

# Pac-12 Conference Men's Basketball Media Day

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Las Vegas, Nevada, USA

## Colorado Buffaloes Coach Tad Boyle Tristan DaSilva K.J. Simpson



THE MODERATOR: We continue Pac-12 media day here from Las Vegas. It's time to talk about the Colorado Buffaloes. It's great to have Tad Boyle with us on the stage now. Coach, welcome.

TAD BOYLE: Thank you. Good to be with you guys.

**Q. We're going to see a couple of your players coming up, two of your top three returning scorers. There's some known quality. Talk about some of the unknown today. How are you feeling about this group so far?**

TAD BOYLE: I feel really good. Troy Andre, our SAD, told us they picked us fifth, the media did.

**Q. Good for you.**

TAD BOYLE: No, it's fine. My comment is, if we're the fifth best team in the Pac-12, Pac-12 is pretty good this year. I like our team. I like the combination of the returning players, our veterans, as I like to call them, and the new young talent, I think it's about right.

We've had some really good practices. I think we're 12 practices in, and this is a competitive group. We don't even have our big guy Eddie Lamb kin practicing with us yet. When we throw him in, it's going to be a lot of fun. \*

**Q. This looks like the most talented group you've had in boulder. \* this is as good a roster as you've had.**

TAD BOYLE: It's deep. It's talented, there's no doubt. I go back to that first team I coached and inherited all those guys, we were really talented offensively. Obviously we weren't in the Pac-12 yet by then, but this is a good group, a lot of talent, a lot of depth.

Look, picking us fifth is great because the pressure is off, right? But the internal standards and goals we have for

this program are much higher than fifth in the league.

**Q. I wanted to ask about Cody Williams, kind of a two-parter on him. Obviously the highest ranked recruit you've brought in. One, how are you kind of managing expectations with him? Then two, just wondering, the make up of this team, could he possibly benefit from coming in -- he doesn't necessarily have to be your leading scorer, doesn't have to be your leading rebounder or point guard. He can maybe just come in and play.**

TAD BOYLE: Two good questions there. The first part, managing expectations, is something we talked about with Cody. We actually talked about it in the recruiting process because he kind of came on the scene and kind of blew up, so to speak, his senior year. It's not like he was known as a freshman or sophomore in high school like a lot of these kids.

Cody, just every day he gets better and better. That's what we've talked about with Cody. Let's take each day as it comes. Let's eliminate as much as we can the outside noise. Thank goodness he's not a huge social media guy. He doesn't have a lot of voices in his ears. That's good. That will serve him as well as far as this season goes.

I want our fans to understand there will be a learning curve. I had a chance to coach Cody this summer with USA basketball. There was an adjustment there. Managing expectations is going to be big for him, and it's something we're going to talk about a lot as the season goes for sure.

The second part of your question is he is definitely going to benefit from guys like Tristan DaSilva and K.J. Simpson and Luke O'Brien and some of our veterans, J'Vonne Hadley, Julien Hammond, because the pressure is not going to be on Cody.

The expectation, there because he's got five stars next to his name. There's a reason he has five stars next to his name, by the way. Some plays he's made in practice, it's like, whoa, okay. That's why that is.

It's going to be a learning curve, and he's going to get

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better. He's going to be a heck of a lot better in February than he was in January. A lot better in January than he was in December. He's a heck of a lot better now in October than he was even when I coached him in June.

**Q. Cody originally said a part of the reason why he committed to Colorado was because of the elite medical programs. Did that surprise you at all? Then the second part is how does it make you feel that not only are they getting a great athletic experience, but academically it's meeting the same bar.**

TAD BOYLE: That's one of the reasons Colorado is so special. We do have the combination of the big time athletics and basketball, now football obviously. We've got big time facilities. We have an MRI machine on our campus. So not that we want to use it, but it's there if we need to. We've had stories where we have had to use it, and it's been there.

The facilities we have, just the culture around our program. Cody Williams came to Colorado because of relationships and all the things that Boulder has to offer and the university has to offer. It's not just -- he's not just a one-dimensional young man.

