our own basketball computer standings and applying the football selection process criteria from last year's Bowl Championship Series rules manual.

Times staff writer Chris Dufresne offers this fictional account of how final selections might have turned out:

The much-maligned Basketball Championship Series standings spit out a title-game matchup Sunday and, for a change, the system may have, sort of, gulp, worked?

Not that the BCS was spared the usual "say what?" — that much is a given in a sport that refuses to decide its champion with a tournament.

It's good to be an Ohio State Buckeye today, though, and a Kansas Jayhawk.

Those two storied basketball programs finished first and second in the BCS standings and will meet April 2 in Glendale, Ariz., for the national title.

The players should be well-rested.

"This proves the BCS works," Big Ten Commissioner Jim Delany said on a conference call. "This proves we don't need a playoff."

Some folks in Gainesville, Fla., however, think they have been sold swampland.

Ohio State was a runaway No. 1 in the final standings with 99.92 points, and No. 2 Kansas edged out No. 3 Florida, the defending national champion, by a margin of 92.51 to 92.46.

"We can't defend our title because of five one-hundredths of a point?" Florida Coach Billy Donovan asked. "And you call this a fair system?"

One Florida congressman has already threatened to introduce a bill to outlaw the BCS (note: it was tried before in Texas, in football, but legislation was dropped the year Texas made its run to the BCS title.).

Kansas was clearly the people's choice for No. 2 this year, so strong in both human polls that it was able to survive a No. 11 ranking in the Ratings Percentage Index, the computer component used in the three-pronged BCS formula.

Florida was No. 3 in the polls and No. 6 in the RPI.

Florida will argue its conference, the Southeastern, was ranked No. 2 in the RPI while Kansas' conference, the Big 12, was seventh, one spot below the Missouri Valley.

Official BCS response: take it up at our spring meetings.

North Carolina finished fourth in the final standings, with 91.70 points, followed by UCLA, Memphis, Wisconsin, Georgetown, Pittsburgh and Texas A&M.

Memphis, a member of a non-BCS league, Conference USA, earned an automatic BCS "basket bowl" bid by finishing in the BCS top 12.

So the final "basket bowl" lineup is set.

The Rose Basket, which lost No. 1 Ohio State to the title game, gets to replace its Big Ten anchor with Wisconsin.

The Badgers will meet Oregon, which clinched the Rose bid by winning last weekend's Pacific 10 Conference tournament.

"We're thrilled to keep our traditional and geographical matchup," Rose Basket chief executive Mitch Dorger said.

The Fiesta Basket will get at-large UCLA vs. at-large Memphis, the Sugar will pair Florida against at-large Texas A&M, and the Sugar will feature North Carolina against Georgetown, a rematch of 1982's "mythical" national title game that introduced the basketball world to a young Michael Jordan.

UCLA has to be kicking itself.

Two weekends ago, the Bruins were No. 2 in the BCS and appeared headed for a title showdown with Ohio State.

But late-season losses to Washington and California, two unranked teams, knocked UCLA to the Fiesta.

What cruel irony.

In 1998, the UCLA football squad needed only a late-season victory at Miami to clinch a spot in the first BCS national title football game, played that year in the Fiesta Bowl.

If only, against Miami, UCLA had brought its tackle box.

Maybe those BCS bosses aren't kidding when they say, in college basketball, it's all about the regular season.

Basketball purists will continue to clamor for a playoff.

Think of all those UCLA teams coached by John Wooden that had to settle for "mythical" national titles because the top-ranked Bruins were contracted to play the Big Ten champion in the Rose Basket?

Donovan said the BCS system "needs to be nuked" despite the fact the Florida football Gators won last season's national title after edging out Michigan by decimal points for the No. 2 BCS spot.

Donovan advocates a "tournament format" that might involve as many as, get this, *64 teams*.

Dream on, right?

The Big Ten's Delany, a defender of the BCS, argues, "When will our student/athletes go to school?"

The controversial BCS system was developed in 1998 in an effort to pair No. 1 and No. 2 in a championship game.

Before that, conference champions were bound to specific "basket" bowl games, causing numerous split titles.

The BCS standings formula, which has been tweaked more than the carburetor on your old jalopy, is now composed of the Associated Press poll, the USA Today coaches' poll and the RPI.

This year's new "double dribble" format created a fifth BCS basket bowl to open up two more at-large possibilities for mid-major conferences that had claimed the sport was a monopoly.

Only the conference *tournament* winners of the six BCS conferences earn automatic bids to basket bowls.

So, will there ever be a playoff in college basketball?

Don't hold your breath.

College presidents, citing lost class time, have for years resisted the idea of a national tournament for Division I despite the fact there are playoffs at *all* other levels.

Conference commissioners continue to insist a tournament in March would dilute college basketball's "fantastic" regular season.

Regular-season ratings for college basketball have never been better.

"Would a game in November mean as much if you knew both teams were going to make something called the NCAA tournament?" SEC Commissioner Mike Slive wondered.

Some are convinced a tournament would destroy the complicated bowl labyrinth that has evolved since James Naismith's Peach Basket Bowl first debuted in 1902.

How many basket bowls, though, are too many?

This year's Phog Allen Classic was the 98th certified by the NCAA, meaning more than *half* of the major basketball schools will play in a bowl this year.

The joke is there will be more nets cut this year than by dory men in Boston Harbor.

No one would deny the Basketball Championship Series has caused as many headaches as it has offered solutions:

The Associated Press returned to the formula after pulling out three years ago following a conflict-of-interest ruckus that involved one voter's admitting he voted his alma mater No. 1 a week after writing a \$30,000 check for the new arena fund.

The BCS replaced the AP with the ill-fated and short-lived Nike Poll, comprised of a panel of sneaker executives.

Who couldn't have guessed that would end with a lawsuit filed by Sonny Vaccaro?

How about the year ESPN announcer Dick Vitale threatened to sit on the rim at Cameron Indoor Stadium unless Duke was elevated to No. 1 in the BCS?

Or the year Auburn went 32-0 but couldn't play for the title because it finished No. 3 in the final BCS standings?

Not that it stopped the coach from ordering national title rings anyway.

Or the year Nebraska missed all its three-point attempts in a 62-36 loss to Colorado, the day after Thanksgiving in 2001, but still got a big basket bid?

Or the year Pac-10 Commissioner Tom Hansen threatened to pull his league out of the BCS unless Oregon State got in?

You can go on and on.

"It's an imperfect system," said former SEC commissioner Roy Kramer, co-creator of the BCS. "But it is a system."

Kramer pointed out that, without increased access provided by the BCS, a mid-major such as Utah never would have earned a trip to the Fiesta Basket in 1998. That team, coached by Rick Majerus, earned an automatic bid by finishing No. 6 in the final standings.

"Does anyone really believe," Kramer said, "that Utah deserved to play Kentucky for the national title that year?"

As we've noted in this space for years, you can cry for a playoff in basketball so long as you realized it's not going to happen.

The BCS is in the second year of a four-year deal it signed with the Indoor Network.

School presidents remain opposed to a full-blown "tournament" but remain open to extending the season by one game.

BCS officials are calling this the "one-plus-one" option.

But even the chances of that passing are, one BCS source confided, "a three-point attempt, blindfolded, from half court."

So maybe the BCS didn't mess things up royally this year.

But there's always next year.

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*

(INFOBOX BELOW)

The formula

A percentage of total points in the AP and ESPN polls plus two times the percentage of points in the RPI rankings. Divide that number by four and multiply by 100. A perfect score is 100 points:

Team Points

1. Ohio State 99.92

2. Kansas 92.51

3. Florida 92.46
4. North Carolina 91.70
5. UCLA 87.91

Team Points

6. Memphis 87.82
7. Wisconsin 87.42
8. Georgetown 84.43
9. Pittsburgh 76.69
10. Texas A&M 74.68

Team Points

11. Southern Ill. 70.24
12. Oregon 68.18
13. Texas 66.23
14. Nevada 62.26
15. Wash. St. 61.93

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IF THE BCS RAN COLLEGE BASKETBALL

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BCS TITLE GAME

- Ohio State vs. Kansas: Some think Ohio State may be the most storied program that hasn't won a national title since 1960, when Bob Knight was a benchwarmer. Kansas is a storied program that hasn't won it all since 1988.

