

SPORTS

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Plan is on the money to some

Conferences will have to begin giving student athletes an extra \$2,000 a year.

DAVID WHAMPTON

College football seemed so easy for Robert Woods. The bigger players and harder hits, the roaring crowds, the excitement of that to become an instant star at USC, catching passes by the dozen as a freshman.

It was another part of the game — a part fans don't see — that took him by surprise. It was the peanut butter and jelly.

"You think coming to USC, you have food everywhere, but it's really not like that," he said. "I've gone four days straight of just sandwiches."

Now a sophomore, Woods has learned that bills — rent, utilities, and phone — devour most of his monthly scholarship check, leaving only dollars a day to eat. The team feeds him dinner during the season, but the rest of the time, he says, "you're on your own."

This dilemma affects student athletes nationwide. According to a 2010 study, the maximum financial aid allowed under NCAA rules (See Pay-for-play, C4)

NCAA proposal has its critics

[Pay-for-play from C1] can fall short of covering school and living expenses by anywhere from \$200 to \$10,000 a year, depending on the campus.

At USC, Athletic Director Pat Haden estimates that his athletes need another \$3,300 to meet basic needs. "It doesn't seem right," he said. "And I think it's a public relations nightmare."

With the Pac-12 Conference and other major conferences set to reap billions from new television contracts, the NCAA board of directors recently announced that members will have the option of boosting aid by as much as \$2,000 a year.

That makes sense to Woods, who says, "All these universities are making money off their players."

But not everyone is thrilled with the change. Some do not believe \$2,000 is enough. Others contend that larger scholarships will put a strain on small schools and shift everyone a step closer to pay-for-play.

Whenever college sports and money intersect, there are no easy answers.

Equality for none?

Hard times are not hard to see. At Robert Kustra has to do a step of the Boise State campus for a bite to eat.

"My students are working for minimum wage in restaurants, collecting as much in tips as they can," the university spokesman said. "Many of them literally have to drop out for a semester to raise money for the next semester."

By comparison, athletes have it pretty good, he believes. Their scholarships might not cover everything, but they get tuition, books and housing. Also, academic tutors help them with schoolwork.

"How many of our regular students have a full ride?" he asked. "Where's their extra spend?"

Critics of the new NCAA legislation worry that growth in spending will exacerbate the so-called "arms race," rival athletic programs scrambling to outdo each other with gaudy training facilities and enormous coaching salaries. The gap between the haves and have-nots has widened.

The NCAA has encouraged its members to vote on increased aid by conference. The big schools — the ones from the Pac-12, Big Ten, Southeastern Conference, etc. — are expected to adopt the change. Smaller conferences with modest television deals might struggle to come up with the money, said David Ridpath, an Ohio University assistant professor and member of the watchdog Drake Group.

"Will it benefit Ohio State more than Ohio University? Yes," Ridpath said. "It is going to make the rich get richer and bring down the small schools? Absolutely."

Boise State currently belongs to the small Mountain West Conference. Yet, when it comes time to vote, Kustra could be put in the uncomfortable position of supporting an increase.

The reason is simple: Over the last few seasons, his football team has beaten the odds by forcing its way onto the national stage and he



FILLING UP HIS PLATE: USC wide receiver Robert Woods (2) says an additional \$2,000 a year in financial aid wouldn't cover all his expenses, but it would help him eat better meals.



LAWRENCE E. HO/LOS ANGELES TIMES

"This is a multibillion-dollar industry, and these players don't have enough to buy groceries."

—JEFF LOCKE, UCLA punter

"They're not coming to Boise State unless we give them the same thing."

Food for thought

It was just last summer that Haden bumped into several football players outside the athletic department.

"They were literally hungry," he said. "They asked if there was any free food on campus."

At first, the athletic director was skeptical. He called eight or 10 athletes into his office — including Woods, tight end Xavier Grimble and cornerback Anthony Brown — to review their finances, comparing scholarship checks against monthly bills.

"It may have seemed like we were going out buying clothes and things like that," Woods said. "He could see that we weren't."

Instead, Haden found that things had changed radically since he was a star quarterback for the Trojans in the 1970s.

Back then, players worked summer jobs to save for the coming school year. Now, they are expected to spend that time training. With more film work and conditioning during the season, they use the rest of the year to take their hardest classes.

