

Bohn says CU committed to Big 12; Pac-10 offer possible

Report indicates Pac-10 may extend offer to Buffs, 5 other Big 12 schools

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/03/2010 05:47:31 PM MDT

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn said he and other school officials have been led to believe the Pac-10 Conference is on the verge of issuing invitations to six members of the Big 12 to join its ranks.

Bohn said CU has not had any contact with the Pac-10 or its representatives and he was not clear on how he came to believe invitations could be forthcoming. But he said Colorado, Texas, Texas A&M, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State and Texas Tech could receive invitations possibly as soon as this weekend when Pac-10 officials meet in San Francisco.

"The longer that we were together in Kansas City it appeared that that rumor or speculation did have some validity to it," Bohn said in an interview with the Camera as he left the Big 12 spring meetings here today.

Orangebloods.com reported Thursday that the Pac-10 is set to invite those same six teams from the Big 12, forming a 16-team superconference that would encompass three time zones with the ability to produce huge television revenue.

Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott issued a statement Thursday evening in response to the report.

"We have not developed any definitive plans," Scott said. "We have not extended any invitations for expansion and we do not anticipate any such decisions in the near term."

Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe did not take questions from reporters following a day of meetings at the Intercontinental Hotel here where a media horde was staked out outside conference rooms where the league's athletic directors met with Beebe as well as school chancellors and presidents.

Beebe is scheduled to speak with media members Friday morning when the spring meetings conclude with a board of directors meeting, that will likely produce votes on future championship sites and other matters.

Beebe came to Kansas City hoping to galvanize the league against rumored attempts from other conferences to pick off members. Missouri and Nebraska are possible targets for the Big Ten, which is studying expansion by 1-5 teams.

Colorado and Texas previously received invitations from the Pac-10 in the mid-1990s but chose to stick with the fledgling Big 12. It now appears the Pac-10 will offer CU and Texas once again, along with four other teams from the Big 12 South Division.

"We're led to believe that that may be the case, but, again, there are so many different reports and different dialogues and different developments within our league and outside our league that prevents me from being able to predict what will happen," Bohn said.

Bohn said at this point Colorado remains a committed and proud member of the Big 12 and he believes the conference has a bright future if its members remain together.

"There is great equity in the Big 12 Conference and currently the financial model and the competitive equity we have as a league is currently serving us well," he said. "The future television partnership opportunities bodes well for long term financial viability."

Bohn said Beebe did not ask for letters of commitment from Big 12 members as of Thursday afternoon and did not seek to make leaving the conference more difficult by attempting to raise exit fees. Both options could still come up before the meetings conclude Friday.

If Colorado does receive an invitation to join another conference, Bohn said school officials would seek a wide range of

opinions on any possible change in affiliation from students, faculty, alumni and boosters. Any change in conference affiliation would be subject to approval by the Board of Regents requiring a majority vote.

The Big 12 requires exiting schools to provide two years notice if they intend to leave the conference. Departing schools would also forfeit 50 percent of conference distributions during those two years. The cost for leaving rises if less than two years notice is given.

If Colorado accepts an invitation to join another conference and provides two years notice, it would likely cost the athletic department at least \$9 million over two years based on recent distributions it has received from the Big 12.

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CU Buffs seek game with Army in Yankee Stadium

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/03/2010 11:50:32 PM MDT

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- When the Big 12 added the Pinstripe Bowl to its postseason lineup earlier this year, Colorado fans allowed themselves to dream of watching Ralphie the buffalo stampede in Yankee Stadium one day when their Buffs get back to playing in the postseason.

Why wait for a bowl game?

Athletic director Mike Bohn said he is attempting to schedule a game against Army in Yankee Stadium sometime in the next five years during the regular season.

"We're exploring that and looking at it and we recognize the large number of alumni that live in that part of the country and we also recognize the prominence and stature of Yankee Stadium and the large number of potential students that come from that part of the country as well," Bohn said.

