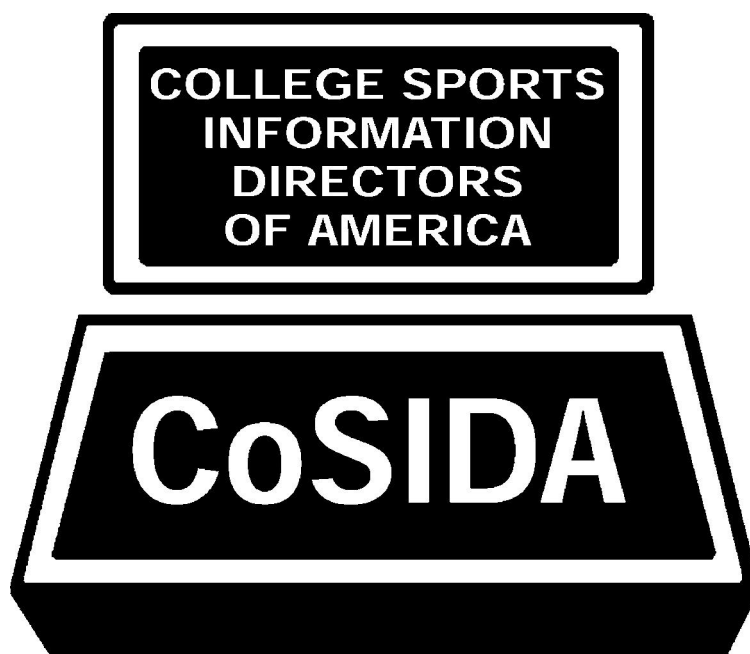


CoSIDA NEWS

Intercollegiate Athletics News from Around the Nation



May 14, 2007

La. Wikipedians try to set record straight on state

By CORY BIRDSONG

Special to The Advocate

Published: May 12, 2007 - Page: 1ba

LAFAYETTE — Louisianians contributing to Wikipedia, at <http://www.wikipedia.org>, are helping to clear up misconceptions about often-stereotyped Louisiana culture.

“I thought the articles were lacking in accurate information, so I decided to revise them using source material I was familiar with,” said Shane K. Bernard, a Wikipedia contributor who has edited many of the articles about southern Louisiana.

Bernard, a historian living in New Iberia, has written two books: “The Cajuns: Americanization of a People” and “Swamp Pop: Cajun and Creole Rhythm and Blues.”

Though Bernard is a historian, Wikipedia allows anyone to add information to its banks.

It aspires to be a free online encyclopedia, available to anyone and editable by everyone.

It contains many entries concerning Louisiana edited by its residents, many of whom say they do it to facilitate the spread of knowledge.

Lafayette City-Parish President Joey Durel has an entry, as well as local terms like “pirogue” and “rougarou.”

“I started just because it was very interesting. I noticed that my alma mater’s page, UL-Lafayette, wasn’t as robust as it could be, so I got involved in that,” said another local contributor, Aaron Martin.

Martin, a New Orleans resident and University of Louisiana at Lafayette graduate, said he tries to focus on local articles that wouldn’t get a lot of attention otherwise.

“I won’t spend a lot of time editing Hurricane Katrina, for example, because a lot of people are doing that, but I will try to focus on sometimes the lesser known or just things that haven’t been set up yet,” he said.

Martin has created articles on Louisiana's German Coast, ULL's Cypress Lake, campus radio station KRVS-FM and St. Joseph Seminary College near Covington. He has revised many more.

"It's a give and take kind of thing," said Matthew Turland, a Baton Rouge computer programmer who contributes "small edits," such as linking to related articles, fixing typos, and correcting formatting mistakes.

Matt Henderson, a ULL computer science graduate student, said he contributes because, "It has a lot of information, so I just like to contribute, I guess, a lot of information back."

Henderson said he started the article on Louisiana-based fast food chain Raising Cane's, which has grown from his original one-sentence "stub" to 700 words and three user-submitted photos.

The entire process of being a "Wikipedian" relies heavily on interaction with Wikipedia's community," Bernard said.

The site's structure makes it easy for users to collaborate.

Henderson said he worked with Martin, whom he had never met, to take pictures of such Lafayette landmarks as Cajun Field.

Wikipedia has grown exponentially since its inception in 2001.

"Imagine a world in which every single person can share freely in the sum of human knowledge," boasts its fundraising page.

If you want to know information on the fauna and flora of the state of Connecticut, you can find a good basic summary on Wikipedia.

A list of "Arrested Development" episodes, with information on each one?

It's on Wikipedia.

Obviously, any user-editable encyclopedia would have problems with vandalism.

"One of the things that really impressed me about Wikipedia when I first started to use it is that it seems as though within minutes of adding information or altering information, somebody came by and checked it," Bernard said. "I like the fact that Wikipedia is designed to be self-correcting."

Aiming for accuracy

"I think that a lot of times (vandalism) is just younger people messing around," Martin said. "It's kind of taken the place of (crank calls). It's a way for some people to anonymously graffiti things, but most of the time it's pretty harmless."

An early vandal on Henderson's Raising Cane's entry vented his frustration, adding the following: "In 2004, they found a way to raise prices, and make the chicken fingers smaller. Thus, making more money for the company."

Bernard said most of the changes on Wikipedia are legitimate edits.

"They might be, at worst, a little awkwardly phrased, and I'll go back and smooth them out for ease of reading," he said.

"I wouldn't necessarily say that everything in Wikipedia is absolute and 100 percent true and accurate, but you couldn't say that about any encyclopedia," Martin said.

He said Wikipedia is best used as a starting point for further research.

"It's an omnisource, a broad gateway of information, and it's organized very neatly," he said.

Bernard said that Wikipedia is an excellent starting place, but if he were teaching, he "would never let them use it as a source in a paper simply because I would never let a student use any encyclopedia as a source."

Turland noted that Wikipedia's knowledge of pop culture, such as movies, video games and television shows, far exceeds any printed encyclopedia.

Martin said he found that information on current events, especially pop culture events such as the Academy Awards, is updated on Wikipedia almost immediately.

Though its online nature tends to attract editors with knowledge of computers, Martin said, editing Wikipedia is easy, and he was able to begin doing so with average computer knowledge.

Bernard said he hoped many more people would become editors in the future.

"I believe that everybody is an expert on something," he said. "I may have a Ph.D., but an auto mechanic will know much more about a carburetor than I do, and hopefully, a number of extremely talented mechanics would have contributed to the Wikipedia article on carburetors."



Posted on Sun, May. 13, 2007

Deep pockets for big trophies

Large-budget programs dominate high-profile college sports, leading some to raise questions of fairness.

By BLAIR KERKHOFF
The Kansas City Star

When it came to trophy presentations in high-profile college sports in 2006-07, bigger budget was better.

Two of the richest athletic departments, Florida and Ohio State, monopolized the football and men's basketball national championships with the Gators defeating the Buckeyes in both finals.

As the school year winds down and budgets for the next academic calendar take shape, should the guesswork for the preseason top-25 polls of 2007-08 be replaced by a simple ranking of athletic coffers?

Or is all good in a college sports world that follows the economic model of supply and demand? Where fan bases that supply the most income to these programs in terms of ticket sales and media consumption demand the most in return?

NCAA president Myles Brand said, "I'm not sure it's not OK" for the programs standing on the winner's podium to be among the richest.

Congress has thought otherwise. Last October, former Rep. Bill Thomas of California, then chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, asked the NCAA whether college sports programs deserved tax-exempt status, arguing big-time college athletics operated more like professional sports.

Wally Renfro, senior adviser to Brand, took exception to the political query during a symposium last month in Kansas City.

The same folks who questioned T. Boone Pickens' \$165 million donation to Oklahoma State, his alma mater, for improved athletic facilities, applauded the \$105 million gift to Stanford's graduate business program by alumnus and Nike president Phil Knight, Renfro said.

"In the minds of many critical of big-time college sports, there is a perceived sin of scale," Renfro said.

Yes, there is, but in some cases that is because the scale seems to be seriously tipping the balance of competition and strongly indicating that only the rich can win at the highest level.

