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Big Game Cats and Defining Football's Value: College Football's Popularity,
Controversies, and Expansion

A thesis

presented to

the faculty of the Department of History

East Tennessee State University

In partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree

Master of Arts in History

by

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May 2015

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Keywords: Intercollegiate Football, NCAA Athletics, Division I FCS, Georgia State Athletics,

Southeastern Louisiana Athletics, Sporting Culture

ABSTRACT

Big Game Cats and Defining Football's Value: College Football's Popularity, Controversies, and Expansion

by

Matthew T. Himel

This thesis directly approaches intercollegiate football from a cultural perspective. The football's popularity exploded during the Twentieth-Century. Television, merchandizing, and a national sporting culture are associated with this development. However, controversies often muddied the waters of that popularity. Football's brutality, athletic scholarships, and controversies within athletics departments overshadowed the immense popularity of intercollegiate football. During the Twenty-First Century, several universities started new football programs. Two of which being Georgia State University and Southeastern Louisiana University. Given the context balancing popularity and controversy, the administrators demonstrated how the image of intercollegiate football has changed over the course of the past century. This thesis analyzes how the administrators sold the new football programs to their respective institutions and concludes that both universities emphasized the sport's popularity, avoided controversy, recognized the large potential for financial loss, and concentrated the new programs benefit being increased indirect and intrinsic values.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

For more than a century, the sport of American football occupied the American educational landscape. Higher education, specifically, participated in the sport's development and expansion. Intercollegiate football's popularity and controversy appeared to grow together. What was at one time recognized as a gentlemen's sport which originated in America's elite, eastern seaboard institutions—those which became known as the Ivey League—morphed into a national pass time. As the popularity and acceptance of the sport grew, coaches, players, and muckraking reporters exposed controversies within and surrounding the sport. The combination of college football's popularity and controversies significantly influenced how university administrators in the twenty-first-century viewed and conceptualized the sports place in and value to the American university.

The first body chapter examines the popularity of intercollegiate football, particularly through merchandising profits and television viewership across the latter half of the twentieth-century. Despite the popularity of this specific sport, or perhaps because of the immense popularity, several controversial issues have arisen over the course of its storied history in America and the American higher education system. The second body chapter examines these controversies. The brutality of the sport, most pronounced in the 1890s but appears to be returning due to the recent spike in concussions and other injuries, nearly destroyed the game in its formative years. The roughness, which characterized football, resulted in numerous rule changes in the early decades of the twentieth-century. More importantly, the development of athletic scholarships, bowl game selections, and the exposure of corrupt recruiting policies and

the payment of players portrayed collegiate football in a negative light. Nevertheless, the merchandising profits and television contracts only grew in size. By the turn of the millennium, the context intercollegiate football placed itself in and revolved around became an uncertain perception.

That perception remained uncertain because of the extensive and ongoing controversies and politics of the sport, at American colleges and universities. However, the popularity of intercollegiate football, and athletics in general, continued to draw an ever growing viewership and consumer base by the twenty-first-century. Simultaneously, as controversies mounted against the supposed profitability of intercollegiate football, advocates for retaining football, and specifically those who wished to expand the number of collegiate football programs within American colleges and universities, sought to redefine the purpose of football within the higher education atmosphere. To this, the third body chapter analyzes two case studies. In the first decade of the twenty-first-century, twenty-eight higher educational institutions started new intercollegiate football programs. Two of these were Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) and Georgia State University (GSU). The author chose these two universities because of the similarities in size. Both entered division I FCS (football championship subdivision) opposed to the FBS (football bowl subdivision), and their locations within the Southern United States. Although, each university expanded differently, and both SLU and GSU occupy separate atmospheres, SLU is located in a relatively rural environment while GSU is positioned within an extremely urban environment.

However similar the two universities may be, the differences allow a more complete comparative case study of how university administrative personnel essentially sell a football

program to their institution and wider community. Through these two diverse universities, each university president residing over the expansion of their respective athletic departments recognized the potential for financial loss and acknowledged the large probability that neither program would produce a monetary profit for the program itself, athletic department, or university in general. Instead, each president highlighted the potential for intrinsic and indirect values a football program could bring to each university. A different type of profit became associated with intercollegiate football. The presidents, their administrators, and feasibility studies at SLU and GSU predominately cited an increase in the quantity and quality of application rates, an increase in graduation rates, and the creation or advancement of campus solidarity. Because of the controversies, especially those involving direct monetary profitability and financial corruption within athletic departments which developed over the course of the twentieth-century, advocates for establishing new football programs have attempted to stress indirect and intrinsic values.

It is completely necessary to demonstrate the sheer popularity of collegiate football in the American landscape. Looking at the controversies alone could lead one to assume, because of the large amount of controversies, that collegiate football was on the decline when SLU and GSU decided to explore a football program's potential at each respective school. However, these controversies help to explain why each university placed the creation of a football program in the context of intrinsic and indirect values and, furthermore, acknowledged the false illusion of a financially profitable football program. Whether this is an advancement or retraction within the American higher educational system remains undetermined. Although, the administrators' recognition of both football's potential values and its controversies certainly appear to suggest an

evolution of intercollegiate football's prescribed role—by university administrators—in American colleges and universities.

CHAPTER 2

COLLEGE FOOTBALL'S POPULARITY

Viewership, Merchandise, and a National Passion

American intercollegiate athletics drew a significant audience throughout the twentieth-century. One sport in particular, American football at the intercollegiate level, became increasingly popular across the entire century. Several books have been written and studies conducted assessing the popularity and controversies of the sport. Zimbalist's *Unpaid Professionals*, Murray Sperber's *College Sports Inc. and Beer and Circus*, and Shulman and Bowen's *The Game of Life*, amongst others, assess the status of collegiate sports in America, at the end of the twentieth-century. Collegiate football and basketball remain the focus. While basketball certainly retains a strong audience, the majority of each of these studies specifically approach intercollegiate athletics through college football. Numerous scandals and controversies plague the sport to a considerable degree. However, the sport remains popular, and it shows little chance of that popularity waning. Many of the studies have not been favorable to, what the authors consider, "big-time" college sports, i.e. large intercollegiate football and basketball programs who compete on a national stage. The authors differ on what role athletics should play in higher education, but the studies were conducted and the authors believe college football does effect higher education in a significant way.

The draw for collegiate football has been enormous throughout the last century or perhaps longer. This chapter aims to demonstrate that popularity, not explain it. Specifically, through the examination of highly ranked academic institutions which have had intercollegiate football programs and the association of football with morality and life lessons, the extensive

popularity can be clearly seen. Also, enormous NCAA television contracts and college merchandising profits in the billions of dollars largely based on intercollegiate athletics, with college football consistently generating a sizable proportion of that revenue, present the American passion for collegiate football in the recent decades. Across the twentieth-century, and into the twenty-first-century, American intercollegiate football both on a national and regional stage captured and held the American population's attention.

In 1994, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Learning classified eighty-eight universities in America, fifty-nine public and twenty-nine private, as Carnegie Research I Universities (RI). RI universities place a high priority on research, award at least fifty doctoral degrees each year, and “receive annually \$40 million or more in federal support.”¹ This list included those newly admitted and those previously distinguished in the Carnegie Foundation's report. Due to this distinction, the academic world viewed these universities as competitive and demanding in the classroom. Several of the universities acknowledged in the report have been associated with the ivory tower for generations. Universities such as Indiana University, the University of Wisconsin, Harvard and Yale often come to mind. However, lesser known universities, such as the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Rockefeller University, also appear on the distinguished 1994 RI list.

While these eighty-eight institutions all held higher education, advanced degrees, and academic success in high regards, the overwhelming majority of them also fielded intercollegiate athletic teams—with one athletic program in particular. Specifically, 82 percent of the eighty-eight schools fielded an intercollegiate football team in 1994. A large proportion of the schools

¹ “Carnegie Research I Universities,” *University of Washington*, accessed September 11, 2014, www.washington.edu/tools/universties94.html

debuted their football programs in the late nineteenth-century, when football began to spread across the United States. Other institutions, such as the University of Alabama at Birmingham, fielded their first team as late as 1991. Some of the schools in the 18 percent reframed from participating in intercollegiate football throughout their entire existence. Others, however, at one time supported an intercollegiate football program but dropped it before 1994.²

A correlation between the listings of RI institutions and the percentage which field intercollegiate football programs, alone, lacks the necessary evidence to undoubtably determine that collegiate football is at least one of America's most popular sports and an integral part the American higher education system. However, the connection between athletics and universities, and the extent at which it occurs even at America's most prestigious academic institutions, does cause for attention. Many of the institutions, such as members of the Ivey League and large state schools, compile an immense athletic heritage coupled with their institutional heritage. D. Randall Smith's "College Football and Student Quality" suggests that a

school's academic 'tradition,' as captured by the age of the college or university, may not be the driving force attracting and keep students at the school...[I]t may be the sporting tradition at the institution that carries more predictive weight.³

The popularity of football—in particular collegiate football—in America, as suggested by Smith, is a determining factor in how a student could choose their alma mater. Merely, this suggests that fielding a football team at the intercollegiate level could potentially increase application and admissions rates, based on the popularity of collegiate football in America.

² To confirm these statistics, I visited each university's athletic website to determine when, if ever, each institution first fielded an intercollegiate football program.

³ D. Randall Smith, "College Football and Student Quality: An Advertising Effect or Culture and Tradition?," *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 68, No. 2 (Apr., 2009), 559.

That popularity came into existence between 1870 and 1930 when the majority of organized sports in America expanded. Football gravitated towards American colleges. Unlike baseball, considered a sport “of the lower class and the masses,”⁴ football gained more support from Americans in the middle and upper classes, those who attended colleges and universities during this time period.⁵ With the spread of muscular Christianity, between 1880 and 1920, sport in America took on a new meaning. Especially within the YMCA (Young Men’s Christian Association), sport became associated with “character building” and the creation of “American manhood”. Advocates of muscular Christianity, such as G. Stanley Hall and President Theodore Roosevelt, “proposed a new model for manhood, one that stressed action rather than reflection and aggression rather than gentility.”⁶ Protestant Christianity factored into the development of the “American manhood” envisioned by Roosevelt and others.⁷ Sports provided the necessary avenue to pursue this.

The YMCA succeeded in its efforts to merge sport with morality. However, by the 1930s, the Christian component became less apparent, and organized sport took on a secular persona.⁸ Although not completely devoid of religious connotations, the sport of American football in particular “was coming to be seen as both a moral training ground and a mirror of

⁴ Michael Oriad, *Sporting with the Gods: The Rhetoric of Play and Game in American Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press: 1991), 12.

⁵ Oriad, *Sporting with the Gods*, 12.

⁶ Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3,5,8.

⁷ Clifford Putney, *Muscular Christianity: Manhood and Sports in Protestant America, 1880-1920* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2001), 3,5,8.

⁸ Oriad, *Sporting with the Gods*, 12; Putney, *Muscular Christianity*.

American industrial capitalism.”⁹ Elements of muscular Christianity linger to this day through organizations such as the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. The American higher education system significantly contributed to the popularity of collegiate football. According to Michael Oriad, the muscular Christians laid a foundation for “what became the major source of-an American sporting ethic: intercollegiate athletics.”¹⁰

The mirroring of industrial America, particularly its business, contributed to the spread of college football’s popularity. Walter Camp, Yale University’s head football coach for several years in the late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century, recognized this. Both on and off the field, Camp exploited his opponents’ weaknesses. According to Camp,

Finding a weak spot through which a play can be made, feeling out the line with experimental attempts, concealing the real strength till every-thing is ripe for the big push, then letting drive where least expected, what is this—an outline of football or business tactics? Both of course.¹¹

This is where American football developed and drew its spectator and viewership, later with the advent of television, bases. As in any business, “Demand should determine ticket prices, and [the university] should profit from the attraction.”¹² Events surrounding and during World War II highlight this ideal.

⁹ Oriad, *Sporting with the Gods*, 13; N. S. Shaler, “The Athletic Problem in Education,” *Atlantic Monthly* 63 (January 1889), 79-88.

¹⁰ Oriad, *Sporting with the Gods*, 12.

¹¹ Walter Camp, “Sport and Business,” 1920, Walter Camp Papers, Box 44, Folder 2, Manuscripts and Archives, Yale University.

¹² Guy Lewis, “The American Intercollegiate Football Spectacle, 1869-1919,” Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1964, 68; Lewis quotes camp talking about college football, demand, and the university.

World War II witnessed a culmination and spread of this thought into American life. By 1941, the game entered the American psyche. Less than one month before Imperial Japan attacked Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941, nearly tens of thousands of spectators gathered in Philadelphia to watch the Army-Navy football game. The United States Naval Academy in Annapolis and the United States Military Academy at West Point first played one another in 1890, and the match became an annual event in 1930. As Kurt Kemper describes in *College Football and American Culture in the Cold War Era*,

No national championships hung in the balance, yet the game had been sold out for months and another two thousand unanswered requests for tickets piled up on the floor of the Philadelphia's Municipal Stadium. Fans from out of town arrived on one of the forty-two special locomotives that the Pennsylvania Railroad scheduled for the event... Among the almost 100,000 fans enjoying the game and unusually mild weather sat the First Lady and almost the entire cabinet.¹³

It was a national event, to say the least. In Camp's words, the Demand presented itself.

Football's meaning in American life became pronounced when GI's brought the game along to war. Throughout World War II, military bases organized football bowl games modeled after the collegiate bowl games such as the Sugar Bowl (first played in 1935) and Rose Bowl (first played in 1890). They were given names appropriate for their given locations. For instance, Florence, Italy hosted the Spaghetti Bowl, while, in Hawaii, 25,000 paying spectators watched the Poi Bowl.¹⁴ These overseas, mock, bowl games, amongst others, provided "an important and necessary demonstration of American Life," one which was believed to aid the soldiers as

¹³ Kurt Edward Kemper, *College Football and American Culture in the Cold War Era* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 7.; "Notable Thrill to Gridiron Show," *New York Times*, November 30, 1941, p. s1.

¹⁴ Kemper, *College Football*, 10.

soldiers and as Americans.¹⁵ Whether this did, in fact, create better soldiers or Americans is debatable, but it is note worthy that the United States military approved and supported the mock bowl games.

The decade after World War II witnessed a dramatic shift in American football. The game remained a pivotal expression of American life, but over fifty colleges dropped their football programs during the 1950-51 school year. Many were smaller urban, private colleges such as Georgetown University. The demise of such programs can largely be attributed to a lack of players due to the Korean War and the National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) rule that coaches redshirt (forcing a player to continue with practices but refrain from participating in competition) all freshmen players. Attendance at large state schools dropped as well, but by 1950 those who once attended live games now tuned in on one of the seven million television sets in America, where they were available.¹⁶ This will be discussed in detail below.

Although more than fifty schools dropped football programs in one academic year, others prospered under these conditions. Colleges located in rural areas and small towns, where significantly less televisions occupied homes in the 1950s, attendance rates "actually increased, and the big games continued to draw alumni, students, and townspeople."¹⁷ As television reached these areas where football gripped the populations, television coverage only reconfirmed its

¹⁵ Wanda Ellen Wakefield, *Playing to Win: Sports and the American Military, 1898-1946* (New York: SUNY Press, 1997), 36, 89, 100.

