

## FWAA writing contest winners

The results of the FWAA's annual Best Writing Contest, which is sponsored by Insight, are listed below. All winners will be recognized at the FWAA's annual Awards Breakfast on Jan. 4 at the

Rose Bowl media hotel. Places one through three will receive certificates and cash prizes. First-place winners also receive plaques.



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### Inside this issue:

President's column 2

Column winner: Stuart Mandel 3

Enterprise winner: Curtis Eichelberger 4

Features winner: John Henderson 7

Game, immediate deadline winner: Jeff Shain 10

Game, loose deadline winner: George Schroeder 12

#### GAME

**First place:** Jeff Shain, *The Miami Herald*

**Second place:** Brian Landman, *St. Petersburg Times*

**Third place:** Dennis Dodd, *SportsLine.com*

**Honorable mention:** Ryan Wood, *Lawrence Journal-World*; Teddy Greenstein, *Chicago Tribune*; Ken Davis, *The Hartford Courant*

#### LOOSE DEADLINE

**First place:** George Schroeder, *The Oklahoman*

**Second place:** Ted Lewis, *New Orleans Times-Picayune*

**Third place:** Vahe Gregorian, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*

**Honorable mention:** Brett McMurphy, *Tampa Tribune*

#### FEATURE

**First place:** John Henderson, *Denver Post*

**Second place:** Craig Hill, *The Tacoma News Tribune*

**Third place:** Gene Wojciechowski, *ESPN The Magazine*

**Honorable mention:** Dennis Dodd, *SportsLine.com*; George Schroeder, *The Oklahoman*

#### COLUMN

**First place:** Stewart Mandel, *SI.com*

**Second place:** John Canzano, *The Oregonian*

**Third place:** Peter Kerasotis, *Florida Today*

**Honorable mention:** Matt Hayes, *The Sporting News*; Tommy Hicks, *Mobile Register*

#### ENTERPRISE

**First place:** Curtis Eichelberger, *Bloomberg News*

**Second place:** Jeff Shain, *The Miami Herald*

**Third place:** Steve Wieberg, *USA Today*

- President  
**Alan Schmadtke**  
*Orlando Sentinel*
- First Vice President  
**Dennis Dodd**  
*CBS SportsLine*
- Second Vice President  
**Mike Griffith**  
*Knoxville News-Sentinel*
- Executive Director  
**Steve Richardson**  
*Dallas Morning News*
- 2004 Directors**
- Jack Bogaczyk**  
*Charleston Daily Mail*
- Al Featherston**  
*Freelance*
- Paul Gattis**  
*The Huntsville Times*
- Tim Griffin**  
*San Antonio Express-News*
- Chad Hartley**  
*Reno Gazette Journal*
- Dave Jones**  
*The Patriot-News*
- Todd Jones**  
*Columbus Dispatch*
- Rich Kaipust**  
*Omaha World-Herald*
- Steve Kiggins**  
*Casper Star-Tribune*
- Brian Koonz**  
*Danbury News-Times*
- Ted Lewis**  
*NO Times-Picayune*
- Joseph Person**  
*The State*
- Damien Pierce**  
*Fort Worth Star-Telegram*
- Chip Scoggins**  
*Minneapolis Star-Tribune*
- Kalani Simpson**  
*Honolulu Star-Bulletin*
- Bob Thomas**  
*Florida Times-Union*
- Scott Wolf**  
*Los Angeles Daily News*
- Ex-officio  
**Bob Burda**  
*Big 12/BCS liaison*  
**Jon Jackson**  
*Duke/CoSIDA.*

# President's column



**ALAN  
SCHMADTKE**

Is your travel bag lighter? Is your bookcase or shelf roomier?

Or, are you flipping through a media guide trying to find a record or a piece of history that's no longer there?

This is big-time college football's new media guide world, one whose ceiling is 208 pages and load-

ed with coach's favorite news. It's a world the FWA has promised to watch closely in 2005.

Following a proposal forwarded by the Atlantic Coast Conference, citing cost concerns, the NCAA earlier this year put a page limit to media guides in all sports. Also included in the limits are conference media guides, something that was cause for summer concern in 12-team leagues like the Big 12 and Southeastern conferences.

Within weeks after the guidelines were announced, the FWA randomly sampled the opinions from sports information directors of one-fourth of last year's 117 I-A football members.

There was no consensus. A handful of SIDs are livid. As you might imagine, these SIDs work at schools with healthy budgets. Most take great pride to produce guides recognized and hailed by designers and by media members.

On the other side, a few other SIDs deliver polite applause to the NCAA, saying it was about time some of the guides' extravagance was curtailed.

As always, there's a middle ground. More than a few SIDs find the new guidelines irrelevant to their work, given that their guides were already shorter than 208 pages or needed only slight trimming to get down to 208.

Views are also mixed among writers in the FWA. Some members are angered the NCAA is affecting our daily work lives. Others, ever weary of drag-

ging heavy guides on road trips, don't mind the NCAA's actions.

For sports information departments used to having books 300 pages or bigger, alternatives were sought. One school incorporated a folder-type pouch on the inside cover of its 2005 guide, a place where its game-day supplement can be tucked away quickly for short- or long-term use.

Others plan for stapled or clipped history or records sections to be made available through a Web site, e-mail distribution or as a game-day handout.

Our posture, which was stated to both the NCAA and to CoSIDA, is that we will monitor the guides. That process began as soon as the guides were released in late July. It will continue as FWA members go through guides with greater purpose during the season. By season's end, we should have a pretty good handle on how functional a 208-page guide is — or can be.

We also want to see how well the supplements work. Part of the NCAA's new guidelines is that the supplements cannot be made available to recruits. This is part of the legislation that has the FWA concerned.

If the supplements can be given to the media but can't be given to recruits, it stands to reason media guides will serve more as a tool for recruiting instead of one for helping the media get its job done. And if that's the case — if coaches end up directing SIDs to ditch the bulky records section of the guide, say, in favor of 10 pages of photos of new and proposed facilities upgrades — that is, in NCAA parlance, an unfortunate, unintended consequence.

Finally, a warning: This issue is not going away. Some members of the NCAA's Division I Management Council, with CDs and .pdfs in mind, are already thinking of the day they can get rid of printed media guides altogether.

Before that happens, I ask that the management council show up for a meeting with all its study material and paperwork scanned or saved into laptops. Let's see how they like navigating their computer files on deadline.

