The Future WAC Opponents:

CALIFORNIA STATE-FRESNO

Location: Fresno, Calif.
Media market 1.5 million
Nickname: Bulldogs
Enrollment: 18,113
www.csufresno.edu

Of special note:

Of special note:

\$103 million Save Mart Center for events under construction; operates only commercial winery on a U.S. campus

UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII

Location: Honolulu, Hawaii Media market 1.2 million Nickname: Rainbows Enrollment: 18,000 www.hawaii.edu

Offers instruction in more languages than any other U.S. university; major research center for oceanography, Asian and Pacific studies, home of Center for Hawaiian Studies

LOUISIANA TECH UNIVERSITY

Location: Ruston, La.
Media market 720,000
Nickname: Bulldogs
Enrollment: 10,036
www.latech.edu
Of special note:
Micromanufacturing Center

Micromanufacturing Center recently built; several technical centers conduct research

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA

Location: Reno, Nev. Media market 425,000 Nickname: Wolfpack Enrollment: 12,659 www.unr.edu

Of special note:

Steven MacFarlane is new president; School of Journalism has produced five Pulitzer Prize winners

RICE UNIVERSITY

Location: Houston, Texas Media market 4.6 million Nickname: Owls Enrollment: 4,200 www.ruf.rice.edu Of special note:

Features residential colleges; two chemists won 1996 Nobel Prize; rated best value among private universities and 5th among all universities; has 4th largest endowment per student in U.S.



A New Era Kicks Off

But can the Broncos run
with the new pack
in the WAC?

By Larry Burke

oise State University entered the Western Athletic Conference in the quiet of a July 1 Sunday. No bands playing and banners waving. But wait until Sept. 22, the day the Broncos play their first conference football game against Texas-El Paso. Then it will be time, as the new Bronco marketing slogan says, to "Attack the WAC."

Yes, less than 35 years removed from its junior college days — remember the games against the Westminsters and Chadron States of the sports world? — Boise State is once again climbing to a higher rung on the ladder of athletic competition.

Few, if any, athletic programs in the country have made the progression from junior college to Division I-AA to Division I-A status in such a short time. As it was when it joined the Big Sky in 1970 and the Big West in 1996, Boise State is again the new kid on the block.

And that's OK, considering the alternatives, says President Charles Ruch.

The Big West began to unravel as a football conference when Nevada left for the WAC one year ago. The WAC threw the Broncos a life jacket just as the Big West dropped football, leaving its remaining members to go independent or seek refuge in the Sun Belt Conference.

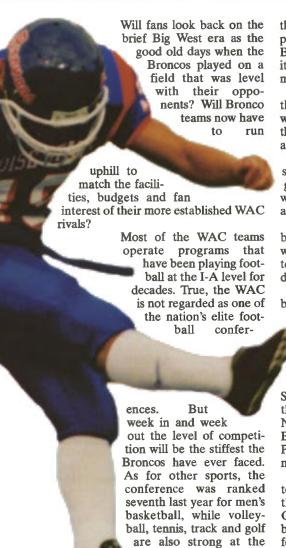
"It became clear to me that if we wanted to remain a strong I-A program, we had to move to the WAC ... we were very pleased to accept their invitation to join," says Ruch.

He says the new conference opens a number of doors for the Broncos, including the opportunity to improve schedules, expand the revenue pie, increase donations and gain valuable exposure in major Texas, Oklahoma and California media markets.

"Membership in the WAC affords us an opportunity to associate with some universities that have excellent academic programs. The conference really is a microcosm of American higher education—a mix of metropolitan, private and land grant universities," says Ruch. "And we are thrilled to be playing in a conference again where all of the schools compete in the major sports. This will give us the opportunity to develop relationships and form rivalries."

Now, the important question: Can the Broncos win in the WAC?

After all, the transition to the Big West went very well, except for the initial 2-9 football season. The Broncos won 14 conference titles, three divisional titles and two bowl games during their five years in the league.



national level.

"We made the

transition into

the Big West without sacrificing our competitiveness," says Athletic Director Gene Bleymaier. "Hopefully, we'll be as competitive in the WAC. But that's going to be much more of a challenge.

"We want to finish in the top one-third of

the conference within five years. That would be quite an accomplishment, given the history of the schools we are competing against."

And quite an accomplishment given the size of their athletic budgets — larger budgets that ultimately tilt the playing field when it comes to coaches' salaries, facilities and recruiting programs.

"We're no longer the big kid on the block. We are going from a conference where our facilities were some of the best to a conference where they are in the middle," Bleymaier says.

Just how do the Broncos stack up in the battle of the balance sheet?

Using WAC figures from the 1999-2000 academic year, Boise State's \$10.4 million athletic budget is sixth in the 10-team conference and some \$5-6 million less than Fresno State, Hawaii, Rice and Southern Methodist. Rice and SMU spend more than \$8 million just on their men's sports. San Jose State and Nevada spend about the same as the Broncos. Only the budgets of Texas-El Paso and Louisiana Tech fall more than \$1 million below Boise State's.

