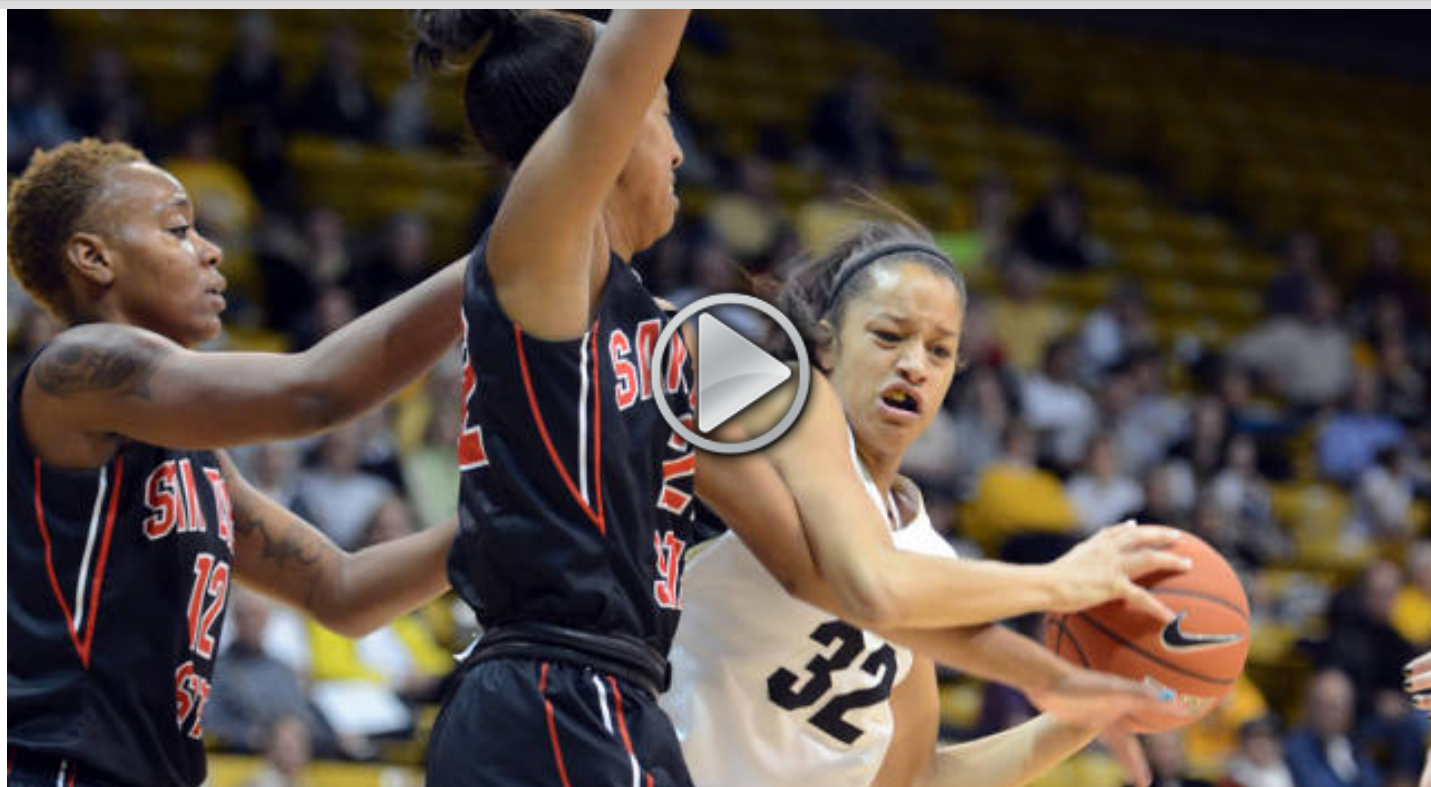




COLORADO BUFFALOES

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CU's Arielle Roberson (32) hauls in a rebound Saturday night.

Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: Buffs Defeat Aztecs, Win Omni Classic

Release: 11/24/2012 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER - What started as a bit of a struggle ended in an impressive stroll Saturday night for the University of Colorado women's basketball team.

The unbeaten Buffaloes (4-0) found their groove midway through the first half and stayed with it the rest of the way, overrunning San Diego State 67-53 to win the Omni Classic at the Coors Events Center.

CU has won 16 of its 26 in-season tournaments, which for 22 years was called the Coors Classic.

Three CU players reached double figures, topped by redshirt freshman [Arielle Roberson's](#) 17 points. Sophomore [Jen Reese](#) added 14 and senior [Chuckie Jeffery](#) 12. Reese also grabbed a game-best nine rebounds, while Roberson added seven.

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Roberson was named the tournament's MVP, an award Jeffery had claimed the past two years. Joining both on the all-tournament team were Auburn's Tyrese Tanner, Texas A&M-Corpus Christi's Janae Blount and San Diego State's Courtney Clements, who led her team Saturday night with 19 points.

