

November 4, 2003

The BIG EAST Conference

MICHAEL TRANGHESE,
Commissioner, The BIG EAST Conference

JOHN PAQUETTE,
*Associate Commissioner,
The BIG EAST Conference*

REV. EDMUND J. DOBBIN,
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President, Villanova University

MARK NORDENBERG,
Chancellor, University of Pittsburgh

JOHN PAQUETTE: Good afternoon. I'm **John Paquette**, Associate Commissioner for Communications for the **BIG EAST Conference**.

Thanks for coming. It's a great day for the **BIG EAST Conference**.

I want to go through some logistics a little bit here and welcome everyone here in **New York**, and all of us, all of you who are joining on satellite.

I'm just going to explain the format briefly. We are going to have brief remarks from **Mike Tranghese**, Commissioner of the **BIG EAST Conference**; **Father Dobbin**, President, **Villanova University**; and **Chancellor Mark Nordenberg** of the **University of Pittsburgh** who's the Incoming Chair of the Presidents.

After that, we'll do a Q & A from here. We have some microphones that we'll be running around for your questions.

We have a transcription service here, and we'll put that up on our website as soon as we can.

We also have a teleconference with **Mike Tranghese** at 4:30 eastern this afternoon.

Also, if we have time - this is for the television stations watching - if we have time before three o'clock, we will have a one-on-one interview with **Mike Tranghese**.

Anyway, thanks again. Please let us know if there's something we can do for you,

Tammy Donovan, Rob Carolla of my staff are here as well. Just let us know what we can do for you, and we'll make it happen.

Now I'd like to introduce the Commissioner of the **BIG EAST Conference**, **Mike Tranghese** (applause).

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: It's a privilege to be and to have been the Commissioner of this conference for the last 13 years; but, more importantly, to be the Commissioner of a new, reconfigured **BIG EAST Conference**.

As we began the process to reconstruct ourselves, we took a step back and said, "We're interested in what we're going to be down the road." So our decisions were not about what we are going to be tomorrow. "What are we going to be in five years? Ten years? Fifteen years? Twenty years?" And, with an incredible amount of time and effort and input from our presidents, who set about the task of evaluating ourselves internally as well as externally.

As I stand here before you today, I can't express to you how excited we are about our future and, in particular, the five new schools that our presidents unanimously voted to extend invitations to.

So on behalf of our conference, I'm pleased to announce that beginning with the 2005-06 season, five new schools will be joining us: The **University of Louisville**, the **University of Cincinnati**, the **University of South Florida**, **DePaul University** and **Marquette University**.

The infusion of these five schools affords us incredible opportunities. Right now, when you look at the makeup of our 16-team conference, these 16 schools represent well over 25 percent of all the television households in **America**; represents in excess of 27 percent of the population of **America**.

I mean, this is going to provide a very, very unique opportunity for our league in the areas of competition, television, and especially in the area of the media.

It's been a long, long process, but I don't know if I can adequately express how we are so pleased to finally have it ended so we can come here today and make this announcement and set

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about the business of being the best that we can be.

I think it's only appropriate that we're here in **New York**. **New York** has been our home. It's been our heartbeat. It's where we made our name.

If you review the history of the **BIG EAST Conference**, we've been about building. When this conference was formed, when **Dave Gavitt** sat around the table with **Jake Crouthamel**, **John Toner**, **Frank Rienzo**, and **Jack Kaiser** and they announced that they were going to create the **BIG EAST**, people weren't applauding us; they said, "Yeah, this is going to be a nice group."

Well, it became more than "a nice group." It became the footprint of eastern college basketball.

Then, in 1990, **Jake** and I and - God rest his soul - **Bill Flynn** and **Ed Bozick (phonetic)** and **Sam Jankovich** sat around the table, and we created the **BIG EAST Football Conference**.

There weren't a lot of people saying a lot of positive things at that time, but we worked hard, and in both instances we proved to be very successful.

I stand before you in Year 25, and we now are entering what I call the "Third Phase in our History." We are committed to working as hard as we have to make us the best that we can be.

Our football group is solid. We think it has enormous potential, and we're eager to begin competing.

