



# COLORADO BUFFALOES

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*The CU men's BB team celebrates Sunday afternoon.*

Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



## Brooks: 'Greedy' Buffs Draw Illini In First NCAA Game

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*"He who is greedy is always in want."*

**BOULDER** - Then again, greed isn't so bad. And for a collection of overachievers it can be a very good thing.

Back in mid-November, coach Tad Boyle and his young Colorado Buffaloes worked up a significant reservoir of the stuff along the drizzly, dank South Carolina coast, unexpectedly winning the Charleston Classic.

When the Baby Buffs returned with it to the Rockies, Boyle found them - to quote the poet - "always in want." And Sunday afternoon in their coach's den, their want was rewarded.

Colorado will play Illinois in the NCAA Tournament on Friday (2:40 p.m. MDT) in Austin, Texas. The Buffs are a No. 10 seed, the Illini a No. 7. It is CU's 12th overall NCAA appearance, the second consecutive trip to the Big Dance, and the first time for back-to-back appearances by the Buffs on March's majestic college dance card in 50 years (1961-62/1962-63).

### BUFFALO EXTRAS



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2013 NCAA Selection Show  
03/17/2013



NCAA Bracket (Times & TV)



NCAA Tournament Game Notes

Before their successful stint in Charleston, Boyle conceded if this was an NCAA Tournament team he couldn't see it coming.

"I wasn't sure," he said after Sunday's early, anxious moments had passed. "I'll be honest with you, when I looked at our schedule before the season started, after Europe, I was thinking 15 to 17 wins - somewhere in that neighborhood. Less than that and I think we would have underachieved, over that I think maybe we overachieved, just because of our youth and our schedule early.

"What happens is, you win early like we did in Charleston, we beat some good teams and you start getting greedy. You want a little bit more and a little bit more. Once that happened, I think my expectations, our fans' expectations, everybody's expectations go up."

Boyle is very careful, very crafty not to hitch his expectations to those circulating outside the Coors Events Center. But this time, he might have found it difficult not to. He saw what his third CU team might be if it improved month to month, and by the final week of the regular season - that would be before an ugly home loss to Oregon State - he had seen indications that if it didn't repeat as Pac-12 tournament champions, it could be among the NCAA's 37 at-large entries.

And that's as much a tribute to his upgrade of CU hoops as was winning four games in four days last March in L.A.

"This is a hard tournament to get into," Boyle said. "We can't ever take this for granted. This is the first back-to-back NCAA Tournaments (for CU) since the early '60s - a long, long time ago . . . so in the modern era, the first back-to-back. We don't want it to be the last. I think it's a great step forward for our program to get an at-large bid. Obviously we'd rather win the Pac-12 Tournament, but the fact we didn't and we got in shows some respect (by the Selection Committee)."

That respect didn't show itself for what seemed a painfully long time Sunday afternoon. The CBS Selection Show went through a pair of 15-minute segments in announcing the Midwest and South brackets before "Colorado" flashed on the screen opposite Illinois in the East.

During their half-hour wait, Boyle and his upperclassmen were flashing back to two years ago in the same room, when a festive Selection Sunday watch party turned funereal when the Buffs were spurned. Angst built on this Sunday when Pac-12 champ Oregon, which had defeated Oregon less than 24 hours earlier, was relegated to a No. 12 seed in the Midwest.

"I was sitting next to Andre (Roberson, junior forward) and we were both getting nervous," Boyle recalled. "All the guys who were here two years ago . . . the rest of the guys don't have any idea, but those guys do."

The younger guys, however, were not sitting at ease. "I don't know if I can even describe it," sophomore guard Askia Booker said. "Your ears get hot, sweat starts coming down your head . . . you're looking at teammates and they're trying to keep themselves composed. It's hard, nerve-wracking. But once you're in, it's all joy."

Boyle's nerves had everything to do with Selection Sunday 2011, but he added, "The fortunate thing was this was a new year, new team . . . a whole new deal. Logically - and I'm a pretty logical person - it shouldn't have had anything to do with it. But emotionally, it's human nature. You know how it works. We're all scarred and sometimes you're afraid of reopening those old wounds."

They stayed closed and when the Buffs were in, with their opponent, date and destination, the Boyle den erupted in cheers.

