

Chucky Jeffery helps CU women advance in WNIT

Bufs next host Villanova in third round on Thursday

Buffzone.com staff report
Boulder Daily Camera

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VERMILLION, S.D. -- Chucky Jeffery was dialed in offensively, and the Buffs were tough on defense.

Jeffery scored 23 points to lead the Colorado women's basketball team to a 64-55 win over South Dakota on Monday night in the second round of the Women's NIT at the DakotaDome.

Throughout the night, CU's top scorer hit big buckets, the last being a layup with 24 seconds left that sealed the win.

"I just stepped up with confidence and was knocking them down," Jeffery said on KKZN AM-760 radio after the game.

It wasn't just her shot that was on. Jeffery had her eighth double-double of the season, finishing with 10 rebounds. She also had three assists and matched her season-low with one turnover (just the third time she's had fewer than two all year).

"We came in, it was a crazy atmosphere," Jeffery said. "I knew I had to remain calm so my team remained calm. I just had to remain aggressive in my play, but I had to stay mentally focused. When I don't turn the ball over, I'm extremely focused."

Her teammates were focused, too, as CU (20-13) clinched its first 20-win season since 2003-04.

CU moves into the third round of the WNIT for the second year in a row. The Buffs will host Villanova (19-14) on Thursday at 7 p.m. at Coors Events Center.

Brittany Wilson added 15 points for the Buffaloes, who are 4-1 in their last five games. Lexy Kresl added nine points, including four crucial free throws late in the game.

South Dakota (23-8), which had won 13 straight at home and finished 16-2 at home this season, took its only lead of the game in the first minute on a 3-point play by Amber Hegge to give the Coyotes a 3-0 lead.

Colorado followed with a 13-0 run and never trailed again. CU led by as many as 12 in the first half as it pushed the pace against the defensive-minded Coyotes.

"In the first half when we went on that run, we really pushed the ball," CU head coach Linda Lappe said. "Starting off the second half, we did the same thing. That really helped us down the stretch to be able to build that lead."

South Dakota never would go away quietly, though.

After CU built a 26-14 lead, the Coyotes went on a 9-0 run to close the gap to 26-23. Jeffery then scored four straight points, including a buzzer-beating jumper to close the half with a 30-23 lead.

A 3-pointer by Jeffery sparked a 12-2 CU run as the Buffs took their biggest lead, 44-28 with 13:42 to play.

Once again, South Dakota responded.

Hegge, who finished with 20 points, scored seven points to cut CU's lead to 46-37 and the Coyotes continued to whittle at the deficit. A bucket by Annie Roche pulled South Dakota within 55-49 going into the final three minutes.

Then, Tempestt Wilson hit a pair of free throws to cut the CU lead to 58-53 with 50 seconds to play.

That's when Kresl came through with four consecutive free throws and then Jeffery hit her final bucket.

"I thought we could have done that (pushed the tempo) a little bit more toward the ends of the game, but we had a lead and we wanted to make sure we took our time and got what we wanted to get," Lappe said.

CU dominated on the glass, outrebounding the Coyotes 47-25 and did a nice job defensively on Hegge. Although she had 20 points, she made just six of 16 shots.

"We knew she was going to be the focal point," Lappe said. "We knew we had to do a great job on her."

The Buffs also got key stops when they needed them. South Dakota didn't score a field goal in the final three minutes.

"As soon as they went on a run, we recognized it," Jeffery said. "We came together and were like, 'We've got to get stops.' We didn't want to give them too much momentum. We just had to regroup."

They did and Lappe's crew is now 5-1 in WNIT play over the past two seasons, including 2-0 on the road.

"Not very many people have come in here and won," she said. "You can see why. The environment was great; a lot of great fans and they were into it."

Now the Buffs have a chance to play again in front of their fans.

"I'm excited," Jeffery said. "Villanova is a pretty good team and I'm pretty excited to get them on our home floor. We're ready."

Notable

CU finished with a season-low nine turnovers, one game after a season-high 27. It was just the third time in 67 games under Lappe that CU finished with fewer than 10 turnovers. ... Each of CU's starters finished with at least five rebounds. ... Jeffery had her highest point total since a 30-point effort against Idaho on Dec. 4. ... Freshman Esther Lee played a season-high nine minutes.

Colorado 64, South Dakota 55 COLORADO (64)

MIN FG 3PT FT Rb PF TP

MM-Peck 25 0-2 0-2 0-0 5 4 0

Seabrook 24 1-2 0-1 0-0 5 1 2

B. Wilson 34 5-13 1-5 4-5 5 1 15

Sborov 17 4-6 0-0 0-0 5 4 8

Jeffery 36 10-19 1-2 2-3 10 1 23

Kresl 28 2-9 1-6 4-4 2 1 9

Lee 9 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

A. Wilson 10 1-1 0-0 0-2 3 0 2

Hargis 17 2-10 0-0 1-2 7 2 5

Team 5

Totals 200 25-62 3-16 11-16 47 14 64

Assists (7): Jeffery 3, B. Wilson 2, Seabrook, Sborov.