On the basketball side, those of you who know me, I never say we're the best, but we're clearly as good as anybody, any conference that's ever been put together.

For people who have sort of been sitting on the sidelines with the **BIG EAST** Tournament, come 2006, I would urge you to get your tickets soon, because it's going to be a very, very special event.

Two gentlemen have provided us enormous leadership throughout this process.

Father Dobbin concluded his two-year tenure as the Chair of our Presidents Group today. As our Outgoing President - he is the President of **Villanova University** and is our Outgoing President - he oversaw this entire process. I'm going to ask **Father** to come up and say a few words about the process itself.

REV. EDMUND J. DOBBIN: I'm delighted, on behalf of the Conference, to extend a very warm welcome to our new partners.

As **Michael** indicated, there's no doubt that with the new configuration of the league, the **BIG EAST** will continue to be one of the premier conferences in the country and arguably - at least in some respects - perhaps the best in the country. We're very pleased with that, and we're very enthusiastic about that.

But I would like to just say a couple of words about the process. As you might imagine, several months ago was a time of crisis for the **BIG EAST Conference**. We Presidents and ADs met about the issues and so on. What really happened over this period of time was downright invigorating, if you will, for us.

It has been a very good experience. We worked together very collaboratively and very deliberately. We did due diligence in a relatively short period of time. People were critical that we didn't move more rapidly; we did move rapidly given the care with which we took in this process. The outcome of the process is one in which I think all of us feel that we've never felt better about the future of the **BIG EAST**.

So we are, in a word, very enthusiastic. I extend a word of appreciation to **Michael** and the **BIG EAST** office, as well as my fellow Presidents and Chancellors and anyone who participated in this process, because it was a process that we feel has made the **BIG EAST** a better conference and one that we are very optimistic about going into the future (applause).

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Succeeding **Father** is our President for the next two years, and he also serves as our representative on the **NCA Board of Directors**, a Chancellor at the **University of Pittsburgh**, **Mark Nordenberg**.

MARK NORDENBERG: Thanks, **Mike**.

Because this is our 25th birthday year, this is a time of celebration for the **BIG EAST Conference**. When you think about it, 25 years is not a very long life by the standards of major athletic conferences, and yet we have accomplished a great deal in that period.

Certainly, our colleagues from **Syracuse** and the **University of Connecticut**, the reigning National Champions in men's and women's basketball, stand as shining examples of our recent successes.

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But this also is a time of excitement for the **BIG EAST**, because we have been working hard to create the kind of foundation that will ensure our next 25 years are even better.

Today we are very excited about our future. We're excited about our new conference partners, five academically ambitious universities with the potential to compete at the very highest levels of intercollegiate athletics.

We're excited about our expanded geographic reach, stretching, as it will, from the Great Lakes through the Mid Atlantic region to the great cities of the east coast and to the west coast of **Florida**, and to all of the major markets that we will serve in that expanded region.

We're excited because we believe that our reconfigured conference will permit us to continue providing our student athletes with the chance to compete at the highest levels, and to learn and to grow from those experiences.

So on this historic day for the **BIG EAST Conference**, on behalf of the Presidents and Chancellors of the **BIG EAST**, I, too, want to salute our Commissioner, **Mike Tranghese**, the professional staff of the Conference, and our Athletic Directors for all that they did to get us to this point.

More than anything else, I want to extend the warmest possible welcome to our new partners at **Cincinnati, DePaul, Louisville, Marquette and South Florida**. We look forward to competing against you. Even more than that, we look forward to working with you to continue building a conference that will deliver the best possible experiences for our student athletes, and that will be a source of pride on our campuses and to our many, many fans.

Thanks (applause).

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: **Mark** and **Father** and I will be happy to answer any questions you may have. We're just going to sit here and answer your questions.

JOHN PAQUETTE: Thank you.

We'll take questions from the audience here, and we do ask that you raise your hand so we can get the microphone over to you so that our transcription service can hear and so that the people can hear on satellite.

Questions, please.

