



Minority hiring, playoff hot topics at college football forum

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IRVING – Washington coach Tyrone Willingham said he believes there's still a "good ol' boy network" that keeps minorities from getting head coaching jobs in college football.

"No question," Willingham said. "You've got to explain the numbers. There's more than one answer. But it's alive and well in certain places, yes."

Minority hiring practices and the possible implementation of a playoff system were two hot-button topics discussed Friday morning at a college football forum organized by the National Football Foundation.

Coaches and college administrators batted around the idea of whether colleges could implement something akin to the NFL's Rooney Rule, whereby schools would be required to interview a minority applicant for any head coaching vacancy.

If the NCAA implemented a variation of the Rooney Rule, more minority coaches would get the opportunity to show university presidents and athletic directors their talents, Willingham said.

"We've gone too long with the numbers the way they are," said Willingham, one of only six black coaches in the Football Bowl Subdivision, which has 119 teams. "We have to change the face of what we're doing, and the only way to do that is legislation."

Notre Dame athletic director Kevin White didn't dismiss the idea, but he doubted that such a rule could be implemented across the rocky college landscape.

"You couldn't put in a Rooney Rule in college athletics," White said. "The lack of homogeneity across the 119 institutions and all the different rules and regulation, public and private, I just don't believe that could ever happen. And if it could happen, I don't think it would be supported."

Straight talk: Conference commissioners have already determined there will be no structural changes to the Bowl Championship Series in the foreseeable future. But Florida State president T.K. Wetherell believes we'll have a football playoff eventually because of the financial benefits.

"Money is going to drive the train," Wetherell said. "The 12th game right now is solving the problem. The reason there's a 12th game in football is the money. People may not want to admit that, but that's the fact of the matter. Ask any of these ADs to take that 12th game away, and then ask them to balance the budget."