



Buffs fall to Jayhawks

By Ryan Thorburn

Saturday, January 17, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — No wonder Jeff Bzdelik was so upset before Friday's practice about not having a full-time video coordinator or strength coach working in the Colorado basketball program.

Leading up to Saturday's game against the defending national champions, Bzdelik took another painful look at CU's first 15 games of the season frame by frame.

Bzdelik determined that his team had a chance to grab 507 defensive rebounds and allowed the opposition to get about 33 percent of them.

"That's how sick I am," Bzdelik said of the exhausting research.

After the Buffs' predictable 73-56 loss to Kansas at the Coors Events Center, Bzdelik sent a handful of CU players directly to the weight room for a workout under the supervision of assistant coaches.

"All I want them to do is get better every day and we're starting to see signs," Bzdelik said. "We're trying. They're just not there yet."

Except for Cory Higgins.

The sophomore guard is a poster boy for the kind of improvement Bzdelik is counting on from his five freshmen in the next year. Higgins scored 20 points in 40 minutes to lead all scorers.

After a 3-pointer by Higgins as the shot clock expired with 16:20 remaining in the game, CU was within 34-32.

Half the crowd went wild. And then the other half went wild as KU went on a 28-9 run capped with back-to-back dunks by Cole Aldrich and Marcus Morris.

"We competed a lot more," Higgins said, referring to CU's humiliating 107-62 loss at Missouri in the Big 12 opener on Wednesday. "But it's the same old things every game, taking care of the ball and allowing offensive rebounds."

The Jayhawks (13-4, 2-0) cashed 18 CU turnovers in for 25 points and won the rebounding battle 31-21.

"We always seem to struggle out here," said Bill Self, who is 6-0 at the Coors Events Center as KU's head coach. "We made some shots to separate ourselves in the second half. Their zone messed us up even though we practiced a lot against it."

CU played with great intensity in the first half but trailed 34-27 after failing to make a field goal over the

final 7:37.

The nearly 10-minute drought didn't end until Austin Dufault's basket with 17:40 remaining in the game.

Dwight Thorne made that final basket by the home team in the first half as part of a 10-0 run that gave the Buffs a 22-17 lead.

"It shows we can stay with anybody," freshman forward Trey Eckloff said. "If we can stay with these guys, there aren't many other teams we couldn't stay with."

KU answered with an 11-0 run capped with a Sherron Collins 3-pointer that came after an offensive rebound and gave the Jayhawks a 30-23 lead. The junior point guard finished with 18 points, seven assists and two turnovers.

Meanwhile, CU freshman point guard Nate Tomlinson did not score (0-for-2 from the field) with seven turnovers and one assist.

"I just had a terrible game and I take a lot of responsibility for this loss," Tomlinson said.

The Buffs (8-8, 0-2) — who shot over 50 percent from the field throughout non-conference play and ranked among the nation's top 15 shooting teams — were 16-for-43 (37.2 percent) against KU after shooting 37 percent (20-for-54) at Missouri.

Defensively, the Buffs allowed the Jayhawks to shoot 61.4 percent and the Tigers 63.3 percent.

Back to the video and weight rooms for Bzdelik and his baby-faced roster.

"We've got a chance to win a couple games," Bzdelik said. "I shouldn't say a couple, we've got a chance to win some games."



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Eckloff gets valuable minutes

Buff freshman leads team in rebounding vs. KU

By Ryan Thorburn
Sunday, January 18, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — It was Trey Eckloff's turn to get some experience and confidence during another Big 12 beating for Colorado.

The 6-foot-9 freshman forward logged a career-high 25 minutes of physical playing time during CU's 73-56 loss to Kansas on Saturday at the Coors Events Center.

Eckloff led the Buffs with six rebounds and also had three points, two assists and a block while trying to hold his own with KU's Cole Aldrich.

