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The BC\$; football's (non) diversity

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SPORT AND SOCIETY FOR H-ARETE
The BC\$; football's (non) diversity
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There is something so right about college football this year. On January 2, nearly a week before the so-called BC\$ National Championship game, there is a legitimate national champion already in place. On the 2nd of January in some bowl game somewhere Utah stomped all over Alabama. You will remember the Crimson Tide from earlier this season when they were ranked by several experts, computers, and their fans as Number One in the nation. We know that Utah is the national champion, not because they rolled all over the Tide, 31-17, but because they are the only undefeated team in Division One football at 13-0.

To repeat, there are no other undefeated teams. There are no undefeated BC\$ teams. Only Utah was able to defeat all opponents including the western division champions in the geographically challenged Southeastern Conference. The SEC, as we all know because the SEC has told us, is the best football conference in the country, unless it is the Big Twelve Conference whose fans have also told us they are the best football conference in the country. Now we know that these claims are at best questionable and need to be modified. Perhaps they could claim they are the best BC\$ conferences in the nation.

One can assume that if Florida wins the BC\$ Championship game on Thursday then the SEC can claim to have the best BC\$ conference, and if Oklahoma wins the Big Twelve can make that claim. Those living on the West Coast may object that they have the best football conference in the country. We know that is not true because the PAC 10 gets proportionally less press than the Big Twelve and the SEC everywhere east of the Rocky Mountains, which you may note is the secret location of the University of Utah.

This is the second time in five years that Utah has finished the season undefeated. The last time it happened their coach was Urban Meyer, who in those days was an inferior football coach in an inferior league with an inferior team ("Inferior" meaning non-BC\$). Now that he is in the SEC he is a genius, the greatest coach in the history of the football universe, and like many of the great coaches is noted for his small-minded behavior. Meyer has proven his greatness by refusing to ever refer to Florida State University by its name, calling it "that school out west." You have to love this sort of infantilism. It is said that Meyer

learned to display "class" in this way from his hero Woody Hayes.

Utah was inspired by another of the great coaches with a infantile vision, Alabama's Nick Saban. Prior to the Sugar Bowl, Saban announced that Alabama was the only team from a real BC\$ Conference to go undefeated in the regular season. Not only was this silly, it is not clear what it means, and it positioned Saban to eat his words, no doubt sprinkled with a sufficient amount of Sugar. All of this has added to Saban's total lack of credibility which he firmly established with embarrassing ease over the past few years playing musical jobs.

After last night's Siesta Bowl that drove people away from the television sets with a 6-3 first half, Texas struggled mightily to beat Ohio State from the eleven team feeble football conference, the Big Ten. Only a classic display of dismal coaching by Ohio State's genius, Jim Tressel, opened the way for Texas to rally in the last minute of play. This will lead some to claim that Texas is number one, although of course they are not. It may also lead those at Southern Cal to claim they are number one because they hammered both Ohio State and Penn State. This claim of course is refuted with two words, "Big Ten."

So let the claims go on. Let those at Florida and Oklahoma operate under the delusion that they are playing for the national championship on Thursday. Meanwhile in Utah they can count up their wins and losses knowing that there is no team that can match them.

In other bowl news, a study from the The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sports at the University of Central Florida showed that graduation rates of football teams going to bowl games had improved slightly. It also showed that the gap between the graduation rates for African American football players and white players increased over the past year. The study showed that 19 bowl-bound teams graduate less than half their African American players, with half of those teams in BCS bowls in that category. Oklahoma was the only team to achieve a graduation rate of less than fifty percent for its white athletes.

This result may in part be explained by findings of another study conducted by the Atlanta Journal-Constitution showing that SAT scores for incoming football and basketball players at big-time programs were hundreds of points lower than for the average student admission. The leader in this category is The University of Florida where there is a 346 point gap between its football

players and the average student. The result is that these athletes find themselves competing in a student body where they are at a considerable disadvantage. Some would argue that the athletes are set up for academic failure in order to ensure athletic success for the university. This was once termed "exploitation" in a less dishonest time than our own.

Still the NCAA insists on using the term "student athlete" claiming that the athlete is and must be treated like all other students. One other non-equal case involves student athletes who want to transfer to another school. In the case of students this is not a problem. In the case of student athletes, transferring students do not have the freedom to choose their new school. They can be prohibited from going to other schools. A case involving a football player at the University of Miami has brought this policy into focus as this player has been prohibited from enrolling at a number of other schools in Florida and the Southeast. In the meantime coaches are free to go wherever they choose.

On the coaching front it is the season for the hiring and firing of coaches and this highlights another great failing of the American university. The number of African American coaches continues to be wallow in single digits and the inability of institutions of higher education, that educate the next generation of American leadership, to produce any change in this area remains a mark of shame. We now know that it is easier for an African American to become president of the United States than it is to become a football coach at most American universities.

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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