Steals (5): Jeffery 3, A. Wilson, Malcolm-Peack.

Turnovers (9): A. Wilson 3, B. Wilson 2, Kresl, Lee, Seabrook, Jeffery.

Blocked shots (4): A. Wilson, Malcolm-Peck, Jeffery, Hargis.

SOUTH DAKOTA (55)

MIN FG 3PT FT Rb PF TP

Wilson 29 4-11 0-2 4-4 3 1 12

Yackley 37 2-7 1-3 0-0 5 1 5

Roche 40 5-8 2-2 2-2 2 2 14

Hegge 40 6-16 1-1 7-8 7 4 20

Boss 38 1-5 0-0 0-0 5 3 2

January 1 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Stewart 14 1-2 0-0 0-0 0 2 2

Knudson 1 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Team 3

Totals 200 19-49 4-8 13-14 25 13 55

Assists (8): Yackley 3, Hegge 3, Roche, Boss.

Steals (4): Yackley 2, Roche, Hegge.

Turnovers (8): Wilson 4, Roche 2, Hegge, Boss.

Blocked shots (8): Boss 4, Hegge 3, Stewart.

Halftime score: Colorado 30, South Dakota 23.

Technical fouls -- None.

Attendance -- 1,569.

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Sports

Buffs End USD's Season

BY KEITH A. BROCKBERG
P&D Correspondent

Published: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 1:08 AM CDT

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VERMILLION — The University of Colorado Buffaloes used a break just before halftime, a strong second-half start and a gaudy rebounding edge to end the University of South Dakota's season with a 64-55 Women's National Invitation Tournament win over the Coyotes at the DakotaDome Monday night.

The Coyotes, who reached the second round of the WNIT with a 61-53 win over Drake Thursday night, got a taste of the next level in facing the lengthy and athletic Buffaloes of the Pac 12.

They also saw a cold-blooded shooter in Chucky Jeffery, who stabbed at the Coyotes' heart whenever they grasped at momentum.

"You saw their athleticism; you saw the next level of talent," USD head coach Ryun Williams said. "Every time they needed a basket, there was Chucky; every time they needed a rebound, they went out and got it."

"We knew they were a good team coming in," Coyote guard Annie Roche said. "Their athleticism and length isn't something we've seen this year."

"We beared down; it was a tough atmosphere out there," CU's Jeffery said. "When we needed some scores, we came up big."

Colorado won the opening tip, but the game's initial sparks belonged to the Coyotes as Amber Hegge blocked Jasmine Sborov's shot on the defensive end and converted on the offensive end with an easy drive for a lay-up and a 3-point play.

But the Buffalo rebounding took hold, and Colorado used it to maximize their possessions.

Colorado built a double-digit advantage as Brittany Wilson sped the baseline for a hoop and some harm. The 5-7 guard swished the free throw for the old -school 3-point play and a 24-14 Buff lead at the 6:34 mark.

The Coyotes and Hegge brought the DakotaDome to their feet with a 9-0 run.



South Dakota's Amber Hegge drives past Colorado's Meagan Malcolm-Peck (14) early in the first half of action in the DakotaDome Monday. Colorado downed USD 64-55 in the second round of the Women's National Invitational Tournament, ending the Coyotes' season with a 23-8 mark. (David Lias/Vermillion Plain Talk)

Hegge rose above the crowd for an in-the-lane jumper and, on the return trip, battled for a rebound deep under the basket and kicked out to Kelly Stewart for a cool jumper.

The senior from Crofton continued to show the Buffaloes her skillset by pulling up for a jumper and then stepping outside for a 3-point shot.

Hegge's spree pulled the Coyotes to within 26-23 with 1:09 left in the half.

Chuck Jeffery answered the USD run with a scoop shot and closed the half with a controversial jumper.

The Buffs played for the last shot, and though they missed a 3-point attempt, Colorado was given possession on a held-ball call on the rebound and awarded an extra half-second to work with. CU capitalized as the inbound pass went to Jeffery, who canned the jumper and sent the visitors to the lockerroom with a 30-23 lead.

"We had a little momentum going near the end of the half, and they made a couple of buckets," Hegge said.

Jeffery and Wilson each had 10 points at the break for the Buffs as Hegge had 10 points for the 'Yotes.

Colorado opened the second half four of five from the field to open up the game.

