

FWAA writing contest winners

The results from the FWAA's 14th annual Best Writing Contest, which is sponsored by Insight, are listed below. All places will be recognized at the FWAA's annual Awards Breakfast on Jan. 8, 2007, at the BCS Championship

Game Media Hotel in Phoenix. Places 1-3 will receive certificates and cash prizes. First-place winners also receive plaques. Honorable mention winners receive certificates.



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GAME

- First place:** David Barron, *The Houston Chronicle*
- Second place:** Ted Miller, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*
- Third place:** Ian R. Rapoport, *Jackson Clarion-Ledger*
- Honorable mention:** David Teel, *Newport News Daily Press*; Embele Awipi, *Salinas Californian*; Bud Withers, *Seattle Times*; Pete Thamel, *The New York Times*

LOOSE DEADLINE

- First place:** Wayne Drehs, *ESPN.com*
- Second place:** Ivan Maisel, *ESPN.com*
- Third place:** Tom Dienhart, *The Sporting News*
- Honorable mention:** Eric Hansen, *South Bend Tribune*; Dennis Dodd, *CBS SportsLine.com*; David Barron, *The Houston Chronicle*

FEATURE

- First place:** Ivan Maisel, *ESPN.com*
- Second place:** Kalani Simpson, *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*
- Third place:** Jon Solomon, *Birmingham News*
- Honorable mention:** Jack Bogaczyk, *Charleston Daily Mail*; Tom Dienhart, *The Sporting News*; Bruce Feldman, *ESPN The Magazine*; Gene Wojciechowski, *ESPN.com*; Bob Condotta, *Seattle Times*; Malcolm Moran, *USA Today*

COLUMN

- First place:** Bud Withers, *Seattle Times*
- Second place:** Gene Wojciechowski, *ESPN.com*
- Third place:** John Adams, *Knoxville News-Sentinel*
- Honorable mention:** George Schroeder, *The Daily Oklahoman*

ENTERPRISE

- First place:** Pete Thamel and Duff Wilson, *The New York Times*
- Second place:** Alan Schmadtke, *Orlando Sentinel*
- Third place:** Jon Solomon, *Birmingham News*
- Honorable mention:** Ted Miller, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*; Bruce Feldman, *ESPN The Magazine*; Joseph Person, *The State*

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Tim Griffin
San Antonio Express-News

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South Bend Tribune

Mike Huguenin
Orlando Sentinel

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Brian Koonz
Danbury News-Times

Ted Lewis
New Orleans Times-Picayune

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Jeff Metcalfe
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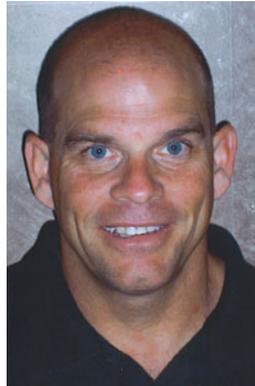
George Schroeder
Daily Oklahoman

Kalani Simpson
Honolulu Star-Bulletin

Scott Wolf
Los Angeles Daily News

Ex-officio
Charles Bloom
SEC/BCS liaison
Jon Jackson
Duke/CoSIDA

President's column



DENNIS DODD

Two responses. Not that I expected flowers and chocolates from the 119 I-A coaches, but two friggin' responses?

First, some background. There are some of us still alive who remember that open locker rooms used to be common. It was part of the tradition of the sport. Stepping over jocks and interviewing sweaty linemen wasn't glamorous, but it was necessary.

And appreciated. There are only a handful of schools these days — UCLA, USC and Miami among them — that have open locker rooms following games. We suspect a lot of it has to do with being in pro markets and the battle for column inches.

Access has eroded to the point that I thought it was time to at least go on record with a position statement. That's what my correspondence to every I-A coach this summer amounted to.

I had the suspicion that even if the letter (which appears below) made it into the hands of the head coach, it would summarily be tossed in the trash can. But at least we would be on record.

All the commissioners and conference service bureau directors got a copy. They would at least know our desires.

I got one letter in return, from Georgia's Mark Richt. He wrote basically that he thought Georgia provided proper media opportunities, and if there were any problems contact SID Claude Felton.

That was fine. The other response was TCU's Gary Patterson. We huddled at the Mountain West media days in San Diego. Patterson was intrigued and wanted to discuss the issue further in the future.

Still, only two responses.

This was the FWAA reaching out to the coaches. Are open locker rooms coming back? Probably not. But I'm not going to run a 4.4 40 either. I still work out. If nothing else we were trying to keep the lines of communication open. Not giving up. Trying to work together. Maybe we can get a dialogue going on other issues.

Two responses.

The hope here is that the idea takes hold with someone like Patterson. A conference like the Mountain West can use all the attention it can get. What if Patterson talked to his conference peers and convinced them to open locker rooms?

What if Conference USA sees what the MWC is doing and those coaches decide to open locker rooms too? I can almost hear dominoes falling.

Or not.

A colleague told me the letter was mentioned at the CoSIDA convention in July. The same colleague told me that a group of SIDs all but dismissed the idea of open locker rooms.

At least, in that case, it got a response.

•

An update on my personal crusade, which any minute threatens to become a five-part PBS series. Indulge me again on the media guide issue.

It became obvious as the '06 guides began stuffing my mailbox. They weren't complete. They were, in many cases, worse than '05 when the controversial legislation forced SIDs to scramble to shoehorn in information.

Worse in terms of the information we need to do our jobs. I'm not naming names, but it's clear that a lot of SIDs have sacrificed information in the media guide in favor of recruiting information.

Specifically, an increasing number of guides don't list the school's all-time results. In the case of a school like Texas, those results are included in the spring guide. Not the best situation having to lug around two publications, but at least the agate is still available and we were told to keep those spring guides for reference.

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Columns: Bud Withers

Comment of the judge, Mickey Spagnola: This was not a glorified feature story. This was a column, full of opinion, but also some research into why the writer had the stated opinion. The column also had passion. There is nothing better than to realize the columnist is not writing just to take a side and get a rise out of readers, one way or another, but that he truly felt there was an injustice at the University of Washington. And best of all, he left me with a good punch in the end. Really nice job.

By BUD WITHERS
Seattle Times

So he skates. Again. Rick Neuheisel always was good at that.

He takes away \$4.5 million in a settlement with the University of Washington and the NCAA in the most stunning convergence of triangular ineptitude since Larry, Curly and Moe got together.

He was vindicated — his word, eight times — of course. No matter that the settlement came primarily through an epic blunder by the NCAA, and that post-trial juror comments indicated he was likely to have a hard time collecting much more than forgiveness of a \$1.5 million loan.

He was vindicated. Just as he was offered the San Francisco 49ers head-coaching job for \$3 million a year (he was dumped off at the airport there to fly home commercial). Just as he wasn't penalized by the NCAA for gambling (he was judged guilty of a violation). If we try hard enough, we may convince ourselves that his Huskies were 2000 national champions because they won the Rose Bowl, and it's the granddaddy of them all.

Rick Neuheisel was blessed with good looks, a winning personality and not the vaguest whit of common sense.

You've probably long forgotten that deep under his dossier of NCAA violations here and at Colorado, beneath the stack of letters of reprimand, censure, admonishment and caution, the *New York Daily News* reported in 1999 that he had attended a party hosted by convicted racketeer Dominick "Donny Shacks" Montemarano. And not long after he came here, Neuheisel made a double-entendre reference to the female anatomy while speaking in a UW classroom.

