

BCS

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR ARETE
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The Alabama Crimson Tide football team is now officially the BCS National Field Goal Champion. This was achieved despite the fact that the Tide did score a touchdown in the waning moments of the game and then watched their kicker miss the extra point. The Alabama coach, Nick Saban, must have been quite proud of this achievement, as it obliterated the loss to LSU in the Field Goal contest of November to determine which team was number one in the nation at that point in the season.

Some pundits complained that this rematch in the BCS National Field Goal Championship game should not have taken place. It is clear now that they were wrong, and that Alabama has proven to be a better field goal team than LSU. In fact there are votes in polls that validate this conclusion. No one can seriously claim that Oklahoma State or Boise State could out-kick these SEC toe men.

So congratulations to Coach Saban and his team. They are now number one and Saban is on his way to the bank with a substantial sum to deposit. Saban receives \$200,000 just for getting his team to the BCS Championship, and having won the title, he receives \$400,000. Whether that is over and above the \$200,000 or simply an add on to the \$200,000 is not clear. I would think that in the world of intercollegiate athletics and BCS finance, the \$400,000 would be over and above.

One can only wonder if the Alabama Athletic Director gets a bonus for whatever his role is in the process, and if the university president is tossed a few crumbs as would befit his status on campus. I would hope that faculty members who nurtured the Alabama football team in the classroom would also get some sort of bonus for their contribution to the program. Perhaps they could be invited to Coach Saban's private luxury box at Bryant-Denny Stadium for a game next season. Or maybe Saban would take them on the airplane he has available to him for 25 hours per year.

One would think that Coach Saban would appreciate the fact that the faculty is a key element in any bonus money he can pick up for a decent graduation rate among his players. If the team's graduation rate puts Alabama in the top quartile in the Southeast Conference, Saban receives an additional

\$100,000. Maybe Coach could help out by lending one of his courtesy cars to a junior faculty member whose ten-year-old vehicle is in the shop for repair.

These numbers come courtesy of Professors Gentry and Alexander of the University of Kansas via the *New York Times* of December 31, 2011. In this article for the *Times* it is reported that Coach Saban receives \$4.68M in total compensation not counting bonuses. The opposing coach in the BCS National Field Goal Championship Game, Les Miles, receives a mere \$3.75M before bonuses. Miles also picked up the \$200,000 for "passing go" on his way to the big game.

In another interesting wrinkle Saban receives an annual retention bonus of \$533,333, or better than twice his base salary, simply for sticking around at Alabama. Miles gets \$550,000 in his annual retention for staying at LSU. I am not certain if this is some sort of comment on the relative attractiveness of Tuscaloosa over Baton Rouge, but it certainly is something Saban may want to look into before his next contract negotiation. It would be difficult for anyone to claim that the charms of Tuscaloosa outshine those of Baton Rouge by nearly \$17,000.

When you look at the dreadful offensive performance by LSU and Alabama over the two games of the century they played against each other this football season, the mind boggles when contemplating what sort of salaries these coaches could demand if their teams could score touchdowns in these big games. Perhaps there should be negative bonuses or paybacks for certain dubious achievements. If for example your team can not cross mid-field for an entire half, or can only cross it once in a game, the coach should have \$100,000 deducted from his salary. If a team went for two games or nearly two games of national importance without scoring a touchdown, perhaps there should be a \$200,000 deduction from the coach's compensation package.

Note that College Football Coaches do not get salaries, they get compensation packages that include small salaries and huge "talent fees." Coach Saban's "talent fee" is \$3.93M annually. But then he is a talented guy.

Professor Gentry and Alexander also have some important tips for faculty members at LSU and Alabama or anywhere that tosses around several millions to coaches. Both Miles and Saban have corporations and foundations that handle

their media appearances and endorsements, as do many other coaches. This allows them to do some clever tax planning, while at the same time retaining employee benefits such as health insurance, pension benefits, and other largesse that is heaped upon university professors. Having a foundation may be as important as having a twitter account.

After watching the game on Monday night, who could quarrel with these compensation arrangements for coaches of such immense talent? In competing for the BCS National Field Goal Championship they showed on the field of play, and more importantly on ESPN, the World Wide Leader in Sports, that they are the best in teaching this skill. Who knows, someday one of their players could kick an NFL team all the way to the Super Bowl.

Certainly that would make it all worth it.

And did anyone notice that Urban Meyer having spent enough time with his family has returned to coaching. Ohio State will pay him a reported \$40M over seven years. That is somewhere north of \$5M per year. No word if that includes "talent fees," or what role this will play in Nick Saban's next contract. (Bank) Roll Tide!

On Sport and Society this is Dick Crepeau reminding you that you don't have to be a good sport to be a bad loser.

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