

Soccer: CU Buffs close nonconference play with win

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

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Football has been a struggle for Colorado this year.

Futbol season, on the other hand, is going quite well.

On Sunday, the Buffs' soccer team wrapped up nonconference play with a 2-0 win against visiting Air Force at Prentup Field.

Darcy Jerman scored her first goal of the season and Hayley Hughes scored her second as the Buffs (6-1-2) completed their best nonconference mark since going 7-1-1 in 2008.

"It's always nice to keep winning and we just want to keep this going," freshman Olivia Pappalardo said.

Colorado has its fourth-best mark ever through nine games and will take a three-game win streak into Pac-12 Conference play, which begins Friday at Oregon.

"I think it was important for the team to get some confidence going forward and to start to get an identity how we wanted to play," head coach Danny Sanchez said. "I think we established that over the last few weeks especially."

So far, the Buffs are proving to be solid on defense and opportunistic on offense.

Already, CU goalkeeper Annie Brunner has five shutouts, tying her career high from 2010. The Buffs limited Air Force to just eight shots (four on net). The Falcons were averaging 16.8 shots (8.3 on net) per game. Leah Bratt, who came in with a team-best 20 shots for Air Force, had just one.

Offensively, it took a while for CU to get going against the Falcons (4-2-3), who were enjoying their best start since 1995.

"They had a lot of people in the middle, so it was hard for us to get it and switch it, which is what we do," Pappalardo said. "And our last passes they kept getting a toe on it, so it was tough for us to get the ball through."

CU still managed to tally 17 shots and post six corner kicks to just one for Air Force. One of those corners led to CU's first goal.

In the 60th minute, Quinn Krier booted the ball from the corner and it soared over the pack of players in front of the net and went directly to Jerman, who put a head on the ball and got CU on the board.

"It was a great ball from Quinn," said Jerman, a sophomore who had two goals in 2011. "I just didn't have a mark (defender) on me; good timing, good placement. I just got up and won it. I'm really excited because it's my first goal of the season."

About 21 minutes later, Hughes found the net. Air Force keeper Kelly Stambaugh charged out to stop Hughes, who delivered a shot. The ball hit off Stambaugh and then off Hughes and got behind Stambaugh. Hughes fought her way past the Falcons' keeper and booted the ball into an open net.

"I wanted it so bad," Hughes said. "I'm a forward and I know I need to score and I've only had one goal, so I was

thirsting for it."

Hughes said it is "not very often" that she gets that good of a look at an open net, so, "it's a chance you have to put away and I'm glad I did."

Sanchez said the opportunity, with CU nursing a 1-0 lead, was perfect for Hughes. Air Force was pushing hard to get the equalizer when Hughes buried her goal.

"Once they are pressing for that goal, there is space to be had and they have to start taking some chances and I think that's where Hayley can shine a little bit," Sanchez said.

As a team, the Buffs have shined throughout non-conference play. Aside from a 4-1 loss to Denver on Sept. 7, CU has been competitive in every game and will take a measure of confidence into Pac-12 play.

"It's good stuff, but as we know, the next 11 games are going to be tough," Sanchez said. "They are going to be battles and we need to continue to move the program forward. If we're going to do that we need to get some wins in conference play."

Notable

The Buffs were 3-4-1 in non-conference play a year ago and 4-13-2 overall. ... Brunner has 12 career shutouts, tying Kara Linder (2006-09) for third-most in Buffs history. Brunner is also fourth in wins (17), just three behind Linder for third. ... Hughes has eight career goals. ... CU's next home games are Sept. 28 vs. Washington and Sept. 30 vs. Washington State. :]Follow Brian on Twitter: @BrianHowell33.

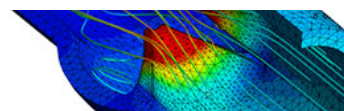


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wind speed: 2 m/s WSW
wind gusts: 2 m/s

Bufs end non-conference season with 2-0 victory over Air Force

Written by Joseph Wirth in Front Page, Soccer, Sports, Uncategorized on Sep 17, 2012 0:02 / comments

Coming off of a 2-0 victory last Friday night against northern rival, the Wyoming Cowgirls, the Colorado women's soccer team (6-1-2) came out looking like a Pac-12 contender at Prentup Field in Boulder on Sunday against the Air Force Falcons (4-2-2).

"We always know Air Force is going to come out and give us a good fight," said senior captain Amy Barczuk. "We play them every season so they're not a team to be overlooked and they came out and played really hard in the first half, and we knew in the second half that we needed to pick up our game."