# Columns: Stuart Mandel

Comment of the judge, Mickey Spagnola: This is what we're looking for in a column, strong opinion. This writer had something to say, and did a nice job of backing up his opinion with well researched facts. And the column flowed, as if he was simply talking to me, his reader. Really, really nice job. Just hope the Ohio State president listened.

*"Successful academic reform ... requires presidential leadership. There are strong forces driving athletics programs toward better and better athletics performance. That is understandable and good: athletics is about winning. But it is essential that the response to these forces be made in a wider context of the mission of universities and colleges, which first and foremost are academic institutions.*

*"The champion for this mission must be the university president ..."*

— NCAA president Myles Brand, State of the NCAA speech, Jan. 11, 2004

**By STEWART MANDEL**  
**SI.com**

Question for Dr. Karen Holbrook, president of The Ohio State University, in light of this week's ESPN the Magazine report about alleged improprieties involving Maurice Clarett and the Buckeyes' football program: When will enough be enough? When will you heed Brand's directive, step in and do something about an athletic department that continues to bring more shame and embarrassment to your otherwise reputable university than any glory it may have achieved on the playing field?

Whether or not you believe Clarett's tale of cash-wielding boosters and free-wheeling car dealers -- the guy's credibility is more than a little suspect -- I can only presume that someone like you, Dr. Holbrook, who's devoted her life to the pursuit of higher learning, would be more incensed by some of ESPN's other findings.

In addition to Clarett, four other former players describe being steered by academic advisers to the easiest possible courses with the football-friendliest professors. One, ex-cornerback Curtis Crosby, left OSU in '02 and tried transferring to Grambling only to find out half his credits, which included courses called Officiating Basketball and Officiating Tennis, would be denied. "What are they doing up there at Ohio State?" he says a Grambling adviser asked him. Former running back Sammy Maldonado showed up at Maryland in '02 with a transcript that included four credits for playing football, three for Issues Affecting Student Athletes, 10 for remedial reading, 10 for remedial math and three for Jim Tressel's Coaching Football class.

Tressel is teaching his players in a football coaching

## STEWART MANDEL —

**SI.com**

**Age:** 29

**College:** Northwestern (1998)

**Background:** Has worked at SI.com (formerly CNNSI.com) since 1999, first as the college sports producer, then, since 2002, as the lead college sports columnist. Mandel also is a regular contributor to *Sports Illustrated* and previously worked at *ABC Sports Online* and interned at *ESPN The Magazine* and the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. Originally from Cincinnati, Mandel now lives in New York City.



class? Are you familiar with Jim Harrick Jr., Dr. Holbrook? I'm guessing you are, considering you came to OSU in '02 ... from Georgia.

Now, if these allegations were the only dirty laundry involving Ohio State athletics recently, I suppose you could get away with having your athletic director, Andy Geiger, dismiss Clarett as a liar, launch a harmless little probe of the academic stuff and call it a day. But Dr. Holbrook, this is the same athletic department in which the following has occurred:

- The men's basketball program is under investigation by the NCAA for major rules violations, including head coach Jim O'Brien giving a recruit \$6,000 (to which he admitted and was subsequently fired). Amongst the other allegations: Boosters lavishing former player Boban Savovic with gifts, including air fare to Hawaii (the booster in question, Kim Roslovic, admitted to such in a deposition) and professors changing Savovic's grades to keep him eligible.

- Fourteen football players have been arrested since '01. Several of the charges were for petty crimes, but others included assault, felony drug abuse, possession of a concealed weapon, theft and lying to police.

- Several current and former faculty members have alleged special treatment of athletes. "They're told exactly which courses are easy. They get every possible break," Marilyn Blackwell, professor of Germanic languages, told *The Associated Press*. The school conducted an investigation last December and found no instances of wrongdoing, prompting you, Dr. Holbrook, to declare, "We have no systematic problems in the way we work with our student-athletes."

If that's the case, why are we now hearing more of the same, only this time from the players themselves?

*(Continued on page 11)*

# Enterprise: Curtis Eichelberger

*Comment of the judge, Shawna Seed: Excellent use of public records to explore a little-known topic.*

By **CURTIS EICHELBERGER**  
*Bloomberg News*

Todd Turner hasn't been on the job five months and the University of Washington athletics director is already facing a financial crisis.

With football ticket sales sagging, he's drawing from a reserve fund and says he may need as much as \$150 million, partly through a bond sale, to renovate the Huskies' 84-year-old stadium in Seattle. It's the kind of budget crunch that Myles Brand, president of the National Collegiate Athletic Association, says may be looming at schools in the NCAA's top division, I-A.

Brand, 62, says athletics expenses, including debt service, have risen so dramatically that any unexpected shortfall could derail some departments. A survey of 87 Division I-A schools shows total bond indebtedness at more than \$1 billion.

"Where do we get the money to fix the stadium? That's the challenge," says Turner, 53. "It's not millions. It's tens to hundreds of millions. You can only borrow so much. How do you pay the debt service?"

Average athletics expenses have grown at 7 percent to 8 percent annually in the last six years, Brand says. That's double the 3.7 percent average annual increase in university costs as a whole during the same period, according to the Higher Education Price Index published by Wilton, Connecticut-based Commonfund, which manages endowments for nonprofit organizations.

"The growth we've seen in college athletics can't be sustained," Brand says. "Budgets will be even tighter in the future. And without new revenue streams, how are they going to pay the debt? We need to have a national dialogue on this very soon."

## 'Lost Our Senses'

Tom McMillen, a former National Basketball Association player who represented Maryland in Congress for six years, says the priorities of universities that spend heavily on sports may be askew.

"We have to wonder if, as a country, we've lost our senses on all these public-funded stadiums," says McMillen, 52, now chairman of Washington Capital Advisors, a merchant bank based in Landover, Maryland. "If we could do it all over again, I don't think this is the model of college sports that we would choose."

A turning point may not arrive, he says, until a university faces bankruptcy.

"Without it, the spending and borrowing will continue," he says.

Twenty state-supported universities are carrying

**CURTIS EICHELBERGER** —  
*Bloomberg News*

**Age:** 38

**College:** University of Maryland (1990)

**Background:** Started his career at the Rocky Mountain News, where he spent eight years covering the Denver Broncos, Denver Nuggets and University of Colorado. Moved to Bloomberg News in 1998 to cover the business of the NFL and in 2003 moved to the enterprise beat. He lives in Washington, D.C., with his wife, Judit, who is finishing her finance degree at Temple University.



more than \$40 million each in athletics debt, according to documents obtained under state and federal open-records laws. The average annual athletics budget in Division I-A is \$27 million, the Indianapolis-based NCAA says.

