

LESSONS FROM SIDELINES PAST: A STORY OF COACH BOBBY BOWDEN

by

MARK ASHLEY SMITH

(Under the Direction of PAUL G. SCHEMPP)

ABSTRACT

The college coach is a media enigma, with many coaches having their own television and radio shows and demanding high yearly salaries. However, beyond the financial rewards and media attention, the accolades of fame extend beyond the boundaries of the sidelines that they occupy. Collegiate coaches are public figures and community leaders, product spokespersons and college representatives. The more successful the coach, the more the media pursues and the more the name becomes a “household” one. It is my contention that we should seek to learn from those that have been labeled successful, superior and even legendary in the realms of coaching. Through the research method of biography, the career path and subsequent interpretations and understandings that can be drawn can aid in the development of future coaches and educators. It was with this purpose that this study attracted Coach Bobby Bowden, the head football coach of Florida State University, as a participant.

Coach Bobby Bowden has amassed 342 wins on the Division I collegiate football stage (the most ever by a coach), two National Championships and numerous accolades, including Coach of the Year honors. Through the examination of Coach Bowden’s career, this study utilized biographical research methods and interprets Bowden’s fifty-one year career through a thematic approach. Bowden’s biography is divided into two parts. Part I: *The What, How and Why of FSU and Bobby Bowden*, details Bowden’s present coaching roles (Chapter One), belief in organization and preparation (Chapter Two) and the elements of coaching that have provided the foundations of his success (Chapter Three). In contrast, Part II: *Life Changes and Learned Lessons*, examines and contextualizes Bowden’s career. Chapter Four introduces the impact of legislation, governance and changes in society. Chapters Five, Six and Seven progressively focus on Bowden himself. Chapter Five discusses the individuals that have mentored, educated and

impacted Bowden's career. In Chapter Six, eight short stories are presented. Each story represents a major event or experience in Bowden's life that continues to impact his career choices and decisions. In the final chapter, *Religion, Family, Football and Then?*, examines Bowden's priorities and lifelong beliefs with reference to the church, his family and Bowden as an individual. All-in-all this text examines the biography of a man that has been extremely successful within the realms of college football through an interpreted thematic text grounded in the research methods of biographical research.

INDEX WORDS: Bobby Bowden, Coaching, Football, College Athletics, Interscholastic Sport, Expertise, Career Development

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to all the children that I have had the honor and privilege to learn from and know. They have been a continual source of knowledge, inspiration and creativity. They have also taught me more about life than I have taught them about sport. I hope that this will never change.



Picture taken during a Britannia Soccer Camp

(Krissy Reynolds, 1994, Morehead City, NC)

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PASSAGE OF THOUGHT AND FOCUS

Always keep your eyes open to the image of man—the generic notion of ... human nature—which by your work you are assuming and implying; and also to the image of history – your notion of how history is being made. In a word, continually work out and revise your views of the problems of history, the problems of biography, and the problems of social structure in which biography and history intersect. Keep your eyes open to the varieties of individuality, and to the modes of epochal change. Use what you see and what you imagine as the clues for your study of the human variety...know that many personal troubles cannot be solved merely as troubles, but must be understood in terms of public issues—and in terms of the problems of history making. Know that the human meaning of public issues must be revealed by relating them to personal troubles and to the problems of individual life. Know that the problems of social science, when adequately formulated, must include both troubles and issues, both biography and history, and the range of their intricate relations. Within this range the life of the individual and the making of society occur; and that within that range the sociological imagination has its chance to make a difference in the quality of human life in our time.

C WRIGHT MILLS (1959/1970, pp. 247-248)

PREFACE

There has to be an attentiveness to time – what people take into research situations and take out of them; as well as feelings, identity, body. In the past ... this reflexivity has been tacit and implicit: the actual studies are presented without much personal reflection, which is saved for a confessional narrative somewhere else. But what has happened recently is a concern that ‘research knowledge’ only makes sense if we can acquire understanding about the active processes through which such knowledge becomes produced. *If we wish to understand a life story, then, we need also to know where both the researcher and the teller of that life are coming from, what kind of relationship they are having together, and how this fits into the wider social order* [emphasis added].

Ken Plummer¹

In an attempt to develop an understanding of the complexities and uncertainties of life, researchers in the social sciences use and tell stories through a plethora of approaches including autobiography, autoethnography, biography, personal narrative, life history, oral history, memoir, and literary journalism.² Terminology and descriptions aside, narratives and stories of individuals and life have transcended the branches of social science (psychology, philosophy, anthropology, sociology and religion) creating textual representations classified under differing academic terminology and theoretical frameworks. Subsequently, these terms have become interwoven and entangled within the (re-)emerging methodology of qualitative research, thus complicating the very investigations that they claim to examine. Plummer noted:

Life Stories come through many blurred sources: Biographies, autobiographies, letters, journals, interviews, obituaries. They can be written by a person as their own life story (autobiography) or as a fiction of themselves; they can be the story coaxed out of them by another, or indeed their ‘own story’ told by someone else (biography). They can exist in many forms: long and short, past and future, specific and general, fuzzy and focused,

surface and deep, realist and romantic, ordinary and extraordinary, modernist and postmodernist. And they are denoted by a plethora of terms: life stories, life histories, life narratives, self stories, ‘mysteries’, autobiographies, auto/biographies, oral histories, personal testaments, life documents.³

It is imperative that before reading a constructed biography of Coach Bobby Bowden’s life and career that the methods of life story, biography, auto/biography that framed it are examined. Roberts emphasized that the term should be used to describe research that “uses the stories of individuals and other personal materials to understand the individual life within its social context.”⁴ The social context of one’s life is an important aspect to consider when examining an individual’s career because “social forces produce social facts,”⁵ and that no life occurs in a vacuum void of cultural influences. Although the social context shapes individuals lives, individuals within a culture also shape the context.

In an academic era where the very language we use to describe a concept is itself troubled, James Garraty’s simple comment, “Biography, to begin with a very simple definition, is the record of life,”⁶ provides a useful foundation and even definition in understanding the perspective from which this text is framed. It was the intent of this study to examine an educational life story (biography) of an expert college football coach, because if academically we want to understand educational practices and events we must confront and examine the biographies of those who inform and implement them.⁷ I believe that the study of biography affords us an excellent opportunity to examine and be able to, as Sorrells noted, “Look back at history and discover how who came before us dealt with, and in some cases solved, the problems that continue to plague the field today.”⁸ Therefore, biographical methods allow researchers the

opportunity to not only understand the career and life lessons of an expert coach, such as Bobby Bowden, but also contextualize the society and culture in which they live.

This, however, is not as easy as it may first appear. In using a biographical research methodology, the research process itself primarily employs the researcher as the main data collection tool. Therefore the researcher's own biography affects the interpretation and understanding of those we seek to understand through research itself. Roberts asserts that, "As biographical researchers interested in the lives of others, we should be cognizant of our own individuality, our own stories, and how we relate to and construct the lives of others."⁹ It is within this complex and philosophical understanding of biographical research that the term "auto/biography," has been defined.¹⁰ "Telling apart fiction, biography and autobiography is no easy matter,"¹¹ that is why Morgan strongly posits that, auto/biography is not:

Simply a shorthand representation of autobiography and/or biography but a recognition of the inter-dependence of the two enterprises. ... In writing another's life we also write or rewrite our own lives; in writing about ourselves we also construct ourselves as somebody different from the person who routinely and unproblematically inhabits and moves through social space and time.¹²

Therefore, this study was strongly oriented in the blurred genres of biography and autobiography. An orientation that has been further blurred and complicated by feminist and postmodern thought.¹³

The potential of biographical and life history methods in educational research is immense. Biographical research examines lives within social contexts and thus provides the teaching profession with information and knowledge that not only informs educators' practices, but also influences those that wish to enter the profession. Biographies and life histories of

educators are a valuable tool in the quest for understanding the process of teaching and the culture of education. Unfortunately, the research terminology that describes such studies has become increasingly complex and diverse. It is imperative that the process itself and the information generated outweigh the terms that define it. In this text, the term biography will represent the research methods that examine the life and context of Coach Bowden and the term autobiography will refer to the history and context that the researcher brings to its construction. Regardless of challenges, discussions and debates in terminology, “The study of biography is slowly emerging as a significant development in the field of educational research”¹⁴ and can provide the research community with detailed descriptions and insights into the development of expertise.

In constructing a thematic text, that has been centered on the life and career of Coach Bowden, I feel it is important to acknowledge that I have further explored my own beliefs and understandings about a number of issues, including coaching practices and religion. Assumptions and perspectives that I once held firm have been challenged. Therefore, throughout this text I have included small parts of my autobiography as gauges of thought, and insights and perspectives that have framed the research process, from planning the research to constructing and writing the text.

As the explorer, author and researcher that examined the life and career of Coach Bowden, the emotions that have accompanied these differing roles have been diverse. They have included the excitement and inspiration that is learning; the frustrations and satisfactions of working with different people; the loneliness that research and traveling entails, and the thrills and spills that are inherent in research. During this process I have interpreted and (re-)visited my own life history and teaching experiences. In all honesty, for me this whole process has been one

of excitement, self doubt, and personal exploration. I think that Davis and Shadle put it well when they wrote:

Knowledge here plays leapfrog with mystery; meanings are made to move beyond, and writing traces this movement. Research becomes seeking as a mode of being. As academic seekers, we journey toward a state of understanding that subsumes both ignorance and knowledge, a state in which we “know” more deeply our own capacity for uncertainty and find that it is uncertainty that keeps us alive and thinking.¹⁵

During the complete research process I have spent many a day and night examining the life and career of Coach Bowden across numerous avenues of research data (Research Timeline shown in Appendix I). I have also been assisted and guided on my travels by the writers and scholars of texts that, through publishing their own thoughts, theories and experiences, have willingly participated. This process has led me to a greater understanding of the impact that the researcher has, not only in the process of data collection but also in the responsibility to the reader of producing a trustworthy biography that can be scrutinized for accuracy, consistency and plausibility.¹⁶

At the beginning of the research process I was concerned that I would not know when it was the right time to stop. In troubling this particular notion, I personally felt that in the case of biographical research that the understanding of a life is never really over, since it is constantly being interpreted by those who read the final text, or wrote in and participated in the production of it. However, a study that is grounded in a biographical research genre needs to stop sometime if only to rest and refuel. Erben addressed this issue with reference to interview data in referencing Bertaux,¹⁷ when he noted:

The appropriate amount of data gained through interview will be determined *both* by respondents' feelings they have made all the observations they feel necessary *and* the researchers ceasing to observe novel cues. Saturation is unlikely to have occurred when only one of these criteria is met.¹⁸

During this long and at times arduous journey, I have constantly puzzled Erben's notion. Within the scope of this study and during the data collection process I firmly believe that the criteria outlined by Erben occurred. That is not to say that data collection cannot continue. A life is a complex interplay of events, experiences, interactions—a list that could go on and on—and the magnitude of Coach Bowden's career and life is a classic example. This text primarily focuses on the events and experiences that have informed his coaching practices and philosophies over his long and successful career. Throughout this text, references will be made to historic events and times that have undoubtedly impacted society on a greater level than can be explored within the covers of this text. For example, the impact that growing up and living in Birmingham, Alabama, during the depression of the 1930s and the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s could be separate texts in and of themselves. I do believe, however, that this text provides informative and productive perspectives into Coach Bowden's life that can illuminate how he became a coaching legend. I hope that in so doing, it also provides cues and tips into the pending journeys of those educators, teachers and coaches that aspire to do the same. I firmly believe, like Kridel, that:

Biographical inquiry provides a fresh perspective on the new possibilities and dimensions of education—new ways to examine how one describes the behaviors of others, new ways to examine how one describes the impact of pedagogical

processes on students and teachers, new ways to explain how educational policy manifests itself in the lives of individuals.¹⁹

¹ Plummer (2001, p. 208)

² Alverman (2000)

³ Plummer (2001, p. 19)

⁴ Roberts (2002, p. 3)

⁵ Sorrells (2001, p. 1)

⁶ Garraty (1957, p. 3)

⁷ Burrough (1998, p. 24)

⁸ Sorrells (2001, p. 4)

⁹ Roberts (2002, p. 62)

¹⁰ For review, see: Stanley (1992, 1993, 1994); & Marcus (1994)

¹¹ Stanley (1992, p. 125)

¹² Morgan (1998, p. 655)

¹³ Stanley (1992,1993, 1994); Marcus (1994)

¹⁴ Kridel (1998, p. 3)

¹⁵ Davis and Shadle (2000, p. 422)

¹⁶ These are all criteria that Blumenfeld-Jones (1995) discussed as being important when reviewing a qualitative research text. For a more detailed list of review of examining and authenticating qualitative research see Dollard (1935); Reissman (1993); Hatch and Wisniewski (1995); Barone (1995); Connelly & Clandinin (1990)

¹⁷ Bertaux (1981)

¹⁸ Erben (1998, p. 6)

¹⁹ Kridel (1998 p. 4)

INTRODUCTION

Like everyone else, we teachers tell our stories. We tell stories of tragedy and triumph, of humiliation and rebellion, of subversion, heroism, and moral action. Our stories are comical, self-effacing, often petty and occasionally transcendent. Sometimes our stories are fully articulated and public, but more often our stories are uneven and ragged, private jokes and little anecdotes passed hurriedly to one another in the hallway or the teachers' lounge. Our stories occur in cultural contexts, and we not only tell our stories, but in a powerful way our stories tell us. Interrogating our stories, then—questioning and probing collective personal myths—is an important pathway into exploring the meaning of teaching.

William Ayers¹

The college coach can be classified as a media enigma. Many coaches have their own television and radio shows and demand substantial yearly salaries. However, beyond the financial rewards and media attention are the accolades of fame that extend well beyond the boundaries of the fields and gyms where they practice their craft. Collegiate coaches are public figures, community leaders, product spokespersons and college representatives on the regional and national stage. The more successful the coach, the more the media pursues and the more the name becomes a “household” one. It is this responsibility or burden of the college coach that is most intriguing. A collegiate coach in the United States is one that has to live and deal with an enormous amount of pressure and responsibility that is often governed by a team's on the field performance. It is my contention and conviction that education should learn from those who have not only made a career in coaching but have also been labeled successful, superior and even a legend. For it is from individuals that have learned to adapt, change, survive and ultimately succeed that lessons should be drawn and opportunities for continuing education developed.

McCullick and colleagues puzzled this notion when they noted, “How does a coach find the path to greatness?” They also suggested that, “Many have attempted to follow what they thought was this elusive trail, only to get lost along the way.”² By identifying an expert coach and addressing their development of expertise in a specific domain through career lessons, a text, like this one, that has been grounded in biographical methods of research can potentially map an expert’s “elusive trail” whilst exploring the lives of others. Vandiver noted:

Good biographies deal with the ways people faced living—tell how they met problems, how they coped with big and little crises, how they loved, competed, did the things we all do daily—and hence these studies touch familiar chords in readers.³

I hope that this study can provided a small glimpse into the life and career of Bobby Bowden, who has traveled the white waters of college coaching. His insights, knowledge and experiences can aid in the interpretations and representations of not only coaching, but also intercollegiate athletics and teaching. Thus this text provides sport instructors of all disciplines and the field of sport pedagogy with alternative perspectives and insights into the historical roots and complexities of coaching.

I posit that biographical research texts of educators can tell important narratives of success and failure of accomplished role models. The use of biography as a research approach, however, is still battling the academic world for credibility. Nevertheless, I believe Oats’ description of what makes a good biography fits the established criteria for good research. He noted, “Good biography, reasonable biography, does not romanticize individuals, but holds them responsible for their acts within a historical context.”⁴ In reviewing popular biographies that can be found in bookstores, one could argue that biographies often do not meet Oats’ definition. Streaun, although from a different vantage point expressed a similar concern when he noted:

There are a plethora of sport biographies in the popular press, which might provide an interesting resource from a narrative perspective, yet many important questions have not been adequately addressed that might be pursued by researchers with academic preparation related to sport psychology.⁵

It is my conjecture that the same argument could and should be waged at other areas of sport research, including sociology, pedagogy and instruction. It was never my intent to develop a research text that “romanticized” Coach Bowden or the Florida State football program. The integrity of biographical research lies in the openly honest representation of the life and context it confesses to tell.

This study, with “academic preparation,” investigated the complexities of the collegiate coaching profession through the biography of Coach Bowden and the research tools of interview, published texts, newspaper articles, documentary evidence and observations. Through the scrutiny of the data collection process and academically informed practices of analysis, this text provides a glimpse into Coach Bowden as an individual and as a coach—an approach advocated by Streaan,⁶ Griffin,⁷ and Martens.⁸ Streaan noted, “Perhaps the most interesting (but virtually untapped) potential area for performance-related description is through biographical accounts of successful coaches’ and athletes’ views and experiences.”⁹ A point supported by the appeal of popular biographies, in general, and, more specifically of sporting performers, coaches and athletes. Finkelstein provided a more in-depth view of the complexity of biographical research and highlighted the possibilities that the field of sport pedagogy and education in general could benefit from when he wrote:

Biographical studies are more than simply individual chronicles—ornamental, illustrative or exemplary of larger processes. ... They provide a documentary context within which

to judge the relative power of material and ideological circumstances, the meaning of educational policy, the unity of schooling, the definition of literacy and the relationship between teaching and learning and policy and practice. Biographies and individual narratives provide both the stuff of substance of history and its more elegant and evocative examples.¹⁰

Dhunpath, referencing Cortazzi, believed that, “Biographies and other forms of life writing enable the reconstruction and interpretation of subjectively meaningful features and critical episodes of a teacher educator’s life allowing us to see the unities, continuities, and discontinuities, images and rhythms.”¹¹ Dhunpath goes further, “The life history approach is probably the only authentic means of understanding how motives and practices reflect the intimate intersection of institutional and individual experience in the postmodern world.”¹²

The expert collegiate coach is an excellent case participant for a biographical study. Not only have they traveled the elusive path to expertise, but have, along the way, learned to survive in a product-based profession where winning is a prerequisite for job security. They have also developed practices and honed traits and beliefs that have enabled players, coaches, fans and the university itself to grow and develop. Templin and colleagues, in a case study that used life history approaches of a physical educator named Joe (synonym), alluded to this very point when testifying to the significance of their study. They iterated, “We believe that Joe’s story and those to come may resonate with the experience of other teachers/coaches and provide something worth learning for prospective teachers, in-service teachers, and teacher educators alike.”¹³ The points that Templin and colleagues made are important because examining the career of an expert college football coach also affords others the opportunity to not only relate their own experiences to those of someone who is perceived to be successful, but also provides hope and

belief that their role models have had to experience and learn from positive and negative situations.

The interest in the biographies of successful and famous sports personalities is a potentially strong source of learning for others interested in sport. The culture of coaching and the development of coaches' knowledge can be explored within their own contexts when seen through a biographical representation. Novoa noted, "Only the story of a life can provide evidence of the way each person allocates their knowledge, values, and energies so as to shape their identity in a dialog with their contexts."¹⁴ Therefore, the ultimate purpose of this study was to interpret and discuss the career of Head Football Coach Bobby Bowden of Florida State University, guided by a biographical research framework and grounded in the data collection methods of life history. I firmly believe that Coach Bobby Bowden was an excellent case participant for a biographical study of this nature. Over his coaching career, he has amassed 342 wins on the Division I collegiate football stage (the most ever by a college football coach), two National Championships and numerous other accolades. Through the use of biographical research methods the positive and negative experiences that Bowden has faces throughout his career can be viewed within his present coaching practices. Through examining Bowden's career it is evident that coaching and, in particular being a head coach, is extremely complex.

However, before examining Bowden's life and career it is important to understand the process that produced this study. The following section titled, *Collecting Autographs and Gaining Access*, documents the journey prior to data collection. The section was adapted from a series of written reflections that were recorded during the project's planning stages. I have included this section because it contextualizes the complexities of biographical research and documents the struggles of just attracting an expert coach of Bowden's stature to participate in

an academic research study. Following its completion, a subsection titled, *The Game Plan*, introduces the overall structure and themes behind each chapter and the content each chapter examines.

Collecting Autographs and Gaining Access

As the spring semester of 2003 tumbled towards a hot Georgia summer, the dissertation had become an ever-increasing topic on my personal academic horizon. Although I had been planning and developing the idea for the dissertation for close to a year, I was still no closer to actually collecting data. To be honest, I had become increasingly concerned that the project would never get started, even though I had already gained approval from the Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects. I had planned to defend my proposal in May, only to be denied by the conflicting schedules of my committee members. I felt stuck between a rock and a hard place, a catch-22 if you will. I needed to address the issue of obtaining a willing and viable participant while wondering if the idea, the format and even the theoretical framework that informed the research was going to be approved. After some deliberations and discussions with several committee members, I came to the conclusion that I needed to make some initial participant inquiries soon. If I waited any longer then the pending collegiate athletic seasons would become another limiting factor in participant selection. Following a week of drafting and re-drafting, editing and re-writing, I had developed a form letter I planned to send to several expert coaches in the southeast.

Through drafting and rewriting the proposal I had decided that the study would focus on the life and career of an expert collegiate coach. As with all research it is important to identify a particular set of criteria, taking into account the inevitable constraints of time, money and other practical considerations that must be considered.¹⁵ After reviewing the literature, I planned to

adopt Spradley's criteria for selecting a good participant. He suggested that a good informant should be:

- Thoroughly enculturized (fully aware, deeply involved and informed in their particular world)
- Currently involved (their account is hence not simply a reinterpretation of past experiences but a statement of current practices).
- Non-analytical (informants who are overly intellectual and overly abstract are of less value than those who talk of experiences in the raw)
- Fairly articulate
- Able to verbalize¹⁶

Although there is often a distinction made between an informant and a participant, I concluded that the criteria outlined by Spadley are very applicable for the selection of a participant in a research study strongly grounded in biographical methods. However, with these suggestions aside, the basic premise that underlines the philosophy and representation that I hoped this study could tell were largely centered on the need for the participant to have a good story.¹⁷

Interestingly, Plummer believed that any participant, "Under the right conditions...will meet this criteria."¹⁸

The second premise of the study was that the coach had to be an expert. Not surprisingly, expertise and the notion of someone being an "expert" has attracted a considerable amount of interest in the social sciences, education, medicine, artificial intelligence, and sport.¹⁹ However, what does it mean to be an expert and to have expertise? In an everyday sense, "expert" is a term used to describe a person who demonstrates a degree of success or even superior knowledge. For example, a child may say that their volunteer parent coach or beginning math teacher is an

expert. However, just because an individual demonstrates more knowledge and experience than someone else, it does not mean that they are an expert. As Dodds stated:

Expert teachers (only a few reach this pinnacle) teach intuitively, having an overall sense of the situation such that they can respond fluidly without deliberating. They work unconsciously until there is a specific problem on which to focus their analytical skills. They operate a cut above all other teachers, just as expert musicians and sports performers do.²⁰

Through the lens of expert performance, Tan defined an expert as someone who demonstrates “consistently superior performance on a set of relevant tasks in a specific field of human activity.”²¹ This definition provided me with an apt platform from which to select a suitable case participant. Based on the expertise literature, the following criteria were used:

- (a) Ten or more years of teaching/coaching experience as a head coach²²
- (b) Formal recognition for the coaching abilities (e.g. regional, conference or national coach of the year honors and awards)
- (c) Established student success (professional level)
- (d) Established and developed team success (national and conference championships)

During the next several weeks and following an unusual opportunity to discuss the project with Vince Dooley, the University of Georgia Director of Athletic and College Football Hall of Fame Coach, I formed a list of four potential participants and a subsidiary list of eight. These four preliminary coaches all had excellent coaching records and were all within a five hour driving radius of Athens, Georgia. The four coaches were Dean Smith, Mike Krzyzewski, Bobby Bowden and Lou Holtz.

Coach Dean Smith, the all-time winningest coach in Division I basketball (879-254), had won two NCAA National Championships as the head coach of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) in 1982 and 1993. During his illustrious career, Dean Smith had also coached and developed basketball superstars like Michael Jordan and received numerous accolades and awards including Coach of the Year honors four times (1977, 1979, 1982, & 1993). In addition he had recently retired, but still remains active at UNC.²³

Another basketball coach that resided in North Carolina also made the list—Coach Krzyzewski of Duke University. Coach K, as he is called, like Dean Smith, had an exceptionally successful career in the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). He had received twelve National Coach of the Year honors over eight seasons and had taken his team to nine final four appearances, winning three NCAA National Championship trophies (1991, 1992, & 2001). There was no doubt that Coach K is one of the elite college basketball coaches of all time.²⁴

Switching from basketball to football, the final two coaches were very successful at the collegiate level. Coach Bobby Bowden of Florida State University (FSU) also fit the expert coach label. Having taken over a program sitting at the bottom of college football rankings, over a 27 year career he had developed a program that had become a perennial power house. Over one particular span, FSU had been ranked in the top five for 14 straight years. During his career he has amassed numerous coaching awards, including Head Coach of the Year (1997, 1999) and two NCAA Championships trophies (1993, 1999). Additionally, Coach Bowden sat just three wins behind Joe Paterno on the all-time wins list in Division I-A college football history.²⁵

I looked at the Southeastern Conference (SEC) and the Gamecocks of South Carolina (USC) for the fourth and final coach—Lou Holtz. Coach Holtz has been successful on all coaching levels, including the professional ranks of the National Football League. However, he

has received the most notoriety as the head football coach of the Fighting Irish of Notre Dame, where he won a National Championship and received Coach of the Year honors in 1988. In moving to Columbia, South Carolina, in 1999, Coach Holtz turned a fledgling program into one that competed in arguably the toughest collegiate athletic conference.²⁶

On April 16, 2003 the four letters were posted and the wait began. With the excitement of starting the project that had been over a year in planning and researching, came doubts and concerns—doubts and concerns about one singular but central question—what am I going to do if I can't find an expert coach? As it turned out my fears were not without foundation as letters and phone calls started to find their way to the University of Georgia Sport Instruction Research Laboratory.

The first coach that declined my invitation to participate was Coach K. His secretary, very apologetically, left a message on the Sport Instruction Laboratory answering machine the Monday after the letters had been sent (April 21st). The second response was from the distinguished Dean Smith. He had diligently read through my letter, judging by the aqua underlining, and the hand written note that was inked onto the bottom corner of the page. However, citing the issue of time and previous experiences with writing an autobiography, he regrettably declined. The second letter to arrive and the third response came from Lou Holtz. Much like the first two, he graciously declined due to other commitments. At this point, my search had turned into a series of “honored,” and “privileged” thanks-but-no-thanks letters and phone calls. As I continued to wait I formulated a second plan of attack. Then I received the third letter and final response from Coach Bowden. Unlike the other responses Bowden's letter did not say “no,” but it did not really say yes either. It read:

Dear Mark

I got your letter and I appreciate you asking me to help you on it. My problem is this, I will be out of town from now until July attending Seminole Booster dinners. Plus, I am gone the whole month of June out of the state. I don't know what this does on you time situation. Also, how much time does it require on my part if I can do it?

Let me know because I would like to help you if I can. Take care and best wishes to you.

Sincerely

Signed Coach Bowden, Head Football Coach.

In response to the letter, I drafted and sent a second letter addressing the questions Coach Bowden had asked. Although within the letter Coach Bowden had briefly outlined his summer commitments, I felt it was important to put the ball back in his court as soon as possible. However, if I am to be totally honest, I was hoping we could find a sliver of time to discuss the project sooner rather than later. With the letter sent, I was again practicing the art of patience.

As May passed into June, and my proposal defense date grew ever closer, so did my concerns regarding the topic and dissertation format—more specifically, my ability to get an expert coach to agree to the project. Time was most definitely not in my favor. It was not until the proposal meeting that I actually voiced these concerns. It was not surprising that the committee members shared my concerns. During the meeting and several informal discussions subsequently, I decided to send out several additional letters, to Erk Russell (Georgia Southern University-Football), Roy Williams (UNC-Basketball), Anson Dorrance (UNC-Soccer), Mary Wise (University of Florida-Volleyball), Rick Pitino (Louisville-Basketball), Tubby Smith

(University of Kentucky-Basketball) and Dan Reeves (Atlanta Falcons-Football). In response to the letter only Rick Pitino responded positively. However, based on scheduling and time commitments he was not able to participate. As for the remaining six potential participants, of those that did reply, Erk Russell, Roy Williams, and Dan Reeves all followed in the footsteps of those before with a, “we are honored but are unable due to time and commitment” letter. So after contacting eleven coaches, only one was still an option—Coach Bobby Bowden of Florida State University.

Following several months of discussion with Coach Bowden and his staff, I was finally able to attain Bowden’s informed consent for the project. However, the trials and tribulations did not stop there. Although he had agreed to participate voluntarily in the project we still had to negotiate timeframes for visiting and observing his program during the season and determine an interview schedule for the upcoming spring—not an easy task I must add.

As I sit back and ponder the process from which this text was constructed, I can, without a doubt, say it was worth it. However, I might admit there were times when I was not so sure. Within this text, you will discover some of the rollercoaster rides of emotions and concerns that accompany any research project, especially one that centers on a coaching legend. You will read about the complexity of scheduling and inevitable scheduling changes. You will indirectly discover the methods of data collection that informed this process, including interviews with players and coaches, past and present; observations of practices, both during the season and in the spring, and program operations in general; searches in the special collections at the FSU library and the FSU sports information files, biographies and books, videos and documentaries about Coach Bowden and Florida State; and, the myriad of newspaper articles compiled from

online databases, the sports information departments of Florida State, West Virginia, Howard University and the University of Pittsburgh, the FSU library and the Internet.

I hope that as you read each chapter and learn more about Coach Bobby Bowden, that you will discover my data informed perception of him. The data in each chapter has been carefully collected, analyzed and formulated thematically to provide an overall sense of not only Coach Bowden's career as a head football coach, but also the external and societal influences that have affected and shaped his life. As a reader you will experience Bowden's own interpretations, his strong sense of humor, his loving and caring nature, his storytelling abilities and his belief in Christianity. Additionally through this text you will experience his ability to laugh at himself—a trait that is highlighted in the following story that took place during his time as the head coach at West Virginia:

Once, Ann and I drove up through New England on vacation. We were just trying to get away from people for a little peace and quiet. We ended up in a town of about 5,000 in New Hampshire. After we checked into a motel and had dinner, we went to a picture show. We hadn't been to a picture show in years. There weren't but about eight people in the whole theater.

As we started to sit down the eight folks in the theater started clapping. I thought, "Lord, I didn't know they knew me up here." And so I turned around and gave them a couple of those "thank you" bows. And the guy in the seat behind us nudged me and said, "Buddy, I don't know who you are, but thanks for coming. You see, they won't start the movie until they get at least ten people in here."²⁷

The Play Book

Collecting autographs and gaining access is a component of research that is inextricably tied to successfully collecting meaningful and appropriate data. The produced text, book or article that discusses the data provides the capstone. In formulating and developing this particular text, I constantly questioned the roles that I as the researcher and author played in its construction and frequently took counsel in the work of Roberts:

While the traditional description of starting the research was to begin without preconceptions, now different biographical ways of seeing are not merely recognized but embraced as part of the negotiated interactive relation between researcher and researched which continues – and should be reflected upon – during the research. Also, the research context and the material collected has a legacy, not merely in terms of the notes made, but also in the memories that are held and stimulated in writing up the research text.²⁸

And, I was added by the work of Erben who explained, "...An autobiographical text has to be understood in terms of the construction of the text, its context and this includes the situated autobiography of the researcher."²⁹ Therefore, in constructing this text, it was my intent that the research process as a whole was contextualized, by including my reflexivity. Throughout the text, my thoughts, interpretations, emotions and insights that were a part of the process are discussed. This provided not only perspectives on data collection methods and fieldwork, but also identified the concurrent process of analysis, interpretation and the text construction of this alternative biographical text.

Recently, several books³⁰ have sought to identify, describe, and in some cases rationalize the needs and possibilities to generate different types of research narratives. I strongly believe

that the premise behind any form of representation strongly adheres to the notion that, “what we call our data are really our own constructions of other people’s constructions of what they and their compatriots are up to... there is nothing particularly wrong with this, and it is in any case inevitable.”³¹ Therefore, the sections and the chapters that Bowden’s career and life biography are framed in, are not constructed chronologically as with most biographies but thematically. Through the writing process I have learned to further critique my own understandings of the past, research, coaching, and sport that I brought to the research process. Although I believe there can never be a perfect text, I do believe that the text I have produced, although a continual work-in-progress is authentic, credible, trustworthy, believable and readable and accurately details coach Bowden’s career. However, “It is not simply *their biographies and their histories* with which we are concerned but also *our lives and historical contexts* which are woven together in the texts we produce.”³²

Morgan delineates between the biographies and histories of the participants and the lives and historical context of the research by noting that they are one and the same.³³ Erben agrees when he comments in reference to biographical research text that, “What is indisputable is that the account is constructed by both the researcher and that those agendas always make reference to the past—both the past of the biographer and that of the participant.”³⁴ Grounded in Erden’s beliefs, each chapter tells a particular tale about the research process, data collection methods, collected data, analysis and the researcher’s insights. More importantly, each chapter examines the life of Coach Bowden.

How to organize such a wealth of information across Bowden’s life span proved to be a significant challenge. The changing face of college football and society, coupled with the present roles that a head coach must play all represent deep and rich narratives that can and should be

told. A chronological account of Bowden's life starting in 1929 and moving through the years to the present day could have been an effective way to tell his story, however, I believe that it would not have provided the same powerful insights into his teaching and coaching that this narrative identifies. Instead, through a thematic representation of Coach Bowden's life and career his current coaching practices will be explored (Part 1) before examining the experiences, events and changing cultural landscapes that, through their examination frame them (Part 2).

Part I begins with an examination of the roles that Bowden plays as the head football coach of Florida State University, is forced to play in the modern realms of intercollegiate athletics (Chapter One). The chapter categorizes Bowden's roles as the head coach as *A Coach*, *A Salesman* and *A Person*. The next chapter examines how Bowden and Florida State football staff organize, prepare and determine the focus of the program and the team throughout the year. It is in this chapter that the importance of preparation in a program of FSU's caliber and magnitude is examined. *Being Prepared and Organized* also discusses how Bowden, as the figure head of the program has been able to survive the win-at-all costs attitude of intercollegiate athletics (Chapter Two). In chapter three, *The Elements of Coaching*, Coach Bowden's views and coaching practices will be identified. This chapter outlines some of the main elements of coaching that has afforded Bowden the opportunity to become a successful coach.

In contrast part II examines Bowden's career within its social and cultural contexts. Each chapter represents a puzzle piece of Bowden's life, in that each piece frames the present. Just like a puzzle, where the placement of each piece reveals the picture, Bowden career can be discovered and with the placement of each piece, making life's lesson increasingly explicit. In Chapter Four the changing forces of college athletics and those that partake in it are briefly introduced. The impact of legislation, governance and changes in the outlook of society and the

attitude of college aged students-athletes is discussed, thus framing and contextualizing Bowden's fifty-plus-year career. If you will, the chapter sections represent the straight edged puzzle pieces of life that bounds Bowden's center puzzle pieces. Chapters Five, Six and Seven progressively focus on Bowden himself. Chapter Five introduces the individuals that have mentored, taught and impacted Bowden's philosophies and practices. It also highlights Bowden's thirst for knowledge and his continual search for improvement. In Chapter Six, eight short stories are presented with very little analysis. It is within this chapter that the ideas that have been scattered through the previous five chapters culminate. Each story represents a major event or experience in Bowden's life that continues to impact his choices and decisions. In Chapters Five and Six Bowden's past provides evidence of why he does what he does in the present. In the final chapter, *Religion, Family, Football and Then?*, examines Bowden's priorities and lifelong beliefs with reference to the church, his family and Bowden as an individual.

¹ Ayers (1992, p. 35)

² McCullick, Cummings, and DeMarco (1998, p. 42)

³ Vandiver (1986, p. 7)

⁴ Oats (1990, p. 6)

⁵ Strean (1998, p. 337)

⁶ Strean (1998)

⁷ Griffin (1926)

⁸ Martens (1987)

⁹ Strean (1998, p. 337)

¹⁰ Finkelstein (1998, p. 59)

¹¹ Cortazzi (1993, p. 5-9) cited in Dhunpath (2004, p. 545)

¹² Dhunpath (2000, p. 544)

¹³ Templin, Sparkes, Grant & Schempp (1994, p. 292)

¹⁴ Novoa (1992, p. 113) cited in Abraho (2002)

¹⁵ Practical implications related to selection of a participant, such as accessibility of place and time had to be considered. The participant had to not only meet the academically stated criteria, but also the practical ones such as being located in Southeast region of the United States. This geographical area was selected because the method of study required a considerable amount of time on the part of the participant and the researcher.

¹⁶ Spradley (1979, pp. 45-54)

¹⁷ Spradley (1979)

¹⁸ Plummer (2001, p. 136)

¹⁹ Artificial Intelligence see: Dreyfus & Dreyfus, (1986); Education see: Berliner, (1988, 1994); Nursing see: Benner & Tanner, (1987); Rew, (1987, 2000); Sport and Physical Activity see: Stakes and Ericsson (2003); Tan, (1997)

²⁰ Dodds (1994, p. 156)

²¹ Tan (1987, p. 30)

²² Ericsson, Krampe, & Tesch-R-mer (1993); Ericsson and Charness (1994); Simon & Chase (1973)

²³ Statistics retrieved from the Basketball hall of fame website: <http://hoophall.com/halloffamers/SmithDean.htm>

²⁴ Statistics retrieved from the Duke University website: http://goduke.collegesports.com/sports/m-basketbl/mtt/krzyzewski_mike00.html

²⁵ Statistics retrieved from the Florida State University website: http://seminoles.collegesports.com/sports/m-footbl/mtt/bowden_bobby01.html

²⁶ Statistics retrieved from, the University of South Carolina Website: http://uscports.collegesports.com/sports/m-footbk/mtt/holtz_lou00.html

²⁷ Bowden and Smith (1994, pp. 241-242)

²⁸ Roberts (2002, p. 158)

²⁹ Erben (1998, p. 43)

³⁰ Sparkes (2002); & Van Maanen (1988)

³¹ Geertz (1973, p. 9)

³² Morgan (1998, p. 657)

³³ Morgan (1998)

³⁴ Erben (1998, p. 43)

PART I

THE WHAT, HOW AND WHY OF FSU AND BOBBY BOWDEN



"Unconquered," stands high above the Williams Family Plaza in front of the south entrance to Doak S. Campbell Stadium. The bronze sculpture by Fritz White, "Depicts a spear-brandishing Seminole astride a rearing horse, designed to capture the indomitable spirit of the Seminole people and those who have adopted that spirit as a symbol for their university." The massive structure stands, "31 feet from ground level to the tip of the spear, about the height of a three-story building. At sunset the night before each home game, the spear will be ignited and burn until sunrise on the morning after the game" Florida State University Athletic Department (2003).

CHAPTER 1

WHO AM I?

Their little eyes upon you.
And they're watching you night and day.
There are little ears that quickly
Take in every word you say.

There's a wide-eyed little fellow.
Who believes you're always right;
And his ears are always open.
And he watches day and night.

You're setting an example,
Every day in all you do,
To the little boy who's waiting,
To grow to be like you.

Anonymous¹

It is a typical autumn Saturday. On college campuses all across America players, coaches, students, faculties, fans and the media are gearing up to participate in the most traditional of all intercollegiate sports, college football. The pageantry and traditions that have been developed over the years have created an event of spectacle status. However, the Saturday competitions that are played out on the athletic fields on college campuses are fought by young college men in very public cathedrals and coliseums. On one particular Saturday in 2003, I experienced first hand the traditions and fervor surrounding the Seminoles of Florida State University at Doak Campbell Stadium in Tallahassee, Florida.

Built in 1950, the capacity of Doak Campbell has swollen from 15,000 to an impressive 82,300. In 2002, the stadium hosted the largest crowd ever to watch the Seminoles suffer a 34-24 defeat at the hands of the Notre Dame Fighting Irish. Over the years Doak Campbell has

witnessed the growth of a college football dynasty, orchestrated by Head Football Coach Bobby Bowden. As the FSU media guide notes, “Like its residents, the most successful college football program over the past decade, Doak Campbell has become a fitting showcase for Florida State University.”²

Leading up to Saturday November 15, and the homecoming game against North Carolina State, I had watched team practices, researched the Florida State Sports Information archives and observed the workings of a Division I-A football program. From what would become my research center, the press box, I witnessed the stadium transform. It was amazing to watch the playing surface go from a plain plot of grass on Monday go to a lavishly painted gridiron, with the Florida State Seminole Logo clearly marking the center by Saturday. As I learned the intricacies of this large dominating brick palace, I began to appreciate its importance. Throughout the research process Doak Campbell hosted me.

The FSU homecoming game with North Carolina State was broadcast on national television and kicked-off at 3:38 pm. Thanks to the athletic department, I had secured a game day parking permit and a sideline pass. I arrived at the stadium at 10:30 in the morning and departed long after the game, some twelve hours later. All week I had focused on the team and the build up. However, it wasn't until one sunny afternoon in the April, as I again gazed out over a torn up turf, whilst watching an activity class of students running steps that I fully appreciated the importance of Doak Campbell Stadium, or “the jock's palace,” as it was described to me by one FSU doctoral student.³

To most people, stadiums, coliseums, arenas, natatoriums, fields, and sporting venues are only seen on game days. Fans dressed in school colors adorn the stands supporting their beloved teams. The more time I spent at Florida State and Doak Campbell, the more I realized that

stadiums fill numerous roles and are more than just a playing surface. Apart from being the home of Seminole football, Doak Campbell also houses University Center A (including, Financial Aid, Dean of Students, Career center), University Center B (including, the Visitors Services, Hospitality Administration Department, University Center Club), and University Center C (including the, Alumni Association, FSU Foundation, Seminole Boosters, School of Social Work). All-in-all, it is more than just a stadium. At FSU, both Doak Campbell and Coach Bobby Bowden perform jobs, tasks and roles that are hidden. The remainder of this chapter examines the roles, both public and private, that Coach Bowden plays as the head coach.

A collegiate head football coach is often judged by what happens on the field, and by what is reported in the media as news. Much of what Coach Bowden's job entails happens outside of the spotlight. Coach Bowden began coaching football in 1953 as an assistant coach at his alma mater, Howard College in Birmingham, Alabama. Fifty one years later, Bowden has won more games than any other Head Coach in Division I-A football. Among his numerous accomplishments one finds two NCAA Championships. His Florida State program, where he has been the head coach since 1976, has become a perennial power house in college football and a non-ten-game-winning season is seen by many to be a failure.⁴

So what does the head coach of such a successful program actually do? Mark Richt, the present head football coach at the University of Georgia and fourteen year assistant to Bowden at FSU noted, "There are just so many roles that have to be played and so many decisions that you have to make. There are so many people that are affected by what you do and what you say."⁵ In discussing the differing roles played by a head coach, Bowden said:

The problem with being a coach is that you must be a teacher, a father, a mother, a psychologist, a counselor, a disciplinarian, and Lord-knows-what-else. If all we had to do was coach, they'd have to cut our salaries because coaching is the easiest part of the job.⁶

Throughout his career Bowden has carefully, honestly and effectively learned to perform the diverse roles that being a head football coach entails. As I analyzed the observations, interviews, archives, documents and previous texts that I had accumulated during data collection, I classified the roles that Bowden performs at FSU into three categories: *A Coach*, *A Salesman* and *A Person*. Each category provides a thematic overview of the job diversity and further stratifies the head coach's responsibilities.

A Coach

In a 1989 *Time Magazine* article, Gup noted, "The national obsession with winning and moneymaking is turning big-time college sports into an educational scandal that, for too many players, leads down a one-way path to broken dreams."⁷ In seasons when a team is winning, the coach is often seen as a hero. Yet, when the team is losing he is often seen as a villain. If, however, a coach like Bowden is able to develop a program that has consistently demonstrated superior performance, one may be proclaimed a legend.⁸ Yet, according to Bowden, "A coach is nothing but a teacher; the only thing is he is louder. A teacher stands before the class and teaches, teaches, teaches, and teaches. A coach goes on the field and does the same. If you can't teach then you can't coach."⁹

Bowden believes that one characteristic of a successful teacher is the ability to communicate with both his players and coaches. As Bowden's career progressed, his primary role as the Florida State head coach is "coaching the coaches," and has the "coaches coach the players."¹⁰ However, he does feel that the head coach of a college football team still needs to be

able to communicate information to the players when needed. This is supported by the fact that when discussing the possibility of retirement, an inability to communicate with the kids (players) would be a sign for Bowden to get out. Under this particular category the roles Coach Bowden plays have been further stratified, as a head collegiate football coach needs to be a *Leader*, *Mentor*, *Surrogate Parent*, and *Listener*.

A Leader

Using a constant reference to the military and the great generals of history, Bowden repeatedly linked the preparation of a football team by a coach to that of a military commander preparing his troops for battle. Bowden is quick, however, to note that although the comparison between the military and football has been traditionally made there is one big distinction. Football is just a game. War is a matter of life and death. However, the humility of the great historical leaders was not lost on Bowden as he noted, “Look again at the truly great leaders in human history, both men and women. They all walk with a limp. They carry their failures with them.”¹¹ Bowden is no different from some of the greatest military generals in his thinking and strategic insights. His actions and interactions with coaches and players are built on the strong and personal foundation of compassion. His planning and preparation routines for competition are still built on the excitement of strategy and the challenge of out-thinking his opponents. However, above the compassion and strategy comes the acceptance of responsibility. Bowden strongly believes that, “EVERYTHING THAT OCCURS WITHIN AN ORGANIZATION REFLECTS BACK UPON ITS LEADER.”[*Emphasis in original*]¹² He goes on to say in his book, *The Bowden Way*, “You are the standard-bearer for your organization. Whatever you expect from others, they’d better see it first in you. If you don’t want this responsibility, then get out of the way and let someone else carry the flag.”¹³ Through cross-referencing the importance

of responsibility, one would find that taking responsibility for your actions and those that belong to the organization that you run is a foundation concept to Bowden's way of thinking and everyday actions. In a text written about him in 1980 titled *Bound for Glory*, Bowden is quoted as saying in response to his success,

It's awfully easy to put the blame on your staff or one of the players, but I'm the head coach, I'm responsible. If we get an intercepted pass, I threw it—I'm the head coach. If we get a punt blocked—I caused it. A bad practice, a bad game—it's up to me to assume responsibility—I'm the head coach.¹⁴

A Mentor

In 1985 Mark Richt, a young pro quarterback, was cut by the Miami Dolphins. His playing days over, he hoped to forge a career in coaching. After approaching his alma mater, the University of Miami, with little success, Richt searched out other coaching opportunities within college football. Following a short spell as a high school coach, Richt finally landed a job in Tallahassee, Florida on the coaching staff of Florida State.¹⁵ During an interview with Coach Richt, he looked back at how he started in college coaching and his relationship with Coach Bowden.

I had been recruited by Florida State and Coach Bowden as a player. I never did play for him, but I had always liked him through the recruiting process and everything. After Florida State had beaten up on Miami one year he came by and offered his condolences, so I always had a high regard for him as a person and as a coach. Then I got an opportunity to be a graduate assistant coach at Florida State. It was a unique situation, in that I also got to coach the quarterbacks. He gave me an opportunity to do what a lot of people probably didn't think was very smart, but he was overseeing it and well he had

coached quarterbacks for years. I was a graduate assistant for 2 years. Then when that ended there was what was called a volunteer assistant. It doesn't exist now because the NCAA changed that, but I was that for two-years. Then, in 1989, I left and went to East Carolina University, but came back the next year as a full time coach, coaching quarterbacks. So, from 1990 to when I left in 2000 I coached QB's and then became the offensive coordinator in, I think, 1994.¹⁶

On leaving Florida State, Richt recalled a piece of advice that Bowden gave him and the influence that he still has on him today:

Well, first of all, he said, "Being a head coach is gut wrenching. Are you sure you want to do it buddy?" Now, he was guiding me all along and he probably didn't even know it. I don't think that was his plan or whatever. He was guiding me as he would any coach to help the team succeed, but even after I was here I didn't have to pick up the phone and call him to have his influence. I mean I had 15 years of memories to reflect on how we did it at Florida State or how would Coach have handled this situation. I mean I could have called him and asked him, but I think I pretty much knew what his answers would be.¹⁷

Mark Richt's testimony regarding the influence of Coach Bowden on his coaching career illustrates the mentoring role that he has had on his assistant coaches over the years. In addition to Coach Richt, three other FSU assistant coaches, Coach Odell Haggins¹⁸, Coach Mickey Andrews¹⁹ and Coach Jim Gladden²⁰ all provided similar endorsements to the influence that Bowden has had on their coaching careers and practices. For example, Bowden's ability to delegate responsibility within the program is seen as a strength of his leadership.²¹

At the beginning of his career Head Coaching career at South Georgia College, Bowden did everything, including mowing the grass and marking the field and coaching the team with only one assistant coach.²² At the end of his career he leads the program with very little direct interaction with the players. He still provides closure to practices and makes the occasionally team speech at its beginning. Bowden, however, largely takes watch in a tower that stands high above the three practice fields or his tan golf cart. As Bowden has matured in age and experience, he has openly admitted that he now does less on the field coaching than he once did,

I don't do hardly any physical coaching on the field anymore. When I first started, I had to. Then the older you get the more you back off that, and the more you delegate that to other people. So, the way I describe that is that I coach the coaches. The coaches go out there on the field and I watch and when I see somebody doing something wrong, well I write it down. Now some coaches may go up to and correct a coach on the field. I don't believe in that. I don't think that is a good trait when you are going up and correcting a fellow coach when he is trying to teach a kid by going, "That ain't right, that ain't the way to do that, get out the way let me show'em." I don't do that. I write notes then when we have our meeting, I coach the coaches. I say look, "Now you are going to have to change this. You are not doing that right. I want it done like this, this, this and this."²³

As a mentor to his coaches Bowden has been able to influence his coaches' interactions with the players and their own personal career goals. Interestingly, Bowden's coaches have been increasingly loyal. Coaches Mickey Andrews and Billy Sexton²⁴ have coached at FSU for over twenty years. Those that have moved on to become head coaches and assistant coaches at other programs have been successful.²⁵

A Surrogate Parent

Looking back, I can still remember leaving home and heading off to college. I moved from a small new town in the rural county of Berkshire to London, the capital city of England. After spending four years of my life earning a degree in education, I moved to the United States of America. Having originated in a country where college athletics relies on the participation and organization of student run clubs, I still find the whole phenomenon and profile of college athletics intriguing. I am amazed by the power and unity that college athletics possesses on college campuses. However, it was not until I arrived at the University of Georgia that I started to appreciate truly the cultural identity, in particular the success of the football team. Yet, I was puzzled and concerned about the pressures on the student-athletes.

Reflecting to my own athletic days, I personally struggled to juggle the necessities of education with the passion and desire to compete in sport and the pressures and commitments—pressures and commitments that were extremely insignificant compared to that of an intercollegiate athlete in the United States. In the United States, sport and higher education are interwoven fibers bonded by the traditions of collegiate athletics. The athletes not only pursue a degree in higher education, they are also asked to practice, play and represent the college on a media level that rivals the ranks of the professional for at least twenty hours a week—a task that requires the utmost of dedication. Interestingly, this happens at a time in their lives when, as students many of them are leaving home and their families for the first time and are assuming responsibility for themselves.

In paternal fashion, Bowden more often than not refers to his players as kids. Now in his mid-70's he, by age, could easily be their grandfathers. Yet, over his fifty years of coaching, Bowden has been able to not only relate to his “KIDS” but also aid in this important transition.

This is a practice that he starts during the recruiting process and continues after they leave. Monk Bonosorte a former player²⁶ testified that:

I have had some personal things that occurred when I was out of college. Now I don't want to get too involved but I had some personal problems the year after I graduated that could have easily been an embarrassment to the program. ... Coach Bowden was very forthright with me. He wrote to me, called me, talked to me, and said that whatever happens you are always welcome back to this organization. You are always a part of our family. That is one of the reasons for coming back here was Coach Bowden. It was his belief and his trust in me as well as his loyalty. He understands that things happen and you just have to move on and come back from them and then right them.

Coach Bowden and I have a great relationship and have always had a great relationship. Another thing that happened when I left Florida State was ... well, I still have this letter that he sent to my parents. He wrote and said that it is going to be hard to see your son leave because I want you to know that your son was like a son to me. He noted my leadership and different things. My parents cried and everything. I don't know of any other coaches that would do that and I don't know if he did that to any other or every other senior.²⁷ Maybe he did. But it is just the way that he touches you and the way that he can impact your life. The way if you have problems, you can come and sit with him and talk to him. Yes, he knows football and athletes, but he tries to touch you and get to know you on an individual bases. He also tries to help you with your personal life even if that is going to conflict with football.

I don't know of any athlete that you could talk to that would say a bad word about him, because he is more than just a football coach. There are other coaches that just

demand things out of you physically and football-wise but don't care about you personally. Coach Bowden cares about all of you.²⁸

There is no doubt that Bowden cares for his players. He frequently claims that he treats his players as he would his own children.²⁹ Time after time, in interviews with, coaches, players and former players, they all spoke of times that he influenced their lives positively, most of which had very little to do with football. One former player and now a graduate assistant coach, Jamie Colzie, talked very openly in an interview about his experience as a freshman at Florida State and the transition that he had to make between leaving home and going to college.

If I ever needed to talk to someone or ever had a problem with anything, the first person that I would go to, wouldn't be my friends. It wouldn't be my mother. It wouldn't be my sisters. It would be my father. We could talk about anything—trouble with the girlfriend, trouble with school, stuff like that. Well when I was 18/19 years old I felt kind of odd doing that with my father only because I mean, I could get on the phone and call him, but I didn't necessarily have that face-to-face conversation. So you know, I am not saying that I had all these problems when I was in school, but if I did need to actually sit down and have a conversation with someone that I needed to have, it would be with Coach Bowden or Coach Andrews.³⁰

Bowden makes no excuses regarding his or his coaching staff's personal investment and surrogate parent outlook when it comes to their Florida State players, "I tell parents that I'll do my best to be like a parent to their boys, that I'll watch over them and, when necessary, discipline them the same way a father would."³¹ During an interview Bowden authenticated this notion, when he declared:

We try to convince the parents that I am going to take care of your son when he comes.

Y'all can't be here when he comes up here. He is leaving y'all. You are through. Now I have got to try and do what y'all did. And, I am going to try and do what y'all did.³²

Throughout the process, thanks to observations and interviews Florida State football had a distinct family feel to it. At all times the players, secretaries, coaches, support staff and for the most part the surrounding athletic staff, had a caring attitude which was personified by their willingness to help. The coaches acted more like siblings with each other as they demonstrated a real sense solidarity and camaraderie, and as caring parents to their 'adopted' kids. For example, each week, during the summer different coaches send out a team letter to the players. In addition, Coach Bowden also sends a letter to the parents of the incoming freshmen. As a conclusion to this small section, I have included a copy of the letter that was sent out to the incoming freshmen in 2003. As you will read, not only does Bowden stress the importance of family indirectly by asking the parents to read the letter to their son, but it also identifies personal problems that their son may face within the first year of their college career. Interestingly, the letter³³ also draws on Bowden's personal experiences that will be discussed further in Chapters Five and Six.

July 28, 2003

Dear Freshman Parents,

Please let me give you some advice in regard to your son's coming to Florida State University this fall and being successful in his academic pursuits and football. I have had four sons in college and 50 years of coaching experience with the college athlete and I can anticipate what is going to happen.

Your son will likely get homesick within three days and it is perfectly natural for him to do so, especially if you are a close family. He may call you seeking sympathy and want to come home. If he does, the best thing you can do as a parent is to tell him you expect him to stay at Florida State at least one full year. Don't let him even consider dropping out (until he has given it a full year's try). Also, if he does call and want to quit or come home, don't sympathize with him. Sympathy will only enhance his chances of leaving. If a boy remains

one full year, he will usually remain four years. However, if he quits, he always regrets doing so. I know because that is what I did my first year in college and I have regretted it for the past 54 years. Sooner or later the baby bird has to leave the nest.

Let me make you aware that I take all of my players to church two times during two-a-days. I take them to a predominately white church and a predominately black church. I do so to let them know that they are welcome no matter what their race. I try to rotate between Protestant and Catholic churches since 98% of our players usually attend one of these. If you do not want me to include your son, write me and tell me and I will not. I have been doing this for 45 years and have had only 3 parents ask that their son not be included. I obeyed their wishes. I expect your son to comply unless you object.

Some boys develop early and some boys develop late. Some may start in their first two years and never get better. Some will start slow and I will about give up on them, then they bloom and become All-Americans. Every boy is different. Cream always rises to the top if we will be patient. We would not have signed your son if we did not feel he was good enough. When he gets to college he will no longer be a big star, he is one of 25 outstanding freshmen starting all over again. The college development is very similar to high school development. What did he do in his first year of high school? College is relative.

We look for immediate help from our freshmen, but do not be alarmed if your son is not ready. Only two or three usually help our varsity as freshmen. The others will be like most of us and improve with age they must not become discouraged and throw in the towel. I do want your son to come in like he will start his first year. We can then gauge him and go from there.

Please reread this letter with your son. If someone had alerted me to this before I went to college, I would have prevented my first failure in college. Save this letter and go back and read it each time he gets down on himself - I know!

Sincerely,

*Bobby Bowden
Head Football Coach*

A Listener

Although Bowden's time is spread thin amongst the differing roles that are discussed in this chapter, he always seems to find time for everyone; primarily through his open door policy

for players and coaches. No matter what Bowden is doing his players and coaches come first during office hours. Numerous examples can be found in interview transcripts or books and articles that have been published. During the time I spent at Florida State Coach Bowden always made me feel welcome. Rather than trying to describe how Bowden is a listener, I will allow the statements of former coaches and players to do so, for they stand as stronger evidence than anything that I can attempt to explain.

Coach Gladden³⁴

I always felt like with coach Bowden that I could carry any problem in to him, any thing personal or relating to the team. I always thought that this relationship was in part like my relationship with my dad. I can go in there and get good advice, and it will be good and sound and honest and I will trust it, and I can act on it.

Coach Andrews³⁵

I think the fact that he cares about you, not only how successful the kids are on the football field, but also the preparation that the kids are going through academically and personally, that will allow them to be successful when football is over with. Now I think that that is very very important to him, as is the spiritual side of coaching.

Coach Richt³⁶

Well, I don't know how it was before I got there but I think that everybody knew who the head coach was and I think that that is important. I think that his door was always open. Now some kids took advantage of that more than others. I think he had a way of talking to the group that was very positive and he has a motivating way about him. I think they believe that he cares about them and I think that that is probably one of the biggest things.

Jamie Colzie³⁷

When you go to other schools and talk to some ex-players from other schools, you just get the impression that some coaches are just untouchable. You know, you would think that a guy that has the most wins in NCAA football history would be someone that you couldn't even talk to. But he is right down there at practice and, well, sometimes he's up there in the tower. But at practice, you know he is flexible and accessible to the assistant coach, and to the trainer who is taping ankles. You can always go up and talk to him. If you have a question all you have to do is go up to him and ask him, he will answer you. He won't ignore you, like some other coaches would. That is surprising to me since he is someone who has the most wins, and some would see him being, maybe more arrogant or rude or something like that. He isn't like that at all. He is very, very approachable, and you could practically ask him anything and he will bend over backwards and try and answer the questions for you.

A Salesman³⁸

To many people, at least initially, the idea of Coach Bowden being a salesman or salesperson would be somewhat alien. However, so are the roles that Doak Campbell Stadium play at Florida State University. At first glance, Doak Campbell was simply the home of the two-time NCAA National Champions Florida State. In comparison, Bowden, too many, is seen purely as a head coach that coaches the Seminoles on Saturdays during the season. As the leader, comparable to "a CEO of a major company,"³⁹ there are many tasks related to his job title that are hidden within the stadium walls. When one thinks about the head football coach being a salesman, many tend to focus on the exceptionally important task of recruiting. However, "Salesmanship is a major component of modern college football. I've been selling since I was 23

years old. And, contrary to public perception, a coaches' target market is not limited to high school seniors," noted Bowden.⁴⁰ In addition, Bowden has to sell the program and the university to alumni, boosters, the media, and sometimes more importantly the general public. In essence he is a public *Figurehead*, *University Ambassador*, *Recruiter*, *Public Speaker* and a *Role Model*, roles that all fall under the umbrella of being a Salesman.

A Figurehead

The first time I meet coach Bowden was at a regular weekly banquet, held every Monday during the season. This particular meeting followed an unexpected loss to his son Tommy Bowden's Clemson Tigers. The proceedings opened with a witty and comical introduction by Charlie Barnes, the executive director of the Seminole Booster Club.⁴¹ Following the introductions Coach Bowden discussed the events that occurred during the game, updated those in attendance of any possible suspensions, and gave a general look at the status of the FSU team. Although the discussion was serious, Bowden possessed an aura during his presentation. He was able to laugh at himself, and "work" the crowd with a well proportioned mix of humor and wisdom, something that he has been able to do throughout his career.⁴² Interestingly enough, with what seemed a little tongue in cheek, he did remind the attending alumni and boosters that teams actually have to lose every Saturday because must we not forget that is the nature of the game. This was a point that he again reiterated in an interview, "You know what your alumni do? They think that you are the only team that lost. So if you lose a ball game, they say, "How can we lose? So, you just have to try and remind them that 50% of the teams that played on Saturday actually lost."⁴³ It is at times like these that Bowden could be said to be somewhat of an actor, another role in the repertoire of a head coach. Now, it is important not to misrepresent what I mean by Bowden being an actor. It became increasingly apparent during the process that

Bowden is very much true to himself and is genuine in his interactions with people. He does not seem to have a “Bowden the person persona” and a “Bowden the Head” one. He is just himself.

