

NDSU to join Gateway Football Conference

NDSU President Joseph Chapman

“Obviously we’re very excited to be accepted into the Gateway conference. It’s a truly exceptional opportunity for us. There are a lot of things that made this a good fit. We have a large number of alumni in the footprint. The member institutions are excellent. We looked carefully also at the fit. We share a common commitment to our students and student-athletes.

Clearly this is a high-end conference. In championship football, you can’t be affiliated with a better conference. The automatic qualifier, the TV package, those are things will bring a national visibility for us.

Finally, and very practically, this will solve some scheduling issues for us and it will bring to Fargo every year four top-end teams to compete here so it’s a very good day for us. This will bring us outstanding football to the state and we’re very excited about it. Thank you for the offer and we gladly accept.”

NDSU Athletic Director Gene Taylor

“Obviously we’re excited about this opportunity. This completes, in my opinion, the work we set out and the goals we had in this transition which was to give all of our student-athletes the opportunity for automatic qualification for NCAA Championships.

It’s kind of ironic that the football program was the one to get an organized athlete and the last one to get the opportunity for NCAA automatic qualifying. This is all about the student-athletes for postseason play. It’s not going to be an easy route. The Gateway is one of the strongest conferences in the country, if not the strongest and certainly has become the strongest with North Dakota State and South Dakota State.

The Great West Conference was a tremendous opportunity and conference for us. Tom Douple and Ed Grom did an outstanding job running the conference. It’s with mixed emotions that we are leaving the Great West. We talked to the athletic directors yesterday and they certainly understand our situation but I know they’ll move forward. We appreciate everything they did for us because they give us a start and a schedule and obviously great competition. We’ll continue to work with those schools with filling out our schedule.

This is a big day for us. This is just another one of those outstanding opportunities to look forward to.”

NDSU Head Coach Craig Bohl

“On behalf of Bison football, I’d like to thank the diligence and leadership of President Chapman and Gene Taylor. Without question, their steady hand in this transition has been remarkable. As coaches, we will forever be in debt to their efforts, leadership and skill in navigating this transition.

We’d also like to say thanks to our friends in the Great West Conference. We’ve enjoyed the competition and we’ll look forward to the competition that we’ll have on the gridiron next season. They’re great schools and they’re well-coached. We’ll continue to enjoy our relationships with them.

This institution is defined on excellence. We feel that the Gateway Conference is an opportunity for us to have competition on the gridiron that is consistent with our institution. We’re going to embrace this competition. Make no mistake, I think the accolades that were mentioned by the conference commissioner are very accurate and we’ve kept pace with schools around the country. The competition that we’ll engage on is going to be challenging. I’m sure the people of Fargo will enjoy the new rivalries that will be initiated. As coaches, we are excited about embracing the competition.

We have a slogan that says ‘Bring on the Competition’ and that’s exactly what we are going to be doing. It ‘s a great day for Bison football and it’s a great day for NDSU.”