## Ohio State

Ohio State University, a sports powerhouse for decades, carried the most debt with \$202.7 million, according to the survey.

Private institutions that don't receive taxpayer funds aren't required to disclose such information and were excluded from the survey.

Other schools carrying large amounts of debt include the University of Wisconsin, in Madison, \$90.8 million; the University of Virginia, in Charlottesville, \$88 million; and Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, \$81.7 million.

Virginia Tech took on debt to renovate parts of its football stadium, adding revenue potential by building 38 executive suites, priced at \$55,000 to \$100,000 per season, and six club-seat areas priced at \$1,500 to \$2,000 per seat.

## 'Rainy Day' Fund

The university, taking a more conservative approach than many schools, required the athletics department to project revenue based on 75 percent stadium occupancy and to set aside three years' worth of debt service in a "rainy day" fund.

Virginia Tech Associate Athletics Director Tom Gabbard, 58, says he understands Brand's concern, though says it shouldn't be an issue for the Hokies, whose record this season in football is 8-2.

*(Continued on page 5)*

# Enterprise (continued)

*(Continued from page 4)*

"If we went 2-8 for a couple of seasons and came up short, we'd have three years to get it fixed," Gabbard says. "We've guarded against things going bad for us. You can never predict the future."

Athletics directors cite a range of reasons for the pressure to construct new arenas and related buildings, including crumbling structures, fans demanding better amenities and what Brand and others call an "arms race" to recruit better high-school athletes and win wealthier donors and positive publicity.

"We have a standard of living, and it's our job to enhance that standard," says University of Akron Athletics Director Mike Thomas, 44.

## **Luxury Suites**

The Ohio school will use some combination of bond sales and donations to finance construction of a new 30,000-seat football stadium for \$40 million to \$60 million with the sale of luxury suites and club seats.

Some colleges, such as the University of South Carolina, are stepping outside traditional funding options. The Columbia, South Carolina-based school is bringing live concerts to its basketball arena.

The NCAA's Brand says schools that find creative ways to expand programs and fund debt are an asset to collegiate sports -- as long as they don't become too commercial.

"Increasing commercialization of the game is definitely not the answer," he says. Brand recently lauded the University of Michigan and Ohio State for rejecting an offer by San Antonio-based SBC Communications Inc. to buy naming rights to the schools' annual football game for \$2.12 million over two years.

Big increases in television-rights contracts over the past 10 years are unlikely to continue, says Neal Pilson, 64, former president of CBS Sports.

## **'Leveling Off'**

Walt Disney Co.'s ABC network agreed in 1998 to televise college football's Bowl Championship Series for \$550 million over eight years.

"National rights-fee deals are heading toward a leveling off," Pilson says. "Competition and a slower economy are among the reasons. But I don't think we'll see another big run-up for quite some time."

The University of Washington's athletics department is typically one of the most successful in college sports, with 11 Pacific-10 Conference football titles since 1959. The Huskies' fortunes have slipped -- the football team's record is 1-9 this season and the coach has been fired.

Washington has trimmed its athletics budget by \$2 million. It's facing declining ticket sales and donations, plus rising scholarship costs. The school, which is carry-

ing \$15.1 million in debt, has already paid \$1 million in attorney fees to defend against a legal complaint by former football coach Rick Neuheisel, who was fired for gambling, according to the school.

## **'Crisis Point'**

"In some ways, we are at a crisis point now," Turner says. "We have enormous needs that are facility-driven and budget-driven. The pressures to keep that up are tremendous."

The school is assessing the soundness of its stadium's concrete and plumbing and needs to add restrooms and concession stands, Turner says.

"We have to broaden our base of supporters and look to alumni and friends," he says. "It won't be simply through buying tickets."

University of Michigan Athletics Director Bill Martin is facing similarly difficult choices at the Ann Arbor campus.

Michigan Stadium, built in 1927, needs repairs to its concrete structure, plumbing and electrical systems, Martin says. Its seats are too narrow, and it lacks ample restrooms and concession stands.

Martin, 64, says he was embarrassed two years ago when Wisconsin lost to Michigan, and the visitors had to fly home without showering because the plumbing was broken.

"Michigan's stadium is functionally and economically obsolete," he says.

## **Search for Revenue**

Martin, whose department is carrying \$8.1 million in debt, says he'll need at least \$20 million to \$30 million for basic repairs. To win approval for the project, he'll need to find new revenue streams.

The answer, he says, may lie in Columbus, Ohio, where the Ohio State Buckeyes financed a \$200 million renovation of the school's stadium and other athletics venues by selling bonds in 1999 and 2002.

The Buckeyes' stadium was built in 1920, and the concrete was beginning to disintegrate, says Athletics Director Andy Geiger, 65.

The repair bill, he says, was \$55 million, and he didn't have the money. So the university lowered the field to add higher-priced club seats, built luxury suites to lease to businesses and added concession stands. The \$15 million in additional annual revenue generated by the project paid for repairs, a new home for the displaced track, and debt service.

## **'No Default'**

Should revenue run short, Ohio State's athletics department would have to find more donors or cut teams, says Bill Shkurti, senior vice president for business and

*(Continued on page 6)*

# Enterprise (continued)

(Continued from page 5)

finance at the school.

"We would not permit a default," he says.

At the University of Cincinnati, the Bearcats are building a \$116 million athletics center that will also house nonsports offices, including the school's health services. Of the \$92 million in costs allocated to the athletics department, \$50 million will come from donors and \$42 million from bond sales, according to Jim Plummer, Cincinnati's chief financial officer.

Plummer says the athletics department's debt of \$64.2 million is more "in line" than the university's \$1 billion in debt. He says the department budget would have to be adjusted should private donations fall short.

### Tuition and Fees

Bonds sold by universities for athletics are backed by tuition and fees paid by students. While internally the athletics department might be required to pay the debt, it is the university's central administration that is responsible to investors, says Bill Ahern, 45, who oversees more than \$1 billion in municipal bonds at Boston-based Eaton Vance Corp.

"Whether it's for athletics or English, it doesn't matter," Ahern says. "It's the university that owes the money, and they're a pretty safe bet."

