



Siena trio sinks CU Women

By CJ Powell, For the Camera
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Although Siena was probably the most obscure team in the Colorado Classic, the Knights just may walk away with the title after topping Colorado 83-74 Friday at the Coors Events Center.

"It wasn't our best effort," said coach Kathy McConnell-Miller, whose team fell to 1-2. "I thought that Siena played extremely well against our press. I thought they hit big shots. They made their free throws and they didn't turn (the ball) over."

Colorado faces Rice (5-2) today in the consolation game at 5 p.m. Siena (2-3), on the other hand, gets Clemson (3-3) at 7:30 p.m. in the championship game.

Melissa Manzer, Shondaya Burrell and Laura Menty accounted for 79 of Siena's 83 points and shot a combined .676 from the field.

"They wanted it more," said Whitney Houston, who finished with 11 points on 4-for-8 shooting.

Even though the Buffs went into halftime trailing Siena 37-35, the game seemed to be evenly matched and the winner was going to be the team that got on a run.

That run came right away for the Knights. Laura Menty opened the second half with a quick layup, which sparked a 14-5 run that the Buffs couldn't overcome.

But they sure did try.

Defensively, Colorado finally started forcing turnovers late in the second half, and the baskets suddenly were falling. After a 7-2 run sliced the Siena lead to just five, Brittany Spears drained a 3-pointer with 2:08 left and cut the deficit to two.

The momentum had swung, and Colorado looked to be back in the game.

That was before Manzer followed with a long, desperation 3-pointer as the shot clock was expiring.

"The shot clock was winding down, and I just trying to run a play, and nothing was working," Manzer said of the mile-long 3-pointer. "It was just one of those shots you really can't explain."

After that, Colorado never recovered.

"Everything was going their way," said Jackie McFarland, who had 24 points on 7-for-13 shooting.

Clemson 62, Rice 59

D'Lesha Lloyd scored 18 points and recorded 16 rebounds to lead Clemson in the first game of the Coors Classic.

Rice's Maudess Fulton made it close when she hit a 3-pointer from the left corner to make the score 60-59 with 4 seconds left.

A quick foul by Valeriy Berezhynska allowed Clemson forward April Parker to go to the free-throw line. She sunk both free throws to seal the victory.



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On-target Saints too hot for Buffs

CU drops Coors Classic opener

*By Brian Howell**Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — When the University of Colorado women's basketball schedule was released, Friday's home opener against Siena College figured to be a win for the Buffs.

What Colorado didn't count on, however, was Siena draining everything it threw in the air.

Three players scored at least 23 points — including a career-high 31 from Melissa Manzer — as Siena stunned Colorado, 83-74, at the Coors Events Center in the first round of the 21st Annual Coors Classic.

"It's definitely surprising," Colorado's Jackie McFarland said.

The Buffaloes (1-2) will play in today's consolation game against Rice at 5 p.m. It's just the second time in tournament history the Buffs won't play in the championship game. They fell to 19-2 in first-round games and won't be able to win the tournament for the 14th time. Siena and Clemson will play for the title at 7:30 p.m.

"We needed to be better," CU head coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said. "It's a very disappointing loss for us, there's no doubt."

The first few minutes looked great for Colorado. Whitney Houston sank a 3-pointer on the first shot of the game, and then McFarland — who finished with 24 points, 11 rebounds and six assists — scored five straight points to give the Buffs a 10-4 lead.

"The first couple possessions versus man (defense), I thought we were getting what we wanted," McConnell-Miller said. "Then when they sat in the 2-3 (zone), I just didn't think we made the adjustments. I thought that changed the momentum of the game; I thought it changed the outcome of the game."

Siena head coach Gina Castelli called a timeout with 15 minutes, 43 seconds to play in the first half and her team down 10-4. At that point, she switched the defense to a 2-3 zone, and the Saints outscored the Buffaloes, 79-64, from there. Colorado had hit 57.1 percent (4-for-7) of its shots at that point but shot 37.3 percent from the floor against Siena's zone.

"We just stuck with what we were doing, and even though they hit a couple 3s, we just felt they were still taking them tentatively," Castelli said.

The Saints (2-3) went on a 15-5 run after that timeout and went on another 15-5 run to start the second half. With Colorado missing 13 of its first 14 second-half shots, Siena took its biggest lead, 52-40, with 12:26 to play.

The Saints led 70-60 with 5 minutes to play, but Colorado chipped away. Brittany Spears had a steal and a layup, and McFarland added a pair of free throws to pull the Buffs within 70-67. Moments later, Spears drained a 3-pointer that cut the Siena lead to 72-70.

Manzer, however scored the game's next seven points, including a long-range 3-pointer before the shot clock expired with 1:03 to go.

“Everything was going their way,” McFarland said. “It’s one of those nights where you’re prepared to stop them and play their defense, but I don’t think we were prepared for the offense that they brought.”

It was a tough pill to swallow for a CU team with high hopes for the 2007-08 season.

“More than anything, I think we need to come together as a team,” McFarland said. “We all have been saying all preseason that we have great team chemistry, but when we step out on the court, I don’t think we’ve learned to play together as a team yet. It’s important for us to focus on it’s not how you begin; it’s how you finish. We’ve got to finish out this tournament; we’ve got to finish out the rest of our non-conference, our conference and our season. We can’t look back on this.”

NOTES: Houston was 3-for-6 from 3-point range. She was 2-for-19 in 31 career games coming in. ... Spears finished with 15 points and 10 rebounds. ... Junior Hannah Skildum had 11 points and hit a career-high three 3s. She had made five career 3s coming in. ... Colorado finished with a .397 shooting percentage, while Siena shot .574. ... Aside from Manzer, Laura Menty and Shondaya Burrell, the rest of the Saints scored four points. ... The only other year CU lost in the first round of the Coors Classic was 2005, in overtime against Northern Iowa. ... In the only other meeting with Siena, CU won, 98-78, in the first round of the NCAA Tournament on March 17, 2001. ... In Friday’s other game, Clemson beat Rice, 62-59.