



Meagan Malcolm-Peck scores 13 points against the Bears.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



03/21/2011 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Bufs Put Away Bears, Face Wyoming Next

BOULDER - Sometimes it all comes together early - or as Linda Lappe reflected, "I told our team they had a nice aura about them ... if you believe in that."

Nice aura, good vibe, extra fine juju ... whatever. Brittany Spears and the Colorado Buffaloes had something special at the opening tip. They started brilliantly Monday night and finished not far below that, eliminating future Pac-12 opponent California 81-65 in the second round of the WNIT.

Trailing by 27 points at halftime, Cal (18-16) attempted a second-half recovery, but never got closer than 14 in the final minute - and by then CU (17-15) was awaiting word on its third-round WNIT opponent. It will be Wyoming on Thursday at 7 p.m. in Laramie, putting the

BUFFALO EXTRAS



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Notes

Bufs on the road for the first time in nine WNIT games. Wyoming advanced by defeating Oklahoma State 75-71 Monday night.



"We came out of the gates firing and didn't take our foot off of the gas pedal for the first half . . . we never let up," said Lappe, whose team got 19 first-half points from Spears (33 total, a season high) and raced to its biggest halftime advantage of the season, 50-23, and its most points since scoring 53 last season against Southern Utah.

"I think we all came in focused and ready to play," said Spears, whose point total was only three below her career high set as a sophomore. She also contributed nine rebounds, two assists, two steals and two blocked shots. Four turnovers were easily forgiven.

"I thought she attacked the rim early and I thought that's what she needed to do," Lappe said of CU's career scoring leader. "She made some nice finishes and she was just on it in all phases, made some good decisions and hit some key shots when we needed them. Her teammates did a nice job of finding her . . . and she did a nice job of capitalizing."

In addition to Spears' output, CU got 16 points from Brittany Wilson, 13 from Meagan Malcolm-Peck and 11 from Chucky Jeffery. The Bufs shot 57.4 percent from the field (31-of-54), hit 10-of-22 three-pointers (one below their season high) and out-rebounded the Bears 34-26 - a point of emphasis for Lappe and her staff against a bigger opponent.

"I know we were ready to play Cal," said Lappe, who might not have foreseen such readiness after an uninspired Sunday practice. "This was a game we had been looking forward to and we didn't have a great practice (Sunday); we weren't as focused as I would have hoped. But I thought our players really responded."

Conversely, the Bears "just came out flat," said Coach Joanne Boyle. "I have never seen my team come out that flat before . . . I think we came out shell-shocked. I think Colorado did a great job.

"They came out on their home floor, came out and attacked us and got us back on our heels. We recovered - but 20 minutes too late to even make it a game."

The focus the Bufs were missing Sunday returned in Monday's all-business shootaround, said Jeffery: "Everybody did well in shootaround and we weren't goofing around in warm-ups . . . we were ready to go."

And they went hard from the opening whistle, running at every opportunity, racing to a 7-0 lead and putting Cal in a catch-up mode for the next 38 minutes. By halftime, the Bufs were up by 27 and Lappe's chief concern might have been the 19-point second-half lead her team almost squandered in its first-round victory against UC-Riverside. The Highlanders closed to two before the Bufs regrouped for a 71-62 win.

But, as Lappe pointed out, Monday night's game "wasn't the same feel as Riverside . . . we had a lull in the second half and were back on our heels."

Spears (and others) didn't allow the Bufs to assume that position against the Bears, who got 15 second-half points from scrappy guard Layshia Clarendon but in reality were doomed by

intermission.

Just over halfway through the second half, Cal - playing more zone defense after the Buffs shredded a man-to-man - had cut CU's advantage to 59-44 on a layup by Eliza Pierre. On the Bears' next possession, Jeffery blocked another Pierre layup attempt, leading to a three-pointer by Malcolm-Peck that restored the Buffs' lead to 18 (64-46).

Jeffery followed with a conventional three-point play, Spears followed that with a three-pointer (her fourth) from the left corner ... and CU was back in front by 22 (68-46) with 9:02 to play. The Buffs weren't about to revisit their first-round lapse against the Highlanders.

Brittany Wilson scored 12 of her 16 points in the first half, hitting all three of her treys in the first 20 minutes. Her explanation of her team's focus and fast start: "We knew we were going to see that team next year in the Pac-12, so we had to send them a statement."

