

Bowling anyone?

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OK, Middle Tennessee. Are you ready to go bowling?

Oops, I didn't mean Middle Tennessee, as in MTSU. The Blue Raiders were bowl eligible and are one of the few college football teams in America not invited to a bowl game.

There are 35 bowl games involving 70 FBS teams. There are only 112 FBS teams, thus more than half of them get bowl invitations. Not MTSU.

MTSU was 8-4, 6-2 in the Sun Belt Conference. Louisiana-Monroe and Louisiana-Lafayette had identical overall and conference records and both are going to bowl games.

"I think it is clear that the bowl system needs improvement and should be better than this," said MTSU Athletics Director Chris Massaro. "This decision wasn't made on the football field. It was made in a board room."

While an 8-4 MTSU team sits at home and a 6-7 (not a typo) Georgia Tech team plays a 7-5 Southern Cal team in the Sun Bowl, something's amiss.

Tech is the only team going to a bowl with a losing record and Southern Cal was preseason No. 1 team in the country. Don't you just know those players and fan bases are hyper-excited about going to El Paso?

It's evident that if you're a college football team and not bowling, you're not trying.

Thirteen bowl teams are 6-6 or worse. The bowl games are great ways to reward mediocrity. But why should college football be any different than any other facet of our society?

Is 35 post-season bowl games too many? Absolutely. No one, except the fans of a team in a bowl game, cares about any more than a handful, maybe less, of games.

The only bowl game that has lasting meaning is Alabama-Notre Dame for the BCS Championship.

I wonder how long in this economy can title sponsors of lower level bowl games keep pumping money out to put their name on a bowl game?

The sponsors' names have progressively gotten weirder.

The TaxSlayer.com Gator Bowl features a Mississippi State team that lost four of its last five games. Mississippi State was picked over Vanderbilt, which had an identical record and a six-game winning streak, because of one thing and one thing only. The Gator Bowl board thought Mississippi State's fan base would travel better than Vanderbilt's and it was probably right.

But should not someone with common sense have stepped in and sent a rising Ole Miss team to the Music City Bowl, Vanderbilt to the Gator Bowl (provided Vanderbilt would guarantee the same amount of tickets as Mississippi State did) and send the Bulldogs to the Liberty Bowl?

It's a dumb decision to give a team a bowl invitation to a game played in the city where the team is located. What kind of a reward is that for fans, players and coaches?

But I guess as long as sponsors support the bowls, the craziness will continue. We'll still be

trying to figure out where the New Era Pinstripe Bowl is, who is playing in the Famous Idaho Potato Bowl and why the R&L Carriers Bowl in New Orleans isn't the Johnny's Po-Boys and Gumbo Bowl.

Now that mention of Johnny's Po-Boys makes me want to be sure and watch the Kraft Fight Hunger Bowl. Anyone know what channel it's on?

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