

BIG EAST Expansion

- Recent expansion has clearly moved the BIG EAST far beyond its origins in the Northeast. With the addition of five new members in December, Navy in January, and Memphis in February, the Conference will continue to have the single largest media footprint in college football. Memphis makes that footprint even larger, spanning from coast to coast and all the major markets in between.

- The new BIG EAST football alignment is a creative and innovative model that will provide fans with two distinct divisions in football – East and West – which will produce new rivalries, accommodate further expansion flexibility and, eventually, set the stage for an annual football championship game.

- With four different time zones under its auspices, the BIG EAST and its television partner will have the potential to schedule four games on a given Saturday back-to-back-to-back-to-back without any overlap. It is a powerful model that will be unmatched by any other conference.

- We are very excited by the progress made and are inspired by the enthusiasm of the BIG EAST's newest members. They know, as we do, that BIG EAST membership will bring them many opportunities to enhance their institutions' standing and prestige both on and off the athletic field.

Diversity

- The BIG EAST Conference is the most diverse athletic conference ever assembled in the history of the NCAA.

- The BIG EAST has been evolving since its inception. The Conference has continued to thrive during this evolution process because of its continuing innovation and leadership in college athletics.

- This diversity is celebrated by the BIG EAST Conference. It allows the BIG EAST to be the true voice of Division I athletics as large state schools, and large and small private institutions, sit shoulder-to-shoulder.

National Exposure / Basketball & Football

- The BIG EAST Conference reaches more television households than any other conference in the country.

- With its new alignment, 13 BIG EAST Conference members will be located in the top 30 media markets (DMAs), 17 are in the top 50, covering nearly 28 percent of all US households.

- For the last five men's basketball seasons, all 144 regular-season league games have been televised on an ESPN platform or CBS Sports. More than half are national telecasts.

- The entire BIG EAST Championship at Madison Square Garden in New York is televised by ESPN, Inc.

- For the last three football seasons, half of all conference games were televised on ABC, ESPN, or ESPN2.

- Including ESPNU, 64% of intra-conference football games were on national TV on an ESPN platform.

- During the 2011 football season, 47% of all home games (conference and non-conference) were televised nationally.

Bowl Championship Series

- The BIG EAST Conference is one of the original founders of the Bowl Championship Series and continues to be one of only six conferences that receive an automatic annual bid.

- The current contract between the BCS and ESPN, which covers the 2010-13 seasons, guarantees the BIG EAST champion to receive an automatic bid to the BCS each season.

The BIG EAST Conference

- The BIG EAST Conference was created in 1979. It is a founding member of the Bowl Championship Series and is the largest and most diverse Division I Conference in the country.

- It has captured 32 national championships in six different sports.

- For more information on the BIG EAST Conference, please visit www.bigeast.org

BIG EAST Conference Expansion Q&A

Q: What were the primary objectives factored into expansion?

A: Our primary objective is simple -- to strengthen our conference and maintain our leadership position and status as a major force in college athletics. Clearly, our response and action regarding conference realignment was critical to that effort. Maintaining our status as a strong BCS conference is an important aspect for all of our football programs, and we have taken some very important steps recently toward that goal with the addition of seven institutions – Central Florida, Houston, SMU, Boise State, San Diego State, Navy and now Memphis. We have a solid foundation and we will continue to build upon it.

Q: Why did it seem that your expansion efforts took so long?

A: We have said from the beginning that we have been more concerned about getting this right than just getting it done. We think we are doing it the right way and we are achieving superior results.



New York's Times Square welcomed Houston's membership to the BIG EAST Conference in December.

There are many moving parts during this process. Ongoing realignment in other conferences has an impact as it keeps the situation fluid and dynamic. Every institution has its own interests and concerns and it takes time and effort to address those. We had to structure a framework to give our potential new members confidence that we could achieve what we thought we could. In the end we have been able to do that. We are very excited about our future.

Q: Is BIG EAST expansion finished for now?

A: As we have stated earlier, it was our goal to create a 12-team football league with two divisions and an annual championship game. Although we have accomplished that, we will always continue to seek ways to strengthen the Conference in basketball and football. We are committed to maintaining our leadership position in basketball and will work to ensure our continued excellence. The addition of Memphis helps us on both fronts.

