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Nikki Marshall a stay-at-home player this year
by Tom Kensler on August 10, 2009

Playing for the United States' gold-medal women's soccer team in the Under-20 World Cup last fall was an incredible experience, Colorado senior Nikki Marshall said. Except for one thing. She missed three CU games last season, including the 1-0 loss to South Dakota in the first round of the NCAA Tournament. "I was really torn last year," Marshall said recently during Colorado's media day. "The way last season ended, it was a huge disappointment. I couldn't be here, and I had no way of knowing if I could have made a difference. "The good thing about this year is I know I'll be here every game." Colorado will need her. The Buffaloes went 14-5-4 last season and finished No. 22 in the national rankings but lost six letterwinners, including five starters. The 2009 schedule features nine opponents that participated in last year's NCAA Tournament. That includes Oklahoma State, which comes to Boulder Aug. 22 for the season opener. Marshall, a 5-foot-7 forward from Mead, should poised for an All-America-type season. The team's other cornerstone is goalkeeper Kara Linder, a senior from Lincoln, Neb. "We have bookends in Nikki and Kara," CU coach Bill Hempen said. "I'm looking for nine other players. We have some pretty good kids that have left the program. You don't ever replace them. What you do is use different personalities that you have and plug them into spots where they can succeed. That's the fun part of coaching." One of the candidates to get minutes is freshman Shayelyn Marshall, a 5-8 midfielder. Yes, she is the younger sister of Nikki Marshall. "It's going to be an incredible experience playing with Shay," Nikki Marshall said. "My family has always been my backbone. I played one year with Shay in high school and it was awesome."



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