With regards to being an actor at times, Bowden has articulated in the past:

Part of being a head coach is playing the actor. You’ve got to pretend you have all the confidence in the world even when you’re shaking in your boots and even when you’re torn up inside over a big loss.⁴⁴

In addition to the banquet, Bowden’s responsibilities to the boosters is yearly, since they actually underwrite a significant percentage of his annual salary. Charlie Barnes, Bowden’s summer traveling partner on the summer tours explained,

As you know, we [The Seminole Boosters] underwrite a good portion of his contract and in return he gives us so many days a year for related functions. In the spring we take him to twenty-five specific places, where he will do pretty much what we want him to do during that time, with the exception of asking for money because he doesn’t like that. So we don’t ask him to do that. But he will play golf, and he will be himself and he will go to breakfast, and go and have dinner with people and he will talk and he will entertain, which is really what we need. We need his personality and we need for him to touch the garments of the faithful.

Now, I set that tour up. That is one of the reasons why they brought me in twenty-seven years ago to do this. He originated the tour, it was his idea back in 1976 and I came in 1978 and formalized the tour and built it and structured it. It has remained a fairly rigid tour that takes place mid-April and runs to the end of May. Now he does do other special events for us during the year, in relation to fundraising, that we ask him to do. He will do pretty much what we ask him. But in terms of speaking to groups of alumni and fans it is

limited to the late April – May swing, a time where we set the agenda. And I am the one that takes him on the visits.⁴⁵

As Charlie Barnes indicated the “Bobby Bowden/ARVIDA tour,” as it is now known, occurs between mid-April and late May.⁴⁶ As can be seen by the tour flier (Figure 1.1) Bowden visited 19 different cities across Florida and into Georgia in just over one month, a schedule that would be too much for most golf professionals, let alone a 74 year old football coach.



THE BOBBY BOWDEN/ARVIDA TOUR

One of the flagship programs of Seminole Boosters is the annual Bobby Bowden/Arvida Tour, a series of golf & dinner outings hosted by local Seminole Clubs, and featuring Coach Bowden and several Seminole celebrities.

Hear Coach Bowden talk about the prospects for next season and watch football film highlights from the 2003 season. All alumni, fans and friends of FSU are invited. Details of the events and reservations are available through your local Seminole Club.

PENSACOLA - Thursday, April 15 Dinner: Anne Easter (850) 380-3614 Golf: Marty Stanovich (850) 932-1330	SARASOTA - Thursday, May 6 Golf: Gene Gainer (941) 359-3880 Luncheon: Jan Felton (941) 927-1676
PANAMA CITY - Friday, April 16 Dinner & Golf: Janice Hanks (850) 770-7544	PINELLAS - Friday, May 7 Dinner: Jim Hall (727) 391-8780 Golf: Marshel O'Shields (727) 536-1016
MELBOURNE - Friday, April 23 Golf & Luncheon: Brendan McCarthy (321) 720-3893	FT. MYERS - Saturday, May 8 Dinner & Golf: Bob Voitaw (239) 481-0230
FT. PIERCE - Friday, April 23 Dinner: Gary Dundas (772) 461-2310	DAYTONA - Thursday, May 13 Golf & Luncheon: Rick Brown (386) 255-0932
PALM BEACH - Saturday, April, 24 Dinner & Golf: Melanie Beare (561) 775-0559	POLK - Friday, May 14 Dinner: Blythe Carpenter (863) 648-3535 Golf: Roger Phillips (863) 294-9485
JACKSONVILLE - Monday, April 26 Dinner: Jim Edmiston (904) 241-1282 Golf: Max Zahn (904) 363-1234	ORLANDO - Saturday, May 15 Dinner: Andy Chmelir (407) 291-2734 Golf: Reg Shrigley (407) 681-6727
LAKE CITY - Tuesday, April 27 Dinner: Donna Paulin (386) 719-4306 Golf: Kevin Francisco (386) 867-5679	TAMPA - Monday, May 17 Dinner: Laura Webb (727) 492-7832 Golf: Bill Crusselle (813) 972-1991
FT. LAUDERDALE - Friday, April 30 Dinner: Ellen O'Dea (954) 675-0842 Golf: Mike Gorham (954) 714-1453	ORANGE PARK - Monday, May 24 Dinner: Brenda Brunner (904) 278-9857 Golf: Russ Vorhis (904) 276-9535
MIAMI - Saturday, May 1 Golf: Ed Lombard (305) 810-2538 Luncheon: Ann Soucy (305) 233-4423	OCALA - Tuesday, May 25 Dinner: Troy Battle (352) 335-9090 x-1481 Golf: Jeff Duval (352) 362-1649
ATLANTA - Monday, May 3 Dinner: Sandi Meier (770) 662-9490 Golf: Mike Hilleboe (770) 845-1813	ARVIDA'S SOUTHWOOD Tallahassee, Florida Home of the FSU Seminole Golf Team

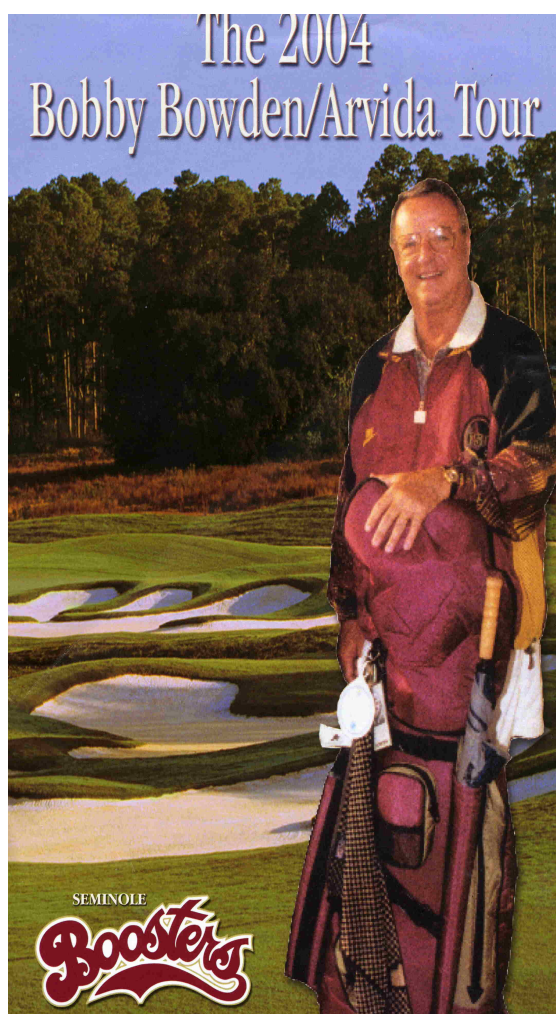


Figure 1.1. The 2004 Bobby Bowden/Arvida Tour Flier

A University Ambassador

In the southern part of the United States, college football takes on more of a rite of passage than maybe it ought to during the fall. As Coach Gladden noted,

College football is a way of life in the south. It is a religion really to some people especially in Florida, Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi and Louisiana. In those states the head football coaches actually have more command than the governors. He is more thought of. Therefore it has got to be a guy that understands the culture of the area.⁴⁷

Bowden is most definitely a proud southern man; some may even class him as an Alabama “red-neck.”⁴⁸ Born on November 8, 1929, Bowden spent his early years in Birmingham, Alabama, his birth city and a city that watched him mature into an All-State high school quarterback and a Little Colleges All-American at the local Christian school, Howard College.⁴⁹ After graduating from Howard College, he headed to Nashville, Tennessee to complete a Masters degree in education at Peabody College, only to return to Birmingham and Howard as an assistant coach in 1953. In 1955, he moved east to the neighboring state of Georgia, to a small two-year college in Douglas, Georgia, again only to return four years later as the head coach of the Howard College Bulldogs. However, Bowden dreamed of coaching at a big state school and ultimately dreamed of following in the footsteps of legendary coaches Frank Thomas and Paul “Bear” Bryant as the head coach of the University of Alabama Crimson Tide. That is why in 1965, following a brief stop at Florida State University from 1963-1965, as an Assistant Coach under Bill Peterson, Bowden head north to Morgantown, West Virginia and the Mountaineers of West Virginia University.

In 1970, after a four year spell as the offensive coordinator, Bowden finally broke into the head coaching ranks as he replaced Jim Carlen as the head coach of the Mountaineers. It was

during his time in Morgantown as the head coach of the Mountaineers that Bowden learned the power of the press, and the importance of football. You could say it was during his six year tenure at West Virginia that he learned that a head football coach was more than a coach; he was also a university ambassador. Bowden returned to Florida State as the head coach in 1976, where he still coaches today.

As the head coach of a perennial football power, Bowden is more than aware of the pressures and public interests that are attached to his football program. Although, fortunate during his initial coaching exploits at Howard and South Georgia College, Bowden soon understood the power that college football possesses in the local community. Following several embarrassing losses to Duke University and the University of Pittsburgh in 1970 it was noticeable to Bowden that the results of the local university football teams represent not only the players, coaches and students but also the community and alumni. As the quote from Coach Gladden attests, the college football coach in the south is a very influential man that lives in a very public environment. For coach Bowden, thanks to his career successes his influence spreads further.

One faction of society that significantly influences the masses is the media, through the communication networks of television and the internet, and the traditional channels of newspapers and radio. When Bowden was a boy it was the radio that introduced him to the great coaches, college teams, and players of the day. Maybe this would explain why, until recently, he has always considered himself a “press man:”

I have always tried to give them [the media] access to stories. I have always felt that the press are like coaches. Now if I am going to coach and I go down to the local high school and the coach won't let me see his players then how am I going to get good players. I

need to see them. Now they make their living by writing. If I can't give them a story then they are going to gripe. So I have always been excessively accessible to the press. Now, you wouldn't say that now because the last couple of years I have been increasingly harsh with the press. Because when we had those bad years they were vicious and they were cruel. Well it made me so mad. So I really backed off the last couple of years in making myself available. I don't hesitate now to say no. I used to try and meet every desire they had. I won't do that anymore.

The things that irritated me the most is say that a kid gets into trouble in September. Then, in December somebody else gets in trouble. Then say in January three guys get in trouble. Now every time something else happened the writers would go back and say don't forget this, and this and then don't forget this and that. ... I got so tired of that, yes we know it happened, I just deal with that and forget all that crap you know. I got so tired of that and it made me mad so I said "Shoot." So I backed off a lot and I feel bad about it, but I don't. And, well, I do what I can.⁵⁰

As highlighted by Bowden's sentiments, the actions of the players both on and off the field and coaching decisions have increasingly strained his personal relationship with the media. This has been particularly evident at Florida State. Throughout the 1980s and 1990's numerous negative events have impacted the Florida State program thus tarnishing Bowden's reputation and integrity.⁵¹ Additionally, his comments, above, provide an initial glimpse into the standards and roles that athletes and coaches are held to as university representatives. For the most part, life inside the Florida State football program is, to many, something that is worth reading and hearing about. Therefore, every action, comment and statement made by a member of the FSU football team is seen as a representation of the university. Needless to say the person in charge of

the program is held even more accountable than those that work with and for him and play under him. A point that was well made by a former player, with regards to the media pressures and public scrutiny that Bowden has recently received underlined the problem:

I think that two or three years ago when you are 10-2 and 11-1 every year and then you struggle to win eight games, you start to garner unnecessary criticism from people and don't take this the wrong way, but most people that criticize are disgruntled jocks that never had the opportunity to play and do anything themselves. They are jealous of the fact that you have young athletes out there giving it all. He got some very harsh criticism and that affected him for a while, especially in the way he handled the media and certain other situations. He kind of pulled away and that wasn't Bobby. I think that the criticism that kept coming and coming and coming hurt. Again, you must remember that because of the volume of players that comes through a program like Florida State, you are going to have some problems.⁵²

That is why one role that Bowden must play is that of a university ambassador. Just as a U.S. Ambassador is stationed in a different country as a diplomat represents the people of the United States of America, Bowden the Ambassador of Florida State football, is a diplomat for the program and university in the eyes of the media and the general public.

A Recruiter

Every February, the high school football stars sign a national letter of intent to a college football program so that they can potentially be a college, and maybe even professional football star. Yet, leading up to this one day, so intriguing and exciting to even the most stoic fan, has been a long and arduous journey. Coaches have dedicated countless hours to traveling, reviewing tapes, scouting and organizing official and receiving unofficial visits by prospective players and

their families. According to Bowden, the ability of a program to recruit the great players must be the cornerstone of any program that wants to attain an elite status in college football. As Bowden stated, “Those that get the best players are going to win. You cannot win the Kentucky Derby with a mule.”⁵³ In further discussing the role of recruiting, Bowden highlighted the fact that coaching and, in particular recruiting, is a very people oriented business:

Well, thank goodness I enjoy people, because if I didn't enjoy people it [recruiting] wouldn't be any fun. You have got to be able to go talk to people. You have to talk to parents, talk to friends, talk to coaches, you have got to talk to the boy; now I do enjoy that. My life would be easier if I didn't have to do it. But I have kind of enjoyed that through the years. Now if I ever lost that, then I would have to get out, because you have to recruit well if you want to win. I like coaching and realize that recruiting is part of it. I have met so many wonderful people doing that. So instead of it being a minus it is a plus.

However, there have been a lot of coaches that have gotten out of coaching at the college level because of recruiting or they simply go coach in the pro's, where they can draft them. There they don't have to put up with all the crap associated with recruiting. I think that they just get tired of traveling and being away from home, Now the toughest thing about recruiting is talking to some 17 year old that thinks he is the best thing that has ever walked, knowing that you ain't going to get him unless you baby him a little. I hate that phoniness part. That is one of the bad things about recruiting. Now the big thing is that it [the fun of recruiting] has stayed with me. Whereas a lot of coaches just, well I remember Coach Jerry Claiborne.

Jerry was a great coach at Virginia Tech. He did a great job but got fired there. Then, he went to Colorado for a year as an assistant coach and then came back to the University of Maryland and had some great teams before retiring. Then, he ended up at Kentucky, his alma mater. That was one of those jobs where you go 7-4 and you have done a great job. So this must have been ten or twelve years ago. Now I heard him tell this story.

He was going up to Ohio to recruit out of Lexington and they were circling the airport trying to get in so that they could see this kid. He was up there in the storm. He said, "Why am I up here in this storm? Why am I doing this?" I am fearful that we might crash. I am doing all this to see some little old 17 year old guy down there, so that I can convince him to come to my school." Well the thing is he came back home from that trip and resigned. He had had enough. Now the reason that I mentioned that to you is that I ain't had enough yet, for some reason. Well you get my age and you would think that you have had enough of that, but I haven't.⁵⁴

Bowden's role in the recruiting process has changed over time. At FSU, Bowden's assistant coaches, in liaison with the recruiting coordinator, are all responsible for designated geographical regions. Bowden, to use a baseball analogy has become the ultimate closer, with the assistant coaches being the starting pitcher and the set-up men.

The big thing that I try to do is bring out the plusses of our school. We don't cherish knocking down the other schools. Now we might try and compare them and why we think that we are better. Now somebody might misconstrue that, but we are going to tell you why we think that this is the best place to go. Now there has been some school that have gone to recruit kids, and they [the kids] have told us it, they will have a package

of writings on us about how bad we are, kids that have got arrested, kids that have got into trouble, kids that have got kicked off the team, kids that have got into, now that is really negative there and we don't do that. What I try and tell them is the positive reasons why you will be better off here at Florida State. We try to convince the parents that I am going to take care of their son when he comes.

The main thing is that the assistant coaches really do all the work. It is like Jim Gladden was a really good recruiter. He would get close to the kid, close to the family, close to everybody, and then I would go in there and make the final sale. But it was because of what he did that allowed us to get the kid. I have been very fortunate that I have had good coaches.

Recruiting is kind of like keeping up with the Joneses. You have got to have a bigger stadium because Georgia has a bigger stadium. We have got to have a better training room, because Florida has a bigger training room. So Coach Bowden you have got to visit him because coach Holtz was there last week. Coach Paterno is coming in there so you have got to go. So, you are keeping up with the Joneses.⁵⁵

Although Bowden's role in recruiting has changed with time and NCAA regulations (Chapter Four), he still has a "recruiter" aspect to his job. For example, at home games during the year, it is not uncommon to see an important recruit visit with him in his office before the game, or after an official visit to see the recruits at his house for a farewell desert. To Bowden the thrill of recruiting is still there, a must for a coach in college football, an even bigger must if they want to win.⁵⁶

A Public Speaker

In addition to the booster functions, Bowden believes strongly in representing his program and university, and maybe even more importantly, his faith. During the year, Bowden can be found at a church pulpit, a banquet or engagement podium, at the head of a classroom, or amidst a group of coaches at a clinic. His schedule, which is progressively busy throughout the year, is completed by Bowden's speaking engagements, as is demonstrated by his schedule for the spring of 2004 in Appendix A.

Bowden, an openly devout Christian, believes that God's plan for his life is to serve Him and expand His teachings. He just happens to be a successful head football coach. His work with the Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA) has brought him national recognition from the organization, and is an organization that regularly hosts Bowden as is noticeable in his schedule of speaking engagements. In discussing a speech that he gave at an FCA breakfast during the National Coaches Association meeting in Dallas one year, it is fairly easy to gauge the importance of faith on Bowden's life:

There's probably not a single group meeting in this country today that is more influential in the lives of the young people than this one, because y'all command X number of young men. We are the most powerful group assembled that can help the youth of America in the name of Christ.

If we were car salesmen, we probably wouldn't have much influence. If we were preachers, we might not have influence because sometimes preachers have a hard time getting kids' attention. But as coaches, we are in a profession that has high visibility. It gives us a platform to witness. And who knows, one of those kids we witness to might turn out to be a world leader and a greater witness for Christ."

I know God had led me into coaching so that I might serve Him better. Our Florida State team plays in a stadium that seats 60, 519 and in the near future it will seat more than that. In 1991 we played at Michigan in front of a crowd of more than 105, 000 plus we had a national television audience watching. We have played in front of 80,000 in the Orange Bowl. We have played on regional and national television many times. Man, you can't find a pulpit any bigger than that. Those are the biggest pulpits in the world, and it is a great opportunity to witness.

We all have influence on somebody. A daddy influences his child. A momma influences her child. A preacher influences folks in his congregation. And as coaches, we influence many, many more.

In FCA there is a poem about influence that describes it better than any words I can say.⁵⁷ (The poem that he is talking about is the one that heads this chapter.)

Although, this small section has focused on Bowden's speaking engagements with particular attention paid to the FCA's functions, Bowden's schedule demonstrates that he believes in the power of speech. As a salesman he is not afraid to sell his program's qualities, as well as his Christian beliefs.

A Role Model

Bowden notes that one of the biggest responsibilities that he, his coaching staff and his players must fill is that of a role model. This is a message that can be found in all the texts that he has written, or that have been written about him. It is also a theme that is inevitably woven throughout this text. An excellent example can be seen in his most recent book, *The Bowden Way*, where he wrote:

Accept your responsibility as a role model.

One message that I repeat constantly to my players and coaches is that we are all role models. Every human being is a role model. It is an inescapable fact of life. You're either a good role model or a bad one. Your example is either helpful or harmful. You improve the lives of others or you diminish them. But a role model you most definitely are.

I want my athletes to realize that young people look up to them ...maybe even idolize them. I tell my players. *Some twelve-year-old boy back in the neighborhood wants to be just like you. Maybe he's having a tough time at home, or he's not doing well in school. Or maybe some other boys in the neighborhood are trying to corrupt him. But he knows about you and thinks you're great. He's decided to make you his role model. So what will he be like if he tries to be just like you?* [Emphasis in original]⁵⁸

Following on from the theme of this section, *A Salesman*, Bowden does not aggressively sell his religious beliefs and faith as central to being a positive role model, instead he talks of character. During my early conversations there were numerous opportunities for Coach Bowden to discuss his Christian beliefs; however, he never took them. It was only after I had openly invited and even encouraged him to discuss the importance of religion to his life that he began to expand on them. Yet, it must be noted that he is not afraid to give his testimony to those that will listen, and have asked for it.⁵⁹ He firmly believes in the teaching of Christianity, and the moral beliefs that underpin it. As you will discover in Chapters Six and Seven, Bowden's life and coaching career have been strongly influenced by the religious teachings and the beliefs of his parents and the church. However, regardless of his faith and status in the football history books, displaying important traits such as loyalty, integrity, and trust, within one's character⁶⁰ is an important construct of being a good and positive role model to future athletes and coaches.

A Person

Very often, people that are in the public spotlight and labeled famous are only viewed and even judged through their very public and media-distributed lives. Coach Bowden is primarily identified, as a head football coach who is responsible for all that is associated with Florida State. He is ironically seen as the mastermind behind the victory, or the incompetent villain answerable for a loss. As this chapter has outlined, Bowden has many different responsibilities that when pieced together tell a particular story of his lifelong career as a football coach. However, as the saying goes, “you should never judge a book by its cover” the same is true of the life of a famous person.

Although the hours are often long and the time commitments extensive in the college coaching ranks, the coach does not actually call the stadium his home. Amazingly, Bowden has been a coach with various titles and responsibilities since 1953. However, even more amazingly he has had the even greater responsibility of being a husband since 1949 and a father since 1951.

In 1949, at the age of nineteen, Robert Clerkler Bowden married his sixteen year old childhood sweetheart Julia Ann Estock. Impressively, fifty four years later, Ann, as she is known, and Bobby are still happily married and are still living in the house that they moved into in 1976 on their return to Tallahassee. In addition, if getting married wasn't stressful enough, while they both were attempting to get a higher education and college degree, only two years later Ann and Bobby had their first daughter, Robyn. Entering into motherhood eventually forced Ann to no longer pursue an undergraduate degree, but Bobby continued his education whilst starring as the Howard College quarterback. Incredibly, by the time Bowden actually graduated from Howard College, the family had grown in size to four with the birth of Steve in 1952. By the time Bowden coached his fourth and final year as the head coach at Howard

College, Robyn and Steve had been joined by three brothers, Tommy (1954), Terry (1956) and Jeffery (1959), and the youngest family member Ginger (1961).

Whilst having such a public professional life, it is easy for those not involved in college athletics to forget that he is also a husband and a father of six. During his career, his family has traveled many of the rollercoaster rides that are inevitable in coaching college football. He and his family have also learned to deal with life's uncertainties, much like any other family. In essence, Bowden, Ann, Robyn, Steve, Tommy, Terry, Jeffery and Ginger are people, like you and me that are trying to make it through the unpredictability of life. It just happens that Bobby lives his professional life in the very public realm of college coaching. Interestingly, apart from Steve, Bowden's other three sons became college football coaches and his youngest daughter, Robyn, married former FSU assistant coach Jack Hines—who now lives in Clemson, South Carolina—where he is an assistant coach for Tommy.

As you might expect, the Bowden lineage did not stop in 1962 with the birth of Ginger. At the last count, Ann and Bobby are proud grandparents to twenty-seven. In discussing the importance that Bowden holds to family, long time assistant coach Mark Richt, talked about the most important qualities that Bowden brings to the coaching profession:

I think, first and foremost, he is a man that you can respect. He is a man of integrity. He is man that understands that there is a lot more to life than football. He does not live and die on every victory and every defeat. He cares about people and he cares about their families. He cares about the players. He cares about how they grow as people. All those types of things, you just enjoy.⁶¹

As the following chapters and stories unfold, I urge you to remember that throughout his coaching career, Bowden has been a husband, father, and with time a grandfather. In a society

where fame and money is often seen as a sign of success, an individual's life is often judged by the same classification. Although winning is important to Coach Bowden, he considers aspects other than football to be more important. Although this text largely focuses on his career as a successful head football coach, the values, beliefs and contexts of life outside of coaching have been just as, if not more important than the experiences of coaching itself.

¹ Cited in Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 191)

² Florida State University (2003, p. 25)

³ The comment was noted following a conversation with a Ph.D. student in History, during a visit to the Special Collections Department at the Florida State Strozier Library.

⁴ See, Vilona (2003)

⁵ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)

⁶ Bowden and Smith (1996, p. 153)

⁷ Gup (1989, p. 54)

⁸ See: Fennelly (2002); Greene (1991); and Thomas (2002)

⁹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

¹⁰ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

¹¹ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 62-63)

¹² Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 11)

¹³ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 23)

¹⁴ Bynum (1980, p. 8)

¹⁵ Information provided in an interview with the author (April 22, 2004)

¹⁶ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)

¹⁷ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)

¹⁸ Coach Odel Haggins, is a ten year asistant coach at Florida State. Coach Haggins also played from FSU and Coach Bowden from 1986-1989 erving All-American honors in 1989. After spending several years in the Pro ranks and earning a Super Bowl Ring in 1990 with the San Fransico 49ers, Haggins returned to Tallahassee as a Tight ends/offensive line coach. Then in 1996 he became the defensive tackles coach, a position he still holds on 2004.

¹⁹ Coach Mickey Andrews has been a long time assistant coach to Bobby Bowden that has recently earned him the Associate Head coach, as well as the defensive coordinator and secondary coach. Andrews came to FSU in 1964. Andrews has the notable distinction of Playing at the University of Alabama, under the legendary Paul 'bear' Bryant, where he earned two NCAA National Championship rings.

²⁰ Coach Jim Gladden, was a long time assistant coach at Florida State and held the until his retirement held the Associate head coach's title. Gladden, was the only member of Darrell Murda's 1975 coaching staff, all be it a graduate assistant, that was hired by Bowden in 1976. Coach Gladden retired from FSU football following the 2001 season.

²¹ Chapters two and three provide further insights into Bowden's coaching philosophies and practices, including his ability to delegate responsibility.

²² Discussion with Author (October 10, 2003)

²³ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

²⁴ Coach Billy Sexton, following Coach Gladden's retirement is the longest serving coach on Bowden's staff (27 years). Sexton joined the Seminoles in 1977 as a graduate assistant. Today he is the Assistant head coach (2002-present) and the running backs coach, a position he has held since 1983.

²⁵ Mark Richt and Dave Van Halanger as the University of Georgia; Chuck Amato at North Carolina State University; Tommy Bowden, Brad Scott, and Jack Hines; Jeff Bowden [Former National Coach of the year at Auburn, 1993].

²⁶ Monk Bonosorte played for the Seminoles from 1977-1980. A true walk-on from Pittsburgh, Monk earned himself a starting spot in the Defensive Back field, were he earned All-American honors in 1979 and 1980.

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- ²⁷ Sending a letter to Senior is not a common practice of Coach Bowden (Personal Communication with Bowden's Administrative assistant).
- ²⁸ Interview with Author (March 4, 2004)
- ²⁹ Park (Producer/Reporter). (2001, Feb 5)
- ³⁰ Interview with Author (April 6, 2004)
- ³¹ Bowden, Bowden, Bowden Family et al. (1996, p. 70)
- ³² Interview with Author (04 08, 2004)
- ³³ Letter provided by Coach Bowden through his Staff.
- ³⁴ Interview with Author (April 8, 2004)
- ³⁵ Interview with Author (April 6, 2004)
- ³⁶ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)
- ³⁷ Interview with Author (April 6, 2004)
- ³⁸ A Salesman by definition is gender specific. If the section was discussing coaches in general then the term salesperson, would have been far more appropriate. But since the definition of Salesman in a male salesperson, I felt that it more than appropriately identified a series of roles that Bowden himself plays.
- ³⁹ Discussion with Author (October 13, 2003)
- ⁴⁰ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 81)
- ⁴¹ Charlie is the executive director of the Seminole Booster Club whose job is to raise money for Florida State athletics.
- ⁴² See, McGrotha (1979); and Walker (1993)
- ⁴³ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
- ⁴⁴ Bowden, Bowden, Bowden Family et al. (1996, p. 150)
- ⁴⁵ Interview with Author (March 23, 2004)
- ⁴⁶ For a description of the 2001 tour, see Ellis (2001); For a review of the 2003 Arvida Tour, visit Charlie Barnes' column on the Seminole Booster Website, at: <http://www.seminole-boosters.com/Default.asp>
- ⁴⁷ Interview with Author (April 8, 2004)
- ⁴⁸ Interview with Coach Gladden (April 08, 2004)
- ⁴⁹ Now known as Samford University
- ⁵⁰ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)
- ⁵¹ Further examined in Chapter Five
- ⁵² Interview with Author (April, 2004)
- ⁵³ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁵⁴ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁵⁵ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁵⁶ Ellis (2001)
- ⁵⁷ Bowden and Smith (1994, pp. 190-191)
- ⁵⁸ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 27)
- ⁵⁹ Park (2001)
- ⁶⁰ Bowden's beliefs concerning character will be further discussed in Chapter 3. Also see McGrotha (1977)
- ⁶¹ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)

CHAPTER 2

BEING PREPARED AND ORGANIZED

Bobby Bowden likes to tell a story about the two guys who were sitting behind his wife at a Florida State University Game.

“They were second-guessing me on every play and calling me every name in the book,” the Seminoles head coach said, “and my wife was having to sit there and listen to it.

“Every time we’d fumble, they’d say, ‘look at that, Bobby fumbled again.’ Every time we dropped the pass, they’d say, ‘Look at that, Bobby dropped another one.’

“They were qualified coaches because they’d paid their money for a ticket to get in. And if they didn’t like the way I was coaching they would say so.

“Finally we got something going and started moving down the field. We completed a pass and one of these guy said, ‘I knew that sideline pattern would work.’ Then we ran it up the middle for a good gain and he said, ‘I knew that quick opener would work.’

“Pretty soon it’s fourth and goal at the one, tough call. So my wife turns around to these two guys and says. ‘What play are you going to call now?’ And they tell her, ‘We got ‘em this far. We’ll let Bobby call this one.’”

Chuck Otterson¹

The ball, fighting its way through the wind, is spinning and spiraling towards its target: two arms outstretched, fingers spread anxiously hoping to feel the abrasive texture of leather. The players, on and off the field, are staring at the ball—a ball that not only represents the present, but also represents the numerous practices and drills of the past. In the stadium shadows a crowd is rising, eyes fixed, generating whispers and cheering with anticipation of success or defeat. Then, amongst it all, there are the assistant coaches who with every rotation of the ball are witnessing a singular moment that has been governed by months of preparation and practice that can shape their season. However, at the center of this organized chaos are the head coaches—surrounded and immersed in the physical, but are ironically isolated within the central

precipice of responsibility. For the outcome of this single play can make or break a season, shape a coach's career, and ultimately impact a coach's family. For every game, sport or match that is played there are moments and events that occur that are (re-)told as stories, provide career memories and impact philosophies of those that witness them and are apart of them.

Yet, as fans and supporters, we sit and watch from the safety of home, or our stadium seats, debating and discussing the game through the emotional edges of favoritism, heightened by allegiances and made prejudicial by our individualities and passions. However, when all is said and done the decisions that were made, the outcome of the game and the encompassing season must be rationalized and justified by one individual—the head coach². It is the coach that carries the heavy responsibility of success and failure for his or her team. A responsibility that at times of success is minimal, yet in times of perceived failure, is heavy. A coach that continues to matriculate through their career will witness and experience the disappointments and triumphs of seasons and plays gone by—disappointments and triumphs that ultimately frame present practices. By understanding the events of the past, such as an improbable interception that wins or loses the game and the championship, individuals can learn, modify and adapt in the future. A bad decision on a play call can help a coach improve his philosophies relating to team strategy and practice preparations. Therefore, it is through careers of individuals, shaped in memories and stories of successes and failures that cultures and historical contexts of sport emerge and the storied understanding of others can be interpreted.

As illustrated by the short story that precedes this chapter, a coach, and more importantly a head coach, is not only held responsible for the team winning and losing, but is also second guessed by those that are only privy to the most public of football glimpses, the game itself. The spectator often has an opinion about a play call or player selection, but often these decisions are

based on limited information and aided by the benefits of hindsight. Only the coaches and players have access to the “full story.”³ What I mean by the “full story” in this context is that the players have worked hard all year preparing for each game through coach oriented practices, and in turn the coach has prepared a game plan, organized and determined season goals and objectives, set practices and prepared for each individual game. Therefore Saturday’s game represents the culmination of months of physical detailing and years of planning, experience and preparation. Saturday merely represents the part of an iceberg that sits above the water in plain view for all to see. Much like an iceberg, the majority of the work that happens in a football program is unseen by the sports fan, booster, alumni and journalist, it is hidden below the water line.

In discussing Florida State’s hidden iceberg, this Chapter is divided into the five sub-sections of: *self-evaluation*, *planning routines*, *practice routines*, *Game weekend*, and *hideaway*. Each section introduces a different facet of preparation. It is through these categories that one can gauge the complexities that a coaching staff and a head coach must face. The sections were constructed from observations of the program: a week during the 2003 season and numerous spring practice visits and observations including interviews. In addition, each section will focus largely on Bowden’s present role in the preparation of the Florida State University football team.

Self-Evaluation

The week before my visit to Florida State and the exploration into what hides beneath the water line at one of college football’s dynasties⁴, I too could only see the visible part of the huge metaphorical iceberg that I now use to represent the Florida State football program. The Saturday before my initial foray to Tallahassee the Florida State Seminoles traveled to South Carolina to take on fellow Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) foes, the struggling University of Clemson

Tigers. However, unlike most Saturday afternoon college football games, this one had particular significance to the Bowden family.

Since 1999, the Florida State versus Clemson game had been dubbed the “Bowden Bowl” by the press⁵ because both head coaches were members of the Bowden’s family tree. Tommy Bowden, Bobby Bowden’s third child, took over the reigns of a floundering Clemson program that had a 3-8 record prior to his arrival in 1999, after successfully steering the Green Wave of Tulane to an undefeated 11-0 season and a national ranking of seven. The initial Bowden Bowl represented the first time in College Football history that a son and father would square off as coaches.⁶ In 1999 the game also took on personal significance to Bowden senior especially since his Florida State team heading into the game was undefeated and ranked first in the nation. A win also represented his 300th career victory. As the history books tell us that first game went to Florida State 17-14, on their way to a second National Championship. During the following three years Bowden Bowl’s II, III and IV all went to Bowden senior. Tommy and Clemson University had not found a way past the dominant Seminoles as they headed into *Bowden Bowl V*.⁷

Coming into the game, both teams were experiencing very different seasons. The Clemson Tigers were regrouping after a demoralizing loss to Wake Forrest and a less than stellar season, having posted an overall record of 5-4, which included an embarrassing home loss to Georgia, 30-0. Due to the lackluster season, the pressure on Tommy was ever increasing and the outcome of the game had significant implications regarding his job security.⁸ In contrast Bobby and Florida State, were on a high after an impressive 37-0 drubbing of Notre Dame in South Bend, an overall record of 8-1, a consensus national ranking of third⁹, and a season that had seen Bowden become the all time winningest coach in NCAA division I history, ironically with a 48-24 victory over Wake Forest. All this was not withstanding the fact that Saturday November 8,

saw Bowden senior celebrate his seventy-fourth birthday and the knowledge that a win would secure an eleventh ACC title and a bid to a Bowl Championship Series [BCS] game.

The morning of the 2003 FSU vs. Clemson game, I too was on the sidelines coaching a game that was not so public in nature. I was coaching the University of Georgia Men's Rugby Club against the Yellow Jackets of Georgia Tech. Unfortunately, for the first time in several years we came out on the wrong end of a 20-19 score and an embarrassing loss. However, as is customary, the other coaches and I had retired to the local watering hole to discuss the game and share our own game reflections. Thanks to ESPN 2 airing the Clemson vs. FSU game, our evening of contemplation was accompanied by the televised crashing of pads that was Bowden Bowl V. Unlike the four previous meetings, Tommy's Clemson Tigers held Florida State to a mere ten points and only one fourth quarter touchdown, on their way to an impressive 26-10 victory. The victory turned out to be the start of a four game win streak which culminated in a 27-14 victory over Southern Conference powerhouse University of Tennessee in the Peach Bowl in Atlanta, Georgia on January 2, 2004. In contrast the loss knocked Florida State out of the National Championship hunt and meant that the homecoming game against NC State would ultimately decide the ACC title and the bowl game destination.

As a spectator and prospective researcher heading to the same Florida State program that had just lost, I was concerned with the potential repercussions that this result could have on my upcoming visit. Would it be a blessing in disguise? Would I be able to observe a coach with years of experience rally a team to a conference title after a demoralizing loss? Would it provide me with a more detailed look into the reactions of a program that is used to winning? Would it spell problems with access? As it turned out, it impacted them all.

Reflection on losing

Losing has always spelled doom and concern amongst coaches, players, athletic departments and, especially, boosters and fans. Throughout Bowden's career, losing a game had always been a particularly painful experience. Even after fifty-one years of working within the profession, the loss to Clemson hit Bowden hard. However, the media attention that is college football does not stop for any coach, especially after a nationally televised game between relatives that included one of the top ranked teams in the country—that just happened to suffer an unexpected loss. Following the game the coaches exchanged pleasantries and then headed to the locker room where respectively they either celebrate with or console their team. For Bowden it is here that the process of self-evaluation and ultimately improvement starts. In recalling the times that he has felt like leaving coaching, Bowden reflects on specific times that he has spent in locker rooms after tough defeats. For example, after being defeated by Joe Paterno's Penn State in 1973, whilst at West Virginia, Bowden questioned his choice of career.¹⁰ To this day the score of 62-14 was the largest margin of defeat a Bowden team has ever suffered. In discussing another such time Bowden claimed,

After every loss you can go back and search yourself, and, "Ask am I doing the right thing? Am I getting too old? Can I still relate?" Now every time we lose it is that way. Now, there have been many—well I say many—but there has been more than five times, where something has happened and made me think maybe I should get out of coaching. Maybe this is something that I shouldn't be doing. However, I have always asked myself, "What would you rather do?" And the answer I keep getting is, "Nothing." Then, I ask myself, "Well can't you stand that criticism, because if you want to stay in this thing you either take it or you have get out, now which one do you want to do?" Well, I say, "Ok I

will take that criticism.” There has been many times in my life when I have been faced with that, my own evaluation, and, well, I am still in it.¹¹

In addition to the time spent in the locker room, Bowden finds time to self-evaluate in what some would consider a public and potentially stressful moment—at the post-game press conference.

Interestingly, Bowden sees the conference as some form of reflective therapy as is identified in the following two statements:

1) For me, a lot of that talking and joking after the game is for my own therapy. I need to get the feeling of failure out of my system. I need to get back in the flow of life going on regardless of the score of a dadgum football game. That’s part of the ritual I need to get me ready to play again.¹²

2) My reaction after a loss has always been the same since the day that I started. The first you lose, come off the field and go to the press conference. This is where I am able to talk and get a lot of it off of my mind. You are talking and telling them why you got beat and that we should have done this instead, and done this instead of that, and congratulate the other team.¹³ Confronting these questions helps me. There is a kind of release there that you can’t get if you just keep it bottled up. I talk and talk. I may joke a little. But it’s strictly gallows humor. That noose is so tight around my neck I can feel it choking me.¹⁴

The first statement alludes to the notion that there is more to life than the game of football and that you have to move on from a defeat no matter what. The second statement, that is grouped from two different sources provides a peak into the reflective questions that Bowden asks himself and the questions that he has to face from the press following a defeat. Through these excerpts we are afforded a view into some of Bowden’s reflective routines and practices.

Although I was not privy to the post game press conference in Clemson, the research process has provided insight into Bowden's routines as they relate to losing and reflection. In a subsequent interview with Bowden the following spring, he elaborated on a routine that he has gone through following a defeat for as long as he can remember:

Well following the press conference and post-game, you get on the plane to go home. Usually I am sleeping because I have been up all day. Then I get home and all that time you are hurting because you lost and there is something that ain't right. Then you try to go to sleep. Then, I finally get to sleep of course I wake up in the middle of the night. I hate to wake up. I wish I could just sleep until the next morning. Now somewhere during that night I will always wake up and start saying, "Gosh, we lost; we lost. Why didn't we do this? Why didn't we do that? Why didn't we do that? Why did that happen?" You are kind of ashamed. It is a feeling of shame. Well, then you finally go back to sleep and you wake up again and go through the same thing. Boy it hurts. It's so painful. Then you get up the next morning and you still feel terrible, but at least it is the next day. Then you go and get the film of the game and start to study it. Then you see, it wasn't as bad as you thought. This play here isn't like all seven guys missed the block. This guy here blocked the wrong guy and then this guy here smeared us and forced a fumble that lost us the game. So instead of getting mad at all eleven guys, it was this guy that made a mistake. So you look at the film and say well it isn't as bad as I thought. So you get to looking at the film some more. Then you get to looking at next week's opponent. Now, when that happens, you are out of the last game and you are through feeling sorry for yourself. You are now thinking about how we can win the next game and everything like that. Then you

are around all your coaches instead of being out in the public and all that. Now, that is the same routine that I have gone through every time we lose.¹⁵

Although Bowden, talks about his routine and moving onto the next game during days following a loss, there are numerous events that force him to relive the 'pain.' First comes the radio show and then there is Bowden's television show. Amazingly, this is done directly after his return to Tallahassee if it is an away game, or in the press box that very same evening if at home. In addition, Sunday morning opens with an open forum, over breakfast, with the press. Now in times of success these events allow for reflection on positive times, yet in defeat, are often laced with painful memories. Come Monday, the questions continue to flow at the weekly Coaches Banquet where Bowden analyzes the game and fields question from those that fund FSU athletics and claim to be some of the most loyal fans, the Seminole Boosters. It was here that I first got to see Bowden work a crowd and field questions as he continued his reflective routine through a play-by-play analysis of the game highlights.

Just prior to the banquet, I had met with the Florida State Sports Information Director, Rob Wilson. I had been in contact with the FSU Athletic Department for several months and an itinerary of the week was to be planned that morning. It was during this meeting that my concerns regarding access to the program was answered—it was going to be difficult, because Coach Bowden wanted no distractions. It was too late to find another week as this was the last home game of the season. So, I was just going to have to make the most of the situation. Following the completion of the banquet, I made a bee-line for Staci Wilshire, Coach Bowden's secretary. She had been instrumental in getting the research proposal approved by Coach Bowden and arranging the initial dates for the visit.¹⁶ After the procession of fans wanting things

signed by coach had dwindled and eventually disappeared, I finally met Coach Bowden, thanks to a formal introduction from Staci.

What happened next was at the time a huge surprise, but as was to see, is indicative of a man that I have had the privilege to study and talk with, he apologized. I was shocked. Here is a man that has numerous responsibilities including running a nationally recognized football program and he apologized to me for the lack of time he was going to be able to give me during homecoming week. However, as the week developed and the focus moved towards the upcoming game, Bowden became more relaxed and gradually allowed me more access to his program. So what was the point of telling the story of how Coach Bowden and I first met, especially in a chapter examining the need to be prepared? A simple answer lies in Bowden's fundamental fear of losing.

A Fear of Losing

As noted previously, Bowden pure and simple hates to lose. That does not mean that he is a sore loser—he is humble in defeat. That is to say, at least he was following the loss to Clemson. During the banquet he gave credit to the other team as is customary in the coaching fraternity, but I had a sense that he truly meant it. Over the years I have witnessed many press conferences on television, and have been privy, at times, to attend them in person. On several occasions the losing coach has passed blame or deflected responsibility onto someone else. Additionally, coaches have discussed “if only” scenarios as excuses. One example might be, “If only we had not fumbled that ball then we would have won.” This was not the case following the Clemson loss. Bowden never provided his team with an excuse for losing and ultimately took responsibility for it.

During the banquet, he discussed the distinction between planning for a game and making plans, whilst drawing reference to Eisenhower and the military. He also openly discussed that going into the game he felt that the team was not mentally ready, a factor that he and the coaching staff are solely responsible for. He discussed how his team was coming off a big win in South Bend, Indiana against Notre Dame and that in contrast, Clemson had been embarrassed by the Demon Deacons of Wake Forest. Bowden, made the point that by winning the game, in the fashion that they had, the team and the players sometimes perceive themselves to be better than they actually are. Whereas Clemson had been told all week they were useless and that they were going to get beat. Interestingly, throughout the reflective dialogue Bowden never once blamed his players or coaches. He just talked honestly about some players' performances, but never laid blame. In the simplest of terms he said, "Our guys played hard, but they just played harder. They just played harder."¹⁷

Time and time again Bowden had iterated that the fear of losing is his personal motivating factor, to prepare, prepare and prepare. Although the fear of losing may be a motivating factor for some coaches, what is it about losing that Bowden is fearful of?

I think the motivating factor for me is I think we are going to lose, and I don't like to lose. So I will do everything I can within the rules to stop us from losing. So you are going to prepare so that everything that happens we are ready for. That is my motivating factor for preparation. So when we go down on that football field on Saturday, I don't care what pops up I want to have a plan for it. I WANT to have a plan for it. I tell my coaches they want to have plans for everything that could possibly happen. So we talk about everything: What if this happens, what if that happens, and what if this happens? So, anyway we try to prepare so that we don't lose.

I am motivated by fear a lot. I am afraid that I will fail, so that is why I try and prepare for every game. So no matter what, I have got an answer for everything, because I don't want to get caught without it, because I am afraid that we will lose.

When, I was head coach at West Virginia, I sat down my staff one day and I asked them a simple question, I said 'Are you motivated to coach out of fear, or out of confidence?' Now, it was funny it was pretty much half-and-half. A lot of them felt that this is what they do because they believe they can do a good job at it. Others thought that they were driven out of fear. I have always felt that I am driven by fear. I am one of these guys that is driving down the street in a 30 mph zone and am going 25 mph and I see a cop I will slow down to 10 mph. I am terrified that I am doing something wrong, and I was actually going 5 mph under in the first place.¹⁸

During that one week I spent in Tallahassee, I was fortunate enough to see Bowden's reaction to losing, yet unfortunate enough to deal with the repercussions relating to access and the need for the team to focus that resulted from it. Following the banquet, I received permission to attend practice that afternoon. During the regular season the practices are closed to the public. This was at least going to provide an orientation of the practice facilities, routines and practice set-up. Unfortunately, I was only allowed to stay for the first twenty minutes of practice due to the issue of secrecy and the importance of the upcoming game against North Carolina State (NC State). Although twenty minutes was nowhere near the time I needed to observe him coach, I figured that twenty minutes was better than nothing. During practice, it was obvious that Bowden had started to focus more on the coming up game than the past one. Then as if to prove it, he did something that I was not expecting. Just before my time was up and I was to be escorted from the facility by Jeff, the assistant sports information director, Bowden approached me in his golf cart,

and said, “When they have finished warm-ups and get into practice then I will come over and pick you up, alright son.” I didn’t know what to expect but hey, at this point, I was up for anything.

True to his word, as practice proceeded he made his way over and picked me up. For the remainder of practice he answered questions and reminisced about his career, retirement and other topics that will appear throughout the remaining chapters. I felt fortunate to have such an experience, an experience that happened because of the notion that twenty-minutes were better than no-minutes.

Unfortunately, I was only able to spend one week there and did not experience the ups and downs that a season can bring to a program like Florida State. However, in 1991, journalist Ben Brown was given permission by Bowden to document the ups and downs that make up a college football season at FSU. Based on his observations of that season, Brown concluded that Bowden’s fear of losing was ultimately his motivation to thoroughly prepare. In his book, *Saint Bobby and the Barbarians*, Brown wrote the following, which documents this notion well:

Bowden was a connoisseur of fear. He cultivated it, especially in the early stages of game preparation. He used it to focus, to bring a sense of urgency to familiar routines. When he first looked at opponents’ game tapes, he let it wash over him. The panic: “These guys are so good, so disciplined. How will we ever get to them?”

The only answer was work, all-consuming and exhaustive. No loose ends. Nothing left to chance. He couldn’t get enough video, couldn’t find enough time to watch opponents’ defensive alignments over and over and over. “Are they doing anything we can predict in a certain situation?” ...

No matter that Bowden's assistants were studying even more detailed breakdowns of the film. No matter that there would be computer analyses of down and distance tendencies, that scouting reports would diagram every defensive formation the other guys used, that there would be position-by-position talent evaluations for Bowden to peruse later or that all of this would be repeated on demand every time the coach needed to be rebriefed. No matter. Bowden knew he had to be prepared as he had prepared for three decades in coaching. He had to study and work until he reached that point where the confidence began to rise and the fear began to recede.¹⁹

Bowden is so propelled by fear that he prepares constantly. This form of organization includes the offensive and defensive game plan, schedules, practice plans, player selections and game day operations in addition to his other head coaching responsibilities.²⁰ The remainder of this chapter will examine the structure and organization framework of the Florida State program. To provide structure and organization, when ironically discussing the same, this section does not discuss such events through a 'diary' of the week. Instead it will focus on the important facets of the program and coach Bowden thematically. In addition to the observations made during that week, evidence will be drawn from other archival and documentary materials, and the conversations and interviews that were conducted with Coach Bowden and past and present coaching staff members.

As with all good teachers, programs, and curriculums, the process is one that has evolved with time and, more importantly, with learning over time based on experiences, knowledge, and information. However, commanding and organizing a team of the magnitude of Florida State is not an easy task, for it is both complicated and multifaceted. In highlighting the sheer complexity of organizing a football team, Bowden, who compares it to "real life":

First of all, there are the numbers. There are eleven people on each side. And since we separate specialties into defense, offense, punting and place-kicking, there are twenty-three or twenty-four separate jobs. To play a game on Saturday afternoon, we may use forty-five or fifty kids, subbing for injured players and giving a breather to first-teamers. To practice for a game, we need a hundred or more. So when you hear football coaches talking as if they're commanding an army getting ready for battle, it ain't much of an exaggeration.

Now with so many people to organize, with so much potential for things to go wrong, football demands an enormous amount of organization. We break teams down into segments, like departments in a corporation. There's an assistant coach for each segment, like a department manager. For a game plan to work and for the whole team to have success each segment and each player in the segment has to understand the plan and execute it.²¹

In an attempt to examine the complexity that is inherent in a football team, several sections will be used. The first section will discuss the notion of planning within the contexts of generating a *game plan* and a *practice plan*. The second section will highlight the NC State game weekend with reference to additional games, including the road trip to Clemson and the season-ending bowl game. Within this section the logistical structures of Florida State will be presented and the last minute preps, on the field decisions, and, again, Bowden's role in the processes. The final section includes an increasing focus on the part of the metaphorical iceberg that is fully submerged. This includes behind-the-scenes perspective of out-of-season team planning and preparation, and a week in July that is called "*Hideaway*."

Planning

During a season in college football, plans have to be made for almost everything that happens or can happen. However, as with all decisions in life and football, some are more important to the overall picture than others. In this section, two main forms of the program will be examined: *Game Plan* and *Practice Planning*. For the purpose of consistency, a game plan refers to a set of strategies that the coaches intend for the team to employ in the upcoming competition. In contrast, practice planning refers to the series of activities that the coaches will employ with the players at practice.

The Game Plan

By the time Saturday arrived and the team step onto the field, and the coaches pit wits, talent, and strategy with a formidable opponent, every member of that staff, be it players, coaches, medical staff, trainers, or equipment managers, need to understand their particular roles and the plan of action. Although the game plan could refer to all these different aspects of organization, for the purpose of this section it will primarily refer to the roles players and coaches play, and relate to the plays and strategies to be used on the field. Within the Florida State program the initial game plan philosophy must be formulated come Monday and by the first practice of the week. Time is a relentless adversary when it comes to creating game plans and running a football team, as Bowden explained:

During the regular season, my coaches and I have six days to prepare for the next ballgame. ... We must have our basic plan worked out before the players report for practice on Monday afternoon. Any new plays we want to put in, or new alignments or blocking schemes we'll use, or whatever tendencies Miami has that our players need to be aware of, all must be resolved at the first of the week.²²

For Bowden this part of the planning process, developing a game plan, has often been the most exciting preparation phase. He explained how he feels that the “greatest pleasure as a coach is to develop strategies and construct game plans. I want to match wits with the guy across the field.” However, as he continues he alludes to his fear of losing, “But I hate losing ... [because] losing poses the threat that maybe, just maybe, I don’t measure up.”²³ That is probably why, in between his hectic schedule and numerous responsibilities, Bowden locks himself away in seclusion in his office with his finger glued to the remote for hours upon hours watching film of that week’s opponent. “I do watch a lot of video, if we are going to play somebody, I will start on the Sunday before the game.”²⁴ Bowden stated in an interview. He continued:

I will continually study them before the game. Then I might go into the offensive meeting and tell the coaches that I think we need to do this or need to do that. Now they might say, ‘No, I don’t think that is any good,’ and I might say, ‘yeah y’ all are right, I think you are right’ or, I might say, ‘I think we ought to do it anyway.’ But, I will watch film all week. I want to try and learn what they [the opposing team] are doing.²⁵

Now as noted, the week I observed the Florida State program was less than ideal. The limited access at the beginning of the week provided me no real insight into how the coaches developed the game plan. However, in planning for the NC State game, it wasn’t like the previous game had gone smoothly. So, after a loss, how do you plan for the next game? How do you modify the fundamental game plan that is based on an overall season scheme that was developed months in advance of the season? These were two questions that I approached Bowden with the following spring. In responding to these questions and more, he identified a very simple approach.

The big thing is to add as little as you have to. Sometimes you might need to add more things than others. A lot of times, if the game plan didn't work, throw it away and go back to the fundamental plan. You have got to be sound fundamentally with your base stuff because that is what you are going to win with anyway. Now, you may see a little wrinkle and take advantage of what they are doing. So as we prepare for that we see it in film. Now I do study a lot of film.²⁶

Although hours were spent by the assistant coaches and graduate assistants evaluating the up-coming opponent, it is interesting to note that one of the responsibilities of being a graduate assistant coach at Florida State is to analyze and breakdown the tendencies of the Florida State team itself. Tendencies are like tell-tales to a poker player—they lead to predictable moves and play calls. In years gone by when Bowden was the primary play caller, these “tell tales” would be reported to him. Yet as the responsibilities of the head coach have grown, it is increasingly up to the assistant coaches to decipher any self-evaluation data that might be generated. Taking this noticeable difference into consideration, Brown, during the 1991 season, observed such a ritual of evaluation:

In the week before the game, they would know the other team's tendencies for every down and distance and out of every formation from every place on the field. The goal was predictability. They wanted to know: When they get here, in this situation, what are they likely to do? Predictability eliminates surprise. Without surprise, the best athletes have the advantage on every play. ...

Of course the opposing teams were performing this same ritual, with the same kinds of computers and video gear. So part of the strategy always was deception: You saw us do this out of this formation in the last three games, but now we'll do the other.

Clint Ledbetter, a volunteer coaching assistant who worked with the offensive line, would supply Bowden with weekly scouting reports, so the coach could monitor his own tendencies. With that information, the head coach could avoid patterns and plant others in the opposing coaches' minds.²⁷

At the beginning of every year and following every game, the Florida State assistant coaches grade their players' performances. This is of particular importance when developing the fundamental game plan for the season and the individual game plan for each opponent. As important as it is to understand the strengths and weaknesses of the opposing team, it is also important to develop a series of plans that maximizes the strengths and minimizes the weaknesses of your own team:

I have always tried to match my material with my plays. ... You take what you have got, see what they can do and build around that. Don't create an offense or a defense and then bring them in and say y'all do that because they might not be able to do that, because he might not be able to do that. They might be talented at doing this, so let's use this offense. I have always tried to do this with the offense, and I am sure that Mickey [Andrews: The defensive Coordinator], does it with the defense, therefore, base it on the type of talent he has got.²⁸

As a philosophy this is even more impressive taking into consideration the eras that Coach Bowden learned to coach in. In the 50s and 60s football was still very much based in the old school philosophies of developing players with gladiator mentalities. Additionally, the formations of offensive and defensive units were limited and offensively based on hard nosed, smash mouth football. Coach Gladden, a long time assistant of Bowden who witnessed Bowden's philosophy first hand commented:

You know I think that that is a one of his great assets. He came along at a time when coaches were still trying to pound square pegs into round holes. They were going to make the kid fit the mold. Where he took kids in the 70's and allowed them to be themselves, I mean he built the mold around them. You know, let it mold to them and what they can do. He has always said, "If the dog can't do what you want him to do let him do what he can do."²⁹

Interestingly, the phrase that Coach Gladden referred to came from a very unusual source and proves that some Coaches do indeed learn from a variety of situations and individuals, as Bowden elaborated:

Now where did I get this? "If a dog won't do what you teach him to do, teach him to do what he can do." I know a guy walked into my office one day back in 1976 when I first got here. He was a Florida State graduate and I had known him for years, but I hadn't seen him in ten years. Well he trained hunting dogs and we got to talking. He started telling me about these hunting dogs. Saying that, "If a dog won't do what you teach him to do, then teach him to do what he can do." Say he might not want to go into the water, well teach him to climb a tree. Well, I went that is exactly like football is. If you have got a player and he can't do this, we'll figure out what his ability is and then use it. Teach him and develop him so he can do that thing really well."³⁰

The Practice Plan

Following the analysis of game film and the devising of a game plan the next stage is to devise a plan so that the team can actually practice it. As with the devising of the game plan, Bowden has some input into the process but strongly believes in not micro-managing his assistant coaches. He actively delegates responsibilities to each assistant coach, so they can

actually do the job that he hired them to do. In discussing his philosophy, with regards to the development of a practice plan, Bowden compared himself to the Hall of Fame coach Paul 'Bear' Bryant, and Bryant's very controlled style:

Now this is a main difference between me and Bear. Bear, when he would make out his schedule, he would tell them where he wanted every player to be at all times. He would go "I want these eleven guys on first team, these eleven on second, these eleven on third here and I want you to take this eleven plus these five to go over here, now take these eleven and these over here and go over here." He would work out the whole dang schedule. I used to be amazed how he could do that. I don't do it that way. Now I go in there and say, "Coaches we have got to work on punt block today, so let's just get it done." I might also say "I want us to spend fifteen minutes on it," or I might say "we have got to work on short yardage today so make sure that you all get at least 5 minutes or 10 minutes on short yardage." Now, I don't tell them how to do it or when to do it, I just make suggestions. I leave it up to them. Now let's say I fired every coach next week or say every coach left and I had to bring in a brand new set of coaches. Now I would have to sit and explain the whole structure and organizational thing, to them. See the staff here, they all know me. Mickey has been with me for over twenty years, Sexton has been with me twenty-seven years, Jeffery has been with me ten, and Jimmy Haggian's³¹ has been with me eighteen years. So I do not have to do that much interjecting as I used to.³²

So how is practice structured at Florida State? Putting it simply, it is organized down to the last second. As I have already mentioned, Brown in 1991, followed FSU for the entire season. In the book he described a typical fall practice and the relationship between the coaching staff and coach Bowden during the final game plan decisions. For two reasons, I have included

his description, rather than providing a similar description based on my own observations. It is more important to understand the organization of a practice and the beliefs behind them, than decide who is the most qualified to describe it:

Except for a few words to the players at the beginning and end, Bowden seldom took an active role during practice. He observed on silence, standing apart, occasionally scribbling notes on a card he kept in a hip pocket. The eight segment coaches were the captains and lieutenants. They were the animated ones, striding forward at full voice, teaching and rearranging the bodies in formations. Then they would stand cross-armed to see if anything had sunk in. Sometimes they would lift their eyes at the end of the play to see if the man downfield had noticed.

After years of working with him, the assistants knew Bowden's confidence in plays and players would rise and fall according to what he saw in practice. No matter how intriguing a play seemed or how potentially superhuman a player might be, come game time, Bowden would rely on what he believed in. And he reached that level of faith only by witnessing successful repetitions in practice.

'Don't depend on the undependables,' the man preached.

Of course, dependability was largely determined by one set of eyes. Shaky plays that worked brilliantly when Bowden was watching had a shot at finding a home in the game plan. Same for receivers who made diving first-down catches the very moment the coach turned his gaze in their direction. The assistant coaches hated to see that card come out of his back pocket, because they always assumed he was noting the screw-up—the receiver who blew a pattern, the back who missed an assignment or botched a fake. The notes would reappear as questions in the next day's staff meeting. When the team went

into its fall game-preparation routines, those sessions with the boss would become like séances. Most of these men had been together at least seven seasons. They could sense the head coach moving toward or away from plays and players. If they felt him cooling his enthusiasm, they had to make up their minds to mount an all-out effort to turn him or to stop wasting practice time.

‘Don’t depend on the undependables.’

In football, the surest route to dependability is reputation. Which is why football practices demand such elaborate choreography. In 1991, the premium on efficiency rose, with new regulations limiting the time coaches had with players. The coaches owned the athletes during the preschool two-a-days, but when classes began they would be limited to 20-hours a week of official practice time, including required video review sessions and meetings. That meant maximizing the time when they had it.

On-field practices were divided into a series of five-minute periods. In spring training, practices could go 28 periods or more; Monday-night sessions following Saturday games in the fall might be only 15. Most practices lasted for 22-24 periods, not including specialty-teams workouts. An air-horn blast from the tower divided the periods, even though players stayed in some drills for two or three periods, depending on the workout script for that day.

Each practice was videotaped from above so that assistant coaches could get nightly overviews of the progress of players and game plans. And each day, coaches would script blocks of periods to hone specific skills or to iron out problems with selected plays.

