

March 11, 2009



Texas – 67
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An interview with:



CHARLIE FISS: All right. We're ready to begin with the Colorado Buffaloes and Coach Bzdelik and his two student-athletes, Dwight Thorne, II, and Levi Knutson.

Coach, your thoughts on today's game?

COACH JEFF BZDELIK: Pretty typical game for us from the standpoint that we can't finish possessions.

When you yield 18 offensive rebounds, give them 24 points off those 18 offensive rebounds, you know, for the most part we are getting stops but it has been our problem all year.

Can't finish a defensive possession. So I'm really proud of my basketball team. We're undersized in so many ways with our youth and inexperience and lack of size and they battled. They have been competitive for a great majority of the year, and today was no different.

Q. Dwight, you will be the only senior next year. What does the team have to do this off-season to win those close games? You have lost 11 single digits. What did you take away from this season as far as a learning experience?

DWIGHT THORNE: First of all, we just got to learn from what we did this year. We got to learn from the games we played. We had close games. We have to learn from the blow-outs we

had. We just got to get better. That's going to be the thing for this off-season is just to get better and learn.

I think if we do that, we got some new guys coming in, got a lot of returners, so we should be okay for next year.

Q. Was it not boxing out on Texas or are they just bigger and stronger where it didn't really matter if you boxed out? Were they just getting the boards no matter what? How did you all see that?

LEVI KNUTSON: It definitely matters. We got to have all five guys in there on the defensive boards, getting a body in. If they don't send their guards, our big guys have to block, or we got to block our man and have the guards come in there and fish out some of those rebounds. They are definitely bigger than us, no question. But that doesn't mean we can't rebound the ball. We got to have all five guys in there. Everybody got to block out and pursue the ball.

Just because they're bigger, doesn't mean we can't rebound the ball with them.

Q. Dwight and Levi, can you talk about Jermyl and his last game as a buffalo?

DWIGHT THORNE: He battled his heart out. He did a hell of a job battling Dwight Thorne. Unfortunately, it is his last game. I wish him the best. I love him. He competed all throughout the year this year.

LEVI KNUTSON: Much of the same. We all love Jermyl in that locker room. He battles his heart out on the floor, he's always battling bigger guys, like Dwight said against Pittman tonight. Jermyl is a guy we look up to. He is always on the floor, always taking charges, fishing out rebounds. So that's something we can all take from him and I also wish him the best moving forward.

Q. Dwight, what was Texas doing defensively different than in the first meeting when you guys shot so well against them?

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DWIGHT THORNE: They were in the zone most of the game this afternoon. We played them in Boulder, they were more of a man team.

The zone, they were playing in the passing lanes and not really pressuring the ball and it kind of threw us off a little bit. We handled it decently. Our main problem was rebounding the basketball, though. That was our main problem for the night.

Q. Did you have a feeling that they were going to pound it into Pittman, and was there much you guys could do about it?

COACH BZDELIK: We are very well aware of Pittman and our lack of size inside. He caught the ball so deep that we were unable to double team him. Our defensive positioning in the beginning of the game wasn't the way we planned it to be.

Staying disciplined to our game plan is imperative. We didn't want to front him and allow him to get angles and dunks. We wanted to keep a body between him and the basket and force him out as much as possible to catch it at least away from the rim and then come off of either Mason or Balbay.

But he caught it so deep and we allowed him angles. We weren't very forceful on him. But, again, to make him shoot over the top of us and then to block him off and not allow him six offensive rebounds, as Levi alluded to, the question about rebounding, sinking and filling with a body on the weak side block, I can remember vividly four times where we did not do that and they got eight points off just improper sink and fills.

See, we're not physical enough. When I talk about our lack of toughness throughout the course of the year, I don't refer to fighting someone. I refer to just the discipline to be physically strong enough to hold and contest position and to sink and fill properly, to hold and contest low-post position from a defensive point. That's what I'm referring to.

How do you correct that? You correct that with strength. You correct that with depth because we wear down and experience. And all those things, depth, experience and strength are correctable. They're correctable through recruiting. They're correctable through experience. They're correctable through physical development.

Q. What is the first thing you guys do to get ready for next fall?

COACH BZDELIK: Our preparation for next fall begins now, it really does. That's what we discussed in the locker room.

We've been competitive for a great majority of the year with an extremely young team. How do we take the next step? Just as I mentioned: Physical development. It is 24/7.

And we talked about Pittman. Here is a young man that was, what? Over 400 pounds, maybe 14 months, 15 months ago. How did he get to where he is? Through 24/7 -- 24 hours a day, 7 days a week of discipline, of eating right, sleeping right, exercising.

I remember when Texas came and played us at Coors just several weeks ago, they were actually lifting weights on the court an hour and a half before the game. It is just that kind of discipline. Winning doesn't come easy. If it did, everybody would be doing it. How do you learn to win? Well, first of all, you have to develop your body.

Again, that's 24/7. Recruiting, I just had an assistant coach over the last four days drive 1500 miles and met us here. I will be going out Friday morning and we've already signed three good players and we hope to add another one or two.

So that will improve the depth. They need to -- when they come back from spring break March 30th, we'll start individual development as well as a strong discipline strength program. It all adds up. And so the question that they have to ask themselves every day is "what have I done today to improve myself and Colorado basketball for tomorrow?"

If they can answer something yes every day, then we're headed in the right direction.

Q. Jeff, Cory might have had his worst game of the year, at least statistically. Did he have an off night or was it something Texas was doing?

COACH BZDELIK: They started off man-to-man and they really had a hard time guarding us, I thought. We were just able to go by him and shot a high percentage. The zone, we were very passive initially against the zone for whatever reason. We weren't -- we have to get the ball inside the zone and our bigs weren't moving real well and our perimeters were just settling and standing around. We weren't penetrating gaps.

Cory had some good looks and I thought

pretty much -- if you wanted to single out one play is when they stole the ball and went in there and got it blocked. It was kind of the way the evening went for us offensively.

Their players were longer and stronger and finished and played above the rim and we played below the rim.

CHARLIE FISS: Coach, thank you very much.

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