

# 10 CU losses came against NCAA tourney teams

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The Colorado men's basketball team lost 16 games this season.

It turns out that 14 of those defeats came against teams that are still playing.

The Buffs lost 10 games to teams in the NCAA Tournament bracket. That includes nine losses to Big 12 foes -- Kansas (twice), Kansas State (twice), Missouri (twice), Oklahoma State, Texas and Texas A&M -- and a loss to Gonzaga at the Maui Invitational.

CU entered the Big 12 Tournament as the No. 8 seed, but the 82-67 loss to No. 9 Texas Tech -- a team the Buffs handled 101-90 four days earlier -- cost Jeff Bzdelik's team a possible NIT berth, an invitation the Red Raiders accepted late Sunday.

"We were right there in a lot of games this year. If we win five of those tight games we might have been in the (NCAA) Tournament this year," Marcus Relphorde said. "I think we can make a big jump next year."

The Buffs also lost to Colorado State (CBI), Oregon State (CBI) and Tulsa (NIT) this season, which means 14 of their 16 losses were against teams in postseason play.

CU did beat two teams in NCAA Tournament: Arkansas-Pine Bluff, the SWAC champions, and Baylor. The Buffs' losses to teams not in the postseason were tough ones to Arizona (91-87) and Iowa State (64-63).

If Bzdelik's team had pulled out one or two of those games there would have been some form of March madness in Boulder this year.

"If you look back, all you get is a stiff neck," Bzdelik said after his third season at CU ended just short of the team goal of earning a postseason berth and a chance to finish with a winning record. "We just need to keep moving forward. We need to get stronger and we need to learn from this. We need to defend better, we need to rebound better, we need to go out and recruit and continue to strengthen this basketball team."

And the 2010-11 schedule?

Despite playing in the Maui Invitational and in the No. 1 RPI conference this season, some fans were unhappy with CU's non-conference home slate, which included wins over Coppin State, Texas Southern, San Francisco, Colorado Christian, Cal State Northridge, Yale and Miami (Ohio).

The Buffs will host rival Colorado State and Oregon State will make the return trip to Boulder as part of the Big 12/Pac-10 Hardwood Series next season.

Bzdelik has also scheduled a home game against an SEC team for a nationally televised matchup that will be announced later this year when the date and time are confirmed. The coach is still holding out hope of scheduling a home and home series with North Carolina; it sounds like the ball is in Roy Williams' court on that one.

CU also plans to play in the Las Vegas Classic next season in a field expected to include Indiana, New Mexico and Northern Iowa. The Buffs have manageable return trips at Harvard and San Francisco on the docket.

In Big 12 play vs. South Division teams, CU will play host Oklahoma State, Texas and Texas A&M and will play at Baylor, Oklahoma and Texas Tech. The Buffs will obviously have home and homes with Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Missouri and Nebraska.

The Buffs return a strong nucleus led by Cory Higgins, Alec Burks and Marcus Relphorde. Point guard Shannon Sharpe,

who sat out this season with a knee injury, should be cleared to start playing again next month. And with Casey Crawford's decision to leave his final year of eligibility on the table, Bzdelik and his staff have three scholarships to work with during the spring signing period.

"I'm very disappointed. This is not how we wanted to end our season," Higgins said of the 15-16 finish. "The guys coming back have to learn from it so we don't have this bitter taste next year."

### **CU against the field**

The Buffs are missing out on postseason play for the fourth consecutive March and haven't made the NCAA Tournament in seven years, but 14 of the team's 16 losses this season were against teams still playing. Here's a breakdown:

### **NCAA Tournament**

**Nov. 13** -- CU 88, Arkansas-Pine Bluff 72

**Nov. 23** -- Gonzaga 76, CU 72

**Jan. 9** -- Texas 103, CU 86

**Jan. 12** -- CU 78, Baylor 71

**Jan. 16** -- Kansas State 87, CU 81

**Jan. 20** -- Oklahoma State 90, CU 78

**Jan. 23** -- Texas A&M 67, CU 63

**Feb. 3** -- Kansas 72, CU 66 (OT)

**Feb. 6** -- Missouri 84, CU 66

**Feb. 13** -- Kansas State 68, CU 51

**Feb. 20** -- Kansas 94, CU 74

**Feb. 24** -- Missouri 92, CU 63

### **NIT**

**Jan. 2** -- Tulsa 84, CU 69

**March 6** -- CU 101, Texas Tech 90

**March 10** -- Texas Tech 82, CU 67

### **CBI**

**Dec. 4** -- Oregon State 74, CU 69

**Dec. 10** -- Colorado State 77, CU 62

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