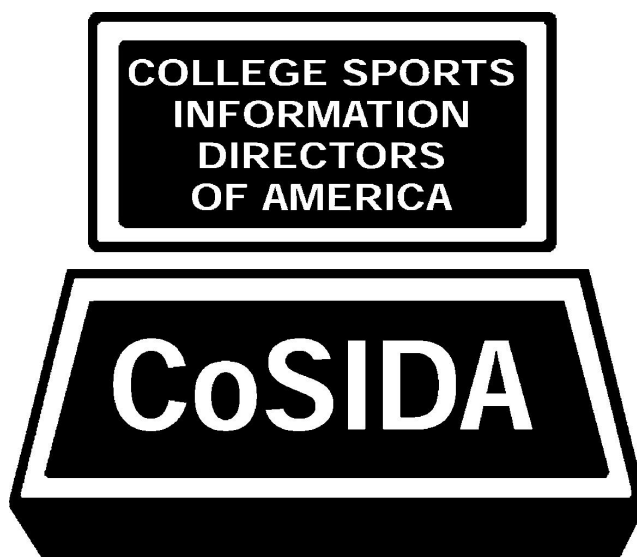


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SEPTEMBER 5, 2006



THIS STORY HAS BEEN FORMATTED FOR EASY PRINTING

COLLEGE FOOTBALL NOTES

The Boston Globe

Soft schedule can be hard

By Mark Blaudschun | September 4, 2006

The mind-set college football coaches and athletic directors used in the addition of a 12th regular-season game was to bring in an opponent who could be beaten and also bring in some additional revenue.

Simple, right? The obvious way to go was to "underschedule," which is why there were a plethora of Division 1-A vs. Division 1-AA meetings over the weekend.

But sometimes strange things can happen. Take what occurred at Colorado Saturday, where new coach Dan Hawkins was going to open the post-Gary Barnett era with a gimme against 1-AA Montana State.

Colorado fans looking to erase the memory of last year's 7-6 record (including a 70-3 loss to Texas in the Big 12 title game) came to Boulder ready to embrace Hawkins, who had compiled a 92-23-1 record at Boise State.

It was the Buffaloes' first meeting with a 1-AA opponent. It may be the last after a 19-10 loss to Montana State that had the normally loquacious Hawkins struggling for an explanation.

"The bottom line is that we got outcoached and we got outplayed," he said. "That's a fact, however you try to slice and dice it."

Uh, Dan, that wasn't supposed to happen.

It was just as bad at Duke, which fell to 1-AA Richmond, 13-0.

The Blue Devils received their traditional Top 25 vote from former Blue Devil and current South Carolina coach Steve Spurrier last week. But Duke, coming off a horrible 1-10 season, doesn't look close to being ready for prime time.

"We talked about it all week," said Richmond coach Dave Clawson.

"We expected to win. It is 1-A vs. 1-AA, but when the game starts, it's 11 against 11. And we told our guys that if we could outwork, out hustle, out hit, out execute, not turn the football over, we thought we had a great chance to win."

But a shutout? Oh, those Dukies.

At least Iowa handled 1-AA Montana, 41-7, limiting Montana to 10 yards rushing. And Virginia Tech's 38-0 rout of Northeastern was another such spanking. But other than adding a victory to a team's total, what is gained by such matchups for the 1-A team besides the possibility of "pulling a Colorado."

Just ask Mississippi State how it felt after its loss to Maine in 2004. Northwestern, which hosts New Hampshire Sunday, better watch out.

Challenge met

A mini-Atlantic Coast Conference-Big East challenge turned out OK for the Big East as Rutgers knocked off North Carolina, 21-16, and Pittsburgh rolled over Virginia, 38-13. Wake Forest did defeat Syracuse, 20-10, which shows how far the Orange have fallen in the past few years . . . Vince Who? Longhorns freshman quarterback **Colt McCoy** got his career off to a nice start in a 56-7 rout of North Texas. He was 12 of 19 for 178 yards and three TDs and had another 38 yards rushing with a TD. But a word of warning. No. 1 Ohio State, which is coming to Austin Saturday night, is not North Texas.

Vols did it all

No. 23 Tennessee mauled No. 9 California, 35-18, at Neyland Stadium Saturday. Tennessee, coming off a 5-6 season that had everyone in Knoxville, and especially coach **Phillip Fulmer**, uneasy, *had* to win the game. A loss would have

ratcheted up the noise about Fulmer's future, especially with SEC East rival Florida coming to town in a couple of weeks. Cal wanted to win, but it wasn't essential for coach **Jeff Tedford's** team. The Bears just wanted to get in a game before heading home to figure out a way to knock off reigning Pacific-10 power Southern California. It was basically over by the half as Tennessee, with an offense run by new (and former) coordinator **David Cutcliffe**, took a 14-0 halftime lead. That turned into a 35-0 third-quarter lead before Cal started looking like the No. 9 team in the country rather than a ninth-place team in a conference. Tennessee was delighted. ``We're back," said wide receiver **Robert Meachem**. ``We've still got a lot to learn, but we're back. That was fun." Meachem had five catches for 182 yards and a couple of touchdowns. Also happy was revitalized quarterback **Erik Ainge** (nephew of Celtics honcho **Danny**). Ainge, who had five touchdown passes last season, tossed four Saturday night.

Not missing a beat

So how good is USC going to be with Heisman Trophy winners **Reggie Bush** and **Matt Leinart** and running back **LenDale White** all moving on to the National Football League? Oh, they'll be OK, if a 50-14 romp past Arkansas was any indication. Quarterback **John David Booty**, finally making his USC debut after a three-year wait, was more than OK, completing 24 of 35 passes for 261 yards and three touchdowns. Much was also made about Arkansas wanting to make peace with itself after allowing the Trojans an astonishing 70 points a year ago. Oh well, I guess allowing only 50 this year is some kind of progress.

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From Athens to Atlanta, Football Reigns

New Rules, Same Atmosphere at UGA

Greg Chalfin

Posted: 9/5/06

Things got ugly in Athens last November.

The University of Georgia football team fell by one point to Auburn University (Ala.). After eight wins in a row, the Bulldogs had now dropped two straight Southeastern Conference games having lost the week before to the University of Florida. That was only the beginning of the problems.

"Whoo, after the Auburn game, the whole damn city was trashed," UGA junior Scott Szymanski said. "That was tons of fun, but I mean the garbage was everywhere. They ripped out a bunch of seats in [Sanford Stadium]."

UGA's response: New policies - the "Gameday Gameplan" - that would make Georgia a place where everyone could enjoy the game. It meant implementing restrictions on parking and tailgating. It meant creating "family-friendly" zones where alcohol is prohibited. In short, when these measures were approved in April, it meant Georgia wanted to scale back its legendary gameday party. Saturday's opener against Western Kentucky University was the first test outside the stadium and "Between the Hedges" for the Bulldogs. After UGA's 48-12 win, many fans felt both goals were successfully met.

"I definitely think it's been better today," Bulldogs fan Jennifer Herring said as she walked with her child. "Sometimes, you'd see a lot of drunks, and I haven't seen that today."

The concern, of course, is that the new policy's restrictions would take away from the atmosphere and traditions in and around Sanford Stadium. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported in a non-scientific poll on Sunday that 81 percent of the more than 2,100 respondents believe the changes were either unnecessary or financially motivated. To be able to tailgate close to the stadium, season ticket holders must now contribute a minimum of \$2,500 to the UGA Athletic Association.

I paid \$10 to park a pleasant 35-minute walk away. And as I followed the red sea toward the stadium, nobody peed or threw up on me. I even mistakenly walked down UGA's frat row without incident. So far, so good.

Inside the stadium, nearly all of the 92,476 fans thought only of the Bulldogs, not of policies or family-friendly zones.

"I haven't really seen any effect on [the atmosphere]," Szymanski said. "I mean, it's only the first game, but I haven't seen any effect."