¹⁶ John Sayle Watterson, *College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 241-242; Donald Edward Parente, "A History of Television and Sports" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1974), 56.

¹⁷ John Sayle Watterson, *College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy* (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 241-242; Donald Edward Parente, "A History of Television and Sports" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, 1974), 56.

popularity. This instance particularly applied to Southern schools. However, interestingly, Southerners failed to recognize football and organized sport in their cultural identity at the middle of the century.

Southern identity, often associated with collegiate football today, at the mid twentieth-century did not necessarily incorporate sports or even collegiate football in the contemporary context. The Bowl Championship Series (BCS) era of collegiate football (1998-2013), with a Southeastern Conference football program winning nine of the sixteen national championships, has painted the picture of Southern dominance of collegiate football in recent memory. However, this has not always been the case. Attempting to identify Southern identity in the mid-century can cause problems, certainly when trying to fuse sport with the South. Hunting was associated with Southern identity more than any other sport. When Southerners wrote about themselves, “no organized sports and no sports at all except hunting,” were mentioned to any considerable degree.¹⁸ Along with NASCAR, college football remained subdued for many years. Unfortunately, negative attention first unearthed Southern collegiate football and presented it on the national scene.

The Southern sporting tradition became prevalent during the culturally transformative 1960s. The University of Alabama was tentatively selected for the 1962 Rose Bowl but, ultimately, was rejected because of the “racially motivated events in Alabama in the late 1950s and early 1960s [which] placed the state at the center of national attention and condemnation.”¹⁹

¹⁸ Ted Ownby, “Manhood, Memory, and White Men’s Sports in the American South,” in *The Sporting World of the Modern South*, Ed. by Patrick B. Miller (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 328.

¹⁹ Kurt Edward Kemper, *College Football and American Culture in the Cold War Era* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 118.

Because many of the most memorable Civil Rights events occurred in Alabama, E. Culpeper Clark said “Alabama was to the civil rights movement what Virginia was to the Civil War.”²⁰ Although the University of Alabama officially integrated in 1963, Alabama’s social injustices reverberated around the country for years to come. Due to the tentative Rose Bowl selection, “Californians . . . protested Alabama’s appearance in the nation’s most prestigious and financially lucrative bowl game.”²¹ In the following chapter, this potential Rose Bowl appearance along with Ole’ Miss’s 1962 undefeated football team and the school’s integration controversy will be discussed. While this fails to prove Southern identity incorporated collegiate football, it does demonstrate its popularity and social forces at work in collegiate football.

Television dwarfs the popular press and its coverage of collegiate football, from controversies such as those at Alabama and Ole’ Miss in the early 1960s, amongst other. With the rise of television in the 1950s, sport as entertainment emerged at alarming speeds. Over the course of four decades, the expansion of televised sport and football particularly became a part of reality television. Those who once attended games “have become [by 1993] so dependent on features like instant replay that they feel cheated when they attend live games and must actually pay attention to every play, lest they miss the big one.”²² A combination of instant replay, the comfort of one’s own living room, and a limited number of tickets for live games helped televised sport gain traction in America.

²⁰ Doyle, “An Atheist in Alabama is Someone Who Doesn’t believe in Bear Bryant: A Symbol for an Embattled South,” Ed. by Patrick M. Miller, *The Sporting World of the Modern South* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois, 2002), 256.

²¹ Doyle, “An Atheist in Alabama.” 257.

²² Shulman, *The Game of Life*, 19.

Between 1951, when the NCAA took control of television broadcasts of collegiate football, and 1983, the NCAA owned the rights to the Annual Rights Fees. During this time, the NCAA would gain between four and twelve percent of the revenue while the remainder would be distributed to member schools. In 1951, the Annual Rights Fees generated \$679,800. By 1983, it rose to \$74,195,155.²³ The amount of televised games also grew exponentially during this time. Shulman and Bowen compiled the televised sporting events for the same weekend in three different years: the third weekend in November of 1955, 1979, and 1993. Shulam and Bowen describe their findings: “In 1955 viewers could watch 3 hours of sports, with no overlap among programs. By 1979, there were 15 1/2 hours of options, and by 1993 fans could choose from among 43 hours of sports—including 15 1/2 hours of college football alone.”²⁴ The increase in revenues generated from television broadcasts due to the increase in televised sporting events, including football, suggests the prominence and consumption of collegiate football in America grew during the latter half of the twentieth-century.

Individual athletic conferences and schools, along with the NCAA, benefited monetarily from the television coverage. As early as 1915 collegiate football teams turned a profit on their football teams. Yale University’s 1914-15 football program generated nearly \$100,000 in revenue. This was primarily due to gate receipts.²⁵ However, with the advent of television contracts, NCAA member institutions’ revenues sky rocketed, due to television contracts. This especially occurred during the NCAA post season bowl games. By 1996, member institutions of

²³ Andrew Zimbalist, *Unpaid Professionals: Commercialism and Conflict in Big-Time College Sports* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1999), 95, 96.

²⁴ Shulman, *The Game of Life*, 19, 20.

²⁵ Shulman, *The Game of Life*, 18.

the Bowl Alliance—created in 1994—generated \$95,916,000. The member institutions included schools from the Atlantic Coast Conference, Big East, Big 12, Southeastern Conference, Pac-10, and Big 10.²⁶ While this is true, the actual revenue generated remains questionable. Andrew Zimbalist describes the expenses a university uses to attend a bowl game:

Participating teams may receive \$750,000 or \$1 million from the bowl [in 1999], but out of this they have to cover expenses, sometimes revenue-share with their conference, and must cover any shortfall in their obligation to sell a specified, large number of tickets...Expenses include hauling approximately one hundred players, coaches, administrators, the school band, and cheerleaders, among others, considerable distances to warmer climes, then housing and wining and dining them for several days.²⁷

Murray Sperber's *College Sports Inc.* attacks the revenue building sports paradigm. Sperber contends that the vast majority of college football programs operate in a deficit and do not actually generate revenue for the program or the university.²⁸ However, it is necessary to consider why a university would allow a collegiate, supposedly extracurricular athletic program, to operate in such a fashion. If the expenses outweigh the revenue generated by television contracts and gate receipts, and programs are allowed to continue, there must be a substantial draw and support from the American population.

While it is important to consider why collegiate football grew in popularity, the fact that it did grow sufficiently explains the context of the American intercollegiate landscape today. The expansive growth of televised football in the 1950s shared several of the same characteristics and drew upon similar emotions as the likes of theme parks, the music industry, and video games

²⁶ Zimbalist, *Unpaid Professionals*, 107.

²⁷ Zimbalist, *Unpaid professionals*, 107-8.

²⁸ Murray Sperber, *College Sports Inc.* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1990).

produce. It became commercialized entertainment. The commercialization of college football, and its subsequent and overwhelming popularity which grew throughout the twentieth-century, demonstrates that the advent of television only helped football's growth and perhaps its popularity. Attendance rates in the thousands were of less importance when compared to the television rates in the millions.²⁹

The breadth of collegiate football reached far beyond the television screen, stadium, and dome. Along with the television contracts, which expanded exponentially throughout the second half of the twentieth-century, and gate receipts, the development of merchandizing notes intercollegiate football's expanded popularity. Since 1981, the Collegiate Licensing Company (CLC) has represented individual NCAA member schools in terms of merchandizing and branding. The CLC's aims to "protect, promote, and grow" individual colleges' brand names.³⁰ By 2014, the CLC represented colleges from across America, almost 200 all together. Of the \$4.6 billion industry, these 200 institutions rack in 80 percent of the market revenues. Similarly, over 3,000 companies provide products for said institutions. Most notably, companies such as Nike, Knights Apparel, and Gear for Sports manufacture the bulk of the merchandise for the universities and their athletic programs.³¹

²⁹ James L. Shulman and William G. Bowen, *The Game of Life: College Sports and Educational Values* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2001), 18-21; Michael J. Mandel and Mark Landler, "The Entertainment Economy," *Business Week*, March 14, 1994.

³⁰ "About CLC," *Collegiate Licensing Company*, Accessed February 25, 2015, www.clc.com/about-clc.aspx

³¹ These are the top three selling apparel licensing for the 2013-14 academic year, according to the CLC.; "CLC Names Top Selling Universities and Manufacturers for 2013-14," *Collegiate Licensing Company*, Tuesday August 05, 2014, Accessed February 25, 2015, www.lcl.com/News/Annual-Rankings-2013-14.aspx

While football alone did not create the \$4.6 billion market, as of 2014, the collegiate sport has certainly contributed to the development of such a market. For example, Auburn University, a Southeastern Conference and winner of the 2010 NCAA college football national championship, generated \$5.3 million in revenue based on their football program during the 2010-2011 academic year.³² The University of Texas at Austin topped the CLC's top sales grossing universities for nearly a decade in the early twenty-first-century, and in that time the University of Texas consistently generated revenues either equal to or surpassing Auburn's \$5.3 million. Merchandising sales are often associated with collegiate football, especially in the South. According Patrick Rishe, an economist and director of the consulting firm Sportsimpacts, the Southeastern Conference was "the most popular conference in college football," as of 2011.³³ Because of Auburn's association with the Southeastern Conference and the University of Texas located in Texas, a area known for football at all levels, their revenues were significantly impacted by their football programs. Similar to the television revenues generated by college football, the merchandising market, although harder to determine the exact sport which generates the majority of the revenue, signifies a dramatic popularity based on the sheer size of the market and revenues individual schools generate due to their football programs.

While certain states in America have historically associated with other sports, such as basketball in North Carolina with both University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke

³² Patrick Rishe, "Merchandise Sales Reflect Enormous Fan Avidity for Texas, SEC Schools," *Forbes*, August 20, 2011, Accessed February 26, 2015. www.forbes.com/sites/prishe/2011/08/20/merchandise-sales-reflect-enormous-fan-avidity-for-texas-sec-school/

³³ Rishe, "Merchandise Sales."

University,³⁴ collegiate football has and continues to grip America, particularly the Southern United States. A vast majority of universities classified as RI institutions also fielded intercollegiate football programs the same year of the classification, 1994. This alone certainly does not constitute a justification for asserting football as one of American's most popular pastimes. However, the muscular Christians and United States Army provided a moral justification for participating in and fielding collegiate football teams by the mid twentieth-century. Additionally, the size of the collegiate athletics merchandising market and television contracts which developed by the end of the twentieth-century certainly suggests American intercollegiate football played at a national and even regional level was and continues to be extremely popular in America. This popularity attracted millions of Americans from across the country as live spectators and television viewers. Unfortunately, that broad audience base did not only tune in to the games. Controversies across the past 150 years, ranging from race riots to the payment of student-athletes to the sheer brutality of the sport, have played out side-by-side bowl games and national championships. The following chapter will address these specific controversies amongst others.

³⁴ The University of North Carolina and Duke University have a combined nine NCAA basketball national champions; five for UNC and four for Duke.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTROVERSY RUNS DEEP

American intercollegiate athletics hold a significant place in American culture and American universities. The big-time collegiate sports such as football and basketball largely dominate the National Collegiate Athletic Association's television ratings each year. American football is the older of the two and has captured a nation for more than a century. Collegiate basketball in America certainly has a long and storied past, but collegiate football remains the subject of several discussions regarding brutality, civil rights, and corruption. As student-athletes have played football, from the end of the nineteenth-century to the present day, these three issues have plagued not only the wider American culture, the players, but university administrations as well. Power struggles between the athletic departments and university presidents have raged on for more than a century. Early in the Twentieth-century, three Ivey League presidents attempted to ban the sport. This drew the attention of an American president, who worked side by side with the university administrators to save the sport. Occasionally collegiate football became intertwined with disputes out of a university president's control, such as the 1962 undefeated Ole Miss Rebels. Other times, university presidents supported and fostered an atmosphere ripe with corruption such as in SMU president Don Shield's case. In all three cases, as with nearly every scenario, the university president remained at the center of every conversation in some form.

The American university president confronted several obstacles throughout the twentieth-century where the university's intercollegiate football program directly became involved with the obstacle or was an obstacle in its own right. This is by no means an exhaustive list of instances which called for the university president's attention. However, they are many of the most

important. In many cases throughout the twentieth-century, university presidents have pandered to successful football programs and athletic departments in order to secure the possible monetary and intrinsic benefits for the university as a whole. The American university president of the twenty-first-century must acknowledge these challenges often associated with administering an institution of higher learning which embodies an intercollegiate football program.

Organized American intercollegiate sport began as a boating race in 1852. Almost entirely organized by students, crews from Harvard and Yale squared off on Lake Winnepesaukee. A University of Virginia student from the period associated rowing with the great universities and “the vigorous youth of a great state.”³⁵ This can be seen as a response to a perceived inferiority to English counterparts who criticized American college men. One British critic living in Boston insisted that “Their [American] powers are subdued, and their mental capabilities cribbed into narrow limits,” due to a lack of athletics and “interval between their leaving school and commencing their business careers.”³⁶

However, collegiate athletics in America would soon dwarf Britain’s and incorporate specifically American sports. The boating regatta, especially between Yale and Harvard, gained momentum and influenced additional colleges to adopt rowing. Eventually, other sports thrived on the regatta’s example. However, in comparison to other sports rowing did not capture the American imagination. Instead baseball truly began the intercollegiate sporting frenzy. On July 1, 1859 Williams, Pittsburg, Amherst, and Massachusetts staged the first Intercollegiate baseball

³⁵ Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History*, (New York: Alfred A Knopf, 1962), 153-4.; Phillip Alexander Bruce, *History of the University of Virginia, 1819-1919* (1920), Vol. III.

³⁶ Thomas C. Grattan, *Observations of a British Consul, 1839-1846* (London 1859), as reprinted in Allan Nevins, ed., *American Social History as recorded by British Travellers* (New York, 1923), 250-51.

game. The growth of baseball lagged until games were associated with the regatta weekend event in 1864.³⁷ Nevertheless, by 1870 baseball was in every corner of America and remains one of American's most popular sports.³⁸

American football came to dominate the intercollegiate competitive arena, with baseball as its closest rival. Football took on a different persona than its counterparts in commercialism, brutality, and popularity (at least at the collegiate level). University administrative criticism accompanied the commercialism and brutality of football almost immediately. Near the turn of the century, three university presidents from Harvard, Yale, Princeton (presidents Eliot, Butler, and Wilson) detested the “brutality, overemphasis on winning, commercialism, and false scale of values” that intercollegiate football induced into American higher education.³⁹ They feared these values would overrun traditional ideals of American college pursuits.⁴⁰ They believed physically exhaustive, unnecessary activities inhibited their process of forging “a man of science” or “gentlemen and scholars” throughout the eighteenth-century and well into the nineteenth-century.⁴¹

This began to change as students continued to lobby for sporting teams and intercollegiate play, for example the regatta, baseball and football games. The first intercollegiate

³⁷ Guy Lewis, “The Beginning of Organized Collegiate Sport,” *American Quarterly*, Vol. 22, No. 2, Part I (Summer, 1970), 228.

