

MARCH 9, 2010, 11:55 AM

## CU's Bzdelik dressed for success?

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

[1]

CU head coach [Jeff Bzdelik](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, with [Cory Higgins](#) <sup>[3]</sup>. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

My friend Berry Trammel, a terrific sports columnist for Oklahoma City's Daily Oklahoman, caught Colorado coach [Jeff Bzdelik](#) <sup>[2]</sup> by surprise with an off-topic question during this week's Big 12 coaches teleconference, and Trammel deserves an award for odd-ball question the year.

But it was a fun and welcomed departure from the usual line of questioning about basketball strategy and player injuries.

Trammel said he was doing a story on coaching attire along the sidelines. Bzdelik has worn a coat and tie throughout this season but informed Trammel that he and his coaching staff did wear Nike-designed Colorado polo-style shirts for games last season.

With Bzdelik in a relaxed, informal look, Colorado went 9-22 in 2008-09, and won just one of 16 conference games.

This season, with Bzdelik and his assistants looking sharp, the Buffs are 15-15 and 6-10.

Coincidence?

They do say a team reflects the style of its coach.

"I'm not sure why I did that," Bzdelik said of last year's polos. "I just did it. But I went back to wearing dress shirts and ties with sportscoats this year. I'm old school. I'd always done that. Why I changed last year, I'm not really sure.

"I just didn't feel right (in the polos). I'd worn a shirt and tie all my life. No big deal. That's just what I feel most comfortable in."

By the way, Bzdelik's coaching opponent for Wednesday morning's [Big 12 Tournament](#) <sup>[4]</sup> opener, [Pat Knight](#) <sup>[5]</sup> of Texas Tech, never wears a coat and tie. Of course, his father, the legendary [Bob Knight](#) <sup>[6]</sup>, never did either.

"If guys want to wear suits, fine, but I don't see any reason for it," [Pat Knight](#) <sup>[5]</sup> said on the teleconference. "We're coaches. I'm not a model. I just want to feel comfortable."

Knight also said it allows him to wear Under Armour athletic apparel, which he endorses.

The Tech coach was asked how he shows frustration with his team or displeasure with the officiating if he doesn't have a sports coat to take off and throw down in disgust.

"That's what clipboards are for," Knight said. "That's why I have a clipboard."

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MARCH 8, 2010, 4:12 PM

## CU-Tech rematch: game of cat-and-mouse?

By **TOM KENSLE** |  1 Comment

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College basketball games, perhaps than most sports, often come down to the chess match between the rival coaches.

Considering that Colorado and Texas Tech will face each other for the second time in five days on Wednesday morning in the first round of the Big 12 Tournament at Kansas City, that makes the matchup between the Nos. 8 (CU) and 9 seeds more intriguing than in some years. No doubt there will be some tweaking by each coach.

Colorado (15-15, 6-10 Big 12) defeated the Red Raiders 101-90 on Saturday in Boulder. Early in the season Texas Tech (16-14, 5-11) was ranked as No. 16 in the Associated Press top-25 poll.

“Obviously, (our) confidence is high,” CU coach Jeff Bzdelik said Monday. “But we have a great opponent in Texas Tech, an opponent that’s going to play much better than what they played the other day.”

Bzdelik said neither team likely will make wholesale changes for the rematch. “What you try to do is make little adjustments and do things better,” he said.

“We had a lot of breakdowns defensively, and we need to improve on that. There were some things we could have done better offensively to counter what they were doing. And of course we didn’t rebound well.

“There were a lot of areas where we need to improve, because we know Texas Tech will play better and improve in areas where they felt they didn’t do well in. Sometimes we get overcomplicated with this game. But it’s about doing things better and more consistently during the course of a game.”

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MARCH 8, 2010, 12:37 PM

## KC native Burks to experience Big 12 tourney for first time

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

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In a surprise, Colorado guard Alec Burks, the newly named Big 12 freshman of the year, said today that he has never even been a spectator at a Big 12 Tournament – even though the event has been held most often in Kansas City. Burks was born in Kansas City and grew up in the K.C. suburb of Grandview, Mo.

