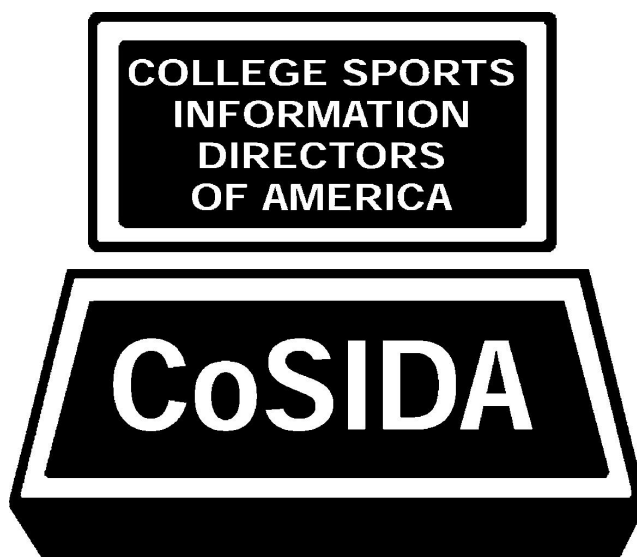


CoSIDA NEWS

Intercollegiate Athletics News and Issues from Around the Nation



AUGUST 25, 2006

LONGHORNS MEN'S BASKETBALL

Texas to cut guaranteed seats for students

University to offer more tickets to public in effort to boost attendance.

By John Maher

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Friday, August 25, 2006

University of Texas students will lose about 1,600 guaranteed seats for the coming basketball season in an effort to make more seats available to the general public and to boost attendance.

Students will still have the same 1,200 seats downstairs in the Erwin Center, but will be reduced to about 840 seats in the mezzanine, Doug Messner, UT senior associate athletic director, said Thursday at a meeting of the university's Intercollegiate Athletics Council for Men.

Messer said last season student attendance at men's basketball games averaged 1,673 and only once in the past two seasons has it exceeded 2,100 for a game. The general public will now be able to purchase the upper-level, general-admission seats for \$8 a game, the same price that a student would have to pay if he or she wasn't one of the first 2,040 to claim a spot.

"For high-demand games, it will be a mad scramble," said Chris Plonsky, women's athletic director at Texas. Plonsky said a similar tactic helped boost football attendance. Football season tickets reached an all-time high of 74,000 this year, with 16,000 of those being student tickets.

In other efforts to increase basketball attendance, an exhibition game will be free to the public this year, and season tickets for seats behind the baskets in the mezzanine will be \$160, down from \$205.

Find this article at:<http://www.statesman.com/sports/content/sports/stories/longhorns/08/25texmen.html>☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL PREVIEW

Big money leads to short leashes for those in the directors chairs

Wednesday, August 23, 2006

The elderly gentleman at the Rose Bowl approached Mack Brown in the euphoric aftermath of Texas' landmark victory last January and couldn't have been more effusive in his praise for the coach of his favorite football team as they walked off the field.

"Mack," the senior citizen said, "you've got a free pass. You don't ever have to win another game."

Eavesdropping in the vicinity, Darrell Royal eased up to Brown and warned, "Forget that. You've got spring practice in six weeks, big boy."

In truth, Brown's honeymoon after winning the school's first outright national championship in 36 years did earn him special treatment. He would have been forgiven a sloppy set of spring drills.

But there are no free passes in college football in this age of heightened expectations and increased scrutiny, loud chat rooms and talk shows and exaggerated salaries.

As many as 35 coaches now make as much as \$1 million a year, according to some reports. Brown is the among the dozen who command salaries between \$2 million and \$3 million with Notre Dame's Charlie Weis making an estimated \$3.3 million.

At those prices, the timetable for turnarounds has sped up dramatically.

In the last three years, Frank Solich was replaced at Nebraska at the end of a 10-win season and a 58-19 tenure, Ty Willingham was relieved of his duties at Notre Dame after just three seasons that included a pair of bowl appearances, and David Cutcliffe lost his job at Mississippi because of a 4-7 season one year after being celebrated as the SEC Coach of the Year.

Are you listening, Dennis Franchione?

Are you renting, Gary Pinkel?

Both the Texas A&M and Missouri coaches know the drill and realize they have to produce immediately or risk getting pink-slipped.

With the addition of a fifth BCS bowl game, the chances of landing one of those lucrative spots increases but so does the pressure to reach that level. The bet here is Fran will once again be the man in Aggieland and produce no worse than an 8-4 season and a bowl team to stop the bleeding. Pinkel shouldn't be as fortunate and, with

<http://statesman.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Big+money+leads+to+short+le...> 8/23/2006

another stumble, could be done in after a 29-30 record through five seasons.

Don't be deluded by the fact that only 11 Division I-A vacancies came open in the offseason, the fewest since 1996. And of those 11, one resulted in midsummer by the death of Randy Walker at Northwestern, which promoted Pat Fitzgerald from within.

There's every bit as much pressure as ever. Remember, 24 head coaches were axed the previous year, the same number as in 2001 and 1997.

The five coaches under the biggest gun this fall are Kentucky's Rich Brooks, Missouri's Pinkel, North Carolina's John Bunting, Michigan State's John L. Smith and maybe North Texas' Darrell Dickey. They're hoping to be starring in college football's version of "The Great Escape."

Very near the flames of the hot seat, Arizona's Mike Stoops, Arkansas' Houston Nutt, Virginia's Al Groh, Air Force's Fisher DeBerry and Fran had best start producing better results soon.

Is it too soon to fire Ron Zook? It'd be a good thing if Greg Robinson won a couple of games at Syracuse.

Conversely, the top five coaches on the rise at smaller programs are UTEP's Mike Price, Tulsa's Steve Kragthorpe, Arizona State's Dirk Koetter, South Florida's Jim Leavitt and Boise State's Chris Petersen.

File them under "A Few Good Men."

Even Mack knows he's never too far from the frying pan.

The real pressure returns to the ninth-year head coach's shoulders on Sept. 2 with the 2006 season-opener against North Texas.

Fortunately, for Brown, he will be accorded hallowed status in his job and will keep it . . . so long as he doesn't lose to Oklahoma or Texas A&M or miss out on a bowl appearance.

He's actually one of the few coaches without a mandate to win this fall.

The same can't be said for many of his high-profile colleagues, even including other national champion coaches like Tennessee's Phillip Fulmer and Michigan's Lloyd Carr. Of course, Fulmer hasn't won it all since '98, Carr since '97.

Among SEC coaches, Fulmer may be the dean, but another 5-6 season and he might be done.

He's hoping a staff shakeup that included the return of Cutcliffe as offensive coordinator and more stability at quarterback will prevent two straight seasons without a bowl after missing out on the postseason last year for the first time since 1988. "It was about rock bottom," Fulmer said.

The cantankerous Carr recognized the need for change, too, after a disappointing 7-5 season, topped off by a loss to a mediocre Nebraska team in the Alamo Bowl.

He replaced both coordinators. That's always Step One toward the head coach's dismissal.

Step Two is never pretty.

kbohls@statesman.com



The Birmingham News

Some votes are worth more than others

Friday, August 25, 2006

Pat Dye doesn't like to brag, but he is awfully proud of the Master Coaches Survey.

"You should write an article about it," the living Auburn legend said.

Hey, you get elected to the College Football Hall of Fame, you have a right to make suggestions.

