



CU spikers notch first victory of the season

Bufs sweep Seahawks in Colorado Invite

By Michael Kelly, For the Camera
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Winning the first two games of a match wasn't the problem.

It was finishing off opponents that hampered the Colorado volleyball team.

Entering the Colorado Invitational, the Buffaloes were 0-2 despite leading in both their matches in the All-State Sugar Bowl Volleyball Classic last week. Against the University of North Carolina-Wilmington on Friday, the Buffaloes were in familiar territory. They won the first two games without much of a challenge, but they never let up, finishing off the Seahawks with a 30-17, 30-18, 30-12 win.

"It feels good to just get the 'W' more than anything else," CU coach Pi'i Aiu said. "That's the first complete game we've played where the effort and the play's been consistent through all three games. It feels good, and I think it feels good for our kids, too."

The Buffaloes (1-2) are motivated to win in their own tournament and erase the memory of blown leads to Tulane and Furman. They had their foot on the gas against UNC-Wilmington from the start, and they never trailed after the Seahawks (1-5) scored the first point of the match.

"Once we got going and got into a rhythm it helped," said sophomore Mallori Gibson, who had a match-high 16 kills. "We worked on being aggressive with every start."

Gibson was aggressive with the finishes, too. She had seven kills in each of the last two games, and she saved her best ones for the end of the games. In the second game, she had four kills in the Buffaloes' final six points, and in the clinching game, she had four more, including an acrobatic smash that gave CU a 28-12 lead.

It was a much different attitude Friday than the Buffaloes had in New Orleans last week.

"I don't think we lacked aggressiveness, I think it was not having that sense of urgency to end the game," Gibson said of the matches against Tulane and Furman. "We played well, we just let up. We thought we had it."

That approach was fixed in practice this week.

"We really got after it in practice," junior Kelsey Loop said. "We went after every ball, we wouldn't let anything hit the floor, and it carried over to the match."

While Gibson was the hitting star in the last two games, junior Alex Buth took that honor in the first

game. She had nine of her 13 kills in the first game to set the tone for CU, and it carried over to the rest of the match.

"We came out really strong in the first two matches but we couldn't find the heart to finish it," Buth said of CU's first two matches of the season. "We played a lot better."

Junior Lauren Schaefer had 10 kills, and sophomore Kaitlyn Burkett had a match-high 48 assists.



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