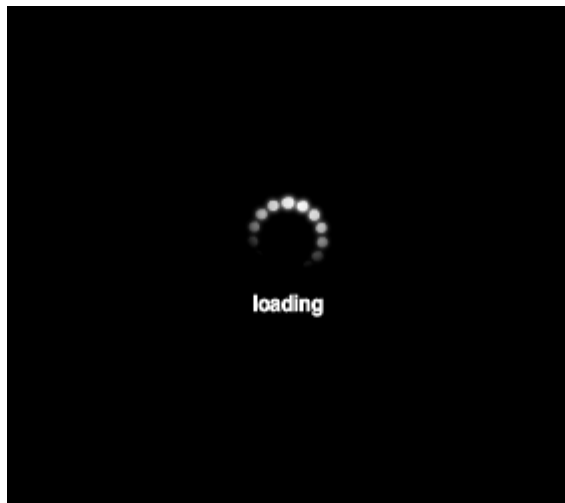


No. 6 Huskers pull away from CU Buff women

Jeffery`s first double-double not enough for CU

By **Joshua Linden** Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 01/30/2010 05:47:11 PM MST



Click on any photo to see full gallery

The script is starting to become a little too familiar for the Colorado women`s basketball team: Fall behind early. Rally to make things interesting. Fall short in the end.

It played out again on Saturday, though even a more complete 40 minutes might not have been enough to top Nebraska`s firepower.

The sixth-ranked Cornhuskers used a strong second half to pull away for an 80-64 victory in front of 3,550 at the Coors Events Center.

Colorado dropped its third straight and lost for the fifth time in six games to fall to 12-8 overall and 2-5 in Big 12 Conference play.

The Huskers, who have dominated all season long, improved to 19-0 and 6-0 in league to remain one of two undefeated teams left in the country along with No. 1 Connecticut.

"It was not lack of effort," CU head coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said. "It was a very good team capitalizing on mistakes.

"There`s no doubt that Nebraska is one of the top teams in the country and in the conference."

The loss was the Buffs` 16th in a row against ranked opponents and kicked off a four-game stretch against ranked teams in which they`ll also face No. 14 Baylor, No. 19 Texas and No. 11 Oklahoma.

After trailing by as many as 14 in the first half, the Buffs managed to cut the deficit to 50-44 with 12 minutes left in the game on a 3-pointer by Meagan Malcolm-Peck. But the Huskers gradually extended their lead, going up by as many as 19 late.

When Nebraska needed her most, standout forward Kelsey Griffin came through. The 6-foot-2 senior scored 16 of her game-high 24 points in the second half. She scored eight in a row for NU at one point as the Buffs were making their comeback.

"We worked hard I thought defensively," McConnell-Miller said. "We made a lot of adjustments and were pretty effective at times, whether it was man or zone. But we didn`t limit Kelsey Griffin`s inside touches at all."

Nebraska shot 55 percent as a team, going inside early and often in the second half. Guard Dominique Kelley scored 18 points, and Cory Montgomery and Yvonne Turner added 11 each for the Huskers.

"We got inside touches and we got shots close to the basket and didn`t have to rely on all 3s," NU head coach Connie Yori said.

Aside from the final few minutes of the game, McConnell-Miller said she was proud of the way her team played. But the coach also acknowledged that the Buffs can`t keep playing from behind, no matter the opponent.

"We`ve talked about that," she said. "We don`t want to be this comeback team and always have to fight from behind. They have that mentality though. They can do it. ... But it`s no way to live, it`s no way to exist in this game."

Freshman guard Chucky Jeffery led CU with 14 points and 11 rebounds for her first-career double-double. Bianca Smith also scored 14 points, and Courtney Dunn and Brittany Spears had 10 each for the Buffs, who out-rebounded Nebraska 36-27.

Six days after a 10-minute field goal drought doomed them against Oklahoma State, the Buffs dug their hole Saturday with a pair of extended stretches in the first half where they failed to make a basket.

The first was a 3½-minute scoreless stretch that came just after Jeffery's putback gave the Buffs their only lead of the game at 7-6. The Buffs later went nearly five minutes without a field goal as a 16-11 deficit ballooned to 27-13 with five minutes to go before halftime.

CU had 20 turnovers and struggled to get shots off before the shot clock expired several times against NU's pressure defense.

"I think we just have to be tougher in those stretches," said Smith, who cut Nebraska's lead to 37-29 just before halftime with a pair of 3-pointers. "I think sometimes we lose our focus and that's when we get into those four-minute stretches where teams push a six point lead to a 12 point lead. And I think with this league with veteran teams, we can't have those lapses."

