

Woelk: Home-and-home series only makes sense for Buffs, Rams

By Neill Woelk Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 12/11/2009 12:19:27 AM MST

FORT COLLINS -- Anyone who braved the cold to make the trek to Moby Arena on Thursday night figured out this much in a hurry:

That's too good of an atmosphere to have occur just once a year.

Colorado State's gym wasn't full, but it was close -- and the noise was capacity level. A rabid Rams student section, a healthy dose of CSU locals and a respectable CU contingent made for a raucous evening.

If only the Buffs had held up their end of the bargain. The Rams out-shot and out-rebounded the visitors all night long -- but most importantly, they out-hustled the Buffs when it mattered most.

That's something that doesn't happen often to Jeff Bzdelik's teams. No matter what else happens on the floor, their work ethic is usually up to snuff.

Not on this night.

The "desperate energy" that Bzdelik stresses was absent for far too much of this one.

The Rams played as if someone were trying to take their lunch money. The Buffs played as if they really weren't that hungry, anyway.

The Rams beat the Buffs to every loose ball possible -- and thanks to some sloppy ball-handling on the part of the Buffs, there were plenty of those. The Rams beat the Buffs to every important rebound -- and thanks to CU's poor shooting, there were plenty of those.

Heck, even when the Buffs did get a rebound, the Rams took it away. Twice in the first half, Buff players came down with the ball firmly in their hands, only to have CSU players rip it away and cash in easy layups. (You've heard of the phrase "If looks could kill?" Guaranteed, two CU players are very lucky that Bzdelik didn't possess that power at those particular moments.)

It was exactly what the CU program didn't need -- and exactly the right medicine for the Rams.

The Buffs headed to Moby hoping to end a road skid that began the day after their last trip to Fort Collins, in 2007. After playing relatively well away from home thus far this season, they were confident that they'd end their much-publicized road woes. A win would have no doubt built on the momentum the team had managed to create up to this point.

Instead, their uninspired performance puts them back to square one.

The Rams, meanwhile, had a chance to end a two-game losing streak to their in-state rival, an opportunity to collect their sixth win and collect a little love from their fans in the process.

Safe to say, they love 'em in Fort Fun this morning -- so much so that the CSU students rushed the court after their team's win over a squad picked to finish last in its conference.

That's what you call hungry for a win.

Not that the Buffs quit, even when the Rams built an 18-point lead eight minutes into the second half.

That's when Colorado finally discovered that desperate energy and tried to make a game of it (or were threatened with the possibility of walking back to Boulder). Whatever the reason, they actually managed to cut the lead back down to single

digits in the waning minutes, providing the home crowd with at least some nervous moments.

But a few more turnovers, a few missed shots and some key free throw misses prevented the Buffs from ever catching up.

The worst part of the evening?

We have to wait until next year for the replay in Boulder.

This needs to be a home-and-home series. Every year. No exceptions. Play one early in December, then play the rematch just before both schools are ready to dive into conference play.

If CSU folk can put 5,000-plus in their gym on a frigid December evening, we're guessing the game would draw the same in Boulder.

Certainly, it makes sense in these economic times. Instead of airfare and hotel rooms, the total travel costs consist of a bus trip. Instead of paying a visitor \$30,000 to visit Boulder -- or Fort Collins -- it's a zero sum deal.

It's not like both schools don't have room on their schedules.

On Dec. 29, the Buffs play host to Yale. On Dec. 31, the Rams play host to -- you guessed it, Yale.

Instead of CU doing its best to draw a couple thousand to its game against Yale, and the Rams struggling to do the same, the two schools should be playing in Boulder on Dec. 31. (Hey, neither one of 'em is headed to a bowl game this year). Guaranteed, attendance for a CSU rematch in Boulder would be much, much better than the Yale game will attract.

CSU coach Tim Miles is all for the idea. "We've had serious discussions," Miles said. "Let me put it this way -- I'd have to be talked out of it."

Bzdelik -- who obviously had other things on his mind after Thursday's performance -- wasn't quite as adamant, but did admit it would make good economic sense.