"There's a notion of fairness that exists so deep in athletics that everybody starts at the same place and everybody has a shot," said Harry Lewis, a Harvard professor, former dean and chairman of the faculty athletic committee. "But some schools have an extraordinary advantage."

Like Ohio State, which spent \$100 million for athletics in 2006-07. Or Texas, last year's BCS Championship winner, which generated \$97 million in athletic revenue during the previous school year.

Compare those schools with Iowa State, which at \$32 million operates with the smallest athletic budget in the Big 12.

In football, the deepest pockets playing for the crystal ball trophy is no surprising development. Income from conference television contracts, lucrative bowl games and ticket revenue from massive stadiums packed on Saturdays have created a separation understood by the participants.

Florida, with its \$82 million athletic budget in 2005-06 according to federal figures, technically plays for the same championship as Troy University and its \$12 million budget.

But both football programs won championships; the Gators took the Southeastern Conference title and Bowl Championship Series national title game. The Trojans won the Sun Belt Conference and after beating Rice in the New Orleans Bowl celebrated on Bourbon Street.

Basketball is set up to be more equal opportunity. Small-budget programs can gain entrance to the NCAA Tournament through their own league tournaments — George Mason's trip to last year's Final Four was widely celebrated — and such non-football factory programs as Connecticut, Maryland, Duke and North Carolina have championships in the 21st century.

But this year, the bigger-money football powers met for the title, leading to the notion that a college championship can be bought as in professional sports. Not by shelling out the big bucks for free agents, but by pouring money into lavish facilities and spending

millions on coaches who can tap into a bottomless recruiting budget.

Just look at some breakthrough teams during the NCAA Tournament in March besides the finalists: Tennessee, Southern California, Texas A&M, Virginia Tech, all better known and deeply funded for football.

But the school year didn't entirely belong to the big-budget haves.

Boise State's football team delivered a conclusion for the ages when it took down mighty Oklahoma in the Fiesta Bowl. The final three scoring plays for the Broncos, to tie the game in regulation and win in overtime, came on tricks.

Boise's budget for 2005-06: \$19 million, or \$45 million less than the Sooners.

Also, the nation's top-ranked baseball team heading into this weekend is Vanderbilt, which eliminated its organized athletic department in 2003 and folded it into the school's division of student life.

Since then, the Commodores have not only thrived in baseball, they've reached two Sweet 16s in men's basketball, including this year.

"Success still gets scattered around," Brand said. "We shouldn't look at just the final game. Schools that put far less money into athletics have had great success as well."

To reach Blair Kerkhoff, college sports reporter for The Star, call 816-234-4730 or send e-mail to bkerkhoff@kcstar.com

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Posted on Sat, May. 12, 2007

Taste testing: Players can judge interest, still go back to college

By J. BRADY McCOLLOUGH
The Kansas City Star

With the basketball season over, Utah State guard Jaycee Carroll kept close watch on the ESPN ticker at the bottom of his TV screen. Every day, it seemed, the same message would flash in front of him:

Breaking news: College basketball underclassman X declares for NBA draft, will not hire an agent.

Two of those players — Nevada's Marcelus Kemp and Ramon Sessions — were Carroll's rivals in the Western Athletic Conference, a league Carroll led in scoring.

Peer pressure can be tough. Carroll declared for the NBA draft April 23, creating his own headlines. He also would not hire an agent, to keep his college eligibility alive. Like more and more underclassmen these days, Carroll declared for the draft only because he has the option to return to school.

"I'm trying to get a little more attention for my senior year," Carroll says, referring to the multitude of NBA scouts who will see him play during the next month. "It's always been my dream to play in the NBA, and I'm going to do whatever it takes to give me the best chance of making it. This just seems like the step to take."

It's becoming harder to ignore the number of players testing NBA waters. As Nevada coach Mark Fox says, "It's snowballing."

This year, only 14 underclassmen have signed with an agent, compared with a whopping 28 that are currently in the draft without an agent, according to [draftexpress.com](#). Kansas sophomore guard Brandon Rush decided to join the group, which includes big names such as Georgetown's Jeff Green and Roy Hibbert and Ohio State's Mike Conley Jr.

Those names are likely to be called in the first round. But what about the guys like Carroll, the unfamiliar names? [Draftexpress.com](#) lists "undrafted" as the projection for 17 of the early entrants, including Carroll. So why are they even bothering?

One word: Exposure.

Players with little previous exposure look at this time as an opportunity to perform in front of NBA scouts against the country's best. They've seen the word "undrafted" by their names in draft projections. But this is not about the 2007 NBA draft. This is about the 2008 draft.

"Hopefully, by going to a few things this summer, I can help my stock rise," Carroll says. "My stock isn't in the draft yet. I've got nothing to lose here. If I don't do well, I have my senior year to improve my stock."

...

Before 1994, a player had to really believe in his stock to declare for the draft early. If an underclassman declared, he immediately lost his eligibility to play college basketball.

The NCAA eventually grew tired of players who declared for the draft early and later wished they could return to school. The organization began to wonder whether it was doing the student-athletes a disservice by not giving them an option to finish their college careers as well as their classroom education.

So, in 1994, the NCAA introduced a new rule that gave players a chance to declare for the draft and still return to college if they hadn't hired an agent. But it took a while for a large number of players to start taking advantage of the rule.

Carroll remembers that, even as recently as five years ago, he was skeptical of the rule when a player from his native Wyoming chose to leave school without an agent.

"I said, 'What's he doing leaving early? He needs to stay in college,'" Carroll recalls. "Now, five years later, it doesn't seem as outlandish as it did back then for me. It is something more players are experimenting with right now."

In last year's draft, many of the high-profile seniors had not taken advantage of the rule as juniors — names such as Brandon Roy, Randy Foye, Shelden Williams, J.J. Redick and Rodney Carney.

But this year, few underclassmen with NBA potential didn't test the waters. Some of those in the minority were Tennessee's Chris Lofton, UCLA's Darren Collison, Arizona's Chase Budinger, Stanford's Brook Lopez, USC's Gabe Pruitt and North Carolina's Ty Lawson. Thirteen years after the rule's inception, the feeling is that it's almost foolish not to declare.

"Why wouldn't they?" asks Steve Mallonee, NCAA managing director of membership services. "It's an opportunity to see where they stack up, to see if they are ready now. Obviously, from our standpoint, we want to make sure they have all the information to make that decision."

Nobody, obviously, disputes that this is great for the players. But what about the college programs they leave in limbo? While Rush teeter-tottered on the fence during April, Kansas' recruitment of shooting guard recruit Alex Legion suffered. He eventually signed with Kentucky, and the questions surrounding Rush knocked KU out of the picture.

At Nevada, Fox has had to deal with the uncertainty of players in the draft without an agent more than any other coach the last two seasons. Last year, then-junior Nick Fazekas declared, but he eventually returned to school for his senior year. This year, Kemp and Sessions are both testing the waters.

"It holds your program hostage," Fox says. "You can't offer their spot to someone else if you don't know if they'll be back. I have one scholarship available, and I've actually changed what we're looking for because of the uncertainty. It's really been a little difficult for us this year, but you have to support the players and their dreams."

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So why hire an agent? Why not savor that option unless you are a bona fide lottery pick?

Plenty of reasons.

Players who don't hire an agent are at a clear disadvantage in getting their names called on draft day. There is a large difference between the help Julian Wright will receive over the next month from agent Rob Pelinka and what Rush will receive from KU coach Bill Self.

That's not to say that Self isn't doing everything in his power to help Rush. But Pelinka and his staff will work around the clock to market Wright to the right teams. They will make sure he is working out with a top trainer like David Thorpe, who prepares players for the predraft workouts as the executive director of the pro training center at the IMG Academy.

In general, Thorpe is uncomfortable with players entrusting their NBA fate to their college coaching staffs. Thorpe says that at last year's predraft camp in Orlando, he overheard a college assistant coach dogging his own player's on-ball defense to NBA officials.

"It's the fox guarding the hen house," Thorpe says.

Jonathan Givony, president of draftexpress.com, says if Rush is serious about being drafted high, his decision to hire an agent is simple.

"Brandon Rush needs an agent," Givony says. "There are so many guys at his position, so many things that need to be done for him. If Brandon has any sense, he's going to go with one of the many agents who are recruiting him."

