

# Expanded playoffs means more games and ... more injuries?

By JOHN ZENOR  
Associated Press



Orlin Wagner/Associated Press, File

**Kansas State head coach Chris Klieman directs his team during the first half of an NCAA college football game against Texas in Manhattan, Kansas, last season. The College Football Playoff is considering a major expansion, raising questions of increasing the risk of injuries to players.**

Few college football coaches know the mental and physical grind that comes with navigating a long post-season better than Chris Klieman.

The Kansas State coach was formerly at FCS juggernaut North Dakota State, whose teams routinely compete for national titles in a division where that means playing 15-plus games per season.

"It's a grind to play 16 games or 15 games a year," Klieman said. "We did it for eight straight years. But when you're competing to try to win a championship, you kind of find a way to get through it. We protected the guys in practice the best we could."

The College Football Playoff is considering expanding from four to 12 teams to determine its champion, reserving six spots for the highest-ranked conference champions along with at-large selections. The FCS typically has a 24-team playoff, minus the conference championship games that are part of the fabric in

the Bowl Subdivision.

Still at least a couple of years away, CFP expansion would get a broader pool of teams involved beyond some of the usual suspects like Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State and Oklahoma.

It also begs the question of how many games is too

many for college players who are still juggling school and facing more wear and tear on their bodies.

Sports medicine Dr. Todd May has seen in his former job working with Marines where fatigue led to more injuries in training, including heat illnesses and stress frac-

tures. Being tired, he said, can lead to more mistakes and perhaps overextending on a play.

"I think the coaches will manage the contact accordingly but the mental fatigue that these guys are going to have to work through, I think that's going to add to the diffi-

culty," said May, who works for Intermountain Healthcare in Salt Lake City. "And that's where we're going to see the injuries go up. It may or may not be contact.

"But I think you'll see injuries go up just a little bit just from the mental fatigue, not from the, 'Hey I've been pounding on my buddies that much longer.'"

Klieman could be a strong resource for his peers in terms of managing practice and contact drills to keep the team as healthy as possible. It's an annual challenge for North Dakota State, where he was an assistant before leading the perennial power from 2014-18.

The Bison would cut down some of the hitting in practice and focus more on things like mental walk-throughs with some extra rehab and recovery sessions built in, especially after Thanksgiving when it's playoff time.

"Science will tell you you can't keep hitting these guys and expect them to be fresh and ready to go," Klieman said.

The Bison went 16-0 in 2019 under coach Matt Entz and 15-1 in 2014. A 15-game season is almost an annual

affair for the top teams in the FCS when there isn't a pandemic.

At the major college level, few teams have tackled that challenge even since the four-team playoff began in 2014. No FBS team has played 16 or more games in the modern era.

That could change in the coming seasons.

Alabama and Clemson have already played 15-game seasons, thanks to the double whammy of a league title game and the four-team playoff.

A 12-team playoff, coupled with the league title games, could extend that season to 16 or even 17 games if the conference championship games don't become a casualty of CFP expansion.

Alabama, which has won six national titles since 2009, went 14-1 in both the 2015 and 2016 seasons. Georgia was 13-2 in 2017, falling to Alabama in the national title game. Another SEC team, LSU, went 15-0 in 2019.

At the major college level, Clemson has been the king of the marathon seasons. The Tigers have had four seasons stretch to 15 games over the last six years.

## Pac-12 says COVID-19 issues can result in forfeits in 2021

SAN FRANCISCO — Pac-12 teams that cannot play because of COVID-19 issues will likely be forced to forfeit games this season.

The conference announced Thursday, Aug. 12, it is reinstating its forfeiture policy after it modified its rules last season because of the pandemic.

Last season, a game that could not be played because of COVID-19 problems with either team was canceled and deemed no contest. This season, COVID-19 will not

be automatically considered an excused absence.

"If an institution is unable to play a contest through its own fault, it shall forfeit such contest to its opponent," the conference said.