³⁸ Rudolph, *The American College*, 154.

³⁹ John S. Brubacher & Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities*, 4th Edition (New Brunswick, U.S.A.: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 133.

⁴⁰ John S. Brubacher & Willis Rudy, *Higher Education in Transition: A History of American Colleges and Universities*, 4th Edition (New Brunswick, U.S.A.: Transaction Publishers, 1997), 133.

⁴¹ Federick Rudolph, *The American College and University: A History*, 2nd Edition (Athens, Georgia: The University of Georgia Press, 1990), 150-51.

football game in 1869 between Rutgers University and Princeton University resulted in the organization of several college teams. However, it was not until the grand Harvard-Yale rivalry, beginning in 1875, that football swept the nation.⁴² The early forms of football resembled rugby much more than American football. An article published in *The Princetonian* on the centennial of the first Rutgers Princeton game reminded readers “that football of that age was closely akin to soccer.”⁴³ The author described each play as “like the one before.” Being closely related to both rugby and soccer, in the first match spectators saw “the same head-long running, wild shouting and frantic kicking,” throughout the game.⁴⁴ Illustrated pictures accompanying the article show what appears to be a rugby scrum in one and a frantic fist fight and player punting the spherical ball in another.⁴⁵ The competition ended with a Rutgers victory, but not before two players toppled a set of bleachers “when two players in hot pursuit of the ball crashed into the stands.”⁴⁶

Football attracted negative attention due to its brutality alone in its formative decades. Princeton’s own Thomas (Doggie) Trenchard, interviewed by Frank Graham for a 1926 *New York Sun* article, described football in the 1890s. Comparing differences in the game across time, Trenchard stated that “Football in the nineties was a rougher game than it is today...battering

⁴² Bruce, “The Beginnings,” 229.

⁴³ “That First Game,” in *The Princetonian*, September 21, 1969. Box 144. Folder 1. Historical Subject Files, AC #109 1746-present Series 5, Athletics Sports: Football 1869-1939. Princeton University Special Collections, Princeton University, Mudd Library. Accessed October 13, 2014.

⁴⁴ “That First Game,” in *The Princetonian*.

⁴⁵ “That First Game,” in *The Princetonian*.

⁴⁶ “Game #1 ‘Headlong Running, Wild Shouting, and Frantic Kicking,’” in *The Princetonian*, September 1980, A reprinting of a Rutgers University newspaper article from November 1869 in *The Targum*. Box 144. Folder 1. Historical Subject Fields, AC #109 1746-present Series 5, Athletics Sports: Football 1869-1939. Princeton University Special Collections, Princeton University, Mudd Library. Accessed October 13, 2014.

plays were depended upon solely...roughing the kicker, pulling up, hurdling-these were the outstanding weapons,” depended upon to win.⁴⁷ Shear force opposed to strategy, the scrimmage line, and the forward pass, characterized a game more closely related to rugby than to modern American football. After the first full decade of intercollegiate football, the 1890s, the sport’s brutality caused several rule changes, near expulsion, and president Theodore Roosevelt’s intervention in the game.

Charles Eliot, Harvard’s President, characterized the sport by saying “football is more brutalizing than prize-fighting, cock-fighting, or bull-fighting.”⁴⁸ According to a 1905 article in the *Chicago Tribune*, 159 players suffered serious injuries while 18 died because of the sport during the previous year’s season.⁴⁹ Numerous rules changes, and added rules, separated the game from its British counterpart, rugby. As Michael Oriard describes, “a dependence on rules in absence of tradition...expressed the American democratic ethos.”⁵⁰ All participants were equal under the sporting code, much like all citizens were equal under the law. Diverging from the British game to a uniquely American sport is due to the first two decades of intercollegiate play.

⁴⁷ Allison Danzing, *The History of American Football: Its Great Teams, Players, and Coaches* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, INC., 1956), 29.

⁴⁸ Ronald A. Smith, “Commercialized Intercollegiate Athletics and the 1903 Harvard Stadium,” in *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), 26.; Chalres W. Eliot, 1905 Annual Report to the University overseers, quoted by Morris A. Bealle, *The History of Football at Harvard: 1874-1948* (New York: Webberprint, Inc., 1948), 165.

⁴⁹ Brubacher, *Higher Eduction in Transition*, 133; Allison Danzing, *The History of American Football: Its Great Teams, Players, and Coaches* (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, INC., 1956), 29.

⁵⁰ Oriard, *Reading Football*, 30; Michael Oriard, *Sporting with the Gods: The Rhetoric of Play and Game in American Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 10-16.

The 1890s, especially, caused football's rules, the sport itself, and its place in the American college to be reevaluated.⁵¹

However, fellow Harvard man President Teddy Roosevelt disagreed with any attempt to eliminate the rough sport from American colleges. Roosevelt's striking comments "I think Harvard will be doing the baby act if she takes any such foolish course" helped discourage Eliot from continuing his quest.⁵² The sport's roughness appealed to Roosevelt and his contemporaries for that very purpose. Although, in traditional democratic ideas, Roosevelt "did want it to be fair." Roosevelt and college presidents saw new rules and a restructuring of the game as the avenue to save the sport. Adding to the established rules and regulations would ideally ensure "a square deal for every player" on the field.⁵³ On October 9, 1905, in response to the Tribune's article, President Roosevelt invited Harvard's, Princeton's, and Yale's physical directors to the White House. Roosevelt, an avid football player, spectator and 1880 Harvard graduate, charged the three directors with cleaning up the sport. In Progressive fashion of the time, he equated foul play and brutality in football to cheating in a card game and insisted that "the game be played on a thoroughly clean basis."⁵⁴ Roosevelt did not view football as being too rough, per se. In fact, it satisfied many requirements of what he called the "strenuous life."

The "strenuous life" can be characterized as "warlike" and "adventurous" in Roosevelt's own words. In an article published in 1899 commenting on Roosevelt's 1899 speech in Chicago,

⁵¹ Oriard, *Sporting with the Gods*, 13.

⁵² Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 377; Morison, *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt*, V, 172.

⁵³ Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 377.

⁵⁴ Rudolph, *The American College and University*, 376; Elting E. Morison, ed.: *The Letters of Theodore Roosevelt* (Cambridge, 1952), V, 46.

the author describes Roosevelt's views of manliness. With both compassion and physical prowess, men are to go "about like roaring lions seeking whom they may devour [while] they take the largest interest in their neighbors...to help them and to respect and promote their rights."⁵⁵ Roosevelt went further in *The Strenuous Life* to say, "it is given to us [men] all to strive manfully to deserve success," and "the nation [America] rests upon...individual manliness."⁵⁶ However, the intellectual and physical properties encompassing masculinity around the turn of the century were in vein without the moral aptitude accompanying such properties. Without the moral sense and purpose, the physical and intellectual, according to Roosevelt, become nothing more than "unscrupulous force and unscrupulous cunning."⁵⁷ According to Roosevelt, such virtues included courage, perseverance, and ethical business and social relations. Roosevelt again relates moral character to physicality by saying "The least touch of flabbiness, of unhealthy softness, would have meant ruin for...the downfall of the proudest hope of mankind."⁵⁸ Off the battlefield, the football field offered the best alternative.

In an attempt to portray football in a positive light in 1934, *The Daily Princetonian* attempted to link the game to ancient Sparta, Rome, and Britain. W. A. Charlie Jr. insisted that "some form of ball existed 29 centuries ago," citing *The Odyssey's* reference to a contest. Similarly, according to Charlie, Augustus "demand[ed] revision of the football rules," shortly

⁵⁵ "Roosevelt on the Strenuous Life", *The Advocate of Peace (1894-1920)*, Vol. 6, No. 5 (May 1899), 100, 101.

⁵⁶ Theodore Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life*, Howard Bound Edition (New York: The Century Co., Messrs. Charles Scribner's Sons, and G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1904), 212, 213.

⁵⁷ Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life*, 212.

⁵⁸ Roosevelt, *The Strenuous Life*, 212.

after gaining the imperial throne. By 1650, the game of football became “a national institution throughout England.”⁵⁹ Association with the ancient civilizations, due to early American education’s emphasis on the classics, and Britain, the Ivey League’s institution model of Oxford and Cambridge, attempted to solidify football as a beneficial aspect of American education in the wake of the negative views of the sport.

Despite attempted connections to masculinity, warfare, and antiquity, early administrative and particularly academic faculty opposition to commercialized football persisted through the decades as collegiate football gained momentum in American society and universities alike. Outrage at the brutality of the game waned as resistance to its commercialism and degradation of higher education became points of contention for university faculty and academics. For instance, at Ohio State University in 1964, faculty protested their possible Rose Bowl selection. The Big Ten conference, previously the Western Conference, at its founding in 1896, established itself “as a collection of faculty representatives,” with overarching power in the organization.⁶⁰ Operating without a constitution, faculty representatives of member institutions ran and organized the conference “by precedent and various resolutions passed from time to time.”⁶¹

⁵⁹ W. A. Charlie Jr. “History Traces Football From Sparta To First Contest With Rutgers in 1869,” in *The Daily Princetonian* December 6, 1934. Box 144. Folder 1. Historical Subject Fields AC #109 1746-present Athletics Sports: Football 1869-1939. Princeton University Special Collections, Princeton University, Mudd Library. October 13, 2014.

⁶⁰ Kurt Edward Kemper, *College Football and American Culture in the Cold War Era* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 48.

⁶¹ “The White Resolution: A Legislative Check,” *Intercollegiate Conference Newsletter*, October 26, 1961, *Intercollegiate Conference, 1960-61* (3/i/18); John Talbott Powell, “The Development and Influence of Faculty Representation in the Control of Intercollegiate Sport within Intercollegiate Conference of Faculty Representatives from its Inception in January 1895 to July 1963,” PhD diss., University of Illinois, 1965, 33.

In this context, H. S. White of Northwestern University successfully proposed what became known as the White Resolution, which essentially allowed “any member institution’s faculty council a thirty-day review period to essentially veto actions of the conference.”⁶² Faculty exercised this resolution, being passed successfully in 1900, often and especially in matters regarding the Rose bowl. However, each university within the conference had a ten member advisor council with six being current faculty. Without coincidence these “so-called [athletic] friendly faculty members found their way onto the athletic board,” and in a manner of speaking, “faculty control of athletics...was never independent of the administration.”⁶³ Individual university athletic boards rarely attempted to cause trouble in the conference, so to speak.

Nevertheless, as a whole, the Big Ten prided itself on the avoidance of commercial endeavors. The commercial incentives exemplify themselves the most in bowl games and particularly the Rose Bowl at this time. Other than the University of Michigan’s appearances in the first half of the twentieth-century, inter-conference was the rule as deemed by its faculty committees. The 1940s saw the Rose Bowl and the Pacific Coast Conference attempt to prostitute, as faculty viewed it, Ohio State into appearing. The commercialism associated with post season bowl games violated the Big Ten’s precedent of not participating in games “under the control of any corporation or association or private individual.”⁶⁴ By 1946, the Pacific Coast Conference approached the Big Ten yet again to develop a contract between the two conferences. A preliminary contract drafted by the conference faculty would initially last five years would not

⁶² Kemper, *College Football and American Culture*, 48.

⁶³ Kemper, *College Football and American Culture*, 51.

⁶⁴ Powell, “The Development and Influence Representation,” 29.

allow participants in the Rose Bowl who were not from the Big Ten or the PCC. They believed, by excluding other conferences, “the overt commercialism of the Rose Bowl” could be avoided.⁶⁵ Little did the faculty know in 1946, but an onslaught of commercialism was forcing itself into the Buckeye red zone.

Due to a denial of athletic scholarships for several decades in the Big Ten, athletic boosters and OSU athletic administrators and the official athletic board at OSU accepted and sponsored a jobs program for student-athletes. Both through on campus jobs and jobs provided The Columbus Chamber of Commerce distributed between \$75,000 and \$80,000 to student-athletes by 1955 under the cover of on campus and off campus jobs. Unsurprisingly, the overwhelming majority of said jobs were nonexistent and served as a “fictitious cover for cash payments to athletes,” predominately football players.⁶⁶ Both the NCAA and the Big Ten suspended all OSU sports teams from postseason play for the 1957, 1958 and 1959 seasons.⁶⁷

This caused a backlash in higher education and especially at OSU in two areas. First, scholarships were awarded based on athletic in conjunction with “a formula linking financial need with academic performance.”⁶⁸ This development led to the second, which placed OSU athletics in the hands of James F. Fullington, an English Professor who insisted that the faculty, over the course of several years, “unknowingly relinquished much of its regulatory and policy-

⁶⁵ Kemper, *College Football and American Culture*, 49.

⁶⁶ Kemper, *College Football and American Culture*, 51.

⁶⁷ John Scanlon, “The Sent of Roses: Ohio State Takes a Fresh Look at Big-Time Sports,” in *Saturday Review* (April 12, 1962): 56-78.

⁶⁸ “Background of Football Grants Told” and “Scholarship Reality,” in *The Lantern* (October 3, 1961): 1, 2.

making privilege to the university administration and trustees.”⁶⁹ Greater faculty control persisted to less avail. By 1961, the university athletic department granted scholarships determined purely on athletic achievement. This did cause debate amongst faculty, administrators and, the community. However, as the OSU student news paper reported,

It would be much more noble to discontinue the awarding of athletic grants completely rather than endorse the proposed Big Ten rule [of granting purely athletic scholarships]. However, abolishing athletic grants would also mean favoring Big Ten athletic competition on the Ivey League model.⁷⁰

This is a telling, however reluctant, acceptance of the athletic scholarship policies eventually held by the vast majority of American colleges and universities from the early 1960s forward.

Along with student-athlete amateur status issues, race played a large role in intercollegiate sports across the country. University administrators grappled with the question of integration throughout the twentieth-century. Iowa State University’s first integrated football team and subsequent death of Jack Trice, the university’s first black player, caused an influx of controversy. Although Trice died on the field in game play, the memory of Trice reconstructed a change “between 1923 and 1984...to suit particular political agendas.”⁷¹ Being one of the first integrated, if tokenism is integration, collegiate football teams in America, Iowa State and the administration naturally received criticism.

⁶⁹ Scanlon, *The Scent of Roses*.”

⁷⁰ “Background of Football Grants Told” and “Scholarship Reality.”; The Ivey League model stipulates that no member institution can compete for and therefore win a national championship. This keeps the majority of Ivey League competition local and inter-conference play, avoiding much of the commercialism feared by the OSU faculty.

⁷¹ Jaime Schultz, “The legend of Jack trice and the Campaign for Jack trice Stadium, 1973-1984,” in *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (Summer, 2008), 997. (997-1029)

In 1869, Iowa State was founded on “the principle of racial integration and equality,” at least in theory.⁷² According to Jaime Schultz, “Although the ideal of racial equality was one of the institution’s founding principles, administrators had only intermittently enforced it during the institution’s history.”⁷³ By the 1960s, minority students, along with much white student support, criticized ISU president Parks regarding the dismal amount of minority student enrollment. When the modern civil right movement forced university administrators to confront integration, ISU president Parker suggested that “we [ISU] should do the best we can to recruit minority students, but there’s a limit here...we just don’t have many blacks in Iowa.”⁷⁴ However, “students were not entirely placated by administrative actions,” attempting to fully integrate the campus.⁷⁵ While ISU was founded on principles of equality, it did not appear to practice them. Nevertheless, neither ISU nor the state of Iowa experienced the national attention spurred by racism in the same way many universities and states in the South drew national attention.

