

CU Buffs to join Pac-10 in 2011

DiStefano negotiates \$6.863M Big 12 exit

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/21/2010 05:29:29 PM MDT

DENVER -- Let the farewell tours of middle America begin.

The University of Colorado is officially in its final year in the Big 12 Conference after the Board of Regents approved a deal Tuesday negotiated by Chancellor Phil DiStefano that will allow the school to part ways with the conference one year earlier than initially planned.

The regents approved CU's move to the Pac-10 in June, but the plan then was to change conferences in 2012. However, Nebraska followed by announcing it was leaving the Big 12 for the Big Ten in 2011 and Utah agreed to leave the Mountain West Conference for the Pac-10 in 2011. Those moves led to CU engaging in several months of negotiations to also leave the Big 12 early and join the Pac-10 on July 1 next year.

Perhaps the biggest surprise in the compromise was the final cost. CU will forfeit only \$6.863 million in conference distributions it would have received from the Big 12, but the Pac-10 has agreed to front CU the same amount so that there is no shortfall in the athletic department budget.

"Knowing we were getting that support from the Pac-10 certainly helped us because I certainly didn't want to use state funds or do things like raise fees or anything like that," DiStefano said. "Given the economic situation that we have here at the university, I thought it made sense to work with the Pac-10 and look at a loan against future revenues."

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn said the Big 12 already withheld \$530,805 of the \$6.8 million in June.

CU officials initially believed it could cost between \$9 million and \$14.5 million when it announced in June it was switching conferences. DiStefano said Big 12 officials began negotiations asking for as much as \$15 million. He said CU had determined it would be comfortable paying as much as \$9 million to get out a year early.

"I felt good leaving the meeting (Monday)," DiStefano said about the savings after a recent mediation session.

Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott confirmed the league pledged up to a \$10 million loan to CU last spring to help pay any exit fees to the Big 12. Scott also was pleasantly surprised by the number DiStefano was able to negotiate.

Nebraska announced Tuesday that its move to the Big Ten will cost \$9.25 million. The difference in cost between the two schools is based on Nebraska's average earnings being higher than Colorado's throughout the time in the Big 12 and the fact that CU gave two years notice of its intention to leave, while Nebraska gave only one.

Nebraska and CU initially said they did not believe they owed the Big 12 anything for leaving the conference because the conference couldn't prove it had been damaged in any way. Big 12 Conference commissioner Dan Beebe said the conference was damaged by the departures of both schools even as he continues to paint a bright future for his 10-team league.

"We thought it could be closer to \$30 (million). They thought it was zero," Beebe said on a conference call Tuesday evening. "That's where we started."

Two weeks ago it appeared a deal might not be possible any time soon. CU officials had started to plan for two more full school years in the Big 12 because the two sides were so far apart. Scott told reporters at the Cal-Colorado football game in Berkeley, Calif., on Sept. 11 that he believed there was less than a 50 percent chance the Buffs would join his league before 2012.

"It's nice to have certainty," Scott said. "All of our planning had been on parallel tracks anyway in terms of 2011 or 2012 and not knowing when they're coming. But now we can focus and we can concentrate our efforts knowing in 2011 we're

going to be a 12-team conference."

Those plans will include a football championship game, with the top team from two divisions squaring off, in December 2011. The location of the game has yet to be determined, but the conference will consider having the higher-seeded team host or playing at a neutral site.

DiStefano said the key in bringing everyone together and ultimately finding resolution was the addition of a mediator, who worked with Colorado, the Big 12 and Nebraska over a day-and-a-half.

"I think having a mediator really helped," he said. "I look at mediation as going to the dentist's office. You don't want to go and you don't like being there, but when it's done, you feel relieved."

DiStefano said the mediator asked not to be identified.

Beebe characterized negotiations with Colorado and Nebraska as difficult at times but professional. He said it never became ugly and no one threatened to go to court to resolve differences.

"One of the major points as we all talked about this was the delay in going forward in the form that we want to as a 10-member conference was going to be problematic," Beebe said. "So that is what motivated us to work hard to make sure we could go forward next year as soon as possible."

Beebe said the approximately \$16 million withheld from the two departing schools will be distributed to the remaining 10 members of his league. He said the Big 12 Board of Directors will decide how the money is split at its October meeting.

So what's next for the Buffs and the Pac-10 -- or Pac-12 as it will be?

Scott said establishing a revenue sharing system, dividing the league into divisions and solving future scheduling issues in all sports are at the top of his list of items to be resolved by an Oct. 21 meeting of chancellors and presidents in San Francisco.

Scott said he has been advocating an equal revenue-sharing plan for all members because he believes the current system in use in his league, which mirrors the one being used in the Big 12, is "antiquated." Both plans award schools with more television appearances more money.

