

Pay for college athletes is gaining steam

Written by Bob Brooks

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This week's epistle is about paying college football players and basketball players an increased stipend allowable by the NCAA to go along with the regular athletic grant.

A proposal has come before the NCAA to pay football and basketball players an extra \$2,000 as an added college expense. This, of course, opens up the whole story of should college athletes be paid to play.

On the NCAA's side, there is this \$2,000 proposal. And on the athletes' side, this week 300 football and basketball players petitioned the NCAA for a cut of the revenue that comes from the NCAA basketball tournament and other related NCAA money.

There is not going to be action this week, but it is certainly on the table for future examination.

Let's see what kind of a scenario the NCAA and member institutions can come up with. No. 1, at the moment only college football players and basketball players are involved in the petition.

The question arises, where does that leave Title IX? The women's side of athletics certainly will want to be part of this extra benefit.

You might ask why is this becoming a major issue now? It all comes from recent happenings with conference realignments, plus the penalties for Ohio State and the University of Miami that probably will put them out of the bowl picture.

And it also comes from the universities themselves, which I'm sure have reminded the NCAA that it only exists because of member institutions joining. When you join, you can also un-join, and that too would change the whole landscape.

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When you take a look at the big picture, you just have to come to the conclusion that down the road the major schools are going to organize themselves, either inside or outside of the NCAA framework, and the money grabbing will still go on. At that time, in some frame or other, the football and basketball players are going to get enhanced payments.

Finally, will the student-athlete in the two major sports become an employee, either of the school or the organization? And would they have some sort of say into how this money is distributed?

Stay tuned. It could get interesting.

(Bob Brooks is sports director at KMRY and has been one of the leading voices of college and prep sports in Eastern Iowa for more than 65 years. He is a 10-time winner of the Iowa Sportscaster of the Year Award, and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana in 2004. His sports reports can be heard weekday afternoons at 4:30 and 5:30, and Saturdays at 6:40 for the Hawkeye football wrap-up.)