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**Reserved: Best Practices for On-campus Football
Parking for People with Physical Disabilities**

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Abstract

College football games transform many campuses into small cities each fall Saturday. The tailgating atmosphere becomes as much a part of the experience as the game for many fans, and a prime parking spot at the game is often as highly valued as a 50-yard line seat. Finding the right parking spot for people with physical disabilities is sometimes less about tailgating and proximity and more about accessibility to the stadium. The purpose of this research was to provide a list of best practices for parking policies based on legal precedent and legislation. To accomplish this, the researchers 1) examined case law dealing with accessible parking issues, 2) examined the football parking policies of universities in the Southeastern Conference (SEC), and 3) examined accessible parking policies to ensure institutions are in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) guidelines without reinforcing social isolation. The recommendations come from a legal examination of the ADA and how courts have ruled on general accessible parking issues, both of which can serve as a template for collegiate athletic event parking.

Reserved: Best Practices for On-campus Football Parking for People with Physical Disabilities

The 2009 college football season saw 28 schools average more than 60,000 in home attendance, and nine schools averaged more than 90,000 (2009 National College Football Attendance, n.d.). Accommodating that many spectators in one facility requires a stringent parking plan especially for campuses that are generally designed to hold far fewer students than stadium capacity.

Erickson, Lee, and von Schrader (2009) report 12.6% of the U.S. population consists of people with disabilities – both physical and cognitive. This study's focus is on people with physical disabilities. For the 28 schools that averaged more than 60,000 in home attendance during the 2009 football season, if 12.6% of attendees had disabilities, it would mean at least 7,560 people with disabilities would be in attendance each game.

Anticipated attendance at sporting events is considerably lower than those extrapolated figures as social isolation among people with disabilities decreases expected sporting event attendance (Bramston, Bruggeman, & Pretty, 2002; Coleman, 1971; Louis Harris and Associates, 1986; Rimmer, Rowland, & Yamaki, 2007). Faris (1934) argued that “the isolated person makes a struggle to establish intimate social relations, and feels lonely when he fails” (p. 157). The greater number of social identities one possesses, e.g. relationships with others such as in a tailgating or football game environment, then the less psychological distress that person endures (Thoits, 1983). People with disabilities face social isolation due to multi-

ple factors, one of which is physical barriers (Burgdorf, 1991; Hirst, 1989). Accessible design at sporting events would be considered a type of physical barrier.

Statement of the Problem

This study examines the following research question: What are the best practices for on-campus football parking for people with physical disabilities? This question will be addressed according to the following four topics:

- Are universities properly accommodating people with physical disabilities with regard to parking?
- How are universities legally required to address accessible parking for large-scale special events like home football games?
- Does accessible parking on a college campus for football games comply with standards set forth by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) without reinforcing social isolation?
- In what ways do athletic departments convey information about accessible parking to the public?

Research Setting

In an effort to better understand the legal, structural, and procedural challenges of providing adequate parking for people with physical disabilities, an investigation of the 12 universities in the Southeastern Conference (SEC) was conducted. The SEC was chosen because it is a conference that competes in the NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision and is one of the six conferences receiving automatic bids to the Bowl Championship Series in football to determine a national champion. Financially, the SEC is among the most successful conferences as it distributed approximately \$209 million to member institutions during the 2009-10 fiscal year (2009-10 SEC Revenue Distribution, n.d.). The SEC had nine of the 28 schools that averaged 60,000 or more in attendance in 2009, five of which ranked in the top 10 in average attendance (2009 National College Football Attendance, n.d.).

The purpose of the analysis was three-fold: 1) examine case law dealing with accessible parking issues, 2) examine the football parking policies of universities in the Southeastern Conference, and 3) provide recommendations to address accessible parking to ensure not only compliance with the ADA but also the implementation of best practices in accommodating sport spectators with physical disabilities. The recommendations are derived from a legal examination of the ADA and how courts have ruled on accessible parking issues, as well as an examination of parking policies in the SEC, the combination of which can serve as a template for collegiate athletic event parking.

