

Big 12 Conference Football Media Days

Tuesday, July 19, 2016

Bill Hancock

CFP Executive Director

THE MODERATOR: We're now joined by Bill Hancock, the CFP Executive Director, and Bill, we welcome and your thoughts.

BILL HANCOCK: Thank you, Peter. Good morning, everybody. It's my pleasure and honor to be here and talk about the College Football Playoff. It got off to a tremendous start. We're looking forward to year number 3. In many ways it seems like it's been around forever, but we're only on year number 3. I can't wait to get going.

This morning I thought I would give you a quick CFP-101, and we will open it up for questions after that, and before I start I want to congratulate Walt Anderson for a terrific presentation. I don't know about you, but I could watch those videos of officiating all day long. Walt does a great job with that.

College Football Playoff 101, been a great success, best four teams. Best of all world's. This thing works. Year number 2, here is some numbers from surveys of fans, pretty clear that they love this committee. They love the CFP. They've really enjoyed it. I don't know anything that gets favorable impressions at 55% in the world anymore. Fans are excited. Regular season keeps getting better. Just when you thought regular season college football couldn't get any better, it continues to grow. They say a tree doesn't grow to the sky, but I'm not sure that's applicable for college football.

It's managed by the ten FBS conferences all together, all ten are at the table. The top group is a board of managers that's university presidents from the ten conferences and then the Management Committee is the ten conference commissioners plus the Notre Dame AD. We get counsel from lots of folks. There are lots of experts on college football. I love to talk to 'em all. I love to listen to all of them. We have a small staff here in Irving that manages the event. We all consider ourselves to be lucky to have been involved in the start of it and now to be able to watch it continue to grow.

Selection Committee, there is their mission, classification of members, current membership. Our first class graduated last year. There are three-year



terms for committee members, of course to get started some served two years, some three and some four. So we have our new group of members coming in this year. How do they choose the teams? There's the points of emphasis. We do weekly rankings. We're going to continue those just like we did last year. The voting system is the key to the protocol. Those of you who have been to our mock exercises understand how this works, but the key is coming up with small groups of teams that can be evaluated against each other.

Here is a little snapshot of how the committee operates. There are seven rounds of voting. Ranking. Round one is three, round two is three, round three is three more teams and then we go to four teams for the last group of 16. After each round, there is long and pointed and pretty exciting discussion among the committee members. As you can imagine, round two is the most significant round of the time as we rank four, five and six. It's a pretty simple process. Seven rounds of rankings produce the top 25. Interspersed between each one is review, review, review.

Then we place the teams in the Bowl games. This year the semifinals are at the Fiesta Bowl and the Peach Bowl. We're looking forward to being out in Phoenix and also Atlanta. Cotton Bowl this year we know they will have the highest rank team from the group of five if that team is not in the playoff, and they will face one of the at-large teams. There is only one at-large team this year. With the semifinals being in Peach and Fiesta that only leaves one of the host bowls available to the group of five will be -- their teams will be playing for a spot either in the playoff or in the Cotton Bowl. Pretty lofty goal for them and pretty exciting for their teams.

Here is the rotation of the semifinals next couple of years. I will talk a little bit about New Year's Eve. You read the coverage of New Year's Eve. I've been talking to the reporters about this since last winter about the possibility of moving the semifinals off of New Year's Eve when it falls on a weekday. We're still working on that. Obviously the viewership last year for the semifinal was not what we wanted, so we have a little time because this year we will be back on New Year's Eve, and next year, the year after that we will be on New Year's Day.

So we are evaluating whether New Year's Eve on a weekday is the best day for the semifinals. Championship game this year in Tampa. I like to say for the first time in the history of the College Football Playoff will be outdoors, so I get to worry about weather, the long two-year history of the College Football Playoff. The trophy, you've seen this around, we're proud of it. It's out there in the lobby. Get your photo made with it.

