I watch a quadbox for the early, middle and late windows of College Football, whilst live blogging and hot taking. This Sunday Morning (UK time), my selection from the options available are:

- San Diego State @ UCLA
- Ohio State @ Texas
- Iowa State @ Iowa
- Georgia Southern @ Clemson

I've chosen this for exactly one reason over the other options; it has Iowa State @ Iowa alongside the ABC Saturday Night Football game. And it's for a pretty gut wrenching reason.

We all know how hot it was for a number of games last week, with some teams opting for a 10 minute 4th quarter. Whilst the players have access to those 'Big Fog' coolers when not on the field of play, that's not the same for the bands who are playing in the stands. A young gentleman by the name of Derek Phillips was a part of the Iowa band last week, and suffered, what ESPN reports as a sudden cardiac arrest. Whilst he was taken immediately to the University of Iowa hospital, *"the damage to his brain was too severe, and we have made the heartbreaking decision to remove life support."*.

The Iowa Hawkeyes band stated that: *"Derek Phillips was our mellophone section leader, a beloved member of the School of Music horn studio, and the kind of friend, student, and musician that represents the very best of what it means to be a Hawkeye,"*.

Whilst marching bands don't always get the same reverence as the players on the field, they are, in my opinion what makes up a large part of the atmosphere that makes Saturdays so great. Everyone who knows me knows that I will hunt far and wide for a marching band, and as a man of colour, I am forever aware of the massive role marching bands play in terms of community and empowerment. From HCBUs, to Ohio State, to Texas A&M and everyone in between, marching bands are that small little cue that just adds to our experience of this sport.

People forget that these uniforms are not the hi-tech mesh technology used for jerseys. They are traditional designs and are maintained with the utmost of care. Band members have practice just like football, basketball and other student athlete programs, and when in the stands when it's hot and humid, it is hot and humid for the band members.

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Iowa has one of the most heartwarming traditions of this millennium in waving to the University of Iowa Children's hospital at the end of the 1st quarter. I think it's a tradition which is universally respected, and I don't care when it is, or if people are watching, I will ***always*** wave. Though the kids can't see me, if I could be there in spirit to wish them well, I will always partake.

This wave will be tough, and I'm sure I'm not the only one who will look to the stars where hopefully Derek is resting. I know the University of Iowa have said they will pay tributes this season and beyond; I'll be there in spirit to honour them.

Rest easy Derek. Thank you for being a part of one of the most beautiful elements of this sport we call our own.

Image Source: NCAA

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