



## ALERTS

### College Sports This Fall In Jeopardy

August 13, 2020

#### Highlights

College football may not happen this fall

Billions of dollars are on the line

Student-athletes are weighing in

With the news that two members of the Power Five college athletic conferences, the Big Ten and PAC-12, have joined others in voting to postpone sports this fall due to concerns about COVID-19, the entire fall college sports season is in jeopardy. Currently, discussions continue to take place at other major conferences on the viability of the fall sports season.

Student-athletes are weighing in like never before, some with an intent desire to play. All this creates a unique sets of decisions for college leaders.

Making the right decision in any crisis is extremely challenging. In the days of the coronavirus, it has become nearly impossible.

For a university president or athletic director, there are no clear cut answers. Universities and colleges are a unique blend of people, coming together for the purpose of learning and growing. Schools don't make

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### **Roscoe C. Howard, Jr.**

Partner

Washington, D.C.

P 202-371-6378

F 202-289-1330

[roscoe.howard@btlaw.com](mailto:roscoe.howard@btlaw.com)



### **William "Billy" R. Martin**

Partner

Washington, D.C.

P 202-371-6363

F 202-289-1330

[billy.martin@btlaw.com](mailto:billy.martin@btlaw.com)



### **Christopher J. Bayh**

Partner

Indianapolis, Washington, D.C.,  
Chicago

P 317-231-7449

F 317-231-7433

[chris.bayh@btlaw.com](mailto:chris.bayh@btlaw.com)

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things or sell things. The commodity is people, as universities enhance people's lives for the future.

Now, the challenge is to make health related decisions, while keeping the institution on stable financial footing. It takes intellect, courage, and a long term view of the world ahead. Short-term decision making will impact the long-term success of the institution.

Sports play into this in a significant way. Billions of dollars are on the line with the potential loss of a college football season. Budgets for universities and athletics department will be impacted for years to come. People are passionate about their schools and teams, but athletes are students first, and a president must view it from that perspective.

The varied interests and opinions of constituents make the job of a president or athletic director even more difficult. Students, faculty, staff, coaches, alumni, donors, fans and others have a specific vantage point from where they see the institution and their place in it. Reaching consensus is a difficult task, especially given the current public health and financial challenges.

The days, weeks, and months ahead will require creative and long-term solutions to the challenges confronting college leaders.

To obtain more information, please contact the Barnes & Thornburg attorney with whom you work, or Roscoe Howard at (202) 371-6378; [roscoe.howard@btlaw.com](mailto:roscoe.howard@btlaw.com); Billy Martin at (202) 371-6363 or [billy.martin@btlaw.com](mailto:billy.martin@btlaw.com); Chris Bayh at (317) 231-7449; [chris.bayh@btlaw.com](mailto:chris.bayh@btlaw.com) or Skip Prince at (202) 831-6711 or [skip.prince@btlaw.com](mailto:skip.prince@btlaw.com).

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