"We've got agreement in our conference that we need to modernize our method of revenue sharing and get away from how many appearances you have on TV and what not," Scott said. "The discussion is still underway in terms of exactly how we'll split the revenue."

Colorado now knows it will definitely play a 13-game regular season football schedule in 2011, including a road game at Hawaii to start the season. It was scheduled to play host to California in nonconference play, but that game will now likely become part of the conference slate, though, until divisions are decided it's impossible to say for sure if the Buffs and Bears will even play next year.

Colorado has maintained a pledge to its fans and season-ticket holders that it will hold at least six home games at Folsom Field each year. For that to happen in 2011, the Buffs must schedule another nonconference opponent to replace Cal, and it must be given five home games in the nine-game conference schedule. CU will have to add two nonconference home games in 2012 as well.

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Woelk: CU early exit good work by Buff officials

Neill Woelk Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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To no one's surprise and almost everyone's relief, the divorce was finalized Tuesday afternoon.

While it may not have been an amicable parting, neither was Colorado's separation from the Big 12 particularly acrimonious. The two will go separate ways beginning in 2011, meaning this year will indeed be the Buffs' swan song through a conference it played a major role in forming.

The Buffs' share of the alimony payment will be \$6.86 million; fellow Big 12 escapee Nebraska will pony up \$9.25 million.

Thankfully, there were no child custody arguments. The Big 12 gets to keep homes in Ames, Stillwater, Waco and Lubbock; Colorado gets the vacation spots in Tempe, Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle.

You tell me who won.

Financially, it's a good result for the Buffs.

When Colorado first announced its plans to go west, initial reports said the Buffs could owe as much as \$15 million to \$18 million for their exit fee.

Wrong.

Instead, they'll pay about 36 percent of two years' worth of conference revenue, a significantly lower portion than some of the rather ludicrous reports that were being circulated even as late as Tuesday morning.

Give Colorado chancellor Phil DiStefano a well-deserved pat on the back for this one, and a healthy assist to athletic director Mike Bohn.

DiStefano quietly but emphatically argued Colorado's case with the Big 12, and came away with a settlement better than many expected.

There's no doubt the Big 12 expected more in terms of an exit fee -- and no doubt Colorado would have liked to pay less. But as the Big 12 pushed the issue and threatened to make it too expensive for Colorado to leave in 2011, DiStefano didn't blink.

Instead, he patiently stuck to his guns. When the Big 12 realized that forcing Colorado to stay another year as "punishment" for its desire to leave was penny-wise and pound-foolish, the conference agreed to an arrangement that was acceptable to all.

Colorado was gracious in its exit; the Big 12 was likewise. Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe made it clear that the conference did not want to entangle itself in a protracted legal battle. The airing of dirty laundry would have helped no one.

"Everybody had a strong desire to make sure we worked this out collegially and without any legal process involved," Beebe said. "That was a primary motive."

But there were some folks who seemed to be itching for a little courtroom drama. Nebraska chancellor Harvey Perlman, who suggested from the beginning that the departing schools didn't owe the Big 12 a dime, admitted that he wouldn't have minded seeing the issue going to court.

"I still think we had a very significant legal argument that would have prevented them from imposing any penalties," said Perlman, a former law professor. "... I'm disappointed, as an academic, that my curiosity about the legal claims won't be resolved. (But) I think it made sense in this setting to get this behind us."

Indeed. That's one thing Colorado didn't need -- a lengthy and costly legal battle.

No doubt, it will take the Buffs a few years to make up the exit fee. Colorado won't start receiving a full share of Pac-12 revenue until 2012, when new television contracts kick in, but will have a loan from its new conference on future revenues to cover up any shortfalls in the interim.

In the long run, it will prove to be a financially sound decision for Colorado, as its revenue shares should increase substantially.

There will be some immediate positive effects. An increased alumni presence, the novelty of new opponents and the general overall feeling of a fresh start should energize Colorado's fan base. If CU officials maximize the potential there, it should soften the immediate blow of the exit fee.

Bottom line?

Tuesday was the latest major step in a game plan Bohn and the CU administration have been formulating for more than a year. It was a carefully orchestrated, well-executed strategy that has ultimately put Colorado in terrific position to begin a new era.

This morning, the fact that it will begin as soon as humanly possible is something Colorado fans can wholeheartedly embrace.

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CU moving to Pac-12 a year early

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/22/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

Colorado will join the Pac-12 Conference next year and will have \$6.863 million in future revenues withheld as a penalty by the Big 12, about half of what the school originally feared.

The CU Board of Regents voted unanimously Tuesday to approve the move, which prevents Colorado from being a lame-duck school in an awkward 11-team Big 12 next season.

