

July 8, 2010



An interview with:

**COMMISSIONER JOHN SWOFFORD
JOHN SKIPPER
KEN HAINES
JOHN WILDHACK
BURKE MAGNUS**

AMY YAKOLA: Good morning, everybody. Welcome to today's teleconference announcing the new 12-year agreement between ESPN and the ACC. Before we get started, I just want to go over today's format for the call which will consist of an opening statement from ACC Commissioner John Swofford and then an opening statement from ESPN Executive Vice President John Skipper. Following those two opening statements, we will begin the Q&A portion of today's call.

At this time I would like to introduce Atlantic Coast Conference Commissioner John Swofford for his opening remarks.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Amy, thank you. We're very pleased today to officially announce that the ACC has reached an extensive multimedia agreement with ESPN for the next 12 years beginning with the 2011-2012 academic year. The new contract combines the rights for football and basketball. That's the first time in our conference's history that we have done so.

As I said, it's an extensive television package that reaches new heights financially, provides unprecedented branding opportunities for us, and we think strongly positions our league within the ever-changing world of technology as we look ahead.

ACC content will now be televised more both regionally and nationally than at any point in our history. All of our 25 sponsored sports will have more visibility than ever before and there will

be close to five thousand events televised over the 12-year time frame of the contract.

Distribution of revenue from the new contract will continue to be divided equally among our member institutions, equitable distribution of revenue is one of the guiding principles that this league has followed since the mid 1980s and certainly that will be the case as we move forward and our institutions will benefit tremendously from a financial standpoint from this new agreement.

Technology will continue to be ever-changing, and the ACC will greatly benefit now and in the future from ESPN's resources and investments in these areas as well as the resources and investments from Raycom, which will continue to be involved with ESPN in this contractual agreement moving forward.

Obviously this is a terrific day for the ACC. We're very pleased to continue the relationship with the tremendous brand that is ESPN. They are called the 'worldwide leader in sports' for good reason. It also continues, through ESPN, a 30-year relationship that we've had with Raycom that has been very productive as well.

So those relationships continue, a little different structure than in the past, a little different connection than in the past, among the three of us. But very, very exciting for the future of the Atlantic Coast Conference, and we are tremendously pleased to continue the relationship with ESPN and with Raycom.

AMY YAKOLA: Thank you, Commissioner.

Mr. Skipper.

JOHN SKIPPER: First I want to thank Commissioner Swofford with whom I've gotten to spend a lot of time with in the last year and I've enjoyed it very much. I know Associate Commissioner Michael Kelly is with John there. I want to thank John and all of his team for the diligent way we stayed after this deal and the structure of it.

We are thrilled, too. As you know, college sports really is part of the DNA of ESPN since the beginning of our company. It's a critical product for



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us so we are thrilled to have a long-term agreement with the ACC that will put more of their great product on our air and across all of our platforms than ever. It is a very critical part of these college agreements for us that we do get rights that allow us to create digital content, mobile content, fuel the growth of ESPN-3 and ESPNU, although we do understand with the marquee and great events of the ACC, we will have lots of games on ESPN and ESPN-2. That will be the primary home for the major college football and college basketball, including as a proud University of North Carolina graduate, we will have both North Carolina-Duke games on our air going forward. We'll have more women's college basketball than ever. We'll have more other ACC championships than ever. We had a great run this year with lacrosse. The members of the ACC that play lacrosse are leaders in that sport. More men's and women's soccer. So for us, we're thrilled with it all around.

I want to acknowledge a couple of my colleagues, John Wildhack, who is on the call, and Burke Magnus. They were critical to getting this deal done, which means they did all the work. Thank you very much. And fine work it was.

We have another great partner on the call as well, and that's Raycom. I believe Ken Haines is on the call representing Raycom. We've had a long partnership with Raycom, as has the ACC. We both value that partnership, and they're a key partner in this deal for us. It is a three-way arrangement which we're thrilled about.

We'll be happy to answer any questions. I know that's true for Commissioner Swofford, as well.

AMY YAKOLA: Thank you, at this point we'll start our Q&A.

Q. John Skipper, can you confirm, I think the report on this, this deal was worth \$1.86 billion?

JOHN SKIPPER: Officially, no, we don't comment on the financial specifics of our deals.

Q. What does this particular deal portend for other leagues that are out there in coming years that are about to have their rights renewal come up specifically the PAC-10, and maybe more specifically the Big 12, which has gotten some promises from you and FOX?

