

# Ohio State Formally Introduces Next Athletic Director Ross Bjork



Ohio State formally introduced the university's next athletic director on Wednesday, with Texas A&M's Ross Bjork set to take over for Gene Smith, who is set to retire at the end of June.

Bjork was introduced by Smith as well as new university president Ted Carter, who began his tenure with the Buckeyes on Jan. 1. Smith first introduced Bjork, and said he is confident that he will be able to lead Ohio State through the ever-changing college athletics world.

"In Ross, the president has found an experienced and seasoned leader," Smith said. "Ross' experience and understanding of the collegiate landscape will be invaluable to Buckeye Nation as we navigate the changes that are in place and those that are in front of us."

Bjork was the athletic director at Texas A&M when it gave football head coach Jimbo Fisher an extension in 2021, firing him in November and leaving Texas A&M with a \$75 million buyout. Carter said he pressed Bjork hard about why that happened.

"Ross has owned it, as has the institution," Carter said. "These things don't happen in a vacuum even though he is the athletic director. He wasn't the original hiring authority, and yes he did give an extension. I experienced that myself in Nebraska, so I understand that."

"A calm sea never produced a good sailor. Those that have had to make those tough decisions, those that have been in it, they learn from that. Those are life lessons. I don't expect we're going to get into any decisions like that at Ohio State, and if we have to make tough decisions, it won't just be the athletic director making it."

Bjork, who called himself "a football guy," said he understands the pressure that comes with being the athletic director at a place like Ohio State. He will continue to serve as the athletic director at Texas A&M until July 1, when he starts with Ohio State, but he will be around to learn from Smith until then.

"You'll probably see me around more after March 1, when I can start coming to events and seeing

activities," Bjork said. "I just want to learn the people. Luckily I don't have to make the key decisions. I can really soak myself in and learn all about this place. There will be a lot of studying, but it's all going to be about interaction with people."