

CU heads into Big 12 tourney on high note

Bzdelik's Buffs roll past slumping Red Raiders

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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Pat Knight and the Red Raiders left the Coors Events Center red-faced after Saturday's regular-season finale.

Colorado put on another offensive clinic and won its third consecutive game with a 101-90 victory over Texas Tech in front of a Senior Day crowd of 8,826.

The Buffs (15-15, 6-10) have rallied down the stretch to get back to .500 and finish eighth in a conference that will likely send seven teams to the NCAA Tournament. Jeff Bzdelik's team is in position for a possible postseason bid with another win next week at the Big 12 Tournament in Kansas City.

Meanwhile, the Red Raiders (16-14, 4-12) -- who were ranked as high as No. 16 in the Associated Press poll during non-conference play -- have dropped their last seven games.

No. 8 CU will play No. 9 Texas Tech again to open the conference tournament at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday at the Sprint Center.

"We're in a bad way," Knight said after CU reached the 100-point plateau for the first time since a 102-90 overtime victory over Iowa State on Feb. 19, 2000. "It's been a bad three weeks. I take the blame, I've done a bad job. It falls on the head coach, so I have to do something to change this."

While Knight was searching for answers on the way back to Lubbock, the Buffs were celebrating after sending Dwight Thorne out a winner. The program's only senior scored eight points while players who will be back next season chipped in with 93.

While the future of the program is bright, CU's focus right now is on earning an NIT bid and extending the 2009-10 season as long as possible.

"We probably have the most confidence since I've been a part of the Colorado program," junior guard Cory Higgins said after scoring 22 of his 30 points in the second half. "I think this team, unlike in the past, has a little bit of cockiness and swagger."

The Buffs went on a 14-0 run midway through the first half to seize control. After a basket by John Roberson with 14:42 remaining, Texas Tech didn't score again for four minutes and 24 seconds and didn't make another field goal until Nick Okorie made a shot with 8:22 left in the half.

Marcus Relphorde scored 15 of his 18 points in the first half, and Thorne gave the Buffs a 53-35 lead at the intermission on his second 3-pointer.

"It was a big start and a big confidence booster," said Alec Burks, who finished with 24 points and became CU's all-time leading freshman scorer. "We wanted to get that 'W' for Dwight, so we had to come out strong so we could finish the game off strong."

CU was 16-for-27 (59.3 percent) from the field and 15-for-16 (93.8 percent) from the free throw line in the first 20 minutes.

The Red Raiders made a late run and cut the deficit to 92-84 after a three-point play by Okorie with just over two minutes left.

"We have to stop somebody. We gave up 90 points," Higgins said when asked what adjustments the Buffs need to make before facing Texas Tech again. "We were giving up some easy buckets. We have to tighten it up on the defensive end."

We can't give up 90 points again and expect to score 100."

Thorne started in place of Nate Tomlinson and finished with eight points and five rebounds. Levi Knutson added 11 points off the bench as CU improved to 9-0 when at least four players score in double figures.

Okorie led the Red Raiders with 34 points on 11-for-16 shooting, Mike Singletary had 21 points and 10 rebounds, and Roberson added 11 points and nine assists for the visitors.

CU shot 58.8 percent from the field but allowed Texas Tech to shoot 50.8 percent and win the rebounding battle 38-30.

"The demeanor is awful," Knight said. "We got beat seven games in a row, you're looking at a team that's just whupped right now."

The Buffs need to find a way to put a struggling Texas Tech team that is seeing red out of its misery at the Big 12 Tournament and perhaps take the Red Raiders' spot in the NIT.

"We've got to win that game at least," Higgins said on the subject of earning an NIT bid. "I don't know who we'd play after that ... Kansas? Well, that doesn't matter. We've got to win that first game."

The winner of the CU-Texas Tech rematch will move on to face No. 1 seed Kansas in the quarterfinals at 10:30 a.m. on Thursday at the Sprint Center.