"We believe that would serve us well to be visibly there on a national stage within a high-profile city."

Bohn will have to rework schedules to make it work.

CU is in the market for home games in 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015 and is committed to season ticket holders to provide at least six true home games in Folsom Field every year. Scheduling another road game in any of those years would probably require asking a future opponent to postpone a game.

Colorado and Army have played twice, with both games taking place at Army. CU won the last meeting 31-0 in 1977 and Army beat the Buffs 47-0 in 1947.

Contract issues

Bohn said CU continues to work on the elements of separation agreements with former hoops coaches Jeff Bzdelik and Kathy McConnell-Miller.

Bzdelik left CU earlier this spring to take a job at Wake Forest and owes CU a \$500,000 buyout for leaving Boulder before the end of his contract.

McConnell-Miller was fired after her fifth season coaching the women's basketball team in April. Bohn and other school officials have refused to comment on whether McConnell-Miller is contesting anything under the terms of her contract.

"It's common for contract issues to take some time in being able to execute and for legal teams on both sides to work those aspects out," Bohn said.

Notable

Big 12 officials are expected to announce conference revenue distribution numbers and future championship sites for football and basketball today at the conclusion of their spring meetings.

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cu football

Report: CU in Pac-10 shift

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Posted: 06/04/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 06/04/2010 01:49:16 AM MDT



Colorado Buffaloes athletic director
Mike Bohn. (RJ Sangosti, The Denver
Post)

SAN FRANCISCO — Long-rumored interest by the Pac-10 Conference in inviting Colorado heated up Thursday amid an online report that turned the Big 12 meetings, which ended with a scheduled news conference being canceled, into a whirlwind of speculation.

The report, by Orangebloods.com, an Austin, Texas-based website affiliate of Rivals.com, says Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott is prepared to offer invitations to Colorado and five other Big 12 schools — Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State — at the end of this weekend's Pac-10 meetings in San Francisco.

After arriving in Colorado from the Big 12 meetings in Kansas City, Mo., CU athletic director Mike Bohn told The Denver Post by phone he has no idea if it will happen.

"I don't have any indication to personally believe that," Bohn said. "But a lot of people feel that's part of the strategy."

The half-dozen would join Arizona and Arizona State in an eastern division, with the other eight Pac-10 schools forming a western division. The arrangement would include seven of the nation's top 20 TV markets.

The website also said Fox Cable Network, the driving force behind the thriving Big Ten Network and which has the current Pac-10 contract, is ready to offer a contract that would provide the 16 teams \$20 million each.

"Speculation is running rampant, at a higher level than in the last six months," Bohn said. "Do I know we'll get an invite? No, absolutely not. I have no confirmation other than a lot of people are talking about it."

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Earlier Thursday before leaving Kansas City, Bohn told the Boulder Daily Camera, "The longer that we were together in Kansas City, it appeared that that rumor or speculation did have some validity to it."

Scott told The Denver Post on Thursday that nothing has been decided, nor has anything been discussed with TV networks.

"We've made no decisions about expansion whatsoever," Scott said. "The report suggests we've made a decision. That's not correct. We're going to have another round of updates."

It is believed Scott's biggest targets are Texas and Texas A&M and observers agree they bring more marketing clout than Colorado and Utah, two schools previously linked to the Pac-10.

"We've not defined a specific goal," Scott said. "What I've been saying for some time is the Pac-10 is very undervalued in its current form."

Asked if he will not invite any new teams by the end of his meetings Sunday, Scott left the door open slightly, saying, "I don't expect anything definitive."

Meanwhile, Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe raised speculation in Kansas City when he canceled a news conference shortly after the report surfaced and said meetings would continue into the night. He added the conference would not have a comment until today.

However, Oklahoma athletic director Joe Castiglione told reporters he knew nothing about the Pac-10.

"We're not having any discussions with anybody but the Big 12," Castiglione said.