ROSE BASKET

- Oregon vs. Wisconsin: Oregon will bring the high-end Pinot Noir and Wisconsin will bring the cheese. What a combination — all this game needs is a box of crackers. This is the one year in four the Rose doesn't regret joining the BCS.

FIESTA BASKET

- UCLA vs. Memphis: Just as USC did in football, UCLA will have to forget about blowing its chance for the national championship and concentrate on bouncing back in this "fallback" bowl.

SUGAR BASKET

- Florida vs. Texas A&M: Florida would rather be in Arizona, trying to do another big number on Ohio State in Glendale, but this matchup against Texas A&M could be the most exciting in the BCS lineup.

ORANGE BASKET

- North Carolina vs. Georgetown: You wake up on selection day and this game falls in your lap. How often will they show that wayward Fred Brown pass in '82 that clinched Dean Smith's first "mythical" NCAA title?

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 PRINT THIS

NCAA's play-ins feel like outcasts

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By [Jason Lieser](#)

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Tuesday, March 13, 2007

Even if the rest of the country calls it a play-in game, the NCAA officially considers tonight's contest between Florida A&M and Niagara part of the tournament's first round.

The NCAA's notion sounds a little funny to Northwestern State (La.) coach Mike McConathy.

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While his Demons prepared to face Winthrop in the inaugural play-in game in 2001, McConathy remembers watching players, fans and cheerleaders from Illinois, Tennessee and Charlotte roll into Dayton, Ohio, with each school assured a true opening-round game later in the week.

"That makes you feel like you're not as much a part of it," McConathy said. "Those kids of mine deserve the same opportunities that kids from Duke and North Carolina have."

The NCAA created the play-in game in 2001 to accommodate the newly formed Mountain West Conference with an automatic bid. Rather than remove an at-large bid, the NCAA expanded the field to 65 schools and added the extra game.

But many coaches say the game doesn't feel like part of the tournament and cheapens the value of smaller conferences' automatic bids.

"I don't think it was worthless because you still had a chance ... but it's not treated like everybody else's tournament," said Texas Southern coach Ronnie Courtney, whose Tigers lost to UNC-Asheville in the 2003 play-in game.

"They say you get an automatic bid, and they should stay true to what they're saying. I don't consider that a bid. It was just an opportunity to play another game to see if you deserve to come to the tournament."

Add Niagara coach Joe Mihalich, whose team won the MAAC and finished 22-1, to the list of coaches who feel slighted.



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"I think everybody was shocked, and maybe some people were insulted by it," Mihalich said after seeds were announced Sunday.

Florida A&M, meanwhile, is the only team to make its second play-in game appearance; coach Mike Gillespie's Rattlers beat Lehigh in the 2004 play-in game before losing to top-seeded Kentucky 96-76.

"Whichever team loses tomorrow," he said, "I think you feel cheated about the whole atmosphere of the tournament."

Princeton Athletic Director Gary Walters, the chairman of this year's selection committee, offered little sympathy.

"There are 260 teams that I assume would love to be playing in the opening-round game," Walters said, referring to teams that did not qualify for the tournament.

Alabama A&M is one of them.

"I'll take Niagara's place right now," said Bulldogs coach L. Vann Pettaway, whose team lost a play-in to Oakland in 2005. "I didn't look at it as being a cheap reward. It has all the effects of being in the tournament.

"One of the plus sides is you're the only game in town. You've got the entire country watching. I didn't feel like a second-class citizen."

But the more he talked, the less positive he sounded.

"Once it sunk in, I discovered we were the only team that won their conference regular season and tournament and didn't make the NCAA Tournament," he said. "Well, I mean we did make it ... in the play-in game."

Alabama A&M is one of six historically black schools sent to the game since the system began seven years ago. The selection committee has been careful not to send two black colleges to the game, which might explain why Niagara (No. 136 in the RPI) is participating this year instead of Jackson State (No. 168).

Nonetheless, even the winners advocate solving those types of problems by eliminating the game.

Monmouth coach Dave Calloway laughed when he heard Walters say play-in teams should be happy to make the tournament by any means.

"Try telling that to the team that loses," said Calloway, whose Hawks beat Hampton in last year's game. "Do you think Hampton felt like they were in the NCAA Tournament?"

"They played four games from Wednesday to Saturday to get into the tournament, and they were tired. The coach from that team ... got to the NCAA Tournament, then loses that game and gets fired."

So would Calloway rather miss the tournament altogether?

"When there's a day where we miss it by one spot, I'd change my mind."

The Associated Press contributed to this story.

TRIBUNE-REVIEW

NCAA: United Steel Worker Union is trying to make athletes 'paid employees'

By Robin Acton and Richard Gazarik
For the Tribune-Review
Sunday, March 11, 2007

As a football player at UCLA, Ramogi Huma found there was always more month than money when it came to the reality of daily living.

His scholarship paid for tuition, books, food and housing, but didn't cover toothpaste, travel expenses or phone bills. When "people came peddling credit cards in front of the athletic department," Huma applied and accepted a sports water bottle as a free gift.

He charged what he needed to survive.

"I thought I could get a job in the summers to pay it off, but when I was playing, I wasn't allowed to work because the NCAA didn't allow it," said Huma, who owed \$6,000 at 19 percent interest upon his 1998 graduation.

That experience -- and the National Collegiate Athletic Association's suspension of a teammate who accepted groceries when his scholarship money ran out -- led Huma in 2001 to found the Collegiate Athletes Coalition to improve conditions for student athletes.

Now, as the NCAA prepares for its annual "March Madness" basketball championships, it is locked in a legal battle with the CAC that could change the future of college sports.

Backed by the Pittsburgh-based United Steelworkers Union, the coalition wants the NCAA to revise rules governing scholarship athletes, the amateur stars in a lucrative commercial enterprise.

Last year, the CAC filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of 20,000 current and former Division 1-A football and major Division 1 basketball players from 144 schools, including the University of Pittsburgh, Penn State University and West Virginia University.

The suit claims the NCAA violated antitrust laws and seeks increases in scholarships to cover full costs of attendance, elimination of earning caps, better health care coverage and higher death benefits. It contends athletes need \$2,500 to \$3,000 more per year for incidental expenses, which the NCAA eliminated in 1973 to cut costs.

Bob Williams, director of public and media relations for the Indianapolis-based nonprofit, said the NCAA believes the union is funding the case in an attempt to unionize athletes as though they are paid employees, thereby threatening their amateur standing. Last month, the NCAA asked a federal judge in Pittsburgh to

Suit claims USW trying to make athletes 'paid employees' - Pittsburgh Tribune-Review
order the union to turn over documents detailing its affiliation with the CAC.

Huma said the union provided organizing assistance, legal support and fundraising.

"The union is trying to empower people who feel they are not being treated fairly," he added.

Tim Waters, the union's liaison with the CAC, said the groups share common objectives.

"There's money there," Waters said. "Everybody's making out except the people the fans are going to see. Where is the fairness with coaches making \$2 million a year, when athletes don't have enough money to take a girl out on a date?"

A ruling against the NCAA could carry considerable financial impact -- more than \$100 million -- based on differences between the actual cost of attendance and scholarship awards of the 20,000 or so athletes. Under antitrust law, damages are trebled, which means they could surpass \$300 million.

Industry experts predict a decision favoring the CAC also would impact the business of college sports if institutions are forced to spend more for scholarships. Football and basketball generate billions annually through ticket sales, media contracts, merchandise sales and license and promotional agreements.

In the 2004-05 school year, Division 1 sports programs generated \$2.2 billion, with profits of \$900 million, the U.S. Department of Education reported.

As financial stakes escalate, proponents of sports reform suggest it is time to revamp the scholarship process, which many say is very misleading.

There is no such thing as a four-year "full ride," because all scholarships are renewable each year at the discretion of coaches. Injured athletes routinely lose their scholarships, leaving many poor students unable to complete their education.

Ellen Staurowsky, a professor at Ithaca College in New York and an advisory board member of the National Institute for Sports Reform, said those conditions create an unfair labor relationship.

"The demands placed on these athletes are different than for any other students. This has created a whole class of students whose existence on campus hinges on their ability to produce revenue," said Staurowsky, who favors a system that offers need-based aid or guarantees four-year scholarships.

