



CU women halt losing streak

Spears scores 25 to lead CU women

By Ryan Thorburn

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Perhaps Arkansas-Pine Bluff should have been invited to the Coors Classic.

The Colorado women's basketball team -- left shaken and doubting itself after finishing 0-for-2 at its own tournament for the first time -- walked off the court with restored confidence after a 73-39 victory over the Lady Lions on Tuesday at the Coors Events Center.

Before the game, CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller put together a scouting report of her own team -- highlighting the Buffs' strengths -- and placed it in the players' lockers.

"I think everybody got a little boost of confidence from it," senior center Kara Richards said. "When you get in those low moments, and every season has them, it's nice to know that people still believe in you. It was great."

The Buffs (3-3) -- who snapped a three-game losing streak that began with a humbling 77-43 loss at No. 11 Virginia -- built a 21-point lead by halftime and shot 60.9 percent (14-for-23) in the second half.

Brittany Spears led the way with 25 points and 12 rebounds, her ninth career double-double, in only 27 minutes of floor time.

"It made us feel wanted all over again," Spears said of her coach's self scout.

The 6-foot-4 Richards had her way with the diminutive SWAC front court, scoring 20 points on 10-for-17 shooting with seven rebounds in 24 minutes.

"They were big," Arkansas-Pine Bluff coach Danny Evans said after his team was out-rebounded 51-28. "We didn't box well. They were able to come over the top. ... They got so far ahead in the first half, and that kind of told the tale of the game."

The Buffs led 41-20 at the intermission with Spears scoring 19 points on 8-for-12 shooting with nine rebounds, two assists and two blocks before the break.

After a basket by LaQuisha Slaton, Arkansas-Pine Bluff was within 19-15, but the visitors didn't score a single point over the next eight minutes and 54 seconds.

CU took advantage with an 18-0 run over that span and finished the half shooting 45.9 percent from the field despite going 0-for-7 from behind the arc.

"They were shaken a little bit," McConnell-Miller said of her team's mindset after losing back-to-back games at home to UMass and Drexel during Thanksgiving weekend. "I believe this team is a very solid team with a lot of weapons and tonight we saw glimpses of what they can do.

"We spent a lot of time on Colorado the last two days. It was really about Colorado basketball and where we are and where we want to be."

Arica Green, who finished with 14 points on 5-for-17 shooting, was the only Arkansas-Pine Bluff player to score in double figures.

Bianca Smith only tallied four points but grabbed a career-high 12 rebounds. Alyssa Fressle added eight points, eight assists, four steals and three rebounds.

"Her numbers are getting better and better," McConnell-Miller said of her emerging freshman star, Fressle. "What is not seen in (the box score) is the amount of ball pressure she puts on opponents."

One of the only negatives for the home team was 2-for-12 (16.7 percent) shooting from 3-point range.

Smith knocked down CU's first shot from behind the arc with 4:08 left in the game, and Dina Piterniece added a garbage-time trey to make the score 71-35 moments later.

The Lady Lions (1-4) shot 26.3 percent from the field.

"It felt good to get this win and it helps it put those losses behind us," Spears said.

The Buffs don't play again until facing Seton Hall on the road next Tuesday.

Notable

CU improved to 4-0 all-time against SWAC teams. ... The Buffs have won nine consecutive games in the month of December dating back to the 2006 season. ...

The Buffs were only 9-for-16 (56.3 percent) from the foul line but the Golden Lions were 7-for-15 (46.7 percent). Both teams were whistled for 17 fouls. ...

Arkansas-Pine Bluff was assessed a technical foul because Camille Cooper was not listed in the official scorer's book before the game started. She did not score and had one rebound in four minutes of playing time. ... Attendance was 1,011.

Colorado 73, Ark.-Pine Bluff 39

ARKANSAS-PINE BLUFF (39)

min fg-fga ft-fta rb ast pf tp

Shields 29 3-9 0-0 5 0 4 6

Walters 31 3-7 0-1 7 1 0 6

Reeves 11 0-0 0-0 0 1 1 0

Green 23 5-17 3-4 3 0 4 14

Jackson 27 2-9 1-1 2 0 1 5

Slaton 31 2-9 2-7 1 2 3 7

Parker-Powell 14 0-3 0-0 2 0 4 0

Cooper 4 0-0 0-0 1 0 0 0

Louison 13 0-0 0-0 1 0 0 0

Prince-Clmn 10 0-3 0-0 4 0 0 0

Musgrave 5 0-0 0-0 0 0 0 0

Overton 2 0-0 1-2 0 0 0 1

Totals: 200 15-57 7-15 28 4 17 39

COLORADO (73)

min fg-fga ft-fta rb ast pf tp

Richards 24 10-17 0-0 7 1 1 20

Fressle 22 3-9 2-2 3 8 4 8

Smith 25 1-4 1-2 12 2 3 4

Spears 27 11-17 3-5 12 4 2 25

Mullaney 29 1-2 1-2 4 2 2 3

Blythe 11 0-1 0-0 0 1 2 0

Skildum 18 1-3 0-0 1 0 0 2

Seabrook 23 2-3 0-1 5 1 2 4

Piterniece 5 1-1 2 2 0 0 5

Dunn 16 1-3 0-2 5 1 1 2

Totals: 200 31-60 9-16 51 20 17 73

Score by halves:

Ark.-Pine Bluff 20 19 -- 39

Colorado 41 32 -- 73

3-point field goals -- Arkansas-Pine Bluff (2-11): Shields 0-1, Green 1-5, Jackson 0-2, Slaton 1-3;
Colorado (2-12): Fressle 0-2, Smith 1-4, Spears 0-2, Mullaney 0-1, Blythe 0-1, Piterniece 1-1, Dunn 0-1.