"Coming off a season where he was a significant presence on a national championship team and now has another year of experience under his belt, he's a great competitor," Eckloff said of the 6-11, 245-pound Aldrich, who finished with 15 points on 6-for-6 shooting with 10 rebounds and three blocks. "His level of talent is far beyond everyone else we have played so far."

CU was out-rebounded 31-21, and Eckloff was guilty of not boxing out on a couple of KU's nine offensive rebounds.

"Obviously I made some mistakes," Eckloff said. "But I think we could go deep into the season before we find a big man as physical and overall skilled as him. It was a great learning experience for me to play against someone of his caliber."

Meanwhile, Casey Crawford -- the 6-9 forward CU coaches bragged about last season when he was redshirting -- played three minutes with one turnover, one foul and one missed shot.

During the 107-62 loss at Missouri, Ryan Kelley scored 19 points in 19 minutes after only playing a total of 36 minutes all season.

Against KU the freshman guard scored seven points in 10 minutes of action.

Higgins streaking

at the line again

If only more aspects of the CU program were as close to perfection as Cory Higgins is at the foul line.

The sophomore guard shrugged off the end of his Big 12 and CU record streak for consecutive free throws made (45) at Missouri by starting a new one.

After making his last six free throws in Columbia and going 12-for-12 at the line on Saturday, Higgins' current streak for consecutive free throws made is 18.

Higgins, who led all scorers with 20 points, has made 63 of his last 64 foul shots and 102 of 119 on the season.

True 'road' win

Kansas picked up its first official road victory of the season, although at least half of the 10,212 in attendance at the Coors Events Center were card-carrying members of Jayhawks Nation.

Bill Self's team lost at Arizona (84-67) and Michigan State (75-62) during non-conference play. KU also lost to Syracuse (89-81 OT) and UMass (61-60) on neutral courts.

"There had to be about 6,000 KU fans here. Remarkable," Self said. "It was a beautiful day for travel. Tickets were \$30, plus I guess they had to buy a ticket-pack; that shows the dedication of the fans."

Notable

KU has won the last 12 meetings and 39 of 40. The Jayhawks lead the all-time series 116-39, including a 23-7 edge at the Coors Events Center and a 24-1 mark since the formation of the Big 12. ... CU, thanks in large part to Higgins (12-for-12), shot 82.6 percent (19-for-23) from the line while KU finished just 53.6 percent (10-for-19).



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cu basketball

Jayhawks thump CU again

Sizzling second-half shooting turns close game into a rout

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 01/18/2009 12:30:00 AM MST

Updated: 01/18/2009 12:53:29 AM MST



Tyshawn Taylor of Kansas goes up high for an alley-oop jam in the second half while Colorado's Austin Dufault (33) and Trey Eckloff try to defend. (Galen Nathanson, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — A day after complaining to reporters that the Colorado men's basketball program would never be on a level playing field with other Big 12 Conference schools until it gets more facility upgrades and a strength-and-conditioning expert, Buffaloes coach Jeff Bzdelik sounded less frustrated and more optimistic about the future Saturday after his team played well in spurts against Kansas.

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But in the end, Colorado (8-8, 0-2 Big 12) lost 73-56 while shooting 37.2 percent with 18 turnovers. So it wasn't like Bzdelik was ready to throw a party or anything.

"When I leave here, I'm going to find a treadmill and run for an hour," Bzdelik said during his postgame news conference. "We're young. We're going to take our lumps. Kansas is a top-tier team in this league. We've got a chance to win some games. . . . My staff has gotten me some stress balls."

A Coors Events Center crowd of 10,212 was a season high and appeared equally divided among CU and Kansas fans, including one Jayhawks supporter who held up a poster that read:

"Welcome to Allen Fieldhouse."

But Colorado, getting 20 points from sophomore guard Cory Higgins, did quiet the KU fans for a spell. CU led by as many as five points in the first half. And after trailing 34-27 at halftime, the Buffs scored the first five points after the break. But as Kansas seems to do without much effort, the Jayhawks turned on the jets and answered every challenge with a run.

