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Brothers reunite in Boulder

Older brother Rick joins Cory Higgins on basketball squad

By David Starcer on October 20, 2009

Philadelphia may be known as the “city of brotherly love,” but thanks to Rick Higgins, Boulder can boast that motto too.

Junior guard Cory Higgins, who led the team with 17.4 points per game and 1.9 steals last season, is no longer the only Higgins in the Colorado Buffaloes locker room. As it turns out, he had a little bit to do with older brother Rick Higgins, 22, being brought to Boulder.

“I approached the coaches with the idea [of bringing Rick in], and they were very receptive to it,” said 20 year-old Cory Higgins. “It really happened pretty fast.”

The two said they share a very strong bond that goes back to when they were kids.

Their father, Rod Higgins, is currently the general manager of the NBA’s Charlotte Bobcats. He played for seven NBA teams over 13 seasons. Because of the constant moving, sometimes all the brothers had were each other.

“Being apart was probably the most difficult part of going to college for me,” Rick Higgins said. “We’re about as opposite as you can get, but it works perfectly because we never disagree, never fight. We’re as close as you can be.”

When asked if little brother being here was his prime motivation for transferring from Cal-Poly University to Boulder, a pause and a little laughter preceded his response.

“Yeah,” Rick Higgins said. “I mean, I could make it sound otherwise, but yeah.”

As for if Boulder is a good fit for him, Rick Higgins said, “It’s been real good. The team’s been great. I’m loving every day here.”

Over the summer, there were rumors circling on blogs and message boards that Cory Higgins was thinking about transferring, something the program and head coach Jeff Bzdelik could not afford to have happen.

The struggles of the team over the first two seasons of Bzdelik’s tenure have been well documented, and losing their best player before the program could get turned around would have been disastrous. Luckily, it was an addition of a Higgins that would make headlines.



Brothers Rick and Cory Higgins (right) pose for a portrait during the men's basketball Media Day. (CU Independent/Ilana Finer)

Though he may not have the resume as Cory Higgins, big brother brings some skills to the table as well.

Rick Higgins played three seasons at Cal-Poly before taking last year off. He'll have to sit out this season due to NCAA rules, but what he brings to the team doesn't require on-the-court results.

"I'm just going to try and bring some maturity," Rick Higgins said. "And whatever coach needs me to do, I'll do it."

Cory Higgins echoed what his brother said.

"He's an extremely smart basketball player, probably the smartest one on the team," Cory Higgins said. "That's the main thing he's going to bring, is that experience."

Both brothers agree 2009 is the year for Colorado to take the next step as a program and put together a winning season.

Cory Higgins also led the team with 5.4 rebounds per game last season, something a 6-foot-5 guard shouldn't be counted on to do – especially since he's their top scoring threat.

During the team's media day Friday, Bzdelik preached on improving on the glass. It's an area he feels a lot of the close losses from last season could have turned into wins.

His players seem to be buying into that philosophy as well.

"[Rebounding] is just a will and a want to," said Cory Higgins, who was adamant about making 2009 a year to remember for CU hoops. "Basically, if you want to do it, you can make it happen."

"The last couple of years, there have been a few excuses and this year we have no excuses, so this year has to be it. We are so deep this year, if people aren't playing right, [Bzdelik] is going to put other players in."

This won't be the first time the Higgins brothers will play with each other. They shared the court at Monte Vista High School in Danville, Calif. and in AAU leagues as kids. When the prospect of playing in the Maui Invitational this November came up, they smiled like a couple of youngsters.

"We've been looking forward to that since they put it on the schedule two years ago," Cory Higgins said.

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

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