Colorado 101, Texas Tech 90

TEXAS TECH (90)

FG FT Reb

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

Reese 22 2-6 0-0 1-3 3 5 6

Roberts 18 0-3 0-0 1-2 0 4 0

Sngltry 38 9-19 3-6 1-10 3 3 21

Rbrsn 35 3-7 3-4 1-2 9 5 11

Okorie 35 11-16 9-9 1-5 2 4 34

Davis 16 4-7 0-3 2-2 1 4 8

Tairu 21 2-3 2-4 3-5 1 4 6

Jenkins 10 2-3 0-2 4-7 1 4 4

Chdrvc 5 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 1 0

Totals 200 33-65 17-28 14-38 20 34 90

Percentages: FG .508, FT .607.

3-Point Goals: 7-19, .368 (Okorie 3-5, Reese 2-4, Roberson 2-6, Davis 0-1, Singletary 0-3).

Team Rebounds: 2.

Blocked Shots: 1 (Reese).

Turnovers: 17 (Tairu 6, Okorie 3, Singletary 3, Roberson 2, Davis, Jenkins, Roberts).

Steals: 3 (Roberts 2, Davis).

Technical Fouls: None.

COLORADO (101)

FG FT Reb

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

Crawford 22 0-4 2-2 0-2 2 1 2

Rlphrd 32 7-13 1-5 0-4 3 3 18

Burks 29 8-12 7-11 3-9 3 4 24

CHiggins 33 9-10 11-15 0-3 1 4 30

Thorne II 26 2-5 2-3 0-5 2 3 8

Tmlnsn 19 0-0 4-4 0-0 6 4 4

Coney 0 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Knutson 17 2-4 7-8 0-3 0 1 11

Dufault 12 2-2 0-0 1-2 0 4 4

Hrnckl 10 0-1 0-0 0-1 2 3 0

Totals 200 30-51 34-48 4-30 19 27 101

Percentages: FG .588, FT .708.

3-Point Goals: 7-16, .438 (Relphorde 3-6, Thorne II 2-3, [C.Higgins](#) 1-1, Burks 1-1, Knutson 0-1, Hornbuckle 0-1, Crawford 0-3).

Team Rebounds: 1.

Blocked Shots: 4 (Crawford, Hornbuckle, Dufault, Knutson).

Turnovers: 10 (Thorne II 2, Relphorde 2, [C.Higgins](#) 2, Burks 2, Tomlinson, Crawford).

Steals: 8 (Burks 2, [C.Higgins](#) 2, Crawford 2, Hornbuckle, Tomlinson).

Technical Fouls: None.

Texas Tech 35 55-- 90

Colorado 53 48--101

A -- 8,826.

Officials -- Dan Chrisman, Brad Ferrie, Randy Heimerman.

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Burks secures CU freshman mark

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/07/2010 12:04:05 AM MST

It was Senior Day at the Coors Events Center, but Colorado's amazing freshman continued to steal the spotlight.

Alec Burks scored 24 points during CU's 101-90 victory over Texas Tech in the regular-season finale on Saturday.

The 6-6 guard from Grandview, Mo., is now the leading freshman scorer in school history with 488 points. Burks passed Chauncey Billups (465 points, 2005-06) and Richard Roby (480, 2004-05) on the list Saturday.

"To me, he should be the Freshman of the Year in the Big 12," Jeff Bzdelik said of his prize recruit. "That just says it all."

Entering Saturday's game, Burks led the Big 12 in field goal percentage (.531) and all freshmen in scoring (16.6 ppg). He was 8-for-12 from the floor and led the Buffs with nine rebounds against the Red Raiders.

"It means a lot because there were some great freshmen here before me," Burks said after his seventh 20-point game of an amazing season. "It means a great deal to me to break that record."

Believe it or not, Burks has not been voted the Big 12's Rookie of the Week this season. That could change on Monday, given his role in CU's three-game win streak.

