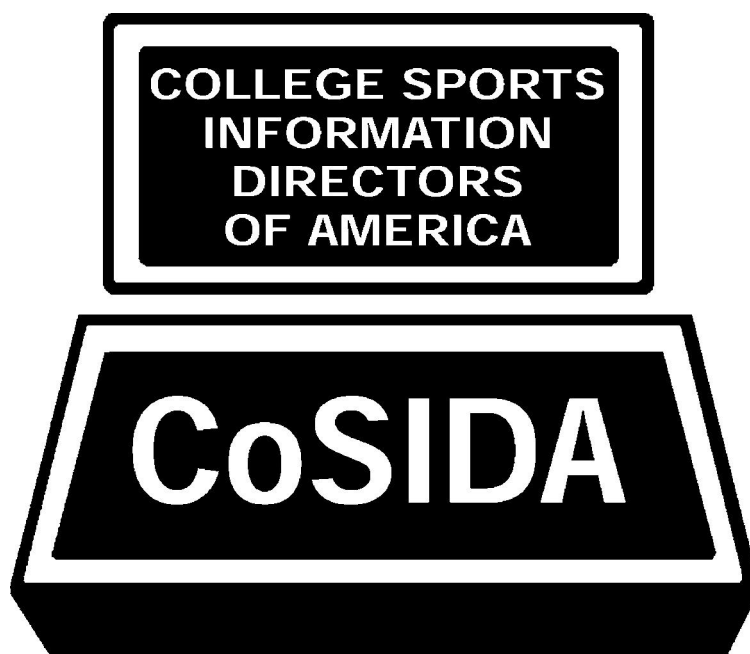


CoSIDA NEWS

Intercollegiate Athletics News from Around the Nation



April 27, 2007

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Travel costs eat up budget

Coaches have to make tough decisions about where to play games

By: Justin Hesser

Posted: 4/27/07

When determining their schedules, coaches have more to worry about than which competitor fits their team best. They also have to work within their budget, which can lead to hard decisions and sometimes fewer long-distance trips.

Travel costs are the third largest part of the athletic department's budget, behind student grant-in-aid and salaries and benefits, Ken Brown, deputy athletics director, said.

While the University of Texas probably isn't worried about the cost of flying to Nebraska this year, the Ball State University athletic department is constantly thinking about travel costs, Brown said.

"It's a problem, but it's like anything else, you try to offset it with revenue and looking at the schedule," he said.

The costs are high, and they gradually increase every year. During the 2005-2006 seasons, Ball State spent \$1,125,291 on team travel, according to information in the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act report.

Football led all 17 sports, spending \$337,170 on travel, which included a more than normal three chartered flights to the University of Iowa, Boston College University and Auburn University. The swimming programs spent the lowest amount, with the men's team spending \$16,692 and the women's team spending \$16,816.

Director of Intercollegiate Athletics Tom Collins said travel expenses like gas and hotels costs are something the department cannot control, but the department can think carefully about how it spends the money.

"It's just a planning process," he said.

Each coach receives a budgeted amount to spend on operating expenses like team travel, and they can decide how to divide that money, Brown said.

Each team is locked into its conference schedule, but often the teams have to evaluate non-conference schedules and ask how far away it is economical to go, Brown said.

"Our coaches do a really good job of trying to look at that and keeping the costs down as much as possible," he said.

Co-coach of the men's and women's swimming and diving teams Bob Thomas said travel expenses are low for swimming because competition is within easy reach and long-distance trips are uncommon.

On the other hand, coach of the men's tennis team Bill Richards said it's difficult to schedule trips within his travel budget.

"You have to be a magician," he said.

Playing in the Mid-American Conference helps Ball State's bottom line because it can bus to every school but one, the University at Buffalo.

Brown said it scares him to think about the Mountain West Conference and Western Athletic Conference because of all the flights needed to compete.

Howard Hammer, chairman of the University Senate athletics committee and associate professor of business law, said the MAC is very cost effective because it's so condensed.

"The problem with travel is distance and number of people traveling," Hammer said. "So conference affiliation is critical."

While coaches get a set budget from the university, this amount is often not enough to cover expenses, so the coaches supplement this with money they generate from sport camps or money they raise through Cardinal Varsity Club, Brown said.

Collins said coaches constantly work to get donors for their sports and find ways to use that money wisely.

In the end, an extra donation could be the difference in a team scheduling travel on the West Coast instead of the Midwest.

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BCS ponders more changes (but don't mention 'playoff' yet)



April 25, 2007

By [Dennis Dodd](#)

CBS SportsLine.com Senior Writer

[Tell Dennis your opinion!](#)

NEW ORLEANS -- BCS commissioners came away from their annual meeting with orders from the top.

BCS coordinator Mike Slive wants his peers to "start thinking about the process of the next go-round." Translated, that means a year from now, commissioners will be entering negotiations on a new TV deal with Fox (which holds the rights to the Sugar, Fiesta and Orange through the 2010 bowls).

Which way do they want their creation to head? To another network? To a playoff? Both?

Slive, the SEC commissioner, never used the p-word during the three-day meeting that ended Wednesday. But he did ask fellow commissioners to start the discussion in their conferences about the future of the postseason.

That future ultimately seems headed toward a playoff, but will it be three years or 30? Slive is open to anything, including the status quo. In the first year of the double-hosting format, there was relatively little controversy with the addition of a fifth BCS bowl.



Jason Campbell's '04 perfect Auburn squad was left out of the title game.
(Getty Images)

"We need to see if this system works. I view this as a beginning of a process to fully evaluate postseason football, with an open mind," Slive said. "We're old enough now. We've moved out of our infancy into early adolescence."

The Bowl Championship Series turns 10 this year with the national championship game here on Jan. 7. In the BCS era, the game has reached a high point in popularity. It set an attendance record last year, while TV ratings have increased, almost across the board.

Slive became a convert to reevaluating the postseason when undefeated SEC champion Auburn was not allowed to play for the national championship in 2004. Since then, he has gently pushed for at least an examination of the process.

The first year of double hosting in January produced one of the best college games of all time (Boise State over Oklahoma in the Fiesta Bowl). But there was a pregnant pause in the week between that and the national championship game won by Florida.

championship game six days later.

This city will double host both the Sugar Bowl on Jan. 1 and the

"I would think we've have another year evaluating the second year of the current model," Slive said. "I would hope (then) we'd have some better sense about people thinking about their future."

BCS notes

- The two-team limit per conference was upheld by the commissioners. Wisconsin, at 11-1, qualified last season out of the Big Ten but it was trumped by Ohio State and Michigan, which went to BCS bowls.
- No change was made in the criteria that allow a runner-up team from a conference to play for a national championship. Nebraska didn't even win its division in 2001 but played for the national championship. With the

advent of divisional play, commissioners don't want to penalize a team that could finish ranked No. 2 and not play in a conference championship game but play for the national championship.

- It's no secret that Dallas (Cotton Bowl), Orlando (Citrus Bowl) and Atlanta (Chick-fil-A Bowl) are interested in joining the BCS. There are no current openings, but membership is always being evaluated. A playoff could compel the commissioners to add a fifth bowl.
- Contingency plans to move the Sugar Bowl again in case of a major storm again were discussed. The easiest solution would be moving the game on a temporary basis to Atlanta. That's where the game was played after the 2005 season following Katrina.
- The next date of significance on the BCS calendar is early June, when SEC presidents meet in Destin, Fla. Florida president Bernie Machen has created a stir lately by calling for a playoff. However, Slive said, "I don't anticipate coming out of Destin with a definite position of the SEC."
- How badly was the SEC scarred by Auburn being left out in 2004? Slive has created a saying: "Remember Auburn."

