

# Big Ten announces future championship sites

By Brendan Stiles

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The Big Ten Conference revealed Sunday afternoon that the league's championship games for football through the 2015 season will all be held at Lucas Oil Stadium in Indianapolis, Ind., while the postseason basketball tournaments will go through a rotation between Conseco Fieldhouse in Indianapolis and the United Center in Chicago, Ill.

Lucas Oil Stadium, which was previously announced as the site for this year's inaugural championship game, edged out Chicago's Soldier Field for bids on each of the next four title games, all of which Commissioner Jim Delany said in a teleconference on Sunday will be televised in prime time on Fox.

Delany confirmed that the biggest factor in the decision reached upon by the Council of Big Ten Presidents/Chancellors Sunday was the issue of having the championship game be played indoors at Lucas Oil Stadium, which has a retractable roof, as opposed to in the outdoor elements provided with playing at Soldier Field.

However, what wasn't discussed was the playing surface at Soldier Field, known for being notoriously awful during the winter months. Delany said what also impacted the decision was providing the conference with a stable setting during the championship game's early years.

"In order to establish ourselves, build a foundation, it was a good idea to be indoors for a period of time, see what we have, and then go from there," Delany said. "We wanted to be

cautious, conservative, call it what you will. But we wanted to get a great foundation for the game, for our fans, for television, and then after we've established that, I think we can make other judgments about whether or not we need or want to go to an outdoor venue in the future."

As for basketball, next year's Big Ten Tournament is slated to be held at Conseco Fieldhouse and will be there in both 2014 and 2016, while the United Center plays host in both 2013 and 2015. The two venues were on a rotating basis from 2002-2007, but the conference has held its tournaments in Indianapolis every year since 2008. In the years the United Center plays host to the men's tourneys, the women's tourneys will be held at the Sears Centre Arena in Hoffman Estates, Ill.

"What we wanted to do was get back to Chicago," Delany said. "We're really pleased to get the United Center, and we're really pleased that we have enough events that we could see Chicago, get back to Chicago, but also continue to have a strong presence in Indy."

#### **BIG TEN FUTURE CHAMPIONSHIP SITES:**

**FOOTBALL** – 2011-15: Lucas Oil Stadium (Indianapolis, Ind.)

**BASKETBALL** – 2011-12, 2013-14, 2015-16: Conseco Fieldhouse (Indianapolis, Ind.); 2012-13, 2014-15: United Center (Chicago, Ill.)