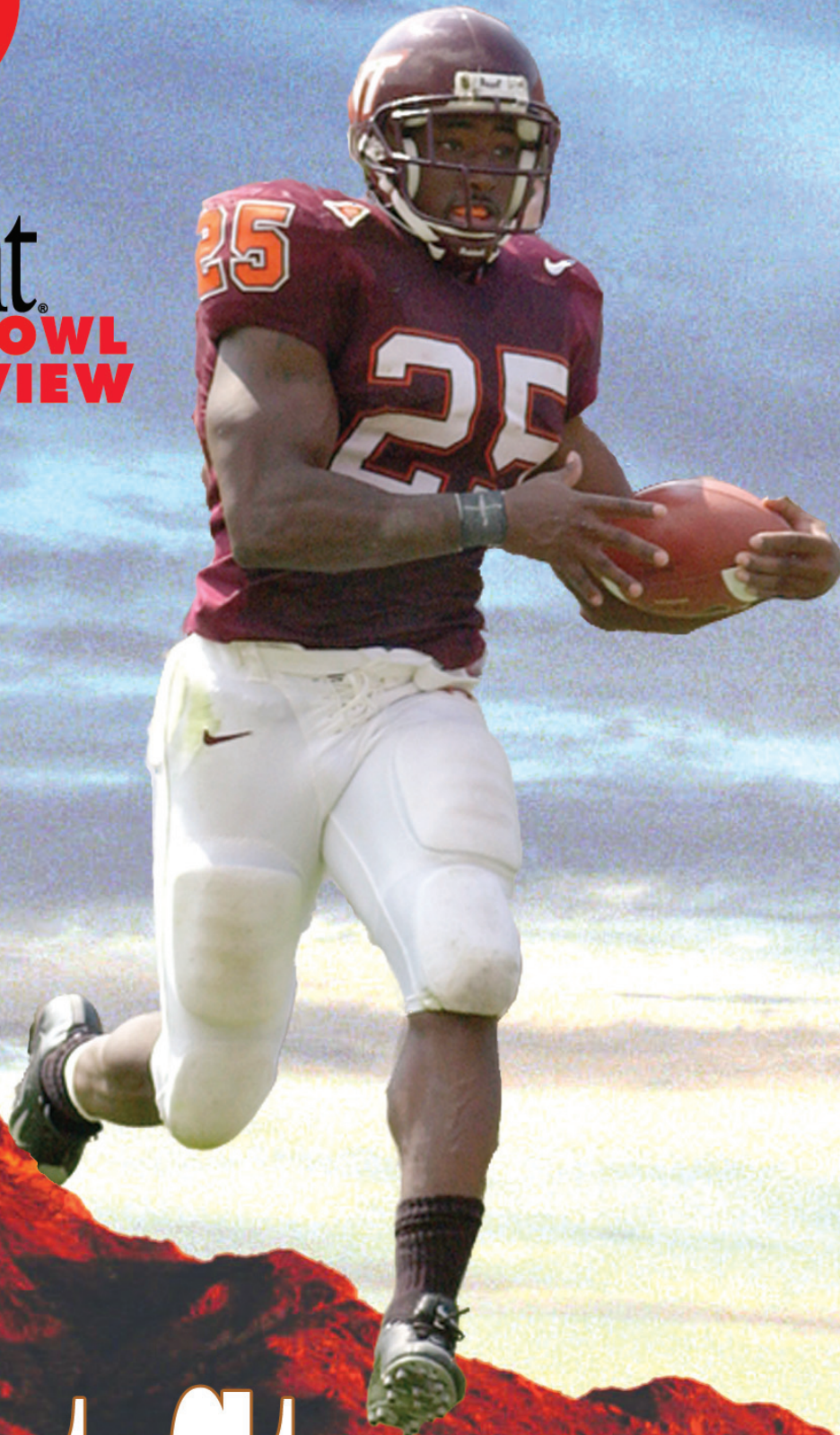


**COLLEGIATE**TIMES

*December 9, 2003*



**Insight**  
**BOWL**  
**PREVIEW**



# Desert Storm

**VIRGINIA TECH VS. CALIFORNIA**  
**DECEMBER 26, 2003 • PHOENIX, AZ**

<b>COLLEGIATETIMES</b>			
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# A history of the Insight Bowl

**Brent Anderson**  
Staff Writer

With freezing rain and snowy slush covering the grounds of Virginia Tech's campus, most students are probably dreaming of warm temperatures and blue skies.