Innocent stuff, surely, but the kinds of things that make you wonder whether the man was gifted with a scintilla of sound judgment.

I agree with the notion that Neuheisel never would have knowingly risked his job by attending those NCAA tournament auctions and betting thousands. On the other hand, there is scant evidence to suggest he actually was guided by the infamous Dana Richardson memo.

BUD WITHERS — Seattle Times

Age: 57

College: Washington State, 1970

Background: Withers covers Pac-10 and national football for the *Seattle Times*. He has won writing awards from several organizations and has written three books, including a newly released history of football at his alma mater and *Bravehearts*, the story of the rise of Gonzaga basketball. Withers also contributed to ESPN's 2005 college football encyclopedia. He is married and has two sons attending WSU and Gonzaga.



So what in the name of Roxy Roxborough was he doing there?

"He should have known not to be at that event," said one juror.

There was a moment in the Neuheisel trial when his side called an expert witness, civil-trial lawyer Jeff Tilden, to testify about how Neuheisel might have benefited from an attorney in NCAA questioning.

At one point in the cross-examination, UW attorney Lou Peterson asked Tilden, "Truth is a big deal?"

"Absolutely," Tilden said. "I think the world needs to take this whole issue more seriously."

Bingo.

But the case was about more than Neuheisel. It had to do with duplicity at the UW, as well as serial bungling by the NCAA — from the inability to operate a tape recorder to president Myles Brand's arrogance to the fatal discovery error with NCAA bylaws to gambling czar Bill Saum, who tried to make like some glorified, latter-day Sipowicz, crashing around in pursuit of Neuheisel.

It had to do with the staggering collapse of Barbara Hedges' regime as athletic director. Let's see: In the last two years of her reign, there was the Neuheisel fiasco, the William Scheyer drug blight and the embarrassing episode in which African-American leaders came forth to protest the unveiling of a Jim Owens statue on Montlake. Other than that, how was the play, Mrs. Lincoln, uh, Hedges?

The Neuheisel case was about deceit and lack of oversight. Neuheisel was Hedges' golden boy and she was golden girl to the UW. Neither could do any wrong. As one juror put it, regarding Washington, "They had this culture of looking for the gray areas."

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Enterprise: Thamel & Wilson

Comment of the judge, Shawna Seed: This well-reported piece illuminated a serious problem in college athletics. It also put a human face on the issue and gave the reader greater insight into why desperate athletes would choose such a school

**By PETE THAMEL
And DUFF WILSON
The New York Times**

By the end of his junior year at Miami Killian High School, Demetrice Morley flashed the speed, size and talent of a top college football prospect. His classroom performance, however, failed to match his athletic skills.

He received three F's that year and had a 2.09 grade point average in his core courses, giving him little hope of qualifying for a scholarship under National Collegiate Athletic Association guidelines.

In December of his senior year, Morley led Killian to the 2004 state title while taking a full course load. He also took seven courses at University High School, a local correspondence school, scoring all A's and B's. He graduated that December, not from Killian but from University High. His grade point average in his core courses was 2.75, precisely what he wound up needing to qualify for a scholarship.

Morley, now a freshman defensive back for the University of Tennessee, was one of at least 28 athletes who polished their grades at University High in the last two years.

The New York Times identified 14 who had signed with 11 Division I football programs: Auburn, Central Florida, Colorado State, Florida, Florida State, Florida International, Rutgers, South Carolina State, South Florida, Tennessee and Temple.

University High, which has no classes and no educational accreditation, appears to have offered the players little more than a speedy academic makeover.

The school's program illustrates that even as the NCAA presses for academic reforms, its loopholes are quickly recognized and exploited.

Athletes who graduated from University High acknowledged that they learned little there, but were grateful that it enabled them to qualify for college scholarships.

Lorenzo Ferguson, a second-year defensive back at Auburn, said he left Miami Southridge High School for University High, where after one month he had raised his average to 2.6 from 2.0.

"You take each course you failed in ninth or 10th grade," he said. "If it was applied math, you do them on the packets they give you. It didn't take that long. The answers were basically in the book."

The NCAA has allowed students to use correspon-

PETE THAMEL -- The New York Times

Age: 28

College: Syracuse University
Background: Former *ESPN The Magazine* staff writer, *Syracuse Post-Standard* staff writer and freelancer for a while, too. He's the only Albanian sportswriter he knows of and has been to all 50 states.

His hobbies include studying obscure Division I basketball conferences, setting up a stealth campaign for former East Carolina coach Steve Logan to return to the sideline and playing bad pick-up basketball.



DUFF WILSON -- The New York Times

Age: 52

College: Western Washington, Columbia

Background: Wilson has been a three-time Pulitzer Prize finalist since 1998. He is the first two-time winner of Harvard University's Goldsmith Prize for Investigative Reporting. Wilson previously he worked at *The Seattle Times* and *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. He is author of a nonfiction book, *Fateful Harvest* (HarperCollins, 2001), which won book-of-the-year honors from Investigative Reporters and Editors.



dence school courses to meet eligibility requirements since 2000. That year, the NCAA also shifted the power to determine which classes count as core courses to high school administrators. In doing so, it essentially left schools to determine their own legitimacy.

"We're not the educational accreditation police," Diane Dickman, the NCAA's managing director for membership services, said in September.

But last week, Myles Brand, president of the NCAA, said he would form a group to examine issues involving correspondence courses and high school credentials. Brand acted partly in response to a letter sent on Nov. 2 from the Southeastern Conference that highlighted cases similar to Morley's and Ferguson's.

The man who founded University High School and owned it until last year, Stanley J. Simmons, served 10 months in a federal prison camp from 1989 to 1990 after

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Enterprise (continued)

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pleading guilty to conspiracy to commit mail fraud for his involvement with a college diploma mill in Arizona. Among the activities Simmons acknowledged in court documents were awarding degrees without academic achievement and awarding degrees based on studies he was unqualified to evaluate.

In interviews last week, he said he should never have pleaded guilty and that he operated legitimate correspondence schools for adults.

In 2004, Simmons sold University High to Michael R. Kinney, its director. Kinney, 27, who was arrested on a marijuana possession charge in 2003 and is wanted on a bench warrant, declined to comment, despite requests by phone, fax and visits to his apartment.

Several University High graduates said they found the school through Antron Wright, a former XFL and Arena Football League player who is prominent in Miami's high school athletic circles. He is considered a savior by some players, but one principal has barred Wright from his building for luring athletes to a rival school and introducing them to University High.

Miami has ideal conditions for academic-athletic exploitation. It is fertile recruiting ground: 38 players from Dade County were on N.F.L. rosters at the start of the 2004 season, more than any other county. Also, Florida's public schools require an exit examination for graduation, but private schools have no such requirement, and operate under a law that prohibits any state regulation. That allows University High to operate essentially unsupervised.

Pat Herring, the interim admissions director at the University of Florida, looked into University High after admitting one of its graduates, Dane Guthrie, a former Killian tight end. "We found that University High School was kind of a storefront operation," Herring said. "It didn't seem to have much in the way of an academic program."

While Florida officials were discussing whether to allow Guthrie to remain, he transferred to Arizona State.