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Athletics<http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i29/29a03301.htm>

From the issue dated March 23, 2007

A Small Athletics Association Tries to Revamp Its Image**The group's new president pushes 'character' program, but will new members and sponsors follow?**

By BRAD WOLVERTON

Kansas City, Mo.

For years, whenever someone asked Jim Carr to explain what the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics was, he compared it to the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

"We're like the NCAA — only smaller," the NAIA executive would say.

These days Mr. Carr, who was named president of the NAIA last fall, is starting to tell the association's story without mentioning the competition.

Spreading the NAIA's message is not an easy job. Many sports fans have never heard of the 282-member organization, which is made up of mostly small private colleges and universities. And those people who do know about it generally perceive it as inferior to the NCAA.

Over the past few decades, the NAIA has had little success changing that perception. Since the 1970s, it has lost nearly half its members and had difficulty attracting sponsors, raising questions about its financial viability.

While the membership exodus has slowed in recent years, it has caused concerns among many college-sports officials. Last year the NCAA established a moratorium on growth at the Division III level, in part to avoid being overrun by teams transferring from the smaller organization.

Mr. Carr believes he can breathe new life into the 70-year-old association by positioning it as a sort of anti-NCAA. He thinks he can attract much-needed corporate support and new members by emphasizing what he calls a "character driven" model of intercollegiate athletics.

Many NCAA programs teach athletes how to behave off the court. But too often, Mr. Carr says, big-time college sports is known more for rampant spending, boorish fan behavior, and athletes who get in trouble with the law. By contrast, he says, most of his group's programs are lean, clean, and more focused on academics than athletics.

"We're providing a strong model that's different than the entertainment-based model of the NCAA," Mr. Carr says. "And we believe there are more people out there willing to support us."

Character Issues

Mr. Carr, a tall, affable man with a slight Southern drawl, first learned about character issues in sports in Gulfport, Miss., when his high-school varsity basketball coach suspended the team's star player for showing up late to practices and games and clashing with the coach.

Most of the squad refused to practice unless their teammate was reinstated, but the coach stood firm. Eight players eventually quit, but not Mr. Carr.

He says the experience taught him to value what it means to be part of a team, the importance of following rules, and the responsibilities of a coach — lessons that he says are as relevant today for young athletes.

"There aren't many coaches willing to stand up to their best player and say, 'These are my rules,'" Mr. Carr says. "I learned that there are a lot more important things than winning games."

Mr. Carr went on to play basketball at Millsaps College, a Division III institution in Mississippi, which helped steer him into a career in college sports.

"Small-college athletics can provide a big value to young people," Mr. Carr says. "It's shaped the direction I've taken in life."

After receiving a law degree from Duke University, and later working in the athletics development office at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, Mr. Carr was named general counsel of the NAIA in 1998. Soon after he was hired, he showed a willingness to take on any task on the 25-member staff. He helped organize the men's basketball tournament his first year, then gathered players' sweaty uniforms after games and drove them to a laundromat.

His willingness to do the association's dirty work endeared him to staff members. And when its Council of Presidents went looking for a new leader last year, they did not have to look far.

Unlike other candidates who wanted to radically alter the NAIA's direction, Mr. Carr believed the association was on the right course — it just needed to sharpen its marketing strategy.

"Jim realizes there's no way we can compete with the resources the NCAA has," says Richard B. Artman, president of Viterbo University, who leads the Council of Presidents. "But he knows we can be a viable alternative by getting away from the big-money, win-at-all-costs mentality."

In recent years, the NAIA has spent a lot of time "chasing rainbows," Mr. Carr says, believing that it could create resources comparable to the NCAA's by attracting sponsorships from the biggest corporations. Now Mr. Carr plans to focus on corporate foundations and smaller companies.

His calling card: a program called "Champions of Character," which he helped develop seven years ago. It is designed to teach coaches and athletes five core values: respect, responsibility, integrity, servant leadership, and sportsmanship. More than 100 NAIA institutions hold character-training seminars for coaches and athletes, who in turn go into local schools and YMCA's to teach middle-school and high-school students, youth coaches, and parents the value of respecting their competition.

Champions of Character also plays a role during NAIA athletic events. Before games, a player often stands up in uniform to urge the other participants, coaches, and spectators to act responsibly — no fighting, no taunting referees, no trash talk.

At Savannah College of Art and Design, an NAIA program in Georgia, coaches hand out sportsmanship booklets to players and talk about the value of fair play. Some Savannah College players were initially skeptical of the lessons, but have been surprised at how they have helped their teams.

"If you turn up thinking it's a battle and you're gonna kill the other team, you start losing sportsmanship and discipline," says Matt Engele, captain of the men's soccer team. "When you go out there enjoying the game in a competitive but fair way, you play better and enjoy it more," he says. "All of a sudden soccer's not everything."

So far only a few companies and foundations have supported Champions of Character. Buffalo Funds, a small mutual-fund company based in Kansas City, promotes the effort mostly for philanthropic reasons.

"This program doesn't generate any business for us," says John Kornitzer, the company's president. "We sponsor it because we see an erosion of character in sports, and the NAIA seems to be the only one willing to teach it."

Bigger Problems

Teaching character may be the right thing to do, but some athletics programs say the association has bigger issues to worry about.

Newman University, which had been an NAIA member for more than 30 years, departed for the NCAA's Division II ranks last year after watching many of its competitors move to the larger association. (The NCAA has about 1,200 members.)

By the end of its NAIA tenure, Newman's sports programs were rarely playing multiple games on road trips because there were not enough NAIA teams in their geographic area to do so, says Kevin Ulwelling, Newman's athletics director.

Now, Mr. Ulwelling says, some of his teams can play two or three opponents on one trip, saving the university thousands of dollars.

North Georgia College & State University, another longtime NAIA member, moved to the NCAA in 2005 after many teams in its conference did the same.

Randy J. Dunn, the university's athletics director, remembers playing and coaching in the NAIA during the 1970s and 80s, when the association had more than 600 members. But over the years, as membership dwindled, he started to worry about the group's solvency.

"I told my president, what happens if the NAIA closes their door?" he says. "We've made scholarship commitments to kids, we have games to schedule, and we need to think about the future."

Mr. Carr says the NAIA is in good financial shape, having produced a revenue surplus of between \$50,000 and \$225,000 a year for each of the past seven years. But the association's entire budget is just \$4-million — the NCAA's is more than \$500-million — and the organization squeezes every dollar. Thanks to a deal with the city of Olathe, Kan., where the association's offices are currently located, the NAIA has not paid a dime in rent the past six years. And to save money, Mr. Carr himself sometimes rooms with colleagues on business trips.

Many NAIA institutions complain that, unlike NCAA members, they must pay most of their own postseason expenses (the NAIA covers championship expenses only for football and baseball teams). Some NAIA colleges have spent \$60,000 a year attending championship events — money they cannot afford to set aside.

"Our budgets are not at the point where we could hold back \$60,000," Mr. Dunn says. "We need that money to run our programs."

What tempts many NAIA institutions to leave, however, has as much to do with image as dollars.

"They may not be at our level, but we benefit that Kansas and Kansas State and other big schools play in the NCAA and we do, too," says Frank Diskin, athletics director at Rockhurst University, which moved to the NCAA about a decade ago. "The NCAA has the image that top high-school athletes see, and that image helps us recruit better players."

Small and Nimble

For many institutions, however, smaller is better, even if it means less exposure. Many NAIA presidents and athletics directors say they like the personal service they receive from the association.

