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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

HawkeyeDrive.com

Last week featured the date prominently known as National Signing Day, a day where high-school football players sign letters of intent to play at schools and their coaches can finally talk about them publicly.

What made this year's edition of National Signing Day significant is that every discussion centering around the Big Ten included its two newest members that will officially be part of the conference later this year – Maryland and Rutgers. As far as football goes, the states of Maryland and New Jersey have always been prevalent in the Big Ten recruiting landscape and will be even more so now with the additions of these two programs.

If either newbie is going to show it can succeed in the Big Ten, both Randy Edsall and Kyle Flood will need to demonstrate they can recruit well in their own states. Edsall was able to do so this year as the Terrapins' 2014 class ranks in the middle of the Big Ten and he was able to land two of the top in-state prospects there was in Maryland this year.

Flood, on the other hand, might have a harder time for two reasons. For one, he saw 12 players de-commit from his program before National Signing Day (some of those 12 players even

flipped from Rutgers to other Big Ten schools). The other is New Jersey gets recruited more heavily by other Big Ten teams than Maryland does.

Some of New Jersey's top high school players are joining the Big Ten. But instead of becoming Scarlet Knights, they're becoming Wolverines, Buckeyes and Nittany Lions instead. They're joining teams that are going to share a division with Rutgers going forward. This is not a good sign for Flood or Rutgers, which seems to have different bits of drama unfold every week in Piscataway.

Think about the schools that would probably be on a similar level to Rutgers. Schools like Iowa, Maryland, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio State, Penn State and Wisconsin that like Rutgers, are the only Big Ten programs in their respective states. All seven of them have proven they can land their top in-state players without issue. Rutgers hasn't reached that point yet and will struggle in the Big Ten until it does. That's just a fact.

Recruiting is the lifeblood to successful college football and basketball programs and last week was a major reminder of that. Now that Maryland and Rutgers are about to become members of the Big Ten, it's important to look at what they're able to do right now because it's going to say a lot about them in the future. Both played in bowl games last season, but right now, only one looks stable and that's despite having a major deficit in its athletics department.

Regardless, the first seasons for both the Terrapins and Scarlet Knights will be intriguing to watch unfold this coming fall. It's those years that follow which don't have an intrigue level established yet.