This study examined game-day parking for on-campus home games and was not concerned with other venues in which teams play that are off-campus. Arkansas' home stadium is on-campus in Fayetteville, Arkansas, but it plays a limited number of its home games in Little Rock, Arkansas. For this study, the focus was only on the team's games in Fayetteville. Florida and Georgia play their annual game in Jacksonville, Florida, rather than on either school's campus. This study did not incorporate that game. South Carolina's home stadium is two miles from the heart of campus, but for this study was considered an on-campus stadium.

Reserved vs. Non-reserved Parking

Game-day parking for on-campus home games at SEC universities includes reserved and non-reserved lots. Reserved parking lots are typically reserved for athletic donors, season ticket holders, and other spe-

cial guests who are typically able to pay a fee to park close to the facility. This parking fee is usually in addition to a donation made to the university or athletic department to be eligible to purchase season tickets and have access to highly desired parking lots. Parking areas that require a standard fee no matter the location are sometimes operated by a parking services department and rented to athletic departments on game days, therefore, the fee is the rate paid by the athletic departments for use of the lot. Reserved parking is also usually provided for staff and media covering the games. Non-reserved parking typically accepts patrons on a first-come, first-served basis and may have financial stipulations that vary from free parking to a campus-wide fee that applies to all lots, particularly when the athletic department rents the property on game days.

Parking Lot Layouts

ADA requirements are measured per lot for large-scale events, and each parking lot must comply with Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (ADAAG) standards regarding the number of accessible parking spaces

Table 1. Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities

Total Spaces	Minimum Accessible Spaces
1 to 25	1
26 to 50	2
51 to 75	3
76 to 100	4
101 to 150	5
151 to 200	6
201 to 300	7
301 to 400	8
401 to 500	9
501 to 1000	2 % of total
1001 and over	20 plus 1 for each 100 over 1000

Source: Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities (2002, § 4.1.2)

at a convenient distance from the football stadium. An accessible shuttle operation may be rendered impractical because it is not feasible for a game-day shuttle service taking fans to the stadium to stop at every lot on campus, according to recommendations from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT). The USDOT recommends that accessible parking for special events be addressed by designating a parking area closest to the venue gates or viewing areas for accessible parking (U.S. Department of Transportation, 2003). Institutions in the SEC have similarly addressed accessible parking by designating entire lots for accessible parking rather than providing individual accessible parking spaces in each lot based on the lot's size.

Parking Lot Location

ADAAG guidelines require that accessible parking be located adjacent to the accessible entrance (Americans with Disabilities Act Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, 2002). Due to recommendations from the USDOT and ADAAG, it is acceptable to have one accessible lot as a reasonable accommodation. Courts, however, have “ignored the question of whether a proposed accommodation is reasonable” regarding employment, instead determining “whether the employer has a valid defense for not making the accommodation” (Key, 1996, p. 93). The ADA “does not require employers to make every conceivable accommodation” (p. 95). In *Vande Zande v. Wisconsin Department of Administration* (1995), the court deemed a cost-benefit analysis appropriate. This ruling can be applicable to accessible parking location in examining the cost-benefit analysis of relocating lots versus providing shuttle transportation with multiple pick-up and drop-off points.

Tailgating

The tailgating community becomes as much a part of the sport experience as the game for many fans, and a prime parking spot at the game is often as highly valued as a great seat location. Within these tailgating communities, there is often a strong bond that reinforces a sense of belonging (Gibson, Willming, & Holdnak, 2002). Tailgating for football games has been described by some fans as “family” time with as many as 20 people present and social interaction being an important benefit (Gibson et al., 2002). Drenten, Peters, Leigh, and Hollenbeck (2009) identified social interaction as one of four basic motivations for tailgating with respondents describing the atmosphere as a “social activity for friends, family, acquaintances, and even strangers to share” (p. 99). Bain-Selbo (2009) compared the college

football tailgating atmosphere to a religious experience, considering a large group of people gathers once a week with those they love the most to passionately pay homage to one particular being, or in this case, a football team.