Schools not in the same conference in other states manage to play twice a year. The New Mexico-New Mexico State rivalry is played twice a year before big crowds.

Meanwhile, college coaches in Colorado talk about how to build interest in the game in a state that's never been crazy for college hoops.

What better way to build a little interest than to have a rematch of Thursday night's affair on the docket about three weeks from now?

It makes too much sense for it not to happen.

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Rival CSU extends CU's road losing streak to 20

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 12/10/2009 09:51:44 PM MST

FORT COLLINS -- "Just like football! Just like football! Just like football!"

The chant from the Colorado State student section had to sting the Buffs fans -- including athletic director Mike Bohn -- who made their way to Moby Arena for Thursday night's game.

Especially when you consider the fact that Steve Fairchild's Rams lost nine consecutive games to end a season that began with a victory in Boulder.

This one can't be blamed on Dan Hawkins.

Colorado was out-hustled, out-rebounded and out-classed on the court during a humbling 77-62 loss to CSU.

The Buffs (6-4) might as well have been playing Arkansas-Pine Bluff again the way they went through the motions for the majority of the game.

The Rams (6-3), whose fans stormed the court after "upsetting" the team picked to finish last in the Big 12, played with a spirit that made it clear the rivalry truly means something up north.

"I just realized it when they stormed the court and were chanting all that. I didn't know it meant that much to them," CU freshman Alec Burks, who led his team with 22 points on 9-for-14 shooting, admitted. "I guess it does. It's a big deal to Colorado State."

Jeff Bzdelik said he talked to the Buffs about the rivalry and the atmosphere they would be walking into.

Instead of silencing the raucous crowd of 5,293, CU lost its 20th consecutive road game against Division I competition. The last such victory for the Buffs was a 73-70 win over Moby Arena on Dec. 22, 2007.

"It was discussed and they should know. They knew," Bzdelik said. "What are you going to do? If you can't get excited about this, you don't have a pulse."

Travis Franklin, who finished with 22 points on 7-for-9 shooting, did most of the heavy lifting as CSU built an 18-point lead with 11:57 remaining.

The Buffs finally showed some life late in the game. After a steal and dunk by Burks and a 3-pointer by Nate Tomlinson, the Rams' lead was trimmed to 65-56 with 3:58 remaining.

Burks made it an eight-point game (67-59) with a three-point play with 3:35 remaining, forcing CSU head coach Tim Miles to call a timeout and regroup the Rams. Keegan Hornbuckle stole the ball and was fouled, but made only one of his free throws to make the score 67-60 with 3:17 left.

That would be as close as the visitors would get down the stretch. "A lot went wrong," Cory Higgins said after being held to 12 points on a forgettable 1-for-10 night shooting. "I didn't play well. Just everything went wrong."

With 10:32 remaining, CSU was assessed a technical foul due to fans throwing debris on the floor. Levi Knutson missed both foul shots, however, allowing the Rams to keep the momentum.

"It feels great to beat CU," said Miles, who improved to 1-2 against the Buffs and 4-0 at home this season. "But it's one step forward in the season."

The Rams led 36-26 at the intermission after holding CU to 34.8 percent (8-for-23) shooting with an aggressive zone

defense that limited the driving opportunities for Higgins and the other guards.

The Buffs led 12-7 after a basket and free throw by Higgins, but a field goal drought of 4:20 allowed CSU to go on a 15-5 run.

Marcus Relphorde picked up three fouls in the first half and allowed guard Adam Nigon, a former Broomfield High standout, to rip the ball out of his hands after a rebound for an easy layup that gave the Rams a 24-19 lead with 7:00 remaining in the half.

After Shane Harris-Tunks grabbed a defensive rebound the 6-foot-11 freshman had the ball taken away by Travis Franklin for another layup to make the score 32-24 with 1:25 remaining.

"We lacked toughness because they took the ball right of our hands two or three times," Bzdelik said. "There were some loose balls ... they dove on it when we reached for it."

