

Volleyball: No. 6 UCLA sweeps CU Buffs

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Facing the defending national champions, the Colorado volleyball team had one of its best attack nights of the season.

Unfortunately for the Buffs, the defending champs had their best night of the year.

Sixth-ranked UCLA swept the Buffs, 25-15, 25-22, 25-12, on Friday night at Coors Events Center.

"It's not a lack of effort," CU head coach Liz Kritza said. "It simply is not understanding the best way to play this team and not putting ourselves in a position to be successful. Some really good plays actually happened tonight, but they're followed by multiple points for the other team."

CU (14-13, 4-11 Pac-12) hit .230 as a team, their third-best attack percentage during Pac-12 play. Neira Ortiz Ruiz had 10 kills for Colorado, while Alexis Austin had eight.

The Bruins (19-5, 11-4), however, had a season-best .530 attack percentage, racking up 52 kills. They came in ranking third in the country in kills per set, at 14.78. Tabi Love had 17 kills for UCLA, while Rachael Kidder (12) and Zoe Nightingale (10) also had big nights.

"We got into a high-ball hitting war with a team that wins high-ball hitting wars," Kritza said.

Like they've done to so many opponents over the years, the Bruins seized momentum in each set. They went on a 5-0 run early in the first set and cruised to the win.

In the second set, the Buffs actually led 17-15, but UCLA went on another 5-0 run, followed by a 3-0 surge to close the set. The Bruins had runs of 5-0, 3-0, 4-0 and 3-0 in the final set.

"It's our job to stay there mentally and be able to side-out the first ball and put away the ball," Ortiz Ruiz said. "We're working on it, but we need to keep on working and work harder."

While the Buffs certainly gave UCLA its due, they were disappointed in their own results.

"I think we put ourselves down more than they did," Ortiz Ruiz said. "We missed a lot of opportunities."

It won't get any easier on Saturday, when the Buffs host No. 7 Southern Cal. But, Kritza is hoping the Buffs can take some lessons from Friday and apply them against the Trojans.

"The more you play against hitters like this, the better you get, even if the result isn't what you want it to be," Kritza said. "We get another shot at it tomorrow night and we will be ready."

Notable

The Buffs are 0-7 all-time against the Bruins. ... CU is 1-7 in its last eight matches. UCLA is 7-1 in its last eight. ... The USC match is CU's last home match of the year. The Buffs' lone senior, Michelle

Miller, will be honored prior to the start. ... Nicole Edelman had 29 assists and four kills for the Buffs. Kelsey English and Nikki Lindow had six kills each.

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