



Reprinted from 2014 - This year more than any other year the talk about going to a football bowl games has been discussed in the news and in many bars and Holiday parties. While at the same time universities have been dropping Olympic sports. The reasons given for dropping men's programs range from Title IX compliance to athletic department cost cutting measures.

UAB football isn't alone in losing money for athletic departments, earlier this month UAB dropped their football program because of their excessive losses - <http://www.cbssports.com/collegefootball/writer/jon-solomon/24839675/uab-football-isnt-alone-in-losing-money-for-athletic-departments>

Athletic Department Deficits

Top 10

UNLV \$35.3 million

Houston \$26.8 million

Air Force \$26.0 million

Old Dominion \$25.7 million

Massachusetts \$25.0 million

UCF \$23.6 million

Georgia State \$23.1 million

Eastern Michigan \$22.4 million

Buffalo \$22.1 million

Western Michigan \$21.3 million

Other Ohio universities and Mid American Conference Universities with sizable loses

Akron \$21.2 million

Kent State \$21.1 million

Miami (Ohio) \$19.7 million

Cincinnati \$19.4 million

Central Michigan \$18.1 million

Ohio \$17.8 million

Ball State \$17.4 million

Northern Illinois \$16.6 million

Marshall \$15.2 million (former MAC university)

South Alabama \$15.2 million

Toledo \$11.7 million

Bowling Green \$11.4 million

Numbers are from 2012-13. Source: USA Today

From the May 3, 2007 Columbus Dispatch article dealing with Ohio University dropping men's track and field

"Ohio's decision to eliminate sports isn't a new concept in the Mid-American Conference. In 2007-08, the 12-school league will field only four men's swimming teams, five men's indoor and six men's outdoor track teams.

NCAA president Myles Brand recently called the extermination of athletic teams "a troubling issue."

"Title IX encourages participation and in no way requires or even suggests that programs be cut," Brand said at a forum sponsored by the Chronicles of Higher Education. "The best answer is to use resources more wisely so that more students can participate, not fewer. Athletic departments need to learn how to balance their budgets."

But, has the expense of going to a college football bowl game and the athletic department effort to put more money into some programs resulted in Olympic sports to be eliminated at many universities? I decided to spend sometime googleing the cost of going to a football bowl game. The following information is from last month as well as over the past five years articles.

The following local Universities have dropped Men's Track and Field in the past few years: Ball State, Bowling Green, Marshall, Ohio University, Toledo, Western Michigan and West Virginia. Also the University of Cincinnati quit funding Men's Track and Field scholarships. Numerous other universities have dropped or are talking about dropping Men's Track and Field as well as swimming and diving, wrestling, gymnastics and other Olympic sports.

What does it mean to go to a college football bowl game today? Here is a little history and some rambling on about college football bowl games. The Rose Bowl started in 1901, in 1934 the Sugar and Orange Bowl started. In 1960 there were 8 bowl games, 11 in 1970, 15 in 1980, 19 in 1990, 25 in 2000 and this year there were 35 college football bowl games. It use to be a big deal for to make a bowl game, but with 70 of the 120 Division I Football Bowl Subdivision playing in a bowl game; has the luster been lost while most universities lose money participating.

The following article – by Scott Miller - College football's bowl problem - Schools are losing more money than ever by going to bowl games appeared last April on the National Football Post web site stated.

“College football’s ever-expanding bowl system is best described as a labyrinth of money. It’s a system that helps put six-figure bonuses in the pockets of coaches and administrators. It’s a system that funnels millions of dollars to the bowls in the form of naming rights’ fees, ticket sales, and television contracts. And it’s a system that pays the CEOs of the sport’s most powerful bowl games salaries of \$500,000 or more.

So why do many think the system is broken? The reason is simple: Schools are losing money — a lot of money — by going to these bowl games. The “allowances” permitted by their parent conferences typically are dwarfed by the expenses brought about by transporting, housing, and feeding a party that can sometimes stretch more than 900 people deep. The difference is absorbed by athletic department budgets, many of which require state funding to remain afloat.

And it’s not just the East Carolinas and Syracuses of the world that find themselves financially burdened by the bowl system. Behemoths such as Ohio State, Auburn, and Virginia Tech have all been buried in recent years by bowl deficits, some topping a million dollars.

