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Easy night for Colorado

By Patrick Ridgell
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BOULDER — Nothing like eking out a 49-point win when you don't feel well.

Colorado's women's basketball team found just such an elixir Wednesday night in a 92-43 defeat of Grambling State that lost most of its drama shortly after the National Anthem.

Winning was nice for the Buffs, but of more pressing concern is their health, especially that of starting guard Chucky Jeffery, who did not play due to a sprained right ankle. She sat on the bench wearing a boot on her right foot.

Jeffery was one of four Buffs who suffered injuries Sunday during the team's first practice following a four-day Christmas break. Coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said Courtney Dunn, Brenna Malcolm-Peck and Chelsea Dale got hurt before Jeffery sprained her ankle, prompting the coach to stop and wonder.

"I thought God might be sending me a sign that it was too tough of a practice for their first day back," she said.

McConnell-Miller said Jeffery, CU's third-leading scorer at 8.9 points a game, was being evaluated following Wednesday's win, and she expects Jeffery to play Saturday when CU faces McConnell-Miller's alma mater, No. 23 Virginia (3:30 p.m., FSN).

The other injured Buffs were well enough to play Wednesday. In fact, McConnell-Miller played everyone but Jeffery as CU (9-2) won its third straight and seventh in its past eight. It was its third of six straight home games.

McConnell-Miller has said CU's non-conference schedule, particularly this six-game stretch, is designed for her to determine roles and rotations and for CU to enter the Big 12 feeling good and confident. Conference play begins Jan. 9 when Missouri visits town.

The question about how well this schedule is preparing the Buffs for January and February arose again Wednesday night, following a game in which CU led Grambling State (3-6) 25-7 after 10 minutes.

"In a lot of areas we're prepared," McConnell-Miller said.

"We've been playing so long together, when we run something we know exactly what we can get out of it. ... I'm pleased with our progress and where we are."

McConnell-Miller said Virginia will provide her a gauge of just how progressed the Buffs are. Virginia has size and strength and well-conditioned athletes, plus a rich tradition that McConnell-Miller knows well. She played in four NCAA Tournaments with Virginia.



Colorado's Chucky Jeffery cheers for her team from the bench against Grambling State on Wednesday at the Coors Events Center in Boulder. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**

There will be an emotional element when McConnell-Miller faces the woman who coached her, Debbie Ryan.

“To have the opportunity to have a coach that was truly a mentor to me come into our house and coach against her is great,” McConnell-Miller said. “I am very excited about it.”

TIP-INS: CU’s 92 points were its season high. The Buffs topped 80 points for the fifth straight home game. ... CU is 8-0 at home. ... Brittany Spears led CU with 20 points. Every Buff but Britney Blythe and Kailah Bailey scored. Dale had a career-best 11 points. ... Point guard Whitney Houston made her second start, relieving Jeffery. ... Attendance was reported at 2,107.

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

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COLORADO 92, GRAMBLING ST. 43

GRAMBLING ST. (3-6)

W. Brown 2-6 5-6 9, Cooper 2-6 3-6 7, Marshall 1-5 2-2 5, Watson 2-6 0-0 4, Blocker 0-2 2-4 2, Johnson 3-8 0-0 7, D. Brown 1-3 1-2 3, Dobbins 2-13 0-0 4, McCowan 1-4 0-0 2. Totals 14-53 13-20 43.

COLORADO (9-2)

M. Malcolm-Peck 4-9 2-4 11, Spears 8-15 2-2 20, Dunn 2-4 2-2 8, Fressle 3-4 0-0 6, Houston 2-3 0-0 5, Smith 3-8 0-0 8, Blythe 0-0 0-0 0, Seabrook 1-2 2-2 4, Dale 4-4 1-1 11, B. Malcolm-Peck 2-3 0-0 6, Mullaney 5-6 0-0 11, Bailey 0-0 0-0 0, MacFarlane 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 35-59 9-11 92.

Halftime—Colorado 45, Grambling St. 20. 3-Point Goals—Grambling St. 2-11 (Marshall 1-4, Johnson 1-2, Watson 0-3, W. Brown 0-1, Cooper 0-1). Colorado 13-27 (Smith 2-6, Spears 2-5, B. Malcolm-Peck 2-3, Dale 2-2, Fressle 2-2, M. Malcolm-Peck 1-5, Mullaney 1-2, Houston 1-1, Fressle 0-1). Fouled Out—None. Rebounds—Grambling St. 24 (Blocker 5), Colorado 42 (Dunn 8). Assists—Grambling St. 5 (D. Brown 3), Colorado 21 (Spears 6). Total Fouls—Grambling St. 12, Colorado 18. A—2,107.