



History not on Buffs' side in Kansas

CU men have not won at Kansas' Allen Fieldhouse in 26 years

By Ryan Thorburn
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LAWRENCE, Kan. -- Remember 1983?

None of the current Buffs do because they were not born yet.

It was the year "Terms of Endearment" forced guys to go out on a tear-filled movie date. Approximately 125 million viewers tuned into the final episode of "M*A*S*H" that season. Michael Jackson's "Thriller" dominated the pop charts.

Some phenom from Stanford named John Elway demanded to be traded after being taken No. 1 in the NFL draft by the Baltimore Colts.

And Jeff Bzdelik was a young assistant coach at Northwestern.

The year 1983 also marks the last time the Colorado men's basketball team beat Kansas at Allen Fieldhouse, a 75-74 victory for Tom Apke's Buffs on Feb. 10.

The 2008-09 Buffs will try to make some history of their own today in a rematch with the Jayhawks at Allen Fieldhouse (2 p.m., ESPNU).

"No," junior guard Dwight Thorne said when asked if he knew how long it had been since a CU men's basketball team flew home from Lawrence happy. "I don't really care to know either. It's been a while."

But it has only been two weeks since these Buffs faced Kansas. A lot of Bzdelik's young players gained confidence in themselves during the 73-56 loss in Boulder, a competitive game that was in doubt until midway through the second half.

"The reasons I think we lost the game were our fault, not their dominant play," freshman forward Trey Eckloff said. "I feel we have a chance to stick with them. Being at their house it will be extremely difficult, but I think we have a good chance."

CU's 18 turnovers in the first meeting led to 25 points for the Jayhawks. KU also won the rebounding battle 31-21. Nate Tomlinson really struggled in his first matchup with Sherron Collins. The Buffs freshman point guard had seven turnovers, one assist and did not score while his talented counterpart scored 18 points with seven assists and two turnovers.

Those numbers must change dramatically for the visitors to stand any kind of chance today.

"Gaining wisdom and experience comes at a high cost and that high cost for Nate was a lot of turnovers," Bzdelik said. "I know he has learned from that experience. He has to protect the ball and be sure of each and every single dribble, be sure of each and every single pass.

"We don't need to be a rock stars, we need to be rock solid."

The Jayhawks (16-4, 5-0) are treated like rock (chalk) stars at Allen Fieldhouse. And the boost the crowd gives their talented roster makes them almost unbeatable at home.

"They expect to win there," Thorne said. "When you play against a team that expects to win and knows that they can win, that's a lot of confidence. When you're going against that it makes it tougher."

The Buffs (9-10, 1-4) gained some confidence after picking up their first Big 12 victory on Tuesday against Iowa State.

Using that momentum and making adjustments from the first game against KU will be very important for the rebuilding Buffs.

Thinking about history -- CU has lost 23 consecutive Big 12 road games and 25 consecutive games at Allen Fieldhouse -- is something Bzdelik can't let his team do.

"Their gym has so much history and their fans are just amazing, as we saw even at our place," Eckloff said. "I'm sure the first few moments during warm-up there will be some awe and a kind of deer-in-the-headlights look.

"But once the ball gets thrown up, me and all the other freshmen will treat it like any other game. We've played them before so that helps."



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CU men's preview: Kansas

TODAY -- Colorado travels to Lawrence to take on Kansas at 2 p.m. at Allen Fieldhouse.

BROADCAST -- Television: ESPNU; Radio: KKZN (760 AM) with Mark Johnson (play-by-play) and Charles Johnson (color).

STORYLINES -- The Buffs (9-10, 1-4) picked up their first Big 12 victory of the season with a 55-49 home win over Iowa State on Tuesday. ... Cory Higgins scored 19 points to lead CU. ... Levi Knutson and Casey Crawford broke out of scoring slumps and made their first Big 12 field goals. ... The Jayhawks (16-4, 5-0) stayed perfect in conference play with a tough 68-62 win at Nebraska on Wednesday. ... KU is looking for its fifth consecutive Big 12 crown.

KEY STAT -- The Buffs have lost 23 consecutive Big 12 road games dating back to an 80-78 overtime victory at Oklahoma State on Jan. 21, 2006. CU has also lost 25 consecutive games at Allen Fieldhouse dating back to a 75-74 victory on Feb. 10, 1983.

COACHES -- Jeff Bzdelik is 21-30 in his second season at CU. Bill Self is 158-36 in his sixth season at KU.

PROBABLE STARTERS:

Colorado -- G Nate Tomlinson, 6-2, freshman, 8.2 ppg, 2.7 rpg, G Cory Higgins, 6-5, sophomore, 17.6 ppg, 5.9 rpg, G Dwight Thorne, 6-2, junior, 12.7 ppg, 3.4 rpg, F Austin Dufault, 6-8, freshman, 8.9 ppg, 3.9 rpg, F/C Jermyl Jackson-Wilson, 6-6, senior, 5.4 ppg, 3.9 rpg.

Kansas -- G Sherron Collins, 5-11, junior, 18.7 ppg, 2.6 rpg, G Brady Morningstar, 6-3, sophomore, 7.2 ppg, 3.2 rpg, G Tyshawn Taylor, 6-3, freshman, 10.0 ppg, 2.5 rpg, F Marcus Morris, 6-8 freshman, 7.4 ppg, 5.0 rpg, C Cole Aldrich, 6-11, sophomore, 15.0 ppg, 9.8 rpg.

SERIES -- Kansas leads 116-39, including a 73-56 win in Boulder on Jan. 17.

UP NEXT -- The Buffs host Nebraska on Wednesday at the Coors Events Center (8:30 p.m., FSN).



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