

# The Washington Post

[Back to previous page](#)

## Pac-12's 3 new coaches facing a variety of challenges coming off spring practices

By Associated Press, Published: May 6

PHOENIX — When it comes to first head coaching jobs, Oregon's Mark Helfrich could not have asked for a much better situation.

There's no rebuilding, no picking up the pieces after the previous coach was fired, no learning curve as the players adjust to new systems and a new style.

As the offensive coordinator in Chip Kelly's go-all-the-time attack, Helfrich simply had to take the keys and keep the car running after his former boss left Eugene for the NFL's Philadelphia Eagles.

"This is a place where succession and continuity has been very successful and obviously we hope for that to continue for a long time," Helfrich said Monday during a teleconference with the Pac-12's coaches.

The Pac-12's two other new coaches, Colorado's Mike MacIntyre and California's Sonny Dykes, will likely have a bit tougher climb, taking over programs that have fallen on hard times.

MacIntyre has had some success turning a program around.

The son of former Vanderbilt coach George MacIntyre, he took over a San Jose State team that was still reeling from limited scholarships and NCAA sanctions from before previous coach Dick Tomey's tenure.

After going 1-12 in MacIntyre's first season in 2010, the Spartans had one of the best seasons in program history last year, finishing 11-2 for their first 11-win season since 1940. San Jose State finished the season with a seven-game winning streak, including a victory over Bowling Green in the Military Bowl, and in the rankings (No. 21) for the first time since 1975.

But MacIntyre may face an even bigger challenge in Boulder.

Colorado has been on a downward slide since the Gary Barnett era ended in 2005.



The Buffaloes have not had a winning season since and had their worst record in the program's 123-year history in 2012, finishing 1-11 to cost coach Jon Embree his job after two seasons.

MacIntyre gave his new players a pep talk when he first arrived at Colorado and spent spring practice trying to build their confidence while getting them accustomed to a new way of doing things.

"We've been improving daily and I feel good about the team," MacIntyre, a former secondary coach for the Dallas Cowboys and New York Jets.

"But it's all relative until you get out there in a Pac-12 football game and see exactly where you stack up. I feel like we have some talent and just need to utilize it correctly and make the most of it."

Dykes' rebuilding project at Cal shouldn't be on quite the same scale as MacIntyre's.

Previous coach Jeff Tedford won a school-record 82 games after taking over a one-win team in 2001, but the program had faded the past few years, missing bowl games two of the past three seasons.

The Bears had their worst season under Tedford in 2012, losing their final five games to finish 2-9, and he was fired after it was over.

Dykes arrives in the Bay Area after a successful run at Louisiana Tech.

The Bulldogs improved their record each season under him and became one of college football's most prolific offenses, leading the nation with 51.5 points per game and ranking second with 577.9 yards per game.

Cal has a decent talent base despite losing receiver Keenan Allen and cornerback Steve Williams to the NFL. It also has superb facilities after a \$321 million remodeling of Memorial Stadium this past season and the new \$150 million on-campus High Performance Center adjacent to it.

One of Dykes' top priorities as he heads into the fall will be finding a replacement for quarterback Zach Maynard, who used up his eligibility.

Zach Kline, Austin Hiner and Jared Goff are the front-runners to land the job, but it's a tight competition, one that didn't come any closer to a resolution after spring practices.

"We had a chance to go back and review everything and really felt similar after reviewing as spring ball ramped up, that we have three guys we thought were very different in what they brought to table, but all three of them are good players," Dykes said. "We felt like they were good leaders, competitive guys who could handle being the starting quarterback at Cal and all the stuff that goes with that."

Helfrich will have a well-stocked offense with quarterback Marcus Mariota coming back, but will have some holes to fill on defense with players such as Dion Jordan, Kiko Alonso and Michael Clay gone.

What should help Helfrich is the foundation Oregon has in place.

The Ducks have a philosophy of "Next Man In" and it's carried over to the coaching staff, with Helfrich following Kelly and Mike Bellotti in being promoted from within the program to the top spot.

The hire-our-own philosophy has helped give Oregon stability like few places in the country — and Helfrich a

head start over other coaches.

“When your strength coach has been here a quarter of a century and almost everyone who touches our guys’ lives has been here for more than a decade, that’s continuity,” Helfrich said. “We’ll do everything we can to make this a little better here, a little better there, make things more efficient, whether we’re talking about the training table or second and 10, we’re all pulling in the same direction.”

Oregon has been doing it that way successfully for years, playing in BCS bowls three of the past four years, including the 2011 national championship game.

Copyright 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

### **Sponsored Links**

#### **Goodbye Glucosamine**

Is it time to throw your Glucosamine in the garbage?  
[www.beneflex.com](http://www.beneflex.com)

#### **Refinance Now 2.53% FIXED**

No cost and no fee mortgage! No SSN reqd. Free quote in minutes. (2.53% APR)  
[Fetcharate.com](http://Fetcharate.com)

#### **Boost Free Testosterone**

Men in Colorado are seeing shocking boosts in free testosterone  
[www.nugenix.com](http://www.nugenix.com)

[Buy a link here](#)

© The Washington Post Company