

PRSA NEWS

*Public Relations News
from around the Nation*



November 14, 2008

PR Tactics and The Strategist Online

Following the leader: What makes the great ones so good Nov.06, 2008

Copyright © 2008 PRSA. All rights reserved.

By Chris Cobb

The following article appears in the fall 2008 issue of The Strategist. Editor's note: The print version of this article incorrectly identified Jack Welch's former employer. The online version includes the proper attribution.

From Winston Churchill to Jack Welch, from Mahatma Gandhi to Tom Coughlin: Great leaders come in many forms and climb to the heights of success. The question: What makes a great or even good leader?

The answer: Well, the experts say that there isn't just one.

The Churchills and the Gandhis are rare cases of people who became world famous, historic emblems of great leadership. Leaders like former GE CEO Welch and New York Giants coach Coughlin are more common. These types of people carry out their responsibilities with high degrees of skill, watched and pressured by shareholders, boards of directors, teams they lead, news media, or the unforgiving fan — as is the case with Coughlin and other pro-sports leaders.

And while it helps to have certain innate personal attributes, some believe that the “born” or “natural” leader is largely a myth.

The ability of most leaders to lead effectively won't save the world from tyranny, but as anyone affected by the Wall Street meltdown can testify, leaders can create or break vibrant, viable companies and directly impact the lives of millions of ordinary families. Good leadership matters.

The right place at the right time

Joseph Nye, a professor at Harvard University's John F. Kennedy School of Government and author of several books on leadership, believes that good leaders are often people in the right place at the right time.

“A good leader has to have the ability to adapt his or her skills to different contexts,” says Nye, who was formerly the chairman of the National Intelligence Council and the assistant secretary of defense for international security affairs. “For example, Churchill is often seen as the greatest leader of the 20th century, but in 1940, before Hitler invaded France, he was regarded as a failed politician. When the context changed and Hitler was pushing British troops into the sea, Churchill became the man of the moment.”

Few leaders have what Nye refers to as “contextual intelligence” — the ability to adapt successfully to any milieu.

“Dwight Eisenhower was a successful general, a successful president of Columbia University and a successful president of the United States,” Nye says. “Others are successful in one context and not in others.”

Importance of good relationships

Diana McLain Smith, a Boston-based management consultant and author of “Divide or Conquer: How Great Teams Turn Conflict Into Strength,” says good leaders need extraordinary vision and the ability to turn that into a robust strategy. She believes that they need to have sharp analytical skills and should be smart, but not necessarily brilliant. A clear understanding of relationships is constantly neglected, she says.

“[Possessing leadership skills] is quite different from having interpersonal skills,” says Smith. “For leaders to lead effectively, they need a sophisticated understanding of how relationships work and how relationships can be changed. It is a critical dimension of leadership and one that will become increasingly important as organizations change and become much less dependent on a structure of hierarchy.”

Smith points to the disastrous relationship between Apple's Steve Jobs and John Sculley — two strong leaders in their own way, but whose differing views on how to direct their company ultimately caused its economic decline.

“At first they looked like the perfect match,” Smith says. “Sculley had marketing experience and a good deal of business acumen whereas Steve Jobs was intuitive, charismatic and a visionary.” However, when the business became unstable, their models of leadership did not mesh well together. Sculley, the former PepsiCo. president, was more controlling, and Jobs was often unpredictable, she explains.

In contrast, adds Smith, consider the relationship between President Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill, who had many differences but worked together to keep focused on their mission to save the world from fascist oppression.

“They both kept the relationship and the mission in mind and invested heavily in both,” she says. “They understood that their relationship was a strategic asset that they had to manage or it would become a liability.”

Nye says that a frequent mistake among business leaders is refusing to accept that leadership can also have a shelf life.

“When a company is small,” he says, “it often needs a genius-type entrepreneur. But when the company grows, that leader might not be able to manage people because he is not willing to delegate. It’s common behavior among leaders who have built a company based on their own thinking, but they fail. As a company scales up, they often have to change their leader.”

In the early years of the 21st century, you can see a shift from top-down autocratic leadership to a softer, more inspirational style. Coach Coughlin, operating in the hyper-macho world of pro football, is one who made that dramatic leap almost overnight.

Last season, Coughlin entered the season under a barrage of criticism for his domineering style. He was on the verge of losing his job when he created a player council and made time to discuss players’ personal lives with them.

Regarding Coughlin, Giants president, CEO and co-owner John Mara told Sports Illustrated: “Nobody thought he could change. But the changes he made with communication — particularly forming the leadership council — were a good signal to the players that he was not a dictatorial person.”

Hard and soft power

In his latest book “The Powers to Lead,” Nye refers to this new, evolving leadership style as “soft power.” Any effective leader has to be shooting for “smart power,” which is a mix of soft and hard skills. Soft power inspires with charm and charisma, while hard power is the more traditional carrot-and-stick approach.

“In the industrial era,” Nye says, “hierarchy was the dominant form of organization, and hard power was suited for that. But in the modern communications or service-based economy, the leaders have to be thought of not as king of the mountain but as center of the circle.”

Nye explains that being at the center of the circle means “not giving orders but attracting people to you — which is soft power. While hard and soft power are both important, the proportion of soft power is going up in the mix.”

On the front lines, soft power has an increasingly important role too, Nye says.

Even Eisenhower seemed to have this concept figured out: “You do not lead by hitting people over the head — that’s assault, not leadership,” he once famously said.

Followers matter

Author and scholar Barbara Kellerman, who lectures on politics at Harvard’s Center for Public Leadership, says the most neglected aspect in the study of leadership is the importance of followers.

Kellerman agrees with Nye that great leaders are shaped by the circumstances in which they find themselves, but says that understanding the needs and wants of followers is vital to a leader’s success.

In her book “Followership,” Kellerman examines the increasing power of followers.

“[They] have always been more important than we in the leadership field give them credit for,” she says.

Kellerman cites stockholder activists as being partly responsible for an increasing turnover of CEOs. People

who are not ordinarily considered as leaders are becoming more powerful than the actual leaders of the 21st century. She goes on to discuss the example of former Harvard University president Larry Summers, who was pushed out of office by the faculty. As she stresses, "Followers have more to say than ever before."

Beyond that, Kellerman asserts that there is no magic, one-size-fits-all leadership formula.

"What it takes to be a good leader on the battlefield," she says, "is different from what it takes to be a good Boy Scout leader." She adds that there are many different types of leaders, and the required skills vary depending on the specific role or environment.

And while she sees an increase in the use of soft power, Kellerman says it has its limitations in some situations.

"If I'm in a hurricane," she says, "do I need someone in control and taking charge? Probably."

The making of a good leader

Susan Bethanis, CEO/founder of the San Francisco consulting firm Mariposa Leadership, says the best leaders are those who have a high level of self-awareness, who understand the effect they have on other people and who are flexible enough to change their behavior.

