



## Bufs finish Big 12 play 1-15

By Ryan Thorburn  
Saturday, March 7, 2009

MANHATTAN, Kan. -- Remember Dick Tharp's "Vision 2010" plan for the Colorado athletic department?

Among the many lofty goals the former athletic director had for the department in the 2000 plan was for the men's basketball program to be consistently ranked in the top 25 by next season.

Right now the Buffs consistently rank 12th in the Big 12.

And one of the goals for 2010 will be to snap a brutal 29-game road losing streak in conference play.

CU's free fall continued on Saturday with a 76-64 loss to Kansas State at Bramlage Coliseum.

The Buffs finished the regular season 9-21 overall and 1-15 in Big 12 play after losing their 11th consecutive game.

"The season is not over," said freshman Toby Veal, whose season seems to be just getting started. "We're really looking forward to the Big 12 Tournament because anything can hap-pen. We want to surprise everybody."

The 12th-seeded Buffs will play No. 5 Texas in the opening round of the conference tournament at 1 p.m. on Wednesday at the Ford Center in Oklahoma City.

"Whenever it's do or die, I think it brings out the best in you," Cory Higgins said after leading the team in scoring for the 18th time this season with 22 points. "I think it will make us take it up a notch."

CU turned the ball over 24 times to help the Wildcats earn a first-round bye in Oklahoma City as the No. 4 seed. K-State scored 25 points off miscues and 21 second-chance points after grabbing 22 offensive rebounds.

It would be hard for the Buffs to beat Fairview High on the road with those numbers.

"That was the whole game, rebounds and turnovers," point guard Nate Tomlinson said after finishing with six turnovers, five rebounds and four assists in 37 minutes. "It killed us."

The Buffs had a 41-38 lead at halftime after shooting 73.7 percent from the field, but the Wildcats scored the first seven points after the intermission and never looked back.

"I think in the first half we came out more aggressive and in the second half we came out kind of calm, like we could just do the same thing," Veal said. "They came out with more intensity and surprised us."

Unless your favorite color is purple this was a hard game to watch.

The officials didn't allow either side to get into rhythm by calling 48 fouls, many of the questionable variety.

The Wildcats only shot 38.7 percent with 14 missed free throws.

And the sloppy Bufs acted like they had never faced a full-court press before.

"I'm surprised we didn't handle the press because we worked on that a lot in practice," Veal said after finishing with eight points, four rebounds, two blocks and one assist in 14 minutes before fouling out. "We worked on different ways to break it and different passes."

At least the Bufs were consistent with 12 turnovers in each half.

"They sped us up, and we couldn't make plays," Tomlinson explained.

CU only had a 29-28 lead with just under five minutes to play in the first half, despite shooting over 91 percent (11-for-12) from the field at that point.

"If we wouldn't have turned the ball over we would have had a double-digit lead in the first half," Higgins lamented.

Instead, the Bufs will have to wait until 2010 to put an end to their Big 12 road losing skid, which is an ongoing nightmare/conference record.

**Kansas St. 76, CU 64 COLORADO**

**FG FT Reb**

**Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PTS**

J-Wilsn 15 2-5 1-1 1-2 2 3 5

Dufault 38 2-3 1-2 0-6 2 4 5

Tmlnsn 37 3-6 2-2 2-5 4 4 10

Higgins 39 7-16 8-8 1-3 3 4 22

Thorne II 27 4-5 2-2 1-6 1 4 10

Kelley 1 0-0 0-2 0-0 0 0 0

Coney 2 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Veal 14 3-5 2-5 1-4 1 5 8

Knutson 15 0-2 0-0 0-1 0 0 0

Crawford 12 2-4 0-0 0-1 0 2 4

Totals 200 23-46 16-22 9-32 13 26 64

**Percentages:** FG .500, FT .727.

**3-Point Goals:** 2-8, .250 (Tomlinson 2-3, Thorne II 0-1, Knutson 0-1, Higgins 0-1, Crawford 0-2).

**Team Rebounds:** 4.

**Blocked Shots:** 2 (Veal 2).

**Turnovers:** 24 (Higgins 6, Thorne II 6, Tomlinson 6, Dufault 3, Crawford, Jackson-Wilson, Knutson).

**Steals:** 4 (Tomlinson 2, Jackson-Wilson, Thorne II).

## KANSAS ST.

### FG FT Reb

### Min M-A M-A O-T A PF PTS

Colon 17 1-3 0-0 3-5 1 0 2

Sutton 23 3-7 2-2 3-6 4 4 8

Kent 25 0-10 0-2 4-6 1 2 0

Pullen 35 4-10 1-4 2-5 1 2 11

Clemente 35 8-18 4-5 1-3 3 3 24

Brown 18 2-7 2-4 2-3 2 2 6

Werner 0 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Awaji 5 1-1 0-0 1-2 0 0 2

Merrwthr 2 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 1 0

Samuels 27 4-5 9-11 3-6 5 4 17

Anderson 13 1-1 4-8 1-2 0 4 6

Totals 200 24-62 22-36 22-40 17 22 76

**Percentages:** FG .387, FT .611.

**3-Point Goals:** 6-19, .316 (Clemente 4-8, Pullen 2-6, Kent 0-2, Brown 0-3).

**Team Rebounds:** 2.

**Blocked Shots:** 5 (Colon 2, Awaji, Anderson, Kent).

**Turnovers:** 14 (Pullen 5, Clemente 3, Sutton 2, Anderson 2, Kent, Brown).

**Steals:** 10 (Pullen 5, Samuels 2, Colon, Clemente, Brown).

**Colorado 41 23--64**

**Kansas St. 38 38--76**

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# Bufs to face UT in Big 12 opener

By Ryan Thorburn  
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MANHATTAN, Kan. -- The Buffs didn't know who their opponent at the Big 12 Tournament was going to be until the charter flight landed back in Colorado.

