

# College Football Playoff Media Conference

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## Executive Director Bill Hancock

CFP Media Conference

BILL HANCOCK: Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining us here in the room and also by phone. We were talking earlier about how nice it is to be able to shake hands, but I reached out and gave knucks to somebody because I'm still going to stick with knucks for a while.

To business: The management committee met over the last 24 hours with some sleep time in there, plenty of sleep time. They thoroughly examined the recommendations from the working group, and the process will move forward. We said this is just the beginning, and it is very much just the beginning of a process that will not conclude before September.

At next week's Board of Managers meeting, the management committee will ask the board to authorize the solicitation of feedback over the next several weeks and months with constituent groups that are important to college football. And those are expected to include student-athletes, presidents, coaches, athletic directors and others. And they will review with them the details of the proposal -- which is, remember, still only a proposal -- and also begin feasibility assessments performance.

So the management committee, again, will be asking the board for authorization to begin those reviews and feasibility assessments. I'm going to stop there and see if there are any questions.

### **Q. What was the feedback or conversations like about adding games?**

BILL HANCOCK: There was talk about almost every aspect of the working-group proposal, including that one. And at the end of the day, the management committee just concluded that we have some important constituent groups that we have not heard from and we need to.

And, so, I'm sure that will be part of the, I'll call it kicking the tires as the management committee moves forward with



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soliciting the opinion of folks.

### **Q. What are the biggest concerns from the seven who only recently received this proposal?**

BILL HANCOCK: That's a good question. Remember, the four people have been in this for two years and the other seven commissioners have been in it and the discussion and in the know for about a week. And I think the biggest thing that kept coming up was we just need time to review this with our folks back on campus. And I think that was probably the biggest thing, just we need time for more input.

### **Q. There's not been any discussion yet about when this could -- I know we're still working on the "if" it will be implemented, but the "when" it could be implemented. You put this out there and a lot of people are thinking, okay, are we going to have to wait until 2026? Can we get this until 2023? Is that even part of the discussion at this point as how soon this could be implemented?**

BILL HANCOCK: The implementation part obviously is a very important part of this. And the working group intentionally did not get into it. They want to put a proposal in front of the management committee that the committee could consider without having the shackles of trying to figure out when to implement it.

And the group this week didn't get into implementation time in a significant way. That will come later. The first step is determining whether this new format is even feasible or something that the people on campus want to do. So that implementation -- that important implementation matter is still to be discussed.

### **Q. Has there been any thoughts or discussions over the last 24 hours to reexamining the quarterfinals and maybe putting those on campus rather than in bowl games as well?**

BILL HANCOCK: There wasn't significant discussion of that today. But that will, again, all be a part of the kicking-the-tires process that will happen between now and September.



**Q. Wondering if anyone shared what their presidents have been telling them between the initial announcement and this meeting -- I know they're going to go back, but have any of those concerns or issues been raised here in Chicago?**

BILL HANCOCK: Not about specifics about the proposal. But almost everybody said we need more time to discuss this with our presidents back on campus -- ADs, coaches, student-athletes. That was the prevailing theme of the meeting. We just need more time.

**Q. Is that people saying that they want to slow this process down, or is that keeping it on the same path that it was ten days ago?**

BILL HANCOCK: I feel like it's on the same path. Just it was emphasized that we just haven't received the feedback that we need in order to make a decision. And of course this meeting was never intended to be a decision-making meeting. And neither is next week's board meeting.

But it became very clear that people just need more time to, I'll use the word, socialize the proposal with people on campus.

If you think about it, this is a big deal. And everyone needs to have a voice in what happens. And there just hasn't been time to have that voice be heard.

I will say that some of the conferences were able to consult with folks on campus, that they kind of fast-tracked it. Others were not able to get people together. And I think we all realized when we left the room that it was important for every voice to be heard.

**Q. How would you describe the general reaction from those who weren't part of the working group to what was presented, especially around the number? Because that was something that a lot of people, again, outside were surprised that it was 12, not eight, or six or whatever.**

BILL HANCOCK: Generally, the people in the room liked what they saw. Realizing that they had not yet received the input from their folks on campus. But I think generally the first impression was that the working committee, working group did a great job and we're pretty happy with what they came up with.

But, again, I can't not overemphasize how important it is to get the feedback from the key folks on campus -- student-athletes, coaches, presidents, ADs. That's the

most important next step.

**Q. What would you say was the biggest, maybe, concern expressed by the people just hearing the details of the plan? And what was the biggest pleasant element that they embraced, just from initial reactions?**

BILL HANCOCK: Pleasant element was more participation. Concern -- I have to say not having had enough time to review it with people on campus.

