

- [News](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Multimedia](#)

- [Subscribe](#)

Twenty questions with Janeesa 'Chucky' Jeffery

CU:I chats with freshman heroine

By Cheng Sio on December 1, 2009

A new star is born.

2
tweets

retweet

Share

The name is Janeesa Jeffery, but she goes by the nickname “Chucky.” Against Harvard on Saturday, Jeffery’s driving lay-up with five seconds remaining propelled the Colorado Buffaloes women’s basketball team to a 67-65 victory in the championship game of the Omni Hotels Classic.

Three days after her heroics, Jeffery chatted with CU Independent sports editor Cheng Sio for 20 questions.

CU Independent: Where did the nickname “Chucky” come from?

Chucky Jeffery: Oh man, I get this a lot. It came from when I was supposed to be born, the doctors told my mom I was supposed to be a boy. So they were going to name me Charles, after my mom’s grandfather. The nickname for Charles is Chucky, but they found out I was going to be a girl. My dad was still trying to name me Chucky, so they just made it my nickname.

CUI: Describe yourself in one word.

CJ (long pause): I think I’m very outgoing.

CUI: Allesa Clayton, your 21-years-old sister, was a star point guard in high school. How is the competition between you two?

CJ: Actually, we played on the same team in high school. She graduated in 2006 and I was a freshman that year. We never really played against each other unless it was in practice. [The competition] was cool because there was a lot of my family on the team at the time. My cousin La’creasha played on the team. A year before that, [my cousin] Shamela [Hampton] was on the team. It just felt good. It was like playing against my sister.

CUI: Faleesa, your 16-years-old sister, currently plays basketball in high school. How is the competition between you two?



Freshman guard Chucky Jeffery dribbles past UC Irvine guard Keyonna Johnson during a Nov. 15 game. (CU Independent file/Lee Pruitt)

CJ: I don't really have time to see her. She's at school, I'm at school up here, so we really don't get to play against each other. But when we're at home, us, my mom and her boyfriend will go outside and play against each other. That's how we get that in.

CUI: Why did you choose to come to Colorado?

CJ: I initially wanted to major in business and we have a very good business school here. But now I'm like open-option and I think I'm going to study sociology. But we have good academics all around, so that's what I looked at first. Then, I started coming up here on a lot of visits and hanging out with the players, and I just felt like a real fit. I got along with everybody, so I just felt like I fit here.

CUI: If you were scouting yourself, what would be on the scouting report?

CJ: Versatile guard, can shoot the ball but likes to drive, can create for a teammate and good passer.

CUI: No weaknesses?

CJ: My weakness is my outside shot. I think that's my weakness because I'm not a set shooter. I need to work on my jump shot.

CUI: What is your most memorable basketball experience?

CJ: I think a good thing I really like was when I was in high school, we became league champions three times in a row. Being league champions three years in a row, that's kind of good. I was excited about that and being the one breaking all the records in school.

CUI: What is your worst basketball experience?

CJ: Going to the Great Eight back-to-back-to-back and not getting further than that. It's just sad, but you got to move on. I think we could've gone [further] all three of those years, but it was just always something we couldn't get past.

CUI: Let's go back to the Harvard game. You had possession of the ball on top of the "Sox Walseth Court" insignia and the clock is winding down. The game is tied at 65. Describe what was going through your head as the seconds ticked away.

CJ: Oh man. I was really just worried about not going too early because before the [end of the first] half, I went too early on the play and then they came back and hit the three. So I had to make sure I didn't go too early. I was just standing there and I thought the girl was going to come out and pressure me. I was just sitting there and I didn't want to think about what I was going to do because then I would fluster myself. I was just dribbling the ball and everything really just got quiet. It just felt like it was me and her in the gym. And then I came down the lane and I finished. It was just real exciting. I can't even describe how that happened. It just happened so quick, I was just so excited. But I knew I had to get back on defense because I couldn't like get caught down here celebrating and then they hit a three or something and we lose.

CUI: When the ball left your hands, did you know it was going in?

