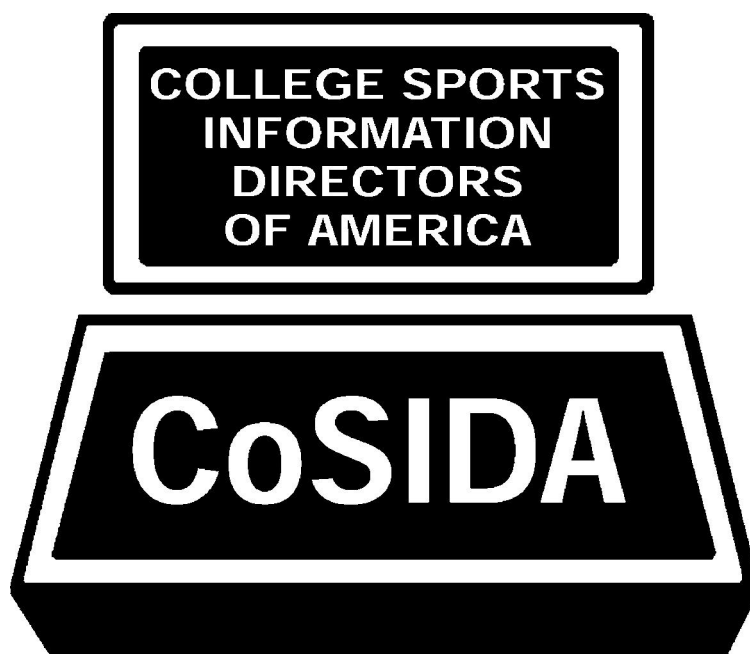


CoSIDA NEWS

Intercollegiate Athletics News from Around the Nation



April 9, 2007

For the second time, which car was chosen best in performance, handling and styling?
(Hint: It's got available all-wheel drive.)



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Mega-bucks, no taxes make colleges cheer

By [MIKE KNOBLER](#)

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Published on: 03/31/07

A dollar sign could be the unofficial logo tonight when the nation's four best college basketball teams play for a spot in the national championship game.

The Final Four is awash in money, including the billions CBS pays for broadcast rights, the millions universities pay coaches, and the \$204 a seat many of the 53,000 spectators pay the NCAA for tickets to games at the Georgia Dome.

But don't make the mistake of thinking these big-money doings are big business. Businesses pay income tax; college sports don't. Consider:

- The NCAA, with annual operating revenues of almost \$8 billion, pays no taxes on the \$6 billion it receives from CBS under an 11-year deal that gives the network broadcast rights for college sports championship events, the jewel of which is the Final Four.
- Fans who donate to their favorite college athletics programs get tens of millions of dollars in tax write-offs, even when the donations buy the right to purchase tickets.
- Postseason football games, like Atlanta's Chick-fil-A Bowl, pay no taxes on multi-million-dollar corporate sponsorships.

The roots of those tax breaks go back to an 1894 law exempting educational organizations from federal income tax. But critics and some lawmakers question whether college sports have strayed so far from the educational mission that they no longer deserve to be treated like non-profit enterprises.

In October, then-chairman of the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee Bill Thomas (R-Calif.) sent a letter to NCAA President Myles Brand demanding to know why taxpayers should subsidize a college sports system he described as "highly commercialized."

In December, the Senate Finance Committee heard testimony from former University of Michigan President James Duderstadt that big-time college football and basketball "have been transformed into commercial entertainment businesses with only marginal relevance to the educational (and, I might add, tax-exempt) mission of the university."

In January, Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), the ranking Republican on the Finance Committee, told the Des Moines Register he was looking into college athletics' tax-exempt status "to make sure that taxpayers are not being played for a
<http://ajc.printthis.clickability.com/pt/cpt?action=cpt&title=Mega-bucks%2C+no+taxes+make+colleges+c...> 4/6/2007

sucker."

This week, Brand said the NCAA "would prefer the Congress not get involved in these issues," and he expressed confidence it wouldn't.

Brand and the NCAA argue the critics sensationalize college sports' problems, overlook the success of the NCAA's academic reforms and often get their facts wrong. Only 23 of the more than 300 Division I athletics programs had more revenues than expenses in 2004-05, Brand said in his response to Thomas.

But with ever-increasing amounts of money spent on coaches' salaries and athletics facilities, some argue, it becomes harder to see college basketball and football as fundamentally different in their mission from the NBA and the NFL.

"When you look for a rationale [for the tax exemption] based on the distinctiveness of the activity, there is none. Football is football," said University of Miami law professor Frances Hill, who has testified before the Ways and Means Committee. "The question becomes why is one taxed and the other not, and there is no principled answer except history."

Historically, politicians have taken the NCAA's side on tax issues. Every decade or so, the IRS challenges some part of the college athletics system. Every time, it has backed down or been overridden by Congress.

In the 1970s, the issue was whether the sale of broadcast rights should be tax-exempt. In the 1980s, the issue was whether to tax the donations many schools' fans must make to obtain the privilege of buying season tickets. In the 1990s, the issue was whether bowls should pay taxes on the money received from sponsors.

"The NCAA and the colleges and the universities have really good lobbyists," said Jim Musselman, a South Texas College of Law professor who has written about tax issues in college and pro sports. "The IRS either has to back off entirely, or they give in quite a bit."

The NCAA has spent comparatively little - \$160,000 - each of the last three years on lobbying the federal government, according to The Center for Responsive Politics.

There's a lot at stake. If college sports were a business, that business would rank in the top 300 of the Fortune 500, just ahead of huge retailers Nordstrom and Dillard's. Annual operating revenues for all NCAA divisions are about \$7.8 billion.

A legitimate squeeze

Tax law affects everything from the way fans pay for tickets to the way schools pay coaches.

When Georgia Tech decided it needed to raise more athletics revenues, for example, it decided to require as much as \$500 in annual donations over and above the season ticket price for the privilege of buying the best men's basketball tickets next season.

By calling that money a donation instead of raising the ticket price, Tech enabled its fans to write off 80 percent of the increased cost as a charitable contribution. The same thing has been going on at the University of Georgia and other top athletic programs for years.

Why are those required contributions 80 percent deductible? Because Congress said so in 1988, after the IRS had tried to disallow the deduction altogether.

"That's a heck of a fund-raising opportunity for the colleges and the universities," said Musselman, the South Texas College expert.

Millions for coaches

Colleges have a big incentive to fight for the deduction. More than one-fifth of sports revenues in the NCAA's top football division come from charitable donations. That figure was \$845 million in 2004-05.

Critics also have expressed concern about escalating coaching salaries, questioning whether they meet the legal standard that tax-exempt organizations must pay only "reasonable" compensation.

The University of Alabama pays new football coach Nick Saban \$4 million a year. Three of the four coaches in this weekend's Final Four receive more than \$1.3 million a year.

How much is too much for college sports to remain tax-exempt?

"The law is that the reasonableness of the compensation is to be determined by the marketplace," said Atlanta lawyer Jim Hasson, who represents universities on complying with federal tax law.

From a tax law standpoint, that marketplace includes the market for pro coaches, he said, so if pro coaches get multi-million dollar deals their college colleagues can get them, too.

In some Northern states, attorneys general have ruled that comparisons should be made only to other public sector workers, Hasson said. Don't look for Southern states to impose such limits.

"At this stage of the athletic cycle, I don't think you'll find Florida would," Hasson said with a laugh about the defending national champions in football and men's basketball.

The NCAA touts its "corporate champions" in the names of the music and entertainment events at Centennial Olympic Park: AT&T in the Park on Friday, The Pontiac Garage today and My Coke Fest on Sunday. The money that paid for those sponsorships isn't considered advertising revenue, which would be taxable, even for a non-profit.

The NCAA, the conferences and the bowls can sell naming rights, use corporate logos, enter into exclusivity deals and display or distribute a company's product. That's sponsorship. They can't compare that product to other products or tell fans to buy it. That's advertising.

"To most lay people, this seems totally silly," Hasson said, "but this is the line that's been drawn."

Find this article at:

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From the Baltimore Sun

Newspapers need to 'do it different' on getting paid

Jay Hancock

April 8, 2007

Everything Sam Zell does, he told the Chicago Tribune last week, "is motivated by doing it best, doing it different, answering questions that no one else could."



Good, because different is what the newspaper business needs. Last week the real estate tycoon agreed to take control of Tribune Co., which owns The Sun, the Tribune, the Los Angeles Times and other papers.

His odds of reviving the company are long. But if Zell's aim is to change newspapers' business model rather than their content, he might be onto something. The problem isn't the journalism; soaring Web readership proves that. The problem is getting paid for it in the Internet Age.

Addressing the following questions that no one else has answered might point a way toward solving it.

- Why do newspapers pay the Associated Press to distribute their expensive, hard-won stories to radio, TV, Yahoo and other enemies of newspapers?

Newspapers run AP as a collective, but the interests of AP and its members have never been further apart. The No. 1 problem for all media is promiscuous content distribution with low or no compensation.

AP makes this worse, striking its own deals and enabling newspapers in their role as content floozies.

Papers must regain control of their stories, hoard them under their banners and Web sites and stitch them to their subscribers and advertisers. If you want Yahoo viewers to read your stories, deal with Yahoo directly, as McClatchy newspapers agreed to last week. Quit AP or revamp it.

- Why aren't more papers charging for online access?

Growing readership has persuaded publishers to seek nonpaying Web eyeballs and hope advertising follows. Much Web newspaper content probably will always be gratis. But most papers are petrified to even experiment with charging online. Somewhere in the mind of God is a business model that lets non-national papers collect online subscriptions.