"What makes a leader go from good to great," says Bethanis, "is the role of relationship builder. A good leader is also a visionary — [he or she can see] what's coming next and what's coming after that. In business, there is constant complexity and change, and that's what's getting a lot of people down."

Leo Hindery, author of "It Takes a CEO: It's Time To Lead with Integrity," thinks that humility is one of the most important assets for a business leader to possess.

"Most are intellectually curious, bright and hard-working, but many of them lack essential people skills," Hindery says. "What I want to see more of is grace. It's a British concept, a sense of fairness and civility and sensibility. A great CEO has roughly a dozen attributes, and greed isn't one of them." (See sidebar on Page 23 for more from Hindery.)

Bethanis, who consults mainly at high-tech firms in Silicon Valley, says she often deals with intense, fast-paced leaders with big egos.

"These are the crème-de-la-crème," she says, "but they need to slow down and be less demanding. You can still have expectations and still get stuff done, but you don't have to be a bulldozer." She believes that people can learn to be strong leaders and that some may have "natural leadership tendencies," but no one is naturally good at everything.

However, Kellerman is skeptical that good leadership can be instilled in a person who has no innate talent to lead.

"Just as there are born swimmers [and] born basketball players, there are born leaders," she says. Kellerman feels that while it is possible to become a better leader, a few exceptional people are naturally gifted with leadership skills.

But Nye thinks that the term "born leader" is an exaggeration.

"It's a myth that leaders are born and not made," he says. "It's possible to train people into leadership roles, but of course that doesn't mean innate talent can't make some difference. You can give people piano lessons and produce some decent piano players, but only a few will turn out to be a Mozart." n

Author and journalist Chris Cobb is a senior writer at the Ottawa Citizen newspaper where he specializes in reporting on media and government communication. He is a frequent contributor to PR Tactics.

Gloomy outlook for Wall Street leadership

Leo Hindery, founder of the private New York equity firm InterMedia Partners, a former CEO of AT&T Broadband and currently an economic adviser to Barack Obama, is gloomy about the prospects for more

responsible leadership at the helm of corporate America. Greed led to the Wall Street collapse, he says, and only strong political leadership willing to clamp down on "exorbitant" executive compensation will prevent it from happening again.

Corporate leaders bring companies to their knees and walk away with tens of millions of dollars in compensation, and feel justified in doing so, Hindery says.

"You can't justify it," he says. "It is just greed. And in the midst of the greatest wakeup call in history, you still have guys telling Congress to 'keep away from our compensation.' I can't recall a time when greed was so blatant."

Leadership traits like humility might be growing in popularity, but there is little of it to be found on Wall Street, he adds. — C.C.



ONLINE MASTER'S DEGREE IN STRATEGIC PUBLIC RELATIONS

THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON DC

Click to Learn more >>



Print This Article

<< Return to [Tweeting Your Way to the Top](#)

Tweeting Your Way to the Top

Sandra Fathi

November 11 2008

In today's on-demand society, news travels fast. In fact, according to social networking tool, [Twitter](#), news travels at about 140 characters at a time. Twitter is the most widely used micro-blogging site and has become an essential PR and marketing tool. When the medium is being talked about by mainstream media staples such as [CNN](#), the [Wall Street Journal](#), and the [New York Times](#), PR folks need to be paying attention.

More and more companies now use Twitter to communicate and create close relationships with reporters, customers and prospective clients. No matter what industry you work in, Twitter is a tool that needs to be on your radar. At the very least, your company should be monitoring Twitter and figuring out the best way to utilize it.

Twitter can be thought of as a short form subscription tool. One of the major benefits of creating a corporate presence on Twitter is that it is spam free, which makes it more inviting to subscribers. The 140 character limit requires tweets to be clear and concise, which forces users to make each interaction meaningful. Once a regular conversation is established through frequent tweets, your profile has the potential to attract a strong following.

PR and headline news

From a PR standpoint, Twitter is a great way to seek and create media opportunities. Reporters are now proactively tweeting to inform their followers of upcoming projects to help find spokespeople. It's also a valuable tool to help monitor key trends, breaking news, and find out about reporters' interests. Whether it's green initiatives or the recession, Twitter users are able to quickly stay on top of what's "hot" in their industry. In this way, Twitter has opened up a new level of awareness that hasn't been available to PR professionals, and one that other social networking sites have not been able to offer. Companies that don't pay attention to Twitter are potentially missing out on extremely valuable media opportunities.

Customer service and CRM

Twitter can also be a great way for companies to stay on top of customer service. Many companies have set up Twitter accounts in an effort to improve their reputation and increase customer loyalty. For example, customers might tweet about product issues, glitches, and other problems that arise. A company that monitors tweets closely can provide solutions and answers quickly, directly to the customer, in order to build trust and strengthen the relationship with their customer base.

Engagement, interaction, and viral marketing

Another advantage of Twitter is that users are able to insert themselves into conversations immediately, which can be a major marketing tool, especially at events. Companies can now offer exclusive content through tweets

from the conference floor at trade shows and events. By engaging potential customers in conversation before, during, and after an event, Twitter allows companies to get a leg up on their competitors. Twitter can also be used to launch and maintain viral marketing campaigns. Brands can encourage users to follow them on Twitter to receive exclusive updates and news.

Immediate gratification and distribution

What makes Twitter so powerful is how quickly users are able to communicate with large groups of people. There is no limit to how many people a tweet can reach at virtually no cost. Twitter has become one of the most cost-effective marketing tools available. Business leaders can use Twitter in a number of different ways, but, as with any social networking tool, it is important to understand the medium, the culture and the unwritten “rules of the network.”

In public relations, new tools are constantly emerging to give practitioners an edge. Twitter is an important social networking tool that has shown no sign of slowing down. Get involved today at least by listening to the conversation, even if you're not ready to join in just yet.

Sandra Fathi is the founder and president of tech-focused boutique PR and marketing firm Affect Strategies. She blogs at techaffect.com, and can be reached at sfathi@effectstrategies.com and on Twitter @sandrafathi.

Issue Date: The Firm Voice - Nov 12, 2008

Crisis Communications Planning: Now Is the Time to Review Critical Lessons for Private and Public Sector Clients Alike



By John Ulyot, Senior Vice President, Crisis Communications and Issues Management, Public Affairs, Hill and Knowlton, Washington D.C.

In today's world, digital and wireless communications have changed how to plan communications in times of crisis. The natural disasters that struck Burma and China earlier this year are instructive and offer some communications lessons.

In Burma, where a military regime tightly controls information, the rest of the world struggled to learn the extent of the impact of the cyclone. In contrast, the devastating earthquake that struck China earlier in May, where the broad access to wireless and digital communications—including cell phone cameras and streaming video—meant that vast amounts of information flowed across China and around the world.

