



## 2015 Big Ten Football Media Days

Friday, July 31, 2015

---

### Commissioner Jim Delany

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** Thank you very much. It's great to be here. And football season is just around the corner.

This is our 44th Media Day, 44th Kickoff Luncheon. I want to recognize Wayne Duke, my predecessor, who initiated this meeting in 1971.

I'd like to say a couple things in an introductory way. We're in transformative times in many, many ways, on the field and off the field, at our universities and in the sphere of communications. But I'm optimistic, not based on hope or faith, but based on action.

Over the last two or three years, we've been able to move the aircraft carrier of college sports in a better direction. We have more work to do. But I really like the momentum that's been created not only in the Big Ten but in the other major conferences around the country and through the NCAA. At times like this, leadership is important. As it was 120 years ago, not more than five miles from here, at the Palmer House Hotel where James Smart, president of Purdue, met with six other university presidents from major Midwestern research institutions. They established the blueprint for the Big Ten Conference at that time, which became the blueprint for the emergence of other conferences around the country.

And even today the presidents of the Big Ten take major leadership roles. Sally Mason recently retired at the University of Iowa, has chaired the Council of Presidents for the last three years, the longest such leadership tenure in the Big Ten since Stan Ikenberry, Illinois president, led the conference in the late '80s and '90s as chairman of that group. Sally has led us through periods of transformation not only in the area of expansion but also in the autonomy movement within the NCAA.

Also, we've got colleagues around the country, like Mike Slive, who had a great run at the SEC. We competed, collaborated, and created on the field and off the field. So I want to salute Mike for a great run in the Southeastern Conference. He really moved that conference in very positive directions during his tenure.

And also a good friend, Britton Banowsky, who's left Conference USA to lead the College Football Playoff Foundation. Brit is a friend. He's got a passion for involvement with community and social justice. And, as that foundation moves forward, Brit will be our leader in that area.

I'd like to talk a little bit about 2014 for a moment. It was a great year for the Big Ten on many levels. I call 2014 a period of time that we gained great traction with our new members and our new region. We added Johns Hopkins as a (men's) lacrosse member. They had a great year winning the inaugural tournament championship. Both Maryland teams played for the national championship in lacrosse, the women winning it, the men losing to Denver in the championship game.

We achieved full distribution before the two members came in officially. We added New York, New Jersey, Maryland, D.C., and Northern Virginia. We established championships for our men's basketball tournament. Madison Square Garden in 2018, the Verizon Center 2017. We played our inaugural pinstripe game between Penn State and Boston College at Yankee Stadium. And Maryland, Rutgers, and Penn State, our three most eastern members, were all among the top 10 attendance growth in college football last year. So we're pleased with the progress. We have more to do.

What makes it really work is that these are peer institutions, major research, AAU members. And we've got more work to do. But we've got great momentum and traction. So our fans, our alumni and, importantly, the students have embraced



## 2015 Big Ten Football Media Days

Friday, July 31, 2015

---

this experience.

On a broad-based basis, which is part of our conference's DNA, we probably had our best competitive year in our history where we won 10 national championships. We had 17 different teams play in Final Four type competition. And the players, the coaches, fans, were treated to a year of success.

But these 9,500 students who are part of a 580,000 undergraduate population moved forward with their education on the field and off the field. They received in excess of \$200 million of direct financial aid. They were learning on the field, off the field, and preparing for a future beyond college.

So this is our 120th football season. We're in a good place. We've got great energy, and it's nice to be part of a conversation.

6.3 million people came to see our games last year. This year, like last year, every game will be nationally televised by BTN or ESPN. We've got great platforms. We've got talented students playing. We've got great coaches.

We have got three new coaches this year, two of whom played quarterback at the schools they're now coaching at. Jim Harbaugh and Paul Chryst at Michigan and Wisconsin. And Mike Riley has come to Nebraska. So I think those three individuals will inject energy, create hope, and lead young people.

This season there are no predictions. There were no predictions last year. And there will be no predictions next year. What we have is 13 unpredictable weeks not only in our conference but around the country. The game is as healthy as it's ever been on the field. Great athletes, great coaches, and a national platform both in television postseason and great intersectional matchups.

