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Lappe reflects on 21-win season

Written by Scott Annis in Basketball, Front Page, Sports on Apr 7, 2012 2:07 / comments

“Building.”

This is the one word that Linda Lappe, head coach of the Colorado women’s basketball team, uses to describe the season.

The Buffs went 21-14 in Lappe’s second season at CU, marking the first 20-win season of her five-year coaching career. The Buffs also made the Women’s National Invitational Tournament for the second consecutive year, advancing to the quarterfinals before losing to the eventual champion Oklahoma State University.

The Buffs started hot at the beginning of the season with a 12-game win streak.

“We expected to start off well,” Lappe said.

Colorado’s non-conference schedule was weaker this year than in past seasons, which helped the Buffs get off to such a fast start. The middle of the season was a different story, though.



When conference play began, the Buffs took a big plunge that all but negated their early winning streak. After beating the University of Utah and losing to the University of Washington, the Buffs came back and beat Washington State University. After the WSU win, though, the Buffs went on a three-game losing streak against the University of California, Stanford University and Arizona State

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Head Coach Linda Lappe gets fired up during the 64-62 loss to Oregon on March 1. (CU Independent File/Robert R. Denton)

University. Against Cal, the Buffs failed to score in the final 7:10 of the game, surrendering a 12-point lead.

After the ASU game, the Buffs won two in a row against the University of Arizona and the University of Southern California, but then the real drought started.

Between Jan. 29 and Mar. 1, the Buffs won only one game (against Arizona), going 1-8. This streak undid the Buffs and left them out of the talk for the NCAA Tournament. They finished the season strong, though, winning seven of their last nine including postseason play in the the Pac-12 Tournament and the WNIT.

Lappe said the Buffs played their best games in “one-and-done” scenarios. One of their biggest wins of the year was during the WNIT against the University of South Dakota. On South Dakota’s home court, where the Coyotes had only lost one game all year, the Buffs took it to them and won by nine.

After a win against Villanova University in Boulder, the Buffs fell in the quarterfinals to Oklahoma State.

“We played [OSU] tighter than anyone in the tournament,” Lappe said. “It’s good to get our younger players postseason play.”

The Buffs are indeed young; they lose only one player next season: senior forward Julie Seabrook. Seabrook played a big leadership role this year, a quality the team will need to find in someone else next year.

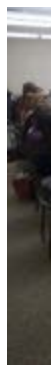
Lappe said point guard Chucky Jeffery, who will be a senior next year, could fill that role.

“[Chucky] continued to mature all season,” Lappe said. “And [she] played her best against the best.”

Stanford and Cal will be big favorites in the Pac-12 Conference next year, but the Buffs should be in the hunt for an NCAA Tournament berth all season long. With a top-30 recruiting class coming in next year, including Lappe’s first Colorado recruit, the Buffs will improve even more.

“[The recruits] could feel the environment here,” Lappe said. “There are opportunities to play right away here.”

Lappe talked about the need to be more consistent next year, saying the Buffs can’t have another up-and-down season with long losing streaks. Both leadership and experience will play a role in the team’s success, and the Buffs should play better in big games having gone through the Pac-12 Championship and the WNIT.



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After having WNIT bids for two straight seasons, the Buffs are anxious to get back to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 2004. They will need to play better in the conference and in the middle of the season in order to build on this year's success.

Winning 21 games is a big accomplishment for the Buffs, but they aren't stopping there.

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About Scott Annis

Scott is a Junior at CU majoring in English. He grew up in Thornton, CO but spent time living in the Bay Area and North Carolina. Scott spends most of his time focused on sports. When he isn't writing about them or watching them he plays on the CU Rugby team. Scott also writes for throughthefencebaseball.com.

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