



Bzdelik's Buffs roll past Prairie View A&M

By Ryan Thorburn

Friday, December 19, 2008

There simply isn't any November or December madness when it comes to Big 12-SWAC college basketball matchups.

Not even when Colorado is involved.

The Buffs -- who opened the season with a 20-point victory over Arkansas-Pine Bluff -- made it 2-0 against SWAC teams this season and 5-0 all-time with a 72-47 laugh over Prairie View A&M on Friday night in front of a sparse crowd of 3,122 at the Coors Events Center.

The Big 12 is now 15-0 against the SWAC this season and 111-1 all-time.

The Buffs (5-3) still have the worst record in the Big 12, which includes No. 4 Oklahoma (10-0), No. 5 Texas (9-1) and No. 21 Baylor (8-1) at the top.

The Panthers (3-7) still have more wins than any team in the SWAC, which includes Southern (0-10), Texas Southern (0-10) and Mississippi Valley State (0-12) at the bottom.

So what did CU get out of devouring this pre-holiday cupcake?

"Well, it's a chance to not have nine days of practice in a row first of all," senior Jermyl Jackson-Wilson said. "It's good to go against someone else and get that competitive edge back."

The Buffs had not played a game since their impressive 75-56 victory over Colorado State on Dec. 10. CU outscored the Rams 47-28 in thesecond half and topped that effort during the first 20 minutes against Prairie View A&M.

The Buffs shot 54.8 percent from the field and held the visitors to 32 percent in the first half while building a 43-18 lead.

Cory Higgins -- who scored 28 of his career-high 33 points in the second half against CSU -- was one of eight Buffs to score before the intermission, leading the way with 15 points.

"It was definitely good to put them away in the first half," said Higgins, who finished with a game-high 17 points and eight rebounds. "But like Coach said, the game is 40 minutes and we can't take the second half off like that because good teams are going to come back on us."

The under-sized and under-manned Panthers -- who were missing six players due to injuries, academic issues and personal reasons -- matched CU on the scoreboard in the second half (29-29) and in rebounding for the game (37-37).

The Buffs also turned the ball over 18 times and were 8-for-15 (53.3 percent) at the foul line.

Some of the sloppiness can be attributed to the fact that Jeff Bzdelik emptied the bench early with 11 of the 12 players who checked in scoring.

"What we get out of it is all these players need as much court time as they can get," Bzdelik said. "When you have a team this young you need this experience. Getting out there in front of people and playing is the way you gain experience. Period. It's important to have the opportunity for guys to get there and get playing time."

Christopher Jones was the Panthers' leading scorer with nine points. The last time CU held an opponent without a double-figure scorer was against Villanova on Dec. 27, 1999, during the Rainbow Classic in Honolulu.

CU 72, Prairie View 47 PRAIRIE VIEW FG FT Reb

Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PTS

Shivers 25 2-5 3-4 1-7 0 3 7

Hugee 12 3-6 0-0 2-3 0 1 6

Johnson 37 2-8 0-0 1-7 1 0 5

Jones 24 3-8 2-4 1-2 1 0 9

Meadws 26 1-3 2-4 1-1 2 1 4

Richman 11 0-2 0-0 0-2 0 2 0

Griffin 20 3-11 0-2 1-4 2 2 6

Khalfan 11 1-3 0-0 1-3 0 2 2

McGlvry 7 0-1 0-1 0-0 0 1 0

McDaniel 27 3-10 2-2 2-6 0 3 8

Totals 200 18-57 9-17 11-37 6 15 47

Percentages: FG .316, FT .529.

3-Point Goals: 2-12, .167 (Jones 1-1, Johnson 1-3, Meadows 0-1, McGilvery 0-1, Griffin 0-2, McDaniel 0-2, Richman 0-2).

Team Rebounds: 2.

Blocked Shots: 0.

Turnovers: 19 (Griffin 4, Johnson 4, Meadows 3, Jones 2, McDaniel 2, Shivers 2, McGilvery).

Steals: 10 (Johnson 3, Griffin 3, Meadows, Jones, Khalfan, Shivers).

Technical Fouls: Hugee.

COLORADO FG FT Reb

Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PTS

Jksn-Wsn 20 4-4 0-0 1-7 2 1 8

Dufault 27 1-6 1-2 1-2 5 2 3

Tmlnsn 28 2-5 0-0 0-1 4 0 5

Higgins 30 6-12 2-2 0-8 2 3 17

Thorne II 26 5-11 0-0 0-3 5 3 12

Kelley 7 0-1 2-2 0-0 1 1 2

Coney 6 0-1 0-0 1-4 1 1 0

Veal 11 1-1 1-2 1-3 0 1 3

Knutson 14 4-5 0-1 1-3 0 0 9

Zehnder 12 2-3 0-2 0-2 0 2 4

Crawford 11 2-5 2-2 0-1 0 1 6

Eckloff 8 1-1 0-2 0-1 1 1 3

Totals 200 28-55 8-15 5-37 21 16 72

Percentages: FG .509, FT .533.

3-Point Goals: 8-20, .400 (Higgins 3-5, Thorne II 2-4, Eckloff 1-1, Knutson 1-2, Tomlinson 1-2, Coney 0-1, Zehnder 0-1, Crawford 0-2, Dufault 0-2).

