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CU athlete profile: Shae Kelley

Freshman baller draws attention

By Marlee Horn on October 28, 2010

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Opponents on the court might think Colorado's freshman forward Shae Kelley is all about the business.

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With her rebounding skills, she is an intimidating force on the basketball court.

But outside the arena, Kelley is a jovial jokester.

Kelley said she did not always think she would be playing ball at a university. In fact, it was not until middle school, when her coach greatly inspired her that she really fell in love with the game.

"I didn't really like basketball when I was little," Kelley said. "I didn't start playing until I was in seventh or eighth grade. He's just one of the best coaches I've ever had. He got me really into the game."

Last year, as a senior at Denver East High School, Kelley and her team went all the way to give the school its first ever Colorado Girls' Basketball State Title.

Kelley describes the win at the Coors Events Center as a great and crazy experience.

"The last season [in high school], it was then or never," Kelley said. "I was talking in the summer like, 'I'm going to get me a ring my senior year.'"

She did just that, and now she is ready to win some more at her new home. She says that from the very beginning, she felt comfortable with the team, and the feeling seems to be mutual.

Head coach Linda Lappe said that despite being a freshman, Kelley's already doing a great job on the court and learning new skills every day. Lappe says her strong points are her athleticism, post defense and ability to get to the rim.

Lappe said she believes that one day, Kelley's magnetic personality will make her a great leader.

"She could be a very dynamic leader for us," Lappe said. "I don't think she's quite there yet, just being a freshman and being a couple months into the program, but she has the type of personality that she could be a really positive leader for us."

Senior forward Brittany Spears notes Kelley's energy and athleticism on the court.

"She brings energy and aggressiveness and rebounds," Spears said, while jokingly adding she expects Kelley to dunk soon as well.

Lappe said that everything will come together for the young players and that one day she could be one of the best rebounders that has ever played for Colorado.

"She jumps very, very, very well, which helps her rebounding," Lappe said. "Her tenacity also helps her rebounding. When she really wants the ball, she can get it."

Off the court, Kelley's competitive side cools off, and her joking side comes out.

"She's really goofy and outspoken," Spears said.

Kelley agrees completely and said she loves to hang out with friends and make people laugh.

"I'm silly," Kelley said. "I just say what's on my mind. My mom taught me to never keep anything in and to stand up for yourself and be confident."

In her free time, Kelley said she likes to write poems and listen to music. She enjoys listening to some lesser-known rappers, but said that sometimes it is the slow jams that really get her pumped.

"I like old school songs, you know, some Tupac and Biggie," Kelley said. "Actually, I'm not a mainstream person. I like a lot of underground people. So I listen to Lupe Fiasco, Wiz Khalifa, Mos Def, Common."

After college, Kelley said she hopes to continue playing basketball or maybe even open a restaurant. She also has a business plan to create a youth recreation facility in her neighborhood back home.

In the meantime however, Kelley is ready to bring even more wins to the Coors Events Center.

"We expect to win, and I think that is our mentality going into every game," Kelley said. "We come out with a winning mentality."

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