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June 26, 2007

THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Athletics

<http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i43/43a03401.htm>

From the issue dated June 29, 2007

WOMEN IN SPORTS

Black Female Participation Languishes Outside Basketball and Track

By LAUREN SMITH

While the enactment of a federal gender-equity law 35 years ago has spurred significant growth in women's intercollegiate athletics, certain racial disparities persist. Chief among them: Few black women participate in sports other than basketball and track.

Since Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 became law, black female participation has soared 955 percent. The growth, however, has been confined to basketball and track and field. In fact, nine of every 10 black female college athletes participate in one of those sports.

In recent years, the racial gap has widened. Between 1999 and 2005, the number of black women participating in collegiate sports increased by only 336, compared with 2,666 for white women. International athletes even surpassed black women, gaining nearly 1,000 spots.

What's to blame? Sports such as soccer, lacrosse, and rowing, which have seen the biggest participation gains for female athletes, require enormous investments of money and time that many black athletes cannot make, says Emmett L. Gill Jr., an assistant professor at Rutgers University's School of Social Work, who studies race and gender in sports.

"Oftentimes females of color, specifically black females, don't have the financial means to participate, and their parents are limited by time constraints in terms of getting them to practice, games, and tournaments," he says. "Black females need some assistance with that investment."

Cultural issues also hold black women back. On largely white teams, many black women complain about not fitting in or not feeling like part of the team, says Mr. Gill. When a player feels more accepted, she performs better, but if she never feels like part of the team, she may walk away from the sport.

"We can't think we can wave a magic wand and put these girls on soccer and lacrosse teams and expect them to fit in," says Mr. Gill. But if high-school and club coaches recruited more black women in sports other than basketball and track, he says, that would help.

"Certainly there are black females out there that have the athletic prowess to compete," he says, "and with a little training could become good players."

Adding Opportunities

To help boost minority participation in sports outside of basketball and track, college coaches could sponsor camps and clinics in communities with a large concentration of minority female athletes, says

Richard E. Lapchick, director of the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports at the University of Central Florida.

Professional leagues and other organizations could also make an impact by providing training, equipment, transportation, and team fees for minority athletes. The U.S. Soccer Foundation, for example, recently gave \$2-million to young athletes in disadvantaged urban communities. Increased support for minority female athletes from women's professional golf and tennis associations in recent years could also pay dividends down the road.

Star athletes like the golfer Michelle Wie and the tennis players Venus and Serena Williams provide role models that could encourage more minority girls to participate. But Mr. Lapchick says symbolic victories of great minority athletes do not necessarily change participation levels because social barriers are too difficult to overcome.

When Tiger Woods won the Masters 10 years ago, "there was an expectation that you'd see more African-Americans participating at the pro level, but he's still the only one on the tour," Mr. Lapchick says.

While Title IX does not apply only to white women, they have benefited from it the most because of their access to a greater variety of sports. If more black women started playing college sports, it would have the same effect, Mr. Gill says.

"They will have an increase in educational opportunities," he says, "and I think the number of degrees awarded to black females would greatly increase."

<http://chronicle.com>

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THE CHRONICLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Athletics

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From the issue dated June 29, 2007

SIDELINES

Coalition Issues Report on Cleaning Up College Sports

By BRAD WOLVERTON

An influential group of faculty members released a report last week with more than two dozen recommendations for cleaning up problems they see in college sports.

The group, the Coalition on Intercollegiate Athletics, made up of 55 faculty senates from many of the universities with the country's largest sports programs, proposes ideas for improving admissions practices, developing better governance of intercollegiate athletics, and ensuring that athletes are integrated more broadly into campus life.

Not surprisingly, many of the ideas in the report, "Framing the Future: Reforming Intercollegiate Athletics," would give faculty members a more prominent role in overseeing athletics programs. The coalition suggests that each NCAA institution establish an athletics board, made up mostly of tenured faculty members, to monitor potential problems.

Such a board should have broad power to review the academic profiles of freshman athletes and transfer students, to make sure they are similar to those of nonathletes, the group says. Faculty members should be involved in the recruiting process, it adds, to ensure that athletes are admitted on the basis of their potential for academic success, not just their athletic prowess.

The coalition also recommends that a campus athletics board, a type of panel that some colleges already have, evaluate athletes' choices of majors to make sure colleges do not design academic programs primarily to keep athletes eligible.

One of the report's more controversial proposals suggests that faculty members be involved in every major athletics decision, including hiring key personnel, evaluating capital projects, and cutting teams.

That idea is not likely to go far. But the coalition hopes to see many of its proposals adopted by the NCAA, either as new legislation or as part of the association's certification process.

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SEATTLE POST-INTELLIGENCER

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Pac-10 can hoist trophy as the best

Last updated June 25, 2007 11:29 p.m. PT

By TED MILLER
P-I COLUMNIST

Jim Morrison said "the West is the best." Of course, the Lizard King was singing about college sports. He knew what he was talking about, considering he attended both Florida State and UCLA.

When Oregon State finished stomping all-comers at the College World Series over the weekend and claimed its second consecutive national title, the Pac-10 earned its eighth NCAA Division I championship in the 2006-07 school year.

Those championships were captured by six different schools. And it's nine national titles won by seven different schools if the Washington men's rowing championship is factored in (the men's rowing championship isn't sponsored by the NCAA, but, then again, neither is football).

That doesn't match the 14 championships the conference won in 1996-97, but it still leads the field.

The 12-member Southeastern Conference won eight national titles -- including women's bowling -- while the 11-member Big Ten finished with seven. The 12-member Atlantic Coast Conference earned five.

The Directors Cup standings annually measure the across-the-board strength of college athletic departments. Its final results won't be released until Wednesday, but Stanford has already clinched its 13th Cup, and the Pac-10 presently owns three other spots in the top six.

And, considering that Arizona State won a national title in women's track and was one of eight teams in the College World Series, it stands to reason the Sun Devils will move up from No. 17 and close in on the top 10 when those sports are factored in.

Along with those national titles, the Pac-10 also finished with at least one team in the top five -- often more than one -- in 10 other sports, including football and men's basketball.

So, basically, the Pac-10 smoked a championship cigar and then stubbed it out on the forehead of the rest of the college sports community.

That may be overstating things a tad. There's this little Florida problem.

The Gators, you may remember, won national titles in football and men's basketball, the basketball championship being an impressive repeat performance.

That's like feasting on a couple of thick, juicy filets of cash cow, while all the other champions enjoy vegetarian meals.

The Pac-10's championships are like winning critical acclaim for art-house films, while the SEC

captured Academy Awards for a pair of blockbusters.

Blockbuster championships are why Florida just made Jeremy Foley the nation's highest paid athletic director at up to \$1.2 million annually. Considering that Foley hired both Billy Donovan and Urban Meyer, many would claim Foley is still underpaid.

We may be aflutter celebrating the 35th anniversary of Title IX -- and justifiably so -- but football and men's basketball still pay the bills, for conferences and individual athletic departments.

"I'd probably trade all ours (national championships) for those," Pac-10 associate commissioner Jim Muldoon admitted about Florida's championship haul.

That sentiment might raise hackles among some who champion the purity of non-revenue sports, but the revenue for football and men's basketball is so eye-popping. The football-centric SEC recently announced it was splitting a record \$122 million among its members. (The average to each SEC school was \$10.17 million.) The Pac-10 divvied up \$84 million.

That \$1.77 million per program difference (though the shares aren't equal in the Pac-10, as they are in the SEC) also goes a lot further in Tuscaloosa, Baton Rouge and Gainesville than it does in L.A., Seattle and San Francisco.

Ah, but where has this supposed celebration of the Pac-10 gone?

Well, it does say something positive about the conference that its non-revenue and women's sports are mostly thriving (though the decline in women's basketball should be a concern).

Of course, that assertion rarely carries much authority on the barstool.

So how about this: The Pac-10, topped by sure preseason No. 1 USC, might make a run at the SEC for best football conference next fall. At least seven teams could make legitimate arguments for inclusion in the preseason top 25 and the only true bottom-feeder will be Stanford.

The jackpot would be scoring a second BCS bowl berth, which the Pac-10 did in 2001 and 2003. That would add approximately \$4.5 million to the conference.

Meanwhile, the Pac-10 will be the nation's best basketball conference next winter. Don't just take my word for it. Check out Andy Katz's preseason top 25 on ESPN.com. He ranks six Pac-10 teams, while the ACC, SEC and Big 12 have seven ... combined. The 16-member Big East has the second-most with four.

And that six doesn't include California or Washington. Eight conference teams will head into the 2007-08 season reasonably believing they have a shot at an NCAA Tournament berth.

A 2006 Dallas Morning News article estimated the value of each tournament berth at \$1 million. Every win, it said, was worth about \$1 million to a conference.

Do some math: Say, seven berths plus five first-round victories -- that's \$12 million and we're not even to the Sweet 16.

One beautiful sound might describe the Pac-10 next year: ka-ching.

So, as good as this year was, the Pac-10 might actually need another famous singer and carouser to capture the mood.

Cue up the Sinatra: The best is yet to come.

PAC-10 NATIONAL TITLES

Men

Oregon State baseball

Stanford golf

California water polo

Washington rowing

Women

Stanford cross country

UCLA water polo

Arizona softball

Arizona State indoor track

Arizona State outdoor track

Also:

USC finished fourth in both major football polls after winning the Rose Bowl.

UCLA lost in the NCAA Tournament basketball final to Florida.

UCLA lost in the men's soccer finals to Virginia.

Stanford lost in the women's volleyball finals to Nebraska.

UCLA lost in the women's soccer semifinals to North Carolina.

Washington and UCLA also made the women's volleyball Final Four.

Washington and Arizona State also made the eight-team Women's College World Series; Washington reached the semifinals, losing to Arizona.

UCLA, USC and Stanford finished third, fourth and fifth in women's golf.

Arizona, California and Stanford finished second, third and fourth in women's swimming.

orlandosentinel.com/sports/orl-secclasses2607jun26,0,5748816.story

OrlandoSentinel.com

SEC intends to scrutinize class attendance

Georgia has adopted a policy that fines its athletes \$10 for missing academic appointments.

Tania Ganguli

Sentinel Staff Writer

June 26, 2007

It wasn't enough to just go to practice this spring. Starting in January, athletes at Georgia have had to go to class and academic counseling appointments if they wanted to protect their playing time -- and their wallets.

"In order to get that academic success in the end, some drastic steps had to be taken," Georgia Athletic Director Damon Evans said.

