



# Higgins sets CU, Big 12 record

By Ryan Thorburn

Tuesday, January 6, 2009

DALLAS -- Well, at least the Buffs are good at free throws.

Historically good in the case of Cory Higgins.

On an otherwise miserable Monday night for the Colorado men's basketball program, Higgins made some history during the team's 70-67 loss to Southern Methodist at Moody Coliseum.

The smooth sophomore guard set a new CU and Big 12 record for consecutive free throws made by swishing two attempts with 13:45 remaining.

Higgins' streak after a 4-for-4 night at the line now stands at 40 and counting. He broke the Big 12 record set by Oklahoma State's Joey Graham (39 during the 2004-05 season) and the CU record previously held by Rob Gonzalez (39 over a 13-game span from Jan. 10 to Feb. 26, 1983).

"Last season I didn't shoot from the free-throw line too good," Higgins said after finishing with 11 points and six rebounds. "So I worked a lot more on my free throws."

Higgins had made 36 consecutive free throws over CU's previous six games, including 20-of-20 during the three-game Rainbow Classic in Honolulu.

The Buffs were 10-for-11 at the foul line as a team on Monday. However, SMU was 21-for-29 thanks in large part to the 16 offensive rebounds CU gave up.

## Homecoming king?

It was a bittersweet homecoming Dwight Thorne, who grew up in nearby Arlington, Texas, and had about 25 family members and friends at the game.

CU's junior shooting guard led all scorers with 18 points with a career-high four made 3-pointers.

"When you do well and you win it's always better than when you do well and lose," Thorne said. "We just have to be more aggressive and rebound the ball better."

## Making the grades

According to CU, nine men's basketball players earned grade-point averages of 2.9 or higher with five student-athletes with a 3.0 or better (Trent Beckley, Austin Dufault, Trey Eckloff, Levi Knutson and Andrew Zehnder).

Jeff Bzdelik's team did not miss one day of classes for games during the fall semester. The only road games (at

Stanford, the Rainbow Classic and at SMU) were over Thanksgiving or Christmas break.

### **Silent night**

Only 2,163 fans attended the game due to a number of factors, including the Mustangs' 4-8 record (including home losses to Arkansas-Pine Bluff and Texas-San Antonio).

The SMU students are not back from Christmas break yet, there were icy roads in the Dallas-Fort Worth metro area on Monday and Texas was playing in the Fiesta Bowl.

### **Notable**

CU did not block a shot in the game. That hasn't happened since March 11, 2005, against Oklahoma State at the Big 12 Tournament. ... Nate Tomlinson has at least one assist in every game he has played in this season.



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# Bzdelik's Buffs fall short

## Five CU players reach double figures, but it's not enough at SMU

By Ryan Thorburn  
Monday, January 5, 2009

DALLAS -- There is still a chance the Buffs could win a true road game this season.

But this was probably their best opportunity and they let it slip away with too many bad turnovers and too few rebounds.

Colorado lost 70-67 here on Monday night to Southern Methodist in front of a sparse crowd of 2,163 at the Moody Center.

Keep in mind, this is a Mustangs team that dropped home games to Arkansas-Pine Bluff -- a team the Buffs clobbered by 20 points on opening night -- and Texas-San Antonio earlier this season.

Nate Tomlinson's 3-pointer as time expired would have forced overtime but instead rimmed out and sent the Buffs back to Boulder with a three-game losing skid and a disappointing 7-6 record with just one non-conference game remaining.

"I was praying," Tomlinson said when asked about the final shot of the game. "But we didn't deserve it."

CU had five players score in double figures led by Dwight Thorne's game-high 18 points. Austin Dufault had 13 points and a team-high seven rebounds.

Cory Higgins scored 11 points, grabbed six rebounds and set a new Big 12 record for consecutive free throws made (40) with a 4-for-4 night at the line.

Tomlinson had 10 points and five assists. Jermyl Jackson-Wilson added 10 points and five rebounds in 16 minutes.

Add it all up and it wasn't enough to overcome SMU's 38-27 edge on the glass, 18 second-chance points or 11-point advantage in free throws made.

The Mustangs (5-8) -- who have the second-worst record in Conference USA -- are bigger, faster and stronger than the young Buffs.

"It's hard to practice because we don't have the kind of size and quickness that we see in the games," CU head coach Jeff Bzdelik said.

The good news? The Buffs host Division II Western State on Wednesday night. The bad news? Big 12 play begins after that and every other team in the conference has at least 10 wins already.