But there is an apples-to-oranges aspect to budget comparisons. Schools differ in the number and types of sports they offer. Generally, the schools with the highest budgets support more sports. Fresno State, for example, offers three more sports than Boise State, which offers 17. Nevada, Southern Methodist and Tulsa offer 18. Most of those schools play baseball for

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY-SAN JOSE

Location: San Jose, Calif.
Media market 6.6 million
Nickname: Spartans
Enrollment: 26,698
www.sjsu.edu
Of special note:

Construction under way on \$171 million Martin Luther King Jr. Library

SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY

Location: Dallas, Texas Media market 5.2 million Nickname: Mustangs Enrollment: 10,064 www2.smu.edu Of special note:

MBA ranked 12th in nation by *U.S. News*; performing arts also ranks high; First Lady

Laura Bush is alum

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-EL PASO

Location: El Paso, Texas Media market 873,000 Nickname: Miners Enrollment: 15,166 www.utep.edu Of special note:

Named one of six Model Institutions of Excellence by National Science Foundation

UNIVERSITY OF TULSA

Location: Tulsa, Okla. Media market 1.3 million Nickname: Golden Hurricane

Enrollment: 4,158 www.utulsa.edu
Of special note:

Building new 34-acre, \$30 million sports and recreation complex; just completed

new arena/convention center



2001 BRONCO FOOTBALL.....SEPTEMBER

SELLEMBER

- 1 at South Carolina (Columbia), 7 p.m. EDT
- 8 Washington State, 6:05 p.m.
- 15 Central Michigan, 6:05 p.m.
- 22 Texas-El Paso, 6:05 p.m.
- 29 at Idaho (Pullman, Wash.), time TBA

OCTOBER

- 6 at Rice (Houston), 7 p.m. CDT
- 13 Tulsa, 6:05 p.m.
- 20 at Fresno State (Fresno, Calif.), 4 p.m. PDT
- 27 Nevada, 6:05 p.m.

NOVEMBER

- 3 Oper
- 10 at Hawaii (Honolulu), 6 p.m. Hawaii time
- 17 San Jose State, 1:05 p.m.
- 24 at Louisiana Tech (Ruston, La.), 2 p.m. CST

WESTERN ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

men and softball for women, sports with expensive price And Southern Methodist, Tulsa and Rice are private universities whose high tuition drives up scholarship costs.

Schools also differ in what they include in the athletic budget. Some, for example, may include items such as tutoring, maintenance or facility operations in nonathletic budgets, all areas Boise State counts as athletic expenses.

There are plenty of examples to demonstrate that success on the field isn't necessarily determined by the size of a school's wallet. Just look at how USC and Alabama did in football last season.

Still. the Broncos will have to do more with less — or raise more money — to keep pace with their new WAC brethren.

"Big budgets don't equal success. We don't have to be at the top to win, but we don't want to be at the bottom. You do need to have enough money to be competitive," says Bleymaier.

"We have to advance. We have to maximize our revenue opportunities. We have to upgrade. Over time we will be up to the

1999-2000 WAC Athletic Department Budgets (in millions)

	Expenses	Revenues	# Sports #	Scholarship
Boise State	\$10.4	\$11.8	17	347
Fresno State	\$15.8	\$15.8	20	502
Hawaii	\$16.2	\$16.7	16	420
Louisiana Tech	\$7.4	\$7.5	14	276
Nevada	\$10	\$10	18	337
Rice	\$16.3	\$16.3	16	304
San Jose State	\$10.1	\$10.2	16	350
Southern Methodi	st \$16.2	\$16.4	18	380
Texas-El Paso	\$8	\$8.2	15	237
Tulsa	\$13.7	\$10	18	309

Source: Chronicle of Higher Education EADA Report

challenge."

Football, like elsewhere, is the economic engine that drives most athletic budgets in the WAC. And there the Broncos can more than fiscally hold their own. If the Broncos had been in the conference last season, their 26,493 per game attendance would have been fourth in league, topped only by Texas-El Paso, Fresno State and Hawaii.

Boise State got a good bang for the

Broncos earned \$3.1 million and spent \$2.9 million. Only three schools earned more revenue, but seven of them spent more.

While entry in the WAC will require more money to keep pace, it also presents opportunities to increase Boise State's revenue, explains Bleymaier.

An improved schedule, enhanced marketing, a new corporate sponsorship program and the new scholarship seating program in Bronco Stadium will add to the revenue stream. And the conference itself, with potential for postseason payoffs in football and basketball, is in a position to earn revenue for member schools.

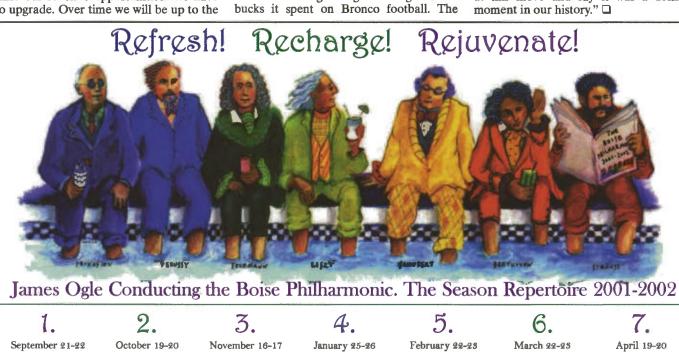
Even with that potential, it might be a few years before

the Broncos are beating teams on a regular

So be prepared for a transition period, warns Bleymaier.

"We don't intend to be the conference doormat in any sport. But it may take up to five years to build new rivalries and get to the level they are.

"But 25 years from now, we'll look back at this move and say it was a defining



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Daniel Stern

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PROKOFIEV

Rebecca Stern

soloist

SCHUBERT

PISTON

DVORAK

Matt Haimovitz

soloist

"Season Finale"

KELTONIC

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