

Pac-12 to Pac-2

The Pac-12 currently has a 41-17 record and only two teams with a losing record. This same conference, if it even exists next season, is only set to consist of two teams.

Due to a lack luster TV deal signed with Apple, reportedly worth \$23+ million to each school per season (per sportspromedia), all but two teams of the current Pac-12 conference have decided to transfer into other conferences for more lucrative deals.

As it stands, only Oregon State and Washington State, both with winning records being 4-1 and 4-0 respectively, are the only teams still considering the Pac-12 as a resigning option for the 2024 Season. OSU is hoping to lure other teams into the Pac-12 and revive the conference, we asked students what would make this possible:

“I think geography is important so I think they need to add teams from the west that would be willing to move up,” said Jackson Gallagher, junior mass communications major. “They also must accept that they are likely no longer a power conference.”

Another interesting student comment was about a team that has the potential to join the Pac-12 in the near future.

“I think that Northwestern University would be a good fit because they are probably going to be pushed out of the Big Ten soon,” said Tyler Baker, junior nursing major.

Northwestern is currently in the Big Ten West and sits towards the bottom of the rankings being 1-2 in conference play and 2-3 overall. With bigger schools joining the Big Ten next season it is possible that Northwestern and other Universities that are towards the bottom of their conferences feel it would be beneficial to relocate into the soon-to-be vacated Pac-12.

USC, UCLA, Washington and Oregon will all be joining the Big Ten from the Pac-12 in 2024. Other departures include Colorado, Arizona, Arizona State and Utah moving to the Big 12 conference, and Stanford and California moving to the Atlantic Coast conference. All for slightly different reasons, but the main one being larger and more consistent TV deals. The Pac-12 failed to leverage its high-level talent to solidify a TV deal early and lost their top performing schools because of it. When asked if students thought the Pac-12 could've signed a better TV deal, the answer was yes.

“Yes, just due to Washington and USC having quarterbacks being two of the most exciting players in college football,” said Baker.

Not only does the Pac-12 currently house two of the top quarterbacks, but those players are also the top bets to win the Heisman award this season. USC QB Caleb Williams is favored for the award (+170 per Fox sports) and right behind him is Washington QB Michael Penix Jr. (+400

per Fox sports). Not to mention, Oregon QB Bo Nix is tied for third in the Heisman race (+900 per Fox sports) with the only non-Pac-12 player in the top four, Quinn Ewers of Texas.

It's difficult to imagine the Pac-12 expected to have such high-end talent during the 2023 season, but it's not difficult to see what a loss it will be having so many teams depart from the conference. What's next for OSU and Washington State is left to be seen, but this could mark the end of the Pac-12 as a conference.