On most days, there were at least 120 players in practices. And to deal with so many at once, football coaches evolved a system that breaks down the team into constituent parts. Each player is a member of successive subgroups. First he is one individual among others playing his particular position; then he is a member of a position segment, such as inside linebackers or receivers or running backs; then a member of the offense or defense; then a member of the Florida State team. Most practices were a process of assembly into larger parts, then a process of breaking them down again.

During the regular season, Florida State practice blocks usually began with segment classroom meetings, then moved to the field, where players worked first in their own groups, then against their defensive counterparts. Full-contact practices usually ended with 11-on-11 drills, offense against defense in goal-line situations or hurry-up offenses. Then, before heading to the showers, they would break down into segments again for conditioning and agility drills.

‘A coach,’ said Bowden, is ‘like an automobile mechanic who has all the parts of a car laid out. You think you have every part you need; because if you don’t you ain’t gonna get it back together. You ain’t gonna make it.’

‘But the only way you’re going to know for sure is to put it together piece by piece. There’s a piece lying over there, another over there. You get to a point where you realize you may have a piece missing. But if the thing’s gonna work, you’re got to find that piece. And in the meantime you’ve got to keep all the other parts greased and fitting together.’

‘It ain’t easy.’³³

One of the reasons that I chose to use Brown's description than provide an original is that Brown's description could have actually describe a practice in 2004. The structure of the practice and the organization has not changed. During my interviews with Coach Gladden and Coach Andrews they confirmed my beliefs. Interestingly enough Bowden has employed the same practice routine for going on thirty years—a practice routine that, not surprisingly, was borrowed from another successful coach:

The blueprint of my practice schedule I got from the University of Texas in 1973 from Darrell Royal, who was the head coach at Texas at that time. For me he was right up there with Bear Bryant. What happened was, I went out and visited with him for one week. I stayed about 4 days just talking to him, his staff and watching spring practice. I really loved the way he ran practice. So when I came back to West Virginia, I put it in at my place. We have used that formula, that segment formula, five minutes periods ever since. Now, a lot of people have seen us do it and Texas do it and now they do it. Before, I had planned twenty-minutes here for this, thirty minutes over here for that and then another ten minutes for something else.³⁴

So what was the second reason that I included Brown's description of practice? At the outset of this project I wanted to understand how Bowden taught football, what strategies did he use to teach football, and how did he learn to do it. After a week of watching practices during the season and on several other occasions during the spring, it was apparent that he didn't directly coach the kids. Instead he taught, mentored, and evaluated the coaches and the execution of the game plan in general. This is not to say that Bowden is not a great on the field coach of technique, because the history of his career suggests otherwise, it is merely an observation I

wasn't expecting. For the most part during practice, Bowden watches, learns, and take notes on the back of his segmented offensive and defensive practice plan note card.

Coach Bowden and Practice

As discussed in Chapter One, the role of a head college football coach is extremely diverse. Therefore, defining what constitutes an expert head football coach is difficult. If coaching the players technically throughout one's entire career is a prerequisite then Bowden and, may I say many other coaches, cannot be consider experts. However, if an expert is defined through the characteristic of an extensive knowledge base, hierarchical organization of knowledge, automaticity of behaviors, problem representation and solving, and acute perceptual capacities,³⁵ then Bowden can most definitely be considered an expert. However, with particular reference to acute perceptual capacities and coaching, his expertise may not only lie in the ability to observe errors in athletes performance of skill, but also the errors and atypical events that accompany a practice that involves up to 110 players, twelve assistant and two graduate assistant coaches, numerous trainers and medical personnel.

Observed

As you look at across the three-tiered practice facility your eyes will be drawn to two very different towers that adorn the second and third tier. One tower resembles that of a prisoner of war watch tower reflected in its original metal surface. This tower holds an assistant with a video camera and the segment boards that enable the coaches and players to keep track of the current practice period. It is from here that the horn is blown every five minutes and the board is changed. Adjacent stands a more decorative two-story wooden tower, festooned in the school colors of garnet and gold. As your eyes survey the wooden structure, about half way up, you will be drawn to a sign that mirrors one that hangs high above the gate to the complex that reads

persistence. If practice is in session, it is on this tower that you will spy Coach Bowden. For the majority of practice, Bowden will be perched on a stool that has been provided by the Florida State Marching Chiefs, constantly surveying the ongoing events on the fields below.

Although his interaction with the players and coaches is limited during practice they all know that Bowden is watching. His reputation of noticing mistakes and spotting technical flaws in schemes is duly noted by the assistant coaches. Since every morning during the staff meeting they are reminded of his ability to identify mistakes. “I see things that they miss,” Bowden said.

It is the old thing about not being able to see the forest through the trees. It’s the same deal. I am sitting up top and I can see what they are doing. Now the guys down on the field might not see a flaw or even realize that there have got it, but I might spot it.³⁶

Armed with only his offensive and defensive note cards³⁷ and the ability to observe, Bowden is able to witness his team at practice diligently. With each practice being structured in five-minute intervals, and the coaches’ responsibilities being cross referenced with periods, Bowden is able to look down at his practice card and almost immediately identify what each coach should be doing at that particular moment and with whom, as he explained:

With the periods being every five minutes I can look at period seventeen on the card, and I know exactly what everybody is doing, all the units and such. Let’s just say that we went out there today for practice and I wanted to watch the linemen do a board drill, and that period seventeen says board drills. Whenever we get to that period I know to watch that drill. Or lets say that here is offense then over here is defense and we are at period twelve and I am wondering what Jeffery is doing. Well, I can look under wide outs and he is working on pass routes. If you want to see what the defense is doing at that time they may look at team out side drill, something like that. So when the horn blows to

segment, I can tell what everybody is doing. It reminds me that at period five, I should be sure to look over and see what the linebackers are doing because I wanted to see that drill.

Throughout his career, Bowden has often been able to distinguish the “forest through the trees.” Several players and coaches made comments to that effect, noting his ability to spot subtle details in practice that significantly impacted the execution of a drill, a pass route and/or an offensive and defensive scheme. As one present player noted

I think for me right now, what makes him a great coach is his foresight. I think he sees things happen before they happen. I think he sees things that, in the way the other coaches, the younger coaches, at least on our staff doesn't see. I mean he sees them before things happen.³⁸

However, although errors are noticed, it is extremely unlikely that you will see Coach Bowden ascend from his tower to correct a play or question a coach. It is simply noted on the back of the note card and discussed the next day in private.

Noted

Before becoming the head coach at Florida State, Bowden recorded his practice observations on a tape recorder that he carried around during practice. He would record errors and corrections and then play them to the staff at the morning meeting. In recalling his meetings at West Virginia, Bowden laughed and commented, “I would come in the office the next day, into the meeting, turn that thing on and let it play. They hated to hear it. So I stopped doing that and started making notes. I thought it was better.”³⁹ Since 1976, the note card and tower have been his main tools of evaluation at practice.

As we sat in his office, I asked him to tell me a little bit about the notes he writes during practice and during games, since it is rare to find him with a back pocket during a game or practice that does not contain a note card and a pen. Upon hearing the question, he proceeded to open his desk draw and pull out a stack of cards. He picked one at random and read the back of one of the offensive practice plans as an example:

Get Walker time and at down and distance. Rix 56 pass is good, no ten on it. If the safeties can play level then there will be not many runners out there. Last year we blocked the edges this year lets block'em solid. Jeff get more curl schemes in for the first game. Then I noticed something about the "ricochet blocks" and that will remind me of what I have to tell them. How are you teaching the forty six reverse pass to X? How are you teaching it? So, I would go in and say, 'how are you teaching that, what are you doing?,'⁴⁰

Bowden's ability to monitor and mentor his coaches has drawn high praise from his assistant coaches, as is noted in Chapter Three. However, his ability to observe numerous facets within the complex football environments that have needed to be improved and that have needed immediate attention, has also received high acclaim. In discussing his ability to observe at practice, Mickey Andrews explained:

He is unbelievable in his ability to observe, whether it be in a practice setting or whatever. Seeing something that others are unable to see. Sometimes you get so involved that you can't see the forest for the trees. Well, he will come into the staff meeting the next morning and he will have something that he wrote down up there on the tower. I mean it makes you go, well, why didn't I think of that. ...That is what he does. He will remind you of things that are so important, that sometimes you get so busy and don't

remember. Maybe coaching a kid on a specific thing, or a general thing that you might not have detailed in the specifics as you might have needed to. He does his coaching inside and lets the coaches go outside to coach. Now the thing is, the amazing thing is, when you are not getting the job done or you are not emphasizing something strongly enough, he has got a great knack inside of what needs to be done, how to correct things, how you can get better, or get it better. Well, he gets that note card out and goes over it and does a terrific job of doing that.

If Coach Andrew's testament isn't strong enough praise regarding Bowden's ability to observe, then Coach Gladdens memory of an exchange that occurred in a staff meeting between Coach Bowden, Mark Richt and the offensive staff, might be. Just to preface the event, it is important to remember that Bowden believes that if something is to work in a game it must be practiced, practiced and practiced.

Bowden is in the meeting one morning, and well he turned to the offense and Mark and said

"What is going to be our lead play?" Gladden recalled. I then remember Mark and them saying, this was on a Thursday Morning, "36 toss."

Coach replied "Really."

"Yeah," said Mark,

"So how come we only ran it twice yesterday and we never even ran it with Dunn? You only ran it with a second teamer," Bowden inquired.⁴¹

The Game Weekend

Kick-Off

Since the last game the coaches have developed a game plan, organized practice in order to implement that plan, and hosted player position and unit meetings. It is now the Friday before the game and all that is left is to put the plan into action. However, that is not all, there is still a lot to be done before the players, lead by Chief Osceola and Renegade⁴² head onto the field. Depending on where Saturday's game is to be played (home or away), the whole team, split into offensive and defensive units, will meet around 2:15. If the game is at home, then that will be followed by a special teams meeting at 4:00pm. Then as is customary with every home game, the team meets outside of Gate A at Doak Campbell stadium for a 9:00 pm departure to Thomasville, GA. Thomasville is approximately one hour north of Tallahassee and has been the Friday night site of FSU football since Bowden became the Seminoles head coach in 1976. According to Bowden ever since he became a head coach of a Division 1-A program, he has taken his teams away the night before the game to:

Get them away from the crowds. I guess most teams do that in 1-A. Tommy [Bowden – Clemson] takes his to Greenville, SC. We take ours to Thomasville, GA. When I was at West Virginia we used to take them to Fairmont, WV which is about 25-miles down the road.⁴³

Upon arriving in Thomasville it becomes Bowden time. This is his time to interact, motivate and convey his thoughts to 'his' players and young men, about what they, as a team and as individuals, need to do to win. As Brown explained, "On Friday night before the Saturday game Bowden had a regular ritual. He spoke to the team as a group, often reading them a story of some famous athlete who had conquered adversity and gone on to accomplish great things."⁴⁴

Depending on the time of kick-off, Bowden holds council with his offensive play callers, the quarterbacks coach and the offensive coordinator on Friday. On occasion, Bowden would also meet with defensive coordinator, Mickey Andrews to discuss the defense. However, based on his beliefs in delegation, Andrews and the defense were usually trusted to simply get the job done. When the meeting occurs is totally dependent on kick-off, since the final plan still needs to be communicated to the players. As Bowden noted:

The day before every game, and sometimes we will do it Friday morning, or sometimes Friday night, but usually if it is a night game we will do it Friday Night because the things that we will discuss, the coaches need to have time to go and discuss and talk with the kids. If it is a morning game, 12:00 kick-off, we will do it Friday morning, so they will have time to meet with the kids.⁴⁵

It is during these meetings that the final game plan will be constructed and every possible scenario of tomorrow's game covered. Brown noted of these meetings that "Bowden's enthusiasm for preparation was boundless."⁴⁶ Bowden explained the purpose and reasoning behind it:

We just cover everything offensively. We cover everything that we think we are going to call at certain situations in the game. Go over every situation. What is the first play of the game, what is the second play? What if we are on the right hash mark, what if we are on the left hash mark? What if we are on the 2-yard line, the 5-yard line, what if we are on their goal line? We cover everything. Now, that meeting can last anywhere from 2-4 hours, depending on how much stuff we need to talk about. We cover everything, all the calls we are going to make, what we expect them to do. We go over their personnel. What

do we think about this player that they have got? What about this player that they have got? Does he have a weakness? Is he a good passer?

Now, you have got to be careful. You have got to be careful or you can paralyze the guy calling plays. If he gets too many issues and decisions going on up there in his head, that he doesn't know what to do. So we try to limit each type of down to one. On this situation this is the best thing to call. Now this is the second best thing. So if he is up there and he doesn't know what to call he can look at his list and that will tell him what to call. At least he has got a pretty good calculated call.⁴⁷

As his quarterbacks coach and offensive coordinator for fourteen years, Mark Richt remembers these final offensive meetings well. In fact, when asked about his most memorable moments of coach Bowden and Florida State, it was the late night meetings he spent with Bowden and Brad Scott that he remembers most fondly:

Now, winning two-National Championships was fun but the memories I have are of the night before the game being in the hotel room talking over the game plans. He would be sitting there in his pajamas and roll up some chewing tobacco and just be relaxed. Just being around the guy when he was a lot more relaxed, not that he is an up tight guy. Just to get to know him better that was a lot of fun for me. Now he would call those meetings, "iffy meeting." You know "if this happens then what are we going to do." He had a sheet of things that we were going to cover. For example the personnel of our opponents, certain downs and distances of what we were going to do, certain ... what were we going to do if it is two point play, what were we going to do if it was 4-1, 4-2, 4-5, 4-9, you know obvious situations of what we are going to do if this happens. He just wanted to hear what, although he already pretty much knew many of the answers before he asked

the questions, I think he wanted to make sure that we believed in what we were doing.

You know I just think he didn't want any surprises the next day. When he turned over the play calling responsibilities if we just started to call things out of the blue, he would go, 'I don't ever remember discussing that one, or where did that come from?' Only he could do that, you know. I think he just believes in covering all the bases and covering all the situations. I also think he couldn't sleep the night before the game anyway and it helped to calm his nerves at least giving him something to do, I mean it would go pretty late sometimes.⁴⁸

Following the last minute meetings between the coaches and players, the following morning will follow the traditional Florida State routines of having a team breakfast, a pre-game meal, and again depending on kick-off time, several different special teams meetings including punt and the punt block units. No matter where the team is staying or where they are playing, the routine is to have the player arrive at the stadium around two hours and thirty minutes before kick-off for game preparation, which includes dressing out and getting taped, so that at exactly one hour before start time the team is ready for pre-game practice and warm-ups. For the purpose of documentation three game itineraries for games played during the 2003 season are included in Appendix C.

Play Calling and the Game Plan

November 15, 2004 at 3:35pm, an overflow crowd of 83,854 anxiously prepare to witness that the pending battle between the Florida State Seminoles and the North Carolina State Wolfpack. The game plan has been practiced, plays and players have been selected and the strategic attack readied for implementation. Yet, in college football you have to expect that the other team is just as ready as you are; especially when the leader of the Wolfpack is Chuck

Amato, a past assistant coach to none other than Bobby Bowden on the defensive side of the ball, for twenty-one years. So, after all that planning and preparation what happens if the offensive game plan does not work?

As an offensive coordinator at West Virginia in the late 1960s under Coach Jim Carlen, Bowden was responsible for calling plays. In 1970, after becoming the head coach, Bowden, just like Carlen, passed on the responsibility to his assistant coach. That was until a not so good season in 1974 and the criticism he received Bowden remembers:

I was ... getting criticism for not calling the team's plays. Remember, I had taken the job as an assistant at West Virginia back in 1966 partly because Jim Carlen said, "Bobby, you'll call all the plays." So when I moved up to head coach I figured since letting an assistant call the plays had worked for Carlen, it would work for me. I had to learn the hard way something that works for somebody else won't necessarily work for you. Anyhow, I let my offensive coaches run the offense. In my first five years as head coach at West Virginia, I don't think I called a dozen plays.

After that year I said to myself, "Bobby, if you're gonna get criticized and maybe lose your job, then you better make sure it's because of what you did or didn't do, and not because of what someone else did or didn't do."⁴⁹

Following the 1974 season, Bowden resumed the play calling responsibility at West Virginia and on his arrival at Florida State he continued to call the plays. However, with the ever increasing roles that a head coach must fill, which include an extensive time commitment away from being a football coach, and the ever increasing complexity of the college game, Bowden relinquished partial responsibility to then assistant coaches Brad Scott and Mark Richt in the early 1990s. By 1994, following Brad Scott's departure to the University of South Carolina, Richt became the

primary play caller, with occasional interjections from Bobby.⁵⁰ Then, following an emotional game against the University of Miami in the fall of 1996, “Bowden stated publicly that he was no longer calling the plays because Richt had asked him to stop ‘messaging him up’.”⁵¹ Looking back, Coach Richt discussed what it meant to him to become the play caller at Florida State:

I am very thankful that he allowed me to do that. Looking back on it he had to trust that I would do a good job. You just don’t give that to somebody unless you feel like the guy has a chance to do a good job of it. Now that I am a head coach, I can see why he did it. It had nothing to do with him. I doubt that he thought that I could do a better job than him. The fact was that all I had to think about was coaching. I was freed up to concentrate on nothing but the game plan, film study, and how I am going to call this game. Now when you are the head coach you don’t have as much time. So I think that he might have felt that the staff could do better than him, not because of any competence level, but because of the time that we were allowed to give to it in comparison to the time that he had.

Nevertheless, Bowden has often confessed that the challenge of strategic planning is what has kept him motivated to coach. Yet, planning and preparing for a game is one thing, actually having the game plan work is another. When I asked Bowden a similar question, he responded,

Well, that is a good question, and I can tell you the truth. You can work on it [game plan] in practice and then go out there and after two series you might throw it out of the window, because it ain’t no good. Now that happens to a lot of people. So you try and have enough in your game plan that if this doesn’t work then we can go do this, and if that doesn’t work we can do that. But, if you have a bunch of them then you can’t get good at it. A lot of times you have to adjust. Well most of the time you have to adjust during the game. Now, whether it is a major adjustment or a minor one is important. But

sometimes the game plan just works and everything executes like it is supposed to and everything executes well. Now sometimes you have planned to do this and they have anticipated it and they have got you covered. Now, I have got to do this. You have got to do it and they also have to do it.

There are some coaches that believe in complete execution. In other words, I don't care what you are going to do, I am doing this, and I am going to do it so good that you can't stop me. Howard Stellenberger was that way at Miami. He would do it so good that sometimes you just couldn't stop him. Then there are other coaches that are always going to try to out-guess you.

Now, I am probably somewhere in between, I do believe in execution. I believe in that real big. ... There has been, well for the last twenty years, a play that we run on 3-1 and lets just say we have come up with the 3-1 200 times. We have probably run this one play 180 of them. Because we believe in it we think we are going to be able to knock it out and get that one yard every time. So, if it is successful you stick right with it, stay right with it. Howard Stellenberger, was that way. You just could anticipate what he was going to do on 3-1 and/or 4-1, but his teams would do it so good that you would have a hard time stopping it.⁵²

On this particular November day, the offensive game plans of both teams were well executed with a combined total of 94 points, which included eleven touchdowns. Additionally, the offensive output of both teams, totaled an amazing 969 yards on 149 plays and amassed 45 first downs.⁵³ On this night, Bowden's fear of losing and the routine that follows every loss was not going to be needed. Following two overtime periods and a total game time of four hours and fourteen minutes, Florida State were victorious, 50 – 44. With the tenth win of the season,

Bowden and his team won their eleventh Atlantic Coast Conference title in twelve years and a coveted bid to one of the four major BCS bowls. As it turned out, FSU was to be reunited with archrivals, the Miami Hurricanes, in the Orange Bowl on January 1, 2004 in Miami, after already losing to the same Hurricanes 22-14 on a very wet day in Tallahassee earlier in the season. However, it is interesting to compare the planning and organization that went into playing this one game in comparison to the more complacent West Virginia team that went to the Peach Bowl under Bowden in 1972.

The college football postseason has been traditionally based on independent and sponsored venues, all across American, hosting two college teams with winning records from different conferences in an invitational game or 'bowl.' Bowden's record in bowl games is unparalleled with an 18-8-1 overall record, second in wins to only Joe Paterno of Penn State. However, one of those losses came at the hands of Lou Holtz and the North Carolina State Wolf Pack in 1972, while head coach of the West Virginia Mountaineers.

It was late December of 1972. I was completing my third year as head coach at WVU, and we were playing Lou Holtz's NC State team in the Peach Bowl in Atlanta, Georgia. My team was favored, and I was eager to play the game.

I'd never been the head coach in a bowl game on this level before, and I felt the bowl was a reward for the players. Consequently, I put few restrictions on them, other than to work hard in practice and play hard during the game. What they did on their own time was none of my business, provided they obeyed our team rules and stayed out of trouble. We practiced hard each day. We had a good plan, and we were ready.

When kickoff came, the ceiling fell on my team. We couldn't do anything right and lost the game 49-13. Everyone associated with the program felt miserable. Some people were downright angry.

When we got back home to Morgantown, all kinds of bad rumors were circulating. Some news reports said our players had been out drinking all night before the game. Others cited boosters who entered players' hotel rooms and found whisky bottles in trash cans.

Whether these reports were true stories or sour grapes, I don't know, but the ordeal taught me a valuable lesson: You better not get lax when you are successful. I was lax with my players. This was a bowl game. I regarded it as a reward. But I gave the players too much freedom, and they ended up acting like college kids – they had a good time but abused their freedom.

I got stricter after that. Better to be restrictive and then loosen up, than to start loose and try to pull the reins in. I didn't want to be criticized for being too lax in discipline. And I didn't want to lose again.⁵⁴

In stark contrast to the Bowden's 1972 game preparations, Florida States bowl preparation was extremely scripted. For the 2004 Orange Bowl against Miami the Seminoles schedule was planned by the hour starting on Friday, December 26, 2003 all the way through to 11:45 am on Friday, January 2, 2004, the day following the game (Shown in Appendix D).

Hiding Away at Florida State

The meticulous planning of the season does not stop in the so called off-season. Preparation at Florida State is a yearly process. The overall organization of the program occurs when many college football fans are on vacation, and toying with the summer past time of

baseball. The coaching staff starts planning for the season in July, at the annual hideaway.

Bowden noted, “This event is one of my most essential management tools.”⁵⁵ The Florida State July hideaway is just that, hiding away from everyone and everything. The hideaway is all about organizing everything so all the coaches and support staff will be on the same page come the start of the season. Now, although locations may have changed what happens during this intense working week has not:

It started off as a “hideaway” because it really was a hideaway. We used to go to a cabin in the woods and no one could find us. It didn’t even have a phone. We couldn’t be bothered and that is really what we wanted. Well we would go out there and stay out there for a week, usually 5 days Monday through Friday. Then we went from there to the top of the press box and would hide up there then we would go there. We want to go somewhere where we cannot be interrupted.

So, now, why do we do that? Well we do that to refresh ourselves on everything that could happen this year and what is our answer to it if it happens. In other words we will have a list of all the support people that help our coaching staff; our doctors, trainers, equipment managers, Chaplin, academic people, athletic director, and law enforcement. They all come in and lecture to us. We all ask questions like: What can we do to keep this from happening? What can we do to keep this from happening? What can we do to stop that happening? Or they might say, what y’all need to do is this and that. Now we do that every year.

When we get through working with all these people we cover our game. The defensive staff has the first go. So, we will go over everything defensively, any changes they have made, what they are calling it, how they are teaching it and things like that.

Now the offense can ask questions and offer suggestions, like you ought to do this because it would be better and when y'all do this then it hurts us more than anything you do. Then when they get through, the offense takes over and goes over what they are planning to do and the defense might be asked what do you think of this? Is that good? Or, is that easy to time on? Well, they will be asked things like that. Then we go onto the kicking game. The coaches will get up and go over the phases of the kicking game.

Then when we have finished with the fundamental game plan, we will talk about discipline. Are there any rules that we want to change? Or, is there anything that we can do to head off this or that? Maybe we will make suggestions like, let's start a unity council this year and stuff like that. We just try and do everything, so that when we come out of there we are all on the same page. This is what we believe, and even if we don't agree with it, when we walk out of here this is what we believe and everybody has to agree with it and defend it. Anyway, that is what we do with hideaway.⁵⁶

The idea behind hideaway is nothing new to the coaching profession in college football and as with most practice structures, planning routines, and even drills and plays have been borrowed from those coaches that have come before.⁵⁷ Although Bowden did not employ a form of hideaway at West Virginia, it didn't mean that he hadn't been introduced to its notion, "Yeah, Bear Bryant, he used to do the same thing. Now I don't know if he did it like we do it. But he would go away for a week," said Bowden.⁵⁸

In addition to all the coaches and staff getting on the same page, hideaway is where the season goals are determined and Coach Bowden and staff design a miniature "State of the Union" address taken conceptually from the annual address by the President's address to the United States congress ever year. Bowden discussed the FSU state of the union noting:

It is usually when I write down some thoughts. When I give it, it is about what we have facing us. It would also include what we can do. This is the way that we have got to do it. It is a speech about what this year means to us and if we do this and do that then we will be successful. We must not do this or that and stuff like that.⁵⁹

In discussing the state of the union address with Coach Bowden, the impression is it sets the goals for the team, coaches and players for the season. In discussing the goals of the season, Bowden was extremely straight forward, “We set out to win a national championship. That is our goal.”⁶⁰ You would imagine that this would be the goal of all college sports teams heading into the regular season. However, Bowden makes a very important point regarding goal setting, in that the goal must be truly attainable:

It is the goal of probably many other schools. But, there are some that have a realistic shot at it and then there are others that don't have a chance at all. Now, we feel like we are in a position whereby we have got a realistic chance at winning a national title. Well we have as good a shot as anybody else.⁶¹

¹ Otterson (1978)

² In supporting this important contextualized coaching construct, Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour and Hoff (2000) note that “coaching practitioners are often held totally responsible for (and their effectiveness judged upon) the results of competitive activities that are highly spontaneous and unpredictable (Coakley, 1994). In addition, the position of the coach is even more unique as these competitive activities can be highly visible and may be subject to widespread comment and criticism.” (p.187)

³ I believe that it is impossible for anyone to know the ‘full story’ of any situation, since the knowledge we gain from a context and a situation is often tacit in nature. Additionally, our understandings are also constructed from our present understandings, with time we may actually see the situation or story differently.

⁴ NCAA (2001, p. 95)

⁵ Brown (1999c); Record (1999); Roseblatt (1999); & Iacobelli (1999)

⁶ Brown (1999c)

⁷ 1999 FSU 17 – **Clemson** 14; 2000 FSU 54 – Clemson 7; 2001 FSU 41 – **Clemson** 27; 2002 FSU 48 – Clemson 31 (HOME team in **BOLD**)

⁸ Knobler (2003, November 6)

⁹ ESPN website, WEEK 12 poles, Retried May 12, 2004, from <http://sports.espn.go.com/ncf/rankings?poll=1&week=12>

¹⁰ Bowden and Smith (1994)

¹¹ Interview with Bowden (Feb 17, 2004)

¹² Bowden, Bowden, Bowden Family et al. (1996, p. 176)

¹³ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

¹⁴ Bowden, Bowden, Bowden Family et al. (1996, p. 170)

¹⁵ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

¹⁶ Without her help I am confident that this project would never have happened, or if started not completed.

¹⁷ Spoken during the Banquet (November 10, 2004) and repeated after Monday’s practice.

¹⁸ Interview with Author (April, 08 2004)

¹⁹ Brown (1992, p. 29)

²⁰ As discussed in Chapter 1.

²¹ Bowden, Bowden, Bowden Family et al. (1996, p. 108-109)

²² Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 66)

²³ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 55)

²⁴ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)

²⁵ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)

²⁶ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

²⁷ Brown (1992, pp. 42-43)

²⁸ Coach Bowden: Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

²⁹ Interview with Author (April 8, 2004)

³⁰ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

³¹ A former Florida state player, Assistant Coach Jimmy Heggins returned to FSU in 1986 as the recruiting specialist and nose guard coach. After coaching the tight ends for two years, in 1992 he became the Offensive line coach, a position he holds today.

³² Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

³³ Brown (1992, pp. 18-19)

³⁴ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

³⁵ Tan (1997, pp 30-33)

³⁶ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

³⁷ A copy of a defensive note card is show in Appendix B.

³⁸ Interview with Author (March 2004)

³⁹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

⁴⁰ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

⁴¹ Interview with Author (April 8, 2004)

⁴² FSU (2003, p. VIII) Football media guide, “The most spectacular tradition in all of college sports occurs in Doak Campbell Stadium when Osceola charges down the field riding a Appaloosa horse named Renegade and plants a

flaming spear at midfield to begin every home game. The tradition was born on September 16, 1978 against Oklahoma State when a student wearing Native American clothing led the team from the tunnel riding a horse.”

⁴³ Bowden: Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

⁴⁴ Brown (1992, p. 48)

⁴⁵ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

⁴⁶ Brown (1992, p. 49)

⁴⁷ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

⁴⁸ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)

⁴⁹ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 88)

⁵⁰ Coach Richt (Interview with Author, April 22, 2004)

⁵¹ Layden (1998)

⁵² Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)

⁵³ Statistics are taken from the official Florida State Automated Score book final summary that is distributed by the sports information staff to the media following the completion of the game.

⁵⁴ Bowden and Bowden (2001, pp. 215-216)

⁵⁵ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p.6)

⁵⁶ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

⁵⁷ Paraphrased from several interviews with Coach Bowden

⁵⁸ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

⁵⁹ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

⁶⁰ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

⁶¹ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

CHAPTER 3

ELEMENTS OF COACHING

“I knew the first time that I was going to sit in on a quarterback meeting, Coach Bowden would blow me away,” Willis recalls. “I just knew that what he told us was going to be technical stuff, two or three levels above anything I had ever heard in high school I couldn’t wait.”

Imagine Willis’s shock in that first skull session when Bowden, the high-tech passing genius, picked up a piece of chalk and began drawing stick men on the blackboard. Stick MEN!

Not X’s and O’s, stick men. Just like the ones we drew in grade school. Bowden drew a stick man receiver with his stick arms outstretched. Then a stick man defensive back with his stick arms trying to guard the stick man receiver. “I don’t dare laugh because it was Coach Bowden,” Willis said. “But I looked around the room and could tell that everyone had a hand over their mouths, trying not to let him see their snickering.”

The high-tech coach then drew a straight dotted line from the stick man quarterback to the stick man receiver. “Men,” said Bowden. “This is an Ooooh pass. It’s straight and fast and pretty. People in the stands see it and they go, ‘Ooooh!’ and they go ‘Ahhhhhh.’ They’re very impressed with how hard the passer can throw. But the receiver never catches it.

Bowden, the high-tech coach, then erased the straight dotted line, and replaced it with one that left the stick man quarterback and arched high all the way to the top edge of the blackboard and then back down again into the stick arms of the stick man receiver. “This,” he said, “is how we throw long passes at Florida State. They’re easy to catch. The receiver can adjust to it. Nobody goes, ‘Oooh’ and ‘Ahhhhh,’ but they cheer when it goes for a Florida State touchdown.”

Peter Tom Willis recalls laughing out loud later that day when he thought about grand, exalted Bobby Bowden drawing stick men. He couldn’t wait to tell his pals back in Alabama.

Then he began to notice something,

In every scrimmage, each time Peter Tom faded back to throw a long pass, he thought about the stick men and the rainbow dotted line. He’d put plenty of air under the ball and was amazed how often the receivers adjusted to the pass and caught the ball. When his time came to be the starting QB in 1989, Willis remembered the stick men enough to loft 20 touchdown passes, leading FSU to a No. 3 ranking and Fiesta Bowl rout of Nebraska. Now griddily frolics into its 20th year at FSU, Peter Tom Willis goes back to the stick men as a small, but telling example of why his old coach is usually a step ahead of the pack.

Larry Guest ¹

Throughout his career Coach Bowden has continually demonstrated abilities across time, programs, historical eras, and an ever changing society to be successful. No matter where Bowden has been a head coach, teams have responded to his teaching styles and philosophies both on and off the field. As evidenced by his coaching records at South Georgia College, Howard College, West Virginia and Florida State, Bowden has only had two losing seasons. In 1974 he went 4-7 at West Virginia and in 1976, his first year as the head coach at Florida State, the team went 5-6. In a coaching career spanning over half a century, Bowden's coaching ingredients and recipes of success have outwardly stood the test of time. In this chapter his coaching recipes and ingredients will be examined under the construct of coaching elements. However, it is important to note that Bowden's recipes within a literal cookbook of success do not singularly fit into the traditional confines held in coaching football—winning and losing. It is very apparent that Bowden sees coaching as a way to develop positive human characteristics and enhance personal and life qualities of young male athletes. He believes in preparing student-athletes for life, by providing them with learning experiences that are important to understand after football and college. One heavily recruited player that is entering his senior year at Florida State discussed this very notion when asked: Do you feel prepared for life after football?

Oh definitely. I personally think that it follows the natural progression of college. It helps to prepare you for life. You know, I think that there is no better way to teach people about life than out there on the field and out there in athletics. In an athletic season you can go through a lifetime of experiences. So I definitely believe I am being prepared. You know, I have gone through three lifetimes and I have got one more to go. I mean you can learn so much from this game. You can learn so much from these coaches. You learn a lot. Well, I have learned a lot. Now there is only so much that you can get from the coaches,

only so much that you can get from this game. Have they done all they can do, I believe so.²

Although this chapter will not define what Coach Bowden means by success, or what it means to be prepared for life, it does highlight coaching elements that Coach Bowden believes and has developed throughout his career. In addition, it examines the leadership skills and practices that have enabled him to survive effectively within the world of coaching. Amazingly, with the pressures on winning and the increased lack of job security for coaches in college football, Bowden has never been fired. Maybe even more amazing is the fact that he has never gotten a job for which he applied.³ Although Bowden's life has been the subject of several books,⁴ his most recent book, *The Bowden Way* describes "50 years of leadership and wisdom,"⁵ and, "Puts forth the fundamental leadership principles and practices that have guided his storied career."⁶ Within the text Bowden noted:

A seasoned coach knows better than to plan too far ahead. Coaches are evaluated at the end of each season. It's a one-year window to improve or diminish your job security. So you sink roots in the community like you'll be there forever. Then you coach each year as it's your last.⁷

In addition to the observations, interviews and newspaper articles, the Bowden Way afforded me insights into his leadership style and importantly the elements of teaching that he deems important. Chapter two discussed the importance of building a successful organization and a community of coaches where the members are all on the same page and prepared for all eventualities. However, many a young coach or teacher that is starting a career may not always see the importance of this coaching element. Yet, in comparison, Bowden still believes in its importance. As he said, "Anybody can coach a three-hour practice. A great coach can organize it

in one and a half hours”.⁸ During an interview in February of 2004, Bowden discusses how he learned this valuable lesson as he identified a moment in time when Bowden and his team were not prepared and organized:

The first thing I ever did at West Virginia and got criticized for was one of those by-the-book things. I simply went by the book. We were behind one touchdown in the fourth quarter and we couldn't stop them. So, we got the ball and drove down to the 31-yard line and we were fourth down and four. Well, nowadays you go for that. ... Now, me, I am thinking field position. If we can punt that ball down inside that three or four, we can come after them get the ball away and get four more downs. That was my strategy by the book, by the “old” book. So we punted. Well what the coach was thinking and the kicker is thinking was two different things. All he knew was to go in there and punt it. Now you're thinking go in there and kick it out of bounds at the 1. So, he punts that thing. He punts that thing out of the stadium. He punts that thing out of the stinking stadium. So now, they get the ball on the 20 and we only gained 11 yards, we only gained 11 yards on that punt. Of course when he didn't kick it out of bounds, I said to the other coach, “Why didn't he kick that thing out of bounds?” Anyway, later after thinking on it I realized that it was our fault. We hadn't prepared him. We hadn't taught him. We hadn't prepared him. It was our fault.⁹

In the very first chapter of the *Bowden Way*, Bowden highlighted three additional objectives in addition to “devising a good plan,” or being prepared which were, hire good people to implement the plan; motivate players to buy into the plan; and then execute the plan.¹⁰ In discussing the underpinnings of a Bobby Bowden run Football program these objectives are crucial in understanding the program. The example of being prepared and organized is just one

element of Bowden's leadership and coaching style that allows the program to run smoothly and effectively. So what are some of the other leadership and coaching elements that have contributed to Bowden's success throughout the years?

The role of a head football coach, as discussed, is diverse, demanding and complex. As Bowden noted, "Coaching is a tough business. If we can't stick together, we've got big problems."¹¹ For a coach to succeed in the modern media-driven world of college athletics, they must be able to survive the constant spotlight that often illuminates a career and the pressures that are associated with a product-centered profession. However, as with many process/product endeavors it is often the process that enables the final product to be achieved. In the case of Florida State football, the process through which the program develops and learns is ultimately centered on the head coach and the abilities of the coaching staff to adapt and modify to changing situations.

For the last 27 years coach Bowden has been a commander-in-chief that has not only been responsible for teaching his staff, but has also been responsible for hiring them. Therefore, before we look at the individual elements that Coach Bowden feels are important for a coach to have, it is important to understand the context in which coaches must work if they are to succeed. If a program is to stay organized, prepared, and cohesive then it is the responsibility of the coaching staff to work as one. So when asked about the characteristics that a coach would need if they wanted to be hired at Florida State, Bowden posited:

So, what do I look for? Well, you need to look for somebody who maybe has the same fundamental beliefs that you and the other coaches have got. You are looking for guys that get along with people. You are looking for guys that can handle criticism. ... But the

big thing is that they must be able to get along with each other. Yeah, you have got to get along with each other.¹²

We have often heard the word ‘chemistry’ used in conjunction with cohesive team sports and even between certain positions on the football field, for example between the quarterback and his favorite wide receiver. However, as Bowden has alluded to it is also important within a coaching staff. With this said, a staff that is similar or that live within their own balkanized cocoons may often fail to see potential shortcomings of a philosophy or practice that can inevitably limit the groups and their ability to adapt. That is why Bowden was quick to point out that:

I don’t want sameness in my staff. I mean somebody might come up and say that that old so-and-so is not tough enough, not tough enough. Well this other guy yells at them all the time. I can’t have everybody yell at them because the kids won’t listen. Or someone might say that he is too tough on them. Well he has got to be tough because the guy over here is too easy on them. They balance each other; they balance off. So, that’s what head coaches need, balance, balance, balance, not sameness, not sameness. I would rather have a guy that knows chemistry than a guy that knows just X’s and O’s but can’t get along with somebody. So chemistry is more important to me.¹³

In addition to chemistry and balance, Coach Bowden’s philosophy, with regards to the building of a winning program, falls on the sage advice given to Bowden by legendary Alabama football Coach, Paul “Bear” Bryant, “He told me that if I wanted to build a winning program then I needed to ‘first surround myself with winners,’ by hiring men who were ‘eager, energetic, hard working, and hungry for the same thing that I wanted.’”¹⁴

Before delving further into the elements of coaching that Bobby Bowden uses and applies, I feel it is important to discuss the difficulties in data analysis and coding that this

chapter has been founded upon. In reviewing the mountains of data that the research process generated it became extremely difficult to compile themes and categories that authentically represent Bowden's career, a notion described as a crisis of representation by Lincoln and Denzin, who go on to question whether researchers can, "ever hope to speak authentically of the experiences of others."¹⁵ It is important to articulate that these difficulties were not caused by the quality or lack of information but the ambiguity of terminology and language. Glesne articulated this point well, when she wrote:

Meaning is more complex than the definition of words. The very choice of the language use—whether clear and coherent, complex or disruptive, removed and formal or personal and evocative—tells a story in addition to what you mean it to say.¹⁶

After reading and re-reading the hundreds of newspaper articles, the books written by Bowden that detail his life and principles, the pages and pages of interview transcripts, my research journal, observation notes, and the pages of preliminary data analysis, I developed three main themes that I believed represented Bowden's career. These themes were policies, characteristics, and philosophies. As I further sifted the data through the themed heading, 13 sub categories emerged as viable components that could explain Bowden's "Successful Coaching" ingredients, the original chapter title. However, with the generation of these emerged categories I again had to rethink the headings, as they no longer captured the content accurately. After discussing this dilemma with several colleagues that had read the preliminary draft of the chapter, the headings became traits, practices and beliefs. As the manuscript continued down the road to fruition the chapter and the components became blurred and immersed within the editing, writing and analysis of the complete text. After revisiting the notion of themes and categories,

and re-reading raw data sources and literature, the current format seemed to present the most accurate account.

In an article titled, “The Elements of Expertise,” Tan examined the seven critical characteristics that have been identified through contemporary theories and research.¹⁷ The seven characteristics Tan identified are a domain specific extensive knowledge base, hierarchical organization of knowledge, acute perceptual capacities, problem representation and solving, automaticity of behavior, long and short-term memory, and self monitoring skills.¹⁸ Using the same theoretical framework, DeMarco and McCullick provide supporting evidence for Tan’s work through the examination of expert coaches like John Wooden, Pat Summitt and Vince Lombardi.¹⁹ In discussing the role of coaching, families and cultural contexts on the development of expertise, Salmela and Moraes further identify that an expertise perspective, through qualitative analysis, has examined constructs of coaching that include, perceptions of training and competition, organizational tasks and educational roles, communication skills, mentoring, coaches’ personal characteristics , gender and coaching, and cultural effects.²⁰ Although it is evident that Coach Bowden, if examined using these sets of characteristics could be considered an expert coach, I feel that the characteristics are limiting in that the profession of coaching, and more importantly Bowden as an individual, is more than a set of criteria. If the scope of this study was to examine Bowden’s career through the characteristics (*lens*) of expertise as outlined in the literature, then the data does categorically support the hypothesis that Bowden is an expert coach and that he indeed possesses the highlighted characteristics—characteristics that are very evident throughout this text.

Instead this chapter, and the elements of coaching that it describes, is a concept derived from a book by Banner and Cannon titled, *The Elements of Teaching*. Interestingly, the book is

one that I have had on my bookshelf for several years and have actually given to a colleague as a graduation gift. It was not until I started packing my belongings that I became re-acquainted with the text. I subsequently took refuge in the ideas and beliefs that the authors' claim are behind its conception:

Rarely, if ever, are we led to reflect on those dimensions of character and mind that are at the very core of what we do—which is to help others acquire both the knowledge by which they can understand life in all its fullness and the dispositions by which they can live such a life. These dimensions of our own selves constitute the core of our teaching; when we teach, we animate inert knowledge with qualities of our own personality and spirit that affect, or ought to affect, our students. Nevertheless, though these qualities differ from subjects and techniques, we rarely consider these aspects of our selves separately; rarely do we take them to be distinct from the hows and whats of instruction, which, extrinsic to ourselves and usually taught to us as we prepare to teach others, do not arise from within.

The basic elements of teaching, by contrast, are qualities that come to inhere in us, even if we do not recognize them as such or fully develop them. Rarely can they be taught. They are ingredients of our own humanity, to which contents and methods are adjunct. We must draw them from ourselves, identify, develop, and then apply them. We may know our subjects and perfect our techniques for teaching them without recognizing that, for our mastery to make a difference to our students, we must also summon from within certain qualities of personality that have little to do with subject matter or theories of instruction. We don't learn these qualities, we call them forth—and, by understanding them, we use them for the benefit of others.

While pedagogical expertise and technical knowledge are essential to it ultimately teaching is a creative act; it makes something fresh from existing knowledge in spontaneous, improvised efforts of mind and spirit, disciplined by education and experience. Thus, unlike a technology, in which correct application produces predictable and uniform results, teaching yields infinite surprises—infinite delights—from one moment to the next. What method can supply to teaching we know or can learn; what art can furnish out of our own selves we must imagine—and then practice.

So while we cannot predict the outcome of teaching from its ingredients, we can isolate these ingredients, much as we can those of any art, in order to examine and understand them. ... Just as all artists learn, know, select, and employ varieties of each of the constituent elements of their craft in creating their distinct works, so teachers use the components of their own art to teach in ways as distinctive as each teacher is unique. For this reason, teaching has always defied strict and agreed-upon definition.²¹

It is from this extract and the philosophical perspectives that it represents that the elements of Bowden's coaching and teaching are centered. As I started this research journey into the life and career of Coach Bowden, I intended to examine and isolate the practices and policies that he has developed and used throughout his successful career. Instead I discovered that in addition to the labeled characteristics of an expert coach it is Bowden's individuality, understanding of individuals and situations, and the values by which he leads his life, that make him a successful coach. In examining Bowden's career, I began to examine teaching through differing qualities. I started to inquire into the principles that guide his actions opposed to the behaviors themselves.

During a conversation in the spring of 2004, Bowden discussed how coaches constantly steal ideas from each other and that it is *when* you use the information that is important. In developing this chapter, I must acknowledge that the idea and structure have been conceptually ‘borrowed’ from Banner and Cannon book. However, the content, the presentation and the structure have been derived from the research process. If I was a football coach then I could say that although I stole the play, I ran it with different personnel for the same purpose, but at a different time. Although I was fortunate to examine the workings of a Florida State program on numerous occasions during the fall and spring season and was able to observe its inner-workings, being able to pinpoint exactly the reasons for the program’s continued success is difficult. Even after examining the mountains of data the same can be said of Coach Bowden’s career, or as Banner and Cannon noted, “We think we know great teaching when we encounter it, yet we find it impossible to say precisely what has gone into making it great.”²²

Although the identified coaching elements in this chapter are strongly informed by the data, one reviewer did note they “could have been taken from the Cub Scout handbook.”²³ I posit that they could even be taken from the belief and value systems of an individual that was raised in Alabama with a Christian upbringing in the 40s, 50’s and so on. However, the choice of language used to stratify the observed, recorded and spoken elements are words that appeared repeatedly during data collection: Compassion and Enthusiasm, Communication and Motivation, Loyalty and Trust, and Character. Therefore it is through these elements that Bowden’s coaching practices, policies, and beliefs are examined.

Compassion and Enthusiasm

While collecting data, I was inspired by the obvious compassion and positive emotions that coaches and players (past and present) demonstrated when discussing not only Florida State

football, but also areas of life they believed to be important. Unforgettable are my conversations with Coach Odell Haggins and the fervor he displayed as he talked about his recruiting class of 1985, his present players, other coaches, his religious beliefs and his boss. Yet this was not an isolated occurrence. In observing and discussing the FSU football program, Coaches Bowden, Gladden, Richt, Andrews, Haggins, and Steele²⁴ all displayed genuinely compassion for each other, the program, the university, and most importantly the players. As a collective the Florida State program has the feel of large but close-knit caring family. On numerous occasions as I waited for interviews, collected data and arranged observations, the coaches, support staff and administrators all treated me as if I were one of their own. I was made to feel welcome at all times. As I spent more time in Tallahassee and became increasingly privileged to the every day conversations between the team and its coaches, I truly began to appreciate the bonds that existed within the program.

Thanks to a Coach Gladden, I was informed that this family atmosphere was not a new concept. When Coach Bowden became the head coach of Florida State in 1976, he brought with him an enthusiastic sense of belief, winning, and pride that had been missing in Florida State Football for several years.²⁵ Now, even more importantly, he not only brought it with him, he lived it:

I'm not a yeller or a screamer. That ain't my way. I very seldom yell at my players and assistant coaches. What I do is stress enthusiasm. I want everybody in our program to be enthusiastic.

When I first came to Florida State, I had the word "Enthusiasm" printed on everything. I had it printed on one wall in the workout room all the way from the floor to the ceiling. The problem was players didn't know what it meant. They thought that it

meant jumping up and down and giving out with a bunch of “rah-rahs.” Shoot, that rah-rah stuff is superficial. It lasts only as long until you walk onto the field and an opponent knocks you on your behind. Then it’s gone. You have to get up, shake off the hurt, and go to work. That’s when enthusiasm—plus confidence and preparation—comes into play. And if you don’t have it, you’re not going to win.²⁶

Along with the powers of enthusiasm that Bowden still brings to the coaching table, a he also demonstrates a strong sense of compassion and caring nature, not just for the athletes but also for the fans and alumni. On every occasion that I interviewed Coach Bowden in his office, mountains of memorabilia, including photographs, footballs and helmets were piled high on an adjacent table ready for him to sign. According to his administrative assistant, Bowden personally autographed every item. The times that I witnessed his signing marathons, he was always happy to do so and he never complained. If you asked him, he would sign.

The first time I met coach Bowden, he made me feel comfortable and, dare I say it, important. It was as if I was the only person in the world that needed his attention and time. He genuinely cared. On several different occasions, I witnessed him interrupt meetings and interviews, so that he could field a question from a player, or meet with a touring group of fans. On one occasion, he cut short an interview with a local reporter, to visit with a group of 25 High school students from the Seminole tribe of Florida that were visiting the campus. During the thirty-minute visit he posed for photographs, made quips and signed all their Florida State t-shirts, hats and photographs. Again, according to Coach Gladden, Bowden always makes time for interaction with individuals such as these High School students. In 1976, his first year, Bowden engineered the rebuilding of the FSU program by insisting that the coaches were caring and accessible:

If a player came to see me about a problem, I would interrupt my meeting to talk with him. If a boy got homesick, I put my arm around him and talked to him as though I were talking to my own son. My assistant coaches were expected to do the same. If attentiveness and concern for players is what we sold them on, then dadgum it, we'd better be as good as our word.²⁷

Now some people might say that that is all part of his job. And to them I would say that they are correct. However, it was not the acts themselves that made you feel welcome, but the manner in which he carried them out. As coach Bowden himself said, "You have got to keep the kids welfare as a big priority. If they have a sense that you are just in it for you they can spot that. They will spot that."²⁸ During a discussion on Coach Bowden's ability to recruit the best players in the country, Coach Mark Richt commented about his personable nature:

You know recruiting is one of the biggest parts of football and he can make people feel comfortable in a very short period of time, and that is what you have got to do. They have got to feel comfortable. Parents have got to feel comfortable handing over their child to you as the head coach. Now, he is a very trustworthy man that has a great track record. Add to that the fact that when he meets people he makes them feel good, whether it is a player, a parent, a coach or even you. In recruiting that is important. In dealing with the media that is also important. If you get the media mad at you enough then they can make things tough on you because they can present to the masses anything that they want. So, for years he has been able to do a good job being open and honest with the guys in a positive and caring way. You have to remember that a head coach also has to deal with his bosses. You have presidents, you have ADs (Athletic Directors), and you

have Board of Regent type people. You have to be able to have them feel very comfortable with you heading up the ship.²⁹

Fairness

It is important to note the importance of the word fairness as a coaching belief as opposed to the term 'equal'. This belief is woven throughout Bowden's coaching philosophy. However, the evidence is deeply embedded into the private world of the Florida State program and the coaches' offices. Through observations of practice, I never noticed any player receiving preferential treatment or favored conditions over another. Whether they were the starting quarterback or back-up kicker, all the players completed the conditioning drills and worked through the planned practices for their positions. This is not to say that all the players received equal playing time at practice. However, the main evidence that supports Bowden's beliefs in treating everyone fairly came during an interview with Bowden himself. Rather than breaking down the conversation into smaller pieces, the transcript of the interview has been included. Interestingly, the conversation spawned from a discussion on keeping athletes motivated.

Bowden: I think the big thing is, well the thing that I have always said is that you have got to be fair. Now, you can't be equal. There's a difference. People say, "Well treat them all equal." Well, you can't do that because that doesn't work. Say, I have got a first teamer and I have a fifth teamer, how are you going to treat them equally? Are you going to practice this one as much as that one? This guy, the first teamer, needs to get ready and he won't get enough practice. Now the fifth teamer can't practice right now, I can't treat them all equally but I can be fair. I can be fair by at least telling them. Now this guy is ahead of you, this guy is ahead of you, this guy is ahead of you and this guy is ahead of you. Now if

you can get ahead of him I will move you up. If you don't, then you have to wait your time. You have got to be fair with them and you have got to be honest with them. So that is what I try and do.

Mark: Has there been times, when you haven't been fair and honest?

Bowden: I am sure that there are times when you haven't been as fair as you should have been. I know sometimes a kid might remind me of that. Coach y'all ain't treating us the same. I tell them we are going to treat them all the same and I try to, but even then you can only do it up to a point. You can only do it the best you can. That's all you can do.

Mark: Was there one particular incident that made you learn about being fair?

Bowden: Yeah, lots of them. Well, I will give you one. This may be one that you can't do anything about it. I had a walk-on sit right here in my office. This has been in the last two months and I was talking to him about being a walk-on. "Although you are a walk-on," I said, "I have a lot of respect for you as a walk-on because you are the ones that really want to play, because you are playing along the scholarship players and you are trying to earn one and you can earn one. But, being a walk-on do you feel that you are being treated any different?" He said "Coach, oh yeah." So I said "what do you mean? Can you give me an example?" He said, "Well, when they give out the equipment, they give these guys the new stuff and give us the leftovers." Well he is right. I hadn't thought about that. We don't have enough new stuff for everybody. So that might be a case that we try to treat them equally, but well you can only do the best we can do. You can't necessarily give the new scholarship guys that old stuff and them

the new stuff. Say we recruited you and you are starting and here is the old stuff.³⁰

As is evident by the interview transcript, treating all the players equally is not only difficult, it is at times almost impossible. Another coaching practice that must be seen as fair, but may not always be equal, is discipline. Within college football, it is expected that players comply with the rules set by the program, the coaching staff, the university, and of course, the laws of the land. If a player can do this then they have character and demonstrate good discipline. Therefore the term discipline refers to those times when an individual that is ultimately under the jurisdiction of coach Bowden, breaks one of these rules. However, Bowden's views on discipline have not always been as they are today. While his morals and beliefs behind discipline remain, his steadfast rules and practices have evolved:

As I passed through my 40s, 50s and 60s, and now during my 70s, I have eased up somewhat, except in regard to morality and my personal ideals. Someone once said that if you hold a bird in your hand too tightly you will kill it, but if you hold it too loosely, it will get away. I squeezed a little too tightly in my younger years.³¹

Throughout his career Bowden has continued to modify and adapted his coaching styles, philosophies and methods with the times, as people, experience and events have challenged his perspectives.³² Back in the late 1960s as an assistant coach under Jim Carlen, Bowden learned a valuable lesson regarding setting program rules. "Simply put, don't have too many of them. But, those that you do have you better make sure you enforce them," noted Bowden.³³ In discussing how he has learned to keep the rules to a minimum and enforce them fairly Bowden noted:

There is no doubt that the players have changed so much. What we have tried to do with rules here is to have as few as you can and then stick by them. Some people say that you

have to treat everybody the same, I don't believe that because every one is different and there are different degrees of punishment and there are different degrees of trouble that you can get into. So I have always tried to go by this, which is being fair. Be fair with them. This kid you kicked off the team and this kid you didn't kick-off were you fair with them—yes because he did that. I have always tried to be fair with them, and have as few rules as you can. Now, down through the years I have probably been influenced by the people I have known, in terms of rules. I have had some people have a rule like this which isn't bad it says the only rule that I have got is that “don't do anything that will embarrass the program or the school.” I think Lou Holtz said that one time. Now, that gives him complete jurisdiction. It means you can do anything you want to because anything they do may embarrass the school. But that is a pretty good rule. If you do not embarrass the program or the school then everything else is going to be okay.³⁴

According to Bowden, disciplining players must be based not only on the rules, but must be fair to “*all*” involved. However, disciplining his players has not always been such a private affair. Throughout his tenure at Florida State, there have been several incidents involving players that have been debated in the media. At times Bowden has been criticized for playing favorites because of his stance on discipline. However, these practices have been viewed by the outcome of discipline rather than the process that governs it. As Bowden explained:

Nothing is as cut-and-dried as we try to make it out to be. I'm a great believer in looking at each case individually. I can't sit in Tallahassee and tell somebody in California or Nebraska what they ought to do when a player gets in trouble. But I think there ought to be some logic in the process.³⁵

An excellent example of how the media misrepresented Bowden's discipline practice occurred in 1999 where two players involved in the same incident received very different punishments. The two players involved were Peter Warrick, a two-time consensus All-American and star wide receiver who was eventually drafted 4th overall in 2000, and Laveranues Coles, another star receiver who was drafted in 78th overall in the 3rd round the same year.³⁶ Warrick and Coles were both accused of paying \$21.40 for \$412.38 worth of clothes with the help of a department store clerk.³⁷ Following the incident Bowden punished each player differently but according to his discipline practices, although both faced the same criminal charges. Coles was immediately dismissed from the team. However, Warrick was suspended pending the verdict of the criminal investigation. As Bowden noted:

That's the gist of the story known to the nation: Coles was out, Warrick was still in. And here's what I heard in response: ... You've kicked Coles off the team. But Peter Warrick, your current Heisman trophy candidate, is being kept on the team for a very obvious reason: You need him to win a National Championship this year.

It sounds great, but it's a ridiculous charge. Laveranues Coles is a good young man whom I really liked. But he'd been in my doghouse on two prior occasions, and I told him that summer that if he did anything else, I'd let him go. ... Peter Warrick however, had not been in trouble before. People wanted me to treat him by the same standard totally. People who wanted me to treat him by the same standard totally missed the fact that I WAS treating him by the same standard....

I have rules. I try to apply those rules evenly and fairly. And I stick with them. Public opinion will not sway me one way or another.³⁸

As highlighted in the incident with Coles and Warrick, Bowden treated the players fairly and honestly. Additionally, Bowden believes in giving athletes that have made a mistake a chance to redeem themselves. In the *Bowden Way*, Bowden wrote, “I’ve learned not to rush to judgment when someone else proves fallible just like me. Humbling experiences have enabled me to become more supportive of those around me.”³⁹ Along with humbling experiences, his belief in loyalty to the players and in turn, their parents, have often persuaded Bowden to look on the positive side of situations and believe that the kid just made a mistake. He often refers to his experiences as a father and parent when explaining discipline. “I try to treat my players the same way I treated my children when they were young. You discipline your kids, but you don’t throw them to the wolves,” Bowden noted in his autobiography.⁴⁰

Bowden also likens being a parent to the role of being a coach. So, what is Bowden’s policy in enforcing his programs rules? In basic terms it mirrors that of the American Justice System, three strikes and you are out. This is demonstrated through Bowden’s rules regarding the use of drugs. In a letter sent out to all incoming freshmen in 2003, Bowden details the policy discipline that will accompany ever indiscretion:

Dear Parents,

For the past ten years we have tested for drugs. We are doing this in an effort to help prevent drugs from harming our athletes. I want you to know that when we test our players it is not because we suspect your son, but that we want to help him avoid any temptation facing him and at the same time give counseling to those who need it.

When our team reports in August, each boy will be tested for drugs during his physical. No one will know the results of the test except for our doctors and football staff. We will test for marijuana, cocaine, steroids, etc. If a player’s test is positive, we will call you. I will also set up private counseling with reputable personnel on our campus and

require him to attend. If he is tested the second time and is positive, I will suspend him for a game and then if he tests positive a third time, he will be taken off scholarship and expelled from the football team. I would appreciate it if you would sit down with your son and read this letter to him to be sure he understands what we're trying to do.

Sincerely,

Bobby Bowden
Head Football Coach

The letter clearly identifies the rules and the consciences that taking drugs entails—basically put, three strikes and you are out.

Although Bowden believes in the giving of second chances, do not be fooled, he is a strong disciplinarian. In the past he has been criticized for allowing a kid to stay on the team, when maybe he should have been dismissed. He does discipline each athlete according to the rule broken and what he considers to be a fair punishment. The underlying philosophy of his policy is related to the notion of giving them the benefit of the doubt. As demonstrated by his thoughts in the book *Winning's Only Part of the Game*:

When I have a kid who gets in trouble, I try to leave him some thread of hope. If we're so big on using football to teach the lessons of life, don't we have to offer these kids hope that there's a way to fight their way back after they stumble and fall? Even if they make mistakes they will still have a chance to succeed? Sometimes players do something so disruptive or dangerous you have to let them go. But if there's still a chance I can have an influence on a player in trouble, I hate to cut the string between us. If something were to happen to him afterward, I would feel so much to blame.⁴¹

Being a head coach at a college football power, and dealing with all the media attention that every indiscretion made by a member of the program receives, is a difficult job for the head

coach. In an interview, Coach Richt openly and honestly articulated the difficulty of discipline and the emotions that its practices can cause:

I mean it hurts. It is just like as a parent. It hurts when your kid disobeys you and gets into trouble. You know you have to try. You have got to decide how you are going to discipline that situation and we all know that it takes a long time to build that reputation, but it doesn't take long to damage it. But, if you continue to stay the course and continue to do what is right then you are going to be okay. But, if you panic or get discouraged and throw your hands up in the air you know then it is over. Things like that [SEC championship ring scandal⁴²] get so sensationalized. Like I said before we are dealing with young people. You don't even have to say young people, I don't care what business you are in, you look at ENRON or all kinds of businesses, people are going to make mistakes. Some deserve punishment and being brought back into the fold and some deserve to be gone. That is the end of them. But you get discouraged and that is the thing that gets into the press.⁴³

In discussing Bowden's approach to discipline and punishment, Richt discussed how he had given chances to players that had sometimes worked out as intended and at other times were the wrong thing to do.

Now, if they get out of line he is certainly not one of those one shot and you're out kind of guys, I mean he will give you chances to learn from your mistakes. However, there is a limit to what you can put up with. He [Bowden] has got a lot of guys that he has given a second chance to and even a third chance. He knows that the guys are 18-to-22 years old and that they are going to make mistakes. And you know how a kid reacts to the discipline has a lot to do with whether or not you are going to let him stick around or not.

