

July 21, 2015



An Interview With:

**COLLEGE FOOTBALL
PLAYOFF
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
BILL HANCOCK**

BILL HANCOCK: Good morning, everybody. Very happy to be here. A year ago, when I was visiting with you, we didn't know what to expect. We were like a bunch of coaches getting ready for the season. You plan, you practice, you model, but you don't know what's going to happen for sure until that first game. Clearly, the first game for us, the first College Football Playoff worked very well. Systems were in place, and they all worked. So we were delighted with how it came out.

I think it's fair to say that it was the biggest change in the history of college football. You were lucky to be covering it. We were lucky to be involved in it from an administrative perspective. What I'm going to do today is just do a little bit of CFP 101, kind of walk you through the processes, how it all works. Most of it you know. But then we'll finish up with a little Q&A.

Off to a good start. Simple format, as you know. People have been waiting for this for years. You've heard me say this, but I believe the BCS was very good for college football. It brought us to where we got, but this playoff works, and we're delighted to have it.

New Year's Eve, New Year's Day, when we put it in, we knew we were going to have back-to-back triple headers, one New Year's Eve, one New Year's Day. There's been a lot of talk about the New Year's Eve situation. We knew it from day one. We've been planning for it. So we'll be playing the semifinals this year, as you know, on Thursday, December 31. ESPN did ask us if we would mind moving to Saturday, January 2, and we said no thanks. That's because we had been planning for the back-to-back triple headers, New

Year's Eve and New Year's Day. We didn't want to change. This was the only year of the next 12 years when the calendar fell the way it did so it would allow us to do what they asked us to do, so we decided to keep it the same.

We're all excited about New Year's Eve. I really believe we're going to change the paradigm for New Year's Eve in this country. When you go to your New Year's Eve parties, they'd better have a television set so we can watch college football.

Someone said to me last week, Well, my wife likes to dance with me on New Year's Eve. And my response was, Well, there's halftime.

Here's the schedule, back-to-back triple headers. As you know this year, the semifinals are the Orange Bowl and the Cotton Bowl. We won't know the game times for those two until Selection Day. All we know is the Orange Bowl and the Cotton Bowl will be in the last two windows. We'll find out which is going to be first and which is going to be second on Selection Day. We'll make that first in consultation with ESPN.

Here's the rotation for the next three years. Philosophy. Best four teams. Not best four conference champions. Not automatic qualifiers. This is a pure bracket. Best four teams. Like the brackets we all made up when we were kids -- 1 plays 4, 2 plays 3.

Set criteria, there's not many, but there are a few. They're up there. Strength of schedule, head-to-head, common opponents, conference championships won. We think this playoff gives us the best of all worlds.

There is universal access, and, yes, there is more revenue for everybody.

Conferences manage this event. It's not an NCAA event. I work for the conference commissioners. We have a board of managers that's conference presidents, one from every conference. And then the management committee. Bob Bowlsby and the other commissioners take care of the day-to-day work. We get counsel from a group of athletic directors, and we have a small but energetic and efficient



...when all is said, we're done.®

visit our archives at asapsports.com

B. Hancock - 7.21.15

and super staff out in our office in Los Colinas. The staff doesn't like me to do this, but please come see it us. We have a delightful 15 people, and we'd love to have you come visit. I know many of you have.

Talk to the committee a bit. You know what their mission is. Select the best teams, rank them, and then pair them. We have classifications of committee members. This was very important. We wanted different perspectives. People tend to use the word "the committee" in singular. I like to think of it in plural. It is absolutely the compilation of the subjective opinions of the 12 members last year, 13 this year. There's the classifications, and, obviously, there's the committee roster.

We're delighted to welcome the two new people, both high-integrity people, both who know the game quite well, Bobby Johnson and Kirby Hocutt.

Here's what they emphasize. Yes, we're going to continue the weekly rankings. The weekly rankings were great for the regular season. Fans couldn't wait until those Tuesday nights to see how the teams were ranked. So we're going to keep it just like we did last year. We're going to begin after week nine. Of course, the season is a week shorter this year. So there will be one fewer set of rankings.

The key to the committee's voting system is identifying a small group of teams that can be compared against each other. They never compare more than six or eight teams against each other. Compare those, analyze them, then rank them and put them in the rankings, and then get more teams and then have another small group. That's the key to the rankings. That's why this works. Small groups of teams compared against each other.

Championship Game, there's the statistics. You've seen them all. Three highest ranked programs ever on cable television were our semifinals and our Championship Game. The trophy, it's out there. Get your picture made with it. I did this morning.

Championship Game this year is in Phoenix. We're delighted to be going out there. Obviously, they had a great history with the BCS. It's a different group we're working with. It's not the Fiesta Bowl Committee per se. They reached out into the city and have brought in many other talented people.

We're also starting down the road to work with Tampa, and we're in the bidding process for the next three years. There are nine cities in the

hunt for that. We're making visits to the cities this summer. Actually going to be in San Antonio this week, and the announcement of the next three sites will happen in November.

Several events happen during the weekend of the championship. Fan festival was right over here this year. It was highly successful. Kids loved it. Had media day on the large playing field inside the Fan Central. Worked out great.

