



CU celebrates No. 25 ranking with easy win

Bufs roll past Southern Utah in first game since holiday break

Saturday, December 29, 2007

When Kathy McConnell-Miller's team returned from its holiday break this week, the Colorado coach noticed a greater sense of maturity in her Buffs.

Talk around the paint centered around basketball instead of who received what for Christmas, for instance.

With greater focus, the Buffs put together two strong practices leading up to Friday's home game against Southern Utah and it paid off in the form of an 81-38 victory in the Coors Events Center.

The Buffs (9-2) won their eighth consecutive game and won handily in their first game since breaking into the AP Top-25 at No. 25.

"The sign of maturity is characteristic of a strong team or a top-25 team," McConnell-Miller said. "I don't necessarily think they came back more mature because somebody designated them as a top-25 team. They appreciate the ranking. But, going home 8-2 they went home with some confidence ... and came back ready to go."

Colorado's first game as a ranked team since the 2004 season featured a strong start, a strong finish to the first half, 12 steals by the Buffs and the passing of a milestone by CU senior forward Jackie McFarland -- as well as the second-largest home crowd of the season despite the game being during the holiday break.

The Buffs jumped out to a 14-4 lead in the first five minutes and put the game away with a 13-0 run to close out the first half for a 44-20 lead at the break. Colorado carried the momentum over with a 12-0 run to start the second half for a 56-20 lead.

Along the way, McFarland surpassed the 1,500 career points milestone. Her 22 points against Southern Utah (2-9) gave her 1,510 for her career and moved her into eighth place on CU's all-time scoring record book. McFarland is on track this season to become CU's second-leading scorer in program history.

"It's always nice to have those accomplishments," McFarland said. "But right now being 9-2 and being ranked is much better."

Freshman Brittany Spears made 7-of-11 shots for 17 points and sophomore Bianca Smith added 12 points for CU, which continues its five-game homestand on Sunday with a 2 p.m. tipoff against Jacksonville State.

Notable

Sophomore Whitney Houston and junior RyAnne Ridge were not allowed to suit up for the game because they broke a team rule. The pair returned late from the holiday break. ... In Colorado's last three games, the Buffs have ended the first half with runs of 13-0 (Southern Utah), 20-4 (Dartmouth) and 15-0 (Texas Southern).

Colorado 81, Southern Utah 38**SOUTHERN UTAH (38)****min fg-fga ft-fta rb ast pf tp**

Westwood 24 3-6 0-2 8 1 4 6

Pascucci 18 1-3 0-0 2 0 4 2

Heuett 36 3-10 0-0 3 1 2 6

Goff 30 3-8 0-0 2 4 3 7

Mackintosh 21 2-6 0-0 1 0 0 4

Haskins 8 2-4 0-0 3 0 1 4

Sagers 14 0-5 0-0 1 0 2 0

Truman 15 0-4 0-0 2 0 0 0

Sears 24 3-5 0-0 3 2 0 6

Sampson 10 1-3 0-0 0 0 1 3

Totals: 200 18-54 0-2 29 8 17 38

COLORADO (81)**min fg-fga ft-fta rb ast pf tp**

Spears 25 7-11 0-0 5 2 0 17

Putnina 26 1-6 4-5 7 1 4 6

McFarland 25 8-10 5-5 3 4 1 22

Skildum 21 2-7 0-0 1 3 1 4

Powers 30 1-2 0-0 4 7 1 2

Smith 19 4-9 1-2 2 0 2 12

Blythe 10 0-1 1-2 1 0 1 1

Dale 8 1-1 0-0 0 0 0 3

Piterniece 7 1-1 0-0 0 1 1 3

Dunn 6 2-3 2-2 3 3 0 7

Dow 14 1-4 0-0 6 0 0 2

Richards 9 1-1 0-0 0 0 2 2

Totals: 200 29-56 13-16 37 21 13 81

Score by halves:

Southern Utah 20 18 -- 38

Colorado 44 37 -- 81

3-point field goals -- Southern Utah (2-11): Goff 1-4, Mackintosh 0-1, Sagers 0-2, Sears 0-1, Sampson 1-3; Colorado (10-23): Spears 3-5, Putnina 0-3, McFarland 1-3, Skildum 0-1, Powers 0-1, Smith 3-4, Blythe 0-1, Dale 1-1, Piterniece 1-1, Dunn 1-2, Dow 0-1.

