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## Hornets hoops pays a pittance

### Salary for men's coach lags in state, Big Sky

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Offering a good, competitive salary can help an employer convince an attractive candidate to take the job.

As Sacramento State searches for its new men's basketball coach, though, money likely will be more of a detriment than an asset.

The Hornets' position ranks last in base pay among the eight Division I teams in the California State University system, according to data from the state Controller's Office, and is close to the bottom when compared to the eight other Big Sky Conference schools.

Former Sac State coach Jerome Jenkins, who was dismissed Friday after his contract was not renewed, made \$88,584 this past year, considerably less than the \$125,000-\$220,000 range for the other CSU Division I basketball coaches.

And although some of those numbers come from more high-profile programs – San Diego State's Steve Fisher earned \$219,048, and Fresno State's Steve Cleveland earned \$208,620 – the Hornets also were outspent by modest programs. Cal Poly San Luis Obispo paid Kevin Bromley \$167,340, and Cal State Northridge gave Bobby Braswell a \$140,076 base salary.

Sac State's basketball salary also falls near the bottom of the Big Sky Conference, whose head men's basketball coaching salaries range from \$85,000 to \$120,000, according to published reports, public employee databases and Bee research.

The Hornets' salary also falls well below the \$107,350 in base pay of UC Davis coach Gary Stewart, although he also teaches badminton as part of that salary.

Other UC head basketball coaches tend to make considerably more; UCLA's Ben Howland earns \$250,000 in base pay, just a small part of his overall income.

So as Sac State athletics director Terry Wanless begins his search for a new coach, he acknowledges the pay will be modest by coaching standards.

"We'll do the best we can in the financial area," Wanless said. "At some point we realize we have some limitations. We'll be successful in attracting a qualified person. People want this as an opportunity to show their skills as a head coach."

Sac State's athletic resources are on the low end of the state's scale because of limited money allocated by the school and meager revenue generated by the athletic department. Wanless said he would look at salaries of other conference coaches and come up with an amount "in that range."

But if anyone comes to town seeking a big payday, they'll be disappointed.

"You don't want to lose quality candidates for a few dollars, but at the same point, if somebody is expecting to come in and expect us to compete with Gonzaga, that's not reality," Wanless said. "Obviously, there is a limitation. We'll be as creative as we possibly can to make it attractive."

The top coaching salary on campus is the \$126,000 for football coach Marshall Sperbeck, according to the state's pay database. Jenkins did not make any significant income through other job-related means, although like other Sac State coaches he was eligible for small Nike-financed performance bonuses.

"If the new coach could help us create some new opportunities, we're not opposed to those," Wanless said.

Potential candidates being discussed on campus include former Weber State coach Joe Cravens, Washington assistants Cameron Dollar and Jim Shaw, Saint Mary's associate head coach Kyle Smith, Delta College head coach Brian Katz, NBA Development League assistant Guy Beach, NBA advance scout Clay Moser, former Southern Utah coach Bill Evans and Morgan State coach Todd Bozeman, the former Cal coach.

Athletic directors in the Big Sky and the CSU system agreed finding good prospective coaches for relatively little money can be challenging but doable.

"At the end of the day, we're candid with candidates about what we have to offer," said Eastern Washington athletic director Bill Chaves, whose first-year basketball coach, Kirk Earlywine, receives a \$90,000 salary, according to published reports.

"Obviously, dollars and cents makes a difference, but ultimately, it's more than that. Maybe they're an Eastern alum, maybe they're a Sac State alum ... You know pretty much what your (salary) range is going to be. There's not a whole lot that you're going to be able to do."

Cal State Northridge athletic director Rick Mazzuto noted how winning coaches who move up to more high-profile programs tend to become wealthy.

"Those coaches that have been around, who have been successful, I believe if I'm not mistaken have all become millionaires," he said. "Some of the Division I assistants are now making \$200,000 a year.

"Are there quality people you can hire? I think the answer is yes ... The bottom line is there's only (341) of these (Division I) jobs, and a lot of people want them."

Said Northern Arizona assistant athletic director Steve Shaff: "Everybody's got financial troubles at this level."

Weber State athletic director Jerry Graybeal noted that Sac State is "well down the food chain" in California, as is his school in Utah, where BYU, Utah and Utah State command more attention.

In his mind, though, the important thing is to remain competitive financially within your conference.

"I don't try to worry about comparing ourselves outside of that range," Graybeal said.

Jenkins' salary ranks ahead of just one Big Sky basketball coach – Northern Colorado's Tad Boyle earns \$85,000 in base pay, according to published reports – and is within \$12,000 of at least four other paychecks in the league.

Which leaves Wanless trying to make the Hornets' opening as attractive as possible.

"I am confident we'll have a great deal of interest in the position," he said. "We'll find the person who's exactly the right fit for this university and this basketball program."

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