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Frei: CU Buffs should jump into Pac-10 if terms work

By Terry Frei
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University of Colorado officials should NOT eagerly await an invitation from the Pac-10 Conference. They must be more aggressive than that.

CU officials should lobby the Pac-10 and its schools, making it clear they want the Buffaloes to make the move — if, and this is a big if, the terms are acceptable.

That stand won't surprise anyone even vaguely aware of my background. I was raised in Eugene, where my father was on the University of Oregon football staff for 17 years. My 2009 novel, "The Witch's Season," is based on the tumultuous Woodstock-era times in Eugene, on the UO campus and in the Ducks football program.

I moved to Colorado in time to graduate from

high school and am a proud CU alumnus. While working at The Oregonian in Portland and at The Post, I've been to all Pac-10 campuses, and to most in the Big 12.

So I'm not jumping on a bandwagon. For many years, I've felt CU should seek out an association with the Pac-10 schools.

That said, there are drawbacks and even some misconceptions floating around that must be conceded and confronted.

It's naive to say that Pac-10 schools are more selective about admitting marginal football prospects than the Big 12, so CU — which at times can't get potential stars into school who end up playing against the Buffs — would be on a level playing field in recruiting. Elite private schools, such as Southern California, can be, um, very flexible. Admissions offices at a handful of public-supported Pac-10 schools also have been very cooperative with the football programs in recent years.

The "arms race" on the facilities front is out of control in the Pac-10 — even more so than in the Big 12.

USC isn't coming to Boulder for a football game every two years if this goes through. The divisional alignment likely would put CU and Utah in with Oregon, Oregon State, Washington and Washington State.

The loss of 50 percent of Big 12 revenue during

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the two-year transitional period would be significant. CU must have a plan and funding to make it through those lean(er) times, and not ones that hand over the keys to the athletic department to sports-obsessed boosters. Much is made of Nike magnate Phil Knight's influence in Oregon sports, but he also has donated megamillions to the university and other causes, which is why there is a Knight Law School and an Oregon Health and Science University Knight Cancer Institute.

Nonetheless, we use to have a saying in Oregon, and CU should take it to heart in relation to the Pac-12: Just do it.

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