

**March 16, 2012**



An interview with:



THE MODERATOR: Questions for Colorado's student-athletes.

**Q. It seems like it was only two weeks ago you guys were playing in Oregon. What triggered the dramatic run? And what's it been like since then?**

NATE TOMLINSON: It has been a bit of a change. We took two hard losses in Corvallis. We had to come together as a group when we got back to Boulder. We had one of our best practices of the year a couple days before we went out to L.A., we really came together as a group out there, and the roll just continued into last night.

**Q. This question is for Carlon and Nate. I know you guys are probably used to hearing it when you're playing on your home court. But what was it like last night with the Colorado fans, and did that make a difference in your performance at all?**

CARLON BROWN: It was great walking out to the floor, seeing all the black and gold at the top. Really gave us a lot of energy. We did feel like we were playing at home. So our fans have been great all year. Obviously, bringing them to L.A. was a great attribute to us winning. We can't thank Mike Bohn and the CU fans enough for their continued support throughout this run.

NATE TOMLINSON: Yeah, I can't say more than what Carlon said. They've been great the whole year and really helped us get through some tough games at home and obviously on the road in L.A. Like Carlon said, they've been awesome all year.

**Q. Austin and Nate, you guys played a UNLV team that you hadn't played in forever. Now this is a team that you're familiar with in Baylor. How different is it preparing for a team that you know as well as you do from playing them in the Big 12?**

AUSTIN DUFAULT: It's definitely nice just having the familiarity with them. They pretty much have the same team back from last year with a couple of additions. So they play the same way, the same personnel. So both teams know a lot about each other, and I think it should be a good match-up.

NATE TOMLINSON: Yeah, like Austin said, being familiar with the team helps a lot this time of the year. It helped us out in L.A.

Like you said, Baylor plays the same way they did last year, real athletic and real big. We know what we have to do to beat them. We were close to beating them last year at their place, and if we do the same things, we'll be all right.

**Q. Nate, does it seem a little unusual playing Baylor the year after you all left the conference that you played in together?**

NATE TOMLINSON: Yeah, this time of year you don't know who you're going to play. But us being familiar with Baylor is good for us, I think. We saw that we could potentially play them, it was a good feeling. Always had good battles against them. I don't think it will be anything different tomorrow.

**Q. Austin, is this going to be the best team you've played? It seems like on paper anyway looking at the schedule, this might be the best team. Where are your advantages going to be? Where are CU's advantages going to be in this match-up?**

AUSTIN DUFAULT: They're just a really big and athletic team. But one thing about us is our interior guys can step out on the perimeter, and we're going to be difficult to guard, I think, in pick-and-roll situations because we can either roll

or pop. We're pretty versatile.

As far as our guards, their guards are pretty small, a couple of them, so hopefully we can try to take advantage of that match-up there.

Definitely talent-wise, probably the best team we've played this year. Got a lot of great guys, NBA guys, but that's why you play the game.

**Q. Carlon, Pac-12 basketball has been a little bit disrespected across the country. You got two bids. What kind of chance is this for you guys to not only show for yourself, but for your conference?**

CARLON BROWN: I think tomorrow's a great opportunity for us to see what -- I mean for the nation to see what we're capable of doing. Obviously, like these guys are saying, Baylor's a great team, but if we execute the game plan that Coach has in store, we don't feel that we should be scared or that we're an inferior opponent. We just feel we have to play our game and execute.

We're not necessarily carrying a torch ourselves for the Pac-12, but we know that's what the media's building upon and what the Pac-12 wants us to do. But mainly we're playing for ourselves, each other, our fans and our coaching staff.

NATE TOMLINSON: Yeah, I was really surprised when I saw Cal's game the other night. I think Cal's an excellent team. I think they had a bit of a tough first half that put them behind the eight ball. I think the Pac-12 is a better league than what it's gotten credit for this year. There are a lot of tough teams at the top of the league that battled all year. Like I said, I was very surprised with what Cal did the other night.

AUSTIN DUFAULT: Yeah, just agreeing with these two guys. I think the Pac-12's a good league. I don't think by any means we have to go out there and prove our league or anything like that. We've just got to go out there and play, and if we do that, we'll be all right.

