



Brittany F. Pair, B.S.E. Student
Christian S. Moore, B.S.E. Student
Stephen W. Dittmore, PhD

Paying for Wins: An Examination of Football Non-Conference Game Scheduling by BCS Schools, 1994-2009

"BCS Intelligence"



- *Yahoo!* writer Dan Wetzel (Oct. 20, 2009) pointed out the lack of incentive for Bowl Championship Series teams to schedule quality non-conference opponents
 - "This isn't scheduling cowardice, it's, in fact, what passes for BCS intelligence. If you're a big-name program, it's foolish to prove yourself outside of the mandated league games. A monster showdown might be fun to play in, but it isn't proportionately rewarded by either the voters or the computers. All it does is open you up to a loss, an injury or an emotional letdown. You're best served staying home and playing patshies."

App State 34, Michigan 32



- Game played Sept. 1, 2007
- Michigan was pre-game 27 point favorite
- App State was paid \$4,000,000 by Michigan
- Front page of *New York Times*
- Game has its own Wikipedia entry
- How did we get here?



Sports Illustrated cover, Sept. 10, 2007

History



- NCAA permitted Division I-A schools to schedule 12 regular season games only when there were 14 Saturdays from first playing date to final playing date in November
 - Occurred in 2002 and 2003. Would have occurred in 2008, but not again until 2013 (Fittipaldo, 2004)
 - NCAA Board of Directors approved measure on April 28, 2005 (effective Aug. 1, 2006) which modified bylaw 17.9.5.1 – Maximum Limitations – Institutional
 - Occasionally schools received a 12th game by playing in Hawaii or a preseason "kickoff classic"
 - The 12th game could be against a I-AA opponent

Literature Review



- Few previous academic studies have focused on the BCS. None have focused on scheduling
 - Depken and Wilson (2004) explored how different variables, including implementation of BCS, influenced competitive balance in college football
 - Dittmore and Crow (2010) expanded that work by examining 15 years worth of data on competitive balance and focusing exclusively on the BCS
 - Southall, Southall, and Dwyer (2009) examined BCS telecasts within the context of institutional logic
 - Hales (2003), Zimbalist (2009), and Pruitt (2009), among others, have studied the legal antitrust implications of the BCS

Literature Review




- Zullo (2005) wrote in *Athletic Management* the rise of "mid-major" schools such as Northern Illinois and Marshall, led some major-conference schools to schedule I-AA opponents, noting the 2006 made that even more enticing




Arkansas v. Missouri State, Sept. 5, 2009, won by Arkansas, 48-10 (photo by Marc F. Henning/Hawgs Illustrated)

Study Purpose




- Examine, longitudinally, the scheduling patterns of BCS institutions from 1994 to 2009
- Allows for comparison of before and after creation of BCS in 1998
- Also exposes impact of 2006 NCAA rules change permitting schools to schedule 12 regular season games




Florida v. Charleston Southern, Sept. 5, 2009, won by Florida, 62-3 (photo by John Raoux/AP)

Study Hypotheses




- *H1: Following the creation of the BCS National Championship Game in 2006, the number of BCS v. BCS non-conference regular season games will decrease*
- *H2: Following the 2005 amendment permitting 12 regular season games, the number of BCS v. I-AA regular season games will increase*

Method

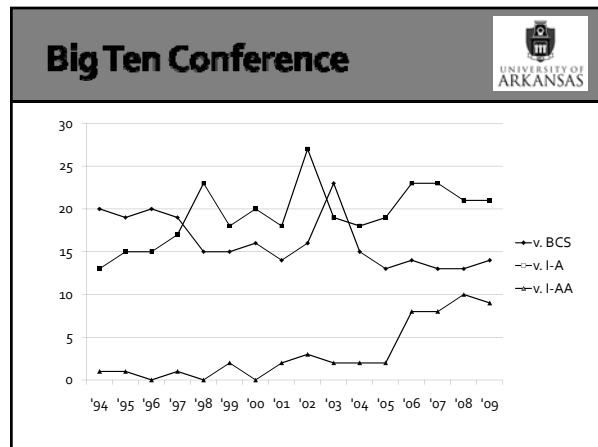
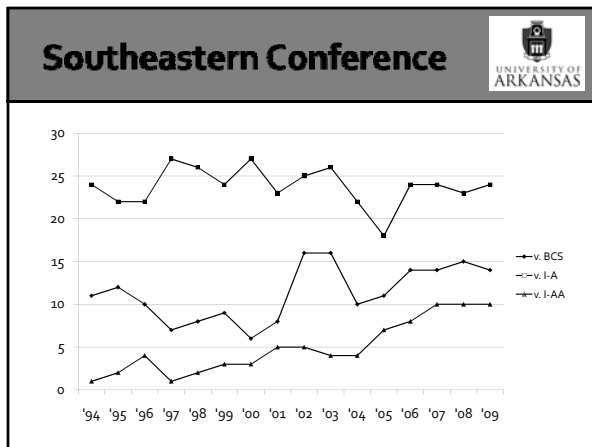


