INSIDE NUCOR’S RECORD YEAR

Tariffs were part of the story, but the biggest boost came from the steel maker’s fundamental strategy to build or buy its way to the top of every market segment where it competes. 12-15
City will look at shift in incentives

When the next round of contracts begin in 2020, organizers of Charlotte's college football bowl game plan on adding a third conference of schools to choose participating teams from, adding to the current lineup consisting of Atlantic Coast Conference and Southeastern Conference members.

"There's a likelihood of a third conference under a split deal," Charlotte Sports Foundation executive director Will Webb told me. "It would give us more choices and also give title sponsors more geographic exposure (by bringing another region of the country)."

The University of Virginia beat the University of South Carolina 28-0 at this year's game on Dec. 29 at Bank of America Stadium. What conference might join the ACC and SEC remains unknown. A three-conference alignment is used by both the Music City Bowl in Nashville, Tennessee, and the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, Florida. In both cases, an ACC school plays a team from either the Big Ten or the SEC.

Schools from the SEC and ACC have been bound to the Belk Bowl since 2014. The ACC, based in Greensboro and including five schools in the Carolinas, has been tied to the Charlotte bowl game from its inception in 2002. The SEC signed a six-year agreement effective in 2014 to send an opponent for the ACC — replacing the American Athletic Conference.

Contracts with title sponsors Belk and SPH, the stadium and the two conferences and after the 2019 Belk Bowl. Webb said his organization's intent is to keep the game going in 2020 and beyond. Belk has told Webb previously the company wants to stay on as a title sponsor.

 Webb left open the possibility of another company backing the game. Belk was locally owned when the company put its name on the bowl in 2011. In 2015, New York-based private equity firm Sycamore Partners bought belk but kept the department store's headquarters here.

"We're not sure where we're going to be title-wise," Webb said. "But Belk has been a tremendous sponsor. We're hopeful, but we'll see where we go." A decision on the title sponsor would be made before the 2019 Belk Bowl is played next December.

According to the Charlotte Regional Visitors Authority, the 2017 Belk Bowl added $5.9 million worth of spending in Charlotte.