

CONFERENCE RE-ALIGNMENT

Conference Re-alignment has been the talk of the college football world for the last couple of years and it looks like it has no end in sight. Even for someone like me who routinely works 100 hours a week during football and magazine seasons, it can be tough keeping up on who will be playing where in the future.

With the recent announcements of the Mountain West welcoming back Boise St and San Diego St and splitting up into divisions and also Middle Tennessee and Florida Atlantic moving to CUSA this upcoming year, it looks like we are finally set for the upcoming season.

Naturally there will be even more changes coming in 2014 with Maryland and Rutgers moving to the Big 10 and also Louisville going to the ACC, but I will not tackle those until a future blog that will look at what college football conferences have looked like in the past 25 years and what they will look like in future years.

As of today, here are what the college conferences will look like for 2013.

ACC	BIG 12	BIG TEN	PAC -12	SEC
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ATLANTIC BOSTON COLLEGE CLEMSON FLORIDA ST MARYLAND NC STATE SYRACUSE WAKE FOREST • COASTAL DUKE GEORGIA TECH MIAMI, FL NORTH CAROLINA PITTSBURGH VIRGINIA VIRGINIA TECH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> BAYLOR IOWA ST KANSAS KANSAS ST OKLAHOMA OKLAHOMA ST TCU TEXAS TEXAS TECH WEST VIRGINIA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LEADERS ILLINOIS INDIANA OHIO ST PENN ST PURDUE WISCONSIN • LEGENDS IOWA MICHIGAN MICHIGAN ST MINNESOTA NEBRASKA NORTHWESTERN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NORTH CALIFORNIA OREGON OREGON ST STANFORD WASHINGTON WASHINGTON ST • SOUTH ARIZONA ARIZONA ST COLORADO UCLA USC UTAH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAST FLORIDA GEORGIA KENTUCKY MISSOURI SOUTH CAROLINA TENNESSEE VANDERBILT • WEST ALABAMA ARKANSAS AUBURN LSU MISSISSIPPI MISSISSIPPI ST TEXAS A&M
BIG EAST	CUSA	MW	MAC	SUNBELT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CINCINNATI CONNECTICUT HOUSTON LOUISVILLE MEMPHIS RUTGERS SMU TEMPLE UCF USF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAST EAST CAROLINA FAU FLORIDA INT'L MARSHALL MIDDLE TENN SOUTHERN MISS UAB • WEST LOUISIANA TECH NORTH TEXAS RICE TULANE TULSA UTEP UTSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MOUNTAIN AIR FORCE BOISE ST COLORADO ST NEW MEXICO UTAH ST WYOMING • WEST FRESNO ST HAWAII NEVADA SAN DIEGO ST SAN JOSE ST UNLV 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EAST AKRON BUFFALO KENT ST MIAMI, OH OHIO UMASS • WEST BALL ST BOWLING GREEN CENTRAL MICHIGAN EASTERN MICHIGAN NORTHERN ILLINOIS TOLEDO WESTERN MICHIGAN 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARKANSAS ST GEORGIA ST LOUISIANA SOUTH ALABAMA TEXAS ST TROY ULM WKU
				INDEPENDENTS
				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ARMY BYU IDAHO NAVY NEW MEXICO ST NOTRE DAME OLD DOMINION

Notes:

- With the additions of Georgia St and Old Dominion, there will now be a record 126 teams playing FBS football in 2013, which means more pages in Phil Steele's 2013 College Football Preview!
- A total of 19 teams will be either jumping up to the FBS level or playing in a new conference in 2013.
- Six conferences counting the independents will be affected with next year's conference realignment.
- There will be a record seven conference championship games next year with the Mountain West going to 12 teams and playing their conference championship game at the highest ranked BCS team.
- Of all the realignment changes for 2013, the Mountain West clearly makes the most sense with Boise St and San Diego St remaining in the conference and the additions of Utah St and San Jose St. Their division names and splits also make perfect sense with the six teams in the Mountain division all being in the mountain time zone and the six Western Division teams all being in the pacific time zone with the exception of Hawaii.
- The three conferences with the most realignment changes are the Big East, CUSA and the Sun Belt and I'm not sure I can make a strong case for any of those conferences coming out as winners in the recent realignment shakeup.
- There will be seven independents next year with Idaho and New Mexico St not having a conference (the WAC now defunct) and Old Dominion will play their first year at the FBS level as an independent before moving on to CUSA in 2014. The seven independents represent the most since 2001.
- Finally, with the additions of Maryland and Rutgers in 2014, the Big 10 should redo and rename their divisions and put Ohio St, Michigan, Penn St, Indiana, Purdue Maryland and Rutgers in one division and Nebraska, Wisconsin, Michigan St, Iowa, Minnesota, Northwestern and Illinois in the other.