

Bohn vows to break ground on CU practice facility by April

New hoops, volleyball facility should be done in 2011

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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The Colorado men's and women's basketball teams and the volleyball team have only one more season to wait before they will have a new practice facility.

Athletic director Mike Bohn said Thursday during the annual post-signing day football recruiting luncheon that the school will break ground on the practice facility, which will be attached to the Coors Events Center in early April, and the project is expected to take 11 months to complete.

Under that timetable, coaches Jeff Bzdelik, Kathy McConnell-Miller and Liz Kritza would all be able to work with their players during spring conditioning in the new building in April and May 2011.

Bohn said bids for some of the construction work are still coming in and the contracts will be awarded in the next 45 days. He said his department has considered a groundbreaking ceremony as early as March 27.

"I guarantee you we're moving dirt in early April," Bohn said.

Thursday's luncheon was held in a large ballroom in the downtown Denver Sheraton Hotel and renderings of the new basketball and volleyball practice facility greeted those in attendance as they entered the room. The project is expected to cost \$10-\$12 million, Bohn said.

Bohn also announced a new ongoing "Glory Colorado" fundraising campaign and said funding for the basketball and volleyball building will come from that campaign. He said Glory Colorado will help fund many athletic department endeavors in the years to come. It is an effort designed to pursue financial gifts and naming rights opportunities of all sizes.

However, Bohn acknowledged that while there are sufficient funds to begin construction on the basketball and volleyball practice facility, it is not fully funded at this point.

"Have we raised all that we want for all the different projects? No, but we're working towards that," Bohn said. "But we've raised enough money for the basketball practice facility and through our other financing associated with it to move. It's going. It's coming out of the ground in April."

As long as Bohn's timetable is correct, breaking ground on the facility will satisfy a clause in Bzdelik's contract that required the project be under way by the start of his fourth year on the job or he would be free to accept a job elsewhere without owing CU any money through his buyout clause.

Other facilities projects Bohn talked about Thursday remain in the planning or conceptual phases, including refurbishing the flatirons club on the west side of Folsom Field, installing new, larger video boards in Folsom Field and possibly replacing the natural grass football field with Field Turf.

Making that change would allow the school to save money in expenses associated with protecting the grass for events such as graduations and the Bolder Boulder. It would also allow CU to rent the stadium for more summer time concerts.

"We're scratching at all those opportunities," Bohn said.

The biggest potential project is a fieldhouse conference center that could also include a campus hotel. It would be located outside the northeast gates of Folsom Field and possibly include a parking structure and indoor practice space for the football and track teams.

"Do we have a definitive plan? No," Bohn said. "But we're looking at that. We're trying to find ways to pull that together to

build great efficiency with campus."

Bohn said the ultimate goal of the Glory Colorado campaign is to eliminate much of the department's debt so that money currently being spent on debt service can be put to work on making CU athletics more competitive.

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Women athletes: Are we there yet?

CU athletes reflect on female progress in sports

By Gina Yocom on February 5, 2010

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Ask any female athlete at CU what most of her day is devoted to, and the response will most likely be training.

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Senior track and field thrower Chynna McCall has the schedule to prove it.

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"I have to block out 2 to 6 [p.m.] everyday to train," McCall said.

Women have come a long way since the days when women's basketball players could only play half-court.

Bianca Smith, a senior guard for CU's women's basketball team, said she has already seen changes since she started her athletic career in 3rd grade.

"I think when I was younger and basketball was less prominent, it was a bit of a struggle," she said. "Most young girls had to play on boys teams, and as I got older there were more and more women's teams, and now there're much more opportunit[ies]."

Although the attitude about women athletes has changed, there is still a stigma around women in sports, some athletes say.

When asked if she had experienced sexism in sports, McCall said she said that she has been treated differently because of her gender.

"I only think with my teammates. In the past we have had some dudes that were sexist on our team and you know, you can't do this or whatever," she said. "It's not really intimidation in what I can do, it's just that they kind of treat me differently, like a girl but it's like I can do the same things as you."

McCall has been throwing for seven years and continues to prove herself, taking second in the CSM All-Comers Meet last year.

Sophomore combined events athlete Katharine Dreher, one of McCall's teammates, said she has not felt the need to overcome any more than the men in her sport.

"I couldn't say that I see a huge difference really," Dreher said. "Maybe just working out with the guys. It's obvious that they are stronger than we are, but I don't think it affects my attitude toward women at all."

Women collegiate athletes seem to be satisfied with how things are. College athletic organizations have made it much easier for women to participate in sports.

The gap between men and women widens in professional sports.

There remains an obvious difference between the salaries of men and women professional basketball players.

The maximum salary cap for an entire team in the WNBA is \$827,000. Meanwhile the Lakers' star Kobe Bryant will make \$23 million this year.

Smith is well aware of the inequality in men and women's pay in professional sports. In regards to women's sports, she feels it's sold a little short.

"I think it's a little underrated as far as payment goes," Smith said. "And the people who watch the sport, just because we're not as high flying as the men are, we lose some fans. So that's where I think there could be some changes."

These CU women athletes feel satisfied and equal to men in college sports, but it's the professional culture that still needs to be changed before equality prevails.

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Buff's planning reunion for 1990 team

By Patrick Ridgell
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DENVER — On Oct. 2, the Colorado football program will hold a 20-year reunion for its 1990 national championship team. That's the weekend CU hosts Georgia in its final non-conference game.

Citing a need to "honor and celebrate" the team's members, former CU coach Bill McCartney announced the planned reunion during Thursday's recruiting luncheon. He said the project will require eight months of intense work to make sure as many members of the 1990 team as possible can attend.

"We want to get them all here, if possible, and honor and celebrate and laugh with them," McCartney said. "We want them to reconnect with the university, and so this year's team can feel the depth of the commitment of those guys."

Athletic director Mike Bohn said CU is working with Nike on a commemorative jersey for the team to wear that game. He said it was possible CU could wear the jersey throughout 2010, but that's undecided.

CU running backs coach Darian Hagan was the starting quarterback on the 1990 team. He said the current Buffs stand to benefit a lot from being around his old teammates.

"It's going to mean a lot to see them back and be honored and let this year's group be around them," Hagan said. "I talk so much about the guys I played with, and our guys will be able to meet them and understand where I come from when I talk about those guys. I think it's time that our guys got back here."

FACILITY NEWS: CU also announced it has raised enough money to hold a groundbreaking for its basketball/volleyball practice facility and to move forward with construction. Bohn did not provide the date for the groundbreaking but mentioned March 27 as a possibility.

He stressed that more money must be raised to complete the project. It'll cost between \$10 million and \$12 million, he said. He said Thursday it'll take 11 months to build.

Bohn said the facility's fund-raising is part of CU's "Glory Colorado" campaign, which "is designed to go out and pursue major gifts but also small gifts and different naming opportunities in our different venues."

Other projects CU is considering funding with the campaign include putting new video boards in Folsom Field, renovating the stadium's 40-year-old Flatiron Club, adding more lights to the practice field and building a fieldhouse conference center, which would be a new building.

"There are different potential opportunities tied with collaborative efforts with the city, with the rest of campus," Bohn said. "There are no definitive plans, but we are looking at (the fieldhouse), scratching at that, trying to find ways to pull that together to build great efficiency with campus."

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