



Woelk: Roby's future in his hands this season

By Neill Woelk

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If you've watched Jeff Bzdelik's Buffaloes play basketball recently, you've seen tiny glimpses of what Bzdelik wants from his team on the offensive end.

Backdoor cuts. Open shots at the basket. The opportunity to put the ball on the floor and drive the lane when the defense spreads.

But as Bzdelik has noted more than once since the season began, he can put his players in position to get an open shot — but he can't make the shot for them.

There's no better example than Buff senior Richard Roby.

In the Buffs' most recent game, a 67-43 loss to Stanford, Roby hit just three of his 10 field goal attempts. At least three of the misses were point-blank shots off the glass.

Ka-ching.

Every time one of those shots bounces off the rim and away from the hoop, you can hear the sound of a cash register — only it's money flowing out of Roby's pocket.

This is Roby's last chance to impress NBA scouts. The player who became an All-Big 12 pick as a sophomore, the player who almost certainly would have been drafted after that season, has only a few more months to convince NBA folks that he's worthy of a chance in the Association.

Right now, there aren't many folks who think Roby's name will even be called on NBA Draft day.

Anyone who has watched Roby play knows he has regressed. Part of the problem can no doubt be traced to his junior season, when a 7-20 finish under Ricardo Patton trashed his confidence. Roby spent a season taking bad shots, displaying lackadaisical defense and generally playing in a season-long funk. The fact that he knew his head coach wouldn't be around another year certainly didn't help.

But there are no such excuses this year, which make Roby's lack of production — and lack of improvement — even harder to figure.

This should be the year he embraces. New coach, new system, and the chance to make up for lost time with a standout senior season.

So far, though, Roby is spinning his wheels. While he's shown flashes of the form he showed as a sophomore, there's been no sign of consistency. For every good game he's had (21 points on 7-for-9 shooting in a win over Air Force), there's been a flop (3-for-10, seven points in the loss to Stanford).

Certainly Roby's troubles aren't the only factor keeping the Buffs from making steady improvement. Too many of the Buffs have yet to find a comfort zone in Bzdelik's new offense. After the loss to Stanford, Bzdelik said the Buffs are "tentative."

It's been painfully evident. About the only player who doesn't fit that bill is senior guard Marcus Hall, whose effort and enthusiasm have been at full speed since the first day of practice.

Otherwise, too many of the Buffs are taking a cautious approach to a system that rewards effort, not style.

Still, it's Roby who has the most riding on this season — and it's Roby who has the ability to pick this team up and carry it to the next level.

Today, there's still money on the table for the CU senior. Whether he decides to put it in his pocket or fritter it away will be strictly up to him over the last few months of his college career.



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