

# Lack of inside game plagues Buffs

## CU takes 7-game skid on road to No. 3 Nebraska

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

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It's the question Colorado women's basketball coach Kathy McConnell-Miller hears most when she's talking to associates, fans and others interested in her team: "What's missing?"

McConnell-Miller doesn't have to think twice about the answer.

"I just feel like we don't have that inside presence that is a go-to on the inside, that has defensively come up with stops for us," the fifth-year Buffaloes coach said this week. "We've had that the first four years and now we've got guards. But we don't have that balance, and it's glaring in the Big 12."

The Buffs (12-12, 2-9) are riding a seven-game losing streak heading into today's noon clash with third-ranked Nebraska (24-0, 11-0) in Lincoln. And if there's been one constant lately, it's been opposing post players having their way inside.

As athletic and talented as the Buffs have become on the perimeter with guards such as senior Bianca Smith, sophomore Alyssa Fressle and freshman Chucky Jeffery, and wings such as Brittany Spears and Meagan Malcolm-Peck, the Buffs remain inexperienced inside.

Only senior center Courtney Dunn entered the season with much playing time in her rearview, and she has seen the bulk of the minutes this season.

The Buffs managed to get by during the easier non-conference portion of their schedule when teams had one really solid post player at best.

"We haven't faced front lines from the 3-4 to the 5 (positions) that have been that good like Baylor has and like Texas has and Oklahoma has," McConnell-Miller said. "That's just a struggle for us."

In each of the seven games on the Buffs' skid, opponents have had at least one interior player in double-digit scoring. In four of those games, the tally was 20 points or more, including Carolyn Davis' no-miss 28-point effort for Kansas on Tuesday.

But it's not just on the defensive end where the Buffs -- who have been out-rebounded in five of their last seven -- are hurting inside. Because the Buffs lack a major go-to threat inside, opponents are able to pressure CU's perimeter players relentlessly.

The Buffs' Achilles' heel this season has been long stretches where they struggle to get a field goal. Often during those spells, the Buffs are forced to resort to a tough shot as the shot clock expires after shuffling the ball around the perimeter for 28 seconds.

"We're not getting any inside looks," McConnell-Miller said.

When the Buffs were finding success early on in Big 12 play this year, Dunn was having a larger impact inside, even notching a double-double in a tough loss to Oklahoma State that started the losing streak. McConnell-Miller admits the block is not where Dunn feels most comfortable but also knows that the Buffs have struggled lately as Dunn's scoring there has decreased.

"We need it desperately," the coach said.

The 6-foot-4 Dunn said her body has felt the effects of physical play in the Big 12, but that she's trying to pick up the pace in practice so she can better defend the league's best. She said CU assistant coach Patrick Harrington also took her aside

recently to remind her of the team's need for her offensively.

"Coach Harrington definitely told me that I do have a part on this team and that when I'm scoring the team wins," Dunn said. "So I need to get back into that scoring mode and definitely start being more physical than I have been these past couple games."

The Buffs' woes could persist beyond this season.

Dunn -- a junior in eligibility -- graduates in May and will forego her fifth season. Six-foot-7 freshman Melissa MacFarlane is still a work in progress when it comes to competing in the Big 12 and sophomore Julie Seabrook also remains inexperienced.

McConnell-Miller said she and her staff could still add a post player to next season's freshman class, which so far includes a pair of guards and a wing player.

The Buffs, however, have repeatedly said they have yet to turn the page on this season, and the interior tests keep coming today.

NU's front line of Kelsey Griffin and Cory Montgomery combined for 35 points in a January win in Boulder, with Griffin pouring in 24.

Spears, who will likely see plenty of time guarding Montgomery, said the perimeter players bear plenty of responsibility for making life tougher on opponents' posts. It starts, she said, with harassing opposing guards to the point they can't get the ball inside.

"We've all got to help out and do what we can do," Spears said.

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## CU women's preview: at Nebraska

Camera staff  
Boulder Daily Camera

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**TODAY:** The Buffs (12-12, 2-9 Big 12) travel to face No. 3 Nebraska (24-0, 11-0) in a noon game at the Bob Devaney Center in Lincoln.

