



Painful end to Buffs' season comes quickly

Texas ousts CU from Big 12 Tournament

By Ryan Thorburn

Wednesday, March 11, 2009

OKLAHOMA CITY — The scene in Colorado's depressing post-game locker room was as painful to watch as *The Wrestler*.

This time Jermyl Jackson-Wilson was the old, broken down piece of meat.

The Buffs' only senior sat in agony -- sporting a bloody lip and wearing large bags on both legs and one arm -- while talking about his final and perhaps most physically punishing defeat.

Jackson-Wilson suffered through 62 losses over the last three years at CU. Ouch.

But the 12th-seeded Buffs' 67-56 loss to Texas on Wednesday in the opening round of the Big 12 Tournament at the Ford Center was the toughest to take because there will be no chance for redemption.

"Long day," Jackson-Wilson said with a sigh.

Dexter Pittman dominated Jackson-Wilson in this cage match. Tag-team partners Casey Crawford, Trey Eckloff, Toby Veal and Austin Dufault didn't provide any resistance either as the Longhorns' 6-foot-10, 300-pound center finished with 26 points and 10 rebounds.

"If he wants to be a lineman in the NFL, I believe they'll give him a job," Jackson-Wilson said.

Jeff Bzdelik knew that Rick Barnes, the CU coach's friend and counterpart, was going to pound the ball inside to Pittman.

Since the Buffs didn't bring Ryan Miller along on the trip, there wasn't much the skinny front-court could do to fightback.

"He's almost like Shaquille O'Neal in a way," said Eckloff, who held his own on the block against Kansas center Cole Aldrich and Oklahoma All-American Blake Griffin earlier in the season. "He's just an immovable force. There's nobody that big I've ever played in my life."

Curiously, Pittman only played 12 minutes during Texas' 85-76 overtime victory in Boulder on Feb. 14. He finished with four points and no rebounds.

"He couldn't breathe," Barnes quipped.

A.J. Abrams and Damion James combined for 50 points in the first meeting but only totaled 21 points at

the Ford Center.

Pittman scored 15 points and grabbed seven rebounds in the first half to give the Longhorns a 35-29 lead. He scored eight quick points after the intermission to help provide his team a 13-point cushion with about 12 minutes remaining.

"It was very difficult because he has at least 100 pounds on me," Veal said. "Coach said to get low and try and move him. I tried that, but it wasn't working too good."

A fitting end to a broken season in which very little worked for Bzdelik and Co.

The Buffs (9-22) lost more games than any team in the 108-year history of the program.

"Pretty typical game from the standpoint that we can't finish possessions," said Bzdelik, whose team gave up 18 offensive rebounds and didn't adapt on the other end after Texas switched to a zone defense.

Dwight Thorne (15 points), who will be the team's lone senior next season and Levi Knutson (11) were the only CU players to score in double figures.

Cory Higgins, who scored a career-high 34 points in the last meeting, had a season-low five points on 1-for-11 shooting.

The Buffs only defeated one Division I opponent (Iowa State) in the final 21 games and ended the season with a 12-game losing streak.

Everyone on the roster except the bruised and battered outgoing senior will be back for more in 2009-10.

"I didn't want it to be over this fast and this way, but sometimes life throws you a curve ball," Jackson-Wilson said. "I'm not going to get depressed about it or anything. Once one thing ends something else begins."

In this case, the healing process.

Texas 67, Colorado 56

COLORADO

FG FT Reb

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

Jkn-Wlsn 25 4-9 0-0 3-6 0 4 8

Dufault 18 1-2 0-0 0-0 0 4 2

Tmlnsn 39 2-5 0-0 0-2 2 2 5

Higgins 32 1-11 3-4 0-1 2 2 5

Thorne II 39 4-11 5-5 0-5 0 2 15

Veal 14 1-3 4-4 1-1 0 0 6

Knutson 19 3-5 4-4 3-6 1 1 11

Crawford 10 1-2 2-2 0-3 1 3 4

Eckloff 4 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 1 0

Totals 200 17-48 18-19 12-30 6 19 56

Percentages: FG .354, FT .947.

3-Point Goals: 4-17, .235 (Thorne II 2-5, Knutson 1-2, Tomlinson 1-4, Dufault 0-1, Higgins 0-5).

Team Rebounds: 6.

Blocked Shots: 0.

Turnovers: 12 (Thorne II 4, Jackson-Wilson 3, Tomlinson 3, Eckloff, Higgins).

Steals: 5 (Higgins 3, Tomlinson, Crawford).

Technical Fouls: None.