"I'm happy for Andre getting to go back to Texas (he's from San Antonio)," Boyle said. "Austin is a great place to go this time of year, heck, anytime of year for that matter. We're very fortunate, and we're playing a team from one of the toughest conferences in the country."

Roberson, the nation's leading rebounder who showed few effects at the Pac-12 tournament from a viral illness that sidelined him for the previous two games, called returning to his home state "definitely great. It's a double for me. This is a great feeling, especially after what happened two years ago. We're going to go and show

everybody why we're one of the best."

One of Roberson's personal goals this season is to advance to at least the Sweet Sixteen, and he believes "we can do that this year with the team we've got and the talent we have . . . I won't say we overachieved, but we had a lot of young guys. We started to rebuild and I definitely feel we did a great job this year."

Being seeded 10th was in the neighborhood where Boyle believed the Buffs might land - and he likes that spot.

"Quite frankly, I was hoping for a ten or eleven more than an eight or a nine," he said. "You face usually a No. 1 seed (if you win the first game) and sometimes that No. 1 seed, they try and keep them close to home. They really put a lot of stock in those No. 1 seeds and once it starts going down from there, the part of the country is less important.

"So I thought certainly with a ten or eleven seed, your first-round opponent is maybe a little bit better, but your second-round opponent - now, they're still going to be good, Miami is a No. 2 seed and won the ACC and the ACC Tournament - but you never know what's going to happen in this thing. That's what makes this tournament so special - the upsets. If a ten seed like Colorado beats a seven seed like Illinois, it's not really considered an upset. But if a fifteen (seed) beats a two, it's a major upset. Those eight-nine games are flips of the coin. We're just elated to be a part of it."

CU (21-11) and Illinois (22-12) have only played four games, with the Illini winning three. Their last meeting was in 1987 in Champaign, where the home team won 69-65. If the Buffs advance to the second round, they catch either Miami (Fla.) or Pacific; they've faced Miami once (a 73-66 CU win in Miami in 1957), but have never faced Pacific.

Illinois finished 8-10 in the Big Ten Conference and was ousted from the league tournament by Indiana 80-64. But the Illini defeated the Hoosiers 74-72 during the Big Ten regular season, as well as winning at Gonzaga 85-74 during non-conference play. Both Indiana and Gonzaga wound up as No. 1 NCAA seeds.

"They're a very good team from one of the best leagues in the country if not the best," Boyle said of Illinois. "They beat Gonzaga at Gonzaga and I don't think anybody else did that this year. They're a quality basketball team and we've got our work cut out for us. Whoever you play in this tournament, you're going to play somebody good."

Before Sunday's Selection Show, Boyle asked his coordinator of operations, Bill Cartun, to start compiling tape on eight or nine possible NCAA opponents. Illinois was on Cartun's list, so Boyle and his staff are a step ahead in that area. CU's Illini scouting report will fall to assistant Mike Rohn.

The Buffs' NCAA experience last March started and ended in Albuquerque, where they defeated UNLV before being sent home by Baylor. Boyle said the biggest lesson learned from that trip was to focus on one game, one opponent: "Not looking ahead is the biggest thing; there are no tomorrows."

Playing in the moment is paramount, just as living in it on Sunday in Boyle's den was excruciating.

"Everything you do as coach, and our players do, day in and day out in practice, all the jump shots, all the wind sprints, all the defensive drills - everything that we do kind of points to this day," Boyle said. "It's probably more important than it should be, but that's the world we live in. You can't bury your head in the sand. When it comes down to one day, one decision and it's out of your hands, it's nerve-wracking."

When the Buffs were officially in, their coach reminded them, "It's a heck of a lot easier when we win the Pac-12 tournament; there's a lot less drama in this room."

But that's next season's goal. A more immediate one awaits in Austin.

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SHOW MENU

## Ringo: Nerves still reality for Buffs on 'Selection Sunday'

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Tad Boyle's face turned pale. Andre Roberson said his heart dropped. There was Oregon on the television screen as a No. 12 seed in the NCAA Tournament during the selection show Sunday afternoon.

It was the same Oregon team that won the Pac-12 Conference Tournament the day before. The same Oregon team that sat atop the conference standings throughout much of the regular season. A 12 seed? Uh-oh.

Roberson said later what many in the room were thinking in that moment early in the broadcast, "If they're a 12, what does that make us?"

There was a nervous energy in Boyle's house where the Colorado men's basketball team gathered to watch the NCAA Tournament selection show. And there shouldn't have been.

