

Ohio State Athletic Director Gene Smith Discusses Big Ten's Decision To Play A Conference-Only Schedule This Fall



Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith spent about 30 minutes on a teleconference with reporters on Thursday afternoon, discussing the Big Ten's decision to move forward with a conference-only fall schedule amid the continued coronavirus outbreak.

Here's a brief recap of what Smith had to say:

- Smith said he talked to the athletic directors of the three non-conference (Bowling Green, Oregon and Buffalo) schools with hopes of rescheduling those games and they were “totally understanding” of the situation. Too early to say if the Buckeyes will host the Ducks next season.
- Smith said they've already made some adjustments to the budget and that they're working with a two-month budget in the athletic department.
- Smith said he's “really concerned” about the possibility of not being able to play this season. Added he's not even “cautiously optimistic.”
- Smith said he hopes the public follows proper protocols that give the players a chance to play this fall. “When you look at the behavior of our country, in May, we were on a downward trajectory. Now, if we are not the worst in the world, we're one of the worst in the world.”
- Smith said the details for the conference-only schedules have not been determined yet, but anticipates those conversations will happen next week. Added that moving conference games into September allows for flexibility and will align with academic calendars, as well as the possibility to pause or reschedule games on the fly.
- Smith said that competitive equality with other conferences is not as important as keeping the student-athletes safe. He added the postseason is not a concern of his at the moment. “Right now, I would love to have Wyatt Davis and Josh Myers to have a chance to have a season.”
- Smith said decisions have to be made quickly to adhere to the six weeks of practice leading into a season.
- Smith said he's hopeful the Big Ten plays a 10-game schedule. “We've talked about that. That's our preference.” That's one more than the typical nine-game conference slate.
- “We're not in a good place,” Smith said. “Two months ago, I was cautiously optimistic, but I've lost that.”
- Smith expects they'll follow CDC guidelines for potential seating inside Ohio Stadium — “if we have fans.”

- Smith said they haven't talked about spring football. "Our goal was to focus on the fall. Right now, that's not a high priority for us."
- Smith said you have to take things day-by-day and week-by-week as Ohio State heads toward the planned start of summer workouts on July 24. "There are a couple variables and it's too difficult for me to speculate at this time (on the start of the season)."
- Smith said Ohio State is not looking to eliminate any sports or institute pay cuts for coaches at this time.

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