

Focus on rebounds paying off for Linda Lappe's CU Buffs

By Brian Howell Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/29/2011 06:50:35 PM MST

Colorado women's basketball coach Linda Lappe knows her team will miss a lot of shots.

Heck, even the best teams miss half the shots they take.

That's why Lappe has put a strong emphasis on what happens to the ball after a shot is taken. She wants her team to be the one grabbing the rebounds.

"We do a lot of drills in practice," freshman Lexy Kresl said. "We focus on positioning. We focus on being physical. We focus on absolutely everything. We have so many principles regarding rebounding and I think that's why it helps because we focus on it so much."

Five games into the season, the Buffs (5-0) are significantly better at rebounding than they were when the season began. Saturday's 58-48 win over Wisconsin was proof of that, as CU out-rebounded the Badgers by 19.

The Buffs are looking for a repeat of that performance Wednesday when San Francisco (1-6) visits Coors Events Center.

"Rebounding is just a mentality," Lappe said. "We didn't have the rebounding mentality in the first few games, but we've gotten it in the past two or three games and I think that's really helped us."

In the opener against Northern Arizona, the Buffs had just 28 rebounds, six fewer than the Lumberjacks. Since then, the Buffs have out-rebounded opponents by five, nine, nine and 19.

"Coach Lappe is not backing off of it," said center Rachel Hargis, who is averaging 4.6 rebounds per game. "We've really been trying to get better and better every single day."

That emphasis is not only for the post players, such as Hargis, Julie Seabrook and Jen Reese.

There is an expectation for every player on the court to crash the boards, and so far they have.

Point guard Chucky Jeffery, in fact, leads the team with 8.8 rebounds per game. Kresl, another guard, is grabbing 4.8 per game. Ashley Wilson, also a guard, had five offensive rebounds in one game.

"I think our guards are doing a much better job in the last few games of rebounding," Lappe said. "That's been the biggest difference. The first few games, our guards weren't rebounding; we were trying to cherry-pick a little bit too much."

It starts in the post. Even when the post players aren't getting the rebound, they are doing a much better job of being physical and clearing the opposition out of the paint. Then, the guards are racing in and cleaning up.

"It's good for us because we block out and we sometimes get off balance or get stuck and it's hard to go and get the rebound," Hargis said. "For (the guards) to be crashing and getting them for us, it helps us out a lot."

The improvement in rebounding over the past few games is only a start. Currently, the Buffs are out-rebounding opponents by 7.2 per game. They set a goal at the start of the season to be at plus-10 by the end of the sixth game. That might be tough to achieve, since they'd need to out-rebound by the Dons by 24 tonight.

But, the Buffs will give it a shot.

Notable

In addition to rebounding, Lappe said she is looking for improvement in screening angles on offense and hitting open players. ... Brenna Malcolm-Peck (concussion) and Arielle Roberson (back) will sit out with injuries once again. Neither has been able to play yet this season.

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)