

CU Buffs clobbered in Columbia

Bzdelik says CU players must get 'tougher'

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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COLUMBIA, Mo. -- Jeff Bzdelik put his brilliant basketball mind to work and laid out a blueprint in practices for his players to survive Missouri's "40 minutes of hell" and position themselves for a heavenly upset.

And then the Buffs shuffled lifelessly off the bus and were soundly beaten 92-63 by the Tigers on Wednesday night at Mizzou Arena.

It's true that CU has only one senior and the future of the program looks a little brighter.

However, Missouri is also one of the younger teams in the Big 12 with 66 percent of its scoring coming from freshmen and sophomores.

Mike Anderson, riding the momentum of last season's run to the Elite Eight, has signed a top-10 recruiting class (according to USA Today's rankings) to add to the mix next season.

So, before the Buffs put this humbling defeat -- which was in a lot of ways much worse than the 84-66 loss to Missouri in Boulder on Feb. 6 (CU was coming off a tough loss to No. 1 Kansas) or the 107-62 debacle here last season (Mizzou was a powerhouse that pummeled many teams in Columbia) -- in the past the Camera asked Bzdelik how he is going to close the gap on Anderson and deal with the Tigers going forward.

After all, CU and Missouri play twice a year. That won't change unless one or both programs leaves for another conference. "It really just comes down to toughness," Bzdelik said after a long pause. "Toughness to be ball strong, toughness to go meet passes, toughness to break to open areas, toughness to keep people in front of you, toughness to spring back harder, toughness to block people off.

"All these little things add up through the course of the game."

They added up in a hurry against an inspired Tigers team that put on a clinic in front of a crowd of 14,303.

CU missed six of its first seven shots, including two layups, and trailed 13-2 after a 3-pointer by Zaire Taylor and an easy basket in the paint by Keith Ramsey.

Bzdelik called two timeouts in the first four and a half minutes and shuffled the lineup to stop the bleeding.

The Buffs either weren't listening or didn't care to compete on this night.

"Everybody is too complacent," said CU freshman Alec Burks, who was clearly irritated by an upper-classman after the game who didn't seem to be upset by the embarrassing loss. "You see that out there. Nobody is really playing hard and having fun like they used to."

Which is the opposite of how Anderson's team goes about its business.

Marcus Denmon, who scored a career-high 24 points during Missouri's 74-59 win at Nebraska on Saturday, came off the bench and buried a 3-pointer to extend the lead to 12 points.

Miguel Paul swished one from behind the arc to make it 15 points. Kim English made it 16 points with another deep ball. Denmon pushed it to 17 points after a pair of free throws.

And after Ramsey grabbed offensive rebounds and converted easy baskets on back-to-back possessions, Missouri led 44-25 with 2:33 remaining in the first half.

CU shot 45.8 percent thanks in large part to Cory Higgins (6-for-9, 14 points), but the Tigers were 19-for-30 shooting (63.3 percent; the highest percentage the Buffs have allowed in a half this season) and led 48-32 at the intermission.

It was the largest halftime deficit CU had faced this year. And it would have been worse if Keegan Hornbuckle hadn't drained a 3-pointer as time expired.

"We just don't have consistent effort," Hornbuckle said. "We play hard for one play and then take three plays off."

Higgins cut the deficit to 59-45 with 15:53 remaining, but before the Buffs blinked Michael Dixon was capping a 13-0 run with a transition hoop to make the score 72-45 with 11:28 remaining.

Missouri led by as many as 29 points before both teams emptied the benches.

"It has got to hurt," Dwight Thorne, CU's only senior, said when asked of the team should just forget about what happened here. "You've got to think about it."

The Tigers (21-7, 9-4) -- picked to finish seventh in the Big 12 preseason coaches poll -- improved to 16-1 this season at home and have won 35 of their last 36 games at Mizzou Arena.

Meanwhile, the beleaguered Buffs (12-15, 3-10) have now:

Suffered 36 consecutive Big 12 road losses dating back to an 80-78 overtime loss at Oklahoma State on Jan. 21, 2006.

Suffered 28 consecutive road losses to Division I opponents dating back to a 73-70 win at Colorado State on Dec. 22, 2007.

At least Missouri isn't on the schedule again this season.

"Before we win we have to play better basketball," Bzdelik said.