JOHN SKIPPER: Look, the ACC, we've always had a special relationship with the ACC.

It's been part of our company for over 30 years. College sports in general, quite important to us.

On the Big 12 specifically, I can confirm what has been public already, which is correct. We agreed with Commissioner Beebe that as his conference moved from 12 teams to 10 teams that we would continue the current payment structure for those 10 teams. There were no other agreements or promises made. We value that conference very much as well.

We have had a good relationship with the PAC-10 and expect to have relationships with those conferences as well.

I want to emphasize on this call, this is the first time we at ESPN have done basically an all-in deal with a conference where we worked to be able to acquire all of their product. We then have an arrangement with Raycom to sublicense some of that product. But I think that speaks to how much we value the product that's in the ACC.

Q. You said 'all-in'. How does that differ with the deal with the SEC?

JOHN SKIPPER: The SEC has a broadcast component with CBS.

Q. I couldn't quite tell from reading the release. Did the ACC retain their archival rights and digital rights? How is that split up?

JOHN SKIPPER: The answer to that is yes.

Burke, do you want to speak to that?

BURKE MAGNUS: The archive rights, the answer is right. Digital rights are part of this agreement and part of the contents that we're sublicensing, that the ACC and Raycom are doing a deal for.

Q. So the ACC retained both?

BURKE MAGNUS: Yes.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: That's correct. That obviously gives us some opportunities with the new technology that we haven't had before.

Q. Commissioner Swofford, I want to make sure what I read I understand correctly. It says exclusive rights to every conference-controlled football and men's basketball game. 'Conference controlled' being games that would fall under your broadcasting rights typically, do I understand that right?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: That's correct. Basically it references home games. There may be some neutral-site games that we control from a television standpoint. But basically it references home games.

Q. Commissioner, you alluded to this in your statement about increasing the financial health for the league and its institutions. Can you elaborate on that point, as we saw the landscape of conferences and school memberships changing, perhaps only taking a respite here this summer, there could still be some real shifting with conference expansion, what this deal does for the ACC.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Well, I think in the ACC we look at our league as a very stable one. I think the financial and exposure aspects of this, as well as the opportunities with new media going forward, only increases that stability. I'll tell you candidly that our schools will be receiving more than double the television revenue that they have been receiving in the past, and certainly that's very significant for any college athletic program in today's world.

Q. Mr. Skipper, as Commissioner Swofford mentioned, this is the first time the ACC has bundled men's football and basketball together. Without telling me what negotiations were like, how much of a factor was that in coming to this deal?

JOHN SKIPPER: Well, it was important to us because we value both the basketball and the football. We liked having them synched up. It was cordial. Early on John and I sort of exchanged what was important to each of us. John understood that that was important to us and we worked hard to try to make that work for him as well.

Q. Commissioner, you sort of alluded a couple moments ago to the stability that you have with this deal. With the recent changes in the college landscape, without this deal, how stable do you feel your league would have been? In other words, does this make you feel as though your league is probably as stable as any going forward?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Well, yes, I think it is. I think it was. I think this enhances that stability. I think we've got a group of schools that are together for multiple reasons, not just financial, although financial is one of them.



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They're together because they've chosen to be together and I think believe in the same kinds of values that they want within a conference, tangible and intangible.

But it's certainly important that the business aspects and the financial aspects of an institutional membership in a conference is solid. And this certainly solidifies that for this conference for the next 12 years.

Q. Commissioner, and Mr. Haines, as I look at, especially under the men's basketball area, there's a particular line, 'full national telecast televised on an ESPN platform,' which I read to mean the previous blackouts inside the ACC region are gone now. If that's correct, what does this do for the strength of what has been a long-time relationship, for those of us who remember Raycom, Jefferson Pilot, what does that do to the strength of the Raycom brand?

KEN HAINES: This is Ken Haines at Raycom. We will continue, as we have in the past. There's virtually very little change in what Raycom is doing in the ACC territory. We're continuing to have basically the same number of games, both football and basketball. That includes the tournament. That includes one of the Duke-North Carolina games.

What it has done is given us the ability to also syndicate games outside of the ACC region, so we can go to other parts of the country and have those games. So our brand really, if anything, is enhanced somewhat by this new arrangement.

