

Waiting for "Super Bowl"

1 Every year millions gather around their televisions to watch the Super Bowl. The Super Bowl has become so popular that its commercials have become a show unto themselves, a reason to settle into the couch with a tray full of hot wings. Arguably, the main reason for the Bowl's appeal is because it lives up to the hype; it is, by all intents and purposes, "super." It is the result of a playoff system that results in the ultimate game between that year's most deserving teams. The Bowl Champion System (BCS) for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) by contrast fails to produce a genuine, satisfying championship match between the season's best teams. 2 The BCS should be changed to more closely resemble the National Football League's (NFL) playoff system. Rather than relying on subjective polling, a playoff system is the only fair way to determine a true national champion each year. As a result, fans will be even more engaged, which will increase profits for both the educational institutions and communities involved in the game.

3 Currently the only means for determining a NCAA two eligible national champion contenders is through subjective media and coaches' polls and a confusing mathematical rating system. For this reason, the highest-ranked teams never get to fully enjoy their ranking—it is always tainted by the biases and ulterior motives of those in charge of the ranking. 4 Instead, the teams would gain more respect and attention if they were allowed to do what they do best in order to earn their ranking and that is to play football. Due to the subjective nature of the BCS, the teams themselves are often overlooked as fans and critics become more interested in the debate surrounding the ranking system. Changing to a playoff system would redirect the focus back to those who most deserve it—the teams, the coaches, and the players.

5 Not only do the intentions of those in charge of the BCS polling process become a distraction, the anticlimactic nature of the actual bowl games also detracts from the hype a true championship should invoke. From the Nokia Bowl to the Chic-Fil-A Bowl to the Doritos Bowl, the BCS often seems to be more about the sponsorship and commercial profit than it is about a real match between the season's best talents. There are so many bowl games with so many market-driven titles that the NCAA's final series has become a confusing onslaught of advertisements for fast food restaurants and potato chips. The commercial excess detracts from the authenticity and grit of a real football competition. Instating a playoff system would ensure that the athletic competition was not swallowed up by marketing strategies.

Additionally, the NCAA does not need a series of sponsored bowl games to bring in money for its schools and cities.

6 The profits enjoyed by the bowl games would eventually, if not immediately, be replaced by profits generated by a playoff system. In athletics, hype is crucial to generating and supporting interest in a sport. That interest translates into money spent. Currently, the BCS struggles to generate the amount of hype typically due a national championship. A playoff system for the NCAA, however, would produce more excitement about the final remaining teams, just as it does for the NFL. Excitement among fans translates into money spent on paraphernalia, gear, travel, lodging, and food as more people commit to watching a true championship match-up.

7 Football is America's most popular sport because of its brute force and intense competition. The NCAA risks squelching America's interest in collegiate football by holding on to a championship system that is more profit-driven than it is competitive. The BCS seems controlled by everyone except the teams and players it purports to support. In order to reward the fans who want to spend money to see their teams play a well-deserved championship match, the NCAA should look to the National Football League's example and leave the likes of Doritos, Godaddy.com, Sheraton, and Beef O' Brady's behind for a bowl that is truly "super."