



Mascot Chip holds Joseph Gebhardt, 17 months, during Friday's first stop on the 2010 Coaches' Tour.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



05/21/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Brooks: Shutting Down The Bus . . . Final Day, Final Wrap

BROOMFIELD - With apologies to The Who, the final postcard after a week on one Magic Bus and another functional ride . . . random thoughts compiled as the mile markers flashed by during the 2010 Coaches' Tour:

FIRST OF MANY? Before this spring's tour, which included 31 stops, the CU athletic department hadn't traveled the state in more than a decade. Don't count on the 2010 trek being the last one.

At a happy hour stop earlier in the week in Greenwood Village, athletic director Mike Bohn told a vibrant crowd at the Cool River Café, "We've got to spend more time in Denver."

He'll make good on that promise, as well as another to expand the tour to reach as far south as Durango and as far west as Grand Junction.

Bohn and the coaches viewed the week's "meet and greet" opportunities, reconnects and new connects as invaluable - as was the chance for new women's hoops coach Linda Lappe and new men's coach Tad Boyle to introduce themselves to the communities and other members of the

coaching staff.

Bohn called the week "a win-win for us . . . It was an opportunity for the coaches and the community to connect and share a collective passion. It was great to be around people who care about our programs and have been so generous in their support. It created such a sense of optimism for all of us."

WHAT HAPPENED ON THE BUS STAYS ON THE BUS - That creed was established early on (actually at mid-week), but it wasn't all-encompassing.

I came away wondering how coaches functioned in the pre-cell phone/pre-Blackberry era. Football coach Dan Hawkins offered a pre-tour clue: "One thing you'll learn from being around coaches all day - we're always on our cell phones."

He was right. If this had been the '80s, it would have been hard to imagine any of them agreeing to make this tour without being overcome by panic from leaving the store unattended.

But now, it's business-by-Blackberry, or as volleyball coach Liz Kritza and Lappe said, "It's good to have good assistants." (Lappe rewarded hers with a dinner on the boss when she returned from Wednesday's journey.)

One of the texts Hawkins sent to his players was, "What are you doing today to get three plays better?" Translation: In most 2009 losses, Hawkins believed his team was "three plays away" from winning.

When the mood on the bus needed lightening, who you gonna call?

Put to a vote, the other coaches would elect Hawkins, who supplied a couple of movies for the tour's longer legs, sprung for coffee several times and generally kept the mood up even without the caffeine.

And special kudos to Bryon White, whose luxury rig put the magic in the Magic Bus for three grand days. White donated his time, equipment, gas (208 gallons per fill up) and hospitality to the touring effort. Oh, yeah, he also drove, deftly maneuvering the 45-footer through a couple of turns you might not try on your 10-speed.

THE CZECH BOUNCED - And we mean that in a very good way. One tour highlight occurred on unplanned stop at Vail's TV8, where ski coach Richard Rokos, with a map of his home country in the background, did a mock weather forecast in Czechoslovakian.

Rokos' team finished second this season in the NCAA Championships at Steamboat Springs, and he reminded himself several times during the week that the Buffs also finished second the two previous seasons.

At Friday morning's first stop - Davidson-Gebhardt in Loveland - Rokos looked in Bohn's direction and said, "Next time it's first or third - no more second places, right Mike?"

Preferably first, right Mike?

FINAL-DAY PROGRAM CHANGE - Joining the speakers' lineup Friday morning was athletics faculty representative Dr. David Clough, whose resume shows 42 years at CU.

In recalling his early years on the faculty, Clough referenced that time with the Buffs' long football losing streak against Nebraska and his growing dislike of the Big Red. On at least one final exam during those years, Clough remembered offering this question for one bonus point: "What is Professor Clough's least favorite color?"

Clough, who doesn't miss many athletic events, explained the APR (academic progress rate) to about 60 persons gathered in front of the Davidson-Gebhardt showroom and how "things have changed" over the last decade in college athletics.

CU, noted Clough, doesn't furnish any academic "safe harbors" for student-athletes. "And we still have to compete with (other schools that do) on the field," he said.

STAFF STILL BEING SET - In addition to retaining Tracy Tripp as director of operations, Lappe has added two assistant coaches. A third opening remains and former Texas Tech star Sheryl Swoopes remains a candidate.

Lappe had hoped a decision on her third hire could be finalized by the tour's end, but she said Friday the process will extend into next week.