Q. Mike, have you had discussions yet with the other BCS Commissioners about your

new conference; and, are you confident that the new BIG EAST will stay part of the BCS?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Well, I haven't had specific conversations, but I'm confident we will for a variety of reasons.

There's a lot of tradition in this league. We have schools in this league who have won National Championships, schools whose players have won the **Heisman Trophy**. We come from one of the most important sectors in this country, which is the northeast. We've been a great partner. We worked as hard as anybody, and we still remain one of the six strongest football conferences in the country.

At the end of the day, I think for all of these reasons, we obviously will fulfill our current contractual obligation. I'm very confident we'll be there in the next go-around.

The hard thing is we don't even know what it's going to be yet; but I'm confident that whatever it is, we will be there sitting at the table with the five other conferences and others.

Q. What was the consideration in remaining in Florida? Was it the television market there? What schools were you considering, and why did you choose South Florida?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Well, we went through our process. We looked at a lot of things. We looked at the institution first. We wanted to make certain that our schools were a comfortable fit academically. When you say "a comfortable fit academically," we're the most unique conference and, in my opinion, the best conference in the country. We're not all the same. We have schools with very different academic missions. But what we have in common is that our schools abide by the rules and graduate their student athletes. This was the first thing.

I think as we began to look at it, the thing that attracted us about **South Florida** is I think they have enormous potential - not only because they're in **Florida**, I think it's their commitment athletically; it's their commitment institutionally. They're not just coming here to play football; they're going to be good in many other sports, including men's basketball. I think they have one of the best young basketball coaches in the country. They hired him last year, his name is **Robert McCallum**. Many of you don't know him, but you will very shortly.

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I think for all of those reasons, that's what ultimately led to our Presidents extending the invitation to **USF**.

Q. How will the new league be split up? And not just for football and basketball, for the other sports? And if there is divisions, how will you decide what goes where?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Well, that's a detail. We haven't even spent time on it. As we went through our process, our Presidents focused on big issues. Whether there are divisions, how they line up, whether we play 18 games, 16 games, it's a detail.

We have such an incredible commitment amongst these 16 schools that we'll deal with it. We don't have to make a decision.

One thing I can tell you is our Presidents are committed to having everybody play everybody in this league.

Q. When will you come to those decisions?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Next year or so - the latest. It could be done in six weeks, six months. There's just no timetable. We've got a lot of things to do. It's just one of those details that we'll tend to when we have to. It's not at the top of our list right now.

Q. You were fairly critical several months ago of the ACC for its expansion plans with Conference USA. How is what you've done any different to Conference USA, different than the ACC's expansion?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Well, I guess a couple of things.

The **ACC** had a choice; they made their choice. We had no choice. We were sitting here with schools like **West Virginia, Pittsburgh, Syracuse, Rutgers** - incredible football traditions - and **Connecticut**, who's made this enormous commitment to play I-A football. The NCA has a rule, you have to have I-A playing conferences.

The only thing I can tell you, and I don't want to sit here and pontificate, as early as our meeting, I was on the phone with other commissioners telling them what we were thinking, what the possibilities were. We walked down the path with those conferences. I think by walking down the path with them, it enabled them to reconfigure themselves.

I think the test at the end of the day is you ought to talk to **Britton Banowsky**, you ought to talk to **Linda Bruno, Karl Benson**, and ask them what they think about our process.

The thing you need to know, if we didn't care, our Presidents could have taken these schools in 2004 and 2005 and caused incredible havoc across the intercollegiate athletic scene.

They told me, "No, we will take the burden and we'll place it on ourselves. We're going to try to do this the best way we can." That's why we're not taking our new members until '05 and '06, because we just didn't want to impose our problems on a lot of other people. Our Presidents should be applauded for that decision.

MARK NORDENBERG: Well, it isn't just the Presidents who should be applauded, if I could intercede for a moment. I really don't want to talk about anybody else, but I will say something about the process that we followed, and it was a process that was led very ably by our Commissioner, **Mike Tranghese**.

We decided from the outset that the process we followed was going to reflect the kind of values that people traditionally associate with universities. As we moved forward, led by **Mike**, we attempted to be honest, we attempted to be open, we attempted to reach out, and we did everything that we could to permit others to manage their own situations in ways that would secure strong futures for them and to minimize their damages.

