

# CU Buffs seniors still have sights on postseason

## Senior Night for Smith, Dunn

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

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When she arrived in Boulder nearly five years ago, Bianca Smith never imagined she'd leave the University of Colorado as the most prolific 3-point shooter in school history.

Yet she passed Shelley Sheetz's career mark of 252 made on Saturday, and Smith is currently tied with her own single-season record of 80 made.

"I wanted to come in and make a difference and play a lot of minutes and get victories," Smith said Tuesday. "But I never thought I would be where I am today."

Smith would trade the records for one more guaranteed shot at the postseason.

As Smith and center Courtney Dunn get ready for their senior sendoff at tonight's 7 p.m. game against Kansas State at the Coors Events Center, they know there are no guarantees.

But the Buffaloes (13-14, 3-11 Big 12) also know the postseason isn't yet out of the question, despite having lost 11 of their last 13 games.

At this point, the Buffs would have to win the Big 12 tournament to earn an NCAA tournament berth. But victories over KSU (12-16, 4-10) and at 13th-ranked Iowa State on Saturday to close out the regular season would be enough to guarantee a .500 finish, and would most likely earn CU an invitation to the WNIT field. The circumstances are similar -- albeit a little more urgent -- to the Buffs' 2007-08 campaign. The Buffs had lost nine of 10 that season before winning three of their final five regular season games to earn a WNIT berth. They ended up winning three games in the WNIT before falling in the semifinals.

"I think it was maybe a sense of urgency," Smith said of the Buffs' late turnaround in 2008. "People realized they weren't ready to quite playing that year. Jackie (McFarland) was very adamant about continuing to play and wanting more games.

"I think me and Courtney have to impress that on the younger players now that we still have a chance, and we can still play a lot more basketball if we want to. The ball is in our court."

CU beat KSU 63-57 on Jan. 20 in Manhattan to halt a long road losing streak. But today's game will carry much more emotion for the Buffs.

Unless the Buffs were to host a WNIT game, tonight's clash will be the last time Smith and Dunn play at the Coors Events Center.

"This team's going to want to win on senior night for those two," CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said.

Dunn is leaving despite having one year of playing eligibility left after redshirting her freshman season. The psychology major will graduate in May and plans to take some time off before applying to medical schools.

After three seasons of paying her dues behind McFarland and former Buff Kara Richards inside, the 6-foot-4 Dunn finally got her chance at the spotlight this season, starting 25 games and averaging 6.2 points and 4.5 rebounds.

"All the years that built up to this definitely paid off," Dunn said.

After being a significant contributor the last three years, Smith wasn't sure she'd even get to play her entire senior year.

After originally signing to play for McConnell-Miller at Tulsa, she followed the coach to CU.

Although she'd never stepped on campus at Tulsa, Smith had to redshirt and sit out her freshman year at CU per NCAA transfer rules. But because Tulsa declined to release her from her letter of intent, Smith also faced sitting out another season. An appeal got Smith one semester back, but it took CU officials until last spring to work out an agreement with Tulsa for Smith to get her full season back.

Had Tulsa not budged, Smith would have had to sit out the first semester this season.

"It was definitely a blessing for me," Smith said. "I was thrilled. It was going to be a stressful season if I had to sit out the first semester."

Now Smith is hoping she can add games to her career one last time.

## **USA Today Women`s Top 25**

### **USA TODAY/ESPN**

The top 25 teams in the USA Today-ESPN Women`s college basketball poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records through March 1, total points based on 25 points for a first-place vote through one point for a 25th-place vote and previous ranking:

#### **Record Pts Pvs**

1. Connecticut (31) 30-0 775 1
2. Stanford 27-1 737 2
3. Nebraska 27-0 720 3
4. Tennessee 27-2 681 4
5. Xavier 24-3 652 5
6. Florida State 26-4 595 9
7. Notre Dame 25-4 569 8
8. Duke 24-5 534 6
9. West Virginia 26-4 508 7
10. Ohio State 27-4 486 12
11. Georgetown 25-5 485 11
12. Oklahoma 20-8 462 10
13. Iowa State 22-5 422 13
14. Texas A&M 20-7 355 15
15. Baylor 21-7 326 17
16. St. John`s 24-5 291 19

17. Gonzaga 25-4 237 20
18. Kentucky 23-6 234 14
19. Virginia 21-8 201 18
20. Oklahoma State 20-8 160 21
21. Hartford 25-3 137 23
22. Texas 19-9 124 16
23. Michigan State 21-8 79 25
24. Georgia 22-7 68 24
25. UCLA 20-7 38 NR

**Others receiving votes:** Vanderbilt 33; Dayton 30; LSU 26; Princeton 20; Middle Tennessee 18; Gardner-Webb 15; Arkansas-Little Rock 10; North Carolina 9; Wisconsin-Green Bay 9; Fresno State 7; Lehigh 5; TCU 5; Georgia Tech 4; DePaul 3; James Madison 2; Syracuse 2; Vermont 1.

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## CU women's preview: Today vs. Kansas State

Camera staff  
Boulder Daily Camera

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**TODAY:** The Buffs (13-14, 3-11 Big 12) host Kansas State (12-16, 4-10) in a 7 p.m. game at Coors Events Center.

**BROADCAST: Television:** None. **Radio:** KKZN AM 760 with Mike Rice (play-by-play) and Carol Callan (color).

**STORY LINES:** Colorado has lost 11 of 13, including a 95-61 setback against Texas A&M on Saturday. ... KSU sits one spot ahead of CU in the conference standings in 10th place. ... CU beat KSU 63-57 on Jan. 20 in Manhattan. ... A win tonight would give CU the tie-breaker over the Wildcats should they finish tied for 10th.

