

Woelk: MU to Big Ten and watch dominoes fall

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So the Big Ten is considering expansion.

Smart move.

Evidently tired of watching other conferences reap the benefits of a championship football game, the league is studying the idea of adding a school. Then the conference that currently has 11 teams and is still known as the Big Ten would have 12 teams -- and would still have to be the Big Ten, well, because "Big 12" is already taken.

The most likely candidates for expansion are Missouri of the Big 12, and Pitt, Rutgers and Syracuse from the Big East (Notre Dame took itself out of contention on Thursday).

The school that makes the most sense is Missouri. MU's television market would be a nice boost for the Big Ten (which actually has its own network), the Tigers have solid academic standards (another requisite for the conference) and they have a built-in Big Ten rival in Illinois.

Missouri, meanwhile, would stand to pick up a little more revenue from the television deal, making it a move that would benefit everyone involved.

So good-bye Tigers -- and now what happens to the Big 12?

Glad you asked. This is where it gets fun.

Make me commish for a day, and I wouldn't stop with just a couple of switches. I'd have the dominoes falling from the Midwest to the Pacific:

First, fill the vacancy in the Big 12 with Arkansas. The Razorbacks have never, ever been a good fit for the SEC. Bring them into the Big 12, and you'd renew one of the great rivalries of years ago, the Texas-Arkansas grudge match that produced some legendary games.

But I wouldn't stop there. I'd also invite TCU to join the Big 12, and for good measure, give a call to Houston and SMU and see if there's some interest (of course there would be).

That brings us to 15 teams in the Big 12 -- a few too many. Which means ...

Colorado leaves the Big 12 for the Pac-10, another conference that's been rumored to be considering expansion for years.

The Pac-10 (which was once the Pac-8 before adding Arizona and Arizona State) also needs a conference championship game. Colorado would be the perfect addition. A significant portion of CU's out-of-state students comes from the West Coast, CU has a huge alumni base there and the addition of the Colorado television market would be a nice lift for the conference.

Now we need one more team for the Pac-10, and it's an easy call. Hello Utah? For all the reasons Colorado fits the Pac-10, so do the Utes, which gives us a 12-team Pac-10.

We'll put Colorado, Utah, Washington, Washington State, Oregon and Oregon State in Pac-10 North. USC, UCLA, Arizona, Arizona State, Cal and Stanford in the South.

A bigger, better conference.

Now back to the Big 12. Still 14 teams, which is too many.

But wait ... isn't our new Big 12 just the old Southwest Conference with a handful of other teams scattered in? Yep. And what teams don't fit that mold? That would be Nebraska, Iowa State, Kansas and Kansas State.

Sorry guys, you're gone. Been real, been fun ... but time for you schools to find a new home. You just don't fit the new landscape.

As for Oklahoma and Oklahoma State -- they remain in our bigger, stronger version of the old SWC. Heck, we'll even give the conference its old name back (and put the over-under on at least three of the schools going on probation for rampant cheating at three years. Remember, SWC actually stood for Southwest Corruption).

Now we're back to the problem of the four homeless prairie schools.

Actually, not a problem. Remember the Mountain West? Since we've taken two of their marquee schools -- TCU and Utah -- we'll give them the Big 12 leftovers. Nebraska brings its football prowess, Kansas brings its basketball tradition and Iowa State and Kansas State ... well, they bring two of the worst road trips in college sports.

You can't have everything.

Now we have an 11-team MWC, which means we need one more to make it an even dozen.

Simple solution -- Boise State. The Broncos need to move out of the WAC and take it up a notch. Our new version of the MWC would be the perfect place.

And, since I'm the commish of the world, I'm also giving the MWC designation as an automatic BCS bid conference. Seven automatic bids and one at-large.

Of course, this leaves us with a few other scattered pieces of the puzzle. The SEC will need a team to replace Arkansas, and Conference USA will need a couple of schools to fill the gap created by the departures of SMU and Houston.

But even the commish can't solve everything in a day. I'll leave those problems up to those conferences.

Meanwhile, enjoy your new leagues.

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