

Colorado winless against No. 1 teams; Burks practicing

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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Seemingly every program gets its bubble burst from time to time.

Defending national champion North Carolina is 13-8 overall and currently in 10th place in the ACC.

UConn (13-9), another Final Four representative last year, will also have to turn things around dramatically just to get into the NCAA Tournament field.

Arizona (12-9) will likely not be invited to the Big Dance for the first time in a quarter century. UCLA (10-11) needs to rally to get into the NIT.

Indiana (9-11) and Michigan (11-11) are mired in painfully long rebuilding processes. Kentucky was down until John Wall and John Calapari arrived on campus.

And then there is Kansas.

The No. 1 Jayhawks (20-1, 6-0 Big 12) -- who take on Colorado tonight at a sold-out Coors Events Center (7 p.m., ESPN2) -- have won at least 20 games for the 21st consecutive season.

"Kansas is a different team," said Buffs forward Casey Crawford, who grew up in Overland Park, Kan., a short drive from Allen Fieldhouse. "They've always had great players, they've always had great coaches and they've always just had that rich history with them. They're a great program." KU has won an NCAA Division I-record 52 conference championships, including the last five Big 12 titles, and owns the nation's longest active home-court winning streak (54).

The Jayhawks are a lock to make their 39th NCAA Tournament appearance and are a good bet to reach the Final Four for the 14th time.

But Bill Self, who guided the program to its third national championship two seasons ago, is not satisfied.

"I still think there's another step to take to be as tough as we can be," the KU coach said on this week's Big 12 media teleconference. "For us to get where we want to go we have to be a tougher, hard-nosed team."

Despite an 11-10 overall record, a 2-5 Big 12 mark and a deflating 64-63 loss at Iowa State, the Buffs believe they can take down Goliath tonight.

CU is 10-1 at the Coors Events Center with an upset of Baylor and a near-miss against Kansas State earlier this season.

"When you're on your home court and you have the home fans behind you, you just play different," said Alec Burks, who also grew up in KU country (Grandview, Mo.). "We would show we can play with anybody in the country if we won that game."

Burks, who sustained a sprained knee in Ames, could give the home team a boost if doctors clear the talented freshman to play tonight. He has practiced the past two days wearing a brace on the injured left knee.

"I was limited but I felt like I could play. The knee felt good, and I was doing the same things I always do -- dunking and shooting -- with no pain," Burks reported. "I didn't like (the brace) because it kind of messed with my moves and my athletic ability. ... If I want to play, I have to use it."

The Jayhawks have won the last 13 meetings in the series and six consecutive times in Boulder dating back to a 60-59 CU victory on Jan. 22, 2003.

The Buffs did give KU a scare at Allen Fieldhouse last season before Sherron Collins took over in crunch time and sealed a 66-61 victory for his team.

"There's going to be a lot of KU fans and hopefully some CU fans this year," Crawford said. "A win over a No. 1 team is a big win, especially against KU."

CU is 0-12 all-time against No. 1 ranked teams, including 0-5 against KU.

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CU men's preview vs. Kansas

Camera staff
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 02/02/2010 11:58:05 PM MST

TONIGHT: Colorado hosts No. 1 Kansas at 7 p.m. at the Coors Events Center.

BROADCAST: Television: ESPN2 with Ron Franklin (play-by-play) and Bill Raftery (analyst); **Radio:** KKZN (760 AM) with Mark Johnson (play-by-play) and Charles Johnson (color).

STORYLINES: The Buffs (11-10, 2-5 Big 12) are coming off a 64-63 loss at Iowa State that stretched the program's Big 12 road losing streak to 33. ... Alec Burks sustained a sprained knee early in the game and is day-to-day. ... The Jayhawks (20-1, 6-0) climbed back to the top of the polls after an overtime win at Kansas State. ... KU has won at least 20 games for the 21st consecutive season.

KEY STAT: CU is 0-12 all-time against the No. 1 ranked teams. KU is 5-0 vs. the Buffs as the No. 1 ranked team.

COACHES: Jeff Bzdelik is 32-52 in his third season at CU. Bill Self is 189-41 in his seventh season at Kansas.

PROBABLE STARTERS:

Colorado -- G Nate Tomlinson, 6-3, sophomore, 5.7 ppg, 2.6 rpg, G Alec Burks, 6-6, freshman, 16.3 ppg, 4.7 rpg, G Cory Higgins, 6-5, junior, 18.3 ppg, 3.5 rpg, G Marcus Relphorde, 6-7, junior, 10.4 ppg, 3.6 rpg, F Austin Dufault, 6-9, sophomore, 6.8 ppg, 3.4 rpg.

