

OSU AD Gene Smith Doesn't Forsee Schedule Changes Despite 'The Alliance'



Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith said Wednesday that “The Alliance” between the Big Ten, ACC and Pac-12 might not lead to scheduling changes between the three conferences regarding future football games. In fact, Smith claims the Big Ten would prefer to keep its nine conference games rather than make room for another non-conference matchup.

“When we first started The Alliance, there was a little bit about scheduling, and that kind of shifted,” Smith said. “We had the eight versus nine (conference-game) conversation more intensely at that time with the thought that if we played eight, would there be an ACC or Pac-12 school that we might play? But we moved away from that pretty quickly because many of us felt like nine games were still right for us.

“We thought that conference contests, from a TV partner point of view, were just as valuable. We decided to kind of walk away from that a little bit. That doesn’t mean it might not come back up. The value of The Alliance was just bringing together schools that think alike.”

Smith said the Big Ten is doing what it can to remain at the forefront of the college football conversation. He recognized that the SEC had made strides in recent years to become a more independent entity, which required the Big Ten, Pac-12 and ACC to form an alliance that would ensure the conference’s survival.

While survival may seem like a bleak term, one can look to the Big 12 as an example of what can happen when the SEC decides to flex its muscles. The Southeastern Conference poached blue-blood programs in Oklahoma and Texas in August 2021 and were reportedly looking to add more colleges and universities to bolster its already-impressive college football pedigree.

When asked if the Big Ten schools were trying to keep pace with the SEC, Smith said that Big Ten primarily focuses on itself and how it can remain an entertaining collection of teams in various sports.

“We talk more about what do we need to do with the Big Ten, to keep the Big Ten as valuable as it is in our footprint, for our fans, for our athletes, and our television partners,” Smith said. “It’s rare that we compare ourselves to even the ACC or the Pac-12. The Alliance, if we were just looking at TV value, we’re more valuable to the ACC or the Pac-12 than they are to us.”

When explicitly asked about the impact that a potential scheduling arrangement between the three conferences could have on Ohio State's scheduled series with schools like Texas, Alabama and Georgia in the future, Smith said he'd prefer to keep those matchups in place rather than move things around to accommodate matchups with teams in the Alliance.

"I just don't see philosophically for us a scheduling model where we would be supportive of making that change," he said. "Nine (conference games) makes sense to us. We still want to listen to eight, but even if we go eight, I'm not so sure we're going to carry the load for the conference and schedule Pac-12 and ACC schools. We're going to play whoever it is. It might be a Pac-12 or ACC school — Washington is on our schedule down the road.

"But I don't see us making any changes that way. Those games are huge. Like with Notre Dame (this fall), this is the sixth time we've played them in the regular season. That's the coolest thing. I don't see us making that change."

For now, Ohio State has home-and-home series scheduled with Notre Dame (2022-23), Washington (2024-25), Texas (2025-26), Alabama (2027-28), Georgia (2030-31) and Oregon (2032-33). Of these teams, the Buckeyes will receive their first test against the Fighting Irish on Sept. 3 in Ohio Stadium.