Maybe Zell will discern it. He doesn't have to go whole hog. Choose one paper, create a micro-payment system for premium content, charge for a few high-demand items and see what happens. Heck, choose one blog at one paper and charge for a portion of the material. Surely The Sun's rock-star Orioles blogger, Roch Kubatko - Tribune Co.'s most widely read blogger - could generate paying clients.

If it works you'll start pumping revenue oxygen back into Tribune Tower. If it flops you've invested in wisdom.

- Why have newspapers cut investment in circulation?

The federal "Do Not Call" registry, launched in 2003, was a great excuse for papers to stop recruiting subscribers. First they reduced hiring telemarketers, which saved money and helped hit quarterly profit targets. Then, of course, circulation fell, which saved even more on newsprint costs.

But you can see where this ends up, and it's time for papers to again spend serious dough on promoting their off-line product, which still generates most profits. This may involve better ad campaigns, reducing subscription prices or massive door-to-door sales. It also requires improved service for existing customers, which means reversing Tribune's transfer of its call centers to the Philippines, for a start.

Simultaneously, newspapers must push hard for Congress to enact a "Do Not Call" exception for newspapers similar to the one in Canada.

- Why is almost all newspaper content treated as obsolete the day after it's published?

Much of what newspapers do - restaurant reviews, crime reports, high school and college sports stats, movie reviews - are valuable long after publication. Thanks to the Web and terabyte hard drives, they need never be out of readers' reach.

But papers are terrible about preparing old material for reuse. Instead of just sticking it in a searchable archive, they need to reorganize it by category for easy access. It's more like being in the database business than the news business, which is why papers don't get it. But it might increase readership or position archives as a revenue center.

Tribune's impending private structure is supposed to give shelter from Wall Street's glare to work these things out. Given the company's post-deal debt burden, I suspect true shelter will require selling the Los Angeles Times or other assets beyond the Chicago Cubs to cut the interest load.

But what then? The industry's answer to the bulleted questions would be: Because we've always done it that way.

It's far from clear that Zell will keep his promise to "do it different," especially in a constructive way. But somebody ought to try.

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From the Baltimore Sun

Commentary

Kentucky proposal limiting private schools' recruiting worth watching

On High Schools: Milton Kent

April 3, 2007

Kentucky public high school officials are, in Bluegrass State parlance, betting on a long shot in an attempt to level the athletic playing field between public and private high schools there. If they're successful, the measure could have ramifications all over the country, including in Maryland.



The state's Board of Education, at the behest of the Kentucky High School Athletic Association, might vote this week on a proposal that would effectively place a serious crimp in the ability of the state's private schools to recruit athletes.

If the Kentucky board approves these new restrictions, which would cover middle school students entering the seventh grade in the 2008-09 school year, it wouldn't take much imagination to see other states consider or even enact similar measures.

The Maryland Interscholastic Athletic Association and the Interscholastic Athletic Association of Maryland, the organizations that govern private school sports in the Baltimore area, have taken steps in recent years to quell anger from public schools over transfers on the high school level.

But there remains a simmering concern among public school coaches about the ability of their private school counterparts to pursue with impunity middle schoolers who might otherwise suit up for the neighborhood public school.

The pending Kentucky measure would, no doubt, alleviate the worries of public school coaches, while opening up a mighty can of worms among the private schools and parents who want to send their kids there.

The Kentucky state board will meet tomorrow and Thursday in Frankfort, the state capital, to consider Proposal 2, which, if adopted, would create "athletic attendance territories" for private schools, which would resemble the attendance areas for public schools.

Simply put, a private school would only be able to immediately play middle school kids who live in a geographic area assigned to that school - more than likely, a contiguous one - once they reach the ninth grade.

<http://www.baltimoresun.com/sports/highschool/bal-sp.kent03apr03,1,7454207,print.column?coll=bal-spor...> 4/9/2007

Any student who wanted to play sports at a private school out of his area would have to sit out a year under Proposal 2. The rule also would apply to seventh- and eighth-graders who switched schools, whether they moved from public to private schools or vice versa, but it doesn't take much effort to see whom the measure is intended for.

Presently, Kentucky's public and private high schools compete together for state championships, but not by choice of the KHSAA, which voted by a more than 2-1 margin 1 1/2 years ago to stage separate state playoffs.

The state board voted down the idea and ordered the association to come up with a plausible alternative, which it hasn't yet found.

Not surprisingly, there is considerable opposition to Proposal 2. Tim Shaughnessy, a state senator from Louisville, tried to attach an amendment against attendance territories to a bill that addressed the athletic eligibility of 19-year-olds, but the state's House voted it down.

Still, Shaughnessy expressed confidence to the *The Courier-Journal* of Louisville that the 11-member state board would reject Proposal 2.

"We believe that limiting students' access to high school athletics based upon the middle school they attend is a terrible education policy," Cecilia Price, a spokeswoman for the Archdiocese of Louisville, told *The Courier-Journal*.

It will be interesting to see if parents and students in other parts of the country will get to weigh in.

- Correction // A word was missing from Friday's column on the Mount Hebron girls lacrosse team's pursuit of their 100th straight win. I meant to say that the average victory margin for the Vikings in their state title games was 12 goals, not that they had won each game by at least 12 goals.

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Intense coverage of recruiting cripples some college careers

By **DAVE SKRETTA**
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Blake Larsen wishes he could have been just another guy on campus.

A police officer in suburban Kansas City, it was only a few years ago the 6-foot-7, 320-pound offensive lineman was the prized recruit of the University of Iowa. He was a Parade All-American, rated by several experts as the top offensive line prospect in the country.

Larsen never started a game.

"It's tough to stay grounded," he said, reflecting on a promising career gone awry. "You're the center of attention. You start to believe your own hype."

Larsen quit the Hawkeyes program after his junior year, one of many former high school stars whose college careers are tarnished by unfulfilled, and often unrealistic, expectations.

While injuries and academic problems have doomed many, experts and administrators increasingly say external influences - mainly fans and the media - are contributing to the downfall of high school athletes when they reach college.

In some cases, players develop a sense of entitlement that sets them up for failure, said Dr. Doug Gardner, a sports psychologist with ThinkSport Consulting Service in Lafayette, Calif. In other cases, athletes wilt under the pressure and scrutiny.

"A lot of young people get totally absorbed in the situation," Gardner said. "They're flattered that someone is interested in them."

R. Gerald Turner, co-chair of the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, said the increased attention is "dramatically impinging upon the lives of student-athletes," turning them into commodities by people "who care nothing about them other than their news value."

Turner, the longtime president of Southern Methodist University, said there is a pressing need for reform in recruiting, but acknowledges there is no good way to curtail growing public interest.

Companies such as Rivals.com and Scout.com have found a niche in recruiting coverage, and in turn are becoming the target of athletics reformers like Turner.

Many athletes say they get phone calls from reporters at least once a week, often more. Letters, e-mails and text-messages are almost constant.

"There are obviously some (players) who enjoy it," Turner said, "but plenty of others and their parents are crying out for a more controlled system."

Bobby Burton, editor-in-chief for Nashville, Tenn.-based Rivals.com, argues that his Web site provides a valuable watchdog service over the sometimes seedy world of recruiting, while

delivering a product fans crave.

"It's up to the player to make the decision when enough's enough," said Burton, who believes parents and coaches must be more actively involved in the recruiting process.

Patrick Crumb, senior vice president of Fox Media Interactive, which owns Scout.com, believes recruiting coverage has become mainstream. USA Today, ESPN and others cover it, particularly around national signing day in February.

"We're certainly cognizant of the fact that we're dealing with teenagers and young adults," Crumb said.

Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz, said the attention creates "undue and unnormal pressure" on highly touted recruits that causes more to wash out than in years past.

In the recruiting class of 2002, nine of the top 100 players identified by Rivals.com didn't make it to campus, falling short academically or running into legal problems. Thirty-one did not play their entire career at the school where they signed, excluding a handful who left early for the NFL. While Vince Young led the University of Texas to the 2006 national title, Garnet Smith and Marquis Johnson virtually disappeared. Ten players from Young's signing class were no longer part of the Longhorns program four years later.

"The pressure the outside sources put on you, expectations get real high," Arkansas coach Houston Nutt said. "We've had a lot of five-stars that didn't pan out."

Ray Reitz, a football coach at Pennsylvania's Jeannette High School for the past 25 years, said the attention he gets for junior quarterback Terrelle Pryor - who has more than a dozen offers from the likes of Michigan and Penn State - is staggering.

"The danger of society right now is kids are skipping these years, adolescent to adult," Reitz said. "There's people out there exploiting kids like this."

Cathy Larsen thinks her son missed out on growing up. She remembers the Internet message boards ripping on Blake Larsen when he did not make an immediate impact at Iowa. Those who lauded him began to attack him.

Blake Larsen contends he's still a success, unlike so many other high-profile recruits who flame out. Larsen earned a degree, met his wife at Iowa and landed a job he loves.

But, he acknowledges, his career might have turned out differently if not for the attention he received in high school. He considers a former teammate, Bob Sanders, who arrived on campus relatively unknown and blossomed into a star for the Indianapolis Colts.

"He's a Super Bowl champion now," Larsen said. "When they do something great, it really opens eyes. If you're already getting all the hype, it's pretty much, 'He was supposed to do that.'"

(Published: April 9, 2007)

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Athletics

<http://chronicle.com/weekly/v53/i32/32a04001.htm>

From the issue dated April 13, 2007

College-Basketball Experts Divided Over NBA Age Minimum

Some coaches say the rule encourages top players to skip classes, while others believe it could lead to more focus on academic work

By BRAD WOLVERTON

Atlanta

Last year the National Basketball Association established a controversial rule requiring star players to wait a year after they graduate from high school, and until age 19, to enter the professional draft.