Nebraska 80, CU 64

NEBRASKA (80)

Player MIN FG FT Rb A PF PT

Griffin 30 10-15 4-9 5 3 3 24

Montgomery 33 5-10 1-2 6 2 0 11

Moore 33 0-2 2-4 2 7 1 2

Turner 25 4-9 0-0 2 0 4 11

Kelley 24 4-7 10-13 1 2 1 18

Neals 17 2-4 0-0 2 2 3 6

Reeves 1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Kuhlmann 20 2-3 1-2 3 2 0 6

Periago 4 0-0 0-0 0 0 2 0

Redmon 13 1-1 0-0 4 0 2 2

Totals 200 28-51 18-30 25 18 16 80

3-Point Goals: 6-15 (Turner 3-5, Neals 2-4, Kuhlmann 1-1, Griffin 0-2, Montgomery 0-2, Moore 0-1.).

Team Rebounds: 2.

Blocked Shots: 3 (Redmon 2, Montgomery).

Turnovers: 12 (Montgomery 3, Neals 2, Griffin, Moore, Turner, Reeves, Kuhlmann, Redmon, team 1).

Steals: 10 (Griffin 2, Turner 2, Neals 2, Montgomery, Kelley).

Technical Fouls: None.

COLORADO (64)

Player MIN FG FT Rb A PF PT

M.Mlcm-Pk 33 4-9 0-0 2 2 5 9

Dunn 25 3-6 3-3 3 1 5 10

Fressle 22 2-7 0-0 2 2 1 4

Spears 35 3-8 4-4 9 5 4 10

Jeffery 38 5-10 4-7 11 5 4 14

Smith 29 5-11 1-2 1 0 3 14

Seabrook 13 1-1 0-0 4 1 3 2

Mullaney 3 0-0 1-2 0 0 0 1

McFrIne 2 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Totals 200 23-52 13-18 32 16 25 64

3-Point Goals: 5-15, (Smith 3-7, M. Malcolm-Peck 1-2, Dunn 1-3, Spears 0-2, Jeffery 0-1).

Team Rebounds: 4.

Blocked Shots: 1 (M. Malcolm-Peck 3).

Turnovers: 20 (Jeffery 6, Spears 5, Seabrook 3, Dunn 2, M. Malcolm-Peck, Fressle, Mullaney, team 1).

Steals: 4 (Jeffery 2, Fressle, Smith).

Technical Fouls: None.

Nebraska 37 43 -- 80

Colorado 29 35 -- 64

Officials -- Lisa Mattingly, Mary Day, Scotty Hermann

Attendance -- 3,350.

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Break gives Buffs chance to regroup

By Joshua Lindenstein Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 01/30/2010 11:43:53 PM MST

If there's a perfect time for the Colorado women's basketball team's bye slot in Big 12 play, it might be this week.

The Buffs -- 80-64 losers to sixth-ranked Nebraska on Saturday at the Coors Events Center -- have been dinged with sickness and other various nagging physical ailments lately. And they're riding their worst stretch of the season.

The Buffs have lost three in a row and five of their last six.

With six days between the loss to Nebraska and this Saturday's game at Baylor, they now get a chance to regroup and address issues that need improvement.

The Buffs will also get some much-needed rest with no practice today or Wednesday.

"It comes at a great time," CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said. "We've got to get back. We've got to teach the basics. Post defense is crucial for us.

"Right now we've got some days to look at where we are and where we need to be."

McFarland engaged

Saturday was Alumni Day for the Buffs, with more than 20 former players honored at halftime. But the day turned out to be extra special for Jackie McFarland.

The former star forward was brought down to the court during the first media timeout to take part in what she thought was a promotion where a blindfolded participant is steered toward a prize by the crowd's approving or disapproving cheers.

McFarland found the prize, but when she got there it wasn't just free pizza.

Her boyfriend, Caleb Ring, was there on one knee waiting to propose with a diamond ring. A stunned and elated McFarland accepted.

"It was definitely a shock," said McFarland, who is now an accountant in Denver.

The spoils of 19-0

Go 19-0 and they will come.

A large portion of the 3,550 in attendance Saturday donned Nebraska red.

The game was one of the Huskers' three Fastbreaker road trips of the season where groups of fans from around the state bus to away games together and spend the night in the host city.

The undefeated Huskers' following has grown and grown this season. A school record crowd of 13,303 showed up for their home win over Kansas State last weekend.

And while the local paper -- the Lincoln Journal Star -- didn't send a reporter to the struggling NU men's team's game in Boulder last week, they did have a beat writer at the Coors Events Center on Saturday.

