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cu 73, csu 70

footers and walk-on Adam Nigon made at least one 3-pointer.

Rams bow to Buffs' rally

By Natalie Meisler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 12/23/2007 01:42:39 AM MST

FORT COLLINS — It opened as a men's basketball game Colorado couldn't lose, the Buffs shooting nearly 70 percent the first 20 minutes. It ended as a contest Colorado State couldn't win inside, despite shooting 75 percent behind the arc in the second half.

When the Rams (5-7) went inside to 7-footer Stuart Creason at the end, CU's Marcus King-Stockton was there for the critical final stop. The Buffs (6-5) prevailed 73-70, ending CSU's two-game winning streak in the series.

"We talked at halftime that they were shooting 70 percent," Creason said. "You can't beat anyone in America letting them do that."

The Buffs cooled slightly at Moby Arena after leading 41-33 at halftime while CSU's Willis Gardner and Marcus Walker started flinging 3-pointers that found a way in. By the time it was over, every CSU player except two 7-



CSU's Josh Simmons commits an offensive foul Saturday as CU's Xavier Silas falls to the floor, while CU's Cory Higgins helps with double-team defense at Moby Arena in Fort Collins. (Bret Hartman, The Greeley Tribune)

Gardner provided CSU with a 70-68 lead on a 3-pointer with 1:15 to play. After a free throw by CU's Cory Higgins, King-Stockton made a layup to put the Buffs ahead 71-70 with 31.3 seconds remaining. Creason had position on the baseline to put CSU back in front with 15 seconds left, but King-Stockton altered the shot. Two free throws by CU's Marcus Hall and a buzzer miss by Walker determined the final score.

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"We weren't finishing games," said CU senior guard Richard Roby, who dominated with 18 points, six rebounds and two steals. "We did a

CU Basketball

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better job finishing today."

It took several timeout reminders by first-year Buffs coach Jeff Bzdelik. CU also had an early double-figure lead on New Orleans in its previous game, only to lose at home.

"What was really great about this win was the way we won in terms of (four) players in double figures," Bzdelik said. "We had 21 assists on 28 baskets, which is a sign of unselfishness."

On two big stops on Creason late in the game, Bzdelik recalled from his two seasons as Air Force's coach that CSU's big man tends to turn over his left shoulder. So King-Stockton stayed with that shoulder.

CU and CSU coaches have seen improvement from the start of the season as league play approaches.

CSU Basketball

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"We're 3-2 on the road and that's not bad," Bzdelik said. "It's a sign of progress."

While disappointed with the loss in front of the first vocal home crowd in three games, first-year CSU coach Tim Miles said: "I will not let the scoreboard define this team. That's a disservice to the kids. We were able to rally when we got down. When we make 3s and get it to Stuart inside, we can be competitive with anyone."

COLORADO (6-5) Hall 4-9 2-3 12, Higgins 5-7 2-4 13, Silas 6-8 0-0 16, Roby 7-14 3-4 18, Jackson-Wilson 3-7 1-2 7, Thorne II 1-3 0-0 2, Knutson 0-0 0-0 0, King-Stockton 2-3 1-2 5. Totals 28-51 9-15 73. Walker 7-14 0-0 17, McFarland 3-5 0-0 8, Simmons 2-3 1-2 6, Creason 6-12 2-3 14, Gardner 5-8 0-0 13, Clayman 2-3 0-0 6, Nigon 0-1 1-2 1,

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Woodard 2-4 0-0 5, Aguilar 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 27-50 4-7 70. CU 41-33. 3-point goals — CU 8-17 (Silas 4-5, Hall 2-6, Higgins 1-2, Roby 1-3, Thorne II 0-1), CSU 12-18 (Gardner 3-4, Walker 3-6, Clayman 2-2, McFarland 2-3, Simmons 1-1, Woodard 1-2). Fouled out — None. Rebounds — CU 29 (King-Stockton 8), CSU 21 (Creason 6). Assists — CU 21 (Higgins 7), CSU 15 (Gardner 5, Walker 5). Total fouls — CU 12, CSU 14. A — 5,377.

COLORADO STATE (5-7)

Halftime —

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mark kiszla

Lesson for Bzdelik: Patience

By Mark Kiszla
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 12/23/2007 12:47:55 AM MST

FORT COLLINS — When a man takes the job as basketball coach at Colorado, he gets a contract, but absolutely no guarantees.