Big Ten powerhouse Ohio State upset Oregon in the 2010 Rose Bowl, but lost \$80,000 on the trip. Virginia Tech incurred a \$2.2 million loss on its trip to the 2009 Orange Bowl, and when invited back to Miami this season, the Hokies again came out in the red — this time by \$1.6 million. Even the 2010 national champion, Auburn, spent nearly \$3 million on their trip to Glendale, Ariz., losing \$614,106 in the process, according to documents released by the school.”

The ticket policy of major bowls puts teams in a tough situation, even those with long histories. Ohio State lost \$1 million for the 2009 Fiesta Bowl, according to the Cleveland Plain Dealer. Virginia Tech lost \$1.77 million when it went to the 2009 Orange Bowl, according to the Virginian Pilot of Norfolk.”

The information below is from <http://www.azcentral.com/news/bcs>

“The University of Connecticut. When the Big East Conference champion played in the 2011 Fiesta Bowl, it received a \$2.5 million conference expense allowance. But the team couldn't resell 14,729 of the 17,500 tickets the Fiesta Bowl required it to purchase.

The Huskies' bowl expenses quickly piled up: \$2.9 million from unsold tickets, \$1.1 million for travel and housing, and \$210,000 in assorted other costs. The final tally was a net loss of approximately \$1.7 million.

Rutgers's received \$400,000 for its participation in the St. Petersburg Bowl in 2009, according to college sports' governing body, the National Collegiate Athletic Association. It cost the Scarlet Knights \$1.14 million to attend, according to Rutgers financial records.

The Mid-American Conference had negotiated an agreement with the Little Caesars Pizza Bowl where their school's payout was based solely on how many tickets it could sell, Ohio University Associate Athletic Director Dan Hauser said in an interview.

The Athens, Ohio, school received 10,000 tickets valued at \$450,000. It sold 2,181 tickets, generating \$98,150, for a game in Detroit about 278 miles north, at 1 p.m. the day after Christmas.

Since its expenses were \$164,464, the school lost \$66,314 playing in the game, according to

university records.” (This figure does not count the money spent to house and feed the team during their Christmas break at a local hotel leading up to the game nor the bonus given to the coaches).

From http://money.cnn.com/2006/01/04/commentary/column_sportsbiz/sportsbiz

“Take the Mid-American Conference's University of Akron Zips, which played in the Motor City Bowl (2005). The school's football program was the only one among this year's bowl participants to take in less than \$1 million in revenue last year and its \$2.9 million reported loss was just a hair smaller than that reported by the University of Central Florida.”

More where going to bowl game costs more than the athletic department gets and then sports are dropped. From <http://www.ohio.edu/people/hoffmar1/Collegiate%20Track%20and%20Cross%20Country.pdf>

“Ohio University, 2006 GMAC Bowl: Former Nebraska coach Frank Solich led Ohio to its first bowl appearance since 1968. The celebration in Athens, however, was short-lived. A \$277,550 bowl deficit was more than an athletic department already awash in red ink.... The university was forced to dip into general reserve funds to pay the bowl tab and just weeks after the game the school dropped track, swimming and lacrosse, leaving 38 3 athletes without teams. Ohio spent less than \$200,000 annually on the three dropped programs. (it was reported the football program lost nearly \$2.1 million dollars in 2006).

Northern Illinois, 2006 Poinsettia Bowl: NIU sent 434 people to San Diego, costing the school about \$916,800 in expenses. The school's share of the payout was \$598,901, leaving NIU with a \$317,898 deficit, more than the school spent last year on six of its nine women's sports combined. (Note: Northern Illinois no longer sponsors men's cross country and track and field)

Six-figure bowl expense deficits for universities have become increasingly common in the past four years, according to bowl expense documents for 62 schools obtained by The Orange County Register.

University officials say ticket allocations and hotel contracts dictated by the bowl committees are the driving forces behind the deficits.

"Bowls can get expensive in a hurry," Ohio State associate athletic director Ben Jay said. "Hotels, meals, transportation - it all adds up in a hurry."

