



Bufs' late rally falls short against Cornhuskers

By Ryan Thorburn

Wednesday, February 4, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — It wasn't as painful or improbable as Alex Henery's 57-yard field goal.

But for the 4,344 diehards who stayed up late with the Buffs on Wednesday night, Colorado's 55-53 loss to Nebraska at the Coors Events Center was a pretty good kick to the gut.

Jeff Bzdelik questioned his young team's toughness after the Buffs fell to 9-12 overall and 1-6 in the Big 12.

"We're not strong enough, we're not tough enough," Bzdelik said after CU was out-rebounded 30-22 by the small Nebraska lineup. "I'm not into moral victories. I know some people are around here are. I'm not."

After a strong second-half performance during Saturday's 66-61 loss at Kansas it looked like the Buffs were headed for a breakthrough.

But suddenly it's turning into another long week for the CU men's basketball program.

Off the court, walk-on Andrew Zehnder was arrested Tuesday on suspicion of third-degree burglary and criminal mischief charges and suspended from the team indefinitely.

On the court, the scholarship players continued their trend of playing well in spurts before letting another potential win slip away with a missed free throw here or a bad turnover there.

"We're not quite tough enough nor strong enough to finish around the rim," Bzdelik lamented. "We got to the rim."

Cory Higgins had a chance to tie the score but missed a difficult shot in the paint with three seconds left.

Thanks to seven missed free throws by Nebraska in the final 1:03, the Buffs were almost able to erase a 46-37 deficit.

A 3-pointer by Dwight Thorne with 15.2 seconds left closed the gap to 54-53.

"I thought we had a chance to win towards the end," Thorne said after scoring a game-high 21 points on 7-for-13 shooting.

CU had one last chance when Sek Henry missed a pair of free throws with 2.6 seconds remaining, but Levi Knutson's desperation shot from about 80 feet was just off line.

"It's hard to win up here," Nebraska head coach Doc Sadler said. "Jeff's team is getting better each game."

Nebraska led the Big 12 in scoring defense (58.9 ppg) entering the game and had forced opponents into 20 or more turnover nine times this season.

The Buffs only turned the ball over 13 times but the Huskers cashed them in for 10 key points. The visitors also scored 10 points off of seven offensive rebounds.

Thorne scored CU's first five points of the second half and gave his team a 30-28 lead on a 3-pointer with 15:19 remaining.

The Huskers' first field goal of the half, a layup by Ryan Anderson with 13:18 remaining, tied the score and started a 9-0 run by the visitors that gave them a seven-point lead.

Nebraska took its largest lead (46-37) on a 3-pointer by Sek with 4:20 left.

"They play extremely hard, they're well coached and their outside defense is probably the best we played against this year," CU forward Austin Dufault said. "We had a lot of open looks but it seemed like they weren't falling. It felt like one of those nights where we were a little off I guess."

The week doesn't get any easier for CU with No. 2 Oklahoma up next on Saturday in Norman.

Notable

Ryan Kelley (knee) has been cleared to return to practice today and will make the trip with the Buffs to Oklahoma. ... Nebraska's bench outscored CU's reserves 25-6. ... Knutson and Higgins led the Buffs with six rebounds each. ... CU was 6-for-7 at the line but Dufault missed the front end of a one-on-one in crunch time. The Huskers were 13-for-24 at the stripe. ... After hitting the end of the recruiting trail Dan Hawkins took in the first half hoping the basketball team could avenge the football team's 40-31 loss in Lincoln last November, a game that turned on Henery's long field goal.

Nebraska 55, Colorado 53 NEBRASKA

FG FT Reb

Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PT

Balham 9 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 2 0

Harley 28 3-6 5-6 1-6 2 2 12

Henry 33 2-6 0-2 0-5 4 3 6

Dagndro 28 3-4 1-3 0-3 2 2 7

Miller 28 1-4 2-4 0-3 2 2 5

Richrdsn 13 1-3 1-1 1-3 0 1 3

Velander 17 1-4 1-2 1-1 3 2 4

McCray 13 3-3 0-0 0-0 0 1 6

Salomon 7 0-0 0-0 1-1 0 0 0

Anderson 24 4-7 3-6 2-5 2 0 12

Totals 200 18-38 13-24 7-30 15 15 55

Percentages: FG .474, FT .542.

3-Point Goals: 6-16, .375 (Henry 2-5, Harley 1-1, Anderson 1-2, Miller 1-3, Velander 1-4, Richardson 0-1).

Team Rebounds: 3.

Blocked Shots: 3 (Dagunduro, Salomon, McCray).

Turnovers: 18 (Velander 4, Richardson 3, Dagunduro 3, Miller 2, Anderson, McCray, Harley, Henry, Balham).

Steals: 5 (Miller 2, Dagunduro, Velander, Harley).

Technical Fouls: None.

COLORADO

FG FT Reb

Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PT

Jkn-Wsn 26 0-2 0-0 0-4 2 4 0

Dufault 32 3-8 0-1 0-4 1 1 6

Tmlnsn 38 1-3 2-2 0-1 1 3 5

Higgins 39 6-12 2-2 1-6 4 3 15

Thorne II 39 7-13 2-2 0-0 0 2 21

Coney 2 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 2 0

Knutson 18 2-4 0-0 0-6 3 4 4

Eckloff 6 1-1 0-0 0-0 0 1 2

Totals 200 20-44 6-7 2-22 11 20 53

Percentages: FG .455, FT .857.

