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BIG SKY CLARIFIES FOOTBALL TIEBREAKER

OGDEN, Utah (Oct. 25, 2012) - When the Big Sky Conference expanded to 13 football members, a need for a new tiebreaker arose and was developed by the league's athletic administrators. As the season winds down, questions have arisen for different scenarios, calling for a clarification of the new procedure.

First and foremost, the tiebreaker is in place solely to determine which team will receive the Conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Division I Championship. If teams tie for the Conference title, they will be co-champions.

The first tiebreaker is head-to-head. This includes matchups of conference teams playing each other in non-conference games.

So far, there have been two matchups of conference teams playing in non-conference games. A third will take place on Nov. 3, when Cal Poly travels to Eastern Washington. Both teams are currently undefeated in conference play, and both could end up the season 8-0 in conference games. If that happens, the winner of next Saturday's non-conference matchup game would earn the automatic bid to the playoffs.

If Eastern Washington and Montana State were to both finish 7-1 in conference, and were the only two teams to finish 7-1, Eastern Washington would claim the automatic bid to the playoffs by virtue of a 27-24 win over the Bobcats on Oct. 13.

The second tiebreaker is record against common scheduled conference opponents in descending order. If Northern Arizona and Eastern Washington both finish 8-0 in conference, the tiebreaker would move to this criteria. Northern Arizona and Cal Poly play in conference game on Nov. 17, meaning there can't be a three-way tie of 8-0 teams.

In this scenario, Eastern Washington and Northern Arizona would have won all games against common scheduled conference opponents, the tiebreaker would move to the third criteria: Record vs. common Conference opponents played as non-conference games in descending order. In this case, there would be no common conference opponents played in a non-conference game.

Criteria Four is record against common non-conference opponents. Again, there would be no common non-conference opponents between Eastern Washington and Northern Arizona.

Criteria Five is the Sagarin Rating. Whichever team has the highest Sagarin Rating will earn the Big Sky's automatic bid to the playoffs. If multiple teams had the same Sagarin Rating, the final tiebreaker would be a coin flip.

"It's important to understand that the tiebreaker is used only to determine who gains the automatic bid to the playoffs," said Big Sky Commissioner Doug Fullerton. "All tied teams are recognized as Big Sky Champions. There have been many years previously where multiple teams have shared title.

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“Our league has a history of sending multiple teams to the postseason, and with the success we’ve had this season, we fully expect the Big Sky to be well-represented in the playoff field. The goal is to get as many teams in the playoff field as possible. We feel with the strength of our league, any team that shares a Big Sky championship will receive an invitation to the postseason.”

Several other scenarios exist, including one where Eastern Washington, Montana State, Cal Poly and Northern Arizona all tie at 7-1.

Big Sky Tiebreaker

When two or more Conference members are tied in the final Conference standings, the tie shall be broken for the purposes of determining the NCAA FCS automatic bid only, and shall be determined on the following basis:

1. Head-to-head competition.
2. Record against common SCHEDULED CONFERENCE opponents in descending order.
3. Record vs. common Conference opponents played as NON-CONFERENCE games in descending order.
4. Record against common NON-CONFERENCE opponents.
5. Sagarin Ratings.
6. Coin Flip

Explanations and Examples

No. 1: This applies to ALL head-to-head games, even those played as non-conference.

No. 2: In the scenario where there is no head-to-head contest to utilize as a tiebreaker, if teams A and B are tied and both play team C in a CONFERENCE game, the results of those games will be used in a tiebreaker. However, if team A plays team C in a CONFERENCE game, but team B plays team C in a non-conference game (i.e., not scheduled by the league), that game WILL NOT BE USED in a tiebreaker

No. 3: If teams A and B both scheduled Conference team C as a non-conference game (i.e. neither game was scheduled by the league), the results of those games can be used as a tiebreaker).

No. 4: If conference teams A and B both scheduled the same non-conference opponent (FBS, FCS, Division II or NAIA), the results of that game could be used in a tiebreaker)