Burks said he did not attend the conference tournament as a youth or while in high school because he didn't grow up a fan of a particular college team.

"I didn't really know where I was going to play in college," Burks said following a morning practice in Boulder. "But I'd watch it on TV. It's a great tournament."

Colorado (15-15, 6-10 Big 12) is the No. 8 seed and will face ninth-seeded Texas Tech (16-14, 5-11) at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday in the Sprint Center. It will be a rematch of Saturday's meeting in Boulder, a 101-90 Buffs victory.

Burks said he is trying to round up about 12 to 15 tickets for family and friends. "People would ask me for more than that, but I had to stop," he said with a grin.

The 6-foot-6 Burks ranked seven among Big 12 scorers (16.8) and led the conference in field-goal shooting (.536). Burks said he "kind of expected" to be named conference freshman of the year but still felt a bit anxious about it because "you never know if they're going to give it to you because I was not as high-profile as (Kansas' Xavier Henry) was. I was glad when I heard the news."

It sounds like Buffs coach Jeff Bzdelik isn't about to let Burks rest on his laurels, not that Burks would.

"It's a great honor, both for Alec and for us as a program and for his teammates," Bzdelik said. "But now with anything in life, it's where do you go from here?"

The Colorado traveling party was to depart for Kansas City this afternoon.

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MARCH 9, 2010, 11:00 AM

## Pat Knight calls out his star tandem

By **TOM KENSLER** |  No Comments

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Like his father, Texas Tech coach [Pat Knight](#) <sup>[1]</sup> isn't afraid to call out his players — even his stars — if they are not performing up to expectations. [Bob Knight](#) <sup>[2]</sup>, the all-time winningest major college coach, certainly never pulled any punches.

It is a public way to send a message.

“(Mike) Singletary and (John) Roberson have just got to make defense a priority,” [Pat Knight](#) <sup>[1]</sup> said of his junior stalwarts. “In our last three weeks, we gave up way too many points.”

Colorado defeated Texas Tech 101-90 on Saturday in Boulder. They will tangle Wednesday morning in a rematch during the first round of the [Big 12 Tournament](#) <sup>[3]</sup> in Kansas City.

“Going into this tournament and into next year, Roberson and Singletary have to get defensive-minded for us to get better,” Knight said. “Offense is never going to be a problem with our motion. We can put up hellacious numbers. But we’ve got to be able to stop somebody. To me, that comes from your best players.

“That’s why the (Chicago) Bulls were so good, because [Michael Jordan](#) <sup>[4]</sup> put an emphasis on defense. This year, (Sherron) Collins, as a guard, puts an emphasis on defense for Kansas. Until John and Mike do that, we’re going to struggle a little bit.”

I have to believe [Bob Knight](#) <sup>[2]</sup> would approve.

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## DE-fense! DE-fense!

That's the coaches' cry as Texas Tech, CU face quick rematch in 1st game of Big 12 Tournament

By Patrick Ridgell  
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

This isn't complicated.

Whatever adjustments Texas Tech and Colorado coaches make in preparation for the programs' meeting Wednesday in the Big 12 Tournament's opening round, it will probably come down to this: guarding people.

The two teams are 11th and 12th in the Big 12 in points allowed entering Wednesday's game in

Kansas City, Mo., when they'll play for the second time in five days. Saturday's 101-90 victory for CU in Boulder on Saturday showed both coaches what to heed for the rematch.

"They outscored us in the second half, and defensively, we were not very good," CU coach Jeff Bzdelik said.

"We have to be able to stop somebody," Texas Tech's Pat Knight said.

Texas Tech shot 53.8 percent from the floor and scored 55 points after halftime Saturday.

Both programs have their sights set on playing beyond this week, which makes Wednesday crucial. Texas Tech, ranked No. 16 on Dec. 14, has lost seven in a row to make the Red Raiders (16-14) iffy for even an NIT pick. For CU (15-15), winner of three straight and four of its past six, this game is the program's biggest since 2005-06.

