Cover illustration:
Joe DiMaggio, in a classic batting stroke, unleashes his second home run of the game on June 28, 1939, in Philadelphia, against Connie Mack's Athletics. The powerful New York Yankees hit eight home runs in this game, and five more in the second game of a double header. Both numbers remain in the record books.

Sports in American Life

A History

Richard O. Davies

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11 College Sports in the Modern Era

Writing in 1929, Henry Pritchett of the Carnegie Foundation summarized the dilemma confronting college athletics:

> It takes no tabulation of statistics to prove that the young athlete who gives himself for months, body and soul, to training under a professional coach for a grueling contest, staged to focus the attention of thousands of people, and upon which many thousands of dollars will be staked, will find no time or energy for any serious intellectual effort.[1]

As the Carnegie Report established, big-time programs had already crossed the line from amateurism to a quasi-professional model. In one way or another, institutions found ways to pay their athletes. Journalist John Tunis, in commenting on the Carnegie Report a month after it appeared, aptly summarized the issue:

> The colleges of the country make money out of intercollegiate sports. The colleges take the money and use it. If their presidents really desired to clean up the athletic situation, they could do so and they would find an amazing number of alumni behind them. But alas, in that event no money would be made.

Tunis concluded that the presidents "will probably do nothing" about the problem. "If it did nothing else," he glumly concluded, "the Carnegie Report brought to light the intellectual dishonesty of the American college."[2] With huge stadiums to fill and high-priced coaches to pay, big-time intercollegiate athletes was already well along the road to becoming, as Murray Sperber would later describe the multi-billion-dollar commercial enterprise, "College Sports, Inc."[3]

As the decades went by, the problems that the Carnegie Commission had identified were magnified many times. Walter Byers served as executive director of the

NCAA from the pivotal year of 1951 until 1987. One would assume that this executive would be among the staunchest defenders of the system he helped create. But after his retirement, Byers published a surprising *mea culpa*, confessing his sins and turning upon his former employer with surprising vengeance. Ascribing the treatment of "student-athletes" by the collegiate athletic system to a "neoplantation" mentality, Byers denounced the very programs he had helped build over his long career. Intercollegiate athletics, he said, were "biased against human nature and simple fairness."[4]

On the eve of the Second World War, intercollegiate athletics remained firmly under the control of individual schools and, in some instances, conferences. The guiding principle was "home rule." This meant that each institution was responsible for supervising itself in the matters of recruitment, academic eligibility, and financial aid. The NCAA had no significant enforcement powers and was little more than a national clearing house that established game rules and conducted a few national championships. In 1940, its largest source of income was a $10,000 profit made on the eight-team national basketball tournament. Its second source of income was the annual dues of $25 paid by each institutional member, which numbered about 250.

During the 1930s, big-time football found itself on the defensive. The echoes of the Carnegie Report resonated, and several motion pictures presented football in an unfavorable light. Influential journalists – including John Tunis, Sol Metzger, Francis Wallace, and Paul Gallico – published articles in popular magazines detailing abuses. For example, in 1939 Gallico wrote that college football was "one of the last strongholds of genuine old-fashioned hypocrisy . . . the leader in the field of double-dealing, deception, sham, cant, hambug, and organized hypocrisy."[5]

The Sanity Code Is Scuttled

Between 1939 and 1948, NCAA membership responded to the drumbeat of criticism with an ongoing discussion about the role of intercollegiate athletics and the policies under which it should exist. Finally, in 1948, the so-called Sanity Code was formally adopted. The Code was a noble effort to find a middle ground between pure amateurism and crass professionalism. Under the Code, the NCAA recognized the right of member institutions to provide full tuition (but no living expenses) to athletes, but *only if* they met the same academic standards required of other students and *only if* financial need existed. Athletes could also hold legitimate jobs, on or off campus, to pay for living expenses.[6] The Sanity Code was a notable effort to establish as policy the traditional ideal of amateurism. It also created an enforcement committee with the power to investigate violations and impose sanctions, including to recommend in extreme cases expulsion from the NCAA, which would require a two-thirds vote by the membership.

Not surprisingly, within a year the NCAA found itself in crisis. Many institutions complained long and loud, with the University of Virginia leading the way. They argued that the Sanity Code would devastate their football programs and

they openly defied the NCAA and its policy. The NCAA responded by announcing that seven schools were in violation and recommended expulsion. Most were members of the Southern Conference: Virginia, Virginia Military Institute, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, the University of Maryland, and the Citadel. In addition Boston College, and Villanova were on the list of the "Sinful Seven." Faced with the possibility of the breakup of the association, the NCAA blinked and ingloriously retreated. At its national convention in 1950, the motion failed to get a two-thirds majority, although more than one-half of the members voted in favor. The Sanity Code was then quietly scuttled.

Almost immediately, the NCAA moved in the opposite direction, voting in 1952 to authorize full scholarships based solely on athletic ability, stripping from its policy book any academic achievement or financial need requirement. As the debate on this fundamental shift took place, the wisecracking head coach of Michigan State College, Duffy Daughterty, made it clear that in one way or another coaches would find a way to funnel monies to their players: "Our grants-in-aid are based on academic achievement and need. By academic achievement, we mean the boy can read and write. By need – well, we don't take a boy unless we need him."[7] During the next few years, under its first full-time executive director, former Big Ten associate commissioner Walter Byers, the NCAA tinkered with its new financial-aid policy and in 1956 adopted an "Official Interpretation" that allowed each institution to provide an athlete with educational expenses covering tuition and fees, books, room and board, and $15 a month for incidental living expenses. Byers instructed all members that they were now to refer to the individuals receiving the so-called "full ride athletic scholarship" as "student-athletes."[8]

Creation of a Cartel

During the 1950s, the NCAA was transformed from a weak, ineffectual national coordinating body into a powerful economic cartel. This occurred, not surprisingly, during a time of crisis. Just as the shock of the basketball points-shaving scandals of 1951 were receding from the headlines, a series of academic fraud cases took their place, beginning with expulsion of half the high-ranked West Point football team for academic cheating just before the 1951 season was to begin. Then it was revealed that officials at William and Mary College, which was seeking to attain status as a major football power, had engaged in massive fraud that included forged and altered high-school transcripts, coaches giving grades of "A" to players for physical education courses they did not attend, and the approval of pay slips for campus jobs not done. In 1953, Michigan State, recently admitted to the Big Ten, was hit by revelations that it made an estimated $50,000 of illegal payments from a "slush fund" to football players. On the West Coast the premier Pacific Coast Conference simultaneously had placed four of its eight members – California, UCLA, Southern California, and Washington – on probation for flagrant violations in recruiting; each of the four schools was found to be paying star football players out of secret accounts established from booster donations.[9] This

flurry of negative publicity fueled the demand that the NCAA develop a strong rules-enforcement division.

The NCAA had actually demonstrated its power to discipline a member institution in 1952, when Byers and his executive committee worked behind the scenes with the Southeastern Conference to force a recalcitrant University of Kentucky to cancel its 1952–53 basketball season as a result of player involvement with gamblers over a series of years. This bold move greatly enhanced the prestige and power of the NCAA, or as Byers put it, "it gave a new and needed legitimacy to the NCAA's fledgling effort to police big-time college sports."[10] Big Ten Commissioner Wayne Duke recognized the new power that the NCAA had assumed: "the Kentucky action just indelibly stamped on the public that the NCAA meant business. It was first thing out of the box . . . and it gave the NCAA clout."[11]

The NCAA also sought economic clout by taking control of the sale of rights for televising football games. During the 1940s, the University of Pennsylvania had pioneered in the development of television technology, and its cooperation with the DuMont Laboratories led to a contract with the fledgling (and ill-fated) DuMont network to televise its games. During the late 1940s, Notre Dame had signed an exclusive contract with NBC for national coverage, and Oklahoma, USC, Michigan, and Tulane had made agreements with local stations. Most college sports programs had shied away from television, however, fearing it would cut into ticket sales. By 1951, several conferences had adopted policies prohibiting the televising of any games.

Thus, in a major step toward establishing itself as a cartel, in 1951 the NCAA national convention voted overwhelmingly 161–7 that the association would control the televising of *all* college football games. According to historian Ronald Smith, the NCAA's bold move put it "on its way toward national control . . . and reigning in a future dominant entity."[12] The plan was to permit the national telecast of one game per week, with an occasional set of regional games being offered about once a month. The University of Pennsylvania, with a three-year $850,000 contract in hand, was not about to give up its television income without a fight. Its president, the former youthful Governor of Minnesota and presidential hopeful Harold Stassen, decided not to abide by the NCAA policy, thinking that his position would be supported in federal court under antitrust law (in 1984 his position was affirmed by the US Supreme Court). He also hoped that Notre Dame would persevere with its own ambitious television plans, but its new president, the Reverend Theodore Hesburgh, decided that Notre Dame did not need potential bad publicity and cut a deal with Walter Byers that informally guaranteed Notre Dame at least two television appearances a year in return for canceling its deal with NBC. Stassen soon learned that his adversary was a foe to be reckoned with. The NCAA declared Penn a member "not in good standing" and threatened expulsion; five of Penn's upcoming football opponents informed Stassen that they would not play unless Penn abided by the new NCAA television policy. Stassen surrendered, decided not to take the case to the federal courts, and the Quaker football team fell from its lofty perch as a national power.