CU was out-rebounded 41-27 and allowed CSU to score 13 second-chance points and another 16 points off 16 turnovers. Burks and Higgins were the only Buffs to score in double figures.

"We lacked discipline. We were selfish. We lacked toughness and we weren't very poised," Bzdelik said. "The only thing to take from this is to learn and understand why we got our butt whooped."

Now it's up to Kathy McConnell-Miller and the CU women's team to salvage the season against CSU tonight when the Buffs visit Moby Arena.

"We wanted it more than them," Franklin said.

Just like football.

CSU 77, CU 62

COLORADO (62)

FG FT Reb

Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PTS

Rlphrd 25 2-9 4-5 0-5 1 5 8

Dufault 25 2-4 0-0 1-2 1 5 4

Burks 31 9-14 3-4 1-3 3 3 22

Higgins 33 1-10 10-11 0-3 3 4 12

Thorne 24 2-6 1-2 1-3 2 4 5

Tmlinsn 19 1-2 0-0 1-2 0 1 3

Hrs-Tnks 12 1-1 0-0 0-3 0 2 2

Knutson 11 0-1 2-4 0-1 0 0 2

Crawford 4 0-0 0-0 1-1 0 3 0

Hrnckle 16 1-4 1-2 1-2 0 1 4

Totals 200 19-51 21-28 6-27 10 28 62

Percentages: FG .373, FT .750.

3-Point Goals: 3-17, .176 (Burks 1-1, Tomlinson 1-2, Hornbuckle 1-2, Thorne II 0-1, Dufault 0-2, [C.Higgins](#) 0-4, Relphorde 0-5).

Team Rebounds: 2.

Blocked Shots: 2 (Harris-Tunks, Dufault).

Turnovers: 16 ([C.Higgins](#) 4, Tomlinson 3, Relphorde 2, Burks 2, Thorne II 2, Crawford, Harris-Tunks).

Steals: 8 ([C.Higgins](#) 2, Knutson 2, Hornbuckle, Tomlinson, Burks, Thorne II).

Technical Fouls: None.

COLORADO ST. (77)

FG FT Reb

Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PTS

Frnklin 34 7-9 8-10 2-10 0 3 22

Ogide 34 5-9 3-4 1-8 2 4 13

Nigon 22 2-8 4-4 1-4 3 2 9

Green 37 5-13 9-11 1-5 1 2 21

Dunn 10 0-2 0-0 0-0 0 2 0

Bocar Ba 5 0-0 1-2 2-2 0 1 1

Hrnung 9 0-1 0-0 2-3 2 5 0

Busch 28 0-3 5-8 0-1 0 0 5

Smith 21 3-7 0-0 0-3 1 2 6

Totals 200 22-52 30-39 12-41 9 21 77

Percentages: FG .423, FT .769.

3-Point Goals: 3-12, .250 (Green 2-6, Nigon 1-5, Dunn 0-1).

Team Rebounds: 5.

Blocked Shots: 6 (Ogide 3, Franklin, Green, Nigon).

Turnovers: 13 (Smith 4, Green 3, Ogide 2, Nigon 2, Busch, Franklin).

Steals: 11 (Nigon 4, Franklin 2, Smith 2, Hornung 2, Ogide).

Technical Fouls: Ogide, Bench.

Colorado 26 36--62

Colorado St. 36 41--77

A -- 5,293.

Officials -- Scott Thornley, Kelly Self, Mark Whitehead.

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Burks tries to carry CU vs. CSU

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 12/11/2009 12:09:30 AM MST

FORT COLLINS -- Alec Burks was trying too hard.

At least Colorado's promising freshman, unlike many of his teammates, was doing his part to match Colorado State's intensity during the Buffs' 77-62 loss on Thursday night at Moby Arena.

Burks led CU with 22 points on 9-for-14 shooting on a night when Cory Higgins added just 12 points on 1-for-10 shooting.

"I guess we just felt like they weren't better than us," Burks said when asked why the Buffs had such a lackluster effort. "We played to their ability instead of up to ours."

