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1500 WEST HIGGINS ROAD
PARK RIDGE, IL 60068-6300
847-696-1010
FACSIMILE 847-696-1150

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CONTACT

Scott Chipman

Big Ten Conference

Office: 847-696-1010

Email: schipman@bigten.org

Josh Krulewitz

ESPN

Office: 860-766-2319

josh.krulewitz@espn.com

Lou D'Ermilio

Fox Cable Networks

Office: 212-556-2573

Email: Lou.D'Ermilio@fox.com

**THE BIG TEN CONFERENCE ANNOUNCES MEDIA AGREEMENTS
INCREASING NATIONAL COVERAGE OF BIG TEN SPORTS**

*Ten-Year Agreement with ABC/ESPN Increases
National Exposure for Football and Basketball*

*Conference Partners with Fox to Create "The Big Ten Channel"
to Launch Nationwide on Cable and Satellite;
DIRECTV Signs on as First Affiliate*

PARK RIDGE, Ill. — The Big Ten Conference has reached two milestone media agreements that will provide the organization with its greatest media exposure ever and ensures long-term vitality for its member institutions' broad-based athletic programs, it was announced today by Big Ten Commissioner James E. Delany. The conference has signed a new 10-year national rights contract with ABC/ESPN and has reached a landmark deal with Fox Cable Networks to create the Big Ten Channel, a national network devoted to Big Ten athletic and academic programs. The ABC/ESPN contract takes effect, and the Big Ten Channel is expected to launch, in August 2007.

ABC/ESPN Contract

Big Ten action has been featured on ABC since 1966 and on ESPN since 1979, the network's first year. Details of the new ABC/ESPN agreement include, but are not limited to:

- Up to 41 Big Ten football games will be televised – up to 17 on ABC and up to 25 on ESPN or ESPN2;
- All regional afternoon football games aired on ABC will be aired by ESPN/ESPN2 in outer-markets, making these games nationally available;



- Approximately 60 men's basketball games will air on an ESPN network (ESPN, ESPN2, ESPNU and ESPN360), including games on each Tuesday and Thursday of the nine-week conference season, plus up to eight Saturday games during conference play;
- A total of 100 women's basketball and volleyball events on an ESPN network, including the championship games of the Big Ten Women's Basketball Tournament, over the course of the agreement; and,
- Through ESPN's collection of new media outlets such as ESPN.com, Mobile ESPN, ESPN360 and ESPN VOD, fans will receive live events (including simulcasts), extended video highlights including in-progress games, features and more. In addition, Big Ten coverage will be available on ESPN Classic and throughout the world through ESPN International.

"The letters ABC and ESPN connote excellence, worldwide reach and innovation," said Delany. "The Big Ten is extremely proud to partner for the next decade with George Bodenheimer and his ABC/ESPN team to bring our events, student-athletes and coaches to fans and alumni across the country and beyond."

"The words 'Big Ten' represent passion, history and excellence, and we are thrilled to continue our unmatched relationship with the conference for another decade," said George Bodenheimer, President, ESPN Inc. and ABC Sports. "This agreement, among the most expansive ever, reinforces our position as the number one college sports destination and serves the ever-evolving appetites of fans by providing premier Big Ten action through traditional outlets like ABC and ESPN and emerging entities such as Mobile ESPN and ESPN360."

Big Ten Channel

The Big Ten Channel is dedicated to covering both the athletic and academic content of the Big Ten member institutions on a national level. Showcasing a wide array of sports as well as original programming produced by the conference's 11 institutions, the Big Ten Channel will operate 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. It will be available to all carriers and distributors nationwide. The Big Ten Channel's first affiliate, DIRECTV, will deliver the Channel to its Total Choice Package subscribers at launch. Many events will be produced in High-Definition television (HDTV). In addition to traditional distribution through cable and satellite, select Big Ten Channel content will also be available through alternative media platforms such as the Internet, iPods, cell phones and/or other emerging technologies.

"Fox has a proven and impressive track record of launching and managing networks," Delany said. "That coupled with our compelling athletic competition will make this channel the go-to destination for our alumni and fans across the nation."

"The Big Ten is clearly one of the most successful collegiate athletic conferences in the country, and its member institutions are among the most prestigious universities in the



world," said Tony Vinciguerra, President & CEO, Fox Networks Group. "Given a loyal and passionate fan base that's powered by millions of alumni across America, it makes sense that the Big Ten is the first conference to take this step nationally, and we're excited to be a part of it."

