

# NCAA realignment would shift CIAA

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Conference could be in jeopardy.

Kerry's claim was rejected. Supporters for the realignment said if the CIAA were to remain in the South Atlantic, the region would have an unfair balance with four conferences: Carolinas-Virginia Athletic, and the Peach Belt and South Atlantic conferences being the other three, while the Atlantic Region would be reduced to two: the Pennsylvania State Athletic Conference and West Virginia Athletic Conference. No region in the nation has more than three member conferences.

"If you have four conferences in a region, at-large access to the championship is diminished because you have to accommodate one more automatic qualifier," said Jill Wilson, Management Council chair and former chair of the Regionalization Task Force. "Regionalization must be based on geography, and the decision to put the CIAA in the Atlantic Region was made because it was the best fit for that region among the conferences in that part of the country."

The CIAA's move can mostly be attributed to its nemesis, the CVAC, whose officials have been trying to get into the South region for years. They argue the CVAC has more members in the area than the CIAA.

That argument is even more valid now that the CVAC has no Virginia schools, while the CIAA has three from Virginia and one from Maryland.

"It turns out that now their teams are geographically more to the south than the CIAA," Hermitte said. "That's the main reason why the proposal went through this time."

The South Atlantic has been a haven for the CIAA, especially in men's basketball. A trip to the illustrious Elite Eight is almost a given.

And that has been a sore spot with the other member conferences.

"The South Atlantic has been a strong region throughout the years. Not only do you have a chance to go to the Elite Eight but generally when you come out of this region, you've got a chance to win a national championship," said Steve Joyner, men's basketball coach and athletic director at Smith. "All of that is going to be damaged, and we strongly oppose it."

But not everyone on the CIAA side is unhappy at the proposed move.

"We are certainly unified with our conference, but as the furthest northern school in the conference, undeniably it helps us out with travel costs," said Derek Carter, Bowie State's athletics director. "The way those schools in the southern part of the conference benefited being in the South, now we'll get that benefit."

# Proposal would split Division II playoffs based on scholarship totals

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out was that they were not going to increase the number of teams to the playoffs," said Phillips, who has won three CIAA championships. "They were going to take the 24 teams and split them up into two divisions. The bigger division may get 16 teams and the little division would only get eight teams. We had to vote on 16/8 or 12/12. Of course, I voted on 12/12. If you're going to have two, you should have it even."

Teams in the larger and more powerful D-II conferences like the South Atlantic (Carson-Newman, Presbyterian, Catawba) are more apt to carry the maximum number of football scholarship allotted in Division II (36). But smaller programs, especially those at historically black colleges, average around 25. CIAA schools averaged 22.5 as of last season.

At the 2005 NCAA convention, a vote was put forth by the Pennsylvania State and Rocky Mountain athletic conferences to lower football scholarships from 36 to 24. It was defeated 2-1, but with an assurance that committees would address equity concerns in the future.

The Football Issues Task Force was asked to recommend: how many teams would be in the larger-program and smaller-program brackets; and what the ceiling for scholarships would be for those smaller programs. (Details had not been released by press time.)

Phillips is confident he knows which group the CIAA will be housed.

"The two proposals for scholarships are 0 to 24 for one side and 0 to 40 on the other side," said Phillips, who declined to say how many he had. "Well, there's not too many of us operating at 36. We all know what corner we're going to be sitting in in our league."

"I don't think that it would be that bad of a deal (with two champions) if they would allow the same number of teams to go to the playoffs."

The biggest concern is what happens if the proposal is voted down.

Another proposal would limit football scholarships to 32 or 30 across the board. If that happens, some ADs fear more Division II programs would move up to Division I-AA.

"This is a huge Division II issue," said David Riggins, athletics director at Mars Hill. "This could have the capacity to change Division II as we know it."

Other highlights of note:

- Approved in concept a plan that would mandate almost all coaches to be certified in first aid and cardiopulmonary resuscitation.
- Agreed to sponsor legislation for the 2007 convention to permit a two-year college transfer student who has not previously attended a four-year institution and who was a qualifier after graduating from high school to be eligible for competition at a Division II institution during his first year only if the student has spent at least one full-time semester or quarter in residence at the two-year college (excluding summer sessions). Such student-athletes would be required to have a minimum grade-point average of 2.0 and to have satisfactorily completed an average of at least 12 hours of transferable credit.
- Referred to the new community task force a proposal that would permit institutions to donate used athletics equipment to all youth groups, including high schools.
- Discussed with consultant Rich Luker the promotion of Division II through greater community involvement.

The NCAA News contributed to this story.

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# Lexus IS250 expensive ride, but the perks are impeccable

WINFRED B. CROSS Test Drive



Why must every car I really like cost almost 40 grand?

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Neither does the Lexus IS250, which will come with such equipment if you are willing to shell out an extra 2,200 bones above the already steep \$34,285. And that's for a subcompact.

But let's digress and talk about the extraordinary driving pleasure you receive by sitting behind the wheel of one of these beauties. First there's the V6. It's kinda little at 2.5 liters and is only rated

at 204 horsepower with 185 pounds-feet of torque. However, Lexus seems to wring all of the energy from the engine at the most opportune times. Yes, the optional 306 hp V6 will trounce it in a race, but this is the little engine that can and will. Coupled to a six-speed automatic, the engine always seems to be at the right revs. You can shift the auto with paddles on the leather-wrapped steering wheel, but it's not as nice as the Audi or Volkswagen system. It works well enough, but a bit more smoothness is needed.

The handling is closer to BMW's 3-series than that company would like. The optional all wheel drive has a lot to do with that. The 3 is still champ in its class but Lexus and Audi are catching up.

That's about the only place. The new IS is visually stunning, far less boxy than the

old design. It actually looks like a mini GS, which is precisely what Lexus wants. The interior isn't flashy, but it screams luxury sport car. Gauges, wood inlays, stitches in the leather seats, carpet - you name it, Lexus has spared no expense to make all feel, well, expensive.

My test car was a comely Matador Red Mica which glistened in the sunshine as if it were wet. Aside from the navigation package, the standard equipment list is long: all-wheel drive, premium audio system, 10-way power front seats, automatic dual climate control, cruise control, driver information center, electroluminescent optitron gauges and power moonroof.

Yes, the price of admission is a tad high, but this sporty sedan is crafted like a fine jewel. I just wish it didn't cost as much.

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