

CU men's offense faces tough task

Bufs look to remain undefeated in Big 12 vs. tough Nebraska 'D'

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 01/18/2011 12:06:52 AM MST

LINCOLN, Neb. -- A lot of basketball historians forget that the legendary Henry Iba was the head coach at Colorado for one season.

The Buffs opened that 1933-34 campaign with three consecutive Rocky Mountain Conference victories.

CU finished 9-8 overall and 7-7 in conference.

"It can go away very quickly," Tad Boyle, the first CU head coach to win his first three conference games since Iba, reminded his team on Monday. "We all know that."

The Buffs (14-4, 3-0) are off to their best start in Big 12 play since the 1996-97 season when CU, led by Chauncey Billups, beat Indiana in the NCAA Tournament.

CU defeated ranked opponents (Missouri and Kansas State) in back-to-back games for the first time in program history and overcame a 12-point deficit to beat Oklahoma State on Saturday. The Buffs are in the "receiving votes" portion of this week's Associated Press poll (30th).

Boyle credits the senior leadership and experience he inherited on the roster as a big reason for the fast start to his career in Boulder. The first-year CU coach's ability to change the way the Buffs rebound and defend has allowed Cory Higgins, Alec Burks and the other veterans to take another major step forward.

CU will need all of those factors to help them beat Nebraska tonight at the Devaney Center (5 p.m., ESPN2).

The Cornhuskers (13-4, 1-2) are 10-0 at home and coming off a 63-60 loss at Allen Fieldhouse in which they blew a 10-point lead to No. 2 Kansas.

"That was on our home floor. If we're playing there, they win the game," KU head coach Bill Self admitted on Monday's Big 12 teleconference. "I thought Doc (Sadler) did an unbelievable job against us. They controlled the tempo from jump street."

Sadler's Huskers are No. 1 nationally in field-goal percentage defense (34.5 percent) and third in scoring defense (55.0 ppg).

Boyle's Buffs (14-4, 3-0) are sixth nationally in field-goal percentage (49.8 percent) and seventh in scoring offense (84.4 ppg).

"You've got a team playing with tremendous confidence and on top of that they're very talented," Sadler said. "And Tad has done an unbelievable job of coaching them. ..."

"They've put themselves in position where they're going to be very difficult to beat at home and they've already won one road game. They're in great shape."

How quickly things have changed. A year ago the Buffs, despite establishing a home-court advantage under Jeff Bzdelik, were one of the worst road teams in the country.

CU lost 36 consecutive conference road games until beating Nebraska here last March. That success continued last week when the Buffs upset Kansas State in Manhattan.

"They're taking a little of what they did last year and Tad is putting his stamp on it," Oklahoma State head coach Travis Ford said of the Buffs. "They're very good. The (Coors Events Center) was sold out the other day and that helps your team build on success. I was impressed with their basketball team. They're going to win a lot of games."

The Huskers are capable of winning their share of Big 12 games this season, especially at home, before heading to the Big Ten.

Nebraska has held five opponents, including Kansas, to a season-low scoring game. Sadler's deeper and taller team has held 12 of its past 13 opponents to 63 points or less, including four below 50 points.

The Huskers also rank second in conference play in rebounds (40.0) and beat the Jayhawks 43-32 on the boards. Believe it or not, the Buffs are the No. 1 team on the glass in conference games (41.3 rpg) after beating all three opponents in rebounding by double digits.

"I wouldn't have expected this would be where we'd be at, to be honest with you," Boyle said when asked about his preseason expectations. "When you have some talented offensive guys who will commit to defense and rebounding, you have a chance to win. ...

"But we have to keep getting better."

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu men's basketball

Boyle has winning Buffs on the run, run, run

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 01/18/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

BOULDER — Colorado's most exciting season for men's basketball in more than a decade features an up-tempo, make-the-opponent-suck-for-air style that could make some track coaches envious.

First-year coach Tad Boyle brought that energized pace from Northern Colorado, where he turned the Bears into a winner by running foes into submission. The style is working at CU's Coors Events Center, where the Buffaloes are 11-0 at home.

Boyle Ball, above all, is fun. Fans jump to their feet as CU players take off on a fast break, which often ends in a soaring dunk or a kick-out 3-pointer. The frenetic style has CU averaging 83.9 points a game, eighth-best nationally, and almost 10 more than a year ago under Jeff Bzdelik. Boyle just wishes he had a better story to explain where he derived his coaching style.

• Larry Brown? Yes, Boyle played in the backcourt at Kansas under the master. But Brown, frankly, is known more as a halfcourt guy.