"We'll see more of that when Big 12 starts with even more speed probably," Dufault said after watching 7-1 SMU

center Bamba Fall score 13 points, grab 11 rebounds and foul out 6-9 CU center Casey Crawford. "We have to start out-smarting people and out-working people because we don't have a whole lot of 7-footers walking around our locker room.

"The way we're going to win is by out-hustling and out-smarting people."

The Buffs trailed by as many as 10 points in the second half and 60-51 with 6:19 remaining after giving up an offensive rebound and layup to 6-9 forward Papa Dia.

Thorne answered with a clutch 3-pointer, Jackson-Wilson cut the deficit to four points with a putback and Higgins brought CU to within 66-63 after making a shot from behind the arc with 45.7 seconds remaining.

After the teams exchanged turnovers, Dufault missed a 3-pointer from the corner with 16.6 seconds left that would have tied the score 66-66.

"I might have rushed it a little bit. It felt good when it came off," Dufault said. "It was a good look and a good pass by Cory. When the game's on the line you have to knock it down. That's just the way it goes."

Tomlinson had a chance for an and-one after making the score 69-67 on a drive with 4.8 seconds left. The freshman point guard missed the ensuing foul shot on purpose, and Higgins was whistled for his fifth foul trying to get the loose ball.

After Fall made 1-of-2 free throws at the other end, Tomlinson got one more chance to be the regulation hero.

"I thought Nate's shot was going to go in," Thorne said. "I had the big 7-footer running beside me and Nate was calling for it so I gave it to him. I thought he was going to knock it in."

CU led 33-32 at the intermission after Crawford beat the buzzer and swished a turnaround jumper.

But the Buffs followed up 50 percent shooting (11-for-22) in the first half with a 13-for-31 (41.9 percent) effort in the final 20 minutes.

CU finished 1-2 at the Rainbow Classic in Honolulu last week, including a neutral-court win over Coppin State, but the program team has not won a true road game since knocking off Colorado State at Moby Arena on Dec. 22, 2007.

**SMU 70, Colorado 67**

**COLORADO**

**FG FT Reb**

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

JcsnWlsn 16 4-6 2-2 4-5 1 5 10

Dufault 39 5-9 2-2 1-7 1 1 13

Tmlnsn 34 4-11 0-1 0-2 5 1 10

Higgins 39 3-7 4-4 0-6 6 5 11

Thorne II 38 6-12 2-2 0-3 2 4 18

Kelley 0 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Knutson 10 0-2 0-0 0-0 1 2 0

Crawford 24 2-6 0-0 2-3 0 5 5

Totals 200 24-53 10-11 7-27 16 23 67

**Percentages:** FG .453, FT .909.

**3-Point Goals:** 9-24, .375 (Thorne II 4-7, Tomlinson 2-7, Higgins 1-3, Dufault 1-3, Crawford 1-4).

**Team Rebounds:** 1.

**Blocked Shots:** 0.

**Turnovers:** 12 (Higgins 3, Tomlinson 3, Thorne II 3, Dufault 2, Jackson-Wilson).

**Steals:** 6 (Higgins 4, Tomlinson, Thorne II).

**Technical Fouls:** None.

**SMU**

**FG FT Reb**

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

Faye 31 2-8 5-7 1-3 1 2 10

Otis 22 0-0 0-1 1-5 2 0 0

Fall 34 3-7 7-10 5-11 2 1 13

Williams 29 3-8 6-6 1-2 4 3 14

McCoy 38 4-11 2-4 0-5 4 0 11

Malone 4 1-2 0-0 1-1 0 1 2

Walker 14 3-7 0-0 1-1 0 0 9

Nyakundi 8 2-5 0-0 0-2 0 2 4

Harp 7 0-0 0-0 1-2 0 0 0

Dia 13 3-3 1-1 5-6 0 4 7

Totals 200 21-51 21-29 16-38 13 13 70

**Percentages:** FG .412, FT .724.

**3-Point Goals:** 7-20, .350 (Walker 3-6, Williams 2-5, Faye 1-3, McCoy 1-5, Nyakundi 0-1).

**Team Rebounds:** 0.

**Blocked Shots:** 3 (Fall 2, Faye).

**Turnovers:** 13 (Otis 3, Faye 2, Dia 2, McCoy 2, Fall 2, Williams, Walker).

**Steals:** 9 (McCoy 4, Williams 3, Faye 2).

**Technical Fouls:** Dia.

**Colorado 33 34--67**

**SMU 32 38--70**

A -- 2,163.

**Officials** -- J.B. Caldwell, Tom Eades, John Higgins.



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