Scott came to the Pac-10 in July from the World Tennis Association. The conference gave him a mandate to increase revenue when the current \$52.3 million TV deal with Fox and ESPN expires at the end of the 2011-12 basketball season. Just this spring, he hired media consultants. He said he has not discussed expansion with proposed networks.

"Contrarily, we contractually have to have exclusive negotiations with incumbent broadcasters ESPN/ABC and Fox," he said. "No, we've had no negotiations and don't intend to until the contractual period ends."

The only market in the western U.S. that would bring a significant number of TVs to the Pac-10 is Texas. However, corralling Texas and Texas A&M would be difficult. Wednesday in Kansas City, Texas athletic director DeLoss Dodds and Texas A&M Bill Byrne said they would not want the Pac-10 because it's two time zones away.

However, the big question is if Scott could attract a mega-TV deal with the current 10 teams, even if he adds a conference title game. Last month, the ACC landed a \$1.86 billion, 12-year deal from ESPN.

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Asked if the Pac-10 can stand pat and get richer, Scott said: "Absolutely. The Pac-10 in its current form is well-structured. It's pure and admired. It has a true round robin in football and we've got a true round robin in basketball. A lot is made about the Pac-10 as it is, and we may decide not to expand at all."

Scott said he is in no hurry to make a decision. His only timetable is he must begin media negotiations by early January. Still, by the end of the year he must know how many schools will consider his conference before negotiating with television.

"Nothing's changed in terms of our timetable," Scott said. "We've been very consistent."

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Rumors of Pac-10 raid on Big 12 causes stir at meetings

By **Suzanne Halliburton**

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Updated: 1:26 a.m. Friday, June 4, 2010

Published: 11:02 p.m. Thursday, June 3, 2010

Will the Big 12 Conference possibly dissolve, with Texas, Texas A&M and Oklahoma, along with three other league schools, bolting for the Pac-10?

That scenario became a hot possibility late Thursday as the Big 12 meetings continued for a third day in Kansas City. The intriguing plotline loomed larger than a much-speculated earlier twist, which had Missouri and Nebraska leaving for the Big Ten.

Big 12 Commissioner Dan Beebe, who was scheduled to address the media Thursday, abruptly canceled his daily briefing. He told reporters he wouldn't have anything to say until today. The league presidents finish the Big 12 meetings with a four-hour session this morning.

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn gave the Pac-10 option a boost when he told the Boulder Daily Camera that he's been led to believe that six schools — Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State and the Buffaloes — would receive Pac-10 invites.

In such a scenario, the Big 12 South division would have only one remaining school — Baylor.

Bohn told the newspaper that he had not heard from any representative from the Pac-10. It's unclear whether his source was a story that was reported earlier Thursday by a Longhorns website affiliated with Rivals.com.

"The longer that we were together in Kansas City it appeared that that rumor or speculation did have some validity to it," Bohn said.

He then later backed off his comment a bit during an e-mail exchange with a reporter from the St. Louis Post Dispatch. He said he could not "confirm" his earlier comments.

Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott issued a statement Thursday night in an effort to debunk the rumors.

"We are aware of a story filed (Thursday) by an Orangebloods.com columnist, speculating about possible expansion plans for the Pac-10 conference," Scott said in a statement.

"While many interesting scenarios have been suggested in numerous news reports, around the country, we remain focused on a thorough evaluation process that examines all of the options for increasing the value of the conference for our member institutions, our student athletes and our fans.

"We have not developed any definitive plans. We have not extended any invitations for expansion and we do not anticipate any such decisions in the near term."

Scott, in a phone interview with the Dallas Morning News, stood pat with his statement late Thursday. But he said other schools have been contacting his league about joining.

The Pac-10 kicks off its meetings today in San Francisco.

Beebe had indicated he wanted all 12 schools to commit to the Big 12 during the meetings in Kansas

City. Missouri already is balking at that.

