



No. 23 CU pushes win streak to 10

Bufs set to start Big 12 play on a roll

By Chris Shelton
Saturday, January 5, 2008

This is why senior forward Jackie McFarland came to Colorado.

After three consecutive losing seasons, the Colorado women's basketball team is rolling.

The latest step forward came with Friday's 65-53 victory against Pepperdine, which extended CU's win streak to 10.

The Buffs (11-2) hadn't won 10 in a row in more than 10 years and now head into Big 12 play next week ranked at least No. 23 in the AP Top 25.

"I couldn't be happier right now," said McFarland, who scored 19 points and grabbed eight rebounds. "We didn't see (success) for three years and it's finally here. You can't keep a smile off my face."

The Buffs won their 10th in a row for the first time since 1994-95 and the double-digit win streak is just CU's seventh in program history.

It couldn't come at a better time, either.

Colorado takes its win streak on the road Wednesday to open Big 12 play at Missouri.

"After winning 10 straight games, it's a great way to go into the conference season," said Colorado senior guard Susie Powers, who notched a career-high 10 assists. "You win 10 straight and now that's what you expect. We set the bar that much higher now."

The Buffs withstood challenge after challenge from a Pepperdine team that was playing its third consecutive ranked opponent on the road.

Colorado's zone presshelped build leads of 19-4, 32-17 and 49-32 only to see the Waves come crashing back when the zone press sprung a leak. Colorado's lead of 57-43 with five minutes to play was cut to eight, 61-53, with 1:50 to play. But CU held Pepperdine (5-8) scoreless the rest of the way to seal the win.

"There were a lot of times I thought we were dominating and I looked up and we were only up 13," CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said. "We could not pull away from them. They made plays when they needed to, and they made them consistently."

Offensively, the Buffs received a much-needed lift from sophomore guard Bianca Smith, who made all

of CU's four 3-pointers en route to 18 points. Smith now has as many 3-pointers this season as she had in all of last season with 32. Freshman Brittany Spears capitalized on four steals for some of her 16 points.

The Buffs hadn't won 11 games last year until Feb. 24 and CU needs just two more wins to match last year's total (13-17). Colorado went 6-10 in the Big 12 last year.

"We haven't spent a lot of time talking about the conference," McConnell-Miller said. "But they know what monster (lies) around the corner."

Colorado 65, Pepperdine 53

PEPPERDINE (53)

min fg-fga ft-fta rb ast pf tp

Ayim 34 3-5 0-0 7 1 3 6

George 23 2-9 1-2 4 0 4 5

Kennedy 36 5-13 4-7 7 1 2 15

Menton 24 3-13 2-2 7 4 2 8

Ross 31 2-5 2-2 1 0 2 7

Lelo 2 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Smith 27 3-8 0-0 5 3 0 7

Bryant 14 2-3 1-2 3 0 5 5

Huley 9 0-1 0-0 0 0 0 0

Totals: 200 20-57 10-15 39 9 18 53

COLORADO (65)

min fg-fga ft-fta rb ast pf tp

Spears 33 7-10 2-2 7 4 2 16

Putnina 33 4-10 0-1 7 0 2 8

McFarland 38 8-14 3-4 8 2 2 19

Skildum 22 2-8 0-0 3 2 4 4

Powers 37 0-5 0-1 6 10 2 0

Smith 25 6-11 2-2 2 1 2 18

Blythe 3 0-0 0-0 0 0 1 0

Dunn 2 0-0 0-0 0 1 0 0

Dow 6 0-0 0-0 3 0 0 0

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

Totals: 200 27-60 7-18 38 20 16 65

Score by halves:

Pepperdine 22 31 -- 53

Colorado 36 29 -- 65

3-point field goals -- Pepperdine (3-11): Kennedy 1-2, Menton 0-4, Ross 1-2, Smith 1-3; Colorado (4-18): Spears 0-2, Putnina 0-3, McFarland 0-1, Skildum 0-1, Powers 0-3, Smith 4-8.

Officials --Trammell, Parrish, Roberts.

Technical fouls -- None.

Attendance -- 3,163.

STEALS

Pepperdine (10):Ayim, George, Kennedy 2, Menton 2, Ross, Smith 2, Bryant.

