

Why Brendan Sorsby's Comeback Fell Apart

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SUMMARY

Ralph Russo and Stuart Mandel discuss various topics in college football, including recent travels, the implications of new NCAA eligibility rules, and the ongoing debate about ties in college football. They also touch on the impact of the College Football Playoff (CFP) expansion and the evolving landscape of NIL deals.

- *Stuart shares his recent travels to Europe, highlighting experiences in Berlin and Amsterdam.*
- *Discussion on Brendan Sorsby's situation, with differing opinions on the advice he received regarding his college football career.*
- *The NCAA's new age-based eligibility model is introduced, with potential lawsuits already emerging against it.*
- *A debate on the merits of reintroducing ties in college football, with Ralph arguing for their return and Stuart opposing the idea.*
- *The CFP's potential expansion and scheduling challenges are examined, with a focus on balancing playoff games with the NFL schedule.*
- *The evolving NIL landscape is discussed, particularly the implications of raising the revenue-sharing cap and its enforcement challenges.*
- *The hosts reflect on the nostalgia of college football in the 1990s, with differing opinions on whether it was a peak era for the sport.*

Hello and welcome to the Audible presented by Trader Joe's. I'm Ralph Russo joined today by my colleague Stuart Mandel is back. Hi Sue. It's good to have you back. You'll notice we are still down one. Bruce, our colleague Bruce Feldman is gone. >> You know, we've had very little time, all three of us together, but we definitely missed you, Stu. Uh, especially missed you last week when Bruce bailed out on me and it was just me on my own. Luckily, Justin Williams came in to save us. Um, but Sue, again, we missed you. Where you been? Where haven't I been? Uh, it's great to be back. Um, definitely ready to to get back into work mode here. Uh, Ralph, we have, my family and I have really become uh European, like wannabe Europeans, I guess would be the way to put it. This was our fourth trip in the last five summers. We always try to hit some new places we've never been and this year was um briefly in Prague, but the main ones were Berlin and Amsterdam. I was blown away by Berlin. I I did not expect that to be like Paris has always been our our, you know, standard bearer. Um, but Berlin is like, you know, you you I mean, most of it had to be rebuilt after World War II and then even more so after the wall came down and like the the combination of all that history and the new modern stuff and like the people were so nice. Uh, we got there by the way, the night we got there was uh a Germany World Cup match. talk about culture and getting to experience the culture being in these countries, these European countries when they play in the World Cup.

>> Uh let's just say that now with the time difference, that game started pretty late and like I'm like nodding off to sleep and all of a sudden I hear this huge roar from outside. There was a big viewing party and Germany had

scored. So, and then Amster, have you ever been to Amsterdam? >> I have not. My European travel is very limited as you know. I went to Italy earlier this year. So we are globe trotting podcast by the way apparently but no I have never been to Amsterdam but heard both that that and Prague are lovely >> except for Bruce who the one time he went to Europe was to Spain a couple years ago cuz Ben got invited to uh I think a soccer camp and his his main takeaway was too much ham.

It's only like the best ham in the world but okay. Um, no. Amsterdam is all canals. Those little row houses that I'm sure everybody has seen in in in culture at some point. Uh, our hotel was right on the canal. So cool. Uh, I I did not miss, you know, being in the weeds. I saw there was like one day, Ralph, where you had like both a I think both a Senate story and a Brendan Sorsby story maybe on the same day or Senate and CSC and and we are going to get to some of that stuff. Um, the much more entertaining thing to read from afar has been our '9s series and and I did I did have my own contributions to that as did you, as did Bruce, but um, there's a couple things right off the top that uh, I've been storing up the takes, not going to lie. Yeah. Well, that's it. We want to do a little get Stew up to speed and also like again, I know this feeling from having been, you know, a couple of weeks on vacation myself. You kind of sit on a bunch of takes, right? and you want to kind of get off a couple of takes. So, we're going to give the opportunity for Stu to do that in the first segment, a little bit in the second segment, and in the middle, we'll definitely hit on our 90s series and talk about some of the interesting my contribution to the 90s series came out today, and it has to do with tie games.

I think Stu and I are on different sides of the fence on this issue, whether this actually is an issue. I think I've created it uh made it an issue. This madeup issue that that you that you brought to the circus, >> right? Exactly. But the first thing because it wouldn't be a podcast without talking about Brendan Sorsby is I did want to put a sort of put a bow on that, right? Like you weren't here. That was the that was the episode we covered all the news with Bren about Brendan Sorsby with Justin. So we are our audience is totally up to date on it. But I wanted to give Stu one more chance to chime in because the what happened when you were gone is that Brendan Sorsby, you know, found out that, you know, he's kind of out of luck here. Like, not only is he not going back to college football, but the roads to professional football have been slammed shut on him. And I think you have some ideas about maybe um as Justin and I talked about, did this guy get the best advice?

