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06/17/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

## Brooks: Revitalized Buffs, Solid Utes Can Be Boon To Pac-12

### BUFFALO EXTRAS



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BOULDER - If you're a believer in things working out in the long run, you've got to like how they've already worked out for Colorado in the short run. Had things gone South (and I think you know what I'm getting at) I'm pretty sure the buzz about Pac-10 membership wouldn't have reached the pitch it's attained and maintained for the past week.

It was only seven days ago that CU announced its acceptance of the Pac-10's invitation to come aboard. Our neighbor half a day's drive straight across I-70 West followed suit Thursday, giving the Pac-10 a dozen teams.

Welcome, Utah, and Westward, Ho . . . good to have someone else from the neighborhood making the trip.

First things first: Name changes now are in order in college athletics. If you're counting at home, the Big Ten and Pac-10 now are 12-team conferences, the Big 12 has been reduced by a pair. The realignment tsunami being predicted at this time last week turned out to be a couple of moderately heavy swells - although CU's soon-to-be-former conference believed for a short time it was about to be washed away.

That the Big 12 held together, however the binding was accomplished, is obvious comforting news for its remaining members and perhaps college athletics in general. But how long the current structure holds up before the mega-conference rumblings begin anew is anyone's guess. If you're a seer of such things, you probably recognize that most of the elements present when the expansion/realignment chatter was at its height have not disappeared.

Somewhere out there - and maybe sooner than later - a big college land-grab lurks.

The good news for CU (and now Utah) is that terra firma has been found. Spare me the whining that a Pac-16 would have been more financially appealing for the Buffs; it no doubt would have been, and CU Athletic Director Mike Bohn conceded as much in a conversation early Thursday morning.

"I think that probably would have been the case, but there would be other challenges associated with the size of the league," he said.

Ah, yes . . . "challenges" such as being the odd former Big 12 North member in a division best described as the relocated Big 12 South. Based on everything gleaned from a variety of Buffs fans over the past seven days, that alignment had all the appeal of a month-old tuna melt.

Had the Buffs been cast in a Pac-16 division with five expatriates from the Big 12 South, the change of scenery and so much more that has galvanized CU's leadership and fan base might not have occurred.

"Those dynamics (associated with that particular eight-team division) would have been interesting," Bohn said. "But then again, we know there's going to be a Pac-12 and we're very excited about that. I think it's time to focus exclusively on that and building our base.

"We're going to have to focus exclusively on all of our different constituents associated with our university and getting them together."

He ticked off these goals: Increasing Buff Club memberships and season ticket sales, rallying CU fans/alums "in the Pac-10 footprint, informing them how they get tickets to games and how they can follow what's going on at the university," working out details for university departments to make road trips, and generally promoting all the campus goings-on.

"We really need to use this (new conference membership) as the key rallying point for the entire university," he said.

Bohn kept most of his other thoughts to himself on what could have been in a bigger, broader Pac-16. As he pointed out, it's a time for forward thinking - and that's where his thoughts are centered.

Now that Utah has signed on, most Pac-12 divisional speculation has CU being aligned with the Southern California schools (UCLA, USC), the Arizona pair (Arizona, Arizona State) and Utah. But specific divisional placement, noted Bohn, will be appraised and addressed later this summer, as will the league's interest in conducting a championship game.

"The leadership and vision of Larry Scott (commissioner) is critical in all these pieces that have yet to be put together," he said. "I really have a great deal of confidence in him and Deputy Commissioner (Kevin) Weiberg, their staff and the other ADs in the league."

Bohn likes the idea of having another Mountain Time Zone inhabitant join CU in the Pac-12: "It gives us the opportunity to have a regional affinity with another league member," he said. "When you think back to our history in the '50s, Utah was our rival. I'm certainly not ready to call them our rival in the Pac-12 yet, but it'll be great to have them as a part of this exciting expansion.

"I have a lot of respect for the growth of their program. They've really taken the Olympic endeavor, when Salt Lake hosted the Olympics, as a springboard to do some great things. The competitiveness of their football program, being in BCS bowls twice in recent years, coupled with the Final Four appearance in basketball before that . . . they'll be a formidable member of the league and someone we look forward to competing with."

Utah, leaving the Mountain West Conference as Boise State arrives, reportedly expects to begin Pac-12 football competition in 2011. That could strengthen CU's case to be done with the Big 12 after this season and move on. It also apparently jibes with the wishes of Scott and Big 12 Commissioner Dan Beebe.

