

## Returning to routine should help CU Buffs extend WNIT run

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Linda Lappe isn't one to sugarcoat things.

So Colorado's first-year women's basketball coach was just as elated as her players about Thursday's first-round WNIT win over UC Riverside. But she also pointed out that the Buffs will need to clean some things up if they want to keep extending their run.

The coach believes a return to normalcy will help.

The Buffs (16-15) -- who rolled up three wins in their final four regular season games to earn WNIT eligibility -- host the California Bears (18-15) at 7 p.m. Monday in the second round at the Coors Events Center.

"She told us we need to get back in our routine of having two practices, game, two practices, game, because we've just been practicing," CU sophomore guard Chucky Jeffery said after the win over Riverside. "She just wants us to get back into our routine and things that we do on gameday and things like that so we can be prepared."

During the conference portion of the season, CU played primarily on Wednesdays and Saturdays, generally taking Sundays off and practicing on the other days. Now that the WNIT is rolling, the Buffs should be able to get into a fairly similar routine again. After taking Friday off, they'll be back on the practice court today and Sunday to get ready for Monday's game.

Lappe conceded that having eight days off like CU did between the Big 12 Tournament and the WNIT can make it tough for players to stay focused -- especially when much of that time was spent not knowing if they'd be selected for the postseason or whom they'd be playing.

Despite playing solid defense against Riverside, the Buffs struggled on the other end at times, committing 21 turnovers.

"It's our jobs to be motivated, and we have to be ready to go from here on out," Lappe said. "We have to make sure we're focused."

### Year 1 success

CU's sports information office came up with this nugget: Of the 35 Division-I women's basketball coaches in new jobs this season, Lappe is one of seven to guide her team to postseason play.

Three, including future Pac-12 rival Utah's Anthony Levrets, are in the NCAA Tournament. Three, including Lappe, are in the WNIT, with all winning first-round games Thursday. And one is in the Women's Basketball Invitational.

Thursday's win over UC Riverside also guarantees the 16-15 Buffs a .500 or better record in Lappe's first season. Of CU's six previous head coaches, only Rene Portland (22-9 in 1978-79) and Sox Walseth (28-5 in 1980-81) can boast the same.

### Familiar foe?

There's a lot of basketball to be played before a matchup between Ceal Barry coaching protégés could come to fruition. But there is another former Buffs player besides Lappe leading her squad in WNIT action.

Raegan (Scott) Pebley -- a Buff from 1993-97 and a 1,000-point scorer at CU -- is in her eighth season coaching a Utah State squad that she started from scratch after the Aggies dropped the program in 1987.

After enduring some growing pains, Pebley's Aggies (18-14) are in the postseason for the first time after finishing third in the Western Athletic Conference this season. Utah State plays at BYU at 3 p.m. today.

CU and Utah State would both need to win two more games to face each other in the WNIT quarterfinals.

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