>> I think he got terrible advice. And so cuz now he's banned from the CFL too, right? So, >> you know, I was thinking about it. It's like Jeffrey Kesler, right, has has generated more tens hundreds of millions of dollars for college athletes than anybody in history between the Austin lawsuit and the house settlement. Like he has there is no question that on those on the in the big picture, right, he has been kind of a savior for former college athletes. But I could also contend that he may have cost Brendan Sorsby millions of dollars. Now you could say, well, Brendan Sorsby is the one who wanted to sue, right? He went out and got a lawyer. And that may be true, but like, you know, you are allowed to give advice. you know, even if somebody hires you, you're allowed to give them advice and say, "Brandon, I don't know if this is the best idea, but it may be that he he's so used to being in situations where the NCA is the villain, and that maybe he just assumed that would be the case here, too. We will paint the NCA as unsympathetic to my client's addiction." But, as it turned out, like nobody was on their side. And you've said it yourself, Ralph, like if he had responded to the um initial ban, right, before the he got the ruling from the judge as okay, I'm done in college football. I need to just now spend a year focusing on my recovery and proving to the NFL that I'm a changed person. This might have all gone differently. I think

part of why you saw that that really harsh letter right from the NFL to Sorsby and denying him the supplemental draft is that this whole situation with Texas Tech and the hey how about a twoame suspension just created this perception that he wasn't that that they don't think gambling on your own team is a big deal and the NFL and even the CFL was like uh-uh this is a really big deal to the point where we're not going to hold a supplemental draft for you and no you can't come running to Canada you be in next year's NFL draft. But I don't know, you know, if you're an NFL team and you see what happened to Texas Tech from a PR standpoint in all this, like do you want to be the team that has to explain next year why you why you spend a draft pick on a guy who uh was banned from the NCA?

Um, so look, I don't know what the bar is to sue a lawyer for malpractice, but I do feel like Jeffrey Kesler did his client about as big a disservice as he could have in all this. >> Yeah, I I don't know if I'm willing to go quite there, but I think you're right. He He I again, I go back to this idea of I wonder if he got bad advice here and he needed to focus on talking to the NFL, right? not talking to the NCAA, saying getting his ducks in a row.

Maybe if he had spent two months petitioning the NFL and talking to the NFL about why he should be in the supplemental draft and all the things that he is doing to correct his problem, it would have it would have led to them possibly letting him into the supplemental draft. All right, enough about Sorsby, but I I I do think you're you're you're not that far off on something there, Steu. Let's also um >> that I've got a that I've got a case for malpractice. Uh maybe. I don't know.

Like, listen, Jeffrey, like my guess is I don't want to take Jeffrey Kessler on in a legal any kind of legal battle. So, to sue Jeffrey Kesler seems like a bad idea. Um however, I you know, I I definitely see what your where your point is there. Another thing to tie up. Another thing to type because this actually happened and this is somewhat new news in terms of we haven't covered it on the podcast before. We have talked about this new eligibility model uh age-based eligibility. It is not 545.

Just to be clear, it is not a five for five. Yes, athletes will be guarant like there's a structure of this and where there's a window in which athletes will be able to be um guaranteed five years of eligibility within a 5-year window. But not all athletes will be guaranteed five years of eligibility because it'll be based on your age and you'll come into that window at different times. So you could get less or you could get more. So it's sort of a matter of being age based here. Well, that's now that now passed the NCAA passed it last week, too. I think it's a good rule. I think it it's smart in a lot of different ways. I think it's going to try to stem some of the tide of having 27 28-year-old players, guys from Europe coming in to play basketball. Uh, all these waivers that are ambiguous and that can easily get challenged and create more eligibility, sixth or seventh years and things along those lines. So, I think it was a smart idea.

And then Stu, the very next day, a lawsuit was filed against it. So we're we're back in court again. There'll be a hearing on Wednesday for an injunction. I I don't know. My sense of this, Steu, is I from talking with people who have been involved in putting this rule together. There was a bit of a damn the torpedoes. We just have to do this. Like we can't be afraid of lawsuits. This is what we think is a good idea. We're going to go ahead with it.

>> Yeah. I mean, first of all, I think you have to give the folks at the NCA a lot of credit, which people don't like to do, right? They're always the villain. But like this this is the kind of thing that in the past would have they would have spent 3 years forming committees and then that committee sends a report to this committee and maybe one day you actually get a new policy. But like basically the the issue of you know pro players coming back to college or uh 26 year old like this all kind of started to percolate late last year in college basketball >> and then accelerated in early 2026 and they worked very quickly relatively speaking to put into place what is a very uh consequential change. I mean, there are no more red shirts. For all our lives, we have used the term red shirt to in college sports and frankly in life. You'll hear you'll hear that term used like academic red shirt and whatnot. And now you will never have another red shirt athlete. Like that term is gone. Um it's it's it's very significant. There is no perfect way to implement it. And so the lawsuits you referred to, I mean, our friend Darren Heitner, who is always looking for a reason to sue the NCA, like did wasted no time here. And he what he's saying is the victims here are the kids who are finishing their who finished their eligibility this year, right?

