

# CU Buffs eye Missouri sweep

## Anderson says Tigers weren't ready in first matchup this season

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

Posted: 02/04/2011 06:39:34 PM MST

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- Allen Fieldhouse.

Tad Boyle can only hope that's where the minds of the Missouri players will be tonight.

After all, the Tigers -- now 0-4 on the road in the Big 12 -- do play Border War rival and No. 2-ranked Kansas on national television Monday night in Lawrence with something to prove outside the Show-Me State.

More likely, Mike Anderson will have No. 14 Missouri focused on Colorado tonight at Mizzou Arena. The Tigers head coach wasn't very happy after the Buffs' 89-76 victory over his team on Jan. 8 at the Coors Events Center.

"You can call it not being prepared, and I'll take the blame," Anderson said of the loss in Boulder. "Hopefully we learned a valuable lesson. You have to bring it in order to get it."

The Tigers (17-5, 3-4) always bring a relentless effort on their home court. Missouri is 13-0 at home this season and has won 48 of the last 50 games at Mizzou Arena.

"I just know Missouri is a heck of a team at home," said Boyle, who is 1-0 against Missouri as a head coach. Jeff Bzdelik was 0-for-6 vs. Anderson the previous three seasons. "They're playing better and looking for a little bit of a payback for us."

Alec Burks scored 36 points in the first meeting. The Grandview, Mo., export has averaged 21.1 points and 8.1 rebounds in Big 12 games this season.

Last season's homecoming didn't go so well as Burks finished with 13 points during Missouri's 92-63 victory over the Buffs. Austin Dufault, Nate Tomlinson and Levi Knutson didn't score in the game.

The Buffs have abandoned the Princeton-style offense, however, and are playing a more up tempo brand of basketball under Boyle. Missouri leads the Big 12 in scoring (83.1 ppg) and CU is third (81.6 ppg).

"Obviously, they're a great pressure team and they want the game up and down; but so do we," Knutson said. "So I think we match up pretty well with them. We have to lock in on the defensive end and get back in transition."

CU snapped a four-game losing streak with a 95-69 victory over Iowa State on Tuesday. Five different players scored in double figures and freshman Andre Roberson had nine points and 13 rebounds.

The Buffs (15-8, 4-4) matched last season's win total and evened their Big 12 record.

"I just feel OK with it," Cory Higgins said of CU's .500 conference record at the midway point. "I feel that we were supposed to be a lot better. I'll take it for now. We're playing better, and I think we're headed in the right direction. We're not satisfied, but it's a good starting point."

Boyle knows his team should probably be at least 5-3 or perhaps even 6-2 in the Big 12. The Buffs didn't show up ready to play at Oklahoma, lost a hard fought home game to Kansas and let a 17-point lead slip away at Baylor.

"I think the one thing that our guys have learned is that it doesn't matter who you play in this league, you better be mentally ready and emotionally ready to play," Boyle said. "I thought the Oklahoma game was a little bit of a wake-up call for that."

"The next month is big for us. We have an opportunity to do something. We have to learn to beat some teams that on paper the so-called experts say we aren't supposed to beat. We are capable of doing that."

A sweep of Missouri would fit that description. The Buffs are 13-54 all-time in Columbia.

"Every game is a must win. I don't look at one as more important than another," Boyle said. "We are not going to get too high after wins and we are not going to get too low after losses. We are going to take a business-like approach."

#### **Notable**

Knutson has been named to the District 7 College Sports Information Directors of America (CoSIDA) Academic All-American first team. The senior is a business administration major with an emphasis in finance and carries a 3.92 grade point average. ... The Big 12 announced that a limited number of tickets for the conference tournament March 9-12 in Kansas City will be available through an online drawing. Interested fans can register at [sprintcenter.com](http://sprintcenter.com).

**TODAY:** The Colorado Buffaloes (15-8, 4-4) open up the second half of the Big 12 season tonight against the No. 14 Missouri Tigers (17-5, 3-4) at 5:30 p.m. at Mizzou Arena.

**BROADCAST:** No television, but can be viewed on [ESPN3.com](http://ESPN3.com). Radio on KKZN (AM 760) with Mark Johnson (play-by-play) and Chris Lewis (analyst).