**Q. Austin and Carlon, the length that Baylor has, how do you overcome that? How do you run your offense effectively against as long as this team is? You haven't faced one as long as they are this season.**

AUSTIN DUFAULT: We just have to play smart. They've got a lot of guys that want to come in and block shots and stuff like that. We've just got to make good decision when's we attack the basket and be able to knock down shots when we have open shots. Defensively we've just got to

play physical, box out and clear out space with our box-outs, and I think we'll be okay.

CARLON BROWN: In addition to that, I just think we have to play with confidence. We can't really think about their length. We've just got to come out and play our game and be more aggressive. That's what we were doing in L.A. and what we were doing last night, and it's worked to our advantage.

If we stop and think they're taller than us, stronger than us or bigger than us, it doesn't matter when you're in March and playing in these type of game situations where it's win or go home. That's what everybody's thinking about. It's either we win or go home. The length and the size is not going to matter tomorrow. We're just going to play our game.

**Q. Carlon and then Nate, back to your point earlier about how you're playing for Colorado, obviously. Do you guys have much affinity for the Pac-12 considering that you guys have been a part of it for a matter of what, months, I guess it is? Do you feel any pride or whatever in playing for the Pac-12, or not?**

CARLON BROWN: There is a sense of pride. Obviously you represent your conference no matter what it is, whether it's a power six or a mid-major. But like I said, we're mainly playing for ourselves and our community because we've had a rough season. Everything hasn't gone as planned. We're just trying to finish it to the best ability that we can.

We surprised a lot of people, but at the same time, we feel like we're not done yet and we're destined for greater things beyond, hopefully, tomorrow.

NATE TOMLINSON: I think the Pac-12 got a bad rap at the beginning of the year. We took some hard losses. Cal lost to Mizzou pretty badly. But as the year had gone on there was an opportunity to show what we could prove. But our boys are playing for what's across our chest, Colorado, and if Pac-12 gets credit for that, fair enough.

**Q. Austin and Carlon, you guys talked about the craziness of the black and gold out there. Just wondering what it's been like for you? Have your phones been blowing up from texts from people? And are any of those texts from the seniors who didn't get this**

**opportunity last year?**

AUSTIN DUFAULT: Yeah, today, actually. Javon Coney who was on last year's team texted me. Me and Nate have been talking to Marcus Releford who is over in Sweden and pretty much everybody. They're just congratulating us on how we've done this year. We just continue to tell them we wish you guys had this opportunity last year, so we're trying to make the most of it for them this year.

CARLON BROWN: Yeah, there's definitely been a lot of texts and chatter on Twitter and Facebook for the whole team. It's good. It feel goods to know people are paying attention to Colorado basketball. The buzz up there in Boulder is unbelievable right now. We're just trying to make sure we keep that up.

**Q. Carlon, they're big. They're tall, but can you use maybe the mismatch to your advantage because you're smaller and maybe quicker type of thing?**

CARLON BROWN: We're definitely going to try to exploit what we do well, and that is run our transition game and get stops on defense and rebounds. Like I said earlier to Mark, the game doesn't change. It's still five-on-five of the same reps and the same inches to the court. So looking beyond all of that, we've got to come out and play our game, execute, and we should be fine, really.

**Q. You're putting together a little top-10-dunk festival here lately. I was just wondering, for those of us who don't dunk as much as you, what is going through your mind when you see that opportunity, if anything? How does it feel?**

CARLON BROWN: Nothing's going through my mind. I'm just trying to get two points. Whether it be a dunk or a lay-up, I'm just able to get some great breakaways to the basket and great passes for my teammates to finish. I'm not really focused on making the Top 10 list every night. I'm just trying to win games for Colorado basketball.

**Q. When you see the replays of those, does that kind of make you go --**

CARLON BROWN: No, not really. All these dunks I've done before, so I know what I'm capable of doing. I'm just thankful to God that I have this talent. Nate says wait till he gets a breakaway (laughing).