Maybe the best analogy is the fate of junior flanker Mikey Henderson's day. Henderson returned two punts for touchdowns (only one of which counted) to spark UGA's 31-7 halftime lead.

On Henderson's first return - the first of his career - he showboated and dropped the ball at the one-yard line as he crossed the goal line. One minute and 16 seconds later, Henderson performed his magic again, and Georgia never looked back. But UGA, like Henderson, dropped the ball on its gameday policy for many years.

"I remember 12 or 13 years ago, we started to allow parking on Lumpkin Street [near the stadium]," Athens police officer David Meagher said. "It got to the point we couldn't even get an ambulance in there."

Students used to be able to park literally anywhere. Now, 75 officers patrol campus, with some working 14- to 16-hour shifts. Meagher said the patrols made Saturday one of the tamer days in his 17-year tenure. Yes, it was Western Kentucky - not Tennessee or Georgia Tech - and the Athens Police Department will have greater challenges, but Meagher's words say UGA's policies are a step in the right direction.

Emory, of course, has the opposite problem. No athletic event draws 92,000 students and usually not even 920. A new policy forbidding tailgating before 7 a.m., like UGA's, would draw laughs, maybe get someone fired for idiocy, and upset no one.

At the same time, Emory is stoking its rivalry with Washington University in St. Louis. "The Department," hoping to foster more school spirit, rowdiness and atmosphere at Emory athletic events, has had moderate success in its first year.

Despite being the direct opposite of UGA's policies, "The Department" moves Eagle athletics forward. It's the right move toward making Emory athletics more enjoyable and popular.

Emory counters UGA's restricted tailgating with its own barrage of free food and drinks at athletic events provided by the E-Team Rewards program. Sounds like a relative of tailgating to me.

UGA and Emory sit close to two opposite poles of college athletics. Opposite ideas define the most recent steps in promoting these programs, and both ideas are right.

-Contact Greg Chalfin at gchalfi@learnlink.emory.edu.

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U.S. colleges get failing grade

By Silvio Laccetti

Tuesday, September 5, 2006

Millions of college students are now returning to school. U.S. News & World Report has just released its latest, much-heralded ranking of America's best colleges. Amid all this activity and fanfare, we might ask how our system of higher education is faring.

The system is failing, according to a less-heralded study conducted by the American Institutes for Research earlier this year. Its survey of college literacy indicates that most college students can't perform an array of "common but complex" assignments: like balancing a checkbook, understanding simple charts or comprehending this article. Only 38 percent can do the latter.

Leaders in all areas of society must ask "What's wrong?" I ask why such dubious performers are in four-year colleges to begin with. What kinds of institutions have colleges become, and what is their proper place in a pressure-packed 21st century that seems to require higher education of all Americans?

In the last 60 years, colleges have taken on a multiplicity of purposes and meanings, most of which are not central to the historic function of the college as an educational institution.

First and foremost, college has become a big business, as have most other aspects of education and training. There are 18 million college students. They are customers, or consumers of educational services. Program offerings are profit centers. The all-important appropriate "market share" is sought by clever public relations campaigns and through the purportedly unbiased annual ranking surveys. Every college wants to top out its own targeted market share of students. If students are educationally shortchanged, who cares? We know they can't balance their checkbooks anyway!

The big business culture in education can inhibit academics and can debilitate programs, which, though necessary, may not be profitable in an economic or public relations sense.

For the big colleges, especially the NCAA category, the intrusion of pre-professional sports dovetails well with the economic model of college as a big business. For example, the Bowl Championship Series football games produce \$150 million in revenue for participating teams and conferences. TV revenues are enormous. Cable and TV network sports programs are ubiquitous. Big name coaches are usually the highest paid employees on campus.

The money, hype and lure of big-time athletics send the wrong message to our society — and to the world community — as to what college is all about. In particular, the televised world of sports-crazed fans ties in with what is perhaps the most insidious function of contemporary colleges: the extension of adolescent dependence in millions of young people. The public should never underestimate the role of parties, drinking bouts or spring break hijinks as portrayed in the print, media, movies, TV and beer commercials.

The most important new social function colleges have acquired in the post-World War II period has been career preparation. Go to college so that you can get a good job. Preparation for a productive life has long been an aim of higher education, but the narrowing vocationalism and economic imperative is something more recent. The globalizing, high-tech service economy demands post-secondary training. The American Institutes for Research

survey suggests that only about 38 percent of ready-to-graduate students can “perform complex tasks” across the board. Thirty-eight percent is a failing grade.

For America to continue its world leadership, colleges must first and foremost be about learning. Students must develop their creative powers, which foster new ideas and technologies.

Students should cultivate analytical abilities in order to understand complex issues, and they should know how to apply critical reasoning to the various problems of our age. We must seek to increase the required number of potentially talented students drawn from every class and sector of society.

But to accomplish any fundamental change, we must first be able to read the handwriting on the wall.

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Three Sunday helpings of Dry Ribs

By Ron Higgins

[Contact](#)

September 3, 2006



1. I've been watching college football from the early 1960s and have a great appreciation of the history of the game even before I was old enough to watch it. I've been covering college football as a reporter since 1979.

And you know, I still get fired up for the opening weekend of college football.

It never gets old for me listening to those illegal cowbells ring in Starkville, or the P.A. announcer at Neyland Stadium say, "It's Football Time in Tennessee!" Or the Bear Bryant video in Tuscaloosa just before Alabama runs on the field.

Or the War Eagle flying at Auburn, the Gator fans doing the chomp in Gainesville and certainly the LSU band's pregame show where they salute every side of the stadium as they play the few first notes of "Hold That Tiger." Or beautiful coeds and the partying in The Grove, the Hog calls of the Arkansas faithful in Fayetteville.

It never gets old for me to covering games in traditional locales, like at Notre Dame (the best fight song ever in college football) or at Army (the sense of military history overwhelms you) or at Texas A&M (with all those crazy Aggies, the robotic all-male cheerleaders and that great war hymn).

It never gets old for me driving back from an assignment on a Saturday night, picking up various games on the AM radio band. It's like listening to games broadcast from Mars, but it's worth it when you hear Georgia play-by-play voice Larry Munson growl, "Whaddaya got Loren?"

All of that keeps college football fresh and evolving every year. That's why it doesn't seem like I'm starting my 28th year perched in a press box.

2. Lorenzen Wright finally signed his deal with Atlanta last Wednesday, ending his five-year run with the Grizzlies.

He will be missed in many ways. He was a great locker room guy, someone who provided much of the same perspective that Shane Battier did. On the floor, nobody brought it every night like Wright.

You and I know he was undersized to play the post in the NBA, but you could never tell Lorenzen that. He brought a fierce competitiveness that often raised the level of his teammates when they were sinking.

Last season, after he finally buried his feelings about not being offered an extension before the season, he was a true professional. When Mike Fratello chose to start Jake Tsakalidis at center in the last half of the season a year ago, Wright didn't pout and didn't go in the tank. Instead, he took on his role off the bench with vigor, understanding since he was playing less time that he could be more aggressive and not worry about fouling out.

Wright was the first person to model a Grizzlies jersey. He did in July of 2001 when the Grizzlies held their "We've Moved to Memphis" celebration at Peabody Place. I remember the joy in Wright's face. The former University of Memphis star never believed his city would ever have an NBA team. Then in a matter of months, Memphis got a team and Wright was traded here on the night before the 2001 draft.

He'll forever be remembered as one of the Grizzlies' most popular players. Like Battier who was traded to Houston, Wright should receive a standing ovation when the Hawks play in Memphis in the upcoming 2006-07 season.

3. NCAA president Myles Brand said last week it might be time for the NCAA to work with the NBA, other basketball organizations and even shoe companies on a plan that would better prepare high school athletes for success in college.

It's not the NBA's job to help prepare high school athletes for success in college. The NBA would sign a junior high kid if it was legal and if the kid was a physical freak with skills beyond his years.

