

Finally: CU Buffs men end road woes

CU thumps Huskers behind Crawford, Higgins, Burks

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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LINCOLN, Neb. -- Rock bottom.

That's where the Buffs found themselves a week ago after a humiliating 29-point loss at Missouri in a game that wasn't nearly that close.

Jeff Bzdelik's team was three games under .500 after suffering the program's 36th consecutive Big 12 road loss.

Postseason?

Now imagine Jim Mora saying that: *Postseason? Are you kidding me? Postseason?*

Well, after Colorado's 81-68 victory over Nebraska on Tuesday at the Devaney Center, suddenly the possibilities seem limitless.

The Buffs (14-15, 5-10) are in sole possession of eighth place in the Big 12 and believe they will be included in some form of March Madness. CU can even its overall record on Saturday in the home finale against Texas Tech and then head into the Big 12 Tournament in Kansas City with some serious momentum.

"We have a lot of confidence right now," Cory Higgins, a junior, said after experiencing his first conference road triumph. "It seems like things are finally clicking for us and it's the right time to click. Hopefully this will just carry us until ... who knows when?"

CU, which had also lost 28 consecutive true road games against Division I competition, needed something special to happen to end the streak.

Casey Crawford's performance certainly qualifies. The 6-9 junior was 7-for-8 from the field (6-for-7 from 3-point distance) with a game-high 20 points off the bench for the Buffs.

"It's a strange feeling. We usually go home on the plane and we're all mad and coach is upset," said Crawford, who sparked CU with 10 points in the second half of the 75-72 victory over Iowa State last Saturday. "You know what? We're going to go home smiling. That's a good thing."

The Buffs, who led 35-28 at the intermission, went on a 12-0 run in the second half to seize complete control of the game. A tough three-point play by Alec Burks put the exclamation point on the surge and gave the visitors a 58-40 cushion with 10:28 remaining.

Crawford's sixth 3-pointer made the score 65-45 with 7:52 left and sent many of the Nebraska faithful to the exits early on Senior Night in Lincoln.

"I'm very happy with the way we played. We really shared the basketball well," Bzdelik said. "And we just fought the best we could defensively, scrapped and forced them into tough shots. Everybody contributed, and it's a great team win for us."

Crawford knocked down his fourth 3-pointer of the game to give CU a 46-36 lead with 14:24 remaining. But on the other end, Brian Jorge Diaz answered with back-to-back field goals as Nebraska cut the deficit to six points.

"We were playing well offensively but we needed to play tougher on defense. I needed to do a lot better on post defense," Crawford said. "That is one thing I'm going to be watching film on. I need to get much better on post-line defense."

Crawford splashed another trey, and Burks completed an old-fashioned three-point play to put the Buffs back in control with a commanding 54-40 cushion and just 12:02 left on the clock.

"When we share the ball and get people involved we have great shooters and great scorers," Burks said. "And it showed tonight."

A 3-pointer by Lance Jeter brought Nebraska to within 74-62 with 2:23 remaining. Crawford -- it was his night -- answered the run with a dunk.

The Buffs got off to a terrific start with 3-pointers by Burks, Marcus Relphorde and Nate Tomlinson in the first three minutes to take an 11-2 lead and silence the crowd of 9,803.

Nebraska answered with an 8-0 run capped with a 3-pointer by senior Ryan Anderson, but the Buffs punched back with a 12-0 blitz that included back-to-back swishes from behind the arc by Crawford and Relphorde.

CU was 9-for-11 from the field and 5-for-5 from 3-point distance while seizing a 23-10 lead with 10:57 remaining.

Another triple from Crawford followed by a Burks layup made the score 30-14 with 7:09 remaining. The Huskers closed the half with a 14-5 run as CU settled for a seven-point lead at the intermission.

"Coach said in the huddle, 'What, did you not think they were going to make a run? It's their last home game,'" Higgins said. "We took their hit and gave them one right back. I think we handled it really well."

The Buffs shot an amazing 61.9 percent from the field and 70.6 percent behind the arc. Higgins (19 points), Burks (19) and Relphorde (12) all joined Crawford in double figures scoring.