"We're not shutting our ears to anything," said Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton. "I'm sure every school here has a responsibility to its own institution as primary responsibility. Conference realignment is something we do for our athletic programs."

The presidents of each school, except for Oklahoma and Kansas, will be in attendance in today's meetings.

Texas president Bill Powers is chairman of the Big 12 board of directors. He was tentatively set to give a press briefing Thursday but, like Beebe, deferred it until today .

Texas athletic director DeLoss Dodds declined comment as he left the meeting Thursday to catch a plane to Austin. He deferred to Powers.

All the athletic directors and senior women's administrators have attended at least one meeting. Faculty representatives of each school also are in attendance.

Oklahoma athletic director Joe Castiglione said he has not been in contact with representatives of the Pac-10.

"Not yet," Castiglione said, "And hopefully I won't have to."

He said of Oklahoma leaving the Big 12 — "It's not a scenario I really want to imagine if I don't have to."

Texas A&M athletic director Bill Byrne also said his school hasn't been contacted by the Pac-10. Earlier in the week, he had said playing games in the Pac-10 conference wouldn't be an attractive option because of the travel involved. Both A&M basketball teams played NCAA tournament games in Washington in March.

"Like I said (Wednesday), we're committed to the Big 12," Byrne said, before adding that A&M is evaluating other options.

Texas Tech athletic director Gerald Myers, like his counterparts potentially linked to the Pac-10, said he has heard nothing from that league.

"Texas Tech's position is we want to be in the Big 12," Meyers said.

"We are committed strongly to the Big 12. Our general feeling is we certainly hope (the Big 12) continues."

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Posted on Thu, Jun. 03, 2010

Colorado AD sees Pac-10 inviting half of Big 12's teams

By BLAIR KERKHOFF
The Kansas City Star

Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe came to Kansas City this week to galvanize his athletic directors and school presidents in keeping the conference together. But as the Big 12's annual meetings come to a close today, it appears the conference is closer than ever to falling apart.

Reports that the Pacific-10 Conference would target six Big 12 teams started surfacing early Thursday afternoon. Later, Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn said that he believed his school would be invited to join the Pac-10, along with Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State.

"The longer that we were together in Kansas City, it appeared that the rumor of speculation did have some validity," Bohn told the Boulder Daily Camera.

Asked directly if Oklahoma had been contacted by the Pac-10, Sooners athletic director Joe Castiglione said, "Not yet."

Beebe and University of Texas president Bill Powers, chairman of the Big 12 board of directors, were scheduled to meet with reporters Thursday after the third day of meetings concluded at the InterContinental Kansas City on the Plaza. They instead canceled the news conference, and both got on an elevator.

Contacted later by The Kansas City Star, Beebe declined to comment. "I have to honor the board's directive," he said.

Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott said that his league, which begins its annual meetings today in San Francisco, does not expect to take action soon.

"We have not developed any definitive plans," Scott said. "We have not extended invitations for expansion, and we do not anticipate any such decisions in the near term."

The Big 12 previously faced a threat from the Big Ten Conference, which is also exploring expansion. But only two Big 12 teams, Missouri and Nebraska, have been rumored to be targets, and the Big 12 could withstand the loss of a few teams, especially if Texas remained.

If the Pac-10's reported move happens, the Big 12 won't exist.

The league would be cut in half, and — if the Tigers and Cornhuskers wind up in the Big Ten — Kansas, Kansas State, Iowa State and Baylor may not have a place to land. Those schools would also be left out of a conference that automatically qualifies for college football's Bowl Championship Series, which creates multimillion-dollar payouts for the top six conferences.

The Big 12, which opened for competition in 1996, will conclude week-long meetings today that Beebe hoped would bring about a sense of unity. Instead, there were indications that the schools weren't on the same page.

"Each athletic director had a chance to convey their thoughts about the future of the conference," Castiglione said.

Was there agreement?

"Everybody expressed their thoughts," he repeated.

