



# COLORADO BUFFALOES

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*CU coach Linda Lappe, senior guard Chucky Jeffery are set to begin Pac-12 tourney play on Friday night.*

*Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com*



## Brooks: CU Set To Battle UW's Hometown Pac-12 Edge

Release: 03/08/2013 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

**SEATTLE** - Rather than a home-court advantage, it's a hometown advantage that the Washington Huskies hope to take into the second round of the Pac-12 Conference Women's Tournament.

And U-Dub is doing its best to make the hometown - more specifically its students - take notice and flock to KeyArena for Friday night's game against No. 18 Colorado, which is riding a nine-game winning streak.

After a bracket flip OK'd by the conference, the tip time is approximately 9:30 p.m. MST rather than the initial mid-afternoon start set for No. 4 seed CU (24-5, 13-5) and No. 5 UW (20-10, 12-7). The later start likely will mean more Huskies fans in attendance, and the school is trying to generate student interest by offering free admission, free food and free transportation from campus.

The freebies apparently helped pull in a large portion of the 4,665 attending Thursday night's UW-Oregon first-round game, which saw the Huskies stage a school-record rally - they came back from a 22-point deficit - to down the Ducks 69-62 and advance.

### BUFFALO EXTRAS



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But whether it's playing on the Huskies' home-court or in their hometown the Buffs don't appear too shaken by either prospect, although CU senior guard Chucky Jeffery conceded that UW's crowd on Thursday night "probably gave them a little advantage in that sense . . . they had a nice crowd; it got them amped up and it's probably what got them back in the game."

Jeffery's coach, Linda Lappe, called the Pac-12 tournament site "a hometown advantage for sure. They had a good turnout (Thursday) night, as did Washington State - which you would expect. That's one of the reasons (the Pac-12) went to a city that was more centrally located for a lot of the teams . . . we expect there to be a lot of Washington fans there tonight.

"But we also expect there to be a pretty good contingent of CU fans that are really loud. And it's never bothered our players to play on the road and in front of an opposing team's fans. It brings excitement to the arena . . . I always think an arena that's loud and energetic gives you a lot of energy. It'll be fun for our players to play in a good atmosphere."

Last year's Pac-12 Women's Tournament was held at the Galen Center on Southern California's campus in Los Angeles. Attendance was woeful, which prompted the conference to ponder and finally switch sites. Thursday's attendance total for the afternoon and evening sessions at the KeyArena was in the 7,000-plus range.

But of more concern to the Buffs than a semi-hostile environment is shutting down the Huskies' perimeter shooting and not allowing UW guard Jazmine Davis to have her way as she did against the Ducks. Davis, the Pac-12's second-leading scorer at 19-plus points a game, got 28 points against Oregon and hit half of her team's six three-pointers.

That trey total - the product of 31 attempts - is nearly three below the Huskies' league-leading 8.2 a game. The Buffs held them to five three-pointers in their 68-61 win in Boulder on Feb. 24 and would like to at least match that defensive effort on Friday night.

CU outrebounded UW 44-30 in the meeting last month and limited the Huskies to 38.3 percent shooting from the field. UW was 5-of-20 from beyond the arc, including just 2-of-14 in the second half.

Also in that game, Davis was held nine points - and duplicating that 'D' on her by CU's Brittany Wilson and Jeffery would enhance the Buffs' prospects of advancing to Saturday's semifinals. Davis hit only two of her 13 field goal attempts.

More productive for UW in the first meeting with CU were forward Aminah Williams (12 points) and guard Kristi Kingma (19). Against Oregon, Williams scored 17 and along with Davis helped generate the Huskies' comeback. But Kingma went 0-for-10 from the field and finished the night with only four points.

"She hurt us in Boulder and we expect her to be better tonight," Lappe said of Kingma, adding, "The big thing for us is making sure they don't get settled in offensively and we make them do things they're not used to doing."

The Buffs practiced on Thursday morning at Seattle University and toured Pike Place Market that afternoon. They got their first glimpse and feel of KeyArena at a shoot-around on Friday morning. Lappe said having Thursday off "benefitted us a lot. You work hard to be able to not play the first day of the tournament . . . you can watch, scout and give your players a chance to see teams play.