Legal Aspects

The primary challenge of providing adequate accessible parking concerns the potential logistical requirements at a Division I football game. The ADAAG states the following:

Accessible parking spaces serving a particular building shall be located on the shortest accessible route of travel from adjacent parking to an accessible entrance. In parking facilities that do not serve a particular building, accessible parking shall be located on the shortest accessible route of travel to an accessible pedestrian entrance of the parking facility. In buildings with multiple accessible entrances with adjacent parking, accessible parking spaces shall be dispersed and located closest to the accessible entrances (Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, 2002, Section 4.6.2.).

It would be an easier guideline to measure if one lot provided parking for all people in attendance, and the ADA guidelines would be set forth in the lot's design. However, large scale on-campus events like Division I football games force universities to use numerous lots of different sizes and characteristics across the campuses for parking.

Accessible parking at athletic events, specifically college football games, is an area that is not commonly disputed in the legal system. While there have been cases focused on disability in relation to colleges and universities, many focus on enrollment, employment, or benefits (*Beck v. University of Wisconsin Board or Regents*, 1996; *Betts v. The Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia*, 2005; *Carten v. Kent State University*, 2001; *Coleman v. Shalala*, 1995). Given this reality, for the purpose of this study, a legal examination of previous court rulings regarding “general” accessible parking issues was a better template to apply to collegiate athletic event parking.

Parking Location

In *Christman v. Tymaco Inc.* (2008), the court found the defendant, which owned Ice Castle Arena in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, in violation of the ADA on sev-

eral counts, one of which was accessible parking location. The arena once had accessible parking adjacent to the facility entrance, but moved the parking for people with disabilities across the street to the main parking garage. Spectators were forced to cross a two-lane street and move in a direction away from the main entrance only to backtrack to the main entrance after using the wheelchair ramp. The plaintiff also said that the access route from the parking lot to the building was not the same for wheelchair users as it was for those who do not use wheelchairs. The court ordered Tymaco to either provide a curb cut or wheelchair ramp in front of the main entrance to the arena, or return accessible parking to its previous location next to existing wheelchair ramps (*Christman v. Tymaco Inc.*, 2008).

Shuttle Drop-off

In *Independent Living Resources and Pike v. Oregon Arena Corporation* (1998), the plaintiff filed suit claiming the Rose Garden in Portland, Oregon, owned by the defendant, was not an accessible athletic facility. The plaintiff's alleged violation of Title III of the ADA, including accessible seating, entranceways, and features within the facility. Among the alleged violations was no curb ramp at the shuttle stop on Wheeler Avenue where busses dropped off spectators. The defendant argued that a curb ramp was not necessary because vehicles using the stop must be equipped with wheelchair lifts. The court ruled that congestion at a main artery like the shuttle stop in question can make it reasonable that other vehicles may use the stop, thus setting up the possibility that one shuttle would not be equipped for passengers with disabilities. The court ordered the defendant to install a curb ramp at this location, stating that the cost of installing a ramp is small when compared to the cost of the arena itself, and for the defendant to work with the plaintiff to determine an agreed upon design and location of the ramp (*Independent Living Resources and Pike v. Oregon Arena Corporation*, 1998).

Accessible Parking Fees

Two cases have addressed charging fees for accessible parking, either through purchased permits for specific lots or state-issued accessible parking permits. In *D'amico v. Rapides Parrish Coliseum Authority* (1986), the court found that a 25-cent per ticket surcharge on every ticket sold at Rapides Parish Coliseum in Alexandria, Louisiana, was not a tax but a service charge because it provided funds for additional security and safety services. In *Dare v. California* (1999), the plaintiff challenged California's fee for accessible parking permits,

arguing that it was a violation of the ADA because the fee did not apply to all parking permits such as regular license plates for vehicles. The *Dare* court sided with the plaintiff, stating that the fee was a violation of the ADA because it was not a required measure and the surcharge was not required of everyone for the same service.

The concept of surcharges related to this study regarding payment or donation for parking privileges: If all patrons are required to make a donation to park in an adjacent lot to the stadium, then patrons with disabilities must make the same donation to park in the lot (ADA Information Line, personal communication, Dec. 11, 2009). This is an example of avoiding the protected-class perception. In this case, allowing patrons with physical disabilities to park for free while charging able-bodied fans, the "protected-class perception of the protection afforded by disability nondiscrimination statutes does violence to the very essence of statutes designed to prevent unnecessary differentiation, i.e. discrimination" (Burgdorf, 1997, p. 569). In other words, overcompensating to ensure no discrimination can be an act of discrimination in itself, whereas statutes such as the ADA and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 strive to reinforce equality rather than enhance a social group's status or opportunity.