Notable

Nebraska improved to 27-39 all-time against CU, including 6-25 in Boulder ... Colorado wore gold uniforms instead of their usual home whites for the second time this season. The first was a win over Missouri.

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Woelk: NU women provide good lesson for Buffs

Neill Woelk Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 01/30/2010 11:50:57 PM MST

The Colorado women's basketball team looked across the floor Saturday afternoon and saw the future.

They hope.

The Buffs lined up against the No. 6 team in the country on Saturday, and met with the predictable result: Nebraska 80, Colorado 64.

The Huskers had everything the Buffs don't -- at least not yet. That would include a tenacious-bordering-on-vicious defense, quality post play and experience across the board.

Experience? NU coach Connie Yori has a team of veterans most coaches can only dream of. The Huskers' starting lineup on Saturday included three seniors, a junior and a freshman -- and two of those seniors were fifth-year seniors while the junior has been in the program for four years.

Colorado, meanwhile, threw a pair of true freshmen, a sophomore, a junior and a senior on the floor.

Do the math on that matchup. The majority of NU's starters were already learning Yori's system when the majority of CU's starters were just getting acquainted with their high school teammates.

It's not a fact that escaped CU head coach Kathy McConnell-Miller.

"Nebraska's older players have started virtually every game in their careers, and they have just continued to improve in their system," McConnell-Miller said. "They are battle tested, and fought the fight consistently in this conference."

Not that the Buffs backed down Saturday. They fought and scrapped, enough to cut a double-digit deficit late in the first half down to eight by halftime, and then produce another surge midway through the second half that reduced a 13-point deficit to six.

But every time the Buffs threw a punch, the Huskers dealt two in return. And when push came to shove, the Buffs made mistakes and the Huskers didn't.

Nebraska point guard Lindsey Moore had seven assists and just one turnover. CU's Chucky Jeffery handed out five assists, but also had six turnovers. That was the story across the board, as CU finished with 20 turnovers compared to Nebraska's 12.

Truth be told, Nebraska is one of those teams that exemplifies the "whole is greater than the sum of the parts" description. The team that might be the best in the Big 12 also might not have a single first-team All-Big 12 player.

One year ago, the Huskers finished just 15-16 overall and 6-10 in the Big 12. But this morning, they are 19-0 and 6-0. Their experience and chemistry creates a smooth-running machine.

It's something the Buffs hope to emulate in a year or two, when freshmen Jeffery and Meagan Malcolm-Peck and sophomore Alyssa Fressle have a couple years experience under their belts.

"We talk about that all the time, especially with Chucky," McConnell-Miller said. "She has seen some of the best players in the league in four straight games, and she is going to make some mistakes, but she is growing. ... This conference is not for the average player; it is not for the player that doubts themselves, but for a player who has an arrogance or confidence about themselves, who can stand up every night and continue to take the hits.

"We just have to keep battling and keep playing."

Jeffery is a tremendously talented youngster -- along with her five assists, she tallied 14 points and 11 rebounds for her first career double-double. Fressle is improving at a steady pace and Malcolm-Peck will benefit greatly from a year of adding some strength and muscle that will help her withstand the rigors of the Big 12.

But the Buffs will still need some dramatic improvement in their post play, and they'll have to take Saturday's lesson to heart -- defense makes the difference.

None of that will be easy. But it's certainly not out of the realm of possibility.

If you need any proof, just look at the sixth-ranked team in the nation.

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Bufs fall to perfect Huskers

Women's basketball drops third straight

By Cheng Sio on January 30, 2010

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Count the Colorado Buffaloes women's basketball team as another casualty in Nebraska's surprising season.

