

Maryland joining Big Ten in 2014

By Brendan Stiles

HawkeyeDrive.com

The University of Maryland announced Monday it will leave the ACC and join the Big Ten as the conference's 13th member, effective July 1, 2014. [As initially reported by ESPN's Brett McMurphy](#), the school's Board of Regents met Monday morning and approved the decision to apply for membership. Maryland's application was then unanimously approved by the Big Ten's Council of Presidents and Chancellors.

ESPN is also reporting that Rutgers University (currently a member of the Big East) is expected to become the conference's 14th member as early as Tuesday, which Big Ten commissioner Jim Delany declined to comment on during both the press conference held in College Park, Md., and later a national teleconference.

Maryland president Wallace Loh has ties to the conference, having served as a provost at the University of Iowa before accepting the role of his current title. During the press conference, he made abundantly clear the role money had in the school's decision to switch conferences. He also said conversations between Maryland and the Big Ten had taken place on and off, but didn't really begin to intensify until earlier this month.

Earlier this summer, Maryland [had to cut seven sports](#) as a result of a multi-million dollar deficit the school was facing. Loh said Monday he and Maryland athletics director Kevin Anderson are both committed to reinstating all the athletic programs that were previously eliminated. In addition, a report from *Sports Illustrated's* Pete Thamel shows

that by switching to the Big Ten, Maryland [could make close to \\$100 million in revenue by the year 2020.](#)

"Membership in the Big Ten is in the strategic interest of the University of Maryland," Loh said. "...We came up with a plan. We're going to pull ourselves out of that financial hole, but we're still living paycheck-to-paycheck. What membership of the Big Ten does is truly enable us to guarantee the financial sustainability of Maryland athletics for a long, long, long time.

With the addition of Maryland to the Big Ten (as well as the likely impending addition of Rutgers), the conference's footprint has expanded East. While a decision won't be made on revising football divisions until February 2013 at the earliest, McMurphy reported Monday afternoon that Illinois would move to the Legends Division, which would then make room for both Maryland and Rutgers in the Leaders Division.

When asked about scheduling for football and basketball during the teleconference, Delany said discussions of having nine conference football games are "on the table," and that while he'd be in favor of expanding to 20-22 conference games for basketball, a negotiation would have to be made with Big Ten coaches.

Delany reiterated the Big Ten's stance of being content with 12 teams once Nebraska became an official member. But he also said those plans were changed by two key components: The Big Ten's joint agreement with the Pac-12 on playing annually across all sports being broken off, and other realignment moves being made such as Notre Dame staying independent in football, yet being able to move all of its other programs into the ACC.

"One of the paradigm shifts relates to conferences moving beyond their boundaries," Delany said during the teleconference. "We continued to see these kinds of moves.

Every one of the five conferences is outside their natural footprint.

“We looked at that and thought, ‘You know, we need to explore how we might become larger.’ When we looked around, we realized there was this corridor rich with people.”

Delany also revealed plans of the Big Ten building a second set of headquarters after its primary headquarters moves from Park Ridge, Ill., to Rosemont, Ill. The second base would be somewhere along the East Coast.

As far as TV revenue is concerned, these additions allow the Big Ten Network to reach homes in two of the biggest national markets of Washington, D.C. and New York City.