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### **“Emmert sees progress, areas of concern”**

Athletes make strides but want more free time; minority hiring remains an issue

**SAN ANTONIO** - As one of his major immediate aims, NCAA president Mark Emmert is determined to lessen time demands on student-athletes in their competition and training. Students have repeatedly told the NCAA they would like more time to be students. The association's leader wants to do something about it.

“The things we are hearing from students themselves is they want to make sure, especially during the season, they can get a full day without travel or other obligations with it,” Emmert said Thursday night, shortly after making his opening address to the association at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center.

“They are looking to get a block of time in the evening so they don't have to look at commitments too late in the day or in the morning. And there's keen interest in blocks of time at the end of seasons and potentially during the summer.”

Several student-athletes echoed what Emmert said as another important item in recent student reform.

After being given better food, stipends for cost of attendance, and other recent improvements, the students have been adamant about time recovering from competition and practice.

“Academics, fairness, and health and well-being have got to be our focus,” Emmert said.

### **Resistance from coaches**

Emmert said reaction from coaches about lessening time demands has been “mixed” in early surveys.

“Coaches, of course, are coaches,” he said. “They want to coach 24/7 if you let them. There have always been constraints about the amount of access with student-athletes.

“One of the challenges is finding the right compromise. They want to stay at the top of their game to achieve the highest level athletically as well as to achieve their aspirations and hopefully have a little bit of a life.”

The recent lack of hiring of African-American head coaches at the FBS level was noted as an area of concern for Emmert and the association.

Of the 27 FBS coaches who had been hired in the most recent cycle through Thursday, only four were African-Americans. East Carolina's Scottie Montgomery and former Texas Tech assistant Mike Jinks at Bowling Green are the only first-time African-American head coaches to be hired. The others are Everett Withers, who jumped from FCS James Madison to Texas State, and Dino Babers, who moved from Bowling Green to Syracuse.

Emmert acknowledged that an NCAA mandate similar to the NFL's "Rooney Rule" wouldn't work because of different hiring practices by public and private institutions.

"But I'm concerned like all presidents that we aren't seeing the pipelines filled up," Emmert said. "In FBS football, there's not any growth right now in African-Americans in coordinator positions, and that's the feeder into head coaching jobs."

"We want to make sure to do everything we can to fill up the pipeline with limited minority candidates. I also think we have to understand what is going on and why there's a fair number of minority coaches and why they aren't moving into coordinator roles."

#### Activism "a good thing"

Emmert doesn't expect increased social activism among athletes after the recent resignation by Missouri president Tim Wolfe under pressure from students and activists over a lack of responsiveness to racist incidents on campus. The Missouri football team had said it would refuse to play until Wolfe stepped down.

"I think we're in a moment and time where there's a lot more activism on campus," Emmert said. "I don't think that's an inherently bad thing at all. But the fact that student-athletes feel they are part of the community and want to voice their opinions on a variety of social justice issues ... I think that's a good thing."

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