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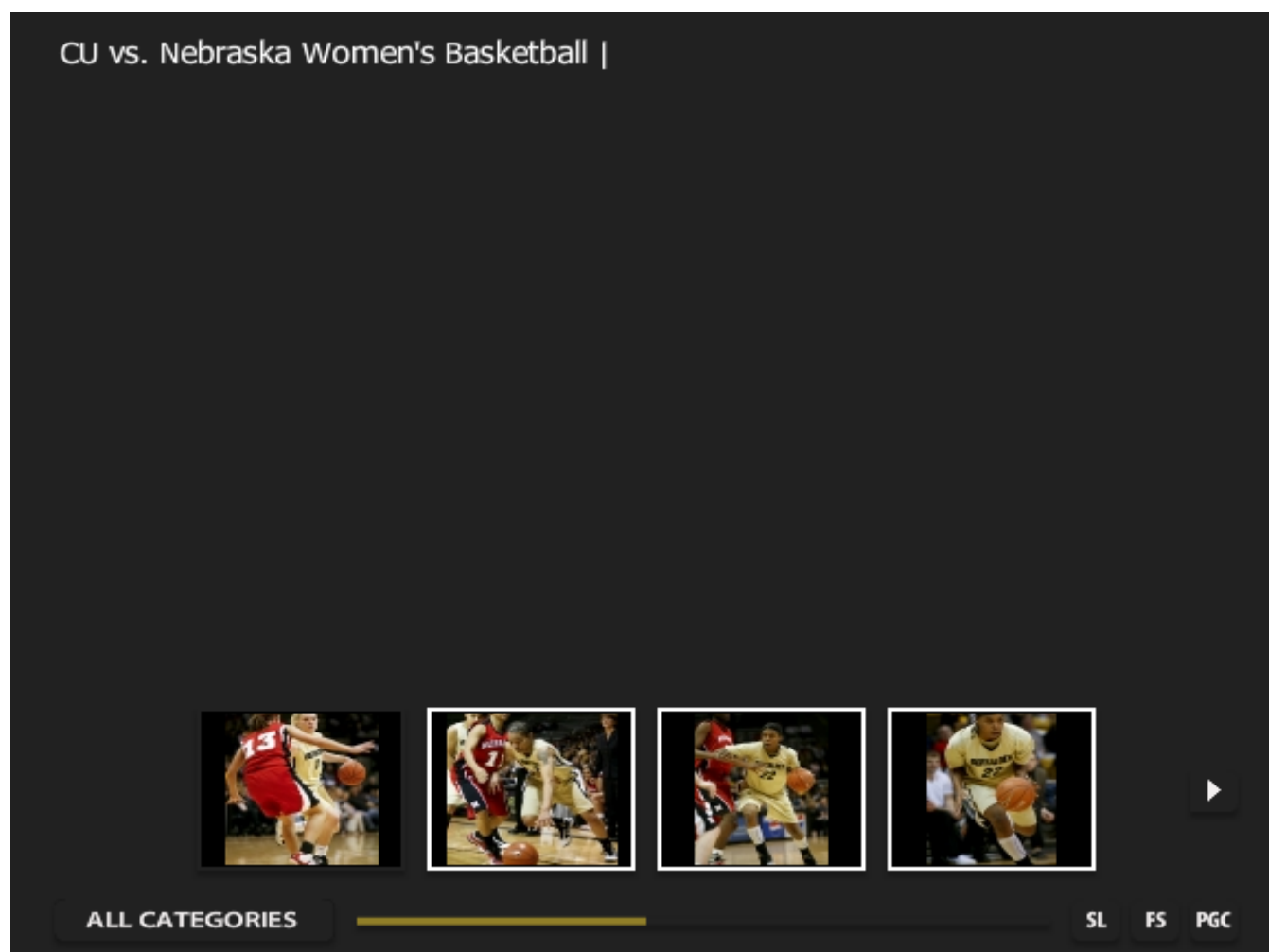
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The Bufs lost their third straight game as they fell 80-64 Saturday in front of 3,550 at the Coors Events Center. Sixth-ranked Nebraska, who were picked to finish sixth in the Big 12 Conference in the preseason by the league's coaches, remains perfect at 19-0, 6-0 in the Big 12.

The key to Nebraska's win over CU was simple: Experience.

"When you look at Kelsey Griffin, Cory Montgomery, [Yvonne] Turner and Dominique [Kelley], they have started virtually every game of their careers," CU head coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said. "They have grown in that system and they have just continued to improve and that's what experience is all about."



The Buffs, who have only one senior in guard Bianca Smith, showed their youth at inopportune times.

Trailing by 13 early in the second half, CU sliced into the deficit with seven unanswered points capped off by Meagan Malcolm-Peck's corner 3-pointer with 12 minutes and two seconds remaining.

Slowly and methodically, Nebraska pushed the lead to 11 before putting the game out of reach with a 7-0 run sealed by a Turner trey with 4:34 left.

Earlier, Nebraska turned a 1-point first-half deficit into a 14-point lead thanks to a 21-6 run spanning 10:11. Four Nebraska seniors accounted for 14 points during the spurt.

Smith, who tied a team-high with 14 points, said the team had lapses both offensively and defensively during key moments.

"I think we have to be tougher in those stretches," Smith said. "I think sometimes we lose our focus and that's when we get into those four minutes stretches where teams push a 6-point lead to a 12-point lead."

Although McConnell-Miller said they were more prepared to avoid the first half pitfalls that have plagued the team since beating Kansas State on Jan. 20, it wasn't enough to avoid a third consecutive game where the team trailed by double-digits.

"We scripted the first four minutes to make sure everybody was on the same page," McConnell-Miller said.