A CU win would set up a game against No. 1 Kansas on Thursday. The tournament's championship will be played Saturday.

CU must win Wednesday to assure itself of at least a .500 record and position itself for an NIT bid. A win won't clinch anything, but it'll make the Buffs a more attractive option. The Buffs could receive an invitation Sunday to the third CBI (College Basketball Invitational) if one from the NIT doesn't come. CU is the eighth-place team in a league that's expected to send seven to the NCAA Tournament.

CU's 73.9 points allowed a game and Texas Tech's 76.4 are the highest averages in the Big 12. Teams shot 46.1 percent on the Buffs, the league's highest clip this season. Texas Tech is ninth in field goal percentage defense, 43.3 percent.

During its seven-game losing streak, Texas Tech has allowed 82.7 points per game. CU shot 58.8 percent in Saturday's meeting, and Baylor, Texas Tech's previous opponent, shot 52.6 percent on the Red Raiders.



Texas Tech's Theron Jenkins, center, goes after a loose ball as Colorado forward Austin Default, left, and guard Marcus Relphorde defend during their game Saturday in Boulder. The Buffaloes won 101-90, but allowed 55 points after halftime, making defense a key focus for CU's rematch against the Red Raiders on Wednesday in the Big 12 Tournament opener. **David Zalubowski/AP**

Knight said his two best players — junior guard John Roberson and junior forward Mike Singletary – need to start thinking defense first for Texas Tech to improve.

“In our losses, we’re giving up over 80-something points a game,” Knight said. “That’s just way too many.”

CU hasn’t out-rebounded an opponent since Colorado Christian on Dec. 7. The Buffs’ rebounding margin in their 16 Big 12 games was minus-11.4.

Texas Tech’s Nick Okorie scored 34 points Saturday. Slowing him presents CU with one of several challenges for Wednesday, not the least of which is finding a way to beat a team twice in five days.

“I don’t think you make drastic changes,” Bzdelik said. “What you do is make subtle adjustments and do things better. We had a lot of breakdowns defensively.

“We have a lot of areas in which we need to improve, because we know Texas Tech will play better. Sometimes we get over-complicated with this game. But it’s about doing things better and more consistently throughout the course of a game.”

Read Patrick Ridgell’s CU sports blog at [www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell](http://www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell). He can be reached at [pridgell@times-call.com](mailto:pridgell@times-call.com).

# Pressure off likely NCAA teams at Big 12 tournament

**With 7 teams already slated for NCAAs, no one likely on bubble**

**By Ryan Thorburn** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/08/2010 11:54:54 PM MST

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- There isn't really a lot left to prove at the Big 12 Tournament.

That time will arrive when the invitations to the Big Dance are handed out and the brackets are set.

For now, the conference members can gather here and boast about having the No. 1 Ratings Percentage Index, the nation's top-ranked team (Kansas) and three other teams in the Associated Press top 25 (No. 9 Kansas State, No. 21 Baylor and No. 23 Texas A&M). Plus, the conference has a total of seven teams that are expected to be included in the NCAA Tournament field (also Missouri, Texas and Oklahoma State).

"We could very well get into postseason and have some difficult matchups and not do as well," Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe said during a media teleconference on Monday. "But when we get into NCAA play hopefully we are successful there, otherwise it kind of goes down the drain, regardless of how much success you've had."

At the bottom of the bracket, Colorado and Texas Tech are fighting for a chance to play in the NIT. Oklahoma and Iowa State will try to experience a little March Madness by producing some magic at the Sprint Center. And Nebraska will probably be put out of its misery in the opening round.

The No. 1 Jayhawks (29-2) can solidify their status as a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament with a run to the championship game here on Saturday.

"I still think with this team there is less margin for error than what there was with that team," KU coach Bill Self said when asked to compare the 2010 Jayhawks to the team that won the national championship in 2008. "My confidence level is high, but I really felt like in '08 going into the NCAA tournament if we played well there was no team that could beat us. With this team, I don't think we have played as well as often."

