

CU finds little joy in halting streak

Buffaloes snap winless stretch at five, but don't play well late

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DENVER -- Trying to gain momentum heading into the Pac-12 season, the Colorado women's soccer team instead looked disorganized in the second half Sunday but escaped with a 2-1 victory over Cal State Bakersfield.

In the finale of the Denver Invitational, the banged-up Buffs took an early 2-0 lead but a breakdown by goalie Annie Brunner led to a Roadrunners goal and the Buffs failed to possess the ball for much of the last 25 minutes in nearly allowing the game to be tied.

"A win's always good, so we're very happy that we did win," said CU senior midfielder Kate Russell. "But there were so many times when it was obvious there were things we need to work on, so that took a little bit of the joy out of it, knowing we still have a long ways to go to be where we want to be."

Colorado (3-4-1) snapped a five-game winless streak. It was the first meeting between the teams since the Buffs played their first Division 1 match in 1996 against Bakersfield (2-6).

Colorado begins Pac-12 play on Friday at Oregon State.

Buffs junior Amy Barczuk scored on a penalty kick in the 13th minute after teammate Shaye Marshall was pulled down driving to the goal.

Marshall, moved out to left midfield from center-mid on Friday and Sunday, got herself open on the left side of the penalty box in the 26th min-ute, took a pass from Russell and drilled a shot into the upper left corner of the goal to give CU a 2-0 lead.

Russell had taken a through pass from Anne Stuller and had a breakaway to the goal. Instead of taking the shot, however, she dished it off to Marshall.

"I was actually surprised," said Marshall, who scored her first goal of the season. "Usually Kate takes the goalie on 'one-v-one,' but you have to be their support no matter what. I'm glad she passed it to me, but she definitely could have scored that one."

The Buffs were looking for a third goal to put away the game before halftime. But in the 32nd minute, the Buffs played the ball back to Brunner to maintain the possession when she let the ball slip under her and out of bounds for a Roadrunners corner kick.

After the initial corner kick wasn't cleared, Bakersfield sophomore Tyler Shirk scooped up the loose ball and found the back of CU's net to cut the lead to 2-1.

Brunner didn't start the second half, giving junior keeper Kayla Millar her first minutes of the season.

"There's never a problem figuring out what we're going to do in practice," Colorado coach Bill Hempen said, "because there's plenty to work on."

The Buffs were without three defenders due to injuries in freshman Bianca Jones, sophomore Lizzy Herzl and senior Caroline Danneberg. Jones and Danneberg were injured in Friday's 2-2 tie against No. 22 Auburn, also on DU's campus. Herzl has a nagging quad injury that may keep her out once a weekend.

Midfielder Quinn Krier moved back to defense with Hayley Hughes, Amy Steiner and Barczuk, CU's regular center defender who had been moved up to forward on Friday. Junior midfielder Lauren Shaner, in her first start of the year,

played up top with Stuller.

Sunday's effort was familiar to those who followed the Buffs last year, when they would get up for big games but have letdowns the next time out.

"Definitely with big-time names in women's soccer there's always a little more adrenaline for those games, but we need to be able to take the same attitude with everyone," Russell said. "That's one of those things we really need to work on."

Added Hempen, "I don't think people realize how hard Friday-Sunday is, especially after the Friday we just had. ... You really have to have a mental capacity that allows you to compete just as high on Sunday as you did on Friday and we don't have that right now."

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