

CFP Working Group To Recommend 12-Team Playoff



The College Football Playoff working group announced on June 10 that it will be recommending a 12-team playoff to the NCAA Division I Council, according to multiple reports. The working group confirmed those reports in a release.

“The four-team format has been very popular and is a big success,” the members of the four-person working group said in a statement. “But it’s important that we consider the opportunity for more teams and more student-athletes to participate in the playoff. After reviewing numerous options, we believe this proposal is the best option to increase participation, enhance the regular season and grow the national excitement of college football.”

The release dived further into the details of what the proposed 12-team playoff would look like. It would be comprised of six automatic qualifiers and six at-large teams, the latter picked by the College Football Playoff committee, while the former six spots go to the six highest-ranked conference champions. The top four teams earn a first-round bye.

The No. 5-8 seeds will host the No. 9-12 seeds in the first round of the playoff, marking the first non-neutral site games of the playoff era. The winners of those matchups will square off with the top four seeds in an assortment of neutral site, New Year’s Six bowl matchups. The semifinals and finals will also be played in neutral sites with bowl affiliations, as they have been since the playoff began in 2014.

“This is a very exciting moment for college football,” the working group members said in the statement. “We think we can capture what student-athletes and fans love about the game and extend it to more people in more places, while enhancing what’s great about the regular season.”

For the sake of reference, the 2020 playoff under this system would have seen Alabama, Clemson, Ohio State, and Oklahoma receive first-round byes, while Notre Dame hosts Coastal Carolina, Texas A&M hosts Indiana, Florida hosts Iowa State and Cincinnati hosts Georgia. The winner of Cincinnati-Georgia would have faced Alabama, as is true down the line.

The next step for potential implementation comes on June 17-18 when the management committee will review the recommendation at its next meeting. If endorsed, the plan will move forward to CFP board of managers, who will meet June 22 and “decide whether to authorize feasibility assessments and

potentially discussions with other entities that would allow for implementation of any altered format.”

Executive director Bill Hancock laid out the next steps in his statement.

“Now that the working group has presented its proposal, the management committee will solicit input from university presidents, coaches, athletics directors, student-athletes and others. That input will help inform what the management committee recommends to the ultimate decision-makers — the presidents and chancellors who serve on the board of managers. I do want to remind you that the final decision will be made by the board of managers, and that decision will not come before this fall.”

Any format changes will not take effect until 2023 at the absolute earliest.