"We thought that was beneficial. We're going to be excited and ready . . . we can't wait to play. Anytime you have that it's a good feeling. We just have to make sure we don't come out and throw the ball away because we're so amped to play."

Despite the venue, sophomore forward Jen Reese said she and her CU teammates expect "our fans to probably be the loudest in the building. Our fans are always great on the road. It's not really a home-court advantage for them; it's a neutral court but they are just a little bit closer than we are. We love playing on the road; we like coming out and showing everyone what we can do."

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SHOW MENU



## Buff's picked to finish ninth, but ended up fourth in standings

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

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Colorado women's basketball coach Linda Lappe figured her team would have to earn some respect as one of the two new teams to the Pac-12 Conference a year ago.

After all, the other teams in the conference had very little experience with the Buffs. Other than California and Southern Cal, who had both faced the Buffs in the 2011 Women's NIT, no other Pac-12 school had faced CU in at least five years.

"Any time you change conferences, nobody knows who you are, what your tradition is like, what players you have, what kind of coach you are, what you have for facilities, what your fan base is like," Lappe said.

The Buffs were picked to finish 11th in 2011-12 and wound up 10th.

Obviously, they had more work to do. That was evident when they were picked by Pac-12 coaches this season to finish ninth. Even Arizona State, which had no returning starters, was more highly regarded.

"I laughed," junior guard Brittany Wilson said of the preseason coaches' poll. "But, that's just because we knew the work that we put in. We knew this year was going to be a special year for us."

So far, it has been.

Ranked No. 18 in the country, Colorado (24-5, 13-5 Pac-12) finished fourth in the Pac-12 and earned a first-round bye for the conference tournament. The Buffs carry a nine-game win streak into Friday's tournament quarterfinals against Washington.

"I think Linda Lappe has done a spectacular job," said UCLA coach Cori Close, whose team finished third. "When we were talking as a staff about people who were in the conversation for coach of the year, she had to be in that conversation.

"It's the way they've gone about it: hard-nosed defense, rebounding, consistency in their execution."

Rather than being bitter about the lack of respect at the beginning of the year, the Buffs dug in and went to work to change that.

"My thought (about the preseason poll) was we've just got to gain our respect," senior point guard Chucky Jeffery said. "We know what we did in the offseason, what type of team that we were building. We know what we had, but they didn't necessarily."

They do now.

CU's only losses in conference play came to the top three teams -- Stanford, California and UCLA -- and the Buffs played fairly well in most of those games.

"Overall, they've become more consistent in a lot of what they do," ASU head coach Charli Turner Thorne said.

Although the Buffs had a 4-5 Pac-12 record at one point, with two losses to Stanford (currently ranked No. 4), two to Cal (No. 5) and one to UCLA (No. 14), Stanford head coach Tara VanDerveer was impressed with how CU used those losses to get better for the second half.

"A lot of teams would get discouraged and they didn't," VanDerveer said.

VanDerveer praised CU for its aggressive play and said the Buffs "are a very well-coached team."

That's the type of praise the Buffs didn't warrant a year or two ago. But now they are viewed as one of the elite teams in the conference.

"I'd rather have us earn it than for it to be given to us and then we slack off," Wilson said. "I think we earned it and you can't ask for anything better than that."

Lappe said she doesn't take much stock in preseason predictions, but, "I knew at the beginning of the season that there was no way that we were going to finish ninth."

Lappe figured if her team remained healthy and got solid contributions from its young players, the Buffs would turn some heads. The Buffs now have a healthy measure of respect from their conference foes, but that's only a step in the right direction. CU still has work to do.

"I'm not sure still how many people expect us to do anything at the Pac-12 Tournament," Lappe said. "We are still a four seed and yes we get a first-round bye, but we're not picked to win the Pac-12 Tournament by anybody, probably."

No, the Buffs aren't picked to win the tournament this week, but the Pac-12 is well aware of how good CU has become. And, with CU hosting the first two rounds of the NCAA Tournament in two weeks, the Buffs have got a chance to build on that.