And so this was a very deliberate commitment on our part led by **Mike**. We really did want to do this in a way that, again, reflected well on our institutions and actually set the kind of example that universities ought to be setting for their students as to how you deal with other people in the real world.

Q. For Father, first, and then Mr. Nordenberg, am I saying that correctly?

MARK NORDENBERG: Yes, you are.

Q. This is sort of "back to the future" for the basketball schools. This is what you guys began with, greatly enhanced. I want you to talk about the strength from your side and, if you could, deal with a little bit of the weaknesses. I know you guys are a fine basketball-playing school, but football was

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your bread and butter - is your bread and butter - and what this does for you.

REV. EDMUND J. DOBBIN: I consider the future for basketball greatly enhanced because the schools that we're bringing in, I think three of them are nationally ranked preseason. So they already will enhance the league right upfront, a year hence when they come into the league.

Already, of course, we have a very strong conference. The teams that we lost, at least from a basketball perspective, are not going to be a great loss to the league. I would say on balance from a basketball perspective, we're better off with this. For that matter, also with women's basketball, I think we'll have a very strong women's basketball conference.

So I am very positive about the league and the way it will move forward.

Now, I didn't get the reference to football. **Villanova** plays football with I-AA.

This is for the Chancellor? Okay (laughing).

MARK NORDENBERG: That's the way it always is - he gets the easy ones, and I get the hard ones (laughter).

First, let me say that we are excited about the conference as a basketball conference. **Mike** was, in his typical fashion, pulling back from using superlatives earlier, but the judgments of other people, I think, will control the day on this. We are moving forward with great strength.

On the football side, we have some work to do, obviously. There are two universities that have been very strong over the course of the last two years that will no longer be a part of the **BIG EAST** mix.

But we do feel as if we're moving forward from a very strong foundation. Part of that relates to the universities, the football-playing universities, that are continuing in the **BIG EAST**.

As **Mike** already indicated, there is great tradition, and we're already seeing some great results on the field this year. I'm smiling at **David Hardesty**, who is still savoring the big win of 10 days or so ago.

We do think that the three schools who are joining us as football-playing members really have tremendous potential. Actually, when we assess the situation, we think that they probably are better positioned to take advantage of **BIG EAST** membership and to strengthen their programs than **Virginia Tech** may have been

when we admitted them to membership not too many years ago.

The other thing I want to say, though it extends beyond either basketball or football, is that this is going to be a wonderful conference for our universities as universities. It's great for the **University of Pittsburgh** to have a visible presence in **New York** and in **Philadelphia** and in **Washington**. It's great for the **University of Pittsburgh**, now, to have a presence in **Chicago**.

So we have been building a conference that we think will meet our athletic needs. We've been building a conference, as **Mike** said earlier, of institutions that, while diverse, have strong commitments to academics. We've also been building a conference that for a range of reasons, whether you're talking about student recruitment or alumni work, gives us a presence in the critical communities of this country.

Q. Mike, have you discussed with Boston College about staying on next year? Are they part of the conference for '04, '05? And what will the withdrawal fee be when they do leave?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Our Constitution speaks to it, and they're here for 27 months. Our withdrawal fee is a significant amount of money. We usually don't talk about it, but it's been reported. So I'd say go ahead and report it, but I'm not going to point it out or talk about it.

No, I haven't had any conversations with **Boston College** about doing anything other than what we feel they're obligated to do.

Q. Regarding football, I was curious to know Notre Dame's role in this and whether or not you guys would make an effort on getting Notre Dame to be playing football in the BIG EAST Conference?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Let me talk about **Notre Dame**. **Father Malloy** is here, **Kevin White** is here.

When we went to **Notre Dame** in the mid '90s and extended an invitation to them to come into this league, there was no discussion about football. In fact, at the time, I told **Father** when we met for the first time that "this is what our interest was" and "this is what his interest was."

I mean, **Notre Dame** has put a high degree or high value on being a football independent; we accept that. We talked about

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things. I think that **Notre Dame** has helped us to cooperate in a variety of ways that are not public. Our membership is thrilled with the fact that **Notre Dame** is in this league.