**STORY LINES:** The Buffs ended a four-game losing streak with a 95-69 victory over Iowa State on Tuesday at the Coors Events Center. ... Alec Burks led five CU players in double figures scoring with 19 points and 10 rebounds. ... The Buffs matched last season's win total with at least nine more games promised to them. ... CU out-rebounded Iowa State 43-30. Andre Roberson had 13 boards. ... The Tigers are coming off a 76-70 loss at Oklahoma State on Wednesday. ... Missouri is 0-4 on the road in conference play but 3-0 at Mizzou Arena. ... CU opened Big 12 play with an 89-76 victory over Missouri on Jan. 8 at the Coors Events Center.

**COACHES:** Tad Boyle is 15-8 in his first season at CU. Mike Anderson is 105-51 in his fifth season at Missouri.

**PROBABLE STARTERS:** **Colorado** -- G Nate Tomlinson, 6-2, Jr., 3.3 ppg, 1.8 rpg; G Marcus Relphorde, 6-7, Sr., 11.5 ppg, 4.0 rpg; G Alec Burks, 6-6, So., 19.8 ppg, 5.9 rpg; G Cory Higgins, 6-5, Sr., 16.2 ppg, 3.6 rpg; F Austin Dufault, 6-9, Jr., 8.0 ppg, 4.5 rpg. **Missouri** -- F Ricardo Ratcliffe, 6-8, Jr., 11.6 ppg, 6.7 rpg; F Justin Stafford, 6-9, Sr., 7.1 ppg, 4.5 rpg; G Michael Dixon, 6-1, So., 10.3 ppg, 2.7 rpg; G Marcus Denmon, 6-3, Jr., 16.7 ppg, 3.9 rpg; G Kim English, 6-6, Jr., 10.3 ppg, 3.2 rpg.

**KEY STAT:** The Tigers have won 48 of their past 50 games at Mizzou Arena (13-0 this season).

**SERIES:** Missouri leads 99-55, including a 54-13 advantage in Columbia.

**UP NEXT:** The Buffs will host No. 16 Texas A&M on Wednesday at the Coors Events Center (7 p.m., ESPNU).

Close Window

Send To Printer

[Print page](#)[Close window](#)

Longmont, Colorado  
 Tuesday, February 08,  
 2011

Publish Date: 2/5/2011

## Buffs aim to tame Tigers for 2nd time

By Brian Howell  
 © 2011 Longmont Times-Call

Colorado's men's basketball team made a statement by upsetting Missouri in the Big 12 opener Jan. 8 in Boulder.

The Buffs have a chance to make another statement today when they visit the 14th-ranked Tigers in Columbia, Mo.

"The one thing we know about Missouri is they're not going to be overlooking us and there will be a payback factor," CU head coach Tad Boyle said. "We need to win that game and want to win that game just as much as Missouri does."

CU's win against Missouri last month sparked a 3-0 start in Big 12 play. Then the Buffs lost four in a row before beating Iowa State 95-69 on Tuesday.

At 4-4 in the Big 12 (15-8 overall), CU is hoping to continue the momentum it gained from Tuesday's win.

"I think we can be a lot better, but I'll take it for now," CU's Cory Higgins said of the Buffs' 4-4 mark. "We're playing better, and I think we're headed in the right direction. We're not satisfied, but it's a good starting point."

That win against Iowa State allowed the Buffs to get back to the up-tempo pace they want to play. It was good preparation for the Tigers, who also like to run.

"We love it when teams will get out and run, because that is what we do best," Boyle said.

The Buffs also are at their best when they're playing good defense and taking care of the ball. CU had just 10 turnovers against Missouri's pressure defense when the teams met last month.

"We are going to really have to take care of the ball against Missouri, because their press is a little bit different at their place than it is on the road," Boyle said. "We handled it well here, but we are going to have to handle it well (today) as well."

CU knows it won't be easy to beat the Tigers a second time, but they are confident going in.

"Obviously, they're a great pressure team and they want the game up and down, but so do we," CU's Levi Knutson said. "So I think we match up pretty well with them."

On paper, Missouri should win today, but paper said the Tigers should have won last month, too.

