

## Fast start sparks CU Buffs to win

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

Posted: 11/16/2009 09:07:42 PM MST



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Alec Burks is almost famous at Colorado.

The talented true freshman has already been compared to Richard Roby by the head coach and is often confused for the program's current best player when walking around campus.

During the Buffs' 82-58 laughter over Coppin State on Monday night at the Coors Events Center, Burks continued to make college basketball look pretty easy, scoring 18 points on 6-for-9 shooting with three assists, two rebounds and one turnover in 26 minutes.

Cory Higgins, CU's more well known big guard, had a game-high 21 points on 7-for-10 shooting with three steals, three assists, two rebounds and one turnover in 30 minutes.

"I get called Cory all the time around here, so I guess we're quite similar," Burks said. "We can run, shoot, pass ... we like to do it all."

Just about everything the Buffs (2-0) did in the first half was all right with Jeff Bzdelik.

CU made six of its first seven shots, including three from behind the arc, and led 15-0 after Higgins scored off a well-designed in-bounds play.

After a 3-pointer by Keegan Hornbuckle and a basket by Burks, the lead for the home team grew to 26-4 with 11:39 left in the first half.

"I think we just came out focused," senior Dwight Thorne said of the quick start. "We knew last year we lost our second game against Montana State, a team we should have beat. We came out and wanted to blow them out from the beginning and we did that."

Throw in the performances of Thorne (13 points, three steals) and Nate Tomlinson (seven rebounds, three assists) and it added up to a pretty impressive evening for the Buffs backcourt.

"Cory's not our only option," said Bzdelik, who had four starters in double figures and nine different players score points. "I think you can see that."

At times Bzdelik's lineup on the floor featured two sophomores and three freshmen. The upgrade in talent and depth would have been even greater had point guard Shannon Sharpe not been lost for the season with a knee injury.

"It's a shame people have to wait to see Shannon Sharpe," Bzdelik lamented after praising most of his newcomers during the post-game press conference. "We had a heck of a recruiting class last year. We did. It's a shame because Shannon is really talented as well."

Marcus Relphorde, the team's "point-forward," led the Buffs with four assists. The 6-7 junior also had 14 points, six rebounds and a steal.

"Marcus has been in five different systems in five years, so he's adjusting to understanding the offense and the defense

and the philosophy and all that," Bzdelik said of his first junior college transfer. "We need everybody playing as well as they can play. I'm really pleased with the way we share the ball. I'm really pleased with shot distribution. We just need to keep improving."

Higgins drained a 3-pointer from the corner and then scored a transition hoop to give CU its largest lead of the first half, 41-13, with 3:40 remaining.

The Buffs led 45-20 at the intermission after shooting 53.8 percent (14-for-26) from the field and holding Coppin State to 22.7 percent (5-for-22). CU scored 16 points off 11 turnovers by the visitors and had an 18-12 edge on the boards through the first 20 minutes.

CU continued to pour it on in the second half and led 73-34 with 11:02 remaining before exhaling and allowing the Eagles (2-1) to go on a 14-0 run and eventually win the second half 38-37.

"I'm pleased with the attitude, the effort, the passion and the enthusiasm," Bzdelik said. "Those are things we can control."

The Buffs will attempt to start 3-0 for the first time since the 2001-02 season against Texas Southern on Wednesday night (7 p.m., FSN).