"We knew what we were running. At times we were good, and at times it got into a little dribbling party out there.

"We don't want to be this comeback team and always have to fight from behind. They have that mentality they can do it. They don't mind the score, they don't mind the situation and they are going to continue to battle. But it's no way to live and it's no way to exist in this game."

Freshman guard Chucky Jeffery recorded her first career double-double with 14 points and a career-high 11 rebounds. But junior forward Brittany Spears, CU's leading scorer at 18.1 points per game entering the contest, was held to 10 points.

"We did a good job on her," Nebraska head coach Connie Yori said. "You have to know her tendencies and Dominique did a good job defensively. We had a variety of people on Spears, but she was on her the most, plus Dominique scored on the other end. I think she played a great game and was a factor on both ends."

Griffin led all scorers with 24 while Kelley added 18 for the Cornhuskers.

The Buffs have a week off before returning to the hardwood against No. 14 Baylor at 6:30 p.m. Saturday in Waco, Texas. It's CU's second of four consecutive games against ranked foes. McConnell-Miller said despite the tough schedule, she doesn't want her team to look ahead.

"I'd like, as a coach, to try to put things in perspective," McConnell-Miller said. "But most importantly, I want to take it one game at a time."

Contact CU Independent Sports Editor Cheng Sio at Cheng.sio@colorado.edu.

Posted in [Front Page, Sports](#) | Tagged [CU Women's Basketball](#)

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Jeffery records first double-double

Freshman unaware of accomplishment

By Marlee Horn on January 30, 2010

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The original photo caption misspelled Chucky Jeffery's last name. 2/1/2010

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Freshman guard Chucky Jeffery didn't know what she accomplished against the Nebraska Cornhuskers.

In the Colorado Buffaloes 80-64 loss to No. 6 Nebraska on Saturday in the Coors Events Center, Jeffery recorded her first career double-double with 14 points and a career-high 11 rebounds.

"I wasn't even aware that I had a double-double, but it would have made it way more sweet if we had won," Jeffery said. "But you've got to take it how it is."

In spite of Jeffery's accomplishment, she also committed a game-high six turnovers.

Head coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said she wants Jeffery to take the ups and downs of the game in stride and that the difficulty of the league speaks volumes about what kind of player she has to become.

"This [Big 12 Conference] is not for the average player," McConnell-Miller said. "This conference is not for the player that ever doubts themselves."

Jeffery said she doesn't doubt that one day the Buffaloes will have the promise to be as strong as this season's accomplished Huskers, who are a perfect 19-0.

"We have a good, strong team," Jeffery said, "and for us to be starting two freshmen already, in a couple of years I think we'll be good because we'll still have Alyssa [Fressle], and [Brittany] Spears will be back next year. We'll have most of our players back and we can be the best team."

Jeffery also displayed the kind of confidence McConnell-Miller described as a necessity for Big 12 play.



Freshman Chucky Jeffery (23) works her way to the basket during the CU versus Nebraska women's basketball game at Coors Events Center on Saturday, Jan. 30. (CU Independent/Stephanie Davis)

“We have the potential, and we have the players, so I think we can be that team,” Jeffery said.

Despite facing a team with six seniors, five of whom are contributors, McConnell-Miller didn’t attribute the loss to a lack of effort or performance from her younger players.

“I am not disappointed with the younger players or the performance,” McConnell-Miller said. “But at times, there is a frustration that sets in with where we are and where we want to be, but they are battling night in and night out. What they did against a top team in the country says a lot.”

In the end, McConnell-Miller compared Jeffery and her young teammates such as freshman Meagan Malcom-Peck and Fressle to the possibility of them becoming the Huskers down the road.

“[Jeffery] has seen some of the best players in the league in four straight games and she’s going to make some mistakes, but she’s growing,” McConnell-Miller said. “But that is where our young players are going to be as seniors.”

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

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Longmont, Colorado
Wednesday, April 28, 2010

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Huskers too much

By Patrick Ridgell
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The Colorado women's basketball program welcomed around 20 of its former players to town Saturday for an Alumni Weekend. The Buffs also welcomed No. 6 Nebraska, a team with a shot at winning the Big 12 and playing long into March.

The two gave CU a chance to remember what this proud program once was, and what it hopes one day to be again.

Nebraska beat CU 80-64, leading almost the whole way before using a 20-8 run midway through the second half to pull away. It wasn't rebounding or shot selection that cost the Buffs this time. It was too much foul trouble and too many turnovers. And, undeniably, way too much Nebraska.

"There's no doubt Nebraska is one of the top teams in the country and the conference," CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said. "They have a very, very solid starting five. I'd match them up with any starting five in the country."