Other colleges that have admitted University High graduates say they know little about it.

Auburn admitted Ferguson in 2004 and a fellow University graduate, Ulysses Alexander, this year. "The bottom line is they were both qualifiers by the NCAA," said Mark Richard, a senior associate athletic director at Auburn.

A four-member academic panel at Tennessee admitted Morley after sending an athletic department official to Miami to investigate University High. Morley has thrived on the field at Tennessee, but Philip Simpson has stumbled at Temple.

Simpson, a standout quarterback at Southridge High,

said Wright had met with him and his parents and offered a sure alternative from high school to college, telling him: "You either stay there and bust your behind and hope and pray that at the end you don't get short-handed. Or you can do this."

Simpson said his mother called the NCAA to check whether University High courses would be accepted. He said he graduated in three weeks by taking four classes, improving his average to 2.3 from 2.0.

He now says he lacks the educational skills for college. For a basic math class at Temple, Simpson said, he studied at least three hours every day, got help from tutors and met regularly with the professor. He still did not score higher than 53 out of 100 on any test.

Simpson said Temple ruled him academically ineligible to play. He watched this season from the sideline.

A Quick Diploma

University High School consists of two small rooms on the third floor of an office building wedged between a Starbucks and an animal hospital on Route 1 in south Miami. Inside are three desks, three employees and two framed posters from art museums on the wall.

Promotional brochures say diplomas can be earned in four to six weeks, with open-book exams, no classes and no timed tests. A diploma costs \$399, no matter how many courses.

In paperwork filed with the state of Florida, the school says it has six teachers. None of the school's graduates interviewed, however, mentioned dealing with anyone besides Kinney, the current owner, and none said they had received any personal instruction.

John M. McLeod, a Miami-Dade Community College educator, is identified as the University High principal on a letter welcoming new students. McLeod said he met Simmons in the 1970's, but that he had no connection to University High. He said his signature had been copied.

"I've never seen this letter," he said. "I know nothing about University High School."

Simmons said he did not know why McLeod's signature was on the letter.

Former students said in interviews that courses consisted of picking up work packets from University High and completing them at home. Grades they received on the packets counted the same on their transcripts as a yearlong high school course.

"If it was history, they had the story with the questions right next to it," Simpson said. "They were one-page stories. It wasn't really hard."

University High says its textbooks are the Essential Series from Research and Education Association of Piscataway, N.J., but their publisher describes them as study guides.

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Enterprise (continued)

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"You wouldn't describe them as textbooks," Carl M. Fuchs, president of Research and Education, said. "You would say they're more supplemental, but they can be used on their own. A textbook is certainly going to have a lot more text, a lot more information."

University High's literature claims it is accredited by the National Association for the Legal Support of Alternative Schools. The association's Web site says it is "not meant to represent an evaluation and/or approval of the materials, teaching staff or educational philosophy employed by the applicant program." It says "only one standard is applied: consumer protection."

The Florida Department of Education's Web site lists accreditation for University High by the National Coalition of Alternative and Community Schools and by the Association of Christian Schools International. But the alternative schools coalition does not accredit high schools, and David Ray, the Florida regional director of the Christian schools association said, "University was never accredited and has never sought accreditation with us."

To Some, a Second Chance

Simmons said that he opened University High School in 2000 to serve adults; and that the average age of about 400 current students is 36. Football players from public schools in poor neighborhoods began enrolling around March 2004, when University applied for membership to the NCAA. Clearinghouse, which determines if a student is eligible and can qualify for a scholarship. Several players said Wright led them to University High.

Philip Simpson said that when he went to University to enroll, Kinney was expecting him because Wright had called. Ferguson and Simpson said they worked on their University High packets at Wright's apartment.

Wright, 30, could relate to talented athletes with academic struggles, some of the players said. A former star at Southridge and Palmetto High Schools in Miami, he did not attend a Division I-A university because of poor grades, local players and coaches said. He graduated from junior college, then played two years at Division I-AA Bethune-Cookman.

Wright later rooted himself in the Miami football community, serving as an assistant coach at three schools and as a substitute teacher at Dade County football powers. He developed a strong bond with his players.

"I thank God every time I step on the practice field for Tron," said Keyon Brooks, a former Killian player and University High graduate now playing for South Carolina State. "He got me here. He helped me succeed in life. I look at him as a role model."

Tavares Kendrick, a top-rated quarterback from Homestead High, credits Wright for helping him get to

Florida International University, where he is a backup quarterback. Kendrick said his average improved to 3.0 from about 2.1 in about seven weeks by taking nine classes at University High.

"Antron is a great guy," he said. "He helps kids that have great talent but don't have the smarts for school."

Yet Wright is barred from Southridge, partly because he lured players to Killian and to University High. In January 2004, five football players left Southridge and later played crucial roles on Killian's state title team.

"He can't come into my building," Carzell J. Morris, the principal at Southridge, said. "Just for the fact he comes in and takes my kids out. Kids that could probably make it if they weren't looking for the easy way out."

Southridge Coach Rodney Hunter said Wright also encouraged Damaso Munoz, who is now at Rutgers, to leave for University High early this year. Robert E. Mulcahy III, the athletic director at Rutgers, said Munoz was enrolled at the university and was paying his own way. He was admitted by a committee of faculty and deans.

Thirteen of the 38 seniors on Killian's 2004 state title team did not graduate with their class. Many, including Morley and Brooks, wound up at University High.

"How legitimate is it?" Otis Collier, the athletic director at Killian, said about Morley's improvement at University. "I don't know. I guess it's because of me. I probably should want to know, but I don't want to know. I don't want to know anything about it."

Wright declined multiple requests to be interviewed for this article.

By transferring to University High, students can bypass the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test, which is mandatory for public school graduation, and focus on passing through the NCAA Clearinghouse.

NCAA minimum standards require the completion of 14 core courses. Grade-point average in those courses and standardized test scores are rated on a scale. Students with high averages can qualify with lower test scores and vice versa.

For example, after Morley's junior year at Killian, a computer program used to project eligibility showed him graduating with about a 2.1 G.P.A., meaning he would need at least a 960 on the SAT. At University, he raised his average to 2.75, so his 720 SAT score was exactly what he needed to qualify.

Although the standardized testing services flag suspicious jumps in scores, there is no similar alarm for grade-point averages that suddenly go up. Assuring the legitimacy of high school credentials is one reason Brand says he is forming the NCAA panel, which will make recommendations by June 1.

"We see the problem accelerating," he said. "We

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Enterprise (continued)

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want to stop it as soon as possible."

Doing Something About It

When Morley was preparing to enter college, Tennessee and the Southeastern Conference questioned his University High transcript. Brad Bertani, the associate athletic director for compliance at Tennessee, went to Miami to investigate.

Bertani, who met with Simmons for three hours, said he determined that Morley had done his own work. But Bertani refused to comment on University High's curriculum.

"There's all kinds of schooling out there, whether you think it's legitimate or not," Bertani said. "That's for the admissions people at each school to evaluate."

Copies of Bertani's handwritten notes from the visit, obtained through a freedom of information request, say that there were no records of University's teachers and that no lab was required for the chemistry course for which Morley received a B.

Tennessee's research showed that University High School sent transcripts from 28 athletes to the NCAA Clearinghouse.

