

An Examination of the NCAA Men's Soccer College Cup

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Trevor Gorman. An Examination of the NCAA Men's Soccer College Cup**

The purpose of this study was to examine the NCAA Men's Soccer Championship, using data from the years of 1998 through 2004. A successful College Cup was defined as measured using the categories of attendance, profit/loss, and television ratings. Within the analysis, three variables, weather conditions, proximity of the participating teams, and stadium capacity were used to determine the relationship they may or may not have had on the success of a College Cup as it was defined. No significant findings presented themselves following the analysis, which indicated that no conclusions could be drawn involving the ability of the variables to predict the success of the College Cup. However, the limited range of data indicated hope that future, more expansive studies, could still uncover significant findings.

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **THE PROBLEM**

#### **1.1 Introduction**

Soccer is widely considered to be one of the most, if not the most, popular sport on the global level. Considered a secondary sport in the United States, soccer has nonetheless seen a dramatic rise in popularity over the past 10-15 years. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Men's Soccer Tournament is an amateur variety of a largely professional sport. Each year the Division I college soccer season culminates with a single elimination tournament finishing with a final four, called the College Cup, to crown a national champion. This College Cup has undergone various changes as the location, television exposure, and the overall structure have all been altered in an attempt to maximize the potential of the event.

Within the last 15 years the NCAA tournament as a whole has evolved and expanded in an attempt to increase its prestige, showing the NCAA's commitment to this goal. The championship has evolved from previously selecting 24, then 32, and finally the current format consisting of 48 teams, and rewarding the top 16 with a first round bye. It has also gone from previously seeding only the top four teams, to seeding the top eight, and then to the current model of seeding those top 16 that also receive the first round bye. As seeding became a larger part of the selection process, the geographical match-ups that were at one

time purposely positioned to help reduce costs have been greatly lessened, showing the decision of the NCAA to create the best match-ups despite any cost increase that resulted.

The College Cup is the centerpiece of the tournament and is by far the most visible college soccer event held each season. The College Cup has been held at eight different sites since the 1994 season. Throughout this time, attendance has fluctuated, suggesting there are many factors that affect it, some which can be controlled by the NCAA or host institution, and some that can not. Revenues and expenses have also changed dramatically over the years, indicating that factors may exist that affect them such as the College Cup site, or the weather conditions. The hope can exist that, if the amount of impact of these and other variables can be determined, future College Cup decisions can be made using this knowledge, leading to continual growth of the event.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

This study is designed to thoroughly examine the NCAA Men's Soccer College Cup using information from College Cups held from 1998 through 2004. Within this study the definition of a successful College Cup will be measured using the categories of attendance, profit/loss, and television ratings. Three variables will be evaluated to determine the amount of impact they have on each of these three categories, thus determining their effect on the overall success of the College Cup. The three variables to be evaluated are: weather conditions, geographical proximity of participating teams, and stadium size and capacity. Taking the findings from this study, the design is to determine if the current structure leads to optimal results in the areas being examined. It is hoped that in examining past College Cups

and establishing trends and repeated circumstances, this study could prove useful in both establishing what has led to positive situations as well as what areas could potentially be altered. The NCAA Men's Soccer Championship has the potential to be one of the flagship soccer events within the United States, with the College Cup as its showcase. This study is designed to evaluate if it is maximizing its potential, and if not, provide alternative methods to do so.

### **1.3 Dependant Variables**

For this study, the dependant variables will be Attendance, Profit, and Television Ratings. The information used for Attendance will be the information reported by the NCAA for each College Cup between 1998 and 2004. The attendance for each College Cup was reported as a total number for the entire weekends. For the purpose of this study, when necessary, this number will be divided in half when referring to attendance for individual days. However, whenever possible attendance for a College Cup will refer only to the attendance of the entire weekend. Profit will be defined as the combination of the actual and unbudgeted expenses subtracted from the actual receipts. The Television Ratings will be the ratings of the games that were broadcast live only. While not all of the games from College Cups between 1998 and 2004 were broadcast live, those that were broadcast on a delay basis will not be examined. This was determined because a game that is broadcast on a delay basis enables spectators to both watch the game in person at the venue and then again on television later, thus potentially skewing the results. The ratings will be reported in terms of the cable rating, estimated households, and estimated viewers.



#### **1.4 Independent Variables**

The independent variables used in this study will be Weather Conditions, Stadium Size/Capacity, and the Proximity of Participating Teams. These three variables will be compared to each of the dependant variables through the testing process. Weather Conditions will be the reported conditions as recorded by the National Weather Service at the recording station nearest the host site of the College Cup that provided adequate information. The Stadium Size/Capacity will be the total number of available seats of the host stadium. The Proximity of the Participating Teams will be determined by using [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com) to measure the distance in miles from the participating university's campus to the host site.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

- A. What is the relationship between success, as measured by Attendance, and the linear combination of the following variables: Weather, Stadium Capacity, Proximity of Participating Teams?
- B. What is the relationship between success, as measured by Profit, defined as the actual and unbudgeted expenses subtracted from the actual receipts, and the linear combination of the following variables: Weather, Stadium Capacity, Proximity of Participating Teams?
- C. What is the relationship between success, as measured by Television Ratings from live broadcasts, and the linear combination of the following variables: Weather, Stadium Capacity, Proximity of Participating Teams?

### **1.6 Statement of the Null Hypothesis**

The following null hypotheses are tested:

- A. There is no significant relationship between success, as measured by Attendance, and the linear combination of the following variables: Weather, Stadium Capacity, Proximity of Participating Teams.
- B. There is no significant relationship between success, as measured by Profit, defined as the actual and unbudgeted expenses subtracted from the actual receipts, and the linear combination of the following variables: Weather, Stadium Capacity, Proximity of Participating Teams.
- C. There is no significant relationship between success, as measured by Television Ratings from live broadcasts, and the linear combination of the following variables: Weather, Stadium Capacity, Proximity of Participating Teams.

### **1.7 Delimitations**

- A. This study was done concerning the NCAA Division I Men's Soccer College Cup.
- B. This study takes into account numbers from College Cups held from 1998 to 2004.
- C. This study only looks at the numbers from the television broadcasts that were aired live.

### **1.8 Limitations**

- A. There is limited-to-no previous research available specific to the NCAA Division I Men's Soccer Championship reducing potential influence and information from existing studies.

- B. Weather conditions reported for sites of games are from the nearest weather station in the city closest to the site that provided adequate information.
- C. Attaining information from the NCAA that was consistent for all years proved difficult and therefore reduced the scope of the study to the years from 1998 to 2004.

