

Ducks to lose full-time assistant football coach

By Ashley Conklin
Emerald Sports Editor

Division I-A football programs will have one less full-time assistant coach for the 1992 season.

The decision, reached at the NCAA Convention in Nashville, Tenn. Monday, means colleges and universities will be allowed to have only eight full-time coaches instead of nine.

That includes Oregon, where Coach Rich Brooks will be forced to decide what to do to trim his staff by August 1992, the date set at the convention.

While Brooks and Athletic Director Bill Byrne were at the convention and unavailable for comment, offensive coordinator Mike Bellotti said the reduction of assistant coaches would hurt the Oregon program in two ways.

"One, recruiting is the major problem," he said, "and two, in the last two years we've had a lot of success with our coaching alignment as far as delegation of responsibility."

With one less coach, Bellotti said, "we'd be spreading ourselves thin. I'm not saying it can't be done, but it would be a lot harder."

College football programs across the country were restricted with eight assistants before 1983 when colleges were allowed to add one full-time assistant.

Brooks currently has five offensive assistants and four defensive assistants. Besides Bellotti, the other offensive coaches are John Ramsdell (wide receivers), Gary Campbell (running backs), Steve Greatwood (tackles and tight ends) and Neal Zoumboukos (centers and guards). The Ducks' defensive coaches include coordinator Denny Schuler, line coach Joe Schaffeld, inside linebackers coach Bill Tarrow and outside linebackers coach Nick Aliotti.

The biggest concern will be recruiting where Oregon already is at a disadvantage considering that it isn't as able as UCLA or USC to cover a major metropolitan area. The Ducks currently recruit in Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Hawaii, Colorado, California, some parts of Arizona and the junior colleges.

Zoumboukos, also the team's assistant head coach, said that if it hadn't been for the expansion to a ninth assistant coach, the Ducks might have not been able to turn the program

around and appear in back-to-back bowl games the past two seasons.

"Back in '81-'82 we had a very limited recruiting base all up-and-down the West Coast," he said. "When we expanded we were able to get people like Bill Musgrave.

"That caliber of player can have a major impact on a program like Oregon and it has to, because we don't have 12 million or 10 million people in our state, so we have to get out to the place like Post Falls, Idaho or John Day, Ore. or Grand Junction, Colo," Zoumboukos said.

"If we lose a coach, we lose a coverage area," Bellotti said,

explaining that a coach "from USC or from Cal could see more athletes than we could."

Zoumboukos said that another problem a school like Oregon faces is the power a bigger school like a USC, a Notre Dame, a Miami, or a Michigan has throughout the college athletic world, and the power that can be exerted by one of these schools.

"The Michigans and USCs have an awful lot of power at these things," he said in reference to the NCAA Convention.

With the new-found parity in college athletics, particularly football, Zoumboukos said that the powers of college football prefer the reduction in assistant

coaches.

"With the parity, some of these schools have lost their advantage," he said, "but now it's been given back."

Although Bellotti said he had no idea how Brooks would make a decision regarding the coaching staff, he did say that he didn't think Brooks would eliminate a defensive coaching position since the Ducks have one more offensive assistant than defensive.

"With five coaches on one side and four on the other, I don't think there would be a situation where you would have five on one side and three

on the other," he said. "It's something that I hate to think that someone will be fired or just let go."

With the promise of sweeping reforms at this year's convention, Bellotti said that a reduction in football coaches was something the coaching staff was warned about, but hoped wouldn't happen.

"Perhaps a little naively we assumed cooler heads would prevail," he said.

Zoumboukos said he believed the reduction of an assistant coach showed how little coaches mattered compared to the bigger, financial picture.

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