CJ: Oh, I knew. When I took it to the hole, I wasn't worried about getting fouled. In my mind, I was taking it to the hole to score. When I scored, I was surprised I scored because it was in the heat of a game. But I knew I could make that basket.

CUI: What does it say about your head coach, Kathy McConnell-Miller, and your teammates to put the ball in your hands in crunch time in your fifth collegiate game?

CJ: I like being in a lot of pressure situations. So when things like that happened, I feel like I want to be in control. When she drew the play up, I was sitting there listening and I was like, 'She's actually giving me the ball.' Of all the players on the team, I would think she would probably go to Brittany Spears or something like that. Me being a freshman and them trusting me to put the ball in my hands for the last shot, it meant a lot in that it boosted my confidence.

CUI: After the game, when you finally had a chance to check your phone, how many text messages flooded your phone and what did they say?

CJ: I don't even know how many text messages I got. But my mom, she couldn't make it to the game because she's in Virginia with my sister. She just had a baby. She texted me and she said, 'Congratulations. I'm so proud of you. I knew you could do it.' She said she was in tears crying and she wished she could be here to see it. That's kind of like how most of the text messages said.

CUI: When you graduate from CU in four years, what do you want your legacy to be?

CJ (long pause): Wow. I just want to be a player that everybody remembers like how Chauncey [Billups] is up on the wall. I know some people won't exactly remember my name, but I want people to remember my game.

CUI: That last sentence rhymed.

CJ: [Laughing]

CUI: Olympian Jenny Barringer and soccer star Nikki Marshall are about to graduate from CU, do you think you are next in line as queen of CU athletics?

CJ: It's really early to tell. I think I have the potential to do great things. It's all going to come in time. I think I can do a lot of things here for the program and the team.

CUI: Can you describe the experience of playing youth football for eight years?

CJ: I didn't really play basketball until like sixth grade because I was so like into football 'til I was about in the eighth grade. I got into high school and I couldn't really play. I just like football a lot, I played like every position. I played quarterback and I was like the only girl on the football team. That was cool. I just like the contact, especially defense.

CUI: Do guys tease when you play football or play basketball?

CJ: Oh no, not at all. They want me on their team. I've never gotten teased because of that. Everybody I grew up with thought it was cool.

CUI: It seems like sports is your life. When you're not playing sports or attending classes, what are you doing?

CJ: I'm either asleep or hanging out with Brittany Spears, Whitney Houston, Bianca [Smith] and Kailah [Bailey]. That's all I do.

CUI: In a game of five-on-five, who would you want on your team?


CJ (chuckling): Me, Brittany Spears, Allen Iverson, Kobe Bryant and Michael Jordan.

Contact CU Independent Sports Editor Cheng Sio at Cheng.sio@colorado.edu.

Share and Enjoy:

Posted in [Sports](#) / Tagged [CU Women's Basketball](#)

Copyright © 2010 [CU Independent](#)

 **ESPN.com:** Women's College Basketball

[\[Print without images\]](#) 

Monday, November 30, 2009
Updated: December 1, 11:43 AM ET

Big 12 holds no big surprises

By Mechelle Voepel
Special to ESPN.com

One of the things about living so long in Big 12 territory is that no matter what happens, I can always say, "Well, that doesn't *really* surprise me."

The qualifier is pretty important here. For instance, I was surprised when Iowa

State lost to Drake a week ago, but not *really* surprised. See, I'm not saying I can regularly predict with any fantastic accuracy everything that's going to occur. Just that when it does, I always understand it -- even when it doesn't necessarily make sense.

That's because when you've followed the programs for so long and seen them in person so much, you just have a feel for the entire spectrum of what they're capable of -- the good and the bad.

So ... if Kansas had beaten both Xavier and TCU at the Junkanoo Jam in the Bahamas over the Thanksgiving holiday, I would not have been surprised. But the fact that the Jayhawks lost both of those games -- the latter in part because of a late technical foul assessed for calling a timeout when Kansas didn't have one -- well, that didn't surprise me, either.