The Big Ten Channel will carry many of the games and events previously available only through syndication, providing greater exposure for these and other Big Ten sports. The sports programming on the Big Ten Channel and/or through alternative Big Ten Channel platforms will include, but is not limited to:

- 35-plus football games, with each school having at least two games aired (at least one of which will be a conference game);
- At least 105 regular-season men's basketball games;
- At least 55 regular-season women's basketball games;
- Big Ten championships and tournaments;
- 170 Olympic sporting events; and,
- Coverage from the conference's vast library of historic sporting events, including bowl games.

In addition, each school will have the right to provide 60 hours of its own content annually. "We anticipate this will create enormous opportunities for journalism, film and other academic programs and provide the ability to highlight academic achievement throughout the universities," Delany said. "How schools utilize this exciting new opportunity is limited only by their own creativity."

The Big Ten Channel will launch in August 2007 and will be available for cable operators and satellite distributors nationwide to carry on their basic tiers. Fox will work to secure carriage agreements with all distributors. Fox has already entered into a charter affiliation agreement with DIRECTV, which will carry the Channel at launch nationwide on Total Choice, its most broadly distributed package, currently received by more than 15.4 million households.

The Channel also plans to exploit emerging technologies to distribute its programming content. "The depth and breadth of the new media environment in which we find ourselves demands the type of accessibility to programming that we have created with the Big Ten Channel," Delany said. "Consumers are taking advantage of all types of emerging technologies, and the way they access sports will only continue to change. The Channel aims to keep pace with the evolving demands of our fans."

The Big Ten Channel represents a 20-year partnership between the Big Ten and Fox. It will be majority-owned by the Big Ten Conference, with Fox holding a minority interest. The Channel will establish its studios and headquarters in Chicago. Fox will handle the administration and daily operations of the Channel. The Big Ten will establish general guidelines regarding the types of programs and advertising aired on the Big Ten Channel



to ensure consistency with the Big Ten's brand values. As such, no alcohol or gambling-related advertising will be accepted.

"The Big Ten Channel will provide our conference the ability to strengthen both its brand and its long term destiny as one of the leading academic and athletic conferences in the nation," Delany said.

The financial terms of the agreements with ABC/ESPN and Fox were not disclosed.

Big Ten Conference Commissioner James E. Delany, Fox Sports Networks President Bob Thompson, George Bodenheimer, President, ESPN Inc. and ABC Sports, and John Wildhack, Senior Vice President of Programming, ESPN Inc., made the announcement during a conference call today. The conference call will be archived on the Big Ten website at www.bigten.org, along with this press release and additional information.

The Big Ten Conference is an association of 11 world-class universities whose member institutions share a common mission of research, graduate, professional and undergraduate teaching and public service. Founded in 1896, the Big Ten has sustained a comprehensive set of shared practices and policies that enforce the priority of academics in student-athletes' lives and emphasize the values of integrity, fairness and competitiveness. Big Ten universities provide in excess of \$89 million in athletic scholarship aid to more than 8,400 men and women student-athletes who compete for 25 championships, 12 for men and 13 for women. Conference institutions sponsor broad-based athletic programs with more than 270 teams. For more information, visit www.bigten.org.

ESPN, Inc. is the world's leading multinational, multimedia sports entertainment company featuring a portfolio of over 50 multimedia sports assets. The company is comprised of seven domestic television networks (ESPN, ESPN2, ESPN Classic, ESPNEWS, ESPN Deportes, ESPNU, ESPN Today), ESPN and ESPN2 HD simulcast services, ESPN Regional Television, ESPN International (networks, syndication, radio, web sites), ESPN Radio, ESPN.com, *ESPN The Magazine*, ESPN Enterprises, ESPN Zones (sports-themed restaurants), and other growing new businesses including ESPN360 (Broadband), Mobile ESPN, ESPN on Demand, ESPN Interactive and ESPN PPV. Based in Bristol, Ct., ESPN is 80 percent owned by ABC, Inc., which is an indirect subsidiary of The Walt Disney Company. The Hearst Corporation holds a 20 percent interest in ESPN.

Fox Cable Networks (FCN), a unit of the Fox Networks Group, a wholly owned division of News Corporation (NYSE: NWS), includes 29 domestic programming services in which News Corporation holds interests. These networks collectively service more than 400 million television homes and represent one of the media industry's largest and most diverse groups of programming operations. FCN networks include FX, FSN and its 15 owned-and-operated regional sports networks; National Geographic Channel; National Geographic Channel HD; SPEED; FUEL TV; Fox College Sports; Fox Soccer Channel; Fox Sports en Español; Fox Movie Channel and Fox Reality. FCN also includes



Fox Sports Enterprises, which manages interests in sports franchises and leading statistical information provider STATS, LLC.

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