

Big Ten, Pac-12 news hit like a bombshell

Written by Bob Brooks

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TEMPE, Ariz. - Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany has struck again.

The Big Ten and the Pac-12 have done a different kind of merger. It's not the fact that they're expanding. Rather, they plan to make a bigger footprint on the college scene by keeping the same number of teams they currently have.

The Big Ten and the Pac-12 are satisfied that they've explored expansion and do not want to add more schools to their leagues. Consequently they will now work together to enhance the marketability of their two conferences by playing against each other on a regular basis.

That means by 2017 the two conferences will play football games against the 12 teams from the other conference, although not necessarily on the same day. Both leagues will have their own television network by then, so they will be able to enhance their footprint to an even larger scale, probably shutting out some teams that would liked to have had Pac-12 or Big Ten affiliation.

The deal also means an enhanced basketball relationship, for both men and women, and the basketball scheduling could come about by as early as next season. There also will be competition in the Olympic sports between the two leagues.

In talking with Gary Barta, Iowa's athletic director, he made this comment about the new relationship with the Pac-12:

"It was very deliberative. The Big Ten and Pac-12 had several meetings. We like the way the Big Ten is right now. We don't want to grow anymore," he said.

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"We went to the Pac-12, our old friends, to see what we can do. It was our way for the two conferences, who share a lot of similarities, to see if we can make both conferences better."

The news hit like a bombshell down here in Tempe, Ariz., before the Insight Bowl between Iowa and Oklahoma. It makes for an interesting effort, especially in the marketing field.

I hope I'm here to see it play out.

NOTE: It was great to have a little private talk with Oklahoma Coach Bob Stoops when he met the press before the bowl game. The Oklahoma players, who are favored in the game, have already won the Battle of Tattoos.

The Hawks made a very clean appearance, while Oklahoma sported all kinds of tattoos that have become so popular with athletes today. It makes me wonder what they'll look when they're 50.

(Bob Brooks is sports director at KMRY and has been one of the leading voices of college and prep sports in Eastern Iowa for more than 65 years. He is a 10-time winner of the Iowa Sportscaster of the Year Award, and was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame in South Bend, Indiana in 2004. His sports reports can be heard weekday afternoons at 4:30 and 5:30, and Saturdays at 6:40 for the Hawkeye football wrap-up.)