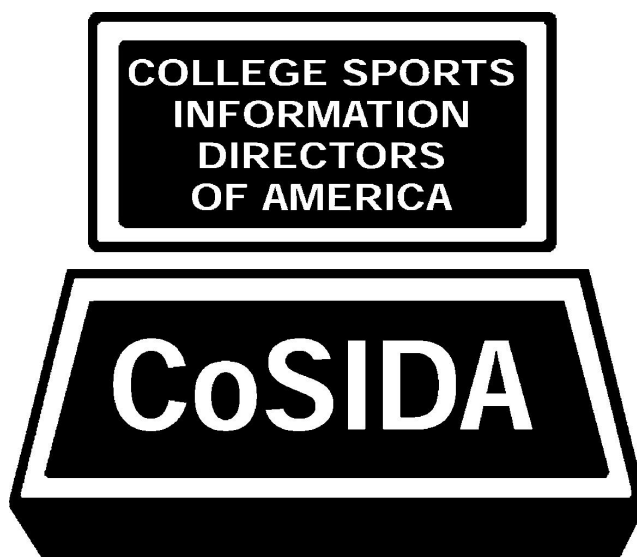


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Athletes Get New College Pitch: Check Out Our Tutoring Center

By [PETE THAMEL](#)

LOS ANGELES — Chris McFoy, a wide receiver at the [University of Southern California](#), answers to about half a dozen coaches. Off the field, his coaching staff has been much larger.

Like many U.S.C. athletes, Mr. McFoy has had a lot of help during his five years as a student. During his freshman season, he met weekly with four tutors, one for each of his classes. He also met with a learning specialist who composed “action plans” to organize his schedule and help him plan for tests and papers. U.S.C. and most other [N.C.A.A.](#) Division I-A universities also use student “class checkers” who traverse campus to make sure athletes are where they are supposed to be.

“There’s no way that you should do bad,” said Mr. McFoy, a 23-year-old senior. “You have to really not care about your grades, or your life in general, to mess up.”

Bigger stadiums and better training facilities are no longer enough to attract some of the most talented football prospects. The competition to create a top athletic program now extends to efforts that help ensure that players survive in class.

Louisiana State University, a perennial championship contender, spent \$15 million to build an academic center for athletes. The [University of Georgia](#), another top-10 football program, built a new facility for \$7 million. At [Temple University](#), long home to one of the nation’s worst football programs, officials increased the academic support budget for athletes by 34 percent in the aftermath of poor academic performance that led to scholarship losses.

All of the nation’s more than 100 major college athletic departments employ some type of academic support program. So do some [Ivy League](#) colleges and other smaller institutions. The National Collegiate Athletic Association said Division I athletic departments spend at least \$150 million annually on such programs.

Few in college athletics doubt the importance of helping student athletes succeed. But while college officials say these programs are necessary because athletes must devote so much time to their sports, few other students whose time is consumed by jobs or activities receive as much assistance. Another issue is oversight: The educational support centers often report to the athletic director, who has an

interest in keeping athletes eligible to compete, instead of to the academic leadership.

“I think that the people who work in it should be working for the provost,” said Jim Delany, the commissioner of the Big Ten Conference.

Investing in Support

U.S.C. spends \$1.5 million annually on tutors and other academic support for its student athletes, more than most programs. The university has 14½ staff positions in its Student Athlete Academic Services Department, having added four positions in the past six years, to serve its 550 student athletes.

“We’re looking for every opportunity to get ahead,” said Pete Carroll, the football coach.

Louisiana State’s academic center for athletes opened in 2002 and has a corporate sponsor, Cox Communications. A review in Architectural Record called the ornate design by Victor Trahan III “sleek,” “inspiring” and “almost monastic in character.”

Georgia’s \$1.3 million budget for academic tutoring for its roughly 600 athletes is the same amount that the university spends on its centralized campus tutorial program for its 25,000 undergraduate students. Dell Dunn, the university’s vice president for instruction, said the budget for all of Georgia’s tutoring services outside athletics rose by \$200,000 when programs in individual departments were included.

Georgia’s center for athletes, which was built in 2002, features rows of computers, plush furniture and an electronic check-in system to make sure athletes put in their minimum study hours. The center has 17 full-time staff members and more than 60 tutors.

“It’s getting competitive — that’s one of the reasons why we have this center,” said Becky Galvin, an academic counselor and tutorial coordinator at Georgia. “The coaches started hearing from kids that so-and-so had a nicer academic center. We had a good academic program, but we didn’t have all the bells and whistles.”

New N.C.A.A. rules can reduce the number of scholarships for colleges whose student athletes do not meet minimum academic standards, a change that has fueled the building boom and budget increases for academic centers. The money usually comes from the athletic department, from ticket sales and television deals, and from the N.C.A.A.

On some campuses, tutoring programs have run into trouble recently. At the [University of South Carolina](#), the senior associate athletic director for academic support arranged for tutors for junior college players not yet enrolled at the university.

At the [University of Tennessee](#) in the late 1990s, a tenured English professor, Linda Bensel-Meyers, found that athletic tutors were doing too much of the work themselves and that the athletic department had the influence to change grades. Bensel-Meyers was ostracized for bringing her findings public, and she later left for the University of Denver.

“Based on my experiences, I would have to say that athletic academic assistance centers serve more as academic evasion centers,” Ms. Bensel-Meyers said.

Many universities have developed training and monitoring programs for tutors, and rules govern how much assistance they can provide. For example, tutors at Tennessee cannot type papers for athletes. Most universities make the tutors sign an integrity contract saying they will not perform work for athletes.

Teaching Independence

At Southern California, Mr. McFoy is a success story. He graduated after four years with a degree in economics and, in his fifth year on campus, is pursuing a double major in political science as he plays football as a “redshirt” senior.

Magdi el-Shahawy, U.S.C.’s director for student athlete academic services, said Mr. McFoy’s experience was ideal. He did well enough eventually to be excused from mandatory team study halls, and he no longer required tutors for all of his classes.

“Our goal in this profession is to create independent, self-regulated learners and teach them what they need to survive,” Mr. Shahawy said.

Mr. Shahawy’s program includes about 50 tutors, all of whom are students, in addition to the 14½ staff positions. He reports to both the provost and the athletic director.

Mr. McFoy said his academic career had not been without incident. Once or twice, he said, he was fined \$10, which was taken from his athletic stipend, for missing an appointment with a tutor.

Even though his grade-point average was high enough that tutors became unnecessary, he sometimes continued with them anyway. “I knew that they would help motivate me,” Mr. McFoy said. “Why not? It’s free.”

Mr. Carroll tries to make academics competitive, like football. U.S.C. has instituted a points system in which athletes can get in trouble with their coaches if they are not attending class or handing in assignments.

Taking Action at Temple

Colleges without the money to pay for such programs can find it harder to recruit and to compete. The struggles at Temple, a public university in Philadelphia, illustrate what can happen.

Last year, the university's football program lost nine scholarships because of its athletes' academic shortcomings, the most of any Division I-A program. In what Temple's athletic director, Bill Bradshaw, called "crisis management," he said all five Temple academic counselors either resigned or were not rehired for their positions. That led to an overhaul that included luring a counselor from [Notre Dame](#) and the 34 percent budget increase for academic support.

"How does Wendy's succeed when it doesn't have McDonald's budget?" said Temple's coach, Al Golden. "We have to be creative."

Formal academic support for college athletes traces back to 1964, and as with just about every major development in college sports, money was a factor.

The president of Notre Dame at the time, the Rev. Theodore M. Hesburgh, asked the fencing coach and engineering professor, Mike DeCicco, to start a program to tutor student athletes.

Television money had become important in college football, and Father Hesburgh worried that universities might sacrifice academic integrity to keep players eligible so they would have strong teams to cash in on television payouts.

To keep that from happening at Notre Dame, Mr. DeCicco began tracking the progress of athletes in class through contact with their professors. If players missed classes, Mr. DeCicco would threaten them with the fencing saber hanging over his desk.

A few years later, Sports Illustrated described Mr. DeCicco's program in an article on Notre Dame's high graduation rate. Calls and visitors came from places like Arizona State, Kentucky and Michigan.

"It was like someone had opened the faucet," Mr. DeCicco said.

The career of one Temple linebacker, Leyon Azubuike, a redshirt sophomore, shows the difference the right people can make. In less than a year, Mr. Azubuike has gone from a struggling student with a 1.8 grade-point average, on the brink of becoming ineligible, to a confident student with a 2.2 average.

When Mr. Golden was hired last December, he made his entire staff build two and a half hours into their daily schedules to help the players personally, with a special focus on academics.

Mr. Golden took the pool table out of the players' lounge and replaced it with more computers.

He posted a list of players not attending class or handing in assignments on the door of the Temple football facility for everyone to see. He takes one shift a week himself to check players' classes

personally.

He made his players get to know their professors, sit in the front row, and not wear hats to class. “If you’re not going to class, you’re going to be suspended,” Mr. Golden said.

Temple increased its academic support staff to nine from six. Peter D’Alonzo, the lead coordinator and a learning specialist at Temple, installed the same program he used at Notre Dame. Freshmen are now mentored by students in Temple’s law school. Students below a 2.4 average are given mandatory study hours and intensive tutoring; Mr. D’Alonzo compared it to doing homework in front of Mom and Dad at the kitchen table.

Mr. Golden said “incredible doesn’t do justice” to the academic turnaround. The team had a grade-point average of more than 3.0 during one session of summer school, and Mr. Bradshaw said the university expected to increase its Academic Progress Rate, the measure the N.C.A.A. uses to gauge progress of student athletes.

But Mr. D’Alonzo is pushing for the tutorial staff to report only to the provost. Noting that the athletic department has an interest in keeping athletes eligible to compete, he said, “It’s entrapment.”

Mr. Azubuike had failed the most basic math course, Math 45, offered by Temple. He credited the new football staff with giving him the confidence and guidance to get a B in the course the second time. He said he was on pace for a B in Math 55, “something I never could have imagined before.”

He is looking forward to raising his average even more by retaking a few classes this summer.

“The biggest difference to me was their love for the student athlete transcended football,” he said. “I’ve been in few situations where the coach cares as much for you personally and academically as they do athletically.”

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Smizik: Improving Big East no longer a BCS weakling

Sunday, November 05, 2006

By Bob Smizik, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

In the sprawling 119-team, 11-conference world of Division I-A football, where there is no playoff and where championship-game participants are determined by voters and computers, perception is reality. There is no other choice.

The question, for example, often heard in these parts is which team is better: Pitt or Penn State? Since they don't play each other and have only one common opponent, it is virtually impossible to determine that answer.

Which means, as in no other major sport, the polls rule.

Which means to the astonishment of many, the Big East Conference, a laughingstock at this time a year ago, isn't so funny any more. The perception of the Big East, as the college football season winds down, is as a conference on the rise and not one that was sixth and a distant last among the Bowl Championship Series-affiliated leagues.

It's really not fair to evaluate conferences at any point in the season, but that's what people do, and for right now the Big East is middle of the pack among the six BCS leagues.