A forfeit will count as a conference victory for a forfeiting team's opponent.

"The Pac-12 rule provides the Commissioner with discretion to determine whether an institution is at fault or primarily at fault for an inability to play a

contest based on the facts of the situation," the conference said.

The Pac-12 announced earlier this month that regular COVID-19 testing will no longer be required for vaccinated individuals. Vaccinated individuals will also no longer be immediately subjected to quarantine after exposure to an infected individual. Regular testing will still be required for unvaccinated players, coaches and staff.

— Associated Press

## Ducks football No. 12 in coaches poll

The Associated Press

EUGENE — Coming off its second straight Pac-12 Championship, the Oregon football team will open the 2021 season at No. 12 in the USA Today Sports AFCA football coaches poll that was unveiled Tuesday, Aug. 10.

It marks the third straight season under head coach Mario Cristobal that Oregon has opened in the top 15 of the coaches poll. The Ducks are the highest ranked team in the Pac-12, with USC two spots behind at No. 14 and Washington coming in at

No. 21. Utah, Arizona State, UCLA, Stanford and California also received votes.

Oregon will open the 2021 season Sept. 4 against Fresno State in Eugene before going on the road to face No. 4 Ohio State in Columbus on Sept. 11.

The Ducks return nine starters on offense, headlined by running backs C.J. Verdell and Travis Dye, and receivers Johnny Johnson III and Jaylon Redd. Oregon also brings back its entire six-man rotation on the offensive line after that unit entered the 2020 season with just one combined

career start.

All-American defensive end Kayvon Thibodeaux leads the way on defense, where the Ducks bring back seven total starters. Cornerback Mykael Wright is coming off a first-team all-conference season in 2020 while linebacker Noah Sewell was the Pac-12 defensive freshman of the year.

Defending national champion Alabama is the preseason No. 1 in the coaches poll. The Crimson Tide got 63 of the 65 first-place votes while No. 3 Oklahoma got the other two.

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**EO-11541**

Notice is hereby given that the City of Umatilla Planning Commission will meet on Tuesday, August 24, 2021, in the city council chambers starting at 6:30 p.m. to consider the following request.

Umatilla Business Center Variance (V-2-21): The applicant, City of Umatilla, is requesting approval of a variance to Umatilla City Code 10-13-2B3G and 10-4A-7C1A which requires the entrance to be located along 6th street and I Street. The subject property is identified as Tax Lots 3700,3800,3900,4100, and 4200 on Assessor's Map 5N2817BD.

Written or oral comments may be presented at the hearing or directly to the Planning Department at City Hall or mailed to PO Box 130, Umatilla, Oregon 97882. Written comments must be received prior to 5:00 p.m. on the date of the hearing or submitted at the hearing. Comments must address how the application does or does not comply with the applicable criteria. This application is subject to the criteria in Sections 10-13-2 and 10-4A-7 of the City of Umatilla Zoning Ordinance.

A copy of the application and all documents and evidence submitted by or on behalf of the applicant are available for inspection at City Hall during normal business hours at no cost. A copy of the staff report will be available for inspection at no cost at least seven days prior to the hearing. Copies will be provided upon request at reasonable cost.

Failure to raise an issue at the hearing, in person or by letter, or failure to provide statements or evidence sufficient to afford the decision makers an opportunity to respond to the issue precludes appeal to the Land Use Board of Appeals on that issue. Failure of any person entitled to notice to receive notice shall not invalidate the City's action, provided the City can demonstrate notice was sent.

Umatilla City Hall is handicapped accessible. If special accommodations are needed for persons with hearing, visual, or manual impairments who wish to participate in the hearing, please contact City Hall at (541) 922-3226 at least 48 hours prior to the meeting so that appropriate assistance can be arranged.

If you have any questions about this application or need additional information, please contact the Umatilla Associate Planner, Jacob Foutz, at (541) 922-3226 ext. 110, or via email at [jacob@umatilla-city.org](mailto:jacob@umatilla-city.org)

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