### **1.9 Definitions**

College Cup: The event at the end of the college soccer seasons where the last four teams remaining in the championship come to a neutral site to compete for the national championship.

Host Site: The location and/or institution chosen by the NCAA to host the College Cup.

Intercollegiate Soccer Football Association of America (ISFAA): The primary governing body of college soccer, prior to 1959, responsible for determining yearly national champions as well as Soccer Bowl participants.

Major League Soccer (MLS): The current professional soccer league in the United States.

National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA): The primary governing body of national collegiate athletics within the United States and the organizer of the NCAA men's soccer championship.

North American Soccer League (NASL): The major professional soccer league in the United States from 1968 to 1985.

Seeds: Teams that are ranked in an order prior to the NCAA tournament so as to reward teams that had better regular seasons with home games and the opportunity to avoid other better teams.

Soccer Bowl: The single game held from 1950 to 1952 involving the top two selected teams playing in a championship match.

United Soccer Leagues: The lower division of professional leagues in the United States that have existed since 1986 but provided poor financial compensation and was characterized by constant change.

## **CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

There is no existing statistical research examining the NCAA men's soccer championship. While studies have been conducted involving other sports, specifically other NCAA championship events, it is difficult to compare and measure those against another. Past studies have been conducted looking at the NCAA men's basketball tournament selection process. These studies examined the procedure used by the NCAA men's basketball committee to select the sixty-four and then sixty-five teams that compete for a national championship each March. It was determined that ranking systems used to select participants in championship events contain certain attributes that may have a tangible or intangible effect on the teams. These attributes include accuracy, appropriateness, impartiality, unobtrusiveness, non-disruptiveness, verifiability, and comprehensibility (Harville, 2003). The NCAA basketball championship is unique to most other NCAA championships in that the entire tournament is played at neutral sites. The recent adjustment to the "pod" system of placement and seeding has shown a home court advantage that the selection committee has been criticized over. Attendance was examined in reference to the new system which places teams closer to home markets, and it was found that the proximity of participating teams has a positive effect on attendance (Brown, 2003).

### **2.1 History of the NCAA Men's Soccer Tournament**

The NCAA men's soccer championship is a long running tradition that has evolved over the years, all the while maintaining the constant of crowning the national champion. The first NCAA men's soccer championship was held in 1959 (Cochrane & Oliver, 1998). However, there was college soccer in the United States for years prior to the installment of an official NCAA championship tournament. The first men's college soccer game was played between Rutgers and Princeton on November 6, 1869 (Litterer, 2005). This game is also widely regarded as the first American Football game ever played. The game itself was a mixture of the two sports leading to the ability to designate this as the first collegiate match for both.

In the years leading up to the commencement of the NCAA holding an annual tournament to determine the collegiate champion, other governing bodies selected the national champion. The first college men's soccer champion was determined in 1904. From 1904 to 1925 the champion was selected by the Intercollegiate Soccer Football League. Then from 1926 to 1935, the organization that determined the national champions changed to the Intercollegiate Soccer Football Association of America (ISFAA). Throughout these 32 years, a national champion was determined in all but one year (1918). Between the years of 1936 and 1944, no champions were awarded. From 1949 to 1958, a champion was determined once again by the ISFAA prior to the NCAA championship beginning in 1959 (NCAA Champions Website).

In the midst of this final period where a champion was crowned by the ISFAA was another experiment designed to find the rightful champion of college soccer each season as well as

promote the growth of the sport. The Soccer Bowl was a single game held in the years from 1950 to 1952 which pitted the top two teams as selected by the ISFAA. These selections were not without controversy, and it was in no way contracted that the winning team in the Soccer Bowl would be awarded the title of national champion. This system could be closely compared to college football's use of polls to determine entrants to a championship game that is always hotly debated. While the Soccer Bowls did not end the debate over who should be declared national champions, it did aid college soccer in moving toward a national championship tournament, as well as connected college soccer in the entire country. Prior to the Soccer Bowls, college soccer was a largely regional sport with teams only scheduling other teams from within the same region. The Soccer Bowls created match-ups of teams from the east against teams from the west or mid-west, a possibility continued through the advent of a tournament. The controversy created throughout the years of a national champion being subjectively named by an organization instead of determined on the field also helped the acceptance of the idea of a tournament to decide the best team on the field. Incidentally, then University of San Francisco publicist and future NFL commissioner Pete Rozelle was given much credit for the successful handling of the Soccer Bowl during its three years of existence (Cochrane & Oliver, 1998).

While the Soccer Bowls were unable to continue due to the meager college soccer budgets of the time, plans were being formulated in the hopes of creating a national college soccer tournament in order to fairly determine a rightful champion year in and year out. In 1959, Jack Squires, the coach at the University of Connecticut, helped devise a way to have the first ever NCAA men's soccer championship tournament. At the conclusion of the regular season,

sectional tournaments were held with the four remaining schools, three from the east, and one from the Midwest, met at the University of Connecticut over Thanksgiving weekend in what was the first ever final four or College Cup (Cochrane & Oliver, 1998). Since that event, the NCAA never looked back, and the NCAA men's soccer championship was off and running.

Since that first year, the championship has grown, expanded, and seen numerous changes leading to the current format now employed. The first four tournaments consisted of just eight participating teams. The reasoning behind having eight teams in the initial tournaments is unclear. The NCAA News was the primary source of information regarding NCAA events and decisions, however, available archives of this publication are only available beginning in 1964, so no explanation from 1959 was found. From 1963 to 1967, the tournament was expanded to sixteen teams. Once again, documentation detailing the reasons for the change in format could not be found. In 1968, the number of participating teams was expanded to twenty-one by the NCAA in order to increase the opportunity for schools and athletes to enter a championship event. It was agreed that of the six geographical regions five would receive an extra bid, with the Midwest being the only exception. It was also agreed upon that with the exception of the west region, all preliminary play leading up to the final matches would be inter-regional so as to promote new match-ups and rivalries (NCAA News, 1968). In 1969 the field was again expanded, this time to twenty-four, but no official documentation behind this further expansion could be found. This format remained in tact for a decade, with twenty-four appearing to be the agreed upon number. Throughout these early years, brackets were mostly regionalized, with geography taking precedence over all else, as both the NCAA and individual schools had to be mindful of costs. Despite the adjustment made in 1968



