

The Student Body

SPORTS • HEALTH • FITNESS

Programs scramble for conference spots

By CHRIS TALBOT

Florida Flambeau, Florida State U.

Imagine the national college football system is a jigsaw puzzle. Now take the puzzle, throw it against the wall, and you have college football for the '90s.

In less than a year, an unprecedented number of college football teams have switched conferences or abandoned their independent status in a scramble to secure spots in major conferences.

"The '80s was a decade when...the (independent schools) could no longer survive," said Chris Plonsky, assistant commissioner of the revamped Big East Conference.

So in search of conferences and financial stability they went.

Penn State, Arkansas, Florida State, Miami (Fla.), South Carolina and some smaller schools joined and switched conferences in search of lucrative television packages.

Penn State began the exodus in January 1990 when the school gave up its independence and joined the Big Ten Conference.

"That decision for us to join the Big Ten, that triggered all these changes going on," Penn State Athletic Director James

College Poll Kickoff

Confused by all the changes in college football? Blinded by all the preseason hype? Then look for the weekly *U. College Football Poll*, compiled by college students for college students, appearing weekly in your school newspaper this season.

Tarman said. "We just sat back in amazement that all (the switching) happened."

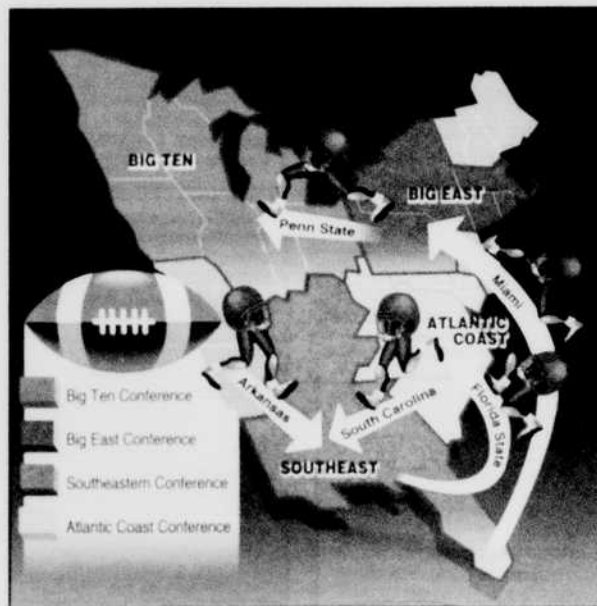
The Nittany Lions were followed by Arkansas, which abandoned a 77-year association with the Southwest Conference to head to the nearby Southeastern Conference.

The Razorbacks were joined in the SEC by South Carolina, which traded independence for the 12-team superconference.

According to Frank Broyles, Arkansas athletic director, his school did not sever its ties with the SWC because it wanted to leave. The Razorbacks made the move out of necessity.

"We were not unhappy in the Southwest Conference," said Broyles. "We've had a long and happy relationship with

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MEL MARCELO, THE UCSD GUARDIAN, U. OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Heading for a postseason playoff?

Football alliance ensures national champ — maybe

By MARK BABINECK

The Daily Texan, U. of Texas, Austin

After years of debate about a college football national championship, the major bowls and conferences decided to settle the score once and for all.

Whether or not they succeeded depends on who you talk to.

The group created an alliance involving four bowl games (the Cotton, Fiesta, Orange, and Sugar), five athletic conferences (The Big East, Atlantic Coast, Big Eight, Southwest and Southeast) and Notre Dame. The new ground rules will begin on Jan. 1, 1993. The Pac-10 and Big Ten conferences elected not to participate.

"The whole intent of this was to create a situation which would get the selection process to a point that it wouldn't be completed until after the season was over," said Mickey Holmes, executive director of the Sugar Bowl.