The leadership of the NCAA had learned how to wield its power. It established

a policy of offering the highest-bidding network eight national games and five regional games each football season. The NCAA received $1,250,000 in 1955, with the revenues shared among the participating teams and other members of the NCAA, and an unspecified amount being retained by the NCAA to cover its growing operational costs. The value of the rights rose to $3 million by 1960. The NCAA's enforcement division learned that a threat to exclude an institution from appearances on television was a powerful club by which to keep wayward institutions in line.

Emphasis and De-Emphasis

In 1960, college sports stood on the eve of a period of enormous growth. Although much of public scrutiny was directed at major college basketball and football, in fact the NCAA was becoming a large, sprawling, and diverse organization that embraced a wide variety of missions. The great majority of the members of the NCAA were small institutions that fielded a variety of teams with no pretensions of athletic grandeur. In 1973, the NCAA created a three-tiered grouping of schools. In Division III were several hundred small colleges that offered no athletic scholarships. Division II schools were permitted to offer a restricted number of athletic grants-in-aid, while Division I schools could provide a larger number of "full-ride" grants-in-aid.

The main focus of intercollegiate athletics, however, was on big-time football and basketball. Football, even at many institutions with national ambitions, continued to pose a dilemma because of its high costs. Consequently, between 1945 and 1960, more than sixty once-hopeful big-time football schools either dropped the sport altogether or opted to "de-emphasize" it by reducing financial aid and slashing staff and operations budgets. Several institutions had canceled football during the war, and some, such as Mercer University in Georgia, and Gonzaga University in Washington, chose not to revive it. Many schools that had held high football aspirations before the war cut back their programs to affordable proportions. Included in this group were Washington University of St Louis, Western Reserve University, and Carnegie Tech, all of which had once enjoyed their moments in the national pigskin spotlight.

The flurry of canceled programs was reason for concern among football enthusiasts. In part, the trend was a residual effect of the anti-football movement of the 1930s, but the main culprit was the more immediate financial distress caused by falling attendance. A large number of private urban Catholic universities were among those leading the de-emphasis movement. The University of San Francisco stunned the football world when it dropped the sport on the heels of an undefeated, untied, nationally 10th-ranked season in 1951. Despite the heroics of All-American running back Ollie Matson, the Dons nonetheless produced a $75,000 deficit along with their spotless record. The most prominent university to drop football during this period was Georgetown University, which in the late 1930s had won 43 consecutive games. Its president cited football's lack of educational value in an article in the *Saturday Evening Post*, commenting that the sport provided nothing besides public entertainment. Other Catholic institutions followed suit, among them St Bonaventure, Duquesne, Villanova, Fordham, Detroit, Xavier (of Cincinnati), and Marquette.

The most significant change in football occurred ironically on the East Coast on campuses where the sport had originated. One-time football giants Yale, Princeton, and Harvard decided to end any pretensions of competing for national football honors. These fiercely independent private institutions had resisted granting any control over their internal operations to any external body, such as an athletic conference. In 1945, eight elite institutions signed the first Ivy Group Accord, which placed heavy emphasis on unsubsidized football and the maintenance of high academic standards for athletes. But one member of the group, Pennsylvania, continued to aspire to national recognition and in 1948 fielded one of the strongest teams in the nation. Between 1938 and 1948, the Quakers had gone 34–5–5 against Ivy opponents. When the NCAA forced Penn to abandon its lucrative television contract with the DuMont nework, its big-time football aspirations were doomed. By then, the institution was more than ready to de-emphasize football and was welcomed back into the good graces of its Ivy peers.

Between 1952 and 1956, the Ivy Group formalized itself into the Ivy League and instituted a series of reforms aimed directly at the excesses of big-time football. The League's membership included Princeton, Columbia, Yale, Dartmouth, Harvard, Brown, Cornell, and Pennsylvania. For starters, the new league banned a leading symbol of commitment to big-time football – spring practice, which had long been a contentious issue that divided faculty and coaching staffs. Off-campus recruiting was sharply curtailed, and no student could play whose tuition and fees were paid by someone not closely connected to his own family, thereby eliminating a long-standing practice whereby an alumnus or booster "adopted" a potential athlete and paid his expenses. Special admission policies for athletes were abolished. So too were post-season bowl game appearances, training tables, financial subsidies to athletes (although they could compete for academic scholarships), athletic slush funds, cushy on-campus jobs, and clinics for high school coaches (another recruiting subterfuge). Beyond doubt, the Ivy League schools took the position that they no longer had any interest in seeking national football fame. The storied days of Walter Camp were history.

Although many alumni screamed to high heaven, the new Ivy League became a model for the practice of amateur athletics in an academic environment, and within a short time it became the source of alumni pride as healthy rivalries developed on a level field of competition. These eight institutions thus assured themselves that they would not have the ignominy of a football scandal blemishing their reputations, and each set out to develop for their students broad-based athletic programs that were funded within the general institutional budget. The programs were designed to be "independent of won-loss or competitive record" by "approaching athletics as a key part of the student's regular undergraduate experience." Ivy League football teams compete at the Division I-AA level (but do not participate in the national playoffs) while its other teams compete in Division I-A.

Upon occasion, its basketball champions have won NCAA tournament games, with Princeton in 1965 and Pennsylvania in 1979 reaching the Final Four. The Ivy League has remained an eight-school operation, and today it supports competition in more than 30 separate sports for men and women, with many teams excelling and winning national championships in lacrosse, rowing, swimming, tennis, squash, and handball. The Ivy League also prides itself on its "rigorous academic standards" that year in and year out have produced the highest graduation rates of any athletic conference in the country. As other Division I programs opted for a professional model designed to enhance commercial opportunities, the Ivy League became a lonely beacon adhering to values that college administrators and coaches had long talked about but never quite got around to establishing.

Woody and the Bear

With the NCAA established as the central authority, those schools pursuing big-time football established a commercial, professional model of intercollegiate athletics. Over the years, the big-time football schools exerted their power to move the major conferences further and further away from the amateur ideal, leaving the Ivy League increasingly isolated as an anomaly, a curious island of integrity in a rising sea of rampant commercialism, cheating, and hypocrisy. With football producing the great bulk of sports revenue, head football coaches naturally demanded that their needs be met first. Between 1955 and 1965, long-time restrictions on substitutions were removed. This led to the development of specialized defensive and offensive players, accompanied by a host of other "specialists" such as punter, place-kicker, and kick-off and punt returner. Where teams were usually restricted to less than 50 players, coaches now assembled squads reaching 150. Free substitution contributed markedly to a much more exciting, if specialized, type of game. It also meant that football budgets had to be increased substantially. Coaches now routinely signed 30 to 40 new players to grants-in-aid each recruiting season. The size of travel squads increased from 35 to more than 60, all justified by the new imperatives established by free substitution.

Time and again, the NCAA convention acceded to the demands of coaches. In 1972, the NCAA convention voted to permit freshmen to play, a major policy change that most academics deplored because they believed it essential for freshmen to have an opportunity to adjust to college life without having to prepare for and compete in high-pressure games. At the same time, the NCAA annual convention voted to reduce grants-in-aid from a four-year commitment to just one year. This meant that an athlete who was not playing at an acceptable level could be dropped and a new athlete given his grant-in-aid. In 1973, under intense pressure from coaches, the NCAA lowered eligibility requirements for a grant-in-aid to the point that nearly any high-school graduate could meet minimum standards.

High paid coaches were expected to produce winning teams and annual trips to post-season bowl games. They responded by increasing the size of the coaching staffs, demanding the construction of new training facilities, athletic

dormitories, and other amenities. The argument for these enhancements was always that football paid the cost of "non-revenue" sports and were necessary to keep pace with the opposition. In reality, most football programs actually lost money each year and required subsidy from the institution's general fund. Economists who have attempted to make sense of athletic budgets confess that there is no way to determine actual bottom lines. Smith College economist Andrew Zimbalist has examined the issue extensively and concludes that only a handful of, if any, big-time programs actually operate in the black. To balance their budgets, in cooperation with compliant university administrators, athletics program managers shift costs to other university budget lines, tap into campus buildings and grounds budgets to maintain their facilities, and offload salaries to instructional and administrative budgets. Longtime critic Murray Sperber has even argued that the deficits created by athletic programs have negatively impacted academic programs because of stealth transfers of funds from instructional budgets to cover athletic department deficits. One of the unrecognized ironies of commercialized college athletic programs is that they have been able to shield themselves from the Internal Revenue Service by claiming to be non-profit educational programs.[13]

Establishing this model for the major football program as a commercial enterprise were two men who dominated the game from the 1950s until the late 1970s, Woodrow Wayne "Woody" Hayes and Paul "Bear" Bryant. Their programs set the standard that competing schools tried to replicate, thereby driving up the expenses of competitors who sought to stay even. They also became powerful political figures within their home states and their influence extended well beyond their campuses to the entire states of Ohio and Alabama.