The case could be made that the league is even higher with three teams, West Virginia (No. 3), Louisville (5) and Rutgers (12) in the top 12 of the BCS rankings. That's a claim only the powerful Southeastern Conference, widely acknowledged as the best league, can make. The Big Ten does have No. 1 and No. 2, Ohio State and Michigan, but falls off to Wisconsin (16) after that. The once-mighty Big 12 only has one team in the top 15 -- Texas (7). The Pacific-10 has two, Southern California (8) and California (10). The Atlantic Coast Conference does not have a team ranked higher than 15th.

The Big East, which was near-death when its two most prestigious football members, Miami and Virginia Tech, left for the ACC is alive and thriving.

"We were very close to being wiped out," commissioner Mike Tranghese said Thursday before West Virginia and Louisville met in the kind of nationally televised showdown game among unbeaten teams that can only elevate a league. "We had separated. Football was going one way and basketball was going the other."

The realities of college athletics -- they all needed each other -- and Tranghese's leadership kept the league together. Louisville and Cincinnati were added, and when Boston College also defected to the ACC, South Florida was brought in.

It wasn't much, but the league had life and that's all it could ask after such major defections.

Then came West Virginia's stunning upset of fifth-ranked Georgia in the Sugar Bowl Jan. 2.

"It was the single-most important game in the history of the league," said Tranghese, putting it in front of a NCAA basketball title game that pitted conference members Villanova and Georgetown and which produced one of the most memorable contests in the history of that event. "There hasn't been any one basketball game that had that kind of effect.

"It took the cloud away. We left that game and said, 'Doesn't it feel good. People are going to leave us alone. We can take a deep breath.' "

Clever scheduling, none of the league's top teams met until the third Saturday in October, focused attention on the conference and its three undefeated teams. That list is down to two after Louisville beat West Virginia, but the league will get another upward jolt in five days when the Cardinals take on undefeated Rutgers.

The biggest boost will come if Louisville remains undefeated, in which case it almost certainly will play in the national title game.

It has to be a source of pleasure for original Big East teams still in the league to see the struggles of their former members in the ACC. Miami and Virginia Tech, elite programs when they left, have taken decided downward turns, and the entire ACC has fallen dramatically. It, not the Big East, is regarded as the weakest of the BCS leagues.

No one even mentions the possibility that the Big East will lose its BCS affiliation. With a new evaluation coming up in about 15 months, Tranghese describes his league as being "in very good shape."

The league would love to expand because scheduling is a problem with only eight teams but it's not going to happen.

"We'd like to go to nine," Tranghese said, "but we don't see anyone out there that excites us, that makes us better. We won't take a ninth team just to make scheduling better. We know the teams that would make us better, but they're not available.

"I got an e-mail from a guy in Pittsburgh who said I was an idiot for not taking Penn State."

With that, Tranghese rolled his eyes acknowledging that Penn State is absolutely not available.

The league still needs better strength at the bottom. None of the other five members -- Pitt, South Florida, Connecticut, Cincinnati and Syracuse -- owns an impressive win over a non-conference opponent.

Still, the perception of the Big East is as a rapidly improving league, and in college football perception is everything.

(Bob Smizik can be reached at bsmizik@post-gazette.com.)

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BCS

Not everyone cheers Louisville ascent

By [TONY BARNHART](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Published on: 11/06/06

Undefeated Louisville used its 44-34 win over previously undefeated West Virginia to jump from No. 5 to No. 3 in the latest BCS standings.

But do the Cardinals deserve it? Is Louisville (8-0) really the third-best team in college football, or would a 12-1 team such as No. 4 Florida or No. 5 Texas be more worthy to play the Ohio State-Michigan winner Jan. 8 in Glendale, Ariz.?

Mike Tranghese, the commissioner of the Big East, said it is an argument worth having — *after* all the games have been played.

"Understand that right now everyone is politicking," Tranghese told reporters late last week. "My advice is to just let the teams play. Then we'll be happy with what we get. It's an argument I would love to have."

Louisville was ranked No. 3 in the Harris Interactive poll and No. 4 in the USA Today coaches poll while getting an overall ranking of three by the six computer polls used in the formula. If the Cardinals win their four remaining games with Rutgers, South Florida, Pittsburgh and Connecticut, they should be in position to move up to No. 2 and into the BCS championship game. Ohio State and Michigan meet Nov. 18 in Columbus, Ohio.

This debate could be moot if Louisville loses Thursday at Rutgers, which is also undefeated but ranked No. 13 in the BCS. Coach Bobby Petrino is all too aware of that. "It's nice to know that we are third in the BCS standings," Petrino said in a statement released by the school. "But all of our focus and attention is on getting ready for an undefeated Rutgers team."

Not everyone was impressed with Louisville's 10-point home win over West Virginia on Thursday. In the Associated Press media poll, which is not used in the BCS standings, Jason Whitlock of the Kansas City Star voted the Cardinals ninth.

"After watching the West Virginia-Louisville game Thursday night, I was shocked at how poorly the defenses played," Whitlock said in an e-mail to the AP on Sunday. "I don't think either one of those teams would survive against the best teams in the SEC. So there are four SEC teams that I think are better than Louisville. I also

<http://ajc.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Not+everyone+cheers+Louisville+asc...> 11/6/2006

think Ohio State, Texas, USC and Michigan are better than Louisville."

West Virginia's loss to Louisville dropped the Mountaineers from third all the way down to 10th. Auburn, which hosts Georgia on Saturday, stayed at No. 6 and was jumped by Texas, which is now in the No. 5 spot.

Boise State (9-0) remained at No. 14. The Broncos need to get to No. 12 in order to be guaranteed an at-large berth in a BCS bowl.

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Coaches move beyond color

ACC peers paved the way for Lowe

CHIP ALEXANDER, Staff Writer

On Friday night, N.C. State's Sidney Lowe will take a seat at the end of the Wolfpack bench at the RBC Center. He will coach his first game -- the first one that counts -- as the Pack opens its basketball season against Wofford.

"I never envisioned myself being the coach here, never thought it would happen," Lowe says. "I'm thankful for the opportunity."

In 1983, when Lowe helped the Pack win an NCAA championship as a senior, the opportunity to coach did not exist for blacks in the Atlantic Coast Conference. It wasn't until 1986, when Bob Wade was hired by the University of Maryland, that an African-American became a head men's basketball coach in the ACC.

Today, there are seven black coaches in the 12-school conference after Lowe's hiring in May. No other major conference has as many.

One of the seven, Clemson coach Oliver Purnell, said he sees no significance in the number.

"It doesn't matter anymore," said Purnell, 53. "I'm old enough to remember when it did matter. There were no African-American coaches in the ACC for the longest time. But it doesn't matter in this league anymore, and that's quite a statement."

But the number of black basketball coaches in the ACC stands out when compared with football. There are no black head football coaches in the conference and only five in NCAA Division I-A, at the major football-playing schools.

For another of the seven black ACC basketball coaches, Miami's Frank Haith, the hiring of Wade was meaningful. It came Oct. 31, 1986, when Haith was 20 and a student at Elon College, having grown up in Burlington as an avid ACC basketball fan.

"To me, it was a milestone," Haith said. "It motivated me. To see the ACC now, it shows how times have changed. It speaks well for our conference. It shows we're willing to be open-minded in the hiring of minority coaches."



Bob Wade was the first black ACC head basketball coach.

AP File Photo

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ACC diversity

With the hiring of Sidney Lowe at N.C. State University, the ACC now has seven black head coaches in men's basketball. Here's a look at the ACC black head coaches, past and present, in football and basketball. Some criticize what is considered 'blatant inequality' in coach hires in ACC football versus basketball.

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Last 7 days

Such words are reassuring to Wade, who said he endured some painful times during his 2 1/2 years as coach of the Terrapins. For the past 10 years, Wade has been athletics director for the Baltimore city schools, watching from afar as more black coaches have come into the ACC.

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"I would never in my wildest dreams thought there would be so many in the league," Wade said. "But these days, schools look for the best person for the program. Presidents and chancellors look at it as, 'Who can get us to the NCAA Tournament or hopefully win an ACC Tournament?'"

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A target at Maryland

Wade, 61, said he was the target of racial slurs as the Terps coach. He said he and his wife feared for the safety of their son, Darion, in school. He said John Slaughter, then the chancellor at Maryland, received hate mail after hiring him.

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"After one of our biggest wins, at Duke, I came back to find racial slurs painted on my garage door," Wade said. "In College Park, Maryland."

Part of it, Wade said, is that he replaced popular Maryland coach Lefty Driesell, who was forced to step down after the cocaine-induced death of Terps star Len Bias. Some Maryland fans also didn't approve of the school hiring a high school coach, even one as successful as Wade, who was something of a local legend at Baltimore's Dunbar High.

"I received a lot of congratulatory calls about how wonderful it was the ACC was opening doors for a minority," Wade said. "I think it did give a ray of hope to up-and-coming [black] basketball assistants that it could be them one day."

"I thought I was qualified, but race was an issue," he said. "There was the hate mail about breaking the color barrier in the ACC."

Slaughter, who is black, said he relied on the advice of some of the ACC coaches before deciding on Wade, who had a 341-25 record at Dunbar. He consulted with former North Carolina coach Dean Smith. He talked with former Virginia coach Terry Holland and with Bobby Cremins, then the coach at Georgia Tech.

And he talked with the late Jim Valvano, then the NCSU coach. Lowe's coach.

"Jim Valvano," Slaughter said, "was Bob Wade's biggest supporter in the ACC."

Stumbling blocks

Wade's tenure at Maryland did not end well. His teams had a 36-50 record. He resigned under pressure in May 1989 amid allegations of NCAA violations that eventually resulted in Maryland receiving a three-year NCAA probation and two-year ban from postseason play.

Wade said a "lack of institutional control" resulted in the strong NCAA sanctions. Gary Williams, a former Maryland player then coaching at Ohio State, was hired to clean up the program, building it into an ACC and national contender.

It wasn't until 1997, when Steve Robinson was named at Florida State, that the ACC had another black head men's basketball coach.

"It was significant when [Wade] was fired because he was the most visible African-American coach who was fired at that time," Williams said. "I think it's gone from that to where you get hired or fired on

whether you're a good coach or not.

"The people in the ACC have gone out and hired the best coaches," he said. "I don't think anybody has said, 'I'm going to go out and get an African-American coach.' They've said, 'I'm going to go get a good coach.' That's where college basketball is right now."

College basketball, but not college football, said Georgia Tech coach Paul Hewitt.

Hewitt serves on the board of directors of the Black Coaches Association. He said the success of former coaches such as John Chaney at Temple, John Thompson at Georgetown and Nolan Richardson at Arkansas made it possible for other black basketball coaches to advance.

Thompson and Richardson each won national championships. Hewitt says that caused a "copycat" effect with other schools bringing in black coaches.

"What goes on in college football is an embarrassment," Hewitt said. "If you had that kind of blatant inequality going on in any other sector of our country, whether in the public schools or a business being run that way, the federal government would come in and shut them down."