These events offer a cautionary tale for those who are involved in communications planning. The fact of the matter is that because of such technology, we need to be prepared for an overabundance of information; information that moves faster than any government agency, first responder or traditional news organization can move. If such technology and information is managed properly, the result can save lives. If not, the outcome can be confusion, chaos and panic.

In today's world such technology cannot be controlled, short of shutting down or disabling networks. Therefore, we need to test our plans and systems to ensure that they are designed for such a scenario, to break through the clutter and noise. In short, accurate and timely information can prove as vital as shelter, medical care and food supplies in times of disaster. And, the importance of making sure that spokespersons are properly trained to deliver clear messages in the face of a crisis cannot be understated.

In preparation for testimony earlier this year on communications planning for a nuclear terrorist attack in front of the U.S. Senate Committee on Homeland Security, Hill & Knowlton commissioned a nationwide survey to provide a benchmark of current awareness of issues relating to the scenario of an attack on a major American city. The three key results were:

- Almost half of all Americans believe they are not equipped today with sufficient information about what they should do in the event of an attack;
- The closer people are to an actual attack, the more likely they are to look to, and rely on, information from local emergency management authorities, as opposed to federal authorities and leaders; and
- Of all the types of information provided in the aftermath of an attack, people place a premium on messages that are, in order: (a) accurate, giving the full facts, no matter how negative, followed by (b) information that is timely. Comparatively few are interested in more abstract, general information such as how the nation will respond to the attack.

The research results and the observations from the natural disasters in China and Burma offer some important lessons for the government's communications planning. To save lives, the government should focus on core areas including the role of interagency coordination, pre-event message development, stakeholder identification, spokesperson identification and preparation, involving media and digital organizations, public-private partnerships, education and awareness efforts, the criticality of period immediately after an event, and training and lessons learned. This holds true for other entities, including corporations, who must be prepared to act when disaster strikes.

It is important that the government's communications plans recognize the need to have a means of providing sufficient content and spokespersons to ensure a stream of accurate and contextual information; to have in place a wholly aligned coordination and communication among federal, state and local authorities; and to provide adequate information to deal with a scenario such as a terrorist nuclear attack.

In addition to the U.S. government's accomplishments in terms of preparing our nation for such an event, it needs to ensure that the communications planning recognizes the powerful technological and societal forces that have fundamentally changed the manner in which the public receives and shares information, and by identifying those remaining barriers to effective communications.

John Ulyot is Senior Vice President of Crisis Communications and Issues Management and leads the Public Affairs practice in H&K's Washington, DC office. This article is an excerpt of the testimony that John delivered before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security on May 15, 2008. The full written testimony can be found at http://hsgac.senate.gov/public/_files/051508Ulyot.pdf.

The Huffington Post

November 14, 2008

[This is the print preview: Back to normal view »](#)



[Myles Brand](#)

Posted November 11, 2008 | 02:10 PM (EST)

Getting a Grip on Fan Behavior in College Sports

Read More: [Athletes](#), [College Sports](#), [Fans](#), [Sports](#), [Sports Fan](#), [Sportsmanship](#), [Stadiums](#), [Entertainment News](#)

Show your support.
Buzz this article up.



Get Breaking News Alerts

SIGN UP

never spam

- [Share](#)
- [Print](#)
- [Comments](#)

There is something very wrong taking place in sports, including college sports.

It isn't universal. It doesn't happen all the time.

But it happens often enough to suggest that we -- the fans -- are losing our way.

Imagine you are playing before several thousand on the road in a conference game that is nationally televised and being singled out with words like "traitor," "liar," and other, more crude, epithets.

Imagine having your family subjected to hearing vulgarities that should never be spoken in the arena directed at you but shouted to them.

Imagine having your mother doused with ice water, your father's sexual orientation called into question and your family assaulted with flying debris.

And imagine that the target of all this hatred and abuse is not some hardened professional who willingly gives as bad as he receives. Instead, the target is an 18-year-old freshman, thrilled to be playing for his team and excited to be a part of college basketball.

These are the facts in two instances that made headlines across the country last spring when Indiana University's Eric Gordon played on the road at the University of Illinois and UCLA's Kevin Love played in a conference match-up at the University of Oregon.

Gordon was singled out because he had verbally committed to playing basketball at Illinois and then changed his mind. And Love -- who played high school basketball in Oregon and was the son of a former Oregon basketball standout -- left his home state to play for the Bruins.

That's it. Those were the sins for which they were visited with abuse.

Frankly, the insults heaped on these two student-athletes far exceeded anything I am willing to repeat here. They were verbally, and in the case of Gordon physically, assaulted. It was ugly and vicious.

And all this took place on the campuses of two of America's greatest institutions of higher education.

What is going on? As we enter another basketball season, what has gone wrong? Fans cheering and jeering has, in some cases, gone beyond what is tolerable.

For a culture that holds dear the concepts of fair play, civility, honest effort -- in short, sportsmanship -- intercollegiate athletics at times sure has a strange way of showing its commitment to such values. And fans -- both students and others -- are moving quickly in some cases from loyal fanatics to out-of-control mobs.

Campuses increasingly have student sections in football and basketball that have taken on the role of ensuring a home court advantage with zealous enthusiasm that sometimes moves from rowdy support to over-the-top vulgarity and violent action. Worse, there are administrators and coaches who judiciously look the other way for fear of dampening the enthusiasm that could give an edge to their teams.

After one of the instances noted above, the coach reportedly praised the home crowd for its enthusiasm! That's simply unacceptable!!

Let me be clear.

These behaviors represent a threat to the integrity of intercollegiate athletics. Rule by mob will as quickly undo the role intercollegiate athletics plays in the national sports culture.

It's time to address this rising problem. We had better get a grip on fan behavior.

The involvement in intercollegiate athletics as student-athlete or fan is often an emotional experience.

The deep passion of playing or supporting a team is part of what makes college sports so attractive. But just as important as expressing the passion for a team is learning the limits of being a true fan.

Some professional teams have taken an interesting approach to fan behavior that becomes out of line. They have posted a number that anyone can call on their cell from their seat to advise venue management of such behavior. A representative of the home team will then show up and, if necessary, escort the offender from the stands and in some cases remove their season tickets.

It may be time for colleges and universities to adopt a similar approach.

For all the concern that instances like those at Illinois and Oregon raised a year ago, there is much encouragement to be taken from another moment in college sports when the student-athletes turned a difficult moment into an example of how the concept of sportsmanship can soar.

In a Division II softball game between conference rivals Western Oregon and Central Washington last spring, and with two of her teammates on base, WOU's senior Sara Tucholsky hit what appeared to be her first-ever home run. Watching her fence-clearing shot, she missed first base, turned abruptly to go back and touch the bag when her knee buckled and she fell to the ground in pain. Crawling back to first, she realized she could go no further.