It's interesting. When we had our Presidents meeting many years ago to discuss **Notre Dame**, I told our Presidents that these are the things that **Notre Dame** will contribute to the league. And they have not only done all of that, they've gone far beyond it. You just look at they've won a National Championship of women's basketball, men's basketball, soccer, all other things.

More importantly, they're a good partner. They're open with us. They're honest with us.

I think not you, but the public, doesn't understand what we're doing at times. They're more annoyed or upset with it. We have a great relationship with **Notre Dame**, and it's going to continue the way it is.

Q. In regards to the new members, will the BIG EAST help cover their financial obligations to Conference USA for leaving that conference?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: No. What the five members are doing with **Conference USA** is taking place amongst their Presidents, and we're not involved in it at all.

Q. Could you talk about what you think this will do to football in terms of your television contract, and also your Bowl tie-ins, whether this has any effect on your Bowl tie-ins.

MIKE TRANGHESE: We're still three years away from current Bowl agreements, so I don't know that anybody knows what the landscape is.

You need to look at who some of the schools are, their ability to sell tickets. That's what drives interest by the Bowls. **Louisville** is probably one of the best ticket-sellers in **America** in terms of taking its team to Bowl games. The last five years, they've gone to Bowl game. Each and every time, they've sold an enormous amount of tickets.

We think **South Florida** has got enormous potential.

But we think some of our people -- I mean, look at **Connecticut's** about to come on board with us next year. What **Randy Edsall** has

done at **Connecticut** is beyond what anyone thought. **Connecticut** fans can't wait to go to a Bowl game for the first time.

I sit here today with **Rutgers**, and I think of the job that **Greg Schiano** has done and is doing in getting that program elevated. **Rutgers**, whether it's this year or next year, when they obtain their Bowl bid, their fans are going to fly. I think the Bowls will look at that.

I think the other thing is, you have to talk to Bowl people. We have formed many good relationships with many of the Bowls. At the end of the day, those relationships will help us to forge the number of Bowls that we currently have, which is five right now. I don't see any reason why we would fall below that number.

Q. In regards to the '05-'06 timetable, especially considering the dominos sort of falling into place with Conference USA, and some farther down the line, has there been anything that you heard from the new members about going in next year instead, just so they don't have to play more than a year and a half as lame ducks in Conference USA?

MIKE TRANGHESE: I think a lot of schools would, but that's a **Conference USA** membership issue. I mean, if **Conference USA** came to us and said, "Would you consider taking members in earlier," we would take it to our Presidents immediately and discuss it.

But we made a commitment. Our Presidents, at the outset of the process, made up their minds that we were not going to insert ourselves into other people's business and cause acts that would just wreak incredible havoc.

If, for some reason, those other conferences that are experiencing realignment make a decision that they want to move this process up, then I think we'd go to the table and talk about it immediately.

Q. You don't consider it closed, that timetable?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Well, look at the last six months. I don't assume anything's closed (smiling).

Q. Mike, sorry to put the cart before the horse, where do you guys stand in terms of keeping the eight teams or going to 10 or 12? Has there been talk about how soon, or is there

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any sense of, "We won't do anything for X-number of years"?

MIKE TRANGHESE: We haven't even talked about it. I think we've just taken on five new members, and you're talking to me about more - please (smiling)!

I don't think we've talked about having to go beyond eight. The time may come where we have to talk about it or we want to talk about it. We really just wanted to get ourselves realigned with the best possible schools, and then start about the business of just doing our business.

It's going to be great to go to work tomorrow and do what we all want to do - trust me. This has been six months of a very, very difficult time. But I will tell you this - it has probably brought our Conference together and bonded a lot of people. Our Presidents are probably closer than they've ever been, and I think our ADs have always been close, but I just think if you were in our presidential meeting today you could feel that effect.

But at the end of the day, and down the road, if there's somebody else that can make us better, then we'll consider it.