TEXAS

FG FT Reb

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

Pittman 28 9-13 8-12 6-10 2 2 26

Abrams 39 4-6 2-2 1-4 1 3 10

Balbay 24 0-3 2-2 0-2 3 1 2

James 31 4-13 2-2 5-11 0 2 11

Mason 22 2-3 2-3 1-2 2 2 6

Johnson 25 3-9 1-3 3-5 1 1 7

Smith 10 0-2 1-2 0-1 1 1 1

Atchley 18 2-3 0-0 1-2 0 2 4

Chpmn 3 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Totals 200 24-53 18-26 18-38 10 14 67

Percentages: FG .453, FT .692.

3-Point Goals: 1-6, .167 (James 1-3, Smith 0-1, Atchley 0-1, Abrams 0-1).

Team Rebounds: 1.

Blocked Shots: 6 (Atchley 2, James 2, Pittman, Balbay).

Turnovers: 12 (Pittman 3, Atchley 2, James 2, Johnson 2, Balbay, Mason).

Steals: 8 (Abrams 5, Atchley 2, Balbay).

Technical Fouls: None.

Colorado 29 27--56

Texas 35 32--67

A -- 15,413. Officials -- John Higgins, Steve Olson, Mike Thibodeaux.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.



Higgins struggles in Buffs' Big 12 loss

By Ryan Thorburn
Thursday, March 12, 2009

OKLAHOMA CITY -- Colorado's best player was at his worst.

Cory Higgins, who played brilliantly throughout the regular season, couldn't get anything going during CU's 67-56 loss to Texas on Wednesday in the opening round of the Big 12 Tournament at the Ford Center.

The sophomore guard was just 1-for-11 shooting and finished with a season-low five points.

Jeff Bzdelik said Higgins was driving to the glass early against the Longhorns' man-to-man defense, but the entire team was unable to get much going after Rick Barnes switched to zone.

"They were really having a hard time guarding us. We were just able to go buy them and shoot a high percentage," Bzdelik said. "We were very passive against the zone for whatever reason. ... Cory had some good looks. If you want to single out one play it would be when he stole the ball and got a layup blocked. It was kind of the way the day went for us offensively."

Higgins, voted third-team All-Big 12 by the league coaches this week, wasn't the only Buff who struggled. Casey Crawford had a dunk blocked by the rim, Nate Tomlinson was 1-for-4 from behind the arc and Austin Dufault only took two shots.

Dwight Thorne led CU with 15 points as the team finished 17-for-48 (35.4 percent) from the field.

"They were playing in the passing lanes and not really pressuring the ball. It kind of threw us off a little bit," Thorne said. "Our main problem was rebounding the basketball though."

Texas cashed in 18 offensive rebounds for 24 points and turned 12 CU turnovers into 17 more points.

Goodbye, Jermyl

Jermyl Jackson-Wilson didn't end his career with one last victory at the Big 12 Tournament the way Richard Roby and Marcus Hall did a year ago. But it wasn't due to a lack of effort as CU's only senior limped off the floor after battling Dexter Pittman all afternoon.

"People will see that I played hard on the court and that's how I will approach whatever I do in life," Jackson-Wilson said after finishing with eight points and six rebounds in his final college game.

Next season Thorne will be the team's only senior.

"Jermyl battled his heart out," Thorne said. "Unfortunately, this is his last game. I wish him the best. I

love him. He competed all throughout this tough year."

Finishing strong

Levi Knutson added 11 points off the bench for the Buffs. The sophomore shooting guard played through a painful hip injury all season and will undergo surgery for the second consecutive offseason.

Toby Veal was another bright spot down the stretch with a career-high 10 points against Texas A&M in the home finale and six points in 14 minutes during the season finale.

Tough Turkey

Dogus Balbay, the only player among the Longhorns' top seven who is not from the state of Texas, had three assists and one turnover. Since becoming the starter eight games ago, the 6-0 sophomore from Istanbul, Turkey, has 52 assists and only 15 turnovers.

Nate Tomlinson needs to grow into that type of player for CU next year. The freshman point guard had five points, three steals, two assists and only one turnover against Texas.

Looking ahead

The Buffs' 2009-10 schedule will include the program's first appearance in the prestigious Maui Invitational (Nov. 23-25). The field includes Arizona, Cincinnati, Gonzaga, Maryland, Vanderbilt and Wisconsin.

CU is also expected to host Denver and Wyoming at the Coors Events Center during non-conference play and will take on Colorado State at Moby Arena, the site of the Buffs' last true road victory on Dec. 22, 2007.

The Big 12 schedule will include a trip to Austin.

Series

Texas leads the all-time series 13-8 and improved to 3-1 against CU in Big 12 Tournament games.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

sports

It's one, done for Buffs

Texas 67, CU 56

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 03/12/2009 12:30:00 AM MDT

OKLAHOMA CITY — Freshman forward Austin Dufault and his Colorado teammates won't waste any time getting back into the weight room.