Ohio State University's 5.125 percent bond maturing in 2031 has traded recently at about 104 cents to the dollar, with investors getting a yield averaging about 4.6 percent. The bond is rated AA by Standard & Poor's and Aa2 by Moody's Investors Service. That yield is equivalent to the yield on an index of comparably rated municipal debt, indicating that investors see no more risk than average for the Ohio bond.

Not all schools have to borrow. In 1999, state officials in Connecticut approved spending \$90 million in tax receipts to build a football stadium in East Hartford for the University of Connecticut.

"Athletics galvanizes the state," says University of Connecticut President Philip Austin, 62. "It gives us a platform to make a case for funding capital improvements to the academic side of the university as well."

### Winning Record

Connecticut's football program has a record of 20-13 since joining Division I-A in 2002. The athletics department's debt is \$1.6 million.

The University of South Carolina says it has spent about \$110 million upgrading athletics-related buildings and fields and constructing a basketball arena in the past decade.

"If there is ever a shortfall in fund-raising, we have to pay the debt out of our budget," says Athletics Director Mike McGee, 65. "So it behooves us to think creatively

and find other ways to generate revenue."

McGee hired a sports-arena management company, which booked acts such as Bruce Springsteen and Elton John for the basketball arena. By the end of their first year, South Carolina had grossed \$11 million in sales.

"If you borrow too much," McGee says, "then you become the tail that wags the dog, and your decisions become, 'I've got to cover my butt.'"

"But we feel we have done a good job building our business, and now we are proposing a new baseball stadium and amphitheater."

ATHLETIC DEBT FOR SELECT NCAA DIVISION I-A SCHOOLS		
School	Total Debt June 30, 2004	2004-2005 Debt Payment
Ohio State	\$202,671,862	\$14,965,863
Wisconsin	\$90,762,661	\$4,353,491
Virginia	\$88,049,000	\$5,984,300
Georgia	\$85,051,408	\$4,524,447
Virginia Tech	\$81,740,000	\$6,185,096
Oklahoma	\$79,260,000	\$5,298,221
Florida State	\$74,865,000	\$1,615,000
Michigan State	\$72,701,243	\$2,892,738
Texas	\$69,900,000	\$7,400,000
Purdue	\$65,220,000	\$4,700,000
Tennessee	\$64,479,239	\$7,688,536
Nebraska	\$64,380,000	\$4,877,000
Cincinnati	\$64,202,345	\$4,877,000
Oklahoma State	\$59,080,000	\$2,554,045
Alabama	\$57,960,724	\$8,415,733
Arkansas	\$53,025,000	\$5,037,869
Colorado	\$45,853,960	\$3,392,087

Source: University documents supplied in response to open-records requests.

# Features: John Henderson

*Comment of the judge, Gene Duffey: Excellent account of the legendary coach's health and his wife's devotion. Made you feel as if you were right in the house with them. Good background on Robinson's early days. Also good quotes from former players show you how much he means to the school and community.*

By **JOHN HENDERSON**  
*Denver Post*

GRAMBLING, La. — Eddie Robinson Stadium sits in a bowl on the edge of Grambling State's brick campus, the surrounding clay hills and pine woods of northern Louisiana providing the perfect backdrop to one of college football's legendary programs.

On a recent sunny Saturday, the famous Grambling Band had just taken its place in the black-and-gold seats. The man who made this town of 5,500 a household name in college football sat above in the president's suite. That perfectly coiffed head of black hair, the one that wowed a little eighth-grade girl who'd become his wife of 63 years, is gone.

So is that intense glare, the one that would make a halfback run the same play 100 times until he got it right or bore into a linebacker if he missed a class.

Instead, Eddie G. Robinson stared vacuously as a man next to him jabbered away, receiving no response. Robinson, dressed in a maroon sport coat, snacked while staring at the field where his once proud Tigers were getting whipped by Arkansas-Pine Bluff, 41-22.

Later, his wife, Doris, would say, "He didn't seem to know what happened and didn't seem to care."

While a thrilling college football season builds to a climax, the sad story of Eddie Robinson serves as a dark backdrop to the game this fall. His name remains legendary. So does his impact on the game. But his image has faded into a gray corner of the public consciousness. We hear of stories. We hear of sightings. What we are afraid to hear is the truth.

Eddie Robinson, 85, the winningest coach in college football history until a year ago, the man who paved the road of opportunity for black players and coaches alike, is dying of Alzheimer's disease.

Yes, the man who inspired dozens of minority players to go into coaching can't hear them credit him for helping knock down the barrier.

Yes, the man who won 408 games in 55 years at the same school, who sent more than 200 players to the NFL and won 17 conference titles and eight black college national championships, now sleeps 18 hours a day. Dozens of former players visit. Only some does he recognize. He needs help getting dressed. He needs help getting to the bathroom.

**JOHN HENDERSON** —  
*Denver Post*

**Age:** 49

**College:** Oregon (1978, journalism)

**Background:** Henderson has been at The Post since 1990 except for a year-and-a-half sabbatical in Rome from 2001 to 2003. He has covered the University of Colorado, Colorado Rockies and Denver Broncos. Since April 2003, he has been the Post's national college football writer. Before the Post, Henderson worked for the Las Vegas Review-Journal, first covering UNLV basketball and then as a columnist. He moonlights as a travel writer and has been to 75 countries.



Said Wilbert Ellis, who coached Grambling baseball for 43 years and is one of Robinson's closest friends, "You know the day is going to come, but you didn't expect this to happen."

#### Staying by Eddie's side

Doris Robinson, 85, has become the caretaker for the legendary coach.

The Robinsons' modest single-story brick house is just a long punt from Robinson Stadium on a quiet street that hasn't changed much since 1951, when they moved in. A black Cadillac sits in the driveway.

Inside, an NFL pregame show blared from a big-screen TV. An American flag stands in the corner. The only signs a football coach resides here is a deflated football on a shelf. But family portraits, especially pictures of Eddie and Doris together, are everywhere.

Doris Robinson plopped down on her leather couch with the exhale of a woman who doesn't get to sit much. Eddie was asleep in the bedroom. Two friends from their hometown of Baton Rouge, La., just had stopped by to see him. She didn't think he remembered who came.

"It's a slow thing, and I guess it's hard on me because I knew him all the time," she said. "Like this morning, I said, 'Now remember to brush your teeth.' He was always brushing his teeth. He had beautiful teeth. Now I have to tell him."