Players without agents are at an increased disadvantage this year. For the first time, the NBA ruled that teams cannot hold private workouts until after the predraft camp, which runs from May 29 to June 4.

In past years, many top players didn't bother with the predraft camp because they had already solidified their status as lottery picks in May.

Now, basketball agent Jason Levien says, more of those players will play in Orlando, which will leave more fringe players such as Carroll out.

If a player without an agent isn't invited to Orlando, his chances of getting drafted are slim to none. And many believe that NBA scouts and officials treat players without agents as less serious about playing in the league.

Nonsense, according to Washington Wizards general manager Ernie Grunfeld, "I don't think it makes a difference. Most teams will go through the evaluation process the same way."

Givony sees this draft as an interesting case study. How will the workout rule interact with the growing number of players testing the waters? It's possible that if players such as Carroll struggle to get workouts or are left off the invite list for Orlando this year, the trend could slow down in the coming years.

"When I first made this decision, I figured I had April, May, June," Carroll said. "Then I found out it's basically a 13-day window when I can come and prove myself. It makes me nervous that people will look over me."

If that happens, Carroll can always remember this: At the very least, he had one heck of a summer internship.

"It's a fun way to spend a summer," Carroll said.

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Los Angeles Times
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LOCATION BABY!



<http://www.latimes.com/sports/la-sp-shannon13may13,1,3782655.story?coll=la-headlines-sports>

Thanks to Francis, he's back on the ball

The fallen USC player had encouraged his friend to return to school and basketball. A grieving mother and coach helped it happen.

By Jaime Cardenas

Special to The Times

7:35 PM PDT, May 12, 2007

Jacobé Shannon would hear it all the time from Ryan Francis. During phone conversations, "You need to start working out." In text messages, "Get back to the gym." Through MySpace comments, "You need to go back to school."

After high school, Francis went to USC on a basketball scholarship while Shannon stayed home in Baton Rouge, La., and worked for the post office.

Shannon had his reasons for stepping away from school and basketball — his father had been killed and he needed some time — but his friend couldn't help but pester him to go back.

"The whole time Ryan was at USC, like every day, he was either on the computer or on the phone, 'Man, you need to start working out, you are going to be in school next year,' " Shannon remembers.

Francis was right. Shannon did return to school last fall — as a tribute to the friend who wouldn't let him give up on goals they shared growing up.

Exactly a year ago, Francis was fatally shot while riding in a friend's car during a visit to his hometown for Mother's Day. Up to that point, he was living the dream he used to muse about with his buddies, starting as a freshman for a rejuvenated USC basketball team.

Now, with the help of what used to be Francis' core support group, Shannon has taken up the cause. He is a freshman at Antelope Valley College in Lancaster, where last winter — wearing No. 12 and starring at point guard as Francis used to do — he helped the basketball team reach the state championship game.

"When he died, it was like, man, I had to get out of Baton Rouge, I had to go to school and I want to play ball," Shannon said. "That was my dream ... that was all our dream."

In the last 29 months, Shannon has lost his best friend Francis, his father and another friend — all murdered. Baton Rouge didn't offer much. "It's a lot of violence, a lot of trouble. Not too much positive," Shannon said of his hometown. "When that happened with Ryan, I had to get out of there."

Francis' mother and the USC coaching staff gave Shannon that chance.

The day after Francis died, Trojans assistant Bob Cantu traveled to Louisiana to be with Francis' mother, Paulette. Trying to console her, the coach received a request.

"I was telling him about a kid that can play," Paulette Francis said. "He was a good guard. I knew that he could play. He just needed someone to look at him."

After talking to Francis and Shannon's mother, Monica, Cantu said he decided Ryan would have wanted him to help his friend. That led to a call from Cantu and USC Coach Tim Floyd to Antelope Valley College Coach Dieter Horton.

"Dieter, I just think this kid can help you and he needs a good place and I trust you," Horton recalls Floyd telling him. "Coach Floyd just felt more of a parental thing and just wanted to take care of this kid."

Said Cantu: "Ryan would have wanted to see Jacobé go away to college and get away from the violence in the city of Baton Rouge. We just felt it would be great to bring him out here and sort of continue what Ryan had started."

Monica Shannon wasn't completely sold on the idea at first. "I was kind of afraid to let him go," she said. "I wasn't sure of his living quarters and how he would afford it. But my oldest son, Robert, told me I had to let him go. I gave him a chance to grow up."

Even though the California community colleges are famously inexpensive, they also don't offer the scholarships that are available in other parts of the country and Shannon still faced out-of-state tuition fees.

However, during his year away from school Shannon had saved about \$4,000 from working at the post office and as a grocery store stocker.

That money, coupled with financial aid he receives and the fact he shares expenses with four roommates, made the move affordable. And when

Shannon falls a little short, his mother and his grandmother help out.

He also has plenty of moral support. Horton says, "three or four times during the year" Floyd called to check how Shannon was adjusting, even offering to drive out to see him if the coach felt it would help.

Shannon was fine, though.

It took him some time to open up to the team, he eventually got past being shy and homesick and began to fit in.

"In some small aspect he feels like he owes it to Ryan and his family to stick it out," Horton said. "He has made the decision that he can't go the other way. He doesn't want to be the bad statistic; he wants to be the success story."

So far, so good. With Shannon starting 31 games and leading his team with 3.3 assists a game, Antelope Valley went 31-7 and advanced to the state championship game for the first time in school history.

The playoff run was the most fun he has had since he came to California, Shannon said. And even though he had no family out here, he never felt alone. As USC players said they did during their run to the NCAA Sweet 16, Shannon felt Francis' spirit on the court with him in the playoffs. His father's too.

It's hard for Shannon not to think of them. Every time he picks up a basketball, he is reminded of his father, who taught him how to shoot and play. And when he watched highlights involving USC last season he couldn't help but think "that should be Ryan out there."

Watching himself on video even caused pause. "I'm just used to seeing that 12 on Ryan," he said.

Shannon owns three T-shirts that have either an inspirational message or a picture of Francis, two wristbands about Francis and a chain that has Ryan's date of birth and death on it. "I'll always miss him," Shannon said.

Francis' good-natured attitude earned him the nickname of "Smiley" in high school.

"If you like really disliked Ryan, you know, you needed to check yourself," Shannon said. "He was fun to be around, he always had a smile on his face, joking with everybody — if he don't know you he'll joke with you. His smile just brightened your day up."

Francis, on his first trip back home since school started, was caught in the wrong place at the wrong time. He was traveling in the back seat of a car with two friends when their car began to receive gun fire. The driver of another car recognized the driver of Francis' car as a person he had an altercation with at a club earlier that night, according to police.

Shannon said Francis seemed happy to be home when they played basketball with Torry Beaulieu, another high school teammate, earlier the same day. "He was excited, you know, talking about going out that night and having fun," Shannon said.

Shannon recalls being tempted to go out with him. "But I had to go to work that night, you know, and at the same time I wanted to keep my job. So I just went to work," he said.

That decision is something he often contemplates.

"Every day I think that could have been me the Lord took," Shannon said. "But instead ... I wouldn't say it's a blessing that he died, but I don't know what you call it. I probably wouldn't have been in the car with him, but who knows what could have happened if I would have gone out?"

What happened instead is that Shannon is now the one playing basketball and going to school many miles from home. A dream living on.

What would Ryan think about it?

Paulette Francis thinks she knows: "Ryan's reaction would be, what took him so long?"

Caywood: Big 12 still has TV power



Kurt Caywood

If the Big Ten Network works, Big 12 decision makers are going to look like clowns.

And do you know what? They'll stick on the big noses and pull on the floppy shoes and curl their painted faces into ear-to-ear smiles, because they'll know the circus is more lucrative than ever. With its network television agreement about to expire, the Big 12 recently announced a new eight-year deal with ABC/ESPN. It was big news, because it added a bunch of national appearances during basketball season and gave the conference the option of moving the men's basketball championship up a day.

The bigger news, though, was what didn't happen.

The Big 12 didn't form its own TV network.

That was what was supposed to happen. That was what the Big Ten did last year, when its old contract expired. That was regarded as the cutting edge of the college sports entertainment.