The Jayhawks finished the first half with a 15-4 spurt. And after Colorado pulled to within two points in the early minutes of the second half, Kansas converted turnovers into layups and went on an 18-4 run, making everything that followed inconsequential.

"We always seem to struggle out here," said Kansas coach Bill Self, who returned only one of

his top seven players from last season. That returnee, junior guard Sherron Collins, scored 18 points and dished out seven assists in his new role of point guard and caretaker for a slew of newcomers.

Kansas (13-4, 2-0) also committed 18 turnovers. At times, the Jayhawks struggled to recognize CU's switching to 1-3-1 and 2-3 zones. But through the offensive sloppiness, Kansas' annoying man-to-man defense remained a constant.

The Buffs made only a third of their shots in the second half. Meanwhile, Kansas enjoyed a 61.4-percent shooting effort, including a blistering 69.6 percent after halftime.

"We competed a lot more (than in a 107-62 loss Wednesday at Missouri)," Higgins said. "But it's the same old things — taking care of the ball and offensive rebounds."

If nothing else, Colorado may have found a center. Trey Eckloff, a 6-foot-9 freshman from Cherry Creek High School, came off the bench and played a season-high 25 minutes, getting three points and a team-best six rebounds. Eckloff also got a whale of an indoctrination from 6-11, 245-pound sophomore Cole Aldrich (15 points, 10 rebounds).

"His level of talent is just yards beyond anyone else we've played," Eckloff said of Aldrich. "It's a great learning experience for me."

KANSAS (13-4, 2-0 BIG 12)

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Aldrich 6-6 3-6 15, Collins 5-14 4-4 18,
Morningstar 1-2 0-1 2, Taylor 6-7 1-2 14, Little
0-0 0-0 0, Teahan 0-1 0-0 0, Reed 4-6 0-1 11,
Mark.Morris 1-3 1-2 3, Marc.Morris 4-5 1-3 10.
Totals 27-44 10-19 73.

COLORADO (8-8, 0-2)

Jackson-Wilson 3-5 0-0 6, Dufault 4-9 2-4 10,
Tomlinson 0-2 0-0 0, Higgins 3-8 12-12 20,
Thorne II 4-9 1-1 10, Kelley 1-4 4-4 7, Crawford
0-1 0-0 0, Eckloff 1-5 0-2 3. **Totals 16-43 19-
23 56. Kansas 34-27. 3-point goals —
Kansas 9-17 (Collins 4-7, Reed 3-5, Marc.
Morris 1-1, Taylor 1-2, Mark.Morris 0-1,
Teahan 0-1), CU 5-16 (Higgins 2-4, Eckloff
1-2, Thorne II 1-3, Kelley 1-3, Crawford 0-1,
Tomlinson 0-1, Dufault 0-2). Fouled out —
None. Rebounds — Kansas 31 (Aldrich 10),
CU 21 (Eckloff 6). Assists — Kansas 19
(Collins 7), CU 8 (Thorne II 3). Total fouls —
KU 22, CU 20. A — 10,212.**

Halftime —

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Longmont, Colorado
Friday, January 23, 2009

Publish Date: 1/18/2009

Familiar script

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Little is changing with Colorado men's basketball.

The Buffaloes still can't come close to Kansas, as evidenced by Saturday's 73-56 loss to the Jayhawks in Boulder. The announced Coors Events Center crowd of 10,212 must have included 50 percent Kansas fans, another normality whenever the Jayhawks visit. And the Buffs still can't rebound or take care of the ball well enough to beat good teams, let alone the defending national champions.

New day, same story.

After its conclusion, coach Jeff Bzdelik basically rehashed the same lines he's used for weeks to describe his team's plight. You can't criticize the coach for that, though, because there appears to be little else for him to say. But improvement is slow to come. Worse, after CU shot almost 49 percent in non-conference games, its first two Big 12 opponents have held the Buffs to 37 percent from the field.