Georgia's attendance policy penalizes athletes with suspensions for missing classes and \$10 fines and suspensions for missing academic appointments. Yes, you read that correctly: Georgia is fining its athletes.

And the concept might spread. This coming academic year, the Southeastern Conference will require its 12 member schools to have some sort of attendance policy in place -- and ways to enforce those policies.

"We showed that it worked at the University of Georgia," Evans said. "What we did might have helped sway the vote a little bit."

Since January, when the new policies began, 10 of the school's 18 teams finished with grade-point averages of 3.0 or better -- a record at Georgia -- and 51 percent of the athletes overall had at least a 3.0.

The NCAA's director of member services, Diane Dickman, wouldn't comment specifically on whether the NCAA supports fining athletes for missing appointments but did say the NCAA applauds "activities that support student academic achievement."

Georgia's policy affects students whose GPAs are below a 3.0. Classes taken by those students are monitored; the first missed class results in a warning, but three missed classes in one course means a suspension of 10 percent of the season's games.

That policy is similar to Florida's attendance policy, which suspends players on their fifth unexcused absence. Florida State's policy states that seven or more absences result in a meeting with members of

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the academic support staff and the athlete's coach, followed by "appropriate disciplinary action." That might include loss of summer aid, suspension from games or the loss of a scholarship.

UCF allows its coaches to determine attendance policies.

"We are definitely in favor of implementing a 'missed-class policy' here at UCF," Athletic Director Keith Tribble said. "We are going to research what the most appropriate sanctions will be and anticipate having those in place for the fall semester."

The financial aspect of Georgia's policy is more unusual.

Starting with a second unexcused absence from an "academic services" appointment, the athlete is fined \$10 per absence. On the fifth absence, the athlete is fined and suspended for 10 percent of his or her games.

The policy isn't for everyone. But Georgia's director of academic services, Ted White, said he has heard from other schools -- specifically citing San Diego State and Boise State -- interested in the policy.

Tomas Jimenez, the executive director of LSU's academic center, said fines for missed appointments is something his department is considering. He said athletes should be held accountable for missing meetings with academic services, which he estimated costs the university \$200,000.

"I really believe that these are privileges afforded to our young student-athletes," he said. "I want them to get the most of their education, I want them to prepare themselves now for life after sports and I don't want them to regret their decisions."

Not all SEC schools have school-wide attendance policies in place, and not all want them. Alabama Athletic Director Mal Moore, for one, said he likes that each of his teams has a separate policy.

Others see potential problems.

"I could see opposition to rules like that or policies like that, whether it's the ACLU or certain groups," Northwestern Athletic Director Mark Murphy said.

Murphy, a former NFL player, said Northwestern doesn't have a uniform attendance policy and doesn't see a need to implement one. Northwestern's student-athlete graduation rate routinely exceeds 90 percent.

Still, Murphy said he supported such policies if that's what a school needs to improve its academic reputation.

To those opposed to Georgia's rule, Evans' response is plain.

"At the end of the day, it's simple: Go to class, go to your academic appointments," he said. "You do those things, nothing happens."

"If they do what they're supposed to do as a student, they won't miss games and they won't be fined."

Tania Ganguli can be reached at tganguli@orlandosentinel.com.

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SFGate.com

A father's view of Title IX

John Diaz

Sunday, June 24, 2007

THERE IS something special about seeing your daughter dressed up for the prom, looking poised and gorgeous, as mine was on a recent Saturday night. There is something equally beautiful about seeing her bolting through the rain for a soccer ball, hair matted and socks flecked with mud, against the bay-chilled wind on a February night.

You can credit Title IX with making the second scene an attainable dream for so many young women.

On June 23, 1972, President Richard M. Nixon signed a 37-word piece of legislation that prohibited discrimination "on the basis of sex" in any education program or activity that received federal assistance.

As anyone who was in high school or college in 1972 knows, Title IX's effects on competitive athletics have been profound. It is evident in the fivefold increase in the number of women participating in intercollegiate athletics today; and the tenfold increase in the number of young women competing in high school sports.

The positive impact of Title IX is apparent in the athleticism and self-image of the young women who participate in sports today. It helped put an end to the cultural notion that only a "tomboy" would relish robust athletic competition.

"When I was in grade school in Reston, Va., I wasn't allowed to do sports ... I was taught to put my hair up, walk upright, learn proper manners and makeup, while the boys got to play basketball," said Jill Lounsbury, the 40ish manager of the San Francisco Nighthawks, a soccer team that draws scholarship athletes from across the nation to compete in a summer league. "I was better than most of the boys in sports, yet I had to do my hair, which I'm still not very good at."

Lounsbury credits Title IX with giving her and her teammates the chance to inaugurate an NCAA soccer team at Evergreen State College, in Olympia, Wash., in the early 1980s.

Lounsbury said the speed and intensity of the game has picked up immensely, but even more dramatic is the demeanor of today's intercollegiate athletes.

"Now the main quality they have in common is they're so confident, capable and independent," she observed. "They think they can do anything."

By now, various studies have established beyond doubt that girls who participate in sports have higher self-esteem, lower drug-abuse and pregnancy rates and better odds of attaining a college

degree. Then there are the intangibles: lessons on teamwork, winning and losing gracefully, rebounding from failure.

"Sports is a place where you learn to be leaders," Lounsbury said.

It's hard to imagine that anyone would want to roll back the clock. But the 1972 law cannot be taken for granted. It has been maligned, unjustly, for causing the demise of non-revenue men's sports such as wrestling and gymnastics. A far greater stress on "minor sports" has been that the king of "revenue sports" -- football -- spends more than it takes in at almost half of Division I-A and I-AA schools. A 2005 survey of major college programs showed that football averaged operating deficits of \$1 million.

The best that can be said of the Bush administration is that it has been passive about enforcing the law. Just one of the 416 complaints filed about Title IX violations from 2002 to 2006 were initiated by the federal government, according to the National Women's Law Center.

Earlier this month, the Pacific Legal Foundation and College Sports Council petitioned the U.S. Department of Education to remove one of the three tests of Title IX compliance: The determination of whether a school's athletic offerings for men and women is "substantially proportionate" to the student body's gender mix. That test has been vital in assuring opportunities for female athletes -- and they have seized them, as the participation numbers attest.

Guess what? More men are playing intercollegiate sports today than in 1972. Title IX, when fairly administered, is win-win.

Knowing how sensitive a 17-year-old can be about any public doting by a parent, I alerted my three-sport daughter that I wanted to mention her athletic endeavors in the course of a column about Title IX.

"What's Title IX?" she asked.

Perhaps that's the ultimate measure of Title IX's progress, 35 years later. It's no longer a huge controversy. Young women assume they have a right to athletic opportunities.

Yet all of us should be aware of the forces that want to declare victory or redefine "equality" even before the playing fields are truly level.

John Diaz is The Chronicle's editorial page editor. You can e-mail him at jdiaz@sfgchronicle.com.

<http://sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?f=/chronicle/archive/2007/06/24/EDGLJQIV3R1.DTL>

This article appeared on page **E - 4** of the San Francisco Chronicle



June 23, 2007

Big Ten's TV games: They might cost you

By Michael Pointer

michael.pointer@indystar.com

June 23, 2007

Comcast officials said they aren't opposed to airing the Big Ten Network. But they are opposed to making it part of the company's basic cable package.

Comcast vice president Mark Apple confirmed Friday the company wants to place the network on a cable sports tier that subscribers would pay an additional fee for when it debuts in late August. Comcast is the largest area cable provider, with about 225,000 homes in the Indianapolis television market.

The Big Ten would be part of a tier that includes the NFL Network, College Sports Television and a series of Fox Sports regional networks, Apple said.

Big Ten officials are asking cable companies for \$1.10 per subscriber, which would make it the second-highest subscription fee for Comcast other than ESPN, Apple said.

Negotiations between the Big Ten and Comcast have hit an impasse, and both sides went public with their differences this week.

"We feel like it's important to put them on this sports tier because we think it's unfair to burden all of our customers with the cost on something that has a limited appeal," he said.

Will Apple and Comcast officials feel that way if Purdue and Indiana fans call asking why they have to pay extra to see their teams' basketball games?

"There is a segment of the population that wants to watch every IU basketball game, and I'm among that," said Apple, an Indiana graduate. "But I'm also willing to pay \$5 per month to do it. We think it's worth it and we don't think it's fair to make the 95 percent that don't want to watch to pay for it."

Apple noted that IU games shown on WTTV-4 this past season averaged a 5.3 Nielsen rating in the Indianapolis market, meaning that 5.3 percent of the televisions in use at the time were tuned to IU basketball. That's a steep decrease from the 1990s, when IU routinely averaged more than a 10 on WTTV.

Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany said that more than 2 million of the 5.6 million Comcast subscribers in the Big Ten's eight-state region are graduates of Big Ten schools.

"I don't think by any stretch of the imagination it's a niche network," Delany said.

Apple noted that many top events -- such as the Michigan-Ohio State football game -- still will be shown on ABC or ESPN. ABC has top priority during the football season. The Big Ten Network will have second choice in just three of the 12 weeks but usually will follow ESPN.

"What you're going to end up seeing are the Iowa-Illinois game or Wisconsin-Northwestern game that aren't picked up by ABC or ESPN," Apple said. "Nothing against those schools, but they just don't have any widespread appeal in this market because there are so many other options available."

Representatives of two other cable companies with subscribers in the area -- Bright House and Insight Communications -- said negotiations are continuing with Big Ten officials, but no agreements have been reached.

TITLE IX

Title IX at 35

Still fuels debate in Texas



By [John Maher](#)

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Sunday, June 24, 2007

As Title IX celebrated its 35th anniversary Saturday, it did so in a changed landscape of college athletics.

In the Big 12 Conference, for instance, there are now more teams in women's equestrian, four, than there are in men's swimming and diving, a sport dropped a half dozen years ago by Nebraska, Kansas and Iowa State.

"We started (equestrian) two years ago and we have about 35 on the team. Eventually we'll have 70," Baylor athletic director Ian McCaw said.

Although it involves horses instead of boats, equestrian is much like women's rowing. It can involve almost as many athletes as football, and it helps balance a school's male and female athlete participation numbers, which can be an important measure for colleges in the Title IX era.

Recently proponents and opponents of Title IX posted studies that, if nothing else, should guarantee that the controversy surrounding the measure will continue in Texas and around the country.