"If that's not going to happen ... I do think that we need to acknowledge the fact that the revenue producers really are campus employees."

Richard Southall, assistant professor of sports and leisure commerce at the

University of Memphis, said highly paid coaches exercise too much control over the players who are struggling financially while making millions for their schools.

"Either it's a free market, or it's not," Southall said. "The NCAA says it can't constrain coaches, but yet it can constrain athletes. It's very hypocritical."

Retired Louisiana State University basketball coach Dale Brown said he's considered "a rogue" for fighting what he perceives as hypocrisy in the NCAA. Brown, whose teams made Final Four appearances in 1981 and 1986, remembers "poverty-stricken" athletes struggling to survive.

"Unscrupulous agents see that and will hit on them. I lost one player ... I know an agent made him go pro because he was advancing the player and his mother money," Brown said.

Critics say scholarship caps force players to apply for federal education grants, or in the most indigent cases, to seek money from the NCAA's special assistance fund.

Earning limits on outside income, and demanding game schedules, practice drills and meetings, make it nearly impossible for them to work.

"If you're a really poor kid, you can get a full grant-in-aid and additional money from Pell grants. If you're not desperately poor and not wealthy enough for your parents to send you an extra couple hundred dollars a week, you still fall short," said Stephen Ross, director of the Penn State Institute for Sports Law, Policy and Research.

Ross said a star athlete can generate as much as \$1 million annually by attracting fans. In a free market, he said, that athlete could be worth a salary of \$100,000 per year.

Rodney Fort, a sports economics professor at Washington State University, said studies show that playing Division 1 football or basketball is a full-time job. He said scholarship athletes, who fit the description of an employee in IRS guidelines, can lose their "jobs" without guarantees.

Williams said the NCAA believes the rules are appropriate.

"We think there are potential problems if there was a move to go beyond that," Williams said. "Some schools could afford that. Some schools could not afford that, frankly."

In 2003, NCAA President Myles Brand publicly conceded that scholarships covering the entire cost of attendance would "be fully compatible with the legitimate purposes and objectives of the NCAA," the lawsuit states.

Russ Sharp, associate athletic director at West Virginia University, said if the university had to increase its awards per player by \$2,000 to \$3,000, scholarship expenses would increase by \$245,000 to \$600,000 per year.

"It's not insignificant," he said. "If you don't have the money, it's an issue."

Brand in 2003 said the NCAA could help by dipping into \$6 billion from its 11-year contract with CBS for broadcast rights for games and tournaments. After a three-year wait, Huma's group felt it was time to turn to the courts.

"We're not seeking a salary for players, just money for the basic expenses," Huma said. "But, I think that the longer college athletes have to do without necessities, the more extreme they're going to get."

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NEW: Get Movie Showtimes in Entertainment



Can VCU wins translate off the court?

RAY MCALLISTER

TIMES-DISPATCH COLUMNIST

Tuesday, March 13, 2007

They call it the "Flutie Factor" in college admissions.

Or maybe now it's the "George Mason Effect."

Whatever it's called, Virginia Commonwealth University is hoping to turn high-profile basketball success into increased visibility for the school and maybe increased student applications and fund-raising.

"Obviously these are good times at VCU," university President Eugene P. Trani said yesterday. "We have a great new coach, Anthony Grant. The excitement has been building at VCU."

VCU begins play Thursday in the National Collegiate Athletic Association's men's tournament against Duke University.

"What's it going to mean? Clearly more students recognizing VCU," Trani said. If they investigate, they'll find the school's academic strengths, he said. It should bump up already increasing admissions.

It also could help fundraising. "It will clearly be part of the branding of VCU," Trani said, "and hopefully get us in some doors we haven't been able to get through before."

The Flutie Factor refers to Boston College quarterback Doug Flutie's long pass to defeat the University of Miami in 1984. Applications to BC went up 30 percent, though over two years.

A Cornell University economist, in a 2004 study for the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, found that success in big-time athletics has little if any effect on donations or applicants.

But some Virginia schools disagree. For programs such as VCU and George Mason and Old Dominion universities that are not in one of the six major athletics conferences, the perception is that it can bring a windfall -- especially if there is a long winning streak.

George Mason won four straight games in last year's tournament. For two weeks, it was the nation's "Cinderella team."

Daniel Walsch, the university's spokesman, said freshman applications have increased by 20 percent since last year's tournament. Campus tours nearly tripled.

Annual fundraising is up from \$19 million to \$23 million.

Walsh said George Mason used its moment in the spotlight for a magazine advertising campaign to highlight academic programs.

"I sense we're becoming more and more of a school of first choice," he said. "I hope that's attributable to

academics, as well."

Down the road in Norfolk, Old Dominion is in the tournament for the second time in three years.

John R. Broderick, ODU's vice president for institutional advancement and admissions, said it's difficult to quantify the effect. "Certainly it has some kind of a spike for you in terms of admissions and enrollment."

Broderick said one link is definite. During ODU's 2005 appearance, the sale of fan merchandise jumped a couple of hundred thousand dollars. "You see a spike today just walking by the bookstore at noon," he said. "You see more people in there buying."

VCU spokeswoman Pam Lepley said admissions and fund-raising officials sense previous appearances resulted in increases, and this will, too. But direct correlations are difficult.

"One statistic is interesting, though," she said. "On this same Monday last year, we received 15 applications. Today, we had 45."

Trani thinks VCU got a national boost by beating Mason, last year's Cinderella, in its televised conference tournament.

Now it gets another.

"I think we're getting a good roll just by playing Duke," Trani said. "They are the most recognizable name in college basketball. And then if we beat them . . ."

That could be the Flutie Factor.

Contact staff writer Ray McAllister at rmcallister@timesdispatch.com or (804) 649-6333. His column runs Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Responses may be printed from time to time.

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March 13, 2007

Complete coaches: More than just recruiters

Steve Megargee

Rivals.com College Football Staff Writer

When [Trooper Taylor](#) worked as Tennessee's running backs coach, the Volunteers had two 1,000-yard rushers in the same season for the first time in school history.



Trooper Taylor is anxious to prove he is more than just a good recruiter.

In Taylor's first season coaching receivers last year, Robert Meachem set Tennessee's single-season receiving record.

Yet Taylor still is recognized more for his recruiting prowess than his coaching progress.

Taylor has plenty of company among his peers in that regard.

Each of the last two seasons, Rivals.com has named a black assistant coach as its national recruiter of the year: Penn State's [Larry Johnson](#) in 2006 and Louisiana State's [Larry Porter](#) in 2007. Black coaches have comprised 44 percent of the representatives on Rivals.com's last two annual lists of the nation's top 25 recruiters.

But all those recruiting victories haven't translated to success in the job market. Blacks hold only six of the 119 head coaching jobs in Division I-A football.

"That's the barrier we have to overcome," said Taylor, who has been selected by Rivals.com as one of the nation's top 25 recruiters two of the last three years. "It's the perception that all you can do is recruit and that you don't know how to coach, how to strategize and how to handle yourself in fundraising."

Plenty of other black assistant coaches also have noticed that stereotype.

Kentucky offensive coordinator [Joker Phillips](#) said he has gone to job interviews in which almost every question has centered on recruiting instead of X's and O's. Phillips remembered telling himself, "They don't even know what they've got as a coach," when he was hired afterward.

"You're labeled as a good recruiter," Southern California running backs coach [Todd McNair](#) said, "and your coaching skills are overlooked."

That's bad news for a guy like Taylor, who has dreamed of a coaching career since a knee injury his junior year at Baylor crushed his hopes of playing in the NFL. He remembered the way his coaches had helped shape him into the man he is today.

Taylor was in the seventh grade when his father died, leaving him without a clear male role model. His coaches taught him everything from how to shave to how to change his oil.

"I learned you don't have to have the same last name as someone to be family," Taylor said. "They treated me like family. The same way they taught me when they were there – the same values they used, the same work ethic – I still use to this day."

Taylor wanted to repay the favor by growing up and serving as a mentor to the next generation of young

The Next Step

There are currently 29 black offensive or defensive coordinators in Division I college football. Many, including Kentucky's [Joker Phillips](#), believe it's just a matter of time before that translates into head coaching opportunities. Here's a look at the 29 current coordinators:

[Jimmy Williams](#), Buffalo (defense)

[Tim Banks](#), Central Michigan (defense)

[Howard Figgins](#), Eastern Michigan (offense)

[Jay Peterson](#), Eastern Michigan, (defense)

[Charlie Strong](#), Florida (defense)

[Mike Locksley](#), Illinois (offense)

[James Franklin](#), Kansas State (offense)

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athletes.