The long coaching career of Woody Hayes encompassed the many changes in college football that occurred during the mid-twentieth century. A 1935 graduate of Denison College, Hayes first coached in Ohio high schools, taught social studies, and then served in the US Navy during the Second World War. When he returned from serving in the South Pacific in 1946, he assumed the head-coaching position at his alma mater, and then moved on to Miami University of Ohio in 1949. After producing a 10–1 record and a Salad Bowl upset win over Arizona State in 1950, Hayes was selected as head coach at Ohio State following an emotionally charged, highly publicized search process in which many fans sought to have Paul Brown brought back to campus. Hayes had impressed the search committee with his strong recruiting skills, and was named to replace Wes Fesler, who had produced three consecutive winning seasons, a Big Ten championship, and a Rose Bowl victory, but had committed the unforgivable sin of losing four consecutive times to arch-rival Michigan.[14]

Possessed of a fiery temper and committed to a philosophy of football that emphasized raw physical power and a simplistic play book, Hayes also had a rare touch for recruiting. To be certain, he had the advantage of coaching the only major-college team in talent-rich Ohio, where some 40,000 high school boys played on 800 teams. A continuum of skilled players to the Columbus campus enabled him to field a nationally ranked team every season after his initial 4–3–1 debut. In 1954, the Buckeyes went undefeated and stomped Southern California

in the Rose Bowl. A national championship that year greatly enhanced his status in football-crazed Columbus, and in 1957 he won another national title. His teams became famous for his "three yards and a cloud of dust" offense, in which his bevy of powerful running backs ran a conservative offense behind a massive offensive line. His defenses became known for their punishing, aggressive play, but he perhaps was most famous for his disdain for the forward pass, stating that "three things can go wrong when you pass, and two of them are bad" – an incomplete pass or an interception.

Hayes became the most popular resident of Ohio, much in demand as an entertaining after-dinner speaker, the confidant of Republican governors and senators, appreciated for his knowledge of military history (from which he often drew analogies that he applied to football situations), admired for his inability to accept defeat graciously, and well known for his emotional outbursts on the sidelines. His hard-nosed style of play was reflective of Ohio's hard-working factory workers and small farmers. On fall Saturday afternoons his teams played before 90,000 scarlet-clad fans in the famed "horseshoe" Ohio Stadium that had been erected as a war memorial in 1921, and millions of Ohioans listened in on a state-wide radio network. Hayes became the epitome of the controlling, demanding, domineering coach. He prowled the sidelines in a state of near-constant fury during games, often smashing equipment, turning his rage equally on referees and his own players. Off the field he oversaw an elaborate recruiting network of booster and alumni euphemistically called "the committee."

For more than a century, the Ohio State–Michigan rivalry has been one of the most intense in all of college football. Representing neighboring Midwestern states, the two universities first played in 1897. When Ohio State joined the Western Conference (later renamed the Big Ten) in 1912, the rivalry intensified. Coaches at both schools ultimately kept or lost their jobs based on their record against their rival, always the final game of the regular season. Although Hayes lost his first Michigan game, he proceeded to win 11 of the next 15 games, earning the unquestioning affection of Buckeye fans.

The rivalry grew white-hot in 1969 when Glenn "Bo" Schembechler stunned Hayes by accepting the Wolverines' head-coaching position. Hayes viewed it as a personal betrayal by one of his top students. Often called "Little Woody," Schembechler had played tackle for Hayes at Miami of Ohio, and he was Hayes's offensive-line coach from 1959 through 1963, at which time he returned to Miami as head coach. Schembechler was Hayes's equal when it came to emphasizing the fundamentals of fierce blocking and tackling. He also exhibited the same inner fury and drive, accepting nothing but victory. Pugnacious and defiant, on one notable occasion while a Buckeye assistant, after Hayes, in normal form, angrily tossed a chair across the room, Schembechler casually picked up the chair and threw it back at him. These two friends, both fierce competitors who could not abide defeat, turned the traditional rivalry into a personal no-holds-barred street fight. The stakes were raised even higher when Schembechler did the unthinkable by invading Ohio during recruiting season to pick off some of Ohio's top prospects. Hayes, however, disdained recruiting players from "that state up north" (he was not known to utter the word "Michigan"). Within short order, nearly one-third of Schembechler's squads were comprised of Ohio high school graduates, adding additional spice to the annual November bloodbath. During the ten years that these two men competed against each other, the Big Ten became known as the "Big Two and the Little Eight," as either Michigan or Ohio State won the Big Ten championship each year.

Hayes's frequent, well-publicized public eruptions on the sidelines were an embarrassment to the university – breaking yardstick markers, pushing cameras into the face of photographers, confronting officials at midfield – but tolerant, perhaps fearful, administrators took no action. Winning, the old saying goes, covers a multitude of sins. It was thus fitting that Hayes's famous temper led to a premature end to his coaching career. Near the end of a close game in the 1978 Gator Bowl against Clemson, with the Buckeyes marching to take the lead, Tiger linebacker Charlie Bauman picked off an errant Ohio State pass in front of the Ohio State bench, ensuring Clemson's victory. As Bauman ran out of bounds, Hayes slugged him in the face, an instinctive act that television cameras picked up and repeatedly showed on instant replay. Such an egregious act could not go unpunished, even at Ohio State and even by the now-legendary Woody Hayes. The next day, he was fired by athletic director Hugh Hindman, bringing an abrupt end to his 28-year career at Ohio State. His well-oiled and well-financed football machine had produced a record of 205–61–10, including 13 Big Ten championships, and after his death a main street through campus was named Woody Hayes Drive.

If Woody Hayes was idolized in Ohio, his many peccadillos notwithstanding, Paul "Bear" Bryant was immortalized in Alabama. More than two decades after he retired, head coaches of the Crimson Tide were still compared – and found wanting – to the Bear. Born the eleventh of 12 children to a poor sharecropping family in Fordyce, Arkansas, at the age of 13 young Paul gained his nickname when he accepted a challenge to wrestle a live bear at a carnival for one dollar. He reckoned that he could earn a dollar for a minute's effort as opposed to working 12 hours picking cotton for 50 cents. Bryant found an escape from rural poverty in the midst of the Great Depression when he accepted a football scholarship to attend the University of Alabama. He played end opposite one of the greatest pass receivers ever to play the game, Don Hutson. In 1945, he became head coach at Maryland, but resigned after one year when the president overturned his decision to boot a player off the squad for violating team rules. He moved on to the University of Kentucky, where his teams compiled a 60–23–5 record at a school that had never before enjoyed much gridiron success. Bryant, however, realized that basketball would remain king in bluegrass country, and after eight seasons accepted the head coaching position at Texas A&M. Before the first season in 1954, he took his 111-member squad to a remote camp at Juction, Texas, where he conducted a "brutal boot camp" in searing heat. Sixty players quit the team before it returned to College Station, and the decimated team won but one game. However, he had put his personal stamp on the team and recruits flooded to College Station. In 1956 the Aggies won the Southwest Conference championship with a 9–1 record.[15]

In 1957 Bryant returned to his alma mater to resuscitate the once-proud Alabama program that had fallen on hard times. His initial salary as coach and athletic director was an astronomical $57,000 – Alabama might have been a financially hard-pressed university with bottom-tier faculty salaries, but finding booster support to secure the services of a winning football coach was no problem. Bryant's teams more than satisfied his financial backers. His first team won five games, one more victory than had been won in the three previous seasons, and in 1959, his team went 7–2–2 and ranked 10th in the nation. That team went to a bowl game, beginning a 24-year string of consecutive post-season appearances. But that was only the prelude to a record-setting run. Under Bryant, Alabama won six national championships (1961, 1964, 1965, 1973, 1978, and 1979). Utilizing the support of a large and generous group of alumni and boosters, Bryant had the resources to build state-of-the-art facilities and to out-recruit his Southeastern Conference foes, in-state rival Auburn in particular. His squads included 125 players on grants-in-aid and several dozen other "walk-on" hopefuls. His enormous coaching staff included 17 full-time assistants, supplemented by a cadre of graduate assistants and other support personnel.

In 1963, his career was threatened when the *Saturday Evening Post* published an article alleging that he had conspired with the Athletic Director at the University of Georgia to obtain the game plan of the University of Georgia team prior to the season-opening game. According to the convoluted story, Georgia Athletic Director Wally Butts had been removed from his head football coaching position against his will, and in retaliation sought to sabotage the coach who had replaced him. The alleged scheme that the *Post* reported had Butts, deeply in debt and facing a forced retirement, seeking to assure that the Crimson Tide would cover the points spread of 17 so he could make a killing through a Chicago bookie. The evidence hinged upon allegations made by an Atlanta insurance agent who claimed that while making a long distance telephone call he was somehow patched into a conversation between Butts and Bryant in which he listened for 15 minutes while they discussed the Bulldogs' game plan. Both Butts and Bryant denied these sensational allegations and sued the magazine. At trial in an Atlanta federal court the allegations were not proven and the *Post* was ordered to pay Butts over $400,000 in damages. Bryant proved to be a star witness against the magazine. Shortly thereafter Bryant and the *Post* settled out of court. Former Notre Dame football player, Attorney James Kirby, who observed the trial for the Southeastern Conference, later wrote a book about the case and contended that while the *Post* had acted unprofessionally and that its allegations were weak, nonetheless concluded that important questions about the telephone conversation (which records showed did occur) between Bryant and Butts went unexplored at trial. While stopping short of accusing Bryant of wrongdoing, Kirby nonetheless says that the episode was closed with many key questions left unanswered.[16]

