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ACC Shocker: Reportedly Inviting Only Miami And VA Tech

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The ACC "stunned nearly everyone last night, extending invitations to Virginia Tech and Miami," according to sources of Josh Barr of the WASHINGTON POST. Boston College and Syracuse were not included. An ACC source said, "It's all new." While details of last night's conference call "were not immediately clear," a source close to the situation said that "perhaps geography played a role with the northeast location of Syracuse and Boston College." The source: "If you argue some kind of contiguous ACC, then you're picking up teams within the ACC." Miami and Virginia Tech must still accept the invitations. Barr notes that the nine-member ACC voting to add two new members was "startling because NCAA rules require leagues have 12 members in order to stage a potentially lucrative football conference championship game. The ACC could propose legislation to change that, or it could try to add a 12th member." An NCAA exec said that if such a proposal is made "promptly and passes, it is possible that it could be enacted before the 2004 football season." Meanwhile, CT AG Richard Blumenthal said that the lawsuit filed against the ACC, Boston College and Miami "remains intact" (WASHINGTON POST, 6/25). ACC Commissioner John Swofford released a statement yesterday, "We are very close to reaching a definitive conclusion to this process. We expect to have an announcement in the near future" (THE DAILY). In N.Y., Viv Bernstein notes Swofford, "suggesting final action had been taken," when asked if another conference call would be scheduled, said, "I doubt it." Bernstein notes that the vote was 7-2 for the invitations with North Carolina and Duke voting against (N.Y. TIMES, 6/25).

ALL THE WAY TO ELEVEN: While the ACC has yet to say if it will look to eventually expand to 12 teams, or petition the NCAA to allow 11-member conferences to hold a football championship game, a source of the Ft. Lauderdale SUN-SENTINEL's Craig Barnes said, "There is a consensus that the petition will have an excellent chance. If the teams accept and move for the 2004-2005 season, it could mean no 12th team or championship game, but one could be put in place by 2005-2006" (SUN-SENTINEL, 6/25).

ARE THEY COMING? In Miami, Barry Jackson cites multiple Miami sources as saying the Hurricanes are "prepared to accept" the ACC's invitation (MIAMI HERALD, 6/25). In DC, David Elfin notes that VA Tech President Charles Steger has said earlier this month that he would not accept an invitation from the ACC, but several members of the school's Board of Visitors had "indicated they would be willing to listen" (WASHINGTON TIMES, 6/25). In Richmond, Bob Lipper writes, "Tech has to accept this bid" (RICHMOND TIMES-DISPATCH, 6/25).

WAS IT ALL TOO MESSY? In Palm Beach, Greg Stoda writes, "If anyone in the UM family had known months ago what they know now, it's more than a pretty good guess the 'Canes would have told the ACC not to bother" (PALM BEACH POST, 6/25). Duke basketball coach Mike Krzyzewski said yesterday, "Obviously we haven't distinguished ourselves in how we've gone about this. ... I hope we mend fences because we've obviously gone into another person's yard with our tractor-trailer and knocked down a few trees" (WASHINGTON POST, 6/25).