Shoe companies certainly don't care about educating blue-chip players. They cozy up to certain players at a very young age, giving them free gear. It just validates the feelings of some kids that they don't need college, that they just need the NBA and a shoe contract.

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The only people who can help high school athletes get ready for the real world are parents or a parent, or a genuinely concerned high school coach.

It's tough to reach a lot of kids from single-parent homes and backgrounds that most of us can't imagine. Sometimes, you have someone reach out, like Memphis businessman and former Ole Miss basketball star Sean Tuohy, who adopted former Briarcrest football star Michael Oher, who now starts at Ole Miss.

Everybody and his brother smirked at that move, wondering about Tuohy's motivation behind it. The motivation was simple and I can say this because I've known Tuohy since we were teenagers in Louisiana. His motivation was of a financially secure human being and his family reaching out to a kid from a rough background that just needed some attention, guidance, motivation and love to help him reach his obvious enormous potential.

That's what we need. Not shoe companies. Not the NBA. Just simple human compassion.

To reach reporter Ron Higgins, call 529-2525 or [send an e-mail](#).

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September 3, 2006

CAREER COUCH

E-Mail in Haste, Panic at Leisure

By MATT VILLANO

Q. You accidentally sent a disparaging e-mail message about a co-worker to the co-worker. What should you do now?

A. Acknowledge your error immediately. Elizabeth Freedman, a management consultant in Natick, Mass., said the worst thing to do after committing an e-mail gaffe is to pretend you didn't do it.

"Don't sit around and hope and pray that your e-mail didn't get read or was somehow lost in cyberspace," she said. "Hit the ground running and take action to repair the damage."

Q. Do these kinds of slip-ups happen often?

A. Surprisingly, they do. Employees most commonly send e-mail messages to the wrong person, or inadvertently send out draft notes as final. Carelessness is often the cause: as employees rush to send hundreds of messages in a given day, many fail to check the content and addressee of each note.

Technology could be a factor as well. Many e-mail programs include an addressing function called AutoComplete that suggests recipients based on names in a user's address book. When the sender starts typing a name in the "To" field, the software automatically fills in the first alphabetical match.

But Eric M. Rosenberg, president of LitigationProofing, a liability consulting firm in Mamaroneck, N.Y., says the software's suggestion is not always the sender's intended recipient.

"We tend to address e-mail with the same attention we give to driving while talking on the cellphone," Mr. Rosenberg said. "In many cases this can lead to disaster."

Another culprit may be the "Reply All" feature in most e-mail programs, a button that lets recipients of a mass e-mail message respond to the sender and everyone else who received a particular note. Mr. Rosenberg notes that employees often hit this button when they mean to hit just "Reply" and unknowingly send a personal note to dozens or hundreds of people.

Q. Are there ways to recapture misdirected e-mail?

A. Not really. Some e-mail programs, like the Outlook program in Microsoft Office, come with an

optional recall feature, but in most cases the feature doesn't let a sender actually yank a message from the recipient's mailbox. Instead, the feature sends the recipient a second message announcing that the sender wishes to recall the first.

Chris Schneider, a product marketing manager at Microsoft, said the recall feature could actually recall a note, but only if both sender and recipient used the same e-mail server and the recipient had not yet opened the original note.

Robbie Kellman Baxter, president of Peninsula Strategies, an online services consulting firm in Palo Alto, Calif., said that efforts to retrieve a message rarely achieved the intended goal. "People think that when they hit recall, this magic hand goes out and pulls that message from everyone's in-box and makes it disappear," she said. But the second messages only serve to highlight the original messages, she said: "They're attention-grabbers." Q. If you send an errant note, should you apologize?

A. A sincere apology always helps to defuse the situation. Deliver this message in person; if you don't work in the recipient's office, pick up the phone. Jennifer Selby, president of the Selby Group, a management consulting firm in San Francisco, says that conversing in real time shows that you are willing to make things right.

"You've already taken the low road; now take the high road," she said. "While it's true that you've made a terrible mistake and have probably hurt your co-worker, you can still salvage your working relationship by taking a direct and open approach."

Q. What kind of recourse does your colleague have against you?

A. Depending on whom you offend and how, your message could land you in trouble. The maligned co-worker could, for instance, forward your disparaging message to the boss, an action that may well raise an eyebrow or two at your next performance review. At worst, a misdirected message could lead to dismissal.

Kate Zabriskie, president of Business Training Works, a consulting firm in Port Tobacco, Md., said a formal complaint could be filed with the human resources department, especially if the recipient felt like a victim of harassment.

"The problem is that e-mail lives forever," Ms. Zabriskie said. "Once you send it, the note is out there and can be used against you by anyone."

Q. Can any good come from this uncomfortable situation?

A. As long as the co-worker is willing to forgive you, this kind of incident can force both parties to speak honestly and make amends.

Regina Barr, president and chief executive of Red Ladder, a management consulting firm in Inver Grove Heights, Minn., said that sometimes an e-mail gaffe was just what two colleagues needed to prompt an overdue discussion about getting along.

“You are going to put your heart on your sleeve,” she said. “If you and your co-worker ever have something to hash out, this is the perfect chance to do it. You could even end up as friends.”

At the very least, the painful process of recovery from misdirected notes should teach employees to be more careful before they click the “Send” button and to make sure they’re sending e-mail messages to the right places.

Fast communication by e-mail is a valuable business tool, but remember that the flip side of instant gratification is instant mortification.

Workplace or career topics may be sent to ccouch@nytimes.com.

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THE DIGITAL COLLEGIAN

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BY STUDENTS AT
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NEWS

[Tuesday, Sept. 5, 2006]

Ban gets icy reply

By **Travis Larchuk** [EMAIL](#)
Collegian Staff Writer

As the Nittany Lions battled Akron in the pouring rain Saturday, the few tailgaters who braved the weather had an issue of their own to deal with: the new ban on drinking in tailgate areas during game time.

Penn State alumnus Bob Reichart, Class of 1972, echoed the sentiments of many tailgaters in his assessment of the new policy.

"I think it's stupid," he said.

Reichart said he's been tailgating at Penn State football games for decades and that most people are just there to have fun, not abuse alcohol.

"The only time I haven't been here was during Vietnam, and I've never seen any problems," he said.

Penn State spokesman Bill Mahon said the new policy was created by a committee that began meeting nine months ago in response to the increased number of underage students hospitalized for alcohol poisoning.

Mahon said the committee is comprised of health experts, university administrators and representatives from Penn State Police Services, the Penn State Alumni Association, student affairs and intercollegiate athletics.

The new policy was inspired by a similar policy adopted recently by the University of Notre Dame, Mahon said.

"We don't know what to do," Mahon said about

alcohol abuse during games. "The educational programs aren't working, the warnings aren't working."

No citations were issued to those who violated the policy Saturday, Penn State University Police assistant supervisor Mark Allen said.

Allen said the policy will go into effect at the third home game, when Penn State plays Northwestern University. Enforcement will especially be targeted toward areas where students and fraternities tailgate, such as Lot 25, Allen said.

"The policy is in place to target those individuals or groups of people who come to the areas around the stadium with no intention of going to the game," he said.



Allen said if tailgaters are observed drinking alcohol during a game police will confiscate the alcohol and ask the violators to leave. Those who do not cooperate with police could be given a summary citation, such as disorderly conduct. Allen also said if those asked to leave refuse to leave the stadium area, they could be charged with trespassing.

State College resident Bob Storch said he was afraid that tailgating could disappear altogether.

"This is the slippery slope toward getting rid of tailgating," Storch said.

Kate Andrew, who graduated from Penn State last May, said it's unfair to prohibit people who are 21 and older from drinking.

PHOTO: Prince Frederick Spells

Penn State alumnus David Biser throws a crushed beer can while tailgating outside Beaver Stadium.

Andrew said because tickets were in such high demand this year, many people were planning to come to Beaver Stadium to tailgate during the game.