At the time, some college coaches worried that the requirement might pose problems for the highest-profile teams, causing elite players to spend just a year in college, blowing off their classes, and leading many less-talented athletes to have unrealistic expectations for their careers.

Last month Bob Knight, the legendary men's basketball coach at Texas Tech University, created a stir when he described the requirement as the "worst thing that's happened to college basketball since I've been coaching."

"Now you can have a kid come to school for a year and play basketball, and he doesn't even have to go to class," Mr. Knight said before the start of the NCAA men's basketball tournament. "That, I think, has a tremendous effect on the integrity of college sports."

Academic officials share Mr. Knight's concerns, but many people in college sports believe the requirement has had a largely positive effect on the college game. For one thing, it has led a handful of talented high-school players, all likely to have been among the top picks in last year's NBA draft, to spend at least a year in college.

Their presence has improved the quality of college basketball. Greg Oden, a 7-foot center who dunks with such force that he shakes the backboard, led Ohio State University to the national title game here last week. Kevin Durant, who starred for the University of Texas, swept the national player-of-the-year honors — the first time a freshman has ever done that.

The age requirement is having an even bigger impact off the court, Myles Brand, president of the NCAA, told reporters during the Final Four. He said the rule had helped persuade scores of high-school athletes to prepare better for college, and ultimately could help improve the graduation rates of men's basketball players.

"Now they'll be in college, they're prepared for college, and the likelihood they'll stay on is increased because they've prepared for it," he said. "I expect hundreds, maybe even thousands, over the years to be positively affected by this rule."

Eyeing the Pros

Kevin Garnett was the first modern-day player to jump from high school to the pro ranks, in 1995, and a year later

Kobe Bryant followed. The success of those two, who are now household names, led many high-school players to start eyeing the professional league in their teens. After the 2005 season, nine players made the leap from high school to the pros, prompting the NBA to establish its age requirement.

When the rule went into effect last summer, coaches of many top programs feared it would cause recruiting headaches and lead to NCAA penalties. At the time, the college association's rules were designed to punish programs whose players left early for the NBA. The NCAA has since changed its rules, and only penalizes teams whose players are academically ineligible when they leave the campus.

When Mr. Knight heard stories about players barely cracking their books as they waited to go pro, he went on the offensive. During a Big 12 conference call with reporters in March, he described how some freshmen players have gamed the system, passing the minimum six credit hours of classes during the fall semester and then not showing up for their classes the rest of the year.

Under the NBA requirement, a player "certainly doesn't have to go to class the second semester," said Mr. Knight, who prides himself on his teams' high graduation rates. "I'm not exactly positive about the first semester. But he would not have to attend a single class the second semester to play through the whole second semester of basketball."

Some academic advisers acknowledged that that scenario sometimes happens.

"Unfortunately, there are no rules per se to stop it," said Phil Moses, director of academic support at North Carolina State University and a former president of the National Association of Academic Advisors for Athletics.

Asked about the practice, Mr. Brand said: "If there are individuals who are just looking at this as one and out, not taking care of business in the second semester, we have to deal with that. There may well be some of those."

Despite such concerns, the rule has benefited many players. High-school counselors like it because it has encouraged young athletes to pay more attention to their studies, says Ken Fox, a college and career counselor at Ladue Horton Watkins High School, in St. Louis, and chairperson of the admissions-practices committee of the National Association for College Admission Counseling.

"The rule is clearly a step in the right direction because the jump from high school to the pros is so rare," he says. "Kids are starting to get the message that while it's OK to dream about playing in the Final Four or the NBA, their academic dreams are a lot more likely to come true."

Len Elmore, a former University of Maryland basketball star who is now a broadcaster, lawyer, and member of the Knight Foundation Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics, also believes the rule has had a positive impact. He says it has forced players to focus on their studies and indirectly helped many athletes realize they are not prepared for the professional game.

"So many kids aren't ready, and by playing a year in college their weaknesses get exposed," he says. "They'll have to go back another year, and maybe a third year. Pretty soon, somebody's gonna get an education."

In an article last month in *SportsBusiness Journal*, Mr. Elmore argued that one year of college is better than none because it helps players improve their basketball skills and become more mature.

Some college administrators, however, disagree that a single season is an acceptable commitment.

"I understand the commercial considerations if a kid can become an instant multimillionaire, but I'm not sure in the long run it's good for society or college sports if kids leave early to chase a buck," says Robert C. Khayat, chancellor of the University of Mississippi, a former college-football player and former president of the Southeastern Conference. "This may sound terribly naïve, but one of our values in this country is valuing commitments and being loyal — and

not just shifting your allegiances on the strength of money."

Longer Stays

Many college-sports officials would rather see basketball players commit to playing two or three years in college before turning pro, as they have to do in baseball and football. Baseball players can either sign minor-league contracts out of high school, or pledge to play at least three years in college. Football players must spend three years in college before entering the NFL draft.

Mr. Brand said last month that part of the reason graduation rates are higher in football than in men's basketball is because football players can't leave for the pros until after their junior year. If basketball players were required to stay more than one year, he believes, that could help raise graduation rates in basketball, which are the lowest of any sport.

The professional leagues, however, are responsible for setting age rules, and NBA officials do not plan to change their requirement.

Ironically, two of the best players in college basketball this season may not make themselves eligible for this June's draft. With all his awards, Mr. Durant does not have much left to prove on the court and would seem a sure bet to go pro. But he has also excelled in the classroom, holding a 3.0 grade-point average, and he says he is still attending classes on the Austin campus.

Mr. Oden apparently wants to be an accountant. He certainly needs to learn how to handle all the NBA riches he is going to bring in someday. But he has repeatedly hinted that he might stay in college longer than one year, even though most basketball experts believe he will go pro this summer.

Buckeyes fans can only hope that because their team lost the national championship game to the University of Florida, Mr. Oden might stick around next season for another shot at the title.

As he walked off the court after the game last week, blue and orange confetti rained on his shoulders. Just before he disappeared into a tunnel under the stadium, an Ohio State fan screamed, "We'll see you next year!"

The big man never looked up.

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Section: Athletics

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SPORTSDAY

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Jean-Jacques Taylor is
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Black coaches seek hire calling

Colleges can honor Robinson by hiring more black coaches

12:35 PM CDT on Thursday, April 5, 2007

jjtaylor@dallasnews.com

For every sports pioneer, it's not so much the fame his accomplishment brought him, but the opportunities his legacy created for others.

See, it's not about Jackie Robinson breaking the color barrier 60 years ago. It's about today's major league rosters being filled by players from all nationalities. And it's not about Bill Russell being the NBA's first black coach nearly 40 years ago. It's about the league having so many black coaches these days we no longer think about race as it relates to NBA hiring practices.

That brings us to Eddie Robinson – Coach Rob to those who knew and loved him – the former Grambling coach who died late Tuesday night after a lengthy battle with Alzheimer's.

Coach Rob won 408 games in a career that stretched six decades and a life that lasted 88 years. He sent more than 200 players, including seven first-round draft choices, to the NFL and showed hundreds of young men how to be better fathers and husbands by example. Talk to any Grambling player, from Everson Walls to Doug Williams, whose life Coach Rob touched, and he'll go on and on about the man's impact on his life.

It's a shame he never had quite the same impact on the sport he loved.

Coach Rob, who began his career in the segregated South, never had an opportunity to face peers like Bear Bryant or Woody Hayes or Joe Paterno with his best teams. The times wouldn't let it happen. And once colleges integrated and coaches like Bryant and Darrell Royal started giving scholarships to black players, Grambling no longer had the talent level to compete against Division I powers, though he would play anyone

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Eddie Robinson (1919-2007)

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Still, his success should've paved the way for more black head coaches in Division I football.

It didn't.

Of Division I football's 119 head coaches, only six are black. America, that's disgraceful.

There's no excuse for it. None.

Some of you – perhaps many of you – don't want to hear that today. You'd prefer to learn about some of Coach Rob's greatest triumphs – the 17 Southwestern Athletic Conference titles and nine national black college championships the Tigers won under his leadership.

Maybe, you'd like to read about the exploits of great players like Tank Younger or Ernie Ladd. Perhaps, you'd rather hear about how Coach Rob used to make sandwiches for road trips because he knew the team wouldn't be able to eat at restaurants in the segregated South.

There's a time and place for that.

Now, however, is the time to honor Coach Rob by demanding university presidents and athletic directors ignore their big-money boosters and move outside their comfort zone and hire more black coaches.

Don't miss the point.

This isn't about establishing quotas or instituting some affirmative action plan. This isn't even about establishing some college version of the Rooney Rule, which forces every NFL coaching search to include at least one minority candidate, though you must vigorously question any college coaching search that doesn't include a minority candidate.

I'm talking about hiring quality black coaches. Don't act like they don't exist. And don't act like you don't know how to find them.

At some point in his career, every man is an inexperienced coach hoping for an opportunity, so don't feed me reasons why athletic directors can't find good black head coaches – just do it. And when you do hire a black coach, give him an opportunity to get through the job's rough patches, so he can build a program.



AP

Washington's Tyrone Willingham (center) is one of only six black head football coaches at Division I schools.

Don't do like Notre Dame did, firing Ty Willingham at the first sign of trouble. UCLA stuck by Karl Dorrell, and now it's being rewarded.

No doubt, there's been progress, but it hasn't been nearly enough. It won't be until there are good black coaches, bad black coaches and recycled black coaches. Only when race ceases to be part of the conversation when hiring or firing – think NBA – will we have achieved the proper level of acceptance.

On the day after Coach Rob's death, athletic directors from some of the nation's most powerful institutions issued statements or discussed his profound impact on college football and his contribution to the game.

Their words, though heartfelt, ring hollow.