allowing inter-regional match-ups, the tournament reverted back to mostly regional match-ups in the following years, with no exact reasoning able to be located for this decision. The concept of a final four was accepted by all institutions with teams willing to find a way to pay the costs of a trip to the selected location (Cochrane & Oliver, 1998). In 1979, the NCAA decreased the number of participants to nineteen. This was done so that the men's soccer championship would comply with the NCAA's 1:8 ratio, which stated that there could only be one team in the NCAA tournament for every eight schools that sponsored the sport. The NCAA rejected a proposal to keep the number of participants at twenty-four, citing the fact that the tournament was not generating sufficient revenues to cover expenses. With this adjustment also came a change in the selection process. A national committee now selected the participating teams instead of separate regional committees. The selection process was still geographically based, with each of the eight geographic regions receiving two spots before the final three spots were filled with at large selections (NCAA News, 1979). In 1980 an extra at large selection was added, bringing the total number to twenty. Expansion continued in 1982 when the field grew to twenty-three teams. The tournament finally returned to where it had been a decade earlier in 1987 when the field once again contained twenty-four teams. Again, documented reasons for each of these expansions were unavailable through the NCAA archives, though an increase in the number of schools sponsoring men's soccer did occur, meaning that increases could have become an option while still remaining within the NCAA 1:8 ratio. An interesting development that also took place in 1982 was the NCAA deciding to move the semi-final games to campus sites rather than having a final four event. This was done because the NCAA had the belief that, despite the threat of inclement weather, the attendance of these games would receive a boost (NCAA

News, 1982). It was at this point in time where the tournament ceased to take steps backwards and really began to grow and expand in a more calculated manner. In 1989, the NCAA approved expansion to twenty-eight teams despite the initial proposal calling for expansion to thirty-two (NCAA News, 1989). Eventually, the expansion to thirty-two participating teams was accomplished in 1993. While it was noted that the bracket had been expanded, there was no specific information regarding the reason for the change. Thirty-two remained the optimal number until 2001, when, after three years of trying, the men's soccer committee was able to convince the Division I Championships Cabinet to approve the expansion of the field to forty-eight (NCAA News, 2001). The field has remained at forty-eight since this final expansion, but has continued to grow in other ways. For example, initially after the growth to forty-eight teams, only eight teams were seeded, with the other eight teams who received a first round bye being placed geographically. In addition, the team with the first round bye played host to the two teams who were competing for the right to play then in round two. This was changed as early as 2002, when all sixteen teams who received a first round bye were seeded, and all rounds of competition leading up to the College Cup took place on the campus of one of the competing teams (NCAA Archives).

## **2.2 Growth of the College Cup:**

As the entire championship grew, so did the magnitude and the visibility of its Final Four event. Known as the Final Four for many years, it was dubbed the College Cup in an attempt to set it apart from final fours in other sports and make it more soccer specific. The feeling was that most major soccer tournaments around the world are known as “cups”, thus changing the NCAA tournament final four to College Cup would help soccer fans identify

with the significance of the event. The College Cup has seen plenty of change over the past 15 years. The event broke through in the sports spectrum in the early 1990's when it was held in Charlotte, NC hosted by Davidson College. The 5,000 seat stadium with added temporary seating (capacity 1992: 8,000; 1993: 10,000; 1994: 12,000) provided the intimate stadium confines that the NCAA was looking for; capable of being filled, and providing a soccer specific atmosphere capable of helping to promote the growth of the entire event. Following the successful stint in Charlotte, the College Cup was moved to Richmond, VA hosted by the University of Richmond. Stadium capacity increased with the move, as the University of Richmond Football Stadium was capable of holding 22,000 spectators. The event generated buzz in its first years in Richmond, and was aided through the participation of at least one team, and in some years two, of relatively close proximity. The College Cup was held in Richmond from 1995 through 1998 before the NCAA once again decided to move the event in attempts to grow it further. In 1999, the College Cup moved back to Charlotte, NC, but this time to a much larger venue. The site was what was then known as Ericsson Stadium, the home of the Carolina Panthers of the NFL. This was a large jump to make, as the capacity of the bigger stadium was just over 73,000, over three times the size of the previous venue at Richmond. The move did not have the desired effect, as attendance dipped and was perceived as being even smaller than it actually was due to the immense size of the stadium (T. Jacobs, personal communication, November 8, 2006). Another factor on the attendance was the fact that in the two years in which the event was held there, none of the participating teams were from local or nearby locations, reducing walk up ticket sales that may have existed had local teams qualified. Following the disappointment of Charlotte, the NCAA knew that the next move was a critical one in the future of the College Cup. The

NCAA wanted to move the event back into a smaller environment more specific to soccer (T. Jacobs, personal communication, November 8, 2006). The destination was Columbus, OH and the Columbus Crew stadium for the 2001 College Cup. Crew stadium was a soccer specific stadium constructed for the Columbus Crew of the MLS. Seating capacity was slightly over 23,000, a more attainable goal for a sell out. However, the issue in Columbus in 2001 was the weather. A winter storm entered the area before the event, and cold temperatures remained throughout the weekend, lowering attendance. In 2002, the College Cup moved to Dallas, TX, hosted by Southern Methodist University (SMU). The stadium used held 32,000 spectators and weather was not an issue. However, geography did play a role in total number of people who attended. With only one Division I men's college soccer team existing in the state of Texas all of the participating teams came from either the east coast or the west coast. This made long, expensive trips the only way for fans to attend. In 2003 the College Cup returned to Columbus, OH as part of the original agreement with the host site. In 2004, the Cup traveled west to Carson, CA and the Home Depot Center. The Home Depot Center is the facility outside of Los Angeles that serves as the home to numerous United States national soccer team training camps or matches. Stadium capacity was 27,000, and overall attendance was greatly boosted through the qualification of the University of California Santa Barbara (UCSB). UCSB fans arrived in large numbers providing the event with atmosphere. In 2005, the College Cup moved back east to Cary, NC and SAS Soccer Park. Hosted by North Carolina State University, 2005 saw the 9,500 seat stadium filled to capacity, as the smaller stadium proved easier to fill, creating a soccer environment similar to those at Davidson and Richmond. This smaller sized environment was replicated again in 2006 when the College Cup was held at Robert Hermann Stadium in

St. Louis, MO, which had a seating capacity of 7,100 for the event. Once again, weather was a factor, causing the games to be pushed back a day following a snow storm and bitter temperatures in the area (NCAA Archives).

The NCAA Division I men's soccer committee is responsible for running the championship. This committee consists of ten members that are a mixture of coaches and administrators that represent the different geographical regions of the country. Each committee member serves a three year term. The committee is responsible for selecting the participating teams in the tournament each year as well as choosing the College Cup site. Criteria are set for each of these selection processes.