>> They don't get the fifth year. Um it goes into effect next year. And so like they're right on the cuto off. These are the kids who came into college in 2022. And you know, if I'm one of those players, I would be like, that's unfair or that sucks. But nothing's being taken away from them. I think that's a really important thing to say here, like they didn't have remaining eligibility that got taken away. Um, or you know, some of these cases we've seen of like there was some extenuating circumstance their sophomore year and they deserve another like this is basically just bad luck.

The rule changed the year after you graduated. So, but as we've learned, it only takes one judge, and I think they they're going to be filing these suits in several different states. The first one was in Ohio, and if that happens, that happens. But to your I agree with you 100% like you had to do this. You know, you you this is such a layup issue. This is such a common sense issue. the the the class honestly and I'm curious your thoughts on this that that probably has more reason to be upset is the kids who are going into their senior year of high school because the biggest ramification of this is not the 2026 graduates the 2020 so players who are going into their senior years this coming year their fourth seasons let's say that >> who now have a fifth like you thought oh I've only got this guy for one more year no now you have him for two more years so the coaches are having to on the fly figure out, you know, gosh, if I can keep, by the way, I'm, you know, I'm softball guy, right? It's like in a sport where nobody really turns pro early, you know, oh my gosh, like Texas is going to have all their best players for another two years. Well, how are you going to free up those spots because we also have roster limits? And the answer, unfortunately, is high school that the high school players coming in. You're already seeing tweets where they'll refer to themselves as having been involuntarily committed. So, I don't know.

It seems to me the people who have a good case for a lawsuit are those people. I don't I don't know if they would win or not, but like they are having something taken away from them. Well, yes and no. I mean, there are still going to be spots. Maybe the spots won't be as desirable as what they had hoped for, right? I mean, there's a vast world of college softball and it will tr and college sports, college sports in general, and it will trickle down, right? There will be some spots at the top that maybe somebody a kid in high school will go, "Oh, I could have been on X team, but that team is full, so I'm gonna have to go down to Y team." And then they bump somebody and they bump somebody. So, yes, eventually there's going to be a kid who says, "I could have been a division one athlete and instead I'm a division 2 athlete cuz division one got all filled." Like, I I totally get that. But again, there's also

there is no way to do this perfectly. And what you also are trying to do by getting I this sounds harsh getting rid of the 2022s is create a little more space, right? Like on one end you're trying to create space, on the other end you understand that you're you're you're filling space up. I I don't know. Again, there's no good way to do this that's going to make everybody happy, but you at some point you have to make a change. And I do know that a lot of legal thought went into this. It's not like they didn't do this with a bunch of lawyers who examined where are our liabilities and legal vulnerabilities and let's do this in a way that creates the fewest of them. So I you know again it is weird to think of like this interesting world that we're moving into and I would also I hammer this all the time. Yes, we are no longer going to have sixth and seventh year seeing years. Now there are some exceptions for pregnancy, for missions, religious missions, for military service, but those are going to be few and far between. Um, but be by getting five years, there are still there are still going to be a way to have very experienced teams, right? We keep going back to the Indiana way of get old, stay old. And I do think that that is it. it it will not be as prevalent as it has been over the last few years, but I do think that that is still going to be the the way not just the wave of the future.

That is the way to build teams. That being able to build teams around very veteran players, especially in football where size and maturity makes such a huge difference, I think is going to be super interesting. The last thing I would say is a lot these lawsuits are all involving basketball players. Why is that significant? because the basketball season doesn't start until November. In football, all the rosters are filled. All the spots are taken. I think there's a there's a thought that in basketball, some schools may still have a little bit of wiggle room and a little bit of money floating around that if somebody becomes eligible who they didn't think was eligible, there might be spots found. I find that to be the most uh fascinating thing about the lawsuits is I have a suspicion there are going to be some of these kids who win an injunction and still don't end up playing because maybe they can't find a spot. St. Anyway, I think we should take a break here. We are >> It depends on how it depends on how good they are. I mean, >> that's exactly it. That's exactly it.

All right, let's take a break, Stu. We'll come back and we'll talk about the 1990s and Stu and I are going to have a vigorous debate over ties. All right, we're back. We're going to take a little trip back to the '90s. It's been really fun. Uh all of last week and into this week, The Athletic has been uh focusing on college football in the '90s, and all of us contributed. Um I had to rank the best teams of the '90s.