In a Women's Sports Foundation study of 1,895 colleges, which included 738 NCAA schools, many large Division I universities fared well, including the University of Texas, which rated a B-plus. Baylor had a D-minus, the lowest grade for any school in a Bowl Championship Series conference, even though its women's basketball team won an NCAA title in 2005 and the softball team made the Women's College World Series this season.

"I feel very good where we are from the Title IX standpoint," McCaw said. "There are two things we've done. We added equestrian and we've implemented roster management (to limit walk-ons in men's sports)."

Substantial number of small colleges also rated D's and F's, and the foundation concluded, "The results demonstrate that women continue to be significantly under-represented among college athletes ...

Progress towards more equitable participation numbers for men and women has stalled."

The foundation's study showed that while the number of female athletes grew by 25,000 at 738 NCAA institutions from 1995-2005, 85 percent of those gains came in the first five years of that 10-year period. The foundation also reported that in the same 10-year-span for those schools, male participation grew by about 7,000 athletes.

Donna Lopiano, the former UT women's athletic director and current executive director for the Women's Sports Foundation, said, "Opportunities have slowed down drastically for women ... it's a myth than men have lost opportunities."

The foundation reported that participation in men's collegiate sports has actually grown since Title IX was enacted in 1972. The College Sports Council, meanwhile, claims that more than 2,200 collegiate men's programs have been lost since 1981.

"Several men's sports are going extinct in states around the country," council spokesman Jim McCarthy said. "Texas is a particularly striking example with regard to soccer."

Citing numbers from the National Federation of State High School Associations, McCarthy said while there are 22,000 high school boys soccer players in Texas, only one men's collegiate soccer program is left standing in the state, Southern Methodist's. Wrestling, which is now a sport recognized by the University Interscholastic League, has 6,500 high school boys competing in Texas, yet there are no college programs in the state.

"They're completely shut out," McCarthy said of the wrestlers.

In Texas, collegiate programs also are nonexistent in men's gymnastics and volleyball, two more of the five sports highlighted by the council, a Washington D.C.-based national coalition of coaches, athletes and supporters of men's athletics. Their position, as voiced by president Leo Kocher, is that "Title IX has been twisted by federal bureaucrats into a law that is hurting males more than it is helping females."

While the council maintains that schools have cut men's sports to comply with Title IX, schools often cite budgetary reasons for the cuts, and women's advocates point to the large sums that many colleges spend on football as a culprit.

"It's a direct result of the arms race. They're paying a ton of money now in (football) coaching salaries," Lopiano said. "It used to be that one million (dollars) was big. Now you're hearing two and three million."

Oddly enough, Title IX, part of 1972 educational amendments to the 1964 Civil Rights Act, says not one word about athletics. It simply states, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational programs or activity receiving federal financial assistance."

Courts have since interpreted it to mean that men and women should be equally represented on collegiate athletic teams. While few colleges met that standard when Title IX passed, many have since had to cope with a moving bar, as the overall percentage of women in colleges has increased. According to the Women's Sports Foundation, as of the 2004-05 school year, females accounted for 55.8% of all undergraduates but only 41.7% of the athletes.

At the University of Texas, the Foundation reported, 52.3 percent of the students were females, compared to 47.9 percent of the athletes.

UT women's athletic director Chris Plonsky said, "I would hope we'd get A's, but a B-plus is a very worthy grade. It's hard to make comparisons."

Of the foundation's study, McCarthy said, "It's a road map for litigation, a legal hit list ... You can bet your bottom dollar that the schools that have D's and F's know that they're vulnerable to a lawsuit."

In the foundation study, however, there were some surprises. Military academies and schools such as Georgia Tech and Cal Tech tended to fare well, largely because the proportion of women in the general student body was so low. Ironically two schools that rated a D minus and F, respectively, were Wayland Baptist and Delta State, which were both in the Final Four of women's basketball when Title IX was turning four years old in 1976.

"I hadn't noticed that. It's a shame," Lopiano said.

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THE BUFFALO NEWS

 PRINT THIS

Setting the stride on Title IX

Women's Sports Foundation honors UB for gender equity

By Amy Moritz NEWS SPORTS REPORTER

Updated: 06/24/07 7:16 AM

When Katie Barnum arrived at the University at Buffalo in the fall of 2003, she had been rowing for six years. That was four years longer than the school had been competing at the Division I level.

Rowing presented an opportunity and a challenge for the native of Clifton Park: She could get in on the ground floor of the program but she would have to help build it. She and some of her teammates helped the coaching staff recruit women who had played sports in high school and wanted to compete in college.

The recruiting was part of the university's effort to increase athletic opportunities for women and satisfy the dictates of Title IX, the federal law that outlawed sex-based discrimination in educational programs. Title IX turned 35 this month.

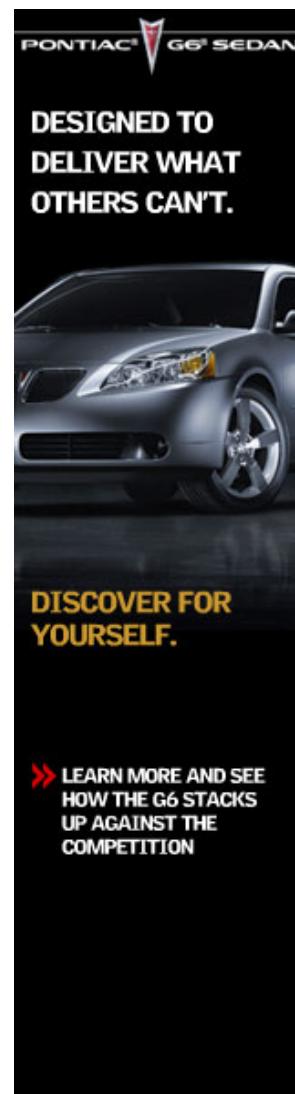
The effort paid off when the school was recently named one of four regional recipients (East) of the inaugural Opportunity Awards by the Women's Sports Foundation. Tennessee Tech (South), Purdue (Midwest) and Washington State (West) were also honored. All the schools received 'A' grades for achieving gender proportionality (meaning that the ratio of female student athletes to male student athletes is within percentage points of the ratio of females to males in the entire student body), have football and have not had a Title IX lawsuit filed against them within the past 10 years.

Balancing the numbers

How did UB do it? There are three factors.

- It added women's rowing.
- It instituted roster management, which sets a maximum number of roster spots for men's teams and a minimum number of roster spots for women's teams.
- It received an \$800,000 grant in August 2000 from New York State to give the athletic department the means to achieve gender equity. The grant helped with the purchase of equipment and the hiring of coaches for women's teams.

"We would always stress that no experience was necessary," Barnum said of the push to increase the size of the



rowing team. “That was a big draw. You could come to practice and we’d teach you. Are you athletic? Even if you don’t know if you’re athletic, come and find out.

“We’d ask the freshmen to bring a friend to practice. You know, find someone in one of your classes who is wearing a field hockey shirt and see if she wants to try it. We definitely got a lot of interest and were able to field a lot of boats in both lightweight and heavyweight.”

This approach required some patience. Each fall, Barnum would have to start working with girls who had never been in a rowing shell, waiting for the rewarding time in spring when they would finally “get it.”

Her just-completed senior year was doubly rewarding. The roster had grown to 54 and the young girls in her lightweight eight really got it. They finished third at the prestigious Dad Vail Regatta in Philadelphia and grabbed UB’s first ever top-10 national ranking (ninth) in the USRowing Collegiate Coaches Poll.

“Honestly, we just were all so happy to be out there and rowing,” Barnum said. “We just all really loved rowing and being with each other and having the opportunity to row for UB.”

The honor given to UB came out of the Women’s Sports Foundation’s latest research project, which graded all colleges and universities on their progress in achieving gender proportionality among their student-athlete populations.

UB received a grade of A for the academic year of the study (2004-05), when 45.7 percent of its undergraduates were female while 47.2 percent of its student-athletes were female.

The study tracked schools over a 10- year period. Buffalo has improved since 1995, when females made up 35.2 percent of the school’s student-athletes compared to 43 percent of undergraduates overall.

The university is in an advantageous position of having fewer women (45.7 percent) than men on campus. Females at schools similar to UB (Division I-A, not part of Bowl Championship Series games) make up on average 53.2 percent of their student populations. Among all schools studied by the Women’s Sports Foundation, 55.8 of students are females and 41.7 percent of athletes are females.

“Obviously here at UB we have benefits,” said Laura Barnum, former senior women’s administrator for UB athletics. “Our peers across the country are faced with a growing female population and they have a hard time moving toward proportionality.

“Here at UB, we have the opposite. We have more male undergrads. I’m told that’s because of the engineering and science programs, which tend to attract more males. Honestly, that makes it easier for us to reach proportionality.”

‘A sense of social justice’

Still, UB had to work to get to its program to this point.

“It’s a long answer, but really it all comes down to good leadership,” Barnum said. “It really comes from good people from the top down thinking about Title IX and gender equity and looking at making choices. When I was in athletics, I talked with everyone about gender equity — coaches, trainers, academic support, the student-athlete advisory committee. Everyone knew about what we wanted to do and we had a gender equity plan in place.”

That attitude is something that caught the eye of those at the Women’s Sports Foundation.

“The schools that earned A’s did so because they felt that this [gender equity] is the right thing to do,” Women’s Sports Foundation CEO Donna Lopiano said. “They did it not because they had to do it but because they believe it’s the right thing. It all comes down to people, not just numbers, and it’s clear the people at Buffalo have a sense of social justice as part of their culture.”

UB President John Simpson credited his predecessor William Greiner and past athletics directors for their work in achieving gender equity goals.

“There’s a larger context to this in that we’re a public university charged with providing access and opportunity to everybody in a fair way,” Simpson said. “This is something that doesn’t start by looking at an imbalance but it’s always in our consciousness.”

While compliance with Title IX has more factors than strict proportionality, participation numbers offer a starting point of reference for opportunities and support given to female studentathletes.

“It means a lot to me and it means a lot to the coaches and the student-athletes and what they’ve done to really get us to this point where we can be recognized,” UB Athletics Director Warde Manuel said. “It’s significant to me because it’s something that we believe in.”

What also sets UB apart from other schools is it did not drop any men’s sports to reach its goal. Men’s rosters were restricted, but no teams were cut.

Remembering men too

The study by the Women’s Sports Foundation showed that over a 10-year period (1995-2005) men’s participation in NCAA athletics grew by about 7,000 athletes. The increase in male participation was seen mostly in football, baseball, lacrosse and soccer, while participation decreased in men’s tennis and wrestling.

