



## Buffs cut ties with Aiu

### Bohn hopes to hire new volleyball coach by end of January

By Kyle Ringo  
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Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn fired volleyball coach Pi'i Aiu on Monday after 12 seasons and now faces the challenge of filling the fifth head coaching vacancy of his tenure in Boulder.

Bohn told the Camera the school is considering using one of two available long-term contracts for the position because he sees potential for significant growth in the volleyball program and luring the right coach might require such a deal. He said he hopes to have a new coach hired by the end of January.

State law allows each state school six long-term contracts for employees. The only people currently working at CU with long-term deals are Bohn, and coaches Dan Hawkins, Kathy McConnell-Miller and Jeff Bzdelik. Chancellor G.P. "Bud" Peterson does not have a long-term deal.

"As our past has shown us, we have had the ability from time to time to be among the league's elite," Bohn said. "To consistently do that I think will take an investment.

"I think the types of investments we're putting into the infrastructure of the program are significant. We're looking forward to building a similar model to what Bill Hempen has in the soccer program and doing a great job of recruiting in-state kids."

Bohn said the athletic department invested in a new playing surface for the volleyball program and \$75,000 to make sure players could remain on campus through the summer for classes and workouts. He said the program will be bolstered in the near future with a new practice facility shared with the basketball teams at the Coors Events Center and it already enjoys a new operations center.

Bohn said the Boulder community has demonstrated in the past that it will support a successful volleyball program and he believes CU volleyball could draw significantly larger crowds with improved performance under new leadership.

Bohn began to form a search committee Monday, which will include senior women's administrator and associate athletic director Ceal Barry and associate athletic director for compliance Julie Manning among others.

Aiu was one of the longest tenured employees in the athletic department along with Barry, who has oversight responsibility for volleyball, soccer, cross country and track.

"Pi'i Aiu is a class act," Barry said in a statement. "It has been a pleasure to be a colleague of his in the athletic department over the last 22 years. I wish him well as he moves forward to a new phase in his life."

There could be some pressure to hire a minority candidate. Aiu, a Hawaiian native, was the only head coach in the department who is not Caucasian. Bohn said hiring the best coach possible is the only goal.

"Our commitment to diversity is not changing," Bohn said.

Aiu was the third volleyball coach in CU history and became the winningest coach of the program during his 12-year tenure. He leaves CU with a 199-154 (.566) record at the school, having coached four All-Americans.

The program recorded 20 or more wins in three of his 12 seasons. His first year was his best. The Buffs went 22-9 in 1997 and advanced to the Sweet 16 of the NCAA Tournament.

But Aiu was more than just the face of the program and a solid coach. He was one of its cornerstones having served in the program in some capacity since its inception in 1986. He began as a student manager in its first season and was hired as an assistant in 1989. He became the head coach in 1997.

"I feel the athletic department is going in the right direction and I am disappointed that I won't get to be a part of that future with the volleyball program," Aiu said in a statement. "It has been a wonderful and unique opportunity to coach here for the past 22 years, and I will always be a supporter of the volleyball program and the university.

"I am proud of the many successes we have had with this program, and I also realize that we have fallen short in some areas."

Aiu's team finished last season 13-16 and tied for eighth-place in the Big 12 Conference with a league mark of 7-13. Bohn said it was time for the program to move in a new direction.

"We thank Pi'i for his extended years of service, his passion and commitment to the athletic program and university," Bohn said in a statement. "But after reviewing this season and the overall state of the volleyball program, we recognize that it's time for a new direction and it is best for Pi'i to step down at this time."



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Denver Post staff and wire services

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Pi'i Aiu, the head coach who guided the University of Colorado volleyball team to nine NCAA Tournament appearances in 12 seasons, will not return to CU next season, athletic director Mike Bohn said Monday.

Aiu compiled a 199-154 record (.566 winning percentage) since taking over the Buffaloes in 1997. He was named the Big 12 Conference coach of the year after his rookie season. Aiu had been directly involved with the CU volleyball team since the program's inception in 1986. He started that season as a student manager before becoming an assistant coach in 1989, a job he kept until becoming head coach.

"I am disappointed that I won't get to be a part of that future with the volleyball program," Aiu said. "It has been a wonderful and unique opportunity to coach here for the past 22 years."

In 1997, Aiu's best season, the Bufs finished 22-9, qualified for the Sweet 16 and finished ranked No. 14 in the nation. This past season, CU

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