

CU Buffs may make move to Pac-10 in 2011

UT stays in Big 12, but that doesn't change CU's mind about conference switch

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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The University of Colorado didn't hit the television revenue lottery after all with its move to the Pac-10 Conference, now that the remaining 10 members of the Big 12 Conference have found a way to stay together.

But CU officials weren't exactly shedding tears at the news Monday.

With the Pac-10 likely to add Utah and become a 12-team league with a championship game in football as well as starting its own television network, Colorado will probably receive as much, if not more, in annual conference distributions in the future than it would have had it remained in the Big 12.

Plus, all the other reasons for making the move remain unchanged.

"Our move was decisive, strategic and represented the importance of connecting with the conference that allows us to have a fit with our colleagues in the league and we remain elated to be a part of the Pac-10 Conference into the future," athletic director Mike Bohn said Monday evening.

It appears if the Pac-10 does stop expansion at 12 teams, it will split the league into north and south divisions. Pac-10 sources indicated the most likely split in a 12-team league is Colorado and Utah joining Arizona, Arizona State, USC and UCLA in the south with the other six schools in the north.

Bohn said it would be premature to speculate on division lineups before the Pac-10 has completed its expansion plans. However, sources said when Bohn informed his coaches and other athletic department staffers last Thursday that CU was switching leagues, he said CU had been promised it will compete in the south division if the conference expanded to only 12 teams. Plenty of uncertainties remain to be worked out in the coming weeks.

At the top of the list is when Colorado will officially leave the Big 12 and begin playing in the Pac-10. The initial plan was for the Buffs to make the switch at the start of the 2012 football season. But when Nebraska announced on Friday that it was joining the Big Ten at the start of the 2011 season, it likely pushed up Colorado's timeline.

Nebraska leaving the Big 12 in 2011 will force the league to redo its conference schedule for one year. It's possible the league could accomplish that with Colorado, but it would probably prefer to part ways with both schools at the same time.

However, if the Big 12 forces Colorado to leave a year early with Nebraska, it could save CU some money in exit fees.

Another factor at play is whether television partners in the Pac-10 will be willing to restructure their contracts with the league for one season to include at least one new member in CU and possibly two, if Utah joins.

"I'm confident after all the league shakeup is confirmed that we'll have the opportunity to sit down with both conferences and explore potential solutions to whatever shakeup is finalized," Bohn said.

If Colorado does leave a year early in 2011, it won't be hard to change the football schedule for the 2011 season. CU is slated to play Cal that season as one of its nonconference games. That game would simply become a conference matchup while the other three nonconference games remain on the schedule.

Another reason CU is likely to move up its change in conference affiliation is the probable addition of Utah. The Utes figure to be the next target for the Pac-10 now that the Texas and Oklahoma schools are staying in the Big 12.

The Mountain West Conference requires only one-year notice to leave the league, which would allow Utah to join the Pac-10 in 2011 with little problem.

The other big issue CU must work out is absorbing the cost of any exit fees it ultimately incurs from the Big 12.

Big 12 bylaws stipulate that if a school gives two years notice that it is leaving the conference, it forfeits 50 percent of its conference revenue distribution for each of those two years. That would cost CU between \$4.5 and \$5 million for each year or somewhere between \$9 and \$10 million over the next two years.

Colorado and Pac-10 officials said last week they have agreed to a plan in which the Pac-10 would help Colorado absorb the cost of leaving the Big 12. How the plan will work remains to be seen. Bohn said no matter how it is done no money from taxpayers or revenue from the CU campus will be used.

"I'm sure we will have the opportunity to evaluate how that is structured and then we will fund it from future conference distribution from the Pac-10 Conference," Bohn said. "We anticipate being able to structure some type of financing related to future disbursements."

Nebraska faces the possibility of losing \$9 to \$10 million in one year because it gave only one year notice. Exit fees rise if less notice than two years notice is given.

However, Nebraska chancellor Harvey Perlman has suggested that his institution might not owe an exit fee to the Big 12 because of confusing bylaws and his assertion that Nebraska was forced to make the move in its own self interest. If the Big 12 does stay together, it is sure to keep any fees it believes CU and Nebraska owe, which could lead to legal action.

