

ATHLETICS COMMITTEE

(Following the Personnel Affairs Committee)

Friday, June 28, 2013

Health and Physical Education Building/Gym

Southern University -- Park Campus

6400 Press Drive

New Orleans, Louisiana 70126

AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of the Agenda
4. Public Comments
5. Action Item
 - A. Rescission of Board's policy relative to football schedule approvals (Clayton)
6. Other Business
7. Adjournment

MEMBERS

Mr. Darren G. Mire – Chair; Atty. Murphy F. Bell, Jr. - Vice Chair
Mr. Calvin W. Braxton, Sr., Atty. Tony M. Clayton, Mr. Raymond M. Fondel, Jr.
Dr. Eamon M. Kelly, Mr. Myron K. Lawson, Mr. Mike A. Small, Mrs. Ann A. Smith
Atty. Bridget A. Dinvaut - Ex Officio



Department of Athletics

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April 17, 2013

Chairman Mire:

I am writing to you in your capacity as Chair of the Athletics subcommittee in reference to a pending proposal to have football game scheduling subjected to Board approval. I welcome this conversation and certainly am not averse to sharing my philosophy of game scheduling with members of the Athletic Committee. To preempt that conversation, I wanted to share some information and data with you so that you can, if you choose, advocate for my position that the Athletic Director and coaches be allowed to schedule contests in the best financial and welfare interests of the department with the consultation of the Athletic Committee Chair, as has been my experience thus far.

With regard to football scheduling, as in all matters related to being an athletic director, I am an experienced negotiator. While at Northwestern State University, I assisted in sealing football guarantees with the University of Houston and reinstated the Northwestern State-Louisiana Tech football matchup after a 21-year hiatus and Northwestern State-Grambling State after a 30 year hiatus. I also negotiated the largest game-guarantee in the history of NSU Baseball when I sold the rights of our home contest vs. LSU to Fairgrounds Park in Shreveport.

When I arrived at SU, I discovered that only one guarantee game was scheduled beyond 2013, a 2015 contest with Georgia that was delivered by former head coach Stump Mitchell. Due to neglect of pursuit of such games, a 9-game scheduling gap had to be filled in short order, leaving only months to tackle this task, given that most institutions schedule games 3-5 years in advance.

My approach to football game scheduling considers several factors which I am not certain Board members are aware of. Student-athlete welfare, recruiting, brand and identity formation, and revenue generation (focusing on net rather than gross) are important factors.

Revenue

The schedule for 2013-2016 includes guarantee contests in excess of \$2 million, with the potential to increase by 10% if proposals to Southern Miss (\$300,000) and TCU (\$425,000) are negotiated successfully. We have also re-instated a home and home contest with Northwestern State which gives us an important 5th home game in 2014, and a home game with Clark-Atlanta in 2013 which only cost us \$40,000, and they



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will travel with their band and collaborate to engage their alumni in New Orleans, South Louisiana, and South Mississippi.

The all-important 5th game over the next two years will allow us to rebuild our fan base and recover season book sales and generate an estimated extra ~\$200k/year in season ticket/gate sales, conservatively (based off of 2012 figures).

The guarantees from Houston (2013) UL-Lafayette (2014) and UL-Monroe (2016) will generate net proceeds of \$550k because of the reduced travel expenses (UL-Lafayette is a day-trip). The guarantees from UL-Monroe and UL-Lafayette are confirmed as the highest ever payouts to DI FCS institutions, and Northwestern State's \$45,000 payout is also precedent-making, as it is their first time paying a guarantee to *any* DI FCS institution.

