



# Colorado Springs Independent

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## CU isn't looking back End Zone

by [Ralph Routon](#)

**Mike Bohn** came back to Colorado Springs again last week, and the University of Colorado's athletic director acted as if he had never left.

Bohn developed his skills in Air Force's athletic department, marketing the AFA football program during a stretch (1984-92) that included four bowl victories and wins against Texas, Ohio State, Notre Dame, Virginia Tech and Mississippi State. He went on to the University of Idaho, the College Football Association, Colorado State and San Diego State before landing the CU job in the spring of 2005.

But if one word could describe Bohn's five-year tenure at CU, that word would have to be turbulent. Back in his hometown of Boulder, the ever-optimistic Bohn has plowed through an endless series of upheavals. That first football season, he fired head coach **Gary Barnett** after a 70-3 loss to eventual national champion Texas in the Big 12 title game. The next year, Bohn helped men's basketball coach **Ricardo Patton** out the door.

But the replacements for those marquee positions haven't set the world on fire. **Dan Hawkins** has struggled through four seasons (16-33) as CU's football coach and barely avoided being fired after a 3-9 record in 2009.

In men's basketball, **Jeff Bzdelik** came from Air Force to take over, then bolted for Wake Forest after three up-and-down seasons and annual job-hunting rumors. Bohn made a smart move in the spring to replace Bzdelik, bringing in **Tad Boyle** from Northern Colorado.

But then came June and another firestorm, as Colorado jumped from the Big 12 to the Pacific 10 Conference.

That's the No. 1 topic on Bohn's plate now. Sure, he thought Colorado would be leading a stampede of five or six schools out of the Big 12 heading west. Instead, Texas and others scrambled to salvage (for now) the Big 12, minus CU and Big Ten-bound Nebraska.

But moving to the Pac-10 has given Bohn fresh material to sell his program.

"We're already realizing the benefits of this change every day," Bohn says, "whether it's our fans, our donor base, our season-ticket sales... everything. But we have to seize this moment and make the most of it. We have to create a big push now, because this will be the igniter for what we need to do."

The prospect of changing leagues doesn't blow away the cloud hanging over Hawkins. He has one more year to change CU football's direction, or he won't be around to see the Pac-10. As Bohn freely admits, "We've been an underachiever in football, so obviously this is a big year for Dan. We all know that."

Bohn sees massive potential for exciting Colorado's fan base in 2010. There's the goodbye-kiss to the Big 12. There's the 20-year anniversary of CU's national championship team of 1990, with a reunion (and retro uniforms) Oct. 2 when the Buffs host Georgia. And there's the upcoming torrent of positive details about the Pac-10, from division alignments and scheduling to how the move will affect Colorado's other sports. Bohn's looking forward to football and basketball games against Southern Cal, UCLA, Oregon, Stanford and the rest.

The first decision will have to do with a timeline. Initially, CU's plan was to stay in the Big 12 two more years, and move in 2012. But now Nebraska's leaving in 2011, and Utah joins the Pac-10 next year as well. So we should hear soon that all the moves will take place in 2011, though Bohn refuses to hint at any specifics. He'll let CU's new conference announce all of that.

Yes, it means high expectations. Some athletic directors might worry about their own job security after misfiring on major hires. If Hawkins can't produce this fall, he'll be gone, and some will wonder if this AD deserves another chance to find the right replacement.

But if Mike Bohn is worried about his own future, he's definitely not letting it show.

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