"Obviously in order to have a chance for success in basketball, the first two criteria are to value the possession of the basketball and yield nothing easy for the opponents," he said. "Those are two areas that our young basketball team has not quite done yet.

"We need to understand that we need to build this program from the ground up. We are going to take some lumps along the way. ... We are just not there yet."

Wherever "there" is is someplace Kansas is much closer to than CU. But Kansas is also young, rebuilding after losing all five starters off last year's national title winner. Besides junior point guard Sherron Collins, who had 18 points and seven assists, its key Saturday players were all freshmen and sophomores.

When the Buffs (8-8, 0-2 Big 12) were within 34-32 early in the second half, Kansas' youth knew what to do. The Jayhawks (13-4, 2-0) immediately went on an 18-4 run, eventually built a 21-point lead, and CU never threatened again. The Jayhawks shot 70 percent in the second half.

Kansas grabbed 31 rebounds to CU's 21. Freshman reserve forward Trey Eckloff led the Buffs with six. He played a season-most 25 minutes and was active.

Forward Casey Crawford, who began 2008-09 as a starter, played only three



Colorado's Nate Tomlinson is tripped up by Kansas' Cole Aldrich at Coors Events Center in Boulder on Saturday. Tomlinson had one assist, seven turnovers and no points in the Buffs' loss to the defending national champions.

Joshua Buck/Times-Call

KANSAS 73, COLORADO 56

KANSAS (13-4, 2-0)

Aldrich 6-6 3-6 15, Collins 5-14 4-4 18, Morningstar 1-2 0-1 2, Taylor 6-7 1-2 14, Little 0-0 0-0 0, Teahan 0-1 0-0 0, Reed 4-6 0-1 11, Markieff Morris 1-3 1-2 3, Marcus Morris 4-5 1-3 10, Releford 0-0 0-0 0, Appleton 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 27-44 10-19 73.

COLORADO (8-8 0-2)

Jackson-Wilson 3-5 0-0 6, Dufault 4-9 2-4 10, Tomlinson 0-2 0-0 0, Higgins 3-8 12-12 20, Thorne 4-9 1-1 10, Kelley 1-4 4-4 7, Crawford 0-1 0-0 0, Eckloff 1-5 0-2 3. Totals 16-43 19-23 56.

Halftime—Kansas 34-27. 3-Point

minutes off CU's bench, none in the second half. Crawford has not scored in either Big 12 game.

Both teams committed 18 turnovers, but Kansas had 19 assists; CU had eight. Point guard Nate Tomlinson finished with no points, one assist and seven turnovers.

"I just had a terrible game," Tomlinson said. "I definitely take a very big responsibility (for) this game, this loss."

The Buffs entered last in the Big 12 in rebounding margin, and next to last in turnover margin.

Trying to solve the rebounding woes, Bzdelik called his former boss from his time with the NBA's Washington Bullets, Wes Unseld, one of the best rebounders in NBA history. Bzdelik asked what can be done. "We're teaching his technique," Bzdelik said. "We need his body."

Bzdelik also had six of his players lift weights after the game. He said it was not a punitive measure, rather, one of necessity. The other half will lift today as the team stresses strength.

"We need to keep getting stronger and learn how to physically hold our ground under the boards," Bzdelik said.

The notion it played with Kansas for around 25 minutes bolsters CU's hopes today. CU even led 22-17 midway through the first half. Actually, there was almost a stubborn defiance among the Buffs, who said Kansas did not win Saturday's game as much as they lost it.

"Give them their dues, but I would not say they greatly outplayed us," Eckloff said. "It was mistakes we made ourselves that lost the game."

"If we can stay with these guys, there aren't too many teams we can't stay with. It's just mistakes we made that are correctable. We have to buckle down and fix those." Sooner would be better than later.