Q. You talked at the meeting about looking five years, ten years, fifteen years down the road. Obviously, you can't look at a crystal ball and say what's going to happen. What have you done as far as getting a commitment from these 16 schools that this is going to stay together for a while?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Well, a pretty significant commitment. We've updated, as you know, the withdrawal in terms of finances. But it's not just finances; it's the amount of time. The 27 months, I mean, we didn't force people to do this; people wanted to do it. I think if we went back and wanted to do more, they'd do more.

I think the commitment is Presidents looking each other in the eye across the table and saying, "This is what we're going to do." I believe what we have is going to be very, very special. We can serve the needs of the student athletes of our 16 schools.

I mean, no one can sit here and say what's going to happen 10, 15, 20 years from now. The one thing I am confident of is these 16 schools, 25 years from now, 40 years from now, they're going to be fine because they're great institutions with incredible athletic tradition. And,

hopefully, it will be under that banner that sits in the back of the room.

Q. Two-part question. One is will you be keeping the title "BIG EAST"? And, your partnerships in basketball with *Madison Square Garden* and now with *Hartford* with the women's side, that will stay in place as well?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: They're all in place. We obviously are keeping our name. The name is... It's our heartbeat.

We've got a long-term agreement with ***Madison Square Garden***. We signed an eleven-year agreement two years ago; we have nine more to go. People at ***Madison Square Garden*** are ecstatic with what we've done, to say the least.

And we're getting ready to go to ***Hartford*** for the first time this year. It's the first time we'll take our women's tournament off-campus. We think we're going to set the attendance record for an NCAA women's postseason tournament.

So that's a three-year agreement with an opportunity to extend it, and we're pretty confident that it's going to go over so well that both parties will come to the table and consider extending it.

Q. I was wondering what the entry fee for those universities would be, and what kind of penalties would they incur if one of them decided to leave?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: They're coming. They've accepted.

We just don't want to talk about money. I mean, it's fair. We talked about it. It's not an outrageous amount. It's a fair amount paid over a period of time.

We've taken the approach that we've taken with all of our new members. It's an approach that most conferences take.

Q. At least on the basketball side, you could have looked at other conferences, particularly the Atlantic 10. How much of an effort was made to keep this to one conference?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Well, probably our Presidents would have to answer that. I mean, I have a deep prejudice towards the Atlantic 10. ***Linda Bruno*** who is a Commissioner there worked here for a long time and is a great friend. I think all

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of our member schools have long-standing relationships with the Atlantic 10.

As we surveyed what it was, we began to talk with **Conference USA**. **Conference USA** saw this as an opportunity to reconfigure itself as a pure I-A southern-based football-playing conference, and they were able to do that.

So when we saw that we might be able to fill our needs, and they, at the same time, would do the same thing, we would not have to reach out to other conferences and be disruptive. To me, it was the best choice that we could possibly make.

We compete with the Atlantic 10, but we have an unbelievable relationship with them. We talk constantly. We share information together. I mean, personally, I'm just pleased that we didn't have to go there because I know what it's like to have members leave and what it means and the amount of work that you have to undergo.

Q. I know you said you haven't determined alignment or whatever, but administering a 16-team basketball conference in terms of scheduling and all that, how difficult is that going to be? How do you overcome some of that?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Well, it would be difficult except I think I have the best person in **America** doing it, and that's **Tom Odjakjian**, who most of you know. He did it at ESPN.

We figured out whatever it is they do, you know how many games they have on - no one did it better. That's what **Tom** does.

We will make it work, because we want to make it work. And it will work. I mean, these are the problems that we're going to have - **Syracuse** is going to play **Louisville**, and **Georgetown** is going to play **Marquette**, and **DePaul** is going to play **Providence**. Nice problems to have.

We're going to have to do some unique things because of the volume of games, but we've managed a 14-team conference, we certainly can manage a 16-team conference.

JOHN PAQUETTE: We have any other questions from here?

Q. I just wanted to ask, as far as men's basketball goes, considering the NCAA tournament usually takes five or six teams from a conference, is there a concern some teams might be left out?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: No. I mean, I had the privilege of serving as a Chair on the Basketball Committee, and **Jake Crouthamel** served as a member of the Basketball Committee. The Basketball Committee's job is not to limit; the Basketball Committee's job is to take the best 34 at-large teams.