That's stunning considering the Buffs have now lost 20 consecutive road games against Division I teams dating back to a 73-70 victory over CSU here on Dec. 22, 2007.

Burks got CU back in the game with a couple of acrobatic baskets that cut the deficit to single digits late, but the 6-foot-6 guard also had two costly turnovers down the stretch.

"He had some opportunities there where I thought he tried to do a little too much," CU head coach Jeff Bzdelik said of Burks. "I thought everybody did. They're not selfish, but born out of 'Let me be the one to rescue us,' it gets worse."

Higgins had averaged 23.0 points, 5.0 assists and 4.5 rebounds in two previous games against CSU, including 33 in CU's victory last season in Boulder.

Thorne returns

Dwight Thorne returned to the starting lineup after missing Monday's win over Colorado Christian to rest a sprained ankle. CU's only senior had five points, three rebounds, three assists and four turnovers in 33 minutes.

No longer perfect

Bzdelik, a former Air Force head coach, was 6-0 all-time against CSU and 3-0 at Moby Arena before Thursday's loss. He is now 13-1 all-time against opponents from the state of Colorado.

Notable

Higgins became the 26th player in CU history to reach 1,000 points for a career. Richard Roby is the program's all-time leading scorer with 2,001 points. ... CU's first half was the worst of the season for field goal percentage (34.8), made field goals (eight) and deficit (10 points). ... The Buffs still lead the all-time series 86-36.

Up next

Bzdelik's boys will have 12 days to lick their wounds and take final exams before their next game on Dec. 22 against Cal State Northridge at the Coors Events Center.

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THE DENVER POST

colorado state 77, colorado 62

Rams knock off rival Buffs

CSU wins in the series for the first time since 2006 behind forward Franklin's 22 points.

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 12/11/2009 01:00:00 AM MST

Updated: 12/11/2009 01:45:53 AM MST



CSU's Andy Ogide looks to pass around two CU defenders during Thursday night's game in Fort Collins. CSU won 77-62. (John Leyba, The Denver Post)

FORT COLLINS — If any of the newcomers on Colorado's men's basketball team wondered about the importance of the rivalry with Colorado State, they know now.

Delirious CSU fans stormed the Moby Arena court Thursday night following a 77-62 victory over the visiting Buffaloes, but not before chanting "Just like football! Just like football!" in reference to the Rams' September victory on the gridiron.

Colorado (6-4) hit five of its first eight shots to take a 12-7 lead, but then connected on just one of its next 12 and never regained the momentum. Getting 22 points from 6-foot-7 junior forward Travis Franklin, Colorado State (6-3) outhustled and outplayed CU and treated the 5,293 fans to the Rams' first victory in the

Extras

[View](#) a slide show of photos from the CSU vs. Buffs on Dec. 10, 2009 .

series since a 2006 win in Boulder.

"We didn't keep the intensity we started out with," said CU freshman guard Alec Burks, who matched Franklin with 22 points. "We felt like they weren't better than us, and we let them win, I guess. When their fans stormed the court . . . I didn't know it meant that much to them. I guess it does."

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THE DENVER POST

Colorado has as much trouble winning on the road as its football team. Colorado lost its 20th straight road game against Division I competition, dating to a 73-70 victory over CSU here in 2007.

After trailing 36-26 at halftime, the Buffs made a late charge but didn't resemble the team that played tough in close losses to Gonzaga and Arizona at the Maui Invitational. CU shot 37.3 percent from the field, and its best player, junior guard Cory Higgins, went 1-for-10.

Give Colorado State much of the credit. Its zone defense, with 6-9, 245-pound Andy Ogide patrolling the paint, pushed the Buffs out of their offensive patterns.

"(CSU's zone) collapsed, so we needed to drive and kick out," Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik said. "We didn't do that. We played selfish and lacked poise."

Feeding off its enthusiastic fans, Colorado State never trailed after Franklin slithered inside for an easy basket to make it 18-17. CSU extended its halftime lead by taking advantage of fast-break opportunities and draining open jumpers when a CU defender arrived too late. A 3-pointer by freshman point guard Dorian Green from the top of the key made it 51-34 with 12:52 to go.