"Let's just call it what it is," said Ridpath, who refers to modern college sports as "a commercialized,

At USC, Haden did the math and found that his athletes spent \$600 to \$800 a month on rent, some of them sharing rooms with teammates. After the usual bills, about \$150 remained.

"Five dollars a day wasn't enough to feed young men and women who worked out constantly, especially football linemen accustomed to consuming 5,000 or more calories."

NCAA rules prohibited Haden from giving them food. And he estimated that almost a third of his athletes received no help from home.

"Those are the kids I worry about most," he said. "We have to do what's right."

Extra investment

When Sidney McPhee agreed to help the NCAA assess athletic scholarships, it felt like familiar territory.

McPhee is president of Middle Tennessee State, where 84% of students receive some type of financial help. He says university administrators frequently review academic scholarships to see how competitive they are with regards to attracting the best and the brightest.

In many cases, "we make adjustments up." It surprised him that the NCAA had not reviewed its aid policies for decades.

Asked about competitive balance, NCAA President Mark Emmert cited a study by the respected Knight Commission that showed Division I schools vary widely in how much they spend per athlete, the numbers ranging from about \$40,000 to \$150,000 a year.

An extra \$2,000 in financial aid, Emmert said, "is not going to have any impact."

He also dismissed concerns that college sports are moving closer to professionalism.

"The driving line on pay-for-play is very sharp and clear," Emmert said. "This is about trying to cover more of the legitimate expenses."

In addition to increased aid, the NCAA recently adopted legislation that toughens academic standards for student-athletes and allows universities to offer multiple-year scholarships, a departure from the traditional year-by-year model.

McPhee put the money issue in simple terms.

"This is not unusual in higher education," he said. "We do quite regularly on our campuses."

Better than nothing

Before he gets started, Jeff Locke wants to make something clear.

As a punter on the UCLA football team — and an economics major — he appreciates the value of his athletic scholarship.

"I'll be the first to tell you that my future earning potential has gone up tenfold by getting a UCLA degree," he said. "I know how blessed I am."

But Locke got what he describes as a "wake-up call" not long ago. Running out of money at the end of the month, he looked around to see other teammates in the same predicament.

"This is a multibillion-dollar industry, and these players don't have enough to buy groceries."

The redshirt junior now works as an intern for the National College Players Assn., a grass-roots organization created by former Bruins linebacker Ramon Huma. It was the NCAA, with help from Itha-

Light in the wallet

The National College Players Assn. and the Ithaca College Graduate Program in Sport Management released a study in October 2010 suggesting that many full athlete scholarships fall short of the full cost of attendance. The number — which represent shortfalls for 2009 — show the average student athlete faced \$3,951 in expense above his or her financial aid.

Locally >>>

School	Conference	Shortfall
Northridge	Big West	\$4,138
Irvine	Big West	\$3,810
Fullerton	Big West	\$3,800
Riverside	Big West	\$3,746
UCLA	Pac-12	\$3,443
Pepperdine	West Coast	\$1,500
USC	Pac-12	\$1,478*

*Athletic Director Pat Haden estimates the shortfalls at \$3,300.

AP football top 10 >>>

School	Conference	Shortfall
Louisiana State	Southeastern	\$2,870
Oklahoma State	Big 12	\$4,250
Alabama	Southeastern	\$2,086
Oregon	Pac-12	\$2,412
Oklahoma	Big 12	\$3,893
Arkansas	Southeastern	\$2,968
Olemiss	Atlantic Coast	\$4,704
Stanford	Pac-12	\$2,385
Virginia Tech	Atlantic Coast	\$3,300
Boise State	Mountain West	\$3,804

ing for a mandatory — not voluntary — \$3,200 boost in financial aid.

That figure is slightly less than the UCLA's estimated \$3,443 shortfall Locke contends the NCAA failed to sufficiently address the problem.

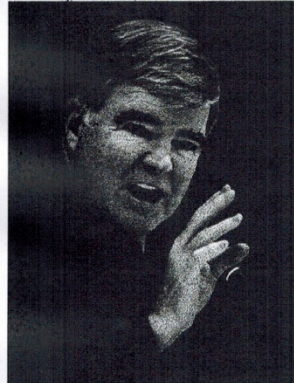
"They need to understand," he said. "That still leaves 100 school out there with players not receiving the full cost of attendance."

