

College Football Compact - Summary

A Regional, Competitive, and Sustainable Championship Model

Executive Summary

College football is facing growing instability driven by conference sprawl, uneven schedules, rising travel costs, and opaque postseason access. The current system concentrates opportunity among a small subset of programs while weakening regional identity and regular-season meaning.

This proposal introduces a **nationally unified, regionally grounded championship framework** that restores clarity, fairness, and long-term sustainability—without diminishing elite competition.

Core solution:

- **120 programs**
- **12 regional conferences of 10 teams**
- **Round-robin conference play (9 games)**
- **16-team playoff**
 - **12 automatic bids (conference champions)**
 - **4 at-large bids**
- **Seeding by final national ranking**

Principle:

Win your conference. Earn your seed. Compete for a national championship.

Guiding Philosophy: Halas-Style Governance

George Halas helped stabilize professional football by prioritizing **clear rules, shared opportunity, and league durability** over short-term advantage. This proposal applies that same logic to college football.

A national sport remains credible only when:

- Competitive access is earned on the field
- Rules are transparent and stable
- Entire regions are not structurally excluded

College football's current trajectory mirrors the NFL's early instability before governance reform—and demands a similar response.

Core Design Principles

1. **Regional Identity Matters**
Conferences should reflect geography, rivalries, and fan bases—not media leverage.
2. **Competitive Access Is Earned on the Field**
Every team within a conference receives a championship pathway.
3. **Schedules Must Be Comparable**
Equal conference size and round-robin play eliminate resume distortion.
4. **The Playoff Must Be Transparent**
Fans and institutions should clearly understand qualification and advancement.
5. **Financial Sustainability Supports Competition**
Revenue should reinforce balance—not concentrate power.

Conference Structure

- **12 conferences × 10 teams**
- Geographically contiguous where possible
- Historic rivalries preserved by design
- **9-game round-robin conference schedule**
- No conference championship games

Benefits:

- Clear standings
- Meaningful conference races
- Reduced travel burden
- Stronger regional media narratives

Regular Season Framework

Conference Play

- Standings determined solely by conference results
- Transparent tiebreakers:
 1. Head-to-head
 2. Record vs. common opponents

3. Strength-of-victory banding* (not raw point differential)

Non-Conference Play

- Up to **3 FBS games**
- Encourages regional or historic rivalries
- Strength-of-schedule factors into final rankings
- Discourages non-competitive scheduling

Playoff Structure

Field

- **16 teams total**
 - **12 automatic bids:** conference champions
 - **4 at-large bids:** highest-ranked remaining teams
- No Top-25 requirement for conference champions (access first)

Seeding

- All teams seeded strictly by final national ranking
- Conference titles determine entry—not seed protection

Format & Calendar

- **Round 1 & Quarterfinals:** on-campus
- **Semifinals & Championship:** rotating historic bowl sites
- Championship played on the Saturday closest to New Year's Day

Competitive Impact (2015–2024 Simulation)

A decade-long simulation using Final AP Polls shows:

- **Every season includes all 12 regions**
- Traditional powers continue to qualify consistently
- More programs remain viable deep into the season
- Reduced dependence on subjective selection cutoffs

Key finding:

Expanded access does not dilute elite competition—it clarifies it.

Governance & Oversight

College Football Championship Council (CFCC)

Composed of:

- Conference commissioners
- Athletic directors
- Former coaches and players
- Independent analytics experts

Responsibilities

- Conference certification
- Scheduling compliance
- Playoff oversight and seeding
- Revenue distribution governance
- NIL alignment coordination

Revenue Distribution Model

- Equal baseline distribution tied to playoff participation
- Performance-based advancement bonuses
- Competitive-balance mechanisms:
 - Travel cost equalization
 - NIL development grants
 - Infrastructure support for smaller programs

Benefits by Stakeholder

Institutions & Conferences

- Predictable scheduling
- Financial stability
- Meaningful conference championships

Student-Athletes

- Reduced travel
- Clear championship access
- Stronger academic continuity

Fans

- Restored rivalries
- Affordable travel
- On-campus playoff games

Media & Sponsors

- Predictable inventory
- Strong regional narratives
- Higher engagement across the season

Why This Matters Now

College football does not need further consolidation. It needs:

- **Clarity**
- **Competitive integrity**
- **Regional coherence**
- **Governance stability**

This model delivers a durable national structure while preserving what makes college football distinctive—and valuable.

Conclusion

This proposal is not radical. It is structural.

By applying proven governance principles—clear access, comparable competition, and regional integrity—college football can regain credibility, stability, and national relevance.

Win your conference. Earn your seed. Compete for a national championship.

NOTES:

*Strength-of-victory banding is head-head competition of tied teams awarding points for victories within certain bands while discouraging blowout games.

- Band 1 - wins by 1–7 points = 1 point
- Band 2 – wins by 8–16 points = 2 points

- Band 3 – wins by 17+ points = 3 points