**KEY STAT:** Senior guard Bianca Smith -- the Buffs' all-time leading 3-point shooter -- and senior center Courtney Dunn are playing what is likely their last games on the Coors Events Center floor.

**COACHES:** Kathy McConnell-Miller is 65-85 in her fifth year at CU and 156-173 overall. Deb Patterson is 277-162 in her 14th year at KSU and overall.

### PROBABLE STARTERS:

**Colorado** -- G Chucky Jeffery, 5-10, Fr., 9.7 ppg, 5.1 rpg, 3.4 apg; G Alyssa Fressle, 5-10, So., 7.1 ppg, 2.8 rpg, 2.6 apg; F Brittany Spears, 6-1, Jr., 17.8 ppg, 8.3 rpg, 2.1 spg; G Bianca Smith, 5-9, Sr., 13.6 ppg, 2.7 rpg; C Courtney Dunn, 6-4, Sr., 6.2 ppg, 4.5 rpg.

**Kansas State** -- G Brittany Chambers, 5-8, Fr., 12.3 ppg, 5.3 rpg, 2.4 apg; G Taelor Karr, 5-8, Fr., 8.6 ppg, 4.2 rpg; G Kari Kincaid, 5-10, Sr., 8.4 ppg, 2.8 apg; F Ashley Sweat, 6-2, Sr., 16.6 ppg, 5.2 rpg; F Jalana Childs, 6-2, So., 7.0 ppg, 4.7 rpg.

**SERIES:** Colorado leads 33-32 overall and 16-11 in Boulder.

**UP NEXT:** Colorado closes out the regular season at Iowa State at 1 p.m. Saturday and then begins Big 12 tournament play on March 11 in Kansas City.

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## **KSU women try to snap skid at Colorado**

### **Special to The?News**

**With the regular season winding down, Kansas State's women will look to break a five-game losing streak against one of the two teams trailing them in the Big 12 standings when they take on Colorado at 8 tonight at the Coors Events Center.**

**The Wildcats, 12-16 overall and 4-10 in the Big 12, have not won since slipping past Missouri, 37-33, on Feb. 10 and finished the month with a 1-7 record. It is senior night for Colorado (13-14, 3-11), with guard Bianca Smith and center Courtney Dunn playing their final regular-season home game.**

**While they're 11th in the league standings, the Buffaloes beat K-State, 63-57, in their first meeting Jan. 20 in Manhattan. Forward Brittany Spears led four CU players in double figures in that game with 15 points, while Smith and Alyssa Fressle had 13 each.**

**For K-State, freshman guard Brittany Chambers had 16 points and senior forward Ashley Sweat 13 to lead K-State, which shot just 28.3 percent from the field in the game.**

**Spears, a 6-foot-1 junior, leads Colorado with 17.8 points and 8.3 rebounds a game, with Smith adding 13.6 points. Sweat averages 16.6 points and 5.2 rebounds for K-State, followed by Chambers with 12.3 points and a team-best 5.3 rebounds.**

**The Wildcats return to Bramlage Coliseum for their final home game Saturday against No. 3-ranked Nebraska.**

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## Wildcats play final road game tonight

By Sam Nearhood

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With time running out to revamp its dwindling record, K-State has hit the road for the last time this season.

The Wildcats (12-16, 4-10 Big 12 Conference) go west tonight to take on the University of Colorado (13-14, 3-11). K-State head coach Deb Patterson said she has confidence in her team.

"I really look at this as another great opportunity for us," she said. "I look at our basketball team, and I feel like we're capable of going on the road and competing extremely well and competing hard."

And the statistics back her opinion. In the past five years, K-State has won four of its final road games in the regular season. Against Colorado, the teams are tied 32-all, but K-State has won 17 of the last 23 games.

Both teams are currently in slumps. Colorado, who looked strong up to conference play, has lost 11 of its last 13 games, most recently by a wide margin to Texas A&M – a team K-State almost beat. The Wildcats are not faring much better; 10 out their last 12 contests have resulted in defeats. But Patterson does not see it this way.

"I think we've shown the ability to play really high-quality basketball. I really do," she said. "We can compete well with anybody in our league."

And the team will have to do just that to find victory in the Centennial State.

When the Buffaloes traveled to Manhattan in January, Colorado narrowly won 63-57 behind a handful of strong individual performances. Patterson said her team would have to concentrate on its offensive efforts to win this one.



Jonathan Knight

K-State forward Ashley Sweat shoots around Texas Tech guard Monique Smalls during their game in Bramlage Coliseum Feb. 24. K-State lost 67-75.

"I know we have to be better on the offensive end of the floor," she said. "Basically, we've got to find a way to score and make open shots. There's nothing really complex about that."

Judging from the last meeting, K-State will have to focus on stopping a few players, most notably junior forward Brittany Spears. When she played in Manhattan over a month ago, Spears scored 15 points and recorded nine rebounds. Freshman guard Chucky Jeffery and senior guard Bianca Smith could also prove troublesome for the Wildcats. Regardless of the difficulties that lie ahead, Patterson had some inspirational words.

"I just look at every next game as an opportunity to step up and be better," she said. "You got to keep working to get better, and you got to keep working to answer the challenge each and every day."

Tipoff is set for 8 p.m. at the Coors Event Center in Boulder, Colo.