**Colorado 82, Coppin State 58**

**FG FT Reb**

**COPPIN ST. Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PTS**

Doughty 25 3-6 2-2 0-4 1 3 8

Kucinkas 20 2-3 4-4 1-4 1 2 8

Young 28 5-13 5-6 3-5 2 3 15

Goldsberry 17 1-2 2-2 0-0 1 0 4

Brown 26 2-8 2-2 1-1 0 1 8

Jackson 15 0-5 0-0 0-0 0 1 0

Reggins 19 1-3 0-1 0-3 3 2 2

Hayden 9 0-1 0-0 1-2 0 2 0

Landry 22 4-8 0-0 0-2 1 0 11

Coleman 19 1-4 0-0 2-4 0 4 2

Totals 200 19-53 15-17 10-27 9 18 58

**Percentages:** FG .358, FT .882.

**3-Point Goals:** 5-17, .294 (Landry 3-5, Brown 2-7, Reggins 0-1, Jackson 0-1, Young 0-3).

**Team Rebounds:** 2.

**Blocked Shots:** 4 (Doughty 4).

**Turnovers:** 15 (Young 3, Reggins 3, Doughty 2, Goldsberry 2, Brown 2, Kucinkas, Coleman).

**Steals:** 3 (Goldsberry, Landry, Kucinskas).

**Technical Fouls:** None.

**FG FT Reb**

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

Dufault 26 1-6 4-4 2-5 2 1 6

Relphorde 28 4-10 4-4 2-6 4 2 14

Burks 26 6-9 5-5 0-2 3 3 18

CHiggins 30 7-10 2-2 0-2 3 1 21

Thorne II 24 4-7 3-3 0-1 2 0 13

Tomlinson 15 0-3 0-0 0-7 3 3 0

Harris-Tunks 9 0-0 0-0 0-1 0 2 0

Coney 1 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 1 0

Crawford 7 0-0 1-2 2-2 1 2 1

Hornbuckle 23 2-3 0-0 2-6 1 1 5

Beckley 4 1-1 0-1 0-0 0 2 2

Eckloff 7 1-3 0-0 2-4 0 1 2

Totals 200 26-52 19-21 11-37 19 19 82

**Percentages:** FG .500, FT .905.

**3-Point Goals:** 11-21, .524 ([C.Higgins](#) 5-6, Thorne II 2-3, Relphorde 2-4, Hornbuckle 1-2, Burks 1-2, Eckloff 0-1, Tomlinson 0-3).

**Team Rebounds:** 1.

**Blocked Shots:** 4 (Burks 2, Harris-Tunks, Dufault).

**Turnovers:** 15 (Dufault 2, Harris-Tunks 2, Relphorde 2, Beckley 2, [C.Higgins](#), Hornbuckle, Eckloff, Burks, Tomlinson, Crawford, Thorne II).

**Steals:** 7 (Thorne II 3, [C.Higgins](#) 3, Relphorde).

**Technical Fouls:** None.

**Coppin St. 20 38--58**

**Colorado 45 37--82**

**A -- 3,689.**

**Officials** -- Terry Moore, Jon Stigliano, Kip Kissinger.

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## Bzdelik wants sustained effort

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

Posted: 11/17/2009 12:02:50 AM MST

The Buffs are being too nice.

Colorado is 2-0 with blowout wins over Arkansas-Pine Bluff (88-72) and Coppin State (82-58), but in each game Jeff Bzdelik's team has been outscored in the second half by these inferior opponents.

After taking a 73-34 lead with 11:02 remaining on Monday night at the Coors Events Center, CU allowed the Eagles to score 14 unanswered points and close out the game with a 24-9 run.

"That's where we have to show maturity," Jeff Bzdelik said. "We sustained our energy a little longer today than the game before, but we have to sustain it for 40 minutes. We're not going to shoot the ball all the time like we started shooting the ball, but the defense and the effort have to be there all 40 minutes. We have no margin for error."

At the intermission the Buffs led Coppin State 45-20 and Arkansas-Pine Bluff 43-22 before relaxing in the second half.

"I think it's human nature when you have such a big lead," Dwight Thorne said. "That is something that we have to be more mature about."

### **Bzdelik returns**

Bzdelik was back on the bench after missing CU's opener to attend to a family emergency in North Carolina. It has been an emotional start to the season for the coach.

"It was really surreal in a way," Bzdelik said of watching the Arkansas-Pine Bluff game on the internet. "It actually gave me a different perspective."

### **Knutson still out**

Levi Knutson (bruised right hip) did not play. Despite all of the balance and depth in the backcourt, Bzdelik said the junior's presence on the floor is being missed.

"He took a really bad fall unfortunately," Bzdelik said. "He had been playing so well and would have added significantly to our depth."