In some circles, the Big 12 deal was portrayed as gutless and elitist, the perception being that not only were the league's leaders too timid to take their place on the vanguard of the industry, they forgot about the rank-and-file fans who might want a place to tune into something other than Texas football and Kansas basketball.

If the Big Ten Network, which debuts this school year, works as envisioned, the Big 12 looks even worse.

On the surface.

On the bottom line, it looks golden.

A couple of years ago, it seemed the supply of sports on TV finally was beginning to exceed demand and the rights-fee bubble was about to burst. The Big 12 was pulling down an average of about \$32 million a year from its network deal, and the last thing members schools wanted to do was take a pay cut.

When negotiations started on a new network agreement, that was still the landscape, and ABC/ESPN low-balled its offer. Then the Big 12 began seriously considering the possibility of its own network, and the game changed.

No amount of investigation could predict the future, and nobody knows how the Big Ten's deal will work out. A network is no good if nobody can see it, and if cable and satellite providers don't carry it, those satellite trucks are talking to no one but the planet Zolton. Then again, if the providers don't offer it affordably, subscribers scream.

It winds up being a high-stakes game of digital chicken, and Big 12 big wigs were content to leave the first round to the Big Ten.

By merely threatening to strike out on its own, the Big 12 hooked the networks. Once the two sides decided to cooperate, with ABC/ESPN recognizing the conference's value and the Big 12 allowing the networks to shift some events to developing platforms, such as ESPNU and the broadband service ESPN360, they reached a deal that produced rights fees in the neighborhood of \$60 million a year for eight years.

That's the richest deal in the history of the conference, almost five times the entire, jaw-dropping nine-figure television package that came out of the combination of the Big Eight and four Southwest Conference schools.

No, the Big 12 won't get as much stuff on TV as the Big Ten, but, realistically, the Big 12 isn't the Big Ten. It commands 23 percent fewer of the nation's TVs. It encompasses seven of the nation's top 50 markets to the Big Ten's 13.

In this round of television deals, the Big Ten had the clout to form its own channel and still command national exposure from ABC/ESPN. The Big 12 didn't.

So in this round, the Big 12 settled for the best of three worlds.

It got the unprecedented money. It got unprecedented national exposure. And it kept its options open.

"In my mind," Kansas State athletic director Tim Weiser told me, "I think we've got ourselves in a really strong position."

If the Big Ten Network turns out to be the greatest thing since the Columbia Broadcasting System, the real effect on the Big 12 won't be egg on the face. It will be mountains of money on top of mountains of money in the next round of negotiations, which, incidentally, will be before the conference's cable deal expires in 2011.

"I'm very intrigued by the TV network, and we made sure this doesn't take us out of the potential of having our own channel later on," Kansas AD Lew Perkins said. "I love when you have choices."

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MiamiHerald.com 

Posted on Sat, May. 12, 2007

Pregnancy jeopardizes some scholarships

By WOODY BAIRD

Cassandra Harding waited nervously, dreading the moment her athlete's body would betray her. Everyone would know her secret, including her track coaches at the University of Memphis - where she was on a full athletic scholarship.

"I didn't want to talk to anyone about it. I thought, what am I going to do now?" she said. "I didn't want to lose my scholarship."

But she did. And that's exactly what her coaches warned would happen.

Harding said she and other members of the Memphis women's track team were required to sign a document acknowledging they could lose their scholarships if they became pregnant. The Memphis athletic department refused to discuss scholarship rules.

"The University of Memphis does not believe that it has violated any federal laws in the matter of Cassandra Harding," the school said in a statement.

Harding spoke first to ESPN, which was to include her comments in an "Outside the Lines" report set for broadcast Sunday. Seven Clemson student-athletes told ESPN they had abortions in recent years, due in part to their fear of losing scholarships.

NCAA spokesman Erik Christianson declined comment on the Memphis case, but acknowledged Saturday that there are no national guidelines about pregnancy. Christianson said decisions on financial aid and scholarships are made by individual schools.

Christianson added that the NCAA's national office allows pregnant athletes to apply for an extra year of eligibility, which would not count as a redshirt year. That gives some women an opportunity to stay in school for six years while competing for four.

Harding and teammate Gail Lee said Memphis coaches made it clear pregnancy can end an athletic career. Harding, who has rejoined the team since giving birth to a daughter, said the document listed other causes for which scholarships could be lost - including drug or alcohol abuse, or assaulting a coach.

"The track coaches hand that out to you. They like read it over and then tell you to sign it," said Harding, a jumper. "Well, I wasn't really thinking anything about it because I wasn't going to get pregnant."

But she did toward the end of her sophomore year in October 2004, and gave birth to Assiah in July 2005. Harding said she considered having an abortion to avoid losing her scholarship, but decided against it.

"I shouldn't have been put in that position," she said. "I'm so happy I have my baby."

When a new school year began, Memphis declined to renew her scholarship. So Harding borrowed the money to stay in school for her junior year, and worked part-time jobs - as a waitress, and as a package handler at the FedEx terminal in Memphis - while rejoining the track team as a walk-on.

Harding said she went to school during the day, worked at night, went back to class in the morning and practiced with the team when required. Her boyfriend took care of the baby when she was in school or at work.

The university lists her as being red-shirted for the 2005 outdoor season and as having missed the 2006 indoor season.

Now a senior, she has a partial athletic scholarship that pays for tuition and books. She had to sign the document again when she got the partial scholarship.

Her boyfriend is now in the Army, so Assiah is living with Cassandra's mother, Maple Harding, in Killeen, Texas. Cassandra Harding expects to graduate in December with a degree in criminal justice.

Lee, a thrower and one of Memphis' top athletes, said she signed a similar document in August 2005.

"There are guys on our team that have babies. Why wouldn't they have to follow the same rule?" said Lee, who won the shot put and finished second in the hammer throw at the Conference USA outdoor championships this weekend in Houston.

Track coach Kevin Robinson declined to discuss the case.

"Look, we're here to compete, not to become a spectacle," Robinson said Friday. "I'm certainly not in a position to comment for the school. We certainly don't want to be represented in a poor light."

Scholarships come up for renewal yearly, and colleges can decline to renew for an athlete unable to perform for medical reasons unrelated to athletics, said Barbara Osborne, a lawyer and assistant professor of sports law research at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"That is an entirely legal thing and within NCAA rules," Osborne said.

But many schools continue scholarships for students temporarily sidelined by accidents, illness or other medical conditions, Osborne said, and some are developing programs to assist pregnant athletes to help them stay in college.

"Refusing to renew scholarships solely because of pregnancy smacks of moralizing," Osborne said, "and to actually have a policy like that and put it in writing seems very 1940s and '50s."

StarTribune.com | MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

The 'Tubby Brand' strengthens U's cause

With Tubby Smith now in the fold as Gophers men's basketball coach, it is apparent high school players and coaches are more willing to consider the U.

By [Jeff Shelman](#), Star Tribune

Last update: May 12, 2007 – 8:57 PM

When everything on the periphery is stripped away, college basketball recruiting is a business. Coaches are selling, and they hope to find players willing to buy.

In many ways, the work college basketball coaches are doing isn't all that different from what Apple, Abercrombie and Fitch and Timberland are doing. It's all brand marketing.

And in less than two months, the men's basketball program at the University of Minnesota has had its brand significantly enhanced.

"It's all about the brand," recruiting analyst Dave Telep said. "When you put Tubby Smith's face next to the Gophers logo, you've strengthened the brand. It's something kids can identify with."

As the Howard Pulley Panthers played host a tournament featuring several very good Midwest club basketball programs this weekend, it was clear that high school players and their coaches are more willing to listen to the Gophers than they were during the final years of Dan Monson's tenure.

"Will they listen? No question about it," said Larry Butler, a veteran of the club basketball scene who runs the Illinois Warriors program. "Tubby can walk into Iowa, he can walk into Illinois, Wisconsin and Indiana and get some of the top players.

Continued Butler: "The Chicago-area kids don't always want to stay home. They don't always want to go to Illinois, DePaul or Northwestern. They want to venture other places, and this is still Big Ten country and Illinois kids like to play in the Big Ten."

