



Athletic director Mike Bohn discussed a wide variety of topics Tuesday.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



02/16/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Bohn Touches Most Bases In Roundtable Discussion

BOULDER - The University of Colorado will not raise its 2010 season football ticket prices, athletic director Mike Bohn announced Tuesday during a roundtable discussion with media that regularly cover the Buffaloes.

Bohn called CU's 2009 season ticket pricing structure "family friendly pricing that was really received well . . .," and he saluted Buffs fans for "helping us meet our budget number with football tickets."

Football ticket prices last season were raised from \$50 per game to \$58 in two of five designated areas, with all other prices for seats at Folsom Field remaining the same as in 2008.

CU's 2009-10 athletic department budget is about \$45 million, and Bohn said due to the harsh national economic climate, "to be able to grow our budget . . . probably is optimistic."

CU's assistant coaches, Bohn said, likely will see their salaries frozen in 2010, but he added the athletic department will follow the university's lead on that matter.

"Campus hasn't made that determination, but I would anticipate that that would probably be the case," he added. "Our coaches have been great; I can't think of a coach across the board who has been over budget in the last two years."

Home football attendance averaged 50,088 in 2009, the second-highest figure in the past four seasons. In 2008, the Buffs played before an average of 49,476 fans. The 2007 figure was 50,509 and 46,053 for the previous season.

Two of the stadium's 41 luxury suites were sold last month and Bohn anticipates "a capacity environment this fall with our suite holders . . . we're in the process of renewals right now; this year's prospects are very exciting for us."

The majority of the suites are sold on an annual renewal basis, Bohn said.

"When you look at those numbers you begin to get a sense of the confidence we have in the loyalty of our fan base . . . I have a lot of faith in our fan base," he said. "I think we're going to have a continued support for our football program. I think the basketball program this season embodies that as well. So we couldn't be happier with our fan base, and we recognize the tough economic times that are out there.

Bohn will participate in several "dialogue discussions" with fans on several upcoming occasions to "engage with us and talk about the program, the future, where we want to go and their long-term support and how important it is to us."

A "50 for 50" donation campaign - or 50 donors contributing \$1 million each - has been publicly discussed and acknowledged by Bohn as being on his "wish list."

Bohn's take on the subject: "It would be great to put something like that (together). Do we look for million dollar donors? We do constantly . . . but we also have a very significant role for the donor that buys a season ticket, to the volunteer, to the individual game ticket purchaser. And that's really the model that's working for us and has worked . . ."

A more viable fund-raising campaign, he said, is "Glory Colorado" - an enterprise that finds the department "working hard with our foundation people and leaders and major donors to try and formulate an opportunity for us to build a model based on traditional fund-raising campaigns, where we have top donors and donors at other levels."

Bohn said CU has been "in the silent phase of 'Glory Colorado' campaign for some time now."

Other topics discussed by Bohn during the nearly hour-long session included:

- **CU-COLORADO STATE TICKET ADJUSTMENT**

The CU-CSU football game returns to Invesco Field at Mile High this season. It will be CSU's home game, but also will be part of CU's season ticket package.

Ticket prices are based on four pricing levels, with stadium season ticket holders billed in Level 3 (\$55). But they will have the opportunity to upgrade to Levels 1, 2 or 4.

Season ticket renewal letters, offering more information on the upgrade plan, are scheduled to be mailed this week. Fans also will have the ability to renew their season tickets on-line, as well as by telephone.

Bohn said the seating adjustments for the Sept. 4 game at Invesco was "put together in collaboration" with CSU officials, CU ticket and development staff "based on feedback we've received. It's user friendly for them to be able to put that together."

- **2010 EXPECTATIONS FOR FOOTBALL, DAN HAWKINS**

CU's football program will be under the microscope - locally and nationally - this season. Coach Dan Hawkins begins his fifth season with an overall record of 16-33, with only one postseason appearance (2007, Independence Bowl)

"There's no question the expectations are high, and they're high because Dan has set them high," Bohn said. "I think Dan has a lot of confidence in his team and the continued growth (and) competitiveness of his team.

"Despite what some people think, I think our home schedule is perfect for the situation that we're in right now. Dan has

consistently proven that he's been able to get his team ready to win big home games."

CU's 2010 home schedule includes Hawaii, Georgia, Baylor, Iowa State, Texas Tech and Kansas State.