Spoiler alert, 95 Nebraska number one. Uh Bruce did the top players of the 90s. Um but we've all had various contributions. I really like Matt Baker's story where he went back and watched a game from each year of the '90s and what those broadcasts were like then compared to now. Ralph, anything that's particularly stood out to you either from that story or from this series that's been uh really cool to either learn or maybe revisit? Everything about Matt's story I loved because it was just I I don't think we I I know I don't again I don't I you don't realize what it was like, right? Like you you It really brought back all this rush of how difficult relative to now it would have been to simply follow the game with no first down marker on the field. uh with simply no time and score bug. Like it it think of bouncing around and how we consume college football. First of all, you wouldn't have been able to bounce around because there wasn't quite as much of it on though it was starting to ramp up in the '90s. But the simple idea of we consume it multiple screens sometimes or really like you know overheating the remote and the reason why we can do that is because every game you land on you can quickly check in and be like where is it okay I can get back to that one where is it okay I need to stick on this one or I

need to put my attention on this one and without those score bugs and time bugs like you can't do that you have to like at least give a few minutes of your time before you know you know Vern or Gary gives score and time like it's just it's it's crazy.

>> Yeah. And another thing he mentioned is you know it seems quaint now but like there was actually a lot of talk of academics on those broadcasts in the '90s. Like there was still this feeling of this is college football. They would show what the players majored in. They would highlight academic all-ameans. you just nobody nobody goes there now. And I don't think that means that's cuz no the kids aren't real students anymore as much as people might assume that.

It's just like that's the audience doesn't care, right? There's there's not uh we're not we're not um desperate to find out what uh you know Arch Manning is majoring in right now. So, um, one thing I will say is this has been very fun nostalgia for me, but I am not. So, like Austin Meek's story that touched this whole thing off, uh, which I thought was really well done, ask whether college football peaked in the 1990s, >> and I would actually contend that it wasn't actually that great a decade, right? Like, it was kind of caught in between eras. And I would actually say the 2000s was a much better decade for college football, the as if you will, because that's when the spread offense started to become a thing and the games became more high-scoring and more exciting. Um, and you had like these legendary game like there was a crazy stat in well it's not really a stat it's a a nugget in Austin's story that when ESPN did the 2019 they did that big you know college football 150 years series only one game from the '90s Cordell Stewart's Hail Mary to beat Michigan ranked in the top 40 of the um best games in college football history. So, as I think back to the '90s, like there's games I definitely remember.

Certainly the wide right games come to mind. Um, the clipping in the Orange Bowl, but like it's not it's not banger after banger after banger, right? So, like it was fun. It would I love the the starter jackets, all that good stuff, but I wouldn't say it was like college football at its peak by any means. >> No. No, and I tend to agree with you, you know, and I thought Austin did a good job of recognizing that simply asking that question is what you're really asking is did you enjoy the '9s, right? And because you enjoyed the '9s personally, you think the '9s were the best time.

You know, Justin Williams and I talked about this the other day. Justin's much younger than us. Like, he doesn't really think of the '9s so fondly. I think of the 90s fondly because I was young and handsome and single and like and my career was starting and you know Pearl Jam and Nirvana like so of course like I thought the '9s were great because all these cool things happened in the '9s that I loved. So, um, so yeah, I I am with you, but I also thought Austin Meek did a nice job of of of saying that upfront that we are asking this question understanding the context that we are asking it in. But again, I still love, you know, again, I graduated in 1992.

Here's the other thing, Stu. Just like I think just like sports, the the music that you love will always be from around like your late teens to college. And that will be the music that will always mean the most to you. and like the you know your late college 20s and I think the same thing with sports to a certain degree like your teens to maybe the late 20s I think will always be the heyday of sports and music for whoever you know for whoever it is. That's exactly right.

I remember, you know, there's that scene in *Almost Famous*, and that movie is set in 1973 where uh Philip Seymour Hoffman Hoffman's character tells young William, uh, you're too late. Rock and roll is already dead. Rock and roll already died, right? And this is 1973, right? It's whatever your formative years to me, like music peaked in the late 90s, early 2000s. It hasn't been the same since. And I'm sure people younger than me would say it peaked whenever they were 19 or 20. All right. one aspect of the 90 we we revisited a lot of aspects the style. Um I did an essay about split national championships whether they were also bad that bad after all. Uh Ralph you really stirred a hornets nest. You have argued that we should bring back ties. Overtime in college football began in 1996.

Before that you could tie and some teams as you pointed out had two ties, three ties in a season. the most I would actually say maybe the most famous game in the history of college football was a tie the 1966 Michigan State Notre Dame game and you just Ralph you just could not be more wrong but I will let you make the case anyway. So here's okay. So here's why though you just in some ways backed up my point.

