

Maryland

By Toby Cork

When you think about Big 10 football, you probably think about historic rivalries. The Big 10 has some of the oldest and best rivalries in college football. Wisconsin and Minnesota have been competing since 1890 for Paul Bunyan's Axe. Indiana and Purdue have met since 1891 with their battle for the Old Oaken Bucket. And, of course, everyone knows about the rivalry between Michigan and Ohio State.

When you think about Big 10 football, you probably think about some of the greatest football players of all time. Before setting the NFL record for all-time passing yards, Drew Brees lead the Purdue Boilermakers to the Rose Bowl. Before winning six Super Bowls and becoming known as the best quarterback in NFL history, Tom Brady played for the Michigan Wolverines.

When you think about Big 10 football, you probably think about giant stadiums and game day traditions. Michigan, Ohio State, and Penn State all play their home games in front of over 100,000 fans. Wisconsin fans enjoy jumping around before the 4th quarter of their home games; while Iowa fans inside Kinnick Stadium share a wave every game with patients in the nearby children's hospital.

When you think about Big 10 football, you probably think about Maryland.

Yes, I just said – Maryland.

Well, when thinking about Big 10 football now, you may not think about Maryland; but you may be thinking about Terrapin football in the very near future for few reasons. Let me explain.

Maryland Coach Mike Locksley has the opportunity to build this program with some of the best high school players in the country. In 2019, there were 22 four and five-star recruits located in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia. Also, Maryland is the closest Big 10 university to southern states known for producing elite football prospects. (In 2019, 26% of the country's top-rated recruits came from North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida). When I asked Maryland running back, Anthony McFarland Jr., a top recruit from the D.C. area, why he chose Maryland over other schools he shared, "I want to stay in the state of Maryland where I was born and raised. I could've gone to a school like Alabama or down to Miami. At the end of the day though I had to think about staying home and being here with my family."

Improving the team's roster with transfer players from other schools will also be an option for Coach Locksley. When players from the Maryland area who decided to join other teams out of high school see what is being built by the Terrapins, they may decide to come back and play a few seasons near their hometown. As an example, linebacker Keandre Jones transferred to Maryland after 3 seasons with Ohio State to play his senior year closer to home. When I asked Keandre about the difference between Ohio State and Maryland, he said, "The biggest difference for me right now would be being close to home and having my friends and family being able to attend all my home games."

All of these great players will also want to join Maryland to practice in their brand-new training facility (Cole Field House) and to play games at Maryland Stadium. Not to mention, they will get to wear the coolest uniforms in the Big 10!

Even though Maryland may have finished this season with a 1-8 record in the Big 10, they have all the right pieces in place to build their team into a Big 10 power. As the famous fable suggests, slow and steady wins the race. Fear The Turtle.