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**End the Madness: Down with the BCS**

**By Jerry Work**

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Lets' face it: the BCS is a piece of garbage. It encourages unsportsmanlike behavior – and there really seems to be too much of that these days – by forcing teams to run up scores to maintain high poll positions. It encourages corruption by allowing poll voters to affect dramatic changes at the last minute, bowing to political pressure. It has resulted in weaker overall bowl matchups. And worst of all, it denies us the ability to settle the matter of the championship on the field.

Auburn, who will face ninth-ranked and two loss Virginia Tech in the Sugar Bowl, are the first team to go undefeated in the SEC and be denied a shot at the title. They beat three top ten teams, and a good Tennessee team twice. Auburn would actually be better off under the pre-BCS system because there would at least be the possibility of sharing the title.

California led Texas in the BCS and was poised for a deserved shot in the Rose Bowl until, at the last minute, the last night of college football – on a night when Cal faced a tough competitor in Southern Miss after a long trip across the country – some voters raised Texas above Cal. This came after two weeks of politicking by Texas coach Matt Brown. There were even reports that some ballots in Texas were submitted before the games were even done.

California passed on the opportunity to score a very late, meaningless touch down, and it's likely that move had an impact on their drop in the polls. There is no longer any room for sportsmanship when a game is in hand. A team competing for positioning in the BCS has no choice but to pummel its opponents.

The tie-ins the major bowls now have to conference championships has resulted in an 8-3 Pittsburgh team playing undefeated Utah in the Fiesta Bowl, and a two loss Virginia Tech taking on undefeated Auburn in the Orange. Meanwhile, one loss Cal takes on 7-4 Texas Tech in the Holiday Bowl. Are these the best possible matchups that could have been put together?

I don't think the creators of the BCS envisioned what we have now. I really believe it was an attempt to have something better. But it's time to admit that the system is a failure, and move on. The old system is better than what we have now. A playoff system is very feasible – given that it already exists in every sport except major college football– and would generate even more money than the current bowl system. The argument that it would take too much time away from the players' schoolwork is rubbish. Will we ever know the true details of the conspiracy among the university presidents, the bowls, and any number of parties, to deny us an honest playoff system? I doubt it. But it is shameful that the presidents of the NCAA–member universities allow such a system, that encourages corruption and poor sportsmanship, to exist.

Jerry Work is an entrepreneur, musician, and sports fan in Nashville, Tennessee. His company, Work Media, is the founder of

, a community–oriented sports and sports gambling portal with news, links, message boards, blogs, and more.

## **Let The Games Begin – Taking Your Sporting Passion Online!**

**By Madison Lockwood**

Sports fans just may be the most loyal, enthusiastic, and excitable fans around. It does not take much for a football fan to start talking about their favorite team, a hockey fan to recount the best play of the year, or a baseball fan to rant about an upcoming season. And if it is a basketball fan, don't even get them started on March Madness!

Come March, you can bet that everyone who follows college basketball is scouring the media to find out as much as they can about the twenty–day tournament that is also called "The Big Dance." The fanatic groupies are devouring all the information they can—from the players' stats, the hottest team gossip, and who, at the moment, is expected to take home the trophy—and even the mild enthusiasts are hungry for the latest news on the championship teams.

To get the full scoop, these fans will undoubtedly turn to a sports website. Designed for the hardcore followers and the casual observers, a sports website can be as specific or as general as you want it to be. For example, a basketball website may have a special section on March Madness that includes:

–interaction with sports fans around the world through a blog, forums, chats, and messaging

–up–to–date bios of the March Madness stars

–photos of the most heated moments in the tournaments

–histories of the teams

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–a schedule of televised games

–March Madness trivia

–stats

One of the best things about a top-notch sports website is that fans can access it before, during, and after different games to get the latest breaking news. Do you have a rival team? Log on and find out what others are saying about them. Curious about a certain player's strategy? Subscribe to a blog through a website and find out what another aficionado thinks. Really, a sports website is the most efficient way to share, swap, and celebrate sports information – all within the comfort of your own home. Best of all, you're your own announcer, so your team is always the home team.

Sports fans deserve a website that is as stimulating as they are, especially during the seasons' wildest and craziest events such as March Madness, the Superbowl, the Kentucky Derby, and the World Series (to name just a few). A well-crafted and entertaining website is just what they need to stoke their fire and keep the heat on.

Many sports websites today focus on just one team or a single sport. Certainly, this is a great way to gather a tight-knit, excited group that will be eager to share even the tiniest tidbit of related trivia. But, a website can also be all-encompassing and cover sports of all kinds. In this way, a wider variety of fans

will interact with each other.

So, if you would like to have a hand in establishing a virtual athletic community, consider putting up a sports website. Before you know it, your site could have a following that rivals the NCAA, and logging on to it may become a national pastime in its own right.

Madison Lockwood is a customer relations associate for

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