JOHN SKIPPER: What we will do is coexist on those games. In my opinion, and I believe in Ken's opinion, this will be to the benefit to the ACC. The ratings of those games, when you combine Raycom, ESPN, will be at historic levels. We're offering fans a choice. They can watch Raycom or watch ESPN. Again, we believe we'll see the overall rating go up there.

I agree with Ken. I think Raycom will continue to enjoy the legacy and reputation for quality that they have within the footprint and outside.

KEN HAINES: The games were coexisting, to make it clear, the Duke-North Carolina game and the ACC tournament.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: From a conference standpoint, certainly that obviously is

an enhancement for the ACC because now all of our syndicated games theoretically can go national. We had some situations in football with some of our syndicated games contractually were regulated to a specific geographic footprint and kept us out of certain areas that we wanted to be in in terms of the distribution of those games.

So this is something that most definitely is a plus for our conference and just extends the exposure that much more.

Q. How much more of a challenge were the negotiations, given some of the uncertainty about what certain conferences might look at and how certain dominos might affect the ACC going forward?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: It really was not a factor in our discussions. We've been having these discussions for, what, probably 15 months.

JOHN SKIPPER: Right.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: We were well into those and basically close to an end point when some of the changes starting taking place in terms of conference realignment.

You know, my sense of it is that it really had no effect on our discussions.

JOHN SKIPPER: I would just confirm that. It never really came up. Just because it's an interesting subject, John and I discussed a little bit the landscape, but most of the details of the deal were hammered out before that came up.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: And were not altered in any way based on what did occur.

Q. If the structure of the ACC changes during the duration of the contract, if it becomes larger or smaller, how does that affect the contract? Any provisions in there about what might happen?

JOHN SKIPPER: We have in our contracts in the past and going forward always had provisions that dealt with conference realignment, conference composition clauses. This was no exception. The deal remains valid. If the conference has a different composition, the end of the day we negotiate in good faith to handle any change.

Look, again, one of the reasons it didn't come up is it's clear that the ACC is a very sound conference, not likely to change. Most of the discussions about the conference realignment, there was very little discussion of ACC schools. As

John said, they're bound together by tradition, also bound together by academic excellence, a commitment to academic and athletic excellence. This mostly was a pretty big non-factor in this discussion.

Q. Commissioner, could you confirm that \$1.86 billion figure?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: I cannot confirm that other than to tell you I've read some things that have been written that have been quite accurate.

Q. Commissioner, can you talk a little bit about how this may enhance your legacy as commissioner of the conference.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: I haven't really thought about that. I think what's important is at this given point in time, considering where we are economically in this country, the recession, et cetera, I think what's important is that we were able to strike an excellent financial deal and exposure dealing with the preeminent televisor of sporting events not only in the country but in the world.

That is a real plus for our institutions going forward because ultimately what this is all about is what is good and what's positive, what assists our institutions and gives them the opportunity to reach any and all goals that they may have athletically.

I think that, coupled with a lot of other aspects of our athletic programs at our various institutions, this puts them in a position where they can compete for not only ACC championships but national championships and do it in the right kind of way.

JOHN SKIPPER: I'll come to the commissioner's aid because it's awkward to comment on your own legacy.

I think this is clear that this will cement John's stewardship of the Atlantic Coast Conference as a preeminent athletic and academic conference. The fact that we're going to expand our conference of both basketball and football I think is going to continue help underpin that the ACC is one of the conferences that competes in basketball and football for national championships and has really one of the outstanding sort of broad collections of athletics.

I mean, this is a conference that plays basketball, football, lacrosse, soccer, swimming, tennis, women's field hockey, and competes for championships across all of those sports. We're

going to have more exposure for some of those sports than ever. Baseball, men's baseball, women's softball.

So I think John also secured a very important financial deal for his institutions to ensure that they are able to keep up with what is clearly a landscape of growing finances.

So I think it's everything. Maybe John will work more than 12 more years. He's a healthy man. I think this is a deal that cements what he's done for the ACC. It's also great for his fans. I think it's a fan-friendly conference. I think that's an important fact as well.

Q. Could you take a more macro view for a moment. More conferences are going to want deals of this nature with a network partner. The dollars don't seem to be going down anytime soon. I'm wondering if there's a breaking point at some point here. Do you see the market showing that all these leagues are going to be able to get deals like this that want them, talking about the major six conferences that play college football, or are we going to hit a point where some league is not going to be able to have a teleconference like this because they're not going to be able to get the sort of deal that's going to be able to sustain them in the way that the ACC is going through right now?