Jeffery canned a 3-pointer and raced in for a lay-up off a Coyote turnover. Wilson scored on a lay-up to put the Buffs in front 39-26.

With their home crowd faithfully and vocally behind them, the Coyotes continued to fight and trimmed the Buffalo lead under double digits with a 3-pointer from Alexis Yackley with 7:03 remaining.

Roche cued up for another trey and Yackley rifled in a pass to Jodie Boss to draw USD to within 53-47.

Jeffery pulled the trigger on a long jumper to again thwart the USD run, but the Coyotes continued to hang around.

Even though USD was trying to extend the game by sending the Buffaloes to the free-throw line, USD ended up shooting six of six from the charity stripe in the final 53 seconds.

USD got as close as 58-53 on a pair of free throws from Tempestt Wilson with 50.3 seconds left, but Jeffery got free on the fly pattern and went in for a lay-up, securing the 64-55 win for Colorado.

Jeffery led all scorers with 23 points while also grabbing 10 rebounds. Wilson added 15 points for Colorado (20-13).

Hegge finished with 20 points, seven rebounds, three assists and three blocked shots.

"Amber Hegge's a great player," Jeffery said of the Crofton Warrior. "She's 6-1 and she can do a lot of things."

Roche scored 14 points and moved into 15th place on the USD scoring chart, passing Jodi Beavers with 1,175 counters. Wilson scored 12 points.

The Buffaloes held a 47-25 advantage on the boards with 19 rebounds coming on the offensive end.

"Our rebounding has been a staple for us all season," Colorado head coach Linda Lappe said. "We did a nice job of getting extra possessions and making them play defense for some times 60 seconds at a time."

The DakotaDome crowd kept the Coyotes believing while making the Buffaloes feeling unwelcome.

"Our fans did an awesome job," Roche said. "Even when we would get a little bit back in it, they were right there backing us up."

"It was a neat environment," Lappe said. "They didn't like us and that made it fun."

The Buffaloes, who reached the 20-win mark for the first time since 2004, will host Villanova Thursday in the third round.

USD finished their final NCAA Division I transitional season with a 23-8 mark while bidding farewell to seniors Hegge, Boss and Roche.

"What a treat to be able to come here and coach Amber Hegge," Williams said. "I couldn't get her at Wayne State so I had to come here so I could coach her."

Boss followed Williams from Wayne State to block a school-record 230 shots while Roche stayed home for her 1,100-point Coyote career.

Hegge finished with 1,759 points, second behind Mandy Koupal in the USD annals while also finishing fifth with 841 rebounds, second to Boss with 176 blocks and ninth in assists with 314.

"I've learned more from Amber Hegge, Annie Roche and Jodie Boss than I could have ever taught them as a coach," Williams said of the departing trio.

COLORADO (20-13)

Brittany Wilson 5-13 4-5 15, Meagan Malcolm-Peck 0-2 0-0 0, Julie Seabrook 1-2 0-0 2, Jasmine Sborov 4-6 0-0 8, Chucky Jeffery 10-19 2-3 23, Lexy Kresl 2-9 4-4 9, Esther Lee 0-0 0-0 0, Ashley Wilson 1-1 0-2 2, Rachel Hargis 2-10 1-2 2. TOTALS: 25-62 11-16 64.

COYOTES (23-8)

Tempestt Wilson 4-11 4-4 12, Alexis Yackley 2-7 0-0 5, Annie Roche 5-8 2-2 14, Amber Hegge 6-16 7-8 20, Jodie Boss 1-5 0-0 2, Pam January 0-0 0-0 0, Kelly Stewart 1-2 0-0 2, McKayla Knudson 0-0 0-0 0. TOTALS: 19-49 13-14 55.

At the Half: CU 30, SD 23; 3-Point Goals: SD 4-8 (Wilson 0-2, Yackley 1-3, Roche 2-2, Hegge 1-1), CU 3-16 (Wilson 1-5, Malcolm-Peck 0-2, Seabrook 0-1, Jeffery 1-2, Kresl 1-6); Rebounds: CU 47 (Jeffery 10), SD 25 (Hegge 7); Personal Fouls: CU 14, SD 13; Fouled Out: None; Assists: SD 8 (Yackley, Hegge 3), CU 7 (Jeffery 3); Turnovers: CU 9, SD 8; Blocked Shots: SD 8 (Boss 4, Hegge 3); Steals: CU 5 (Jeffery 3), SD 4.



<p>Amber Hegge</p>

Coyotes season ends with loss to Colorado

**BY BARRY POE bpoe@siouxcityjournal.com |
Posted: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 6:00 am**

VERMILLION, S.D. -- Big time college women's basketball came to the DakotaDome Monday night and the University of South Dakota held its own against an established Division I program.

