

Bufs facing more uptempo

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 02/23/2009 12:01:09 PM MST

Updated: 02/23/2009 12:02:17 PM MST

Colorado won't have much time to catch its breath.

After getting chased around Saturday in a 66-53 loss to Missouri, Jeff Bzdelik's men's basketball team hosts Oklahoma State in an 8:30 p.m. matchup Wednesday. The Tigers and Cowboys are the most fast-paced teams in the Big 12 Conference. Both employ full-court pressure on defense and love to run at the other end.

"They're very similar to Missouri in the way they play," Bzdelik said when asked about Oklahoma State during today's Big 12 coaches teleconference. "The fact that we just played Missouri, the prep (work) will be pretty much the same.

"Oklahoma State won't want to guard us (in the half court)," he explained. "They'll probably look to scramble the game. They attack the rim well, especially (Byron) Eaton."

Considering Colorado (9-17, 1-11 Big 12) never

led against Missouri, some Bufs fans must wonder if facing another uptempo team is a good thing or bad.

Bzdelik drew some consolation in the fact that CU committed fewer turnovers (17) than Missouri (18). In a Jan. 14 meeting at Missouri, Colorado was blitzed 107-62.

"I think we're getting better (in handling the full-court trap)," Bzdelik said. "We're just not strong enough or tough enough. Is that a result of being young and not as (physically) strong as our opponents? Yeah. But also, I can't accept that. We need to be pushing through."

After arriving from the University of Massachusetts, first-year Oklahoma State coach Travis Ford immediately ditched the pattern offense taught by Eddie Sutton and Sean Sutton. A Kentucky native, Ford played at the University of Kentucky for Rick Pitino after beginning his college career at Missouri.

Ford certainly coaches more like Pitino than former Missouri coach Norm Stewart.

"You have to be able to catch the ball and make plays, go by somebody and make good decisions," Bzdelik said, when asked about breaking the press. "You have to make sure passes. You have to make sure catches. You have to be strong with the ball. All these little things add up.

"You have to be tougher. We took about five or six charges in that game. So we're getting better

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in that regard. But we could have taken two or three more."

Oklahoma State (17-9, 6-6 Big 12) is riding a three-game winning streak. Sophomore guard James Anderson has scored 20 or more points in his past four games.

But Ford is leery.

"Texas beats us by 25 or 30 (99-74) and then Colorado takes Texas into overtime, so we have our hands more than full come Wednesday night (in Boulder)," Ford said Monday on the teleconference. "This is a very hungry Colorado team."

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