Continued Bohn: "There's no question that we have big expectations (for the 2010 season), but again, that's something that Dan's helped set the stage for. And his team's up for that. Fans have big expectations as well and I have big expectations for Dan to continue what he's been of late - focused on football . . . winning and representing (CU) with a great deal of pride and being very competitive."

- **JEFF BZDELIK'S FUTURE, PRACTICE FACILITY GROUND BREAKING**

Men's basketball coach Jeff Bzdelik has two years remaining on his original five-year pact. Bohn said he and Bzdelik briefly discussed his contract last year.

Bzdelik, said Bohn, "has been so focused on his team, he wants to earn it (an extension). I salute him for that, and at the appropriate time after the season, I hope we have to opportunity to visit with him about it."

He said Bzdelik has distinguished himself with his game-day abilities, his off-court efforts for the Buffs program and his recruiting.

"Every day, Jeff's roots (at CU) get deeper and deeper," Bohn said. "He's touched by the fan support, the student support, the excitement generated on game day and the great league we play in . . .

"In my opinion, those things mean a lot to Jeff. He knows how hard everybody here is working along with him, and that touches him."

However, Bohn said he would not be surprised if Bzdelik was pursued "by the NBA or any major opening across the country."

But Bohn indicated he was betting on Bzdelik's "love for Colorado" keeping him at CU. "Who wouldn't want to be around a great community like Boulder - healthy, happy, fun?"

With six games remaining in his third season, Bzdelik's overall record is 32-55. The Buffs have not reached the postseason in his two previous seasons.

Groundbreaking for CU's new basketball/volleyball practice facility is set for March 25 at 12:30 p.m. at the north end of the Coors Events Center.

The facility, to be built adjacent to the Events Center, will cost about \$10.8 million and will be funded with private monies raised by the athletic department. Bohn said the project is not yet fully funded: "We will be using some resources that the athletic department has generated through other sources."

He also indicated that an announcement on naming rights could be forthcoming: "We're not in position to announce it at this time, but we would anticipate something like that coming together."

The expected completion date is approximately 11 months after construction begins - or April, 2011.

- **SPECULATION ON CU'S FUTURE CONFERENCE AFFILIATION**

Perhaps the current hottest topic on the national college scene is league expansion and subtraction - who might leave what conference and who might join another.

CU is listening, but no official calls have been made.

A charter member of the Big 12 Conference, CU unofficially has been linked to possible expansion by the Pacific-10

Conference. That league's television contracts - a prime piece in any expansion scenario - expire in 2011-12.

Bohn, of course, has stay attuned to the issue. He's communicated with Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe, as have all other Big 12 athletic directors.

"That's a national issue right now - the speculation associated with league affiliation," Bohn said. "We're committed to the Big 12 Conference, we're committed to being competitive in the Big 12 Conference.

"However, there is a different feel right now about movement across the country. So, obviously, we're mindful of that and we're trying to do everything we can to insure we're supportive of the Big 12 . . . but speculation right now is a big distraction for us because it's simply that."

While the Big Ten and Pac-10 have been the two conferences expansion speculation has centered on, Bohn said "to be honest with you, the Big 12 is talking about where do we expand, where do we look for opportunities as these things come together?"

Bohn expressed a "great deal of confidence" in Beebe and his leadership. He also said CU chancellor Phil DiStefano was on campus in 1994 when the Pac-10 issued a formal membership invitation to CU and was declined.

"That experience will bode well for us. We'll just have to kind of monitor it as much as we can," Bohn said, adding that CU's fan base and academic standing will be of great benefit "regardless of what league we're in . . .

"We have not called the Pac-10 or the Big Ten and they have not called us. Again, we're focused on being a great member of the Big 12 Conference."

Bohn believes Big 12 ADs and administrators recognize the Southeastern Conference's recent TV agreements "have created a gap for us, and we're working every day to try and close it."

The "gap" is considerable: The SEC recently signed a 15-year TV agreement with ESPN that will pay \$2.25 billion. Also, the league has a 15-year deal with CBS worth \$825 million.

"Again, that's why I salute Dan and his staff," Bohn said. "They understand that; they're working hard with our TV partners for every opportunity for us to be able to feature our great league."

Asked to project a timeline when the pieces might begin coming together nationally for new conference affiliations, Bohn said his "personal sense" was this summer.

"But again, that's mere speculation, that's a guess. I don't have anything to back that up with - no invitations, no discussions, nothing. But if I had to guess, that would be my guess."

