



Thanks to the Supreme Court ruling this summer, cameras like these will be seen more frequently

Swofford calls for reorganization

By MICHAEL SCHOOR
Staff Writer

Calling for reorganization of the NCAA, UNC Athletic Director John Swofford believes the current relationship between college football and television is "symptomatic of a greater problem within the NCAA — the organizational structure."

Until this season, the NCAA controlled the television rights to all college football games. However, individual schools may now negotiate their own television deals, since the Supreme Court upheld a suit this summer filed against the NCAA by College Football Association members Georgia and Oklahoma.

Sixty-three Division I-A institutions comprise the CFA. ABC and ESPN have national broadcast rights to CFA games. The Big Ten and Pac-10 conferences chose not to align with the CFA, and negotiated a separate deal with CBS.

Swofford, chairman of the NCAA television committee, sees an unhealthy division over television rights. He labored unsuccessfully to bring the CFA and the Big Ten/Pac-10 together and cannot understand the logic behind the split.

"Historically the Big Ten and the Pac-10 have been pro-NCAA," Swofford said, trying to explain the conferences' refusal to join the

CFA.

"We'd have a much stronger and more stable situation from a negotiating standpoint if the two could get together."

Swofford proposes extensive division of the NCAA into groupings of similar institutions, each with some degree of autonomy.

"The television issue would not have progressed as it did if a division existed to deal with the 83-90 major athletic institutions," he said.

"The NCAA has grown too large and fragmented. Too many institutions that aren't very similar in their approach to intercollegiate athletics are voting within the same division."

Swofford remains hopeful for an NCAA re-emergence, preferring reorganization to extinction. He disdains formation of another national organization.

But the NCAA membership rejected an alternative NCAA television plan, because the plan had not been approved by a district court. The court still has not ruled. The colleges decided to negotiate their own television deals, through the CFA or the Big Ten/Pac-10.

"I wasn't surprised at what occurred with the alternate NCAA plan," Swofford said. "The (NCAA) membership had to cast its lot ... because of the court action."

Could TV ruling mean decline at gate?

By MICHAEL SCHOOR
Staff Writer

Fifty thousand football fans used to pack Kenan Stadium on Saturdays when the Tar Heels played at home. It was usually the only way to see UNC football.

But then along came a Supreme Court ruling, the College Football Association and Jefferson Productions, and things may never be the same.

The high court ruled this summer that the NCAA's restrictive control of college football telecasts is illegal. While the NCAA constructed an alternate plan (yet unapproved by a district court), Division I-A institutions realigned. Sixty-three universities joined the CFA, which sold broadcast rights to its games to ABC and ESPN. The Big Ten and the Pac-10 conferences refused to join the CFA, and worked out a separate deal with CBS.

ABC, ESPN and CBS are broadcasting games nationally. Meanwhile, the ACC inked an agreement with Jefferson Productions of Charlotte for a conference Game-of-the-Week beginning at noon. ABC follows with a 3:30 p.m. game, and ESPN cablecasts a game at 7 p.m.

Is the market saturated with college football? Will a possible case of overexposure affect UNC at the gate?

"We may be on television more times than I would like," UNC athletic director John Swofford said, noting that the Tar Heels could be on television seven times in 1984.

"Our concerns are just the opposite of before. It's such a different world in college football television."

Different, indeed. In years past, Swofford lobbied to get two or three UNC games on the networks. Now, Jefferson Production plans to show North Carolina as much as possible to bolster the ratings.

Clemson, the ACC's other top television draw, is still ineligible for coverage.

"Clemson should not be allowed on television this year," Swofford said. "The sanctions have been set by the NCAA and the ACC and they shouldn't be changed to make our conference television package more attractive."

See the Tar Heels play Navy, see them play Wake Forest, N.C. State, Georgia Tech, Duke. See it all in the living room.

Swofford fears a decline in the gate at Kenan, yet he welcomes the opportunity to have an ACC television package and accepts UNC's prominent role in the lineup for 1984.

"It will benefit ACC football over a period of time, much like it did ACC basketball," he said. "I can accept being on television so often for this year ... to generate good ratings and a better financial situation for the conference in the future. What the ACC is paid in rights fees is directly related to the ratings this year. But I do not want that many games on television year in and year out."

The ACC's contract with Jefferson Productions is for one season, as are national network and cable agreements. Many more games will be broadcast but the revenues have shrunk. The difference may be as much as \$20 million from what could have been tendered under the deceased NCAA plan.

"1984 will not be a particularly good gauge of the scenario," Swofford said. "The lateness of the court ruling made it difficult for conferences or the CFA to go to television with any type of leverage in negotiating ... that's the reason the money's down."

"Also, there's no exclusivity. Without exclusivity, ABC isn't going to pay the dollars they paid under the NCAA plan."

UNC should earn about \$450,000 in television revenues this season, and more if ABC agrees to broadcast the Maryland game, Swofford said. That's a projected decrease of \$176,000.

"We may need to readjust (spending) in the future," he said. "We rely on two revenue-producing sports to (fund) the other 24 sports. If revenues are drastically affected, the ultimate impact could come at the non-revenue sport level."

College football and television are in a year of transition, and with the future so clouded, no group of institutions opted for a multi-year contract. Swofford hopes that by 1985 the framework for college football's house of television will be built, and long-term deals negotiated.

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