Officials --Jones, Campbell, Murray.

Technical fouls -- None.

Attendance -- 1,342.

STEALS

Southern Utah (3):Westwood, Pascucci, Heuett.

Colorado (12):Spears 2, McFarland, Skildum, Powers 3, Smith, Blythe, Dale, Dow, Richards.

BLOCKED SHOTS

Southern Utah (1):Heuett.

Colorado (6):Spears, Putnina, McFarland, Skildum, Powers, Dow.

TURNOVERS

Southern Utah (22):Westwood 5, Heuett 4, Goff 7, Mackintosh 3, Sagers, Truman, Sears.

Colorado (16):Spears, Putnina 3, McFarland 2, Skildum, Smith 4, Piterniece 2, Richards 2.

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TIMES-CALL

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For CU, game is business as usual

25th-ranked Buffs roll past T-Birds for 8th straight win

By Justin Williams

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Playing as a nationally-ranked team for the first time in three years, the No. 25 Colorado women's basketball squad claims it didn't feel any different Friday night.

The Buffs certainly didn't play any differently, either.

CU won its eighth straight game with a 81-38 rout of Southern Utah at the Coors Events Center. The Buffaloes played in front of 1,342 spectators, well above their season average at home, and the CU faithful clearly appreciate the Buffs' recent run

Still, Colorado played aloof to all the national recognition.

"It's a good compliment, but I don't think it really meant that much to us," senior Jackie McFarland said of the top-25 ranking, which the Buffs (9-2) attained earlier this week. "I think we're young enough, and I don't think we've proven ourselves enough yet. We've had some good wins, but when you're this young, you play every game like it's the biggest game of the season.

"You stay focused, and that's what we've been doing."

CU head coach Kathy McConnell-Miller believes Friday night might have been the Buffs' most focused effort of the season, even though it was their first game back after a four-day break for the holidays.

"They traveled to all parts of the world, but when they came back, they were focused," McConnell-Miller said. "I just sensed a sign of maturity on their part when they came back. There wasn't a lot of chit-chat about what they got for Christmas.

"We got on the court and had two really good practices back to back, and I thought that carried over to tonight's game.

"I just think the sign of maturity is characteristic of a strong team, of a top-25 team."

McFarland scored a game-high 22 points in the game, which vaulted her over 1,500 points for career and into eighth place on CU's all-time scoring list.

The Buffaloes closed out the first half on a 13-0 run against the Thunderbirds and then opened the second half on a 12-0 run. CU only trailed once in the game, and that was at 2-0.

"I did like the aggressive nature of trying to take the team off the bounce," McConnell-Miller said. "We've been a good 3-point shooting team, we've been a good inside-outside combination, but we tried to explore off the dribble tonight, and that's the first time I've seen that out of our offense consistently."

The Buffs handed Southern Utah its 30th straight road loss, which dates back to December 2005, and head coach Steve Hodson said he knew his Thunderbirds would have their hands full with Buffs.

“Coming into a game such as this, you have to prepare in two ways,” he said. “First, you have to believe you can win. We all know the story of Cinderella and how she got the slipper. You always have to have that in the back of your mind. Second, we had to understand that this is the 25th ranked team, and they are a talented team. We used this game to get better.”

Since she took over as head coach three seasons ago, McConnell-Miller has had her share of those games, as well. But as the Buffs head down an unfamiliar road, they continue to profess their national prominence won't change their approach.

“We're just playing our game and what got us there, so we don't worry about the ranking,” freshman Brittany Spears said. “We're just trying to continue how we've been playing.”