It is important also to note what the ADAAG states in regard to parking lots. Section 4.6.2 of the ADAAG states:

If parking spaces are provided for self-parking by employees or visitors, or both, then accessible spaces complying with (section) 4.6 shall be provided in each such parking area in conformance with the table ... (see Table 2). Spaces required by the table need not be provided in the particular lot. They may be provided in a different location if equivalent or greater accessibility, in terms of distance from an accessible entrance, cost, and convenience is ensured (Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, 2002).

The ADAAG goes on to state:

One in every eight accessible spaces, but not less than one, shall be served by an access aisle 96 inches (2440 mm) wide minimum and shall be designated "van accessible" as required by (section) 4.6.4. The vertical clearance at such spaces shall comply with (section) 4.6.5. All such spaces may be grouped on one level of a parking structure.

EXCEPTION: Provision of all required parking spaces in conformance with “Universal Parking Design” is permitted (Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, 2002).

These cases and legislation focused on parking location, shuttle transportation for people with physical disabilities, fees for accessible parking such as required donations or gifts to athletic departments, and specifications for accessible parking lots. Legislation states that accessible parking must be located closest to the accessible entrance to the building it serves, and case law has reinforced this by ordering facilities to move accessible parking. Shuttle transportation can assist spectators with physical disabilities, but all shuttles and shuttle drop-offs must be accessible, as proven by case law. Fees and surcharges must be equal; for example, people with physical disabilities should not be treated differently than able-bodied spectators in regards to parking fees or surcharges. Legislation also states that accessible parking lots must meet size and location criteria set forth by the ADAAG (2002).

Data Collection

In order to examine the existing accessible parking policies of universities in the SEC, the official athletic Web sites of the 12 universities in the conference were examined for parking policy information provided to potential spectators, and each athletic department was contacted by telephone seeking supplemental information regarding parking policies. The Web site examination and telephone interviews were used as data collection methods and field notes were taken during the informal interviews to collect any supplemental parking policy information that was not provided on the official athletic Web sites. The following semi-structured interview questions were asked of athletic department officials during telephone interviews:

1. Does your university or athletic department have a written policy for accessible parking at home football games?
2. Does your university or athletic department have supplemental information regarding accessible parking for home football games aside from what appears on the official athletic Web site?
3. What is the primary source at your university or athletic department through

which people can obtain information regarding accessible parking policy?

Notes were taken during the interviews and analyzed to identify themes that emerged from the answers provided.

Results

Four themes emerged from the examination of Web sites and semi-structured telephone interviews and were identified as a) Lot Location, b) Information Source, c) Misuse, and d) Governance. Lot Location and Information Source were themes that emerged directly from the questions asked during the semi-structured telephone interviews. These themes identified where accessible parking lots were located on campus and the primary method in which spectators were expected by the athletic department to obtain information regarding accessible parking. Misuse was a theme that emerged from the informal telephone interviews as athletic representatives acknowledged that spectators fraudulently used accessible parking lots through various means. Governance was a second theme that emerged from official Web site analysis. Universities vary in their governance of game-day parking through three main departments: development, tickets, and parking services.

Lot Location

Reserved and non-reserved are two types of game-day parking that determine where a parking lot is located. For this study, adjacent parking lots are defined as those lots directly next to the stadium, providing the closest possible route to the entrance. Ten universities provide reserved accessible parking adjacent to the stadium, charging patrons to enter the lot. One university provided reserved accessible parking adjacent to the stadium free of charge. One university did not publicize accessible parking in a reserved lot adjacent to the stadium, per its Fan Guide that is posted online which the university ticket office stated was the first and main source of information (Parking and Traffic Information, n.d.). All 12 universities in the SEC provided non-reserved accessible parking that is not adjacent to the football stadium. Each university that provided non-reserved accessible parking also provided shuttle transportation to and from the stadium, either by bus or golf cart. (See Table 1.)

