

CU's Higgins making name for self

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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LAHAINA, Hawaii -- College hoops junkies across the country who are tuning into the EA Sports Maui Invitational are discovering what diehard Colorado fans have known for two years.

Cory Higgins is a great player.

The Colorado junior continued his impressive start to the season with 28 points, including two made free throws that forced overtime, during the Buffs' 91-87 loss to Arizona on Tuesday at the Lahaina Civic Center.

"Great player," Wildcats guard Nick Wise, an All-American candidate, noticed. "Before watching film on him I never really heard too much about him. He's an All-Big 12 player and that says enough about him because it's a great conference."

Wise scored 30 points and willed Arizona to the victory in overtime. He was 9-for-15 from the field, 5-for-9 from behind the arc and 7-for-8 at the line with six assists, four rebounds and only two turnovers in 32 minutes.

"He's a great player and it's fun to go against one of the best guards in the Pac-10," Higgins said. "I'd like to think I'm among those elite guards, too."

The Buffs appear to have another talented hidden gem in Alec Burks, who scored 19 points. The 6-foot-6 guard has 84 points through his first five collegiate games, the most by a CU freshman since Chauncey Billups scored 121 through his first five games in the 1995-96 season.

Austin powers

Austin Dufault played the type of game the CU coaching staff expects to see a lot of in his sophomore season. The 6-8 forward scored 14 points on 4-for-7 shooting and grabbed a game-high 11 rebounds in 29 minutes.

"Austin definitely played one of the best games he has at CU," associate head coach Steve McClain said after Dufault's first career double-double. "He went hard on the glass, he was going after loose balls, he scored the ball inside, he made simple plays. Both defensively and offensively it was one of his better games."

The Buffs out-rebounded Arizona 37-34, even though starting forward Marcus Relphorde only had one rebound and one point in 17 minutes.

"We've been challenging them every day about rebounding and taking charges and making simple basketball plays," McClain said. "I think this team is going to continue to grow. A year ago we couldn't have had guys in our starting lineup not play well and had a chance to win. This year we can."

Deeper bench

Nate Tomlinson scored 20 points off the bench and was 7-for-9 from the field with four assists, three rebounds and two turnovers in 33 minutes. The Buffs' reserves outscored Arizona's bench 25-10.

"The encouraging things for me is when somebody isn't playing well we had guys come off the bench and play well," McClain said. "We really won everything but the game. You look at the stats and we out-rebounded them. We did what we had to do but we just couldn't win the game."

CU in Maui

There is no question Wisconsin has by far the largest contingent of fans here and somewhat of a home-court advantage. Arizona's fans -- and even the cheerleaders -- also traveled well.

The Buffs also have some support, a small but vocal group of about 100 black and gold-clad fans who gather right behind the CU bench.

"I like the fact that nobody thought we'd have any fans here and we had a nice little group of fans here," McClain said. "I think it says that people are starting to fall in love with this group of kids."

Notable

It was the first meeting between CU and Arizona since 1974. The Buffs lead the all-time series 8-5. ... CU outscored Arizona 38-18 in the paint and 18-5 in points off turnovers. ... Levi Knutson (hip) and Trent Beckley (stomach virus) were feeling healthy but did not crack McClain's rotation.

Quotable

"We blow our team last year out of the water," Higgins said of CU's improved talent, depth and execution.

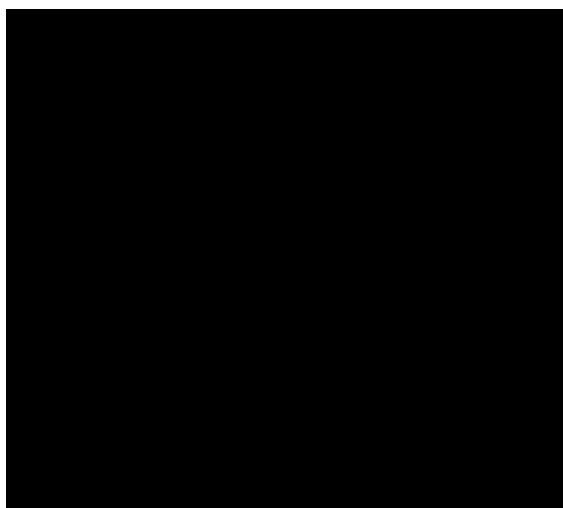
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Colorado basketball team loses another heartbreaker in Maui

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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LAHAINA, Hawaii -- Steve McClain had a simple message for the Buffs.

