

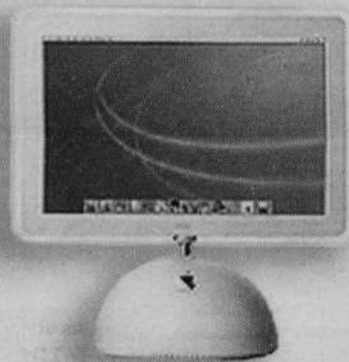
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Less Seattle and Silicon please, more Fiesta during bowl season

So we all just saw one of the most enticing college championships in quite a while when Miami and Ohio State battled to overtime.

The game was filled with a grandeur unmatched this season. Only Willis McGahee's injury could spoil what was a spectacular afternoon in Tempe, Ariz., at the Fiesta Bowl.

Now college football needs to get off its high horse and make sure spectators don't have to endure any more Seattle, Silicon Valley and Motor City Bowls.

There were 28 bowls this season, making enough space for 56 programs to participate in postseason play. There are 117 teams in division I-A. That's a tad bit of an overload.

Just under 11,000 attended the Silicon Valley Football Classic between Fresno State and Georgia Tech. How many of those went home crying after the game because they spent at least \$30 per ticket? I'm gonna guess just under 11,000.

Priceless. The NCAA needs to take a long look in the mirror, focus on what is necessary, then go from there. And that means the postseason, especially.

The money may be there for the extended postseason, but getting through it seems more like a death march than a leisurely trip into sports paradise.



Hank Hager
Behind the dish

When I got around to watching the Miami and Ohio State game, not only did I confuse the game for a high school contest, but it seemed like it took longer between the first bowl and the last bowl of the season than the entire regular season.

The postseason should be a sprint, not a marathon. Especially when that involves collegiate athletes who may never get paid for their actions on the collegiate turf.

Take McGahee for instance. The sophomore was set to enter the NFL draft later this year. Some were arguing he could be a top 10 pick, a potential Pro Bowler within the next few years, and a good bet someday to break NFL records.

Instead, he now gets to endure a season of painstaking recovery from surgery that resulted from a severe injury involving his anterior cruciate and medial collateral ligaments in his left knee.

OK, you say, it's a horrible thing that happened to him, but it's the kind of thing that can happen in a championship game.

That's well and all. But now let's make this situation hit a little closer to home.

Let's say, for example, that this happened to Onterrio Smith. Only, it wasn't in the Fiesta Bowl. It was in the Seattle Bowl, the game that meant nothing more than an opportunity for Washington fans to get in their last Oregon jabs of the season.

How would you feel then? Probably a bit heartbroken.

There's no question that every collegiate team felt grateful to be invited to a bowl. Every player says there's

no experience like it.

But in Seattle? In Boise? How about Tennessee?

It's just a case of the NCAA taking an opportunity to make some money on top of the Bowl Championship Series. With sponsors throwing around cash like they found it in the cushion of their couches, the bigwigs in Indianapolis have been getting bigger eyes by the day.

Like every other collegiate program, spending needs to be curbed. Not only because these bowl games are getting to be a strain on the fans, but also because of the athletes. As I pointed out before, the possibilities of a career-ending injury increase with each game. And of course, these games really don't have much of a bearing on the final standings.

So what should the NCAA do? Limit the postseason to 15 bowls. Let's make sure every AP Top 25 team gets into a bowl. Those are the teams that are most deserving. Making sure only teams that have eight wins be eligible is another step in the right direction.

The best bet would be to bottle up the intensity of contests like the Alamo Bowl and the Fiesta Bowl, then spread it out over a shorter span. After all, the more college football product there is, the less time the average fan will have to spend watching the old boob tube.

Geez, I never thought I'd say I wanted to see less football.

Contact the sports reporter at hankhager@dailyemerald.com. His views do not necessarily represent those of the Emerald.

Women's

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Oregon had a downfall in the second half as sophomore Kedzie Gunderson left the game with a broken nose after a collision with a Montana player.