### **2.3 College Cup Selection Criteria:**

When selecting the teams that will compete in the championship each year, the committee uses a number of factors, much like the selection processes for other, more visible NCAA championships such as men's basketball. Once these teams are selected, host institutions must then be determined. As mentioned earlier, seeding for the championship has evolved to the current system where sixteen teams are seeded, making it easy to decide who will host, as the rules state that the higher seeded team will automatically host provided they submitted the appropriate application to host the game. This evolution has been congruent with the adaptations that have taken place in the criteria used to select host institutions. Factors that are included in this decision making process include an evaluation of the facility, quality of field surface, attendance capacity and amenities, game management, and weather patterns. All of these elements are broken down further and point values are assigned to each area.

This gave the committee a score for each university that can be formally used to decide who would host all games, and now is used to decide who hosts a game if both participating teams are unseeded (T. Jacobs, personal communication, November 8, 2006).

When selecting host sites for the College Cup over the past 15 years, the same criteria as talked about above have been used but with some additions, and are viewed on a different scale. In comparing the sites of Davidson College, Ericsson Stadium, and SAS Soccer Park, certain constants and differences are discernable. When the NCAA accepted Davidson College's bid to host the College Cup in 1992, the event was moving from Tampa, FL where announced crowds were less than 4,000 (C. Slagle, personal communication, February 12, 2007). Davidson College presented a proposal to the NCAA guaranteeing at least 6,000 attendees, a full sized grass field, a better atmosphere, and a stadium complete with all the amenities needed to host a championship event. The NCAA committee was looking to find a better home for the event at this time. They wanted to increase attendance and provide a better atmosphere that best enhanced the student athlete experience. Beyond that, there were not specific financial or organizational concerns (C. Slagle, personal communication, February 12, 2007). The three years at Davidson College saw a consistent increase in attendance each year as mentioned earlier, and the criteria for selecting a College Cup site began to include a desire to continue this growth, a task not possible at Davidson, as there were no more areas where additional seating could be added. The initial success at the University of Richmond provided the selection committee with a platform to believe that more growth was possible. When the Charlotte group decided to bid to have the event hosted at Ericsson Stadium, the proposal consisted of the idea that the entire lower bowl of the

stadium (22,511 seats) and the club seats/suites (13,648 seats) could all be filled. This would have lead to a total of 36,149 in attendance. In addition, the Charlotte group also offered the NCAA a lucrative guarantee that had, and still has not, been matched. This proposal appealed to the NCAA's desire to grow the event, and the addition of the elaborate club and suite level seating gave the event more high class potential. These factors played into the committee's criteria of growth, excellent facilities, and the enhancement of the student athlete experience, as well as offered the potential to increase revenue (through a combination of the favorable guarantee and increased ticket sales potential) (C. Slagle, personal communication, February 12, 2007). However, as stated earlier, the experiment was largely considered a failure, and the College Cup was moved back into smaller settings in Columbus, OH, Dallas, TX and Carson, CA. These results were documented previously, but when SAS Soccer Park bid to bring the event to Cary, NC it was a different scenario than it had been seven to ten years earlier. The College Cup was no longer a growing event, and instead was looking for stability and trying to regain the atmosphere it had enjoyed at Davidson and Richmond. Thus, when the committee was looking at SAS Soccer Park, one of the first areas of appeal to them was that it was a smaller sized stadium that again presented the possibility of a sell out crowd. The committee rationalized that a sold out stadium and a demand for tickets would boost the event and provide a better atmosphere to create a favorable student athlete experience. The positive environment, coupled with nearby, accessible accommodations sat favorably with the committee. Also, the presence of North Carolina State University as the hosting institution provided the added benefit of being able to handle the ticket sales with ease, an area that had posed problems at previous College Cups (C. Slagle, personal communication, February 12, 2007). It is suggested that the

NCAA committee has the criteria of creating a favorable student athlete experience, providing first class facilities for all attending the event, creating the best possible atmosphere, and continually growing the event. These criteria have not necessarily changed over the past fifteen years, but the definition of what constitutes each of these elements very well might have. Financial concerns such as total profit/loss, revenues, and expenses are not mentioned in these criteria, and it is speculated that these concerns might be of note to the NCAA in general, but not one that is of great importance to the committee (C. Slagle, personal communication, February 12, 2007). The presence of the NCAA men's soccer committee, and the power afforded them have played a large role in the path that the NCAA championship as a whole, and the College Cup specifically, has taken. Undoubtedly, their role will be crucial in the continued growth and development of the NCAA championship tournament.

#### **2.4 Growth of Soccer in the United States**

The continued growth of the NCAA championship field was due in large part to the continued growth of soccer as a sport in the United States. Soccer in America has evolved greatly throughout the years and, excluding the large growth of youth soccer which has been a constant over the past twenty years, there have been evolutions in the college and professional games within the United States that have led the sport to where it is today at the NCAA level.

Soccer arrived in America in the early days of the nation, yet did not develop as the dominantly popular sport that it is in Europe. It is argued that the lack of popularity soccer



has faced in the United States can be traced all the way back to the pivotal time period between 1860 and 1930, when most sports cultures were established all over the world. The fact that soccer never reached a level in the United States comparable to the rest of the world is not, as is commonly asserted, a result of a lack of understanding, or low scoring matches, but rather a byproduct of America creating its own modernity within its sports culture (Hellerman & Markovits, 2003).

The most significant times in the growth of soccer in America that also correspond with college soccer's development were the 1940's and 1950's, the years of the North American Soccer League (NASL) in the 1970's, and the reemergence of soccer beginning in the 1990's.

The 1940's and 1950's were in the midst of a period of time in American Soccer that some referred to as "The Ethnic Period". During these decades soccer was mostly confined to the cities such as New York, Philadelphia, and Saint Louis where participation was high, specifically amongst the large ethnic populations. The North American Soccer Football League was formed in 1946, but lasted only two seasons due to financial difficulties. Nevertheless, soccer was showing itself to be popular within the cities, a fact that was reflected on the college level. Strong teams were formed at Pennsylvania State University, St. Louis University, and Temple University to name a few, made up largely of players from the inner city leagues that were forming all the time (Litterer, 2005). The Soccer Bowls in the early 1950's, as mentioned earlier, provided the first interaction on the college stage between teams from different soccer hotbeds (Cochrane & Oliver, 1998). This came on the

heels of the United States qualifying for the 1950 World Cup held in Brazil. In that tournament, the Americans stunned the world by defeating England 1-0, guaranteeing publicity and notice within the United States, both at the time and upon the team's return. The growth of soccer culminated at the end of the 1950's on the collegiate level with the formation of the NCAA championships for soccer in 1959 (Cochrane & Oliver, 1998).