Bertani also spent weeks investigating Morley's connection to Wright, who accompanied Morley on his recruiting trip to Knoxville and kept in contact with Trooper Taylor, an assistant football coach at Tennessee. Bertani said he found no improprieties with Wright or any connection between him and University High.

Morley, who played defensive back and returned kicks this season, did not respond to repeated attempts for comment by e-mail and through Tennessee officials. His mother, Felicia Henry, demanded to know who had told a reporter he had attended University High and said she knew nothing about the school's academics.

Morley took a full course load at Killian while playing football, along with seven other core courses -- half the NCAA minimum for a high school career -- at University. Transcripts obtained by *The New York Times* show he received four A's and three B's from University. At Killian, he received C's in English all four years, but he got an A in classical literature from University. Grades like that helped his G.P.A. in core courses improve to 2.75 from 2.09 from August to December.

Three of the four members of Tennessee's admissions panel expressed reservations.

"I didn't see anything fraudulent or out of line," Richard Baer, the dean of enrollment at Tennessee, said of his initial reaction to Morley's transcript. "It looked like it could have been another student's transcript from another institution. I didn't see anything that struck me as saying: 'You know what? We need to look carefully at this.'"

The other panelists reacted differently. "All of this was in my mind very, very questionable," Anne Mayhew, the vice chancellor for academic affairs, said.

Todd Diacon, the head of the history department, said, "Anytime I see a transcript like a University High School, it concerns me."

Ruth Darling, an assistant vice chancellor for academic affairs, said, "I always had reservations about this type of school, if students are actually learning."

In the end, the panel never voted, accepting the transcript because the NCAA approved University High and Bertani found that Morley had done his own work there. But when told of Simmons's fraud conviction, Mayhew said Tennessee should have been more careful.

"I think we need to add a new layer of caution to deal with high school diploma mills," she said.

Tennessee Coach Phillip Fulmer lauded the university, pointing out that no other college had visited University High.

"I'm a Tennessee graduate as well," he said. "I want the university to be represented in the right way."

At What Cost a Degree?

When describing his reasons for transferring to University High, Simpson recalled a Southridge basketball player with Division I potential who failed his last chance at Florida's mandatory graduation exam.

"I still remember to this day him walking around the hallways crying," he said. "He was ready to fight every principal and teacher in Miami."

That image stuck with him as he struggled academically. Simpson said he still has his ninth-grade report card showing a 0.6 grade point average. He said he relied heavily on others to do his work.

"The basic skills I'm supposed to have from way back then," he said, "none of them are there."

Mark Eyerly, Temple's chief communications officer, said, "It is in the best interests of our students and of the university for us to offer admission to students whom we believe can succeed here academically."

Simpson said that his problems at Temple made him more determined.

As a freshman, Simpson played defensive end and made seven tackles for a 2-9 team. Temple completed an 0-11 season this month.

When his football career ends, he said, he sees himself in only one place.

"I believe that my fate is to go back to Miami and change things," he said. "My job is to go into school systems like Miami and be a coach and teach kids right from wrong."

Features: Ivan Maisel

Comment of the judge, Lee Feinswog: The Tulane football team, in essence homeless after Hurricane Katrina, landed in Dallas. This story captures the emotional path the Green Wave traveled to survive emotionally and as a football team. It sets the scenes, captures the feelings and truly made you feel what the coaches and players endured.

By **IVAN MAISEL**
ESPN.com

"In Jackson the other night, I was falling asleep sitting up. My son Glenn said, 'Dad, you're falling asleep on a bench like a homeless person.'"

*Glenn paused. Then he said:
"Dad! We are homeless!"*

-- Tulane defensive coordinator Eric Schumann

DALLAS -- They laugh because they don't want to stop to cry. The Tulane football team doesn't know where it will play this season. The 88 players, 10 coaches and assorted staff don't know where they will live. The players don't know where they will attend class. They have no money in their pockets. New Orleans bank accounts remain frozen. Many of them don't know what, if anything, in their homes remains dry and not looted.

In the grand scheme of what Hurricane Katrina hath wrought, their problems are slight. But they are no less easily solved. As the members of the Green Wave try to pick up the pieces of their lives, living in a Double Tree Hotel some 500 miles from home, they also continue to try to exist as a Division I-A football team using borrowed or donated supplies.

"Most of us lost everything," senior middle linebacker Anthony Cannon said, "and if you do have something, you're not getting into New Orleans anytime soon to get it. It's pretty amazing to go from having everything to having nothing in a matter of 24 hours. Coach stresses to us that we shouldn't worry about ourselves right now. We're OK."

Katrina has forced head coach Chris Scelfo to attempt a balancing act as a football coach and a disaster relief coordinator, two jobs that are mutually exclusive. Coaches thrive on routine, and on planning for every contingency. Right now, the only thing that Scelfo knows for sure is that the Green Wave will play this season. He didn't even know that for sure until three days ago.

Tulane's first game, at Southern Mississippi, was moved last week from Sept. 4 to Nov. 26. But it was not until Friday that Dr. Scott Cowen, the university president, decided that the athletic teams should "carry the torch, face, and name" of Tulane this fall. The new opener is against Mississippi State on Sept. 17, site unknown. It had been scheduled for the Superdome.

IVAN MAISEL — ESPN.com

Age: 46

College: Stanford

Background: Ivan is beginning his 20th season as that increasingly rare species, the national college football writer. That makes him second to Mark Blaudschun of *The Boston Globe* in tenure on the beat. He has been around long enough to interview six Alabama head coaches in the same office. He has been around long enough to remember open locker rooms and media guides that actually informed the media. He's hoping that he will be around long enough to experience them again. He has been a frequent winner and placer in the FWAA Contest over the years.



In Scelfo's new world, 12 days from now might as well be 12 months. A I-A program, with its trainers, weight rooms, video, and assorted other branches, is a complex business. Scelfo, like so many CEOs in New Orleans, is trying to keep his company going while rebuilding its infrastructure from scratch.

What appears to be a former meeting room has been transformed into a locker room. A "locker" is a hotel banquet chair, the round-backed ones that stack atop one another. Above it, taped on the wall, is a piece of computer paper with a uniform number printed on it.

"If you close your eyes," said Conference USA commissioner Britton Banowsky, inhaling, "it's a locker room."

Other necessities have not been so easily found. It may be as simple as providing water for practice.

When he gathered his players around him Saturday after practice on a typically stifling Dallas morning, Scelfo reminded them, "Stay hydrated. I want you peeing clear, not yellow or orange. When we walk out of here, grab a water bottle.

"But just grab one. That's all we have."

It may be as sophisticated as computers.

Scelfo had to delay his staff meeting Friday until the position meetings ended. They had to be staggered because the team had only two VCRs available for watching practice tape. In this era of digitized video, VCRs are the equivalent of Game Boy Color.

"It goes much deeper than that," Scelfo said.

It may be as heartfelt as arranging with a Dallas

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Features (continued)

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therapist, Brandi Sinclair, to be available should any of his players become overwhelmed by the tumult in their lives.

Scelfo has been staying awake until some time between 4 and 6 in the morning, worrying about his players, worrying that other coaches will lure his players away, trying to find a happy medium between keeping his players cooped up in the DoubleTree and letting them out in a city that neither he nor they know.

