

A noticeable Big Ten scheduling trend

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Between [an earlier report from the Lafayette Journal-Courier's Mike Carmin](#), and [a report on Thursday from the Cedar Rapids Gazette's Scott Dochterman](#), I have noticed a scheduling pattern the Big Ten has for football.

When divisions and schedules for 2011 and 2012 were first released back in September, the Big Ten comprised "cross-protected games." In Iowa's case, this means the Hawkeyes play Purdue every season even though the two are in opposite divisions.

With all of this in mind, the other two interdivisional games on each team's conference schedule are broken into pairs. So for example, any team in the Leaders division not named Purdue that plays Iowa between 2011-2014 also plays Northwestern.

Carmin's report confirmed that Purdue would not play Northwestern in 2013 or 2014. Northwestern's cross-protected game is against Illinois. This means that Illinois and Purdue consist of one scheduling pair, and as a result, Iowa and Illinois wouldn't meet in 2013 or 2014, either, confirming what Dochterman wrote.

(By the way, it's strange that barring a Big Ten Championship Game between the two, Iowa and Illinois will go an entire US Senate term without meeting each other in football.)

The cross-protected games were as follows (Legends division teams listed first): *Iowa vs. Purdue, Michigan vs. Ohio State, Michigan State vs. Indiana, Minnesota vs. Wisconsin, Nebraska*

vs. Penn State, and Northwestern vs. Illinois.

Now, here are the scheduling pairs I've noticed:

Legends – Iowa/Northwestern, Michigan/Minnesota, and Michigan State/Nebraska

Leaders – Illinois/Purdue, Indiana/Penn State, and Ohio State/Wisconsin

Dochterman wrote that Iowa would play Wisconsin and Ohio State in both 2013 and 2014. Knowing that Northwestern doesn't play Purdue in either of those years, this means the Wildcats would have to play the Badgers and Buckeyes as well. Also, both Iowa and Northwestern play Indiana and Penn State over the course of the next two seasons.

From there, it was easy to figure out everything else because of the pairings of teams done by the Big Ten. So assuming everything is proven correct, the Big Ten regular season match-ups we won't be seeing until 2015 at the earliest are as follows:

Iowa vs. Illinois

(Iowa plays Indiana/Penn State in 2011/2012, Ohio State/Wisconsin in 2013/2014; Illinois plays Michigan/Minnesota in 2011/2012, Michigan State/Nebraska in 2013/2014)

Northwestern vs. Purdue

(Northwestern plays Indiana/Penn State in 2011/2012, Ohio State/Wisconsin in 2013/2014; Purdue plays Michigan/Minnesota in 2011/2012, Michigan State/Nebraska in 2013/2014)

Michigan vs. Wisconsin

(Michigan plays Illinois/Purdue in 2011/2012, Indiana/Penn State in 2013/2014; Wisconsin plays Michigan State/Nebraska in

2011/2012, Iowa/Northwestern in 2013/2014)

Minnesota vs. Ohio State

(Minnesota plays Illinois/Purdue in 2011/2012, Indiana/Penn State in 2013/2014; Ohio State plays Michigan State/Nebraska in 2011/2012, Iowa/Northwestern in 2013/2014)

Michigan State vs. Penn State

(Michigan State plays Ohio State/Wisconsin in 2011/2012, Illinois/Purdue in 2013/2014; Penn State plays Iowa/Northwestern in 2011/2012, Michigan/Minnesota in 2013/2014)

Nebraska vs. Indiana

(Nebraska plays Ohio State/Wisconsin in 2011/2012, Illinois/Purdue in 2013/2014; Indiana plays Iowa/Northwestern in 2011/2012, Michigan/Minnesota in 2013/2014)

Of course, this all becomes irrelevant once the Big Ten expands from eight to nine conference games. This also doesn't reveal where and when every 2013 and 2014 conference game specifically takes place.

But given the information known at this time, this is what I would anticipate seeing whenever the Big Ten does reveal its conference schedules for those upcoming seasons, because it just makes too much sense logically.