You want to honor Coach Rob, then hire someone who looks like Coach Rob to lead your football program. Or convince a fellow athletic director to do it. Give someone an opportunity to be this generation's Coach Rob.

Anything else is an insult to Eddie Gay Robinson's legacy.

April 8, 2007

Building a dynasty

How did UF become a powerhouse? The right people in the right jobs

*BY DAVID JONES
FLORIDA TODAY*

The growl heard 'round the world has reverberated loudly from Gainesville three times lately. But it's not just another national championship at yet another athletic powerhouse.

This is No. 3. In a year's time. At the same school.

Just how did Florida develop the perfect storm of college athletics prowess?

Sure, the school has a treasure chest of alumni and booster support, both in loyal fans and dollars. But a lot of schools have that. What the others do not have is the triumvirate of two coaches and an athletic director who seem to mesh high goals and academic structure with a combination of charm and hard-driving passion.

So many schools have searched for the perfect formula through the years. But none has matched what Florida has done in the past year -- ever. UF is the first college program to win national titles in football and men's basketball in the same school year. The Gators were the first to win back-to-back national crowns in men's hoops since Duke in 1991-92.

And no one else has these magic ingredients:

- Billy Donovan, the young phenom from Rockville Centre, N.Y., who this past week captured his second consecutive college basketball title and proved he was a true Gator by turning down an opportunity to coach at Kentucky, one of the most storied of college basketball institutions.
- Urban Meyer, who left the supportive program at Utah and tamed the snake pits at Gainesville in two years by winning the national football championship in January.
- Jeremy Foley, the athletic director who recruited them, kept them, gave them what they needed to succeed and set the tone for their work.

"First and foremost," said Manny Fernandez, a member of the UF Board of Trustees, the secret of the Gators' success is "getting the right people in the right jobs." At the moment, everyone agrees that Foley, Donovan and Meyer are a perfect fit.

"I was sitting there, watching the end of the (national championship) game, thinking about what an extraordinary achievement this is," SEC commissioner Mike Slive said. "It has to be unparalleled in the modern annals of college athletics."

How are they doing it?

"It's the University of Florida. It's everybody," Gators basketball coach Billy Donovan said. "It's our players, it's our coaches, it's our administration, it's our presidents. Everybody is kind of going through this the same way. Everybody has to be on the same page working toward the same thing."

Show the money

It all starts with cash. UF has plenty of it. The booster organization ranks among the best in the nation.

"It doesn't hurt that they have provided a beautiful practice facility," ESPN's Dick Vitale said of the basketball program. "Obviously, those dollars don't hurt."

Neither does the school's desire to be good in all sports, not just a few. Florida had five different sports teams ranked No. 1 in the nation at some point this school year: Football, men's basketball, men's golf, gymnastics and women's tennis.

"I think so much is made into, 'This is a football school,' or 'This is a basketball school,' " Vitale said. "Why can't you be both? And that's what (Donovan has) proven."

"It is rare and certainly should be celebrated as a great achievement," said Dan Radakovich, director of athletics at Georgia Tech. "But remember, they played the same school (Ohio State) in both championships. So we may see this again."

Leader in front

"I think it starts with Jeremy," Meyer said of Foley.

Meyer realized right away that athletes who were not coming to school to get an education and win championships were not acceptable to Foley. That is emphasized to coaches, as well. There are high standards off the field and on it.

"I think he creates an environment of success," Meyer said. "But it's success done the right way.

Meyer said those athletes who don't understand Florida's standards and accept them "probably should go somewhere else."

He remembers going to coaches' meetings with Foley where programs like volleyball were singled out for their success. It becomes obvious right away that under Foley, every program is held in high esteem, not just basketball and football.

It's an environment of family and working together.

"It is all about the people," UF trustee Fernandez said of Foley. "It is true in business, is true in your personal life and definitely true in this case. He is the best -- period. No one comes close."

Recruiting good people with good families is No. 1 on Meyer's priority list. That matches Foley's attitude. Meyer attended the Final Four. One of the things that impressed him the most was not happening on the court in Atlanta.

"I was looking in the stands at those parents," he said. "And it was unbelievable, when you look at them, all those moms and dads who are successful people in their own rights."

"Our family has a lot of respect for Mr. Foley and the way they do things," said quarterback Chris Leak's father, Curtis. "They want to win. But they want to win the right way."

Donovan remembers that even when things were not going great in his first few years at Florida, Foley's support and standards never wavered.

"I think he's got a good understanding, our administration does, of what is out there and what needs to be done," Donovan said. "But a lot of times it comes down to the relationship that you have and you share because you're really making this journey all the way through together as one."

Draw for athletes

"It's a great place," Foley said. "But it doesn't just sell itself. That would be arrogant to say the program sells itself."

Foley said people sell the program, including academics as well as the facilities that he has pushed to improve. Sandy beaches just a short drive away -- while it's snowing or bone-chillingly cold somewhere else -- does not hurt, either.

Meyer is realistic. While Florida has everything anyone could want as far as an education and facilities, without great athletes, a superpower can't be built.

"Billy Donovan is just another guy without those players," Meyer said.

The coaches' roles

But Foley insists, "Coaches set the tone. Coaches get it done year after year. Athletes come and go."

Foley doesn't leave any doubts that, when the Gators have an opening, he goes after people he considers the perfect fit. Donovan was that fit 11 years ago, even though he was only 29 years old and untested. But Foley saw something in Donovan, as a person, that set him apart.

Donovan was no John Wooden, or even Rick Pitino. But he had the desire to work hard and be successful. He tried not to make enemies along the way. But there was something else that made Donovan -- and other Gators coaches -- stand out.

Donovan knows how to rally a group of athletes with different backgrounds and personalities around a common cause.

"It's great communication ability," Vitale said. "He has a great skill relating to the modern-day athletes. People love playing for him. He has a great warmth, caring."

Added CBS basketball analyst Clark Kellogg: "The thing that I've been most impressed about is the fact that he's always willing to learn and he wants to be able to communicate and relate in a positive way with his players. And that to me is a big part of being able to get a group of talented guys to lock in to losing themselves for the sake of the team -- the ability to communicate."

Meyer fell in love with Florida for a number of reasons. One of those was looking around campus and realizing it was special. He credits professors and academic facilities for making him a better recruiter and coach.

Utah realized Florida was getting something special when Meyer left for Gainesville two years ago.

"Urban has a combination of many qualities that I felt would make him a very successful coach at Utah," Utes athletic director Chris Hill said. "He combines passion, organizational skills, a willingness to hold himself and others accountable and a vision to think big that all add up to success. Above all, Urban impressed me with his leadership skills."

But he has something else: the ability to make players want to play for him. Defensive tackle Ray McDonald, who played a vital role in the football national title, thought about leaving school after three years playing under Ron Zook.

When Meyer was hired, his attitude changed.

"You want to play for Coach Meyer," McDonald said. "You want to do well for him, for his family, for the other coaches and for their families."

Family. It's a strong word with Meyer. Coaches have been known to hand their infants to players, to help them understand they're not just playing for an NFL contract. They are playing for each other.

"It starts with great principles and great family guys," Fernandez said. "Normally this translates into great winners. You can recruit better, you can create a better family and eventually it translates into creating better teams."

Stealing the plan

So if you're at another program and you want what Florida has -- all the big trophies and the attention -- is it just a matter of copying the Gators' master plan?

Foley said he's sure some schools copy some things Florida does. If they knew exactly how the program is run, they might be able to follow a similar path. But there are some things UF does that just won't be told.

Why give up the whole formula for success?

In reality, it is almost impossible for Florida followers to expect the next year to come close to this past one. After all, it was a year in college athletics that no program has ever enjoyed.

But this much Foley and the Gators do promise: supporters will continue to pile money into the bank vault. Any facility lacking will be upgraded. Any coaching vacancy will be filled with a "perfect fit."

While football and basketball get the headlines, there are championship teams all over campus. The tennis team has won national titles, the golf team is one of the most feared in the nation. The baseball team pours out pro prospects and competes for College World Series berths. Swimming, soccer, volleyball and gymnastics rank among the nation's best.

"Obviously, it's amazing," Foley said of the last year. "It's hard to do any time you win a championship. Certainly for the basketball team to win back-to-back titles, the football team to win a national title, that's hard to do. It's hard for the tennis team when they won, the golf team when they won and so on."

It is hard. You do have to be lucky. But when you have the right formula, it's not about luck. It's about how much more room is there in the trophy case.

"I'm sure," said the tackle McDonald, "no matter how many times you win, they can move a few things around and find a little more space here and there."

Plans are under way for new cases to be built at the football and basketball facilities. They're running out of wiggle room.

FLORIDA TODAY's Brian McCallum contributed to this report. Contact Jones at djones@floridatoday.com.

Booming Web sites focus on recruiting coverage

Associated Press

Sunday, April 8, 2007

Shawnee — On Feb. 7, when most high school football stars signed a Division I national letter of intent, more than 70 million people logged onto Rivals.com.

It was a single-day record for the Web site, which covers all levels of sports but focuses on football and basketball recruiting.

Thousands of people subscribe to networks such as Rivals.com and Scout.com, which have team-specific Web sites that cater to fans of each school or professional team. Most have a tandem print publication that comes out weekly or monthly. Fees are about \$10 per month.

Despite their popularity, they are increasingly coming under attack by coaches and administrators who argue they heap too much attention on young, impressionable student-athletes.

Bobby Burton, editor-in-chief for Rivals.com, recently sat on a panel sponsored by the Knight Foundation on Intercollegiate Athletics that examined outside influences on recruiting. He defended his business as no different from any other media outlet.

“All we’ve done is bring to light something that’s been going on forever,” he said.

Recruiting coverage took off in the early 1990s, after a book called “The Courting of Marcus Dupree.” A Mississippi high school legend, Dupree had offers from every big-name program and eventually settled on Oklahoma.

