



UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BUFFALOES MEN'S BASKETBALL



Game #9: Colorado (5-3, 0-0 Big 12) vs. Colorado Christian (1-4, 1-1 RMAC)

- **Date:** Monday, Dec. 7 • **Tipoff:** 7:05 p.m. (MST) • **Television:** None
- **Location:** Coors Events Center (11,064)
- **CU Radio:** 760-AM: Mark Johnson (p-b-p), Charles Johnson (analyst)
- **Series vs. Colorado Christian:** CU leads 1-0 (78-58 in Boulder, Nov. 20, 2007)
- **Record versus Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference:** 68-26 (.723)

COLORADO Probable Starters

| Pos/No | Student-Athlete | Ht | Wt | Yr | Hometown | PPG | RPG | APG |
|--------|------------------|-----|-----|-----|------------------|------|-----|-----|
| G 5 | Marcus Relphorde | 6-7 | 220 | Jr. | Chicago, Ill. | 9.8 | 2.9 | 2.3 |
| G 10 | Alec Burks | 6-6 | 185 | Fr. | Grandview, Mo. | 16.0 | 4.3 | 1.4 |
| G 11 | Cory Higgins | 6-5 | 190 | Jr. | Danville, Calif. | 20.0 | 3.8 | 2.5 |
| G 12 | Dwight Thorne II | 6-3 | 185 | Sr. | Arlington, Texas | 7.8 | 2.3 | 1.5 |
| F 33 | Austin Dufault | 6-9 | 230 | So. | Killdeer, N.D. | 8.5 | 4.6 | 1.3 |

OFF THE BENCH

| | | | | | | | | |
|------|-------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| G 1 | Nate Tomlinson | 6-3 | 185 | So. | Sydney, Australia | 7.0 | 3.5 | 5.1 |
| F 34 | Casey Crawford | 6-9 | 245 | Jr. | Overland Park, Kan. | 3.4 | 2.0 | 0.5 |
| G 35 | Keegan Hornbuckle | 6-7 | 205 | Fr. | Westlake Village, Calif. | 2.9 | 2.0 | 0.9 |

COLORADO CHRISTIAN COUGARS Probable Starters

| Pos/No | Student-Athlete | Ht | Yr | Hometown | PPG | RPG | APG |
|--------|-----------------|------|-----|----------------------|------|-----|-----|
| G 3 | Rye Olson | 6-2 | Jr. | Missouri City, Texas | 6.6 | 1.8 | 3.2 |
| G 12 | Jobi Wall | 6-7 | So. | Arvada, Colo. | 16.4 | 5.2 | 1.8 |
| G 24 | Jay Azubuike | 6-3 | Jr. | Tulsa, Okla. | 4.6 | 2.8 | 2.0 |
| C 40 | Justin Neuhaus | 6-11 | Sr. | San Marcos, Texas | 15.8 | 6.4 | 1.2 |
| F 53 | Tyler House | 6-5 | Sr. | Fort Collins, Colo. | 3.6 | 4.4 | 1.4 |

CCU UPDATE: Colorado Christian comes into tonight's game with one win after five games. The Cougars defeated Western State on Sunday, Dec. 6, 77-69 at the Cougar Event Center in Lakewood. Jobi Wall recorded his first double-double of the season with 24 points and 10 rebounds, along with four assists. Justin Neuhaus added 10 rebounds, eight points and seven blocked shots as CCU led by nine points at halftime. The Cougars shot 45.6 percent from the field and made 11 treys.

LAST GAME RECAP: Colorado dropped its second straight game in Corvallis since 2004 this time part of the Big 12/Pac-10 Hardwood Series, 76-69 last Friday. It also drops the Buffaloes record to 0-3 all-time in the three-year history of the tournament. Previous losses came against Stanford (76-62 in 2008; 67-43 in 2007). Freshman Alec Burks shared high game scoring honors with 19 points and grabbing a season-best nine rebounds. He also made a season-high seven field goals and six offensive rebounds. Cory Higgins and Marcus Relphorde chipped-in with 15 and 13 points, respectively.

POSTER FEATURE: Tonight's feature is Head Coach Jeff Bzdelik and Associate Head Coach Steve McClain. McClain has filled in for Bzdelik a total of four games this season, winning the season opener and coaching a trio of games at the EA Sports Maui Invitational where the Buffs fell to eventual tournament champion Gonzaga and Arizona, each by four points. Coach Bzdelik was on the sideline for home wins over Coppin State, Texas Southern, and San Francisco. Tonight against Colorado Christian, the Buffs will attempt a 5-0 record at home, matching the 2005-06 season for consecutive home wins to begin a season (CU won seven-straight that year).