Jeff Bzdelik could do everything right and it might not be enough to succeed. Change the culture of a program with zero expectations? Alter the power structure of the mighty Big 12 Conference? Where do you start?

It all could drive a patient coach stark, raving mad.

"The draw to Colorado was people telling me: 'You can't win there.' But let's see. I'm going to give my best effort. And I might fail.

"But I'm not afraid of failing. I'm going to try," Bzdelik said Saturday night, after the Buffaloes beat Colorado State 73-70 at Moby Arena.

Where does a CU coach begin? Not by beating Kansas. Not by earning a bid to the NCAA Tournament.

In a bad basketball program, the devil resides in the details. And Bzdelik is a detail man. So he began by sweating the small stuff.

"On our first road trip, I started by teaching them how to dress professionally," Bzdelik said. "I actually went behind a player in the airport, unbeknownst to him, and pulled up his baggy pants. I think I gave him a wedgie."

There is nothing subtle about this coach. Bzdelik employs a firm hand when instructing the Buffaloes on the complex brush strokes required to make the Princeton offense look like art rather than five guys staring dumbfounded at an abstract painting.

And, in return, the Buffs are teaching Bzdelik how not to pull every last strand of hair from his head.

Sound like a fair deal?

"I had a very difficult time learning to balance teaching and changing the culture with results on the court," admitted Bzdelik, whose team broke a three-game losing streak to improve its record to 6-5. "To be very honest with you, two or three weeks ago, I wasn't handling it very well.

"And I had to really take a step back and say: 'OK, Jeff, what did you think? You dummy. ' Now, I just want to see progress being

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made, because that's what this is all about."

To suggest this is a learning curve underestimates the size of bumps on the road for Colorado. There's nothing smooth about this long, hard climb.

For example: The Buffs raced to a 16-4 lead against CSU in seven fun-filled minutes after the opening tip, but closing the deal was far from simple.

It was a one-point game in the final 11 seconds of the second half, when Marcus Hall made two free throws, finally allowing the grimace on Bzdelik's face to relax.

"We've got to learn how to put teams away when we've got 'em by the throat," said CU senior Richard Roby, who scored 18 points against the Rams.

There was a moment late in the game, when the 5,377 fans in Moby were screaming, as Bzdelik got up from his seat on the CU bench. He adamantly twirled an index finger in the air, ordering the motion offense.

When the coach gazed at the court, there was point guard Marcus Hall, with the basketball on a yo-yo near half court, looking as if he were waiting on a bus.

A relationship does not take hold with a snap of a finger or the magic wave of a hand.

Hall insists he loves the intensity the new CU

coach brings to the task.

"We're a work in progress," Bzdelik said.

In two years at the Air Force Academy, Bzdelik won 50 times. If he can win five times in the Big 12 this season, he deserves to be named coach of the year.

When an entire basketball program is learning everything from how to practice to how to dress, it takes time for a coach and his players to become of one mind.

After walking in the CU locker room Saturday night, what were the first words Bzdelik wrote on the board?

Great achievements require great effort.

Victories will have to wait. Effort cannot afford patience.

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Aggressive Buffs eke out victory

King-Stockton delivers down stretch vs. Rams

By Ryan Thorburn
Sunday, December 23, 2007

FORT COLLINS -- Welcome to Marcus King-Stockton's 2007 season highlight reel.

It's only three minutes and 36 long and we'll edit it down for you:

3:36 remaining -- King-Stockton banks in a free throw to give Colorado a 68-64 lead against rival Colorado State. No, he didn't call glass.

31.3 remaining -- After the Rams rally to take the lead, Richard Roby draws two defenders and finds a cutting King-Stockton in the lane for an easy hoop to give CU a 71-70 lead.

15.1 remaining -- All 5,377 witnesses in Moby Arena, except King-Stockton, know that CSU is going to get the ball to Stuart Creason for the last shot. When the 7-foot senior receives the pass and makes his post move, King-Stockton digs in, forces the miss and then alertly slams the loose rebound off Creason's back to give the Buffs possession.

:00 remaining -- King-Stockton finishes with eight rebounds, five points and a block in 17 minutes to help CU end a three-game losing streak with Saturday's 73-70 victory over CSU.

Not bad for a guy who was averaging 9.8 minutes, 2.1 rebounds and 1.3 points through CU's first 10 games.

