For some people summer- with its beautiful weather, cookouts, outdoor activities and lazy afternoons, can't possibly overstay its

welcome. But for college football summer can't end soon enough. During the long, hot summer of 2011 the game was repeatedly rocked with one unsavory piece of business after another. From Miami to Honolulu and all points in between, seemingly no corner of the college football world was spared from the litany of arrests and investigations that made this summer one of the darkest in the long history of this great, flawed game.

The list of malfeasances is long and all-too distinguished:

May 5: Having proven it can play football with the big boys, Boise State proves it can bend rules with them too. Chris Peterson's program- as well as those of men's and women's track and tennis- is dinged with self-imposed cuts in scholarships over the next two years after an investigation uncovers a pattern of minor violations , notably the arrangement of cheap meals and hotel reservations for prospective Bronco football recruits. No word on whether the reduction in scholarships will lead to a corresponding reduction in late hits and cheap shots delivered by Boise players on the friendly blue turf of Bronco Stadium.

May 18: Harvey Updyke Jr., a 62-year old Alabama fan, is indicted by a grand jury on four felony and two misdemeanor counts related to the deliberate poisoning of the venerable oak trees at Auburn's famed Toomer's Corner. The 130-year old oaks were given a lethal dose of the herbicide Spike 80DF. Updyke gives a leg up to authorities by calling into Paul Finebaum's radio show and bragging about the crime , claiming he poisoned the trees a week after Auburn's Iron Bowl victory over the Tide at the end of the 2010 season. Though calling himself simply "Al from Daleville," Updyke's true identity is revealed shortly afterward. I'll now pat myself on the back for resisting a cheap joke about the

intelligence of SEC football fans.

May 30: Jim Tressel resigns after ten years as the head coach of Ohio State, in the wake of a scandal involving the NCAA-prohibited sale of personnel memorabilia by Buckeye players. Tressel's downfall is triggered by the revelation in March that the head coach knew of the transactions in April of 2010 yet failed to reveal his knowledge to the NCAA. In a normal summer the fall of a seeming untouchable like Tressel would be the big story in college football, and it was- for a couple of months anyway.

June 12: Oregon cornerback Cliff Harris is pulled over by state troopers while driving 118 miles per hour down Interstate 5 in a rental car that smells of marijuana. Harris is driving with a suspended license at the time. This is just the start of what proves to be an extremely eventful summer for the Oregon football program.

July 1: Three weeks after the arrest of Cliff Harris the real bomb drops on Eugene in the form of Houston-area recruiter Willie Lyles. In an interview with Yahoo Sports Lyles claims to have received $25,000 from Oregon head coach Chip Kelly to steer prospective recruits toward the Ducks. The cash payment is the latest in a long, murky relationship between Lyles and the Oregon football program- a relationship that includes, among other things, the arranged transfer of Texas prep star LaMichael James to an Arkansas high school, allowing the future Duck standout to avoid the tricky math portion of the Texas Assessment of Knowledge and Skills test.

This wasn't the first time Lyles appeared in college football's scandal sheet. In March reports surfaced that the recruiter attempted to sell the services of star cornerback Patrick Peterson to Texas A&M for $80,000 back in 2007.

July 14: Georgia Tech's football program is placed on four year's probation and stripped of its 2009 Atlantic Coast Conference title for using an ineligible player. Wide receiver Damaryius Thomas was allowed to suit up for the Yellow Jackets despite the school knowing he had accepted money from an agent. Tech's basketball program is also dealt sanctions in the wake of the investigation, which reveals that athletic director Dan Radakovich hindered the inquiry by alerting Thomas prior to his interview with the NCAA.

July 27: North Carolina head football coach Butch Davis is fired less than a week prior to the

start of fall practice, a victim of the scandals that overtook his program. The long-overdue canning takes place more than a year after the NCAA began investigating the Heels on charges of academic misconduct and improper benefits- charges that resulted in the suspensions of several top players for the entire 2010 season. (Insert obligatory "they were cheating their guts out" crack here.) UNC athletic director Dick Baddour resigns the day after Davis is fired.

August 16: Barely two weeks before the start of the regular season, the biggest scandal of the summer- the biggest in college football, perhaps, since SMU's "Pony Excess" days of the 1980's- hits Miami like, well, a hurricane. In a devastating series of interviews with Yahoo Sports, Former University of Miami booster Nevin Shapiro- now serving time for his role in a $930 million-dollar Ponzi scheme- reveals details of nearly a decade of illicit involvement in the Hurricane football program. Cash, luxury items, five-star restaurants, the hottest nightclubs on South Beach, trips, prostitutes, even a paid-for abortion- Shapiro lavished just about all of it on Miami football players over an eight-year period beginning in 2002.

What's funny to me is that the Miami story immediately generated a new outpouring of "We have to give the players a stipend!" stories, as if giving these kids $500 or $1,000 per month would do anything to prevent the kind of events that transpired in Coral Gables. It's not as if Nevin Shapiro was fronting for Top Ramen and schoolbooks here. (Okay, he probably was in addition to the Japanese steakhouses and escorts, but still.) A small stipend isn't going to stop players from accepting wads of cash, cars and the other fringe benefits that go along with being a big-time college athlete.

Look, these guys already get plenty- a $100,000 dollars in scholarship money, free room and board, connections with well-heeled boosters and alumni that should benefit them for years down the road when it comes to making a living, not to mention the attentions of the best women on campus. I do think athletes should have the right to sell the memorabilia they acquire over the course of their college careers. But straight cash payments are a ridiculous idea- and an unworkable one, thanks in huge part to Title IX.

August 27: Two Louisiana State players, including starting quarterback Jordan Jefferson, are suspended after being hit with felony battery charges for their role in a fight outside a Baton Rouge nightclub on August 19. Jefferson and linebacker Joshua Johns are charged with second-degree battery after putting two people in the hospital- one with three fractured vertebrae- following the fight outside an establishment appropriately

known as Shady's.

August 29: Not to be outdone by the monkeyshines back on the mainland, two University of Hawaii football players are suspended for that team's season opener against Colorado for their role in a fight at a Waikiki nightclub early the previous morning.

What's scary is I've probably overlooked a few things as well.

In short, college football's opening weekend can't at a better time, and not just for pigskin-starved fans. For the first time in months, the game will once again be the property of sportswriters instead of investigative reporters and the guys who hammer out the police blotters. And we'll finally be able to watch the exploits of these magnificent athletes on the field as opposed to off the field, where no news is truly good news.