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college basketball

## Newcomers help Buffs roll at home

Colorado 82, Coppin State 58

**By Tom Kensler**  
*The Denver Post*

Posted: 11/17/2009 01:00:00 AM MST



Colorado's Marcus Relphorde takes a 3-point shot Monday night against Coppin State at the Coors Events Center in Boulder. Relphorde, a 6-foot-7 forward, contributed 14 points, six rebounds and four assists to the Buffs' rout. (Mark Leffingwell, Boulder Daily Camera )

BOULDER — It was hard to tell which pleased Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik more Monday night during an 82-58 waltz over Coppin State.

Was it CU hitting six of its first seven shots and

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jumping to leads of 15-0 and 30-6? Or those seven offensive rebounds in the first half?

With it being CU's second game of the season, count on Bzdelik getting a bigger kick out of the board work. At this point, he's looking for effort, fundamentals and smart decisions — especially from the newcomers.

Marcus Relphorde, a 6-foot-7, 220-pound forward and eager junior college transfer, darted along the baseline to grab two of those offensive rebounds and went back up for easy baskets. He finished with 14 points, six rebounds and four assists.

Another newcomer, 6-6 freshman guard Alec Burks (18 points), challenged veteran Cory Higgins (21 points) for scoring honors. And 6-7 freshman forward Keegan Hornbuckle added five points and six rebounds.

"We had a heck of a recruiting class last year," Bzdelik said. "We need everybody to contribute."

Bzdelik missed Colorado's season-opening victory over Arkansas-Pine Bluff on Friday while attending to a family emergency. The Buffs celebrated his return with a 45-20 halftime lead.

Before heading to the Maui Invitational, Colorado has another home tuneup, Wednesday night against Texas Southern. Baltimore-based Coppin State dropped to 2-1.

## COPPIN STATE (2-1)

Doughty 3-6 2-2 8, Kucinskas 2-3 4-4 8, Young 5-13 5-6 15, Goldsberry 1-2 2-2 4, Brown 2-8 2-2 8, Jackson 0-5 0-0 0, Reggins 1-3 0-1 2, Hayden 0-1 0-0 0, Landry 4-8 0-0 11, Coleman 1-4 0-0 2. **Totals 19-53 15-17 58.**

## COLORADO (2-0)

Dufault 1-6 4-4 6, Relphorde 4-10 4-4 14, Burks 6-9 5-5 18, C. Higgins 7-10 2-2 21, Thorne II 4-7 3-3 13, Tomlinson 0-3 0-0 0, Harris-Tunks 0-0 0-0 0, Coney 0-0 0-0 0, Crawford 0-0 1-2 1, Hornbuckle 2-3 0-0 5, Beckley 1-1 0-1 2, Eckloff 1-3 0-0 2. **Totals Colorado 45-20. 3-point goals — Coppin St. 5-17 (Landry 3-5, Brown 2-7, Reggins 0-1, Jackson 0-1, Young 0-3); Colorado 11-21 (C. Higgins 5-6, Thorne II 2-3, Relphorde 2-4, Hornbuckle 1-2, Burks 1-2, Eckloff 0-1, Tomlinson 0-3). Fouled out — None. Rebounds — Coppin St. 27 (Young 5), Colorado 37 (Tomlinson 7). Assists — Coppin St. 9 (Reggins 3), Colorado 19 (Relphorde 4). Total fouls — Coppin St. 18, Colorado 19. A — 3,689. 26-52 19-21 82.**

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## Bzdelik gets win in return

By Ray Sobczyk  
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BOULDER — Jeff Bzdelik had a much better view Monday night.

The Colorado men's basketball coach missed the team's opener against Arkansas-Pine Bluff on Friday to attend to a family emergency. However, he watched the game live online through Buff Vision.

With Bzdelik back on the bench, the result didn't change against Coppin State (2-1).

Behind hot shooting and a run-and-gun offense, the Buffs (2-0) stormed out to a 30-6 lead, then coasted to an 82-58 win over the Eagles at the Coors Event Center.

Following Monday night's win, Bzdelik was asked if having to watch the Buffs' 88-72 victory over Arkansas-Pine Bluff was a good thing. His answer: "No."