"Check our ID, don't tell me I can't tailgate," Andrew said while holding an alcoholic beverage during game time.

Geoff McCollom graduated from Penn State in 1982, and said the money he pays for a tailgating spot comes with certain privileges.

"We give \$1,800 a year to be here; we've earned the right to drink during the game," McCollom said.

He said he is concerned that the rule can't be enforced

fairly.

"How do you enforce it if a guy in his half-million dollar motor home is drinking a glass of wine?" he said.

Allen said legally the policy can't apply to people in mobile homes.

"A motor home is just that -- it's a home on wheels," he said. "Just like I can not come to your house and tell you what to do inside your home, I can't enter someone's mobile home or RV and tell them they can't consume alcoholic beverages."



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A grown kid's sports heroes down to one



**TOM
PURFIELD**

Aunt May spoke words of wisdom when she told Peter Parker, "Lord knows, kids like Henry need a hero . . . everybody needs a hero."

OK, the hero to whom she referred was the title character in the second "Spider-Man" movie, but her words ring true nonetheless.

Almost every little boy or girl naturally develops some degree of hero worship if he or she is a sports freak. At a young age, the wonder of the games people play is enhanced by the stars who play them. Little boys love to proclaim that an athlete is "my guy."

That dedication and loyalty is fierce. And it can last a lifetime.

This thought was brought into focus last week as the world of sport trained its eye on Andre Agassi at the U.S. Open. When Agassi's career came to an end Sunday, another of my childhood heroes had played his last game.

It brought back a flood of memories of watching sport with awe, and innocence, during my formative years. My weekends revolved around the big games, Sports Illustrated was read cover-to-cover and not a drop of ink was missed in the daily sports pages.

So much of that obsession was driven by four of "my guys." And now, only one remains.

The first athlete to completely capture me is still my favorite. And always will be.

Dad and I were watching an obscure college basketball game in the fall of 1981 and some skinny freshman for the University of North Carolina caught our eye. He just seemed to move in a different way from the other players, kind of floating around the court and then exploding with a spectacular move to the rim.

By the time Michael Jordan left the game in 2002, he had taken complete ownership of professional basketball and is widely considered the greatest to ever play the game. If a Chicago Bulls game was on TV, catching it was the top priority of the day, and not just for me, but for about every sports-minded kid I knew in those days. We wanted to have the latest Air Jordans, marveled at his unbelievable moves and helplessly tried to recreate them on the playground courts.

Watching crazy-exciting Denver Broncos games was almost the norm on Sunday

afternoons in the 1980s. After putting the Broncos on his back time and time again, John Elway's never-say-die approach to football made him one of my all-time favorites. When he retired a repeat champion following Super Bowl XXXIII, I was happy he could finally leave all of the physical beatings behind.

Roger Clemens is still going strong today, having lost a few miles per hour on the fastball and replacing the curve with a devastating split-finger pitch. He has flirted with retirement for years and when he finally hangs it up, one child's quartet of sports heros will be gone from the courts and fields of competition.

Tennis was pretty darn cool in the late 1970s and early '80s, with McEnroe, Connors and Borg providing the thrills. When Agassi hit the scene, he did it with a splash of neon, bleach and bling.

The flash was never my thing, but once I saw Agassi play a few times, he quickly became my tennis guy. He was an artist on the court with remarkable groundstrokes that made him a unique craftsman. His game was so much more fun to watch than a guy blasting 150-mph serves for quick, lifeless points. Agassi truly had to earn his.

I stuck with him through a dark period where he tanked matches in the fifth set, let himself go physically and basically said "I couldn't care less." As he gradually returned to the top, he did so as a new man dedicated to respect, humanitarianism and hard work.

Agassi is now a renowned philanthropist and ambassador of tennis. His Andre Agassi College Preparatory Academy, purposefully established in one of Las Vegas' most destitute neighborhoods, is a groundbreaking institute that has made a huge impact in the most important way.

Athletes' performance on the field usually makes them heroes in a child's eyes. Agassi's performance in life makes him a hero in the eyes of a grown man.

Chieftain sportswriter Tom Purfield may be reached at (719) 544-0006, ext. 453; or by e-mailing tpurfield@chieftain.com.

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September 4, 2006

SEC, Big East make big statements in Week 1

Steve Megargee

[Rivals.com College Football](#)

KNOXVILLE, Tenn. – Tennessee quarterback **Erik Ainge** said his teammates could hear California's players screaming "Pac-10" during pregame warm-ups Saturday at Neyland Stadium.

The Volunteers spent the rest of the day helping the Southeastern Conference deliver an emphatic response.

Tennessee's stunning 35-18 demolition of the ninth-ranked Golden Bears helped the SEC make its case as the top BCS conference.

"This game wasn't just for Tennessee vs. California," Ainge said. "It was the South vs. the West Coast. The SEC and Pac-10. We took that to heart."

The opening week featured three SEC/Pac-10 matchups. Auburn buried Washington State 40-14, while Southern California salvaged some Pac-10 pride with its 50-14 whipping of Arkansas.

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AP
Tyler Palko led Pitt to a convincing win over Virginia.

But the biggest stories of the first week came in the Big East.

The conference lost arguably its most dynamic player when Louisville's Michael Bush broke his leg in Sunday night's game with Kentucky, but it also continued to shed its "Big East" label by winning two of three head-to-head matchups with the Atlantic Coast Conference.

Pittsburgh quarterback **Tyler Palko** showed signs of regaining his 2004 form in a 38-13 whipping of Virginia, while Rutgers went on the road and beat North Carolina 21-16. The ACC's only victory over the Big East came at Wake Forest, where the Demon Deacons outlasted Syracuse 20-10.

The Rutgers victory was particularly interesting because it featured a breakthrough performance from **Raymell Rice**, who gained 201 yards and scored three touchdowns. The combination of Rice and fullback **Brian Leonard** could give Rutgers one of the nation's top backfield tandems.

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The unofficial SEC-Pac-10 and Big East-ACC challenge represented just one of the top 25 storylines of college football's opening week. Now let's run down the rest of the Top 25:

2. Hawkins' rude awakening: Colorado had never faced a Division I-AA team before Saturday.

The Buffaloes probably don't want to do it again anytime soon.

Former Boise State coach **Dan Hawkins'** debut at Colorado resulted in a stunning 19-10 loss to Montana State. Rick Neuheisel remains the only Buffaloes coach since 1932 to win his first game at Colorado.

And this loss could have been even worse. Montana State reached Colorado's 1-yard line on back-to-back series in the fourth quarter and had just three points to show for it.

"I have been doing this a long time, and I've lost before," Hawkins told **BuffStampede.com**. "If you can't understand how to deal with losing, you are never going to win. To me, it is only devastating if people make it devastating. We understand that most people are going to jump on when it's rosy, but we all find out about ourselves when things aren't so good."

3. Hey, hey, I-AA: Montana State wasn't the only Division I-AA team to knock off a I-A program this weekend.

Richmond posted a 13-0 victory over Duke, which never recovered after losing running backs **Justin Boyle** and **Ronnie Drummer** to injuries in the first half.

New Mexico's offense didn't fare much better in a 17-6 loss to Portland State. The victories by Portland State and Montana State marked the first time in six years that two Big Sky teams beat Division I-A teams on the same day.

Northern Arizona nearly gave the Big Sky three wins over I-A teams this week. The Lumberjacks were tied 14-14 with Arizona State at the end of three quarters before falling 35-14.

4. Trojans share the wealth: So much for the talk that all those offseason departures would decimate Southern California's offense.

USC doesn't have Reggie Bush or LenDale White, but the Trojans proved against Arkansas that they still know how to run the ball.

In fact, USC has so many capable backs that Trojans coach Pete Carroll can't seem to pick a favorite.

Allen Bradford, C.J. Gable, Emmanuel Moody, Desmond Reed and **Chauncey Washington** all carried the ball at least four times Saturday in a 50-14 victory over Arkansas. Gable (12 attempts, 58 yards) got the ball the most, but Moody (7-58) and Washington (8-55) averaged more yards per carry.

