

McConnell-Miller signs three

Class includes Denver prep standout Kelley

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Two guards and a wing player will join the Colorado women's basketball team next year, coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said on Thursday.

The 2010 recruiting class includes small forward Shae Kelley from Denver East and 5-foot-8 twin guards Ashley and Brittany Wilson from Long Beach, Calif.

The signings leave the program guard-heavy. Of the 15 players expected to be on CU's roster next year, only four will be either true forwards or centers.

Kelley was the fourth consecutive in-state player to sign with the Buffs, following Aija Putnina three years ago, Alyssa Fressle two years ago and Chucky Jeffery and Brenna and Meagan Malcolm-Peck last year.

Kelley, 6-foot, ranks No. 54 in the nation among wing players, according to HoopGurlz.

"(Kelley) continues to solidify our commitment to keep the state's best players at home," McConnell-Miller said. "The Kelley family's commitment to excellence in academics and athletics parallels our basketball program and university."

The Wilsons will be the second set of twins on the CU roster, joining the Malcolm-Pecks, who are freshmen this season.

Ashley Wilson ranks as the 53rd best guard in the nation, according to HoopGurlz, while Brittany is ranked the No. 31 shooting guard in the country.

The Collegiate Girls Basketball Report ranked CU's 2010 early signing class as No. 33 in the nation.

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2009-2010 Big 12 women's basketball predictions

Big 12 entertains in women's college basketball

By Cheng Sio on November 12, 2009

Editor's note: Welcome to the CU Independent's five-day season preview of Colorado Buffaloes basketball. Each day, we will delve into the world of CU basketball leading up to the men's season-opener against Arkansas-Pine Bluff on Friday, Nov. 13. On Day 4, we will predict how the Big 12 Conference will shake out.

I hope you know there's life in women's college basketball outside of Geno Auriemma's Connecticut Huskies and Pat Summitt's Tennessee Lady Volunteers. The Big 12 Conference is living proof.

For instance, did you know Courtney Paris said if the Oklahoma Sooners didn't win the national championship last year, she would give back every penny from her \$64,000 scholarship? Paris and company lost by two to Louisville in the Final Four and wanted to make good on her promise. However, athletic director Joe Castiglione told the public he doesn't plan to hold Paris to her guarantee. Where else can you find such a touching story?

Or how about watching two players as great as Kansas' Danielle McCray and Oklahoma State's Andrea Riley imitate their best Wonder Woman impersonations as they try to lift their teams' on a nightly basis. I don't think Candice Parker or Rebecca Lobo ever had that type of challenge.

If neither of the above interests you, then how about a female player who can dunk every time she touches the ball? Baylor freshman Brittney Griner is the name and rattling the rim is her game. Unfortunately, she won't be visiting Boulder this season, but I'm sure ESPN will showcase her at some point this season, so watch her then.

Anyway, without further ado, here are the 2009-2010 Big 12 women's basketball predictions:

1. Oklahoma – So Paris, her three Big 12 Player of the Year awards and her twin sister Ashley have finally gone to the WNBA. What's the big deal? Sure, they can't dominate inside anymore, so they will play a different game with guards Danielle Robinson and Whitney Hand running the Sooners' fast-paced attack.
2. Texas A&M – The Aggies' 15-point loss to Arizona State in last year's Sweet 16 probably still stings, but nothing says a new season more than bringing in fresh blood — especially names people don't know yet. Forward Danielle Adams from Jefferson College was named the Big 12 Preseason Newcomer of the Year.



Adams is expected to replace some of the production lost due to the graduation of Danielle Gant and Takia Starks, a pair of All-Big 12 First-Team players.

3. Texas – Head coach Gail Goestenkors has the Longhorns slowly on the rise and the 2009-2010 basketball season could be their breakout party. Texas features 6-foot senior guard Brittainey Raven and sophomore guard Ashleigh Fontenette. The duo forms what may be the best squad Goestenkors has had in her three years in Austin, Texas.

4. Nebraska – I hate to admit it, but the Cornhuskers could be the surprise of the Big 12. Nebraska returns six seniors, including forward Kelsey Griffin, who missed all of last season after undergoing two foot surgeries. If Griffin returns to her 2007-08 numbers, 15.3 points per game and 7.2 rebounds per game, then Nebraska should have a spot reserved for them in the NCAA Tournament.

5. Baylor – If you haven't seen Griner yet, here's a [sneak preview](#). The freshman phenomenon is 6-foot-8 and judging by the video, she can dunk with ease. Those dunks must have made an impact on the rest of the Big 12 head coaches as they voted Baylor to win the conference. I'm sold on Griner, but not on Baylor taking the conference, especially when they lost four starters from last season.

6. Iowa State – The Cyclones loves to shoot up a storm and there isn't a better one-two punch from behind the three-point arc entering this season than Alison Lacey and Kelsey Bolte. Unfortunately, they might shoot their way down the standings with the graduation of last year's leading gunslinger, Heather Ezell.

7. Colorado – There is no doubt this is a rather lofty perch for a team picked to finish 11th in the Big 12. Bianca Smith is the team's lone senior, but there are a slew of talented juniors such as Brittany Spears and Whitney Houston. If everything goes right — they stay healthy, get continued progression from Spears and hold their own in the post — then they should threatened the top half of the conference.

8. Kansas – McCray can do it all. Last season, McCray was in the conference's top 10 in eight statistical categories and for her efforts, she was named the Big 12 Preseason Player of the Year. But Kansas is ranked this low because the Jayhawks don't have five Danielle McCrays on the team. If they did, they would be as good as the men's team.

9. Kansas State – Outside of missing the NCAA Tournament, the Wildcats had a great season last year as they went 25-8 and won 10 conference games. Now they have to regroup as Shalee Lehning and Marlies Gipson, a pair of All-Big 12 players, have graduated. The Wildcats still have senior forward Ashley Sweat, so maybe they will sweat this season out.

10. Oklahoma State – Riley has the same problem that Kansas' McCray has; they are both the only ballers on their teams. Riley led the Big 12 last season in points per game and minutes played per game, second in assists per game and seventh in steals per game. Where's the calvary when you need them?

11. Texas Tech – There isn't much to brag about with the Lady Raiders. However, they do have a building block in sophomore Kierra Mallard. Hopefully, they can surround her with enough talent where in two years, they can be in contention.

12. Missouri – The difference between Missouri, Oklahoma State and Colorado — the three worst teams in the Big 12 last year — is that the Cowgirls and the Buffs have a stud on their team. Mizzou does not. That's why they belong here.

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