

CU men vs. CSU

Camera staff
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 12/08/2010 12:04:33 AM MST

TODAY: The Buffs (4-3) host Colorado State (4-1) at 8:07 p.m. at the Coors Events Center.

BROADCAST: Television on FSN with Drew Goodman (play-by-play), Ceal Barry (analyst) and Alanna Rizzo (sideline). Radio on KKZN (760 AM) with Mark Johnson (play by play) and Chris Lewis (analyst).

STORYLINES: The Buffs are coming off an 83-57 thrashing of future Pac-12 foe Oregon State. ... Levi Knutson scored a career-high 22 points on 8-for-10 shooting to lead four Buffs in double figures. ... The Rams (4-1) are coming off back-to-back home wins over Drake and Fresno State that followed a stunning loss to Sam Houston State at Moby Arena. ... CSU won last year's meeting 77-62 in Fort Collins.

COACHES: Tad Boyle is 4-3 in his first season at CU after going 56-66 in four seasons at Northern Colorado. Tim Miles is 36-64 in his fourth season at CSU.

PROBABLE STARTERS

Colorado -- G Levi Knutson, 6-4, Sr., 11.4 pg, 4.1 rpg; G Marcus Relphorde, 6-7, Sr., 11.0 ppg, 4.6 rpg; G Alec Burks, 6-6, So., 19.9 ppg, 4.3 rpg; G Cory Higgins, 6-5, Sr., 17.1 ppg, 4.1 rpg; F Austin Dufault, 6-9, Jr., 8.3 ppg, 4.6 rpg.

Colorado State -- F Andy Ogide, 6-9, Sr., 17.6 ppg, 8.2 rpg; Travis Franklin, 6-7, Sr., 15.6 ppg, 5.0 rpg; Andre McFarland, 6-6, Sr., 8.2 ppg, 1.2 rpg; G Dorian Green, 6-2, So., 7.2 ppg, 2.0 rpg; Wes Eikmeier, 6-3, So., 7.2 ppg, 1.6 rpg.

KEY STAT: Both programs have postseason aspirations this season, but entering Tuesday's games CU's RPI was 261 (last in the Big 12) and CSU's was 288 (last in the Mountain West). The Buffs and Rams last made the NCAA Tournament in 2003.

SERIES: CU leads 85-35, including a 55-8 edge in Boulder.

UP NEXT: The Buffs host The Citadel on Dec. 17 at the Coors Events Center (7:30 p.m., FSN).

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"He comes every day with the same attitude," Boyle said. "And it doesn't matter if he has missed seven shots in a row, he's going to take the eighth one like he's going to make it. He has a confidence about him."

Marcus Relphorde is also starting to round into form for the more balanced Buffs, averaging 13.8 points and shooting 52.8 percent over the last four games. CU averages 80.9 points per game, but CSU is averaging 81.0 ppg.

The last NCAA Tournament appearance for the Buffs and Rams was in 2003. Although both programs have the talent to end those streaks this March, entering Tuesday night's action CU's RPI was 261 (last in the Big 12) and CSU's RPI was 288 (last in the Mountain West).

"Sometimes it just takes a while to find yourself. I think as a coach I was maybe expecting a little too much, too early," Boyle said. "I'm not sure how realistic that was. And we're not there yet, we're still a work in progress, but I like the track we're on."

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CU Buffs prepare for rival Rams

Colorado faces off against CSU at home

By Mackenzie Carroll on December 8, 2010

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The Buffs aim to continue their four-game home winning streak against in-state rivals Colorado State.

Colorado will host the Rams at the Coors Events Center on Wednesday night in their eighth game of the season. Following a huge win Saturday against Oregon State, the Buffs look to avenge last year's defeat. Falling to the Rams 77-62 last season at Moby Arena, the team is prepared to fight for a win this time around.

"They're a tough, well-coached, experienced team," CU Head Coach Tad Boyle said of the Rams. "It should be a great game, there should be a lot of energy in the building, and it's not going to be easy for us."

Colorado State comes into Wednesday night's game with a 4-1 record, averaging 81 points per game, just ahead of CU in the NCAA standings.