The ACC has had one black head football coach: Jim Caldwell, who coached at Wake Forest from 1993 to 2000.

ACC Commissioner John Swofford said having seven black basketball coaches in the league shows "very progressive hiring practices at the institutions."

"They've stepped up and tried to hire the best people for their particular programs," he said. "As that has turned out, a lot of best coaches are African-American. Hiring the right person seemingly is colorblind."

But the ACC and other conferences must do better in their football hirings, Swofford said.

"Nationally, it's not happening in the same way, for whatever reason," he said. "I think we need to pay a lot of attention to that and try to make more progress on the football side."

A recruiting edge?

Many of the ACC's best basketball players are black. Although there might be a perception that black coaches have a recruiting edge in signing black players, Hewitt disagrees.

At the recent ACC Operation Basketball in Greensboro, Hewitt smiled and pointed, first at Duke coach Mike Krzyzewski, then Carolina's Roy Williams.

"Those guys in blue do as good a job in recruiting as anyone," Hewitt said, laughing.

Georgia Tech guard Anthony Morrow, a 6-5 junior from Charlotte, calls Hewitt a black role model and a father figure who provides "tough love" and personal guidance.

"It didn't cross my mind about Coach [being black] when I signed," said Morrow, who is black. "I liked his approach, the way he coaches, the way he cares."

Boston College's Sean Marshall, a senior from Rialto, Calif., said he did sign with the Eagles because of their coach, Al Skinner.

"But not because he's a black coach," Marshall said. "It was more a matter that he had played in the NBA and there was a lot I could learn from him."

Florida State coach Leonard Hamilton spent 12 years as an assistant coach at Kentucky before getting his first head coaching job at Oklahoma State in 1986. He went from OSU to Miami in 1990, then briefly coached in the NBA before going to FSU in 2002.

"Our fans love Leonard, and he's very social with them," said Charlie Barnes, executive director of Seminoles Boosters Inc., FSU's athletics fundraising organization. "In his first meeting with the high-

end, big-money group, he said, 'I know what the problem is in basketball, and I'll fix it.' He was straightforward, and everyone appreciated that.

"Our fans want to win. [Race] is not an issue," Barnes said. "That's one of those things where it seems to take a long time to change, then suddenly you wake up one morning and it's changed."

Hamilton said he is thankful for those who went before him -- Chaney, Thompson, Richardson, former Washington State and Iowa coach George Raveling.

"George Raveling went to Pullman [Wash.], a nonmetropolitan area, was creative in recruiting and won," he said. "Nolan Richardson did it at Arkansas.

"They all paved the way."

And Bob Wade at Maryland.

"Chancellor Slaughter afforded me a chance to step into a new world," Wade said. "I have no bitterness of what happened. I hoped I helped in some way.

"I'm happy for the African-American coaches in the ACC. They're doing extremely well. It makes us old guys feel good."

Staff writer Chip Alexander can be reached at 829-8945 or chipa@newsobserver.com.

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The Washington Times

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Some thoughts on Title IX

By Tim Lemke

THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Published November 3, 2006

I'd like to offer some thoughts on the issue of Title IX and Thursday's rally in front of the Department of Education. But first, I want to point you in the direction of an interesting Q&A featuring Todd Radom, the designer of many sports logos, including the Washington Nationals. I always get a kick out of reading about people who do work we take for granted. My colleague Maury Brown at Bizofbaseball.com conducted the interview, [found here](#).

Now, on to the dryer, yet no less important topic of Title IX.

A quick primer: Title IX was passed in 1972 to ensure the gender balance of college sports teams reflects the student body as a whole, and that no one was denied the right to play sports on the basis of gender.

When my editor told me earlier this week I'd be writing about this, I immediately thought taking a sedative and watching the test pattern on a broken television would be a more riveting experience. But after covering yesterday's rally featuring scores of James Madison University athletes, I came to realize the issue of Title IX is actually quite fascinating, even if it does appear mind-numbingly complex.

Here's the skinny on what's been happening:

James Madison, citing a need to comply with Title IX, recently announced it is eliminating 10 teams, including seven on the men's side. It's a somewhat ironic occurrence; when Title IX was created in 1972, it essentially served to ensure that schools would *ADD* sports for women. But women now outnumber men at most college campuses, thus making attempts at gender balance among sports teams a little trickier than in the past, especially since a good share of the men's scholarships are used up by football, a team which has no female counterpart.

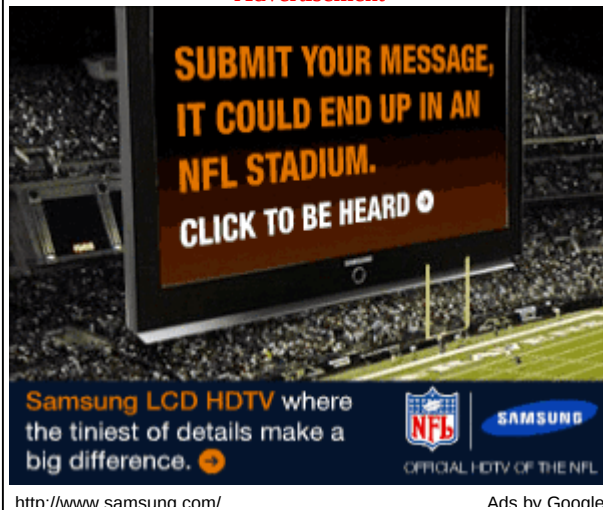
The athletes at yesterday's rally, many of them members of the to-be-cut men's swim team, are campaigning for changes to Title IX that will allow schools to simply survey students to determine what sports they want to play, and eliminate the gender balance requirements.

No matter where you stand on the issue, you have to feel sorry for some of these athletes. Many of them chose James Madison because the school offered them the opportunity to play sports, and some of them even came to the college after their previous institution cut their team.

"A lot of these kids were recruited, and the tables were turned on them," said Linda Martin, whose son, Tom, is a member of the spurned swim team.

Of course, whether or not these cuts are actually the result of Title IX is where the current

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debate starts.

Supporters of the law, including NCAA Myles Brand, insist sports teams are being eliminated because teams can't get their financial house in order.

Other supporters argue it would be easier and less disruptive to add a few women's teams than cut a large number of men's teams to get into Title IX compliance.

Trying to determine precisely why a sport is eliminated is tough. A school could easily blame Title IX when budget concerns are the true culprit. But, universities have been known to blame budget problems when in fact, Title IX compliance is their main motivation.

The issue of athletic department budgets has no doubt complicated this issue. All but about two dozen athletic departments are spending more money than they are bringing in. So it seems logical that some lower profile teams --particularly those teams like swimming and archery, which bring in little revenue -- could be eliminated. However, it's also logical to note that those same sports are also very inexpensive to operate, and eliminating them offers little cost savings to the university.

Clearly, the cutting of college sports teams goes against the spirit of Title IX. But is Title IX itself to blame? Or are universities like James Madison taking drastic, unnecessary steps to get into compliance with the rules? Is Title IX an outdated law designed to address gender inequity problems that no longer exist? And if so, should it be eliminated, or simply tweaked?

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Protecting sports in the schools

November 6, 2006

Shelby County Schools officials are taking a useful and timely look at recruiting by coaches who moonlight with private club teams.

The study -- which would be just as timely in the Memphis City Schools -- was prompted by complaints from some parents who say children who won't play for club teams have been treated unfairly by their coaches. But it could go deeper than that.

The way things are going in youth athletics, some critics say, the institution of high school sports is in danger of being overshadowed by off-campus athletics.

A recent series in the Washington Post suggested that amateur basketball "exposes teenagers to many tempting outside influences while doing little to prepare them for life outside of athletics."

"For the most talented teenage players," the newspaper reported, "the importance of summer league basketball has made the traditional high school basketball season almost irrelevant."

Shoe companies are investing millions in the enterprise in order to establish brand loyalty and to discover the next marketing superstar.

Players are expected to play their sport year-round, and in some cases have been punished for playing in tournaments not sponsored by a company that has been showering them with favors.

With the stakes as high as they are in some sports, coaches who are expected to build character among the student-athletes they mentor are subjected to temptations that interfere with their primary responsibilities toward players.

A recent Dallas Morning News article documented how it is legal and common for high school and amateur athletic coaches to land summer camp jobs at colleges by nudging star athletes in the right direction.

Like any other field, coaching has bad apples who put personal agendas ahead of the interests of the athletes they're supposed to mentor.

Instead of character, what bad coaches produce are coddled players with unrealistic expectations about what they may eventually be able to earn, little interest in their academic careers and a sense of entitlement that won't serve them well in later life.

Myles Brand, president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, college sports' governing body, has met recently in an effort to improve the situation with representatives of the National Basketball Association and the shoe companies that pour millions of dollars from their promotional budgets into amateur basketball.

No doubt the vast majority of coaches take their responsibilities to athletes seriously. Few would dream of doing anything to harm junior high and high school athletes or the institution of school sports.

Coaches should welcome the scrutiny promised this week by a committee of Shelby County Schools officials and parents. One proposal under consideration -- prohibiting coaches from promoting or recruiting students into clubs in which they profit financially -- seems a reasonable way to cut off serious trouble in the schools before it starts.

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Sunday, November 5, 2006

DAVID HAWPE

Block that debate, hold that thought

What a disgusting way for a university to make a major decision -- by closing off debate...by stopping the exchange of ideas.

Western Kentucky University's board ran roughshod over faculty regent Robert Dietel last week, as it rushed to embrace Division I-A football. With Louisvillian Larry Zielke proposing the put-down, WKU's board told Dietel to shut up.

Contempt dripped from Zielke's explanation: "People on this board dedicate their time for free. They have better things to do than let some university professor just keep talking about the same things.... He wasn't cut off. He had time to speak."

In other words, crawl back into the library stacks, Prof. We're running this place.

Regent Tamela Smith got the back of her colleagues' hand, too. "I'm greatly disappointed that the board shut down the discussion," she said. "I'm a staff regent, and the staff brought concerns to me to be addressed. I just had a few questions, a few comments."

Advertisement Indeed, she had intended to vote for the move from I-AA and Gateway Conference football to I-A and Sun Belt competition in that sport. But, put out over being put down, she abstained. Good for her.

This move to I-A football is going to cost millions, and it will be financed on the backs of students, as if they don't have enough trouble these days shouldering all the increased costs of a college education.

WKU students will be paying an additional \$70 per semester, starting next fall.

Campus vanity doesn't come cheap. And it can't stand real scrutiny.

Athletics director Wood Selig claims the move to Division I-A will put the Hilltoppers in the company of such schools as Michigan and Stanford.

How soon does he expect either of them to schedule WKU?

Potential Sun Belt opponents include such powerhouses as Middle Tennessee, Troy, Arkansas State, Florida Atlantic, Louisiana-Lafayette, North Texas, Florida International and Louisiana-Monroe.

Think of all the TV exposure. The big night for conference competition on the tube this year was Oct. 18 -- a matchup between Florida Atlantic and Louisiana-Lafayette on ESPN2.

Did you catch that one?

