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Here Come The Buffaloes: Colorado Makes First Foray Into Pac-12

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By Sam Juliano
Contributing Writer

With the newly formed Pac-12 championships to be inaugurated this weekend in Arizona, much of the spotlight will be focused on returning champs Stanford and their loaded pack or on individual favorite **Lawi Lalang** from Arizona. However I would say that the entry of former Big- 12 powerhouse and consistent national threat Colorado will be the most compelling drama in the race. With their move to the Pac-12, the Buffaloes now with Stanford and Oregon represent in one conference nine of the last 15 men's national champions. Though not spoken of in the same breath this year as Oklahoma State and Wisconsin as a chance to win the big dance, Colorado will come to be a force that could stand on the third rung of the national ladder. Despite being currently ranked sixth in the nation and two spots behind new conference rival Stanford, look to see the group from Boulder make waves.



The tradition of Goucher, Torres and Ritz lives on in the Pac-12 (CUBuffs.com)

Their move into the Pac-12 also changes the dynamic of the conference heavily as it is no longer a two way slugfest between Oregon and Stanford for the title but now will year in and year out come to include the **Mark Wetmore**-led Colorado team that seems to have an endless supply of surprises over the years. Whether it be “stealing” a national title from a unbeatable Wisconsin team (which had world-class stars **Matt Tegankamp** and **Chris Solinsky**) in 2004 or supplying the U.S. Olympic squad over the years with runners like **Alan Culpepper**, **Adam Goucher**, **Billy Nelson** and **Jorge Torres** to name a few, the Buffaloes should be watched by their conference mates to be the new bully on the block. With three titans of running in one conference it can be said that national champions may be decided at the Pac-12 before nationals is ran.

As proven already at Pre-Nats, the Buffaloes are stacked enough to hang with any team in the country and going out on a limb here but my prediction would be a Buffalo victory to ring in their new confines in conference. With **Andy Wacker** looking tough and a mean pack rounded out by super freshman **Ammar Moussa** I can see the Buffaloes sneaking up on the Stanford Cardinal with their amazing front pack and the somewhat depth-lacking Oregon squad. The end of the dual reign of west coast superpowers maybe at hand in the Pac-12 with sounds of thunderous Buffaloes from the Rockies set on achieving dominance over their coastal brethren on their new turf.

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