WHAT'S AHEAD: CU will travel to in-state rival Colorado State, Thursday, Dec. 10, 7:30 p.m. CU holds an 87-33 advantage. Since 2000, the Buffs are 7-2 against the Rams and have won the last two games in the series. Coach Bzdelik is 6-0 all-time against CSU and 3-0 at Moby Arena.

TEAM LEADERS: After eight games, Cory Higgins and Alec Burks are averaging 20 and 16 points per game, respectively. Higgins leads in steals (12), field goal percentage (.563) and at the free throw line (.929). Nate Tomlinson leads in assists (41, 5.3 pg.); Shane Harris-Tunks in blocked shots (7); and Austin Dufault in rebounding (4.6 rpg.).

KEEP AN EYE ON: Alec Burks has started all eight games and has netted over 10 or more points in every game so far. With 128 points, he ranks fourth behind CU greats Chauncey Billups (178, 1995-96); Emmett Lewis (146, 1975-76); Richard Roby (132, 2004-05) in their rookie campaign after eight games. Billups, Roby and Lewis have at least made it to nine straight games of 10 or more points. Burks is also shooting .556 percent (40-of-72) from the field, good enough for second on the team.

MORE ALEC: Against Oregon State, Alec Burks had career-highs with seven made field goals, nine rebounds, and six offensive rebounds. He led the team in scoring for the third time this season (previous two shared). Burks is the first CU player this season to lead the team in scoring, rebounding, and steals outright.

CORY HIGGINS UPDATE: Cory Higgins has led the team in scoring six of eight games (one shared) and has five 20-plus scoring efforts this season (17 career) • His 28 points against Arizona was his third highest scoring game • 964 career points (28th at CU) and has started every game as a Buff (71), ranking 16th • 14th in career steals (107) • 16th in minutes played (2,490) • 28th in assists (173) • Last season was one of 13 players nationally to lead team in five categories • 2008-09 All-Big 12 Third Team; 1st Big 12-only steals (1.9 avg.).

TEAM NOTES: CU's streak of games scoring at least 70 points ended at seven following the loss at Oregon State • The five-point loss is the third single-digit loss of the season and the 23rd in Bzdelik's tenure • CU is now 5-2 this season when leading at the half • Coach Bzdelik has 101 career collegiate wins • CU scored 80 points in four of eight games this season (previously 80+ five games in first two years) • Team has shot 50 percent or better in 11 of 16 halves; 58 3-pointers after eight games, is a school-best since 2000-01 • Team shooting .505 after eight games from field, a best in Coach Bzdelik's three years.

LAST TIME AT EVENTS CENTER: CU's 78-54 over San Francisco saw Nate Tomlinson and Marcus Relphorde each lead the Buffs in assists with six apiece, a school-first where a pair led the team with six or more assists (Dec. 19, 2003 against Tennessee State) • Austin Dufault swatted a career-best three shots • Cory Higgins made his first eight shots against the Dons (first miss 15:49, second half). He went 6-for-6 in the first half • CU shot a first half best .615 from the field (16-of-26) • CU committed only six turnovers against USF, the third time this season with single-digits turnovers and Keegan Hornbuckle had a season-best three assists.

BROADCAST: All Colorado men's basketball games can be heard live on KKZN AM 760. Mark Johnson will deliver play-by-play with Charles Johnson color commentary. Live internet audio of all CU basketball games is available on BuffsRadio, a subscription service through CUBuffs.com. Live internet video streaming of Sunday's game is available on BuffsTV, also a subscription service through CUBuffs.com. Please note the BuffsRadio audio and BuffsTV video are separate subscriptions.

ROAD GAMES: Even though CU broke an 18-game road losing skid when they defeated Chaminade, 73-58 at the EA Sports Maui Invitational (the NCAA later ruled it was road game), the Buffs still have a 19-game skid against Division I opponents on the road. CU's last road win came on Dec. 22, 2007 at Colorado State, 73-70 -- CU's opponent Dec. 10.

CLOSE CALLS: During the last three years, the CU men's team has suffered 45 losses. If you take a closer look, 23 of those losses were by single-digits, an average of 4.6 points.

2009-10: 3 games (13 points, 4.3 ppg.)

2008-09: 11 games (three non-conference, eight Big 12 games): 50 points (4.5 ppg.)

2007-08: nine games (three non-conference, six Big 12 games): 43 total points (4.8 ppg.).

