

Big 12 Conference Men's Basketball Tipoff Media Day

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Kansas City, Missouri, USA

Colorado Buffaloes Coach Tad Boyle

Media Day Press Conference



TAD BOYLE: It's good to be back in the Big 12. It's been a 13-year hiatus for us, but last time we were in this building, the Kansas Jayhawks got us in the semifinals of the postseason tournament, and we were snubbed by the NCAA Tournament and we were the first round of the NIT.

I've got bittersweet memories of the league, but it's really good to be back and excited to be part of the Big 12. It's a different league, obviously, today than it was 13 years ago.

It's great to be back.

Q. You see a lot of times a sort of synergy between the basketball coach, the football coach. What has Deion Sanders done for this program in terms of the spotlight he's put on Colorado athletics?

TAD BOYLE: Yeah, it's unquestionable the spotlight he's put on our university, on Boulder, the University of Colorado and the whole state.

Deion Sanders is one of one; there's not anybody else like him. Obviously we don't have a chance to interact as much as I would like because we're in different buildings and our seasons are so different, but every interaction I've had with Deion has been positive. He's done a lot for the state of Colorado and the university and Boulder.

Really excited they're off to a fantastic start, 5-2. We've got a big game Saturday night against Cincinnati. We'll be locked into that.

Q. As a coach that had experience with the Big 12 then and coming into the Big 12 now, you talked about things have changed. What things have you seen that have changed in style of play, what teams do from then until now?

TAD BOYLE: Yeah, I think the biggest change has been some of the schools. Obviously Texas and Oklahoma are gone, and Central Florida wasn't in the league, Cincinnati

wasn't in the league. There's a lot of new teams that are in the league now that weren't here when we were.

But the core of the league -- Houston wasn't in the league.

I think the additions that they've made and certainly with the additions of now BYU and Utah and Arizona and Arizona State and ourselves, I think, look, it's been the best league in the country, what, nine out of the last ten years, certainly the last four years with the NET rankings and eight NCAA Tournament bids last year.

It's a deep league, and it's a -- look, every league has good coaches and every league has good players, but the venues that you go to on the road in this league -- I remember the year we were in it, we were playing Iowa State, and they were -- we were playing 16 league games at the time.

We were 3-12, and we go to Hilton coliseum on senior night and it's sold out. That building beat us that night with a team that weren't as talented as we were, they weren't as good as we were, but that building helped win them a game that night on senior night, so that's the kind of stuff you see in the Big 12 that you don't see in other leagues.

Q. You have been a head coach since 2006; do you think it's been easier or harder to build a roster?

TAD BOYLE: You know, you can build a roster. It's no more difficult today -- in fact, you can make an argument it's easier to build a roster today because you have players that can transfer in and play right away. So it's easier to build a roster.

It is infinitely harder to build a program, and there's a difference between building a roster and building a program. We've tried to build a program at Colorado that's been sustained success, and I think we've done a good job of that for the most part. Certainly there's a lot of things that we haven't done that I hope to do before we as a staff end our tenure there.

But building a roster is easy. Building a program in today's day and age is really, really difficult. We've tried to do that.

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I feel like we've got a really good culture. I know that's an overused term, but I'm proud of what we've accomplished, and I'm looking to accomplish a lot more.

Q. When you go from the Pac-12 to the Big 12, what changes in the 40 minutes on the court, the actual game, or is it still just basketball either way?

TAD BOYLE: Well, look, I said this when we left the Big 12 to go to the Pac-12. We left one good league to go to another good league. The Pac-12 was a good league last year. We had good teams, good coaches, good players. We're coming into a monster of a league.

I think the biggest thing that changes when the ball goes up, to answer your question, is just the physicality of this league and just the style of the defensive, hard-nosed -- we open up with Iowa State, and as you watch those guys defend, you're just like, man, I hope we get to 50 points against those guys.

Now, if we don't get to 50, we'd better hold them to in the 40s to have a chance to win that game.

But it's the defensive and the mindset that a lot of these programs have that's made them so darned successful.