For the Tech football team, that dream will soon become a reality as they travel to sunny Arizona to play in the Insight Bowl on Dec. 26.

Students, alumni and fans may be grumbling because they can't

enjoy the festivities of Bourbon Street and cheer their beloved Hokies on to a national championship in the Nokia Sugar Bowl. However, before dismissing this year's bowl game as just another end to a disappointing season, Tech fans might want to receive a little information about their team's destination.

The Insight Bowl, which takes place in Phoenix, Ariz., is in its 15th year of its existence. Beginning in 1989 when the NCAA gave its approval to the non-profit Copper Bowl Foundation to hold a game in Tucson's Arizona Stadium, the game, not surprisingly, was called the Copper Bowl.

For many years, the Copper Bowl enjoyed success in Tucson, hosting regional matchups that featured some of the best players in college football.

The inaugural game was played on New Year's Eve at Arizona Stadium that same year. More than 37,000 fans came out to see University of Arizona and North Carolina State University battle it out. Arizona fared well playing in its home state, beating N.C. State 17-10.

In 1997, the Arizona Sports Foundation signed a letter of agreement to acquire the Copper

Bowl and assume the operating responsibilities. Under the direction of the foundation, the Copper Bowl was transformed into the Insight Bowl in 1997 when Insight Enterprises stepped in and signed a long-term deal to be the title sponsor of the game.

Insight Enterprises is a company that offers more than 200,000 computer peripherals and software products throughout Canada, United Kingdom and the United States.

In 2000, the leaders of the bowl moved the game to Phoenix's state-of-the-art Bank One Ballpark, home to Major League Baseball's Arizona Diamondbacks. While it may seem odd to be playing a football game at a baseball stadium, keep in mind that several NFL franchises still do the same thing.

One glaring difference about playing a football game at Bank One (aside from the swimming pool located in right field) is that players from both teams stand on the same sideline.

In 1998, the Insight Bowl began to invite the third-, fourth- or fifth-ranked team from the Big East conference. That trend has continued to this day with Pittsburgh, Syracuse and West Virginia all having participated. The Big East has not fared so well against opposing teams, posting a record of 2-3 against schools from the Big 12 and Pac-10 conferences.

The Hokies' opponent this year, the University of California, also has a spot in the Insight Bowl's history. In 1990, they beat the University of Wyoming 17-15.

This will be Tech's 11th straight year that they have traveled to a bowl game and the first time that they will play in the state of Arizona.



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# Cal Golden Bears feature high-octane passing attack

**Jana Renn**  
Sports Assistant

To get to Phoenix for the Insight Bowl on Dec. 26, the University of California Golden Bears and the Virginia Tech Hokies will travel in different directions. From California, the Golden Bears will travel a southeast route of 750 miles to reach Bank One Ballpark in Arizona, while the Hokies will head southwest 2,100 miles.

However, despite being on opposite sides of the country, the two teams have a few things in common. Each team finished fourth in their respective conferences, and each team got their biggest win of the season by knocking off a team ranked in the top 5 in the nation.

The Hokies defeated Miami, who was ranked No. 2 at the time (Nov. 1), while the Bears beat the University of Southern California, who was ranked No. 3 (Sept. 27). The Trojans are now ranked No. 1 in the nation, while the Hurricanes are ranked No. 9.

"Tech's win over Miami was right on par with our win over

USC," said Cal head coach Jeff Tedford. "Even though Tech was ranked high early in the season, and we haven't had that luxury, the wins were similar."

In that game against USC, the Bears jumped out to an early lead, but the Trojans fought back to force overtime. Cal was able to pull out the 34-31 victory with a field goal in the third overtime.

"I felt like that win was huge for our program, and it taught our guys a lot about themselves," Tedford said. "For our young team to never panic and always believe in themselves was a huge step for our players, and it and gave them a lot of confidence."