This team has the credentials to be playing in the Big Dance. There is no doubt about it. Somehow in that moment that Oregon appeared on the screen, Boyle and his Buffs forgot it was the same Oregon team they swept this season.

But you can't blame Boyle, his assistant coaches, a few of his veteran players and CU administrators for that queasy feeling rumbling around their stomachs Sunday as they waited to see the CU logo flash on the screen. This is a program still scarred by what happened two years ago in the same room. The Buffs thought they had done enough to earn a bid in 2010-11 but were snubbed.

"Logically, and I'm a pretty logical person, it shouldn't have anything to do with it," Boyle said. "But emotionally and human nature and the way life works, we're all scarred and sometimes you're afraid of re-opening those wounds."

Fortunately, the selection committee got it right Sunday at least as it pertains to Colorado and those old wounds were left alone. The Buffs are a No. 10 seed in the East Regional and will play No. 7 seeded Illinois on Friday in Austin, Texas. It's a trip home for Roberson, who came to CU three years ago from nearby San Antonio.

CU produced a 21-11 record. Make that 22-10. The selection committee undoubtedly gave CU credit for what should have been a win over then-No. 3 Arizona on the road Jan. 3, when officials erroneously waved off the game-winning basket and the Buffs went on to lose in overtime.

There has been talk this season about Colorado starting to become a basketball school. If Boyle and his assistants and players continue to perform at this level and the football team continues to struggle, it might one day happen, but it's still years away, and this is how I know.

Despite winning 20 games for third year in a row, something that has never been done at CU ...

Despite setting record attendance numbers this season in Boulder ...

Despite producing RPI and strength of schedule numbers that strongly indicated CU had earned a spot in the

tournament ...

Despite the fact that no reputable tournament bracketologist had seriously questioned CU's résumé for weeks even after losing to Oregon State in the regular season finale ...

The Buffs just couldn't bring themselves to sit there comfortably, palms dry, hearts keeping a normal rhythm and wait to see where they were going.

"I don't even know if I can describe it," Askia Booker said. "Your ears get hot, sweat starts coming down your head ... It's hard. It's nerve-racking, but once you're in, it's all joy."

In the first 5 minutes I was at Boyle's house Sunday, three different people asked some version of the same question about whether the Buffs would hear their name called. The Buffs and their fans want to believe, but they're not quite there yet.

CU basketball is here to stay. Sure, there will be the occasional year the Buffs miss the Big Dance and must settle for the NIT, but this is no longer the program that only occasionally reached the postseason and rarer still, the NCAA Tournament.

The work has been done, the infrastructure is in place, the school is in the right conference, it hired the right coach and has shown it is willing to pay to keep him. Continue to recruit well, continue to coach well, continue to support the team and this should be the expectation going forward. Selection Sundays don't have to be days filled with fear and trepidation Buffs. You belong here. You've earned it.

If CU can beat Illinois, a very real possibility because the Illini have been inconsistent since early January, they will likely face No. 2 seed Miami for a chance to go to the Sweet 16. When Roberson had shed his case of the nerves and finished hugging and high-fiving his coaches and teammates, he said his goal now is to take this team at least one step further than it made it last season when the Buffs lost to Baylor in the round of 32.

Roberson wants to play in a Sweet 16 game. Now that would be something to be nervous about.

Follow Kyle on Twitter: @KyleRingo

## Men's basketball: CU Buffs will face Illinois in NCAA Tournament

By Ryan Thorburn *Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera*

Posted:

DailyCamera.com

NIWOT -- It hasn't quite been three years since Tad Boyle sat down in Andre Roberson's living room in San Antonio, Texas, hoping to land his very first recruit at Colorado.

Boyle loved Roberson's potential but didn't know the skinny and unheralded 6-7 forward would evolve into the Pac-12 defensive player of the year and lead the program to back-to-back NCAA Tournament appearances.

On Selection Sunday, Roberson was sitting in Boyle's living room enjoying the fruits of their labor once again.

The Buffs drew a No. 10 seed and will face No. 7 Illinois in the East Region on Friday in Austin, Texas. They will play at 2:40 p.m. on TNT.

"I'm really happy for Andre getting a chance to go back to Texas," Boyle said. "Austin is a great place and hopefully our fans can make it."