• Mark Turgeon? Boyle served as an assistant to Turgeon for eight years, primarily at Wichita State. But has anybody see Turgeon's Texas A&M teams play? The Aggies rarely push the pace.

• How about watching footage of UNLV under Jerry Tarkanian, or Loyola Marymount under Paul Westhead? No and no.

• Some genie appear with a stopwatch?

"It's just a philosophical thing for me, not pretending to think it's the way everybody should play or anything," Boyle said Monday before the Buffaloes (14-4, 3-0 Big 12) traveled for today's final trip to Nebraska (13-4, 1-2). "I just believe there are a lot of reasons to be up-tempo."

First and foremost: recruiting. Boyle has been in the living rooms of enough recruits to know they prefer an up-and-down style. At least the best players do.

"And that's the kind of players we're looking for, talented, athletic guys that want to show off their skills," Boyle said. "In college basketball, recruiting is paramount. It's

about attracting good players. You want a style that they're going to want to play.

Advertisement

Get a **FREE** ADT-Monitored Home Security System.*

(With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services.
See important terms and conditions below.)

*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. **\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.

Call Now!
1-877-835-8373



Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

CU Basketball

[View slide show of CU-Nebraska men Jan. 18.](#)

[View slide show of Oklahoma State-CU men Jan. 15.](#)

[View slide show of CU-Kansas State men Jan. 12.](#)

[Visit the CU Stats Page for men's boxscores, Big 12 standings, team leaders and more.](#)

[Visit the CU Stats Page for women's scores, Big 12 standings.](#)

[Visit the All Things Buffs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at CU athletics.](#)

State. Boyle wondered if the Buffs would have rallied from a 12-point second-half deficit if the place wasn't packed.

"It felt like I was back in high school. Our crowd was crazy, man," said CU sophomore star Alec Burks, who led Grandview (Mo.) High School to the Missouri big-school championship game.

Last but certainly not least, Boyle said, is the altitude factor. Trying to keep up in rarefied air can get to visitors' lungs — and into their heads. With a straight face, Roy Williams tried to persuade his Kansas teams that altitude doesn't matter indoors.

"I think the altitude really affected our guys," Oregon State coach Craig Robinson said after the Buffaloes almost ran his Pac-10 team out of the gym

for an 83-57 victory in December.

"If I'm coaching in high school, heck, maybe I don't use this style. If I'm coaching in the NBA, maybe not. But in college, it's about recruiting."

Get the right players and fast breaks lead to uncontested shots, and a lot of fun. Boyle is all about bettering the odds.

"My philosophy is, I want us to get as many easy baskets as we can," Boyle said. "You do that by pushing it in transition to try to get baskets before the (opponent's) defense sets up."

Boyle is well aware the home crowd can be a bigger factor in college basketball than in any other sport. Colorado's fans turned out in force Saturday to watch CU's victory over Oklahoma

Advertisement



SAVE up to **64%**
Plus, get
3 FREE Gifts



Special Code: 45069ZWN

To Order: www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71 or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST



Tad Boyle's style appeals to increasingly enthusiastic CU fans, but he hopes it also appeals to athletic players who will want to join the Buffs. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

CU assistant coach Mike Rohn previously worked for Turgeon at Texas A&M.

"The first thing we'd do when we walked into the visitor's locker room here in Boulder was cover up the sign that gives the elevation," he said.

While the Buffs are eighth in scoring among 345 NCAA Division I teams, their plus-12.7 scoring margin is also very good, 36th nationally. Bzdelik's teams ran more than outsiders would believe, usually trying to push the ball in transition after takeaway turnovers and opponents' missed shots. As for Boyle's bunch, they will run even off made baskets.

Doug Moe coached his Nuggets teams to run and take advantage of the elevation. Boyle wants CU

to do the same. College basketball programs along the Front Range face several disadvantages (sparse population for recruiting, so-so tradition, general lack of fan interest), so why not utilize the one inherent advantage of altitude?

"When we get up and down the court a couple of times, you can see them huffing and puffing," CU freshman forward Andre Roberson said. "Then they start doing things they wouldn't normally do."

Boyle realizes the Buffs can't run at will in every game. Some opponents won't allow it. CU scored in the 70s in victories over Kansas State and Oklahoma State. The Buffs may struggle to reach 65 points tonight against a Nebraska team that's deliberate on offense and stingy on defense.

But if it becomes a matter of which team reaches 65 points, Boyle wants his team to get there first.