Kansas -- G Xavier Henry, 6-6, freshman, 13.7 ppg, 4.1 rpg, G Sherron Collins, 5-11, senior, 15.5 ppg, 4.1 apg, G Brady Morningstar, 6-3, junior, 5.9 ppg, 3.3 apg, G Marcus Morris, 6-8, sophomore, 12.6 ppg, 6.0 rpg, F Cole Aldrich, 6-11, junior, 11.6 ppg, 10.3 rpg.

SERIES: Kansas leads 117-39, including a dominant 26-1 record against CU since the formation of the Big 12.

UP NEXT: The Buffs host Missouri on Saturday at the Coors Events Center (2 p.m., Altitude).

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THE DENVER POST

colorado basketball

Bufs face tall order in Aldrich, Jayhawks

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 02/03/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

BOULDER — When devising a defensive plan against top-ranked Kansas, it's always a pick-your-poison proposition. Do X and the Jayhawks will counter with Y.

But Colorado's toughest matchup tonight at the Coors Events Center figures to be Kansas' 6-foot-11 junior center Cole Aldrich. CU has no one tall enough or bulky enough to match up against him.

For conference games, Colorado (11-10, 2-5) ranks last in rebounding margin. Kansas (20-1, 6-0) tops the league in board work. If that wasn't tough enough, Aldrich averages a double-double this season, 11.6 points, 10.3 points.

"With Aldrich, you have to make him take tough shots over you," Colorado 6-9 junior Casey Crawford said. "You have to make him catch the ball as far off the block as you can, and then

make sure he takes contested jump shots. If we're making him do that we've done our job."

Sellout crowd.

Tonight's game is a sellout. The team expects a higher percentage of Bufs fans in the crowd than in recent years, because of CU's improvement. In past years, Kansas fans filled as many as half the seats.

"If you get booed coming out of that tunnel in your own gym, it's something you're going to remember for the rest of your life," said CU guard Dwight Thorne, the team's only senior. "It gets you a little upset."

CU coach Jeff Bzdelik said: "If they have hurt feelings (from hearing boos), they should do something about it."

Footnote.

CU freshman guard Alec Burks, who leads Big 12 newcomers with a 16.3 scoring average, said he expects his availability for tonight to be a game-time decision. Burks sustained a knee sprain in Saturday night's loss at Iowa State. He said he feels good enough to play but realizes it is not his call to make.

"I was doing my usual thing in practice, I was dunking and shooting," Burks said with a grin.

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Longmont, Colorado
Monday, April 26, 2010

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Buffs hope for home-court edge against Kansas

By Patrick Ridgell
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BOULDER — No. 1 Kansas is in town to face the Colorado men's basketball team today, an annual event that sees blue-clad fans pack the Coors Events Center and boo the Buffs. Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik doesn't seem too concerned.

Questions Monday for the coach about how he braces his young team for what awaits elicited only a shrug.

"It'll be fun," Bzdelik said. "It won't be any different than anything we've encountered anywhere else. And that's the truth. We played at Texas, we played at Oklahoma State ..."

Yeah, but you're playing at home.

"Who cares?" Bzdelik countered.

What about all those loud Kansas fans?

"Doesn't bother me," he said.

Bzdelik also said he wasn't aware the past three No. 1 teams have all lost, forcing them to relinquish their top spot. He added he doesn't read newspapers or watch television news. He only watches film of his team and its next opponent, and then "Seinfeld" re-runs.

The coach might need some levity tonight. Kansas is 6-0 in a Big 12 that coaches fawn over at every opportunity. The Jayhawks have already won three league road games, and have won their six conference games by an average of 14.66 points.

CU reported Tuesday that today's game is sold out and many of the 11,000 expected, as usual, will fancy the Jayhawks. Some years, more than half the crowd favors Kansas. Veteran Buffs are used to it. Senior guard Dwight Thorne admitted it was "shocking," the first time those Kansas fans booed him as he took CU's home floor.

The Buffs — coaches and players — credit their fans for helping create a home-court edge. CU is 10-1 in Boulder and has enjoyed big crowds for three league games. Some Buffs believe that trend will continue.

"I think this game might be a little bit different," Thorne said. "We've been having bigger crowds for us as of late, and I think crowd-wide, it may be more for us than half and half. I could be wrong.

"If it is half and half, you just have to tell (CU's younger players), 'You know what, you're going to get booed coming out of that tunnel. It's going to be something that you'll remember for the rest of your life, having that feeling in your

No. 1 Kansas (20-1, 6-0) at CU men (11-10, 2-5)

When/Where: 7 p.m. tonight at the Coors Events Center in Boulder

TV/Radio: ESPN2/KKZN 760 AM.

The series: Kansas leads 117-39, 38-26 in Boulder. The Buffs have lost 13 straight to Kansas, six in a row in Boulder.