The last-place Cornhuskers (14-16, 2-13) shot 37.9 percent from the field and 35.7 percent behind the arc, leaving the red-clad fans seeing red and longing for their women's basketball team to take the court again.

"You can sit here and give Colorado credit. They did shoot the basketball awfully well," Nebraska coach Doc Sadler said. "But as I told the team, I am so, so sorry. It's my responsibility to put that type of performance on the floor."

It was CU's first Big 12 road win since an 80-78 overtime victory at Oklahoma State on Jan. 21, 2006, and the first true road win against Division I competition since a 73-70 victory at Colorado State on Dec. 22, 2007.

What will this breakthrough mean for the program moving forward?

"I can look out the window of this plane I'm flying out on tonight and at least enjoy myself," Bzdelik said. "That's what it means."

Colorado 81, Nebraska 68 COLORADO

FG FT Reb

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

Dufault 7 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 3 0

Tomlinsn 31 2-4 0-0 0-2 6 2 6

Rlphrde 24 3-6 4-6 0-3 3 4 12

Burks 39 7-9 4-6 1-3 1 3 19

CHiggins 36 6-11 7-9 0-6 4 4 19

Thorne II 12 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 1 0

Hrs-Tks 1 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Knutson 20 1-3 2-2 0-0 2 1 5

Crawford 30 7-8 0-0 0-4 1 3 20

Totals 200 26-42 17-23 1-20 17 21 81

Percentages: FG .619, FT .739.

3-Point Goals: 12-17, .706 (Crawford 6-7, Relphorde 2-3, Tomlinson 2-3, Burks 1-1, Knutson 1-2, [C.Higgins](#) 0-1).

Team Rebounds: 2.

Blocked Shots: 4 (Crawford 2, [C.Higgins](#), Relphorde).

Turnovers: 14 ([C.Higgins](#) 4, Crawford 3, Thorne II 2, Relphorde 2, Knutson, Tomlinson, Burks).

Steals: 9 ([C.Higgins](#) 4, Crawford, Harris-Tunks, Tomlinson, Thorne II, Knutson).

Technical Fouls: None.

NEBRASKA

FG FT Reb

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

Stdndngr 19 1-3 8-10 3-6 2 4 10

Nelson 4 0-2 0-0 2-2 0 0 0

Henry 30 3-11 2-2 3-4 2 4 9

Jeter 32 5-7 2-2 2-4 0 4 14

Anderson 30 3-12 2-3 4-13 2 3 10

Holley 3 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Rchrdsn 29 2-4 4-5 0-1 2 2 8

Ubel 16 0-2 0-0 1-2 0 1 0

Gallegos 18 1-5 0-0 0-2 1 0 2

Diaz 19 7-12 1-4 3-4 0 2 15

Totals 200 22-58 19-26 20-40 9 20 68

Percentages: FG .379, FT .731.

3-Point Goals: 5-14, .357 (Jeter 2-3, Anderson 2-4, Henry 1-5, Ubel 0-1, Richardson 0-1).

Team Rebounds: 2.

Blocked Shots: 1 (Diaz).

Turnovers: 13 (Anderson 4, Diaz 3, Richardson 2, Standhardinger, Henry, Jeter, Nelson).

Steals: 9 (Richardson 2, Standhardinger 2, Anderson 2, Gallegos, Ubel, Henry).

Technical Fouls: None.

Colorado 35 46--81

Nebraska 28 40--68

A--9,803.

Officials--Scott Thornley, Gerry Pollard, Tom Eades.

ROAD WOES END

Colorado's painful 36-game Big 12 road losing streak, which dated back to an 80-78 overtime triumph at Oklahoma State on Jan. 21, 2006, finally ended on Tuesday in Lincoln. Here's one final look at the long road the program endured during the transition from the Ricardo Patton era to the Jeff Bzdelik era.