And Cory Higgins, who had 30 points on 9-for-10 shooting, is a strong candidate for conference Player of the Week. That's a pretty solid 1-2 punch entering the Big 12 Tournament.

"Alec is a very talented player. Him coupled with Cory, I've heard people refer to them as one of the best wing tandems in the nation," Bzdelik said. "And they certainly are."

Burks set the record on a reverse layup with 15:20 remaining and received a standing ovation from the crowd when public address announcer Alan Cass made the crowd aware of the feat during the next timeout.

Senior Day festivities

Dwight Thorne and Trent Beckley were honored before Saturday's opening tip and presented with framed jerseys by Bzdelik.

"They are both graduating, they're both great students, and they epitomize what we want in a University of Colorado basketball player," Bzdelik said.

Thorne, the last remaining recruit from the Ricardo Patton era, had eight points and five rebounds in his final home game.

"I'd like to thank Ricardo Patton, who didn't have a chance to be here, and Jeff Bzdelik for allowing me to stay here," Thorne, who started instead of Nate Tomlinson, said during his postgame speech.

Beckley has a year of eligibility remaining but has decided to call it a career after missing last season with a serious back injury and this season with medical issues. The walk-on from Vail joined the program with Thorne and six other scholarship players who left the team for various reasons since arriving at CU together in 2006.

After the game, Beckley thanked trainer Larry Willock in his postgame remarks.

"I spent a little too much time with him during my time here," Beckley said.

Crawford cools

Casey Crawford, coming off stellar shooting performances in the wins over Iowa State and Nebraska, was 0-for-4 from the field with two points on Saturday.

The 6-9 junior scored 10 points in the second half to spark CU to the 75-72 victory over the Cyclones and had 20 points with a career-high six 3-pointers during Tuesday's 81-68 victory in Lincoln.

Crawford -- who replaced Austin Dufault in the starting lineup against Texas Tech -- was a combined 11-for-14 from the field in the previous two games. He will graduate in May along with Thorne and Beckley but plans to use his final year of eligibility.

"I will be," Crawford said when asked if he would be back next season.

Notable

CU was 13-3 at the Coors Events Center this season. The program record for home wins is 14 (set in 2002-03 and 2005-06). ... The Buffs' three-game winning streak in the Big 12 is the longest since the 2005-06 team put together a five-game conference winning streak. ... CU leads the all-time series with Texas Tech 17-12 and snapped a four-game losing streak against the Red Raiders. ... CU wore its silver uniforms.

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Woelk: Now, Buffs must avoid stumble in Tech rematch

Neill Woelk
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/07/2010 12:02:37 AM MST

Three years ago, I asked then-Colorado freshman Cory Higgins after a home loss to Kansas if he could ever envision a day when such an atmosphere at the Events Center would be the norm rather than the exception.

Saturday afternoon, after 8,826 watched CU carve out a 101-90 home win over Texas Tech in the regular-season finale, Higgins reminded me of my question.

This year, he had an answer.

"We're getting there," he said with a grin. "We're getting closer all the time."

Indeed. Version 2010 of the Buffs has been a definite upgrade, particularly at home. Currently sitting at 15-15 overall (13-3 at the Events Center) with a three-game win streak under their belts, the Buffs have a little swagger these days.

You can't blame them. After three consecutive seasons of at least 20 losses, the Buffs have by most accounts turned the corner. Picked to finish last in the Big 12, they instead finished eighth, with the seven teams ahead of them all likely ticketed for the NCAA Tournament. For the first time in four years, they have a shot at postseason play. For the first time in even longer, they have a foundation that doesn't hinge on just one player.

Which brings us back to that part about turning the corner. If the Buffs aren't careful next Wednesday, they'll turn that corner -- and run head-on into a wall.

A loss to Texas Tech in Wednesday's Big 12 tournament opener (10:30 a.m. tipoff) would throw a wet rag over a whole bunch of those good feelings in a hurry. It would end the Buffs' hopes of an NIT berth, eliminate their opportunity for one more shot at Kansas (yes, they want that shot) and send them into the offseason with a sour taste in their mouths.