One of maybe the most famous one of the most famous games in college football history is a tie. And that's because ties create stress and a little bit of chaos. And when we get a tie in a big game, it makes the game even more memorable. The reason why ties were abandoned, well, first of all, everybody likes the outcome decided, right? It's just it's human nature. Human nature is we want winners and losers. And that was definitely the case. And I think by the mid '90s, going back to your article about split national championships. It was ties were becoming problem more and more problematic with split national champions. How do you determine a conference championship standings when now you have a tie involved? So it made sense. All high school football, all levels of football were moving away from this idea of like going to o of ties or the game ending in regular in regulation time if it was tied and going to an overtime. So I understood it. But like nowadays with the playoff, hey man, like ties aren't so bad. Like we're not going to have those complications that came with a games ending in ties back in the 90s or throughout the history of college football. Like ties work better now.

There's also a case to be made that the way first of all it's awesome to sort of put that on a coach. I have a I have a cool anecdote that I stumbled upon and in my story about Hayden Fry after the third tie of the 1988 season for uh for um Iowa being like sort of browbeaten by reporters about his decisions cuz they kicked a 20 40 yard field goal with 21 seconds left. And he's like, "No, no, no. We played for the win. I did an onside kick with 16 seconds left. That was our way of trying to get the ball back. We were going to tie and then get the ball back as if that's like a really good strategy to try to go for the win.

But I wouldn't mind I think it would be fun to put that back on coaches, especially nowadays because strategically we've already moved analytically speaking away from coaches playing for overtime, right? I think people are starting to realize like actually, you know, we don't want this game to go to overtime. The other thing I would say is so a you could get rid of overtime alto together in the regular season. By the way, I understand for the postseason you can't do that, but altogether in the regular season or you could implement a real overtime that that creates real football, right? I I ran this by Rich Rodriguez and he thought it was a pretty good idea. a little more like the NFL.

But again, you play 10 minutes, you play whatever the amount of time, and at a certain amount of at a certain point, if it's still tied, it's a tie. And we just live with the fact that it's a tie. I love chaos. I love anomalies. Go ties go. That's a lot to digest. I I do love that your story began with a with an Iowa anecdote because let's Can you imagine if there if Kirk Ference had coached in the age of ties like the way he would have managed that? Oh my goodness. I mean they would be punting from the from the 20 yard line just to make sure they don't they don't lose their tie. Um here's the problem. Like I admit from like an entertainment standpoint, a grill the coaches standpoint that would be fun but look it was it was not planned this way at the time but 1996 is 2 years before the BCS starts. I think ties were could be more tolerable when we just weren't even making any attempt to declare a real national champion. It was a mythical national champion. You want to have some ties in there? Sure. Go ahead.

But can you imagine today we everybody is already so angsty about the selection committee. You know, Miami beat uh Notre Dame and you have them behind them like that storyline last season. Now throw some ties in the mix. Now have Miami and Notre Dame fighting for the last playoff spot and they played that season and they tied. People will would lose their There's there's just no way around. Like you cannot intro reintroduce ambiguity at a time when we have never been more focused on making sure we have absolutely the right teams and absolutely the right national champion and this is scientific now. We're no longer just throwing it out to the voters. I just don't think those two things are compatible.

>> Okay. So my retort is actually again I feel like you are making my point. We are more analytical. We are more we are more precise. And the fact of the matter is as I pointed out in the story, sometimes games are practically ties. Like the if you look at the win the win expectancy percentage of the Miami Notre Dame game from last year, I think Miami was like 51% win expectancy and Notre Dame was 49. So, we already have virtual ties and I think people should be able to sometimes walk away from a football game. We should be advanced enough in our thinking, evolved enough in our thinking and go teams are pretty much the same. Like we like I want to evaluate those two teams as equals because the game ended and they were equal. Now, Stu, one thing you've learned about me over the last year and a half of or a couple years, almost two years of working with me and then being on this podcast is I do like to be a contrarian here. So, I I just like this is really very much me embra I I I am I stand by this point. I am not making this point just to be a contrarian, but it is a fun point to make because again, I think like analytically like we want to be precise. Well, sometimes being precise is these two teams are equal.

It's a tie. Everybody go home happy or not happy or whatever. You know, Bruce and I have actually talked about this, how we did not realize until you joined the podcast just what a contrarian bent you have and the lengths you are willing to go to to defend a point that everybody else absolutely hates. Um, and and but like good good for you. Like stick to your guns. We get it. And look, I mean, they're not bringing back ties, right? So, at the end of the day, this is a fun little thing, just like they're not bringing back split national championships. But I I just think you would be um you you it wouldn't be helping matters. Let's put it that way.

It would only be making the pursuit of a national champ of of a 12 team or whatever size this playoff's going to end up being even harder because you know what? We're not that evolved. I I I was actually okay with Miami

being ranked below Notre Dame for most of that season because I was because I had the context. I was willing to consider the context of that game was on the road week one came down the last second wasn't a blowout, but nobody else was.