Feb. 5, 2006 -- Iowa State 96, CU 79

Feb. 8, 2006 -- Texas A&M 61, CU 58

Feb. 18, 2006 -- Kansas State 72, CU 60

Feb. 22, 2006 -- Nebraska 93, CU 77

March 1, 2006 -- Kansas 75, CU 54

Jan. 10, 2007 -- Oklahoma 78, CU 54

Jan. 20, 2007 -- Nebraska 71, CU 50

Jan. 27, 2007 -- Kansas 97, CU 74

Jan. 30, 2007 -- Baylor 97, CU 83

Feb. 10, 2007 -- Kansas State 78, CU 59

Feb. 17, 2007 -- Texas Tech 95, CU 74

Feb. 21, 2007 -- Iowa State 55, CU 53

Feb. 28, 2007 -- Missouri 91, CU 82

Jan. 12, 2008 -- Texas A&M 86, CU 69

Jan. 19, 2008 -- Texas 69, CU 67

Jan. 29, 2008 -- Iowa State 57, CU 41

Feb. 6, 2008 -- Oklahoma State 64, CU 63

Feb. 16, 2008 -- Kansas 69, CU 45

Feb. 23, 2008 -- Missouri 60, CU 53

March 4, 2008 -- Kansas State 78, CU 72

March 9, 2008 -- Nebraska 68, CU 49

Jan. 14, 2009 -- Missouri 107, CU 62

Jan. 20, 2009 -- Texas Tech 63, CU 55

Jan. 31, 2009 -- Kansas 66, CU 61

Feb. 7, 2009 -- Oklahoma 77, CU 72

Feb. 11, 2009 -- Iowa State 70, CU 42

Feb. 18, 2009 -- Nebraska 46, CU 41

Feb. 28, 2009 -- Baylor 75, CU 57

March 7, 2009 -- Kansas State 76, CU 64

Jan. 9, 2010 -- Texas 103, CU 86

Jan. 20, 2010 -- Oklahoma State 90, CU 78

Jan. 23, 2010 -- Texas A&M 67, CU 63

Jan. 30, 2010 -- Iowa State 64, CU 63

Feb. 13, 2010 -- Kansas State 68, CU 51

Feb. 20, 2010 -- Kansas 94, CU 74

Feb. 24, 2010 -- Missouri 92, CU 63

March 2, 2010 -- CU 81, Nebraska 68

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Crawford delivers for Buffs in win at Nebraska

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/02/2010 11:52:55 PM MST

LINCOLN, Neb. -- When Casey Crawford went into Jeff Bzdelik's office last week he was the Clark Kent of Colorado basketball.

When the talented but disappointing 6-9 forward exited, he was Superman. Or at least playing with the swagger of someone confident enough to wear a cape and tights.

Crawford, who scored 10 key points down the stretch in CU's 75-72 victory over Iowa State last Saturday, had a spectacular 20-point performance on Tuesday night to lead the Buffs to an 81-68 road victory over Nebraska at the Devaney Center.

What got into this guy?

"He's playing with a different kind of mentality. I'll just leave it at that," Bzdelik said. "He and I have had some recent discussions, and I think his mental approach is different."

Crawford, who the coaches raved about after he transferred from Wake Forest, has been stuck in the doghouse for the better part of two seasons. He was averaging 4.2 points and 2.0 rebounds entering Tuesday's game.

And then Crawford stunned the Cornhuskers by draining six 3-pointers in seven attempts.

"As a player the only thing you can do is go out there and play confident. You can't go out there and play scared, or you're not going to play well at all," Crawford said. "I just went out there and played as hard as I could and everything fell in place."

Cory Higgins, Alec Burks and Marcus Relphorpe have been solid all season. If Crawford keeps this up the Buffs are going to be a tough out at the Big 12 Tournament.

"What you saw today and our last game is what I envisioned from him when we recruited him," Bzdelik said. "He's starting to get it. Better late than never."

Alec and Chauncey

After scoring 19 points on Tuesday, Burks (464 points) is one point behind Chauncey Billups (465 points, 1995-96) for second place on CU's all-time freshman scoring list.

Richard Roby (480, 2004-05) is first. At least for now.

Burks, who was averaging 16.5 points and was the Big 12 leader in field goal percentage (.523) entering the game, was 7-for-9 from the field. The 6-6 guard missed a pair of free throws, however, that would have sent him past Mr. Big Shot.