Colorado (11):Spears 4, Putnina, McFarland 3, Powers 3.

BLOCKED SHOTS

Pepperdine (2):Ayim 2.

Colorado (5):Spears, McFarland, Skildum 2, Dow.

TURNOVERS

Pepperdine (19):Ayim 2, George, Kennedy 4, Menton 2, Ross 6, Smith 3, Bryant.

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



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TIMES-CALL

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Smith, CU on target

Reserve guard scores 18 as Buffs notch 10th straight victory

By Brian Howell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The night after Thanksgiving, Bianca Smith missed all 11 shots she attempted in a loss to Siena.

That hasn't stopped the sophomore from Missouri City, Texas, from shooting, though.

Smith came off the bench to score 18 points Friday night and help the 23rd-ranked University of Colorado women's basketball team to a 65-53 win over Pepperdine at the Coors Events Center.

Jackie McFarland had 19 points and eight rebounds, and Brittany Spears added 16 points and seven rebounds for the Buffaloes (11-2).

For Smith, it was another good night off the bench. After starting the year 2-for-16 from 3-point range — including 0-for-10 against Siena — she has made 44.1 percent of her 3-pointers.

"I'm always in the gym shooting, especially since the Siena game," Smith said. "I've been constantly trying to get as many shots up as possible."

Since that shocking loss against Siena, Colorado is 10-0, and Smith has averaged 12.2 points per game off the bench. She made four of eight 3-pointers Friday, the third consecutive game she's made at least four from long range.

It's that production that has made Kathy McConnell-Miller accept a disruption of her schedule. CU's head coach had a set schedule for how long the team would shoot before the game and a precise time the players would eat together as a team, etc. Players such as Smith, however, have challenged that because they don't want to come off the court after a shoot-around.

"They've really messed with my routine, and I just have to go with it," McConnell-Miller said. "It's not something I was comfortable with at first, but ... I know that the benefits later that night are going to be 4-for-8."

Smith's spark off the bench Friday was a big reason the Buffaloes stretched their win streak to 10 games. It's just the seventh win streak of 10 or more in program history and the first since CU won a school-record 25 straight in 1994-95.

The current streak — which included wins over then-No. 21 Wyoming and then-No. 20 Vanderbilt — has vaulted the Buffs into the Top 25 for the first time since the 2003-04 season.

"This is what I came to Colorado basketball for," said McFarland, a senior who waited nearly her entire career to see the Buffs jump into the Top 25. "We've come in here and we've played strong. I couldn't be happier right now just being in this position. More than anything, the hard work has paid off by now. I can't keep the smile off my face."

To stretch their streak, the Buffs had to get past the scrappy Waves (5-8). CU jumped out to a 19-4 lead midway through the first half, but Pepperdine scored 11 straight to close the gap. CU then responded with a 10-0 run —



Colorado's Brittany Spears drives against Pepperdine's Miranda Ayim and Jessica Ross in the first half of Friday night's game at the Coors Events Center. Spears scored 16 points in the Buffs' 65-53 win.

Jill P. Mott / Times-Call

highlighted by two Smith 3-pointers.

Pepperdine still didn't go away. The Waves stayed within striking distance throughout the second half and trailed by just eight with 1:50 to play.

Despite Pepperdine's record, McConnell-Miller wasn't surprised. Three of the Waves' losses came by five points or less.

"They're just a team that is solid," she said. "They put five players on the floor that you have to guard. They make shots; they make plays."

Of course, CU does, too. The Buffs have been making a lot of plays in recent weeks, with nine of the 10 wins in the streak coming by double-digit margins.

"I just think it gives us a really big boost going into conference," Smith said.

With the non-conference schedule now complete, Smith and the Buffs are hoping they can carry the momentum into Big 12 play, which begins Wednesday when they travel to Missouri.

"Having (won 10 straight) going into the Big 12 Conference, it just shows that we've really come together as a team," point guard Susie Powers said. "We're playing as a true team. Our chemistry is there."

WELCOME BACK: Former CU great Shelley Sheetz returned to the arena Friday as a coach. She is an assistant for Pepperdine.

Sheetz was the Big 8 player of the year and an All-American in 1995, the Big 8 newcomer of the year in 1992, and a three-time, first-team all-conference selection during her time with the Buffaloes.