Debby De Angelis, director of athletics at California State University-East Bay, which has a dual membership in the NAIA and NCAA, says she gets quicker responses to her questions from the smaller association.

"The NAIA has capable people who are responsive to the membership," she says. "That's part of the reason why I see them as viable."

Its small size also helps the association move quickly. This week at the NAIA's annual convention, members were scheduled to discuss a new direct-qualification model for national championships, which provides conference winners automatic bids to postseason play. The change took about a year to put into place, and is expected to help programs save thousands of dollars in travel costs.

Institutions also like that the association does not require programs to field a minimum number of teams, nor does it dictate scholarship minimums. And athletics directors say its rule book is far easier to navigate than the NCAA's.

But many people complain about the NAIA's loose enforcement program. Compared with the NCAA, which has 24 employees who investigate rules violations, just two NAIA employees sort out potential problems in athletics departments.

The NAIA's policy requires institutions to self-report violations, but some athletics officials say that does not always happen.

"There is a certain laxness that is predominant with the NAIA that I haven't seen in our short association with the NCAA," says Duncan A. Rose, an associate professor of social sciences and the faculty athletics representative at Newman University.

Some NAIA members are pushing the association to change its enforcement approach. "When there are allegations, someone other than the institution needs to look into them," says Jim Redd, athletics director at William Jewell College.

Mr. Carr agrees that the NAIA's hands-off philosophy needs changing. He is considering random audits to help catch more violations, and he wants faculty athletics representatives to play a bigger role in certifying the eligibility of athletes.

"If we're going to talk about character-driven athletes, we can't have a system that allows 5 to 10 percent of institutions to get away with bad things," Mr. Carr says. "We've got to fix that, or we'll lose credibility."

Greater Visibility

This spring Mr. Carr is relocating the association's national office to downtown Kansas City, Mo., where it will have to start paying rent. The space is located on the same block as the College Basketball Experience, an interactive exhibit set to open this fall that will play highlights of NCAA and NAIA games and include a new college-basketball hall of fame. The exhibit will be located next door to a new 18,000-seat arena that is expected to play host to early-round games in the NCAA tournament every few years.

Mr. Carr thinks the changes will give the association opportunities to showcase the NAIA name to the many sports fans who might not know about it. He is also using the move to try to drum up additional support. Since taking over the NAIA's top job, he has met with more than 50 prominent Kansas City business leaders to solicit sponsorships and build partnerships.

"They needed to hear our message," he says. "I'm convinced that once they hear our story, they'll believe in us."

Over the next year, Mr. Carr plans to hit the road a couple of days every week to meet with members and sell the association to potential sponsors. He hopes to double sponsorship revenue in the next three years.

He also wants to change the perception that NAIA teams are not as strong as NCAA programs. In fact, several top NAIA squads have beaten NCAA Division I teams this year. But members of the two associations rarely compete because NCAA teams that play too many games against NAIA programs can harm their chances of qualifying for postseason play. Mr. Carr is urging the NCAA to make it easier for programs in the two associations to schedule games against each other so they can save money on travel, but that won't be an easy sell.

The NCAA is keeping Mr. Carr apprised of its plans for creating a fourth division, which could have a major impact on the NAIA, particularly if the new level offers opportunities for colleges to downsize their athletics programs. Top NCAA officials say, however, that they want the NAIA to have a strong presence in college sports because the association serves many smaller colleges that do not fit the NCAA's model.

Mr. Carr appreciates the NCAA's cooperation, but feels an increasing tension with Division II officials as the two groups vie for new members.

Last year he heard that Division II representatives tried to recruit an entire NAIA conference whose members had never expressed interest in moving. The conference's officials met with Division II representatives, Mr. Carr says, but turned down the offer.

Mike Racy, vice president of Division II, says the NCAA has never made cold calls to recruit members.

"Nothing we're doing is aimed at recruiting or hurting other organizations," he says.

Mr. Carr finds the response disingenuous. "It's a little hollow for the NCAA to say they want a strong NAIA if their actions don't show that," he says.

Mr. Carr insists that the NAIA does not need additional members to have a strong presence in college sports. In fact, he says, he would rather see the association stay the same size or even become a little smaller than have members that do not share its principles.

"Our primary mission and responsibility is to build people of character, to prepare young people for life as opposed to winning games," he says. "If you're not in it for that, you're not an NAIA school."

<http://chronicle.com>

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**ESPN.com:** College Football[\[Print without images\]](#)Thursday, April 26, 2007
Updated: April 27, 8:26 AM ET

Score one for the Luddites as NCAA nixes texting

By Ivan Maisel
ESPN.com

Give a coach a video terminal and he will get to work. Put him at practice, give him a whistle, and unless you want to run until you puke, get out of the way. Coaches love competition, and every last one of them understands how much preparation a good performance demands.

So how in the name of all that is Cingular did coaches lose the right to text-message recruits? The NCAA Division I Board of Directors voted Thursday to end the practice, effective Aug. 1. The board didn't vote to control it or curtail it. Coaches didn't lose permission to text a recruit during, say, school hours. They didn't lose permission to text a recruit during certain months of the year. They lost permission to text a recruit, period.

OMG.

That's Oh My God in textspeak, for those of you who aren't bilingual.

The answer is, the coaches got beat by the recruits. The NCAA Student-Athlete Advisory Committee lobbied the board to stop the practice because it had become too invasive. The coaches killed the goose that laid the golden cell phone.

"Sometimes, coaches are our own worst enemies," Syracuse coach Greg Robinson said.

Over the past two years, text-messaging became the lingua franca of coaches anxious to stay in contact with recruits. Why? Because the NCAA ruled that a text message is not a phone call. The NCAA Manual devotes three single-spaced pages to telephone calls and recruits. There are many fewer restraints on e-mail.

The phone rules came into being in 1991, during a time when the NCAA first began to pay attention to the welfare of its student-athletes. The NCAA doesn't always side with the athletes who keep the organization alive -- witness the dunderheaded decision several weeks ago to rescind permission for students who have graduated and still have eligibility to transfer without having to sit out a year.

But as recently as last year, an NCAA Presidential Task Force decreed, "The primary focus in intercollegiate athletics should be the student-athlete. Therefore, student-athletes should have direct input in the management of intercollegiate athletics."

When the student-athletes complained that text messages grew like kudzu, overtaking lives and taxing wallets, the Division I Board listened. It saw text messages as nothing more than a loophole that mocked the intent of those three pages of rules.

Coaches love loopholes. As competitive as recruiting is, once one coach found the loophole, the rest of the industry poured through. For instance, Florida offensive coordinator Dan Mullen estimates that he sends 50 to 100 texts on a typical day.

"We're big proponents," Mullen said. "That starts with the head man [coach Urban Meyer] down. He's been one of the big text-messengers out there."

Since the phone rules came into effect, coaches have complained that they don't have the opportunity to get to know a

recruit well enough to decide whether they want him in their meeting room six days a week.

With text-messaging, Mullen said, "You can converse a little back and forth and get a feel for what type of person you're dealing with."

Most coaches have expressed dismay over the loss of text-messaging. The American Football Coaches Association beseeched the Division I Board to delay action and find a compromise. The AFCA didn't know the game already had been decided.

The ban won't hurt all coaches. Florida State director of football operations Andy Urbanic said through a spokesman Wednesday that the Seminoles staff didn't begin to use text-messaging until Bobby Bowden brought in five new coaches over the winter.