"I'm proud of these guys, but I also told them this: Losing is not acceptable," Colorado's associate head coach said. "In this program for too long it has been. I think this group understands it's not. And that's why we'll keep getting better."

The Buffs lost another heartbreaker in the EA Sports Maui Invitational on Tuesday, overcoming an eight-point deficit in the final 50 seconds of regulation only to fall 91-87 in overtime to Arizona at the Lahaina Civic Center.

The punch-to-the-gut defeat came on the heels of CU letting a 15-point lead against Gonzaga slip away during a 76-72 loss on Monday.

Nine more points and this team could be playing for the championship of college basketball's most prestigious early-season tournament.

Instead, the Buffs (3-2) will have to beat host Chaminade, a Division II program, today to avoid last place in the competitive eight-team field.

"If I have to get your spirits up then you shouldn't be doing this. It's another opportunity to play the game," McClain said when asked if he was worried about a letdown following two close losses to big-name programs. "We flew clear across the country to play three games. If that doesn't excite you then don't come. ... I'll find seven, eight guys who want to play hard and try to get out of herewith a win."

Cory Higgins will be the first player picked. CU's star scored 22 of his 28 points in the second half, including two pressure free throws with 18.8 seconds left to force overtime.

"You have to stay positive and you can't get discouraged," Higgins said. "We played hard out there. But it definitely hurts."

After the Wildcats took an 80-72 lead in the final minute, Nate Tomlinson and Higgins each hit 3-pointers to bring CU to within two points with 24.1 second remaining.

McClain called a quick timeout to set his defense, and Austin Dufault was able to steal the in-bounds pass. Higgins then drew a foul and tied the game at the stripe.

"We just kept believing," Tomlinson said. "It's a tough thing to keep taking losses like this, but we're a tight group and we're just going to keep believing in each other. That's what we did and we got it into overtime and had a chance."

The Buffs extended the run to 11-0 and led 83-80 in overtime after a 3-pointer by Tomlinson.

Then Arizona star Nick Wise -- who scored 14 of his team's next 16 points after the score was tied 72-72 with three minutes left in regulation -- tallied seven quick points to give his team a 90-85 advantage with 33.1 seconds left.

Higgins cut the deficit to three points with 18.8 seconds remaining, but a Brendon Lavender free throw iced the game for the Wildcats.

"The team that finishes the game wins the game," Sean Miller, Arizona's very relieved head coach, said. "We were able to stick with it and battle through."

Wise finished with 30 points on 9-for-15 shooting. The Wildcats were shooting 30 percent from 3-point distance as a team entering the game but were 14-for-24 (58.3 percent) from behind the arc against CU.

"I think you have to give Arizona credit. They came out and played really hard and stepped up and made some big plays," McClain said. "Once again, I was proud of our effort. It wasn't always going our way but we found a way to keep ourselves close and we get the game into overtime and it comes down to they make a couple shots and we don't."

Chaminade lost to Maryland (79-51) in the opener and to Vanderbilt (68-41) on Tuesday. The locals will be dancing in the streets if the Silverswords (0-2) can shock the Big 12 representatives today.

"Somehow we've got to find a way to win that game," McClain said. "And we're going to."

Arizona 91, Colorado 87

ARIZONA

FG FT Reb

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

Williams 32 3-9 5-6 1-9 0 2 11

Horne 34 6-9 0-1 0-8 3 4 17

Hill 32 3-7 1-2 3-6 2 4 7

NWise 32 9-15 7-8 0-4 6 4 30

Lavender 36 6-9 1-2 2-3 2 3 16

Ntzhko 15 1-3 2-2 0-0 0 3 4

Judkins 4 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 1 0

Jones 13 0-0 1-2 0-1 0 3 1

Fogg 26 2-5 0-0 0-2 3 5 5

Jacbsn 1 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Totals 225 30-57 17-23 6-34 16 29 91

Percentages: FG .526, FT .739.

3-Point Goals: 14-24, .583 (Horne 5-5, [N.Wise](#) 5-9, Lavender 3-6, Fogg 1-3, Hill 0-1).

Team Rebounds: 1.

Blocked Shots: 8 (Horne 7, Williams).

Turnovers: 14 (Williams 3, Hill 3, [N.Wise](#) 2, Lavender 2, Jones 2, Horne, Judkins).

Steals: 2 (Williams, Lavender).

Technical Fouls: None.