As much as Monson and his coaching staff were panned for their inability to keep the top local players at home, they never recruited a high school player from out of state that was a true difference-maker.

If Smith, hired away from traditional power Kentucky in a surprising U coup, is going to get the Gophers going in the right direction in short order, he's going to have to land some difference-makers from outside the state.

The reason is simple: The two top players in the 2008 high school class in Minnesota have already opted to go elsewhere. While the Gophers were slogging through a 9-22 season, Princeton center Jared Berggren and Benilde-St. Margaret's guard Jordan Taylor

accepted scholarship offers to play at Wisconsin.

Compounding matters is that Smith will have significant holes to fill. The Gophers coaching staff will have at least four scholarships to use for the 2008 class, and the team will be in serious need of frontcourt players.

It's possible that Smith's first full recruiting class for the Gophers might include a Minnesotan or two -- Rosemount's Andrew Brommer committed when Monson was still the coach -- but Smith will have to leave the state to find true impact players.

Former Tartan star Jake Sullivan, who played at Iowa State, said he has sensed a change in perception about the Gophers.

"The atmosphere got dead there, it fell off," said Sullivan, who now runs the All-Iowa Attack program. "Kids are going to be a lot more interested in Minnesota now with Tubby there."

This weekend's tournament comes during a time when Division I coaches are prohibited from attending, but Smith and assistants Ron Jirsa and Saul Smith spent time Friday night at the tournament hospitality room talking with club coaches.

Smith was criticized for the quality of players he lured to Kentucky, and it will be several months before any sort of verdict can be reached about his ability to recruit at Minnesota. Telep is one person who doesn't pan Smith as much as some have for his recruiting at Kentucky.

"The one thing Tubby did was get top-100 players, players who would fit into his system," Telep said. "What the rabid Kentucky fans wanted him to do was be in with every elite player. What was important to Tubby Smith and what was important to Joe Kentucky Fan didn't match."

Butler said Smith will have success in recruiting for one simple reason.

"He's got a [NCAA championship] ring," Butler said. "If you have a ring, people will listen to you. Tubby's been around, he's been successful at all his stops. Tubby's going to do a great job at the University of Minnesota.

"I have a lot of respect for him. He's one of the better coaches around."

And that's part of the reason the Tubby brand is strong.

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The difference between brothers

By John Walters

NBCSports.com

Posted: May13, 2007, 12:13 pm EDT

New York -- They have one thing in common (parents) and another quite uncommon. Together these two men comprise the most unique, and it would seem adversarial, fraternity in college sports.

Steve Kragthorpe, 41, is the head football coach at the University of Louisville.

Kurt Kragthorpe, 46, is a sports columnist at the Salt Lake Tribune.

"We're both trying to overcome one another," says Steve, who from 2003-06 was the coach at Tulsa.

"I've only covered one game that he coached," says Kurt (the 2004 Humanitarian Bowl in which Georgia Tech annihilated the Golden Hurricane 52-10), "and I wouldn't want to repeat that experience."



Instead of becoming a coach like his father, Kurt Kragthorpe chose a life in the media box.

Michael Corleone had Fredo. Heat Miser had Cold Miser. And Kurt and Steve Kragthorpe have each other. There is literally a Continental Divide between these brothers, the children of Dave and Barbara Kragthorpe. And given their chosen lines of work, it's a shock that there's not a figurative divide as well.

"I don't think I've had one person who's not in the media say that," says Kurt, who's written sports continuously for newspapers in the Beehive State since he was 16.

"People outside the media think it's great that we both work in sports. They don't understand the relationships between head coaches and the media."

Steve Kragthorpe, more so than his big brother, is in the family business. Dave Kragthorpe coached college football either as an assistant or head coach for 32 seasons. In 1981, Dave led Idaho State to the Division I-AA national championship in his second year in Pocatello.

"It's a funny life," says Kurt, the columnist. "What happens 11 Saturdays a year kind of determines your whole existence. But the coaching life is definitely the thing that bonded our family. Even my mother."

Barbara, who's been married to Dave nearly 49 years, recently attempted to count all the football stadiums that she has visited. "I stopped when I reached 80," she says, "and I'll add another one this fall. I've never been to the stadium (Papa John's) in Louisville for a game."

The Kragthorpe parents, as do most, display no overt signs of favoritism. They live in Logan, Utah, home to Dave and Kurt's alma mater, Utah State, for half the season. The first thing Barbara reaches for every morning is the sports section in the Tribune in order to read her older son's copy. "Then, given my age," she says, "I turn to the obituaries."

In the fall, like migratory birds, the Kragthorpe parents head off to wherever Steve is coaching for the season (it's also a grandchildren-motivated relocation). Dave works under his younger son as a consultant, earning \$1 annually and the job title "Director of Player Programs." His salary is less of an expense than the cost to print up his business cards.

"After taxes last year it worked out to 79 cents," says Dave, who is 74. "But that allows me to attend practice and talk to the players and recruits."

And, despite his encyclopedic knowledge of the game, Dave never offers Steve unsolicited advice. "I'll come home from practice and Barbara will ask me, 'What did Steve have to say?' says Dave. "And I'll say, 'I don't know. He didn't come over to talk to me.'"

Kurt, the sportswriter, has offered his brother advice. Last fall, Tulsa played at Brigham Young, and Kurt attended as a family member, not a member of the fourth estate. His little brother gave him a sideline pass, and Kurt attempted to be unobtrusive. But late in the first quarter, with Tulsa facing a fourth down-and-3 and going for it directly in front of him, Kurt realized that the clock would run out on the quarter before the play clock did. Kurt realized this; Steve did not.

"So I impulsively ran up to Steve," says Kurt, "and told him, 'You've got the quarter, if you want it.'"

Without so much as a nod in Kurt's direction, Steve began yelling at his quarterback, Paul Smith, not to run the play so that they could regroup. Smith, unable to hear his coach, took the snap and completed the pass for a first down.

"But it's true," says Kurt. "At least once, Steve did accept a suggestion from the

media."

Growing up, primarily in Provo where Dave was an assistant for 10 years, Kurt and Steve were separated by more than just their nearly five year age difference.

"Kurt always knew what he wanted to be," says Barbara. "When he was 6 years old we'd hear him playing ball in the backyard, announcing the play-by-play as he was doing it."

Steve floated from sport to sport with ease and talent. Kurt played baseball and always saw room for improvement within. "If their dad was going to hit each of them 25 grounders," says Barbara, "then with Kurt, once he got to the 25th, he'd hear, 'Just five more?' With Steve, he'd get to 15 and hear, 'How many more?'"

Kurt moved to the sidelines first. When he was 13, Paul James, the long-time radio voice of BYU football, hired him as a spotter. Two years later he was ripping off the teletype (ask your dad) each morning and writing stories after school for the Provo Herald.

"The joke in the family is that both of us worked for the Herald then," says Barbara, "since Kurt was too young to drive."

Kurt, ever the journalist, gently corrects his mom. "That's a nice story and we always tell it," he says, "but I was 16. I was old enough to drive."

Steve played quarterback in high school and college, at West Texas State (now West Texas A&M). Kurt wrote for the Provo Herald in high school and then for the Logan Herald Journal while in college. After a brief stint at The Desert News in Salt Lake City, Kurt had moved on to the Tribune when Steve at last became the starting quarterback in his senior year at West Texas.

"I went to two of his games, covering neither," says Kurt. "One of the games was at Troy State, who that year would win the Division II national title."

West Texas State lost that game, 45-0, and at one point Steve threw a pick that was returned for a touchdown. Kurt was so upset at the play that he stormed off from his companions -- his wife and Steve's future wife -- and stood alone at the top of the stadium. Asked if he was angry as a brother or as a fan, Kurt replies curtly: "Both."

At the outset journalism and college football coaching pay about the same, which is little. Steve earned an M.B.A. from Oregon State and was a grad assistant there under his father. He gave himself five years to make it in the coaching game. His first full-time job was at Northern Arizona and he recalls vividly what his wife said when he told her that he'd be earning eight thousand dollars.

"A month?"

"No, a year."

"You talk about swallowing your pride," says Steve. "I was waiting tables at the Adobe Grill in Flagstaff to

support us and our baby."