Bohn says only that "some tough decisions" are ahead on that subject and prefers to let league officials tackle it, as well as the prospect of the Pac-12 playing a championship football game. In a teleconference earlier this week, Beebe indicated the Big 12's loss of its championship football game (the NCAA requires conference to have 12 members to hold one, but 10-member leagues can petition for an exception) wouldn't be mourned by most of his coaches.

Would that sentiment prevail in the Pac-12? Bohn's initial observation is that the league is "a little mixed on that." But something to consider (as always) is television revenue. After losing the Big 12 championship game, ABC has those dollars to dangle in front of the Pac-12. As a result, Bohn admitted, "Maybe they're a little hungrier to help pull that together."

But that decision, like the dozens of others to be made before CU and Utah open league play, can't be rushed. When I asked Bohn to reflect on the whirlwind that's engulfed him for the past two weeks, he responded, "It's been extremely refreshing in many ways."

Mainly, he's been buoyed by the rallying at the administrative levels above him, or as he described it, "the opportunity to galvanize our leadership - the president, the chancellor, the regents and so many other of our key stakeholders in this exercise.

"It's been a huge boost to our overall synergy, and that's going to be key for us in working on our competitiveness going into what will be a challenging league."

Proof might be a couple of years away, but upon hearing that, one comes away believing Bohn and those he answers to don't want the Buffs heading west at anything slower than a gallop.

That's welcome news for CU athletic teams and their followers. Leaders and members of their new conference probably don't mind hearing it either.

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# Utah expected to follow CU to Pac-10

## Conference extends invitation to Utes

Associated Press  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/16/2010 04:16:19 PM MDT

SALT LAKE CITY -- Utah is poised to become the 12th member of the Pac-10 as the conference quickly pivoted Wednesday to invite the Utes after being turned down by Texas and four other members of the Big 12 two days ago.

Utah officials did not immediately say whether the invitation would be accepted, but it would be shocking if the Utes didn't leave the Mountain West Conference for the Pac-10.

Spokeswoman Liz Abel said the athletics department would not comment until today, after the school's board of trustees meets to discuss the school's conference affiliation. A news conference was scheduled at the football stadium following the meeting.

Pac-10 officials are expected to attend today's news conference in Utah.

Utah has been a member of the MWC since the league began in 1999 -- and one of its most successful in football and basketball.

There had been speculation on Tuesday that Utah would be the next school to be approached by the Pac-10. When asked about the possibility, school president Michael Young told The Associated Press "we wouldn't anticipate making a move of this magnitude without the concurrence of our board of trustees."

A message left with Randy Dryer, chairman of the board of trustees, was not immediately returned Wednesday. If Utah bolts the Mountain West, it would be the latest in a string of conference affiliation changes.

Last week, Colorado decided to leave the Big 12 and accept an invitation to join the Pac-10. Nebraska has also said it will leave the Big 12 for the Big Ten, while Boise State is fleeing the Western Athletic Conference to join the Mountain West.

The Mountain West called a news conference for today following Utah's.

Earlier in the week, Texas, Oklahoma, Texas A&M, Texas Tech and Oklahoma State recommitted to the Big 12 instead of hopping to the Pac-10.

That left the Pac-10 in need of another member to reach the 12 required to hold a football championship game. Pac-10 spokeswoman Danette Leighton declined to say when Utah would begin competing in the Pac-10 if it accepts the conference's invitation.

The addition of Utah now gives Colorado a geographical rival and travel partner. The league is likely to divide into two six-team divisions and how that will shakeout is unclear.

The other members of the Pac-10 are USC, UCLA, Stanford, California, Washington, Washington State, Arizona, Arizona State, Oregon and Oregon State. Utah had already previously scheduled games with Oregon in 2011, and Washington State and Colorado in 2012 and 2013.

Utah officials have long been frustrated about their inability to play for a football national championship while in the Mountain West. Utah had an undefeated season in 2008 but was not invited to the national title game. It defeated Alabama in the Sugar Bowl. Utah also went undefeated in 2004 and did not play for the national championship.

Under the Bowl Championship Series, the champions of six conference have automatic bids to play in top-tier bowl games, while the other conferences such as the Mountain West don't. Those six conferences also receive more money than the other conferences.

Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff, angered that the Utes were denied an opportunity to play for a national title, has said he's investigating the BCS for possible antitrust violations.

He said although Utah is "exhibit A" as to why the BCS is unfair, the investigation would continue if Utah changed conferences. He plans to meet with the U.S. Department of Justice in July to discuss the matter.

Utah lawmakers, including U.S. Sen. Orrin Hatch, have also expressed their frustrations with the BCS.