Highlights of this year, just a wonderful year for the Playoff, another wonderful year for college football. Championship weekend events. We never had a weekend like this to celebrate college football until the Playoff came about. Well, there is a snapshot of the event that we had during the weekend, interactive fan event, kids love it. I love to go to the Fan Central just to watch the kids. Media Day was at Fan Central this year. It worked.

In Tampa, we're moving across the street to the hockey arena. Concert series, great success. People loved this, free of charge to the public, top-name acts. We bring the cheerleaders in, as many band members as we can from the schools to go to the concert series. Just a great celebration of college football. We have a 5K run. It's part of our charitable Foundation, "Extra Yard for Teachers." Britton Banowsky will be here in a moment to talk to you about the Foundation and the great work that it's doing. I don't see any reporters in that group of starters there. I'm sure there are some!

Another fundraising event is "Taste of the Championship," another terrific, fun, great event for the local community. Back when I started in this business we just opened the stadium doors and expected folks to come and watch and that was the end of the celebration. That's all we had. We've learned since then that we have to do things for fans. We have to provide more than just a game, quote, end quote.

So we have added all kinds of events during the weekend. We have a wonderful tailgate party at the stadium before the game. I guess this year we had 35 or 40,000 people at this, again, free of charge, big-name act. There is a photo what this party looked like outside of the University of Phoenix stadium. Beautiful day, remarkable, remarkable event and, again, 40 years ago when I started in this business we never dreamed of producing anything like this. But it's the right thing to do.

Top acts. Little tidbits on the Foundation, I'm going to leave this for Britton Banowsky to talk about. I will say that our Foundation is doing wonderful things for teachers and students around America. We're very, very proud of it. One cool thing is the part that is inspiring, a college going culture at schools. We put up

college banners in elementary schools where many times the students haven't even dreamed of college, and if we can awaken one student to the possibility of college and a better life ahead then we've achieved victory. What's ahead for us? We gotta do this again. We've been very successful. All we gotta do is crank up and be successful again. Here is our goals in communication. I'm going to skip through these. Fans are so passionate about college football and here is my info if you have questions. Peter, that's it. Do we have questions?

Q. Bill, with the Big 12 moving to a championship game for 2017, how does that affect the dynamic in the room now that everybody you're going to be considering is going to have that 13th data point? Does it make it easier for the committee? How do things change?

BILL HANCOCK: Oh, I don't think it makes it any easier for the committee. This is not really about making things easy. There is nothing easy about team selections no matter what sport it is. But the Big 12 will benefit from its champion having played another game against a quality opponent. That's what the Big 12 has been missing. That's one other game against a good team and now they will have that with the championship game.

Q. Bill, when you talk about possibly or looking at the dates New Year's Eve, the semifinals, wouldn't a simple solution be to put both semifinals on New Year's Day sandwiched around the Rose Bowl? I never figured out why the Sugar Bowl suddenly developed superior status and some sort of tradition that didn't seem to be there until two years ago?

BILL HANCOCK: Yeah, we built this on existing tradition of college football and that included the Rose Bowl. And as soon as we decided that the Rose Bowl would keep its window, the Big 12 and SEC said we would like to start our own tradition in the Sugar Bowl, so our group agreed and that's what happened.

Q. Bill, with the new committee members coming in, where are you at in the process of assigning the point persons for each conference?

BILL HANCOCK: We're work on that. As you know, every conference has two committee members that are its point persons. We will finish that by the end of August for sure.

Q. With the new Playoff Committee Chair in Kirby Hocutt, the Texas Tech Athletic Director, what attracted you guys in what he brought to the table to be in that position this season?

BILL HANCOCK: Integrity, patience, leadership. Kirby is every man. The challenge the Committee Chairman

has is twofold, one is managing the room and the other one is coming out and explaining what happened in the room. Managing the room is encouraging everyone to participate, making sure everyone participates, making sure they stick to the protocol and then he explains what happened. Jeff Long did a terrific job. He had a predetermined two-year term, and Kirby is also going to be a terrific Chair.

THE MODERATOR: Thanks, Bill.

BILL HANCOCK: I will be around for the rest of the day. Look forward to visiting with you.