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

**STORYLINES:** Colorado has lost seven straight and nine of its last 10. ... The Buffs fell to Nebraska 80-64 in Boulder on Jan. 30. ... The Huskers are off to the best start in Big 12 Conference history. ... CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said senior guard Bianca Smith would start in place of freshman Meagan Malcolm-Peck for the second game in a row.

**KEY STAT:** Nebraska is the highest-ranked road foe for the Buffs since falling to No. 3 Oklahoma on Jan. 2, 2002.

**COACHES:** Kathy McConnell-Miller is 64-83 in her fifth year at CU and 155-171 overall. Connie Yori is 145-97 in her eighth season at NU and 341-237 overall.

### PROBABLE STARTERS:

**Colorado --** G Chucky Jeffery, 5-10, Fr., 10.1 ppg, 5.5 rpg, 3.3 apg; G Alyssa Fressle, 5-10, So., 6.9 ppg, 2.4 rpg, 2.4 apg; F Brittany Spears, 6-1, Jr., 17.2 ppg, 8.5 rpg, 2.3 spg; G Bianca Smith, 5-9, Sr.; C Courtney Dunn, 6-4, Sr., 6.5 ppg, 4.8 rpg.

**Nebraska --** Lindsey Moore, 5-9, Fr., 5.2 ppg, 4.5 apg; G Yvonne Turner, 5-8, Sr., 12.5 ppg, 3.7 rpg; G Dominique Kelley, 5-7, Jr., 12.1 ppg, 4.0 rpg; F Kelsey Griffin, 6-2, Sr., 19.3 ppg, 10.2 rpg; F Cory Montgomery, 6-2, Sr., 12.6 ppg, 4.8 rpg.

**SERIES:** CU leads 39-27, but NU has won five straight in Lincoln.

**UP NEXT:** Colorado plays at Missouri at 5:30 p.m. Tuesday.

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## Versatility makes NU offense hard to stop

*By CURT McKEEVER /Lincoln Journal Star*

At her wishing well, Nebraska women's basketball coach Connie Yori would ask to have a bigger guard so she could throw yet one more offensive wrinkle at opponents.

But then, that would be greed, because even without one, the third-ranked Huskers are causing major headaches with their versatility.

Entering Saturday's game against Colorado at the Devaney Sports Center, NU is on track for its best scoring average in 22 seasons.

The Huskers' 78-point average ranks sixth nationally. Coincidentally, so does their shooting percentage of 46.7 percent.

How has that all come about?

One could easily point to the return of two-time All-Big 12 Conference forward Kelsey Griffin and the addition of court-savvy freshman point guard Lindsey Moore. But that might be oversimplification, because what make Yori's motion system run so smoothly is having numerous parts.

Which is exactly what she's got.

\* There's a major three-point threat in senior guard Vonnie Turner.

\* You've got another guard who can dribble penetrate and finish around the basket in junior Dominique Kelley.

\* There's Griffin with a polished inside-outside package, and fellow senior forward Cory Montgomery, who's as comfortable stepping out to take a shot as she is getting one off a post-up.

"It's more of a feel offense, but also you have to read matchups," Yori said, adding that what keys her type of motion offense is being able to spread the floor. Thus, "we really try to recruit players who have versatility, offensively."

The versatility of Nebraska's front line — junior center Catheryn Redmon is the only one who's strictly a low-block player — has helped open up driving lanes and created more one-on-one chances.

"A person like Dominique is going to take advantage of that. That's why she's having a better year," Yori said.

Turner — now healthy after playing last season with a shoulder that regularly popped out of place — also has benefited from the Huskers' motion spread.

Of course, spacing wouldn't mean as much if you didn't have good shooters. But that's not a problem for NU.

Consider that Griffin, Montgomery, Turner and Kelley are shooting a combined 50.3 percent from the

field (466-of-925), and are on pace to give Nebraska four double-digit point scorers on the same team for the first time in 14 seasons.

**Briefly**

Nebraska's game at Oklahoma on Wednesday night will be carried on Lincoln's MyTV (channel 110).

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