

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE BOWLS**

### **Why are there so many bowls?**

Many reasons. First, bowls are popular for host communities. Even with 35 current bowls, more communities have expressed interest in hosting a game. One reason, despite what some in the media would have you believe, is that bowl games are more popular than ever with record overall attendance and TV viewer ship. Of course the newer bowls don't expect to be compared with the Rose Bowl as they host teams ranked considerably lower and are typically played in smaller stadiums, however conferences want a large number of bowls to provide opportunities for more schools and players to participate in the bowls and receive the benefits that brings to their schools -- Benefits that go far beyond the financials. The NCAA certifies the bowls each year and approves applications for new bowls who meet a set of established criteria.

### **Who makes money on the bowls?**

Mainly the vast majority of the Division I-A universities. Most of the bowls are non-profit 501C3 organizations setup by the host communities to manage and promote the bowls, which of course benefit these communities through economic impact and exposure. However, financially the bowls are setup to primarily benefit the universities that participate in the game and their conference partners. Most conferences divide any revenues over typical expenses of attending the bowl with all the other schools in their respective conference. In this way even a program that goes winless can reap a share of the bowl revenue generated by that schools conference. In some conferences that can be millions for each school. Therefore, not only do the 70 teams playing in bowls receive money but so can dozens of other teams that do not even participate. In addition, the BCS provides millions of dollars each year to be divided by each of the Non-BCS conferences and additional funds to Division IAA members, something that was never done prior to the formation of the BCS. This year the bowl system will distribute about \$260 million.

### **Why not a playoff in Division I-A college football?**

College football is unique in at least two major ways: It has a post-season that allows participation by more than half of its teams and it has the most important regular season of any college sport.

There are 35 college bowls that allow participation by 70 teams or 58% of the schools, provide opportunities for 7,000 student-athletes and crown 35 bowl champions. These players travel to interesting venues, take part in many unique experiences, and are treated as if they are all national champions. Coaches get to work with their players for an extra two to five weeks, which pays dividends for their young players. Universities have a focal point to rally their fans, alumni and boosters to build on their relationship with their favorite school. They also receive national exposure for their program and institution. Fans get to "vacation" with their favorite team in a fun and often unique destination. Those teams who win their bowl also have a springboard to take into the next season as they encourage more donations, season tickets, and other revenue and support areas.

With a playoff, virtually all of this is lost for all but a few teams. That's because the bowls would disappear. Even with a 16 team playoff you would thus eliminate 54 teams participation. Games would be played on campus as fans would not travel in necessary numbers to multiple locations. Teams would treat it like a typical road game, though at a neutral site, flying in the day before instead of a week prior. Any gulf between the haves and have-nots would just expand as only the top teams would receive any benefit beyond financial (provided the revenues were shared equally).

In addition, and maybe even more important to the overall game, the regular season would be undermined. A loss to an underdog or early season loss to a rival would simply result in a lower seeding in the tournament. You could afford to lose a couple games and still win the national title as long as you can make the playoffs, because like college basketball, the real season is the tournament. Everything prior is just positioning. Just get to the party then run off 3-4 games and your national champs.

Today, EVERY game is important if you want to win the national title. Games in September can determine whether you have a shot. It intensifies every Saturday throughout the regular season, which in turn affects everything from ticket sales to TV revenue for these games. In essence, Division IA does have a playoff, it's called the regular season!

There are other reasons too depending on who you talk too: Crossing the line on commercialism, taxing the players to play more games (including those looking at potential NFL contracts), class schedules (though touted by playoff proponents as everybody's concern because it's an easy target it is one of the lesser reasons).

In fact a vast majority of college presidents, athletic directors and coaches are AGAINST a playoff!

### **Can't you have a playoff using the bowls?**

This is where playoff proponents like to try to have their cake and eat it too by saying we can keep the bowls AND have a playoff and nobody gets hurt. Wrong! Fans will not travel to three, four or even five bowls in different locations in the numbers they do today. Could you afford to do that and get that much time off? Unlike basketball teams which typically travel less than 1,000 fans each to early round NCAA tournament sites, football teams typically bring 10,000 - 30,000 fans each to bowls. You couldn't go to Tampa one week, then Phoenix the next and Miami the next... and you certainly wouldn't spend 4-5 days there. The teams too would limit travel to a day or two in each location, not the full week they currently spend. There would be no special experiences for them, just a game played at a neutral site. Indeed the schools would want to save the costs associated with so much travel. And without the fans, and teams flying in and out, there would be no incentive for host communities to want to incur the work and expense of the games.

A playoff would need to follow the NFL and every other major professional sport, along with Division IAA football, and play the games on campus. This would also allow the host schools to reap more revenues, even if shared, that come with another home game.

### **What about a playoff after the bowls?**

If you have a three game playoff, or even a "plus one" after the bowls you have started down a very slippery slope. First, most attention, even more than today, will be focused on the playoff and away from the bowls. The bowls will become like the NIT compared to March Madness. And just as today you will have problems determining who should play in the games and who don't (even teams left out of the 65 team NCAA basketball tourney complain). Most likely a four team/ three game playoff will quickly expand into an eight or sixteen team playoff and the bowl system will become extinct meaning only a fraction of the schools participating (and benefiting) that you have today. Also, how do you determine which team plays who in the semi-finals? For instance, what if you have three undefeated teams and one team that's 9-2. You could say the No 1 team gets to play them however

isn't the argument over who is really No. 1? You would still have to have a "BCS Ranking" type system in place to determine who gets in and who is seeded where.

The other argument is that it is not always justifiable. Even playing one game. In 2002-03 we had two undefeated teams, Miami and Ohio State. They played for the title. It happened again in 2005-06 with Texas and USC. In the same scenario why should they have to play an extra game against teams with losses to earn the right to play each other? There is never a perfect system that will fit all situations every year. And in the meantime we would have destroyed the bowl system and lessened the importance of the regular season.