JOHN SKIPPER: From a macro point of view, college sports are very, very important to us. And remember how many platforms and how many networks and Internet sites and mobile platforms and broadband Internet networks we have. We have the need for a lot of product. Over the last few years, what we have tried to do is upgrade that product. That's where things have come in like we've really been able to use things like women's college softball, the men's baseball tournament and lacrosse to continue to program the best competition on that.

College sports has generally been priced well. We think it's great product for an appropriate price. The deals that we've done work for us financially. Again, we have a lot of platforms that they work for.

I would say I don't foresee a trend where these rights in general go down because there's more competition for those rights than ever. You have conferences that have done their own networks. There are a number of regional players who want to put on college football, college basketball, other college sports. So I would

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suspect this will continue to be a competitive landscape.

We will continue to acquire marquee product that we need. We will pay a market price for it. But it works for us in our financial models.

Little bit of a long-winded answer, I apologize. It's a big, complicated thing.

Q. Commissioner, is there a secrecy clause in the contract with discussing the price tag? There are eight publicly supported schools in the league.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Yes, there is. The contract is between ESPN and the conference, and there is such a clause.

Q. You said a while ago that each school would more than double its TV income. Are you talking about annually there or over the course of the entire contract?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: I'm talking about the average of the current contract versus average of the new contract more than doubles.

Q. I have a couple of questions about how the broadcast coverage will occur. Does this mean that FOX Sports is out completely from any kind of ACC coverage? The coverage they previously had on the women's basketball tournament and other games of that nature is what I'm referring to.

JOHN SKIPPER: We retain the rights, in consultation with the conference, to sublicense products. We may determine to sublicense products, though it's not been determined yet. At the end of the day, there may be some other parties involved. But John and I will consult on that, decide if that's mutually beneficial to us.

It's an honest answer, but it sort of doesn't directly answer your question. I mean, we don't know yet sort of what we'll do. But we do retain the rights to the product, so it can only be acquired through us and the conference.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: In addition to that, because locally here you may want to know this. The new agreement does guarantee that every game of the women's basketball tournament will be televised. We've never had that before. The same is true for our baseball tournament. Every game there will be televised as well. Those are significant

improvements for us. The women's championship game will be on either ABC, ESPN or ESPN-2, and the semis will be national as well on one of those three outlets or ESPNU. ESPNU is now in 73 million homes. So it has a very extensive reach.

Q. Speaking to that reach, many games on ESPN are often streamed online and not necessarily on the networks. North Carolina in particular has a good number of households that subscribe to Time Warner and aren't able to reach that. When we're talking about that nationwide reach, how far are we speaking? What is going to be on ESPN versus what's going to be on ABC, which is broadcast nationally?

JOHN SKIPPER: For us, one of the excellent things about this, and I believe it will be excellent for the conference as well, is that we have a great deal of flexibility. This is a little bit of a meritocracy right. The best games will end up with the widest distribution and on the biggest networks. That will be a lot of ACC football, basketball games.

As to the specific ESPN-3 question, we're in a little over 50 million homes right now, which is about 75 to 80% of all broadband homes in this country. We are in active negotiations with the Time Warner Company and would hope that we'd be able to reach a resolution that would have that service distributed to all Roadrunner subscribers, and that would include North Carolina. We anticipate getting that done in time for this year's football season.

Look, we're very fan-centric company at a very fan-centric conference. We want to make sure and have committed to John that more people will be able to see more games than they have ever seen, generally speaking, all of the ACC-controlled games are going to be available to a national audience.

JOHN WILDHACK: ESPN and ESPN-2 are both fully distributed networks now at a hundred million homes. Our ABC college football coverage oftentimes is regionalized. We do have more flexibility in this deal in terms of where we could program the best game. You know, the best game may very well wind up on ESPN or ESPN-2 where it's a full national or an ABC Saturday night where it's full national.

We have more flexibility. It's important to point out that ESPN more and more, we have programmed marquee events, whether it's Monday Night Football, whether it's college football, the

Duke-Carolina game, whether it was last year the most-watched regular-season game, USC-Ohio State. We've proven there's no delineation anymore between cable and over-the-air broadcast. People come to ESPN networks and they've come in record numbers.

JOHN SKIPPER: We will, of course, this year be broadcasting the Bowl Championship Series, including the championship game on ESPN.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: We might also mention the simulcast of games that can take regional games national in terms of ESPN-3.

