

CU women stumble in second half to rival Rams

By Joshua Lindenstien Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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FORT COLLINS -- Colorado women's basketball coach Kathy McConnell-Miller spoke this week of the need for her players to stay within "the Colorado bubble" and block out external distractions if they were to become a good road team.

The Buffs' bubble burst in the second half at Moby Arena on Friday night.

After leading rival Colorado State by as many as 16 in the first half, the Buffs crumbled down the stretch in a 69-61 defeat.

It was CU's third defeat against rival CSU in major sports this semester as the men's basketball team lost 77-62 on Thursday in Fort Collins and football team lost 23-17 in Boulder in September.

The loss was the seventh in a row on the road dating back to last season for the women's program and it showed that, while the Buffs' might be heading in the right direction, there is still a long road ahead toward the goal of becoming a postseason contender.

Down 1 with under 3 minutes to play, the Buffs turned the ball over on three straight possessions as the Rams built a 61-55 lead with a minute left. From there, CSU hit eight free throws in a row to seal the win.

"I think the travels, I think the decisions at the end, part of it was personnel, part of it was frustration, and part of it's being on the road and having to make a great play," McConnell-Miller said. "And we didn't do that."

CU fell to 6-2 on the season and saw its four-game winning streak snapped. CSU (7-3), meanwhile, continued its best start since 2004-05.

"This will always be in the pit of our stomachs to lose this game," said CU senior guard Bianca Smith, who led the Buffs with 19 points off the bench. "It's a huge rivalry game, and I think we're going to take this back into practice and use it for competition, use it for fuel for the next opponent."

The Buffs return to Boulder for six straight home games, including the Big 12 opener. But they left Fort Collins feeling like they'd let a chance for a road win slip away against a team they should beat.

Neither team was good offensively. CU shot 33 percent from the floor, including just 8 of 24 from 3-point land. CSU hit just 32 percent of its shots. Both teams committed 16 turnovers, including nine in the second half for CU.

CSU's shooting was especially dismal in the first half as the Rams hit just one of their first 16 shots.

Chatilla Van Grinsven had 16 points and nine rebounds to lead four Rams in double-figure scoring. Brittany Spears added 15 points, and Meagan Malcolm-Peck had 12 for the Buffs.

Colorado led 27-11 with 5:03 to play before halftime, but CSU went on a 12-4 run heading into the intermission to make it 31-23.

"I think we had a lapse there," Smith said. "We went up 16 and felt like we could just coast. I think that's what happened. We let down and figured we could come in here, get up 16 and then just take a breather and they would just go away. And they didn't. They kept working. They worked hard for 40 minutes."

An 11-2 run to start the second half gave CSU a 34-33 lead. That marked the first off 11 lead changes in the second half as the teams traded mini runs.

Smith hit a pair of 3s to make it 50-46 CU, and the Rams answered with five straight points. Spears hit a 3 for the lead with 4:24 to go, and CSU's Bonnie Barbee answered with a 3 of her own.

The Buffs' last lead came on a Spears layup that made it 55-54 with 2:50 left. But Van Grinsven's layup four seconds later put the Rams on top for good.

Spears traveled on CU's next possession, and guard Whitney Houston traveled on consecutive possessions after that.

Smith and McConnell-Miller both acknowledged that the Buffs let officiating get in their heads in the second half on non-calls where the Buffs felt there was contact.

"I think we just had a letdown of not only mental toughness, but physical toughness, getting tired," Smith said. "I think we've got to be tougher, especially when we're on the road."

Notable

Bianca Smith's three 3-point baskets gave her 198 for her career, moving her one ahead of Kate Fagan for fourth all-time at CU. ... Former Silver Creek standout Meghan Heimstra started for CSU and scored seven points and grabbed six rebounds in 35 minutes. ... McConnell-Miller missed out on getting her 150th-career victory as a head coach. ... CSU closed CU's lead in the all-time series to 30-11.

Colorado St. 69, Colorado 61

COLORADO (61)

Player MIN FG FT Rb A PF PT

MalcolmPeck 38 5-8 0-2 8 0 3 12

Spears 37 5-12 2-2 9 2 6 15

Dunn 16 0-2 0-0 3 3 1 0

Fressle 25 2-8 1-1 4 0 1 5

Jeffery 31 1-7 2-2 8 1 4 4

Smith 19 6-18 4-4 3 0 4 19

Houston 14 2-6 0-0 0 1 5 4

Seabrook 1 0-0 0-0 0 0 2 0

Dale 4 0-1 0-0 0 1 1 0

Mullaney 15 1-4 0-0 2 1 1 2

TOTALS 200 22-66 9-11 43 9 25 61

3-Point Goals: 8-24, .333 (Spears 3-3, Smith 3-12, M. Malcolm-Peck 2-2, Dunn 0-1, Jeffery 0-1, Houston 0-1, Mullaney 0-1, Fressle 0-3.

Team Rebounds: 6.

Blocked Shots: 4 (Spears 2, Jeffery, M. Malcolm-Peck).