Race dictated university administrative decisions in nearly all parts of America, but no where was this more visible than in the South. Southern identity at the mid twentieth-century did not necessarily incorporate sports or even collegiate football in any significant way. Attempting to identify Southern identity in the mid-century can cause problems, certainly when trying to fuse sport with the South. Hunting was associated with Southern identity more than any other sport. When Southerners wrote about themselves, no organized sports and no sports at all except

⁷² Schultz, “The legend of Jack Trice,” 1010.

⁷³ Schultz, “The Legend of Jack Trice,” 1010.

⁷⁴ Schultz, “The Legend of Jack trice,” 1012. Schultz quoted Parks in Underhill, *Alone Among Friends*, 157.

⁷⁵ Schultz, “The Legend of jack Trice,” 1012.

hunting,” were mentioned to any considerable degree.⁷⁶ Along with NASCAR, college football remained subdued for many years. Unfortunately, negative attention first unearthed Southern collegiate football and presented it on the national scene. Two specific cases highlight the immense impact sport, and particularly college football, had on both the South and Southern universities.

The Southern sporting tradition became prevalent during the culturally transformative 1960s. The University of Mississippi had one of its greatest, if not the greatest, football season in its history in the fall of 1962. The Ole Miss Rebels rolled over ten teams, beating two ranked teams, posting three shutouts, and a Sugar Bowl victory. The Rebels finished the season ranked #3 according to both the Coaches and Associated Press polls. Their 1962 season is impressive in its own right, but the larger social context played out around the team makes the Rebels’ 1962 season immensely remarkable that they even finished the season, much less undefeated.

After the landmark 1954 *Brown V. Board of Education* decision, Southern schools were slow to comply. The public school system in Little Rock, Arkansas drew unprecedented national and international attention in 1954 by refusing to admit the Little Rock Nine. Its collegiate equivalent, Ole Miss, confronted the possibility of integration with just as much zeal and tenacity as Arkansas. As in Arkansas, the governor of Mississippi, Ross Barnett, vowed on September 13, 1962 that “no school in our state will be integrated while I am your Governor.”⁷⁷ In response, on September 27, United States Attorney General Robert Kennedy said he “hope[d] that this matter

⁷⁶ Ted Ownby, “Manhood, Memory, and White Men’s Sports in the American South,” in *The Sporting World of the Modern South*, Ed. by Patrick B. Miller (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2002), 328.

⁷⁷ Ross Barnett, *Governor Barnett’s Declaration to The People of Mississippi, Broadcast via TV and Radio September 13, 1962*, in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, <http://microsites.jfklibrary.org/olemiss/home/> [accessed November 7, 2014].

[would] be resolved peacefully and without violence or further action from the federal government.”⁷⁸ With the attempted enrollment of an African American United States Air Force veteran, James Meredith, and deployment of United States National Guard troops to the Ole Miss campus, riots broke out on the campus. On the night of September 30, the same night as the riots, President Kennedy addressed the nation and specifically the students of the University of Ole Miss. Attempting to reach out to those students rioting, he said, “You have a tradition to uphold — a tradition of honor and courage, won on the field of battle and the gridiron as well as the university campus.”⁷⁹

As the wave of unrest and defiance of federal laws consumed the Southern campus in the fall of 1962, University of Mississippi chancellor John Williams was forced to decide if following Arkansas’s example of closing the school system was an appropriate choice. In his obituary published in *The New York Times*, May 31, 1983, *The Times* quoted Williams on that infamous semester: “My business is to educate the students sent to me.”⁸⁰ The university remained open, thus allowing Meredith to attend but also the football team to continue its dominating season. It can be argued that the tenacity and tradition on the gridiron ultimately persuaded Governor Barnett and University chancellor Williams to continue classes. The Ole Miss players and students embodied the tradition on the gridiron President Kennedy spoke of the

⁷⁸ Robert F. Kennedy, *Statement by Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy, September 27, 1962*, in John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, <http://microsites.jfklibrary.org/olemiss/home/> [accessed November 7, 2014].

⁷⁹ John F. Kennedy, *President’s Original Speech With Notes: The James Meredith Case, September 30, 1962*, in the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, <http://microsites.jfklibrary.org/olemiss/home/> [accessed November 7, 2014].

⁸⁰ “John Williams, Ole Miss Head in Desegregation Crisis in ’62,” in *The New York Times*, May 31, 1983.

night of the riots. Ultimately, chancellor Williams was able to utilize the football team as a rallying point for all Mississippians.

The issues of civil rights engulfed a fellow Southeastern Conference football team the same year. As stated in the previous chapter, the Rose Bowl Committee tentatively selected the University of Alabama for the 1962 Rose Bowl, but the committee ultimately rejected because of the “racially motivated events in Alabama in the late 1950s and early 1960s [which] placed the state at the center of national attention and condemnation.”⁸¹ Because many of the most memorable Civil Rights events occurred in Alabama, E. Culpeper Clark said “Alabama was to the civil rights movement what Virginia was to the Civil War.”⁸² Decades before the modern civil rights movement began, University of Alabama President George Denny, in 1927, reflected on Alabama’s second Rose Bowl win by saying that the victory led him to return “with [his] head a little higher and [his] soul a little more inspired to win the battle for this splendid Anglo-Saxon race of the South.”⁸³ Alabama’s social injustices reverberated around the country for years to come.

Due to the tentative Rose Bowl selection, “Californians...protested Alabama’s appearance in the nation’s most prestigious and financially lucrative bowl game.”⁸⁴ Their reasoning, seemingly logical, consisted of two points. They resisted the notion of granting

⁸¹ Kurt Edward Kemper, *College Football and American Culture in the Cold War Era* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois Press, 2009), 118.

⁸² Andrew Doyle, “An Atheist in Alabama is Someone Who Doesn’t believe in Bear Bryant: A Symbol for an Embattled South,” Ed. by Patrick M. Miller, *The Sporting World of the Modern South* (Urbana and Chicago, IL: University of Illinois, 2002), 256.

⁸³ Kemper, *College Football*, 120.

⁸⁴ Doyle, “An Atheist in Alabama.” 257.

Alabama a Rose Bowl birth because it would provide, win or lose, “financial profit to the university to further its segregation policies.”⁸⁵ Similarly, they did not want a team “which wouldn’t permit either [USC or UCLA] on its field for race reasons” invited to the famous bowl game.⁸⁶ The protestors did not want the segregated university to gain finances, prestige or viewed as an equal to the potential, integrated, opponents. Alabama’s denied Rose Bowl invitation and subsequently forced university integration in the fall of 1963 can be linked to this development in the 1962 Rose Bowl section. The exposure by journalists and protesters in Southern California, as well as nationwide as the controversy expanded across the nation, may have brought added attention to the university to put pressure on Alabama to desegregate the following year.⁸⁷

The increased politicalization of sport became evident as journalists and sportswriters such as Jim Murray began pointing out these politically charged competitions. Commenting on the 1961 Georgia Tech-Alabama match off, Murray insisted, “I came down to Birmingham not to find social injustice but to cover a football game. But the crosscurrents of our time are such that the two are interrelated.”⁸⁸ Murray’s statement could not be more true. University presidents and chancellors, especially those at Iowa State, Ole Miss, and Alabama, confronted those issues and potentially recognized collegiate football’s significance. Racial tensions persisted long after integration at Southern schools. Even if coaches sought black players for their teams, “they were

⁸⁵ “Negro Groups Nixes Alabama,” *Daily Bruin*, November 5, 1961, 2.

⁸⁶ “Alabama an Insult to Bowl,” *Los Angeles Examiner*, November 15, 1961.

⁸⁷ Kemper, *College Football*, 136-145.

⁸⁸ *Atlanta Constitution*, November 15, 1961, 31,; *Los Angeles Times*, November 20, 1961, IV-1, quoted in Doyle, *An Atheist in Alabama*,” 255.

not about to challenge the status quo for fear of alienating university administrators, influential boosters,” or the rest of the community.⁸⁹

The administrative decisions and statements made and released in times of heightened politicalization constitute grave importance. Iowa State’s President Parks contained the Jack Trice and lack of minority student controversies within the university. However, on occasion higher authority such as a state governors or nation wide committees intercede and override administrative authority, such as Governor Barnett in the case of Ole Miss and the Rose Bowl Selection Committee for Alabama. Issues of race defined much of the controversies plaguing university administration in the socially transformative 1960s and early 1970s.

University administrators confronted the issues of race in their institutions and athletic departments throughout the modern civil rights movement, but the following decades saw an explosion of corruption within athletic departments across the country. Beginning in the late 1970s payments to revenue generating sports such as football and basketball exceeded all previous under the table transactions between universities, athletic boosters, and athletes. This resembled earlier attempts to pay players. Furthermore, the creation of athletic scholarships and expansion of NCAA rules and regulations regarding amateurism curtailed the overt pay-to-play mentality, but the pressure to win resulted in larger incentives for players to sign to a particular institution. By the late 1970s and into the 1980s, corruption characterized collegiate athletics. As evasion of the NCAA regulators grew in importance, so too did the amounts of payments to star athletes. For one highly recruited high school basketball star, “an annual supplement of \$10,000

⁸⁹ Richard O. Davies, *America’s Obsession: Sports and Society Since 1945* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thompson Learning, 1994), 45.

to the legitimate scholarship” may have been tempting.⁹⁰ However, when confronted about this deal, the players dismissed it by saying “Coach, you aren’t even close.”⁹¹

An overwhelming number of corruption cases went through the NCAA during this decade of decadence. According to one estimate, nearly fifty-three of the 106 big-time collegiate football programs in the United States “suffered sanctions [by the NCAA] from 1980 to 1989,”⁹² most of which for “serious recruiting-related violations.”⁹³ These scandals disrupted various athletic programs, not simply affecting the specific team in question, but instead the athletic administration, university administration, and university reputation. They often resulted in the resignation of coaches and university presidents. As with racial integration in the 1960s and early 1970s, corruption spanned the breadth of America, and in some cases, more so. Many universities across the nation became overwhelmed by uncontrollable athletic departments and consequential NCAA sanctions. Specifically, Clemson University, the University of Illinois, and Southern Methodist University exemplified this era of excess, disregard for NCAA rules, and fanatical emphasis on winning.

President William Atchley of Clemson University oversaw two corruption scandals in the 1980s. The first, in 1982, charged the Clemson tigers with recruiting violations amongst other infractions. The NCAA voted to place the defending national champions on a two year probationary period. A probationary period possibly but not necessarily included barring a

⁹⁰ Davies, *America’s Obsession*, 204.

⁹¹ Davies, *America’s Obsession*, 204.

⁹² John Sayle Watterson, *College Football: History, Spectacle, Controversy* (Baltimore, MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 2000), 353-4.

⁹³ Davies, *America’s Obsession*, 203.

university from television coverage, participation in any bowl games, or granting new scholarships. Clemson received each penalty in 1982, not to be lifted until the 1984 season. Additionally, the Atlantic Coast Conference's board of faculty representatives voted to withhold ACC television revenue, usually shared with each conference member, for a two year period.⁹⁴ These penalties were expected to clip the university's revenues by \$2 million.⁹⁵ President Atchley commented on the matter, saying, "I think we did things very carelessly," and declared that he would take full control of the athletic department in an attempt to remedy the situation.⁹⁶

President Atchley may have had the university's best interests at heart when he insisted he would clean up the athletic department, but, unfortunately, the NCAA placed Clemson under investigation yet again in 1985. For universities, such as Clemson in 1985, attempting to overcome recent scandalous history, any negative attention can cause a backlash in public opinion. The *New York Times* described Clemson University as part of a "controversy [which] has focused on academics vs. athletics and on intrusions by the university's board of trustees into the day-to-day administration of the institution."⁹⁷ The second scandal within a five year period erupted after coaches provided anabolic steroids for the athletes during the 1982 and 1984 seasons.⁹⁸ The reputation and image of a university can take decades to cultivate, but for Clemson, both were "quickly tarnished by overzealousness to achieve national prominence and

⁹⁴ Mark Asher, "Clemson Faces Two-Year NCAA probation," in the *Washington Post*, November 11, 1982.

⁹⁵ "Athletics Perverted," in the *Washington Post*, November 25, 1982.

⁹⁶ Watterson, *College Football*, 354.

⁹⁷ David J. Senn, "What is at Stake when an Athletic Scandal Hits," in the *New York Times*, March 10, 1985.

⁹⁸ Watterson, *College Football*, 354.

by struggles to attain a power advantage within that institution.”⁹⁹ The competition between the athletic department and university administration ultimately caused President Atchley to resign in 1985 when the university’s board of trustees “refused to back the president” in his call for the athletic directors resignation.¹⁰⁰

In addition to the illegal recruitment and doping scandals, the Clemson Tigers brought even more negative attention to their Southern university in the fall of 1985. While competing against Maryland in November 1985, one Maryland player tackled a Clemson player on the Clemson sidelines and in the process knocked over several Tigers. In response to this, a few “Clemson players pulled his [the Maryland player’s] face mask and tried to take off his helmet. At least one Clemson player used his own helmet to hit the downed Maryland player.”¹⁰¹ The ACC suspended four tigers. Bob James, the ACC commissioner, outraged, asserted that “there is no way I would sit in this chair and tolerate actions like this.”¹⁰² This, along with the doping and cheating charges issued by the NCAA in 1982 and 1985, provided absolutely no “cultivation [or] nurturing” of a public image which Clemson and all universities sought to establish.¹⁰³ The violations in recruitment practices and distribution of anabolic steroids to players resulted in the resignation of the university president, who could not control the athletic department or the athletic director. Additionally, the reputation of the university was immediately in jeopardy with

⁹⁹ Stenn, “What is at Stake.”

¹⁰⁰ Watterson, *College Football*, 354.

¹⁰¹ “At Clemson: ‘It War Very Ugly’,” in the *Washington Post*, November 23, 1985.

¹⁰² “At Clemson.”

¹⁰³ Senn, “What is at Stake.”

the first NCAA violations, but with the subsequent scandals in doping and un-sportsmanship, Clemson's public image was significantly mired.

After the 1980 college football season, the University of Florida experienced a slew of NCAA investigations itself. By the beginning of 1985, the NCAA president, John Toner, handed down its harshest penalties yet. The 107 infractions included everything "from illegal recruiting to payment of players."¹⁰⁴ The penalties included a large reduction of scholarships for a three year period and no television coverage or bowl games for two years. The University's athletic director, Bill Carr, estimated a loss of \$2.2 millions of university revenue generated through television coverage and bowl games would come as a result.¹⁰⁵ Marshall Criser insisted that the immense reduction in awardable scholarships could be "a chilling effect on institutional self-correction in the future," due to heightening the possibility of future violations.¹⁰⁶ President Criser explained that "The football program had become self-autonomous, if not autonomous," with virtually no oversight from the university administration.¹⁰⁷

After the resignation of the previous university president, Criser declared that at the University of Florida, "We're an academic institution which happens to have a football program, not the other way around. We're going to deal with this or any other problem that needs to be changed."¹⁰⁸ Firing head football coach Charlie Pell, retaking control of the athletic department,

¹⁰⁴ Watterson, *College Football*, 354.