Fast-forward 13 years to 2003 ... Steve is making his head-coaching debut with Tulsa, which had finished 1-11 the year before, at the University of Minnesota. Kurt is back in Salt Lake City at the sports desk, tracking the game via the internet. "I'm refreshing the game-tracker," says Kurt, "and it's starting out well. On the first series Tulsa holds them on fourth down and then advances all the way to the Golden Gopher 10-yard line. And I'm thinking to myself, My god, he's turned this around in a hurry."



Ed Reinke/AP

Steve Kragthorpe was named the new University of Louisville head coach less than 48 hours after Bobby Petrino resigned.

The halftime score? Minnesota 35, Tulsa 0. Minnesota wound up winning 45-3.

"There's no one who cares more about the outcome of Steve's game than Kurt does," says their father.

"It's true," says Kurt, who, when Steve's games are televised, normally watches them on television with their 93 year-old grandmother, Elsie Hansen. "I spend part of every day thinking about his football team. Three hundred and sixty-five days a year. Now, for instance, I picture the football preview mags coming out next month and wondering what they'll write about Louisville."

But this season, as with the past, Kurt will refrain from working on the same day in the same place as his brother. Which is why when Brigham Young visits Tulsa, Steve's recent employer, on Sept.15, Kurt will cover his first Tulsa game (excluding that Humanitarian Bowl nightmare) in five years. Yet when Utah visits Louisville on Oct. 5, Kurt will likely not attend. Or if he does, will not be in the press box.

"It does compromise my job to get too entangled with his," says Kurt, who has written a half-dozen or so columns related to his closest relative that are both funny and self-deprecating. "Last season, I covered BYU at Arizona the week before the Cougars were going to face Tulsa. I was worried people might say something, as if I was scouting BYU."

"Then I thought, 'What Division I-A college football coach is going to listen to a sportswriter's scouting report?'"

In truth, both Steve and Kurt admit that they do not talk much. They lead busy lives, have families and have roles that almost compel them to discuss something besides football when they do speak. And the Kragthorpe family converses heavily in footballese.

There's a motto for the popular ESPN morning radio show Mike & Mike. It goes,

"What makes them different makes them great."

When you think about it, the inverse is true for the brothers Kragthorpe: What makes them great is what makes them different. And, unfortunately in some ways, keeps them apart.

John Walters blew off medical school for a job at Sports Illustrated (what a dope!), where he toiled as a reporter and then writer for 14 years. He has won fewer journalism awards than Les Nessman, but he can bench press 275 -- so there! He is the author of "The Same River Twice: A Season with Geno Auriemma and the UConn Huskies" as well as -- coincidentally -- "Basketball For Dummies."
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Big 12 Insider: TV for specific schools an evolving idea

Web Posted: 05/11/2007 04:11 PM CDT

Tim Griffin
Express-News Staff Writer

The creation of the Big Ten Network has been hailed as one of the biggest innovations in the broadcasting of college sports.

But as much as the idea of a network devoted to one conference might sound appealing, the future of college sports broadcasting might be even narrower in terms of reach.

Why stop at a conference starting its own network? For some of the more futuristic-thinking schools, a channel devoted only to their own games might be even more profitable and practical.

Wouldn't a devoted Texas fan living in El Paso or Marfa tune into the Longhorn Channel if he knew he could get his fix of baseball, volleyball and softball games, with an occasional track meet and football practice thrown in for good measure?

Or for that matter, how about a Nebraska fan in Phoenix, Miami, Scottsbluff or McCook being able to turn to a Cornhusker-specific channel at their whim to immerse in the action of their favorite school.

UT athletic director DeLoss Dodds thinks that such an idea would work. And if not now, maybe in several years when technology has made a few more advances to make such a concept even more financially practical.

Viewers might be watching the Longhorn Channel from their television set. Or it could be from their computer or their cell phone. Or in a form that doesn't currently exist. But the visionary Dodds wants to be sure that his school is on the cutting edge of such innovation.

"I don't think it's such a good idea just for a conference," Dodds said. "But Texas people want to see their own school rather than conference sports. The same goes for A&M people or Nebraska people or anybody else. I think that's where the future may really be."

The Longhorns have tinkered with such an idea in the Bevo-D on-demand channel currently available on Time Warner Cable digital subscribers in Austin and San Antonio. But Dodds would like to see more live programming featured than the limited smorgasbord that Bevo-D serves up. In fact, he'd like to see such a station serve as a portal to practically every game not encumbered by national television contractual obligations.

"I think there's a way to pay for an idea like this and maybe even make some money," Dodds said. "We've got Bevo-D TV now. I'd like to enhance this and really get after it. We're talking about taking it to our staff and ramping in up in the next three to four years. We'd like to really study it and see if there is a market for it."

Big 12

Got a question about the Big 12? Use the form below and fire away!

*Your name

*Your e-mail

Your hometown

*Your question



Nebraska athletic director Steve Pederson said that the concept of a school-specific network sounds appealing, even with the need for wide distribution for his school in national broadcasts.



**Required*

"While the national piece is very important, the real appetite for our fans would be anything having anything to do with Nebraska," Pederson said. "There's interest here on anything that we do or play at any time. We have a statewide volleyball network. If we went to something like that, our fans could watch our games no matter where they were. The market is there for something as specific as a package for all of the games we could show."

Demand for such programming might be stronger than most suspect.

"If you look in the future, distribution will grow," Fox Sports Southwest chairman Jon Heidtke said. "You have to determine whether people will watch those things, but television habits certainly will change. The question is whether that niche audience is big enough to support the appropriate economics to make something like a school-specific network work."

Before somebody laughs at the idea, remember that concepts like an all-news network, a food channel and a weather channel were thought to be fallacies at the conception stage. All have developed into unquestioned broadcasting successes over the years.

And much like the hunger for news, food, travel and history, the ravenous support for college sports might have wider appeal and deliver the kind of high-end demographics that advertisers salivate about.

"There's an audience that would be interested in these kinds of events," said Heidtke, whose network was the first to make telecasting spring football games a priority. "There is a group of heavy users out that can't get enough of their school's sports. These are the people who go to the Internet message boards and the all-access television programming. We certainly recognize that and try to provide network programming to satisfy that interest where we can."

And even that might not be enough -- if the ideas of Dodds and Pederson come to fruition.

Five things I think I think ...

1. The groundbreaking earlier this week of the \$34 million Alwin O. and Dorothy Highers Athletics Complex and the Simpson Athletic and Academic Center is another tangible indication that Baylor is staying competitive with the rest of the Big 12.

But the challenges of being the only private school in the Big 12 are immense -- particularly competing regularly against such heavy hitters as UT, A&M, Oklahoma and Nebraska.

The Bears have been serious and consistent competitors in every sport with the exception of football during their history in the Big 12. And unfortunately for coach Guy Morriss and athletic director Ian McCaw, the public perception of their program hinges on them narrowing the football gap.

2. OU might have picked up some quarterback insurance with the arrival of former Texas State QB Chase Wasson to the Sooners. Wasson is far behind quarterbacks Joey Halzle, Sam Bradford and Keith Nichol, who all battled for the starting job throughout spring practice.

A more likely scenario might be to keep Wasson as a third quarterback of sorts behind Halzle and Bradford. That would enable Stoops the luxury of redshirting Nichol, who was trying to make the roster this spring as an early entry after graduating from high school last December.

OU coaches trimmed back Nichol's plays early in spring practice. An extra year of seasoning as a redshirt might give

him a better chance to eventually develop in the system rather than playing as a freshman.

3. Rumors are already surfacing in Nebraska that the Cornhuskers are planning to switch to a 3-4 defense to emphasize the speed and hitting ability of a strong group of linebackers.

Feeding into the mysteriousness of coordinator Kevin Cosgrove's defensive alignment was the lack of media scrutiny during spring practice. It's made some believe that a change could be imminent.

4. It wasn't surprising that Jerry Jones' "Dog and Pony Show" surfaced in Lubbock earlier this week. The Dallas Cowboys' owner made a personal pitch to Texas Tech officials about moving the Tech-Oklahoma State game to Jones' new stadium in Arlington.

