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Devlin: Boyle wants in-state help to lift Buffs

By Neil H. Devlin
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BOULDER — Tad Boyle considers it one of his fondest high school memories.

At the Coors Events Center, where his University of Colorado men's basketball team had just completed practice Monday, Boyle stood within an outlet pass of where he led Greeley Central over Broomfield to the Class 3A (in a 4A system) championship in his final schoolboy game.

"And that was 30 years ago," Boyle said of holding the trophy and parading around the floor. "Seems like yesterday."

Yesterday is appropriate, similar to what's been stated about the all but closed-door policy by CU to locals. It's starting to seem like old news.

Boyle, the only in-state prepster to become CU head coach, vows to be open-minded when

assessing the notoriously thin Rocky Mountain yield.

He realizes followers would like to have been at least somewhat familiar with some of the names before they became Buffs and that he and his staff actually track and make a play for the best in-state talent.

"Absolutely, Colorado is going to be our No. 1 recruiting state," he said.

Boyle, who played for Larry Brown and with Danny Manning, isn't drunk with power. Indeed, he has the Buffs getting sudden notice in the Big 12 Conference, and there's the promise of heading to the Pac-12, but his feet appear to be weighted solidly as if he's a deep-sea diver. Realistically, he agreed, we live "in a cyclical state, so we have to do a great job of evaluating everybody in the state."

It pained the former prep player of the year that the recent high-end likes of ThunderRidge's Matt Bouldin (Gonzaga) and Palmer's Reggie Jackson (Boston College) chose to hoop elsewhere. And that was before Boyle landed with the Buffs. Even worse, it has been going on for decades.

Said Boyle, who played at Kansas: "People always ask me, 'What are you going to say to a Colorado high school kid who wants to leave the state?'"

In fact, said a committed Boyle, who knows a climb

when he sees one and yearns to be on CU's

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to CU, but the appeal of "Colorful Colorado" as place to live and a mix of local and national talent on his roster is as enticing as necessary.

"The high school coaches want the colleges to be good and the colleges want the high schools to be good," Boyle said. "So we have to work together to promote it. The high school coaches here are great.

"This could be a special place."

*Neil H. Devlin: 303-954-1714 or
ndevlin@denverpost.com*

sideline longer than the sinks in the Coors men's room, "It took me 16 years to get back to where I wanted to be."

Grass roots could figure heavily into his plan, which includes goals of seriously challenging for conference titles and regularly qualifying for the NCAA Tournament. For one, fans at CU games go a longer way than simply buying a ticket for a game or standing up and clapping. They could also affect impressionable middle-schoolers who will want to play for the Buffs.

For another, as Colorado's flagship university, CU must not only be viewed during competition, but be accessible with open practices, offering clinics and having a presence at high school games.

The best way, Boyle said, is to keep lines open with in-state coaches. He knows. He was an assistant at Greeley West and Loveland and head coach at Longmont. Sure, he figures the talent pool he saw while coaching at Northern Colorado has faded like a concert T-shirt with his switch

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