If he learns from a mistake, or at least the coach perceives that he is learning from the mistake that he made then he is much more willing to give him another opportunity than a guy who doesn't seem to be getting it, or a guy that doesn't want to be under the authority of anyone. Those are the guys that don't seem to stick around too long. If a guy makes a mistake and fesses up to it and is willing to take the punishment and move forward and try and learn from it, then that is part of the college experience. He feels like this is what he is called to do is to help make good men. It is just like your children when they make a mistake the first thing that you don't do is kick them out of the house. You try to train them.

That is what Coach does, he tries to do anyway. He tries to get these guys to be good people. Hopefully they will learn from the mistakes that they made and maybe learn from the mistakes of another player by how he handles that situation. I think that there is always a chance that you give a guy another opportunity and he blows it again and that it may have affected the team in another way. All you want to do is apologize to the team for giving him another chance. Yet on the other hand there is another guy that you gave that chance to and he turned out to be a great player, got his degree and became a great man. If coach would have given up on him he never would have had a chance to turn things around.⁴⁴

Communication and Motivation

When I can't talk to kids, I'll get out.

Bobby Bowden⁴⁵

If a coach is enthusiastic and compassionate, he or she must be able to communicate and motivate the players positively as needed. After a hard loss, a losing season, or a bad play, the

coach must believe that through practice and persistence the team and its players will improve and become a cohesive group. It is the responsibility of the coaching staff to physically and mentally prepare athletes for competition. One way that Bowden motivates his players and staff is to find a silver lining in every situation. As a strategy he believes that he can find the good in any situation:

I usually try to, 'when we lose,' when I talk to the squad, naturally get them to learn by their mistakes. What mistakes did we make that got us beat. Let's correct it and not do that any more. And then I try to always come up with a bright side. In other words, we start off the season and our goal is to win a National Championship. Well, okay, we win our first four games and we are right on the road. Well, then we get beat. Then, usually, my approach to my kids is that we have lost a game, but you can still win a National Championship even with one loss. Now, if we win the rest of our games, everybody in the country is probably going to lose one game. They might not but I am doing everything I can to tell my kids optimistically that we are still in this thing. Don't lose our fire. Now, let's say that you lost another game. Now I am going to try and find something else, like men we can still win the conference championship. Hey men, if we win a conference championship we get a BCS bowl. I try to always find something optimistic, something positive that we can do. That is what I try to do after a loss. Even after a couple of not so good seasons you can be optimistic, which I did with that team just the other day. We won 8 games in 2001, 9 in 2002, 10 in 2003, so we are heading in the right direction.⁴⁶

Motivation can be seen as the act of motivating someone else and also the state of being motivated. The latter definition is referred to by Bowden as either self-discipline or self-

motivation. In 1955, Bowden was not so self-disciplined. As the athletic director, head football coach and head basketball coach, the 25 year old man was less than enthusiastic and motivated when it came to coaching basketball.

I took that job at South Georgia College, just to get the football job. I only had so many scholarships, so a basketball player had to be a football player. So if I had this many scholarships and well I gave them all to football players. Now, if I could find one that could play basketball, then he would also go play basketball. Anyway I did a lousy job, I wasn't motivated. I just did it to get the other job. Then, the next year I fired me.

I was so bad and I did such a poor job. I wasn't motivated. If I studied like I could, then I could have done okay, because I do believe that a good teacher that is a good motivator and a good communicator can be successful. See that's what a coach needs to be. Now I was a good baseball coach, because I studied it, and I think we won three state championships there in baseball.⁴⁷

In discussing the importance of self-discipline in his players, Bowden believes it is an essential component if a player is to reach their high school potential, and is one of the most important qualities he and his coaching staff will look for during recruiting. The following extract is taken from an interview with Bowden. It is interesting to note that he saw the biggest barrier to effective coaching and success was the lack of self-motivation:

Mark: How do you motivate your kids?

Bowden: Number one, you better recruit self-motivated players. That is a key. So, first recruit players that are self-motivated. If I have got to bring a player in here and make him want to play and make him want to practice and make him want to play hard then you have got a problem. A lot of them are like that; maybe most of them

are like that. Now that is why player leadership is so important. If you have got leaders that believe in that, they will tend to follow the leader. But, how do you motivate? Number one, you should try and recruit self-motivated players. Well, what if they are not self motivated? Then have some kind of rewards for them. Like feeding an animal, you get the dog to roll over and you give him a piece of meat. You get him to stand on his back feet then give him another piece of meat. I think you need things, rewards and things like that and lots of encouragements about how this would make them better. Saying son if you do this you will be better. So, you try and sell that to them.

Mark: How have you been able to do it for just over 51 years?

Bowden: Well, that is what we try to recruit motivated players. Then, your coaches have got to be motivators. You may have 10 coaches in there and 5 of them are super motivators, maybe only three of them are super motivators. But they better be able to communicate and motivate. But again if you get self-motivated kids then they motivate themselves, that's it.

Mark: You have had so many athletes come through the program. What have been some of your best motivating speeches to an athlete?

Bowden: There are probably hundreds and hundreds of them. But there is something that you have got to remember, there are only so many talks that I can give to motivate. You have got a kid for 4 years and he is going to play 12 games a season for you. Now if you think you are going to be able to stand there and motivate him to play every time, then you are fooling yourself. After he has heard it three or four times, he is not going to be paying much attention. So they have to

be self-motivated. Then if you need to try and motivate them then, of course, you are looking for something that is going to fire them up.

Mark: How do you look for something that will fire them up?

Bowden: Well, there are certain things you look for. One of the biggest is newspapers. You know if the other team has said something bad about you, or one of their players said something bad about one of your players, or one of their players said that “they ain’t no good,” or one of there players said that, “we are going to beat that team 20-0.” If I see those things I clip them out. That is material that I read them the night before the game. Stuff like that. Maybe they have beaten you five times in a row. Like Miami has beaten us five times in a row. It was like our first ball games with Miami, they won the last five games. I don’t think I have to motivate them for that game; well I better not have to. If I do then we will get beat for a sixth time. So there are so many things that need to happen, and again try to get them to be self-motivated. However, after that then the best thing to do is show them how it will help them. Show them how they will get better. Show them how they will improve. Show them how they could get in pro football, if they do what you ask. Show them how to get an education. Show them how they can get their degree, you know things like that.

So, for Bowden, the notion of motivation begins with the student being self-motivated. An athlete that is self-motivated doesn’t need to be motivated by the coach. However, if a player in not self-motivated then Bowden tries to find something that will ‘fire them up,’ and/or appeal to the notion of self-improvement and future achievements. As Bowden once said, “If you can be successful without having to motivate the people down in the trenches, more power to you. It

doesn't work that way in college football. If my players aren't motivated to work hard, we won't win."⁴⁸

Throughout his 51-year career, coach Bowden has continued to be successful in spite of the changing faces of football, universities, society, and athletes. Over time he has adapted in the way that he communicates with and motivates his coaches, athletes, support staff, and fans. In discussing modern athletes, Coach Bowden, remembers a time when all you had to do was tell players what to do. Now you have to explain why it will benefit them. In "*The Bowden Way*," Bowden wrote how, "The biggest mistake made today with the modern athlete is not explaining to the player why he must do something and how it will benefit him. If you explain it to him, he will comply."⁴⁹ As discussed in chapter two, Bowden tends to monitor and evaluate practice—more so as he has gotten older. He mentors the coaches and lets the coaches coach the athletes. During the practices that I observed, Bowden would always call the players together and explain why the practice benefited each and every one of them and how it would make them better. As practice moved towards its end, Bowden would always move down from his tower, get into his golf cart and drive to an ideal gathering place. It was here that his whistle was blown. Almost instantly he would be surrounded by the 110 football players and his support staff. Over the next couple of minutes he resembled an actor performing an exquisite monologue.

He firmly believes that a coach's ability to communicate and interact with his or her players is paramount. In one interview Bowden said,

The ability to communicate is big. If you can't communicate you can't teach. We are nothing but teachers. That is why I get mad at some of the coaches, because they scream at them all the time. That is not teaching. We are teachers, yet I have got to let them be themselves. He has to be himself, because he can't be somebody else. But I would want

someone that can communicate. I don't care how good a player you were, it doesn't help if you can't tell him how to do it. You may have been an All-American or won the Heisman. It doesn't matter if you can't tell him how to do it. You have got to be able to communicate.⁵⁰

During my time at Florida State, I am comfortable in saying that Coach Bowden had a grasp of presenting information. In addition, Bowden had a knack of conveying information at the most appropriate level, at the right time. In discussing the importance of formal education, Bowden commented that there are "PhD's that can hardly communicate, because they talk at a different level." As highlighted by the story presented at the beginning of the chapter, Bowden is such an established communicator that he can even convey ideas of ball flight to a freshman quarterback through the throwing actions of stick men, so that quarterback can apply the idea as a senior in an important game.

In teaching the flight of a ball, matchstick men might not be the most complex strategy a coach might use, but nevertheless it was helpful enough that Peter Willis not only remembered it, but executed accurately and effectively because of it. An athlete in the heat of battle has numerous decisions to make and choices that must be made correctly, all within a time-sensitive moment. Athletes that are confused by the sheer volume of information are said by Bowden to be suffering from "paralysis by analysis"⁵¹, or "overcoaching." As Bowden noted, "In football, we talk about overcoaching a game, interfering with the flow more than you need to. You end up confusing the players and risk messing up your chances to win."⁵² However, overcoaching is not only linked to the game, it starts in practice. As Bowden remarked, "To me, overcoaching would be that you would have coached a kid so hard that he cannot play naturally and he becomes a robot."⁵³

So what does it mean for an athlete to be a robot? What does it mean to not overcoach, yet also teach a game that has become “increasingly complex?”⁵⁴ Not surprisingly to Coach Bowden the answer is, “Keeping it simple is such an important factor in athletics. You must KEEP IT SIMPLE. If the guy has to think it slows him down.”⁵⁵ In discussing Coach Bowden’s teaching philosophies, Coach Gladden, a long time assistant, discussed the importance of not overcoaching as a very important ingredient to coach Bowden’s success:

Sometimes coaches coach like they are going to play themselves. They carry it too far and they overcoach. Now, I think that that is the fault of especially the young guys. I mean if I am coaching you and I coached the defensive ends, I can tell you too much information, I can overcoach you so that when that ball is snapped in your mind you are asking if he said if he did this I should do this, and if he did that then I need to do this, if the guy went that way I do this, or if he went that way do I do that. He always talked about mental imprisonment. You can imprison a guy mentally to where he becomes a robot, or you can allow him to play by keeping it simple and allow him to play on his ability. He is a coach that always believed you need to recruit good ability and allow them to play on their ability. You need to keep his assignments simple, because the more these [cogs] have to turn up here in your head, then the slower your legs go. So the less these have to turn the faster these [legs] can go. If you tell them too much then it can create hesitation. ... Coaching is not a complicated thing. Coaching is not complicated it is about getting players to do what you know. ... You want everything to be an automatic reaction. Everything needs to be automatic and spontaneous without hesitation.

Another phrase he [Coach Bowden] used is ‘*paralysis by analysis.*’ You can be paralyzed by doing too much analysis. His thing is he wants the entire game plan to be on

a 6 x 4 card. He says, “that is what I can retain. That is what I can function with. If there is more than that, then I can’t function. So if you are studying it 16-18 hours a day and the kids are only studying it maybe 3 hours a day, how is a kid going to digest it in 3 days or 4 days of practice, unless it is on a 6 x 4 note card. So KEEP IT SIMPLE.” I think those are two keys for me about coach Bowden’s success.⁵⁶

When discussing coaching and overcoaching, Bowden further discussed the need to keep things simple, and stratified the notion further by discussing how you need to vary instruction based on the player’s athletic ability and the position.

If you were a player on my team and I always told you to step with this foot and always fight with that foot and always be sure to do this and always be sure to do that, then the first thing you know is you are out there trying to be like a robot because you are trying to do everything that he said. Now you can’t play football that way. They have got to be able to turn it lose. So, you want to coach it so that they just get the thought and then you get them as many reps as you can and let them play, that is where overcoaching can be harmful.

Also, the better the athlete you get, the more that is true. If you get a guy that is not a good athlete, then you really have to teach him and it will take rep after rep after rep after rep. Now the guy I am talking about is an offensive lineman. Here is Booker, you don’t teach him anything. The guy can catch the ball, he can run the ball, he can throw the ball, so don’t try and tell him how to run. That would be overcoaching and you are going to ruin him. Okay, here comes a big lineman in here. He is 300 pounds, is not real quick but is not real slow either. Now it might take him 5 years to develop. I have to coach him to take the right step then a left step. I have got to coach him to take shorter

steps, play with knees bent, get your knees bent, do this, do that, do this, and do that.

Now all that while, while you are teaching him, he isn't ready to play because he is like a robot. He can't play yet, but as he gets older and does it over and over and over and over and over by the time he is a junior or a senior he is playing winning football for you and maybe able to play pro ball. So the better athlete you get the less physical coaching you do. You do more mental coaching about what you have to do if they do this or this or that.⁵⁷

As noted by Coach Gladden, Bowden not only keeps his coaching simple, but he also wants the game plan to be simple enough that the players can learn and digest the information, then perform without hesitation. There is nothing overly complicated with his half time team speeches, team talks and practice speeches. That is not to say that they are not influential or inspiring. It is more a reflection that they are appropriate, understandable, and relevant because they are simple enough to understand, and at times of importance are very motivational. As one of his present players noted about his practice speeches:

Before practice he usually touches on very fundamental surface things, like going 100 miles an hour, tackling, just real basic stuff. He doesn't get really deep into techniques and stuff like that, especially. He usually gives us something fundamental for each position to work on. He will talk to the quarterbacks and receiver: we have got to make everything look like the deep ball. Running backs we have got to protect the ball.

Linebackers we have got to get the ball out. Cornerbacks we can't get beat deep. That is usually what he does before practice. Now after practice he will touch on the things that he saw, you know that we did well and things that we need to do well.⁵⁸

As demonstrated by these comments, Bowden focuses on attainable and simple, yet important components that each position can focus on during practice and that a player, coach and team unit can continuously build on. Through the research process, it was noticeable that much of what Bowden communicates to his players follows an organized plan of thought that flows throughout the varying components of the football schedule, from pre-season, to the regular season, to post-season, to mat drills and into spring practice. In 1991, the catch phrase was “no excuses,” in 1976 it was “don’t quit.” All phrases that, when said, inspired, motivated or even focused players. Looking back, Bowden referred to his first season at Florida State when ‘don’t quit’ was the mantra of the season.

When I first came here, it was like hideaway. It was such a big thing here, “don’t quit.” “DON’T QUIT.” Like if you started a drill then “don’t quit.” If you were running a forty-yard dash, “don’t quit.” If you are running laps after practice then “don’t quit.” You know if we are doing a drill and you have got to go from here to there, then “don’t quit.” You have to go as hard as you did over here as you did over here so, “don’t quit.” So that is probably, well 50% of the schools have adapted that, now whether they got that from us I don’t know. We have always hammered something like that home here.⁵⁹

Throughout the research process and especially the writing of this text, I have often remembered those words of wisdom, “DON’T QUIT.”

Loyalty and Trust

During Coach Bowden’s career, loyalty has been of major significance with regards to his personal successes and his program’s achievements. As this chapter has alluded, Bowden and FSU have been under the media spotlight regarding discipline and player actions on numerous occasions. Yet, throughout his career, Bowden has been loyal to a place, a coach, a

player and a belief. That is until loyalty is not given in return.⁶⁰ In 1999, Bowden stood behind Peter Warrick during his legal issues demonstrating the importance of loyalty no matter what the court of public opinion charges. As Bowden noted in relation to supporting his coaching staff,

My belief is that you should always defend your staff until or unless the facts mandate otherwise. Wait until all the facts are in before withholding support of anyone. You hurt your credibility if you prematurely jump to a conclusion and then are proven wrong.⁶¹

There was no bigger statement made within the literature and the interviews than one that was written in the book, *Winning is only part of the Game*, where Bowden discussed his first season at Florida State in 1976:

When I first came to Florida State in '76 and was going through the things I expected out of our staff, the word that I said over and over again was loyalty.

“Men,” I said, “Without loyalty, we can’t have anything.”⁶²

In fact to this day, the word loyalty still appears on the first page of the Hideaway folder, followed by the statement “We will be loyal to one another – I will defend you and you will have to defend me. It starts with loyalty.”⁶³

The notion of loyalty was further articulated during a conversation regarding the question: What makes a good coach? As noted within this chapter, several traits have been identified as important. In addition, the notion of loyalty linked with the desire to improve is a characteristic that has been discussed. Through experiences as an assistant coach and observations, Bowden noted:

What makes a good assistant coach? I will tell you this; there are some head coaches that are paranoid. They don’t want to hire anybody that wants a head job, because they might want their job. I don’t think like that. I wish that all my coaches wanted a head job. I

think if they want a head job then they are going to work their tails off to get one. All I do demand is loyalty. All I demand is loyalty. Don't ever let me here you out there talking about my job. But, in return I am going to do everything I can to help you get a head job.⁶⁴

In chapters five and six, Bowden's tenure as the head coach at the University of West Virginia will be discussed and the lack of loyalty demonstrated by the fans introduced as a major factor for Bowden accepting the Florida State position. It was during this time that Bowden's friends abused his trust. Therefore demonstrating that trust is a word that is easily used, yet difficult to achieve and give. However, in sport trust is imperative if a team is to reach the highest potential. This is even more evident in a contact sport like football where the actions and executions of one player directly affect both the safety and success of another. In addition, a player must trust their coaches—for it is the coaches that design the game plan, scout the opposing team and prepare the team physically, mentally and emotionally—a point that Bowden is quick to make:

They (athletes) must trust us and they must trust their teammates. That's a word you don't hear very often in explanations of lessons you take away from football, but I think it's an important one. Trust may be the toughest thing to ask from another human being. You're asking them to put themselves at risk with the promise that you won't let them down.

Trust is the absolute last thing a lot of kids are willing to invest these days. For many of the ones we see there's nothing in their experiences that suggest much of a payoff in trusting somebody else. The lessons they come to school with are lessons of the

street: Get the other guy before he gets you. Never turn your back: Don't depend on anybody.⁶⁵

Trust is not just limited to players trusting their teammates and coaches. Something that is often overlooked, but appeared repeatedly in the data was the notion of delegating responsibility. It is through this process that Bowden, as the head coach, must trust in the teaching abilities and the overall ethics of the assistant coaches:

I do a lot of delegating now. It's better that way. I trust my staff to do their jobs, and they enjoy having both the added responsibility and the added authority. We win more games when I leave them alone to do what they do best. It gets back to having staff members you can trust to do what is expected of them.⁶⁶

At Florida State Bowden now acts in the capacity of mentor. As the prior quote attests, one way that Coach Bowden demonstrates trust is his practice of delegation. He allows coaches to teach the way they need to or believe they have to. In describing his beliefs regarding his coach's loyalty, Bowden iterated:

Well, if I had to name a thing then it would be letting them coach. I let them coach. Their job is to get their job done. Now, if they couldn't get it done then I will call them in and suggest that you ought to do this or do this, or try this, or do this.⁶⁷

Bowden's style of leadership is very "consultant democratic."⁶⁸ This is a style where the group members are involved in the decision making process, like at hideaway, but the ultimate decision is made by Bowden as the head coach. Now, this is not to say that being able to delegate responsibility is straight-forward. It demands a huge amount of trust on the part of those delegating. As Bowden noted:

Delegation isn't as easy as it sounds, however. If I empower my coaches to deal with certain problems and issues on their own, then I must trust their judgment and support their decisions. One of them might handle a player situation differently that I would handle it. But, if I start undermining their decisions pretty soon they'll just start tossing the problems back to me, which is something I don't have time for.⁶⁹

Having noted that Bowden feels that delegation is one of the most important practices in running a successful football program, it is important as to hear the testimony of coaches that have worked with him. In reporting the coaches' perspectives and feelings it also adds credibility, since he walks the walk, and talks the talk. Therefore, quotes from interviews with Coach Mark Richt, Coach Jim Gladden, Coach Odell Haggins and Coach Andrews have been included as an indication of the policy that Bowden adheres to:

Coach Mark Richt,

He would give responsibility to people and he would also give them the authority to carry out their responsibilities. I think that was very important to me and for other guys that have worked for him. Just being allowed to grow, I was allowed to grow unbelievably under his guidance and he allowed me to handle more responsibility as time went on, if he felt like I had earned it. I think that most people get excited about a chance to express their ideas and get things done. I think that people then take more ownership in what is going on and buy into it. But, if everything is being dictated to you and you don't think that you are growing in any way, then it is very difficult if you feel like you are being smothered by the head coach. It is tough to want to stick around.⁷⁰

Coach Jim Gladden,

He has tried to bring out in people how he does in terms of how you treat the kids and how you treat the players. The greatest thing as an assistant coach working for him, when he hires you he will outline your areas of responsibility and they are very clear cut. In other words when he hires you to do a job, it's all in writing what he expects. You know you are responsible for this, this, this, this and this and that is all I am going to hold you accountable for. This is your job, now I am hiring you to do that job and I am not going to tell you how to do it because I hired you. So you put your own twist on it you do it like you think you need to do it. Now, if it is not getting done, then we will have to talk about it. If you are getting it done then I am not going to micro-manage you. I am going to let you handle the job, because by doing that it gives you ownership in the program. It gives you ownership in what you are doing. That makes you feel like your contribution is of value. He values everyone and gives everyone value and that makes for good morale among the coaches and then the same thing is true with the players. He allows those older guys especially to have input into their thinking and it gives them ownership into the program. So it is outstanding and I think that that is coach Bowden's greatest asset.⁷¹

Coach Odell Haggins

But the thing that I love being here at Florida State and being under Coach Bowden as the head coach is that he lets you do your job and work hard. Now, if he sees something wrong in the way you are doing it, he will tell you and that makes me want to work hard. When you have a boss that lets you do your job, you work harder and you have got trust in him.⁷²

Coach Mickey Andrews

It really just amazes me how he hires a coach and then tells them what he wants done, but then doesn't tell them how to do it. A lot of people can't do that, they have to micro-manage. He has a great sense to that and yet he is unbelievable in his ability to observe, whether it be in a practice setting or whatever.⁷³

Based on the four coaches' statements it is very obvious that all four of them appreciated the ability to take responsibility for their own coaching. Bowden, as a leader, delegated to each coach a series of responsibilities, then allowed them to perform and execute those responsibilities based on their own strengths and values. This practice allowed each coach to gain a sense of ownership and personal responsibility and develop relationships built on loyalty and trust.

Character

In his younger days, growing up in Birmingham, Alabama, Bowden was less than a perfect child. However, looking back on those not so responsible days, Bowden said, "I've learned you don't have to go around using bad language and fighting to show others how macho you are. That stuff won't get you anywhere. It just shows lack of vocabulary and character."⁷⁴ College football coaches have often used the notion that football builds character as a justification of the importance of the game, and the rough and tough practices that have traditionally accompanied the sport. So, what does it mean to have character? Why is it important that players and coaches build it? Bowden believes that, "Good character is a leader's greatest ally. Even if you're young, people will respect the moral principles you stand for."⁷⁵ However, Bowden is also quick to remind us that character is in fact an adjective and that, "We have good character only to the extent that we demonstrate good character. That's why it's so important for a leader to create good habits. Words are cheap, we are known by our deeds."⁷⁶

During our conversations I asked Coach Bowden, “You talk about character, your coaches talk about character and your team talks about character. What do you as a program and as a coach mean when you say character?” He replied:

Obedience; now, obedience to what, you might ask? To our rules, government, laws of the land, and to God. Now, that is character. If you don't have obedience then you might steal. I think when you are talking about character you are talking about people who are obedient to authority. To have character, doesn't mean that you have to be a Christian. You can be a man that doesn't believe in God and still obey the rules. I think, the reason that I add God and Christ is that you are more likely to follow the rules and be obedient. It is something that I would call for example; there is a difference between discipline and self-discipline. If all our boys are self-disciplined then I don't have a thing to worry about, because they discipline themselves. But, there are some that are not so disciplined, so you have got to do it. So self-discipline comes to me with a belief in a faith or something. Now, if you were a Muslim, and I am a Christian, then you have laws to go by. Most religions have thou shall not kill, thou shall not steal, thou shall not ..., well most of them have got that. So if you just do that then you are going to be a pretty good person and have good character.⁷⁷

For Bowden character is guided by his religion and faith in God and Jesus Christ that in turn informs his style of coaching and leadership. However, only through (re-)examining these beliefs can one live with integrity and be honest to yourself and others. In chapter two the notion of reflection and self-analysis discussed the importance of understanding and learning from one's mistakes in the quest for improvement. Here the concept of honesty is, in its wider context, linked to the notion of self-improvement, humility and ones overall integrity. However, before

looking into the notion of integrity, it is important to examine what is meant by humility and honesty. “Some ... think they must consistently project an image of strength and unwavering self-confidence. They see humility as a sign of weakness. I see it differently. I think humility is a sign of honesty.”⁷⁸ In addition, Bowden continued by saying later in the same chapter that

Humility and honesty go hand in hand. What is humility if not an honest appraisal of one’s own fallibility? And what is arrogance if not dishonesty to oneself? If a guy can’t even be honest with himself, I’m not sure you want to follow his lead.⁷⁹

In discussing the notion of humility and being honest with oneself, Bowden often referred to some of the great leaders in military history as examples, noting “They all walk with a limp. They carry their failures with them.”⁸⁰

In addition to being honest internally, Bowden is adamant that you must also be honest with all those that are around you, including the players, coaches, support staff, parents and media:

You have got to be honest. That is one of the first things that I tell kids is that “son you got to be honest with me and I will be honest with you and “don’t you ever lie to me because I will never lie to you.” If y’all ever sense that I am telling you one thing and that I am not doing it, then y’all better come let me know. Maybe I am doing it and don’t even know it. I don’t think I have ever had one do that, but I would want them to. If I tell them one thing and I am doing something else, don’t let me do that. So, you have got to be fair and honest with them, said Bowden.⁸¹

Another example, of his honesty occurs during recruiting. Although, Bowden believes that the team that gets the best talent wins, he is very open regarding the program and the type of attention a player will receive when becoming a member of the squad:

During recruiting, I try to tell them as honestly and as best that I can. I have actually told this to kids before. Let's say that he is all-world and you have about got him talked into coming to your school and he is still a prima donna. Now I have made this statement, "Now son, once you have signed that scholarship then it is all over." I even start to tell the kid by saying you will have to stop calling me Bobby. When you sign you can't call me Bobby no more, it is Coach Bowden. But I have told them, now look son once you sign that scholarship you are ours. Once you sign that scholarship it ain't going to be like it was. You are going to be like everybody else on this team. You are going to find guys out here that are just as good as you are, and we are not going to have any more of that prima donna story. When I get fed up with them and they don't like it, then I tell them that they can go somewhere else if they want. But most of them understand the program. We do try and be honest with them and that you are going to have to fight for your life here.⁸²

All together the wholeness of Coach Bowden can be linked to the integrity of his character and the belief that he is doing the right thing for the athletes. It is here that he draws the line between the opinion of others and his beliefs. Although the media has increasingly influenced his learning curve in recent years (Chapter 5), he still sticks by what he believes is the best for the team, program and importantly the players:

You want my advice? Don't worry too much about what others think. It will paralyze you. Focus on what you believe to be the right path. And when you stumble or wander, don't give up. Pick up where you left off and start again. If you are heading in the right direction and you work hard enough, success eventually will overcome all criticism. But, if you react to every little thing, you'll bounce around forever.⁸³

If honestly and humility are not strong enough precursors of integrity, then the sage advice handed down to Bowden from Bear Bryant, of just being yourself is. Throughout the process, Bowden frequently mentioned the importance of becoming a coach that is representative of who you are. As Bowden expressed, “Be yourself. Lead through your own personality. Don’t try to imitate someone else. Just remember to act professionally and do what is right. The rest will take care of itself.”⁸⁴

¹ Guest (1995)

² Interview with Author (March, 25, 2004)

³ Personal discussion at practice (November 10, 2003)

⁴ Bynum (1980); Brown (1992); Bowden and Smith (1994); and Bowden and Family (1996)

⁵ Bowden and Bowden (2001, Cover)

⁶ Bowden and Bowden (2001, Cover)

⁷ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 3)

⁸ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 73)

⁹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

¹⁰ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 3)

¹¹ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 91)

¹² Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)

¹³ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

¹⁴ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 93)

¹⁵ Lincoln and Denzin (1994, p. 577)

¹⁶ Glesne (1999, p. 177)

¹⁷ Schempp (1997)

¹⁸ Tan (1997)

¹⁹ DeMarco and McCullick (1997)

²⁰ See, Salmela and Morales (2003) for a more detailed review.

²¹ Banner and Cannon (1997, pp. 2-3)

²² Banner and Cannon (1997, p. 3)

²³ Personal Communication (June 1, 2004)

²⁴ Coach Kevin Steele is the newest member of the Florida State Coaching staff. His previous coaching jobs included being the head coach at Baylor University and the Linebackers coach for the Carolina Panthers.

²⁵ Coach Gladden during an interview with the Author March, 17, 2004)

²⁶ Bowden and Smith (1994, pp. 152-153)

²⁷ Bowden and Bowden (2001, pp. 84-85)

²⁸ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

²⁹ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)

³⁰ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

³¹ Bobby Bowden, cited in, Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 127)

³² Discussed in greater detail in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

³³ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 128)

³⁴ Interview with Author (April 8, 2004)

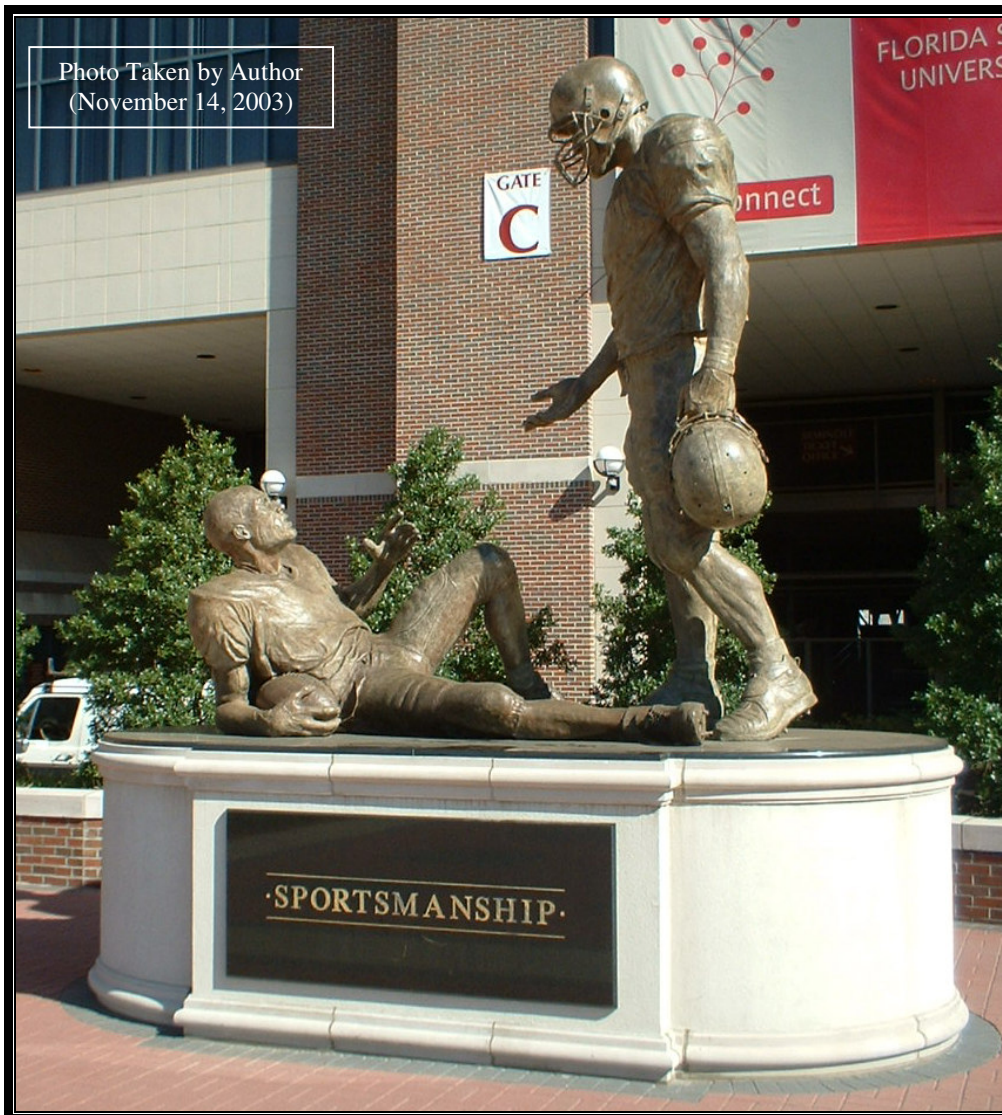
³⁵ Bowden and Brown (1996, p. 124)

³⁶ FSU Football Media Guide (2003)

³⁷ Campusmonster.com, Posted Wednesday October 13, 1999, http://www.campusmonster.com/news/football/1999/10/10-13-99_3.htm - retrieved 5/10/2004

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- ³⁸ Bowden and Bowden (2001, pp. 202-203)
- ³⁹ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 61)
- ⁴⁰ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 50)
- ⁴¹ Bowden and Smith (1996, p. 126)
- ⁴² Following the successful 2002 campaign that saw UGA win the SEC and the Sugar Bowl the team were rewarded with championship rings. However, citing the need for money nine players auctioned their rings to the highest bidder.
- ⁴³ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)
- ⁴⁴ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)
- ⁴⁵ Layden (1998)
- ⁴⁶ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁴⁷ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
- ⁴⁸ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 11)
- ⁴⁹ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 128)
- ⁵⁰ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁵¹ Interview with Bowden (April 22, 2004)
- ⁵² Bowden and Brown (1996, pp. 97-98)
- ⁵³ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)
- ⁵⁴ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁵⁵ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)
- ⁵⁶ Interview with Author (April 8, 2004)
- ⁵⁷ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)
- ⁵⁸ Interview with Author (March 5, 2004)
- ⁵⁹ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)
- ⁶⁰ Further Discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.
- ⁶¹ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 44)
- ⁶² Bowden and Brown (1996, p. 193)
- ⁶³ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 44)
- ⁶⁴ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
- ⁶⁵ Bowden and Brown (1996, p. 113)
- ⁶⁶ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 69)
- ⁶⁷ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁶⁸ Tayeb (1996)
- ⁶⁹ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 77)
- ⁷⁰ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)
- ⁷¹ Interview with Author (April, 08, 2004)
- ⁷² Interview with Author (April 7, 2004)
- ⁷³ Interview with Author (April 6, 2004)
- ⁷⁴ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 204)
- ⁷⁵ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 21)
- ⁷⁶ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 21)
- ⁷⁷ Interview with Author (April 8, 2004)
- ⁷⁸ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 56)
- ⁷⁹ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 63)
- ⁸⁰ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 63)
- ⁸¹ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
- ⁸² Interview with Author (April 8, 2004)
- ⁸³ Bowden and Smith (1996, pp. 70-71)
- ⁸⁴ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 168)

PART II
LIFE CHANGES AND LEARNED LESSONS



This one ton 15' tall Sportsmanship statue stands between Gates B and C of Doak Campbell Stadium. "The enduring symbol of the most important aspect of athletic competition was sculpted by FSU alumnus and accomplished artist Edward Jonas" (Florida State University, 2003, p. VII).

CHAPTER 4

CHANGING TIMES

Down at the corner Dairy Dip
 They sold soft ice cream for a dime
 White people ordered from the front
 The side was for the colored line
 We all were told they had their place
 Because they were a different race

We spent hot summer afternoons
 At the public swimming pool
 Where the privileged and the few
 Played on their island of cool blue
 Brown children watched outside the fence
 It never made one lick of sense

And the train of change
 Was coming fast to my hometown
 We had the choice to climb on board
 Or get run down

It was crazy there were grown men fights
 Over segregation and civil rights
 Martin Luther King and the KKK
 George C. Wallace and LBJ
 And when the National Guard came in
 I thought the world was gonna end
 It was crazy in Alabama

Crazy in Alabama, Kate Campbell¹

Since 1929, the United States of America has witnessed and been impacted by the Stock market crash and the Great Depression of the 1930's, World War II, the rising of the civil rights movement, the Cold War, the Vietnam War, lunar landings, the Gulf War conflicts and the destruction of the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, DC. Each event undoubtedly had a significant impact on the values, beliefs and the development of the

society that we today live and work in. Therefore, each event has shaped our understanding of not only the past from where we come, but also the present.

For example, on the afternoon of August 28, 1963, on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, one man made an eight-minute speech that still lives in the memories and history books of the American people today. It was a speech that will always, in my mind, stand as a testimony to the notion of change regarding beliefs, values and ideologies of culture as a whole. Martin Luther King Jr. talked of change, equality, and most importantly dreams. Dreams and beliefs that his, “Four children will one day live in a nation where they are not judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.”² Throughout his life he advocated change. Change in the institutions and bureaucracies that govern our society and change that reinforced the notion that all men are created equal. He advocated the need for change, yet understood that change would be slow. King had a dream; a dream that planted the seeds of belief into others. A dream that saw these seeds grow through nurturing and guidance and a belief that one day the seed, like his dream, would exist in its full glory. This notion of belief is as strong today as we head into the 21st century as it was back in 1963.

Throughout the Twentieth Century, change has been an inherent characteristic of the American society. In discussing the complexities of society, Michael Fullan noted, “Society is more complex, more chaotic, more non-linear than ever before. The demands on school are ever more multiple and fragmented. The boundaries between school, their communities and society are more porous and permeable.”³ Therefore, it is important to understand both the processes and the regulations that have governed not only societies, but the micro-societies that we as individuals live within. However, change as a process related to learning and education is slow. Darling-Hammond stated that:

The process of change is slow and difficult. It requires perseverance and it requires investments in those things that allow teachers, as change agents, to grapple with transformations of ideas and behavior: time for learning about, looking at, discussing, struggling with, trying out, constructing, and reconstructing new ways of thinking and teaching.⁴

For fifty-one years, Bowden has learned to adapt to the changing faces and values of the American society. He has also had to work in compliance with the regulations and bylaws of the governing body of intercollegiate athletics, the National Collegiate Athletic Association. Therefore, if one is to further understand how Coach Bowden learned his trade and continued to be successful, it is important to understand the outside forces that have both impacted it and shaped it. It is important to remember that society not only impacts our ability to change our practices and philosophies, but also affects our ability to develop and grow. It is this ability to change that ultimately expands our understanding of oneself as individuals, our careers, our interactions with others, and our understanding of culture.

This chapter will examine some of the policies, events, and changes that have directly, and indirectly, impacted Bowden's capability to coach football throughout his career. Therefore the purpose of this chapter is to provide context to Bowden's career, by examining a condensed history of *College Athletics* with particular reference to the *Governance of College Athletics and the NCAA*, and the changes in *College Football and Athletes*.

College Athletics

From my own partial survey of the American social scene, I believe that our culture portrays a close correspondence between our present conduct of athletic games and our conduct of business and commercial enterprise. In short, the

culture is uniform in this respect, and what happens on the campus fits the pattern of our present practices in free enterprise.

Jesse Feiring Williams⁵

Student athletics have been a staple component on American universities and college campuses throughout the Twentieth Century regardless of the historical events that shaped society. Throughout Bowden's lifetime, college athletics and the ideals that they reportedly represent have been continually questioned, challenged, modified, adapted and changed. However, one constant remains, and that is the discussion of the role that athletics should play in higher education. In 1949, Jesse Feiring Williams, wrote in an article titled *The Crucial Issue in American College Athletics*,

In spite of the enormous crowds at intercollegiate games, the college athletic situation is deplorable and the conditions are chronic. The problems were so serious twenty years ago that the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching studied the field and reported upon the topic, *American College Athletics*, issued in 1929. The National Collegiate Athletic Association [NCAA] and the College of Physical Education are constantly studying the athletic conditions that confront them, and these conditions are characterized by such words as *commercialization, subsidization, exploitation, bribery, gambling, and proselytism*. Can the existing conditions be changed? Can the recognized evils be abated? Can the practice of culture be directed into new channels?⁶

We now have given our best efforts to develop college athletics who are at times dismayed by the gambling, amazed at the legalisms of the amateur code, and all but disillusioned by the crass commercialism that everywhere abounds. . . . The chaotic sports picture is but one frame in the film of our current society.⁷

As is highlighted in the two passages, college athletics in the early part of the twentieth century, struggled to balance the ideals from which they were created, the educational values and beliefs of academic integrity proclaimed by those within the walls of higher education and the values of the society that ultimately influenced and built such walls. Forty years after Williams, article was printed, college athletics, in particular the big time sports of men's football and basketball, continued to be in disarray with scandals dominating the pages and broadcasts of the sporting media.⁸ The continuing troubles that have plagued college athletics linked with the concern for athletes' welfare led to the trustees of the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (The Knight Foundation) to establish an exploratory commission, with its purpose being to propose a reform agenda for college sports that countered the growing problems and corruptions that were festering in intercollegiate athletics.⁹ In part the growing problems that are outlined below were used as evidence by the foundations in a statement of interests regarding the present problems in intercollegiate sport.¹⁰

- In the 1980s, 109 colleges and universities were censured, sanctioned or put on probation by the National Collegiate Athletic Association
- That number included more than half the universities playing at the NCAA's top competitive level – 57 institutions out of 106
- Nearly a third of present and former professional football players responding to a survey near the end of the decade said they accepted illicit payments while in college, and more than half said they saw nothing wrong with the practice
- Another survey showed that among 100-big-time schools, 35 had graduation rates under 20 percent for their basketball players and 14 had the same low rate for their football players.

- 8-10 Americans questioned in the Louis Harris poll in 1989 agreed that intercollegiate sports had gotten out of control, that the athletic programs were being corrupted by big money, and that the many cases of serious rules violations had undermined the traditional role of universities as places where young people learn ethics and integrity.

Additionally, the foundation acknowledged that this was not a new problem that could just be solved through the production of a report. Looking back, Creed C. Black, the president of the foundation from 1988-1998, noted:

We were under no illusions that this would be easy. As far back as 60 years ago, another major American Foundation – the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching – had published a study on college athletics which concluded that recruiting had been corrupt, professionals had replaced amateurs, education was being neglected and commercialism reigned.

That was in 1929, not 1989. The problem had become worse in the intervening years because the millions of dollars television was pouring into college athletics had raised the stakes – and put an even higher premium on winning.¹¹

Following the formation of the commission in 1989, the foundation subsequently published three reports reexamining the state of college athletics between 1991 and 1993.¹² The first of these, *Keeping Faith under the Student-Athlete: A New Model for Intercollegiate Athletics*, was released in March 1991; *A Solid Start: A Report on Reform of Intercollegiate Athletics*, was published a year later; and in March 1993 the final report, *A New Beginning for a New Century: Intercollegiate Athletics in the United States*, was released. The major recommendation of the foundation was for the NCAA to implement a new model titled the “One-Plus-Three”¹³ The model consist of the “one – presidential control – directed towards the

three – academic integrity, financial integrity and accountability through certification.”¹⁴ The impact of the regulations and the subsequent administrative changes that occurred in college athletics in general will be discussed in the section detailing the *Governance of College Athletics and the NCAA* (National Collegiate Athletic Association), and then more specifically in a section titled *College Football*.

Governance and the NCAA

Founded on March 31, 1906 as the, “Intercollegiate Athletic Association of the United States,” the NCAA began life with very little significance on the American sporting society. However, thanks to the intervention of then president, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., the importance of the NCAA was established through the building of a bridge between football and higher education.”¹⁵ This unintentional marriage “forever changed both amateur sports and higher education, although that outcome wasn't obvious until the youngster came of age, many years later.”¹⁶ Today the NCAA published mission states that it is striving “to maintain intercollegiate athletics as an integral part of the student body.”¹⁷ However, some questioned the NCAA’s integrity regarding its stated purposes. (NCAA purposes documented in Appendix E) “As college athletics, and in particular programs in Division 1-A have become more like a business, the emphasis within the term “student-athlete” appears to have shifted away from “student” and toward “athlete.”¹⁸ The Knight Commission noted, “Somehow ... sanity had to be restored to this bleak scene and the values of higher education put above all else in the world of intercollegiate athletics.”¹⁹ Before delving deeper into the troubles and scandals that have plagued college athletics further, it is important to briefly discuss historically the maturation of the NCAA from its inauspicious beginnings in 1906.

NCAA: Historically

In the 1920s college athletics were a very popular spectacle in American society. In particular college football “experienced an explosive growth,” and “colleges hastily constructed mammoth stadiums.”²⁰ With the stock market crash in 1929 and the depression, college sports continued to play an important part in American Society in the 1930s.²¹ However, with this increased interest came the call for accountability and the resolution of amateur ideals with intercollegiate sports. In 1939, the NCAA “expanded its bylaws to include a definition of *amateur sportsman* and demanded that its members follow specific rules.”²² However, college athletics—football and basketball in particular—were being seen by many as a business more than as the amateur sporting endeavor. Interestingly, it was during this historical decade that revenue from broadcasting started to make inroads in the college athletics through the medium of radio. By the end of the 1930s most big-time college football programs received some form of revenue from radio.²³

Following the bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1942, the United States officially entered the Second World War. Between 1942 and 1945, college athletics took a back seat in many institutions. However, at the war’s conclusion, intercollegiate athletics started to again occupy college campuses. By 1947 attendance at college football games had returned to pre-war numbers. Although some claimed that the war effort had aided in the “cleaning up” of college sport,²⁴ the post-war NCAA was looking to further regulate the growth of intercollegiate athletics.

In 1947, the NCAA developed and installed its first definitive set of regulations known as the Sanity Code. The code represented a significant attempt to curb the increasing levels of illegal recruiting practices and subsidies.²⁵ However, the code was not without its problems as

Brown explained, “Detractors were concerned about the Sanity Code mainly because the only enforcement penalty was expulsion from the NCAA, a price no one wanted to visit on a wrongdoer, regardless of the crime.”²⁶ The then NCAA president, Hugh Willett, fought hard for the code at the NCAA convention in 1951 under increasing criticisms from the southern schools.

We have entered the field of so-called “regulation,”... It would be dishonest and ungracious of me not to acknowledge the progress we have made in bringing to the consciousness of our members the great need of putting our athletics houses in order.²⁷

However, support of the code ultimately failed to reach the two-thirds majority during a vote at the annual NCAA convention in 1951 and was repealed, throwing the NCAA into a seemingly powerless position.²⁸ Falla stated,

The downfall ... is not the end of the concept of athletic regulation and enforcement; rather, it marks the faltering and perhaps a too-hurried step at the beginning of what is to become a slower, more methodical and better-supported approach to cooperative preservation of the spirit of amateurism.²⁹

The death of the Sanity Code spurred a series of new regulations including the 12-point code in 1952, the formation of a Committee on Infractions in 1953, and an amendment to Article 2 in 1961 which specified the need of member organizations to enforce NCAA legislation.

During the 1950s and later in the 1970s the NCAA attempted to further regulate the amateur status of college athletics. Radio, as a form of communication was still important, but it was during this time that the NCAA and the medium of television began to develop it’s now inseparable relationship³⁰ with some early skepticism. Watterson wrote,

College football entered into a period of unprecedented prosperity. The live attendance went from just under fifteen million in 1956 to more than thirty million in 1971. NCAA-

TV revenues, which had broken the two million mark in 1950, reached twelve million by 1970, a testament to both the popularity of college football and the negotiating abilities of NCAA executive director Walter Byers.³¹

By the time college athletics reached the end on the 1980s, it had been receiving increasing notoriety for its numerous scandals that were placing intercollegiate athletics in jeopardy.³² Hawes reported,

Scandal after scandal had tarnished the reputation of all of athletics, and the pressure of big-time college sports had led to spiraling costs, increased cheating and, in some cases, a disregard for student-athlete welfare. ... The scandals of the 1980s got the attention of leaders in intercollegiate athletics -- and academics -- like nothing had before. It became clear that an institution caught cheating for athletics gains suffered consequences that reached far beyond athletics. There was a public perception -- and perhaps a reality -- that student-athletes were being used for their athletics ability, with no real regard for their academic welfare. Institutions' academic reputations were at stake, as was the integrity of all in intercollegiate athletics.³³

An association that at its historical beginning in 1906 was founded on the premises of making football safe and forming regulations needed to truly (re-)establish, “enforcement procedures, develop academic standards for eligibility and adopt legislation that governs everything from football television contracts to financial-aid limits.”³⁴

In 1991 a reform package was proposed at the annual NCAA convention in Nashville, Tennessee. At the “reform convention” of 1991 “significant measures supported by the NCAA institution presidents were adopted by the NCAA membership”³⁵ for the first time. The package was primarily based on the results of a study conducted in 1989 by the NCAA president’s

commission and the historic June 1990 summit between the commission and the NCAA's student advisory council. The package ultimately consisted of three main parts: *cost containment*, *time demands on student-athletes and restructuring*. Ultimately, the package propelled what is now known as the "20-hour rule;" 20-hours being the amount of time student-athletes can be mandated to participate in their respective college sport per week, during the designated season.

At the 1992 NCAA convention and on the heels of the *Keeping Faith with the Student Athlete* report by the Knight Commission, significant strides were once again made regarding legislation and governance. The Knight Foundation's second report *A Solid Start*, documented the 12 main changes that the NCAA intended to implement over the course of the following four years that were passed at the 1992 convention. These changes, documented in appendix G, helped in the reshaping of intercollegiate athletics.

Between 1906 and 2004, the NCAA has, with increasing governance, attempted to regulate college sports. During this time significant changes have enabled the development of the NCAA as is briefly outlined in this chapter. Rather than detailing each piece of legislation that has impacted college football and therefore Coach Bowden's career, this next section will examine the issues of, *Practice Structures and Schedules, Scholarships, Recruiting, and Athletic Dorms*. It is important to note that regulatory changes are not limited to these categories; rather, these individual sections represent changes that Bowden and his staff discussed as significantly impacting their career practices and football programs.

Practice Structures and Schedules: Time Commitments

If you were to watch the first day of spring practice in 1956 when Bowden was the head coach at South Georgia College, or the first day in 1977 at FSU, there would be obvious differences in comparison to the first day of spring ball at Florida State in 2004. Coaching

philosophies and strategies would be one difference, as will be discussed in this chapter.

However, not so noticeable would be the practice progressions and underlying structures. Monk Bonasorte, an All-American defensive back at Florida State in 1981 and the present Varsity Club Executive Director, describes the differences between his first practice in 1977 under Bowden and the first spring practice of 2004.

You would have seen that they were in shorts and shells. If it was our practice you would have seen us have about a three hour practice in full pads, I mean the program back then wasn't where it is right now. In addition the NCAA regulations have made more restrictions. Our spring practice would have been full scale hitting over 20 days of practice. Now, they have 15 days only, with only a percentage that can be in full pads. We were full-go all the time. In 1977 that was his first recruiting class. He was still playing with players that he had inherited from another regime. So he also had to find out who everybody was. Again, those players hadn't had a winning season, because just before that they were 3-8, before that they were 1-10 and before that 0-11. So I don't think there was a panic button, I just think that he worked us hard. Now, I don't want to confuse work with work ethic, I just think that work intensity was harder because it was full out and contact. I think that has changed because of the regulations. And, then, Bobby wouldn't have been in the tower; he would have been on the field. You would have seen more physical contact between offense and defense and between starters at that time instead of scout team players.³⁶

As Bonasorte mentioned, NCAA regulations regarding practice had impacted what coaches can do at practice, including what the players are allowed to do. The 2004 NCAA manual details the bylaws that every university and every sanctioned sport must abide by. Figure 4.1 and appendix

Here are extracts of the bylaws that govern college footballs out-of-season practices. During a conversation about the changes in football practices, Bowden noted,

NCAA regulations, have affected what we can do in practice, you have got to go with shorts the first day and the second day. You can't put full pads on but so many days. But anyway, what's fair for one is fair for all.³⁷

- (b) **Spring Practice [I-A/I-AA].** Fifteen postseason practice sessions [including intrasquad scrimmages and the spring game permitted in Bylaw 17.11.5.2-(a)] are permissible. An institution is not required to count as one of its 15 designated days any day during which countable athletically related activities are limited solely to required conditioning activities and/or review of game film. Practice sessions must meet the following conditions: (*Revised: 6/21/01*)
- (1) All practice sessions are conducted within a period of 29 consecutive calendar days, omitting vacation and examination days officially announced on the institution's calendar and days during which the institution is closed due to inclement weather.
 - (2) Any such practice sessions held during vacation days may not be of longer duration than those normally held when academic classes are in session.
 - (3) Only 12 of the practice sessions may involve contact, and such contact shall not occur prior to the third practice session.
 - (4) The noncontact practice sessions may involve headgear as the only piece of protective equipment.
 - (5) Of the 12 permissible contact sessions, eight sessions may involve tackling, and no more than three of the eight tackling sessions may be devoted primarily (greater than 50 percent of practice time) to 11-on-11 scrimmages.
 - (6) Tackling shall be prohibited in four of the 12 contact sessions. An institution has the discretion to determine the practice activities (other than tackling) that may occur during the four contact nontackling sessions as well as the protective equipment to be worn by the student-athletes.
 - (7) If an institution conducts a "spring game" per Bylaw 17.11.5.2-(a), the game shall be counted as one of the three sessions that can be devoted primarily to 11-on-11 scrimmages.
 - (8) The amount of time that a student-athlete may be involved in such postseason countable athletically related activities shall be limited to a maximum of four hours per day and 20 hours per week. (*Revised: 1/10/90 effective 8/1/90, 1/10/91, 1/10/92, 1/11/94, 1/13/98*)

Figure 4.1, NCAA Bylaw 17.11.6b Out-of-Season Related Activities (I-A/I-AA).

As Figure 4.1 shows and the regulations attest (17.11.6.2b), the NCAA imposes eight conditions on spring practice in addition to all other regulations. Some of the regulations that have significantly impacted a spring practice schedule are the number of sessions and overall practice periods. For example, fifteen practice sessions must be conducted in a twenty-nine day

period (Rule 5). If the example of spring practice is not sufficient, Appendix H, details the policies for pre-season practice. Even though it seems to be a lot less restrictive than the spring season regulations, it is still a far cry from the famed, “Junction Boys”³⁸ style practice sessions of the 1950s, 60s and 70s.

Scholarships

After pronouncing itself against full-ride athletic scholarships to college for several decades, the NCAA capitulated in 1952 when student aid based on athletic skill, rather than financial need or academic merit, was approved. In 1956, the full-ride athletic scholarship was sanctioned and grants-in-aid have been part of the NCAA lexicon ever since. Aside from a momentary pang of conscience in 1976 when the Association narrowly defeated a motion (120 to 112) to make scholarships need-based in Division I, the only changes have come in the name of cost-cutting. The number of full-ride scholarships that could be handed out in Division I football, for instance, was set at 105 in 1973, then reduced to 95 in 1988 and to 85 in 1994.

Andrew Zimbalist (1999, p. 41)³⁹

As the quote at the head of this section details, the notion and role of athletic scholarships in interscholastic sports have witnessed a considerable amount of change since Bowden played college football (1949-1952). Although commonly referred to as scholarships, the NCAA refers to the funding that athletes receive to attend college under the broad category of “Financial Aid,” governed by Bylaw, article 15.⁴⁰ Under bylaw 15.01.1, institutional financial aid refers to the financial support noting that “A student-athlete may receive scholarships of grant-in-aids administered by (see Bylaw 15.02.1) an educational institution that do not conflict with the governing legislation of this association.”⁴¹ With regards to the distribution of financial aid to athletes Bowden discussed two main areas that have changed over his career. The first related to the length of time that a player can receive a scholarship.

Back in 1970-73, I am not sure if that was when it changed or not. Well, I signed you to a scholarship I would have to give you a four year scholarship. Now, when I signed you for

four years you got four years. If I kicked you off the team, you still got your scholarship. That's not completely correct. If I kicked you off for the team for a bad reason, which was my fault, then I'd still give you the scholarship. Now, if you did something bad I could get rid of you. Well, now, let's say you walked in my office and said, "Coach I don't want to play football any more", and I would say, "Hold it boy, you still got three more years?" "I don't care. I just ain't going to play no more." You would still have to give him a scholarship for four years. Then the NCAA said this ain't working. So, they changed the rules so you could only give them a scholarship in one year increments. So now you only sign them for one year and then you renew it in July if you want to. Most times you do want to. Now that was a big change there.⁴²

As Bowden noted the policy on signing a player to a scholarship has changed. Bylaw, 13.3.3.1 reads, "One-Year limit: Where a student's athletic ability is taken into consideration in any degree in awarding financial aid, such aid shall not be awarded in excess of one academic year."⁴³ Additionally, "financial aid can be renewed each year for a period of four years."⁴⁴ Although Bowden, noted that a scholarship could be terminated, today's rules, bylaw 15.3.4.1 amended in 1994 and 1995, identifies in detail the institution's ability to cancel or reduce an award during the award period if the recipient⁴⁵:

- a) Render himself of herself ineligible for intercollegiate competition; or
- b) Fraudulently misrepresents any information of the application, letter of intent or financial aid agreement (see Bylaw 15.3.4.1.1); or
- c) Engages in serious misconduct warranting substantial disciplinary penalty (see bylaw, 15.3.4.1.2); or

- d) Voluntarily withdraws from a sport at any time for personal reasons; however the recipient's financial aid must not be awarded to another student-athlete in the academic term in which the aid was reduced or cancelled.

The bylaws also noted that, "Institutional financial aid based in any degree on athletics ability may not be increased, decreased or canceled during the period of its award (revised 1/11/94)"

- a) on the basis of students athletic ability, performance or contributions to a team's success; or
- b) Because of injury that prevents the recipient from participating in athletics; or
- c) For any other athletic reason

Other than the terms and time that a scholarship can be awarded, Bowden referred to the limitations that have been placed on scholarships in Division I-A that helped level the playing fields of college football:

My philosophy has always been: he who gets the best players is going to win. That is so big. Well, nowadays everybody gets good players. Back when you used to have unlimited scholarships, a team like Alabama would get all the boys. They would get theirs then yours too. Say they saw that there was a quarterback that you wanted and that they had to play against you, I would go get him just to stop you from getting him. So, I don't need but two quarterbacks, but I have got six, so you can't have them. Now you can't do that because you can only sign so many. If you signed five quarterbacks now you are not going to have enough guards and tackles. So, there is more parity now. But it used to be that the rich got richer and the poor got poorer. Anyway getting the best players is one of the biggest keys. The other, of course, is getting real sound coaching.⁴⁶

Bowden's statement provides an interesting look at the organization of college football, from the booming, yet scandal riddled times of the 1950s through to the early 1990s. Under today's NCAA regulations, a Division 1-A football program is restricted by Bylaw 15.5.5.1, as to the number of financially supported athletes a team may have in general and per-year. The bylaw states,

There shall be an annual limit of 25 on the number of initial counters⁴⁷ (per Bylaw 15.02.3.1) and an annual limit of 85 on the total number of counters⁴⁸ (including initial counters) in football at each Division 1-A institution (Revised: 1/11/91 effective 8/1/92).

The changes in scholarship policies throughout Bowden's career have, in his mind, provided teams with equal opportunities to recruit players fairly, at least on a surface level. As will be discussed further in the conclusion of this section the notion of an "arms-race"⁴⁹ in college athletics has been partially avoided by restricting the number of scholarship players a team may have and, through bylaw 17.11, the restrictions on the number of students that may participate in team practices during the year. As you will see in chapter six, Bowden's experience as a player may have been different if these rules were in existence in 1949.⁵⁰

Recruiting

Under existing conditions, promising young athletes in high schools and academies are rounded up by alumni scouts or other agencies, they receive inducements of one sort and another, in many cases legitimate and in many other cases such as to prostitute all moral integrity. But whether right or wrong, the athlete is zealously sought after, and that because he is an athlete.

C.W. Savage, professor, Otterbein College, 1914⁵¹

Many a scandal and accusations thrown at college athletes has revolved around the illegal and subsidized payments linked to recruiting and "scholarships."⁵² On April 3, 1989, Time Magazine's cover story, *The College Trap: Student athletes earn millions for schools, but are*

they getting an education documented some of the ills that have been seen as the plague of college sports. In discussing recruiting, the magazine documented,

As any coach knows, the outcome of a season is determined before the opening tip-off or the first game. It begins with high school players recruited by the school. A single talented player can be worth hundreds of thousands of dollars to a college—and, indirectly, to a coach. The NCAA prohibits recruiters from offering money to prospective players. But many student athletes say recruiters offered cash, cars and jewelry.⁵³

However, recruiting violations are not a new problem of the present college athletic climate. Instead it is a college athletic heirloom that has been passed down within the intercollegiate athletic family by coaches, institutions, alumni, boosters and even parents. O'Connor in an article titled *NCAA governance, its past and future*, made the same point citing the example of Southern Methodist University (SMU) and paying players in 1922.⁵⁴

In an article printed in the New York Times in 1988, Bowden detailed his own experiences with recruiting and highlighted some of the issues that face intercollegiate athletics in general and college football in particular.