Colorado came away a 64-55 winner in the second round of the WNIT, but the Buffs from the Pac 12 got all they wanted from the Summit League's pesky Coyotes.

Chucky Jefferey, a first-team All-Pac 12 selection, led Colorado with 23 points, 10 rebounds and three assists. The Buffs (20-13) will face Villanova in the next round.

"Colorado is a very good team, I think you saw their athleticism and Chucky is a hard player to handle," said USD Coach Ryun Williams, whose team finished 23-8. "I think we just saw next level athleticism and length tonight and it's pretty darn disruptive.

"But our kids fought. We gave everything we had tonight, but it was hard to establish a decent, confident rhythm and tempo and Colorado had a lot to do with that."

Amber Hegge closed her brilliant USD career with a 20-point, seven rebound effort. The Crofton, Neb., product finished as the second leading all-time scorer in school history with 1,759 points.

"They had a couple of two or three-minute runs where they got away from us and we dug ourselves too big of a hole," said Hegge, who also had three assists and three blocked shots. "They were pretty long and it was hard to keep them off the boards and Chucky is a great player. It just seemed like she kept hitting big shots."

Colorado led 30-23 at halftime and stretched the lead to 44-28 with 13:45 remaining. But the Coyotes fought back to within 55-49 and had a chance to come closer but 6-foot-4 Rachel Hargis blocked a Hegge shot at the two-minute mark., Colorado freshman Lexy Kresl converted four in a row.

"It was a tough atmosphere out there but it was fun," said Jefferey, a 5-10 junior from Colorado Springs who averaged 15.2 points this season. "South Dakota went on some key runs there but we knew we had to get some stops and execute on offense. When we needed scores we stepped up big.

"South Dakota kept plugging away. They didn't go away and fought and Hegge is a really good player who can do a lot of things."

Annie Roche tallied 14 points in her final collegiate game while Wilson, a junior, added 12 points. Jodie Boss, also playing her final game in a Coyote uniform, had five rebounds and four blocked shots.

South Dakota picked up its first-ever WNIT victory, 61-53 over Drake on Thursday and had won 13 of its last 14 games.

"It was fun to be a part of that ride, they took our staff on a fun, fun journey" said Williams. "Hegge, Roche, Boss, those three seniors, this is what they wanted. This is the season that they worked for.

"Yeah, it didn't end great tonight but our season was outstanding and they have a lot to be proud of.

Colorado led 30-23 at halftime. The Coyotes crept within six points with just over three minutes left and Hegge had a shot blocked that would have cut the margin to four.

The Buffaloes dominated the rebounding chart by a 47-25 margin.

Linda Lappe, the second-year Colorado coach, played on back-to-back state championship teams at Winfield-Mount Union (1995-96) and was inducted into the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union's Basketball Hall of Fame in 2009. Lappe, 31, was a two-year captain at Colorado and played in consecutive NCAA tournaments from 2001-03.

"We knew their offense went through Hegge and that we had to push the ball in transition" said Lappe, who had family members and friends on hand. "I thought we did a good job of that for about three quarters and our rebounding was fantastic. Outrebounding opponents has been a staple of ours all season and I thought we did a good job of getting ourselves extra possessions and making them play defense."

As it turned out, a 13-0 run after Hegge started the game with a conventional 3-point play was the difference.

"That was a great run. We knew they were going to come back at us in the second half," said Lappe. "I didn't like how we came out at halftime. I thought we looked sluggish and our energy wasn't good so we called a quick time out and I thought from that point on we really realized that if we want to win this game that's what it's going to take."

The Coyotes overcame a slow start, pulling within 26-23 on a 3-pointer by Hegge with 1:14 left in the half.

Colorado's Jeffery made a shot at the buzzer after officials put 1.3 seconds back on the clock after it read .8.

USD made just one of its first nine shots before Roche ended the skid with a 3-pointer. The former Vermillion High School standout added a hoop at the 11:09 mark, trimming the early deficit to 13-8.

Trailing 26-14, the Coyotes ran off nine points in a row -- seven by Hegge -- to come within three. Jeffery, though, scored on a nice move to the hoop and ended the half with the buzzer beater.

COLORADO (64)

Brittany Wilson 5-13 4-5 15, Meagan Malcolm-Peck 0-2 0-0 0, Jasmine Sborov 4-6 0-0 8, Chucky Jeffery 10-19 2-3 23, Lexy Kresl 2-9 4-4 9, Julie Seabrook 1-2 0-0 2, Esther Lee 0-0 0-0 0, Ashley Wilson 1-1 0-2 2, Rachel Hargis 2-10 1-2 5. Totals 25-62 11-16 64.