And as you may have guessed, Arkansas coach Houston Nutt, whose cell-phone and text-messaging bills were outed earlier this month by boosters intent on embarrassing him, said Wednesday that he favored the ban. Nutt's stance had nothing to do with seeing his text messages discussed across the country. He just believed that it might bring a semblance of order to his workday.

"It's gotten to be such a tough, tough thing," Nutt said. "We spend a lot of time text-messaging, all day long. I think it [the ban] is good."

So score one for the Luddites. The NCAA may have become an old man at the beach, bucket in hand, intent on holding back the tide of technology that has washed over modern life. Said Mullen, "I have had a couple of recruits ask, 'How are we going to communicate?'"

Sit down, Sonny, and let Gramps tell you of a time when communication went through the post office. The coaches sound as if they are resigned to going back to the future of writing letters. Robinson, who first began recruiting in the dark ages of the 1970s, already has tried it.

"It's funny how with a handwritten letter, you get [a recruit's] attention," he said.

Maybe recruiting tactics, like Xs-and-Os, never die. They just get recycled.

Ivan Maisel is a senior writer for ESPN.com. Send your questions and comments to Ivan at ivan.maisel@espn3.com.



Sports

April 27, 2007, 1:00AM

It's good to be home for NCAA tourney hopefuls

Teams with aspirations of making it to the College World Series know how important it is to host a regional or super regional

By MOISEKAPENDA BOWER
Copyright 2007 Houston Chronicle

Had an upstart group of Rice freshmen initiated their last-minute postseason push earlier in 2005, perhaps the Owls would have earned a national seed and not participated in the New Orleans super regional.

And, given his familiarity with Reckling Park, Rice first baseman Joe Savery might have avoided the broken right hand he suffered crashing into the fence at Tulane's Turchin Stadium while trying to catch a pop up in foul territory.

With a healthy Savery in their lineup, perhaps the Owls would have qualified for the College World Series, setting the stage for their return to Omaha last season and, maybe, their second national title under Wayne Graham.

Oftentimes the difference between postseason success and postseason failure is the smallest of margins. Winning a midweek game here or sweeping a weekend series there can provide the Ratings Percentage Index boost needed to earn a national seed, host a regional or qualify for the NCAA Tournament. That margin isn't lost upon the participants.

"Absolutely you want to be home," Savery said of playing in the postseason. "As many external factors that can come into a time like that are minimized when you're at home, so we definitely want to play for a national seed."

For the first time ever, the NCAA on Wednesday released its baseball RPI during the season, giving clear indication to teams with postseason dreams of the work that lies ahead as the regular season winds down.

For Rice (RPI of 2), Texas A&M (4) and Texas (6), the message is clear: Keep on winning. Ratings percentage indexes aren't the lone barometer used by the selection committee to determine NCAA Tournament participants or seedings, but the RPI carries a disproportionate weight in the proceedings. Finish the season with a flourish and an RPI in the top five or six, and one of eight national seeds is all but guaranteed. And with that national seed comes the additional benefit of hosting a regional and super regional, something everyone considers advantageous.

"Most of the teams that get to Omaha hosted, but on the other hand they were the top seeds. They were supposed to get to Omaha," Graham said. "They were supposed to be the best teams. But the fact remains that if you look at the percentage, you'd be shocked at the percentage of teams that host that advance over the years."

Seeding makes a difference

Over the eight years since the NCAA implemented the super-regional round of the postseason, 42 of the 64 teams that reached the College World Series were national seeds.

The last three national champions — Oregon State (2006), Texas ('05) and Cal State Fullerton ('04) — were not national seeds, but the Longhorns were the only team to claim a super regional on the road, winning the final two games over Mississippi at the Oxford super regional.

RESOURCES

IT'S OMAHA OR BUST

With NCAA Tournament bids to be announced in May, here is how the state's major-conference baseball teams stack up:

- **Rice (34-11; RPI 2)** -- Even with a poor closing stretch, the Owls are guaranteed a national seed. A strong finish and they could wrap up the top overall seed.
- **Texas A&M (33-10; RPI 4)** -- The Aggies could lose Ratings Percentage Index ground with series against Dallas Baptist and Kansas State, but a sweep of Texas could net a national seed.
- **Texas (34-12; RPI 6)** -- Like Rice, the Longhorns are Tournament locks. And like the Owls, the eyes of Texas are focused squarely on the No. 1 overall seed.
- **Baylor (24-19; RPI 45)** -- The Bears may be a year away from making another charge to Omaha, but a .500 finish should be enough to get them into the Tournament.
- **Houston (23-17; RPI 50)** -- With a backloaded schedule, the Cougars need only to win their series against East Carolina and Southern Mississippi to make the NCAAs.
- **TCU (31-10; RPI 52)** -- Even with a stellar record, the Horned Frogs will be hurt by the miserable Mountain West Conference. TCU may need to win out.
- **Texas Tech (RPI 64)** -- The Red Raiders are on the outside looking in, and even their Big 12 affiliation may not be enough to get them off the bubble.

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From the Los Angeles Times

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

No news is the news at BCS meetings

Conference commissioners are happy with the way system worked last season; playoff, for now, is dead.

By Chris Dufresne
Times Staff Writer

April 26, 2007

NEW ORLEANS — Convinced that the past college football season all worked out in the end, Bowl Championship Series commissioners emerged from meetings Wednesday in the Crescent City without making any crescent-wrench changes to the controversial system.

In a way, doing nothing was the twist.

The BCS system has been tweaked almost annually since its inception in 1998, often accompanied by siren calls for a playoff, yet officials are presently comfortable with the "double host" format that was introduced last season.

Discussions of a full-blown, NFL-style playoff in college football are all but dead, and even modest notions of adding one more game to BCS construct — the so-called "plus-one" model — are probably a year away from serious consideration.

"There has never been more interest in college football," Mike Slive, BCS coordinator and Southeastern Conference commissioner, said Wednesday. "It's fair to give the BCS some credit for contributing to the interest in college football."

Some would argue the BCS, a points system implemented to pair schools for a title in a sport that has resisted overtures for a playoff, only dodged a bullet in 2006. There was plenty of controversy in Ann Arbor when Florida narrowly edged Michigan for the No. 2 spot in the final standings, but that outcry largely subsided after Michigan got routed in the Rose Bowl by USC and Florida upset No. 1 Ohio State to win the national title.

There will be no changes to the BCS standings formula in 2007. The components will remain the Harris and USA Today coaches' polls and the same six computer operators, with each element awarded one-third weight.

The 11 BCS commissioners, along with independent Notre Dame, discussed but did not enact a rule that would allow more than two teams from one conference to play in a BCS game. Officials also nixed a proposal that would require championship-game participants to have won their conference titles.

Slive deemed the first year of "double host" or "piggyback," a success, with the Fiesta Bowl setting a high bar with its presentation of Boise State-Oklahoma in the Fiesta Bowl and, a week later, the BCS championship game.

The issue becomes more complicated this year, in the post-Katrina era, with the Sugar Bowl hosting two games — its own game and the BCS national title. But Slive left New Orleans saying, "There's a sense we're in good hands."

Paul Hoolahan, the Sugar Bowl's Chief Executive Officer, said he answered many tough logistical and security questions during a Tuesday meeting with BCS officials.

"If they weren't watching us, they wouldn't be doing their jobs," Hoolahan said of the BCS.

Because of damage to the Louisiana Superdome caused by Hurricane Katrina, the 2006 Sugar Bowl had to be moved to Atlanta. But the 2007 game, Notre Dame vs. Louisiana State, returned to the Superdome.