But after CU's 76-64 loss to Kansas State on Saturday at Bramlage Coliseum in the regular-season finale, the players and coaches figured it would be a team they had almost beaten.

It turns out the 12th-seeded Buffs -- who lost eight conference games by single digits -- will play No. 5 Texas in the opening round on Wednesday at the Ford Center in Oklahoma City (1 p.m., Altitude).

The Longhorns defeated CU 85-76 in overtime at the Coors Events Center on Feb. 14.

Last year, CU became the first No. 12 seed in the history of the tournament to win when the Buffs beat Baylor in two overtimes.

"Competition is competition, and I think we can play with anybody in this league," Toby Veal said. "As long as we get it in our heads that we can do it."

The Wildcats earned the No. 4 seed and a bye with the win over CU. Kansas State (21-10) Texas (20-10), Oklahoma State (20-10) and Texas A&M (23-8) all finished with 9-7 record in Big 12 play.

"It's about us," CU coach Jeff Bzdelik said when asked about preparing for the conference tournament. "We've lost 11 games by an average of about four points. It's about us rebounding the ball and finishing plays."

## Seconds of Veal

Veal played well for the second consecutive game off the bench. The 6-7 forward was 3-for-5 from the field with eight points, four rebounds and one assist before fouling out with about four minutes left.

The talented freshman scored a career-high 10 points before fouling out against Texas A&M last Wednesday. Veal had only scored a total of nine points all season before the loss against the Aggies.

## Senior struggles

Kansas State only has one senior, Darren Kent, in the program this season. The 6-11 forward was honored by the Wildcats prior to the game but finished without a point after going 0-for-10 from the field.

Jermyl Jackson-Wilson -- the Buffs' lone senior -- also struggled during his final game at the Coors

Events Center with two points, one rebound and five turnovers against Texas A&M.

### **Notable**

K-State leads the all-time series 95-43, including the last seven meetings. ... CU was whistled for 13 fouls before the intermission, the most team fouls in a first half this season for the Buffs. K-State was also called for 13 fouls. ... CU led at halftime (41-38) for the second consecutive game and scored its most first-half points in Big 12 play this season. ... The Buffs were 23-for-46 from the field and shot 50 percent for the first time in seven games.



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## Kansas St. 76, Colorado 64

By JUSTIN NUTTER For The Associated Press

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MANHATTAN, Kan.—While Kansas State has overachieved by many people's standards this season, the Wildcats still have plenty on the line.

Picked to finish eighth in the Big 12 in the preseason coach's poll, the Wildcats are hoping for a second straight NCAA Tournament appearance. They entered their regular season finale against Colorado with an 8-7 record in Big 12 play after starting the conference season at 0-4.

"Today's game and the next two days in practice are very important," Kansas State point guard Jacob Pullen said. "It can decide whether we go to the NCAA or the NIT."

Kansas State capitalized on the opportunity, defeating the Buffaloes 76-64 behind Denis Clemente's game-high 24 points on Saturday.

Jamar Samuels added 17 points and Pullen 11 for the Wildcats (21-10, 9-7 Big 12). Cory Higgins led the Buffaloes (9-21, 1-15) with 22 points while Dwight Thorne II and Nate Tomlinson each added 10.

Thorne erupted for 30 points in Colorado's last meeting with Kansas State, which the Wildcats won 77-75 on Jan. 24.

After struggling in the opening period, the Wildcats caught fire early in the second half. Five straight points by Clemente ignited an 11-2 run that gave Kansas State the lead for good. The Buffaloes got within eight on a 3-point play by Jermyl Jackson-Wilson late in the game, but a bucket by Clemente put the game out of reach.

"This game was our season in a nutshell," Kansas State coach Frank Martin said of his team's performance. "We have had moments where people say 'Oh they stink. They can't play.' But these kids keep fighting. They are resilient."

Kansas State took advantage of mistakes by the Buffaloes, scoring 25 points off 24 turnovers in the contest. The Wildcats also won the rebounding battle, grabbing 40 boards to Colorado's 32. Each team had 15 rebounds in the first half.

"You're not going to win when Kansas State has 23 offensive rebounds and we turn it over 24 times," said Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik. "We have to rebound the ball, finish plays and play to our potential."

Toby Veal, who had six points in eight minutes for Colorado, said the Buffaloes' miscues could be credited to Kansas State's pressure defense.

"We didn't handle their defensive pressure well," he said. "At the beginning of the game, we came

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out more aggressive, but they came out with more intensity in the second half."

The loss extends Colorado's Big 12 road losing streak to 29 games. The Buffaloes' last conference road win came against Oklahoma State on Jan. 21, 2006. Colorado is now 21-41 under Bzdelik and has finished last in the Big 12 in each of the last three seasons.

The second-year head coach said the Buffaloes have played tough this season, but don't yet have the tools to succeed in the conference.

"We lost 11 games this year by an average of four points," he said. "We do not have enough depth, experience and physicality. It's plain and simple."

Kansas State appeared to take control early, using a 9-2 run that included four points by Dominique Sutton to take a 16-10 lead midway through the first half.

But a basket by Casey Crawford sparked a 7-2 run that gave the Buffaloes a 25-24 advantage with 7:35 remaining. Colorado connected on 73.7 percent of its field goal attempts in the half and led 41-38 at the break.

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