



RAMSEY: Sierra's Chucky prepares for stardom at CU

[DAVID RAMSEY](#)

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BOULDER - During Chucky Jeffery's dominating, entertaining career at Sierra High School, no one in the state could prevent her from arriving at the rim.

She was too quick, too determined, too strong. She could not be stopped.

And that, strangely enough, is part of her current problem. Jeffery never developed a consistent outside shot because she never needed to develop one.

Jeffery is delivering a superb sophomore season at the University of Colorado. She averages 14.8 points, which is no surprise. She also averages 8.8 rebounds, a shocking number for a slender, 5-foot-10 point guard.

"More times than not," Jeffery said, laughing, "when I tell myself I'm going to get a rebound, I get the rebound."

In many ways, Jeffery's college career resembles her high school career. What she wants, she gets.

This isn't surprising. Jeffery is a superb athlete who starred as a quarterback and linebacker in grade school and junior high on football teams otherwise occupied by boys. Her mother, Alana, still laughs about the wicked hits Chucky delivered on the football field.

She kept dominating when she switched to basketball. As a senior guard/forward/center at Sierra, Jeffery averaged 21 points, nine rebounds, two assists and two blocks. She did everything and did it well.

But she's discovering there are limits to her ability to grab whatever she seeks on the court.

Jeffery is a natural who has worked tirelessly to improve, but one area of the game eludes her.

She struggles with her jump shot. The more distance defenses can put between Chucky and the rim, the less effective she becomes.

When Jeffery takes off on one of her joy rides to the rim, she's moving without a care, but when she prepares to launch a jump shot she starts talking to herself. The natural switches to the thinker, and so far the switch isn't working.

"It's an internal thing," Jeffery said. "I'm always talking to myself, 'You've got to make this.' I question myself, and it's not going to go in because I questioned it."

Jeffery's smile vanished during discussion of her jumper, but a question returned joy to her face.

What wonders could she perform with an effective jump shot?

"I can only imagine," she answered. "I can't say until I get there."

Her coach, Linda Lappe, tilted her head, raised her eyebrows and sighed when she considered the possibility of Chucky with a jumper.

"She becomes one of the better players in our conference," Lappe said.

You can make a strong case she's already arrived near the top of the Big 12. CU lost at Kansas State on Wednesday night, but don't blame Jeffery for the defeat.

She collected 18 points (sinking 8-of-11 shots), seven rebounds, four assists, three steals and no turnovers in 27 minutes.

And she did all that without a reliable jump shot.

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