



Hempen's Buffs knock off No. 10 Longhorns

Marshall delivers game-winner in 74th minute

By Ryan Thorburn

Saturday, October 11, 2008

It was only a matter of time until Nikki Marshall's name appeared at the top of the Buffs' list for most goals scored in a career.

Her timing couldn't have been better.

Marshall scored a brilliant goal in the 74th minute to lift No. 22 Colorado to a 1-0 victory over No. 10 Texas on Friday at Prentup Field.

"It's not that big of a deal really," the humble Marshall, who is only a junior, said after moving into a tie with Katie Griffin (2003-06) with 32 goals. "The win is huge for us. Beating Texas is awesome, so I think we're just excited about that."

Thanks to Marshall's goal and an impressive effort defensively, the Buffs (10-2-2 overall, 4-1-1 conference) remain in strong position to win a Big 12 championship. There is a picture in the CU locker room of the 2003 team that captured the program's first conference championship. That doesn't seem like a long time ago, but Marshall and a lot of her teammates were just 15-year-old Fran Munnely groupies five years ago.

Now the young girls in the crowd are screaming for Marshall and dreaming about playing like No. 17 some day.

"She's a thoroughbred," CU head coach Bill Hempen said. "When she gets in that little gap you can just see her pulling away."

Marshall took a perfect touch pass from Nikki Keller and split two defenders, including Longhorns standout Kasey Moore, before putting the ball into the upper left corner of the goal while the frozen keeper watched helplessly.

"She did that against one of the best defenders in the conference," Hempen noted. "And to be able to finish with the other ones chasing her was a really neat finish for her. That's a great goal for her to remember (tying Griffin) by."

Marshall -- who now has more game-winning goals (14) than any player in CU history -- put a header into the back of the net in the first half but the play was called offside.

Michelle Wenino had a strong shot on goal turned away by Texas keeper Dianna Pfenninger in the 25th minute. Gianna DeSaverio and Alex Cousins each had shots sail just wide in the second half before Marshall's heroics.

Both teams finished with only four shots on goal. The more aggressive Buffs were called for 12 fouls compared to six for the visitors and took eight corner kicks while only allowing four.

Three yellow cards were issued in the match, including one to Marshall.

"She's got the heart of a lion," Cousins said. "And she just wants to get better."

Sophomore defender Kym Lowry, who was struggling with an injury in recent weeks, played a terrific game. She would have had an assist on Marshall's header had it not been ruled offside and she cleared a shot headed for the back of the net in the 88th minute to preserve the victory.

"Kym's been struggling a bit with her own confidence and she got it back tonight. She was incredible," Cousins said. "That defense that we have back there with Michelle (Wenino) and Kelly Ross and Caroline Danneberg, everyone is just in sync. We've got each other."

The Longhorns are 8-2-2 overall but only 1-2-1 in Big 12 play. Still, this was a huge hurdle for CU in the race for a conference title.

"We've just got to stay strong and win the rest of our games and we'll have a good shot at a Big 12 championship," Marshall said.

CU hosts Baylor at 1 p.m. on Sunday at Prentup Field.



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