



# College volleyball Buffs stun No. 11 Cal in CU Invite

## CU sweeps Bears in tournament finale

It was an un-Bear-able afternoon for the highly-touted visitors on Sunday at the Coors Events Center.

Cal's volleyball team had not dropped even a single game entering its match against Colorado, but that changed in a big way as the 11th-ranked Bears were left stunned and shaking their heads on the way to the bus after being swept by the Buffs — 30-28, 30-25, 30-28 — in the finale of the CU Invitational.

"We definitely had them on their heels," said CU junior right side Alex Buth, who was named the tournament's most valuable player after adding eight more kills to her weekend total of 33. "Especially after the first game they were kind of like, 'Whoa, we weren't expecting this.'

"And once you get a team on their heels, especially with a freshman setter, that just kind of gets them all jittery. We got them on their heels, we just kept pushing them back and we had control."

The Bears (5-1) do have a freshman setter in Cari Lloyd, who finished with 22 assists and three digs. The Buffs (3-2) are also somewhat inexperienced at the vital position with Kaitlyn Burkett replacing All-American Ashley Nu'u, but the sophomore controlled the match with 37 assists and eight digs.

Add freshmen Schylur Edelman (eight kills) and Ellen Henry (eight digs), and sophomores Mallori Gibson (11 kills) and Emilee Sisco (nine kills) to the mix and the future is bright for this team.

"It's an amazing feeling," Edelman said of upsetting a ranked Pac-10 opponent. "I don't think I realized exactly how big it was until afterwards. During the game there was such a high intensity level and it's just amazing that I had the opportunity to play in a game like this as a freshman."

The best part of this story is that it apparently only took two games for this young team to grow up. CU had opened the season with a pair of five-game losses to Tulane and Furman before sweeping UNC-Wilmington, Central Florida and Cal on the home court in consecutive days.

"I think our kids started to understand that the level of play and the level of work you have to put into this game to be good at it, especially at our size, is higher than they were putting in," Buffs head coach Pi'i Aiu said. "Now they know we can play with them. It's real important, I think, for our psyche."

CU won the first game, which included 19 ties and seven lead changes on a kill by Edelman and proceeded to score the first four points of the second game.

The Buffs held a 23-19 lead before the Bears rallied with four consecutive points to even the score, but Cal had some miscommunication on its side of the net in crunch time. The Buffs took advantage as Buth's kill made the score 29-25 before she was able to close the game out on her serve. Sisco had seven

of her kills in the second game.

And just when it looked like the Bears were ready to throw in the towel, the talented visitors turned a 19-13 deficit into a 21-21 tie in the third game.

"I think Cal came out real disjointed and not real good. And I think our team made the mistake of thinking they were just going to give it away," Aiu said. "A team like that doesn't give anything away and we told them that in the first timeout Cal called. And until you actually see a team like that step it up you don't believe it."

The Buffs would never trail in the decisive game and put it away on a match point kill by Gibson.

In addition to Buth, Burkett and junior middle blocker Lauren Schaefer (eight kills) were named to the all-tournament team along with Cal's Angie Pressey and Mindi Wiley, Central Florida's Schanell Neiderworder and UNC-Wilmington's Megan Nash.

"We have beaten ranked teams, and I know how it feels. It feels amazing," said Buth, who was a part of CU's wins over No. 1 Nebraska in Big 12 play and No. 19 New Mexico State in the NCAA Tournament last season. "I'm just so glad the freshmen and sophomores can experience what it feels like to be a part of CU and just beat a really good team. After 0-2 they were like, 'I don't even know what it feels like to win at CU.'"

"Now that they know what tradition we have here and what team they are playing for, it's great."

The Buffs will now face another tough road test on Thursday against Colorado State at Moby Arena.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.