Roberson called winning the award "a really big honor; I couldn't have done it without my teammates." And Jeffery was happy to see the award passed to a teammate: "She played a heck of a game . . . she earned it."

Defeating the talented Aztecs, an NCAA Tournament last season, was a benchmark November win for the Buffs and third-year coach [Linda Lappe](#). She acknowledged that it was her best non-conference win at CU, primarily because her team dealt with and overcame adversity against a physical opponent.

Said Lappe: "It was a great game throughout, two good teams and lot of great players on that court. What we were able to do in the second half . . . it was not for the faint of heart. I enjoyed seeing our team step up to that level to win."

San Diego State is coached by former CU assistant Beth Burns, who admitted her homecoming tugged at her heart: "It was really difficult at first because I kept singing the fight song . . . I said to myself, 'What am I doing?' Boulder will always be one of my homes; I loved it here."

As Lappe has done after the Buffs' previous three wins, she pointed to her team's balance and depth in the post as keys in overtaking the Aztecs, who led by nine points in the early going. Along with the frontline productivity of Roberson and Reese, CU got eight points and three rebounds from [Rachel Hargis](#) and five points and three rebounds from [Meagan Malcolm-Peck](#).

Lappe said she and her staff had challenged her frontline players to match San Diego State's physical play: "We challenged them before the game and they took it on . . . they were the difference makers."

Added Jeffery: "We can put any mix on the floor and our energy level won't drop . . . we've got players. We've got so much more of a post presence now . . . it's great."

The Buffs led 28-23 at halftime, but getting that five-point lead was difficult. When the Aztecs raced ahead 6-0, it doubled the largest deficit the Buffs had faced in their three previous games. And San Diego State wasn't content with that.

Over the next 5 minutes, the Aztecs built a 14-5 advantage and were limiting the Buffs' looks at the basket. But at the 13:19 mark, CU began to click - mainly because it thumbed up its defensive intensity and matched San Diego State's physicality.

"We were trying to force things," Roberson said. "I don't know if it was nerves or whatever, but we needed to get on the same page." Once that happened and the season's first test of adversity was passed, "It showed us who we really are . . . we're a tough team, they're a tough team."

At about the 6 minute mark, the Aztecs were 5-of-17 from the field - and that made field goal number included San Diego State hitting its first two baskets of the game.

The Buffs began creeping back into it and fashioned a 13-2 run. They finally caught the Aztecs at 16-16 on a Roberson follow of her own miss, then passed the visitors at 18-16 on a short Reese jumper.

In the half's final 2:15, CU outscored San Diego State 7-1 to take its five-point lead to the locker room. During that span, CU got its only two treys of the first 20 minutes, courtesy of Roberson and Malcolm-Peck.

A 5-0 run to open the second half gave the Buffs their largest lead of the game (33-23) - and they kept the pedal down. After the Aztecs closed to within six, a 7-2 CU spurt opened an 11-point advantage (42-31) with 13:02 to play. Reese was responsible for four of those points, with Jeffery converting a conventional three-point play for the others.

In the final 7 minutes, the Buffs led by as many as 15 - 67-52 in the final half minute - and the Aztecs never got closer than eight points.

"We stayed together," Lappe said. "We knew they would make a run midway through the second half (but) I loved how we responded."

The win against a quality opponent "shows us a good team and what we need to beat a good team, what we need to work on in practice, what level we have to play at game in and game out."

The Buffs' next opportunity comes Wednesday against Wyoming (7 p.m., Coors Events Center).

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Women's basketball: CU Buffs beat San Diego State for tourney title

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Since Linda Lappe took over as Colorado women's basketball coach two years ago, the Buffs have been looking for a signature win in nonconference play.

Saturday's 67-53 win against San Diego State in the championship game of the Omni Hotels Classic at Coors Events Center may be it.

"I think I'd probably have to agree with that, yeah," Lappe said. "San Diego State is a really good team, they're well-coached, they have great players and we knew it was going to be a hard-fought game. I really enjoyed seeing our team step up to the level that they stepped up to tonight."

Arielle Roberson had 17 points and seven rebounds and became the first CU freshman to earn tournament MVP honors in leading the Buffs (4-0) to their fourth consecutive Omni Hotels Classic title. It's CU's 16th title in the 26-year history of the event.

Jen Reese had 14 points and nine rebounds and Chucky Jeffery had 12 points and six boards for the Buffs.

While San Diego State (3-2) isn't one of the elite powers in the nation, the Aztecs are a perennial winner and have been to the NCAA Tournament in three of the past four seasons. They have received top-25 votes every week this season.

Keep this up and the Buffs might earn a few votes soon.

"It means a lot," said Jeffery, who closed her career with an 8-0 record at the Omni Hotels Classic. "We have a lot of basketball to still be played, but that's going to be monumental for people to look at, because they're going to be in the (NCAA) tournament again. That's a good team and that was a great quality win for us. If we play like that and we continue to play like that, we're going to be a contender ourselves, so I think it was good for us."

