How you feel about the Ohio State Buckeyes hiring Urban Meyer as its next football coach probably says a lot about how you feel about college football in general these days.

For Buckeyes fans, Meyer's hiring, assuming he's the Meyer of two national championships and not the burned out Dick Vermeil-type that left Florida in the lurch, this is the best possible outcome to the worst possible scenario.

No one outside of the drive-by moralistic hypocrites in the national media who simultaneously scream for an even bigger payday for a national championship while belittling the sordid side of what all that money brings with it wanted to see Jim Tressel leave the Buckeyes.

Tressel committed a serious infraction of NCAA rules. The system depends on honesty from those running programs and Tressel wasn't. It's highly debatable whether he deserved the equivalent of the death penalty for his single transgression, but that plane has flown and there won't be a return trip.

Having Tressel be replaced by Meyer is almost scripted too perfectly for the locals, kind of like Al Lerner pushing his friend Art Modell to move the franchise to Baltimore and then buying the new one in Cleveland. It surely makes the nervous nellies think that Meyer in Columbus can't possibly end well, even if he wins big.

Maybe it will, maybe it won't. Meyer has a consistent record of high achievement and the

requisite Ohio State roots so there isn't any reason to think that his success won't continue. Yet for many fans, particularly those in Cleveland who understand that every silver lining in their sports world exists merely to deflect attention briefly from the dark clouds, they'll watch with that same skeptical eye usually reserved for the Indians and the Browns.

For those solely focused on the Buckeyes, like the more pragmatic folks downstate, they tend to take their luck when they find it and don't question its source. So Meyer as a Buckeye is the lucky penny with no downside and if he does fail there will be someone better to come along anyway.

Indeed there really isn't a downside to the Meyer hiring. He's the right age. He's coming off a self-imposed sabbatical, which means his batteries are fully charged, and he seems poised to pounce like a dog at the ankle of the UPS guy. He says the right things. He does the right things.

Once we step outside of the parochial world of the Buckeyes program and its fans, though, all that the hiring of Meyer suggests is that for all the good talk about reigning in a sport that is careening out of control, no one's serious. Not Gordon Gee. Not the NCAA and certainly not the media despite their constant moralizing.

It starts with the money that Meyer is being paid. We'll know soon enough the exact terms because it will be a public record. But it's multi-millions over multi-years. And yet in the context of the Buckeyes program it's a blip. No non-revenue sports will get cut and overall it's a cost that's easily absorbed by a nine figure enterprise.

The fact that any college team, public or private, can afford to pay that kind of money to a football coach is really a rather shocking thing, isn't it? Yet it's common place, so much so in fact that complaining about the spiraling costs of high quality football coaches puts one in the "get off of my lawn" category.

But isn't all this piling on of the cash what got programs like Ohio State, Auburn, Miami, Boise State, Michigan, and, of course, Penn State, in trouble in the first place?

Maybe that answer, too, depends on your perspective. Still it's hard to not place the latest volley in the arms race that is big time coach hiring in the context of the larger picture about all that is wrong with college football.

There rarely is a week that goes by when one program or another has run afoul of the NCAA. Part of that stems from a rule book so draconian and yet so oblique that it's hard sometimes to even find a thread of logic for the underlying rule. The other part of it stems from the fact that the pressure to win in college football is every bit as great as it is in the NFL because the money is too great to be ignored.

On the same day that Meyer was hired by Ohio State, 10 other coaches, at least, lost their jobs and all for the same essential reason, the negative impact those coaches were having on the athletic department's bottom line. That includes big names like Rick Neuiheisel at UCLA and Ron Zook at Illinois to the next tier down like Turner Gill at Kansas to still another tier down like Ron Ianello at Akron.

The Ianello firing is instructive because even at the level at which the Zips play, winning and the money that follows winning, guide the decisions. Ianello won exactly two games in his two seasons so on the surface the firing shouldn't even raise an eyebrow.

But in reaching the decision, Zips athletic director Tom Wistrcill had to notice the increasing abundance of open seats at their new stadium. Akron's stadium is modest by Big 10 standards but keeping it mostly filled is still important to the overall health of the football program's budget. So Akron will find a new coach, pay him about $400,000 and hope for the best, which means more butts in the seats.

Meanwhile Meyer's top assistants will be pulling down at least that much to further ensure that a football program teetering at the moment doesn't have an extended stay in the land of 6-6. Money doesn't always guarantee success. But spending big money to make even bigger money should guarantee against extended failure.

Meanwhile it's not hard to wonder what must go through the minds of all those players, particularly the likes of Dan Herron and Devier Posey who got smacked down so hard because of their desire to have even the faintest of taste of the big bills being thrown around like confetti

after the BCS title game.

Surely they must shake their heads and wonder why the system conspired to hurt their brief careers so harshly over chump change while it greatly enriches those at the top of the pyramid. Consider just the example of how a failure like Rich Rodriguez ended up with a bigger salary from Arizona then he was pulling down from Michigan before he was fired. They're hoping certainly that the Michigan experience was an anomaly and he'll go back to being the Rodriguez of the more successful West Virgnia experience. Their budget depends on it.

It all just proves the point that no mistake is too big to overcome if there is even a slightest chance that it will bring more money to the program.

If it weren't for the fact that nothing in the great State of Ohio is more beloved then Buckeyes football, given this kind of economic disparity underscored by the Meyer hiring you could almost see the roots of an Occupy Ohio State movement take hold. Almost.

I'm not going to begrudge the Buckeyes their glamor hire because I'm a Buckeyes fan like the rest of the sane citizens of this State. It's important to me for reasons that are completely stupid in the grand scheme of life to see that the team succeeds. I happen to think Meyer is a fabulous hire and since I'm not directly paying for it, I couldn't be happier. The real worst case scenario to me would have been hiring the next John Cooper. That's not going to happen.

Yet I'm nonetheless perplexed at the insanity that has enveloped college football generally and keep batting around the question in my mind if the Meyer hiring is a further sign of the coming apocalypse or just another head shaking moment in a sport so corrupt that these things now seem perfectly acceptable.

There's no question, though, that with all that the money has brought the sport, things like constant conference re-alignment, jerry-rigged national championships, low-life boosters, players and their "consultants" gaming the system, shady coaches who look the other way because they are just as scared as anyone as to what lies down that dark alley, a day of reckoning is coming. Let's just hope it's still a few years and another Buckeyes national championship away.