

An interview with:

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD

JACK SWARBRICK

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon, and appreciate everybody's patience as we're getting to the teleconference portion of our day. We will have opening statements from ACC Commissioner John Swofford and Vice President and Director of Athletics at the University of Notre Dame Jack Swarbrick. As soon as those opening statements have concluded, we'll take a brief question-and-answer portion of the call. I'd like to introduce ACC Commissioner, John Swofford.

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Thank you. First of all, this is an historic day for the Atlantic Coast Conference. I think we've arrived at a point in terms of accepting the University of Notre Dame as a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference. I think that's a real win-win both for the ACC and for the University of Notre Dame.

I think when you look at the ACC, and its history and traditions and its culture, and so much of that being about really high quality academic institutions that play collegiate sports at the highest level, there is no question that academically, athletically and culturally the University of Notre Dame fits the profile.

I think we've reached the point where certainly business is good for both parties, and that's how it should be. We just very much look forward to Notre Dame being a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference.

THE MODERATOR: Now Vice President and Director of Athletics, Jack Swarbrick.

JACK SWARBRICK: Thanks, Amy. I would just echo John's sentiments and enthusiasm. What makes ultimately a successful partnership is one where you have shared values and an arrangement which serves the interests of both parties. I think this is the definition of that. The alignments of the values of our institution with those of the Atlantic Coast Conference could not be any more direct both academically and athletically.

I think thanks to the great leadership demonstrated by John and President Hatch and President Barker, we were able to take what is at its core a fairly complicated arrangement and work through it in a way that really served the interests of both parties. The result being, we think, a stronger conference and a better opportunity for Notre Dame.

I think the outcome here is some really remarkable opportunities for student-athletes. The competitive results whether you're talking about basketball or lacrosse or baseball or softball is really extraordinary. The opportunity for us to promote the conference and Notre Dame through a shared number of football games just furthers that experience for our student-athletes.

So all in all, we view it as a home run, and we're thankful to everyone in the ACC's leadership and especially Commissioner Swofford for helping make it happen.

Q. John, I was wondering if you could get into the specifics about the rotation of teams that will play Notre Dame in those five games and how that will work as you move on here?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: The idea is that we will move through the entire membership and then in a perfect world each ACC team will play Notre Dame either at home or away at least once in every three-year period. We do -- Notre Dame already has some games scheduled against ACC opponents, and we need to take a look at that and look at what works and whether maintaining those contractual games is the right and best thing to do before we get into the ultimate rotation that we would have.

Q. Can you talk about what you want to protect, and when do you see this ACC partnership starting based on what you know about the future schedules?

JACK SWARBRICK: Our goal is to implement the football scheduling portion of this in '14, and as John said, one of the things that gives us an opportunity to do that is we already have two of those coming here as we have four ACC games booked already. So either by retaining those games or using those slots, it's up to the ACC to decide how it wants to do that.

It gives us a great head start. We haven't worked through the details of exactly how we'll get this done. Our obligation to the conference is to find five dates and make them available, and John and the conference will figure out who our opponents are on those days. So we'll work with the schools with whom we already have relationships and work toward freeing up those dates and making them available to the ACC.

Q. Just the rest of the teams you've played, the Big Ten teams, maybe the USC, Stanford games, what you plan to do with those and how do you plan to address those moving forward?

JACK SWARBRICK: It's hard to get into too much detail until we really work through it. But we do -- it is important to us to get out to the west coast annually, and as everyone close

to Notre Dame knows the tradition of playing Navy is very deep and important roots for the University. So I think those are probably building blocks, beyond that we'll have to work through it over time.

Q. John, earlier Jack called this a financially neutral position for Notre Dame in joining the league. I'm guessing that it's not for the ACC. Just how far down the road are you with ESPN and talking about renegotiating the television package?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: We have started some conversation, and obviously as you would expect, it was prudent of us to do some analysis of that looking forward, so we have some idea looking forward. I do think that it will be an enhancement with our existing television contract. We'll have to negotiate that out and see where we land. But I think it will prove to be beneficial to our member schools.

Q. Jack, just wondering what your departure to the ACC says about where the Big East stands right now?

JACK SWARBRICK: Well, in my remarks at the press conference, for us this was not about going from something, but about going to something. The opportunities, especially on the academic front that we think the ACC offers to our University, I'm bullish on the Big East.

I think with the leadership of Mike Aresco, one of the really talented guys in our business, with the moves they've made to add other institutions, I know people -- I've already seen today that some people are interpreting this move as having strong negative consequences for the Big East. I don't share that view. I think the Big East with what they've got in place and the future holds will thrive and be strong.

Q. If I could ask John, I think I saw that Notre Dame's going to enter into the bowl agreements. I was wondering if it was going to be similar to what Notre Dame has with the Big East right now where they get in to a bowl once in a four-year cycle or how that is going to work?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: I'm not totally familiar with what Notre Dame has with the Big East at the moment. But the way it will work with us, as Jack and I talked through this, is that first of all, starting at the top of the pecking order, if you will, that being the Orange Bowl, which is where the ACC champion will ultimately be going if it's not in one of the national semifinal games. Notre Dame will have an opportunity to potentially be an opponent to the ACC champion or another ACC team in the Orange Bowl.

