

Big 12 Conference Athletics Media Conference

Monday, October 17, 2016

Commissioner Bowlby President Boren Press Conference



I've seen speculation that there was discussion of individual schools, there were a series of considerations of whether there was support, a super majority for any admission of any particular school. There was no such discussion. We had no discussion of individual schools in the sense of taking votes on individual schools, trying to (indiscernible) support for individual schools.

We've gone through a very thoughtful process here in the course of the last year or so in terms of looking at options to strengthen the conference because we all want to see a stronger Big 12 Conference. We feel we're very strong already.

If you look at the outcome of national competitions and championships this last year, the conference is in very good position from an athletics point of view. It continues to be one to which we aspire to improve, and to show ourselves in competition on the field and on the court, to continue to be worthy of high national levels of competition.

At our past board meetings, all of you remember when we released the per school financial allocations. We had this year, of course, the largest financial allocations on a per-school basis in the history of the Big 12 Conference.

I would say the state of the conference overall in the modern period has been strong athletically, stable and strong financially as well, as we looked at the results this last time.

So the decision to remain at the number where we are, we feel we have a very good model for competing with each other, and many other advantages. We're a conference that can move, and we are still looking at changes in technology, for example, and how our conference might be a leader in utilizing technological change for the benefit of the members of the conference.

The decision was unanimous. The decision was unanimous. All the schools participated very actively in the decision. So once that decision was made, once we decided that this issue would no longer stay on the agenda, we decided to move on.

THE MODERATOR: Good afternoon and welcome to those joining us in person and those participating remotely via our teleconference hookup. We're joined by Big 12 board of directors chairman and University of Oklahoma president David Boren, and Big 12 commissioner Bob Bowlby.

We'll begin with opening statements by both gentlemen before taking questions from the floor.

President Boren.

PRESIDENT BOREN: As all of you know, we just completed a series of meetings which began Sunday evening here with the presidents and the board of directors. I would describe it as a thoughtful and candid meeting which showed a great deal of unity and strength in the conference.

We first took up the question of whether or not the conference should expand at this time, whether it should remain an active agenda item for the board of directors. We decided after a very thorough discussion that we would remain at 10 members. We committed ourselves to that proposition.

Along with that discussion and that decision to remain at 10 members at this time, also there were a very, very strong series of commitments and comments made by every single member of the board, every single president representing our institutions, of our very strong commitment to the Big 12, to the strength and stability of this conference. I have never heard, since I've been on the board, such strong commitments and such a unified sense of purpose on the board.

I would say that as we look at the whole outcome of this meeting, it was a very, very positive meeting in terms of expressing the cohesion of this conference and the unity of this conference on this issue.

We've gone through a process which I think all of you understand, to look at ways in which we could strengthen the Big 12. We've looked at a number of options.

One of the options we looked at, of course, was the championship game, which is being implemented today. Our athletic directors have taken charge of that process in terms of mechanically putting that process together. We feel we're on a good track, making progress. At the appropriate time they will speak for themselves, not today, but at the appropriate time, on the process that will be followed in that regard. So that was one of the things that we looked at.

We also, as you recall, thought another way we should look at potentially strengthening the conference, and this is a full, comprehensive approach, we've gone through a very methodical way, is exploring the possibility of a Big 12 Network, our own conference network.

After a good bit of discussion on this matter, discussion with media partners and others, we found that the marketplace made a decision for us in essence that that was something that was not going to move forward at this particular point in time. But we explored that.

We've had a great amount of discussion, as I mentioned, about new technologies. Then, of course, we have looked in a very methodical way, and we appreciate the efforts of the commissioner and others here at the Big 12 for the very thorough manner in which we've looked at and examined the possibility of whether an expansion would be advisable at this point in time.

Let me say I think we all feel deep gratitude for those colleges and universities that have indicated interest in being a part of the Big 12. While we have made a decision, these are quality universities, quality both in academic terms and in athletic terms. And while we have made a decision right now it's the best for us to stay where we are, to keep our options open about all the ways in which we can move to strengthen the conference, we do very much appreciate their interest.

The fact that so many schools of such stature expressed interest in the Big 12 at this point in time is, again, another sign of strength of the conference.

But I would say also to all of those who participated, we have all taken notice, and we've learned a great deal about these universities and their athletic programs. So the time they have spent in informing us, informing the commissioner, informing the board, it is time and effort certainly not wasted because it gives us a very good indication of these schools, what they're

about, and the strengths that they have. So that process has been very thorough, very fair.