Jones desperately needs to capture some part of the college football market after seeing UT and OU keep their "Red River Rivalry" at the Cotton Bowl through 2013.

Although both Tech and OSU have improved their programs since their 1996 game at Texas Stadium, it's hard to believe that the schools would come close to filling the new stadium in Arlington. And if the game can't do that, it would always be considered as a stepchild to the "Red River Shootout" in terms of public acceptance.

5. Players like former Nebraska DE Adam Carriker are a reason why recruiting lists should be taken with a grain of salt. Carriker was listed as a two-star recruit and was listed as the nation's 46th best strong-side defensive end prospect by Rivals.com when he graduated from Kennewick (Wash.) High School in 2002.

And he'll end up as a multi-millionaire in a few weeks after he signs with the St. Louis Rams after he was the 13th player selected in the first round of last month's NFL draft.

The List, Part I

Here's a ranking of the Big 12 head football coaches in terms of their college football careers as a player.

- 1. Mike Gundy, Oklahoma State:** Four-year starter at Oklahoma State remains the most decorated quarterback in Oklahoma State history.
- 2. Guy Morriss, Baylor:** Old-school toughness helped him as two-time All-SWC choice at TCU and later during a 15-season NFL career as a center.
- 3. Gary Pinkel, Missouri:** Two-time all-conference tight end and an honorable mention All-American at Kent State.
- 4. Bob Stoops, Oklahoma:** Four-year starter at defensive back at Iowa from 1979-82, including two seasons as an All-Big Ten selection and honorable mention All-American selection as a senior.
- 5. Mack Brown, Texas:** Two-year letterman as a running back at Florida State whose career was cut short by knee injuries. He started his college football career at Vanderbilt.
- 6. Bill Callahan, Nebraska:** Three-year starter at NAIA Illinois Benedictine as a quarterback, earning honorable mention All-America honors his final two seasons.
- 7. Dan Hawkins, Colorado:** Bullish blocking fullback was a four-year letterman at California-Davis.
- 8. Ron Prince, Kansas State:** Two seasons at Appalachian State after two seasons as all-conference tackle at Dodge City (Kan.) Community College.

9. Gene Chizik, Iowa State: His career as a linebacker ended prematurely at Florida after an unusual illness that doctors initially feared was colon cancer.

10. Dennis Franchione, Texas A&M: Played baseball at Pittsburg State.

10. Mike Leach, Texas Tech: Didn't play college football, spending much of his time playing club rugby and watching LaVelle Edwards' practices at BYU.

10. Mark Mangino, Kansas: Didn't play college football at Youngstown State.

The List, Part II

Here's a list of Big 12 football programs in terms of their average Academic Progress Reports score released earlier this month. Those schools that reached 925 or higher met the NCAA's standards. And those schools with APR scores below 925 must work with the NCAA to put together an improvement plan.

Texas ... 944

Baylor ... 940

Oklahoma ... 936

Nebraska ... 935

Colorado ... 934

Missouri ... 934

Texas Tech ... 931

Iowa State ... 930

Kansas State ... 926

Oklahoma State ... 924

Texas A&M ... 922

Kansas ... 918

Jawjacking

"I don't drink. I didn't fit in at Boulder."

– *Steve Findry* Former Colorado tight end, explaining his transfer to BYU to the Salt Lake City Deseret Morning News

Curious Factoid that May Appeal to Only Me

Baylor coach Guy Morriss is one of only two active Division I-A head football coaches to have appeared in a Super Bowl. Morriss was a center for the New England Patriots in their Super Bowl XX loss to Chicago.

The other current college coach to appear in a Super Bowl was Army's Stan Brock, who started at left tackle for the



COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Tampa In Hunt For ACC Football Title Game

By SCOTT CARTER The Tampa Tribune

Published: May 14, 2007

TALLAHASSEE - The inaugural Atlantic Coast Conference football championship game in 2005 went off exactly as ACC officials envisioned. A packed stadium showed up to watch Florida State upset Virginia Tech before a prime-time national TV audience.

Not too bad of a debut for a basketball conference, huh?

But tradition isn't built overnight, and the ACC learned that lesson in embarrassing fashion in December. While other major conference championship games around the country were sold out - including the SEC Championship Game a few hundred miles away in Atlanta - Georgia Tech and Wake Forest played in a half-empty Jacksonville Municipal Stadium.

The game was bad (Wake Forest squeezed out a 9-6 thriller) and the weather worse (rain and wind), leaving ACC officials contemplating moving the game from Jacksonville after only two years. In February, the league opted to pick up just one year of a two-year option with Jacksonville to serve as the game's host, a sign the league is ready to listen to other cities interested in the game.

Tampa, Charlotte, N.C., Orlando and Baltimore all spoke up, with Tampa considered Jacksonville's strongest rival at this point. Officials from those cities will be in Amelia Island at the ACC's annual spring meetings this week to gauge the league's interest. While the conference isn't expected to take official bids until after the 2007 game, the prep work has begun.

"We're just standing by waiting to see if, or when, the league sends it out to bid," said Rob Higgins, executive director of the Tampa Bay Sports Commission. "We really enjoyed hosting the ACC Men's Basketball Tournament and we enjoy our partnership with the ACC. If anything does become available, we would love to be considered."

In March, Tampa received mostly rave reviews when the ACC's premier postseason event made a four-day stop at the St. Pete Times Forum. ACC commissioner John Swofford left town impressed, saying Tampa would be strongly considered as a future host of the tournament.

Unlike the men's basketball tournament, the football championship game provides the conference unique challenges to fill seats, especially when football schools such as FSU, Miami, Clemson and Virginia Tech fail to make the game.

Swofford remains convinced the game will become a success, but he knows it's not going to happen overnight. That is why ACC officials are considering changing venues after originally wanting to keep the game in Jacksonville long-term the way the SEC has done with its championship game in Atlanta.

"Our game is an infant, in a sense," Swofford told The Charlotte Observer last week. "I think we've gotten off to an excellent start, but it's developing, and it's a little hard to tell how it's going to do in certain cities without those cities having the game."

Tampa Bay Sports Commission officials reserved dates at Raymond James Stadium from 2008 to 2010 when the ACC announced shortly after last year's game that it was exploring other sites.

"That's really standard operating procedure for us," Higgins said. "Any time there is a chance of a larger event, we always make sure we've got a place to play before we even start the process. We just want to make sure internally that we're ready."

"We thought basketball was a success. Everyone we received feedback from, from the commissioner to Joe Fan, was positive."

TITLE TOWNS?

Tampa is one of five cities vying to host future ACC football championship games. A glance at the contenders:

TAMPA

VENUE: Raymond James Stadium (65,700)

PRO: Great weather and served as host of 2007 ACC Men's Basketball Tournament.

CON: Some say SEC town and too far from ACC territory.

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

VENUE: Bank of America Stadium (73,400)

PRO: Located in heart of ACC country.

CON: Cooler weather than Florida sites in December.

JACKSONVILLE

VENUE: Jacksonville Municipal Stadium (73,000)

PRO: Hosting game for third consecutive year in 2007 with an option for 2008.

CON: Stadium was only about half full last season for Georgia Tech-Wake Forest game.

ORLANDO

VENUE: Florida Citrus Bowl (70,000)

PRO: Plenty of entertainment options for ACC visitors.

CON: Outdated stadium in need of major renovations.

BALTIMORE

VENUE: M&T Bank Stadium (69,000)

PRO: Strong ACC fan base and strong push from local community to get game.

CON: You ever been to Baltimore in December? It can be real cold.

Scott Carter

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Find this article at:

<http://www.tbo.com/sports/MGB18ZJDO1F.html>

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washingtonpost.com

New NCAA Rule Will Help Junior Colleges

By Eric Prisbell
Washington Post Staff Writer
Saturday, May 12, 2007; E01

When Ryan Swanson, the men's basketball coach at Hutchinson Community College in Kansas, recruits a player, he routinely begins by asking, "Why aren't you going to prep school?" If the player suggests prep school is an option, Swanson has typically stopped pursuing him because he knows he doesn't stand a chance.

That approach likely will change because of a new NCAA rule that will prohibit players from attending prep schools for a year to correct deficiencies in their academic transcripts following four years of high school.

