

Arizona Daily Star
SPORTS

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WILDCATS BASKETBALL: NO. 1 ARIZONA 69, COLORADO 57



PHOTOS BY KELLY PRESNELL / ARIZONA DAILY STAR

Arizona freshman Aaron Gordon, left, claws with Xavier Johnson after stripping the Colorado forward of the ball in the second half. Gordon recovered the ball and finished with a thunderous dunk for the No. 1-ranked Wildcats, who improved to 19-0. Gordon finished with 12 points and four rebounds.

Quick-starting Cats stuff Buffs

Despite rebounding dip, UA tops Colorado to raise record to 19-0

By Bruce Pascoe
ARIZONA DAILY STAR

On yet another bright Arizona Wildcats evening, when Sean Miller found it “awesome” to tie another school record, there was a dark side the coach still could not ignore Thursday night.

By the time Arizona’s dazzling, defensive-oriented 18-4 start turned into a 69-57 win over Colorado at McKale Center, tying UA’s school record for consecutive wins over college teams at 19, some of the stats had evened out, including a hot-button one that is particularly close to Miller’s heart.

That is, Arizona and Colorado each had 32 rebounds, and the Buffs managed 10 offensive rebounds, just one fewer than the No. 1 Wildcats’ total.

It was the second time in the past three games that the Wildcats, so dominant on the boards for most of the season, had tied their opponent in rebounding.

Arizona, which also tied USC 30-30 on the boards in Los Angeles on Jan. 12, entered Thursday’s game out-rebounding opponents by an average of 10.6 per game.

“If you ever want to get scared as an Arizona fan, when you see us not out-rebound our opponent, that’s the sign of a lot of bad things that are coming our way,” Miller said. “Some of it was Colorado is a very good offensive rebounding team, but we have to do a better job of rebounding.”

On the surface, you could argue it wasn’t a big deal. After all, when a team goes up 18-4, maybe it’s human nature to relax a bit.

But, as good as the Wildcats have been during their school-record 19-0 start, they sometimes need rebounding to compensate for weaker areas.

On Thursday, UA made only 3 of 15 three-pointers, and hit just 57.1 percent of its free throws, needing the early scoring of Brandon Ashley, a game-high 18 points from Nick Johnson and another dunk-a-thon from Aaron Gordon (12 points) to get it done.

It was good, it was a record, but it wasn’t quite what the Wildcats were hoping for against a team that appears to still be learning how to play without all-around

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UP NEXT

- What: Utah at No. 1 Arizona
- When: 6 p.m. Sunday
- TV: FS1
- Radio: 1290-AM, 107.5-FM, 990-AM (Spanish)

SN On StarNet: Keep up with the Wildcats’ basketball team on Bruce Pascoe’s blog at azstarnet.com/pascoe



T.J. McConnell gets a hand in the face of Colorado’s Askia Booker in the second half. The Buffaloes didn’t get many easy buckets, shooting just 38.5 percent in UA’s 69-57 victory.



Greg Hansen

Celebrity growing; Cats just play, win

Everybody wants a piece of No. 1, not just Colorado and Utah, not just Herb Sendek and Mike Montgomery, but everybody with a pen, pencil and internet connection.

Sports Illustrated and ESPN produced a pair of hosannas to the Arizona Wildcats this week. Yahoo did a blowout on the furnishings in Nick Johnson’s apartment. The Arizona Republic printed not one but two you-guys-are-the-greatest decrees, and every conceivable obscure website (sportsonearth.com, for example)

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