When I began coaching football in 1953, there was a phrase I picked up that was attributed to the late Red Sanders, then the head football coach at U.C.L.A. He said that the best way to be a successful college football coach and produce winning teams was to "come by some good football players."

Recruiting is the name of the game. National championships can be won in February by those who sign the best prospects. That is why our skies, bus terminals and highways are jammed with football coaches and players going from hometown to college, back and forth, trying to determine who will attend which university.

As a head football coach, I feel a burden lifted off my shoulders two times a year. One comes a day after our last football game. There is so much pressure to win that it builds up, week after week. I don't realize it until the final whistle of the season.

The second burden lifts ... the day after signing day. Coaches spend weeks competing with anywhere from five to 20 universities for the services of 75 top athletes. Each player is a separate contest that a coach must win. When he doesn't sign a great player that he has been trying to recruit over seven months, it gnaws at him as if he'd lost a ball game. Instead of an 11-game season, he is experiencing a 30-game season. When prospects sign, the burden is lifted.

I'll bet recruiting drives more college coaches out of football than anything else because it becomes so demanding and pressurized. A coach stays on the road a total of two and a half months of the year. If it were not for my love of the game and the fact that I want to do nothing else, I could not put up with some of the evils of recruiting. However, if a coach expects to survive, he must recruit.

The worst part of recruiting is the cheating that goes on, along with having to inflate the egos of 17-year-old athletes, knowing that you will later have to deflate them.

Do not believe the cliché that everybody is doing it. Most coaches do not cheat, but as in any profession, there are those who take the easy way out. They offer the athletes illegal inducements to attend their school.

The quickest way to become a millionaire is to rob a bank. The quickest way to build a powerhouse is to buy players. A coach can recruit a boy for 12 months, but if the boy is naive and dishonest, someone can come in and "buy" him.

I don't think our rules are tough enough on the prospect who accepts payoffs. We punish the universities for violations and let the players keep playing. I believe guilty players should be expelled from the game for two years if they are found guilty of accepting cars, cash, clothes, or other inducements. They know better. If a prospect knew he could not play if he got caught, he would think twice before "selling out."

A sadder occurrence in recruiting is when a family member tries to "sell" an athlete. There are instances of a father asking, "What will you give me other than a scholarship?" and then telling you what the ante is. In other words, if you want to play the game, get the wallet out. Any coach who hasn't experienced this hasn't been around.

Why would a coach cheat in the first place? One reason is the pressure to win. They think, "If I don't win, I'm going to get fired. So I might as well do what it takes to come by some good football players."

I blame much of the pressure on lack of administrative control over heavy contributors. A second cause is a coach's ego; he simply tries to build an empire at any cost. Both are dangerous.

Violators give us a black eye, so rules and sanctions must be in place.⁵⁵

As Bowden highlighted in the extract, the "pressure to win," and the lack of administrative controls have contributed to, in his view, recruiting violations being the NCAA's biggest troubled customer. If the information provided in this section does not demonstrate the need for better regulatory practice regarding recruiting, a statement made in the 1991 Knight Commission report might:

Recruiting, the bane of the college coach's life is one area particularly susceptible to abuse. While most institutions and coaches recruit ethically and within the rules, some

clearly do not. Recruiting abuses are the most frequent cause of punitive action by the NCAA. Even the most scrupulous coaching staffs are trapped on a treadmill, running through an interminable sequence of letters, telephone calls and visits.⁵⁶

Although the recruiting scandals have been a constant, the recruiting process itself has seen remarkable changes. The capital investment in time needed by a program to successfully recruit on a national level is staggering. Financially, recruiting has become a million dollar industry. A coach in a typical college Division I-A football program has to spend numerous hours scouting players, making house visits and observations, and selling his program when, and only when, it is permitted by the NCAA bylaws. In discussing some of the most noticeable changes in coaching, Bowden was quick to point to recruiting,

We used to recruit by mail, just write letters, and maybe some of the alumni might tell you about a great kid, so you would write him a letter and maybe even pay him a visit.

Nowadays, you are on the road all the time making visits costing thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars.⁵⁷

However, for a team to be successful they must be able to recruit. As highlighted in chapter one, one of the most important jobs that a coach must attend to is that of being a good recruiter, because in case you have already forgotten Bowden's testament, "Those that get the best players are going to win. You cannot win the Kentucky Derby with a mule."⁵⁸

So what have the NCAA changed over the years when it comes to recruiting? To start with no one could argue that the NCAA does not have the bylaws in place or that they are specific enough to cover the area of recruiting. Under Bylaw, article 13, the NCAA outlines 39 pages of recruiting regulations that include the different time periods that a coach is allowed to recruit, the number of visits a coach can make, even the number of telephone calls one can make

during a specific period of time. In addition to the bylaws the NCAA publishes a series of booklets designed to inform the specific sports coach of their responsibilities and guiding regulations regarding recruitment of athletes. Again, the sheer volume of information provided based on the existing bylaws is amazing. As demonstrated by NCAA 2002/2003 Recruiting Guide for Division I Football (Appendix F) which shows the table of contents for the.⁵⁹ This is a stark contrast to a time when Bowden, himself a scholarship player, didn't know who was paying for his scholarship or even the number of athletes on the team that had a scholarship.⁶⁰

The issue of recruitment within college athletics has always gained significant attention in the media, the NCAA and in individual universities and colleges. The policies that presently govern institutional procedures are extensive and far reaching. The majority of these changes have occurred over Bowden's career span. This section does not accuse Bowden or any of Bowden's schools during his career of any illegal recruiting procedures. It merely identifies a significant area that has impacted his career. For example, recent legislation has declared that all college coaches must pass the NCAA recruiting certification examination, annually.

Athletic Dorms

Although insignificant to the majority of universities and colleges, an NCAA policy relating to an institution's structuring of housing for athletes has been another factor which has impacted the supervision of college athletes. In very basic terms, the NCAA has recently regulated the housing of athletes in dormitories or blocks that are provided by the institutions for athletes. Under the constitution bylaws student-athletes are representatives of the general student population and must be treated as such. However, athletes on some of the larger university campuses that employed athletic dorms were increasingly receiving preferential treatment through their housing allocations. Within the NCAA 2003-2004 Division I Manual, Bylaw 16

addresses the issues awards, benefits and rewards for enrolled students. Section 16.5 specifically addresses the issues of housing and meals:

16.5.1 General Rule. An institution is required to apply the same housing policies to student-athletes as it applies to the student body in general. During the academic year, the institution may not house student-athletes in athletic dormitories or athletic blocks within institutional or privately owned dormitories or apartment buildings (when the institution arranges for housing) on those days when institutional dormitories are open to the general student body (*Adopted: 10/1/01 effective 8/1/02*)

16.5.1.1 Athletic Dormitories. Athletic dormitories shall be defined as institutional dormitories in which at least 50 percent of the residents are student athletes. (*Adopted: 1/10/91 effective 8/1/96, Revised: 11/1/01 effective 8/1/02*)

16.5.1.2 Athletic Blocks. Athletic blocks shall be defined as individual blocks, wings or floors within institutional dormitories or privately owned dormitories or apartment buildings in which at least 50 percent of the residents are student-athletes. (*Adopted: 1/10/91 effective 8/1/96, Revised: 1/10/92, 11/1/01 effective 8/1/02*)

16.5.1.3 Exception—Nondiscriminatory Housing Policy. The prohibition against the use of athletic dormitories or blocks does not apply when the institution demonstrates that its housing assignment policies do not differentiate between student-athletes and students generally. (*Adopted: 1/16/96 effective 8/1/96, Revised: 11/1/01 effective 8/1/02*)

As the bylaws clearly demonstrate, the NCAA regulated institutions to move away from the alleged preferential treatment of student athletes toward a policy representative to the general student population. However, many in athletics questioned the policy, in particular, the coaches of the sports whose athletes are constantly under the national media spotlight. In an NCAA comment section published on August 19, 1996⁶¹, several head football coaches voiced their concerns regarding the then new housing policy.

Danny Ford, football coach, University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

This probably worries me more than football, or having to play Florida, or anything like that. The big question is, 'What are these players going to do for the first time without the supervision?

You don't know what kind of crowd they're going around with.

You don't know what agent is sitting over there in his car, you don't know what kind of bookie might be living in the apartment complex....There are a lot of things we won't have control over that we had control over in the past. The way it is now, you're only one night away from having a very bad situation.

Gene Stallings, football coach, University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa

"I think players need supervision. I think they need to be in at a certain time. I think they need to eat breakfast. I think it's important you know what's in their refrigerator."

In addition, Terry Bowden, the then head football coach of Auburn University, in a separate article, reported that he himself was not a real fan of a policy that give coaches less contact and control of players, noting, "At a time when more leadership and more guidance might be necessary, we're being asked to give less and yet be more accountable."⁶²

As the comments allude to, the issue of accountability by the head coach for student actions has steadily increased, yet the ability for coaches to supervise students decreased. A former Florida State player commented on the contradictory policies of housing and coach accountability when discussing the changes that Bowden has had to make:

What people don't realize is that when you are 18 years of age and living at home, and then all of a sudden you come down here [Tallahassee] and you are on your own, things are going to happen. If you want statistics, there are probably 30,000 students here and there are a good percentage of them that get into trouble everyday. But the difference is they don't get publicized. ... Now, when you bring kids in here and they are going to be away from home and they might not have great families or a stable home. All of a sudden, as an athlete, everybody loves you, and everybody wants your autograph; you can become bigger than life, or you can make yourself bigger than life. So sometimes you

think you are invincible, it really is that powerful an atmosphere. Now, as a coach you have to oversee them, make sure that they don't do anything wrong. There are a lot of temptations and things happening on the Florida State Campus. There are so many things with all the activities. Now remember, Florida State football players are pretty big guys on campus. For as much criticism as he has gotten, I think some of the issues have to go back to the NCAA. See when I was here we were all in the same apartments. The whole team stayed together, we worked out together. We did everything together. Now you have kids spread all over the Florida community. It is harder for you to look over them. It is harder for you to keep an eye on them. It's harder for you to have a coach walk out there at night and see what's going on. The NCAA has made that policy. I think they opened up a can of worms. I think that the policy was designed to make athletes more open to the campus, but it also makes them more open to the problems. There again, they don't publicize every student that gets arrested for drinking, fighting and everything. Now, if it is an athlete, that's a different story.⁶³

The testimony of this former athlete demonstrates that the policies that are implemented to govern college athletics can often impact the practices of a coaching staff. Before the rule changes in 1996, Florida State had athletic dorms. However, since that time they have been forced to comply with the NCAA regulations as is demonstrated in the following letter⁶⁴ that is sent home to the incoming freshmen by Coach Bowden every summer.

July 28, 2003

Dear Parents,

The NCAA passed a rule in 1997 that is now in effect, that abolishes football dorms. The rule says a football dorm must not have over 49% occupancy by athletes and must have 51% non-athletes. We moved 51% of our players from Burt Reynolds Hall.

We decided that we would move our seniors and juniors and let our sophomores and freshmen remain. This meets NCAA regulations.

Several years ago, we polled all of our seniors and juniors as to which they would prefer: (1) give them the money and let them find their own housing, or (2) let us rent enough spaces in another dorm to house them. They voted 100% in wanting to find their own apartment - that is what they are currently doing.

Only about 25% of major colleges had an athletic dorm to begin with, so for us and for them it is a new experience. The players now must really budget their money or they will be crying to you for help. According to NCAA rules, we can only give money equal to what it costs to live and eat in a regular or campus dorm. We will not be able to loan them extra money or pay them more than the NCAA prescribes. If I were you, I would tell your son he better get a firm budget and stick to it.

Sincerely,

Bobby Bowden
Head Football Coach

Again this section has shown that Bowden has been forced to change, due to the policies, rules and regulations that had governed college athletics throughout his career, including where his players are to live.

College Football

One might track how ideas about violence and “necessary roughness” changed or remained constant in response to two world wars and wars in Korea, Vietnam, and the Persian Gulf; how ideas of masculinity in football responded to the further incorporation on American life throughout this century, to the rise of modern, feminism, to the new men’s movement of recent years that has heightened awareness of gender issues in the 1980s and 1990s. Such inquiries would lead into two directions: not only a detailed cultural history of football itself, but also toward a fuller understanding of the ways in which some of the major developments of our century have registered in Americans’ consciousness. Football is a text in which the social and political and economic histories of our century are written indirectly, not altogether consciously. A cultural history of football would not reveal what Americans openly proclaimed about certain fundamental issues of their time, but it would perhaps bring us closer to their deepest responses to them.

Michael Oriard⁶⁵

As discussed, the NCAA was primarily formed out of the necessity to marry the institution of higher education and the sport of college football. Hawes noted in the history of the NCAA series that, “Football was the initial reason for the Association, although the organization didn't limit itself, even from the beginning, to just one sport. Football was the seed that began it all.”⁶⁶ Although college football, along with men’s basketball, has been perceived by many as the cornerstone sports of intercollegiate athletics, Dempsey, noted that

As often as college football is seen as intercollegiate athletics’ greatest asset, it frequently is perceived as the “elephant in the living room.” It is both the metaphor for most of those things that fans and the public see as positive in college sports and nearly all of those things they see as negative. The biggest problem with elephants in the living rooms, of course, is the attention they draw to themselves.⁶⁷

Interestingly, one of the oddities of college football is the relationship, at least in the media and the public’s eyes, regarding the influence of the coach and the players on the game itself. Oriard posed an excellent question in his book *King Football*, which reads “Players’ or Coaches’—whose game is it?”⁶⁸ Within the chapter Oriard discussed the role of famous coaches throughout the history of college football.

We have grown accustomed to superstar coaches that we likely are aware how odd the concept is. Albert Einstein’s favorite math teacher was not Time’s man of the century. None of Mariah Carey’s music teachers ever won a Grammy. The public has no idea who taught Bobby Fischer to play chess. More to the point, in football (soccer) played in most of the world, the coach is little more than a spectator on the sidelines once the game begins. Not the American football coach. Everything that transpires on the field is understood to be the execution of the coach’s game plan, perhaps devised by an offensive

coordinator or “assistant head coach” in today’s highly specialized times, but ultimately deriving from the top man himself.⁶⁹

So far this chapter has introduced the problems and issues that have faced intercollegiate athletics and the NCAA over the past century, with particular reference to specific policy changes that have forced its participants and coaches to subsequently change. Although the chapter has drawn reference to college football linked to its governance by the NCAA, the changes in college football were merely inferred. However, to discuss changes, developments and regulations in college football more specifically would be beyond the scope of this text. For a more extensive overview of the history and changes to college football, the works of Oriard and Watterson should be reviewed.⁷⁰ Therefore, this section will focus on the aspects of college football that are not governed by the NCAA, but will focus on the main participants the coaches and the players. However, only the issues that were raised by Bowden and his staff during the research will be discussed due to the large scale of the subject area. This will be done through the two themes titled, Coaches and Athletes.

Coaches

We know that at their best coaches are educators, mentors, and loyal advocates for their institutions and for higher education. We understand that you are on the front line – forced to make career-shaping life decisions under great pressure, constantly on the alert to insure that rivals do not gain an advantage over you, your program or your institution.

You and your coaches are the adults with the greatest day-to-day contact with our student-athletes. You must make them understand that fewer than one in a hundred will ever make a living from their athletic ability. Emphasize to them the value of a college degree. Insist that the privilege of being a member of your squad carried with it the obligation of being a student in good standing. Search out opportunity to drive home the point that your athletes behavior, on and off the field, is important not merely because of what it says about them. Your satisfaction will be a lifetime associated with adults who have, with your assistance, achieved their full potential.

Cedric Dempsey, former NCAA president⁷¹

As the quote attests, the head coach of a Division I-A football program has a great deal of responsibilities. The responsibilities of the football coach, historically, have steadily increased.⁷² Regardless of the influences and roles that a coach has had in the past, or in the present, it is evident that the football coach is a central figure as players move on, yet coaches arguably remain. The point is that a coach of a successful college program often gains more public notoriety. This is not to say that some players in college football do not attain legendary status. For example ask a present University of Georgia student about a Heisman trophy winner named Herschel Walker and you will understand the legendary status that a player can achieve at a specific institution. However, in general it is the coaches of programs that achieve such status on a national level. Williams reminded us:

Athletic coaches, like all other persons who have a hand in the destiny of the athletic scene, and now, more than ever, effects and not causes. They, too, are the product of the culture in which we live; they, too, reflect the values that dominate the athletic scene.⁷³

After exploring the complexities of college football, the influences on it of those that are within it and the society which encompasses it, several questions should be asked. How has the role of the head coach been changed by the game? How has the role of the head coach changed the game? How has the role of the head coach been impacted by society? For Bowden, “Football has changed dramatically, because you have got to look back just over a half of a century, 51 years. It has changed physically. It’s changed technically. It’s changed scientifically. It changed society wise.”⁷⁴ The sections of *Coaching Philosophies*, *Platoons* and *Complexity* will be used to examine and discuss some specific changes.

Philosophies

If you take a quick look at the history books of the twentieth century, it will not take long before you notice that each decade, 1950s, 1970s, 1990s, has a sense of individuality. Each decade had a unique, but accepted, fashion sense, lifestyle and general acceptance and understanding. Additionally, the decades were all governed by a differing societal philosophy which included examining the changing roles of men and women, racial and social hegemony, and political ideologies. A head football coach, as with any other agent of society, belongs and works within these societal philosophies. Yet, a college coach, a sports team and the sport itself is also governed by a set of micro philosophies and rules that enable it to function independently, and still conform—a sentiment that Oriard mirrors, in the quote at the head of the college football section. It can therefore be said that the philosophy and rules of college football coaches were not exempt to the ever changing culture of America, and just as importantly, regional philosophies. Instead they represent at times, the “deepest responses” to social, political and economic histories.⁷⁵ Indirectly Bowden provided evidence that what might have been appropriate in one cultural timeframe may not be acceptable in the present consciousness, “You couldn’t coach now like Bear did in the 60s and 70s ... he had really mellowed a lot. He had slacked up. I mean if he tried to coach like he did in the 50s and 60s they would fire you the next day.”⁷⁶

Bowden’s coaching career started in 1953 as an assistant coach, only to become a head coach of a small rural school in Georgia two years later. Over time, he has been able to develop a successful career in college football, where many have tried only to fail. Much like the Bear Bryants of the coaching fraternities of the past, as previously noted Bowden was also a strong disciplinarian in his early coaching years:

It was short hair, “yes sir” and “no sir,” ... Definitely my way or the highway. Any player who challenged my rules was dismissed from the team. And any coach who divorced or drank alcoholic beverages or used drugs could not be kept on the staff. I was a child of my times who also happened to have a strong religious upbringing. Many of my expectations, especially regarding player discipline, were typical of that era.⁷⁷

To use somewhat of a cliché, the 1950s, 60s and 70s typified the notion that college football was all about the “survival of the fittest.” College football was all about the “physical toughness,” where “magazine profiles of coaching ‘biffs’¹ such as Bill Glassford and Bear Bryant celebrated their iron-fist handling of players,” and where “making men out of a boy justified all kinds of coaching brutality.”⁷⁸ As Bowden notes, “You would ask the kids to do some physical drills that were just vicious. Now Bear was not the only one that did it. Most guys were doing it. You were taught vicious football with drills that were really brutal.”⁷⁹ As is highlighted in the remaining components of this discussion, Bowden’s coaching philosophy was both positively and negatively influenced by the times and the “Biff” and “Pop” coaching strategies he witnessed throughout the early stages of his career. His first practice as the head coach at South Georgia College is a good example of such “Biff” influences:

I took the job in June. I was an assistant coach and got the head coaching job offered in June. So I reported by July 1. The boys reported in first of August, because back in those days we didn’t start football until October. Your first game was in October. Now, I can tell you exactly how I started practice, I probably had about 110 boys out and my job was

¹ The terms of “Biff” and “Pop” coaches, provided reference to a particular type of coach. The terms refer to the two major roles that a father of the time would be expected to play “Both nurturing and demanding” (Oriard, 2001, p. 149). A “biff” coach represented the demanding coach, where “pop” represented the nurturing father type of coach. Ironically, the terms came out of the football journalism and fictional media of the time. See Oriard, Page 146-152 for a more detailed review and explanation.

to cut it down to 33. So you can imagine how tough we made it to cut it down to 33. The first thing you do is get the weaklings to leave. ... We had some really tough practices. Then the faint hearted ones leave, but you can't do that any more. You would go through drills, drills, drills, and there would always be some kid that thought they were players and they weren't and it wasn't worth it, and things like that. Back then, that was the kind of style, which was to get the guys who really wanted to play and get the other guys out of there.⁸⁰

Although Bowden looked back upon the days where the toughness of the individual athlete was challenged and the notion that those that had survived had indeed proved their masculinity, he was not enamored by some of the coaching practices of the times. The boy into men philosophy of coaches did not always sit well with a young, independent, and somewhat stubborn Bowden. In particular, Bowden at times challenged and questioned some of the practices:

The biggest disagreement I had with my college coach was that he would get mad and beat the crap out of you. Physically beat the crap out of you now, not fighting. Have you ever seen a team tackle practice where you get a line here and line there and you get a ball and then they run and hit each other? If you get real close then it ain't like anybody is likely to get hurt. Now the further you get, the more likely you are to get injuries. Well, our coach would get mad at us and say "Alright, two lines." Oh Lord. Well half would go here and half would go there and we would just tackle, tackle, tackle, then this guy would knock his shoulder down. He's out. Then this guy would sprain his knee, he would be out. Tackle, tackle and tackle then this guy would get knocked out of his head. Tackle and I am talking about knocking our team down to a skeleton just because he was mad.

Well, that is one thing I learned not to do. I mean he did that one time before a ball game. We were playing on Saturday and we were practicing on Thursday. We usually didn't even put pads on Thursdays. We went out there and he got mad about something and we tackled and we lost three good starters that day. Things like that are the negative things we learn. I ain't going to do that when I coach.⁸¹

Another change that has occurred in general, but is very noticeable in comparing the traditional football coaching practices and structures and the present one, is the health and safety of the player's welfare. At a Florida State practice, the players and coaches are surrounded by their own internal army of trainers, doctors and support staff. One health issue that has been of particularly important to the safety of the players, centers on the physiological considerations of personal hydration. As a player, prior to the 1960s, it was customary to go an entire practice without taking a drink of water. Drinking water was seen as a sign of weakness and a lack of conditioning. However, this traditional philosophy and practice did not make sense to Bowden:

Well I'll tell you one thing that I did—I don't know of any coach that did it before I did, but I am sure that someone had to—and that's giving water during practice. You see when I came up during high school you were not allowed water during practice. If a boy ever slipped in a sip of water, or sometime the managers would get a towel wet and ring it like that and the coach ever caught you, he would run you to death. So you couldn't drink water. So when I went to college it was the same way, you couldn't drink water. So when I started coaching it was the same for my first two years: no water. In my third year, I go to thinking that at a ball game a kid could come out of the game and get some water. So a kid could come out off the field, he was tired and go over and get a pitcher, a pail. We used to have a pail and a dipper, back in those days. So if you can do it

in a game, why can't you do it in practice? So, I got it open to where we would practice and take a water break. We would have a big old hose out there and drink that water. I don't know of another single coach that was doing it back then, but there might have been. Now every one has water breaks and water all over the place because if they didn't they would die. I don't know how we did it back then.⁸²

As you can see, the college football coach practice philosophies have changed. The old-school, "Biff" like coach has had to adapt and modify dramatically to changing times. As discussed in chapter one, a present head coach has become more of a father figure, or a "pop" coach:

Football has changed. Well not only football has changed, but coaches have changed for the better from what they had been taught, which involves health. When, I started you didn't have trainers. I was the trainer. I taped my players before the game. Now you got probably 8-10 trainers out there with two being full time. Now that's all for the better.

But the main thing now is the difference is that you have to keep the welfare of the boy in mind first.⁸³

Platoons

I went out and rented a camp and planned to do it like Coach Bryant had done when he was at Texas A&M. I had been told what Coach Bryant had done by his assistant, Gene Stallings, who later became head coach at Alabama. I was going to get my players off away somewhere where we could close the gates and let them go at it, and I mean really go at it. I wanted a "survival of the fittest" camp.

The camp, a Baptist camp called Cooke Springs, was located about thirty-five miles from Birmingham, where we could work the players without any interruptions. So, I wrote all my players a nice letter, and, oh, I painted them a pretty picture of that camp. I made it sound like I was going to take them on a nice seven-day retreat (LETTER) (p. 71).

I'm not proud of that, because now I look back, I was pretty rough on those boys. I didn't know any better. That's not an excuse; it's just a fact. I was doing what everyone else was doing. Remember, it was one-platoon (players

played offense and defense) football back in those days. To play one-platoon you had to be tough. If you weren't tough mentally and physically, you couldn't play, because you wouldn't survive.

Nowadays, it's two-platoon, and you can have sissy kids playing out at wide receiver. You can have a guy that can't do anything but catch the ball play for you. These are guys who are talented at doing one thing, but they won't hit nobody. You can have a kid who don't know a dad-gum thing about football on your team because he's a good kicker. There's a spot now for everybody. I hope I don't hurt anybody's feelings, but some of them are sissies. And some of them have no idea how the game was played back when it was one-platoon.

Bobby Bowden⁸⁴

The story of the survival of the fittest camp provides evidence that the format of football has not only changed in the philosophy of its coaches, but also in its structures. Rule changes regarding a team's ability to make substitutions on the college level were modified significantly in 1941 when, for the first time, "Free substitution is allowed, and substitutes are permitted to communicate immediately with their teammates on the field, and therefore can bring in plays from the sideline."⁸⁵ This rule change meant that college teams could abandon the single-platoon style of play and develop a two-platoon based game. This caused a major rethinking of coaching strategy. However, after only 12 years, in 1953, free substitution was eliminated and the single platoon game of college football returned. It wasn't until 1964, that unlimited substitutions were restored and the structure of play that we are familiar with today started to develop. In examining the time lines in relation to Bowden's playing and coaching career, it is noticeable that Bowden spanned each era. For example between 1955-1963 as a head coach at South Georgia College and Howard College, Bowden worked within the one-platoon style of football, only to see it change in 1964. In talking of the challenges of his first coaching position Bowden affirmed,

The biggest changed from when I first started was that you only really played with eleven guys. They would play offense and defense. So for a squad you didn't need but 30-33 guys. Now 33 guys were 3-teams of 11. Now a kicker, you just had to get one of your

guys to kick. Punter was, well, whoever could punt. You never went out and recruited a punter. I mean you couldn't waste a scholarship on that, you know. Then again, they had to be good enough to play defense and offense.⁸⁶

Complexity

When I first started everybody ran the T-formation, then they finally found out that we could flanker a guy out and spread their defense. Then they found out that we can flanker two-guys out, now they have got to put two out. Now we can put three of them out there, then four then five. So now it has gotten down to three, four, five wide-outs. Then they found out about the shotgun, went into the shotgun, so it has changed and changed and changed. Defensive changes, it kind of goes in cycles, there was one cycle where everyone was running the option. Everybody was running the option that would be 50s, 60s, 50s and 60s. Then in the 70s they began to get in the pro-formations—two wideouts and throwing the ball around.

Football has changed so much, back in those days people used to sit back in defense in one formation. You could tell what was happening. Now, you can't tell until the next Monday watching film, what they were doing. That's why they sit up there in the top of the stadium. That is what your coordinators do.

Bobby Bowden⁸⁷

Throughout Bowden's career college football has not only changed structurally, but it has also become increasingly complex. As the quote opening this section attests, the formations and styles of college football today are far different from the traditional formations that were dominant when Bowden started. Linked with the complexity of the game has come the responsibilities that a head coach must now undertake if he is to develop, run and maintain a successful college football program, as discussed in chapter one. The responsibilities of the job and the added measures that have accompanied NCAA regulations and bylaws, has meant that the head coach is more than just a "teacher" of football. Bowden revealed

The fact is coaching became more sophisticated. You don't just coach football any more.

You have gotta know what your boys are doing for 24-hours. So the coach now has

become a guardian, 24-hours a day, a coach-guardian, recruit, ... Then, something they started in the late 70s you have got to make sure that they graduate. Coach you are responsible for that graduation. How come you are not graduating all of them? Now we also have to stay on top of them about their grades and going to class because you are responsible for them. Then, of course, we had a boy die here. So now coaches are responsible for not letting them die. Now that sounds very trite, but if you have ever lost a kid, then you know by golly, we can't afford this, nothing is worth that, you know. So really there have been a lot of changes.⁸⁸

In addition to the roles and the complexity and volume of formations that teams now run offensively, preparation and play calling has become increasingly scientific and demanding. As discussed in Chapter two, Bowden no longer calls Florida States offensive plays. The offensive coordinator from the press box is now responsible, largely because Bowden feels the additional time commitments do not allow him to adequately prepare.

Athletics

So far, this chapter has briefly examined the changes in society and culture, NCAA governance and policies and college football and coaching. However, as is common, when discussing college football, the players often seem to be forgotten. Yet, without the players that don the pads and helmets on a college football Saturday, there would not actually be a Saturday that one could label. As the game, coaches, regulations and structures have changed and modified with the ever changing American culture, so to have the players. Bowden, a little All-American at Howard College; Mickey Andrews, a letterman at the University of Alabama; Mark Richt a quarterback at the University of Miami; amongst others, all addressed the issues that the athletes and the players are, not surprisingly, different today than they were twenty, thirty, forty

and fifty years ago. During the evolution of this research project, several themes have emerged when athletes were discussed by former and present coaches. However, as with other topics examined in this chapter the context of the historical times and the severity of the issues are far, far greater than the scope of this chapter and this text in general. Therefore, the issues that will be discussed will be developed through the opinions and insights of those that have witnessed the changes in players, in particular, Coach Bowden, over his fifty year plus career.

The first issue that is discussed is related to ideological changes of American society and racial *integration*. Following the case of *Brown vs. Board of Education* and the Supreme Court's decision in 1954 to enforce the right of Black students to have an equal education to those of White children, America changed. Chief Justice Earl Warren asserted, "That in the field of public education the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."⁸⁹ Although the decision significantly, "Infused the overall fight for civil rights with constitutional legitimacy,"⁹⁰ Oriard posited that "the most powerful force for integration [in college football] was not high-minded principles but the need to win football games."⁹¹

The second theme that will be discussed in this section is related to the characteristics of the players themselves or what Bowden has describes as the change in players *attitude* over time. However, it must be noted that the changes in players' attitudes has not occurred in a vacuum void of societal influences. As Watterson stated "football ... reflected the traditional beliefs, values and conventions within the community; it celebrated primal loyalties to race, economic class, and social caste."⁹² Additionally, the ethos of college sports and sports in general has also changed dramatically. Therefore, it is inevitable that the attitudes of players have changed. Again, the influences and reasoning behind the players' changes in attitudes can be drawn from a

greater understanding on the influence of society and culture that is beyond the limitations of this text.

Integration

Before discussing the implication on intercollegiate athletics and college football of the civil rights movement and with particular reference to the practice of integration, it is important to draw context to the culture that Bowden himself grew up in and has predominantly coached in during the early stages of his career. Bowden has, for the most part, lived in the southern states of: Alabama, and Georgia (1929-1962), West Virginia (1965-1976) and Florida (1962-1965; 1976-present). Growing up, Bowden lived in Birmingham, Alabama, a town where he played high school football at Woodlawn High and college football at Howard College, now Samford University. In his autobiography, Bowden recalled:

When I was growing up in Birmingham I didn't even know what the words meant. I grew up in the south back in the 1930's and 1940's. Black folks lived in one part of town; white folks lived in another. That's just the way it was. I thought that was the way it was supposed to be. I never thought to wonder "Why?"

I knew that there were white rest rooms and "colored" rest rooms, white water fountains and "colored" water fountains, but it never occurred to me to question that stuff. I didn't know the injustice of it and how serious it was. How could I? All I was interested in was playing sports and having a good time.⁹³

The history books are full of facts, tales and racially motivated incidents that detail the civil rights movement of the 1960s, in the South and in the state of Alabama. Bowden, himself never played in integrated football, "When I played in high school, I played with nothing but white guys. When I played in college, nothing but white guys. When I coached up to 1966 I had

never coached a minority.”⁹⁴ Bowden’s experiences were mirrored across the state’s college campuses and high school teams for most of the 60s until integrated teams from other geographical regions of the United States played the southern powers in post-season bowl games, and non-conference games.⁹⁵ An article titled *Recalling the Death of Racial Segregation in Southern College football* identified the issues of segregation and racism linked to college football. It detailed the efforts of then head coach Bear Bryant and his integrated beliefs at the University of Alabama. Bryant, while the head coach at the University of Kentucky, had attempted but failed in his endeavor to integrate the Wildcats. During his early career at Alabama, he feared that if he again voiced his beliefs he would lose his job. With time and an Alabama defeat at the hands of Southern Cal and a black running back called, Sam “Bam” Cunningham who rushed for 212 against the tide, at home, Bryant was able to recruit his first black player in the fall of 1971.⁹⁶ However, the article contextualizes the life and times in Alabama and college football in the South—a South in which Bowden had experienced his childhood:

I believe that coaches are probably one of the least prejudiced people in the world. ... You are going to get the best players in, no matter what their nationality or race. You should just get the best you can. It was very pleasing to me that we started integration. You know it was amazing when you came up like me. Your background might have been the same in England, but I never got to play with black boys. You just have to remember that I was from Alabama. If I would go to a restaurant to eat there was a place for me and a place for them. If I had to go to the restroom, there is mine and they have got one over there. Don’t you dare come in here? I was raised that way. Everywhere you would go was white, everybody on the team was white, and then I came to Florida State and coached as

an assistant, same way. Then, I go to West Virginia. Now, it's after Martin Luther King has got it going. Now I am up in West Virginia and all of a sudden there are a couple of black boys, and I happened to coach one because he was a running back. I enjoyed it; but they really were skeptical of me. Oh they were skeptical. I was from Alabama. My car had Alabama tags on it. They egged it, not my players but somebody saw that Alabama tag and just well didn't tear it up, but did abuse it. They throw mud on it and stuff like that just because I was from Alabama, you know. I really enjoyed all those guys I coached and they all recognized that. They are still some of my best friends today.

However, they were skeptical. I had one of them one time he said, "I can't play for you because you are from Alabama." And after talking with him about that over the year, it became a so what kinda thing? But that didn't last but a year. They did everything I asked them to and I could see where they were coming from, because it was what they were taught. Down in Alabama things were segregated and they treated minorities bad. Well, in some cases they did and in some cases they didn't.⁹⁷

The civil rights movement and the impact of integration affected a society and those that lived, worked and played within it. For Bowden the realization that society consisted of different cultures that acted and reacted differently was a lesson that he had been learning since his senior year in college and has continued to learn throughout his career (Chapter Six). Bowden's experience with Garrett Ford at West Virginia was not an isolated event in the locker rooms and playing fields of primarily white campuses during this time period in history. Wiggins detailed the ever increasing roles that black athletes played on three college campuses from 1968-1972,⁹⁸ as he cited a series of articles that appeared in Sports Illustrated by John Underwood:⁹⁹

Their [coaches] authority was being challenged by different groups of people, but most noticeably by black athletes who, because of a lack of status consistency on predominantly white campuses and pressure to become actively involved in black political activities, were exerting both a new-found sense of independence and apparent willingness to speak out on racial issues. ... This path was paved with dire consequence, however. Coaches could not allow team rules to be transgressed for fear that their authority would be undermined and team discipline disrupted. As a result black athletes who refused to follow the dictates of their coaches were sometimes dismissed from the squad, and, therefore, ended up sacrificing both their education and years of training that might have landed them in professional sports. Coaches, on the other hand, lost the service of athletes who were, in many cases, crucial to their teams overall quality of the school's total athletic program.¹⁰⁰

Although Wiggins' article examined 1968-1972, the negotiating between players and coaches of all races has become an integral component of the modern game. During the 1995 season, Bowden and many college coaches of the time were faced with, coincidentally, a decision between football and the beliefs of black athletes:

Bowden: Well, they had the Million Man March up there in Washington. What was that about? It was about getting black males to be more responsible. I think that was the theme of it. Anyway, it became a national thing. And, well, I didn't think anything of it. They can have a good time up there and we are just going to carry on with our lives. Then one of my players; no, I had four or five of them wanted to go up there. I said no, you can't, we have a ball game on Saturday. "Well, we just think we ought to go" they said. On that day I said, "Ok, but only one guy can go. You can get a representative and we will

let him go.” They decided that they would be fine with that. Well, then they didn’t want to practice that day. Here I am with a football team that is 50% minority and 50% Caucasian. Well, I get a feeling that they ain’t going to show up and I don’t want that split in the team. So, I finally got them together and said, “I am going to call practice off.” Now we are going to make it up Friday, but we are going to let you off on Thursday in honor of that march. So our kids accepted that and they saw that I was sympathetic to their cause.

Mark: How hard was that for you to do?

Bowden: Here’s what you are faced with. You have got a cause that these kids believe in. I have got a ball game Saturday that I have got to win. You excuse them all you want to and you get beat; everybody is going is say, “Why did you do it?” So, I had that to be concerned about. I said, “If I let these guys off that day, it wasn’t as if we were going to miss, because I could make it up another day or the next day or something. Boys we are going to have to make practice half an hour longer because you missed yesterday. Then we are going to have to add half an hour the next day and that will make up for what we missed. So, that’s how we went about it, and we won the next weekend. I guess if we had lost I would have always wondered if we had been better off making them practice. Again, I was afraid it would cause a split in the team so I thought that was the best thing to do.¹⁰¹

Attitudes

A high proportion of big-time athletes don't attend college for either an education or a degree, but to take advantage of the only viable route to professional basketball and football. Stephon Marbury, the talented point guard at Georgia Tech in 1996, announced after his freshman year that he was entering the NBA draft and with refreshing candor explained that attending college was "just a way to position myself for the [NBA] draft. '81 Former Iowa State football coach Jim

Walden told *Sports Illustrated*: "Not more than 20 percent of the football players go to college for an education. And that may be a high figure. These outcomes convey a very simple and clear message about the conflict between big-time athletics and academic values.

Andrew Zimbalist¹⁰²

Before, discussing the notion that with time the attitudes of college athletes have changed, I think it is important to note that this does not necessarily categorize all athletes as having 'issues' or views that college sports are not related to higher education. In addition, I would like to note that no coach associated any change in player attitude with playing position or race. In fact, Coach Richt discussed the notion of players attitudes as the mere progression of society and generations:

I think that people think the players are so much different now and everything. Well I don't think so. I think that styles are always changing and I think that fads are always changing. I think the younger generation has a way of expressing themselves that the older generation, maybe, doesn't approve of so much. But I think that it is much more generational. Some people think that race might have something to do with it, but I don't think so. I think strictly it is a generation gap. Every time you get a bunch of young guys coming through they have got their own ideas. They want to be a little different. They want to do it their way. They have a lot of energy added to the fact that, now they have the notoriety. In a way it is probably very exciting for them, but they can hardly do a thing without the world knowing it.¹⁰³

Therefore, the notion of players' attitudes changing reflects Coach Bowden's perspective over 50 years and not the entire coaching fraternity. Rather than drawing conclusion or inferences, several extracts from interviews from coach Bowden have been combined to provide a better overview of why he thinks the attitudes of athletes have changed and how they have changed.

Well the big change that I have always said over the years and it is pretty much true: When I first started coaching, you told a kid what to do it was never questioned even if it was unfair. It would have been, “men we are going to do this.” If somebody said, “why”, I would say, “because, I said so, period.” If he didn’t follow that you would probably get rid of him. You cannot coach like that today. You have to explain to the kids why were going to do this and how it will benefit them. They are all looking at me and I have to be a good salesman, because it is all about I, I, I, I. And, you are trying to get that out of them and make it team, team, team. But boy the modern day kid is raised for I, I, I, I. What can I get out of it? A great example was the Super Bowl this year: The New England Patriots and the Carolina Panthers the two least teams in the NFL as far as stars are concerned. The New England Patriots won it because they had a team. Team, Team, Team they don’t let them have that I, I, I, I, me, me, me, me, my, my. We talk to our kids about us, us, us, we, we, we, and our. So, nowadays my approach is; I have got to explain to them why we do this. This is why it will make it better for you. And, I think you have got to do that. That’s a big change there.

I think it probably started about 1970-75. Well it seemed like, when I became the head coach at West Virginia in 1970. That’s the first time I really became aware that kids were getting rebellious. I think it was a trend throughout the country. I am not giving up on my ideals just because you kids want this or that. Well, you don’t have to give up on your ideals, you just have to go ahead and do this and do it right. So nowadays, my approach is to tell them what we are going to do, tell them why we are going to do it and how we will all benefit from it. That’s my whole theory that has changed from when I started.¹⁰⁴

Although this section has been somewhat shorter than the sections documenting the changes in governance, football and coaches, it is not because it is not as important. It is simply that the changes in players' attitudes and racial make-up has more to do with the societal changes of the period than college football itself. However, as you will see in chapter five and six, players can have a significant impact on the coaches and the game. During Coach Bowden's career, his interactions with the players have, at times, forced him to reflect upon his role as a coach.

¹ Kate Campbell wrote and recorded Crazy in Alabama. The lyrics extracts were retrieved June 10, 2004, from <http://www.katecampbell.com/discography.html#> on her visions of plenty album released April 21, 1998.

² Johnson & Adelman (2000, p. 142)

³ Fullan (1997, p. 302)

⁴ Darling-Hammond (1990, p. 240)

⁵ Williams (1949, p. 15)

⁶ Williams (1949, p. 12)

⁷ Williams (1949, p. 13)

⁸ See generally, Zimbalist (1999) Chapter 2: The Student as Athlete (pp. 16-53)

⁹ John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (1999, August, p. 3)

¹⁰ John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (1999, August, p. 4)

¹¹ John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (1999, August, p. 5)

¹² The three documents, based on a conclusion made by the commission in the third report regarding accessibility, can be found in a compendium at John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (1999, August)

¹³ John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (1999, August, p. 25)

¹⁴ John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (1999, August, p. 25)

¹⁵ Hawes (1999, Nov 8a)

¹⁶ Hawes (1999, Nov 8a)

¹⁷ National Collegiate Athletic Association, *NCAA Mission, Values and Goals*. Retrieved May 15, 2004, from [Http://www1.ncaa.org/eprise/main/Public/hr/mission.html](http://www1.ncaa.org/eprise/main/Public/hr/mission.html)

¹⁸ Skidmore (2004, p. 319)

¹⁹ John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (1999, August, p. 25)

²⁰ Watterson (2000, p. 143)

²¹ Whittingham (2001, p. 44)

²² Watterson (2000, p. 197)

²³ Oriard (2001)

²⁴ Watterson (2000)

²⁵ Oriard (2001)

²⁶ Brown (1999, November 22a)

²⁷ Brown (1999, November 22b)

²⁸ Watterson (2000)

²⁹ Falla (1981, pp. 134-135)

³⁰ For an Overview of the birth of College football on television, see: Brown (1999, November 22b)

³¹ Watterson (2000, p. 287)

³² Hawes (1999, December 20b)

³³ Hawes (1999, December 20b)

³⁴ Hawes (1999, December 20a)

³⁵ Hawes (1999, December 20a)

³⁶ Interview with Author (March 4, 2004)

³⁷ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

³⁸ “In the summer of 1954, legendary coach Paul “Bear” Bryant took his struggling Texas A&M football team to Junction, Texas for it’s pre-season camp. The drought-plagued town of Junction was an ideal backdrop for the infamous “Bryant hell week” that preceded the A&M football program’s return to national prominence in the mid 1950s. Of the 111 players that initially made the trip, only 35 remained after 10 days of grueling practices.” Crow (2002); for a more detailed review see: Dent (1999) or the Movie produced by Robe (2002) based on the Dent’s book.

³⁹ Zimbalist (1999, p. 41)

⁴⁰ NCAA (2003, p. 191a)

⁴¹ NCAA (2003, p. 191a)

⁴² Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

⁴³ NCAA (2003, p. 201a)

⁴⁴ NCAA (2003, p. 202a)

⁴⁵ NCAA (2003, p. 202a)

⁴⁶ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

⁴⁷ 15.02.3.1 Initial Counter. An “initial counter” is a counter who is receiving countable financial aid in a sport for the first time. (NCAA, 2003a, p. 199)

⁴⁸ Bylaw 15.02.3 **Counter**. A counter is an individual who is receiving institutional financial aid that is countable against the aid limitations in a sport (NCAA, 2003a, p. 199).

⁴⁹ Dempsey (2002, p. 20)

⁵⁰ Chapter 6, Section Rolling with the Tides of Love in Alabama

⁵¹ Hawes (1999, Nov 8b)

⁵² For a review of scandals, see: For football, Watterson (2000) chapter 18. For college athletics, see: Hawes 1999, Dec 20b)

⁵³ Gup (1989, p. 58)

⁵⁴ O’Connor (2002)

⁵⁵ EXTRACT taken from the New York Times, Feb 14, 1988, Sunday Late Edition, titles, Tension, Pain, Satisfaction: Inside the Recruiting Game, By Bobby Bowden: Bowden (1988)

⁵⁶ John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (1999, p. 21)

⁵⁷ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

⁵⁸ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

⁵⁹ NCAA (2003b, pp. 1-2)

⁶⁰ Further discussed in Chapter 6: Rolling with the Tides of Love in Alabama

⁶¹ NCAA (1996, August 19)

⁶² Berger (1995)

⁶³ Interview with Author (March, 2004)

⁶⁴ Letter provided by Coach Bowden and his Staff.

⁶⁵ Oriard (1993, p. 279)

⁶⁶ Hawes (1999)

⁶⁷ Dempsey (2002, p. 19)

⁶⁸ Oriard (2001, pp. 126-161)

⁶⁹ Oriard (2001, p. 130)

⁷⁰ For a more detailed review see: Oriard, M. (2001). *King Football: Sport & Spectacle in the Golden Age or Radio & Newsreels, Movies & Magazines, the Weekly & Daily Press*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press; and Watterson, J. S. (2000). *College football: History, Spectacle, Controversy*. Baltimore, MA: John Hopkins University Press.

⁷¹ Dempsey, C. W. (2002, p. 25)

⁷² Oriard (2001, p. 131)

⁷³ Williams (1949, p. 13)

⁷⁴ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

⁷⁵ Oriard (1993, p. 279)

⁷⁶ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

⁷⁷ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 127)

⁷⁸ Oriard (2001, p. 222)

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- ⁷⁹ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)
- ⁸⁰ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)
- ⁸¹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
- ⁸² Interview with Author (Feb 17 2004)
- ⁸³ Interview with Author (March 03 2004)
- ⁸⁴ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 72)
- ⁸⁵ Whittingham (2001, p. 44)
- ⁸⁶ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)
- ⁸⁷ Interviews with Author (March 03, 2004; April 08, 2004)
- ⁸⁸ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁸⁹ Lawson & Payne (1998, p. 11)
- ⁹⁰ Lawson & Payne (1998, p. 11)
- ⁹¹ Oriard (2001, p. 313)
- ⁹² Watterson (2000, p. 308)
- ⁹³ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 193)
- ⁹⁴ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)
- ⁹⁵ See, Oriard, M. (2001). Chapter 9: "Race," pp. 283-327; Watterson, J. S. (2000). Chapter 16: "The accidental reform: African Americans at predominantly white schools," pp. 308-331.
- ⁹⁶ "Recalling the death" (1998)
- ⁹⁷ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)
- ⁹⁸ Wiggins (1988)
- ⁹⁹ Underwood (1969a, 1969b, 1969c)
- ¹⁰⁰ Wiggins (1988. p. 305)
- ¹⁰¹ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)
- ¹⁰² Zimbalist (1999, p. 38)
- ¹⁰³ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)
- ¹⁰⁴ Combined from two different interviews (March 03, 2004; April 08, 2004)

CHAPTER 5

LEARNING TO BE A COACH

I bet you every coach at every level of sports has stood in front of players at one time or another and talked about the lessons you learn in courts and fields that you can take with you for the rest of your life. That's because, for those of us who've spent our lives in sports, the lessons couldn't be more clear.¹

There is no doubt about it, you learn and just continue to learn. I have been coaching 51 years and I feel like I know about 60% of what is out there, no, maybe 50%. There is so much more out there. I enjoy learning. I love to see new stuff. I love to learn it, read it and do it. . . . You know it would be amazing if I knew back in 1953 and 1963 and even 1973 what I know now. Instead of having 342 wins, I probably would have 380. I would have won more ball games, because now I know how I lost them. So, it is aligned with experience and learning; you sometimes have to learn the hard way.²

Bobby Bowden

A career in sports can generate and provide numerous experiences that aid in ones understanding of not only sport itself, but also life in general. At seventy-four years of age, Bowden's participation in athletics and football has spanned more than sixty-years. His first football practice occurred in 1946 at Woodlawn High School. His last is still yet to be determined. The year 1955 saw a 26 year old Bowden coach his first game as a head football coach at South Georgia College. In 2004, Bowden will continue his coaching career as he leads the Seminoles into battle for the 28th season. Throughout his sporting career, Bowden has been able to adjust to the changing cultural climate, regulations that govern intercollegiate athletics and college football, and his roles in life. With experience, time, and the desire to continually learn, Bowden has been able to improve by acquiring a vast array of knowledge. As a result, he has been able to develop winning football programs wherever he has laid his hat.

Through the research lens of expertise, it has been determined that knowledge and its organization are critical characteristics of an expert coach.³ In essence, the platform of expertise as a cognitive skill relates to coaches having more knowledge to “interpret, solve and perform solutions to problems.”⁴ Scholars have frequently noted that the extensive and specialized knowledge needed to be an expert coach is accumulated with years of experience from a wide variety of information relating to their sport and their athletes, including observation of other coaches.⁵ This chapter will examine the journeys, experiences and knowledge that Bowden has accrued throughout his life that have impacted and informed his career in athletics. In constructing this chapter, the biggest challenge was to organize the lessons that Bowden had learned throughout his career, into a coherent structure that made sense. Cushion described coaching as a “web of complex, content-dependent, and interdependent activities, [that] come together to form the holistic coaching process.”⁶ Douge & Hastie posited, “Effective coaching is not only a set of established coaching behaviors but also a coach’s ability to observe, analyze, synthesize, and modify his or her coaching to fit the situation and the needs of those involved.”⁷ Both sentiments highlight the ambiguities, complexities and the individuality that being a coach and coaching entails. Aside from the diversity it must also be noted careers and life are not static in knowledge and information for they are continually being (re-)interpreted. As Bowden noted, “Heck, I’m still learning my lessons, too. Just when I think I have the whole process figured out, along comes something that throws me for a loop.”⁸

In the case of Bowden and a coaching career that started in 1953, there are numerous influences, sources of knowledge, and information that have informed his coaching practices. Following detailed analysis examining Bowden’s life and career it became apparent that his major career influences could be organized into two overarching categories: *Influenced by*

SOMEONE and *Influenced by EVENTS*. Each category is divided into smaller sections that further stratify the influences on Bowden's career.

Influenced by SOMEONE

Coaches steal ideas from one another all the time. There ain't any secrets in coaching.

Bobby Bowden⁹

Throughout Coach Bowden's successful career, a great many people have served as educators, motivators, mentors, role models, sources of knowledge and guides. One particular group of people that have been a constant source of learning for Coach Bowden are the coaches and teachers that he has studied with, acted under, discovered in text, listened to in lectures, and observed in action. However, throughout Coach Bowden's adventures into the complexities of the structures of football, teaching pedagogies, and student-athlete differences, one of the most important sources of learning has come from visitations—visitations to the great Alabama football programs and teams of the late 1950s and 1960s, amongst others.

As a football community outsider, I was interested to learn about the willingness which college football programs and their supporting coaching staffs share ideas, strategies and information with coach's from opposing teams. After all, they are all striving toward a common goal; the National Championship. As coach Bowden discussed in a recent interview

I really feel like and I am sure other coaches feel the same way that everything that I have learned I have learned from somebody else. Everything I have gotten I have gotten it from somebody else. I have always visited other schools to see what they are doing and stuff like that.¹⁰

As we delved into the role of formal education, teachers and other coaches, I became further intrigued by the sources of knowledge, information and learning situations that have

informed and impacted Coach Bowden's professional development. Based on these conversations, this section will focus on individuals that have influenced Coach Bowden's career through four identified groupings; Educators, Military Leaders and Generals, Family Members and Athletes.

Educators

Throughout our lives we are constantly learning, whether we explicitly realize it or not. Traditionally, teachers and coaches have been the main deliverers of knowledge, experiences and wisdom when it comes to the realms of sport and physical activity. However, as with much of life's understandings we often learn from the negative experiences of interactions with others as much as we do positive ones and from sources in addition to the perceived experts. During this research project, which included several discussions with Coach Bowden regarding this issue, it was very apparent that he had learned about coaching and life through negative experiences at the hands of various educators and individuals. However, due to his firm belief that you should never say anything bad about anyone and coupled with the notoriety of several individuals involved in some of the experiences, this section will focus for the most part on experiences where certain influential educators will only be identified by name in conjunction with positive experience. Or, with experiences that, when described, will not publicly identify anyone. This is an important admission to make, since when telling a biography, the life that it represents should be told as fully and as accurately as possible. His testament bodes more to his beliefs in treating those around him with respect and humility.

Although this section has made a distinction between teachers and coaches, Bowden himself believes that,

A coach is nothing but a teacher. The only thing is he is louder. A teacher stands before the class and teaches, teaches, teaches, and teaches. A coach goes on the field and does the same but he has to yell and it's active. Its active but really the base of it is teaching. If you can't teach you can't coach.

Having been in and around athletics and sports for most of my life, I would agree with Bowden. Some of my best teachers were coaches. In contrast, some of the worst teachers and experiences I have had were also coaches. However, the distinction in Bowden's career on the influences of formal education and the "teachers" in the more traditional sense and "coaches," also in the more traditional definition, provide very appropriate headings from which to discuss this issue.

Teachers

Although Bowden confesses to being not the most attentive student as he traveled the corridors of formal education, he did acknowledge that several teachers and professors that occupied the lecture theaters and classrooms that he passed through significantly influenced his teaching and coaching career.

Mark: Are there any other people that have been influential in your coaching career?

Bowden: When you went through high school and college you always had favorite teachers that you learned from and wanted to be like. You wanted to teach like they did, because you thought that they really got it down. I had some teachers that I wouldn't ever want to teach like. I had some teachers that really knew how to get it across. They really knew how to teach it and they were really entertaining.

Mark: What did they do that made them your favorite teacher?

Bowden: You know, I had a teacher in grad school, and I can't remember his name, Dr. Something. Well, I was bad about cutting classes all the time, but I would never

cut his. This professor was a famous professor, so his lecture room was like a theater and it was always packed. But, it was so entertaining that you couldn't cut it. He was probably one of the best that I ever heard. I remember I also had a physiology teacher that could really explain it, really make you want to learn. I had a psychology teacher that could do it too. Some teachers just make you want to come to class and some you find every way you can to get out of it.

Mark: What types of things did they do that made you want to come to class?

Bowden: I think, maybe the big thing was they would tell interesting stories. Tell anecdotes and stories that you couldn't wait to see what was going to happen. Sometimes I might go out and make a talk somewhere and I will only have four noted down there. It might be four different stories then I will talk about why it's important. Then I might tell another story and tell why it's important. Tell this story when I think it's important. So I try and get my point across that way.¹¹

As the transcription indicates, Bowden did learn some teaching strategies from the formalized training he received, as he pursued his Bachelors in Physical Education and Masters in Education. However, the passage highlights that the influences were linked to the methods the teachers used and the potential of the teaching strategies to motivate him as a student. The role of formal education and the teachers and professors involved in such endeavors were not associated with Bowden's learning and experiences as he himself became an educator. Instead, the major individuals that were involved in Bowden's "teacher training" were the coaches in the "field" through observations, mentoring and additional opportunities to interact.

Coaches

I've sure received a lot of credit for things other coaches have come up with. For instance, we had some success with a thing we called a middle-screen pass. But I

got that from Notre Dame. I think Notre Dame got it from Penn State. I don't know who Penn State got it from. There aren't any secrets in this game. And it's not so much what you do, it's when you do it.

Folks call me an innovative coach. I would describe myself as an innovative copier. We will play some team and they will run a play that I like. Unfortunately, when I like a play, it usually means our opponent has run it against us with some degree of success. So I might incorporate it into our offense, or I might change it a little bit and it will become a new gimmick. But what we all do is steal—maybe borrow sounds better—from somebody else. All coaches do it. That's the way it is in this business.

Bowden¹²

The 1975 West Virginia University Media Guide quoted Bowden as saying, “You’re right, I do have a nice-guy image,” said Bowden. “Some say a nice guy can’t win. Well, I’ve seen them all. I’ve seen mean coaches win. I’ve seen nice coaches win. I’ve seen loud coaches win. I’ve seen quiet coaches win. I’ve seen profane coaches win. I’ve seen Christian coaches win.”¹³ As the quotes attest, college coaches over the years have had very different coaching styles that have proven successful for them. As noted in Chapter three, Bowden firmly believes that for a coach to be successful, they have to be themselves. However, throughout his high school and collegiate playing career; his years as an assistant coach at Howard, FSU, and WVU and his head coaching positions at SGC, Howard, WVU and FSU, Bowden had the privilege of learning from a number of effective, experienced and philosophically different coaches. The first part of this section will introduce two of the most influential coaches that Bowden learned from and credits. Subsequently, four subcategories will discuss coaches who have influenced Bowden by being his *mentors and role models* or *assistant coaches*, or that have influenced him through the mediums of *Books and Lectures, Meetings, Programs and Clinics*.

Kenny Morgan

In a top 10 list printed in the Tallahassee Democrat,¹⁴ Bowden named Kenny Morgan as his most influential coach. Morgan was inducted into the Alabama High School Athletic

Association Hall of Fame in 1996 and was the head football coach at Woodlawn High School for 14 years in the late 1940s and 1950s. Over his career at Woodlawn High School, Morgan led his teams to two State Championships (1955 and 1956) and four city Championships, while posting a 78-48-6 overall record. In talking about his coaching role models in his latest book *The Bowden Way*, Bowden noted,

I got into coaching because I loved the challenge of the game. The men who coached me – particularly Kenny Morgan, my high school football coach – I had the deepest respect and admiration. I wanted to be part of their great fraternity.¹⁵

In reminiscing about the late Kenny Morgan, Bowden fondly remembers how his former classmates and players still honor the positive influences that he once had on their young lives.

We [former players] think so much of him, that we still meet every second Saturday of June and have a Kenny Morgan get together, where all the Kenny Morgan guys come back. We have been doing that now for the last 26/27 years. We raise money to send kids to college where he went to college [Howard College] and we call it the Kenny Morgan scholarship fund. He was not like Bear Bryant. He was an easy going, quiet, tough guy, but he was the kind of guy that everyone would like. Mothers would like and Daddies would like. Now Bear he would turn some people off, but that's what it took. Kenny was a father type to us....To be honest, I have gotten a lot of stuff from him. I know I have gotten chewing tobacco from him. I chewed it all my life. Well I say I chewed all my life—well when I started coaching my coach chewed tobacco—so I had to chew tobacco.¹⁶

In discussing the influences of Coach Morgan on his career, Bowden rarely identified any particular characteristics that he can directly attribute to his now successful coaching career.

Nevertheless, it is very apparent that Coach Bowden regards Kenny Morgan as a coach that inspired him to not only play football, but to make coaching football his lifelong career choice.

Coach Paul “Bear” Bryant

It is not every day that you get an opportunity to play for at that time, what people thought was one of the greatest coaches of all time Bear Bryant, and then turn around and get the opportunity to coach with undoubtedly one of the greatest coaches that has gone through college football.

Mickey Andrews¹⁷

Although viewed today as two of the greatest college coaches of all time, in 1958 Coach Robert C. Bowden and Coach Paul W. Bryant occupied two very different positions in the college coaching ranks. Coach “Bear” Bryant had recently accepted the head coach position at the University of Alabama following successful coaching spells at Kentucky and Texas A&M. Little did he know that his career would include six National Championships and thirteen Conference titles. In contrast Bowden was a four year head coach at South Georgia College. A school that at the end of that season dropped its football program due to financial pressures.¹⁸ However, in the spring of 1960 Bowden and the Bear were to meet.

Following the 1958 season, Bowden, the Athletic Director at South Georgia College, received a letter from Dr. Leslie Wright, the new president of Howard College, asking Bowden if he would be interested in becoming the new head football coach.¹⁹ Needless to say Bowden returned to his beloved Birmingham and Howard College as the head coach. Amongst other things, upon Bowden’s return to Howard, he wrote Coach Bryant a letter that asked if he would allow Bowden to come down to Tuscaloosa and watch his team practice.²⁰ Bryant responded positively to the young coach’s request with, “Yeah. Y’all come on down.”²¹

During the four years that Bowden coached at Howard College the spring would see him make the 60 mile trip to Tuscaloosa to watch, observe and learn from Coach Bryant and his staff.

Every chance I had, I would drive down to Tuscaloosa to visit with my good friend Gene Stallings,²² who always took time to explain Alabama football philosophy with me. I'd usually get there by 10 A.M. and we'd sit there by the chalk board with guys like Sam Bailey, Jerry Claiborne, Phil Cutchins, Clem Gryska and Bryant, just talking football. Then by five or six in the evening we'd break up to go eat supper and continue talking football. I learned a lot of football just watching those guys work on the chalk board or on the field.²³

In addition to learning about the philosophies of Alabama football under Bryant's leadership, Bowden also began to learn an important lesson about coaching. In discussing how Bear operated his practices, Bowden commented:

By watching his teams practice, I learned how great he was at teaching the fundamentals. Now, he had his own way of doing things, things that probably wouldn't have worked for anyone else. Man, I didn't know how tough he was until I saw him in action.

