A year ago, Frontier Conference expansion really took shape. Dickinson State University was a full-fledged member of the league, Southern Oregon began playing football in the Frontier and the conference announced the College of Idaho would do the same beginning in 2014.

I, for one, really liked the additions, whether the schools were football-only members, or whether it was the Blue Hawks playing all sports. In fact, I thought DSU was a perfect fit for the Frontier and have for a long time.

I know some may not agree with that due to the changes the addition of DSU brought to schedules and travel budgets. But from a peer-institution standpoint, as well as new rivalries, DSU made perfect sense to me.

Now however, it turns out the Frontier didn’t make perfect sense to the powers that be in Dickinson, or to many of DSU’s rivals in North and South Dakota.

After what will only be their second year in the Frontier, DSU is leaving the league to join the new North Star Conference. The North Star received official approval by National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics Council of Presidents at the recent NAIA convention a few months ago and will be composed of Jamestown College, Mayville State, Valley City College, Dakota State and Presentation College. With the exception of Presentation, all of the aforementioned schools were part of the original Dakota Athletic Conference, which disbanded several years ago.

For those schools, I understand the formation of a new league was beneficial. I understand that the proximity of the schools decreases travel budgets, renews old rivalries and gives, especially North Dakota, a regained foothold in the ever-changing NAIA landscape.

I get all that and am fine with all of that.

What I don’t like is the trouble the Frontier Conference went to get DSU in, and the time the league also apparently spent courting Jamestown, which also flirted with joining the Frontier several times. What I don’t like were the accommodations made to scheduling and travel to get DSU into the league, only to have the school spend a quick two years in the Frontier.

I may be talking out of turn, but it seems to me that DSU may have used the Frontier until something more to its liking came along.

And that’s disappointing because I for one liked the expansion. I liked having the Blue Hawks as part of the conference and I liked the direction the league was taking. Now I’m not saying a return to the original Frontier schedules will be a step back for the league, but I am disappointed DSU won’t be a part of it any longer.

It seems to me, it would have made more sense for DSU to remain an NAIA Independent for two years because you can’t tell me the formation of the North Star Conference only began after DSU joined the Frontier. Something as big as forming a new athletic conference doesn’t happen overnight, and I’m guessing that long before DSU actually started playing football, basketball and volleyball games in the Frontier, the North Star Conference was already in the works.
But, that’s the world of college athletics these days. You don’t need DSU as an example of a school jumping ship, instead, look no further than what has gone on at the NCAA DI level. It’s musical chairs for conferences at that level, and it seems like it’s trickling all the way down to the NAIA level.

So for what it’s worth, I was truly disappointed to hear about Dickinson’s departure from the Frontier, but I guess, if the school sees greener pastures, more power to it. Fortunately, the core members of the Frontier are as strong as ever and the league will be just fine.

It’s just too bad we had to go through all we went through over the last three years, only to see it change again in the blink of an eye. But I guess that’s the world of college sports today, and I guess I just need to start getting a little more used to it.