The only division among the sampling of 1,895 schools in which male participation fell was in NCAA Division I, with the largest drop coming among Division I-A non-BCS schools, which includes the University at Buffalo. They generally attempted to comply with Title IX’s proportionality test by cutting men’s programs. At those schools, programs lost an average of 23.5 male student-athletes during the 10-year period.

In that time, Buffalo has added three sports — rowing and softball on the women’s side and baseball on the men’s.

“It’s exciting really to be a part of an institution which has made strides to support women’s athletics without having to cut men’s teams,” UB wrestling coach Jim Beichner said. “When you cut men’s teams you’re not supporting women’s teams. In fact, it sets women’s teams back because it pits men against women and that’s not what sports should be about.”

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Athletic Catch-22

Football the main battleground in the fight for equity

It's the elephant on the field, and there are two ways to deal with it - feed it or put it on a diet.

In the debate on football's place in Title IX compliance, most only fall on one side. That sport alone has made Title IX compliance difficult for many schools, both in its large rosters and equally big budgets.

The argument has become the focus of the Title IX debate, one difficult to win from either side.

"That elephant is writing checks," said Laney athletic director Fred Lynch. "You've got to leave that elephant alone."

Title IX advocates argue that elephant has been the culprit of non-compliance, with unnecessary spending and inflated rosters.

"There is some real craziness to the notion that if a program makes money, it should be immune from civil rights laws," said Donna Lopiano, CEO of the Women's Sports Foundation.

Some coaches of women's collegiate sports take a less strident approach, saying that while they would like more for their programs, they understand how much football helps fund athletic departments.

"If it wasn't for football," said East Carolina women's track coach Curt Kraft, "we wouldn't be where we are. That's the engine that drives the train. If football doesn't do well, then none of us are going to do well."

Big-time roster debate

On numbers alone, no women's sport compares to football. Division I-A schools can offer up to 85 scholarships, and many carry rosters of more than 110 players. More scholarships are usually offered for women than men in other sports in an effort to compensate for football. For example, schools can offer 13 basketball scholarships for men and 15 for women and 9.9 and 14, respectively, in soccer.

Football supporters say such high numbers are necessary given the violent nature of the game and injuries, as well scout teams. But Title IX advocates argue teams could get by with less.

Mary Jo Kane, director of the Tucker Center for Research on Girls & Women in Sport, said downsizing has become necessary in the arms race of college football. Since teams rarely travel to away games with more than 70 players, they should be able to cut scholarships and roster spots, she said. Support staff - with many teams having around nine full-time assistants, plus several trainers - could be cut as well to free up money, she added.

"That money you would save would allow you to go a long way," she said. "If the NFL can do it with 53 (players), we should be able to do it with 75."

The opposing sides seem to have a different way of viewing football, each using a different prong to measure compliance. Title IX advocates push for the use of prong one, which says a school must provide opportunity proportionate to its enrollment, meaning if there are more women on campus than men, then athletic opportunities should reflect that. Football

supporters recommend using one of the other two prongs, showing a history of continued expansion for women or proving the school is meeting the interests of the underrepresented gender. Schools may choose any one of the three prongs to prove compliance.

North Carolina athletic director Dick Baddour said that with a student body that is 60 percent women, the school uses the second prong since proving compliance with the first would be impossible. While the Tar Heels spent more than \$14 million on men's basketball and football in 2005-06, those two sports pulled in nearly \$20 million in profit.

"It's because you have a football program and you have a men's basketball program, it makes the resources," Baddour said. "Football here generates resources for women's sports. There are but two sports here that make money."

The money problem

Football's ability to make money has been its main defense, one that is weak to Title IX supporters. Programs are spending too much money, they say, and even if football makes money, that shouldn't be the point of college athletics.

"Money becomes problematic because you choose one or two sports that serve a great number of men," Lopiano said, "and you treat them like kings, then you've got to have just as many queens."

Many football teams stay in a hotel the night before home games, a wasteful practice in the eyes of Title IX supporters but something that doesn't stir such strong emotions in some college coaches.

"It's a great luxury because a lot of programs can't do it," said N.C. State softball coach Lisa Navas, "but I think it's something that helps our program."

Wake Forest field hockey coach Jennifer Averill said while she would like more for her team, comparisons to football and its budget accomplish little besides frustration.

"The rules that apply to football are a different standard than the rest of us fall into," she said. "If you're going to talk about scholarship opportunities, if you're going to talk about budgets, if you're going to talk about chartering flights ... it's completely different. But so are the pressures and expectations. They're under the gun in so many other facets than we are. "When you're looking at athletic departments, it's football and the other sports."

In Division I-A, 79 schools (68 percent) reported an average profit of \$9.2 million for football in 2002. Texas won the 2005 national championship, spending nearly \$18.5 million while generating more than \$60 million in revenue. While spending numbers are not yet available for the 2006 season, national champion Florida spent nearly \$16 million in 2005 while bringing in more than \$48 million.

The amounts are bigger, Baddour says, but the cost of doing business is always on the rise. "Are there escalating costs involved in major programs? Yes there are," he said. "I realize the cost of improving programs is increasing, but I suspect you would have said that in 1940."

The arms race of football, where teams spend more and more to match their opposition and land blue-chip recruits, has deterred college sports from the spirit of amateur athletics, Averill said.

"When we follow the male model, that's not exactly the best model to follow," she said.

"Sometimes I feel like athletics is out of control."

For high schools, spending on football is justified because it often supports the rest of the school's programs.

"My coaches know that their programs are funded by football," West Brunswick athletic director Marcia Heady said.

Too easy to blame Title IX

It is the near refusal by athletic directors to trim football budgets and rosters that Title IX supporters blame for cuts to men's sports that have traditionally been blamed on the law. It is not women that are eating up money and opportunities for men on non-revenue sports, they say. It's football.

At James Madison, university officials cut 10 programs, including seven men's teams, in September 2006, citing Title IX as the reason. The school will save \$550,000 on the eliminated programs, money that Jennifer Alley, executive director of the National Association of Women Collegiate Athletic Administrators, said will only go to supplement sports like football.

At East Carolina, where men's soccer was cut two years ago, athletic director Terry Holland cited an inability to remain competitive in the Conference USA. The school could not make the increases needed for the team to travel around the country.

"We had to drop the team or allow it to be non-competitive," he said in an e-mail. "I determined that fielding a team that was so under-funded was not fair to the coaches or athletes involved."

While ECU lost money on football in 2005-06, it likely made money last season after an appearance in the PapaJohns.com Bowl. ECU women's soccer coach Rob Donnenwirth said football has helped women's sports by bringing in money and by allowing the growth of women's rosters to balance out large football rosters.

"For a women's soccer program, I think football is a huge benefit," he said, adding that football has pushed the growth of women's soccer in the Southeastern Conference.

While many advocates of the law noted that they support opportunities for men, it should not be at the expense of other male and female athletes - athletes who, football supporters say, might not have a team if it weren't for football.

And around and around it goes, each looking at the elephant a different way, each proposing their own ideas of weight management with neither making much progress.

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Tech's Myers, other ADs see no need to retire

The View at 70

BY DON WILLIAMS

Near the end of May, Gerald Myers went with a group to Scotland, playing two rounds of golf a day for five days in a row - on a seven-day trip. Golf carts, Myers discovered, are far less common in Scotland than in the United States, so he walked the 36 holes a day.

The Texas Tech athletic director is plenty fit, then, for recreational pursuits, but he's not ready to devote himself entirely to hobbies.

Not even at age 70.

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Myers is among a small group of major-college athletic directors who are blowing past conventional retirement age, still enjoying their work too much to quit, evidently.

"I think it keeps you active," said Myers, who will turn 71 on Aug. 5. "I think it keeps you young, in a sense. There's always issues every day that you deal with, a lot you think about. I guess I never really think about myself being 70."

Arkansas athletic director Frank Broyles has announced plans to retire on Dec. 31, just days after he turns 83.

"I don't do those things, haven't ever done those things, doubt if I would become real good at those things," he said. "If I would retire, I don't know what I would do. ... And personally to me, it's never been a job that's been tough."

Vince Dooley was almost 72 when he retired as Georgia's athletic director in 2004. Dodds could easily top that. He's just finished the first year of a five-year deal and says retirement is "not on my radar."

If Dodds completes his contract, he will have spent 30 years as UT athletic director.

Birthdate/age information isn't systematically recorded by the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics (NACDA), a spokesperson for the organization said, so where Myers ranks among the oldest is uncertain. But he intends to stay in the game a while longer. Myers just completed the first year of a three-year contract that runs through May 31, 2009.

He says he doesn't have a time frame for when he wants to retire.

In that regard, he's not alone. At least three ADs will turn 70 on their next birthday - Old Dominion's Jim Jarrett (July 7), Texas' DeLoss Dodds (Aug. 8) and LSU's Skip Bertman (May 23). All said in interviews with the A-J last week that they have no immediate desire to get out.

Bertman who, like Myers, has two years left on a three-year deal, can't see himself hunting, fishing or playing golf.

"I've watched a lot of guys retire, and they're not happy," Dodds said. "I want to be happy, and I love to be around kids and coaches. It keeps you going.

"As you get older ... These jobs are never easy, but they seem more doable. The job seems more doable to me today than it did 15, 20 years ago. The experience that you gain and the wisdom that you gain serves you well."

Another angle, according to Dodds, is that pay for athletic directors has escalated significantly just in the last few years.

"I'm shooting in the dark here," he said, "but I think the average salary in the Big 12, highest salaries are in the 600(-thousand range) and bottom's probably in the 300 (thousands). Five years ago, (the bottom) was probably like 100 (thousand), 150."

Myers current deal pays him \$310,000 a year.

Neither of the Big 12 veterans seem to be doing it for the money, though.

Dodds isn't surprised at the thought that Myers will be alongside him as they soldier into their 70s.

"Some people fit their jobs really well," Dodds said. "He personifies that. You can tell in meetings that he has a passion for the university and he's got a passion for kids. He's been a coach. He knows how to talk to and deal with and support coaches. It's been a win-win for Tech and for Gerald. He's been good for Tech, and Tech is really where he wants to be and is his love."