"Nobody's talked about the student-athletes' experience, and I think they're the real winners right here," athletic director Mike Bohn said. "Not only for the Pac-12 but the Big 12, all those athletes, it's very important for our student-athletes to have a great experience, knowing who they're going to play, to be able to compete for a championship knowing it's going to be equitable."

Nebraska, which will leave for the Big Ten next year, will have \$9.255 million withheld. The higher amount is based on what the two schools have historically earned through TV and bowl

game appearances. If Nebraska is one of two Big 12 schools to make one of the five lucrative BCS bowls this season, the amount withheld will be \$500,000 less.

Colorado chancellor Phil DiStefano has spearheaded the negotiations with the Big 12 since June, when Colorado announced it would leave for the Pac-10. He said the Big 12 initially said it would withhold funds totaling \$14 million to \$15 million.

He said the school's goal was to get the amount withheld under \$9 million.

"Having a mediator really helped," DiStefano said. "I look at mediation like going to the dentist's office. You don't want to go and you don't like being there, but when it's done you feel relieved."

Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott confirmed in a phone interview that the conference will float Colorado the \$6.863 million loan, which will be paid back with future earnings from the Pac-12's upcoming TV negotiations and the school's expected future ticket revenue and booster donations.

Bohn said since Colorado announced it would join the Pac-10, Buff Club donations from the state of California have gone up almost 400 percent.

The regents were happy the amount is low.

"Very pleased," Steve Bosley said. "You have to

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 22, 2010

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CU confirms 2011 Pac-10 move

By Brian Howell
 © 2010 Longmont Times-Call

In the end, everybody got what they wanted.

On Tuesday, the University of Colorado reached an agreement with the Big 12 Conference that will allow it to join the Pac-10 Conference on July 1, 2011 — one year ahead of its original schedule.

“We’re very fired up,” CU athletic director Mike Bohn said.

CU will have \$6,863,000 in revenues withheld from the Big 12 because of the move. That figure is well below what it could have been, and CU’s Board of Regents approved the agreement with a unanimous vote Tuesday.

“It sounded like a pretty good deal to me,” said Dr. Jim Geddes, a CU regent. “If we had been required to abide by the contract to get out of the Big 12 next year, we would have had to pay more like around \$14 million. We ended up paying about 36 percent of what the original penalty was going to be. Everybody was happy with it.”

Reaching Tuesday’s deal wasn’t easy.

CU announced in June that it would leave for the Pac-10 in 2012. However, Big 12 bylaws state that a school that leaves the conference must forfeit a certain percentage of revenue. Figuring out that fee took a while.

In fact, earlier this month, it didn’t appear CU would get to this point. On Sept. 11, prior to the Buffaloes’ game at Cal, Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott told the media that he felt CU’s chances of leaving the Big 12 in 2011 were “worse than 50-50.”

That changed in a hurry.

“The activity the last 10 days has been extremely productive,” Bohn said. “Our legal team and our chancellor (Philip DiStefano) just did a terrific job at continuing to work hard at looking for the opportunity to put the deal together.”

The deal was made easier by the fact that all parties involved — CU, the Big 12, the Pac-10 and all the schools in both conferences — wanted it done. The Big 12, which also lost Nebraska for 2011, was ready to move forward with 10 teams. The Pac-10, which also gained Utah for 2011, was ready to move forward with 12 teams. Bohn praised the professionalism of everyone involved with reaching the agreement.

Tuesday’s announcement allows CU, the Big 12 and the Pac-10 to look ahead to the future.

“It’s a great day for the conference,” Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott said. “We’re pleasantly surprised that the mediation was successful. I’ve gotten a lot of feedback. I think everyone is excited. The decision today gives us certainty; it gives us focus on what we’re working towards.”

Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe said: “We are pleased that, with this issue behind us, the Big 12 is poised to begin the



University of Colorado Chancellor Philip DiStefano, left, shakes hands with Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott on June 11. **Richard M. Hackett/Times-Call file**

transition to its exciting future as a 10-member conference beginning in July.”

CU now knows that this will be its last year in the Big 12, ending long-standing relationships with several schools, including Nebraska, Missouri and Kansas.

“It was hard for me to really feel terribly excited about leaving the Big 12, but on the other hand, we have a great opportunity in joining what will be the Pac-12,” said Geddes, a CU graduate in the early 1970s. “It will bring additional funding into the university, which is of substantial importance.”

CU expects distributions from the Pac-10 to be greater than what it now gets from the Big 12. That added distribution, along with increased ticket revenue from Pac-10 home games, is expected to fund the \$6.8 million. CU also might look into getting a loan from the Pac-10. The money will not come from tuition, taxpayers, general funds or state support.

