

# Thorne looks for help from CU Buff men teammates

## Buff senior scored all 9 of CU's first-half points last year at ISU

**By Ryan Thorburn** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

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AMES, Iowa -- Iowa State 37, Dwight Thorne 9.

That was the halftime score here on Feb. 11, 2009, as the Cyclones cruised to a 70-42 victory over Colorado.

Thorne is going to lead the Buffs off the bus again on Saturday. This time CU's only senior expects his teammates to follow him into Hilton Coliseum to face the Cyclones (7 p.m., no television).

"Last year we went there and got smacked," Thorne recalled.

The Buffs (11-9, 2-4) -- coming off an impressive 72-60 victory over Nebraska on Wednesday -- are feeling better about themselves after doubling last season's Big 12 win total and determined to have a better showing, and final result, here Saturday.

Alec Burks continued a spectacular freshman season with 21 points against the Cornhuskers, Cory Higgins leads the team in scoring (18.2 ppg) for the season, and CU is shooting 48.9 percent from the field in Big 12 play.

There is no question the program has taken some big steps forward in Jeff Bzdelik's third season.

At least in Boulder.

However, the Buffs are still a predictably bad on the road where they have dropped 24 consecutive games to Division I opponents and packing a 32-game Big 12 road losing streak on the trip to Ames.

Needless to say, it's a sore subject.

"I can't get any more sick of hearing about it," Higgins said.

The Cyclones (12-8, 1-4) might represent CU's best chance of getting a breakthrough away from the Coors Events Center. Iowa State has lost three consecutive games and still dealing with shooting guard Lucca Staiger's decision to abruptly leave the program to pursue a professional career in his native Germany.

Greg McDermott's team rallied back from a 21-point deficit before losing 89-84 at Oklahoma on Wednesday. Despite being down to eight scholarship players, the Cyclones had six players score in double figures.

"They're not as deep as they were before," Bzdelik said. "But their seven or eight players are very good ones."

There might not be a more dangerous one-two punch in the Big 12 than Craig Brackins (15.9 ppg, 7.8 rpg) and Marquis Gilstrap (14.9 ppg, 9.2 rpg).

"They're really talented players, very athletic, and they'll be making some money some day playing basketball," Bzdelik said. "They're every bit as good as advertised. They'll take a lot of shots and you just have to hope you can limit them and make their shot opportunities tough ones."

Staiger was shooting 42.5 percent from 3-point distance before quitting on his team. Sophomore Scott Christopherson has stepped in made 58.8 percent of his 3-pointers in conference games.

Thorne is shooting 81.8 percent (9-for-11) from behind the arc off the bench. Levi Knutson and Casey Crawford combined

for 13 points and three 3-pointers to help loose up the Huskers' smothering defense.

"It's a big game. We started out (in the Big 12) playing three ranked teams in a row and then an Oklahoma State team that's in the top four in the league," Thorne said. "This is the part of the schedule where we can get some wins. I think everybody recognizes that."

If the Buffs win it will obviously put an end to the hideous road losing streaks and will also give them more momentum and confidence heading into Wednesday's game against Kansas, which will be televised nationally on ESPN2.

If the Jayhawks beat Kansas State today they'll likely arrive at the Coors Events Center ranked No. 1. CU is 10-1 at home.

"Iowa State is a little down at the moment. It's hard for anyone to win on the road, as we've found out, but we're looking forward to going there and giving it a shake," Nate Tomlinson said. "If we play hard like we did against Nebraska, I think we can get that one."

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## CU men's preview vs. Iowa State

Camera staff  
Boulder Daily Camera

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**TODAY:** Colorado travels to Ames to face Iowa State at 7 p.m. at Hilton Coliseum.

**BROADCAST:** **Television:** none; **Radio:** KKZN (AM 760) with Mark Johnson (play-by-play) and Charles Johnson (color).

**STORYLINES:** The Buffs (11-9, 2-4) are coming off a 72-60 victory over Nebraska on Wednesday, which doubled CU's Big 12 win total from last season. ... Alec Burks led the way with 21 points and is the team's leading scorer (19.2 ppg) in conference games. ... The Cyclones (12-8, 1-4) have lost three consecutive games since shooting guard Lucca Staiger left the program without warning to play professionally in Germany. ... Iowa State is 9-3 at home this season.

**KEY STAT:** The Buffs are 1-12 at Hilton Coliseum since the formation of the Big 12. CU will be trying to snap a 32-game losing streak in conference road games.

**COACHES:** Jeff Bzdelik is 32-51 in his third season at CU. Greg McDermott is 56-59 in his fourth season at Iowa State.

### PROBABLE STARTERS:

**Colorado** -- G Nate Tomlinson, 6-3, sophomore, 5.9 ppg, 2.7 rpg; G Alec Burks, 6-6, freshman, 17.2 ppg, 5.0 rpg; G Cory Higgins, 6-5, junior, 18.2 ppg, 3.7 rpg; G Marcus Relphorde, 6-7, junior, 10.4 ppg, 3.6 rpg, F Austin Dufault, 6-9, sophomore, 6.8 ppg, 3.3 rpg.

**Iowa State** -- G Diante Garrett, 6-4, junior, 8.5 ppg, 2.6 rpg; G Scott Christopherson, 6-3, sophomore, 7.4 ppg, 2.0 rpg; F Marquis Gilstrap, 6-7, senior, 14.9 ppg, 9.2 rpg; F Craig Brackins, 6-10, junior, 15.9 ppg, 7.8 rpg; C Justin Hamilton, 6-11, sophomore, 5.4 ppg, 3.6 rpg.

**SERIES:** Iowa State leads 75-67.

**UP NEXT:** The Buffs host No. 2 Kansas on Wednesday at the Coors Events Center (7 p.m., ESPN2).

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