

2025 Men's College World Series

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Omaha, Nebraska, USA

Jay Artigues

Craig Keilitz

Anthony Holman

State of Collegiate Baseball



continues to evolve, you mentioned the growth of college baseball and the coverage of it. It's a weird dynamic watching college football give us weekly updates on where the committee stands. And college basketball, at the halfway point, they say here's our top 16 teams. Have you considered a midseason report of sorts as the sport continues to evolve?

JAY ARTIGUES: Funny you asked that question. Somebody brought that up. I think baseball is a little different. It's a little bit tough to do that. But it was discussed. It was brought up.

You mentioned the coverage today. I was talking to Craig's dad earlier and he was talking about when he was in this role, and I told him how much easier I think it is today for us to do this because of y'all -- the resources we have, what we're able to see, the information we get from you guys.

And also every game's on the ESPN platform. If you want to watch a baseball game, get on ESPN+. I want to tip my hat -- I'm looking at Jeremy in the back, a committee member from Southern Miss, they really watched a lot of games.

The eyeball test today is really important because you see so many teams from across the country playing each other. But also the structure of the conference tournament now -- everybody doesn't play each other in a lot of the bigger conferences which makes it challenging.

So I think watching it on the ESPN platform and the eye test, I think that helps us.

As far as seeing them halfway through, I think it's a little more challenging in baseball to do that because of injury to a Friday night starter early in the season better than late in the season. If you look at all the aspects, it makes it a challenge to do that.

ANTHONY HOLMAN: I'm going to protect them from themselves and talk them into doing that, for the reason he says but also because you guys are so good at your jobs.

THE MODERATOR: We have Jay Artigues from the D-I Men's Baseball Committee, Anthony Holman from the NCAA and Craig Keilitz, the ABCA Executive Director.

JAY ARTIGUES: Really excited for this week. This is what I look forward to. The last four years have been the funnest two weeks of my life.

So it's a lot fun to be here. Heck of a group here, the eight teams coming in. I know everybody's probably excited about the different group. First time since '57 that we've had no returners, which we'll get into a few minutes.

I want to say really look forward to a great week.

And thank you all for being here for the coverage. The coverage we get these days doesn't compare to how it's been in the past. So thank you all very much.

ANTHONY HOLMAN: Likewise, thanks for coming out and supporting the championship. We're excited to be here in Omaha for the 75th anniversary of the championship being in Omaha. Randy Bohr (phonetic) from our staff will remind you it's the 78th year of the College World Series, but 75 years in Omaha is no small feat.

We are excited to celebrate with our friends here in Omaha. We'll talk a little bit more about what's going on this weekend and over the next two weeks. Thank you.

CRAIG KEILITZ: There's not a better place in the world to be than Omaha, Nebraska this time of the year. So I think about how much I enjoy this tournament and I've been here for about 15 or 16, I think, and it seems to get more and more special every year, maybe as I get older. But it's a great place to be in June. Thank you.

Q. Jay and to an extent Anthony, as the committee



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I don't want you to see that in April and then call me and say, you said three weeks ago that so and so is the No. 1 seed.

What we'll commit to doing and I think it's really important is talking about the metrics that the committee uses earlier in the year and then let you guys do some assessments to say, hey, based off of what the committee's going to be using, right now this is how that would probably fold out.

I think we can do a better job of educating you on what they look at. And then you guys can make your own assessments weekly.

JAY ARTIGUES: I think what Anthony mentioned, the transparency on our part to let everybody know exactly what you're looking for in that room -- because you have to remember, there's 10 ADs. We're all type A personalities. We're used to getting our way on our campuses. And you all come in with different opinions which is what makes it so special, guys from the East Coast, West Coast, North, South -- and I think the information we are able to get, like Anthony alluded to, is really important.

Q. Jay, what if question, there's been talk a lot already Arkansas and LSU, a 3 and a 6 national seed meeting in the first round. Would this be a good year for a reseed?

JAY ARTIGUES: That was discussed at dinner last night, actually. I think the challenge of that is that's what also makes this so special. When you look at what's going on with Murray State and some of the other teams in this field. Reseeding has always been discussed.

But this year it won't be. It's a little too late for this year. I think it may be something they do at least talk about, no question about it. This year kind of brought that to the forefront.

ANTHONY HOLMAN: If you were to reseed, would you suggest it based off of the entire season body of work or just from regionals through the end?