Senior forward Andy Ogide leads CSU in scoring, and is coming off his second straight double-double in a victory against Fresno State Saturday. Senior forward Travis Franklin is second in scoring for the Rams, averaging 15.6 points per game.

"We have to be concerned with their two post players, Travis Franklin and Andy Ogide," Boyle said. "For us, it's going to take a great team effort and we are going to need all hands on deck to beat this CSU team."

Boyle said anyone could be a big player Wednesday night. Several standout players have been surfacing in recent games. Freshman guard Andre Roberson is leading the Buffs in rebounds, averaging 6.9 rebounds per game, leaving him in second in the nation for true freshmen. Senior guard Levi Knutson led the Buffs against Oregon State, scoring a career-high 22 points and six 3-pointers.

Knutson has turned the heat up in his final season as a Buff, leading the team in scoring for two consecutive games and taking the limelight off of regular leading scorers Cory Higgins and Alec Burks.

Knutson said the team chemistry is a big factor in CU's successes this season. Of his recent performance, Knutson said his hard work has finally paid off.

"I had a good off season training in the weight room, and getting in the gym," Knutson said. "I think that was the biggest thing."

As for CSU, Knutson said he is confident in the Buff's abilities.

"As a team if we can put together two good halves defending and rebounding I think we'll come out on top," Knutson said.

Senior guard Cory Higgins and sophomore guard Alec Burks haven't slowed down this season either. Despite Knutson's recent back-to-back scoring lead, Higgins and Burks have gone back and forth, leading CU in scoring in 33 of the past 38 games.

Burks said Wednesday's game will be a tough match-up, with the entire team working hard.

"I expect a hard game," Burks said. "It's going to be tough, physical, and a hard game to win."

Tip-off is scheduled for 8:07 p.m. at the Coors Events Center in Boulder. The game will be televised on FSN Rocky Mountain.

Contact CU Independent Staff Writer Mackenzie Carroll at Carrolma@colorado.edu.

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cu basketball

Knutson stepping up — to the arc — to offer CU another scoring option.

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 12/08/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

Updated: 12/08/2010 06:37:36 AM MST

BOULDER — In Alec Burks (19.9 points) and Cory Higgins (17.1), Colorado claims two of the top-five point producers in Big 12 men's basketball, so guess which Buffaloes player topped the team in scoring for the past two games?

You'll probably have to guess again.

Try again.

Once more?

Even some knowledgeable area college hoops fans may have forgotten about Levi Knutson. The senior guard, who never averaged as much as five points per game in previous seasons, has found his shooting stroke.

He scored 18 points Nov. 30 against Texas-Pan American and came back Saturday to produce a career-best 22 points against Oregon State. After years of not having a third or fourth scoring option, the Buffs (4-3) may have finally found it.

Knutson, a former Arapahoe star, is playing like he did in high school when he led the state in scoring (28.6) as a senior. His 42.9 percent success rate on 3-pointers ranks third in the conference, and his scoring average of 11.4 points is third on the team behind you know who.

"It's impossible for Alec and me to do it by ourselves," Higgins said Tuesday after practice.

Knutson buried 6-of-8 3-pointers against Oregon State, and another stellar effort from the 6-foot-4 Knutson to complement the star power may be needed tonight against Colorado State at the Coors Events Center (8 p.m., FSN). It can be argued that CSU (4-1) has a deeper bench than the Buffs. The Rams are certainly more potent in the paint.

Colorado State rolled to a 77-62 victory in last year's meeting at Fort Collins when Burks and Higgins combined for 34 points but nobody else on the Buffs roster managed more than eight.

Knutson played just 11 minutes against CSU last year, scoring only on two free throws. He figures to be a focus of the game plan this time, likely earning his second consecutive start.

"We're always looking for balance in our offense," first-year CU coach Tad Boyle said.

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"Our playmakers are looking for Levi now, and they understand that he can help make them better, take some pressure off them. He's a guy that you have to guard from beyond the arc."

With Knutson being a senior, fans must wonder what took him so long. For one, former CU coach Jeff Bzdelik never settled on a defined role for him. And, frankly, Knutson was often banged up. He underwent surgery to repair torn cartilage in his left hip after his freshman season and then had almost identical surgery on his right hip after his sophomore year.