That's why Buff coach Jeff Bzdelik was only cautiously optimistic after Saturday's win. Bzdelik likes the direction his team is headed, and he's excited about the long-term future.

But he also knows the danger the immediate future holds, as he likened the back-to-back matchup with Texas Tech to an NBA playoff series.

"You make adjustments," Bzdelik said. "Sometimes you make adjustments for the better and sometimes for the worse. You just have to evaluate the film and see perhaps what you can do better schematically that might help you."

"Sometimes you don't do a thing."

Bzdelik and the Buffs have legitimate reason to be worried. While Tech coach Pat Knight spent most of his post-game press conference in self-flagellation mode ("We have lost seven in a row and it's my fault. I take the blame"), the Raiders are nonetheless a dangerous team.

They are, after all, the same Raiders who were ranked as high as 16th in the nation in mid-December. Tech junior Mike Singletary (21 points on Saturday) is the same Singletary who set the Big 12 tournament record of 43 points last year when he lifted 11th-seeded Tech to an upset win over Texas A&M in the first round (A&M swept the regular season series).

Simply, Saturday's CU win doesn't mean a whole lot when it comes to Wednesday's game.

"We have to stop somebody," Higgins said of the rematch. "We gave up 90 points. They were getting too many easy buckets, and it's the same old thing: rebounds. We can't let them score 90 points again and expect we are going to score 100 because that doesn't happen."

Well, it doesn't happen very often. Granted, when you get 18-plus points from your top three scorers -- 30 from Higgins, 24 from Alec Burks and 18 from Marcus Relphorde -- you like your chances. But when you give up 34 to Nick Okorie and 21 to Singletary, that does signal a little bit of a defensive deficiency.

And, as Bzdelik noted, the Raiders might actually have a little edge in their corner.

"Their coaches can draw upon the fact that they lost here as a tangible motivating factor," Bzdelik said. "We certainly have to have that edge, because they're going to have it for sure."

Tech's Knight agreed in that regard. "The one thing about losing is that I think it's easier to prepare if you have to play someone again because you are ticked off," Knight said. "You did something to lose, so now you can try to correct that."

But, as Knight also noted, "From the confidence factor, they (the Buffs) have got the edge."

There is, however, one major difference.

Even with their seven-game losing streak, the 16-13 Red Raiders are a likely NIT bet.

The Buffs have no such guarantee. They will be the team with the most to lose.

If they plan on extending their season, they need to play with that in mind.

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Leaving with class

Lone senior Thorne to play last game as a Buff on Saturday

By David Starcer on March 6, 2010

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Ask the media, his teammates, his coach or anybody who knows CU men's basketball guard Dwight Thorne II and they'll tell you the same thing about him.

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"He just defines class," said head coach Jeff Bzdelik.

The senior from Arlington, Texas has had an up-and-down season, his last here at Colorado, going from a starter to coming off the bench and seeing his minutes go to newcomers such as freshman Alec Burks and junior Marcus Relphorde. As a result his numbers have gone down (12.0 points a game in 2008-09 to 7.5 this year) as has his time in the spotlight.

But as his teammates will attest, his impact and influence on the team has increased.

"He's just been a steady voice throughout his time here," said junior guard Cory Higgins.

The usually stoic Higgins was clearly sad to see his backcourt mate of three years depart.

"He keeps everybody level-headed and does all the little things for the team that don't show up on the stat sheet."

Not only has Thorne experienced individual difficulties, but during his tenure at Colorado the program hasn't had its best run. Some of his former teammates, recruited by former CU coach Ricardo Patton, have had success elsewhere after leaving the program.

Junior Xavier Silas, who was suspended by Bzdelik during his sophomore season, transferred to Northern Illinois and leads the Huskies in scoring in 2010 with 19.7 points per game.