Hoolahan said he knows that his bowl, and his city, will be under scrutiny later this year when thousands of media and fans descend on New Orleans.

He also said challenge provides New Orleans "the ability to prove to the rest of the world that we're back.... our obligation is to make it a flawless event."

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BCS looking to the future But ultimate path is work in progress

Thursday, April 26, 2007

By Ted Lewis
Staff writer

They said there wouldn't be any progress toward some semblance of a playoff for college football coming out of this week's BCS meetings in New Orleans, and there wasn't.

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In fact, the picture might be more unclear than it was going in.

Southeastern Conference commissioner and BCS coordinator Mike Slive on Wednesday told his fellow commissioners they need to "drill down" in the coming weeks and months to explore where the sport should go in the future.

Action is at least a year away, but at least the dialogue has started -- and in this case, prudence is advised. This is a major, major step to take.

So far, in its nine years of existence, the BCS has mostly been struggling to find a process that assures the best teams play for the title. Much of what has developed has been in response to unfavorable public reaction to an unplanned situation.

"Our annual nervousness," Slive said.

For the last two years, the BCS was relatively controversy free, and there aren't any minor tweaks being made for next season.

And then there was the Scott Cowen-led coalition that forced easier access to the BCS bowls for those teams outside the six major conferences and Notre Dame.

The current double-hosting setup is a direct result of Cowen's campaign, and the Crescent City will see it implemented in January when the national championship game will be played at the Superdome a week after the Sugar Bowl.

Double hosting created five BCS games instead of four, albeit with two of them at the same site.

Now though, as the BCS grows from childhood into adolescence, it's time for the big question: Should college football move beyond the regular season-and-one bowl game model that has been in existence for more than a century?

There are huge philosophical and financial implications at work.

A full-fledged NFL-style playoff is out of the question. The school presidents, the ultimate decision-makers in the matter, are determined that college football will remain true to its collegiate roots, even if it means leaving millions on the table.

However, there does seem to be a majority sentiment toward adopting a plus-one model, which would mean teams would have to win a bowl game to get to the title game.

But the path to plus one, which seemed pretty open a few months ago, might not lead that way. There are a lot of devils in the details.

Here's an example:

If the plus-one model was adopted, most believe that there should be a two-week gap between the bowl games that decide the finalists and the championship game. But if the bowls were played on or around Jan. 1, that would push the title game until Jan. 15 or so. That would never fly with the presidents, who are adamant about not spilling football into the spring semester, even if two teams are involved.

Simple enough then. Back up the semifinal games a week.

But the bowls are fearful that playing the games in and around Christmas would hurt attendance, and ticket revenue accounts for 80 percent of their income.

"We're an airline that flies only one day a year, so we'd better be full," Fiesta Bowl Executive Director John Junker said.

That doesn't resolve whether the top four teams at the end of the regular season would be seeded into semifinal games at pre-designated bowls, or if the conference champions would go to their traditional bowls -- with the top two teams in the standings after those games playing for the title.

Such situations are no surprise to Big Ten Commissioner Jim Delany, the most outspoken proponent for keeping the status quo, saying any change that would further alter his conference's relationship with the Rose Bowl is unacceptable.

Because the Rose Bowl is involved, it's a stance that gives Delany, plus Pacific-10 Commissioner Tom Hansen, virtual veto power over a plus-one model.

That is, if the other conferences believe there can't be a national championship without the Big Ten and Pac-10. Chances are, they do. But, Delany said, "I believe that after study and the more you think about it, the majority of those people (who favor a plus-one model or even an NFL-like playoff system) will say 'No' to it, even if we didn't say 'No.' "

As Slive said, "If we really thought we had to have a playoff, we would have gone that route already."

Even those thought to be in favor of a plus-one model are urging caution.

"Simply adding a game doesn't mean addressing the issues for which the BCS has been criticized in the past," Big 12 Commissioner Kevin Weiberg said. "We've got to make sure there's true improvement."

Slive is of the same mindset.

"I think most everyone is open-minded about fully evaluating college football's postseason with an eye toward determining what are our best interests in the long run," he said. "But it needs to be a long deliberative process so that when we do come to a decision, we will be able to clearly say here's what we're doing and why."

That means it probably will be at least until next year's BCS meetings in Miami before it's clear which way things are headed. The SEC presidents will discuss the matter at their spring meetings next month in Destin, Fla., and their responses will be a good indicator.

But nobody is willing to predict where things will wind up.

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Ted Lewis can be reached at tlewis@timespicayune.com or (504) 232-5071.



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Acts of kindness and Hokie pride keep Tech squad fast and focused

By DAN GELSTON, Associated Press

© April 27, 2007

Last updated: 11:34 PM

PHILADELPHIA - No matter where the Hokies run, teary-eyed strangers are never far behind, with prayers or a reassuring hand on a shoulder.

Such is life for everyone at Virginia Tech after the massacre that left 32 students and professors dead, plus the gunman who killed them.

Virginia Tech's women's track and field team is competing this weekend at the Penn Relays. With their team outfits on, it's been easy for others to offer concern and sympathy. Someone even picked up the bill for their team dinner Wednesday night.

"It's been an emotional week," said sprinter Britni Spruill, who is from Hampton. "I'm totally overwhelmed by what happened, but at the same time I really appreciate all of the people who have come up to us to express their feelings. I've just taken it all in stride and use it as a motivating factor."

They are spreading the message that Virginia Tech will get through the tragedy. It will just take time.

The day after the massacre, the Hokies didn't know if they would still compete in last weekend's ACC outdoor championships. But they decided to travel to College Park, Md., and rallied from second place entering the final day to win the title.

"For them to be able to come together and perform at such a high level, basically days later, that was the thing that for me I'll never forget," said Dave Cianelli, director of track and field and cross country at Virginia Tech. "I think that helped me really toward healing, going from one of the worst days of my life on Monday to one of the happiest days of my life on Saturday."

Distance runner Natalie Sherbak said the team was set on bringing home a championship to the "grieving Hokies."

"And we accomplished what we set out to do despite everything that's happened," said Sherbak, a Kellam grad who finished fifth in the 10,000 meters. "And it took us being able to shut out the world to do it. It was something for us to be happy about in a time when there wasn't anything to be cheerful about."

Others also saw what Virginia Tech was able to do under the circumstances, including USA Track and Field, which named the women's track and field team its Athletes of the Week.

The Hokies couldn't carry over that success in the 400-meter relay at the 113th Penn Relays. They finished third in their heat in 45.85 and did not qualify for today's final.

But they said Thursday that they ran the race of the season at the ACCs in memory of their fallen classmates. They stayed focused, stayed positive and did what was needed to become champions.

"We were really, really motivated because of what happened," said junior Sherlenia Green. "We wanted to represent for the victims and the families that were mourning."

"It taught me that you have to make the most out of life because you never know when it can end," Spruill said. "I think we just used it as an inspirational tool and just took it with us to the meet. You've got to run like it's your last day. That's what I do every day now."

Cianelli was friends with one of the victims - his neighbor and Virginia Tech French teacher Jocelyn Couture-Nowak. Couture-Nowak and some of her students were killed when Seung-Hui Cho burst into her morning class at Norris Hall and opened fire.

"That was very difficult on everybody, just knowing someone," said Cianelli, who is in his sixth season as coach. "Even though we're a large state school, it's a fairly tight-knit student body."

In tribute, some of the Hokies pinned black ribbons on their uniform Thursday. When the women finished running, Penn Relay staffers offered their prayers and well-wishes.

Trainer Dan Preusser was stopped by people who noticed his "VT" hat.