"It's a team scheme," King-Stockton said when asked about watching most of his senior season from the bench. "And when Coach needs to plug me in, I'll be ready."

CU head coach Jeff Bzdelik only plugs in players who earn their minutes during practice. The fact that six players made major contributions in this game is a great sign for the Buffs (6-5) as they try to build some momentum before Big 12 play begins.

Richard Roby was aggressive and unstoppable at times, finishing with 18 points on 7-for-14 shooting and grabbing six boards. Xavier Silas finally came up big under pressure, burying three clutch 3-pointers down the stretch to thwart the Rams' comeback bid. Cory Higgins added 13 points on 5-for-7 shooting and handed out seven of the Buffs' 21 assists on their 28 field goals.

"Everyone who played contributed in a great way," Bzdelik said. "Marcus King was great defensively and great on the boards on both ends."

King-Stockton and Jermeyl Jackson-Wilson combined to score 12 points and grab 10 rebounds. More

importantly, they limited Creason — CSU's only returning starter — to 14 points and only six rebounds.

"I thought Creason was going to set a ball screen and try and get the guards going to the basket," King-Stockton said when asked about the key defensive stop of the game. "And they went to the corner and Creason posted me up, which kind of caught me off guard there. He had great position on me. I was just fortunate that he wasn't able to make the shot."

The Rams (5-7) had to make 12 of their 18 3-pointers (66.7 percent) to give themselves a chance to steal the win.

The Buffs led 41-33 at the intermission after shooting 69.6 percent from the field. The aggressive visitors made 10 layups in the first 20 minutes, including one by Marcus Hall that gave them a 16-4 lead with 12:56 remaining in the half.

The Rams wisely switched to a zone defense and clawed their way back into the game by making some long 3-pointers over CU's zone. Andre McFarland cut the deficit to 19-17 after burying a jumper from behind the arc.

Roby led all scorers with 12 points at the break on 4-for-5 shooting. Hall added 10 points and made both 3-pointers he took, including one with 51 seconds remaining.

CSU was 6-for-10 from behind the arc and shot 56.5 percent in the first half.



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Bzdelik: CU learned from New Orleans loss

By Ryan Thorburn

Sunday, December 23, 2007

FORT COLLINS — It was the kind of start Jeff Bzdelik has been drawing up on the greaseboard since October.

Richard Roby scores on a backdoor layup. Xavier Silas' first shot is from point-blank range.

Another layup for Roby after an aggressive drive. A lob pass from Roby to Jermyl Jackson-Wilson for an easy deuce.

Another layup for Silas. A transition basket for Roby. A steal and basket for Marcus Hall.

After Colorado's first eight field goals came in the paint the visitors were leading 16-4 en route to a 73-70 victory over Colorado State on Saturday night at Moby Arena.

The Buffs (6-5) had four players score in double figures, recorded 21 assists on 28 made baskets, and shot 54.9 percent from the field to end their three-game losing streak.

"It's a telling sign of unselfishness and starting to get it," Bzdelik said. "(CSU) really had to get out of that man-to-man because we actually had some backdoor cuts and we were getting some open drives to the rim."

After the Rams (5-7) used the 3-point arc to mount an impressive comeback, Bzdelik had a bad flashback to the New Orleans game 10 nights earlier. CU blew a 10-point lead and fell 67-65 to the Privateers at the Coors Events Center.

"I actually alluded to the New Orleans game during a timeout," Bzdelik said. "I said, 'What did we learn from it? That's behind us and let's move forward here.'"

CSU took its first lead of the game (47-46) on a 3-pointer by Willis Gardner with 15:47 remaining. CU regained the lead 12 seconds later on a layup by Jackson-Wilson.

The Rams took their last lead (70-68) on another 3-pointer by Gardner with 1:13 remaining. The Buffs answered the challenge with a 5-0 run to end the game.

Hoop dreams realized

Last year Adam Nigon watched the CU-CSU game from the cheap seats at the Coors Events Center with some of his buddies. This time the former Broomfield standout played in the game.

After Tim Miles took over as the Rams head coach, he asked four players to leave the program due to

off-the-court issues. Three other players quit. And Jason Smith left early for the NBA draft.

That left Miles with one player with any significant experience, 7-foot center Stuart Creason, and only eight scholarship players. Nigon is one of three walkons who made the team after trying out last spring.