Cal's starting lineup featured four sophomores and a freshman, with two of the sophomores being heralded posts DeNesha Stallworth (12 points) and Talia Caldwell (11). Both were touted as physical players, but Spears & Co. apparently didn't buy it.

"We play in the Big 12, which is the best conference in the (NCAA)," Spears said. "They're in the Pac-10 right now, and they're good, but they aren't as physical as the teams in the Big 12. We are used to the physicality ... it's just another game."

And it sends CU to Laramie to play yet another game.

Lappe, who has played and coached there, called Wyoming "a great women's basketball environment. Their fans are going to come out. The good thing is that we have a couple of members of our coaching staff (Jonas Chatterton, Dan Doerflein, both BYU imports) that have coached against them their whole careers in the Mountain West. They know (Wyoming's) style of play, know what they do to be successful and really how to beat them."

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SHOW MENU



CU Buff women rout Cal, advance in WNIT

By Joshua Linden Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/21/2011 09:02:51 PM MDT



The Colorado women's basketball team came out California steamin' on Monday night and rode a 50-point first half right into the WNIT round of 16.

Aiming to send a message to the first Pac-12 foe they will face in their new conference next season, the Buffaloes got through loud and clear with an 81-65 rout of the California Golden Bears in front of 920 CU faithful at the Coors Events Center.

The Buffs led by 27 at halftime, fought off a tough second half by Cal and kept their season alive on the back of a season-best 33-point performance by senior forward Brittany Spears.

"I know that we were ready to play Cal," CU head coach Linda Lappe said. "It was a game that we were looking forward to. We didn't have a great practice yesterday. We weren't as focused as we would have hoped. But I thought our players responded. At this time of year it's just about playing basketball, and I thought our team came out and they just played."

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The Buffs (17-15), who guaranteed themselves their first winning season since 2008, will play at Wyoming (24-8) at 7 p.m. Thursday.

If they keep playing first halves like they did Monday, it might not matter who they play the rest of the season.

CU shot a blistering 18 for 31 from the field, including 7 of 12 from 3-point range. They didn't commit a turnover for nearly the first 12 minutes. And they locked down a talented Cal team to the tune of a 29-percent first half from the field.

The Buffs quickly built a 31-12 lead and then finished the half on a Chucky Jeffery-led 9-0 run to take a 50-23 edge into the break. After Meagan Malcolm-Peck made it 44-23 with a 3-pointer from the top, Jeffery got a steal and hit Spears in transition for a layup. Jeffery then drained four straight free throws in the final 35 seconds.

"I thought we came out of the gates firing and we never took our foot off the pedal until after halftime," Lappe said. "I told our team they had a nice aura about them tonight, if you believe in that. You can just tell when they're ready, when they're confident, when they're poised, when they have their composure."

Spears scored 19 of her points in the first half on a night when four different Buffs scored in double figures.

"I think we all came in mentally focused and ready to play," Spears said. "We played in the Big 12, the best conference in the (nation). They're in the Pac-10 so they're good. But they're not as physical as the Big 12 is."

Not as physical maybe, but the Bears (18-16) did prove resilient in the second half.

Thanks to hitting their first seven shots of the frame and a trapping defense that slowed the Buffs' onslaught, Cal kept things interesting, shaving CU's advantage to 15 with 10:48 to play. But the Bears could get no closer until making it 79-65 with less than a minute left.

"We recovered, but 20 minutes too late to even make it a game," Cal coach Joanne Boyle said. "So a lot of credit to Colorado coming into the conference. They are going to be a great team in the conference."

Up 70-55 with 5:32 left after Cal's Layshia Clarendon hit a pair of free throws, the Buffs finally sealed the victory with an 8-

0 spurt that included a pair of layups by Spears before she left the court to a standing ovation.

Clarendon led Cal with 20 points, while DeNesha Stallworth had 12 and Talia Caldwell added 11.

Jeffery finished with 11 points, eight rebounds and six assists for the Buffs, who shot a season-best 57 percent for the game. Brittany Wilson scored 16 points. And Malcolm-Peck added 13 points and five rebounds for the balanced Buffs.

"We don't want our season to be over basically," Jeffery said. "We knew that we had to come in and be ready on all levels."