CU overcame a sluggish start to put together an impressive victory. The Buffs, who trailed by as many as nine early in the game, didn't give up the lead during the final 26 minutes.

After closing the first half with four straight points, the Buffs opened the second half with five in a row. SDSU played catch-up the rest of the way and never could get any closer than six points.

"The way we closed out the first half and started the second half I thought was the difference in the game," Lappe said.

Jeffery, who was the tournament MVP in 2010 and 2011, joined Roberson on the all-Tournament team. She averaged 13.0 points and 7.5 rebounds during the weekend and was more than happy to pass on MVP honors to Roberson, who averaged 16.5 points and 7.5 rebounds during the tournament.

"It's a really big honor," said Roberson, who has scored at least 16 points and grabbed at least six rebounds in all four games this year. "I couldn't have done it without my teammates, obviously. We all worked hard and I

was really happy for the team. For me to get it was just the icing on the cake."

Early on, it looked like San Diego State might take the title. CU got off to a terrible start, falling behind 10-2 and 14-5. More than six minutes passed before the Buffs grabbed their first rebound.

Prior to Saturday, CU hadn't trailed by more than three points this season, and that was a 3-0 deficit at Missouri-Kansas City.

The Buffs were pleased to get that adversity and battle through it against a physical Aztecs team.

"It showed us who we really are," Roberson said. "We are a tough team and also they're a tough team. Tonight we really pulled it out and for our future games this really sets the tone."

After the Aztecs took their big lead at 14-5, though, the Buffs got in gear. Six different Buffs scored during a 13-2 run that gave the Buffs the lead, 18-16 with 6:06 to play in the half. They never trailed again.

"If you don't play good teams, you don't exactly know where you stand," said Lappe, whose team has now won 17 consecutive regular season non-conference games. "It's going to help us as we get into our conference play and as we get into the tougher part of our non-conference schedule here coming up. It's just going to help us be able to know what level we have to play at game-in and game-out."

Notable

Reese came within one rebound of her second career double-double. ... effery is one of only two two-time MVPs in tournament history (former Buff Jenny Roulier is the other). ... Courtney Clements led the Aztecs with 19 points. ... Saturday's game was the first meeting between these teams since CU beat the Aztecs in the championship game of the 1994 Omni Hotels Classic. ... CU leads the series with the Aztecs, 2-1.

Follow Brian on Twitter:

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Colorado 67, San Diego State 53 SAN DIEGO STATE (53)

MIN FG 3PT FT Rb PF TP

Clark 32 0-2 0-1 5-6 2 3 5

Amarikwa 15 2-3 0-1 7-8 3 4 11

Nahinu 19 2-3 0-0 0-0 3 4 4

Hopkins 37 3-8 0-1 1-3 6 5 7

Clements 36 9-17 1-4 0-0 1 4 19

Hunter 10 0-2 0-0 0-2 5 0 0

Culberson 16 0-1 0-1 3-6 2 1 3

Harvey 18 0-6 0-2 0-0 0 2 0

Scurry 17 1-5 0-1 2-2 5 3 4

Team 3

Totals 200 17-47 1-11 18-27 30 26 53

Assists (4): Nahinu 2, Hopkins, Harvey.

Steals (8): Hopkins 2, Clements 2, Amarikwa, Hunter, Harvey, Scurry.

Turnovers (21): Hopkins 9, Amarikwa 2, Nahinu 2, Hunter 2, Harvey 2, Clements, Culberson, Scurry, Team.

Blocked shots (0): None.

COLORADO (67)

MIN FG 3PT FT Rb PF TP

Roberson 27 6-11 1-1 4-12 7 3 17

Hargis 21 3-5 0-0 2-2 3 1 8

B. Wilson 31 2-4 0-1 2-2 4 1 6

Sborov 22 1-1 0-0 1-2 2 5 3

Jeffery 32 4-12 0-1 4-5 6 3 12

Kresl 23 0-4 0-4 0-0 1 2 0

A. Wilson 11 0-1 0-0 2-2 1 0 2

MM-Peck 10 1-2 1-1 2-2 3 2 5

Reese 19 4-6 0-1 6-6 9 1 14

Weston 1 0-0 0-0 0-0 0 0 0

Swan 3 0-1 0-0 0-0 0 3 0

Team 1

Totals 200 21-47 2-9 23-33 37 21 67

Assists (13): Reese 3, Roberson 2, Hargis 2, B. Wilson 2, Jeffery 2, Sborov, Malcolm-Peck.

Steals (13): Roberson 3, B. Wilson 3, Jeffery 2, Hargis, Kresl, A. Wilson, Malcolm-Peck, Reese.

Turnovers (19): Roberson 7, B. Wilson 3, Jeffery 3, Hargis 2, Malcolm-Peck 2, Kresl, A. Wilson.

Blocked shots (1): B. Wilson.

Halftime score: Colorado 28, San Diego State 23.

Technical fouls -- None.

Attendance -- 1,538.