"It's good to see that out of a tragedy, there's a sense of community no matter where you go," he said.

Cianelli said he hasn't had time to answer all the letters, cards and e-mails of support he's received. He has heard from nearly 200 coaches from around the country.

"It's been tremendous," he said. "We've felt like they've all been with us and supporting us and want to see us do well."

Staff writer Larry Rubama contributed to this report

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April 26, 2007

B.C.S. Format Receives a Reprieve, for Now

By [PETE THAMEL](#)

NEW ORLEANS, April 25 — The annual Bowl Championship Series meetings, which gather all of the Division I-A college football conference commissioners, ended here Wednesday with little significant action.

The B.C.S. coordinator Mike Slive said that there would be no change to the current format and that there was no discussion of alternative postseason models during the three days of meetings.

Slive did say that alternatives would probably be discussed at next year's meeting in Miami. Each conference will evaluate a postseason model that works best through the prism of that conference.

"I think we have to look at what's the best way to continue to further the interest and growth of college football in the long term," said Slive, who is also the commissioner of the Southeastern Conference. "Do we have the best model? Should we do something else?"

The B.C.S. is entering the second year of its television contract with Fox, which televises every game in the B.C.S. rotation except the Rose Bowl. That contract ends in 2010, but the negotiating window for the next one would open around this time next year.

Fox and other television networks, and most of the conference commissioners, including Slive, are interested in a serious discussion about alternative postseason models.

That includes the Plus One model, in which the teams ranked first and second in the B.C.S. standings after the four major bowls (Rose, Fiesta, Sugar and Orange) would meet for the national title. The current model matches the teams ranked 1-2 after the regular season and conference championship games.

Ten of the 12 B.C.S. decision makers, who include the heads of the 11 conferences and [Notre Dame's](#) athletic director, Kevin White, said in December that they would be open to discussion about an alternative postseason model.

Slive said he was pleased with how the B.C.S. had worked the past two years, but that he still remembered an undefeated Auburn team not getting a chance to win the title in 2004.

"I remember Auburn," Slive said. "It's not the Alamo, but as you go through the analysis, it's a factor."

He added, "I think there's some interest in alternative models."

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04/23/2007

College athletics help begin healing process

As much as athletics can be a great divider, it also seems to unite us in some of our most tragic moments.

Following last Monday's tragic shootings at Virginia Tech in which 32 people were killed, the nation has banded together ... especially the nation of intercollegiate athletics.

Penn State's annual Blue-White game concluding spring football practices was anything but blue and white this year.

Several thousand of the record 71,000 people in attendance at Beaver Stadium were clad in the maroon and orange of Virginia Tech, including Penn State's Blue Band and cheerleaders.

Instead of the "S-Zone" normally visible in the student section, the "VT" logo was displayed.

"For our fans, as supportive as they are of us, for them to show their colors ... it was great," quarterback Anthony Morelli said.

Penn State tackle Gerald Cadogan spoke to the crowd prior to the game, delivering the message that "We are with you" to the Hokies, the Blue Band played "Amazing grace" during a moment of silence and followed with the Virginia Tech fight song.

All of those were small tributes, but they all reminded us that we are part of a much larger community.

"You see all of those Penn State kids with Virginia Tech colors on," said Joe Paterno, the legendary Penn State coach. "My wife's here in maroon and orange. To see all of those kids, you realize there's something about intercollegiate athletics ... it's special. You've got to be almost fascinated by it and proud to be a part of it."

Most of us probably didn't know anyone involved in the tragedy, but we're all connected in some way or another.

A Penn State graduate, Jeremy Herbstritt, was killed during the senseless tragedy and Paterno had spoken to Herbstritt's girlfriend and her mother prior to his press conference.

He strode into the Beaver Stadium media room clutching a Virginia Tech hat that the pair had given him.

Paterno didn't know the Herbstritt's, but a tragedy like this brings us all together.

The towns of Blacksburg, Va., and State College are very similar, as are the universities. So, it's scary to realize this could have happened in either place, or anywhere for that matter.

"We all reach out for each other," Paterno said. "I'm glad to see the student body reach out the way they did."

It's important to keep life and sports in perspective, even though sports can be a metaphor for life.

Sports can provide a needed distraction from the real world, though.

"When we get out there, we concentrate on football," Morelli said.

It's just important that we keep that in perspective, which we fail to do sometimes at all levels of competition.

Virginia Tech coach Frank Beamer called off the Hokies' final three spring practices and their spring game, also scheduled for Saturday.

The Hokies did take the field for their baseball game in Blacksburg against Miami on Friday night and have resumed all other intercollegiate contests.

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Now is the time for their community to heal.

In many ways, sports can help us to do that. Just like they did following the Sept. 11 attacks.

As an alumnus of Penn State, it was strange seeing orange and maroon and a giant "VT" in the student section.

But there was also a great feeling of both pride and sadness.

"I thought that was great," defensive coordinator Tom Bradley, also a Penn State alumnus, said. "I think it's just an outpouring of support and sympathy."

Added Morelli: "I thought it was awesome showing that support."

So even though we may be apart in competition, it helps us understand that we're all a part of something much bigger in life.

(Keating is a staff writer)



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Tudor:

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College baseball is a hot ticket

CAULTON TUDOR, Staff Writer

N.C. State's Dail Park baseball stadium has 2,500 seats.

All are sold for today's 7 p.m. game against North Carolina. Same story for the second game of the series Saturday night and the concluding game on Sunday afternoon.

"Baseball's popularity has really picked up," State athletics director Lee Fowler said.

And not just for the Wolfpack. Attendance is brisk throughout most of the ACC and much of the NCAA.

Stadium improvement and enlargement projects are commonplace, a prime example being the powerful Tar Heels.

With a \$3 million donation from former player Vaughn Bryson and another \$1 million from New York Yankees owner George Steinbrenner, UNC is about to launch a \$17.2 million makeover for its Boshamer Stadium. The seating capacity will increase from the current 2,500 to at least 4,000 and probably more.

Construction work on the project will begin amid a period of unprecedented on-field success for UNC. Last season's team came within a whisker of winning the national championship at the College World Series in Omaha, Neb.

The eight-team field for that championship series was awash with ACC hopefuls. North Carolina was joined by Georgia Tech, Miami and Clemson. Three other league teams -- N.C. State, Florida State and Virginia -- landed NCAA Tournament bids.

Those same teams could reach the 64-team postseason again.

The ACC Tournament is scheduled for May 23-27, in Jacksonville, Fla.

The Tar Heels (35-9, 14-7 ACC) are first in the league's Coastal Division. State (28-14, 11-10) is third in the Atlantic and not yet a lock to qualify for the ACC Tournament, which includes only the top eight teams.

Duke (6-15), Virginia Tech (4-17) and Maryland (7-14) are all but eliminated. Boston College (9-12) and Wake Forest (8-13) likely will determine the eighth spot but still have some hope of catching State and Miami, also 11-10.

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Even as interest in college baseball spikes, there's almost no chance that the sport can emerge as a profitable venture.

The scholarship investment isn't that much of a financial burden. Schools are limited to 11.7 scholarships annually. That's less than the scholarship allotment for softball (12) and men's track (13), but facilities upkeep, long schedules and extensive travel combine to escalate the baseball budget.

Fowler notes that ticket prices are such bargains at most schools that it would be virtually impossible to sell enough to cover the bottom line. State and UNC each charge \$5 for adults. Students and children get in free.

"There are some schools that draw big crowds day after day, but I doubt they come very close to covering expenses, either," Fowler said.