She's now in her third year as an assistant with Pepperdine. Friday's game had special meaning for Sheetz: In addition to coaching against her alma mater, she had her family in the stands.

Sheetz has spent a lot of time lately tending to her mother, Carol, who lives in Johnstown and has terminal cancer. Carol and several other members of the family were in attendance Friday.

TIP-INS: Powers had a career-high 10 assists and chipped in with six rebounds. ... Daphanie Kennedy led Pepperdine with 15 points. ... After taking a 3-0 lead on a Kennedy 3-pointer, the Waves missed 13 consecutive shots from the floor. ... Colorado shot 45 percent (27-for-60) for the game. ... Smith has hit 32 3-pointers this season, already more than the 31 she had all of last season. ... Sophomore guard Whitney Houston, a starter for the first four games, didn't get off the bench. It's the second time in three games she hasn't played.



Buffaloes earn 10th straight win

By Rocky Wire Reports

Saturday, January 5, 2008

Jackie McFarland had 19 points and eight rebounds to help No. 23 Colorado win its 10th straight game, 65-53 against struggling Pepperdine on Friday night.

Bianca Smith added 18 points and Brittany Spears had 16 points for Colorado (11-2), which is off to its best start since beginning the 2003-04 season with a 12-1 mark. The Buffaloes begin their Big 12 Conference season Wednesday against Missouri.

Daphanie Kennedy led Pepperdine (5-8) with 15 points. The Waves have lost six in a row, all on the road. The Waves begin West Coast Conference play Thursday at Gonzaga.

With Pepperdine trailing by 15 at the break, Kennedy hit a short jumper to get it to 38-33 with 18:08 to play, then McFarland took over for Colorado.

McFarland muscled in four layups and Smith added a three-pointer in a three-minute span to give CU a 49-32 lead.

Two free throws by Kennedy with 1:50 left got Pepperdine to 61-53 with 1:50 left before Smith's basket and two free throws put the game away for Colorado.

Pepperdine led only once, when Kennedy made a three- pointer 39 seconds into the game. The Waves then missed their next 14 shots.

While the Waves struggled, Colorado went on a 19-1 run. McFarland scored seven of the points to put the Buffs ahead 19-4.

Miranda Ayim's basket with 7:53 remaining capped an 11-0 run, but Smith came off the bench to hit three three-pointers in the last seven minutes as Colorado pulled away to a 36-22 halftime lead.

PEPPERDINE (5-8) - Ayim 3-5 0-0 6, George 2-9 1-2 5, Kennedy 5-13 4-7 15, Menton 3-13 2-2 8, Ross 2-5 2-2 7, Lelo 0-0 0-0 0, Smith 3-8 0-0 7, Bryant 2-3 1-2 5, Huley 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 20-57 10-15 53.

COLORADO (11-2) - Spears 7-10 2-2 16, Putnina 4-10 0-1 8, McFarland 8-14 3-4 19, Skildum 2-8 0-0 4, Powers 0-5 0-1 0, Smith 6-11 2-2 18, Blythe 0-0 0-0 0, Dunn 0-0 0-0 0, Dow 0-0 0-0 0, Richards 0-2 0-1 0. Totals 27-60 7-11 65.

Halftime - Colorado 36-22. **Three-point attempts** - Pepperdine 3-11 (Kennedy 1-2, Ross 1-2, Smith 1-3, Menton 0-4), Colorado 4-18 (Smith 4-8, McFarland 0-1, Skildum 0-1, Spears 0-2, Putnina 0-3, Powers 0-3). **Fouled out** - Bryant. **Rebounds** - Pepperdine 39 (Ayim, Kennedy, Menton 7), Colorado 38 (McFarland 8). **Assists** - Pepperdine 9 (Menton 4), Colorado 20 (Powers 10). **Total fouls** - Pepperdine 18, Colorado 16. **A** - 3,163.

No. 9 Baylor 84, Texas State 57

WACO, Texas

Rachel Allison had 23 points and 13 rebounds to lead the Bears past the Bobcats.

Angela Tisdale added 19 points, Jessica Morrow scored 12 and Jhasmin Player had 11 points for Baylor (12-1).