



Freshman guard Lexy Kresl believes CU wore down Utah last weekend.

Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: Buffs' Conditioning Made Difference At Utah

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BOULDER - Over the course of a 12-0 start, Linda Lappe has been offered glimpses of her Colorado basketball team's resolve and mental resilience. But what she saw last weekend at Utah in CU's Pac-12 Conference opener also underscored what she had suspected about the Buffaloes' conditioning.

Down 10 points at one second-half juncture, CU held Utah without a point in the final 9 minutes, finished with a 14-0 run and won 58-52.

Conditioning, contended Lappe, was "the difference in the game. I think (Utah) wore down a little bit. A lot of Utah's shots were short. You never if they're really tired or if their shots were just off, but we think we did everything up to that point to wear them down."

The Utes, said CU freshman guard Lexy Kresl, had no answer when the Buffs took them out of their preferred slower pace: "When we changed the tempo they had a harder time with keeping up. The last eight minutes is when we started running in transition and started pushing the ball on offense. They couldn't keep up defensively with that pace."

Lappe likes her team to push the pace when it can, but even in its decisive late stretch against Utah, she didn't think CU did "a great job of pushing in transition, we can do a better job with that. But for the most part, I think in the last eight to ten minutes we had another gear. I think it was more about us than necessarily about them."

Kresl said she "probably" is in her best condition ever, hedging only because she ran track at Shadow Mountain High School in Paradise Valley, Arizona, and played on a club hoops team that "ran a lot."

"So it's not too much different now," added Kresl, who is averaging 11.8 points a game and second in scoring to junior Chucky Jeffery's 17.1. "But I do feel like I'm in really good shape now."

That's been the team goal during off-season conditioning and lifting work, and James Hardy - in his fifth season on CU's speed, strength and conditioning staff - called Lappe's second Buffs team the best women's hoops group he's seen here in several areas.

"The players did an awesome job this summer as far as motivating each other, holding each other accountable and motivating themselves," Hardy said. "And that carried over into the preseason and now the conference."

"If you look at the (Utah) stat sheet, that's a good example of mental toughness - our being down by ten and then them not scoring at all in last nine minutes. The girls' resilience, the mentality of 'we're not going to lose, we're going to win this game' - that's what I was very happy with."

So was Lappe, who called this team "more physically fit and mentally fit" than her debut CU squad in 2010-11. "A lot of times it helps to be more mentally fit because players can get more mentally tired long before they're physically tired. So that's probably the biggest difference - this team is more mentally fit than they were last year."

Lappe and her staff have emphasized trying to achieve an edge in conditioning that would be prominent at Boulder's altitude (5,345 feet) and make the Coors Events Center that much more formidable.

"When our staff came in here, one of the things we knew we had to use is the altitude," Lappe said. "It's one of our greatest benefits being at (CU). And in order to use the altitude you have to be a running team. You have to play tough man-to-man defense, you have to get up and down the floor in transition offense. We do a lot of movement in our motion offense, so teams have to run a lot. That's part of what we do and it's part of the advantage we want to create."

It won't be an advantage the Buffs get to exercise until next week. This week finds them playing their first Thursday/Saturday road games in the Pac-12. The first stop is at Washington, the second at Washington State.

The quick turnaround necessitates changes in game-planning but nothing drastic as seen by the players, according to Kresl. "We always try to do one (opponent) at a time, then change our focus when that game is over," she said. "We've looked at a few things for Saturday (WSU), but we're going to try and focus on them on Friday. Right now it's only Washington."

The Buffs return to the Events Center to play California on Thursday, Jan. 12 (7 p.m.), with No. 4 Stanford visiting on Saturday, Jan. 14 (4 p.m.) Tickets, with prices starting at \$8, can be purchased at CUBuffs.com/tickets or by calling 303-49-BUFFS.

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SHOW MENU



CU's Seabrook relishes trip to Washington

Senior has never played so close to Canadian home

By **Brian Howell** Buffzone.com
Boulder Daily Camera

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Throughout her career at Colorado, Julie Seabrook has been able to visit home a few times, most recently for the Christmas break.

Until today, however, the senior has never been able to play a game close to home.

Tonight, the Buffs (12-0, 1-0 Pac-12) will be in Seattle to take on Washington (8-4, 0-2). They'll visit Washington State (8-6, 2-0) on Saturday.

