



K-State guard's triple-double drops Buffs

By Kyle Ringo
Saturday, March 7, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — The final game in one of the ugliest basketball seasons ever played inside the Coors Events Center ended fittingly Saturday afternoon with one of Colorado's two teams losing once again.

The women coached by Kathy McConnell-Miller dropped a mark in the loss column for the eighth time in the past nine outings and the 17th time overall in a season that also saw the men's team win just once in 16 Big 12 games.

A deeper, more experienced and more talented Kansas State squad was too much for the Buffs for the second time this season in a 71-61 decision. KSU senior guard Shalee Lehning recorded a triple-double with 16 points, 11 rebounds and 12 assists in her fourth game back from a midseason bout with mononucleosis.

"I'm just happy we got the win," Lehning said. "I'm just really proud of my teammates. They kept fighting. So for me, my teammates deserve the credit. They made the shots to get me the assists to get the triple-double."

It was Lehning's third triple-double of the season, and she is now tied for third in NCAA history with five triple-doubles.

Forward Marlies Gipson was the perfect complement to Lehning with a versatile game that made it tough for the Buffs to defend the Wildcats. Gipson scored a game-best 21 points in just 29 minutes. Adding more bad news to the mountain already accumulated this season in Boulder is the fact CU must face the Wildcats again in the first round of the conference tournament on Thursday in Oklahoma City in a matchup of the No. 5 and No. 12 seeds.

Every game from this point on is a must win for CU, which lacks the resume of a postseason team. The next loss will end the season.

"I don't think this is the way any of us wanted to end this season," McConnell-Miller said. "And I don't think any of us anticipated it ending this way. We're in a league that is tough and we put ourselves in this situation."

McConnell-Miller said Saturday's performance was representative of the entire season in that it had some "great and not-so-great moments." She said the clear difference was Lehning's play.

Three CU seniors played their final home games as Buffs. Kara Richards led CU with 19 points and eight rebounds. Hannah Skildum fouled out in the final minute after two points and Dina Piterniece enjoyed some rare playing time down the stretch when the outcome had been decided.

"You have been true warriors and we love you," McConnell-Miller said to her seniors in postgame remarks.

Colorado fell to 11-17 overall and 3-13 in Big 12 play. The Buffs are now 17-47 in regular-season Big 12 games in four seasons under McConnell-Miller.

Kansas State led by as many as 14 in the first half. The Wildcats sank their first three 3-point attempts and were shooting 63 percent from the floor through the first 12 minutes.

McConnell-Miller implored her team to play better defense while pacing red-faced in front of the home bench, and the Buffs responded. CU held the Wildcats to 3-for-11 shooting in the final 8 minutes of the half while whittling down a rebound advantage and getting to the foul line.

Bianca Smith induced a foul call on a desperation 3-point attempt with 1 second showing and she sank all three free throws to tie the game 37-37.

The results of the Buffs' hard work to end the first half, evaporated early in the second as Lehning began to take over. The Wildcats scored the first six points after intermission and used an 8-0 run at one point to push their lead to a dozen with 12 minutes to play.

"She's exceptional," McConnell-Miller said of Lehning. "They go as she goes. She is a true point guard in that she understands the situations in the game. She's good at reading defenses, and that's the savvy of a senior."

The Buffs trimmed the lead back to eight with just over 4 minutes remaining. They had the ball with a chance to cut further into the Wildcats' advantage, but sophomore Brittany Spears put up a wild shot in the lane and Kansas State regrouped to win for a program record 10th time on the road this season.

"Any time you get a win on the road, it's a big win," KSU coach Deb Patterson said. "I think for us it was a big win because our last two on the road had been losses."

Kansas St. 71, CU 61

KANSAS ST. (71)

min fg-fga ft-fta rb ast pf tp

Sweat 38 3-15 6-8 6 1 2 13

Zanotti 35 1-2 0-0 4 0 3 3

Gipson 29 8-20 5-7 8 2 3 21

Lehning 32 7-10 2-2 11 12 1 16

Kincaid 38 3-4 0-0 1 2 1 9

Nelson 12 1-1 0-0 1 0 1 3

Hill 3 0-2 0-0 0 0 0 0

Childs 9 2-2 0-0 0 0 4 4

Brown 4 1-3 0-0 0 0 2 2

Gilbertson 1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Totals: 200 26-59 13-17 38 17 17 71

COLORADO (61)

min fg-fga ft-fta rb ast pf tp

Spears 40 8-17 1-2 7 3 4 18

Richards 40 8-14 3-5 8 2 2 19

Fressle 35 4-9 2-3 2 1 2 10

Smith 37 1-6 3-3 8 0 2 5

Mullaney 31 2-7 2-2 3 0 2 7

Blythe 4 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Skildum 11 1-3 0-0 0 0 5 2