As dawn approaches, Scelfo grabs a couple of hours' sleep and starts again. His wife Nancy and their children Sarah, 13, and Joseph, 12, are with him. They have no idea whether their home is intact. They left the family cat in the garage with food and water.

"I'm not going to stop and figure out how I'm doing," said the coach, 41, the son of a legendary Louisiana high school coach. "I'm fortunate. I got everything I need. I am in good shape."

He paused.

"I might fall asleep in the middle of talking to you."

The Green Wave bugged out of New Orleans on Sunday, Aug. 28, and went north to Jackson, a three-hour drive that took nine in the exodus. Katrina followed less than a day behind them. On Tuesday, after spending nearly 24 hours in a gym that became an oven, the team loaded onto buses and headed west across I-20 to Dallas. SMU offered to share its weight room and whatever else Tulane needed.

Late Tuesday night, the buses pulled into a truck stop in Shreveport. Not until then did the players see television coverage of the destruction and chaos in New Orleans.

"The whole football team was in the store, eyes glued to the television," Cannon said. "You could have dropped a dime in there and heard it fall."

Quarterback Lester Ricard stood there, listening to the tale of a man in the rising waters, holding onto three children with one arm and his wife with the other.

"She was slipping off. She told him, 'Take care of my babies,'" Ricard said. "I'm telling you now and it makes me want to cry. I had to leave out of there. I cried for two hours. I was that emotionally torn up."

Added Cannon, "It's the recognition of streets I drive on every day, and the streets of these people who don't have running water, drinking water, medicine, food, Pampers for their babies. I've never seen anything like that. I see that in third-world countries. To see it in the city I left ..."

Seven of the 10 coaches believe their homes are destroyed. Late Friday night, defensive line coach Lorenzo Constantini went to Nola.com, which has satellite photos of the city broken down by neighborhood. The photo did-

n't quite show his house. But it showed enough.

"You can't see one car," Constantini said. "One house, there's water all the way up to the vents. That one's two doors away from me."

Constantini regrets only that the baby pictures of his two daughters may be ruined. Dennis Polian, the new director of football operations, believes the one-bedroom apartment he moved into in mid-August is ruined. He had just filled it with new furniture.

"I sat in it for a day," he said. "And I really loved it."

Like New Orleans neighbor Blanche DuBois -- another famous city institution, from the play "A Streetcar Named Desire" -- Tulane is depending on the kindness of strangers. After Scelfo made public pleas for clothes, food and toiletries for his team, people all over the country responded.

One conference room in the hotel has been devoted to the gifts. Along one wall are bulging brown grocery bags labeled Deodorant, Soap, Toothpaste, Shave, Conditioner. Another wall has all kinds of snacks. Lining the hallway outside there is a box of bananas, a box of apples, a box of oranges, and a few cases of water bottles.

Polian is the son of Indianapolis Colts president Bill Polian, who sent down boxes of Colts T-shirts, as well as windbreakers for the coaches. Nike FedExed a couple of dozen cases of T-shirts, shorts and duffel bags.

The players need it all. They packed for Jackson as if they would be gone for two, three days tops.

"This isn't a Christmas deal," senior offensive lineman Matt Traina said. "Nobody thought, 'Let me see how much I can get.'"

A Tulane donor offered to buy clothing for the entire football team. It would be, in normal times, a blatant NCAA violation. If anyone believes Tulane has gained a recruiting advantage in the last week, it's hard to believe that he would have the gall to complain.

"The NCAA is going to promote local decision-making," said Banowsky, who, with his staff, has spent countless hours in the last week keeping Tulane athletics alive. "If the decision is a function of the disaster, that's a fairly consistent principle. Getting the students clothes that they would have had at home is one of those things."

On Thursday afternoon, the team traveled en masse to a nearby Dillard's Department Store. Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones had invited the team to its preseason game that night against Jacksonville. Scelfo wanted them wearing something other than the workout gear they had been in for four days.

Each player had a list of items he could pick out. It included collared shirts, nice slacks, dress shorts, T-shirts, underwear, socks, and shoes.

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Features (continued)

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After senior linebacker Brandon Spincer gathered the items on his list, he picked up a black Sean John T-shirt.

"I wanted it," Spincer said. "I didn't need it."

Spincer moved to the Uptown neighborhood in New Orleans in elementary school. When Katrina approached, his parents, Barbara and Barry, left to stay with relatives in Greenville, Miss. His brother Christopher stayed in New Orleans in a room on the ninth floor of the Fairmont Hotel, where a friend worked.

Rescue personnel didn't get to the people at the Fairmont until late in the week. No one in the family knew that Christopher had made it safely out of the city until he called his mother from the Astrodome in Houston, pleading with her to come get him. Friends loaned Christopher cab fare to get to the Greyhound station, where a bus ticket to Greenville awaited him.

"The things I take for granted," Brandon Spincer said. "Just being able to drink water. I can drink water, and people back home can't get clean water to save a life. I'm drinking it because I'm a little fatigued."

Spincer replaced the Sean John T-shirt and walked away.

On Friday night, the Tulane team went to Dave & Buster's, a restaurant and sports bar, for dinner, billiards, and arcade games. Scelfo warned the team that it would be there until 10 p.m. SMU uses the DoubleTree on the night before home games. Mustangs coach Phil Bennett had a 10:30 curfew for his players. Scelfo is so self-conscious about the footprints that his team leaves that he wanted to make sure Tulane stayed out of SMU's way.

After their respective teams made curfew, and Scelfo conducted a late-night staff meeting, he and Bennett stayed up until 4 a.m.

"He needed to talk," Bennett said. "I'm not a sleeper. Since my wife died, I get four or five hours a night. I just listened." In August 1999, shortly after Bennett became the defensive coordinator at Kansas State, his wife Nancy went jogging. She was struck by lightning, leaving Phil with two young children.

"I told Chris something," Bennett said Saturday, before the Mustangs lost their opener to Baylor 28-23. "I've lived around coaches. They're private people. I'm very private. When I lost Nancy, I didn't want people taking my kids anywhere. I was going to do it."

"[Wildcats coach] Bill Snyder called me in. He said, 'People want to help you. You have to let them. Not for yourself, but for your children.'"

"I told Chris, 'The people here want to help you. Let 'em.'"

Bennett and SMU athletic director Jim Copeland in-

vited the Tulane team to the Baylor game.

In normal circumstances, that is an NCAA violation. Opposing coaches and players may not scout a team on their schedule. Tulane is scheduled to play SMU on Sept. 24. Scelfo called Copeland and offered to send only the players. Copeland dismissed the notion.

"You got all the film," he said.

"Yes, sure," Scelfo replied. "It's floating down at Tulane."

The Green Wave's off-the-field lives have been reduced to the DoubleTree, practice at Jesuit High, and weight training at SMU. Scelfo is trying to keep his players' spirits up, and he is trying to keep his program alive. Those two goals come to cross-purposes when it comes to the players' free time.

"We are not going to turn them loose, going to high school games," Scelfo said to his staff Friday night. "If they ask you, say, 'I wouldn't ask Coach right now.' I don't want them out on the streets right now. One slip and it's over. A player, a coach, everybody."

After the night at Dave & Buster's, Scelfo held a team meeting.

"You guys got to trust us," Scelfo said. "Here's what I propose to you: next weekend, you invite your people here. Curfew is going to be adjusted daily. I told you, I'm not going to let you down. What we do is going to be done in the hotel or together, outside of it. On our day off, you want to have a party here? I'll be damned if y'all have a party without inviting me."