3-Point Goals: 7-18, .389 (Thorne II 5-8, Tomlinson 1-2, Higgins 1-3, Coney 0-1, Dufault 0-2, Knutson 0-2).

Team Rebounds: 1.

Blocked Shots: 4 (Jackson-Wilson, Dufault, Higgins, Thorne II).

Turnovers: 13 (Higgins 4, Tomlinson 3, Thorne II, Dufault, Eckloff, Jackson-Wilson).

Steals: 5 (Thorne II 2, Higgins 2, Knutson).

Technical Fouls: None.

Nebraska 27 28--55

Colorado 25 28--53

A--4,344.

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college basketball

Bufs just "a little bit off"

Nebraska 55, CU 53

By Colin Chmielewski
Special to The Denver Post

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Cory Higgins drives to the basket while being guarded by Nebraska's Cookie Miller. Higgins finished with 15 points in the Bufs' loss. (Kasia Broussalian, Boulder Daily Camera)

Events Center could only daydream of games like those.

In a Big 12 matchup with far fewer fans and even less fireworks, the Buffaloes (9-12, 1-6 Big 12) suffered through their lowest offensive output of the conference season, falling to the Cornhuskers 55-53.

"They're a tough, scrappy team," CU junior Dwight Thorne said. "It just didn't go our way at the end."

CU appeared lethargic for most of the first 38 minutes, before 3-pointers by Nate Tomlinson and Thorne, who scored a game-high 21 points, cut Nebraska's lead to one with 15 seconds

CU Basketball

[View](#) slide show of Texas-CU men's basketball Feb.

- [14](#) . Visit the CU Stats Page for men's boxscores, Big 12 standings, team leaders and more
- Visit the CU Stats Page for women's boxscores, Big 12 standings, player pages and more
- Visit Tom Kensler's All Things Bufs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at
- CU sports

BOULDER — On the football field this decade, the University of Colorado has twice scored more than 60 points in wins over rival Nebraska. Wednesday night, basketball fans at the Coors

left. But after two missed free throws by the Huskers, Cory Higgins couldn't convert a driving layup, and then Levi Knutson's desperation heave was off right.

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"I thought we had a chance to (win)," Thorne said. "I thought (Higgins') layup was going in. I think there was a little contact, but the referees left it up to us to make a play, and unfortunately we didn't make the shot."

The Buffs shot 45 percent from the field against what players described as a top-caliber group.

"They play very hard, and their help-side defense is probably the best we've played against this year," freshman forward Austin Dufault said.

After taking its first lead of the game, 30-28, on Thorne's fourth 3-pointer of the game, CU stagnated while the Huskers went on a 9-0 run to take a 37-30 lead with about 10 minutes left.

Despite five straight points by Higgins, who finished with 15, to cut the score to 39-37, CU never got the lead back.

An interference on Jermyl Jackson-Wilson, a missed one-and-one opportunity for Dufault and then ensuing baskets by the Huskers' Steve Harley and Sek Henry gave Nebraska (14-7, 4-4) a 46-37 advantage and just enough cushion to hold off the late surge.

"It was just kind of one of those nights where everything felt a little bit off, I guess," Dufault said.

Harley and Ryan Anderson led the Huskers with 12 points each.

CU also made news off the court as walk-on Andrew Zehnder was suspended indefinitely by athletic director Mike Bohn. Zehnder was arrested by CU-Boulder police for an incident Saturday.

NEBRASKA (14-7, 4-4 BIG 12)

Balham 0-1 0-0 0, Harley 3-6 5-6 12, Henry 2-6 0-2 6, Dagunduro 3-4 1-3 7, Miller 1-4 2-4 5, Richardson 1-3 1-1 3, Velander 1-4 1-2 4, McCray 3-3 0-0 6, Salomon 0-0 0-0 0, Anderson 4-7 3-6 12. **Totals 18-38 13-24 55.**

COLORADO (9-12, 1-6)

Jackson-Wilson 0-2 0-0 0, Dufault 3-8 0-1 6, Tomlinson 1-3 2-2 5, Higgins 6-12 2-2 15, Thorne II 7-13 2-2 21, Coney 0-1 0-0 0, Knutson 2-4 0-0 4, Eckloff 1-1 0-0 2. **Totals 20-44 6-7 53. Nebraska 27-25. 3-point goals — Nebraska 6-16 (Henry 2-5, Harley 1-1, Anderson 1-2, Miller 1-3, Velander 1-4, Richardson 0-1), Colorado 7-18 (Thorne II 5-8, Tomlinson 1-2, Higgins 1-3, Coney 0-1, Dufault 0-2, Knutson 0-2). Fouled out — None. Rebounds — Nebraska 30 (Harley 6), Colorado 22 (Higgins, Knutson 6). Assists — Nebraska 15 (Henry 4), Colorado 11 (Higgins 4). Total fouls — Nebraska 15, Colorado 20. A — 4,344.**

Halftime —

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