



Freshman Brittany Wilson (11) has come up big in the Buffs' last two WNIT wins.  
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



03/26/2011 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

## Brooks: 'B-Wil' Improves, Follows Lappe's Rules (Mostly)

**BOULDER** - Most of Linda Lappe's on-court rules aren't so iron-clad that breaking one brings serious consequences. Take her edict on hanging around a rebounder who has snared a missed Colorado shot . . . she'd rather see her players retreat in transition defense than roll the dice on stripping away the ball.

But there are exceptions - and Thursday night in Wyoming's frenetic Arena Auditorium, freshman point guard Brittany Wilson provided a significant one.

With the crowd of 7,000-plus howling and the Buffs cradling a 55-50 lead in the final 6 minutes, Wilson committed the no-no of lingering at the baseline after a missed shot. It turned out to be a yes-yes moment in a 70-58 win that sends CU into Sunday's WNIT semifinals against Southern California (1 p.m., Coors Events Center).

Reaching in from a Cowgirl forward's blind side, "B-Wil" poked the ball away and laid it in - in heavy traffic - to give the Buffs a momentous seven-point lead. Wyoming never recovered.

Remembered Wilson: "Coach Lappe always tells us don't hang on the rebounder, because we're never going to take the ball from them. So, I just thought I'd give it a try. She wasn't paying attention, so I was like, 'Forget it.' . . . I just took it right out of her hands. I thought they fouled me when I went up, but, hey . . ."

### BUFFALO EXTRAS

- [Buy Tickets](#)
- [CU Notes](#)

Lappe's largest objection at the time was the 5-foot-8 Wilson going back up with the ball among three taller Wyoming defenders and not passing out of the impromptu triple-team. But upon further reflection, and given the game's circumstances, Lappe found herself in a forgiving mood - mainly because she's an ex-player herself.

"I think she made something out of nothing," Lappe said. "I think she made a mistake by taking that ball up with three players when she had an open player (to pass to). We talk about not hanging on the rebound; we want them back in transition defense. But we do talk about making it up on defense - if you don't make a play on offense, then just get it back on defense. She got it back on defense. She found an opportunity and it's also about just playing. I understand that as much as anybody, being a former player. Not everything can be scripted; you've got to understand that. And she made a play."

Over the two most recent WNIT games, Wilson has been making more and more of them, scoring 16 points in CU's win against California and 15 at Wyoming. Against Cal she was 6-of-10 from the field, 3-of-3 from three-point range and hit her only free throw attempt for 16 points. She also had three assists, three rebounds and a steal. Against Wyoming she hit seven of her 10 field goal attempts and one of her two trey attempts for 15 points, adding four rebounds and the one very significant steal.

Her double-figure output in each of the past two games marks the first time she's scored in double figures in back-to-back outings since mid-January when she fashioned a stretch of 19 (Iowa State), 11 (Oklahoma State) and 11 (Missouri). Lappe describes that nearly two-month stretch as a "little mid-season funk" that sometimes befalls freshmen during their first year.

"You never know," Lappe said. "But in her case, we put a lot of responsibility on her shoulders, starting the game at point guard and playing a large portion of the game there. Not only is she a freshman, but it's not her true position. I feel like she's finally understanding what she needs to do in order for our team to be successful - and that's a huge part of growing up and leading a team.

"I think she's done a great job of letting the game come to her and understanding how to get her teammates involved when she's at the point or the 'two,' how to be a part of the offense. She's doing a much better job of playing defense and being in the right positions. I think the biggest thing is she's just settled down and into her role."

Wilson primarily was a shooting ("two") guard at Long Beach Poly High, sometimes switching positions when her team's No. 1 point guard suffered through a sub-par performance. Lappe gave her a look at point guard in the hopes of creating depth at the position and allowing sophomore Chucky Jeffery to lend energy coming off the bench - which has worked.

Lappe's ideal scenario is for both Wilson and Jeffery to contribute equally at the point - and that's begun happening. To Wilson's past two-game totals, Jeffery has added 27 points, 13 rebounds, 11 assists, 4 steals and two blocked shots.

"It's great when those two can play well, as well as (Brittany) Spears," Lappe said. "That's what we've kind of been missing throughout the year . . . we said as a staff if we could get those two playing well at the same time, we'd be a pretty dynamic team - and I think that's what happening right now."

But the acclimation process for Wilson has taken time. She's worked on her jump shot, becoming more of a perimeter threat during CU's late surge, and she's become more familiar with her role.

"When I first started, I didn't really know it, then once I settled down and started letting the game come to me, I think I just rolled from there," she said. "I'm seeing a lot more than I was in the beginning of the season. Now that (Lappe) has me actually playing the point guard role, I feel like I've been stepping up as much as needed."

Teammate Britney Blythe, a senior guard, agreed: "The biggest thing for 'Brit' is that she's gotten a lot better at decision making. I think in high school she was more of a scoring guard; now she's out there really running a team. When she got here, that's what her big worry was, but now she's adjusted really well. And especially, being a starter, it's kind of hard as a freshman.

"And she's hitting big shots; she's really calm and collected. A lot of freshmen have a tendency to speed up . . . but she just seems to hit big shots when we need them - just like (Thursday) night."

Blythe called Wilson and her twin sister, Ashley, who's older by 5 minutes, "hustle players . . . they'll go in and get rebounds over taller people. I know 'Brit' was guarding a 6-1 girl (Wyoming's Jade Kennedy) sometimes and they didn't take advantage because (Wilson) was using her quickness. She's a beast on the boards, even though she's not as big as some people."