It could be today, perhaps — once the soreness wears off from banging into Texas junior center Dexter Pittman during a 67-56 loss Wednesday to the Longhorns in a first-round game of the Big 12 Tournament at the Ford Center.

Pittman, who dunked his way to a career-best 26 points and completed a double-double with 10 rebounds, goes 6-feet-10 and 298 pounds and plays even bigger. He has shed almost 75 pounds of baby fat and replaced much of it with muscle since arriving in Austin in 2006.

"It's time to start eating and start lifting," said the 6-8, 210-pound Dufault, who was preparing for a Class B high school regional in North Dakota at this time last year. "When you're

watching the Big 12 on TV, you can't tell how big and strong these teams are. You can't prepare for how physical it is."

CU Basketball

[View](#) slide show of the career of

- [Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik](#) .

[Visit](#) the CU Stats Page for men's boxscores, Big 12 standings, team leaders and

- [more](#) .

[Visit](#) the CU Stats Page for women's boxscores, Big 12 standings, player pages and

- [more](#) .

[Visit](#) Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at

- [CU sports](#) .

Certainly not against a mountain of a man like Pittman.

"That's probably the closest we're going to get to playing against Shaquille O'Neal," said CU freshman forward Trey Eckloff, who needs to add some girth to his 6-9, 225-pound frame.

Pittman entered the game averaging 9.2 points. Improving by the week, he looked unstoppable.

Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik tried five different players on Pittman. The problem was, CU defenders allowed Pittman to catch the ball too deep.

"We were unable to double-team him," Bzdelik

Advertisement

Office Liquidators is Now Offering Office Supplies

Office Liquidators has been Colorado's **Low Price Leader** for Office Furniture **for 23 years** and will now do the same with **Office Supplies!**

\$20 off
initial order of \$60
enter code PC2060

Still locally owned with the same **great service.**

OFFICE LIQUIDATORS
Profit From Our Experience

ORDER ONLINE
www.OfficeLiquidators.com

303-759-3375 11111W. 6th Ave/LAKEWOOD
Between Kipling & Simms

Hours: M-F 8:30 - 6:00, Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

said. "We weren't very forceful on him. We're not physical enough."

The No. 5 seed, Texas (21-10) advanced into a quarterfinal game today against fourth-seeded Kansas State.

Colorado (9-22) depends heavily on guard Cory Higgins, who entered the game ranked fifth (17.8) among Big 12 scorers. The usually steady sophomore had scored a career-best 34 points in the earlier meeting with Texas, an 85-76 overtime loss, but couldn't get to the rim this time. He finished with a season-low five points on 1-for-11 shooting.

COLORADO (9-22)

Jackson-Wilson 4-9 0-0 8, Dufault 1-2 0-0 2, Tomlinson 2-5 0-0 5, Higgins 1-11 3-4 5, Thorne II 4-11 5-5 15, Veal 1-3 4-4 6, Knutson 3-5 4-4 11, Crawford 1-2 2-2 4, Eckloff 0-0 0-0 0.

Totals 17-48 18-19 56.

TEXAS (21-10)

Pittman 9-13 8-12 26, Abrams 4-6 2-2 10, Balbay 0-3 2-2 2, James 4-13 2-2 11, Mason 2-3 2-3 6, Johnson 3-9 1-3 7, Smith 0-2 1-2 1, Atchley 2-3 0-0 4, Chapman 0-1 0-0 0. **Totals**

24-53 18-26 67. Texas 35-29. 3-point goals — Colorado 4-17 (Thorne II 2-5, Knutson 1-2, Tomlinson 1-4, Dufault 0-1, Higgins 0-5), Texas 1-6 (James 1-3, Smith 0-1, Atchley 0-1, Abrams 0-1). Fouled out — None. Rebounds — Colorado 30 (Jackson-Wilson, Knutson 6), Texas 38 (James 11).

Assists — Colorado 6 (Higgins, Tomlinson 2), Texas 10 (Balbay 3). Total fouls — Colorado 19, Texas 14. A — 15,413.

Halftime —

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or
tkensler@denverpost.com

Advertisement

Office Liquidators is Now Offering Office Supplies

Office Liquidators has been Colorado's **Low Price Leader** for Office Furniture **for 23 years** and will now do the same with **Office Supplies!**



\$20 off
initial order of \$60
enter code PC2060

Still locally owned with the same **great service.**

OFFICE LIQUIDATORS

Profit From Our Experience

ORDER ONLINE
www.OfficeLiquidators.com

303-759-3375 11111W. 6th Ave/LAKEWOOD
Between Kipling & Simms

Hours: M-F 8:30 - 6:00, Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™