**Q. I want to go back to you coaching Cody. You coached the USA U-19 team this summer. How much have you had to get him up to speed for what he's going to see once he gets to practice in Colorado? He's got to manage the whole team, so is it not as much as someone would think? Is it more than we would think in terms of him getting to know you and what you're going to expect in September.**

TAD BOYLE: It's a good question. I've never been in that situation before. It's almost -- I've never coached one of my own kids. A lot of people have. I never have. That's how I felt with Cody, with Team USA.

Like this is my son, you know, but he's part of the team. He's part of the national team, the 19 and under team.

Trying to find that balance was key, but Cody's such a coachable young man. He listens. He learns. He self-corrects himself. McKinley Wright was like that when we had McKinley. McKinley would make a mistake, and you'd really go get ready to talk to him about it, and he'd already know, Coach, I know what I should have done there. Cody has some of those same attributes as a freshman.

**Q. I was hinting with Mark Madsen earlier before you came on about some of the things that make college basketball different than it used to be, in terms of NIL,**

**transfer portal, those types of things. I said this to somebody the other day, we were talking about it, we obviously don't root for anybody. We're objective, and we want to see everyone do well. But I said, I want to see Tristan DaSilva win Player of the Year in the conference this year, why?**

Because it would be two years in a row that a four-year player that stayed and got better won Player of the Year in the conference.

TAD BOYLE: Absolutely. I couldn't agree more. Tristan DaSilva is what college basketball is all about. To me, he's one of the top players in the game, in the college game today. If he's not top ten, he's certainly top 20. I'll go to war with him every night.

He's gotten better every year. He's worked on his body every year. He's committed. He could have left. He could have gone overseas. He could be playing in Germany for a lot of money right now, but he wanted to finish what he started, and we're thankful that he did.

I couldn't agree more. I hope he can have the year that Jaime had last year for UCLA because, if he does, it's going to bode well for the Buffaloes.

**Q. Kind of piggybacking a Little bit on what Donny was just talking about, in a perfect world, you're a veteran coach. You've seen a lot of changes in the college game. How would you like to be able to recruit the way things are set up now currently and have your program be where you have more four-year players, where you have the continuity? You've got two of the best players coming up soon, returning in the conference right now. Kind of your step back a Little bit and what's happened in college basketball.**

TAD BOYLE: Look, we're going to keep doing what we've been doing. We've had success with it. You've got two players here, K.J. Simpson, who's going into his junior year, and Tristan obviously his senior year, came in as freshmen. Neither one of them redshirted, but we redshirted two freshmen last year. This year we might redshirt one or two more. We'll see how that goes November.

We're not going to change what we do and how we do it just because the rules are different. Now, does NIL change things? Absolutely. Are we in that game? Absolutely. You have to be or you get left behind. In terms of what we're selling to our recruits and their families, it's not going to change. It didn't change with Cody. It's not changing this November when we signed the recruits we're going to sign in November.

We're going to keep doing what we're doing. We're going to try to stay out of the transfer portal, if we can, because I don't like doing it.

I like getting to know guys. I like developing guys. To see K.J. Simpson and where he is today relative to where he was as a freshman is really gratifying to me as a coach, and I think it is to himself and his parents and all the people that know and love him.

We're going to keep doing what we're doing.

**Q. Coach, I'm looking forward to watching the bus play this year. Last year you were one of the best defensive teams in the country. You guys are always on point. Your offense was up and down a little bit, shooting was an issue. I'd like to hear kind of not only just the players, including Cody, that you're bringing in, but are you tweaking anything offensively? Has perimeter shooting been a big priority for you this off-season?**

TAD BOYLE: It has. It's funny, on my desk every day, I've got the off-season plans we make for each one of our players. There was one for K.J. There was one more for Tristan. There was one for J'Vonnie Hadley, you name it, Luke O'Brien, all of our returning guys, and shooting was on every single one of their off-season plans. We've got to become better, more consistent shooters.

