

Will Grier Headlines Growing List of College Football Stars Skipping Bowl Games

Name: _____ Date: _____

Directions: Read the following article about college football stars skipping bowl games.

West Virginia QB Will Grier became the latest college football star to skip out on his team's bowl game in order to focus on the NFL Draft.

In 2016, running backs Christian McCaffrey and Leonard Fournette caused a stir when they made the same decision. Since then, it's a trend that has been growing among college football players and it's reached new heights in 2018. So far, the list of players to make that decision has reached double digits.

As more and more players make this decision, the reaction to them continues to grow as well. While many fans understand why players would skip out on a somewhat meaningless bowl game in favor of their future, others aren't as happy about the trend. Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy, who will be without Hill and Williams in the Liberty Bowl against Missouri, said he's not a fan of players missing out on bowl games.

"It's become very popular now," Gundy said, via *The Oklahoman*. "I hate to see that happen, but as I've said before, we live in a society today where things are considerably different than they ever have been before, and (if) young people feel that there's a better opportunity for them somewhere else, then they're gonna make that decision to move on, and so we do the same."

"The one thing that I am concerned about is the longevity of the bowls and the fact that I would hate for it to become so popular that bowls aren't important anymore, because I think that's a great reward for a team."

Grier's coach, however, had no issues with his quarterback's choice.

"Will and I spoke at length about the bowl game, and I am fully supportive of his decision to begin preparing for the NFL draft," Dana Holgorsen said in a statement. "While we will miss him in Orlando, Will's commitment and service to WVU Football over the last three years will be talked about for many years to come. He led us with class, hard work and a willingness to learn, and set a high standard for his teammates."

Part of why players decide to not play in the game is because they saw what happened to Jaylon Smith and Jake Butt. Both players suffered serious injuries playing in bowl games and as a result their draft stock took a hit, potentially costing them millions.

But those players both told Sports Illustrated they'd make the same choice.

“I know it sounds a little bit crazy,” Butt said, “but I would make the same exact choice again. That was one of the biggest games I was going to play in Michigan in my career.”

There's no right answer when it comes to this decision. Some players feel the need to stay with their team, others think it's another opportunity to put on game film for scouts, some think it's not worth the injury risk and others just may not view the game as important enough to attend. No matter what, though, fans, coaches and fellow players should be able to respect whatever decision these guys make.

Sources:

Article: <http://www.sportingnews.com/us/ncaa-football/news/will-grier-list-of-college-football-stars-skipping-bowl-games/1v7n2tm4itrbb1w3iledxrbg76>

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