¹⁰⁵ Mark Asher, "NCAA Denies Florida a Reduced Probation; Limitations on Florida's Scholarships, Signing of Recruits Among Penalties," in the *Washington Post*, January 14, 1985.

¹⁰⁶ Asher, "NCAA Denies Florida."

¹⁰⁷ Mark Asher, "Criser: New Rules for Florida Coach," in the *Washington Post*, September 19, 1984.

¹⁰⁸ Asher, "Criser."

and hiring a separate athletic director and head football coach¹⁰⁹ all served to restructure the university. Additionally, the university president initiated and executed each of these decisions.¹¹⁰

While Clemson dabbled in illegal recruitment, doping, and un-sportsmanship, and the NCAA handed down its harshest penalties by 1985 to Florida, one other lesser known university committed just as many, if not more, violations. When discussing intercollegiate corruption cases none other than the Southern Methodist University Mustangs come to mind. The likes of head football coach Ron Meyer, former governor of Texas Bill Clements, and an extremely private yet influential booster and SMU alumni Sherwood Blount, are associated with the series of scandals which plagued SMU as a whole in the 1980s and into the 1990s. Several cases studies could be written about how these scandals developed, the culture in Texas and collegiate athletics they grew out of, and the institutional impact of both SMU and the NCAA.

SMU lacked a large appeal for both students and football players in the mid 1970s. David Whitford's *A Payroll to Meet*, published in 1989, provides a detailed description of the SMU landscape in terms of football, academics, and social life. Whitford went down the line of what SMU did not have to offer:

Facilities? Nothing to brag about there. Big crowds? Well, no. Pretty girls? Sure, except that SMU had very few black women students; many black players who later came to SMU...chose to spend their weekends forty miles up the interstate [at] North Texas State University, where the student population was more diverse and the party scene more varied. What about academics? SMU is good but probably not the best in the Southwest Conference; Rice has a better reputation, the University of Texas has more to offer. The team? The Team was terrible. Recruits who chose SMU were giving up a better chance go going to bowl games,

¹⁰⁹ This was the first time since 1950 that the athletic director was not also the head football coach at the University of Florida.

¹¹⁰ Asher, "Criser."

appearing on television, and playing in front of big crowds at any number of other schools.¹¹¹

Southern Methodist simply had little to offer when Ron Meyer took the head coaching position in 1976. This led to a series of practices ranging from questionable to down right corrupt.

The severity of their violations, particularly in the recruitment and payment of players, may not have been anymore serious their counterparts, but as John Style Watterson put it, “SMU was not a flagship state institution” yet they achieved the highest “winning percentage of any team in the country,” in the first half of the 1980s.¹¹² Between 1981 and 1984, SMU’s collegiate football record was 41 wins, 5 loses, and 1 tie. Craig James, running back for SMU and member of the storied “Pony Express,” once said, “We could beat anybody we walked out on the field with.”¹¹³ SMU outsiders and especially the NCAA thought there might be a reason for such rapid success. Watterson continued:

Southern Methodist had a reputation for not only as big-time football power but also as a repeat offender that persistently was investigated by the NCAA-and this reputation grew worse after sanctions in 1984 and another probe in 1985. When newscaster Tom Brokaw addressed the NCAA at the end of the year, he began by saying: “I was especially flattered when I was asked to be here and do this today, especially when I realized that for \$10,000 and a new convertible you could have and the top running back prospect from SMU for this luncheon.”¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ David Whitford, *A Payroll to Meet: A Story of Greed, Corruption, & Football at SMU* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 23.

¹¹² Watterson, *College Football*, 355.

¹¹³ *ESPN 30 for 30*, “Pony Excess,” season 1, episode 30, November 9, 2010; David Whitford, *A payroll to Meet: A Story of Greed, Corruption, & Football at SMU* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 60.

¹¹⁴ Watterson, *College Football*, 355-356.

Brokaw's anecdote was not far fetched nor isolated to SMU. Along with the recruiting violations at Clemson and Florida, the Southwest Conference, of which SMU belonged, notoriously violated NCAA rules regarding recruitment.

David McNadd of the *Dallas Morning News* equated recruitment in Texas to the Wild West in the 1970s and 1980s. When interviewed about recruitment in Texas during this time, Craig James, the second most recruited player in 1978 and SMU running back from '79-'82, said, "The going rate for the top player out there [was] \$50,000 cash, \$1,000 a month."¹¹⁵ Similarly, Harvey Armstrong, SMU Defensive back from '78-'81, "was offered a home for my parents at one time." He continued "Yes, that's what I said. A House."¹¹⁶ During this time, of the nine members within the Southwest Conference, eight of which were in Texas, "five were on some sort of NCAA violation."¹¹⁷ One reporter recalled that there were institutions in Texas giving out hundreds of thousands of dollars a year and "winning three games. That is the definition of a loser." When asked about SMU, he said, "at least they bought players that could play."¹¹⁸

Changing circumstances, which added incentives to sign with a particular school, characterized the landscape of recruitment. Recruiters employed various tactics to sign the best players, and it was not simply bribery. Eric Dickerson, the number one high school recruit in the nation out of Sealy, Texas, recalls Texas A&M recruiters "showing [his] mother \$50,000 in a

¹¹⁵ *ESPN 30 for 30*, "Pony Excess," season 1, episode 30, November 9, 2010.

¹¹⁶ "Pony Excess."

¹¹⁷ "Pony Excess."

¹¹⁸ "Pony Excess."

brief case.”¹¹⁹ A&M boosters bought the eighteen year old high school senior a brand new gold TransAm before he even signed his letter of intent to play for A&M. Dickerson claims in one interview, with a grin on his face, that his grandmother bought him the car. The University of Texas’s technique did not involve a bribe but instead tried to intimidate the young athlete. One recruiter from the University of Texas told Dickerson, “If you consider going out of the state of Texas, when you get out of college we can make sure you don’t get a job in Texas...I’m serious.”¹²⁰ In turn Dickerson replied “F you man...I ain’t ever going to Texas...I hated Texas from that point on.”¹²¹ Dickerson never reviled what made him choose SMU. He once said “if it would have been about money, I would have went to A&M” yet the running joke was that he “took a pay cut when he went to the NFL.”¹²² A booster at SMU said, “that was one guy I didn’t think we were going to get.”¹²³ Ken Andrews, an SMU booster from ’76-’85, only said, “Eric decided he wanted to come to SMU [short pause] and he did. That...that, I’m stopping.”¹²⁴

SMU boosters and recruiters, often one in the same, “were extremely creative in finding ways around the rules, or convincing themselves that the rules didn’t apply to them.”¹²⁵ SMU’s head football coach Ron Meyer and the exorbitant amount of cash from the university boosters were the keys to recruitment. One Dallas reporter described Meyer’s and SMU’s reputation as

119 “Pony Excess.”

120 ”Pony Excess.”

121 ”Pony Excess.”

122 “Pony Excess.”

123 “Pony Excess.”

124 “Pony Excess.”

125 “Pony Excess.”

this: “He would walk into a recruit’s living room, and he could leave with the kid. Whether he had a sack of cash with him or not.”¹²⁶ Meyer described how he chose recruits in one interview: “I didn’t want players that could play on the collegiate level. I wanted players that could play on the NFL level.”¹²⁷ The Mustangs succeeded overwhelmingly in this venture given their record in the early 1980s.

As Brokaw joked about the payment of players, the reality was much more serious than he described, and it drew enormous amounts of attention from the media and the NCAA because of their rapid growth as a program. According to an SMU tight end in ’76, ’78-’80, the talent at SMU went from Death Valley to Mount Everest from 1976 to 1980, due in large part to copious amounts of bribes and a mounting payroll for the athletes. In addition to the signing bonuses, boosters literally paid more than a dozen Mustangs a monthly salary each year. At one point, the payroll reached at least \$60,000 annually, and many were written contracts.¹²⁸ An inner circle of SMU boosters came from the SMU board of trustees, a governing body for the entire university. This board consisted of seventy-five members, but within this governing body, the twenty-one member board of governors made “crucial decisions.” These members were “powerful Dallas businessmen.” This was “not simply a booster board [for the university] but also controlled some of the biggest money in the city whose ambition knew no bounds and whose lust for winning was legendary.”¹²⁹

¹²⁶ “Pony Excess.”

¹²⁷ ”Pony Excess.”

¹²⁸ Davies, *America’s Obsession*, 206; “Pony Excess.”

¹²⁹ Watterson, *College Football*, 357.

SMU President Paul Hardin temporarily curtailed this legendary need to win. He served a short two year term at SMU from 1972-1974. After an NCAA investigation unearthed the fact that boosters were paying players during his presidency, the board of trustees fired president Hardin who sought to end athletic corruption, in 1974. Without the active participation of the board, “root[ing] out big-time corruption” was next to impossible when “the president act[ed] alone.”¹³⁰ This self-perpetuated athletic culture, not necessarily including the university president in Hardin’s case, determined to win by any means necessary. For the boosters, many of whom were on the board of governors, this meant securing a university president that the secretive and exclusive board of governors could count on.¹³¹

These highly connected individuals essentially controlling SMU athletics were supported by the president of the university when the board of trustees voted to name Don Shields as the new president in 1980. He replaced presidents who were in constant contention with the athletic department such as Hardin. President Shields attended nearly every SMU football game and even went into the locker rooms before and after games on several occasions. He was often spotted on the sidelines at games and believed, as did many boosters, “that the [NCAA] charges were merely a result of attempts by [SMU’s] rivals to sabotage the football program.”¹³² Once the centers of power within SMU converged to support the football program, the flood gates opened. In 1982, Ron Meyer resigned and accepted a coaching position with the New England Patriots. After this development, the boosters became more involved in recruitment and, subsequently,

¹³⁰ Watterson, *College Football*, 358.

¹³¹ Watterson, *College Football*, 358; “Pony Excess.”; David Whitford, *A payroll to Meet: A Story of Greed, Corruption, & Football at SMU* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 77-80.

¹³² Watterson, *College Football*, 361. Whitford, *A payroll to Meet*, 95.

more players drew illegal paychecks. Also, they increasingly “played a far more visible role, not unlike part-owners of a professional football team.”¹³³ This made the Mustangs that much more susceptible to NCAA probes and investigations.

Between 1974, when the board of trustees fired Hardin and 1985, the NCAA placed SMU on probation four times.¹³⁴ As SMU began its fourth probationary period in eleven years, the NCAA and “more than two hundred college presidents passed a number of measures which showed their determination to strike at the worst play-for-pay and recruiting abuses.”¹³⁵ At this conference in 1985, one particular measure established a repeat violators clause which severely punished any institution found guilty of the same infraction twice within a five year period. The penalty decided on at this conference included eliminating an entire program for two consecutive years. Officially known as the Repeat Violators Clause, it became known as the “death penalty.” With SMU’s infractions record, along with other universities of the era, “Southern Methodist would emerge as a prime candidate for the new penalty.”¹³⁶

David Stanley, one disgruntled former player, blew the whistle on SMU in late 1986 by appearing on the local Dallas news, revealing that the football program paid him the previous year, the same year SMU went on its latest probation and when the two hundred university presidents voted to establish the “death penalty.”¹³⁷ A series of probes by the NCAA in early

¹³³ Watterson, *College Football*, 362.

¹³⁴ Randy Harvey, “The Scandalous Southwest,” in the *Los Angeles Times*, October 14, 1985.

¹³⁵ Watterson, *College Football*, 365.

¹³⁶ Watterson, *College Football*, 365.

¹³⁷ Watterson, *College Football*, 365; Whitford, *A Payroll to Meet*, 175.

1987 sealed the Mustangs' fate. Stanley's public testimony ultimately resulted in the termination of SMU's football program for two years and, therefore, the first and only time the NCAA utilized the "death penalty." The fallout after the NCAA declared its penalty wreaked havoc on the university as a whole. Nearly the entire coaching staff, including coach Collins, was fired, the athletic department completely gutted, and the university administration, along with president Shields, restructured due to the infractions. SMU's reputation as an institution of higher education did suffer to an extent, but their athletic department no longer generated any funds for the university. Following the 1991 season, their second football season after the death penalty, the athletic department, which was now explicitly attached to the university administration, suffered a \$4 million deficit.¹³⁸

However severe the financial losses appear after a scandal in a university athletic department, university presidents left to pick up the pieces can find a silver lining: reform. One administrator from Clemson said, regarding its scandals earlier in the decade, "recent controversies have helped us reaffirm that Clemson University is first and foremost an academic institution."¹³⁹ Although previous attempts at establishing presidents as an integral part of governing intercollegiate athletics failed, most notably the 1929 Carnegie Report, ALE Special Committee, and the Hanford Report, the corrupt 1980s generated enough turmoil for a slight changing of the guard. In 1988, the Knight Foundation, originally constructed by John S. and James L. Knight, sought to clean up big time college athletics. James Knight, the original Chairman, urged onlookers to believe that:

¹³⁸ Davies, *America's Obsession*, 206.

¹³⁹ Senn, "What is at Stake."

We have a lot of sports fans on our board, and we recognize that intercollegiate athletics have an integral and proper role to play in college and university life. Our interest is not to abolish that role but to preserve it by putting it back in perspective. We hope this Commission can strengthen the hands of those who want to curb the abuses which are shaking public confidence in the integrity of not just big-time collegiate athletics but the whole institution of higher education.¹⁴⁰

In order to execute this goal, the Foundation offered numerous suggestions, but the vast majority of those were rooted in one seemingly logical suggestion. They argued that presidents of universities should have the same authority in athletic departments “that they exercise elsewhere in the university, including the authority to hire, evaluate and terminate athletic directors and coaches, and to oversee all financial matters in their athletics departments.”¹⁴¹ If university presidents control all aspects of an institution, and assuming they have the best intentions for the university as a whole, real change could occur.

What separated the Knight Foundation from earlier attempts at placing power back in the hands of university presidents is that the NCAA reacted to the Knight Foundation. The NCAA “drastically overhauled its governance backed on a structure ‘lifted chapter and verse’ ... from the commissions recommendations.”¹⁴² Shortly after the first Knight Foundation convened in 1988, the NCAA formally placed power back in the hands of faculty representatives, which the majority of conferences used in the first half of the twentieth century, One example being the Big Ten Conference discussed above. However, to curtail problems even the Big Ten encountered with appointing faculty members friendly to athletic department, the faculty representative “shall

¹⁴⁰ Knight Foundation, August 1999, pg. 3.

¹⁴¹ Knight Foundation, August 1999, pg. 18.