We're really looking forward to it. We've got a fabulous set of postseason events. We're playing in great venues against great opponents. We'll be back to the Rose Bowl this year. Eight times in the next 11 years we'll be competing for a spot in the College Football Playoff. We were fortunate to participate last year. We hope to participate this year if we earn it.

We'll be in the Citrus Bowl this year. Because the Orange Bowl is hosting a semifinal game, we'll be in Orlando for sure. And then we'll be playing against ACC, SEC, Pac-12, and Big 12 opponents in postseason play.

So the bowl system is in a new environment because of the College Football Playoff. But I love our bowl alignment across the country. And I think our coaches and players have an awful lot to play for, not only for the slot in the Final Four, not only for the Rose Bowl, but throughout the country. So we're excited about that.

In 2016, we will establish -- not in 2015, but in 2016, our scheduling format. We call it Strength of Schedule 1910. We'll have one major intersectional game each year against an autonomy conference. We'll have nine conference games, which allows us to play each other on a more regular basis, which I think is important as conferences expand. We'll have a championship game. And then we'll have all of our games against FBS competition. I think that's responsive to what the College Football Playoff committee is looking for. It took a little while to get here because of schedules and expansion. But all of our coaches and players and athletic directors are committed to this platform. We think it's what our fans want. We think it's what our players want. And we think it's what the College Football Playoff committee wants.

Let me talk a little bit about the college experience. We're searching and seeking a sweet spot. We need to change and improve. Last year we established the cost of attendance for student-athletes that are playing intercollegiate athletics. That



## 2015 Big Ten Football Media Days

Friday, July 31, 2015

---

was necessary. We did away with the \$15 a month laundry fee in the early '70s for financial reasons. And I'm really pleased that we not only have a cost of attendance, but students are available for the full pale if they have need. We also have a special assistance fund that expenses millions of dollar a year for special emergency situations. In conjunction with the scholarships available, we're providing over \$200 million of direct financial aid. That needed to be done.

We're also committed to exploring the time demands issue. We've got to get a better handle on time demands. There are demands during the season. There are demands during the summer. And there are demands during the springtime. We've got to get our arms around and make progress in each of those three areas.

And on a conference level, I'm pleased to report that we have permissive legislation in this area. And the conference has committed to multi-year scholarships as well as a lifetime opportunity to return to college to complete our degree.

Tomorrow, or later this afternoon, we will have two student-athletes represent the student-athlete perspective. In the past we've had Ameer Abdullah, who really spoke about achieving your full potential on and off the field. In 2013 we had John Urschel, from Penn State, a great mathematics student, who really challenged other students to master your craft, to make a mark in your community, and to guide the next generation, as well as to plan ahead for a life after football. In 2012, Denard Robinson, a great player from the University of Michigan, talked to his colleagues about making the right decisions. And in 2011 Kirk Cousins set social media on fire talking about the privileges and responsibilities associated with wearing Big Ten uniforms.

Today you'll hear from Nate Sudfeld, Indiana quarterback. His father was a founder of the humanitarian organization Assist International, and he has made two trips to Uganda, most recently over spring break. Joshua Perry, from Ohio State, led the national championship team in tackles. Urban Meyer called him one of the best leaders he's ever known. Two of his brothers attend Ohio State. One who has graduated and a younger brother with Asperger's syndrome and is enrolled in programs for students with intellectual disabilities. Joshua not only is a teammate but he's a great brother. So Nate and Joshua will speak later today, speaking on behalf of not only themselves and the 42 athletes here, but the 9,500 athletes across the Big Ten.

When we talk about returning to college to get an education if you don't get it the first time around, I can point to Bobby Bell, 74 years old, Hall of Famer at Minnesota and the NFL, who returned to get his degree at Minnesota recently. Michael Finley, 15-year NBA player, returned to Wisconsin to get his degree. Tyrone Wheatley, former Big Ten Player of the Year on the offensive side, 10 years in the NFL, returned in 2008 to get his degree. Brandon Scherff came back last year, in Iowa, to get his degree to win the Outland Trophy and to become a top-five pick in the NFL. These are but a handful of the thousands of stories that happen every year across the Big Ten and intercollegiate athletics. We want to make those the central focus of what we're trying to achieve, while they also have an opportunity to play at the highest level in college sports.

