



Buff booters top Nebraska in Big 12 tourney opener

CU advancements to conference semifinals

Camera staff

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SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Senior defender Michelle Wenino headed in Colorado's lone goal in the second half and the Buffs made it stand for a 1-0 victory over Nebraska in the opening round of the Big 12 tournament on Wednesday.

Colorado advanced to the semifinals and will face the winner of Wednesday night's Oklahoma State-Texas Tech game at 4:30 p.m. Friday at Blossom Soccer Stadium.

"After not advancing last year, I am just excited that we get to go on to the next game," Michelle Wenino said. "(It) was a total team effort. Everything was there."

The Buffs (14-3-3) scored less than five minutes into the second half from an unlikely pair.

Senior forward Gianna DeSaverio carried the ball down the right side of the Nebraska goal box and crossed the ball toward a pair of players in front of the goal. Wenino had plenty of time to plant her feet and head the ball in the goal.

Nebraska goalkeeper Brittany Pfeil was able to get her hand on the ball, but it had already crossed over the line, giving Colorado the 1-0 lead with 41 minutes remaining in the game.

"I saw two white players standing on the six," DeSaverio said. "I didn't know who was there, but when I looked up and saw that it was Michelle, I knew the ball was going into the back of the net."

It was Wenino's second goal of the year and DeSaverio's third assist.

"Gianna's ball was the best service I think I've ever had," Wenino said. "The ball went up and kind of died and I had a lot of time. My defender was ahead of me and the whole backside was left open for me to put it away."

Colorado coach Bill Hempen approved.

"Our center back scores the winning goal," Hempen said. "But she gets forward when she wants to and usually does something good with it, and she certainly did that (Wednesday). Michelle was the recipient of a great effort by Gianna. That was a great service. She got past a player and attacked the goal line and made something happen. She played a great ball and created that one."

Nebraska (10-9-1) had a good chance to score in the first half.

The Huskers' best opportunity came in the 32nd minute when Molly Thomas was left wide open for a shot at the top of the goal box. Thomas fired off a shot, but Buff keeper Kirstin Radlinski made a diving save to deflect the ball wide.

And the Buffs withstood a Nebraska charge at the end of the match.

In the last six minutes of the game, Nebraska took six shots, forcing Radlinski to make five saves and preserve the win.

"You get one step further in the tournament and it becomes a little tougher," Hempen said. "We were playing a team (Wednesday) that's trying to get into the NCAA tournament."



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