In a 2002 newspaper article printed in the Tampa Tribune entitled, *All Kinds of Legends Bowden now in Same Class as the Bear*, Fennelly discussed how Bowden remembered observing the Crimson Tide and the Bear at work.

He'll never forget those Alabama practices. When Bryant came down from his tower on the practice field, quicker than a firefighter down the pole, Bowden dived for cover like everyone else.

"I'd be standing there and I'd hear someone say, 'look out, here he comes,'" Bowden said. "And Bear'd be coming down that tower. 'look out, here he comes.' I'll never forget that as long as I live.

He'd take players on physically and show'em how to do a drill. He went pretty dang hard on them. "Hey, Boy, get down here,' he'd say. "Get down here. Charge me! Get after me!"

Bowden smiled. That was Bear.

He couldn't be that way. Bowden decided that pretty early after watching the Bear. That wasn't Bowden's personality. Bear smoked and drank. Bear cursed like he breathed. Bowden couldn't do that.²⁴

Even after leaving Howard College to become an assistant coach at Florida State and West Virginia, where interestingly he eventually became the head coach of both programs Bowden kept in contact with Coach Bryant and continued to learn.

I used to call Coach Bryant for advice when I was head coach at West Virginia too. I especially called him when things started going bad in 1974. That was the year we lost a lot of players to injuries and had to win two of our last three games to finish with a dad-gum 4-7 record.

Coach Bryant gave me one good piece of advice that year. I called him and told him what was happening. I said, "Coach, what do I do?"

He said "Bobby, I'll tell you one thing you better do. You better give them boys plenty of lovin', because if you're counting on the one's left winning for ya', you better give 'em love—and lots of it".²⁵

Throughout his career Bowden aspired to be the best coach that he could be. Importantly, however, he heeded Bryant's advice²⁶ and coached by being himself. Bowden noted that

Now this is an interesting stat on Bear, not 100% correct, but it is probably 98% correct. Bear, at one time had 29 assistant coaches that went out and became head coaches. So,

they were Bear Bryant prototypes. Out of those 29 coaches 28 of them had been fired. Twenty eight of them were fired. Now some of them got fired and later on went over here and succeeded. But you say 28 out of 29, how in the world? They all got jobs because of Bear, and Bear surrounded himself with nothing but the best coaches. But, why was he successful and they were not? I think a lot of it was that they tried to be like him. They tried to be like him and that wasn't them. So I have always tried to be me. Do what I feel like I ought to do, set the way I was set, and don't try to copy somebody else. I think that is a very big key in coaching....Now, I liked his mannerisms. I probably tried to copy some of them, maybe subconsciously. He also had a great sense of humor and was a great joke teller. But I am really not like him at all. Bear was a mean, tough, grumpy, guy. A physically big guy and I am a little guy. But, I just felt like he got more out of his material than did any other coach. ... I have never known a coach that got so much out of his kids than he did. That was the thing that struck me the most.²⁷

In addition, to “being yourself” it was noticeable that Coach Bowden’s career has been influenced significantly by the practices of the late Coach Bryant. As was discussed in chapter two the Florida State football program is extremely well organized and Bowden himself strongly believes in the mantra of being prepared. With the increasing media attention, Bowden, like his role model, has frequently stood by his players and coaches displaying a true sense of loyalty regardless of public opinion—two traits learned and observed from Coach Bryant:

Organization, being prepared, covering every detail of a game—that’s the big thing I saw him do that I’ve tried to do. He had a plan for everything, wasn’t afraid to try it and wasn’t afraid of what people thought and said. If there’s anything I try to do like him, I don’t let public opinion tell me what to do.²⁸

Mentors & Role Models

Throughout our lives we are inspired by others in all walks of life, albeit at times through the glamorous realms of television, radio, movies, and sports. Yet, we are also inspired by those that we work with, attend church with, and even grow up and live with. It is through those that we are inspired and mesmerized with that we all, so often, define ourselves by. In a society where we are regularly measured by our perceived successes and our fame and fortune, it is those that have achieved what we deem success that we measure ourselves against. Believing that one day we can achieve similar successes.

At 13 years of age, growing up in Birmingham, Alabama all Bowden, a young man that breathed Alabama football, dreamed of doing “was to one day play for Coach Frank Thomas at Alabama and maybe have the opportunity to play in the Rose Bowl game.”²⁹ Over time, Bowden learned from many great and not so great “educators.” So far this chapter has identified two coaches that have significantly influenced Bowden’s career pathways, philosophies and teachings. However, the mentors and role models that we often have the opportunity to learn from can come to us through a variety of mediums. For a young Bowden the radio afforded him access to the great Alabama teams of the 1930s and early 40s and his coaching hero Frank Thomas. Additionally, his first high school coach, Kenny Morgan inspired him to become a coach, and as discussed, the legendary Coach Paul “Bear” Bryant helped Bowden learn and study the trade that he now masters. However, Bowden’s coaching mentors and role models are not limited to just these three men. As discussed in chapter two, Darrell Royal the famed University of Texas coach that lead the Longhorns from 1957-1976, provided Bowden with the practice structure that he and Florida State still employs today.

Interestingly, Bowden's playing career never afforded him the opportunity to physically watch, learn and play for some of the all-time coaching legends of college football. However, this did not stop a young Bowden from learning and being mentored by them,

I played football at a small college where there was no big name coach that was coaching me. If I told you the name of my coach you would never have heard of him. It's not like I went to Alabama, Tennessee or Notre Dame. I went to Howard College, which is now Samford University. I got a great education there and learned a lot by the "school of hard knocks" having to learn things myself. Therefore as mentors, I studied other guys that coached at other schools like Frank Thomas who was the head coach at Alabama, Bear Bryant when he came to Alabama, Bobby Dodd at Georgia Tech, General Neyland at Tennessee, Frank Leahy at Notre Dame, Bud Wilkinson at Oklahoma. Those were the great coaches when I first got into coaching back in 1953, so they were my mentors.³⁰

After a successful high school career under Kenny Morgan, Bowden, following a spring semester at the University of Alabama, enrolled at Howard College. Under Head Coach Earl Gartman, Bowden had a successful college career where he earned All-Dixie honors in 1950, 1951, 1952 and culminating with All-American Honors in his senior season of 1952 at quarterback. Upon graduating from Howard College, Bowden had a proposition that he readily accepted,

When I got out of college [undergraduate program] my athletic director [Earl Gartman] said, "If you go off and get your masters then we will hire you back here." So I left after I graduated in January and went to Peabody College up in Nashville (now part of Vanderbilt University). That's where all the teachers went. That was a teachers college and I got my masters degree and finished it in August. So, I came back to my alma mater

and coached track, I was the head track coach and an assistant football coach. Then the second year I coached there, there was a coach that came in as the head football coach. His name was Cannonball White. He had played at the University of Tennessee and fought in World War I. He then went back and became a very successful small school coach. Then he came to my school as the head coach and I was an assistant under him. That's when I really began to learn about the X's and O's, strategy and pre-game talks, half-time talks and discipline. You know, I was under it [as a player] up to that point then all of a sudden I was with a guy doing it and I was learning it.³¹

The two years that Bowden worked as an assistant coach, he was responsible for coaching the back and receivers, while Gartman, the former head coach and AD, took the defensive responsibilities and Cannonball took responsibility for the rest of the team's offense. However all was not well at Howard. After two seasons the team had amassed only three wins, leading to Coach White's retirement and Gartman's resignation,³² leaving Bowden as the only coach left from a less than successful coaching staff. Following several discussions with the athletic director and College President, Bowden was disappointed not to receive the vacant position. The administrators responsible for hiring felt that he was too young. As with most of Coach Bowden's career, coaching opportunities seemed to fall into place as needed and 1955 was no different. Shortly after hearing that he would not be the new head coach at Howard, he received a letter from a small Junior College in South Georgia. However, the job entailed more than coaching football. He was to become the head football and basketball coach as well athletic director, all at the age of twenty-five. After one year of coaching basketball he fired himself. Interestingly this is the only coaching job from which he has ever been fired. Then, three years later, the football team was disbanded and Bowden returned to Howard College as the new head

coach. After four years, his teams went a combined 31-7-0 including invitations to the Textile Bowl³³ and Golden Isle Bowl.³⁴

During his years at Howard College, Bowden's teams had pulled off several upsets and he had built a successful program. Bowden had greater ambitions. So when Head Coach Bill Peterson of Florida State came looking for an assistant coach in 1964, Bowden soon headed to Tallahassee, Florida. It was at FSU, under the tutelage of Coach Peterson, that Bowden started to build on his knowledge of the passing game that he had previous developed.

I learned the passing game when I came here [Florida State University] in 1963 as an assistant coach. Up to that time, I had not been throwing the ball very much. Back in those days, people thought that you had to run the ball to win. So when I came down here in 1963, Bill Peterson was the head football coach and had put in the pro offense. Back in those days that was unheard of. He was really one of the first guys. Baylor did it. Tulsa did it. Florida State did it. Maybe there was somebody else. See most of the people and teams were wishbone; grind it out kind of offenses. Bill Peterson put a flanker out right and a flanker out left, split the backs, and just threw it all over the field. So when I came down here, I learned that from him. He was copying a lot of pro teams. Now, back then, nobody thought you could do it. But, nowadays everybody is doing it. That was the first time I got interested in the pro-passing attack, which we have built on over the years.³⁵

After three years as an assistant coach at Florida State, Bowden was becoming increasingly unhappy. So when Jim Carlen, the recently appointed head coach at West Virginia University offered him the offensive coordinator position, Bowden, had a discussion with his wife Ann Bowden and the family packed their bags and moved north to Morgantown, West Virginia. Bowden had met Carlen, an assistant at Georgia Tech, in 1964 when he had made a

visit to Florida State to study an offense that scored 263 points and a defense that only conceded 85 points on there way to a 9-1-1 season. “When you have a good year, coaches come from all over to try to find out how you did it....The next spring I went up to Georgia Tech and studied what they were doing.”³⁶ It was under Coach Carlen, that Bowden started to experience the finer points of recruiting³⁷, the benefits of delegating responsibility, and benefit of working emotionally with your assistant coaches:

The thing that I learned from Jim was that he was organized too. I talked about Bear and that he was so organized that he would tell you everything to do during practice. Now I have adopted his [Jim’s] way of saying, “Now, I want this done, and now go ahead and do it.” I learned how Jim went about making assignments to coaches and then said “go ahead and do it.” He would give us responsibilities on the fields. For example, I am going to coach the receivers and the extra point team. Then, off the field, I am in charge of the cafeteria. ... So I learned how to assign coaches assignments on the field and off the field which took responsibilities off of him. ... Then, I think the big thing I learned from him was that he let you do your own coaching. If he thought you were doing something wrong then he would see you after practice.³⁸

After a four year period of being an active learner under Coach Jim Carlen, in 1970 Bowden finally landed a head coaching job at a major university. He was appointed the new head football coach at West Virginia following Coach Carlen’s move to Texas Tech. It was here that Bowden started to learn the complexities and pressures of being the man with all the responsibility for winning and of running a program. On many occasions, Bowden had been known to apologize to the West Virginia fans, noting that “I feel like I lost games up there, since

it was my first main head job. I felt like I learned a lot about coaching up there that caused us to lose games.”³⁹

Assistant Coaches

Since his first assignment in 1953 as an assistant coach at Howard, Bowden has continually been involved in the fall traditions of college football. In 2004, Bowden will be entering his fifty-first year in the profession, of which he has spent forty-one years as a head coach. During his coaching tenure, Bowden, once mentored, has turned mentor to numerous assistant coaches as he and his staff at Florida State became a college football powerhouse. As a testimony, several assistant coaches became successful head coaches at other large college football programs.⁴⁰ Not surprisingly though, Bowden believes a head coach needs to practice leading with humility and therefore never stop learning.

Humility has taught me to be open to new ideas and new ways to improve, both as a person and as a coach. I’ve proven how dumb I can be at times. It’s made me more interested in the ideas of others.

I encourage my staff to think independently of me and to argue for their alternative points of view. What a shame if I refused to draw readily on their experience or refused to benefit from their insights. One of the biggest problems with an arrogant person is that there’s nothing others can teach him. Why should he listen to his staff or employees when he already knows it all? What a waste of the creative insights and good common sense that others possess. And what better was to miss golden opportunities to make improvements.⁴¹

Although never employed as an assistant coach, an excellent example of Bowden learning from individuals that assisted him came in 1960. Bowden, the head coach of Howard

College at the time, was increasingly interested in learning more about the passing attack and decided to ask for help during spring ball from an Alabama native and Green Bay Packers quarterback, Bart Starr:

I knew him because our high school played his high school, he was a freshman when I was a senior, but I knew about him then. Then he went to Alabama, and I went to Howard. So I kept up with him at Alabama and well he wasn't all that successful at Alabama. He might have been the second team quarterback for most of his career. Then he goes to the Green Bay Packers. They pick him up late and take him as a chance. He's not doing much up there. Then, Vince Lombardi goes there to coach. He was a great coach; many think the best ever. So, he makes Bart his quarterback and of course he won Superbowls and championships with Bart and he became the hall of fame quarterback up there. Anyway ... he lived in Birmingham during the off-season. I was coaching in Birmingham at Howard. So I just called him one day and said, "Why don't you come out here and maybe work with my quarterback some." Well he was very enthusiastic about that. He was a young guy and he came out there during spring practice and he stayed out there every day. He got me introduced to the passing game. Then later, even when I was at West Virginia, I would fly up to Green Bay and visit him while he worked out. I got to hang out with him and Lombardi a little bit.⁴²

Books and Texts

In our educational lives, texts have been seen as a traditional source of knowledge and information. Although Coach Bowden stopped pursuing a formal educational path following the completion of his Masters Degree in 1953, books and other texts have continued to be an important source of learning. It is important to note that all kinds of books have played an

influential role, as will be discussed later in this chapter. Books examining the careers and characteristics of some of the most famous military leaders and generals have been one such knowledge archive. Additionally, biographies, coaching books and the Bible have also added to Coach Bowden's coaching wisdoms. In discussing his basic coaching philosophy of blocking and tackling, Bowden used Vince Lombardi's coaching books for reference:

Oh yeah, that [Blocking and Tackling] is something that I always start with. For example when we start spring training that is the first thing that we will do. ... I remember Vince Lombardi has probably got one of the greatest reputations in football as a professional coach. Well he was a great college coach too, but he never got a head coaching job. Anyway, when he went to the Green Bay Packers that was what made him famous. I always remember, when you start reading his coaching books the first thing he says is "football is two things: blocking and tackling." He said you can take all the rest, those tricky formations, take all your tricky this and tricky that's and it is still blocking and tackling that wins games. So, well I have always used that as my starting point too.

The importance of books for Bowden can not be underestimated. Being an avid reader, Bowden's office resembles that of any other university educator, with shelves piled high with books spanning a wide variety of subjects. The front corner of his desk is great testament to the scope of his reading with books including the Bible, biographies of Tom Landry and Bear Bryant and historical events such as D-Day. In addition, it is not uncommon to find his present reading selection somewhere on that same desk. Bowden is quick to point to the important books as his career continues to develop:

Now I read a lot, I read a lot of books. Dale Carnegie that was probably the first one I read, it was about getting along with other people. ... Here is the book I am reading right

now by John Wooden probably one of the greatest basketball coaches ever. I like to read stuff like that and pick up peoples thoughts. Anyway to answer your question if you are asking me how did I learn to teach? Number one it is based on a love for it. Now that you love it, how did you learn it? I would have to say reading. Yes, I would have to say reading.

Other Programs and Head Coaches

On becoming the head coach at Howard “The first thing I did,” Bowden later revealed, “ was attend a coaching clinic in Tallahassee, Florida, where Tom Nugent, the FSU head coach, and Forest Evashevski, the Iowa head coach, were lecturing. Coach Evashevski took a liking to me real quickly and soon invited me up to Iowa for spring training. They had just returned from beating a very good California team in the Rose Bowl that year. So I wasted no time in accepting the offer.

Mike Bynum⁴³

So far in this chapter I have introduced how Coach Bowden has continued to learn about the game he loves and the life he leads from other educators and coaches. At the outset of this section, Bynum discusses how Bowden become the head coach at Howard College and visited Iowa. The practice of visiting other programs and learning within the confines of other college teams is something that the average fan never sees, because in actuality, hidden behind competitive realms of college football there is a coaching community. It is in this community that coaches share knowledge and information. Nearly all educational establishments operate a similar policy through conferences, lectures, publications and associations. However, actually inviting coaches to visit and interrogate the very foundations of a program, including the competitive system that makes-up the game plan in the fall season is not as common. Coach Bowden throughout his career has visited numerous programs and examined the coaching structures and teachings of many college and professional football coaches. For example, while

discussing one visit to the University of Houston, Coach Bowden describes how he learned a particular system so that he could implement it into his program:

Bill Yeoman was a very successful coach at the University of Houston [1962-1986] with what he called the triple-veer, which is an option style system. So, I went out there and visited him for three to four days and then went back and put it in at West Virginia.

Nearly everything that I have done, I have gone somewhere else and watched them come back and put the things that would work in, if I liked it. I might pick up a play or I might pick up a way to run a play.⁴⁴

As discussed, Coach Paul “Bear” Bryant of Alabama and Coach Darrell Royal of Texas played a significant role in the formation of Bowden’s coaching philosophies, organizational set-up, and athlete interactions. When asked what he looked for when he visits a program, Bowden responded:

Well, you go to places like that and you see drills that they do. You might see five drills and you like one, so you come back and incorporate it into your practice. You might see a particular technique, you might learn a saying that you like, and you just pick it up. I have been in this business 51 years so I have visited with some of the greatest coaches. ... I just went to schools and made visits so I could learn something when I was growing up. As you said people don’t know about that part. ... Now, Bear Bryant was my idol, and well I had other idols, but he kind of stood above the rest of them. Darrell Royal was one of them, but Bear and I are so different. He was big, a kind of John Wayne type. I don’t know what I looked like, maybe Mickey Rooney. So anyway, I have always felt like one of the secrets of success is to be you. I have always tried to be myself. I have not tried to

be like Bear Bryant, not try and be Darrell Royal, but I hope that I pick up maybe some of their little peculiarities. But, the worst thing I could ever do was to try and be them.⁴⁵

Studying Military Leaders and Generals

The importance of his historical past has always been an important part in the life of Bobby Bowden. Throughout his childhood and coaching career Bowden has been an avid adventurer into the strategies, characteristics and leadership skills of military generals and leaders. Bowden has often referred to the challenges that military leaders face on the battle field to that of a football coach on the sideline. Charlie Barnes the President of the Seminoles Boosters commented that, “He believes. I have heard him say that he studies generals because Kings and Generals are the easiest things to study because they are the most obvious profiles.”⁴⁶ In discussing how he relates coaches to generals Bowden noted:

You learn a lot about why they [Generals] are good leaders ... and why they make good leaders. They are men of integrity and men of compassion, with a commitment to excellence and things like that. ... In reference, the head football coach is very much like a General, there are so many similarities. You are both handling a bunch of men and therefore you are going to have problems. You are going to have moral problems. You are going to have people who disobey. You are going to have to find your leaders. It is so much alike. Then you go into a battle and you have got to be able to adjust because once the battle starts forget all those plans you had that don't always work. Now, football is very much the same way. You go out there and kick-off and after one series, you could be like my game plan isn't going to work “I have got to do this.” So there are a lot of similarities there. So, they are very much like. The only thing is, is that war is a million times more serious because you are talking about life and death.⁴⁷

It was during the research process that I started to see Bowden's interests with generals, and military history and its applicability to how he views the strategies of football and the relationships generals and commanders have with their troops. Every Monday during the regular season, following a Florida State game, the Seminoles Booster Club, chaired by Charlie Barnes, holds a Boosters Banquet. During a comically entertaining 25 minute speech, after the loss to Clemson, Bowden drew reference to his study of great leaders and generals by paraphrasing a famous quote by President Eisenhower, who said that "Before the battle, planning is everything, however once the battle has started it means nothing."⁴⁸ and relating it to football. When discussing the notion of game plans and the importance of planning, Bowden again explained how important planning is from a military perspective:

The biggest thing you do is practice during the week so you can cover the things that you might face on Saturday. Now a lot of that is based on calculations, because you can't prepare for everything. There is a saying in war which is true that "you can't defend everything." ... I only have so many troops to cover an area. If I spread them all out then I will be weak all the way across the line. So I have got to anticipate, if they are going to come across from this way, or are they going to come from this way. Are they going to come down the middle? So, you try to anticipate where they are going to come from. So I am going to bunch all these guys up over here, but if I anticipate wrongly then I am going to get hurt. ... Now, that is the way that football strategy is. You go out there and practice on things you think that they are going to try and do against you. You want to have a good general overall philosophy, but boy, be sure to know where to put your strength against their strength. Now, remember they are doing the same dadgum thing. So, that is the kind of the strategy that is involved in this dadgum thing.⁴⁹

Bowden never served in the military but believes that he would have had he not been guided by God into coaching. His knowledge of the great military generals has come largely from the studying of biographies and historical texts. Although his library is varied, the majority of the books that adorn his office shelves are military based. When I asked him what book he would recommend to a new teacher or coach, Bowden again turned to the great military generals in history:

Well many coaches have a book and you can learn something from all of them probably. But, I would think you would get more from reading a book on Robert E. Lee or Napoleon, or Eisenhower, or Patton. I know a book that I would really recommend would be Robert E. Lee, because he was so compassionate and so honest in everything. He had a great comment, when he became the president of Washington and Lee University, after the civil war. There was a story that a kid was sent to him with a disciplinary problem. And the kid asked him what the rules are here in this school. And then Lee said, "We only have one rule." And the kid said, "What is it?" Lee said, "Kindness." If you are kind to everybody, then you are going to be obeying the rules pretty good. Now that was typical Robert E. Lee. Robert E. Lee is a guy, that someone offered him 50, 000 dollars a year to be the president of an insurance company....After the war he didn't have a job, but he turned it down. He said, "I have to turn it down because I have no experience in insurance." They said, "We just want your name." And then, he said, "My name is not for sale." That's why I say if you read about him, you will probably find out about more stuff that will help you be a better coach.

Now, my favorite general, well maybe not my favorite but the best one that I have ever read about is Napoleon. He was brilliant. All the generals that I have read about refer

back to Napoleon, I mean Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee, Rommel, Patton, all of them refer back to Napoleon, that guy was brilliant and I never knew that until I started reading all these books about him.

But, for me, Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson were the best two, Burt Reynolds gave me those two books, ... I read both of them. It probably took me a year. Both of those guys were great Christian men, God fearing men, and brave. Those are the best. But I get something out of all of them.⁵⁰

Family and Religion

It has often been said that whether we like it or not our parents have significant influences on what we decide to do with our lives and the professions that we chose to pursue. Although Bowden's father was not an athlete himself, Bowden believes that he has "nearly [influenced me] as much as anybody did because he was a good man. I was lucky that he was a good man."⁵¹ Additionally Bowden's mother had an indelible influence on Bowden growing up.

Sunset Bowden was a house wife, whose primary role was to take care of the family, "She did a lot of those nice motherly things, she taught me scriptures and things like that. A lot of things that a good mother would do," Bowden recalls.⁵² Growing up in a southern city, Bowden was always raised with a very strong Christian influence. Looking back at his family life and his father, in particular, Bowden said of his father, "He was very church orientated, he was a deacon of the church, sang in the choir; every time the church doors opened we were there, Sunday morning, Sunday night, Wednesday night prayer meeting and he would lead that."⁵³ In discussing his southern heritage, Bowden also alluded to the influence of being raised "southern:"

I think being from this part of the country [South/Alabama] people are more religious down here, probably more than anywhere in the world. In the South people are more religious, more church conscious and more outspoken about it. That is why they call it the “Bible Belt,” you know. So I guess I was raised under that influence.⁵⁴

Now his dad also loved athletics, although he “never played; he was raised on a farm in Clayton, Alabama. Then he moved to Birmingham and that is where he met my mother and they married.”⁵⁵ However, Bowden’s father did have several of the Woodlawn High School standouts in his Sunday school classes and would take Bowden to Legion Field to watch his future high school alma mater play.

Bobby Bowden married early in his life (1949) to his childhood sweetheart Julia Ann Estock (Ann) and eventually had six sons and daughters, Robyn (1951), Steve (1952), Tommy (1954), Terry (1956), Jeff (1959) and Ginger (1961). As the family grew, three of the four boys, Tommy, Terry and Jeff, played football for their father and became football coaches in the college ranks themselves. As of June 2003, Tommy Bowden is head coach of the Clemson Tigers and Jeff Bowden is at Florida State as his father’s offensive coordinator. After having a successful coaching spell and winning the Bear Bryant Coach of the year award in 1993 while the head coach at Auburn, Terry Bowden left the coaching to become a TV analyst. Robyn and Ginger married former football players of their father. While Steve Bowden, the second oldest child, became an ordained minister with a Ph.D. in philosophy. In discussing the importance of family with reference to coaching football, Bowden believes that he can’t do it without family. In explaining his answer he commented:

I don’t think you can do it without your family. In other words to be a football coach, you must have a football wife. Unfortunately there are a lot of divorces in football, because a

lot of women can't get used to their husband being away. Or, can't get used to their husband getting all the publicity and they get none. You know they can't get used to other people hanging on the shoulders of the coach and their husband and stuff like that. So, you must have a family that supports you. I have been very fortunate, very fortunate, because Ann has been real supportive of me. And my children have naturally because most of them went into it.⁵⁶

In discussing the role that Ann has played in Coach Bowden's career, Charlie Barnes believes that without Ann, Bobby may not have been the coach he has become today. He commented:

I think that Ann has probably been his greatest source of encouragement. Ann has a very competitive nature. She wants to be the best. I think she has probably pushed coach beyond where he probably would have gone if he had to push himself. She has been a motivator, a catalyst if you will, throughout his career. Now, she has also been a wonderful mother to the children. ...Ann has been a very stabilizing force and a motivator, behind decisions that he has made.⁵⁷

Players and Athletes

As a teacher or a coach, there are always those special students and athletes that touch your soul and make a profession worthwhile. For me, Brian, a PE major and a rugby player, touched me in such a way that I learned more about my beliefs, my values and reasons that I had actually chose the teaching profession than any book, coach or other event that I have so far experienced. He was a young man that helped me to see what teaching was all about.⁵⁸ Yet, just like the coaches that we are influenced by, we often learn through less than positive experiences. Maybe it was the player that quit the team because he was pushed too hard, or the child that in class got hurt playing an activity that wasn't really appropriate. Maybe, it's a student that is so

gifted he or she does something that changes your philosophy about a particular technique.

Regardless of the circumstance, as educators, teachers, and coaches we are always learning from our students.

In Coach Bowden's career there have been numerous occasions where, he and his coaching staff have learned invaluable coaching lessons from the athletes that they teach. In fact, it would be almost impossible to count the number of times a coach has utilized such a lesson in his or her coaching. Several years ago, I interviewed an expert college gymnastics coach for a different research project. During that process I will never forget a story that she told me about a time when she learned a very valuable lesson from a very unlikely source:

This is something that I learned, I'll never forget it. It is something that I will always remember. I had a gymnast who was on the Canadian Olympic Team. She was one of our best athletes here ever. We had this big huge competition in Alabama and we won the meet and I went in the locker room afterwards and was going over all the deductions and all the corrections. And Jenny [pseudonym] started crying and said "You are never satisfied. You're just never happy. Can't you let us just enjoy the win?" I'll never forget that one. That's one that happened that I was like "She's right. We won, let them celebrate. We can talk about this on Monday." Because to me it's never good enough and so I'm always looking to be better.⁵⁹

Although this particular coach's view on being perfect didn't change her attitude and behaviors, such events can have a significant impact. Throughout Coach Bowden's career, athletes have played influential roles in his career development. For the purpose of this chapter two such events will be described. The first story will demonstrate the impact one particular student had on coach Bowden's career when he was a newly appointed head coach at South Georgia College

in the late 1950's. The second, much shorter story, is set during his long tenure at Florida State and discusses how one particular group of very talented athletes, led by arguably one of the greatest defensive backs in football history, helped him and the Florida State coaching staff modify old-school traditional practices to fit the highly-recruited new school athlete.

Jim Patterson

It was funny and tragic. I was coaching at South Georgia College. My assistant coach "Vince Gibbs" played here [FSU]. We had known each other since we were kids. Vince came here to Florida State, so we had a tie into FSU. If they had a kid that wasn't good enough and he couldn't play for them, then he would send them up to us. So one day I get a call from Vaughn Mancha. Vaughn was the line-coach here [FSU] and an All-American center at Alabama. Vaughn said "We got a kid down here named Jim Patterson. He is 6'4" and two-hundred pounds. Now, Jim must have weighed about 250 or something like that. He was a giant. In those days I started tackles that were only two hundred pounds. Anyway, he said, "We got this big guy who can run. He is an Indian from Hendersonville, North Carolina, where there are a lot of Cherokees. He said, "If you want him we can send him up there." So, I said, "Yeah send him here." So, he thumbs up here. The boys look at him and he is the best looking thing that has ever come through the door. Well, big Jim stuttered. He said. "Sssiiiiirrrrr, I, I'm Jjjjiimmmmm Paaatttteeerrrrson." Well you didn't want to laugh. You didn't dare. I said boy, this is going to be good. So we bring him in and we get him a room, get him a scholarship, get him in school and everything is going. I mean everything is going. We haven't started practice yet, but he is here.

Then one night I get a call from the police at about two-o'clock in the morning. They said, "Have you got a guy out there named Jim Patterson". "Yeah," I replied. They said, "You better come down here, we got him in jail." The officers there said that, "He tried to set the jail on fire, so we would let him out." Now, Jim was in a cell but still lit matches. So, anyway he did that, and I said, "Oh my goodness." So I called him in my office and I said, "Jim, you can't do that. In a small town like this you can't do anything like that." I said "If you got to fight or something like that, then go and do it in the next town. Around here, everybody knows everybody." Well, so what happens the next weekend? The sheriff from the next town calls me and tells me that he has gotten into a fight over there.

So anyway, he stayed out with the team and went through spring training. A lot of the kids didn't like him. Now we might have let him go, but back then we were desperate to have kids like that [physically gifted]. So, anyway, he stays there and we get through spring training with him and then we come back in the fall and I am having problems off and on with him. But, I had taken him to church several times and thought he was kind of getting sold. You know what, he even gave me his knife, HIS KNIFE. Now, I am not sure when this happened, but you need to understand that Jim always wanted my favor. So, I told him, I said, "Son, you have got to obey the coaches."

There was this graduate assistant and he had threatened to whip him about something and he wouldn't do it. So I said, "Jim you have got to do it. Even though he is younger and inexperienced, he is a coach. Jim, coaches are different than players. I gave him the talk. So, he gets to thinking and a couple of hours later he comes back, and says. "Coach, I got this idea." He said "When we are out there at practice today just to show

these guys that you are the boss, I want you to walk up to me and hit me as hard as you can right across the jaw. You hit me as hard as you can. I'll let you do it and I will show them that y'all are the bosses. Well needless to say I never slugged him, but if I had slugged him, he would have probably got back up and killed me.

He said, "Coach, I am really ccchannn [changing], in fact I want you to take my knife. Now this was a big knife. It has about 6-8 inch blade, the kind that he could have cut your throat with. Well, that was a pretty big thing, him giving up his knife, so maybe he wouldn't of killed nobody. So, anyway, his life went up and down. So then we get into the season and we play up there at ... West Georgia College, and when we leave there one of the players had had something stolen. And, I said, "Do you have any idea who did it?" And he said, "Yeah I think it is Jim Patterson." "Well, why?" "Well, his room is right above mine." Well he had the same number but just on a different floor and I believe he had caught him walking in to his room, claiming that "Oh, I thought that I was on the other floor." Well anyway, I had to get rid of him. So I told him a story. I learned not to do this. But you had to be careful of him because he might cut your throat. So I said, "Look Jim you are off the team because you stole that guys money but I called a friend of mine who will give you a scholarship at his school. And you see, I hadn't actually called yet. I did have a friend that was the Athletic Director at Southern Mississippi. I knew I could call him and tell him, since he was like me he was looking for good players and all. So, anyway I told him how to get there and who to look for. So he took off, since he had nothing, he just took off. Then I tried to call my friend and I couldn't get him. You know back then we didn't have all this email, we had a telephone call. And, in fact I think that

he left, he had changed jobs. He wasn't even there. Now, I have got this guy going down there, and there is nobody there but at least I got him out of my hair.

So anyway, about two-three days later he called me and said, "Coach, this is Jim wwwhhhyyyy did you do me this way?" I said, "What do you mean?" "There ain't no coach so and so down here, they don't even know who I am." So here I am stuck. . . . Anyway, so when that had happened I told him don't come back up here. So I told the police that they should be looking out for this guy because he might come up here and kill me. Anyway, the next time I heard of old Jim he had gone to Jacksonville State. Now he had gone to schools, I went to Southern Union School one time and they said, "Oh Jim was here, but we had to kick him off." At Jacksonville State "Yeah he was here, the big Indian fella, yeah he was here, but we had to kick him off." Now the last I heard he was at Jacksonville State up there in Alabama. I know the coach up there and he was telling me this story. He said "Oh yeah, we brought big Jim. We brought him in and got him a place to get his meals where he could work towards his meals. Then one day a waitress said something to him funny that he didn't like and he picked up a ketchup bottle and threw it at her as hard as he could. So, they had to get rid of him. Well anyway, when it boils down to it that was a scary experience."⁶⁰

Although the story has a humorous side, Bowden recalls that he had some sleepless nights following that phone call. What I did wasn't right. In fact, it was downright yellow. I had abandoned a player instead of trying to help him. I resolved not to do that again. To this day, I'll defend my players and support them unless circumstances prohibit me from doing so. I believe their parents would hope for as much from me.⁶¹ Whether or not this incident has played into future coaching decisions regarding athletes is difficult to say. However, coupled with his

religious beliefs, Bowden openly acknowledges that the biggest mistake that he has continued to make in coaching is “Waiting too long to kick a player off my team. My reluctance has nothing to do with winning games. I just hate to give up on a kid if there’s some way to help him improve his life.”⁶²

The Team of 1985

In 1976, Bowden headed south to a fledgling program that he had left only ten years prior. His journey took him to a Florida State football program that had only won four games over a three year span (1973-1975) resulting in a 4-29 overall record. Following a less than auspicious 5-6 start in 1976, Bowden now at the helm of what was once a sinking ship slowly raised the Florida State program into the higher echelons of college football. Amongst other accomplishments, FSU has amassed 11 Atlantic Coast Conference Championships, two National Championships title (1993, 1999), a 19-7-1 record in bowl appearances, and appeared an unprecedented 14 straight years with a top five finish or better in the rankings (1987-2000). Yet, how did it happen? Why did it happen? For almost nine years Florida State bounced on the edges of greatness, never quite being able to propel itself amidst the big league hitters of college football. Although the program was gaining national recognition, they never could quite recruit the elite class to rival the established programs.

Then, in 1985, “A particular class came through that team and program, probably taught all of us more about handling young people than any other” said long time assistant coach, Jim Gladden:

We learned that ... we had a whole bunch of great players that came through at that time and they taught us that you didn’t need to do it by the book to play great on Saturday.

They taught us that you could have fun in the locker room, you could laugh and have

music and that you could laugh out there on the practice field too, and still get it done. I think that that really changed all of our coaching philosophies.⁶³

Bowden said of the 85 team:

That was the class that started our ... dynasty. The NCAA, maybe 8 or 9 years ago, came out with maybe 7 or 8 teams that were dynasties, all through the history of football and they had Florida State listed as one of them. Now Alabama had two listed. They had two dynasties. Oklahoma had one dynasty. Florida State had one during those 14 years where we put all those good years together. That 85 team that we recruited didn't hit their peak till 1987. That is when it all started.⁶⁴

As a member of that 1985 recruiting class, Odell Haggins, a 10 year assistant coach at Florida State, reflects back on that team of the late 80's with a true sense of accomplishment:

What it was, we got a lot of great athletes. See back then, when we were just starting, Florida got all the great athletes. Then, we [FSU] started to get better athletes, but we never could get that one class with the abundance of great athletes. Then, we had that great class that came in 1985, Deion Sanders, myself, Sammie Smith and Eric Hayes. Now with that class we elevated the talent on this football team. It was hard. I will never forget the Florida game in 1985. They beat us 30-14. We stood up on that bench; myself and Eric Hayes and we said this is getting ready to change.

Well ok, if you get great athletes let them play football. Well, teach them what to do and how to do it and let them play. Now that's the thing about it. That class that we were in, we had a scout team defense that would stop our first team offense. We had freshman but we had enough talent that we could make mistakes and still beat our first team offense at times. Now that will tell you a lot about the talent. Deion was very

talented. When we walked on the field, I don't care what receiver, Michael Irvin, Andre Rison, Lawyer Tillman we didn't have to worry about it because one of their receivers was going to be shut down if he was on them. Now, you don't always have that luxury. We knew that Deion was going to shut them down. Deion would come and tell us "Man I am going to shut him down." Now when you have a leader that says that, man shoot, we are all playing hard. We were very confident in that. Now we weren't cocky we were just confident and you know what, credit to that coaching staff because they saw that and they went out and let us do that. Coach Bowden always told us, "We are the coaches and we decide on the discipline, but when you are on the football field it is your team."⁶⁵

Throughout Bowden's career, numerous people have influenced his coaching philosophies, methods, strategies and interactions with others. It is important to note that this section by no means is all inclusive. The assistant and head coaches, the teams, and the military leaders and generals that were mentioned are representatives of different groups of individuals that he has been influenced by over time. As Bowden says "The objective is to be one of the first to change, not one of the last."⁶⁶ "I try to stay on the front end of change. The first coach to use the wishbone attack won games. The last coach to use it got fired."⁶⁷

Influenced by EVENTS

Change is something you're thinking about. "Hey," you say, "we've been winning doing this one thing let's don't do anything to mess it up."

Those kinds of situations are still teaching me lessons about the need to adapt. It's a permanent process. When I stop learning and adjusting, nobody will have to tell me to retire. There ain't much wiggle room at our level. When we stop adapting, we'll be losing so that I'll want out.

Bobby Bowden⁶⁸

In this chapter, Bowden's career has been examined through the influence of others upon it, and the roles that people have played in shaping it. However, in life there are often events and

experience that have happened to us that also help to shape our outlooks on life⁶⁹ and, in this particular case, on coaching. It would be foolish to assume that individuals and experiences are mutually exclusive because as you will see within this section they are often codependent upon each other. At times the event that involves individuals may be the central source of learning as opposed to individuals. This section will examine such events that have impacted Bowden's coaching, because as he said:

Football has been a great teacher. It thrust me into leadership before I felt ready to lead. It proved a harsh taskmaster at times – testing my convictions, pushing my mistakes, and relentlessly pushing me beyond myself. But it also taught me more about leadership than I ever could have gleaned from books.⁷⁰

Therefore for the purpose of organization and explanation this section, “*Influenced by ... EVENTS,*” will present events and experiences that have impacted Bowden's life, in chronological order.

Before Coaching

As a child growing up in Alabama, Bowden openly admits that he was no saint. Throughout his career he has been known as “Saint Bobby.” In 1992, Ben Brown, a reporter and feature writer for many years, published a book titled, *Saint Bobby and Barbarians*, that documented the Florida State football season of 1991. However, Bowden is a lot less enamored by the appointed title, noting that:

I can tarnish that “Saint” stuff easily by going back to when I was a youngster. Then I was a bit of a little wise guy. I had a smart mouth too. It all had to do with me thinking I was pretty good with my fists; I got a big thrill out of fighting.⁷¹

His desire to physically fight as a child, and his general cockiness tended to land Bowden in numerous fights during his school days. Although small in stature Bowden was never one to back down, a philosophy had held him in good standing during his early years at Florida State and at West Virginia, where they were quite often seen as the underdog. In discussing the role of being an underdog and its use as a motivational strategy with his players Bowden recalls that it was during his childhood that he really learned to harness its powers:

Well that [being an underdog] has been probably true the whole time in my life. That is another thing that goes back to the environment that I was raised in. Number one I was not big when I young. When I went to high school I weighed about 113 pounds. When I went out for football, I only weighed about 116 pounds. By the time I was a senior I weighed about 155 pounds. Now that wasn't small back in those days. It wasn't big, but it wasn't small. I would always play with guys that were older than me. We would play football and baseball and they would let little Bobby play so that they could get enough people. ... I was always playing with bigger and older guys, so I would always have to plot ways to succeed, and tricks. Like you throw it to him and then he throws it back to me and I will throw it over the end. I was really kind of raised under that. That carried over into my coaching a long time. The better you get the less you have to do that. A lot of people ask me now, "Why don't we run trick plays like we used to?" Well, we are better now, we don't have to, because every time you try a trick play there is a chance of failure that can kick you in the rear end. So, I do it just for motivation and momentum. Hoping that sometimes we can get something going, I would just hope that something could get us going and fire us up. Sometimes you do and sometimes you don't.⁷²

As A Player

During his high school and college days, Bowden learned to play. As with many coaches their playing experiences provides some insight into the demands and pressures of the sport and the strategies and skills that an athlete needs to be able to perform and execute. Bowden, on more than one occasion, was quick to point out that “the best players don’t always make the best coaches.”⁷³ However, he did acknowledge that playing “experience helps you to learn the game”.⁷⁴ In discussing how his personal experiences as a player helped, he reminisced about how the game had changed since his time and how in his day you had to play both sides of the ball:

Well, back in my days you had to play both ways. You played offense and defense. So I think that gave me a pretty good background on both. Kids coming up nowadays might just be a punter, or a snapper, or might be just a wide out. Back in those days you played every position. I punted, I would run back punts, and ran safety on kick-offs. They get the ball, I am on defense, we get the ball, I would be the quarterback. So that did give me a good overall foundation of football on both sides of the ball. That was probably a big help.

As evidenced by this statement, Bowden believes that his playing experience has provided him with a solid and foundational set of knowledge that has afforded him content understanding when it came to coaching. However, in addition, positive and negative interactions with both the game and people has also provided Bowden with valuable coaching lessons that he still incorporates today. For example when it comes to his beliefs on disciplining and communicating with his athletes, he has noted that there is “one memory that stands out more clearly than all the others”:⁷⁵

One thing that affected my career, and I have been criticized a lot publicly for, is giving a kid a second chance, when a kid might have violated a rule here at the university or gotten arrested for some minor infraction. Well, the public opinion is to kick them off the team. Get rid of them. They embarrass us. To me that is the easiest thing to do. I usually try to save them if I can. Now, I can't forgive them over and over, but I can try to save them once and so, I do. I get criticized a lot for that. Just because I forgive them and I don't kick them off the team doesn't mean that I haven't done something else. One of the things that stimulated that was in my last year in college. We were playing my last football game. Well, last football game that I was in. Now, this is one of those things that I disagreed with my college coach over.

We were playing my last game, and we were getting ready to go out and play. We ... went out and warmed up, then came back inside, and then, the coach got up and pointed at 7 guys. About four of them were starters. He said "Y'all can't play here tonight. I am steaming because I found out Thursday that y'all went to the fair. I told y'all not to go to the fair and you went, so you can't play."

Now it's my last game and I wanted to win that dang thing. We get beat 14-0 and I will never forget it. See back in those days you didn't have but thirty guys on your team. So naturally, we wanted those guys to play. Although we didn't break the rules and they did, we wanted them to play. We hated to give those guys up. Well, ever since that time I have always said that I am not going to punish a boy if it punishes the team. Now here is a kid that violated a rule the other day, I am going to let him play anyway. But I am going to run him to death out there on that field and I am going to discipline him some other way. There is more than one way to skin a cat. ... But I don't want to punish the team.

Now that game has kind of influenced my thinking on that, and I'm sure not many people agree with me on that. But that was a case of learning from what that coach did. I am not going to do the same thing, because I didn't like that as a player.⁷⁶

As A Coach

In football, it seems like the road to becoming a head football coach almost always leads through the pathways of apprenticeship and maturation within a hierarchical structure of seniority. Many an aspiring coach has started on his journey to fame, fortune, and a head coaching position through a graduate assistant position or as a position coach. The profession of coaching is not serviced well by the formal highways of education. In discussing the role that his Bachelors degree in physical education and Master's degree in education aided him in his chosen profession, Bowden provided a less than stellar declaration of importance:

Formal education naturally helps you; you can't really get a job without it. ... I think the big thing you get out of an education, is if you learn English and history. You don't need the other stuff unless you are going into math or unless you are going into science, unless you are going into certain fields. I bet you now most coaches don't have a degree in physical education. Now when I came through school you, if you were wanted to be a coach then you had to get a degree in physical education. Now, there was a lot of challenge there. It wasn't simple. There is a lot of science. But again nowadays I don't know if any coaches have a degree in physical education. Mickey Andrews might because he is back from the old school. But again the degree will get you the job, and the degree educates you to where you can carry on a decent conversation. That's why I go back to English and speech and things like that, you know. ...

I do not remember studying something that taught me how to teach. I believe that people either have it or don't. You can find people with PhDs that can hardly communicate. They are so far above you or something. So I think a lot of that is instinct or is inherited somehow.⁷⁷

However, just like most head football coaches, Bowden also learned through the classroom of experience. As he weaved his coaching path through Alabama, Georgia, Florida and West Virginia, Bowden learned a great many lessons about coaching the hard way. Of his first experience as a head coach of a big football program at West Virginia, Bowden commented:

I have always felt sorry for the West Virginia fans who had to suffer while I was learning what to do, and what not to do as a head coach. Boy, did I make a bunch of dad-gum mistakes in the six years that I coached in Morgantown. I tried to rationalize and say it was because it was my first experience at being in charge of a major college program. The truth is I just wasn't as smart as I thought I was.⁷⁸

South Georgia College (1955-1959)

After two years as an assistant coach, Bowden left Birmingham for Douglas, Georgia and South Georgia College. At South Georgia College, Bowden learned how to coach and run an athletic program, primarily through trial and error:

When I went to South Georgia College, I had nobody to lean on. I didn't have the advantage in playing for a Bear Bryant, a Vince Dooley, or a Wally Butts. I played for a small college coach, who nobody knew. So I go to South Georgia and learn a lot again through the practical. Probably practical is the best way to learn by going out there and doing it and learning by mistakes—yeah learning by mistakes.⁷⁹

One such mistake came during a hot Georgia summer. Upon hearing some firecrackers go off outside of his and Ann's apartment in Powell Hall. Bowden rushed outside to see what was happening. He found an individual that had on more than one occasion been in trouble with the school. With only one suspect, Bowden drew the conclusion that he must be the culprit. Upon drawing such a conclusion, he took the young man to the Dean the following day to have him dismissed from school. However, in the mean time, one of Bowden's players stepped up in the kid's defense and claimed responsibility for the incident.⁸⁰ After that experience, Bowden recalled:

"I learned then never to accuse a young man of doing something wrong unless I see him do it. In that situation at South Georgia, I already had a prejudice against the young man in the first place and that controlled my sense of rationale—my good reasoning and my emotions. Since that day, I've tried to learn not to be prejudiced to people."⁸¹

Another invaluable lesson occurred during Bowden's inaugural 5-3-1 season at SGC. After successfully winning the first two games of the season, Bowden's team was getting ready to face Jones Junior College in Emmitsville, Mississippi:

I remember coaching the first game and won it, then played the second game and won it, I thought I was the answer to the coaching profession. You know, I thought I would coach the rest of my life and never lose a game. That's what I thought. I will probably never lose a game. I am so good, I am the answer to coaching, I have already won two games and I don't know if I will ever lose.

So anyway, we go over to Mississippi and play.... Now, that year they went on to win the Junior Bowl National Championship. They used to have a Junior Rose Bowl and they won it, they were the best junior college team in the country and I am playing them.

Well, they beat us so bad I think it was 62 –14. At the half they must have had us 28-0 and well back in those days that was a lot of scoring. Nowadays a lot of people do that. Anyway, in that second half we came out and maybe scored the first two times that we had the ball. But, anyway, we just couldn't stop them and they just kept scoring. When I came home, I was so embarrassed. I actually wondered if I should be in coaching. Maybe this ain't my profession after all. My Dad had a real estate business and wanted me to take over his business and I really questioned myself. Am I really doing the right thing, since I can't stand this losing? I was so embarrassed going out and getting beat like that. So I dwelled on that for several days then started preparing for the next game, and you win and then you finally get over it. But that was one of my first big learning experiences that told me this ain't going to be easy. That was the first thing I learned. I learned you are not going to win them all-forget it.⁸²

Apart from the embarrassment of the loss, Bowden also learned another important lesson from the Head Coach of Jones Junior College that week. However, this time it was a lesson linked to the notion of trust:

Back in those days you didn't have money to go recruit. You didn't go scout people because you just didn't have money. Well, we played a team over in Mississippi. So the guy that was coaching them—he was an old grizzly guy he had been there for years—calls me and he said, “We have got to play each other next week and we can't scout each other. Why don't you tell me what you do and I will tell you what I do?” Well, here is ol' Bobby 25-years old and I told him what we did and he told we what he did. But, it wasn't what he did. ... I learned that week that you better watch what you are telling people.⁸³

During his time at South Georgia College and at Howard College, Bowden learned some very important and valuable lessons about coaching, by doing things with a trial and error approach to learning. However, it wasn't until he reached the West Virginia campus in Morgantown that he realized he still had a lot to learn, especially about the fickleness of fans and the pressures of being the head man at the major college football level.

West Virginia (1965-1975)

During his time at West Virginia, Bowden learned numerous lesson about fans, friends, coaching, his family and about himself. However, during that six year period there is one game that has impacted his career more than any other game. During the research process Bowden brought it up in conversation on three separate occasions. To this day, Bowden still refers to the game between West Virginia and University of Pittsburgh [Pitt] as the darkest day of his coaching career:

In 1970, my first year as the head football coach at West Virginia, we played Pitt. Now Pitt up there is a big rivalry. It is like Georgia vs. Georgia Tech and Florida vs. Florida State, it's big. Well, we had Pitt 35-8 at the half like you were going to kill them. A lot of Pitt people had already left the stadium they were so disappointed, you know. Everything we did turned into a touchdown.

So you go in at half time and everybody is happy and everything is good. So you ain't going to change anything, because everything is good, you know. Now, they take the approach that West Virginia is going to kill us. We have got to stop the clock and slow this game down. So they went into a really tight formation. ... Now, they got into this powerful formation and we just couldn't stop them. Now there were about six or seven times in that game that they had fourth and one, were you would normally punt, but

they were so far behind that they would go for it. Well they made it every time. They just kept going and kept going and eventually they ended up beating us 36-35.

The big thing I learned from that game was that I would never sit on the ball again. You know I get accused of running up the score all the time, nowadays. But, when you get beat 36-35 after being up 35-8 you realize that people can catch you. That was when the criticism really came. I received criticism from the papers, the fans, there were people trying to knock down the door, threatening your life and all that stuff. That was a bad time.

Now this will also show you how dumb some of those writers are. The next year we played them at West Virginia and we won. Well the next year we had to go back to Pitt. Now here I am back at the scene of the crime, were they tried to lynch me, kill me, shoot me, fire me, and get rid of me. We beat them pretty good. Well I say pretty, we might of beaten them 36-12⁸⁴ or something like that. Now there was one time in there, we were backed up down to about our own 20. I called for a reverse pass and we hit it for about 70-yards. The next day, one of the writers said, “Golly don’t you think that was crazy running that reverse pass. What if it had failed?” I said “Man, did you forget the last time we were up here, when I went really conservative and I was running the ball, so that we could run the clock out and we got beat? Have you forgotten that?” So, anyway that was a lesson I learned. People still get on me now about running up scores. I say “man I am not going to sit on that ball anymore.”⁸⁵

Florida State (1976-Present)

Over his 27 year career, Bowden’s Florida State teams have played 340 games, with an overall record of 269-67-4. Throughout these games there have been dramatic wins,

heartbreaking losses, and games that have had been more meaningful compared to others. The following two games, although with different outcomes on the score sheet both propelled the Florida State program toward the goal of being the best team in the country.

OKLAHOMA (Saturday 25, September, 1976)

In 1976, following two road losses,⁸⁶ Bowden's Seminoles had to travel to Norman, Oklahoma. As if the Miami loss, one week earlier, was not enough the press was giving the first year head coach no chance, with headlines reading *It's no joke: Seminoles are going into Norman,*⁸⁷ and *FSU: Mission Impossible – Oklahoma by 5 or 6 – TDs.*⁸⁸ In the Florida Flambeau, Bowden commented on the game:

We have some talent ... s-o-m-e talent...but most of it is in freshmen. And who wants to send freshmen to play Oklahoma?" ... "There are some changes this week, but if we go with a bunch of freshmen and sophomores just to give them experience . . . that's when we'll really take some lickings."⁸⁹

After all, the mission did look darn near impossible:

“We aren't kidding ourselves about this one,” said FSU Coach Bobby Bowden earlier in the week, “We know we have our work cut out for us.” Currently ranked 4th in the country, Oklahoma had won back-to-back national championships. In three-plus seasons under the coaching of Barry Switzer, the Sooners had lost ONCE (to Kansas 23-3 last year) and the record during Switzer's time, including this year's 2-0, is 34-1-1.

In addition to the two losses and the up coming Oklahoma Sooners, Bowden and his coaching staff decided to shake up the line up and bench six upper classmen who were still caught in the ruts of seasons past. Due to the calculated changes FSU put six true freshmen in starting positions and a true freshman kicker. The only, “Question was if Miami had won 47-0, what

would Oklahoma – on its home field in Norman – elect to make the score?”⁹⁰ By the time the final whistle blew that Saturday, Oklahoma had indeed won, but not by the score that many experts and journalists had predicted. In fact, FSU had only lost by a score of 24-9. In discussing the game in his autobiography Bowden talks about why this game was so important to the program.

We had some great looking players physically, but the thing I didn't take into account was their mental condition. After that Miami game, I figured out that the players didn't believe they could win. And, folks, I don't care how big, or strong, or fast, or whatever else an athlete is, if a man doesn't think he can win, he is not going to win.

Well, we had a bunch of guys living up to their expectations, and those expectations weren't very high.... So, after that Miami embarrassment, I sat down with our coaches the very next morning and said, “When you grade the film, I want every boy you see on that film that looked like he didn't think he could win put on the bench. Let's put freshmen in their place. It don't look like we're gonna win any games anyway, so let's teach them younger players how to play, and build on that. At least those freshman don't know how to lose yet. Those other guys sure do.”

We ended up putting six true freshmen in the lineup. These were guys who were in high school four months earlier. ... Oklahoma ended up winning 24-9.⁹¹

NEBRASKA (Saturday, October, 4, 1980)

The upset bug in college football has missed a few of the traditional major powers in the opening month of the season. But, does that mean balance has finally come to the major powers. ... Already this season, Stanford knocked off Oklahoma, Florida State defeated Nebraska, UCLA shut out Ohio State and South Carolina upended Michigan. What made those upsets all the more shocking was the fact the favored teams all were defeated at home.

Minikoff⁹²

Although, classified an upset by the press in 1980, Florida State's 18 – 14 win in Lincoln, Nebraska over the favored Nebraska Cornhuskers provided a growing program with the incentive it needed to become the college power that it is today. A crowd of 76,152 witnessed the upstart Seminoles win one of the biggest games in school history and announce to the college football fraternity that they had arrived. The Northern Illinois coach in 1980, Bill Mallory, noted that "Florida State, Miami, South Carolina, are building strong programs and are becoming factors."⁹³ When examining the record books, the game between Florida State and Nebraska that Saturday reads just like any other, a win to Florida State. However, the impact it had on a growing Florida State program is immeasurable, as the following passages from Coach Gladden and Coach Bowden testify:

Well it was just so exciting, it was exciting. I mean we took a sow's ear and made it into a silk purse. ...Just the excitement of where we took this program to, and how it rose and the enthusiasm and the fan following and the adulation. The excitement and the escalation of success in the program was wonderful. Then of course, there were the big games like beating Nebraska in Nebraska in 1980 for the first time. They were number three in the country and we had just lost the week before, on a field goal. ... After being down that week and losing to Miami, then coming back and winning at Nebraska, it was those kinds of feelings that you cannot duplicate – Assistant Coach Jim Gladden.⁹⁴

Well there have been a lot of happy moments here at Florida State, but there have been some major ones. I think probably the first major one was when we beat Nebraska, in 1980, up in Nebraska. We had to play them four years in a row, four times up there with no return game. We won two out of the four though. We were probably one of only a few

teams in the country that have a winning record against Nebraska. ... Anyway, we played them in 1980 and won. They were number three in the country I believe and we go up there and get behind 14-0 in the first quarter, then 14-3 at the half and then we come out in the second half and beat them. We ended up beating them, 18-14. Now they did end up on our three yard line at the end of the game, but fumbled. That was a game that was one of the most exciting and I think it was the game that put Florida State on the map. There were not many people that had not heard of Florida State and then we go and beat Nebraska up there. That was kind of a big feat. That's one of the great moments right there – Head Coach Bobby Bowden.⁹⁵

Riding the Media Rollercoaster in 1994

Florida State won the 1993 national championship, but because of unsavory agents, rule-breaking players and its own lack of vigilance, it ended up a loser.

THE MOST brazen episode was a midseason, two-handed, shelf-clearing, 90-minute shopping spree by members of the Florida State team that would go on to win college football's national championship. Running shoes galore. Team jackets of all colors. Dozens of hats, T-shirts, shorts and gloves. Winter coats that the players could wear to South Bend for the big game against the Fighting Irish. Some \$6000 worth of merchandise in all, armloads and armloads, large cartons crammed full, every item purchased on the credit card of Raul Bey, a Las Vegas businessman who was in a loose partnership with a street agent named Nate Cebrun.

Sports Illustrated⁹⁶

During the whole research process and the investigation into the major events that helped shape coach Bowden's career, it is fascinating to note that Florida State's National Championship seasons of 1993 and 1999 were never really discussed. Now this is not to say that winning a National Championship did not significantly impact a Florida State Program and its reputation. However, in 1994, not long after Florida State had beaten a previously undefeated University of Nebraska side in the New Year's day Orange Bowl, the Florida State program was

again the center of attention in the media. As highlighted in the extract from Sports Illustrated, *ANATOMY OF A SCANDAL* article⁹⁷, the Florida State football program was under scrutiny and an NCAA investigation for rules violations, based on player interactions with agents and the receipt of free merchandise. With the increasing scrutiny, the normally accommodating Bowden's interactions with the press changed.

Since the program was tried and scrutinized by the media, what better way to present the impact of the "footlocker scandal" on Bowden and the FSU football team than through the associated press? Therefore, extracts taken from Bob Harig's reports in the St Petersburg times, that examine and describe the events that summer, are presented.

*BOWDEN, FSU DENY*⁹⁸

Saying Sports Illustrated has "insulted my integrity and the integrity of our University," Florida State football Coach Bobby Bowden on Monday released a statement saying he declined the magazines request for a second interview and reiterated that he was unaware of possible NCAA violations in his program.

The magazine attempted late last week to get another interview with Bowden, who – in an unusual move for him – declined.

"I have run a program at Florida State that has been very open to the media for 18 years, and I have always considered myself to be extremely open to the media," Bowden said in the statement. However, Doug Looney has made a show in the Florida media of his impression that I have lied to him. He has insulted my integrity and the integrity of our university. I have already interviewed with Sports Illustrated and was very clear in answering their allegations.

“With continuing investigations by an independent law firm, I do not feel it is appropriate to comment any further on this matter. But let me be clear, I stand firm in my feeling that no one within our administration or coaching staff was aware of any violations, and had we been, we would have self reported to the ACC and NCAA.”

BOBBY BOWDEN'S BUMMER OF A SUMMER⁹⁹

The past few months have been worse for Bowden, who's Florida State Program has been troubled by reports that several players accepted money and gifts from agents, in violation of NCAA rules.

Bowden had been interrupted by a television news reporter in a helicopter dropping onto a golf course; he's had reporters knock on his hotel room door late at night, hoping to interview him. One newspaper, in a public records request allowed by state law, asked to see all of Bowden's personal correspondence for a two-month period this year.

But perhaps most stinging of all is what he perceives to be a slap at his integrity by media members, including Sports Illustrated, who maintain that Bowden knew—or should have known—about the indiscretions that took place in program.

“To me, it's been pushed too far. I resent it,” Bowden said last week. “I've never been through anything like this in my life. I'm not tormented, but it's a nuisance. I've never had anybody check my mail or want to see my contract. I had no idea it would turn into what it's turned into.”

When you have to come off vacation so you can make a copy of all the mail you've had for the last two months, that very distressing. It's very aggravating.”

... Bowden has had a tough summer. He had to switch from celebrating FSU's first national championship after an 18-16 victory over Nebraska in the Orange Bowl on Jan, 1 to defending himself, his coaching staff and his program.

