



CU football season ticket renewals holding steady

Football program off 1 percent from last year despite struggling economy

By Kyle Ringo
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BOULDER, Colo. — Severe problems in the economy and a raise in some ticket prices have not drastically affected football season-ticket renewals at the University of Colorado.

But the athletic department is facing a stiff challenge in trying to sell clubs seats and suites which came open for renewal this year.

Athletic director Mike Bohn said 72 percent of season-ticket holders met the renewal deadline this spring, just one percent off last year at this point. Season-ticket holders are now going through the seat upgrade process, meaning those who have not renewed still can.

The Buffs will play six home games in Folsom Field next fall against a lineup of teams including both of the program's major rivals in Colorado State and Nebraska.

Filling the stadium on Saturdays is imperative for the success of the entire athletic department because the football program pays for every other sports team at CU.

"It's the foundation that our whole budget and our whole athletic program is built on," Bohn said. "That revenue supports all 16 sports. It's the cornerstone of our foundation."

Season-ticket numbers rose last year to 22,603 up more than 5,000 from when Bohn took over leadership of the department in 2005. Keeping that number rising could be an impossible task given the nature of the economy and the loss of disposable income for many.

The department raised ticket prices in some areas of the stadium by \$8 per seat earlier this spring and lowered prices in Section 5 to rates not seen since 1995. The department is also considering ways to make attending a game next fall more affordable for families.

The 2008 season was a historic one for suite sales with every luxury box sold for every game. It also was a banner year for club seat-sales, which have been the most difficult part of the stadium to sell since the addition was added to the east side of Folsom Field in 2003.

"We are pleased with the renewal rate but recognize that meeting last year's sold out suite situation and record club seat sales will be a challenge," Bohn said.

Bohn said he could not provide an accurate number Monday of vacant suites for the 2009 season as the department heads into a cool period for sales between the end of spring football and the beginning of training camps that generally refocus attention on the sport in late July and early August.

The suites and club level were open to the public Saturday during the spring game in an effort to attract interest and allow fans to see what they get for the money.

Many of the suites are generally purchased by area businesses and corporate sponsors who hope to entertain clients at the stadium on game days.

The economy has made more businesses and corporate sponsors less willing to commit to the three-year contract CU has required in the past. The school does rent out the suites on an individual-game basis, but that isn't done until well into the summer.

"We're encouraged," Bohn said. "We're real excited about the dialogue we're having with our partners. We'll keep working to solidify as many as we can on a season-ticket basis and then begin breaking down the boxes and selling them on an individual game basis."



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