"We worked hard. I thought we made a lot of adjustments and were pretty effective at times. ... We did not limit Kelsey Griffin's inside touches at all. It got us in foul trouble and led to easy buckets and three-point plays. It was a struggle for us."

Griffin, Nebraska's Naismith and Wooden awards hopeful, led the Cornhuskers with 24 points. CU got 14 points apiece from Chucky Jeffery and Bianca Smith, and Jeffery grabbed 11 rebounds to record her first double-double.

CU longs for the day it has a veteran team like Nebraska (19-0, 6-0 Big 12), which started three seniors and a junior. It also knows with freshmen like Jeffery and Meagan Malcolm-Peck filling key roles, experience must be gained the hard way. And the Buffs are starting to take their lumps.

At 12-8, 2-5 in the Big 12, CU has lost three straight for the first time in 2009-10, and five of its past six. The Buffs have lost three straight home games, plus 13 straight to opponents ranked in both the AP and WBCA polls. Saturday's game was their first in a stretch of four straight against ranked teams.

McConnell-Miller answered questions about this stretch by claiming she and her players must not peer too far into the future. She has ample reason.

"I just don't want them to look ahead and see playing three or four top 20 teams and (have) any level of frustration or lack of confidence or lack of belief in what they're doing," she said.



Colorado's Chucky Jeffery, right, goes up for two points as Nebraska's Cory Montgomery defends on Saturday at the Coors Event Center in Boulder. **Jill P.**

Mott/Times-Call

NEBRASKA 80, COLORADO 64

NEBRASKA (19-0, 6-0)

Griffin 10-15 4-9 24, Montgomery 5-10 1-2 11, Moore 0-2 2-4 2, Turner 4-9 0-0 11, Kelley 4-7 10-13 18, Neals 2-4 0-0 6, Reeves 0-0 0-0 0, Kuhlmann 2-3 1-2 6, Periago 0-0 0-0 0, Redmon 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 28-51 18-30 80.

COLORADO (12-8, 2-5)

Malcolm Peck 4-9 0-0 9, Dunn 3-6 3-3 10, Fressle 2-7 0-0 4, Spears 3-8 4-4 10, Jeffery 5-10 4-7 14, Smith 5-11 1-2 14, Seabrook 1-1 0-0 2, Mullaney 0-0 0-0 0, MacFarlane 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 23-52 13-18 64.

Halftime—Nebraska 37-29. 3-point goals—Nebraska 6-15 (Turner 3-5, Neals 2-4, Kuhlmann 1-1, Griffin 0-2, Montgomery 0-2, Moore 0-1); CU 5-15 (Smith 3-7, Malcolm-Peck 1-2, Dunn 1-3, Spears 0-2, Jeffery 0-1). Fouled out—Malcolm-Peck (C), Dunn (C). Rebounds—Nebraska 27 (Montgomery 6); CU 36 (Jeffery 11). Assists—Nebraska 18 (Moore 7); CU

One thing the Buffs say they must address soon is mental lapses that trigger opponent runs. That was a problem Saturday when Nebraska blew open a close game in the second half.

16 (Jeffery 5, Spears 5). Total fouls— Nebraska 16; CU 25. Technicals— none. A—3,550.

“I think we have to be tougher in those stretches,” Smith said. “Sometimes we lose our focus and that’s when teams push a six-point lead to a 12-point lead.”

CU has only one senior among its top six players — Smith. It lists fourth-year junior Courtney Dunn as a senior because she is expected to graduate this year and forgo her last season of eligibility in 2010-11.

The program has reached 12 NCAA Tournaments, including six straight in the 1990s, but none since 2003-04. Alums who helped build the tradition, like Lisa Van Goor and Jamillah Lang, were among the crowd Saturday. Some visited with current Buffs on Saturday.

McConnell-Miller might hope they injected some confidence in the current Buffs.

“This conference is not for the average player,” McConnell-Miller said. “It is not for players that doubt themselves, but for a player who has an arrogance or confidence about themselves, who can stand up every night and continue to take the hits.

“We just have to keep battling and keep playing.”

Read Patrick Ridgell’s [CU sports blog](#). He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

#25 Texas	10-6	22-10
Texas Tech	5-11	17-14
Kansas	5-11	15-15
Kansas State	5-11	14-18
Colorado	3-13	13-17
Missouri	2-14	12-18

· [View expanded standings](#)

Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. -- Kelsey Griffin and Nebraska are just focusing on the game at hand and not worried about being undefeated.

Griffin scored 24 points, including the 1,700th of her career, to help Nebraska (No. 4 ESPN/USA Today, No. 6 AP) remain unbeaten with an 80-64 victory over Colorado on Saturday.