5. Rapid recovery: As they absorbed a second consecutive one-sided defeat to Southern California, Arkansas fans at least could take solace in **Darren McFadden's** comeback.

The All-America candidate rushed nine times for 42 yards barely a month after undergoing surgery on his left big toe. McFadden said he was playing at about 80 to 85 percent of full strength.

"It just feels good to be out there on the field with my teammates again," McFadden told **HawgSports.com**. "And being able to play in this game, I'm just really thankful."

The Razorbacks better hope McFadden is ready to run even more next week. **Felix Jones** fumbled three times in the first half Saturday – losing two of them - while splitting carries with McFadden.

6. Tenuta does it again: Looking for a way to shut down the offense of a top 10 team? Give Georgia Tech defensive coordinator **Jon Tenuta** a call.

Georgia Tech used Tenuta's aggressive, take-no-prisoners approach to upset Auburn and Miami last year. The Jackets nearly pulled off another major upset Saturday before falling 14-10 to second-ranked Notre Dame.

The Jackets held Heisman Trophy candidate **Brady Quinn** without a touchdown pass and shut the Fighting Irish out for the game's first 29 minutes. Georgia Tech coaxed Notre Dame into three false-start penalties and forced the Irish to rely on short passes instead of throwing deep.

"It's a little different when you're under duress than when you have time to step and throw," Notre Dame coach **Charlie Weis** told **IrishIllustrated.com**.



Associated Press

Brady Quinn was held without a touchdown pass against Georgia Tech.

7. Two-way Travis: One of the nation's most high-profile preseason position switches was Weis' decision to move backup running back **Travis Thomas** to linebacker, where the junior earned a starting job on the weak side.

But when the Irish needed to run out the clock in the fourth quarter, Thomas was back at his old position grinding out yardage.

He finished the night with six carries for 19 yards on offense and four tackles on defense. Two of his tackles were behind the line of scrimmage.

8. Gambles don't pay off: Central Michigan and Illinois State both squandered opportunities to pull upsets after their late risks backfired.

After Illinois State scored a touchdown that cut Kansas State's lead to 24-23 with 3:02 remaining Saturday, the Redbirds went for two instead of trying a game-tying extra point. Kansas State sacked quarterback **Luke Drone** and survived with a one-point victory.

Central Michigan trailed Boston College 31-24 and had the ball on the Eagles' 34-yard line in the final minutes of a 31-24 game. That's when the Chippewas lined up in a bizarre formation that placed their offensive line on the left hash mark, while their quarterbacks and receivers were on the right hash mark.

The plan backfired when Chippewas quarterback **Dan LeFevour** ran for his life before making an off-balance pass that **Brian Toal** intercepted with 1:33 remaining.

That wasn't the Chippewas' only odd decision. Boston College also scored a second-quarter touchdown after Central Michigan unsuccessfully went for a first down on fourth-and-8 from its 27.

9. Nix up to his old tricks: **Tyrone Nix** earned a reputation as one of the game's top young defensive coordinators while at Southern Mississippi, but he couldn't translate that success to the Southeastern Conference last year. South Carolina finished 10th in the conference in total defense last year with Nix serving as co-defensive coordinator.

Perhaps the Gamecocks just needed time to adjust to him.

In Nix's first game as sole defensive coordinator, South Carolina allowed just 161 total yards to blank Mississippi State 15-0. The Bulldogs advanced beyond South Carolina's 38-yard line only once all night, when an interception gave them the ball on the 28.

The Gamecocks knocked starting quarterback Michael Henig out of the game with a broken collarbone in the first half, then teed off on backup **Tray Rutland** the rest of the night.

"Tyrone Nix called a gutsy game, a heck of a game," South Carolina head coach **Steve Spurrier** told **GamecockCentral.com**. "That's the way we need to play."

10. Similar name, similar game: There's a new guy wearing Olson on his back in the UCLA huddle, but his performance brought back some familiar memories.

Ben Olson threw for 318 yards and three touchdowns in the Bruins' surprisingly easy 31-10 victory over Utah. Olson is replacing Drew Olson – no relation – who threw 34 touchdown passes and only six interceptions last year.

UCLA's surprisingly easy victory could cause some people to raise their expectations of the Bruins. Because they struggled late last season and lost Drew Olson, the Bruins were widely picked to finish around the middle of the Pac-10 standings this season.

11. Utah's BCS hopes take a hit: Before the season, Mountain West rivals Texas Christian and Utah were considered the most likely beneficiaries of a rule making it easier for teams from smaller conferences to earn BCS bids.

The addition of a fifth BCS game this year allows a team from a conference such as the Mountain West to earn an automatic bowl bid to the Fiesta, Rose, Orange or Sugar if it is ranked in the top 12 of the final BCS standings.

But it's tough to imagine Utah earning a BCS invitation now.

Losing so badly to UCLA could prevent Utah from reaching the top 12 this year. The Utes have no games remaining against teams from BCS conferences.



Steve Spurrier will likely not be welcomed with cheers the next time he visits The Swamp.

12. Look who's back: On a night when Florida unveiled much of its future, the Gators also reached to the past.

Percy Harvin, rated by Rivals.com as the No. 1 player in the 2006 recruiting class, ran four times for 58 yards and had three catches for 33 yards in Florida's 42-7 victory over Southern Mississippi. Highly touted freshman quarterback **Tim Tebow** came off the bench and rushed for a touchdown.

But the loudest cheers were reserved for former Gator coach **Steve Spurrier**, who returned to Florida Field as part of a pregame ceremony honoring the 1996 national champions. Spurrier could get a much different response when he leads South Carolina into Gainesville on Nov. 11.

Spurrier wasn't the only familiar name from the past to make an appearance. **Stephen Reaves**, the son of former star Gator quarterback John Reaves, played quarterback for Southern Mississippi in the fourth quarter.

13. Northwestern getting defensive: Northwestern and Miami (Ohio) held a moment of silence before their game Thursday to honor former Wildcats and Red Hawks coach Randy Walker, who died of a heart attack two months ago. The Wildcats handed Walker's widow, Tammy, a game ball after their 21-3 victory.

In between those moments, the Wildcats bore little resemblance to the high-scoring Northwestern teams of the Walker era.

Northwestern recorded five sacks, held Miami to 2½ yards per carry and didn't allow a touchdown for the first time since a 38-5 victory over Duke in Sept. 9, 2000 – the second game of the Walker era.

The Wildcats ranked last in the nation in total defense a year ago, but they still went 7-5 because of Walker's explosive offense. They may be learning a different way to win under first-year coach and former All-America linebacker **Pat Fitzgerald**.

14. Everything's all Wright in Fresno: One of the most heartwarming developments of the season's opening week came in Fresno, where former 1,000-yard rusher **Dwayne Wright** rushed for 158 yards and three touchdowns in a 28-19 victory over Nevada.

What made this story so special? Wright hadn't played a game in nearly two years.

After rushing for 1,038 yards two years ago, Wright tore the patellar tendon in his left knee at the end of a 61-yard pass play during a 45-21 upset of Kansas State on Sept. 11, 2004. He sat out the rest of that season and the entire 2005 campaign.

15. Broussard's also back: Wright wasn't the only running back to return from a serious knee injury this week.

LSU's **Alley Broussard** also returned after missing the entire 2004 season with an injured right knee. Broussard, who rushed for a team-high 867 yards in 2004, gained 46 yards and scored a touchdown Saturday in the Tigers' 45-3 victory over Louisiana-Lafayette.

"It was great to see a guy that has undergone as much adversity as Broussard to get in there," LSU coach **Les Miles** told **TigerBait.com**. "We want him to have some success. We're not going to go too fast with him. We want him to be ready when he gets in a game that's competitive."

16. Sooners struggle past UAB: Oklahoma quarterback **Paul Thompson** played well enough to help the Sooners beat Alabama-Birmingham 24-17, but the former receiver also made the type of errors he can't repeat two weeks from now at Oregon.