Team Rebounds: 2.

Blocked Shots: 4 (Higgins 2, Veal, Jackson-Wilson).

Turnovers: 18 (Dufault 4, Tomlinson 3, Higgins 3, Kelley 2, Thorne II 2, Veal, Knutson, Jackson-Wilson, Zehnder).

Steals: 5 (Jackson-Wilson 2, Crawford, Tomlinson, Thorne II).

Technical Fouls: None.

Prairie View 18 29--47

Colorado 43 29--72

A--3,122.

Officials--Steve Welmer, David Hall, Verne Harris.



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CU men cruise to victory

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — College basketball coaches always fret over that first game back after finals.

Concerns include rust and anxiety. Players' minds are sometimes frayed. Coaches stress fundamentals and patience, and they hope their guys aren't too affected by the lengthy layoff so they can somehow pull out the victory.

That, or they just schedule Prairie View A&M.

The Colorado men's team played Friday for the first time in nine days and won with ease, beating Prairie View A&M, 72-47. CU (5-3) finished the first half on a 27-7 run that forward Trey Eckloff capped with a buzzer-beating 3 to make it 43-18 at halftime. The game was never close again.

Just don't believe the result satisfied the Buffs.

"It was definitely good to put them away in the first half," CU guard Cory Higgins said. "But like coach said after the game, the game is 40 minutes. We can't take the second half off like that when we get out to a big lead. Better teams can get right back in it."

The visiting Panthers (3-8) of the Southwest Athletic Conference could not climb back into it. They aren't that great, for starters. But they were missing six players due to illness, injury, personal reasons and academics. Coach Byron Rimm said the Panthers didn't have one guy because even though he had just become eligible, the school's athletic director was out of town and never cleared him.

Prairie View A&M has played some good teams, like UCLA, Baylor and Missouri. But its wins this year are against Champions Baptist College, Southwest Assemblies of God and Ecclesia.

Who? Where?

"This is the worst game we've played all year," Rimm said.

It wasn't CU's best, either.

"I just don't think our focus was there the whole time," Higgins said. "I don't think we took (the second half) off, per se. But we didn't play as well as we should have."

CU coach Jeff Bzdelik said he was worried about the results of spotty practices during finals, during which the Buffs were forced to practice at the CU rec center when tests were booked at the Coors Events Center. He said he was pleased Friday with how they started, how they had 21 assists on 28 baskets and forced 19 turnovers.

COLORADO 72, PRAIRIE VIEW A&M 47

PRAIRIE VIEW A&M (3-8)

Shivers 2-5 3-4 7, Hугee 3-6 0-0 6, Johnson 2-8 0-0 5, Jones 3-8 2-4 9, Meadows 1-3 2-4 4, Richman 0-2 0-0 0, Griffin 3-11 0-2 6, Khalfan 1-3 0-0 2, McGilvery 0-1 0-1 0, McDaniel 3-10 2-2 8. Totals 18-57 9-17 47.

COLORADO (5-3)

Jackson-Wilson 4-4 0-0 8, Dufault 1-6 1-2 3, Tomlinson 2-5 0-0 5, Higgins 6-12 2-2 17, Thorne 5-11 0-0 12, Kelley 0-1 2-2 2, Coney 0-1 0-0 0, Veal 1-1 1-2 3, Knutson 4-5 0-1 9, Zehnder 2-3 0-2 4, Crawford 2-5 2-2 6, Eckloff 1-1 0-2 3. Totals 28-55 8-15 72.

Halftime—CU 43-18. 3-

Point Goals—Prairie View A&M 2-12 (Jones 1-1, Johnson 1-3, Richman 0-2, Griffin 0-2, McGilvery 0-1, McDaniel 0-2), CU 8-20 (Higgins 3-5, Thorne 2-4, Knutson 1-2, Eckloff 1-1, Tomlinson 1-2, Coney 0-1, Zehnder 0-1, Crawford 0-2, Dufault 0-2).

Fouled Out—none.

Rebounds—Prairie View A&M 37 (Shivers 7, Johnson 7), CU 37 (Higgins 8).

Assists—Prairie View A&M 6 (Meadows 2, Griffin 2), CU 21 (Thorne 5, Dufault 5).

Total Fouls—Prairie View A&M 15, CU 16.

Technicals—Hугee (Prairie View A&M). A—3,122.

He was not happy with how CU handled Prairie View A&M's press in the second half, which was a sloppy 20 minutes that saw the teams score 29 points apiece. CU also finished 8-for-15 on free throws.

"Those are areas we need to continue to work on, and we will," he said. "All we want to do is get better every day."

What CU got out of beating up on an inferior opponent that played its fourth straight road game, and third this week, might be tough to see from outside the program. It's not to the players, though.

"You beat up on yourselves for so long, it's good to go against someone else ... and get that competitive edge back," senior forward Jermyl Jackson-Wilson said. "Then to come out of a game with a win, it feels so good. It builds confidence. We all need all the confidence we can get."

Bzdelik said the best thing CU got out of Friday's win was the chance to go use the whole bench.

"All these players need as much court time as we can get," Bzdelik said. "When you're as young as we are, with one senior and one junior playing, players need playing time. You need that experience."

"The only way to gain confidence is to experience confidence."

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