"We aren't thinking about that right now," Griffin said. "We put all our focus on Colorado and after the game was over we put all our attention on Oklahoma State because we can't afford looking any farther than Oklahoma State."

Dominique Kelley matched her season high with 18 points for Nebraska (19-0, 6-0 Big 12), which is off to the best start of any Big 12 team since the conference's inception in 1996-97.

"We have the attitude that every game is a big game, to never get too high or too low," said Griffin, who has scored 1,715 points in her career at Nebraska. "I never expected to have a season like this as a team, but it has come together with a lot of dedication helped by the fact we've played together so long and we know each other's tendencies."

Cory Montgomery and Yvonne Turner added 11 each for the Cornhuskers, who won in Boulder for the sixth time in 31 games and remain the only undefeated team besides top-ranked Connecticut. The Huskies blew out Pittsburgh 98-56.

"We really don't look at it as pressure to win," Nebraska coach Coni Yori said. "The media likes to talk about it and it's great because it helps to create interest in our program but at the same time we just need to keep taking care of what we're doing and not look ahead too much in fact not look ahead at all."

Bianca Smith and Chucky Jeffrey led Colorado (12-8, 2-5) with 14 points apiece. Jeffrey had 11 rebounds for her first career double-double and the Buffaloes suffered their season-high third straight loss.

Nicole Neals made a 3-pointer and Kelley contributed a three-point play to make it 44-33 after Colorado had trimmed the lead to 38-33 on Jeffrey's layup early in the second half.

"I didn't even notice," said Griffin about the tightening of the game. "We just try to play every possession."

Griffin made two layups to increase Nebraska's advantage to 13, but with Griffin getting a two-minute rest, the Buffaloes got to within 50-44 on Meagan Malcolm-Peck's 3-pointer with 12 minutes left.

Griffin hit a layup, blocked a shot and came up with a steal upon her return and her basket with 9:03 to go put the Cornhuskers ahead 58-46. Montgomery had layups off an inbound pass and a steal and Turner followed with a 3-pointer to pad Nebraska's lead to 70-52 with 4:31 remaining.

"I think we have to be tougher in those stretches," Smith said. "Sometimes, we lose our focus and that's when

teams push a six-point to 12 on us."

The Buffaloes never got closer than 14 the rest of the way.

Griffin was limited to eight points in the first half, but Kelley filled the void with nine as Nebraska built a 37-29 lead. Two free throws by Griffin and Neals' 3-pointer gave the Cornhuskers their biggest lead of the half, 27-13, but Smith got the lead under double digits with a pair of 3-pointers in the last minute.

"There is no doubt Nebraska is one of the top teams in the country," Colorado coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said. "They have a very solid starting five that I would match against any starting five in the country."

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Husker defense shuts down Buffaloes

BY CURT McKEEVER / Lincoln Journal Star

BOULDER, Colo. — Hey, so their coach recently questioned their defensive intelligence. Apparently, the Nebraska women's basketball players have thick skin.

In three halves since Connie Yori called out the Huskers for being unsound while allowing Kansas State 34 first-half points, they'd given up 22, 21 and 26 points.

Saturday, NU used another stifling and smart first-half effort against Colorado to set the tone in an 80-64 victory in the Coors Events Center.

The win left Nebraska 19-0 on the season and 6-0 in the Big 12 Conference. It's the first time the Huskers have ever been 6-0 in either the Big 12 or Big Eight.

"Our team defense has been pretty solid (of late)," Yori said. "We work hard and it's not overly complicated. We play our system, get out on the three-point line, pressure teams and when they put it on the floor we hope we're good enough in defensive rotations that we get over."

She could have put a check mark next to all of those things after the opening 20 minutes Saturday.

While building a 37-29 halftime lead, NU limited the Buffaloes to 11-of-26 shooting, and the 10 turnovers the Huskers caused included a five-second call on an inbounds play, two shot-clock violations and two charging calls against CU.

"She (Yori) had every right to call us out," said senior forward Kelsey Griffin, who led Nebraska with 24 points and also had two of the team's 10 steals. "Our defense wasn't what it needed to be against K-State, and that was our main focus (during Wednesday's 89-47 win) against Texas Tech.

"It's never really a lack of effort, more communication we tend to struggle with. And that's still not where it needs to be yet, but credit the girls for working really hard. It's hard to play here, with the elevation and just being on the road in the Big 12."

Even though CU struggled to score, the Buffs (12-8, 2-5) were still hanging tough with 11:55 remaining when Meagan Malcolm-Peck sank a three-pointer to draw them to 50-44.