Thompson threw two interceptions after Oklahoma had driven inside UAB's 25-yard line. Those turnovers – coupled with some poor tackling by Oklahoma's vaunted defense - helped the Blazers stay close all day.

17. Wolverines' defense comes alive: New Michigan defensive coordinator **Ron English** promised that the Wolverines would play harder and faster this season.

So far, so good.

Michigan collected six sacks and 11 tackles for loss in a season-opening 27-7 victory over Vanderbilt. The Commodores' only touchdown came on a trick play – a 30-yard pass by wide receiver **Earl Bennett**.

"It feels like Coach E., he's more aggressive," sophomore cornerback **Charles Stewart** told **TheWolverine.com**. "He's more enthusiastic. We're more excited to play for Coach E. There was nothing wrong with Coach Herm ([former defensive coordinator Jim Herrmann]), we were excited for him too, but Coach E. just brings something else to the table emotionally."

18. Dennis Erickson can still coach: Although he never had much success in the NFL, it's hard to argue with Erickson's track record as a college coach. His résumé includes two national titles at Miami and a Pac-10 co-championship at Oregon State.

Erickson's latest move trying to turn around an Idaho program that has lost 47 games in the last five years, represent the toughest challenge of his career.

He took a step in the right direction Saturday.

Erickson began his second tenure at Idaho (he previously coached there from 1982-85) with a closer-than-expected 27-17 loss to Michigan State. The Spartans entered the game as a 29-point favorite, but they didn't clinch the victory until Brett Swensen kicked a 23-yard field goal with 30 seconds remaining.

19. McCoy cements his status: Ohio State doesn't have to worry about guessing the identity of Texas' starting quarterback next weekend.

Colt McCoy solidified his hold on the job by going 12-of-19 for 177 yards with three touchdown passes in the Longhorns' 56-7 shellacking of North Texas. McCoy had earned the right to start the season opener by beating out true freshman **Jevan Snead**.

Snead didn't look nearly as comfortable in his debut. He went 3-of-7 for 20 yards with an interception.



Even in a loss, Dennis Erickson's Idaho team showed signs of life.

20. True freshman QBs make their mark: True freshman **Matthew Stafford** couldn't win Georgia's preseason quarterback competition, but his performance Saturday indicates he may not remain a reserve much longer.

Stafford went 3-of-5 for 40 yards and a touchdown pass in the Bulldogs' 48-12 victory over Western Kentucky. He led two fourth-quarter touchdown drives in relief of starter **Joe Tereshinski**, who went 7-of-17 for 90 yards.

Stafford's performance dominated the headlines, but Georgia's coaches said Tereshinski will remain the starter next weekend against South Carolina.

"I feel good about the way Joe T played and the way he performed," Georgia quarterbacks coach **Mike Bobo** told UGASports.com. "I feel comfortable with him going into Columbia."

While Stafford still must wait his turn, the time is now for Arkansas true freshman quarterback **Mitch Mustain**.

Mustain went 4-of-6 for 42 yards and led a touchdown drive in the Razorbacks' loss to Southern California. He has been named the starting quarterback for next weekend's game with Utah State.

21. Mixed results for Wolfe, Thomas: North Texas' **Jamarion Thomas** and Northern Illinois' **Garrett Wolfe** entered this season with a track record of success against bigger programs.

Thomas had averaged 6.7 yards per carry against Big 12 teams during his career. Wolfe had rushed for 393 yards in games against Big Ten schools Michigan and Northwestern last year.

Only one of them continued that run of success Saturday.

Wolfe compiled 171 rushing yards and 114 receiving yards in Northern Illinois' 35-12 loss to top-ranked Ohio State, but Thomas mustered just 38 yards on 14 carries as North Texas fell 56-7 to No. 3 Texas.

22. Meyer on the run: The Big 12's top returning quarterback just added another dimension to his game.

Bret Meyer threw for 234 yards and a pair of touchdowns in Iowa State's 45-43 overtime victory over Toledo, but his legs proved as valuable as his arm. The senior quarterback rushed for 70 yards and three touchdowns on 18 carries.

Meyer doubled his career total for rushing touchdowns and ran for almost half as many yards in this game as he did all of last year.



Associated Press

Graham Harrell picked up where his predecessors left off.

23. New QB, same story: Texas Tech quarterbacks Kliff Kingsbury, B.J. Symons, Sonny Cumbie and Cody Hodges have led the nation in passing yardage each of the last four years.

Graham Harrell appears on his way to continuing the tradition.

The redshirt freshman threw for 333 yards and five touchdowns in his college debut as the Red Raiders trounced Southern Methodist 35-3.

Texas Tech didn't seem to miss all-Big 12 receiver **Jarrett Hicks**, who was ruled academically ineligible for Saturday's game. **Robert Johnson** picked up the slack with a school-record 15 catches for 139 yards.

24. Lions add new wrinkle: Penn State capitalized on its deep linebacking corps by lining up in a 3-4 defense at the start of its 34-16 victory over Akron.

The 3-4 formation allowed **Sean Lee** to move into the starting lineup and capitalized on the versatility of **Tim Shaw**, who started at middle linebacker last year. Shaw alternated between rushing the passer and dropping into pass coverage.

Penn State later created an even newer look with a 2-4-5 alignment that included five defensive backs and two down linemen. Defensive coordinator **Tom Bradley**, who usually employs a traditional 4-3 scheme, wouldn't speculate on how the Lions might line up at Notre Dame next weekend.

"This was for Akron. We played it for Akron," Bradley told **BlueWhiteIllustrated.com** after the game. "We'll come in on Sunday and look at the film and assess where we want to go against Notre Dame."

25. ACC injuries: Wake Forest and Clemson won their season openers, but they suffered a couple of potentially devastating losses in the process.

Clemson linebacker **Anthony Waters** will miss the rest of the season after tearing the anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee during a 54-6 victory over Florida Atlantic. The loss of this preseason All-America candidate comes just as the Tigers prepare for road games with Boston College and Florida State the next two weeks.

Waters, a fifth-year senior, now will likely try to follow the path of former Florida State cornerback Antonio Cromartie, who was drafted in the first round by the San Diego Chargers despite missing the entire 2005 season with a knee injury.

"Anthony is a terrific player," Clemson coach **Tommy Bowden** told **TigerIllustrated.com**. "I am confident we will have players who will respond. But we can't replace his leadership, experience and intensity."

Wake Forest quarterback Benjamin Mauk is out indefinitely and also might not return this season after breaking his right arm and dislocating his right shoulder during the Deacons' 20-10 triumph over Syracuse. Mauk's injury will force redshirt freshman quarterback **Riley Skinner** to direct the Deacons' offense.

Talk about it in **The Round Table**



Tuesday, September 5, 2006 - 12:00 AM

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Sideline Smitty

High-school experience enriched by sports

By Sideline Smitty

Q: What do you consider to be the benefits of playing a high-school sport?

A: Pull up a chair. This is a pet subject and I'm full of free wisdom.

Harvard and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology each have more than 40 varsity teams, which means these two elite colleges obviously think there is value in athletics. I think sports are even more important for high-school kids, whose self-images and confidence constantly are under construction.

At this moment, some parent who has read the preceding paragraph is sarcastically saying, "Wonderful, I'm sure my kid who is too uncoordinated to tie his shoes can be point guard at Garfield next year." Hey, let me just remind you that every school offers "no cut" sports such as track, cross-country, wrestling and, at most schools where it is offered, swimming. Athletic opportunities are out there for everyone, not just the physically gifted or the children of soccer parents who pay \$6,000 a year so Suzy can play on a select team.

One of the primary things interscholastic sports do is connect a kid to his or her school. This can be especially good for kids who aren't good students and thus may not enjoy academics, or have trouble making friends. It also is good for any kid to be part of something bigger than himself or herself.

