Sports editor guilty of flawed reasoning

I finally reached the end of my preliminary research in NCAA Division I-AA, and decided my reason for starting with this level of collegiate football this year was flawed.

I thought starting my annual research into the upcoming season with Division I-AA would prove simpler than got straight to Division I-A, but I was wrong. So far, I've counted 124 teams that will play Division I-AA football in 2004, belonging to 15 conferences with three teams playing as independents. That number will probably change as I dig further, especially since there's still over two months until the season starts.

My gripes with Division I-AA, for those who haven't figured it out yet, are with the organization of its conferences. Out of the 15, only two or three make sense. The others need some work and a dose of common sense. A couple are so bad you need either an abacus or slide rule to even begin to understand them.



Four of the 15 are football-only tween seven and 11 could work. A conferences. At first I thought there conference with six or fewer teams were three, but one of them is named after a regular conference.

Some might find confusing; I certainly did. Initially, I thought the way the Atlantic 10 organized football was a nightmare, but now I believe the Atlantic 10 Football Con- if the champion goes 6-0 in conferference is a separate entity, which ence play, it could lose all five of its helps explain why it's organized as it is. I still think it's too big and needs a major dose of common achampion should. The reason I say sense, but it is less of a headache if the minimum should be eight is you look at it as a football-only con- many times the champion will have ference.

conference doesn't sponsor football.

The size of a football conference should be between eight and 10 teams, although be-

has the possibility of its champion being undefeated in conference play but having an overall losing season, which wouldn't be good for the league's prestige.

In a conference with seven teams, non-conference games and still have an overall winning record, as at least one conference loss. With Football-only conferences are a eight teams, the champion can end good idea, but should stick to up 6-1 in conference play and still

schools that play foot- be guaranteed a winning season. ball that belong to a Assuming, of course, an 11-game that regular season.

> The reason I say the maximum should be 10 is because I believe schools should play at least two non-conference games per season. This provides variety of opponents and most teams will open their season against a non-conference foe to work the "bugs" out before going into conference play. A 10-team conference can play nine conference and two non-conference games in an 11-games season.

> Only one conference in Division I-AA has more than 10 teams, the Atlantic 10, which has 12. Sure, it could play a conference-only schedule year after year, but no team does that.

> How, unless the teams play every other team, can a real champion emerge? In 2003, the Atlantic 10 had 11 teams but each only played nine conference games with two finishing the regular season 8-1.

ence plays every other team, there's the possibility of two of them going undefeated in conference play, sharing the title or having the champion determined by some kind of tie-breaker. In that situation. I believe the vast majority of players, coaches and fans would rather see it determined on the field.

Another gripe I have with two of the conferences, the Pioneer Football League and the Southwestern Athletic Conference, is that they are divided into two divisions. Conferences do this when they have so many schools to make maintaining statistics and forming schedules unfeasible. Some conferences, especially at the Division I-A level, do this just to add a conference championship to the schedule and make some money. Ain't that right, Big 12?

However this is not the case with the Pioneer League or the Southwestern Conference. One has nine

Unless every team in a confer- teams and the other 10, so splitting into divisions was never necessary.

> A few readers have noticed I tend to base some of my reasoning on 11game regular seasons. I do this because I think for Division I-A, I-AA and II, 10 games is too short and 12 is too long. With an even number of games, several teams will end up 5-5 or 6-6, meaning the players worked an entire season just to break even.

> Whatever number of games the teams decide to play, all teams at a particular level should play that number. If Division I-A wants to play a 12-game regular season, then all its teams should play 12.

> One of my gripes with Division I-AA is that while most will play an 11-game regular season in 2004, some, like the Ivy League, will play 10 and a few others will play 12 as part of their campaign to move up to Division I-A, where the money



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One of the resident squirrels in Chambers Park watched from a use the park. safe height two weeks ago as more and more people started to

Photo by Greg Stover/The Goodland Star-News

Colby beats Goodland twice

The Colby American Legion Wednesday against Goodland.

most of his chance on the hill, striking out 12 and walked three on his way to a complete-game 10-2 victory.

