

CU women aim to contain Cowgirls PG Riley

Oklahoma State senior averaging 25.9 points per game

By Joshua Lindenstein Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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Colorado women's basketball assistant coach Patrick Harrington had some realistic advice for sophomore Alyssa Fressle when she was preparing to guard Virginia All-American Monica Wright earlier this season.

Don't worry about trying to shut her down. Just give her an off night.

"If they're (averaging) 12 for 19 on field goals, your goal should be 9 for 19 this game," Fressle recounted Harrington telling her.

The advice came to mind for Fressle this week because the Buffs are getting ready to face the most explosive scorer they've seen this season in Oklahoma State point guard Andrea Riley.

The 5-foot-5 senior from Dallas -- named All-American honorable mention by the Associated Press in the preseason -- is averaging 25.9 points per game this season. And she's been on a tear lately with 30 points or more in each of her last four games, including a 43-point outburst in a win over Baylor two weeks ago.

"It's hard to guard her because she's so fast," Fressle said. "We've just got to contain her ultimately.

"We've just got to play good D on her and shut down the rest of the team."

Fressle had much of the duty of guarding Riley last season in the Buffs' 78-43 loss in Stillwater. Riley had 18 points in that game.

The effort to contain Riley won't rest solely with Fressle when the Buffs (12-5, 2-2 Big 12) host the 12th-ranked Cowgirls (15-3, 3-1) at 2 p.m. today at the Events Center.

McConnell-Miller said her plan will probably consist of some combination of Fressle, freshman Chucky Jeffery and forward Brittany Spears, among others.

"All of our guards will have the opportunity to guard her, but not one person," McConnell-Miller said.

Fressle, who generally guards opponents' best perimeter players, said she learned plenty going against Riley last year, including the Cowgirl's love of constant trash talk. Fressle likely spent the last couple of days relaying much of her knowledge to Jeffery, who usually guards opponents' point guards.

Intimidation is an affliction from which Jeffery rarely suffers, and the freshman is excited for the chance to measure herself against Riley.

"I know she's a pretty deep shooter and has pretty deep range," Jeffery said. "If I just pressure her, I think we'll be able to contain her a little bit and get her going to the bucket. She's small, so if we just stand up tall and make her shoot tough shots in the lane, then I think we'll be fine."

Riley is well-known for her ability to shoot NBA-range 3-pointers, but it's not just her scoring that haunts coaches' dreams. She also leads the Cowgirls with 7.4 assists per game.

McConnell-Miller, in fact, said she's less concerned about Riley scoring a lot of points than her setting up teammates for career-type nights.

"She scores 41, she scores 26, she scores 30," McConnell-Miller said. "But when you feel like you've taken Andrea Riley out of it and you allow the other players to career, that becomes a problem."

The Buffs know the challenge they face, but they also come into today's game riding high after snapping an eight-game road losing streak at Kansas State on Wednesday.

"After that one, I think it just solidified that they are very competitive," McConnell-Miller said.

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CU Buffs women's preview: vs. Oklahoma State

Camera staff
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TODAY: Colorado (12-5, 2-2 Big 12) hosts No. 12 Oklahoma State (15-3, 3-1) at 2 p.m. at the Coors Events Center.

BROADCAST: Television: Fox Sports Net with Brent Stover (play-by-play) and Brenda VanLengen (color). Radio: KKZN AM 760 with Mike Rice (play-by-play) and Carol Callan (color).

STORYLINES: Today's game kicks off a stretch in which the Buffs face five ranked teams in six games. ... The Buffs enter the game looking for their first win over a ranked opponent in nearly two years. CU has dropped 14 in a row against ranked opponents. ... OSU has been racing up the national rankings in recent weeks. The Cowgirls had won 11 games in a row before falling at Texas on Wednesday. ... Former Fairview High standout and CU/Louisiana Tech player Amber Metoyer is a graduate assistant for the Cowgirls.

KEY STAT: Oklahoma State point guard Andrea Riley led the Big 12 in scoring her last two years and is averaging a career-best 25.9 points per game this season.

COACHES: Kathy McConnell-Miller is 64-76 in her fifth year at CU and 155-164 overall. Kurt Budke is 85-60 in his fifth season at OSU and 165-76 overall at the Division-I level.

PROBABLE STARTERS:

Colorado -- G Chucky Jeffery, 5-10, Fr., 10.1 ppg, 5.2 rpg, 3.3 apg; G Alyssa Fressle, 5-10, So., 6.5 ppg, 2.6 rpg, 2.6 apg; F Brittany Spears, 6-1, Jr., 17.9 ppg, 8.8 rpg, 2.5 spg; F Meagan Malcolm-Peck, 6-2, Fr., 7.2 ppg, 5.0 rpg; C Courtney Dunn, 6-4, Sr., 5.8 ppg, 4.6 rpg.

Oklahoma State -- G Andrea Riley, 5-5, Sr., 25.9 ppg, 7.4 apg; G Lakyn Garrison, 5-5, Jr., 7.4 ppg, 1.8 rpg; G Precious Robinson, 6-0, Jr., 8.6 ppg, 8.4 rpg; F Tegan Cunningham, 6-1, Sr., 17.2 ppg, 7.6 rpg; C Megan Byford, 6-2, Sr., 3.7 ppg, 3.8 rpg.

SERIES: Colorado leads 26-23, including 12-9 in Boulder. But Oklahoma State has won three in a row over the Buffs.

UP NEXT: Colorado plays at Kansas at 6 p.m. Wednesday.

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Today's Game

By Patrick Ridgell
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No. 12 Oklahoma State (15-3, 3-1) at Colorado women (12-5, 2-2)

When/Where: 2 p.m. today at the Coors Events Center in Boulder.

TV/Radio: FSN/KKZN AM 760.

The series: CU leads 26-23, 12-9 in Boulder. Oklahoma State has won the past three meetings.

Leading scorers: Oklahoma State — Andrea Riley (25.9 points per game); CU — Brittany Spears (17.9 points per game).

Notes: CU has lost its past 11 games to teams ranked in the AP and WBCA polls. It has lost its past 14 to teams ranked in at least one of the polls. Iowa State, No. 20 WBCA, beat the Buffs in Boulder on Jan. 16. ... CU snapped an eight-game road losing streak Wednesday at Kansas State. ... CU's Bianca Smith needs 10 points to become the program's 23rd player to reach 1,000. ... Oklahoma State has won 11 of its past 12. Riley is the nation's second-leading scorer. ... CU is celebrating National Girls and Women in Sports Day today. Kids in eighth grade and younger can participate in a skills and fitness challenge on the arena's concourse from noon to 1 p.m. The first 700 to finish it receive a free T-shirt. CU student-athletes will sign autographs from 1 to 1:30 p.m.