

# 2/18/2013: State of the Big Ten, Volume 87 (premium)

*Every Monday, we will be running a weekly series titled "State of the Big Ten," which will be made available to all members of HawkeyeDrive.com. This series of columns will focus on one major headline regarding the conference and go in-depth on the subject at hand.*

By Brendan Stiles

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The Iowa Hawkeyes and Nebraska Cornhuskers are to meet inside the Bob Devaney Center in Lincoln, Neb., the evening of Feb. 21 (this Thursday). As of Monday, this game is still on pace to be played as scheduled despite reports of snow anywhere between 12-16 inches hitting the eastern portion of Nebraska in the hours prior to tip-off.

The Big Ten says it's about safety and that if the weather is bad enough, that Thursday's game might get moved back to Saturday to ensure player safety. If history is any indicator however, this game's still going to go on as scheduled, no matter how much snow gets dumped on Lincoln, Neb.

Now, one thing to consider here is that neither Iowa nor Nebraska has a game this weekend, so the game being pushed back to Saturday could conceivably be pulled off and quite frankly, this is what should occur.

But here's the problem – this weekend has been deemed a weekend off from games for both these teams for close to six months now. Chances are both head coaches, Fran McCaffery and Tim Miles, already have recruiting trips lined up these weekends. In Miles' case specifically, he might even have recruits visiting Thursday night and attending the game. He's

not going to want to have that opportunity be missed out on.

Then there's the television angle. Right now, this game is scheduled to be televised on ESPN2. As much marketing and promoting as the Big Ten does for its programs, games on networks like ESPN, ESPN2 and CBS are a commodity these programs are going to crave. This is a chance for both Iowa and Nebraska to showcase its teams.

In the case of the Hawkeyes, this is an opportunity for viewers around the country – including perhaps some members on the NCAA Selection Committee – to see what kind of team Iowa has and how it might stack up against other bubble teams. As for the Cornhuskers, this is the only game they have prior to the Big Ten Tournament on a network not called BTN or ESPNU. This is a chance for Miles, again, to sell his program to that same audience.

Not to mention the fact that if the game were to get postponed to Saturday, ESPN2 won't carry it still. It probably either gets relegated to ESPN3, which is only accessible online, or a deal with BTN would have to probably be brokered and who knows what that would entail.

In terms of the history repeating itself facet, consider that Iowa played a home game against Michigan State with similar weather conditions taking place in Iowa City. That game still went on as planned on the night it was scheduled for, so there's a precedent. The Hawkeyes are going to fly to Lincoln regardless. If they're able to leave Wednesday and get there before the storm starts the crux of its damage, the game's happening Thursday night, period.

Logistically, it could be pushed back and again, it would probably end up serving in the best interests of everybody – players, coaches, officials, fans and media – to have this game on Saturday. But the odds of this actually happening don't look likely, no matter how much of a blizzard is set to

embark on Lincoln.