Not to be confused with the USA Today, Harris or AP polls, the Master Coaches Survey - now heading into its second season - compiles the votes of 17 retired field generals to rank the top 25 college football teams each week.

Hey, if Gene Bartow can have a vote in the Harris Poll, why not Gene Stallings in the MCS?

"There's not another poll in the country," Dye said, "that's got the detailed knowledge that we've got as far as knowing the best teams in the country."

Translation: They know their stuff.

No other poll voters in the country watch game film each week for the express purpose of trying to figure out the best teams in the country.

Tommy Tuberville has to rank Texas in the USA Today poll, but he's not watching film of the Longhorns because he doesn't have to play them. At least not before Jan. 8.

No other poll voters hold a weekly conference call to share their expertise about teams in their specific regions of the country.

"We have a great time," Dye said. ``It's a shame they can't open it up to the public. It would be a best-seller.

``But there are too many private conversations going on."

No other poll includes 11 voters who themselves have been voted into the College Football Hall of Fame.

The master coaches aren't content just to watch film, gossip and cash a nice check for the effort. They want their poll to matter. They want it to become part of the BCS rankings.

Toward that end, Dye and Andy Curtin, the Master Coaches Survey's executive director, visited SEC commissioner and BCS coordinator Mike Slive back in June.

Slive and Curtin are old friends, and the commish recognizes the expertise of old coaches like Dye, Stallings and Vince Dooley.

The BCS formula is unchanged this season. It'll use the USA Today and Harris polls and six computer rankings to figure out the two teams that'll play in the BCS championship game.

The BCS announced Thursday that it's signed a four-year extension with the people who run the Harris Poll

to include it in the BCS formula through the 2010 season.

Slive said that agreement "doesn't preclude" the BCS from possibly adding the Master Coaches Survey to the mix in the interim.

"We'll watch it very carefully," Slive said.

The Harris Poll, dogged by controversy about its initial voter list last season, is expected to release the names of this year's 114 pollsters in the next week. Bartow doesn't expect to be included.

"My guess is my term is up," he said. "They may have cut the basketball coaches from voting in a football poll."

Good idea. Almost as good as giving votes that matter to real experts like Dye and Stallings. In this case, voting should be a privilege, not a right. Kevin Scarbinsky's column appears Sunday, Monday, Wednesday and Friday. Write him at kscarbinsky@bhamnews.com.

© 2006 The Birmingham News

© 2006 al.com All Rights Reserved.

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)

Article Last Updated: 8/25/2006 12:15 AM

cu football

Hawkins' way dials in players

By Chris Dempsey
Denver Post Staff Writer
DenverPost.com

Boulder - Or, or, or.

Colorado players had better get used to it. Or else.

When he coached Boise State, Dan Hawkins used to drive the media batty with his depth charts. He admits that it was amusing when he answered abstractly to the media's get-to-the-point questions, but the new CU coach insists it wasn't to be intentionally annoying.

He just had a system. And the "ors" were prevalent.

In a time of "getting to know you," the Buffaloes have another issue on their plate - the ever-present "or."

CU depth charts now work like this: The only positions set in stone from game to game are the quarterback and offensive line. It's open season on everyone else.

"It'll keep everyone dialed in," Hawkins said.

Offense now works like defense, where set starters are sometimes difficult to pin down because the 11 players who start each game usually are tailored to what the opposing offense does well. For example, if Oklahoma runs the ball most of the time, four down linemen and three linebackers will start for the Buffs. If spread-you-out- and-pass Texas Tech is in town, CU will use an extra defensive back or two.

Hawkins will start the skill-position players who best fit what he wants to do in that week's game. The Buffs' depth chart at running back baffled many when Hawkins revealed there are three "co-starters." But that is just the beginning. Wide receivers, tight ends and fullbacks are just as susceptible.

CU running backs coach Darian Hagan said he never had heard of three players tied for the top at any position.

"But in our system, I think it's an advantage for us to play all three and get those guys doing different things," Hagan said.

The cynical viewpoint is that CU doesn't have one running back it can count on to be good carrying the football, in pass protection and whatever else the coaching staff is asking players at that position to do. The optimistic viewpoint is that CU has three running backs with different skills, and they all deserve playing time.

But what do the players think about it? From the first time any of them played football, there was a first team, a second team and so on.

"I think everybody looks at it as a way to contribute," said senior Mell Holliday, one of the three "starters" at running back. "Most of the people just want to play. So when they see we have a chance to be in there at any given time, it gives them more to look forward to."

Said senior defensive end Abraham Wright: "It definitely keeps you on your toes. You can't get lackadaisical. It just makes you just keep working. You can't miss too many days. You can't slack off."

But there is a tad bit of skepticism, too.

"At this point everybody is thinking real positive about it," Holliday said. "But when it gets into the season, I think it's going be a lot of different opinions about how things are going. You never know. It might for the better or it might change for the worse."

Footnotes

Posted on Thu, Aug. 24, 2006

Here's '1' way the BCS can be forced into playoff

By Wendell Barnhouse
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

"Wanna go see a movie? How about *Snakes on a Plane*?"

"Um, sure. What's it about?"

Claustrophobic and ophidiophobic (fear of snakes), I will not visit the local multi-plex to watch Samuel L. Jackson wrangle a bunch of riled-up reptiles.

"Wanna hear about "Progress On a College Football Playoff?"

"Is it in our lifetime?"

Maybe. There's hope. Not for a full-fledged multi-team, NFL-style playoff. But the Bowl Championship Series' jury-rigged double-hosting setup that begins this season is perfect for adjusting to a plus-one, a one-game title game with the teams selected after the four BCS bowls.

For movement in that direction, what we need is some impetus, a detonator, a flash point. We need controversy similar to 2003 or 2004.

We need some...snakes on a plane. The snakes in this case would be one-loss teams. The following season results would produce 15 slithering one-loss nightmares for the BCS architects:

Ohio State: Beats Texas, loses at Iowa, beats Michigan in the season finale. Finishes 11-1 overall, 7-1 in the Big Ten.

Notre Dame: Loses at home to Michigan, wins at Southern California. Finishes 11-1 overall.

Texas: Loses at home to Ohio State, beats Oklahoma, beats a 10-2 Nebraska team (with losses at USC and to Texas) in Big 12 Championship Game. Finishes 12-1.

Auburn: Loses to 11-1 Tennessee in SEC Championship Game, finishes 12-1.

West Virginia: Only loss is on the road to Louisville. Finishes 11-1.

USC: After outscoring 11 foes by nearly 20 points a game, loses season finale at home to Notre Dame after going for it on fourth-and-goal instead of attempting the potential game-tying field goal. Finishes 11-1 and is Pac-10 conference champs.

California: Wins season opener at Tennessee; only loss is at USC by three points. Finishes 11-1.

Oklahoma: Only loss is to Texas. Finishes 11-1.

Florida State: Wins season opener at Miami. Undefeated in regular season, loses rematch to Miami in ACC Championship Game when game-winning field goal bounces off the right upright. Finishes 12-1.

Miami: After season-opening loss to Florida State, wins the rest of its games. Beats Florida State in ACC title game. Finishes 12-1.

Louisville: Loses at home to Miami. Beats West Virginia, wins Big East title, finishes 11-1.

Michigan: Wins at Notre Dame. Loses season finale at Ohio State. Finishes 11-1 overall, 7-1 in Big Ten.

Iowa: Wins at home against Ohio State. Only loss of season is at Michigan. Finishes 11-1, 7-1 in Big Ten.

