THE PRICE OF NCAA TRASH

I have been having a pretty interesting discussion off blog with Gulf Coast Pirate about the coaching carousel and big money in college football. The long and short is that his team, the Houston Cougars, has a hot young coach, and my team, the ASU Sun Devils, needs one. Enrollment wise, ASU is in the top five in size, has surprisingly good research and business sponsorship, fantastic facilities for football including a nearly 80,000 seat stadium that, with healthy attendance (especially full attendance) is a gold mine for cash flow. Oh, and starting in less than 30 days, we have our full share of this:

> The Pac-10 – soon to officially become the Pac-12 – has agreed to a 12-year television contract with ESPN and Fox that will more than triple its media rights fees and be **the most valuable for any conference in college sports.**
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> The contract, which will begin with the 2012-13 season, will be worth more than $225 million per year – or $2.7 billion over the life of the deal, Sports Business Daily and The Associated Press reported on Tuesday.

Why does all this matter? Because hot young coaches, Like Houston's Kevin Sumlin, do not come cheap. The former coach at ASU, Dennis Erickson, was making in the vicinity of $1.25 mil/yr. ASU was making backchannel offers to Sumlin reportedly in the vicinity of $2.5-3 mil/yr. Several key locals thought they had their man, and were all set to fly to Houston to make it official after the Cougars' league championship game against Southern Mississippi today. But noooooo, the damn Aggies from Texas A&M up and fired their perfectly good coach, Mike Sherman, and they are hot to trot over

Sumlin. Reportedly, the new asking price for Sumlin is now starting in the $3.5-4 mil/yr range. ASU has already bailed on that race.

The interesting dynamic here is that it is certainly not that ASU doesn't have the money and facilities to compete with A&M; they do in spades. Not to mention that, while you may not beat them every year, ASU can easily be very competitive with USC and Oregon every year. The chances of consistent success are WAY better at a place like ASU in the Pac than they are at A&M where they have deteriorating facilities and will never consistently complete in the top tier of the SEC. Yet ASU threw in the towel. Why? I am not sure yet. Mostly, I think, we just have a crappy and weak AD, Lisa Love. Love should be toast along with Erickson to be honest.

Now the point here is not to pitch ASU as a destination, but just to show how wild the money in college football really is. It is easy to scoff at the giant sums of money paid to a coach like Kevin Sumlin to move jobs, especially in light of the skyrocketing tuition for students, depressed salaries for educators, and general costs of education. But, that said, the difference between 50,000 and 78,000 butts in seats at Sun Devil Stadium for fall Saturday nights is one hell of a lot of money. And huge for the local downtown economy too. So, yeah, when you really count the money it brings in, it is probably worth it. Not to mention that I live in a state with many idiots; there is a big and positive buzz about how UofA scored by hiring Rich Rod and how they were going to overtake ASU in football (they OWN our ass in basketball already, and most other asses in the Pac too). That cannot maintain (and never has in modern history), the Devils must do something!

So, onto the games!! Houston and Southern Miss for the Conference USA Championship (hey Brett, are you there?) is already underway on ABC. USM is actually a decent team (their coach, Larry Fedora also on the ASU list by the way), but Houston is going to move to 13-0 here and get a

BCS bid. Baylor plays the Whorens for whatever title is at stake; go RGIII. The Georgia Gawgs are a good team, but LSU will run over them for the SEC crown. The glam pick is for the Sooners to upset Okie State in Big-12, I don’t think so. Lastly, the best game of the day (actually, this one at night, is the inaugural Big-10.2 Championship between Michigan State and Wisconsin. Sparty beat the Badgers at the end of the game on a bogus play earlier in the year. Even though this is in Lansing, I think Russell Wison, Monte Ball and the Badger Boys win in a great game.

I will add in some pros stuff in a bit. The music this week is by a little known guy, except in music circles, Jerry Riopelle. He was, still is I guess, really good. For bmaz trivia buffs, I think the girl with him in the duet and playing guitar, though not positive (it is bad video copy and has been a LONG time) is Llory McDonald, who I went to high school with and knew pretty well.

Make some Trash noise, will ya?