The 1960's saw spectator sports in general grow in popularity within the United States, and in 1968 the North American Soccer League (NASL) was formed. The NASL got off to a slow start, as many of the original teams failed to survive through the early years. It was not until the early 1970's that the league began to grow and flourish into what briefly became a golden period of American soccer (Litterer, 2005). The NASL's centerpiece was the New York Cosmos. The Cosmos played their home games in Giants Stadium and brought in some of the world's biggest names to play for their team (NASL Website). These superstars generated tremendous fan interest, not just in New York, but also wherever the team traveled to. While the Cosmos' success was one of the high points of the league, they also were a precursor to many of the problems that would ultimately doom it. The NASL lasted 18 years before finally ceasing operations in 1985. Throughout the existence of the NASL, 48 different franchises existed with the league high of 24 competing at the same time coming in 1978 (NASL Website). This excessive expansion combined with the escalating salaries needed to pay the high profile players imported to the league were two of the major reasons that the league eventually failed. Though the expansion in 1978 was viewed as a positive event, it made it harder for smaller market teams to achieve profitability and led to franchises relocated almost every year (Litterer, 2005). During this time of the NASL, college soccer

saw it's national championship tournament settle on a field of 24 teams and integrated the concept of a Final Four event, feeling they could attract fan interest to a soccer showcase in the same way that they NASL was doing. In addition, the NASL exposed the American sports fan to the game of soccer and showed them all of the positives that the game could provide. This, in turn, led to the participation of many of the youths from that era in the sport who would then continue their careers through college and sometimes beyond (Litterer, 2005).

Once the NASL folded, college soccer was left as the only major form of outdoor soccer available within the United States. This was a development that ultimately hurt the state of the game as youths would grow up and participate in college soccer but would then have very limited options if they wished to continue playing afterwards. The only leagues that existed during this period of time were the United Soccer Leagues (USL). The USL began in 1986 as an indoor league in the Midwest consisting of only five teams. In 1989 the USL became a league with both indoor and outdoor competitions. Teams in the USL were frequently added, moved, or folded as the lack of money available in the league often caused franchises to attempt a move to a new city or to cease operations completely, while many other franchises sprang up in an attempt to jump into the soccer market. While the number of participating franchises reached a league high forty-three in 1993, it was still not financially rewarding enough for players to be able to use the league as their sole source of income, meaning there was constant player turnover. Once Major League Soccer debuted, the USL settled into a more comfortable role of being a minor league with different divisions used to develop players to move on to a higher level (USL Website).

College soccer continued to exist, however, and it was a collection of current and recently graduated college all stars that aided in the rebirth of soccer within the country. The United States ended a 40 year hiatus from the World Cup when they qualified for the 1990 tournament using largely young, inexperienced college players. Though the team was unsuccessful in the actual tournament, the qualification alone, coupled with FIFA (the world governing body of soccer) deciding that the United States should host the World Cup in 1994 lifted the sport back up, and provided it a platform to grow once again. Part of the agreement that the United States be allowed to host the World Cup was that it have a professional league in place in the country within one year of the tournament. Though it took one year beyond that, Major League Soccer (MLS) debuted in 1996 with fun fanfare and national media interest. Now in its tenth year of existence, the league continues along modestly, aiming to avoid many of the mistakes that doomed the NASL over 20 years ago. The emergence of the United States on the international level and the addition of a professional league within its borders have also strengthened the college game (Litterer, 2005). Youth participation has never been higher, and while some youths now choose to bypass college entirely to play professionally, players are still able to use their time at a university to prepare themselves for a professional career. This has caused the level of play to improve as well as the interest of outsiders, as the college game is now a professional feeder, the same as in football, basketball, or baseball. These developments have played a large role in allowing the NCAA to expand the championships to 48 teams, double the number of 20 years ago. Soccer as a sport has seen itself rise and fall through the years as it has struggled to find a niche in the American sporting culture. While there were periods of regression, the progress has continued to the point where the game is healthier today than ever before, at the youth,

college, professional, and international levels. The NCAA soccer championships have mirrored this growth, from its humble beginnings to the even that it is today.

## **CHAPTER III METHODOLOGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

This study was designed to evaluate the success of past NCAA Men's Soccer College Cups by comparing statistical data from past College Cups. The information being examined was compiled from all NCAA Men's Soccer College Cups from 1998 through 2004. The NCAA provided all numerical data in the areas of College Cup revenues, expenditures, television ratings, site capacity, and attendance. The site temperature readings were compiled from the National Weather Service using the weather station located in the area closest to the host site that provided adequate information. The proximity of the participating teams in the College Cup was measured in miles, as estimated by [www.MapQuest.com](http://www.MapQuest.com).

### **3.2 Dependant Variables**

The dependant variables for this study were Attendance, Profit, and Live Television Ratings. Attendance was the number of fans reported as having attended each College Cup by the NCAA. Profit was defined as the actual and unbudgeted expenses subtracted from the actual receipts as reported by the NCAA. Live Television Ratings were the reported numbers given by the NCAA as taken from the Nielson TV ratings.

### **3.3 Independent Variables**

The independent variables for this study were Weather Conditions, Proximity of Participating Teams, and Stadium Capacity. Weather Conditions were measured as the average temperature from the dates of the semi finals and final matches in each College Cup. The temperature readings were taken from the weather station located in the National Weather Service database nearest the host site that also had adequate information reported. Proximity of Participating Teams was determined by recording the distance from the host site to each of the participating university's campuses using [www.MapQuest.com](http://www.MapQuest.com) and finding the average of those four totals. Stadium Capacity was obtained by looking up each of the respective stadium's official website. Since the College Cup consists of two separate days of competition and the NCAA reported its attendance as total attendance from the College Cup, the capacity of the stadium was doubled to represent the capacity for the entire weekend of the College Cup instead of just one game.

### **3.4 Procedures/Analysis**

Each dependant variable will have a hierarchical multiple regression analysis run separately for it to determine which, if any, of these variables have the ability to predict the success of the College Cup, as it was defined. In the hierarchical multiple regressions analyses the dependant variable was compared to first the independent variable of weather conditions, then the second independent variable of proximity of participating teams, and then the third independent variable of stadium capacity. The independent variables were added in the same order for each of the dependant variables.