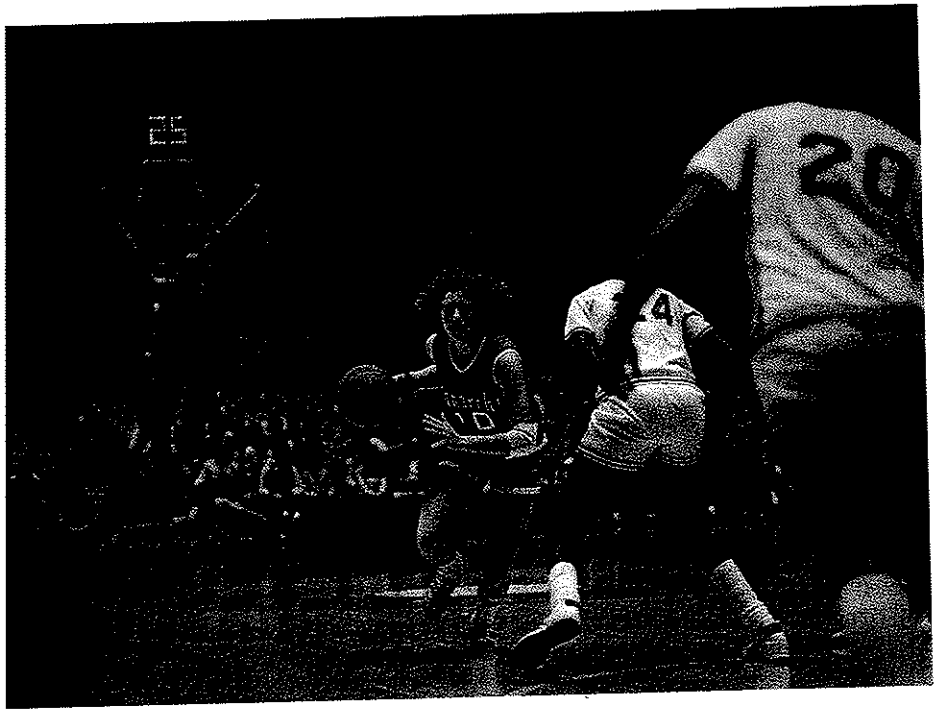
Although this bizarre episode for a time threatened Bryant's career, it was soon forgotten, as the Bear proceeded to win championships. Bryant had long chafed under the "white only" gentlemen's agreement that precluded the recruitment of black players. But working in a state where the rabid segregationist George C. Wallace was governor, Bryant had to bide his time. But when desegregation did occur in Deep South universities, he led the Southeastern Conference in recruiting African American players. By 1973, he had black captains leading his Crimson Tide teams which now numbered 40 percent African American. When Bryant retired he had amassed a career record of 323–85–17, breaking Amos Alonzo Stagg's all-time winning record. He had been named national Coach of the Year three times by Associated Press. After his death in 1983, the NCAA's Coach of the Year award was named in his honor. The weird story of the alleged conspiracy to obtain a rival team's secrets had long since been forgotten, and Bryant's harsh treatment of his Texas A&M players in 1954 became the subject of a warm and fuzzy made-for-television movie in 2002.



Figure 11.1 University of Alabama coach Paul "Bear" Bryant is carried from the field on November 14, 1981, after his record-setting 314th career coaching win against Penn State. At Alabama he took the Crimson Tide to 29 consecutive bowl games and won five national championships. He often said that his entire life was coaching, and he died in January, 1983, just 28 days after he announced his retirement from coaching. © Bettmann/CORBIS.

Deceit and Deception: the NCAA and Gender Equity

In 1972, when Congress enacted its annual Education Act, few persons took notice of an amendment – labeled Title IX – offered by Congresswoman Edith Green of Oregon, which stated, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any



·e 11.2 One of the early ficiaries of Title IX was d Nancy Lieberman. ·n here in 1979 driving rd the basket against ·ns College during \ll-American season the Lady Monarchs of)ominion University. ·ttmann/CORBIS.

refusing to accept competitive athletics as a proper pursuit for teenage women."[19] In 1973, the hierarchy of the AIAW reluctantly agreed to permit athletic grants-in-aid, but with male athletic directors controlling university athletic budgets, the amount of financial aid available to women proved inconsequential.

While women sports administrators argued about philosophical issues, the more pragmatic male-dominated NCAA callously attempted to subvert Title IX. The men controlling intercollegiate athletics viewed Title IX as a serious threat to the economic foundation of their programs. Although Title IX did not specifically mention sports and compliance guidelines had yet to be adopted by the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, the bottom line seemed to indicate that women and men would have to be treated equally. The male athletic establishment viewed Title IX as a major threat. Walter Byers recalled that the AIAW was now pressuring HEW to establish guidelines that stipulated 50 percent of the resources of a college budget devoted to intercollegiate athletics should be allocated to female sports and women's athletics should be operated separately from men's. Their theme was "equal numbers and equal dollars," a position that he and the

thousands of men he represented viewed as completely unacceptable. Suddenly, men's athletic budgets were in play, in particular gargantuan football budgets. Contending that so-called "revenue-producing sports" (i.e. football and basketball) should be exempt from Title IX, Byers derisively dismissed the claim that "football and women's field hockey immediately deserved the same per capita expenditures" as "financial lunacy."[20]

The NCAA leadership developed a three-pronged strategy. One was to exploit the many close connections between coaches and athletic directors and their friends in Congress to overturn Title IX, and failing that, to put a maze of legal roadblocks in the way of implementation. If that failed, the back-up strategy was to take over the women's programs by destroying the AIAW.

The first NCAA move was to support the amendment offered in 1974 by conservative Republican Senator John Tower of Texas, which would have exempted intercollegiate athletics from the purview of Title IX. When that failed in committee, leading football schools launched an extensive lobbying effort in Congress to delay the issuance of compliance guidelines. President Gerald Ford, himself a former All-American center at Michigan, received a barrage of letters from across the land and even granted an interview to coaches Bear Bryant and Barry Switzer of Oklahoma, who urged him (without success) to exempt football from Title IX calculations. An NCAA-hired law firm filed suit in federal court contending that if an athletic program did not receive direct federal aid, then it should be exempt from compliance reviews. The argument was that because athletics were not specifically mentioned in Title IX, HEW had exceeded its rightful authority by applying it to college athletics. The federal district court in Washington, DC, summarily dismissed the case in 1978. Therefore, the opportunistic Walter Byers and NCAA declared war on the AIAW by offering a large range of championships for women at the Division II and III levels in 1981 and in Division I in 1982. Then it used its vast resources to induce AIAW members to switch to the NCAA by including women in its new national basketball television contract and by offering to accept transfers from AIAW-affiliated schools by waiving membership fees. NCAA spokesmen also gently raised the possibility that if schools did not abandon the AIAW, their men's programs might be given special scrutiny by the rules enforcement committee. By 1982, more than 150 AIAW members, primarily those with men's programs affiliated with the NCAA, made the switch. With its financial resources dwindling, the AIAW gambled on a lawsuit against the NCAA, alleging antitrust violations. Legal costs from pursuing the suit depleted the organization's remaining financial reserves. After its case was summarily dismissed in June 1982, the AIAW quietly folded. The NCAA not only had eliminated a financial rival, but one that embraced a different philosophy.

Among women athletic administrators, Linda Estes of the University of New Mexico and Alice Hill of San Diego State, were in the forefront in scuttling the AIAW. Byers praised them for their embrace of the professional-competitive model of the NCAA: "Right or wrong, [they] sought high-level competition, and national exposure for women's college sports. They were committed to the NCAA's philosophy – to the winner belongs the spoils."[21] A different perspective was held by

Peg Burke, a former president of AIAW: "I think it is interesting that an organization that has been so active in fighting equal opportunity for women now wants to offer championships for them," she said in 1980. "This is not the consent of the governed. In certain circumstances involving men and women, lack of consent is classified as rape."[22]

The consolidation of women's and men's athletic programs changed the nature of the struggle, but the battle was far from over. On campuses, women's program administrators were appointed to posts clearly subordinate to the male athletic director, who retained control of budgets. Suddenly many aspiring male coaches found that they could achieve a personal professional goal of becoming a college head coach – of a women's team. During the 1980s, the percentage of women head coaches actually declined by 50 percent because men were appointed to fill vacancies as new women's teams were initiated. A new type of guerrilla warfare raged within athletic departments over a wide range of issues: access to facilities, recruiting budgets, travel budgets (often men went by air, women by van), coaches' salaries, the number of scholarships, and, as in the case of Temple University, even the difference in quality and quantity of game and practice uniforms provided to men's and women's teams. It would not be until the mid-1980s that the first female athletic director – Judith Sweet of the University of San Diego – would be appointed with control over men's programs. As late as 2004, only five women had been appointed to the post of Director of Athletics of Division I programs, the most prominent being Deborah Yow of the University of Maryland, and Barbara Hedges at the University of Washington.