While we could negotiate for higher guarantees or hybrid agreements (gate guarantees), these are risky and athletic directors are loathe to agree to them. A gate % agreement in the 2012 Atlanta Football Classic, which saw a 30% reduction in attendance YOY because of FAMU's band suspension punched a \$40k hole in the athletic budget (\$283k was paid out when \$325k was "guaranteed"). After our re-negotiation with Northwestern State in which it was proposed by Board members to get a % of the gate (after a contract was signed for a \$22,500 guarantee) I've touched bases with athletic directors at institutions DI FCS institutions within a 7-hour radius. They will not play Southern under such agreements. These include McNeese, Lamar, Southeastern, Nicholls, and Central Arkansas. This limits severely my ability as an athletic director to negotiate home-home agreements (keeping in mind, each additional home game generates ~\$150k in net revenue and helps build our fan base), which are not the only kinds of games available, but in the interests of keeping our options open, we shouldn't rule them out, because these teams are Division I, we recruit against them (and in recent years, have increasingly lost those battles), and they are beatable on the field of play. Of these teams, given their coaching turnover and recent performance, Northwestern State is arguably the *most* beatable (hence, my choice to sign them to a home and home).

Other such agreements, such as selling the rights to home games, may generate revenue more than playing more home games, but we risk alienating our fan base. The 2009 Jackson State game, which resulted in a healthy, above average \$230k net ticket sales collected (according to our 2009-10 books),

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reduced the home schedule to only 3 home games in 2009, and resulted in a 14% YOY drop in season book purchases in 2010, and those figures have never recovered (admittedly, there are likely other factors).

Recruiting/exposure

Playing out-of market guarantee games may generate additional revenue, but does not maximize exposure. Our recruiting hotbeds (for students and student-athletes) are the State of Louisiana, Houston, DFW, Atlanta, and other large metropolitan areas in the southeast, east coast, and Midwest. Playing football games in Houston, Monroe, and Lafayette (and potentially Atlanta and DFW) exposes us significantly in those areas, not only for our football team, but our band and our fan base. The positive impression left by these groups can translate into boons in recruiting, but are wasted in places like Albuquerque, NM and Las Vegas, NV where we made incredible impressions on locals, but we are not likely to draw interest from large numbers of students and student-athletes.

Further, our football team (and many of our sports) compete for student-athletes in these regions, and though we are getting better, we're still losing too many of those recruiting battles. Competing well against and winning against these schools will send a strong message to prospective student-athletes and students about the advantages of attending Southern. It also gets us precious television and newspaper exposure in mid-size to major media markets.

Brand/Identity Formation

Southern University has long been known for its exciting brand of football, high level of talent, exhilarating performances by the Human Jukebox, cheerleaders, and Dancing Dolls, and the Jaguar Nation. But doubts abound about the school and its brand, and it's important that we recognize that.

Record-breaking attendance in Division I-AA in the 1990's of 25,000/game dwindled to a decade low of 12,990 in 2011. This is a trend nationwide in black college athletics, with the Atlanta, Florida, Circle City, Shreveport, and Magic City Classics seeing huge YOY declines in attendance in 2012 (notably, the Bayou Classic was the only major classic to see a minor *increase* in attendance). The Jaguar Nation was labeled the "Jaguar Village" by a local columnist in 2012 when Southern played a home game in October with 1st place in the SWAC West on the line and a season low 14,000 attended.

Showing up in full-force and putting on great performances can restore our identity in key youth demographics as the elder members of the Nation are less able to ardently support Southern Athletics.

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We are best able to do this by playing games within a "Tank of Gas" geographical footprint and in areas where we have strong Alumni bases who will support us. It is important for us to establish relationships with institutions (Like UL-L, UL-M, La Tech, Houston, TCU, Southern Miss) who can not only pay out record guarantees now, but because of our brand and identity being restored, offer larger guarantees as their football fortunes improve (through growing stadiums, budgets, and conference realignments).

A \$350k contract with Houston, who will be joining the Big East, could easily become a \$500k contract once their new stadium is built and their Big East TV revenues are collected in future years. If stadium expansion plans are on pace at UL-L, their guarantee could easily grow, as well, so long as we are believed to be viable partners. This has much to do with the fact that SU has historically been highly sought after for its fan base—but make no mistake about it, the calculations are simple. They know they can get Prairie View, Texas Southern, Alcorn, Grambling, and the like for 60% of what they'd offer Southern, and if our demands exceed their low-ball offers, SU will be stuck looking for games, despite its reputation.