¹⁴² Knight Foundation, August 1999, pg. 1.

not hold an administrative or coaching position in the athletics department.”¹⁴³ This was in direct response to the Knight Foundation Commission’s first report suggesting that “The evidence presented to the Commission indicates that some faculty athletics representatives have not fulfilled their potential as guardians of the academic interest.”¹⁴⁴ In the early 1990s, the NCAA drew up specific guide lines to ensure that academic pursuits of universities remained intact and a first priority.¹⁴⁵

Despite the NCAA’s and Knight Foundation’s pursuits to clean up intercollegiate athletics after the overtly corrupt 1980s, tradition and perception remained crucial factors impeding their goal. As early as 1929, the Carnegie Report on Athletics revealed widespread support for intercollegiate athletics from universities and the public. In 1927 alone, spectators spent \$50,000,000 on college football tickets. The Carnegie Report sought to curtail the professionalism because, according to the report, collegiate sports with a professional nature corrupted both students and institutions of high learning they represented.¹⁴⁶ The overt professionalism, personified by pay-to-play and an overemphasis on winning, not only remained in tact but spiraled as the century continued. Although the pay-to-play excess may have begun in the late 1970s, the need to get the very best athletes went back decades. In 1957, the University of Iowa’s former athletic director, Forest Evashevski, described the emphasis on winning to a journalist after years of coaching. According to him, “the coach entered into a tacit understanding

¹⁴³ Carol Barr, “History of Faculty Involvement in Collegiate Athletics,” pg. 45.

¹⁴⁴ Barr, “History of Faculty,” pg. 45.

¹⁴⁵ Barr, “History of Faculty,” pg. 45.

¹⁴⁶ Brubacher, “*Higher Education in Transition*,” 345.

with the [university] president that he will recruit good ball players by any means short of larceny.”¹⁴⁷ The secret lies in the star high school players, which is why the majority of NCAA violations involve illegal means of recruitment.

Brutality, civil rights, and corruption characterize the twentieth-century in many respects. Intercollegiate football embodied all three of these, all of which called the attention of university presidents. After several instances, collegiate football became intertwined with political controversies and business practices, university presidents seemingly lost control of their athletic departments which were often dominated by the football program. Football encountered staunch criticism from a group of university presidents’ witnessing and actively causing for a transformation in American higher education near the end of the nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century. This particular sport generated enough attention that, in the midst of Civil Rights era America, collegiate football played a crucial role in the development of that movement. The overemphasis placed on commercialization, personified by the perceived need for a successful or winning program, resulted in presidents supporting the commercialization of the sport for monetary and intrinsic gains. In order to secure order in athletic departments after these instances, which temporarily, if not permanently, tarnished the reputations of the universities discussed, the NCAA, through the recommendation of the Knight Foundation in the late 1980s, overhauled their governance. Placing control of the athletic departments back into the hands of university presidents does not ensure that they will avoid the political or corrupt spotlight. This is at the discretion of the president and the university culture that a newly hired president encounters. For the university that starts a football program from the ground up, the

¹⁴⁷ Davies, *America’s Obsession*, 203.

president can be the most beneficial or destructive administrator because he or she has the near absolute authority established by the NCAA and the individual university.

CHAPTER 4

THE BIG CATS

The Value SLU and GSU Saw in Football

The American intercollegiate football institution is separate from yet still connected to American higher education. Across the twentieth-century several controversies in American history intertwined collegiate football with various instances. The creation of athletic scholarships and conference relations in the 1950s and 1960s set precedents which still exist today. Brutality, which characterized the sport in the 1890s, is coming full circle with the debates regarding concussions in the twenty-first-century. In the social arena, the modern Civil Rights Movement witnessed football's role as a social cohesive at Alabama and especially Ole Miss. However, even outside the South, football brought civil protest to the forefront with the likes of Jack Trice and the naming of the Iowa State football stadium. In terms of business, particularly corruption, big-time collegiate football and corruption could be synonymous to many pessimistic viewers. Especially during the 1980s, the decade of decadence, when the NCAA investigated countless collegiate football programs across America for the payment of players, the image of college football, and college sports in general, corrupt business practices appeared the norm rather than the exception. Several infractions at Clemson University, University of Florida, and the notorious Southern Methodist University "death penalty" highlight this notion.

While these instances exemplify the negativity associated with intercollegiate football, athletic directors and university presidents have often clung to the potential for positive aspects. Ticket sales, lucrative television contracts, and merchandizing profits benefit a minuscule amount of American universities, but it seems logical for administrators to attempt to gain what

they can for themselves and their school. However, because of the majority of athletic departments operate on a balanced budget at best and at a deficit in many cases, those who do want a thriving athletic department search for indirect and intrinsic values which a collegiate football team, or basketball team in some cases, can provide. Campus solidarity, school spirit, and an increased quantity and quality of applications are a few of these intrinsic values associated with a football program on a college campus.

In the first decade of the twenty-first-century, twenty-eight universities started football programs. Georgia State University and Southeastern Louisiana University, two of these twenty-eight, constitute two prime examples to analyze the university administration's justifications for starting such a financially costly venture. Given the negativity, political implications, and financial burden often associated with collegiate football, along with the possibility for intangible intrinsic values sought after by administrators, university presidents grapple with a tremendous amount when initially deciding if collegiate football constitutes an overall benefit for their university. Based on the Georgia State University and Southeastern Louisiana University examples, university presidents ultimately exercised near autonomous decision making powers regarding athletics. This emergence of intercollegiate football in the twenty-first-century forced a reexamination of why a university should field an intercollegiate football team, given the historical context of the sporting institution.

Athletic departments in America's high education system command enormous amounts of leverage within the academy. In the early 1980s, and possibly persisting into the 1990s and 2000s to some extent, athletic directors were essentially presidents of their own institutions. The majority of the time, athletic directors could accept whoever they wanted into their departments.

There can be considerable speculation to the degree which athletic directors exercise power over the entire university. While this may have been true in the era of serious athletic department corruption, such as at Southern Methodist University in the mid 1980s, it certainly persists to an extent today. While a football program is established and operational, the athletic director potentially overshadows some of the university. However, before a football program arrives at a school, the dynamics can be different. It is the decision to start a program which falls, not on the athletic director, but on the university president.

The administration of the entire university and especially the president of a university ultimately hands down the final decision because, although coaches and athletic directors can hold considerable leverage, before the football program is created there is little leverage to be had. There is no coach to decide what players to recruit or admit. Even the current athletic director often suffers because an institution may replace him or her with someone with experience running an athletic department that includes a football program. In the twenty-first century, university presidents and their administrations have judged the emotional and financial support for a football team and looked for any intrinsic value for establishing a football team on their campus. Residing over a university with a football program can be a potential resume builder for those looking to expand their career. Nevertheless the president makes the final decision.

Twenty-eight universities created football programs between 2000 and 2009, two of which were Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia and Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. The administrations reasons, arguments, and pressures for creating their programs drew similarities but also contrasted one another heavily. Ultimately, while Georgia

State experienced an explosion of growth and evolved throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, administrators believed a football program would solidify that transformation in 2010. However, Southeastern experienced an increase in building projects, but pressure from the community and suspected personal motives from the university president largely contributed to the creation of a football program in 2002.

Early in America's modern higher education system, possibly predating it in some regards, university presidents recognized the athletic department's place in higher education. In 1869, Charles E. Eliot, President of Harvard University from 1869 until 1909, recognized the potential for intercollegiate athletics in his inaugural Presidential Address by stating, "There is an aristocracy, to which sons of Harvard have belonged, and let us hope, will ever aspire to belong—the aristocracy which excels in many sports."¹⁴⁸ However, Eliot rejected football. As late as 1905 Eliot looked down on football. In a report to Harvard's university overseers that same year, Eliot shared his views of the sport. After a tumultuous decade involving several serious injuries and some deaths, Eliot concluded that "football [was] more brutalizing than prize-fighting, cock-fighting, or bull-fighting."¹⁴⁹ However, presidents like Eliot at America's oldest Eastern and newest land-grant universities across the nation established an atmosphere for the sport to thrive. Intercollegiate sport began to thrive during this era when the American higher education system transitioned into the educational institutions resembling today's. Out of the sports discussed by

¹⁴⁸ Charles E. Eliot, "Inaugural Address," 19 October 1869, p. 22, Harvard University Archives, Cambridge, Mass.

¹⁴⁹ Ronald A. Smith, "Commercialized Intercollegiate Athletics and the 1903 Harvard Stadium," in *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), 26 ; Charles W. Eliot, 1905 Annual Report to the University overseers, quoted by Morris A. Bealle, *The History of Football at Harvard: 1874-1948* (New York: Webberprint, Inc., 1948), 165.

universities presidents, collegiate football certainly remained and grew as America's pastime, especially in the latter half of the twentieth-century and into the twenty-first-century.

Ironically, this sporting aristocracy, exemplified primarily through football, Eliot spoke of reverberated throughout America and particularly the Southern United States with the rise of football giants such as: the University of Alabama, Louisiana State University, the University of Florida, Auburn University, Florida State, Texas A&M, and the University of Georgia, to name a few. These, along with others, competitively seek national titles in football and have become nationally known, in part, for their athletic accomplishments. Similarly, either lesser known or lesser accomplished football programs, such as: Georgia Tech, Georgia Southern, Clemson University, the University of Central Florida, the University of Louisiana-Monroe, and Texas State University, to name only a few, contribute to Southern football culture, as well. Despite the longevity of these programs, they are the exceptions and not the rule. Though some programs persist as institutions on college campuses in their own right, others are much more connected to the university because of a lack of longevity. Additionally, these programs become much more susceptible to the larger societal influence, largely negative in some cases. For instance, the University of Alabama at Birmingham started a football program in 1991. With more than two decades of varied successful seasons and marked competition with Auburn and the University of Alabama, begging geographically located between the two, UBA experienced sizable monetary and external pressure to abandon their big-time football pursuits. At the end of 2014, the university announced that they would drop football the following season. As more information and research is able to be done on this matter, it will make for a revealing case study on the rise and demise of so called second class football programs.

From 2000-2009 “28 programs that have been started, and more are warming up.”¹⁵⁰ Universities predominately “situated in urban areas with a small pulse on campus...,”¹⁵¹ fielded these new teams. In some regions, football makes sense. Atlanta, Georgia, for example “is...situated in ‘the most intense region of the United States’ for football ‘at all levels’,” C. H. Johnson Consulting commented in *The New York Times*.¹⁵² Georgia State University’s position within the geographical confines of the Atlantic Coast Conference and the impressive Southeastern Conference adds support for this statement of “most intense region.”¹⁵³ Also located within the geographical boundaries of the Southeastern Conference is Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond, Louisiana. Unlike Georgia State, the university itself was once a hot bed for football in Louisiana. However, Southeastern terminated the program in the mid 1980s due to budgetary issues.

College Sports Inc., published in 1990 by Murray Sperber, attacks the idea of revenue building programs. These universities insist that the spectator based sports, football and basketball in particular, not only generates revenue to support itself but also enough revenue to support other academic initiatives.¹⁵⁴ Sperber In 1982, the NCAA conducted an analysis of

¹⁵⁰ Mike Tierney, “Georgia State Hoping Football Builds Community in a Football Town,” in *The New York Times*, April 19, 2009.

¹⁵¹ Tierney, “Georgia State Hoping.”

¹⁵² Tierney, “Georgia State Hoping.” Tierney quoted C. H. Johnson in his article.

¹⁵³ Tierney, “Georgia State Hoping.”; From 2007-2013 a member of the Southeastern Conference won the BCS national football championship, while in 2014 Florida State University, a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference was crowned champion. This gives C. H. Johnson’s statement validity, at least for the twenty-first century.

¹⁵⁴ Murray Sperber, *College Sports Inc.* (New York: Fitzhenry & Whiteside Limited, 1990). Sperber’s monograph disproved the myth of a revenue building athletic program in higher education, with few exceptions.

college sports' financial sustainability, concluding that on average programs operate at a deficit.¹⁵⁵ In another study in 1992 revealed clearly that both university presidents and athletic directors failed to recognize "that sports geared towards spectators had been having an increasingly difficult time being self-supporting."¹⁵⁶ However, Eliot's inaugural address foreshadowed the extent of football's major significance, "in the college's extracurriculum that a stadium was erected to accommodate those eager to watch the game."¹⁵⁷ The enthusiasm for football in America cannot be understated. However, the financial support for such a venture has often been believed to be the constant variable: the funding for a football program.

Both Georgia State University and Southeastern Louisiana University had many of the same goals, similar experiences, and enthusiastic communities regarding football. However, they also came from very different histories. The GSU campus sits adjacent to both Georgia Tech and Emory University, but its position amongst the Atlanta Braves' Turner Field, the Georgia Dome, and the Georgia State capitol, the infamous "Gold Dome," create a unique atmosphere positioned in downtown Atlanta. The University was established in 1913 as Georgia Institute of Technology's "Evening School of Commerce." This Georgia State was essentially an extension of Georgia Tech, directed originally by Wayne S. Kell, a faculty member of Georgia Tech at the time. The university expanded slowly, and in 1961 the Board of Regents changed its name to Georgia State College. By 1969 the name was changed again to Georgia State University due to

¹⁵⁵ M. H. Raiborn, *Revenue and expenses in intercollegiate athletic programs: Analysis of financial trends and relationships 1978-1981* (Mission, KS: National Collegiate Athletic Association, 1982), 40.

¹⁵⁶ John R. Thein, "Good Sports? Historical Perspective on Political Economy of Intercollegiate Athletics in the Era of Title IX, 1927-1997," in *The Journal of Higher Education*, Vol. 71, No. 4 (Jul. - Aug., 2000), 397.

¹⁵⁷ Ronald A. Smith, "Commercialized Intercollegiate Athletics and the 1903 Harvard Stadium," in *The New England Quarterly*, Vol. 78, No. 1 (Mar., 2005), 26. (26-48)

academic advances which included then six colleges. It has since been expanded to include several professional schools and graduate programs including a law school. All the while, the majority of the campus consisted of rented buildings in the downtown area. By the early 1990s, the University began extreme expansion and transformation when the “administration, the faculty and the student body [started to] carve out its destiny” in the metropolis of Atlanta and became the Georgia State of the twenty-first-century.¹⁵⁸

Southeastern Louisiana University evolved in very different circumstances. In the fairly geographically isolated community of Hammond, Louisiana in Tangipahoa Parish north-west of Lake Ponchartrain, Southeastern evolved at a much faster rate compared to GSU. Unlike Georgia State, citizens from the rural community voted to established Hammond Junior College in 1925. They began their first semester with only five faculty members, forty coed students, and fifteen acres of land. The first baccalaureate degree was awarded in 1939, and by 1946, their fifteen acres of land grew to 365 acres. In 1997 enrollment reached 15,000 students, with Hammond truly becoming a college town and suburb of both Baton Rouge and New Orleans. Most importantly to this study, however, is the football program’s initial presence from 1930 until 1985 when the program was discontinued. The program grew out of a rural area, had several successful seasons in the 1950s and 60s, but lost notoriety both in performance and finances in

¹⁵⁸ “Georgia State University History,” *Special Collections and Archives: Georgia State University History*, March 31, 2014, accessed April 21, 2014, URL: <http://research.library.gsu.edu/GSUhistory>. All the chronology in this paragraph came from this source.