So with that I will complete my remarks and make myself available to you for any questions you may have. Thank you.

**Q. With more and more consumers cutting their cable and moving away from cable television and with ESPN recently cutting costs, is there any concern within the Big Ten that the next -- their next TV rights deal may be less valuable than perhaps initially forecasted a few years ago?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** You know, there's a lot of change. It's a dynamic time in the communications world that we live in.



## 2015 Big Ten Football Media Days

Friday, July 31, 2015

---

I don't think there's any doubt that you know we're in the dynamic period. We've had a great period running up to this. I'm quite optimistic about our position in the marketplace even with the dynamic change which is occurring. We've prepared for it. Economy is good. I think sports content is valuable. There may be a transition period over the next decade as to how people consume in terms of direct to consumer or through the cable package or through a thinner package. But we're looking forward to those negotiations. ESPN has been a great partner. I hope they'll be one of our partners in the future.

So we're optimistic, prepared, look forward to it. There's always something happening in any particular period of negotiation. And we read the trades like you do. And we're hopeful, look forward over the next year to figure out where we end up.

**Q. Jim, how does this year's event feel different at all with the success the football team has had winning a national title just from previous years when it seemed that the Big Ten was on the defense a lot about its product?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** You know, this is my 27th Kickoff Luncheon. And the feelings that I have coming up here are always the same. My palms are a little bit sweaty. And it's hard to anticipate all the questions that might be asked.

We have great energy. We had a great year last year. And it was a long and interesting run. We didn't start strong, but we ended strong. But that was last year's story.

This year's story is going to unfold over 13 weeks. There is good energy. And we're glad to be in the conversation. I'm going to be watching the games as closely as you will be, attending a lot of them. But I think the thing that's fascinating about college sports is the unpredictability of it all and the number of great teams and the way the game is played. It's incredibly entertaining.

So, to be honest with you, it's easier to come up after a good year. And there is a certain energy and optimism. We feel good about that. But, really, the interesting thing is the -- is how the season plays out and watching the stories unfold. And that hasn't changed from year to year.

**Q. Jim, with the O'Bannon injunction going into place tomorrow, can you tell us what the next steps are for the NCAA and the Big Ten and also when we might see a cap put in place and what the cap might be?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** Great questions. The NCAA council and the NCAA board of directors has been meeting all week to talk about the changes that may be necessary under NCAA rules to accommodate the judge's ruling.

But, as you know, a request for stay has been, you know, requested. The judge hasn't ruled on that yet. But we hope that we would get a favorable ruling. We may or we may not. We're also hoping the Ninth Circuit delivers an opinion before August 1st. That's just today and tomorrow. It may happen. It may not.

But, once we understand what the NCAA rule changes are, I'm sure there will be lots of details that will need to be addressed. And we'll do that. So we believe in the rule of law. We believe in an individual's right to bring their concerns to the courts. And we also believe in our right to defend. So I think that, regardless of how this case comes out, it's a case that has been decided differently than the case in Nashville, Tennessee. So there's going to be differences of opinion within the circuits. And I think, regardless of what happens in the short-term, this is one of those areas of fundamental principle which will be played out through the courts over time.



## 2015 Big Ten Football Media Days

Friday, July 31, 2015

---

**Q. Jim, the scheduling commitment that you just illustrated up there, just to clarify, is that now a requirement that schools must do that?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** Yeah. I'd call it an athletic director's agreement. I'm not sure that there's penalties. We haven't really talked about that. But everybody has agreed we have the nine conference games. We have a commitment to schedule an intersectional game. We have a conference championship, and we have a commitment to play only FBS opponents.

**Q. So once any current conflicts against scheduled FCS teams happen maybe next year, no more FCS?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** That's correct. It's really a commitment to FBS. I'd imagine, if someone had a contractual issue, we would take a hard look at that. But I think that's the template that everybody thinks is best going forward from a variety of perspectives.

