

HEAD COACH ROY EDWARDS



Roy Edwards is now in his seventh season as head coach of the University of Colorado men's golf team, having been named to the position on July 14, 2006, following in the footsteps of the only two coaches the program had ever known over a span of six decades.

Edwards, 36, is just the third full-time men's golf coach in Buffalo history. He came to CU with an impressive pedigree, joining the Buffaloes from his alma mater, the

University of Kansas, where he had served as the assistant for both the men's and women's programs for the previous four years (2002-06). He held the same position at Vanderbilt University for a year prior to returning to KU.

Edwards replaced the late Mark Simpson, who passed away from complications due to lung cancer in December 2005. Simpson had held the post since 1977, when he followed in the footsteps of his college head coach, Les Fowler. Fowler took over as player-coach in 1948 and remained on board until Simpson, his assistant, replaced him. Thus, Edwards is only the program's third full-time head coach since 1948.

"Coach Fowler and Coach Simpson have built an extremely proud legacy at the University of Colorado," Edwards said when he was hired. "It's a privilege to follow them at CU, which is truly one of the great institutions in the world and it is an honor to be named its head men's golf coach."

Edwards is faced with the most daunting task in CU golf history: with the Buffaloes joining the Pacific-10 Conference on July 1, 2011, making it the Pac-12, Colorado is now a member of the most prestigious men's golf conference in the nation. As many as seven schools have regularly occupied the top 30 over the last several seasons. But he is up to the challenge and the program is positioned to join the nation's elite.

It took less than three years for Edwards to put his stamp on the CU golf program, perhaps in no bigger way than completing the dream of his two predecessors. One of the few major golf programs in the nation without its own true home golf course and facilities, Edwards played an integral part in working with Colorado alum Steve Kerr in the latter's acquisition of Vista Ridge Golf Club in Erie in early 2009. The club officially became

Colorado National Golf Club in March of that year and now serves as the official home for the university's men's and women's golf teams. In 2012, construction was completed on a state-of-the-art practice facility at the course that matches any in the nation.

He also initiated the Colorado Partners program, a group that quickly grew to over 100 members who contribute financially to augment the school's golf budget, and established the Colorado Golf Day which is an annual celebration and fundraiser for CU golf.

On the course, the team has enjoyed success and endured some struggles but has continually shown promise. In 2011-12, his sixth season, the Buffs stormed out of the gate to win its first two fall tournaments, their own Mark Simpson Invitational and Air Force's Miranda Invitational; the victories propelled CU to an early No. 10 national ranking. The team successfully navigated its way through its first season in the ultra-competitive Pac-12 Conference, finishing eighth in a league championship that featured eight teams ranked in the top 30. The Buffs just missed qualifying for the NCAA championships but junior Derek Fribbs was selected to play as an individual.

The 2009-10 and 2010-11 teams, his fourth and fifth, respectively, had their moments but did not advance to the postseason, though Justin Bardgett qualified individually in 2010. The Buffs finished ninth and 10th in their last two appearances in the Big 12 Conference meet. The disappointments only created more resolve in the program and thus the turnaround in year six.

His third Buffalo team (2008-09) sported one of the nation's dynamic duos in Patrick Grady and Derek Tolan, as each won two tournaments and combined for 14 top 10 finishes. But the team was also balanced as a whole, with 32 top 20 performances posted by seven different golfers, and recorded a 74.06 stroke average, second lowest in school history (topped only by 73.77 in 2003-04). The Buffs posted 11 top 10 finishes in major tournaments, the second-most in school history that included a record-tying seven in the top five, and highlighted by a 34-stroke win in the DU-Ron Moore and three runner-up finishes in the USF Olympic Club, Western Intercollegiate and its own CU-Stevenson Ranch Invitational.

In earning a fourth straight trip to the NCAA's, in the Big 12 Championships, the Buffs posted their best conference finish in 28 years when they took second place; it tied for the largest improvement from one season to another in Big 12 history after finishing 10th in 2008 (CU moved from 11th to 3rd from 1997 to 1998 as did Missouri



on one occasion). The Buffs were in the hunt for the title until the back nine of the fourth and final round, when Oklahoma State finally was able to get some distance and eventually won by 14 shots.