“That (loss of revenue this year) creates quite a gap, and that’s why we’ll work hard with contributions and ticket sales and TV revenue and every opportunity we can to generate the revenue to support our enterprise,” Bohn said.

EXTRA POINTS: The Pac-10 will have league meetings in October. It is possible that division alignments and a 2011 conference schedule will be settled within the next month. ... Scott said the Pac-10 is planning to host a conference championship game in football in 2011. The league is working on models as to whether that game would be at a neutral site or at the site of the No. 1 team. ... The Pac-10 is likely to adopt a nine-game conference schedule in football. One of the Buffs’ current non-conference games, at home against Cal, is likely to become a conference game. That will leave CU with one more open slot to fill out its 13-game slate. ... Nebraska, which is also leaving the Big 12 after this school year, announced on Tuesday that it will forfeit \$9.255 million in revenue for its move. NU could cut \$500,000 off that penalty by reaching a BCS bowl game this season.

Brian Howell can be reached at bhowell@times-call.com. Read his Buffs blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/howell.

CU Buffs moving on 3rd down

Hansen & Co. second in Big 12 on key conversions

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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Colorado football fans searching for signs of progress from the Buffs and coach Dan Hawkins aren't coming up completely empty.

Plenty of questions remain about the capabilities of this season's team, and more concrete answers will be provided as the season moves along, but there have been reasons for hope through the first three games.

Exhibit A is the turnaround on third downs for the offense so far.

The Buffs rank second in the Big 12 Conference and 17th nationally in third-down conversions, just behind Nebraska. The Buffs are converting 51 percent of the time.

That level of efficiency isn't likely to hold up all season, but it is a drastic improvement over the Buffs' performance last year when drives and possessions were on the line. CU converted on third downs 36 percent of the time in 2009.

"Isn't that the best stat ever?" quarterback Tyler Hansen said when asked about the improvement.

Hansen described last season's team as "horrible" on third downs and said coaches and players put a lot of emphasis on that part of the game in the offseason. Hansen said he announces the down and distance in the huddle on third downs so that everyone in the game understands the situation and the importance of the play. It's something coaches began having him do in practices in the spring.

He said doing so gets him thinking about how he can make the first down before the snap. If it is third-and-2, he might remind himself he can probably run for the first down if his receivers aren't open.

"It kind of kills the morale of the defense and just keeps drives going," Hansen said of converting in third-down situations. "If you can convert on third downs, it gives you more confidence for the rest of the drive."

Hansen was particularly effective last week against Hawaii. The Buffs converted 10 of 14 third downs against the Warriors. Hansen threw the ball on third down 10 times in the game and completed nine of those passes for 147 yards and eight first downs. He also threw two touchdown passes on third downs.

"He's still learning," offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said. "He's still working to manage the game. I think he's doing better. It's in slow, small increments. Every Saturday for him is going to be another building block."

How important are third-down conversions? The answer to that question can depend on the nature of each team.

Those with big-play ability or tough defenses can get by without converting at a high rate and still win games. That hasn't been Colorado in recent years.

The Buffs have relied on the offense moving the ball methodically down the field, with big plays coming every now and then.

"I think what's real important is we're getting in third-and-manageable," Kiesau said. "That's probably the undisclosed factor here. Before, we were always in third-and-eight or nine-plus. We're doing a lot better job of being in third-and-three or third-and-six."

Notable

Hawkins said Paul Vigo suffered a broken fibula against Hawaii and is out at least 4-6 weeks. Vigo is the third nickel back to be lost for significant time to injury this season. Junior Jonathan Hawkins, who has had knee problems in the past, is the fourth player to step into the starting nickel back role this fall. Jonathan Hawkins, no relation to the head coach, made an interception late in the win over Hawaii. ... Dan Hawkins said the team is already working on the Georgia game plan this week.

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cu briefs

Bufs QB Hansen focusing on third downs

Posted: 09/22/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Colorado junior quarterback Tyler Hansen approaches third-down situations with a new outlook this season. If it's third-and-short, he will run for the first down if he must. If it's third-and-longer, he will just get it done, whatever it takes.

"In the huddle I'll say it's third-and-4, and we have to get this first down," Hansen said after Tuesday's practice. "I'll just be emphasizing third downs. If it's third-and-2, I can run for it."

The Buffs, 2-1, rank 17th in the country on third-down conversions, having made good on 23-of-45 attempts for 51 percent.

A year ago, CU converted just 35.8 percent of its third-down plays, 89th in the Division I ranks. That was among the reasons CU finished 3-9.

Even with the slow start against Hawaii last Saturday, Hansen was 9-for-10 for 147 yards passing in third-down situations.

"Isn't that the best stat ever?" Hansen said. "We had a real good game plan going in on third-down stuff."

Moving on up.