"We want to control the tempo, wherever we play," he said. "We realize it's tougher to score points away from home. You don't have the crowd behind you.

"That doesn't mean we want to stop running on the road, but we don't want to get wild. We'll just pick our spots and be smart about it."

Then it's off to the races.

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or tkensler@denverpost.com

Advertisement




Send flowers for any occasion

Bouquets \$19.99
from ^{+s/h}

ProFlowers



Order ONLY at
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1-877-888-0688

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

Power in reserve

Colorado's bench isn't deep, but here are the key reserves first-year coach Tad Boyle has relied on:

- G Levi Knutson, 6-foot-4 Sr., Littleton, 11.6 ppg, 3.0 rpg — Provides instant offense off the bench with Big 12-leading 53.3 percent on 3-pointers. Doesn't back down from contact.
- F Andre Roberson, 6-7 Fr., San Antonio, 6.6 ppg, 7.6 rpg — Perhaps the nation's top rebounder who isn't a starter, also leads team in steals and blocks. Has bright future.
- G Shannon Sharpe, 6-1 R.Fr., Corona, Calif., 2.4 ppg, 1.7 apg — YouTube dunking sensation, still adjusting after knee injury cost him last season. No relation to the ex-Bronco.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

Colorado at Nebraska

5 p.m., ESPN2, 760 AM

Spotlight on Caleb Walker: The 6-foot-4 junior guard likely draws the assignment vs. Alec Burks. Walker is a transfer from Butler (Kan.) Community College. The Huskers' suffocating man-to-man limited Kansas to a season-low 63 points in a three- point loss to KU in Lawrence, Kan.

Colorado: Nebraska leads the series 75-71, including 51-14 in Lincoln, but the Buffs won 81-

68 last year at the Devaney Center to snap a 36-game road losing streak in Big 12 games. Alec Burks and Cory Higgins each scored 19 points. . . . Colorado's seven- game winning streak is its longest since the 2005-06 season (nine straight). . . . CU is hitting 77.8 percent on free throws to lead the Big 12 by a wide margin. . . . CU received votes in both major polls but not enough to crack the top 25. The Buffs were last ranked in any poll during the 2005-06 season during back-to-back weeks in the coaches' poll during early February.

Nebraska: The 63-60 loss against KU marked the fifth Nebraska opponent to record a season low against the Huskers. Nebraska has held 12 of its past 13 opponents to 63 points or fewer. Its field-goal shooting defense of .351 percent ranks second nationally, behind Florida State (.350). . . . The Huskers' reserves have outscored the opponents' bench 279-105 over the past nine games. . . . Nebraska has 6-foot-11 players from Puerto Rico (Jorge Brian Diaz), Brazil (Andre Almeida) and Germany (Christopher Niemann). Diaz is a starter.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

Advertisement



Send flowers for any occasion

Bouquets \$19.99
from \$19.99^{+s/h}

ProFlowers

Order ONLY at
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1-877-888-0688

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

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

Longmont, Colorado
 Sunday, January 23, 2011

Publish Date: 1/18/2011

See Them Now?

Colorado men receiving national recognition

Brian Howell

© 2011 Longmont Times-Call

Colorado isn't in the national rankings yet. The Buffs are gaining some respect, however.

Legendary analyst Dick Vitale, of ESPN, named Colorado as the team of the week in his weekly awards.

In addition, the latest Associated Press Top 25 college basketball rankings came out Monday. CU, at 14-4, isn't in the Top 25, but the Buffs were fifth among the "others receiving votes."

Essentially sitting as the No. 30 team in the country says a lot about CU. It has been a while since the Buffs last sniffed the Top 25 rankings. Grabbing attention from voters around the country is a sign that CU is being taken seriously as a quality basketball team.

"It's different than in years past when maybe people came in here and expected to win," CU coach Tad Boyle said after CU's 75-71 win over Oklahoma State on Saturday.

So far, the Buffs are protecting their home court, and they've won their only road game in Big 12 play.

Although there are 13 Big 12 games left, it's odd to see the Buffs (14-4, 3-0 in the Big 12) sitting atop the league standings.

"I wouldn't have expected this is where we were going to be at, I'll be honest with you, but I look at the growth and how much better we are today than we were six weeks ago," Boyle said. "It opens my eyes a little bit and it shows me what's possible down the road. I think it's the same for our players."

The respect for CU is spreading quickly around the Big 12. Not that CU senior Cory Higgins cares what others think.

"Personally, I don't really care," he said. "They haven't given us respect since we got here, so they can think what they want. It doesn't matter to us. We all have each other's backs and we're all going to stick together."

