



CU freshman Jasmine Sborov (21) wants her offensive production to improve in L.A.

Photo Courtesy: Joel Broida



Brooks: Lappe Likes Bracket, But Utah Comes First

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BOULDER - With two wins in her last 10 games, Linda Lappe doesn't want to - really, has no reason to - look too deep into the Pac-12 Conference women's postseason tournament. But the side of the bracket that her team finds itself occupying offers food for thought - and Colorado's second-year coach isn't reluctant to partake.

Tenth-seeded CU broke even in eight regular-season games against teams on its side of the bracket - Washington State (No. 11 seed), Utah (No. 7), Oregon State (No. 6) and Southern California (No. 3). The Buffaloes (17-12) open their initial Pac-12 tourney on Wednesday at 6 p.m., MST against fellow conference newbie, the Utes (15-14).

"We're 4-4 against teams on our side," Lappe said Monday afternoon a couple of hours prior to her team leaving for Los Angeles. "We're excited to play Utah for a third time and get a rubber match. But in this scenario, you take it a game at a time. We can't look past the first game to get to the second . . . you just have to go in and play with a tremendous mindset. You can't get to the second game without winning the first game. We have to focus on what we need to do to beat Utah."

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Tournament Notes



All-Pac-12 Team



Pac-12 Tournament

Oddly enough during the regular season, the Buffs and Utes couldn't beat each other at home. CU opened Pac-12 play with a 58-52 win on New Year's Eve in Salt Lake City. Utah visited Boulder almost two months later and won 61-56 in overtime. That loss was particularly irritating for Lappe because it preceded a Bay Area swing to second-ranked Stanford and California - the postseason tournament's top two seeds, respectively. Decided underdogs in each game, the Buffs lost both.

"That (Utah visit) was a really important game in the conference standings," Lappe recalled. "And it was a game we felt like we had many chances to win. We just couldn't take advantage; give Utah credit, they executed down the stretch and really had a lot of confidence when it went into overtime."

Entering the conference tournament, the Buffs would have been severely deficient in the confidence category had it not been for their 67-57 season-ending win against Oregon State on Saturday. If ever a team needed a tonic, it was CU. And if there was a timely tonic, this was it.

"I think the first time we played them (in Utah), we played a lot like we did Saturday," said freshman Jasmine Sborov, whose minutes have increased with the departure two weeks ago of freshman Jen Reese (facial surgery). "We had a lot of energy, everyone was on the same page. The second time we played them, we were kind of all scattered. With us having this new mindset and regaining our focus, I think that alone give us a huge edge. It should look a lot better than our (home) game against them."

Sborov has started the last three games and is averaging 3.5 points and 3.1 rebounds. She said she and her teammates "were loose, just having a lot of fun" playing for lone senior Julie Seabrook and injured players such as Reese and freshman Arielle Roberson (hip surgery) last Saturday against Oregon State. "Really, we had nothing to lose. We know who we are and what we can do . . . we didn't have any pressure on us."

Indeed, Lappe saw a team that was more efficient in almost every category than it had been during a five-game losing streak preceding the Beavers' visit. Still, during that losing stretch, she said the Buffs showed signs of improving. Her goal is to keep the upgrade going this week in L.A.

"We have to come out every game like we did on Saturday," Lappe said. "It's that point in time where you're not guaranteed a next game. We're not guaranteed anything past Wednesday. If we don't have a tremendous amount of focus for that game, then I don't know when we're going to be focused."

Seabrook, whose last two games have been two of her best at CU (a combined 27 points, 18 rebounds), has a final chance to win a conference tournament game - something that eluded her in three previous Big 12 tournaments. In her first three seasons, the Buffs were eliminated by Kansas State, Baylor and Kansas, respectively.

Her senior season brings a change of venue and scenery, both welcome. The Pac-12 has one ranked team (No. 2 Stanford) and the postseason tournament should be a more equitable event.

"It's more exciting in a way because it could be more of anyone's game . . . depending on how people play and how the tournament shakes out," Seabrook said. "It could be very up in the air. Obviously Stanford is good, but they're not unbeatable. We had a really good first half against them (in their second regular-season meeting). If we do end up playing them, I'd hope we can continue off that."

While CU will be minus Reese, Utah is expected to be without point guard Janita Badon (knee). The Pac-12's assist leader (5.5 a game), Badon has missed most of the last four games, but the Utes nevertheless are 2-2 without her. They closed with wins against Oregon and Oregon State.

Lappe believes the Buffs and Utes matched up well in their two previous meetings, but how that goes on Wednesday depends on how CU can cope inside without the 6-2 Reese. In her absence, Seabrook says Rachel Hargis, Meagan Malcolm-Peck, Sborov and herself have to step up their play against Utah posts Michelle Plouffe (6-4) and Taryn Wicijowski (6-3). Seabrook, Plouffe and Wicijowski were teammates on the 2009 Canadian Junior National team.

"Offensively, our team could use some extra points, not specifically from me, but we've lost a scorer (Reese)," Sborov said. "Defense, rebounding - that's all there for me. But offensively, I think I can pick it up a little bit."

When the calendar turns to March, some freshmen unaccustomed to their seasons being so lengthy begin to wear down. Sborov is different; she said she "hit the wall about a month ago; I think I just got past it. Physically and mentally I was really exhausted. I just got my second wind; I feel really good right now."

She believes her increased playing time in Reese's absence has put her more in touch with what's expected of her: "I've become a lot smarter during this and learned things about myself and the coaches. The past month, I think I've grown a lot."

