

Long layoff of little concern to CU women

Lappe's Buffs taking nine-day break between games

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Posted: 12/10/2010 01:54:05 AM MST

The Colorado women's basketball team is riding high after a rout of in-state rival Colorado State. They've weathered the adversity of player defections, injuries, losses and adjusting to a new coaching staff. And coach Linda Lappe has been proud of her team's progress with each game.

Now the Buffs (7-2) have to find a way to carry that momentum through a nine-day break from games for final exams.

Lappe, for one, isn't concerned.

"I like the nine days off," the first-year head coach and former Buff said after Wednesday's win over CSU. "I think we're at a point now where we really know some of the things we need to work hard on." And a lot of times you can't work on those as much during games as you would like. It gives you a chance to ... kind of refine a lot of things that we've done up to this point before we head into a really tough part of our schedule."

Along with some time off around Christmas, the Buffs play only two games between now and a Dec. 30 home contest against Colgate.

When the No. 2 pencils are ordered to stop and all of the tests are finished next week, the Buffs will hit the road for Southern Cal's Women of Troy Tournament Dec. 18-19. They'll face a strong USC squad in the semifinals before seeing either Dayton or San Diego State, both of whom were NCAA tournament teams last season. After hosting Colgate and North Dakota, Big 12 play begins.

If players were doing the scheduling, there might not be so much time between games.

"Nobody really wants to practice for nine days in a row without playing," sophomore guard Chucky Jeffery joked as her coach sat two chairs away. "But we have finals so it's kind of good for us to have that time off so we can focus on our school. When we're done with finals then we can just focus on basketball."

Lappe said the team will take a few days off completely from practice during finals to rest players and give them time to study.

She said the fact that the Buffs head into the break after rolling CSU will help ease some of the doldrums of a long stretch of practice.

"They've had a great attitude," she said. "They've been extremely coachable the last three weeks or so. We'll continue that and I think we'll be a lot better by taking the time off."

CSU redux

The Buffs' shots might not have been falling for much of the game on Wednesday night, but it wasn't for lack of execution.

Lappe said she liked the way her team shared and moved the ball offensively.

CU hit just 8 of 32 shots (25 percent) from the field in the first half, but improved to an 18-for-30 clip (60 percent) in the second.

"We got a lot of great shots," Lappe said. "I can't think of too many offensive plays where we forced anything. We just kind of let it come to us."

Part of CU's success came from the Buffs' persistence in getting to the basket, which not only led to layups but plenty of chances at the charity stripe as well.

Colorado attempted 23 free throws, their third-highest total of the season. Brittany Spears, who had attempted just 14 in the first eight games, got to the line seven times and made five.

"I thought our team did a nice job of giving her space and keeping our offense spaced," Lappe said. "A lot of times we're too congested and the drive isn't really there. I thought she got the ball on the wing a lot of times and saw an open lane and did a great job of recognizing that and taking it at the defense."

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