Missouri 92, Colorado 63 COLORADO

FG FT Reb

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

Rlphrde 24 3-10 4-4 1-5 1 2 11

Dufault 16 0-1 0-0 1-3 3 4 0

Tomlinson 17 0-1 0-0 0-0 3 2 0

Burks 30 5-9 3-3 1-5 2 4 13

CHiggins 34 9-14 1-2 2-3 2 0 21

Thorne II 24 1-5 4-4 0-2 1 2 6

Hrs-Tnks 20 3-3 0-0 1-2 0 3 6

Coney 3 0-1 0-0 2-2 0 0 0

Knutson 15 0-2 0-0 0-5 1 0 0

Crawford 4 0-2 0-0 1-1 0 0 0

Hnbckle 11 2-3 0-0 0-0 1 1 6

Eckloff 2 0-2 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Totals 200 23-53 12-13 9-28 14 18 63

Percentages: FG .434, FT .923.

3-Point Goals: 5-20, .250 (Hornbuckle 2-3, [C.Higgins](#) 2-5, Relphorde 1-4, Dufault 0-1, Eckloff 0-1, Tomlinson 0-1, Knutson 0-1, Thorne II 0-4).

Team Rebounds: 0.

Blocked Shots: 2 (Burks, Eckloff).

Turnovers: 19 ([C.Higgins](#) 4, Relphorde 3, Burks 3, Thorne II 3, Tomlinson 2, Harris-Tunks 2, Crawford, Hornbuckle).

Steals: 4 (Burks 2, Thorne II, Tomlinson).

Technical Fouls: None.

MISSOURI

FG FT Reb

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

Ramsey 27 6-6 1-1 3-7 3 2 13

Safford 7 3-4 2-2 0-1 0 0 8

Tiller 26 3-6 4-5 2-7 9 2 10

Taylor 16 2-4 0-1 0-1 0 2 6

English 23 3-8 1-2 0-2 0 0 9

Paul 22 3-5 0-0 0-0 3 2 8

Dixon 15 3-5 0-0 0-0 1 3 7

Denmon 23 7-12 5-8 1-4 2 0 21

Bowers 13 4-7 0-0 3-3 0 3 8

Sutton 2 0-1 0-0 1-1 0 0 0

Moore 21 1-2 0-0 0-3 0 2 2

Stone 2 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Undrwd 3 0-0 0-0 1-3 0 0 0

Totals 200 35-60 13-19 11-33 18 16 92

Percentages: FG .583, FT .684.

3-Point Goals: 9-14, .643 (Paul 2-2, Taylor 2-3, English 2-3, Denmon 2-4, Dixon 1-2).

Team Rebounds: 1.

Blocked Shots: 9 (Ramsey 2, Moore 2, Underwood 2, Bowers, Paul, Taylor).

Turnovers: 10 (Dixon 2, English 2, Paul, Stone, Moore, Safford, Tiller, Bowers).

Steals: 13 (English 3, Moore 2, Ramsey 2, Paul, Dixon, Safford, Tiller, Taylor, Denmon).

Technical Fouls: None.

Colorado 32 31--63

Missouri 48 44--92

A -- 14,303.

Officials -- Rick Hartzell, Mark Whitehead, Michael Eggers.

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Hornbuckle returns in CU loss

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 02/25/2010 12:05:10 AM MST

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- Keegan Hornbuckle played.

There's your bright spot, Buffs fans.

In fact, Jeff Bzdelik was able to empty the bench and get all of the healthy reserves some court time during Colorado's humiliating 92-63 loss to Missouri on Wednesday night at Mizzou Arena.

Hornbuckle was back in uniform after sitting out the last month with a right shoulder injury. The freshman forward, who was averaging just 2.6 points this season, splashed a 3-pointer as time expired on the first half to cut CU's deficit to 48-32.

Hornbuckle ended a 13-0 run by Missouri in the second half with another make from behind the arc, but CU still trailed 72-48.

"We decided to take the last week off and let it heal a little bit," said Hornbuckle, who finished with six points in 11 minutes. "It felt pretty good today except on a couple of occasions when it got bumped. It's pretty sore right now."

Bzdelik can only wonder if the season might have included a few more wins had Shannon Sharpe (knee) not missed the entire season and had Hornbuckle been able to stay healthy.

At least one of the promising freshmen will be gaining some more experience down the stretch alongside star classmate Alec Burks (13 points, five rebounds).

"I'm definitely getting a little tired of watching the games from the sideline without dressing out. I want to help the team," Hornbuckle said. "I'm going to get a lot more experience in the next four games and that's going to help me out a lot for next year."