Then obviously Notre Dame would have opportunities in the other BCS games as would potentially other ACC teams. And the ACC would keep its Orange Bowl revenues and BCS revenues. Notre Dame would keep its revenues for those games.

When you get below the BCS, Notre Dame will basically be in our bowl lineup as a potential team to play in any of the ACC contracted bowls. In order to be selected, they would have to be -- their overall record would have to be better than, equal to, or within one win of the ACC teams that are also available to be picked at that point in time, or they would need to be ranked higher in the BCS standings.

Q. Is there anything in this contract where Notre Dame has agreed to join ACC in football if it decides to leave its independent status?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Well, first of all, I want to reinforce that it's our intention to remain independents. It was central to us and central to these discussions. If something drastic would change, work them into the ACC. We would expect this to be the home of that, if we made a change. I don't want to send the wrong message. Our intention is to remain independent.

Q. I understand that. Can you answer though if that's actually in the contract?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Well, there is no contract at this point.

Q. Okay. Can you talk about the challenges of the 15-team men's basketball schedule? Also, is there any future expansion a possibility or are you done forever?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Well, first of all, I guess one of the logical questions from some people would be wouldn't it make sense to go to 16, given these set of circumstances? The answer to that is no. It would not make sense to go to 16, and therefore we have no intention of doing so. Simply because with Notre Dame not being in the football mix in terms of a division. Obviously, the five games every year are very important.

If we brought in a 16th school, then our football divisions would be thrown off. In basketball, we don't have divisions, so it will be a straight 15-team basketball conference. Sure, there are challenges with that. But we've looked at that and looked at it thoroughly. We'll probably go back to a two-partner scheduling approach. I would think we'll probably stay at 18 games. There may be some discussion for more.

With the basketball tournament with 14 teams, we were going to need to have two games on Wednesday, now we'll have three games on Wednesday, and the Top 5 teams, Top 5 seeded teams for the tournament will receive a bye.

Q. John, when did the bowl agreement with Notre Dame kick in for the minor bowls than non-Orange Bowl games?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: When the next iteration of the BCS kicks in. We've got two more years currently with that situation. But we would expect to start that at that point.

Q. For Jack, I remember talking to you outside Notre Dame's locker room the day Pittsburgh and Syracuse announced that they were going to leave. You admitted that you were shocked and surprised by the move. I was curious how long the gap was between that moment and when you felt like you needed to explore moving to the ACC as an Olympic sport, non-football member?

JACK SWARBRICK: Well, as we stated frequently, for us we wanted to understand where the BCS was going to wind up and what the resolution of that was. So that was the factor, and the timing factor for us, nothing else. Once we had gotten that behind us, it was time for us and we had indicated that we would do so to evaluate our future, and that's when we began the process.

Q. You mentioned this is a financially neutral for Notre Dame and you're leaving the Big East. If it's financially neutral, why not stay in the Big East?

JACK SWARBRICK: I think there are a number of answers to that. Simply, the opportunity it represents to the broader University. We're really excited about some of the academic cooperative initiatives that we think can come out of this with institutions that we already have begun to do some work with.

Another important aspect for us was postseason football. There have been questions about it here. We think through this partnership we hope we can be a helpful asset to the ACC as it makes its future bowl arrangements, and we certainly believe it's very helpful to Notre Dame to have the benefit of the conference package available to us and the strength of the conference and the position it will be in in postseason football was important to us.

Q. When Notre Dame considered joining the Big Ten in 1999, a big part of that was talked about how they have this alliance where they share information. Does the ACC have

something similar to that or was that something that was worked on? Does the ACC have some sort of alliance where they share information, academic studies and that sort of thing?

JACK SWARBRICK: They do. The consortium you're referring to is the CIC at the Big Ten. And one of the things that we're most excited about is to be part of the consortium that exists here, and we believe in building it. There is great enthusiasm among the presidents of this conference and our discussions with them, and trying to do even more with the consortium that does exist.

Q. It would seem something one way or another that would have to be compromised down the road with this move. Was there a plan, a buyout plan with any current scheduling contracts or how do you approach that?

JACK SWARBRICK: Contracts for future football games include in the contract provisions, notice provisions, if you want to terminate one early and what the consequences of that are. They're not all the same, but they're in the contracts. So we just follow those if we needed to do that.

Q. Just to clarify something. Obviously, you're going to be playing ACC schools. Would the BC rivalry not be every year then?

JACK SWARBRICK: We'll deliver the dates to Commissioner Swofford and the conference, and they'll work through the process of how to allocate those dates.

Q. Mr. Swarbrick, independence in football is very important to you. Were there discussions with any other conferences where it was an all or nothing type deal to bring football and everything else? Did that play a role in this?

JACK SWARBRICK: No, there were not. The only conference with whom we entered into some sort of discussions was the ACC.

Q. I'm not clear on the academic part of it. The consortium and there is a lot of talk about academics here. What exactly does that mean?

