

Bufs' Schroeder embraces rebuilding

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The future of Colorado volleyball is already on the court.

In many ways Kerra Schroeder, the Big 12's reigning offensive player of the week, is the face of Liz Kritza's program as the Buffs prepare for life in the Pac-12.

The San Diego export has the game and leadership skills to be the foundation of the ongoing rebuilding project.

"I was definitely excited to be a part of that rebuilding process," said Schroeder, who started all 29 matches last season as a true freshman. "I think the coaches and Rosie (Steinhaus), as a senior, they've all done a great job recruiting and pushing us toward being a winning program. That's definitely where we're headed. ...

"I really take it to heart, especially because I came in the same year as coach Kritza."

Schroeder had 35 kills, including 13 in the epic fifth set, during CU's dramatic comeback win at Texas Tech last week. The Buffs trailed 0-2 before winning the next three sets, including a 28-26 fifth set.

"She's a special kid. Already in her sophomore year she has faced challenges many players won't have faced even in their junior and senior years," Kritza said. "She has had to come in and be committed to the overall direction of the program. As a player you have to come to terms with that, and she did that last year. I'm really proud that she has really taken ownership and embraced what is going on around here.

"She could have said, 'This isn't what I signed up for.' Instead, she made it clear she wanted to build this program with us."

The Buffs (6-9, 3-6) host No. 10 Iowa State at 6:30 p.m. today at the Coors Events Center. An upset of a ranked foe would also serve notice that CU is a program on the rise.

"They're a great team, but we are too," Schroeder said. "Like I'm sure I've repeated a million times, it's about running our system and playing our game."

Schroeder's 35 kills against Texas Tech tied for the second-highest total ever by a Buff. The only other two CU athletes to record 35 or more kills are Amber Sutherland (35 vs. Missouri in 2006) and Sarah Lodge (40 vs. Oklahoma in 1996).

"That showed a lot of character and a lot of heart with everyone on our team," Schroeder said of the win in Lubbock, Texas. "It was kind of like, 'This is it. We can't lose.' That was the mindset. ...

"I didn't think it would have been a great flight home if we would have lost that match and I'm proud we won."

For the season, Schroeder, a sophomore outside hitter, ranks fifth in the Big 12 in kills (228, 3.93 per set). The other players in the top 10 include five seniors and four juniors.

"Things couldn't be scripted better for a really great success story for her," Kritza said. "Coming in and making a really huge impact through a transition for the program, and then making a transition into a league that was virtually her hometown, her stomping ground."

Notable

The CU cross country teams are gearing up for the Big 12 Championships on Oct. 30 in Stillwater, Okla. Sophomores Laura Tremblay (second at the NCAA Pre-Nationals) and Joe Bosshard (seventh) were named the conference's runners of the week. ...

The women's cross country team moved up in the national rankings on Tuesday, going from ninth to seventh in the Division I coaches poll. The men, meanwhile, fell from fourth to ninth. ...

The CU track and field program will have its first reunion in 20 years this coming weekend. The reunion falls on the 25th anniversary of the 1985 men's cross country team placing third at the NCAA Championship, as well as the 10th anniversary of the 2000 NCAA women's championship team, CU's first-ever cross country championship team. Over 200 alumni and current athletes are expected to celebrate one of the most decorated track and field/cross country programs in the country with a number of events surrounding Saturday's football game.

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