

Pac-10 commish given OK to pursue expansion

Multiple scenarios on table for Scott

Associated Press
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/06/2010 07:16:44 PM MDT

SAN FRANCISCO -- The Pac-10 concluded its meetings Sunday by giving commissioner Larry Scott the authority to pursue any possible expansion, while not committing the conference to adding any more schools.

Scott addressed the chancellors and presidents on the final day of the weekend meeting about possible expansion scenarios and was given permission to move ahead with the process without having to go back to the board for approval.

"What direction that process takes still could go in different directions," Scott said. "Everything from remaining as we are as a Pac-10 that has some very bright days ahead of it, to a bigger conference footprint. I have the authority to take it different directions depending on various scenarios and discussions we will have."

The conference will decide its future plans by the end of the year before negotiating a new television contract for the 2012-13 academic year.

The Pac-10 administrators arrived in San Francisco this weekend to a report that the conference was ready to invite Texas, Texas A&M, Texas Tech, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State and Colorado from the Big 12 to create a 16-team megaconference. There has also been a report that Baylor could replace Colorado in that scenario.

The Camera attempted to contact CU athletic director Mike Bohn on Sunday regarding the latest expansion scenarios, but he was not available for comment.

The Pac-10 could also choose to keep the status quo or add only two teams in a smaller move.

"We probably have contemplated or are contemplating almost everything you've read about," Scott said. "The Pac-10 is in a very fortunate position. We have tremendous prospects exactly as we are. We also have some potentially exciting opportunities regarding expanding the footprint of the conference."

Scott, the former head of the Women's Tennis Association, took over the conference last July. In February, he said the window for possible expansion would be until the end of 2010 before the conference negotiated a new television deal. Since then, speculation has grown about if the Pac-10 would choose to expand, and if so, what teams it would seek to add.

With five pairs of natural rivals, the Pac-10 has been able to hold down travel time and costs and play a full round-robin in football and home-and-homes against each team in basketball.

But, a major motivation for the expansion talk is to increase revenues for the schools under a new media contract that begins in the 2012-13 academic year. Negotiations will start early next year and could lead the development of a Pac-10 network similar to what the Big Ten has successfully done.

Pac-10 teams make considerably less from television and bowl deals. Big Ten schools reportedly receive about \$22 million each from television and bowl deals and SEC school each get at least \$17.3 million. Pac-10 teams, meanwhile, reportedly only get about \$8 million to \$10 million each from the conference deals.

Scott said the reason for expansion would be that it could create "exponential" growth in terms of money and exposure.

"I can't say for sure sitting here today that there are options that will achieve these goals where the Pac-10 can stay true to its DNA and its special values," Scott said. "But there are some very exciting possibilities out there. That's why we're investing so much time and effort."

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Pac-10 has OK to expand, but CU Buffs' future uncertain

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Posted: 06/06/2010 06:28:17 PM MDT

Updated: 06/07/2010 12:05:57 AM MDT



(Denver Post file photo)

SAN FRANCISCO — Pac-10 Conference presidents and chancellors gave commissioner Larry Scott full approval Sunday to pursue expansion plans. However, it remains unclear

whether that potential expansion would include Colorado.

As the Pac-10 summer meetings concluded, Scott would not say which direction he will go, nor did he name any specific schools, but it appears he'll send out feelers very soon.

"I got all the feedback and support that I need to continue our process and continue our development," Scott said. "That's where we are. We haven't made any decisions that I'm in a position to announce."

Scott emphasized that his conference may remain at 10 teams or could expand to up to 16, which, possibly, would include Colorado, along with Big 12 members Texas, Texas Tech, Texas A&M, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State. Adding those six Big 12 teams was a hot rumor going into the weekend.

"There's no specific number," Scott said. "You've read an awful lot about different ideas. We probably have contemplated or are contemplating everything you've read about."

Should the Pac-10 add six Big 12 teams, it's not certain Colorado would be included. ESPNDallas.com reported that 15 Texas legislators are pushing Baylor to replace Colorado as a potential Pac-10 school. A legislator told the website of the importance to keep Baylor together with Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech in any expansion plans. Political powers in Texas forced the inclusion of Baylor over TCU when the Big 12

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was formed. TCU was the more obvious choice at the time.

"If you're going to have an exported commodity involved in this, do you think we're going to allow a school from outside the state of Texas to replace one of our schools in the Big 12 South?" the legislator told the website. "I don't think so. We're already at work on this."

"Baylor is fully committed to the Big 12," Baylor athletic director Ian McCaw said. "We especially value our relationship with our Big 12 Texas rivals."

If the Pac-10 does expand, it will be for the 2012-13 school year. Scott must decide on the conference's formation by the end of the 2010-11 year, when he begins negotiating with Fox on a new TV deal.

Much of what the Pac-10 will look like in two years will be determined by what other conferences do. A Columbus Dispatch report said Ohio State has already contacted Texas about joining the Big Ten, and the Austin American-Statesman reported Sunday that the Big 12 has given Nebraska and Missouri a Friday deadline to make their intentions known. The Big Ten is believed to be courting both schools. Nebraska has been upset for years with what it believes is favoritism shown the Big 12 South schools in league decision-making. Orangebloods.com, the Austin, Texas-based affiliate of rivals.com, reported Sunday that Colorado, along with Nebraska and Missouri, was given a deadline by

the Big 12 of roughly June 15 to decide whether to commit to remaining in the Big 12.