Bruce Arnberger gave Sulzman one, to earn the 11-1 victory. Josh baseball team swept a doubleheader run support early with a two-run Houtz went 2 for 4 with a double home run in the bottom of the first. and three RBIs to lead the Colby Colby's Brian Sulzman made the Both Arnberger and Josh Houtz had offense again. Both Miles Akerman two RBIs in game one. In game two, Jordan Cranston apiece.

pitched five complete innings, striking out six and walking just

and Jeremy Dietz had two RBIs



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Sports television schedule

SATURDAY MORNING

10:00 22/56 ESPN SportsCenter At the French Open (Live) (CC)

10:30 40/38 FX NASCAR Racing Busch Series MBNA America 200. From Dover International Speedway in Dover, Del. (Live)

11:00 13/7 FOX MLB Baseball Philadelphia Phillies at Atlanta Braves. From Turner Field in Atlanta. (Live) (CC)

22/56 ESPN 2Day at Belmont From Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y. (Live)

99/36 WGN MLB Baseball Pittsburgh Pirates at Chicago Cubs. From Wrigley Field in Chicago. (Live) (CC)

AFTERNOON

1:00 3/9 NBC 8/8 NBC Arena Football Divisional Playoff — Teams TBA. (Live) (CC) 7/11 CBS PGA Golf Memorial Tournament — Third Round. From Muirfield Village Golf Club in Columbus, Ohio. (Live) (CC)

1:30 22/56 ESPN Belmont Stakes Special From Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y. (Live) (CC) 2:00 4/6 ABC WNBA Basketball Los Angeles Sparks at Houston Comets. From Toyota Center in Houston. (Live) (CC)

54/57 ESPN2 MLS Soccer D.C. United at Chicago Fire. From Cardinal Stadium in Naperville, III. (Live) (CC)

3:30 3/9 NBC 8/8 NBC Horse Racing Belmont Stakes. From Belmont Park in Elmont, N.Y. (Live) (CC)

22/56 ESPN LPGA Golf Kellogg-Keebler Classic — Second Round. From Aurora, III. (Live)

5:00 22/56 ESPN Triple Crown 2004 (Live) (CC)

5:30 54/57 ESPN2 SportsCenter (Live) (CC) SUNDAY MORNING

10:30 22/56 ESPN Baseball Tonight (Live) (CC) 40/38 FX NASCAR Racing Nextel Cup Series - MBNA America 400: A Salute to Heroes. From Dover International Speedway in Dover, Del. (Live)

11:00 25/35 IND MLB Baseball Philadelphia Phillies at Atlanta Braves. From Turner Field in Atlanta. (Live)

AFTERNOON

12:00 7/11 CBS PGA Golf Memorial Tournament — Final Round. From Muirfield Village Golf Club in Columbus, Ohio. (Live) (CC) 54/57 ESPN2 SportsCenter At the French Open (Live) (CC)

99/36 WGN Lead-Off Man (Live) (CC) 12:10 99/36 WGN MLB Baseball Pittsburgh Pirates at Chicago Cubs. From Wrigley Field in Chicago. (Live) (CC)

12:30 22/56 ESPN LPGA Golf Kellogg-Keebler Classic — Final Round. From Aurora, III. (Live) (CC)

1:00 3/9 NBC Arena Football Divisional Playoff — Teams TBA. (Live) (CC)

2:00 54/57 ESPN2 Women's Soccer Japan vs. United States. From Louisville, Ky. (Live) (CC) 3:15 99/36 WGN Tenth Inning (Live) (CC) 4:00 22/56 ESPN SportsCenter (Live) (CC)

5:00 22/56 ESPN Baseball Tonight (Live) (CC)

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