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# Conference bowl lineups won't shift yet

## Realignment will likely impact affiliations when contracts expire

**By Kyle Ringo** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/16/2010 11:09:07 PM MDT

The Big 12 Conference will have 10 teams at some point in the next two years. The Pac-10 will have 12 and the Big Ten also will grow to a dozen.

None of that is expected to change bowl lineups or affiliations with conferences any time soon.

Conference bowl affiliations were set just last year through the 2013 season and won't be re-worked simply because a handful of teams changed leagues. That means when the Big 12 becomes a 10-team league in 2011 or 2012, those 10 teams will have eight bowl possibilities and maybe nine if one of its members reaches the national championship game.

The likelihood of the league filling all those spots, especially now that its teams will be playing nine conference games and can schedule one fewer cupcake each year, is remote.

It's a different story in the Pac-10, which is expected to add a 12th team today in Utah.

The Pac-10 has contracts with six bowl partners through the 2013 season and is more likely to have too many bowl eligible teams in some years. When that happens, the league will probably send teams to fill other empty bowl slots at games around the country.

Former CU coach Rick Neuheisel did just that last season when UCLA played Temple in the EagleBank Bowl, which is not affiliated with the Pac-10.

"You would like to add with additional members, but the question is, where can you go to add," Pac-10 spokesman Jim Muldoon said. "...With 35 bowl games in operation now I think there are going to be some empty berths every year. The NCAA has changed the rule where a 6-6 team has the same standing as a 7-5 team. So I think there are going to be some opportunities out there for teams that fall outside our contracted bowls. You can't count on it and it could be different bowls every year."

Several bowl officials speculated Wednesday that when bowl agreements come up again in four years, the number of affiliations with each conference will likely reflect the size of those leagues.

"You have to have a history of bowl eligible teams when you do these contracts," said Bruce Binkowski, executive director of the Poinsettia and Holiday Bowls. "So it would not be surprising to see the Pac-10 add more games because it will probably have more eligible teams."

The Pac-10's current bowl partners are the Las Vegas Bowl, the Poinsettia Bowl (San Diego), the Emerald Bowl (San Francisco), the Holiday Bowl (San Diego), the Sun Bowl (El Paso, Texas) and the Rose Bowl (Pasadena, Calif.) in addition to the BCS national championship game.

The bowls affiliated with the Big 12 are: the Alamo Bowl (San Antonio), the Insight Bowl (Tempe, Ariz.), the Holiday Bowl (San Diego), the Pinstripe Bowl (Bronx, N.Y.), the Texas Bowl (Houston), the Cotton Bowl (Dallas), the Dallas Football Classic (Arlington, Texas), the Fiesta Bowl (Glendale, Ariz.) and the BCS title game.

Bowl officials around the nation have been as interested, and at times, concerned as anyone in recent weeks as talk raged of major realignment in college athletics. Fiesta Bowl and Insight Bowl spokesman Andy Bagnato described the past few weeks as "a very anxious time."

The Fiesta Bowl has a long history with the Big 12, and, for a few days at least, was considering a future in which that league might no longer exist if a move by the Pac-10 to invite six of its members had been successful.

"It probably cut into some peoples` golf games I would say," Bagnato joked. "It was concerning for everybody because you`re talking about potentially your pool of teams that you draw from either shrinking or going away. That`s a concern.

"We were pretty confident, given our relationships over the years with not just the Big 12 but other conferences, that no matter what happened we were going to come out of this in a good way. But the Big 12 has been such an ideal partner for us that we were certainly hoping the best for them."

If major realignment had occurred or 16-team super conferences were created, bowl officials generally agree most of the current bowl contracts would have had to be renegotiated.

"Most bowls probably have a clause that if there is a conference realignment like that you go back to the drawing board," Binkowski said. "It would have been renegotiation all the way around. But I don`t anticipate much of that at all now."

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# Pac 10's Scott says there's no animosity toward Texas

## Pac-10 boss promises more 'innovative' steps ahead

Associated Press  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/16/2010 11:14:06 PM MDT

NEW YORK -- Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott walked away from his failed attempt to create the nation's first super conference feeling as if he sent a message about the future of his league.

"The Pac-10 that people got to know over the last week is the new Pac-10," Scott said Wednesday in a 45-minute telephone interview with The Associated Press, his first since Texas and four other Big 12 schools turned down a chance to join his conference.

"I think you will continue to see innovative, bold steps that we take to make the Pac-10 and our schools the best they can be."

A year after Scott left his position as head of the Women's Tennis Association to become Pac-10 commissioner -- a hiring that made few national headlines -- he nearly changed the landscape of college sports.