Because we have capable shooters, we really do. We didn't prove it in games last year, but yeah, we have tweaked our offense a little bit. We're going more to a five-out offense because part of our personnel, Eddie Lambkin is one kid we did get from the transfer portal. He's a unique player, but he's a lot like Evan Batty in the sense that he really likes to pass the ball. We can play through him. Not necessarily always at the low post, but even at the high post, and he's a willing passer. He's a good screen and roll guy.

When Eddie's not on the floor we've got five guys that can really space the floor, spread the floor. So we're going to go more to a five out. More than a four out, one in, than we've done in the past. That doesn't mean we won't post the ball. That means we're going to attack mismatches probably more with the players we have.

**Q. Speaking of last year, Tad, you weren't very big either. It seems like you got bigger this year. Lovring comes in, Lambkin, you mentioned. What does that do not only offensively, but defensively, now that you can do different things with some size?**

TAD BOYLE: Certainly. Rebounding is something we always emphasize, defensive rebounding, you know that. I think we do have to get better offensively. I think our length this year, we've got a couple freshmen bigs. Bangot Dak who is 6'9" with a 7'2" wingspan. Assane Diop is a kid with great length. Cody obviously has great length. Even our guards have good wing span.

We're going to be able to play maybe a little bit more zone. Really gap the floor, shrink the floor a little bit, and we're going to switch a lot. We're going to switch a lot of ball screens. Yeah, we're going to -- I think defensively we've got a chance to be as good as we've ever been. I think offensively we can take a big step this year.

**Q. I'm not going to ask you to comment on both of your players coming in because you already did. We appreciate your time.**

TAD BOYLE: These guys are special.

THE MODERATOR: Colorado Buffaloes, K.J. Simpson and Tristan DaSilva. I know you guys were in the back of the room talking about you. K.J., when he said that Tristan is one of the best players in the nation, you were pointing at Tristan. How does it make you feel, Tristan, to hear that from your coach and see that from your teammate?

TRISTAN DaSILVA: I love it. We feel like a family at Colorado. We always hype each other up. We always support each other. It feels great.

**Q. K.J., how was your summer? I know it was frustrating. You got sick at the end of last year, missed the last part of the season. That didn't have any lingering effects. You had a normal offseason, were able to work on your game and all that to get ready for this year?**

K.J. SIMPSON: Definitely going into the summer it was a little frustrating. I didn't feel I was completely left off the team. I had a voice still. Vocally I was trying to be a leader off the bench, but it was disappointing not being able to finish the season with the guys.

Going into summer, working out, I made sure it was kind of like a chip on my shoulder, adding more fuel to the fire that I already had.

Yeah, I'm good, healthy. I've been working on trying to keep my body healthy and making sure that I, unfortunately, don't get sick no more. Everything was good in the summer.

THE MODERATOR: You're the first guy that showed up



today wearing a knee pad already, a shin guard already, so you're ready to play.

**Q. Never know when a one-on-one game is going to break out. Jacobson got his uniform back there if you want to play him.**

K.J. SIMPSON: I'll stay ready. I just want you to know that, I'll stay ready.

**Q. Tristan, you went through the draft workout process during the spring. You had options. You could have gone to the NBA, maybe could have gone back to Europe. How close did you come to do either of those things, and what brought you back to Colorado?**

TRISTAN DaSILVA: I mean, it was a long evaluation process. I talked to a lot of former teammates, my family, friends, coaches, the people that I worked with over the summer. Ultimately, it got to a point where I recognized that the options that I can -- or the position that I can play myself into this coming year are probably going to put me in a better position or will put me in a better position to get to where I want to be next year.

So it was an easy decision at the end to come back to Colorado. I stand by that. That was the right decision for me.

**Q. What was some of the feedback, Tristan, that you got, and what you've worked on this summer to kind of change what those people think of you?**

TRISTAN DaSILVA: A lot of people told me I'm on the right path, working myself up to being on the first team last year, Pac-12 first team, and kind of leading my team to where we were.

I've just got to keep working on the stuff that I work on, keep being versatile and keep improving in all aspect of the game. That's what I'm trying to do, and that's the goal for this year. I feel like I'm on the right path.