Turnovers: 16 (Spears 5, Jeffery 4, Houston 2, M. Malcolm-Peck, Dunn, Fressle, Smith, Mullaney.

Steals: 7 (Jeffery 2, M. Malcolm-Peck, Separs, Dunn, Smith, Mullaney.

Technical Fouls: None.

COLORADO STATE (69)

Player MIN FG FT Rb A PF PT

Mestdagh 35 5-17 0-0 4 3 1 12

Heimstra 31 1-3 5-8 6 1 3 7

Barbee 22 1-8 2-2 4 1 3 5

VnDnAdel 31 3-7 7-9 6 3 3 14

Simmons 31 2-5 8-9 6 2 1 13

VnGrinsvn 26 5-13 5-5 9 2 3 16

Kennedy 15 0-1 0-1 2 0 0 0

Cooke 9 1-2 0-0 1 0 0 2

TOTALS 200 18-56 27-33 45 12 14 69

3-Point Goals: 6-19, .316 (Mestdagh 2-9, Simmons 1-1, Van Den Adel 1-2, Van Grinsven 1-3, Barbee 1-4).

Team Rebounds: 7.

Blocked Shots: 3 (Heimstra 2, Simmons).

Turnovers: 16 (Van Den Adel 3, Heimstra 2, Barbee 2, Simmons 2, Van Grinsven 2, Cooke 2, Mestdagh, Kennedy, team).

Steals: 5 Heimstra 3, Mestdagh, Kennedy.

Technical Fouls: None.

Colorado 31 30 -- 61

Colorado State 23 46 -- 69

Officials: Price, Jones, Barlow.

Attendance: 1,696.

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csu women 69, colorado 61

Rams complete sweep of rival Buffs

By Natalie Meisler
The Denver Post

Posted: 12/12/2009 01:00:00 AM MST



CSU's Meghan Heimstra, center, battles for the ball against Colorado's Meagan Malcolm-Peck, left, and Alyssa Fressle during Friday's game in Fort Collins. (Rich Abrahamson, Fort Collins Coloradoan)

FORT COLLINS — The heat was on a Colorado State women's basketball team as it dropped

behind Colorado by 16 points in the first half.

Either make up the gap or incur the disappointment of an entire university for not sweeping the bitter rival to the south.

CSU chose the former Friday, rallying to a 69-61 win over the Buffs (6-2). The 2008-09 academic year sweep was in the bag. The Rams (7-3) beat their Big 12 neighbor in football, volleyball, and men's and women's basketball.

As Rams coach Kristen Holt was leaving Moby Arena on Thursday after the men's win, she said, "Last night was awesome, but it put the pressure on us. People said, 'OK, Coach, let's get the sweep.' "

CU looked like it was going to win going away.

"We could have been down by 30 in the first half," Holt said.

Counterpart Kathy McConnell-Miller added, "When we're on someone else's floor, we have to put them away."

She took the blame for reaching too deep on her bench while players settled on some poor shots in the second half.

"It's a great feeling being the top team in Colorado," said CSU sophomore forward Meghan Heimstra, the lone in-state player on the Rams' eight-player active roster.

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THE DENVER POST

The Rams overcame the coldest of starts (1-for-14 from the floor in the first 12:37) in a game of momentum shifts. Holt said her players were thrown early by some of the Buffs' new defensive looks.

CSU didn't reach double figures until Chatilla van Grinsven's 3-pointer with 6:16 left before intermission to trail 22-11. Meagan Malcolm-Peck and Alyssa Fressle, two of three in-state starters for the Buffs, extended it to 27-11 before CSU took over and finished the first half on a 11-4 run.

After halftime, momentum switched. CU fell cold while European imports van Grinsven and Natalie van den Adel took over. After Erin Cooke provided CSU's first lead of the game, there were eight lead changes before van Grinsven's layup put the Rams ahead for good with 2:46 left. The Rams sealed it at the foul line, led by Zoi Simmons, who connected on 8-of-9.

Holt said this week she hoped her lectures about the rivalry would work on the European players. She worried needlessly.

"At the beginning of the year I went to the football game. That got me going," said Kim Mestdagh of Belgium. "I realized this was a rivalry."

COLORADO (6-2)

M. Malcolm-Peck 5-8 0-2 12, Spears 5-12 2-2 15, Dunn 0-2 0-0 0, Fressle 2-8 1-1 5, Jeffery 1-7

2-2 4, Smith 6-18 4-4 19, Houston 2-6 0-0 4, Seabrook 0-0 0-0 0, Dale 0-1 0-0 0, Mullaney 1-4 0-0 2. **Totals 22-66 9-11 61.**

COLORADO STATE (7-3)