"There's a reason they brought me in," he said. "There's a reason they didn't go with a traditional candidate from college sports."

Scott said he never felt he had an agreement in place with Texas that would have led to the Longhorns, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas Tech, and Texas A&M joining the Pac-10. And he said he holds no animosity toward Texas for essentially killing the deal.

"In my experience in professional sports and college sports, nothing's ever done until it's done," Scott said.

"We developed this plan with our eyes wide open," he said. "We knew that this would be seen as a very bold stroke and there would be all kinds of reasons why it might not be possible at the end."

"I think there was a sense that this was an incredibly compelling vision and certainly created a lot of excitement among the schools that we were talking to as well as our members. And it captured a lot of other people's attention as well."

The Pac-10 did land one Big 12 school in Colorado.

"We realized that there could be all kinds of complications in terms of pulling off such a bold move," he said. "That's why we moved first on Colorado as a beachhead, to put a stake in the ground to keep available other options that we're very interested in in terms of expansion that might be more modest in nature."

Plan B fell in place hours after Scott spoke to the AP, when the Pac-10 announced it had invited Utah to become its 12th member.

Utah officials have not said what they will do, but the school has announced a news conference for Thursday and it would be shocking if the Utes did not leave the Mountain West for the Pac-10.

Scott said when the news came down that Texas and the rest were not joining the Pac-10, he called Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe to congratulate him for saving his conference.

The Big 12 also lost Nebraska to the Big Ten, but will remain as a 10-team league.

Scott said he believes the expansion to 16 teams failed for three reasons.

"Number One, I think there was a tsunami of Texas political pressure from Texas A&M and Baylor," he said. "Secondly, it's clear there was a great national fear that such a compelling plan would cause dramatic domino effects nationally, with other conferences."

Lastly, Scott added he was given strict parameters to work with by Pac-10 university leaders.

"My marching orders were clear. There are essential principles and values the Pac-10 holds true to that we were not going to compromise as part of trying to get a deal done."

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## Utah headed toward joining Pac-10 with Colorado

By John Henderson  
The Denver Post

Posted: 06/16/2010 01:24:55 PM MDT

Updated: 06/16/2010 04:32:56 PM MDT



Utah, which holds the longest current bowl game winning streak in the nation after beating Cal in the Poinsettia Bowl last season, will see the Bears in league games soon. (Denis Poroy, AP)

The University of Utah Board of Trustees will meet Thursday at 12:30 p.m. to accept an invitation to the Pac-10 Conference.

Earlier today, the Pac-10 invited Utah to become its 12th member and, perhaps, Colorado's new regional rival and travel partner. The Utah board will hold its meeting on the sixth floor of Rice-Eccles Stadium, similar to how Colorado announced its announcement Friday at Folsom Field, and a news conference is to follow.

Utah is leaving the Mountain West Conference, which has no exit penalty, and will be part of a football south division with Colorado, Arizona, Arizona State, Southern California and UCLA.

"Certainly it'll be an asset having another league member in the mountain time zone and the Rocky Mountain region," Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn said. "No question they've continued to grow and build their program to be in the BCS bowl games in football, the Final Four in basketball and hosted the Olympics. They've continued to make progress."

Colorado, which leads the Utah football series 30-24-3, has played the Utes more than any other nonconference opponent outside of Colorado State. The two schools go back to when they were archrivals in the 1940s as members of the old Mountain States Athletic Conference.

In 1961, Utah beat Joe Romig-led Colorado, 21-12, in Game 7 for the Buffaloes' first loss, preventing them from going to the Orange Bowl undefeated. It kept them from likely finishing in the top three in the nation that year. The Buffs went on to lose to Louisiana State in Miami, 25-

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After Colorado switched to the Big Seven in 1948, the two teams played in 11 consecutive seasons and then again in 1961 and '62. They haven't played since. However, they already have scheduled a home and home for 2012 and 2013. The 2012 game is set for Sept. 22, the 50th anniversary of their last meeting.

MWC commissioner Craig Thompson has a teleconference scheduled for Thursday afternoon.

"There will be no grudges held, at least not on this end," said CSU athletic director Paul Kowalczyk.

Playing in a south division instead of a north with the Bay Area, Oregon and Washington schools was a must for Colorado to accept an invitation. Its largest out-of-state alumni base is in southern California.

"That is a huge boost for us," Bohn said. "The southern division for the University of Colorado provides many opportunities that are keys to reaching our alumni to our recruiting and to enhance media exposure that connects best to the Denver market."

A week ago, college sources said Utah was out of Pac-10 consideration. However, on Monday Texas chose to stay in the Big 12 and Texas A&M, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech all followed.

