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COUPON

New NCAA ruling may flood viewers with game showings

By Joshua Perry Of the Emerald

With the new Supreme Court ruling that released NCAA members from their contracts with the television networks, college football fans can look forward to an explosion of game coverage this season.

But many insiders have their misgivings as to whether or not this is such a good idea.

"Sports fans will probably be able to O.D. on football, and I think that is a sad thing," said Oregon Athletic Director Bill Byrne. "I'm afraid that we're going to oversaturate the market. It is a serious problem."

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled that broadcast agreements between the NCAA, ABC and CBS to televise college football games was anti-trust and restricted competition. The lawsuit was raised by the 63-member College Football Association, led by the Universities of Oklahoma and Georgia.

"We were disappointed in the ruling," said Pac-10 Public Relations Director Jim Mul-doon. "We were in the NCAA's corner on that one. We were hoping they would be successful in that suit."

The CFA wanted the NCAA to allow their member schools to be able to negotiate television deals themselves feeling it would be more beneficial for them. The agreement before the ruling was that the NCAA negotiated television contracts for all the schools.

The CFA wanted the NCAA television plan to be liberaliz-ed," Muldoon said. "It has become so much more liberalized than they wanted - it's reached a point where they have no control.

"College football has lost all of its leverage. You can tell by the dollars paid out by the networks...it's way down," Muldoon added. "It's become a buyer's market, and the networks are the winners.'

That concern has been echoed throughout the country, as schools search for a way to keep existing revenues coming in under the new plan. The Pac-10 and the Big-Ten conferences have formed a consortium and bought a package deal with CBS. The Pac-10 has also con-tracted with Metrosports to televise games regionally along the West Coast including Oregon's games with USC on Oct. 13 and UCLA on Nov. 3.

"Between the two packages we will equal, or perhaps surpass, the television revenues of last year," Muldoon said. "We're probably the only conference that is going to make as much as last year."

So for this year at least, Oregon should come out all right. But with an over-saturation of college football running the risk of low-ratings this year, what is going to happen next year?

"I'll tell you where it could get us," Byrne said. "If you start watching the market share start to drop, the advertisers aren't going to have to pay as much for commercial time. I think it's a sad, sad com-

"If you would have told me five years ago that Oklahoma and Georgia would've been so greedy to sue the NCAA, which is really the goose with the golden egg, I'd have told you that you were dead wrong," he