



*Tad Boyle's first/last trip to Ames, Iowa as CU's head coach was sadly unforgettable.
Photo Courtesy: Tony Harman*



03/08/2011 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Brooks: Buffs Seek To Put Shame Of Ames Behind Them

KANSAS CITY, Mo. - Not many losses - in fact, none this season - have affected Tad Boyle like his Colorado team's defensive rollover two games ago at Iowa State. Ames? For CU, it became Shames for a night.

BUFFALO EXTRAS



Game Notes #32: vs. Iowa State

With so much to gain, the Buffaloes showed so little in keeping the Cyclones away from the rim and covering their three-point shooters. With the loss, CU lost a chance to take a significant step in the Big 12 Conference standings and perhaps leave the NCAA Tournament bubble for more solid, if unofficially so, footing.

Boyle was beyond disturbed. "There was a lot on the line for us," he said, "and we just didn't respond on the defensive end . . . you score 90 points, you should win on the road or at home."

Not if you allow 95 . . .

Boyle stewed on the loss for a day, replaying for his team the 32 mostly unimpeded trips to the rim that allowed the Cyclones to run what amounted to a 40-minute layup drill. They made 24, a total that Buffs senior Cory Higgins called "unacceptable - especially if you expect to win games in the Big 12. We have to cut down on that and not let them get anything easy."

"They just got a lot of hustle layups, fast breaks, shots that we could have prevented," added CU sophomore Alec Burks. "If we'd stopped that, we could have won by 10 or 15. We didn't rebound, we didn't have that toughness we usually have. If we get that back, we can beat them easy."

The Buffs believe the bad taste of that final trip to Iowa State, can be purged Wednesday afternoon (1 p.m., MST) in the first round of the Big 12 postseason tournament. No. 5 seed CU (19-12) meets No. 12 seed ISU (16-15) in a game the Buffs must win to remain in consideration for the NCAAs.

Said Higgins: "We're fired up . . . we're glad we drew them because they kicked our butts in Ames. We want to show everybody we're not the team that showed up there. We didn't defend and we didn't execute the game plan. We didn't guard the ball, didn't guard the shooters . . . we really didn't do anything defensively that we're trying to get our identity from. That's the most disappointing thing."

Not surprisingly after the implosion in Ames, Boyle spent most of the following day's practice reemphasizing defense. And at least for a 10-point win against Nebraska, the lessons took. But the Cyclones are built differently, and if a team with a 3-13 conference record can be entering its league tournament with anything resembling confidence, it's Iowa State.

The Cyclones won two of their last three regular-seasons games, defeating Nebraska and CU before they went flat (and cold) at Kansas State in a 67-55 loss. Despite the defeat in Manhattan, first-year ISU Coach Fred Hoiberg said his team gained late-season confidence.

"I'm excited about the way we played in a couple of games to end the season," he said. "We fought through adversity in the Nebraska game, then played Colorado close and won." The Buffs rallied in each half but couldn't close out the 'Clones, and Hoiberg said if teams "had that kind of run on us early in season, we'd have dropped our heads and said, 'Here we go again.'"

"I love our heart; I've said that all season long. Going back to opening day, really when I took this job, I sat down with this group and talked about expectations. I told this group of guys, as thin as we were, we were going out and battle and give it our best shot. There would be certain nights when we just didn't have enough manpower at the end of the game, but I asked them to play as hard as they can and give themselves a chance to win.

"And that's pretty much what this group has done. It's why I like coaching them. Hopefully we can go down there (to KC) and continue to battle."

If Iowa State's two dozen layups against CU is uncharacteristic of the Cyclones' offensive strength, it underscores how out-of-sorts the Buffs were defensively. The 'Clones love the long-ball; they lead the Big 12 in three-pointers made per game in league play (8.6, 14th nationally). They've made nine or more treys in 15 games this season, including 14 against both Baylor and Kansas this season.

Hoiberg spreads defenses with his launch-it offense, but if a driving lane is offered the Cyclones gladly will travel it . . . ask the Buffs.