SOUTH DAKOTA (55)

Tempestt Wilson 4-11 4-4 12, Alexis Yackley 2-7 0-0 5, Annie Roche 5-8 2-2 14, Amber Hegge 6-16 7-8 20, Kelly Stewart 1-2 0-0 2, Jodie Boss 1-5 0-0 2, Pam January 0-0 0-0 0, McKayla Knudson 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 19-49 13-14 55.

Halftime score -- Colorado 30, South Dakota 23. Three-point shots -- Colorado 3-16 (Wilson 1-5, Malcolm-Peck 0-2, Seabrook 0-1, Jeffery 1-2, Kresl 1-6), South Dakota 4-8 (Wilson 0-2, Yackley 1-3, Roche 2-2, Hegge 1-1). Fouled out -- none. Rebounds -- Colorado 47 (Jeffery 10), South Dakota 25 (Hegge 7). Assists -- Colorado 7 (Jeffery 3), South Dakota 8 (Hegge 3, Yackley 3). Turnovers -- Colorado 9, South Dakota 8. Total fouls -- Colorado 14, South Dakota 13. Attendance -- 1,569.

Coyote women fall in second-round WNIT

Austin Ashlock | Posted: Monday, March 19, 2012 10:34 pm

The University of South Dakota women's basketball team quickly got the ball rolling during Monday night's WNIT second-round game against the University of Colorado with a three-point play by senior Amber Hegge.

The Coyotes' three point lead to begin the game would be their last.

Led by Chucky Jeffery's 23 points and dominant play on either side of the ball, the Colorado Buffaloes overcame a rowdy DakotaDome crowd, inevitably ending USD's hopes of a WNIT championship by a score of 64-55.

"They are a very good team," head coach Ryun Williams said. "We saw next level athleticism and length tonight, and that was disruptive. Our kids fought through the adversity, but it is hard to establish a decent tempo against a team like that."

The Buffaloes displayed their superior size and athleticism on both offensive and defensive sides of the ball in Monday night's match-up, out rebounding the Coyotes 47-25.

Colorado also managed to grab 19 offensive rebounds, opposed to just three for the Coyotes.

"Conversions were very hard for us," senior forward Amber Hegge said. "They were long, and that made it hard to keep them off the boards."

Colorado extended their lead to as many as 13 during the second, a margin the Coyotes very nearly erased in the final five minutes.

Two free-throws by junior guard Tempestt Williams brought the Coyotes within five with 50 seconds remaining, however a Coyote turnover leading to a run of free throws by the Buffaloes silenced the 1,569 hopeful cheers inside the DakotaDome.

"Our fans did an awesome job supporting us tonight," senior guard Annie Roche said. "We would just get a little back into it and they would be right there with us. It was great having that fans out there tonight."

Monday night's loss snaps the Coyotes' five-game winning streak dating back to the regular season, and is only their second loss since Jan. 21.

"It was a blast," Williams said. "It was just fun to be apart of that ride. These girls took our staff on a fun journey, it didn't end great tonight but they have a lot to be proud of."

Hegge led the Coyotes with 20 points and seven rebounds in the final game of her illustrious collegiate career, while Roche and Williams added another 14 and 12 points, respectively.

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Outdueled at Dome

VERMILLION — A long and eventful ride ended for the University of South Dakota women on Monday night, with the squad maintaining in ample supply much of what got them into the second round of the WNIT.

But during a string of 13 wins in 14 games, the big shots won those contests. Against the Colorado Buffaloes, those same efforts just kept the Coyotes close.

The program's last game as a Division I transitional school ended with a 64-55 loss at the DakotaDome, completing a memorable and historically significant first year in the Summit League.

The Coyotes (23-8) had two probable issues heading into this contest against the Buffaloes, who will now play Villanova in the WNIT quarterfinals.

No. 1 was containing Colorado's All-Pac-12 guard Chucky Jeffery. No. 2 was doing whatever was necessary to undermine what promised to be a persistent rebounding problem.

"They had a couple two or three-minute runs where they got away from us," said senior Amber Hegge, who scored 20 points and grabbed seven rebounds in her last game at USD. "We got into too big of a hole. We'd come back, but it wasn't enough. That was our downfall."

With a boisterous crowd of 1,569 behind them, the Coyotes were a few shots away from turning things around for much of the second half, but Jeffery, a 5-10 guard with the ability to both drive and shoot 3-pointers, scored 23 points.

And the Buffaloes, who averaged more than 13 offensive rebounds a game, kept possessions alive 19 times on offensive boards against the Coyotes while outrebounding them 47-25 overall.

"We saw a next-level athleticism tonight and a next-level length that was pretty darn disruptive," USD coach Ryun Williams said. "We fought. We gave everything we had tonight, but it was tough for us to establish a decent, confident tempo, and Colorado had a lot to do with that."