"There's more to it than money, though. Having fans this interested in coming to the stadium and supporting the team is an intangible, but it's definitely important. It builds excitement and in our case, the students seem to really enjoy getting out to the games. They get into it."

Columnist Caulton Tudor can be reached at 829-8946 or caulton.tudor@newsobserver.com.

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April 27, 2007

New rules could change college baseball

Kendall Rogers

Rivals.com College Baseball Editor

Just a day and a half after releasing the official baseball RPI to the public, the NCAA was back in the news Thursday afternoon.

The NCAA Division I Board of Directors officially voted in the text-messaging ban for recruiting. But the most important news stemming from the meeting concerned the Baseball Academic Enhancement Working Group's package of recommendations.

The new legislation, which would change college baseball as we currently know it, was approved by the Board of Directors.

In the package are three important prongs – Transfer year in residence, financial aid and fall-term certification.



Under the new rules, Matt Spencer would have had to sit out a year.

The transfer prong eliminates the one-time transfer exception. With the rule, baseball joins football and basketball as sports where a player has to sit out a year in the event of a transfer from a four-year school to another.

The only problem is that football and basketball are full scholarship sports – baseball isn't.

While the working-group sees the move as encouraging coaches and student-athletes to make a thoughtful decision about their academic fit at an institution, many college baseball coaches are hesitant about the rules' ramifications.

"It's definitely going to take some time to sink in, but I think the rule just makes it where coaches have to think more about their personnel decisions," Vanderbilt coach Tim Corbin told Rivals.com. "At Vanderbilt a partial scholarship doesn't go too far, so you've got to be sure the kid will be a good fit for your program."

Corbin also believes it will keep coaches from taking chances or

signing projects.

"This rule would make the recruiting process a four-year commitment," he said. "As a coach, we're going to be less likely to take a chance on a kid, because if it doesn't work out, he's likely with you for the long-haul."

Despite the concerns, Corbin agrees with the principle behind the transfer rule.

Two coaches on the other side of the fence are Arizona State's Pat Murphy and Oklahoma State's Frank Anderson.

Murphy and the Sun Devils have benefited from adding former North Carolina outfielder Matt Spencer, while former N.C. State infielder Matt Mangini is now one of the top offensive producers for the Cowboys.

"I just don't think it makes much sense to have this rule in place for a partial scholarship sport," Anderson said. "Not only is going to potentially harm a kid financially, it could also hurt them academically."

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If a kid doesn't feel comfortable at a place like OSU, his only resort (unless he wants to sit out a year) is to head to a JC."

In the end, Anderson doesn't see that scenario as helping the student-athlete meet their academic goals.

Murphy sees two sides to the debate.

"The administrative leaders at institutions have said that they want to better the APR. So, if your main goal is to better the APR, the new rule will certainly help that," he said. "These new rules might be good for the APR, but it might not be the best solution in the long run for college baseball as a whole."

UC Irvine coach Dave Serrano also weighed in on the issue.

"With college baseball at an all-time high in this country, it's unfortunate that these rules have to be put in place," he said. "I personally don't see a problem with the way our game is right now and I subscribe to the thought that if it isn't broke, don't fix it."

*I personally
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— UC Irvine head coach
Dave Serrano

Besides eliminating the one-time transfer exception, the NCAA will also penalize teams that cut scholarships or encourage players to transfer.

According to the NCAA release from Thursday's meetings, encouraging a student athlete to transfer would cost the institution APR points. Additionally, the institution would not be able to replace that player until the following year.

Most importantly, teams will be limited to just 35 student-athletes, regardless of the source of financial aid.

The NCAA views the legislation as helping to eliminate the "run-off" strategy that some coaches reportedly employ during fall workouts.

The other prongs to the legislation include:

- Requires programs with a four-year average APR under 900 to be subject to baseball-specific penalties as well as penalties already stipulated in the Academic Performance Program. This includes scholarship reductions. Examples of baseball-specific penalties include a reduction in a team's number of contests from 56 to 50 and limiting the playing and practice season from 132 to 119 days.
- Retaining the current financial aid model of 11.7 scholarships, but limiting counters to 27 and requiring that each of their aid packages include at least 33 percent athletics aid.
- Another working-group proposal focused on the academic progress of two-year players transferring to four-year schools. Under the new rule, the NCAA hopes to eliminate the instances of two-year athletes transferring into a Division I program at mid-term without making a serious commitment to academics and then departing for the professional ranks. The athlete must earn enough hours during the previous spring to stay eligible, or he must enroll for summer school.

The text-messaging proposal goes into effect on August 1 of this year, while the proposals initiated by the working-group will do the same on August 1, 2008.

Editor's Note: After another exciting weekend of baseball action, come back to Rivals.com on Monday afternoon, as I will be writing a column giving my thoughts on the new rules and explaining where college baseball goes from here.

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April 27, 2007

Basketball coaches stand on shaky ground

Andrew Skwara

Rivals.com College Basketball Staff Writer

Job security may be reaching an all-time low for college basketball coaches.

There were a record 61 head-coaching changes at the Division I level - about a fifth of the jobs available - in 2006.



Gary Williams' 18 years at Maryland is a rarity in college basketball coaching.

There have been 48 more switches so far this year. That includes high-profile jobs such as Kentucky and Arkansas.

[Bob Huggins](#), who spent 16 consecutive seasons at one school until 2005, has held three different head coaching jobs in the last 20 months.

But there are a couple of places where coaches can feel relatively entrenched.

ACC coaches have an average tenure of 7.6 seasons at their respective schools, the most of any of the major conferences. Three have held the same job for 10 or more years - Duke's [Mike Krzyzewski](#) (27), Maryland's [Gary Williams](#) (18) and Boston College's [Al Skinner](#) (10 seasons).

"Long-term coaches seem to have gone the way of the albatross, but that hasn't really been the case in our league," said [Skip Prosser](#), who left Xavier for Wake Forest in 2001. "You can look at Coach Krzyzewski or Coach Williams. [Dave Odom](#) (South Carolina coach) was at Wake for 12 years before I got here."

Prosser, a Pittsburgh native, was offered a lucrative deal by the University of Pittsburgh in 2003, but chose to stay in Winston-Salem. A couple of seasons in the ACC convinced Prosser he couldn't find a similar situation elsewhere.

"When you're outside the league, you sort of feel that the ACC is a lot of hype. But once you get in you appreciate how talented the players are and the difficulty of winning on the road," Prosser said. "I was also shocked to find out how much the tradition meant here. Maybe more than anything, you can't imagine a place where they take college basketball so seriously."

The Pac-10 ranks second with an average tenure of 6.6 seasons. Like the ACC, it will bring back every one of its coaches from last season. It also has three coaches with 10 or more years at one school - Arizona's [Lute Olson](#) (24), California's [Ben Braun](#) (11) and Oregon's [Ernie Kent](#) (10).

"The Pac-10 is kind of a destination conference," Braun said. "For most of the coaches here, this is the highest level we've been at. It's so tough to remain successful here that you know you have to be committed to building your program."

Braun also credits much of his and his peers' longevity to improved depth.