Tennessee: Only loss is in season opener against Cal. Beats undefeated Auburn in SEC Championship Game. Finishes 12-1.

That's 14 teams with one loss. Conference champions are Texas, USC, Miami, Tennessee, Louisville and Ohio State (the Buckeyes would win a tiebreaker over Michigan and Iowa).

That's six of the 10 BCS bowl teams. That's the easy part.

Now let's throw in TCU. Let's say the Frogs are either undefeated or 11-1 and qualify for a BCS bowl. That means TCU gets one of the four remaining "at-large" BCS spots. And let's say Notre Dame also earns an at-large bid.

There would be seven teams from the Big Six conferences, all with one loss, all clamoring and campaigning for the two available BCS at-large bids.

The musical-chairs scramble for at-large invitations would be calm compared to the day-after-Thanksgiving-at-the-mall scrum for the BCS championship game.

All those one-loss teams. Some of the losses came early, some came late. The voters in the Harris and the coaches' polls, which comprise two-thirds of the BCS rankings formula, would be hard-pressed to sort all of that out.

And, oh by the way: Of the 15 teams mentioned in this doomsday scenario, 13 are coached by voters in the coaches' poll. Think those 13 ballots wouldn't receive some scrutiny?

Those in the know say that the only way the BCS will undergo a significant change and the only way we'll move toward even a one-game playoff is to have a catastrophic event.

The 2003 and 2004 seasons came close. Maybe if this season ends with a half-dozen or more one-loss teams, there will be enough snakes on BCS Flight 2006.

Wendell Barnhouse, 817-390-7760 wbarnhouse@star-telegram.com



Ho'oulu komo ia ka ua

<http://www.latimes.com/sports/la-sp-tv22aug22,1,3270846.story?coll=la-headlines-sports>

Football Fight Turns Political

L.A. City Council's involvement reflects the seriousness of a dispute between Time Warner Cable and the NFL Network.

By Larry Stewart
Times Staff Writer

August 22, 2006

Who says you can't fight City Hall? You can if you're Time Warner Cable, a division of the largest media company in the world. And the mighty NFL as well.

The cable television giant and NFL Network are in the midst of a bitter dispute, and the Los Angeles City Council is on NFL Network's side, as evidenced by a resolution passed Friday.

But even with City Hall on its side, NFL Network faces a difficult battle that could keep it out of 2 million cable homes in the Greater L.A. market, and 600,000 homes within the L.A. city limits.

For three years, Time Warner Cable has refused to carry the league-owned network, which launched in November 2003.

And when Time Warner Cable recently replaced Adelphia and Comcast cable in the L.A. market, it took NFL Network away from those customers who were getting it.

The Federal Communications Commission ordered Time Warner Cable to put NFL Network back into those homes for 30 days, since it was taken off without warning.

The City Council resolution asked the FCC to extend the order to restore NFL Network indefinitely.

The FCC order drew a 67-page response from Time Warner Cable, and that, in turn, generated a 24-page legal brief filed by NFL Network on Monday.

The idea behind the FCC order was to give both parties more time to work out their differences.

Those differences, however, are significant.

Time Warner wants to put NFL Network on a sports tier that costs customers \$2-\$5 a month extra — and maybe more down the road.

NFL Network wants to be carried as a basic service, along with CNN, TBS, USA, ESPN and so on, giving it much greater exposure.

The more viewers, the more NFL Network can charge advertisers.

That part also works for Time Warner, since it gets several minutes of advertising time each hour.

"We do want to carry NFL Network," Time Warner Cable spokesman Keith Coccozza said Monday from the company's corporate headquarters in Stamford, Conn. "We have made them offer after offer."

But, he added, NFL Network is unwilling to be put on a sports pay tier.

Coccozza said that since NFL Network added an eight-game, late-season package, it had raised its rate to cable companies 250%. Sources say the rate went from about 25 cents per subscriber a month to about 70 cents.

NFL Network spokesman Seth Palansky, although declining to confirm the rate, said, "For a year, it's less than a movie ticket."

But that's per subscriber, and Time Warner has 14 million subscribers nationally. That amounts to more than a \$100-million annual tab for the cable company.

"That's \$100 million for eight out-of-market games," Coccozza said, specifying "out-of-market" because in cities that have NFL teams, those games must be televised on an over-the-air channel.

Coccozza, pointing out that NBA TV is among the channels on Time Warner Cable's sports tier, said, "And NBA TV carries 88 live games, as compared to eight on NFL Network."

NFL Network also offers an extensive schedule of exhibition games, midweek replays and game highlights during the season, the network's video-on-demand content and round-the-clock NFL programming.

One NFL Network executive suggested the real reason Time Warner Cable doesn't want to put the network on basic cable is because it would compete with the many Time Warner-owned networks, which include TBS, TNT, Turner Movie Classics, and CNN.

"That's simply not true," Coccozza said. "That's a separate division, and those networks have to negotiate just like everyone else."

Time Warner Cable, the country's only major cable or satellite company without a deal with NFL Network, claims it is looking out for its customers in not having to raise rates for a network not everyone wants. NFL Network claims it is looking out for pro football fans who shouldn't have to pay extra.

Can a deal still be worked out?

"I hope cooler minds will prevail," Coccozza said.

Said New York sports television consultant Neal Pilson, "These things have a way of working out."

Retiring NFL Commissioner Paul Tagliabue put NFL Network in the news Monday. Meeting with a half-dozen or so writers in his New York office, he was asked about Bryant Gumbel's commentary on HBO's "Real Sports" last week.

In an "open letter" to new Commissioner Roger Goodell, Gumbel said, "Before he cleans out his office, have Paul Tagliabue show you where he keeps Gene Upshaw's leash. By making the docile head of the players' union his personal pet, your predecessor kept the peace without giving players the kind of guarantees other pros take for granted. Try to make sure no one competent ever replaces Upshaw on your watch."

Tagliabue told the writers, "What Gumbel said about Gene Upshaw and our owners is about as irresponsible as anything I've heard in a long time."

According to the Associated Press, Tagliabue also said Gumbel's role as the play-by-play announcer for NFL Network's eight-game package would be a point of discussion between Goodell and NFL Network President Steve Bornstein after Goodell takes office Sept. 1.

Copyright 2006 Los Angeles Times | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)
[Home Delivery](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Archives](#) | [Contact](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Help](#)

PARTNERS:  

PalmBeachPost.com

 PRINT THIS

Message boards now major players

By [Edgar Thompson](#)

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Sunday, August 06, 2006

Hi, I'm Larry - my friends know me as 1ChopCity1 - and I'm an Internet message board addict.

Hi, 1ChopCity1!



More college sports

[Colleges home](#)
[Florida Gators](#)
[Miami Hurricanes](#)
[Florida Atlantic Owls](#) |
[Blog](#)
[Florida State Seminoles](#)
[More area colleges](#)
 Talk Back: [Message board](#)
[Weekly e-mail updates](#)

More in Sports

- [Latest news, photos](#)
- [XML RSS feeds](#)
- [Miami Dolphins, NFL](#)
- [Florida Marlins, MLB](#)
- [Miami Heat, NBA](#)
- [Florida Panthers, NHL](#)
- [Colleges](#) | [Gators](#) |
- [Hurricanes](#)
- [Owls](#) | [Seminoles](#) |
- [Local schools](#)
- [Golf](#) | [Courses](#)
- [High schools](#) | [Youth](#)
- [Recreation, outdoors](#)
- [Tennis](#) | [More sports](#)
- [Weekly e-mail updates](#)

It's been 30 minutes since I analyzed Florida State football and I already feel like I'm out of the loop. I spent six hours the other day debating Jeff Bowden's red-zone package. I know more about the kids in the 2008 recruiting class than I do about my own kids. I'm just glad there are people who understand my struggle.