Mestdagh 5-17 0-0 12, Heimstra 1-3 5-8 7, Barbee 1-8 2-2 5, Van Del Adel 3-7 7-9 14, Simmons 2-5 8-9 13, Van Grinsven 5-13 5-5 16, Kennedy 0-1 0-0 0, Cooke 1-2 0-0 2. **Totals 18-56 27-33 69. Colorado 31-23. 3-point goals — Colorado 8-24 (Spears 3-3, Smith 3-12, M.Malcolm-Peck 2-2, Dunn 0-1, Houston 0-1, Mullaney 0-1, Jeffery 0-1, Fressle 0-3), Colorado St. 6-19 (Mestdagh 2-9, Simmons 1-1, Van Den Adel 1-2, Barbee 1-4). Fouled out — Houston. Rebounds — Colorado 43 (Spears 9), Colorado St. 45 (Van Grinsven 9). Assists — Colorado 9 (Dunn 3), Colorado St. 12 (Mestdagh, Van Den Adel 3). Total fouls — Colorado 25, Colorado St. 14. A — 1,696.**

Halftime —

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Shorthanded Rams butt Buffs

By Patrick Ridgell
© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

FORT COLLINS — The shouting coming from Colorado's locker room after the game said it all.

Its women's basketball team lost 69-61 at Colorado State on Friday night. The Buffs blew a 16-point first-half lead and watched as a short-handed opponent — CSU dressed eight players — showed courage and resiliency in a comeback that the Buffs (6-2) believed never should have happened.

While those shouts from inside their locker room after the game were not clear enough to be understood, the players provided a good idea of what coach Kathy McConnell-Miller was talking about.

"Like coach said, we have to have a killer instinct. We have to develop that and work on it, because we don't have it yet," CU guard Alyssa Fressle said.

"We got complacent on both the defensive and offensive ends. We didn't play together. It's a tough thing to see. ... Overall, we did not play together as a team, and this team has so much more talent than what we showed tonight. We all know it."

CU led 27-11 on Fressle's jumper with 5 minutes, 3 seconds to play in the first half. Colorado State (7-3) scored the next 10 points and eventually went into the break trailing 31-23.

There are a lot of things that'll bug CU about Friday's loss. It shot 33 percent from the floor and, according to McConnell-Miller, settled for 3s and jumpers when it didn't need to. Guard Bianca Smith said the Buffs let officiating get into their heads. And CU committed four of its 16 turnovers in the final 2:10 — three on travels. McConnell-Miller called them "very disturbing."

But letting Colorado State up when they had the Rams down was the worst for the Buffs.

"We lapsed there," Smith said. "We got up 16 and felt like we could just coast. I think that's what happened."

"We thought we could come in here and get up 16 and then just take a breather, and they would just go away. They didn't. They kept working and worked hard for 40 minutes. That's what happens."

Colorado State went ahead 60-55 with 1:26 left when CU left Chatilla van Grinsven all alone in the lane and she hit a layup for two of her team-high 16 points. The Rams hit nine of 10 free throws in the final 65 seconds.

Smith led CU with 19 points. She moved into fourth place all-time at CU with 198 3s, but she shot 3-for-12 from beyond the arc.

COLORADO STATE 69, COLORADO 61

COLORADO (6-2)

Malcolm-Peck 5-8 0-2 12, Spears 5-12 2-2 15, Dunn 0-2 0-0 0, Fressle 2-8 1-1 5, Jeffery 1-7 2-2 4, Smith 6-18 4-4 19, Houston 2-6 0-0 4, Seabrook 0-0 0-0 0, Dale 0-1 0-0 0, Mullaney 1-4 0-0 2. Totals 22-66 9-11 61.

COLORADO STATE (7-3)

Mestdagh 5-17 0-0 12, Heimstra 1-3 5-8 7, Barbee 1-8 2-2 5, Van Den Adel 3-7 7-9 14, Simmosn 2-5 8-9 13, Van Grinsven 5-13 5-5 16, Kennedy 0-1 0-0 0, Cooke 1-2 0-0 2. Totals 18-56 27-33 69.

Halftime—Colorado 31-23. 3-Point Goals—Colorado 8-24 (Smith 3-12, Spears 3-3, Malcolm-Peck 2-2, Fressle 0-3, Dunn 0-1, Jeffery 0-1, Houston 0-1, Mullaney 0-1), Colorado St. 6-19 (Mestdagh 2-9, Barbee 1-4, Van Grinsven 1-3, Van Den Adel 1-2, Simmons 1-1). Fouled Out—Houston. Rebounds—Colorado 43 (Spears 9), Colorado St. 45 (Van Grinsven 9). Assists—Colorado 9 (Dunn 3), Colorado St. 12 (Mestdagh 3, Van Den Adel 3). Total Fouls—Colorado 25, Colorado St. 14. A—1,696.

Former Silver Creek star Meghan Heimstra had seven points and six rebounds for Colorado State. She was one of four Rams who played 31 minutes or more.

CU's four-game winning streak ended. The Buffs are off until they host Southern Utah on Dec. 19. The loss also snapped CU's three-game winning streak over CSU.

In keeping with their men's basketball and football counterparts, CU lost its seventh straight road game. It won't play another one until Jan. 12 at Texas Tech, a league game. So it'll be a while before the Buffs see what they learned Friday.

"When you're on somebody else's floor, you have to learn how to put teams away, and we just didn't have that mentality," McConnell-Miller said.

Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell. He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.