Utah will allow the Pac-10 to have convenient travel partners throughout the league. The Pac-10 also has the minimum 12 schools to put on a league championship game.

Bohn said next on his agenda is to push the first year of Pac-10 competition from the 2012 football season to 2011.

*Staff writer Natalie Meisler contributed to this report.*

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Longmont, Colorado  
Friday, June 18, 2010

Publish Date: 6/17/2010

## CU likely to join Pac-10 a year early

By Brian Howell  
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

Another piece fell into place Wednesday that will likely lead to the University of Colorado joining the Pac-10 a year earlier than expected.

Utah received an invitation to the Pac-10 on Wednesday and is expected to accept that invitation today. Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn told the Times-Call on Wednesday that he believes Utah will join the Pac-10 in 2011.

When CU joined the Pac-10 last Friday, it announced a plan of joining the league in 2012.

Since then, Nebraska has left the Big 12 and will begin Big Ten play in 2011. Utah's expected announcement makes CU's Pac-10 start date likely to be pushed up.

"That's a scenario we're exploring," Bohn said. "We are in discussions with both conferences (the Big 12 and Pac-10)."

A Pac-10 spokesman said Wednesday that Colorado is set to join in 2012, but that the league could make an adjustment for a 2011 start.

CU already has one Pac-10 opponent — California — on the 2011 football schedule and already has Utah on the 2012 schedule.

Bohn said that if Utah's inclusion in the Pac-10 is confirmed, "It will add an exciting piece to the league."

Utah would give CU another Mountain time zone opponent and could create a natural rivalry among the schools.

**STILL THE RIGHT MOVE:** At the time that CU made its move to the Pac-10, it appeared the Buffs were the first to get off a sinking Big 12 ship.

Because of the expected destruction of the Big 12, the Buffs were applauded for being proactive.

Now that the Big 12 — minus Colorado and Nebraska — is sticking together, CU's departure shouldn't be viewed any differently.

The Big 12 ship didn't sink, as expected, but CU has hitched a much better ride in the Pac-10.

All of the good reasons CU gave for this move — better academic associations, more money, the possibility of better recruits, etc. — still remain.

But now that Texas has decided to stay in the Big 12 instead of joining CU in the Pac-10, the Buffs have another good reason for the move: They will no longer be pushed around by the Longhorns.



Colorado quarterback Joel Klatt tries to get away from UCLA's Dave Ball at Folsom Field in Boulder on Sept. 6, 2003. CU and UCLA could begin playing each other as Pac-10 foes as early as 2011. **Times-Call file photo**

The other nine teams left in the Big 12 — Baylor, Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Missouri, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas A&M and Tech Tech — seem content letting Texas run the Big 12, as it has for years.

In fact, Baylor, Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State and Missouri even drafted up a plan to give the other five more money just to keep the conference afloat.

The Big 12 should thrive in the future. Nebraska ought to do well in the Big Ten. And CU is looking ahead to a bright future out West.

In the end, it's a win-win situation for everyone involved.

For CU, simply getting out from underneath the thumb of Texas is a win.

Give Texas credit for saving the Big 12. In the end, Texas made the right choice and did what was best for Texas and other schools in the conference.

But don't think CU missed out by not sticking around. CU made the right move to get out, and the Buffs aren't looking back.

"No question," Bohn said. "We're thrilled."

CU'S NEW DIVISION: With Utah now likely to join the Pac 10, giving the conference 12 teams, CU's future is a little more clear.

Most likely, the Pac-10 will be divided into two six-team divisions for football.

The North division would likely be made up of Cal, Oregon, Oregon State, Stanford, Washington and Washington State.

The South division would be made up of Arizona, Arizona State, Colorado, Southern Cal, UCLA and Utah.

That's a division in which the Buffs could compete in quite well.

Brian Howell can be reached at  
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# Big 12 will talk about offer to share money

By **Kirk Bohls**

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Updated: 12:19 a.m. Thursday, June 17, 2010

Published: 11:44 p.m. Wednesday, June 16, 2010

The presidents of the newly configured Big 12 Conference will discuss today an Iowa State suggestion that the league's five nearly-abandoned schools forfeit their share of Nebraska's and Colorado's penalty money over to Texas, Texas A&M and Oklahoma, Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe confirmed on Wednesday.

"These five (Baylor, Kansas, Kansas State, Missouri and Iowa State) were looking at life without these three schools and not liking it," Beebe said. "They felt there was little or no risk where we go with future media deals, and they said, 'We don't want them to leave because of money.'"