I commend the commissioner for the thoroughness, and all our members do, the thoroughness in which this study was undertaken.

As I've learned, what may not be timely, or the right time right now to expand, we all came to a unanimous feeling that this was not the right time. All the information generated is not wasted effort I would say to those schools that have participated. They have certainly presented themselves in a very fine light and we appreciate them. So that is the action.

I know the commissioner wants to add some additional words, then we'll be happy to take your questions after that.

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: Thank you, President Boren. Thank you for leading a really productive meeting today.

One of the things that we'll probably get asked later on is, Did you make a recommendation to the CEOs? The answer to that is, Yes, I made one recommendation, and that was that we should bring this process to closure one way or the other, that we shouldn't kick the can down the road. We have undertaken an extensive data analysis process. That's the empirical part of what we did.

There's certainly another more local element to the process. Each institution is expected to have their own sensitivities and their own priorities, their own perspectives on how that all fits together.

Interestingly enough, our 10 presidents came together in unity, and came to the same conclusion, and that was that we like the competition that we have. We like playing a full round-robin. We're glad we added a championship game. We think that we have, through an RFP process, identified some great sites for the hosting of our championship.

I think there's a lot of enthusiasm around what that will do for us in terms of giving us an extra opportunity to compete at the highest levels. Our conference has always been about winning national championships. That certainly includes the sport of football.

But we also, as President Boren said, last year we had 16 sports where we finished in the top four, including three national championships, and I think six runners-up. We do a very good job of competing at the highest levels. We've got lots of great coaches, we've got lots of great student-athletes, great venues. There's a lot to celebrate. I think the decision in part was a celebration

of what we have.

I think that I would be remiss if I didn't echo my appreciation to the schools that self-identified and voluntarily got involved in this process. I learned a lot about a bunch of very fine universities.

The decision really didn't have very much to do with the individual elements of those institutions. They all have their strengths and weaknesses, obviously, as all of our members do.

But this was really about defense of our model. We feel like a full round-robin in football and a double round in men's and women's basketball, we had three of the last eight teams in the baseball tournament, we won a softball national championship. There's an awful lot to celebrate.

So we really, I would have to say, expressed more unity in this set of meetings than any before. I think our leader can take some much-deserved credit for that.

But we have been through the empirical process, and aspirationally what I wanted to do for our board and for our athletic directors, is when we got started in March of 2015, I wanted to get to the end of the process or near the end of the process with everybody singing off the same sheet music, not contesting the components of what we're going to do to get better, not contesting the value of those things, but instead having an empirical roadmap that allowed us to make those uniquely institutional decisions.

In the end we had good collaboration between our ADs and chief executive officers, and we came to a point where I feel really good about the strength of our conference going forward.

I think that this was really not a decision not to expand, but this was an endorsement and a reinvestment in the strength of the 10 that we have. So I feel very good about that. I think it was a deliberate process, one that included a lot of people. It was more public than many of these other processes have been.

As I mentioned, these were institutions that self-identified. We did not go out and solicit the participation of any institution. So by the very nature of that, it was a little different process than some of the others have been. But I feel good about the outcome and I feel very bullish about the future.

With that, we'll both be happy to answer your questions.

THE MODERATOR: We'll take questions, please.

Q. Just to be clear, the door on expansion has been closed? It's not something that the league is going to revisit any time soon?

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: We do not consider it an active agenda item any longer. It is certainly not a decision where we would say we're never going to consider it again. But it's not an active agenda item at this time.

PRESIDENT BOREN: I think the one thing we've learned over the last several years is the landscape, including all parts of the landscape, that includes technology, commercial atmosphere surrounding sports, a lot of things have changed. It's a constantly changing landscape.

We would never say never. But we do feel it would be wrong to indicate that it is an active agenda item, because it no longer is at this point.

Q. President Boren, at one time you characterized the league as 'psychologically disadvantaged'. I'm wondering what has changed your mind about that and if you regret that characterization?

PRESIDENT BOREN: Some have suggested I've had a brain transplant. Rumors to that effect are not true.

I would just say this. Any time you make a statement, it has to do with the context in which you're saying it and the circumstances in which you're saying it. The circumstances have radically changed.

