



Colorado to meet Toledo on gridiron in 2009

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, March 25, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — The Colorado football schedule for the 2009 season is finally set after more than a month of waiting on the Mid American Conference.

Coach Dan Hawkins' team is already assured of playing at least four nationally televised games with the most recent alteration.

CU will now play at Toledo in Week 2 on Friday night Sept. 11 (7 p.m. MDT), instead of playing at Miami (Ohio) on Sept. 12 as previously scheduled. ESPN has agreed to televise the first-ever meeting between the schools. CU officials are expected to announce the change Thursday.

"Any time you have late changes to your schedule, it's a challenge and creates angst associated with your fans and your coaches," CU athletic director Mike Bohn said. "However, ESPN and many others were diligent, professional and committed to ensuring that all the pieces fit in the right place and for all the right reasons."

The change came about after Kentucky approached Miami (Ohio) with the idea of playing in Cincinnati's Paul Brown Stadium.

Miami had to get out of one of its two home nonconference games to make it work and collaborated ESPN and the MAC to find Colorado a suitable opponent. Bohn said at least five other schools were needed to make changes in their schedules to make the deal work.

The game contract between CU and Miami called for damages of \$750,000 to be paid if one school canceled on the other. However, Bohn said since a suitable replacement was found and the game will still be nationally televised as originally planned with Miami, there are no damages.

"We're real fortunate to have a strong, mutually respectful relationship with ESPN, and in the end, ESPN is the one that drove many elements that were important to not only us but many of the other institutions impacted as well," Bohn said.

Miami did make one important concession to CU to help the deal go through. The Redhawks' men's basketball team will visit Boulder next season to play coach Jeff Bzdelik's Buffs without receiving any compensation. Bohn said nonconference Division I basketball games are contracted on average for about \$80,000 these days.

Bohn said he and coach Dan Hawkins are comfortable with the change to the schedule, as inconvenient as it might have been coming less than six full months before the game is played.

Toledo is coming off a 3-9 season and, like Miami, will be breaking in a new head coach next fall in Tim Beckman, who was the defensive coordinator at Oklahoma State last fall.

Toledo plays in a bigger stadium than Miami. The Glass Bowl seats 26,248. Yager Stadium in Oxford, Ohio, seats 24,286.

“They’re very comparable,” Bohn said. “Both teams have new head coaches. Both teams have had recent successes. Certainly, Toledo winning last season at Michigan is their most recent one.”

Bohn said Colorado did not consider hosting a seventh home game next season because season-ticket renewals were already underway at the time Miami notified CU of the possible change.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.