Hansen, a part-time starter his first two years, had absolutely no idea that with 2,278 career yards, he passed four players on the CU passing charts this past week — Jeff Knapple, Bill Solomon, Ken Johnson and Bobby Anderson — to crack the school's top 15. Johnson, while directing a run-oriented option offense, quarterbacked CU to the nation's No. 3 spot as a sophomore in 1971. Anderson earned All-America honors after switching to tailback.

"I didn't know this," Hansen said. "That's unbelievable."

Bye week plans.

CU is off this week and plays host to Georgia next week. "This bye comes perfectly because Georgia is a real physical team in the SEC, so they are going to have athletes," Hansen said.

Redshirt candidates and third-teamers are getting extra work this week while the top of the depth chart gets a chance to heal.

"We're working on some fundamentals and some little stuff," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "We're doing some Georgia stuff."

Hawkins had mixed feelings about the timing of the bye week. "There's pros and cons. We

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finished on a good note (Saturday). Maybe you just like to keep playing."

Footnote.

Freshman cornerback Paul Vigo, who cracked a nonweight-bearing bone in his lower leg, will be out four to six weeks.

Natalie Meisler, The Denver Post

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Bufs to join Pac-10 next year

CU will move to new conference one year earlier

By Michael Krumholtz on September 21, 2010

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In a change of plans, Colorado will join the Pac-10 Conference in 2011, a year earlier than previously expected.

“We are very excited that Colorado will be joining the conference in 2011,” said Pac-10 Commissioner Larry Scott on Tuesday. “Our plans all along were for them to join the conference in 2012 so this puts the Pac-12 ahead of schedule, which is great news. With Colorado and Utah coming on board next year we are tremendously excited about the future of the conference.”

CU will officially leave the Big 12 behind at the end of June 2011. The conference will retain \$6.83 million that would have been paid to the school as a share of the Big 12’s revenue pie.

The move comes at somewhat of a surprise, considering Scott said there was less than a “50-50” chance CU would transition to the conference before 2012.

For now, Colorado will finish up the school year in the conference they’ve called home ever since it was first born as the “Big 8.”

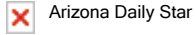
“Even as we leave for an exciting future in the Pac-10 Conference, we value the great friendships and memorable rivalries we have been a part of,” CU Chancellor Phil DiStefano said. “And we appreciate the good faith [Big 12] Commissioner Dan Beebe has shown in working with us on our exit from the conference,”

CU will join the Pac-10 with the Mountain West Conference departing Utah Utes, and the conference will fittingly change its name to the Pac-12.

Contact Staff Writer Michael Krumholtz at Michael.krumholtz@colorado.edu.



(Logo courtesy NCAA)



Colorado to join Pac-10 next summer

Jon Wilner San Jose Mercury News | Posted: Wednesday, September 22, 2010 12:00 am

SAN JOSE, Calif. - It will be the Pac-12 next fall, after all.

Colorado's Board of Regents accepted terms of an exit agreement Tuesday with the Big 12 Conference, ending a lengthy negotiation and clearing the way for the school to join the Pacific-10 Conference for the 2011 football season.

Colorado agreed to pay the Big 12 approximately \$6.86 million.

Chancellor Phil DiStefano told The Associated Press that Colorado had been prepared to forfeit up to \$9 million.

"To be under that was obviously a benefit to us," he said. DiStefano said the Big 12 had floated a figure of withholding roughly \$14 million to \$15 million.

"This agreement was accomplished through a respectful process that all parties believe is fair," Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe said in a prepared statement.

Colorado Regent Steve Bosley told the AP he was "very pleased" with the \$6.86 million figure for Colorado's Big 12 exit.

"I don't think we anticipated it being quite this low," he said.

DiStefano lightheartedly likened the negotiations to going to a dentist's office.

"You don't want to go there, but when it's done, you feel relieved," he said.

Colorado and Utah accepted invitations from the Pac-10 in June. There was never any question that Utah would join in time for the 2011 season, but Colorado's status was uncertain as it negotiated an exit fee with the Big 12.

As recently as two weeks ago, Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott said the chances of Colorado joining next fall were "worse than 50-50" and that the holdup was "purely financial."

But as the deadline approached for both conferences to set their 2011 football schedules, Colorado and the Big 12 reached an agreement.

The development means:

- The Pac-10 will become the Pac-12 next summer, when Utah and Colorado join the conference.
- The Pac-12 will split into two six-team divisions for football next season. The specifics are expected to be completed late next month when the league's presidents and chancellors meet.

The conference is evaluating two options: splitting the league in a north-south manner or dividing up the natural rivals.

- The Pac-12 probably will stage a football championship game in December 2011, matching the first-place teams from each division.

