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colorado women's basketball

Lappe fitting in just fine as new CU women's basketball coach

By Natalie Meisler
The Denver Post

Posted: 05/03/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT



Linda Lappe, at the Coors Events Center, was a member of Ceal Barry-coached CU teams that were 22-9, 24-10 and 24-8 her last three seasons as a player. (Joe Amon, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — Linda Lappe stood in the empty Coors Events Center and reflected on the ghosts

in the building. She recalled the arduous workouts under Ceal Barry, her former Colorado coach and new boss. In the silence, she could almost hear the fans urge on her CU teams.

"Looking around here, when people (during practice) were maybe not doing what they should be, Ceal would say, 'Go grab a wall,' " said Lappe, named the Buffaloes' new women's basketball coach on April 12, pointing up the path to the south bleachers.

To this day, Lappe is proud Barry never told her to grab a wall. "She was low maintenance," Barry said.

And that was one reason Barry, who helped lead CU's search for a coach to replace the fired Kathy McConnell-Miller, always felt Lappe would become a coach.

"She was one of the most mature players I ever had," said Barry, now an associate athletic director for the Buffs.

When she was coaching at CU, Barry outrecruited Notre Dame, Iowa State, Iowa, Drake and Wisconsin for Lappe, who was a high school star in Iowa. Once Lappe saw the Buffs play Tennessee in the 1997 NCAA Tournament in Iowa City, she was sold.

"I loved how hard they played," she recalled.

Four years ago, Barry recommended Lappe to Metro State, and the Division II Roadrunners

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hired her. Now she is convinced Lappe is the right person to lead CU back to power.

"She's a leader. She has honesty and integrity," Barry said of Lappe, 30. "Those are things you want young people to be around. If kids are going to play hard, they have to respect who their leader is."

Barry said Lappe brings the same attributes to coaching she did as a player — namely, not stopping until she figures a way to win. Barry recalled how Lappe got the ball to the post, avoiding Stanford's big players, in the 2002 Sweet 16.

"We knew we could post up a player, but the most important thing was to get the ball to that player. I remember

CU Basketball

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- [Visit](#) the CU Stats Page for women's boxscores, Big 12 standings, player pages and more .
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thinking, 'I need someone I can count on to

pump fake and do exactly what needs to be done under pressure,' " Barry said. "We ran the play three times in a row and it was Linda. She didn't care if she got the shot or made the points."

Lisa Van Goor, CU's all-time scoring leader (1981-85), said she had been hoping CU would hire an alum. That said, the program needs major reconstruction to get back to the level it was at when Lappe played at CU.

"She's going to have a huge challenge," Van Goor said. "We play in the best conference in the United States. The expectations for this program are always going to be in the top of that conference."

Lappe earned high marks from the Metro State program she left behind. Even before she was hired by CU, Metro State athletic director Joan McDermott called her "a young Mike Dunlap," referring to the former Roadrunners coach who led the men's team to two NCAA titles.

"She's a winner. Losing is not an option for her. . . . She's a very hard worker and she expects you to work hard as well," said Chelsea Williamson, a senior standout at Metro State this past season.

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Linda Lappe bio

Age: 30 Notable: Signed a five-year contract to coach the CU women's basketball team. . . .

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Youngest women's basketball coach at a BCS conference school. . . . In three years as Metro State's coach, she had a 50-36 record. . . . Was an assistant at Drake (2004-06) and at Colorado State (2006-07). . . . At CU, was a two-year captain and made all-Big 12 honorable mention, averaging 7.8 points, 3.7 rebounds and 2.0 assists in her 1998-2003 career. Averaged a team-high 10.7 points as a 1998-99 freshman. . . . Born and raised in Iowa, she played high school basketball at Winfield-Mount Union, which won Class A state championships in 1995 and 1996.

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