



Bufs cruise to victory vs. Billikens

By Ryan Thorburn

Monday, December 22, 2008

The holiday break came a little too early for the Colorado women's basketball team.

A sloppy ending to an otherwise impressive performance by the Buffs on Monday night at the Coors Events Center was the only aspect of CU's 76-63 victory over Saint Louis that head coach Kathy McConnell-Miller didn't enjoy.

"I just told the team that Christmas break started now, not with 10 minutes to go (in the game)," McConnell-Miller said. "The biggest concern for me was that we didn't finish that game."

The Buffs (5-4) led by as many as 26 points before setting the cruise control down the stretch.

Theresa Lisch padded her stats with 21 of her game-high 28 points in the final minutes for the Billikens (4-8).

"Personally speaking, I was maybe a little tentative on the defensive end because I had three fouls," CU freshman Alyssa Fressle admitted. "To finish strong we need to continue to get better on defense."

With Britney Blythe starting at point guard for the second consecutive game CU got off to a dominant start.

The Buffs led 40-23 at the intermission after shooting a blistering 61.9 percent (13-for-21) from the field and holding the Billikens to 31 percent (9-for-29).

Brittany Spears scored 14 of her 21 points in the first half. The sophomore forward netted 10 of CU's first 15 points and sparked a 28-10 run with a 3-pointer that gave the home team the lead for good at 15-13 with 10:24 remaining.

"She's really starting to see the big picture and that's encouraging," McConnell-Miller said. "I think she's playing good basketball right now."

CU scored 11 points off 12 Saint Louis turnovers and went 10-for-11 from the line in the first half. Bianca Smith made two of the Buffs' four 3-pointers in the first 20 minutes en route to 16 points and a team-high eight rebounds.

"This lineup gets us off to a good start and defends," McConnell-Miller said. "That's exciting."

Kara Richards finished with 15 points on an efficient night from the field (4-for-8) and foul line (7-for-9). The 6-4 center also had five rebounds and two assists before fouling out with 3:42 remaining.

"One thing I need to focus on is not trying to block shots," Richards said when asked about her balancing act between playing aggressively and avoiding foul trouble. "That's not my forte. ... I think we've come pretty far communication-wise. We've learned how to communicate player to player."

Fressle finished with 11 points, five assists and no turnovers after making just one of her 11 field-goal attempts during

Saturday's 71-49 victory over Missouri-Kansas City.

The Billikens -- who were coming off a 74-59 victory at Wyoming -- out-rebounded the Buffs 34-28 and scored 17 second-chance points on 19 offensive rebounds.

Notable

The Buffs shot 52.3 percent for the game and are 4-0 this season when shooting 45 percent or higher. ... Spears is averaging 20.1 points this season and has scored 20 or more points five times already this season. ... CU has converted 41-of-49 free throws (84 percent) over the last three halves. ... The Buffs have been out-rebounded seven times in nine games. ... Attendance was 1,070.

Colorado 76, Saint Louis 63

SAINT LOUIS (63)

min fg-fga ft-fta rb ast pf tp

King 27 1-2 0-0 6 0 0 2

Kemezys 28 2-9 3-4 2 0 4 7

Goodwin 16 0-2 2-2 3 0 2 2

Lisch 30 9-15 9-9 4 1 4 28

Gearlds 29 1-5 0-0 4 2 3 2

Johnson 5 0-0 1-2 1 0 2 1

Haynes 5 0-1 0-0 2 0 0 0

Paganelli 24 5-14 1-1 0 1 3 13

Woods 30 1-5 6-10 7 2 4 8

Reid 6 0-1 0-0 2 0 1 0

Totals: 200 19-54 22-28 34 6 23 63

COLORADO (76)

min fg-fga ft-fta rb ast pf tp

Spears 34 8-10 2-2 5 1 4 21

Richards 30 4-8 7-9 5 2 5 15

Fressle 34 4-10 3-4 1 5 4 11

Smith 33 4-10 6-6 8 1 3 16

Blythe 28 0-1 4-4 2 2 5 4

Skildum 11 1-2 0-0 2 1 3 2

Seabrook 15 0-0 0-0 4 0 0 0

Mullaney 10 2-3 2-2 1 0 1 6

Dunn 5 0-0 1-2 0 0 1 1

Totals: 200 23-44 25-29 28 12 26 76

Score by halves:

Saint Louis 23 40 -- 63

Colorado 40 36 -- 76

3-point field goals -- Saint Louis (3-12): Paganelli 2-8, Lisch 1-2, Gearlds 0-2; Colorado (5-12): Smith 2-6, Spears 3-3, Fressle 0-3.

