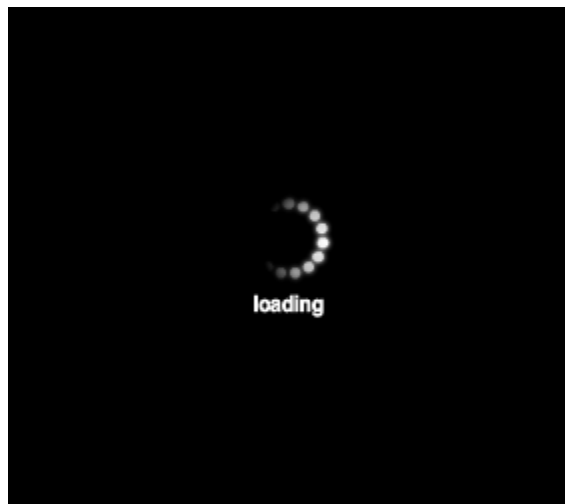


CU Buff women cruise to win vs. DU Pioneers

Spears, Dunn help Colorado improve to 5-1

By **Kyle Ringo**, Camera Staff Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 12/03/2009 12:13:00 AM MST



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Proof will come over the long haul, but there are signs the Colorado women's basketball team is finally hearing what coach Kathy McConnell-Miller has been preaching the past four years.

Perhaps the best indication of all was the scoreboard Wednesday night at the Coors Events Center as the final seconds clicked away on a 84-57 drubbing of Denver. It was the first meeting between the programs in 10 years.

In previous years, the Buffs would have found a way to keep the game close. But once they finally broke away at the end of the first half, there was no let up or cold spell, just solid basketball extending the CU win streak to three games.

The Buffs improved to 5-1 in the early going this season. With the 5-2 start by the men's team, it is the best combined start to a basketball season in Boulder since 2003-04.

Another sign the women's program could finally be turning the corner came through the play of senior center Courtney Dunn, who scored a career-best 16 points and a team-high six rebounds. Dunn scored in a variety of ways making two 3-point attempts, three short-range shots and all four of her free throws.

The last time Dunn scored more than nine points in a basketball game she was wearing the red-white-and-black uniforms of St. Mary's College High School in the Bay Area in California leading her team to the state quarterfinals in 2006.

"She's got the biggest upside of any player on this team, and you see it," McConnell-Miller said. "She can score on the block. She can shoot the three. She is athletic. She can put the ball on the floor and get to the rim, and when she puts her mind to it and she is committed to doing it, she will do it."

McConnell-Miller said there was a moment Wednesday when, for the first time in her career, Dunn asked to be put in the game. Dunn said her coaches pushed to her best performance as a Buff when they challenged her not to settle for 3-point shots and become more of an inside presence.

Now she needs to build on her career night. She had scored 16 points in the previous five games combined.

"I'm going to try to be more consistent in practice," Dunn said. "I've been told that I tend to slack off more in practice, but I'm going to try to keep it up and then bring it out in games next time."

One final sign of progress from the Buffs was a subtle nuance within the game noticed only by the coaches at the time but shared with reporters afterward.

McConnell-Miller said she has been teaching her players how to defend a certain play that nearly every opponent runs against the Buffs for the past two years. She said her players recognized it on their own for the first time during the game Wednesday and junior Brittany Spears made a steal just the way it has been coached in practice.

"I was so happy," McConnell-Miller said. "And she knew it when she got it that she made the right play. Things are clicking for them, and they're starting to feel good about it."

A little later, there was a moment Spears didn't feel so good about.

With the Buffs leading by 27 points and 4:08 remaining, Spears stepped on a loose ball as she was running down court. She fell awkwardly and hit the court face first but managed to rise and walk to the bench after team athletic trainers came to her aid. She received one stitch inside her lip after the game.

When asked if she had a fat lip, Spears deadpanned, "A little bit, but I still look good though."

Spears scored a team-best 17 points and grabbed five rebounds. Freshman Chucky Jeffery (12) and senior Bianca Smith (13) were the other Buffs who scored in double figures. Jeffery has scored in double figures in three straight games. McConnell-Miller was able to get 14 players into the game with 13 of them seeing meaningful action.

The Buffs produced 22 more field goal attempts than the Pioneers, something McConnell-Miller chalked up to increased athleticism on her team and better defense.

Denver (1-4) self-destructed down the stretch in the first half, allowing the Buffs to turn what had been a close contest into a double-digit deficit.

