



Bufs' Big 12 road drought hits three years

CU misses good chance to pick up win against struggling Texas Tech team

By Ryan Thorburn

Tuesday, January 20, 2009

LUBBOCK, Texas — LUBBOCK, Texas -- Nate Tomlinson and the rest of the freshmen are only 0-2 in Big 12 road games.

But that doesn't mean the young Bufs aren't feeling the burden of the program's 23-game losing streak in conference road games.

"I heard someone say we haven't won for two years or something like that on the road," Tomlinson said.

Actually -- after Colorado's 63-55 loss to Texas Tech on Tuesday night at United Spirit Arena -- today marks the third anniversary of the Bufs' last road triumph in Big 12 play.

"We're looking for one. I thought we had one tonight," Tomlinson said. "Got a few rough calls down the stretch there. It happens."

Even though both teams were whistled for 20 fouls, the theme in the visitors' locker room from the head coach on down was that the Bufs got a bad whistle.

The call that seemed to have Jeff Bzdelik particularly upset was a charge against Austin Dufault with 3:49 remaining and the score tied 49-49.

Nick Okorie made a jumper after the change of possession to give Texas Tech the lead.

"There was a call that was in the balance," Bzdelik said when asked how the Red Raiders were able to close the game with a 12-4 run following a basket by Cory Higgins that tied the score 51-51 with 2:57 remaining. "We missed an open shot, they made one ... fine line."

Texas Tech's Mike Singletary hit the Bufs like former Chicago Bears middle linebacker Mike Singletary. The 6-5 sophomore scored his team's final 12 points to finish with a team-high 20 points and nine rebounds.

Per usual, Higgins led CU with 21 points and seven rebounds. But the sophomore shooting guard has now experienced 18 losses and not a single win on the road in the Big 12.

"I thought we did almost all we could," Higgins said. "I think we got the short end of the stick on some of those calls and it really hurt us."

Really, the officiating is to blame?

"We can't put it on the referees. We had way too many turnovers and got out-rebounded again," Higgins said. "And ultimately it's on us."

Ding, ding, ding. Correct answer.

The Buffs turned the ball over 20 times and allowed 12 offensive rebounds, a combination of mistakes that led directly to 29 Texas Tech points.

"Our guys played hard," Bzdelik said. "It's the same stuff with us."

Tomlinson -- who had scored a total of two points with 12 turnovers and four assists in Big 12 play entering the second half -- made 3-pointers to tie the score at 34-34 and 44-44.

But Singletary, who Pat Knight called out before the game as a role player who needed to become a leader, made all of the offensive plays during crunch time as Texas Tech outscored CU 39-6 in points off the bench.

"He made some big plays down the stretch," Thorne said. "He was attacking and he made his free throws."

The Buffs last Big 12 road victory was an 80-78 overtime decision on Jan. 21, 2006, at Oklahoma State.

Texas Tech 63, Colorado 55

COLORADO

FG FT Reb

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

Jkn-Wlsn 29 1-2 0-0 1-3 2 5 2

Dufault 30 2-7 0-1 0-3 1 4 4

Tmlnsn 37 3-8 0-0 1-4 1 1 9

Higgins 38 7-13 7-8 2-7 6 2 21

Thorne II 36 5-11 1-2 0-2 2 1 13

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

Knutson 18 0-4 2-2 1-2 1 3 2

Crawford 3 0-1 0-0 0-1 0 1 0

Eckloff 6 2-2 0-2 0-2 0 3 4

Totals 200 20-49 10-15 8-30 13 20 55

Percentages: FG .408, FT .667.

3-Point Goals: 5-15, .333 (Tomlinson 3-5, Thorne II 2-5, Dufault 0-1, Knutson 0-2, Higgins 0-2).

Team Rebounds: 4.

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

Turnovers: 20 (Jackson-Wilson 5, Dufault 5, Higgins 3, Tomlinson 2, Knutson 2, Thorne II, Crawford).

Steals: 14 (Tomlinson 4, Higgins 3, Jackson-Wilson 2, Knutson 2, Thorne II, Dufault, Crawford).

Technical Fouls: None.