Information Source

Information Source is the first and main way in

Table 2. Accessible Parking Characteristics of SEC Members												
Characteristic	Alabama	Arkansas	Auburn	Florida	Georgia	Kentucky	LSU	Mississippi	Mississippi State	South Carolina	Tennessee	Vanderbilt
Free reserved lot adjacent to stadium	✓											
Paid reserved lot adjacent to stadium		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Non-reserved lot with shuttle	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Information – Web site primary source	✓	✓	✓						✓	✓	✓	✓
Information – Other primary source				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				
Governing Office – Development		✓		✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Governing Office – Logistics	✓								✓		✓	
Governing Office – Ticketing			✓		✓							

which people access information about accessible parking for home football games at the 12 SEC universities. This was specifically asked in Question 3 during each personal interview, but for this study it is identified as a theme because of the answers that were provided. Universities provided three options as the first and main source of information: Web Site, Telephone, and Direct Mail. Universities may have used a combination of communication methods to distribute information about accessible parking, but for the purpose of this study each university official was asked to only identify the primary source in which accessible parking information is communicated to ticket holders. Web site as an information source meant that information provided on the official athletic Web site was the first and main way in which information about accessible parking was communicated between athletic departments and the public. Telephone meant that the athletic department's first and main means of communicating information about accessible parking was through telephone calls, whether it was ticket holders placing calls to the athletic department asking questions or the athletic department calling its database of names to relay information. Direct Mail meant that the athletic department's first and main source of disseminating information was to send direct mail to either the entire season ticket holder base or to ticket holders who identified themselves through initial season ticket requests as having a physical disability.

Seven universities used their athletic Web site as the first and main source of information for fans with physical disabilities to retrieve guidelines for accessible parking policies. Five universities used a combination of other sources as a first and main way for fans to obtain guidelines for accessible parking policies, such as telephone calls to and from the athletic department, season ticket request forms, and parking information direct mailings.

Misuse

Misuse was the third theme that emerged from the data. Six universities noted fraudulent use of accessible parking lots has been or presently is an issue that has forced the university to examine its approach. The common action among the six universities was to require state-issued documentation that a passenger within a car had a disability. However, issues of misuse remain due to the amount of revenue received through adjacent parking; universities can charge spectators from \$400 for a season parking pass to as much as a \$2,400 donation to obtain a parking pass for a reserved adjacent lot. One university admitted misuse was a major problem among season ticket holders who obtained parking passes to use the adjacent accessible lot. The university sells accessible parking passes at \$400 on a season basis, which is the least expensive parking price on campus for a season pass. It changed its policy to allow the accessible parking passes to be transferred by the consumer to anyone he or she chooses, wheth-

er they have a disability or not. No patron is asked to prove disability before entering the accessible lot as long as he or she has the university-issued accessible parking pass. This has resulted in an increase in fraudulent use, although the university errs on the side of caution in order to comply with the ADA by not questioning disability status of the accessible parking patrons.

Another university instituted an attendance policy for ticket holders who obtained accessible parking along with their season tickets. This requires accessible lot pass holders to be present for a minimum number of games per year or they will lose their parking privileges in that lot. Yet another university required a state-issued accessible parking permit or tag and additionally a university-issued parking permit to access the accessible lot.

Governance

In regards to a written parking policy or supplemental information from what is posted on the official athletic Web site, all universities reverted to the information posted on the official athletic Web site. This suggests that the information posted is the most accurate and current regarding accessible parking. All 12 universities provided information about accessible

parking on their official athletic Web site, although the amount of information provided varied from university to university. Semi-structured interviews also provided a varying amount of information regarding accessible parking for home football games. The varying degrees of information provided suggests that some universities may govern accessible parking more strictly than other universities, perhaps depending on the extent to which it must be addressed or the department that governs parking during football games.