While embittered battles over gender-equity issues were fought on many campuses, the struggle also continued at the federal level. With the NCAA now responsible for women's programs, the organization ironically found itself in the position of attempting to prevent Title IX from being undercut by social conservatives, a 180-degree reversal from its position in the 1970s. The administration of Jimmy Carter had staunchly supported Title IX, but the administration of Ronald Reagan showed scant enthusiasm, and the pace of compliance reviews slowed markedly in the early 1980s. In 1984, the US Supreme Court dropped a bombshell on women's athletics when it agreed with the NCAA's legal position of 1978 in *Grove City College v. Bell*, that Title IX applied *only* to programs receiving direct federal financial aid and that unfunded programs, such as intercollegiate athletics, were exempt even if a university received federal assistance for other programs.

For a time it seemed that *Grove City* had put women's programs back to a pre-1972 status, but momentum for women's programs had been building for more than a decade and would not be stopped by a mere Supreme Court ruling. The grass-roots development of high school and college programs had produced a new outlook among the American public that assured that women's programs would not be scuttled. Budgets for women's programs continued to improve, although the Reagan Administration halted more than 800 compliance reviews and related investigations. Many university presidents, now under intense pressure from women faculty and community leaders, made clear to their athletic departments that long-term plans for achieving compliance with Title IX would continue to be implemented no matter what the courts had ruled. The hiring of many women professionals by the NCAA placed them within that organization's decision-making bureaucracy where they exerted authority. The issue was finally resolved for good in 1988, when Congress passed over President Reagan's veto the Civil Rights Restoration Act, which restored the original intent of Title IX. Any gender discrimination in public schools or higher education, including sports programs, was once again in violation of federal law.[23]

By the early years of the twenty-first century, women's sports had come of age as an integral part of a university athletic program. The pipeline of athletes was surging, as young girls now had many opportunities to perfect their skills prior to entering college. That they had opportunities in sports that were not available to their mothers and grandmothers probably seemed somehow arcane, if not irrelevant to them. They now could develop skills in summer camps, play competitive softball, volleyball, and soccer in organizations and leagues affiliated with national associations, and in junior and senior high school have a wide range of team sports from which to choose. The more individualistic sports – golf, tennis, swimming, track and field, gymnastics – were also available for girls to develop skills and compete. By the time young girls reached junior high school, competent coaching had become available. Competition became as intense as what had long existed among boys, and arduous practice and physical conditioning was no longer considered un-feminine. For exceptional female athletes, like their male counterparts, a "full-ride" university "athletic scholarship" could be the reward.

Title IX at all levels exerted a revolutionary force on American sports. A young girl in today's society has a wide vista of opportunities that her mother did not enjoy. Resistance to women engaging in competitive sports still is occasionally revealed in corners of American society, but the main battle has been fought and gender equity has controlled the field. Mopping-up skirmishes remain to be fought, but a new world of opportunity now exists for females of all ages. If long-term trends are any indication, the gap between funding and opportunities for women as compared to men will continue to narrow, but important social and psychological implications remain. The quest for equality of opportunity for women, however, does not simply entail requiring men to make room for the women. It also means that men have to abandon their once-unique masculine identification. As women continue to improve as athletes, they will narrow the gap between men's and women's performance levels, thereby assuming many of the traits once identified as masculine: strength, agility, speed, skill. These traits, as Susan Cahn explains, will "become human qualities and not those of a particular gender." Noting that historically sports had enabled boys to become men possessed of the qualities needed to assume leadership roles in society, now girls are being presented with the same opportunities. This will ultimately lead, she suggests, to the reformulation of traditional models of masculinity and femininity, undercutting "the social hierarchies that have historically granted men greater authority in political, economic, religious, family, and athletic matters."[24] If Cahn is correct in her analysis, women's expanding role in sports will ultimately lead to a transformation of gender roles and relationships in America.

Criticism of Major College Sports

In 1990, Indiana University professor Murray Sperber published *College Sports, Inc.*, a book that the NCAA and big-time college sports departments wished had never been written. Marshaling a vast array of data to support his view that the NCAA had become a powerful, multibillion-dollar cartel, and that athletic departments had become essentially for-profit economic enterprises that, while located on college campuses, were for all intents and purposes independent, Sperber painted an uncomfortable picture of overpaid coaches and athletic directors; of exploited athletes; of fearful presidents quaking before the powerful network of boosters, donors, and trustees. In particular, he contended that even the most successful athletic programs were "awash in a sea of red ink" and routinely found ways to subvert money from instructional and research budgets to bail out irresponsible spending in athletic programs. A decade later, Sperber returned to the attack in *Beer and Circus*, in which he accused educational leaders of abandoning their responsibilities of corralling out-of-control athletic departments that had continued their wastrel ways, paying themselves outlandish salaries and providing themselves with myriad perks and supplemental income. At the same time, these self-indulgent coaches and athletic directors used their influence within the NCAA to enact and enforce policies that prevented athletes from receiving a portion of the monies they helped generate, even to the point of creating policies that made it more difficult for athletes to avail themselves of a genuine college educational experience.[25]

Sperber's critique, of course, has never connected with the general public or the sports fans whose only interests lie in entertainment and rooting for their favorite teams. Throughout Sperber's informed and revealing books, the words "corruption," "fraud," and "hypocrisy" resonate. During the Watergate scandal of the early 1970s, Indiana University basketball coach Bob Knight commented, "When they get to the bottom of Watergate, they'll find a basketball coach." He spoke with an ironic bite, of course, but he gave expression to the fact that his profession had more than its share of serious ethical lapses. During the half century that the NCAA had maintained its enforcement division, at any one time programs at about 20 percent of Division I institutions were either on probation or under investigation. Over the years, a high percentage of the most prominent big-time colleges were exposed for major violations, many of them so flagrant as to defy the imagination. The reason for this was quite simple – it takes outstanding (so-called "blue chip") athletes to win championships, and it takes several to make a team "number one" and win a national championship. In addressing the issue of the importance of recruiting, back in 1951 the head football coach at Wake Forest, Douglas "Peahead" Walker, laconically noted, "You don't go bear hunting with a switch." The successful football coach at Iowa, Forest Evashevski, told a reporter in 1957 that the only objective in college football was "to go out and win." He confessed,

> At most colleges the pressure is on the coach from the president on down. The coach enters into a tacit understanding with the president that he will recruit good ball players by any means short of larceny. And if the coach doesn't come through with good recruiting, out he goes.[26]

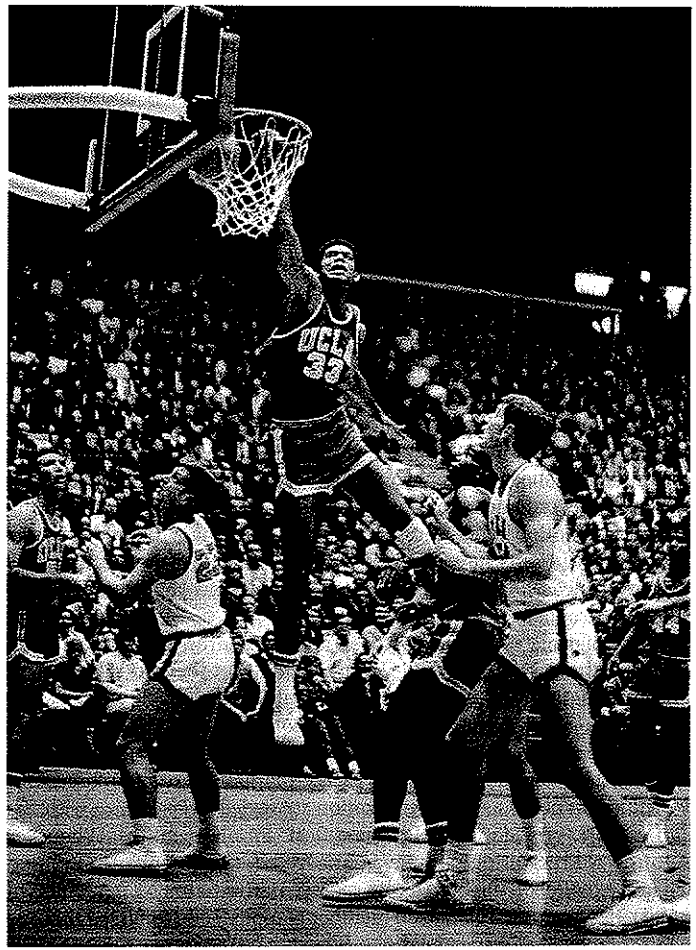


Figure 11.3 Between 1964 and 1975, under Coach John Wooden, the Bruins of UCLA won 10 NCAA national men's basketball championships. One of the many outstanding players who made this feat possible was 7' 2" center Lew Alcindor, shown dunking against Georgia Tech in 1967. Before his senior year he announced his Muslim faith and changed his name to Kareem Abdul-Jabbar. He later played 19 seasons in the NBA with the Milwaukee Bucks and Los Angeles Lakers, setting scoring and rebounding records, and being named the league's Most Valuable Player six times. © Bettmann/CORBIS.

According to many critics, the greatest fraud in the entire college sports enterprise has been the lip service given to "academics." Such commitment is *de riguer* during the interview process when a new coach is hired and during the pat speeches that coaches deliver to alumni and boosters. But the coach knows that athletic graduation rates are of minor consideration in the grand scheme of things. Players have long

been counseled into "snap" courses to maintain eligibility and are required to put in long, grueling hours at conditioning and practice that leave them too exhausted to do serious study. Increased scheduling of midweek games means they miss many classes. Although in recent years the pressures of television upon money-strapped schools to schedule midweek games has produced some criticism, there has been little, if any, criticism of college spring baseball and softball schedules that call for teams to play 50 games or more.

