



First Stop Monday in Erie at the Colorado National
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



05/18/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Brooks: Odds, Ends From Day One Of Coaches' State Tour

PUEBLO - Postcard from a 14-hour day, half of it spent cruising in style on Bryon White's supremely tricked-out Buffs Bus from Erie to Pueblo, with intermediate stops to mix, mingle and munch on the 2010 Coaches' Tour of the state:

But first, this . . .

NEWS OF THE DAY - Don't be caught without a roster at this season's football games. Coach Dan Hawkins says his team recently voted on having one identity this fall - that of the CU Buffs.

They've elected to have the names removed from the backs of their jerseys, opting to go with numbers only and Colorado on the front.

It's a team thing.

During spring drills, several veteran players told me they believed the 2010 team was more unified than any Buffs squad during their tenures.

"It came from them . . . and it tells me a lot (about their unity)," Hawkins said, noting it's the first time in his coaching career that his players have elected to go "nameless" on their jerseys.

Hawkins also said this season's morning practices generally will run from 7:45-9:45 a.m., and he doesn't foresee class scheduling conflicts. To the contrary, he believes the morning drills will eliminate the exodus of players to late-afternoon classes that the team has experienced for years.

"There are more classes offered early," Hawkins said. "I expect we'll have fewer guys leaving (early), and we'll also be able to finish practices in the light (rather than winding up in darkness on the unlighted practice fields). There are a lot of residual things that are good about moving the practice time."

And now, back to the tour . . .

STOP ONE, DAY ONE - At the Colorado National Golf Club, the five-day tour's 8 a.m. launch point, athletic director Mike Bohn told a gathering of about 75, "Help us get warmed up here . . . the natives are restless the further south we go."

(Actually, on subsequent stops at Castle Pines, Colorado Springs and Pueblo, the state's southern natives were hospitable and charming.)

Also at the morning's first stop, women's basketball coach Linda Lappe confirmed that former Texas Tech All-American Sheryl Swoopes was among the candidates being considered to fill out her staff.

"We're waiting on a couple of things," Lappe said. "We should know by the end of the week."

Men's golf coach Roy Edwards reminded the breakfast bunch that CNGC would be the site of the NCAA Regional Tourney in 2011.

And this on judging a prospect's growth potential from men's hoops coach Tad Boyle, who conceded he borrowed this wisdom from colleague Mark Turgeon (Texas A&M): "Look at the back of their calves and check for hair . . . if it's not there, the kid is still growing."

For the record, Boyle said Andre Roberson, the athletic 6-foot-7 Texas prospect who signed recently, has hairless calves - meaning he could grow.

As for Ben Mills, the 7-footer from Wisconsin who also came aboard in the spring signing period, Boyle has no doubt that Mills will get heavier than his 220 pounds. Said Boyle: "He's still growing . . . I know - he ate off of my plate on his recruiting trip."

First-day introductions included Hawkins to both Boyle and Lappe; their paths hadn't crossed since Lappe and Boyle were hired within a week of each other in mid-April.

STOP TWO, DAY ONE - As for recipes for success, it's hard to argue with Jack Vickers, the self-made oil baron and founder of the now-defunct International Golf Tournament.

Vickers, a close friend of late CU football coach/AD Eddie Crowder, said Crowder's organizational skills were fundamental to the Buffs' success in the early 1970s.

Vickers was instrumental in the building of the Flatirons Club at Folsom Field and has been a prominent CU booster for what seems like a century. In the early going, he drew on his Oklahoma ties to make it all work in Boulder as Crowder went about renovating the football program.

In explaining to about a dozen visitors at Castle Pines how he helped Crowder get things turned around, Vickers said he had the statistics compiled of his top conference competitors. He made use of a flip chart to show where CU stacked up with the conference in relation to facilities, budgets, etc.

Vickers, 84, told Bohn and the assembled coaches the same could be done now. He had plenty of rapt listeners.

STOP THREE, DAY ONE- You might not expect to find Wes and Barbara Dieter taking their lunch at Champps Sports Bar at midday on a Monday.

Then again, if there's a CU gathering anywhere in their area, chances are the Dieters will be there. Wes, a 1948 CU grad who said World War II "got in the way of my education," has missed only two Buffs home games since 1949.



Wes and Barbara Dieter with CU football coaches Brian Cabral, Darian Hagan and Dan Hawkins.

"And that was only because my doctors caught up with me," said Wes, a very youthful 87.