Across town, at USC, Wood knows an additional \$2,000 will not cover all of his expenses. But it views the situation from a slightly different angle.

At this point, he will take what

Column: NCAA last amateur left in college sports

By JIM LITKE AP Sports Columnist The Associated Press
Wednesday, October 26, 2011 5:26 AM EDT



NCAA President Mark Emmert speaks about policy changes being considered by the NCAA... (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

The number of people who buy the NCAA's argument that amateurism is the backbone of college sports is dwindling by the day.

The notion is increasingly being challenged in the courts, questioned by Congress and earlier this month, some of the kids on whose backs the business is actually built decided to call the organization's bluff. More than 300 major college football and men's basketball players signed and sent a petition to the NCAA asking the college presidents who run it to spend some of their new-found riches on education.

"The things we go through, the hours we put in, what our bodies go through, we deserve some sort of (results)," said Georgia Tech defensive end Denzel McCoy, a redshirt freshman who signed and helped circulate the petitions drawn up by the National College Players Association (NCPA), an athletes advocacy group. "College football is a billion-dollar industry."

The NCPA petition doesn't ask for a specific amount to be set aside, or for players to be paid salaries. Instead, it seeks a hike in scholarships of about \$3,200 to make up a shortfall in school-related expenses each year, better medical coverage and an "educational lock box" that players could use to fund their educations if they're permanently injured or exhaust their athletic eligibility before they graduate. They also would be entitled to what's left in the lock box upon graduation, with no strings attached.

The response from the NCAA, which begins its quarterly Division I Board of Directors meeting Wednesday in Indianapolis, has been near-total silence.

"We'd eventually like a seat at the table, but all we asked for off the bat was a meeting," Ramoji Huma, a former UCLA linebacker who founded the NCPA more than a decade ago, said Tuesday over the telephone from his office in California. "I'm looking at the letter from (NCAA President Mark) Emmert right now. The answer was a definite 'no.'"

Instead, Emmert will get up in front of an informal meeting with university presidents and unveil the organization's latest meager stab at reform: a proposal to be voted on Thursday that would give each conference the option to dig into its own pocket and increase the cost of a scholarship by about \$2,000. That sum won't solve any of the problems currently bedeviling major college sports — in fairness, \$3,200 wouldn't make a dent in the number of athletes taking money under the table, either — and it might actually make things worse. College football and basketball, the big-revenue producing sports, already suffer from a widening gap between the haves and the have-nots who compete outside them.

1 2 Next

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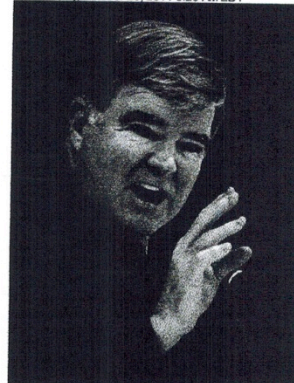
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NCAA President Mark Emmert speaks about policy changes being considered by the NCAA... (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

Previous 1 2

Yet the fact that the NCAA may finally be under pressure from below is a very good sign. A dozen years ago, it agreed to try and police its members by applying pressure from the control of the organization over to universities with a mandate to clean up the shady deal football and basketball and sign a truce or fast becoming "an athletic arms race" between competing schools. What the presidents did was hide the brooms, green-light even-bigger and promise each other to behave better. Scandals at Southern California, Ohio State look the same as those in the past — acad cheating coaches, corner-cutting recruiters hanging around preying on easy marks — dollar figures involved have a lot more zero to them. The only other difference is that they now stand alongside embarrassed athletic officials in front of microphones to explain what they didn't know, let alone act, when they should.

Emmert paid lip service only last July to the perception that the NCAA itself was guilty of being one of its most dreaded judgments at schools, a lack of institutional control.

"The integrity of collegiate athletics is seriously challenged today by rapidly growing pressure from many directions. We have reached a point where incremental change is not sufficient to meet challenges. I want us to act more aggressively, more comprehensive way than we have in the past. A few new tweaks of the rules will do it."

Yet that's all the NCAA appears capable of at the moment.

