



It's Hall or nothing for Buffs

Only one point guard left after Thorne goes out with knee injury

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Jeff Bzdelik didn't inherit a lot when he accepted the challenge of rebuilding the Colorado men's basketball team from the rubble of last season's 7-20 finish.

But one can get the feeling the veteran head coach wouldn't trade Marcus Hall for anyone this season.

The senior point guard is averaging 13.3 points, 3.8 rebounds, 3.4 assists and a team-high 35.8 minutes this season.

And those numbers will probably all have to go up with the news Wednesday that backup Dwight Thorne will not be available for Friday's game against SMU at the Coors Events Center (8:07 p.m., Fox Sports Net) due to a deep bone bruise on his right knee.

"Marcus is obviously very important to us and now with Dwight out even more so," Bzdelik said. "He has provided great leadership with his competitive spirit. ... He's a warrior. He's really the heart and soul of this team in so many ways."

Hall underwent thumb surgery just days before the opener against New Mexico and had two teeth knocked out during a game against Savannah State on Nov. 16.

The Buffs need that toughness to continue all season because there really isn't anyone else the coaching staff can rely on to run this team the way the senior point guard does.

"I think I have to be more careful with what I do, knowing that we don't have a guy to come in as a true point guard to back me up if I'm out there messing up," Hall said. "(Thorne's injury) is a big loss for the team, but I think I'm prepared for it physically to play as many minutes as the team needs me to play."

Richard Roby, CU's leading scorer (15.9 ppg) and rebounder (6.3 rpg), will now be called on at times to help Hall bring the ball up court as a point-forward.

"It's a way to start our offense and give our point guards relief if they're getting pressured a lot," said Roby, who played point guard a couple of times for former coach Ricardo Patton. "I feel I'm one of the better passers on the team. I like having the ball in my hands and being able to create and make the right decisions. ..."

"Hopefully we get Dwight back so I can run the court. But I can play all the positions, I think."

Thorne, who is averaging 3.9 points and 15.3 minutes per game, will start an aggressive rehab program.

The sophomore suffered his injury in the second half of last Saturday's game against Grambling State after scoring 10 points and handing out three assists.



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