

## NASCAR

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

### Announcer hospitalized in intensive-care unit

Former NASCAR champion Benny Parsons remained in intensive care Friday at Carolinas Medical Center after entering the hospital nearly two weeks ago because of complications stemming from lung cancer.

The 1973 Winston Cup champion was diagnosed with cancer in his left lung in July and declared in October he had beaten it.

But he was unable to attend a ceremony in November in New York to accept the Myers Brothers Award for contributions to the sport.

"Parsons' family has been overwhelmed by the outpouring of support from fans and the NASCAR community, and they encourage everyone to keep Benny in their thoughts and prayers," said a statement issued on behalf of Parsons by Performance Racing Network.

Parsons, a NASCAR television commentator, has a weekly show on the radio network.

## FOOTBALL

CLEVELAND

### Browns begin overhaul by getting rid of coaches

Wide receivers coach Terry Robiskie and tight ends coach Ben Coates won't be back with the Cleveland Browns next season, the first departures in an overhaul of coach Romeo Crennel's staff.

The team announced Friday that those two as well as offensive quality control coach Carl Crennel II and strength and conditioning coach John Lott will not be retained for next season.

"These decisions were made with the best interest of the franchise in mind," Romeo Crennel said in a statement.

More coaching changes could occur as Crennel continues meeting with general manager Phil Savage and owner Randy Lerner following a 4-12 season that began with high expectations.

NEW YORK

### Tomlinson nabs AP offensive player donor

With a bushel full of records and an MVP award already in his 2006 collection, LaDainian Tomlinson added The Associated Press NFL Offensive Player of the Year to his résumé Friday.

Tomlinson, voted Most Valuable Player on Thursday, broke Shaun Alexander's league record for touchdowns by scoring 31 (28 rushing) and also threw for two scores.

Tomlinson rushed for a league-high 1,815 yards on 348 carries, had 56 receptions for 508 yards and was 2 for 3 as a passer, both completions for scores, giving him six in his six-year career, tying him for second among non-quarterbacks.

DAVIE, Fla.

### Dolphins' Taylor wins award as top defender

Miami Dolphins' defensive end Jason Taylor, who is contemplating retirement at age 32, was honored Friday as the league's defensive player of the year.

Frustrated by a franchise-record five consecutive years out of the playoffs, Taylor said he's unsure whether he'll return next season.

Taylor provided one of the few bright spots during the Dolphins' disappointing season. He had 13½ sacks, forced 10 fumbles, recovered two, intercepted two passes and returned both for scores.

## BASEBALL

SAN CRISTOBAL, Dominican Republic

### White Sox shortstop says he may miss season

Chicago White Sox shortstop Juan Uribe may sit out the 2007 season after a judge ordered him to make twice-monthly court appearances in a Dominican Republic shooting case.

The 27-year-old, due to make \$4.15 million this year, said the case was likely to force him to miss the start of spring training, which is scheduled for mid-February.

Chicago White Sox general manager Kenny Williams was not available for comment, and spokesman Scott Reifert said the team expects Uribe to be at spring training in Tucson, Ariz., next month.

Uribe was questioned along with his brother and a friend following a shooting in October that wounded a Dominican farmer in the coastal city of Juan Baron.

# Endless bowl games give DVR workout

So have you been bowled over?

No? Well it isn't over yet. You still have the International Bowl and the GMAC Bowl to wrap your arms around.

Not doing it for you?

Oh well, I guess there is some big game Monday you can look forward to.

And if the BCS Championship Game between Ohio State and Florida is anything like the rest of the bowl season, then expect the unexpected.

So far, 10 of the 29 games played (yes, there have been that many) have been decided by three points or fewer. Four contests were decided by a solitary point. Of course, not every game was close. Six teams won by 20 points or more.

But the 2006-07 bowl season has provided us with a number of ups and downs. Here's one man's view of the holiday football season, the gift that keeps on giving and giving and giving:

**Best bowl game:** Tostitos Fiesta Bowl.

This is why I pay the extra \$10 a month for my DVR (that's digital video recorder, for you cave dwellers).

With Boise State leading 28-20



Matthew Glesnek

in the fourth quarter, the mid-night hour approaching and my eyelids beginning to descend, a simple press of the record button saved the day.

I didn't even wait to shower or eat my customary bowl of Apple Cinnamon Cheerios when I awoke. Finding out if Boise State could hold on to upset Oklahoma was concern No. 1.

And for those who were not fortunate enough to catch the game, I regret to inform you, you might have missed the greatest four minutes of college football bowl history.

This game had it all: a blown lead, a crushing interception return for a touchdown, trick plays and a gutsy overtime call to go for the win with a 2-point conversion.

Last year's Rose Bowl was great, but watching the upstart Broncos bounce back after hav-

ing their lead slip away was absolutely enthralling, even nine hours after the fact.

**Worst bowl trend:** Giving bids to teams that finish the regular season 6-6.

I'm sorry, but bowls are rewards for teams with winning records, not teams with non-winning records.

If you can't find a team with a winning record to fill the slot, well then my friend, we have far too many bowl games.

**Best wardrobe decision:** This was a close call.

I really enjoyed Oregon's glow-in-the-dark helmets that changed colors depending on how the light hit them.