Meanwhile, former players are pushing a class lawsuit threatening the organization's ability and seeking back pay for the use of their names on jerseys and video games. Congress is expressing interest in NCAA's inconsistent, sometimes-inexplicable decisions in their punishment, as well as its refusal to follow through in some disciplinary matters. More still could be the conference realignment that is altering the college sports landscape; in that bigger, even more powerful conferences, so observers see the outlines of a system controlled thoroughly by the conferences that they might be emboldened enough to out the NCAA out of its posts on basketball tournament, much if way the Bowl Championship Series pushed organization out of the postseason football.

And now, the players themselves are threatening to organize and demand their share of the ever TV deals rolling in.

"We're on the right side of this debate. No one said Huma, who has been invited to make the case for the 7,000 or so members the NCPA represents roundtable discussion in Washington, D.C., next week organized by Illinois Rep. Bobby Rush.

Huma paused for a moment, then told a story about a teammate of his at UCLA who said on a radio show that he didn't have enough money left that week to buy food. When the player returned home, he found groceries on his doorstep, took them in and wound up being slapped with a one-game suspension for receiving improper benefits.

"We were the No. 5 team in the nation at the time, his jersey was on sale in shops all over the place so have enough to go down to the corner and buy a sandwich," Huma recalled. "Everybody agrees the system is broken, they've known it for years. I don't think players resent other people making money from college but if the underlying mission is supposed to be the education it provides, making sure the players get the very least — doesn't seem like too much to ask for."

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Previous 1 2

Stan Van Gundy has some words on amateurism Score: 145 Log-in to rate:

Posted on: August 29, 2011 10:49 am

By Matt Moore

Stan Van Gundy is not afraid to speak his mind. He's not bombastic or a braggard, he just has his opinions and would be happy to share them with you. His pragmatism and basic viewpoints actually harken back to Red Auerbach, in a way. Van Gundy was at the University of Miami this past weekend, dropping his daughter off for school, and was asked about the ongoing scandal there. Let's just say Van Gundy didn't exactly hold back. From the *Miami Herald*:

"The system is set up for everybody but the kids while pretending to be about the kids," Van Gundy said. "Athletics and education should be separate. Colleges shouldn't be farm systems. It doesn't make any logical sense. But the schools don't want to be blatantly in the situation of being professional sports even though they already are professional sports. They just want to disguise it, so they hide behind education. But, really, all you want is enough of your athletes to graduate so it looks like that's what you care about. Anyone around sports knows it is all a bunch of bull [expletive]."

"I am not calling college coaches or administrators hypocrites. I believe that, in general, they care about the kids and education. But the system is wrong. Being a farm system creates problems that are beyond the control of even the best and most well-meaning administrators of which [UM's] Donna Shalala would be at the top of my list."



via University of Miami scandal brings out hypocrisy on campuses - Dan Le Batard - MiamiHerald.com.

Well, then. Don't hold back, SVG. Really let your feelings out. It's good to see Van Gundy taking a stand on the issue instead of deferring since it's part of the traditional basketball system. What gets overlooked in all the discussion is the fact that much of what goes on is exploitation. The reaction is to say they can't be exploited, they're getting a college education. But you can be exploited while still getting something in return, and in this case, an education that is barely existent in some cases and largely useless in a great deal of them doesn't exactly make things equal. But wait, there's more from Van Gundy. He's actually got a proposal for a solution.

"Let the schools decide whom they enroll and how — no entrance or eligibility requirements, how much the boosters want to pay them and whether or not they go to class," he says. "There are two rules. You play only four seasons, and the upper age limit is 25. No other rules. Players who are paid must declare their income and pay taxes on it. If they don't and get caught, then they have to deal with the IRS and instead of giving back the Heisman they risk going to jail. This drops the myth about amateurism and education. It allows players to get paid but puts it out in the open. Now people can stop hiding behind their idealism about the purity of college athletics and let you know what the school and alumni truly value. NCAA enforcement is the drug war. We've lost. Let's find a different, more realistic approach."

In essence, Van Gundy wants to call a spade a spade, which is pretty reasonable. The NBA is a lot of things, but it doesn't try and pretend to be something moral. It's a business at its core, and it acts accordingly. Look no further than the lockout for proof on that.

Maybe if we start talking about the issues within the context of reality and not the moral ideal that isn't even ideal for most of the people involved in it, we can start to move towards some solutions. Call it the Calipari-Van Gundy approach.

Half of you just started vomiting, didn't you?

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