* * *

Gerald Myers never pictured himself being Tech AD at age 70 - nor at 60, for that matter. He won 326 games in 20 1/2 seasons as the Tech men's basketball coach, and he'd coached at Monterey and Houston Baptist before that. He was known for running battles with Southwest Conference referee Mike Tanco and for spirited rivalries with coaching colleagues such as Shelby Metcalf, Eddie Sutton and Abe Lemons.

The idea of administration ended at the limits of his team.

"I never intended to be an athletic director," Myers said. "I mean, that thought never crossed my mind when I was coaching. I never had any intentions of being an athletic administrator."

But Myers had to do something when then-AD T. Jones asked him to step down in 1991 after a string of four straight losing seasons, including three with single-digit victories.

At 55, he was a fish out of water, reassigned to a job as an assistant athletic director.

"I think the first two or three years, it was pretty difficult," Myers said. "I still was interested in coaching. That was still something that I would have liked to have done. But I didn't want to coach bad enough to start at a low level - a low Division I or non-Division I school."

Myers credits Bob Bockrath, who took over as AD in September 1993, with helping chart the course for what's been a rewarding second half to his career.

Bockrath put Myers to work as a game administrator - overseeing a multitude of sports, but most of them women's athletics. At that point, Myers remembered something that he might have lost sight of: He loved women's sports much the same as men's.

"Whether it's going out and watching our girls play soccer or volleyball or going out and watching us play Texas A&M in football, it doesn't make any difference. I enjoy it," Myers said. "I enjoy watching kids compete and represent Texas Tech. It's just fun to see them do that."

Myers said a lot of his appreciation for women's athletics comes from the influence of his mother, Maggie. She died in 2005 at age 87, having lived the last 15 years of her life in Fort Worth. Growing up, she played basketball in Mobeetie, a tiny speck on the Panhandle map. She was a big influence on her son being in sports all his life.

Myers' father, Lynn, who worked as a welder and a pipe fitter in the oil fields around Borger, died from a heart attack at age 56 in 1976.

When Myers was coaching Tech for two decades, his mother didn't often venture down for games at Municipal Coliseum.

"I tell you what she did do, though: She had the best radio she could get, and she'd maneuver around and try to pick up games," Myers said. "She'd listen to those games and read the newspapers and follow our games. She came to some of our games, but not a lot. But she tried to listen to all of them on the radio. It was kind of tough to pick up KFYO up in the Panhandle after sundown."

* * *

At Old Dominion, Jim Jarrett has been athletic director for 37 years. Here's another way of saying it: He's worked for seven university presidents.

"I'm fairly fortunate. That doesn't happen very often," he said.

When Jarrett began his tenure as AD, ODU was a Division II program with a \$500,000 budget that included only \$100,000 for student activities. Now he oversees a \$20 million budget for a department that moved into Division I in the late 1970s.

His challenge at the moment is reviving the Monarchs' football program, which will compete in Division I-AA beginning in 2009. Jarrett hired a football coach, Bobby Wilder, in February to bring the sport back to campus for the first time since 1940.

He's giddy at how sales have gone for luxury suites at 20,000-seat Foreman Field - all 24 have been snapped up with five-year commitments. And that'll be all for the time being, because there's no room to construct more.

To comply with gender-equity requirements, the school will add women's softball, volleyball and crew over the next seven years.

So Jarrett has a lot to look forward to.

"It continues to be exciting and fun," he said. "We're in the metro area of Hampton Roads (Va.), which is a wonderful place to live and work. I'm very, very pleased with what I'm doing and where I am."

Unlike some of his colleagues at bigger universities, Jarrett said he has signed one-year agreements every year since he started.

As for how long he'll keep reupping, Jarrett said, "As long as I enjoy it and I'm doing a good job."

* * *

The move that earned Gerald Myers the most attention as athletic director probably was the hiring in March 2001 of legendary basketball coach Bob Knight.

Professionally, it generated attention for Myers from coast to coast. Personally, it was no less significant. Before Knight arrived, Myers said he didn't own a gun or a fishing rod. He'd never hunted and had fished, uneventfully, with inferior equipment.

"But now I own three shotguns and about four flyrods and about five or six spinning rods," Myers said, "since he's been here the last six or seven years, and I've enjoyed that. Now, I'm not in his class by any means. He's a world-class fly fisherman, a hunter. You know, I can't hardly hit the broad side of a barn."

Myers stresses that he's not one of Knight's most frequent outdoors partners. Nevertheless, with the coach showing him how, Myers says he's learned a little about hunting dove, quail, pheasant and turkey - developing an interest that he'd never had before.

In July, they're likely to take off again for fishing in the far north of British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

On a warm June afternoon, however, it's not hunting gear or a tackle box that a visitor spots in Myers' office. It's a gym bag sitting in the corner.

A busy schedule of meetings keeps him from working out every day, Myers said, but he tries to keep up a fitness routine several days a week. About a half dozen types of weight lifts. Situps. Knee raises. Thirty-minute sessions on an elliptical machine.

One of the benefits, Myers said, is that he's gotten to know a slew of Tech football players - kids young enough to be his grandsons. He uses the dressing room where they dress, and works out where they work out.

There's a limit, though, to how hip a 70-year-old AD can be.

"I listen to their music, and I just go on," Myers said. "I don't ever say anything about their music. ... They do have a variety."

* * *

Mike Cleary, executive director of the NACDA, guesses that going forward there will be fewer - not more - athletic directors willing and able to work into their 70s. The way Cleary sees it, the demands of being the public face of a multi-million-dollar operation - and answering to impatient alumni - make it too difficult a job.

"You can't hide in Division I," is how Cleary puts it.

Maybe ADs at non-scholarship Division III schools - those who have fewer factions to satisfy - can live long and prosper in the role. Cleary thinks the 70-something set trying to do the work at major universities will be dinosaurs.

"Just looking around the convention this year, there's not a hell of a lot of old-timers," he said.

This coming from a man who's 72 and has spent 42 years in his current position.

But more power to the ones who are still doing it, Cleary said, such as Myers.

"Obviously, God blessed him with good health, and the administration has an awful lot of confidence in him," Cleary said. "The constituents and alumni ought to take care of him and make sure he stays around as long as he wants to work."

Even as the work piles up for young and old ADs alike.

Dodds can tick off a long list of the way things have changed since he took over at Texas in 1981. Back then, he said, the UT athletic budget was about \$5 million. Next year: \$107 million. The department has grown from about 100 employees to about 250, Dodds said, from one half-time compliance person to eight, from one academic counselor to 16. Today, Dodds said, UT athletics grosses at least \$8 million annually from its radio network, sponsorships and signage compared to maybe \$20,000 when he started. Making the job more complicated, he said, are more legal issues, sponsorship issues and negotiating contracts with the likes of Coca-Cola, Gatorade and Nike.

"The job was one thing 25 years ago," Dodds said. "It's absolutely a different thing today."

With that said, Dodds said he's learned to go about his duties more efficiently now than before. His staff is bigger and, he thinks, better organized.

"And I work smarter than I worked then," Dodds said. "I used to work just to work. Today, I work to do what I need to do."

It isn't the work that Bertman expected to be doing when he retired as one of college baseball's most accomplished coaches. Bertman's LSU teams won seven Southeastern Conference championships and five College World Series in his 18 seasons, the last in 2000. He announced after that that he would go only one more year.

"I definitely wanted to try something else after coaching," Bertman said, "but it wasn't being the athletic director. It was professional speaking."

Bertman said former LSU basketball coach Dale Brown blazed the trail for him by hooking on with a speakers' bureau. That sounded good to Bertman, too, so he jumped from the dugout to the dais.

Bertman said he had done 34 speaking engagements when he was asked by school officials to become the Tigers' athletic director. That was in January 2001.

"The one thing that I've got here as the AD that I didn't have going in coaching is my wife and I can spend more time together whenever we want," Bertman said.

Bertman recognizes that there's still a monster to feed in his role as LSU athletic director.

"The number-one challenge as an athletic director is to fill the football stadium. There isn't any question about that," he said. "This template LSU operates under is very fragile, like most athletic departments. Have a hurricane, for example, like we did a couple of years ago, and you use up your reserves. It isn't as if we've got endless amounts of money. The only way to succeed for any of us is to fill the football stadium."

Myers gave a similar answer when asked what he considers the most challenging part of the job: Fund-raising, both for operations and facilities.

He has not only a football stadium to fill, but is trying to come up with the money to enlarge it.

In any event, he'll be at the task for at least a while longer. A certain old LSU coach said he's not surprised to know that when he hits the big 7-oh, Myers will be there to welcome him to the club. In fact, Myers welcomed Bertman in Lubbock last summer when the latter was inducted into the College Baseball Hall of Fame.

"Just from what I saw being out there last year," Bertman said, "he's pretty young at heart."

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The Florida Times-Union

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BUYOUT BUSINESS

By Gene Frenette,
The Times-Union

When agent Jimmy Sexton negotiated his first coaching contract in 1995 - for Tommy Tuberville at Ole Miss - the buyout clause to leave for another job was \$100,000, then about 25 percent of the annual salary.

Today, as both sides play the leverage game in the big businesses that are college football and men's basketball, buyouts have become a golden parachute for fired coaches - and an expensive security blanket for successful coaches schools want to keep.

By the numbers
NICK SABAN -- ALABAMA Current salary: \$4 million. Length of contract: Eight years. Buyout: \$0.
HOUSTON NUTT -- Arkansas Current salary: \$1.6 million. Length of contract: Six years. Buyout: \$500,000.
TOMMY TUBERVILLE -- AUBURN Current salary: \$2.4 million. Length of contract: Five years. Buyout: \$6 million.
URBAN MEYER -- FLORIDA Current salary: \$3.25 million. Length of contract: Six years. Buyout: \$150,000.
LES MILES -- LSU Current salary: \$1.8 million. Length of contract: Five years. Buyout: Up to \$1.2 million.
MARK RICHT -- GEORGIA Current salary: \$2 million. Length of contract: Seven years. Buyout: \$2 million per year left.
STEVE SPURRIER - S. CAROLINA Current salary: \$1.75 million. Length of contract: Six years. Buyout: \$500,000 per year left.
PHIL FULMER -- TENNESSEE Current salary: \$2.05 million. Length of contract: Five years. Buyout: \$1 million.

Trading places
When men's basketball coach Tubby Smith left the University of Kentucky for Minnesota, he made both a professional and financial commitment. Smith traded a contract that had no buyout obligations for one that will have steep penalties should he leave the Golden Gophers at any time in the next four years. Here's a look at Smith's seven-year deal with Minnesota and the buyout implications.

