

Lappe's CU squad sticking together

Loss at Texas A&M not shaking Buffs` confidence for today`s game

By Joshua Lindenstein Camera Sports Writer
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Colorado women`s basketball coach Linda Lappe liked what she heard as she approached her team`s locker room at halftime on Saturday in College Station, Texas.

The Buffaloes had just been out-scored 45-17 by Texas A&M during an abysmal half that included 17 turnovers and 29-percent shooting.

Yet as the first-year head coach and her staff chatted about what they wanted to address with the team, there was positive banter from players inside the locker room concerning what they could do to get back in a game that had essentially been decided.

When Lappe entered the room, she had her team`s attention. No one`s eyes wandered. No one was sulking.

No part of the scene changed the ultimate outcome. The Buffs fell 85-57. But Lappe got the response from her players that a coach would hope for in such dire circumstances.

"We felt great that we fought," Lappe said after practice Tuesday. "We didn`t just give up. We wanted to be able to leave there holding our heads high and being proud to be Colorado. We didn`t want to leave there with our tail between our legs."

The Buffaloes get back to the comforts of home today with a 7 p.m. game against Kansas at the Coors Events Center. And they do so hoping that a strong second half vs. the Aggies buried some of the demons that haunted them in the first even if it didn`t show on the scoreboard.

"We`re not OK with losing by 30," Lappe said. "But at the same time we didn`t lose our confidence, and if anything we gained confidence by the end of that game."

Granted, the Aggies subbed liberally in the second half. But there were positives for the Buffs to take away.

Chief among them was the way the Buffs handled A&M`s defensive pressure. CU committed just 10 turnovers, nothing to brag about but a significant change from the first 20 minutes nonetheless.

The timing is important because KU likes to apply plenty of pressure of its own.

"It was great to have played that for 40 minutes," Lappe said. "I think we`ll be ready for Kansas when they get out and pressure our point guard and deny wing entries."

CU freshman guard Brittany Wilson and senior forward Brittany Spears both had strong second halves against the Aggies offensively, with Wilson sparking a 14-6 run to begin the frame.

"We didn`t want to give up, because people already assume that`s what we`re going to do," Wilson said. "So we had to just come and play like there was a chip on our shoulder after halftime. And that`s what we did."

After two straight 3-13 seasons in Big 12 play, the Buffs won`t earn respect from their opponents until they start picking up more wins on the court. But Spears said the vibe Saturday was different than a year ago when things would go south.

"We stayed together," Spears said. "We didn`t fight. We just played together."

"We were mad that we lost but we all came together (after the game) and just talked through it. Last year wasn`t like that. We lost and then we`d just get back on the plane."

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A winning mentality for Buffs basketball

Women's basketball starts Big 12 play

By Marlee Horn on January 12, 2011

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The University of Colorado women's basketball team is looking for a fresh start after a loss in their opening Big 12 play game.

Moving on from an 85-57 loss to the No. 7 Texas A&M team might seem like a difficult challenge, but the Buffaloes would like to look at the positives. Despite scoring just 17 points in the first half, Colorado came back to play evenly with the Aggies in the last 20 minutes.

"If anybody was paying attention to the game, we played A&M 40-40 in the second half," sophomore guard Chucky Jeffery said. "They're one of the best teams in the country, in our conference and we kept up with them in the second half. I just feel like if we come out with that mentality from the beginning and play a whole 40 minutes, then we'll be a tough competitor."

Playing 40 minutes is increasingly important as the team begins a home stand of Big 12 play. In order to have consistent intensity, players on the team said they need to come out with energy from the very first minute.

"It's all mental," Jeffery said. "At the beginning of the game sometimes we tend to feel out what the teams are going to do, but we just have to trust our game plan and stay focused."

Head Coach Linda Lappe said she hopes her team can focus on the things that have been most important to getting wins: defense, consistency and momentum.

"Momentum during the game is extremely important," Lappe said. "We have to use our defense to help our offense. Usually our defense kind of spurs our offensive play. It spurs our momentum and gets us going. We get a lot of energy out of playing defensive stops."

The players agree, as they said that defense has been something their coaches have been harping on all along.

"I think our defense is pretty much going to surprise most of the teams that we play," Jeffery said.



Forward Julie Seabrook (#15) looks for an open shot during the women's basketball game versus Idaho on Nov. 12, 2010. (CU Independent file/Phil McMichael)

As good as their defense is, Lappe said the Buffs also need to be consistent as they play the very talented teams of the Big 12.

“As we move forward, the consistency just has to get better, and it will,” Lappe said. “We’ve seen spurts of great consistency, and we’ve seen spurts of not so good games and not so good consistency.”

Lappe has confidence in all her players and says that her freshmen have learned what they needed to from their first college games and have come back from break with a renewed energy and confidence.

“I think we have a lot of different players who step up each and every game,” Lappe said. “The obvious two are Chucky Jeffery and Brittany Spears. They do a lot of scoring for us, but we also have a lot of players who have been key role players for us. I think Meagan Malcolm-Peck has done a great job. She got a double-double again the other night. Britney Blythe has been one of our best defenders of the year so far. Brittany Wilson has been coming off the bench, and now she’s starting and providing some really good minutes for us, both in scoring and in defense.”

With a solid starting five, senior forward Brittany Spears could be starting to feel the pressure to perform at her best and lead in her final season. However, she says that doing something that she loves doesn’t bring on the nerves.

“I really don’t feel pressure,” Spears said. “I’m just playing basketball. It’s not like I’m going to a test or something like that. I’m just going to play basketball. It’s something I love to do. There’s really no pressure. I just need to be consistent and a positive influence, a leader.”

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