Seabrook 1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Dale 1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Piterniece 1 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Totals: 200 24-56 11-15 33 6 17 61

Score by halves:

Kansas St. 37 34 -- 71

Colorado 37 24 -- 61

3-point field goals -- Kansas St. (6-13): Kinciad 3-4, Sweat 1-3, Zanotti 1-2, Gipson 0-2, Hill 0-1.
Colorado (2-8): Spears 1-5, Mullaney 1-1, Smith 0-2.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

college basketball

CU women lose final home game

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 03/07/2009 05:22:45 PM MST



Colorado's Kara Richards, center, shoots as Kansas State's Ashley Sweat, left, and Marlies Gibson defend during the second half Saturday in Boulder. (Cliff Grassmick, The Associated Press)

BOULDER — Never losing control of its second-half momentum, the Kansas State women's basketball team stole some fun from Colorado's "senior day" celebration Saturday with a 71-61 victory over the Buffaloes at the Coors Events Center.

Colorado (11-17, 3-13 Big 12) finished the regular season with five consecutive losses. The Buffs have won only one of their last nine and will be the No. 12 seed in next week's Big 12 Tournament in Oklahoma City for only the second time.

A crowd of 2,706 cheered CU center Kara Richards as the 6-foot-4 senior from Graham, Texas, scored a team-best 19 points and grabbed eight rebounds in her final home game. But Kansas State (23-6, 10-6), ranked No. 21 in the coaches poll, broke free from a 37-37

CU Basketball

View slide show of the career of Colorado coach Jeff Bzdelik .

- **Visit** the CU Stats Page for men's boxscores, Big 12 standings, team leaders and more .

Visit the CU Stats Page for women's boxscores, Big 12 standings, player pages and more .

- **Visit** Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports .

halftime deadlock and never was threatened in the final 20 minutes.

Also playing in their final Colorado home game were seniors Hannah Skildum, who scored two points, and Dina Piterniece, who failed to score.

"We play in the toughest conference in the

Advertisement

Office Liquidators is Now Offering Office Supplies

Office Liquidators has been Colorado's **Low Price Leader** for Office Furniture **for 23 years** and will now do the same with **Office Supplies!**

\$20 off
initial order of \$60
enter code PC2060

Still locally owned with the same **great service.**

OFFICE LIQUIDATORS
Profit From Our Experience

ORDER ONLINE
www.OfficeLiquidators.com

303-759-3375 11111W. 6th Ave/LAKEWOOD
Between Kipling & Simms

Hours: M-F 8:30 - 6:00, Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

country," CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said. "I don't think any of us thought we'd end the (regular) season this way.

"(But) it's typical of us," she added, referring to losing control in the second half. "We've had some great moments and some not-so-great moments."

With a starting five of three seniors and two juniors, Kansas State kept its composure after blowing a 14-point lead in the final 4-1/2 minutes of the first half. The Wildcats opened the second half with a quick 6-0 spurt and controlled the tempo — and the scoreboard — throughout the final 20 minutes.

In a rarity, Kansas State got a triple-double from its point guard. Shalee Leehning, a 5-9 senior, recorded 16 points, 12 assists and 11 rebounds for her fifth career triple-double but first in a Big 12 game.

"She's exceptional," McConnell-Miller said of Leehning. "They go as she goes. She's a true point guard."

Leehning relied on savvy and experience — rather than athleticism — to pick her spots and blow by CU's Alyssa Fressle on drives down the lane. Fressle, a quick-footed freshman from Highlands Ranch, no doubt will learn from that.

Always a good shooting team under coach Deb Patterson, Kansas State opened the game gunning 3-pointers. Five of the Wildcats' first eight field goals were from beyond the arc.

With hot outside shooting, Kansas State jumped to a 21-9 lead. Two open-court steals by Fressle that she converted into layups enabled the Buffs to stay within range until their shooters got hot.

They did just that. Almost left for dead early in the game, Colorado woke up and outscored the visitors 19-5 to end the first half, pulling even at 37-37 by the break. Playing as a team, five CU players contributed points in the flurry that included several fastbreak buckets.

The 37 points marked the most scored by Colorado this season for a first half of a Big 12 game. But the Buffs fell behind early in the second half and never caught up.

The 2005 Big 12 Tournament marked the only other time that CU was seeded 12th. That year, the Buffs lost a 64-62 squeaker to No. 5 Iowa State in the opening round — the final game of Ceal Barry's coaching career.

CU's opponent on Thursday in the first round of the Big 12 Tournament in Oklahoma City will be a familiar foe — Kansas State.

"They beat us twice. We want to get one," said CU sophomore Brittany Spears, who scored 18 points Saturday but had eight turnovers.

