

Bufs must 'move forward'

CU faces tough test in Waco on Saturday morning

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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WACO, Texas -- It's time for the Buffs to turn the page.

The players were clearly struggling to put Tuesday's 82-78 loss to No. 6 Kansas behind them during a lackluster practice on Thursday.

The coaches were still scratching their heads over the 67-60 loss to Oklahoma a week ago.

Colorado will have to play an inspired road game today in order to rebound with a win over Baylor at the Ferrell Center (11:30 a.m., Altitude).

This matchup between the Bears (13-6, 3-3) and Buffs (14-7, 3-3) could have an impact on the programs' postseason plans. Both talented teams are trying to find the consistency needed to finish in the upper half of the Big 12 standings.

"The biggest obstacle I think we have to overcome is just emotional letdown," CU head coach Tad Boyle said. "We saw it in practice a little bit. It's part of human nature, and we've got to overcome that and put the Kansas game behind us. We can't feel sorry for ourselves. We have to move forward."

The Buffs have lost three consecutive games after opening the conference schedule with impressive wins over Missouri, Kansas State and Oklahoma State.

CU dominated the glass in those victories. KU out-rebounded the Buffs 37-23 with a 21-2 advantage in second-chance points.

Believe it or not, Baylor's front line -- Quincy Acy (6-7), Anthony Jones (6-10) and Perry Jones III (6-11) -- is even bigger than the Jayhawks' formidable lineup.

"If we play like we did against Kansas every night, we'll get a lot more wins," said freshman forward Andre Roberson, CU's leading rebounder. "We just have to keep working hard in practice like Coach said."

Baylor guard LaceDarius Dunn leads the Big 12 in scoring for the season at 20.8 points per game. CU's Alec Burks is averaging 21.7 points in conference games, which leads the league. The Bears are known for their 2-3 zone defense. That could be a problem for CU if Burks and Co. settle for jump shots like they did at Oklahoma.

"We have to try and penetrate everything," said Burks, who scored 25 points against KU. "Everybody has to be committed to the same goal. If we do that we'll have the right energy."

Getting sky-high to play the Jayhawks in front of a sellout crowd at the Coors Events Center is easy. How can CU bring that same intensity to a morning tip-off in Waco?

"You just have to love basketball," Roberson said. "You have to be willing to get up and go out there and compete hard."

Last season the Buffs upset a ranked Baylor team 78-71 in Boulder. Five different CU players scored in double figures, led by Cory Higgins' 18 points.

Higgins and Burks each scored 15 points in Norman, combining to shoot 10-for-29 from the field. The Buffs shot 40.4 percent and allowed the Sooners to shoot 56.6 percent in their last road game.

"We better have unbelievable energy and focus," Boyle said. "I think Baylor is better than Oklahoma, and you saw what happened at Oklahoma. With that being said, it's a winnable game."

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Today's CU Game

By Brian Howell
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CU men (14-7, 3-3 Big 12) at Baylor (13-6, 3-3)

When/Where: 11:30 a.m. today at Ferrell Center in Waco, Texas

TV/Radio: Altitude/760 AM

The series: CU leads 15-8, but the Buffs are just 3-5 in Waco.

Leading scorers: CU — Alec Burks (19.8 points per game); Baylor — LaceDarius Dunn (20.8)

Notes: Dunn ranks first in the Big 12 in scoring, while Burks ranks second. CU's Cory Higgins (16.2) is eighth. ... CU has not won two Big 12 road games in the same season since 2005-06. The Buffs already have won at Kansas State this year. ... Burks needs just 72 points to join Chauncey Billups as the only Buffs to reach 1,000 career points as sophomores. ... Baylor forward Perry Jones III (13.9 points, 7.1 rebounds) is projected by many to be the No. 1 overall pick in the NBA Draft this summer.