



Tomlinson rises from Down Under

By Ryan Thorburn

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Jeff Bzdelik and his staff spanned the globe -- from Sydney, Australia, to Lee, Maine -- to recruit the point guard they wanted to run their system for the next four years at Colorado.

Nate Tomlinson, the first Australian to play basketball at CU, spent the past two seasons honing his skills and taking care of his academic responsibilities at Lee Academy in Maine. His father, Billy, is a professional basketball coach in his native Sydney.

Last year Tomlinson -- who turned 19 years old in July and stands 6-foot-2 -- played with Australia's under-19 national team at a tournament in Serbia.

This is the third installment in a five-part Q&A series that will introduce Camera readers to the Buffs' five-man freshman class.

Here's our first conversation with Tomlinson:

BC: How did a kid from Sydney end up in Boulder?

NT: Well, I actually did two years of prep school up in Maine and just sort of got recruited up there from (CU assistant) Derrick Clark. He knows my father back home in Australia. Last summer I played with Australia in Serbia and they sort of kept an eye on me and that sort of stuff. And then they came and recruited me early last year up in Maine, came up to my school and I met Coach Bzdelik and all the other coaches and really liked how they were with people and the basketball side of things. Then I came for a visit last November and just loved the place, loved the people here, loved the atmosphere and all the stuff that was starting to happen. Everything was starting to move forward with the basketball program. With the history of the football team, they're trying to create that with the basketball team. I wanted to be a part of that.

BC: How difficult was it to live so far away from home? And up in Maine no less.

NT: In Maine I was up in the sticks. It was a big adjustment but the people up there were nice. It was a small town and a big change moving from the city to the country like that. The people helped me a lot up there. The basketball side of things was good, too.

BC: What do you think of America?

NT: Everyone drives big cars ... no, it's good. People ask me that but I couldn't really tell them because Maine is not the stereotypical America. Boulder is good. I enjoy the people and I'm just looking forward to being here.

BC: Your dad coaches a professional basketball team in Australia. Have you been playing the sport all

your life?

NT: I have, yeah. My mom was sort of the player in the family, my dad played a little bit. I've played my whole life and just love being around it and being around pro athletes. It makes you dream to be like them. My father has helped me a lot, guided me the right way, put me with the right people and that sort of stuff.

BC: Who are some of the best players you've scrimmaged against back home?

NT: When the Australian team comes in the likes of (Andrew) Bogut and all the best players back home. A lot of them.

BC: Did you think Australia would give the Redeem Team a better go in Beijing?

NT: The first time they played them I thought it was good. I was really surprised because they didn't have Bogut for their whole preparation, so throwing him in there shuffled things around a little bit and they struggled with him in there. The first time they played them they did well, I thought they competed. The second time you could tell nobody was going to beat them. They had a mission and they weren't going to be stopped. The Australian guys did a good job and competed like they always do. Hopefully a few years down the track a couple of young guys like (St. Mary's) Pat (Mills) and (Vanderbilt's) A.J. (Ogilvy) coming through will be really good for us.

BC: Where does basketball rank on the sports food chain Down Under?

NT: These days it's slipping. It was up there really good. They're trying to redo the whole stature of the league and build it up again. We have really good juniors and the league over in Australia is slipping but they're rebuilding and restructuring it all so in the next couple years it should slide up. We don't have that many people in Australia, like 20 million, and we have so many sports. For the size of the country we're really good at sports. We have cricket and all those different kinds of rugby and football we have. We're doing all right.

BC: What do you think of American football? Been to Folsom Field yet?

NT: I love it. It's crazy because everybody is so into it and loves the school team. The games are so slow and they go forever, but it's fun.

BC: Is Jeff similar to your father at all in terms of his coaching style?

NT: He's amazing. He's so professional in everything he does. My father sort of taught me how to play, he never really coached me like on a team because he was so busy with what he did. But Coach Bzdelik, I'm just looking forward to being here and he was one of the main reasons I came here, obviously. The few weeks I've been here, being on the court with him he's just so professional. Everything has to be first-class, done right and that's how you get it done.

BC: How much will your international experience help the transition to the Big 12?

NT: It will definitely help me a lot. The style of play and the physicality side of things in international ball is really up there. It has given me a lot of experience and I've seen a lot. Obviously coming into college and playing against Kansas will be a different sort of level but I think I'm up to it. I'm ready.

BC: What are your expectations this season? There are five freshmen in the class and Jeff has said you guys aren't coming here to redshirt.

NT: I'm really excited and can't wait. Everyone is on board, nobody thinks they're better than anyone else, everyone is ready. We're young but we don't want that to be an excuse. We're all coming here and we want to win from Day One. That's been our thing the whole way along. I think we're ready to give it a shot.

BC: What are your early impressions of your new teammates?

NT: Great guys, first of all. That's the sort of people you want to be around, people that want to be with you, play with you and give it all out there. They're great guys and I'm looking forward to working with them every day.



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Bufs run streak to five, beat Memphis

CU finishes road trip with 2-1 win

Camera staff report

Monday, September 15, 2008

MEMPHIS, Tenn. -- The Colorado soccer team extended its winning streak to five games with a 2-1 win over Memphis on Sunday.

Colorado (5-1-1) captured its second-straight come-from-behind victory on a pair of second-half goals. Alex Cousins scored on a penalty kick to tie the game in the 52nd minute and Kelly Butler scored the game-winner in the 71st minute.

"Friday we won with a lot of determination and really good play, and today we won with what was left," said CU coach Bill Hempen, whose team beat Ole Miss on Friday. "I am pretty sure that they are exhausted right now and while it wasn't particularly pretty, we did enough."

The Tigers opened the game up late in the first half, breaking through the Colorado defense and getting on the board by way of a Melissa Smith goal

Cousins' PK was her second this season, with the other coming against James Madison.

Butler, a freshman, scored her second goal of the season. She sent a high ball toward the goal that went right over the goalkeepers hands, giving CU the 2-1 lead.

With two goals and two assists, Butler is CU's second-leading scorer along with senior Amber Bettenhausen.

"It feels good to have a winning streak going on but we need to work on not chasing the game," Butler said. "We can't always be playing catch-up."

The Buffaloes' current five-game win streak is the longest since 2004 when CU had a pair of six-game winning streaks.

Colorado hosts the Colorado Soccer Classic on Friday. The Buffs will host Denver, Fresno State and Gonzaga on Sept. 19-21 at Prentup Field.



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