Leading scorers: Kansas — Sherron Collins (15.5 points per game); CU — Cory Higgins (18.3 points per game).

Notes: CU guard Alec Burks is a "game-day" decision. He sprained his left knee Saturday at Iowa State. ... In Burks' absence Saturday, senior Dwight Thorne played extra minutes and will likely start tonight if Burks does not. ... CU is 1-2 against ranked teams this year. The Buffs last beat a top-five team at home when it defeated No. 3 Texas in February 2003. ... Kansas' Cole Aldrich was named Big 12 player of the week on Monday. He's averaging 11.6 points, 10.3 rebounds and 3.6 blocks a game.

home gym that you're the underdog.'"

Bzdelik claimed ignorance over the recent plight of No. 1s, but Thorne did not. Thorne just didn't know if that trend will help the Buffs.

"It can work for us or against us," Thorne said. "They might come in here thinking they're not going to lose this game. They might have a chip on their shoulders. We'll have a chip on our shoulders. It's going to be a dog fight."

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

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Bring it on

CU hosts No. 1 Kansas in front of sold-out crowd

By David Starcer on February 3, 2010

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When the Colorado Buffaloes men's basketball team takes the floor to battle the top-ranked team in the nation, it will be the fourth and final Kansas-Colorado match-up in Boulder for senior guard Dwight Thorne II.

Thorne, as well as the rest of his teammates, said he thinks this game might be different than ones in years past.

"I think maybe for the first time we might actually have more fans here for us," Thorne said, smiling ear to ear.

Kansas (20-1, 6-0 Big 12) has yet to be conquered in the conference this season, and boasts impressive wins over Missouri (16-5) and no. 20 Baylor (16-4), both of them probably national tournament-bound.

And as for the players on the floor, the Jayhawks may have the deepest team in the country.

For starters the team has not one, but two preseason All-Americans in senior guard Sherron Collins (15.5 points per game) and junior center Cole Aldrich (11.6 points and 10.3 rebounds per game). That inside-outside combination, coupled with the Morris brothers (starter Marcus and reserve Markieff), high-flying freshman sensation Xavier Henry (second on the team with 13.7 points per game) and the sharpshooting Tyrel Reed make up a difficult defense.

For CU head coach Jeff Bzdelik, it starts down low in the paint.

"You got to make [Aldrich] take contested shots and jump shots and not dunks or power moves where he shoots a high percentage," Bzdelik said.

Thorne said it would also come down to controlling parts of Jayhawks offense.



Senior guard Dwight Thorne II carries the ball to the Buffs 3-point line during a game against Nebraska in the Coors Events Center on Dec. 2, 2009. Thorne scored five 3-pointers, including one in the final minute that brought CU within sight of a win. Still, CU finished the game short, losing 55-53 against the Cornhuskers. (CU Independent file/Molly Maher)

“The guys inside are going to be the main focus on offense,” Thorne added. “If they’re clicking, it makes the outside game easier, so they’ll probably try to get the ball to Sherron. We just have to try and control either of those aspects of the game.”

For junior guard Cory Higgins, the task of stopping a KU attack that averages almost 85 points per game can’t be pinpointed on one player or another.

“They are a pretty balanced team,” Higgins said. “You just have to be solid and not key in on this guy or that guy because all of them can hurt you.”

Yet the Jayhawks are still human. They lost to a Tennessee team that was without forward Tyler Smith, one of their best players, due to a suspension. They squeaked out an 81-79 overtime victory over Kansas State this past weekend. They also had down-to-the wire finishes with Memphis, Baylor and Cornell, the first of which was at a neutral site and the latter two being at Allen Fieldhouse in Lawrence, Kan.

Add that to the fact that the Buffs are an impressive 10-1 at home and are already battle-tested in the Big 12 with games against No. 9 Texas, No. 10 Kansas State and No. 20 Baylor.

The “Rock Chalk” faithful may not be able to etch the outcome in stone just yet.

“It’s not about them, it’s about us,” Higgins said. “We’ve got to run our stuff, stay aggressive and not be psyched out by the name on the jersey. We’ve got to play like the players that we are.”

Perhaps the biggest x-factor on the Colorado sidelines is the status of guard Alec Burks, who sprained his knee in the first few minutes of the team’s loss to Iowa State on Saturday. Burks was donning a brace at Tuesday’s practice, and according to Bzdelik, he will be a game-time decision.

“It feels good to me,” Burks said, with no real signs of a hobble as he moved. “It’s a pretty big brace, and I hope it doesn’t hinder me, but no matter what I’m going to play through it.”

He might have to if the Buffaloes hope to conquer Kansas for the first time since Jan. 22, 2003. On that Wednesday night Colorado beat the then sixth-ranked Jayhawks 60-59 to snap a 27-game losing streak against KU. CU’s Stephane Pelle (27 points) and David Harrison (11 rebounds) outdueled current NBA players Kirk Hinrich and Nick Collison to shock the “Rock Chalk” faithful.