My thoughts about expansion have really centered around the possibility in the past of whether or not we could have a conference network. I felt that we were at that time disadvantaged because we did not have a conference network. I still wish and hope someday, who knows which form of technology it will take, we will perhaps someday have a branded conference network of some kind.

But the circumstances have changed. If you know the (indiscernible) with changing circumstances, you're bound to be mistaken about where you are now. You can't afford to be rigid about that.

And the circumstances have changed, as I said. We said it at the last meeting, I believe, the marketplace has in essence made that decision for us. We cannot command the marketplace. Economic forces are at work in the marketplace, and technological change is at work in the marketplace. We just realized that has to be off the table at this point in time because the marketplace made that decision for us.

I would say that was the situation then. I hoped we could find a way when we thought we could build a

conference network. We needed additional material, additional schools to have additional material for the network. To do that then I think would have made sense.

The situation now is very, very different. As the commissioner has said, I think we feel very comfortable with our scheduling model, with playing each other. We take great pride in the fact that we have had great success nationally. We take pride in the fact that our per capita distribution is certainly higher than it's ever been before in the Big 12.

We don't feel a sense of urgency to expand just for expansion's sake. It has to be tied to the circumstances at the time.

I think this decision, and I think my colleagues felt this decision, left us very agile to look at all the possible ways in which we could strengthen our conference in the future, to look at new technologies, be able to deal with those on a quick basis.

Bigger is not always better because sometimes it makes your decision making more ponderous, for example, more difficult the more schools you have involved.

Just for a whole myriad of reasons, and as we walk through all these steps, the championship game, network, expansion, all these possibilities, I just have to say I think circumstances have changed and I think the network is off the table. That's the principal one with me.

So I think that calls for a change, adjustment of what your views are. If the circumstances change, you have to change your thinking. That's a challenge to all of us.

We're looking at a period of such unimaginable change, we have to be able to be fleet afoot and change to adjusting circumstances.

Q. President Boren, you talked about the commitment by each of the 10 schools. Did the extension of grant of rights come up? Was that broached as a way to show the stability of the conference? If not, why not?

PRESIDENT BOREN: No, it did not come up. I will tell you why. I think there's been a lot of discussion, maybe some misunderstanding about the position of our university or any other university about extension of the grants of rights. I would tell you this. Let me give you a preamble about that.

As you know, I've been on this board since day one. I think I'm the only remaining president on this board that's been here since day one when the Big 12

Conference was formed.

What I heard over the last 24 hours as our colleagues spoke very candidly among ourselves was the strongest expression of unity and cohesion and commitment to the conference that I've ever heard. In my opinion, there's not a single school in this conference that is looking to go elsewhere. We are committed to each other. We're committed to the Big 12 Conference. We're committed to staying in the Big 12 Conference and making it as strong as possible.

The grant of rights has come up in the past at a time in which we have been negotiating contracts with our media partners and otherwise. So, in other words, it's always been in the context of a proposed deal, if you want to say it that way, proposed agreement that would lead to longer-term media contracts, with certain provisions in them.

So that's when you consider grant of rights. As we begin to approach the end of our current term of contract, which is approximately eight years, I think undoubtedly you're going to see a whole series of discussions about what are the prospects, how will the contracts be renewed or changed.

I mentioned new technologies perhaps will get involved when we get to that point. We'll be ready to negotiate in the open marketplace I think with great cohesion at that time.

That's certainly I think the feeling that we've had at the University of Oklahoma, that when that time comes, that's when you discuss the grant of rights. You don't discuss it as an abstract matter when there's really nothing on the table.

I would just say this to you. Does the University of Oklahoma have a theological position that does not favor a grant of rights? No. I think at the appropriate time, when the time comes, as we approach those times, we have some idea of what the parameters are, I really believe that all the schools in this conference, and I include the University of Oklahoma among that number, will be prepared to go forward with the grant of rights when it's clearly in the interest of the kind of agreements we hope to have at that time.

So I just want to underline, there is no theological or abstract opposition to the grant of rights at the University of Oklahoma. We are committed to this conference. As I say, what I heard in that room, gave me a tremendous amount of optimism. There have been times over the past in the history of the Big 12 when there's not been that sense of unity in the room, real cohesion, and sincere commitment.

No one's looking to walk away from this conference. Any feelings to the contrary is just mistaken. They don't understand the strong commitment that we all have to it.