According to the rules, she could not be helped by her teammates; and if she could not continue around the bases, her hit would be recorded as a single. Western Washington's Mallory Holtman, a power-hitting first baseman with many home runs to her credit, asked if it was against the rules for her and one of her teammates to carry their opponent around the bases so she would get credit for the home run. She was told that it was not, and they did, and Western Oregon went on to defeat Central Washington.

Holtman had a simple reason for her display of sportsmanship in helping Tucholsky round the bases: "She hit it over the fence. She deserved it."

Ironically, among the many letters and e-mails of thanks and tribute that Holtman received, were some that accused her of being selfish and not thinking of their teammates. Seriously, in the midst of an inspiring act of pure sportsmanship, there still are those who entirely miss the lesson.

Such fan behavior deserves only one response.

Get a grip.

 [stumble](#) [digg](#) [reddit](#) [del.icio.us](#) [news trust](#) [mixx.com](#)

[More in Entertainment...](#)

- [Dead Fan Found At Paula Abdul's House](#)
- [Jennifer Aniston On Oprah \(VIDEO\)](#)
- [George Clooney Slams Prop 8](#)
- [NBC Axes "Enemy" And "Jungle" Amid Ratings...](#)

Comments Pending Comments [FAQ: Comments and Moderation](#) [FAQ: HuffPost Accounts](#)
6 0 [Post Comment](#)

Want to reply to a comment? Hint: Click "Reply" at the bottom of the comment; after being approved your comment will appear directly underneath the comment you replied to

View Comments:
- [PrairieDog](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of PrairieDog](#) [permalink](#)

NEW

The Monday following the UI-IU game the athletic powers-that-be here in Champaign released a statement putting down the fan behavior (especially after instant nation-wide criticism). For that some fans were livid that other places are just as bad. As if that justified it. I don't think booing Gordon would have been out of line since his game-changing commitment was imminent though unofficial. But the mass cursing & other antics were an embarrassment to a world class university.

[Reply](#) [Favorite](#) [Flag as abusive](#) Posted 10:08 AM on 11/13/2008
- [Mom4Choice](#) [See Profile](#) [I'm a Fan of Mom4Choice](#) [permalink](#)

My question, Mr. Brand, is how do you feel about LSU fans burning an effigy of Nick Saban the night before the Bama-LSU game this past weekend? Oh right, that was Alabama, so that's not a problem. But what if it had been Pete Carroll? I can only imagine the outrage.



Academics and Athletics at its best

NCAA.org	NCAA.com	NCAASTudent.org	Publications	Double-A Zone Blog	Champion Magazine
HOME	About Blog	Blog rules	Terms of use	Contact us	

Search

GUEST BLOGS

No holidays in football - Nov 13, 2008
 posted by: Howard Smith

[ShareThis](#)

This entry is written by [Carl Ehrlich](#), a football student-athlete at Harvard. Check out Carl's previous blogs: [Playing Under the Lights](#), [Summer Dogs](#), [R.I.C.E.](#), [A tale of two lives](#) and [Remembering recruiting](#).



Last Tuesday, as every eligible American should have, I voted.

Many Americans might find the election and their personal voting decision to be a private matter. As for me, I feel as though my vote is far too important of a topic to "let it shine under a bushel basket."

Those who know me and my stance on the issues will say that I made up my mind before the election even started. But I just knew in my heart of hearts what the right choice was for myself and for my country. Putting all accolades and obvious collegiate bias (a Harvard man!) aside, I looked deep into the candidates and deeper into myself to determine whom I would put my vote behind.

While a GoCrimson blog endorsement might not carry much weight on a national level, I feel as though my candidate is ready to lead this country and I would be remiss if I didn't do everything I could to help him get elected. That is why I'm officially supporting Mike Fucito for the Lowe's Senior CLASS MVP.

Fucito is a senior on the men's soccer team who is having a great season and epitomizes the "classroom, character, community, and competition" that the award looks to recognize. It's a shame the award doesn't recognize the ability to pass for Dustin Pedroia, because then it would be no contest.

Make sure to log onto the website (http://www.seniorclassaward.com/vote/sport/menssoccer/?KEY=&DB_OEM_ID=9000&DB_LANG=&IN_SUBSCRIBER_CONTENT=) and cast your vote for Harvard's own.

Yes we can.

Election Day came and went last week (with a patriotically high number of absentee ballots mailed by Harvard Football players), and while the significance of the results were not wasted on the team, the "holiday" aspect of it was. Talking to my mom, a school teacher who had off school for Election Day, she began to ask how I was putting my Election Day to best use before catching herself.

C'mon Mom, you know better. There's no crying in baseball, and there are no holidays in football. Not traditional ones, anyways. Because of the demands of our schedules, our workouts don't match up well to the federal holiday calendar. The consummate football player would respond that everyday is a holiday because we get

COMMENTS

I am optimistic and believe that the NCAA will be an agent of change and will hire qualified minorities into leadership roles.
 - Anonymous Read Post

RECENT UPDATES

- >> [No holidays in football](#)
 - >> [Sports journalism draws comparison to college football](#)
 - >> [Reflections from D-II Leadership Academy](#)
 - >> [Preseason expectations, upcoming MAC showdown, wedgebusting and superstitions](#)
 - >> [What should the NCAA do about online courses?](#)
 - >> [Rhodes scholar update, BCS proposal and the ultimate fan](#)
- | | | | |
|----------|--------|---------|----------|
| NCAA.org | Div. I | Div. II | Div. III |
|----------|--------|---------|----------|
- >> [The Record - 11-13-08 - NCAA News](#)
 - >> [ACL injuries sideline female athletes - 11-13-08 - NCAA News](#)
 - >> [Fisher's Kahler to retire with most women's wins in DIII - 11-13-08 - NCAA News](#)
 - >> [DII membership process gets front-end alignment - 11-13-08 - NCAA News](#)
 - >> [DII committee prepares for new Canadian member - 11-13-08 - NCAA News](#)

DOUBLE-A POLL

What's the best part of homecoming weekend on a college campus?

- Seeing alumni
- Tailgating
- Football game
- Band's performance

[Vote](#)

Powered by PollMonkey

BLOG ROLL

to play the sport we love, but I'll (for the sake of the non-football playing reader of course) operate on the more functional, commonplace definition of a holiday as a day off.

But in lieu of traditional holidays, we on the football team have created our own. During the offseason, we refer to our workout-less Wednesdays as "Mini-weekends" and the actual weekends then become "mini-vacations."

Our annual Media Day, held each August, is always circled on the calendar during preseason, and although it's not a day off, The Game is the most important day of the year to many in the Harvard Football family.

Working backwards, a few examples of traditional holidays...

I spent "Veteran's Day" on Tuesday icing down the injuries that I had accumulated during my service on the gridiron.