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

Goals—Kansas 9-17 (Collins 4-7, Reed 3-5, Taylor 1-2, Marcus Morris 1-1, Markieff Morris 0-1 Teahan 0-1), CU 5-16 (Higgins 2-4, Thorne 1-3, Kelley 1-3, Eckloff 1-2, Dufault 0-2, Tomlinson 0-1, Crawford 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds— Kansas 31 (Aldrich 10), CU 21 (Eckloff 6). Assists— Kansas 19 (Collins 7), CU 8 (Thorne 3). Total Fouls— Kansas 22, CU 20. Technicals—none. A—10,212.
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Longmont, Colorado
Friday, January 23, 2009

Publish Date: 1/18/2009

Eckloff earning more time for young Buffs

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Trey Eckloff is getting better.

Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik didn't have to say it Saturday, following CU's 73-56 loss to Kansas. It was clear by the freshman forward's work on the floor. He led the Buffs with six rebounds, and he was active.

Bzdelik has said in recent days there are some freshmen on the team whose work in practice and understanding of the offense are starting to earn them more playing time. Eckloff is one. He played 17 minutes in Wednesday's loss at Missouri, and followed that with a season-most 25 Saturday against Kansas.

Whether Eckloff remains part of the rotation will be seen. Bzdelik sounds encouraged with what he's doing, though, even crediting Eckloff with trying, unsuccessfully, to draw a charge or two.

"He battled and he learned," Bzdelik said. "He did not block off a couple of times."

Eckloff matched up with Kansas' 6-foot-11 center Cole Aldrich on a few occasions. Aldrich finished with 15 points on 6-for-6 shooting and 10 rebounds, so it was not like anyone really slowed him. But Eckloff thought the experience of going against Aldrich will be valuable.

"His level of talent is far beyond everyone else we have played so far," Eckloff said.

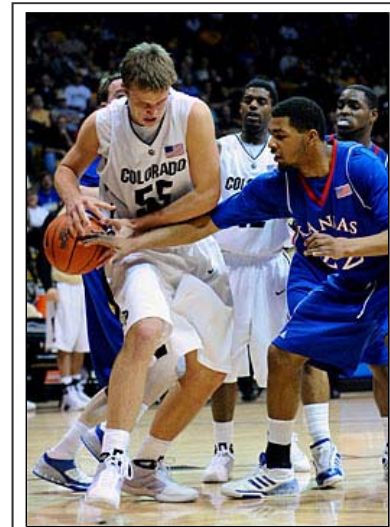
KANSAS FANS: As usual, about half of the Coors Events Center was in blue with Kansas in town. The announced attendance was 10,212.

"There had to be about 6,000 KU fans here, remarkable," Kansas coach Bill Self said. "It was a beautiful day to travel. Tickets were \$30, plus I guess they had to buy a ticket-pack. That shows the dedication of the fans."

General admission tickets at CUbuffs.com for next Saturday's home game against Kansas State were going for \$10 on Saturday night.

TIP-INS: CU has lost 39 of its past 40 games with Kansas. ... Cory Higgins has hit 63 of his past 64 free throws. He went 12-for-12 Saturday. He finished with 20 points, leading CU in scoring for the 10th time this season. ... CU was outscored 32-16 in the paint, 25-12 off turnovers and its bench 24-10 by Kansas' bench.

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.



Colorado's Trey Eckloff nearly loses a rebound as Kansas' Marcus Morris gets a hand in at Coors Events Center in Boulder on Saturday. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**



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BREAKING NEWS: ['Worst of the worst' gets 60 years for 1996 rape](#)

By B.G. Brooks, Rocky Mountain News (Contact)

Published January 17, 2009 at 3:57 p.m.

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BOULDER — Here's how comfy the Kansas men's basketball team has become when visiting the University of Colorado's Coors Events Center: Some enterprising Jayhawks fans who annually contribute to CU's largest home crowd of the season have begun wearing T-shirts proclaiming the Buffaloes' homecourt as "Allen Fieldhouse West."

No debating that in seasons past, and neither will there be after Saturday, when in the final two minutes of the game, Jayhawks fans began chanting, "This is our house, this is our house."

