



Missouri thumps Bzdelik's Buffs

By Ryan Thorburn

Wednesday, January 14, 2009

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- The scary thing is it was actually only about 30 minutes of hell.

But watching Colorado suffer its worst loss ever to Missouri, a 107-62 pitchforking on Wednesday night at Mizzou Arena, felt more like an eternity of suffering to basketball perfectionist Jeff Bzdelik.

The Buffs trailed by four points with 9:14 left in the first half before allowing the Tigers -- who executed Mike Anderson's version of the "40 minutes of hell" philosophy almost flawlessly -- to go on a 19-0 run en route to the 45-point pratfall.

Missouri's largest margin of victory in the CU series previously was 31 points (87-56 on Feb. 13, 1999).

"What you take away from this game is a red face and a red behind," Bzdelik said.

CU had a week to prepare for the game and the focus in practice was on avoiding bad turnovers. The visitors finished with a season-high 26 turnovers that led to 30 points for Missouri.

Starting point guard Nate Tomlinson coughed the ball up four times while fighting through cramped muscles. The other two starting guards, Cory Higgins and Dwight Thorne, got in early foul trouble and combined for 10 more turnovers.

"That's all we practiced and emphasized was to in-bound the ball, advance the ball and get a good shot and yet we turned the ball over 26 times to yield 30 points," Bzdelik said. "The combination of missing layups, turning the ball over and breakdowns defensively, it snowballed quickly." CU trailed 48-22 at halftime, despite Ryan Kelley's buzzer-beating 3-pointer. The freshman guard was the lone bright spot for the Buffs with a career-high 19 points in 19 minutes.

After a field goal by Austin Dufault, CU was within 21-17, but Missouri turned up its pressure defense and stunned the turnover-prone visitors to put the game away before the intermission.

"We didn't counter their run with a run of our own," said Thorne, who scored nine of his 13 points in the first eight minutes of the game. "When they put us in the hole it was hard for us to get out of it."

Tomlinson slipped in the paint and hurt himself with just under four minutes left in the first half. Before the whistle blew and trainers were able to check on the freshman his turnover was cashed in for a fast-break dunk by DeMarre Carroll that made the score 37-17.

Higgins -- who set a Big 12 record for consecutive free throws made with 45 over the previous eight games -- missed his first opportunity at the line with 3:32 remaining.

Missouri rebounded the rare miscue by Higgins at the stripe, and Miguel Paul made a 3-pointer with 3:09 left to cap the run and push the margin to 40-17.

Higgins made a pair of free throws to stop a scoring drought of 6:19 for the Buffs. Kelley's 3-pointer at the horn ended CU's field goal drought at 9:14.

"They're a team that thrives off that kind of stuff," Tomlinson. "The first 10 minutes we dealt with it pretty well. A couple turnovers here and there ... it sort of went on from there. We played hesitant and that fell into their hands."

Whatever adjustments were made at halftime did not work as the Tigers opened the second half with an 11-0 run capped with a five points by freshman Kim English in nine seconds off CU turnovers against the full-court press.

"I'll tell you what, our guys came out and they had the right approach to the game," Anderson said. "I thought they came out with a defensive mindset. We got some good guys in foul trouble early on, and I thought our pressure really affected them. Not necessarily from the steals standpoint, but it disrupted what they wanted to do."

Thorne and Higgins picked up their third fouls in the first half. And the Buffs didn't bother to play any defense in the second half, allowing Missouri to shoot 71.9 percent (23-for-32) in the final 20 minutes and 63.3 percent (38-for-60) in the game.

"We have a small margin for error," Bzdelik explained. "We're not very deep."

The Tigers (14-3, 1-1), who improved to 11-0 at home, had six players score in double figures despite playing without suspended senior forward Leo Lyons.

The Buffs (8-7, 0-1) have now lost 22 consecutive Big 12 road games, dating back to Jan. 21, 2006.

Missouri 107, Colorado 62

COLORADO

FG FT Reb

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

JknWlsn 12 1-4 2-2 2-3 1 2 4

Dufault 31 2-6 0-0 1-5 0 1 5

Tomlnsn 29 0-1 2-2 1-2 3 3 2

Higgins 29 3-9 6-7 2-4 2 3 12

Thorne II 24 5-11 2-2 2-3 1 4 13

Kelley 19 7-12 3-5 1-3 0 3 19

Coney 9 1-1 0-2 0-2 1 3 2

Veal 6 0-0 1-2 0-2 0 0 1

Knutson 14 0-2 1-2 0-1 0 0 1

Crawford 10 0-5 0-0 3-3 0 0 0

Eckloff 17 1-3 0-0 1-5 1 4 3

Totals 200 20-54 17-24 15-35 9 23 62

Percentages: FG .370, FT .708.

3-Point Goals: 5-14, .357 (Kelley 2-4, Dufault 1-1, Eckloff 1-2, Thorne II 1-4, Crawford 0-1, Tomlinson 0-1, Jackson-Wilson 0-1).

Team Rebounds: 2.

Blocked Shots: 0.

Turnovers: 26 (Thorne II 6, Tomlinson 4, Higgins 4, Dufault 3, Kelley 3, Eckloff 3, Jackson-Wilson, Veal, Knutson).

Steals: 8 (Higgins 5, Kelley, Dufault, Knutson).

Technical Fouls: None.