Sports offer benefits in learning to deal with teammates and that authority figure called the coach. Both skills can be useful later in the land of bosses and paychecks.

Playing fields are one of the few places where kids from broken homes are held accountable. For a lot of those kids, the coach is the only authority figure who must be obeyed.

Sports teach time management, discipline, sportsmanship and goal-setting. Also, studies have shown that students involved in sports are less likely to commit crimes, use drugs or become teen parents.

John Schindele, retired football coach at Bellevue, Sammamish and Interlake high schools, once told me, "Sports is the only place other than music and debate where students have perfection as the goal. The rest of the time their goal is getting by."

It's a truism, but sports teach kids a lot about winning and losing. Most parents go out of their way to make sure their kids don't experience failure, but sports is about as safe a place as there is to fail. You just hope the lesson learned is how to bounce back.

In a nation that gets fatter every day, interscholastic sports provide exercise.

Often, I have seen more parental involvement in kids' lives who play sports. The parents enjoy going to

games and kids like having them there. Of course, there are Sports Parents from Hell, but I've found 90 percent of sports parents to be the kind of people I enjoy being around.

Studies have shown that kids who played sports have more pride in their communities and stronger social bonds with people and institutions. They also tend to express greater satisfaction with their overall high-school experience.

If you haven't figured it out by now, I obviously consider sports to be part of a good education. Like any human endeavor, though, including religion and government, there are pitfalls.

To me, where high-school sports most go astray are where kids fall into a "jock culture" where being tough and cool become priorities instead of being good people and good students. We all know high-school football players whose heads got bigger than their helmets. Thanks to coaches with strong personalities and sharp tongues, there aren't more of them.

Q: Does it bother you that when the WIAA stripped Chief Sealth of its 2005 and 2006 Class 3A girls basketball titles this summer for illegal recruiting, it decided not to award the championships to runner-ups River Ridge of Lacey and Issaquah?

A: No. I like the decision. The titles would have had an artificial flavor.

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

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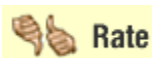
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DeCourcy's SportingBlog

NCAA rule change causing headaches

August 31, 2006

When I wrote a [column a couple weeks back about the changes to NCAA rules regarding offseason workouts](#), there was some concern the issues discussed were more philosophical than practical.

Is it a big deal that programs with classes currently in session are forced to conduct their skill workouts with only four players at a time until Sept. 15, as opposed to last year when they could have their full squads present?

Well, one answer came from Rice coach Willis Wilson. I'd like to share with you some of the e-mail he sent after my column appeared:

Wrote coach Wilson:

"I was on the Special Committee on Recruiting and Access (SCRA) that came up with the (full-squad) idea. The rule worked great, by the way. It saved both players and coaches a great deal of time at one of the two most important parts of the school year: the beginning. At Rice our kids are in a crunch for time as it is with classes, labs, tutorials, meeting with tutors and other academic obligations. The worst thing is to jerk them back and forth from academics to the gym three and four times a day.

DeCourcy's bio



About DeCourcy:

Position: senior writer

Height: 5-8

Weight: 145

2005-06 season: Experience down year, projecting Michigan State to be the national champion. Took no solace from Spartans remaining the best team in East Lansing, Mich. Season highlight: suggesting Florida's season would be more "fun" with Matt Walsh and Anthony Roberson.

Career: Ten years writing college basketball column for Sporting News. Survived four seasons as beat writer covering Bob Huggins. Has interviewed Muhammad Ali, Jim Brown, Tom Mitchell and Nelson Mandela.

Personal: Married. Favorite authors: Fred Forsythe, Nick Hornby. Favorite movie: The Godfather. Hobbies: attending Broadway shows, watching soccer. Appeared as an extra in single worst movie ever made, "Going Home".

More from DeCourcy

"Additionally, last year this time I was allowed to set a very positive tone with my team by being with them in a group setting. We had no foolishness or behavioral problems in the gym throughout the school year because we set a high standard and enforced it from the start of the year because our coaching staff was present twice a week for a two-hour period with the entire team. Student-athletes did not have to run back and forth from their dorms or classes to get to the gym or weight room for workouts. "We were able to structure their schedules so that we got our eight hours per week of work (weights, conditioning, agilities, team instruction) done in a timely fashion. We even cut down our open gyms because our guys liked playing during team instruction. As head coach, I was able to attend team workouts and got to spend time around our new players. I did not feel as though I was compromising recruiting to attend individual workouts because I only had to attend 2 times per week as opposed to 6-8 times per week.

"The crazy part of the protest by the coaches at the quarter schools was that the semester schools were getting a three-week head start with practice. The reality was that we were getting a six-hour head start (two hours per week for about three weeks). So we changed a good rule and in the process lost ground on the possibility of creating more and better access to our players for the future. So much for doing what is right for Student-Athletes and the game of basketball."

Wilson reports that now the Owls are having to scramble to find gym time in between similar workouts for the women's basketball team and regular practices for the university's volleyball program. Again, it's not the worst inconvenience ever perpetrated in college athletics, but it was entirely unnecessary.

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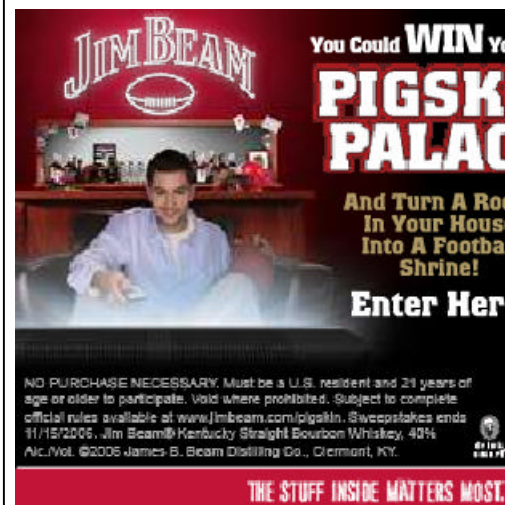
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Posted on Tue, Sep. 05, 2006

Spurrier's cash backs his words

By RON MORRIS
Columnist

THIS TIME IT truly is not about the money.

That is not to diminish the \$250,000 Steve Spurrier has pledged to the South Carolina athletics department over the next five years. It is just that there is much more to Spurrier's latest donation to help improve facilities throughout the department.

Spurrier's generosity has much more to do with his commitment to being at USC. No other college is likely to woo Spurrier away, not Florida, not Notre Dame, not Southern California. The prospect of an NFL team ever calling him again is slim and slimmer.

"Hopefully, it shows I'm going to be here for quite awhile," Spurrier says. "I'm committed to trying my best to make us a big-time football program. Everybody wants to be big time, but there is a certain way you have to go about making it happen.

"I'm just trying to set an example."

The examples are many as Spurrier embarks on his second season at USC.

Believing that USC could better spend its money elsewhere, Spurrier might have been the first coach in college football history to negotiate a lower salary when he was hired.

USC offered an annual salary of \$1.5 million, and Spurrier settled on \$1.25 million. He earmarked the \$250,000 difference to be split evenly among his nine full-time assistant coaches.

At many schools, the head football coach operates on an island, seldom seen on campus or at other athletic events. Not so with Spurrier, who along with his wife, Jerri, have long been advocates of women's athletics.

Spurrier donated \$20,000 to \$25,000 annually to the women's athletics department in his 12 years at Florida. He attends nearly every home USC women's basketball game and even showed up while on vacation this past season to watch the team play at Florida.

Upon learning that the track and field program could use financial support, Spurrier wrote a check a year ago to Curtis Frye's program for \$25,000.

When Spurrier's "Cock 'N Fire" wine was marketed for the first time a year ago, he partnered with men's golf coach Puggy Blackmon. The proceeds, which amounted to \$85,000, went to Blackmon's program. Spurrier said he considering pushing all future proceeds from wine sales toward the general athletics' facilities fund.

Unfortunately for the athletics department, even Spurrier's name could not sell his combination hat and visor called "Spur's Lid."