The Coyotes trailed by as many as 12 points in the first half, but they cut the margin to 26-23 on a Hegge 3-pointer with 1:24 to go before intermission. Jeffery responded to the Coyote rally (as she would all game), first with a drive for a

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layup, then with a short jumper at the horn to send Colorado into half leading 30-23.

The first six minutes of the second half were not any more kind to the Coyotes. The Buffaloes continued to have success on the offensive boards, pushing the lead to 44-28 on a layup by Lexy Kresl with 13:50 to play.

The crowd had quieted, but the Coyotes persisted. Annie Roche, who finished with 14 points, hit a 3-pointer to narrow the margin to 53-45 with 5:05 to play.

The Coyotes twice cut the margin to six points over the next two minutes and both times followed with defensive stops, but weren't able to convert their own next possession in either case.

"We put ourselves in a position where if we'd made a few more plays on the offensive end and a few more plays on the defensive end, we could have pulled it out," said Roche, who along with Hegge and Jodie Boss was playing her last game at USD. "It just wasn't our night, I guess. But Colorado has a very good team – all the credit in the world to them."

The Buffaloes, who defeated Northern Colorado last week and will play host Villanova on Thursday, did show signs of wear in the second half against the Coyotes, hitting just 3 of 16 on 3-pointers while shooting 25-for-62 overall. The second-chance points mitigated the shooting struggles, however.

"We were able to bear down when we had to," Jeffery said. "This was a tough atmosphere, but a fun one."

Colorado coach Linda Lappe, an Iowa native and Colorado alumnus who is in her second year as head coach at CU, anticipated the crowd becoming a factor – and sort of appreciated that.

"The crowd was great – they didn't like us very much, but that's what makes it fun," Lappe said. "We wouldn't have had that kind of support at our own venue. Our players love games in environments like this."

As the players left the court, the crowd gave the departing Coyotes – the last squad to play with the restraints in place during a four-year Division I transition – a standing ovation. By the looks on the players' faces, the post-game salute wasn't yet erasing the disappointment. But that didn't mean it went for nothing.

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"This year was Coyote basketball," said Williams, who led the Coyotes to the 20-win mark for the second consecutive season. "It was very tough, it was very determined, it was very together and it was fun.

"These kids came to work every single day, they were classy off the floor, they're great students. That's Coyote basketball, and we want to live up to what this group has established every single season."

COLORADO (20-13)

Brittany Wilson 5-13 4-5 15, Meagan Malcolm-Peck 0-2 0-0 0, Julie Seabrook 1-2 0-0 2, Jasmine Sborov 4-6 0-0 8, Chucky Jeffery 10-19 2-3 23, Lexy Kresl 2-9 4-4 9, Esther Lee 0-0 0-0 0, Ashley Wilson 1-1 0-2 2, Rachel Hargis 2-10 1-2 5. Totals 25-62 11-16 64.

SOUTH DAKOTA (23-8)

Tempestt Wilson 4-11 4-4 12, Alexis Yackley 2-7 0-0 5, Annie Roche 5-8 2-2 14, Amber Hegge 6-16 7-8 20, Jodie Boss 1-5 0-0 2, Pam January 0-0 0-0 0, Kelly Stewart 1-2 0-0 2, McKayla Knudson 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 19-49 13-14 55.

Halftime – CU 30, USD 23. 3-pointers – CU 3-16 (B. Wilson 1-5, Malcolm-Peck 0-2, Seabrook 0-1, Jeffery 1-2, Kresl 1-6), USD 4-8 (Wilson 0-2, Yackley 1-3, Roche 2-2, Hegge 1-1). Total fouls – CU 14, USD 13. Fouled out – None. Rebounds – CU 47 (Jeffery 10), USD 25 (Hegge 7). Assists – CU 7 (Jeffery 3), USD 8 (Hegge, Yackley 3). Steals – CU 5 (Jeffery 3), USD 4 (Yackley 2).

Blocked shots – CU 4 (4 with 1), USD 8 (Boss 4, Hegge 3). Turnovers – CU 9, USD 8. A – 1,569.

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SPORTS

College basketball: Colorado takes down USD women

From staff reports

3:05 AM CDT, March 20, 2012

VERMILLION - The South Dakota women's basketball team cut a 16-point deficit to five in the final minute, but the Coyotes' rally fell short in a 64-55 loss to Pac 12 foe Colorado in the second round of the Women's National Invitational Tournament on Monday night.

The Coyotes ended their season - their best since moving to Division I - with a 23-8 mark, while Colorado improved to 20-13. Senior Amber Hegge capped off her Coyote career with 20 points, seven rebounds, three assists and three steals. Senior Annie Roche also wrapped up a stellar career with 14 points, while junior Tempestt Wilson added 12. Senior Jodie Boss added to her career blocked shots record with four blocks, while junior guard and Sully Buttes graduate Alexis Yackley added five points, five rebounds, three assists and a team-high three steals.

