

Scoring drought costly for Lappe's CU Buffs

Southern Cal's 20-2 run dooms Lappe's squad

Camera staff report
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

LOS ANGELES -- For about 28 minutes Saturday night, the Colorado women's basketball team played like a team poised to make noise in the Pac-12 next season.

Then a vice that became all too familiar last season cropped back up and doomed the Buffaloes' hopes of scoring a road win over USC.

CU went 6 minutes, 15 seconds without scoring late in the second half, a stretch that was part of a larger 20-2 run by the Trojans. USC turned a two-point game into a 68-54 triumph in the semifinals of their own Women of Troy Tournament at the Galen Center.

The loss dropped the Buffs to 7-3 on the season and into today's 4 p.m. consolation game against either Dayton, which lost 74-62 to San Diego State. USC (6-3) -- which has already notched quality wins over teams like Gonzaga, Georgia and North Carolina State -- advances to the 6:30 p.m. finals.

"We let up," first-year CU coach Linda Lappe said on the KKZN post-game radio show. "(USC) hit some big shots. We didn't hit big shots. I felt like we were pretty tentative offensively (during the scoring drought). And when you don't score for a period of however long we didn't score for it's tough to keep playing defense."

Long scoring droughts turned several close games into big losses for CU last season. But the trap was one the resilient Buffs hadn't allowed themselves to fall into yet this season.

They had even bounced back early Saturday when USC raced out to a 14-6 lead. The Buffs led twice late in the first half and were down just 46-44 after a 3-pointer by Meagan Malcolm-Peck with 12:34 to go in the game.

Things went south from there.

A 6-0 spurt by USC made it 52-44 before Chucky Jeffery got a putback with 9:21 to go for the Buffs' last bucket until the Trojans held a 66-46 advantage.

Colorado went 1-for-12 from the field with seven turnovers during the 20-2 run, during which seven different USC players scored.

"I did like our fight for a lot of that game," Lappe said. "But it just didn't happen for 40 minutes."

Guards Briana Gilbreath and Ashley Corral scored 14 points each to pace four Trojans in double figures.

Colorado answered with three players in double figures -- Chucky Jeffery (12), Brittany Wilson (11) and Chelsea Dale (10), who was playing for the first time this season after sitting out for academic reasons.

But CU leading scorer Brittany Spears had a tough night.

After scoring her team's first four points, Spears committed two quick fouls and played only eight minutes in the first half. She played 25 minutes in the game but scored just five points on 2 of 12 shooting. She had six rebounds but also six turnovers.

"We've already talked to her about not letting her offensive game dictate the rest of her game, not letting her shot and whether that's going in or not dictate whether she's going to have a good game," Lappe said.

Even with Spears sidelined in the first half, the Buffs managed to heat up offensively.

Treys by Wilson, Dale, Malcolm-Peck and Seabrook helped CU tie the game at 20. A 3-point play by Jeffery later gave CU a 29-28 lead with 4:47 before halftime, and the Buffs trailed just 37-34 at the break.

But CU -- which won the rebounding battle 44-34 against the bigger Trojans -- committed 24 turnovers for the game. And after hitting 5 of 10 3-pointers in the first half, the Buffs hit just 1 of 14 in the second. They shot 32 percent from the field on the night.

All but the rebounding are numbers the Buffs will have to fix if they're to get a win tonight against a Dayton squad that played in the NCAA Tournament last season.

"We can't let this one affect our next one," Lappe said. "This one is only bad if you let it affect the next one and we don't bounce back.

"I like our team and we've done it all year. We've been a great bounce-back team."

Notable

Colorado's 54 points were a season low. ... Spears' five points tied for her lowest output since scoring three in a loss to Texas Tech on Jan. 12 last season. ... Jeffery led CU with eight rebounds, but eight of nine Buffs pulled down at least three boards each. ... Colorado's bench outscored USC's 26-11.

USC 68, Colorado 54 COLORADO 54

MIN FG 3PT FT Rb PF TP

Seabrook 28 1-4 1-2 0-0 5 1 3

Spears 25 2-12 0-4 1-2 6 3 5

Blythe 23 0-5 0-5 0-0 3 0 0

MM-Peck 27 3-8 2-4 0-0 5 4 8

Jeffery 34 5-11 0-0 2-3 8 1 12

[B.Wilson](#) 19 5-11 1-4 0-2 4 4 11

A. Wilson 13 0-3 0-1 2-2 2 3 2

Dale 21 3-6 2-4 2-2 5 2 10

Hargis 10 1-2 0-0 1-1 3 1 3

Totals 200 20-62 6-24 8-12 44 19 54

Assists (10): Jeffery 4, Spears 2, A. Wilson, B. Wilson, Hargis.

Steals (8): Jeffery 2, B. Wilson 2, Spear, Malcolm-Peck, Dale, Hargis.

Turnovers (24): Spears 6, Malcolm-Peck 5, Dale 5, Jeffery 2, B. Wilson 2, Seabrook, A. Wilson, Hargis.

Blocked shots (0).

USC (68)

MIN FG 3PT FT Rb PF TP

Harberts 34 4-7 0-0 3-4 4 2 11

LaPlante 20 3-6 0-0 2-2 3 4 8

Gilbreath 32 5-9 0-2 4-4 6 3 14

Gemelos 31 3-7 2-2 2-4 2 3 10

Corral 36 5-14 2-6 2-2 7 3 14

Marinacci 21 1-6 0-1 6-9 5 0 8

Bradley 4 1-2 1-2 0-0 1 0 3

Franco 3 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Smith 3 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 1 0

Brown 16 0-3 0-1 0-0 3 1 0

Totals 200 22-55 5-14 19-25 34 17 68

Assists (16): Gemelos 5, Corral 4, Brown 3, LaPlante 2, Gilbreath 2.

Steals (12): Gilbreath 5, Gemelos 3, LaPlante, Corral, Marinacci, Brown.

Turnovers (15): Corral 4, LaPlante 3, Brown 2, Harberts, Gilbreath, Gemelos, Marinacci, Bradley, Smith.

Blocked shots (4): Gilbreath 3, Gemelos.

Halftime score: USC 37, Colorado 34.

Technical fouls -- none.

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