The No. 2 Wildcats (24-6) want to return to form and perhaps improve their NCAA tournament seed after dropping the final two games of the regular season.

The No. 3 Bears (24-6) were picked to finish 10th in the preseason coaches poll but enters the Big 12 tournament with the look of a Sweet 16 team.

The No. 4 Aggies (22-8) have been the model of regular-season consistency over the past five seasons and didn't use injury problems as an excuse this year.

"We've been a really good team, we just haven't been a great team," said Texas A&M coach Mark Turgeon. "We've been to the NCAA tournament, but we haven't advanced to an Elite Eight or a Final Four. ... You've always got a chance to earn respect and we have a chance over the next few weeks to do that."

The No. 5 Tigers (22-9) are the defending Big 12 tournament champions and should play with a chip on their shoulders considering no Missouri players were picked first- or second-team All-Big 12.

The No. 6 Longhorns (23-8), who went from No. 1 in the national rankings to 9-7 in Big 12 play, would like to get some swagger back with a good showing here.

The No. 7 Cowboys (21-9) have the conference's player of the year in James Anderson and a signature win over KU on the resume.

"Everybody has tape and everybody knows about everybody. It's going to be an interesting tournament," Missouri coach

Mike Anderson said. "You better bring it each time you take the floor."

The No. 8 Buffs (15-15) are on a three-game winning streak and open up against a No. 9 Red Raiders (16-14) team that has dropped seven consecutive games, including a 101-90 loss in Boulder on Saturday.

The No. 10 Sooners (13-17) still have a talented roster, despite a 13-17 record, and get to play another Bedlam game against Oklahoma State in the opening round.

The No. 11 Cyclones (15-16), who are coming off an overtime win in Manhattan, have two future NBA players (Craig Brackins and Marquis Gilstrap) draw slumping Texas.

The No. 12 Cornhuskers (14-17) are trying to forget the 2-14 Big 12 regular season happened and start from scratch at the Spring Center.

"All that sounds good, but the fact of the matter is we've got to play well and good things have to happen to us," Nebraska coach Doc Sadler said. "Just because it's a new day and you're starting a tournament, you're not going to just show up and everything's going to be OK."

**Here is a look at the Big 12 Tournament field in order of seed/regular season finish:**

### 1. Kansas

**Record:** 29-2 overall, 15-1 Big 12

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 1

**Head coach:** Bill Self (198-42 in seventh season at KU)

**All-Big 12 players:** Sherron Collins, first team; Cole Aldrich (Defensive Player of the Year), first team; Marcus Morris, second team; Xavier Henry, honorable mention.

**Postseason projection:** The Jayhawks are in line for a No. 1 seed in the NCAA Tournament.

**Stat that matters:** KU has won or shared 10 regular-season Big 12 titles and earned the top seed at the conference tournament six times.

**Quotable:** "From a national perspective and really getting people to talk about you, it bodes well for recruiting," Self said on the strength of the Big 12 this season.

**Tournament opener:** Thursday vs. Colorado-Texas Tech winner (10:30 a.m., ESPN2).

### 2. Kansas State

**Record:** 24-6, 11-5

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 4

**Head coach:** Frank Martin (67-30 in third season at K-State)

**All-Big 12 players:** Jacob Pullen, first team; Denis Clemente, second team.

**Postseason projection:** The Wildcats, despite a two-game losing streak, could still play their way to a No. 2 seed in the NCAA Tournament with a run this week.

**Stat that matters:** K-State has won at least 21 games the last four seasons.

**Quotable:** "It's hard to control kids. You can't control what they do. But I can tell you that if somebody doesn't play with that desire and enthusiasm, their minutes are going to disappear," Martin on the need for a better effort from his team after losing the home finale to Iowa State.

