

It's official: Kathy McConnell-Miller out at CU

Women's basketball coach fired after four losing seasons in five years

By Joshua Lindenstein Camera Sports Writer
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Colorado women's basketball coach Kathy McConnell-Miller's ouster is official.

CU athletic director Mike Bohn announced in a release on Monday evening that the school has decided not to retain McConnell-Miller a short while after both he and the coach addressed the team about the change.

Neither Bohn nor McConnell-Miller could be reached for comment.

Monday's release said that representatives for McConnell-Miller and the school are "discussing issues related to her contract of employment and hope to reach an agreement in coming days."

The coach, who has three years remaining on her contract, makes roughly \$361,000 per year in base salary, incentives and other compensation, with her base salary of nearly \$180,000 being guaranteed through next season.

The contract includes a clause in which the school can reassign McConnell-Miller to another position at her base rate of pay, though that option seems unlikely given Monday's release.

Bohn said in the release that CU will begin an immediate search for a successor, beginning with forming a search committee.

The announcement comes four days after Bohn denied reports that the coach and school had been negotiating a settlement.

Forward Meagan Malcolm-Peck -- one member of a prized freshman class that just completed its first season on campus - said McConnell-Miller told the players how much she loved them and that she wants what's best for them when she met with the team. "She handled everything very well," Malcolm-Peck said.

"I think she's an amazing coach. She just has all the players' best interests in mind. It was a joy getting to play for her. ... But I'm going to respect Mike Bohn and his decision and the school's decision."

Malcolm-Peck said she had no plans to transfer but said she didn't know if any of her teammates had such plans in the wake of their coach's dismissal.

McConnell-Miller went 65-88 in five years at CU, including a 20-60 mark in regular season Big 12 play. She was the sixth coach in program history and is only the second to depart with a losing record. Carol Hochsprung went 2-11 in the team's first season before Jerry Zancanelli took over the next year.

The Buffs went 13-17 this season, including a second straight 3-13 mark in Big 12 play. They finished 11th in the league and missed the postseason for the fourth time in five seasons under McConnell-Miller's watch.

McConnell-Miller, who came to Boulder after six years as the head coach at Tulsa, took over a CU program in the spring of 2005 that had just finished its worst season in two decades.

After two losing seasons to start, things seemed to be looking up in her third season as the Buffs finished 19-15 and made a run to the WNIT semifinals. She was given a contract extension after that campaign that runs through the 2012-13 season.

But the Buffs went 11-18 in the 2008-09 season and finished last in the Big 12.

The optimism surrounding a 10-3 non-conference run this season faded as the Buffs struggled through conference play.

McConnell-Miller scored some celebrated recruiting classes during her time in Boulder.

Forward Brittany Spears heads into her senior season with a chance to challenge for CU's all-time scoring record. Sophomore Alyssa Fressle was the top recruit in the state two seasons ago, and her freshman class was followed up by one that included a trio of celebrated in-state recruits in guard Chucky Jeffery and twins Meagan and Brenna Malcolm-Peck.

Still, the Buffs' best finish in Big 12 play was a tie for seventh in 2007.

McConnell-Miller noted multiple times this season that she believed her team was a solid post player away from climbing the conference ranks.

"Nobody in the program from top to bottom is excited about our record, but we definitely feel like progress continues to be made," McConnell-Miller said when asked about her job status following CU's season-ending loss to Baylor in the Big 12 tournament. "We have a strong foundation. I can only control what I can control."

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CU cuts coach

McConnell-Miller out after 5 seasons

By Patrick Ridgell
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BOULDER — Colorado announced Monday that it will not retain women's basketball coach Kathy McConnell-Miller.

In a news release, athletic director Mike Bohn said the school will immediately begin its search for a successor by assembling a search committee.

The release said that Bohn will comment on the decision to dismiss McConnell-Miller "at the appropriate time" after her contract issues are resolved. Parties representing McConnell-Miller and CU are discussing the terms of her departure.

CU reported that it hopes to reach an agreement in upcoming days. McConnell-Miller's pay was about \$350,000 a year. CU's athletic budget is expected to remain at \$45 million in 2010-11.

CU went 65-88 in five seasons under McConnell-Miller, 20-60 in Big 12 games. She agreed to a contract extension through 2012-13 in the fall of 2008. Her best year at CU was 2007-08, when CU went 19-15 and reached the semifinals of the Women's NIT.

Within weeks of that season's end, McConnell-Miller interviewed for the head coaching vacancy at UCLA.

In the past two seasons, CU has gone 24-35, 6-26 in the Big 12. CU went 13-17 in 2009-10, losing 14 of its final 16 games.

Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell. He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.



University of Colorado women's basketball head coach Kathy McConnell-Miller gives instructions to her team during a February 2007 game against Nebraska at the Coors Events Center in Boulder. CU announced Monday that it will not retain the coach. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**