The Bears went into this season expecting it to be a rebuilding year. They only returned nine starters from a team that posted a 7-5 record en route to their first winning season in nine years. The 2002 season was Tedford's first with a team he inherited after they went 1-10 in 2001. This year, they finished 7-6 overall and 5-3 in the Pac-10. The record propelled Cal to its first bowl invitation since 1996.

"We lost 23 seniors last year,

so we had the least amount of returners in the country. We had the second toughest schedule in the country also. I felt that our five non-conference games at the beginning of the season really benefited us."

The key to the Bears season has been the performance of young players such as sophomore quarterback Aaron Rodgers.

Rodgers won the starting position in preseason and ended up being named an All Pac-10 honorable mention by the end of the season. He finished the season completing 59.9 percent of his passes for 2,509 yards and 17 touchdowns. His favorite target was junior wide receiver Geoff McArthur, who averaged 17.7 yards a reception with 10 touchdowns for 1,504 yards. His performance garnered him second team All Pac-10 accolades.

The highlight of the Bears' offense is senior running back Adimchinobe Echemandu, who finished second in the conference with 1,161 rushing yards, an average of 96.8 yards per game. He rushed for 12 touchdowns over the course of the season. This was



DANIEL YAFFE/THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN

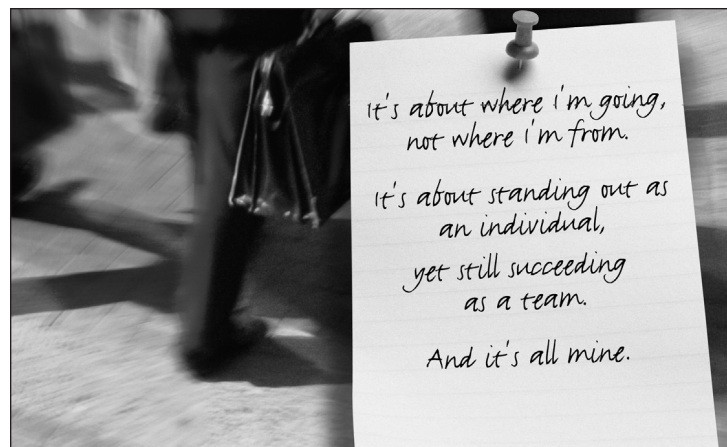
## Cal wide receiver Geoff McArthur ranks second in the nation in receiving yards and led the Pac-10.

Echemandu's first season as a starter and he was named to the All Pac-10 first team.

Cal's potent offense will take on a Tech defense that has been on a downslide since the game against

Miami but is still capable of making instrumental plays.

"Tech is extremely well coached and is a very quick team," Tedford said. "Anyone that is like that, we have a great deal of respect for."



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# Playoff system would produce clear champion



**Kumar Malhotra**  
Change the Game

With the 2003-04 college football season coming to a close, it's time once again for the BCS-bashing to start. Come on, you know it's your favorite post-season activity and the main argument on why your team was cheated out of a national championship.

This year's victim — the University of Southern California Trojans, who despite finishing the season 11-1 and

No. 1 in both major polls, will not get a chance to play for the National Championship.

How can the NCAA allow this travesty to go on? How can three teams finish with nearly identical records and schedules of similar difficulty, yet only two get a chance to play for the title? Something is afool in the world of college football.

In an era when the fate of teams is decided by a complex computer formula, an omission of this magnitude was bound to happen. No matter how sound the BCS formula is on paper, it fails to consider one critical factor — common sense.

