



Spikers' win boosts CU's confidence

By Justin Coons, For the Camera
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Coming into today's match against No. 11 California, the CU women's volleyball team looks to finally have found some confidence.

Colorado swept the Central Florida Knights on Saturday in the Coors Events Center, 30-26, 30-22, 30-23. CU swept UNC-Wilmington in three games Friday.

After losing the first two matches of the season, the wins are huge in preparing for the first ranked opponent of the season, junior Lauren Schaefer said.

"Everything is flowing right now," she said. "It's hard to have new people on the court because you don't know what they are like, but we are starting to get used to each other and things are working much better."

A slew of graduations and early season injuries, including the season-ending injury to All-Big 12 selection Amber Sutherland, left Colorado with holes at several positions.

Junior Kelsey Loop and sophomore Kaitlyn Burkett were activated from reserve roles to fill in at outside hitter and setter. Freshmen — as many as three on the court at a time — have been tapped to fill the other roles.

The team is slowly learning how to play with different faces and showed signs of jelling Saturday, Schaefer said.

"I thought we were a little disjointed in game one," head coach Pi'i Aiu said. "I thought we were working hard, but things just weren't flowing yet. That's one of the things you are going to have with a young team."

Colorado, which has one active senior on the roster, had a .197 kill percentage through the first game. CU took an early lead, but the Knights stayed competitive through the rest of the game.

The Buffs hit their stride in game two, going on a 9-1 run early on and holding a .319 kill percentage through the game, riding the momentum into the final game.

Schaefer led the Buffs with 14 kills, while three other Buffs had kill counts in the double digits. Juniors Alex Buth and Callie Webster both recorded 10 digs.

Colorado won the final game, but not before giving up a 6-2 UCF run at the end.

The flagging late-match effort is symptomatic of the young team and worked against Colorado in its

losses to Tulane and Furman, Aiu said. "You have to learn to maintain your effort and your focus," he said. "We have a young team, and that is something they are learning."

Notable: In Saturday's 4:30 p.m. match, No. 11 California beat UNC-Wilmington, 30-16, 30-14, 30-13.



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