"The league was good when I got here. In my first

COUNTING EXPERIENCE

The tenures of coaches in the six major conferences and the average tenure by conference:

ACC

[Al Skinner](#), **Boston College**: 10 seasons
[Oliver Purnell](#), **Clemson**: 4 seasons
[Mike Krzyzewski](#), **Duke**: 27 seasons
[Leonard Hamilton](#), **Florida State**: 5 seasons
[Paul Hewitt](#), **Georgia Tech**: 7 seasons
[Gary Williams](#), **Maryland**: 18 seasons
[Frank Haith](#), **Miami**: 3 seasons
[Roy Williams](#), **North Carolina**: 4 seasons
[Sidney Lowe](#), **NC State**: 1 season
[Dave Leitao](#), **Virginia**: 2 seasons
[Seth Greenberg](#), **Virginia Tech**: 4 seasons
[Skip Prosser](#), **Wake Forest**: 6 seasons

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year, Arizona finished second in the conference and won the national championship," Braun said. "But now I think you see a lot more parity. If you can finish in the top half of our league you can compete for a national championship and even the eighth, ninth and 10th-best teams in our league can compete with the best teams in the country. You may not get to the NCAA Tournament every year, but all the teams in our league have experienced some success. The improvement of Washington and Washington State has had a lot to do with that."

Washington State had long been the league doormat until rookie head coach [Tony Bennett](#) took over the program last year. Bennett led the Cougars, who hadn't had a winning record since 1996, to a 26-8 record and a No. 3 seed in the NCAA Tournament. He earned several national coach of the year awards (including Rivals.com's) and was rewarded with a seven-year extension. The Big East ranks just behind the Pac-10 with an average of 6.4 seasons, but that number is a bit misleading. Take away Syracuse's [Jim Boeheim](#) and Connecticut's [Jim Calhoun](#), who have a combined 52 years at their schools, and that average dips to 3.6 years.

The 16-team league welcomed three new coaches last year – Cincinnati's [Mick Cronin](#), Rutgers' [Fred Hill](#) and Seton Hall's [Bobby Gonzalez](#) – and will add two more next season. [Stan Heath](#), who was hired at South Florida after being fired at Arkansas, and Huggins - who left Kansas State for his alma mater West Virginia – will lead new teams in the 2007-08 campaign.

All that turnover pails in comparison to the Big 12, which easily ranks last with an average of 2.3 years. Two-thirds of the league's coaches will be entering their first or second seasons with their schools in 2007-08.

After hiring a record five new coaches last season, the league added three more with the addition of Colorado's [Jeff Bzdelik](#), Texas A&M's [Mark Turgeon](#) and Huggins' replacement at K-State, [Frank Martin](#).

Texas' [Rick Barnes](#), whose name has been linked to many coaching searches in recent years, ranks as the elder statesman with his nine years in Austin.

The Big Ten also hired three new coaches, causing its average tenure to fall to 3.5 years. But unlike the Big 12, it appears to be building a reputation as a destination for some of the hottest coaching candidates available.

Michigan snagged [John Beilein](#), who had been linked to several other job openings, away from West Virginia. The Wolverines didn't even have to ante up for any of Beilein's \$2.5 million buyout.

[Tubby Smith](#) surprised many by bolting for Minnesota. No other realistic candidates could have matched Smith's credentials. He was under pressure at Kentucky despite averaging 26 wins over the last 10 years.

Iowa landed one of the most successful coaches at the mid-major level when it hired [Todd Lickliter](#) away from Butler. He guided the Bulldogs to a pair of Sweet 16 appearances over the last four seasons.

SEC coaches average nearly two more years at 5.3 seasons apiece, but that doesn't necessarily mean they feel more secure.

Heath was coming off back-to-back NCAA Tournament appearances, while Smith had guided the Wildcats to the Big Dance for 10 consecutive years - including three trips to the Elite Eight.

Total: 12 coaches, 91 seasons = 7.6 seasons

Big East

[Mick Cronin](#), Cincinnati: 1 season
[Jim Calhoun](#), Connecticut: 21 seasons
[Jerry Wainwright](#), DePaul: 2 seasons
[John Thompson III](#), Georgetown: 3 seasons
[Rick Pitino](#), Louisville: 6 seasons
[Tom Crean](#), Marquette: 8 seasons
[Mike Brey](#), Notre Dame: 7 seasons
[Jamie Dixon](#), Pittsburgh: 4 seasons
[Tim Welsh](#), Providence: 9 seasons
[Fred Hill](#), Rutgers: 1 season
[Bobby Gonzalez](#), Seton Hall: 1 season
[Stan Heath](#), South Florida: 0 seasons
[Norm Roberts](#), St. John's: 3 seasons
[Jim Boeheim](#), Syracuse: 31 seasons
[Jay Wright](#), Villanova: 6 seasons
[Bob Huggins](#), West Virginia: 0 seasons
Total: 16 coaches, 103 seasons = 6.4 seasons

Big Ten

[Bruce Weber](#), Illinois: 4 seasons
[Kelvin Sampson](#), Indiana: 1 season
[Todd Lickliter](#), Iowa: 0 seasons
[John Beilein](#), Michigan: 0 seasons
[Tom Izzo](#), Michigan State: 12 seasons
[Tubby Smith](#), Minnesota: 0 seasons
[Bill Carmody](#), Northwestern: 7 seasons
[Thad Matta](#), Ohio State: 3 seasons
[Ed DeChellis](#), Penn State: 4 seasons
[Matt Painter](#), Purdue: 2 seasons
[Bo Ryan](#), Wisconsin: 6 seasons
Total: 11 coaches, 39 seasons = 3.5 seasons

Big 12

[Scott Drew](#), Baylor: 4 seasons
[Jeff Bzdelik](#), Colorado: 0 seasons
[Greg McDermott](#), Iowa State: 1 season
[Bill Self](#), Kansas: 4 seasons
[Frank Martin](#), Kansas State: 0 seasons
[Mike Anderson](#), Missouri: 1 season
[Doc Sadler](#), Nebraska: 1 season
[Jeff Capel](#), Oklahoma: 1 season
[Sean Sutton](#), Oklahoma State: 1 season
[Rick Barnes](#), Texas: 9 seasons
[Mark Turgeon](#), Texas A&M: 0 seasons
[Bob Knight](#), Texas Tech: 6 seasons
Total: 12 coaches, 28 seasons = 2.3 seasons

Pac-10

[Lute Olson](#), Arizona: 24 seasons
[Herb Sendek](#), Arizona State: 1 season
[Ben Braun](#), Cal: 11 seasons
[Ernie Kent](#), Oregon: 10 seasons
[Jay John](#), Oregon State: 5 seasons
[Trent Johnson](#), Stanford: 3 seasons
[Ben Howland](#), UCLA: 4 seasons
[Tim Floyd](#), USC: 2 seasons
[Lorenzo Romar](#), Washington: 5 seasons
[Tony Bennett](#), Washington State: 1 season
Total: 10 coaches, 66 seasons = 6.6 seasons

SEC

[Mark Gottfried](#), Alabama: 9 seasons
[John Pelphrey](#), Arkansas: 0 seasons
[Jeff Lebo](#), Auburn: 3 seasons
[Dennis Felton](#), Georgia: 4 seasons
[Billy Donovan](#), Florida: 11 seasons
[Billy Gillispie](#), Kentucky: 0 seasons
[John Brady](#), LSU: 10 seasons
[Rick Stansbury](#), Mississippi State: 9 seasons
[Andy Kennedy](#), Ole Miss: 2 seasons
[Dave Odom](#), South Carolina: 6 seasons
[Bruce Pearl](#), Tennessee: 2 seasons
[Kevin Stallings](#), Vanderbilt: 8 seasons
Total: 12 coaches, 64 seasons = 5.3 seasons

Totals: 73 coaches, 391 seasons = 5.4 seasons

When coaches with those kind of results wind up looking for jobs, it's no wonder that so many conferences stop looking like safe havens.

Andrew Skwara is a national writer for Rivals.com. He can be reached at askwara@rivals.com.

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