He has spent the last 15 years coaching at four Division I schools. The former defensive back has coached positions on both sides of the ball, and currently is Tennessee's assistant head coach.

Taylor eventually would love to take over his own program, yet he withdrew his name from consideration for Howard's head coaching vacancy last year.

Why did he take himself out of the running? Taylor believed his current position gave him a more direct path to his ultimate goal.

"When Eddie Robinson doesn't get a Division I job in the SEC, Big 12 or something like that after all the games he won (at Division I-AA program Grambling), it's not encouraging for me to go that route," Taylor said. "Any decision you make, you want it to be an educated one. I researched everything. I took money out of the equation and looked at the doors it would open for me."

"I just didn't see how coming from assistant head coach here to head coach at Howard would allow me to reach the goal I'd set for myself, which is to be a Division I head coach in a major conference."

Jim Tressel proved a Division I-AA coach can succeed at the I-A level when he made the transition from Youngstown State to Ohio State, but coaches at historically black colleges and universities such as Grambling rarely get a chance to make similar moves.

For example, **Joe Taylor** owns a 191-73-4 record in a 24-year head coaching career that includes a 130-44-1 mark at Hampton. Taylor has led Hampton to eight Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference titles and seven trips to the NCAA Division I-AA playoffs, yet he hasn't made the move to the I-A level.

"He flat-out wins every year, he graduates his kids and he does it right," said Gene Marshall, the president of the Black Coaches Association. "He doesn't cheat. He should be a candidate for a I-A program, but he'll never get a shot because he comes from a (historically black college or university)."

Then again, head coaching opportunities also aren't coming very often to black assistants at big-time programs.



Kentucky's Joker Phillips believes things will change as black coordinators have success.

"Everybody's focus is on it," Littlepage said. "That would lead me to believe it's going to get better, but it is a little bit of a concern knowing there are so many talented people out there who aren't getting opportunities. I think as some of the young African-American coaches who are getting their opportunities achieve higher and higher levels of success, it's just a matter of time before those numbers and opportunities increase."

Slowly but surely, more black coaches are capitalizing on those opportunities. A close look at coaching staffs across the country reveals a growing number of promising young black assistants.

UCLA, Kentucky, Notre Dame and Eastern Michigan now have black offensive and defensive coordinators. The 2006 season turned into a banner year for black assistants.

• Rivals.com named Michigan's **Ron English** the national defensive coordinator of the year after the

Joker Phillips, Kentucky (offense)

Steve Brown, Kentucky (defense)

Tim Walton, Miami (defense)

Taver Johnson, Miami-OH (defense)

Ron English, Michigan (defense)

Don Treadwell, Michigan State (offense)

Everett Withers, Minnesota (defense)

Woody McCorvey, Mississippi State (offense)

Osia Lewis, New Mexico (defense)

Garrick McGee, Northwestern (offense)

Michael Haywood, Notre Dame (offense)

Corwin Brown, Notre Dame (defense)

Kevin Sumlin, Oklahoma (offense)

Tom Williams, San Jose State (defense)

Tyrone Nix, South Carolina (defense)

David Shaw, Stanford (offense)

Mike Pelton, Troy (defense)

Paul Randolph, Tulsa (defense)

Jay Norvell, UCLA (offense)

DeWayne Walker, UCLA (defense)

Mike London, Virginia (defense)

Calvin Magee, West Virginia (offense)

Twenty-three head coaching jobs opened up at Division I-A schools this offseason. The only black candidate to fill one of those vacancies was Miami's **Randy Shannon**. The only other minority head coach hired was Florida International's **Mario Cristobal**, who is a Cuban-American.

Those facts give Trooper Taylor and other talented minority assistants reason to worry.

"I'm not playing the race card," Trooper Taylor said. "I'm playing the qualified card. If a guy's able to do the job, don't keep him from doing it just because you're worried about him being a minority. Give him the opportunity because you're fired up about him and believe he can do the job."

Virginia athletic director **Craig Littlepage**, the first black to hold that position in Atlantic Coast Conference history, acknowledges having some concern over the offseason developments. But he also believes the number of black head coaches could increase rather soon.

Wolverines led the nation in run defense his first season as coordinator.

- UCLA defensive coordinator [DeWayne Walker](#) played a key role in the year's biggest upset when UCLA's pass rush shut down Southern California in a 14-9 victory that knocked the Trojans out of contention for the national title.

- Florida co-defensive coordinator [Charlie Strong](#) helped construct a defense that limited Ohio State to 82 yards of total offense in the national championship game.

"We're just now getting the opportunity to be coordinators," Phillips said. "As we continue to have success as coordinators, I think you'll start to see more head coaching opportunities for minorities. I honestly believe that."

Recent developments in the NFL offer these promising assistants more reason for optimism.

Many of them considered it a watershed moment earlier this year when Indianapolis' Tony Dungy and Chicago's Lovie Smith became the first two black head coaches to lead their teams to the Super Bowl.

"I'm glad I lived to see that," Trooper Taylor said. "There was a time I didn't think I would. I was fortunate to be alive to watch the Super Bowl when Doug Williams was the quarterback for the Redskins (the first black quarterback to lead his team to the Super Bowl). To be able to see that in my lifetime, that's a huge step. It's a big deal. It would be like having a minority President. It tells you it can be done."

Some of these assistants aren't necessarily waiting for head coaching opportunities. They're satisfied right where they are now.



USC's Todd McNair isn't concerned with being a head coach.

McNair, for instance, looks like a natural head coaching candidate. He tutored Heisman Trophy winner Reggie Bush at Southern California and was rated by Rivals.com as the nation's No. 3 recruiter last year.

There's only one problem. McNair says he's not interested.

Then again, McNair also never planned to enter the coaching profession in the first place. The former NFL running back changed his mind only after two of his old coaches – Marty Schottenheimer and current New York Jets running back coach Jimmy Raye – continually encouraged him to follow that path.

"I don't plan on being a head coach or anything," McNair said. "I just like being around the guys and teaching. But if enough seeds are planted, you can always change course."

Any change in course might require a change in attitude from the people in power.

For his part, Trooper Taylor has tried to answer the questions that often follow any black assistant who expresses an interest in becoming a head coach. He believes his accomplishments prove he's a quality coach and not merely a recruiter.

Trooper Taylor also believes he could make himself an effective fundraiser. He cites recruiting victories such as luring four-star running back [Lennon Creer](#) out of Texas this year as evidence that he knows how to make an effective sales pitch.

"It's a lot harder to convince someone to become part of your university than it is to convince someone to give money to a university they already love and respect," Trooper Taylor said.

He now finds himself in the same situation as many of his peers in the black coaching fraternity.

They've proved they can effectively recruit the nation's top high school players.

Now they want the chance to sell athletic directors on their ability to run a program.

Also see:

- [Recruiting issues faced by minority coaches not as simple as black and white](#)
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March 13, 2007

Recruiting not always black and white

Olin Buchanan

Rivals.com College Football Senior Writer

Neil Armstrong had it easy. He only had to walk on the moon.

Willie Jeffries, the first black head coach in Division I football, had to walk into the homes of recruits – often Caucasian – and try to convince them to play for him at Wichita State.



Associated Press

Josh Freeman committed to Nebraska during recruiting but changed his mind when Kansas State hired Ron Prince.

"There was a northern kid – I was visiting his home in Philadelphia – and he said he could not bring himself to play under a black head coach," recalled Jeffries, who coached Wichita State from 1979 to 1982. "I decided to joke about it, and I said I was happy to find that out before it was fourth-and-1. His parents laughed and we kept drinking our hot chocolate and eating cookies."

Now retired and living in South Carolina after a successful career in which his teams were 174-130-6, Jeffries said those kind of hurtful incidents were rare. He said his players, boosters and community were 100 percent supportive, and he rewarded their loyalty by guiding the Shockers to an 8-3 finish in 1982.

That was Wichita State's highest victory total in 21 years. It was only their second winning season in that span, which was a big reason Jeffries was coaching there in the first place.