Hey, how about blowing off this meeting and breaking down Bobby's right tackle rotation?

Sound familiar? Are you a college football message board maniac? Or is someone close to you afflicted by the insatiable need to tap away at a keyboard and get the latest on every pulling guard and pulled hamstring?

Perhaps a 12-step program is next for people like 1ChopCity1 - also known as Larry Bishop of Roanoke, Va., a habitual visitor to [Warchant.com](#), the Seminoles' primary fan site.

"It's like a drug," Bishop said. "I'd be on it so long when I first started. I've gotten better with it, but I still love it."

The boards are burning year-round, but they'll start heating up again this week as pre-season camps open throughout the country.

Bishop, a former high school coach now in the art business, figures he has posted more than 13,000 times in the past five years. Nowadays, he's under strict house rules to log on only after his wife goes to bed.

"If I wanted to keep my family - I'm not saying it was that deep - but I didn't want to have any friction in the household," Bishop, 36, said.

Ross Weinstein, a Long Island resident who goes by NYGator on Florida's two main fan sites, became such a serial poster that he forced himself to go cold turkey for three months last year.

"It's a real disease. I'm not joking," Weinstein, 36, said. "It's like anything. If there's an outlet, people are going to find a way to overuse it."

Like Weinstein did during a vacation to the Dominican Republic, where he made the time to duck into Internet cafes to get his Gators fix.

What's everybody yakking about in cyberspace?

Everything from who should be starting and sitting to who should be fired and hired to who's in trouble and why. And the postings pile up from all over the globe.

"It's amazing how diverse the demographic is," said Gene Williams, who founded Warchant.com in 1995. "People all over the country, out of the country - England, Australia. You don't realize you have a 12-year-old in Tampa arguing with an 80-year-old who lives in Seattle."

The message boards also are home to close friends and family members of players or potential recruits. Ernie Sims Sr., whose son, Ernie Jr., played linebacker for FSU the past three seasons, is a Warchant.com member. Randy Miller, whose son Drew is an offensive lineman at Florida, is a regular on GatorBait.net. Former Gators offensive lineman Shannon Snell spent his final three seasons online defending Ron Zook's teams under the handle "Showstoppa75."

Controversy isn't tough to kick up on the boards, but truth often is.

"It's just a rumor mill," said Robert Merkel, a longtime Gators booster from Palm Beach County who used to frequent Gatorcountry.com. "There's very little fact to any of it. It's like reading *Alice in Wonderland*."

Yet enough solid information has been offered that the boards can't be ignored.

Entries from Alabama's fan site, TiderInsider.com, were subpoenaed during a lawsuit filed against the NCAA by former Tide assistant coach Ronnie Cottrell, who was fired for recruiting violations involving Memphis linebacker Albert Means. In a related case, lawyers asked Tennessee booster Roy Adams to discuss entries he posted on the Volunteers' fan site Gridscape.com.

But the posting that boosted boards from nerd to national status came from an Auburn site when a fan wrote about Alabama coach Mike Price's drunken escapades at a Pensacola strip club. The April 2003 incident led to Price's dismissal less than a month later.

Despite that landmark moment for Auburn fans, Rodney Orr, who owns TiderInsider.com, said the Tigers still trail the Tide when it comes to breaking news about the rivalry. Orr claims Terry Bowden's 1998 decision to resign as Auburn's coach and the subsequent hiring of Tommy Tuberville broke on his site.

FSU fans were the first to read about some recent trouble at Florida when allegations appeared on a Warchant.com message board that Gators cornerback Avery Atkins hit the mother of his infant son. Atkins left the team and faces a charge of misdemeanor battery.

Jamie Newberg of Scout.com, a recruiting service affiliated with more than 200 fan sites, thinks coaches and administrators have no choice but to check postings.

"They're going to blast what we do. They're going to blast the message boards, the posters," Newberg said. "But

when they're in their offices, they're reading that stuff and they're seeing what's out there."

Coaches who read the boards have differing opinions.

"Sometimes they make sense, other times they're just talking," Central Florida's George O'Leary said.

Asked for his opinion about the boards, Tennessee coach Phil Fulmer wasn't as tolerant: "You really want me to say? I don't know if I can say all that and print it."

Like them or not, schools monitor the boards. Steve McClain, who heads the sports information department at Florida, has staff members check message-board content the same way they always have clipped newspaper articles about the program.

"When you think there's no more room for growth, it continues to grow," McClain said of the message-board chatter. "It makes you wonder how much room there is for growth. But I wouldn't be surprised if in five years I'm making the same statement."

Bare-bones Internet chat rooms sprung up in the mid-1990s, but were accessible primarily to the computer-savvy. A decade later, everyone can easily join the discussion.

"It's not like it used to be, when everybody got up and read the sports page," Florida Athletic Director Jeremy Foley said. "Now everybody gets on and logs on to the Internet and either reads it or posts on it."

"It changes how people get to interact with the world of sports."

This new culture has a good and bad side for board heads like Bishop and Weinstein. These days, being a fan can consume a lot of valuable time.

Dakine Beckman, a Seminoles fan and stay-at-home father from Plantation, said he averages about eight posts a day during the season, but as many as 20 on game days.

That's nothing.

"There are guys who have posted triple digits in one day after a loss," Beckman said.

Bradley Pike, a third-generation Florida graduate from Tampa, can relate. A 35-year-old father of two small children, he has made more than 20,000 posts on the message board at GatorBait.net since 2001.

"That's 4,000 posts a year, 10 a day," said Pike, a financial analyst who goes by the handle GordonGecko. "When you break it down, it's not that much."

Fellow message board addicts would agree: It's never enough.

Find this article at:

http://www.palmbeachpost.com/sports/content/sports/epaper/2006/08/06/a1b_boards_0806.html

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Close Window

Send To Printer

The Salt Lake Tribune

<http://www.sltrib.com>

Article Last Updated: 8/25/2006 12:48 AM

Monson: It's coach's way or the highway

By Gordon Monson
Tribune Columnist
Salt Lake Tribune

More than any other group, outside of junior high vice principals, the Marine Corps, and the nuns at every parochial grammar school I ever heard of, coaches are an authoritarian bunch. Especially football coaches.

It is their calling, they believe, to be masters and commanders.

It is their place to rule over their realms, to bark out their orders, to have things done just so, for no other reason than because they say so.

Ask Kevan Barlow about Mike Nolan.

On second thought, don't.

But there are hundreds of guys just like Nolan.

They don't just want things done a certain way, the right way, if there is such a thing, they want them done *their* way.

If those things aren't all properly tucked in and put to bed by players, there are consequences for those players to face.

Coaches call the collision between that unwanted behavior and those consequences "teachable moments."

It's a euphemism for "hell to pay, until you see it my way," all, of course, for the betterment of the kids.

Brigham Young coach Bronco Mendenhall had such a moment this week when he met with and subsequently suspended defensive back Cole Miyahira after the player exchanged words with secondary coach Jaime Hill during a practice.

Here's what happened: Hill got in Miyahira's face, then sent him in to a drill, and the player refused. He was immediately thrown off the field and, later, put on the shelf for nearly two weeks for his indiscretion.