Junior Jeremy Williams has been a carbon-copy of Relphorde during his stint in Division I basketball, averaging 7.7 points and 4.6 rebounds as a freshman at Colorado, then sitting out a season due to academic suspension, before transferring to junior college and finally ending up at UTEP. He's now averaging 10.5



Senior guard Dwight Thorne II goes for a lay-up during a game against the University of Oklahoma in the Coors Events Center on Feb. 17. The Buffs beat the Sooners 77-67. (CU Independent file/Lee Pruitt)

points and 5.0 boards a game for the Miners, who are in the AP top 25 and clinched the Conference USA title (and thus a spot in the NCAA tournament).

Thorne has been on the other side of the spectrum: In fact, he has suffered 77 losses in his time in Boulder, the most of any player in men's basketball history. Needless to say, he and his teammates want nothing more than to send Dwight out a winner.

"I haven't played in the postseason in my career, and I know Dwight wants to play in the postseason bad," said junior forward Casey Crawford, who happens to be Thorne's roommate. "We're all going to play our tails off for him."

In order to do that, the Buffs first have to take care of business against a tough Texas Tech team, who has beaten the likes of Washington, the aforementioned UTEP, and Oklahoma State this season. And despite being in the midst of a six-game losing streak, the team knows not to take this one lightly.

"There's such a fine line between winning and losing and they are such a desperate team and a very good team," Bzdelik said, drawing a comparison to his own team coming up on the short end of the stick in many close Big 12 games over the past three years.

"Every night in the Big 12 you play someone good, believe me, you can lose games and still play very good basketball," Bzdelik said.

After utilizing their transition offense effectively in their last few home games, the team knows good rebounding is key to establishing an up-tempo game.

"We're going to try and run on them," Thorne said. "They like to shoot a lot of threes, so if we can get some long rebounds, hit guys with some outlet passes and run on them, in this altitude I think we'll have the advantage."

Hopefully Colorado can parlay a good performance on Saturday into some momentum heading into the Big 12 Tournament, which starts Wednesday in Kansas City, Mo. A few wins could be the difference between an NIT birth and sitting at home for the fifth straight year. The Buffs have a chance to win three straight conference games for only the second time in five years.

But even with the pressure to perform so high, coach Bzdelik and company are still taking the one game at a time approach that has served the young team well so far.

As for Thorne, the praise he received goes well beyond his basketball skills.

"He [Dwight] is an excellent student-athlete, he's been a great mentor to our young players, and he represents the university and the team and everyone who's worn Colorado across their chests in such a first-class way," Bzdelik said.

"Dwight's been like the big brother on the team," said Higgins, one of those players Thorne has taken under his wing. "We're going to miss him a lot."

And as for the man himself, he's approaching his last home game as a Buffalo in typical Dwight fashion.

"To be honest, I haven't thought about it a lot," Thorne said. "I'm just anxious to get out there, play well, and get the win. Winning this game would be huge, we need it, and I think we're going to get it."

Contact CU Independent Staff Writer David Starcerc at david.starcerc@colorado.edu.

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Late bloomers

Bufs wrap regular-season rally with strong win over Texas Tech

By Patrick Ridgell
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The Colorado men's basketball revival took another nice step Saturday.

The Buffs concluded their regular season with a 101-90 defeat of Texas Tech. CU (15-15, 6-10) clinched eighth place in the Big 12, which is expected to send seven teams to the NCAA Tournament, and reached the .500 mark to put themselves in position to play beyond next week's Big 12 Tournament. Fifteen wins and six league wins are CU's most under coach Jeff Bzdelik, and its best totals since 2005-06.

The Buffs will get a rematch with ninth-place Texas Tech in the tournament's opening round on Wednesday in Kansas City, Mo. (10:30 a.m., Altitude). It's a game they must win to earn an NIT spot.

Opinions widely vary as to how difficult it is to beat someone twice in a row, and many will tell you the losers of the first game hold an edge entering the rematch because they're mad. But Texas Tech, ranked No. 16 on Dec. 14, has lost seven straight and does not sound like it's heading to Kansas City with guns blazing.