- **CU'S AD ON HIS FUTURE**

In April, 2005, Bohn signed a five-year contract - one of six multi-year pacts permitted by CU - to succeed Dick Tharp as athletic director.

Bohn received an extension in November 2007 during the tenures of former CU President Hank Brown and former Chancellor Bud Peterson that was approved by the school's Board of Regents. Bohn's contract now expires in November, 2012.

"I'm a Boulder native, I love (CU) and what we're doing here," Bohn said. "I recognize that we haven't achieved the level of scoreboard results as many people would like us to, but I am extremely proud of everything we've been able to do.

"I'm very proud of the staff we have (and) the synergy with president (Bruce) Benson and Phil DiStefano. I'm going to do everything I can to ensure that my tenure at (CU) is as long as possible. But I don't get to determine that."

Bohn said he loves the university's direction and believes Boulder and the Front Range are "vibrant . . . I'm enjoying working hard to build something we can be proud of. The partnerships we're building are designed for long-term relationships . . ."

Bohn emphasized the program "is bigger than the AD, the football coach, the basketball coach . . . it's about the kids, the program, the university, the community and the constituents that we touch. That's what it's about . . ."

"Our passion, and my passion, for what we're doing has never been higher. Is that based on competitive results? Yeah. But it's also based on continued progress of what we're putting together."

- **ETC:** Bohn thanked Steamboat Springs and the city's planning committee "that's really busted their tails" in preparation for the NCAA Ski Championships (March 10-13). "The people of Steamboat make that a special (event) for us," Bohn said . . . Members of CU's 1990 co-national championship team will be back in Boulder for the Buffs' game on Oct. 2 vs. Georgia. CU is working with Nike on commemorative jerseys associated with the '90 team. Bohn also said the school will continue with the tradition this fall of adding members to the Hall of Fame . . . Bohn saluted Boulder for being named the "happiest city in America" in a recent national poll. "We take great pride in that distinction - no other BCS representative in the country can say that," he said. "When our fan base in engaged at Folsom Field, in a part of our game-day experience, it's something special. It's something we're proud to hang our hat on."

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SHOW MENU



Pac-10 deal could come this summer

But move would be in two years

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 02/17/2010 12:14:17 AM MST



The possibility of Colorado trading the Big 12 for the Pac-10 was the hot-button issue Tuesday during an afternoon roundtable with athletic director Mike Bohn, who said if any move happens, it would likely come this summer.

Bohn met with reporters for more than an hour at the Dal Ward Center to address a variety of issues concerning his department.

Discussion swung from the football season-ticket plan to a March 25 groundbreaking for the basketball and volleyball practice facility to his expectations for coach Dan Hawkins next season and the probability of another year of tight budgets.

Bohn said CU will listen to any proposal from the Pac-10 but there has been no communication between the league and the school.

Bohn said because the Big 12 requires a two-year notice to leave and the Pac-10 is about to begin negotiations for a new television contract that would begin in two years for the 2012 football season, he believes any movement on expansion or conference realignments will come this summer.

Bohn called that "A guess, I don't have anything to back that up with."

"It's so difficult to comment because it's simply speculation," Bohn said. "... We have not called the Pac-10 or the Big Ten and they have not called us. We're focused on being a great member of the Big 12 Conference."

Bohn was asked about recent comments made by Nebraska athletic director Tom Osborne, who said that he is concerned that "the center of gravity" in the Big 12 is shifting south into Texas. Bohn said he understands how administrators and

coaches of north division teams can feel that way in the Big 12.

"I think that mostly has to deal with the fact that the Big 12 Conference has made a commitment for the next several years to explore keeping the championship game for football in Arlington (Texas)," Bohn said. "I think that's where that comes from."

CSU seating changes

Bohn said there are no price increases for tickets to Colorado football games in 2010, but seating options for the game against Colorado State in Denver will be different than in previous years when the game was held at Invesco Field.

In the past, the schools have sold tickets at the same price regardless of location inside the stadium. This year, seats for the CSU game will be sold using tiered pricing. Ticket prices will range from \$55 for seats in the top level of the stadium to \$110 for club level seats. All seats will be allocated based on the CU priority points system and season-ticket holders can request an upgrade to different pricing levels.

Bohn said fans have the choice of what price they want to pay and are not being forced to pay the higher prices because they can simply choose to sit in sections where tickets are less expensive.