"The schools that hired black coaches early were schools that were at the end of the road," Jeffries said. "They tried and tried all kinds of things and said we've got to try something never tried before to see if we can get the program going."

Since Jeffries was hired in '79, there have been 20 black head coaches in Division I-A. In the vast majority of cases, the schools had struggling programs.

A common theory was that a black coach might be better able to relate to minority players. Some recruits then might be drawn to a program with a minority coach.

"Some will and some will not," Jeffries said. "You have individuals who want different things. Where there's an advantage with one kid there may not be with another."

The recruiting process clearly isn't a black-and-white issue, and some of today's players who chose to play for black coaches maintain they were not influenced by race.

Two years ago, [Josh Freeman](#) — a four-star quarterback prospect from Kansas City — was the jewel of Nebraska's 2006 recruiting class.

He had committed to Nebraska in June that year, and the likely schedule of his progression called for him to serve as [Zac Taylor](#)'s understudy for one season. Then, he would step in to direct the Huskers' West Coast offense for coach [Bill Callahan](#) — who is white.

Three weeks after Kansas State hired [Ron Prince](#) — who is black — as its football coach, Freeman reneged on his six-month commitment.

The Chosen Few

There are currently just six black head coaches among the 119 major college football programs:

[Turner Gill](#), Buffalo, hired 2006

[Ron Prince](#), Kansas State, hired 2006

[Randy Shannon](#), Miami, hired 2007

[Sylvester Croom](#), Mississippi State, hired 2004

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A year later, Freeman acknowledges that it was Prince's presence which lured him to Kansas State — but not for the reasons some might think. [Karl Dorrell](#), UCLA, hired 2003
[Tyrone Willingham](#), Washington, hired 2005

"It had nothing to do with race at all," Freeman said. "My mom is white and my dad is black. It has more to do with that person. Coach Prince is someone you're comfortable around every day and he'll push you to be the best you can be."

"Callahan is a great coach, but he's not the type I want to be around every day. In no way would I have had the type relationship I have with Coach Prince."

[Alterraun Verner](#) is a former three-star cornerback prospect from Carson, Calif. Verner chose to play at UCLA for coach [Karl Dorrell](#), who is black. But like Freeman, Verner said Dorrell's race did not play into his decision.

"The times I talked to him (in recruiting) he was always positive and that's what appealed to me," Verner said of Dorrell. "He's the same way (now) he was when he recruited me. He didn't feed me any false dreams."

Dorrell is popular with his white players, too — who obviously showed they had no issue with race by choosing to play for him.



Tyrone Willingham took over a Washington program that was struggling.

"I think it could definitely be an issue for some people," said UCLA senior linebacker [Christian Taylor](#), who is white. "I lived in California my whole life — and I'm not saying there isn't racism in California — but I never really saw it. In other states race may be a factor. Because of some kids' beliefs they might not go to a school (with a black head coach). But race has never been an issue for me."

"(Coach Dorrell) is still my coach and he's still someone to go to for leadership just like any coach. He's a great guy and he's very fair. He's a man of morals and he truly wants what is best for his players. Football is important, but he wants us to graduate and do well. He cares about us as a team but he cares about us as individuals more."

Relating to and attracting players from all ethnic backgrounds is important, but the majority of highly rated prospects are black. About 70 percent of Rivals.com's top 250 rated players of 2007 are African-American.

Verner speculated that some black athletes might be influenced by the race of coaches when choosing a school, but guessed that's the exception — not the rule.

"I think there are probably a few players that will take that into consideration," he said. "But probably most programs have at least one African-American coach on the team, anyway. I really don't think it matters. I think that's more for the fans (to talk about)."

On-field and recruiting success would seem to support that opinion.

The five Division I-A programs that were led by black head coaches last season finished a combined 24-38. Only two — Kansas State and UCLA — posted winning records.

However, it should be pointed out that Buffalo's [Turner Gill](#), Mississippi State's [Sylvester Croom](#) and Washington's [Tyrone Willingham](#) are directing programs where preceding white coaches previously failed.

Just as revealing is how those programs have recruited. Of the six Division I-A programs that now have black coaches, only Miami (now led by [Randy Shannon](#)) had a class ranked among the top 30 this year by Rivals.com.

Miami ranked No. 18, while Washington ranked 35th, UCLA 38th, Mississippi State 39th, Kansas State 41st and Buffalo 108th.

In Dorrell's defense, he had a limited number of scholarships available this season.

Climbing in those rankings is dependent on relationships rather than race.

"It's all about relationships," said first-year Minnesota coach [Tim Brewster](#), who is white. "It's your ability to build a relationship with high school coaches, parents and kids. You'd like to think a kid is choosing a school because he likes the school, but that's not always the truth. Kids choose schools because of relationships with coaches."

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Brewster, who is white, has a reputation as a tremendous recruiter. As an assistant at Texas, he was instrumental in getting Vince Young to Austin — which would seem to reinforce that race isn't a major issue in recruiting.

However, Brewster also has six black assistant coaches on his nine-member full-time coaching staff. That seems to indicate race is a factor at least on some level.

But Freeman adamantly disagrees.

"The coach at Texas ([Mack Brown](#)) is white and the coach at Florida ([Urban Meyer](#)) is white, and they have no problem getting black players," he said. "(Athletes) just want to go somewhere to play, have a good time, go to school and win football games. Race doesn't really tie into it."

At least, it doesn't matter as much as it did for Jeffries about 25 years ago.

Also see:

- [Complete package: Black coaches proving they are more than just good recruiters](#)
- [Tim Brewster puts together diverse, qualified staff in Minnesota](#)
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March 13, 2007

List of qualified black assistants keeps growing

Steve Megargee

Rivals.com College Football Staff Writer

The 2006 season turned into a year to remember for black assistant football coaches.

Florida co-defensive coordinator [Charlie Strong](#) helped lead the defensive-minded Gators to a national championship.

Michigan's [Ron English](#) was named the Rivals.com national defensive coordinator of the year.

Kentucky offensive coordinator [Joker Phillips](#) helped the Wildcats put together the Southeastern Conference's most prolific passing attack.

The list of talented black assistant coaches grows longer each year, yet the list of Division I-A black head coaches remains only six deep: Mississippi State's [Sylvester Croom](#), UCLA's [Karl Dorrell](#), Buffalo's [Turner Gill](#), Kansas State's [Ron Prince](#), Miami's [Randy Shannon](#) and Washington's [Tyrone Willingham](#).

Which assistant coach will become the next Prince or Shannon?

We put together an alphabetical list of 25 black college assistant coaches who eventually could emerge as head coaching candidates. We restricted this list to assistant coaches who were on college staffs in 2006.

On the Horizon: Head coaches of the future?

John Blake, North Carolina defensive line coach: Although he posted a 12-22 record in three years as Oklahoma's head coach from 1997-98, Blake's recent work as an assistant could help him receive a second chance. Rivals.com named Blake one of the nation's top 25 recruiters in 2005 and 2006, when he was working on Nebraska's staff.

Burton Burns, Alabama running backs coach: He joined [Nick Saban](#)'s staff at Alabama after spending the past eight seasons at Clemson, where he coached [James Davis](#) and [C.J. Spiller](#).

Ron English, Michigan defensive coordinator: The 2006 Rivals.com defensive coordinator of the year was the architect of the nation's top-ranked run defense last season. Rivals.com selected him this year as one of the nation's top 25 recruiters.

James Franklin, Kansas State offensive coordinator: He helped Kansas State freshman quarterback [Josh Freeman](#) improve tremendously in the second half of the 2006 season. Franklin also has NFL experience as the former Green Bay Packers wide receivers coach.

Rodney Garner, Georgia defensive line coach: Rivals.com listed Garner as the nation's fourth-ranked recruiter in 2006. He also has coached four first-round draft picks (Richard Seymour, Marcus Stroud, Charles Grant and Johnathan Sullivan) in the last five years.

Odell Haggins, Florida State defensive tackles coach: His former pupils include first-round draft picks Brodrick Bunkley, Travis Johnson and Corey Simon.

Michael Haywood, Notre Dame offensive coordinator: The American Football Coaches Association named Haywood the Division I-A assistant coach of the year in 2005. Haywood specializes in mentoring running backs and has tutored Kevin Faulk, Cedric Benson and [Darius Walker](#) during his stints at Louisiana State, Texas and now Notre Dame.