But Nebraska didn't give up a point during the next four possessions and got a basket by Griffin and lone free throws from Dominique Kelley and Griffin to build its lead back to double digits.

After Julie Seabrook scored in transition for Colorado, Kelley hit another pair of foul shots and Griffin scored on the run at the front end of a game-clinching 20-8 spurt.

Kelley drew the assignment of keeping Colorado's athletic wing Brittany Spears under wraps, and wound up limiting her to 10 points — eight below her average.

Kelley was just as aggressive at the other end, hitting 4 of 7 shots and 10 of 13 free throws to finish with 18 points.

“Nique was big — played well on offense and defense,” Yori said.

But it was Kelley’s defensive work that drew the most notice.

“Spears is one of the best wing players in the league — smart, athletic and can score in bunches — and Nique really did a nice job on her.”

Nebraska now returns home for two games pivotal to its hopes of winning the Big 12, as second-place and 15th-ranked Oklahoma State will be in the Devaney Sports Center on Wednesday night before No. 8 Texas A&M comes in Saturday afternoon.

“We know that Okie State, they only have one (Big 12) loss. They have an awesome player in Andrea Riley and we know what she’s capable of,” Kelley said. “She’s quick, very versatile, has deep range and so we’ll have to be ready to go really hard again.”

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Huskers pull away, hit 6-0 in Big 12

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CLIFF GRASSMICK/THE CAMERA

Colorado's Chucky Jeffery, left, tries to control a rebound against NU's Catheryn Redmon during the second half on Saturday in Boulder. Nebraska won 80-64.

BOULDER, Colo. — Nebraska missed 12 free throws and was outrebounded by Colorado, but those merely became blips on the performance Saturday night as the Huskers pulled away to an 80-64 victory in women's basketball.

In doing so, NU reached 6-0 in Big 12 play for the first time in program history.

“Not all games are going to be pretty,” Husker senior forward Kelsey Griffin said. “This was a grind, but we ground it out for the win.”

No. 6-ranked Nebraska (19-0) compensated by shooting 54.9 percent from the field. Griffin made 10 of 15 shots to finish with a game-high 24 points.

“We didn't play necessarily our best basketball, especially defensively,” NU coach Connie Yori said. “On the road and we miss 12 free throws and we score 80 points, but that means we did some things right on the offensive end.”

Colorado led just once — at 7-6, and for only 12 seconds — but kept itself in contention as long as it could at the Coors Event Center.

The Buffaloes pulled within 50-44 on a 3-point shot by Meagan Malcolm-Peck with 12:03 remaining. They stayed within striking distance for about the next four minutes until Nebraska broke the game open.

It started to collapse on Colorado when Yvonne Turner made a pair of 3-pointers.

It was all but over after Cory Montgomery turned a steal into a layup for an 18-point Husker lead with 4:29 to go.

“It was a huge play that gave us enough of a lead to feel comfortable,” Yori said of Montgomery's play.

Nebraska's lead never dropped below 14 for the rest of the game, even with NU feeling the effects of Boulder's higher elevation.

“It feels like the last five minutes of the game all the time,” NU junior guard Dominique Kelley said. “You just have to play through it. I was dying about a minute into the game. Our ability to sub took a toll on them.”

It also didn't hurt the Huskers to have a strong following among the crowd of 3,550. NU previously had won just five of 30 games in

Boulder.

"It was really neat, really special," Yori said. "I think we outnumbered their fans. It's terrific that our fans would come out and support us."

Kelley finished with 18 points and Turner and Montgomery added 11 apiece. Griffin also had five rebounds.

Colorado played aggressive defense to keep the score close, although it failed to limit Griffin's touches inside. When the Buffs sent Nebraska to the free-throw line, the Huskers made just 18 of 30.

"Sometimes they go in and sometimes they don't," Yori said. "Today we just didn't shoot them well."

Colorado (12-8, 2-5) held a 36-27 edge in rebounds, including 11 by freshman Chucky Jeffery. But the Buffs also hurt themselves with 20 turnovers, compared to 12 for NU.

"We knew they were going to come in ready to rebound," Griffin said. "We didn't get it done necessarily how we wanted to. However, we got it done well enough. As for myself, it just seemed like I couldn't find the ball under the glass."

Jeffery and Bianca Smith scored 14 points apiece for Colorado. Brittany Spears added 10, but was more than eight points under her season average.

The Huskers left an impression on CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller as the Buffs lost for the fifth time in six games.

"There's no doubt that Nebraska is one of the top teams in our conference and the country," McConnell-Miller said. "They've got a very, very solid starting five. I would match them up with any in the country."

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