"If they get the right matchups in Boulder, I really do believe they can be a (Sweet 16) team, for sure," Close said. "In fact, I expect them to be, quite frankly. They have really good guard play, they're very physical, I think Boulder is a hard place to come in and play. There are a lot of things boding in their favor."

Regardless of how the next few weeks turn out, CU can at least walk away from this season knowing it has made significant strides in the eyes of its rivals.

"I am proud that I feel like we've been able to at least put a dent in that in earning the Pac-12's respect," she said. "It's a big deal and it means a lot."

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CU women's hoops preview

FRIDAY: The No. 18 Colorado Buffaloes (24-5) face the Washington Huskies (20-10) in a 9:30 p.m. game at KeyArena in Seattle.

BROADCAST: TV -- Pac-12 Network. Radio -- KKZN (760 AM), with Mike Rice on play-by-play and Carol Callan providing color commentary.

**STORYLINES:** Colorado is the No. 4 seed in the 12-team Pac-12 Tournament and had a bye in Thursday's first round. ... Washington defeated Oregon 69-62 on Thursday. The Huskies rallied from an early 22-point deficit. It was the largest comeback win in program history. ... This is Colorado's highest seed for a conference tournament since being the No. 3 seed for the Big 12 Tournament in 2004. ... Since joining the Big 12 in 1997, the Buffs are 6-2 in conference tournaments when they are the higher seed. ... Since 1997, the Buffs are 3-2 after a first-round bye, losing their first game in 2002 and 2004. ... CU has won five conference tournament titles, taking four in the Big Eight (1988, 1992, 1995 and 1996) and one in the Big 12 (1997). ... CU is 30-25 all-time in conference tournament games. ... The Buffaloes have won nine consecutive games, including against Washington on Feb. 24. ... This is the longest win streak the Buffs have taken into postseason play since the 1994-95 team won 19 in a row to close the regular season. The 1994-95 team extended the streak to 25 by winning the Big Eight Tournament and reaching the Elite 8 of the NCAA Tournament. ... CU finished the regular season 23-0 against unranked teams.

**KEY STAT:** During Pac-12 play, the Buffaloes ranked second in the conference in field-goal percentage defense (35.3 percent). Offensively, Washington (35.5 percent) was 10th in field-goal percentage. The Huskies made just 32.0 percent of their shots in Thursday's win against Oregon.

**COACHES:** Linda Lappe is 63-35 in her third season at CU and 113-71 overall. Kevin McGuff is 40-24 in his second season at Washington and 254-97 for his career.

**PROBABLE STARTERS:** Colorado -- G Chucky Jeffery, 5-10, Sr. (13.6 ppg, 8.6 rpg, 4.0 apg, 2.3 spg); G Brittany Wilson, 5-7, Jr. (8.3 ppg, 2.5 rpg, 2.3 apg); G Jasmine Sborov, 6-0, So. (2.9 ppg, 3.1 rpg, 1.4 apg); F Arielle Roberson, 6-1, Fr. (12.4 ppg, 5.8 rpg); C Rachel Hargis, 6-4, Jr. (4.5 ppg, 3.1 rpg, 1.1 bpg). Washington -- G Mercedes Wetmore, 5-8, Jr. (7.2 ppg, 3.2 rpg, 3.8 apg); G Jazmine Davis, 5-7, So. (19.2 ppg, 3.0 rpg, 3.2 apg); G Kristi Kingma, 5-11, Sr. (13.7 ppg, 4.7 rpg); F Aminah Williams, 6-0, So. (9.3 ppg, 10.7 rpg); F Talia Walton, 6-2, Fr. (13.5 ppg, 7.0 rpg, 1.7 bpg).

**SERIES:** CU leads Washington 7-3, including a 68-61 victory against the Huskies on Feb. 24 in Boulder.

**UP NEXT:** With a victory on Friday, CU will play Saturday at 9:30 p.m. MST in the Pac-12 Tournament semifinals in Seattle. If CU loses, it will wait until at the NCAA Selection Show on March 18 to find out its postseason destination.