The Pioneers went scoreless in the final 2 minutes, 40 seconds of the half and committed several turnovers, including one in the final seconds that led to Bianca Smith's buzzer-beating 3-pointer. The shot gave the Buffs a 38-28 halftime lead.

Three DU players scored in double figures, led by forward Kaetlyn Murdoch who tallied 23. Ashly Robinson scored 11 points with eight rebounds.

The Buffs play host to Seton Hall on Sunday at 1 p.m.

Notable

Spears moved into 17th place on CU's all-time scoring list and 16th on CU's career-rebounding list. She now has 1,114 points. She has scored in double figures in 10 consecutive games dating back to last season. ... Smith has made at least one 3-pointer in every game this season and has started the season making 13 of 14 free throws.

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colorado women's basketball

Jeffery's play sparks Buffs' first-half run

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — A Colorado freshman guard with a funny name and a flashy game, Janeesa "Chucky" Jeffery seems to sense when her team needs an emotional lift.

During CU's 84-57 victory Wednesday night over Denver, Jeffery found a way to make a spectacular play at just the right time. With an old-fashioned three-point play, the former Sierra all-stater sparked a 15-4 run to finish the first half, leaving the Buffaloes feeling confident and in rhythm.

"She's instinctive," CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said. "She makes us better when she's on the floor."

The play was all Jeffery. After stealing the ball at midcourt, she raced the other way and was

fouled while making a transition layup. Denver players, in the midst of a six-game stretch on the road, looked tired.

"We needed to pick it up," Jeffery said. "There's usually something on defense that gets us going."

The 15-4 blitz put Colorado (5-1) in control with a 38-28 halftime lead. A Coors Events Center crowd of 1,847 watched the Buffs cruise from there. Denver (1-4) got 23 points from sophomore forward Kaetlyn Murdoch in the first meeting between the programs since 1999.

Jeffery, a deft ballhandler who can play both guard positions, finished with 12 points, five rebounds, three assists and two steals. She got plenty of help. Junior forward Brittany Spears scored 17 points, and senior center Courtney Dunn contributed 16. With 12 points at halftime, Dunn already had bettered her previous career best scoring effort (nine) for a game.

"Coaches said I needed to be more of an inside presence instead of settling for 3-pointers," Dunn said. "I took that to heart."

Wednesday night marked a homecoming of sorts for DU assistant coach Shelley Sheetz, a Colorado All-America guard and the 1995 Big Eight Conference player of the year. "It's a little different from the other side," Sheetz said afterward.

DENVER (1-4)

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Robinson 1-6 9-12 11, Murdoch 10-15 3-6 23,
Culberson 6-11 0-0 12, Rice 1-3 3-4 5, E.Smith
0-1 4-4 4, Palmere 0-2 0-0 0, Gotarez 0-0 0-0
0, Feeney 1-2 0-0 2, Jaspersen 0-2 0-0 0.
Totals 19-42 19-26 57.

COLORADO (5-1)

M.Malcolm-Peck 4-8 0-0 9, Spears 6-12 4-4 17,
Dunn 5-7 4-4 16, Fressle 4-8 0-0 8, Jeffery 4-7
4-6 12, B.Smith 5-12 1-1 13, Houston 0-2 0-0 0,
Blythe 0-0 0-0 0, Seabrook 2-3 0-0 4, Dale 0-1
0-0 0, B.Malcolm-Peck 1-2 1-2 4, Mullaney 0-1
0-0 0, Bailey 0-0 0-0 0, MacFarlane 0-1 1-2 1.
**Totals 31-64 15-19 84. Colorado 38-28. 3-
point goals — Denver 0-1 (Culberson 0-1),
Colorado 7-17 (Dunn 2-3, B.Smith 2-7, M.
Malcolm-Peck 1-1, B.Malcolm-Peck 1-2,
Spears 1-3, Fressle 0-1). Fouled out — None.
Rebounds — Denver 27 (Robinson 8),
Colorado 35 (Dunn 6). Assists — Denver 14
(E.Smith 6), Colorado 13 (Jeffery, Spears 3).
Total fouls — Denver 18, Colorado 19. A —
1,847.**

Halftime —

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Buffs rout Denver

By Patrick Ridgell
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BOULDER — Brittany Spears is OK.

For the Colorado women's basketball program, that might be the best news that came out of Wednesday's 84-57 defeat of Denver.

With a little more than 4 minutes remaining and the Buffs up by 28 points, Spears tipped the ball and dashed after it as it rolled down the court. But before she could gather it, she stepped on it, fell awkwardly and slammed her face onto the Coors Events Center floor, snapping her head back.