Everybody else was, you know, just absolutely beside themselves that we weren't treating that head-to-head result as a certainty that Miami was better than Notre Dame. So, god forbid they actually tied. We are going to take a quick break and when we come back um we're going to revisit a few things that were in the news while I was away that um I haven't had a chance to weigh in on frankly. It's basically Stu gets to have his takes. All right, we're back. Couple topics we want to hit on include yet another CFP expansion uh development, if you will. Um and then the SEC and Big 10 trying to uh rejigger the salary cap.

But actually, there was a little bit of mild news. Um cuz all things lead back to Texas Tech. Of course, Ralph, on Monday, uh Texas Tech announced that Paramount Plus has is doing a documentary, a docu series on Texas Tech's eventful offseason. Micah Brown is the director. He uh we actually had him on the show before you were on um because he did the Netflix Connor Stallions documentary and I which I thought was pretty good. So it is built as set in the intense world of college football. The docu series follows the Texas Tech Raiders as head coach Joe Magcguire Joey Maguire builds a new team identity during a demanding off season. There is no mention of the Sourceby stuff in this press release, but I think it's safe to say that will be a pretty big story line. So, what do you are you going to uh 12:01 a.m. Will you be tuning in to Paramount Plus when that comes out?

>> Well, I don't have Paramount Plus, so there there's that. Uh secondly though, yeah, listen, the only thing I want to know about this is how much of the Sorsby stuff they get into. No offense, I it might be interesting in some other ways. It's always fun to look behind the scenes, get the curtain pulled back on the programs that we cover and sometimes you get some nuggets that you wouldn't or ordinarily get. But the the quality of this documentary will very much be or docu series will be determined by just how much they reveal about the internal dialogue around Brendan Sorsby and we'll see how much Texas Tech wants that out there. Yeah. I think a problem with all of these whether it's Netflix, Amazon, this whatever is like these the word documentary has really become warped.

like a documentary like Hoop Dreams is like a purely organic we're going to go out and see what we get and come back and tell the story. Whereas these these kind of these sports documentaries, I'm using air quotes for those not watching are often like the school has sign off. The school is involved. The school isn't agreeing to this unless they have some sort of sign off. So my concern would be that it's going to paint the rosiest possible picture of the way Texas Tech handled that saga, right?

Like somehow they'll end up being the victims for all the persecution and all the criticism they took. If they give an honest, fair portrayal of how that all went down, frankly, it could be fascinating because it turned out to be the biggest story of the offseason to date. Um, I just I wouldn't count on especially since apparently they've been working on it all off season. So, you're probably I mean, Sorsby would have to be the main character, I would think, since he was the main uh you know, he was the big pickup, but he might only be a small part of it. Okay, let me let me uh shift this to again some news that was made while you were gone, though it wasn't big news.

The latest CFP meeting, I'm pretty sure you were gone by the time that that happened. No huge things came out of it, right? And we weren't expect folks, a decision is not being made on next year's format until at least the fall and maybe the very end of the fall, pushing the winter. So, just so you know, what's trying what they're trying to dig into here, as we've talked about before, is like what does a 2014 playoff look like? How does it how is it formatted?

How and what the value is of a 2014 playoff. And really, Stu, like it's not rocket science here. There's just a couple of I I know your opinion on a 2014 playoff is well established and you don't love it. But if I sort of laid out to you, if we have a 2014 playoff, if you can't stop it from happening, as much as you'd like to try, the idea is when does it start and how do you schedule it? And I think for for fans, it's good to understand that like if they were to do this, you can either start the playoff, you you would eliminate championship weekend and you could start the playoff on championship weekend, right? Right after the season ends on Thanksgiving weekend and you start the playoff on championship week, what what what used to be championship weekend. I know a lot of coaches have really wanted to do that. Want to get in the playoff a little sooner so it can end sooner.

That's not really the idea that's being played with. Like I don't think that's the number one idea. I think that's an idea. But I think the the the the more prominent idea is take a week off. Everybody takes a week off except Army Navy. So we get Army Navy in on what used to be championship weekend. do the Heisman and then ramp up and start the playoff the next week. And one of the reasons why is if you're going to have eight first round playoff games and you're going to try to keep them in somewhat exclusive windows, you're going to have to play these games on you're going have to start playing these games on Thursday, St. So that's sort of the layout here. I wonder what your opinion is on the idea of you're going to have eight first round games starting on a Thursday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, but there's no NFL that Saturday. So, that's a good thing. And then maybe and then the next week you're going to start running into some NFL games. But again, you're going to have eight games and you got to probably play some of them on Thursdays and some of them on on Fridays and also be not quite so afraid of going into the NFL. So, I just wanted to throw that out to you as you're thinking of like what's better starting immediately or and trying to figure out what to do with Army Navy or taking that week off.