With Oklahoma losing in convincing fashion in the Big

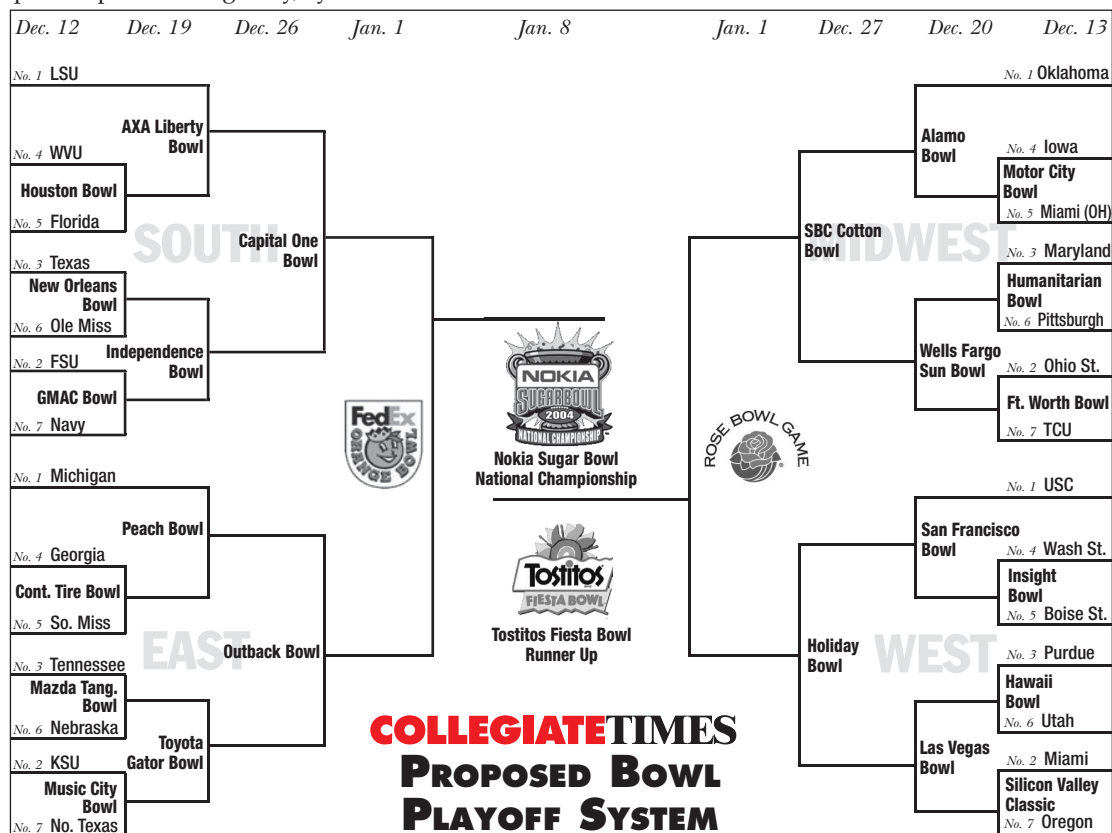
12 championship it is evident that they aren't the best team in the nation. So why reward them with a national championship bid? Logically, you

would want to reward the team that took care of business down the stretch, right?

Wrong. Due to the Sooners' absolute domination of their

first 12 opponents, Bob Stoops' boys get a shot at LSU and a second title in four years.

See **PLAYOFF**, page 8



A.J. MANDRACCHIA

Teams were selected for the brackets based on poll results, conference standings, strength of the team's conference. Conference champions automatically get a birth in the playoffs.

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# Insight Bowl will be Beamer's 11th straight

**Jin Gak Bae**  
Staff Writer

Many Hokie fans were disappointed after Virginia Tech announced it will finish out the season at the Insight Bowl. Being ranked as high as No. 3 in the bowl championship series poll, Phoenix was not the destination most had in mind.

"I think expectations were extremely high," said head coach Frank Beamer. "We could have won more football games but what is most important for us now is forgetting what could have been and getting on making the next game the best one it could be."

Beamer will lead the Hokies to play in their 11th straight bowl appearance against the University of California Golden Bears on Dec. 26.

"There is only six other teams that have accomplished such a feat. We are definitely in good company with this," Beamer said about the streak.

The Golden Bears come into this game playing, well winning four of their last five games.

"Offensively they can do a lot of things," Beamer said. "Being the only team to beat Southern Cal speaks volumes about your team."

The Virginia Tech football program became serious about their level of success after hiring Frank Beamer as head

coach in 1987.

Since Beamer's arrival at Tech, the Hokies have been one of the most successful programs in NCAA Division I-A football. In his tenure, Beamer has compiled a record of 117-69-2, including the streak of bowl games.

Under his guidance, the Hokies had a streak of 84 straight weeks in the top 25, finishing the season in the top 25 in the past nine of 10 years.

He has many noteworthy accomplishments as the head coach of the Hokies including Tech's first ever national championship bowl game in 1999. Under coach Beamer, the Hokies have won the Big East three times and posted the program's first every back-to-back 11-win seasons.

