

CU Buffs' DiStefano expects plus-one or 4-team playoff system

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Colorado chancellor Phil DiStefano is just one of many presidents and chancellors around the nation who have a say in determining the future of college football in the coming weeks and months. But DiStefano is confident that whatever system is chosen to replace the Bowl Championship Series model, it won't put an end to the controversies that arise each January.

DiStefano said recent meetings with his peers in the Pac-12 and commissioner Larry Scott left him with the impression that the new way forward will feature either a plus-one system, where the two highest ranked teams after the bowl games play for the national title, or a four-team playoff.

The controversy, as is the case now, will come in the criteria used, or not used, to rank and select those teams and in who or what does the rankings and the choosing.

"If it's a plus-one, someone or something, such as a computer, will have to determine who those top teams are going to be to play in the championship," DiStefano said. "If it's a playoff and it's team one-and-four and two-and-three playing, again somebody or something will have to determine who those teams are. So it may be a little bit better, but I believe we will still have controversy."

Conference commissioners are meeting again this week in Chicago and next week in Washington as they try to settle on a new way forward that will take effect in 2014 and replace the BCS, which has been in effect since 1998.

DiStefano said the only areas where Pac-12 presidents and chancellors were firmly united were continuing the league's relationship with the Rose Bowl and continuing a conference championship game.

DiStefano said no votes were taken at the Pac-12 meeting but he believes there are diverging opinions in the league on issues such as whether strength of schedule should be a factor in selecting the championship or semifinal participants.

He said he is strongly in favor of strength of schedule helping to determine the best teams, as well as allowing only conference champions to be in the national championship discussion.

"For me that is an important piece," DiStefano said.

So what if a team with a mediocre record manages an upset victory in a conference championship game and somehow is selected for a plus-one game or a semifinal?

"It's possible, but I think the probability is small that it would occur on a regular basis," DiStefano said.

DiStefano, has spent four decades at Colorado and most of that time he has been involved with

athletics. He first served as a faculty athletic representative. He said he doesn't see a day when he would support anything more than a four-team playoff without also shortening the regular season.

He said stretching the season to 14 or 15 games for those teams involved in the national title picture is bound to take an academic toll on the players.

While many have targeted the end of the month as a likely time the commissioners will make a decision, DiStefano said he would not be surprised if the conversation drags out deeper into the summer and maybe even into the fall.

He said presidents and chancellors have many unanswered questions about the basic framework of the proposals.

DiStefano said he and his peers want a clear vision on who will decide who gets in and who is left out of the national championship picture at the end of each year and what criteria they will use to make those decisions.