Looking ahead

CU will finish the regular season on Saturday against Texas Tech at the Coors Events Center (2 p.m., Altitude). The team will honor Dwight Thorne, the team's only senior, before the game.

There is a good chance the Buffs and Red Raiders will play again in the first round of the Big 12 Tournament in Kansas City a week from today as the No. 8 and No. 9 seeds.

If those seeds hold, the winner of the rematch will likely advance to face No. 1 Kansas on Thursday should the Jayhawks hold on to the top spot.

Notable

CU swept Nebraska for the first time since the 2003-04 season. ... Nebraska still leads the series 76-69 with an 11-3 edge at the Devaney Center. ... CU had lost the previous five meetings in Lincoln dating back to a 68-60 win on Jan. 14, 2004. ... CU, which led the Big 12 in free throw percentage (.773) entering the game, was 17-for-23 (73.9 percent) at the line. ... The Buffs are 12-4 when leading at halftime this season. ... The Buffs wore all-gold uniforms. The sports information department believes it's the first time the team has donned the color on the road since the early 1990s.

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Crawford goes deep to end streak

Junior posts career-high 20 off the bench in road win

By David Starcer on March 3, 2010

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Will the real Casey Crawford please stand-up?

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After his last two performances, it appears we may finally be seeing what Buff basketball fans have been waiting for out of the junior from Overland Park, Kan.

Following up his solid play against Iowa State, Crawford poured in a career-high 20 points and six 3-pointers in 30 minutes off the bench, as the Colorado men's basketball team ended both their conference (36 games) and overall (28) losing streaks with an 81-68 win over rival Nebraska on Tuesday night in Lincoln.

Junior Cory Higgins and freshman Alec Burks each added 19 points for Colorado (14-15, 5-10 Big 12) who made a season-high 12 3-pointers as a team and shot season-best percentages from the field (61.9 percent) and beyond the arc (70.6 percent).

The Buffs swept the season-series from Nebraska (14-16, 2-13 Big 12), who was led in scoring by their own backup big man, freshman Brian Diaz, who scored 15. Junior Lance Jeter added 14 points for the Cornhuskers, who slipped into an early 11-2 hole and trailed the rest of the game.

Colorado built their lead up to 16 (32-16) in the first half and 20 (72-52) in the second half, only to see Nebraska slowly work their way back.

But thanks to the lights-out shooting of Crawford and efficient play of his teammates, it was as much daylight as the Huskers would see.

Junior Marcus Relphorde and sophomore Nate Tomlinson each added a pair of threes for the Buffaloes, and a tomahawk slam by Crawford off a nice feed from Relphorde put CU up 76-62 with 2:10 to play.

The game was not lacking in accolades for CU, as Burks passed Chauncey Billups for second all-time on the freshman scoring list (trailing only Richard Roby), and Colorado won in Lincoln for the first time since January 14, 2004, breaking a five-game losing streak at the Devaney Center.



Junior forward Casey Crawford shoots a lay up over Nebraska defense during their game on Jan. 27 in the Coors Events Center. The Buffs defeated rival Nebraska 72-60. (CU Independent file/Molly Maher)

The Buffs will return to Boulder for their regular season finale against Texas Tech at 2 p.m. on Saturday at the Coors Events Center.

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

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NU men's basketball suffers 81-68 loss against CU Buffaloes

By Michael Schaefer

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Updated: Wednesday, March 3, 2010

Nebraska's seniors will want to remember everything but the game following Tuesday's 81-68 blowout loss to the Colorado Buffaloes.

Before the game, seniors [Ryan Anderson](#), [Chris Balham](#), [Sek Henry](#) and [Ben Nelson](#) received an ovation out on the center court.

Then the cheering stopped.

After the opening tip, the Buffaloes stepped out and knocked down shot after shot and quickly built a double-digit lead.

Colorado made their first six 3-pointers before missing one, finishing the half shooting 78 percent from behind the arc.

Freshman Alec Burks led the charge, scoring 11 of his 19 points in the first half.



