



# COLORADO BUFFALOES

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*Men's basketball coach Tad Boyle addresses students at Berry Creek Middle School in Edwards.*

Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



## Brooks: CU Coaches Caravan Postcard - Day 5

Release: 05/17/2013 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

**GRAND JUNCTION** – The 2013 Colorado Coaches Caravan/State Stampede is a wrap, ending Friday after five days and 30 in-state stops.

Was it a success?

CU Athletic Director Mike Bohn and the Buffaloes' new football coach, Mike MacIntyre, gave the tour an emphatic thumbs up.

"Anytime you engage the public on a broad spectrum from people associated with the university and people who are not – some may be disconnected, some may be close – you get feedback and feel their connection with the institution," Bohn said. "It's been extremely gratifying and inspirational – it's touched all of us – that they're paying attention and that they care."

MacIntyre, hired in December and seeing much of Colorado for the first time, termed the tour "very beneficial" from the standpoint of "seeing the different communities, getting a feel for the exact locations, the distances in between – that sort of thing. It's been a lot of fun meeting the ground-floor faithful, so to speak."

On four days of bus trips – kudos to Horizon Coach Lines – to Fort Collins to the north and Pueblo to the south

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**CU Coaches Caravan**

and stops in between, MacIntyre also got acquainted with men's basketball coach Tad Boyle and women's basketball coach Linda Lappe. That, too, he said was beneficial after only five months on the job.

"As you well know, we've all been in the bus for a while, cars and speaking at different places and interacting," MacIntyre said. "That's been a lot of fun seeing the different personalities, which is great. I think it's really been good because now we can make connections, help each other in recruiting or different situations that arise from time to time and have each other's back."

Central to the tour's mission was helping CU build on a sense of statewide community among its fan base. Bohn believed the Caravan and the interaction it provided for coaches and fans helped this tour accomplish that this spring maybe more than any past tour.

"Our expectations are always high, but we couldn't be prouder from the military to the civic leaders to all the different people that came and talked to us and shared their views," Bohn said. "We're appreciative of them. It's one of the missions of our statewide tour to say thank you for their support and emotional connection to the university."

Bohn said meeting so many new people and reconnecting with others "has been a real treat."

MacIntyre managed to "keep it fresh" with a new story at nearly every stop – although he said the final stop in Grand Junction "might tax me . . . maybe I'll have to tell one over again." He didn't, recalling his tenure as secondary coach at Temple in 1998 and a stunning schematic change in a week that helped the Owls to a 24-20 upset of No. 5 Virginia Tech – a 38.5-point favorite.

Bohn said MacIntyre's repertoire of football tales will expand: "He's going to have a chance to grow some of his own (at CU) and that'll make it even better."

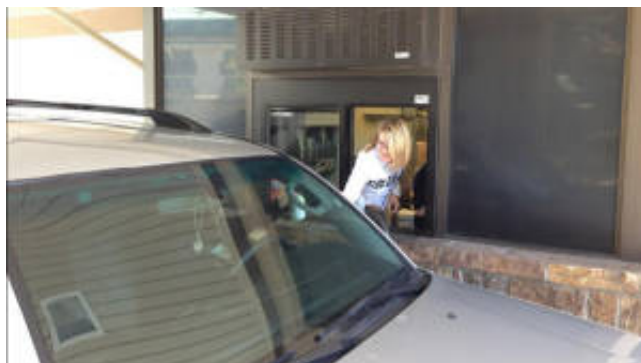
Bohn called MacIntyre "a true gentleman and a professional at each and every spot. He's shared so much about himself; he's all in, he's jumped in with both feet. He realizes the pride and the connection with the community. That's been so important this week – community and how we're all interconnected. Mike really drove that home in a big way. It's been great for him to be able to see the state and meet the people. It's been invaluable for him."

Bohn also said the interest shown by Buffs fans at every stop provided "a great message to take back to our student-athletes. They represent so much more and so many things that are bigger and greater than themselves. We have the ability to deliver that message back to them."

Friday's stops included the McDonald's in West Vail, the Berry Creek Middle School in Edwards, and one final happy hour meeting at the Doubletree Grand Junction.

Hitting Friday's highlights:

- On the final day, the Caravan picked up a "newbie" – CU Chancellor Phil DiStefano, who joined the tour for the morning flight to Vail, then the afternoon trip to Grand Junction. He had attended Day One's final stop in Boulder. "From what I saw from our three head coaches and other coaches in attendance then, they've had a wonderful outreach to the state," DiStefano said. "I want to congratulate all of them."
- Former CU tight end Quinn Sypniewski (2000-05) met the Caravan at the McDonald's in West Vail, making the short trip from his home in nearby Avon.



Having had practice on Tuesday, women's basketball head coach Linda Lappe is in a zone working the McDonald's Drive Thru in Vail.



CU mascot Chip has a rare quiet moment before heading to Vail during the final day of the CU Coaches Caravan.

He's married now (Mia) and has two children (Keira, Kolt). Sypniewski played four seasons for the Baltimore Ravens before a series of left knee injuries terminated his NFL career 21/2 years ago. Sounds nearly unbelievable, but he's had nine surgeries on his knee – the most recent on April 12. He's on crutches for three months and wearing a brace, and when he discards the crutches he'll be relegated to low impact exercise. Of his time with the Ravens, he laughed and said, "I don't know what they were thinking, but they had to go ahead and win their Super Bowls without me."