"They're going to make some threes; they're a good shooting team . . . a hard team to guard," Boyle said. "You have to pick your poison to some degree. But we have to take away the layups and contest the threes - and understand that some of them might go in."

Iowa State shot 70.4 percent from the field (19-for-27) in the second half against CU a week ago. The Cyclones outrebounded the Buffs 40-32, but Boyle offered an explanation: "They missed eight or nine shots in the second half so there's not a lot of rebounds to be had; you can't rebound it coming out of the net."

Higgins called defending the 'Clones "challenging . . . but it was frustrating because we were able to do it our place, then we went to their place and looked like we weren't the same team. That's the most disappointing thing, knowing we can do it. We have to get back to that."

Although they can't ignore the Big Dance buzz hovering here, not many in the CU camp are immersed in bracketology.

Boyle's prescription is to win the first game, win the second (No. 4 seed Kansas State awaits) . . . see where it all goes.

"We've got to win . . . I'm not saying the not whole thing, but certainly the first round game with Iowa State," Boyle said. "I'm not much for making cases - I'm a coach, not a politician. But I do think that we've proven during the course of the Big 12 season that we're capable of beating good teams. The one thing I've said about our team that's frustrating is that we're inconsistent. But the one thing I love is that we're resilient.

"We're capable of playing with anybody on any given night, and to me that's what NCAA Tournament is all about. You want teams in there that are capable of playing the tough teams tough. We're capable of doing that. Inconsistency - we don't have a corner on that market; there's a lot of inconsistent teams throughout the country and that's why you have bubble teams and people making cases for or against certain teams. I just like our resume . . . let wins and losses speak for themselves, because that's what they do."

If the Buffs don't raise their voices Wednesday afternoon (and maybe the following afternoon against K-State), they're in for a silent Selection Sunday - at least in hearing from the NCAA.

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SHOW MENU



Boyle's CU Buffs ready for rematch

CU men lost to Iowa State a week ago

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/08/2011 06:43:48 PM MST

KANSAS CITY, Mo. -- Defense is not optional this time.

A week ago, Colorado allowed 32 shots from point-blank range, 24 made layups, 40 rebounds, 70 percent shooting in the second half, and 95 points in a loss at last-place Iowa State.

The No. 5-seeded Buffs get a do-over against the No. 12 Cyclones today in the opening round of the Big 12 Tournament at the Sprint Center (1 p.m., Altitude).

"Everything went wrong. We didn't guard the ball, we didn't get out on shooters, our help side (defense) was terrible, we didn't play Colorado basketball," explained senior guard Cory Higgins, who also struggled at times on the offensive end (4-for-12 shooting, 15 points) in Ames. "I definitely like our draw. We wanted to play Iowa State again as soon as we lost that game because we let one slip away."

The CU-Iowa State winner moves on to face No. 4 Kansas State in the quarterfinals on Thursday. The Buffs swept the surging Wildcats, who are ranked No. 19 in the latest Associated Press poll after winning eight of their last nine regular-season games.

"You can't look ahead, but Kansas State is going to be a tough one, too," Higgins added.

The bubblicious Buffs are dreaming big. And why not? This is the first time anyone on the roster has had a realistic chance of playing their way into the NCAA Tournament.

"If we win this tournament we get it automatically," Alec Burks noted. "That's what we're trying to do. We're going to take it one step at a time with Iowa State first."

No team in the 15-year history of the Big 12 Tournament has cut down the nets without the benefit of a bye.

CU, projected as one of the "last four in" by ESPN.com bracket expert Joe Lunardi, doesn't have to win four games in four nights to go dancing. The Buffs will almost certainly be included in expanded 68-team field with two wins and an appearance in the semifinals on Friday night.

"We're going to try to win this thing," freshman forward Andre Roberson said of the program's final Big 12 Tournament. "But we know we've got to get two games."

The Buffs (19-12) realize they would be in a less stressful position for March madness had they taken care of business against the likes of Georgia, San Francisco and Harvard in November or Nebraska, Oklahoma and Baylor in January or the Cyclones seven nights ago.