"This is a big game," Franklin said afterward, "and our fans did a great job. We wanted it more than (Colorado)."

FG FT Reb

COLORADO Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PTS

Relphorde 25 2-9 4-5 0-5 1 5 8
 Dufault 25 2-4 0-0 1-2 1 5 4
 Burks 31 9-14 3-4 1-3 3 3 22
 CHiggins 33 1-10 10-11 0-3 3 4 12
 Thorne II 24 2-6 1-2 1-3 2 4 5
 Tomlinson 19 1-2 0-0 1-2 0 1 3
 Harris-Tunks 12 1-1 0-0 0-3 0 2 2
 Knutson 11 0-1 2-4 0-1 0 0 2
 Crawford 4 0-0 0-0 1-1 0 3 0
 Hornbuckle 16 1-4 1-2 1-2 0 1 4

Totals 200 19-51 21-28 6-27 10 28 62

Percentages: FG .373, FT .750. **3-Point Goals:**

3-17, .176 (Burks 1-1, Tomlinson 1-2, Hornbuckle 1-2, Thorne II 0-1, Dufault 0-2, C.

Higgins 0-4, Relphorde 0-5). **Team Rebounds:**

2. **Blocked Shots:** 2 (Harris-Tunks, Dufault).

Turnovers: 16 (C.Higgins 4, Tomlinson 3, Relphorde 2, Burks 2, Thorne II 2, Crawford, Harris-Tunks). **Steals:** 8 (C.Higgins 2, Knutson 2, Hornbuckle, Tomlinson, Burks, Thorne II).

Technical fouls: None.

FG FT Reb

CSU Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PTS

Franklin 34 7-9 8-10 2-10 0 3 22
 Ogide 34 5-9 3-4 1-8 2 4 13
 Nigon 22 2-8 4-4 1-4 3 2 9
 Green 37 5-13 9-11 1-5 1 2 21
 Dunn 10 0-2 0-0 0-0 0 2 0
 Bocar Ba 5 0-0 1-2 2-2 0 1 1
 Hornung 9 0-1 0-0 2-3 2 5 0
 Busch 28 0-3 5-8 0-1 0 0 5
 Smith 21 3-7 0-0 0-3 1 2 6

Totals 200 22-52 30-39 12-41 9 21 77

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THE DENVER POST

Percentages: FG .423, FT .769. **3-point goals:**

3-12, .250 (Green 2-6, Nigon 1-5, Dunn 0-1).

Team rebounds: 5. **Blocked Shots:** 6 (Ogide 3, Franklin, Green, Nigon). **Turnovers:** 13 (Smith 4, Green 3, Ogide 2, Nigon 2, Busch, Franklin).

Steals: 11 (Nigon 4, Franklin 2, Smith 2, Hornung 2, Ogide). **Technical fouls:** Ogide, bench.

Colorado 26 36 — 62

Colorado State 36 41 — 77

5,293. Officials — Scott Thornley, Kelly Self, Mark Whitehead.

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Longmont, Colorado
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CU lifeless in loss to CSU

By Patrick Ridgell
© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

FORT COLLINS — Jeff Bzdelik had no explanation Thursday night. That might be the biggest problem.

The Colorado men's basketball coach watched his team, the one he wants to play with extreme passion, play most of the night with all the passion of a dead fish in a 77-62 loss at Colorado State.

The Rams (6-3), who lost to Northern Colorado on Dec. 1, out-hustled, out-shot, out-executed and out-rebounded (41-27) the Buffaloes. And then their fans stormed the court with similar glee to what they demonstrated in September at Folsom Field as the silent Buffs (6-4) trudged away.

"We lacked discipline, we were selfish, we lacked toughness and we weren't very poised," Bzdelik said.

"The only thing to take from this is to learn and understand why we got our butt whooped."

The night featured the normal exchanges of pleasantries from fans of both sides, but the rowdy atmosphere in Moby Arena appeared to rile the Rams and stun the Buffs.