CU athletic director Mike Bohn did not immediately return a phone message Sunday.

Texas athletic director DeLoss Dodds said last week he prefers to stay in the Big 12 but will seek other options if the league is reduced to 10 teams.

The Big 12 presidents reportedly decided to impose the ultimatum.

Scott said he was unaware of the report but said he will watch closely what the

Big 12 does.

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Post Poll - Conference Call



Denver Post columnist Mark Kiszla says CU should keep conference alliance with the Rocky Mountains and join an expanded Mountain West Conference. What do you think?

☐ **Join Mountain West:** Conference rivals close by in an economically challenging time. What a great idea!

☐ **Stay in Big 12:** It's a great conference. Keep it as it is.

☐ **Join the Pac-10:** . . . or Pac-16? It would be a power conference, no doubt.



erence, no doubt.

"Ultimately, schools have to decide if they're happy where they are or would they consider other options," Scott said.

The difficulties of managing an expanded conference are many. The Pac-10 presidents were told not to discuss the contents of the meetings this weekend, but Washington president Mark Emmert said the sessions were "good. Complicated but good."

The Englewood-based Western Athletic Conference tried a two-division, 16-team conference for a few years before breaking up. Scott said he is studying what happened with the WAC. He's also looking into the financial viability of having nonrevenue teams travel long distances.

If the Pac-10 does expand, Colorado would be under consideration not only for geographical reasons but also academic. CU is a member of the prestigious Association of American Universities, which includes seven Pac-10 schools.

"That's part of the DNA of the Pac-10 Conference," Scott said. "Our challenge is how you can look at opportunities to grow, but you don't want to lose what's core and special and unique about the Pac-10 Conference."

Scott said the conference may unveil its plans during a July 27 media day in New York.

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Longer road trips for CU Buffs fans under a Pac-10 switch

By Whitney Bryen, bryen@coloradodaily.com
Colorado Daily

Posted: 06/06/2010 06:35:01 PM MDT

With reports swirling that the Pac-10 conference is preparing to extend an invitation to the University of Colorado, local Buffs fans are left wondering whether what's best for the school's athletes is also best for their followers.

As a current member of the Big 12, CU's NCAA teams travel to states across the Midwest to compete for bragging rights. But a switch to the Pac-10 would force the Buffs' teams and their devoted fans to venture out to Washington, California and Oregon to get their game on.

Travel time

A look at how long it takes to drive from Boulder to the Pac-10's campuses:

Arizona State University: 14 hours, 32 minutes

University of Arizona: 14 hours, 52 minutes

University of Southern California: 16 hours, 27 minutes

University of California, Los Angeles: 16 hours, 44 minutes

Washington State University: 18 hours, 7 minutes

University of California, Berkeley: 19 hours, 43 minutes

Stanford University: 20 hours, 26 minutes

University of Washington: 20 hours, 56 minutes

Oregon State University: 21 hours, 23 minutes

University of Oregon: 21 hours, 25 minutes

Source: Google Maps

CU senior Danielle Boyd and four of her friends make it their priority to support the football team as often as possible -- even if it means tagging along on the road.

"We enjoy the road trips and spending time cheering on our team," Boyd said.

But Boyd said she's worried that away games will be more difficult to attend if CU joins the Pac-10 because they'd be much further away.

"I think being in the Pac-10 would get more fans a chance to see our team, but, at the same time, it would cause me to have to travel a lot more," Boyd said.

Among current Big 12 destinations, Texas A&M in College Station -- a nearly 17-hour drive, according to Google Maps -- is the longest trek of the conference season. But games in Kansas, west Texas and Nebraska come with more manageable drive times, generally under 10 hours.

A change to the Pac-10 would mean driving as much as 21 1/2 hours to Eugene, Ore., to battle the Ducks. The shortest Pac-10 trip for the Buffs would be 14 1/2 hours to Arizona State University in Tempe, nearly double the drive to Lincoln, Neb.

Junior Andrew Hill said that while the distance may not be ideal for fans, the Pac-10 conference is a better all-around fit for CU, based on academic rankings and reputation.

"I think the Pac-10 teams are far more prestigious than any other teams in our conference, except for Texas," Hill said. "Our reputation could go up (if CU joins the Pac-10)."

CU alumnus Charles Cavanaugh attends a couple of football games every year and, like Hill, said the increased exposure CU would gain from becoming a part of the Pac-10 could improve the overall reputation of the university.

CU would have to make some major changes to compete with some of the Pac-10 powerhouses, Cavanaugh said, but just being in the same conference as those teams could greatly improve CU's recruitment both academically and athletically.

"Maybe the national exposure would draw more interest in attending Colorado," Cavanaugh said.

Cavanaugh also said the ideal locations and impressive teams might entice Buff fans to go the distance to support their teams.

"I think at first (fans) would spend the money, if the games were in nice-weather places, like Arizona and Southern California," Cavanaugh said.

While fans continue to duke it out over which conference is best for their teams, one philosophy remains consistent among Buffs zealots.

"A real fan will follow their team no matter what," Boyd said.

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