She rolled around in obvious pain until trainers tended to her and teammates helped carry her away. Moments later, she wandered into the post-game press conference holding ice on a fat lip after having received one stitch in her mouth.

Could've been worse.

"I still look good," Spears cracked.

Her team could share such sentiment.

The Buffs (5-1) had some problems with their post defense early, but things finally clicked. They tore off a 15-4 run to end the first that Bianca Smith capped with a 3 at the buzzer. Their lead neared 30 in the second half as CU finished with 20 forced turnovers and a 31-for-64 clip from the field. Denver went 19-42, taking 22 fewer shots than the Buffs.

"We have to be happy with the victory and, most importantly, the second half," coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said. "The first half, our post defense left a lot to be desired. We allowed too much penetration that left the bigs exposed. We came out in the second half with a lot of energy."

Said Denver coach Eric Johnson: "Suddenly it's a 10-point lead and in the second half they continued to assert their will."

CU center Courtney Dunn heeded coaching advice and spent more time in the paint to contribute 16 points and six rebounds. Of greater importance to McConnell-Miller was that Dunn was so assertive, when the coach pulled her with four fouls, she wasn't happy and asked to go back in. McConnell-Miller quickly complied.

"That was a good sign," McConnell-Miller said.

The coach also complimented Chucky Jeffery (12 points), and discussed her next opponent, Seton Hall, which last year beat CU 77-40 in New Jersey. That makes Sunday's return date something of a grudge match.

Spears led CU with 17 points, and entered leading it with 19 a game.

Two Buffs were in a car wreck earlier this fall — one sustained a concussion and another suffered a concussion in the season opener. Others have missed practice time dealing with the bug that's going around.

So, seeing that Spears was OK and hearing her crack jokes was a relief.

“This year has been full of challenges for us ... and it's really been a balancing act,” McConnell-Miller said.

“We've been through a lot that has really nagged this team. So I did want her off the floor. I had someone at the (scorer's) table waiting to go in for her.

“So, yeah, when she goes down, the heart skips a beat.”

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

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Bufs rout in-state foe DU

Women's basketball raises record to 5-1

By Marlee Horn on December 3, 2009

The Colorado Buffaloes women's basketball team is keeping the ball rolling to maintain their strong start to the 2009-10 season.

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The Buffs decisively beat the Denver Pioneers 84-57 Wednesday in front of 1,847 at the Coors Events Center to move their record to 5-1.

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Early in the first half, CU set the tone with two quick three-point baskets. Defensively, the team kept the Pioneers in single digits by limiting DU to a few field goals.

After a timeout, DU crept from behind with the help of 12 made free throws in the first half. However, the close score didn't last for long.

Free throws by freshman guard Chucky Jeffery and senior center Courtney Dunn helped pushed CU's lead to 31-26. Later, Bianca Smith sank a three-pointer in the last seconds of the first half to give the Buffs a 10-point lead heading into the locker room.



(CU Independent/Beth Schonberger)

CU head coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said the team regrouped during halftime, which helped them to the large victory margin.

"I thought in the first half, our post defense left a lot to be desired," McConnell-Miller said. "We allowed a lot of penetration that left our bigs exposed, but I thought we came out in the second half with a lot of energy."

In the second half, the Pioneers didn't stand a chance.

The Buffs came out strong and held DU to three points in the first four minutes.

DU errors such as turnovers and airballs helped propel CU. They continued to score after some moderate fumbling from both teams thanks to a lack of Pioneers' defense.

With less than five minutes left in the game, the Buffs led 78-51. Even after a hard face-plant by junior forward Brittany Spears, the team didn't lose their momentum and finished the game with a resounding 27-point win.

In the postgame press conference, McConnell-Miller emphasized how injuries, concussions and car accidents can't hold her team back. Spears seemed relatively unfazed by her fall despite stitches and an ice pack pressed to her mouth.

"I still look good though," Spears said with a fat lip.

Some players in particular stood out. Dunn finished with 16 points and six rebounds while Jeffery had 12.

McConnell-Miller lauded Dunn's enthusiasm for getting into the game, and her work ethic on dedicating herself to practice and not settling for three-pointers, thus becoming more of an interior player.

McConnell-Miller also said she enjoys Jeffery's instincts for the game and knew from the time of her recruitment that she would be a star player.

"I'm just here to raise her game and take her game to another level," she said.

Contact CU Independent Staff Writer Marlee Horn at Marlee.horn@colorado.edu.

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