



Hempen's squad heating up on offense

Colorado has scored 11 goals in last three games

By Ryan Thorburn
Sunday, September 7, 2008

Bill Hempen didn't have to travel far to find most of his star players.

Nikki Marshall (Skyline), Kate Russell (Silver Creek), Alex Cousins (Fort Collins), Nikki Keller (Ralston Valley) and Michelle Wenino (Smoky Hill) all played at Colorado high schools.

But on Sunday it was two players from outside the state -- freshman Kelly Butler (Naperville, Ill.), and senior Amber Bettenhausen (Irvine, Calif.) -- who set the tone for the Buffs early during an impressive 4-0 victory over James Madison at Prentup Field.

Butler was pulled down in the box after making a nice run to draw a penalty kick, which Cousins calmly buried to open the scoring at 11:58. Bettenhausen beat two defenders and JMU keeper Diane Wszalek for an unassisted goal and 2-0 lead at 17:12.

And at 67:53, Butler assisted on Bettenhausen's second goal of the match to cap the scoring.

"I don't even deserve credit," Bettenhausen said. "Kelly Butler sent a perfect ball across. If I didn't put that in that would be a big problem."

It's hard to believe that the Buffs (3-1-1) were having problems scoring at the beginning of the season when they mustered only one goal in their first two games. Since that time CU has scored 11 goals during a three-game win streak.

"Thank goodness we're scoring now and thank goodness our team is doing better," said Bettenhausen, who also had the game-winning goal against San Francisco a week earlier. "We still have to step it up. We still have so much more to reach."

The Dukes (2-1-1) -- who beat Wyoming 2-1 at 7,220 feet in Laramie on Friday -- looked like they were playing uphill. CU led 3-0 at the intermission after putting five shots on goal and only allowing one weak shot on its own net.

Marshall had a blistering shot turned away by a sliding Wszalek early in the match and created a hand ball penalty to give the Buffs a second penalty kick, which Kelly Menachof cashed in for her first goal of the season at 19:38.

"It's tough for a team to come out here and play two games," said CU head coach Bill Hempen, whose team will have to travel to the South to play at Mississippi on Friday and Memphis on Sunday. "That second game, no matter if the other team plays or not, that second game is tough on them. We did a

good job of taking advantage of that right away."

James Madison was a step behind all afternoon and committed 17 fouls compared to eight for the deeper Buffs. And when the Dukes were able to start moving the ball on offense Wenino and Cousins were always in position to thwart their efforts.

"You have great duos in sports through history. And we're just little old soccer, but I'm glad I've got Wenino and Cousins in the middle of the defense for us," said Hempen, who challenged the Buffs to record their first shutout of the season leading up to the match. "They're playing great together."

And so are Butler and Bettenhausen.

"We're just trying to improve every game. We have to come out with the same mentality every game that it's not going to be easy," Butler said. "Everybody is out there working hard to get it done and I'm glad we got it done today."

Bettenhausen only scored one goal in 22 games (eight starts) last season after transferring from Wake Forest in 2006 and sitting out a year recovering from a knee injury. Hempen moved her from midfield to forward this season and right now she has the team lead with three goals.

"You've got to have your forwards scoring goals," Hempen said after CU finished with eight shots on goal while allowing only two. "They're supposed to score the brunt of your goals."

Butler, one of three who are starting as a freshman, is going to get her share before her CU days are over.

"She is a calm character out there. She doesn't show a lot of emotion and she knows exactly where you are. It's funny to watch these defenders try and get the ball from her because she just calmly rolls it away and puts it over their head or around them," Hempen said. "She's a nice player. The moment I saw her and her ability with her left foot I was just like, 'Man, you've got to play for me.'"

"It worked out and she's going to be a good one for us for four years."

The only bad news from the match for the Buffs was Gianna DeSaverio suffering a painful ankle injury with 4:44 remaining. The senior forward had her ankle wrapped in ice after being helped off the field.



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sports - the week ahead

CU-CSU showdown should net some interest

Spikes, sets and big digs

By Mike Chambers
The Denver Post

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Mekana Barnes adds considerable power to the lineup for Colorado State, which is 5-1 this season and is ranked No. 17 in one national poll. (Nathan W. Armes, Special to The Denver Post)

Colorado hosts Colorado State on Wednesday for a big-time volleyball match at the Coors Events Center.

Can you dig it?

The Buffaloes and Rams are big-time rivals, and both are off to terrific starts. CU is 6-0 and has won 18 of 19 sets, and the Rams are 5-1 and have dropped only four of 20 sets.

The Buffs, who were picked to finish seventh in the Big 12 Conference, are off to their best start in school history. The last time CU began 4-0 was 1992.

But CSU is more nationally recognized. The Rams — the preseason pick to win the Mountain West Conference — were 17th in last week's American Volleyball Coaches Association (AVCA) poll, while the Buffs didn't receive a vote.

However, that could change today, when the second AVCA poll of the season is released.

Wednesday's match begins a busy week of volleyball action in Boulder and Fort Collins. CU hosts Florida on Thursday and North Carolina on Saturday. CSU welcomes the Tar Heels on Friday and the Gators on Saturday.

The Rams played Sunday, beating Pacific 3-1 at the Asics Classic in Corvallis, Ore. CSU dropped the first set 25-20 before rallying to win the last three (25-23, 25-18, 25-21).

The Rams were playing their second match in less than 17 hours. On Saturday, they put together their best effort of the young season to sweep Oregon State.

In Sunday's win, four Rams had at least 10 kills for the first time in nearly a year. Jacque Davisson had a career-high 13 kills and 12 digs for her first career double-double. Mekana Barnes had a team-high 17 kills, and Jaime Strauss and Katelyn Steffan each had

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CU's perfect record is the result of sweeping two tournaments. After going 3-0 against Troy, Arkansas- Pine Bluff and host Mississippi State on Aug. 29-30, the Buffs visited Corpus Christi, Texas, where they beat Arkansas-Little Rock, Texas Southern and Texas A&M- Corpus Christi.

Only Arkansas-Little Rock has taken a set from the Buffs, who are led by Lauren Schaefer, Alex Buth and Amber Sutherland.

Buth was named tournament MVP in Corpus Christi, and Schaefer and Sutherland were selected for the all- tournament team.

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THE DREADED MANNY

Dodgers fans to go deep at Coors Field.

Manny Ramirez is coming to town for the first time since October, when he won the World Series with the Boston Red Sox. Ramirez's new team, the playoff-contending Los Angeles Dodgers, visit The Keg for a three-game series beginning Friday night.

Dreadlock wigs will be in full bloom. Manny sells, and he appears to have found his perfect laid-back niche in L.A., where he has produced MVP-like stats. Heading into Coors, he is hitting .500 in his previous 10 games and has a combined Boston/L.A. line of .326 average, 31 home runs and 102 RBIs.



Manny Ramirez (Victor Decolongon, Getty Images)

He has ignited Dodgers ticket and merchandise sales and guided the club into the playoff picture, but the best thing about Manny for L.A. brass is this: The controversial slugger is free.

The Red Sox wanted him gone so badly in July, they agreed to pay the rest of his 2008 contract — about \$7 million — to not have him on their team.

Boston fans aren't complaining. After criticizing upper management and generally playing lazily in left field and on the basepaths, Manny infuriated Red Sox Nation in late July by saying he couldn't play in a series-opening game against the Yankees at Fenway Park.

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