

COLLEGE ATHLETICS CONFERENCE REALIGNMENTS

Pac-12's Kliavkoff jabs Big 12, touts future after USC, UCLA

BY GREG BEACHAM

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Pac-12 Commissioner George Kliavkoff said his conference is far from finished, despite the defections of Southern California and UCLA.

Kliavkoff confirmed the Pac-12 is actively exploring expansion and lobbed several feisty jabs at the Big 12 during an eventful opening speech at his conference's football media day Friday, July 29 in the nation's second-largest media market.

While painting a promising picture of the league's future even after USC and UCLA leave for the Big Ten in 2024, Kliavkoff said the Pac-12 intends to keep its current members while entertaining new additions.

The commissioner also acknowledged frustration with the upheaval created by the Los Angeles schools' shocking decision, saying he had spent the past month "trying to defend against grenades being lobbed in from every corner of the Big 12 trying to destabilize

our remaining conference."

Kliavkoff responded to Big 12 Commissioner Brett Yormark's recent declaration that his league was "open for business" in expansion by suggesting those moves could include Big 12 schools coming his way, instead of the opposite assumption.

"With respect to the Big 12 being open for business, I appreciate that," Kliavkoff said. "We haven't decided whether we're going shopping there or not."

"I understand why they're doing it, when you look at the relative media value between the two conferences," Kliavkoff added later. "I get it. I get why they're scared, why they're trying to destabilize it. I was just tired of that. That's probably not the most collegial thing I've ever said."

Later, Kliavkoff told The Associated Press that he was eager to speak up colorfully in defense of the Pac-12.

"I wanted to exude confidence in the conference, because that's what I'm seeing

from our presidents and chancellors and athletic directors," Kliavkoff said. "It's my job to carry that message, and I'm happy to do so."

Still, the Pac-12 has lost its Los Angeles flagships after a century of history, and Kliavkoff acknowledged the widespread speculation about the long-term health of his comparatively underfunded West Coast conference. The commissioner insisted the Pac-12 will have a stronger base after its new media rights deal, and that footing could lead to expansion.

Kliavkoff understandably didn't identify specific schools as candidates for expansion, although San Diego State has been repeatedly mentioned by others. He reiterated the league's determination to keeping a football presence in the talent-rich, heavily populated end of California.

"Southern California is really important to us," Kliavkoff said. "I think there are different ways of approaching staying part of Southern California. We may end up playing a lot of football



Serena Morones for The Oregonian/File

Oregon State's Champ Fleming (2) goes up for the ball against Oregon's Verone McKinley III (23) as the Beavers visit the No. 11 Ducks in their annual college football rivalry game on Saturday, Nov. 27, 2021, at Autzen Stadium in Eugene. Oregon won 38-29.

games in LA."

Kliavkoff expanded on those thoughts later to the AP: "LA is part of the Pac-12, even if UCLA and USC are not. We're not giving up on LA. We play the Rose Bowl here and intend to play more games here. And we're not giving up on that. We like it here."

The two-year transition is a weird challenge for all par-

ties, but Kliavkoff said he has instructed everyone to treat the Trojans and Bruins will all proper respect. Both USC coach Lincoln Riley and UCLA's Chip Kelly both say they're on board with a move that will dramatically increase both of their schools' revenue and their recruiting reach.

"It's an awkward situation for everybody," said Kelly, who

soared to coaching prominence 13 years ago at Oregon. "I've had a great experience in this league. I owe my life to the Pac-12. I appreciate what this league has done. ... It is what it is. It's realignment. It's going on, governed by television. Those are things out of my control."

Kliavkoff speculated that the remaining Pac-12 schools are likely to get a significant boost in recruiting fertile Southern California in every sport except football, given that many Olympic sport athletes and their families aren't going to want to fly off to the Midwest and East Coast regularly for competition.

He reiterated that the Pac-12 expects to keep its remaining members despite widespread speculation about both the Big 12 and the Big Ten looking to expand. Oregon and Washington were linked to a future move to the Big Ten immediately after USC and UCLA announced their departures, while the Big 12 has been linked to the Arizona schools, Utah and Colorado.

Vin Scully, Dodgers broadcaster for nearly 70 years, dies at 94

BY BETH HARRIS

Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Hall of Fame broadcaster Vin Scully, whose dulcet tones provided the soundtrack of summer while entertaining and informing Dodgers fans in Brooklyn and Los Angeles for 67 years, died Tuesday night, Aug. 2. He was 94.

Scully died at his home in the Hidden Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles, according to the team after being informed by family members. No cause of death was provided.

"He was the best there ever was," pitcher Clayton Kershaw said after the Dodgers game in San Francisco. "Just such a special man. I'm grateful and thankful I got to know him as well as I did."

