



Bufs will host men's golf invitational in Erie

Event to debut in September 2010 at Colorado National GC

By Gary Baines
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The last time the University of Colorado men's golf team hosted a full-fledged invitational tournament in Colorado, a guy named Justin Leonard finished near the top of the leaderboard.

Three years earlier, the reigning U.S. Amateur champion, Phil Mickelson, won CU's home tournament.

That's two contenders who went on to win Grand Slam events -- not a bad legacy for the five years the Bufs hosted the CU-Fox Acres Invitational in Red Feather Lakes in northern Colorado (1989-93).

And now CU is hoping to add to the storied history of tournaments it's hosted in the state.

Roy Edwards, coach of the men's golf team, said recently that starting in September 2010, the Bufs will host an invitational at their new home course, Colorado National Golf Club in Erie.

Tournament dates are set for Sept. 27-28, 2010, with practice rounds scheduled for Sept. 26. Two rounds will be played Sept. 27, with the final round scheduled for Sept. 28.

"This is a really big deal," Edwards said. "Anytime you play at home, that's a good thing, and this tournament should be attractive to fellow schools. And Colorado National is a good test."

Edwards said the yet-to-be-named tournament, which will be an annual affair, will likely feature 12-15 teams, and the coach hopes that includes most of the nearby Front Range-based Division I programs. Invitations will probably go out later this summer.

The 2010 tournament should be particularly attractive because CU will host an NCAA regional tournament at Colorado National later that season. The regional, one of six nationwide and the first ever held in Colorado, is set for May 19-21, 2011.

Colorado National, then known as Vista Ridge Golf Club, was purchased late last year by former CU golfer Steve Kerr, who subsequently renamed the club and made it the home course for the CU men's and women's golf teams.

The proximity to CU of the Bufs' new tournament will be a nice change for local golf fans who don't get to see much college golf in the area. Colorado National is less than 15 miles from Boulder. In contrast, Fox Acres is approximately 90 miles away.

Last September, when the University of Denver hosted a tournament at Green Valley Ranch Golf Club, it marked the first time a Division I men's college golf invitational had been held in the Denver metro

area since 2004.

“We’re excited,” Edwards said. “It’s a great way to energize our fans. They’ll have access to the team in competition.”

The tournament at Colorado National essentially will replace the out-of-state invitational CU has hosted for the last decade in Stevinson, Calif., east of San Jose. But this coming season, 2009-10, the Buffs won’t host a tournament at all as the 11th and final CU-Stevinson Ranch Invitational was held in April, when Buff senior Pat Grady claimed the individual title.



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