Year	Package	Buyout
2007-08	\$1.7 million	\$3 million
2008-09	\$1.8 million	\$2 million
2009-10	\$1.9 million	\$1 million
2010-11	\$2 million	\$500,000
2011-12	\$2.1 million	None
2012-13	\$2.2 million	None
2013-14	\$2.3 million	None

Note: Smith's package doesn't include performance bonuses.

"The whole landscape of college athletics has changed from an educational model to a business model," Minnesota athletic director Joel Maturi said. "I struggle with that. You can't survive in this business unless you're chasing the competition."

"There's an arms race in this business when it comes to facilities and coaching contracts. It's reality."

Specifically, buyouts have become the biggest money clause in college sports, often going into the

millions for schools from Bowl Championship Series conferences. It's not just the financial obligation of schools to pay coaches they fire, but what coaches are on the hook for if they leave before their deal expires.

Look no further than the Southeastern Conference's football ranks for evidence of the jump that buyouts have taken in the last decade.

Tuberville, now the coach at Auburn, is practically a lock to stay there because it would cost him \$6 million to leave after this season, a figure that is cut in half should he remain with the Tigers through 2011.

At Georgia, to dissuade any notion that he might bolt for Florida State or somewhere else in the future, coach Mark Richt agreed last year to a contract extension, through 2013, that penalizes him \$2 million per year - the value of his contract - if he takes another job. In turn, Georgia would pay Richt the same amount if it terminated him before the end of his deal.

Last December, when South Carolina bumped Steve Spurrier's annual salary from \$1.25 million to \$1.75 million, it also wanted an insurance policy. Sexton, who also represents Tuberville, Alabama's Nick Saban, Arkansas' Houston Nutt and Tennessee's Phil Fulmer, negotiated the deal that doubled the buyout - \$500,000 for every year left on his contract - for Spurrier to pay should he opt to take another job before 2012.

"It's just the way the marketplace has gone," Sexton said. "Stadiums are full. Radio and TV rights are at an all-time high. [A buyout clause for a coach] is one of the trickle-down effects of college sports, especially in the Southeast.

"Some coaches don't care what their buyout is because they have no intention of leaving. It all depends on what the coach wants and what the school wants. The more leverage a coach has, the more likely he won't have a buyout."

At Florida, the buyout obligations for football coach Urban Meyer and men's basketball coach Billy Donovan - both recently given extensions that increased their annual salaries to \$3.25 and \$3.5 million, respectively - are nothing compared to most of their rivals. Meyer would only pay \$150,000 if he left the Gators, and Donovan's buyout is just \$100,000, which the coach would have needed to pay had he stayed with his decision to join the NBA's Orlando Magic earlier this month.

School spokesman Steve McClain said the minimal buyouts are there to essentially cover the costs of "paying off assistant coaches."

Sexton, who doesn't represent Meyer, says it isn't a big deal that the coach has a small buyout clause.

"What good does it do to have a \$500,000 buyout or more for Urban Meyer," Sexton said. "He's got one of the best jobs in football, college or pro. Where is he going to find a better job?"

No buyout is more favorable than the one handed to Saban, the nation's highest-paid college football coach. Not only did the Crimson Tide give Saban a guaranteed eight-year, \$32 million contract after leaving the Miami Dolphins, there also isn't a buyout obligation. Theoretically, Saban could go back to the NFL at any time without owing Alabama a penny.

"That's just unbelievable," Virginia Tech athletic director Jim Weaver said. "Buyouts should offer

protection for both sides. There's costs associated with having to go on another coaching search."

Industry observers believe Saban's no-buyout clause was an aberration, the result of a school desperate to lure him after its pursuit of West Virginia coach Rich Rodriguez failed. However, when Saban was at LSU (2000-04), he didn't have a buyout obligation when he left for the Dolphins. When the Tigers hired Les Miles, they changed their stance and put in a \$500,000 buyout, which jumps to \$1.25 million if the coach leaves for his alma mater, Michigan.

"Saban's contract [with Alabama] is a result of the strongest leverage of any coach in the history of college football," said Mobile-based agent Barry Terranova, who runs Executive Sports Management and represents more than 50 college football head coaches and assistants. "The circumstances combined to form one of the most one-sided contracts ever."

Alabama athletic director Mal Moore, who declined an interview request for this story, did issue a statement to the Times-Union refuting the perception that the school gave Saban too many perks.

"Our negotiations really differ from coach to coach and sport to sport," Moore said in the statement. "We consider much of the costs involved to simply be part of the business we are in these days."

"Ultimately, our primary concern tends to lie with a coach's desire to be here. In coach Saban's case, I'm very pleased with the contract we have agreed upon, and I do expect that he will be here for many years to come."

Balancing the scales

By nature, college administrators and agents tend to have an adversarial relationship at the negotiating table. They see dollar signs in every bargaining point of a coach's contract.

"A lot of coaches don't want to begin their tenures thinking about problems," Terranova said. "Where we have to earn our money is to protect them in the event that things go bad. We have to prepare for the day that things fall apart."

Conversely, many schools want that same financial protection in case coaches leave for other jobs, especially if they bolt early in a tenure.

"You've got to make it a win-win situation," South Carolina AD Eric Hyman said. "If something was to happen [with the coach leaving], the university needs to be compensated in some capacity. Agents want to make it a one-way street, but there has to be a fairness element to it."

Minnesota seems to have accomplished that balance when it enticed Tubby Smith to leave a college basketball mecca, Kentucky, for a rebuilding job.

Smith signed a seven-year deal worth approximately \$14 million, which included a staircase-down buyout clause. It starts at \$3 million that Smith must pay if he leaves the Golden Gophers after one year, but the buyout disappears after four years.

"I'm making a great commitment to [Smith], and I need him to make it to me," Maturi said. "If I have Tubby Smith for four years, I believe Minnesota basketball will be back where it needs to be. I told him the people in Minnesota would embrace him. He's always going to be in the shadow of [Adolph] Rupp and [Rick] Pitino at Kentucky. Here, he can cast the shadow."

Maturi is banking on having Smith for at least four years, which is why the contract tilts completely in the coach's favor after that time.

"I don't want to limit someone from going to the job of their dreams," Maturi said. "I might not negotiate the same contract with another coach. You can't paint a broad brush for everybody. But it's not as necessary for the buyout [on the coach's part] to continue after a certain period of time."

Weaver says Virginia Tech's philosophy is that it wants protection equal to the coach's. When women's basketball coach Bonnie Henrickson left a few years ago to take the Kansas job, the school received a buyout check for \$523,000.

"I don't know whether she paid it or Kansas paid it, but that didn't matter to us," Weaver said. "All I know is, when we buy a coach out, we got to pay whatever the number is. If they want to go early [for another college job], they got to pay us the same number."

Breaking up sometimes costly

Just as schools must pay for highly successful coaches, the price for failure can be even worse.

Two new members of the Jaguars' staff - quarterbacks coach Mike Shula and offensive coordinator Dirk Koetter - were recipients of seven-figure buyouts when Alabama and Arizona State, respectively, cut each loose just one year after handing over a contract extension.

Shula is obligated to receive \$4 million, which included \$200,000 in base salary for each of the five years left on his contract, plus another \$3 million. Arizona State is on the hook to Koetter, who had three years left on his deal, for \$2.85 million. According to various reports, both coaches are scheduled to receive payments from their former employers in regular increments rather than in a lump sum.

In both instances, whatever salary that Shula and Koetter earn with the Jaguars, or in any coaching capacity before those contracts expire, will be deducted from the money the schools owe them. Both Shula and Koetter declined to comment about their buyouts.

Generally, schools firing coaches will give them, at minimum, their base salary times the number of years left on the contract. In recent years, however, agents have been able to squeeze much heftier sums to account for lost income through television, radio and clothing deals.

"It used be the only thing guaranteed [for a fired coach] was the base salary," Sexton said. "We've made a lot of strides in getting closer to the total worth of the contract, like in Shula's case."

Nowhere was a buyout issue with fired coaches more contentious than in Minnesota, where the state's flagship university had to pay its football coach, Glen Mason, and its men's basketball coach, Dan Monson, a combined \$3.5 million to walk away.

Marty Seifert, the Republican House Minority leader in the Minnesota state legislature, weighed in on the issue after the university requested an increase in funding.

"That's a lot of money to get rid of a package of M&Ms," the AP quoted Seifert as saying.

Maturi understands the sensitive nature of buyouts, especially with the misperception that taxpayer money is being used to foot the bill. He expects the buyouts for Mason and Monson to be paid through

an anticipated boost in ticket revenue with the hiring of Smith and new football coach Tim Brewster.

Still, the buyout prices for schools and coaches, like coaching salaries, only figure to grow. But when thinking about Saban's salary at Alabama and the fact that he doesn't have a buyout if he leaves, Maturi doubts that could happen on his doorstep.

"I'm trying to think of a name where I'd get away with that in Minnesota," Maturi said. "Maybe Vince Lombardi."

gene.frenette@jacksonville.com,

(904) 359-4540 Pricey exits When major Division I schools decide to fire coaches, as long as it doesn't involve NCAA violations, the price tags to say goodbye can be awfully steep.

 Coach Previous school Sport Current status Buyout price
 Chuck Amato N.C. State Football Florida State
 linebackers coach \$555,000 John Bunting North Carolina Football Relocating to Wilmington,
 N.C. \$856,000 *Dirk Koetter Arizona State Football Jaguars offensive coordinator \$2.85 million Glen
 Mason Minnesota Football Still in limb \$2.2 million #-Pat McMahon Florida Baseball Recently
 fired \$487,023 Don Monson Minnesota Basketball Long Beach State coach \$1.3 million Carolyn
 Peck Florida Women's basketball WNBA analyst for ESPN \$313,267 *Mike
 Shula Alabama Football Jaguars quarterbacks coach \$4 million John L. Smith Michigan
 State Football Businessman in Louisville, Ky. \$3.05 million -----

*-School's portion of the buyout will be reduced by the amount of salary paid by the Jaguars or any other employer over the next five years. #-Buyout paid over a three-year period. Compiled by GENE FRENETTE/The Times-Union

This story can be found on Jacksonville.com at http://www.jacksonville.com/tu-online/stories/062407/col_179690188.shtml.

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NCAA dragnet to scoop unlucky, too

Wednesday, Jun 20, 2007 - 12:25 AM Updated: 12:47 AM

By PAUL WOODY
TIMES-DISPATCH COLUMNIST

The idea of justice once was that it is better for 100 guilty people to go free than for one innocent person to go to jail.

