

Michigan President Remains One Of Largest Obstacles To Big Ten Football Returning, Per Report



According to a report by Sports Illustrated's Steve Deace, Michigan President Mark Schlissel is currently one of the largest obstacles in the Big Ten's return to playing football in 2020 "to the point he's threatening to have Michigan sit out even if the Big Ten votes to go in October, denying the Big Ten its signature game."

Wolverine Digest EXCLUSIVE: source tells me Michigan's university president @DrMarkSchlissel is who stands in the way of the return of Big Ten football. And he's even using the Michigan-Ohio State game as leverage to keep the league on the sidelines.
<https://t.co/IMBZR28gl8>

— MichiganPodcast (@MichiganPodcast) September 4, 2020

"From what I'm told Schlissel is willing to weaponize the Michigan-Ohio State game as a threat to keep the Big Ten home this October, believing the league wouldn't dare move forward without The Game," the report states. "Thus losing hundreds of millions of dollars for member institutions while watching 76 other FBS teams play college football."

Schlissel has not spoken to the majority of the Michigan football team, and that has become increasingly frustrating to the players, according to defensive end Kwity Paye, who was projected to be a No. 20 prospect in the 2021 NFL Draft by ESPN's Mel Kiper.

"We haven't heard anything," Paye said. "I think Carlo (Kemp) has talked to him a bit, but other than that, he hasn't addressed the team. We haven't had any conversation with him. There's been no communication."

The lack of communication from Schlissel is also frustrating to many because of his medical background, where he holds a professorship in microbiology and immunology, making him, likely, one of the most knowledgeable presidents involving COVID-19 in the Big Ten.

“Schlissel should be one of the most uniquely qualified presidents/chancellors to opine on playing this season, but he has offered no public specifics about his apparent concerns as the sport ramps up across the Big Ten footprint at the high school and pro level,” Deace said in the report. “Neither did he visit the football program one time this summer to see for himself how the players were being kept safe and honoring protocols, but he does appear willing to use the power of the Michigan football brand as leverage to suit his desires here.”

The Big Ten postponed the fall football season for the rest of 2020 on Aug. 11, but there have since been reports that the conference has discussed moving the season back up to Thanksgiving weekend at the end of November. Other sources have also said that members of the conference would like to start the football season in early October.

Michigan was one of the 11 Big Ten programs that voted in approval of postponing the football season for the rest of the year. Iowa, Nebraska and Ohio State were the three programs that voted against it.

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