Spears makes a name for herself

Freshman scores 17 in Buffaloes' win over T-birds

By Associated Press

Saturday, December 29, 2007

Brittany Spears has taken grief since sixth grade about the name she shares with the pop diva.

But the University of Colorado freshman is carving out an identity for herself on the basketball court.

Spears scored 17 points and grabbed five rebounds, guiding the No. 25 Buffaloes to an 81-38 win against Southern Utah.

Spears is the leading scorer among freshmen in the Big 12 Conference, averaging 13.6 points. Yet no one believes her when she tells them her name really is Brittany Spears.

"I have to show my ID card," said Spears, whose first name is different than the Britney Spears that's a tabloid regular. "When I first came here (Colorado) and I was trying to enroll in my classes, I called a guy to get my class online, he said, 'What's your name?' and I was like, 'Brittany Spears.' He said, 'I don't believe you,' and hung up."

Spears might not have a catchy hit song, but she has a mean jumper. She hit three of five three-pointers Friday night.

SOUTHERN UTAH (2-9) - Westwood 3-6 0-2 6, Pascucci 1-3 0-0 2, Heuett 3-10 0-0 6, Goff 3-8 0-0 7, Mackintosh 2-6 0-0 4, Haskins 2-4 0-0 4, Sagers 0-5 0-0 0, Truman 0-4 0-0 0, Sears 3-5 0-0 6, Sampson 1-3 0-0 3. Totals 18-54 0-2 38.

COLORADO (9-2) - Spears 7-11 0-0 17, Putnina 1-6 4-5 6, McFarland 8-10 5-5 22, Skildum 2-7 0-0 4, Powers 1-2 0-0 2, Smith 4-9 1-2 12, Blythe 0-1 1-2 1, Dale 1-1 0-0 3, Piteriece 1-1 0-0 3, Dunn 2-3 2-2 7, Dow 1-4 0-0 2, Richards 1-1 0-0 2. Totals 29-56 13-16 81.

Halftime - Colorado 44-20. **Three-point attempts** - Southern Utah 2-11 (Sampson 1-3, Goff 1-4, Mackintosh 0-1, Sears 0-1, Sagers 0-2), Colorado 10-23 (Smith 3-4, Spears 3-5, Piteriece 1-1, Dale 1-1, Dunn 1-2, McFarland 1-3, Skildum 0-1, Blythe 0-1, Powers 0-1, Dow 0-1, Putnina 0-3). **Fouled out** - None. **Rebounds** - Southern Utah 29 (Westwood 8), Colorado 37 (Putnina 7). **Assists** - Southern Utah 8 (Goff 4), Colorado 21 (Powers 7). **Total fouls** - Southern Utah 17, Colorado 13. **A** - 1,342.

Concordia-St. Paul 64, Metro State 55

DENVER

Amanda Behnke scored 19 points as the Golden Bears beat the Roadrunners. Ashley Mickens led the Roadrunners in scoring with 14 points.

CONCORDIA-ST. PAUL (11-0) - Behnke 7-12 5-10 19; Olstad 5-7 2-3 13; Jones 4-11 0-1 8; Lund 2-6 2-3 8; LaViolette 0-3 5-6 5; Schroeder 2-5 0-0 4; Nielsen 1-1 0-0 3; Smetana 1-4 0-0 2; Small 1-1 0-0 2; Olstad 0-4 0-0 0; Tewes 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 23-55 14-23 64.

METRO STATE (5-6) - Mickens 4-12 6-10 14; Powers 4-10 0-0 9; Sinclair 3-5 1-4 7; Sauter 2-7 0-0 6; Bratton 3-11 0-0 6; Bean 2-4 1-2 5; Benson 1-4 2-2 5; Dennee 1-2 0-2 3; Williamson 0-2 0-0 0. Totals 20-57 10-20 55.

Three-point goals - CSP, Lund 2, Olstad, Nielsen; MS, Sauter 2, Powers, Benson, Dennee.

Tarleton State 65, Colorado Christian 60