At the appropriate time, when the appropriate proposal is on the table, we'll be able to go to the open market at the appropriate time and I think negotiate very successfully. I think the product of that will be cooperation from all of our schools.

Q. Do you two expect to get more money out of your television partners, ESPN and FOX, for not expanding? Along with that, would you kill the pro rata clause in the contract?

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: I'm not going to get into a whole lot of specifics on our negotiations.

We have a new piece of inventory with our championship game, so we're in the process of discussions with both FOX and ESPN on that.

There are components of the contract that we also talk about in the context of those changes, and we're going to continue to talk about those.

But I think when those things are completed, we'll go about the process of announcing them. Until then, I'm not prepared to talk about the specifics of any of them. In fact, they're works in progress. Anything I would say would be highly preliminary.

Q. (No microphone.)

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: There are a couple other components we deal with. But it's mostly championship game. That's where most of the value is.

PRESIDENT BOREN: I would endorse what the commissioner just said.

Q. Bob, following up, the current media rights play nothing into what you had to decide with the expansion? You've heard the stories. We read the stories. Anything to that, that the media partners wanted you not to expand?

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: As I said, we were in constant contact with them because of the discussions around the champ game.

One of the things that we would like to have the opportunity for is to possibly start a third-tier network. Right now FOX and ESPN have consent rights over that. We've had discussions around those components.

We've talked about windows. We kick at between

11:00 and 7:00. There's been some talk about massaging that window. There are always things.

I mean, we have very well-articulated look-ins where we're constantly having discussions. But none of that stuff has been valued. When we come to closure on it, when we have a deal, then we'll likely put out a joint release of some sort.

Q. Bob, in March, I was told if the Big 12 doesn't do anything in 12 years, (indiscernible) \$20 million FTC and the Big Ten. Is that still the case and is that still a concern and why?

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: Well, we're always concerned about revenue. We're always going to be concerned about revenue.

I think one of the nice things about doing a championship game is that it both enhances revenue and it gives us a better chance to compete at the highest possible level.

So I think we've taken a couple steps down the path. As I mentioned earlier, we've got an RFP process that's going on that will also generate some additional revenue for us.

We're constantly looking for opportunities. But I don't know that there's anybody that's demonstrated a direct correlation between the amount of money spent and the number of championships that you win. I guess it would be fair to say that we'd not like to get 10 or 15 years henceforth and find out if there was a delta, there isn't any way we could fix it and it would make a difference in how competitive we were.

But we reside in very fertile recruiting grounds. We have great coaches. We have great venues and great traditions. I think we're always going to be concerned about revenue. As we went through this process, we certainly looked at schools from the vantage point of, Are they additive? I think there are many of them that are additive.

Having said that, in the end, I think the additive nature of them was probably offset by some of the things we might have to give up, like some of the traditional rivals, the full round-robins, the double rounds in basketball.

So there's an evaluative process that goes on that is, as I said earlier, unique to individual institutions. But there's also collective evaluative processes that go on that's shared by all 10 of our institutions.

So are our finances always going to be a concern to us? Yeah, absolutely. Do we need to find innovative ways to generate revenue and to try and keep pace? Sure, we do.

We also need to make sure that we're keeping score on how you compete and what causes you to compete well. Taking on millions of dollars in debt isn't necessarily the way to do that. There are many institutions that are deeply in hock, and fortunately we have a lot of schools that have invested wisely and own their facilities and aren't carrying quite as much debt service.

I think there's a case to be made for rational and thoughtful use of resources, as well. I think we continue to compete very well because we're well-resourced. As President Boren said, we just distributed the largest amount of money that we've ever distributed to our members. We expect that to increase. We have escalator clauses in all of our media contracts.

While we are somewhat behind now, we're going to do everything we can not to have that delta grow. It's going to force us to be smarter and better and more innovative, to look at new distribution processes and systems and ways to monetize those things.

It's a constant challenge. I think as the commissioner, that's one of the responsibilities that my staff and I have, is to provide our member institutions with as much in the way of resources as we can.

I don't think there's one decision that's going to make that imperative go away. I think it's going to be constantly there. We have to be mindful and we have to keep score.

PRESIDENT BOREN: Again, I want to repeat the interest on the board in making sure that we have the ability to have flexibility as we approach new technologies, new platforms, new methods of distribution, so that we have the opportunity to do that in the conference. That certainly is a concern of ours, along with all the other qualitative things that the commissioner just talked about.