A semi-healthy Burks and a sellout crowd might be just the recipe for that to happen again.

Contact CU Independent Staff Writer David Starcer at david.starcer@colorado.edu

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Colorado vs. Kansas

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TIME: 09:00 P.M. EST

Kansas is back on top of the rankings, but its players are focused on other goals - like adding to their lead in the Big 12.

The No. 1 Jayhawks have a good opportunity to remain perfect in conference Wednesday night with a road matchup against one of the Big 12's worst teams, Colorado.

The nation's top-ranked team for the season's first eight weeks, Kansas has bounced back with six straight victories since its only loss at Tennessee on Jan. 10. That run and South Carolina's upset of Kentucky on Jan. 26 helped the Jayhawks (20-1, 6-0) return to the No. 1 spot this week.

"We'd rather be two games up in the Big 12 than be No. 1 right now," senior guard Sherron Collins said. "No. 1 doesn't mean anything because at the end of the year there's only going to be one No. 1."

Aiding that resurgence is junior center Cole Aldrich, who struggled with bronchitis and his grandmother's death earlier this season. The preseason All-American averaged 10.6 points through the first 16 games this season - 4.3 lower than his 2008-09 average.

In the past five contests, he has averaged 14.6 points and posted three consecutive double-doubles.

"It was a slow start for him at the beginning of the year. Now he's Cole again," Collins said. "He was just in a slump and he was going through some hard time. ... I'm glad he came around now and not later in the year."

Sophomore forward Marcus Morris has also helped by scoring in double figures in all six conference wins, averaging 17.8 points on 62.1 percent shooting. It was Collins, the team's top scorer (15.5 ppg), who lifted the Jayhawks to their latest victory, 81-79 in overtime at Kansas State on Saturday night.

Shaking off back spasms, Collins scored with nine seconds remaining in the extra period and finished with 16 points. Aldrich led the way with 18 points and 11 rebounds, and Morris had his third double-double this season with 13 points and 10 boards.

The win helped Kansas push its conference lead to two games over Texas, but the Longhorns, who host Kansas on Feb. 8, cut into that deficit with Monday night's victory at Oklahoma State.

Texas, though, is idle Wednesday as the Jayhawks try for their 14th straight win over the Buffaloes (11-10, 2-5) and seventh in a row in Boulder. Kansas has also won 52 of 55 meetings since 1984-85 and 26 of 27 since Big 12 play began in 1996-97.

Colorado, trying to avoid a fourth straight last-place finish in the Big 12, didn't help its cause by shooting a season-low 34.4 percent in Saturday's 64-63 loss at Iowa State.

The Buffaloes also lost their second-leading scorer, Alec Burks, early in the defeat to a sprained left knee. The freshman guard, averaging 16.3 points, won't play Wednesday.

Junior guard Cory Higgins, who leads Colorado with 18.3 points per game, scored 21 for his 15th straight game in double figures. Junior forward Marcus Relphorde added 11 points but missed a layup in the final seconds.

The defeat was the Buffaloes' seventh straight on the road, but they are 10-1 at home this season and upset then-No. 22 Baylor there on Jan. 12.

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Big 12

Team	Conf. W-L	Tot. W-L
Kansas	15-1	33-3
Kansas St.	11-5	29-8
Baylor	11-5	28-8
Texas A&M	11-5	24-10
Missouri	10-6	23-11
Texas	9-7	24-10
Oklahoma St.	9-7	22-11
Colorado	6-10	15-16
Texas Tech	4-12	19-16
Iowa St.	4-12	15-17
Oklahoma	4-12	13-18
Nebraska	2-14	15-18

Expanded Standings

Key Players



Sherron
Collins G, KS

31.7
15.5
4.1
2.0
45.3
38.9
86.1

Min. Per Game
Pts. Per Game
Ast. Per Game
Reb. Per Game
Field Goal %
Three Point %
Free Throw %

32.9
18.3
2.4
3.5
50
32.8
83.1



Cory
Higgins G, CO

Head to Head



SCORING

84.7	Points/Game	75.8
49.6	Field Goal %	47.8
71	Free Throw %	76.7

DEFENSE

41.3	Three Point %	38.1
44.0	Rebounds/Game	30.9
8.8	Steals/Game	8.7
6.3	Blocks/Game	2.3

Other Games

PSU	62		USF	72		DUQ	60	
OHST	75	Final	GTWN	64	Final	TEMP	76	Final
PITT	51		IAST	63		MSST	72	
WV	70	Final	BAY	84	Final	VAND	75	Final
WICH	56							
NIA	59	Final						

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