The Buffs downplayed it. CU guard Alec Burks said things did not rattle them, and teammate Nate Tomlinson said, "We were our own worst enemy tonight; it wasn't the crowd."

But Bzdelik said they discussed the rivalry and its meaning to Colorado State before the game. And when asked about the atmosphere, he said, "If you don't get excited to do this, you don't have a pulse."

Said Colorado State coach Tim Miles: "I love the fact that our students came out and really made that a home-court advantage. There's no question that had a huge effect on the game."

Burks admitted the Buffs did not match Colorado State's intensity. Asked where their intensity went, Burks said, "I guess we just felt like they weren't better than us and we let them win. We played to their ability instead of ours."

Tomlinson said the intensity tilted away from the Buffs with rebounding. Colorado State held a 21-12 edge at halftime.

CU has lost 20 straight on the road against Division I opponents. The Buffs show little sign the streak will end at Tulsa on Jan. 2, the next time they leave home, or when Big 12 play starts a few days later. They've lost 29 straight Big 12 road games.

COLORADO ST. 77, COLORADO 62

COLORADO (6-4)

Relphorde 2-9 4-5 8, Dufault 2-4 0-0 4, Burks 9-14 3-4 22, C. Higgins 1-10 10-11 12, Thorne II 2-6 1-2 5, Tomlinson 1-2 0-0 3, Harris-Tunks 1-1 0-0 2, Knutson 0-1 2-4 2, Crawford 0-0 0-0 0, Hornbuckle 1-4 1-2 4. Totals 19-51 21-28 62.

COLORADO STATE (6-3)

Franklin 7-9 8-10 22, Ogide 5-9 3-4 13, Nigon 2-8 4-4 9, Green 5-13 9-11 21, Dunn 0-2 0-0 0, Bocar Ba 0-0 1-2 1, Hornung 0-1 0-0 0, Busch 0-3 5-8 5, Smith 3-7 0-0 6. Totals 22-52 30-39 77.

Halftime — Colorado St. 36-26. 3-point goals — Colorado 3-17 (Burks 1-1, Tomlinson 1-2, Hornbuckle 1-2, Thorne II 0-1, Dufault 0-2, C. Higgins 0-4, Relphorde 0-5), Colorado St. 3-12 (Green 2-6, Nigon 1-5, Dunn 0-1). Fouled out — Dufault, Hornung, Relphorde. Rebounds — Colorado 27 (Relphorde 5), Colorado St. 41 (Franklin 10). Assists — Colorado 10 (Burks, C. Higgins 3), Colorado St. 9 (Nigon 3). Total fouls — Colorado 28, Colorado St. 21. Technicals — Ogide, Colorado St. Bench. A — 5,293.

The Buffs fell behind by 18 early in the second and spent the rest of the night frantically pressing, trying to fight back. They pulled to within seven with 3 minutes, 17 seconds remaining, and again with 2:46 — but never closer.

CU's stagnant offense shot a season-low 37 percent. It committed 16 turnovers and had 10 assists. Colorado State had 11 steals and six blocks to CU's eight and two. Rams ripped rebounds out of the arms of Buffs, making it clear which team wanted this more.

Leading CU scorer Cory Higgins finished with one field goal, none in the second half, and only 12 points. Marcus Relphorde, the newcomer on whom Bzdelik said he was counting the most, fought foul trouble and was ineffective.

CU does not play again until Dec. 22, meaning the Buffs have lots of time to sit and stew.

"It'll be bad, because we'll be thinking we could have won this game," Burks said. "But we'll just practice hard and get it out of our system."

Bzdelik continues to stress the need for his team to "sustain the aggression, effort and execution both offensively and defensively for 40 minutes," as he put it Wednesday. That's not happening with consistency, especially away from Boulder.

Why? Bzdelik did not provide an answer. He did say finals and course demands are taking a toll. One of his starters took a final at 2:30 p.m. Thursday. But he was clear he did not want to offer school as an excuse.

Asked what the Buffs can do to sustain their intensity, Tomlinson offered this: "If you have any new ideas, let us know."

Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell. He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.