

Sports

Pac-12 falls behind rivals

Revenue sharing won't reach \$38M in payouts per school until 2023



The Pac-12 is trailing other conferences when it comes to payouts to member schools. KIRBY LEE/USA TODAY SPORTS

Brent Schrottenboer
USA TODAY Sports

The Pac-12 Conference is projected to fall far behind other Power 5 conferences over the next five years in revenue-sharing and won't even reach \$38 million in payouts per school until 2023, according to budget documents recently provided by Pac-12 member Washington State.

By comparison, the Big Ten is expected to provide payouts to schools this year that exceed \$51 million. Even the Atlantic Coast Conference soon is expected to rocket past \$40 million after previously ranking last in school payouts among the Power 5.

And that's a problem for the Pac-12, which recently also has struggled on the national stage in football and men's basketball.

"I think if you look at the overall athletic budgets of the top 25 largest (public) athletic budgets in the country, I think the Pac-12 only has two schools that are even on that list," Washington State President Kirk Schulz told USA TODAY Sports.

"I do think it's harder to compete for coaches. It's harder to build facilities. It's harder to do the things we would like to do with less revenue coming in compared to (other leagues). I do think it puts us at a disadvantage."

Some Pac-12 school officials recently have grumbled dissatisfac-

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tion about the payout disparity and accepted that it wouldn't improve dramatically until around 2023-24, when the league's current TV contracts expire with ESPN and Fox. The recent budget projections from WSU put the next five years into stark specific terms.

This year, the payout estimate is \$31.5 million. It then is projected to go up incrementally to \$32.7 million in fiscal year 2019, \$35.3 million in 2021 and \$38.1 million in 2023, according to the payout projection range confirmed by WSU officials.

The Pac-12 shares television revenue equally and generally only has slight differences among members with payouts.

Every other Power 5 league either has exceeded the \$40 million payout mark already or is projected to get there in a year or two at most, with contract terms that are ex-

pected to increase that amount annually.

"As I told our fans, we've got to stop worrying what the Pac-12 is providing to the conference and start doing some of our own creative things to bring in additional revenue," Schulz said.

In the meantime, the Pac-12 has seen a number of coaches and athletic directors taking the same jobs at other Power 5 conference schools that offered more, including basketball coach Cuonzo Martin, who left Cal last year for a bigger contract at Missouri. Football coach Willie Taggart was making \$2.9 million guaranteed at Oregon but moved last year to Florida State, where his contract is \$30 million over six years.

Schulz doesn't blame league leadership for the league's position and said Pac-12 commissioner Lar-

ry Scott "continues to do a great job for our conference." Instead, he noted the cyclical nature of the revenue landscape for conferences, which make most of their money from media networks broadcasting their football and men's basketball games.

For example, in 2013-2014, the Pac-12's \$374 million in total revenue ranked first in the Power 5. But then the market spiraled upward. At the same time, the Pac-12's television venture, the Pac-12 Networks, failed to meet financial expectations after battling distribution challenges.

The Pac-12 declined comment on the projections and referred USA TODAY Sports to a news release last month that noted member distributions have increased 63% since 2012-13, when the average was \$19 million.

Other conferences still have had bigger percentage increases since then and now have much rosier trajectories. The Southeastern Conference reported an average payout of about \$41 million for fiscal year 2017. In the ACC, recent payouts have ranged from \$25 million to \$31 million. But that is expected to increase significantly after next year, when the ACC and ESPN launch the ACC Network. Florida State athletic director Stan Wilcox said at a university board of trustees meeting last year that the average payout is

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A Salem water crisis ... of a different sort



Fishing
Henry Miller
Guest columnist

We've recently been camping ... at home.

Along with the on-again, off-again, on again cyanotoxin water advisory in Salem, Kay and I recently were hit by a water crisis of a different color, and odor, so to speak.

When the company that contracted to put in the fiber-optic lines to schools was working in our neighborhood, one of their Ditch Witch horizontal drilling machines speared our home sewer line.

Right through the heart, according to the photo provided by the plumber who was trying to see what was clogging the line.

The video shows a bright orange cable running smack dab through the mid-

dle of the concrete pipe.

The contractor, Henkels & McCoy out of Portland, was Johnnie on the spot (pun intended on the "Johnnie") with the repairs, digging down to the rupture and installing a splice the day after we notified them of the pipe impalement.

And we've submitted the plumber invoices for reimbursement.

But for the three-plus days between the first bathroom backup, and resulting unsuccessful roofer attempt, water jet flushing and sewer-line colonoscopy camera shoot, along with the repairs, we were bereft of bathroom, shower and sinks.

All the while commuting to the water station at nearby Woodmansee Park and at the home of Kay's buddy Sandy and her husband Ken that is on a well in the wilds of south Salem.

As I said, during the double-whammy interregnum, we were basically camping at home, fetching potable water and looking for open-source bath-

rooms.

The latter of which is less of a problem for guys than for gals, No. 1-wise, if you catch my drift.

Not to be too crude, or no more crude than usual, let's just say that when the sun went down, the greenery in the backyard that's obscured from view was well-watered.

I digress.

With the help of nearby relatives and friends, the port-a-potty next to the Table of Plenty food pantry at Queen of Peace Catholic Church, the showers at my member-friendly YMCA, and the 24-7 hours at the neighborhood WinCo Foods, we limped, and occasionally sprinted, through the bathroom dearth.

As a thanks to WinCo, we bought something every time we went, the key being to think strategically, dividing up the shopping list to "essentials" to be purchased immediately, and "can-wait"

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Henry Miller and his bag of cockles. KAY MILLER/SPECIAL TO THE STATESMAN JOURNAL