

COMMENTARY

A 24-team College Football Playoff is worst idea of all time

BY TIM COWLISHAW
The Dallas Morning News

DALLAS People think the 1966 NFL championship game at the Cotton Bowl, a 34-27 Green Bay Packers victory, was the Cowboys’ first playoff game.

Technically, it wasn’t. In 1965, after finishing second in the Eastern Conference for the first time, the Cowboys flew to Miami to face the Baltimore Colts in the Playoff Bowl.

The Colts won, 35-3, even with a running back (Tom Matte) playing quarterback. It was a terrible game and a terrible idea.

In the early days of the NBA, when four teams from each conference made the playoffs, the 1-seed played the 3-seed and the 2-seed played the

4-seed. There was no rationale for this system. It was a terrible idea.

For a decade, the NHL had 16 teams battling for the Stanley Cup when there were only 21 franchises. So an 80-game regular season eliminated five teams. It was a terrible idea, but, fortunately, it was the 1980s and, with no major cable contract, almost no one in this country was watching.

On Friday afternoon - what has become the traditional “news dump” period - word came that the College Football Playoff and ESPN had a handshake deal that will expand the playoff from 12 to 24 teams starting next year.

It is the worst postseason idea of all time. Move over, Playoff Bowl.

For years on ESPN, I fought the battle in favor of

the BCS against the majority forces of an expanded playoff. I knew I wasn’t going to win that fight forever, but I have always loved the significance of the college game’s regular season. I grew up thinking the 1969 Big Shootout between undefeated Texas and Arkansas was as good as it gets. Nebraska and Oklahoma playing the Game of the Century two years later satisfied that same passion for the magic moment.

These were games that meant everything. In the world of even the current 12-team playoff, they would be battling for seeds, not history. In a 24-team event, good grief, a smart unbeaten team might rest its players just to prepare for the long postseason haul.

The 24-team tournament is an idea that fills the needs of ESPN and, to some degree, the Big Ten and SEC, but really no one else. Coaches hate it. Even though some coaches at the “Group of Five” level, like Matt Drinkall at Central Michigan, said it best this week.

“It’s just like everybody went nuts at once,” Drinkall said. “They’re going to prostitute the game as much as they can until the people stop caring.”

The 12-team tournament already feels too long. Now we will be asking the best teams to win four playoff games or the bottom eight of that group to try to win five in order to become champion. If you paired up the teams by rankings right now, SMU (ranked 23rd) would open at Utah (10th). Beyond local interest, how much attention is that game getting nationally? Probably ranks right alongside No. 21 Boise State at No. 12 Kentucky.

These games are on the road to the championship. Is this really necessary?

Although nothing will be announced until the deal is finalized, indications suggest we are talking about weeknight games in December that turn into weeknight games in January to make this 23-game tournament work. College football might be wildly popular despite all of its modern day imperfections, but you don’t butt heads

with the National Football League. The CFP tried that two years ago and games like Penn State-SMU and Clemson-Texas got destroyed in the TV ratings.

How do you think Northwestern-UCLA or Wake Forest-USC (more current AP-based matchups) are going to do against the Kansas City Chiefs? Better play those games on a Wednesday night.

Texas’ current slide from No. 1 in the nation to No. 19 has all of Longhorn Nation in a lather. Sark’s eyes appear closer than ever to popping out of his head in news conferences. But in a 24-team tournament, so far it just means the Horns may have to open the playoff on the road.

No one can reasonably argue that a 24-team tournament is in the business of seeking fairness. The first 16 games will be played on campus sites. Home field advantage is of much greater value in college than it is in the NFL. That’s why so many early games in the two years of the 12-team CFP have been one-sided. Imagine

16 games of heavy underdogs on the road serving as the kickoff for your tournament excitement.

The conference title games will disappear in this new format. Once the playoff expanded from four teams to 12, they already had become games where there was more to lose than to win. But their disappearance will only remind us that the conference races, the standings, all of it is irrelevant in the new landscape. From Labor Day to early December, being in the top 24 is the one and only thing that matters.

You hate to see a sport that can give us days like last Saturday - top 10 powers Georgia, Notre Dame, Texas and Alabama all losing to lower-ranked teams - getting trashed this way. The bands, the cheerleaders, the classic stadiums will still provide the atmosphere to keep us engaged week after week. But anyone that thinks a 24-team field is the perfect conclusion to all that comes before?

Like the man said: They’ve gone nuts.

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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Lexington-Fayette County Health Department is accepting proposals for custodial services for its building at 650 Newtown Pike and its leased site at 1051 Whipple Court. The specification package is available at www.lfchd.org/bids. Sealed bids must be addressed to Candice Johnson, Facility Operations Team Leader at Lexington-Fayette County Health Department, 650 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY 40508. Proposals will be received until 4:00 p.m. EST, Friday, November 20, 2026. No proposals will be accepted after this time or over the telephone. The Lexington-Fayette County Health Department reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

IPL0381338
Oct 19,25,Nov 1 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that Ball Homes, LLC, 3609 Walden Drive, Lexington, Kentucky 40517, has filed an application with the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Cabinet to construct a single-family residential development adjacent to the Lower Town Branch Tributary. The project is located at the intersection of Sandersville Road and Greendale Road in Lexington, Kentucky. Any comments or objections concerning this application shall be directed to: Kentucky Division of Water, Water Resources Branch, 300 Sower Boulevard, Frankfort, Kentucky 40601. Phone (502) 564-3410.

