

CU women's team rallies to win Pac-12 opener

Bufs still perfect after beating Utah

Buffzone.com
Boulder Daily Camera

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SALT LAKE CITY -- Colorado's 11-0 start in women's basketball was nice.

It wouldn't have meant a whole lot without a win Saturday, though.

Buckling down in the last eight minutes, CU rallied to defeat Utah 58-52 at the Huntsman Center in the first-ever Pac-12 Conference game for both teams.

"The most important start is the 1-0 in conference," Buffs head coach Linda Lappe said after the game on KKZN AM-760. "This is what we're playing for. We're playing for the conference. We've been looking forward to this for a long time.

"To be 1-0 and to get our first road win (in conference play) I think is tremendous and it shows a lot of heart by all of our players."

Colorado needed a whale of comeback to improve to 12-0 for just the third time in school history.

Chucky Jeffery scored nine of her 13 points in the final eight minutes as CU closed the game on a 14-0 run to stun the Utes (7-5, 0-1).

"That's just our mentality," said Jeffery, who also had seven rebounds and five assists. "We knew that we can't give up. There were times we got down, but we never stopped believing."

Julie Seabrook scored 17 points (one off of her career high), pulled down seven rebounds and drained a career-high four 3-pointers. Brittany Wilson added 14 points and four assists.

It was Seabrook and Wilson who kept the Buffs close most of the afternoon. Even with their efforts, Utah threatened to pull away.

Iwalani Rodrigues hit a jumper with 9:17 to go, putting Utah ahead 50-41. That was the last field goal for the Utes, though.

Rodrigues' two free throws with 8:33 to go gave the Utes a 52-44 lead, but they didn't score again, as CU's defense was relentless from that point.

"We said, 'We've got to bear down, get back down to our defensive principles and that's how we were going to get back in the game,'" Jeffery said.

The strong defense coincided with Jeffery's offense finally showing up. She hit the first bucket of the game for CU, but had just four points going into the final eight minutes.

"We knew Chucky had to get some scores," Lappe said. "If she's not scoring, it's going to be tough for us."

Jeffery sparked the final run with a three-point play with 7:27 to go. About a minute later, she missed both free throws after an intentional foul by Utah. But, she came back to sink three straight buckets to put the lead back in CU's hands.

"I was getting a little bit frustrated with missing easy shots," she said. "(Assistant) coach Jennie (Baranczyk) pulled me aside and said, 'You've got to keep your composure. This is your team; you've got to lead them.'"

Part of Jeffery's late success came from her attacking the hoop and taking the ball right at Utes point guard Janita Badon,

who had four fouls.

"I was just going hard to the rim and we went on from there," she said.

CU had a tough time all afternoon against Utah's impressive frontcourt duo of Michelle Plouffe (13 points, five rebounds) and Taryn Wicijowski (16 points, 11 rebounds).

With those two clogging the middle, Seabrook, who teamed with Plouffe and Wicijowski on the Canadian Junior National Team, found another way to score. She was 2-for-7 on 3-pointers before Saturday, but hit 4-of-6 against the Utes.

"I've been feeling pretty confident from there," she said. "Today, they pressured a lot on the inside and were really physical. I didn't get a lot looks from in there, so I had to step it up somewhere else. They were sagging off on me on the outside, so I felt like I had a lot of open shots and I've been really working on that over the break."

With the win, Colorado has now won six straight games away from Boulder, including five this season. The Buffs are 8-1 in their last nine away from Boulder.

"We kind of got over our road curse finally, as of last year, and hopefully we continue to build off of this," Seabrook said.

The Buffs will have two more road games next week, at Washington and at Washington State.

Notable

Lappe is 30-16 as CU coach. Only two coaches in program history got to 30 wins quicker: Sox Walseth (in 36 games) and Maureen "Rene" Portland (in 45 games). ... The Buffs went just 4-11 in conference road openers during the Big 12 era. ... CU is a perfect 5-0 on New Year's Eve games, and got its first-ever win on Utah's home floor (1-7). ... Utah had the biggest run (14-0) allowed by CU all season, and handed the Buffs their largest deficit of the year (10 points, at 48-38). ... CU outrebounded the Utes 41-30. It was the 11th straight game that CU had the edge on the glass.