Knutson won't use the surgeries as an excuse, but it came as no surprise that he was slow to round into form. A dead-eye sharpshooter in high school, he combined for just 30.6 percent from 3-point range during his first three collegiate seasons.

"It was hard when I wasn't making shots," Knutson said. "It was the different speed of the game, a lot of things. But what I tried to do was go in there and defend, no matter what was happening on offense. That kept me motivated."

The school's women's teams will open today's doubleheader, with Colorado (6-2) and Colorado State (5-2) tipping off at 5:30 p.m. (FSN).

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

DECEMBER 8, 2010, 2:16 PM

CU vs. CSU twinbill could spark interest, Boyle says

By **TOM KENSLER** |  No Comments

BOULDER — At least first-year Colorado men's basketball coach Tad Boyle hopes so.

College basketball along the Front Range tends to get lost until football season ends. But Boyle, a Greeley native, would like to see these intrastate rivalry battles change that and give hoops fans something to circle on their calendar each year in anticipation.

Tonight's Colorado vs. CSU doubleheader in the Coors Events Center begins with a 5:30 p.m. women's game. The men's teams tip off at 8 p.m. Both games are to be televised on FSN.

"I think it's really important," Boyle said. "(The state of) Colorado basketball can be special. But the only way it can be special is if you get games like this that generate interest for our fans and for people around the state.

"I hope it can do that. I hope we have a great crowd, a spirited crowd, and hopefully it will be a great night of basketball for the state of Colorado."

Much of Colorado's nonconference schedule was set before Boyle was hired in April. But in the future "I hope to schedule more games against area teams," he said. "That's the way to build interest."

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Bufs have new coach, offensive philosophy

BY KELLY LYELL • KellyLyell@coloradoan.com •
 December 8, 2010

The University of Colorado has two players - guards Alec Burks and Cory Higgins - on the 50-man preseason watch list for the Wooden Award as the top player in college basketball and a new coach, Tad Boyle, who's given them the freedom to showcase their skills.

The Buffaloes (4-3), featuring the same players who ran a version of the methodical Princeton offense last year under former Jeff Bzdelik, now are running a free-flowing motion offense and scoring at a clip of 80.9 points a game while making 47.6 percent of their shots from the floor. Burks, a sophomore, averages 19.9 points a game, and Higgins, a senior, averages 17.1 for a CU team that has two other players - senior guard Levi Knutson and senior forward Marcus Relphorde - averaging more than 11 points a game.

"We have some method to our madness, but I do think that you have to allow players to be basketball players and make basketball plays," said Boyle, a Greeley native who came to CU last spring after four seasons at Northern Colorado. "We want to teach our guys what we're looking for on the floor and then let them go do it."

It's an offensive philosophy much like the one fourth-year coach Tim Miles brought to CSU and one the Rams (4-1) have used to score an average of 81.0 points a game this season while hitting 52.9 percent of their shots, third nationally through Monday's games.

"It's not a system at all," said guard Adam Nigon, a Broomfield native and one of four seniors on Colorado State University's team. "He gives us a lot of free rein in the offense to do whatever we feel, to play off each other. We use a few sets, but other than that, it's mostly just playing off every guy on the floor."

Senior Andy Ogide, a 6-foot-9 forward, is averaging 17.6 points a game and 6-7 senior forward Travis Franklin is averaging 15.6. Six other CSU players are scoring 5.5 or more points a game and have scored in double figures at least once this season.

"They get the ball to Franklin, they get the ball to Ogide on the block; they get the ball to those guys in positions where they can make plays, and they let them make plays,"

Boyle said. "And we try to do the same things with Cory Higgins and Burks and Marcus Relphorde, to get them the ball at positions on the floor where they can make plays.

"And then when you surround those guys with good shooters, like Colorado State has, and I think we've got a couple of them in Levi Knutson and Austin Dufault, you become a pretty hard team to guard."

The similarities in coaching philosophies, though, run much deeper than just the offense. Both also are trying to get their teams to commit to tough, man-to-man defense and aggressive rebounding so that they have a chance to win even on nights when the shots aren't falling.