"That's the thing we've struggled with a little bit this year is not being able to handle prosperity in games that we feel like we're supposed to win," CU head coach Tad Boyle said. "That's part of growing the program and being the hunted rather than the hunter."

The Cyclones (16-15) are feeling a lot better about themselves after ending a 10-game losing streak with wins over Nebraska and CU. Iowa State is seeking its first win at the Big 12 Tournament since 2005.

"I love how hard our guys have competed all season long," first-year head coach Fred Hoiberg said. "There have been certain nights where we just haven't had the manpower at the end of the game to compete. But I love coaching them."

Calvin Godfrey (23 points), Scott Christopherson (17), Jake Anderson (16), Diante Garrett (16) and Jamie Vanderbeken (15) all scored in double figures during CU's 95-90 loss at Hilton Coliseum.

Burks (19), Higgins (16), Marcus Relphorde (15), Levi Knutson (15) and Nate Tomlinson (10) all scored in double figures during the Buffs' 95-69 victory over Iowa State on Feb. 1 at the Coors Events Center.

The team that defends and rebounds the best will survive and advance at the Sprint Center.

"We're very much looking forward to this game to get back at them. We need to clamp down on defense," Roberson said. "I think it was just a lack of intensity and a lack of discipline in our defense. This time we're going to get that corrected."

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college basketball

CU coach Boyle borrowed from a master: Larry Brown

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 03/09/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Not long after being offered an entry-level job on the Oregon staff in 1994, Tad Boyle called the coach he played for at Kansas, Larry Brown.

"Coach Brown didn't give me a lot of advice," recalled Boyle, a Boulder stockbroker and the Longmont High coach at the time. "But he did say that if my teams played good defense and rebounded the ball, I'd give myself a chance to win."

A dozen years later, Boyle called Brown again shortly after Boyle accepted his first head coaching gig, with Northern Colorado.

"Same thing — defense and rebounding," Boyle said.

It doesn't take long to understand Boyle's coaching philosophy if an observer sees one of Colorado practices — as a couple of thousand fans might have realized Tuesday at the Sprint Center as they watched the Buffaloes' open workout in preparation for today's Big 12 Tournament opener against Iowa State.

Boyle expects his players to guard the ball and crash the boards on every possession. CU plays almost strictly man-to-man defense, and players at every position, including point guard, are expected to rebound.

"All coaches stress defense and rebounding," CU senior guard Marcus Relphorde said. "But Boyle has a different mentality. He stresses it a little more."

Despite lacking a dominant inside presence, Colorado (19-12) managed to rank third in Big 12 rebounding for league games (35.7), behind only Texas (38.9) and Kansas (36.4). That may be among the most amazing statistics in the conference, considering the Buffs list four of their five starters as guards, and 6-foot-9 junior forward Austin Dufault is playing out of position in the middle.

But Boyle wouldn't expect anything less. It's how he coaches.

It has worked this season. In a preseason poll of the Big 12's coaches, Colorado was picked to finish ninth. Don't look now, but the Buffs are perceived to be sitting "on the bubble" for a possible NCAA Tournament bid, which would the

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program's first since 2003.

Boyle says he is not a miracle worker. He credits his players for buying into his defense and rebounding philosophy.

"Honestly, in a big, competitive conference like this, that's the only way you can win," junior point guard Nate Tomlinson said. "Especially for us. We're undersized and we're not as deep as other teams, so we really have to do those things to in every game."

Colorado players work on defense and rebounding in every practice. And there are repercussions for falling short of Boyle's expectations.

The penalty in practice for failing to box out an opponent during a rebound is a 22-second wind sprint. All players on the team of the penalized player must run from baseline to baseline, twice.

The penalty for failing to execute a prescribed defensive concept of the day: an 11-second wind sprint for all members of his team.

"Wind sprints aren't something that's difficult," Boyle said. "But when a guy makes the same mistake two or three times and everybody has to run, now players may start to get on their teammates a little bit. Peer pressure kicks in."

Interestingly, Boyle rarely stops practice and invokes a penalty for an offensive turnover.