On Election Day I "elected" to wake up at 5:45 to get a lift in.

We spent all of Halloween driving to Dartmouth and preparing for the game. Matt Hanson wore the scariest looking suit and tie combo I've ever seen

On September 1st I was in the midst of camp and had two practices, bringing a whole new meaning to "Labor Day."

On the Fourth of July I celebrated my dependence. We did actually get workouts off for this day but the next week's conditioning loomed over my head so I got an extra run in.

Thought you were getting a day off for a cheap holiday? April Fools!

Season update: While I thought this would be a fun topic to write on, there isn't a player on the team that would want to be anywhere else in the world right now than down at the field house. We're in a two-game season for the ivy-league championship and play at Penn this week in a matchup of first place teams. Even if Christmas was tomorrow I'm not sure anyone on the team would notice.

ACC Nation
All on the Field
American Legends
Centennial Conference Blog
CofC Sports Fan
Complete Sports
Corn Nation
Critical Fanatic
D3Football.com

Post a Comment

Name

Email

URL

Remember personal info?

Comments (You may use HTML tags for style)

SPORTS MEDIA WATCH

HOME NBA NFL MLB NHL NCAAF RATINGS

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2008

BCS could be the first of many to go to cable.

The potential move of the Bowl Championship Series from broadcast to cable could be the biggest sports television move in years.

ESPN is bidding \$125 million per year for the rights to the BCS, a 50% increase from the current 82.5 million FOX is paying for the rights to four of the five games (ABC has a separate deal with the Rose Bowl). FOX is offering only \$100 million, and is not expected "to **increase its bid by enough**" to match ESPN's offer.

If ESPN is successful, the Bowl Championship Series will move exclusively to cable, making it the highest-profile sporting event to move from broadcast to cable. While several major sporting events have moved to cable in recent years, the championship events of most sports still remain on broadcast. Should the BCS, arguably the strongest of the non-NFL championship events, move to cable, it would set a precedent that could result in many other sports properties making similar moves.

Weaker events like the World Series, NBA Finals and Stanley Cup Finals are prime candidates to leave broadcast, should the BCS do the same. The last four World Series are the four lowest rated World Series ever, including the most recent series between the Phillies and Rays, which drew a record low 8.4 rating. The NBA Finals has drawn single-digit ratings in five of the past six years, with the last 34 NBA Finals games ('03 to '08) averaging an 8.4 rating. The Stanley Cup Finals barely register in the ratings -- this year's series, the highest rated in six years, drew only a 3.1 average on NBC.

With that in mind, there is already a likelihood that these events are not long for broadcast. The World Series will air on FOX through 2013, the NBA Finals on ABC through 2016, and the Stanley Cup Finals on NBC through at least this season. If a marquee event like the BCS National Championship Game can move to ESPN, it could remove some reluctance that **Bud Selig, David Stern or Gary Bettman** may have about relegating the championship events in their leagues to cable as well.

While such a domino effect might seem unlikely at first, consider this: when the NBA moved predominantly to cable in 2002, marking what was then a sharp change in ideology, it may not have seemed like other sports would do the same. But within the next five years, *Monday Night Football* would move to ESPN, and the vast majority of MLB postseason games -- including an entire League Championship Series -- would be awarded to TBS.

If the BCS/ESPN deal goes through, it may not be long before the World Series moves to ESPN or TBS, or even FX. The NBA Finals already air on ABC -- a move to ESPN would not be much of a stretch, though TNT would likely make a significant push for rights as well. Should the Stanley Cup Finals move back to ESPN, as has been rumored, it is unlikely games would air on ABC. Already, golf's British Open is set to become the first golf major to move entirely to cable; ESPN is expected to gain all four rounds of the event starting in 2010.

Even stronger sports could make the shift. While the Super Bowl is likely a decade or two away from airing on cable, it would not be a surprise to see ESPN gain the rights to a Wild Card game. Additionally, if ESPN gains the rights to the 2014 and 2016 Olympics, there is every possibility that at least some prime time coverage would air on ESPN rather than ABC.

Recent examples, such as ABC dumping NASCAR for *America's Funniest Home Videos*, show that sports is not nearly the priority for broadcast as it was in the past. While sporting events on broadcast still draw the highest ratings, the relative success of



Sprint

Genetically engineered for your thumbs.

The HTC Touch Diamond™
From the #1 wireless provider to business.

Get it now →

BLOGS (MEDIA)

Sports Media News

NFL Network
Thursday Night
Football Telecast
Notes & Quotes
17 minutes ago



Fang's Bites

Some NFL-Related
Press Releases
7 hours ago

TVbytheNumbers

Monday Night Football and baseball's League Championship Series on cable is evidence that the majority of the television audience can find marquee events on any network. At this point, broadcast television no longer needs sports, and vice versa.

Published by Paulsen at 1:57 PM

Labels: [College football](#), [ESPN](#)

[close\(\)](#)

status via twitter

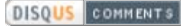
recent comments ([follow comments](#))

[View Profile >](#)

Powered by [Disqus](#) · [Learn more](#)

[close](#)[Reblog this comment](#)

Powered by [Disqus](#) · [Learn more](#)



Add New Comment

Type your comment here.

[?] Unclaimed Register Login DISQUS

Record video comment

OPTIONS +

4 Comments



[drew](#) 1 day ago

For some reason I do not see the NBA Finals, All of the Olympics Coverage, Superbowl on Cable. I think the leagues would not allowed it. College sports is one thing...pros is totally different.

[reply](#)



[Morgan Wick](#) 1 day ago

If this is correct, and the deal goes through as rumored, I suspect the BCS itself will eventually move back to broadcast once most of the biggest events clear out, just because it is the largest non-NFL sporting event.

NBA: Goodbye ABC, hello ESPN or TNT.

ABC: Hmm. I have all this extra money, I'm going to nab the BCS with it. (Yes I know ABC is part of the ESPN family, it's not like they don't keep shoving it down our The following is a presentation of ESPN on ABC... DAMMIT!)

(Or flip out MLB for NBA, Fox for ABC, and TBS for TNT.)