It's not exactly home for Seabrook, who is from North Vancouver, British Columbia, but at just about three hours away, it's as close as she's ever been in a CU uniform.

"I'm really, really happy that my dad can come watch me play, because he hasn't really gotten to see me play that much," said Seabrook, who has had family members see her play in Boulder in the past. "Also my high school coaches are going to be watching."

The trip to Washington couldn't come at a better time for Seabrook, who is the midst of arguably her best stretch of play since she came to CU in 2008.

"I feel confident shooting the ball and I also feel confident in my post game," said Seabrook, who ranks sixth in the Pac-12 in field-goal percentage (58.5). "Hopefully I can just take advantage of what they're giving me and continue doing that."

Through the fifth game of this season, Seabrook had started 39 straight games, averaging 5.2 points and 5.2 rebounds in those games.

In the past seven games, she has posted 10.1 points and 7.0 rebounds per contest. In CU's 58-52 win at Utah on Saturday, she drained a career-high four 3-pointers en route to a 17-point, 7-rebound performance.

She would love to continue her great play this week in front of family and friends.

"It's my senior year and hopefully I'll have a good game and won't put too much pressure on myself to perform," she said.

Most important to Seabrook is how the entire team is playing.

The Buffs' 12-0 start is tied for the second-best start in school history. They are currently one of just six undefeated teams in the country.

"Yeah, there's pressure to prove people wrong, but we know how hard we've worked and the effort and how hard we're going to work in every game on our defense and rebounding and transition and stuff like that," she said. "I think we're pretty confident that we can continue to play well. We know we have to put the hard work in to be successful."

Pac-12 coaches picked the Buffs to finish 11th, while media picked them to finish 12th. That eases the pressure, Seabrook said.

"They were the ones who picked us at the bottom of the Pac-12 and there's really no pressure on us," she said.

The Buffs have gained confidence throughout the win streak, but have done a good job of realizing it could end at any time if they let up.

"We want to stay humble though, and we want to know that we can still always lose," freshman Lexy Kresl said. "We have to keep performing at our top level and keep working hard."

Colorado is coming off of "our best win of the year," according to head coach Linda Lappe.

In that game, the Buffs had to rally from a 10-point deficit to beat Utah. They closed the game on a 14-0 run. While the performance wasn't perfect, Lappe was pleased with how her team finished.

"We had the wherewithall to understand what it was going to take to win a game," Lappe said. "That's what we've shown so far this year, that we understand what that's going to take."

Seabrook would love nothing more than to keep the win streak going as she plays near her home. She said these two games will be probably two of her favorite games of her career. Of course, they'd be better if CU wins.

"It's nice to not lose," she said with a laugh. "Hopefully that will continue."

CU vs. UW

TODAY: The Colorado Buffaloes (12-0, 1-0) visit the Washington Huskies (8-4, 0-2) in an 8 p.m. game at Bank of America Arena.

BROADCAST: Radio on KVCU (1190 AM), with Mike Rice doing play-by-play and Carol Callan providing color commentary.

STORYLINES: Colorado is looking for just the second 13-0 start in school history (15-0 start in 1992-93). ... The Buffs have not started 2-0 in conference play since the 2006-07 season. ... CU has won six straight games away from Boulder. ... This is CU's first game of 2012. The Buffs went 22-12 during the 2011 calendar year, including 18-3 in their last 21

games. ... Colorado has out-rebounded its last 11 opponents. ... CU's Meagan Malcolm-Peck ranks in the top-15 in school history in career 3-pointers (13th, 70) and blocked shots (15th, 57). ... Washington has lost its two Pac-12 games (at Oregon State and at Oregon) by a combined seven points. ... The Huskies are 6-1 at home, winning their last six. ... Huskies center Regina Rogers ranks second nationally in field-goal percentage (67 percent).

KEY STAT: On the road, CU has allowed just 52.2 points per game and 33.9 percent shooting.

COACHES: Linda Lappe is 30-16 entering her second season at CU and 80-52 overall. Kevin McGuff is 8-4 in his first season at Washington and 221-77 overall.

PROBABLE STARTERS:

Colorado -- G Chucky Jeffery, 5-10, Jr., 17.1 ppg, 8.4 rpg, 4.6 apg; G Lexy Kresl, 5-11, Fr., 11.8 ppg, 3.9 rpg; F Meagan Malcolm-Peck, 6-2, Jr., 5.3 ppg, 5.0 rpg; F Julie Seabrook, 6-3, Sr., 7.8 ppg, 5.8 rpg; C Rachel Hargis, 6-4, So., 5.1 ppg, 4.4 rpg.