To stay in Division I-A, WKU will have to average 15,000 fans at its home games. But it hasn't even been filling L. T. Smith Stadium, where attendance has been 10,279 so far this year and was 12,795 last year -- despite all the interest built up as the school won the 2002 NCAA Division I-AA national championship and

went on to complete 10 consecutive winning seasons.

Never mind. Spend \$37 million enlarging the stadium from 17,500 to 24,000. Build it and they will come. Let the faculty stay home and read Chaucer if they don't like it.

Faculty members who voted on the move to Division I-A were opposed, almost two to one. When the school's 19,000 students were polled, 1,095 were for it and 600 were against. Maybe the rest went home early for the weekend.

Selig and WKU president Gary Ransdell are looking forward to the possibility of a Bowl Championship Series appearance. Maybe that would produce some dough, but there are so many bowls these days that a bid to most of them carries about as much prestige as an invitation to a Tupperware party.

Dietel is right. He knows his intercollegiate athletics history. When you commit to big-time competition, and especially to the lavishly expensive business of fielding a winning football team, the push to spend what's necessary to buy a winner is almost irresistible. And the price just keeps going up. Meanwhile, a long list of academic needs and educational opportunities goes unmet.

Ransdell is a terrific university president, and WKU, under his guidance, has emerged as an even more dynamic and promising institution. But even he can be wrong on occasion.

As for me, I'm a lot more excited about seeing Dr. Glenn LaFantasie assume the million-dollar Richard Frockt Family Professorship in Civil War History than I am the prospect of seeing Western play North Texas late some night on ESPN2. I'm excited about all 23 professorships that have been created during WKU's "Investing in the Spirit" campaign.

The Hill is a special place. But it has seen better moments than the squelched debate over Division I-A football.

David Hawpe's columns appear Sundays and Wednesdays on the editorial page. His e-mail address is dhawpe@courier-journal.com.

STORYCHAT

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Sorry it took so long to send this reply, but the doctors thought they were going to have to put me on life support. I do believe this is a first, I agree with David Hawpe.

Not all, but a great many of our institutions of higher education seem to have forgotten their main purpose for existing is, now get this, EDUCATION. Sports are great, I love most of them, but sadly so many, many times they overshadow education.

I must go now, my pace maker awaits.

Posted: Sun Nov 05, 2006 4:28 pm

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The price of glory for Rutgers

Sunday, November 5, 2006

**By JEAN RIMBACH and PATRICIA ALEX
STAFF WRITERS**

Rutgers football is riding high, enjoying a national ranking for the first time in more than a generation. But success hasn't come cheap.

There's \$2,900 for an Atlantic-City-to- Manhattan helicopter ride for the million-dollar head coach.

It cost \$10,000 to hobnob with the elite of college football at a black-tie dinner at the Waldorf-Astoria.

Rings, pendants and other mementos honoring the team's runner-up appearance in last year's Insight Bowl ran nearly \$90,000.

A review of university financial records by The Record shows that, in its drive to become a football powerhouse, Rutgers has spent millions more on the team than it's taken in. Even the trappings are costly.

Leaders at the state's flagship public university say that's the price of competing -- a price they are willing to pay.

"We're doing it because of the extreme visibility of the football program and its importance to the image and reputation of the university," said President Richard McCormick.

While football spending has been climbing, and hit a new high of more than \$13 million last season, Rutgers is coping with an \$80 million shortfall in state aid. More than 600 jobs and 800 course sections have been lost. Six high-performing Olympic sports are being axed.

From bus schedules to library hours, students are feeling the pinch. Tuition is up 8 percent this year. At just under \$20,000 for a full-time student who lives on campus, Rutgers is among the most expensive state universities in the nation.

"It's a straight upward line for the football team and a straight downward line for the academic and physical conditions here," said Richard Gundy, a statistics professor. "This is a political issue, not only within the university, but it should be a political issue in the state."

For some it's already decided.

"It's great for the university," said state Senate President Richard Codey, who proudly wears one of the Insight Bowl rings. "On New Year's Day, if there is a choice between watching the Gator Bowl or the academic bowl, I'd want to watch the Gator Bowl."

With fans in high places, Rutgers officials have embarked on a publicly funded quest to rise to the elite of Division I-A. It's a world where the key people are media and marketing executives, corporate sponsors, bowl officials and recruits -- and lavish spending is the norm.

- Coach Greg Schiano, who's led the Scarlet Knights to an 8-0 start, is the highest paid state employee and will make more than \$1 million this year. The university also pays \$998 a month for his Cadillac Escalade and has spent at least \$158,000 preparing a piece of its ecological preserve that Schiano bought to build a new home.

- Despite a payout of \$1.25 million, Rutgers lost money on the Insight Bowl appearance in Arizona last year.

The university paid the way for an entourage of nearly 300, including school officials and family members. Bonuses totaling more than \$200,000 were handed out to coaches and other staffers.

- It cost nearly \$175,000 to put the team up at a local hotel for six home games; that item alone exceeds the entire budget for the tennis team, one of the six eliminated sports.
- The university has plowed millions into new facilities for football -- from \$12.5 million for a state-of-the-art training center to \$750,000 for synthetic grass. A flashy lobby display honoring the team ran \$450,000.

Subsidies needed

Rutgers officials see the football spending as part of an investment that's starting to pay off. The team is undefeated, home games are selling out and the future looks hopeful with a Heisman Trophy contender and commitments from star recruits. The athletic director thinks ticket sales will hit a high of \$2.6 million by the end of the season.

Rutgers, says Athletic Director Robert E. Mulcahy III, has been trying to "catch up" to other schools in Division I-A, the most competitive tier in collegiate football. He bristles at being "nickled and dimed."

"People can make arguments about whether this expenditure should happen and that expenditure should happen -- I understand that," he said. "If you're not going to do things in a first-class fashion ... then you're not going to attract the kinds of recruiting classes that we've been able to attract in the last few years."

He also envisions the football program making money within five years.

A poll by The Record shows nearly two out of three New Jerseyans are aware of the team's growing prominence; of those expressing an opinion, a slight majority said it's worth the investment by Rutgers.

The team reached its perch -- last week it was ranked 15th by the Associated Press -- aided by a soft early schedule against teams not in its Big East Conference. Nonetheless, its midseason 20-10 victory over formidable Pittsburgh convinced even longtime skeptics that Rutgers, at last, might have what it takes.

Much is riding on Thursday night's game with Louisville. A victory would propel Rutgers to the top tier of the national rankings.

"These are heady times," said alumnus Joe Nackson, a Hackensack attorney who's a longtime season-ticket holder and a member of the Class of 1969. "We've been waiting 30 years in the wilderness and now we can see the Promised Land."

Football revenue is up -- most recently due to increased ticket sales and more television exposure. But so is spending.

Although Rutgers officials balked at releasing budget figures, it is clear that each year the university subsidizes football. Last year, the figure was \$2.65 million in direct support and student fees, according to an unaudited statement. Each undergraduate in New Brunswick pays \$270 a season in intercollegiate athletic fees. In return, students get free seats at all Rutgers sporting events.

Since Mulcahy took the reins in 1998, athletic spending has nearly doubled, hitting a high of more than \$41 million last year -- about a third going for football.

"When I was brought in, the mandate I was given was to restructure the department, make it competitive and fix football," Mulcahy said. "I have the backing of the board of governors and I have the backing of the president."

But at Rutgers some are asking "what price glory?"

"Real students are being marginalized and cheated in 100 different ways," said William Dowling, an English professor and longtime critic of Rutgers' Division I-A buildup. "Now the financial situation makes more dramatic what big-time athletics does to an institution."

Unequal treatment

Mulcahy has invested his hopes -- and no small amount of public money -- in Schiano. A 40-year-old native of Wyckoff, he returned to New Jersey in 2000 after assistant coaching stints at Penn State, Miami and in the National Football League.

"Greg has justified all my confidence in what he's been able to accomplish," Mulcahy said

Under Schiano, Rutgers reversed its losing streak and headed to its first bowl since 1978 -- the December 2005 Insight Bowl matchup with Arizona State. The Scarlet Knights lost 45-40, and Rutgers overspent its payout, running up bills on travel, parties and the rings and other mementos given to state officials, Rutgers staff and relatives, in addition to players and coaches.

Governor Corzine took office in January, not long after the bowl game, and began to tackle a state budget gap of more than \$4 billion, declaring "the games are over. New Jersey must put its fiscal house in order."

In February, Mulcahy rewarded Schiano with a new contract that pumped his pay by 75 percent. The new package put him more in line with other top coaches in the nation.

The next month, Corzine detailed a spending plan that cut support to higher education by \$169 million. President McCormick pledged there would be no sacred cows at Rutgers.

Football spending was not cut, but in May, Mulcahy sent a plan to McCormick calling for the elimination of as many as eight other sports.

His original proposal included wrestling and gymnastics, but they were spared. However, six sports, with combined budgets estimated by Mulcahy at \$800,000, were not. Men's swimming and diving, heavyweight and lightweight crew, tennis, and men's and women's fencing will be dropped.

"I don't want to bad-mouth football. I'm a fan, I watch the games," said Matthew Gitterman, a graduate and former member of the tennis team. "But as a taxpayer of New Jersey, you start to scratch your head."

Mulcahy said it's about priorities. Rutgers is one of only three schools in the six major conferences that have 30 or more sports and the others -- Ohio State and Stanford -- have much larger athletic budgets.

"It was a shock to us," said Steve Wagner, coach of the crew team, Rutgers' oldest sport. The axed sports have strong athletic and academic records, with student grade-point averages ranging from 2.9 to 3.1 and graduation rates of nearly 100 percent.

Rutgers administration has lauded Schiano for improving the academics of the football team, which has a GPA of 2.58. McCormick notes that no player has left the team for academic reasons under his watch. Records show Schiano got a \$25,000 bonus because of his players' academic progress. The team has a six-year graduation rate of 58 percent, according to the NCAA.

Supporters of the eliminated sports have appealed to the Legislature for reinstatement.

"The decision to cut these teams says to me that I should follow the crowd, money is the measure of success -- forget my passion," said Alexis Jemal, a former member of the fencing team. "It's better to be a bench warmer as part of a money-making sport than to be the NCAA champion in the sport I cherish."

The profit motive

Mulcahy makes no apologies for his focus on the marquee sports. He believes that men's basketball will one day be able to cover the cost of the women's team. He also sees football becoming self-sustaining, even profitable, within five years, and donations to athletics nearly doubling, to \$10 million.

But experts note it takes more than one or two winning seasons to create a dominant college football program -- particularly in a state such as New Jersey, where there are three pro teams close by.

"If they have a \$3 million deficit in football it's a chase for the Holy Grail," said Andrew Zimbalist, an economist at Smith College who has studied college sports. "It's not absolutely inconceivable that they'd ever become a surplus department, but it's quite unlikely, and a hundred other schools are out there trying to do the same thing."

Of the 1,000 schools in the NCAA, Zimbalist said, there are "a half-dozen to a dozen in any particular year that have a true surplus in their athletic programs. If you want to be an athletic department that has a surplus, you'd better be one of the top 10 football programs and do it consistently."