BUFF NOTES (individual): Austin Dufault recorded his first career double-double (14 points, 11 rebounds); he's the first CU player to tally a double-double since Cory Higgins last year (Western State, 24 pts., 10 rebounds) • Nate Tomlinson scored a career-best 20 points; first CU player other than Higgins and Dwight Thorne to score 20 or more in a game since Richard Roby scored 22 at Oklahoma State (Feb. 6, 2008) • Tomlinson had a career-high eight assists against Gonzaga and Chaminade, also had a career-best five steals against the Silverswords • CU placed a pair of 20-point scorers against Arizona (Higgins 28, Tomlinson 20), that's twice this year with a pair w/ a least 20+ a game (the other, Texas Southern) • Alec Burks tallied 19 points against Arizona, his second highest scoring game • Associate Head Coach Steve McClain has replaced Head Coach Jeff Bzdelik four of the eight games this season due to family concerns. McClain went 2-2, however Coach Bzdelik is credited with the wins/losses.

MAUI INVITATIONAL WRAP: The Buffaloes lost a pair of close games in their first-ever visit at the EA Sports Maui Invitational falling to Gonzaga, 76-72 and Arizona, 91-87 (overtime). CU defeated Chaminade on day three, 73-58. In the first game against the Bulldogs, four players scored double-digits with Cory Higgins scoring a team-high 19 points with six rebounds. The following day, the Buffs, again placed four players in double-figures with Higgins and Alec Burks scoring 28 and 20 points, respectively. On day three, the Buffs received 13 points each from Burks and Marcus Relphorde against Chaminade.

CU SINCE 1996-97... In the 14-year history of the Big 12 Conference, CU is performing a best in nearly every category listed below except wins in a season.

| Years | PPG | FG % | 3-Pt.% | FT% | To | W's |
|---------|------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-----------|
| 2009-10 | 79.6 | .505 | .438 | .794 | 12.1 | 5 |
| 2008-09 | 62.9 | .454 | .346 | .731 | 14.1 | 9 |
| 2007-08 | 62.4 | .451 | .343 | .684 | 13.4 | 12 |
| 2006-07 | 69.1 | .417 | .313 | .655 | 17.5 | 7 |
| 2005-06 | 76.8 | .434 | .342 | .646 | 14.0 | 20 |
| 2004-05 | 71.6 | .435 | .353 | .629 | 14.4 | 14 |
| 2003-04 | 74.2 | .464 | .372 | .621 | 14.6 | 18 |
| 2002-03 | 75.2 | .443 | .326 | .669 | 14.0 | 20 |
| 2001-02 | 79.7 | .453 | .357 | .677 | 17.0 | 15 |
| 2000-01 | 80.6 | .460 | .359 | .715 | 16.5 | 15 |
| 1999-00 | 75.2 | .426 | .339 | .686 | 14.3 | 18 |
| 1998-99 | 73.1 | .414 | .344 | .702 | 14.7 | 18 |
| 1997-98 | 71.4 | .404 | .346 | .688 | 14.3 | 13 |
| 1996-97 | 73.1 | .420 | .362 | .681 | 13.9 | 22 |

FRESHMAN STARTERS: In his first three years, Coach Bzdelik has started at least one freshman in the starting line up on opening night. Against Arkansas-Pine Bluff, Alec Burks started (10 pts., three assists, two rebounds). Cory Higgins started his first game (Nov. 9, 2007) with a 10-point, five-rebound, three-assist performance against New Mexico. Last year, Austin Dufault (13 pts.) and Nate Tomlinson (12 pts.) started against Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

NEW UNIFORMS: The 2009-10 season marks the first time in 19 years the Colorado men's basketball team will don new home uniforms. This season's new look will be silver, a first since the 1990-91 season. They also wore black and silver for both home and away games. This season, the 2009-10 Buffs will have silver, gold and black jerseys.

ENTERING 2009-10: This will be the third year of head coach Jeff Bzdelik and his staff. Here's a brief synopsis who and what is returning for the 2009-10 season:

Starters Returning/lost: 4/1

Top Returning Scorer: Cory Higgins 17.4 ppg.

Top Rebounder: Cory Higgins 5.4 rpg.

Top Returning FG Shooter: Dwight Thorne II 48.1%

Top Returning FT% Shooter: Cory Higgins 83.0%

Letterwinners Returning/Lost: 9/3

OUT FOR SEASON: Freshman guard Shannon Sharpe will miss the 2009-10 basketball season with season-ending knee surgery after injuring his left knee during pre-season workouts. Sharpe successfully had a microfracture procedure. Sharpe, a 6-1, 200-pound guard from Corona, Calif. is one of four true freshmen on the 2009-10 roster. He will be medically redshirted.

DEFENDING THE OPPOSITION (Scoring Defense): In the last two years under Coach Bzdelik, CU's defense has allowed the opposition an average of 66 points per game (67.5: 2008-09; 64.4: 2007-08). That two-year total ranks only second to the 1980-81 season (64.5 ppg.) and 1979-80 (67.3 ppg.). Those two years averaged out to 65.9 ppg.