On Saturday, Nigon — who was averaging 18.2 minutes and 2.2 points entering the game — finished with one point, one steal and one turnover in 15 minutes. He led Broomfield to a 2004 state title and to the final four in 2006 but was not recruited by any of the Front Range schools.

•Williams update•

Jeremy Williams watched Saturday's game from the bench and said he hopes to return to the court for the Buffs on Dec. 29 when they host Grambling State at the Coors Events Center. The 6-foot-7 sophomore was academically ineligible for the fall semester and expects to be eligible as soon as his final grades are posted.

The Buffs will take the next three days off and will return to practice on Dec. 26.



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Longmont, Colorado
Wednesday, December 26,
2007

TIMES-CALL

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Victory another step for Buffs

CU holds off CSU

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

FORT COLLINS — The Colorado Buffaloes awake today believing they're making progress.

Signs of such abounded during Saturday night's 73-70 win at Colorado State.

The Buffs (6-5) shot 55 percent, they totaled 21 assists on 28 baskets. And when a repeat of their collapse against New Orleans 10 days earlier appeared imminent, they did what they couldn't do in that loss: get a stop.

Trailing by a point with 31 seconds to play, CSU (5-7) fed 7-footer Stuart Creason in the low post and watched as the center went up for a short shot over Marcus King-Stockton. It missed, and King-Stockton slammed the rebound off Creason out of bounds to give CU possession.

Marcus Hall sank two free throws with 11 seconds left to put the Buffs up by three. CSU's Willis Gardner missed a 3 on the Rams' final possession.

For a team still stinging from blowing a 10-point to New Orleans on Dec. 12, one seeking confidence and reason for optimism as Big 12 play awaits, winning in Fort Collins in front of 5,377 fans is nice.

"I alluded to the New Orleans game during a timeout," CU coach Jeff Bzdelik said. "I said in that game we were in this same particular position, so what did we learn from it." Actually, Bzdelik conceded, he might have brought up New Orleans in a couple of timeouts. But his point was salient.

CU led that night by 10 and watched the Privateers slice its defense apart in the end to win in Boulder.

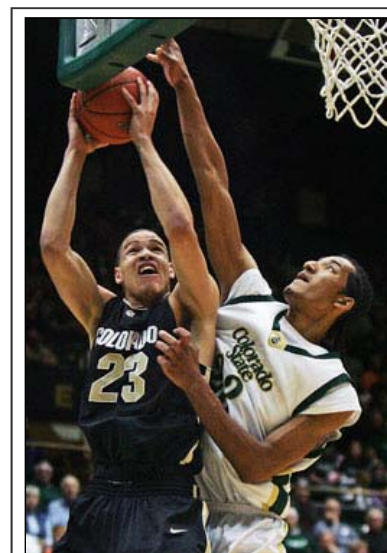
On Saturday, the Buffs jumped ahead 16-4, and led, 41-33 at halftime after shooting 16-for-23 from the field in the first 20 minutes.

CSU hit seven of its first eight shots after the break and led, 70-68, with 71 seconds to go when Gardner nailed a 3. The Rams hit 8-for-17 of their 3s.

But this time, CU got the stops it had to have.

King-Stockton said he did not think CSU would go to Creason on the final play, which must have made him one of the few in Moby Arena who didn't.

Creason's size caused CU problems, but with King-Stockton in his face, he missed his last shot and could not out-scramble the Buffs for the board.



Colorado's Richard Roby, left, goes up for a shot against Colorado State's Ronnie Aguilar during the first half Saturday night at Moby Arena in Fort Collins. Roby scored a game-high 18 points to lead the Buffs to a 73-70 win. **Steve Stoner / Loveland Reporter-Herald**

"We always pretty much know what the other team is going to do," Roby said. "Stopping them is the hard part." Said King-Stockton: "He posted me up, which caught me off guard. He had great position on me. I was just fortunate he was not able to make a shot."

King-Stockton put CU ahead for good with 31 seconds to play when a doubled-teamed Roby fed him in the lane for a layup, making it 71-70.

CSU had slowed CU with a zone in the second half, but the Buffs still enjoyed one of their best offensive nights. King-Stockton's final basket was a product of solid, albeit unexpected, execution.

