



# Bzdelik looking for points

## CU coach needs more production from Crawford, Knutson

By Ryan Thorburn  
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BOULDER, Colo. — Cory Higgins oozes confidence and has quietly emerged as one of the best young players in the Big 12.

But Colorado's two other key sophomores -- forward Casey Crawford and guard Levi Knutson -- are both elbow deep in ugly shooting slumps entering today's game against Kansas State at the Coors Events Center (4 p.m., Altitude).

Crawford -- the 6-foot-9 Wake Forest transfer Jeff Bzdelik said would be counted on to knock down 3-pointers and open up driving lanes for Higgins and Dwight Thorne this season -- is still looking for his first point in Big 12 play.

"It's difficult but I've got to keep working hard," Crawford, who is 0-for-7 from the field in only 16 minutes of action over the last three games, said when asked if it has been hard to get into a groove offensively with such limited playing time.

"And when I get my chance to go in I have to knock them down. If I keep working hard I'll get my chance to get back in the loop."

Knutson is going to be counted on even more with the news Friday that freshman guard Ryan Kelley, who was averaging 13.0 points in Big 12 play, is likely out for the rest of the season with a dislocated kneecap.

Since scoring nine points against Coppin State on Dec. 28, Knutson is 0-for-14 from the field (0-for-5 behind the arc) with a total of three points in six games. He did not play against Kansas.

"My shots haven't been falling but my teammates still have confidence in me and I have confidence I'm going to knock down shots if I get a wide open look," said Knutson, who is playing through a painful hip injury. "I'm not worried about it. There's a lot more to the game than shooting."

"Defending, getting on the floor for loose balls, boxing your man out, hitting open guys, running the offense hard ... I'm just trying to do all those other things right and the shooting will come."

After cracking the top 15 nationally during non-conference play by shooting nearly 49 percent as a team, the Buffs are shooting 38.4 percent so far in conference. That ties them with the Wildcats for last in the Big 12.

"There's more to the game than shooting the basketball. With that said, you have to produce," Bzdelik

said. "We have confidence in them. In one particular case, by the notion that we're playing them. ... But when you're open, at some point you've got to be able to make shots."

Kansas State, known for its aggressive defense, allowed Baylor to shoot 56 percent from the field during the Bears' 83-65 victory in Manhattan on Wednesday. The Wildcats are 0-4 in conference for the first time in 12 years.

"It's going to be a tough game and a really scrappy game. We're both winless in the league right now and we just need to battle," Crawford said. "There's going to be a lot of guys hitting the floor and working hard because both of us are struggling to get a win."

The Buffs' Big 12 road losing streak is now at 23 consecutive games and dates back three years after Tuesday's 63-55 loss at Texas Tech.

Higgins led CU with 21 points on 7-for-13 shooting with seven rebounds, six assists and three steals. Crawford was 0-for-1 shooting in only three minutes while Knutson was 0-for-4 with two points in 18 minutes.

"Players are always thinking about the next thing they do," Knutson said. "Hopefully the next one goes down."



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