



Oklahoma State throttles Colorado

Hot-shooting Cowboys sink Buffs

By Ryan Thorburn

Wednesday, February 25, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — Levi Knutson and Casey Crawford were finally major factors in Colorado's offense.

And they were both miserable after the game.

Despite Knutson's career-high 19 points and Crawford's 14-point comeback performance, the Buffs were blown out by the bubble boys from Stillwater on Wednesday night.

CU's bench — a very weak link throughout the season — outscored Oklahoma State's reserves 38-8.

But Nate Tomlinson (concussion) did not play, Cory Higgins (nine points) and Dwight Thorne (no points) were hardly noticeable, and Austin Dufault (two points, two rebounds) was in foul trouble.

Add 30 points from an unguarded James Anderson to the equation and the Cowboys were able to cruise to a 76-55 victory in front of the 4,288 disappointed diehards who stayed up late to support the last-place Buffs at the Coors Events Center.

"We want to win games," Knutson said after outscoring CU's entire starting five 19-17. "Me and Casey got more minutes than we usually do, but nothing was sweet about that game. We have to have everybody together and stay together."

Anderson was 6-for-8 on 3-pointers and finished with a game-high 10 rebounds to lead the Cowboys (18-9, 7-6).

"First of all, no one was guarding him. You can start there," CU coach Jeff Bzdelik said on the sore subject of Anderson's performance. "He was wide open and very comfortable."

The Buffs (9-18, 1-12) have now lost eight consecutive games for the first time since the 1995-96 season.

"We're just a soft team," Bzdelik said.

Tomlinson is still experiencing symptoms from the concussion he sustained during last Saturday's game against Missouri.

"I felt like there was no way I could have played," said Tomlinson, who was having trouble watching the game under the bright lights just like Oklahoma's Blake Griffin did on Monday when the Sooners

lost to Kansas without the big guy on the end of the bench. “The doctor said it will go off like a light. The headaches will just go away.”

For now Tomlinson is out indefinitely.

Javon Coney made his first career start in Tomlinson’s place and did not score in 27 minutes. The non-scholarship player did lead CU with six rebounds, but OSU won the battle of the boards 38-23.

Knutson — who was 0-for-9 on 3-pointers in Big 12 play and had scored in double figures only once this season with 12 points against Montana — was 3-for-5 from behind the arc.

Crawford, who didn’t play in five of the previous six games and only seven minutes at Iowa State, was 4-for-5 from 3-point range.

“It’s never fun losing. It’s tough going through a season like this,” Crawford said. “But we’re a family, we’re all we have, and we stick together.”

Freshman forward Toby Veal was also in street clothes on the end of the bench due to some complications from having his wisdom teeth pulled out.

Ryan Kelley — who scored 19 of CU’s 26 bench points (the previous season high) during the 107-62 loss at Missouri — added five points in 17 minutes during garbage time against the Pokes.

The Buffs will try to snap a 27-game Big 12 road losing streak on Saturday at Baylor.

“The lack of passion and effort from a great majority of our team was embarrassing,” Bzdelik said. “Even though we haven’t won a lot of games, the great majority of the time this year we have played with effort, passion and commitment to playing the right way. Tonight that was absent from the great majority of our team.

“I know I’m embarrassed and I would hope our team is embarrassed.”



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college basketball

Lifeless effort kills Buffs' first-half rally

OSU 76, CU 55

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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It looks more like a wrestling match on Colorado's home court Wednesday night as CU's Dwight Thorne II, center, fights Terrel Harris, left, and Byron Eaton for a loose ball. (Mark Leffingwell, The Daily Camera)

BOULDER — Never mind for the season — the Colorado men's basketball team can't even get

over the hump during a game.

Trailing the entire way for a third straight outing, the Buffs ran their losing streak to eight straight for the first time since the 1995-96 season, this time falling 76-55 Wednesday to Oklahoma State.

A Coors Events Center crowd of 4,288 watched Colorado (9-18, 1-12 Big 12) pull to within one point in the first half, when a 16-footer by sophomore guard Levi Knutson from the right elbow made it 24-23. But the Buffs missed their next three shots and committed three turnovers. That fueled an 11-0 run by Oklahoma State. And that was that.

CU coach Jeff Bzdelik was disappointed in his team.

"The

CU Basketball

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- Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik .

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lack of passion and effort from a great majority of our team was embarrassing," Bzdelik said. "Even though we haven't won a lot of games . . . effort and passion has usually been there."

Bzdelik added that he is looking for a warrior's mentality. "We've got a soft team," he said. "I've recruited a lot of nice young men."

Under first-year coach Travis Ford, Oklahoma State (18-9, 7-6) won its fourth straight conference game and remained on the bubble for the NCAA Tournament.

Ford installed a high-scoring, up-tempo offense that has revved up the the Cowboys. OSU burned Colorado's zone by hiding 6-foot-6 sophomore James Anderson and 5-10 freshman Keiton Page in the corners. The pair combined for seven 3-pointers in the first half alone, helping Oklahoma State take a 43-31 lead.

Any thoughts of a Colorado comeback disappeared when Anderson scored the first points of the second half. You guessed it — a 3-pointer. Anderson became a one-man wrecking crew with 30 points and 10 rebounds.

"We had to get out to shooters quicker and not get sucked in on their drives," Knutson said.

Colorado played without its starting point guard, freshman Nate Tomlinson, who suffered a concussion Saturday against Missouri. Knutson got more minutes and scored a career-best 19 points.

Unlike Eddie Sutton's OSU teams, these Cowboys aren't known for defense. But they held CU's top offensive threat, Cory Higgins, to nine points.