**Q. What does Jim Harbaugh coming to Michigan maybe done for the program, for the league?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** There's no doubt about it. It's a head-turning hire. Jim has had a great career as a player and as a college coach both at San Diego and Stanford and then great success with the 49ers.

So, you know, Michigan probably had the most consistent football program from 1984 to probably six or seven years ago. I think they've won eight or more games every year for 25+ years. So I think it's important for them to make a great hire. I think Jim is a great hire, obviously, added energy and a proven record as a coach. So I think for the University of Michigan, it's probably a successful hire. If it's successful for Michigan, I'm sure it will be successful for the Big Ten.

What I really like is the quality of people that have come into the conference as coach leaders, whether it's been at Ohio State or the three that were brought in this year, James Franklin. I think we've really done a great job of identifying people who can lead young people, who can recruit nationally, and who can compete year in and year out. That's important. The leadership of these programs is very important to overall conference success.

**Q. Rutgers recently announced plans for a major initiative to improve its facilities. I'm curious if you were at all involved in that and how important do you see that to the future of that program?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** I wasn't involved in that at all. People have suggested that when we have been involved in expansion, there have been expectations or suggestions or recommendations about facilities. And I can tell you that has never been true whether it's Penn State or whether it was Nebraska, Rutgers, or Maryland.

Obviously, facilities are important to fan bases, to the students, to recruitment. And so I'm pleased that they're aspiring to improve facilities in order to create better competitive environments for their students and for their fans and for recruitment purposes. I think it's important. We've had a generational upgrading over the last 20 years in our facilities. And a lot of them were built in the '20s. Some of them were built in the '50s. So I think that it's appropriate. And I support it, but really not involved in the discussions that led to it.

**Q. You talked about the energy around football programs in your conference. Does that energy come at a fortuitous time with the television contract negotiations about to start? Or is that too short-sighted? Does short-term energy from football have any bearing on a television -- on a long-term television deal?**



## 2015 Big Ten Football Media Days

Friday, July 31, 2015

---

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** That's a good question. I think the fundamentals, you know, always are sort of more important than the emotion. But there's no doubt about it that in any negotiation, emotion plays a part. That's how people feel about themselves. It's how they feel about their company. It's about what they feel about their future. So, when you have some competitive success, it's positive. But, basically, these things are driven by the fundamentals that are operating at any particular time. So, you know, I would always take winning and good energy over negative energy.

But, really, the Big Ten and what it stands for, what its history stands for and what its future stands for, those are the fundamentals. But always feel good about winning and a smile on everybody's face makes them feel optimistic.

**Q. Back to the O'Bannon case, if it goes into effect, what's your sense of whether Big Ten schools will provide that payment? And also what's your interpretation of how Title IX will factor into that?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** Well, it's permissive legislation. So those judgments will be made from school to school. That's the first thing. So the answer to the first question is I'm not sure. I think there are a lot of issues that relate to tax and trust law and that need to be examined.

On the issue of Title IX, from our perspective, Title IX is not only the law. But Title IX is philosophically, ideologically, incredibly important to how Big Ten sports operates. We were the first conference to establish voluntary participation mandates. No one did it from the outside. We did it from the inside. We moved from 71 percent to now 29 percent in 1990 to 48, 49, 50, 51, seven, eight years later. So that was the time when we were in the middle of a recession in the early '90s and really had no new resources. People think it has always been tall cotton. In fact, there have been tough times it seems like every decade. But there's also been very good times.

So I expect that our schools, regardless of what they did or what they will do, will do it in an equitable way. But I think we need to figure out what the Court of Appeals says. We need to wait and see about the stay. We also need to wait and see about what the NCAA rule changes are.

After we know all of that, I think we can look at the landscape and each school can make its own decisions.

**Q. I'm curious with the new concussion protocols, how important those were to you. And did some of the incidents in the past year like the one at Michigan, did that kind of help push those things forward a little quicker?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** Well, the health and safety of our players as Bill Carollo has stated, have been paramount for us. Five years ago we entered into a research collaboration with the Ivy League. And we had a third summit here in Chicago with researchers from all of those institutions who are collaborating, seeking funds to do long-term epidemiological research. So it's high on our agenda both with respect to research but also with respect to the application of our rules and in terms of the kinds of contact and the kinds of officiating that go into place.