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Texas turns down Pac-10, keeps Big 12 alive

Other schools make concessions to get Longhorns to stay

Associated Press
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/14/2010 04:41:48 PM MDT

AUSTIN, Texas -- Given up as a lost cause just days ago, the Big 12 emerged Monday evening as a leaner, richer conference with 10 teams and its viability assured.

Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe, sitting in what he called his "war room" at the league offices in Irving, got the game-changing phone call from Texas president William Powers about 4 p.m. Monday, according to a source familiar with the process. The Longhorns had turned down an invitation to the Pacific-10 Conference and were staying in the Big 12, swayed by lucrative TV possibilities.

Powers confirmed UT's decision to Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott, who had seemed poised to deliver Texas, Texas Tech, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State -- and possibly Texas A&M -- to the Pac-10, creating a 16-team superconference that would transform college athletics.

"We've been informed by University of Texas president Bill Powers that Texas will stay with the Big 12," Scott said in a brief interview. "We have not received definitive details about this decision."

Soon after, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State announced they were also remaining in the Big 12.

Texas Tech is expected to stay and indicated it will issue a statement today.

The next key was Texas A&M. The school quickly followed with a statement from president R. Bowen Loftin, saying that the Aggies would continue as members of the Big 12. Loftin said the survival of the Big 12 was the preferred choice for himself and athletic director Bill Byrne.

"We are committed to the Big 12 and its success today and into the future," the statement read in part. That ensured that Colorado (Pac-10) and Nebraska (Big Ten) would be the only defections from the Big 12, losses the league could endure.

A key factor was a long-term TV deal initiated by Beebe and unveiled Sunday. With help from current league partners Fox Sports Net and ABC/ESPN, the deal will enable some schools to double their revenue. Terms were expected to be revealed by Beebe today.

But one key component in the Big 12 proposal allowed Texas to keep alive hopes for its own TV network, viewed as an important project by athletic director DeLoss Dodds. With the network, Texas could make upwards of \$25 million annually in conference revenue, multiple sources familiar with the plan said. Big 12 schools each make between \$12 million and \$7 million in revenue now.

Schools such as Oklahoma and A&M, which has battled debt problems in its athletic department, could earn about \$20 million. Other schools in the conference will make less under the plan, but more than they are currently making.

The Fox cable rights deal with the Big 12 expires in 2012, but ESPN/ABC is locked in until 2016. Both networks reacted with concern to Pac-10 plans to add major schools in Texas and Oklahoma and place them on a conference TV network, according to multiple sources familiar with the situation. The move also could have set off a chain reaction of college realignment that could have dramatically changed the landscape.

Much of the A&M fan base was electrified about a bid to the Southeastern Conference and a separate identity from rival Texas.

Nobody quite knew how they might react to remaining with the Big 12.

A key barometer was A&M regent and Aggies football legend Gene Stallings, who had been among those vocally wondering if the Aggies should take a step away from Texas.

In a phone conversation just before noon Monday, Stallings said he liked the idea of a 10-team Big 12.

"First of all, if I had my druthers I would wish that the conference did not disband," said Stallings, who played for Bear Bryant at A&M and won a national title at Alabama as head coach. "I would really hate to see A&M and its rivalries with Texas and Texas Tech and Oklahoma go away. I hated to see the Southwest Conference disband. I'm the sort of person who holds on to old values."

Another key conference voice weighed in during the afternoon: Dallas oilman and financier T. Boone Pickens, whose donations have transformed Oklahoma State athletics. He was optimistic after giving a talk in Austin and said he liked the idea of a lean Big 12.

"I don't want to go off and leave Iowa State, Kansas State or Baylor," Pickens said. "The Pac-10 is not that interesting. I'd rather trim the conference. I don't care if Nebraska leaves, I have no love for them. And I'd just as soon Missouri leave, and Colorado kind of fell in the same category."