That penalty money, Beebe said Wednesday, could end up in the \$18 million range each for Nebraska and Colorado.

"It's only those five institutions' money they're talking about," Beebe added. "If they want to give up all their money to some other school for charity, they could do it. It's totally their prerogative."

The presidents will convene by teleconference. The meeting had been scheduled for two weeks.

Texas president Bill Powers said Tuesday that the university would oppose such a deal, and Longhorns athletic director DeLoss Dodds suggested placing the exit penalty money into a Big 12 reserve fund.

"It was a generous offer that Texas said it was not willing to accept," Beebe said. "I don't know what the other two (A&M and Oklahoma) would do."

Nebraska informed the Big 12 last week that it would leave the conference for the Big Ten, starting in 2011. Colorado a day earlier had accepted an invitation to join the Pac-10 no later than 2012.

Beebe also said that league officials would meet soon to consider the possibility that Colorado could leave sooner than 2012.

"We don't have anything to make them stay," he said. "I think that's something we'll have to discuss."

Officials at Texas and Texas A&M could not immediately be reached for comment. Texas Tech chancellor Kent Hance, however, said he was unsure whether the proposal would fly.

"It is my understanding that the University of Texas was not going to take that money," Hance said.

"That does not surprise me. Bill Powers and DeLoss Dodds are people of integrity, and they would not be involved in something like that, and I doubt anybody else would take that money."

Texas Tech, Hance said, also opposes any such arrangement. It is not known how Oklahoma State would figure into the proposal.

Hance added that the "five without a (possible) home were drowning, and for us to charge them to get in the boat would not be fair. I would be shocked if we would follow through with this."

Hance said the presidents also will talk about controversial future television revenue-sharing, specifically whether the league's five smaller schools — Baylor, Missouri, Kansas, Kansas State and Iowa State —

give up part of their shares of the expected future Fox television package to Texas, Texas A&M and Oklahoma until those three reached a revenue level of \$20 million in a year.

Beebe denied that the presidents would discuss such a proposal.

#### Pac-10 invites Utah

The Pacific 10 wasted little time looking elsewhere for its expansion plans. The conference quickly pivoted Wednesday to invite Utah after being turned down by Texas and four other Big 12 schools on Monday.

Utah officials did not immediately say whether the invitation would be accepted, but it would be shocking if the Utes didn't leave the Mountain West Conference for the Pac-10.

The addition of Utah — which has had highly successful football and basketball programs — now gives Colorado a geographical rival and travel partner. The league is likely to divide into two six-team divisions and how that will shake out is unclear.

#### Scott: No hard feelings

NEW YORK — Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott says he has no animosity toward Texas for declining an invitation to join his league and at no point did he think his grand expansion plan was a done deal.

"Nothing's ever done until it's done," Scott said. "We developed this plan with our eyes wide open. We knew that this would be seen as a very bold stroke and there would be all kinds of reasons why it might not be possible at the end."

Scott said he believes the expansion to 16 teams with Texas leading the way failed for three reasons.

"Number one, I think there was a tsunami of Texas political pressure from Texas A&M and Baylor," he said. "Secondly, it's clear there was a great national fear that such a compelling plan would cause dramatic domino effects nationally, with other conferences."

Lastly, Scott added that he was given some strict parameters to work with by the university leaders who hired him about a year ago. He said Texas would not have been allowed to start its own TV network.

— Associated Press

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Thursday, June 17, 2010

## Big 12 still strong in women's hoops

By Mechelle Voepel  
Special to ESPN.com

It is, admittedly, a strange feeling to wake up a day after the official announcements that the college landscape isn't going to change nearly as much as it looked like it might ... and realize that the preparation for a potentially very different women's basketball world is not needed.

At least not for now.

There are still many conspiracy theories flying about -- "Texas brilliantly orchestrated the whole thing to gain even *more* power!" is a particularly popular one -- and the thought remains that alliances are always subject to be broken up if the money/circumstances are right.

Not to mention who knows how economic conditions over the next decade might impact college sports in ways we can't predict. If the grass starts looking vibrantly green in one conference as opposed to another, the whole merry-go-round almost certainly will start again.

But for now, it appears the Big 12 will stay mostly together, losing Colorado to the Pac-10 and Nebraska to the Big Ten and putting Texas even more in control than before.

This is all being sliced and diced by observers across the country, but I'll offer some thoughts specifically as they relate to women's basketball. The Big 12 has led all leagues in attendance for the sport for the past 11 seasons. Several factors have contributed to this.

The fan base in many Big 12 states has been predisposed to being more open to supporting this sport because women's and girls' basketball has a stronger history in these places.

