

# The University of Oregon and Upcoming Athletic Conference Change

## Fall 2023 Background

The University of Oregon (UO) recently announced it will join the Big Ten Conference in August 2024 for competitions beginning in the 2024–25 academic year. Here are some facts and details about the organization and operation of national collegiate athletic conferences, the UO Athletics program, and the transition to the Big Ten.

### UO Intercollegiate Athletics

The UO has approximately 500 student-athletes competing on 20 NCAA teams.

#### Men’s teams (8)

Baseball • Basketball • Cross Country • Football • Golf • Tennis • Track and Field (indoor and outdoor)

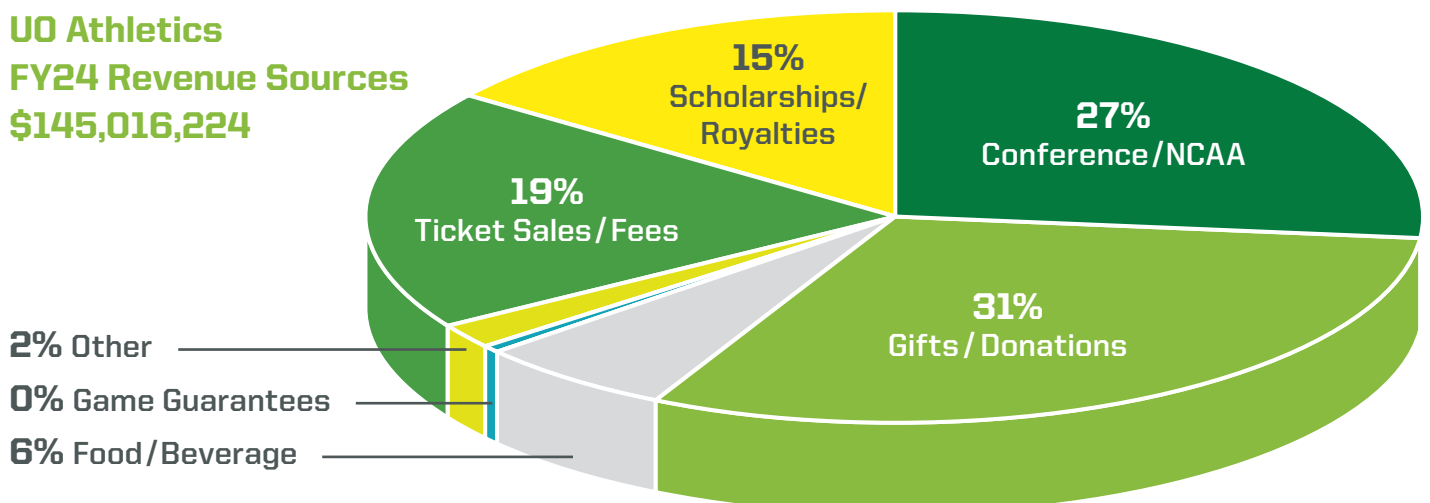
#### Women’s teams (12)

Acrobatics and Tumbling • Basketball • Beach Volleyball • Cross Country • Golf • Lacrosse • Soccer • Softball  
Tennis • Volleyball • Track and Field (indoor and outdoor)

**UO Athletics is one of approximately 25 programs in the nation, and the only program in Oregon, that is self-sustaining.** The current annual UO Athletics budget is \$145 million. The UO does not fund its athletics programs with student tuition and fees or state general fund dollars. Athletics programs and scholarships are funded entirely through the following sources:

UO Athletics annually transfers approximately \$20 million back to the UO general fund for student-athlete tuition, overhead assessments, and other expenses. Athletics also provides a strong marketing and engagement platform for student recruitment, alumni engagement, philanthropic efforts, and enhanced campus and student life.