A 2005 NCAA study showed that, for most football and men's basketball programs in Division I, spending more money doesn't necessarily improve the bottom line.

To be sure, there are money-making football programs, and the payoff can be big: Michigan and Texas each reported surpluses of more than \$35 million in 2004-05, according to reports filed with the federal government. A trip to a top bowl can yield a payout of \$14 million to \$17 million.

Indeed, nearly all the current Top 25 schools reported a surplus in football during 2004-05.

But the reports don't always tell the whole story. In that year, Rutgers reported that its football program broke even with \$10.7 million in revenue. But that total counted as revenue nearly \$3 million in university support and student fees.

Big football costs, such as stadium construction and debt service, very often are not included in athletic budgets.

The reports show that Rutgers spends as much as Michigan on football.

Robert H. Frank, an economics professor at Cornell, studied the revenue potential of Division I-A programs for the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics.

"If you're a school that has a history -- a University of Michigan, a University of Texas -- there are some built-in advantages," said Frank. "For somebody coming in from the outside hoping to crack that circle, it's almost certainly a losing proposition."

McCormick, the Rutgers president, also is wary of Mulcahy's prediction of a football team that could be a cash cow.

"Bob says five years? Good luck," said McCormick. "We're not doing this to make money."

Attracting donors

Boosters say a high-profile football program brings a host of benefits to the university. Some are intangible: good feelings, free publicity, happy alumni.

The televised Insight Bowl was a "three-hour infomercial" for Rutgers, said Mulcahy. "Those three hours were worth how many millions of dollars? But more importantly it's the sense of community that the university feels."

Winning teams also can reap a surge, albeit temporary, in applications although most research shows it doesn't improve the caliber of prospective students.

More immediately, donors are drawn by success on the field.

Fund raising for the athletic department last year hit a high of \$5.9 million -- \$2.1 million was given for football.

Richard H. Shindell approached his alma mater about making a football donation, which Rutgers directed toward the team display in the lobby of the training center.

But he also wound up endowing a \$3 million chair in neurosciences.

"It all started with the fact that Richard came to a football game," said Jason Kroll, executive director of the Scarlet R Club, the athletic fund-raising arm of the Rutgers Foundation. "Why did he come? Because they were doing better than in the past."

More money may be coming in, but plenty is spent on frills in the name of competing in the Division I-A arms race.

Last year, \$239,000 in recruiting costs included \$31,640 spent at ESPN Zone, a dining and entertainment center.

For home games, rooms for players and coaches, food and rental of audiovisual equipment at the East Brunswick Hilton cost Rutgers more than \$165,000. An additional \$8,000 was spent busing the team between the training center and hotel.

Mulcahy says that's typical for Division I-A football; it's all about helping the players stay focused.

"There's an incredible amount of human intensity required in preparing and playing a football game," said McCormick.

The hotel is less than 10 minutes from the Hale Center, the headquarters for football and the showpiece for Rutgers athletics. A recent upgrade and expansion -- guided by Mulcahy and Schiano -- cost \$12.5 million.

"The initial plans, when I got here, for it were significantly smaller," Mulcahy said, "but once we sat down and realized what we wanted to do, it got bigger."

It has a 60-yard artificial-turf track for sprinting practice and a weight room covering more than 14,000 square feet with over 100 machines and a high-tech stereo system. Flat screens at lifting stations provide digital imaging of proper technique. The training room has an underwater treadmill and hot and cold tubs. The football players' lounge has a plasma television and pool table.

The center's granite-columned lobby was designed to impress. Mulcahy says the showy entrance is "absolutely critical" to recruiting. Photographs of the team adorn the area. Displays celebrate the team's history and its appearance at last year's bowl: the runner-up trophy is the centerpiece.

Mulcahy and his top coaches travel in a style befitting corporate executives.

When Schiano accepted two speaking engagements two hours apart, he helicoptered between them. He spoke to New Jersey coaches in Atlantic City at 5 p.m., then hopped a \$2,900 flight into Manhattan to speak to New York coaches.

"It would have been a slight not to show up," said Mulcahy, who approved the expenses.

Coaches and other staff have used drivers for meetings and recruiting trips. And when four staffers went to the National Football Foundation's annual awards dinner at the Waldorf, the bill for 10 hours of driver time, tolls and tip was \$864.

The athletic division had two tables at the event that Mulcahy said "is the single biggest dinner in college football." He said half the \$10,000 bill -- 20 people at \$500 a head -- came from his discretionary fund and the other half from the Scarlet R Club.

Mulcahy's base salary as athletic director is \$286,250 plus a \$12,000 car stipend. The university also covers his membership dues at Baltusrol Golf Club in Springfield, which run about \$8,000 a year.

"It brings a little bit of class to the program that definitely needed it, and because I was there it became a simple thing to do," he said of his membership at the exclusive club.

Already boosters are talking about enlarging and adding luxury boxes at Rutgers' 41,500-seat stadium, which is sold out for Louisville on Thursday.

On game night, Schiano and his Knights will do the Scarlet walk -- the ceremonial procession past the statue depicting the first intercollegiate football game in the United States. Rutgers won the 1869 matchup with Princeton.

The statue is "heroic sized," that is, slightly larger than life, and was donated by the Class of 1949. With its sinewy receiver in knit cap and lace-up leather boots, it's an homage to a simpler time, long before college ball became a multimillion-dollar enterprise.

* * *

Spotlight

Greg Schiano

Occupation: Rutgers football coach

Age: 40

Rutgers record: 8-0 this season, 27-39 overall

Distinction: New Jersey's million-dollar man; the highest paid public employee in the state.

His deal: Base compensation is \$875,000 in 2006; jumps to \$1.1 million in 2012, the last year of the pact; possibility of hundreds of thousands of dollars in bonuses each year.

Bonuses include: \$25,000 for conducting football camps in 2006; \$50,000 if the team plays in a bowl; \$100,000 if the team plays in a Bowl Championship Series bowl; \$50,000 for a ranking in the Top 10; \$20,000 if players have a grade-point average of 2.6 or above; \$100,000 if season-ticket sales rise to 25,000.

Future digs: a 5,000-square-foot house near Rutgers Stadium in Piscataway. Schiano bought the 0.85-acre parcel from Rutgers for \$325,000. The land had been part of the school's ecological preserve and Rutgers spent \$158,000 in engineering and legal fees preparing the land for the coach. Neighbors protested and one activist called the deal "affordable housing for the wealthy."

Hometown: raised in Wyckoff; now lives in Somerset County with wife Christy and four children.

"Rutgers should be the vogue place to go. You get there by showing the students' spirit, the pride in the state, all the fun on ESPN. We can help more and more New Jersey residents recognize Rutgers as their home school."

Greg Schiano, Rutgers' head coach

"I've gone to more games in the last five years since Schiano was hired. You get into these issues of whether a football coach is worth five times what you pay a professor. But America has already decided that question."

Joe Nackson, Rutgers graduate

>

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NCAA to Schools: Trim Sports Spending

By HOWARD FENDRICH

WASHINGTON - When the NCAA set out to improve graduation rates among student-athletes, it established national standards and penalties for teams that didn't comply. Shifting the focus from academics to finances required a much more hands-off approach.

In a task-force report released Monday by NCAA president Myles Brand, Division I schools were encouraged to rein in spending on sports _ but there aren't any requirements everyone must adhere to or punishments if they don't.

"In the case of academic reform, we had a hammer _ namely, by teams not conforming, we could take away scholarships and, if that failed, we could keep them out of the Final Four and postseason. That's heavy duty. That's a sledgehammer," Brand said after speaking at the National Press Club. "The fact is, we don't have that for fiscal responsibility in intercollegiate athletics."

The task force of about 50 school presidents and chancellors was formed in January 2005, and the report's release comes as the NCAA is preparing its response to an Oct. 3 letter from Rep. Bill Thomas, R-Calif., chairman of the tax-writing House Ways and Means Committee. Thomas asked the NCAA to justify its tax-exempt status and sought a reply by the end of October; the NCAA received a two-week extension.

"We want to answer this in the most serious way, and I want to make sure we have enough time to develop answers that are accurate," Brand said.

Antitrust laws prevent the NCAA from mandating how much schools can spend, Brand said, adding that because each situation is so different, it wouldn't make sense for there to be broad rules covering budgets for sports.

"A cookie-cutter approach will not work," Brand said.

So instead, Monday's report _ "The Second-Century Imperatives: Presidential Leadership, Institutional Accountability," a reference to the NCAA's centennial _ makes more than a dozen recommendations, covering spending and how to make sports an integrated part of campus life.



Myles Brand, president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, left, answers a reporter's question after he spoke about the findings from an 18-month presidential task force study on the future of Division I intercollegiate athletics and discusses the progress of NCAA academic reforms at the National Press Club in Washington Monday, Oct. 30, 2006. At rear right is Ohio State University President Karen Holbrook. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)

University presidents are offered suggestions and tools for how to monitor and moderate spending on sports. Brand said there will be more transparency.

"You can read it, whether you're from a small school or from a very large school like ours, and find things in it that you can comply with, that you can disagree with, and in some cases things that you can't afford and in other cases things that you can afford," said Ohio State president Karen Holbrook, a task force member. "Sometimes guiding people as opposed to pushing people or telling them what to do is more effective."

The task force also put forth two ideas but stopped short of endorsing them:

_ adding a fifth season of eligibility;

_ allowing athletes in all sports who transfer after freshman year to be eligible immediately, without sitting out a season.

Brand insisted there is no fiscal crisis in Division I college sports, but he did say there is "clearly stress in the system and the stress is almost certain to increase without corrective action."

While general university spending rises about 3 to 4 percent annually, spending on Division I sports is rising as much as 12 percent, Brand said.

"You need to design programs that moderate the rate of increase," he said.

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Ready for final rundown

Mike Huguenin
INSIDE THE COLLEGES

November 6, 2006

We're coming into the home stretch of what has been a good-but-not-great regular season. Let's revisit the BCS conference races:

ACC: Raise your hand if you had Maryland or Wake Forest in the league championship game. (If your hand is raised, you're lying, so put it down.) Georgia Tech is a lock to win the Coastal Division (the Jackets have to lose to Duke *and* North Carolina to blow it), and Maryland and Wake are the front-runners in the Atlantic Division. Despite its loss to Wake on Saturday, Boston College remains alive -- but only if it wins out and Wake loses twice in its final three games (at FSU, Virginia Tech and at Maryland). Maryland's finish: Miami, at BC and Wake. BC has Duke, Maryland and Miami, with only UM on the road.

Big East: Louisville takes a big step toward winning the league if it wins at Rutgers on Thursday. The Cardinals also play USF, Pitt and UConn. Rutgers puts itself in the driver's seat if it beats the Cardinals; the Scarlet Knights finish with Cincinnati, Syracuse and West Virginia. WVU still has a shot, too; the Mountaineers' best scenario is winning out against Cincinnati, Pitt, USF and Rutgers, and Louisville losing twice.