COLORADO

FG FT Reb

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

Dufault 29 4-7 5-7 5-11 1 5 14

Rlphrd 17 0-7 1-2 1-1 0 1 1

Burks 38 5-12 9-10 2-4 1 4 19

CHiggins 41 10-22 7-7 1-4 2 3 28

Thorne II 19 0-3 0-0 1-2 2 1 0

Tmlnsn 33 7-9 3-3 1-3 4 3 20

H-Tunks 11 1-1 1-2 1-2 1 1 3

Crawford 20 0-1 0-1 0-4 0 2 0

Hrnbccl 17 1-4 0-0 0-2 0 1 2

Totals 225 28-66 26-32 14-37 11 21 87

Percentages: FG .424, FT .813.

3-Point Goals: 5-19, .263 (Tomlinson 3-3, [C.Higgins](#) 1-3, Dufault 1-3, Hornbuckle 0-1, Crawford 0-1, Thorne II 0-2, Relphorde 0-2, Burks 0-4).

Team Rebounds: 4.

Blocked Shots: 2 (Hornbuckle, Harris-Tunks).

Turnovers: 9 (Burks 3, [C.Higgins](#) 2, Tomlinson 2, Crawford, Harris-Tunks).

Steals: 6 (Burks 2, Dufault, Hornbuckle, Harris-Tunks, Thorne II).

Technical Fouls: None.

Arizona 35 45 11--91

Colorado 34 46 7--87

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Wise lifts Wildcats over Buffs in Maui

Arizona 91, CU 87, ot

By The Associated Press

Posted: 11/25/2009 01:00:00 AM MST

LAHAINA, Hawaii — Nic Wise scored 30 points, including 16 of his team's final 19, to lead Arizona past Colorado 91-87 in overtime Tuesday in a consolation game at the Maui Invitational.

Wise appeared to give the Wildcats (3-1) enough of a cushion when he scored his team's final eight points of regulation, on two 3-pointers and a pair of free throws, to give them an 80-72 lead with 52 seconds left.

Earlier, he assisted on a three-point play by Solomon Hill to tie the game 72-72.

But Wise's point guard counterpart, Cory Higgins, led the Buffaloes (3-2) back. Higgins assisted on a 3-pointer by Nate Tomlinson and hit a 3-pointer himself. Then his free throws with 20 seconds left sent the game to overtime.

In overtime, Wise sank two free throws to bring

his team within 85-84 with 3:20 left, and his layup put the Wildcats ahead to stay 86-85 with 2:42 left.

Wise, a 5-foot-10 senior, hit another 3-pointer to make it 89-85 with 1:37 to go, and he added a free throw to make it 90-85 with 33 seconds left.

Arizona hit 30-of-57 shots (52.6 percent), including 14-of-24 attempts from 3-point range (58.3 percent).

Jamelle Horne scored 17 points, Brendon Lavender 16 and Derrick Williams 11 for Arizona. Wise added six asists.

Higgins, a 6-5 junior, led CU with 28 points. Tomlinson scored 20, Alec Burks added 19 and Austin Dufault scored 14.

ARIZONA (3-1)

Williams 3-9 5-6 11, Horne 6-9 0-1 17, Hill 3-7 1-2 7, N. Wise 9-15 7-8 30, Lavender 6-9 1-2 16, Natyazhko 1-3 2-2 4, Judkins 0-0 0-0 0, Jones 0-0 1-2 1, Fogg 2-5 0-0 5, Jacobson 0-0 0-0 0. **Totals 30-57 17-23 91.**

COLORADO (3-2)

Dufault 4-7 5-7 14, Relphorde 0-7 1-2 1, Burks 5-12 9-10 19, Higgins 10-22 7-7 28, Thorne II 0-3 0-0 0, Tomlinson 7-9 3-3 20, Harris-Tunks 1-1 1-2 3, Crawford 0-1 0-1 0, Hornbuckle 1-4 0-0 2. **Totals 28-66 26-32 87. Arizona 35-**

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34. End of regulation — 80-80. 3-point goals — Arizona 14-24 (Horne 5-5, N. Wise 5-9, Lavender 3-6, Fogg 1-3, Hill 0-1); CU 5-19 (Tomlinson 3-3, Higgins 1-3, Dufault 1-3, Hornbuckle 0-1, Crawford 0-1, Thorne II 0-2, Relphorde 0-2, Burks 0-4). Fouled out — Dufault, Fogg. Rebounds — Arizona 34 (Williams 9), CU 37 (Dufault 11). Assists — Arizona 16 (N. Wise 6), CU 11 (Tomlinson 4). Total fouls — Arizona 29, CU 21. A — 2,400.

Halftime —

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