Colorado 81, California 65 CALIFORNIA (65)

MIN FG 3PT FT Rb PF TP

Stallworth 33 5-8 1-2 1-2 3 2 12

Caldwell 38 3-6 0-0 5-7 7 2 11

Pierre 22 3-6 0-0 0-0 4 1 6

Clarendon 27 8-16 2-4 2-2 2 3 20

Sherbert 24 2-7 2-5 1-2 1 1 7

Jemerigbe 22 1-7 0-0 3-3 2 2 5

Federico 26 1-5 0-4 2-2 2 2 4

N'diaye 8 0-2 0-0 0-0 3 1 0

Totals 200 23-57 5-15 14-18 26 14 65

Assists (12): Clarendon 4, Stallworth, Jemerigbe, Pierre, N'diaye.

Steals (11): Stallworth 3, Clarendon 2, Sherbert 2, Jemerigbe 2, Caldwell, Pierre.

Turnovers (14): N'diaye 3, Caldwell 3, Stallworth 2, Clarendon 2, Pierre, Sherbert, Jemerigbe, Federico.

Blocked shots (2): Stallworth, N'diaye.

COLORADO (81)

MIN FG 3PT FT Rb PF TP

Seabrook 27 0-1 0-0 0-0 6 2 0

Spears 32 14-19 4-6 1-1 9 2 33

Blythe 22 1-3 1-3 0-0 1 1 3

B. Wilson 25 6-10 3-3 1-1 3 2 16

MM-Peck 26 5-9 2-5 1-3 5 3 13

A. Wilson 7 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 1 0

Dale 14 0-3 0-3 0-0 1 0 0

Jeffery 26 3-7 0-2 5-5 8 2 11

Hargis 21 2-2 0-0 1-2 0 1 5

Totals 200 31-54 10-22 9-12 34 14 81

Assists (16): Jeffery 6, B. Wilson 3, Spears 2, Malcolm-Peck 2, Blythe, A. Wilson, Dale.

Steals (6): Jeffery 2, Spears 2, Blythe, B. Wilson.

Turnovers (16): Spears 4, Blythe 2, B. Wilson 2, Malcolm-Peck 2, Jeffery 2, Hargis 2, Seabrook, Dale.

Blocked shots (4): Spears 2, Dale, Jeffery.

Halftime score: Colorado 50, UC Riverside 23.

Technical fouls -- none.

Attendance -- 920.

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In potentially last home game Spears dominates

By Joshua Linden Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/22/2011 12:00:03 AM MDT



If Monday's 81-65 triumph over California proves to be Brittany Spears' last game at the Coors Events Center, the senior forward from Pasadena, Calif., went out with a performance to remember.

Colorado's all-time scoring leader piled up 33 points, nine rebounds, two assists, two blocks and two steals to help the Buffs into the WNIT round of 16.

The Buffs will play at Wyoming at 7 p.m. Thursday, though they could return home at some point in the tournament if they keep winning.

"I just went out to have fun," Spears said. "I didn't think about if it was my last game. You think about that, you put pressure on yourself. I was just playing it like another game."

Spears hit 14 of 19 shots from the field. It only seemed at times like she couldn't miss.

[Click on any photo for gallery](#)

Her second of four 3-pointers gave CU its first 20-point lead of the game at 34-14, and the Buffs kept rolling to a 27-point halftime advantage. A 19-footer from the corner with 6:21 left in the game halted a long scoring drought for the Buffs as Cal tried to rally.

The 33-point game was the third-best of Spears' career. Her best was a 36-point effort against UMass her sophomore year. She scored 34 in a win at Missouri last year.

Spears now has 593 points on the season, passing Tera Bjorklund (592) for the fifth-best single season output in school history.

"She was just on it in all phases tonight," CU coach Linda Lappe said.

Hitting the road

Colorado improved to 6-2 all-time in WNIT games, with all of those coming at the Coors Events Center. Now the Buffs have to prove their postseason mettle on the road against Wyoming, a 75-71 winner over Oklahoma State on Monday.

The Buffs and Cowgirls are familiar foes, with CU leading the all-time series 33-9. Colorado won the last meeting on Dec. 5, 2007, knocking off a ranked Wyoming squad that had won the WNIT title the year before.

