

SPORTS

Colorado men's basketball: Buffs ready for unique road trip

By Brian Howell

BuffZone.com Writer

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Coach Tad Boyle says playing in the CBI on Monday at Seattle gives the Buffs a chance to "learn how to win on the road in tough environments." (Jeremy Papasso / Staff Photographer)

CU men's hoops preview

MONDAY: Colorado Buffaloes (16-17) at Seattle Redhawks (17-15), 8 p.m. MDT at Connolly Center in Seattle.

BROADCAST: Radio — KOA (850 AM). **Online stream** — buffs.me/18P37TK

COACHES: Colorado — Tad Boyle, 5th year (108-67; 164-133 career); **Seattle** — Cameron Dollar, 6th year (78-103; 89-125 career).

PROBABLE STARTERS: Colorado — G Dominique Collier, 6-2, Fr. (4.5 ppg, 1.7 rpg, 1.4 apg); G Xavier Talton, 6-2, Jr. (4.1 ppg, 1.6 rpg, 1.5 apg); G Tre'Shaun Fletcher, 6-7, So. (5.2 ppg, 2.5 rpg); F Wesley Gordon, 6-9, So. (6.7 ppg, 6.8 rpg, 1.4 bpg); F Josh Scott, 6-10, Jr. (14.4 ppg, 8.3 rpg, 1.8 bpg). **Seattle** — G Isiah Umipig, 6-0, Sr. (17.2 ppg, 3.2 rpg, 2.9 apg, .429 3-pt %); G Jarell Flora, 6-3, Sr. (13.8 ppg, 4.4 rpg, 1.5 apg); G Emerson Murray, 6-3, Sr. (2.4 ppg, 3.4 rpg, 3.0 apg); F William Powell, 6-6, So. (7.6 ppg, 6.5 rpg, 2.0 apg); C Jack Crook, 6-11, Jr. (6.6 ppg, 5.6 rpg, 1.5 apg).

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When accepting a bid to play in the College Basketball Invitational, Colorado coach Tad Boyle figured his team would get some unique experiences.

Monday's quarterfinal matchup will certainly be unique.

The Buffaloes (16-17) will visit Seattle University (17-15), with the game being played in the Redhawks' on-campus gym, the Connolly Center.

Smaller than a lot of high school gyms, the Connolly Center holds about 1,000 fans, which should make it the smallest crowd to see a CU game since a visit to St. Mary's on Dec. 6, 2000, when only 658 people showed up.

The crowd may be small, but the Buffs are expecting it to be loud and unfriendly.

"Great environment, great chance to go into a snake pit and exert our will on the game and play Colorado basketball, both offensively and defensively," Boyle said. "It's one of the reasons we played in this tournament is to learn how to win on the road in tough environments.

"Next year, we're going to play in some tough environments, so we have to learn how to not only play in them but hopefully be successful in them."

Playing in its first Division I postseason tournament since the 1969 NCAA Tournament, Seattle will be ready. The Redhawks quickly shook off the disappointment of losing the WAC title game March 14 and went into the CBI with excitement.

"I'm ecstatic to be in the CBI," coach Cameron Dollar told the Seattle Times prior to the Redhawks' first-round game on Wednesday. "It



NOTABLE: This is the quarterfinal round of the College Basketball Invitational. ... In the first round, CU defeated Gardner-Webb, 87-78, while Seattle defeated Pepperdine, 62-45. ... CU lost the only other meeting with Seattle, 86-69 on Dec. 17, 1965, in Tempe, Ariz. ... In his last five games, Scott has averaged 21.6 points and 11.2 rebounds, while shooting 64.2 percent. ... CU has used 14 different starting lineups. ... Fletcher, Gordon and Talton are the only Buffs to have appeared in all 33 games this season. ... Both teams tend to pile up turnovers. CU averages 13.2 per game, while Seattle averages 13.6. ... Seattle is 13-0 when holding opponents below 60 points and 4-15 when giving up 60 or more. ... CU is 0-10 when scoring below 60 points and 16-7 when getting at least 60. ... Umipig has taken 66.9 percent of his shots (273 of 408) from 3-point range. ... Scott needs five rebounds to move into 10th on CU's career rebounding list. ... Junior Xavier Johnson needs 15 points to become the 33rd player in CU history with 1,000 career points. ... Murray is a transfer from California and played a total of 22 minutes in four games against the Buffs during the 2010-11 and 2011-12 seasons.

would be big time to be able to win the CBI championship. Just being able to compete for it and challenge for it is something that we're all really excited about."

Colorado is hoping to match Seattle's excitement and energy.

"I think it's fun," CU junior Xavier Johnson said of going into Monday's game. "Anyone who wants to compete should be allowed to compete, and the harder they compete, the better it makes us. I'm glad that they're ready to play and they're not going to just give up. I hope we come ready to play. I know I am."

The Buffs and Redhawks haven't played against each other since 1965, but Seattle's coaching staff won't have a problem scouting CU. Head coach Cameron Dollar and two of his assistants both previously worked at Washington under current Huskies coach Lorenzo Romar, and they're sure to ask their former boss for some advice.

Boyle and his staff will be ready for the Redhawks, though.

Senior guards Isiah Umipig and Jarell Flora fuel the Seattle offense. That duo has combined for 31 points per game and they take 48.6 percent of Seattle's shots, including 80.7 percent of the 3-pointers. They were the top two 3-point shooters in the WAC this season.

"We have to limit their 3s and we have to guard them," Boyle said.

Perimeter defense has been an issue for CU all season. The Buffs, however, should have a significant size advantage, just as they did Wednesday against Gardner-Webb. In that game, CU dominated the boards, 43-18, and scored 66 points in the paint.

As Gardner-Webb did, Seattle is likely to play a zone defense. The Buffs have seen a lot of zone lately, and have steady improved their zone offense, with junior Josh Scott putting up some

big numbers of late.

"Our advantage is on the inside and we have to take advantage of that," Boyle said. "We can't just go there and expect to shoot jumpers and beat them. We have to get the ball inside-out."

Do that, and the Buffs stand a good chance of leaving the Connolly Center with a victory and extending their season yet again.

Brian Howell: howellb@dailycamera.com (<mailto:howellb@dailycamera.com>), on Twitter: [@BrianHowell33](https://twitter.com/BrianHowell33).

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