His second team, in 2007-08, became just the third in school history to win two major tournaments in the same season, as the Buffs won the Louisiana Classics and the Ohio State Kepler Intercollegiate. The Buffs finished 10th in the Big 12 meet, which moved to a 72-hole format for the first time, and was again invited to the NCAA's, placing 18th in the Central Regional. Junior Derek Tolan was one of two individuals to advance out of the regional into the finals, the first Buff to do so since 1993.

Edwards' first CU team (2006-07) had moderate success, and finished 11th in the Big 12 Championships; while that was disappointing, his team did something that neither Fowler's or Simpson's did, qualify for the NCAA Championships (though in fairness, more teams are invited today than when they coached, but it still was an impressive accomplishment). The team placed 20th in the NCAA Central Regional.

At Kansas, he was heavily involved in recruiting and the day-to-day functions for both the men's and women's teams, managed the Jayhawks' Birdie Club and was the main contact for both golf camps. A KU graduate, he returned to his alma mater in August 2002 as the assistant coach for both the men's and women's programs and further developed all the skills necessary to one day become a head coach. Among his many duties were coordinating and managing a \$1 million-plus fundraising campaign for KU's golf practice facility and establishing an annual booster club program.

During his time at Kansas, he was one of three finalists for the Golf Coaches Association of America Assistant Coach of the Year in 2004 and helped coach six first-team All-Big 12 players (five men, one woman) and four Academic All-Americans. He started his coaching career as a volunteer/graduate assistant in 1998, working three years in that capacity before moving on to Vanderbilt for his first full-time assistant coaching position. During this time, he was also the Junior Golf Director for the Kansas Golf Association, running all activities for over 600 junior members of the KGA.

He was the assistant for both the men's and women's teams at Vanderbilt for the 2001-02 season. He was a part of history as both teams experienced two of the best seasons in the programs' existence the year he was a part of the program. He had a hand in coaching a pair of first-team All-Southeastern Conference players, including Brandt Snedeker, a first-team All-American, the 2007 PGA Tour Rookie of the Year and current star on the Tour.

Between KU and Vanderbilt, he coached five players who attained some level of All-American status, ranging from first-team to honorable mention.

A three-year member of the Jayhawk golf team, he lettered as a senior under legendary and long-time coach Ross Randall and earned his bachelor's of science degree in business administration from Kansas in 2000. Simultaneously while finishing his degree, he worked as a volunteer assistant coach for the men's team. His career playing highlights include being named the PGA Midwest Section Player of the Year in 1995 and



the Heart of America Four-Ball champion in 1997. As a student, he was also heavily involved on KU's Student-Athlete Advisory Committee and held several leadership roles on campus.

Simpson and Randall were good friends, and their teams would cross paths during the regular season four or five on the average before the league championships. Not including his year at Vanderbilt, Edwards was with the Jayhawks for 56 tournaments as a player or assistant coach since 1996 that the two schools were in the same field, aiding his familiarity with the CU program.

Born October 14, 1976 in Kansas City, Mo., but truly a native of Hutchinson, Kan., he was a four-year letterman in golf at Hutchinson (Kan.) High School under legendary Kansas high school coach Rusty Hilst, one of his early mentors in the game. His hobbies include playing golf, cooking and traveling, and he was also an Eagle Scout in high school. His father, R.A., is a distinguished KU alum who was awarded the 2002 Fred Ellsworth Medallion for "unique and significant service to the university" (which two grandparents also earned). An uncle, Ray Evans, is recognized as one of the greatest athletes in KU history, as he was a two-time All-American in basketball (1942-43) and was KU's first football All-American after returning from World War II in 1947.

Edwards is married to the former Shelly Bonfantine of Albuquerque, N.M., as they wed on July 7, 2007 (07-07-07); she is a former golfer at the University of New Mexico. They are the parents of two sons, Ashton Ross (4) and Luke Leo (1).