The league is considering two approaches for the location of the championship game: The home stadium of the higher-seeded team or a neutral location, such as University of Phoenix Stadium in Glendale.

"We are very excited that Colorado will be joining the conference in 2011," Scott said in a statement released by the Pac-10. "Our plans all along were for them to join the conference in 2012, so this puts the Pac-12 ahead of schedule, which is great news. With Colorado and Utah coming on board next year, we are tremendously excited about the future of the conference."

CU athletic director Mike Bohn told the AP the move would help the university with donors and with recruiting, and that ticket sales could rise with CU's early move.

DiStefano said he was confident the Pac-10 will loan CU money against future revenues to pay for the cost of switching conferences.

Bohn said he will work to schedule an additional nonconference home game for 2011 to fill out a six-game home schedule.

The Associated Press contributed to this report

Sep 21, 2010 6:00 pm US/Mountain

Colorado Authorized To Move To Pac-10 In 2011

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — University of Colorado regents on Tuesday authorized the school's chancellor to move forward with plans for the school to join the [Pac-10](#) on July 1, for a price tag of \$6.86 million.

Colorado previously had said it would move from [the Big 12](#) to the Pac-10 in 2012, but it was exploring how much it would cost to leave a season early.

With the help of a mediator, Colorado and the Big 12 agreed the conference would withhold \$6.86 million in revenues that Colorado would be entitled to receive before July 1.

Chancellor Phil DiStefano said Colorado had been prepared to forfeit up to \$9 million.

"To be under that was obviously a benefit to us," he said. DiStefano said the Big 12 had floated a figure of withholding roughly \$14 million to \$15 million.

Regents voted 9-0 Tuesday to move forward with plans for Colorado to switch conferences before next season.

Attorneys for the Big 12 and Pac-10 have been negotiating an exit strategy for weeks.











CU athletic director Mike Bohn insisted the move would help the university with donors and with recruiting and that ticket sales could rise with CU's early move.

DiStefano said he was confident the Pac-10 will loan CU money against future revenues to pay for the cost of switching conferences.

Bohn said he will work to schedule an additional nonconference home game for 2011 to fill out a six-game home schedule.

Colorado already was scheduled to play nonconference games at Hawaii and Ohio State next season and to play Colorado State in Denver, plus California at home. Now that Colorado and California will be conference rivals next season, that leaves Bohn with one more nonconference game to schedule.

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Tuesday, September 21, 2010

Colorado, Big 12 agree to early exit

ESPN.com news services

The Big 12 will become a 10-team league next year after all in the wake of an agreement on Tuesday by Colorado to forfeit more than \$6 million in conference payouts in order to leave the Big 12 after the 2010-11 academic year.

Colorado plans to leave for the Pac-10 on June 30, 2011 and have \$6.863 million withheld from its conference revenue.

Colorado initially planned to leave for the Pac-10 after the 2011 season, but Nebraska's announced plans to move to the Big Ten after the 2010 season meant Colorado would have to do the same or force the Big 12 to play a season with 11 teams, along with the Pac-10, who will add Utah after the 2010-11 academic year.

Nebraska and the Big 12 announced earlier Tuesday that it would agree to have \$9.255 million of its conference revenue withheld, but that number would fall to \$8.755 million if Nebraska was one of two teams in the Big 12 to qualify for a BCS bowl game.

"We are pleased that, with this issue behind us, the Big 12 is poised to begin the transition to its exciting future as a 10-member Conference beginning in July," Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe said in a statement.

Big 12 blog



ESPN.com's David Ubben writes about all things Big 12 in his conference [blog](#).

• [Blog network:](#)
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"Even as we leave for an exciting future in the Pac-10 Conference, we value the great friendships and memorable rivalries we have been a part of, and we appreciate the good faith Commissioner Dan Beebe has shown in working with us on our exit from the conference," Colorado chancellor Phil DiStefano said.

Both officials from Colorado and Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott sounded pessimistic after Colorado's recent game at Cal-Berkeley that a deal to leave the Big 12 by 2011 instead of 2012 would come together.

The Big 12, under its bylaws, originally had sought to withhold 80 percent of Colorado's actual slice of the conference payout for 2009-10 and their projected distribution for 2010-11. That would have been at least \$15 million for Colorado.

Nebraska and Colorado officials initially said their schools shouldn't be required to pay anything because the league was on the verge of collapsing when they struck deals with the Big Ten and Pac-10 in June.

Texas and four other schools had talked to the Pac-10 before Beebe convinced them to stay in a 10-team league. Nebraska and Colorado challenged the bylaws, saying their moves were based on unstable circumstances that they did not create.

"I think everybody knew there was going to be a dispute," Beebe said in a teleconference Tuesday night. "They were firm in their positions, we were firm in ours, and we worked out the compromise."