The Media Attention Continues

Since 1994 and the 'Footlocker' scandal, many of the events that have impacted Bowden's coaching career have centered not on a successful Florida State's teams on-the-field performances, but rather on incidents and events that have occurred off of it. Even after an undefeated season in 1999 and a National Championship, Bowden had to answer questions about discipline and his ability to control his program. One newspaper article titled *Bowden refusing to slow for speedbumps*,¹⁰⁰ outlined several of the major allegations that Bowden has had to address in 2003, including the Adrian McPherson Affair¹⁰¹, and his oldest son's business problems linked to legal allegations of fraud.¹⁰²

In addition, his discipline policy of giving second chances has come under increasing pressure regarding its appropriateness and accountability. Two very public incidents that occurred in 1999 and 2000 are excellent examples. In both cases star players were perceived to have received preferential treatment on the eve of big games and were give second chances as per policy. For example,

All-American wide receiver Peter Warrick wasn't booted from the team after a 1999 arrest for receiving "deeply discounted" merchandise. ... Sebastian Janikowski, the Polish party-hearty placekicker, wasn't sent home when ignoring curfew before the 2000 Sugar

Bowl. Warrick got a two game suspension. Janikowski ran sprints until he dropped or barfed—which ever came first.¹⁰³

However nothing affected his relationship with the media and the morale of the program more than a very unfortunate incident that occurred during conditioning drills in February, 2001. On this day a very promising and talented linebacker, Devaughn Darling keeled over, passed out, and subsequently died following a team sanctioned workout. In commenting on the unfortunate events of 2001, Bowden, noted:

That was bad. That was tough on all of us. But, you know what was really tough about that was that our kids saw him die. They were all working together and then he drops dead. So they saw it. We couldn't bring him back. Now those kids haven't really seen death before. That was tough. It was tough on our kids, tough on our coaches, tough on everybody.¹⁰⁴

How these events affected Bowden's coaching routines is difficult to articulate. However, former Associate Head Coach, Jim Gladden, who was present when the 18 year old Darling passed away, believes:

You know a lot of that [media criticism] started when we had the death of Devaughn Darling back in the spring of 2001. That opened up a Pandora's box of critiquing by the media. Then, you have a very average year the next year and the offense is terrible, and they are looking at Jeff Bowden, the Offensive coordinator. I think that he received a lot of undue criticism on that. You know he has bristled a little bit more because that's natural. Here is someone criticizing his son. Coach has probably reacted more humanly than ever before. I have always felt that one of his strong suits is being able to handle the

press and disarm them with their critical remarks and hard questions. And, he has done that through, humility.¹⁰⁵

In addition, Monk Bonosorte, a former Florida State All-American stated:

I think that two or three years ago when you are 10-2 and 11-1 every year and then you struggle to win eight games, you start to garner unnecessary criticism from people. ... He got some very harsh criticism and you know that affected, for a while, the way he handled the media and certain situations. He kind of pulled away and that wasn't Bobby. ... Then, having a few down years has made it a little harder on him. Things are a little different. Instead of rebuilding like some programs, he was always reloading, and I think that has affected him a little bit.

I also think the whole Devaugh Darling thing affected him, I think that really affected Bobby's coaching philosophy, by wondering if he could have done anything differently. Although I think there was nothing that they could have done differently it still must have had an affect on him, knowing the way he cares about each athlete. Its like it was one of his kids that died under his supervision. It had to weigh very heavily on him. Again, when he brings kids in, he tells the parents that he is going to help the kid and help make him successful.¹⁰⁶

Throughout Bowden's career, events and individuals have been significant in shaping his career decisions and coaching practices. Bowden's experiences with events and other coaches and leaders continue to be a constant source of knowledge, wisdom and information. Although this chapter has discussed and described events and individuals as separate entities, it is interesting to note that the sources of experiences within the two main categories have had varying influences and have changed with time, and that the described events were often

centered on individuals. However, individuals who influenced Bowden's career early in its development, such as Kenny Morgan and Bear Bryant, his mentors, have had less of an informing role than his athletes more recently. This is not to say that these individuals do not continually play an integral role in his learning but more that they are less influential than the players and athletes as Bowden has matured and the role of college athletics has evolved.

¹ Cited in Bowden, and Brown (1992, p. 105)

² Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

³ DeMarco & McCullick (1997)

⁴ Abraham and Collins (1998, p. 59)

⁵ See, DeMarco & McCullick (1997); Gould, Giannini, Krane, & Hodge, (1990); and Salmela, (1996)

⁶ Cushion (2002)

⁷ Douge & Hastie (1993, p. 14)

⁸ Bowden, Bowden, Bowden Family et al. (1996, p. 180)

⁹ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 27)

¹⁰ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)

¹¹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

¹² Bowden and Smith (1994, pp. 125-126)

¹³ University of West Virginia (1975, p. 25) *Football Media Guide*. Morganton, WV: WVU Athletic Department.

¹⁴ Ellis (Sat, Nov, 15, 2003)

¹⁵ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 147)

¹⁶ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

¹⁷ Interview with Author (April 6, 2004)

¹⁸ Bynum (1980, pp. 71-79)

¹⁹ Bynum (1980)

²⁰ Bowden and Smith (1994)

²¹ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 78)

²² Gene Stallings went on to become the Alabama Head coach in the 1980's, winning two National Championships with the Crimson tide.

²³ Bynum (1980, p. 84)

²⁴ Fennelly (2002)

²⁵ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 81)

²⁶ "Bryant would tell his boys to be themselves. He told Bowden that, too. Not everyone listened. Some of them imitated Bryant, and lost trying to do so. Bowden listened. He was himself. He could inspire excellence, if not fear" (Fennelly, 2002)

²⁷ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

²⁸ Landman (2001)

²⁹ Bynum (1980, pp. 23-24)

³⁰ Pi Kappa Alpha Educational Foundation retrieved from: <http://www.pikes.org/wbowd.html> 11/17/2003.

³¹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

³² Bynum (1980, p. 50)

³³ Beat Gordon Military Academy 52-20

³⁴ Lost 21-14 to McNeese State.

³⁵ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)

³⁶ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 28)

³⁷ Bynum (1980)

³⁸ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

³⁹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

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- ⁴⁰ Mark Richt at the University of Georgia; Chuck Amato at North Carolina State; Tommy Bowden at Clemson University.
- ⁴¹ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 62)
- ⁴² Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
- ⁴³ Bynum (1980, p. 80)
- ⁴⁴ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
- ⁴⁵ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
- ⁴⁶ Interview with Author (March 24, 2004)
- ⁴⁷ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁴⁸ "In preparing for battle I have always found that plans are useless, but planning is indispensable," Dwight D. Eisenhower
- ⁴⁹ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
- ⁵⁰ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁵¹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
- ⁵² Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
- ⁵³ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
- ⁵⁴ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
- ⁵⁵ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
- ⁵⁶ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁵⁷ Interview with Author (March 23, 2004)
- ⁵⁸ The full story is told in the introduction to Chapter 6.
- ⁵⁹ Interview with Author (Spring, 2001)
- ⁶⁰ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)
- ⁶¹ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 57)
- ⁶² Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 129)
- ⁶³ Interview with Author (04 08, 2004)
- ⁶⁴ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
- ⁶⁵ Interview with Author (04 07, 2004)
- ⁶⁶ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 42)
- ⁶⁷ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 40)
- ⁶⁸ Bowden and Smith (1986, p. 213)
- ⁶⁹ Discussed in Chapter 6
- ⁷⁰ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. VII)
- ⁷¹ Brown (1992, p. 198)
- ⁷² Interview with Author (March 23, 2004)
- ⁷³ Interview with Author (Nov 10, 2003)
- ⁷⁴ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
- ⁷⁵ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 134); Supported by Ellis (2003)
- ⁷⁶ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
- ⁷⁷ Interview with Author (February 17, 2004)
- ⁷⁸ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 82)
- ⁷⁹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
- ⁸⁰ Story re-told based on the accounts in (Bynum, 1980)
- ⁸¹ Bowden, Bowden, Bowden Family et al. (1996, p.70)
- ⁸² Story compiled from two separate interviews with Author (Feb 17, 2004; April 08, 2004)
- ⁸³ interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
- ⁸⁴ The final score was actually 38-20
- ⁸⁵ Story compiled from several interviews with Author (Feb 17, 2004; March 03, 2004)
- ⁸⁶ Memphis State (21-12) and Miami (47-0).
- ⁸⁷ Meshburn (1976)
- ⁸⁸ McGrotha (1976)
- ⁸⁹ Meshburn (1976)
- ⁹⁰ McGrotha (1987, p. 134)
- ⁹¹ Bowden and Smith (1994, pp. 100-101)

⁹² Minkoff (1980)

⁹³ Minkoff (1980)

⁹⁴ Interview with Author (April 8, 2004)

⁹⁵ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

⁹⁶ Sports Illustrated (1994, p. 18)

⁹⁷ Sonja and Swift (1994)

⁹⁸ Harig (1994, May 31)

⁹⁹ Harig (1994, June 21)

¹⁰⁰ Mizell (2003, April 11)

¹⁰¹ McPherson started for games as Quarterback, winning three, however behind the scenes there were far more serious allegations including fraud and the eventual legal charges of gambling – Mizell (April 11, 2003)

¹⁰² Coach Bowden's oldest son, Stave Bowden, pleaded guilty to fraud, due to swindling \$10 million from investors, which included \$1.6 from his father. His was final sentenced to six months in home detentions and one year on probation –“Bobby Bowden's oldest son” (2003, October 17).

¹⁰³ Wojciechowski, (2003, p. 67)

¹⁰⁴ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

¹⁰⁵ Interview with Author (April 8, 2004)

¹⁰⁶ Interview with Author (March 4, 2004)

CHAPTER 6

LEARNING LIFE'S LESSONS

*When things go wrong as they sometimes will,
 When the road you're trudging seems all up hill,
 When the funds are low and the debts are high
 And you want to smile, but you have to sigh,
 When woe is pressing you down a bit,
 Rest, if you must, but don't quit.*

*Life is queer with its twists and turns,
 As everyone of us sometimes learns,
 And many a failure turns about
 When he might have won had he stuck it out;
 Don't give up through the pace seems slow
 You may success with another blow.*

*Success is failure turned inside out
 The silver tint of clouds of doubt
 And you can never tell how close you are,
 It may be near when it seems so far,
 So stick to the fight when you're hardest hit
 It's when things seem worst that you must not quit.*

Author Unknown¹

Through the formal paths of education, I have traveled several avenues that have led to academic pathways of knowledge. In doing so I have constantly pondered and discussed theories of teaching and coaching and possible ways to improve not only myself, but also the understanding and insights into teaching my students. This line of inquiry had been, among other aspirations, the hidden motive behind my quest for knowledge and entry into the doctoral program at the University of Georgia. Most of my life had been spent on and around the playing fields of sport. I played at a competitive level in both soccer and rugby and have always been one of those athletes that could excel in any sport. Yet the level of competition and playing time had

decreased tangentially with my quest for understanding of the teaching and coaching process through formal education. However, one of the most valuable experiences and most important educational moments came during my time as the Western Carolina Head Rugby Coach from 1997-2000.

The first year as the WCU 'Rugby Coach' was initially framed by several life changing experiences. The summer prior to that first season, I had not only moved from the United Kingdom to the USA, but I had also married and started a Masters program in Physical Education—three events that have subsequently provided numerous sources of experience, pain, and knowledge. The rugby team at WCU had originally been founded in 1979, but the team's record in collegiate competition was less than stellar. In the two years prior to me joining the team, they had gone a perfect 0-22. It was during that first fall that I started to experience some of the subtle nuances and dynamics that coaching entails. However as the semester progressed so did the team. The following spring we won our first game and by the spring of the second year we had posted a winning record.

As the team grew and the players and coaches negotiated their particular roles within the sporting structure, we started to develop and learn together. A sense of belief had started to infiltrate the players by the time my third year and final semester had rolled around. The games came and went quickly as did the results. Before we knew it the team had qualified as the Division II North Carolina Champions for the South Championships—the first time the team had made the play-offs.

Both the team and I were excited and yet, although they did not show it, nervous. As the championship drew closer we completed all the paper work, reserved hotel rooms, talked the

university into a van, practiced and prepared as well as I knew how. The afternoon of April 2, 1999 we took the field against Auburn, the defending Division II champions.

This became apparent as Auburn quickly took advantage of our mistakes and lack of tournament experience, as they rapidly took the lead 14 – 0. We looked nervous and less than comfortable with the situation. However, after this initial 15-minute period, we slowly imposed ourselves on the game. At half time, we were only down by 7 (21-14). Yet the second half of the game started much like the beginning of the first. Auburn posted three more scores on the board. With 10-minutes remaining, we had tried our hardest and competed for every possession, yet Auburn was just too strong.

Early in the week, Brian, a prop,² and second year team member, had severely twisted his ankle. It was amazing that he had been able to play in the game, let alone play as well as he did. For most of the second half, I had tried to make changes to the team for tactical and fatigue reasons. However with every passing tick of the referees watch, the game was slipping further and further away. I had started to put as many players into the game as I could. I had one substitution left and it was Brian that I chose to take out. Little did I know then that this one insignificant decision in a game that we were soon to lose, would have such an impact on my life and career as it has, and that this game became not a loss but the biggest win that anyone could ever want or need.

I called over Jeff, a young freshman that over the next few years would, himself, become an influential member of the team. I gave him some basic technical and safety pointers that were important for him to remember, but the most important thing that I told him was to have fun and enjoy it. I signaled to the assistant referee that I wished to make another substitution at the next available dead ball, and we waited. Several minutes later the ball was whistled dead and the

referee was signaled that I wanted to make a change. I called out Brian's name and expected him, much like every other player had ever done to leave the field and sit with the small but vocal crowd, primarily consisting of parents and girlfriends.

As Brian looked up he was both smiling and crying. As he ambled from the field he headed straight at me. With each step, the tears flowed faster and the smile flattened. By the time he reached me, the trails of tears had created a meandering stream of water distinguishable and bounded by the face pack of mud that the game had provided. His arms flung up and in one motion. It was at this point that he gave me a hug like there was no tomorrow. I was not surprised with Brian's reaction. He was a player that gave all and left all on the field both during practice and on game day. He played the game as it is supposed to be played, with passion, honesty and above all, heart. No, I was not surprised with his reaction. I was surprised by his words. As his grip grew tighter, he mumbled "Thanks for the memories and the great season—I am going to miss you," quickly followed by a "sorry we didn't win it for you." As he looked up, it was as much as I could do to console him and walk him back towards his parents. It was at this point that I smiled and realized that we had already won. Moments later the final whistled blew and the winners were crowned. In the record books of south rugby you will see the result Auburn 38 WCU 27. However a record book can never show what a season means for the team.

Over the next day or two, each and every player had made a point to thank me in their own unique way for the season and the memories that we shared. Some told stories of victories, others of heroic acts, some talked of next year, and others the parties. However, all talked of fun, enjoyment and team. The night before we left to return home, I found myself in the lobby of the hotel, dreaming of what could have been and thinking about all the things I could have done differently. Yet, through it all I started to realize that the games and sports we play mean nothing

if all you do is win or lose. Without the experiences and memories, the record books have no significance. The sport of rugby over those three years had enabled me to meet new friends, survive school, complete my masters degree, but most of all learn a valuable lesson in my life and career—the lesson being that a coach who is more than just a teacher, or bearer of knowledge, if you will—he or she is a role model, a parent, a mentor, and a friend. From that weekend on, I never looked at sport the same way again. Long gone were my days as a player, I wanted to be that teacher/coach, that helps players and students enjoy the memories and experiences that only sport can give. That weekend was a moment in my life that I will always remember—a moment that has and will continue to shape my life in academics and sport, for it was there that I learned that sport is not only winning and losing, it is about growth.

For months and even years during this research process, people have asked, “Why do you want to study the career history of this man?” Moreover, for many months my response had been calculated and laden with theory and explanations of grandeur, garbled in the academic and cultural language of qualitative research. Yet, it was more than an academic journey into the profession of coaching and teaching. Through my own experiences, I started to understand the very personal motivations and reasons behind my initial curiosity. If in three years of coaching, this one moment, spurred by one sentence by one player, had influenced my coaching and teaching as much as it has, making it is hard for me to imagine individuals that have made the coaching profession a career. For legendary coaches who have shaped the sporting realms, what epiphanies did they experience that helped mold them into successful coaches? What lessons did they learn? How did they learn them? When in their careers did they learn them? And, notably, as discusses in chapter five, whom did they learn them from?

In the remaining chapter, at least for one legendary coach, the epiphanies and critical events that have occurred inside and outside of sport, and across a lifetime from boyhood to a maturing adult for Coach Bowden will be presented. In chapter five, themed topics were used to highlight sources of knowledge and learning. In this chapter eight short stories will be told in chronological order. Each story represents an event or an experience that forced Bowden to evaluate his life. From chapter one through to chapter five, Bowden's life has been discussed through sections and chapters that together provided insights into Coach Bobby Bowden. His interest in football and the military, his firm belief in loyalty, his notion of character, his awareness and understanding of cultural differences, are sources of knowledge informed through his learned experience over time and through constant (re-)evaluation of their significance.

Football Fields

On October 29, 1929, the New York Stock Exchange crashed for a third straight day with stock prices losing 10 – 15 billion dollars in value.³ Termed “Black Tuesday” this historical date has symbolized the start of the Great Depression of the 1930s. Just nine days later in the industrial steel milling town of Birmingham, Alabama, a child by the name of Robert Clerkler Bowden was born. From 1929 until 1934 the young Bowden lived amongst the shadows of Woodlawn High School's football stadium and the east end zone goalposts in a 3-bedroom white frame house with his mother and father, sister and granddaddy.⁴ Although young and unable to visually watch the footballing events due to a plant-engulfed fence which separated his backyard from the field, Coach Bowden can still remember how he would listen to the players “kicking and playing and playing and kicking,”⁵ usually accompanied in the fall months by the Woodlawn band. In addition to the tones of high school sport, the roof of the family garage often provided a private ‘box’ where, carried by his father, he could witness the sport in which he has

subsequently invested much of his life. Looking back on those early childhood memories, Bowden recalled,

“When they were passing and punting, running plays and such, I really became infatuated with what I was seeing out on the playing field. I didn’t have the foggiest idea of what was going on, but, gee whiz, it sure looked exciting. For there was something about the rich sounds I kept hearing every afternoon—the thump of shoulder pads crashing together, the bark of the head coach, and the blare of the colonel’s fight song being pounded out by the marching band. I could hardly wait to be a part of it all.”⁶

In 1934, amidst the depression, the young Bowden and his family moved to the Birmingham suburb of East Lake, an area that housed Berry Field, the home of the Howard College Bulldogs⁷ – a field that was only half a block away. Due to the proximity Bowden continued his footballing observations as he would often “walk over there and watch them practice.”⁸ Coach Bowden said of this time in his life, “When I was there I didn’t know what was happening at the time but now I can see how football got in there,”⁹ it “sorta became ingrained into my lifestyle.”¹⁰ “All I knew was that my love for the game was growing and growing. It was becoming part of my life.... I thought all kids had the same thing.”¹¹

Football Fever and the German Outbreak

“I never knew my grandmother. She died before I was born, so he was by himself, and lived by himself,”¹² remembers Bowden as he talks about his grandfather. “During the depression he lost his job and every penny that he had. He went to the bank to get his money out and there was nothing. It had gone. So he moved in with us. He stayed with us until I was 15, when he died.”¹³ As he further examined his childhood, Bowden remembered how his granddad was always listening to the radio, “everyday there was nothing he could do, he was probably

around 70 years of age, so he would always listen to the radio.”¹⁴ His granddad was of German descent on his mother’s side, so when the German armies, under the leadership of Adolf Hitler, invaded Poland on September 1, 1939, it was of personal significance to the Bowden household:

I heard what was happening, Edward R. Murrow and such were all broadcasting about the war on the radio. So it had a big impact on our lives. He [granddad] would just sit there by the radio and listen to it all, for most of the day. So I grew up in that atmosphere.¹⁵

The Second World War further escalated on December 7, 1941 with the bombing of Pearl Harbor and the subsequent declaration of war on Japan by America and Britain two days later. For the average family living in the U.S., the American airwaves were a constant insight into a world at war.¹⁶ This became even more significant in the life of Coach Bobby Bowden in 1943, where like his granddad during the depression, the radio would be become what he could do:

One afternoon I came home from playing YMCA basketball, and my knees were sore. Man, they were killing me. They had been hurting me for days. I hadn’t been sleeping much at night because of the pain. I wasn’t very old, but I was old enough to know that something wasn’t right. My knees had never bothered me before. When you are young and full of vinegar and your joints have always worked, you just take them for granted they always will. Well, mine weren’t working, and I was scared.

And this particular day they were worse. I could barely make it up the porch steps. My feet and ankles were swollen too. Momma really got worried. So, she took me to see Dr. Mahaffey. Doc Mahaffey was a general practitioner. Back then that was all we had. In the early 1940’s they didn’t have specialists all over the place. Most families just

depended on their family doctor. And if you couldn't get to his office, then they came to your house.

Anyway Momma took me to his office. Since we didn't have a car, we had to walk, and with my knees hurting and my feet and ankles swollen, it wasn't the most pleasant walk I ever took. Doc Mahaffey checked me over. It seemed like it lasted for ever. And when it was over he told Mother, "Mrs. Bowden, your son had rheumatic fever. That's why his joints are so sore. I can hear a heart murmur and I'm afraid the fever will do permanent damage to his heart. This disease is very serious."

Momma started crying. I didn't feel so hot either.

The doctor ordered me to bed, and I mean in bed flat on my back, for six months. I wasn't allowed to get up for nothing—not to eat, not to go to the bathroom, not to stretch my aching back. Nothing. I still remember having to use a dad-gum bed-pan. Ugh! That was humiliating.¹⁷

With the advancement of medicine and technology, rheumatic fever is all but non-existent today's society, a point Bowden was quick to make, "Nowadays that would have been nothing. But back then in the early forties we didn't have all that stuff that they have now, they were just getting in penicillin back then."¹⁸ He went on to say, "I remember that when I first got rheumatic fever he put me in bed, one day I started to sit-up he said, "No, no, no get back".¹⁹ Now today they would laugh at those doctors. I don't hear of Rheumatic fever any more. So that year was the most informative of my life. I had so much time to sit and read and think and listen to the radio. We didn't have television, the war was going on and it shaped my life a lot."²⁰ He continued:

I really had nothing to do so I listened to the radio. Well when my mother did bring me toys it would be tanks, guns, soldiers, and things like that, so I think that is where my military background became interesting during the war and in particular my interest in Germany because my granddaddy was German and he knew people really on both sides. The fear that we had in those days, that they might come over here and get us, you know. So anyway, growing up I began to learn about all that. Then I began to read about the Generals. McArthur who I guess was one of my earliest favorite generals at that time. Then of course I had a really big interest in the civil war, Robert E Lee, Stonewall Jackson, all those guys and then Ulysses S. Grant. Then of course I learned about Rommel, the great German General and then the invasion. I can remember the morning of the invasion, I can remember the morning they invaded Normandy. I got some paint and a paint brush and painted June the 6th 1944 on my wall.²¹

Although the United States were firmly entrenched into the politics of war, sport was still an integral thread in the fabric of American society. For a 13-year old bedridden boy, it was one of the only threads linking him to the outside world, “Even though I was ordered to stay in bed, I still kept up with sports. I listened to every football radio broadcast I could”.²² Although unable to participate physically, Bowden was rapidly becoming a student of the game, thanks to the radio broadcasts that transmitted college adventures into his room every Saturday telling of triumph and tragedy of his beloved home state schools of Alabama and Auburn, and of National powerhouses like Michigan, Notre Dame, USC, and the military academies of Army and Navy.²³ Thanks to these ‘broadcasting adventures’ Bowden would often chart the games of his beloved Alabama teams²⁴ and relive them on a board game that his dad had given him:

I had gotten a little game that Christmas about two feet long and a foot wide and it had a football field on it. You had little, little battery things and it would be first down, and the ball here. So I could punch say a pass over the middle, well my opponent didn't know what I was going to do so he would punch up some form of defense and through the formula it would say 8-yard gain plus 8.²⁵ "One day I listened to an Alabama game on the radio when they were playing Mississippi State. According to my little game, using the same plays, Alabama should have won, but they didn't."²⁶ That was one thing we would play hour-after-hour-after-hour. That was one of those things I could do.²⁷

A Broken Thumb

"When I went to high school [Woodlawn High], I wasn't allowed to play football, but I was allowed to play band. So I played in the band the first two years."²⁸ However, at a slender 5'6", 120-25 pounds Bowden still dreamed of playing football,²⁹ if only Dr. Mahaffey would clear him. Finally after months of pleading, Bowden's mother took the aspiring teenage football player to Dr. Warrick, a heart specialist, for a second opinion. Unlike Dr. Mahaffey, Dr. Warrick was less concerned with his now slight heart murmur, and cleared a jubilant Bowden to play.³⁰

I remember breaking down and crying that day, right in the same room with mother and Dr. Warwick. I just couldn't help it, for it seemed as if a tremendous burden had been lifted. No doubt about it, I was definitely the luckiest guy around. God had really blessed me.³¹

After 16 years of waiting, in the fall of 1946, Bowden finally took the field for practices as a halfback under Coach Kenny Morgan,³² a field that he had once watched from his garage roof. However, Bowden's stay on the field was short. Roughly two weeks before the first game

of the season the first-year tailback broke his right thumb during a routine catch. “I was devastated,”³³ noted Bowden.

Now to many this would seem like another penny in the wishing well of bad luck, however, Coach Morgan had a plan. He “got me to drop out a semester and got me another year of eligibility, which meant that I ended up with two more years of eligibility playing,”³⁴ Bowden remembers. So that next spring, after sitting out the fall semester, Bowden returned to school and resumed his playing career—a career that only two seasons later produced an All-state high school quarterback.

Well, I have told the kids this many times, that year breaking my hand was probably one of the best things that has ever happened to me. Not that you think of a break being great, but it was one of the best things that happened. ... I didn't have any size. ... The year that I dropped out I grew from 130 pounds to 150 pounds. Now back in those days 150 pounds wasn't bad. In my last year I weighed nearly 160. Well back in those days, in the 40's that wasn't bad. I can remember a lot of those All-Americans in colleges weighing only 165 pounds. ... Johnny Majors probably didn't weigh but 167lbs. Anyway, so what I am saying is by laying out a year it allowed me to grow up and gain a scholarship. Which if I finished a year earlier, nobody would have allowed me to play football for them.³⁵

Rolling with the Tides of Love in Alabama

Nineteen Forty-Nine saw Adolph Rupp's University of Kentucky Wildcats team win a men's National Championship in Basketball. Notre Dame, following an undefeated 10-0-0 season, was crowned the National Champions of college football. Legend and World Heavyweight champion Joe Louis retired from boxing, and Red Barron, an Alabama native,

become the inaugural NASCAR Champion. As it turned out the year also saw a major change in the life of Bowden.

In January of that year, Bowden left Birmingham for the first time and moved an hour west to fulfill a dream that he shared with many Alabama high school graduates, to play football at the beloved University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

Well, it is funny ... as a kid I always wanted to go the University of Alabama. ... I followed them ever since I was a child. So when you got out of high school, you either went to Alabama or Auburn, well of course I was Alabama all the way. So I get out of high school and I got a scholarship. Now scholarships are different now they are a piece of paper you sign. ... Back in those days nothing was ever said, I had a businessman who was paying my way through college.

Anyway, I remember when I went out for the freshman team at Alabama they had 112 freshman, 112. Now how many of them were on scholarship I don't know. ... What I do remember was when we would practice, I was playing half back, so I would run a play, then I go to the back of the line and there would be 13 guys in it. So in 13 plays I would get to run another one. I couldn't see myself ever getting to play like that.³⁶

The problem of playing, or rather not playing, was bothering me. And on top of that, I began to get homesick. ... I missed my folks. And more than that, I missed my high school sweetheart. I was three years older than she was, but since I had missed that year-and-a-half of school, I was only one semester ahead of her. I just couldn't stand being away from her.³⁷

We were just two young people that loved each other, and we were getting real intimate. But neither one of us believed in intercourse without marriage. She was raised

not to and I was raised not to, but we knew we were getting mighty close. So we decided to get married.

Now they had a rule in those days that if you get married you can't have a scholarship. I know several guys that I went to school with, went down and played for three years, and got married their senior year and had their scholarship taken away.³⁸

“So, I stopped going to practice and started hiding from the coaches. I didn't know how to face them, and didn't want to. I admit I wasn't very mature about it. I'm still kind of ashamed about the way I did that.”³⁹

“[So] I transferred to Howard College without ever really giving it a shot. That's something I regret to this day. ... I remember it like it was yesterday. It was my decision to leave. It was my responsibility. But I remember, too, that nobody took me aside and encouraged me to hang in there. Nobody said they knew how I was feeling and that I just had to trust the coaches and trust my own talent.”⁴⁰

That is why, say I have a kid come in here homesick, wanting to go home, wanting to quit. I say, “Son don't quit, don't quit.” Then I might tell him that story, because that was the only thing that I ever quit in my life and have wondered all my life what might have happened if I stayed? “Well” Bowden continues, “When I look back at my life and I say, well gee I did the right thing, because after that everything really came together. But, what if I had stayed down there and this had happened or that had happened?”⁴¹

Following Bowden's decision to leave the University of Alabama and enroll at Howard College, Ann and Bobby's decision to get married had one more hurdle to clear, their parents. Both sets

had other plans for the young couple and didn't think that them getting married was the wisest of choices.⁴² So they decided to elope.

We had heard that other couples at Woodlawn High School had done the same thing. They had gone just over the Georgia state line to a little town called Rising Fawn. It was up Route 11, near the triangle where Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee meet. Now I really didn't think Ann and I planned to run off and do that. It just sort of happened.

You know, if a young boy and young girl are determined to be together, there's not much you can do about it. They are going to find a way to be together. And we definitely wanted to be together. That's a fact.

I didn't have a car. And I didn't have any money either. So I wasn't sure how we were going to get to Georgia and get married. But you know young folks, they don't worry about little details like that.

It turned out that on this one weekend my mother and daddy were going to Atlanta for some kind of convention. This was the end of March. They took the train to Atlanta. Back then most folks, at least most folks we knew traveled by train when they went somewhere. Daddy left the family car at home. More important, he left the car keys at home too.

And on Sunday morning, April 1, 1949, I got Daddy's car, borrowed twenty dollars from a buddy named Dennis Hudson, and went to pick up Ann. We skipped church that morning and took off for Georgia. I was in such a hurry to get to Rising Fawn that I got caught for speeding through Gadsden. The policemen said, "Son, y'all didn't see the speeding limit sign back there, did you? That's gonna cost you ten dollars."

So, I had to donate half of the twenty dollars that Dennis had loaned me to the Gadsden economy. Now we had only ten dollars to finance our trip and pay the justice of the peace for marrying us. That wasn't exactly doing it in style.

When we got to Rising Fawn, we had to find the justice of the peace. His house, which was also his office, was located down at the end of an old dirt road off the main highway. Man, this was really in the country. We knocked on the front door.

The justice of the peace's wife answered and promptly announced, "State your business, son, We're just sitting down for Sunday dinner."

I tried to stand up as tall as I could and said in what I thought was a deep grown-up voice, "Me and my sweetheart want to get married."

The woman just turned and hollered over her shoulder, "Hey, Pa, that are two youngsters here who want to get hitched."

Pa hollered back, "Bring 'em on in Ma."

So, she invited us in and told us to sit down, and said that they'd be with us in a few minutes. I think they went ahead and finished eating. Anyway, we sat there and tried to relax while they got things ready for the wedding. That justice of the peace didn't ask us our age of anything like that. They didn't require proof of age in Georgia back then. That's why some of the kids from school were running away there to get married.

The justice of the peace asked me, "Boy, you got a ring?"

Ring? I hadn't thought that far ahead. Shoot, all I had on me was the ten dollars left from Dennis. I said, "Naw, I ain't got no ring."

He said, "Well, we'll use your high school ring." It was a long time before I got Ann a proper ring.

And we got married. I gave the justice of the peace five dollars. That left me five dollars to buy gas to get back to Birmingham. Talk about faith.⁴³

The Black Caddy

An excerpt from Bobby Bowden's Autobiography *More Than Just a Game: My Life on and off the Sidelines*, written with Bill Smith (1994, pp. 193-195)

I have to say something about segregation and integration. When I was growing up in Birmingham, I didn't even know what those words meant. I grew up in the South back in the 1930s and 1940's. Black folks lived in one part of town; White folks lived in another. That's just the way it was. I thought that was the way it was supposed to be. I never thought to wonder "Why?"

I knew that there were white rest rooms and "colored" rest rooms, white water fountains and "colored" water fountains, but it never occurred to me to question that stuff. I didn't know the injustice of it and how serious it was. How could I? All I was interested in was playing sports and having a good time.

It's easy for me to say, "Yeah, but I played with the black kids when I was going to school. We used to shoot marbles together all the time. My mother has a black maid and we felt like she was part of the family," But that doesn't quite get it.

I remember when I was a senior at Howard College, and I took a golf class to learn how to play golf. Now, we didn't have access to a golf course. All we did in class was go out and hit balls on the football field. But about two miles away was the Roebuck Country Club, where I still play golf when I go back to Birmingham. Being able to play golf at Roebuck back in those days was a big deal.

I didn't have any money back then, and I sure couldn't afford to pay to play golf. One day I said to a friend of mine named Gene McGee, "Let's get up about six o'clock in the morning and go sneak on the Roebuck course and play some golf." So we did.

Gene and I were out there playing golf, and while we were out there playing for free, about five or six caddies arrived on the course to get ready for the day. All the caddies were black guys. And since it was real early, they were out on the golf course looking for golf balls because if they found some good ones, they could sell them and make extra money. If I'd been smart I would have been looking for balls, too, because I sure could have used some extra cash.

One of the caddies was a guy about fifteen years of age. Apparently, he had caddied a lot and had seen so many good golfers that he had figured out what you are supposed to do with your swing to hit it well. I know this, he hit it pretty well.

He started following us, so I asked him, "You want to hit some balls with us? You want to play?"

He said, "Yeah, if y'all don't mind."

So he started playing with us. And in the meantime, somebody back in the clubhouse must have seen us—two white kids out there playing with a black kid. All I know is that all of a sudden we looked back toward the pro shop and here came a pickup truck flying right down the middle of the fairway toward us. I mean, that truck was coming lickety-split.

I thought, *Oh, Lawdy, they've caught us. I ain't got no money, and I'm married and have two kids. Lawd, they're gonna take us to jail.*

That truck came to a screeching stop and a guy jumped out and yanked out a big gun. It was just a pistol, but it looked like a cannon to me. I flinched because I knew that guy was going to point that thing at me and Gene and say, “Boy’s what are y’all doin’? Don’t you know you’re breaking the law? You boys are under arrest.” Gene and I were scared to death.

But that guy didn’t even look at me and Gene. Instead he grabbed that caddy and put that gun right into his head and yelled, “What are you doin’, boy? You know you ain’t allowed to do this, I’m going to fix you good.”

And he grabbed that caddy by the back of the neck and threw him in the truck and took off. He never said one dad-gum word to me and Gene.

I often wondered what ever happened to that caddy. I guess all they did to him was scare him and let him go. I pray it wasn’t worse than that, but it might have been.

I really didn’t think we were doing anything bad by inviting that caddy to play with us. I thought that the bad thing we did was sneaking onto the golf course. But back then blacks weren’t allowed to play golf at Roebuck. It’s ironic because today when I go back to that same golf course I see about as many black golfers as I do white golfers.

Anyway, that incident showed me for sure that segregation was something big and serious ... and not good. All that caddy was doing was hitting a golf ball. He wasn’t hurting anybody. I certainly didn’t think I was any better than him just because I happened to be white.

Until that incident, I don’t think I really understood it all. I had gone to a white elementary school, a white high school, and a white college and had always attended a

white church. I didn't hear anyone talk about the injustice of segregation. I certainly didn't hear it from the pulpit.

Boy there sure is a lot of ignorance in this world. Racial bigotry is nothing but pure ignorance, not to mention hate; and if my vocabulary was bigger I could probably come up with some better words to describe it.

Saved

I was fortunate to have been raised in a Christian home by Christian parents. I don't ever remember a time in my life when the Bible and Church weren't part of it. And that's why I'm going to say at the outset that I'm a Christian. That's the first thing I always say to an audience. "Folks, I'm a Christian. I just want to make sure y'all know where I stand.

Bobby Bowden⁴⁴

In 1943, as Bowden battled Rheumatic fever and America battled Germany and Japan, he asked God for help. "I have always been raised as a Christian, and it was kind of one of those years, God if you do this for me then I will do this for you."⁴⁵ In his recent book *The Bowden Way*, Coach Bowden again expressed how his beliefs in God and his faith, in general, has played a more-than-integral role in his life and coaching career:

In my life, integrity and religious faith are inseparably related. My one great source of strength is faith in God. Faith doesn't make me perfect, but it sure points me on the right direction. I don't worry as much about what other people think, because I believe God has a plan for my life. God's plan may not be my plan, but I try to trust Him and press ahead.⁴⁶

However, not really understanding his faith or Christianity in general I asked him a simple question: You have always stated that you are a practicing Christian, but what does being a Christian mean to you?

A Christian, now that is a good question because a lot of people don't understand that. The normal guy out on the street, if I went out and said, and I do this a lot of times. I start my talks this way, I will say "I am a Christian." Now first reaction is that people say "He must be good, He must be a good guy," or he must think he is good. ... That is not what Christianity is about. It is about people that follow Christ. In other words, I follow Christ, he is my savior therefore I am a Christian. Does that mean I never sin? No it doesn't mean I never sin. Does it mean that I deserve it? No I don't deserve it. Does it mean that you are good? No I never said I was good, I said I am a Christian. Now that is my faith and my belief.⁴⁷

Through further discussions and conversations regarding religion, faith, Christ, God and spirituality, I discovered that in the Christian faith he had been raised with and ultimately declared on his own, that "Being Saved" was an event, a realization, an understanding of what it truly means to be a Christian. Unlike the other experiences described in this chapter, finding and understanding Christ and being saved is a very personal realization and one that is often difficult to explain. Therefore instead of me, an individual that does not confess to understand its importance, trying to explain what it means to be saved as, I have included an extract from a conversation where Bowden discussed what it means to him and his faith:

Mark: You mentioned being saved, when do you feel that you were saved?

Bowden: I felt like I was saved when I was 23. I thought I was when I was 11 and I was baptized and I thought that was it. But I realized later on that that wasn't it. In the Christian faith, you are saved when ..., have you seen the movie the Passion?

Mark: No I have not?

Bowden: Well if you see that you will know what we believe. We feel like He died for our sins and there isn't nothing we can do to earn it, but if we believe in him and have faith in Him and commit to Him, then we are saved. I was 23 before I realized that.

Mark: Was there any special event that made you realize that?

Bowden: No it just came out of the clear sky. Up to then, I felt like you earned your faith and salvation by being good. So when I got to the age of 23 I realized that that didn't do it, and that that would never be good enough. You are saved through your faith, saved through faith by grace. I was 23 when I understood that.⁴⁸

Tree Swinging, Moving Vans and For Sale Signs

In exploring Bowden's coaching career through the research avenues of written texts and interviews, it was apparent that it was his time he spent in West Virginia as an assistant coach, and more importantly as a head coach that impacted his coaching style significantly.⁴⁹ However, along with the lessons relating to the "nuts 'n' bolts" of coaching, he and his family were afforded opportunities to learn about themselves as individuals, as a family, and about their supposed Mountaineer friends.

In 1970, following Pittsburgh's extraordinary second half comeback rallying from 35-8 at the half to win 35-36, shocking a West Virginia football nation, Bowden began understanding the pressures and responsibilities of being the Head Coach.

I remember going back inside the locker room and talking to the kids. They were dejected. ...

So everyone gets dressed, and I'm the last one getting out, as usual. And I hear a mob of people outside screaming, kinda, like they're going to kill me, 'Bring him out. Bring him out.'

What you had was four or five drunks, but I had to go out there and face that. I didn't know if they were gonna kill me, shoot me or what. I'd never been through anything like that. I had to have a police escort to get back on the bus to Morgantown. Ann's crying. She's heard all kinds of abuse.

You see that happen, you catch all that criticism and it gets to you. People would call. I even had death threats. Some guy would call me: 'we're going to kill you.' I was so mad I was wishing they'd come by. That was the toughest day of my life.⁵⁰

"What in the world am I doing in this profession?" I asked myself. "I don't have to put up with this. I can quit, go to Birmingham and work in my father's real estate company. Nothing's worth this kind of abuse."

After a night's rest, things don't look quite so bad. I started working with the team again, getting ready for the next game. And as soon as we win, the noise dies down. We go 8-3 that year, and I'm a genius again.⁵¹

However, although Bowden describes that day in 1970 as his darkest, it merely provided him with a glimpse into the passions, pressures and fanaticisms of college football. In 1974, as he suffered his first losing season, Bowden truly learned what losing meant, to fans, and more surprisingly, friends in Morgantown, WV. Ultimately it was this fickleness and lack of loyalty that helped direct Bobby Bowden and his family to Tallahassee, FL and Florida State University.

Now the 1974 season was another experience, when a bunch of them tried to fire me at West Virginia. A bunch of fans and boosters had started to get together meetings

and had already picked out a coach to take my place. But they couldn't do it, because the President and the Athletic Director stood behind me. A lot of times nowadays that doesn't happen. The President will cave in to public opinion and will cave in to big money givers and things like that. So I learned a big lesson there about the fickleness of fans, again they will cut your throat if you don't win, and the importance of loyalty from those around you.⁵²

I walked out of campus one day and saw myself hung in effigy. You talk about an ego deflator, there's just nothing worse. What do you tell your kids when they see something like that? Do you say, 'look, there's daddy hanging over there?'⁵³

It is so embarrassing, it is so embarrassing, you see a lot of the time a coach doesn't hear all of that. In other words, I am the football coach and I have done a lousy job and all the papers are writing bad things about me, telling people how bad I am, and that he ought to be fired. Well I don't have to read the papers. I only have to read the paper when I want to. So I can miss all that. Now I go to the office and I am around all the other coaches that are going through the same thing, now we are all in this thing together. You don't hear all that either, because we are together and so now your family catches it. Your wife goes to the grocery store and that is all she hears. The kids go to school and everybody gets on them and so on. So it is embarrassing. You feel bad for your family because they have to put up with all this stuff, because they might pull a moving van out in front of you house. They might put a for sale sign on you door at night, they all have signs hanging up in town saying bye, bye Bobby. You might get hung in effigy.

Well now I look back and it is funny. It is funny, I don't resent it at all I think that it was a great experience to go through, I needed to learn, plus I get a lot of good jokes out of it. Tommy is a funny one, my son Tommy. One day when I was being hung up in effigy in West Virginia, Tommy has told this story before. ... Tommy was running across campus and saw that effigy of me hanging up there on the tree you know and he started to go in there and cut it down. Well he went in there and the guy said

“You can't come onto this property, this is private. You can't come out here.”

And Tommy said “I just want to come out there and add some fat, because y'all didn't make him fat enough. I want to put more stuffing in him you all didn't make him fat enough.”

Well that is typical Tommy. Anyway, here is the thing that I saw in 1974. I saw how unjust it [coaching] is. I found out that there are a lot of things that you cannot control. In 1974 I probably had the best material that I had in all the 6 years that I was up there as a head coach at West Virginia. I think I had 7 guys that went in the draft or went into pro ball. Now back in those days if you had one, you would be doing pretty good. I had 7. ...Anyway, how many of them made it I don't know. But any way, the nose guard got hurt and was out for the year. The best receiver stayed hurt for half the year. I lost the starting quarterback. I lost 4,5,6,7 starters and it really killed us and I saw the unfairness of it.

Everybody is getting on me, but I couldn't help it that we lost our nose guard, Jeff Marrow was his name he played for the Atlanta Falcons for 10 years a great player. Well I lost those guys and just couldn't replace them so we got beat in close games. So I saw the unfairness of it all, I couldn't help it that those players got hurt and stayed unhealthy.

Now people don't give you credit for that at all. So what, you are supposed to win anyway. I also saw how fickle fans are in 1974 they wanted to hang me in effigy, and did hang me in effigy. Anyway, I also saw how fickle people were including friends.⁵⁴ I began to take a lot of criticism from folks I thought were my friends. I was close to a lot of folks at West Virginia, but some of them really turned on me. They were people I enjoyed being around and playing golf with. That really hurt because I never had trouble getting along with folks. I couldn't believe they would do that just because we had lost a few dad-gum football games.

All of a sudden, they quit calling. All of a sudden, they stopped inviting me to their homes. I saw how ruthless some people could be. When they'd see me, they'd wave and say, "Hi, Coach. See you later." And I reckon they meant much later.⁵⁵

Another thing, about 1974 ... I have always been a loyal guy, I am loyal to whom I work for. That year I said to myself if I ever have a chance to leave here [West Virginia] and want to, then I have every right in the world. Well that very next year we had a good year and Florida State came open and asked me to come down here and to be honest with you, Ann and I weren't going to come. We had had a good year, people were back in my corner, the Athletic Director wanted to build me a new stadium, wanted to build me a new this, was going to build me a new that and this and give me a better contract. But I had already learned how fickle people are and if I wanted to leave I had the right to.

Now if I had not had that bad year, I would not have left. I would not have left and I am going to tell you why. Number one I had four children going to school at West Virginia; Terry, Tommy, Steve and Robyn. They were all going to school there and it meant if I left I was going to be away from my family for 5 months because they had to

stay up there and finish school, and I don't like being away from my family. So if we had had a good year in 1974 and I had never caught a lot of that flack, I would have never left. Florida State had won one ball game, we were going to Bowls, they ain't ... but the fact that I saw how fickle and unloyal fans and friends ...

Now it is not just West Virginia fans it is true all over the country and I didn't leave just because they did that either. Ann and I wanted to come back down south to live. We also wanted to be with our families and our parents for the last years of their lives. We were with them about 10 years before they died. But it just shows you, that if I hadn't had that bad year then I probably wouldn't be here at Florida State today.

... Now this past year [2003] Tommy had to go through the same thing. I am thinking that this is good for him because this will make a man out of him. Now we will find out if he is tough enough to coach. Now Terry went through the same thing at Auburn and then it was the same old deal. Jeffery is going through it now. It will make a man out of him. He has got to realize that this is part of the job. It is part of it. It is the nature of the job. If you can't handle it then get out of it. So that's kind of the way that I approach those kinds of adversities.

Now, it hurts when it is happening to you. It is easy for me to say now. I can look back and I can see where it was good for me. Where would I have been if I hadn't left West Virginia? You don't know, but look how lucky I am that I am here. Great state, plenty of prospects, a beautiful university growing in a great state, and then they asked me, I didn't ask them.⁵⁶

Those [days at West Virginia] were the hardest years of my life, then. And I learned a real valuable lesson. I learned just how much people love you when you are

winning, and just how vicious some folks will get when you're down. I learned a lot about the fickleness of fans, and I learned to take care of myself and my family.⁵⁷

You could say that it was during these times that Bowden not only learned that fans and friends are fickle, but that loyalty is an important component of college football. On reflection, with retrospect on the importance of loyalty and the times when you truly understand its importance, Bowden articulated,

Most coaches learn that during times of adversity, you circle the wagons and remain loyal to one another. If you've never had your company's performance scrutinized by the media on a daily basis, or had the least little mishap broadcast nationwide, it may take you longer to learn this lesson.⁵⁸

Pablo

In 1986, Pablo Lopez, a senior offensive lineman was tragically killed in a shooting incident at a Tallahassee party, an incident that provided Bowden with another important life lesson:

I got an awakening then of how minorities treat death, which is different to how you and I might treat it. I had never seen people respond like that. Especially those young black kids, they respond differently than we do. ... I mean me, with my background, when someone dies, I would be quiet, silent, and pray full. They were hollering, screaming, laying on the ground kicking. You knew I don't know if they were all like that but I learned that we have different cultures here and we have got to be sensitive to it. I tried to explain to the guys, what could come out of it. That was a difficult time.⁵⁹

An excerpt from Bobby Bowden's autobiography, *More Than Just a Game: My Life On and Off the Sidelines*, details Bowden's reaction to the death of Pablo and the impact it has had on his career:

We had opened the season with a 24-0 win over Toledo. Our second game was against Nebraska and we led 14-10 at the half, but ended up getting thumped 34-17. Then we had an open date before playing North Carolina.

Most of our players went home on that weekend, when we had no game. But, Pablo, who was married and had a child, stayed in Tallahassee. And on Friday night, he went to a dance on campus with his wife.

Apparently one of our guys got into an argument with another student and Pablo stepped in to break it up. Anyhow, this student left the dance and after a while came back with a shotgun. He walked across the parking lot and went right up to Pablo and pointed the gun at him. And I guess Pablo must of said something like, "What are you gonna do? Shoot me?" And that's what the guy did. He pulled the trigger and shot Pablo at point blank range. I learned from the doctor later that Pablo was probably dead before he hit the ground.

One of my graduate assistants called me at home and said, "Coach, you'd better get to the hospital quick. Somebody shot Pablo."

I said, "How bad is it?"

He said, "I don't know, Coach. I think it's bad."

We didn't know that Pablo was dead. So, first of all, before I left the house I called our team chaplain, a Baptist minister named Ken Smith, and asked him to meet me at the hospital.

Ken knew it was serious because I seldom called him when one of our players got in trouble. Most of the time it was the other way around when a player got into something on campus or around town, the authorities would call Ken first. He was usually the one who straightened things as best he could.

Ken and I arrived at the Hospital at about the same time, and when we got there Pablo was already dead. I will never forget the feeling of horror that came over me as I looked down at the body of that young man one that had been so full of life and so strong. He was a young man who had so much to live for. One minute he was alive, and the next minute he was gone forever.

All of our football players which had been at the party, there must have been thirty of them, were at the hospital. Their girlfriends were with them too. They were all outside the emergency room. I asked Ken, "How are we going to tell them about Pablo?"

Ken suggested we find the hospital Chaplain and see if there was a chapel in the hospital we could use. The hospital did have a little chapel and we were able to use it.

So, we called all the players and girls into the room and broke the news. We told them that Pablo was dead. It was one of the most difficult things I've ever had to do because I hadn't been around death that much, not that kind of death.⁶⁰

Morgan delineates between the biographies and histories of the participants, and the lives and historical context of the research, by noting that they are in fact one and the same.⁶¹ Erben agrees, when he comments in reference to biographical research text that, "What is indisputable is that the account is constructed by both the researcher and that those agendas always make reference to the past—both the past of the biographer and that of the participant".⁶² Grounded in Erden's work, this chapter has outlined the experiences that Bowden has highlighted in

numerous data sources as the major influences of his career.⁶³ Again, it is important to iterate that these experiences do not represent the only experiences that have influenced Bowden's career. The experiences that were told through these short narratives represent the influences that were prevalent within data collection and those events that can bear witness to his current practices as interpreted through the research process itself. Additionally, it is important to remember that biographies and personal histories are shaped by numerous contexts—contexts that through interpretation provide us with varying explorations and understanding of the evidence. For example the death of Pablo as an event is an arduous experience in and of itself, but it is the lessons and personal reactions to the event supported by the context that truly impacts those involved. For Bowden the event documented the cultural differences in his athletes. However, the severity of the experience and its impact on his career can only be understood through his subsequent interpretations and the changes that were made consciously because of it. Ultimately the impression it has had on his career may never be fully understood by anyone, including Bowden himself.

¹ One of Bowden's Favorite Poems – Cited in Bynum (1980, p. 20)

² A specific rugby position, #1 and #3

³ http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761584403/Great_Depression_in_the_United_States.html#p16

⁴ Bynum (1980); Brown (1992)

⁵ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

⁶ Bynum (1980, p. 15)

⁷ Now Samford University

⁸ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

⁹ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

¹⁰ Bynum (1980, p. 16)

¹¹ Bowden & Smith (1994, p.37)

¹² Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

¹³ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

¹⁴ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

¹⁵ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

¹⁶ Horten (2002)

¹⁷ Bowden and Smith (1944, p. 40-41)

¹⁸ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

¹⁹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)

²⁰ Interview with Author (Feb 17 2004)

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- ²¹ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
²² Bowden and Smith (1944, p. 41)
²³ For a review of sport and Radio see, Oriard (2001, Chapter 1, pp 39-52)
²⁴ Brown (1942)
²⁵ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
²⁶ Bynam (1980, p. 19)
²⁷ Interview with Author (Feb 22, 2004)
²⁸ Interview with Author (Feb 22, 2004)
²⁹ Bowden and Smith (1994)
³⁰ Bowden and Smith (1994); Bynum (1980)
³¹ Bynum (1980, p. 27)
³² Bowden and Smith (1994)
³³ Andrews (1994)
³⁴ Interview with Author (Feb 22, 2004)
³⁵ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
³⁶ Interview with author (Feb 17, 2004)
³⁷ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 49)
³⁸ Interview with author (Feb 17, 2004)
³⁹ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 49)
⁴⁰ Bowden, Bowden, Bowden Family et al. (1996, p. 114)
⁴¹ Interview with Author (March 03, 2004)
⁴² Bynum (1980, p. 47)
⁴³ Bowden and Smith (1994, pp. 53-54)
⁴⁴ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 5)
⁴⁵ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
⁴⁶ Bowden (2001, p. 42)
⁴⁷ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
⁴⁸ Interview with Author (March 17, 2004)
⁴⁹ As discussed in Chapter 5
⁵⁰ Brown (1992, p. 350)
⁵¹ Bowden (1986, p. 5)
⁵² Interview with Author (Feb 22, 2004)
⁵³ Atkins (1997, p. 112)
⁵⁴ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
⁵⁵ Bowden & Smith (1994, p.87)
⁵⁶ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)
⁵⁷ Bynum (1980, p.112)
⁵⁸ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 44)
⁵⁹ Interview with Author (Feb 17, 2004)
⁶⁰ Bowden & Smith (1994, pp. 228-230)
⁶¹ Morgan (1998)
⁶² Erben (1998, p. 43)
⁶³ Erden (1998)

CHAPTER 7

RELIGION, FAMILY, FOOTBALL and THEN?

I can recall Bowden talking to us after we won the first national championship in 1993. He was talking about winning the big one. For years they [the media] would say, “Coach Bowden can’t win the big one. Florida State can’t win the big one.” It might have been after the recruiting period and signing day. We were getting ready for spring ball. We were in a staff meeting and he started asking everyone around the room: How did we feel now that we have won the big one? Well I didn’t feel that much different. If he had asked us right after the game, then we might have given a different answer. But, after a month or two had gone by we didn’t feel that much different. So he continued and started talking about winning the big one. He said “Winning the big one is not winning the National Championship. Winning the big one is accepting Christ as your Lord and Savior. That is what the big one is, because that is one of the most important decisions that a person can make.” I remember that day quite distinctly. That provides you with a measure, or a picture of who he is and how he thinks.

I believe, like Coach Bowden, that is what it [coaching] is all about. Someone asked me the other day what do you consider success? The successful part is helping guys grow. That is what it is about. We all know that we need to win a few games along the way in order to keep our jobs. We are all very competitive. We want to win. We are going to do the best jobs that we can do. When I think of Coach Bowden, I think of Colossians 3: 23, 24, which says, “What ever you do, do your work heartily for the Lord rather than for men.” Now I think that is his motivation. He does his work heartily for the Lord, not to please any man, the media or anybody else. His motivation is to do well out of love and obedience for God.

He is a man that loves the Lord, loves his family. His goal in life is to honor the Lord with what he does. ...He just happens to be a coach.

Coach Richt ¹

Throughout the six previous chapters, Bowden’s coaching career has been examined and discussed thematically. Chapters one through three detailed the what’s, how’s and why’s of the present Florida State football program, whereas, chapters four through six described Bowden’s journeys, experiences, influences and events that have informed how he coaches. Each chapter has provided an informed examination of Bowden’s life and career from which future coaches

and teachers can learn. Metaphorically the chapters can be seen to represent information layers of an onion. With the peeling of each internal chapter more detailed and personal information about Coach Bowden was provided—information that is often obscured. In its entirety the six chapters have detailed important components of Bowden’s life and slowly introduced the important facets that have enabled him to become an expert coach. Each chapter has peeled away his life story and biography thus revealing his values and beliefs and his strong religious convictions.

Throughout his lifetime, Bowden has faced a considerable amount of adversity. He, however, has been successful on the historical scoreboards of college football and in the minds and hearts of past and present players and coaches. The biggest not-so-secret behind his continual success is the order in which Bowden prioritizes life’s important facets. However this was not something that just happened:

I probably learned it. Well I probably faced up to it. You know when you are young you are so busy trying to get ahead you may neglect some things that you probably shouldn’t have neglected. It is then that you finally realize there is more to life than football. I mean I can’t go around like a sour puss because I lost the last ball game. It affects your life, your family, your kids, and the people that are around you. You need to have something higher to focus on. I have seen so many coaches get into this game and it has meant more to them than everything else in the world. That’s all they thought about. So when they got to losing they couldn’t handle it because it was all they had. They were banking on winning all the way. So, then, they start cheating. Not that most of them do it, but some do. I have seen it happen, several times where a coach is about to get fired, so next year

he does everything to win. He goes out and buys players and does stuff that is illegal.

However, with time it will get you.²

So how has Bowden survived on the very public and scrutiny filled stage that is big time intercollegiate athletics? How has he continually developed winning college football teams that have been housed in successful intercollegiate programs?

Through reading this text I hope you have developed a sense that football, although important in his life, is not the central focus. As I searched through the mountains of articles and texts and spent time with Coach Bowden and the Florida State family it was clear that football came behind religion and the welfare of all the individuals. The following extract taken from Bowden's book, *The Bowden Way*, clearly discusses his priorities:

To keep from being overwhelmed by adversity, I work hard to keep my priorities in order. The priorities in my life, ranked in descending order are:

God

Family

Others

Football

It's easy to come up with such a noble-sounding menu as this. It's another thing entirely when life hands you the bill for your choices.

It's not always easy to put God first or to maintain my family's priority over the time demands of coaching. I see things I could've done better, others that I should've done differently, and many that I regret. But I'd follow the same path if I had another 50 years in coaching.

Keeping God first is easy when you are successful. The real test comes when adversity strikes. Sometimes the only thing you can do is simply lift your empty cup upward in a defiant affirmation of faith. At other times, you cling to faith because you just don't wish to live otherwise.³

Clearly identified are Bowden's underlying life components.

Throughout this text I have interjected important narrative and provided anecdotal evidence when appropriate that has alluded to Bowden's priorities. It would be wrong to continue this chapter without again doing so.

At the top of Bowden's list of priorities is that of God and by association Christianity. During data collection, the topic of religion, faith and God was one that concerned me. In stating my religious convictions simplistically and somewhat directly I do not consider myself to be a very religious individual. That is not to say that I am not familiar with the notions of faith or Christianity, or that I am opposed to discussing and understanding the philosophies that guide them. As a child I attended church and studied religious education in secondary school to the age of fourteen. My perspective on religion is somewhat undecided. I have always been put off with the subject because of the way people approach the topic. On more than one occasion, I have had discussions with very religious individuals whereby I have been informed that I will never truly be happy unless I find God and Jesus Christ. Therefore, I was particularly concerned about discussing this topic with Coach Bowden. It was apparent after completing some preliminary research that Bowden holds very strong religious convictions. I was anxious that our obvious religious differences would somehow affect the project, especially when the majority of the data was to be collected using interviews. However, by the end of the second interview, I was the one that instigated the conversation. For over three and a half hours Bowden had not once mentioned,

discussed or directed any of the conversations towards Christianity and faith. As the data collection process developed he explained:

It turns people off. That is why I have tried to be really discrete. It is like talking to the team on the night before a game I give a little devotion. I will say men, now you have to listen to me, but you do not have to do what I say, just like you listen to these professors. You are supposed to listen to them but you do not have to do what they say either. I am just trying to tell you how to get through life easier. So I try and present it like that. But I have never questioned their beliefs. If you tell them what to believe then it doesn't work. All I do is to try and make myself available. I feel like God had put me in this position to provide witness to my boys. But I am not going to make them do what I do. You don't have to believe. That is your call.⁴

Bowden has noted that football is an integral component of his life. However, it is not the most important priority. This text so far has focused on Bowden's coaching career and the events that have shaped and informed it. This chapter will focus on the more personal aspects of Bowden's life, including his *Religious Beliefs, God, and Football*, the importance of *Family* and that he is in actuality a very *Private Person*.

Religious Beliefs, God and Football

Bowden's strong religious convictions are not hidden from the media or his players.⁵ In fact, throughout the previous chapters his belief in Jesus Christ, God and Christianity is evident. For example, in chapter two, an extract from a letter details how during two-a-day practices he takes the players to a primarily black church and then to a primarily white church with parental consent. In chapter six the story titled *Saved* detailed how that particular moment in his life was

one of the most influential. Additionally, his discipline practices, discussed in chapter three, can also be linked with his strong religious beliefs:

I mean when you look at your own life. When you look at my life and anybody's life, where would you have been if somebody hadn't given you that second chance? Where would you have gone? What would you have done? So there is a forgiveness factor. It is like this. As Christians, we are taught not to forgive one time, but two times, three times four times, five times, even hundreds of times. But I can't do that in coaching a football team.⁶

So when Bowden talks of Jesus Christ, God, Christianity and faith what does he really mean? As previously discussed in Chapter six, it would be presumptuous of me to declare that after this process I can truly understand his personal religious beliefs and Christianity in general. During the interviews Coach Bowden and I discussed religion and its place in college football and the methods by which Bowden personally delivers his own religious beliefs. Therefore, I have included a composite of several interview transcripts that detail his perspective:⁷

Mark: Today, I would like you to start this interview by talking about religion. How has it affected your coaching career?