Officials --Eric Brewton, Randy Campbell, Eric Larson

Technical fouls -- None

Attendance -- 1,070

STEALS

Visitor (5):Haynes 2, Woods 2, Gearlds

Colorado (10):Smith 3, Richards 2, Fressle 2, Dunn 2, Spears

BLOCKED SHOTS

Saint Louis (0):

Colorado (1):Spears

TURNOVERS

Saint Louis (20):Gearlds 6, Lisch 5, Paganelli 4, Kemezys 2, Haynes, Woods, 1 team

Colorado (18):Spears 6, Smith 4, Blythe 4, Richards 2, Mullaney 2



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Longmont, Colorado
Wednesday, January 07,
2009

Publish Date: 12/23/2008

Unstable finish tops CU victory

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Colorado women's basketball coach Kathy McConnell-Miller enjoyed her team's performance Monday night. All except for the last 10 minutes.

CU's 76-63 defeat of Saint Louis was thorough until the end. That's when Saint Louis whittled a 26-point deficit to 12.

The visitors, who won Saturday in Wyoming, never seriously threatened, though. And it's not like those closing moment were bad enough to ruin CU's Christmas, especially after the Buffs (5-4) shot 62 percent in the first half on their way to 40-23 lead at halftime.

But ...

"The last thing I said to them (after the game) is Christmas break starts now, not with 10 minutes to go," McConnell-Miller said. "That was our biggest concern. We didn't finish the game."

Otherwise, the coach had few gripes. Its first half "would appear to be the best first half" CU has had in 2008-09, McConnell-Miller said. Offensively, CU effectively identified Saint Louis' defenses, and adjusted well. Defensively, the coach said it was "probably" CU's best 20 minutes this year. The second half, in which Saint Louis scored 40 points, was not one of its best defensive effort.

"If we put back-to-back defensive (halves) like that together, we're walking away tonight feeling pretty darn good," McConnell-Miller said.

Four Buffs scored in double figures, led by Brittany Spears' 21, including 14 in the first half. She has led CU in scoring five times in 2008-09.

Center Kara Richards scored 15 points before fouling out. McConnell-Miller said

said, once again, CU must have Richards on the floor more because her presence makes a difference, even when she's not scoring.

"I think one thing I need to focus on is not trying to block shots," Richards said. "That's not my forte." CU used a 28-10 run to close the first half after Saint Louis took a 13-12 lead with 10 minutes, 27 seconds left in the first half. The lead grew to 26 with 12:54 left.

Saint Louis (4-8) pressed effectively late. McConnell-Miller said point guard Britney Blythe has little experience running CU's press break, which caused problems.

"I take responsibility for that," McConnell-Miller said.

Saint Louis guard Theresa Lisch scored 28 points.

COLORADO 76, SAINT LOUIS 63

SAINT LOUIS (4-8)

King 1-2 0-0 2, Kemezys 2-9 3-4 7, Goodwin 0-2 2-2 2, Lisch 9-15 9-9 28, Gearlds 1-5 0-0 2, Johnson 0-0 1-2 1, Haynes 0-1 0-0 0, Paganelli 5-14 1-1 13, Woods 1-5 6-10 8, Reid 0-1 0-0 0. Totals 19-54 0-0 63

COLORADO (5-4)

Spears 8-10 2-2 21, Richards 4-8 7-9 15, Fressle 4-10 3-4 11, Smith 4-10 6-6 16, Blythe 0-1 4-4 4, Skildum 1-2 0-0 2, Seabrook 0-0 0-0 0, Mullaney 2-3 2-2 6, Dunn 0-0 1-2 1. Totals 23-44 25-59 76.

Halftime—CU 40-23. 3-Point Goals—SLU 3-12 (Paganelli 2-8, Lisch 1-2, Gearlds 0-2), CU 5-12 (Spears 3-3, Smith 2-6, Fressle 0-3). Fouled Out—Richards (CU), Blythe (CU). Rebounds—SLU 34 (Woods 7), CU 28 (Smith 8). Assists—SLU 6 (Gearlds 2, Woods 2), CU 12 (Fressle 5). Total Fouls—SLU 23, CU 26. Technicals—none. A—1,070.

CU's next game is Dec. 30, at home against Idaho State.

"We've come so far," Richards said. "We've learned how to communicate player to player. So I think we've improved a lot. But it's a work in progress."