



CU women set to host road-weary Waves

Bufs close out nonconference schedule against Pepperdine tonight

By Chris Shelton
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Ignore Pepperdine's record in women's basketball games this season and look instead at the scores.

The Waves (5-7) hit Boulder for today's 5:30 p.m. game against Colorado (10-2) with some relatively close games against well-known opponents.

On the road.

Pepperdine lost at Iowa State 70-59, won at Washington 74-56, lost at USC 55-52, lost at No. 20 George Washington 82-68 and on Wednesday lost at No. 6 Rutgers 55-45.

The Buffs took notice, too, and are looking forward to a quality opponent in their final nonconference game of the season.

"I heard they are one of the toughest teams that we are going to play in nonconference," said CU sophomore Aija Putnina, who is coming off a career-high 20 points in Sunday's 91-64 win against Jacksonville State.

"Obviously Big 12 games are going to be tougher and harder so I think we need the last nonconference game to be a tough one so we get ready for Big 12," Putnina added.

What concerns CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller the most about the Waves is their ability to score from both beyond the 3-point arc and from inside the paint.

Pepperdine features two strong post players in 6-foot-3 sophomore Miranda Ayim (12.8 points and 7.8 rebounds per game) and 6-4 senior Teiosha George (9.7 ppg, 6.8 rpg).

"It's an important game for our post players," McConnell-Miller said. "Kara Richards and her size is going to be key. We're going to have to rely on a good rotation with our posts to not allow them some touches."

And then there's senior guard Daphanie Kennedy, who averages 17.2 points per game, as well as 3-point shooters Katie Menton and Jessica Ross.

The Buffs will counter with tall guards Susie Powers (5-10), Hannah Skildum (6-0) and Brittany Spears (6-1), each of which have long arms and play steady defense.

"We have to know where the shooters are and contain them," Spears said. "We have to pressure every shot so they won't get any easy shots. This will be a good test for later in the season."

The Buffs finish the nonconference season riding a nine-game win streak and have moved up to No. 23 in the AP Top 25.

Pepperdine, meanwhile, is on a 10-day road trip. Colorado will mark Pepperdine's sixth consecutive road game and seventh in its last eight.

"They have a really tough schedule," McConnell-Miller said. "To put six games in a row on the road is almost unheard of. Fortunately for us, it's their sixth game on the road and less than 48 hours after they were playing at Rutgers."

Pepperdine will have one advantage. Former Buff and current Pepperdine assistant Shelley Sheetz has seen CU play two games in December. Sheetz has been home to attend to her mother's illness.

Sheetz's inside scouting report doesn't bother McConnell-Miller, who granted Sheetz permission to attend CU's games.

"At this point," McConnell-Miller said, "regardless of whether you see people live you know their tendencies."



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