

# Coach withdraws name from vaunted position in Miami

MIAMI (AP) — Colorado State coach Sonny Lubick withdrew Tuesday as a candidate for the Miami Hurricanes' vacancy, throwing the job search wide open.

Lubick, a former Miami assistant, had been regarded as the front-runner to succeed Dennis Erickson.

"Certainly Miami has its attractive lure of a great university and its football tradition," Lubick said at a news conference in Fort Collins, Colo. "But CSU is a place that's treated me tremendously over the last two years. I fit in here — that's the basic 'why.'"

Lubick, 57, had repeatedly expressed concern that his courtship with Miami would hurt Colorado State's recruiting. Nonetheless, his announcement represented the rejection of a powerhouse program.

"Kind of a shocker," former Hurricanes coach Jimmy Johnson said.

Lubick is expected to sign a contract extension that will increase his pay at Colorado State to \$115,000. Erickson made \$550,000 last season at Miami.

Lubick's announcement provided a twist that fit a trend, because the Miami vacancy has produced widespread lack of interest among potential candidates.

Duke's Fred Goldsmith, who grew up near the Miami campus, became at least the second coach to turn down an interview invitation from Hurricanes athletic director Paul Dee. Several other coaches ruled themselves out of

consideration.

Six days into the search that Dee hoped to conclude this week, the only known candidates were two NFL assistants and a Division I-AA coach, Jim Tressel of Youngstown State.

"It may be that they may have to go for someone that has not had head coaching experience," Johnson said.

That category includes former Hurricanes assistants Gary Stevens and Butch Davis. Stevens, the Miami Dolphins' offense coach, interviewed with Dee last Friday. Davis, the Dallas Cowboys' defensive coordinator, has said he would like to be considered.

"I haven't heard from anybody with the university," said Davis, who was in Mobile, Ala., for the Senior Bowl. "People know where to find me if they're looking."

Besides Stevens and Lubick, the only coach known to interview with Miami is Youngstown State's Tressel. Hurricanes officials, perhaps eager to improve their program's renegade image, apparently like Tressel's reputation as a disciplinary.

"They wanted to know how I handled players, how I disciplined players, even in terms of celebrations — how they reacted when we scored a touchdown," Tressel told a luncheon group Tuesday in Youngstown. "It's obvious

they want to clean up their act."

Tressel, 42, led his team to the national title three of the past four years. His record of 61-9-2 in the 1990s is the best of any coach in I-A or I-AA.

The growing list of coaches who denied an interest in Miami included Goldsmith, Glen Mason of Kansas, North Carolina's Mack Brown, Wisconsin's Barry Alvarez and Brad Scott at South Carolina. All had been mentioned in various lists of potential candidates; Alvarez turned down a chance to interview with Dee.

The level of wariness is perhaps surprising considering the Hurricanes have won four national championships since 1983 and sent their past two coaches to the NFL.

Miami's search may be hindered by an anticipated NCAA investigation of a Pell Grant scandal and play-for-pay scheme. In addition, prospective candidates are aware that Erickson was widely criticized in South Florida despite a six-year record of 63-9.

"The expectations are such that it might scare some people away," said Johnson, who coached at Miami from 1984 to 1988. "People are not going to be happy unless whoever comes in is competing for the national championship and wins it occasionally. You don't have those expectations other places, but other places don't have the same talent, either."

## RAMS

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up in St. Louis, took the microphone, she was met with cheers and applause.

"I'm overwhelmed," she said. "I don't think I've been this happy since the last game we won."

Frontiere said she planned to meet with each player and their families and said she knew they'd be anxious to move.

The deal also calls for Missouri businessman Stan Kroenke to purchase part of the team.

The city assembled the ultimate care package to lure the Rams, who were 4-12 last season. It includes a potential of \$20 million in annual profits.

The Rams will get a \$260 million domed stadium to play in, a \$15 million practice facility to prepare in and a cushy \$250,000 annual lease that won't cut into profits. The city is retiring the Rams' \$30 million debt to Anaheim, Calif., and paying \$15 million in assorted relocation fees.

Rams president John Shaw told the *Los Angeles Times* that the agreement "is as good an economic deal as there is in football today."

So what does the city get in return?

"We all think St. Louis is better off with football for all of the intangibles: emotional, prestige, pride," said Frank Viverito of the city's Convention and Visi-

tors Commission. "All of those are going to make this a winner."

Not everybody is happy about the deal.

"Look at the loot they're going to get," said Tom Sullivan, who heads the Campaign For Better Government in St. Louis. "The Rams are getting all the revenue, and taxpayers are picking up all of the cost."

Sullivan said he's been told by Jerry Clinton, a beer distributor who headed the city's expansion efforts, that the lease alone is worth \$30 million a year over 30 years.

"It's apparently the most lucrative lease in the history of sports," Sullivan said.

Also, steep ticket prices could exclude some fans. Before purchasing season tickets, permanent seat licenses that could run as high as \$4,500 must be bought.

FANS Inc. hopes to raise \$60-\$70 million in the PSL campaign. The Rams have asked St. Louis to sell at least 40,000 PSLs before the league's annual spring meetings, scheduled for March 12-17 in Phoenix. A move likely would be approved then, with the votes of 23 of the 30 owners needed.

A second news conference is set for Wednesday to detail the intricacies of the permanent seat licensing plan, the primary financing vehicle for St. Louis' bid.

The Rams have the option to void the deal unless a certain number of PSLs are sold by those March meetings. Sources have told the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* that figure is 40,000.

Bringing back pro football hasn't been easy for St. Louis. The city lost the Cardinals in 1988 when Bill Bidwill moved them to Phoenix, and twice lost out in the 1993 expansion sweepstakes to Charlotte, N.C., and Jacksonville, Florida, when squabbling among the ownership group bogged down the bid.

The Rams have agreed to play for the first month or so in Busch Stadium. The domed stadium is due to be completed around Oct. 25.

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