Universities use a combination approach to governance; some universities govern from the athletic development department, others from the ticket office, and yet others from a logistical department on campus. For this study's purpose, a logistical department on campus can be described as the university's parking services department, transportation department, or special events department; while titled differently at universities, each primarily governs on-campus parking and transportation. Parking falls into the development category at some universities because of the financial requirements attached to parking in a reserved lot, which typically requires a donation to the athletic department. Accessible parking may be governed from the ticket office

Table 3. Best Practices for On-Campus Football Parking for People with Physical Disabilities	
Category	Recommendation
Communication	Use direct mail and telephone as the first and main source for providing information to season ticket holders about accessible parking. This can develop stronger relationships while reaching a greater portion of the audience by taking a proactive approach. Relying solely on the Internet as a communications tool can potentially eliminate half of the target audience.
Misuse	Require three items for entry into an accessible parking lot: state-issued accessible parking permit, valid accessible parking certification/receipt from the purchase of the permit (if applicable), and photo identification of accessible permit holder. These three practices have proven successful in other large sporting events, and will not require additional funding. This can prevent potential fraudulent use such as borrowing an accessible permit from another individual.
Policy	Examine the policies of other universities periodically and implement appropriate practices. Reevaluating event management practices occurs frequently. Therefore, re-evaluating accessible parking policy based on feedback from spectators as well as practices of other universities transforms accessible parking from a reactive measure to a proactive approach taken by the athletic department.
Shuttle Drop-off Time	Ensure pre-game and post-game shuttle operation times are convenient for all spectators. Pre-game operation may vary depending on kickoff time, but should begin one hour prior to when the gates open. Post-game operation should last at least one hour following the event to accommodate for games decided late in the contest. Attention should be shown to post-game operation; pre-game operation includes spectators arriving at different times, whereas post-game operation includes a majority of spectators exiting at the same time and can cause logistical issues for people with physical disabilities.

because of season tickets, which are often tied to donations and therefore tied to reserved-parking privileges. Accessible parking may be governed by a logistics office if that office controls university-wide parking on game days. That accessible parking is governed by different departments at different universities is not ideal, but the qualities of accessible parking make it cross-disciplinary involving parking, fundraising, and tickets. Having different departments govern accessible parking at different universities, however, may present a reason for such diverse governance and regulation.

Discussion

In examining the ADA, previous court rulings, and current parking policies at universities in the SEC, a list of best practices (see Table 3) can be compiled as suggestions for large schools like those in the SEC in regards to accessible parking policies. From a legal standpoint, universities in the SEC are following guidance set forth by the ADA, ADAAG, USDOT, and court decisions. All lots must provide the required amount of accessible parking spaces per the ADAAG (Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, 2002). The ADA requires accessible parking to be adjacent to the facility, and universities have provided accessible parking in reserved lots adjacent to stadiums. Often those lots require a fee to park in addition to a donation to the university or athletic department. One university in the SEC did not charge a fee for parking in its reserved lot during the 2009 season, but planned to charge a fee of \$10 in 2010. Requiring patrons with physical disabilities to make the same donation in order to gain access to a specific lot is legal under ADA guidelines because all patrons, whether with or without a disability, have the same requirement, therefore avoiding the possibility of creating a protected class of patrons (ADA Information Line, personal communication, Dec. 11, 2009; *D'amico v. Rapides Parish Coliseum Authority*, 1986; *Dare v. California*, 1999). (See Table 2.)

One university reviewed its accessible parking policy and overhauled the policy after discovering that the reserved grass lot adjacent to the stadium did not comply with ADAAG design standards because it was not a paved lot. The overhaul showed proactive responsibility by the university, which also provides several “best practices” examples for other universities to follow. The university set aside an accessible reserved lot that is adjacent to the football stadium for ticket holders based on how long they have been a season ticket holder. Not all spaces were being used in the accessible lot, so dur-

ing the 2009 season the university implemented a stipulation that season ticket holders who used the accessible lot were required to attend four of the seven home games or risk the parking privilege being revoked. Each patron had a reserved space and lot attendants took attendance for each game; each hang tag had to match the assigned parking space. Patrons must renew their season tickets to renew the pass to park in the accessible lot each season. The university plans to continually send out applications to park in the lot to its season ticket holders to prevent spaces from not being used, and to replace non-renewals with other season ticket holders.

