

Former TV, MLB Executive Tony Petitti Named Big Ten Commissioner



The Big Ten named former MLB and TV executive Tony Petitti as its commissioner on Wednesday, ending a long search for Kevin Warren's replacement.

Petitti will begin his tenure as Big Ten commissioner on May 15 and carries over a wealth of experience in sports and entertainment. He has served in various roles during his career, working in both the media and executive fields in sports. He spent time with ABC Sports and CBS Sports before taking over at the MLB Network in 2009, he then moved into the executive field and served as the deputy commissioner and Chief Operating Officer of the MLB from 2015.

"At this important and transformational time in collegiate athletics, it is truly my great honor to be chosen by the Council of Presidents and Chancellors as the commissioner of the Big Ten Conference," Petitti said in a statement. "I am energized to work alongside the best athletics directors, coaches, conference staff and board in the country as - together - we continue to elevate the academic and athletic experiences and resources for our 14, soon-to-be 16, world-class universities with nearly 10,000 incredible student-athletes. Thank you to the extraordinary people and places that have led me to this next challenge in my career. I am ready to get to work for the Big Ten Conference community."

Petitti will have big shoes to fill with the departure of Warren, who helped the Big Ten secure a multi-billion dollar TV deal with Fox, CBS and NBC in August 2022, as well as led the acquisition of USC and UCLA into the conference — starting in 2024. Warren left the conference to take over as the president of the Chicago Bears, where he will begin in mid-April.

Pettiti has worn many hats throughout his career in sports, getting his start at ABC Sports as a general attorney in 1988. He then climbed up the ranks to become the executive vice president of CBS Sports, where he served from 2002-08. Following his stint at CBS Sports, he became the president and CEO of MLB Network, assisting in the channel's launch in 2009 and serving in the role until 2014.

Following his work at MLB Network, Pettiti was named deputy commissioner and COO of the MLB after Rob Manfred was elevated to the commissioner and stayed in those roles until 2020.

Pettiti's background in media and sports is what stood out to the Big Ten Council of Presidents and Chancellors' Executive Search Committee — a group that included Ohio State president Kristina M. Johnson.

"The Big Ten Conference is in an extraordinary position of strength," University of Maryland president Darryll J. Pines said in a statement. "Tony's capabilities to navigate the complexities of changing marketplace environments, history as a collaborative leader, and passion for academics and collegiate athletics made him the right leader, at the right time, for the Big Ten Conference."

Pettiti is now the seventh commissioner in Big Ten history.