

Colorado men's basketball: NCAA rule changes will have impact on Boyle's CU Buffs

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

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Colorado men's basketball coach Tad Boyle has always loved when his players stand their ground and take a charge on defense.

He's hoping the Buffs continue to do that, but new NCAA rules will make it more difficult than ever before.

In an effort to see more scoring and limit some of the contact on the court, the NCAA has adopted new rules in regards to hand checking and the block/charge call.

"They're going to affect everybody; they're going to affect the whole game," Boyle said of the new rules. "I like the hand-check rule. I'm very concerned and worried about the block/charge rule."

That rule, in particular, will have an impact on CU, because of Boyle's emphasis on taking charges. With the new rules, once an offensive player has started an upward motion with the ball, the defender can no longer move into that player's path. The defender has to already be in position.

"We're going to have to adjust, but I don't like the rule," Boyle said. "I think it lets the officials default to the block, so anything that's close is going to be a block. It's the hardest play in basketball to call anyway. As a defender, you're allowed spots on the floor in legal guarding position. We just have to get to our spots earlier."

On Thursday at Pac-12 media day in San Francisco, Bobby Dibler, the Pac-12's new coordinator of men's basketball officiating, said he expects more blocks to be called early in the season because of this rule change.

That is likely to have a big impact on the Buffs, although sophomore Xavier Johnson said the players simply need to adjust and stay aggressive.

"Just get your feet straight," he said. "If you see a man coming out of control, stand your ground and just take it."

Boyle still wants his team to take charges, so the Buffs will have to learn how to do so within the new rules -- even if it means a few more defensive fouls during the adjustment process.

"Yeah, they might call the block, but eventually if we're doing the right thing, they're going to have to call a charge," guard Askia Booker said. "You just have to play through it, but don't change your mentality. We're not going to change."

Conversely, some of the Buffs might benefit from the new rule on offense.

"That's good for me, because last year I had quite a few offensive charges," Johnson said. "So, that makes me happy."

The rule on hand checking is aimed at reducing contact and disallowing the use of the forearm to stop an offensive player. For some defenders, that's going to be a major adjustment. Booker, however, is not concerned.

"On the defensive end, I'm just going to have to use my quickness to stay in front and not be so physical with these guys," he said. "I think that's just something we have to get better on day by day and eventually we should be just fine."

Booker has been working on his leg strength so that he can be a more effective defender with the new rules.

Offensively, Booker loves the new rule because it should free him up to be a more effective scorer.

"I don't see many guards staying in front if they can't put their hands on me," Booker said. "The best chance you have is contesting a jump shot now. At the same time, I'm willing to attack the basket more."

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Colorado men's basketball: Askia Booker on the mend

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Colorado guard Askia Booker is getting close to returning to practice, he said. He has been sidelined for nearly two weeks with a virus that sapped his energy.

"I just had to sit out and wait until my body could fight it off," he said. "I think my body is on its way back."

He did some conditioning work Monday in anticipation of being cleared to play, possibly as early as Tuesday, he said.

Booker has missed being on the court, but said he's seen a benefit from it, as well.

"I watch a lot of film, I talk with coaches and I see what they're seeing while practice is going on -- the mistakes that they're seeing," he said. "When I get back in the game, it's going to be a little different."

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