

## Woelk: CU officials have plenty on plate for Pac-12 move

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First order of the day is a well-deserved nod of recognition to the Buff football team for its cleanup effort along Boulder Creek.

The entire team -- along with most of the coaching staff, including head coach Dan Hawkins -- spent Thursday morning cleaning up the corridor along the creek from Broadway to 28th Street.

Anyone who walks or rides along the path knows what a monumental task such a chore entailed.

But what most folks don't know is that every member of the CU football team -- in fact, just about every student-athlete at Colorado -- is required to complete a community service project every year. When CU officials say they want their student-athletes to give back to the community, it's not empty talk.

Thursday's cleanup effort, by the way, doesn't fulfill the requirement. It was merely a little "extra credit" suggested by Hawkins.

Athletes catch lots of grief for lots of reasons these days. Granted, some of it is deserved. But every CU athlete will leave Colorado with first-hand experience of what it's like to give something back to his or her community. No cheers or adulation; just the satisfaction of helping out and making a difference.

I'd love to know what percentage of the CU general student populace can make the same claim. ...

**Now that it's** official that Colorado will be heading west to join the Pac-12 next year, CU officials are rapidly preparing for the switch.

Buff athletic director Mike Bohn has no problem identifying CU's top priority.

"One thing first and foremost on our plate is how are we going to improve our competitiveness across the board?" Bohn said Friday. "It's a great conference, and not just in football.

"When you look at the fact that we're going from a conference that's fourth or fifth in RPI to No. 1 in volleyball and women's soccer, when we're going to one of the best track and field conferences in the nation, you have to be ready to improve."

Bohn also knows the move offers a unique opportunity in the major revenue sports -- football and men's basketball.

"It's a big challenge and a great opportunity for us," Bohn said. "We need to go in there and be competitive right away."

Bohn said CU's goals in its new conference won't change. Those include finishing in the upper portion of the conference standings every year and periodically competing for conference championships.

"If you finish in the upper tier in football, that means a bowl game," Bohn said. "If you finish there in men's basketball, that's an NCAA Tournament berth. We should be aiming for the postseason every year." ...

**Meanwhile, CU officials** are also preparing to deal with scheduling issues. The question on everyone's mind is where and who the Buffs will play, and in what division will they be placed?

Those questions won't be answered until October, when Pac-10 (it's still the Pac-10 until next year) officials get together to hash out all of those very important details.

"Even though we're starting next year, it really doesn't answer any questions right now," said Buff associate athletic

director Dave Plati. "All it does is allow us to clear out eight Big 12 games from our football schedule and then go from there."

As of now, CU officials don't even know how many home league games they'll be playing next year.

If, as expected, the league approves a nine-game conference schedule, it means schools will play four home conference games one year and five the next.

That's important to Colorado because, as Plati noted, "Everything on our schedule is tied to a minimum of six home games." CU's contracts for club seats, sponsorships, luxury suites, donors, signage -- each a major source of revenue -- are based on a minimum of six home games.

As it stands now, Colorado has two home games on the schedule for next year, but one of those is Cal (the other is Fresno State).

Thus, unless Colorado draws the five-game home conference schedule, it means CU will have to add another home opponent next year.

As for future schedules, CU also has a number of series on tap with teams that will be their new conference brethren, including Utah, Oregon and Washington.

That means more schedule juggling.

"The years when we have just four conference home games, we're going to have to find a team to come here that won't demand a return game from us, or a team that will agree to a 2-for-1 (which Fresno State did recently)," Plati noted. "But until we see how the divisions break out and what years we have four or five home conference games, we just have to wait."

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