Somewhere along the way, that changed.

Now, the idea seems to be that if one innocent person must suffer in order for 100 guilty people to be punished, well, that's just the way it is.

The NCAA has provided the latest example of this type of thinking.

Weary of "diploma factories" that take recalcitrant high school athletes, usually basketball players, and turn them into college-eligible academic wizards in a single school year, the NCAA has decided to crack down on the teenagers.

In April, the NCAA Division I Board of Directors adopted Proposal No. 2006-65-A. This proposal means that, upon entering high school as a freshman, an athlete has eight semesters in which to successfully complete work in 14 core courses. That increases to 16 core courses in 2008.

If an athlete fails to meet those requirements after eight semesters, he may attend an accredited high school and take one core course.

For most athletes, this is not a problem. Someone - mom, dad, a guidance counselor or astute coach - makes sure academic progress is steady.

For others, there are no such safety nets.

Everyone recognizes the problems with "diploma mills." They make a mockery of education and ill-serve the athletes who attend them.

But the NCAA already has taken action against the worst of the worst. It will not accept transcripts from a number of these schools. That's the way to wipe out these dens of academic iniquity and the people who run them.

Certainly some teenagers have become experts at working the system. They are bad news no matter where they attend high school.

They become headaches for college coaches and, unless they are spectacularly talented, quickly wear out their welcomes and are sent packing.

This new rule punishes athletes who try to succeed through the most adverse of circumstances.

"You take a kid who is a good kid but is in an environment where it's hard for him to study and be successful in school," said Fletcher Arritt, the coach of the boys post-graduate basketball program at Fork Union Military Academy. "He finishes with a 1.9 GPA, comes to Fork Union and takes five subjects.

"Now he's got a goal. Now he's doing what he's supposed to do. Why punish him when he's doing what you want him to do? This is not exactly fair."

No, it's not.

Arritt does have a vested interest in this. Fork Union, located in Fluvanna County near Charlottesville, takes some "non-qualifiers."

But Fork Union does not exist to be a diploma factory for athletes. After examining the FUMA program a year ago, the NCAA agreed.

No one can blame the NCAA for wanting to scrub away the slime that renegade high schools ooze onto intercollegiate athletics.

But some teenagers legitimately need more than eight semesters to meet eligibility requirements.

That's not a crime. That's the way life is in the real world. The NCAA Division I Board of Directors needs to realize that and change this rule.

Contact Paul Woody at (804) 649-6444 or pwoody@timesdispatch.com.

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June 13, 2007

NCAA CALLS FOUL ON REPORTER'S BLOGGING

It's not just the pros who want control. Over the weekend the NCAA ejected a Louisville Courier-Journal reporter from a college baseball championship for live-blogging the game. [Brian Bennet reports](#) that he had been posting updates throughout the game on his [Courier-Journal blog](#), until, at the bottom of the fifth inning, "an NCAA representative came to my seat on press row and asked for my credential and asked me to leave. I complied."

Apparently, according to a memo NCAA circulated, the college athletic association believes that live-blogging interferes with its revenue streams from broadcast licenses:

The College World Series Media Coordination staff along with the NCAA Broadcasting group needs to remind all media coordinators that any statistical or other live representation of the Super Regional games falls under the exclusive broadcasting and Internet rights granted to the NCAA's official rights holders and therefore is not allowed by any other entity. Since blogs are considered a live representation of the game, any blog that has action photos or game reports, including play-by-play, scores or any in-game updates, is specifically prohibited. In essence, no blog entries are permitted between the first pitch and the final out of each game.

Now there are legal and policy questions here: First off, this wasn't a copyright or misappropriation claim. If the reporter had watched or listened to a broadcast and blogged details from there, the NCAA would have no claim against him (see [, where the basketball association lost just such a claim](#)). [It can't claim ownership of the facts, even if it currently makes money from selling privileged access to the facts.](#)

Tags: [NCAA baseball misappropriation bloggers+rights sports](#)

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Instead, the NCAA was clamping down on the data through a claimed right to control physical access to the game, at least to the press box. Was the NCAA within its legal rights to revoke a press credential? Probably. The NCAA has no obligation to issue press credentials, and apart from anti-discrimination law, can condition them on whatever arbitrary terms it likes. But David Price points out another twist: The University of Louisville, where the game was played, is a public institution, subject to First Amendment limitations on the speech-limiting rules it can impose. Can it ban speech or allow others to do so on its space based on claimed disruption to a business deal? Does it depend whether a baseball stadium is a "public forum"? (Under current law, it's probably not.)

Finally, there's the policy. Even if banning bloggers is legally permissible, it's silly. Silly of the NCAA to think it can keep up this kind of control, silly of licensees to see blogs as a substitute to what they're licensing, and silly of schools to endorse and accept such policies for their student athletes' games. Exclusivity of facts is unlikely to last long in practice, as the **Courier-Journal reports**: "The Oregonian newspaper in Portland decided to work around the rules by blogging Oregon State's game against Michigan on Sunday off a radio broadcast in its newsroom, said its executive editor, Peter Bhatia. He said the newspaper heard no objections from the NCAA and planned to do the same yesterday."

Posted by Wendy at June 13, 2007 02:29 AM | [TrackBack](#)

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The Birmingham News

Skiping classes can be unkindest cut for athletes

Monday, June 18, 2007

JON SOLOMON
News staff writer

Georgia Athletics Director Damon Evans won a victory of sorts recently. After several years of talking, the Southeastern Conference approved a rule requiring each athletics department to have a uniform classroom attendance policy for all of its sports.

"Maybe it creates a little bit more equality across the board," Evans said. "But at the end of the day, it's just the right thing to do."

Evans' policy at Georgia hits athletes where they care most - money and games.

Georgia fines athletes \$10 for each unexcused tutor session, and suspensions are possible for missing too many. Three skipped classes result in a 10 percent suspension from competition, and each additional missed class is another 10 percent.

"You go to class to prepare for your tests, which is like going to practice to prepare for a game," Evans said. "If you miss practice, coaches probably aren't going to play you. We should put the same emphasis on class time. If you don't go to class and you still play, we're sending a mixed message."

Beginning Aug. 1, each SEC athletics department must have a class attendance policy that provides a "reasonable means" for supervision and enforcement. Each school can decide its own policies, but penalties must include suspension from competition.

The rule, created from meetings of SEC faculty representatives, had been put off the past two years. Several schools, including Alabama and Auburn, have not had a department policy and allow each coach to establish rules.

Last fall, Alabama football coach Mike Shula would not discuss his policy and penalties. Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville said he had no set number of classes a player can miss before triggering penalties, which he said include early-morning workouts and suspensions.

"That's the problem," Evans said. "Nobody wants to be accountable. We're going to be accountable at Georgia."

Georgia says the fines, which started in January, are paying off in the classroom. During a three-week period in January, athletes missed 46 classes or tutor sessions, down 90 percent from 421 over a three-week period in September.

For the first time, more than half of Georgia's athletes had a 3.0 grade-point average in the spring semester. The number of credit hours earned by athletes increased to 954 this spring from 770 last spring.

The fines are donated to the United Way, said Evans, who described the amount collected as "a lot."

Auburn Athletics Director Jay Jacobs said he is impressed with Georgia's fining system. Auburn, like

Alabama, is in the process of creating a department-wide class attendance policy, although Jacobs favors coaches having discretion.

"After having gone through the NCAA certification process, a department policy was something we were asked about and we're working on one now," Jacobs said. "I'm trying to get all the coaches in sync."

SEC schools without department policies argue the decision should be an institutional matter whether to have a uniform policy or let individual coaches decide. They also say monitoring classes will pose challenges.

"Are you going to hire three more people to make sure your 600 students are in every class?" said Ole Miss Athletics Director Pete Boone. "Is it just going to be football and basketball, or any sport? Most schools probably have professors that don't take records or won't supply them. It's just such a loose area."

There are also questions about how to measure different standards and penalties.

"If you miss one class at Ole Miss and are suspended for half a game or a game, but you're at Georgia and it takes three classes before they suspend somebody, how does that measure?" Boone said.

The new rule provides no enforcement authority for the SEC. If there is a great disparity among policies, the conference will bring the subject up for discussion, Commissioner Mike Slive said.

Those arguing that the rule should be an institutional policy are missing the point, Evans said.

"This rule does leave it in the hands of the institution from the standpoint of, 'What is your (department-wide) policy?'" he said. "All it does is make sure you have one."

The importance of attending class and tutor sessions is not lost on Boone, who receives correspondence when football players skip academic assignments.

"What I've noticed is the handful of folks missing the classes are the same ones busting assignments on Saturday," Boone said. "They're not as dedicated as they need to be in the classroom or on the practice field." The Associated Press contributed to this article.

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Georgia donates fines to United Way

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Article published Jun 17, 2007

SEC makes a statement in 2006-07

Records fall as conference piles up eight national titles

Glenn Guilbeau and

Scott Ferrell

Gannett News Service

BATON ROUGE - It might be time for Big Ten commissioner Jim Delaney to write another letter to his league's fans.

Delaney, motivated by a Chicago Sun-Times article that praised the Southeastern Conference and its recruiting base fresh off Florida running by Ohio State 41-14 in the BCS national championship game, wrote a letter to fans taking up for the Big Ten on Feb. 9.

"I love speed and the SEC has great speed, especially on the defensive line, but there are appropriate balances when mixing academics and athletics," Delaney wrote. "Each school, as well as each conference, simply must do what fits their mission regardless of what a recruiting service recommends.

"I wish we had six teams among the top 10 recruiting classes every year, but winning our way requires some discipline and restraint with the recruitment process. Not every athlete fits athletically, academically or socially at every university. Fortunately, we have been able to balance our athletic and academic mission so that we can compete successfully and keep faith with our academic standards."

Since that letter was written, the SEC's national championship total for 2006-07 has reached eight with a chance for one more as Mississippi State is in the College World Series that started Friday. The Tennessee softball team just finished as national runner-up.

Big Ten in minority

The Big Ten is one behind the SEC with seven national titles, but none of those are of the major sport variety. The Big Ten has championships in the current year in fencing (Penn State), women's lacrosse (Northwestern), wrestling (Minnesota), men's and women's hockey (Wisconsin), men's gymnastics (Penn State) and men's indoor track and field (Wisconsin).