Whether it's wanted or not, point guards usually assume on-court leadership roles. Even as a freshman, Brittany Wilson has done it, but Blythe added, "She has a good way of not overstepping her bounds; she knows her role. And she knows that with (Brittany) Spears and I in the huddle, being seniors, her job isn't always to be in the huddle talking. She knows that we're taking care of that. She takes a lot of her leadership in what she does on the court, getting us into plays and telling us what to do."

The Buffs see facing the Trojans as a pay-back opportunity for their 68-54 mid-December loss at the Women of Troy Tournament. CU players say they've been seasoned by Big 12 Conference play and they no longer resemble the team that lost in Los Angeles. Brittany Wilson also sees another opportunity in USC's Sunday afternoon visit.

"It means a lot to me because I'm a California kid," she said. "I know all of those girls on that team. When we went down there and played them, it was in (December) and we weren't clicking as much as we are now. Now, we're pretty good, and they were actually peaking then."

"For us to get a chance to have a rematch, and for them to get a chance to see how good a team we can be - even next year when we go down there (as members of the Pac-12) it's going to say a lot. I think we're way more ready to play them now."

If that's the case, CU can advance to the WNIT semifinals, playing the Illinois State-Arkansas winner next week at a site to be determined.

**Contact:** [BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU](mailto:BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU)

SHOW MENU



# CU Buff women look to measure progress

## CU women lost to USC early in season, face Trojans Sunday

**By Joshua Linden**stein Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/25/2011 11:49:54 PM MDT

No doubt the Colorado women's basketball team will be excited to face another future Pac-12 foe when the Buffaloes host the USC Trojans on Sunday.

But the 1 p.m. matchup at the Coors Events Center also provides a rare opportunity for the Buffs to measure their season-long progress against an opponent that beat them soundly early in the season.

With the Buffs adjusting to a new coaching staff and several underclassmen in key roles, USC presented the Buffs with their first major test of the season back on Dec. 19. After CU stayed close through much of the game, the bigger Trojans pulled away with a 20-2 second-half run for a 68-54 victory.

The Buffs have looked like a different team lately than the one that struggled to find an offensive flow in Los Angeles.

CU has won six of its last eight games, including three in a row to reach the WNIT quarterfinals. Their last three wins have marked three of their seven highest scoring outputs of the season. "Way different (team)," said CU leading scorer Brittany Spears, who scored just five points against the Trojans. "We've been through the Big 12. We've played tough competition.

"We're playing our best basketball right now so it should be a good game at home."

One of the biggest ways in which the Buffs (18-15) have grown, coach Linda Lappe said, is that players up and down the roster are asserting themselves in key moments.

Make no mistake. Spears and sophomore point guard Chucky Jeffery are still the two primary catalysts. But the team's increasing versatility shined through again in Thursday's 70-58 win at Wyoming with the game on the line.

CU led 57-51 with 6 minutes left after Spears left the game with her fourth foul. Wyoming had been within three points three times and appeared to have momentum on its side, especially with a hot-shooting Spears sidelined indefinitely.

But after the teams traded two possessions each without scoring, CU senior guard Britney Blythe drove to the lane and hit junior Julie Seabrook for a layup and ensuing foul shot to put the Buffs up nine. The play came from two Buffs who had seen little playing time last season and still had some developing to do this season in their starting roles.

Jeffery followed the play with a 3-pointer to put CU up 12. Just before Spears' fourth foul, meanwhile, it had been freshman Brittany Wilson who had followed her own badly missed layup by stealing the ball right back for an easy score.

"At the beginning of the year, we didn't have that," Lappe said. "We didn't have players that were ready to step up. Now it doesn't matter who it is. Everybody's ready to step up, and they're not waiting for other people to step up and do something. They're taking it upon themselves, in the right way without being selfish."

The Wyoming game wasn't the first time such late game heroics had come from a variety of players. But it illustrated well how much the Buffs have improved from early in the season when they often struggled to move the ball on offense or get a timely stop on defense.

"Our defense, we take a lot of pride in our defense," Jeffery said. "I think our defense is way better than what it (was). We talk, we know how to get through screens. We play better one-on-one defense. And our offense now, lately we've been executing a lot, setting good screens. Our transition offense, our transition defense, I think we've improved in a lot of different areas."

On Sunday, the Buffs will get a true look at just how large those strides have been.

## Coors Events box office

### to open early Sunday

Friday, the final day of spring break, was a university holiday, closing down most of campus. That included the Colorado athletic department ticket office despite the fact that the women's basketball team hosts USC in the WNIT quarterfinals at 1 p.m. Sunday.

But CU athletic director Mike Bohn said season ticket holders and those with special seating requests that can't be met through online sales don't have to worry that their needs won't be met.

The Coors Events Center box office will open at 11:30 a.m. Sunday, leaving a healthy window before the game for fans to purchase tickets face-to-face with a ticket agent if they choose.

The general public can buy tickets online at [cubuffs.com](http://cubuffs.com), through TicketsWest (866-464-2626) or at area King Soopers grocery stores.

If season ticket holders aren't able to get their seats online, they can do so at the box office Sunday. Their seats will be reserved for them until tip-off. Handicap seating can also be purchased at the box office Sunday.

Bohn said more than 1,000 tickets had already been sold as of about 5:30 p.m. Friday.

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)