



CU suffers OT heartbreaker

Thorne scores career-high 30 in loss to Kansas State

By Ryan Thorburn
Saturday, January 24, 2009

One more 3-pointer and Dwight Thorne would have been the king of the post-game homecoming gathering attended by former Colorado royalty such as Chauncey Billups, Cliff Meely and Birdie Haldorson.

But CU's junior shooting guard -- after scoring a career-high 30 points on 8-for-12 shooting, including a couple of clutch 3-pointers to extend the game -- couldn't get open on the final possession.

And after Jermyl Jackson-Wilson's desperate shot attempt from just inside the 3-point arc bounced harmlessly off the rim at the buzzer, Kansas State celebrated a 77-75 victory in front of 6,061 crestfallen witnesses at the Coors Events Center.

"This is a type of game that makes you want to cry," Thorne said after the Buffs fell to 8-10 overall and 0-4 in the Big 12. "It was an emotionally and physically draining game to play."

Jackson-Wilson, the only senior in CU's program, got emotional after hearing a young teammate talk about the rebuilding process and a better seasons to come for the Buffs.

"I don't got time for a turnaround," Jackson-Wilson said after scoring 14 points and grabbing a team-high six rebounds with three steals. "We have to learn from this loss, put it behind us and win on Tuesday."

That's when the Buffs return to action against Iowa State at the Coors Events Center. After back-to-back losses to Texas Tech and K-State, beating the Cyclones at home might be CU's best chance to crack into the conference win column this season.

"There has to be a sense of urgency," CU head coach Jeff Bzdelik said. "Otherwise you are not going to grow. Jermyl is right, this is about winning."

The Buffs trailed 75-71 after a free throw by Jamar Samuels with 15.1 seconds remaining. Thorne came down the court and splashed a 3-pointer to cut the deficit to one point with 6.2 seconds remaining.

K-State's Darren Kent was quickly fouled and made both pressure pitches with 5.2 seconds left. The visitors wisely fouled Thorne with 2.8 seconds left before he could launch another potential game-tying shot from behind the arc.

"I knew they were going to foul me and I tried to get a shot off," Thorne said. "But it was a poor excuse for a shot."

Thorne was awarded two free throws and made the first attempt to cut the deficit to 77-75. He missed the second attempt intentionally and Kent was called for traveling after grabbing the defensive rebound.

The Wildcats switched on a screen for Thorne that was supposed to free the junior up for a game-stealing 3-pointer in the corner.

Cory Higgins (12 points) wasn't open either, and Nate Tomlinson had just fouled out.

That left it up to Jackson-Wilson, who was unable to knock down the big shot with "Mr. Big Shot" sitting a few feet away in courtside seats.

"Anytime I shoot it up it has a shot. In a game like that anything can happen," Jackson-Wilson said. "We saw Dwight come down and knock down two or three 3-pointers."

Thorne made a 3-pointer with 10 seconds remaining in regulation to force overtime. CU rallied from an 11-point deficit in the final 10 minutes and a six-point deficit in the final 1:03.

"I thought we were going to win the game," Thorne said. "Didn't happen."

The score was tied 26-26 at halftime.

The Wildcats led 19-10 when Samuels capped a 9-0 run by the visitors with a dunk off a lob pass with 12:21 remaining. K-State would not make another field goal for 9:26.

Thorne made CU's first 3-pointer of the game to tie the score 20-20. The Buffs led 24-21 after a hoop by Higgins but Fred Brown ended the Wildcats' field goal drought with a basket from behind the arc to knot things up with 2:55 remaining.

After shooting 33.3 percent in the first half the Buffs were an amazing 14-for-17 (82.4 percent) in the second half.

The Wildcats scored 35 points off 13 offensive rebounds and 17 CU turnovers.

"There's a difference between just playing and playing to win," Bzdelik said. "Every possession has to matter."

Kansas St. 77, Colorado 75

KANSAS ST.

FG FT Reb

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

Sutton 31 2-5 1-2 2-5 1 4 5

Kent 23 3-5 6-7 1-7 3 4 13

Colon 31 4-5 2-5 2-4 1 3 10

Pullen 30 7-12 1-2 0-1 2 3 17

Clemente 37 4-10 4-4 3-3 7 3 15

Brown 30 2-9 0-1 0-1 2 1 5

Awaji 4 0-1 0-0 1-1 0 0 0

Mrrwthr 2 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 1 0

Samuels 25 2-6 4-6 1-5 0 2 8

Anderson 12 2-3 0-1 2-3 1 1 4

Totals 225 26-56 18-28 13-31 17 22 77

Percentages: FG .464, FT .643.

3-Point Goals: 7-19, .368 (Clemente 3-6, Pullen 2-6, Kent 1-1, Brown 1-6).

Team Rebounds: 1.

Blocked Shots: 1 (Colon).