Missouri chancellor Brady Deaton said several times during an interview that the Tigers were "proud members of the Big 12. (But) we're not shutting our ears to anything. I'm sure every school here has a responsibility to its own institution as a primary responsibility.

"Conference alignment is something we do for our athletic program. That's what we're working on right now."

Last month, Big 12 athletic directors met with Pac-10 counterparts in Phoenix to discuss working together in negotiating television contracts and scheduling. The conferences in their current structure include 22 BCS automatic-qualifier programs west of the Mississippi River and account for 31 percent of the nation's television

markets in their combined footprint.

"I think there's some potential value there," Castiglione said. "We brainstormed some of the possibilities that may exist. Since then, both our commissioner and Larry Scott have had conversations. It leads one to believe there are some real viable opportunities for both leagues."

But one Pac-10 president said earlier this week that the conference could be on the verge of big news involving its own television entity.

In a question-and-answer session with the University of California Alumni Club of New England, Cal-Berkeley chancellor Robert Birgeneau said Monday that he would be "surprised if something did not happen that revolutionized college athletics" at the Pac-10 meetings.

One downside to a 16-team conference that spans three time zones would be more time on the road, which is already an issue for many schools.

"I've heard a lot about the distances we'd have to have our student-athletes travel," Texas A&M athletic director Bill Byrne said. "We had a really tough experience in April when we had to bring our teams from Seattle and Spokane and after ballgames, and we got into College Station at I believe 6:30 in the morning. Then we expect for our kids to go to class at 8 o'clock. That's tough."

Beebe and Powers are expected to meet with reporters today, and the conference is expected to announce future championship sites. Kansas City could get the Big 12 men's and women's basketball tournaments through 2014, and if that happens, 2013 would be a hoops festival — the city already is one of eight sites for NCAA Tournament first- and second-round games that season.

But will there even be a Big 12 to contest tournaments and championships that year?

Castiglione, previously the athletic director at Missouri, has been the league's most vocal supporter throughout the meetings, often harkening back to challenges of the Big 12's fusion of the Big Eight and four members of the Southwest Conference, which disbanded after 1995. He has said throughout the week his preference is for the Big 12 to continue.

"There are people who really love this conference," Castiglione said. "As far as I know we have a football season coming up, a whole academic year coming up, sports planning to compete, new-student athletes coming into our conference."

But on Thursday, there was a sense that the Big 12 wasn't business as usual.

| Blair Kerkhoff, bkerkhoff@kcstar.com

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Thursday, June 3, 2010

Little is clear at Big 12 meetings

By David Ubben

KANSAS CITY -- Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe took one route, outrunning the gaggle of cameras and microphones into a hotel elevator. Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn went another without answering a question. But reached on his cell phone by the Boulder Daily Camera's Kyle Ringo, it was [Bohn's brief words](#) that made the biggest splash at the close of the Big 12 spring meetings' third day.

"The longer that we were together in Kansas City it appeared that that rumor or speculation did have some validity to it," Bohn said, lending credence to an earlier [report from Texas' Rivals.com website Orangebloods.com](#) that said five South schools -- minus Baylor -- and Colorado were being targeted by the Pac-10 for a group invitation.

Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott swiftly issued a statement shooting down the report.

"We have not developed any definitive plans. We have not extended any invitations for expansion and we do not anticipate any such decisions in the near term," Scott said in the release.

But truth or fiction, one thing is clear: Thursday [did not go as planned](#) for the first day of meetings with university heads. Beebe emerged after 10 hours of meetings with plans to deviate from the day's schedule, canceling a post-meeting Q&A with reporters alongside University of Texas president William Powers, who is also the chairman of the conference's board of directors.

But other than the general, vague [conflicts foreshadowed in earlier comments by Oklahoma athletic director Joe Castiglione](#), the why is unknown.

