

C.J. Stroud, Gene Smith, Kevin Warren Discuss Revenue Sharing Following New Big Ten Media Deal



After the Big Ten agreed to the largest media rights contract in college football history on Thursday, Buckeyes quarterback C.J. Stroud and Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith shared differing opinions on the idea of college athletes earning a share of the revenue from the TV deal.

The idea of revenue sharing has picked up steam since college athletes were granted the right to profit off of their name, image and likeness in 2021. At Big Ten Media Days in July, Michigan head coach Jim Harbaugh spoke in favor of allowing the conference's student-athletes to earn some of the revenue from the new media rights deal.

Stroud echoed Harbaugh's sentiment on Thursday, emphasizing his belief that players and coaches should earn a share of the media rights deal.

"I'll probably have to think about that a little more, but off of the rip, I would say yes," Stroud said. "They're paying for our school, so that's definitely a plus. But at the same time, I'm not 100 percent sure what our tuition is, but I'm sure it's not the worth of how much we're actually worth."

"It would definitely mean a lot, not only to the players, but to the coaches. I think even the school would appreciate just giving us maybe a little something because we put in show much work. We're in here when no one is looking and all of the time that goes into it, it's definitely tough," he continued. "Then you take the time away from your family. I'm 2,000 miles away from home. I don't want anyone to feel bad for me, but at the same time it does take a lot of courage, it does take a lot of heart, to be here day-in and day-out and year-in and year-out."

"I definitely think it should be shared, but if not, at the end of the day, we still have the NIL space and we can do it that way."

While Stroud laid out his belief that players and coaches should earn a share of the television revenue, Smith said the conference's student-athletes already benefit from the media deals by way of athletic and academic resources on campus.

"That's something that we haven't discussed, but frankly they're already getting a piece of the television revenue," Smith said. "When you aggregate in what we offer here with our circle of care, all

of the people that we put around our student-athletes — trainers, strength coaches, sports psychologists, nutritionists, academic counselors — just keep going down the list and that's how we fund those positions. That's how we fund this building. That's how we fund this new field. That's how we fund the new field in the stadium. That's how we fund the security that we'll need for 103,000 people in the stadium.

"They actually already get a piece. It might not be directly in their pocket, but it's an investment in them," he continued. "Do we do more down the road? Possibly. And that will be discussed, but not in the form of pay-for-play. Otherwise, I'm out."

Smith's feelings on media revenue sharing were not met by Big Ten commissioner Kevin Warren, who told HBO Real Sports' Bryant Gumbel that he envisions the conference will pay players in the future.

"Those are the things that we have to resolve," Warren said. "I want to be part of this conversation, and will be part of this conversation of what we can do to make this better."