

# Banged-up Buffs set for Big 12 tournament

## Hempen says team must win league title to advance to NCAAAs

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Shaye Marshall knew her big sister was one of the best soccer players in the country and the face of the Colorado program entering the season.

What the freshman didn't realize, until joining the Buffs roster this summer, was how hard Nikki Marshall practices and plays.

"She's amazing. She works her tail off and she deserves everything she receives," Shaye said. "That's the one thing that surprised me is her work ethic on the field. She just works so hard."

Nikki Marshall scored her 18th career game-winning goal to lead CU to a 2-0 victory over Texas Tech in the regular-season finale last Friday at Prentup Field. The senior All-American's 42 goals and 93 points are CU records.

The older Marshall, a senior, still has her ultimate goal in front of her -- a Big 12 championship.

The Buffs (9-9), who finished third in the conference during the regular season, will likely have to bring the Big 12 Tournament title home with them from San Antonio in order to advance to the NCAA Tournament.

No. 3 CU plays No. 6 Texas in the first round at 1 p.m. today at Blossom Soccer Stadium.

"It's going to be great to be on a neutral field," Nikki said. "I don't know why it was so rough on the road for everyone in the conference, it's interesting. But now there are no excuses. I think we're excited to play on neutral ground and hopefully pull some wins out."

The Buffs lost 1-0 to the Longhorns in Austin on Oct. 25. The winner of the rematch will take on the No. 2 Texas A&M/No. 7 Baylor game (two teams CU also lost to on the road) in the semifinals at 7 p.m. on Friday.

"Realistically, at the very least I think we have to get to the final," CU coach Bill Hempen said when asked what he thought the Buffs needed to do to earn an NCAA berth. "When I sit there on the bench, we've got a lot of kids hurt and they are some pretty key individuals. It's a little putty here and a little spackle there.

"You look around and go, 'Wow, we're pretty young out there and inexperienced under these conditions.'"

Kelly Butler, one of CU's top players, is out with an ankle injury. Starting center back Taryn Vitacca has been out the last month due to an injury, and senior midfielder Mary White suffered a season-ending injury at No. 1 Stanford on Sept. 18.

Freshman Erin Bricker was the latest player to make the most of an opportunity, setting up Nikki Marshall's goal and scoring an insurance goal against Texas Tech.

And during a recent goal-scoring drought, senior goalkeeper Kara Linder was able to keep the Buffs in every match they played.

"My favorite thing is to stand at forward and watch Kara make a phenomenal save," Nikki said. "She's incredible and without her back there we wouldn't be the same. She's definitely one of my favorite people to watch."

Getting a chance to play with her little sister has only made a brilliant CU career even more enjoyable.

"I wouldn't trade it for anything," Nikki said. "I'm so excited that she chose to play here and I'm lucky for the time that I got to play with her. It means a lot.

"And I think it's going to be good for Shaye when I leave because she can kind of do her own thing. We've gotten so much closer, and I think

there`s a good group of young kids out here who are going to step up and really lead. I`m excited to see where they go."

### **All academics**

Seven soccer players landed on Academic All-Big 12 teams.

Seniors Kelly Menachof, Nikki Marshall and Ally Goodman, along with junior Kelly Ross and sophomore Kelly Butler were named first team Academic All-Big 12.

Senior Kara Linder and junior Amanda Foulk were named to the second team.

Marshall and Goodman made the list for the second consecutive year.

First-team members must have a GPA of 3.20 or better and second-team players must have a GPA of at least 3.00.

### **Roby signs**

Former Buff Richard Roby signed with Maccabi Haifa on Tuesday to play basketball in the Israeli Premier League.

Roby, 24, was a four-year starter for the Buffs from 2005-08.

He played in the Israeli Premier League last year, suiting up for Bnei Hasharon, averaging 10 points and 2.6 rebounds per game.

### **Notable**

CU`s volleyball team, winding down a tough season (6-16 overall, 1-12 in the Big 12), hosts Kansas (12-10, 4-8) at 7 p.m. tonight at the Coors Events Center and plays last-place Texas Tech (2-19, 0-12) on Saturday in Lubbock. ...

CU`s tennis team will compete at the ITA National Indoor Championships in Charlottesville, Va., Thursday through Sunday.

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