"Defensive mistakes are more of a concentration

thing," said CU sophomore center Shane Harris-Tunks, who is redshirting this season after ACL surgery. "If you make a mistake on defense or in rebounding, you're

March Madness

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not paying attention, you're not in the right spot or you're just being lazy. Offensive mistakes, on the other hand, are generally just an error."

Practices are for building habits, Boyle says. Wind-sprint penalties become effective reminders.

"Our guys understand what needs to be done," Boyle said. "They understand when they make mistakes. We just don't have the habits and the mentality to do things consistently. It takes awhile."

Playing more up-tempo under Boyle, Colorado ranks 14th nationally in scoring (79.3). But the Buffs wouldn't be where they are if it weren't for

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defense and rebounding. Case in point: Colorado's defense let down in Iowa State's 95-90 victory March 2 in Ames, allowing the Cyclones to hit 57.1 percent from the field. An evaluation of the game film by CU's coaching staff revealed more damaging evidence. Iowa State got to the rim 32 times, making baskets on 24 of those attempts.

After returning home, Boyle had his players work on defense for much of the following day's practice.

"Everything went wrong when we played Iowa State last week," senior guard Cory Higgins said Tuesday. "We didn't guard the ball, we didn't get out to shooters, our help-side defense was terrible.

"We did everything that went against Colorado basketball and what we're trying to establish. We can't let that happen against them here."

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

Colorado vs. Iowa State

1 p.m. Wednesday, ALT, 760 AM

Spotlight on Scott Christopherson: Part of Colorado's game plan no doubt is to never leave the 6-foot-3 junior guard open not even for a second. Christopherson ranks third among Big 12 players in 3-point shooting accuracy (.452). He averaged 20.5 points in the two regular-season games against Colorado, going 7-for-15 on 3-

pointers.

Colorado: CU has won four of its past six games to jump into the conversation as a bubble team for the NCAA Tournament. "I try not to worry and think about things I have no control over," CU coach Tad Boyle said Tuesday when asked about "bracketology" after his team's practice. . . . The Buffs scored 90 or more points in both regular-season meetings with Iowa State, but the teams split. . . . CU enters its last Big 12 Tournament with a 7-14 all-time record in the event. . . . Four CU players have made at least 100 field goals this season, the most by the program since the 2004-05 season.

Iowa State: The Cyclones have not won a game in the Big 12 Tournament since 2005, a first-round victory over Baylor. . . . Iowa State comes off a 67-55 loss at Kansas State, but the Cyclones were down by just four points with four minutes left. Senior guard Diante Garrett scored 18 points and also recorded five assists and a career-best four steals. . . . Under first-year coach and local legend Fred Hoiberg, the Cyclones are assured of their first nonlosing season since 2005-06. "I love how hard our guys have competed," Hoiberg said. *Tom Kensler, The Denver Post*

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

MARCH 8, 2011, 6:14 PM

Boyle regrets CU playing so many road gamesBy **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — On the eve of the first round of the Big 12 tournament, Colorado coach Tad Boyle told reporters Tuesday that he regrets scheduling so many road games during the nonconference portion of the Buffaloes' schedule.

Colorado played three true road games in November and lost all three: at Georgia, at San Francisco and at Harvard.

If CU had two or three more victories, the Buffs (19-12, 8-8 Big 12) might be a near lock for an NCAA Tournament bid instead of being perceived as "on the bubble."

Colorado won at Cal-Bakersfield in their fourth true nonconference road game, on Jan. 2. They split two nonconference neutral site nonconference games, losing to New Mexico and defeating Indiana, both at a tournament in Las Vegas.

Boyle added the Georgia and Cal-Baskerfield games. The games against San Francisco and Harvard had been scheduled before he replaced Jeff Bzdelik in April.

"I do think with this team having a lot of veterans, I wasn't afraid to go on the road," Boyle said. "I do think as a first-year coach, I don't know how smart that was. I think maybe if we had Georgia at home, we win that game.

"But I do think the fact that we played more true road games than any team in the Big 12, I'd like to be rewarded (by the NCAA Tournament selection committee) for that. I don't know if we will be or won't be. As we look to make future scheduling, we'll see what happens with that (on Selection Sunday)."

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