From the middle of the room, a voice rang out.

"Naw, coach. You can't come."

The entire team broke into laughter, Scelfo loudest of all.

"This is not [like] a Friday night on a road trip," Scelfo said. "Treat this like we all live off-campus. It's just a hell of a lot nicer place than all of y'all have."

On the way off the practice field Saturday, Scelfo pulled freshman defensive back Matt Harding aside. Harding graduated last spring from South Garland High in the Dallas area.

"You want to be a hero?" Scelfo asked him. "Get your friends here. Your teammates need to see a different face, a pretty face. Get the Dallas guys together. I know you're a freshman. Take the responsibility."

Harding nodded and went to the bus.

Scelfo needn't have worried. Before the game, Scelfo brought the team to The Boulevard, the tailgating area for Mustang fans in the center of the campus. It is modeled on The Grove at Ole Miss. Tents and tables are set up beneath a canopy of live oaks. The food is catered, the music is vibrant and the beer is cold. Scelfo in-

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structed his players several times that, as they walked through, to introduce themselves and thank the SMU community for all it had done.

For coaches and players used to being hidden away on game day, The Boulevard was a revelation.

"How can I get paid and travel around the country and tailgate?" asked assistant head coach Bill D'Ottavio. "This is awesome."

The locals adopted the Green Wave.

"One of the girls I was talking to," said Mason, the linebacker, 'said, 'I wish we had a team that didn't suck. I know who I will be rooting for in a couple of weeks.'"

Students wandered around the Boulevard carrying plastic canisters. One of them approached a Tulane player.

"Would you like to donate to the Pony Hurricane Katrina Fund?" she asked.

Senior tailback Jovon Jackson replied, "We are the Pony Hurricane Katrina Fund."

The Green Wave left at halftime to return to their ho-

tel. They needn't get too comfortable in Dallas. It looks as though Tulane will leave the DoubleTree soon, perhaps for Louisiana Tech, perhaps for another campus.

"Everybody is going with the flow pretty much," said Mason, one of the team leaders, as he sat in the north end zone. "We had a team meeting today on how the coaches are doing everything for the best. Whatever we can do to support them, we're all for it. Whatever the situation, we're fortunate to get out of New Orleans and fortunate for everything we have. Everything people are giving us is overwhelming, to be honest with you."

Added Ricard, the quarterback, "Some people are wanting to go home. I think guys need to realize the big picture. If your parents are safe and you know it, that's what you need. We're here for each other. Home isn't there for a lot of guys."

Tight end Jerome Landry grew up in Chalmette, a town submerged next to New Orleans. He dismissed the notion of going home.

"Where am I going to go? I don't have anywhere to go."

President's column (continued)

The point is, the 208-page limit has forced SIDs to make some hard choices. It's not just the all-time results, which, to me, are an absolute staple in any media guide.

Increasingly, those hard choices mean sacrificing *our* information for recruiting information.

If you've fast-forwarded to the irony, welcome. The NCAA folded recruiting information into media guides years ago in order to cut costs. Make things more equitable what with those evil four-color recruiting guides going out.

Congratulations ladies and gentlemen of the association, you've officially chased your tails. To include the essential information for the *media* more schools are putting out supplements or including it in spring guides. Neither is affected by the 208 limit.

So by forcing SIDS to make a choice, the NCAA has actually created *more* publications. Killed more trees. Depleted our precious staple supply.

Please, don't laugh.

I've said before: media guides and recruiting information don't mix. It's like putting ads in the Bible.

Give us back our information. It shouldn't have to compete for space so recruits can know the average year round temperature in Pullman, Wash.

- Another congratulations to Fiesta Bowl executive director John Junker. It was a pleasure presenting JJ with our highest honor — the Bert McGrane Award — during the College Football Hall of Fame weekend in August.

Junker is too modest. He is one of the most influential people in the business (he would blush at the word "powerful"). He gets it when it comes to bowls, teams, football — and media. I'd like to think that's part of the reason the Fiesta — as Charlie Weis himself said — is the best bowl around.

Now gimme a lap, JJ. Charlie said so.

DODD'S LETTER TO I-A COACHES IN JUNE

Dear Coach:

In light of diminishing access opportunities for college football media, the Football Writers Association of America is hoping you consider these suggested policies to be instituted in your program going forward:

- *Locker rooms be open a minimum of 30 minutes following each game. If space becomes a concern, especially for road teams, interviews could be conducted*

(Continued on page 16)

Game: David Barron

Comment by the judge, Corky Simpson: The winner has a special crackle to it. The writer accomplished the near impossible by taking an event almost too big for words -- the One Great Game of the year -- and bringing it into sharp focus. The logic supports the rhetoric and the quotes fit, rather than dominate, the story. The lead is outstanding and the narrative compelling. This is an extremely well-told tale.

By DAVID BARRON
Houston Chronicle

PASADENA, CALIF. - In the capital city of Texas, on the campus that produced the grandest team of the 2005 college football season, the Tower glows orange.

It shines for an iron-willed, unstoppable magician from Houston's south side named Vince Young. It gleams for a defense that scratched and clawed and repelled a seemingly unstoppable offense in the dying minutes of the fourth quarter.

It burns for the University of Texas Longhorns, 41-38 victors against the Southern California Trojans in the BCS national championship game Wednesday night at the Rose Bowl.

On a night when the Trojans enjoyed stellar performances not only from their two Heisman Trophy winners, quarterback Matt Leinart and running back Reggie Bush, but from running back LenDale White and wide receiver Dwayne Jarrett, the Longhorns trumped excellence with magnificence.

Trailing 38-33, Texas took possession at its own 44-yard line with 2:09 to play after the Longhorns' defense held USC on downs for the first time in the second half. Before 93,986 fans, Young marched Texas downfield and scored on an 8-yard run with 19 seconds to play.

Young ran 19 times for 200 yards and three touchdowns, completed 30 of 40 passes for 267 yards, and lifted a program wishing and hoping for its first national championship since 1970 onto his back.

And then, at midfield of the grand old stadium in the Arroyo Seco, with cameras flashing and confetti flying, he contemplated the object of his affection - the BCS national championship trophy.

"It's so beautiful. Don't you think it's beautiful?" Young said. "And it's coming home to Texas - all the way to Austin, Texas, baby."

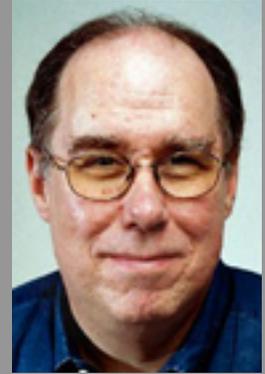
As with every significant victory of a Texas football team, the university bathes its Main Building, the landmark Tower, in orange lights.