Miyahira will not be permitted to play in the Cougars' opener against Arizona on Sept. 2, nor is he allowed to even practice with the team until the week after.

The exact reasoning behind that particular bit of discipline was not explained or delineated by Mendenhall or Hill, the action was merely issued in a statement.

A day later, Mendenhall emerged to say the following: "I'm excited for [Miyahira] to come back and am anxious to move forward, and I look forward to his return. I'm pleased he has handled the situation to this point. It could turn out to be a real positive in his life.

"What I've learned as the head coach is that there are teachable moments. Teachable moments aren't always in alignment with the immediate game coming up. If this teachable moment can be one that helps a young man move forward in his life, then I'm willing to do that."

In those words, Mendenhall sounded more magnanimous than authoritarian, almost simultaneously self-important and self-sacrificing. And, yet, the punishment remains harsh and the so-called teachable moment is blown out of proportion.

He successfully sends a message to his players for them not to mess with his coaching staff, and that could later help

him win games.

But is a player's life really going to be favorably and significantly altered on account of him being sentenced to two weeks of no practice?

If that's a teachable moment, what exactly is the broader applicable lesson in all of it to be absorbed by a 22-year-old, beyond football? That he should just take getting yelled at by an authority figure, whether he agrees with what's communicated or not?

That works in football because, well, it's a truly unique setting and the player has no other practical options. Coaches expect those commands to be fulfilled, and, when disobedience comes back at them, they presume to hold the moral high ground, presuming further that they can administer life lessons.

Sometimes they really can, sometimes they shouldn't try. Sometimes they're up in the night, wrapped in a dictatorial ego so vast that their shroud around reality fools them.

Which category Bronco falls into in this case, I'm not sure.

But the discussion is a compelling one, one worth having.

Coaches are seen by many, including themselves, as generals, and, from a strategy stand point, they are in complete control. They make the decisions that affect what happens on the field. It's their baby.

However, the amount of authoritarianism needed to win games varies. There have been winning coaches who have treated players like dogs. In the cloaked confines of practice, those coaches call players obscene names, they tear away more than reticence to learn, they sheer off personal dignity, they go out and win games, and they are hugely remunerated and heralded.

Discipline is necessary in sports, an obvious key to winning and, at least when it is applied appropriately, a virtue. How that virtue is administered by coaches, particularly by those who stay in one place for a long time, is what matters most.

Urban Meyer was given credit for swooping in at Utah, taking Ron McBride's players, putting certain demands on them, and enjoying terrific success over a two-season span. I always thought it would be interesting to see how Meyer would do in one place for, say, 15 years. It would be worth watching to see if his players, repeatedly subjected to his heavy rule, season after season after season, would put up with him for that long.

Some coaches who are power freaks make the attempt, and fail when players quit on them. Others apply the right amount of authoritative pressure, without the over-the-top authoritarian nonsense, and end up drawing out genuine feelings of admiration and loyalty from their players - in public and private.

Same thing goes for high school and junior league coaches, some of whom have too much of their own identity wrapped up in the endeavor, screaming into their kids' facemasks as though they are Bill Cowher and the Super Bowl is at stake.

It's amusing that the word of the day in coaching, as far as what is required from players, is normally associated with finances and financial return: *investment*. It's a term that leads back to the question: Who's investing what so the coaches can get the biggest payout?

The authentic winners, at all levels, are the coaches who understand the relationship between authority and its proper use with those it is used upon, first and foremost, not for the benefit of soothing one's view of oneself, but in effectively teaching football.

If some of that honestly spills over into real life, well then, that's OK, too.

gmonson@sltrib.com



SEC is hard to figure

Predicting champion is difficult for media

August 23, 2006

By Scott Ferrell

sferrell@gannett.com

When it comes to predicting Southeastern Conference football the only thing that is predictable is its unpredictability.

Only twice in the last 14 years has the media covering the SEC successfully picked the league champion. In 10 of those 14 years the predicted champion didn't even make it to the SEC Championship Game.

So if you're Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville, well, the media may have just placed the kiss of death on your team. The Tigers were picked to not only win the West but the SEC championship as well.

"Yeah, that's not a good percentage," Tuberville said. "Expectations and predictions are good."

Just why is it so hard to pick a champion in the SEC?

You start with competitiveness. The top three teams in both the SEC East and West finished within a game of first place last season. Georgia won the East at 6-2 with South Carolina and Florida at 5-3. LSU and Auburn shared the West at 7-1 with Alabama a game back at 6-2.

"The competition in this league is keen from top to bottom," LSU coach Les Miles said.

Said Tennessee coach Phil Fulmer: "You take this conference from top to bottom, it could go to most leagues around the country and win it, the middle school could. It's tough."

That competition alone adds to the degree of difficulty in successfully predicting an SEC champion.

Just last year, Fulmer's Vols were picked to win the SEC championship. They ended up 5-6 and had three losses by a touchdown or less.

"In this league, only a few plays are going to make a big difference in the ballgame, a big difference in the season," Fulmer said "That's what happened to us last year. In the years past, we had made most of those plays. Last year we didn't make those plays and/or we gave up plays that allowed somebody else to win the game."

Then, there is the approach of the media when picking a conference champion. The media often looks at returning starters and skill players.

"Y'all tend to look at quarterbacks and running backs," Tuberville said. "I tend to look more at linemen. If you're going to be consistent and win games, you have to be consistent on the offensive and defensive line to let those guys that get all the publicity make sure they can do their job."

Tuberville may have a point.

At this year's SEC Media Days, the media picked Florida to win the East. The Gators return senior quarterback Chris Leak. Auburn, picked to win the West, returns its starting quarterback in Brandon Cox.

Both got the nod from the media.

Returning starters also play a big part in determining preseason favorites. Tennessee had 16 returning starters last year to earn its spot as a preseason favorite.

"You pick from the past couple of years, what the team has done," Tuberville said. "You look at coaching staffing, how they handle seasons."



(Illustration by Jamey Bramlett/The Times)

SEC media predictions

East

1. Florida
2. Georgia
3. Tennessee
4. South Carolina
5. Kentucky
6. Vanderbilt

West

1. Auburn
2. LSU
3. Alabama
4. Arkansas
5. Ole Miss
6. Miss. State

Championship Game: Auburn over Florida

Tuberville is hoping his team can buck the trend of favorites falling in the SEC.

"We've been pretty successful. We've won, what, five of the last six western division championships, either won or tied, we're the winningest team in conference games in the last five years," Tuberville said. "A lot of guys coming back."

In the end, though, the predictions are not worth much.

"Somebody has to be ranked up there high," Tuberville said. "We'll take it this year."

They'll take it and see what they can make of it. Because while Auburn is picked to win the SEC, 11 other teams will see if they can't make history repeat.

"We don't really care what the predictions are," Miles said, "whether they're an advantage to us or a disadvantaged. Doesn't make any difference. We'll look to earn our way. I think our football team will do that."

Article Comments

This article does not have any comments associated with it

[Add Comment](#)

©The Times
August 23, 2006

Partners: Jobs: [CareerBuilder.com](#) • Cars: [Cars.com](#) • Apartments: [Apartments.com](#) • Shopping: [ShopLocal.com](#)
[The Daily Advertiser](#) | [The Town Talk](#) | [The News Star](#) | [The Daily World](#)

Copyright 2005© The Times. [Principles of Ethical Conduct for The Times](#)

Use of this site signifies your agreement to the [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#) (Updated 2005).

