

## Mess

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much for these guys, okay?

And of course, the pact also contains another major flaw: it leaves out two of the top conferences in the nation.

The Pac-10 and the Big Ten are not part of the plan. They keep sending their champions to meet in the Rose Bowl and

minding their own business, which, by the way, is doing quite well, thank you.

"We get 100,000 people in the (Rose) Bowl every year," said Jack French, the bowl's executive director. "It's hard to beat success."

"It was our choice not to be a part of it," said French. "We have our own arrangements—a good arrangement."

So, like the little kids who weren't invited to the party and then say they didn't want to

go in the first place, the Pac-10 and Big Ten conferences are thumbing their collective noses at the pact.

And why shouldn't they? Now entering its 78th year, the Rose Bowl's popularity makes it the country's most financially successful bowl, said Bill Flinn, assistant executive director of the Rose Bowl. Simply put, the "granddaddy of them all" is a cash cow.

This slightly improved pseudo-championship setup shouldn't hurt the self-

sufficient Tournament of Roses at all.

Nobody's pulling the wool—or the Cotton—over anybody's eyes here. We can see there is still no playoff that guarantees an undisputed national champion.

It is possible that the top two teams will play each other in a bowl game this year. But wouldn't it be sweet if it was No. 1 Michigan and No. 2 Washington or vice versa?

Come on NCAA, wake up and smell the Roses.

## Championship

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a major player in the agreement. The arrangement ensures the Irish an appearance in a major bowl every year.

"It's not a perfect solution to ensuring that the No. 1 and No. 2 teams meet, but it's a significant enhancement," Rosenthal said.

Texas Athletic Director DeLoss Dodds agrees with Rosenthal on one point—it's anything but perfect. He contends that if the Longhorns were to win the SWC and Nebraska were to take the Big Eight and the teams were ranked No. 1 and No. 2, there would still be no national championship game because the teams are committed to different bowls. And countless scenarios like that could ruin the ideal championship game.

"The best thing for us would be to have an alliance with the flexibility for any possible national champion," he said. "The second best thing would be to do nothing. The worst possible thing would be to leave it (the proposed bowl alliance)."

All the bowl bosses have sounded their agreement with the plan, and Fiesta Bowl officials are particularly pleased.

That bowl, played in Tempe, Ariz., was chosen from a group of games vying for the fourth slot in the agreement, including the Citrus, Gator, Blockbuster and Holiday bowls.

Conspicuous by its absence is the Rose Bowl, the only major game whose teams are automatically determined. The Big Ten and Pac-10 send their champions to Pasadena each year. If a No. 1 or No. 2 team comes from those conferences, the Rose Bowl could render the new alliance's top matchups meaningless.

Granted, the last team to emerge from Pasadena as national champion was the U. of Southern California in 1972. However, in most of 1991's preseason polls, the Big Ten's Michigan and Pac-10's Washington are among the top three picks in the nation. Add perennial power Penn State to the Big Ten schedule in 1993, and it further damages the alliance's chances of fielding a title game.

Confused? Probably, but most agree that the arrangement takes at least a small step toward creating a national championship game.

"I think it's better than what we have ever had," said Florida State Athletic Director Bob Goin. "They went back and looked at it and found that 12 out of the last 15 years, number one would have been against number two (if this system was used)."

"It means that there is more flexibility and the bowls are going to be rewarded with the highest rankings. I think that's good."

■ *Jim Tincher, Oklahoma Daily, and John Shipley, The Daily Iowan, also contributed to this story.*

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