Darrell Hazell, Ohio State wide receivers coach: He has spent the past three seasons coaching one of the most star-studded units in all of college football. His pupils have included 2006 first-round draft pick Santonio Holmes, potential 2007 first-round pick Ted Ginn Jr., Anthony Gonzalez and Roy Hall.

Larry Johnson, Penn State defensive line coach: Rivals.com named Johnson the national recruiter of the year in 2006. Johnson has mentored No. 1 overall draft pick Courtney Brown and first-round draft pick Tamba Hali among others since coming to Penn State in 1996. He won three Maryland state titles and posted a 139-36 record as head coach at McDonough High School in Pomfret, Md., from 1975-91.

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Bobby Kennedy, Texas wide receivers coach: [Limas Sweed](#) and [Billy Pittman](#) have shown plenty of progress while learning from Kennedy, a 17-year college assistant entering his fourth year at Texas. Rivals.com named him one of the nation's top 25 recruiters in 2005.

Mike Locksley, Illinois offensive coordinator: Rivals.com has named Locksley one of the nation's top 25 recruiters for three of the last four years. If Illinois can translate some of its recent recruiting victories to success on the field, Locksley soon could become a very attractive candidate.

Mike London, Virginia defensive coordinator: Don't blame London for Virginia's struggles last year. The Cavaliers recorded two shutouts last season and allowed seven or fewer points in three of their last five games. Rivals.com named London one of the nation's top 25 recruiters this year.

Calvin Magee, West Virginia offensive coordinator: The former Tampa Bay Buccaneers tight end has helped give West Virginia one of the nation's most productive rushing attacks.

Todd McNair, Southern California running backs coach: Rivals.com named McNair the nation's No. 3 recruiter in 2006. He made the top 25 again this year. The former NFL running back has coached Heisman Trophy winner Reggie Bush and second-round draft pick LenDale White during his three-year tenure at USC.

Tyrone Nix, South Carolina defensive coordinator: The former Southern Mississippi defensive coordinator was a 2003 finalist for the Frank Broyles Award, which goes to the nation's top assistant coach. The 34-year-old Nix already is entering his seventh season as a defensive coordinator.

Ken Norton Jr., Southern California linebackers coach: Norton certainly has the name recognition as the only person ever to play on three consecutive Super Bowl-winning teams (the 1992 and 1993 Dallas Cowboys and 1994 San Francisco 49ers). He will spend this season working with arguably the nation's most talented linebacking corps.

Jay Norvell, UCLA offensive coordinator: The former Oakland Raiders tight ends coach arrives at UCLA this season after spending the last three years helping Nebraska move from a run-oriented attack to the West Coast offense. The Cornhuskers ranked in the top 25 in rushing offense and passing offense last season.

Joker Phillips, Kentucky offensive coordinator: Kentucky emerged as one of the surprise stories of the 2006 season in part because it led the Southeastern Conference in passing offense. Phillips also can bring in talent. Rivals.com named him one of the nation's top 25 recruiters in 2006.

Anthony Poindexter, Virginia running backs coach: One of the greatest safeties in Virginia history now is rapidly moving up the ladder on the Cavaliers' coaching staff. He has spent the last three seasons as Virginia's running backs coach and also served as the Cavaliers' special teams coordinator last year.

Larry Porter, Louisiana State running backs coach: Rivals.com named him the national recruiter of the year last month after he helped bring five-star prospects [Terrance Toliver](#) and [Chad Jones](#) to Baton Rouge. Porter mentored first-round draft pick Joseph Addai at LSU and coached a 1,000-yard rusher each of his three years on Oklahoma State's staff.

Charlie Strong, Florida co-defensive coordinator: All he needs to bring to an interview is a tape of last season's BCS championship game. Florida held Ohio State to 91 total yards in a 41-14 shellacking. Strong also played a key role in helping Florida land the nation's top recruiting class this year. Rivals.com listed him as one of the nation's top 25 recruiters.

Kevin Sumlin, Oklahoma co-offensive coordinator: The former Purdue linebacker worked as a receivers coach at his alma mater and briefly served as Texas A&M's offensive coordinator before coming to Oklahoma as tight ends coach. He specializes in coaching receivers and helped Malcolm Kelly deliver a banner season last fall.

Trooper Taylor, Tennessee wide receivers coach: Robert Meachem put together one of the finest seasons of any receiver in Tennessee history last fall during Taylor's first year as the Volunteers' receiving coach. He also had two successful seasons as Tennessee's running backs coach and has been named one of the nation's top 25 recruiters by Rivals.com two of the last three years.

DeWayne Walker, UCLA defensive coordinator: A UCLA defense that struggled throughout 2005 ranked sixth in the nation in sacks and ninth at stopping the run last year in Walker's first season as coordinator.

Tim Walton, Miami defensive coordinator: The former Miami defensive backs coach has been promoted to coordinator on [Randy Shannon](#)'s new staff. His secondary helped Miami lead the nation in pass defense and pass efficiency defense in 2005. Walton's former players include first-round draft picks Antrel Rolle and Kelly Jennings.

Also see:

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A storied history

New book documents the madness and memories of March

By Melody Gutierrez - Bee Staff Writer

Published 12:00 am PDT Tuesday, March 13, 2007

Two letters and one point separated Michigan's Rumeal Robinson's fate.

In the 1989 NCAA championship game, Robinson will either be remembered famously or infamously as he approached the free throw line against Seton Hall with three seconds remaining.

Think you know what happened?

"It's these kinds of things when I'd go drinking with my buddies, we'd get into arguments and try to figure out what the truth is," said Alan Zullo, author of the new book "March To Madness" (Running Press; February 2007; \$6.95).

With office pools and bar bets, the NCAA Tournament brings out the sports fanatic in many Americans. Before wagering a small fortune on your sports trivia retention, here's a refresher course in the tournament's history.

How it started

The first national collegiate men's basketball tournament included eight teams in 1939 and was won by Oregon. (Trivia question 1: How many championships have the Ducks won since?)

That's the year designated as the "modern era" of basketball because before that teams would have a center jump at midcourt following each basket.

Oklahoma State was the first team to win two titles, taking them back-to-back 1945 and 1946. The second championship game won by Oklahoma State was televised locally for the first time in New York City by CBS. An estimated 500,000 people tuned in to watch the Cowboys' victory over North Carolina 43-40.

A year later, the NCAA began keeping official weekly statistics in 1947.

The first of many tournament expansions took place in 1951, with the field expanding to 16 from 10 conferences. Two years later, the bracket included 22 teams. The number of teams stayed between 22 and 25 until the mid-70's.

NBC reported in 1971 the largest network telecast audience with 9.3 million households watching the semifinals. The East vs. West bracket format was changed for the first time, pitting East vs. West and Mideast vs. Midwest.

More teams were added in 1975, the same year the term "Final Four" first appeared in an NCAA publication.

With a 32-team bracket, the field was open for nonconference champions to be chosen. (Trivia question 2: Who was last team to go undefeated through a season and win the championship?)

Another expansion came in 1979, with 40 teams invited, then eight more teams were added in 1980.

The tournament bloated to 64 teams in 1985 before settling on 65 teams in 2001.

In between, the tournament's popularity took off. Tickets were hard to come by, with the NCAA using a computerized random drawing for the general public to get tickets to the 1986 Final Four.

"It really took off in the 80's and now it's exploded," said Zullo, who resides in North Carolina and has written dozens of sports-related books.

Since 1980, Duke and North Carolina lead the pack of title winners, each owning three. Duke was the last team to win back-to-back championships, winning titles in 1991 and 1992.

Madness indeed

From the 1983 North Carolina State Wolfpack to the 1997 Arizona Wildcats, many special teams have played in the tournament. While upsets and unlikely runs have been a major part of the appealing nature of the tournament, social implications have been prevalent. The 1966 champion Texas Western team, for instance, made social and sports history with the first all-African-American starting lineup to win a title.

The game has evolved, records have been reset. UCLA has the mark for most titles won with 11, thanks to the seven consecutive championships from 1967-1973. Notre Dame's Austin Carr holds the record for most points scored in a game with 62 against Ohio in 1970.

As a team, North Carolina scored the fewest points in tournament history, losing to Pittsburgh 26-20 in 1941. (Trivia question 3: What was the biggest blowout in NCAA history?)

