

CU Buffs' Mike Bohn lands contract extension

CU athletic director to be under contract through 2016

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/05/2011 08:19:15 PM MDT

SEATTLE -- University of Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn played a leading role in the school's move from the Big 12 Conference to the Pac-12 Conference in the last year and it earned him a contract extension.

Chancellor Phil DiStefano told the Camera on Sunday at the close of the Pac-12 spring meetings that all that remains to finalize the extension is "tying up some loose ends."

DiStefano said the Board of Regents will review the extension and vote on it at its next meeting later this month in Colorado Springs or at another meeting later this summer.

He said the terms of the contract would not be drastically different from Bohn's current deal, but it would add another 21/2 years on the back end, keeping Bohn under contract in Boulder until spring or summer of 2016.

"I think Mike has done a very good job as the athletic director," DiStefano said. "And I think working together with Mike and the president's office to move out of the Big 12 and into the Pac-12 it took a lot of collaboration and cooperation and Mike was right there. I believe he deserves a contract extension."

Bohn was not available for comment on Sunday.

Bohn was one of the three lowest paid athletic directors in the Big 12 but his annual salary of more than \$300,000 ranks in the middle of the Pac-12.

While his base salary is not expected to grow much with the extension, new incentives related to fundraising will be added giving him the opportunity to earn more.

With rising tuition rates and shrinking financial support from the state, the school is embarking on a comprehensive capital fundraising campaign. DiStefano said with that in mind, it makes sense to build incentives into Bohn's contract related to new funding he might be able to generate for scholarships and facilities improvements.

"Even though we're getting a significant bump from media, we still have fundraising goals, especially related to scholarships and possibly facilities," DiStefano said.

Bohn has had other incentive clauses in his contract since he was hired in 2005 for performance in enhancing the growth and stature of the department, financial management, student welfare and development and enhancing community involvement and citizenship of the entire department. He can earn up to \$100,000 annually with those incentives.

It has been a big year for Bohn, who was under fire from some in the spring of 2010 following poor showings by the football team in the fall of 2009 and both basketball teams in the 2009-10 season.

He fired former women's basketball coach Kathy McConnell-Miller and replaced her with a former Buff in Linda Lappe. He collected a \$500,000 buyout from former men's coach Jeff Bzdelik, who bolted for Wake Forest, and hired Tad Boyle to lead the men's basketball program.

Lappe and Boyle each led their programs deep into the National Invitation Tournament earlier this year, with the men winning a school record 24 games.

Bohn also fired unpopular football coach Dan Hawkins in November and replaced him in December with former Buffs tight end Jon Embree, a move that has played well with fans and former players, even though Embree hasn't coached a game yet.

But Bohn's largest success in the past 12 months was the bold move to be the first school in the nation to announce it was changing conferences last summer and then negotiating an exit package from the Big 12 that amounted to only a third of what CU could have been forced to pay.

Bohn, school administrators and faculty members were enthusiastic about the move west because they all believe the culture and academic focus in Boulder is more in line with Pac-10 schools than it was with much of the Big 12. All of their experiences with the new league so far have bolstered those beliefs.

When the Pac-12 announced the largest media rights deal in college sports history last month, one that will more than double and likely eventually triple or even quadruple what CU had been receiving in conference distributions from the Big 12, it was the capstone moment for Bohn.

He had inherited a department in 2005 that was deeply in debt and lacking a plan for a way out. Ticket sales, fundraising and energy were sinking after a two-year soap opera of allegations surrounding the football program.

It has been a bumpy road for Bohn with many wrong turns and re-starts along the way, some of his coaching hires being at the top of the list, but DiStefano believes Bohn has managed the department about as well as anyone could have during his six years.

Another CU administrator had this to say about Bohn this week.

"He always lands on his feet."

Close Window

Send To Printer