Midfielder Darcy Jerman traps the ball Sunday during the 2-0 win against Air Force. Jerman played 75 minutes and scored one goal. (CU Independent/Joe Wirth)

The first half saw very physical play from both teams, but for the most part the Buffs dominated the flow of the play and kept the ball securely tucked into Air Force's half of the field. But with 10 girls behind the ball on defense, it was difficult for the Colorado forwards to spread out Air Force and find open space and good shot opportunities in front of the net.

In the 29th minute, junior Hayley Hughes picked off a weak pass from an Air Force

defender and was taken down from behind on a breakaway leaving a free kick for the Buffs right outside the penalty box that was skied over the bar by Anne Stuller. It was the best opportunity for Colorado going into the halftime break.

The Buffs had eight total shots in the first half but only three on target with a lot going just over the crossbar. The Buffs only allowed one shot on goal the first half, but they had some trouble keeping the ball in the final third of the field and breaking the goal seal in Sunday's match. The lack of pride in possession was one of the only major, noticeable concerns from the Air Force match.

"We're getting into spots and just kind of panicking and shooting from long range instead of building our numbers," said head coach Danny Sanchez. "We're getting there and then just kicking it, whereas maybe we could have built more numbers and switched it."

"As the half wore on our speed of play kind of slowed down and took away some of our chances," Sanchez continued. "Going into halftime scoreless we were a little bit disappointed, but we knew that as long as we kept creating chances that we would be ok."

Over and over again in the early minutes of the second half, the Buffs knocked on the door of the goal, getting close chance after close chance until the hour mark when the Buffs pushed through with a goal off of a corner kick. The goal came from sophomore Darcy Jerman on a

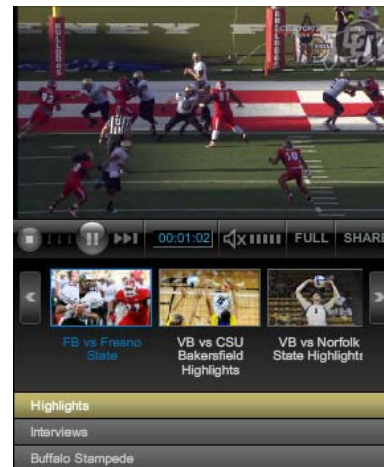
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strong header towards the corner's near post that beat Air Force's goalkeeper Kelly Stambaugh.

Jerman's goal was a good indicator of a lot of emphasis on set plays in practice.

"I think it [set pieces] will be crucial because when we start to get into these tough Pac-12 games that's going to be the difference maker," Amy Barczuk said. "Just being able to put those away is very crucial for us."

Once the first goal went in for the Buffs, Air Force had to step up offensively to try to equalize. A late offensive surge by the Falcons played to the Buffs' favor by allowing more space to be found on the flanks for the Colorado midfielders and more opportunity to capitalize off of counter-attack opportunities.

Hughes, the girl who always seems to be in the right place at the right time, pulled through again, scoring her second goal of the season off of another Air Force defensive miscue in the 80th minute.

"Annie Stuller played a great ball through and it kind of was bouncing and I knew that the goalkeeper was going to contest it," Hughes said. "I just ran towards her right foot like our coaches said and was lucky to have it bounce off me and I got pancaked. When I turned, the ball was just there and I put it in with an open net."

"It was one of those chances that you just have to put away when it's just you and the goalie," Hughes said.

This game marked the end of non-conference for the Buffs this season. It's now time for the girls and Coach Sanchez to begin preparing to play in the immensely talented Pac-12 conference, but this year it's a different Colorado squad that will take on some of the nation's finest programs.

"Having momentum going into the Pac-12 is great and to be in the position we are now is awesome," Barczuk said after the game. "But we also need to realize that these are going to be really tough games coming ahead and we can't come out playing relaxed [like against Air Force Sunday] against Pac-12 teams."

Although the Buffs have had a tremendous season thus far, they have yet to play a game where they were the true underdog, which will be the case for most of the games the remainder of the season but will also be their motivation against the Pac-12 powerhouses.

"We're really excited for Pac-12 play," said junior forward Anne Stuller. "It's a tough conference and we know we're the underdogs and we're going to play with a chip on our shoulder all season. We also know that we're 0-0 now and non-conference doesn't mean anything, so we have to prove ourselves and it starts with Oregon."

The Buffs next matchup is next Friday Sep. 21 at 5 p.m. (MST) as the women's soccer team travels to Eugene, Ore. to take on the Ducks (4-2-1).



About Joseph Wirth

Do you know Joe Wirth? is a common question rung around The Hill area of Boulder, typically on the weekends. But the thing is no one knows who this guy is, yet. Fresh into the journalism world, this is Wirth's second semester working at the CU Independent. When asked how being a sports columnist is, he simply replied, "This is only just the beginning."

Tags: air force falcons, Colorado, CU buffs, Danny Sanchez, pac 12, prent up field, Soccer, women's soccer

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