"It's big," said Jeff Kidder, the coach of Indian Hills Community College in Ottumwa, Iowa. "Everyone is aware of it. It's a whole different ballgame in recruiting. These kids can't automatically say, 'I'm going to prep school.'"

Kidder said two players who seemed destined for prep school a month ago are reconsidering his school.

Several other junior college coaches said they are quickly disseminating information to high school and AAU coaches to educate players on the new legislation because some expect a "feeding frenzy" late this summer over unsigned players.

Junior college, once a popular two-year destination for talented players who lacked the academic credentials to be eligible to compete immediately at four-year universities, was a stop for future NBA standouts such as Steve Francis, Shawn Marion and J.R. Rider. But over the past decade, the proliferation of prep schools -- some legitimate institutions, some fraudulent entities known as diploma mills -- has drained junior colleges of talent. One year at a prep school left players with four years of athletic eligibility at a four-year university, as opposed to two years of eligibility after two years at a junior college.

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

"When you combine those two rules, you are going to see a different landscape for a few years while high school students adjust to that," said Brian Hoberecht, the coach at Dodge City (Kan.) Community College.

"It is going to help the junior colleges," said Syracuse Coach Jim Boeheim, the president of the National Association of Basketball Coaches. Yet he called the rule "one of the worst ever passed" because if players fall behind during their freshman year in high school, there is not enough time to catch up within a four-year window. Boeheim added that the rule could have the unintended consequence of eliminating "the poor kid who is not a good student," which is why Boeheim is working with other Division I coaches to push for an amendment.

Several junior college coaches praised the NCAA's attempt to eliminate fraudulent prep schools, though they also said the majority of prep schools were legitimate. But many junior college coaches acknowledged they will benefit personally from the legislation because better players likely will attend junior colleges.

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Dennis Helms, the Odessa (Tex.) College coach whose former players include 1991 No. 1 draft pick Larry Johnson, was blunt, saying: "We would not complain a bit if they somehow come up with a rule that figures out how Kevin Durant would come play for you. That would be okay."

In the past, coaches at four-year colleges often steered recruits with troubled academics to junior colleges to boost their credentials. Once prep schools became more popular, some coaches at four-year schools helped push players to specific prep schools so the players could improve their academics and preserve their four years of college eligibility.

"All of a sudden, instead of people trying to place players with you, you now had to go out and try to really recruit against Division I schools who were trying to put a kid in a prep school," said Paul Swanson, the coach at Pensacola (Fla.) Junior College.

For the four-year school, "if you can put someone somewhere for one year and get him back for four, it was a simple business decision. You knew which [prep] schools were legit and which were not, so not only was it hurting you, it was hurting the young man."

A decade ago, coaches said, the best junior college teams in the Midwest usually had five players who could play for major Division I programs. In recent years, the better teams usually had two players of that caliber. Wabash Valley (Ill.) College Coach Dan Sparks, who coached Marion in junior college, said close to 100 college coaches used to attend the national tournament each year. That number, he said, has been cut in half.

Paul Swanson and others said the emergence of fraudulent prep schools was a major topic at recent summer meetings for junior college coaches.

Junior college coaches had watched the practice become "progressively worse," he said, and "suddenly they were popping up everywhere."

In a response to the trend, he submitted a proposal two years ago to the NABC that detailed how players would be able to stay at a junior college one year to repair their academic deficiencies before being eligible at a Division I school.

Ryan Swanson added: "I have seen the transcripts. Kids with a 1.0 for 3 1/2 years go to some place and get a 4.0. That used to bother me, kids having this perception that prep school was some fantasy where you went and automatically became eligible."

The Washington Post reported in February 2006 that Lutheran Christian Academy in Philadelphia, which sent players to Georgetown and George Washington among other programs, was operated out of a community center, had no textbooks and had only one full-time employee, a former sanitation worker with no college degree. The New York Times reported in November 2005 that University High, a correspondence school in Miami, offered diplomas to students despite having no classes or instructors.

"We saw the NCAA not doing anything yet to legislate or police some of the prep schools that we knew were not doing the right things," Ryan Swanson said. "We were upset that the system rewarded kids for dropping out of school. We were upset because we felt the NCAA viewed us as the ugly, red-headed stepchild."

Coaches don't know if junior college basketball will return to the level of 15 years ago, but they expect more talent to be spread across the country and for it to have added relevance on the national recruiting scene.

"I think it may come back," Kidder said, "and it's not because people want it to come back. It's because the NCAA has made it that much more difficult for these guys, with this rule closing up all these sweatshop places."

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Brand likens Title IX to Jackie Robinson at LHU graduation

By IAN QUILLEN, iquillen@sungazette.com

LOCK HAVEN — Myles Brand makes no secret of his support for Title IX, the 35-year-old federal gender discrimination law that has grown into a hot-button issue in college athletics.

As the NCAA president spoke at Lock Haven University's commencement Saturday, Brand paired the legislation with racial integration as two ways sports have enabled social change.

But while the nation almost universally celebrates Jackie Robinson as an American hero, Title IX still has vociferous critics. Specifically, displaced athletes, coaches and supporters have blamed the law for the elimination of men's athletic programs throughout the country.

"People think that men's sports are being closed because of the growth of women's sports. That's not true," Brand said in an interview with reporters. "There are schools that have been closing men's sports in Division I ... and they're doing it to distribute the resources. They'll say 'we're going to focus in on a couple sports.' It's usually the revenue sports (football and basketball)."

Title IX basically stipulates that schools must provide athletic opportunities to women on an equal scale to those they provide for men. In Division I, that normally means that if a school has 65 percent female students, it must aim to give 65 percent of its athletic scholarships to women. If it doesn't, a school must prove it is expanding those opportunities for women.

Thus, when men's programs are cut, critics point to Title IX as a partial cause. But Brand says its just one of many misconceptions the NCAA is fighting as he enters his fifth year as president.

"I do know that sometimes you have to cut sports, sometimes the budget is a problem. But don't blame it on Title IX," Brand said. "What we want to do is make sure that women have every opportunity that men do."

Brand, formerly president of Indiana University and the University of Oregon, has spent most of his tenure working on academic reform. Now, it appears the man perhaps most famous (or infamous) for firing Indiana basketball coach Bob Knight is fighting a different battle.

In an era where television contracts and coaches salaries in men's Division I football and basketball are rising, Brand is trying to convince a skeptical public that there are still educational principles behind college athletics at all levels.

Brand stops short of advocating for college sports to take a more insular route and shun media attention. But he worries about spending, but often more about the rapid construction of new facilities, which he says create more burden than almost all coaching contracts.

Citing that only half a dozen athletic programs make a profit on their own, Brand is hoping new NCAA measures that increase transparency in spending will slow the damage.

"I think we had people operating with bad information," Brand said. "So one school would say, 'Well, I've got to do XYZ because they're doing it down the block.' Well, they're not."

The NCAA has countered the attention generated by Division I sports with a concerted effort to conceptualize the purpose of Division II program's like Lock Haven's. Using the catch phrase "I Chose Division II," the campaign, now two years old, is designed to promote the balance of competition and community offered at the second level of collegiate sports.

"There's a better attempt to build understanding of what Division II stands for," Brand said. "To make sure people who are in Division II are able to take advantage and don't feel that they have to run to Division I, which almost in every case is a terrible idea. It'll cost them \$ 10 or 15 million more a year, and they'll go from a winning program to a losing program. The stands empty out, because no one likes to see teams lose all the time. It's usually a disaster."

As far as the Bald Eagles' field hockey and wrestling programs?

"A couple programs, that's OK," Brand said. "It's a division II school."

In his speech, Brand echoed that belief in the educational value of sports, and the ability of athletes to live complete college lives. But his message gets grayed by what makes news; things like this April's dilemma with Don Imus and the Rutgers' women's basketball team. Or the ongoing court proceedings involving members of the Penn State football team.

"They're not celebrities." Brand said. "They're 18- or 19-year old kids. They're very vulnerable, they're not experienced. They don't often have a platform to respond. We get confused in the mind of the public that these are young vulnerable students. And we treat them as though they are celebrities. They're not.

"One of the things we have to do ... the NCAA and everyone else ... is help the public put it in context."

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