Beebe has pushed for a long-term commitment from each Big 12 school, as much as 10 years, to avoid any repeat in the near future, sources said.

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Big 12 revived: Horns, others to stay

TV deal key as schools courted by other conferences stick to 10-team league.

By **Randy Riggs, Ralph K.M. Haurwitz and Kirk Bohls**

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Updated: 1:14 a.m. Tuesday, June 15, 2010

Published: 11:05 p.m. Monday, June 14, 2010

Never mind.

That pretty much sums up the announcements Monday by the University of Texas and Texas A&M University that their athletics programs will continue competing in the Big 12 Conference. Their decisions thus assured a future for a league that appeared mortally wounded as recently as Saturday.

The announcements followed a whirlwind romance involving UT and the Pacific-10 Conference that the Longhorns broke off for reasons that UT officials declined to discuss Monday evening. But the reasons almost certainly included questions about multimillion-dollar television revenues, concerns among elected officials and the future of long-standing rivalries.

Texas officials — President William Powers Jr. and Athletics Directors DeLoss Dodds (men) and Chris Plonsky (women) — have scheduled a 10 a.m. news conference today. Dan Beebe, commissioner of the Big 12, is scheduled to discuss the league's survival in a teleconference at 11 a.m.

A&M had been considering whether to join the Pac-10 or the Southeastern Conference. If the Aggies had decided to join the SEC, the Big 12 proposal would have collapsed, and Texas, Texas Tech, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State would have been bound for the Pac-10.

"As Athletics Director Bill Byrne and I have stated on numerous occasions, our hope and desire was for the Big 12 to continue," A&M President R. Bowen Loftin said in a statement. "We are committed to the Big 12 and its success today and into the future."

The demise of the Big 12 had seemed all but certain a few days ago, after the University of Colorado quit the league for the Pac-10, effective in 2012, and the University of Nebraska announced it will depart for the Big Ten in 2011.

Under the new 10-team alignment, it's expected that the Big 12 will eliminate its north and south divisions and play a nine-game conference football schedule. The conference football championship game also is expected to be eliminated because the NCAA stipulates that a league must have at least 12 teams, split into divisions, to play a championship game.

At least two sources from Big 12 schools said that Texas and all the remaining schools in the league will be allowed to keep their rights for their own institutional TV network and the revenue from it. That is something Texas has coveted and would have had to surrender if it joined the Pac-10.

Indeed, the Pac-10's refusal to let the Longhorns have their own network was a major stumbling block in that conference's ability to lure Texas away from the Big 12. The Pac-10 was steadfast that it could not allow a member school to operate its own TV network because that could harm the leaguewide network's success. The Big Ten has a similar ban on individual school networks because it has a conferencewide network.

Each school in the SEC owns its local broadcast rights and markets them through three sports marketing

entities, Learfield, IMG and ISP.

The powerhouse schools in certain sports — Georgia and Florida because of football and Kentucky because of basketball — can make between \$8 million and \$10 million through sponsorships and local TV rights. Those figures are on top of the \$17 million that each SEC school received this season from a TV package with CBS/ESPN in the league's first year of a 15-year, \$3 billion contract.

Each SEC school also is given one football game for pay-per-view and allowed to keep all the profits.

The Big 12 will distribute \$139 million in TV revenue to its member schools for the 2009-10 academic year, an average of \$11.58 million per school. But Texas stands to receive about \$14 million to 15 million because of the league's policy of revenue-sharing based on number of TV appearances.

The 10 members of the new-look Big 12 — several officials say there are no current plans to expand — stand to make more money in the league's TV agreements with Fox Sports and ABC/ESPN. The Fox contract will run through 2012, and the deal with ABC/ESPN will end in 2016.

"Supposedly we'll get more, but we'll see," said a high-ranking official at a Big 12 school.

Though there are no estimates on how much money Texas might make from its own network, it's thought to be a lucrative source of additional income for an athletic program that is already the richest in the nation, with annual revenue of \$138.4 million in 2008-09, the most recent reporting period.

