

COMMENTARY: What should happen on Oct. 20

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The Penn State story makes me sick.

Everything about it – from what Jerry Sandusky did to innocent children, to what Joe Paterno and other higher ups knew and neglected to act on – makes me sick. The more details that emerge about what took place at Penn State, the more I want to cringe. Having had a summer job all throughout high school where I was a summer school associate and worked with kids between the ages of 5-8, hearing about any child being harmed by a pedophile just disgusts me.

A lot has been written over the past week about what should happen to the Penn State football program going forward after [The Freeh Report](#), which was revealed publicly on July 12, provided further evidence of a cover-up taking place. There have been arguments made both for and against Penn State receiving the “Death Penalty” (i.e. the football program suspends operations for this season and possibly for multiple seasons). Valid points have been made by those from both sides.

Exactly three months from now, the Iowa Hawkeyes and Penn State Nittany Lions are scheduled to play a football game versus each other at Kinnick Stadium. The more I’ve thought about everything, the more I find myself on the side that says Penn State shouldn’t play football this fall (I would prefer to see it self-impose this along with other punishments as opposed to the NCAA and/or Big Ten having to come down on the school).

As unfair as it might seem to those currently associated with the Penn State program that had nothing to do with anything that occurred, I keep coming back to the fact that children were harmed and that nothing was done to keep more children from being abused. A young boy having his innocence taken from him by a monster like Sandusky is a hell of a lot more unfair than some football team not being able to play games.

Even if it's just for one year, I don't think Penn State should play football, and right now, the thought of walking into Kinnick Stadium on Oct. 20 to observe a football game between Iowa and Penn State seems quite unsettling.

I don't want to hear about logistical problems with scheduling and how this would affect Iowa. For one thing, if Penn State's forced to forfeit, this game would go down in the win column for the Hawkeyes, so that alone should prevent the majority of fans from complaining.

More importantly, however, it's worth repeating: Children were harmed on a college campus by a football coach and those in power at that school didn't do anything when they should have. It doesn't get more despicable than that.

Here are two options that Iowa ought to consider in the event Penn State doesn't play football this fall: 1. Treat that week like a bye week (which is probably what Kirk Ferentz would do), or 2. Hold a 60-minute scrimmage inside Kinnick Stadium that night and allow fans who would've gone to the game to use their ticket stub to enter for free. If it went the scrimmage route, there could also be a donation box set up at each gate and fans could be asked to give money to charities such as the [Rape Victim Advocacy Program](#) and others across the state that help victims of child sex abuse.

(I realize from a football-playing standpoint, a scrimmage might not be wise. It's merely an idea that could go towards a good cause and at the same time maybe make it up to those who

already spent or will be spending money in Iowa City that weekend. Again, if the team wants to treat it like a bye week, so be it.)

But with all that being said, I wouldn't anticipate Penn State football being shut down this fall. Maybe it is next year. Maybe other punishments end up being in play instead. None of us know yet what will ultimately happen long-term.

So now let me provide a scenario for what should happen if there is a game on Oct. 20: Similar to the scrimmage idea, have every fan attending the game donate \$10 at the gate to charities that help child sex abuse victims. Assuming all 70,595 seats are filled, that would make \$705,950 in donations right there. Not to mention that with it being a night game, there could be UI student organizations that go all around campus throughout the day and collect donations from tailgaters to help add to that total.

There could potentially be over \$1 million in donated money towards a worthy cause. How many of you currently with intentions of being at Kinnick Stadium that night wouldn't want to be a part of that?

Basically, there's two scenarios at play here: Either Penn State doesn't play football this season, or it does. Whichever outcome occurs, the UI has three months to create a positive for that weekend. Three months should be plenty of time to properly organize a fundraiser that would likely have enormous success, whether it's during a game, scrimmage, or just something done in Iowa City if the stadium isn't put to use that night.

No matter what happens, this Penn State story isn't going away anytime soon and there's a good chance it just keeps getting worse. All I know is it would be a lot less unsettling to be in Kinnick Stadium that day if something could be done to ensure that heinous crimes like what took place in

Pennsylvania aren't done to children in the state of Iowa.