The latest figures show the Pac-10 paid its members between \$7-\$11.5 million. With the additions of Colorado and Utah, the

league expects those figures to almost double when it negotiates new television deals next year.

Conference distributions are divided among member schools mostly from revenues derived from football and men's basketball television contracts, bowl games and the NCAA men's basketball tournament.

"We are very excited that Colorado will be joining the Conference in 2011," Scott said in a statement Tuesday night. "Our plans all along were for them to join the Conference in 2012 so this puts the Pac-12 ahead of schedule, which is great news. With Colorado and Utah coming on board next year we are tremendously excited about the future of the Conference."

Beebe said Big 12 leaders would meet next month to discuss how the money withheld from Nebraska and Colorado would be distributed among the 10 remaining members.

Information from ESPN.com's David Ubben and The Associated Press contributed to this story.

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Tuesday, September 21, 2010

Colorado officially plans to leave in 2011

By David Ubben

Get ready for the newer, slimmer Big 12 to make its debut next season.

The Big 12 announced on Tuesday evening that it had [agreed to terms with Colorado for an exit](#) after the 2010-11 academic year, and planned to withhold \$6.863 million of Colorado's conference revenue.

"We are pleased that, with this issue behind us, the Big 12 is poised to begin the transition to its exciting future as a 10-member Conference beginning in July," Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe said in a statement.

Colorado initially planned to leave for the Pac-10 after the 2011 season, but Nebraska's announced plans to move to the Big Ten after the 2010 season meant Colorado would have to do the same or force the Big 12 to play a season with 11 teams, along with the Pac-10, who will also add Utah after the 2010-11 academic year.

Both officials from Colorado and Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott sounded pessimistic after Colorado's recent game at Cal-Berkeley that a deal to leave the Big 12 by 2011 instead of 2012 would come together.

Tuesday, it did.

Nebraska and the Big 12 announced earlier Tuesday that it would agree to have \$9.255 million of its conference revenue withheld, but that number would fall to \$8.755 million if Nebraska was one of two teams in the Big 12 to qualify for a BCS bowl game.

The obvious question is, why does Nebraska have to pay more? Commissioner Dan Beebe will probably be asked that question in his soon-to-begin teleconference Tuesday night.

Colorado spokesman David Plati told ESPN.com that his understanding for the discrepancy was that Colorado originally announced it would leave in two years and Nebraska planned on one, but deferred further questions to Beebe. The Big 12 may have waived further penalties to avoid the prospect of having to conduct a season of competition with 11 members, which would have produced any number of scheduling problems.

My guess is those numbers were devised as roughly half of what the two parties were projected to earn in revenue over the next two seasons. As we all know, the Big 12 [does not distribute revenue equally](#), a policy that got a little too much traction and blame during all the realignment talk over the summer. The Pac-10 also does not distribute conference revenue equally. The Big Ten does.

I'm glad to have most of this behind us, as I'm sure Nebraska, Colorado and the Big 12 are, too. We'll know more Tuesday night after Beebe's teleconference.

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Division alignments, schedules and title game plans are now on a fast track as the conference expands to 12 teams.

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Big 12 names its price: \$16 million for Nebraska, Colorado to depart

Ray Slover

SN Sporting News

Big 12 officials on Tuesday reached agreement with their departing members and set a course for a 10-team conference starting in July 2011. The deals will allow Nebraska to flee to the Big Ten and Colorado to escape to the Pac-10 -- at a cost of about \$16 million.

Sporting News' Dave Curtis says the deal breaks down to about [\\$9.2 million for Nebraska and about \\$6.9 million for Colorado](#). The conference will withhold revenue from those schools; the figures were set with the help of a mediator.

Nebraska officials had contended they should be allowed to leave without penalty.

Nebraska accepted an offer from the Big Ten to become that conference's 12th member in early June, roughly six months after the Big Ten declared it was interested in expanding.

"We feel the long-term benefits of entering into the Big Ten, both academically and athletically, will make this a very good investment," Nebraska athletic director Tom Osborne said.

Colorado and Utah, which will leave the Mountain West Conference, will make the Pac-10 a 12-team conference.

Colorado chancellor Phil DiStefano said his school had been prepared to forfeit up to \$9 million, according to The Associated Press.

"To be under that was obviously a benefit to us," he said.

DiStefano said the Big 12 had floated a withholding figure of roughly \$14 million to \$15 million.

Colorado's Board of Regents voted 9-0 Tuesday to move forward with plans for the university to switch conferences before next season.

Attorneys for the Big 12 and Pac-10 have been negotiating an exit strategy for weeks.

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn insisted the move would help the university with donors and recruiting and that ticket sales could increase with the school's early move.