Big Ten: Ohio State hosts Michigan on Nov. 18. The winner goes to the BCS National Championship Game. The loser will be in the BCS, too, almost certainly in the Rose Bowl.

Big 12: Nebraska is in control in the North; it must win once more, against Texas A&M or Colorado, to clinch the title. In the South, Texas wins unless it loses to Kansas State *and* Texas A&M. Oklahoma wins the South if it beats Baylor and Oklahoma State and the Longhorns lose twice. Texas A&M wins the division if it beats Nebraska and Texas; Oklahoma loses twice; and Texas also loses to Kansas State.

Pac-10: California controls its destiny. The Golden Bears' Nov. 18 game at USC should determine the league crown. But if USC falls this weekend at home against Oregon, Cal can lose to USC and still win the league crown -- as long as it beats Arizona and Stanford.

SEC: Florida has clinched the East Division, but the West is essentially a two-way race between Arkansas and Auburn. For Auburn to win the division, it must win out against Georgia and Alabama, *and* Arkansas has to lose twice. With games against Tennessee and LSU still remaining for the Hogs, Auburn has to like its chances.

A tale of two QBs

Two of the nation's top high school quarterbacks in 2003 were from Pennsylvania: Chad Henne from West

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Lawn Wilson and Anthony Morelli from Pittsburgh Penn Hills.

In May 2003, Henne committed to Penn State, and the Nittany Lions stopped recruiting other quarterbacks. But in August of that year, Henne changed his mind and said he would sign with Michigan. A few days after that, Morelli committed to Pitt. In January 2004, a few weeks before National Signing Day, Morelli changed *his* mind and said he would sign with Penn State.

Fast-forward to this weekend.

Henne now is at the controls for the No. 2 team in the nation. He has thrown 16 TD passes against six picks and is averaging 177.3 passing yards per game.

Morelli now is at the controls for a team that's 6-4. He has thrown seven TD passes and seven picks, and is averaging 184.8 yards per game. But in the Nittany Lions' four losses, Morelli averaged 148.3 yards, with one TD and five picks. And if you watched Penn State's "offense" attempt to move the ball against Wisconsin on Saturday, you had to be struck by the Nittany Lions' ineptness.

It brings to mind the quote from Henne before this season's Michigan-Penn State game: "I just felt a lot more comfortable here with [Michigan quarterback coach] Scot Loeffler and him developing me as a quarterback than with [Penn State quarterback coach] Jay Paterno."

Grid bits

All hail Mississippi State, which ended a 23-game SEC road losing streak by shocking host Alabama 24-16. The happiest guy in the world has to be Bulldogs Coach Sylvester Croom, a former Alabama player who was passed over for the job when the Tide hired Mike "I have the name but I sure can't coach the game" Shula. The Tide is 6-4, and given that the two remaining games are against LSU and Auburn, a 6-6 record looks likely for Alabama, which would make Shula 26-23 in four years. Man, it's good Alabama gave Shula a contract extension after last season.

Georgia started 5-0 and was ranked as high as ninth. Alas, the bottom has fallen out of the Bulldogs' season -- they have lost to Kentucky *and* Vanderbilt! -- and a 6-6 finish seems likely. They play at Auburn this week, then host Georgia Tech on Nov. 25. Auburn has a lot to play for and will be out for blood this Saturday. And if you've seen Tech's defense and taken a gander at Georgia's offense, you have to shudder at the beating Bulldogs QB Matthew Stafford is going to take from the blitz-happy Yellow Jackets. Kentucky was the latest team to beat the Bulldogs, winning for only the 11th time in 60 meetings between the teams. "Was that last year that we won the SEC championship?" Georgia Coach Mark Richt asked in the aftermath of the Bulldogs' latest setback. "It seems so long ago." Richt's defense has fallen apart, partly because a running game that was supposed to mask the deficiencies at quarterback has been pitiful. With no running game, the offense has suffered, meaning the defense has been on the field too long.

In its past two games, Hawaii has outscored its foes 131-20, with QB Colt Brennan throwing 11 TD passes. This week, Brennan gets to throw against Louisiana Tech, which is 84th nationally in pass defense.

When talking about disappointing teams, the first stop should be the state of Iowa. Iowa State, coming off a 7-5 season and with 13 starters back, was considered a legit contender in the wide-open Big 12 North. Instead, the Cyclones -- blasted by Kansas on Saturday -- are 3-7 overall and 0-6 in the Big 12 (the only league team without a conference victory). As for Iowa, it was considered a strong contender for the Big Ten title. Instead, the Hawkeyes -- stunned at home by a bad Northwestern team Saturday -- are 6-4 overall and 2-4 in the conference. Iowa's four-season string of reaching a January bowl appears over unless the Hawkeyes can somehow upset Wisconsin this weekend.

If we hear one more time about how the Big East has the best record among BCS leagues against other BCS

leagues, we're going to be sick. The statement is true, but there's no context. Let's add some context and take a look at the victories: Illinois (twice), Indiana, Kentucky, Kansas State, Maryland, Miami, Mississippi State, North Carolina (twice) and Virginia. We're not saying another BCS league deserves kudos in this category; we're just saying -- for the most part -- Big East teams have beaten no one.

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Article published Nov 6, 2006

Sit this one out, Charlie Candor not needed for ND's bowl hopes

ERIC HANSEN
Tribune Staff Writer

SOUTH BEND -- Someday Charlie Weis will learn to speak gibberish or simply smile wide and say "no comment."

Until then, the Notre Dame head football coach's candor will tend to get the best of him at times.

Like the seemingly innocuous little tangent he stumbled onto recently about Notre Dame students showing up outside his office at 4:30 a.m., trolling for autographs.

"Sickos, I'll tell you," Weis said of the phenomenon that occurs on average about once a week.

"It gets worse around Christmas time," Weis said with a chuckle. "It's a cheap Christmas present. Every once in a while, if they walk over and the weather's really bad, I'll feel sorry for them and I'll pop them on the golf cart and drive them back over to the dorm." And then he answered one question too many: Is there a better time to catch you for that?

"No, that's the safe bet," he said, and then paused and shook his head. "And I just should not have said that."

To give Weis some time to practice perfecting the art of stonewalling, we'll ask the questions and give the answers this time:

What do Notre Dame's bowl options look like?

Realistically, unless the moon is in the seventh house and Jupiter is aligned with Mars and something really weird happens in college football -- like Lee Corso starts predicting a whole bunch of games correctly, the Irish (8-1, No. 9 BCS) are in the mix for four bowl berths -- Sugar, Rose, Cotton, Gator.

Which teams are Notre Dame competing with for an at-large BCS berth?

First, let's explain what the new-look BCS looks like. There are five BCS games this season and 10 available slots. The champions of six conferences earn automatic berths. The remaining four sports are open unless Notre Dame or a conference champ from a mid-major league meets certain criteria.

Right now the automatic spots are shaping up as follows:

ACC: Wake Forest, Boston College or Maryland vs. Georgia Tech in the ACC title game.

Irish vs. Falcons

Who: No. 9 Notre Dame (8-1) vs. Air Force (4-4)

When: Saturday, 4 p.m., EST

Where: Falcon Stadium; Colorado Springs, Colo.

TV: CSTV and CSTV.com (pay per view)

Radio: WNDV-FM (92.9), WDND-AM (1490).

Quotable: "I think it really comes down to playing more fundamentally sound to not give up big plays. I think that's probably the biggest issue we deal with on a weekly basis and, I think, what we'll continue to be working on."

ND coach Charlie Weis
On where the Irish need to improve

Big East: Louisville, Rutgers or West Virginia.

Big 10: Winner of Ohio State-Michigan, Nov. 18 in Columbus, Ohio.

Big XII: The winner of Texas vs. Nebraska in the Big XII title game.

Pac-10: The winner of USC-Cal, Nov. 18 in Los Angeles.

SEC: Florida vs. Arkansas or Auburn in the SEC title game.

That leaves seven teams realistically competing for four at-large spots: The Big Ten runner-up, Boise State of the WAC, the Big East runner-up, the Big XII runner-up, the Pac-10 runner-up, the SEC runner-up and Notre Dame.

And that's leaving out some pretty good teams like possibly an 11-1 Wisconsin, a 10-2 Tennessee, a 10-2 LSU, for example. The ACC is the one conference that won't get a second team in. They're just not ranked high enough.

Looking at the seven candidates, the Ohio State-Michigan loser is a lock. A second SEC team would seem to be so too, especially if Auburn finishes 11-1. If Boise State runs the table, the Broncos would likely meet the criteria to be an automatic qualifier (top 12 BCS finish). That leaves four teams competing for the final spot: Most likely the USC-Cal loser, an 11-1 Big East team, a 10-2 Oklahoma squad and Notre Dame.

If the Irish win out, they're in. A top eight finish in the BCS standings qualifies them automatically.

What if the Irish finish 10-2, losing to USC in the regular-season finale?

Fairly or unfairly, Notre Dame at 10-2 would likely get picked over a 10-2 Cal team, but not necessarily over a 10-2 USC squad that had just beaten them. It's safe to say the BCS folks would prefer the Irish over the Big East runner-up -- whoever that is -- and anyone from the Big XII unless Texas loses in the Big XII title game. That throws a little more gray area into the equation.

The Irish have national TV demographics and gaga fans that will buy game tickets and spend money in the bowl city. That all works in their favor. ND-Ohio State, for example, drew the highest TV ratings (12.9) among the non-title BCS bowls last season.

What the Irish lack this year that they had last season is a compelling story line. Through no fault of Brady Quinn, people are tired of looking at him. Along the same lines, they know all about Jeff Samardzija's baseball/football dilemma, Tom Zbikowski's lucrative boxing hobby.

If there is an intriguing angle, it's almost that of casting Weis and the Irish as the antagonists. Weis, quite frankly, isn't any different than he was last year when he was such an endeared national figure. In fact, if anything, he's more media-friendly. But from a distance, he must look different -- more like a bully trying to take someone's lunch money.

Isn't there a way for the Irish to sneak into the championship game?

There is, but not without a scenario with so many "ifs" it would cause migraines. Here's the easiest way to put it -- no school ranked lower than fifth with four weeks to go has ever made it to the BCS title game. The Irish are ninth with four weeks to go.

If you had to predict ND's bowl and opponent, what and who would it be?

Sugar Bowl and Florida. Yes, Weis vs. Urban Meyer. Quinn vs. Chris Leak. A school that stands for hope playing in a city (New Orleans) that stills needs plenty of it.

What Irish players have the best chance to earn first-team All-America honors?

Now that Ohio State's Troy Smith has had his mulligan game, the Heisman and first-team All-America are likely to come down to Smith's and Quinn's performances in Ohio State-Michigan and Notre Dame-USC, respectively.

Each of them has a statistically frailty. Smith is sixth in the nation in passing efficiency, while Quinn is 19th (but climbing). Quinn is eighth in total offense, while Smith is 38th (but comes out of blowouts early).

Wide receiver Samardzija needs more games like he had Saturday (6 receptions, 177 yards and a picturesque touchdown), especially against USC. The biggest perceptual hurdle he has to overcome is that Samardzija's numbers (49 catches, 686 yards 8 TDs) are hard to separate from his own teammate's. Rhema McKnight has 52 catches, 673 yards and 11 touchdowns.

