One AD’s Take: We Must Change the Momentum of the ‘Dollar Culture’
July 24, 2012, 12:24 pm
By Brad Wolverton

In the wake of the Penn State penalties, many people have written about the corrupting influence of money in big-time sports, and the troubling role that it can play in distancing athletic departments from their universities. Terry Holland, the athletic director at East Carolina University, had an interesting take on that idea, commenting Tuesday on an informal e-mail list we’re on together:

Punishing Penn State will not change the negatives of the athletic culture any more than punishing Enron changed the business culture. Overpaid coaches, overpaid executives, and everyone in such positions aren’t likely to allow a change in the culture that is making them richer than they could have imagined, and richer than is actually healthy for them. …

Until the NCAA and all of us are willing to send a consistent message about what is important to our universities, the “dollar” culture will continue to drive all decisions no matter how many individuals and institutions are punished. The words “academics come first” and “graduation is your most important objective” are meaningless when our actions speak so loudly as we schedule competitions during the student-athlete’s class days, their exam periods, and even during their graduation ceremonies.

We cannot change the momentum of the “dollar” culture until the NCAA (which is us) is willing to require a year in residence with real grades in real classes before a student-athlete can represent an institution in competition. This would allow student-athletes to prove they can do the work at this particular school and, more importantly, that they will do the work at this school. After a year in residence, let them have four years of eligibility with a fifth year available to those students who graduate after four years (one year in residence and three years of eligibility).

When a student-athlete completes an undergraduate degree, they should be allowed to transfer to any institution for graduate work without penalty or the permission of their original institution. These changes would eventually create a much larger pool of outstanding students among the student-athletes...
in every sport as more student-athletes pursue graduate opportunities while continuing to compete.

This entry was posted in Money in College Sports, NCAA, Penn State Investigation, Terry Holland. Bookmark the permalink.
Orthopedics East's Bruce Wilhelmsen M.D., left, assists ECU Health Education grad student Kevin Reilly during a staged splint injury scenario at D.H. Conley High School on Tuesday. (Aileen Devlin/The Daily Reflector)

**Caregivers practice football first aid**  
*By Ronnie Woodward*  
Wednesday, July 25, 2012

Sharon Rogers isn’t a football coach, but she kind of emulated one Tuesday night at D.H. Conley High School.

Rogers, who oversees the athletic training partnership between East Carolina University and Pitt County Schools, gave an introductory speech in Conley’s cafeteria and then monitored the room as the ECU graduate students who she supervises practiced injury scenarios they might encounter on football fields this fall. A player from each of the county’s six high schools was there to act out the scenarios, and EMS representatives and doctors were also available to assist.

The event served as a practice for the medical team that will be treating injured athletes this year. High school football practice begins Monday and the first round of games is slated for Aug. 17.

“The wrong time to open communication is during an emergency,” said Rogers, an assistant professor in East Carolina’s Department of Health Education and Promotion. “Tonight was to create scenarios that prompt some of the things that will occur. We’re all members of the sports medicine team, but very seldom do we ever interact unless there’s an emergency scenario.”

This is the third year of the program, which was partially created in reaction to the 2008 death of a J.H. Rose player who died from suffering two concussions in roughly a 48-hour span.
One ECU graduate student will be assigned to each of the six schools, and a seventh will serve as the middle school coordinator. A certified athletic trainer will be at all high school games and practices, and for the first time this year one will also be at every middle school game.

Three of the students assigned to high schools were in the program last year, and three are first-year participants. One of the newcomers is Kevin Reilly, who will be at Rose.

The partnership was featured in a CNN special report in January and Reilly said he heard about the piece shortly after he was referred to ECU. He went to James Madison for undergraduate school.

“After doing some research I found out that all of this was going on and it’s much bigger than what I had thought,” he said. “I love everything that they’re doing and I wish I would’ve heard about it sooner. That really made me want to come here even more and it’s just a plus that I found out this was happening.”

Tuesday’s event was centered around communication, and there was plenty of dialogue between all parties involved during the injury scenarios.

“Everyone plays a very important role in this and our No. 1 job is to make sure that those kids are safe,” Greenville EMS specialist Lester Layton said.

Amber Price, the athletic trainer assigned to Ayden-Grifton for the second straight year, said making the Charger players feel comfortable with her is a priority. She was working on Ayden-Grifton rising sophomore Jacob Wright on Tuesday.

“This made me feel comfortable to where if I was in a real situation, I’d be all right with it,” Wright said.