Q. After the super regional.

ANTHONY HOLMAN: After, so you've got a sample size of two or three games, potentially.

Q. Yeah.

ANTHONY HOLMAN: I don't agree with that. (Laughter).

Q. 75 years, hard to believe. It gets better and better. Question for all of you, there was an article in the news

maybe a week or week and a half ago where, in basketball, they're considering to grow the sport and the popularity by maybe looking at more inclusive games to get to the basketball tournament. We're at that 64 point as we, whatever the metrics are going to be with the committees evaluating teams around the country. Some conferences internally are more powerful. Other ones have to schedule a noncon knowing they may not have a chance to go as deep, have to schedule some games early on in anticipation of how deep big conferences go. So the question is, are we at a point where we could have some excitement, where we would have some teams playing in to get into the tournament?

JAY ARTIGUES: You are asking if we should expand the field. There's always discussion about that. As far as the excitement, would it bring excitement. I don't know that there could be any more excitement in college baseball today.

But to your point, there's a lot of factors that go into that. One is TV. Anthony is a lot smarter than I am, and he'll tell you more about the TV aspect of it.

I love expanding it coming from a mid-major school. If you see the success of the Murray States and some other mid-majors around the country right now, it shows they can play with the big boys. Look, it's always a challenge. Do you take a 12th or 13th place team SEC versus a mid-major?

It's always going to be an argument. Always going to be a challenge. Even if we expand it, am I in favor of it personally? Yes, I am personally. But there's so many aspects I don't even think about, like the TV and like the cost aspirations of it.

From the perspective from that, it makes it a challenge. From the personal perspective, I love it. Definitely has pros and cons, no question.

CRAIG KEILITZ: Yes. No, I would love to have us look at it. I don't know if we'd have a play-in aspect because there's just not that time available to do that.

But we have a really special tournament, and it's like a great restaurant and they expand and then all of a sudden things fall apart on them. That's something we always need to be very cognizant of.

But I'd love to see more teams in because I think there's teams that are deserving to be in that fit in the field and would do well in the field. I don't think it's just an additional type team. These are teams that belong in. I hope we

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continue to evaluate that.

ANTHONY HOLMAN: I thought that would be the answers from those guys. I don't disagree from a personal aspect. From the vice president of championships hat/lens, I don't know what the value proposition is to that.

We've got a very robust championship. Our broadcast partners do a tremendous job. We're fortunate to have the coverage that we have. Anytime you add something to it, you run the risk of, to Craig's point, messing up the recipe a little bit.

And the last part of this -- full transparency -- we lose money on regionals. So the proposition of not garnering additional revenue to offset expenses and just adding to expenses, in this day's economic landscape doesn't make a whole lot of business sense.

CRAIG KEILITZ: We stopped caring about finances a few months ago.

ANTHONY HOLMAN: Apparently. (Laughter).

Q. I would like to add my input to Anthony's question. Murray State, the 4 seed in this field of eight in Omaha, they go to Ole Miss, an SEC host, they beat them 2 out of 3. They knock off Georgia Tech, who won the regular season in the ACC. And they visit Duke and take games 2 and 3. Reseeding in favor of an LSU and an Arkansas, an LSU team who had to play a 4 seed three times in their regional -- maybe a little bit of a softer draw -- maybe reward Murray State for paving their path and possibly making that a weaker part of the Omaha eight. But overall, my question would be, the big story line this weekend is the diversity of the eight teams in Omaha. What are your guys' opinion on the six different conferences we see? Also Oregon State as an independent as well?

CRAIG KEILITZ: I love it. Part of my job as the executive director of the ABCA is promoting baseball. I don't think we could promote it any better than we have. I'm probably surprised as a lot of people as this proliferation of money has followed its way down, to say it might not be possible.

But I think it's absolutely remarkable. I think it's going to be interesting. I think it's going to be highly watched and followed. I don't think we could have scripted it any better. Excited to see how it plays out.

ANTHONY HOLMAN: I think it's tremendous. I think this is a great example of young people playing for the name on the front of the jersey and not the name on the back of the jersey. That's evident there.

Yeah, there's tons of money. We know what we're talking about, NIL deals and all the other stuff. But this is a great example of nine people on a field making a difference and doing it. And that's more than it takes in basketball, just two less than football.