[Send us your questions and comments.](#)



This is a printer friendly version of an article from www.southbendtribune.com
To print this article open the file menu and choose Print.

For a printer friendly version that includes the article's **picture** click here:  [Print Story with picture](#)

[Back](#)

Article published Aug 21, 2006

College football online Some schools bypassing TV sports contracts in favor of the Web

PAT EATON-ROBB
Associated Press Writer

On the Net:
Big Sky Conference:
www.bigskytv.org

ESPN 360:
<http://broadband.espn.go.com/ivp/splash>

Western Athletic Conference TV:
www.wac.tv

NEW HAVEN, Conn. -- When Yale football coach Jack Siedlecki goes on a national recruiting trip, he hears the same questions over and over from parents.

"They always want to know, 'Are you on TV? Can I get the games?'æ" Siedlecki said.

With the exception of the game against rival Harvard, the answer is usually, "No."

The big TV networks simply aren't interested in the little Ivy League.

But the Ivy League and other small conferences may have found a way around that -- the Internet. Many schools, and now some conferences, have begun showing football and other sports on their Web sites.

"We can produce our own television and reach, literally, the entire world on the Web, without having to go through the issues of, is there cable availability? Is there satellite availability? Is there advertising support?" said Jeff Orleans, commissioner of the Ivy League.

He expects most of the league's sporting events will be online within seven years.

Big Sky Conference's Northern Arizona offered Webcasts of home football games last year. Using the four cameras already set up to provide replays on the stadium scoreboard, the school added audio from its radio broadcasts along with continually updated statistics.

"Our fans love it," said Steven Shaff, a spokesman for the school's athletic department. "We had people in Alaska, parents of students in Canada, watching our games last year." This season, the entire nine-school Big Sky Conference will Webcast all football, basketball and volleyball games, using technology from Salt Lake City-based SportsCast Network LLC.

Fans will be able to choose which team's audio feed to which to listen. Games will be archived and can be downloaded to portable devices like Apple Computer Inc.'s iPod.

"This is the future," Big Sky Commissioner Doug Fullerton said. "The fan will decide what they are going to watch and when they are going to watch it."

Contrast that with television, where only a handful of games each week are chosen for national broadcast, primarily featuring Top 25 Division I-A teams.

The financial setup is different from traditional television contracts, in which networks pay a flat fee

for broadcast rights. In the Big Sky contract, the schools keep the rights and provide feeds to SportsCast, which processes the video for viewing online. The schools sell advertising and charge a subscription fee -- it's \$60 to follow one Big Sky school all year. The schools share profits with SportsCast.

Until recently putting sports online had not been practical. Not enough people had high-speed Internet connections.

That's changed. According to the Pew Internet and American Life Project, 62 percent of U.S. Internet users now have broadband at home, compared with 21 percent just four years ago.

Online video technology also has improved, allowing for bigger, sharper pictures that take up much less bandwidth, said Michael Begley, the CEO and founder of SportsCast.

SportsCast isn't alone. The NCAA last year contracted with Charleston, S.C.-based Penn Atlantic LLC to help show some of its Division II and III basketball championships. The Division III semifinal games last March had 49,000 people log on, said Jack Pennington, the chief executive of Penn Atlantic.

His company will be Webcasting 39 Western Athletic Conference football games this year.

Fans of larger schools will see more games as well.

This fall, ESPN's new online channel, ESPN 360, will show 30 football games, 10 of them, involving teams such as Virginia Tech, Purdue, Miami and Minnesota, exclusively on that Web site. The site, available to about 6 million homes, will also have such features as chat rooms, statistics and online polls. "It truly is interactive television," said Tanya Van Court, ESPN's vice president and general manager of Broadband and Interactive Television. "It really gives you all the best things about the Internet, with all the best things about television."

For several years, ESPN also has offered games that are televised only regionally to cable and Internet viewers on a pay-per-view basis.

Van Court says the network is not concerned about losing revenue to schools that decide to produce their own broadcasts.

"Even with the number of networks that we have on television, we still don't have the capacity to put on every sporting event that we think our fans want to see," she said. She said schools' willingness to show their own games online indicates demand not only for the games but also for the new platform.

The schools also don't see the Web replacing television. Major conferences make millions of dollars from their football and basketball television contracts, but many also plan to Webcast other sports, such as volleyball or swimming.

The Big Ten Conference announced plans this summer to create its own cable channel for minor sports. The Big Ten Channel also will be available through the Internet, iPods, cell phones and other technologies, the league said.

"There's still nothing like sitting in your chair and watching high-definition football on TV," said Jon Kasper, a spokesman for the Big Sky Conference. "But for our fans that don't have that option, this is the wave of the future. It's what everyone will be doing in two, three or five years."



Powered by Clicka

Suit tests ban on leave for father-athletes

Advertisement

Updated 8/24/2006 11:17 PM ET

By Kelly Whiteside, USA TODAY

Should male college athletes be allowed time off for paternity leave? That's the crux of the argument being made by Eric Butler, the Kansas defensive tackle, who was denied an extra year of eligibility by the NCAA after missing the 2001 season following the birth of his daughter, Angelina.

Butler, whose fight began in the spring, has also filed a federal civil rights lawsuit alleging the NCAA violated Title IX since its waiver which allows time off for pregnancy applies only to females.

Butler's lawyer, Tarun Mehta, said Thursday that there is a chance Butler can be back on the field in two weeks if the United States Court of Appeals for the Tenth Circuit reverses an earlier U.S. District Court ruling that denied Butler's request for a temporary restraining order. The decision could come quickly because emergency relief was requested. Their season opens Sept. 2 against Northwestern State.

The NCAA's pregnancy exception states a school "may approve a one-year extension of the five-year period of eligibility for a female student for reasons of pregnancy."

Butler's case is the first time the NCAA's pregnancy exception has been challenged by a male student athlete, the NCAA said.

"The pregnancy exception is explicitly written for female students whose physical condition due to pregnancy prevents their participation in intercollegiate athletics, and therefore is not applicable in this case," NCAA spokesman Erik Christianson said last week when USA TODAY asked about the Butler case.

"At first blush, it causes you to raise questions, what's going on here?" said Steve Morgan, a Kansas-based lawyer who has no connection to the Butler case but worked for the NCAA for more than 20 years, most recently as chief of staff for Division I. However, Morgan said based on the way the pregnancy exception evolved — it was created in the early 1980s shortly after women joined the NCAA — its limited intent is clear.

"Which is certainly not to say that the NCAA committee structure or membership cannot carve out a similar exception for men, but at this point it would require more than an interpretation of existing rules," Morgan said.

In the workplace, the federal Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 gives men who work at companies with 50 employees or more the right to take up to 12 weeks of paternity leave.

"I think it should be the same way as it would be in the workplace," Butler said in a telephone interview Thursday. "It's kinda like a job, it's almost like a 40-hour week being a college athlete. They should give college athletes the same opportunities that people in the normal workplace have. I think that's the way society is moving."

Experts for the National Women's Law Center say if eligibility is extended for child rearing, it should extend equally to men and women. If eligibility is extended because of the physical effects of pregnancy, then that obviously only applies only to female athletes.

"If athletic programs allow women to be redshirted for a period of child raising, then that is treatment that should also be extended to

male team members who take leave from school for the same reason," said Jocelyn Samuels, National Women's Law Center senior vice president. "As a matter of social policy, that is a direction that the NCAA may want to consider. As a matter of social policy, to ensure that people can fulfill both their academic and their parental responsibilities would be a good thing."