¹⁵⁹ Information regarding the universities evolution is referenced from “History,” *Southeastern Louisiana University*, accessed on April 21, 2014, <http://www.southeastern.edu/about/history/index.html>. Information regarding Southeastern Louisiana Football program is referenced from “Southeastern Football History,” *Lion Sports*, accessed on March 31, 2014, <http://www.accessecon.com/pubs/VUECON/vu10-w05.pdf>

the early 1980s.¹⁵⁹ Specifically, “Southeastern discontinued its football program in 1985 when limited [Louisiana] state funding forced the university to make significant cutbacks.”¹⁶⁰

Differences in Georgia State and Southeastern are quite apparent: a large discrepancy in environment (one urban based while other rural transforming to suburban) and the creation of an entirely new Georgia State football program which lacked any sort of history while Southeastern followed the terminated SLU program. However, they are similar in many ways. Both schools began as small colleges in the early twentieth century and expanded throughout the century. Each established or reestablished a football program in the twenty-first-century ultimately aided in the furthered evolution of both universities.

When Georgia State University announced on April 12, 2007 “that former NFL head coach Dan Reeves would be hired as a consultant for the University as it examined the addition of football,”¹⁶¹ the beginnings of a long awaited football program was born. Mary McElroy, Georgia State’s Athletic Director at the time, commented on the possibility of a football program. She instated, “we are looking aggressively for the answers to see if the financial support will meet the emotional support in order to do that.”¹⁶² Reeves indicated that “if [he] didn’t think

¹⁶⁰ Rene Abadie, “Southeastern to Expand Fund Raising Campaign with Focus on Overall Athletic Enhancement,” in *Southeastern NEWS*, March 13, 2014.

¹⁶¹ William Inman, “A touch of greatness: Former NFL coach Dan Reeves to steer football exploration,” in the *Villager*, Volume 7, Issue 11, May 1, 2007.

¹⁶² Inman, “A touch of greatness.”

there was a good chance this would move forward , [he] wouldn't be as excited."¹⁶³ Early in Georgia State President Carl Patton's stay at the university, he was repeatedly asked, "When are we getting football?"¹⁶⁴ Often, he responded as saying, "I have to admit my answer was, 'not in my lifetime.'"¹⁶⁵ Jokingly, he followed up the question with, "I also have to admit that my lifetime here [at Georgia State] has lasted longer than I thought it would."¹⁶⁶ Patton was president of Georgia State from 1992-2008. Students, according to the president, continued to ask about football. Mike Tierney of *The New York Times* reported in 2009 that,

Soon after Carl Patton became Georgia State's president in 1992, he began regularly rounding up 100 students at a time for chats. The Leadoff question at the first session, and nearly every one thereafter, was: 'When are we getting football?'¹⁶⁷The finances of creating a football program, from the ground up, unsurprisingly frightened administrators for several years. However, enthusiasm for a program was unearthed before Georgia State brought in Dan Reeves.¹⁶⁸

During the fall of 2006, Georgia State hired C. H. Johnson Consulting to perform a Football Program Strategy Assessment to determine the emotional support and financial costs for a program at Georgia State. The study summarized their findings by saying, "On the surface the football program appears to be a desired and logical choice for the (GSU) athletic department to

¹⁶³ Inman, "A touch of greatness."

¹⁶⁴ William Inman, "Touchdown!: it's official-football is coming to Georgia State," in the *Village*, Volume 8, Issue 11, April 23, 2008.

¹⁶⁵ Inman, "Touchdown!".

¹⁶⁶ Inman, "Touchdown!".

¹⁶⁷ Tierney, "Georgia State Hoping."

¹⁶⁸ Tierney, "Georgia State Hoping."

pursue.”¹⁶⁹ As evidence of these findings, C. H. Johnson polled students, faculty, and alumni, with the highest support drawing from the students. According to the study, “ninety-one percent of the students who responded to the survey have at least some interest, with sixty-five percent expressing strong interest about a football program at GSU.”¹⁷⁰ As for Alumni, of those who responded, “seventy percent support the possibility of a football program....”¹⁷¹ C. H. Johnson reported the lowest amount of support coming from faculty. Despite saying “the overall feeling from faculty is that having a football program would create a sense of community on campus,”¹⁷² the study reported only fifty-two percent indicating excitement for the possibility for a program and forty-seven percent interested in season tickets.¹⁷³ Nevertheless, the study indicated reasonably strong support for a football program at Georgia State across “Panther Nation.” Dan Reeves commented by saying that “everyone I’ve talked to wants football...No one is not excited about it. We just need to let people know how to help.”¹⁷⁴ The financial costs associated with starting a football program in the twenty-first-century provided community supporters an avenue to help, but C. H. Johnson highlights internal fund raising possibilities.

In subsequent sections of the study, C. H. Johnson confronted the financial feasibility for football in the downtown Atlanta university. In comparison to existing budgets from Towson

¹⁶⁹ C. H. Johnson Consulting, Inc. AMT Group Rosser International, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 3, Page 7, November 2006.

¹⁷⁰ C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 3, Page 5.

¹⁷¹ C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 3, page 6.

¹⁷² C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 3, Page 7.

¹⁷³ C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 3, Page 7.

¹⁷⁴ “First Team For Football Expects to Win,” Georgia State University Athletic Archives, August 8, 2007.

University, the University of Delaware, James Madison University, Georgia Southern University, Coastal Carolina, Old Dominion University and George Mason University, C. H. Johnson generated an expected phase-in operating costs budget for Georgia State football. The study took into account the organization, budget, facilities, and support programs. The projected operating costs, including salaries and benefits of new personnel, for the creation of football program came to \$2,366,460 for the 2010 fiscal year. C. H. Johnson estimated that year the football program would “be approximately twenty-six percent of athletic department budget.”¹⁷⁵ However, generating these funds for the additional athletic program created problems. C. H. Johnson suggested 88% of the funds should come from a student athletic fee with 1.14% from alumni donations. This left 10.86% of the athletic budget unaccounted for, meaning that the department would run at a loss. C. H. Johnson briefly addressed this, stating that “these programs [Georgia State and the other universities in the study] are allowed to exist as financial burdens to the athletic department because of the intrinsic value they provide to students, alumni and communities.”¹⁷⁶ These intrinsic values will be discussed later. However, student fee increases must be addressed here briefly.

The study advised the university to increase the mandatory athletic fees incrementally to cover the phase-in operating costs of a new football program. Beginning in 2008, “The student fee will increase by \$100 in the first year, \$20 in the second year, \$20 in the third year, \$30 in the fourth year, and \$30 in the fifth year.”¹⁷⁷ Simply put, they suggested the student fee be increased

¹⁷⁵ C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 4, Page 15.

¹⁷⁶ C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 4, Page 16.

¹⁷⁷ C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 4, Page 14.

by \$200, starting at \$284 in 2007 and rising to \$485 by 2012. The incoming student body president for fall 2009, “said that he had detected grumbling on campus over the [then rumored] increase in fees, but...‘nobody will question it 10 years from now when they’re sitting in the stands and cheering.’”¹⁷⁸ Student interest and disapproval will be discussed in a later section.

In addition to the student fee, the study assumed that the Athletic Department would self-generate revenue, and that that revenue “will grow as the football program matures.”¹⁷⁹ The study insisted that Georgia State men’s basketball program must contribute to the overall expenses of the Athletic Department. The study expressed great optimism, insisting that “one must believe the men’s basketball program will not continue to underachieve as it is currently.”¹⁸⁰ This is simply an assumption, not supported by any evidence. Although the study did not investigate the possibility of self-generation of revenue, the consulting group attested that, “it is not unreasonable to expect help from this source.”¹⁸¹ This is especially true since they continued on to say “that the incremental revenue generated from student fees will not be sufficient to cover facility expenses associated with the additional program (the additional program being Women’s Lacrosse in compliance to Title IX).”¹⁸² Reeves’ call for community support would also be an expected source of aid.

¹⁷⁸ Mike Tierney, “Georgia State Hoping Football Builds Community in a Football Town,” in *The New York Times*, April 19, 2009.

¹⁷⁹ C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 4, Page 14.

¹⁸⁰ C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 4, Page 14.

¹⁸¹ C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 4, Page 14.

¹⁸² C. H. Johnson, “Football Program Strategy Assessment,” Section 4, Page 14.

Southeastern Louisiana University President Sally Clausen experienced a similar, yet not identical, situation compared to President Patton. President Clausen remembers “that one of the first questions she received as president at the university [beginning in 1995] was ‘When are you bringing back football?’”¹⁸³ Unlike president Patton’s experience, however, members of Hammond’s community and Southeastern’s alumni predominately posed this question to President Clausen. Although “a number of students” did approach President Clausen, it was “community members, individual board members, and some legislators [who] requested that [President Clausen] take steps to explore the financial feasibility of returning football to Southeastern.”¹⁸⁴

It is no surprise that members of the university, faculty, staff, and students, expressed interest in the football program, but members of the community and even legislators’ enthusiasm separated Southeastern from Georgia State. The defining cause of this is the fact that Southeastern, at one time, did have a bustling and relatively successful football program. Ken Magee, a previous player (1958-1962) and coach (1972-1982) for Southeastern and, in 2001, the president of the Southeastern Football Players Association exemplified many of the community members who supported reinstating football. Additionally, according to Rene Abadie, fundraising had “the support of the Southeastern Development Foundation and the Southeastern Alumni Association.”¹⁸⁵ The community had a support base within southeastern Louisiana and,

¹⁸³ Rene Abadie, “Southeastern Athletic Building Named in Honor of Dugas Family,” in *New Releases* by the Public Information Office of Southeastern Louisiana University, September 27, 2004.

¹⁸⁴ Rebecca Tucker, “Football Interest Survey Underway at SLU,” in *Southeastern NEWS*, November 11, 1997.

¹⁸⁵ Rene Abadie, “Southeastern Announces Major Gift Supporting Athletics and Possible Return of Football,” in *Southeastern NEWS*, August 8, 2001.

more widely, Hammond. A history of college football existed in the town with a large proportion of the tens of thousands of alumni remaining in the area who associated college football with their university experience.

Football meant a tremendous amount to community members. The then Southeastern Vice president of Academic Affairs and Provost, Randy Moffett, stated that “Southeastern has the capacity to raise...money from donors whose primary interest is in athletics and the return of football,” alluding to the base of alumni in the community.¹⁸⁶ In addition to the community support, the university predicted “Athletic Director Frank Pergolizzi, who joined the administration in [2000], and his development staff would also play key roles in the fund raising effort,” to attract “new donors who [were] primarily interested in contributing...specifically to reinstate football.”¹⁸⁷ On November 12, 1997, President Clausen “announced...that the university has contracted with Applied Research Technology Corporation of Baton Rouge to conduct a survey to determine the level of interest and financial support for reestablishing a varsity football program at Southeastern.”¹⁸⁸ As in Patton’s office and GSU board rooms eight years later, raising the funds for football would be the largest concern.

Sperber’s book, *College Sports Inc.*, Addressed the general financial burden a big-time athletic department, which emphasizes the football and men’s basketball teams, has on American universities. Sperber asserts that

¹⁸⁶ Rene Abadie, “Southeastern to Expand Fund Raising Campaign with Focus on Athletic Enhancement,” in *Southeastern NEWS*, March 13, 2001.

¹⁸⁷ Rene Abadie, “Southeastern to Expand Fund Raising.”

¹⁸⁸ Tucker, “Football Interest Survey.” ; The feasibility study by Applied Research Technology Corporation was not able to be retrieved for this study.

an athletic department is not an academic unit. If, one year, the math department has a budgetary shortfall due to underenrollment, the university absorbs the financial loss because the mission of an academic unit is education, not monetary profit, and the value of teaching and research cannot be calculated in dollars and cents. However, the purpose of an athletic program is commercial entertainment, and if its expenses exceed its revenue, then, like every other business in America, it should be held accountable.¹⁸⁹

Sperber potentially over estimates the ideals of the ivory tower, and the assumption of college athletics as sole purpose as entertainment may be short sighted. Viewing American universities' athletic programs as inherently forms of entertainment and revenue generators for the university completely disregards any type of indirect, intrinsic value of a big-time athletic department.

Richard O. Davies, author of *America's Obsession: Sports and Society Since 1945*, holds an a priori assumption about the meaning of college athletics, as well. While discussing the failure of many athletic departments to comply with NCAA regulations, he lays out a thick blanket statement. With Davies's assumptions overtly present, he condemns American education by saying, "If the ultimate goal of sports is to teach good sportsmanship and adherence to established rules, then higher education has failed dismally."¹⁹⁰ Although differing from Sperber's assumed reasons for fielding football teams, Davies relies on the intrinsic values rather than the monetary. He neither accurately unearthed the underlying reasons why universities continue to encourage nor promote intercollegiate athletics, especially in the twenty-first-century.

The intrinsic values of fielding a football team each year can positively affect universities, at least to an extent. What exactly *intrinsic* means differs. Many have studied the correlation between success in football and men's basketball and undergraduate, non athlete,

¹⁸⁹ Sperber, *College Sports Inc.*

¹⁹⁰ Richard O. Davies, *America's Obsession: Sports and Society Since 1945* (Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning, 1994), 211.

graduations rates. Numerous sociological and economic studies have been conducted across the latter half of the twentieth-century to determine collegiate football's impact on higher education. For example, "There is no evidence to suggest that the consumers of athletics (i.e., the undergraduates) are negatively impacted by a higher degree of success of their school's athletic program."¹⁹¹ Patrick Rishe, a sociologist continued by saying that "There is actually evidence that undergraduates have higher graduation rates at schools with major athletic programs..."¹⁹² Additionally, success in intercollegiate football can "increase the quality [and quantity] of applications to a school after that school achieves sports success."¹⁹³ GSU and SLU, although sought athletic success, also hoped to garner this seemingly indirect effect on their student bodies.

Even without success, which is less common depending on the definition of success, it can be suggested that simply fielding big-time intercollegiate sports team can translate into positive aspects for a university. Also, "institutions with Division I sports programs attract more applications and enroll students with higher average SAT scores than similar institutions that do not participate in Division I sports."¹⁹⁴ Furthermore, "students actually are willing to pay for big-time athletic programs, and indeed they do so, as those universities with big-time athletic

¹⁹¹ Patrick James Rishe, "A Reexamination of how Athletic Success Impacts Graduation Rates: Comparing Student-Athletes to All Other Undergraduates," in *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Apr., 2003), 417,424. (407-427)

¹⁹² Patrick James Rishe, "A Reexamination of how Athletic Success Impacts Graduation Rates: Comparing Student-Athletes to All Other Undergraduates," in *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, Vol. 62, No. 2 (Apr., 2003), 417,424. (407-427)

¹⁹³ Devin G. Pope and Jaren C. Pope, "The Impact of College Sports Success on the Quantity and Quality of Student Applications," in *Southern Economic Journal*, Vol. 75, No. 3 (Jan., 2009), 776. (750-780)

¹⁹⁴ Getz, "What Does Intercollegiate Athletics Do." 9.

programs charge higher tuition and fees.”¹⁹⁵ These studies suggest that not only success but simply having a major athletic program, usually associated with revenue sports such as football and basketball, can potentially lead to higher graduation rates of the whole student body and an increase in the quality and quantity of applications.