Q. Coach, you've mentioned a couple times during the preseason that another one of the big differences between the Pac-12 and the Big 12 will be the venues that your team has to play at. Is there any way to prepare your team for those venues, or is it just kind of something they have to experience when they get there?

TAD BOYLE: Well, I think, look, you can do the old deal where you pipe in game noise or you -- our practice gyms, you've been in them, the acoustics are not very good, so they're really loud and it's hard to communicate, so maybe we practice in those gyms before we're going to a venue that's going to be loud and difficult to communicate.

But in terms of the experience that our players -- they're going to have to experience it. There's no teacher in this world like experience.

With this team, we don't have a lot of experienced players returning. We've got three graduate transfers that are transferring in. They have experience, but two of them have experience at lower levels.

We're going to have to learn as we go this year, and it's going to be a season -- I think if you watch Colorado basketball from the beginning to the end, you're going to see a lot of growth, a lot of improvement as the season

goes on.

I'm not sure we're going to be in mid-season form because we don't have a lot of experience coming back early in the year.

Q. You just spoke to the fact that you have two grad transfers, Trevor Baskin and Elijah Malone coming in from lower levels of basketball, Division II in Baskin's case, and the NAIA in Malone's case. Beyond just the basketball, the skill sets, what attributes do you think can make those two successful and quality contributors to your team?

TAD BOYLE: Well, I think, number one, they've been the best players on their team, so they've had to carry the load, so to speak, whether it's scoring, whether it's rebounding, whether it's leadership, whatever that role was, and in many cases with both Elijah and Trevor, it was a variety of things.

I think those guys -- if you can play, you can play. Derrick White taught us that. If you can play at the Division II level, you can play -- now, can you be a first-round draft pick and have the year that he had? What people forget about Derrick is he got to sit out for a year. He didn't have to sit out, he got to sit out, and that year of sitting out really benefitted him in many, many ways.

Elijah and Trevor don't have that luxury, so we're going to need them to step up right away, but again, without that year of sitting out, it's going to be a process for them, as well.

But they bring experience and they bring -- they've been the best players on their teams, and I think the adjustment that they have to take is now they're surrounded by better players, and so they need to understand that and not have a, hey, I'm going to take over the world by myself kind of attitude, which sometimes freshmen can have coming in, and sometimes transfers can have it, as well.

Q. You've talked a little bit about recruiting already, but does it change moving from the Pac-12 to the Big 12 from a geographical standpoint? Are you looking at players in Texas now more than California? How does that work?

TAD BOYLE: Look, when we got to Colorado 14 years ago, we were in the Big 12, and I think you always recruit the footprint of your league. I think that's the best way you can go into homes and tell parents you're going to come back to Texas or back to Kansas, wherever you're recruiting the kid from and sell that.

California obviously when we were in the Pac-12 was in the footprint. We really made inroads there. We've got relationships as a staff there and a lot of people are familiar with their program there.

Texas and California are going to be the backbone outside of Colorado, and then you go wherever else you need to go to get players. That's the nice thing about Colorado is we had mentioned Coach Sanders earlier, he's really done a lot of things in Florida because that's where he's from. He has relationships down there.

The fact that Colorado is a place that you can't build your team with just Colorado kids, you have to go elsewhere, and now we've got the Big 12 to sell behind it, we're going to make inroads in Texas for sure.

Texas has always been good to us, hopefully even more so now that we're back in this area.

Q. You've talked a lot about the opposition and facing them, but what type of relationships do you come back to in the Big 12, specifically in Kansas where you played?

TAD BOYLE: Well, Coach Self, I saw him earlier when I walked in, and he and I played against each other. We both played in the Big 8. I think Coach Drew at Baylor was here, again, when I was here the one and only year in the league. I'm trying to think who else is still around. There's a few faces. There's a lot of new faces, though.

Like I said, it's good to be back. Just landing in Kansas City today and driving up on a beautiful fall afternoon in Kansas City, this is a great city, this is a great basketball city, and I know this place is going to be rocking and rolling come postseason tournament time.

Again, I'll say it again, it's great to be back.

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