One of Lappe's two hires is Johnna Pointer, whose Texas connections helped CU land post player Rachel Hargis last week. At several tour stops, Lappe has said Hargis is closer to 6-foot-5 than the 6-4 she's listed, and she will arrive at CU with a chip on her shoulder from being passed over by the nearest Big 12 Conference school - Baylor - and others in the state.

THE OLD NEIGHBORHOOD - Boyle, reared in Greeley, was well-received on the tour's final Thursday stop at the Greeley Country Club. The good vibes spilled into Friday morning at Loveland, as well as into a lunch stop at Old Chicago in Longmont, where Boyle spent the first three years of his coaching career.

"I'm a hell of a lot better coach now," Boyle said.

He also noted that one of his philosophies now is, "Players don't care how much you know, but they know how much you care."

SEASON TICKET UPDATE - Among the questions put to Bohn during the Longmont lunch stop was one concerning football season ticket sales. Bohn didn't offer numbers, but noted while sales currently were down about 15 percent, he hoped that deficit would be recouped by the start of the 2010 season. That's become a fairly common descent and ascent, he said.

THE BEST FOR LAST - The tour's last stop was a happy hour reception at the Omni Interlocken Resort in Broomfield. The event attracted the week's largest crowd (about 150) and featured a change-up by the coaches. Rather than talking about their own teams, they figured after hearing their counterparts discuss their teams for 41/2 days, they'd change sports.

Boyle spoke on Lappe's team, Lappe reviewed Hawkins' squad, volleyball coach Liz Kritza talked about Hawkins and his football squad. But Hawkins - after proposing the idea on the previous day -

went rogue. He spoke generally about football and athletics, leaving Bohn to address volleyball.

Three women's hoops players - Kelly Jo Mullaney, Brittany Spears and Chelsea Dale - attended Friday's final function, which produced a flashback for Boyle. It was his first time he'd been back to the Omni since the CU search committee interviewed him there last month.

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

SHOW MENU



Former local joins CU coaches' tour

By JOHN LA PORTE
Fort Morgan Times

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Alumni and fans of University of Colorado athletics received an added treat on a coaches' tour stop in Fort Morgan Thursday.

Former local resident Liz Harris, spirit coordinator for the Buffaloes, joined athletic director Mike Bohn and several coaches for a luncheon attended by about 80 people at the Country Steak-Out.

Harris' program has had national success — mascot "Chip" has won two national titles, and the dance team was third and the cheer team sixth in national competition.

The spirit program has about 70 students participating, she told the group.

Concerning rumors that CU will be going to the Pac-10, Bohn said that if there is any truth to them, he does not know it. He and staffers are trying to be ready for whatever happens.

Football coach Dan Hawkins said his son Cody and Tyler Hansen both looked good at quarterback in the spring, adding, "We'll let them slug it out."

He said there is no quarterback controversy within the team, and the team will be fine with either one playing or with a tandem.

Players have voted to take their names off the backs of their jerseys, which the coach called an attitude that the team name on the front of the jersey is more important than the individual name on the back.

He has told his players "we're going to be a blue-collar football team," he added.

The team is stronger, faster than ever and grade-point averages are rising, Hawkins said.

The Buffs will have to scratch and claw and dig in every game, he warned, because there are no bad teams in the Big 12.

The 1990 national championship team will be saluted at the Georgia game Oct. 2, it was noted.

All of the coaches on the tour emphasized in-state recruiting.

New men's basketball coach Tad Boyle pointed out, "This is our back yard."

Boyle, who grew up in Greeley, said he and his staff had kept all but one of the prospective returning players and have a Utah transfer and a 7-foot freshman coming in.

"We hit the recruiting trail running," he declared. "We have high-quality young men representing you."

Linda Lappe, the new women's basketball coach, played for CU.

She said WNBA standout Sheryl Swoopes is a possibility for the staff.

Volleyball coach Liz Kritza, who grew up in Colorado Springs, cited nearly 50 visits to the CU campus by students from Colorado.

Four of last year's national "sweet 16" were from the Big 12, she pointed out.

"If you're competitive in the Big 12, you're competitive nationally," Kritza declared.

Dr. Kevin Lindell and local businessmen Allan Goetz and Jeff Schauermaann were local sponsors for the coaches' tour stop.

— Contact John La Porte at news@fmtimes.com.

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