

State Of The NCAA Address

Written by {ga=furls}

Monday, October 16 2006 7:00 PM -

There aren't many people on this planet that are more devoted fans of college athletics than Mike Furlan. And he sees some things happening in college football that he doesn't care for. In this "State of the NCAA" address ... Furls rants on the 12th scheduled game, TV timeouts, the extra BCS game, instant replay, and Mark May. Enjoy.



Every year, the sitting President gathers both houses of Congress together to bore the nation with statements of the obvious and political hyperbole. I thought I might do something similar, but with slightly more honesty and a bit of humor, so gather round the soapbox if you dare.

We live in a time of great historical significance. The wheels are turning; the gears are grinding; and powers are aligning. Yet we, the sports fan must remain resolute in our demands and defend our way of life, our distraction, our salvation. For if we are to survive as a sports nation we must unite against the axis of evil, the stupid, the incompetent, and the greedy that threaten our NCAA values.

There is a storm brewing and you may not even realize it yet. Right now forces are aligning against you and against college football fans everywhere to deny us our justly earned rewards. At first minor changes to clock rules seemed insignificant. We stood by and did nothing as the NCAA shortened our game by about 10% of its normal plays. A change like this begs the question, why? NCAA football ranks among the fastest growing sports activities in ratings and revenues. The product is superior and gaining momentum, why make the change? Well, according to NCAA officials, the game was getting too long. Average game times for televised games were pushing well beyond three and a half hours. How could this be when the game clock itself has not changed?

Introducing the Television Timeout.

According to some football players, television timeouts have become so prevalent that it actually affects their off-season preparation. Players from prominent national teams have commented that television timeouts have become so plentiful that teams are not doing nearly as much "cardio" training in camp, because it really is not as necessary anymore. The players and the coaches both know that the game will come to screeching halt, consistently.

Well, we didn't make much of a fuss; we were too enamored with the great gift the NCAA had bestowed upon us, a twelfth game. The game that they could not give us before for a playoff, because it may take the players away from the classroom just a little bit too much. Let's not forget they are student athletes.

What we had failed to realize, my fellow Saturday afternoon couch potatoes, was that the NCAA had changed a long standing rule that discounted Division I wins at the expense of Division IAA teams. So what did every major Division I team do? Rush out and schedule a victim, I mean opponent, to fluff up their win loss record. We are not immune to this crime here in Buckeye country. Check the 2007 schedule. I am sure you will find the feared Penguins of Youngstown State lurking on the schedule.

So what did we, the consumer, get? The old bait and switch. The NCAA basically took an entire game from the schedule by reducing 11 games by 10% and substituting that game for one with a Division IAA opponent. Sounds like a great way to water down a terrific product. Feels an awful lot like when they make that bag of chips two ounces lighter and continue to charge the same price. Well, don't worry; I am sure all that new television revenue will be well spent on scholarships and research.

Speaking of watering down, thank goodness they added another BCS game. Now two more teams get to feel special. Maybe we should get everyone a trophy too. We can hand them out

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during team snack after the game. You know, when we tell the losing team that they did a great job trying.

Hey, while we are on the subject of watering down, how terrific is it that we can now see college football like EVERY single day. This has allowed some really great teams, like New Mexico State to get some serious national coverage. Don't get me wrong, I love having a couple of extra football games on per week, but can't we find some more compelling matchups? Also, why is it that the worst BCS conference dominates Thursday night football?

Well I guess we have discussed the bad, how 'bout if we kick around the ugly. I suppose that everyone has already beaten this whole BCS system to within an inch of its life, but hopefully I can shove it one iota closer to the brink of extinction. The system is flawed and it is obvious. What's worse is that it actually undermines college football. Weighted as it currently is, the BCS favors a team that wins over a team that plays a tough schedule and ends the season with a scar to show for its struggles. This makes matchups like the terrific Ohio State vs. Texas home and home a very risky proposition and those are the match ups that the NCAA should be striving for.

Speaking of ugly has anyone seen anything as well intended as instant reply go as horribly awry? What a train wreck, I am speechless. Nobody wakes up in the morning and says, "You know what, I am going to totally screw things up today, look like a total jack ass in front of the whole country, and destroy my professional credibility!" Sucks to be that reply official from the Oregon vs. Oklahoma game.

While we are on the subject of screwing up your job, how does Mark May still have one? He is wrong more than he is right. He is arrogant every six weeks when he gets something right (like the Auburn game this week), and unapologetic the other five weeks. Tell him to clean out his desk. I am coming. I think Lee Corso may be bucking for my Trev Alberts Award for Broadcasting and Analytical Ineptitude. The years are catching up to you Lee; get out before you go Keith Jackson on us.

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With so much negativity and ire it can be hard to see the good, but all you have to do if you want to find it is tune in on Saturday. The game itself, the players, the coaching, and the systems are as good as they have ever been. I am sure you can look around and find some old timers who will tell you I am wrong, beginning with a, "Back in my day..." but they are wrong. Today's elite players are comparable to elite players across all generations, but what has really changed has been the depth of talent across the country. Maybe it was always there, buried until the 85 scholarship limitations unearthed players that would have sat on the bench in years past. In any case, that talent is on the field now and in my opinion there is no better game.

We must stay the course and protect our sport. We must be willing to fight the money grubbing, hypocritical university presidents and NCAA officials wherever they lie.