Neena Chaudhry, senior counsel of the National Women's Law Center added, "But I see why you would want a separate rule for an athlete who is actually pregnant and going through the physical demands of a pregnancy vs. a more general provision. Pregnancy does provide its own physical limitations. Women would automatically need more time."

Athletes have five years to complete four seasons of eligibility. Coming out of high school in Leawood, Kansas, Butler and his wife, Chantel, originally planned to attend Northwest Missouri State but once Chantel learned she was pregnant and once the Butlers found out the school did not allow children in their dorms, they chose colleges close to home and shared caretaking responsibilities for their daughter.

Butler's five-year eligibility clock began in 2001 when he enrolled at the local campus of DeVry University, which didn't have collegiate sports. His five years expired after last season even though Butler played just two seasons of college football, in 2005 for the Jayhawks and in 2003 for Avila University, an NAIA school.

"Everybody is surprised that I would have to go through all of this to get an extra year of eligibility," Butler said of the reaction from his teammates. "Everyone thinks it's stupid that the eligibility clock will start when you're at a school that doesn't have athletics at all. They're also angry that I only played for two seasons and still have to get an extension of the eligibility clock. All of my teammates want me on the team. They're pretty angry at the entire situation."

Butler, a walkon who played in 12 games, is schedule to graduate in May from Kansas with an economics degree.

A walk-on last year who played in 12 games, Butler was promised a scholarship this year but will now have to wait for the court ruling and continue to pay his own tuition, will work out on his own and hope that he's wearing a Jayhawks uniform sometime soon.

Contributing: Erik Brady

Find this article at:

http://www.usatoday.com/sports/college/2006-08-24-titleix-lawsuit_x.htm

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Related Advertising Links

[What's this?](#)

 **Online Stock Trading**
Join the new TD AMERITRADE and get up to 50 free trades + \$100.
www.tdameritrade.com

Scottrade Online Broker
\$7 online trades. Fast, accurate executions. 265+ offices nationwide.
www.scottrade.com

American Express® Small Business Cards
Business Gold Rewards card. 1st year fee free - save \$125.
www.americanexpress.com

Place your ad here



Powered by Clicka

With so many changes, college football season is up in the air

Updated 8/25/2006 12:33 AM ET

By Kelly Whiteside, USA TODAY

With so much up in the air about college football, it's hard to forecast the season ahead. At this point, the national picture seems as clear as a cumulous cloud.

For the first time since 2001, there's little consensus about the preseason No. 1. Though Ohio State claimed that spot in the USA TODAY Coaches' Poll, five other teams also received first-place votes. And after Southern California was such a strong favorite in the last two preseasons, Ohio State earned less than half the first-place votes this time.

In the Associated Press media poll, the Buckeyes took just over half the first-place votes, with five other teams receiving at least three first-place votes.

"Last year nobody could beat USC, but somebody did," said Miami coach Larry Coker. "This year it does seem pretty wide open."

Also up in the air is the ball itself — passing attempts and passing yards per game reached record highs last season, a wide-open approach expected to continue.

Then there are the changes in the sport — the new fifth Bowl Championship Series game (will the Big Six conferences take all the spots?), the permanent 12-game schedule (which many coaches predict will result in more injuries), new instant replay rules (based on cameras above and officials high in the press box) and new clock rules (that have also elicited a sky-is-falling reaction from coaches).

But as Newton discovered way before the invention of the forward pass, what goes up must come down. What seems so up in the air now most likely will be as clear as a desert sky come Jan. 8 when two teams meet for the national championship in Arizona.

Who's No. 1?

It's hard to predict this year's favorite because each of the top five teams has major concerns. No. 1 Ohio State has nine new defensive starters, including the entire back seven. No. 2 Texas must replace a legend with two freshman quarterbacks. No. 3 Notre Dame has a Heisman contender at quarterback but a defense that struggled. Southern California, tied with the Irish at No. 3, must replace two Heisman winners. No. 5 Oklahoma — the coaches' votes were cast before the Sooners starting quarterback was kicked off the team — will rely on a passer who played wide receiver last year.

The 63 Division I-A head coaches on the voting panel also had varying opinions on who's No. 1. The top six teams in the coaches' poll received first-place votes, the most teams since 2001, when nine were picked first on ballots. Last season, all but two coaches selected Southern California as the preseason favorite.



The top five in the coaches' poll are separated by only 167 points, the tightest margin since 1994. Last season only Southern California and Texas received first-place votes in the preseason poll and 344 points separated the top five.

Newton's law of gravity isn't quite the same as Buster Davis' equation for success (though both are simpler than the BCS formula), but last month the loquacious linebacker from Florida State held court with a group of reporters and described his "factorization process."

"Do we have any math majors here?" Davis asked. "Hey, I'm not one, either, but I know that $y = mx + b$. That's the equation Florida State has."

Davis' deduction didn't make much sense, at least to a group of English majors, but he developed it after taking a math class this summer ("I got an A. Put that down. I hate math, but I like money."). Basically, his theory is that if players sign with Florida State, they win championships and then make a lot of cash in the NFL.

The Seminoles are ranked No. 10, but in a season that seems anyone's for the taking, why not them? They'll probably have to win their opening game at No. 11 Miami (Fla.) on Sept. 4 to stay in contention. Five days later, in another elimination game of sorts, No. 1 Ohio State is at No. 2 Texas.

"You know what? It is kind of unique," Miami's Coker said of all the contenders. The last time there was so little consensus, in that free-for-all start to 2001, the Hurricanes began the year No. 2 and finished as national champions.

Passing fancy

The spread offense has become the *American Idol* of football, spawning dozens of copycats. The offense is run by teams in all six major conferences and has spread throughout the high school ranks as well.

Throughout this decade, passing has risen and rushing has fallen. Last year marked the highest number of passing attempts per game (32) and passing yards per game (224.6) since the NCAA began keeping stats in 1937. Rushing attempts (38.6) were at their lowest point since 1937, and rushing yards (155.2) were the third fewest since 1965 and fewest since 2000.

"The passing game over the last 10 years has dramatically changed because you've gone to more spread formations now," Washington coach Tyrone Willingham said. "I talk to the players about the old days, when we'd have three backs and two tight ends. But the game is not played that way anymore. Today it's from sideline to sideline. And because of that, the passing game gives you the ability to gain huge chunks of yards on a simple pass that only comprises 5 yards, but a guy turns it up because there's no help there and it's a 30-, 40-yard gain. The passing trend is here to stay."

Defense may win titles, but wide-open offenses and scoring 41 points do, too. "I think in looking at the two teams that have won the national championship in the last two years, you have to score points to win," Nebraska coach Bill Callahan said. "What Texas did, putting 41 points on SC, and what SC did two years ago against Oklahoma (55 points), it's pretty prolific."

Vince Young, a quarterback who runs, and Reggie Bush, a tailback who catches, were the singular exceptions. In years to come will they be the prototypes? "Quarterback runs off that (spread formation) is really the uniqueness that has hit college football in the last five, six years," Callahan said. "The great athletes can do more. And the better your athlete at quarterback in that style of offense, the more problems you can cause."

Another reason that passing will continue to rise is the most simple one: It's exciting. Fans love the long ball.

"Even if it's incomplete, they love it," Arkansas coach Houston Nutt said.