All-Pac 12 first-team selection Chucky Jeffery led the Buffaloes with a game-high 23 points and 10 rebounds. Colorado shot 40.3 percent (25-of-62) for the game, compared to 38.8 percent (19-of-49) for the Coyotes. The Buffaloes held a decisive 47-25 edge in rebounding.

Hosting a school from a BCS conference for the first time since 1984, the Coyote women put forth a valiant effort before seeing their rally fall short. Colorado built a 44-28 lead with 13:50 left on a layup by Lexy Kresl. South Dakota then responded with a 14-7 spurt to cut the lead to single digits at 51-42 with 7:07 left. Hegge had five points during that run while Wilson had four, while Yackley drained a three to cut the lead to nine.

Colorado pushed the lead back to 11, but a three by Roche and a layup by Boss brought the Coyotes within 53-47 with 4:34 left - the closest they had been since early in the second half.

The Buffaloes pushed the lead back to nine with 1:00 left, and Hegge and Wilson each hit two free throws to bring the Coyotes within 58-53 - the closest they had been since the first half. However, their rally fell short, as Colorado hit 4-of-4 free throws in the final 48 seconds to help secure the win.

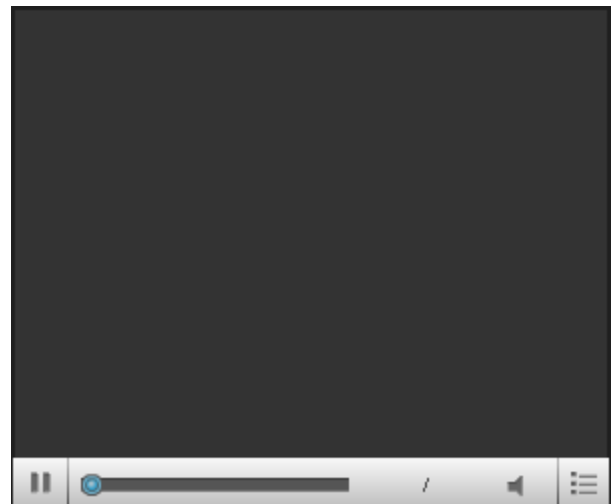
South Dakota led 3-0 in the first minute when Hegge converted a three-point play, but that was prove to be the Coyotes' only lead of the night. Colorado answered with a crucial 13-0 run to take a 13-3 lead, and from there, the Coyotes played catch-up.

The Coyotes were down 26-14 with 4:04 left in the first half but came back with a 9-0 run to cut the lead to 26-23. Hegge was the catalyst during the run with seven points, while freshman Kelly Stewart added a jumper. Jeffery, however, hit two key baskets in the final minute to push the Colorado lead to 30-23 at halftime.

Hegge had 10 points in the first half for the Coyotes, who shot 39.1 percent (9-of-23) from the field in the first half. Colorado shot 42.9 percent (12-of-28).

The Buffaloes opened the second half with a 14-5 run over the first 6:10 to stretch the lead to 16 before the Coyotes mounted

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their rally.

The game marked the end of the careers of the three Coyote seniors - Hegge, Roche and Boss. The three players combined for 3,359 points, 1,615 rebounds, 421 blocks, 237 three-pointers, 659 assists and 278 steals during their time at South Dakota, in addition to helping the Coyotes to back-to-back postseason appearances.

COLORADO (20-13): Lexy Kresl 2-9 4-4 9, Esther Lee 0-0 0-0 0, Brittany Wilson 5-13 4-5 15, Ashley Wilson 1-1 0-2 2, Meagan Malcolm-Peck 0-2 0-0 0, Julie Seabrook 1-2 0-0 2, Jasmine Sborov 4-6 0-0 8, Chucky Jeffery 10-19 2-3 23, Rachel Hargis 2-10 1-2 5. Totals 25-62 11-16 64.

SOUTH DAKOTA (23-8): Tempestt Wilson 4-11 4-4 12, Alexis Yackley 2-7 0-0 5, Annie Roche 5-8 2-2 14, Amber Hegge 6-16 7-8 20, Jodie Boss 1-5 0-0 2, Pam January 0-0 0-0 0, Kelly Stewart 1-2 0-0 2, McKayla Knudson 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 19-49 13-14 55.