When evaluating the dependant variable of College Cup attendance, we ran a hierarchical multiple regression analysis using the independent variables of weather conditions, proximity of the participating teams, and stadium size/capacity. The test was run with the independent variables being inserted in that order to determine the level that each independent variable predicted the attendance of the College Cup. Through the execution of this test it was hoped to determine if the attendance at the College Cup was positively or negatively affected by the weather on the day of the game, the proximity of the four participating teams, or the size/capacity of the stadium that hosted the event.

When evaluating the dependant variable of College Cup profit, we ran a hierarchical multiple regression analysis using the independent variables of weather conditions, proximity of the participating teams, and stadium size/capacity. The test was run with the independent variables being inserted in that order to determine the level that each independent variable was able to predict the profit/loss of the College Cup. For the purpose of this study the dependant variable of profit/loss was defined as the actual and unbudgeted expenses subtracted from the actual receipts. Through the execution of this test it was hoped to determine if the profit/loss of the College Cup was positively or negatively affected by the weather conditions on the day of the game, the proximity of the four participating teams, or the size/capacity of the stadium that hosted the event.

When evaluating the dependant variable of television ratings of live broadcasts, we ran a hierarchical multiple regression analysis using the independent variables of weather conditions, proximity of the participating teams, and stadium size/capacity. The test was run with the independent variables being inserted in that order to determine the level that each



independent variable was able to predict the television ratings of the College Cup games broadcast live. The goal was to determine if the television ratings of College Cup games broadcast live were positively or negatively affected by the weather conditions on the day of the game, the proximity of the four participating teams, or the size/capacity of the stadium that hosted the event. Though not every College Cup game from the period of time being examined was featured as a live broadcast, these broadcasts were the only ones being examined as these were the games that would present an either or situation for the spectators.

In running each of these regressions, results were examined to determine the level of effect each independent variable had on the ability to predict the dependent variable. By looking at the R Squared the initial level of predictability was determined. With the addition of each subsequent independent variable, the R Square Change statistic would provide the information of how much that added independent variable changed the predictability of the dependant variable from what it had been using only the previous independent variable or variables. Finally, if the P-value of the R Square Change statistic was less then .05 that will indicate that there was a significant finding involving the independent variables being able to predict the dependant variable.

In addition to the multiple regression analyses, a series of simple linear regressions evaluated the relationships between each independent variable and each dependent variable respectively. The hope was that this would supplement the multiple regression tests and provide evidence that each independent variable had a direct effect on the predictability of the dependant variable.

Finally, using descriptive statistics, the average value, as well as the range, low, and high values was presented for each of the variables examined in this study. These figures represent what the average College Cup has been over the past seven years as well as identifying the most successful and least successful.

The hope was that through these statistical analysis procedures significant findings would become evident, showing which independent variables had the greatest influence on the predictability of a dependant variable. Within the study, it was determined to what extent each of the three independent variables influenced each of the measures of success outlined in this study. It was hoped that any discovery of this nature could aide in future decisions regarding the College Cup or the structure of the NCAA Men's Soccer Championship in general to eliminate any potential negatives and increase the probability of replicating the positives.

## **CHAPTER IV RESULTS**

The data compiled were placed into a spreadsheet and run through a series of multiple and simple regression analyses. First however, descriptive statistics were used to show the average, range, low, and high values for each of the dependant and independent variables used. This showed us the best and worst years for each of the categories, information useful to potentially recreate similarities of good years and eliminate mistakes of the bad ones. The average attendance of the College Cup was 17,422. The high of 24,082 occurred in 1998 in Richmond, VA while the low of 8,786 was in 2003 in Columbus, OH. The average profit was \$24,477 with the largest profit coming in 1998 and the heaviest loss in the 2000 Cup in Charlotte, NC. The average television ratings from the games broadcast live was 0.28. The high was 0.41 in both 2000 and 2001 while the low was 0.15 in 2003. The average temperature from College Cup dates was 46 degrees F with a high of 63 degrees in 2004 (Carson, CA) and a low of 30 degrees in 2003 (Columbus, OH). The average distance of the teams participating in the College Cup was 1,309 miles with a high of 1,845 in 2004 (Carson, CA) and a low of 895 in 2000 (Charlotte, NC). Finally, stadium capacity for a College Cup, measured as the stadium capacity doubled averaged 77,916. The high was 146,596 in 1999 and 2000 (Charlotte, NC) and the low was 44,000 in 1998 (Richmond, VA). Complete information can be found in Table 4.1

*Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics*

	Attend.	Profit	TV Rat.	Avg. Temp	Avg. Dist.	Stadium Cap.
Avg.	17,422	\$24,477	0.28	46	1,309	77,916
Range	15,314	\$242,504	0.26	33	950	102,596
Low	8,768	\$-56,932	0.15	30	895	44,000
High	24,082	\$185,572	0.41	63	1,845	146,596

Each multiple regression analysis was conducted with the independent variables entered in the following standardized order: Model 1 (Average Temp), Model 2 (Average Temp, Average Dist.), and Model 3 (Average Temp, Average Dist., Stadium Capacity).

In the multiple regression analysis using Attendance as the dependant variable, the independent variables of weather conditions, proximity of participating teams, and stadium capacity added in that order produced no significant findings. The p-values decreased from 0.477 (Average Temp) to 0.237 (Average Temp, Average Dist.) to 0.187 (Average Temp, Average Dist., and Stadium Capacity). The R value increased from 0.325 (Average Temp) to 0.716 (Average Temp, Average Dist.) to 0.871 (Average Temp, Average Dist., Stadium capacity). Additional information can be found in Table 4.2.

*Table 4.2: Multiple Regression Analysis: Attendance*

	R	P <sub>R</sub>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	P <sub>R<sup>2</sup></sub>
Model 1					
Avg. Temp	0.325	0.477	0.106	----	----
Model 2					
Avg. Temp, Avg. Dist.	0.716	0.237	0.513	0.407	0.141
Model 3					
Avg. Temp, Avg. Dist., Stad. Cap	0.871	0.187	0.758	0.245	0.180

In the multiple regression analysis using Profit as the dependant variable, the independent variables of weather conditions, proximity of participating teams, and stadium capacity added in that order produced no significant findings. The p-values ranged from 0.710 (Average Temp) to 0.186 (Average Temp, Average Dist.) to 0.400 (Average Temp, Average Dist., and Stadium Capacity). The R value increased from 0.173 (Average Temp) to 0.754 (Average Temp, Average Dist.) to 0.761 (Average Temp, Average Dist., Stadium capacity). Additional information can be found in Table 4.3.