Left offensive tackle Ryan Harris draws raves from Weis on a weekly basis and draft analyst Mel Kiper Jr. pegs him as a top 15 pick, but ND's standing as the 96th-best team in sacks allowed will hurt him. Similarly safety Zbikowski's chances are gouged by ND's penchant to give up big plays and the fact Zbikowski was playing through injury during a stretch.

Punter Geoff Price is seventh in the nation in punting, so he has an outside chance.

ND's best bets, however, may be two players that might not immediately come to mind -- tight end John Carlson and defensive end Victor Abiamiri.

Carlson leads all Div. I-A tight ends in receiving yards per game and trails only Chris Hopkins of Toledo in receptions per game. And there may be no better vertical threat among tight ends in the nation.

Abiamiri, meanwhile, has climbed to No. 4 in the nation in sacks -- ahead of most of those guys who were terrorizing Quinn earlier in the season (Michigan's LaMarr Woodley, UCLA's Bruce Davis, Purdue's Anthony Spencer). And he might be even more disruptive against the run.

When is Notre Dame going to get another "big name" verbal commitment?

They just got one -- Matt Scioscia. But he plays baseball. The son of Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim manager Mike Scioscia hit .325 last season for Encino (Calif.) Crespi, with six doubles and 18 RBIs. And yes, he is a catcher. BCS standings

	Harris			USA Today			Computer		BCS	
	Rk	Pts	Pct	Rk	Pts	Pct	Rk	Pct	Avg	Pv
1. Ohio State	1	2849	0.9996	1	1575	1.0000	2	0.960	0.9865	1
2. Michigan	2	2731	0.9582	2	1502	0.9537	1	1.000	0.9709	2



Louisville Jumps To No. 3 In BCS

By JOEY JOHNSTON The Tampa Tribune

Published: Nov 6, 2006

Late Thursday night, you could almost hear a collective coast-to-coast gasp from the nation's college football fans. Louisville had just defeated West Virginia 44-34, moving another step closer to the Big East Conference championship - and maybe a whole lot more.

Louisville?

Undefeated?

Competing for the national championship?

Louisville?

We'll know more about the Cardinals (8-0) on Thursday night when they travel to Rutgers (8-0) for yet another battle of unbeaten teams in the Big East.

Sunday, we learned what the voters (and the computers) think.

Louisville moved up two spots to No. 3 in the Bowl Championship Series standings, behind Ohio State and Michigan (which meet Nov. 18 to likely decide the Big Ten title and one spot in the BCS Championship Game).

So theoretically, if Louisville finishes 12-0, it should advance to face the Ohio State-Michigan winner Jan. 8 in Glendale, Ariz.

Right?

But Florida (8-1), holding at No. 4 in the BCS standings, is building a strong case as a one-loss team, especially if it wins the SEC. So is defending national champion Texas (8-1), No. 5 in the BCS, in the Big 12.

"If we win all our games and prove ourselves, why shouldn't we get a chance at No. 1?" Louisville center Eric Wood said. "Take a one-loss team over an unbeaten team? It makes us mad to hear people just dismiss us like we're nothing. We are a worthy team.

"If there are two unbeaten teams at the end, they should be matched up for the national championship. If we win out, and we get left out, that won't be right."

Two seasons ago, Auburn (13-0) won the SEC, but could only watch as unbeaten USC and unbeaten Oklahoma were selected for the Orange Bowl's BCS Championship Game. SEC commissioner Mike Slive remembers the disappointment.

He wouldn't speculate whether a one-loss Florida team would be more worthy than an unbeaten Louisville team. Slive, the BCS coordinator this season, said all speculation is premature.

"There are three phases to this," Slive said. "The honeymoon period, where we came off a spectacular championship game [Texas-USC]. The speculation period, which we're in now and belongs to you guys [reporters]. Then there's the controversy period, when I get my chance to respond.

"I've been in the situation in my league where we had an unbeaten team that didn't go [to the BCS title game] and that was not fun. First and foremost, I'm the SEC commissioner, but I think we have to look at these things from two perspectives. What's good for college football? What's good for our own parochial interests as commissioners of these conferences? Right now, it's just too early to speculate on anything. There's a lot of football left to be played."

Beginning Thursday night, when Louisville goes to Rutgers. Continuing Saturday afternoon, when South Carolina comes to Florida.

But if the Cardinals keep winning?

"Ohio State, in my mind, is far and away the best team," Louisville athletic director Tom Jurich said. "But if there's an unbeaten team in the Big East Conference, I think they should be the opponent. I'm not going to lobby for anything, but there's no doubt in my mind."

Reporter Joey Johnston can be reached at (813) 259-7353 or jjohnston@tampatrib.com.

November 6, 2006**SPOTLIGHT ON COLLEGE FOOTBALL**

After the Games End, the Head Scratching Begins for Poll Voters

By THAYER EVANS

On most Sunday mornings during the college football season, Max Urick is at the computer in his home in Manhattan, Kan., preparing his weekly rankings for the Harris Interactive poll.

Urick, the former athletic director at Iowa State and Kansas State, is one of 114 voters in the Harris Interactive poll, which accounts for a third of the formula used in the Bowl Championship Series standings. The USA Today coaches' poll is another third and the remainder is an average of six computer rankings.

Unlike many voters, Urick uses a cumulative rating system that he created with the former head of the statistics department at Kansas State. He declined to reveal its formula, but said it was based on three statistics that were between 91 percent and 96 percent accurate in predicting conference champions from 1990 to 2005.

His ratings also consider the strength of opponents and whether teams are playing at home or on the road, Urick said. He said his weekly Harris poll rankings were not strictly based on his ratings, but he uses them to differentiate between teams with the same record or those in non-B.C.S. conferences.

"Once you get in about halfway through the season, trends start to develop, tendencies show and you can really key in on the game and not be bogged down with some of the emotional things and subjective things," Urick, 67, who is retired, said in a telephone interview. "You're not swayed necessarily by a magical name."

The Harris Interactive poll began last year. Its panel consists of former football players and coaches as well as former college administrators and members of the news media, some of whom are retired, said Jim Quilty, vice president of research for Harris Interactive, a market research firm based in Rochester, N.Y.

He declined to say how much the B.C.S. pays Harris Interactive, which is under contract through the B.C.S. bowls in 2010.

A majority of the poll's voters participated last year and all were part of more than 300 nominations

http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/06/sports/ncaafootball/06colleges.html?_r=1&oref=slogin&ref=... 11/6/2006

over the past two years by Division I-A teams, Quilty said.

He said voters were not paid and must adhere to Harris Interactive's "principles of commitment," which he did not specify.

Of the poll's 30 to 40 new voters, several replaced those who did not adhere to Harris's policies, Quilty said.

Some of last year's polls did not include rankings from all voters; in some cases, he said, emergencies like Hurricane Rita prevented voters from participating.

Voters must submit their rankings by 1 p.m. Eastern time on Sundays. "Our panelists are extremely committed," Quilty said in a telephone interview. "They spend a great deal of time with their rankings."

Robert Lawless, a former president at Tulsa and [Texas Tech](#), said he spent about 20 hours a week on his rankings.

"My wife is very supportive, and the neighbors tease her because they all say, 'I wish I had to watch football,' " Lawless, 69, a consultant for an academic search firm, said by telephone from his home in Tulsa, Okla. "She'll say, 'Don't bother him; he's working.' "

Lawless said he submitted his rankings by e-mail at 6 a.m. on Sunday mornings.

"I believe that I basically do my rankings based on performance, and I still think that there are a lot of the rankings based on perception and reputation," Lawless said.

Another voter, Brentson Buckner, 35, who played in the N.F.L. for 12 seasons and is now a sports radio and television personality, said his participation in the poll was a frequent topic of conversation. He said he watches many games, some of which he taped, and estimated he spends 10 hours a week on his rankings.

Buckner said former teammates like [Panthers](#) receiver Keary Colbert, who played at Southern California, often call him and campaign for their alma maters.

"I feel like I've got to be exactly right," Buckner said by telephone. "I try to compare who played good and who did they play and how did they look playing. A lot of times, people get caught up in teams playing a weak schedule. To me, a win is a win."

Urick said his ratings correlated more to the computer rankings used by the B.C.S. rather than the human polls. His top five in the Harris poll this week were [Ohio State](#), Michigan, Louisville, Florida and Louisiana State, but Louisville topped his computer ratings.

“There are no standard ways of doing it,” Urick said. “Somebody will flip a coin. Other people will see if the moon is a full moon, but I kind of use a statistical formula. I feel good. I’m comfortable with it.”

BIG WIN FOR WAKE FOREST Before Saturday’s 21-14 victory against No. 16 [Boston College](#) at Groves Stadium, Wake Forest linebacker Jon Abbate was reminded of the lack of respect for the program. Abbate said he got a call from an uncle in Miami who said a newspaper there picked Boston College to win by 21. Not only that, Abbate’s team was called Cake Forest.

“Hopefully, they know it’s not Cake Forest anymore and that we’re Wake Forest,” Abbate said after the game. “I think today proved a lot.”

But No. 22 Wake Forest (8-1) still has more to prove. The Demon Deacons play this Saturday at [Florida State](#), then play host to No. 20 [Virginia Tech](#) and finish the regular season at No. 23 Maryland.

VIV BERNSTEIN (NYT)

B.C.S. ACCORDING TO PLAN It has been 10 years since Roy Kramer, the retired commissioner of the Southeastern Conference, first met with ABC in Atlanta and proposed the framework for the Bowl Championship Series. Kramer said he was delighted by the debate over the B.C.S.

“People are talking about college football, there is excitement, and that was what we intended,” he said Saturday at Neyland Stadium in Knoxville.

“We said there would be controversy. The system is not perfect, but it almost always works itself out because of the games in November.” RAY GLIER (NYT)

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Posted on Sat, Nov. 04, 2006

BCS powers would be wimps on Fear Factor

By **Wendell Barnhouse**
Star-Telegram Staff Writer

Pat Hill can be sworn in as an expert witness. He can testify on behalf of teams that operate outside of the Bowl Championship Series, aka The Millionaire Boys Club.

Hill, the Fresno State coach, makes a habit out of playing nonconference games against BCS schools. His team plays in the Western Athletic Conference, one of five leagues that fight for scraps remaining after BCS teams finish their seven-course bowl meals.

Fresno State has lost to BCS teams Oregon, Washington and LSU this season. Wednesday night the Bulldogs were drilled by fellow WAC team Boise State 45-21.

In this week's coaches' poll, Hill said he voted Boise State No. 8. He believes the Broncos are better than any of the BCS teams. One would expect that sort of boosterism for a team from Hill's conference.

But Boise State is in prime position to earn an at-large invitation to a BCS bowl.

If the Broncos follow the footsteps of Utah in 2004, they will be considered -- in BCS circles, at least -- one of the nation's 10 best teams.

