

CU's Malcolm-Peck searching for her shot

Junior has been in season-long slump

By Brian Howell, Buffzone.com
Boulder Daily Camera

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What started off as a slump has grown into one of the biggest mysteries of the season for the Colorado women's basketball team.

With two games left in the regular season, including tonight against Oregon, CU junior Meagan Malcolm-Peck is still trying to regain her shooting touch.

In the third game of the season, at Colorado State on Nov. 20, she hit 5-of-8 shots for a season-high 12 points. At that point, she was 9-for-20 (45 percent) on the season, including 4-for-12 (33.3 percent) from 3-point range.

Since then, however, it's been a major struggle for Malcolm-Peck, whose shooting numbers have taken a nose-dive from last year. She is hitting just 27.7 percent from the floor, including 19.5 percent of her 3-pointers; at the free-throw line, she at 37.0 percent. A year ago, she hit 41.0 percent from the floor, 35.8 percent from 3-point range, and 63.3 percent from the free throw line.

"(Assistant coach Jonas Chatterton) and I have looked at it a lot," she said. "It's coming off my hand a little weird sometimes and I'm just not ready for it as much as I used to be. It's just all in my head right now. I really just can't focus on it too much."

Malcolm-Peck doesn't concern herself with individual statistics, but she knows the team, which has struggled throughout Pac-12 play to score, could really use some of her scoring punch. She's averaging 4.2 points per game for the season, but only 3.5 in Pac-12 play. Despite starting all but two games this season, she has been held scoreless in five Pac-12 games. She scored eight points -- her best total in the Pac-12 -- in Saturday's loss at Cal.

"I've definitely been extremely frustrated this year and we want (lone senior Julie Seabrook) to go out on a good note," Malcolm-Peck said. "Obviously I feel like if I was stepping up and producing more we could be in more games, so that's on my shoulders for sure. I've just been doing what I can. I've thought about it a long time and at this point I'm just like, 'I've got to let it go.' I just have to get it out of my head."

"I've been having some good practices where it feels really good, and then in the games it just doesn't go in or I just shoot a couple shots. It's been there off and on, so I'll just keep working on it, I guess."

Give her credit for that. On Wednesday, she stayed late to work on her shot and has done that numerous times throughout the season. Head coach Linda Lappe is also quick to point out the many good things Malcolm-Peck has done for the team this season. She is second on the team with 49 offensive rebounds, leads all of CU's front-court players with 32 assists and has the fewest turnovers among the six players who have average at least 20 minutes of playing time. She's also been an exceptional leader on and off the floor.

"We know she's still valuable to our team even though she's not hitting her outside shot," Lappe said.

The fact that Malcolm-Peck's shot has not fallen has been a head-scratcher, though.

"Yeah, I am surprised," Lappe said of the length of Malcolm-Peck's slump. "I think that's attributed to a lot of different things, probably that nobody really will ever know. If you had a magic formula for shooting the ball, everybody would want it and everybody would take it."

Malcolm-Peck will continue searching for that formula and she and the Buffs hope to find it as soon as possible.

"I really think if she would have one great game of shooting the basketball -- one full game -- I think she could still break out of it," Lappe said.

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Lappe's CU Buffs in need of strong finish

CU has lost 7 of last 8 to hurt chances of WNIT berth

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com
Boulder Daily Camera

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Like most college basketball teams, the Colorado women began this season with a certain goal in mind.

Now the Colorado women, like many other teams, are looking at a new goal with the postseason around the corner.

"We started this year saying 'NCAA Tournament,' and at this point, we have not done what we need to do to get there," junior Meagan Malcolm-Peck said.

With two regular season games to play -- tonight vs. Oregon and Saturday vs. Oregon State -- the real question is whether the Buffs (16-11, 5-11 Pac-12) have done enough to even get to the consolation tournament -- the Women's NIT.

Although the Buffs have clinched a winning record, which is a requirement for WNIT selection, they have lost four in a row and seven of eight. The WNIT selection committee isn't too fond of teams fading down the stretch.

"We can't lose nine of our 10 last games and have any chance of getting to the postseason," Malcolm-Peck said of the importance of this weekend.

The Buffs probably need to get a win or two -- or three -- between this weekend and next week's Pac-12 tournament.