Andrew Dickinson

Conversely, Nebraska shot just 36 percent from the entire field for the half and attempted only two 3-point field goals. The lone make came from Anderson.

The Huskers appeared to turn the game around by closing within 46-40 following a Henry layup with 14 minutes left in the second half. But Colorado closed out any comeback hope with a decisive 12-0 run that took just four minutes.

Nebraska head coach Doc Sadler took the blame all on himself Tuesday night. He apologized to the fans and to the players for the defensive effort the Huskers displayed on the floor.

"Inexcusable on my behalf," Sadler said. "It's not any one player's fault, it's not the team's fault, it is entirely my responsibility. I'm just sorry for the fans that came out and we're going to get it corrected."

Husker point guard Lance Jeter finished the night with 14 points and four rebounds. He said he doesn't put any blame on his coach.

"It isn't coach Doc's fault," Jeter said. "We're the ones playing. They get us ready like every other game. We're the ones who've got to play defense. We're the ones who've got to put the ball in the hoop. We didn't do that."

Sadler said he was disappointed in the character of his team during Tuesday night's performance. He said he didn't see them come out and compete when the game started to get away from them.

"Beyond basketball and in life, you have to compete," Sadler said. "It's not going to be easy. I tell these guys all of the time, they're growing up in a period that's not going to be easy and it's my responsibility to teach them better than what I've taught them."

Sadler said he felt he's let the team's defense slip.

Chief on the list of Sadler's disappointments was the defense on Colorado's Casey Crawford. The reserve forward came into Tuesday night averaging just four points a game for the Buffaloes, but scored a team high of 20 points against Nebraska. Crawford would often lurk in the corner before flashing to the top of the key to knock down 3-pointers. He finished with six 3-pointers on the evening.

The Nebraska seniors struggled all evening offensively.

Anderson finished the night with a double-double with 10 points and 13 rebounds. But the guard from Seattle, Wash., struggled from the floor, shooting just 3-for-12 from the field. His game would end prematurely when a twisted ankle kept him sidelined for the game's final five minutes.

Henry shot almost as poorly, going 3-for-11, but most of his shots came late when the Huskers were heaving up desperation 3-pointers in an effort to get back into the game.

The loss dropped Nebraska to 14-16 and 2-13 in Big 12 conference play. The loss also locked Nebraska into the 12 seed for the Big 12 Tournament.

Before the tournament, Nebraska has one final game in Stillwater, Okla., against the Oklahoma State Cowboys. Sadler said the team has a lot of work to do before then.

"We're going to go to work and we're going to work hard," Sadler said. "It's the only thing I know how to do is roll up your sleeves and go to work, because that right there is inexcusable."

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Q&A with Colorado freshman standout basketball player Alec Burks

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Brian Smith - FOXSportsSouthwest.com

Quick: list off the best freshmen in college basketball this season. If your list doesn't include Colorado forward Alec Burks, it's missing an essential name. The Missouri native, who was overlooked by both the Tigers and the Jayhawks in recruiting, is averaging almost 17 points per game for the Buffaloes. Burks talked about turning around the Buffaloes and more with FoxSportsSouthwest.com

You suffered a really tough break when you were injured in the Iowa State game, and weren't able to play at home against Kansas the following game. How tough was it watching your teammates take the #1 team in the country to overtime and lose?

It was very hard. When you can't be on the court and help your teammates, it hurts you. They fought hard though, and I was proud of them.

What was the mood in the locker room after that game?

They had their heads hung for a minute, but they got them right back up because they realized they just played one of the best teams in the nation really close. It ended up giving them a big confidence boost.

Colorado has given several good teams (Kansas, Kansas State, Texas A&M) all they could handle, but ultimately lost those games toward the end. What do you need to do to get over the hump?

I feel like we need to just rebound better and execute better on offense in the second half. If we do those two things, we could've won all of those games.

You did get a big win at home over a ranked Baylor team earlier this year. What was the difference in that game?

We played hard the whole game and rebounded well. We played hard defense and shared the ball with each other. When we do all those things, we'll keep winning. It's just about keeping our intensity level up.