An English teacher for 25 years, Doris Robinson at 85 still is sharp enough to correct Walt Whitman's grammar. Dressed in a classy pink pants suit with neatly short-cropped gray hair, Doris has become Eddie's

*(Continued on page 8)*

# Features (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

caretaker. She gets him dressed. She feeds him. She gets him to most Grambling home games.

She tires but she works with the same love she had when he was captain of Baton Rouge's McKinley High School football team. In a picture on a shelf, Eddie is wearing a dapper white tuxedo and his trademark pencil-thin moustache. Doris was told her husband looked like an older version of actor Billy Dee Williams.

"Oh, he's better looking than Billy Dee," she said, gazing at the picture.

He used to take her dancing at various fraternities and sororities on weekends. He always stared into her eyes when they danced to "Stardust."

Today those eyes no longer have any tears to cry.

It started seven years ago, shortly after her husband retired. He felt sick. He began forgetting things. The Robinsons went from New Orleans to Dallas to Houston trying to find the problem. It turns out he had a mild stroke that affected the side of his brain that carries the memory.

Ricky McCall, Grambling's head trainer, also has helped care for Robinson. He said the Alzheimer's is "in the mid- or latter stages." Robinson can talk clearly. He can carry on simple conversations, particularly about football. However, his mind tails off within minutes.

"He kind of comes and goes," McCall said. "The biggest part and the hardest part is his wife basically dealing with it. After a while, she's gotten physically tired. It's a day-to-day 24-hour operation."

Doris must do it because McCall no longer can. Four years ago, he was diagnosed with incurable sinonasal cancer. He gets chemotherapy every two weeks but it hasn't stopped him from making periodic stops at the Robinsons.

For McCall, at every visit, Alzheimer's removes another layer of Robinson's very being.

"Yeah, you can see a difference," he said. "You can definitely see a difference. The last time I was over there, I was looking for my keys. No one knew where my keys were, and he put them in his coat pocket and never knew he had them."

Doris has punted all suggestions about putting her husband in a home. She can't imagine him living anywhere but that modest brick house near the stadium. The kinds of lessons he taught his estimated 4,500 players rubbed off on her.

"He was always patient and good with his family and, of course, with me," she said. "He was ready to do everything he could do all the time. And you know, I want to be that way about him."

## Following a football dream

The undeterred young coach puts Grambling on

football map in South.

To understand what Robinson meant to college football, it's important to understand from where he came. The son of a sharecropper, Robinson began dreaming of becoming a football coach when local high school coach Julius Kraft visited his fourth-grade class.

Robinson played quarterback at now-defunct Leland College near Baton Rouge and upon graduation in 1941 worked in a Baton Rouge feed mill for 25 cents an hour and on an ice wagon at night. But that same year he got a call from a school in Grambling, La., called the Colored Industrial and Agricultural Institute of Lincoln Parish. When he arrived, the school had 881 students, no field, no locker room and an unwieldy name. The newlywed Robinsons' home had no running water.

## Undeterred, he improvised.

He put cement in coffee cans to serve as weights and in his second year the team not only went 9-0, it didn't give up a point. Not one. He got the school to change its name to "Grambling" and became one of college football's foremost experts on the winged-T formation.

The Tigers became the G Men and were revered around the South. Robinson's 6-foot-2 presence and religious upbringing swooned the hearts of mothers of the top black athletes in the segregated South, as did two promises: Their sons would go to church and would graduate.

He went to every coaching clinic he could and made his assistants go, too. Alabama's Bear Bryant befriended him. Pro coaches visited him. The winning didn't stop for half a century. From 1942-94, he suffered two losing seasons and topped Bryant's record for victories in 1985, a passing of a torch that made Robinson cry in deference to his good friend.

"We'd take one play and run it 50 times back to back to back to back," said Sammy White, Grambling's current offensive coordinator who played wingback for Robinson in the 1970s and became an all-pro with the Minnesota Vikings. "Over and over and over. You do something like that many repetitions, you could run it closing your eyes."

Robinson also had great vision. Backed by an equally famous band, he took the team to Chicago, to New York, to Tokyo. He played and beat Division I-A schools. He graduated 85 percent of his players. By the time he retired, Grambling had an enrollment of 8,000, with 49 percent of the students from out of state. He turned down offers from the Los Angeles Rams, Tampa Bay Buccaneers and the University of Iowa.

"He wanted persons throughout the world to know Grambling State University," Ellis said. "And it was beyond the athletic part of it."

(Continued on page 9)

# Features (continued)

*(Continued from page 8)*

If a player arrived thinking he'd join Grambling's pipeline to the NFL, Robinson put him on another path. After practice, he'd gather the team in the end zone and talk about life, love and supporting a family. Or he'd take a white envelope and pull names of players who missed class. The next fly pattern they ran was up the stadium steps.

He'd hold etiquette classes and have players over for dinner, coat and tie required. One time he saw players' rooms had pictures from girlie magazines on the walls. He told them, "You can leave them up there if you want. But when we have Mother's Day, we're going to come through here."

One time a reporter asked him how he kept his players off steroids. "Easy," Robinson said. "I just tell them it causes impotence. You should see how round their eyes get."

"People who don't know Eddie personally don't know two things," Penn State coach Joe Paterno said. "One, he was a fierce competitor. He did a marvelous job for his institution. Two, he was just such a warm, good honest guy. He and his wife were delightful. It's hard to think that Eddie's out of it with Alzheimer's. He had principles. He believed in college football. He believed in Grambling. He believed in so many good things."

Robinson's win record may have lasted forever except for John Gagliardi. The Trinidad native made national news last year when he won his 409th game with a St. John's (Minn.) team that went on to the Division III national title. The national media wondered why Gagliardi didn't make a bigger deal out of breaking Robinson's mark, or even crack a smile. Now we know.

"To be honest, I hated to break his record," Gagliardi said. "I had mixed emotions. He was such a giant. That was the only thing I didn't feel good about. I hated to do that to such a good guy." Robinson also believed in blacks coaching well before blacks knew they could. He was more proud of the dozens of black coaches he produced than NFL players. In 1997 he told *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, "Racism is what made me work like hell. You remember when people used to hold hands and sing, 'We shall overcome?' I never did that. I always said, 'Anything you can do, I can do better.'" "

Said UCLA's Karl Dorrell, one of five black coaches in Division I-A: "He was the one who gave us our ambition to be where we're at. His number of wins and tenure at Grambling meant a lot to minority coaches in this profession."