Bohn said the department is mailing season-ticket renewal information this week. He said growing average attendance numbers over the past four seasons give him confidence fans will continue to turn out and support the Buffs regardless of the lack of success under coach Dan Hawkins.

High expectations

Bohn said he has high hopes for the football program next season, in part, because Hawkins feels good about his team and has "helped set the stage" for high expectations heading into his fifth season.

"I have big expectations for Dan to continue to be what he's been of late. That has been focused on football, focused on winning and focused on representing the University of Colorado with a great deal of pride and being very competitive," Bohn said.

Bohn did not mention a number of wins he would like to see Hawkins and the Buffs achieve in 2010. CU is 16-33 under Hawkins in his first four years as coach.

Bzdelik extension

Bohn said he hopes to visit with basketball coach Jeff Bzdelik after the season about the possibility of extending the coach's contract. Bzdelik is completing his third season in Boulder and is steadily improving the level of talent in the program, though the results haven't come in the win column.

Bohn said he and Bzdelik discussed a contract extension last offseason, but Bzdelik told Bohn he wanted to earn it. During his tenure in Boulder, Bzdelik has twice been mentioned as a candidate for NBA coaching positions.

"I think Jeff Bzdelik, every day his roots get deeper and deeper at the University of Colorado," Bohn said. "He is convinced that he is very close. He is touched by the fan support. He is touched by the student support and the excitement it has generated on game day."

Budget

Bohn said he does not expect the 2010-11 athletic department budget to grow and he believes all or most salaries in the department will remain the same. The 2009-10 budget was approximately \$45 million.

"We'll follow the campus' lead on that," he said when asked about a salary freeze.

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cu football

Bohn expects resolution to expansion issues

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 02/17/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

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Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn says conferences could be making big changes this summer. (THE DENVER POST | RJ SANGOSTI)

BOULDER — Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn said he expects decisions concerning possible expansion and realignment of conferences will be resolved by this summer.

The Big Ten and Pac-10 conferences announced recently they are analyzing the potential impact of conference expansion. Colorado declined overtures from the Pac-10 in 1994, having already committed to the formation of the Big 12, but CU could be a candidate again if the Pac-10 elects to grow.

Television contracts for the Pac-10 are due to expire after the 2011-12 academic year. Gaining new members in new markets is a way for conferences to strengthen and gain leverage for TV negotiations. Bohn said Colorado has not been contacted by the Pac-10.

Colorado Football

View slide show of CU spring football game at Folsom Field on April 10 .

- **View** slide show of CU scrimmage April 2 .

Visit the CU Stats Page for boxscores, Big 12 standings, team leaders and more .

- **Visit** Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports .

"If I had to bet, I've got to believe something is going to happen this summer," Bohn said Tuesday of conference expansion. "It doesn't make any sense to prolong it. That's my personal sense."

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THE DENVER POST

"But that's mere speculation. That's a guess. I don't have anything to back that up with — no invitations, no discussions, nothing."

Footnotes.

Bohn on the CU football program, which is coming off a 3-9 season: "No question, expectations are high, because (coach) Dan Hawkins has set them high." . . . Ceremonial groundbreaking for the Buffs' \$11 million basketball and volleyball practice facility is set for March 25. Construction is expected to take 11 months. . . . There will be no increase in the price of CU season football tickets, although for the first time there will be a tiered pricing of seats for the game against Colorado State at Invesco Field at Mile High.

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

FEBRUARY 16, 2010, 7:47 PM

CU: Athletic budget to remain steady

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

Speaking Tuesday during a “media roundtable,” Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn said he expects little change in the CU athletic-department budget for the upcoming year. The budget was about \$45 million for the 2009-2010 academic year.

Because of the economic climate, Bohn said is likely that the salaries of staffers in the athletic department will be frozen. An exception would be coaches contracts which specified pay increases.

Bohn credited CU’s loyal fan support, especially for football — which funds the other sports — for the reason that substantial cuts can be avoided. Colorado’s average home football attendance — about 50,000 per game— has held relatively steady for the past several years, Bohn said.

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Bohn: CU to 'monitor' expansion

By Patrick Ridgell
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BOULDER — It's becoming the 800-pound gorilla in the Big 12's living room.

Expansion is coming. Maybe. The Pac-10 and Big Ten are exploring it, and with summer deadlines forcing decisions sooner rather than later, it's a topic Colorado can't avoid.