You grew up in Missouri. Both Mizzou and Kansas are traditional powers in that area; did you root for the Tigers or the Jayhawks as a kid?

I wasn't really a fan of anybody from the area. I liked a few of their players, but I wasn't really into their teams.

Were you recruited at all by either school?

No, they really didn't pay any attention to me at all. Kansas State was really the only school from there that was talking to me.

Why do you think they overlooked you?

I really couldn't tell you. I guess I just wasn't what they were looking for.

What did you like about Colorado?

Coach Bzdelik. I believed in what he was telling me. I believed when he said we could work this program up. I know if I keep working, we can do something special here.

You were the Gatorade Player of the Year for the state of Missouri during your senior year. How much of an honor was that for you?

It was a big honor, knowing that you were the best player in your state and that all your hard work paid off.

Colorado has been down recently, losing 20-plus games in each of the past three seasons. What will be the key in turning around a program that hasn't tasted success in a while?

I think just having the expectations of winning instead of losing. Now that we're starting to win some games, I think we're changing our mindset.

After having such a successful high school career, I'm sure you're not used to losing. How hard is it for you to handle a loss?

It's very hard when you lose any game, but you have to put that one to rest and move on to the next one, and hope you play better.

You spoke earlier about Coach Bzdelik. What do you like about him?

I like that he was an NBA coach. He helps you with figuring out the mistakes that you made, and tells you what you should do in that situation to make a better decision the next time.

Talk about your relationship with junior guard Cory Higgins. It seems like you guys have similar games; are you close off the court?

We have a great relationship, both on the court and off it. It shows the great companionship that we have. He's a great person and a great guy to

look up to, on the court and off.

What's been the toughest part of transitioning from the high school game to college basketball for you?

Probably the speed and the physicality. They're all grown men out there, so you have to get used to playing like that after playing four years against high school kids. That's probably been the biggest adjustment for me.

Growing up, what players did you pattern your game after?

Probably Jamal Crawford. I saw him play in eighth grade when he was playing for the Knicks. He did some moves that made me feel like if I could do that, I could get to where he was at.

When did you know that you were just better than almost anyone you played against?

I think it came when I started winning all these awards in high school. I realized that people who get those were some of the best, so I felt like that's when I started to know.

If you keep up this pace, it won't be long before pro scouts come calling. Have you thought any about a career in the NBA?

I have, and every kid dreams about it when he first starts playing basketball. But I'm not worried about it right now. I'm just focused on the next game, and trying to play hard.

Tags: [Colorado Buffaloes](#), [Big 12 Basketball](#), [Alec Burks](#)

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Red-hot Buffs shoot down Huskers

BY BRIAN ROSENTHAL / Lincoln Journal Star

Too bad Nebraska didn't show the same fire that Doc Sadler had in his eyes after Tuesday night's game.

Otherwise, players on the Husker men's basketball team might be able to sleep in Wednesday.

Instead, they have a 5 a.m. practice, one in which Sadler repeatedly promised his team would "work hard."

Define that as you wish.

"It's the only thing I know to do, is roll up your sleeves and get to work, because that right there is inexcusable," Sadler said after his team's 81-68 loss to Colorado — one that guarantees Nebraska will finish last in the Big 12 Conference for the first time since 2003.

"Inexusable."

Sadler tried giving credit to the Buffaloes — who ended a 36-game losing streak in Big 12 Conference road games — but deep down, he knew a floundering performance by his team was as much to blame.

Colorado (14-15, 5-10) shot 61.9 percent, including 12-of-17 on threes, jumped in front 11-2 and never trailed.

Casey Crawford, who averaged 4.2 points before Tuesday, scored 20 points and was 6-of-7 on three-pointers.

The Buffaloes, who led by 16 before halftime, led by 20 points with 5:42 remaining, when most of the Devaney Sports Center crowd of 6,809 darted for the exits.

Sadler apologized to the fans.

"I am so, so sorry — and it's my responsibility — to put that type of performance on the floor," he said.

"I don't ask a lot. I don't ask you to make shots, but we're going to compete, because that's a character deal. Beyond basketball, in life, you've got to compete. It ain't going to be easy."