In addition to the straight dollars, we're talking about those kinds of issues, but we're also talking about the great rivalry games, the other things we need to have preserved as we move forward in whatever we do.

New technology is a big concern for us, too.

Q. From the standpoint of just the process, because July 19th there was a unanimous vote to pursue candidates, now it's a unanimous vote against expansion. You went through a process of identifying up to close to 20 candidates, 11 finalists, all making presentations. What do you

tell those schools at this point when you look at the entire process? We're getting some reaction right now from schools that seem somewhat upset by the way things turned out and maybe justifiably so.

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: I'm sure reasonable people can disagree on that. I've spoken with the president or chancellor at every one of the candidate institutions repeatedly during the process, including most recently this afternoon. They expressed gratitude at being a part of the process. They expressed disappointment.

I want to correct one of the things you said. The board did not make an expansion vote in July. They acted to charge me to go out and consider candidates. But there was no expansion vote taken. I think we were very careful not to have it construed as that.

It was an exploratory process. The schools all self-selected. We went through a process that was I think thoughtful and respectful of the schools. We met repeatedly with the ADs and the presidents or chancellors at each of the institutions.

It was a more transparent process than most of them have been. We wanted to be very careful not to commoditize great institutions and to view them as chess pieces on a board. We didn't do that.

I think it was a public and transparent but highly respectful process. It was intended to be that. So I think while there was disappointment on the part of schools that hoped they would be considered, I think our board made a decision today that emanated out of the decision they made in July, but they weren't the same decision. It wasn't the same consideration process. That was to look into the prospects, and this was to decide to go forward or not. I think those are two very different processes.

When it came right down to it, I think the board acted in ways that were representative of their belief that we have something special, and that all 10 institutions are enthusiastically engaged in it, and that we had a bunch of good schools involved. In the end, we felt like what we had was pretty good.

PRESIDENT BOREN: I certainly agree with everything the commissioner said about the process and the respectfulness of the process, and also what he said about the board action when we took the action. The words were chosen very carefully. I've been asked by some of you in this room previously several weeks ago, Does that mean we're definitely expanding? I said, No, it does not, nor does it mean we're definitely not expanding.

What we carefully drew the instruction from the board was that we instructed the commissioner to carefully consider and evaluate. We asked the commissioner to evaluate those schools who had expressed affirmative interest in the conference.

So that was what passed. It wasn't a question of whether we would expand or not. We did not take up that issue at that time. We instructed the commissioner to help us in our evaluation.

So we've gone through a very thoughtful process along the way, as I said a while ago. Part of that process was to explore a conference championship game. We did that. To get the additional data point that could be helpful in many ways, helpful financially and in other ways. That was done.

We explored the conference network. We continued to kick those tires, hoped that could happen, tried to figure out ways. The marketplace in essence didn't respond. We wanted to look very thoroughly as to whether it would be advantageous to us at this moment in time to undertake expansion. We came to a conclusion unanimously that that was not the right thing to do at this particular point in time.

But as I said a while ago, is all this gathering of information a waste of time? To me gathering of information is never a waste of time, whether we're gathering information about potential schools, whether expansion is the right thing to do at the time, whether we're gathering information about new technologies, what the options may be for us. All this gathering of information has been very helpful, the methodical way which it's been done to the conference, and reaching what all the members of the conference felt was the right decision today, the right decision on the championship game, the right decisions on the other things that will undoubtedly come before us in the future.

Also, we have never said never. I think it's always unwise in this changing landscape to ever say never. What we are saying is it's off the agenda as an active item. At this time we're simply not going to expand. We don't want to keep people on tenterhooks about whether we are or not. We don't think that's fair.

On the other hand, those schools having armed us with a tremendous information about them, and they're fine institutions, has that been a waste of their time? I think not, because we've come to know a lot more about them in this process. Who knows with this changing landscape when that information could be utilized and be called into play. That's not to hold out any possibility that we're going to change in the next meeting, we're going to expand. No, that's off the

agenda right now. Does that mean forever? Does that mean down the road? None of us can predict the future.

Gathering this information I think has not been a waste of time at all. I think it's been very helpful. I think every single president participated actively in this meeting. No one sat silent. No one failed to do their homework.

