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## Buff's preach defense, mental toughness and leadership

Women's basketball opens season Sunday at home

*By Marlee Horn on November 14, 2009*

The Colorado Buffaloes women's basketball team has a plan.

In preparation for the season-opener, head coach Kathy McConnell-Miller said the team has worked with great emphasis on defense in hopes of allowing more players to score effectively and going deeper into its bench.

The Buffs will look to start the season strong with a win at home when they face UC Irvine at 3 p.m. Sunday in the Coors Event Center.

The interplay of offense and defense is important, according to the team. McConnell-Miller said she wants her team to create offense through defense, and thoroughly execute the philosophy throughout the game.

Beyond the physical aspects, McConnell-Miller said the team will also approach the game with a strong mental outlook.

"I think the mental aspect of it is something that will help us when we enter the Big 12 Conference," McConnell-Miller said. "I think that this team is not a team that focuses on its last possession, they focus on the next possession. They don't draw negatively from their mistakes. They are a team that's always looking forward and always looking ahead."

If the Buffs looked back at last season, it may not have been a pretty sight as they went 11-18. However, the team could feature five new players as well as the return of a floor general.

"Personnel is a lot different," McConnell-Miller said. "I think the mentality of the players is different. We got a mentality with the return of Whitney Houston and the addition of some of the freshmen that we're going to play a higher possession game."

Houston, the junior point guard, redshirted last season because of a torn anterior cruciate ligament in her left knee. After undergoing surgery, Houston is back with more patience, she said.



(CU Independent/Beth Schonberger)

"I was always used to going fast, but now I'm patient," Houston said. "It gives me time to think about what I'm doing before I actually do it – be a smarter point guard."

She said patience will help her create more shots for teammates. It's this kind of leadership that makes McConnell-Miller believe this could be a great season.

"We've got strong leaders," McConnell-Miller said. "I think the ups and downs of a season are something that can wear on you, but this particular group is young and energetic."

With hard work, leadership and chemistry taken to the floor, sophomore forward Julie Seabrook said she is excited to go after a home-opening win.

"Chemistry is probably one of the most important things," Seabrook said. "You've heard them say there's no 'I' in team. To be good teams, you're going to need all those five players on the floor to get a win. If they shut down one person, we can look to other people."

Recently, Seabrook said she's specifically been working on her post moves, strength and outside game. She said she wants to be able to compete against Big 12 post players and hopes the fans take notice of the Bufs' aggressive game.

"I want to put on a good show for the fans, you know," she said. "Hopefully, they will be around the whole season."

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