**Q. Carlon and Austin, what does it mean to have a chance to take CU to the Sweet 16 for the first time in 43 years?**

CARLON BROWN: It means everything. It's a lot of history riding on this game. We can definitely leave an imprint and a legacy in Colorado basketball and set a high standard for a lot of teams to come under Coach Boyle. So we're definitely proud of where we're at.

But like I said, we're not satisfied with what's left in front of us. Winning tomorrow would mean everything not only to this team but to that community and our fan base who has been very supportive and very proud of us.

AUSTIN DUFAULT: Yeah, it would mean a lot to be able to go to the Sweet 16 and represent our program, just show the growth that we've had over the last few years as a program. The projection for where we want to go in the future, leaving it to the younger guys once we leave is something that's really special, and hopefully we can leave a good imprint like Carlon said.

THE MODERATOR: Questions for Coach Boyle.

**Q. The UNLV team that you guys hadn't played in forever and weren't familiar with, does it help that you played Baylor before last year in the Big 12, obviously, and in this short turnaround, does it make it better?**

COACH BOYLE: I think the short turnaround helps, but again, it helps them too because they know us just like we know them from last year. So I don't think it's an advantage either way in terms of our team or their team.

But it certainly helps us in our preparation. Our veteran players that are coming back that know a lot of the Baylor returnees. They've got a couple of new guys, just like we do. But it helps your mindset as a coach, because you at least have some familiarity. Because the short turnarounds with teams that you don't know or a style that you've never seen before can create some angst for you, but we don't have that right now. The only angst we have is their front line of long, tall, athletic guys.

**Q. They have a couple of NBA guys, players that helped you get here, even though they're not here. Have you or anybody on the team heard from them since last night?**

COACH BOYLE: I know our players have. I haven't heard from them. I know when we were in Los Angeles last week we communicated, like kids do nowadays, with texts. But since we've been here since last night I haven't. But I quit checking my phone for texts after last night.

I know coming over here yesterday I asked Austin and Nate and Carlon if they had talked to those guys, and they said they talked to all of them. So they've been communicating, but not so much our staff right now.

**Q. You've faced length this season, UCLA and Stanford and had issues with that. This team you're going to see tomorrow might be as long as any you've seen since you've been a head coach. How do you combat that and deal with their length?**

COACH BOYLE: Well, we've challenged our guys to be physical. We have to be physical with them. If you get in a jumping contest, we're going to lose. We've got to get bodies on them defensively in the post. When the shot goes up, we have to create space with our box outs because you can't fight that any other way.

We have to be physical. We have to be the aggressor. We have to exert control over a 15-foot radius of the basket. That's easier said than done with these guys. My whole thing is make them work for everything they get. If you make a mistake against Baylor, it's a dunk at the basket; and we want to limit that as best we can, make them shoot jump shots over our hand, which is always our goal no matter who we're playing. But with tall, athletic guys it presents a problem.

Oregon State's a team that we've had some success against, not so much in Corvallis, but we've been up and down in that regard. So it's going to be a heck of a challenge.

**Q. Can you talk about the job your assistants did in L.A. getting the guys ready for four opponents in four nights in the wee hours? Also does the Thursday-Saturday Pac-12 schedule help you in these type of situations?**

COACH BOYLE: Absolutely. I've got to say this about our coaching staff, they do not get enough credit. Our assistant coaches and our whole administrative team does a great job with our guys who are on the road. But specifically Mike Rohn who had to scout last night. Jean Prioleau who has the Baylor scout, and Tom Abatemarco who has been around college

basketball for years. Those three guys do a tremendous job. They work extremely hard. They watch a lot of film. If I watch two games on tape, they'll have watched six. They work probably three times as hard as I do in terms of the preparation because as a head coach, you only have so many hours in the day.

They do a great job of prepping our team. Our players have a lot of confidence in their game plans and their words, and I do too. So I can't say enough about the job our staff did in L.A. You don't win four games in four days against the quality opponents we did without having great preparation. So they get a lot of credit for that. I'm glad you asked that, because they deserve that recognition.

The Pac-12, yeah, Thursday-Saturday helps us. Absolutely, it helps us Thursday-Saturday. It took us a while early in the season. We talked about it. We weren't necessarily very good in November and December. We scheduled some non-conference games with one day in between to kind of get us ready for league play, and we didn't handle that real well. But as the season has gone on we have. I think it will help our players as we progress into the future in certainly tournaments like this.

