

Gene Smith “Excited” To Add USC, UCLA To Conference Schedule Beginning In 2024



This next football season will be the last for the Big Ten without USC and UCLA in the conference, but once the 2024-25 football season is on deck, Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith is “excited” to add those teams to the schedule.

In an interview with Buckeye Sports Bulletin, Smith said that the addition of these teams to the conference - with Ohio State set to travel to UCLA in 2024 and host USC in 2025 - will “add something new” to the Big Ten, which will go without divisions beginning in 2024.

“The business part of it, everybody knows, but I think that there’s something new that will be good for us,” he said. “We’ve been to USC before and played there before but going to USC as a conference member is a little different, and same with UCLA. I’m looking forward to that from that novelty point of view. That’ll be pretty cool.”

Smith said the move will require changes to Ohio State’s non-conference scheduling philosophy, already seen with the elimination of a home-and-home series with Washington in 2024 and 2025 that was canceled earlier this year. Any changes will be aimed at best positioning Ohio State ahead of the new College Football Playoff format set to be introduced in 2024.

“We’ll see what the future holds with the new (College Football Playoff) model and how that actually works,” he said. “Strength of schedule may matter in a different way, so we’ve got to watch that, but I’m excited about it.”

For more from Smith’s exclusive interview, be sure to check out the July issue of Buckeye Sports Bulletin - our annual Interview Issue - mailing the first week of July.