The coach's priorities have to be on winning, and winning consistently. Coaches know that athletic directors, with their eyes constantly on ticket sales, booster donations, post-season invitations with lucrative payoffs, and the number of television appearances, have always been ready to change coaches if the number of losses mounts. With the number of football bowl games reaching 25 during the 1990s, it was not unusual for an athletic director to budget as income a future bowl game, thereby placing enormous pressure upon the coach. Thus, in 2005, it was a most unusual event in intercollegiate sports when Nancy Zimpher, president of the University of Cincinnati, fired the school's most successful men's basketball coach in history, Bob Huggins, specifically for the sorry academic record and criminal rap sheet of his players. In 16 seasons, Huggins had erected an enviable 399–127 record and taken the Bearcats to 14 NCAA post-season tournaments, but his graduation rates were abysmal. As one angry Bearcat booster said about the decision: "Fans have forgiven players for suspensions and arrests because the program was so successful. We knew what kind of players Huggins recruited. But who cared?"[27]

The recruitment of athletes has always been a major source of unethical practices. Many coaches have said in unguarded moments that they find the system degrading and humiliating. But it is an essential skill for the coach who is to be successful in the won–lost column. The history of college recruiting is filled with stories that make a mockery of the goals and standards that the NCAA has set for its programs. Over the years, a once-slender NCAA manual on rules enforcement grew to more than 500 pages as the organization struggled to keep pace with the cheaters in an effort to provide "a level playing field" for all members. Whenever a new twist to the old recruiting game was uncovered, the compliance manual was amended and expanded. Many a faculty representative to the NCAA, charged with overseeing rules compliance on each member campus, has confessed that the rules became so complex that some violations, however "minor" they might be, are almost inevitable. Coaches have long complained that enforcement is highly selective and that the established winning programs are given a free pass, a charge that NCAA executives have denied emphatically. However, even taking into consideration journalist Don Yaeger's tendency toward sensationalism, his book *Undue Process* establishes many inconsistencies in the NCAA's enforcement policies.[28] Because the NCAA is a private entity, its enforcement officials lack the power to subpoena witnesses and must rely on individuals voluntarily testifying. Over the years, many investigations have fizzled due to a lack of willing witnesses. Even when it was able to prove violations, the punishment meted out seems not to have had its intended deterrent effect. The typical punishments that the NCAA imposed on a wayward program proved insufficient to stop cheating – being placed on probation, a reduction in the number of available scholarships, a ban on post-season games, loss of television revenues, limits on recruiting. But it seemed that most everyone seemed to accept them as a price for doing business and the intended embarrassment to a university seldom had significant impact. Besides, the standard response went something like this: "Our opponents are cheating and we simply have to keep up with the competition. We just got caught."

By 1985, the frustration – if not desperation – of NCAA officials with their inability to curb rules transgressions led the organization to hold an "integrity convention." That convention authorized a get-tough policy that included the power to terminate a program if it repeatedly and egregiously engaged in improper conduct. The press dubbed this the "death penalty," which in fact the NCAA had utilized de facto in 1952 when it cooperated with Southeastern Conference officials to force a defiant University of Kentucky to shut down its basketball program for one season. The new penalty called for the suspension of a program for two years if it were demonstrated that a university administration did not exert proper "institutional control" over its athletic program and that a consistent pattern of major wrongdoing were found that included egregious repeat offenses.

It did not take long for the death penalty to be invoked. NCAA investigators uncovered a massive scam at Southern Methodist University that essentially put many football players on salary. Payments ranged from free airline tickets up to cash payments of many thousand dollars a year. The total cost of these illegal payments, funded by wealthy alumni and boosters, probably exceeded $100,000 a year. Not that the university had not been warned – it had been the most punished institution in history of the NCAA, being hit with probations in 1958, 1974, 1976, 1981, and 1985. It was found that not only did the university athletic director make monthly payments to players, but that boosters associated in the recruiting process provided recruits with free apartments, automobiles, and cash. The crucial witness was a Pennsylvania high school recruit who was given $5,000 in return for his signature on a national letter of intent. Incredibly, the monthly payroll payments continued even after the institution was informed that an official NCAA investigation was underway. These payments were specifically authorized by the chairman of SMU's board of trustees, William Clements. Apparently, Clements and other officials believed that, should they halt the illicit payments, angry players would tell all to NCAA investigators. That Clements had served Presidents Nixon and Ford as a deputy Secretary of Defense and had been elected Governor of Texas (and was in the midst of launching another campaign for that office) provides ample evidence of the extent to which university and community leaders would go in order to enjoy the bragging rights of a winning football team.[29]

This church-affiliated university suffered greatly for the sins of its athletic program and boosters. SMU's governing board, including Governor Clements, was fired by an angry Council of Bishops. President Donald Shields resigned, citing health reasons, as did the recently hired football coach and athletic director, who had inherited the mess but attempted to cover it up. However, the coach under whom the payroll system had apparently originated, Ron Meyer, had already

left for the head coaching position of the professional New England Patriots and escaped punishment. To be certain, he denied any knowledge of the payoffs, but his role in the scandal is unquestionable according to NCAA Executive Director Walter Byers, who cites instances where Meyer would show a prospective recruit a $100 bill with the comment, "Young man, this is my calling card." The message was clear – the recruit would soon be contacted by a Mustangs booster with checkbook open. When Meyer was starting his tenure at SMU, one of the leading high school running backs in the country was Eric Dickerson, who lived with his grandmother in a ramshackle one-bedroom house in a small town 60 miles west of Houston. Well before he committed to SMU, high school student Dickerson was seen driving a new $15,000 high-performance automobile, which he claimed his grandmother had purchased for him. According to Byers, it had actually been the gift of a Texas A&M booster; and when Dickerson elected to attend SMU, apparently for a better deal, he kept the car. The snookered Aggie booster could not complain or the NCAA enforcement staff would have paid a visit to College Station.[30]

The entire enforcement mechanism of the NCAA is predicated upon the cooperation of member institutions. It is based upon an informal set of policies and procedures. The NCAA does not have subpoena power and it cannot compel individuals to testify. This raises an intriguing question: what happens when a member institution decides *not* to cooperate with the NCAA enforcement officers? What happens when a coach refuses to cooperate with the NCAA, when he is supported in that defiant stance by the university president, the athletic director, boosters, and trustees, indeed by the entire power structure of a state, including the legislature and state court system? Can he thumb his nose at the enforcement officers and the NCAA? The long-running feud that lasted for almost three decades between the NCAA and high-profile basketball coach Jerry Tarkanian is therefore most instructive.

Ever since he emerged as a talented coach at Long Beach State in the late 1960s, after compiling an enviable won–lost record at two California junior colleges, Tarkanian and the NCAA seemed to be on a collision course. Tarkanian followed a simple formula throughout his 40-year coaching career that saw him win 778 games and have an unequaled winning percentage of 83 percent. He could identify and recruit top talent, often unpolished players overlooked by other programs, and turn them into talented players with his coaching skills. One of the principal reasons many of Tarkanian's recruits were "overlooked," however, was that they often had dubious academic credentials. Tarkanian loved to play the role of "Father Flanagan," giving young men who had faced social and economic obstacles an opportunity to escape their past. His willingness to take a chance on players whom other schools passed over – high academic risks, unpolished but promising athletes, the poor, and especially the inner city black athlete – enhanced his reputation in serious basketball circles. Between 1968 and 1973, he turned a mediocre Long Beach State program into one that enjoyed national rankings and appearances in the 16-team NCAA tournament – much to the irritation of nearby basketball power UCLA. He compiled a 122–20 record at the upstart state college,

and in the process attracted the attention of the NCAA – his supporters contend that UCLA athletic director J. D. Morgan blew the whistle – leading to 23 violations charges and two years of probation for Long Beach.[31]

By the time the penalties were handed down, however, Tarkanian had already departed for Nevada's recently opened state university in Las Vegas. Within a week after his appointment was announced, the NCAA indicated that it was reopening a dormant investigation of the UNLV basketball program. To Tarkanian, this move was clear evidence that he had been targeted by executive director Walter Byers and director of enforcement David Berst. He believed that a comment he made in a Long Beach newspaper in 1973 was responsible. In that article, he charged the NCAA with something that many coaches believed but wisely elected not to say publicly, that the organization followed selective enforcement policies that protected the prestigious programs while punishing those which sought to reach a higher level. He wrote,

> It's a crime that Western Kentucky is placed on probation. The University of Kentucky basketball program breaks more rules in a day than Western Kentucky does in a year. The NCAA just doesn't want to take on the big boys.