Nebraska, less than a month ago, led the Big 12 in scoring defense. Now, the Huskers are allowing 82.3 points over their past six games.

"Defensively ... as good as we have been, we've become that bad," Sadler said. "That's hard work. That's just guts. That's getting after it on my behalf. And I've let it slip."

Jorge Brian Diaz scored 15 points to lead four Huskers in double figures. Seniors Ryan Anderson and Sek Henry, playing for the final time at home, had 10 points and nine points, respectively, and combined to shoot 6-of-23.

Anderson, who left the game late in the second half with an ankle injury, also had 13 rebounds, as the Huskers had a 40-20 rebounding advantage, including 20-1 on the offensive glass.

And still lost by 13, at home.

“Pitiful,” said point guard Lance Jeter, who scored 14 points.

“It’s character. Coach said it. We’ve got to go out there and play. We’re the ones who got to play defense. We’re the ones who got to put the ball in the hoop. We didn’t do that. It ain’t Coach Doc’s fault, it’s our fault.”

Reach Brian Rosenthal at 473-7436 or broseenthal@journalstar.com.

NU men fall to Buffs



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Bufs' Hot Shooting Humbles Huskers

Sadler calls defensive effort 'inexcusable'

by Samuel McKewon

March 02, 2010

An already painful season for the Nebraska men's basketball team hit rock bottom on Senior Night.

Nebraska guard Ryan Anderson lost his final game at home.

NU never led in a 81-68 loss to Colorado Tuesday night, and trailed by double digits for much of the second half as the Buffaloes snapped a 36-game losing streak in Big 12 road games - which spanned more than five seasons - by shooting 61 percent from the floor, which included a season-high 12 3-

pointers.

The defense for which head coach Doc Sadler's team are known was absent. CU guards Nate Tomlinson, Cory Higgins and Alec Burks dashed by Cornhusker defenders into the lane, drawing fouls, hitting runners and kicking out to wide open shooters for 3-pointers. In their faded gold uniforms, the Buffaloes were allowed to execute like an NBA team than the dregs of the league for the last three seasons.

As good as NU's defense has been in the past, Sadler said, that's how bad it was against Colorado.

"It's inexcusable," said a seething Sadler afterward as he chewed on the inside of his mouth. "Inexcusable on my behalf. It's not any one player's fault, it's not the team's fault, it's entirely my responsibility. I'm just sorry for the fans that came out and we're going to get it corrected."

"Pitiful," point guard Lance Jeter called the performance.

Nebraska, now 14-16 overall and 2-13 in the Big 12, will work out at 5 a.m. Wednesday, Sadler said. Friday, too, in preparation for Saturday's game at Oklahoma State.

"We're going to go to work and we're going to work hard," said Sadler, drawing out the final word. "We're going to work hard and we're going to come back on Friday and do the same thing and we're going to work hard."

Colorado (14-15 and 5-10) quickly jumped to an 11-2 lead within the game's opening minutes. NU closed to 11-10. It then switched to a zone defense that CU busted into pieces with ten straight points. That advantage grew 30-14 before the Huskers clawed back to 35-28 at halftime. Nebraska stayed with six until the 13:16 mark of the second half, when the Buffaloes launched a swift 12-0 run over three minutes to ice the game.

NU had no answer for Burks and Higgins, who both scored 19. Two long-but-quick guards the Huskers just don't possess, they zipped by their defenders, drew more to them, then kicked out to Casey Crawford, a reserve forward whose 20 points - six 3-pointers and a baseline jam - were 16 above his season average.

"We saw (Crawford) on the game plan," Sadler said. "But I didn't have us ready."

Said point guard Lance Jeter: "It ain't Coach Doc's fault. We're the ones playing."

Sadler and Jeter both said they felt sorriest for Nebraska's four seniors, Ryan Anderson, Sek Henry, Ben Nelson and Chris Balham. It's the first Senior Night loss of the Sadler era, and the first time NU has ever finished 0-10 vs. the Big 12 North since the inception of the league.

Worse, Sadler said, it was a poor effort.