This is double-edged, because if we have to branch ever-further out to get games scheduled, it will cost us more to travel, and if we have to continually invite Division II and NAIA teams for home games at \$40-60k a game, this could also become expensive.

Student-Athlete Welfare

This is an issue rarely broached in Board discussions, but it is my *primary* responsibility. I turned down a \$400k offer from Oregon in favor of a \$350k offer from Houston because traveling to Oregon would've required a flight, a game versus a perennial power, and more missed class time. Exposing student-athletes to increased risk, institutional embarrassment (think Savannah State in 2012), and missed class time are recipes for the kind of failed football program I inherited in 2012. Playing more home games, in a tight geographical footprint, against leveled competition, gives us the best opportunity to strike a balance between revenue, welfare, and recruitment concerns.

I hope this is a valuable primer, and exposes you to the insights that guide my decision-making. I want the Board to know I am an experienced, record-breaking, award-winning, nationally-regarded athletic director. I have a career gift record of over \$15 million, I've presented at national conferences among my peers, consulted nationally, and recently sat on a panel of 33 athletic directors at the Final Four in Atlanta. On that panel, represented by PAC-12, Big 10, Big-12, ACC, and Big East ADs, I was the second youngest and one of only 4 only African-American ADs, and the only from an HBCU. I have a wide network, am well-

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studied, and have put together schedules through 2016 that are precedent-setting and record-breaking. I invite scrutiny and discussion, and I hope that you know that the work that I've done is being done in the best interests of the student-athletes and university.

William Broussard, Ph.D.

Director of Athletics

Henrietta Vessel

From: dmire@aol.com
Sent: Tuesday, April 23, 2013 2:21 PM
To: henrietta_vessel@sus.edu
Subject: Memo from Dr. Broussard regarding football game scheduling
Attachments: Memo_regarding_football_game_scheduling.doc

Mrs. Vessel

Please forward to the board along with the attached memo.

Darren

Darren G. Mire
Chairman of Athletics
Southern University Board of Supervisors

Wanted to get you some much-needed data regarding football game scheduling. Of note:

2013: Houston--\$350k (largest out of state alumni base, likely televised, played in Reliant Stadium in recruiting hot bed, will generate \$281,500 net revenue compared to similar net vs. New Mexico which required commercial flights (20% of the roster didn't arrive until 4 hours before game time due to disruptions) and a 40-hour bus ride for band members and fan buses.

Northwestern State -- \$45k unprecedented in the NCAA FCS Subdivision. No in-state DI FCS team has ever paid an in-state rival a guarantee for a football game (source FCS ADA). Will essentially cover travel costs for band and team, and adds 5th game to 2014 schedule (impact of ~\$225k-\$250k on budget).

Clark-Atlanta -- \$40k payout includes 5th home game for 2013, they are bringing their band, and could generate in excess of \$125k net revenue in 2013

2014: UL-Lafayette -- \$250k largest DI FCS payout in UL-L's history, game in front of large alumni base and in recruiting hotbed and within one hour of home fans, down and back with no class time missed for

student-athletes, \$200k+ net revenue. (Bear in mind, LSU's largest ever payout to an in-state FCS is \$405k, with a stadium 3X as large as Cajun Field).

2016: UL-Monroe -- \$250k largest DI FCS payout in UL-M's history, game in front of large alumni bases (Shreveport/Monroe) and within 4 hours of home fans, no class time missed for student-athletes, \$200k+ net revenue.

Also have had discussions with Southern Miss (\$300k in 2014), TCU (\$400k+, 2017) and several other possibilities open for home games in 2015 if Atlanta Football Classic offer is not renewed.

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