Boyle doesn't mind returning to Big 12 country. However, the former Kansas player was somewhat relieved to avoid the No. 8 vs. No. 9 draw (North Carolina vs. Villanova) in the South Region with the winner likely advancing to play the Jayhawks in Kansas City, Mo.

The Buffs, upset winners over UNLV as a No. 11 seed last year before getting eliminated by Baylor in Albuquerque, N.M., aren't just happy to get into the field of 68.

"Our goal is to make the Sweet 16," said Roberson, whose sister Arielle could be focusing on the same mission with the CU women's team at the NCAA Tournament in Boulder while Andre is competing in Austin. "We want to win at least one more game than last year."

The CU-Illinois winner will play the No. 2 Miami/No. 15 Pacific winner on Sunday.

The Illini (22-12) finished 8-10 in the bruising Big Ten but posted an impressive win at No. 1 Gonzaga during non-conference play.

"They're a very good team from one of the best leagues in the country, if not the best league in our country this year," Boyle said. "They beat Gonzaga at Gonzaga, I don't think anybody else did that this year. They're a quality basketball team and we've got our work cut out for us."

This is the first time in the 113-year history of the program that the Buffs (21-11) have made three consecutive postseason appearances.

CU won the Pac-12 Tournament and the conference's automatic bid to the NCAA Tournament a year ago and made a run to the NIT semifinals two years ago after being snubbed on Selection Sunday.

"I hope we can win a conference championship every year, unfortunately we didn't this year," sophomore shooting guard Askia Booker said. "But we got into the tournament and that's what matters at this point."

This is the 12th time the Buffs have participated in "The Big Dance" and the first time they have made back-to-back appearances in the NCAA Tournament in 50 years (1961-62 and 1962-63).

The Buffs are 10-13 in their NCAA Tournament history with two Finals Fours (1942 and 1955) before the field was significantly expanded.

"In the modern era it's the first back-to-back and we don't want it to be the last," Boyle said. "I think it's a great step forward for our program to get an at-large bid."

A strong non-conference schedule clearly helped CU, which only has one senior (Sabatino Chen) on the roster, avoid the possibility of painful exclusion like the 2010-11 team experienced.

"I'll be honest with you, when I looked at our schedule before the season started ... I was thinking 15 to 17 wins, somewhere in that neighborhood," Boyle said when asked if he expected his talented but inexperienced third CU team to get into the NCAA Tournament. "Less than that, I think we would have underachieved, over that I think we have overachieved given our youth and out schedule early."

The Buffs are 4-1 on neutral courts this season after winning the Charleston Classic in November, beating Oregon State in the opening round of the Pac-12 Tournament, and then losing to No. 18 Arizona in the quarterfinals on Thursday at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

Boyle, the only CU coach to eclipse 20 wins in each of his first three seasons, is the first coach since the legendary Sox Walseth to get the Buffs into the NCAA Tournament in consecutive seasons.

Roberson -- who has led the Buffs in rebounding, steals and blocks in each of his three seasons in Boulder -- returned from a viral illness and played well in Las Vegas, which certainly helped the argument for CU receiving one of the 37 at-large bids.

Now the dynamic coach/player duo returns to the big stage not far from where it all began when Boyle recruited Roberson shortly after taking the CU job in April 2010.

"When I sat down with coach the first time I met him, that's one thing he wanted to do was get this program known nationally and get it some respect," Roberson said. "I feel like we're doing a great job of doing that right now."

Follow Ryan on Twitter: @RyanThorburn

## Colorado Buffaloes start vs. Illinois in NCAA Tournament as 10th seed

By Tom Kensler The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

NIWOT — Moments after "Colorado" flashed Sunday on the TV screen as the No. 10 seed in the NCAA Tournament's East Regional, Buffaloes standout forward Andre Roberson was reminded that No. 7 seed Illinois, CU's opening opponent, plays in arguably the nation's most physical conference, the Big Ten.

Roberson grinned from ear to ear. The Buffs like to mix it up too, he pointed out.

"I think we play our best when we are physical and the refs let us play," said Roberson, the nation's second-leading rebounder (averaging 11.3 per game) behind Siena's O.D. Anosike (11.4). "We know we're going to have to grind it out. It's not going to be an easy win."

Colorado (21-11) and Illinois (22-12) meet Friday in Austin, Texas, at approximately 2:40 p.m. The winner advances to Sunday's "Round of 32" game against the Friday winner of No. 2 seed Miami vs. No. 15 seed Pacific.