And it was. Again.

Contented, confident KU, the defending national champion, blistered CU 73-56 before a season-high 10,212 at the Events Center, beating the Buffs for the sixth consecutive time in Boulder and the 46th time in their past 49 meetings.

CU, falling to 8-8 overall and 0-2 in the Big 12 Conference, succumbed to sloppy ball-handling (18 turnovers), weak rebounding (KU won the boards 31-21) and decisive Jayhawks runs in both halves (13-1 in the first, 16-4 in the second).

Buffs coach Jeff Bzdelik said his young team, which lost its conference opener by 45 points Wednesday night at Missouri, still hasn't learned to "value every possession and yield nothing easy."

The Buffs did neither, allowing the Jayhawks 37 points off turnovers (25 points) and second-chance baskets (12 points). Plus, Kansas shot 69.6 percent (16-for-23) from the floor in the second half.

"We made some shots to separate ourselves in the second half," Jayhawks coach Bill Self said. "We shoot great from the field, but not from the free-throw line (10-for-19 overall)."

But Kansas (13-4, 2-0) didn't really need a stellar afternoon at the line to beat CU. Four Jayhawks players, led by Sherron Collins with 18, reached double figures in scoring, and Cory Higgins (20) was CU's only consistent offensive threat.

And Higgins got more than half his total (12) from the foul line. He made all 12 of his attempts Saturday, and he has made 63 of his past 64 free throws.

"We competed a lot more (than at Missouri), but it's the same old things every game — taking care of the ball and offensive rebounds," Higgins said.

The Buffs enjoyed their moment of first-half glory after a three-point play by junior guard Dwight Thorne II gave them a five-point lead (22-17), their largest of the game.

The Jayhawks were neither impressed nor bothered. After Thorne's layup and free throw with 7:37 left in the half, CU didn't make another field goal before intermission.

Kansas immediately launched a 13-1 run to take a 30-23 advantage — that was its largest advantage of the half — and built it to 34-25 before Higgins hit two free throws in the final minute to push Kansas ahead 34-27 at intermission.

Higgins was the Buffs' only offense in the first 20 minutes. But of his 12 first-half points, 10 were scored at the free-throw line. He was one point off the school record for free throws made in a half.

None of Higgins' teammates could manage more than five first-half points (Thorne and Austin Dufault finished with 10 each), and in addition to CU's offensive problems to close out the half, point guard Nate Tomlinson never got into a rhythm.

He committed half the Buffs' 12 first-half turnovers while not registering an assist or scoring. He committed only one more turnover and picked up one assist in the second half, but he ended the game scoreless.

"I just had a terrible game and take responsibility for this loss," he said.

Kansas, meanwhile, benefited from 15 first-half points by Collins, who hit three of his five three-point attempts and all four of his free throws. The Jayhawks shot 52.4 percent from the floor to start the game, while the Buffs managed only 43.8 percent and got worse in the second half (33.3).

CU scored the first five points of the second half to close to 34-32 before freshman Marcus Morris, whose twin brother Markieff is a Jayhawks freshman, hit a trey from the right wing to push Kansas to 37-32.

On the Jayhawks' next possession, freshman Tyshawn Taylor completed Collins' high lob pass with a soft lay-in and a free throw, and Kansas went up 40-32. Collins then drained a three-pointer, sending the feeling-right-at-home visitors ahead 43-32.

The Jayhawks clearly were in their comfort zone, and the Buffs still searching for theirs. More careless ball-handling by CU helped Kansas construct a 52-36 advantage with about eight minutes to play, and

the Jayhawks cruised from there, leading by as many as 20 (65-45) in the final four minutes.

"We need to understand that we need to build this program from the ground up," Bzdelik said. "We're going to take some lumps along the way. It's hard to look at the box score; we're just not there yet."

The Buffs play at Texas Tech Tuesday night, and the Jayhawks entertain Texas A&M on Monday night at Allen Fieldhouse in Lawrence, Kan.

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