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or tkensler@denverpost.com

Advertisement

Office Liquidators is Now Offering Office Supplies

Office Liquidators has been Colorado's **Low Price Leader** for Office Furniture for 23 years and will now do the same with Office Supplies!



\$20 off
initial order of \$60
enter code PC2060

Still locally owned with the same **great service.**

OFFICE LIQUIDATORS

Profit From Our Experience

ORDER ONLINE
www.OfficeLiquidators.com

303-759-3375 11111W. 6th Ave/LAKEWOOD
Between Kipling & Simms

Hours: M-F 8:30 - 6:00, Sat 10-5, Sun 12-5

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

[Print page](#)[Close window](#)

Longmont, Colorado
Thursday, March 19, 2009

Publish Date: 3/8/2009

CU ends tough regular season

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Colorado women's basketball coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said Saturday's loss to Kansas State was not the way the Buffs wanted to end their regular season. Unfortunately for her program, the beginning and middle portions of the regular season weren't that great, either.

Saturday's 71-61 loss on Senior Day capped a forgettable conference slate for the Buffs. They've lost five straight and eight of their past nine to take last place in the Big 12. CU (11-17, 3-13) hasn't finished there since 2004-05, Ceal Barry's final season.

The Buffs' reward is another matchup Thursday with fifth-seed Kansas State (23-6, 10-6), to which it already has lost twice this season by double-digit margins, in the first round of the Big 12 Tournament.

McConnell-Miller called Saturday's loss "typical" in the way her team played well at times, not so well at others. Solid stretches eroded into stints filled with poor decisions and bad shots. As it was Saturday, that sort of play has been CU's calling card all season.

"We had some great moments and some not-so-great moments," McConnell-Miller said. "We have very little margin for error."

CU closed the first half by turning a 32-18 deficit into a 37-37 tie but stumbled coming out in the second half and never recovered. Its biggest problem was an inability to force the faster tempo it prefers. That was mostly due to the work of Kansas State senior point guard Shalee Lehning, who recorded a triple double: 16 points, 12 assists and 11 rebounds.

"The difference in the game was Shalee Lehning," McConnell-Miller said. "She's exceptional. They go as she goes."

Improvement has eluded CU, especially in February and March, but McConnell-Miller said she knows where it's needed most. Poor shot selection has helped opponents go on long runs this season, she said. The Buffs need a fast tempo, but that also means taking good shots within that tempo.

The coach sent the players home Friday with tape from their first meeting with Kansas State, and they came back saying they needed to take higher-percentage shots when opponents go on runs. Everyone said they are on the same page, McConnell-Miller said, even though the results don't yield success on the court.

As for matching up with Kansas State a third time, McConnell-Miller said she might want to stick someone besides just Alyssa Fressle on Lehning for parts of Thursday, rather than subject the poor freshman to 40 more minutes of what she endured Saturday.

KANSAS STATE 71, COLORADO 61

KANSAS STATE (23-6, 10-6)

Sweat 3-15, 6-8 13, Zanotti 1-2 0-0 3, Gipson 8-20 5-7 21, Lehning 7-10 2-2 16, Kincaid 3-4 0-0 9, Nelson 1-1 0-0 3, Hill 0-2 0-0 0, Childs 2-2 0-0 4, Brown 1-3 0-0 2, Gilbertson 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 26-59 13-17 71.

COLORADO (11-17, 3-13)

Spears 8-17 1-2 18, Richards 8-14 3-5 19, Fressle 4-9 2-3 10, Smith 1-6 3-3 5, Mullaney 2-7 2-2 7, Blythe 0-0 0-0 0, Skildum 1-3 0-0 2, Seabrook 0-0 0-0 0, Dale 0-0 0-0 0, Piterniece 0-0 0-0 0. Totals 24-56 11-15 61.

Halftime—37-37. 3-point goals—Kansas State 6-13 (Kincaid 3-4, Sweat 1-3, Zanotti 1-2 Nelson 1-1, Gipson 0-2, Hill 0-1), CU 2-8 (Mullaney 1-1, Spears 1-5, Smith 0-2). Fouled out—Skildum (C). Rebounds—Kansas State 38 (Lehning 11), CU 33 (Richards 8, Smith 8). Assists—Kansas State 17 (Lehning 12), CU 6 (Spears 3). Total fouls—Kansas State 17, CU 17. Technicals—none. A—2,706.

Strange as it may sound, the Buffs say they want to play the Wildcats again, a point CU's Brittany Spears made very clearly after the game, and after CU's three seniors delivered their emotional so-long speeches to the crowd.

"We've lost to them twice; we have to get them in Oklahoma City," Spears said.

Meanwhile, the Wildcats say they'd prefer another opponent than the Buffs.

"No one looks forward to playing a team three times in a row," Kansas State coach Deb Patterson said. "But that's what we got."

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.