- Also visiting the West Vail McDonald's for a visit with the Caravan was former college athletics administrator Chuck Neinas, whose son, Toby, coaches special teams for MacIntyre. Chuck Neinas and wife Patty Pacey have a home in Vail and were in the area for the day. "When I heard about this stop on the tour, I thought I'd drop by," he said. "It's good to see so many familiar faces."
- Chuck has received a glowing report from his son on MacIntyre. "He tells me he's never been with a better coach in terms of leadership and organization," the elder Neinas said. Only 41, Toby Neinas this fall will enter his 18th season as a full-time college assistant. He's been at Temple, Alabama-Birmingham, San Diego State, New Mexico and most recently at Montana State, where MacIntyre found him.
- Friday's second stop was at the Berry Creek Middle School in Edwards, where principal Amy Vanwel assembled her 350 students to hear Boyle talk about goal setting, MacIntyre on what it means to be a student-athlete and Lappe on sportsmanship, team work, respect, pride and competition.
- As a bonus, the students received an extemporaneous and insightful message from Associate Athletic Director Jim Senter on the courage required to stand up to bullying.
- The coaches complied with students' autograph requests, but the middle school session's rock star was mascot Chip. Apologies to MacIntyre, Boyle and Lappe, but the line for Chip's autograph dwarfed the coaches' lines. No surprise, but Chip was a week-long hit.
- At the tour's last stop, Boyle told of an affinity for Grand Junction that arose from a bet with his mom that he could stop drinking Coca-Cola for a year. When he did and won the bet, his payoff was going to the Ed McCauley basketball camp at Mesa State. Boyle went that year and for the next several. "I've always had a soft spot in my heart for Grand Junction," he said.
- Lappe's team will travel to Italy in August, which she said will give her added time to ponder how to replace leading scorer/rebounder Chucky Jeffery. Throughout the tour, Lappe said that replacing Jeffery likely would be done by committee.
- The Caravan's 30 stops didn't magically fall into place. Josi Carlson, assistant director of special events, and Gail Pederson, chief of staff, fashioned a five-day tour with few hitches. If there's a tour next spring, here's hoping it unfolds as smoothly and productively.

Contact: [BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU](mailto:BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU)

SHOW MENU



## Colorado Coaches Caravan offers insights on Buffs football, basketball

By John Henderson *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

Posted:

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Random observations after following the Colorado Coaches Caravan for three days from Colorado Springs to Pueblo, also known as the I-25 Chip Toss:

- The approaches of the three main coaches are as different as their sports. Basketball coaches Tad Boyle and Linda Lappe tell gathered alumni how they plan to maintain success of NCAA Tournaments and Top 25 rankings. First-year football coach Mike MacIntyre explains how he'll lift up the 1-11 Buffaloes from abject embarrassment.

If anyone can sell it, it's MacIntyre. His down-home, Tennessee-bred Southern hospitality jumps out of his pores. At every stop he spins a different tale with a pertinent point about Colorado's future.

Like in Pueblo on Wednesday, when he told of the time in 1982 when he was a ninth-grade ball boy for his father George's Vanderbilt team. It hadn't won an SEC game in six years and nearly won at Alabama, 24-21. Alabama coach Bear Bryant came into his dad's locker room and told the Commodores they outplayed Alabama and shouldn't lose another game.

Vanderbilt won its next six straight before losing to Air Force in the Hall of Fame Classic Bowl to finish 8-4, its best season since 1955.

"What that taught me is it's so much of a confidence and a mental game," MacIntyre told the crowd, "that if you believe in yourself, there are unbelievable things you can accomplish."

- I wondered how big of an impact the sports have in Denver. The coaches all worked the drive-thru window at the McDonald's on West Colfax, and each one had to introduce him or herself to the drivers.

But at least they had a sense of humor. While MacIntyre was learning how to work the cash register, I asked him, "Checking out other jobs in case you don't go to a bowl game the next five years?"

He laughed. I think he meant it.

- The crowds were good but not overflowing. Despite Boyle's and Lappe's success, this isn't exactly Tobacco Road. I met a few alumni in Pueblo and Colorado Springs on Wednesday who stopped making the drive for football games. They will make the trips this year. The alumni in Pueblo were particularly grateful for the stop.

"There are too many Rams down here," one told me.

- Boyle put up a brave front when talking about the early departure of Andre Roberson to the NBA draft. "We support Andre in any goal he pursues," was his mantra. I also noticed Boyle said Roberson "is beginning his career in pro basketball." Good point.

After all, the D-League is not the NBA.

- Good thing Boyle can coach. He'll have a hard time explaining to his players how, at Tuesday's Blake Street Tavern happy hour stop, a waitress nearly beat him in a game of Pop-A-Shot.

- In a bit of news, MacIntyre announced the defensive line is well on its way to losing the combined 100 pounds as per instructions. Three have already lost 20 each. Also, 6-foot-10 forward Josh Scott has gained 10 pounds, Boyle said, and is 15 away from their goal of 245.
- Chip, the buffalo mascot, managed to spend three days and 19 stops (many of them private) without uttering a word.
- The caravan continues Thursday at 12:30-1:30 p.m. at Pasta Jay's (registration required for lunch) at 9226 Park Meadows Dr. in Lone Tree and 4:30-5:30 p.m. at the Lone Tree Safeway at 9229 E. Lincoln Ave. On Friday it's at the West Vail McDonald's at 2171 N. Frontage Rd. West from 11 a.m.-noon and the Doubletree Grand Junction happy hour (registration required) at 743 Horizon Dr. in Grand Junction from 4:30-6:30 p.m.

For registration, visit [CUBuffs.com/coachescaravan](http://CUBuffs.com/coachescaravan).

John Henderson: 303-954-1299, [jhenderson@denverpost.com](mailto:jhenderson@denverpost.com) or [twitter.com/johnhendersondp](https://twitter.com/johnhendersondp)

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