I think it was helpful to us, and I think it will be helpful to us in the future. A lot of times in my experience in life is sometimes the door closes on something now, but who knows, down the road who knows when the door reopens, for some other reason it reopens, the circumstances change. So gathering information has not been a waste of time.

Q. (No microphone.)

PRESIDENT BOREN: The commissioner can comment in more detail because he's been so actively involved in this process, and I think been actively involved in running a very fair and open process.

But for one thing, of course, you don't want to be guilty of tortuous interference with members who feel they're in one way or another bound to another conference. This was not the Big 12 out trying to raid other conferences. This was the Big 12 in essence inviting those people who were interested in us, those institutions who were interested in us, to let us know of their interest, and then for the commissioner to set up a process for which to evaluate those who voluntarily came forward and said, We're interested. That's the reason.

We were very, very cautious to adhere to the appropriate legal boundaries, for example, in starting this process.

The commissioner can add to that. He's talked about the fairness already. I would just say from what I've observed of it, he has conducted this with absolute fairness and respect for all institutions involved.

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: Thank you, David.

That's certainly been our attempt. I don't honestly know what we expected at the very beginning. It was an opt-in process. We had quite a few people self-identify. As they did it, their colleague institutions are raising their hands saying, Why not us?

It was perhaps a little bit more of a sweepstakes than we might have thought it was going to be at the very beginning. It was a very good process. We did some video conferences that were an hour long. We did some in-person interviews that were a couple hours. We exchanged a lot of information. We did a lot of

background work. We had consultants that did deep dives on each of these institutions.

It was very thorough and it was aboveboard. We actually spent some time talking about not wanting to sneak around undercover of darkness, especially not do that when we hadn't made the commitment to adding anyone.

I just think it was the right process for us at the right time. Reasonable people can disagree about that. In terms of being forthright and respectful and transparent, I think we did it about like we would have hoped we would.

Would it have been the way that everyone would have chosen? Perhaps not. It was a good process.

Q. How much time did the discussion of expansion take up during your meeting today?

PRESIDENT BOREN: Last night and today. We started the meeting last night.

Q. How much time during those meetings? Do you believe the CEOs came to the meetings with their minds made up or were minds changed during discussion the last two days?

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: I made an hour and a half presentation, so I hope I had some influence on them (smiling).

PRESIDENT BOREN: It certainly did. We appreciate the commissioner's presentations.

I think most people came to the meeting willing to listen very carefully. What really impressed me about the tone in the room, and I would say that I didn't total up all the hours, it was an adequate time, maybe five hours of sometimes very philosophical discussions, discussions about our rivalries, discussions about our competitive program that we have now, how it operates. The cohesion that the conference has now. All these things were talked about.

Around all of that was also our commitment to each other. I mean, that really came in as a part of the discussion of, Do we feel the need to change? Are we worried about being committed to each other?

I think we all left the room feeling a much stronger sense of commitment to the conference, commitment to each other, that all of us are Big 12 people, we're proud to be part of this conference, and we want to always be a member of this conference as far as we're concerned. We want to see it be all it can be.

A lot of very, very thoughtful discussion. A lot of

questions were raised. So probably five, six hours in terms of just the general discussion.

Now, what I do want to make clear again is discussion of any particular single school, university X, college Y, zero discussion. We thought first in terms of the sequence of decision making. You first decide, Are we going to expand at this time? The decision was, No. If the decision had been, We are going to expand at this time, of course, immediately we would have gone into a discussion of individual institutions, which institutions, so on. We never got to that point because the first decision was made, and that made the second deep dive into discussion of individual schools moot.

During the discussion of the broader question of expansion/no expansion, there was not any discussion or debate about particular schools.

Q. Because you say there was no discussion about individual schools, that leads me to ask, had there been a different group of individual schools, would that have changed the discussion any?

PRESIDENT BOREN: I couldn't possibly speculate about that. We have the schools we had. We had the situation we had.

We also just had the sense of, I would say, satisfaction of where you are. We feel like we're in a very good situation at this point. The sort of philosophy of 'do no harm', to quote some other people, 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it', we feel a lot of confidence that we have in the conference. That contributed to our decision not to further expand at this point.

We have a very good culture. I think these schools are very comfortable with each other in terms of a lot of shared characteristics, our fan bases, the kinds of people that are in our conference. We feel good about that.

These schools in the Big 12, they feel we belong together, we have an affection for each other, we have an affinity for each other. So do we want to change or risk changing that culture in other ways or anything. I would say it's more of a positive expression, as the commissioner said, about where we are right now as a conference, and the way we think we have our own destiny in our hands going forward in a very good way.