The BCS system has been tweaked, in Rube Goldberg fashion, to increase opportunities for non-BCS conferences. That tweaking headed off antitrust hearings in Congress.

There are two additional at-large berths available, plus the qualification criteria has been softened.

Boise State (9-0) was No. 14 in this week's BCS standings.

It needs to finish 12th or better in the final BCS standings to automatically qualify, or finish 16th or better and be ranked higher than the lowest-ranked champion from a BCS conference.

The Fiesta Bowl would likely be Boise State's BCS destination, probably against Texas (or the team that wins the Big 12 championship).

This is where the Dirty Little Secret gets out.

Arguments against a multi-team Division I-A playoff are varied. Some are flimsy; some make a bit of sense. In my mind, there's a Fear Factor among the BCS schools.

A playoff, like the NCAA Tournament, would be one-and-done.

Teams from BCS conferences can argue their rugged league schedules equal a seasonlong playoff.

Could Boise State go undefeated in the Pac-10? Could Louisville or West Virginia go undefeated in the Southeastern Conference?

Rhetorical questions would get on-the-field and, perhaps, upsetting answers in a playoff.

In 1992, Fresno State beat Southern California in the Freedom Bowl. USC's program was mired in the muck for the next decade.

Hill, who became Fresno State's coach in 1997, has, to no avail, campaigned for a game against the Trojans. USC has no reason to schedule a game where there is nothing to gain and everything to lose.

In a playoff, anything can happen. Let's say Boise State beats Texas in the Fiesta.

Sure, it would be stunning. Certainly, Texas A&M fans would have an off-season of joke writing. But this year's results in the four BCS nonchampionship bowls are meaningless.

Now consider the impact of Boise State beating Texas in the first-round of a 16-team tournament. Or TCU beating an Alabama or an Auburn. Or Tulsa beating Michigan.

Even if those upset winners lost in the next round of this playoff fantasy, consider how meaningful those first-round triumphs would be.

Major basketball programs such as Michigan State, North Carolina and Connecticut have moved past their knockout losses during George Mason's Final Four run.

The Millionaire Boys Club of college football has no desire to open its membership to similar upset scenarios.

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Posted on Sat, Nov. 04, 2006

College Football Insider: Schools need to make noise with hires

By WENDELL BARNHOUSE
STAR-TELEGRAM STAFF WRITER

An unwritten rule involving coaching changes is "Win The News Conference."

Translated, that means that the new coach needs to make a favorable impression when he is introduced at his new school. A failure to do that can make the regime change that much harder.

Michigan State is looking for a new coach after dismissing John L. Smith, effective at season's end. A candidate is Steve Mariucci, the former 49ers and Lions coach. He has a strong advocate in Spartans basketball coach Tom Izzo. They've been friends since grade school.

But if athletic director Ron Mason does hire Mariucci, it probably won't be with the blessings of both Detroit newspapers. Both publications have pointed out that Mariucci was a failure as Lions coach.

Pete Carroll's success at USC has provided a template for schools who are interested in hiring energetic former NFL coaches. Michigan State, which has been playing second fiddle to Michigan for over three decades, needs to hit a home run with this hire.

Coaching carousel, Part II

Former Dallas Cowboys assistant, Miami (Fla.) and Cleveland Browns coach Butch Davis belongs on the bow of the Titanic with Kate Winslet. He's king of the world (right now).

Davis, who has spent this season working as an analyst for the NFL Network, is tanned, rested and ready. Davis could have the North Carolina job if he wants it. ESPN.com reported Friday that Davis was at the top of the Tar Heels' list. He could also be on Miami's list if Larry Coker is canned.

Like any good team with a lead, Davis is willing to run out the clock to await the best offer.

Kicking it around

Washington State got ranked and bowl eligible with its 37-15 victory at UCLA on Oct. 28. The Cougars won the game with a kicking game that was patched together.

Punter Darryl Blunt became ill during pre-game warmups and was taken to a hospital. Kicker Loren Langley handled the punting but after missing his second field goal try he fell out with a pulled thigh muscle.

Romeen Abdollmohammadi (that's 15 letters for the last name, folks) took over as the kicker. A walk-on from Seattle, he had missed the only field-goal attempt of his life — in high school. He made a 31-yarder against the Bruins.

At halftime, the Cougars asked for volunteer punters. Slotback Michael Bumpus stepped forward. His two second-half punts went for 36 and 35 yards.

"It was like junior high tryouts at halftime," Washington State coach Bill Doba said.

Voting fraud?

The Butkus Award semifinalists were announced this week. Last year's winner, Penn State linebacker Paul Posluszny made the list. And he's not even the Nittany Lions' best linebacker this season.

So says Posluszny.

"I have a great amount of respect for Dan Connor," Posluszny said. "He's the best linebacker on our team, especially with the way

he has played here the past few games. He makes unbelievable plays. He's just a great linebacker."

Connor was not named as a Butkus semifinalist.

Going into Saturday's game with Wisconsin, Connor had a team-leading 80 tackles, 7½ tackles for loss, four sacks and two interceptions. Posluszny's stats: 79 tackles, four tackles for losses and two sacks.

Just so you know, the voting for some of college football's post-season awards are more about reputation and popularity as production.

This Old Big House

A planned renovation and expansion of Michigan Stadium has created a controversy between the traditionalists and the forward thinkers.

The drawings depicting the addition of two structures behind the stands in each end zone were released about two weeks ago. The school has received just over 600 e-mails with comments. While about half of the comments were positive, the Ann Arbor News reported some of the critics were creative.

Some architects who weighed in called the renovation a cross between a medieval castle and a factory, another described it as "faux classicist kitsch" and "theme park architecture."

One fan called the project the "Big Aqueduct," a take-off on the stadium's "Big House" nickname.

Another opponent vented in a creative manner: "It strikes me as almost parallel to the megalomaniac capital and infrastructure projects often seen in evil regimes like Iraq, the Soviet Union, and North Korea — an out of control leader building a legacy by literally building."

What goes around ...

Texas Tech coaches believe they were robbed by the Big 12 zebras in Saturday's 35-31 loss to Texas. I didn't see the calls in question, so I don't have an opinion either way. However, here are some observations:

The Red Raiders were penalized 12 times for 115 yards. Maybe that supports the coaches' claims. Maybe that speaks to playing undisciplined, particularly when it comes to grabbing Texas facemasks.

Irony, Part One: After the Red Raiders believe they were robbed, three Tech players were arrested on suspicion of robbing a residence.

Irony, Part Two: If the instant replay official failed to properly discharge his duties Saturday night, remember this, Tech fans: Texas Tech 23, Oklahoma 21, Nov. 19. The replay official grivet, the replay official teeth away.

Karma-like payback is a ... well, you know.

Firing up the team

Oregon State players made inspirational speeches the day before the Beavers knocked off USC, 33-31. Sammie Straighter would have made Knute Rockne proud.

The Oregon State receiver referenced David vs. Goliath during the team's Friday night chapel service. Then he produced a bag of stones and symbolically handed one to each of his teammates. Linebacker Alan Darling stuck one in his pants (exactly where, I don't know) so that the rub of the rock would remind him on each play of the task at hand.

Straighter, by the way, backed up his inspiration by returning a punt 70 yards for a touchdown that helped push the second-half momentum in Oregon State's favor.

Hurricanes downgraded

Miami will probably find out how the other half lives. The Hurricanes' recent bowl destinations have included stops at the Rose, Orange, Fiesta and Sugar.

Even the team's last two trips to the Peach Bowl in Atlanta has been lucrative in terms of per-team payouts.

Based on the Atlantic Coast Conference's bowl tie-ins and Miami's 5-3 record (going into Saturday's game with Virginia Tech), the Hurricanes' bowl choices will range from the Champs Sports Bowl (Orlando), Music City Bowl (Nashville), Heineken Car Care Bowl (Charlotte, N.C.), Emerald Bowl or MPC Computers Bowl (Boise, Idaho).

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Today's News

Monday, November 6, 2006

Auburn U. Panel Finds Independent-Study Classes Heavily Attended by Athletes Went Easy on All Students

By [JEFFREY SELINGO](#)

A committee at Auburn University investigating whether independent-study classes at the institution that required little work were used to keep athletes academically eligible has found that the two professors who oversaw the courses were "overly accommodating to all students," not just athletes.

Even so, statistics in the panel's [report](#), released last week, show that the fraction of athletes who took courses from the two professors was still much larger than the proportion of athletes at the university over all.

For example, according to the report, in the 12 semesters from the spring of 2003 to the fall of 2006, scholarship athletes made up 17 percent of the enrollment, on average, in Thomas A. Petee's sociology and criminology courses. But in 2004-5, athletes represented only 3.2 percent of undergraduate enrollment at the college in Alabama, according to data for *The Chronicle's* annual report on gender equity in college sports, which uses figures compiled by the U.S. Department of Education. The percentages were similar in James E. Witte's adult-education courses, where athletes accounted for 23 percent of the enrollment, on average, over the same number of semesters.

The committee found the abuses were not widespread across departments and were confined to courses taught by Mr. Petee and Mr. Witte, who had "too many students in too many course sections" and "lacked effective oversight from a higher-level administrative unit." Both professors have since resigned from their administrative duties but remain on the faculty.

The problem with the proliferation of independent-study courses at Auburn was first reported in a July 14 article in *The New York Times*. It included the example of Doug Langenfeld, a former defensive end for the football team who realized that he had to pick up a new class 10 weeks into a 15-week semester to remain eligible for a football-bowl game. He added a course classified as a "directed reading" with Mr. Petee. The player said he got a B for reading one book and submitting one paper.

Indeed, the committee found that independent study was an easy way to earn credits at the university. Former students interviewed by the panel all identified the same work expectations from Mr. Petee: "reading one or two books and completing a term paper, approximately 15 pages long." In addition, "all indicated that they were expected to work on their own, with no class meeting times."

Students who took the courses with Mr. Witte didn't even have to read a book, according to the committee's interviews with students.

"The students interviewed indicated that they were required to meet with Dr. J. Witte at the start of the semester to receive their syllabus," the report said. "They also had two or three meetings with Dr. J. Witte during the semester. Typically, they had to complete a written assignment and had to take some sort of exams to determine what sort of learner they are. One student gave the example of taking the Myers-Briggs personality-trait test."

The committee found that in "a small number of cases," students in both programs never completed the required

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work, yet received grades. "These appear to be due to the faculty members' careless record-keeping," the report said.

As for the students who received grades, most got A's from both professors. The report found that 66.3 percent of the students in Mr. Witte's courses received A's (58.7 percent of athletes received A's). In Mr. Petee's courses, 90.6 percent of all students received A's or B's (88.5 percent of athletes got A's or B's).

Auburn's president, Edward R. Richardson, said in a statement on Friday that a new policy announced in August ([The Chronicle](#), August 11) should ensure the correct use of directed-reading courses.

"We have outstanding academic programs at Auburn, and our new policies only enhance those programs," Mr. Richardson said. "I'm confident that Auburn is a stronger institution today because we have addressed this issue directly and openly."

Neither Mr. Witte nor Mr. Petee could be reached for comment on Sunday.

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