I can tell you that **Tom Jernstadt**, who is real responsible, he knows with the changing environment of conferences that the Committee is really going to have to take a look at the reconfiguration of conferences because they've become bigger. There is nothing to prohibit this conference from getting seven, eight, nine teams in. There is no rule against it.

My first year as Commissioner, when I took over, we were a nine-team league. We qualified seven teams. If we can qualify seven teams in a nine-team conference, I don't know why we can't qualify seven, eight, or nine in a 16-team conference.

Our problem is we are going to have so many good teams, they'll beat up on one another. But they'll go out and prove themselves in non-conference play, which is ultimately what gets teams into the tournament.

Q. Do you expect to have to start lobbying your fellow BCS members to give you time right now, to not reassess your membership within this contract?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: I don't think I have to lobby. They know what's going on. Trust me, they know.

I mean, **Tom Hanson** and **Jim Delaney**, **Kevin White**, **Mike Slive**, people I've dealt with for a long time, I consider them friends. But this isn't about friendship. They'll do the right thing. They're good people, and the Presidents are heavily involved in this process.

We have the BCS Presidential Oversight Committee. **President Hardesty** from **West Virginia** is our representative. I'm very confident we don't have to lobby.

Q. Was there any thought at all of reconsidering Temple at least for football?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: Well, we talked conceptually about adding a ninth team as a federated member, and we just decided at the end of the day it just wasn't what we wanted to do. Here we are reconfiguring, we've got 16 full

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partners, and we thought we ought to keep it that way and move forward.

We spent some time discussing some schools, but the vast majority of our focus was on the concept of a federated ninth member. At the end of the day, we just didn't think it was in our best interest.

JOHN PAQUETTE: Any other questions, please?

Q. Mike, as far as the BIG EAST Basketball Tournament, is there any talk about opening it up to more teams, adding another day to it? Have you guys talked about how you're going to configure the BIG EAST Basketball Tournament?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: We've talked a little bit about it. I doubt we would add more teams. It would have to start in February if we brought everybody in (smiling). It's one of those details that we need to talk to our television partners about.

We need to think about the kids. I mean, we have to ask kids to play four, five days in a row. Some of them are faced with playing four now. It's just an awful lot.

And the one thing that I learned from **Dave Gavitt** a long time ago - and he's the best I've ever known at this kind of thing - what you do that week, be careful, because the next week is more important. And that's the NCAA tournament. You don't want to overlook that week and then inhibit our teams from being able to perform.

It's one of the reasons why we began playing Saturday nights, to be honest with you, was to give our coaches and our kids a chance to regroup. I often think about whether it was the right decision, but then I look towards last year when **Syracuse** had its magical run and all four of our teams made it to the regionals. I think the fact we end on Saturday and they have time to regroup, it's played a role in that.

Q. Has ESPN approached you yet about renegotiating a football contract? And, if not, do you expect that they will?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: We're going to renegotiate both contracts, because we have a clause. Every conference in **America** has a clause. If you reconfigure, then either party has a right to open up talks.

People don't know this. ESPN formed the year that we formed. We started together. We started in 1979 on a delayed telecast. We've been partners for 25 years. We talk constantly. As soon as we get our house in order, in about a week's time, we'll probably begin talking to them about both basketball and football.

Q. Operating under the assumption that your basketball contract will increase, will that make up for how the football decreases?

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: You know me well enough, I'll never answer that. We're going to find out.

You know what the thing is, is that everybody looks at what's going to happen tomorrow. What our President says, "Let's talk about where we're going to be three years from now, five years from now." I'm pretty confident where we're going to be; I really am.

John, before we conclude, one of the things we want to do, if you can indulge me, we'd like to ask our Athletic Directors and Presidents to come up. For our archives, we want to take pictures.

JOHN PAQUETTE: We can definitely indulge.

MICHAEL TRANGHESE: I'd like to invite our Presidents and Athletic Directors up.

JOHN PAQUETTE: This concludes the formal part of our news conference.

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