Q: Is the BIG EAST open to having more than 12 football members?

A: We are obviously pleased to reach our stated goal of having 12-football playing members in fulfillment of our primary objective of fortifying the BIG EAST Conference for the long term. We will always be vigilant and continue to do whatever is in the best interest of our membership.

Q: What are the individual time frames for each of the new schools to join and be active in the BIG EAST?

A: Memphis will begin competing in the 2013-14 academic year in all BIG EAST-sponsored sports along with Central Florida, Houston and SMU. Boise State and San Diego State will start competing in football in the 2013 season. Navy will begin competing in football in the 2015 season. All seven institutions will immediately be included in our meetings and our future planning processes.

Q: Was the addition of Memphis motivated by basketball?

A: Although the University of Memphis has a very well-known and highly respected basketball program, its 19 athletic programs compliment the BIG EAST Conference membership in a variety of ways across the board. Further, its geography, time zone, corporate and community ties are very impressive and bring great value to our members. This move also allows us to host a conference football championship game. Memphis' basketball prowess obviously also makes the conference even more formidable.

Q: How will divisions be constructed?

A: Any divisional discussions will occur at future conference meetings with input from our directors of athletics and presidents.

Q: How committed are the new schools to staying in the BIG EAST for the long-term?

A: We are all fully committed to each other and intend for these ongoing partnerships to serve as the basis to improve the overall strength of our league long-term and enhance the quality of our Conference brand. Clearly, our new schools will see many immediate benefits in joining the BIG EAST and we are confident that the value of those benefits and advantages will only increase. We believe their interests and ours align for the long term. Each of these incoming members is aware of the history of institutions that have joined the BIG EAST and subsequently experienced an enhanced profile and improved performance.

Q: Can you comment about any other schools that you spoke with about membership?

A: Out of respect for the many confidential conversations we had with various universities during this process, we will continue to not comment on any specific schools that we were involved in discussions with over the past several months.

Q: BIG EAST schools are now located all around the country and the league reach goes coast to coast. How does this geographic profile impact the league overall?

A: In both football and basketball, our Conference has the largest TV footprint in all of college sports. This underscores the BIG EAST national brand. Memphis is a national name in college athletics with a strong presence in the West. Establishing strong East/West divisions was important to us. This will allow us to have great natural rivalries, open new recruiting markets and mitigate the concerns regarding distances and traveling.

Q: What impact did TV rights have on this move? Does the addition of Memphis help the Conference with future television negotiations?

A: Television rights are always an important factor to our Conference and member institutions because of the large number of programs they help support. Appropriate levels of television revenue are something our members rightfully expect us to deliver and we are committed to doing so. We believe we will be very appealing to programmers when we offer television rights based on the additions we have made to our Conference. Memphis is a strong national name in college athletics.

Q: Does the BIG EAST have any plans to change its name?

A: We have no such plans.

Q: What impact did solidifying BCS AQ status have on expansion decisions?

A: As you know, discussions about the future of the BCS are ongoing. Regardless of what the next football postseason model may be, we are confident that the BIG EAST Conference will always be included at the highest level.

Q: The BIG EAST will lose Syracuse, Pittsburgh, and West Virginia. Are you concerned about your basketball brand?

A: Even with the departures, the BIG EAST remains among the strongest conferences in college basketball with eight of its ongoing schools having made the NCAA tournament last year. No conference has ever earned eight or more NCAA bids in a season except the BIG EAST which has accomplished it four times in the last six years. The Conference is obviously very committed to basketball. Every expansion decision is considered relative to the impact on our basketball programs with valued input from representatives of our basketball members. The addition of Memphis obviously adds tremendous value to the BIG EAST basketball brand. The Memphis program has enjoyed great success and has a strong national profile.

Q: What is the status of the West Virginia legal action? How do these additional schools alter the situation with West Virginia trying to leave the Conference by 2012?

A: The addition of Memphis has no impact whatsoever on our view of West Virginia's contractual obligations to the BIG EAST.