But Dupree’s college career was a bust and his professional career short-lived.

“The thing that’s perhaps more intriguing today is it’s been more focus on players than the teams, and their wants for the players,” Burton said.

That’s why recruiting sites have developed exhaustive databases that include photographs, video clips, frequent stories and updated measurables on thousands of prospects — even those who won’t graduate for two or three more years.

Rivals.com has its own radio network on Sirius satellite radio, and an online system allows subscribers to watch streaming video content. Fox Media Interactive acquired Scout.com in 2005.

Each company has a team of several hundred writers, although only a few are designated to call recruits. And despite Web sites that cater to specific programs, they also adhere to a code of ethics that prohibits employees from lobbying for their team.

“Most major media use our rankings,” said Patrick Crumb, senior vice president of Fox Media Interactive. “Even in this last signing day, (Florida coach) Urban Meyer was quoted in a newspaper article saying he spent his whole day on Scout.com tracking where everyone is going.”

Not every coach fancies what Rivals.com and Scout.com are doing.

Arkansas coach Houston Nutt takes particular exception to the subjective rankings of prospects and recruiting classes that the Web sites roll out regularly.

“You have to wait three to four years to see what kind of class you’ve got,” Nutt said.

Tennessee had the No. 2 recruiting class in the nation in 2002, according to Rivals.com. Four years later, the Volunteers went 5-6. Arizona, Mississippi State and Kansas State also had top 25 recruiting classes. None of them had a winning record four years later.

“The expectation level can become very unrealistic,” Iowa coach Kirk Ferentz said. “There’s an awful lot of development and transition and adjustment that goes on.”

Burton said a series of camps sponsored by Rivals.com helps to educate prospects. Scout.com has a similar series of combines.

“There’s an education process there that goes on,” Burton said. “If you aren’t aware of the world, you will be sooner rather than later.”



Monday, Apr 9, 2007

Posted on Sun, Apr. 08, 2007

Driven coach has right stuff

By John Clay

Tubby Smith tells the story about Billy Donovan that when the two were assistant coaches at Kentucky, Tubby would come into the office early in the morning and there would be Donovan at a desk covered with stacks of personal notes the young assistant had painstakingly written to recruits.

Now listen to Norm Roberts, the St. John's head coach who served as an assistant with Billy Gillispie at Illinois. Roberts told the New York Times last month that Gillispie would stay up all night writing 50 to 60 handwritten letters to prospects.

"And they were all different," Roberts said. "He just didn't write the same thing."

These days, it's the drive that pays. The grit. The determination. The singleness of purpose. Big-time athletics, be it college or pro, is so competitive, so cutthroat, those lacking the necessary obsessiveness are doomed to failure. Hard work wins.

Ask Jon Gruden, the Super Bowl-winning football coach famous for rising at 3:17 a.m. each morning. Ask Bobby Petrino, the former Louisville football coach, now of the Atlanta Falcons, notorious for working around the clock. Ask Rick Pitino, who by age 45 had spent so much time in the video room people worried, judging by his paleness of skin, if he was closer to 65. Ask Billy Donovan.

"It definitely took years off my life," Donovan said at the Final Four last week when asked about the work it took to make Florida a winner.

It may not be the healthiest way to live, but for a coach it is the only way to live.

It's the way Billy Gillispie lives. It's why I think he'll be successful here, because he will put his heart and soul into the very sport that is Kentucky's heart and soul. Show me a coach without food in his refrigerator, and I'll show you a good coach.

Mitch Barnhart, the UK athletics director, was right Friday when he said Gillispie fits the mold of other coaches hired in his tenure. Be it John Cohen, the baseball coach, or Craig Skinner, the volleyball coach, or Mickie DeMoss, the women's basketball coach, all are high-energy, highly motivated workaholics determined to get the job done.

Yet, as with the aforementioned, it will take Gillispie time. He'll need patience, even if he's really not into that himself.

While Billy G. was right Friday when he said Kentucky basketball doesn't need fixing, some replenishing is definitely in order. You won't see the Cats on any pre-season Top 25 lists for next year. Smith's downfall came from a dip in overall talent, too many holes in the roster. That will be the case next year, even more so.

While the backcourt boasts depth, the frontcourt is nearly bare. Center Randolph Morris is gone one year early, off to the New York Knicks. Perry Stevenson and the redshirted Jared Carter comprise the returning scholarship height. Michael Williams, a 7-footer, and A.J. Stewart, at 6-7, are signees with limited rŽsumŽs.

I'm not optimistic about Gillispie landing either Patrick Patterson or Jai Lucas. Both appeared taken more with Tubby than Kentucky. Patterson's mother sounded thrilled that Donovan was staying in Florida, leading you to think young Patrick wants the warm weather. Now Lucas is thinking of being a Gator.

Gillispie is said to be mighty persuasive, and maybe he can talk the two into becoming Blue. Or maybe with his numerous junior-college contacts, Gillispie can find immediate help to fortify the roster.

More likely, next year won't be easy. The SEC is tougher than the Big 12, and Gillispie's arrival only makes it more so. Donovan didn't stay in Gainesville to coast on the Florida coast. Bruce Pearl, another maniac of high energy and motivation, is building a juggernaut at Tennessee. It's going to be a blast watching Billy D., Billy G. and Bruce Almighty knocking heads in the years to come.

Gillispie can hold his own. Have no doubt about that. He fits the profile. He's not afraid of a little dirt on his shoes. He has the necessary grit.

If he fails, it won't be from a lack of effort.

He just needs a little time to get the job done.

StarTribune.com | MINNEAPOLIS - ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

Last update: April 01, 2007 – 9:38 PM

Choose your sport, and a champion could emerge

Ohio State and Florida are proof that football excellence can help feed a first-tier basketball program.

By [Jeff Shelman](#), Star Tribune

ATLANTA - For decades the conventional thinking was that Division I institutions had one of two options. They could be a football school. Or they could be a basketball school.

Now there is a new option: all of the above.

There were signs in recent years that so-called football schools could have hoops success -- Oklahoma reached the Final Four in 2002, and Texas followed the next year -- but the footballization of college basketball has never been more evident than it is now.

Tonight a season in which eight football schools ended the regular season ranked among the top 25 basketball teams in the country and one that had six football schools reach the Sweet 16 of the NCAA tournament will culminate with Florida and Ohio State playing for the national championship.

For those who believe in the separation of hoop and grid, this is a frightening time.

With the Gators having won last season's title, it is guaranteed that a football school will win titles in consecutive years for the first time in the history of the NCAA tournament.

If Florida -- which defeated Ohio State for the Bowl Championship Series title exactly 12 Mondays ago -- wins tonight, the Gators will become the first repeat national champions since Duke did it in 1991 and '92.

Of the schools winning both in the fall and the winter, Florida might have been the first to figure out that it could be done. After Lon Kruger, who led the Gators to the 1994 Final Four, bolted for Illinois, Florida got serious about winning both in football and basketball.

Billy Donovan was hired from Marshall and given pretty much whatever resources he needed to compete. After the Gators reached the 2000 Final Four, Florida began the trend of schools building impressive basketball practice facilities.

It was part of Florida athletic director Jeremy Foley's belief that the Gators could have success in every sport.

"The commitment is to having the best athletics program in the country, not just

football, basketball, baseball, but also on the women's side with volleyball, swimming, tennis," Donovan said.

It's something that has begun happening across the country. This season football schools Texas A&M, Tennessee, Southern California and Oregon joined the Gators and Buckeyes in the Sweet 16. Wisconsin, Notre Dame and Brigham Young were ranked at the end of the regular season.

The footballization reaches a new level tonight as this will be the first time in modern college basketball history that two traditional football schools have reached the championship game.

Football pays bills

Not surprisingly, football revenue has a lot to do with the rise of basketball at these schools.

According to the Equity in Athletics Disclosure Act forms that every school is required to file with the federal government, Ohio State's athletic department generated nearly \$105 million during the 2005-06 school year. Florida generated \$82 million in the same span.

To put that in context, Georgetown (a Final Four school) brought in only \$23.6 million in revenue. Traditional basketball schools Indiana and Duke had revenue totals of just under \$40 million and \$50.5 million, respectively.

That money allows the football schools to pay top dollar for coaching talent. It builds fancy practice facilities. And it pays for such things as luxurious locker rooms, private planes for recruiting trips and support staff.

"The correlation between 105,000 people on a Saturday afternoon in the Shoe [Ohio Stadium] definitely helps all programs," Ohio State coach Thad Matta said. "I think that it's helped us through the recruiting process. The notoriety that our program has footballwise is something we really try to work hand-in-hand with."

Said Donovan: "In today's day and age with college football, not just at Florida, but across the country, it's a huge revenue sport. You're talking about seating 95-, 100,000 people per game and then the BCS and everything else."

Donovan and Matta are among a growing list of basketball coaches making more than \$1 million at football schools, a list that also includes Tennessee's Bruce Pearl, Texas' Rick Barnes and Alabama's Mark Gottfried.

Each of those salaries can be easily paid for with revenue from only one home football game.

Costly to keep up

Because of the budget disparity between the football powers and some so-called basketball schools, it doesn't appear as if things are going to change in the short term.

This week, Texas A&M coach Billy Gillispie turned down the job at Arkansas after having his salary bumped up to \$1.75 million per year. This week, Texas A&M is going to break ground on a \$22 million practice facility. In addition, Pearl turned down a chance to interview for the Iowa job and return to a school where he had worked as an assistant coach.

That brings us back to Donovan and the Gators.