"I don't ask a lot," Sadler said. "I don't ask you to make (all your) shots, but we are going to compete because that's a character deal. Beyond basketball and in life, you have to compete. It's not going to be easy."

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LINCOLN — Colorado, which hadn't won a Big 12 road game in more than four years, waltzed into the Devaney Center on Tuesday night and made itself at home.

The Buffaloes never trailed Nebraska and never were threatened, winning 81-68 to snap a 36-game skid. CU hadn't won on the road in league play since Jan. 21, 2006, at Oklahoma State.

The loss officially buried Nebraska (14-16, 2-13) in last place for only the second time in 46 years.

Not many people saw what NU point guard Lance Jeter termed a “pitiful” performance. The gathering of 6,809 was the fifth-smallest for a conference game in the 34-year history of the Devaney Center.

Only the daylight custodial crew will see Nebraska's next practice.

Coach Doc Sadler scheduled defensive slides to start at 5 a.m. today in hopes of not letting another team shoot 61.9 percent (26 of 42) from the field and 70.6 percent (12 of 17) on 3s like Colorado did.

“We're going to go to work, and we're going to work hard,” a visibly perturbed Sadler said, repeating the second part of that phrase twice.

“And we're going to come back Friday and do the same thing, and we're going to work hard. That's all I know to do. Just roll up your sleeves and get to work because that right there is inexcusable.”

Colorado (14-15, 5-10) also came in with a 28-game road losing string against all Division I opponents.

But the Buffaloes jumped to an 11-2 lead on NU, then went on a 19-4 run to go ahead 30-14.

Nebraska closed to 35-28 at half and to 46-40 with 13:41 to go. Colorado called time and answered with a 19-5 outburst, and eventually built three leads of 20 points.

And note this: CU's leading scorer, junior forward Casey Crawford with 20 points, entered the game with a 4.2 average.

“You can sit here and give Colorado credit,” Sadler said. “They did shoot the basketball awfully well.

“But as I told the team, I am so, so sorry. It's my responsibility (for) putting that type of performance on the floor.”

Adding to the sting is it occurred on Senior Night.

The two scholarship fourth-year players, Ryan Anderson and Sek Henry, were a combined 6 of 23 from the field. Anderson had 10 points and 13 rebounds, Henry nine points and four rebounds.

“It's not any one player's fault, and it's not the team's fault,” Sadler said. “It's entirely my responsibility. I'm just sorry for the fans that came out.”

Jeter, who had 14 points, said the players aren't shucking responsibility.

“It isn't coach Doc's fault,” he said. “We're the ones playing. They get us ready like every other game. It's character. Coach said it. We've got to go out there and play.”

The word “character” may be echoing through the Devaney Center as you read this.

“I don't ask a lot,” said Sadler, his brow narrowing. “I don't ask you to make shots, but we are going to compete because that's a character deal.

“It's beyond basketball. In life, you have to compete. I tell these guys all the time they are growing up in a period that's not going to be easy, and it's my responsibility to teach them better than what I've taught them.”

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- **Video:** Watch Nebraska coach Doc Sadler's postgame press conference after Tuesday night's game against Colorado:



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Good win for Buffs ...

Written by [neill](#) in Tuesday, March 2nd 2010 under [Uncategorized](#)
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That was a big win for Jeff Bzdelik's Buffs in Nebraska on Tuesday. Along with ending the dreadful road drought, the Buffs kept themselves in contention for a postseason spot. If they can get a win Saturday at home against Texas Tech — and pick up a Big 12 tourney victory — they'll be in position for an NIT berth.

That's a good step in the right direction for Bzdelik's program. The Buffs lose just one senior, Dwight Thorne. They also have a host of quality players coming back, beginning with Cory Higgins, Alec Burks and Marcus Relphorde.

Honestly? This is a program that should be an NCAA Tournament team a year from now. I guarantee you, Bzdelik will be greatly disappointed if it doesn't happen.

As for this year, an eighth-place conference finish is by no means a monumental achievement. But eighth place in a conference that's likely to send seven teams to the NCAA tournament is moving in the right direction.

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