In 1982, a North Carolina freshman named Michael Jordan became one of many clutch players in the tournament, sinking the game-winning basket against Georgetown for the 63-62 win.

With many memorable moments, Zullo knew he'd have no problem filling his book.

So, did Robinson make those free throws in the 1989 championship? How was he remembered by Michigan fans?

Famously. He drained both free throws and Michigan defeated Seton Hall 80-79.

"That was to me the most pressure cooker moment for a single player," Zullo said. "That's what makes March Madness so great. You see greatness in the making. You see wonderful high points and devastating low points."

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Sideline Smitty

Let the fans have fun; it's a big part of the game

By Sideline Smitty

Seattle Times staff reporter

Q: What's your take on the WIAA proposals to set standards for crowd behavior?

A: The Washington Interscholastic Activities Association needs to lighten up. We're dealing with exciting games and real rivalries, not church-league basketball or third-grade soccer matches where everyone gets an orange slice at halftime.

A quick review: A 15-member WIAA committee is working on a set of guidelines for behavior at prep events that will be finalized in May.

The guidelines discourage booing, personal attacks on players and organized chants that focus on one player or a referee.

Some of this makes sense and I can see a case for everyone being told that standards don't change from league to state-tournament play. And yes, there are lines that shouldn't be crossed, such as anything racial. But everyone knows that already.

But what I'm detecting is too much political correctness in the committee's work. I think part of the problem in this quest for "more civility" is that the mindset of school administrators is to avoid problems, especially anything that might spill over to the parking lot. The worst of these administrators are like safety officials who would like everyone to wear a helmet to protect against asteroids.

Some things that bother the committee folks don't bother me. Holding up newspapers and pretending to read them when the other team is announced isn't disrespectful, it's hilarious. The other team gets the joke.

And chanting the name of a player's girlfriend to try to distract him? Doesn't bother me.

Clever chants have become part of the landscape at basketball games and they do more than administrators realize to build school unity. It's us vs. them, baby. You're either from the blue school or the red school and it doesn't matter if you're a nerd or the prom queen, we're a combined brotherhood-sisterhood in the stands, chanting, cheering and laughing together. We're dishing it out to the other school and taking it, too.

It's a battle of wits in the stands and a battle of athletes on the floor. It's entertainment and energy.

One of my favorite prep moments was hearing Mount Si students chanting "Daddy's Money! Daddy's Money" at Seattle Prep in 2006 after Prep kids chanted, "Where's Mount Si?"

I agree that booing just to boo is stupid but I can't remember the last time I heard it.

Booing a questionable officiating call is spontaneous and just part of sports. What's unsportsmanlike is "riding a ref," but refs can stop this by halting the game and having the offending jerk ejected.

And what about this argument that disrespectful crowds are discouraging the recruitment of referees? My hunch is that crowds are nothing compared to dealing with hostile coaches who try to intimidate refs. Anyone who signs up to be a ref and complains about booing is like someone who joins the Army and complains about being shot at.

This whole thing smacks of the naiveté the WIAA showed for a while in the 1990s when it had a cartoon character named "Sporty" in a costume at state tournaments to encourage sportsmanship. "Sporty" belonged at a preschool picnic; the WIAA eventually figured it out and retired him.

I'm not saying all the recommendations of this committee need to disappear, but I think O'Dea coach Phil Lumpkin summed it up best during the tournament when he said, "Let kids be kids."

Q: How did Steven Gray of Bainbridge win the MVP award in the boys 3A basketball tournament? He didn't have a good championship game and his team lost.

A: Ballots were due at halftime of the title game. Some writers and broadcasters from out of town voted hours before the game started and left for home before tipoff. A lot of folks on deadline also voted before the game started.

Have a question about high-school sports? Craig Smith will find the answer every Tuesday in The Times. Ask your question in one of the following ways: Voice mail (206-464-8279), snail mail (Craig Smith, Seattle Times Sports, P.O. Box 70, Seattle, WA 98111) or e-mail csmith@seattletimes.com

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Ratings Percentage Index ... or, Rip-off Promoting Inconsistency?

By [Vahe Gregorian](#)

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Tuesday, Mar. 13 2007

With a Ratings Percentage Index ranking of 67, Stanford on Sunday received an invitation to the NCAA Tournament ahead of 20 teams with better RPIs that didn't make the field.

Whatever else Stanford's seemingly curious inclusion at the expense of others might reflect, it brings into scrutiny once more the continuing confusion over the RPI's role in the tournament committee's deliberations.

At least it does to the public and dejected rejects from the tournament.

But to committee chairman Gary Walters, the inclusion of Stanford affirms what the NCAA has insisted for years.

"The RPI is a guideline," he said in a teleconference. "It's not an absolute predictor of what we do."

Despite a general fascination with the RPI, the notion of it as merely one of a number of tools used by the committee has been apparent for several years now — as Missouri State knows better than anybody.

Twice in seven previous seasons, the Bears set records for highest RPIs ever left out of the tournament. This season, their 36 wasn't close to the record 21 they established in 2006, but it was the second-best left out of this field behind Air Force's 29.

"It was obviously one of those teams that received enormous consideration, (but) there was just a feeling that when you looked across the board at all the teams nationally, we just felt they didn't merit inclusion," said Walters, noting the Bears were hurt by going 0-5 against Southern Illinois Carbondale and Creighton. "Was it an easy call? No, it wasn't an easy call. None of these calls are easy."

Perhaps the complicated calls might be easier for some to accept if there were an all-encompassing explanation or rating that dictated the committee's actions.

But maybe the closest approximation of that is the Bowl Championship Series system used by college football, and that has proven infinitely controversial.

The committee simply has no "magic formula," Walters said, not even the omnipresent RPI, which essentially is composed of a team's winning percentage (25 percent), its opponents' winning percentage (50 percent) and its opponents' opponents' winning percentage (25 percent).

"If you torture the numbers long enough," Walters likes to say, "you can get them to confess to anything."

Instead, the committee does its tortuous work by way of an imperfect but largely successful system that incorporates not only numerical considerations such as RPI, strength of schedule, road record and record in last 10 games but also substantial, nuanced discussions about the capabilities and flaws of teams themselves.

"Understand that we're looking at a series of different issues," Walters said. "And they're not just quantitative, they are also qualitative."

To what degree they're quality, of course, often depends on who's affected.

Mid-majors, for instance, received only six of this season's 34 at-large berths despite two reaching the Sweet 16 last season and a third, George Mason, going to the Final Four.

But Walters said that was purely coincidental in attempting to evaluate the field in a season that featured 104 teams with more than 20 victories; 78 had been the previous high.

"It just shakes out where it shakes out," he said. "This year it happened to shake out with six at-large teams from the so-called mid-majors."

It also shook out in the Big East, where Syracuse coach Jim Boeheim has been among the most vocal about his team's exclusion this season.

Yet despite tying for fifth place, Syracuse had flaws: It was 3-6 against top 50 teams, 6-6 on the road and had a nonconference strength of schedule of 122 to go with its No. 50 RPI.

"Jim Boeheim is a good friend of mine; I hope he still is a good friend of mine," Walters said, adding, "While I understand Syracuse's disappointment, also understand that we think we made good decisions."

Not that Walters thinks the group's work is infallible.

"I don't presume that we are necessarily 100 percent right. Who knows? All we're doing is taking the best information we can get," he said, adding, "I think all of us around the table would say that reasonable people could differ, all right?"

Even on the use of the RPI.

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March 12, 2007 4:08 p.m. EDT

THE DAILY FIX

By CARL BIALIK AND JASON FRY



NCAA Tournament Snubs Lament Their Missed Chance

March 12, 2007 4:08 p.m.

There's plenty of time to consider who's in the NCAA men's basketball field of 65 unveiled last night; the tournament doesn't begin until Thursday. Right now, Wonderful Thursday is a long way away -- Morose Monday is the time for the snubbed schools to air their gripes.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch columnist Bernie Miklasz points out that schools in that middle tier of college-hoops power rankings, i.e. the mid-majors, didn't get much credit for their strong out-of-conference showing last fall. "Of the 34 at-large bids available Sunday, 28 went to the power conferences," [Mr. Miklasz writes](#)¹. "It was a wonderful day for Jay Bilas, Dick Vitale, Digger Phelps, Billy Packer and other basketball elitists who were angrily gnawing on their brackets last year when the committee dared to give some love to the mid-majors."