The only thing that's clear is that nothing is clear. A unified front and clear consensus would have made answering questions a reasonably simple exercise for two men with backgrounds in law. But that front never materialized on Thursday, leading to the postponement of Powers' and Beebe's comments until late Friday morning.

And the reports about the Pac-10's shockingly proactive move -- which sounds far closer to a possibility than a probability -- obviously contributed to that delay.

The only people sleeping in Kansas City tonight with an idea of how close -- or how far -- that consensus is from forming spent the day inside the meeting room. And even they might not know.

But no one outside the room knows, and there's no promise that will change after Friday.

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Is Pac-10 in the mix with Big 12?

By Stu Durando

ST. LOUIS POST-DISPATCH

Friday, Jun. 04 2010

KANSAS CITY — A long day of closed-door discussions at the Big 12 meetings spilled unexpectedly into the evening Thursday, lending added mystery to a day that featured more expansion speculation.

Commissioner Dan Beebe offered an adamant refrain of "no comment" before slipping into an elevator during a break in the action, which came after a report that the Pac-10 planned to extend invitations to six Big 12 schools.

The list included Texas, Texas A&M, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas Tech and Colorado and, for a moment, turned the attention away from the Big Ten's expansion explorations this year that have brought Missouri's future with the Big 12 into question.

MU officials limited their comments, although chancellor Brady Deaton kept the door open to all possibilities.

"We're not shutting our ears to anything," he said. "I'm sure every school here has that responsibility to its own institution."

Beebe said this week that his preference would be to end the meetings with indications from every school regarding their status for the future. However, the day ended with more uncertainty than ever.

Missouri athletic director Mike Alden would not say whether Beebe had asked schools if they plan to stick with the conference.

"When you get into all the rumors and speculation and people start to guess on things, that's where it becomes so troublesome," he said. "We've never entered into them, and we're not going to enter into rumors and speculation."

However, athletic directors from several of the schools on the Pac-10 list were willing to comment.

"I haven't seen any of these reports, and if I've been in a hotel all day in meetings, I don't know what has been speculated," Oklahoma athletic director Joe Castiglione said. "If it's anything like previously, it continues to be more and more conjecture."

Asked if he had talked to the Pac-10, Castiglione said: "Not yet. And hopefully I don't have to."

Texas A&M athletic director Bill Byrne said his school was still committed to the Big 12. Byrne openly complained this week about transportation to Seattle and Eugene, Ore., cities in the Pac-10, and bemoaned the increasing cost of travel.

Texas Tech's Gerald Myers repeated Myers' sentiment about the Big 12.

"Texas Tech's position is we want to be in the Big 12," Myers said. "The general feeling is everyone feels good about the Big 12 and certainly hopes it continues."

Texas athletic director DeLoss Dodds deferred comment to school president William Powers, who was scheduled to meet the media with Beebe but now won't talk until today.

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn was quoted in the Boulder Daily Camera saying the expansion report on Orangebloods.com "did have some validity to it." However, he responded to an e-mail from the Post-Dispatch by writing, "I cannot confirm that. I am surprised by that quote."

The Big 12 athletic directors wrapped up their meeting with the conference board of directors during the afternoon, completing their sessions for the week.

Meanwhile, Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott issued a statement on the eve of his conference's gathering in San Francisco.

"We have not developed any definitive plans," the statement read in part. "We have not extended any invitations for expansion, and we do not anticipate any such decisions in the near term."

By coincidence or not, the Big 12 and Pac-10 have had preliminary talks about a joint television venture that could increase revenue to both leagues.

The Big 12 board of directors is scheduled to meet for several hours on the final day of meetings with a report to follow.

If the Pac-10/Big 12 rumors have validity, reports of the Big Ten's interest in Missouri take on added importance for Deaton and Alden. However, Deaton deflected talk of expansion.

"People feel good about the future of the conference," he said. "It's a great conference. It's a very competitive conference. We feel good about the academic strength, our progress in the APR. So we feel good about a lot of things going on."

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