

## Boyle: CU Buffs need to get tough

### CU begins key five-game homestand today

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Shane Harris-Tunks made the trip with the Buffs from Boulder to Boston.

Watching Colorado's 82-66 loss to Harvard on Sunday at Lavietes Pavilion from the end of the bench was cruel and unusual punishment for the 6-11 center who is sitting out the season with a knee injury.

Harris-Tunks' teammates have looked helpless without him during a disappointing 2-3 start to the season.

Case in point: Harvard's Keith Wright dominated the game with 19 points on 8-for-11 shooting. The 6-8 forward also had nine rebounds and eight assists.

The Big 12 big men will be drooling over the game film when the Buffs make their final tour of the conference.

"They had some tremendous guards," Harvard sophomore guard Christian Webster said after scoring 20 points. "But we felt like if we got it into Keith early, they would have no one to stop him. And that's what happened."

The good news for the Buffs -- now 0-3 on the road this season -- is they don't have much time to dwell on getting blown out by an Ivy League team.

CU hosts Texas-Pan American tonight at the Coors Events Center (7 p.m., FSN).

"I see us as two totally different teams right now -- at home team and a road team. I don't like that," first-year CU head coach Tad Boyle said. "I think to be a good road team you have to have pride and you have to have toughness. It's easy to play at home when your fans are cheering for you and things are going well.

"It doesn't matter where you go on the road, it's not going to be an easy environment to play in, and we're not mentally tough enough yet to do that."

During Jeff Bzdelik's three seasons in Boulder the basketball facilities were upgraded, the APR was drastically improved, and talented players like Cory Higgins and Alec Burks were recruited.

But Boyle has inherited a group that is soft in the post and an easy mark away from home.

"I'm confident we can change it because every place I've been we had to overcome the same thing. It's not something that's just the case with Colorado, there are a lot of teams like that," Boyle said. "But the good teams, which is what we want to become, are not like that. That's where we're at and that's our challenge ahead."

Harvard out-rebounded CU 31-28 and scored 19 second-chance points.

Austin Dufault, forced to guard the opposing team's top post players again this season due to Harris-Tunks' injury, was in early foul trouble and finished with seven points and three rebounds in 19 minutes.

"I think we really feed off our crowd's energy and we're just more comfortable at home," Dufault said of the Buffs' Jekyll and Hyde personality. "On the road we don't have that comfort level and that's something we need to get over.

"We need to figure out how to be comfortable being uncomfortable."

CU will play two games on a neutral court at the Las Vegas Classic Dec. 22-23 and one more true road non-conference

game at Cal State Bakersfield on Jan. 2.

But first the Buffs have a chance to start feeling warm and fuzzy again with five consecutive home games beginning tonight.

"We have to figure it out right now. I think this week is going to really determine how the season is going to go," Higgins said. "If we don't figure things out during this week, it's going to be a long season for us."

**TODAY:** The Buffs (2-3) begin a five-game homestand against Texas-Pan American (2-5) at 7 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).

**STORY LINES:** The Buffs are coming off an 82-66 loss at Harvard. Cory Higgins (21 points) and Alec Burks (20 points) did the heavy lifting on offense as usual, but no one wearing black uniforms played well defensively. ... CU is 2-0 at home and 0-3 on the road. ... The Broncos ranked 206th in scoring and 297th in rebounds entering Monday's action.

**COACHES:** Tad Boyle is 2-3 in his first season at CU after going 56-66 in four seasons at Northern Colorado. Ryan Marks is 9-33 in his second season at Texas-Pan American.

**PROBABLE STARTERS: Colorado** -- G Nate Tomlinson, 6-3, Jr., 4.8 ppg, 2.0 rpg; G Marcus Relphorde, 6-7, Sr., 9.8 ppg, 4.2 rpg; G Alec Burks, 6-6, SO., 22.4 ppg, 4.2 rpg; G Cory Higgins, 6-5, Sr., 19.2 ppg, 4.8 rpg; F Austin Dufault, 6-9, Jr., 8.0 ppg, 5.0 rpg. **Texas-Pan American** -- G Brandon Provost, 6-3, So., 10.3 ppg, 4.6 rpg; G Aaron Urbanus, 6-0, So., 15.1 ppg, 2.1 rpg; G Jared Maree, 6-3, Jr., 8.6 ppg, 3.0 rpg; F 6-6, Sr., Matt Mierzycki, 6.6 ppg, 5.4 rpg; G Perry Petty, 6-1, Sr., 11.9 ppg, 4.1 rpg.

**KEY STAT:** Including last season, the Buffs are 2-16 in their last 18 games outside of Boulder but 15-3 at the Coors Events Center.

**SERIES:** CU leads 1-0, a 79-64 victory on Feb. 14, 2000, at the Coors Events Center.

**UP NEXT:** The Buffs host Oregon State in the Big 12/Pac-10 Hardwood Series on Saturday night at the Coors Events Center (8 p.m., FSN).

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