Five BCS games

After years of campaigning for more inclusion to the big-money BCS bowls, teams from leagues that do not have an automatic qualifier now have a better chance to secure a spot with the fifth bowl. Will they cash in?

A team from Conference USA, the Mountain West, the Mid-American, the Western Athletic or the Sun Belt that finishes in the top 12 is automatically in. Previously, it had to finish in the top six.

If one of those teams is in the top 16 of the final standings but finishes ahead of a champion from a conference with an automatic bid, it automatically gets a spot. If that last scenario had been in place last year, Texas Christian would have been in a BCS game.

This is the first season for the BCS' "double hosting" model in which one of its four bowls will annually host two games — its usual bowl and the national championship game a week later. This season, the Arizona Cardinals' new \$455 million retractable-roof stadium in Glendale, Ariz., will hold the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl on Jan. 1 and the national title game Jan. 8.

12 regular-season games

To get to that point, some teams, such as No. 6 Auburn, have to play in 12 consecutive weeks during the regular season.

"The 12-game stinks, basically, in the way we're doing it," Auburn coach Tommy Tuberville said.

"I'm not against playing 12 games. I understand we need it to make more money. But give us another open date. Extend the season. I promise you, people across the country wouldn't complain about it. It's not going to affect the academics. ... One more game doesn't sound like a lot, but it's quite a bit. We might play 13 in a few years, who knows?"

With the newly permanent 12-game schedule, most coaches are worried about injuries and depth and say they are likely to play more freshmen as a result.

Then there's South Carolina coach Steve Spurrier.

"I think it's easy to play 12 games," Spurrier said. "I watch girls basketball. They'll play four straight nights at the SEC tournament. I don't hear them bitchin' and complainin' that they're playing too much."

Speed drill

Will the new coaches' challenge slow down the game? As part of instant replay, coaches will be able to challenge an official's call once a game, provided they have a timeout remaining. If the call is reversed, the team challenging will keep the timeout. If the coach loses the challenge, his team loses the timeout. Replay officials can also stop the game after any play to review a call.

Will the new clock rules speed up the game? The first new clock rule states the clock will start when the ball is kicked, not when the receiving team touches it. The other rule states the game clock begins on a change of possession when the ball is ready for play.

The new changes are expected to shorten games about 10 to 24 plays a game, which could affect statistics, records and end-of-game situations. Which is why the changes have rankled plenty of coaches before the first second of the season's clock has ticked.

"I don't particularly like it because I think it's all geared to speed up the game for television. Television, I think, is dominating everything we do," Penn State coach Joe Paterno said.

Paterno's suggestion? Cut some commercials. Even airtime is up in the air.

Contributing: Jack Carey, Mike Dodd, David Leon Moore, Steve Wieberg

Find this article at:

http://www.usatoday.com/sports/college/football/bonus/2006-08-24-bonus-cover_x.htm?csp=N009

☐ Check the box to include the list of links referenced in the article.

Related Advertising Links



Rocket Stock Picks: Free

Rocket your bank account with our free picks. Huge Upside!

www.rocketstockpicks.com

Screaming Stocks Move Huge

Free report and email newsletter alerts. Dont miss big returns.

www.screamingstocks.com

It's Time for Wondertime

Revel in the joys of your child's learning! New parenting website.

wondertime.go.com

What's this?

Story originally printed in the Winona Daily News or online at www.winonadailynews.com

Published - Thursday, August 24, 2006

Sportsmanship a matter of heart, not winning

By Sarah Merchlewitz | Community columnist

Here we are, about to begin another year another year of school and another year of school sports. As was published in another Daily News article, athletes and spectators alike have a lot of expectations for their teams, but should winning really be tops on our list of priorities? Is winning the only factor there is in determining a successful season?

I have gone from playing MSHSL tennis for Winona Senior High to playing for my college, whose team doesn't even belong to the NCAA. With these two teams, I have stood on two different ends of the competitiveness spectrum. In high school, I joined the team that was just coming down from a streak of dominating the Big 9 conference. That meant, for my teammates and I, four years of conditioning and frequent pep talks — always ending with the final Winona-Rochester Mayo match to go to state. We always lost and had to build back our confidence as well as our team the following year.

I remember being practically indoctrinated by the older players on my team to devalue the girls on the Mayo team and not to fully appreciate what were probably some of the best, high-caliber matches I'll ever have. As I look back, it was not a healthy environment for game of tennis and for the mission of high school sports.

In contrast, my college team barely has a reputation, and we have to nearly beg people to pick up a racquet and join just to fill out the roster. Personally, I joined the team because I missed the camaraderie of organized sports, and it turned out to be one of the best ways to meet people in a new setting. Ours is a team based on staying physically fit and having fun — keeping with the Sarah Lawrence philosophy that the student must come first in every student athlete. Somehow, we won last year's conference tournament, which we played at the beautiful USTA National Tennis Center, site of the U.S. Open.

Clearly, this difference has to do with the proverbial "luck of the draw," but I'm sure it has just as much to do with attitude — the attitudes and dedication of our players, schools, administrators and communities. The very nature of team sports deems that not everyone can be a superstar, and that means players must cultivate relationships with one another. And, by golly, maybe people play because they just want to have fun.

This idea echoes the philosophy of a place where they know there are other ways to keep score in life than by an illuminated scoreboard or newspaper stats. Tennis & Life Camps in St. Peter, Minn., emphasizes that sportsmanship and a positive attitude determine the success of a match and, ultimately, a player. The camp's director, Steve Wilkinson, with the invaluable help of his wife, Barb, has been nurturing campers in this spirit for the past 30 years.

However, his approach does not divorce quality tennis from the concept of "the inner game." In fact, his camp was ranked one of the top 25 in the region by Tennis magazine, and the team he coaches at Gustavus Adolphus College places at the very top of the conference and division time and again.

A story I heard from one of the camp instructors when I was a camper has stuck with me through my years of competitive tennis. It recalled a fierce college football team and the natural desire to be the very best. But the anecdote ended with the instructor advising that it's OK to want to win;

therefore, during a play, you should go after your guy and hit him as hard as you can, but as soon as that play is over, you should also be the one that helps him up off the ground.

This summer, as an instructor for Wilkinson, I remember him suggesting at a family camp that when a child comes home from a match, instead of asking, "Did you win today?" or "What was the score?" instead parents should ask "Were you a good sportsman/woman today?" or "Did you stay positive through the entire match?"

Getting back to Winona Senior High, thankfully our coach recognized that a Big 9 trophy was not all that Winhawk tennis should be about. It was a trophy enough for the community and the teams to work together and build new tennis courts. She also always said that if we can't take the state title by our performance on the courts, we would have to take it by our work in the classroom. We did just that. All four years, my teammates and I won our section's award for academic excellence — even placing both first and second in the state.

These are just a couple alternative options to the constant emphasis on score as the determining factor for a team's success. Let's avoid pushing high school kids to the point of burnout or adding the skyrocketing number of high schoolers with serious sports injuries. So what if the Winona Senior High football team never wins a game?

Let's look past the lighted numbers at Paul Giel Field or the "Field of Dreams" and try to at least win the pride of our alumni and the support of the community. After all, tennis shouldn't be the only sport that begins with love.

Sarah Merchlewitz, a former Winona Winhawk, is currently attending Sarah Lawrence College in New York. She is studying nonfiction writing and music in the hopes that some combination of the two will yield a sensible career. Sarah can be reached at smerchlewitz@slc.edu.

All stories copyright 2000 - 2006 Winona Daily News and other attributed sources.