What do you think? I think in you know whether it's 12, 16 or 24, I've made it clear they need to get the whole thing over with by January 8th or around that like they cannot be going till January 25th. >> Just so you know, that is definitely not happening anytime soon. Well, they I guess what I'm saying is I'm in favor of anything that would shift as many games uh away from head-to-head with the NFL because I I just think it's a disaster when you're going headtohead with the NFL. So, there is merit to taking advantage of those Saturdays before, thanks to the Sports Broadcasting Act, Cody Campbell's favorite thing, prohibits the NFL from playing on Saturdays. But, you know, I do remember back in 2021 there was a when they first when the CFP had that committee with Jack Swerbrick and Bob Bolsby and Greg Seni and Craig Thompson and they they announced their 12 team plan. And a big talking point on that call was making sure, you know, the season is a grind.

We got to make sure the players get some time off before they they start this run. And now that seems like that's nobody thinks about that anymore. like we got to cram as many games in as soon as we can. And you know,

you've got coaches complaining about by-weeks. Like, forget the bye-week. We want to just we want to keep our rhythm going. We want to start right away. So, I'm just wondering if that's still a factor or not. If it's not, then just play it play it all as soon as possible. Like, take advantage of that time of year before the NFL playoffs start. One thing, Ralph, I'm curious about when you say they're gonna have to play the games on Thursday. Are we talking March Madness, noon Eastern on Thursday, we've got a college football playoff game?

>> Because that would actually be pretty cool. >> I don't think they want to do that. I mean, if you think about it, how do you play eight games in a in a weekend? You're probably looking at two two and four. Two Thursday, two Friday, four Saturday again. and maybe some overlap in those windows where so it's a little like March Madness in that you don't have an exclusive window where one game ends and another game starts and oh by the way the we're going to hold up the Rose Bowl for 15 minutes or for five minutes while we get while we get done with the Sugar Bowl or actually vice versa I I I should have said um so there'll be a little of that March Madness but I also don't think that we'll necessarily get a Thursday where you're waking up at noon and there's a game kicking off and or not waking up at noon, but you'll be waking up at 9:00 right on the West Coast and there's a game kicking off. I don't think we'll get to that on a weekday uh quite just yet. Um and then again, there's a problem of Army Navy.

you you kind of still want to keep that exclusive. But again, just to just to sort of see where your mind goes here or explain this a little further, having that week off after you start the regular season is necessary to get everybody calibrated on the right schedule so you could play on a Thursday, right? if the schedule ends on Thanksgiving weekend to try to play Thursday playoff games would be almost impossible in terms of getting fair rest because you have so many teams who have played on Fridays and Saturdays. So it becomes that's the big reason to put that buffer in there just to get reset everybody's rest. So looking at this year's calendar, if this were in effect, you would have the season ends Thanksgiving weekend.

Everybody gets December 5th off and then we start playoff games the Thursday, December 10th, the weekend of that would be the weekend of what Army Navy is now, right? >> That's the first round. So then the next round, the round of 16 would be the weekend that the the games, the first round games are now. >> Mhm. >> Explain to me why we can't finish this thing sooner. >> Oh, I see. We can't. We flat out can't.

>> The quarterfinals would be then at that point is >> unless you play on Christmas. >> That's it. you're you're going to create a little bit of a gap between the quarterfinals, a a little bit of a delay between the quarterfinals and New Year's Day, which is when you're going to play the quarterfinals. The good news though is everybody's has the same gap, right? You're not you're Yes, you're it's more than a week, but everybody has the same amount of time because what's what's become a problem with the buys is not necessarily the buy itself. It's that some teams are on 25 days rest and another one is already played. And that's been the complication that that that coaches don't like. Anyway, so now you're up to date on where that is. Stu Ralph, all I'm taking away from this is that it's like yet another reason why people should just be like this is insane. This is ridiculous. We're talking about like a twomonth. The college football playoff should not be longer than the NFL playoffs. And in this case, substantially longer because you're talking about starting it on December like selection Sunday would be November 29th and then we and it's almost 2 months until the national championship game. I mean this is not

healthy for anybody. It's really not. So this should be your ultimate sign that like yeah maybe 24 is too many.

Um, last thing I saw a headline or story or something on a train and was on a train from Amsterdam to Berlin that you know CSC is hard to talk about. Um, but like very quietly the whole thing was you have to any transaction above \$600, any NIL deal has to go through NILG go and because of that because in football and basketball in particular there's a whole lot of deals way above \$600, right? There's just cases piling up and piling up. So, very quietly, the CSC put out a memo that like, oh, by the way, \$600 isn't the threshold anymore. Now, the number is 15,000. Anything under 15,000, uh, you don't have to approve, right?

