



ATHLETICS

Gene Smith

Director of Athletics
Rm. 224, St. John Arena
410 Woody Hayes Dr.
Columbus, OH 43210-1166

Phone 614-292-7572
Fax 614-292-0506

THE PEOPLE. THE TRADITION. THE EXCELLENCE.

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Dear Buckeye Fans:

I am writing to update you on the status of negotiations between the Big Ten Network and Time Warner Cable. Today – just 10 days from our kickoff against Youngstown State on the network – there is no deal in place with Time Warner. This is especially disheartening because in addition to the Youngstown State game, the network also will televise our game with Troy University on Sept. 20 and very possibly the conference opener against Minnesota. That means three of the Buckeyes' first five games will be on the network, with the possibility of an additional conference tilt later in the year.

While negotiations are ongoing with Time Warner, it appears very unlikely that an agreement will be reached before the first game of the year, and anything beyond that is problematical.

Therefore, we feel compelled to let Buckeye fans know that there is only one way you would be guaranteed to get the Big Ten Network in time to see us take the field against Youngstown State. And that is to call one of the providers now carrying the network in the state: DirecTV, DISH Network, AT&T, Insight, WOW, Buckeye Cablevision, and Massillon Cable TV, to name some of the largest. You can go to www.BigTenNetwork.com and type in your zip code to see all the providers in your area.

Time Warner's decision not to carry the network is a huge disappointment, particularly given the network's success in reaching agreements with Comcast, the largest cable company, 230 other cable providers and the nation's two satellite companies. In reaching these agreements, the Big Ten Network has shown its commitment to successful negotiations and a willingness to be flexible enough to reach an agreement that is fair and reasonable. Seven in 10 homes in the Big Ten states now have the network, versus four in 10 in Ohio. It is a shame that due to Time Warner's decision, nearly all Michigan fans have the network, but Buckeye fans do not. And all of these agreements call for the network to be carried on the expanded basic level of service inside the eight Big Ten states.

As the network enters its second season, we are proud of all the Ohio State programming on the network and we are proud of how the network represents the best of the Big Ten. In its first year on the air, the Big Ten Network featured more than 200 hours of Buckeye programming, including four football games, 22 men's and women's basketball games and two Buckeye classics, the 2003 National Championship victory over Miami and the thrilling 2006 defeat of Michigan.

We remain disappointed in Time Warner's decision, but if you make the call today, it's likely you will be able to get the network in time to see the games and all the other Buckeye programming the Big Ten Network has to offer.

Sincerely,

Gene Smith