For the first time in coach Bonnie Henrickson's career at KU, the Jayhawks are actually feeling the pressure of being expected to win. They've been climbing up from the bottom half of the conference since she arrived for the 2004-05 season. This year, they received a preseason ranking and were picked to finish second in the Big 12, along with Texas.

Falling to Xavier, which was ranked No. 10 to KU's No. 23, was an acceptable loss. And even though TCU was unranked, it's still TCU -- a program that coach Jeff Mittie has led to eight NCAA tournament appearances in his 10 seasons there.



Kelsey Griffin and 6-0 Nebraska have the best record among Big 12 teams right now.

KU might well fall out of the rankings now, but there's no reason for the Jayhawks to panic. Six of their remaining eight nonconference games are at home in Lawrence, Kan. They are integrating a redshirt freshman point guard in Angel Goodrich and watching sophomore post Aishah Sutherland develop consistency. They have a legitimate All-American in Danielle McCray.

But if, in their Big 12 opener in January, the Jayhawks somehow lose to graduation-depleted Kansas State for the ninth consecutive year in Manhattan, Kan., ... maybe then they should consider panicking.

As for the Wildcats, they are going through the pains any program does after losing a savvy point guard who played a million minutes and never had a real understudy. To say Shalee Lehning was a staple for K-State the past four seasons is like saying Miley Cyrus is pretty important to the Disney Channel -- it just doesn't quite adequately wrap up either one's all-everythingness.

K-State also lost defensive anchor Marlies Gipson, and of its two returning starters, only senior forward Ashley Sweat is a consistent high-level scoring threat. She has already scored 33 in a game and will pile up the points provided the other mostly young Wildcats (like rookie guard Brittany Chambers) can do enough to keep her from being quadruple-teamed.

Iowa State lost three starters from an Elite Eight squad last season. The Cyclones are inexperienced, to say the least, at post, where they start two freshmen. But because Iowa State has a run-through-a-wall type senior in Alison Lacey and coach Bill Fennelly doing the strategizing, you just expect that the Cyclones are going to figure out a way to get to the NCAA tournament for the 11th time in Fennelly's 15 seasons in Ames.

Missouri has won the fewest Big 12 games (11) of any program over the past three seasons, with Colorado and Kansas next at 14 each. The Buffaloes, who this season do have some talent, led by junior forward Brittany Spears (19.0 ppg, 10.4 rpg), are 4-1. Which doesn't sound like a big deal, except that it's CU's best start in coach Kathy McConnell-Miller's five seasons. Perhaps it's a true sign of progress at Colorado, a program that needs to regain its former status. We'll see.

That brings us to Nebraska, the only Big 12 program never to have won a league tournament title in either the Big 12 or Big Eight/Southwest Conference days. If ever there was a season to do it, how about this one?

The league tournament is in Kansas City, an easy drive from Lincoln, Neb., for Huskers fans who've never seen the Nebraska women even make the Big 12 final. (They made the Big Eight final twice, losing to K-State in 1977 and Kansas in 1993.)

Led by seniors Kelsey Griffin, Cory Montgomery and Yvonne Turner, the Huskers are 6-0, the best start in coach Connie Yori's eight seasons. They've yet to have a real test, though, and won't until a trip to Miami on Saturday and a visit from LSU on Dec. 20, a game I'm really looking forward to that should draw a big crowd to the Huskers' Devaney Center. Both Miami and LSU are also currently unbeaten.

That wraps up the North schools in the Big 12. As for the South, I've already written a fair amount this season about Baylor and Oklahoma. Things have gone largely as expected so far for both. Oklahoma's two losses were at Georgia and to Notre Dame at the Paradise Jam event in the Virgin Islands. The latter,



Danielle McCray and Kansas (3-2) suffered back-to-back losses this weekend to Xavier and TCU.

though, came without sophomore guard Whitney Hand, who suffered a knee injury Friday against San Diego State.

Unfortunately, it was announced Monday that she suffered an ACL tear and will miss the rest of the season. It reduces the Sooners' roster to nine and benches one of the league's most charismatic players. Hand will now apply for a medical hardship waiver and should receive it, having played in only five games.