[reply](#)



[James](#) 1 day ago

Prediction: when the NFL goes to 18 regular season games it will also increase the number of playoff teams and those additional games will go to ESPN

[reply](#)



Jets Defeat Patriots in Overtime, Nobody Sees It on NFL Network
8 hours ago

Awful Announcing

The Jets Claim First Place In The AFC East On Thursday Night Football
9 hours ago

mediabistro.com: TVNewser

Barbara and Friends
10 hours ago

Puck The Media

Back to the Jack Well: Edwards' Delivers the Goods in Call of Great Bruins-Hawks Game
13 hours ago

Eye On Sports Media

The Cablization of Television Sports Properties - Part I
17 hours ago

Playbooks and Profits - The Oregonian - OregonLive.com

The Fed, AIG and sports marketing
1 month ago

Boston Sports Media Watch

MEDIA WRITERS

- [Barry Horn](#)
- [Barry Jackson](#)
- [Bob Wolfley](#)
- [Dan Caesar](#)
- [Darren Rovell](#)
- [Dave Darling](#)
- [David Barron](#)
- [Jerry Greene](#)
- [Jim Carlisle](#)
- [John Maffei](#)
- [Judd Zulgad](#)
- [Ken Schott](#)
- [Michael Hiestand](#)
- [Ray Frager](#)
- [Richard Deitsch](#)
- [Richard Sandomir](#)
- [Scott D. Pierce](#)
- [Teddy Greenstein](#)
- [Tom Hoffarth](#)
- [William Houston](#)

BLOGS (GENERAL)

- [A Sports Scribe](#)
- [And One](#)
- [Ball Don't Lie](#)
- [Can't Stop the Bleeding](#)
- [Cosellout](#)
- [Hardwood Paroxysm](#)
- [InHistoric](#)
- [Kukla's Korner](#)



November 13, 2008

Funds and games

Basketball fans might be fewer, coaches expect

*BY DAVID JONES
FLORIDA TODAY*

Tennessee coach Bruce Pearl looks up with sad eyes and frowns.

The subject was not his team's recruits or hopes of matching last year's Sweet 16. It's a topic that has been coming up more and more in athletics. The economy.

As the nation's economic struggles continue with college basketball season opening, coaches are realistic. They realize the scoreboard at their games might not be as important this winter.

Football is 12 games, basketball is 30. They expect the financial impact to be there even more than it was in stadiums around the nation in September. And they understand arenas could have some big holes in them, at least in November and December during non-conference play.

"I'm not willing to say because you need to take care of the milk money and the gas money instead of coming to a game you're not a great fan," Pearl said. "I think the economy thing is for real. People are scared."

Coaches around the nation seem to understand that things could be very different this winter. And they are more than OK with it. They want families to do the right thing for themselves, not the hoops squad.

"I've never been a big believer that, when it comes to money and sporting events, . . . I'm not in a position at all to say that you have to come out there and support us," said Florida coach Billy Donovan, whose team hosts Toledo on Friday in its season opener. "That's a personal choice. I think we have a good product and people want to come and support the Gators, but in these times and this economy, a lot of people are going through struggles whether it's with their homes or their jobs."

Donovan is among the highest-paid college coaches in the nation, but even he feels some of the impact.

"I have family members back in New York that are out of work on Wall Street," he said. "Sporting events and things like that are added perks that are enjoyment, and when the economy gets tough, I think people tend to cut back on enjoyment and focus in on necessities."

The major colleges rely on fans from far away to help fill arenas. That means expenses like airline tickets and hotels.

"In Knoxville, we were fourth in the nation in attendance last year," Pearl said. "I can't tell you how many people traveled from Johnson City, an hour and a half to two hours away. Or just south of Nashville, a couple hours away. We have season ticket holders in Murfreesboro and Chattanooga -- an hour and a half (drive).

"On a Wednesday night or something like that, I think that's going to be a factor. If we are winning, they'll keep coming."

The women's game has grown in the last decade to amazing proportions. But it, too, could see a setback from a struggling economy.

"Our tickets are very affordable," said Auburn women's coach Nell Fortner. "It's not the price of football tickets."

But she admits women's basketball may have to be more creative in luring fans and rely on local attendance a little more. There's also a question of whether finances could eventually impact how teams travel if they are not drawing fans to help pay the bills.

"We haven't had that discussion yet," Fortner said.

Meanwhile, the games will go on. But most coaches agree, this is one season where you better win a lot of games. Losing teams will make it even easier for fans to decide to stay home. Pearl goes one step further.

"I do worry about them," he said of Vols fans. "I appreciate them. After a game is over, I do my post-game radio show, I'll stay in the gym for two hours until I am done signing the last autograph. What else can I do? I'm limited. Do I worry about them? I got a lot to worry about. But I do respect and appreciate their support. . . I can stand out there and thank them."

For now, coaches are just like the average ticket buyer. They are not sure what to expect next.

"Certainly the economy reaches down and affects a lot of people in a lot of ways," Vanderbilt coach Kevin Stallings said. "Certainly we're not immune. Does it affect your season ticket base, does it affect your donors? There are a lot of things it could affect in terms of college athletics and the conference tournament could certainly be one of those."

Especially this year. The SEC tourney is in Tampa. That's a long way from many of the other league teams. Most years, the event has been held in Atlanta or Nashville.

"A lot of people are looking, just as a nation, to see if this is a short-term problem or a long-term problem," SEC commissioner Mike Slive said. "We'll discuss those issues with our athletic directors in December. But the tournament's going to be at the St. Pete Forum and it will be what it will be."

Like Pearl, Slive answered with sad eyes and a frown. As the season starts, it's more predictable than ever. In many ways.

Additional Facts

Comparing ticket prices

University of Florida:

- **Men's basketball games:** \$20 for general admission tickets.
- **Women's basketball games:** \$5 for reserved seats; \$4 for adults and \$2 for children and students in general admission.

Florida State:

- **Men's games:** \$14 for adults (\$20 for Atlantic Coast Conference games, Florida and Pittsburgh); \$7 for children 3 to 18 (\$10 for ACC, Florida and Pittsburgh); children younger than 2 admitted for free.
- **Women's games:** \$5 for adults and \$3 for children and senior citizens.

University of Miami:

- **Men's games:** \$10 for general admission, with a range of seating choices escalating to \$31.

University of Central Florida:

- **Men's games:** \$17 for Conference USA games and the USF game and \$12 for non-conference games.
- **Women's games:** \$5 for general admission and \$2 for children and seniors.

University of South Florida:

- **Men's games:** \$20 for non-conference games and \$25 for conference games in Level Two; \$15 and \$20 for seats in Sections C and E row six and higher; Level Three seats are \$8 and \$10.

Tennessee:

- **Men's games:** \$10 for non-conference games (except Memphis and Gonzaga); conference games and the game against Gonzaga are \$15; \$25 for games against Memphis Florida and Vanderbilt.
- **Women's games:** \$10 for general admission and reserved seats ranging from \$15 to \$20.

North Carolina:

- **Men's games:** \$45 for reserved seats. All games, with the exception of contests against Oral Roberts, Evansville and the College of Charleston, are sold out.
- **Women's games:** Reserved seats range from \$10 to 12.

University of Connecticut:

- **Men's games:** All tickets are \$30.
- **Women's games:** \$22 for adults; \$15 for children and senior citizens.

University of Kentucky:

- **Men's games:** \$33 for lower arena and \$28 for upper arena.
- **Women's games:** \$5 for adults; \$2 for children and senior citizens.