TEXAS TECH FG FT Reb

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

Roberts 22 3-6 0-0 1-5 2 4 6

Prince 21 1-2 0-0 1-3 0 4 2

Suljagic 3 0-0 0-0 1-1 0 1 0

Voskuil 23 1-1 0-0 0-0 0 2 3

Robrsn 35 5-10 1-1 0-2 6 0 13

Craig 20 1-7 0-0 0-2 0 2 3

Ray 3 0-0 0-0 0-1 0 0 0

Lwdwsk 14 1-5 2-3 1-5 1 1 4

Okorie 33 3-9 4-4 0-3 2 3 10

Chdrvc 4 1-1 0-0 1-2 0 1 2

Sngltry 22 7-12 6-12 4-9 1 2 20

Totals 200 23-53 13-20 12-37 12 20 63

Percentages: FG .434, FT .650.

3-Point Goals: 4-15, .267 (Roberson 2-7, Voskuil 1-1, Craig 1-4, Okorie 0-3).

Team Rebounds: 4.

Blocked Shots: 5 (Prince 2, Roberts 2, Singletary).

Turnovers: 19 (Singletary 4, Roberson 3, Cohadarevic 3, Okorie 2, Suljagic 2, Lewandowski 2, Craig, Prince, Voskuil).

Steals: 10 (Okorie 3, Prince 2, Craig 2, Lewandowski 2, Singletary).

Technical Fouls: None.

Colorado 23 32--55

Texas Tech 27 36--63

A -- 9,379.

Officials -- Tom O'Neill, Gerry Pollard, Doug Shows.



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Tomlinson tallies key 3-pointers

By Ryan Thorburn

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LUBBOCK, Texas — The sparse crowd at the United Spirit Center had their "guns up" on Tuesday night after Texas Tech's first Big 12 victory of the season.

But at least Colorado fired back during its 63-55 loss to the Red Raiders.

Nate Tomlinson -- who had scored a total of only two points and taken just three shots during the lopsided losses to Missouri (107-62) and Kansas (73-56) -- made three 3-pointers in the second half to keep the Buffs in the game.

The freshman point guard from Sydney buried shots from behind the arc to tie the score 34-34, cut CU's deficit to 42-41 and tie the score again at 44-44.

Welcome back, mate!

"I was just trying to win. If I needed to shoot, I needed to shoot," Tomlinson said. "It doesn't feel good because we lost."

Tomlinson missed a 3-pointer with just more than two minutes remaining and the Buffs trailing 53-51. Dwight Thorne and Austin Dufault each missed attempts from behind the arc in the final minute.

Tomlinson had just one assist and two of CU's 20 turnovers but he also had a career-high four steals and four rebounds in 37 minutes.

"You're going to see that from us throughout the season. That's a given from us now," Tomlinson said of the effort. "We've made a commitment to ourselves that we're going to play hard for 40 minutes. That's never going to change."

Higgins shines again

Cory Higgins led the Buffs with 21 points and seven rebounds. It marked the 11th time the sophomore guard has been the top Buff in both categories this season.

"In my mind he's developing into one of the top players in this conference," CU head coach Jeff Bzdelik said. "He's consistent and scores in a variety of ways. He plays an entire game."

Higgins also led CU with six assists, made three steals and was 7-for-8 at the free-throw line. Levi Knutson was 2-for-2 at the stripe but he was shooting the free throws for Higgins after he left the game briefly due to a collision with Michael Prince.

The rest of the team was just 1-for-5 at the stripe with three misses coming on the front end of one-and-one situations.

Bufs homecoming

CU is sponsoring "Homecoming Weekend" this Friday and Saturday for Bufs basketball alumni. Bzdelik started the event last season.

A reception will be held Friday night and former CU players will also have a chance to tour the refurbished facilities and attend a pregame event with the Buff Club before Saturday's 4 p.m. tipoff against Kansas State.

By the numbers

0-4 -- CU's record in true road games this season.

64 -- Turnovers the Bufs have committed in three conference games.

228 -- CU's RPI entering Tuesday's game, easily the lowest in the Big 12 behind Iowa State (110) and Texas Tech (103).

Notable

CU led the all-time series 16-11, including a 6-6 record in Lubbock. Texas Tech had won five of the previous six meetings. ... Dwight Thorne scored 13 points and has scored in double figures nine times over the last 11 games. ... The Bufs are 2-8 when trailing at halftime. ... CU's 14 steals were the most since the 2005-06 season.



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