The Dieter family came to this country from Germany in the 1880s and was in the bookbinding business. Wes did that for a while before working in a pair of non-related fields. He's also got two granddaughters who are CU graduates.

When I asked Wes if planned on attending all of the Buffs home games this fall, he answered, "I'll be at every game this year as long as I can walk up and down those damn stairs."

On display at Champps as well as at the day's final stop (below) were replicas of a 1990 CU helmet and jersey. It wasn't a coincidence: The Buffs will wear them this fall to commemorate the 20th anniversary of CU's 1990 national championship.

Volleyball coach Liz Kritza enjoyed a homecoming of sorts in C-Springs. She was born and reared in there before moving to New Orleans in 1995 to do her undergraduate work at Tulane.

And on an unrelated CU volleyball note, stay tuned for an international item of interest to come shortly from Kritza's program. Think Serbia. Think tall.

STOP FOUR, DAY ONE - When Kritza walked into The Tap House at the Walking Stick Golf Course in Pueblo late Monday afternoon, she spied a willowy 6-4 blonde woman.

Kritza claimed she immediately went into recruiting mode . . . Turns out the object of her attention was Britt Gomer, whose maiden name was Hartshorn.

Ring a bell? It did with Lappe, who played on the same CU team with Hartshorn, a Southern Coloradan (Lamar) who recently returned to the area. Hartshorn was accompanied by her daughter

Brylin, who turns two in July.

If Kritza felt a twinge of *déjà vu* in Colorado Springs, Boyle experienced the same in Pueblo. He was born in the city, where his father was an English professor at Southern Colorado before he took a job at Northern Colorado and moved the family to Greeley.

Joked Boyle about his dad's profession and what it did for Tad's vocabulary: "Now I speak a lot gooder than most people."

Logistical feat of the day: Moving the giant inflatable Alfie - Ralphie the Buffalo supersized - from site to site ahead of the tour, which continues Tuesday with various Denver stops.

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SHOW MENU



Woelk: Buff tour could be boon for department

By Neill Woelk Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:05/17/2010 07:34:20 PM MDT

ERIE -- It had the trappings of a rock tour -- or the political campaign trail.

T-shirts, other souvenirs and autographs were available. A giant inflatable mascot graced the venue entrance, and food and beverages were available.

When the show began, the man in charge of introducing the "stars" grabbed the mike and did his best to get the crowd excited. From there, the band took over, with each member playing a solo. Fans clapped and smiled, took pictures-- and were delighted with the chance to get some one-on-one face time with the "star" of their choice when the show was over.

No barriers here. No security to keep the fans at bay. Step up, ask your questions, get an autograph or two and maybe -- just maybe -- a little inside info.

But it didn't last all morning. There was a schedule to be kept. With breakfast still rumbling in their bellies, the band was off to the tour bus, a massive luxury cruiser worthy of Madonna or Madden. Gear was loaded, last-minute pictures were snapped -- and then they were southbound.

Welcome to the Colorado athletic department statewide tour.

The Buffs are taking the message to the masses.

Breakfast in Erie, lunch in Colorado Springs and a happy hour show in Pueblo on Monday. Later this week, they'll play Edwards, Dillon, Fort Morgan, Greeley; then Loveland, Longmont and Broomfield. Before the summer is over, they'll take the show on the road to the Western Slope, with the itinerary including stops in Durango and Grand Junction -- and wherever else they can land a gig.

Want to ask new men's hoops coach Tad Boyle what kind of offense he wants to run? Stop by one of the gatherings and you'll likely have the chance. Want to know about the 6-6 Serbian star Liz Kritza is ready to add to her roster? Catch her at one of the tour stops and she'll be glad to fill you in.

Same for Dan Hawkins and Linda Lappe.

It's casual, it's personal and it's something that might just catch on in years to come.

The idea is to get CU's coaches in front of the public, and in turn, give the public a chance to get to know CU's coaches. They aren't just quotes in the newspaper or sound bites on TV.

"We're getting the message out there," said CU athletic director Mike Bohn. "We're meeting people. We want them to know us, know who we are and know what we're doing."

It's a good idea -- and one I hope the department continues.

It's not the first time CU has attempted such a tour. In the late 1990s, they had similar events, but not to this extent. Back then, recruiting calendars and other obligations prevented some coaches from making all the stops.

This year -- and hopefully in the years ahead -- the calendar is more cooperative. This year, Boyle, Lappe, Kritza and Hawkins will make every stop. At various junctures, they'll be joined by other CU coaches.