University of Kansas:

- **Men's games:** All tickets are \$55.
 - **Women's games:** \$8 for adults; \$5 for children. The admission price for the game against Kansas State will be \$15.
-

BusinessWeek

TOP NEWS November 7, 2008, 6:34PM EST

University of Texas Plans Own Sports TV Channel

The school is in talks with Time Warner, Comcast, and AT&T to distribute Longhorn Sports Network, a first for a specific college

By [Tom Lowry](#)

In what would be a first for college sports on television, the University of Texas is planning to launch its own 24/7 sports network, signaling a further move toward niche programming on cable and satellite.

Officials from the University of Texas have teamed up with the college sports unit of [IMG Worldwide](#), a talent agency and licensing company, to negotiate distribution on Time Warner Cable ([TWC](#)), Comcast ([CMCSA](#)), and AT&T ([T](#)) in Texas and possibly in bordering states, says Pat Battle, a senior vice-president at IMG College. IMG has an agreement with the Austin (Tex.) school, which is part of the Big 12 Conference, to oversee its trademark licensing, marketing, and multimedia rights.

If the channel, tentatively named the Longhorn Sports Network, gets off the ground, it would be the first time a university has created its own sports network seeking broad distribution. "Texas has such an incredible fan base and such great content through all its sports programs," says Battle, "that we feel a network like this will have a real following." A spokesman for DeLoss Dodds, the UT athletics director, said he was unavailable for comment.

COLLEGE SPORTS' TV EXPANSION

While the network will show a range of sports, from baseball to track and field, it currently does not have the rights to show all the Longhorns' enormously popular football games, which raises doubts about what kind of an audience the network could attract.

Sports are a huge draw in Texas, with college athletics and music as the main attractions in its largest university's hometown. With a storied history in football and the largest university sports budget in the country, at more than \$120 million, Texas reportedly operates one of the most profitable university sports programs. The University of Texas football team is currently ranked No. 4 nationwide, having been knocked out of the top spot by a Nov. 1 loss to Texas Tech. Texas plays unranked Baylor at home on Nov. 8.

Over the past decade, college sports has expanded its reach greatly on television, moving from the broadcast networks to cable outlets such as ESPN, to regional sports networks like Fox, to such college-themed networks as CBS College Sports and ESPNU, to, more recently, networks established by college conferences themselves.

Now Texas is taking the lead in breaking out on its own to capture revenues exclusively. But is it economically feasible to support a university-only sports network, particularly when it has become much harder to get the necessary distribution on cable to make a profit? "I don't know how far down the tree you can take this thing," says Mike Trager, founder of TV sports consultancy The Trager Group. "The revenue pie for college sports stays essentially the same, but they keep slicing it up. The question for Texas is, 'Can you get the revenue and distribution for that specific of a niche?'"

TEXAS FOOTBALL TELECASTS

Even as sports offerings have grown on TV, cable and satellite operators have become more resistant to paying for the escalating rights to show sports, their most expensive category of programming. When the Big Ten Conference tried to get distribution deals for its network in 2007, it met huge resistance, particularly since it wanted to charge distributors a dollar a month per subscriber (ESPN charges about \$3). Cable and satellite operators balked until the Big Ten lowered its price to about 70¢. The Big Ten Network now has distribution to about 35 million homes. Comcast offers it on its expanded basic service in those states with Big Ten schools and on its digital sports tiers elsewhere.

IMG's Battle says Texas would seek distribution only on digital sports tiers, for which subscribers pay an extra fee. The university has not reached any deals with distributors yet, but Alex Dudley, a spokesman for Time Warner Cable, with 1.8 million subscribers in such Texas cities as Austin, Dallas, and San Antonio, called the talks "very productive" thus far. A broadband offering of the network or of some programming on the network is under consideration as well, says Battle.

A big sticking point for distributors is knowing which sports and which games the university network will be able to show—mainly the super-popular Longhorn football games. The Big 12 has rights deals for broadcast television with ABC ([DIS](#)) and for cable with Fox Sports Networks ([NWS](#)), so many of the Texas football games air on those outlets. Fox sometimes sublicenses those rights, so Big 12 games also air on other cable outlets, such as ESPN and Versus. Battle says he and university officials are currently in talks with Fox about buying back rights to some Texas games. As it stands now, the university's sports network would be able to air as many as four football games, says Battle. Clearly, they wouldn't be the most competitive matchups, since ABC and Fox would want to keep those. The university could offer Fox, or the cable outlets, an equity stake in the network as an incentive to complete the ongoing deal talks. Battle says that hasn't been ruled out as a possibility.

Battle, whose father was the successful University of Tennessee football coach Bill Battle, is not deterred by the challenges. He's hoping the network will launch next fall and perhaps become a model for other large universities. Of course, Battle is not a disinterested party. IMG College represents the rights for 15 Division I universities, including the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, where college sports might be just as much of a religion as it is in Austin.

[Lowry](#) is a senior writer for *BusinessWeek* in New York.

Xerox Color. It makes business sense.

Copyright 2000-2008 by The McGraw-Hill Companies Inc. All rights reserved.

The McGraw-Hill Companies

Slate

SPORTS NUT

Bowling for Dollars

Why college football is more cutthroat and competitive than the NFL.

By Michael Oriard

Posted Thursday, Nov. 6, 2008, at 6:47 AM ET

What's the biggest story in college football so far this season? The dramatic surge of Alabama in Nick Saban's second year? Early losses by Ohio State, USC, and Georgia, opening up room at the top for the Crimson Tide and others? I'd nominate the [SEC's \\$2.25 billion deal with ESPN](#) for rights to televise the conference's games through 2025. With an additional \$55 million annually from CBS, the SEC will get \$205 million a year over the life of the television contracts, a little more than \$17 million per school per year. Those figures don't resonate with football fans as much as, say, the latest jockeying in the Heisman Trophy race, but it's these figures that will shape the game's future.

We've been hearing for years that big-time college football is becoming indistinguishable from the NFL. I disagree: College football is much more cutthroat and competitive. On account of pro football's revenue sharing—most importantly, nearly \$4 billion in television money gets split up between the 32 NFL clubs each year—it's hard for even a lousy pro football team to lose money. NFL clubs do not constantly have to upgrade their facilities in order to attract players. Instead of recruiting wars, pro teams take turns selecting the best college players, whom they pay a fixed percentage of the league's revenues. NFL clubs also don't steal one another's coaches, and what they pay the men on the sidelines is not governed by fear of losing a successful coach to another team.

