

Colorado soccer: Buffs finish non-conference schedule with win

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The Colorado women's soccer team has proven it can look great against non-conference opponents.

Now, the Buffaloes need to show what they can do against their Pac-12 rivals.

On Sunday, CU completed its non-conference schedule with a 3-1 win against UNLV at Prentup Field in the Omni Hotels Women's Soccer Classic.

"It's awesome, just because we're starting Pac-12 next week and I feel like we really hit a lot of momentum," said junior midfielder Darcy Jerman, who had two goals in Sunday's win. "It's good to win this last one and be 8-1 going into Pac-12."

The Buffs (8-1) have matched their win total from last year (8-8-4) and won both games during the Omni Hotels Classic, outscoring their opponents 7-1.

Offensively, the Buffs couldn't ask for much more. They had just 27 goals during the 2012 season but have 20 already this year.

"Pretty good goals," CU head coach Danny Sanchez said of Sunday's output. "Maybe could have had a couple more, but at the end of the day, three goals is a good performance."

It took just 2 minutes, 40 seconds to get the first one. Freshman Brie Hooks made a run down the right side of the field and sent a crossing pass to the middle of the field, where Jerman took it and buried it.

"It felt really good because I've been having chances earlier this season and it just hasn't come together," Jerman said. "Brie had a beautiful cross in there and I was just there and shot and it was awesome."

CU had six corner kicks in the first half and finally scored on the last one. Anne Stuller sent the ball from the corner to the goal box and sophomore defender Heather Ward was there to head it in for her first career goal.

"In big games, a lot of times it is determined by set pieces, whether it's defending them or scoring them," Sanchez said. "So, I feel that it's good to get those opportunities, but in the same sense, we're not going to get as many (in Pac-12 play) as we got this weekend."

CU was dominant in the first half, outshooting the Rebels 12-0, including 7-0 in shots on goal. The Buffs also had a 6-0 advantage on corner kicks.

In the second half, UNLV (5-2-2) showed some life and made it a game. Brittney Gideon scored for the Rebels to cut the CU lead to 2-1 with 18 minutes to go.

"We were wining 2-0 and that's a dangerous lead in soccer; we might have relaxed for a minute," Jerman said. "I think that goal sparked us back up again and we came back strong."

Less than five minutes later, CU put the game away. Tori Cooper was fouled in the goal box, setting up a penalty kick that Jerman punched into the left side of the net for a 3-1 lead.

After a dominating run through the non-conference slate -- the only loss came against 14th-ranked Denver -- the Buffs are eager to test themselves against the toughest conference schedule in the country. Next up is No. 2 Stanford on Saturday.

"I don't know that we're going to be any more ready," Sanchez said. "We feel good about where we're at, but we know the challenge of these next 11 games."

Notable

Northern Colorado defeated Stony Brook 1-0 in the other game Sunday. ... Jerman, Hooks, Lizzy Herzl and Madison Krauser all made the All-Tournament team. UNC's Natalie D'Adamio, Danielle Birdsall and Tara Rickenbach also made the All-Tournament Team. ... In two seasons under Sanchez, the Buffs are 14-2-2 in non-conference play, with 11 shutouts. ... Sunday was the fourth time the Buffs have scored at least three goals. They did that just twice in 2012. ... During the tournament, CU out-shot its opponents 43-10. Stuller had 12 shots to lead CU.

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