Baylor, after losing its opener at Tennessee, has won six in a row by an average margin of nearly 40 points. Brittney Griner dunked against Jacksonville State and nearly had a triple-double against Lamar (26 points, 12 rebounds, 8 blocked shots).

Baylor's only game in the next 13 days is Saturday, when coach Kim Mulkey's alma mater and longtime employer Louisiana Tech -- coached by Teresa Weatherspoon -- visits Waco, Texas.

Oklahoma State, which went through chemistry issues last season, lost twice so far -- but both times to ranked teams. The Andrea Riley-led Cowgirls fell in the preseason WNIT title game at Ohio State and in double-overtime to another Big Ten contender, Michigan State, at the Junkanoo Jam in the Bahamas.

The remainder of Oklahoma State's nonconference schedule is not nearly so supersized, and all but one of those games (at Vermont) are at home in Stillwater, Okla.

Texas and Texas Tech rather unfortunately met UConn and Tennessee, respectively, in the ESPNU Road to the Championship doubleheader in San Antonio on Nov. 17. It wasn't much of a showcase for the Big 12; both teams got crushed.



Alison Lacey and Iowa State are 3-1, losing to Drake on Nov. 22.

Tech hasn't lost since, though -- but also hasn't left Lubbock since, either. And it won't leave until a Dec. 18 trip to UCLA. Sophomore Kierra Mallard is one of the better young post players in the league, but once again Tech is integrating a lot of newcomers.

Coach Kristy Curry took on an even-tougher-than-it-looked job in replacing Marsha Sharp in 2006, a time when the other three Big 12 schools in the Lone Star State were already collectively stronger than ever. Then the next year, 2007, Texas hired Gail Goestenkors as coach.

She's gone to the NCAA tournament her first two seasons with the Longhorns. But let's face it -- Texas wants championships and pays coaches accordingly. Goestenkors left Duke for Texas because it was an offer too good to refuse, the school-provided resources would be plentiful, and it was a new challenge.

It has, indeed, been that -- because the expectations are so high. The Longhorns beat Mississippi State -- the team that eliminated Texas from the NCAA tournament last season -- and Rutgers at the Paradise Jam event in the Virgin Islands, but were upset by Southern California. The Longhorns still have a visit to Tennessee coming up this Sunday (ESPN2, 7 p.m. ET).

Kathleen Nash is emerging as the Longhorns' most reliable scorer and rebounder. If Goestenkors' career at Texas continues to be similar to how things started for her at Duke, Nash is going to have a very successful junior season. Players were fully invested in her system at Duke by Goestenkors' third year

there, and the same appears to be the case now at Texas.

Texas A&M's fans thought the Aggies were being grossly underestimated in the preseason. I think most observers were not really doubting the program, but just waiting to see how the team would deal out of the gate with the loss of three starters. The answer has come in: pretty darn well.

The Aggies are 3-0, beginning the season with a statement victory against Duke. They didn't play over the Thanksgiving holiday. After a midweek visit from one of coach Gary Blair's former teams, Stephen F. Austin, the Aggies go to a tournament at Cal this coming weekend, where they seem likely to face the Bears in the title game.

Danielle Adams, the junior college player of the year last season, has started off just as she was predicted to. Picked as preseason Big 12 newcomer of the year, she has led the Aggies in scoring all three games.

Blair has a deep team with some very powerful players inside. And if the Aggies ended up actually winning the Big 12? Well, even though I still think Baylor is the favorite ... it wouldn't be a surprise.

Mechelle Voepel, a regular contributor to ESPN.com, can be reached at mvoepel123@yahoo.com. Read her blog at <http://voepel.wordpress.com>.

ESPN.com: [Help](#) | [PR Media Kit](#) | [Sales Media Kit](#) | [Report a Bug](#) | [Corrections](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Mobile](#) | [ESPN Shop](#) | [Jobs at ESPN](#) | [Supplier Information](#)
© 2009 ESPN Internet Ventures. [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy and Safety Information/Your California Privacy Rights](#) are applicable to you. All rights reserved.