Scoring explosion

Colorado's 50 points in the first 20 minutes were the most in a half for the Buffs this season and the most since they led Southern Utah 53-11 at the intermission on Dec. 9, 2009 last season.

Colorado's 27-point halftime lead was also a season-high, eclipsing a season-opening 25-point edge against Regis.

The Buffs' 81 points also marked a season high.

Introductions

Barring any more postseason hoops matchups, the Buffs will finish the 2010-11 school year with a 5-3 record against future Pac-12 Conference rivals over all sports.

Men's hoops and soccer went 2-0 against the Pac-10 this year. Women's hoops is 1-1. Football and tennis each went 0-1.

Three of the meetings came against Cal, with CU winning both in basketball by wide margins and falling 52-7 in football last fall.

Notable

Both Cal and CU entered Monday's game with strong rebounding margins for the season, but the Buffs won that battle 34-26. ... Colorado hit 10 of 12 3-pointers, with four players getting in on the act.

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RINGO: New era underway thanks to Lappe

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/22/2011 12:02:01 AM MDT

Since the legend known as Ceal Barry hung her whistle on a wall or tucked it away inside a desk drawer six years ago, the Colorado women's basketball program she built into a perennial contender in the Big 12 Conference has lacked toughness.

It would be premature to say the program has completely regained that crucial characteristic under first-year coach Linda Lappe, but the Buffs are certainly well on their way.

Senior Brittany Spears led the Buffs to a surprising 81-65 rout of California on Monday night at the Coors Events Center in the second round of the Women's National Invitation Tournament, giving CU a sweep over its future Pac-12 foe in the postseason this year.

Now with the CU men one win away from the semifinals and the women two wins away there is a feeling, "an aura" as Lappe referred to it, that something special is happening with both programs on the hardwood. Perhaps one day in the future we will look back and see this spring as the start of a basketball Renaissance in Boulder.

It suddenly seems at least possible, which is much more than could be said at this time last year.

Spears scored 33 points and was simply the best player on the floor Monday, which is saying something considering each of the past two Cal recruiting classes has been nationally ranked and the roster is stocked with six McDonald's All-Americans, four of whom played in the game.

But the Buffs are far from a one-woman show these days and that is why they are advancing in the postseason.

There has been only one other CU team since Barry retired as coach to truly improve over the course of the season. It happened in the 2007-08 campaign under former coach Kathy McConnell-Miller. The Buffs advanced to the WNIT semifinals that season, but they weren't able to build on the experience when practices resumed the following fall.

These Buffs still have basketball to play this season, but that once again will be the challenge when this year is over.

Can they build on it? Will they build from it, or will they start over at square one once again.

There is every reason to think Lappe and her assistants will get the job done.

Why? It's simple.

They expect to.

This isn't a coach or a coaching staff consumed by what they don't have or what they aren't getting or who they have to play or how tough their conference is or what time they have to practice or what star recruit chooses to sign elsewhere.

Lappe is a coach with a vision and a plan for making it happen, hurdles be damned.

It took awhile, probably much longer than Lappe wanted, but the Buffs have adapted to her style of play and have adopted her personality.

"I think we've made a lot of strides in a lot of different areas," Lappe said. "The biggest thing is going into a game like this knowing we can win and we should win and coming out and being able to see that right from the start and throwing the first punch.

"... Our overall attitude, our overall coming together, our overall demeanor has changed through the year, and it's always

good to see that."

And all of that was evident when the Buffs were on the floor Monday, especially during the first half when they raced to a 50-23 halftime lead.

They scored 30 points in the first 10 minutes of the game, a total that exceeded their total points in 17 first halves this season. They did it by scoring in transition off of defensive stops and by executing their plan on offense. They found the open player and made the extra pass.

Simple stuff that simply hasn't happened around here consistently in a long time.

They rebounded and defended as a team and generally appeared to be the group that looked like it wanted to keep playing. For instance, with 1 minute left and her team leading by 17 points, senior Chelsea Dale dived on the floor to compete for a loose ball with a Cal player.

That is the toughness that once was a hallmark of the Colorado women's program.

"I feel like we're getting stronger by the day," sophomore Chucky Jeffery said.

Having the "want to" particularly at this point in the year in a tournament in which they can't win a national title says a lot about a team. It is a sign of good things happening inside the program when no one is watching but the people at practice day in and day out.

It's also a sign that even better things are yet to come.

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