The white lights shaping the numeral 1 will come tonight as coach Mack Brown brings the title trophy back to Austin to celebrate the final victory of the 2005 Longhorns - possibly the greatest team in 112 seasons of

DAVID BARRON —
Houston Chronicle
Age: 53

College: Texas

Background: Barron has written about Texas college football since 1980 as a reporter and editor for the *Houston Chronicle*, United Press International, the *Waco Tribune-Herald* and *Dave Campbell's Texas Football* magazine. Barron graduated from John Tyler High School in Tyler, Texas, where he saw Earl Campbell play his first high school game in 1971. Barron graduated from the University of Texas at Austin and worked for *The Tyler Courier-Times--Telegraph* before joining the *Waco Tribune-Herald* in 1978. He began working in 1980 with Dave Campbell on *Texas Football* magazine, serving as managing editor from 1990 through 2004. Today Barron remains the magazine's longest-tenured contributor. After working five years at UPI's Dallas bureau, Barron joined the *Houston Chronicle* in 1990 and has worked as assistant sports editor (1993-2004), Olympics writer and sports television-radio writer.



Texas football.

Trojans' streak ends at 34

The Trojans entered the national championship game with a 34-game win streak and aspirations of immortality as the only program to win three consecutive national championships.

They were as good as advertised. Leinart completed 29 of 40 passes for 365 yards and a touchdown. Bush totaled 177 yards on runs and passes, including a 26-yard touchdown run that will warm the hearts of the Houston Texans, his probable NFL employer. White rumbled for 124 yards and three touchdowns, and Jarrett had 10 catches for 121 yards and a fourth-quarter score that appeared to be the kill shot to Texas' championship hopes.

Young, however, was undeterred. He ran 17 yards for a touchdown with 4:03 to play to pull the Longhorns within 38-33, then turned it over to the Texas defense, which had allowed four consecutive touchdowns to squander a 16-10 halftime lead.

And the defense responded. USC coach Pete Carroll elected to go for the first down on fourth-and-2 from the

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Game (continued)

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Texas 45 with 2:09 to go, and All-America safety Michael Huff stopped White a yard short.

"We knew all we had to do is make that stop," said Rod Wright, the Longhorns' All-America defensive lineman from Houston. "All we had to do was make the stop, and we knew Vince was going to get it into the end zone for us."

And he did. Young had runs of 7 and 5 yards and completed passes of 7 yards to Quan Cosby, aided by a facemask penalty, and 9 and 17 yards to Brian Carter to take the ball to the USC 8-yard line with 30 seconds to play.

After throwing incomplete in the end zone to Limas Sweed, Young, facing fourth-and-5, took the shotgun snap, broke up the middle and veered right, then scored a touchdown that certainly brought tears of joy to the eyes of Texas.

"It was really surreal when we were sitting in the fourth quarter and we were down by two scores, and you think you're going to win," Brown said. "You're playing a team that has won 34 straight games, and momentum is turning, and your defense is struggling. But we never thought we would lose the ballgame."

Picking up pace

With Texas leading 16-10 at the half, both offenses kicked into gear in the third quarter - Texas led by

Young's scrambles out of the zone read option and passes to David Thomas and Sweed, and USC led by Leinart's quick outs to Jarrett and White's bruising runs.

First the Trojans went up 17-16 on White's 3-yard TD run and Mario Danelo's PAT with their opening possession of the third quarter. Then Texas led 23-17 when Young kept on the zone read option from the 14, dashed for the right pylon and dove across for the score.

White's 12-yard run on fourth-and-1 gave USC a 24-23 edge, and after David Pino missed a 34-yard field-goal try to open the fourth quarter, Bush broke away for his best run of the game. He swept right from the 26, beat Texas safety Michael Griffin to the corner, dashed down the sideline and somersaulted over the goal line to put the Trojans up 31-23.

Texas pulled within five on a 34-yard field goal by Pino, but USC drove 80 yards, capped by Leinart's 22-yard laser over the middle to Jarrett, who scored with 6:42 to play.

While offense ruled the second half, defense was the critical factor in the early going as Texas had three defensive stops inside its 25-yard line.

The biggest came when Leinart's pass from the Texas 25 was intercepted in the end zone by Griffin. Officials first ruled the pass incomplete but allowed the interception after a replay review.

Column (continued)

(Continued from page 3)

The trial was five weeks spent reinforcing the horrors from a time with a vacuum of leadership, both in the athletic director's chair and presidency.

Richardson came across as sympathetic, a waif issuing legal opinions with nobody listening. Still, she failed the common-sense test herself. It's common among compliance officers to check with the NCAA if there's a question. Her choice was to make a pivotal, personal call on the NCAA's hottest hot-button issue, with one of the loosest cannons in college sports seated one building away.

It seemed like a case made for settlement, yet settlement came after the trial. By the end of 2004, UW had paid \$898,000 in attorney's fees, a number expected to rise to about \$1.5 million.

The school calculates that had it opted to fire Neuheisel with cause in 2003 — just said, "We've had it with

your incessant hijinks" — it would have had to pay him \$2.964 million. His loan would have been forgiven, as it was in the settlement. So if attorney's fees are \$1.5 million and it's paying another \$500,000 in settlement, in essence the UW saved \$964,000 by hanging out its dirty laundry.

This was what we were left with last week: Neuheisel's father, Dick, taunting radio personality Hugh Millen and Neuheisel's sister flipping Millen off, the family oozing class to the finish.

So go, Rick Neuheisel, Barbara Hedges, Bill Saum. Go clutter someone else's landscape. You deserve each other.

Loose deadline: Wayne Drehs

Comment of the judge, Lee Feinswog: The Northwestern College Eagles have the unlikely task of playing twice in one day and the story about their remarkable undertaking is extremely well done. You get a good feel just how tough a day this is through excellent narrative and a strong array of quotes.

By Wayne Drehs
ESPN.com

ST. PAUL, Minn. — The game is already over, the home team has won. Now it's time to decompress.

At the end of one hallway, a pair of lineman sit slumped against a wall, nodding off in exhaustion. On a quiet stairwell not far away, a receiver buries his head in Scripture. In the trainer's room, players sprawl out on any open piece of carpet they can find. And upstairs in the coach's office, five men sit around a platter of sandwiches trying to figure out just how this is going to work.

On any other normal fall football Saturday, the day would be over for the Division III Northwestern College Eagles. Already having disposed of Trinity Bible College 59-0, they should be heading home. To their wives. To their girlfriends. To an afternoon of watching college football from the couch.

But this is unlike any other Saturday in college football history. The Eagles' work is only half finished. In a little less than four hours, 6½ miles down the road, there's another game to be played, another physical, mental and emotional peak to be reached.

"This is strange," coach Kirk Talley says. "We should be celebrating. I should be getting ready to go out for a nice dinner. Yet I've got all these players still around.

"It feels like a sleepover."

Normalcy is nowhere. Inside the equipment room, a student worker throws socks, T-shirts and underwear in a dryer, hoping they will be ready for the next game. Inside the locker room, where players are unwinding after the rigors of one game, coaches are passing out game plans for another.

What the Eagles are doing is believed to have never been attempted before in modern college football history. And for good reason. Football is a game that most teams get an entire week to recover from. The Eagles are barely going to get a three-hour respite.

"I have to be honest," sophomore lineman Clint Wolcyn said. "Now that it's actually here, this feels pretty weird knowing we have to play again. But we'll get some rest, get some food and then go out there and hopefully take care of business again."

Said receivers coach Scott Hvistendahl: "The way I look at it, it isn't every day that you get to see a bunch of pants dirty before a game."