**Q. The last eight to nine minutes of your last two ballgames have been a little tense, and you've always talked about closing out and so forth. What do you do to get a better closeout in a game like tomorrow, if can you?**

COACH BOYLE: Well, what we have to do is we talk about the three-pronged approach with Colorado basketball. We play hard. We play smart. We play together.

The playing hard part and playing together part has not been a problem. It's the playing smart part that sometimes we need a little bit of work on. With that being said, I think we have a smart team, but there is a fine line. I talked about it after the game last night. When you have a lead between playing smart and taking good shots and having good offensive possessions and playing tentative, and playing not to lose rather than playing to win.

We have to do a better job of playing to win even when we have a lead, yet playing smart. Not shooting after one pass, letting the offense work a little bit.

UNLV, I have to credit them last night,

because I think their pressure bothered us. They got up into us. We tried to practice that on Tuesday and Wednesday, but we can't simulate their athleticism in practice. We just can't. We didn't handle it as good as we could have or should have.

But I think having great offensive possessions where you work and make the defense work and then execute at the end of it, we were two or three of those away from breaking that game open and breaking UNLV's back, and we didn't.

They came down and scored and they got on a roll. It was game on from there. We have to do a better job of playing smart down the stretch. That entails a lot of different things.

**Q. Over the last 20 years the phrase home-court advantage and Colorado basketball haven't always been closely related. How much do you think your support helped this team in your previous game last night, and how much could it help tomorrow?**

COACH BOYLE: I hope it helps tomorrow because that means we've got a lot of Buff fans in the state. We had a good contingent last night, I thought. It inspires our players. It starts with our students and the 50 that came to the Pac-12 tournament that Mike Bohn arranged for; and now we have 100 down here, and I think more drove on their own.

It inspires our players and gives them something to play for. We talk to our guys all the time about playing for somebody other than yourself. Whether it's our student section, whether it's our fan base, our season ticket holders or alumni base, the people back in Colorado who are watching the game on TV with their friends, we owe it to the fan base that's supported us to this point. This is a great opportunity to expand that. That's what we want to do.

You have to seize the opportunity when it's there, and it's there for us right now. We want to continue this. We don't want this to be just a one-hit wonder. We want to continue to build the support at home that we've started, and that's the challenge.

**Q. You've spoken eloquently about trying to represent the Pac-12 and things like that. So now you're going against the conference you left. What did you think about conference realignment? And do you think this**

**match-up sort of adds a little juice to it given the circumstances?**

COACH BOYLE: It doesn't to me because, again, those decisions are made so far above coach's heads that I never got into where we should be or wanted to be. We're going to play where they tell us to play, and we're going to play against who is on our schedule.

That might be something for fans to think about and talk about. But in terms of us and how we approach it, how we feel about it, I don't have any feelings in that regard, to be honest with you.

**Q. Late finish last night, and you're just talking about the preparation for Baylor. Do you guys go back last night and begin your preparation or did that begin this morning?**

COACH BOYLE: No, that began last week. Again, Coach Rohn on our staff had the UNLV scout. Coach Prioleau had the Baylor scout; and Coach Abatemarco had the South Dakota State scout.

So Sunday night, Selection Sunday is when the preparation began for those guys. So they've watched the film. Again, that's where trust and confidence in your assistants comes into play. Last night I said, "Okay, Coach Prioleau, where we at? What do we have to do?" He briefs you.

I've got a chance to watch film this morning and this afternoon before we came over here. We watched it with our team. We got our scouting report in, our game plan in, we'll practice here, and off we go tomorrow night.

So it's a very short turnaround time, but that preparation started last week on our staff, so it's not as quick as you think.

Back to Ryan's point, I think our players who are used to the Thursday-Saturday turnaround, that's how we approach our league schedule. We don't talk about Saturday's opponent all week, but the assistant is. On Friday, hey, we're putting the game plan in.

So our guys are very good at digesting the game plan on a very short turnaround like we have right here, and we've got a smart group of guys, some veteran guys who understand what it's all about.