Beamer comes to bowl games as a seasoned veteran. He has experience being one of few coaches in college football to play as a player and stand on the sidelines as a coach.

As a player, he played on the football team in the 1966 and 1968 Liberty Bowl teams as a defensive back. But Beamer never tasted victory in either of the Liberty Bowl appearances. Tech lost in 1966 to then-No. 9 Miami 14-7 and in 1968 the Hokies lost to Mississippi 34-17.

Overall, Beamer's record during bowl games are 5-5. Last year, he led the Hokies to a 20-13 win over Air Force

at the San Francisco Diamond Walnut Bowl.

Beamer ranks as one of the most successful active coaches. He is fifth all-time amongst active coaches for the most

wins in Division I-A football.

"I think the consistency of our program has been very good throughout the years. We have maintained a solid coaching staff throughout the year.

In addition we have been good in our recruiting year in and year out," Beamer said. "With consistent coaching and good recruits it's a good formula for success."

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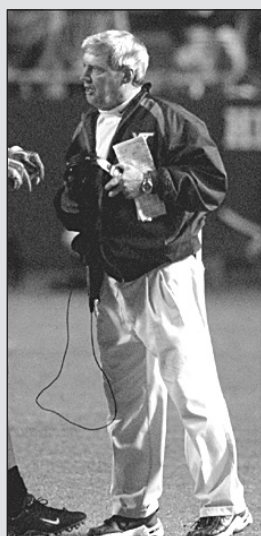
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### Frank Beamer's Bowl History

1993	(9-3)	Independence Bowl versus Indiana (W, 45-20)
1994	(8-4)	Gator Bowl versus Tennessee (L, 23-45)
1995	(10-2)	Sugar Bowl versus Texas (W, 28-10)
1996	(10-2)	Orange Bowl versus Nebraska (L, 21-41)
1997	(7-5)	Gator Bowl versus North Carolina (L, 3-42)
1998	(9-3)	Music City Bowl versus Alabama (W, 38-7)
1999	(11-1)	Sugar Bowl versus Florida State (L, 29-46)
2000	(11-1)	Gator Bowl versus Clemson (W, 41-20)
2001	(8-4)	Gator Bowl versus Florida State (L, 17-30)
2002	(10-4)	San Francisco Bowl versus Air Force (W, 20-13)



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Tech's not the only team going bowling:

# Four other Big East teams get bowl bids

**Clark Ruhland**  
Staff Writer

The Big East conference produced five teams that are bowl bound this year with University of Miami topping the list and West Virginia University, University of Pittsburgh, Virginia Tech and Boston College rounding out the pack. The five bowl bids awarded to the Big East makes it the conference with the second highest number of bowl berths.

Each team is deserving of their respective bowl based on their

final Big East standings.

Miami head coach Larry Coker and the Hurricanes tied WVU for the Big East championship. With their last minute win against the Mountaineers in October, Miami stayed undefeated until their loss at Tech.

The Big East champion was not decided until the end of November when the Hurricanes beat Pittsburgh to clinch the title. Finishing with a 6-1 conference record and 10-2 overall, Miami earned a bid to the Bowl Championship Series to represent the Big East. They got the nod over WVU because of their

higher ranking in the BCS poll.

"That's our fourth Big East championship in a row and our seniors have won four in a row," said Miami head coach Larry Coker after the win over the Panthers. "That's exciting."

The Hurricanes will take on the Florida State Seminoles in the Orange Bowl. The Seminoles were the Atlantic Coast Conference champions finishing with a 10-2 record.

Even though WVU did not secure the BCS bid, head coach Rich Rodriguez, who turned the struggling program around after a 1-4 start, is satisfied to play in the Toyota Gator Bowl on New Year's Day.

After their win over Rutgers, a nationally televised victory over the Hokies propelled the Mountaineers to finish their season at the top, going 6-1 in the conference and 8-4 overall.

Rarely do bowl game matchups repeat regular season games, but WVU will take on the University of Maryland Terrapins, who dominated their September game against the Mountaineers, winning 34-7.

