

# CU Buffs planning Pac-12 parties

## DiStefano aiming for fundraising boost before road football games

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University of Colorado officials are planning several large alumni gatherings for road football games this fall at Arizona State, Stanford and UCLA similar to the big weekend of parties and meetings the school featured last fall when the Buffs visited Berkeley, Calif.

CU estimated at least 9,000 Buffs fans attended the game at Memorial Stadium last September to watch the Buffs play the Bears. CU lost 52-7, putting a damper on what had been a very successful trip until the point the game started.

Many of those fans attended a Friday night party at a San Francisco hotel and a pregame tailgate on Saturday morning. Officials estimated about 7,000 fans attended a similarly scheduled set of events prior to the 2007 road game at Arizona State.

Chancellor Phil DiStefano said over the weekend at the Pac-12 Conference spring meetings in Seattle that CU would probably host alumni events on the road for all seven of the Buffs' away games this fall. The three largest would be at ASU, Stanford and UCLA because of their locations in Arizona, and Northern and Southern California. CU also plays at Washington and Utah in conference play.

He said there will be a smaller event at Hawaii prior to the season opener Sept. 3 and a Friday night party prior to the Sept. 24 game at Ohio State.

"What we want to be able to do is have a presence with our alumni at these away games," DiStefano said. "I think it's very important to get our alumni office outworking with our alums and parents because it is a big splash for us going into the Pac-12."

DiStefano said he plans to make every road trip with the football team this fall and president Bruce Benson will be at most of the road games, if not all of them. Members of the Board of Regents and other top school officials and faculty members also will make the trips.

DiStefano plans to arrive early during game week during the conference portion of the season, likely on Wednesdays or Thursdays, to meet with boosters and alumni and work on fundraising.

One of the primary reasons the school is leaving the Big 12 Conference for the Pac-12 Conference is because so many more alumni live in the six-state Pac-12 footprint.

"It's to get the message out that we're going to be there," DiStefano said. "One of my goals and I think one of (athletic director) Mike Bohn's goals is to increase Buff Club participation and one way of doing it is by having that presence."

Bohn reported earlier this spring that Buff Club membership in California alone had grown from 99 members prior to the school announcing its change in conference affiliation to approximately 500. Bohn set a goal of 3,000 Buff Club memberships in California without establishing a time frame for reaching the mark.

It would be a big help to the school's fundraising efforts if the football team becomes more competitive on the road this fall under first-year coach Jon Embree. The Buffs haven't won a road game since Oct. 27, 2007 at Texas Tech, though they came close on several occasions under former coach Dan Hawkins, including Hawkins' final game as coach last year at Kansas.

CU blew a four-touchdown lead in the fourth quarter, allowing the Jayhawks to score 35-unanswered points in the second largest fourth-quarter comeback in major college history.

**One site for hoops**

## **tournaments**

Pac-12 Conference commissioner Larry Scott said over the weekend he favors having both the men's and women's basketball tournaments at one site or city but the conference is accepting proposals from cities that might want to host just one.

The Staples Center in Los Angeles hosted both tournaments last season, but lackluster attendance in the recent history there has officials excited to hear from other markets. The league has one more year scheduled at the Staples Center and could move elsewhere for the 2013 tournaments.

"If I could wave a magic wand, I'd have this be a combined event," Scott said. "But we will look at what is best."

## **Charter flights coming**

The Pac-12 has no prohibition on teams using charter flights to and from away games, but there hasn't been a need for them in the past in a 10-team league using travel partners and a rigid schedule.

With a new media rights deal beginning in 2012 along with the Pac-12 network, the league will have to be more flexible in playing games on different days throughout the week.

Love said that means schools will be forced to use charter flights to help minimize missed class time. Colorado and most Big 12 Conference teams already are used to charter flights in basketball with games scheduled in the middle of the week and weekends, but it will be a big adjustment for others.

"I think if we are asking our student-athletes to play a basketball game with television interest and to accommodate our television partners somewhere in the Pac-12 footprint, then we have an obligation to get them to the game and back to class. I don't really see, quite frankly, that there is much of a choice. It's an investment that needs to be made. It's already been frustrating enough with the current competitive model trying to contain missed class time. Now if we take our student-athletes to compete on Wednesday or some other night of the week, we need to be able to get them back to campus for class."

## **Notable**

The conference named Tony Corrente coordinator of football officiating as the league prepares for the inaugural Pac-12 football season, commissioner Larry Scott announced Monday. Mike Pereira, who served in the role on an interim basis since February, will remain as a consultant through the 2011-12 season as he continues to implement changes in the officiating program.

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