Universities in the SEC have also designated non-reserved lots for accessible parking with shuttle transportation to the stadium since these lots are often not adjacent to the stadium. While a university may take steps to ensure all shuttles are accessible, it cannot necessarily confirm that the shuttle stops will be without congestion from other patrons or other vehicles, nor can it prevent possibilities of other transportation units using the drop-off point, legally or illegally (*Independent Living Resources and Pike v. Oregon Arena Corporation*, 1998). Time frames and destinations for shuttle transportation should be examined to ensure maximum integration of people with physical disabilities into the game atmosphere and to ensure proper accessibility. For example, one university's accessible shuttle begins two hours prior to kickoff to transport fans to the stadium. However, for return to the non-reserved accessible lot, the shuttle begins at the end of the third quarter of the game and stops running 30 minutes after the game (Game Day Central: Parking, n.d.). While this may not prevent a patron from experiencing the game in its entirety, special situations like close games or overtime contests can result in most fans leaving at the same time, and therefore congesting logistics for people with physical disabilities who would normally use the accessible shuttle. In other words, it may take 30 minutes for a fan with a disability to move from their seat to the accessible shuttle boarding point, and if the accessible shuttle ceases operation 30 minutes after the game then the fan is left without transportation back to their accessible parking lot.

Another example is a university that provides golf cart transportation from non-reserved accessible lots to the stadium. The golf cart service, however, does not take fans to a well-known central tailgating location on campus although a non-accessible shuttle does transport fans there. The lack of accessible transportation to the tailgating area has been a complaint of fans. Two other

universities acknowledged they have fielded complaints of a similar nature in that their non-reserved accessible lots, which are not adjacent to the stadium but provide accessible shuttle transportation to and from the stadium, are not located close to their central tailgating area on campus. This does not mean universities that receive complaints must relocate non-reserved accessible parking to central tailgating locations. The ADA does not require relocation as long as reasonable accommodations or modifications are provided (Burgdorf, 1991).

From an equality standpoint, providing the same shuttle transportation for people with physical disabilities as able-bodied spectators is not legally required if the shuttle is simply going to a popular stop rather than the ultimate destination, the stadium. It should, however, be an adopted practice, even if it is to transport fans to and from a non-essential aspect of the football game. The tailgate scene is where the pregame atmosphere is often the “Times Square” of a college campus on game day, and those locations are not always nearest the stadium. Lots may serve patrons well in terms of creating accessibility to and from the stadium before and after the event through proximity or shuttle services, and tailgating is possible in those locations. Yet locations like Mississippi’s “Grove” and LSU’s “Touchdown Village” are not considered adjacent to their respective stadiums, and for some spectators the central tailgating atmosphere may be more enjoyable than the actual game. While parking location may be a priority for accessibility pre-game and post-game, it does not negate the fact that the social aspect of tailgating can be viewed as a school’s goods, services, and privileges while arguably integrating spectators of both teams and cultural backgrounds.

Goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, and accommodations shall be afforded to an individual with a disability in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of the individual (Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines for Buildings and Facilities, 2002).

Ensuring that non-reserved accessible parking lots are integrated into the heart of campus during football games, or at least providing accessible shuttle transportation to those central tailgating points, can avoid the risk of socially isolating a population of the fan base. People with disabilities are already less likely to attend sporting events (Bramston et al., 2002; Coleman, 1971; Louis Harris and Associates, 1986; Rimmer, Rowland, & Yamaki, 2007), but

when they do attend social events such as games, they should have access to all of the potential experiences.

The avenue through which universities distribute their message is equally important. A majority of universities in the SEC use their Web sites as the first and main source of relaying information regarding accessible parking. This can be the most convenient and inexpensive route for universities to update and distribute information to the most people. One university designed a one-stop-shop Web site that is dedicated to pre-game activities, post-game activities, and logistical information. Other universities have Web pages that focus on parking and transportation for game day.

