



Men's basketball coach Tad Boyle with Larry Hicks, his basketball coach at Greeley Central High School.
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Brooks: Bits, Pieces From Day 4 Of The 2010 Coaches' Tour

GREELEY - Postcard from the plains, where Tad Boyle once reigned . . . Day Four of the 2010 Coaches' Tour:

When August camp opens, the Buffs will have one less quarterback on their roster. Not to worry - no one's leaving. One QB, however, is switching sides of the ball.

After spring drills ended in mid-April, Seth Lobato approached the coaching staff about moving to safety. Coach Dan Hawkins told a crowd Thursday afternoon at the Greeley Country Club that he was all for the experiment.

"He's 6-5, he can run and he's smart," Hawkins said, adding if Lobato, a sophomore from nearby Eaton who walked on in 2008, discovered that he was better suited to play offense, he would return and become a "slash-type player . . . He can play somewhere - he's too good not to be on the field somewhere at some point."

BUFFALO EXTRAS



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Lobato won't be the first QB in his class to look at another position; Clark Evans has made what appears to be a successful switch to tight end. Also making an experimental move to safety in August will be receiver Cameron Ham, a senior from Haxtun.

WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG? It took four days and a trip to Fort Morgan, but someone finally asked - publicly at least - a quarterback question on the tour.

In a brief post-lunch Q&A session at the Country Steak Out - an eatery where you could envision a noonish event such as Thursday's, or a high school football banquet, or maybe a wedding reception - Hawkins was asked about CU's "quarterback situation."

Get ready, folks . . . for a replay of the answer you probably heard in April. The 80 or so persons composing the lunch-time crowd were told that senior-to-be Cody Hawkins and junior-in-waiting Tyler Hansen both had "great springs," with a beefed-up receiver corps and more able bodies in the offensive line contributing mightily to the QBs' spring performances.

The head coach's fall forecast: "We'll let them slug it out in (August) camp."

As he's done countless times before, Hawkins said there is "no controversy in our camp" over who will be the 2010 starter. "Both guys don't care . . . they'll do whatever's best for the team."

Dan Hawkins was more definitive on January enrollee Nick Hirschman, saying Hirschman has the strongest arm at the position and is a better-than-average runner. However, the staff doesn't see him as a risk-taking running quarterback.

"He's smart, he's committed and he's going to be a good player," Hawkins said.

FLAT-OUT WRONG? Another question from the Fort Morgan crowd concerned the Buffs "coming out flat" in their season-opening loss to Colorado State.

Hawkins disputed that: "I don't think we did . . . we had the same preparation as the year before (a CU win)." After scoring 20 first-half points, the Rams held on for a 23-17 victory that opened the Buffs' 2009 season darkly.

Hawkins added that the Buffs were stunned - fatally it appeared - by the Rams' hitting a third-down bomb in their opening drive, and then a momentum-changing (and questionable) second-half reception/fumble that halted a Buffs drive.

Starting fast this September, "getting a break here and there," is imperative, said Hawkins, whose team opens against CSU on Sept. 4 at Invesco Field at Mile High.

TONEY WAS TOO TIGHT: Michigan transfer Toney Clemons, eligible this season after sitting out 2009, is one of the receivers Hawkins was referring to in his QB comments.

But it took awhile in spring drills for Clemons to regain the form that awed coaches and players when Clemons ran with the scout team last fall.

Hawkins spoke with Clemons midway through spring drills and advised him simply to "loosen up." Clemons, said Hawkins, was trying to be perfect when playing naturally - as he did as a scout-

teammer - was sufficient.

"Perfect is the enemy of good," Hawkins said.

FWIW: At every stop this week, Hawkins has been telling audiences that his team not only will be faster, but "way faster" than his previous four at CU. Stronger, too, he added.

Asked what the Buffs' 2010 record would be, Hawkins didn't bite. He said CU "has a great schedule. Not a team in the Big 12 is going to be bad, and there's not one team (on the entire schedule) where a coach could say, 'Yeah, we've got that one and that one.'"

HAIR RAISING EXPERIENCE: Boyle, the Buffs' new men's basketball coach, told the crowd he had memories of playing the Fort Morgan Mustangs "when I had a full head of hair."

An attendee who remembered Boyle's flowing locks was Allan Goetz, one of the persons instrumental in organizing the tour's Fort Morgan stop. Goetz was a sophomore guard for Fort Morgan, Boyle a senior for Greeley Central.

Said Goetz: "He smoked me."

MEMORABLE FIRST STEP: When Boyle stepped onto the court for his first college game as a Kansas Jayhawk, he looked across half-court and saw Michael Jordan, James Worthy and Sam Perkins.

The Jayhawks were in Charlotte, N.C., to play a non-conference game against North Carolina, whose other two starters were Jimmy Black and Matt Doherty.

"Pretty big stage for a kid from Greeley, Colorado," Boyle said.

North Carolina won it all that season. Kansas didn't do so well, finishing 13-14. Little wonder . . . in addition to North Carolina, KU's non-conference schedule included Kentucky, Arizona, Arizona State, Michigan State, Indiana and St. John's.

"Ted Owens scheduled himself out of a job," said Boyle, who played his first two seasons for Owens and his final two for Larry Brown.

BOUNTIFUL SPRING HARVEST: Boyle believes this spring signing period is an anomaly that worked to his advantage. In a typical spring period, he said there could be about 25 unsigned Division I prospects. This spring, there were 50.

When he was hired in April, CU hadn't signed any prospects. His initial thought: The former staff didn't do him any favors. But the deeper he got into the spring cycle, that thinking shifted - particularly when he saw a pool of available recruits that included Carlon Brown, Ben Mills and Andre Roberson.

Boyle used three of the four available scholarships on that trio and shortly could make use of the fourth scholarship. As he's often said on this tour, "We've got our oars in the water."

Thursday's stops included visits to the Boulder Sports Medicine Mapleton Center, WhiteWave foods

in Broomfield, Pioneer Press in Greeley and the happy hour country club stop, where Boyle was greeted by his high school hoops coach (Larry Hicks) and numerous other acquaintances that Boyle said "touched my life."

Hicks followed Boyle's teams at Northern Colorado and plans on making the trip from Greeley to Boulder to watch Boyle's debut season.

"They'll do it his way," Hicks said. "You can bet on his teams playing hard and doing things the right way."

The five-day 2010 Coaches' Tour ends Friday with stops at Loveland, Longmont and a happy hour reception at the Omni Interlocken Hotel in Broomfield.

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SHOW MENU