### UO Athletics FY24 Revenue Sources \$145,016,224



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Sports Lottery

Sports Lottery funding helps Oregon’s public universities meet Title IX requirements to fund women’s athletic programs equitably. Sports Lottery is divided into funding for intercollegiate athletics (88 percent) and graduate

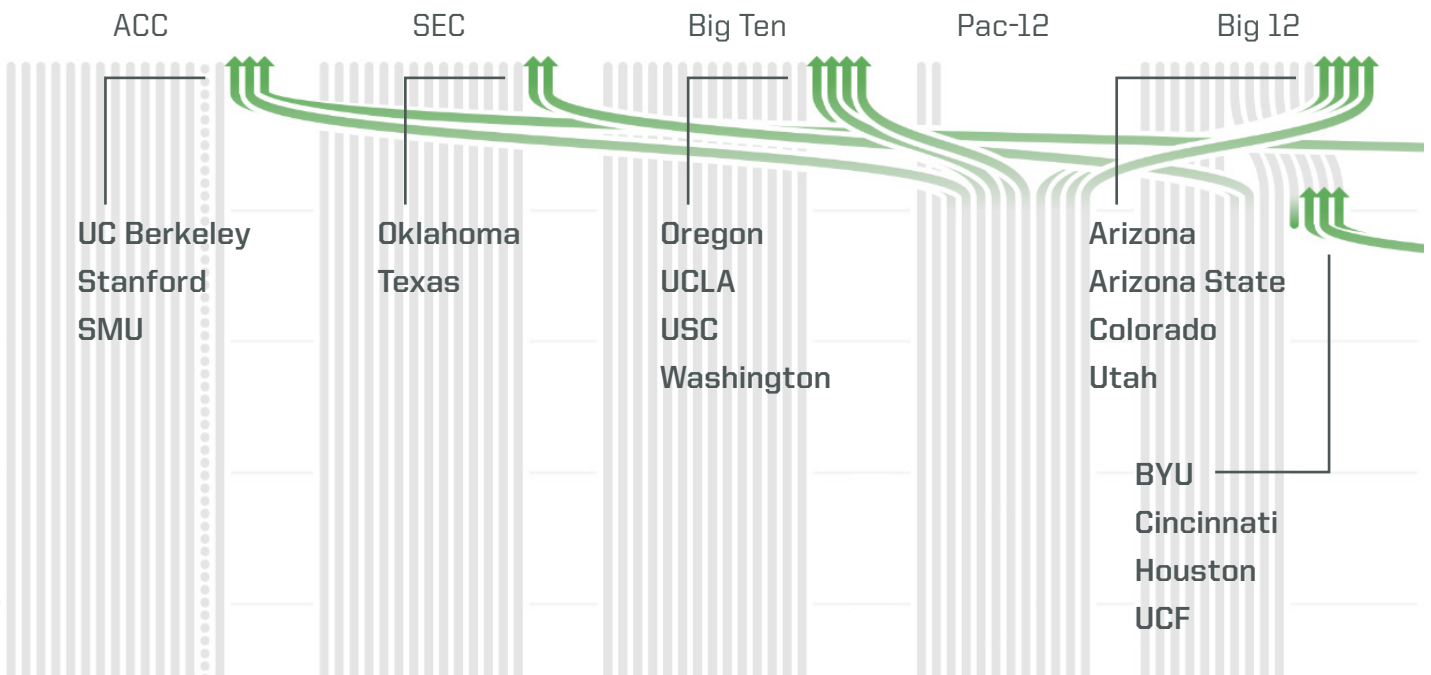
student academic scholarships (12 percent). Sports lottery funds make up 0.3 percent of UO’s total athletics revenue, the only state resource that funds student-athlete scholarships.

UO’s Move to the Big Ten Conference

We appreciate and are proud of our longtime history in the “Conference of Champions.” As UO President Karl Scholz reminds us, we are humans with the ability to experience multiple emotions at the same time. While we are excited to join the Big Ten, we are sad to see the

loss of the conference that we have been a part of for so long. The Pac-12 has supported our growth and done so much for collegiate athletics on the West Coast, and UO explored numerous options over a long period of time to keep the Pac-12/10/9 sustainable.

NCAA Conference Realignment



SOURCE: NEW YORK TIMES

Pac-12 and UO Context

The stability of the Pac-12 took a seismic hit in June of 2022 when UCLA and USC announced their departure for the Big Ten beginning in 2024, making the future of the Pac-12 unstable. UCLA and USC provided approximately 40 percent of the market value for the Pac-12, and Southern California is a significant recruiting market for UO both for students and student-

athletes. In July 2023, Colorado announced its departure for the Big 12, causing further instability. The losses of these schools and media markets meant less future revenue through broadcast media rights for all remaining Pac-12 members, jeopardizing the UO’s commitment to maintaining a self-sustaining athletics department.