3-point field goals - Colorado 3-16 (Kresl 1-6, B. Wilson 1-5, Malcolm-Peck 0-2, Seabrook 0-1, Jeffery 1-2); South Dakota 4-8 (Wilson 0-2, Yackley 1-3, Roche 2-2, Hegge 1-1). Total fouls - Colorado 14; South Dakota 13. Fouled out - None. Rebounds - Colorado 47 (Jeffery 10); South Dakota 25 (Hegge 7). Assists - Colorado 7 (Jeffery 3); South Dakota 8 (Yackley 3, Hegge 3). Blocks - Colorado 4 (Wilson 1, Malcolm-Peck 1, Jeffery 1, Hargis 1); South Dakota 8 (Boss 4). Steals - Colorado 5 (Jeffery 3); South Dakota 4 (Yackley 2). Turnovers - Colorado 9; South Dakota 8. Officials - Ann Schroeder, Ben Franson, Zac Brost. A - 1,569.

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Coyotes fall in WNIT

Austin Ashlock

THE VOLANTE | Posted: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 10:16 pm

Inside the University of South Dakota men's track locker room doubled as a conference room, USD seniors Annie Roche and Amber Hegge sat in front of the media Monday night wearing an the unmistakable mask of disappointment.

"It has been a great season, a lot of fun, but just not very much fun right now," Hegge said.

With a trip to the Women's National Invitation Tournament championship a mere three wins away, the chance the University of South Dakota women's basketball have dreamt of all season long was seemingly within their grasp.

After snagging their second post-season victory in two years with a comeback win over Drake University in the first-round of the WNIT, the next obstacle standing in their way was Pac-12 foe Colorado.

Hegge quickly got the ball rolling during Monday night's second-round game against the Buffaloes after her three-point play gave the Coyotes a swift 3-0.

The Coyotes' three-point lead to begin the game would be their last.

Led by Chucky Jeffery's 23 points and dominant play on either side of the ball, the Buffaloes overcame a rowdy DakotaDome crowd, inevitably ending USD's hopes of a WNIT championship by a score of 64-55.

"They were a very good team," head coach Ryun Williams said. "We saw next level athleticism and length, and that was disruptive. Our kids fought through the adversity, but it is hard to establish a decent tempo against a team like that. Every time they needed a basket there was (Jeffery), or every time they needed a rebound they would get one."

The Buffaloes displayed their superior size and athleticism on both offensive and defensive sides of the ball in Monday night's match-up, out rebounding the Coyotes 47-25.

Colorado also managed to grab 19 offensive rebounds, opposed to just three for the Coyotes.

"Conversions were very hard for us," Hegge said. "They were long, and that made it hard to keep them off the boards."

Hegge led the Coyotes with 20 points and seven rebounds in the final game of her illustrious collegiate career, while Roche and Williams added another 14 and 12 points, respectively.

Colorado extended their lead to as many as 13 during the second half, a margin, the Coyotes very nearly erased in the final five minutes.

Two free-throws by junior guard Tempest Williams brought the Coyotes within five with :50 seconds remaining, however a Coyote turnover leading to a run of free throws by the Buffaloes silenced the 1,569 hopeful cheers inside the DakotaDome.

“Our fans did an awesome job supporting us tonight,” senior guard Annie Roche said. “We would just get a little back into it and they would be right there with us. It was great having that fans out there tonight.”

Monday night’s loss snaps the Coyotes’ five game winning streak dating back to the regular season, and is only their second loss since Jan. 21.

“It was a blast,” Williams said. “It was just fun to be a part of that ride. These girls took our staff on a fun journey, it didn’t end great tonight but they have a lot to be proud of.”

In the teams inaugural Division I season, the Coyotes ended the year on a 13-2 run, on their way to a 23-8 overall record.

An overtime win at Creighton University in Omaha, Neb. on Nov. 22, 2011 jump started the Coyotes regular season only to drop four of six to begin conference play.

The team did not stay down long, after a 51-59 to South Dakota State on Feb. 16, the Coyotes went on an eight game winning streak that included wins over Oral Roberts, North Dakota State and SDSU.

“This year, to me, was Coyote basketball,” Williams said. “It was tough, determined, together and just a lot of fun. The girls were classy off the floor and were great students, that is Yote basketball and it is something we want to follow up and continue to do each season.”

A large portion of the Coyotes success during the 2011-12 season has been credited to their outstanding defensive efforts, efforts that have been on display both on the court and on paper.

Over the course of 31 games, the Coyotes allowed just 52.7 points per game while boasting a field-goal defense percentage of 33.8 percent and 7.3 blocks per game.

Senior Jodie Boss led the team’s defensive charge with her 4.0 blocks per game, a statistic that if eligible for national rankings would have placed second in the country only behind Baylor’s Brittney Griner who averaged 5.1 blocks per game.

Monday night marked not only the end of a historical season for USD women’s basketball, but also the collegiate career of one historical Coyote.

“I am really glad my daughters got to watch (Hegge) play basketball,” Williams said.