DiStefano said he was confident the Pac-10 will loan Colorado money against future revenues to pay for the cost of switching conferences.

Bohn said he will work to schedule an additional nonconference home game for 2011 to fill out a six-game home schedule.

Colorado already was scheduled to play nonconference games at Hawaii and Ohio State next season and to play Colorado State in Denver, plus California at home. Now that Colorado and California will be conference rivals next season, that leaves Bohn with one more nonconference game to schedule.

DiStefano lightheartedly likened the negotiations to going to the dentist's office. "You don't want to go there, but when it's done, you feel relieved," he said.

The Big 12 had sought to withhold an estimated \$19.4 million from Nebraska under its bylaws. That would have represented 80 percent of the projected distributions that would have been paid to Nebraska for 2009-10 and 2010-11.

The Big Ten distributed \$22 million to each of its schools last year. Over the past four years Nebraska received approximately \$10 million annually in revenues from the Big 12.

Chancellor Harvey Perlman said in June that he opposed paying a penalty because the Big 12 was in a state of flux, with schools negotiating with the Pac-10. Only Colorado and Nebraska left.

"I still think we had a very significant legal argument that would have prevented them from imposing any penalty," Perlman said Tuesday. "I'm also cognizant of the risks associated with litigation. What I think is the law may not turn out to be the law.

"I'm disappointed, as an academic, that my curiosity about the legal claims won't be resolved. But when you look at everything, I think it made sense in this setting to get this behind us and avoid the risks of litigation."

A Big 12 administrator told the Texas website Orangebloods.com it was clear the departures had to be cleared before season's end.

"There is too much consensus to get Colorado on its way to the Pac-10," Big 12 administrator told Orangebloods.com. "That's what Colorado and the Pac-10 want. That's what the Big 12 wants."

According to the report, the Big 12 voted on a total of eight football schedules for 2011: four with a 10-team league and four with an 11-team league. The 11-team alignment is now moot.

The Big 12 will rid itself of divisions because it will not have a championship game.



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Pac-10 expansion: Colorado to join in 2011 (it's a done deal)

Posted by **Jon Wilner** on September 21st, 2010 at 5:04 pm | Categorized as **Colorado football**, **Pac-10 Conference**, **Pac-10 expansion**, **Pac-10 football**

***** 5:20 p.m. update:** *Something I should have mentioned below: With Colorado in the conference next season, Cal suddenly has to find itself another football game.*

The Bears are scheduled to visit Boulder next fall. Because it now counts as a conference game, Cal needs a third non-league game.

Don't be surprised if the Bears hook up with a Big 12 team, since its members will be scrambling to replace Nebraska and Colorado on the schedule.

***** 9:05 p.m. update:** *Almost forgot: As some fans may know, Cal has been in discussions with Fresno State about a game in the Bay Area for 2011. The last I checked with school officials — about two weeks ago — the Bears and Bulldogs were close but hadn't finalized anything. Cal was also keeping tabs on Big 12 scheduling needs if Colorado bolted for the Pac-10, as noted above. But Fresno is probably the likeliest solution (if the schools can make the date and location work).*

The Big 12 just announced the terms of Colorado's departure following the 2011-12 season.

Which means the Buffs will be playing football in the Pac-10 next fall, pending approval by the Colorado regents (which will come as early as tonight).

Which means the Pac-10 will become the Pac-12 on July 1, 2011.

Which means it will have two, six-team divisions for football next fall (alignment to be finalized next month).

Which means it will have the structure to stage a football championship game.

Colorado owes a little under \$7 million.

Here's the news from the Big 12:

The Big 12 announced it has reached agreement with the University of Colorado regarding its withdrawal from the Conference effective June 30, 2011, subject to final approval from the member institutions' respective governing boards.

The Conference will withhold \$6,863,000 from the revenues otherwise distributable to the University.

Colorado will withdraw from the Conference at the end of the current academic year.

Big 12 Conference Commissioner Dan Beebe stated, "This agreement was accomplished through a collegial, respectful process among the Conference, its institutions, and the University of Colorado that led to a resolution that all parties believe is fair. I appreciate the cooperation of Chancellor Phil DiStefano and others at Colorado. The Big 12 has enjoyed its relationship with CU and wishes it well in the future."

"The University of Colorado at Boulder was a founding member of the Big 12 and a proud participant in it for 15 years," said DiStefano. "Even as we leave for an exciting future in the Pac-10 Conference, we value the great friendships and memorable rivalries we have been a part of, and we appreciate the good faith Commissioner Dan Beebe has shown in working with us on our exit from the conference."

"We are pleased that, with this issue behind us, the Big 12 is poised to begin the transition to its exciting future as a 10-member Conference beginning in July," Beebe added.