Colorado 58, Utah 52

COLORADO (58)

MIN FG 3PT FT Rb PF TP

Seabrook 36 6-9 4-6 1-1 7 1 17

Hargis 13 0-3 0-0 0-0 5 4 0

Kresl 29 2-5 1-2 1-3 6 0 6

MM-Peck 30 2-6 2-5 0-0 3 1 6

Jeffery 38 6-14 0-1 1-4 7 1 13

B. Wilson 29 5-12 3-6 1-2 3 1 14

A. Wilson 9 0-3 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Reese 16 0-1 0-1 2-4 7 0 2

Team 3

Totals 200 21-53 10-21 6-14 41 8 58

Assists (13): Jeffery 5, B. Wilson 4, M. Malcolm-Peck 2, Seabrook, Reese.

Steals (7): M. Malcolm-Peck 2, Seabrook, Kresl, Jeffery, B. Wilson, A. Wilson.

Turnovers (17): Jeffery 5, Seabrook 3, Kresl 3, Hargis 2, B. Wilson 2, Reese 2.

Blocked shots (2): Hargis, Kresl.

UTAH (52)

MIN FG 3PT FT Rb PF TP

Plouffe 39 5-16 1-3 2-2 5 2 13

Wicijowski 36 6-11 0-0 4-4 11 3 16

Badon 29 4-9 0-0 0-0 3 5 8

Rodrigues 38 5-16 1-9 2-2 3 0 13

Messer 37 0-2 0-2 0-0 2 1 0

Wilson 7 1-1 0-0 0-0 0 0 2

Bridgewater 1 0-0 0-0 0-0 2 1 0

Rolniak 13 0-0 0-0 0-0 1 2 0

Team 3

Totals 200 21-55 2-14 8-8 30 14 52

Assists (8): Plouffe 4, Rodrigues 3, Badon.

Steals (8): Plouffe 5, Badon 2, Wicijowski.

Turnovers (11): Plouffe 4, Badon 3, Wicijowski, Messer, Bridgewater, Team.

Blocked shots (4): Wicijowski 2, Rolniak 2.

Halftime score: Colorado 31, Utah 29.

Technical fouls -- None.

Attendance -- 717.

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college basketball

Colorado women 12-0 after beating Utah 58-52

Posted: 12/31/2011 04:56:29 PM MST
Updated: 12/31/2011 10:57:59 PM MST *The Associated Press*

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SALT LAKE CITY — Julie Seabrook scored 17 points and Colorado moved its record to 12-0 with a 58-52 victory over Utah today in the Pac-12 opener for both schools.

Brittany Wilson scored 14 and Chucky Jeffery added 13 points for the Buffaloes, who rallied from a 10-point deficit midway through the second half.

Seabrook was 4 for 6 from 3-point range and Colorado finished 10 for 21 from behind the arc. The Buffaloes also outrebounded Utah 41-30.

Taryn Wicijowski had 16 points and 11 rebounds to lead the Utes (7-5). Michelle Plouffe had 13 points and five steals while Iwalani Rodrigues scored 13 points for Utah.

The comeback allowed Colorado to make some history as the Buffs tied for the second best start in team history (1980-81).

Colorado travels to the Pacific Northwest next week with games at Washington on Thursday and Washington State next Saturday.

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Deseret News

Utah Utes women's basketball: Loss leaves Utes shaking their heads

By Jessica Wilde

Deseret News

Published: Saturday, Dec. 31, 2011 11:26 p.m. MST

SALT LAKE CITY — With 8:33 remaining in its first Pac-12 Conference game of the season, the Utah women's basketball team had a 52-44 lead. A debut victory seemed certain.

But as the buzzer sounded, Utah head coach Anthony Levrets was shaking his head in disbelief.

Colorado scored 14 unanswered points in the remaining time and thwarted Utah any chance of redemption, handing them a 58-52 loss on Saturday at the Huntsman Center.

"This is what we're going to face week in and week out now," Utah center Taryn Wicijowski said. "Grinding to the end of games. It's something we're welcoming but we're just not used to it yet. We're pretty tired."

The **Utes** did have scoring opportunities down the final stretch but they were unable to convert — something Levrets attributed to a tiring first half and nine offensive rebounds for the undefeated Colorado Buffaloes.