**Q. Wanted to ask if you guys had much conversation about the potential impact that this could have on nonconference games? And have you talked about making sure that the selection process will incentivize teams to schedule marquee nonconference games?**

BILL HANCOCK: The working group did spend plenty of time on that. They feel that this proposal will make the regular season better. Will make November better because of the conference champions, the six conference champions. And frankly will make September better because of the at-large. So, both ends of the regular season, and of course the middle too, we think will be better, under this proposal.

**Q. My question is just in general, is there a sense from, let's say, the Power Five, or the people who are really charged with overseeing this college football industry, to give something back to gain something, which the current college football schedule, it just seems like this is something that's going to be tacked on at the end and go deep into the second semester, which may not be in the best interests of many of the constituents, namely the players. I don't know, just is there a sense that the Power Five is willing to give back a 12th regular season game or conference championship games to gain something that could potentially be bigger than any of that on the back end? It just seems like this is an unwieldy add-on at the end that's going to create a lot of tough circumstances for people?**

BILL HANCOCK: Neither the working group nor the management committee this week talked about those two elements. If you remember -- you have to remember that conferences have contracts for their conference championship games, television contracts and venue contracts that extend a fair amount of time into the future. So, those elements have not been discussed at length by either group.

**Q. Wanted to ask if there's more clarity how the New Year's six bowls would factor into it, and what you**

**think might be unintended consequences might be for the entire bowl system as a whole under this proposal?**

BILL HANCOCK: The group didn't talk about it today but the working group talked about it at length. We don't know who the six bowls might be if the format goes through. That will be determined later. In my mind the six bowls that will be a part of this will be delighted to be part of it.

As to the other bowls, this is Bill Hancock's personal opinion, there will always be a place for bowls in college football. There always has been and there always will be. And so that will continue.

**Q. The 2022 season, you've been saying this obviously couldn't be implemented for this year, is 2022 off the table also?**

BILL HANCOCK: Yes, it is. Both this year and next year is off the table.

**Q. So, the earliest is 2023?**

BILL HANCOCK: Yes. Not to say that it will happen then, but that's the earliest that it could. And I don't want the headline to be "Hancock says it could happen in 2023," but that's just the earliest. It cannot happen this year or next year.

**Q. (Indiscernible) contracts?**

BILL HANCOCK: Contracts are in place. That's the main reason. And if you think about it, by the time this gets approved, if it does even get approved in September or if it's kicked down the road after that, we'd be pretty close to that season starting.

**Q. You mentioned no real bowl discussion. I was just curious if the Big Ten or Pac-10 brought up the Rose Bowl, where it falls or sharing where the Rose Bowl could fit into this?**

BILL HANCOCK: It came up today. The importance of the Rose Bowl in college football to all of us who love college football. All of us who love college football love the Rose Bowl. And that comes up in many of our meetings and has in the 16 years I've been doing this. All the bowls were talked about, with no specifics.

**Q. Have there been any talks or discussion in depth or otherwise about a plan B, on the off chance this feedback feasibility phase reveals too many concerns? Is there essentially a rip cord for a backup plan to move forward outside of 12?**

BILL HANCOCK: Good question. At the moment, I suspect -- there hasn't been talk about a plan B. I think always is plan B is plan C. Whatever is what we have. And we're fortunate to have a four-team event that we all like.

**Q. Last week the commissioners talked about how relevant the bowls are. You just mentioned the bowls will always be a part of college football. However, with an expanded playoff, how much of a concern is there that several bowls will be eliminated during the next few years?**

BILL HANCOCK: That won't be for us to say. We manage our event. And my strongest answer to that is there will always be a place for bowl games. But I've got enough on my plate with the six, seven, perhaps 11 games that we may get ourselves into in the future.

**Q. Your meetings this week are happening at the same time that there was another congressional hearing about name image and likeness and compensating athletes. As the group talks about a new system that would possibly add more games to, asking athletes to play more games, how does that factor into the discussion, the notion that if this comes to be, there are certainly going to be calls for the athletes to be compensated for adding more games and taking on more injury risk?**

BILL HANCOCK: Those things are happening on parallel tracks, obviously. And we're all in the middle of watching those. It's my hope that there can be more benefits for student-athletes from -- if there is an expansion of the playoff. What those might be, no one knows. We haven't talked about it yet.

But short of pay-for-play, there's no interest in our room in pay-for-play. But can we do more for student-athletes? I think we'll all be interested in exploring what might be out there.

**Q. Has your TV partner been involved in any of the discussions yet, with ESPN in the room in one way, shape or form -- I didn't see anybody from ESPN here but there are Zooms and ways to get people here?**

BILL HANCOCK: No, they weren't involved. They know what's happening, of course. Everybody in college football knows what's happening. But they have not been involved.

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