Dwight Thorne (24 minutes), Shane Harris-Tunks (20), Levi Knutson (15), Casey Crawford (4), Javon Coney (3) and Trey Eckloff (2) also saw playing time off the bench. However, they combined for 12 points on 4-for-15 shooting.

Missouri's bench outscored CU's reserves 46-18. And two of CU's starters, Austin Dufault and Nate Tomlinson, didn't even score.

Tigers injury

Missouri forward Justin Safford went down with a left knee injury after making a layup with 13:12 remaining in the first half that gave the home team a 15-4 lead. The 6-8 junior had already scored eight points for the Tigers at that point.

Safford, who had 10 points during Missouri's 84-66 win in Boulder, will undergo tests. Missouri coach Mike Anderson did not want to speculate on the severity of the injury immediately after the game.

Notable

Cory Higgins (21 points) is now 14th on CU's all-time scoring list with 1,291 career points. ... Missouri leads the all time series 98-52 with wins in the last eight meetings. ... Former CU player Martane Freeman (2004-06), who is related to Missouri standout Marcus Denmon (21 points), attended the game.

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

FEBRUARY 24, 2010, 10:29 AM

CU men's team aids the women

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

In a classy move, the Colorado men's basketball team helped the CU women's squad record a road victory in overtime Tuesday night at Missouri.

In preparation for its game tonight in Columbia, Mo., the CU men's team held a workout early Tuesday evening at the MU practice gym. Afterward, rather than return to the hotel, the CU men's team went over to the women's game and sat behind the CU bench, cheering on their Buffs counterparts.

After the game, Tom McConnell, an assistant coach on the Colorado women's team, told CU sports information department staffer Troy Andre that the presence of the men's team and the vocal support it supplied played a role in the overtime win.

Previously, the CU women's team won at Kansas State in January so this season has marked the first since 2004 that the Buffs have won at least two road games.

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Missouri men's basketball team tweaks game in blowout win

By [Brian Nordli](#)

February 24, 2010 | 8:35 p.m. CST



Senior guard J.T. Tiller puts up a shot in front of Colorado's Alec Burks on Wednesday at Mizzou Arena. Tiller finished the game with 10 points and nine assists. | ANJALI PINTO/Missourian

COLUMBIA — During a time out with nine minutes left in a blowout victory against Colorado on Thursday, Missouri men's basketball coach Mike Anderson quickly pulled aside guard Mike

Dixon Jr.

Rather than allow his team to become complacent with a 20-point lead, Anderson took the opportunity to focus on one-on-one coaching. He quickly got in a defensive stance and began showing a frustrated Dixon what he was doing wrong on defense while the rest of the team waited in a huddle.

“Corey Higgins can get his arms around guys and attack, and Mike got caught up in that,” Tigers assistant coach Matt Zimmermann said. “And coach was probably getting frustrated with his defense. He was trying to use that time for Mike to do a little better job keeping guys in front of him.”

However, on a night when Missouri was having a near perfect game, winning 92-63 over Colorado at Mizzou Arena, Anderson still had plenty for them to work on. Missouri assistant coach Melvin Watkins said it is blowout games like this one that gives the Tigers (21-7, 9-4) a chance to improve on more specific aspects of their game.

“When you got a lead like that, you see the guys looking at the scoreboard and lose their focus,” Watkins said. “So we were sure to challenge them to stay focused and finish the game out on a positive note.”

Even in the locker room, Anderson found plenty to yell at his team about. Anderson said it wasn't until he saw the stat sheet that he was forced to give his team some credit.

“Once I got the stat sheet, I had to kind of back up on what I said to my guys in the locker room,” Anderson said. “Because they really played well.”

Missouri spent the majority of the game enforcing its trademark pressure defense, never letting up even as the team extended its lead to more than 25 points. Even though Missouri held Colorado (12-15, 3-10) to just 63 points, Watkins said the team's main focus in the second half was preventing the easy layups it allowed earlier in the game.

“A couple times, in our zone, we got a little lackadasical there, and gave them some easy baskets,” Watkins said. “So there are some things we got to work on, but I think this group is up for the challenge.”

The blowout also allowed the Tigers' bench to get important playing time. Zimmermann said it is like a gift to be able to play the whole team during conference play. He said it will give the Tigers much needed experience as Missouri heads down the stretch.

“The more minutes your bench can get at this point at Feb. 24, it is very very crucial,” Zimmermann said. “Tonight we were able to get a couple guys some extra minutes and all that helps.”