**Tournament opener:** Thursday vs. Oklahoma State-Oklahoma winner (5 p.m., Altitude2)

### 3. Baylor

**Record:** 24-6, 11-5

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 10

**Head coach:** Scott Drew (105-101 in seventh season at Baylor).

**All-Big 12 players:** LaceDarius Dunn, second team; Ekpe Udoh (Newcomer of the Year), second team; Tweety Carter, third team.

**Postseason projection:** Bears, who made it to the Big 12 Tournament final last season but settled for the NIT, are in the NCAA Tournament no matter what happens in Kansas City.

**Stat that matters:** This is the first time Baylor has won 10 regular-season games in conference play and earned a first-round bye.

**Quotable:** "We've stayed injury free for most of the year and we've had great leadership," Drew said on his team exceeding the preseason expectations. "That has helped us to be successful."

**Tournament opener:** Thursday vs. Texas-Iowa State winner (7:30 p.m., ESPN2).

### 4. Texas A&M

**Record:** 22-8, 11-5

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 5

**Head coach:** Mark Turgeon (71-29 in third season at Texas A&M).

**All-Big 12 players:** Donald Sloan, first team; Bryan Davis, third team.

**Postseason projection:** The Aggies are going to be in the NCAA Tournament for the fifth consecutive year thanks to great coaching and senior leadership.

**Stat that matters:** Texas A&M led the Big 12 in scoring defense in conference games, allowing 65.8 points per game.

**Quotable:** "That would be an important thing for our program," Turgeon said on possibly winning the Big 12 Tournament for the first time. "We're still in the infancy stage of building tradition here."

**Tournament opener:** Thursday vs. Missouri-Nebraska winner (1 p.m., Altitude).

### 5. Missouri

**Record:** 22-9, 10-6

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 7

**Head coach:** Mike Anderson (87-44 in fourth season at Missouri)

**All-Big 12 players:** Kim English, third team; Zaire Taylor, honorable mention.

**Postseason projection:** Tigers will be a dangerous team in the NCAA Tournament once again after making it to the Elite Eight last March.

**Stat that matters:** Missouri is 22-10 in the Big 12 the past two seasons, second to Kansas in wins over that span, and won the Big 12 Tournament last season.

**Quotable:** "We want to make sure we get the best kids in our state," said Anderson, who did not offer Big 12 Freshman of the Year Alec Burks (Colorado) of Grandview, Mo., a scholarship.

**Tournament opener:** Wednesday vs. Nebraska (1 p.m., Altitude)

## 6. Texas

**Record:** 23-8, 9-7

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 2

**Head coach:** Rick Barnes (293-113 in 12th season at Texas).

**All-Big 12 players:** Damion James, first team; Avery Bradley, honorable mention.

**Postseason projection:** Thanks to some impressive non-conference wins the Longhorns will limp into the NCAA Tournament unless they can put things together at the Sprint Center.

**Stat that matters:** Texas has won at least 20 games in each of the last 11 seasons.

**Quotable:** "I don't know why we would want to expand it. It's a good thing right now ... for three weeks it takes center stage," Barnes on possible NCAA Tournament expansion. "I think it's great the way it is. If it goes to 96 (teams) it will probably be because of money."

**Tournament opener:** Wednesday vs. Iowa State (7:30 p.m., Altitude2).

## 7. Oklahoma State

**Record:** 21-9, 9-7

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 6.

**Head coach:** Travis Ford (44-21 in second season at Oklahoma State).

**All-Big 12 players:** James Anderson (Player of the Year).

**Postseason projection:** Cowboys will receive an at-large bid after knocking off No. 1 Kansas. Anderson is good enough to carry this young team deep into the bracket.

**Stat that matters:** Anderson has scored 25 points or more 17 times this season and has reached double figures in 43 consecutive games.

**Quotable:** "In a league that has so much individual talent, let alone so many great teams, it is an incredible honor," Ford said on Anderson being named the Big 12's Player of the Year. "James is so humble, when I called him and told him he didn't believe me."