"It turned into really long possessions for them offensively and we spent a long time on the defensive end of the floor," Levrets said. "It takes your legs out of you. That's what we want to do to other people but that was a little reversed today."

Utah jumped out to an early 7-2 lead in the first half but experienced a scoring drought minutes later as Colorado went on a 10-0 run. The lead would change four more times throughout the well-matched contest, with the Utes unable to hold on.

"I thought we did a good job getting the ball inside to Taryn (Wicijowski)," Levrets said. "But I thought there were a couple possessions where we weren't patient enough. We put the ball on the floor too soon when we were about to get Taryn or Plouffe inside."

When the Utes were able to feed Wicijowski, she delivered. The talented center earned yet another double-double, leading with 16 points and pulling down 11 rebounds in the narrow loss.

Although the Buffaloes' hounding defense hindered Utah's outside shooting, Michelle Plouffe and Iwalani Rodrigues were able to combine for an additional 26 points for the Utes, putting in 13 each.

Colorado's speedy guards, Julie Seabrook and Brittany Wilson, were too much for the Utah defense at times as they combined for 30 points in the win. The Utes shot just 14-percent from beyond the 3-point arc, going 2-14, compared to Colorado's 47-percent.

Despite the loss, Coach Levrets believes in a bright future.

"It (the loss) will be turned into a positive," he said. "This is a long season. We'll learn from it and get better."

Wicijowski agreed.

Colorado remains unbeaten, while Utah falls to an overall record of 7-5. Utah returns to action with a pair of Pac-12 road games next weekend, playing Washington State (Thursday, Jan. 5) and Washington (Saturday, Jan. 7).

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The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah women's basketball: Utes fall to Colorado, 58-52

Colorado's 14-0 run at end ruins U. women's first Pac-12 contest.

By Tony Jones

The Salt Lake Tribune

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The Utah women were nine minutes away from beating Colorado, delighting their fans at the Huntsman Center and winning the first Pac-12 game in program history.

Then, with an eight-point lead, it all went horribly sour for the Utes' offense and transition defense.

By the time the Buffaloes were done, they had scored a 58-52 comeback win, which was followed by them skipping gleefully off the floor, fully knowing that they had stolen a victory.

Utah failed to score a single point in the last nine minutes. Up 52-44, the Utes surrendered a 14-0 run to end the game.

Several shots seemed on the verge of dropping, before falling out. Other shots hit the backboard and served as de facto outlet passes for the Colorado fast break.

"We will learn from this, and we will get better," Utah head coach Anthony Levrets said. "This hurts right now, but we have to fix this. We have to rebound better, or it will be a long season in this conference."

For the Utes, this was a startling reminder of last year, when they went long stretches failing to score points. And indeed, Saturday was one of those



Francisco Kjolseth | The Salt Lake Tribune Utah's Taryn Wicijowski reaches up for a basket as the University of Utah women's basketball team takes on the University of Colorado on Saturday, December 31, 2011, at the Huntsman Center.

examples.

After two free throws by Iwalani Rodrigues, the last points of the game for Utah, the offensive execution stopped. The offense became stagnant, and Colorado, sensing an opening, took advantage.

Buffaloes guard Chucky Jeffery put her team ahead for good with a jumper that made it 54-52 with 1:59 remaining. But it was the 3-pointer by Julie Seabrook from the top of the key that made it a five-point Colorado advantage and served as the dagger.

"We have to win games like this," Utah forward Taryn Wicijowski said. "We didn't execute the way we should've when it mattered, and it came back to really hurt us."

Wicijowski led the Utes with 16 points and 11 rebounds. Michelle Plouffe scored 13 points, had five rebounds and four assists. Rodrigues had 13 points of her own.

But Janita Badon's inability to stay out of foul trouble — she fouled out — hurt Utah. Without Badon, the point guard and senior leader, the offense faltered in the final few minutes.

She scored eight points but handed out just one assist and grabbed only three rebounds.

Utah falls to 7-5 overall on the season. The Utes still have plenty of time to make a run. But if they are looking for an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament in March, this one may come back to hurt.

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Colorado 58, Utah 52

R Colorado scores the final 14 points.

- Utah doesn't score a single point in the last nine minutes.
- The Utes start their Pac-12 schedule with a bitter defeat.

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