"University of Texas President Bill Powers has informed us that the 10 remaining schools in the Big 12 Conference intend to stay together," Larry Scott, the Pac-10's first-year commissioner, said in a statement. "We are excited about the future of the Pac-10 Conference, and we will continue to evaluate future expansion opportunities under the guidelines previously set forth by our Presidents and Chancellors."

The governing boards for UT and Tech had scheduled meetings for today, presumably to give the go-ahead to the schools to sign on to the Pac-10. UT's Board of Regents canceled its meeting after Monday's announcement, but Tech's governing board will meet as scheduled.

Until last week the stated preference of UT, A&M and Tech was to preserve the Big 12. But when Colorado and Nebraska left, serious doubts arose as to whether the league could survive when other major conferences seem intent on expanding.

T. Boone Pickens, Oklahoma State's top donor, told the American-Statesman hours before Monday's announcements that he favored preservation of the Big 12.

"We don't need to go to the Pac-10. We've got everything we need here. I'm not big about going off and leaving people," Pickens said, referring to the schools that would have been left to join a less prestigious athletic conference.

Those schools include Baylor, Kansas, Kansas State and Iowa State.

Baylor football coach Art Briles expressed relief that the Bears will remain in a Bowl Championship Series league. "The people in control stood tough," Briles said of Big 12 and school leaders.

His sentiments were echoed by Kansas basketball coach Bill Self, whose Jayhawks are one of the elite programs in the country. "We felt all along we would land on our feet, but we were nervous," Self said. Pickens had harsh words for the Big 12's University of Missouri, which let it be known it could be wooed after the Big Ten said late last year that it wanted to expand.

"I'd rather have Missouri if they want to be in the conference," he said. "But if they're going to complain all the time, let them go someplace else."

The announcements by Texas and A&M drew praise from some members of the Legislature.

"All along it has been clear that if Texas' universities including UT-Austin, Tech, A&M and Baylor stay together, they have the strength to do what is in the best interests of our state's families, fans and student-athletes, rather than hand over control of their fates to universities in Nebraska, Colorado, California, or anywhere else," said state Rep. Jim Dunnam, D-Waco.

Still scheduled is a hearing Wednesday on athletic conferences before the House Higher Education Committee.

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<http://www.statesman.com/sports/longhorns/big-12-revived-horns-others-to-stay-747684.html>



Texas stays in Big 12, and league gets a new life after turnaround

01:04 PM CDT on Tuesday, June 15, 2010

By **CHUCK CARLTON** / The Dallas Morning News
ccarlton@dallasnews.com / The Dallas Morning News

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The other key was Texas A&M.

The school quickly followed with a statement from president R. Bowen Loftin, saying that the Aggies would continue as members of the Big 12. Loftin said the survival of the Big 12 was the preferred choice for himself and athletic director Bill Byrne.

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CODY DUTY/DMN

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Staff writer Wayne Slater in Austin contributed to this report.

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Patching up the Big 12: Remaining schools commit to conference


By John Helsley, Staff Writer, jhelsley@opubco.com  90
Published: June 15, 2010



Photo by Chris Landsberger, The Oklahoman

With all on board – all those invited, anyway – preparing for the wild ride to the Pac-10, the strange and unexpected happened Monday.

Someone yanked the emergency brake.

Now the departure of five Big 12 South schools is not only delayed, it's off, with the

once-gasping Big 12 again breathing comfortably on its own.

In a stunning turnabout, the expected exodus of Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech to the Pac-10 halted, with a new deal struck to stick with a 10-team version of the Big 12.

With Texas and Texas A&M leading a renewed commitment to the Big 12 on Monday, the remaining members of the conference found solidarity, as well as a promise of more money from league commissioner Dan Beebe, following the exits of Colorado and Nebraska last week.

The move, or non-move, was met favorably in Norman and Stillwater.

"We have said all along we prefer to keep the conference together," said OSU president Barns Hargis. "We applaud commissioner Beebe's bold moves and intense efforts over the past several days to keep the conference not only together, but also more viable than ever. We also appreciate the collaboration of all conference members to reach this agreement."