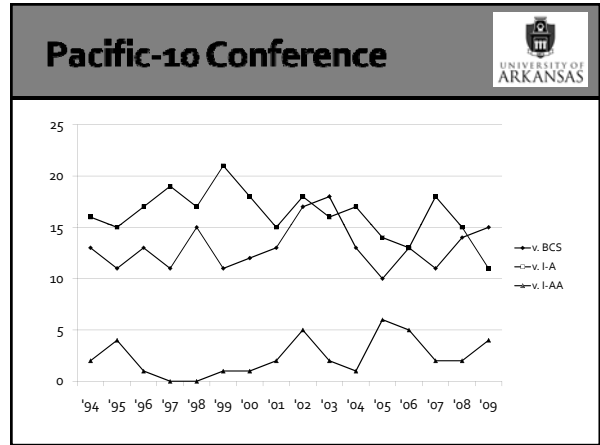
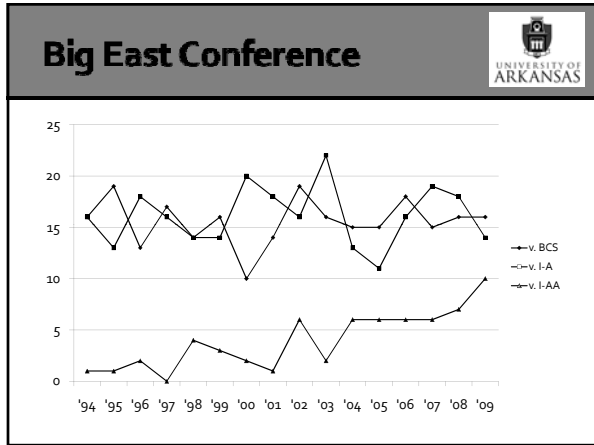
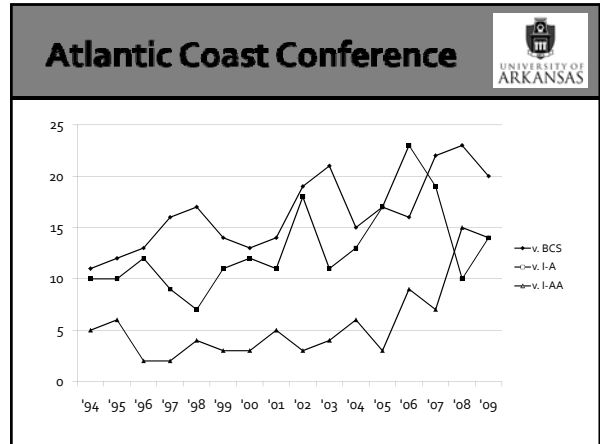
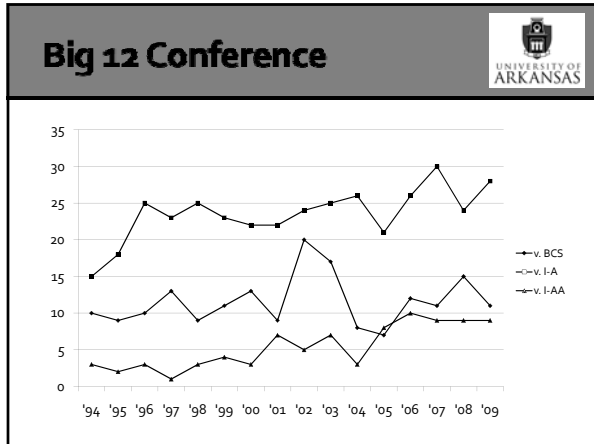
- Using records kept at *College Football Data Warehouse*, researchers conducted frequency counts for BCS schools' non-conference football schedules from 1994-2009
- v. BCS = non-conference games against teams in other BCS conferences at time of game
- v. I-A = non-conference games against teams in non-BCS conferences
- v. I-AA = non-conference games against teams in what is now the Football Championship Subdivision (FCS)

Method




- Participation in a post-season bowl game was dummy coded for the study period (1 = participation in a bowl game; 0 = no participation)
- 2008 season payout information was obtained from the *Des Moines Register's* online database for NCAA payouts
 - 82% of teams in FBS supplied information to the DSM Open Records Request





Payouts

- Payouts ranged from:
 - High of \$2.85 million by LSU to play Troy, Tulane, Appalachian State, and North Texas
 - Low of \$150,000 by Duke to play James Madison
- Conference averages:
 - SEC = \$1.529 million for 11 schools
 - Big 12 = \$1.201 million
 - Big Ten = \$1.155 million
 - ACC = \$699,000
 - Big East = \$639,000
 - Pac 10 = \$586,000



Idaho State lost 64-0 at Oklahoma, Sept. 12, 2009 (Photo by Daily Oklahoman)

Correlation Matrix

	v. BCS	v. I-A	v. I-AA	Wins	Payout
v. BCS	1.000				
v. I-A		1.000			
v. I-AA			1.000		
Wins	-.013	.053	.048	1.000	
Payout	-.342	-.316	-.020	.149	1.000

Conclusions



- No support for H_1 : *Following the creation of the BCS National Championship Game in 2006, the number of BCS v. BCS non-conference regular season games will decrease.* Total number increased from 87 to 90
 - 83 BCS v. BCS non-conference games in 1997
 - 90 BCS v. BCS non-conference games in 2009

Conclusions



- Support for H_2 : *Following the 2005 amendment permitting 12 regular season games, the number of BCS v. I-AA regular season games will increase.* Total number increased from 32 to 56
 - Despite this increase, the extremely low correlation between games against I-AA opponents and wins (.048) suggests this practice does not always produce a better record

Conclusions



- Researchers' opinion that the combination of BCS system and the 2006 NCAA rule creates a strong disincentive for BCS schools to schedule other BCS schools in non-conference games
- Many BCS v. BCS non-conference games are long-standing rivalries (e.g., Florida v. Florida State; Michigan v. Notre Dame; Michigan State v. Notre Dame)

Conclusions



- Future research should explore the financial implications of these games for both the BCS and I-AA schools
 - \$400,000 may not seem like a large expense to a BCS school, but it is likely a significant revenue source for I-AA school
 - How would I-AA schools cope with finances if these games went away?



bfpair@gmail.com
christian.moore87@gmail.com
dittmore@uark.edu

Thank you...