"They just killed us — buried us," Texas Tech coach Pat Knight said. "We have to go play them again on Wednesday. I don't know. We are just in a bad way right now, and I don't know how to get out of it."

In years past, such an utterance was common coming from CU coaches at the close of the regular season. But the Buffs are playing well right now, having won three in a row to close a season for the first time since 2003. They've won four of their past six and have recorded successive double-digit league wins for the first time since 2004.

Three weeks ago, the Buffs were 2-8 in the league and teetering on a fourth-straight last-place finish.

"We had a choice to either cave in or push through," CU's Cory Higgins said. "Obviously I don't think we're a bunch of people that would cave in. We've been through the worst of the worst, so I think everybody just decided that we have to push."

CU had an early 14-0 run Saturday and led 53-35 at halftime behind 59.3 percent shooting. The lead reached 20 in the second half. Texas Tech closed to within eight in the final 3 minutes, but never closer.



Texas Tech guard John Roberson, left, fouls Colorado guard Alec Burks in the second half of their game Saturday in Boulder. Burks scored 24 points in CU's 101-90 victory to move his total to 488, breaking the CU freshman scoring record. "He should be the freshman of the year in the Big 12," coach Jeff Bzdelik said of Burks. **The Associated Press/David Zalubowski**

COLORADO 101, TEXAS TECH 90

TEXAS TECH (16-14, 4-12) —

Reese 2-6, 0-0 6, Roberts 0-3 0-0 0, Singletary 9-19 3-6 21, Roberson 3-7 3-4 11, Okorie 11-16 9-9 34, Davis 4-7 0-3 8, Tairu 2-3 2-4 6, Jenkins 2-3 0-2 4, Cohadarevic 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 33-65 17-28 90.

COLORADO (15-15, 6-10) —

Crawford 0-4 2-2 2, Relphorde 7-13 1-5 18, Burks 8-12 7-11 24, Higgins 9-10 11-15 30, Thorne 2-5 2-3 8, Tomlinson 0-0 4-4 4, Coney 0-0 0-0 0, Knutson 2-4 7-8 11, Dufault 2-2 0-0

Higgins had 30, with 22 coming after the break. Alec Burks scored 24 to move his total to 488, breaking Richard Roby's CU freshman scoring record of 480.

"He should be the freshman of the year in the Big 12," Bzdelik said. "I think that says it all."

The Big 12 will announce its postseason awards today.

"It means a great deal to me to break that record," Burks said.

Lots of things mean a great deal to the Buffs these days, but to play beyond next week's tournament might be immeasurable. CU has revived interest in a program that lagged while it struggled over the past three years. It drew another good crowd Saturday — 8,826 — and it finished the regular season averaging more than 6,000 per game for the first time since 2002-03, its last NCAA Tournament appearance. Aside from departing senior Dwight Thorne, the entire roster is expected back in 2010-11.

The NIT may call if CU can win Wednesday's game, which probably won't be anywhere near as easy as Saturday's. The Buffs appear to know this.

"We have to stop somebody," Higgins said. "We gave up 90 points. They were getting too many easy buckets, and it's the same old things."

TIP-INS: CU scored its most points in a Big 12 game since a 102-90 defeat of Iowa State on Feb. 19, 2000. It was CU's most points, and first time above 100, since it had 116 against Savannah State on Jan. 3, 2006. ... CU honored Thorne and Trent Beckley, its seniors, before and after the game. Beckley has not played this season due to an undisclosed health reason. ... CU snapped a four-game losing streak to Texas Tech. ... CU improved to 13-3 at home. ... Casey Crawford started and finished with two points. He had 20 in Tuesday's win at Nebraska. ... Marcus Relphorde scored 18 points, 15 in the first half. ... Texas Tech's Nick Okorie scored 34 points. The Red Raiders out-rebounded CU 38-30.

Read Patrick Ridgell's [CU sports blog](#). He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

4, Hornbuckle 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 30-51 34-48 101. .