And so far this season, it's working out well for both squads. Although the Bufs are 0-3 on the road, they're unbeaten at home and coming off an 83-57 demolition of Oregon State. CSU picked up a 77-66 road win Nov. 18 at Denver and has beaten Drake and Fresno State by double-digit margins in its past two outings.

"I think it's two teams that are going to play hard and play well, so it should be a special event," Miles said.

Throw in the heated rivalry that always exists whenever teams from CU and CSU tangle, in any sport, and it should be a pretty entertaining matchup between programs that appear to be on their way up after long cold spells.

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"It's an in-state rivalry, and that gets the juices flowing," said CSU's Andre McFarland, a senior from Las Vegas. "Everybody should be really hyped up, and it's going to be a good one I expect."

CSU men's basketball

> **Next up:** CSU at CU, 8 tonight, Coors Events Center, Boulder

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Posted on Wed, Dec. 08, 2010

Colorado State (4-1) at Colorado (4-3)

By Sports Network
The Sports Network

GAME NOTES: In-state rivals renew their relationship in Boulder tonight, as the Colorado Buffaloes entertain the Colorado State Rams in non-conference action at the Coors Events Center.

Despite being winless on the road in three tries this season the Buffaloes, under new head coach Tad Boyle, have rattled off four straight victories in their own building and have now built a seven-game home win streak as a result. Most recently the team took on and defeated Oregon State on Saturday, 83-57, as part of the Big 12/Pac-10 Hardwood Series.

Meanwhile, the Rams have lost just once in five chances so far in 2010-11, dropping a 92-81 decision against high-scoring Sam Houston State back on November 27. Since then the team has posted back-to-back victories, the most recent of those coming over the weekend against Fresno State, 87-74, at home in Fort Collins and Moby Arena.

Separated by a mere 53 miles, the series between these two programs began more than a century ago in 1905 and shows the Buffaloes ahead by a count of 85-35 currently. The Rams won the most recent outing by a score of 77-62 last year at Moby Arena and have taken three of the last five encounters overall.

Except for Wes Eikmeier who tallied just six points, hitting all six of his free-throw attempts while missing all for shots from the floor, every starter for the Rams scored in double figures in the win over Fresno State Saturday, beginning with Andy Ogide who recorded a double-double with 16 points and 11 rebounds. Travis Franklin and Andre McFarland both chipped in 13 points and Dorian Green nailed a pair of three-pointers to arrive at 10 points for the squad as they shot not only 9-of-17 beyond the arc, but a sizzling 59.2 percent from the floor overall. Ogide has been the main player for the Rams thus far with his 17.6 ppg and 8.2 rpg leading the squad in both categories. He is shooting a ridiculous 70.4 percent from the floor, which helps to cover up the fact that he has made just 45.8 percent at the free-throw line and has just two assists against 12 turnovers. Franklin is good for another 15.6 ppg and he too is shooting the lights out from the field at a 61.9 percent clip, pushing the entire squad to an impressive 52.9 percent from the field in the early going.

Against future conference foe Oregon State, the Buffs knocked down 58.6 percent of their field goal chances, while holding the Beavers to a mere 38.9 percent and 3-of-14 behind the three-point line in the lopsided decision. Levi Knutson led four starters in double figures as he delivered a game-high 22 points on 6-of-8 shooting behind the three-point line, followed by Alec Burks with 15 points and Austin Dufault and Marcus Relphorpe with 12 apiece, the latter adding eight assists and six rebounds to his stat line as well. Burks is one of four players currently scoring in double figures for the program with his lofty 19.9 ppg, even though he has connected on just 27.8 percent of his three-point tries. Where Burks has really flourished is at the free-throw line where he is 44-of-55, which means he has already converted more shots than any of his teammates has even attempted. Higgins goes for another 17.1 ppg, but with a thigh bruise one has to wonder how much he can contribute while he waits to get back to 100 percent.

Both of these teams are scoring in excess of 80 ppg in the early going, so don't expect much defense from either side. With Higgins having his issues that might just open the door for the Rams tonight.

Fact Stats

Game Date and Time

Predicted Outcome

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