MISSOURI

FG FT Reb

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

Carroll 22 5-8 2-2 2-11 2 1 13

Ramsey 21 2-3 1-2 0-2 1 0 5

Tiller 12 4-6 5-5 0-1 2 1 13

Taylor 19 0-0 2-4 0-0 6 4 2

English 14 4-6 2-4 0-0 2 1 12

Paul 19 2-3 2-3 0-1 3 1 8

Denmon 21 5-8 0-0 0-3 4 1 13

Andsn Jr 10 0-0 0-0 1-2 1 1 0

Bowers 19 7-8 2-2 2-3 2 2 16

Safford 15 5-9 2-3 0-1 2 1 13

Sutton 4 0-2 0-0 0-1 0 1 0

Moore 9 1-3 1-1 1-2 1 2 3

Lwrnce 15 3-4 0-2 1-1 0 3 9

Totals 200 38-60 19-28 7-29 26 19 107

Percentages: FG .633, FT .679.

3-Point Goals: 12-20, .600 (Lawrence 3-4, Denmon 3-5, Paul 2-2, English 2-4, Safford 1-1, Carroll 1-2, Sutton 0-2).

Team Rebounds: 1.

Blocked Shots: 8 (Carroll 2, Safford 2, Ramsey 2, Bowers, English).

Turnovers: 10 (English 2, Bowers 2, Taylor, Moore, Denmon, Anderson Jr., Carroll, Paul).

Steals: 12 (English 3, Bowers 2, Lawrence 2, Ramsey, Paul, Taylor, Carroll, Safford).

Technical Fouls: None.

Colorado 22 40-- 62

Missouri 48 59--107

A -- 9,171.

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Freshman Kelley Buffs' lone bright spot

By Ryan Thorburn

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COLUMBIA, Mo. -- Leading up to Wednesday night's Big 12 opener, Jeff Bzdelik was asked about the need to develop a bench.

"I want to, trust me," the Colorado head coach said. "I want to play guys. I give players five minutes, they determine whether or not they get another five minutes. I desperately want and need people to play with a desperate energy, to dive on the floor, to take charges, to block people off. I need that, I want that, and we've got to have that. It has been a very inconsistent area."

Ryan Kelley, the nephew of former CU standout Vince Kelley, turned his five-minute opportunity into 19 points in 19 minutes during the Buffs' otherwise pathetic 107-62 loss to Missouri at Mizzou Arena.

The talented freshman guard had played a total of only 36 minutes in the team's previous 14 games.

"I understand that I'm a freshman coming in and it takes time to work yourself into the lineup and get to know the system," Kelley said when asked if he was frustrated by the lack of playing time during the non-conference portion of the schedule. "I'm just waiting my time like everybody else has. Whenever my name is called I'll just be ready for it."

Kelley was inserted into the game just before halftime and made a deep 3-pointer at the buzzer to cut CU's deficit to 48-22. The much-needed hoop also ended the Buffs' field goal drought at 9:14.

Austin Dufault had cut the early deficit to 21-17 before the Tigers embarked on a 31-2 run prior to Kelley's 3-pointer.

Missouri opened up the second half with an 11-0 run before Kelley knocked down another 3-pointer to make the score 59-25 with 17:08 remaining.

"It feels pretty good to go out there and get some experience because you never know when you might get in again," Kelley said. "If you get out there you can't be scared. You have to work hard in practice and that kind of transitions to the game. It's nice to get my feet wet in case I get in any other games this season."

Bzdelik took notice of the fact that Kelley was 7-for-12 from the field on a night when the rest of the Buffs were 13-for-42.

"I thought Ryan was a bright spot and it's great to see him do well," Bzdelik said. "He's a young player and he has a bright future if he continues to work. ... He's getting there."

Tomlinson scare

Could it have been any worse for the Buffs? Yeah, if Nate Tomlinson's injury were more serious.

CU's freshman point guard slipped and hit the hardwood awkwardly in the first half but the diagnosis is that Tomlinson was just suffering from a muscle cramp.

Tomlinson, who hit the floor with 3:54 remaining in the first half, returned to the game in the second half. He finished with four turnovers, three assists and two points.

Streak snapped

It was so bad for the Buffs on Wednesday night that Cory Higgins couldn't even stop a seemingly endless Missouri scoring run at the foul line.

Higgins' Big 12 record for consecutive free throws made ended at 45 when the sophomore guard missed his first attempt with 3:32 remaining in the first half on the front end of a one-and-one.

The Tigers' Miguel Paul splashed a 3-pointer moments later to make the score 40-17 and extend the home team's decisive run to 19-0. Higgins was fouled again and made both free throws with 2:55 remaining to stop a CU scoring drought of 6:19.

Higgins made his final six foul shots but finished with just 12 points on 3-for-9 shooting after getting into early foul trouble. He did tie his career-high with five steals.

Unlucky 17

Both the CU men's and women's basketball team hit a wall when they hit 17 points Tuesday night.

When the Colorado men reached 17 against Missouri, they trailed by four points. The Tigers then went on a 19-0 run.

Meanwhile, in the women's 79-43 loss at Oklahoma State, the Cowgirls went on a 22-0 run once the Buffs hit 17 points. That surge gave No. 22 OSU a 47-17 lead.

By the numbers

45 -- Wednesday's margin of victory was the highest for Missouri in the history of the series with CU. The Buffs' worst loss to the Tigers before this was an 87-56 beating on Feb. 13, 1999.

22 -- Consecutive Big 12 road losses for the Buffs. The streak dates back to the Buffs' 80-78 overtime win at Oklahoma State on Jan. 21, 2006.

37.0 -- CU's season-low field goal percentage came in the Big 12 opener. The Buffs took 54 shots and made 20 of them.

71.9 percent -- Missouri's Harlem Globetrotter-like shooting percentage in the second half.



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