

Ohio State Athletic Director Gene Smith Has Excitement, Questions About 12-Team College Football Playoff Proposal



This is an excerpt of a story from the July print edition of the Interview Issue at Buckeye Sports Bulletin. For four free issues of the print edition, no card required, sign up at the link here: <http://www.buckeyesports.com/subscribe-4issue-trial/>

On June 10, the College Football Playoff working group announced that it will be recommending a 12-team playoff to the NCAA Division I Council. The playoff expansion could go into effect as early as the 2023 season.

Along with the expansion from four to 12 teams, the four highest-ranked conference champions would receive a bye, while teams 5-12 would play in an opening round that takes place at the home stadium of the higher seed.

Buckeye Sports Bulletin spoke with Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith on June 17 for the annual Interview Issue on a variety of topics, including his thoughts on the 12-team playoff proposal. Here is what he had to say:

“I think the group of four that studied this for two years did an excellent job looking at all the different permutations and different models and then came up with a pretty exciting model. I think what we have to do is now allow practitioners like myself and others to look at the great work they’ve done and try and, practically, see how it could work. Learn what we need to learn and what they learned in their process.

“It took them two years to get to that. We’ve just looked at it for the first time and actually haven’t seen a lot of the details around it. So, I’m curious to talk to my colleagues. I’ve talked to a few nationally, but as ADs and others, we have to get together. And it’s hard now because we’re in that time of year where people are taking vacations, particularly after COVID. But I’m looking forward to having conversations with my colleagues and learning more about the model, but I think the work they did was excellent.

“Playing at first-round sites is a perfect example. I want to talk about that more, look at that more. It sounds great, fans always love that. But there is a reality that your first priority is a quality experience for your player.

“I think we have to look at when is that window of time that the game will be played? What’s the historical climate? Do we want to truly, truly play in 32 degrees, in a cold rain or snow? Is that really right for the players? Or, if you’re in the north, can you take that game to one of your domes in Indianapolis or Minneapolis or Ford Field (in Detroit)? I don’t know.

“These are the questions that I have, along with a number of others. Just being curious and see and make sure that we do what’s right for the players. It sounds good, it sounds like a great idea to play that at your own site, but I’m not so sure playing that game a little bit further north is a good idea, so we have to study that a little bit.”