

[!\[\]\(c8d96c8885d3000a912c2582004aed63\_img.jpg\)Update 6/14/2010: Sanity prevails \(see below\)](http://www.flickr.com/photos/23270024@N03/3999896660/ "Longhorns vs Colorado")

Sometimes you don't know what you've got until it's gone. That couldn't be more true than in the (apparent) demise of the Big 12 conference. In the last few days, we've watched the [University of Colorado at Boulder](http://www.colorado.edu/ "University of Colorado at Boulder") walk out the door, followed shortly thereafter by the [University of Nebraska system](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Nebraska_system "University of Nebraska system"). Ponder that for a moment. Perhaps even sigh a little with the thought.

Now, a reality check: let's not forget it's Colorado and Nebraska, folks! The bottom line is that we're talking about two football programs that have seen their best days in the rear view mirror. Winning the Big 12 North is not exactly epic these days. Consider that we're talking about 2 television markets that really aren't all that big a deal. We're talking about two men's (and women's) basketball programs that are, well, worse than their football programs. And academically? I am not convinced that the academic brain trust of the [Big 12 Conference](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Big_12_Conference "Big 12 Conference") resided in Boulder or Lincoln. But I may be wrong.

Does anyone really care that Colorado and Nebraska have bid the Big 12 an acrimonious farewell? The real question is this: has chaos really discovered the Big 12, or do bigger and better things await the conference?

What is being lost with a demise of the Big 12? A very strong football and basketball conference. Consider this: the [University of Kansas](http://www.ku.edu/ "University of Kansas"), one of the top 5 basketball programs in the country, will be searching for a conference. Hello? How about Baylor, and their meteoric rise in both men's and women's basketball? They will be searching for a conference as well.

It all started when Missouri started making overtures to the Big 10, hoping that perhaps they could slide into a new conference. But much as I suspected, they weren't a player at all. Then, the whining began (again) at Nebraska. They never did like the power shift towards the Big 12 South, and they never could get over the idea that someone else could be the big man on campus. So [Tom Osborne](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tom_Osborne "Tom Osborne") decided that it was time to take his pigskin and leave. And while closing the door behind him, noted that 

"Schools that were urging us to stay had talked to as many as three conferences. At that point you begin to wonder where you're going to get yourself if you make a commitment."

Hey Tom, Texas had committed to stay if Nebraska did. Period. Done. So you left anyways. I guess you were never on board in the first place.

Since then, everyone has decided to run around as though the sky is falling.

So what is the best solution? **Save the Big 12.** Wave goodbye to Nebraska and Colorado, and get on with it. If the conference had exerted its influence, it could have added TCU and Boise State when Missouri first started threatening to leave (ideal threats nonetheless). Imagine this: TCU is a consistent top 10 team in the Dallas-Fort Worth television market, and they have strong ties to the former SWC. Boise State is another top 10 team that was there for the taking. But the Big 12 sat around and waited and waited, and now both are part of the [University of Kansas](http://www.ku.edu/ "University of Kansas")

title="Mountain West Conference"

href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain\_West\_Conference" rel="wikipedia">Mountain West</a>. </p> <p>Sure, the Big 12 lacked foresight and initiative. How could they let this slide when Missouri has spent months making public overtures to the Big 10? But even so, they could still move forward with plans for expansion and not miss a step. Let's get on with adding two teams (or more) and keep the conference championship and automatic BCS berth.

Arkansas perhaps? <a class="zem\_slink" title="Conference USA"

href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conference\_USA" rel="wikipedia">Conference USA</a> has some good teams that would have geographic appeal ♦ Tulsa and Houston being two options (with one good TV market). SMU? UTEP? Perhaps they are not exactly high-visibility options at first, but why sacrifice a perfectly good football and basketball conference just because Colorado and Nebraska left?</p> <p>While we're moving ahead with the Big 12, and we watch more dominoes fall, we could then sit back and chuckle at Notre Dame. Yes, the same Notre Dame that has too much ego (and too big an NBC contract) to simply get into a major conference. They may have been too proud, too long ♦ and may now find themselves redundant and completely out of the discussion.</p> <p>But, Golden Domers, I understand that the Big 12 might have a spot available now. Of course, that would mean that you might have to schedule some real teams like Texas and Oklahoma - other than Army or Navy.</p>

<p>Nah, didn't think you'd go for that one.</p><p><strong>Update 6/14/2010:</strong> Today, Texas committed to staying in the Big 12 Conference, along with Texas A&M, Oklahoma, and Oklahoma State. The Big 12 remains a fabulous football and basketball conference - perhaps now even better since we don't have to deal with Nebraska anymore. No more road trips to Lincoln. Swap names with the Big 10 and let's get on with it!</p><p>Photo credit: <a title="abesselink on Flickr"

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