OKLAHOMA STATE (18-9, 7-6)

Moses 3-8 2-4 8, Eaton 2-6 4-4 8, Harris 4-9 1-2 10, Page 4-6 0-0 12, Anderson 9-16 6-7 30, Muonelo 0-3 0-0 0, Brown 1-1 0-1 2, Sidorakis 2-2 0-0 6. **Totals 25-51 13-18 76.**

COLORADO (9-18, 1-12)

Jackson-Wilson 2-6 2-2 6, Dufault 1-6 0-4 2, Higgins 3-8 3-5 9, Thorne II 0-3 0-1 0, Coney 0-1 0-0 0, Kelley 2-3 1-2 5, Knutson 8-13 0-0 19, Crawford 5-10 0-0 14. **Totals 21-50 6-14 55.**

OSU 43-31. 3-point goals — OSU 13-23 (Anderson 6-8, Page 4-6, Sidorakis 2-2, Harris 1-4, Eaton 0-1, Muonelo 0-2), CU 7-14 (Crawford 4-5, Knutson 3-5, Dufault 0-2, Thorne II 0-2). Fouled out — Dufault. Rebounds — OSU 38 (Anderson 10), CU 23 (Coney 6). Assists — OSU 13 (Eaton 5), CU 10 (Knutson 4). Total fouls — OSU 14, CU 16. A — 4,288.

Halftime —

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or tkensler@denverpost.com

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Bzdelik questions players' effort after CU men lose to Cowboys

By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — A long, dreary season for the Colorado men's basketball season is finally nearing a merciful end. It might not come soon enough for some.

The Buffs lost their eighth straight Wednesday, 76-55 to Oklahoma State before 4,288 at the Coors Events Center. CU hasn't lost eight in a row since 1995-96, the year coach Joe Harrington quit midseason and Ricardo Patton took over. The Buffs trailed by 12 at halftime, and after Oklahoma State (18-9, 7-6 Big 12) ballooned the lead to 19 early in the second half, they never threatened again.

Coach Jeff Bzdelik openly questioned his players' effort and passion in his post-game news conference, which are getting more interesting with each loss. He called the loss "embarrassing" and called his team "a bunch of nice young men." That was not meant as a compliment.

At 9-18, 1-12 in conference, CU's might be motivated to play for pride, but the coach's words make that appear unlikely. Asked if he detects resignation among his players, Bzdelik said, "That's a good question. I don't know the answer to that."

CU played without starting point guard Nate Tomlinson, whom coaches held out due to a concussion he suffered during Saturday's loss to Missouri. CU was also without forward Toby Veal, who missed the game after undergoing work to remove wisdom teeth in recent days, including Tuesday, that have left an infection.

"His mouth is a mess," Bzdelik said.

Tomlinson is still having headaches and Bzdelik said when the guard will return is uncertain. Bzdelik added Tomlinson's absence should not have mattered.

"Everybody has to be collectively engaged with a commitment to playing hard and right all 40 minutes for us to have a chance to win," Bzdelik said.

Bzdelik gave extended minutes to reserves Levi Knutson and Casey Crawford. Knutson responded with a career-high 19 points. Crawford had 14, his most since 18 against Harvard on Nov. 22. Ryan Kelley played his first substantial minutes, 17, since the conference opener Jan. 14. CU's bench outscored Oklahoma State's, 38-8.

"Me and Casey got more minutes than we usually do," Knutson said. "But nothing was sweet about that game."

OKLAHOMA ST. 76, COLORADO 55

OKLAHOMA ST. (18-9)

Moses 3-8 2-4 8, Eaton 2-6 4-4 8, Harris 4-9 1-2 10, Page 4-6 0-0 12, Anderson 9-16 6-7 30, Muonelo 0-3 0-0 0, Brown 1-1 0-1 2, Sidorakis 2-2 0-0 6. Totals 25-51 13-18 76.

COLORADO (9-18)

Jackson-Wilson 2-6 2-2 6, Dufault 1-6 0-4 2, Higgins 3-8 3-5 9, Thorne II 0-3 0-1 0, Coney 0-1 0-0 0, Kelley 2-3 1-2 5, Knutson 8-13 0-0 19, Crawford 5-10 0-0 14. Totals 21-50 6-14 55.

Halftime — Oklahoma St. 43-31. 3-Point Goals — Oklahoma St. 13-23 (Anderson 6-8, Page 4-6, Sidorakis 2-2, Harris 1-4, Eaton 0-1, Muonelo 0-2), Colorado 7-14 (Crawford 4-5, Knutson 3-5, Dufault 0-2, Thorne II 0-2). Fouled Out — Dufault. Rebounds — Oklahoma St. 38 (Anderson 10), Colorado 23 (Coney 6). Assists — Oklahoma St. 13 (Eaton 5), Colorado 10 (Knutson 4). Total Fouls — Oklahoma St. 14, Colorado 16. A — 4,288.

CU's starters struggled. After leading the team in scoring and rebounding Saturday, Austin Dufault had two points and two rebounds before fouling out Wednesday. Dwight Thorne didn't score, and Cory Higgins' nine were his fewest since Nov. 29.

"Levi looked confident; he was active," Bzdelik said. "Casey the same way. Casey has had a good week of practice.

"But that's my point. Everybody has to be ..."

Bzdelik did not finish the thought. He didn't need to.

TIP-INS: Oklahoma State went 13-for-23 on 3s. It was the most 3s CU has allowed this season. ... Javon Coney started in Tomlinson's place. He did not score in 27 minutes, but grabbed six rebounds.

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