MARCH MADNESS GUIDE

Dan Shanoff [breaks down](#)² the 10 top storylines of the NCAA tournament -- and he'll be back tomorrow with some bracket strategy and his own picks. Join Dan and other readers in the Online Journal's [discussion forum](#)³.

MARCH MADNESS CONTEST

Put down those [brackets](#)⁴. If you think you can nail down this year's Cinderellas and opening-round upsets in the men's basketball tournament, then take a shot at the Daily Fix NCAA quiz. Choose only one answer for each of the first seven questions, as in the case of a tie, any correct answer counts. Correct answers are worth 10 points each unless otherwise noted (Fixers' picks in *italics*):

1. Which will be the team with the highest seed number (16 is higher than 1) to win in the first round?
2. Which will be the team with the highest seed number (16 is higher than 1) to make it to the Elite Eight, a.k.a. regional finals?
3. Which No. 1 seed will win by the fewest points in the first round?
4. Which region [Midwest, West, East South] will see the most first-round upsets (defined, for our purposes, as the number of teams seeded 9th through 16th that advance to the second round)?
5. Which conference will see the highest number of its representatives reach the Sweet 16?

Drexel is tops on most lists of the unfairly omitted. Philadelphia Inquirer columnist [Bob Ford was there](#)⁸ when a would-be festive gathering to watch the selection show turned funereal: "When the last of the slots had been assigned, the Dragons got up slowly from their chairs and shuffled silently from the room. A handful of boosters and athletic department personnel offered a smattering of applause as the team made its exit, but the sound went hollowly off the walls and even the fire-breathing creatures on the banners seemed momentarily extinguished."

Among the big conferences, the best team left out was, by consensus, Carl's favorite, Syracuse. New York Post columnist Mike Vaccaro argues that the Big East has hurt itself by growing too Big -- there are now 16 teams in the mega-conference. "Syracuse is the shocking omission, because Syracuse represents the old-school Big East, because the Orange's coach, Jim Boeheim, has more institutional memory than anyone currently employed in the league," [Mr. Vaccaro writes](#)⁹.

Syracuse, at least, got a No. 2 seed in that other tournament, the NIT (composed of 32 teams that didn't make the cut for the NCAA tourney). Big East rival UConn is done for the season, missing a postseason tournament for the first time in two decades. "The solace must come for Jim Calhoun in the prospects of next season," [Jeff Jacobs writes](#)¹⁰ in the Hartford Courant. "The solace must come in the head coaches his Hall of Fame career has spawned. For in the end, the legacy will continue on in those men." Four of these men in Mr. Calhoun's coaching tree earned

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6. Which player will score the most points (total points, not points per game) in the tournament?
7. Who will be named Most Outstanding Player in the Final Four?
8. Which teams will make the Final Four (10 points each)?
9. Which team will win the championship (30 points)?

Email responses to dailyfix@wsj.com⁵ by **noon EST Thursday**, then check the Daily Fix throughout the tournament for a daily roundup of the Web's best writing on college hoops and all other sports.

Later this week: links to select columns and features about all regions of the men's and women's tournaments.

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tournament berths.

UConn's omission was no injustice, but the Akron Beacon Journal's [Terry Pluto can't fathom](#)¹¹ how 26-7 Akron was left out of the NIT. Likewise, Seattle Post-Intelligencer columnist Art Thiel wonders how Washington didn't make the cut. "I am completely stunned," said coach Lorenzo Romar, a man not readily given to conveying surprise," [Mr. Thiel writes](#)¹². "Having been around the college game long enough to have seen most things on the far end of the absurdity scale, Romar was speechless, flabbergasted and appalled. Other than that, he was OK."

Every single New Jersey school was shut out of both tournament fields. "But New Jersey players -- as they always do -- dot the rosters of tournament teams from Connecticut to New Mexico, from big programs like Louisville to small ones such as Niagara," [Steve Politi laments](#)¹³ in the Newark Star-Ledger. Mr. Politi constructs his all-Jersey college hoops dream team, and wonders what it would take to get players of this caliber to stay in-state.

* * *

Now that the tournament has expanded to a field of 65, with two teams (this year, Florida A&M and Niagara) chosen to play against each other before the main event begins, the Philadelphia Inquirer's Phil Sheridan wonders why there can't be three more teams added to the mix, to accommodate more of those who feel snubbed. (That's three teams, not seven, as an earlier version of Mr. Sheridan's column mistakenly said.) "The goal should be to give as many deserving teams as possible control of their own fate without diminishing the overall quality of the tournament," [Mr. Sheridan writes](#)¹⁴. "The cleanest, easiest, fairest way to do that is to add three teams to the play-in field."

* * *

How did the SEC get five teams into the tournament, including Arkansas, which finished 7-9 in the conference's puny west division? Birmingham News columnist Kevin Scarbinsky says it couldn't have hurt to have conference commissioner Mike Slive in the room of the selection committee. "By rule, Slive had to leave the Indianapolis hotel room where the selection committee convened every time an SEC team was discussed," [Mr. Scarbinsky writes](#)¹⁵. "But in this case, out of sight is not out of mind. The committee members spent most of their waking hours together Wednesday through Sunday. They ate meals together. They watched conference tournament games together. They challenged each other's assumptions and confirmed each other's suspicions."

* * *

Taking measure of the teams who did make it in, columnists focus on the red-hot defending champs and the nation's best player.

Florida, which rolled to the SEC championship by a combined victory margin of 59 points in three days, appears to be back in national-title form after a bewildering late-season collapse. Yet those three losses in four games suggest the Gators might be vulnerable to overestimating their abilities, [Sam Borden writes](#)¹⁶ in the Florida Times-Union: "The Gators' toughest foe along the way might be their own brains. Swiping a title from out of nowhere, as they did last season, often is easier than holding on to a trophy already in hand, and Florida's veteran roster already has shown that it isn't immune to getting in its own way."

On the opposite side of the bracket looms the Texas Longhorns and freshman Kevin Durant, the favorite for

every major national player of the year award. Texas is just a 4-seed (Texas A&M is a 3), but the Longhorns are dangerous. Of their nine losses, seven came to fellow tournament teams, and the other two to conference foes who qualified for the NIT. And five of the losses were by fewer than five points. Yesterday's Big 12 final loss to Kansas, 90-86, qualified on both counts, but there was a troubling sign: Yet again, Mr. Durant didn't get the ball as much as he should have.

"The inability to locate Durant has been a regular complaint about the Longhorns," [Kevin Sherrington writes](#)¹⁷ in the Dallas Morning News. "He tends to float through stretches for reasons still unclear. Maybe it's because Rick Barnes doesn't call his number enough. Maybe Durant's teammates would like to shoot, too. Or maybe Durant, asked to do so much on defense because of the lack of any other significant presence inside, needs a break now and again. Good news: Texas won't be playing three games in three days like it did last week, when its bench totaled 26 points."

San Antonio Express-News columnist Buck Harvey compares Mr. Durant to former Texas quarterback Vince Young, who led the Longhorns to a Rose Bowl victory last year with [a remarkable individual performance](#)¹⁸. "Their edge is both rare and intimidating," [Mr. Harvey writes](#)¹⁹. "Other teams can scout Durant, but they won't know the full force until they play him. That's why he's the hoop version of Vince, and Durant's line Sunday looked like something straight from the Rose Bowl: 37 points, 10 rebounds, 10 of 11 from the free-throw line and six blocks."

If Texas can get through a bracket that includes North Carolina and Georgetown, Mr. Durant might face his presumed rival for No. 1 pick in this summer's NBA draft: Ohio State freshman Greg Oden. Mr. Oden makes his Buckeyes, winners of 17 straight and the No. 1 ranked team in the country, the favorite to meet Florida in the title game. ([Sound familiar?](#))²⁰

* * *

The first-round matchup between Oregon and Miami of Ohio pits perhaps the two luckiest teams in the tournament against each other. [The Oregonian's John Canzano explains why](#)²¹.

Found a good column from the world of sports? Don't keep it to yourself -- write to us at dailyfix@wsj.com²² and we'll consider your find for inclusion in the Daily Fix.

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