The UNLV officials readily said that they were using basketball to give the new institution national visibility. Tarkanian delivered on his promises and turned the UNLV basketball team into a popular Las Vegas extravaganza. The "Runnin' Rebels" provided an exciting high-scoring machine that reached the Final Four of the NCAA tournament in 1976. That same spring, however, the NCAA levied new allegations about improprieties in the UNLV basketball program that had been committed since Tarkanian's arrival. Instead of meekly accepting the informal justice system of the NCAA, however, UNLV and Tarkanian counter-attacked, denying all charges. UNLV Vice President Brock Dixon conducted an in-house investigation and concluded that the evidence presented by David Berst was "clearly in doubt" and that it lacked a "standard of proof and due process" that was "inferior to what we might expect." Dixon told the press, "In almost every factual situation delineated by the NCAA, the university's own investigation has been able to find a substantial body of conflicting evidence."

Tarkanian complained that he was being judged by the same persons who brought the indictment and that the informal disciplinary procedures of the NCAA prevented him from confronting his accusers, thus denying him the right of due process. For the first time in its history, the NCAA's relatively informal enforcement mechanism – an essential part of its power – was being openly challenged. Economists who have studied the behavior of economic cartels have frequently noted that they do not tolerate contrarian behavior, and this was the case in 1977 when the organization slapped UNLV with probation. Most significantly, for the first time in its history, the NCAA took the dramatic step of demanding that the school suspend its head coach for two years without pay. This was indeed an unprecedented penalty. Subsequent developments indicate that Tarkanian had plenty of reason to suspect that he was being singled out for special attention.

Tarkanian – carrying an alliterative nickname that could be interpreted many ways, "Tark the Shark" – responded just as he would as a coach when an opponent threatened to upset the Rebels. He went on attack with the legal and political equivalent of a full-court press, suing the NCAA, launching a media backlash through his journalist friends in Las Vegas, denouncing the NCAA for attacking him with "lies, distortions, and half truths," in a "Star Chamber" environment. He called into play many of the political leaders of Nevada, marshaling key members of the legislature, the Board of Regents and the UNLV administration behind him. A series of lawsuits were filed that stopped the suspension in its tracks, and the prolonged process of litigation that ensued bought him a delay of 20 years. To say that the hierarchy of the NCAA was perturbed by his response is an understatement. In the meantime, Tarkanian's Runnin' Rebels were dominating the Big West Conference, enjoying high national rankings and – much to the dismay of Berst and Byers – appearing every year in the NCAA post-season tournament, making it to the Final Four in 1987 and winning the championship in 1991 with an unprecedented 30-point blow-out victory over Duke in the final game. The following year, the team went undefeated throughout the regular season, led by a bevy of players soon to make their way to the National Basketball Association, but lost to Duke in a major upset in the semi-finals of the Final Four. Tarkanian never served his two-year suspension.

Just at the time Tarkanian's teams crested at the top of the college basketball world, his audacious behavior caught up with him. He had received strong criticism, even in friendly Las Vegas, when it was revealed that he had gone into a California medium security prison to sign one special recruit to a letter of intent, and when one of his prize junior college recruits, Lloyd Daniels, whose academic record was highly suspect, was arrested by an undercover police team while purchasing cocaine in North Las Vegas. Daniels never played for the Rebels, but he did have a modest career as a reserve forward in the NBA. These revelations moved UNLV president Robert Maxson to begin the process of forcing accountability on the coach for the image of his program.

In June 1991, the bottom fell out of Tarkanian's program when the *Las Vegas Review Journal* published front-page pictures of three members of the national championship team sitting in a hot tub drinking beer at the posh Las Vegas home of the infamous sports gambler, Richard "The Fixer" Perry. He had been convicted of fixing harness races in Massachusetts during the 1970s and of bribing Boston College basketball players to shave points in 1984. By 1991, Tarkanian had become engaged in a power struggle with president Maxson, who feared that the Runnin' Rebels were creating an image that undercut his efforts to upgrade the academic reputation of UNLV. With the damning pictures appearing on page one of the city's largest newspaper, Tarkanian's support within the Las Vegas community began to crumble. When he resigned under pressure shortly thereafter, the community was bitterly divided. Maxson was subjected to death threats by angry Rebel boosters and was shortly thereafter forced out of the presidency, whereupon he accepted, ironically, the presidency of Long Beach State.

Tarkanian would go on to a brief 20-game coaching career in the NBA and then return to his alma mater, Fresno State, where many of his players became ensnared in various scrapes with law enforcement. Charges of gamblers influencing the outcome of some Bulldog games were even leveled at the program, but never proven. In 1998, Tarkanian won perhaps the greatest victory in his coaching career when the NCAA decided to settle without admission of guilt a lawsuit that Tarkanian had brought against the organization in 1992 for harassment and fabrication of evidence. The shockingly large settlement of $2.500.000 was the first in the NCAA's history and was viewed by many observers as evidence that Tarkanian had been unfairly treated by the NCAA. "They've never paid money to anybody [before]," he told the press, "I feel vindicated. They beat the hell out of me for twenty-five years."[32] Nonetheless, the renegade image of "Tark the Shark" continued to cloud Tarkanian's image even after he had retired. Perhaps that explains why he was never elected into the Basketball Hall of Fame, despite his lofty won–lost record and many championships that spanned four decades of college coaching.

Television and the Triumph of Commercialized College Sports

Much of college athletics' contemporary problems can be traced to the huge amounts of money available from the sale of television rights for football and basketball. This began innocently enough in 1953, when the NCAA secured control of football television revenues. As the revenue stream increased with the passing of the years, the great majority of NCAA member institutions were pleased with the arrangement because it not only provided a large percentage of monies to the football programs that were featured on the Saturday telecasts, but also distributed some funds to other members. In 1968, the NCAA signed its first national contract for televising the national basketball tournament – a $2 million deal with NBC. The popularity of this event grew steadily during the 1970s, climaxing with the 1979 championship game between Michigan State and Indiana State, which featured two of the most exciting players of the century, Earvin "Magic" Johnson and Larry Bird. The tournament, now labeled "March Madness," filled a void in the annual sports calender, setting off a frenzy of gambling based largely on "bracket" predictions and pools conducted in offices and sports bars. In 1985, the NCAA expanded the field from 32 to 64 teams, overnight doubling the number of games to be televised. The men's basketball tournament became a cash cow for the NCAA, by the mid-1980s funding over 80 percent of its total operations. In 1989, CBS signed a seven-year $1 billion contract for the broadcast rights, and in 2002 the network agreed to an 11-year, $6.2 billion deal.

The basketball windfall came at a propitious time because in 1982 the NCAA lost control of its football television monopoly. When the NCAA established its absolute control in the early 1950s, Notre Dame had reluctantly gone along with the restrictive plan. But Notre Dame's president, Father Theodore Hesburgh, believed that the program was "socialistic" and denied the Fighting Irish millions

of dollars of additional revenue each season. Behind the scenes, Hesburgh worked with like-minded university presidents to return to the "home rule" days that preceded 1952.[33]

In 1982, Father Hesburgh's efforts were rewarded when the presidents of two major football institutions, William Banowsky of the University of Oklahoma and Fred Davison of the University of Georgia, filed suit in federal court in Oklahoma City alleging that the NCAA was operating in a monopolistic fashion by restraining free trade by preventing members from pursuing their own television deals. Federal district judge Juan Burciaga agreed with the presidents, and ruled that the NCAA was in direct violation of antitrust laws by its "presumptuous seizure" and "commandeering" of television rights. The NCAA's television policy and controls on member institutions were "unreasonable, naked restraints on competition" that were motivated by "rank greed" and "a lust for power." In short, the NCAA no longer could control the televising of football games of member institutions. Judge Burciaga's sharply worded decision made it clear that the NCAA was not the educational association it claimed to be, but rather a commercial entity that was operating in the manner of a powerful cartel by fixing prices, restricting access, and restraining the free flow of commerce.[34] In 1984 the US Supreme Court upheld the decision by a 7–2 vote. The NCAA had suffered a major setback.

With the loss of its football television package, the NCAA looked to basketball for its financial future. By the 1990s, it could be reasonably argued that basketball was threatening to surpass football as the premier college sport. "March Madness" – the 64-team post-season tournament – had become the most popular college sports event on television, much more so than post-season bowl games. By 1989, the basketball tournament was drawing more viewers than the 25 bowl games, a trend that continued into the twenty-first century.

Unlike all other sports sponsored by the NCAA, only its top football division of some 115 institutions did not have a national championship playoff system. It was the only sport that had its "national champion" determined by the vote of coaches and/or journalists in two separate polls. On the surface, resistance to a playoff for Division I-A seemed strange, especially when it was estimated that the television rights for a playoff would generate $100 million a year. The stock response given by university presidents for their refusal to create a 16-team – or even eight-team – playoff was that it would adversely affect the academic welfare of student-athletes because it would occur near the time of final examinations. That of course was pure hypocrisy, because the presidents had frequently and routinely supported policies that adversely affected the academic welfare of athletes. And, advocates of a playoff pointed out, the NCAA offered 16-team playoffs for schools playing football at Division I-AA, II and III.