But "it was really surreal, in a way," he said. "It gave me a different perspective, to be honest with you."

He didn't offer much else.

Dwight Thorne, who scored 13 points Monday, said it was "nice" to have Bzdelik back on the bench.

"He brings energy, just like coach (Steve) McClain does," Thorne said. "Those guys do a good job preparing for us. It doesn't matter who is coaching us; we just have to play."

That they did.

The Buffs had four players score in double figures, including a team-high 21 from Cory Higgins. The junior was 7-for-10 from the floor, nailed five 3-pointers and anchored his team's charge in the opening half.

Five minutes into the game, CU was up 15-0. Higgins' first 3-pointer of the night gave the Buffs a 20-2 lead, and his second jumper from beyond the arc put his team ahead 39-13.

"We came out focused," Thorne said.



Colorado head coach Jeff Bzdelik is back on the bench at Coors Events Center in Boulder on Monday after missing the home opener Friday. **Joshua**

**Buck/Times-Call**

### COLORADO 82, COPPIN STATE 58

#### COPPIN STATE (2-1)

Doughty 3-6 2-2 8, Kucinskas 2-3 4-4 8, Young 5-13 5-6 15, Goldsberry 1-2 2-2 4, Brown 2-8 2-2 8, Jackson 0-5 0-0 0, Reggins 1-3 0-1 2, Hayden 0-1 0-0 0, Landry 4-8 0-0 11, Coleman 1-4 0-0 2. Totals 19-53 15-17 58.

#### COLORADO (2-0)

Dufault 1-6 4-4 6, Relphorde 4-10 4-4 14, Burks 6-9 5-5 18, Higgins 7-10 2-2 21, Thorne II 4-7 3-3 13, Tomlinson 0-3 0-0 0, Harris-Tunks 0-0 0-0 0, Coney 0-0 0-0 0, Hornbuckle 2-3 0-15, Crawford 0-0 1-2, 1 Beckley 1-1 0-1 2, Eckloff 1-3 0-0 2. Totals 26-52 19-21 82.

Halftime — Colorado 45-20. 3-Point Goals — Coppin State 5-17 (Young 0-3, Brown 2-7, Jackson 0-1, Reggins



The Buffs held a 45-20 lead at halftime. They finished the game with 11 3s and shot 50 percent from the field — with nine players scoring.

“We have a lot of guys scoring, a lot of guys playing,” Thorne said. “Everybody is involved, and that breeds ... confidence.”

But for the second straight game, the Buffs showed signs of lethargy in the second half.

0-1, Landry 3-5), Colorado 11-21 (Relphorde 2-4, Burks 1-2, Higgins 5-6, Thorne II 2-3, Tomlinson 0-3, Hornbuckle 1-2, Eckloff 0-1). Fouled Out — None. Rebounds — Ark — Coppin State 27 (Young 5), Colorado 37 (Tomlinson 7). Assists — Coppin State 9 (Reggins 3), Colorado 19 (Relphorde 4). Total Fouls — Coppin State 18, Colorado 19.

Coppin State used a late 22-3 run to make the final score respectable. The Eagles shot 45 percent in the second half, when they outscored the Buffs by one point.

Bzdelik said his team played high-energy ball for 27 or 28 minutes Monday.

“That’s where we have to show maturity,” Bzdelik said of the second half. “It was a little longer today than the game before.

“But we have to sustain that (energy) for 40 minutes.”

One player who isn’t slowing down is freshman Alec Burks. He started at point guard for the second straight game Monday and ran the offense with energy and efficiency.

Burks posted 18 points and three assists and missed only three shots. He’s taken over the starting role from Nate Tomlinson.

“Burks is talented; that’s first and foremost,” Bzdelik said. “He’s really skilled.”

But the coach doesn’t want to make a big deal about Burks starting over Tomlinson, who started all 28 games a year ago. That has no hidden meaning.

“It’s not about who starts. Everybody is going to play minutes,” Bzdelik said. “It’s about ‘Colorado’ across the front of the jersey, not the name on the back.”

Burks said he’s been compared to Higgins already.

“I get called Cory all the time around here,” Burks said. “We like to score, get to the free line, shoot, pass. We just like to do it all.”