The point I'm trying to make is money doesn't always drive competition. I think the model isn't broken, necessarily. I think this is an exciting thing for us to be encouraged about and not discouraged about because there's still lots of parity and opportunities for teams to be successful.

JAY ARTIGUES: To go off of that, if you look at what Murray State, if you heard his interview when he talked about we're really focused on what we have instead of what we don't have, I think the mid-majors having success, they found the formula because the Arkansases, the LSUs and the Georgias of the world, they're going to have the premier 18-, 19-year-olds in the country, no question about it.

They can't get old because they're 18- and 19-year-olds are signing after that third year. Now where a mid-major to compete against them is going to have a good 22- or 23-year-old. You put a good 22-, 23-year-old against a really good 18-year-old, it evens the field.

I think the mid-majors that are having success are all older. You look at what Southern Miss did this year, they're a fourth-, fifth-year team. That's why they're kicking the crap out of some P4 teams.

I think the formula, the schools that understand that, mid-major wise -- look at Little Rock. Chris Curry did a tremendous job, an older team. The older mid-majors can compete against the really talented P4s. That's what you're seeing right now.

Q. Craig, you probably talk to more coaches than anybody. How is the consensus on the increase of scholarships from 11.7 up to the 30s?

CRAIG KEILITZ: We're nervous and ecstatic at the same time. We fought to get a couple more scholarships, to possibly have 15 some day. And now to go to 34 maximum is incredible. But there's some things that have to happen along with that. And I keep reading negative stuff after negative stuff after negative stuff. But I'm an internal optimist.

I think we're getting to a spot right now where we can figure out what's happening with our sports. Baseball is just one of many. So they're all going through this. But we've got some incredible opportunities right now, and it's up to us,



all the ADs, the commissioners, certainly the NCAA, the law firms that are involved in it, to make it work.

We've got to stop pointing the finger and make it work. So I think our coaches are all on board to say, okay, what is our roster, what does it look like, how many can we have in the fall, how does this transfer portal work so we can continue to do the things we do, and that's to build character with young men and women and the educational effort and so forth. But all that's been lost in this whole cluster of lawsuits.

It's crazy, but now we are where we are and we need to make it work and I'm bullish to make it work.

JAY ARTIGUES: You have to be creative and make it work, especially at the smaller-sized schools, but just figuring that out.

I remember when NFL started free agency, everybody said it's going to kill the NFL. It didn't. It's thriving like it is.

I think it's same with college baseball. People are like, well, NIL is going to kill college baseball, college athletics. It's not. You've got to change and adapt.

Teams that are doing that, like Craig alluded to, are going to be the ones succeeding. So just embrace it and figure it out because right now it's definitely a moving target, but it's something, as administrators we have to figure that part out.

Q. Anthony and Craig and Jay, have we thought about moving the transfer portal date? I know we've had coaches in the regionals and super regionals and they've had a hard time having special hotel rooms where they take these phone calls because kids are in the transfer portal before they even get going. Have we thought about moving it to the end of the season so guys can play out the whole season before they have to think about moving the whole roster?

ANTHONY HOLMAN: I think that's a fair question. What we're seeing is a model -- there's a group working on -- it's called the Division I Decision Making Working Group, and they're making some recommendations about the new normal around Division I. And one of those things may be we can't have universal days for all sports.

So we may move to this model where there's oversight sport committee or oversight committees for each sport and they may establish their own. I think that's probably a direction we may see and that probably makes the most sense for those sports.

JAY ARTIGUES: If you remember years ago, the draft was going on while the College World Series was going on. That was changed. Yes, I do think that's something to look into soon. Valid point.

Q. Dan McDonnell said you might have this for us. Have you taken any surveys on what the scholarship offerings are going to be like school to school, how many you're going to offer 34, how many 25, how many under 20?

CRAIG KEILITZ: I don't think the schools know what they're going to offer right now. I think as they work through this, they're trying to figure it out. The athletic directors position has always been difficult. I don't know if it's ever been more difficult than it has been right now because the uncertainty, all the different budgets and the different people pulling at them and trying to find that money to make it work.

I don't know where we are, but I do know we'll be better than 11.7 at most of the schools. I do think we'll have a lot more closer to 34 than we will at 25, which is incredible. So we'll see how it plays out. But I don't think anybody has any idea right now or doesn't have a great idea and they're not keeping it from you, it's just don't know where they're at right now.

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