



Bufs put some teeth into 'D'

Hall will need dental work after victory over Savannah State

By Ryan Thorburn

Saturday, November 17, 2007

MADISON, Wis. — Richard Roby might still have a shot at the NBA if he can play more consistently like he did on Friday night.

But the senior forward, despite scoring 17 points to lead Colorado to a 58-43 victory over Savannah State in the America's Youth Classic at the Kohl Center, can forget about a career in the NHL after this comment:

"I thought he just had a bloody lip or something like that," Roby said. "When I saw his tooth on the floor it was kind of disgusting. It scared me."

Roby was talking about teammate Marcus Hall, who lost two teeth during the Bufs' gruesome win.

Hall earned first star of the game honors after taking an unintentional but still painfully damaging elbow to the mouth with 17:35 remaining. He left the court and headed to the locker room with blood streaming down his chin while one of his front teeth remained on the hardwood.

"One got knocked out," the point guard said after channeling his inner hockey player. "One was kind of hanging."

Hall, who had surgery to repair damaged ligaments in his thumb just before the season, returned to the game and knocked down four free throws in the final 1:21 to put the game on ice.

"Marcus Hall is such a tough, hard-nosed competitor," CU head coach Jeff Bzdelik said. "He's had surgery, he's had teeth knocked out, but he just seems to be so resilient in bouncing back. He wants it so bad. And he's really the heart and soul of this basketball team in so many ways because of his inner strength."

Hall said the only pain he experienced was a slight "headache" and that he is going to put off a trip to the dentist until after the road trip so he can play in tonight's game against Wisconsin.

"They want to put (the teeth) back in (today), but that would mean I couldn't play," Hall said after finishing with 10 points, three rebounds and two assists. "I guess I'll just wear a mouth guard."

Roby, who had only scored a combined 11 points in CU's first two games, made the score 1-0 with a free throw before the opening tip. Savannah State was assessed an administrative technical foul for not submitting its starting lineup 10 minutes before game time.

"I'm just chipping away and trying to get better every game," Roby said. "I've got my head up and things are looking better every day, so I'm happy about that."

The Buffs (2-1) took what appeared to be a commanding 41-26 lead after a three-point play by Roby with 7:44 remaining. But the Tigers (2-3) were able to create four sloppy CU miscues with a full-court press and cut the deficit to 41-37 with 5:31 remaining.

"We were just turning the ball over, and their press got us out of sync a little bit," said Hall, who committed four of his team's 22 turnovers. "If our offense doesn't start right, it's usually not going to finish right. And we understand that."

Xavier Silas, who scored a career-high 24 points during the Buffs' 83-59 victory over Florida A&M on Thursday, ended Savannah State's 11-0 run with a 3-pointer.

Moments later, Levi Knutson came up with clutch back-to-back 3-pointers to make the score 51-39 with 1:57 remaining. On one of those possessions all five CU players touched the ball before the true freshman buried the big shot from the corner.

"It was nice to give the team a lift. My team did a great job swinging the ball and finding the open guy," said Knutson, who was 3-for-4 from behind the arc with 12 points. "I just happened to be the one that was open and I'm glad I could knock down some shots for the team."

The Buffs led 25-16 at the intermission after holding Savannah State without a field goal for a stretch of 9:34. The Tigers led 13-12 after a hoop by Anthony Jones and trailed 25-16 when Jovonni Shuler ended the drought with 1:06 remaining in the first half.

"We have to dig out wins because at times we are limited offensively," Bzdelik said. "I was very proud of the way our players battled and dug out a win against a very good defensive team."

Savannah State was 16-for-58 (27.6 percent) from the field and scored 15 of its points off turnover. CU was 19-for-35 shooting (54.3 percent), including 7-for-16 (43.8 percent) from behind the arc, and had a 24-14 scoring edge in the paint.



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First true road test on tap for CU

By Ryan Thorburn

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MADISON, Wis. — Allen Fieldhouse and Gallagher-Iba Arena have more history and perhaps better atmospheres.

But the most difficult venue Colorado will play in this season will likely be the Kohl Center.

Since Bo Ryan took over the Wisconsin program six years ago, the Badgers are 94-5 in their state-of-the-art home arena. And that includes Friday night's 88-40 victory over Florida A&M in the America's Youth Classic nightcap.

The Badgers (3-0), who host the Buffs (2-1) at 6 p.m. today to put a cap on the three-day event, have outscored their three opponents by an average of 39.7 points per game.

"It's our first real road game and it's going to be in a hostile environment against a very good team," Richard Roby said after scoring 17 points to help CU improve its record to 2-0 at the Kohl Center. "But we're looking forward to it to see where we're at and see what we need to improve on."

The Buffs have been starting four guards and forward Jermyl Jackson-Wilson (6-foot-6). The Badgers' starting five includes 6-7 forward Marcus Landry, 6-11 forward/center Brian Butch, 6-11 center Greg Stiemsma and 6-7 guard/forward Joe Krabbenhoft.

"We're going to be grossly undersized. At the same time, maybe we can cause some problems for them matching up because of the mobility we have up front," CU head coach Jeff Bzdelik said after his team's 58-43 victory over Savannah State on Friday night. "We're going to have to do a great job of keeping them away from deep post position and offensive rebounds."

In order to pull off the upset, Marcus Hall said the Buffs will have to cut their turnovers at least in half after committing 22 of them against Savannah State.

CU will also have to shoot a high percentage from the field, which Bzdelik's bunch was able to do in the wins over Florida A&M (54.7 percent) and Savannah State (54.3 percent).

"We just need to play a complete 40 minutes together as a team," Bzdelik said. "And play with great will and determination and hustle and execute as best we can."

Happy homecoming

Jackson-Wilson is from Milwaukee and played in the Big Ten at Ohio State before transferring to CU. His high school team beat Butch's in the state title game.

"Just being back here in Wisconsin is good for me," Jackson-Wilson said. "Hopefully I can do the same thing I did during the state tournament and win three in a row here."

Jackson-Wilson led the Buffs with 13 rebounds against Savannah State.

He was also 3-for-6 from the floor for six points.

"I'm from Wisconsin, but no one is going to be cheering for me out there in all that red," Jackson-Wilson said. "We've just got to play hard, play with intensity and do what we do."

Defensive change

The Buffs, who usually play man-to-man defense, executed a 2-3 zone very well against the Tigers, who were 3-for-15 from behind the arc.

"That's a defense we've been working on. It's tough to score against when you run it right," Levi Knutson said. "As long as we're talking and communicating with each other it's going to be a good defense for us."

Recruiting update

The Buffs are still waiting to collect signatures on all of the letters of intent for their five recruits before Bzdelik and his staff can comment on the class.

The prize prospect, 6-7 forward Toby Veal, is from Savannah, Ga.

Notable

The Buffs wore their black road uniforms against Savannah State after beating Florida A&M in the home whites. ... CU only had four points in transition after enjoying a 20-6 edge in fastbreak points during the 83-59 win over Florida A&M. ... CU's 22 turnovers were its most since committing 23 against Kansas last season (Feb. 14, 2007).



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