Contact Ronnie Woodward at rwoodward@reflector.com or 252-329-9592.
Pirates pass 20,000-ticket mark
By ECU Media Relations
Wednesday, July 25, 2012

East Carolina has surpassed the 20,000 mark for football season tickets sold for the sixth straight season, the university announced Tuesday.

Under head coach Ruffin McNeill, East Carolina set school records last season in total attendance (300,069) and average attendance (50,012), besting the previous marks of 297,987 and 49,665 set in 2010.

In addition to leading Conference USA in average attendance for the fourth straight season, ECU stood first nationally among all Bowl Championship Series non-automatic qualifiers in 2011 and also ranked 40th among all 120 FBS programs.


The Pirates will kick off the season on Sept. 1 inside ECU’s 50,000-seat Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium by renewing an in-state football rivalry with Appalachian State that covers 30 games and spans 80 years.

Also scheduled to visit Greenville this fall are C-USA members UTEP (Sept. 29), Memphis (Oct. 13), Houston (Nov. 3) and Marshall (Nov. 24). East Carolina wraps up non-conference play by hosting Navy on Oct. 27.

Season tickets are still available and can be purchased online at www.ECUPirates.com or by calling the ECU athletics ticket office at 252-737-4500.
Transforming U.S. 264 ‘tough sell’

“We’re going to do it. It’s going to be done. In this county, this region, we are going to have an interstate connection.”

Steve Tripp
Ayden mayor

By Wesley Brown
Wednesday, July 25, 2012

State highway engineer Kevin Lacy started to inch toward the door Tuesday morning when he broke the news to four city mayors in Pitt County that it would be a “tough sell” to transform U.S. 264 into an interstate.

At $2 million per mile, the cost to bring the federal highway up to Interstate standards could easily exceed $76 million, Lacy said.

Shoulders would have to be widened. Bridges may have to be heightened. Plus, the proposed system, which would stretch 36 miles from Interstate 795 outside of Raleigh to N.C. 11 in Greenville, is far down the list of prioritized highway projects in North Carolina.

The obstacles, though, did not phase the mayors of Ayden, Greenville, Grimesland and Winterville. As the leaders of the area’s Metropolitan Planning Organization, the four ordered engineers to measure U.S. 264 for a fitting.

“Measure us up,” Greenville Mayor Allen Thomas told district engineer Neil Lassiter during a meeting the organization held Tuesday at the Greenville Public Works Department.

Sizing U.S. 264 for a red-and-blue Interstate placard is only the beginning of what could be a decade-long fight in Pitt County to bring the highly coveted highway sign to eastern North Carolina.
Measurements are expected to take four to six weeks and when they’re in, area leaders plan to talk with representatives in 10 counties and three regional planning organizations about partnerships — a process Lacy said was crucial to local success.

Pitt County leaders are competing against four highway projects in North Carolina, each of which are clamoring to be included in the 36,000 miles of Interstate highway across the state that is federally funded.

There is Interstate 74, which would run from Durham to Michigan; Interstate 44, which would stretch from Raleigh to Norfolk, Va.; and two options coming out of Greensboro that would connect to either Washington, D.C., or Danville, Va.

“Finding partners would not be an issue. We have the jewels,” said Ayden Mayor Steve Tripp, referring to East Carolina University, Vidant Medical Center and the area’s growing population and central location.

According to a federal study, Greenville is one of a handful of cities across the country that are in a metropolitan area of more than 100,000 residents that is not serviced by an Interstate.

“What we need to decide is what connection — north, south or west — is going to give us the biggest bang for the buck,” Tripp said.

If U.S. 264 cannot be tweaked, leaders discussed connecting Greenville to the proposed I-74 corridor — or U.S. 17, as it is now — through the use of N.C. 11. Another option was collaborating with other agencies to turn U.S. 70 into an Interstate.

Either way, the group is primarily eyeing a partnership with the City of Kinston, due to it having the Global TransPark, a jetport with an invested interest in seeking access to docking stations in Wilmington and Norfolk.

Lacy said local planners have two options in getting the proposal approved. One was having a project marked as “top priority” and having Congress insert the project into a bill. The other was committing to a 25-year plan to bring the highway up to Interstate standards. (Six miles of U.S. 264 included in the I-795 expansion already meet federal guidelines.)

After that, the next step, he said, would be to choose a number — an end Tripp already has in sight.