In a joint statement by OU president David Boren and athletic director Joe Castiglione: "The decision to stay in the Big 12 represents a consensus position which resulted from a collaborative effort with our colleagues in the conference. We value the strong working relationship that has been reaffirmed during this process among the conference members.

"We intend to work very hard to make the conference as lasting and dynamic as possible. We appreciate the respect and interest that has been shown to OU during this process."

Heading into the weekend, the Big 12 was being left for dead.

Colorado had already accepted an invitation to the Pac-10 and Nebraska made a bolt to the Big Ten. More defections appeared likely, with five Big 12 South schools – Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech – all at the depot for the last train out of their decaying league.

"This train was rolling toward the Pac-10," a Big 12 administrator who preferred the move out west told *The Oklahoman*.

"Looks like it has passed us by."

When Texas A&M hesitated to join the exodus, weighing an apparent option to join the SEC, it created a cause to pause on the Pac-10. That allowed Beebe an opportunity to work out a new proposal that features more TV money and the freedom for the schools to create their own networks, key points for Texas and OU.

Under Beebe's plan, each Big 12 school would net at least \$14 million, with the heavyweight Longhorns and Sooners making as much as \$20 million.

A Big 12 source said the money is close to SEC money with Fox and ESPN involved.

And, the source said, the money is very much real.

"It's not funny money," said the source. "If you're sitting in a Fox or ESPN chair, you have to assess the value to you of not having a mega-conference."

Even as Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott made a weekend tour through Oklahoma and Texas to issue the official invitations to join his league, hints of a Big 12 bounce-back surfaced.

And Monday, the hints gained legs and became an all-out sprint toward a Big 12 brotherhood once more. Weakened perhaps, both in number and prestige, yet together, again.

"While we are disappointed Nebraska and Colorado have chosen to withdraw from the conference, we believe the remaining members have the ability to maintain the Big 12 Conference's tradition of competing for national championships," OSU athletic director Mike Holder said in a statement.

"Our hope is that this experience will draw the conference closer together and inspire us to work together toward a brighter future."

Some details remain sketchy, but sources say that football is headed toward a round-robin schedule of nine conference games. Basketball would likely feature an 18-game league schedule in which the teams play each conference member home and away.

The Big 12 is not expected to seek expansion.

"Ten is all anyone wants at this point," said the Big 12 source. "Everyone's pleased with 10."

And, apparently, everyone's pleased with the 10, even Missouri, which at one point openly campaigned for a spot in the Big Ten.

"Who can fault them?" the Big 12 source said. "At the end of the day, that's what you're working for, doing what's best for your employer."

"It's a big-boy's world. A big-boy's league."

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Winners and losers from the Big 12's survival

By Berry Tramel, Staff Writer, btramel@opubco.com  36

Published: June 15, 2010

Now that the Big 12 has survived, who are the winners and losers?

→ **WINNER: January football** — OU's and Texas' road to the national championship game just got a lot easier, with no Nebraska and no Big 12 title game. Remember the long-time Big 12 refrain that if it had to play a title game, every league should have to play a title game? That argument will be reversed, now that the Big Ten is likely to add a title game and the Pac-10, too, if it adds another school.

→ **LOSER: December Football** — We're about to discover what a huge platform the Big 12 championship game provides. While the SEC, ACC and soon Big Ten (and maybe the Pac-10) plays a showdown on the final Saturday of the regular season, the Big 12's championship game will have been played two months earlier, in the Cotton Bowl.

→ **WINNER: Oklahoma State** — The Cowboys move up the Big 12 food chain one notch, with the departure of Nebraska. Easier to get to good bowls.

→ **LOSER: Big 12 North football** — The North schools have been struggling even though they get five games against each other and only two or three a year against the South dobermans. Now they get five games a year against the South dobermans. Better soften up the non-conference schedule as best they can.

→ **WINNER: Dan Beebe** — The maligned commissioner was ridiculed only a few days ago as a weak leader whose league was crumbling. Now he's the man who saved it.