Washington -- G Jazmine Davis, 5-7, Fr., 11.4 ppg, 3.1 rpg, 3.3 apg; G Mercedes Wetmore, 5-8, So., 8.8 ppg, 3.3 rpg, 3.2 apg; F Charmaine Barlow, 5-10, Sr., 2.8 ppg, 4.0 rpg; F Mackenzie Argens, 6-3, Sr., 10.0 ppg, 7.8 rpg; C Regina Rogers, 6-3, Sr., 17.0 ppg, 7.9 rpg.

SERIES: CU leads 6-2 and has won five straight against the Huskies. This will be the first meeting since Dec. 21, 2004.

UP NEXT: Colorado continues its Pacific Northwest trip by visiting Washington State on Saturday.

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UW women to face undefeated Colorado, Chucky

Washington (8-4, 0-2 Pac-12) hosts undefeated Colorado (12-0, 1-0) at Edmundson Pavilion Thursday night. The Buffs, who spent 15 years in the Big 12, are one of six remaining undefeated teams in the country.

By Jayda Evans

Seattle Times staff reporter

It's a head-scratcher.

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True, Colorado lost its all-time leading player in Brittany Spears (2,185 career points). But it played in the nation's top-rated conference, the Big 12, and defeated then-Pac-10 mainstay California 81-65 in the WNIT tournament. The Buffs lost to USC 87-70 in the quarterfinals.

 Not sure why the coaches would disrespect Colorado in the voting like that, but it's to...
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Surely Colorado deserved some respect heading into its inaugural Pac-12 season.

Nope. Taped to its locker room door was the rudest welcoming Colorado could imagine — clips showing their bottom-feeder rankings in preseason polls by the coaches (11th) and media (12th).

"I don't think anybody really knows us," said Colorado coach Linda Lappe, who posted the rankings to be certain her team knew what outsiders thought. "I don't think a lot of them even knew we were in the Big 12 last year."

Washington (8-4, 0-2 Pac-12) will get a formal introduction on Thursday, hosting undefeated Colorado (12-0, 1-0) at Edmundson Pavilion. The Buffs, who spent 15 years in the Big 12, are one of six remaining undefeated teams in the country and are off to the third-best start in program history.

Leading the team is do-everything point guard Chucky Jeffery. Yes. *Chuck*y.

"When my mom was pregnant with me, the doctors told her she was going to have a boy so she was planning on naming me Charles after my great-grandfather," said Jeffery of the nickname. Her first name is Janeesa. "Later they found out I was going to be a girl but my dad was still trying to name me Chucky. They just made it my nickname instead and it stuck."

Hailing from an athletic family with roots in Denver, Jeffery is averaging 17.1 points on 52.9 percent shooting from the field. She grabs a team-leading 8.4 rebounds, with 4.5 assists and 4.5 turnovers.

This is Jeffery's first season taking over at point guard. She worked with Lappe and her staff over the summer to learn the position, also working with freshmen like Lexy Kresl (11.8 points), who arrived early on campus.

"(Chucky) has the ability to control the game," Washington coach Kevin McGuff said. "She's really one of the more dynamic players in our league."

Colorado isn't even offense-minded. Under Lappe, in her second season coaching her alma mater, the Buffs play an aggressive man-to-man defense that the Huskies haven't seen since early nonconference play.

Although inconsistent, UW has an inside-out game that could frustrate Colorado. Washington lost to the Oregon schools by a combined seven points last week, but centers Regina Rogers and Mackenzie Argens are strong and reserve Kellie McCann-Smith nailed six three-pointers Saturday.

How that translates against Colorado is unknown. The teams haven't played each other since 2004, the Buffs holding a 6-2 series edge.

"They should know that we're not going to be like any other team that they've seen or played," said Jeffery of what the conference should know about Colorado. "We're going to be something new, and we shouldn't be overlooked for sure."

"We've kind of got a chip on our shoulder about the rankings."

Note

- Former Washington forward **Liz Lay** will join the UWTV broadcast team as a color commentator Thursday. Lay was forced to retire last season due to chronic knee injuries but remains on scholarship.

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