*Table 4.3: Multiple Regression Analysis: Profit*

	R	P <sub>R</sub>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	P <sub>R<sup>2</sup></sub>
Model 1					
Avg. Temp	0.173	0.710	0.030	----	----
Model 2					
Avg. Temp, Avg. Dist.	0.754	0.186	0.569	0.539	0.089
Model 3					
Avg. Temp, Avg. Dist., Stad. Cap	0.761	0.400	0.579	0.010	0.802

In the multiple regression analysis using Television Ratings from games broadcast live as the dependant variable, the independent variables of weather conditions, proximity of participating teams, and stadium capacity added in that order produced no significant findings. The p-values decreased from 0.729 (Average Temp) to 0.430 (Average Temp, Average Dist.) to 0.283 (Average Temp, Average Dist., and Stadium Capacity). The R value increased from 0.162 (Average Temp) to 0.586 (Average Temp, Average Dist.) to 0.821 (Average Temp, Average Dist., Stadium capacity). Additional information can be found in Table 4.4.

*Table 4.4: Multiple Regression Analysis: Live TV Ratings*

	R	P <sub>R</sub>	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> Δ	P <sub>R<sup>2</sup></sub>
Model 1					
Avg. Temp	0.162	0.729	0.026	----	----
Model 2					
Avg. Temp, Avg. Dist.	0.586	0.430	0.344	0.318	0.236
Model 3					
Avg. Temp, Avg. Dist., Stad. Cap	0.821	0.283	0.674	0.330	0.179

The simple regression analysis tests ran using the dependant variable of Attendance compared to the independent variables of weather conditions, proximity of participating teams, and stadium capacity separately provided no significant findings where the p-value < .05. The same was true when separate simple regression tests were run using the dependant variables of Profit and Live Television Ratings against the same independent variables. All values can be found in Table 4.5.

*Table 4.5: Simple Regressions Analyses*

	Avg. Temperature		Avg. Distance		Stadium Capacity	
Attendance	R	0.325	R	0.699	R	0.468
	P	0.477	P	0.080	P	0.289
Profit	R	0.173	R	0.455	R	0.101
	P	0.710	P	0.305	P	0.829
Live TV Ratings	R	0.162	R	0.332	R	0.572
	P	0.729	P	0.468	P	0.180

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS**

#### **5.1 Summary**

Data were collected from the NCAA Men's Soccer College Cups held between the years of 1998 and 2004 to determine the level of success the NCAA was achieving when conducting the championship event for men's college soccer. Success of a College Cup was measured using the categories of attendance, profit/loss, and television ratings. Three variables were evaluated to determine the effect that each, individually or combined, may have on the success of the College Cup as it was defined for this study. The three variables evaluated were: weather conditions, geographical proximity of participating teams, and stadium size and capacity. Using hierarchical multiple regressions, the variables were evaluated with respect to their impact on each of the three categories used to determine success of the College Cup.

The data analysis yielded no significant findings, indicating that there is no conclusive statistical evidence that any of the factors tested have a direct relationship with the success of the College Cup, as it was defined for this study.

#### **5.2 Conclusions**

As there were no significant findings when running the statistical analysis, there are no definite conclusions that can be drawn. This should not, however, immediately indicate that the factors examined have no predictability of the success of the College Cup. A major limitation of this study was that there was a limited power for linear analysis. Information was unable to be obtained in all areas evaluated for years outside of the period examined between 1998 and 2004. For any future research to take place it is necessary that the NCAA itself completely support, and ideally conduct the study. This is the case because virtually all of the data needed is held by the NCAA, and for any comprehensive test to be run that would have a chance of uncovering significant findings, full disclosure of these data would be required.

An ideal study would have included data from all of the College Cups ever held. This would have provided a larger data set and thus, a greater chance that more distinct patterns or trends would exist, making some of the output generated statistically significant. An example of this is the relationship between the attendance of the College Cup and the proximity of the participating teams measured using the average distance from the host site to the campuses. When a simple regression was run using these two measures the p value was 0.080 which, while not significant, approaches 0.050 where it would have been. This could suggest that, had we had a larger sample to work with, a significant relationship could be proven to exist between the two variables. Unfortunately, in studying all the other p-values from the simple regressions there was only one other value even less than 0.20, and six of the nine p-values were greater than 0.30.



### **5.3 Limitations**

In compiling information for this study it proved difficult to gain full access to all information that may have enabled the expansion of the scope of this study. When examining the reported attendance from each College Cup it was unclear how attendance was measured. It was not clearly stated if the reported attendance represented total attendance from both dates of games or if fans who attended both sessions only counted as attending once. In a related issue, the stadium capacity numbers used in the study took the actual stadium capacity and doubled that number so as to represent the potential capacity for an entire College Cup. However, with the uncertainty surrounding the reported attendance numbers, this logic could or could not be correct. In researching the average temperature statistics the exact temperature at the stadium could not be found. Instead, the nearest weather station to the host site that provided adequate information, in some circumstances, was up to twenty miles away. When examining the proximity of participating teams in a College Cup the average distance of all four participating teams was used. This did not take into account, however, the potential effect of one particular participating team located in extremely close proximity such as the University of Virginia in 1998 or the University of California at Santa Barbara in 2004. Instead, one team in close proximity could be outweighed by two or more teams from the other side of the country.

### **5.4 Recommendations**

As indicated in the literature review, there has been very little research conducted relative to NCAA Championships. The College Cup, and the entire NCAA Men's Soccer Championship in general is worthy of further examination. In any future study, the first and

foremost requirement, as mentioned above, would be to use data from all College Cups, or at least all College Cups since 1991, which was the beginning of the modern College Cup as it remains today. Areas used in this study such as attendance, profit, television ratings, weather conditions, and proximity of participating teams should, without question, remain a part of further research.

An expanded study with complete access to all NCAA records may also look at other areas involved in a College Cup. Analyzing the financial elements in more depth could prove insightful. Operating costs can vary depending upon the size of the host stadium, types and quantities of amenities offered at the stadium (i.e. hospitality suites, restrooms, concessions). Host site monetary guarantees can also vary depending upon the bid submitted by the host committee. These are two areas that can directly affect how much money a College Cup makes or loses each year. They are also two areas that can be intertwined, as a larger stadium with higher operating costs may offer a larger guarantee to help offset those costs. Examining those two areas could provide useful information that could help the site selection and running of College Cups in the future.