WAYNE DREHS —
ESPN.com

Age: 29

College: University of Iowa

Background: Wayne joined ESPN.com in 2000 as a general assignment/enterprise writer and has written about everything from streakers to Super Bowls to Steve Bartman. His work has been cited by the *Best American Sportswriting* and he was

recently named one of the country's top sports columnists by *The Wall Street Journal Online*. He lives in Connecticut with his wife Shana, who works as a book editor.



The idea of a doubleheader was the brainchild of Northwestern athletics director Matt Hill. While Hill was struggling to find a 10th opponent for the Eagles' 2005 schedule, Macalester College called inquiring about a game on Oct. 8. After consulting with Talley, Northwestern's president, the team's captains and the athletic directors from Trinity and Macalester, Hill decided the Eagles would play two games in one day.

He had no idea it had never been done before. "Then I called the NCAA to ask them if it was any sort of a rules violation and they laughed at me," Hill said. "And they said it might be next year."

When the 2005 schedules were printed, everyone from alumni to parents called Hill to tell them there was a misprint.

"I'd tell them, 'There's no misprint,'" Hill said. "'We're playing two games in one day.'"

The support of Talley, who takes pleasure in being an out-of-the-box player's coach, was key. This is a man who led his team in Simon Says on Wednesday, a man who lost his starting running back the day before the conference championship two years ago after the player tore up his knee playing a football/kickball hybrid game before a Friday walk-through. It's a game that the team still plays today.

"Most guys, that probably would have been the end of that," Talley said. "But guys know I'm a little goofy. It's just a game. I take more pleasure in the journey."

No journey has been quite like this. Especially here. Northwestern, a quiet Christian college of 2,600 students in a wooded neighborhood on the north side of St. Paul,

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Loose deadline (continued)

(Continued from page 14)

is a place where spiritual growth is just as important as intellectual growth. It's a place where students sign contracts pledging not to drink, smoke or dance.

When a player on either team is injured, Northwestern players fall to their knees, hold hands, bow their heads and pray. And it isn't uncommon to see an entire offensive or defensive unit holding hands on the sideline and praying between series.

Before Saturday's game against Trinity, assistant coach Beau Taylor handed each one of his linebackers a piece of chalk. One by one, in front of their teammates, they went up to a chalkboard and wrote the answer to Taylor's oversized question:

What Will You Give?

In a room overwhelmed with silence, one player wrote "love." Another, "respect." Yet another, "intensity." Then senior defensive back Dan Pazurek stepped to the board and wrote, "all the glory to Jesus Christ."

It's that passion, that ability to "play for an audience of One," as the coaches so frequently repeated through the week, that Talley believes made the turnaround from one game to another possible.

"We have a higher power that we call upon," Talley said. "That's what we have to do. I always tell our guys, 'believe the unbelievable.' I never thought when I said that, it would mean two games in one day."

The biggest challenge, from beginning to end, has been logistics. In an effort to simplify things for his players and his staff, Talley broke the team and coaching staff up into two groups -- Trinity and Macalester.

"To try and prepare everybody for everything, there's just no way," assistant head coach Bryan Johnson said. "So this is the way we decided to do it and we figured we'd deal with the surprises as we go."

The surprises, as it turned out, came away from the field. One of Talley's major concerns late Friday was whether or not the team's battery-operated headsets would last two games, so the coaches elected not to use headsets against Trinity. Then Talley worried about players not having enough clean socks for two games. So he went to Target on Friday night and purchased \$100 worth of socks. Socks, as it turned out, that only came up to the calf. Most of his players would not wear them.

Because there were two games, everyone who was healthy on Saturday played. This includes junior running back Joe Steffenhagen, who was born without full use of his right arm. Steffenhagen had served as team manager the past three seasons before asking Talley if he could play this year. Sure, Talley said. And late in Saturday's win over Trinity, coaches put the starting offensive

line back in the game as Steffenhagen followed their lead for an emotional 4-yard touchdown run.

"I guess I learned what it feels like when somebody hits a game-winning home run and all your teammates come up and hit you in the head," Steffenhagen said. "I have a bit of a headache now. But this is a dream come true for me. I can't believe it."

The doubleheader also was an opportunity for 40-year-old Harold Hicks, a physical education major who joined the team in hopes of learning how to someday become a coach. Hicks had three tackles against Trinity, "one for each Tylenol he takes before and after every game," a teammate quipped.

But not everyone was all smiles. One fan, standing outside the Northwestern locker room at Macalester, told the Eagles "they were an embarrassment to NCAA football." And Trinity Bible coach Jim Dotson, hired after his school approved the doubleheader, also didn't like the idea.

"I was kind of taken aback by it all," Dotson said. "You can sugarcoat it anyway you want to, but from our perspective, it was a putdown. 'We're not worried about you guys, so we're going to go ahead and play someone else the same day.'

"I think it's an insult."

So why did Northwestern do this? Hill insists it wasn't about publicity, money or embarrassing opponents. Hill just wanted to give his kids an opportunity to play a 10th game, like most every other team in Division III.

All anybody had to do was look into Talley's eyes as his team gathered around him following its 47-14 victory over Macalester in Game 2 to understand. There, his eyes welling up from the fall chill and the emotion of the moment, he revealed what this day had meant to him.

Some 10 minutes earlier, senior defensive lineman Nick Wolcyn had intercepted a pass on the Macalester 25-yard line. Stumbling toward the end zone, his team ahead 40-14 with 8 seconds left, Wolcyn seamlessly pitched the ball to fellow defensive lineman Justin Payette, who caught it in mid-stride and marched in for his first career touchdown.

The play touched Talley.

"It would have been easy to hold onto the ball, to take all the glory," he said in his postgame speech. "But Nick thought to himself, 'No. Justin, I'd rather have you score.' We've had a lot of epitomes today, but moments like that, that's what it's all about."

When the day was finally complete, when the clock crept past midnight, the players finished up their pizzas and started heading home, the low-key, even-keeled

(Continued on page 16)

Loose (continued)

(Continued from page 15)

Talley tried to put into further context what had just taken place. In less than 12 hours, his team had gone from 3-2 to 5-2, and one more win next weekend would clinch the Upper Midwest Athletic Conference championship. The Eagles had outscored two opponents 106-14, racked up more than 1,000 yards of offense, but more importantly as he saw it, had grown as men. His body was sore, his back ached and his mind was absolutely shot.

"It was a great day," Talley said, "but I'm glad it's over. It sorta reminds me of vacation -- you love being away, you love something different, but it sure is great to get back into your own bed. I'm ready for my own bed."

As for whether or not the Eagles will ever try something like this again, the overwhelming consensus, from Hill to the coaching staff all the way down to the players, was a resounding "no." Fun once, a royal pain twice.

Only there's one problem -- Hill has yet to find an opponent for a 10th game next year.

President (continued)

(Continued from page 11)

outside the locker room by mutual agreement of the media and SID.

- *Aside from rightsholders, a strict media access policy be adhered to after games. No legitimate media will be denied access to postgame media activities. Nor will any fan/alum/booster etc. be allowed access to post-game media activities. This would not include parents and/or recruits who would be present in a locker room after a game.*

- *Head coaches be available to answer questions for a reasonable duration after each practice — spring, fall and in-season.*

- *Access be allowed to all assistant coaches.*

In the interest of the promotion of your program and student-athletes, these minimal access guidelines should be viewed as a win-win for media and yourselves. The FWAA welcomes your feedback.

Sincerely,

Dennis Dodd

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