"The Gator Bowl is excited to have two of the hottest teams in college football," said Gator Bowl President Rick Catlett. "This matchup should insure the Gator Bowl's third straight sellout."

Pittsburgh, led by head coach Walt Harris, boasts the leading scorer in the nation in Heisman Trophy candidate

Larry Fitzgerald. The Panthers contended for the Big East championship until their final game loss to Miami. Pittsburgh finished their season losing two of their last three including a loss to rival WVU. The Panthers finished the season third in the Big East with a 5-2 conference record and a record of 8-4 overall. The Continental Tire Bowl invited Pittsburgh to play the University of Virginia, who is making their second straight postseason visit to Charlotte, N.C.

"We are extremely excited to invite two strong teams, Virginia and Pittsburgh, to the 2003 Continental Tire Bowl," said bowl executive director Ken Haines. "Coupled with the success we had last year, we feel that a great tradition is being built for the Continental Tire Bowl. This will be an excellent opportunity for fans to experience a very competitive college bowl game."

Tom O'Brien and the Golden Eagles had a losing record in the Big East, but a strong non-conference record and a victory over Penn State, had the Eagles finishing with an overall winning record. In Big East play, Boston College suffered losses to Miami, WVU, Pittsburgh and Syracuse, which resulted in a No. 5 finish in the Big East. Their victory at Virginia Tech at the end of November propelled the Eagles to the postseason. The Diamond Walnut San Francisco Bowl selected Boston College to play Colorado State on Dec. 31.

## Orange Bowl

Jan. 1, Miami, Fla.



**Miami Hurricanes**  
10-2 (6-1 Big East)

vs.



**Florida State Seminoles**  
10-2 (7-1 ACC)

## Gator Bowl

Jan. 1, Jacksonville, Fla.



**West Virginia Mountaineers**  
8-4 (6-1 Big East)

vs.



**Maryland Terrapins**  
9-3 (6-2 ACC)

## Tire Bowl

Dec. 27, Charlotte, N.C.



**Pittsburgh Panthers**  
8-4 (5-1 Big East)

vs.



**Virginia Cavaliers**  
8-4 (4-4 ACC)

## San Fran. Bowl

Dec. 31, San Francisco, Ca.



**Boston College Golden Eagles**  
7-5 (3-4 Big East)

vs.



**Colorado State Rams**  
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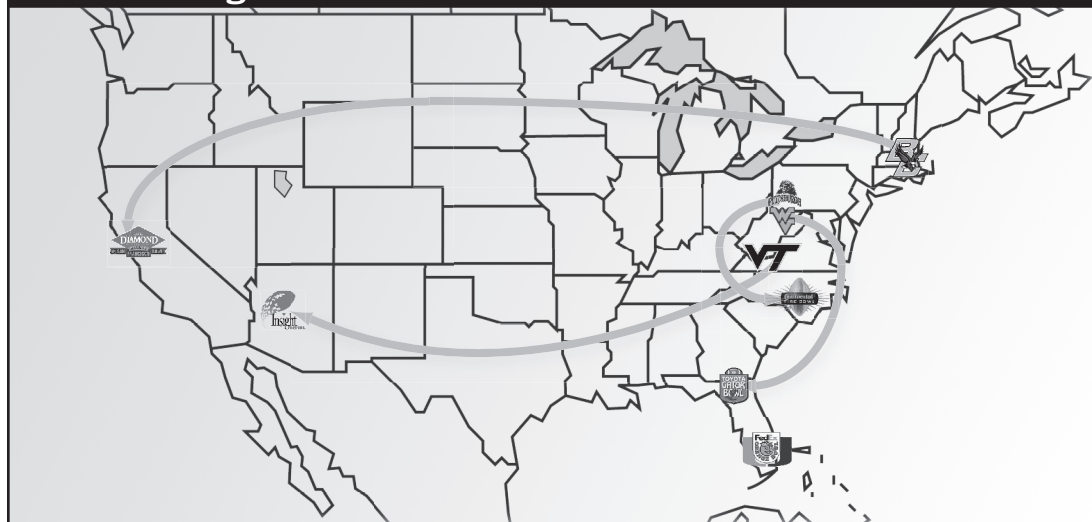
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# Playoff: System eliminates computer controversies

Continued from page 8

Pete Carroll's bunch will head to nearby Pasadena to face Michigan in the Rose Bowl, and we are left with controversy — the one thing the BCS was supposed to eliminate.