BIG 12 AGE AVERAGES: With only one senior on the Colorado roster, the men's team is the second youngest school in the Big 12 Conference. The following breakdown is courtesy of Mike Noteware of Oklahoma State. These averages are as of Oct. 15, 2009.

| Team | Yrs | Months | Days | Experience |
|----------------|-----|--------|------|------------|
| Oklahoma State | 19 | 11 | 25 | 1.1 |
| Colorado | 20 | 2 | 20 | 1.3 |
| Iowa State | 20 | 3 | 27 | 1.3 |
| Oklahoma | 20 | 4 | 1 | 1.2 |
| Missouri | 20 | 5 | 23 | 1.3 |
| Texas A&M | 20 | 6 | 0 | 1.4 |
| Baylor | 20 | 6 | 6 | 1.1 |

| | | | | |
|--------------|----|----|----|-----|
| Kansas | 20 | 6 | 26 | 1.2 |
| Kansas State | 20 | 7 | 15 | 1.3 |
| Texas | 20 | 8 | 24 | 1.6 |
| Nebraska | 20 | 9 | 14 | 1.3 |
| Texas Tech | 20 | 11 | 14 | 1.8 |

The "experience" category basically is the average number of years the members of the team have been playing (i.e. A senior is given a 3, a junior a 2, a sophomore a 1 and a freshman a 0). The findings did not take into account redshirt years, and it's obviously not based on Division I experience, since a juco transfer would be assigned a 2 just like a third-year junior. Missouri's Tyler Stone is the youngest player in the Big 12 (born Sept. 8, 1991), while Brady Morningstar of Kansas is the oldest (born Jan. 23, 1986).

Defense through the years): In his six years as a collegiate coach and two-plus seasons in the NBA, head coach Jeff Bzdelik has installed playing defense as a major part of the game. Here's a look at his teams over the years. His 2005-06 season at Air Force was a nation's best in scoring defense of all 970 collegiate schools in Division I (326), D-II (265), and D-III (379).

| | | |
|---------|--------------|----------------------|
| 1986-87 | UMBC | 70.1 ppg. (28 games) |
| 1987-88 | UMBC | 78.0 (28 games) |
| 2002-03 | Denver (NBA) | #92.4 (82 games) |
| 2003-04 | Denver (NBA) | 96.1 (82 games) |
| 2004-05 | Denver (NBA) | 97.4 (28 games) |
| 2005-06 | USAFA | *54.7 (31 games) |
| 2006-07 | USAFA | **56.0 (35 games) |
| 2007-08 | Colorado | ^64.4 (32 games) |
| 2008-09 | Colorado | **67.5 (31 games) |

* - nation's best ** - runner up nationally (Princeton 53.3)

^ - lowest in CU history 46 years; 12th all-time at CU

- franchise record (shattering mark by more than five points)

** ranks 20th in school history

CAPTAINS NAMED: Colorado men's basketball head coach Jeff Bzdelik announced that senior Dwight Thorne II and junior Cory Higgins were named captains for the 2009-10 season. Both earned the honor for the second straight year. Thorne II, the lone senior on the team, enters his senior campaign coming off his best season-to-date finishing second in team scoring (12.0 ppg.), steals (35), made field goals (128) and made free throws (70). He was the team leader with 45 3-pointers. Higgins, originally from Danville, Calif., also enters the new season after a stellar sophomore campaign that earned him an All-Big 12 Conference third team selection. Higgins was also associated with elite company last year as one of 13 players nationally ranked first or second on their team in five major statistical categories (points, rebounds, assists, steals, blocks). He was the only sophomore on that list. Last season, he averaged a team-best 17.4 points per game.

BIG 12 PLAY SETBACKS: Winning on the road is sometimes a difficult task, especially in the Big 12. CU has lost 29-straight Big 12 Conference road games since Feb. 5, 2006. All eight games in 2008-09, 2007-08 and 2006-07; and the last five games of the 2005-06 season.

Last Big 12 Road Win: Jan. 21, 2006 at Oklahoma State, 80-78 (ot)

Last Big 12 Road Win (Regulation): Jan. 14, 2006 at Missouri, 74-71

vs. RANKED OPPONENTS: The Buffaloes have lost eight straight games to nationally ranked opponents dating back to the 2006-07. Their last win came in Boulder against then-No. 18/19 Oklahoma State, 84-75 (Feb. 15, 2007).

ON THE ROAD vs. RANKED FOES: CU has fallen on the road to ranked opponents 25-straight times. CU's last win on the road came at No. 20 Texas Tech, 80-78 (Jan. 11, 1997). The Buffs have lost 32-straight nationally ranked games away from Boulder, including 25 on the road, seven on neutral courts. Their last road win against a nationally ranked school came at No. 20 Texas Tech, 80-78, Jan. 11, 1997; last win over a top-10 opponent on the road: never.