As part of his contract, Spurrier gets the use of a luxury suite at Williams-Brice Stadium. Again this season, Spurrier returned the suite to the athletics department, which in turn sold it. Estimated value of the suite is \$52,000 annually.

Spurrier also is allotted eight tickets each season between the 40-yard lines. He returns six of those tickets to the athletics department for sale. If you include what a Gamecock Club donation would cost to purchase those tickets, their value could exceed \$10,000.

Spurrier is allowed year-round use of two complimentary cars, according to his contract. He uses only one, believing it is not proper for his wife to use the other.

Previous coaches have been offered the use of a university-owned house. Spurrier built a million-dollar home in an exclusive Elgin development. It was one more way of showing the school, athletics department and its fans that he has established residency in Columbia, and he plans to stay awhile.

When Spurrier left Florida and eventually took the head coaching job with Washington in the NFL, he no doubt was looking for another challenge. He wanted to test his skills at the highest level of football.

Spurrier also admits that money played a part in that decision. Who could blame him for jumping at a \$5 million a year contract? But when he returned to college coaching, Spurrier said it had nothing to do with money.

At USC, he keeps proving that with each donation to the athletics department. With each donation Spurrier also shows he aims to stay awhile.

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Teams get adjusted to rules shortening game

Updated 9/5/2006 12:16 AM ET

 By **Steve Wieberg, USA TODAY**

College football's rules makers got what they wanted: a faster, shorter game.

Seventeen minutes faster and shorter.

Major-college games played during the season's opening week — employing clock and other changes aimed at picking up the pace — lasted an average of 3 hours, 3 minutes, a notable drop from last year's opening-week average of 3:20.

Thirty-one of the 72 games involving teams in NCAA Division I-A, going into Monday night's Florida State-Miami (Fla.) matchup, were completed in three hours or less. Only four lasted as long as 3½ hours.

A year ago, only five of 52 opening-week games finished in three hours or less. Thirteen went 3½ hours or longer.

It's what the NCAA's football rules committee was looking for when drafting the changes last winter. The clock starts on kickoffs rather than when the receiving team touches the ball and, after a change in possession, restarts as soon as the ball is marked ready for play rather than on the ensuing snap. Kicking tees also were shortened by an inch to limit the number of clock-stopping touchbacks.

Texas Tech coach Mike Leach, whose No. 25-ranked Red Raiders took an even three hours to defeat Southern Methodist 35-3 Saturday, attributed a couple of delay-of-game penalties to the tweaks. "I don't think they're too hard to work around," he said.

But he echoed reservations expressed by a number of coaches heading into the new season. "I just think it's dumb to shorten these games that have been a perfectly good length for years and years," Leach said. "We talk about football, football, football, and we do all we can to have less football."

Indeed, this year's opening games averaged 13 fewer plays than last year's. Teams totaled 101 fewer yards a game, and they scored 4.5 fewer points a game.

The effect was felt, among other places, at Oklahoma, where the Sooners and Alabama at Birmingham ran a combined 110 offensive plays in OU's 24-17 victory. It was one of the lowest totals of the weekend and the lowest for a game involving the Sooners in 50 years.

West Virginia and Marshall got in 123 plays, a little below the first-week average of 126 and well beneath the 2005 opening-week average of almost 139.

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"Normally, in most games, you have 12 or 13 possessions. We had 10 on offense," said WVU coach Rich Rodriguez.

"So there's no question there's a (smaller) number of plays and a (smaller) number of possessions. So you've really got to make things happen offensively."

Rodriguez said he called a timeout when the Mountaineers started a possession with about 30 seconds left in the first half so the clock wouldn't start before the ball was snapped.

Pittsburgh coach Dave Wannstedt said his team huddled on the sideline before starting new possessions in a victory against Virginia and then moved immediately to the line of scrimmage and ran the play.

While that was a change for the Panthers, it "was the only adjustment we made," he said.

More teams, however, might have to get used to doing things differently as the season goes on.

"People are very aware of the speed of the game right now," South Florida coach Jim Leavitt said.

Contributing: Jack Carey

Times are changing

Charting the initial impact of rules changes designed to shorten the length of college football games, comparing opening-week games a year ago with this year's (averages are teams' combined):

Season	Games	Avg. time	Avg. no. of plays	Avg. total offense	Avg. scoring
2005	52	3:20	139	754 yards	51.1 points
2006	72	3:03	126	653 yards	46.6 points

Longest games

3:38 Iowa State 45, Toledo 43 (3OT)

3:35 Southern California 50, Arkansas 14

3:31 Oregon 48, Stanford 10

Shortest games

2:30 Arkansas State 14, Army 6

2:34 Central Florida 35, Villanova 16

2:36 Minnesota 44, Kent State 0

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Heisman Candidate Michael Bush's Injury Reminds Many That College Athletes Should be Paid, says Professor

Prominent Syracuse professor and ESPN guest analyst, Dr. Boyce Watkins, argues that players should be rewarded for the risks they take.

(PRWEB) September 5, 2006 -- Dr. Boyce Watkins, Syracuse University Professor and author of "Everything you ever wanted to know about college" says that the injury to Heisman candidate Michael Bush is another reminder that the NCAA needs to pay its athletes. "It makes no sense that half of the players come from poverty, and their starving families get almost nothing in return," says Watkins, who was a recent guest on ESPN's "Quite Frankly with Stephen A. Smith".

Bush, the star running back at The University of Louisville, broke his leg in the team's first game against The University of Kentucky. Bush was expected to be a high draft pick had he left for the NFL last year, and he was also considered by experts to be a strong candidate for the Heisman Trophy. Dr. Watkins, a Louisville native and graduate of The University of Kentucky, knows the experience of the college athlete all too well. He has taught at The University of Kentucky, The Ohio State University and now Syracuse University, all of whom have major athletics programs. "The NCAA has signed an 11 billion dollar TV rights deal for the NCAA tournament alone," says Watkins, who wrote a scientific study last year calculating the economic value of the black male athlete to the NCAA. "Athletes take the greatest risk, they are distracted from their educations to play sports, and they get almost none of the rewards." In his study, Watkins finds that over a 40-year period, black males will contribute nearly \$250 billion to the NCAA. He claims that this is in stark contrast to the fact that many of these athletes are not invited to become coaches and many of them do not graduate from college.

Watkins, a Finance Professor, has no problem with the financial rewards, as long as everyone is allowed to participate in the financial prosperity. "The NCAA is really a gang of pimps," says Watkins, who was interviewed for the cover story of the September issue of Smart Money Magazine. "They are pure capitalists when it comes to paying millions to coaches and signing multibillion dollar TV deals, but when the players ask for their cut, they suddenly become amateurs again. This system is made more astonishing by the way players are threatened with scholarship loss if they try to earn money from their fame to support their families. This system is in stark violation of nearly every dimension of the American way."

Dr. Watkins speaks around the country on strategies for college success, particularly for athletes. His Step Up and Go to College Tour works to persuade inner city students to go to college, and he even writes hip hop rhymes to explain college life. For example, his poem "Strictly for the ballaz" describes the experience of a college athlete who loses his career due to injury. One of the lines states "Did you ever take a second to think, why the coach's wife shows up to games wearing mink? While my mama is slaving as somebody's cook, thinking her baby's off hitting the books."

When asked what he thinks is going to rectify the problems with college sports, Dr. Watkins recommends a congressional review of the NCAA's monopoly status, as well as an IRS inquiry into their non-profit standing. "Like Nino Brown, the drug dealer from the film 'New Jack City'," says Watkins. "It's going to take a lot of power and courage to correct the blatantly un-American business practices of the NCAA."

Dr. Boyce Watkins has been a guest on many national media outlets, including The Big Idea with Donny Deutsch, Fox News, The Wendy Williams Experience, and USA Today. He is the author of "What if George Bush were a Black Man?" and "Quick and dirty secrets of college success".

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