There was a time not long ago when the Florida basketball coach would very well walk to Lexington, Ky., for an opportunity to coach at Kentucky. Because of his time spent as a Wildcats assistant coach and because of his success at Florida, Donovan appears to be one of the top candidates (if not the leading candidate) to replace Tubby Smith at Kentucky.

Now, however, it isn't a lock that Donovan will leave. He might, but not without some deliberation. It's no longer crazy to think that a talented coach at a football school would turn down a position at an elite basketball school.

This is, after all, 2007 instead of 1997. And football schools really can have it all.

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FOR THE RECORD: NCAA Responds to Atlanta Journal Constitution Article Titled "Megabucks, No Taxes Make Colleges Cheer"

For Immediate Release

Saturday, March 31, 2007

Mike Knobler's March 31 story, "Megabucks, no taxes make colleges cheer" misrepresents some facts, omits others and makes it impossible for the reader to get a clear understanding of the NCAA's mission, what the Association does with its revenue and why the association is tax exempt. Knobler incorrectly states that the NCAA has operating revenues of "almost \$8 billion..." In fact, the NCAA's annual revenue is approximately \$550 million and the association redistributes 95 percent of those funds back to member schools to assist with academic and athletic programs. Those funds provide resources to operate new and existing academic support programs, assist student athletes in an emergency, drug testing and education programs, student athlete insurance programs, and funds 88 championships, among other things.

Knobler is also off the mark when he infers the NCAA is no different than big business...and should pay taxes. Not for profit status is linked to the purpose for which revenues are spent, not the amount of revenue generated. The NCAA meets its educational mission by providing the resources and programs necessary for student athletes to be successful both in the classroom and on the field of competition.

Bob Williams
Managing Director of Public and Media Relations

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FOR THE RECORD: NCAA Responds to ESPN.com Story on Sports Wagering

For Immediate Release

Thursday, April 5, 2007

Contrary to a story published this week on ESPN.com, the NCAA was not informed 18 months ago about sports wagering suspicions related to the University of Toledo. Not only was the NCAA not contacted at that time about the suspicions, but also no report was filed with the NCAA.

The NCAA is certainly aware of the point-shaving allegations and in contact with the University of Toledo and law enforcement officials. The NCAA also is involved in regular communication with gaming industry officials in Las Vegas. However, it is inappropriate to discuss specifics related to the University of Toledo allegations at this time, because this situation is still developing.

But these types of allegations are precisely why the NCAA continues to take such a strong stance against any sports wagering. There is no doubt that sports wagering threatens the well-being of student-athletes and can affect the integrity of our games.

Student-athletes who are caught wagering on sports lose all NCAA eligibility, and they can face criminal charges as well. Their campus can also be cited for violating NCAA rules related to institutional control if officials there knew about the situation or should have known about it.

Due to Association policy, the NCAA cannot comment on whether it is investigating this particular situation.

Erik Christianson

Director for Public and Media Relations

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April 6, 2007

Throwing Batters Curves Before Throwing a Pitch

By [ALAN SCHWARZ](#)

The pitch was nothing remarkable: Pat Venditte, Creighton University's temporarily right-handed pitcher, threw a fastball past a Northern Iowa batter for a called strike three. It was his next windup that evinced this young pitcher's uniqueness and, perhaps, professional future.

As his teammates whipped the ball around the infield, Venditte smoothly, unthinkingly, removed his custom glove from his left hand and slipped it on his right. Moments later he leaned back, threw a strike left-handed to the next batter, and finished the side in order.

Venditte is believed to be the only ambidextrous pitcher in [N.C.A.A.](#) Division I college baseball, the ultimate relief specialist. A junior, he throws left-handed to lefties and right-handed to righties, and effectively. In a home game in Omaha last Friday, he allowed only one hit in five and a third shutout innings to earn the victory against Northern Iowa.

Because neither arm was particularly tired afterward, Venditte also pitched in both games of Creighton's doubleheader against Northern Iowa two days later, retiring the only batter he faced (left-handed) in the first game and then tossing a shutout inning (pitching both ways) in the nightcap. He also pitched two innings, alternating arms, in Tuesday's game against archrival Nebraska. Venditte (pronounced ven-DEH-tee) has a fine 3.29 earned run average in 18 appearances this season.

"I don't think twice about it," said Venditte, whose father, Pat Sr., taught him to throw with both arms when he was 3. "You grew up with it, you love it, you want to keep playing as long as you can."

Venditte has improved so much in the past year that major league scouts are starting to consider him a possible late-round pick in this June's amateur draft because of his versatility. "He could be an economical two-for-one," Jerry Lafferty, a longtime scout for the [Philadelphia Phillies](#), said last Friday while assessing the 21-year-old Venditte from behind the backstop.

College baseball has had a few switch-pitchers in the past 15 years, but the major leagues have had only one since the 19th century: Greg Harris, primarily a right-handed reliever for many clubs from 1981 through 1995, pitched one inning using both arms for the Montreal Expos in his final season. That outing was considered more stunt than strategy.

Video



[More Video »](#)

Venditte is smoothly proficient from both sides. His deliveries are not mirror images of each other: as a right-hander he throws over the top and relatively hard, up to 91 miles an hour, with a tumbling curveball; as a left-hander, he relies on a whip-like sidearm delivery and a biting slider.

Umpires working Creighton's games have to dust off seldom-used rules regarding switch-pitchers. Like everyone else, Venditte gets only eight warm-up pitches upon entering a game and five before any inning, whether he chooses to throw left-handed or right-handed, and may not warm up again if he changes arms midinning.

A switch-pitcher facing a switch-hitter could make a fine Abbott and Costello routine. Against Nebraska last year, a switch-hitter came to the plate right-handed, prompting Venditte to switch to his right arm, which caused the batter to move to the left-hand batter's box, with Venditte switching his arm again. Umpires ultimately restored order, applying the rule (the same as that in the majors) that a pitcher must declare which arm he will use before throwing his first pitch and cannot change before the at-bat ends.

"Eventually, after 10 or 15 minutes, they got it figured out," Venditte said with a smile.

Venditte's customized Louisville Slugger glove is as distinctive as its owner: four fingers are flanked by two thumbs, perfectly symmetrical, so that he can slip it on either hand with ease. It allows him to change throwing arms so seamlessly during warmups — one second No. 27 is throwing left-handed, the next right-handed — that many unaware fans and opponents do double-takes.

"The first time you see him, it's definitely a distraction," said Northern Iowa shortstop Brandon Douglas, who struck out (right-handed) against Venditte last Friday. "On the bus ride to games people talk, 'You should see this guy. It's pretty neat.' "

Until teams actually face him, that is. Creighton's coach, Ed Servais, initially resisted using Venditte both ways because, he said, "I am a traditionalist when it comes to baseball, and I didn't want it to become a circus." But

Venditte proved his ability last season, when he used both arms in 22 games and struck out batters each way in 12 of them.

The Bluejays use Venditte as a long reliever so that he can be deployed at any point in any game. In the Northern Iowa game last Friday, for example, Venditte quelled a third-inning rally and then, facing a lineup that alternated its lefty and righty hitters, calmly switched throwing arms 10 times in the next five innings and allowed no runs and only one single. (Pitch limits are looser with Venditte because he shares the workload between his arms.)

“Usually you have to follow the hitter: a left-hander’s coming up, so you have to decide whether to bring a lefty in,” Creighton’s pitching coach, Rob Smith, said. “In this scenario, you have the control. It helps the depth of the bullpen a lot — you don’t have to burn a guy to get the matchup you want.”

Venditte is naturally right-handed. But his father, a former college ballplayer who at 61 still catches for his Men’s Senior Baseball League team, noticed his 3-year-old son picking up a ball and throwing it with both arms on his own, and encouraged him to pursue it.

“You’ve got to cultivate that,” said Pat Sr., who later built a batting cage, complete with lights, near the family’s home in an Italian neighborhood of Omaha.

To build his son’s muscles for baseball, Pat Sr. also taught Little Pat to punt with both legs and throw a football with both arms. “If I’d stuck with it,” he said, “he could have been a QB with both hands.”

Venditte’s mound versatility could become an interesting test of baseball’s trend toward specialization. Major league teams have long forced college stars who both pitch and hit — players like Dave Stieb, [John Olerud](#) and Brad Wilkerson — to focus on either pitching or hitting as professionals, claiming that one is difficult enough. But as bullpens become ever more segmented, with left-handed and right-handed specialists entering games for only one or two batters apiece, a pitcher who can do both for one salary would certainly be intriguing.

Venditte said he would probably return to Creighton for his senior season, trying to add a few miles an hour to his fastballs and enjoying the camaraderie of college ball. After throwing his five-plus innings last Friday, Venditte characteristically shunned ice treatment and skipped the trainer’s room. He joined the rest of his teammates by pulling the tarp across the diamond — with both hands, naturally.

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INSIDE THE COLLEGES

Coaching is mercenary work

Mike Huguenin
INSIDE THE COLLEGES

April 8, 2007

So much vitriol surrounds Bob Huggins' move from Kansas State to West Virginia. And K-State officials expressed shock and indignation that Huggins would leave after one season.

Is anyone really surprised a coach would leave after one season? If they are, they're naive. It's all about winning and money, and Huggins obviously thinks he can win more -- and thus make more money -- at West Virginia, his alma mater.

At his introductory news conference Friday, Huggins said, "I want to stay here as long as I can do what I'm supposed to do and as long as you people will have me."

What he is "supposed to do" is win; he'll do that, no question. Huggins is a good coach whose teams play hard, get after you on defense and run on offense. The Mountaineers will contend for Big East titles and go to NCAA tourneys.

As for the second part of the quote? "As long as you people will have me" is at least partially true. What he should've said is: "As long as you people will have me or until I get a better offer."

Actually, what disgusts us far more than Huggins' decision is K-State's decision to promote assistant Frank Martin to fill Huggins' vacancy.