Also, the natural rivalries that come about because of geography have been strengthened with the newer rivalries between "North" and "South." Further, the league itself has been proactive in growing attendance for women's basketball, with efforts like the "Million Fan March" several years back and other incentives to make the individual schools' promotion departments work harder to sell the sport.

And, frankly, success at one place helps spur success in other places, out of a sense of competitiveness and community. The Big 12 has seen several of its women's hoop programs rise to national heights during the life of the conference, which began competing in 1996. Other programs could see that success and say, "Why not us? We're in the same league. What do they have that we don't have? We can do this."

### CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE LEADERS



Big 12 women's basketball set an NCAA attendance record for the second consecutive year in 2009-10 while leading the nation in attendance for the 11th straight season. Five Big 12 schools (Iowa State, third; Oklahoma, sixth; Nebraska, seventh; Baylor, eighth; Texas Tech, 10th) ranked in the top 10 nationally for average home attendance.



Bill Fennelly and Iowa State were third in the nation in average home attendance (9,316) last season.

**Conference '09-10 attendance**

1. Big 12 1,091,289
2. SEC 740,993
3. Big East 778,916
4. Big Ten 735,453
5. ACC 568,184

Salary gains for coaches and overall program upgrades also built on one another from program to program. Not everybody is equal in the Big 12 -- or ever will be for as long as it lasts and however many teams are in it -- but there has been a feeling that everyone can compete, even if some have more resources.

The fan base of Big 12 women's basketball has formed a stronger bond than I think is the case in many leagues. This is not to say there aren't fan feuds and sparring, but that has been far more the exception than the rule. In general, the hard-core fan base at each school tends to reach out to the same folks at other schools. They love their team the most, of course, but also love the league.

Now, two of those schools will be leaving, and the pragmatic view is that these are sustainable losses. From a geographic standpoint, Colorado always felt the most remote, in the Big Eight and then the Big 12. The idea of the Buffaloes being in the Pac-10 has been floated in previous years, and I think Big Eight/Big 12 followers would say that while they might not necessarily have wanted CU to leave, the school's destination makes sense.

And perhaps -- again speaking in women's basketball terms -- Colorado adds some needed vibrancy to the Pac-10. The program has been in decline the last several years, but it's not as if Colorado doesn't have a history of being nationally competitive. The Buffaloes have been a heartbeat away from the Final Four, and with a new coaching staff led by former CU player Linda Lappe, maybe the program can recapture what it once had and help the Pac-10.

Nebraska is a different situation. Geographically, the school was anchored in the Big Eight/Big 12, but it isn't a huge stretch for it to be in the Big Ten. From strictly a women's basketball standpoint, the Huskers were not a national contender until last season, a magical convergence of having the right people at the right time.

This past season, Nebraska made its first trip to the NCAA Sweet 16. So while there is a current feeling of the Huskers' relevance in the women's basketball world, that's certainly not long-standing.

And it's up to Nebraska coach Connie Yori and her staff to show that the gains in exposure and success this season were a real indication of turning a corner permanently, and not a temporary trip to the upper echelon that isn't repeated or sustained.

So once the two departing schools leave the Big 12, what's left are still the league's top performers in women's basketball (led by Baylor and Oklahoma), the biggest overachiever (meant as a compliment) in Iowa State, and a couple of underachievers (unless there are some improvements in the next couple of seasons) in Missouri and Kansas.

The Big 12 with those 10 teams is still a very strong women's basketball conference, with its biggest traditional attendance success stories remaining linked together.

Meanwhile, Colorado can't hurt and might well help the Pac-10 in women's hoops. I think I would say the same for Nebraska in the Big Ten.

I think most women's basketball fans in the Big 12 -- of the 10 schools sticking together, that is -- are breathing a sigh of relief, almost like they dodged a destructive hurricane that could have caused a lot of damage but turned the other direction.

And Pac-10 and Big Ten women's basketball fans probably don't see the changes as making much difference at all.

All things considered, what has happened -- and what didn't happen -- is probably for the best in regard to women's basketball.

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Wednesday, June 16, 2010

## Pac-10 will likely split North-South

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By Ted Miller  
ESPN.com

It appears increasingly likely that the Pac-10 will split into six-team North and South divisions once Utah and Colorado join the league.

While Pac-10 officials won't confirm this, it seems that Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn was promised a spot in the south division with USC, UCLA, Arizona and Arizona State. Utah will become the sixth member and the Buffaloes' travel partner from the Mountain Time Zone.

