

# Pac-12 Men's Basketball Media Day

Friday, October 21 2016

## Tad Boyle

## Wesley Gordon

Colorado Buffaloes

MODERATOR: From Colorado, Coach Tad Boyle and Wesley Gordon.

TAD BOYLE: Well, another year, coming off a fantastic year for our conference and certainly our basketball program, and we're eagerly anticipating another great season of Pac-12 basketball. When I think about Colorado's team this year, obviously Wesley is one of four fifth-year seniors. We've got a lot of experience. George King is fourth-year junior. Dom Collier and Tory Miller are juniors themselves. So lot of experience coming back, and we're really excited about the upcoming year.

**Q. Coach, I was wondering if you could tell us what it was like watching Team Colorado in the basketball tournament this past summer, and kind of how that might open an avenue to future Buffs who might not be at the NBA level but could certainly play overseas as maybe another source of a basketball outlet?**

TAD BOYLE: It was great. A great experience for not only those young men, but for our players. That team came back to Boulder to have kind of a mini camp to get ready for this tournament. So had a chance to work out in our practice facility and play some pick-up with these guys that were in town taking summer classes. So it was a great way to kind of tie the old Buffs with the current Buffs. These guys got a chance to visit with them, again, play against them for a couple days. Then for them to go on the run, I remember I had that team over to my house for a barbecue, and I said if you guys get to the final, I'll be there, and lo and behold, they got to The Finals and I got on a plane to go to New York.

But they brought a lot of pride to our program, our current players, and they came up a little bit short. Which I always said, I've been in a lot of really, really tough locker rooms after losses, and that might have been the hardest one. Those kids were devastated, but really brought a lot of pride to our program.

**Q. Coach, when you're out on the recruiting trail, the body of work you've put together at this point,**



**four NCAA Tournaments in five years, you have a good freshman class this year, couple late signees. Do you think that body of work is starting to gain attraction to kids, get Colorado more on their radar than, say, when you took over in Boulder?**

TAD BOYLE: Yeah, I'd like to think so. With recruiting, you just want to eat a little bit higher on the food chain than maybe you currently are. The longer you're at a place, I think the stability of our program, the stability of our coaching staff -- and we lost Coach Billups this year to go to the University of Denver, but Coach Prioleau and Coach Rohn, who have been recruiting for us now for going into year seven, added a really quality coach in Bill Grier. Because so much recruiting, the assistants do a lot of the legwork. And we're very blessed with stability in that area.

And I think our current players, they are the difference makers when we bring these kids to campus. So I do think our success, our stability, and our current players can speak to what can happen at Colorado. Obviously, we're looking to take it to the next step, in the next level in recruiting and certainly on the court.

**Q. Wes, kind of a two-part question on Xavier being back this year. One, what's it mean for the team getting such an experienced guy back in the mix? And for you personally, you're a fifth-year guy, and Xavier, coach mentioned a fifth-year guy. He's the only one that's been there five years with you. What's it mean for you personally to have him back in the mix to share his senior year with?**

WESLEY GORDON: It means a lot that I'm just not by myself in all of this. He's been with me since day one, so it's really nice to have him right next to me as I'm going through all of this, the leadership role and all those things.

**Q. Coach, I just wanted your thoughts on you guys being picked fifth with a lot of guys back, and what you see at the top of the race this year?**

TAD BOYLE: I didn't know we were picked fifth. And don't care where we're picked. I think that's the most inconsequential piece of information you can get on days like this. Because really it's all about where we go from here. Now, the league's really good this year, just like it was last year. So I think there are so many teams that you can point to really any team in the conference and look at them being maybe as good if

not better than they were last year. Obviously we lost some good players. We lost a heck of a player in Josh Scott, and we're adding players, and I think the same could be said for anybody in the league this year. But lot of balance. If we can get seven teams in again this year, I think everybody would be pretty excited about that.

I think the biggest key for us as a league is we all have to take care of business and have great Novembers and Decembers, given our schedules. We all have different schedules, go to different schools, play in different tournaments. We have to play well and win games in November and December. It will help everybody come January and February, and certainly March.

**Q. Both Colorado and Utah joined the Pac-12 in 2011. Can you talk about the value you feel both of you have brought to the conference?**

TAD BOYLE: Well, I think two really good institutions that fit in well with the other ten, used to be the Pac-10, now the Pac-12. So I think we've brought something to the table hopefully as a basketball program. I know when we came in the league, our program was a little further along than Utah's was. Larry had just taken over and was faced with a pretty major rebuilding job. Obviously he's done a terrific job doing that. We've been able to sustain our program at a pretty high level and compete with most of the teams in the Pac-12. So I think it's been a good addition for the league. I think we feel very good about it, and fortunate, and I think the rest of the league feels the same way. So good fit for both institutions.

**Q. Coach, one player no one is talking about at this point is George King. Obviously he went on to have a great year. League's Most Improved Player. What can we expect from him for an encore this year, especially when he's going to get the attention of opposing defenses?**

TAD BOYLE: George really works on his game in the off-season. He spends a lot of time in the gym. That was evident by his breakout year last year. He used his red-shirt year certainly to the fullest. He's always getting shots in after practice. He's a very, very good knock-down shooter, and he proved that by leading the league in three-point shooting last year. But he's also a big, strong, physical guy who can post up, can get to the rim, finish with contact.

The big challenge with George is good players make themselves better, and he's made himself better. He's a good player. Great players make those around them better, and that's the transition he has to make is how does he make Wesley Gordon better. How does he make Dom Collier better, Xavier Johnson better. He's

got the ability to do that now this year. He's going to work on those things.

**Q. Since you've come into the Pac-12, at least in Los Angeles we're all asking who is Colorado's rival? Because ASU has Arizona, USC has UCLA. In basketball, do you guys feel like you have a arrival at all in the Pac-12?**

WESLEY GORDON: I mean, myself personally, I don't feel like we have rivals with anybody. I think we try to go out and beat every team we play. So I don't think there is any. I mean, maybe Utah, I guess.

TAD BOYLE: Obviously, everybody tries to pit us against Utah. We're travel partners. But I think rivalries have to take on a life of their own. You can't just pick somebody. I remember when Bill McCartney was a football coach at Colorado. He came in and picked Nebraska. And Nebraska never recognized that rivalry until Colorado started beating them.

And so I think for us, we've got to just get to the upper echelon in the league, and those rivalries will happen, I think, over the course of time. Usually they're sparked by an incident. I'm not going to awake any sleeping dogs in this conference. We're just going to try to sneak up on people. But that stuff will come as time goes on.