The game proved especially important for Missouri center Steve Moore, who might need to play a bigger role because of an injury to forward Justin Safford. Five minutes into the game, Safford injured his left leg and had to be helped to the locker room. He returned to the bench, but didn't play. Anderson said Safford will get an MRI on Wednesday night to determine the severity of the injury.

Missouri will play No. 6 Kansas State on Saturday night in Manhattan, Kan. Watkins said that even though the game against Colorado was a blowout, it gave Missouri new things to work on to be prepared for the Wildcats.

“There are some things we can learn from this,” Watkins said. “The biggest thing is the way we defended. We will be sure to talk about that.”



Posted on Wed, Feb. 24, 2010

Missouri thumps Colorado, bolsters hopes for NCAA bid

By MIKE DeARMOND
The Kansas City Star

COLUMBIA | J.T. Tiller swore up and down that Missouri's 92-63 mauling of Colorado was not as easy as it looked.

"No game in the Big 12 is easy," Tiller said. "I can't tell you how it looked from the bystander standpoint. I just know we went out there, played very hard, and everything fell our way tonight.

"But we can't take anything away from Colorado."

No? The Tigers took everything away from the Buffaloes.

Their jump shots, their drives, 33 of 61 rebounds, the basketball on 13 steals, part of 19 Colorado turnovers.

Oh, and what pride Colorado had remaining in what is now a 12-15 season, 3-10 in the Big 12 Conference.

Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik insisted he saw at least one positive in his team's play.

"I thought, at times, we moved the ball a little bit better than the last game," Bzdelik said.

Was he talking about "the last game" as a 94-74 loss at No. 1 Kansas on Saturday, or "the last game" against Missouri, an 84-66 loss at Colorado on Feb. 6?

Didn't matter. Bzdelik simply had to reach too far to find a positive for Colorado on Wednesday night at Mizzou Arena.

Missouri, meanwhile, played so well that coach Mike Anderson said he was going to have to apologize for some of the things he included in his postgame critique.

"Once I got the stat sheet," Anderson said, "I had to kind of back up on what I said to my guys in the locker room. They really played well."

Tiller passed out a career-high nine assists to go with 10 points and seven rebounds. Anderson apologized for taking out Tiller, his senior point guard, before he could get a double-double. Heck, it might have been a triple-double.

Senior forward Keith Ramsey was perfect. Literally. He took six shots from the field and made all six. He hit the only free throw he took. He grabbed seven rebounds.

Marcus Denmon, for the third time in the last six games, came off the bench and led Missouri in scoring. This time, he threw in 21 points, hitting seven of 12 shots.

Kim English scored nine points, Laurence Bowers and Miguel Paul and Justin Safford eight points each.

Safford scored all his points before falling to the floor with 13 minutes, 12 seconds left in the first half, clutching his left knee.

Safford was helped off the floor but returned to the bench later in the half. And, he walked out for the second half limping, but without crutches or a brace on the knee.

Anderson said he would not know the extent of the injury until a late-night MRI, and MU officials said they would announce nothing until this morning.

Tiller acknowledged the team's concern over the injury to Safford, "especially the one that he might have."

"You've got to hope for the best and prepare for the worst," Tiller said.

Denmon knocked on the wood table at the front of the interview room.

Denmon contended he never feared Missouri might overlook Colorado and ahead to what is now a huge Saturday

night game at Kansas State.

"I feel that it may have been possible for some people," Denmon said. But not for this Tiger team that was focused on moving to 21-7 overall and to 9-4 in the Big 12 Conference standings, a record that probably now has assured a bid to the NCAA Tournament.

"We know every game is important," Denmon said. "We didn't want to look past Colorado, knowing we've got Kansas State coming up. We had to play this game first, and that's what we did."

No. 6-ranked Kansas State is currently alone in second place in the Big 12 standings at 10-3. However, if Missouri wins in Manhattan on Saturday, the Tigers — by virtue of also having beaten the Wildcats in Columbia — would have the tie breaker over Kansas State.

A top-four finish in the regular season guarantees a bye in the first round of the Big 12 tournament in Kansas City. But a second-place or third-place regular-season finish would keep Missouri from having to play league champion KU until the tournament title game.

Tiller said those concerns were beyond the scope of his concern at this point.

"You can't worry about the Big 12 tournament," he said. "We can't worry about the game after K-State. We've just got to go in there focused and get ready for that game."

@ Go to **KansasCity.com** for photos from the game and analysis on the Campus Corner blog.

To reach Mike DeArmond, call 816-234-4353 or send e-mail to mdearmond@kcstar.com

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