Bowden: Alright, I have always felt, been taught, believe and think that every man is put on this earth for a reason—you, me, everyone—for a reason. Now it is our job to find out what that reason is and then glorify God with our life. To me that is the basic principle of life. I feel that God leads us into different professions; I don't know why. I didn't read a book about how to be a coach and decide that I wanted to coach. I always wanted to be a coach. So I feel people are led and maybe

directed—if they will seek it—you do have to look for it. So, I have always felt that man's purpose on this earth is to glorify God.

Therefore, when I went into coaching, I felt like it was an opportunity to try and motivate boys, not just in football, not just in academics, but also to have a spiritual life that will help make them a better person. When I started building the program here at Florida State, it wouldn't be like education and football are on one side and religion is on the another side of the program where it has nothing to do with football and academics. I believe that religion goes hand-in-hand with them both. Now I hate to use the word religion. I prefer the words character and spirituality. See, I feel that they need to be developed as well. So I really try to do that. I really want that to be a part of the learning process.

As coaches we are going to try and make a football player. We are going to try and make sure that you get an education. Then at the same time, I am going to require you to listen. If you are going to come to this program, I want you to listen to what we talk about according to the spiritual angle of life. I am just trying to get you to come out of our program as a better person in three main areas: physical, mental and spiritual.

Anyway that is my basic philosophy. Therefore I am not hesitant to bring in a devotional speaker. I will bring in—well my favorite to bring in—is some All-American that all the players know. That is always good because they will listen to him. Then maybe the kids will get involved. Now we also have a program that is in all our universities. That is if a university wants to have it. I am

sure that Georgia has one. The program is called, the *Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA)*, and is a volunteer organization.

Now linked with the FCA and faith, I will talk about faith to our kids but I will never say they have to believe. I always try and present it so that they can make a decision. If they don't do it, then they don't do it. I also feel that I have an obligation to set a good example for these boys. When I first started coaching it was pretty prevalent in the coaching profession that coaches would say, "Don't do what I do. Do what I say to do." I have never believed in that philosophy. Anyway, that is the backbone to my thinking. I try to develop these guys physically, spiritually, and academically.

Mark: You mentioned your own up bringing. In the things that I have read, you have talked about being a Christian man. What do you mean by that?

Bowden: Now most people in this nation are Christians. Well statistics claim that. I think they say that about 83% of all Americans claim Christianity. Now out of that 83%, 40% actually practice, as they probably should. Anyway, when you talk to the boys it is not as if you are the one-percent talking to ninety-nine-percent of the population. You are actually talking about something that this nation is founded on—something that we have lost sight of through the years.

Now we have had Muslims on our football team. We have had Jews on our football team. I welcome them all. What I tell them, if I have any meeting with my kids regarding Christianity, is that they don't have to come if they don't want to. Now the rest of you have to come unless you have a written letter from your mommy and daddy. Now, before I sign a football player I will discuss this

with the recruit. I also always write a letter⁸ to the incoming kids' parents the summer before they arrive. I tell them that we are going to take your son to church. We are going to read the Bible. We are going to pray together. We are going to have devotions. Now if you do not want me to do this with your son then I won't. I will excuse him. Now in the thirty years I have had only three parents that have asked me not to do that with their kids. ... Anyway, that is the way that I have done it through the years. I feel that our kids have responded well and we have had a lot of lives change through Christianity and the Bible.

Now if you have never read the Bible I suggest that you start in the New Testament and John. I think you should start there and then read each verse. You should try to understand what it is saying and go from there. Then when you have finished reading Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, then go back to the Old Testament because that is the history part, a prediction of what is going to happen. That is the way that I kind of approach it. For example, I had a guy that walked into my office one time about eight years ago. Now, he is still living but is suffering from Lou Gehrig's disease. Well, he came to see me one day. I have known him ever since I moved here to Tallahassee. Now, I don't know him real good but I do know him. He is nice, funny and just a great guy. He walks in and says, "I have just been to the doctor and found out that I have Lou Gehrig's disease. I am scared, really scared." Well, I got talking about his religion and his faith and all that stuff and I actually decide to give him my testimony. Now, I ain't going to tell him what someone else believes. I am going to tell him what I believe. There was a Bible on my desk and I said, "Do you ever read this thing."

He said, “Na.” So I said, “You take this book home with you and I want you to read John.” Now this is exactly what I told him, remember he is a funny guy, so I said, “You better start with John. When you get through reading John keep reading the New Testament and go over to Matthew. Then when you get through that, start with the Old Testament and Genesis. Now don’t start with Genesis, because you will probably be dead before you get to the new part.” He laughed. He loved it. I wouldn’t of said that to many people, but he loved it.

Mark: You mentioned your testimony. If I came and asked for your testimony what would you tell me?

Bowden: Well, I spoke ... in Myrtle Beach to a group called, *The Gathering*. It is a Christian group. There were 750 men there. The Gathering gets about one hundred guys that all buy a table. It might be one thousand dollars a table. Then they go out and find ten guys to sit at their table. They will get guys there that are not religious and try to get them believing in Christ. Anyway, I started off and I do this a lot, by saying, “You all wonder why I am here as a head football coach? What in the world am I doing up here talking to y’all?” I then posed a question, “If you knew the cure to cancer would you tell somebody?” I let them think about that. Then I said, “Well I know something greater than that. I know the cure to all life’s ills. I know how to have eternal life.” Then after that I get into what I believe—my testimony. I usually ask them did they see the Passion of Christ. Well a lot of them have and lot of them hadn’t. I said, “If you really want to know what Christ went through then that is a great thing. He did it for y’all and me.” Then I told them why I believe in Christ. Why I believe it’s real and that it is not a

myth. People saw him and wrote it down. That is the way history has been recorded. People see something and they write it down. Then I went into the fact that he is the son of God. He was God on Earth. God wanted to come down here and show us how to live, so he sent his son. Then I told them about how he has helped me in my life and how my life has been led by someone other than myself. Then I told them that I have never got a job that I applied for. Every job I have had has been given to me and I don't know why. Then I discussed how you have to make yourself available to God and he will use you. Well that is my testimony. Then I ask them, "Have you ever asked Christ to be your personal savior?" Finally, I like to leave them the thought, "Have you got a better plan for life? Because if you do then let me know what it is. ... After that I usually go tell stories that relate to it.

Mark: What kind of stories do you tell?

Bowden: Well, I give them examples. Say, of a guy wishing he could see God as a man just like us. He is saying, "I have heard about God but I have never seen Him, so where is He? Don't you wish He would stick His head out where we can see Him?" Now, if He did that then we would all believe because there He is, but you can't see Him so you don't know. Well, then I tell them that He did more than stick His head out because He actually came down here. The Bible says the *word*—which is God became flesh—that Jesus came down here to earth. So God did come down here and show us how to live. Well you might say, "That ain't really God." Well he raised Lazarus from the dead, only God can do that. He stilled a storm and stopped it, only God can do that. He met a leper, touched his

hand and washed it away, only God can do that. He took a blind man and gave him sight, again, only God can do that. I said he must have been God in the flesh. Then I will, use the demonstration of going through the lunch line and going to where the drinks are. There is a big old vat of orange juice up there. You are thirsty and hot. Oh, you could just drink that whole thing. But you can't because it is too big. So you get a little glass, fill it up and then drink it. Well you are getting the same thing in the cup that you see in the vat. You now know what it tastes like. So I say that is like God being in the flesh—God in the flesh down here. So I use that as an illustration. Then I sometimes talk about judgment day, when we die. The Bible says that we will all be judged. I believe it will be just like being in court. You have got your lawyer there, Jesus, who is saying that He believes in me and trusts in me. He is saying that this man committed his life to me, so let him in. Those are the approaches I take.

Mark: So what is your favorite story?

Bowden: Well, I can tell you one of my favorite church stories. Actually, it is probably one of the most meaningful stories I ever tell because it is something that happened to me when I played baseball in college. I was playing my last year and I had never hit a home run. I could never hit it that far. Now I could hit line drives, but I never got anything over the fence. So it is my last year in college and we were playing Auburn. Now I got a hit. It went through the infield and I took off. I rounded first and just then I thought that I would try for second. So, I got first and came on down to second. It was here that I could see that it had gone through the infielders and they had to chase it. So I turned and went to third. Now when I got to third I

couldn't see the ball anymore. But the third base coach over there—he tells you whether to slide, stay or go home—was waving me home. I am thinking I have never got a home run in my life. I came on down that third base line, the catcher was squatting down at the plate and I am about ready to score. He is squatting in front of the base blocking my path waiting for the ball. Now, I could see him eyeing the ball, so I hit him about as hard as I could. Well, by the time I hit him the ball had his glove and jumped out. I hit the home plate and the official said, “You're safe.” It was a home run. So all the guys came out of the dugout and were shaking hands. Then the first baseman yells to the catcher, “Throw me the ball.” So the catcher throws him the ball and he steps on first base. The first base umpire shouts, “You're out—you didn't touch first.” I had missed it. I had actually missed it. Anyway the point that I go on to make is that I didn't get the home run—I also say that I still haven't hit a home run—but the moral is that Jesus Christ, in life, is first base. If you are a Christian that is what you believe. Now, if you don't touch first base, then all that other stuff doesn't count. If you are trying to get to heaven you have to hit first base. Say, second base is all those good things that you did in life that you thought would get you there. You don't get there unless you step on first base. Anyway, that is my favorite story. There is no doubt about it.

Mark: Have you always had such strong convictions?

Bowden: Yeah, I had it when I first got into coaching. Now I didn't start getting into the church thing—lets see, I have been here 28 years and have been doing it ever since. ... Now, I didn't make them go to church when I was at West Virginia, but

we still had devotions and stuff like that—so around 27 years. When I came here I started taking them to church. I just felt like there was a need for it. See, a lot of these kids come from homes without a father. Some come from homes that might have taken them to church. Well now, they go off to college and, if they do like I did when I ran off to college, the first thing I did was resign from the church—church was out. I was away from home, so church was out. So, I don't care how strict they have been brought up, once they come here, they are not getting up anymore and nobody is going to wake them up. So, that is one reason. I do it, so they know it is still there. All I want to do is follow what their parents have taught them. Kind of a, this is the way your parents raised you and they can't be up here with you, so I am your parent now type of thing. Then after that, I leave it up to them.

Mark: You obviously have strong beliefs that you stand behind. How have they affected your coaching practices per se?

Bowden: Well, number one we are going to try and do what is right. My coaches believe like I do. I hire coaches that have similar convictions. So, it means as a staff, we are going to try and do what is right. I do not want to cheat. If something is wrong, I don't want us to do it. If it is breaking a rule, I don't want us to do it. Now other than that we are going to hit as hard as we can and play as hard as we can.

Mark: Talk to me a little bit more about faith. What would be some of the things that you would tell me to read or suggest that I read?

Bowden: Well, I would probably talk to you about how faith is important to your life. The most I would do though would be to make it available. I am going to say, "Son, I am not going to tell you what to believe. I would like to tell you what I believe. Now, you don't have to believe what I believe. You don't have to be a Christian to play for me. You don't have to go to church ever Sunday to play for me. Now, I am going to wish you were. I am going to tell you what I believe. Again, I am hoping to just make them a better person. I would probably say that this is what your Mama would want me to tell you. This is what your Daddy would want me to tell you. Now, when kids are bad and they send them off to college, they still want them to be good. They still want there kids to be good. So parents often agree with it. Remember, I have always asked for their permission.

The transcript extract highlights not only Bowden's religious beliefs, but also the importance of faith and spirituality in the Florida State football program. Bowden strongly believes that preparing athletes for life beyond football by providing guidance during such a transitional phase, namely college, is extremely important. This is supported by the testaments of Mickey Andrews who noted:

What is very, very important to him [Coach Bowden] is the spiritual side of life. He doesn't force religion onto the kids or the staff. Now, we do have a devotion everyday when we meet and he does expose the kids to it. We have a team Chaplin and a full time FCA guy. We have a prayer and devotion before every game. On Friday nights when he talks to the team, it is always something that is based on the spiritual aspect of life. I think that if he had a choice ... my gut feeling is, if he had a choice of the most wins of any division one college football coach or seeing his kids being saved, I don't think that there

would be any doubt about which one he would take. Now, that speaks strongly about the man.⁹

As Coach Andrews attests, for Bowden religion and football are intertwining components of the successful program. They are not treated as separate entities that must exist in isolation. They are, in fact, integral components. For Bowden they are not only part of the program but are fully ingrained components of his own life. As he has frequently noted, “I cannot remember a single day when church and football were not central parts of my life.”¹⁰ During this research journey Bowden’s desire to serve God through coaching has been an important aspect of his life and he strongly believes that God has guided his career for a reason. As a result he believes that as a role model, be it personally or through the mediums of television, newspapers or speaking engagements that he must lead by example. All-in-all Bowden’s belief in Christianity and his co-existing responsibilities as a head football coach affords him, in his eyes, the opportunity to help people find Christ if they seek it:

If we were car salesmen, we probably wouldn’t have much influence. If we were preachers, we might not have influence because sometimes preachers have a hard time getting kids’ attention. But, as coaches, we are in a profession that has high visibility. It gives us a platform to witness. And, who knows, one of those kids we witness to might turn out to be a world leader and a greater witness for Christ.

I know God had led me into coaching so that I might server Him better. Our Florida State team plays in a stadium that seats 60, 519, and in the near future it will seat more than that. In 1991 we played at Michigan in front of a crowd of more than 105, 000, plus we had a national television audience watching. We have played in front of 80,000 in the Orange Bowl. We have played on regional and national television many times.

Man, you can't find a pulpit any bigger than that. Those are the biggest pulpits in the world, and it is a great opportunity to witness.¹¹

Family

In the introduction I outlined my unwillingness to pry into the personal or family life of Coach Bowden. However, despite the fact that the scope of this text is limited, the importance of family in Bowden's life and the values that are associated with it should not be underestimated. In chapters five and six Bowden's learning and life experience were discussed and inferences to the importance of family made—inferences based on learning experiences and events that have impacted Bowden's career. However, in response to a question discussing the hardest thing that he has ever had to do in his coaching career, Bowden truly demonstrated the importance that family has had during his professional career:

What is the hardest thing I have had to go through in coaching? It may not be what you are looking for, but it happened three times. When I was an assistant at Florida State and then when I went to West Virginia as an assistant coach.... We had six children at the time and they were all in school, so Ann couldn't come with me. So I had to go up there for January, February, March, April, May and June, a total of six months without them. That was the worst thing that I ever had to do in my life. I would call them every chance I would get. I wasn't used to being away from my family. Then I finally got them moved up there. However, then I moved back down to Tallahassee and Florida State and I had to do it again. That definitely was the most difficult part of my whole coaching career, being away from my family.¹²

In his printed list of priorities, discussed at the outset of this Chapter, Bowden has family ranked second behind God. Although this text has not explored the importance of family with

regards to Bowden's coaching, it is important to acknowledge its importance in the larger web of his life. If, however, the documents and written testaments do not provide sufficient evidence, then walking into Bowden's office would authenticate his strong family ties. In fact, it would be hard for you not to notice the importance Bowden places on his family. The bookshelves and walls are all decorated with pictures of his wife, children and grandchildren. Always encompassed into his unbelievable busy schedule are two undisturbed weeks in the middle of June that the entire family spends on vacation in Florida.

A Private Person

At the end of chapter one I urged you to remember, as you read each subsequent chapter, that hidden amongst the media guided frenzies and notoriety of being a head football coach at Florida State, that Coach Bowden is a husband, a father and a grandfather. And, above all, he is an individual like everyone else. Within this text elements of Bowden's life and the beliefs that continue to inform it have been examined, discussed, expressed and analyzed. Additionally, as this chapter has unfolded the priority of God and Family over football has been detailed. However, when his day is over and it is time to escape the public side of his life, the Bowden that returns home is not the recruiter, university spokesperson or even the one capable of captivating a crowd. He is a private man. Bowden, if he had a choice, "Would go home, put on a pair of shorts, eat a sandwich and watch movies about World War II."¹³ In chapter twenty-three of his autobiography, titled *Ann's Turn*, Ann Bowden discussed this private side of Bowden:

I do think there has been more of a personal battle inside him than I realized.

Bobby is a very private person, and I know there will be many who will be surprised at that statement. People will probably say 'Bobby Bowden, private? He can't be that kind of person. He coaches his teams in front of thousands of people every Saturday in the fall.

He coaches his teams in front of national television audiences. He is interviewed by hordes of the media. He speaks to alumni groups. He preaches in churches. He speaks at national conferences of the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. How can he be a private person?' Well, those folks don't know him like I do.

We don't sit together and talk all that much. He never does what you would call 'spill his guts.' So, I guess in that respect, I can't really see inside him and know what's in his heart. But I can see the way my husband lives his life. Being a good example has been very important to him.

... Our boys love to be with their daddy. He will interact with them in his own way, but he has never been one to go out and play ball with them, or take them to the ball games, or take them fishing and hunting, or take them camping. The nature of his job, particularly since he's been a head coach at a major university, demands almost all of his time and energy.

People see him as a very successful, well-paid, famous coach. Believe me, it wasn't always that way. We had our tough times, times when we didn't have money in the bank, times when we weren't sure how we were going to pay our bills. There were plenty of times when we couldn't afford to go places or do things. I remember how tight finances were when we lived in the old Army Air Corps barracks at South Georgia Junior College. I remember what it was like to raise six children on less than \$5000 a year. I know what it was like to rob Peter to pay Paul. Through all those times, though, I always believed in my husband.¹⁴

As the passage details, Bobby Bowden is not the outgoing socialite that the media portrays and the public witnesses. He is a man that holds simple, southern principles that have been governed

by his upbringing. This text has not only explored his practices, beliefs, private and public life history and his coaching career, but also the pathways that have led him to them. Additionally, it has described and examined the opinions and sentiments of those that have known him, not only longer, but better than I do.

Although the voices and opinion of others and Bowden himself are strong tributes to the life of this expert football coach, based on my own interactions with coach Bowden I believe him to be a man that not only leads by example, but is also true to his word. Never did I witness a contradiction between his beliefs and values and the behaviors he publicly exhibited. Never did I feel intimidated by him or any of his staff. I also felt that he was a man whose interests are often paved by the needs of others. I must admit, however, that there were times when I became frustrated with the complexity of the research process. This was particularly true when it came to organizing interviews, observations and formal visits. As noted in chapter two, the week I spent with the program in the fall of 2003 was filled with many ups and downs, thus proving to be an excellent example of the difficulty in conducting research on such a public individual. Another example would be the constant flux in his schedule. However, only once was an interview cancelled and rescheduled when I had actually made the trip to Tallahassee. Yet, would you blame him? If I was Coach Bowden and I had the choice to play golf with the 1999 Heisman Trophy winner and the National Championship quarterback, Chris Weinke, or sit in an office answering questions with some researcher, I think I know which one I would pick. Yet, true to his word regarding access, much like the first practice in November, Bowden found time. During our next one hour scheduled interview, we actually discussed his career for over two hours.

It is important to note that the events and individuals that were discussed in this chapter and in this text as a whole are not the only experiences that have affected Bowden's career.

When discussing a life it is extremely difficult to piece together the roles and influences that experiences, events and individuals' have had upon it. An experience that happened twenty-years ago may be viewed differently today than it was back then. At the time it may have been viewed as insignificant; maybe in the future it is recognized as a lesson that was extremely important and essential. Therefore, lessons that are learned from sidelines past are continually changing and deriving new meanings within different contexts. The changing of practices and life is very often a slow process that with the aid of time enables an individual to survive, learn and improve. In concluding Bowden's present career story, it is only fitting to conclude with a metaphor that he used when asked about how his career has changed, he noted:

I can hardly remember a day that I have changed. It is not as if you did it [change] all of a sudden and then just stopped. It is more like a frog that you put in the skillet of hot water. Because the water is hot he will jump out. Now if you put him in tepid water and gradually turn the heat up, then he will stay there and gradually fry to death. That is the kind of water I have been in over my career—tepid—I just stayed there. So you just learn as you go.¹⁵

¹ Interview with Author (April 22, 2004)

² Interview with Author (Feb 22, 2004)

³ Bowden and Bowden (2001, p. 226)

⁴ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

⁵ For review See: Park (2001)

⁶ Interview with Author (March 27, 2004)

⁷ Interviews with Author (March 03, 2004; April 08, 2004)

⁸ Discussed and presented in Chapter One.

⁹ Interview with Author (April 6, 2004)

¹⁰ Bowden and Smith (1994, p. 33)

¹¹ Taking at a FCA meeting, cited in Bowden and Smith (1994, pp. 190-191)

¹² Interview with Bowden (Feb 22, 2004)

¹³ Interview with Charlie Barnes (March 23, 2004)

¹⁴ Bowden and Smith (1994, pp. 174-175)

¹⁵ Interview with Author (March 3, 2004)

EPILOGUE

If you don't mind going places without a map, follow me

Bahar¹

So where do I go now? During the developmental stages of the project and through the proposal, I asked those that supported this particular piece of biographical research to follow me. The pathways that the research guided me down were ones of excitement, anxiety and fulfillment. Four years ago as I headed south from North Carolina to Athens, Georgia I did not know what to expect, or the direction that my life was about to take. I wasn't even sure that I was even good enough to pursue a PhD and complete the dreaded dissertation. Yet, here at the end of a text that signifies the culmination of four years of work, I find myself again asking the same type of questions. This time I am moving west and instead of being a student I am about to become a professor, where again I am asking those that care to follow me. However, during this journey into the life of Coach Bowden I have been able to evaluate, question and re-visit some of the central components of my life, like religion, family, relationships and teaching. During research, it is hard for a researcher to stay focused on the purpose at hand and not draw comparisons with the person that they are studying. That is not to say that I would ever consider myself to be like someone of Coach Bowden's stature. However, it is through the process of, to use a Bowden phrase, self-evaluation, that I have learned more about myself both personally and professionally than I would have imagined at the outset.

The research experiences that I have been privileged to take part in will forever influence my life. What I do know is that the study of another life in search of understanding is a

journey that I want to experience again. However, this present narrative and exploration into the life of another is far from complete. There are still questions to be answered and stories to be told. As Wolf wrote, “Unfortunately, we rarely know the right place, right time, right question, or right people until we have nearly finished the job, or have finished it and are three thousand miles away.”² With time I hope this text will be further developed and the experiences it details and the lesson learned within it, shared with educators, coaches, teachers and anyone interested in the quest for improvement.

When this journey began I sought to discover knowledge of teaching, coaching and education. I desired to learn the lessons of those that had traveled the career roads of knowledge. Yet, what I discovered was that I learned more about the type of human being I have become. Although, I have always faced life head on and enjoyed the company of those that have shared it with me, I have often struggled to balance the strain of working in a people-based business with the responsibilities of personal relationships and the ultimate sanctuary of solitude. However, my interactions with Coach Bowden have helped me understand my life priorities that with time can be further honed. I have often taken for granted the place and the people that see me at my worst—home. As a child, a roommate and as a husband home was where I lived—a place where I vented my frustrations with the world to those that did not deserve such aggravation. Thanks to this experiences I am further understanding that home is where I feel safe. It is a sanctuary where I can share my insecurities and trouble my frustrations with the persons that I care about most. If I had to compare myself to Coach Bowden in anyway I think the passage that concludes this text, taken from an interview with Coach Bowden, helped me understand the importance of family and ultimately the person I refused to believe I had become:

When I go home I don't want to see anybody. I don't know if that is right or not, but that is just the way that I am. People might not realize this I don't like people coming out to see me. I don't want to talk to people when I go home. When I come home I want to be by myself, have Ann there, watch TV, read or do what ever I want to do. Now, I hate to say that, but I don't like people dropping by to see me. I don't care who it is, it could be the President of the United States; I don't want him dropping by to see me. I guess that is kind of quirky. Somewhere you have got to have privacy. I think I just need to get away and be by myself. I mean I don't have very many close friends because I don't allow myself to get very close to people. My friends are my family. I would rather be with my sons than anybody. They are the only ones that I don't mind dropping in on me. Jeff comes by or Steve, or Terry, or Tommy, or the girls. It's good. When I go home I like to get away from everybody. I see everybody in the day time that I want or need to see.³

¹ Bahar (1996, p. 33)

² Wolf (1992, p. 128)

³ Interview with Author (April 08, 2004)

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APPENDIX A

BOBBY BOWDEN'S SPEAKING ENGAGEMENTS:

SPRING SCHEDULE 2004

Coach Bowden's Spring/Summer 2004 Speaking Engagements

Event Date	Event Day	Event Time	Contact Name	Complete Organization Address	Phone	Fax	Event
February 9, 2004	Monday	9:30 AM 10:45 AM	Bob Brymer rbrymer@fsu.edu	FSU School of Hospitality Florida State University Tallahassee, FL 32306			Classroom Speaking
February 11, 2004	Wednesday	6:10 PM 7:00 PM	Paul Nixon paulnixon@juno.com	Congregation Development 2600 West Strong St. Pensacola, FL 32505			Network of United Methodist Church Developers Conference
February 12, 2004	Thursday	6:30 PM 8:30 PM	Dicky Clark rwalker@ fca.org/dclark@fca.org	FCA Georgia (Rome) P.O. Box 352 Watkinsville, GA 30677			FCA Banquet
February 14, 2004	Saturday		Chuck Rohe	Nike Coach of the Year Clinic P.O. Box 1511 Windermere, FL 34786-1511			Nike Coach of the Year Clinic
February 15, 2004	Sunday	6:00 PM 7:30 PM	Charlie Warren cwarren@fca.org	FCA West Central Florida P.O. Box 1971 Lakeland, FL 33802-1971			Victory Church Speaking
February 17, 2004	Tuesday		Doug Scott	FCA South Georgia P.O. Box 466 Thomasville, GA 31799			FCA Valdosta Dinner
February 19, 2004	Thursday		Danice Wallace danice@southwalton.com	All Sports Association Banquet			FCA Breakfast

Coach Bowden's Spring/Summer 2004 Speaking Engagements

Event Date	Event Day	Event Time	Contact Name	Complete Organization Address	Phone	Fax	Event
February 20, 2004	Friday		C.R. Beede	Department of the Navy 2080 Child St. Jacksonville, FL 32214-5000			National Prayer Lunch
March 1, 2004	Monday		Doug Scott	FCA South Georgia P.O. Box 466 Thomasville, GA 31799			FCA Tifton Breakfast
March 1, 2004	Monday	5:30 PM 9:30 PM	Donna Arterburn donna@strom.clemson.edu	Clemson University Strom Thurmond Institute Clemson, SC 29634-0125			Calhoun Lecture Series
March 4, 2004	Thursday	11:00 AM 1:00 PM	Kerry O'Neill koneill@fca.org	FCA Fredericksburg, Virginia 2217 Princess Anne St., Suite 202-3 Fredericksburg, Va 22401			FCA Booster Club Kickoff Luncheon
March 5, 2004	Friday		Gail Robbins grobbs@pc.fsu.edu	FSU Panama City 4750 Collegiate Dr. Panama City, FL 32405-1099			FCA Golf Tournament
March 20, 2004	Saturday	7:00 PM 8:30 PM	Jim Grabo	Covenant Community Church 1007 Gospel Rd. Ft. Walton Beach, FL 32547			Banquet
March 28, 2004	Sunday		Dan Carter	Zebulon Baptist Church 108 West Glenn St. Zebulon, NC 27597			Church Speaking

Coach Bowden's Spring/Summer 2004 Speaking Engagements

Event Date	Event Day	Event Time	Contact Name	Complete Organization Address	Event
March 29, 2004	Monday	10:30 AM 6:00 PM	Ernie Stevenson fcatal@infionline.net	FCA North Florida 2121 Old Bainbridge Rd. Tallahassee, FL 32308	FCA Golf Tournament
April 1, 2004	Thursday	12:00 PM 11:00 PM		FSU	FSU Coaching Clinic
April 2, 2004	Friday	7:00 AM 7:00 PM		FSU	FSU Coaching Clinic
April 2, 2004	Friday	8:00 AM 12:00 PM	Jason Pence jpence@fca.org	FCA Panama City P.O. Box 86 Panama City, FL 32402	FCA Golf Tournament
April 3, 2004	Saturday	7:00 AM 2:00 PM		FSU	FSU Coaching Clinic
April 4, 2004	Sunday	7:00 PM 8:30 PM	Hale Stephenson sammartin@fca.org	FCA Greenville PMB 171, 740 Greenville Blvd., Suite 400 Greenville, NC 27858	FCA Banquet
April 5, 2004	Monday		David Parker	FCA 2362 Goff Dr. Batesville, AR 72501	FCA Arkansas

SPRING GAME IS AT GENE COX STADIUM

Coach Bowden's Spring/Summer 2004 Speaking Engagements

Event Date	Event Day	Event Time	Contact Name	Complete Organization Address	Event
April 7, 2004	Wednesday	7:00 AM 9:00 AM	Larry Kreider	The Gathering USA, Inc. 106 East Church St. Orlando, FL 32801	Gathering of Men Spring Breakfast
April 11, 2004	Sunday	10:30 AM 11:45 AM	Ryan Begue ryan@fcbonifay.com	First Baptist Church of Esto 202 West Kansas Ave. Bonifay, FL 32425	Church Speaking
May 23, 2004	Sunday	10:45 AM 12:00 PM	Elbert Nasworthy enasworthy@myrtlelak e.org	Myrtle Lake Baptist Church 2017 Riegler Rd. Land O'Lakes, FL 34639	Church Speaking
June 6, 2004	Sunday		Ray Shackelford RevRayS@AOL.com	Birmingham Fellowship Ministries 125 Tenth Street Birmingham, AL 35217	Church Speaking Event
June 7, 2004	Monday	10:00 AM 4:00 PM	Marvin Thornton marvin.thornton@south trust.com	South Trust Bank & Glenwood, Inc. A-001-WB-0303, P.O. Box 2554 Birmingham, AL 35290	Katherine R. Ireland Memorial Golf Tournament
June 10, 2004	Thursday	7:30 AM	Bill Morton	Boy Scouts of America 400 Shades Creek Pkwy., Suite 200 Birmingham, AL 35259	Scouts Youth-At-Risk Breakfast
June 14, 2004	Monday		Twig Gray tgray@fca.org	FCA South Carolina 100 Executive Center Dr., Suite A-4 Columbia, SC 29210-8407	FCA Black Mountain

Coach Bowden's Spring/Summer 2004 Speaking Engagements

Event Date	Event Day	Event Time	Contact Name	Complete Organization Address	Phone	Fax	Event
August 20, 2004	Friday	11:00 AM	Lee Howell	FSU Baptist Campus Ministry 200 S. Woodward Ave. Tallahassee, FL 32304			Speaking to the BCM
		11:45 AM	leehowell@fsubcm.org				
August 24, 2004	Tuesday	7:30 PM	Reggie Hutchins	FCA North Florida 2121 Old Bainbridge Rd. Tallahassee, FL 32303			FCA Huddle Meeting
		8:30 PM	Rhutchins@fca.org				

APPENDIX B

COPY OF A DEFENSIVE NOTE CARD USED BY COACH BOWDEN

OCTOBER 15, 2003

COACH BOWDEN'S DEFENSIVE PRACTICE SCHEDULE				
DATE		Def. Practice		DRESS
10/15/2003				Sh. Pads
MEETINGS			FLEX	
2:25 PM			3:30 PM	
A	KOR	KOR	KOR	Fundamenta
B	KOR/KOC	KOR/KOC	KOR/KOC	"
C	KOC	KOC	KOC	"
D				
	DB	LB	DE	DL
1	Big 4	Big 4	Big 4	Big 4
2	Open field tack	Individual	Individual	Individual
3	Adjustments	"	"	"
4	Skev vs. Wake	Skev vs. Wake	"	"
5	"	"	"	"
6	"	"	"	"
7	Inside	Inside	Inside	Inside
8	"	"	"	"
9	Outside	Outside	Outside	Outside
10	"	"	"	"
11	Team	Team	Team	Team
12	"	"	"	"
13	"	"	"	"
14	Team Redzone	Team Redzone	Team Redzone	Team Redzor
15	Team Short yd	Team Short yd	Team Short yd	Team Short y
16	Team Goalline	Team Goalline	Team Goalline	Team Goallir
17	Skel	Skel	Pass Rush	Pass Rush
18	"	"	"	"
19	11 on 11	11 on 11	11 on 11	11 on 11
20	1 minute	1 minute	1 minute	1 minute

APPENDIX C

THREE FLORIDA STATE GAME ITINERARIES

HOME TO NC STATE – NOVEMEBER 15, 2003

AWAY TO CLEMSON – NOVEMBER 8, 2003

HOME TO WAKE FOREST – OCTOBER 25, 2003

Florida State vs. NC State Itinerary
Saturday, November 15, 2003

Friday, November 14, 2003

3:15 PM	Defense Meets Offense Meets	
4:00 PM	Special Teams Meet	
7:45 PM	Captains leave for PowWow	Civic Center
9:00 PM	DEPART FOR THOMASVILLE	Gate A
10:00 PM	Arrive in Thomasville Snack before curfew	Hotel

Saturday, November 15, 2003

7:00 AM	Continental Breakfast	
8:00 AM	Wake Up Call	
8:30 AM	BRUNCH	Holiday Inn
9:10 AM	Punt Team Meeting	
11:15 – 12:00 Noon	Pre-Game Meal for those not traveling to Thomasville	
11:30 AM	PRE-GAME MEAL Depart Thomasville Billy Smith to Accompany Team ↳ SECURITY	Holiday Inn
12:30 PM	NON-TRAVEL PLAYERS WHO ARE DRESSING TO BE TAPED	Training Room
1:00 PM	Arrive in Tallahassee	Stadium
1:30 PM	Travel players to be taped	Training Room
2:30 PM	CHAPEL ALL PLAYERS TO BE DRESSED	Weight Room
2:38 PM	Pre-game practice begins	Field
3:18 PM	Field Cleared	
3:19 PM	Pre-game Show	Field
3:31 PM	Senior Recognition	Field
3:36 PM	Coin Toss	Field
3:38 PM	FSU vs. NC State Kick Off!	

FSU vs. CLEMSON ITINERARY
Greenville Marriott Airport
One Parkway East
Greenville, SC 29615
(864) 297-0300

Friday, November 7, 2003

9:00 – 10:30 AM	Pick up Travel Warm-Ups	
11:00 AM	Buses Depart	Gate B
12:00 PM	Delta Charter Departs	
1:15 PM	Arrive Greenville Marriott Airport Buses leave immediately for hotel Offense Skill to Stadium	
1:45 PM	Team Arrives at Hotel	Greenville Marriott
2:15 PM	Defense Meets Offense Meets (O.L.)	Salon ABC Salon D, E, F
6:00 PM	Team Dinner	Piedmont Room
6:30 PM	Coach Bowden Speaks	Salon D
7:00 PM	Offense Meets Defense Meets	Salon D Salon ABC, E, F
9:30 – 10:00 PM	Snack	Piedmont Room
11:00 PM	Lights Out	

Saturday, November 8, 2003

7:00 AM	Early Risers	Piedmont Room
9:00 AM	Wake Up	
9:30 AM	K.O.C/Ex. Pt. FG/K.O.R. Block Meeting	Salon D
10:00 AM	Team Breakfast	Piedmont Room
10:30 AM	Punt/Punt Block	Salon D
11:00 AM	Defense Meets Offense Meets	Salon ABC Salon D, E, F
3:25 PM	Pre-Game Meal	Piedmont Room
4:25 PM	Chapel	Salon D
4:55 PM	Buses Depart for Stadium	
7:45 PM	FSU vs. Clemson	
1:00 AM	Departs Greenville Airport – Delta Charter	
3:00 AM	Estimated Arrival in Tallahassee	

Florida State vs. Wake Forest Itinerary
Saturday, October 25, 2003

Friday, October 24, 2003

2:15 PM	Defense Meets Offense Meets	
4:00 PM	Special Teams Meet	
9:00 PM	DEPART FOR THOMASVILLE	Gate A
10:00 PM	Arrive in Thomasville Snack before curfew	Hotel

Saturday, October 25, 2003

7:00 AM	Continental Breakfast	
8:00 AM	Wake Up Call	
8:30 AM	BRUNCH	Holiday Inn
9:10 AM	Punt Team Meeting	
11:15 – 12:00 Noon	Pre-Game Meal for those not traveling to Thomasville	
11:30 AM	PRE-GAME MEAL	Holiday Inn
12:00 Noon	Depart Thomasville Billy Smith to Accompany Team	
12:30 PM	NON-TRAVEL PLAYERS WHO ARE DRESSING TO BE TAPED	Training Room
1:00 PM	Arrive in Tallahassee	Stadium
1:30 PM	Travel players to be taped	Training Room
2:30 PM	CHAPEL ALL PLAYERS TO BE DRESSED	Weight Room
2:37 PM	Pre-game practice begins	Field
3:12 PM	Field Cleared	
3:17 PM	Pre-game Show	Field
3:33 PM	Coin Toss	Field
3:37 PM	FSU vs. Wake Forest Kick Off!	

APPENDIX D

ORGANGE BOWL ITINERARY

FSU VS UNIVERSTIY OF MIAMI (01, 01, 2004)



Sheraton Bal Harbour Beach Resort
9701 Collins Ave.
Bal Harbour, FL 33154
(305) 865-7511

REVISED 12/12/03 - SAW

Friday, December 26, 2003 (Shorts)

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
9:30 AM	Guests Arrive at Delta Check-In	
11:00 AM	FSU Charter Flight Departs	
11:00 – 1:00 PM	Team checks in and registers	Sheraton Bal Harbor Crystal Ball Room
12:00 PM	FSU Charter arrives	Miami International
1:00 PM	Per Diem pass out for players	Sheraton Bal Harbor Crystal Ball Room
2:00 PM	Team Orientation Meeting	Grand Ball Room
2:30 PM	Ticket Request & Sign Up	Room 1269
	Defense Meets	Gardenia/Juniper
	Offense Tapes & Dress	Magnolia Room
3:00 PM	Offense Meets	Banyon/Jasmine
	Defense Tapes & Dress	Magnolia Room
3:30 PM	Team Departs for Practice	Front of Hotel
3:45 PM	20 minutes for media	Barry University
4:05 PM	Team flex	
4:15 PM	Practice (1-12)	Barry University
5:10 PM	Announcements/Sublicious Subs	
5:15 PM	Conditioning	
ASAP	NCAA Meeting	Cypress Room
7:00 PM	Welcome	Azalea Room
:15 PM	First Shuttle Leaves for South Beach	
1:00 AM	CURFEW – DON'T BE LATE	

SECURITY ON ALL FLOORS

Saturday, December 27, 2003 (Pads) - Like Tuesday Practice

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
7:45 AM	Wake up call for players	
8:00 AM	Coaches Meeting	Board Room
7:30 – 9:30 AM	Continental Breakfast	Azalea Room
8:15 – 9:00 AM	Defense Meets	Gardenia/Juniper Banyon/Jasmine
	Offense tape and dress	Magnolia Room
9:00 – 9:45 AM	Offense Meets	Gardenia/Juniper Banyon/Jasmine
	Defense tape and dress	Magnolia Room
9:50 AM	Buses leave for practice	
10:10 – 10:30 AM	20 Minutes for Media	Barry University
10:30 AM	Team Flex	
10:40 AM	Specialty	
10:50 AM	A – B – C	
11:10 AM	Break	
11:15 AM	Practice (1-18)	Barry University
12:45 PM	Conditioning	
1:00 PM	Pick up Boston Market	
2:15 – 4:30 PM	Buses depart for Orange Bowl Beach Party	
5:00 – 7:00 PM	Ticket Sign Up	Room 1269
8:15 PM	First Shuttle Leaves for South Beach	
1:00 AM	CURFEW – DON'T BE LATE Security – Walk Halls	

* NOTE – For coaches – divide the field when we get to BARRY UNIVERSITY

Sunday, December 28, 2003 (Shells) – Like Wednesday Practice

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
7:30 AM	Wake up all players	
7:30 AM	Coaches Meeting	Board Room
7:30 – 9:30 AM	Continental Breakfast	Azalea Room
8:15 – 9:00 AM	Defense Meets	Jasmine/Banyon Gardenia/Juniper
	Offense Tape & Dress	Magnolia Room
9:00 – 9:45 AM	Offense Meets	Jasmine/Banyon Gardenia/Juniper
	Defense Tape & Dress	Magnolia Room
9:50 AM	Buses leave No Media	
10:05 AM	Team Flex (poss. team flex)	Barry University
10:15 AM	Specialty	
10:25 AM	A – B – C	
10:45 AM	Break	
10:50 AM	Practice (1-18)	
12:20 PM	Conditioning Select Seniors take warm-ups & shower at Barry University for hospital *OB to help with directions	Coach Sexton in Charge 2 Vans & Seniors Chris St. John (driver) Jeff Talbert (driver)
12:20 PM	Pick Up Papa Johns Pizza	
12:30 – 2:30 PM	Ticket Sign Up	Room 1269
1:30 – 4:30 PM	Orange Bowl Hospital Visit (Select Seniors)	
5:15 – 9:00 PM	Buses Depart for Dinner	Smith & Wollensky Steak House
1:00 AM	CURFEW – DON'T BE LATE!!! Security – Walks Halls	

Monday, December 29, 2003 (Shells)

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
6:30 AM	Wake up all players	
7:00 – 9:00 AM	Buses Depart FCA Breakfast (Attendance Mandatory)	Radisson
10:00 AM	Defense Meets	Jasmine/Banyon Gardenia/Juniper
	Offense Tape and Dress	Magnolia Room
10:45 AM	Offense Meets	Jasmine/Banyon Gardenia/Juniper
	Defense Tape and Dress	Magnolia Room
11:20 AM	Buses leave for practice	
	No Media	
11:35 AM	Team Flex	Barry University
11:45 AM	Specialty	
11:50 AM	A - B - C	
12:05 PM	Break	
12:10 PM	Practice (1-18)	
1:30 PM	Conditioning	
1:45 PM	Pick up Olive Garden	
2:00 – 4:00 PM	Ticket Sign Up	Room 1269
8:15 PM	First Shuttle Leaves for South Beach	
1:00 AM	CURFEW – DON'T BE LATE	
2:30 – 3:00 AM	Security Walks Halls	

Tuesday, December 30, 2003 (Shorts) - LIKE A THURSDAY PRACTICE

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
7:45 AM	Wake up call for players	
8:00 AM	Coaches Meeting	Board Room
7:30 – 9:30 AM	Continental Breakfast	Azalea Room
8:15 – 9:15 AM	Defense Meets	Gardenia/Juniper Banyon/Jasmine
	Offense Tape and Dress	Magnolia Room
9:15 – 10:15 AM	Offense Meets	Gardenia/Juniper Banyon/Jasmine
	Defense Tape and Dress	Magnolia Room
10:20 AM	Buses leave for Practice	Barry University
10:35 – 10:55 AM	20 Minutes for Media DRESS	
10:55 AM	Team Flex	
11:05 AM	Practice (1-15)	
12:20 PM	Finished	
12:20 PM	Pick up Boston Market	
12:30 – 6:00 PM	Ticket Sign Up – Final Day	Room 1269
	AFTERNOON FREE	
8:15 PM	First Shuttle Leaves for South Beach	
12:00 Midnight	CURFEW – DON'T BE LATE!!!	
12:30 – 3:00 AM	Security – Walks Halls	

Wednesday, December 31, 2003 - LIKE A FRIDAY
(DAY BEFORE GAME)

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
11:00 AM	Bus Departs *ORANGE BOWL COACH'S LUNCHEON* Coach Sexton will select <u>15 players</u> to attend Dress: Warm Ups	
2:00 PM	Defense Meets	Jasmine/Juniper
	Offense Meets	Banyon/Gardenia
3:45 PM	Bus Leaves with Skilled Offense Players	Pro Player Stadium
4:45 PM	Special Teams Meet	Cypress Room
5:30 PM	Season Hi-Lite Tape	Cypress Room
6:00 PM	Team Dinner	Azalea Room
6:30 PM	Coach Bowden Talk	Cypress Room
6:50 PM	Defense Meets	Cypress Room
	Offense Meets	Juniper Room
10:00 PM	Mandatory Snack	Azalea Room
11:00 PM	CURFEW - BED CHECK DO NOT LEAVE HOTEL DON'T BE LATE!!!!	
11:00 PM	ALL NIGHT SECURITY	

Thursday, January 1, 2004

<u>TIME</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
9:30 AM	Wake up call for players	
10:00 AM	Brunch	Azalea Room
10:30 AM	Kicking Team Meeting	Cypress Room
11:00 AM	Defense Meets	Cypress/Juniper Banyon/Jasmine
11:45 AM	Offense Meets	Cypress/Juniper Banyon/Jasmine
1:00 PM	SECURITY ON PLAYER FLOORS (No one on floors except players)	
4:00 PM	Pre-Game Meal Dress – Warm Ups	Azalea Room
5:10 PM	Devotional	Cypress Room
6:00 PM	Buses leave for Orange Bowl	
8:30 PM	Kickoff FSU vs. Canes	
12:00 PM	Post-Game Buffet JUST PLAYERS	Azalea Room

Friday, January 2, 2004

6:30 AM	Loading of luggage trucks	
7:15 AM	Luggage trucks depart for airport	
8:45 AM	Buses depart for airport	
	Continental Breakfast	Azalea Room
10:30 AM	Delta Charter Leaves for Tallahassee	
11:45 AM	Arrival in Tallahassee	

*PLAYERS CHECK OUT AND DEPART ON THEIR OWN!!!

APPENDIX E

STATED PURPOSES OF THE NATIONAL COLLEGIATE ASSOCIATION (NCAA)

SECTION 2.1

SOURCE:

National Collegiate Athletic Association (2003). *2003-2004 NCAA Div I manual*. Retrieved May 21, 2004, from http://www.ncaa.org/library/membership/division_i_manual/2003-04/2003-04_d1_manual.pdf

1.2 PURPOSES [*]

The purposes of this Association are:

- (a) To initiate, stimulate and improve intercollegiate athletics programs for student-athletes and to promote and develop educational leadership, physical fitness, athletics excellence and athletics participation as a recreational pursuit;
- (b) To uphold the principle of institutional control of, and responsibility for, all intercollegiate sports in conformity with the constitution and bylaws of this Association;
- (c) To encourage its members to adopt eligibility rules to comply with satisfactory standards of scholarship, sportsmanship and amateurism;
- (d) To formulate, copyright and publish rules of play governing intercollegiate athletics;
- (e) To preserve intercollegiate athletics records;
- (f) To supervise the conduct of, and to establish eligibility standards for, regional and national athletics events under the auspices of this Association;
- (g) To cooperate with other amateur athletics organizations in promoting and conducting national and international athletics events;
- (h) To legislate, through bylaws or by resolutions of a Convention, upon any subject of general concern to the members related to the administration of intercollegiate athletics; and
- (i) To study in general all phases of competitive intercollegiate athletics and establish standards whereby the colleges and universities of the United States can maintain their athletics programs on a high level.

APPENDIX F

TABLE OF CONTENTS FOR THE DIVISION I FOOTBALL COACHES RECRUITING
GUIDE

SOURCE:

National Collegiate Athletic Association (2003). *2002/2003 Recruiting Guide: Division I Football*. Retrieved May 21, 2004, from http://www.ncaa.org/library/membership/recruiting_guides/2002-03/2002-03_football_recruit_guide.pdf

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APPENDIX G

KNIGHT FOUNDATION RECOMMENDATIONS (APPENDIX A)

SOURCE:

John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (1999, August). *The reports of the Knight Commission on intercollegiate athletics*. Retrieved May 20, 2004, from <http://www.knightfdn.org/publications/knightcommission/KnightCommissiononIntercollegiateAthletics.pdf>

Appendix: Action On Knight Commission Recommendations

I. PRESIDENTIAL CONTROL

Trustees should explicitly endorse and reaffirm presidential authority in athletics governance, delegate authority over finances, affirm the president's authority for personnel and annually review athletics program.

Implementation of this recommendation requires action on individual campuses. Although no detailed records are available, more than 100 institutions and organizations have reported adoption of this principle.

Presidents should act on their obligation to control conferences.

The 1992 NCAA convention addressed the issue of presidential control, amending Article 5 of the NCAA Constitution so to require presidential approval of conference-sponsored legislative initiatives.

Presidents should control the NCAA.

Legislation passed at the 1993 NCAA convention formalized the governance role of presidents within the organization by the creation of a Joint Policy Board comprised of officers of the NCAA and the Presidents Commission.

Presidents should commit their institutions to equity in all aspects of intercollegiate athletics.

The 1992 NCAA convention delayed reductions in financial aid for Division I women's sports. Also, the NCAA appointed a Gender-Equity Task Force which issued its findings and recommendations in the Summer of 1993. Additional gender equality legislation is anticipated for the 1994 NCAA convention.

Presidents should control their institution's involvement with commercial television.

The 1992 NCAA convention directed that the Special Committee on Financial Conditions in Intercollegiate Athletics examine the issue of media revenues, among other financial considerations.



II. ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: “NO PASS, NO PLAY”

- **The NCAA should strengthen initial eligibility requirements: By 1995, initial eligibility should be based on a 2.00 average in 15 units of high school academic work and a combined score of 700 on the SAT or 17 on the ACT.**

The 1992 NCAA convention established core curriculum requirements of 13 units, and an initial eligibility index of 2.5 GPA in the core combined with an SAT score of 700 (ACT score of 17).

- **High school student-athletes should be ineligible for reimbursed campus visits (or signing a letter of intent) until they show reasonable promise of being able to meet degree requirements.**

The 1992 NCAA convention prohibited official visits prior to the early signing period in Division I sports if student-athletes do not present as SAT score of 700 (ACT score of 17) and a minimum 2.00 GPA in seven core courses. Under current bylaws, prospects may visit campus after the early signing period even if they do not meet SAT or ACT minimum requirements.

- **Junior college transfers who did not, on graduating from high school, meet proposition 48 requirements, should “sit out” a year of competition after transfer.**

This recommendation is substantially incorporated in a new progress toward degree requirement adopted at the 1992 NCAA convention (see below).

- **The NCAA should study the feasibility of requiring the range of academic abilities of incoming athletes to approximate the range of abilities of the entire freshman class.**

The NCAA's new certification program (see section IV below) requires institutions to compare academic performance of incoming athletes with the rest of the freshman class.

The letter of intent should serve the student as well as the athletics department.

No action to date.

Athletics scholarships should be offered for a five-year period.

No action to date.

Athletics eligibility should depend on progress toward a degree.

The 1992 NCAA convention created new Division I requirements governing: mid-year transfer students, credits to be earned during the regular academic year, proportion of credits toward a specific degree, and minimum GPA toward that degree. The credit and GPA requirements govern athletics eligibility in years 3 and 4.

Graduation rates of athletes should be a criterion for NCAA certification.

The certification process (below) incorporates graduation rates as a major criterion.



III. FINANCIAL INTEGRITY

Athletics cost must be reduced, and cost control measures adopted in 1991 must not be “fine tuned” out of existence.

The 1992 NCAA convention reduced the allowable number of grants-in-aid. Also, the NCAA appointed a special Committee to Review Financial Conditions in Intercollegiate Athletics which issued a report in June 1993. Based upon the recommendations of the Special Committee, additional “cost-cutting” legislation will be introduced at the 1994 NCAA convention.

Athletics grants-in-aid should cover the full cost of attendance for the very needy.

No action to date.

The independence of athletics foundations and booster clubs must be curbed.

The 1992 NCAA convention directed the Special Committee to Review Financial Conditions in Intercollegiate Athletics to examine the role of booster clubs, among other financial considerations;

The NCAA formula for sharing television revenue from the national basketball championship must be viewed by university presidents.

The Presidents Commission reviewed the revenue-sharing formula, approved it, and recommended reserving additional moneys for the membership fund.

All athletics-related coaches’ income should be reviewed and approved by the university.

The 1992 NCAA convention required annual written approval from the institution’s CEO for all athletically related income.

Coaches should be offered long-term contracts.

Implementation of this recommendation requires action on individual campuses.

Institutional support should be available for intercollegiate athletics.

Implementation of this recommendation requires action on individual campuses.

IV. CERTIFICATION

The NCAA should extend the certification process to all institutions granting athletics aid.

The 1993 NCAA convention adopted a new athletics certification program for Division I institutions.

Universities should undertake comprehensive, annual policy audits for their athletics program.

The NCAA certification program entails an annual compilation of this and other data.

The certification program should include the major themes advanced by the Knight Commission, i.e., the "One-Plus-Three" model.

The NCAA certification program substantially incorporates the fundamental principles of the "One-Plus-Three" model.

APPENDIX H

NCAA REGULATIONS FOR PRESEASON PRACTICE (17.11.2)

SOURCE:

National Collegiate Athletic Association (2003). 2003-2004 NCAA Div I manual.

Retrieved May 21, 2004, from http://www.ncaa.org/library/membership/division_i_manual/2003-04/2003-04_d1_manual.pdf

17.11.2 Preseason Practice.

(See Figure 17-11)

17.11.2.1 First Practice Date. A member institution shall not commence official preseason football practice sessions for the varsity, junior varsity or freshman team prior to the date that will permit a maximum of 35 units (see Bylaw 17.02.11) prior to its first scheduled intercollegiate game. During the preseason practice period, institutions may not engage in more than 29 on-field practice sessions (see Bylaw 17.11.2.4.1). *(Revised: 1/11/89, 4/14/03, 4/24/03 effective 5/1/03 to begin implementation at the beginning of the 2003 summer conditioning period)*

17.11.2.1.1 Limit on Number of Participants—Division I-A. [I-A] In Division I-A football, there shall be a limit of 105 student-athletes who may engage in practice activities prior to the institution's first day of classes or the institution's first contest, whichever occurs earlier. *(Adopted: 1/11/94)*

17.11.2.1.1.1 Replacement of Student-Athlete Who Voluntarily Withdraws. [I-A] A student-athlete who has voluntarily withdrawn from an institution's team, has departed the practice site and no longer will engage in any preseason activities may be replaced with another student-athlete without including that individual in the institution's 105-participant preseason practice limitation. *(Adopted: 1/10/95)*

17.11.2.1.2 Limit on Number of Participants—Division I-AA. [I-AA] In Division I-AA football, there shall be a limit of 90 student-athletes who may engage in practice activities prior to the institution's first day of classes or the institution's first contest, whichever occurs earlier. *(Adopted: 1/11/94)*

17.11.2.1.2.1 Exception—Limited Preseason-Practice Units. [I-AA] There shall be a limit of 110 student-athletes who may engage in such preseason-practice activities at an institution that establishes its first preseason practice date based on 27 practice units, per Bylaw 17.02.11 (including practice units for first-time participants). This exception shall apply exclusively to institutions that award financial aid in the sport of football pursuant to the following criteria, even if there are student-athletes who participate in football and one or more other sports who receive athletics aid in sport(s) other than football: *(Adopted: 1/11/94, Revised: 1/10/95)*

- (a) In football, the institution awards financial aid only to student-athletes who demonstrate financial need, except that loans, academic honor awards, nonathletics achievement awards, and on-campus employment and certain aid from outside sources may be provided without regard to financial need;
- (b) The institution uses methodologies for analyzing need that conform to federal, state and written institutional guidelines. The methodologies used to determine the need of a student-athlete must be consistent with the methodologies used by the institution's financial aid office for all students; and *(Revised: 1/10/95)*
- (c) The composition of the financial aid package offered to football student-athletes is consistent with the policy established for offering financial assistance to all students. The financial aid packages for football student-athletes also shall meet the following criteria:
 - (1) The institution shall not consider athletics ability as a criterion in the formulation of any football student-athlete's financial aid package; and
 - (2) The procedures used to award financial aid to football student-athletes must be the same as the existing financial aid procedures utilized for all students at the institution.

17.11.2.1.2.2 Junior Varsity Exception. [I-AA] Institutions that sponsor junior varsity teams that compete in at least four intercollegiate contests are not subject to the limits of Bylaw 17.11.2.1.2. *(Adopted: 1/11/94)*

17.11.2.1.2.3 Replacement of Student-Athlete Who Voluntarily Withdraws. [I-AA] A student-athlete who has voluntarily withdrawn from an institution's team, has departed the practice site and no longer will engage in any preseason activities may be replaced with another student-athlete without including that individual in the institution's limitation on the number of individuals who may participate in preseason practice. *(Adopted: 1/10/95)*

17.11.2.2 Activities Prior to First Practice Date. [I-A/I-AA] Prior to participation in any preseason activities, all prospects and student-athletes (with the exception of those individuals who received a physical pursuant to Bylaw 17.11.6.2-(a)-(2)-(c)) shall be required to undergo a medical examination that is administered or supervised by a physician. *(Revised: 4/24/03 effective 5/1/03 to begin implementation at the beginning of the 2003 summer conditioning period)*

17.11.2.3 Five-Day Acclimatization Period —Divisions I-A and I-AA. [I-A/I-AA] In Divisions I-A and I-AA, preseason practice shall begin with a five-day acclimatization period for both first-time participants (e.g., freshman and transfers) and continuing student-athletes. All student-athletes, including walk-ons who arrive to preseason practice after the first day of practice, are required to undergo a five-day acclimatization period. The five-day acclimatization period shall be conducted as follows: *(Adopted: 4/24/03 effective 5/1/03 to begin implementation at the beginning of the 2003 summer conditioning period)*

- (a) Institutions may not conduct administrative activities (e.g., team pictures, equipment issue, academic orientation, etc.) or conditioning, speed, strength, or agility tests on any day prior to the start of the five-day acclimatization period. During the five-day acclimatization period, the institution must establish an academic orientation period for those student-athletes who are beginning their initial season of eligibility for football practice at the institution. The orientation activities may be conducted on more than one day during the five-day period, but must be conducted for the equivalent of one day (no less than six hours).
- (b) During the five-day period, participants shall not engage in more than one on-field practice per day, not to exceed to three hours in length.
- (c) First-time participants and continuing students shall not be required to practice separately.
- (d) During the first two days of the acclimatization period, helmets shall be the only piece of protective equipment student-athletes may wear. During the third and fourth days of the acclimatization period, helmets and shoulder pads shall be the only pieces of protective equipment student-athletes may wear. During the final day of the five-day period and on any days thereafter, student-athletes may practice in full pads.

17.11.2.2 Activities Prior to First Practice Date. [I-A/I-AA] Prior to participation in any preseason activities, all prospects and student-athletes (with the exception of those individuals who received a physical pursuant to Bylaw 17.11.6.2-(a)-(2)-(c)) shall be required to undergo a medical examination that is administered or supervised by a physician. *(Revised: 4/24/03 effective 5/1/03 to begin implementation at the beginning of the 2003 summer conditioning period)*

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APPEDIX I

RESEARCH TIMELINE

Gaining Access

1. Mailed first participant request letter April 2003
2. Received interest letter May 16 2003
3. Sent information letter May 20, 2003
4. Gained final acceptance and authorization August 2003
5. Gained informed consent September 2003
6. Continual Analysis of data (September 2003 – August 2004)
7. Writing and Editing Phase (May 2004 – August 2004)

Phases of Data Collect and Descriptions of Data Collection Methods

First Site Visit: November 10-16, 2003

Florida State Homecoming Week against North Carolina State

Observations

- ◆ Practices
- ◆ Team Meetings
- ◆ Staff Meetings
- ◆ Booster activities
- ◆ Alumni Functions
- ◆ Game Day including a Sideline Pass
- ◆ Press Conferences

Informal Interviews / Conversations

- ◆ Coach Bowden
- ◆ Assistant Coaches and Players
- ◆ Sport Information Staff
- ◆ Booster Association Staff Members
- ◆ Former and Present Players
- ◆ Football Office Administrative Staff
- ◆ Journalists and Sports Writers

Sports Information archives

- ◆ Newspapers
- ◆ Media Guides
- ◆ Game Programs
- ◆ Game Statistics

Data Collection between FSU Visits: November 17, 2003 – February 17, 2004

Archival Document Collection and Analysis

- ◆ University Athletic Departments Sports Information Offices
- ◆ Florida State University
- ◆ West Virginia University

- ◆ Samford University (Previously called Howard College)
- ◆ University of Pittsburgh
- ◆ Clemson University

Electronic and Multimedia Sources

- ◆ Internet Web Sites
- ◆ Electronic Databases (e.g. Lexus Nexus),
- ◆ Documentaries
- ◆ Promotional Videos

University Libraries

- ◆ Florida State University
- ◆ West Virginia University
- ◆ Samford University (Howard College)

Texts

- ◆ Biographies
- ◆ Autobiographies
- ◆ Magazines Articles
- ◆ Newspapers
- ◆ Tallahassee Democrat – Steve Ellis (Sports Writer)

Continued Data Collection at Florida State: February 17 – April 28, 2004

Interviews (The Interview times are approximate.)

- ◆ Coach Bowden (12 Hours)
- ◆ Mark Richt (1.5 Hours)
- ◆ Jim Gladden (2 Hours)
- ◆ Mickey Andrews (45 minutes – 1 Hour)
- ◆ Odell Haggins (1 Hour)
- ◆ Former Players (6 Hours)
- ◆ Present Players (2.5 Hours)
- ◆ Boosters Executive Director: Charlie Barnes (1.5 Hours)
- ◆ Football Office Administrative Staff (3 Hours)
- ◆ Florida State University Sports Information Staff (10 Hours)

Last Archival Data Search: FSU library and Sports Information Office Files