JOHN SKIPPER: Absolutely. We've had a great deal of success that really provides another opportunity for fans who may not be able to get to a television set to watch. A lot of these games will end up on mobile television, as well, so people will have opportunity to see the games on a mobile device. Of course, a lot of these games will end up in our game plan and Full Court products as well on DIRECTV.

A lot of opportunities. Again, we believe that fans will have more opportunities to see more games than ever for the ACC.

Q. On the Sunday franchise on ESPNU, are we talking about any judgments in the ACC schedules that we're going to see? How is that going to play out?

JOHN SKIPPER: We expect to continue that Sunday series on an ESPN network.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Some of the feedback we had gotten back on that, both internally from schools and fans in general, is that they prefer a little earlier in the evening tip-off if possible. We're going to be able to provide that. Those games on the Sunday package now will be played sometime starting at 2, no later than 6 p.m., which is a little earlier than we have been starting those games. We think that will be well-received by basketball fans throughout the area.

As I said earlier, ESPNU goes into 73 million homes. So that's going to be similar to what we have been doing and will be doing this year with the FOX Sunday night package.

In addition, something I think fans will be interested in, is that the syndicated games will be over what will be called the ACC Network that will be syndicated by Raycom. The syndicated football games on Saturday, which have had a noon kickoff



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in the past, starting with this agreement, not this fall but the fall of 2011, will have a 12:30 kickoff over the air, which again is something that is in response to feedback we've received from fans over the years with that early 12 noon kickoff.

Q. How will the online component between Raycom and ESPN work with one another? Will there be any kind of borrowing that occurs between the two?

JOHN SKIPPER: Ken?

KEN HAINES: Well, our games, ESPN, because of the multitude of platforms they have, can be on Game Plan, can be on ESPN3.com. So really what it's done, I think at the end of the day, the fans and the viewers are the real winners of this particular agreement. As both Johns have said, there's more conference of ACC sports on more media platforms to more viewers than ever before in the history of the conference.

We have been somewhat hampered in the past as a lot of you know by some individuals in some parts of the country not being able to see our regionalized games. All that now has been put to bed so that fans really anywhere in the country are going to have basically, because of the multitude of ESPN platforms, us continuing with our strong syndication package, be able to see about anything anywhere on a more convenient time basis.

We will continue to work with both ESPN and the conference on the digital rights. We have a lot of exciting things I think coming and working with the ACC and ESPN in being very out front in what we're going to be plan to be doing digitally. Those individual viewers that like to enhance this new technology, are attracted to the new technology, are going to be able to see more ACC product than they ever have in the past on these new platforms. That applies anywhere in the country.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: That was an important part of these discussions as we look ahead. I think it's critical that our conference in this kind of relationship can be nimble and adjust to the changing technology and use it to our advantage moving forward.

I think with these two partners, as I said at the beginning briefly, I think we're very well-positioned for that. The world may look very different over the next 12 years. One of the reasons we settled on 12 years is that seemed to be a balancing point where we could maximize the

dollars and not take ourselves so far out that the world could just look so completely different.

So we were very comfortable with the 12-year deal. Could have been longer, but we felt that was the right point that balanced all of this out in terms of dollars and not wanting to get -- we wanted to give ourselves stability over an extended period of time, but we were also concerned about going too far out with the changing technology that is out there.

Q. Commissioner, do you share revenue equally at the ACC?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: We do. We started that back in the mid '80s and have ever since. It's one of the real principles in our league and has served our league tremendously well.

Q. You mentioned the reasons for the 12-year deal. Did that have anything to do with maybe synching up or balancing any future BCS deals? They go in four-year increments with the conferences.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: No, not at all.

Q. Can I get you to comment on your thoughts on future conference alignments, sooner rather than later. What are your opinions on it right now?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Well, from my standpoint, it's hard to speak to other conferences. It certainly appears to have settled down at this point in time. What other conferences may decide to do remains to be seen. I would hope personally that things settle in with the existing conferences as they're now comprised and we have stability moving forward.

I know that's the preference of our schools for our conference, as well as the overall landscape. But we'll just have to see how it plays out, if and when it plays out.

I read some people saying that the 'super conferences' are inevitable. I do not agree that they're inevitable. They may or may not happen at some point in time, but I certainly don't think that they're inevitable.