→ **LOSER: Conference Status** — A 10-team league that's top-heavy with OU and Texas, with Iowa State, Baylor, Kansas and Kansas State at the bottom? The Big 12 clearly will be ahead of only the Big East in reputation.

→ **WINNER: Loyalty** — OU and OSU can sleep easier at night, knowing it didn't effectively ruin the athletic departments of old friends Kansas, Iowa State, Kansas State and Missouri.

→*LOSER: Conference Stability* — OU and OSU can't sleep too easy, knowing the conference is built on sand. What if the projected revenues don't come to pass? What if the Big Ten eventually warms up to Missouri? What if A&M rethinks the SEC? And will the cushy Plan B of the Pac-10 be available next time?

→*WINNER: Kansas City* — Without a Big 12, there is no Big 12 basketball tournament, and KC's new Sprint Center — without an NBA or NHL tenant — was about to lose its marquee event. But now the tournament can remain in Kansas City and bring millions of dollars to KC coffers.

→*LOSER: Oklahoma City* — OKC has been effectively shut out of the Big 12 basketball tournament. The Pac-10 offered a chance to get back into the hoops rotation.

→*WINNER: Big 12 North (plus Baylor) Comfort* — Kansas, Missouri, Kansas State, Iowa State and Baylor were about to be left behind, with a shambles of a conference and nowhere good to go. But now the Big 12 lives, apparently with increased revenues, and the almost-forsaken have a home.

→*LOSER: Jerry Jones* — The Big 12 gave his stadium the conference title game through 2013, but 2010 will be the final Big 12 championship game unless the league expands or NCAA rules change.

→*WINNER: Texas A&M's Manhood* — In the end, the Aggies not only publicly stood up to Texas, they ended up with the final decision. Jumping to the SEC could have triggered the mass exodus for the Pac-10 by at least four other schools.

→*LOSER: OU Manhood* — The Sooners publicly let Texas run interference on the potential conference shakeup and make the decision on staying. OU no doubt was more involved than it appeared, but in the end, A&M seemed to think for itself while the Sooners didn't.

→*WINNER: Traveling Fans* — More drivable games for OU and OSU fans. You can drive to Columbia and Ames. Can't drive to Tempe or Tucson.

→*LOSER: Television Fans* — You can drive to more games, but the games aren't as good once you get there. More Texas-Kansas and Oklahoma-Iowa State games does not make for great television.

→*WINNER: Mike Gundy's Scheduling* — Gundy always has wanted to scrap the championship game and play every team in the league. Now he's got his wish.

→*LOSER: SEC* — The SEC seemed on the verge of getting Texas A&M and forging a niche in the rich recruiting grounds of Texas. Now, the SEC remains just outside the nation's best high school football state.

→ **WINNER: Southern Cal** — While recovering from a major NCAA probation, the Trojans were faced with beating OU or Texas, some years at JerryWorld in Arlington, to reach the Rose Bowl.

→ **LOSER: Big 12 Parity** — OU and Texas have dominated the league for a decade, but at least there was hope that Nebraska could find its footing and make a football Big Three. And Colorado has had its moments during the Big 12 era. Now, fewer teams than ever can challenge the Sooners and Longhorns.

→ **WINNER: Big 12 Budgets** — If Beebe's promised riches for a new television contract hold, the television revenues for most schools will more than double. That's transforming for schools like OSU, Iowa State, Kansas State and Texas Tech.

→ **LOSER: Pac-10** — The Pac-10 seemed on the verge of transforming the collegiate landscape. Now, all the Pac-10 has done is add Colorado.

→ **WINNER: Arizona schools** — Arizona State and Arizona were about to join the Big 12 South, which would have been a steep upgrade from its current Pac-10 schedule.

→ **LOSER: Vengeance** — Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon's crack about OSU's and Tech's academics now will go unpunished. In the Pac-10, Tech and OSU would have had the last laugh.

→ **WINNER: Texas Power** — The Longhorns maintain their kingpin status in the Big 12 and lose their gadfly, Nebraska. The Longhorns held the league hostage, then stayed in the Big 12 with even more revenues and power.



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