Turnovers: 15 (Pullen 4, Clemente 4, Kent 2, Sutton 2, Brown, Colon, Anderson).

Steals: 6 (Pullen 2, Sutton 2, Clemente, Brown).

Technical Fouls: None.

COLORADO

FG FT Reb

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

Jkn-Wsn 32 5-8 4-6 0-6 0 4 14

Dufault 37 4-6 1-2 1-4 1 1 9

Tmlnsn 23 2-4 1-2 0-0 1 5 6

Higgins 45 3-6 6-7 0-5 3 3 12

Thorne II 40 8-12 9-11 1-4 3 3 30

Coney 27 1-3 1-2 1-4 3 2 4

Knutson 7 0-2 0-0 0-0 1 0 0

Crawford 11 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 2 0

Eckloff 3 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 2 0

Totals 225 23-42 22-30 4-27 12 22 75

Percentages: FG .548, FT .733.

3-Point Goals: 7-14, .500 (Thorne II 5-6, Coney 1-2, Tomlinson 1-2, Dufault 0-1, Higgins 0-1, Knutson 0-1, Crawford 0-1).

Team Rebounds: 4.

Blocked Shots: 2 (Crawford 2).

Turnovers: 17 (Higgins 5, Tomlinson 4, Jackson-Wilson 3, Dufault 2, Crawford, Knutson, Eckloff).

Steals: 10 (Higgins 4, Jackson-Wilson 3, Crawford, Tomlinson, Dufault).

Technical Fouls: None.

Kansas St. 26 41 10--77

Colorado 26 41 8--75

A -- 6,061.

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Turnover bug bites Buffs' Higgins

Colorado commits 17 miscues in loss to Kansas State

By Ryan Thorburn
Saturday, January 24, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — Cory Higgins had another complete game with 12 points, five rebounds, four steals, three assists ... five turnovers?

Yes, even Colorado's best player isn't immune from the sloppy basketball sin that continues to plague the Buffs.

CU turned the ball over 17 times during Saturday's 77-75 overtime loss to Kansas State at the Coors Events Center.

The Wildcats scored 21 points off those miscues.

"Every possession matters," Higgins said when asked what his team should take away from its latest Big 12 defeat.

Trailing 67-64 late in regulation, Higgins turned the ball over and was forced to foul Fred Brown. The K-State guard missed the front end of the ensuing one-on-one, and Dwight Thorne erased his backcourt mate's mistake with a 3-pointer to force overtime.

The Buffs were within 72-71 in OT but allowed a K-State offensive rebound that led to a Jacob Pullen basket that gave the visitors a 74-71 lead with 35.6 seconds remaining.

CU was only out-rebounded 31-27 but the Wildcats scored 14 second-chance points off 13 offensive rebounds.

"Why did we lose? We needed just two or three less turnovers, two or three more defensive rebounds," CU head coach Jeff Bzdelik said. "Did we take a charge tonight? No, we didn't."

Kelley update

Ryan Kelley showed up at the Coors Events Center about 90 minutes before tip-off and made his way to the training room on crutches.

After receiving treatment on his dislocated left kneecap the freshman guard got dressed and walked out onto the court without crutches to watch his teammates warm up.

Kelley then watched the tight game helplessly from the end of the bench.

"It was tough," Kelley said of the injury sustained during Thursday's practice. "But it's OK, I'll bounce back."

Will Kelley be able to recover in time to play again this season? Probably not.

But before CU rules Kelley out for the season an MRI will be performed on the injured knee to determine the severity of the damage and a realistic timetable for his return to the court.

Kelley played in 13 games averaging 2.9 ppg. He scored a career-high 19 points at Missouri on Jan. 14.

Tomlinson struggling

Nate Tomlinson turned the ball over on CU's first possession and picked up his third foul just 7:24 into the game.

The freshman point guard never really got on track and finished with six points, four turnovers and one assists before fouling out in overtime.

Meanwhile, freshman forward Austin Dufault scored nine points on 4-for-6 shooting.

"Austin played better today and played more athletic," Bzdelik said. "He took a step up, and Nate took a step backwards. but that's just being a freshman."

Hoops homecoming

Denver Nuggets point guard Chauncey Billups and assistant coach Jamahl Mosley were among the CU alumni in attendance at Saturday's game as part of the basketball homecoming weekend.

A total of 27 players were introduced to the crowd at halftime, including legends Cliff Meely and Birdie Haldorson.

Quotable

"Road wins are never easy," Kansas State head coach Frank Martin said after the Wildcats picked up their first Big 12 win of the season. "I don't care what assumption you might make, it's never easy."

Notable

CU is 0-4 in the Big 12 for the first time since 2004-05. ... The Buffs have lost six consecutive games to Kansas State. ... With six rebounds, Jermyl Jackson-Wilson moved into 39th place on CU's all-time rebounding list (383). ... K-State had 17 points off the bench while Javon Coney (four points) was the only non-starter to score for CU.



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