



Sutherland lifts Buff spikers

CU picks up important win over Cyclones

By Ryan Thorburn
Sunday, October 19, 2008

Grin and bury it.

Amber Sutherland's surgically repaired shoulder doesn't feel real good as the Colorado volleyball team finds itself right in the middle of the Big 12 meat-grinder.

But the senior outside hitter's game looked great during a dominant performance in leading the Buffs to a critical 22-25, 26-24, 21-25, 28-26, 15-12 victory over Iowa State on Saturday afternoon at the Coors Events Center.

Sutherland, who redshirted last season to recover from the career-threatening injury, put away nine of her 17 kills in the fourth set and two more in the decisive fifth set.

"The support from my teammates has been great. It's hard going through a lot of struggles right now," Sutherland said. "There's only like four home games left. It's the end of the season and we've just got to make that last push. All pain is out of my mind right now. I'm just trying to give everything I have to the team."

The Buffs (10-8 overall, 4-5 conference) fought off three match points in the fourth set -- the first with a block by Schylur Edelman, the second with a kill by Alex Penewell, and the third with a kill by Alex Buth.

"One defensive play makes the whole match," said Buth, who also finished with 17 kills. "That's what we really think about on every match point."

CU had a chance to seize early control of the match with a 22-16 lead in the first set, only to watch the Cyclones score the next nine points. But in the second set it was the Buffs who turned a 24-22 deficit into a tie match with key kills by Penewell and Edelman followed by a Buth block.

The inspired effort came less than 72 hours after Oklahoma swept the Buffs 3-0 in Norman.

"This was one of the most intense matches that we've played," Buth said. "After the last game we talked about being competitive and being intense. I think we definitely brought that. Even the girls that are not naturally intense, they even stepped it up. I just thought we played as a team."

A series of questionable calls went against the home team during the third set but Sutherland came to the rescue in the fourth after Buth had made most of the big plays for CU throughout the tilt.

"We feed off each other and we knew it was time to light the fire on the team and take care of the balls we needed to take care of," Sutherland said. "It's a great confidence booster. We come in day in, day out at practice and work our butts off. When we can come out and get a win like that it really means something to us."

Lauren Schaefer, watched the match with a walking boot on her injured right foot. CU head coach Pi'i Aiu is holding out hope that the senior middle blocker will be able to return at some point this season but he expects to be without her for at least two weeks.

The Buffs moved into a tie with the Cyclones (12-8, 4-5) -- who were led by Victoria Henson (30 kills) and Rachel Hockaday (20 kills) on Saturday -- for fifth in the Big 12. CU has road matches at Missouri and Texas Tech next week before hosting No. 2 Nebraska at the Coors Events Center on Oct. 29.

"It's exactly like looking at a mirror," Aiu said of CU's matchup with Iowa State, which had won five of the previous six meetings in the series. "I thought both teams played well, we battled it out, both teams won games when they were right on the brink of losing them. It's a great win for us."



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.