Given C. H. Johnson’s analysis and, more importantly, the acknowledgment of the budgetary burdens on the athletic department and the university as a whole, Georgia State administrators undeniably understood that a newly created football program would not completely support itself nor generate any revenue for any academic department. Once Georgia State administrators announced on April 17, 2008 that they would create a football program they viewed the indirect and intrinsic benefits associated with having a football program as outweighing the financial burden. Similarly, Southeastern accepted these intrinsic values and thought they would “provide [students] with a fully-rounded college experience.”¹⁹⁶ General reasons for establishing division-I athletic programs apply to nearly all American universities, including GSU and SLU. Increasing the depth and quality of application rates, raising graduation rates, and stimulating campus life are all goals held by most university administrators.

However, Georgia State’s administrators sought to transform its history as a commuter school predominately emphasizing evening and night classes, into a “24/7 campus with all traditional collegiate trappings – dorms, Greek housing and, most staggering of all, football.”¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁵ Getz, “What Does Intercollegiate Athletics Do.” 9.

¹⁹⁶ Rene Abadie, “Southeastern Announces Major Gift Supporting Athletic and Possible Return of Football,” in *Southeastern NEWS*, August 8, 2001.

¹⁹⁷ Rebecca Burns, “Expanding-Locally and Globally: The past 25 years have seen the transformation of student life and campus,” no date, found at magazine.gsu.edu/article/expanding-locally-and-globally/, accessed on 4/14/2014.

According to President Carl Patton a football program would “be great for Georgia State because it’s going to create more life, vitality, and activity on our campus and it’s going to engage our students more in the life of the university.”¹⁹⁸ President Patton “bought into the notion that football could ‘put life and vitality on the campus,’”¹⁹⁹ after reading the study conducted by C. H. Johnson. The President’s administrative power within higher education meant Patton’s opinion held considerable weight.

As far back as 1992, students inquired about a program, but what gave the basis for conducting a feasibility study? What changed between 1992 and 2006 for Georgia State to order a study estimating the feasibility of football? Tierney continued his article by saying, “as dormitories sprung up and the average age of students began trending downward,” President Patton ordered the study by C. H. Johnson. It is not simply an increase in dormitories and the average student age decreasing, however. Georgia State experienced an explosion of growth from the mid 1990s to the present. The University System of Georgia designated Georgia State as a full research university in 1995. They have enrolled over 30,000 students since 2010. These students represent every state in the union and at least 150 nations of the world. By 2010, Georgia State was building a Greek Village and, by the mid 2000s, constructed student and recreation centers.

Most impressively, once Georgia State commissioned Dan Reeves as football consultant, “Patton told Reeves...that he was *willing* to take no for an answer,” if, in his expert opinion, the

¹⁹⁸ “Football Groundbreaking,” Georgia State University Archives, November 20, 2008.

¹⁹⁹ Tierney, “Georgia State Hoping.”

program should not move forward.²⁰⁰ Even with the exceptional growth, President Patton was hesitant to start a program without Reeves' blessing. Athletic director Mary McElroy hoped that the emotional support and transformation of the university would combine to translate into financial support.

Southeastern's President Clausen approached football from a more reactionary approach. Yes, Georgia State students continued to ask President Patton about football, but the broad spectrum of community leaders, Southeastern faculty and staff, and students requested that President Clausen "take steps to explore the financial feasibility of returning football to Southeastern."²⁰¹ This, at least on the surface, distinguishes Southeastern from Georgia State. In numerous press releases, the administration was quoted as saying that it was "not prepared to address the issue [of football] in isolation until a complete assessment of Southeastern's immediate and overall academic and capitol outlay needs had been conducted."²⁰²

The commitment to pursuing academic excellence through the fund raising effort, entitled the Commitment to Excellence Campaign, enabled the university to build many academic buildings. Additionally, this was intended to "raise additional funds for scholarships, endowed professorships and chairs, and other academic initiatives and cultural activities" throughout the 1990s.²⁰³ The financial stance appeared secure when the university reached and

²⁰⁰ Tierney, "Georgia State Hoping," Italics added.

²⁰¹ Rebecca Tucker, "Football Interest Survey Underway at SLU," in *Southeastern NEWS*, November 12, 1997.

²⁰² Tucker, "Football Interest Survey."

²⁰³ Rene Abadie, "Southeastern to Expand Fund Raising Campaign with Focus on Overall Athletic Enhancement," in *Southeastern NEWS*, March 13, 2001.

surpassed the stated goal of \$10 million. The committee ultimately raised an additional \$5 million. However, with the expressed interest from a wide and deep body of support, the university expanded its Commitment to Excellence Campaign to include athletics and a goal of raising another \$5 million.²⁰⁴ These excess funds were to be used specifically for athletics. The Southeastern administration indicated that:

The \$5 million would be allocated according to the following formula: \$3.2 million for the football operation, enhancement of women's athletic scholarships and for improvements to women's facilities; \$800,000 to improve other athletic facilities, primarily Strawberry Stadium [the football stadium]; and \$1,000,000 to serve as a "rainy day" endowment fund.²⁰⁵

The appropriation of funds leaves many unanswered questions. The committee would allocate an initial \$3.2 million to 3 separate initiatives: football operations, women's athletic scholarships and improvements to women's facilities. Would they divide these funds evenly? The \$800,000 would be for improvements to Strawberry stadium and other facilities. What other facilities, and what proportion of the \$800,000 does "primarily" mean? While these questions are not directly answerable, the explicit support for the football program does suggest the football program would be the main beneficiary if the \$5 million were raised. Even with the expressed community support, a lack of monetary funding would smother any possibility of a reincarnated Southeastern football program.

Within the Georgia State community, private and institutional fundraising appeared to be moving along well. To the surprise of many, during a press conference soon after the decision to

²⁰⁴ Rene Abadie, "Southeastern to Expand Fund Raising."

²⁰⁵ Rene Abadie, "Southeastern to Expand Fund Raising Campaign with Focus on Overall Athletic Enhancement," in *Southeastern NEWS*, March 13, 2001.

move forward with the program, Georgia State's Athletic Director Mary McElroy stated that, "We were very pleased to be able to raise over \$1.2 million dollars in pledges prior to [a] student fee committee vote."²⁰⁶ Given the financial discrepancies the C. H. Johnson study exposed, this was a promising first step towards fund raising. During the fall of 2007, the athletic department encouraged the Atlanta community, and predominately Georgia State alumni, "to commit to a three-year pledge at [either the] Field Goal Level \$300...Touchdown Level \$600...Game Changer Level \$1,000...[or the] Game Breaker Level \$1,500."²⁰⁷ Additionally, over a five month period from October 2007 to April 2008, the student mandatory fee committee, the university's fiscal advisory committee, and the board of regents all voted unanimously to increase the student athletic fee as C. H. Johnson advised.²⁰⁸ As a result, Georgia State University would officially field a Division 1 Football Championship Subdivision (FSC, previously AA) by the fall of 2010.

Southeastern's fundraising efforts were equally, if not more, successful. According to Moffett, the entire Commitment to Excellence Campaign raised "more than \$17 million...since 1995, far exceeding the \$10 million goal."²⁰⁹ Thanks to numerous new donors primarily interested in contributing to the football program, \$5.025 million of the \$17 million went towards restarting the football program in Hammond, Louisiana after a hiatus of eighteen years. However, the administration did insist there would not be a reduction in efforts to raise money

²⁰⁶ "Press Conference Transcript," Georgia State Athletic Archives, April 17, 2008.

²⁰⁷ "First Team for Football Expects to Win."

²⁰⁸ "Press Conference Transcript."

²⁰⁹ Rene Abadie, "Southeastern Announces Return of Football," in *Southeastern NEWS*, May 21, 2002.

for academic and cultural pursuits.²¹⁰ Given these realities, *Southeastern NEWS* published a story on May 21, 2002 which began, “HAMMOND-Southeastern Louisiana’s football program will return to the gridiron in the 2003 season....”²¹¹

Along with both Georgia State University and Southeastern Louisiana University creating new football programs in the fall of 2010 and 2003, respectively, each university transitioned into a new administration shortly after the announcement to launch a football program (2008 and 2002, respectively). Georgia State’s President Patton had a long and storied history at a truly urban campus. In 1992, when he first took office at Georgia State, he took a ten year vested interest in the Teachers Retirement System and sold the president’s residence. Him and his wife then moved into a loft downtown. This showed that “he wasn’t just banking his retirement fund on being at Georgia State for a while,” but “he also planned to live in the heart of the campus.”²¹² This indicates President Patton not only thought of Georgia State as a job but also a home. He planted himself there for sixteen years. Additionally, under his leadership, unprecedented expansion occurred. Although he was not solely responsible, a background in urban planning certainly contributed to his success. Commanding the growth of the urban campus lent itself well to someone able to fully understand urban planning and movement of people throughout the city.

Given the expansion overseen by President Patton leading up to the creation of a football program, once Mark P. Becker succeeded President Patton in 2009, the former president had left his mark on the university. However, this was not simply a mark. Patton still lives in the same

²¹⁰ Rene Abadie, “Southeastern Announces Return.”

²¹¹ Rene Abadie, “Southeastern Announces Return.”

²¹² Rebecca Burns, “Expanding-Locally and Globally.”

loft with his wife and is still officially President Emeritus at Georgia State University. Georgia State and the football program specifically were not career moves but life moves.

Contrastingly, Southeastern Louisiana University President Sally Clausen, with tremendous community support, called for the feasibility study and appointed a feasibility committee. While the feasibility study was not recovered for this paper, “the committee voted 9-7 against the return of a football program” to Southeastern.²¹³ This was primarily due to the operating costs and not the emotional support expressed by the community of Hammond, Louisiana. President Clausen came to Southeastern in 1995, and because of community pressure, indicated she would “address the specific issue of football within in a two-year period.”²¹⁴ President Clausen contributed immensely to the Commitment to Excellence Campaign to raise funds for academic pursuits and, later, an expansion of the athletic department.²¹⁵

Her successor, Randy Moffett, acknowledged this once the university officially announced football in May 2002. President Clausen created a reputation for herself as an administrator while at Southeastern for being a courageous president who positioned academics before athletics. However, she certainly did not disregard or avoid athletics by any means. President Moffett recognized her administrative accomplishments by stating, “through her leadership...Southeastern is enjoying an overdue construction boom that totals \$70 million,” the majority of which were academic buildings. However, Moffett continued with, “once those priorities were met, she threw her enthusiastic support and considerable persuasive sales skills

²¹³ Christina Chapple, “SLU President Deliberating on Football’s Fate,” in *Southeastern NEWS*, February 20, 1998.

²¹⁴ Rebecca Tucker, “Football Interest Survey.”

²¹⁵ Rene Abadie, “Southeastern Announces Return.”

into the athletic campaign.”²¹⁶ After Moffett took over as president of Southeastern, Clausen became president of the University of Louisiana System in 2001.

These two universities established football programs in the same era of college football and of higher education. Their reasons for establishing each program varied in some respects. The intrinsic values a football program brings to a university can be hard to calculate, but the Georgia State University administration from 2006, when rumors of a program began circulating, until at least 2010, the inaugural season, relied heavily on those values as a basis for justification. The university administrators, and President Patton in particular, aspired to further develop and transform Georgia State University. President Patton’s long tenure, nearly twenty years, at the university and his emeritus status afterward prove his devotion not only to the football program but also to the university. Southeastern Louisiana University’s expansive alumni community in Hammond, Louisiana did significantly push for a return of Southeastern football. Their alumni association and even state legislators pressured President Clausen to pursue a route to football. Nevertheless, President Clausen did override the feasibility committee’s 9-7 vote against reinstatement and resigned months before the inaugural season only to accept the office of President of the University of Louisiana System, effectively distancing herself in case the program was not the expected success. Both presidents acknowledged the financial burdens and relied heavily on intrinsic values, such as famous solidarity and increased application rates, as justifications for beginning football programs at their respective universities.

Their reasonings constitute a transition in the connection between American higher education and intercollegiate athletics. It appears that university presidents in the last two

²¹⁶ Rene Abadie, “Southeastern Announces Return.”

decades discounted the false monetary benefits revealed by Murray Sperber in 1990. If anything they have learned how to sell a football program to their university community by highlighting the intangible and indirect benefits while still acknowledging the monetary risks. The effects of the decisions made by these two presidents along with the other twenty-six who started football program during this particular decade will take years if not decades to determine. College football will undoubtedly continue to experience the cultural and political connections to the wider society seen throughout the twentieth-century, but the transition of university presidents and their approach towards football may indicate a renewed optimism where college football is less of a business venture and more of a socially cohesive institution. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize college football, just as American higher education, is in fact a business to at least a degree.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The intercollegiate landscape changed considerably across its 150 year history. The Ivey League's amateur contact sport of choice morphed into an institutional pass time at the overwhelming majority of American colleges and universities by the middle of the twentieth-century. The sport's popularity exploded over the succeeding decades. Also, by the end of the twentieth-century and first decade of the twenty-first-century, the American South—at least by perception—embodied the pinnacle of intercollegiate football. In addition to the shift in institutional and regional location, the meaning of the sport and how football could contribute to the American university also shifted.

As the sport's popularity grew, controversies within the sport and wider society became exposed. In the first decades of the sport, brutality characterized the controversy. By the middle of the twentieth-century, larger social taboos intertwined themselves with collegiate football, as at Ole Miss, the University of Alabama, and Iowa State. Later, muckraking reporters and whistle blowers within athletic departments exposed controversies within the sport itself. The payment of players and false profitability, especially, associated college athletics with corruption. Nevertheless, collegiate football's popularity remained constant if not rose. Television contracts and merchandising revenues expanded to reach the billions of dollars in profits by the new millennium.

The intersection of popularity and controversy developed overtime and, for those administrators at Southeastern and Georgia State, culminated in the first decade of the new millennium. This intersection caused advocates for intercollegiate athletics at mid level

universities to redefine collegiate football's purpose and contribution to a respective institution. Sperber's book *College Sports Inc.*, amongst other studies, largely debunked notions of college sports' profitability. Additionally, the payment of players and several recruiting violations unearthed in the 1980s associated college football with corruption in many minds. These two negative associations caused administrators and proponents of intercollegiate athletics to conceptualize collegiate athletics in a way that separated financial and intrinsic values. At both SLU and GSU, administrators recognized the almost guaranteed potential for financial loss and completely avoided notions of corruption. At each institution, administrators—especially the university presidents—harnessed the popularity of college football and ultimately succeeded in establishing football programs at each institution. By associating collegiate football with increased application rates, both in quality and quantity, increased graduation rates and a stronger development of campus cohesion and solidarity, administrators successfully combined the general popularity of the sport with indirect and intrinsic values which, they claimed, would ultimately benefit each university. The actual benefit is difficult to determine because of the relatively recent establishment of both SLU's and GSU's football programs. However, intercollegiate football's role within an American college or university appeared to have shifted.

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