Officials --Hermann, Campbell, Larson.

Technical fouls -- Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

Attendance -- 1,011.

STEALS

Ark.-Pine Bluff (4):Green 2, Jackson, Slaton.

Colorado (6):Richards 2, Fressle 4.

BLOCKED SHOTS

Ark.-Pine Bluff (0):0

Colorado (4):Spears 2, Dunn 2.

TURNOVERS

Ark.-Pine Bluff (17):Shields 3, Walters, Green 2, Jackson 3, Slaton 7.

Colorado (20):Fressle 3, Smith 2, Spears 4, Mullaney 3, Blythe 2, Seabrook 3, Dunn.



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Buffs: Doggone it, they're good enough

Coach boosts team's esteem before win

*By Patrick Ridgell
 Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Stuart Smalley has nothing on Kathy McConnell-Miller.

Sensing Tuesday that her Colorado women's basketball team was rattled after losing twice last weekend in the Coors Classic, McConnell-Miller set out scouting reports of each of her players in the locker room prior to tipoff with Arkansas-Pine Bluff. The Buffs read them, then went out and won, 73-39.

Was it necessary Tuesday? Arkansas-Pine Bluff (1-4) had already suffered a 42-point loss at Mississippi State and a 46-point loss at Oklahoma State. Tuesday, the Lady Lions earned a technical foul in the first half when they used a player not listed in the official scorebook. The Boston Celtics, they are not.

But the events and fallout from last weekend's losses to Massachusetts and Drexel, which marked the only time CU (3-3) has been swept in its own tournament, left the coach thinking some Daily Affirmations were in order.

"I think everybody got a little boost of confidence," said center Kara Richards, who scored 20 points on 10-for-17 shooting.

"When you're getting those low moments, and every season has them, it's nice to know people believe in you still." Said guard Brittany Spears: "It made us feel wanted all over again." CU led ,19-15, with 10 minutes, 28 seconds to play in the first half. It scored the next 18 points, holding Arkansas-Pine Bluff scoreless for nearly nine minutes.

The Buffs also outrebounded their smaller visitors, 51-28. They shot 52 percent and held the Lady Lions to 26.

Spears finished with 25 points, including 19 before halftime, and 12 rebounds.

McConnell-Miller said those pre-game scouting reports usually focus on the opponent. She said that in recent days, when she asked her players what they do well, answers were difficult to find.

"Ten days ago, they would have rattled stuff off," she said.

"That showed me they needed to hear what's good about them and what I see and feel every day and why I believe in them. ... I think we need to focus on Colorado right now."

CU might find confidence harder to boast when Big 12 play starts, or next Tuesday, when the Buffs visit Seton Hall for

COLORADO 73, ARKANSAS PINE-BLUFF 39

ARKANSAS PINE-BLUFF (1-4)

Shields 3-9 0-0 6, Walters 3-7 0-1 6, Reeves 0-0 0-0 0, Green 5-17 3-4 14, Jackson 2-9 1-1 5, Slaton 2-9 2-7 7, Parker-Powell 0-3 0-0 0, Coper 0-0 0-0 0, Louison 0-0 0-0 0, Prince-Coleman 0-3 0-0 0, Musgrave 0-0 0-0 0, Overton 0-0 1-2 1. Totals 15-57 7-15 39

COLORADO (3-3)

Richards 10-17 0-0 20, Fressle 3-9 2-2 8, Smith 1-4 1-2 4, Spears 11-17 3-5 25, Mullaney 1-2 1-2 3, Blythe 0-1 0-0 0, Skildum 1-3 0-0 2, Seabrook 2-3 0-1 4, Piterniece 1-1 2-2 5, Dunn 1-3 0-2 2. Totals 31-60 9-16 73.

Halftime—Colorado 41-20. 3-Point Goals—Arkansas Pine-Bluff 2-11 (Green 1-5, Slaton 1-3, Jackson 0-2, Shields 0-1), CU 2-12 (Smith 1-4, Piterniece 1-1, Fressle 0-2, Spears 0-2, Mullaney 0-1, Blythe 0-1, Dunn 0-1). Fouled Out—none. Rebounds—Arkansas-Pine Bluff 28 (Walters 7), CU 51 (Smith 12, Spears 12). Assists—Arkansas Pine-Bluff 4 (Slaton 2), CU 20 (Fressle 8). Total Fouls—Arkansas 17, CU 17. Technicals—Arkansas-Pine Bluff. A—1,011.

their next game.

But in repeating a theme that permeates several CU teams these days, McConnell-Miller said her team is young, but energetic and passionate. She'll take the mistakes and the inexperience. She just wants the team to grow and be confident.

"Youth is something we're excited to have," she said. "We're going to be younger next year. It's all about how quickly they grow and learn. "They were shaken a little bit after the last couple of games, and I think this team is a very solid team with a lot of weapons. We saw glimpses of what they can do. If it was mentally getting back on the same page, they they accomplished that tonight."

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