### Tonight's game

CU men (15-8, 4-4 Big 12)  
 at No. 14 Missouri (17-5, 3-4)

**When/Where:** 5:30 p.m., at Mizzou Arena in Columbia, Mo.

**TV/Radio:** ESPN360, Ch. 452 on Dish Network/760-AM

**The series:** Missouri leads 95-55, including 54-13 in Columbia. CU is 2-12 at Missouri since the Big 12 began in 1996-97. CU beat the Tigers 89-76 on Jan. 8 in Boulder.

**Leading scorers:** CU — Alec Burks (19.8 points per game); Missouri — Marcus Denmon (16.7)

**Notes:** CU has lost four its last five, while Missouri has lost two in a row. ... Missouri hasn't lost three in a row since the 2007-08 season. ... CU's Cory Higgins is slated to make his 117th career start tonight. He and Richard Roby are tied with a school-record 116 starts. ... Marcus Relphorde has posted 17 points per game in his last three games. He leads the Buffs in assists (21) and steals (14) during Big 12 play. ... Missouri has won 13 straight and 48 of its past 50 at Mizzou Arena.

— Brian Howell

“This next month is big for us,” Boyle said. “We’ve got an opportunity to do something, and we’re going to have to beat some teams that maybe on paper or from whatever the so-called experts say we’re not supposed to beat. We’re capable of doing that.”

BOARDING: True freshman Andre Roberson leads the Buffs in rebounding, with 7.5 per game.

He’s getting some tough competition of late, though.

In eight Big 12 games, Alec Burks is posting a team-high 8.1 rebounds. Roberson is averaging 7.3 in the Big 12.

“You know what? Nobody is talking about Alec’s rebounding,” Boyle said after Burks pulled down 10 rebounds against Iowa State. “Alec has really stepped up his rebounding since conference play has started.”

Burks posted 4.7 rebounds per game in non-conference play. He has pulled down at least eight in eight of the past 10 games. He hasn’t had fewer than six in any of those games.

“I think he’s just made a conscious effort,” Boyle said. “You can see him going to the boards, the offensive boards, and he is just going after rebounds. I don’t know if he has learned from Andre. Those guys are pretty competitive, and they talk a lot of trash in pre-game meals and before and after practice. So I don’t know if there was a challenge that was laid down, but (Burks) is taking it to another level.”

Brian Howell can be reached at [bhowell@times-call.com](mailto:bhowell@times-call.com).

## [MU Extra](#)

- [Login](#) or [Register](#)
- [News](#)
- [Stats](#)
- [Forum](#)
- [Chats](#)
- [Photo](#)
- [Video](#)
- [RSS](#)

## Tigers hope to protect their turf



Photo by [Parker Eshelman](#) | [Buy this photo](#)

Missouri players take the court before beating Iowa State 87-54 on Jan. 22 at Mizzou Arena. The 14th-ranked Tigers are 3-0 at home in Big 12 Conference games but have lost four straight on the road. Missouri hosts Colorado Saturday night.

By [Steve Walentik](#)

[Saturday, February 5, 2011](#)

There's no question members of the Missouri basketball team were happy to return home Thursday after a 68-hour trip to Stillwater, Okla., and back that included stops in Kansas City and St. Louis that weren't part of the original itinerary.

**COLORADO (15-8, 4-4)**

**Hgt.**

**Pts.**

**Reb.**

G	1	Nate Tomlinson	6-3	3.3	1.8
G	10	Alec Burks	6-6	19.8	5.9
G	11	Cory Higgins	6-5	16.2	3.6
F	5	Marcus Relphorde	6-7	11.5	4.0
F	33	Austin Dufault	6-9	8.0	4.5

**(14) MISSOURI (17-5, 3-4)**

			<b>Hgt.</b>	<b>Pts.</b>	<b>Reb.</b>
G	1	Phil Pressey	5-10	5.9	2.2
G	12	Marcus Denmon	6-3	16.7	3.9
G	24	Kim English	6-6	10.3	3.2
F	10	Ricardo Ratliffe	6-8	11.6	6.7
F	23	Justin Safford	6-9	7.1	4.5

**Time:** 6:30 p.m.**Place:** Mizzou Arena**TV/Radio:** KOMU/1580 AM, 96.7 FM**Fast facts**

Missouri leads the all-time series with Colorado 98-53 and is 56-11 against the Buffaloes in Columbia. CU's only victory at Mizzou Arena was a 74-71 win on Jan. 14, 2006, Quin Snyder's final season on the MU bench.