The traditional bowl arrangements will remain the same, with the champions of the Big Eight, SWC, and SEC going to the Orange, Cotton, and Sugar bowls, respectively. The Fiesta Bowl will remain an open bowl. The remaining slots in those bowls will be filled by a five-team pool consisting of Notre Dame, the Big East and

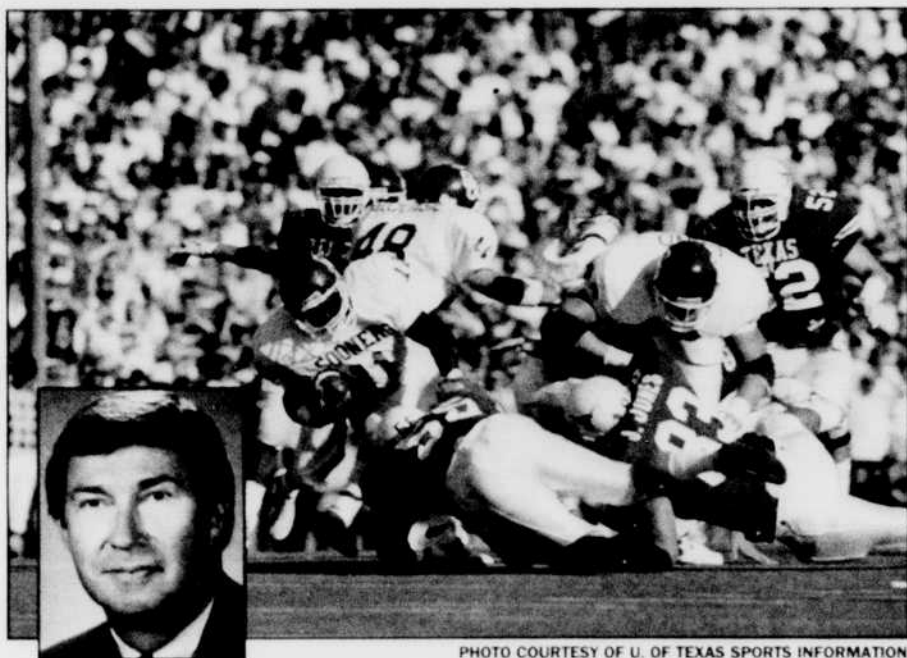


PHOTO COURTESY OF U. OF TEXAS SPORTS INFORMATION

Texas and Oklahoma stand to benefit from the proposed national championship system, but UT Athletic Director DeLoss Dodds, inset, calls the alliance the "worst possible thing."

ACC champions, and two other highly ranked at-large teams.

In the new alliance, the top-ranked team will face the next highest-ranked team available. This arrangement should increase the possibility of a true national championship game between the No. 1 and No. 2 teams and eliminate the early bowl pairings of the past few years.

"Last year (the bowl selections) happened virtually in the first week of November. How in the world can you expect to have

meaningful pairings if you do it that early?" Holmes said.

Holmes stressed the alliance is not a step toward the national football playoff that many college fans have been calling for.

"That was never the intent, to create some sort of playoff," he said. "The threat... of a playoff system would lead the bowls to the same status of the dinosaur."

Notre Dame Athletic Director Richard Rosenthal is happy to see his school become

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Bowls, conferences should wake up and smell the roses

By RICK SCHULTZ

The Daily Californian, U. of California, Berkeley

What a joke. Over the summer, a few college football bowls got together with some conferences and formed a nice little agreement that says they will try to match up the No. 1 and No. 2 teams in a "national championship" game every year.

But it accomplishes something few thought was possible. It makes college football's post-season even more confusing.

The agreement is nowhere near a playoff system that would determine an indisputable national champion. There is still a chance that two teams will be claiming the national title at the end of the year, as was the case in 1990. Georgia Tech finished first in the UPI poll, while Colorado was No. 1 in the Associated Press poll.

And then there's Notre Dame, the school that became its own conference, with a guaranteed berth in a major bowl every year.

Let's not South Bend the rules too

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