What the Buffs would like to see now is a three-game winning streak to start the season. The team plays Texas Southern on Wednesday at home before traveling to the Maui Invitational next week, where they’ll face Gonzaga, Arizona and Wisconsin.

“It’ll give us confidence to go in there and win that tournament,” Thorne said. “We’re not going there to try and go 2-1 or 1-2; we’re trying to win. It’s a business trip.

“If we have three wins under our belt, it’ll give us a little more confidence.”

Ray Sobczyk can be reached at [rsobczyk@times-call.com](mailto:rsobczyk@times-call.com).

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## Bufs trample over Eagles

CU men's basketball wins by 24

*By Gina Yocom on November 17, 2009*

The Coppin State Eagles left the Coors Events Center with their heads held low after a 82-58 loss.

Within the first 15 minutes of Monday night's men's basketball game, the Colorado Buffaloes had a 30-6 advantage. Four of the six Eagles points came from the free-throw line.

The first half seemed as if the Eagles couldn't stay away from the CU defense, and if they did have a chance to shoot, the Buffs were right under the net waiting for the rebound.

Sophomore guard Nate Tomlinson led the way for the Buffs as he nabbed seven rebounds.

As far as offense goes, the Buffs made it look easy.

Coppin State let Colorado run up and down the court with the ball in the first half. Dunks, lay-ups and three-pointers — the Buffs didn't seem to have a preference of shooting, but found ways to get it through the basket.

Junior guard Cory Higgins led CU as he finished with a game-high 21 points.

In the second half, the Buffs slowed down a little bit and the Eagles tried to take advantage of it as much as they could.

The Buffs led by as much as 39 points midway through the second half, but the Eagles managed to condense the gap to 20.

Despite the huge victory, head coach Jeff Bzdelik said there is still plenty of room for improvement when it comes to the energy his team displayed in the second half.

"That's where we have to show maturity," Bzdelik said. "It was a little longer today than the game before, but we needed that. We need to sustain that for all 40 minutes. We're not going to shoot the ball all the time like we started shooting tonight. The offense is a variable, but the defense and the effort has to be there for all 40 minutes."

Senior guard Dwight Thorne II had a lighter response to his team's slower second half.

"I think its just human nature to be up by such a big lead," Thorne said. "It's important for my team to get a good start."

Thorne also said the team has become more confident compared to last season.

“We got a lot of guys scoring, a lot of guys playing,” Thorne said. “Everybody is involved and it boosts our confidence.”

In the victory over the Eagles, the senior captain said it was his teammates who made the big difference.

“Marcus [Relphorde] is a big difference, Nate [Tomlinson] I think has about seven rebounds a game,” Thorne said. “We are not a huge team, so I think it has to be a collective effort.”

Bzdelik said Relphorde is a huge asset, but he needs the whole team to perform.

“The thing about Marcus is that he’s been through five different systems in five years, so you know he is constantly adjusting and understanding the offense and defense, and the philosophy and the system and all that,” Bzdelik said. “But you know we need everybody playing as well as they can play. I’m really pleased with the way we share the ball, I’m really pleased with the shot distribution, you know we just need to keep improving and we’ll keep working at it.”

Freshman guard Alec Burks finished with 18 points and is said to be an up-and-coming Cory Higgins.

“I get called Cory all the time around here, so I think we play similar,” Burks said. “He likes to score, get to the free throw line and shoot. He likes to do it all.”

Bzdelik isn’t complaining.

“Well now Cory is not our only option, I think you can see that,” Bzdelik said.

The victory was humbly accepted and even though Bzdelik said his team needs improvement, he’s happy with what his squad has done so far.

“I’m just pleased with the attitude, the effort, the passion and the enthusiasm,” Bzdelik said. “Those are the things we can control, and we have a heck of a basketball game on Wednesday.”

The Buffs will host Texas Southern at 7 p.m. Wednesday at the Coors Event Center.

Contact CU Independent Staff Writer Gina Yocom at [Gina.yocom@colorado.edu](mailto:Gina.yocom@colorado.edu).

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