In reality, the big-time football schools were opposed to a playoff for several reasons. Because bowl games are held in warm-climate locations, over the years Southern and Southwestern schools have benefited handsomely from the informal invitation process; close "good-old-boy" relationships developed between athletic directors, coaches, and bowl directors, and these persons were loath to cut those sentimental and often personal ties. In likelihood, a playoff system would soon

kill most bowl games. Further, the bowl payoffs were substantial and 50 teams got to participate. A playoff would reduce that to a small number. Several bowls also were steeped in football tradition. The Big Ten and Pac-Ten had enjoyed their lucrative Rose Bowl rivalry since 1947 and were reluctant to abandon that tradition. Bowl executives, their own livelihoods on the line, became ardent lobbyists against a playoff system whenever the idea reached the NCAA Presidents' Council. The great majority of head coaches, already under enormous pressures to produce winning teams, did not want the additional stress of a playoff system wherein all but one coach would end the season with a loss. It would be much better to have an opportunity to win one of 25 bowl games. It was widely rumored that some university presidents, overshadowed on their own campus by a popular football coach, seemed unwilling to give the coaches an even greater opportunity for publicity that a national playoff would engender.[35]

The national media, however, demanded that a national playoff system be established. This pressure eventually led to the creation of the Bowl Championship Series (BCS). The unstated purpose was to preserve the bowl system and quiet the critics demanding a playoff. The BCS was organized outside the NCAA. It placed the conference commissioners of the six most prestigious football conferences in control. The plan was to use a complicated formula that included won–lost records, "strength of schedule," traditional polls, so-called "quality wins," and computerized "power rankings" to select the top two teams to play in one of the four BCS bowls for the national championship. The three other BCS bowl games would have the pickings from among other top-ranked schools. All six conference champions had to be included in the four games, with the faint possibility being held out to non-BCS programs that they could be included for consideration if a team finished high enough in the BCS-designed computer ratings. Not surprisingly, in the first six years of operation, this did not occur, although after the 2004 season the undefeated and highly ranked University of Utah from the Mountain West Conference was named to play in the Fiesta Bowl where it easily defeated a BCS team, the University of Pittsburgh.

The BCS system was a transparent effort to preserve the traditional bowl system and enable the six self-appointed BCS conferences – Big Ten, Big East, Southeastern, Atlantic Coast, Pac-Ten, and Big Twelve, along with independent Notre Dame – to control large chunks of television revenue outside the purview of the NCAA. The result was widespread dissatisfaction. By effectively excluding several Division I conferences – Western Athletic, Mid-America, Mountain West, and Conference USA – the BCS created a two-tiered pecking order within the ranks of Division I-A football, re-enforcing the perception that the rich were getting much richer while leaving the excluded schools out in the cold. The computer ratings designed to select the top two teams proved to be a major joke. The two teams selected to square off for the national championship sometimes conflicted with the national polls, thereby angering fans of those teams overlooked. Each year controversy reigned when the computer spit out its final numbers. Although the teams were determined by a previously adopted statistical model, the computer-generated results revealed serious

oversights on the part of the human beings who created the rating formula. Each year, the formula was revised to respond to the most recent glitches and criticisms, indicating that the entire concept had inherent flaws that could not be solved. As the BCS encountered continued criticism from many quarters, the likelihood of some form of national playoff system for Division I-A being sponsored by the NCAA seemed to increase each year, but its proponents realized that the major obstacle presented by the BCS schools had to somehow be circumvented.

The Knight Commission Report

In 1989, the Knight Foundation funded an extensive examination of the state of big-time college athletics. The Knight Commission was reminiscent of the Carnegie Commission of 1929 and its findings were hauntingly similar; so too was its impact on changing the culture of major college athletics – negligible.[36] The commission's concerns were aptly expressed by *Time* magazine at the time of its creation: "an obsession with winning and moneymaking that is pervading the noblest ideals of both sports and education in America." The Commission's report, issued in 1991, was replete with indignation and frustration over the debasement of higher education by athletic departments. More than 50 percent of the Division I programs had been sanctioned or put on probation during the 1980s, and Southern Methodist had suffered the ignominy of having its football program shut down for two seasons. The news media produced a never-ending barrage of negative publicity about tutors taking examinations and writing papers for athletes, avoidance of standardized admissions requirements, widespread criminal acts committed by male athletes, often against women, illegal payments to players, unethical and even bizarre behavior by coaches, and embarrassingly low graduation rates (especially among football and men's basketball squads). A random survey of former and current professional football players indicated that one-third of them had received illicit payments while in college, and most significant, that they saw nothing wrong with that fact.

The commission identified the monies generated by television broadcasting contracts as the main culprit because these relationships "moved colleges and universities into the entertainment business in a much bigger way" that attracted a primary viewing audience not associated with the campus or its alumni – "people who valued winning more than they did the universities' underlying purposes." Thus "the thrill of victory, sports as spectacle, sports for gambling – these were their lodestones." The solution, the Commission concluded, rested not with the NCAA because it was a willing partner in maintaining the status quo, but with campus presidents who were "directed toward academic integrity, financial integrity, and independent certification."

A cursory examination of the names of the members of the Knight Commission, however, indicated that these self-appointed reformers had been major players on their campuses in helping to create or at least to permit the existence of the problems they now decried. Their reform recommendations, tightly wrapped in lofty academic language, merely sought to shift some control of sports programs away from the athletic departments to central administration, not to diminish the size of the programs or return to a truly amateur system. Although written in compelling language, the report's recommendations would have done little to change the underlying assumptions or *modus operandi* of intercollegiate athletics. To the issue that critics of college athletics have frequently raised, that the athletes did not share in the vast pool of revenues they helped generate, the Knight Commission was strangely mute. As one critical book by several prominent economists concluded, "Until this is done, the rest of the so-called reform movement can be seen for what it is: a bunch of people shedding crocodile tears for the young men and women on the playing field."[37]

At the time the Knight Commission issued its initial report, Bo Schembechler, former coach and athletic director at the University of Michigan, derisively dismissed the report with the comment that while the reforms would attract a great deal of initial attention, "by the turn of the century, things will return to their normal state. The hubbub will pass, as will the so-called reformers." His cynical comment was, of course, absolutely correct. When the Commission reassembled on its 10th anniversary in 2001 to assess its impact, it had to conclude that nothing had changed for the good, that "the problems of big-time college sports have grown rather than diminished." Academic dishonesty had produced several high-profile scandals, the money being spent on athletics programs had greatly accelerated as institutions increased stadium seating capacities, added luxurious boxes, built enormous basketball arenas and indoor football practice facilities, and sought to attract recruits with ever-more lavish locker rooms, study areas, weight-training rooms, and athletic "halls of fame" that proclaimed the glories of past athletic triumphs – a sure stop during every recruit's visit to campus.

Perhaps most egregious was the fact that salaries for high-profile coaches, always a problem, had now escalated out of all proportion, with 30 coaches making more than one million dollars a year, and twice that number approaching seven-figure incomes (in 2004, in the wake of winning the national championship, Louisiana State University head football coach Lou Saban signed a contract calling for $2.7 million a year, making him, at least for one season, the champion of the salary race). All of this, the Commission intoned, meant that it had found vast "evidence of the widening chasm between higher education's ideals and big-time college sports." The problem was "money-madness." Drawing upon the ideas of long-time critic Murray Sperber, the Commission concluded, "What we have now is a separate culture of performers and trainers, there to provide bread and circuses but otherwise unconnected to the institution that supports them." The reassembled Knight Commission, in reality, held out little hope for substantive reform in the years to come.

At the heart of the problem, the Commission gently conceded, was that the NCAA was incapable of living up to its written role statement of maintaining intercollegiate athletics as "an integral part of the educational program, and the athlete as an integral part of the student body, and to return a clear line of demarcation

between intercollegiate athletics and professional sports." The 2001 interim report concluded that "its [NCAA's] dual mission of keeping sports clean while generating millions of dollars in broadcasting revenue for member institutions creates a near-irreconcilable conflict."[38] The two reports, separated by 10 years, issued by the Knight Commission were but many in a long line of well-intentioned critiques that have fallen off of the shoulders of those in charge of America's institutions of higher education like so much water off a duck.

From the Carnegie Commission to the Sanity Code to the Knight Commission, and with library shelves stocked full of books and articles providing a mountain of compelling documentation of the same essential story of greed and chicanery, reform-minded individuals could hold out little hope for the future. When it comes to big-time intercollegiate sports, the more things change, it seems, the more they remain the same.

12 Play for Pay

Professional sports came of age with television. Prior to the age of television only professional baseball had gained widespread acceptance with the American sports fan. Ironically it would be television that would undercut "America's Pastime" to the point where its popularity fell behind professional football and was seriously challenged by NASCAR as the nation's primary spectator sport. It was also challenged, but never surpassed, by professional basketball during the 1980s and the 1990s, and even for a time hockey enthusiasts thought that with nationwide expansion their sport would also flourish. Those hopes were never realized, as hockey never caught on outside of Canada and a few Northeastern American cities. The story of professional sports is much more than the games played, because they became enmeshed in a continuum of labor disputes and aggravating strikes, the movement of franchises from city to city by owners seeking sweeter financial deals, and endless jousting with television networks for extended coverage and higher broadcasting rights. Although the sports fans focused on game scores and championships won and lost, those running the professional teams were businessmen making hard-headed business decisions.

A Tale of Two (Football) Cities

Cleveland is a hard-nosed football town. Its population is largely descended from the immigrants who came to work in its bustling mills, foundries, wharves, factories, and refineries during the two great human migrations out of Eastern Europe and the rural American South that transformed the United States between the Civil War and the Second World War. From the moment the Cleveland Browns played their first games in the new All-American Football Conference in 1946,

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