Q. David, based on what you learned in this process, what you have gone through, do you see if your media rights deals were closer to expiring, do you think 10 schools moving forward would create the demand necessary? Or do you feel when you get to that point, based on what you now know, you're going to have to revisit this?

PRESIDENT BOREN: The commissioner described this as an ongoing process. It's an ongoing process to continue to explore ways in which we might strengthen the conference. Those ways may differ depending upon the time period we're in.

Who can predict? I've learned, my goodness, after a life in politics, I don't even predict election day right now. I've seen things that are going on in the political landscape I never thought I'd see in my lifetime.

Everything seems to be in a state of change. Where will we be? What will be the situation? What will be our position in the open market, so to speak, as we examine what that market is? Where will our current media partners be in terms of their strength, even the way they're composed, for example? Will they be strictly linear? Will they themselves form partnerships that might be with digital platforms and other ways? Will we have options with individual companies that are specializing in providing the digital side of things?

I think there's so many unanswered questions, we just wouldn't be prepared to answer them at this point.

I think what we did feel was a sense of confidence that as we move along year after year after year, all through this period of eight years, then beyond it when we have our new agreements, that we're going to be the Big 12, we're going to be the Big 12 united as it is now, and prepared to take appropriate advantage of whatever the situation is at that time.

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: As an example, as a follow-up on that, one of the examples I would cite for you is when you think about the number in your conference, if you're thinking about a linear network, there's an amount of inventory that's required to populate a linear network and also have multiple tiers of primary television packages.

If you're in a digital environment or on a video on-demand environment, you're not talking about 24/7, 365. You're talking about a very different process. It's those kinds of questions that we dive into and look at because they go directly to how much content you need.

As that evolves, as President Boren said, we're going to be vigilant in watching those trends. That makes it an exciting time to be involved right now. But it's very different than five years ago or ten years ago.

Q. During your 90-minute presentation today, did you discuss individual schools? Is that part of the presentation? Secondly, were individual schools ever discussed previously in a meeting at any point?

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: I shared a lot of information after our in-person meetings with the board. I've called our own board multiple times to take their temperature on what they saw. That was the charge, was to go out and do a deep dive on these people, using resources that we hired as consultants, and also doing my own research. Drawing upon 30 years on campus, I can feel like I'm in pretty good shape to make those kinds of assessments.

I think the process was a good one. Yes, there were times during my presentation when I made reference to individual institutions. I didn't make any recommendations because we never got to that point, and the board never asked me for them.

PRESIDENT BOREN: I think there was speculation, let's say, for example, we start the meeting. We say, Okay, there are all these schools, potential candidates. Are there eight votes for this one or nine votes or ten votes for this one or that one? That did not happen. That's not how our process went.

At the end of discussing these individual schools, no one got this many votes or that many votes. That's not the way the process worked. We didn't get into that kind of discussion at all.

We were constantly backgrounded in terms of the commissioner's evaluations among the schools. Maybe 'evaluation' is the wrong word. Summary of experience, summary of information mainly that they provided to us. But we didn't get into that kind of process that might be in your mind.

Q. Bob, when you were in the process of getting into the candidates, exploring what they had to offer, given what's going on at Baylor, the forum you did about sexual assault, how much was that a factor for you in your search?

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: Well, I wouldn't tie it to anything that's gone on in our league, per se. But we did a thorough Title IX investigation. 'Investigation' is probably the wrong term. A review to ensure Title IX compliance, to make sure that institutions that we were looking at were meeting one of the three prongs of Title IX in terms of participation opportunities, scholarship allocations. We looked at that.

We did a review of a lot of documents relative to NCAA violations, pending investigations, things like that. I mean, we did a very thorough investigation.

So I don't know that that emanates from anything at Baylor or anyplace else. I just think that's part of your due diligence when you go through this kind of process.

Q. Did any of the Power 5 conference schools express any interest, even mild, in wanting to join the Big 12?

COMMISSIONER BOWLSBY: Well, we should end the process the way that I began the process. That is, I'm not commenting on any of the candidate schools. I never have. No need to start now.

I'm just trying to be consistent.

THE MODERATOR: That will conclude the press conference. Thank you, everybody, for being here today and those that participated remotely via teleconference.