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December 21, 2007 - 1:49AM

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ASU women head into holiday break with loss to Texas

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Al Bravo, For the Tribune

The Arizona State women will have plenty of time for soul searching after completing a 6-5 nonconference schedule. Coach Charli Turner Thorne would just like for her top players to get — and stay — healthy.

The Sun Devils fell to another ranked team, 62-51 Thursday night against No. 19 Texas, and will now have five days off before preparing for the Dec. 28 Pac-10 opener against UCLA.

“We know we have a lot to do over the break,” guard Briann January said. “I think this is motivating people to really analyze their game and know what they need to come back with, so it’s coming at a good time.”

It might be a good time for starters Jill Noe and Reagan Pariseau, as well as reserve Dymond Simon.

Noe had her left ankle X-rayed late Thursday after a collision with 9:31 left in the game and ASU down by seven. Pariseau might have suffered a concussion after a shot to the head in the first two minutes Thursday. Simon is still recovering from a knee injury suffered in a loss to Texas Tech.

“At this point, I’m just kind of hoping that we come back and have Dymond (Simon) and Reagan and Jill can play,” Turner Thorne said. “That we can have those guys because I was really hopeful that after this game, win or lose, next week that we’d be pretty much back at full strength.”

The Sun Devils find themselves in new territory — they only lost five games the entire season last year — and are still searching for an identity, having had to deal with new faces and the injury bug.

“(With) everybody else, we thought, ‘get some rest, come back strong.’ But now, we’ll see,” Turner Thorne said. “That’s pretty much all I care about right now.”

On Thursday, it looked like ASU would find a way to rally after an atrocious 1-for-15 start from the field, but a 17-4 Texas run foiled a chance to take some momentum into the holiday.

“I’ve learned that we have a lot of weapons on our team,” said January, who tied her career high with 22 points. “It’s just a matter of putting them all together, just coming together as a whole to get where we want to go. I think it’s totally possible and our second season is going to be awesome. I’m excited for it.”

But ASU is facing a conference schedule with three of its guards hobbling and one possibly out for the season.

Turner Thorne said there is a possibility that reserve shooting guard Danielle Orsillo, who had a career-high 21 points in her only appearance this season, could be done for the year, although the coach would not elaborate. Orsillo was said to have a bone bruise and has not returned since the Nov. 11 injury.

But also troubling was the way the Sun Devils lost on Thursday.

“The bottom line is you control the boards, you control the game,” Turner Thorne said. “And when we’ve played the top teams around the country we have not done this. That’s the difference right now. If we figure that out, we’ll be right there.”

The Sun Devils were outrebounded 44-35, keeping them from getting their running game going. Meanwhile, Texas stayed with its half-court offense even after it struggled early in the game.

“We just have to get a little tougher. I thought we played a little soft on our shots and start rebounding better,” Turner Thorne said. “The rest will come.”

January carried much of the load on Thursday, finishing with 22 points, six rebounds, five assists and three steals. She had to play 35 minutes because of Pariseau’s injury.

“We’re not having other people step up scoring and that’s an issue, and that’s something as coaches we have to look at and maybe make some changes,” Turner Thorne said.

The Sun Devils stayed close in the second half and when Noe hit a 3-pointer with 12:10 left, the score was tied at 37. But Texas reasserted itself, with Brittainey Raven (18 points) and Kathleen Nash (10) leading the way for the Longhorns (9-2).

“We haven’t learned it yet and we keep getting the same lessons,” Turner Thorne said. “We have to work harder to be a better rebounding team and we have to toughen up a little bit.”

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