



Texas A&M Aggies

College Football: Texas A&M Moving to the SEC, What's at Stake?

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By
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According to CBSsports.com, there could be an announcement very soon regarding Texas A&M pulling out of the Big 12. That means that they would be moving to the SEC, as long as the SEC is ready to expand. It all sounds still as much up in the air as it was last week.

If you ask most fans of the original SEC, "should Texas A&M be included?" you'll get a resounding no. There are purists within in the South who see an expansion of the league as a dilution of the original conference and a territorial misstep.

One Auburn fan that wished to remain anonymous said, "When Arkansas was added that was a stretch. Texas A&M is too far west. The next thing you know we'll be talking about Arizona State."

I get the point. This is the "Southeastern" conference after all and Texas A&M is in the Southwest, as in what used to be the Southwestern Conference. However, in today's college sports world, geographical lines have little to no bearing on what teams are in what conferences.

But, I remember when Arkansas and South Carolina were brought into the SEC and those *are* southern states. There was some disapproval and a feeling that those teams could not keep up with the stronger teams of the SEC, thus creating a dilution of the conference.



However, look where we are now, at least in terms of football. Steve Spurrier's Gamecocks were in the SEC championship last year, and chosen by some pundits for a repeat this year. Arkansas is now a competitor and both teams are in the preseason football top 20, ranked ahead of some of the original SEC teams. Texas A&M, by the way, is ranked in the preseason top 10, just as a reference and a point for comments.

But, college sports today is more than territories or sentimental attachments to the glories of yesteryear. It's about power and money, and the partners you choose are a key to your success, just like in any business.

The 12-team SEC is now considered to be the strongest conference in the country and I'm sure the chancellors and presidents are happy with the position they're in, as they consider taking on Texas A&M. They are in a good place, the darlings of college sports, a club that everyone wants to be a part of.

If a Texas A&M Big 12 defection were to happen, with an expansion of the SEC, the entire college landscape would be prone to another monumental upheaval.

Think about the potential scenarios.

Texas A&M would likely be added to the already top-heavy SEC West, so to provide some balance, adding to the SEC East would be required. The logical candidate is Florida State.

Both teams moving to the SEC would cause a void in the ACC and the Big 12. Those conferences might want replacements, so realignment within the Big 10, the Pac 12, and with Boise State's propensity for moving up, the Mountain West as well.

The SEC has stated that future expansion was possible, but are they ready for that now? Maybe they are, but is college sports ready for that now?

According to the CBSsports.com article that came out yesterday, something could possibly happen this week with regard to an announcement from Texas A&M in terms of leaving the Big 12, but that is really in the hands of the SEC. In other words, no movement of Texas A&M would happen unless the SEC is ready for expansion now. And, Texas A&M has \$20 million at stake in the Big 12, so they really need a place to go, where they can do as well or better before they pull out.

Let the games begin.

