

## CU men's preview: Coppin State

Camera staff  
Boulder Daily Camera

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**TONIGHT** -- Colorado hosts Coppin State at 7 p.m. at the Coors Events Center.

**BROADCAST** -- **Television:** FSN Rocky Mountain; **Radio:** KKZN (760 AM) with Mark Johnson (play-by-play) and Charles Johnson (color).

**STORYLINES** -- The Buffs are coming off a 88-72 victory in the opener over Arkansas-Pine Bluff. Five players scored in double figures, led by Cory Higgins with 26 points. ... Jeff Bzdelik is expected to return to the bench tonight after missing Friday's opener due to a family emergency. ... The Eagles are 2-0 after beating West Virginia Tech and Lincoln (Pa.) in the Coppin State Classic over the weekend.

**KEY STAT** -- The Buffs had 20 turnovers and 15 assists against Arkansas-Pine Bluff. But point guard Nate Tomlinson finished with seven assists and one turnover off the bench.

**COACHES** -- Jeff Bzdelik is 21-42 in his third season at CU. Ron Mitchell is 373-321 in his 24th season at Coppin State.

**PROBABLE STARTERS** -- **Colorado:** G Dwight Thorne, 6-3, senior, 10.0 ppg, 1.0 rpg, G Alec Burks, 6-6, freshman, 13.0 ppg, 2.0 rpg, G Cory Higgins, 6-5, junior, 26.0 ppg, 2.0 rpg, F Austin Dufault, 6-9, sophomore, 10.0 ppg, 3.0 rpg, F Marcus Relphorde, 6-6, junior, 6.0 ppg, 4.0 rpg. **Coppin State:** G Lenny Young, 6-2, sophomore, 18.0 ppg, 3.0 rpg, G Kareem Brown, 6-2, junior, 14.5 ppg, 5.0 rpg, G Vince Goldsberry, 6-0, junior, 10.0 ppg, 5.0 rpg, F Branden Doughty, 6-8, sophomore, 9.5 ppg, 7.0 rpg, C Ceslovas Kucinskas, 6-8, junior, 4.0 ppg, 5.0 rpg.

**SERIES** -- CU leads 2-0: a 91-63 victory in Boulder on Jan. 2, 2001, and a 80-63 victory last season at a tournament in Honolulu.

**UP NEXT** -- The Buffs host Texas Southern on Wednesday at the Coors Events Center (7 p.m., FSN)

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## CU men already benefiting from more depth

### Nine players scored in first game of season

**By Ryan Thorburn** Camera Sports Writer  
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Throughout a painful 1-15 march through the Big 12 last season, Jeff Bzdelik would often turn his head away from the action on the court and glance down the bench in search of some help.

And then, more times than not, he would leave starters Cory Higgins, Dwight Thorne, Austin Dufault and Nate Tomlinson out there to fend for themselves against deeper and more experienced conference foes.

It was a much different story for associate head coach Steve McClain, who ran the bench during the opener as Bzdelik attended to a family emergency, on Friday night as seven Buffs played 18 or more minutes in an 88-72 victory over Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

"It's nice to have a bench that you have confidence in," McClain said. "It's easy as a coach when you turn around and you feel good about who you're grabbing and sending in there. I think all of our new guys had some bright spots and some things they have to do better. And I thought all of our veteran guys did some good things. There's no question as our young kids continue to develop that's going to make us better."

The more balanced Buffs (1-0) -- who had nine players score (five in double figures) and all 12 healthy bodies take the warm-ups off to check in against Arkansas-Pine Bluff -- return to action tonight against Coppin State at the Coors Events Center (7 p.m., FSN).

"It was a good start. I was happy with the way the whole team performed," Tomlinson said after coming off the bench for the first time in his CU career and finishing with a team-high seven assists, six rebounds and only one turnover. "Everyone played and that's what it's going to take for us to be successful."

Alec Burks, a 6-6 true freshman with a Richard Roby-like skill set, started instead of Tomlinson and finished with 13 points in his collegiate debut. Marcus Relphorde, the other new face in the starting lineup, was in early foul trouble and had six points in only 18 minutes.

"More than anything we got that first game out of the way," McClain said. "So now the jitters and some of the indecision that brought will hopefully be gone."

Thorne (20 minutes) and Dufault (25 minutes) each scored 10 points, despite spending a lot more time on the bench catching their breath than they were accustomed to last season.

Higgins was as brilliant as ever with 26 points in 33 minutes.

"Cory was impressive and we're there for him this year," Tomlinson said. "Last year he had to do a lot for himself. Everybody got better over the summer and now we're looking to move forward."

The Eagles (2-0) won their own tournament over the weekend and then flew to Colorado with some confidence on Sunday. One of CU's nine wins last season was an 80-63 victory over Coppin State on a neutral court in Honolulu.

Bzdelik's young roster understands it has to take care of business at home during non-conference play to accomplish the team goal of having a winning season.

"Way too many kids and fans and coaches get wrapped up in who starts," McClain said. "At the end of the day, it's about how you finish games."

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