**Q. Question for both of you. I'll start with you, K.J. What has it been like to be a student at Colorado the last two months?**

K.J. SIMPSON: Yeah, it's been pretty crazy. I'm pretty sure everybody knows it's like the BET wars there. No, it's been real good. I feel like, if anything, it's been positive, especially what Coach Prime is bringing to the football team. The fan base have been dying to see a successful year.

Just being able to already do better than the past years we've had so far, it's been good. Obviously we go out, we support our fellow student-athletes, not just us, all the rest of the athlete goes and support the football team.

It's been fun. It's been real positive energy. Everybody is really, really excited, and it's kind of carrying over to basketball season now that it's right around the corner.

**Q. How about for you, Tristan? What's it been like? You been going to football games?**

TRISTAN DaSILVA: Yeah, it's crazy. Obviously coming from Germany I didn't have the football experience like that, but this year has been wild. They've got so many celebrities and so many people popping out to the games. Every weekend the campus is packed. It's really fun being out there.

The vibe overall, the student body, everybody's excited. Everybody's kind of electric on campus. It's a great feeling.

**Q. Are you guys going to ask him if he can get the celebrities to come to your games too?**

K.J. SIMPSON: That would be great. No complaints. I'm trying to get some shades, though, if I'm being honest.

(Laughter).

**Q. Your coach had some questions about Cody Williams, having a teammate coming in with so much potential and expectation and all of that. What's that been like? How's he been?**

K.J. SIMPSON: Cody is somebody I've grown really, really close to on the team. One thing about him I would say, coming in, he's really, really unselfish. He's just a teammate that just wants to go out there and do the right thing to win, make the right play.

I can already see how special of a talent he is, but the crazy thing about is he's still so young, he still has so much to learn. He's willing to learn, so he comes to me and Tristan all the time, asks us questions. We talk a lot outside of practice. Hang out outside of practice and stuff like that, but he's a special talent.

**Q. Isn't that part of your culture, K.J.? It seems like tad has forever run his program a Little differently as college basketball has evolved. I've heard stories about when you guys host recruits on recruiting trips, like the coaches ask you guys, hey, should we recruit this guy or not? Because if they'll fit into your culture or not.**



So I'm not surprised to hear you talk about Cody like that because it just seems like there's more stability, more continuity within the program based on how Tad operates it, says he doesn't want to go in the portal. I guess my question for both of you is how nice is that to know that, if you're going to be there for four years, that you're getting good people coming through there as well as good players?

K.J. SIMPSON: I would say -- it's crazy you said it. That was the biggest thing I was kind of worried about. I didn't get to have a visit because of COVID. So coming to Colorado, I was wondering how the atmosphere, the culture would be meshing with the team. Ever since I've been here, that's one thing that Coach Boyle really, really does and the rest of the coaching staff, they make sure that they get the right guy, the right fit for the team not only on the court but off the court. Somebody where our bond and chemistry will just mesh together really, really well.

So it doesn't take too long for guys to get along with the team, kind of like you said, and that helps.

TRISTAN DaSILVA: It kind of helps us bond too as a team. When you get to know these people on the visits and you feel like they're the right character to fit in the team, it's really easy to get excited for the next year and get excited for the recruits coming in and kind of gel together as a team.

And it gives us confidence too and trust in the coaches that they put their trust in us to evaluate the recruits we have coming in.

**Q. K.J., I want to put you on the spot. Before you were born, I used to coach, believe it or not. What are the things you need to continue to work on to become a more effective percentage shooter?**

K.J. SIMPSON: I mean, there isn't more to it than just working and putting up reps. Obviously that's a place -- and I've talked about it with Coach, worked on it in the summer. Obviously I'm very capable of being that. I think more in terms of just me understanding, having the confidence to understand I'm going to have some nights where I'm not perfect.

I trust in the work that I put in. I fall back on the principles that I have, that I laid down in practice and the reps I've been putting up in the summer.

So I think the biggest thing is just making sure I stay in the gym and keep working at it. If I have an off night or something, shake it off, and the next game will be different.

THE MODERATOR: K.J., Tristan, preseason first team all leaguers, congratulations on that and good luck.

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