The Tigers are looking to snap their first two-game losing streak of the season. They have not dropped three in a row since losing at Iowa State, at home against Kansas and at Texas Tech in January 2008.

Colorado sophomore Alec Burks is averaging a Big 12-best 21.1 points in conference play and also ranks third in rebounding (8.1 rpg). Kansas junior Marcus Morris is the only other league player ranked among the top five in both categories.

The unpleasantness of the experience was only amplified by a 76-70 loss to Oklahoma State on Wednesday night that dropped the 14th-ranked Tigers to 0-4 on the road in Big 12 play.

The inability of Mike Anderson's team to win away from home has only heightened the significance of emerging victorious each time it takes the floor at Mizzou Arena, starting with tonight's 6:30 tipoff against Colorado.

"We've got to protect the home turf. That's one thing Coach always says, and you steal some on the road," junior forward Laurence Bowers said. "Well, we haven't stolen any on the road right now, but we have protected the home turf so far."

Missouri (17-5, 3-4 Big 12) has won 48 of its last 50 games on Norm Stewart Court, including all 13 this season. It's won those contests by an average victory margin of 24.4 points.

The Tigers, by comparison, are 4-5 away from home with a 1-4 mark in true road contests this season. The only victory was an 83-80 win at Oregon on Dec. 2.

It's hard to put a finger on why things have been so much more difficult for Missouri outside Columbia.

"But we can put it on what," junior guard Kim English said. "It's obviously defense. ... We've just got to buckle down and become more of a unit on defense. Guys have to buy in that that is Missouri basketball — defensive basketball."

In Big 12 play, the Tigers have held opponents to 60.6 points on 36.3 percent shooting, and their pressure defense has generated an average of 19.3 turnovers in three home games. Those numbers are 81.8 points on 48.1 percent shooting and only 11.3 turnovers in the four road games.

They could be in for a long night if they can't pick up their defensive intensity and pressure when they travel to No. 2 Kansas on Monday night.

But first Missouri has to worry about slowing down Colorado (15-8, 4-4) at Mizzou Arena. The Buffaloes are capable of doing plenty of damage offensively, as they showed when they dropped 89 points in a Big 12-opening victory over the Tigers on Jan. 8.

Sophomore guard Alec Burks, a Grandview product, had 36 of those, doing seemingly whatever he pleased while shooting 12 for 19 from the field, including 3 for 3 from beyond the 3-point arc.

Senior guards Cory Higgins and Levi Knutson are also dangerous. Higgins, who's expected to start his school-record 117th game tonight, is averaging 15.5 points during the league season, and Knutson is contributing 11.9 off the bench while shooting 50 percent from 3-point range.

The latter has become something of an X-factor for Colorado. He scored 13 points against Missouri, went for 20 in an upset victory at then-No. 21 Kansas State on Jan. 12 and had 15 against Iowa State this week as the Buffaloes snapped a four-game losing streak.

First-year Coach Tad Boyle's team is still a little thin inside, which could give the Tigers an advantage, particularly if Bowers is back to his old self.

MU's third-leading scorer and second-leading rebounder only played four minutes in last Saturday's loss at Texas before getting knocked out with a concussion after catching an inadvertent elbow from Tristan Thompson. He returned but was limited against the Cowboys and scored seven points and collected five rebounds in 15 minutes.

"Some people said I probably shouldn't have played in the game — my family or whatever — but I knew my team needed me, so I kind of disobeyed them and played," Bowers said. "I felt good about it after I did it, even though we lost. I felt like that was a great thing to do as far as being a teammate, but I didn't feel well as far as being in the game."

He said his head is clearer now, which is good news as Missouri tries to avoid its first three-game losing streak since January 2008 before heading back out on the road.

Reach Steve Walentik at 573-815-1788 or e-mail [swalentik@columbiatribune.com](mailto:swalentik@columbiatribune.com).

This article was published on page B1 of the Saturday, February 5, 2011 edition of The Columbia Daily Tribune with the headline "Home sweet home Tigers hope to protect their turf.." [Click here to Subscribe.](#)

Recommend

Be the first of your friends to recommend this.