Halftime — CU 53-35.

3-point goals — Texas Tech 7-19 (Okorie 3-5, Reese 2-4, Roberson 2-6, Singletary 0-3, Davis 0-1); CU 7-16 (Relphorde 3-6, Thorne 2-3, Burks 1-1, Higgins 1-1, Hornbuckle 0-1, Crawford 0-3, Knutson 0-1). Fouled out — Reese (TT), Roberson (TT). Rebounds — Texas Tech 38 (Singletary 10); CU 30 (Burks 9). Assists — Texas Tech 20 (Roberson 9); CU 19 (Tomlinson 6). Total fouls — Texas Tech 34; CU 27. Technicals — none. A — 8,826.

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Buffs hand Red Raiders seventh straight loss

By [Courtney Linehan](#) on March 6th, 2010 [48 Comments](#) [Printer-Friendly](#)

BOULDER, Colo. — Marcus Relphorde was too busy watching Mike Singletary defend him from the left to see Mike Davis reach around from the right and pick off his dribble late in Saturday's game. Davis broke down the court, ball in hand, and threw David Tairu a bounce pass under the bucket, setting up the shot that could have put Texas Tech within six points of Colorado.

Instead of scoring, though, Tairu lost control. The ball rolled out of bounds, and Colorado scored on its next possession to take Tech out of the game.

"Our problem is we had chances to cut into stuff and we either made a bad play or a dumb play," Tech coach Pat Knight said. "... That's just been the M.O. for three weeks."

This time the result was a 101-90 loss to Colorado, the Red Raiders' seventh consecutive loss. It locks in Tech as the No. 9 team in the Big 12 Conference Tournament, with a rematch against Colorado scheduled for 11:30 a.m. Wednesday.

Knight assumed all responsibility for the string of losses, but had no explanation for what's gone wrong as Tech dropped from 4-5 in conference less than a month ago to its final record of 4-12.

"I've done a bad job for three weeks," Knight said. "I have got to figure out some way to turn it around. These kids have played hard, but it falls on me."

Who's playing the hardest? That's likely Nick Okorie, who's averaged more than 20 points over Tech's last five games. Okorie tied his career high with 21 points against Texas on Feb. 20, then topped it with 28 against Nebraska on Feb. 27. He broke that mark again Saturday, scoring a game-high 34 at Colorado.

But even a second half in which Okorie scored 19 and Mike Singletary added 15 (he finished with 21) couldn't make up for first half in which the Red Raiders failed defensively. Trailing just 12-9 after five minutes, Tech gave up six consecutive field goals, allowing Colorado to go on a 14-0 run. The Raiders went 6:45 without scoring a field goal and after just 11 minutes the Buffaloes owned an 18-point lead.

That held well into the second half, but with 12:37 left to play Tech began chipping it down, ultimately closing the gap to eight points when Tairu failed to score on Davis' steal.

"It was too far of a climb," Okorie said. "We couldn't pick up enough points to catch up."

While Tech will face Colorado having lost every game in more than a month, Colorado comes into Wednesday's match up on a 3-game winning streak. The Buffs defeated Iowa State on Feb. 27 and Nebraska on March 2 before closing their regular season against the Raiders.

While Saturday was their senior night, it was freshman guard Alec Burks who got accolades for solidifying the win. Burks scored 24 points, second behind Cory Higgins' 30.

“To me, he should be the Freshman of the Year in the Big 12,” Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik said. “I think that just says it all. He’s a very talented player. He coupled with Cory, I’ve heard people call them one of the best wing tandems in the nation.”

Tech will likely focus on Burks and Higgins during Wednesday’s rematch. A win will be the only way for either team to keep its season alive, but Knight knows even that motivation might not be enough.

“We’re just in a bad way right now,” he said, “and I don’t know how to get out of it.”

To comment on this story:
courtney.linehan@lubbockonline.com | 766-8735
terry.greenberg@lubbockonline.com | 766-8700