This would be the same Frank Martin who used to coach at Miami High. The same Frank Martin who so egregiously cheated that the school was stripped of its 1998 Class 6A state title for what then-Florida High School Athletic Association Commissioner Ron Davis called "one of the most, if not the most, blatant violation of FHSAA rules against recruiting that I have encountered."

Martin has no college head-coaching experience, and it appears the only reason he's being promoted is in an attempt to keep K-State's highly ranked recruiting class intact. Michael Beasley, considered the nation's No.1 prospect in some circles, has signed with K-State, and as soon as the Huggins news broke, Beasley said he would have to re-evaluate his decision. K-State obviously hopes this will appease Beasley.

The other side of the equation, of course, is that Beasley looks like a one-and-done collegian, meaning that if he shows up at K-State, he'll likely be gone in one year anyway.

Hoop talk

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So, we're sitting around the office, and talk turns to the six worst coaching jobs in the BCS leagues. Our "winners": Baylor from the Big 12, Colorado from the Big 12, Miami from the ACC, Nebraska from the Big 12, Penn State from the Big Ten and USF from the Big East. The worst of the worst could be USF, given how the rest of the Big East treats basketball. That doesn't bother new Bulls Coach Stan Heath, who was fired by Arkansas, then hired by USF last week. "We're going to win," he said at his introductory news conference. "And we're going to win real soon, a lot sooner than a lot of people think." Uhh, Stan: You're not going to win soon with the talent on hand. There's a reason USF has gone 4-28 in league play in its two seasons. Heath is known as a good recruiter and a so-so X's and O's guy. Recruiting to Arkansas is a heck of a lot easier than recruiting to USF, though.

Ben Howland deserves a lot of credit for getting UCLA back among the nation's elite. But Howland has to loosen the reins on offense. Howland finally gets a legit big man next season when 6-foot-9 Kevin Love arrives. If guard Arron Afflalo returns, Love's insertion into a lineup with Afflalo, Darren Collison and Josh Shipp could be lethal -- assuming the offense is a bit more free-wheeling.

If we had to pick preseason conference champs in the "big leagues" today for next season, it'd go like this: ACC -- North Carolina; Atlantic 10 -- Xavier; Big East -- Louisville; Big Ten -- Michigan State; Big 12 -- Kansas; Colonial -- Virginia Commonwealth; Conference USA -- Memphis; Missouri Valley -- Southern Illinois; Mountain West -- Utah; Pacific-10 -- UCLA; SEC -- Tennessee, with Mississippi State a dark horse; and Western Athletic -- Fresno State.

Pairings for next season's inaugural Big East/SEC Invitational were released Thursday, but after looking at the matchups, it's hard to get excited. On Dec. 5 in Birmingham, it'll be Auburn-West Virginia and Alabama-Georgetown. On Dec. 6 in Philadelphia, it'll be Providence-South Carolina and LSU-Villanova. Four different teams from each league will be selected to participate in each of the next three years, so perhaps the '08 matchups will be better.

Creighton Coach Dana Altman thinks his flirtation with Arkansas -- he accepted the job, then backed out a day later -- means he will finish his career with the Bluejays. "A school would be real reluctant to make an offer to someone who's backed out of one. That's a reality of life," Altman told reporters last week. "That's OK."

General Mills, which makes Wheaties, said it will release a special-edition box honoring the 2007 Florida basketball team; it will be available nationally in 2-3 weeks. This will be the first time Wheaties has recognized an NCAA men's basketball champion.

Grid Bits

RB Noel Devine quietly signed a scholarship to West Virginia on March 30. Devine, from North Fort Myers High, may have been -- talentwise -- the best prep player in the nation last fall. But he has more than a few off-field issues, not the least of which is that he may not qualify academically for freshman eligibility. "We're very excited that Noel has made the decision to join the Mountaineer family," WVU Coach Rich Rodriguez said in a statement. "We know he is working hard to meet all his eligibility requirements, and we're confident he can get that done." If Devine indeed gets his academic work in order, he will play this season as a backup to Steve Slaton. If he doesn't, he seems likely to go to a prep school.

The Western Athletic Conference unveiled its ESPN games this fall. No surprise: Eight of the 10 are on Thursday, Friday or Sunday. The only games on Saturday are ones against BCS-league teams (Nov.24, Kansas State at Fresno State; and Dec.1, Washington at Hawaii).

Florida Coach Urban Meyer and Ohio State's Jim Tressel attended their schools' men's national championship game Monday night. Neither Tennessee's Phil Fulmer nor Rutgers' Greg Schiano went to Tuesday's women's final, though Schiano did attend the semifinal victory against LSU.

Former Arkansas QB Mitch Mustain was scheduled to be at USC this weekend as he tries to decide where he'll go next. It appears he'll go to Tulsa or USC. Mustain's tie with Tulsa: His former high-school coach, Gus Malzahn, is the Golden Hurricane's new offensive coordinator; Malzahn also was coordinator at Arkansas last season. Mustain's tie

with USC: His former Arkansas and high-school teammate, WR Damian Williams, already has transferred there.

A Final Thought: We have a feeling Kentucky fans will end up liking Billy Gillispie just fine, thank you.

Sentinel staffer Alan Schmadtke contributed to this report. Mike Huguenin can be reached at mhuguenin@orlandosentinel.com.

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Rising coaches' salaries are price of success

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By [Carlos Frías](#)

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer

Sunday, April 08, 2007

Bernie Machen doesn't care if you're talking about the medical school or the basketball team - he wants the University of Florida to be the best.

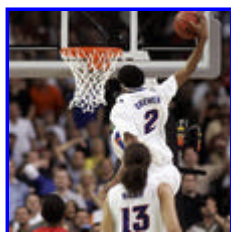
"If you're going to play the game, you might as well play to win," said Machen, UF's third-year president.

More on the Gators

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Good thing that's the approach, because Machen and the Gators are about to pay a high price for winning - in the O Dome and at The Swamp. Last week's second straight NCAA Tournament title and January's national football championship gives the Gators an unprecedented run of success in college sports history.

Gators Now, basketball coach Billy Donovan and football coach Urban Meyer can expect significant pay raises, meaning Florida could have two coaches each making more than \$2 million.

"I know what the market is for those type of people, and the University of Florida is going to be competitive within those markets," UF Athletic Director Jeremy Foley said.

Donovan had a guaranteed salary of \$1.389 million this year and stands to make more than \$1.8 million including bonuses and incentives, according to data collected by *USA Today*. That's less than several other college basketball coaches, including Tubby Smith, who was making \$2.1 million before leaving Kentucky to become Minnesota's coach.

The Wildcats reportedly were set to offer Donovan \$2.5 million to leave the Gators, but he said last week he would remain in Gainesville as Foley and Co. start preparing a contract extension.

The Gators already are negotiating a new deal for Meyer, who signed a seven-year, \$14.2 million contract two years ago and won the national title in just his second season. Meyer's salary isn't even near the top 10 football coaching salaries in



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GAINESVILLE — After Florida won the 2006 national championship in Indianapolis, the athletic ...

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college, according to the *USA Today* report.

Meyer made just more than \$1.5 million last year. Nine coaches made more than \$2 million last season, according to *USA Today*, including recent national championship winners Pete Carroll of Southern California (\$2.8 million) and Mack Brown of Texas (\$2.7 million). In January, Alabama climbed to another plateau, luring Nick Saban away from the Dolphins with a deal worth \$4 million a year. For Florida to raise the stakes, it will dip further into the many revenue sources of its athletic department.

Coaches' salaries are not paid by the university, but by the University Athletic Association, a private, non-profit corporation that is also supported by boosters. The UAA collects salary money from several sources, including television and radio rights deals, sponsorships and agreements with apparel companies.

"Somewhere within all those pieces, we'll find revenue enough to pay our coaches," Foley said.

Florida's athletic teams made more than \$82 million last year, netting about \$4.2 million after expenses, according to figures from the U.S. Department of Education.

This year, Donovan will make at least \$525,000 from a deal the university has with apparel companies, according to his contract. He also will make \$225,000 from radio and television deals.

Meyer made \$500,000 of his salary from the apparel companies, another \$300,000 from his radio and television commitments, and \$200,000 for speaking engagements.

As coaching salaries escalate, critics continue to circle. Shortly after Saban signed with Alabama, the House Ways and Means Committee challenged the NCAA to explain the rising salaries and questioned whether athletic departments should still be tax-exempt.

"We pay neurosurgeons more than pediatricians, engineers more than history professors. ... The market determines value," Machen said. "Long ago, people had to accept that a public school teacher makes less than a football coach."

The huge salaries call into question the integrity of universities, said Andrew Zimbalist, a leading sports economist and professor at Smith College in Northampton, Mass. Zimbalist is not alone in criticizing a system in which players do not benefit financially, but coaches are handsomely rewarded.

"Morally and ethically, it's absurd," Zimbalist said. "It's hypocritical, it's wrong. It's economically not justifiable and it's also sending the wrong message to the student body."

Florida's urgency to further compensate Donovan and Meyer comes as UF's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences faces a \$4 million deficit and potential layoffs of professors. Machen stresses that money for athletics comes from separate sources and that private donations made to the athletic programs cannot be used for academic purposes, or vice versa. Plus, he said, the athletic program annually contributes money to other programs at the school.

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"When a donor makes a donation to athletics, he expects it to be used for athletics," Machen said. "And it's not like you can take money from the hospital to pay the football coach."

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So which coach will make more? Neither Machen nor Foley wanted to discuss that question, saying too much already is being made of the subject.