## Comparison of Media Deals

The media rights deal presented by the Pac-12 Conference to the remaining nine members in August 2023 did not provide stability for UO and our student-athletes. The Pac-12 media deal proposed was through a subscription streaming service-only option, with a guaranteed per school value of \$23 million a year for the rights to football, men's basketball and women's basketball, a \$5 million per school reduction from the Pac-12's current broadcast media rights agreements. The proposal included the potential for increased media rights only if ambitious subscription thresholds were

achieved and did not include any distribution of Pac-12 sporting events through traditional cable or network TV, thus significantly limiting the number of family, fans, recruits and others to watch UO student-athletes.

The Big Ten media deal with Fox, NBC and CBS will pay both UO and University of Washington each an average of \$32.5 million a year for the first six years and that amount should more than double when the two schools receive a full share of Big Ten media rights revenues beginning in the 7th year.

## Impact on student-athlete travel related to UO's move from the Pac-12 to Big Ten

The conference move is a change for our student-athletes and their families, and the UO will be working with conference officials and peer departmental leaders over the next year to prepare for the smoothest transition possible.

10 of UO's 20 sports and approximately 200 of UO's student-athletes (Acro and Tumbling (45 athletes), Men and Women's Track and Field/XC (110 athletes), Men and Women's Golf (21 athletes), Beach Volleyball (20 athletes) do not currently play a Pac-12 schedule, will not play a Big Ten conference schedule, and will not experience travel impacts from the conference change.

Football (125 athletes) currently charters transportation to all destinations, which will continue—with only five road games per season.

While travel can always be difficult, this move will not significantly increase travel days/missed class time for our student-athletes. The greatest impact will be on Men's Basketball, Women's Basketball, and Volleyball. Tennis (men's and women's), Baseball, Softball, Soccer and Lacrosse are impacted to a lesser degree in terms of increased travel days. On average, those impacted will see 3-4 additional travel days, though some will be greater distances than Pac-12 travel. The maximum impact on any sport is 6 days of travel.

## Academic support for UO student-athletes

The UO is committed to prioritizing student-athletes' well-being and academic success as they compete in the Big Ten Conference. Academic support for all UO students (including student-athletes) is housed and funded centrally under the Office of the Provost. Student-athletes receive additional academic support through Services for Student-Athletes, housed at the John E. Jaqua Academic Center for Student Athletes. The University of Oregon established the Services for Student Athletes program long before the NCAA mandated such

a service. Student-athletes receive academic support on campus and on the road with help from a team of academic advisors and learning specialists.

In 2022, the overall Graduation Success Rate for UO student-athletes was 84 percent, which marks the 12th consecutive year that UO student-athletes have been at 80 percent or higher. This exceeds the six-year graduation rate for all UO students in 2022, which was 73.3 percent.

## More Background on National Intercollegiate Athletics

The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is made up of three divisions: I, II, and III. The University of Oregon's Intercollegiate Athletic Program and its student-athletes compete in Division I (I-A for football purposes). Across all sports, with more than 350 member schools, Division I schools field nearly 6,700 athletics teams and provide opportunities for 192,000 student-athletes to compete in NCAA sports each year.

In terms of football, the NCAA's highest revenue-generating sport, 10 conferences and 133 programs participate at the Division 1 Football Bowl Subdivision level, the highest level of college football.

In the state of Oregon, four universities compete in Division I in at least one sport; University of Oregon, Oregon State University, Portland State University, and

the University of Portland, with only the University of Oregon and Oregon State University competing at the Division 1 Football Bowl Subdivision level.

Sources of funding for Division 1 Athletics programs include ticket sales, NCAA and conference distributions (including broadcast media rights), donations from alumni and others, concessions, and royalties.

Supporting athletics has become increasingly expensive for colleges in recent years due to rules regulation. Significant changes to how sports operate with the transfer portal, name/image/likeness authorization, Alston ruling, and national NCAA deregulation have led to increased benefits and elevated expectations for student-athletes and corresponding pressure on the financial resources of athletic departments.



### Government and Community Relations

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