



Nov. 8, 2016

For Immediate Release:

Last week's announcement that the Big Ten Conference would hold six Friday night games beginning in 2017, along with today's release from the league that the University of Wisconsin will host a home game on Friday, September 1st, 2017 are significant disappointments to the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association, our Executive Board, and the more than 3500 members we serve.

"The WFCA has always supported reserving Friday night for HS Football," said WFCA Executive Director Dan Brunner. "The plan by the Big Ten to televise six games on Friday nights next year is very disturbing.

"The thought of the Badgers being involved in one of those games is especially upsetting. Many of our coaches and their players look forward to attending or viewing Badger games on Saturdays. A lot of them have former players playing for the Badgers. It would also have a negative affect on attendance at high school games, especially in Madison, when the Badgers are playing."

Like the other coaches associations in the Big Ten footprint, we were not consulted on this decision by the Big Ten or the University of Wisconsin in regards to how this will negatively impact high school football in our state. We stand united with the leadership of other associations in our concern for both the implementation of this proposal and the lack of communication.

We are especially concerned with the teams in the greater Madison area and the impact this will have on travel, attendance, gate revenue, fan support, volunteer availability, and media coverage. These things will negatively impact all teams in the state to some degree, but the damage will be felt especially hard in the Dane County area. Most teams get just four to five home games per year, and a decrease in revenue from a game as a result of the Badgers playing on Friday night could be considerable, and provide significant challenges to the team and overall athletic budget.

"Friday Night Lights" are about high school football. The Big Ten's decision to infringe on that deeply-rooted tradition creates obstacles to the long-term success of the game at every level. We look forward to working with the University of Wisconsin, Director of Athletics Barry Alvarez, and head coach Paul Chryst to discuss ways to mitigate the negative impact of this decision on our state high schools as well as explore solutions to address this problem moving forward.

Dan Brunner, Executive Director of the WFCA
Tony Biolo, President of the WFCA
WFCA Executive Board