College football programs share revenue, too, but not nearly as much and only within conferences. That's why the SEC's extraordinary windfall could change the basic structure of big-time football. (While basketball and other sports are included in the conference's TV deal with ESPN, football is the clear driving force.) In 2006-07, the most recent year for which we have data, Division I-A (now Football Bowl Subdivision) schools generated \$2.04 billion in revenues. That same season, NFL clubs generated \$6.54 billion (increasing to \$7.09 billion in 2007), with revenues ranging from the Cowboys with \$312 million to the Vikings with \$182 million. Compare that relatively narrow range with that of the Football Bowl Subdivision, where the University of Texas led with \$63.8 million in revenues and New Mexico State sat at the bottom with \$1.1 million. The largest revenue for a school outside the [six BCS conferences](#), TCU's \$13.3 million, ranked 55th. Of the \$2.04 billion in total revenue, nearly \$1.8 billion went to BCS schools.

Whether the actual numbers are familiar, the huge gap between BCS and non-BCS programs is common knowledge. But let's dig a little deeper into the BCS conferences, where disparities are also striking. These are the average revenues for schools in the six major conferences:



SEC: \$38.2 million
Big Ten: \$33.7 million
Big 12: \$24.8 million
Pac-10: \$22.9 million
ACC: \$19.5 million
Big East: \$15.2 million

The SEC was already the wealthiest conference before its latest TV deals, which will nearly triple the league's annual media revenue. With its recently launched [Big Ten Network](#), the second-wealthiest conference has seen its media revenue increase to \$15 million per school per year. (ESPN dumped its billions on the SEC to prevent it from following the Big Ten to creating its own network.) With ESPN now so heavily committed to the SEC, there's little chance that any of the remaining four conferences will receive such a windfall. The six majors will begin to look like a top two and next four. (There's also the unique case of Notre Dame, which has [a big-money contract with NBC through 2015](#).)

Why does any of this matter? It matters most because of the relentless and relentlessly increasing pressure on the lesser football programs to compete with the greater ones. It is ironic that we have heard much in recent years about a new parity in college football, wherein a school like Appalachian State can knock off Michigan, and South Florida, Wake Forest, and Kansas have contended for the national championship. The occasional upset and rogue title contender shouldn't obscure the fact that mostly, the same schools contend for the championship each year. Parity does not extend throughout the BCS conferences, let alone into the midmajors. The one-time appearance of a Utah or Boise State or Hawaii in a BCS bowl game is misleading. These outliers break through one at a time, then promptly lose their coach to a major BCS power temporarily fallen on hard times (or lose their star quarterback to the NFL) and once again take their proper places in the food chain.

When an outlier breaks through to a BCS bowl, the relative distribution of revenues between BCS and non-BCS conferences is barely affected; the overwhelming majority of non-BCS schools are not affected at all. With the BCS adding a fifth bowl game in 2006-07, the six major conferences now claim nine or 10 huge payouts instead of seven or eight, and every big-conference school gets a share. Non-BCS conferences without a representative in a BCS bowl share almost nothing. The 11 highest football revenues in 2006-07 belonged to Texas, Notre Dame, Georgia, Ohio State, Florida, Auburn, Alabama, Michigan, LSU, Iowa, and Penn State. Notre Dame is a unique case, and we would certainly have to add Oklahoma (16th) and USC (just 21st) to our list of perennial contenders, but does anyone really doubt that the wealthiest programs will provide most of the contenders for national championships into the foreseeable future? (Should Texas Tech pull off a miracle this season, it will be a "miracle" precisely for this reason.)

While public attention is always on these top programs, the bottom ones face the most brutal challenges. An infusion of an extra \$100 million or \$150 million into a couple of conferences—for facilities, coaches' salaries, academic tutors, and all of the rest (though not for paying the "amateur" athletes, God forbid!)—increases the advantages for a few and raises the ante for the other conferences desperate to stay competitive. The programs with the highest revenues can cherry-pick the best athletes and then have the most resources to keep the weakest students among them on track academically. (Whether these resources translate into a good education is an issue for another day.) After three years under the NCAA's new initiative for academic reform, the

[Academic Progress Rate](#), only three BCS programs have been penalized (Arizona, Kansas, and Washington State), a tiny fraction of the non-BCS and Division I-AA programs that have been hit. While Toledo and LSU have to meet the same APR standard, only the latter can afford a \$15 million learning center for athletes.

Under Myles Brand, the NCAA is pursuing a two-pronged agenda: *mandatory* academic reform (via the APR), with a risk of losing scholarships and bowl appearances for failure to reach the minimum standards, coupled with *voluntary* fiscal restraint. Limits on spending, whether on coaches' salaries or facilities or any other feature of a first-class program, can only be voluntary, due to the risk of an antitrust lawsuit, such as the one in 1984 that ended the NCAA's monopoly on selling television rights.

College football's lack of spending limits means that high-revenue schools will forever be at a competitive advantage. LSU made \$48 million off football in 2006-07 and spent \$16 million. The University of Toledo made \$1.6 million and spent \$4.6 million. With state legislatures decreasing investment in higher education and nonelite private colleges facing their own financial squeeze, football below the elite level has become a loss-leader for luring in potential donors. Most college-football fans do not worry overmuch about the fate of Baylor and Cincinnati (bottom feeders in the BCS), let alone Toledo. But it's worth remembering that a lot of schools are spending educational dollars to subsidize athletics out of the desperate hope for "intangible" benefits, and a lot of athletes are making the academic sacrifices demanded at all levels of Division I without institutional resources to support them.

The media-rights windfalls for the Big Ten and SEC, then, will not introduce inequality into big-time football but rather reconfigure the inequalities that have long existed. The big winners will be the schools in those two conferences with smaller-budget football programs: Mississippi State, Vanderbilt, Mississippi, Northwestern, Indiana, and Minnesota, all of them with football revenues under \$20 million in 2006-07. But disparities within conferences will remain huge. With \$63.8 million in revenue in 2006-07, Texas made \$26.6 million more than its closest Big 12 rival (Oklahoma, at \$37.3 million). Now the Longhorns are exploring the possibility of [launching their own statewide TV network](#).

While a University of Texas TV network seems like an unlikely prospect considering that all of their games are already on TV, it's not surprising that college football's top tier is exploring such a move. (Like the SEC contracts and the Big Ten Network, the proposed UT network is for all sports, and the fact that the football games are already televised is what makes the prospect unlikely.) It is inconceivable to me that top programs will choose to share more revenue, and the NCAA is powerless to mandate such sharing. At some point, this inequality between and within conferences will become unsustainable for those at the bottom, perhaps even for those just below the top. Not by free choice but from overwhelming external forces, a dramatic reconfiguration of big-time football will come. What it will look like is unpredictable: Conference realignments that exclude the small-revenue schools? A single superconference along the lines of soccer's [Premier League](#), with the remaining teams consigned to lesser status? What is clear is that whatever happens will be determined by those on top, while the rest scramble to salvage what they can.

Michael Oriard is the author of [Brand NFL: Making and Selling America's Favorite Sport](#).

Article URL: <http://www.slate.com/id/2203927/>