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Missouri governor spurred Buffs' move

By David Ubben

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn says comments made by Missouri's governor expedited the Buffs' move to the Pac-10.

After the Big Ten announced in December of 2009 that it planned to explore expanding the league's membership, Missouri governor Jay Nixon was outspoken in support of Missouri exploring the possibilities of a move to the Big Ten.

His comments, though, caused Bohn to assess what lied ahead in Colorado's future.

"The governor's remarks got me going. We had to do something, and fast," Bohn [told the Denver Post's Woody Paige](#).

The Pac-10 had hired former Big 12 commissioner Kevin Weiberg as chief operating officer. Bohn and Weiberg fast-tracked private talks, and the Buffaloes announced intentions in mid-June to join the Pac-10. The next day, Nebraska turned to the Big Ten. Missouri was left behind.

In December of 2009, Nixon made the first of several comments in support of Missouri exploring a move.

"This is not something that should be kept on the sports page and treated with the back of the hand," he said. "We have an obligation to make our schools as excellent as they can be."

Speaking explicitly of a move to the Big Ten, he said, "It's worth looking at."

Bohn didn't say which of Nixon's comments got him going, but the governor's most controversial comments came days later.

"I'm not going to say anything bad about the Big 12, but when you compare Oklahoma State to Northwestern, when you compare Texas Tech to Wisconsin, I mean, you begin looking at educational possibilities that are worth looking at," Nixon said.

Nixon's hilariously ineffective, misguided clarifier that preceded his inflammatory comments didn't earn Missouri any friends across the conference, but I doubt anyone thought it could have accelerated the process of expansion during the summer. Nevermind that his comments were dealing with Big Ten expansion. His comments appeared to have the biggest effect on Pac-10 expansion.

With half the Big 12 still mulling a move to the Pac-10, Colorado booked its ticket west to try and connect with its large alumni base in California, leaving Baylor likely without a home and the Big 12 South's other five teams with a decision to make.

Ultimately, they decided to stay in the Big 12, which is why you aren't reading this post on the Pac-16 blog.

Had Nixon kept quiet, who knows what would have happened. But at the very least, it seems Colorado's move to the Pac-10 might have come a bit later, if at all.



Comments in 2009 by Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon, shown in April, hastened the decision of Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn to get the Buffaloes out of the Big 12.