

CU women need to overcome road woes

Lappe's squad winless outside of Boulder

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On the road again.

Willie Nelson couldn't wait to get there, and the Colorado women's basketball team would do well to take on a similar enthusiasm for their travels.

Starting with today's 6 p.m. game at Kansas State, four of the Buffs' final six regular season games are on the road. And the Buffs have to start winning there if they're to make a postseason appearance.

Colorado (12-11, 3-7 Big 12) is 0-7 outside of Boulder this season and has lost nine in a row away from home overall, including a couple of neutral site games. The Buffs' last road win came in overtime on Feb. 23 at Missouri last year.

The good news is -- for all of the Buffs' road woes the last couple of years -- this group goes into KSU's Bramlage Coliseum having won there before. The Buffs beat the Wildcats in Manhattan last year to snap an eight-game road skid.

"That gives us a lot of confidence," CU point guard Chucky Jeffery said Tuesday as the Buffs prepared to catch a bus to the airport. "We still talk about it. We got them there last year. If we play hard and play together, we can get them there again. And that would be big because they beat us here on our floor, so it would only be right to get one back from them."

The Wildcats (16-7, 6-4) have been the darlings of the Big 12 this season after a 14-18, 5-11 campaign a year ago. They start three sophomores and two juniors, players who took their lumps last season as KSU transitioned following a string of seven 22-win-or-more efforts in eight years.

KSU started out 6-2 in Big 12 play this season, including a win in Boulder on Jan. 26, and have twice come close to cracking the national rankings. And while they've lost two straight, their setback to Texas last week marked their first home loss of the season.

"K-State has had a great season because they play hard, they play smart, and they have a never-die attitude," CU coach Linda Lappe said.

In a lot of ways, coach Deb Patterson's program is a model for where Lappe would like to steer the Buffs -- who have three freshman and two sophomores learning valuable lessons this season. Lappe noted the Wildcats' discipline, toughness and belief that they can beat anyone even when they don't have the most talent on the floor.

"I respect Coach Patterson a lot," said Lappe, who as a CU player faced some of her counterpart's first elite teams at KSU. "She's done a great job of getting her team to that point."

"I know at Colorado we may not always have the most talented players when compared to a Baylor or an Oklahoma. But at the same time we can still be very successful in doing things the right way and being disciplined and being smarter and being fundamental."

The Buffs are coming off one of their worst outings of the season, one in which they struggled with the fundamentals of handling the ball against Texas Tech's press in a 72-44 loss.

Jeffery said CU players talked to each other following that game about increasing their own defensive intensity against each other in practice, even making a point this week of fouling frequently to remind each other to be strong with the ball.

"We were all just getting after it so I think that was really good," Jeffery said.

KSU didn't press the Buffs much last time, but the Wildcats are stingy defensively in their own right, ranking second in the Big 12 in points allowed. And they forced 13 CU turnovers in the first half of that 72-59 win and had the Buffs playing catchup from there.

The Buffs know that to start insisting the world turns their way on the road tonight, they'll have to protect the ball and match KSU's scrappy style.

"They live and die by, 'We're going to get every loose ball and we're going to make it a point to score off of those things,'" Lappe said. "They're kind of just things that can deflate your team and raise their level of play at the same time. So we've got to make sure we don't let them get going, especially at home."

Two Buffs named

Academic All-Big 12

Sophomore Meagan Malcolm-Peck and junior Julie Seabrook were named to the Academic All-Big 12 Conference second team on Tuesday.

The award is the second for Seabrook, who was first team last season.

Players must have earned a 3.2 grade point average or better, either cumulatively or in the previous two semesters, and have played in at least 60 percent of a team's games for first team distinction. A GPA of 3.0-3.19 earns second-team recognition.

Since the Big 12 started in 1996, the Buffs have had 61 Academic All-Big 12 members, including 40 on the first team.

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