The way the Buffs are going, that respect is going to turn into expectations for success. Boyle isn't worried about the outside pressure, though.



CU's Cory Higgins encourages the fans during the second half against Oklahoma State on Saturday at the Coors Events Center. The Buffs won 75-71 for their third Big 12 win last week. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**

TONIGHT'S GAMES

Colorado men (14-4, 3-0 Big 12) at Nebraska (13-4, 1-2)

When: 5 p.m. tonight

Where: Bob Devaney Center in Lincoln, Neb.

TV/Radio: ESPN2/760AM

The series: Nebraska leads 75-71, including 51-14 in Lincoln. CU won both games against the Huskers last year.

Leading scorers: CU — Alec Burks (19.7 points per game); Nebraska — Jorge Brian Diaz and Lance Jeter (10.2 each).

Notes: In 17 games this season, Nebraska has had 10 different players lead it in scoring. No other team has had more than seven players. CU has had four. ... Nebraska's Jeter leads the Big 12 in assist-to-turnover ratio (73 assists, 28 turnovers). ... CU ranks second in the Big 12 (and

"We're going to judge ourselves this year, and how I look at success is, is your team getting better throughout the season, from game to game, practice to practice, month to month?" Boyle said. "If the answer to that is yes, then I think we're on the right path and we're going to be successful."

ANOTHER TOUGH TEST: Over the summer, CU announced it was leaving for the Pac-10, and Nebraska announced it was leaving for the Big Ten. No big deal, some in the conference said. The Buffs and Cornhuskers were the bottom-feeders of the league anyway.

Well, tonight the Buffs visit the Cornhuskers (13-4, 1-2), who are enjoying a resurgence of their own. Nebraska has lost two in a row, but those were road games at No. 13 Missouri and No. 2 Kansas. And the Huskers took both teams down to the wire.

Boyle certainly respects the Huskers, who are 13-0 at home. Nebraska leads the entire country in field-goal percentage defense and is third in scoring defense.

"They're a solid, solid basketball team," Boyle said.

The feeling is mutual. Nebraska coach Doc Sadler gave high praise to the Buffs during Monday's Big 12 teleconference.

"(Tonight's game) is bigger than the Missouri and Kansas games combined," Sadler said. "You're talking about a team that may be playing as well as anybody in the league right now. I don't know if there's another team in the country that has two guards as good as they've got (with Higgins and Alec Burks)."

AROUND THE BIG 12

Kansas (18-0) moved up to No. 2 in the AP poll Monday. They entered Monday's game with Baylor as one of just four unbeaten teams in the country. No. 1 Ohio State, No. 3 Syracuse and No. 6 San Diego State are the others. Syracuse lost to No. 5 Pittsburgh on Monday night.

In addition to Kansas, No. 10 Texas (14-3), No. 11 Texas A&M (16-1) and No. 13 Missouri (16-3) are all ranked. Kansas State dropped out of the rankings and is two spots ahead of CU among others receiving votes. Baylor also received votes.

Kansas was down 10 against Nebraska on Saturday before winning. It was the first time in nine years that the Jayhawks overcame that big of a deficit to win a game.

Baylor's LaceDarius Dunn has made at least one 3-pointer in 30 straight games, setting a school record. Dunn is also fourth on the all-time Big 12 scoring list (2,029 points).

Iowa State (14-4, 1-2) needs one win to match last year's total.

At 16-1, Texas A&M is off to its best start in 91 years.

Last week, Nebraska dismissed guard Kamyron Brown from the team, while junior center Freddy Asprilla left Kansas State's team.

Marcus Morris of Kansas was the Big 12 player of the week. He averaged 24.5 points and 12.0 rebounds in two wins last week.

seventh nationally) with 83.9 points per game. Nebraska ranks first in the Big 12 (and third nationally) with 55.5 points allowed per game. ... CU is shooting 77.8 percent from the free-throw line. That is by far No. 1 in the Big 12 (Texas A&M is second at 72.9 percent).

..

Colorado women (10-6, 1-2 Big 12) at Oklahoma St. (12-4, 0-3)

When: 5 p.m. tonight

Where: Gallagher-Iba Arena in Stillwater, Okla.

TV/Radio: No TV/1190AM

The series: CU has a 26-24 lead in the series, but OSU has won four in a row. The Cowgirls are 12-8 against the Buffs in Stillwater.

Leading scorers: CU — Brittany Spears (17.5 points per game); OSU — Toni Young (14.6).