**Tournament opener:** Wednesday vs. Oklahoma (5 p.m., Altitude2).

## 8. Colorado

**Record:** 15-15, 6-10

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 12

**Head coach:** Jeff Bzdelik (36-57 in third season at CU).

**All-Big 12 players:** Cory Higgins, third team; Alec Burks (Freshman of the Year), honorable mention.

**Postseason projection:** The Buffs need at least one win in Kansas City to be eligible for the NIT.

**Stat that matters:** Seven of CU's 15 losses were against ranked teams and 10 of the losses were against teams that have more than 20 wins this season.

**Quotable:** "Coming in, I really believed in my heart that he was as good as any high school player coming out of high school," Bzdelik said of Burks, whose only other major scholarship offer was from Kansas State. "But you never know until the lights come on and the ball goes up. From the opening tip, Alec embraced the moment."

**Tournament opener:** Wednesday vs. Texas Tech (10:30 a.m., Altitude).

## 9. Texas Tech

**Record:** 16-14, 4-12

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 9.

**Head coach:** Pat Knight (34-40 in third season at Texas Tech).

**All-Big 12 players:** John Roberson, honorable mention; Mike Singletary, honorable mention.

**Postseason projection:** The Red Raiders have lost seven consecutive games but are still an attractive NIT candidate after being ranked as high as No. 16 during the non-conference season.

**Stat that matters:** Senior Nick Okorie scored a career-high 34 points against Colorado on Saturday and has averaged 20.2 points while shooting 55.9 percent from the field in the last five games.

**Quotable:** "Especially when you're Joe Schmo like me, you're third year is very important," Knight on the pressure facing him to get the Red Raiders back in the NCAA Tournament.

**Tournament opener:** Wednesday vs. Colorado (10:30 a.m., Altitude).

## 10. Oklahoma

**Record:** 13-17, 4-12

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 3.

**Head coach:** Jeff Capel (83-49 in fourth season at Oklahoma).

**All-Big 12 players:** Tommy Mason-Griffin, third team; Willie Warren, honorable mention.

**Postseason projection:** The Sooners, one year after making it to the Elite Eight with Blake Griffin, will not play in the postseason unless they cut down the nets on Saturday night at the Sprint Center.

**Stat that matters:** Mason-Griffin has set OU freshman records for assists (145) and 3-point field goals (69) this season.

**Quotable:** "This is a little bit different with where we are. We don't have a winning record and it's just keeping the guys motivated and let them know we have a chance to get better and improve," Capel said.

**Tournament opener:** Wednesday vs. Oklahoma State (5 p.m., Altitude2).

## 11. Iowa State

**Record:** 15-16, 4-12

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 8.

**Head coach:** Greg McDermott (58-68 in fourth season at Iowa State).

**All-Big 12 players:** Craig Brackins, second team; Marquis Gilstrap, honorable mention.

**Postseason projection:** The Cyclones, coming off an overtime win at Kansas State, will need a couple more upsets in Kansas City to be eligible for the NIT.

**Stat that matters:** The win in Manhattan snapped Iowa State's 21-game road losing streak against ranked opponents.

**Quotable:** "I've had conversations with my boss throughout the season as I do every season. The reality of the situation is my job was never in jeopardy," McDermott on the announcement made by Iowa State on Monday that he would be retained as head coach next season.

**Tournament opener:** Wednesday vs. Texas (7:30 p.m., Altitude2).

## 12. Nebraska

**Record:** 14-17, 2-14

**Big 12 preseason coaches poll:** No. 11.

**Head coach:** Doc Sadler (69-57 in fourth season at Nebraska).

**All-Big 12 players:** None.

**Postseason projection:** The Huskers' season will end in Kansas City unless they can put together a miracle run at the Sprint Center.

**Stat that matters:** The Huskers have defeated Missouri the last two times the programs have met in the Big 12 Tournament.

**Quotable:** "We don't have a lot of options. I told the team when you continue to practice hard usually good things will happen," Sadler said on finding a way to play with confidence as the 12 seed. "We need some shots to fall to have a chance to win some games."

**Tournament opener:** Wednesday vs. Missouri (1 p.m., Altitude).

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