

Colorado football assistants set to hit road

Hawkins, all head coaches grounded for spring evaluation period

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Dan Hawkins has taken a lot of criticism in the past year for losses his football team has suffered, recruits he has failed to land and some of the words he has spoken.

No one questions his work ethic.

Today brings the arrival of the third spring evaluation period in which Hawkins and every other head football coach across the nation are prohibited from leaving campus to recruit. Anyone who has spent any time around Hawkins during his tenure in Boulder knows it's killing him today to be trapped at the Dal Ward Center while his assistant coaches scour the country for prospects for the 2011, 2012 and even the 2013 recruiting classes.

The NCAA passed legislation in January 2008 excluding head coaches from evaluating prospects off campus in the spring because some coaches have reached such celebrity status they are unable to go to high schools without creating a stir of excitement that often leads to them unintentionally "bumping" into recruits.

"We heard a little, tiny bit of grumbling at first from the more younger, energetic recruiters of these head coaches, but we really haven't heard anything at all, nor is there anything in the pipeline that would make you believe that someone is going to write legislation to offset this," CU director of compliance Julie Manning said.

Hawkins hated the rule when it was instituted and CU was one of a handful of schools to submit an override vote. Hawkins has never been one to play golf or do much fishing and he said at the time the rule favored those head coaches who do and penalized coaches such as himself who enjoyed the recruiting process.

Three cycles later, it appears Hawkins has no hope of the rule ever being overturned. In fact, the NCAA strengthened it last year by further restricting head coaches by not allowing them to participate in promotional activities off campus during the evaluation period.

"People were getting very creative and having coaching clinics and such, which obviously got them out there in front of the prospect's coach and stuff," Manning said. "They came back and said, 'You can't go to their high schools and you can't meet with their coaches off campus.' So they really hammered it down."

Hawkins was among those creative types that first year, organizing a statewide tour to promote the program and meet with fans and boosters.

Manning said Hawkins is very interested in using the video conferencing feature on Skype in order to communicate with some recruits and their coaches. Some coaches around the nation have used the technology in the past two spring evaluation periods. Doing so counts as the one weekly phone call to the prospect.

Hawkins vowed in 2008 to spend the evaluation period on the telephone with coaches if he couldn't be there to shake their hand.

"If I can't talk to the coach in person, I'll get him on the phone and make sure we get the transcripts in here and really try to hone in on those guys," Hawkins said at the time.

The spring evaluation period is important for every program in the nation, but it is particularly important to programs such as Colorado that get the majority of their recruits from outside the state and can see a limited number of prospects during the fall. The evaluation period runs from today until the end of May.

CU coaches will visit hundreds of high schools over the next six weeks and offer dozens of scholarships to prospects. The program is expected to sign 15-17 recruits next February and should sign a full class of 25 the following year.

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