

# Huggins' contract still debated

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Two months after Bob Huggins was introduced as Kansas State's new basketball coach, lawyers in Cincinnati and Manhattan, Kan., continue to haggle over his contract.

The sticking point in the five-year deal is over "specific language," Kansas State Associate Athletic Director Jim Epps said Tuesday, declining to elaborate. But he said major issues like length and compensation have been resolved for weeks.

He said the contract is now in the hands of Huggins' attorney, Richard Katz, but hoped to have it signed by the end of the week.

"I can tell you this, we're down to literally the last couple of issues," Epps said. "Our attorneys sent our position on those issues (Monday), so most of the heavy lifting has been done. I would hope we can get this damn thing wrapped up and put it to bed."

Katz declined Wednesday to discuss what language in the contract is causing the holdup, although he said it has nothing to do with money or other major issues.

"All of the financial terms have been agreed upon," he said. "It's some language in other areas of the contract."

Katz also refused to discuss specific terms of the contract, although he said it would be on par with Kansas Jayhawks coach Bill Self and other top Big 12 coaches.

When Self was hired in April 2003, he signed a five-year deal that paid him a base salary of \$129,380, with additional guaranteed money for media appearances, a summer basketball camp and from a contract with Nike. If he met all the performance goals, Self could earn up to \$1.48 million per year in compensation.

"We'll be about there," Katz said. Huggins was attending the Big 12 annual meetings in Colorado Springs, Colo., on Wednesday and was unavailable for comment.

The deliberate pace of the negotiations stands in contrast to Missouri and Iowa State, where Mike Anderson and Greg McDermott were hired at about the same time as Huggins and quickly signed long-term deals.

Missouri, which refused to interview Huggins as a replacement for Quin Snyder, agreed to pay Anderson a minimum of \$850,000 annually over the next five years. McDermott signed a 6-year, \$3.9 million contract with the Cyclones.

"For the life of me I don't understand why Katz would quibble" over the contract, Epps said. "It's just a couple of issues that his attorney wants a greater definition on. We think we've accommodated that wish. I'll be curious."

So are Wildcat fans, who began to fret recently over rumors that because a contract wasn't signed, Huggins might leave for West Vir-

ginia, his alma mater. But Mountaineers coach John Beilein signed an extension there, ending the speculation.

Huggins, who is 567-199 in 24 seasons and was 399-127 at Cincinnati, was hired March 23 to resurrect a Kansas State program that has not been to the NCAA tournament since 1996 and has struggled to escape mediocrity since the late 1980s.

Though the deal isn't technically done, Huggins has already started drawing paychecks, Epps said.

The 52-year-old coach has signed an annual appointment, which is required of all Kansas State employees.

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