

Iowa High School Athletic Association Position Statement:

BIG TEN CONFERENCE PLAYING FRIDAY NIGHT FOOTBALL

On Wednesday, November 2 the Iowa High School Athletic Association was informed by Big Ten Conference Commissioner Jim Delaney that the Big Ten's new media-rights agreement includes six Friday night football games being played annually beginning in 2017. It is the Athletic Association's understanding that The University of Iowa does not want to host Friday night games, except on Labor Day weekend. It is also our understanding that such games would not be an annual occurrence.

Almost certainly Friday night Hawkeye football games will have a negative impact on high school football games across the state. This negative impact would not only be in terms of attendance, but also coverage by radio stations, print media and television highlights. Due to increased traffic, schools around the Iowa City and Cedar Rapids areas would potentially be impacted more than those farther from Iowa City. Even a nationally televised away game would have a negative impact on high school programs by dividing the fan base.

While the decision to play Big Ten Conference football on Friday nights may be in the best interest of the Big Ten Conference and its member schools, we do not believe it is in the best interests of high school football across the State of Iowa. That being stated, we will reach out to The University of Iowa in the hopes we can work together to mitigate the damage this decision by the Big Ten Conference will have on high school football in Iowa. I am confident the Athletic Association and those who support Iowa high school football will find ways to keep it popular and relevant given this new challenge.

Alan Beste
IHSAA Executive Director