"The game was great, and that was a big one for us," Gunderson said. "I went up for a rebound and I was coming down and her elbow came straight down on my nose."

Texas Christian 76, Oregon 70

The Ducks would continue their quest on the road as they faced off against the Horned Frogs in Texas on Dec. 22. But despite solid outside shooting, Oregon didn't have enough.

Oregon bettered its school-record on 3-pointers, going 14-of-26, which upped the record it set just a week before against Santa Clara.

But despite Oregon's shooting extravaganza from 3-point land, the Ducks shot just 6-of-16 for 38 percent on free throws and 11-of-45 for 24 percent on shots inside the arc.

The Ducks trailed late at 69-57 with 3:18 left in the game, but after some solid defense, Oregon went on a 10-1 run to pull within 70-67 with 1:33 to go.

Oregon couldn't hold on, though,

and would commit three turnovers in the final minute to seal the Horned Frogs win. The Ducks dropped to 4-5 on the year before returning home to begin conference play.

UCLA 93, Oregon 68

The Ducks found themselves struggling against the full-court press and struggled to find offensive rhythm as they fell hard to the Bruins in their first conference game Dec. 27.

UCLA dominated from the start, as the Bruins jumped out to a 27-7 lead in the first 10 minutes. Oregon would make things even easier for the Bruins as the Ducks committed 11 turnovers in the first half.

Oregon trailed 49-28 at the half and after UCLA's blazing start, the Ducks would never get closer than 13 points. Oregon's 25-point deficit was its second-worst loss at home to a Pac-10 team.

The Bruins were led by freshman guard Nikki Blue with a game-high 26 points, followed by junior Whitney Jones, who also caught fire with a career-high 24 points, surpassing her previous best by 14.

The Ducks suffered without Kraayeveld, who encountered severe inflammation in her right knee before a practice the day before the game.

Oregon 79, USC 73

Oregon found what it was looking for — a solid offensive presence — and was able to overcome the Trojans on Dec. 29 in front of 4,561 fans at McArthur Court.

It was a good win for Oregon, as it was able to find its way to its first conference victory.

The Ducks jumped to a 32-22 first-half lead but struggled toward halftime from the Trojans' full-court press. USC was able to cause several Oregon turnovers and go on a 16-2 run entering halftime.

The Ducks would not be distracted, though, and shot a solid 67 percent from the field in the second half.

With hot shooting, Oregon managed a 17-4 run late in the second half to take the lead 72-61 and secure a victory.

Oregon had solid contributions all around, as five Ducks scored in double figures on the evening for the first time this season.

"It was a great opportunity for us to rebound from a game we didn't play very well," Oregon head coach Bev Smith said. "We came back against USC knowing (Kraayeveld) wouldn't be back with us for an extended period of time, and everybody just came with that focus."

Contact the sports reporter at jessethomas@dailyemerald.com.

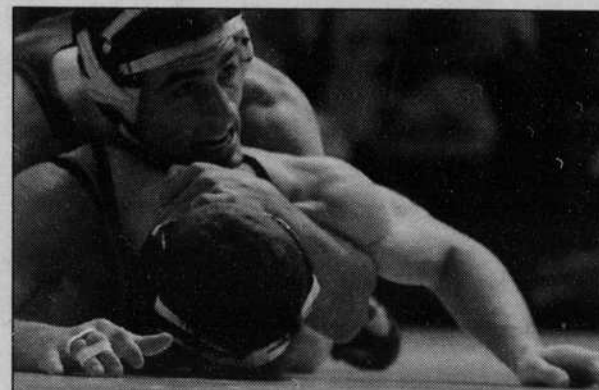
Wrestling

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in the rankings.

Injury wagon

Webb, who started off the season with a strong showing at the Nov. 23 Body Bar Invitational, has sat out every competition since with an injury. His status was not available as of press time.

Mindi Rice is a freelance writer for the Emerald.



Jason Harless (top) followed Mitchell in the comeback over Oregon State.

Jeremy Forrest
Emerald