CU, which qualified for the NCAA field a year ago by virtue of winning the Pac-12 Tournament, has won 20 or more games in each of three seasons under coach Tad Boyle, the first time in program history.

"This is a great step for our program to get an at-large bid," Boyle said. "That shows respect."

CU players and staff members gathered Sunday at Boyle's house to watch the CBS selection show.

But Boyle learned his lesson from two years ago when he threw a big party that ended early, in disappointment. This time, boosters were left off the guest list.

Boyle and his players suffered quietly through some anxious moments Sunday as two regionals were announced without Colorado being mentioned and Pac-12 teams receiving lower than expected seeds. Nationally, recognized "bracketologists" had slotted Colorado into the tournament, but the longer the show went, Boyle began to wonder if the Buffs would be left out again.

"We were a little bit nervous about it," Boyle said. "I looked over at Andre and he was nervous. Andre was one of those who was reluctant to come over to the house and watch.

"It's not because of what this team did this year," Boyle added. "I told Andre that I felt good. It's all about two years. We are all a little bit scarred."

Roberson's nerves turned to elation when CU was shown on the screen.

He grew up in San Antonio, has an older sister who played volleyball for the University of Texas and is ready to be a tour guide for the team. And if there is no time for sightseeing, at least Roberson can make sure the bus driver doesn't get lost.

"There's going to be a lot of fans for us in Austin," Roberson said. "I've already gotten a lot of texts. I'm going to have to make a lot of phone calls. My family is really happy."



Boyle said Sunday that he hadn't yet studied the bracket, but he knows Illinois will be a difficult challenge.

"They are a very good team," Boyle said, "that is in one of the best, if not the best leagues in the country."

Boyle said he is familiar with the scoring ability of 6-foot-4 Illini senior guard Brandon Paul, who is regarded as one of the nation's best shooters. Boyle said he likely will put one of his best defenders, the 6-7 Roberson or 6-6 guard Spencer Dinwiddie, on Paul.

"I'll do it," Roberson said eagerly.

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## A look at the Illini

ILLINOIS (22-12, 8-10 in Big Ten)

Location: Champaign, Ill.

Conference: The Illini were the eighth seed in the Big Ten Tournament. After beating Minnesota 51-49 in the first round on Brandon Paul's buzzer beater, Illinois lost to top-seeded Indiana 80-64 in the quarterfinals.

Coach: John Groce is finishing his first season at Illinois after he spent four seasons at Ohio, where he was 85-56 and went to the NCAA Tournament in 2010 and 2012. Before that, he was at Ohio State and spent eight seasons as an assistant to Thad Matta (at OSU, Xavier and Butler).

Starting lineup: Forward — Tyler Griffey, 6-foot-9, Sr. (averaging 7.1 points, 3.3 rebounds). Center — Nnanna Ekwu, 6-11, So. (6.5, 4.6, 1.3 blocks). Guards — Tracy Abrams, 6-1, So. (10.4, 3.5, 3.4 assists); D.J. Richardson, 6-3, Sr. (12.5, 4.0, 1.6); Brandon Paul, 6-4, Sr. (7.1, 3.3, 0.5).

Key reserves: Sam McLaurin, F, 6-2, Sr. (4.0, 3.3, 0.5); Joseph Bertrand, G, 6-6, Jr. (7.4, 4.3, 0.5); Mike LaTulip, G, 6-0, Fr. (1.2, 0.1, 0.0).

Scouting report: Illinois had a 7-9 record against teams in the top 50 of the RPI this season. The Illini started 12-0 and beat No. 1 Gonzaga, Indiana (when it was ranked No. 1) and No. 10 Ohio State. Illinois enters the game having lost three of its last four, a stretch in which it has shot just 32.5 percent.

Key stats: Illinois has exceeded 70 points 16 times this season after doing so just 10 times in 32 games a season ago. The Illini are 14-2 when scoring 70 or more points. ... Richardson ranks third in Illinois in career 3-pointers, having made 273. ... With 22 wins, Illinois secured its most victories since the 2008-09 season (24). ... The Illini held their opponents to fewer than 60 points in seven of their past nine wins.

Tournament history: It is their 30th appearance, with a 39-30 record. In their most recent appearance in the Final Four, they lost to North Carolina in the title game in 2005.