IPL0384044
Oct 25-27 2026

PUBLIC SALE

Available 11/5/26 9am. Units available for public bidding will be announced on the block. Public bidders must arrive between 8 & 8:30am, show photo to ID, & pay the \$50 non-refundable registration fee & a separate, refundable \$1,000 deposit per car. Certified Checks only - NO CASH. American Credit Acceptance: 337667- 15 Mustang, 112166- 20 Tucson, 409964- 22 Ram 1500, 885787- 16 CX-5, 558679- 21 Camry, 470103- 17 Highlander, 005615- 15 Panamera, 202001- 21 Palisade, 147883- 16 C300, 609497- 14 Jetta, 610806- 20 Elntra, 030048- 17 QX30, 157183- 20 Altima, 015899- 23 Sportage, 279615- 23 Sentra, 618144- 17 Cherokee, 108753- 24 Corolla, 586510- 21 Compass, 066610- 13 Rav4, 008973- 20 Telluride, 014088- 20 Malibu, 610495- 23 Mazda3, 178024- 21 Cherokee, 747623- 19 Spark, 078324- 15 Genesis, 042287- 20 Encore, 137384- 14 Acadia, 323821- 17 Silverado 1500

IPL0383970
Oct 25 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE TO FAYETTE COUNTY VOTERS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a proposal relating to the adoption of attendance and accountability expectations by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council shall be submitted to the electorate of Fayette County at the November 3, 2026 General Election.

The purpose of said proposal will be to take the sense of the voters upon the question of whether Section 4.07 of the Charter should be amended, in pertinent part, to provide as follows:

Except as otherwise provided in the Charter, the Council, shall determine its own rules and order of business and shall provide for keeping a records of its proceedings. These records shall be a public record. The Urban County Council shall, by ordinance or resolution, establish standards for Council member attendance and accountability, which shall be reviewed at the beginning of each new Council term. Records documenting compliance with attendance and accountability standards adopted hereto shall be public records. Nothing in this section shall be construed to alter, amend, expand, or restrict the procedures for the removal or discipline of a Council member otherwise applicable under Kentucky Law.

If a majority of those voting on the proposal shall vote in favor, it shall be effective with the term of office that begins on January 4, 2027.

This Notice is given pursuant to the provision of Section 14.03 of the Charter of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government.

/s/ Susan Lamb, Fayette County Clerk
/s/ Abigail Allan, Fayette Urban County Council
IPL0381262
Oct 14,18,25 2026

Legals & Public Notices

PUBLIC NOTICE TO FAYETTE COUNTY VOTERS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a proposal to the compensation of Lexington-Fayette than County Government council members shall be submitted to the electorate of Fayette County at the November 3, 2026 General Election.

The purpose of said proposal will be to take the sense of the voters upon the question of whether Section 4.05of the Charter should be amended, in pertinent part, to provide as follows:

All duly elected members of the Council shall receive an annual salary to be fixed by the Council which shall not exceed \$6,000 per annum, or the maximum set by the General Assembly of Kentucky for Urban County Governments. Effective with the term of office that begins on January 6, 2031, all duly elected members of the Council shall receive an annual salary which shall not exceed \$59,987 per annum, adjusted to equate with the purchasing power Of the dollar using 2027 as the base year. In no case shall any change of the annual salary of council members voted by the Council become effective during the current term of any council member.

If a majority of those voting on the proposal shall vote in favor, the compensation shall be effective with the term of office that begins on January 6, 2031.

This notice is given pursuant to the provisions of Section 14.03 of the Charter of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government.

/s/Susan Lamb, Fayette County Clerk
/s/Abigail Allan, Clerk of the Fayette Urban County Council
IPL0381182
Oct 14,18,25 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE TO FAYETTE COUNTY VOTERS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a proposal relating to the enactment of charter review procedures by the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Council shall be submitted to the electorate of Fayette County at the November 3, 2026 General Election.

The purpose of said proposal will be to take the sense of the voters upon the question of whether Section 14.04 of the Charter should be amended, in pertinent part, to provide as follows:

Without limiting the amendment and revision procedures available under this article, and commencing in 2027, the Council shall convene a Charter Review Assembly at least once every eight (8) years to conduct a comprehensive review of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government Charter. The Charter Review Assembly shall be comprised of not fewer than twenty four(24) representatives and shall be established pursuant to an ordinance adopted by Council which shall, at minimum, establish selection procedures using a representative lottery and shall further establish procedures for the assembly to conduct its review and publish its recommendations, which shall include opportunities for public engagement.

The Council shall further establish, by ordinance, a standing Charter Review Board to serve as a permanent advisory body to identify appropriate Charter amendments between eight-year review cycles, to facilitate the review conducted by the Charter Review Assembly as set forth herein, and to advise the Urban County Council not less than annually on appropriate Charter amendments.

If a majority of those voting on the proposal shall vote in favor, it shall be effective with the term of office that begins on January 4, 2027.

This Notice is given pursuant to the provisions of Section 14.03 of the Charter of the Lexington-Fayette Urban County Government.

/s/Susan Lamb, Fayette County Clerk
/s/Abigail Allan, Clerk of the Lexington Fayette Urban County Council
IPL0381186
Oct 14,18,25 2026

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