As the longest tenured broadcaster with a single team in pro sports history, Scully saw it all and called it all. He began in the 1950s era of Pee Wee Reese and Jackie Robinson, on to the 1960s with Don Drysdale and Sandy Koufax, into the 1970s with Steve Garvey and Don Sutton, and through the 1980s with Orel Hershiser and Fernando Valenzuela. In the 1990s, it was Mike Piazza and Hideo Nomo, followed by Kershaw, Manny Ramirez and Yasiel Puig in the 21st century.

"You gave me my Wild Horse name. You gave me love. You hugged me like a father," tweeted Puig, the talented Cuban-born outfielder who burned brightly upon his Dodgers debut in 2013. "I will never forget you, my heart is broken."

The Dodgers changed players, managers, executives, owners — and even coasts — but Scully and his soothing, insightful style remained a constant for the fans.

He opened broadcasts with the familiar greeting, "Hi, everybody, and a very pleasant good evening to you wherever you may be."

Ever gracious both in person and on the air, Scully considered himself merely a conduit between the game and the fans.

After the Dodgers' 9-5 win, the Giants posted a Scully tribute on the videoboard.

"There's not a better storyteller and I think everyone considers him family," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said. "He was in our living rooms for many generations. He lived a fantastic life, a legacy that will live on forever."

Although he was paid by the Dodgers, Scully was unafraid to criticize a bad play or

a manager's decision, or praise an opponent while spinning stories against a backdrop of routine plays and noteworthy achievements. He always said he wanted to see things with his eyes, not his heart.

"We have lost an icon," team president and CEO Stan Kasten said. "His voice will always be heard and etched in all of our minds forever."

Vincent Edward Scully was born Nov. 29, 1927, in the Bronx. He was the son of a silk salesman who died of pneumonia when Scully was 7. His mother moved the family to Brooklyn, where the red-haired, blue-eyed Scully grew up playing stickball in the streets.

As a child, Scully would grab a pillow, put it under the family's four-legged radio and lay his head directly under the speaker to hear whatever college football game was on the air. With a snack of saltine crackers and a glass of milk nearby, the boy was transfixed by the crowd's roar that raised goosebumps. He thought he'd like to call the action himself.

Scully, who played outfield for two years on the Fordham University baseball team, began his career by working baseball, football and basket-

ball games for the university's radio station.

At age 22, he was hired by a CBS radio affiliate in Washington, D.C.

He soon joined Hall of Famer Red Barber and Connie Desmond in the Brooklyn Dodgers' radio and television booths. In 1953, at age 25, Scully became the youngest person to broadcast a World Series game, a mark that still stands.

He moved west with the Dodgers in 1958. Scully called three perfect games — Don Larsen in the 1956 World Series, Sandy Koufax in 1965 and Dennis Martinez in 1991 — and 18 no-hitters.

He also was on the air when Don Drysdale set his scoreless innings streak of 58 2/3 innings in 1968 and again when Hershiser broke the record with 59 consecutive scoreless innings 20 years later.

When Hank Aaron hit his 715th home run to break Babe Ruth's record in 1974, it was against the Dodgers and, of course, Scully called it.

"A Black man is getting a standing ovation in the Deep South for breaking a record of an all-time baseball idol," Scully told listeners. "What a marvelous moment for baseball."

FORMER OREGON STAR PREPARES FOR 3RD NFL SEASON

Herbert focuses on footwork

BY JOE REEDY

Associated Press

COSTA MESA, Calif. — Despite being the Offensive Rookie of the Year in 2020 and then reaching the Pro Bowl last season, Los Angeles Chargers quarterback Justin Herbert still has room to improve going into his third season.

Herbert is focused on his footwork. He made it a major focus of his offseason program and has continued to hone in on it during the first week of training camp.

"I think all of the drops that tie into the routes — three-step, five-step, seven-step — and being smooth in progressions and going through all of the reads," said Herbert about what he wanted to improve.

"I'm still experiencing the

young aspects of playing in the NFL. I have a lot to learn, but hopefully a lot of room for improvement, as well."

Footwork has been at the top of Herbert's improvement list going back to when he was preparing for the draft. He did not take any snaps under center during his four years at the University of Oregon.

Honing in on footwork took a little bit of a back-seat last season as Herbert was getting up to speed with coach Brandon Staley, offensive coordinator Joe Lombardi and quarterback coach Shane Day.

Now that he's more comfortable in the offense, Herbert's work on his footwork has become a bigger focus.

Day — also the Chargers

passing game coordinator — has noticed improvement from last year's training camp to offseason workouts and the first week of preseason practices.

"The evolution of that footwork is pretty cool," Day said. "The second year, kind of once you have the offense down, then you can focus on the fundamentals. It's been working through that progression of what's best and me learning what his body does best too, because he's a top quarterback. And then figuring out how to implement all that stuff as we go."

Herbert's learning curve of learning how to operate under center is part of a process that most quarterbacks have to go through when they come into the NFL.



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