

Victory over UCLA gives Buffs soccer team hope

Hempen's squad faces fifth-ranked A&M on Friday

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The Colorado soccer team measured up extremely well against future conference measuring stick UCLA.

The Buffs (4-4) earned a 1-0 double-overtime victory over the 10th-ranked Bruins on Sunday at Prentup Field. The notable non-conference win should provide the young team with a much-needed mental boost entering Big 12 play.

"I think it kind of gives us a sense of confidence that either wasn't yet instilled in us or we weren't aware of," junior midfielder Kate Russell said. "UCLA is better than most of the teams we play. Knowing that we can come out and beat them, as long as everybody plays well and contributes, helps your confidence.

"Now you look forward to these other games, you don't dread them."

CU will open Big 12 play against preseason favorite and currently fifth-ranked Texas A&M on Friday in College Station. The Aggies' (7-2) losses this season were to No. 1 North Carolina and No. 3 Portland.

"We've never, ever beaten Texas A&M," CU head coach Bill Hempen said when asked if his team would gain some momentum and consistency with Sunday's impressive result. "I don't know what this means for this team. We're just young. Maybe (against UCLA) they found out what it takes."

The Buffs are actually 1-17-1 all-time against the dominant Texas A&M program. But Hempen's freshmen don't care about the past.

Freshman Lizzy Herzl was named Big 12's co-Newcomer of the Week and freshman Alex Dohm was named the CollegeSoccer360.com Primetime Performer of the Week team following their efforts against UCLA.

Herzl entered the game at the start of the first overtime period at forward, a position she had never played while at CU, and scored the game-winner on the first shot she has attempted this season to deliver the win over the Bruins.

Dohm defended UCLA star Sydney Leroux, limiting the All-American and national team member to two shots on goal in 108 minutes.

"A lot went into this," Hempen said of the victory. "That's the way a team is supposed to play."

Freshman keeper Annie Brunner posted the shutout after CU had given up 10 goals in the previous four games.

"I think the whole team came in with confidence and the whole game we were all over UCLA," Brunner said. "We talked about just keeping that up and that's exactly what we did. It's impossible to not win if you try that hard."

The Buffs bounced back from a 3-1 loss to Purdue in the first round of the CU Classic. Texas A&M defeated Purdue 2-1 in overtime at West Lafayette, Ind., on Sept. 12.

"Coming out of the Purdue game there were very mixed feelings. There was frustration and anger," Russell said. "Then you also know you have to play UCLA and you're like, 'Oh my gosh, I'm so excited to play them. Crap, we better play well.'"

"We stepped up to the plate."

Volleyball home stand

Liz Kritza's Buffs, coming off back-to-back losses to Oklahoma and Nebraska to open the Big 12 season, will begin an important three-game home stand tonight against Kansas State (6:30 p.m., Coors Events Center).

The Wildcats are 7-5 overall and 2-0 in conference. CU leads the all-time series 25-22.

The Buffs (3-5, 0-2) will host Kansas on Saturday and Texas A&M next Wednesday.

Mark Simpson Memorial

The CU men's golf team, coming off a disappointing ninth-place finish at the Air Force Invitational, will host the Mark Simpson Memorial next Monday and Tuesday at Colorado National Golf Club in Erie.

"Overall, just not a lot of good coming out of our first event, and we expected better just being a short drive from home, so we're disappointed with that," CU head coach Roy Edwards said after the Buffs shot an 886 in Colorado Springs. "We've got to get after it and get ready for next week, we're going to see some of these same teams again in preparing for our own meet. They understand they don't want to play like that anymore and have to keep working at it."

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