So where do we go from here? What can the NCAA do to ensure an oversight like this doesn't happen again? How can more than two teams have a legitimate shot at the National Championship?

Drum roll please.

The great equalizer — a playoff system, where the top teams in the nation duke it out in true NCAA fashion in order to determine the best team in the nation. Great in theory, but how feasible would this 28-team, five week tournament be? More feasible than you think.

Here's the deal: the winners of the following 10 conferences (ACC, Big 12, Big East, Big Ten, Conference USA, Mid-America, Mountain West, PAC-10, SEC and WAC) would get automatic bids to the tournament. The remaining 18 spots would be given at-large, based on a variety of factors (i.e. record, strength of schedule, place in

the polls, wins over quality opponents, etc.).

Take these 28 teams and divide them into four brackets (South, East, Midwest, West) and seed them according to the aforementioned factors, a la March Madness. Give the top team in each region a bye into the second round and a match up with the winner of the No. 4-No. 5 game (See graphic).

Each game in the tournament would be hosted by a different bowl, with the twelve first round games being hosted by lower tier bowls, such as the Insight and San Francisco bowls. As the tournament progresses, the payouts would increase and more prominent bowls would play host. The "BCS Bowls" (i.e. Sugar, Orange, Rose and Fiesta) would rotate as hosts of the National Championship, National Runner-Up and National Semifinal games, similarly to what they do now.

Obviously, the teams that progress the furthest earn the most money, so to reward teams for making the playoffs, the loser in each game of the first three rounds would take home 65 percent of the Bowl's

payout, as opposed to the even split that takes place now.

The team that moves on is guaranteed more money and the teams that make early exits still go home with a significant purse.

When teams reach the fourth round (i.e. semifinals and one of the big bowls) the pay structure reverts back to the 50-50 scale.

Now for a playoff system of this magnitude to take place, where the final four teams could potentially play five games, the regular season would have to be shortened.

Currently most teams have a 12 game regular season, while some depending on their conference, play 13 (LSU and Oklahoma) or 14 (Kansas St.).

Solution — shorten the season to 12 games. Limit the number of bye weeks, cut the out of conferences games, do whatever you have to; just get everyone to play the same amount of games. End the season Thanksgiving week-end, give teams two weeks to prepare for first round games, which would start the second week of December (Dec. 12-13 this year).

If you gave teams a week off between games, the tournament would end the second week of January, about a week or so after the date the National Championship is currently played (Jan. 4).

This is 2003, and about time for college football to join the rest of the sporting world. Bowls are a great idea, but 27 of the 28 are meaningless. Having playoffs forces teams to play opponents they're not accustomed to and will prove who the best teams are. No weeks of scouting or preparation — every seven days, two teams battle and the stronger of the two moves on.

Many college football fans argue the current system limits teams' margin for error, making every game meaningful and giving college football the drama and excitement it has. I tend to disagree with this logic.

With a playoff system, teams will still want to win as many games as possible in order to secure a high seed and a possible first round bye.

Furthermore, a loss won't completely eliminate a team from a chance at the title; it just makes their road tougher. Thus teams like the Hokies, wouldn't implode after their first loss of the season, when the national

championship seems out of reach. With a playoff system, a loss is a loss regardless of when it occurs and a team would not be relegated to a lower tier bowl due to one slipup.

Lastly, with a shortened season, the "gimme" games will be off the schedule, making every remaining game a tough contest and worth watching.

More than anything, it's the environment that surrounds college sports that make it what it is.

It's the diehard fans that tailgate and support their team in hurricanes, blizzards and the occasional lightning attack. It's the players who haven't experienced the spoils of the professional world.

It's the history, the rivalries and tradition.

It's time for college football to make new history and implementing a playoff system would ensure a bright future. The bottom line is this — the NCAA got \$6 billion from CBS for March Madness, how much do you think they could get for a real Bowl Championship Series?

Ching ching let the games begin.

Sports writers Rajan Nanavati and Adam Abramson contributed to this article.

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## Big Bowlin'

Payouts to teams participating in various  
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