



Bzdelik's young Buffs looking forward after loss

CU coach pleased with how team battled at Stanford

By Ryan Thorburn
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PALO ALTO, Calif. -- Was Jeff Bzdelik disappointed after Colorado's 76-62 loss at Stanford on Saturday night?

No.

"I'm not disappointed in anything," Bzdelik said before joining his players on the bus outside Maples Pavilion. "So often we had three freshmen out on the floor and a couple sophomores. They battled and they competed. I'm going to sound like a broken record all year long. I just want them to get better, and winning will eventually be a byproduct of getting better.

"Yeah, they made some mistakes. We just have to keep learning and getting better."

Bzdelik is looking at the big picture but opponents are still looking at a small Buffs team that doesn't measure up athletically at this stage of the rebuilding process.

Stanford's Josh Owens and Lawrence Hill -- two 6-8 players that aren't going to make fans around here forget about the Lopez twins anytime soon -- had their way with CU's bigs. The duo combined for 37 points on 15-for-23 shooting with 14 rebounds and two blocks.

"They were far more athletic than us, and I think that's definitely how it's going to be all year," said freshman point guard Nate Tomlinson, who scored a career-high 18 points. "We're going to play against bigger, stronger, more athletic teams than us. Being young we need to learn how to box off and get on the glass better. We're not going to be the tallest team all year, so everybody needs to get on the boards."

It looks like Casey Crawford will have to get out of the doghouse first. The 6-9 sophomore has played soft defensively this season and scored just one point with two rebounds against the Cardinal.

And this was on a night when Crawford started for Jermyn Jackson-Wilson, who was violently ill before the game and finished with four points and two rebounds.

"I've got to step up. I'm not playing as well as I'd like to and Coach is on my case about that," Crawford said. "I'm not playing up to what I should be playing. It isn't really a part of what the defense is doing to me, it's just myself. I have to get better."

True freshmen Austin Dufault (10 points, five rebounds) and Trey Eckloff (two points, four rebounds) had their moments but not enough to match the talent (Owens) and experience (Hill) Stanford threw at them in the paint.

"It's a good test, but I don't expect this outcome in the Big 12," Jackson-Wilson said when asked what his young teammates will draw from playing a Pac-10 foe on the road. "I expect to win."

So does Bzdelik ... eventually.

"It's tough," Tomlinson said after the Buffs fell to 3-2. "We put a lot into this game and we felt confident coming in. It's a bit of a setback, but we have to move on. No point in bowing our heads now."



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