

Big Ten Coaches Reportedly Express Frustration With Michigan Sign Stealing, Encourage Commissioner Tony Petitti To Take Action



According to a report from ESPN, the Big Ten held a video call with the conference's head coaches and commissioner Tony Petitti on Wednesday in which coaches expressed frustration with the sign-stealing investigation around Michigan's football program.

On the reportedly 90-minute call - which included nearly an hour without Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh, who left the call after regularly scheduled Big Ten business - coaches encouraged Petitti to take action against the Wolverines.

"Collectively, the coaches want the Big Ten to act - right now," said a source familiar with the call. "What are we waiting on? We know what happened."

Michigan has been investigated by the NCAA in recent weeks over an alleged sign-stealing scandal, which includes low-level staffer Connor Stalion purchasing tickets to over 35 games - including 12 of 13 teams in the Big Ten - with the intention of handing them out and having individuals record the sideline of Michigan's future opponents to steal their signs.

The Big Ten's coaches - who reportedly used words such as "tainted," "fraudulent" and "unprecedented" on the call to describe the allegations, and added that "every game they play is tainted" - explained to Petitti the competitive impact of Michigan knowing signs and signals ahead of games.

"People don't understand the seriousness of it," a source said. "How it truly impacted the game plan. To truly know if it's a run or a pass, people don't understand how much of an advantage that was for Michigan."

While the NCAA is likely unable to take action this season, considering it would have to provide Michigan with a 90-day notice of allegations, putting the investigation long past the end of this season, Petitti is allowed to hand out discipline under the Big Ten's sportsmanship policy, and should potential repercussions be considered "beyond a standard level," it would go to an executive committee.

"I don't think the Big Ten understood how upset everyone was," said another source. "The tenor of the call was asking the Big Ten to show leadership - the conference and the presidents. An unprecedented violation of the rules would require unprecedented action from the Big Ten."