**Q. How disappointing was it not to get in the tournament last year? And how exciting has it been to get into this one?**

COACH BOYLE: Extremely disappointing

last year. I said it on Sunday when the pairings came out. I'm more angry now about last year's snub than I was last year. Last year I was in shock to be honest with you. Again, there is nothing you can do about it.

But I think it's been a source of inspiration for our players that we've used. We've talked about getting in touch with those six guys that were on the team last year that didn't have this opportunity. So it's been a source of inspiration for our guys and me as well.

Again, we played our way in this year. So we're proud of that, and we've got to change the national perception of Colorado basketball. Hopefully we're on the way to doing that.

**Q. As far as individual match-ups tomorrow night, what are a couple you're really looking at and why?**

COACH BOYLE: Well, I think André Roberson on Perry Jones is an interesting one. Perry is obviously -- André didn't go up against as much guys he's given four inches to. They're just as athletic and long as he is. So that's a match-up that's going to be interesting. I think Nate Tomlinson and Spencer Dinwiddie and Askia Booker are the different guys we'll have on Pierre Jackson.

I think Pierre Jackson for Baylor is a real key match-up. The guy leads them in scoring. He averages six and a half assists per game. He makes them go in a lot of different areas. So I think trying to control him and contain him as best we can, then limit Perry Jones. Those two are key.

With that being said, watching Baylor, the guy that scares the daylight out of me is Quincy Acy. I think he's as tough and strong and aggressive as any post player we've played against all year. I've got a lot of respect for him and how hard he plays every possession that he's on the floor.

I'm leaving a lot of guys out that are pretty talented. I could go down the list for you. But I think those three are the ones we've got to -- we've got to limit them to one shot, bottom line. We can't give them two or three chances on offensive rebounds and expect to win this game.

**Q. One of the cool things about the NCAA Tournament for people around the country is if you're a 10 or 11 or 12 seed, with every good game and every good play people, whether it's VCU or George Mason or the Zags back in the day, more and more people jump on**

**the bandwagon. Can Colorado be the cuddly underdog, or are you too well known as a university for that?**

COACH BOYLE: No, no. I think we can be an underdog. We haven't been here in nine years. We haven't won in a game since '96 or '97 whatever it was when Chansi was here. I think right now we are. We don't want to be in a position where we're the underdog eventually. But right now, we are. We're an 11 seed. They picked us 11th in the Pac-12, right? Lot of interesting things about that No. 11 for us this year.

It's amazing as a coach when you're inside the tournament how focused and dialed in you are. When you're outside looking in you're looking to the seeds and who is beating who. I couldn't tell you who is playing today, who is winning today, who is losing today. You're so wrapped up in the moment yourself. That's more, I think, for you guys to look at and certainly the fans around the country to look at. You're right. That's what makes this tournament so special.

**Q. Could you make the argument that last year's run and last year's success in the NIT has benefited this team though?**

COACH BOYLE: Absolutely. Especially our veterans. I think we had success in the NIT last year. We won some games, albeit they were at home. But we gained some confidence in tournament play. You go back to the Big 12 Tournament last year where we got to the semifinals and battled KU pretty darn strong on the road at The Sprint Center and lost by 6 or 8 points, whatever it was. Had a good showing there. They had a good showing in the NIT, and it just followed through this year in the Pac-12 tournament.

So this is a confident team, and a team that's taken a lot of lessons from last year with it. They're benefiting us today.

**Q. You talked about you guys playing for more than just yourselves, but not only carrying the Pac-12 banner, do you feel like you're carrying the banner for all of college basketball in Colorado since it's been 43 years since anyone from the State went to the Sweet 16?**

COACH BOYLE: Yes, absolutely, we're carrying that banner. It's a position we want to put ourselves in. I don't think anybody two weeks ago gave us a shot to be here where we are today, but

we're here.

Again, we've got a wonderful opportunity tomorrow night against a good, talented basketball team and program to carry that banner and to make a whole State proud, which is kind of neat. We are the University of Colorado. We're the flagship university, and we want to represent the state well.

I didn't realize it had been 43 years for the Sweet 16 run, but now I do. We'll talk about that as well with our guys.

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