



## Colorado Student-Athlete Spotlight: Elysse Richardson And Megan Beckwith

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Elysse Richardson and Megan Beckwith have no trouble getting inside each other's heads - and that's a good thing for the pair of freshmen on the Colorado volleyball team.

Richardson and Beckwith have much more in common than their home state. After eventually joining forces on the same club team in Virginia, they have become inseparable to the degree that many new acquaintances mistake them for sisters.



And that misnomer often is strengthened when they finish each other's sentences. They've become that close. *Courtesy: Big12Sports.com*

"During my first year of club we played each other a couple times," said Beckwith, who initially played for the Northern Virginia Volleyball Association (NVVA) before switching to Richardson's Virginia Elite. "It was a huge rival between our two teams, so it was pretty intense when we played them. But once I moved over it was a totally difference experience."

The experience sprouted a life-long friendship. Despite not attending the same high school, these two have spent the majority of their social life with each other on and off the court, which would only continue after they individually chose CU.

Beckwith committed to the Buffaloes in the spring of her junior year, while Richardson was a little more hesitant.

"I was looking at a few other schools, but this one just blew every other one right out of the water," said Beckwith. "The coaches were incredible. The landscape is unbelievable and the team was so welcoming and supportive. I think it was everything put together that helped me make my decision."

Almost six months later, Richardson jumped on board and made her decision to join Beckwith in moving across the nation.

"I didn't copy her," joked Richardson. "I picked it after we both came out here for camp. I loved the coaches, but I didn't really know what the volleyball was going to be like. I was really impressed with the way they ran the camp. I knew I was going to learn a lot and that's what I wanted. In the end I definitely think I made the right choice."

Neither Beckwith nor Richardson knew anyone else attending CU, so they took comfort in each other once move-in day rolled around.

"I'm not going to lie, I was definitely homesick the first week," said Richardson. "There's all the new stuff you're excited for, but I still missed home. It sounds kind of cliché, but the court never changes. It was something familiar that I could go back to. The team is kind of like a family, so it made everything a lot better knowing that I had volleyball. I had my 'family.'"

Beckwith agreed, adding, "Volleyball gives you a constant..." Richardson finished the sentence, "Release."

Both girls believe that having the other on the team has only made them play better during their freshmen campaigns.

"I think it was really cool because we love playing together," said Beckwith. "We know how each other plays and we feed off of one another."

"We have a lot of the same goals," said Richardson. "We want to play at the highest level possible, and we push each other to do really well. When we look at each other, we just know that we are aiming for the same thing."

Beckwith and Richardson are two of 11 freshmen this season on the Buffs roster. Both are listed at the libero position, but Beckwith is also a defensive specialist while Richardson also fills a roll at setter.

Beckwith became the first Buff since 2007 to record at least 30 digs in a single match when she recorded 30 in a five-set win against Montana on Sept. 4. Only six other Buffs have recorded 30 or more digs. She also has recorded 20 or more kills in six matches this season.

Richardson has played 20 matches, logging seven starts and has recorded a career-high 17 digs in two matches.

Despite CU's below average record of 6-15, these two freshmen have set their career goals high.

"Our first goal is to fill this entire place (the Coors Events Center), and also to win the national championship," said Richardson.

Although these two are only in their first season as Buffaloes, they have already mastered one thing that cannot be coached - team chemistry.

"It's indescribable," said Beckwith. "She knows me better than so many other people do because we've been through really hard times and really good times together. Just having that support system here is just incredible..."

"And having someone to rely on is great" Richardson continued. "She loves me for the good and the bad."

"It makes being far away from home so much easier," said Beckwith. "It's like having a piece of your family with you."

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