A demographical comparison of Internet users and people with disabilities, however, shows that users may not rely on the Internet as their first and main source of information. Among people in the United States age 65-74, 26.6% have disabilities that include visual, hearing, ambulatory, and cognitive and affect self-care and independent living; 51.5% of U.S. citizens age 75 and older have a disability (Erickson, Lee, & von Schrader, 2009). Therefore, a large portion of the U.S. population age 65 and older has a disability. In comparison, just 51.2% of the U.S. population age 55 and older consider themselves Internet users, the smallest percentage among U.S. Internet users age 25 and older (Current Population Survey Internet Use, n.d.). Younger people also spend more time on the Internet than older people (Han, 2008). The majority of university athletic donors are age 50 or older (O’Neil, J. & Schenke, M., 2007; Pan & Gabert, 1997). By using the athletic Web site as the first and main source of accessible parking information, it assumes that those seeking the information regarding accessible parking are Internet savvy and use online sources to retrieve information. However, data contradict that, showing that the majority of people with disabilities are older, the majority of donors are older, and older populations are less likely to use the Internet. This combination of factors demonstrates that a message sent primarily by means of the Internet may not be reaching its target audience, particularly if the university governs its accessible parking through its development office. This information suggests that universities examine the way they rely on conveying their message regarding accessible parking, particularly if they use the official athletic Web site as the first and main source from which ticket holders obtain accessible parking information.

Five universities in the SEC relied on direct mail to a database and telephone conversations as their first and

main source for distributing information regarding accessible parking. One university official who identified accessibility needs when tickets are purchased admitted to potentially talking to each season ticket holder who has requested accessible parking. A different university presented information on accessible parking in its annual Fan Guide that is mailed to season ticket holders and single-game ticket purchasers from the past four years. Another university identified fans with physical disabilities (a process done when the patron purchased tickets originally) in their database. Those fans received a letter explaining accessible parking and the deadline for applying for an accessible parking pass, which required proper documentation of disability.

While both approaches of providing Web-based information and through direct mail can be effective, the latter is a more proactive approach by the university that seeks to identify fans with physical disabilities and therefore creates a more in-depth relationship with a segment of the market. The proactive method can also be a means of preventing potential complaints by spectators that did not have access to accessible parking information online and therefore were not in a position to take advantage of the accommodation.

A final recommendation for a university is a measure to monitor potential misuse in accessible parking permit. A university should set standard procedures for keeping patrons accountable for use of disability services. Multiple universities in the SEC admitted a misuse problem in accessible parking lots and some have changed the required documentation for entrance into the lots. A university could require three items of each patron using an accessible parking lot: 1) a state-issued accessible parking tag or permit, 2) valid certification from the state in which the permit was obtained, if applicable, and 3) photo identification. An individual could be identified on all three items in order for admission into the lot. This is a policy that has been instituted at some NASCAR venues, where attendance figures are comparable to college football games (2010 Accessible Needs Parking Permit Application, n.d.).

The issues uncovered in this study are ones that can be addressed by universities immediately. The ADA states that changes must be made if they are reasonable modifications that do not fundamentally change the nature of the business, and can provide an integrated setting. The issues of accessible parking availability and location can certainly be addressed with regard to physical ability. These recommendations

come from an examination of the ADA and previous court cases, as well as policy examination of universities in the Southeastern Conference, which has the highest average attendance for football games.

This study was limited in that it only examined one conference of universities in one region of the United States for one sport (football). Examinations of universities in other conferences and other regions may produce different results or the recommendations set forth in this study may not be applicable, particularly for a university that has an off-campus stadium. Future research should be done in different regions of the United States, and include different sports. Future research should also include an examination of the terminology used on athletic Web sites in regards to accessibility. Official athletic Web sites use a mix of terms that may not be acceptable in the disability community, with terms such as "handicap" being an example of terminology that should be replaced by more current and accepted words like "accessible." The themes of Lot Location, Information Source, Misuse, and Governance require further examination as do aspects such as accessible seating with regard to social isolation among people with physical disabilities.

On-campus parking presents challenges due to the small size of parking lots on college campuses and the lack of one designated area for spectators to park and tailgate. Therefore, on-campus parking for large scale events must be spread across multiple lots at various locations. The ADA and ADAAG state that accessible parking must be in the closest adjacent lot to the accessible entrance, although an alternative proposed by the USDOT states that clustered parking can be legally acceptable at large events if the event provides accessible shuttle transportation. It appears that universities in the SEC are in compliance with regard to accessible parking regulations for home football games. This study revealed measures that can be taken to ensure spectators are not socially isolated and experience all aspects of the game day environment in an equally enjoyable way as able-bodied fans.

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