Monday morning, Colorado National Golf Club owner Steve Kerr made the club available for the tour kickoff, and about 70 fans and boosters were on hand. Some were season ticket holders who are quite familiar with the program. But there were others who heard about the gathering and decided to see what CU coaches had to [say](#). Fittingly for the venue, CU golf

coach Roy Edwards -- who will have one of his players participating in the NCAA regionals this year -- made an appearance.

This year's tour should be interesting for a variety of reasons.

One, it will give CU's new hoops coaches a chance to introduce themselves to fans around the state. Hired in April, they haven't had the chance to meet their constituency.

They'll get that opportunity this week.

"I'm excited," Boyle said. "This is a chance to get our program out there and for people to find out what we're about."

It will also be interesting to see how Hawkins is received. The man perceived to be on the hot seat was greeted with a warm reception Monday morning, with a number of folks making it a point to stop and talk with Hawkins -- and offer their support -- after the "official" part of the program was finished.

Each of the coaches had a specific message.

Hawkins talked about CU being ready to reap some rewards for the players' hard work. In a quote that's sure to be over-analyzed and over-emphasized, Hawkins told the crowd, "We are that far away," and held his fingers a few inches apart to emphasize how close he thinks the program is to success. It's nothing he hasn't said before, but guaranteed, it will keep people talking about CU football.

Lappe, meanwhile, addressed recruiting and her coaching staff. Kritza talked recruiting, and also about the foundation of support for her program. Edwards noted that an NCAA Regional will be played at Colorado National next year, and Boyle vowed that his team will "play hard, play smart and play together."

Again -- nothing all of them haven't said before.

But Monday, instead of talking to the media, they were talking to some familiar faces and maybe making some new friends.

Those things -- especially the second part -- are what's important for the CU athletic department.

This is a good step in that direction.

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Hawkins: Buffs better

By **Adrian Dater**
The Denver Post

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Women's basketball coach Linda Lappe talked to fans with men's coach Tad Boyle, center, and football coach Dan Hawkins. (John Prieto, The Denver Post)

ERIE — Holding two fingers less than an inch apart, Colorado football coach Dan Hawkins said Monday that is all that separates the Buffs from returning to "the national stage" as a program.

"Guys, trust me. We are that far away," Hawkins said. "Nobody wants to be close to having a good marriage, and nobody wants to be close to winning football games. We've just got to build a

little confidence, build a little momentum.

"We had a good spring. We are way faster than we've ever been. All our numbers were way, way lower than they've ever been before. Our strength numbers continue to go up. I think our guys are very poised, and they've got to have a great summer."

With several new faces on the University of

Colorado Football

[View slide show of Buffs touring state by bus in May to greet fans .](#)

[View slide show of CU spring football game at Folsom Field on April 10 .](#)

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Colorado coaching staffs, and a football coach still trying to win over the public, Monday seemed like a good day for a road trip.

Reviving a tradition of touring the state to greet fans, the Buffaloes embarked on a five-day, 10-city "CU Coaches Tour" for the first time since

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THE DENVER POST

1999. Before boarding a shiny bus adorned with the school colors, CU coaches greeted a group of boosters for breakfast at the Colorado National Golf Club in Erie.

But it was Hawkins who made ears perk up a little more than the others with a state-of-the-program talk.

The Buffs will wear replicas of their 1990 national championship uniforms for home games this season. Hawkins, 16-33 entering his fifth season, isn't promising a national championship but remains optimistic of a rebound after a 3-9 season.

"It's like taking out pavement; you've just got to keep pounding and pounding. (Sometimes) nothing happens and nothing happens, and pretty soon there's a little crack and it falls away," Hawkins said. "When we get this thing turned around a little bit, it will be because of only a couple little things. It won't be anything huge."

Most fans Monday met new basketball coaches Tad Boyle and Linda Lappe for the first time at the Front Range stops. Boyle's one guarantee was that his men's team would "play hard and as a unit every night" and placed a premium on finding "guys with character" on recruiting trips.

Lappe, a former Buffs player under Ceal Barry, spoke of getting the program back to the level of Barry's tenure. Lappe also confirmed that she recently interviewed former Texas Tech and

WNBA star Sheryl Swoopes for an assistant coaching job.

The tour continues Wednesday in the mountains with stops in Edwards and Dillon. Thursday will bring tour stops in Fort Morgan and Greeley, and Friday the Buffs will be in Loveland, Longmont and Broomfield.

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