

Football playoff system discussed

By Tim Pearson
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Nebraska Athletic Director Bill Byrne has heard enough about proposals to institute a Division I-A football playoff.

"I wish we would quit talking about this," Byrne said. "The reason is every time we talk about it publicly, a sponsor gets nervous, and thinks their bowl is not going to make as much money."

The NCAA President's Commission last week heard a proposal from Nike and Creative Artists Agency — based in Hollywood — to expand the current football season to a seven-game playoff among eight teams. Nike and Creative Artists said the proposal would raise \$100 million and not affect the current bowl system.

A playoff would require the approval of a majority of the 107 Division I-A schools at the annual NCAA convention in January. But the commission declined to put the question on the January ballot.

Byrne said he was pleased with the commission's decision.

"I'm glad the president's commission did not bring it forward," he said. "The reason is that I support the current bowl format."

Byrne said he did not think the playoff proposal was a serious issue.

"Only the media makes it one," he said. "I think the athletic directors have pretty much come to the conclusion that we will only support this if there is a whole bunch of new dollars and it does not affect the bowls."

"The bowl system has worked pretty well for 70 years."

“**Quite frankly, it is just the financial woes that are stripping football of its integrity. If they make any more cuts, college football will not be the same.**”

—McCartney
Colorado coach

Sponsors of a playoff would have to be willing to put money up front, Byrne said, if he was to support their proposals.

"We would consider that if the money was guaranteed," he said. "The bowls do that."

But Byrne said talk of a playoff could destabilize the current arrangements Division I-A teams have with bowls and their sponsors.

"I think it could conceivably be harmful to the current bowl system," he said.

But not everyone in the Big Eight Conference has heard enough talk about a football playoff.

Colorado football coach Bill McCartney said he had once opposed a playoff for Division I-A football, but had changed his mind this year because of the financial considerations.

"I've shifted gears there and I'm now in favor of a playoff," he said. "For the most part I've been on the other side of the spectrum on this thing, but now I support a playoff."

If a playoff is not instituted, McCartney said, college football can-

not remain in its present form.

"Quite frankly, it is just the financial woes that are stripping football of its integrity," he said. "If they make any more cuts, college football will not be the same."

"In light of that, I see (a playoff) as a viable solution."

McCartney said he thought college football had reached a point where it was as lucrative as basketball. He said he thought a football playoff could generate as much attention as the Final Four does for basketball each year.

"Ultimately, what I would like to see, is schools divided into North, South, East and West regions," he said. "Each area would produce a champion and there's our final four."

Until such a presentation could be worked out, McCartney said he supported the plan presented to the president's commission for an eight-team playoff format.

Bill Snyder, football coach at Kansas State University, said he still had not made up his mind on whether he supported a playoff.

"I'm in favor of further study," he said. "Bowls obviously have money guaranteed to us."

"We'd want to make sure the money is guaranteed."

Snyder said he thought the president's commission had declined to put the playoff proposal on the NCAA's January ballot because of concern about the bowl's tradition as well as their sponsors.

"We're slow to let go of (tradition)," he said. "We don't want to scare sponsors away from the bowls."

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time the intercollegiate team was practicing."

Papik said if a willful attempt was proven, UNL would have to take further steps.

"If there was, we need to self-report, and in all probability the violation would be classified as secondary and what we would need to do is assure them we have a procedure in place so that there would not be a recurrence," he said.

Papik said he hoped the investigation would be completed in the near future.

"I assume this investigation and report will take a couple weeks," he said. "My hope will be that Rick

(Walton) will cooperate with the investigation."

Allen said the problem with practices being held at the same time occurred because of communication problems.

“**People are going to say that Nebraska is cheating and we aren't cheating. If that's what they think cheating is, then it's out of control.**”

—Allen
NU Men's Gymnastics Coach

"(Walton) was 50 percent of the problem because he never ran his

practices when they were supposed to run," Allen said. "It comes down to there was a communications gap between Rick, myself and the Nebraska School of Gymnastics."

Allen denied that he had pressured anyone to have Walton fired.

"That's just a flagrant lie," he said. "(Walton) has really been exaggerating everything."

"I'd say anytime you turn in the school you were with is a bad deal," he said. "What makes it worse is when you stretch the truth like that. There is just no foundation for what he says."

Allen said he did not think the allegations would hurt Nebraska's gymnastics program.

"It shouldn't have any effect on it," he said. "I know it's sure not going to bring me down."

Clinton's mother to visit Ak-Sar-Ben

From Staff and Wire Reports

Nebraskans spending a day at Ak-Sar-Ben July 31 will be placing bets along with Virginia Kelley, President Clinton's mother.

Linda Grasso, executive marketing director for Ak-Sar-Ben, said she had been contacting Mrs. Kelley since March in an attempt to bring her to Omaha. Grasso said part of her efforts involved a trip to Oaklawn, the track in Kelly's home of Hot Springs, Ark.

One attraction for Kelley, Grasso said, was her friend Jack

VanBerg. Grasso described VanBerg as one of Nebraska's best known owners.

"He trains throughout the United States," she said. "He encouraged Mrs. Kelley to come as well."

Kelley will present the Cornhusker Handicap Cup to the winner of the \$125,000 race. She will also have dinner with friends of hers in the racing industry, Grasso said.

Grasso said she was not certain were Kelley would sit when she visited.

"I'll leave that up to her," she said. "I don't know where she will want to

sit.

"I assume it will be in the clubhouse."

Ak-Sar-Ben will hold a home run contest with prizes awarded for the longest shots. Grasso said all softball players in Omaha are invited to participate. Lottery tickets will also be sold for a free baseball weekend in Chicago.

Grasso said Ak-Sar-Ben officials were looking forward to hosting the president's mother for the Cornhusker Handicap Cup.

"We're thrilled she's coming," she said. "It's just a big cup."



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