Had to have concerts, of course. The concert series, we went to see Sting, my wife and I, and we had to go from party to party. We were headed to the media party that night. We walked in to Sting, we sat down, and Sting played "Message in a Bottle" and "Roxanne." I said to Nicki, That's it, that's what we came for, and we left.

The concert series was terrific. We also involved the university bands. Kids loved being involved with it. Lenny Kravitz was a big hit.

Had a 5K run. People had a great time. The weather was terrible, but people had a blast. If you can imagine, started on the field of the Cotton Bowl and ran around the fairgrounds and back to finish on the field of the Cotton Bowl. For me, that would have been the experience of a lifetime, would be to actually run and get to finish a race on the Cotton Bowl grounds. We're hoping for better weather this year in Phoenix.

Had a charity event, the Taste of the Championship, came out great. Brought in chefs from around the country and had some football players to come and be involved in it.

Had a big party at the stadium, tailgate party. The estimate was 45,000 people went through that before the game. Free of charge, fantastic event, fans loved it. Zac Brown played. It was so cold I can't believe their fingers didn't freeze to the guitar strings, but they were troopers. They made it happen. Had the obligatory zip line, of course.

I'll talk a little bit about our foundation. I'm very proud of this. You saw the news this week that we retained Britton Banowsky to be director of the foundation. We wanted a charitable enterprise when we started the playoff and decided, after lots of deliberation, to focus on K through 12 education. There's nothing more important in this country than public education. Our program is called Extra Yard For Teachers. You see the components there. We provide actual revenue to elementary and high school teachers. We recognize successful

teachers, provide professional development.

And then I don't like jargon, but I like this one, Inspire a College-Going Culture. What that means is we go into elementary schools and provide college banners. For most of the -- many of the students there, that's their first exposure to colleges, and we're hoping some young third grader will walk down the hall and see a banner for Texas Tech or Baylor or Oklahoma State and say, hey, maybe I can go to college. Maybe nobody in their family ever went to college. Maybe by seeing a banner from a College Football Playoff, they will decide there's college in their future. So K through 12 education.

We raised about \$2.5 million this year. We think we can get that up to 7, 8, \$9 million over time, thanks to having Britton on board. A little bit more about our programs, recognizing teachers. We brought them to media day. We got to meet the coaches. We had folks in Dallas and Fort Worth select the outstanding teachers from this region. So we brought in six of them. They were just thrilled. They got to go to the game. They got to meet the coaches. Condi Rice spoke. They loved meeting her. She was great. She was phenomenal.

There's Tim Brown at his elementary school on the College-Going Culture putting up the Notre Dame banner. He had not been back to his elementary school for a long time. Most of the kids didn't know who Tim Brown was, but when we told them Heisman Trophy, Notre Dame, they figured it out, and they were thrilled.

Yes, we have a website, mobile app. It all works. Great new era, phenomenal new era, phenomenal change in our great game, and we're very proud to have been involved with it.

There's my contact info. Holler at me anytime you have any questions. I'll be happy to visit with you about this.

How about questions?

Q. On the rankings, that became a point of a lot of fan debate as things went on last year. I know you said repeatedly the committee starts over every week, but I don't know if some fans wanted to hear that. Was there any discussion about maybe not doing rankings as often this year?

BILL HANCOCK: Yeah, there was. We talked about that considerably. But we decided to keep it the same for two reasons. We want the fans to get an insight into the committee's operations and what they're thinking and their

processes, and what better way than to announce the rankings every week?

Secondly, if we didn't do rankings, some other rankings would be perceived as the real rankings. And you saw the first week of our rankings, how different our committee's rankings were from the AP and the coaches rankings. So we didn't want to cede that ranking territory to others. That's why we decided to keep on keeping on.

Q. Bill, Bob Bowlsby said yesterday that, since the spring meetings, he's talked with both you and Jeff Long about the 13th data point. And basically his takeaway is 13 is better than 12. I guess my question, does that leave the Big 12 at a disadvantage in the room when it comes down to that final week?

BILL HANCOCK: There's no question that Ohio State benefitted from getting a chance to play another game against a quality opponent. It enhanced their resume. However, you have to remember the risk of conference championship games, and we've talked about this, a lot of us have, if two of those games had come out differently, the Big 12 could have had two teams in the playoff and they would have looked like a roomful of geniuses at this point.

So the risk from conference championship games is significant. Nobody knows that better than the Big 12 through the years, as many good teams as they had go down in championship games. So, yes, it helped Ohio State, but one year doesn't make a trend, and I think the Big 12 is smart to sit back and wait. Of course, they couldn't have a championship anyway now under the NCAA rules. But I think they're smart to be deliberate and thoughtful about this.

So I hope that answered the question. Yes, Ohio State benefitted from playing Wisconsin, adding another good game to their resume, but if they lost the game, we would have been having a whole different discussion today.

Q. They will be able to have, though, a Championship Game with ten teams sooner rather than later, don't you think? The later is bureaucracy should be taken away with regard to having a Championship Game with only ten teams, don't you think? That's going to happen, don't you think?

BILL HANCOCK: Yes.

Q. Just wanted to know.

BILL HANCOCK: Yes. I think, with the way the changes are happening at the NCAA, that that will happen. Then they'll have a decision to make. Good to see you, Tim. I figured it out.

Thanks, everybody.

FastScripts by ASAP Sports