

# CU women face No. 12 Sooners

## Bufs take five-game skid to Oklahoma

**By Joshua Linden** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

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Plenty needs to change if the Colorado women's basketball team is to break out of its current funk -- not the least of which is how the Buffaloes are starting games.

Colorado has fallen behind by double-digit deficits in the first half of each of the five games in its current losing streak.

The mentality of playing from behind, senior guard Bianca Smith said this week, is one the Bufs got too comfortable with early in the season when they were winning against lesser opponents.

"In the preseason we had some games where we'd come from behind and make it a game and then take over and win," Smith said. "And in this league you just can't do that. They're experienced, experienced coaching staffs, and they're going to capitalize on things like that."

CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said shaking up the starting lineup was a possibility, though such changes are unlikely to come today when CU (12-10, 2-7 Big 12 Conference) travels to face 12th-ranked Oklahoma in a 1 p.m. game.

Playing harder early in games is hardly the only thing that needs fixed, after all.

The Bufs' scoring woes, in particular, have been a nagging issue ever since the start of Big 12 play.

The Bufs are coming off their two worst offensive outputs of the season in losses to Texas and Baylor. A team that put up 74 points per game in non-league play is averaging just 59 points per game and shooting 37 percent from the field in the conference.

The Bufs routinely go through stretches of three or four minutes or longer where they don't notch a field goal. Leading scorers Brittany Spears and Bianca Smith are struggling to find clean shots, and their production has consequently dropped.

Part of the reason for the struggles, of course, has been the increased level of competition and physical play in the Big 12. McConnell-Miller said she had the team's male practice players get more physical in practice on Thursday after the loss to Texas and that her team responded with a spirited workout.

But McConnell-Miller said that even in non-league losses to solid teams like Minnesota and Virginia the Bufs managed to do a better job of running through their offense and executing and utilizing screens to get good looks at the basket.

"It was the commitment to running our offense," the coach said.

One solution to freeing up Spears and Smith is for other players to become dangerous scoring threats.

"Teams usually put their best defenders on Bianca or Spears," freshman guard Chucky Jeffery said. "And if me or Alyssa (Fressle) or Meagan (Malcolm-Peck) can get to the bucket and take pressure off of them, then we can get them open shots."

The two most likely candidates for such a task, McConnell-Miller said, are Jeffery and Fressle. Both are slashers who can break down defenses on the dribble, and Fressle is coming off of what McConnell-Miller called her best overall outing of the season in the loss to Texas.

"I would like to see that, but not to the point where anyone is forcing it within our offense," McConnell-Miller said. "We're not very good when that happens."

In the end, McConnell-Miller said Spears and Smith can go a long way toward righting the ship themselves by working harder to get good looks instead of settling for contested shots.

"Those are our big guns," McConnell-Miller said. "As much as we enjoy the production from Kelly Jo Mullaney and Melissa MacFarlane and whoever, we need our consistent scorers to be there night in and night out. That's the expectation and it's not there."

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## CU women's preview: at Oklahoma

Camera staff  
Boulder Daily Camera

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**TODAY:** The Buffs (12-10, 2-7 Big 12) travel to face No. 12 Oklahoma (17-6, 7-3) in a 1 p.m. game at the Lloyd Noble Center in Norman.

**BROADCAST:** Television: None. Radio: KVCU AM 1190 with Mike Rice (play-by-play) and Carol Callan (color).

**STORYLINES:** Colorado has lost five straight and seven of eight, and the Buffs are coming off their two lowest-scoring games of the season against Baylor and Texas. ... This is the Buffs' fourth straight game against a ranked foe. The Buffs have lost 18 straight against ranked teams. ... The Buffs have also lost 19 in a row on the road against Big 12 South Division opponents. ... OU has won two in a row and three of four. ... According to the College Basketball News' RPI, OU's strength of schedule is second strongest in the country behind Rutgers. The Sooners add No. 1 Connecticut to the slate on Monday. ... OU forward Carlee Roethlisberger is the younger sister of Pittsburgh Steelers quarterback Ben Roethlisberger; center Abi Olajuwon is the daughter of former NBA great Hakeem Olajuwon; and reserve forward Joanna McFarland is the younger sister of former CU star Jackie McFarland.

**KEY STAT:** Colorado's last win in Norman came in the last year of the Big Eight Conference, a 68-53 victory on Jan. 28, 1996.

**COACHES:** Kathy McConnell-Miller is 64-81 in her fifth year at CU and 155-169 overall. Sherri Coale is 303-138 in her 14th season at OU.

### PROBABLE STARTERS:

**Colorado --** G Chucky Jeffery, 5-10, Fr., 10.2 ppg, 5.5 rpg, 3.4 apg; G Alyssa Fressle, 5-10, So., 6.5 ppg, 2.5 rpg, 2.3 apg; F Brittany Spears, 6-1, Jr., 16.7 ppg, 8.3 rpg, 2.3 spg; F Meagan Malcolm-Peck, 6-2, Fr., 6.2 ppg, 4.3 rpg; C Courtney Dunn, 6-4, Sr., 6.6 ppg, 4.9 rpg.

**Oklahoma --** G Danielle Robinson, 5-9, Jr., 17.3 ppg, 3.0 rpg, 5.1 apg; G Nyeshia Stevenson, 5-10, Sr., 14.2 ppg, 4.1 rpg; F Carlee Roethlisberger, 6-1, Jr., 8.1 ppg, 5.2 rpg; F Amanda Thompson, 6-1, Sr., 11.8 ppg, 10.2 rpg; C Abi Olajuwon, 6-4, Sr., 11.0 ppg, 6.9 rpg.

**SERIES:** CU leads 33-21, though OU has won seven straight. The Sooners lead 12-10 in Norman.

**UP NEXT:** Colorado hosts Kansas at 7 p.m. Tuesday at the Coors Events Center.

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