Or, as Mississippi State's Sylvester Croom best put it: "Without question. Coach Rob proved that winners come in every color."

## A prayer for Eddie

Doris wants the strength to carry on for her husband no matter how long.

There should be a happy ending here, but there isn't.

Before Alzheimer's hit, opposing coaches used Robinson's age against him in recruiting, and he ended his career with three consecutive losing seasons. Then-president Raymond Hicks asked him to resign after the 1996 season but the governor stepped in. Hicks eventually resigned under pressure.

Robinson finally hung up the whistle in 1997 after a 3-8 season, culminated by a 30-7 nationally televised loss to Southern that forced Sammy White to leave his watch party for another room to weep.

Today, Robinson lies in bed and refers to his wife only as "Baby." Doris doesn't know if he knows what's happening. He never complains. However, when they sleep, he holds her hand as if he never wants to let go.

After her interview, she brought a visitor from Denver to shake his hand, which he nearly crushed.

"Nice handshake, Eddie," he's told.

"Yeah," he said, "but that's about all."

"What'd you think of your defense yesterday?"

"What? In practice?"

"No. Against Pine Bluff."

"We played Pine Bluff?"

"Do you know who won, Eddie?" his wife asked.

"Well," he said, pausing, "I imagine Pine Bluff. So you're from Denver, huh?"

"Yeah. Ever been there?"

"Yeah, I was there, well, three years ago."

Doris then grabbed the visitor and led him out, whispering, "He didn't go to Denver."

She's asked if she's scared. She says no. She said a neighbor who has Alzheimer's doesn't even know his wife's dead. She's grateful Eddie is not at that stage, but he could get there. When? In three months?

Three years? No one knows.

"I tell you what," she said. "I need prayer. I hear from people. I hear from people I don't know. That is a big help to me. I wanted to be strong enough to do this. I want to be here for him as long as he needs me. And I want to take care of him."

"As long as I can do it."

# Game: Jeff Shain

*Comment of the judge, Corky Simpson: This is a story worthy of the biggest game of the year. It jumps right into Southern Cal's 55-19 national championship rout of Oklahoma and doesn't go overboard with adjectives. Tight, taut and economical, it nevertheless puts us on the 50-yard-line. This isn't a story I wish I had written -- it's a story I wish I could write.*

**BY JEFF SHAIN**  
*The Miami Herald*

Crown the Southern California Trojans kings of the college football world again. And this time there's no sharing.

No dispute, really, after the Trojans dismantled No. 2 Oklahoma 55-19 on Tuesday night in an Orange Bowl that turned out to be the most lopsided title game in the brief history of the Bowl Championship Series.

Heisman Trophy winner Matt Leinart set an Orange Bowl record with five touchdown passes, adding the MVP trophy to his display case. USC's defense forced turnovers on four straight OU possessions on the way to a 38-10 halftime lead.

"They kept giving us the ball back, and we just kept putting it in the end zone," Leinart said.

So ravaging were the Trojans (13-0) that the only thing undone was to leave the Boomer Schooner up on blocks.

OU's famed covered wagon left the field with the Sooners (12-1) trailing 28-7, just in case, though it returned after intermission. By the end of the third quarter, droves of Sooners fans had found the exits.

"Sometimes it happens quickly, and it doesn't take much for it to happen," OU coach Bob Stoops said.

When the rout finally was over, the Trojans and coach Pete Carroll climbed a huge portable stage at midfield to jubilantly lift the crystal football that eluded them in last season's BCS fiasco.

The Trojans split that crown with LSU, left out of the Sugar Bowl title game despite ending the season ranked No. 1 in both polls. A Rose Bowl victory against Michigan gave USC the Associated Press title, but LSU got the coaches' nod as part of a standing agreement to give its trophy to the BCS championship winner.

No such division this time. Though No. 3 Auburn also finished 13-0, Monday night's 16-13 Sugar Bowl win over Virginia Tech was nowhere near as impressive.

"This is so much better than last year," USC defensive lineman Shaun Cody said. "Winning [last year], we didn't know whether we would be champs or not. This year we got the job done."

The poll sweep figured to be complete within hours of the final gun, when the AP released its final results.

**JEFF SHAIN —**  
*The Miami Herald*

**Age:** 40

**College:** Arizona State.

**Background:** Entering his seventh year at the Herald and fifth as its national football writer. He adds Florida State duties this year, completing a beat-writer "Triple Crown" of the state's three major programs. Previously spent three years with the Associated Press and 10 with United Press International, where he was the final keeper of UPI's college polls. Shain also covers golf for the Herald.



Leinart threw for 332 yards against the Sooners, completing 18 of 35 attempts to easily prevail in the historic showdown of Heisman-winning quarterbacks. Oklahoma's Jason White, the 2003 winner, finished with 244 yards but was intercepted twice in the pivotal second quarter.

"There's nothing I can do to change it," said White, who threw three interceptions total. "It's a low point, but I'll be all right. I'll pick myself up."

The Sooners also lost two fumbles, including one on an ill-advised Mark Bradley punt return.

Leinart's five TD passes broke the Orange Bowl mark of four by Florida State's Danny Kanell (1996), Michigan's Tom Brady (2000) and Florida's Rex Grossman (2002).

The junior has thrown at least four TDs seven times in his 26-game career, and has lost just once as a starter.

Steve Smith made three TD grabs, tying an Orange Bowl record by FSU's Andre Cooper (1996) and Michigan's David Terrell (2000). LenDale White added a pair of TD runs.

Freshman Dwayne Jarrett hauled in a 54-yard TD bomb, and tight end Dominique Byrd made a stellar one-handed grab for USC's first score.

Oklahoma took an early lead on White's 4-yard TD pass to Travis Wilson, but spent the next 48 minutes held out of the end zone. White caught the other TD with 3:59 remaining.

Freshman Garrett Hartley added OU's only other points on a 29-yard field goal, the first of his college career. Freshman sensation Adrian Peterson ran for 82 yards, held under the 100-yard mark for the first time.

*(Continued on page 11)*

## Game (continued)

*(Continued from page 10)*

The Sooners now have lost back-to-back BCS title games, victimized 21-14 by LSU a year ago.

All week, the game had been hyped as a clash of titans, perhaps rivaling such classics as Miami-Ohio State (2003 Fiesta Bowl), UM-Penn State (1987 Fiesta) or UM-Nebraska (1984 Orange).

Instead, it was a blowout.

"We didn't expect it to be this easy," Carroll said, "but the game went our way from the beginning."

