

# Big Ten Considers Bubble For Basketball Season



While most of the attention in college sports has been focused on football, discussions regarding the possibilities surrounding the upcoming basketball season have been progressing.

CBS Sports college basketball expert Jon Rothstein posted on Twitter that several of the biggest basketball conferences have considered playing in a bubble-type setting.

“Sources: Several power conferences in college basketball have had preliminary discussions about holding games next season in a ‘bubble’ type setting,” Rothstein wrote. “This is one of many potential options on the table, but one that gains traction with student athletes taking classes online.”

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— Jon Rothstein (@JonRothstein) August 6, 2020

National basketball analyst Jeff Goodman posted on Twitter that the Big East and the Big Ten have both discussed the possibility of playing in a bubble as one of multiple options.

“The Big East and Big Ten are two conferences that have discussed using a bubble for basketball this season, per sources,” Goodman wrote. “However, it’s just one of multiple options that has been discussed.”

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— Jeff Goodman (@GoodmanHoops) August 6, 2020

Michigan State athletic director Bill Beekman fielded questions about the prospects of playing sports in the 2020-21 academic year, and he expressed his hope for both football and basketball in the spring.

"We have two sports to generate revenue, football and men's basketball. And so if we have the ability to play sports to generate revenue, we absolutely will," Beekman said. "I think that I'm very hopeful that we'll play football in the spring, that we'll play basketball. I think relative to basketball, there are open questions as to when the season will start. But I am hopeful and optimistic that we will find a path forward."

Beekman discussed the need to think outside the box during the uncertain times brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic. He credited Michigan State head men's basketball coach Tom Izzo for emphasizing the need to be creative, pointing to the possibility of adopting a bubble for college basketball, like the NBA did.

"I think as Coach Izzo has said recently, we need to be creative. We need to put everything on the table and figure out how to make things work if it's at all possible," Beekman said. "I, of course, fully support that perspective, and we're working on it. I think that some sort of a, maybe not at the level that the NBA is at, but some sort of an environment that is more bubble-like - I'll put it that way - may be viable and maybe more viable at a time like this than it would have been at other times when almost all of our classes were in-person."

With many schools changing to online-only courses due to health concerns regarding COVID-19, Beekman believes that gives college basketball more flexibility with the idea of a bubble. Ideally, if all of their classes were online, student-athletes could live in a bubble and compete while still completing their coursework.

"I think that certainly basketball, with a much smaller number of people, lends itself more to that approach," Beekman said. "We are talking about student-athletes not professional athletes, and I think it's important to remember that their students first."

"With that said, with most of our universities fully engaging or near fully engaging in online classes or hybrid classes, I think the question of being off campus for a longer period of time becomes more feasible when the vast majority of classes are online."

While thorough discussions regarding the upcoming seasons persist, Michigan State as well as the Big Ten and its other member schools are not rushing to any conclusions. For the time being, the focus is on keeping the student-athletes safe and healthy while considering different alternatives in regards to the 2020-21 athletic calendar.

"We haven't made any final decisions. In some cases, we're a little bit of a wait-and-see mode," Beekman said. "We are encouraging our athletes that are here on campus to continue working out."

“And I think that’s really in their best interest both from a physical health and a mental health perspective, to keep staying in the groove and working hard. And if it’s at all possible, we’ll get them on the court or the ice or the or the field at some point in this academic year.”

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