JACK SWARBRICK: I'll let John talk about the landscape of the existing consortium. But from our perspective, these enterprises that work best around the country are ones that share resources, share research opportunities. The provosts meet regularly, the purchasing officers meet regularly, and they find cross-University opportunities to make each school better. And I think that's the key, in essence, an academic collaborative where the schools in a prescribed way work together to benefit each other.

It's something that in the ACC has progressed very nicely over the last five to seven years or so. To some degree, it's patterned after the Big Ten for many, many years, but it's something our presidents are very committed to. Some of it is related to international studies. Some of it is related to institutional changes where a student may go to another institution from an academic standpoint.

So it's an actual and collaborative where our provost throughout the league are heavily involved. Obviously, the whole thing is intended to benefit students.

Q. I was going over some of the 990's at the Big East, and bouncing that off what Notre Dame would receive as part of its 20% for joining the basketball on the basketball side as Commissioner Swofford outlined earlier in the press conference. By my calculations, it actually looks like you're going to be taking a revenue cut. It looks like you've got about five and a half million, and 5 million from the Big East over the past three years. That would come down to about 3.2 million, 3.3, 3.4 million in that neighborhood. Can you talk about why you want to come to the ACC even though you'd actually be taking a revenue cut?

JACK SWARBRICK: That analysis isn't right. There are a lot of numbers. You've got to factor in shares of NCAA participation, whether a conference pays for travel to its conference championships. It's really hard on that basis to compare apples to apples.

We've engaged in a very detailed financial analysis which projects all of the factors that produce the conference distribution and are quite confident this is neutral to slightly positive.

Q. Can you be a little more specific?

JACK SWARBRICK: Not really.

Q. Talk a little bit also about how the revenue would be shared from the bowl games? I know you had said from the Orange Bowl that would go to the ACC, of course, and anything at the top level would not be shared. But talk about the agreements for how that revenue would be shared at the lower level bowl games?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: It would be basically Notre Dame would be treated exactly like any other ACC member would be treated. So Notre Dame would share in any net revenues, and they'd have the same expense allowance and going to any of those games.

Q. Mr. Swofford, was full membership ever on the negotiating table?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Well, Notre Dame as a full member, but that was not in the cards. While we'd like to see that, we understood very early, right off the bat that football

independence is extremely important to Notre Dame, has been for many, many years and continues to be. So the discussion was really around, okay, what could be a win-win for both of us in the sport of football?

I think the arrangement that we came up with is a win-win in the sense that Notre Dame and our schools have the opportunity to play Notre Dame five times every season. Notre Dame's involvement in our bowl picture probably enhances our bowl lineup and at the same time then that gives Notre Dame the opportunity to participate in attractive bowl lineup with the ACC teams. At every turn with where we ended up, it's a win-win.

Q. Jack, why all of a sudden now did the ACC become so much more attractive to you than one year ago, two years ago, five years ago? Was it because of the revolving door membership of the Big East left you unsettled? Or what is the reason now it became such a good fit?

JACK SWARBRICK: I've always thought the ACC was attractive. It's a great conference. It was really related to the BCS. It wasn't about any changes in the Big East. It wasn't about media contracts. It was once we had an understanding of how the BCS would work, our focus turned to the other elements of postseason and below that. That was the point in time in which we always said, we said working up to that point, once we got past that, we'd use it to evaluate our options, and that's what caused us to do that.

It wasn't a changed perception of the ACC, it was just a time to take a look at what our future held.

Q. Commissioner Swofford, I'm not sure how much you've explored this, but could the nine-game conference schedule in football present some complications specific to Clemson, Florida State, Georgia Tech, those schools as you know don't have as much scheduling flexibility because they have a permanent non-conference rivals. Any thoughts on that to this date?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Well, I think the schools in our league that have a rival such as Clemson has South Carolina and a few others in our league that are outside the conference that they play every year, it is a little more of a challenge. But I also think that those schools are very excited about the opportunity to play Notre Dame in addition to those rivalry games at least once every three-year period, once we get started with the rotation.

I think also when you consider the BCS going forward and how strength of schedule is going to be evaluated and monitored, this arrangement is good for our teams as well, and I think

it will be good for Notre Dame because that will be more of a factor in a team's ability to get into the semifinals.

Q. John, to follow up on that question, would the ACC since you're renegotiating your contract with ESPN, do you go back and revisit that nine-game conference schedule?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: Well, we may. That's really up to the athletic directors, and if they want to revisit it. If enough of them want to revisit it, it will be revisited. I don't say that to suggest that it's likely that we would go from nine back to eight.

But if the ADs want to rethink that and retalk about it, that certainly could happen.

Q. Commissioner, in regards to the 15-team basketball league, previously the scheduling partners had been announced. Pitt basketball, Maryland was their scheduling partner was going to two. Would the league be more inclined to have a partner from a former Big East team as in Syracuse, Notre Dame, BC, or even Miami, or more inclined to establish a new rivalry with a team like that?

COMMISSIONER SWOFFORD: That's hard to answer at this point in time until we really sit down and talk through it, and talk with our institutions and try to configure something that is in each institution's best interest and make sense from a basketball rivalry standpoint and from a television standpoint.

It's a little premature for me to comment on that.

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