In their 10-point win against Oregon State, CU got double-figure scoring from Seabrook (11), Chucky Jeffery (13) and Lexy Kresl (20). Kresl hit six-of-seven three-point field goal attempts against the Beavers, pushing her season total to a team-best 55. The Buffs also had a plus-15 rebounding advantage against Oregon State and played one of their most complete games in a month.

"We have to do what we do better than what they do," Lappe said of Wednesday's match-up with CU's other-side-of-the-mountain opponent. "But that's what makes it exciting and a chess match - especially with us and Utah. We're very similar teams. It's going to come down to who makes the plays and who steps up - and that's what makes it exciting."

If they eliminate the Utes, the Buffs will play No. 2 seed California at 6 p.m. MST on Thursday at USC's Galen Center. Cal swept CU in the regular season.

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SHOW MENU



University of Colorado's Chucky Jeffery honored by Pac-12

Junior named to first team; Kresl, Reese among top freshmen

By Brian Howell, Buffzone.com
Boulder Daily Camera

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Pac-12 awards (coaches' vote)

Player of the year: Nnemkadi Ogumike, Stanford

Freshman of the year: Jazmine Davis, Washington

Defensive player of the year: Chiney Ogumike, Stanford

Coach of the year: Tara VanDerveer, Stanford

All-Pac-12 first team

Guard -- Layshia Clarendon, California G Jr. San Bernardino, Calif.

Guard -- Ashley Corral, USC, Sr.

Guard -- Jazmine Davis, Washington, Fr.

Guard -- Rebekah Gardner, UCLA, Sr.

Guard -- Briana Gilbreath, USC, Sr.

Guard -- Chucky Jeffery, Colorado, Jr.

Forward -- Amanda Johnson, Oregon, Sr.

Guard -- Toni Kokenis, Stanford, So.

Guard -- Earlysia

Marchbanks, Oregon State, Sr.

Forward -- Chiney Ogumike, Stanford, So.

Forward -- Nnemkadi Ogumike, Stanford, Sr.

Center -- Regina Rogers, Washington, R-Sr.

Guard/Forward -- Markel Walker, UCLA, Jr.

Guard -- Davellyn Whyte, Arizona, Jr.

Forward -- Taryn Wicijowski, Utah, R-So.

Honorable mention -- Kali Bennet, Arizona State, R-Sr.; Brittany Boyd, California, Fr.; Gennifer Brandon, California, R-So.; Kimberly Brandon, Arizona State, Sr.; Cassie

Junior guard Chucky Jeffery earned first-team All-Pac 12 honors Tuesday by the league's 12 coaches.

Jeffery, from Colorado Springs, was one of 15 players to earn first-team honors. Jeffery was the only player in the conference to finish among the top 15 in scoring, rebounding and assists.

She was seventh in scoring (15.2 points per game), fourth in assists (3.93) and 11th in rebounding (7.3). She also was fourth in steals (2.41, sixth in 3-point percentage (.363), 11th in free-throw percentage (.713) and 13th in field-goal percentage (.445).

In addition, Jeffery was one of five players named to the all-defensive team. CU teammates Lexy Kresl and Jen Reese received honorable mention for the all-freshman team.

Stanford's Nnemkadi Ogumike was named the conference player of the year for the second time in three years. She also earned the honor in 2010. Ogumike led the conference in scoring (21.6) and finished second in rebounding (10.5). She ranks among the top 14 in the country in both categories.

On Monday, Jeffery was named to the 15-member All-Pac 12 team in a media vote, while Kresl was named to the six-member All-freshman team.

In the media vote, Ogumike was player of the year and co-defensive player of the year, along with USC's Briana Gilbreath. Jazmine Davis of Washington was the freshman of the year and Scott Rueck of Oregon State the coach of the year.

Harberts, USC, So.; Jasmin Holliday, Oregon, Sr.; Ali Gibson, Oregon State, Fr.; Thea Lemberger, UCLA, So.; Deja Mann, Arizona State, Jr.; Jazmine Perkins, Washington State, Sr.; Michelle Plouffe, Utah, So.

Pac-12 All-freshman team

Guard -- Brittany Boyd, California
 Forward -- Ariya Crook, USC
 Guard -- Jazmine Davis, Washington
 Guard -- Ali Gibson, Oregon State
 Forward -- Reshanda Gray, California
 Honorable mention -- Taylor Greendfield, Stanford; Lexy Kresl, Colorado; Amber Orrange, Stanford; Jen Reese, Colorado; Aley Rohde, Arizona.

Pac-12 All-defensive team

Center/Forward -- Kali Bennett, Arizona State, Sr.
 Center/Forward -- Patricia Bright, Oregon State, Jr.
 Guard -- Briana Gilbreath, USC, Sr.
 Guard -- Chucky Jeffery, Colorado, Jr.
 Forward -- Chiney Ogwumike, Stanford, So.
 Honorable mention -- Janita Badon, Utah, Sr.; Charmaine Barlow, Washington, Sr.; Brittany Boyd, California, Fr.; Kimberly Brandon, Arizona State, Sr.; Toni Kokenis, Stanford, So.; Deja Mann, Arizona State, Jr.; Christina Marinacci, USC, So.; Carly Noyes, Washington State, Jr.; Nnemkadi Ogwumike, Stanford, Sr.; Eliza Pierre, California, Jr.; Jazmine Perkins, Washington State, Sr.

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