Tied 7-7, USC's Tom Malone mishit a punt off the right side of his foot, but caught a break when the ball hit at the OU 20 and bounded toward the end zone.

Inexplicably, Bradley picked it up at the 3 and tried to head upfield. But USC's Collin Ashton poked the ball loose and Josh Pinkard fell on it at the 6.

Leinart handed to LenDale White, who bounded off a defender and stretched the ball over the goal line for a 14-7 lead.

Jason White drove the Sooners right back into USC

territory, but threw a ball up for grabs that was picked off by Jason Leach. Six plays later, Leinart caught OU in a corner blitz and hit Jarrett for a 54-yard TD.

USC picked off White again four plays later, as Eric Wright stepped in front of Bradley and took it back 22 yards to the Sooners 11. Leinart needed three plays to hit Smith over the middle on a 5-yard TD.

After Hartley's field goal pulled OU within 28-10, Leinart hit Smith with a 33-yard TD. And a fumble by OU's Kejuan Jones was converted into a 44-yard Ryan Killeen field goal to end the half.

USC's 38 points set an Orange Bowl record for a half, and matched its entire output in their 2003 Orange Bowl victory against Iowa.

"We kept hearing about how great Oklahoma's defense was," Leinart said. "Obviously we have great respect for them, but we dominated them in every facet of the game. We've proven that we are the best team in the country."

## Column (continued)

*(Continued from page 3)*

You've remained conspicuously quiet, Dr. Holbrook, throughout a tumultuous period for the athletic department. Your only public statement about the basketball scandal was to acknowledge "the situation was clear" that O'Brien had to be fired. Your last public comments about the football program came in July, when you told the Columbus Dispatch, "I continue to have full confidence in Andy Geiger and Jim Tressel and in the integrity of the program they are running." A school spokesperson said Wednesday you would be unavailable for comment, and that the football and basketball scandals are "quite separate."

Together, however, they paint a similar picture of an athletic culture that represents everything wrong with college sports. Myles Brand has spent much of his two years in office preaching the need to bring athletics back into the sphere of the overall university, less like the professional enterprises they've become. No athletic department symbolizes this trend more than yours, which generated a staggering \$87 million in revenue in '02-03, the most in the country. You've created a monster, in which little things like coaching ethics and educational values get brushed aside in order to keep feeding the beast.

I understand, Dr. Holbrook, that yours is hardly the only school guilty of such transgressions. But you have the power to do something about it.

As I see it, you have one of three options:

1) You can simply choose to ignore the whole mess -

- that is, if you can sleep at night.

While Claret's accusations, if true, rise to the level of transgressions that got SMU the death penalty, there may be no smoking gun or paper trail for the NCAA to follow. And while jock curriculums and overly hands-on tutors may seem unethical, there's technically nothing in the NCAA handbook against it. Nor does a team's number of player arrests count against it in the BCS standings.

2) You can take the Colorado approach, roll out a bunch of politicians and self-appointed investigators, spend several hundred thousand dollars, show the public you're concerned, then, at the end of the day, let everyone involved keep their jobs and go about their business.

3) Or, Dr. Holbrook, you can actually do something bold. You can shut down the athletic department for a year. A self-imposed death penalty.

By doing so, you'll acknowledge that athletics are the window through which the outside world views your university, and that these scandals are cheapening the hard work of thousands of bona fide students who go there, perhaps even devaluing their degree in the eyes of potential employers.

Lord knows you wouldn't be a popular person in Columbus. In fact, you'd probably have to move, for your safety. But across the rest of the collegiate world, you'd be viewed as a hero.

# Loose deadline: George Schroeder

*Comment of the judge, Gene Duffey: Well written and good job of research, talking with everyone involved in the case. Tracking down the father of guy that Dvoracek and his buddies beat up in Dallas made the story.*

**By George Schroeder**  
*The Oklahoman*

NORMAN—University of Oklahoma defensive tackle Dusty Dvoracek was dismissed from the football team late Friday amid mounting allegations of violent behavior.

OU head football coach Bob Stoops announced the decision in a statement released by the school. Hours earlier, OU had announced Dvoracek had been indefinitely suspended and stripped of the title of team captain for his involvement in an altercation last Sunday morning that landed a friend in the hospital with a head injury.

But as allegations of two incidents were made by parents of three men, Stoops came to a more final conclusion Friday.

"I have learned more over the course of the day and now believe there is a sufficient pattern of behavior to merit Dusty's removal from the team," Stoops said in the statement.

Dvoracek, a senior who was an outspoken leader and honor-roll student, was expected to be one of the Sooners' best defensive players this season. Teammates elected him captain last month — a position typically awarded to players for their character as well as their ability.

But Norman police are investigating Dvoracek's role in an incident early last Sunday morning. Sources said Dvoracek and Matt Wilde, 21, his former high school teammate, had been drinking, then argued.

There were indications the incident last weekend wasn't the first for Dvoracek. Other allegations of violence included reports of a fight last March in Norman and in 2002 in Addison, Texas. Also in 2002, the Cleveland County district attorney's office evaluated — but declined to pursue — a sexual assault complaint filed with OU police against Dvoracek.

Wilde, who was unconscious when he arrived at Norman Regional Hospital, spent five days in intensive care before he was moved to another room Thursday. A hospital spokesman said Friday that Wilde was in "good" condition.

## Conflicting reports

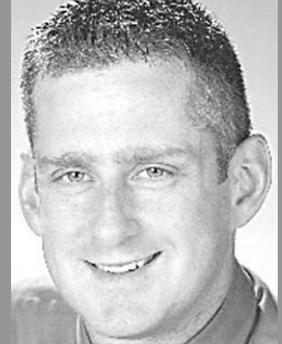
Sources' accounts conflicted on whether the injuries occurred when Wilde was struck by Dvoracek or when he was pushed by Dvoracek and fell awkwardly, striking his head.

Norman police and an investigator from the Cleve-

**GEORGE SCHROEDER —**  
*The Oklahoman*

**Age:** 36

**Background:** After nine years at the Arkansas Democrat-Gazette, Schroeder, a native of Little Rock, moved to *The Oklahoman* to cover the OU football beat in December 1999. He is the author of an Arkansas football book, *Hogs: A History*, released by Simon and Schuster in August. Schroeder lives in Norman, Okla., with his wife and two children.



land County district attorney's office have separately contacted Wilde and his family and been told Wilde didn't want to press charges. Police spokesman Lt. Tom Easley said officers were continuing to pursue leads in the incident.

