



# Bufs rally to overcome Jayhawks

## CU fell behind 2-1, but rebounds for first home win

By Ryan Thorburn

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The Colorado volleyball team killed some demons on Wednesday night during an emotional 25-18, 26-28, 15-25, 26-24, 15-12 victory over Kansas at the Coors Events Center.

The Bufs:

Won their seventh game of the season. That already eclipses last year's total (6-22).

Are 1-0 in the Big 12. Last year they went 1-19 in conference play.

Won the first five-game match they've been a part of this season. Last year they were 0-10 in five-game matches.

"That just proves we have changed this year," CU senior Alex Buth said after coming through in the clutch with five of her 13 kills in game five. "I thought if we won it would make our season that much better. But if we would have lost it would have put a big dent into our season. It could have really gone to either extreme. Thankfully ... we won and we're 1-0."

The Bufs (7-3) -- coming off deflating losses to Colorado State, Florida and North Carolina last week in their own invitational -- appeared to be headed for another collapse on their home court. Colorado blew an 18-12 lead in game two after winning game one behind six Buth kills.

The Jayhawks (6-4) kept the momentum in gamethree, scoring the first three points and cruising to a victory and a 2-1 lead in the best-of-five match.

But CU rebounded to win its first match at home this season.

"We just said, 'We're not letting this happen,'" freshman middle blocker Alex Penewell said after leading CU with 14 kills. "We needed to show them we're CU and that we're not going to let people come in and beat us on our court."

KU had a match point in game four but failed to close out the road win with two hitting errors and a net violation. In game five, the Jayhawks led 7-4 before the Bufs rallied.

Buth capped a 4-0 CU run with a kill to give her team an 8-7 lead, she blocked KU standout Karina Garlington (24 kills) to give her team a 12-11 lead and added two more kills to give her team a 14-12 lead.

Amber Sutherland, who took a medical redshirt last season, completed the comeback with a kill on match point.

"Hopefully they take that into their hearts," CU head coach Pi'i Aiu said of watching his team fight off a match point and a determined Big 12 opponent. "I think it will be a confidence booster for us. We were on the brink and we fought our way out of it."

The Buffs were without Lauren Schaefer, who was scratched from the lineup due to an old injury. Aiu is hoping to have the senior middle blocker available for Saturday's match at No. 18 Kansas State.

"(Penewell) is going to be a player that we're going to use a lot in the coming years. I would rather not use her against K-State. I'd rather Lauren Schaefer be back in the lineup," Aiu said. "But if Lauren is not back we're OK I think."

Penewell hit .600 and finished with eight blocks as Schaefer's stand-in.

"I definitely felt like I had some big shoes I had to fill. She usually gets a lot of kills, a lot of blocks in the game. I did my best to equal those," Penewell said. "It's always fun to play with so many seniors on the court because there is so much energy and confidence in me. All the girls were great saying, 'Come on, you've got this.'"

"Words can't express how fun it is to win out on that court."

The Buffs -- who were swept by the Jayhawks last season -- now lead the all-time series with KU 34-11, including an 19-3 advantage in Boulder.

"That," Buth said of the cathartic match, "is the definition of finishing."



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