Ticket sales could be another area that is examined in future studies. Breaking down the number of tickets sold prior to the College Cup versus the number sold to walk up spectators could prove to be related to the size of the host stadium and therefore the level of demand for tickets that exists. Sites that are located within a certain radius of a number of universities that support men's soccer may show higher pre-sales, as the demand again could increase.

The marketing budget and strategy used to promote the College Cup is another area that potentially could be examined. This information, if quantifiable, could be related to the number of ticket sales or overall attendance at the event. The amount of money spent on marketing the College Cup as well as the types of marketing techniques used could be examined to determine if they are producing the result of increasing early ticket sales and overall attendance. In preparation for such a study the NCAA or host site could include a brief survey to all fans pre-ordering tickets asking where they obtained their information to purchase. Correlations found examining these areas could prove useful in the marketing and promoting of future College Cups as well as ensure that the money spent of these part of the event is being maximized.

Over the years, many of the College Cups have been held in conjunction with a youth soccer showcase, designed to bring in the top youth soccer teams in the country to be seen by numerous college coaches and increase attendance at the College Cup itself. Many times tickets to the College Cup games are included in team registration fees. An area that could be studied in the future could revolve around years where a youth tournament was hosted versus years where one was not to see if there was any effect on the attendance.

In addition, a future study comparing the NCAA Men's Soccer College Cup or championship as a whole to other NCAA championships could prove insightful. A study comparing men's soccer to another smaller championship such as field hockey or lacrosse could compare similar situations and any differences between the championships that seemed to enhance the success might be transferable, and therefore able to be used in the other. The men's soccer

championship could also be compared to a larger, proven championship such as men's basketball. With the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship and Final Four arguably the most successful amongst the NCAA championships, ideas that could be related to a smaller event such as the men's soccer championship may be discovered.

### **5.5 Suggestions**

The College Cup itself has been run using the same basic format for over the past twenty years. It has always consisted of the final four teams remaining in the championship convening at a neutral site the week immediately following the quarterfinal match-ups. As discussed earlier, the College Cup has been held in a number of different sites, each of which has provided a different set of circumstances. Some of the sites have been in areas of the country where low temperatures and snow have been present. Other sites have been located many miles away from the majority of the potential participating teams. Still other sites have had unreasonably high stadium capacities that were unable to be close to filled, potentially affecting the demand to pre-order tickets. Although none of the data yielded significant findings, the NCAA may want to experiment by addressing some of these areas to see if future results may prove to be significant. To attempt to find a balance that creates the best scenario involving all of these factors, some different ideas altering the structure could be considered for the future.

One suggestion related to location would be to stabilize the location of the College Cup at a repeated site. This type of arrangement has worked well for baseball with the College World Series in Omaha, Nebraska. This would provide stability to those planning to attend and

might encourage or create a fan base that would attend the event year after year. It would allow fans to plan trips and purchase tickets in advance knowing the type of experience to expect. The added potential of making this site a warm weather site could also encourage people to travel from farther away, treating the trip as an opportunity to get away, regardless of the proximity of the participating teams.

Another variable to be explored could be to have the College Cup moved back farther on the calendar. Currently it is played the weekend immediately following the quarterfinal games, typically toward the end of the second week in December. With the quarterfinal games typically being played on a Sunday and the semi-final games being played on a Friday night, this provides only a few days for fans of qualifying teams to plan a trip to the site of the College Cup. Moving the event to the week between Christmas and New Years could be examined to determine if this positively impacts attendance. This is a common time for vacations and the extra few weeks leading up to the College Cup would enable fans, alumni, and others more time to plan a trip. This extra time could aid in encouraging more fans to make the trip regardless of the proximity of the participating teams. It would also provide more time for the host site to market the event with the identity of the participating teams known. In the same way that baseball fans flock to Omaha each summer regardless of the teams participating, this time period might be conducive for soccer fans to plan a College Cup centered vacation regardless of affiliation with a participating team.

One location that could be considered based on the previous suggestions is Orlando, Florida. The Disney Soccer Showcase is a youth soccer tournament held in Orlando each year during

the suggested time period. It features hundreds of youth soccer teams and was rated the number one youth soccer tournament in United States according to Soccer America magazine. In addition, youth soccer tournaments are held in Tampa, Florida and Cocoa Beach, Florida at the same time. Between all of these thousands of youth soccer team participants, their parents, and friends, a large number of potential spectators will already be guaranteed to be located within a 90 mile radius of the event. This does not even factor in the fans that would travel into the area to support the teams participating in the College Cup. Additional general soccer fans could be persuaded to travel to a location such as Orlando because there are plenty of other things to do with their families during the time between games. The likely good weather of Orlando is a positive as well. The average temperatures in Orlando from the same dates as the College Cup was held from 1998 to 2004 ranged between 59 and 74 degrees with an average temperature of 66 degrees. Consistent temperatures over 60 degrees will eliminate potential weather dilemmas, such as having to reschedule games due to freezing temperatures and snow in St. Louis in 2006, as well as provide a favorable environment for spectators attending the championship. Through the installment of temporary seating, an appropriately sized stadium could be prepared, or even permanently constructed in the area, were the NCAA and the host organization to reach a long term agreement. This stadium could be constructed as a smaller soccer specific stadium designed to be filled and promote a European style atmosphere. Instead of using a football stadium such as was used in Charlotte, NC in 1999 and 2000 that had a combined two day capacity of 146,596, a stadium with a two day capacity between 30,000 and 40,000 could legitimately be filled every year given the surroundings. Such a crowd could increase the

demand for tickets and could ultimately lead to stadium expansion at the same site, a possibility that should be allowed for during the construction of the stadium.

An additional idea to explore could be to host the NCAA Women's Soccer College Cup at the same location. With youth soccer tournaments featuring boys and girls teams, the potential fan base is in place for both events. Thus, the NCAA could pool together the designated resources for both College Cups and create one large showcase event for the sport at the collegiate level. A final spin on this idea could be to eliminate the College Cup as a four team event and instead play semi-final match-ups at campus sites and have only the men's and women's finals be played at the warm-weather neutral site. This would almost revert back to the concept of the Soccer Bowls held over 50 years ago.

The NCAA Men's Soccer College Cup is an event that represents a sport with one of the largest youth participation rates in the United States. To continue to search and strive for the most successful situation to maximize the event is a goal that should be important to the NCAA. Though this particular study was unable to unearth any significant findings, further, more in-depth research is still needed to determine if there are variables that can be manipulated to create the most successful College Cup scenario.

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