"Because of the injuries, I have encouraged Norman Police Department to continue their investigation whether the victim wants to (press charges) or not," Cleveland County District Attorney Tim Kuykendall said.

In the school's statement, Sports Information Director Kenny Mossman said OU "is cooperating fully with the appropriate authorities in their investigation."

Last March, Dvoracek was alleged to have broken a young Norman man's nose with a punch during an argument at Bison Witches, a bar in downtown Norman. The man's mother, who asked that she and her son not to be identified, said Friday her son declined to press charges after Dvoracek apologized and agreed to pay for medical bills and because they "chalked it up to drunk college kids."

## 'Scared of Dvoracek'

Also Friday came allegations of an incident in Addison, Texas, in spring of 2002. Dvoracek, then a freshman at OU, and friends were alleged to have crashed a party and severely beat three men who attempted to stop them from leaving with a keg of beer and the keg tap.

Don Dugan, stepfather of two of the men, Brandon and Trenton Ballard of Grapevine, Texas, said he contacted Kuykendall and Norman police after learning of the alleged incident involving Dvoracek last weekend.

"I told (the authorities) Dvoracek beat up my two stepboys," Dugan said. "They had black eyes, bloody

*(Continued on page 13)*

## Loose deadline (continued)

*(Continued from page 12)*

lips and contusions. They told him he could take the keg but not the taper. My sons owned it.”

Requests to interview Dvoracek and OU coach Bob Stoops were declined Friday. Dallas County Assistant District Attorney Brandon Birmingham, who handled the 2002 case, did not return phone calls Friday.

The Oklahoman and Kuykendall separately pursued but didn't find records of the alleged assault in Addison or Dallas counties. Dvoracek does not have a record in Texas.

Neither Brandon Ballard nor Trenton Ballard could be reached Friday for comment. Dugan said against his wishes, his stepsons decided they didn't want to testify against Dvoracek. Dugan said he would provide court documents related to the case, but had not done so by

Friday evening.

“They just wanted to (allow Dvoracek to) plea it out and pay medical bills and drop the charges, and that's what happened,” Dugan said. “Once (the stepsons) are over 21, they can do what they want to do.

“My kids are scared of Dvoracek, I'll tell you right now. They don't want to be beaten up by him again.”

The man involved in last March's incident in Norman declined to answer questions about the incident but said, “I have received several personal apologies from Dusty Dvoracek, and I consider all matters between us to be fully resolved.”

The man's mother said her son's nose was fractured, his eyes were swollen shut for three days and blackened for six weeks.

## Ted Gangi's technology tips

By now, you have received a fresh set of 208-page media guides and are trying to decipher just how it is that schools were able to condense all that information into the mandated page limit.

Well, the truth is, they didn't. They couldn't. Many, many of you SID's did try, though. Even at that, there is going to be some missing elements of old, most likely all-time lettermen lists, game-by-game results and other lengthy staples.

But there is some good news, and it's two-fold: The modern media guide is now back to a reasonable size and, at the very least, much of the information left out will be posted on line in an easy-to-manage format.

Now, more good news: Your laptop's hard drive is bigger – and faster – than you think. And, you're going to want to take advantage of that. Seriously. With 30 or more gigabytes (GB) of space, it'll be a long time before you run out of space.

A few years ago, when we first put the FWAA member directory online as a .pdf, there was some trepidation, and perhaps rightly so, from the membership. Fears abounded. “Do I have to get online to access the membership directory?” was a burning question.

Yes, you did have to get on line, but technically only once – and just long enough to download the entire book to your hard drive. As Adobe has improved its .pdf technology, the features of the format have gotten better and better.

Once the book (or any .pdf) is on your hard drive, you can access it instantly, “thumb” through it using its bookmarks, and search it electronically. In many cases, find-

ing what you need on your computer is now actually faster than digging your print copy out of the bottom of your bag and rifling through it.

So, as we become more and more dependent on electronic distribution of what used to be paper, here are some pointers:

- First and foremost, download the Adobe Reader 7.0, the latest version, now. Today. Don't wait. It's free and installs itself from adobe.com.

([www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html](http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html)).

- If there is a file you know you will want to access a lot (like the FWAA directory, a school's media guide or the NCAA record book), download it and save it to your hard drive. With a high-speed connection, it will take no time at all and you can name the file whatever you like. Even on a dial-up, you won't be there all day.

- Get to know the right mouse button on your Windows-based PC. You can right-click on most .pdf links and hit “Save Target As ...” to download the file without waiting for it to open in your browser. (Note: On the collegesports.com network of official sites, this option only works once you've gotten to the page of the actual .pdf).

- Request that SID's do not send you large attachments but rather a simple link to the appointed file on their website. This will prevent a traffic jam in your e-mail program, especially if you're still in the dial-up universe.

*Ted Gangi is the webmaster for the FWAA and is the assistant sports editor for DallasNews.com. He will write occasional columns on media technology for footballwriters.com.*

# BCS establishes policies for game operations, credentialing

By **ALAN SCHMADTKE**  
*Orlando Sentinel*

Beginning with this season's four bowl games, the Bowl Championship Series will use a uniform standard of media operations, including how it issues credentials. The 11 Division I-A conference commissioners and Notre Dame Athletic Director Kevin White recently approved the policies.

They include:

- A 10-minute cooling-off period for the losing team.
- A 20-minute cooling-off period for the winning team.
- A 30-minute mandatory open locker rooms for both teams.
- Providing a free courtesy phone for every three seats in the press box.

Credential requests for the Orange, Sugar, Fiesta and Rose bowls — plus the BCS National Championship game, starting in 2006 — will follow a procedure similar

to that used by the NCAA for its men's basketball tournament. The number of credentials given out will be based on circulation, although the bowl will retain a share of control for extra credentials.

The breakdown by daily circulation:

- 50,000 to 99,999 — 1 seat.
- 100,000 to 199,999 — 2 seats.
- 200,000 to 299,999 — 3 seats.
- 500,000 to 999,999 — 4 seats.
- 1 million and above — 5 seats.

The Associated Press and the game's primary newspaper(s) for daily coverage can get up to eight seats.

In addition, the BCS hopes to set up one Web site at which media members can apply for credentials for one or more BCS games.

The complete policy will be part of this year's BCS Media Handbook, available online soon, BCS spokesman Bob Burda said.



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