"I feel like we need to win and we need to win in the right way," CU coach Linda Lappe said of the upcoming two-game homestand. "I think that's important, even just for our own program, regardless of what the future holds there (in the WNIT). We just need to turn the corner a little bit."

CU has a strong recent history with the WNIT. In 2008, the Buffs were 16-14 going in and earned four straight home games because of their power to pack the stands. A year ago, a 15-15 mark got them in and they earned three home games out of four, once again because of their ability to put fans in the seats.

Since the committee doesn't take past history or attendance into account -- according to the tournament web site -- the Buffs can't simply rely on that.

The CU administration has submitted bids to host WNIT and NIT games if the Buffs are unable to earn a berth in the NCAA Tournament.

Regardless of the postseason, CU simply wants to get the winning feeling back. The Buffs have had some big wins this season, but the past month has been filled with too many disappointing losses for their taste.

"You can only bounce back for so long and we've been bouncing back a lot," Lappe said.

Despite their recent struggles, the Buffs have always maintained a positive attitude -- something that could serve them well this weekend.

"I think we just realize we still have a great opportunity and just look at the positive side of things," Malcolm-Peck said.

What the Buffs want most is wins. Get those and a postseason berth should take care of itself.

That's why the Buffs aren't worried about the WNIT. They're focused on Oregon.

"At this point, we're desperate for a positive outcome to a game and being able to do all the right things to get that positive outcome is part of it," Lappe said. "It's going to be important to finish the conference on the right note."

CU women's hoops preview

TODAY: The Colorado Buffaloes (16-11, 5-11) host the Oregon Ducks (14-14, 6-10) in a 6:30 p.m. game at Coors Events Center in Boulder

BROADCAST: TV on Root Sports with Marc Stout on play-by-play, Ceal Barry with color commentary and Abby Waner on the sidelines. Radio on KKZN (760 AM), with Mike Rice doing play-by-play and Carol Callan with color commentary.

STORYLINES: Colorado looks to snap a four-game losing streak. ... Oregon is looking to snap a three-game losing streak. ... Oregon beat the Buffs 67-62 on Feb. 4 in Eugene, Ore. The Ducks had an 18-0 run in the middle of the game to erase a 13-point CU lead. ... The Ducks' Amanda Johnson had 26 points and eight rebounds in that first meeting. ... Johnson is among the Pac-12 leaders with nine double-doubles. ... CU's Lexy Kresl had a career-high 17 points in the first meeting with the Ducks. ... CU is 2-5 in Pac-12 home games, but Oregon is 2-5 in Pac-12 road games. ... Oregon ranks 22nd nationally in scoring (72.6 points per game). ... CU ranks 10th in the Pac-12 in field-goal percentage (.364) during conference play, while Oregon is 11th (.351). ... CU has just nine healthy players, with forwards Brenna Malcolm-Peck, Jen Reese and Arielle Roberson out for the season.

KEY STAT: Colorado is 2-11 this season against the nine teams that sit above the Buffs in the Pac-12 standings, including Oregon.

COACHES: Linda Lappe is 34-27 in her second season at CU and 84-63 overall. Paul Westhead is 45-47 in his third season at Oregon and 330-270 overall.

PROBABLE STARTERS:

Colorado -- G Chucky Jeffery, 5-10, Jr., 15.2 ppg, 7.3 rpg, 3.8 apg; G Brittany Wilson, 5-7, So., 8.4 ppg, 3.0 rpg, 2.0 apg; G Jasmine Sborov, 6-1, Fr., 2.4 ppg, 2.4 rpg; G/F Meagan Malcolm-Peck, 6-2, Jr., 4.2 ppg, 4.0 rpg; F Julie Seabrook, 6-3, Sr., 7.1 ppg, 5.1 rpg.

Oregon -- G Nia Jackson, 5-7, Sr., 9.1 ppg, 2.8 rpg, 3.6 apg; G Ariel Thomas, 5-6, So., 9.4 ppg, 3.4 rpg; F Jasmin Holliday, 6-0, Sr., 13.4 ppg, 7.2 rpg; F Danielle Love, 6-2, So., 6.3 ppg, 5.3 rpg; F Amanda Johnson, 19.0 ppg, 9.6 rpg.

SERIES: Oregon leads 9-3 and has won five straight against the Buffs. Oregon is 3-1 in Boulder

UP NEXT: CU hosts Oregon State at 4 p.m. Saturday.

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