But I'm going to have to go with Holiday Bowl participants the California Golden Bears, who produced gorgeous golden uniforms that really sparkled on my high-definition TV.

Talk about dressing for success. Cal's performance on the field was equally impressive as it toyed with Texas A&M, winning 45-10.

**Worst bowl performance:** Notre Dame.

There was nothing sweet about the Irish's second-half performance against LSU in the Sugar Bowl.

Always an overrated team, Notre Dame lost its ninth straight bowl game, the longest such streak in the country.

Charlie Weis is no different than Ty Willingham.

Notre Dame loses to good teams and racks up wins against marginal talent and the service academies, yet its own television contract with NBC leads everyone to believe the Fighting Irish are better than they really are.

And Brady Quinn as the No. 1 pick in the draft? I'll take LSU's JaMarcus Russell 10 times out of 10.

**Best bowl performance:** Hawaii quarterback Colt Brennan.

All season long Brennan has been near or at the top of NCAA passing statistics, and in the aptly named Hawaii Bowl against Arizona State, he didn't disappoint.

The junior finished the game with 559 passing yards and five touchdowns for a gaudy quarterback rating of 224.9.

**Best conference:** Big East.

Three years ago, everybody called the conference a wasteland.

Gone were perennial powers Miami, Virginia Tech and Boston College.

Things looked bleak, and there were calls for the conference to lose its BSC bid.

Well, now the conference is 4-0 in bowls and has a chance to get to 5-0 if Cincinnati can win the International Bowl against Western Michigan.

Louisville, Rutgers, South Florida and West Virginia all looked good, and if their key players opt not to enter the NFL Draft, the conference might boast four teams in next season's top 25.

Perhaps more important than its victories on the field were the ones the Big East recorded off the field, namely Rich Rodriguez spurning Alabama to stay at West Virginia and Greg Schiano saying no to Miami (Fla.), preferring to remain in Jersey.

Well, there you have it. The good and bad of this year's bowl season.

But something tells me the best is yet to come. Enjoy Ohio State and Florida. I know I will.

I just hope I won't need the DVR for this one.

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# Athletes telling BCS: 'Show us the money'

## Chance at earning college football championship not reward enough for some players

BY ANDREW BAGNATO

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

GLENDALE, Ariz.

Playing in a bowl is no longer reward enough for some college football players: Some Buckeyes and Gators want a cut of the millions being generated by the championship game.

"We all deserve more money," Ohio State senior guard T.J. Downing said. "We're the reason this money's coming in. We're the guys out there sacrificing our bodies. We're taking years off our lives out here hitting each other, and we're not being compensated for it."

Instead, players from top-ranked Ohio State and No. 2 Florida received portable satellite radios and commemorative wristwatches, first-class meals and VIP treatment at posh resorts.

"We're the guys out there sacrificing our bodies. We're taking years off our lives out here hitting each other, and we're not being compensated for it."

T.J. Downing

Ohio State senior guard on not receiving money to play in the BCS championship

"I've got to admit, sometimes I look in my hand and look in their hand," Florida defensive tackle Joe Cohen said, referring to the Bowl Championships Series. "I believe players should get a little bit more than what they're getting. I don't want to sound like I'm greedy. It's just reality."

"I believe players should be paid, because I'm broke," Cohen chuckled when he said it, but it's no laughing matter for the NCAA, which has steadfastly maintained that players — or student-athletes, as the association

refers to them — are amateurs and cannot be paid. It's right there in Bylaw 2.9 of the NCAA Manual: "Student participation in intercollegiate athletics is an avocation, and student-athletes should be protected from exploitation by professional and commercial enterprises."

But bowls have become increasingly commercial. Fourteen different commercial logos appeared Friday inside University of Phoenix Stadium, where media day was conducted.

Bowl payouts have been mush-

rooming, too. According to the Football Bowl Association, this year's 31 bowl games will generate \$210 million for NCAA schools. Over the last six years, bowls have paid schools \$900 million, the association said, and it estimates bowl payouts will grow to \$2.2 billion during the next 10 years.

Meanwhile, the Phoenix area expects to reap \$350 million in tourism revenue from its three bowl games this year: the Insight, the Fiesta and the BCS title game.

Plus, Fox is in the first year of a four-year deal that will pay the BCS \$320 million for the broadcast rights to the Fiesta, Orange and Sugar bowls from 2007-10 and the national title game from 2007-09.

Little of this money trickles down to the players. The NCAA has set a \$500 limit on gifts they can receive from bowl hosts.

Some players shrugged when

asked about the money they help generate.

Ohio State quarterback Troy Smith, who won the Heisman Trophy, said he doesn't mind that others profit from sales of his No. 10 jersey, the garment of choice among Buckeyes fans.

"I think what you get is what you deserve," he said. "Thinking about getting revenue off jerseys right now, for me, is definitely not my thinking. That doesn't bother me at all."

Officials and coaches from Florida and Ohio State said paying players would not be practical.

According to 2005-06 U.S. Department of Education figures, Florida reported a total of 538 male and female athletes and said it spent \$5.3 million on athletic scholarships. Ohio State reported a total of 996 athletes and said it spent \$11.3 million on athletic scholarships.

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