"Both defenders went out on Rich and I happened to be under the basket," King-Stockton said. "Actually I was shocked he passed to me. Not because Rich doesn't pass, but I just didn't think he was going to pass it to me, to be honest with you."

Players and coaches insist CU practices focus on defense first, but Bzdelik trumpeted the offensive execution Saturday night.

"We're starting to get more instinctive, and (CSU) had to get out of that man-to-man because we actually had some back-door cuts and were getting some open drives to the rim," he said.

"We're ... not as robotic as we were earlier in the year."

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

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Longmont, Colorado
Wednesday, December 26,
2007

TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 12/23/2007

King-Stockton beginning to make his presence felt

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

FORT COLLINS — His name is Marcus King-Stockton. Remember him?

The 6-foot-9 senior forward from Denver has played sparingly this season, but his minutes are increasing. And during Colorado's 73-70 win at Colorado State on Saturday, he made several key plays in the closing moments.

King-Stockton scored the go-ahead basket with 31 seconds to play. He helped force a stop on CSU's next possession, then slammed the loose rebound off Rams 7-foot center Stuart Creason to give CU possession. And the capper: he banked in a free throw with 3 minutes, 36 second to play.

Asked if he knew it'd be his night after banking a free throw, he said no.

"I wasn't even thinking about that. I was thinking about defense," King-Stockton said. "It was late in the game and I needed to get back and help my team make a stop."

The bigger questions with King-Stockton concern where has he been, and whether he can continue to help the Buffs, especially in Big 12 play, when larger players await. Queries about these issues posed to King-Stockton and CU coach Jeff Bzdelik on Saturday produced contrasting answers.

"Players determine playing time; I don't," Bzdelik said. "It's how you practice. I have no agendas. I'll play anybody who can help me win.

"How you play in practice is going to be how you play in games, so show me. He's practiced well."

Said King-Stockton: "It's all up to coach Bzdelik. ... Whenever he wants me in, I'll be ready to go."

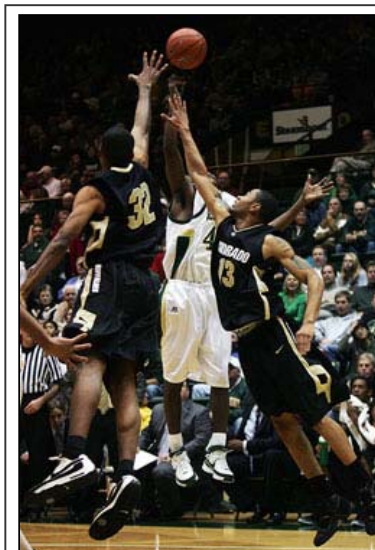
King-Stockton said he "needed to get things together," and added he's had a sore foot.

He scored five points and grabbed eight rebounds in 17 minutes Saturday. In CU's previous game, Dec. 12 against New Orleans, he had six points and six rebounds in 18 minutes.

In the five games prior to New Orleans, he logged fewer than five minutes in each game. Against Air Force, he never made it off the bench.

"Some of those other games, like DU and Air Force, I'm sure he didn't need me as much," King-Stockton said. "And we still got the victory, so I can't complain."

WILLIAMS NEARS RETURN: Sophomore forward Jeremy Williams said Saturday he's waiting on one final grade to be posted that could make him academically eligible.



Marcus King-Stockton, left, and Xavier Silas, right, go up for a rebound against Colorado State's Marcus Walker in the first half of Saturday's game in Fort Collins.
Steve Stoner / Loveland Reporter-Herald

Williams has been ineligible all semester. CU has aimed at Jan. 4 or Jan. 7 for his return to the lineup, but Williams said he could play Dec. 29 against Grambling State in the Buffs' next game.

Bzdelik declined to comment on Williams' status, but has in the past called him "very talented" and said Williams will not redshirt in 2007-08 because CU needs him. Williams, a 6-foot-7 forward, is one of the few Buffs post players with good experience.

TIP-INS: CSU held a 24-game, non-conference winning streak on its home floor entering Saturday. It was the seventh-longest streak in the nation. ... Marcus Hall improved to 18-for-18 from the line in the final two minutes of games this season. As a team, CU is 30-for-36 on free throws in the final two minutes. ... CU's Xavier Silas went 4-for-5 from 3-point range. He scored 16 points. The Buffs won't practice again until Wednesday. CU plays Grambling State at home at 2 p.m. on Saturday.