



Bzdelik's Buffaloes tally win

Roby, Hall, Silas spark CU in coach's debut

By Ryan Thorburn
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Comparative scores don't usually mean much in college basketball.

Still, Colorado was able to open up the Jeff Bzdelik era with a 70-56 victory in an exhibition game against Canada's Brock University on Thursday night in front of a sparse crowd of 2,722 at the Coors Events Center.

The small but seasoned Badgers, who play in the Ontario University Athletics league and have 13 games under their belts this season, were able to defeat Air Force 24 hours earlier at Clune Arena.

"I'm very proud of our players," Bzdelik said. "We gutted out a win as a unit for the first time together. It's something to build on."

The diehards came to see the Buffs run Bzdelik's offense, which the team has been practicing mostly against man-to-man defense, and pick apart the opposition the way his Falcons had the past two seasons.

Brock didn't cooperate, however, employing a zone for most of the evening to try and neutralize the more athletic Big 12 foe.

Although CU finished 4-for-16 (25 percent) from behind the arc, Richard Roby dominated in the paint on both ends, scoring 23 points and grabbing 14 rebounds. The Badgers only had 19 rebounds as a team.

"It definitely helps your field-goal percentage when you take a lot of shots in the paint and get a lot of layups," said Roby, who made 11 of the 19 shots he took. "That helps your outside game, too. After you get a couple layups you start feeling good and things start running smoother."

Marcus Hall, playing with a splint on his surgically repaired thumb, finished with 12 points and five assists. The senior, who redshirted last season due to academic problems, was 4-for-11 from the field and had two turnovers.

"It has been over 400 days since I last played in a game. It was nice just to be out there and go up and down against somebody other than my teammates," Hall said. "I'm just glad to get this first game out of the way."

Hall said his thumb is healthy and that he will probably lose the protective splint before next Tuesday's exhibition against Regis.

The Buffs had more turnovers (11) than assists (9) in the first half and trailed 35-33 at the intermission.

But the home team picked up its defensive intensity and held the Badgers to 21 points in the second half on 39.1 percent shooting (9-for-23).

Hall and Roby each attacked the rim and scored on CU's first two offensive possessions of the second half to give their team its first lead (37-35) since a 6-5 advantage 2:59 into the game.

After Brock regained the lead, the Buffs went on a 13-0 run that began with a Xavier Silas 3-pointer and ended with the talented sophomore scoring on a backdoor layup to make the score 57-46 with 7:13 remaining.

"It was a much better performance in the second half, which is very encouraging," Bzdelik said. "Brock University is a very difficult team to play."

Silas finished with 17 points on 6-for-9 shooting. Freshman Cory Higgins added seven points and five rebounds.

"We have a long ways to go," Bzdelik said. "But this was good going out there and playing against somebody else."

Brock led 19-8 with 11:57 remaining in the first half after making back-to-back 3-pointers.

The Badgers — who made 17 of 31 3-point shots, including one by Rohan Steen with under a second to play to beat Air Force 66-63 on Wednesday — were 7-for-21 from behind the arc against the Buffs. And that included a meaningless hoop with one second remaining on Thursday.

"It's tough having back-to-back games, and I think our guys just ran out of gas," Brock head coach Ken Murray said. "Colorado did a good job of staying on us and trying to wear us out. Fatigue definitely played a factor in the second half."

Notable

Jermyl Jackson-Wilson started at forward for CU but only played 13 minutes after picking up three quick fouls. ... Marcus King-Stockton (six minutes) and 6-11 freshman Caleb Patterson (did not play) are expected to be in the rotation this season but weren't in the game plan for the diminutive Brock lineup. ... Levi Knutson, another freshman, was 0-for-2 from the field (two 3-point attempts) but had three rebounds and two assists in 22 minutes. ... CU assistant sports information director Linda Poncin sang the national anthem of each team's country.



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