Consider this from a [Denver Post story](#) this afternoon:

Playing in a south division instead of a north with the Bay Area, Oregon and Washington schools was a must for Colorado to accept an invitation. Its largest out-of-state alumni base is in southern California.

"That is a huge boost for us," Bohn said. "The southern division for the University of Colorado provides many opportunities that are keys to reaching our alumni to our recruiting and to enhance media exposure that connects best to the Denver market."

So it's fait accompli, unless Bohn is mistaken (and [a source told](#) the Pac-10 blog Tuesday that no other arrangement has traction with conference administrators).

There are then four remaining mysteries, other than what the conference will be called -- Pac-12 seems most logical.

- What will be the format of a conference championship game? Will it be played at a neutral site or on the home field of the No. 1 seed?
- When will Colorado and Utah join the conference? It seems there's growing momentum for both to join in 2011-12.
- Will Utah and Colorado add enough juice for the conference to start its own TV network?
- And, finally, when the new TV and media contracts are signed, how much will the per team revenue increase? Can the conference even approach the \$17 to \$22 million distributed by the SEC and Big Ten?

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**THE SPOKESMAN-REVIEW**

June 16, 2010

**Utah is No. 12**

Future divisional alignment concerns WSU

Vince Grippi

The Spokesman-Review

Tags: **Pac-10** **Utah** **Washington state**

PULLMAN – The Pac-10 Conference announced Wednesday it has invited the University of Utah to join, bringing to a close a week that saw the University of Colorado accept an invitation and five other Big 12 schools reject theirs.

The inclusion of Utah, which is expected to be finalized today when the school's board of trustees meet and announced at a subsequent press conference, would bring the Pac-10 to 12 members by 2012 at the latest.

How the new-look conference would be configured is a point of concern to Washington State athletic director Bill Moos.

If the Pac-10 had been able to expand to 16 teams, which looked like a distinct possibility heading into the week, Moos was on board with a divisional setup that kept the old Pac-8 teams together while the new members and the Arizona schools would have formed an eastern division.

But the recalcitrant University of Texas submarined that scenario earlier this week, and Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott turned to Utah to build a 12-team conference, the minimum needed under NCAA rules for a football championship game.

Now comes the hard work: ironing out the details.

"We'll have discussions," said Moos, after applauding Scott and the conference's presidents for moving aggressively toward expansion. "I'm still trying to get a handle on our new commissioner and how he manages, but he's been given a lot of authority in regards to this expansion by the presidents and chancellors.

"But I would guess he and his staff are going to listen closely to the athletic directors when we start to discuss what's the best setup. We'll sit at a table and discuss the format and how we will structure the conference."

Moos believes those discussions will begin at the athletic directors' next meetings scheduled for the end of July.

If Moos has his way, he would put the four Northwest schools – WSU, Washington, Oregon and Oregon State – in a division with Cal and Stanford. That would leave the two new members, Utah and Colorado, in a division with USC, UCLA, ASU and Arizona.

In football, there would be five games against divisional foes and four – two home, two away – against the other division.

"That's in the best interest of Washington State and, I think, the conference," Moos said, citing the ability to continue traditional rivalries but maintaining a scheduling presence in California.

That presence is important to basketball coach Ken Bone as well.

"Definitely, and I don't think that will ever change," Bone said. "We're not too far from California and the conference has been in existence for a long time. For us to be able to recruit, to compete, I think we need to be able to get down to California and play games

down there."

Whatever the divisions, Moos doesn't see a huge uptick in costs associated with expansion, though the revenue projections seem to still be enormous.

"It's all speculation, of course," Moos said. "But the conference and our consultants have been working almost round the clock in crunching the numbers.

"You look at the Big Ten model and all those schools are getting an equal amount of revenue from their television partnerships, between \$20 and \$22 million. What I'm hearing in my discussions with people who are fairly knowledgeable, we might be able to realize \$15-\$17 million a year per institution."

The Pac-10's current revenue formula is not equal, with WSU receiving less than \$7 million in total from the conference (\$3.6 million of that is from television) this year with USC, on the other end, earning more than \$11 million.

There is another area in which the conference's expansion will pay dividends, according to WSU football coach Paul Wulff.

"It really puts us into more of an elite status with the national scene," Wulff said of the new look. "The game isn't going to change. It's still football. Your opponents may change a little bit and, if anything, your exposure becomes more national."

The football history between Utah and WSU could not be more even. In 10 games, the last of which was a 38-21 Cougars victory in 2000, each school has won five times. More than that, each has scored 273 points.

The schools played often in basketball through the 1950s, but have met only four times since 1971. The Utes own a 13-2 lead in the series.

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