Oh, well, that's kind of a big change. And then, you know, the Big 10 and SEC are out there campaigning to lift the cap, which was, I think, going to be about \$21 million this year. Hey, maybe it should be 30. Maybe it should be 40. Ralph, then why have a cap if you can just change it? This is This is basically the equivalent of the Warriors and the Lakers being like, "Hey guys, we just really want to spend more than what you're allowing us. So, let's just lift it. Let's just move it up, right?" Like why have a cap if the if the teams that are spending the most money can just say let's lift it by you know 10 20 \$30 million this year. One clarification, the the deals that get go through NIL go and have be and are subjected to approval and um range of compensation.

The the the floor goes up to 15,000 if an athlete has more than \$50,000 worth of deals. In other words, if the athlete himself or or herself has more than \$50,000 worth of deals, in that case, we're going to raise the floor to \$15,000, and those are going to be the ones that are going to get I know it's a it's a little arcane, a little maybe complicated in terms of like putting your head around it, but that is an an important distinction. There are still going to be some uh scrutiny over deals at 600,000 at \$600 if the athlete has doesn't have a a large volume of deals. Um, as far as the salary cap or the revenue, we keep saying salary. It's a revenue sharing cap. Stu, this is now being fought out in Washington DC. Frankly, I I again without going too deep into it, some of the stuff about where the rev share cap should be, how associated entities and how the CSC should be judging things and how schools can use money to sort of either what what is circumvention of the cap. That is now part of what is being played out in DC when it comes to this this bill that Cruz and Canwell put forward and for the SEC and the Big 10.

some of the wording that they don't like that they're trying to get changed is related to this. Here's the one thing I would say on the revenue sharing cap why I think it's a good idea to raise it. The higher the revenue sharing cap is, the more money can come directly from the schools and you don't have to deal with all this monkey business of how you're going to circumvent the cap. It just becomes under the cap and the schools are in charge. And frankly, I think you can have a band of like 50 to 20 million where most of the schools compete in. And just like other sports where not everybody goes to the cap or baseball, you can find some competitive uh a competitive band within there where the cap is higher and some schools live toward the end of the cap and some schools live toward the top of the cap and but you can still compete against each other. So I don't think it's the worst idea in the world, Steu. I mean the the theme all along from the minute this first got announced you know I guess over a year ago now is naive the the amount of naive that has gone into the implement the the coming up with it the idea that everybody was just going to go along with it and submit all the deals and everything would be you know on the up and up always just I mean it's been one of these things where you've

just sat here from a distance been like what are you talking about like that's not that's not going to happen and So when you hear them say, "Well, if we just if we could just raise it to this amount, then everything would be fine." No, if we could just raise it to this amount, then everybody will play. I don't care what you raise it to.

Texas Tech, somebody is going to find a way to go even higher than that, right? Oregon, whoever it may be. I just say, why have a cap? Why Why do we even Why do we even need a cap? You know, it's it's it's it's not it's not enforceable. It's not collectively bargained. It's not enforceable. Um, there's already one lawsuit out there from a couple players that I frankly never heard of who are, you know, suing over the NIL Go limitations. I'm sure there will be more. Um, but I will say this, there's one thing, okay, let's say they do raise it, right? Let's say the system stays in place and they do raise it. I think one thing that would be great for is non-revenue sports because right now they're none of these schools are allocating almost no money to anything but football, men's and women's basketball cuz they feel like that's what it costs to field that ro. If you could get it up to where okay maybe the top dozen schools or so are going to spend most of that on football but everybody else can be like all right well now maybe we can shell a couple million out to the volleyball team. you know, like all the scare tactics, all the fear-mongering over um why they need congressional input is if we don't do this, we're going to have to kill women's sports. We're going have to kill non-re Olympic sports, which I think is all um a ruse. But regardless, like, hey, if you can if if this is going to allow you to pay the uh the athletes in those sports more directly and not all just brand deals, that's a good thing.

But again, I will just continue to say like the CSC has an expiration date. You know, God bless Ryan Cely. He's trying, but whatever version of this they come up with, the schools will just find a way to work around that as well. The greatest um uh um example of the naivete was believing that your these schools were only going to spend 20 million. that that was where the the the one of the original sins was not understanding that once we've already been spending 20 million and the salaries are not going down, the revenue like the the money that we're paying players is not going to go down. So that was the original sin of all of this. Yeah. The writing was on the wall when Texas Tech kind of was out there last summer advertising that they were spending 55 million on their athletes. 55 million. And the idea that a year from a year later they were going to cut that in half. Come on. Come on guys. What what are we doing here? Um next episode later this week we will be answering your mailbag questions. As always, send them to the audible pod@gmail.com and we will see you next