The SEC, meanwhile, is the first conference in history to win the national title in football (Florida), in men's basketball (Florida) and women's basketball (Tennessee) in the same academic year. Other national championships in 2006-07 for the SEC are in women's gymnastics (Georgia), men's and women's swimming and diving (Auburn), men's tennis (Georgia) and women's bowling (Vanderbilt).

"It's been a great year," SEC associate commissioner Charles Bloom said. "We work hard to make sure all of our sports have a chance to compete on the national level."

Begins with football

It all starts, though, with football, which pays for the other sports through huge profits from various television contracts, bowl prizes and ticket sales.

New Alabama football coach Nick Saban, who used to coach Michigan State in the Big Ten and LSU in the SEC, sees no problem with the "mission" of the SEC.

"I think there's a tremendous balance between the academic integrity that we all try to create as well as the competitive spirit we bring to the field," he said. "This is a great league."

The SEC's lone private school, Vanderbilt, did win the league baseball title and was ranked No. 1 despite some of the toughest admission standards of any conference, including the Ivy League.

Auburn's football program, however, is in the midst of a grade-changing controversy involving signees, and Saban was recently accused of contacting prospects during a non-contact period. But people keep watching, and the athletes keep coming.

"Obviously the parity in this league is something that is probably unique in college football," Saban said, "and I think the interest - as we get the TV rankings information - is obviously reflecting that."

Attendance leader

The SEC ranked No. 1 in football attendance last season with more than 6.5 million in the various stadiums. Five teams finished in the top 10 for attendance as Tennessee was No. 3, Georgia No. 5, LSU No. 6, Alabama No. 7 despite finishing 6-7 and Florida No. 9. SEC commissioner Mike Slive said television ratings have gone up for the league's ESPN games despite ABC carrying games in the same Saturday night window.

"I've always said that I don't know what the strongest conference in the country is, but I do know the one that has the biggest stadiums and the most fans," said South Carolina coach Steve Spurrier, who like Saban came back to the SEC after an unpleasant stint in the NFL.

"That's facts, right there," Spurrier said. "Interest in the SEC in football is, in my opinion, probably greater than anywhere else."

No other league can boast of four national championship coaches. Spurrier won one at Florida in 1996, followed by Phillip Fulmer at Tennessee in 1998, Saban at LSU in 2003 and Urban Meyer at Florida last season.

"And there's also another coach who went undefeated, which is very difficult to do in this league, and unfortunately didn't get the opportunity to play for the national championship," Saban said of Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville's 13-0 season in 2004 that fell short of the BCS title game.

Dominating the BCS

The SEC has more national championships than any other conference under the Bowl Championship Series (BCS) format that started in the 1998 season with three - Tennessee, LSU and Florida. The SEC is also the only league with five football national championships in 15 years - Alabama (1992), Florida (1996), Tennessee (1998), LSU (2003) and Florida (2006) - or one every three years.

"I think that says a tremendous thing about the quality of programs and people in this league, but I think it says something about the kind of high school football we have in the Southeastern part of the country in the programs and coaches who develop those players at that level," Saban said. "It's exciting."

It's also taxing.

"It's the best in America from top to bottom," Fulmer said.

"You look at what Kentucky and Vanderbilt have done on our side. It gets back to scheduling and who gets a bounce here or there and who stays healthy."

More than football

The SEC is not just a football league, though. Florida has won back-to-back men's basketball titles. In 2006, Florida and LSU made up half the Final Four. The LSU women's basketball team has been to four straight Final Fours.

"In the last 10 years, the SEC has had more players drafted in the NBA than any other conference," said LSU men's basketball coach John Brady, who fell from the Final Four penthouse to 11th of the 12 teams in the SEC at 5-11 this past season. "I think top to bottom, the SEC in basketball is as good as it gets."

The SEC is trying to shed its jock factory image as well.

"In terms of the national focus, we are the preeminent conference to be reckoned with," LSU chancellor Sean O'Keefe said. "There's no doubt about it. In every field, in every sport, in every activity, it's a very hotly competitive conference and one that is balancing academics and athletics as well. It's going in the right direction."

washingtonpost.com

Prep Stars Caught Off Guard By New Academic Timeframe

By Eric Prisbell
Washington Post Staff Writer
Tuesday, June 12, 2007; E01

CHAPEL HILL, N.C. -- Sitting in the Dean Smith Center, Terrance Joyner, a junior at Genesis One Christian School in Mendenhall, Miss., scrolled through his Sidekick 3 to find an e-mail from a college basketball coach. The e-mail explained a new [NCAA](#) rule that will prohibit players from attending prep schools for a year to improve academic deficiencies following four years of high school.

Advertisement



"I'm happy a lot of college coaches put me on to it," Joyner said after reading a portion of the note aloud. "A lot of people don't know about it."

In the month since the NCAA moved to address abuses in prep basketball, some prominent college coaches have called for the rule to be changed and several AAU coaches have looked for loopholes in it. But the rule is a mystery to many of those who could be most directly affected: high school players who need to improve their grades to become eligible to play in college.

"Nobody is talking about it," said Lance Stephenson, one of the nation's top sophomores from Lincoln High in [Brooklyn](#) and one of hundreds of players who competed in a high-profile AAU tournament in [North Carolina](#) last weekend.

The new NCAA rule states that upon entering ninth grade, athletes have four years to meet the eligibility standards in core academic courses to participate in college athletics; following those four years, they may take only one additional core course at any high school recognized by the NCAA. Beginning in 2008, recruits also will need to complete 16 core courses instead of 14, which will make it harder for players to become academically eligible after four years of high school.

The rule was introduced following reports in [The Washington Post](#) and the [New York Times](#) last year that highlighted the proliferation of so-called diploma mills, fraudulent schools operating with little or no oversight that players use to correct deficiencies in their academic transcripts compiled at traditional high schools.

The NCAA announced earlier this year that it would not accept transcripts from 15 nontraditional schools because of academic irregularities. Seven other schools, including Genesis One Christian, are still under review.

The problem, according to some involved in youth basketball, is that with so many high school players unaware of the change, many potential college recruits assume that they still have a fifth year to correct their academic problems when they now are limited to one course. This could have severe implications on their eligibility to play in college.

"They will understand in a year or two when one of their friends get messed over because the rule affected them," said Clark Francis, editor of Hoop Scoop, a basketball recruiting publication. "Suddenly people who aren't educated about it become educated real quick. We're going to throw away a class or two of players."

Gerald Stokes, the coach of the 16-Under Baltimore Stars, said he first learned about the rule in an e-mail sent by an AAU organization more than a month ago. Stokes said he and other Stars coaches have informed those on the team who could be affected.

When asked who -- players, parents or coaches -- is responsible for players not knowing about the rule, Stokes said: "All of the above. They are not being educated about it."

Kevin Lennon, the NCAA vice president for membership services, said informing high school players about the rule is a "shared responsibility," and that college coaches who are recruiting players often are in the best position to do so. "It does take time to get the word out," Lennon said, adding, "It would surprise me if kids being recruited were not aware of it."

As of Aug. 1, all student-athletes who need more than four years to fulfill their core-course requirements -- except for those currently attending prep schools -- must apply to the NCAA for a waiver to be eligible to play college athletics.

Lennon said that when determining whether to grant a waiver, the NCAA would consider whether the player was made aware of the rule and also whether he could have done anything differently had he been made aware of it.

"We would go ask the school, 'Did you make him aware of the rule?' " Lennon said. "You also have to ask the fundamental question: How would behavior have changed if they had known? How did the lack of information impact the young person's decisions?"

Standing near the court at the AAU tournament last week, sophomore Daquan Brown of Mount Zion in [Durham, N.C.](#), said he is in his third year of high school and will graduate in spring 2009. When a reporter told Brown about the rule, he said: "That's the first I heard about it. You can only take one class?"

Brown summoned his coach, Antonio Fozard, who said he plans to meet with Brown and other players individually to examine how they could use summer school to graduate after their eighth semester of high school.

"I would advise a young man like this to go ahead and take summer school, get some online courses that are credible," Fozard said. "That's the only thing you can do right now. Kids can graduate during the summer. We've done it at Mount Zion before. It's something he has to look into. He has to do summer school. I think he knows that."

When Fozard walked away, Brown groused that his scholarship does not cover summer school at Mount Zion and said he was not planning on attending summer school. Pointing to the games being played before him, he asked how players could be expected to complete courses in the summer when they attend high-profile AAU events that are showcases for their talent.

The rule also takes aim at what is known as reclassifying, the growing practice in which players repeat a high school grade to enhance their attractiveness to colleges by either retaking classes to improve their

academic standing or by competing largely against players one year younger than they are.

Lennon said those who reclassified before the rule was in place and therefore are not in position to graduate after eight semesters of high school represent "classic" waiver cases. The NCAA also will consider whether reclassifying had the desired effect of improving the player's academic transcript, he said. He said the number of waivers granted is expected to be made public.

Dave Telep, a national recruiting analyst, said the rule will have a significant effect on youth basketball, but players won't be fully aware of it until the NCAA denies someone his college eligibility. To that end, Rummell King, a forward on the Baltimore Stars, listed his friends that he said are still planning to reclassify.

"No one has whispered anything about that in my ear," he said. "People continue to do it. If anyone heard about it, they wouldn't be doing it. But they are still talking about doing it."

Henry Sims, a Mount St. Joseph's junior who committed to [Georgetown](#), said he was unaware of the rule until a teammate told him about it during the drive to the AAU tournament. "It hasn't been on TV," he said. "I haven't seen it on the Internet at all."

Zach Nelson, a senior small forward from [Sacramento](#), said he was unaware of his academic shortcomings until a counselor told him two weeks ago that he was not on track to graduate and likely would need to take at least one course in prep school. Since then, Nelson has talked to an AAU teammate about the new rule but was unaware of the waiver process.

"I don't know all about it," Nelson said. "A lot of kids don't know about the rule."

Genesis One Christian forward Malcolm White, who committed to the [University of Mississippi](#), said he was originally supposed to graduate in 2006 but now will graduate in 2008 after reclassifying to "bring my GPA up."

"There are not that many legit kids across the country who are their right age," said Joyner, White's teammate who has also reclassified. "Most of the kids are at least one year back, the top-rated kids across the country. They don't really talk about" the rule.

Two weeks ago, Stephenson's coach, Dwayne Morton, explained the prep school rule to him. Like Joyner, Stephenson said many players are still unaware of it.

"I think coaches should tell them because if they reclassify now they are doing it for nothing," Stephenson said. "They should know it if they want to play college basketball. It is their fault."

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