But longtime observers of college sport said the lack of control by university administrations has allowed bowl games to become the ultimate college party and, it seems, everyone is invited.

"It's embarrassing," said Murray Sperber, the former chairman of the Drake Group, a national faculty committee pushing for college sports reform. "It's out of control. There's no cost containment."

From <http://thebiglead.com/index.php/2011/05/23/why-do-college-football-teams-play-in-so-many-unprofitable-bowl-games-ask-espn>

“Oklahoma ate \$2.2 million, second highest figure in the country, playing in the Fiesta Bowl. Ohio State sold out its Sugar Bowl allotment, by opening it to the general public, including Arkansas fans. Auburn ate \$781,825 in unsold tickets for the freaking BCS title game.

An NCAA report released in August 2009 for fiscal year 2008-09 said 14 athletic departments of the 120 schools in college football's bowl subdivision had an operating profit, down from 25 in 2006-07 and 2007-08.”

From the December 23, 2011 USA Today – Jack Carey’s article, Ticket sales for some bowls thrown for losses - <http://www.usatoday.com/sports/college/football/bowls/story/2011-12-22/ticket-sales-hit-surprising-rough-spots/52170064/1>

“West Virginia's sports marketing director, Matt Wells, said this week that the school has sold

only about 7,500 of its Orange Bowl allotment of 17,500 tickets... That means WVU probably will be on the hook for more than \$1 million in unsold ducats."

Ohio State, coming off a subpar season, was allocated 12,750 tickets for the Gator Bowl and has sold a little more than 7,000, said OSU spokesman Jerry Emig."

Another recent article from the December 31, 2011 Wall Street Journal "Enough Already With the Little Guy - Why College Football's Power Conferences Should Ditch the Smaller Ones; the \$2,000 Question - <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204720204577130893202202710.html>

"Even in the mighty, 120-team Football Bowl Subdivision, 43 percent of teams lose money—some of them as much as \$10 million a year....The nation's poorer programs need to drop down because they drain money from their schools."

From The December 15, 2012 Columbus Dispatch - Todd Jones article

MAC football: Balancing bowl budget a tough taskFrom

From a school's financial perspective, a bowl game is like getting invited to a party and then having to pay for the bash. - <http://buckeyextra.dispatch.com/content/stories/2012/12/15/balancing-bowl-budget-a-tough-task.html>

So the next time someone tells you a university's athletic department makes a lot of money going to a football bowl game – realize most universities spend much more than they receive.

But the question remains - have some universities desire to chase the dream of playing in a football bowl game cost Olympic sports to be dropped at universities?

Why we need to work to keep Track and Field.

According to the National Federation of State High School Associations 2010-11 survey boy's track and field in the second most popular sport in the Nation with 15,954 schools offering track and field with 579,302 athletes participating in the sport at the high school level. On the girl side it is number one as 475,265 athletes participate in track and field in US high schools. Cross Country ranks fifth for both boys and girls in the number of schools which offer the sport at the high school level. Also, the NFHS survey list 794 Ohio high schools offering boy's track and field with 24,501 athletes. Only Texas, California and Illinois have more boys participating in high school track and field.

Many articles stated that Track and Field teams are very diverse and provide unique opportunities for minority students.

Cross country and track and field are two of the cheapest sports a school can offer, Division I school can award up to 12.6 scholarships with Mid American Conference universities giving only up to 8. Therefore, on a typical team of 40 track and field athletes more than 30 plus men track athletes are paying full tuition to go to their university to participate in the sport they love. According to "Bring Back OHIO Track" web site *"Ohio University saved less than \$20,000 in travel when they dropped their men's track and field program. They still sponsor men's cross country with five scholarships and they have the same number of coaches for both the men's and women's cross country teams and women's track and field team as they did before they dropped men's track and field. But the university lost more money by dropping men's track and field than they saved. The NCAA awards the university \$22,000 for each sport that it sponsors above 14"*.

Track & Field is the oldest sport known to mankind. There are more countries participating in track and field in the Olympics than any other Olympic sport.

Hopefully, if you plan to give money to a college or university you will consider donating to their track and field program. With our support and voice we can help stop

the elimination of men's track and field programs and other Olympic sports from our universities.[]