JOHN SKIPPER: I'd speak most to the conference we're announcing this deal with, such as the ACC. We are quite happy, again, with the quality of the athletic competition. We have an

interesting position in that we're in business with pretty much all the conferences in question. So we tried mostly to take an approximation on the sidelines.

Other than when we are asked by a specific conference to talk about our current agreement, we have been clear that we were happy with the status quo here. We're not the instigator for any of the discussions about realignment.

Again, I would echo what John said a little bit. We're in business, I think 31 out of the 32 conferences. We think that the current landscape for college football and college basketball is tremendous. We're happy.

Q. Is there some sort of boilerplate language in all these conference deals pertaining to conference membership; you can reopen it at some point or they can reopen it if they expand or is it different for each league?

JOHN SKIPPER: There is standard language in all of our deals. The most important principle to us is we are still in business with the conferences and the deals are still valid, and then there are adjustments that we can make. Those vary slightly from conference to conference. In most cases, they require us to negotiate in good faith to come to a reasonable agreement on more or less money, what the conference has done.

BURKE MAGNUS: This is Burke. That's always been the case. This is not a new phenomenon. When there's been expansion in the past, we've always had that protection.

Q. My question is, if something like that comes up in the middle of the deal, how long do you or the conference have to wait to move on any changes? In other words, do you have to wait till the end of the deal?

JOHN SKIPPER: I mean, the mechanisms in the deals allow us, and pretty much require us, to make those changes concurrent with the change in the conference lineup. In other words, I'll just make it up. If the conference was to expand by two teams three years from now, we would be required to adjust our current deal beginning in the year in which the change happened.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: The only thing I would add is any agreement we've had since I've been a part of the ACC has had that clause in it, that arrangement. Secondly, the only thing I would add, in today's world you have to evaluate what landscape changes would mean

and what a larger conference would look like. I think we all know what a 12-member conference looks like. We know that it works.

I think as you get larger, it can work, but it also brings certain complications with it as well as certain benefits. You know, it's not a stick-your-head-in-the-sand kind of thing for any of us. But that's just part of doing due diligence.

I know internally with our league, we're very, very happy with 12 and very happy with the 12 that we are.

Q. I wanted to speak to the negotiations that I've read and heard as being somewhat accurate recently in terms of figures, moving away from the \$1.86 billion figure, but how it occurred as the zero hour approached and the ACC finally settled on ESPN. What considerations, anything beyond just a dollar figure, went into that?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Well, obviously the dollar figures are very important in those kind of negotiations. The exposures for our conferences, what would be asked of our schools to have those exposures, when we would play, the times we would play, what we could generate from an exposure standpoint beyond the obvious football and men's basketball so that we can bring more exposure to our Olympic sports, the platforms that they're on.

The ESPN brand is obviously a factor. The ability to retain our copyright and what we can do with those. The technological capabilities of who we would go with as we look at the future, what that could mean to us as all of that evolves.

So a lot of different factors come into play.

Q. What kept the conference from deciding to strike out on its own and create a network or enter into agreements with a group of broadcasters, as some other conferences have done?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: I think simply the fact that ultimately we thought, all things considered, the proposal from ESPN was the best proposal for our league. That sounds simple, and it's not simple getting there - believe me - but that's how you ultimately evaluate it.

All things considered, much of which I just mentioned, is really what comes into play. We felt that ESPN, combining our football and basketball together, gave us the best package for our schools

and for our fans and for our athletes moving forward.

We did do what I would call our due diligence on a network. That's a sexy thing to talk about in this day and age. Didn't feel that for our particular conference it was the right time or the right direction to go in. Considerable financial risk involved with that. Considerable money needed up front to make that work.

You know, the Big Ten Network may turn out to be an anomaly. It's working well for them. Each conference is a little different in terms of what we are and number of alums, population, television sets, all of that comes into play, as well as the state of the economy.

You know, there's some recent deals that were done before the economic downturn. Sometimes a part of negotiations is simply timing, that you can't control what the economic status of the country is at that given point in time when it's your turn.

So all of that came into play. Probably a good point for me to acknowledge Barry Frank and IMG, the assistance they gave to us in these negotiations on a consulting basis.

But at the end of the day we are extremely pleased with this new arrangement with ESPN.

AMY YAKOLA: That concludes today's teleconference. Certainly want to thank everybody for joining the call. We appreciate your time. Have a great rest of the day.

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