Notes: The Buffs upset then-No. 17 Iowa State on Saturday in Boulder. ... Both teams play solid defense. OSU is allowing 51.6 points per game, while CU is allowing 57.8 per game. ... OSU's Young leads the Big 12 with eight double-doubles. CU's Chucky Jeffery is second with seven. CU's Spears is tied for third with six. ... Oklahoma State is 10-2 at home this year.

Brian Howell

Baylor freshman Perry Jones III was the Big 12 rookie of the week. He posted 17.5 points and 6.0 rebounds in two games.

Brian Howell can be reached at bhowell@times-call.com.

Home / Sports / Men's Basketball

Huskers' next challenge: Red-hot CU

- Story

By BRIAN ROSENTHAL / Lincoln Journal Star | Posted: Monday, January 17, 2011 1:00 pm

Font Size:

Default font size

Larger font size

- 0 tweet

[Recommend](#)

One person recommends this.



[Buy this photo](#)

Colorado forward Marcus Relphorde dunks during the first half of the Buffaloes' game against Kansas State on Wednesday, Jan. 12, 2011, in Manhattan, Kan. (AP Photo/Olin Wagner)

Related Stories

- Related: Nebraska-Texas Tech lineups
- Related: Big 12 men's basketball rankings

Surprised that Colorado enters Tuesday night's game at Nebraska with a 3-0 record in Big 12 Conference men's basketball games?

You're not alone.

"I wouldn't have expected this is where we were going to be at. I'll be honest with you," first-year Colorado coach Tad Boyle said. "But I look at the growth and how much better we are today than we were six weeks ago, and it opens my eyes a little bit."

The rest of the league -- and nation -- is paying attention, too.

The Buffaloes, 14-4 overall, received 78 votes in Monday's Associated Press Top 25 poll, which would put them No. 30.

They've beaten two ranked teams, including one on the road.

They rallied Saturday from a 12-point deficit to defeat Oklahoma State before a rare sellout crowd at Coors Events Center, extending their winning streak to seven.

They're a victory shy of matching last year's win total.

"You're talking about a team that may be playing as well as any team in the league right now," Nebraska coach Doc Sadler said. "You've got a team that's playing with tremendous confidence, and on top of that, (are) very talented, and Tad's done an unbelievable job of coaching them."

It all means that Nebraska, coming off back-to-back, single-digit road losses to ranked teams, has another big game on its hands.

"It's bigger than the Missouri and Kansas games combined," Sadler said.

Mostly, because it's at home, where the Huskers are undefeated, yet haven't been able to finish off conference foes in recent seasons. Saturday's 63-60 loss at No. 3 Kansas only added to Nebraska's near-miss frustrations.

"Almost isn't good enough for us," NU center Andre Almeida said. "We feel like we're pretty good and we can play toe-to-toe with anybody in the nation."

Colorado is exuding the same confidence. The Buffaloes returned all five starters from last year's team that finished 6-10 in the Big 12.

Boyle, hired from Northern Colorado to replace Jeff Bzdelik, said his upperclassmen have been through the rigors of the Big 12 and respect the league.

The Buffs are also talented.

Guards Alec Burks (19.7 points per game) and Cory Higgins (16.6) are All-Big 12-caliber players. Levi Knutson, who comes off the bench, is shooting 50.7 percent on three-pointers, which leads the Big 12.

"There was a good group of young players, and a good group of veteran players in this program," Boyle said, "and they suit to the way we want to play to a 'T'. We have some good athletes. They're skilled. We can shoot the ball and score pretty well. We've proven that.

"We're defending and rebounding, and when you have some talented offensive guys who will commit to that, you've got a chance to win."

Boyle said his team, which is effective in transition, must be more efficient in the half court against a Nebraska team that's No. 2 nationally in field goal-percentage defense.

Sadler, meanwhile, said keeping the Buffaloes away from the free-throw line will be important. Colorado was 34-of-39 on free throws in its victory against Oklahoma State.

Nebraska's psyche will also bear watching.

"Upset, of course, but not hanging our heads," guard Lance Jeter said after the loss at Kansas. "I mean, we played two good teams at their place, and that's always going to be hard to do for any team.

"We're very excited about this team. We've got the pieces that can win a lot of games."

Reach Brian Rosenthal at 402-473-7436 or broenthal@journalstar.com.

Posted in Mens-basketball on *Monday, January 17, 2011 1:00 pm* Updated: 7:30 pm. | Tags: Doc Sadler, Colorado, Tad Boyle,