During a roundtable discussion Tuesday, CU athletic director Mike Bohn addressed recent reports that said the Pac-10 might court CU if it decides to expand. CU turned down Pac-10 overtures in 1994. Bohn would not say how CU will react if the opportunity presents itself again, but added, "We'll monitor (the situation) as it develops."

"Obviously, that's a national issue right now: the speculation associated with league affiliation," Bohn said. "We're committed to the Big 12 Conference. We're committed to being competitive in the Big 12 Conference. However, there is a different feel right now about different movement across the country, so obviously we're mindful of that and we're trying to do everything we can to make sure we're supportive of the league we're in."

"Speculation right now is really a big distraction for us, because it's simply that. One day the Big Ten is expanding to 12; the next day it's 14. The Pac-10 is talking about maybe expanding. To be honest with you, I think the Big 12 is talking about where do we expand, where do we look for opportunities as these different things come together."

Bohn said CU has not heard from or contacted the Pac-10 or the Big Ten.

The Big 12 told the Times-Call on Tuesday that there is internal discussion going on within the conference's quarters about the speculation and what the conference will do if it loses members. There have been reports that the Big Ten may court Texas and/or Missouri.

The Big 12 stressed that because there is nothing beyond speculation and rumors at this time, it's not publicly discussing the topic.

CU would have to provide two years notice if it intends to leave the Big 12. During those two years, the Big 12 would cut its distribution to CU by 50 percent. If CU provided less than two years, the distribution cut would be greater.

Bohn said that if there is going to be movement, he expects it to happen by this summer.

Topics of Discussion

In addition to expansion, Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn addressed several items during Tuesday's roundtable discussion. They included:

- Bohn said football ticket prices will not increase this season. Last year, CU increased costs for about 34 percent of Folsom Field. Bohn cited the tough economy and CU's satisfaction with its fan base as reasons to keep prices the same. Bohn also said he anticipates CU's athletic budget — approximately \$45 million in 2009-10 — won't change. He said assistant coaches' salaries likely will remain frozen.

- Expectations for football coach Dan Hawkins and his program are high. "There's no question they are high, and I think they're high because Dan has set them high," Bohn said. "Dan has a lot of confidence in his team. Despite what some people think, I think our home schedule is perfect for the situation we're in right now. Dan has consistently proven he can get his team ready to win big home games." CU will host Hawaii, Georgia, Baylor, Texas Tech, Iowa State and Kansas State in 2010.

- Groundbreaking for the new basketball/volleyball practice facility will take place at 12:30 p.m. March 25, just north of the Coors Events Center. Bohn said he hopes to discuss a contract extension with men's basketball coach Jeff Bzdelik "at the appropriate time" following the season. Bzdelik said in October he wants an extension only if he deserves one.

- CU football's season opener with Colorado State at Invesco Field in Denver will be part of its season ticket package, but the game will have tiered pricing this year as opposed to past seasons. Bohn said costs will

In 2009, the Big 12 generated \$130.1 million to distribute among its schools. Half the money, which is generated from television and NCAA Tournament appearances, is split equally. Conference programs can earn greater shares of the other half through televised non-conference games and longer stays in the NAAs in March. CU reported its cut last year was roughly \$9 million.

The \$130.1 million the Big 12 generated was its highest yet, and up from \$113.5 million the previous year.

The TV deal the Southeastern Conference struck last year with ESPN (15 years, \$2.25 billion) and CBS (15 years, \$825 million) has created a sense among other leagues that they must catch up, according to Bohn.

The Big 12's deals with ABC/ESPN (eight years, \$480 million, through 2015-16) and Fox Sports Net (four years, \$78 million, through 2011-12) don't compare.

"I think the Big 12 athletic directors and leaders in the Big 12 recognize the SEC TV agreement has created a gap for us, and we're working every day to try and close it," Bohn said.

The Pac-10's TV deals with ABC/ESPN (five years, \$125 million for football; six years, \$52.5 million for basketball) and with Fox Sports Net (five years, \$97 million for basketball) run through 2011-12.

Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell. He can be reached at pridgell@timescall.com.

vary for club, suite, upper deck, end zone and 50-yard-line seats. Bohn said CU sold suites at Folsom Field to two new buyers in the past month. "We anticipate a capacity environment this fall with our suite holders," he said. Bohn said nearly all of Folsom's 41 suites were sold out last year. Renewal letters are being sent to season ticket holders this week. Bohn said CU has a list of new buyers for season tickets as well.

- Patrick Ridgell