“We’re going to do it. It’s going to be done,” Tripp said. “In this county, this region, we are going to have an interstate connection.”
Swift, fair
Editorial
July 25, 2012

The penalties were harsh and damaging and without compromise and that is how it had to be. The sexual abuse of innocent boys by high-ranking Penn State University assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky was profoundly harmful to victims and inexplicable in its continuation even after university officials at the highest level found out about it.

Those officials included a president, two senior administrators and the revered Coach Joe Paterno, the man who with his decades of football success and reputation for lofty ideals put the university on the map.

Paterno, fired from his coaching post, died at 85 before a report led by former FBI Director Louis Freeh confirmed just how bad the abuse was and how ineffective and inexcusable the university’s response to it was. But Paterno’s reputation, which had been held as an example to others, is ruined. Freeh’s report showed that Paterno knew more than he acknowledged knowing about Sandusky and helped, in effect, to delay action.

Paterno was all-powerful and when this most serious of challenges came before him, he failed. Others hesitated to cross the coach. And they doubtless worried as well about the effect of a monumental scandal on a university that, academic strengths aside, had allowed its football program to define it.

Now they know the effect. The NCAA, college sports’ governing body, has decimated the program, reducing scholarships, allowing players to transfer without penalty, voiding 111 of Paterno’s recorded victories, levying a $60 million fine. It likely will be a decade or more before Penn State returns to anything resembling a “major college football program.”

Good.

Not going away

Paterno reigned for four decades, and in that time he made the Nittany Lions not just a brand-name for big-time college football and national championships and the rest of it. He branded the university. Seriously, when “Penn State” entered a conversation, a discussion of football and Joe Paterno was almost sure to follow.
That was not a healthy situation for a university that should have sought a broader identity. For, when the walls tumbled down on the Penn State football program, destroying not just the next few seasons with penalties but its very legacy, the university’s reputation suffered greatly.

After all, no less than the president of Penn State, Graham Spanier, had to resign, his own reputation now forever linked with the scandal. He treated Joe Paterno with worship; his faith was misplaced.

And because Penn State was such a high-visibility “football school,” it’s going to see the scandal in the first few paragraphs of most anything written about the university from now on.

Letting it happen

Yes, of course there was more to the university than the football program, but too many campus leaders were willing to allow that program to dominate the campus. They lost perspective, or fooled themselves into thinking it didn’t matter. Paterno was so popular that some students continued to resist the idea (while he was alive but after the scandal broke) that he should pay a price for what happened until his role became so painfully clear.

While Penn State is the focus, other universities that are so enamored of their sports programs that they allow the tail to wag the dog must rethink their priorities. The child abuse that brought on this story is not, one would hope, a problem elsewhere. It seems this was a case of the wrong man, Sandusky, in the wrong place, a football operation where he was trusted too much, getting away with heinous activity that no one suspected for a long time.

But letting sports programs get so big that they are inordinately revered by alumni and feared by those on faculty and staff who know better is a very bad idea. Intercollegiate sports are worthy of being a priority at a large university, perhaps, but not if it means a loss of perspective on basic issues of right and wrong.
Opposing sides argue plan to ban big drinks

By SAMANTHA GROSS
Associated Press

NEW YORK  Doctors lined up at a public hearing Tuesday to speak in favor of a proposed ban on giant-sized sugary drinks at New York City restaurants, cafeterias and snack trucks, while opponents derided the plan as an assault on personal freedom and wondered what tasty but unhealthy foods might be targeted next.

New York City's health board heard hours of testimony on a proposed rule that would limit soft-drink cup and bottle sizes at food service establishments to no larger than 16 ounces.

Medical experts spared no rhetoric in hailing the proposal as a way to protect the public, sodas and other sweetened beverages are a leading factor in a health epidemic linked to poor eating habits that kills thousands of New Yorkers every year. At least one likened soda companies to big tobacco.

"Soda in large amounts is metabolically toxic," said Walter Willett, a professor of epidemiology and nutrition at Harvard School of Public Health. "It's obvious that this is the right thing to do."

Critics ridiculed the idea that city officials would be trying to regulate how much people eat or drink.

City Councilman Daniel Halloran III called the proposal a "feel-good placebo" that would hurt profit margins at small businesses while failing to improve anyone's health.

He questioned whether a limit on the size of steak was around the corner.

Another critic, Councilman Oliver Koppell, called the ban "a clear overreaching of government into people's everyday lives."

The proposal requires only the approval of the Board of Health -- appointed by Mayor Michael Bloomberg -- to take effect. But opponents could sue to block the ban, or they could convince legislators to step in and block the proposal.

The board is scheduled to vote on the measure Sept. 13.