Last year there was an incident at Michigan. And you know, I think they spoke to it. And I think that there were eyes that didn't grasp fully in real time what was occurring from our perspective. We thought, well, how can we change that? So how can we improve that?

So what actually happened was we surveyed all 14 to see how people were positioning their health experts and others. And, as you know, offensive and defensive coordinators often have birds-eye views. Some of our institutions had put trainers above the field. But they didn't have any ability to intercede. They could call down, but they couldn't stop play. We talked to the NFL about how they were managing the sideline as well as how they were managing the birds-eye view.



## 2015 Big Ten Football Media Days

Friday, July 31, 2015

---

And, from reviewing everything our schools were doing, from looking at the problem at Michigan, from talking to the NFL, we concluded that the establishment of this policy where the conference assigned a health expert, they have the ability to call and stop the game, not to make a final decision, but to bring to the attention of the health officials on the sideline, so it's an extra layer of oversight.

And I think it was not only was the incident at Michigan precipitating our reviewing this policy, but it's just a general overall concern at this juncture to get the best research, to get the best playing rules, to get the best day-game procedures, to provide the best environment in a sport, which is very physical.

**Q. Regarding the autonomy five scheduling requirement for the future, I know that several Big Ten schools have Notre Dame and BYU on future schedules. Will those teams satisfy that requirement, or will they need to additionally schedule a team?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** They would -- both BYU and Notre Dame would satisfy the scheduling criteria, yeah.

**Q. Jim, I wonder would you mind expounding a little bit on some of the reasons why you think the new scheduling format is something you want to do? And how much does building sort of strength of schedule for playoff considerations come into play for doing that?**

**COMMISSIONER DELANY:** I think there are a number of motivating factors. First, I think that when we added our 12th game 12 years ago or so, I think, uniformly, it was a game that didn't necessarily tantalize the fans, the players, television, or even writers. For the most part those games were home games, not necessarily competitively challenging games.

It's not to say that there aren't FCS teams, because I've seen them win. I've seen Furman beat NC State. I saw Appalachian State beat Michigan. And I was Commissioner in a conference for 10 years with Eastern Kentucky, Murray State, Middle Tennessee. These teams can play. They only have 63 scholarships. And they wear down. And, when they do win, it's an upset. They win fewer than 10 percent, maybe fewer than 5 percent of the time.

So, as we were looking at our future, there are challenges around the game day experience. So I think the better competition draws the fans more. I think, if you ask players, they don't like to practice very often but they love games, they love big games. So I think it was a partly player and fan and television.

But, if you really look at -- and I'm not sure that people have paid as much attention to the guidelines for selection of teams. There are about eight paragraphs that deal with the issue of when resumes look similar, similar record, similar resumes. Conference champions are going to get the first tiebreaker consideration. And strength of schedule is going to get the second.

So, if you start looking at schedules that have FCS teams that have some 20 fewer scholarships, I think that's a consideration. I think, if you're playing more conference games and you're in a strong conference that, typically, is going to give you a stronger strength of schedule resume. I think winning a conference championship game gives you an advantage. Likewise, losing a college conference championship game hurts. Ohio State would have been in the 1-2 game two years ago. And they were beaten by Michigan State, I think. And so last year they got a bump. Year before they were eliminated.



## 2015 Big Ten Football Media Days

Friday, July 31, 2015

---

So everybody knows that a conference championship game can swing two ways, but it's an additional opportunity. Everybody knows that a major opponent on the road is more difficult but can swing both ways.

To be honest with you, we would have loved to have won the game in Oregon or have beaten LSU. But playing those teams is important. Whether you win or lose, it's a great gauge, it's a great measurement. And I think it's -- you know, what it's about is playing big games on big stages. It gets the juices going and flowing. And our people thought a lot about it. And they ended up where they ended up for the reasons that I've tried to outline.