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The scorecard is simple enough: Donovan, in his 11th season at Florida, has three Final Four appearances and back-to-back national titles. Meyer, entering his third season, already has a national championship. Football is king at Florida, especially

at the gate - the football program generates nearly seven times more revenue than basketball, according to the Department of Education. Machen doesn't expect salary envy between his coaches.

"I can make a case for them to be paid the same, or one more than the other," Machen said. "But I don't think they care that much, to be honest with you."

Find this article at:

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TRANSCRIPT

Originally Aired: March 30, 2007

Analysis

Colleges Need to Improve Academic Success of Athletes, Studies Show

Recent studies of NCAA programs suggest that colleges need to do more to ensure their student-athletes graduate, rather than simply generate revenue and attention for their schools. The NewsHour takes a closer look at the issue.



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JEFFREY BROWN: On the court, they have the skills. They dribble; they dunk; and they bring out the school spirit.

But off the court, there's been a long history of academic underachievement in men's NCAA basketball. The teams making up this year's Final Four arrived in Atlanta, as the annual fever known as March Madness reaches its climax.

This weekend won't be about test scores and passing grades, but a new study examining the graduation rates for participating schools released by the University of Central Florida presents some good and bad news.

It found that, of the 65 schools participating in this year's tournament, just 24 institutions graduated at least 70 percent of players in recent years. Some schools in the NCAA tournament graduated less than one in five players, or 20 percent, including the University of Tennessee and the University of Maryland. Ohio State, a contender for the championship this year, has a 38 percent graduation rate.

But there are some schools that are excelling. The College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts, the University of Florida -- another of the remaining title contenders -- and Weber State University all graduated 100 percent of their male basketball athletes.

The study also revealed that white athletes are graduating in much higher numbers than their black colleagues in NCAA schools.

In 2001, a study by the Knight Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics recommended that, by this year, 2007, teams that did not graduate at least 50 percent of their players should not be eligible for championship play.

And for more on how athletes are doing off the court, I'm joined by Richard Lapchick, the lead author of the new study. And he's director of the Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports at the University of Central Florida.

And Kevin Blackistone, a freelance sportswriter who appears on ESPN, NPR and other outlets, he has reported widely on college athletics.

Well, Richard Lapchick, you've been watching this problem for years with some concern. Where do things stand now?

RICHARD LAPCHICK, Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports: Well, the good news is that, when the Knight Commission said 50 percent should be the measure to be eligible for the tournament, only 28 percent of the teams would have met that standard in 2001. This year, 64 percent of the teams graduated better than 50 percent of their basketball-playing student athletes.

There's been a gradual increase in the graduation rates for basketball players in general. The bad news here is that nearly 49 percent of those teams in the tournament had a gap of 30 percent or more between the graduation rates of their African-American players and their white players.

JEFFREY BROWN: Kevin Blackistone, how do you see it, emphasize the glass half-full, half-empty, how do you see it?

KEVIN BLACKISTONE, Freelance Sportswriter: Well, I think it's half-empty, and the reason is because it's the mission of higher education to educate people, hopefully provide them with a certification of that education, which is a diploma, and hopefully a validation of what they've learned by being able to get employed once they leave.

And, obviously, what this shows is that there is a disconnect between college athletics and what that mission statement in higher education really is. And, as Richard pointed out, things have gotten better, probably because schools feel somewhat behooved now to do a better job in terms of graduating their student athletes, simply because there's a lot more pressure being put on them to do so.

Colleges feeling the pressure

JEFFREY BROWN: Are they feeling that pressure, do you think, Richard Lapchick? Is that why you see a positive sign here of improvement?

RICHARD LAPCHICK: I think the passage of something called the academic progress rates, which if they fall below a certain standard, starting next year, in terms of their graduation rates, they'll start to lose scholarships.

I speak on college campuses pretty regularly, and people in the athletics department tell me all the time that now they've started to recruit athletes that they are confident will be able to graduate because the coaches do not want to lose those scholarships. Those scholarships are their bread and butter of how they stay in contention to get in the tournament and to get to this weekend in general.

JEFFREY BROWN: Do you see, Kevin, a change in the life of the student athlete, or is it really school by school? Is that how to think of it? Or is there a general rule?

KEVIN BLACKISTONE: Well, it is school by school, but I think, if you look at the last generation of student athletes, I think you can see a change. They've become much more important to the lifeblood of a university beyond just building up school spirit.

Those scholarship athletes also are a great marketing tool for the universities. And, beyond that, most importantly, they're great revenue generators for those universities.

Athletic departments at major schools like those that we're going to see this weekend in the Final Four, those are basically separate corporations that have a...

JEFFREY BROWN: Separate corporations?

KEVIN BLACKISTONE: Separate corporations. I mean, we're talking about places that control \$50, \$60, \$70 million in revenue in their athletic budgets. They have to get that money from somewhere, and they're getting it from the revenue sports, which we know of as being basketball and football.

Bolting for the NBA

JEFFREY BROWN: And, yet, you see some discrepancy in Mr. Lapchick's data there between a Florida and an Ohio State.

KEVIN BLACKISTONE: Exactly. But I would also point out -- and as Richard knows, down there in Florida, that's going to change dramatically for Florida pretty soon, because most of the players that they have on this year's team who returned from last year's national championship team are underclassmen, and most likely will bolt this year for the NBA.

And, therefore, it won't be until they actually finish their education and get a degree that they'll count in these



Richard Lapchick
University of Central
Florida

“ People in the athletics department tell me all the time that now they've started to recruit athletes that they are confident will be able to graduate because the coaches do not want to lose those scholarships. ”



Kevin Blackstone
Sportswriter

“ That's going to change dramatically for Florida pretty soon, because most of the players that they have on this year's team who returned from last year's national championship team are underclassmen, and most likely will bolt this year for the NBA. ”

statistics.

JEFFREY BROWN: Yes, Mr. Lapchick, that's a little confusing, isn't it? Some of the big stars that we often hear about leave school after a year or two years to, some of them hopefully -- I mean, they hope -- to go to the NBA. Are they counted in your statistics here?

RICHARD LAPCHICK: In previous years, when the Knight Commission released that statement in 2001, they would have counted against the school. As long as they leave in good academic standing now, they do not count against the school. They become a neutral factor.

And Kevin mentioned, you know, football and basketball being the drivers. I think it's a statement about the University of Florida that their national championship football team also had the highest graduation rate of all the 56 bowl-bound teams last year.

They're doing something right at Florida, and I think it would behoove the other schools, not only in the Final Four, but in the tournament who play Division I sports to find out what's going on in Florida, because it's across the board. They're producing clearly great athletic teams.

And if we had a final game on Monday night between the two with the best graduation rate, it would be Georgetown and the University of Florida.



Richard Lapchick
University of Central Florida

“ More than 80 percent of the women's teams have a graduation rate above 70 percent. And equally important to me is the gap between African-American females and white females on those teams is very narrow. They've eliminated that gap. ”

Better picture on the women's side

JEFFREY BROWN: Mr. Lapchick, staying with you, what about the women's side here? It sounds like it's a better picture.

RICHARD LAPCHICK: The women have consistently had higher graduation rates. We're 10 to 20 percent higher across the board in the women's teams than we are in the men's teams.

There are lots of women -- more than 80 percent of the women's teams have a graduation rate above 70 percent. And equally important to me is the gap between African-American females and white females on those teams is very narrow. They've eliminated that gap.

And I think that's an important statement about how they play the women's game, and it's also about them not having the same driving force at the end that they think they're going to play in the pros, and know that they're going to have to be better prepared academically for a career outside of the game of basketball.

JEFFREY BROWN: You wanted to jump in there?

KEVIN BLACKISTONE: Yes, I was going to say that's the biggest difference. The WNBA, obviously, does not provide the same riches that the NBA does. And so women, unfortunately, don't have as many professional athletic opportunities as men do and I also don't think have grown up with this dream that they can hit the lottery ticket of being a professional athlete.

Gap between black, white athletes

JEFFREY BROWN: The big gap that he does cite, Mr. Lapchick cites, on the men's side, is between black and white athletes.

KEVIN BLACKISTONE: Yes, and that may be part of what I just mentioned. You know, unfortunately, still today, when young black males look for images to emulate, what do they see? They see Michael Jordan. They see Magic Johnson. They see all these fabulous athletes who get featured on MTV "Crips" and all of the wonderful things they can do with the millions of dollars that they make.

They don't necessarily think about a Condoleezza Rice or a Colin Powell or someone who's a lawyer or a doctor.



Kevin Blackistone
Sportswriter

“ They don't necessarily think about a Condoleezza Rice or a Colin Powell or someone who's a lawyer or a doctor. And, therefore, they get caught up in this chase for the athletic dream, and sometimes that turns out to be a tragedy. ”

And, therefore, they get caught up in this chase for the athletic dream, and sometimes that turns out to be a tragedy.

JEFFREY BROWN: Mr. Lapchick, we just have a minute here, but I wanted to ask you, for those schools that continue to do poorly, how much of an oversight regime is there? Is there anybody really pushing them with some, you know, real hard sanctions?

RICHARD LAPCHICK: Well, this is going to be the first time, starting next year, that the NCAA will be able to penalize them with a loss of scholarships. You know, we've gone for 50 or 60 years with poor graduation rates that have really very recently, under Miles Brand leadership, started to change.

And I think the fact that they are able to put in those sanctions is the primary difference-maker. But I want to point out that, on many of our college campuses, those basketball student-athletes who are African-Americans graduated at a higher rate than African-American students in general.

Too many of our campuses are still unwelcoming places for people of color when they come. The streets and the buildings were all named after people who look like me. The faculty mostly look like me, the administrators. That has to change, too. We have to have a more friendly and welcoming climate on our college campuses for all students of color.

JEFFREY BROWN: All right. Thank you both very much, Richard Lapchick and Kevin Blackistone, thanks.

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