



# Bzdelik wants 'tougher' Buffs today against Bears

## Colorado takes road skid to Baylor today

By Ryan Thorburn  
Friday, February 27, 2009

WACO, Texas — The Buffs aren't tough enough.

They don't dive on the floor for loose balls enough. They don't rebound enough. They don't take charges enough. They don't foul hard enough.

Jeff Bzdelik, a fierce competitor, is flummoxed by the situation.

"I recruited a bunch of nice young men," Colorado's head coach said after enduring an eighth consecutive loss.

And we all know where nice guys finish.

"I'm excited, I'm jacked up, but that's me," Bzdelik continued. "Like I said, they're really nice young men."

Perhaps Bzdelik should make the Buffs take cold showers at the hotel here before heading to the Ferrell Center to take on Baylor today (2 p.m., Altitude).

Even though most of the players are relatively new to the program, it's time for someone other than Bzdelik to get angry about CU's 27-game Big 12 road losing streak.

During Wednesday's 76-55 home loss to Oklahoma State, Cory Higgins (nine points) and Dwight Thorne (no points) -- the only Buffs who score in double figures on average -- disappeared into a basketball witness protection program.

Travis Fords' team focused on CU's two leading scorers, but the Cowboys are the second-worst defensive team in conference play, allowing 79.2 points per game.

"We did a good job with those two," Ford said. "And we knew some of their other guys might have big nights with our game plan."

Sure enough, Levi Knutson scored a career-high 19 points off the bench and Casey Crawford added 14 points out of the doghouse.

The two sophomores were a combined 13-for-23 from the field, including 7-for-10 from 3-point range.

The other Buffs were a combined 8-for-27 shooting (0-for-4 behind the arc).

To their credit, neither player was happy about being a bright spot on another dark night at the Coors Events Center.

"I don't care if I ever step on the court if we win games," Crawford said. "It's not about me, it's about the team. We are a family; it's all we have."

The Buffs (9-18, 1-12) are frustrated right now but are exactly where the Big 12 coaches predicted they would be this season -- in last place.

The Bears (16-11, 4-9) -- who have four seniors and one junior in an extremely experienced and talented starting lineup -- have more explaining to do for their recent failures.

Baylor, picked third in the preseason poll conducted by Scott Drew's peers, has lost eight times in the last nine games.

Today might be CU's best opportunity to win outside of Boulder this season. The Buffs upset these same Bears at the Big 12 Tournament in the last meeting to become the first No. 12 seed to beat a No. 5.

"Everybody has to be collectively engaged with a commitment to playing hard for us to have a chance to win," Bzdelik said. "Everybody knows what to do."

Nate Tomlinson, who did not play against Oklahoma State due to a concussion suffered a week ago, made the trip with the team to Waco and his return to the lineup is questionable.

The Buffs could obviously use the freshman point guard's toughness today.



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## CU men's preview

By Ryan Thorburn

Saturday, February 28, 2009

**BOULDER, Colo. — TODAY --** Colorado travels to Waco, Texas, to play Baylor 2 p.m. at the Ferrell Center.

**BROADCAST -- Television:** Altitude with Brad Sham (play-by-play) and Bryndon Manzer (analyst); **Radio:** KKZN AM 760 with Mark Johnson (play-by-play) and Charles Johnson (color)

**STORYLINES --** The Buffs (9-18, 1-12) are looking to snap a 27-game Big 12 road losing streak. ... The Bears (16-11, 4-9) are the most disappointing team in the Big 12.

**KEY STAT --** The Buffs have lost eight consecutive games, the program's longest losing streak since the 1995-96 campaign. The Bears aren't playing much better with a 1-8 mark in their last nine games.

**COACHES --** Jeff Bzdelik is 21-38 in his second season at CU. Scott Drew is 73-91 in his sixth season at Baylor.

### PROBABLE STARTERS

**Colorado --** G Nate Tomlinson, 6-2, freshman, 7.5 ppg, 2.6 rpg; G Cory Higgins, 6-5, sophomore, 17.2 ppg, 5.6 rpg; G Dwight Thorne, 6-2, junior, 12.3 ppg, 3.1 rpg; F Austin Dufault, 6-8, freshman, 8.9 ppg, 4.0 rpg, F/C Jermyl Jackson-Wilson, 6-6, senior, 5.4 ppg, 3.9 rpg.

**Baylor --** F Kevin Rogers, 6-9, senior, 12.4 ppg, 7.6 rpg; C Mamadou Diene, 7-1, senior, 1.6 ppg, 1.5 rpg; G Curtis Jerrells, 6-1, senior, 15.9 ppg, 4.4 rpg, G Henry Dugat, 10.9 ppg, 3.4 rpg; G Tweety Carter, 5-11, junior, 11.9 ppg, 2.7 rpg.

**SERIES --** Colorado leads 14-7 overall with a 3-4 record in Waco. The series is tied 3-3 since the formation of the Big 12.

**UP NEXT --** The Buffs will face Texas A&M next Wednesday at the Coors Events Center in the home finale (7 p.m., ESPNU).



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