



Freshman Jasmine Sborov is understanding the game and her role at the right time.
Photo Courtesy: Joel Broida



Brooks: Persistent Sborov Finds Game At Right Time

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BOULDER - Freshman Jasmine Sborov's best night as a member of the University of Colorado women's basketball team reminded her of where she had come from and what she was recruited to do.

It also reinforced a couple of points that have become evident to her coach and teammates: Sborov is as tireless as she is unassuming. Coach Linda Lappe didn't recruit her to score 20 points a game, but if Sborov got half that total - which she did Thursday night against Arizona - of course Lappe could live with it.

"She's going to be a role player offensively . . . anything that she scores is going to be a bonus," Lappe said after CU's 69-59 win. "But defensively she can set the tone for us and it's a huge help to our team . . . From the first game to now, she's probably made the most progress of any player we have."

Her teammates have noticed.

"She's really grown from the first day she stepped on the court," sophomore guard Brittany Wilson said. "She's

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one of our top lifters, along with me Chucky (Jeffery) and Ashley (Wilson). She works hard in every aspect - she's rebounding, doing everything we need her to do. We knew what she could do, but we also know a lot of those girls in that locker room can roll with the best of them."

Wilson said Sborov's perseverance has gained admiration among the Buffs: "I look up to her because she just keeps going; it doesn't matter how much a coach is yelling at her. 'Jas' just keeps fighting, keeps going and doesn't let anything deter her confidence."

A solid 6-footer, Sborov obviously had enough confidence in her offensive game at Red Rock (Texas) High School to average 15 points a game as a senior and be three-time offensive player-of-the-year. But it was her athleticism and physicality - plus her eight rebounds a game and defensive potential - that attracted Lappe and her staff. And the fact that Sborov was Red Rock's four-time hoops MVP and set her school's high-jump record (5-6) also spruced up her resume and looked pretty good to Lappe.

Sborov arrived in Boulder willing to work but obviously needing time to acclimate. Said Lappe: "We saw some good things in Jasmine early. She was almost a deer-in-headlights in the games though."

As a result, Sborov's minutes early in non-conference play - and even when Pac-12 play began - were limited. But a lack of court time didn't push her into a shell in practice.

"She had a great attitude and stayed with it and worked hard," Lappe said. "She's really persevered. I know it's tough when she sees freshmen like Lexy Kresl and Jen Reese playing. She's wanted to learn and has had a passion to be on the floor."

That surfaced against Arizona when Sborov submitted her best performance at CU. She recorded career highs in points (10) and rebounds (seven) and tied her career best in assists (three).

"She has gotten better, more than anything, at knowing when to take a shot and knowing what's a good shot for her, just getting her feet set and knowing where to take shots," Lappe said. "She took some 15-foot jumpers (Thursday); she was playing with a lot of confidence and you like that . . . she just has a better understanding of the game."

Still, Sborov, who hit four of her six field goal attempts and was two-of-three from the free throw line, downplayed her offense against Arizona. "I was just getting back to my roots and doing what I do best, basically just what they recruited me for: rebounding and defense," she said.

Sborov is averaging 2.0 points and 2.3 rebounds in 12.1 minutes. She's played in 20 games (no starts). Those numbers have risen slightly in conference play: 2.7 points, 2.4 rebounds in 12.8 minutes (12 games).

As for the steady improvement she's shown since that early deer-in-the-headlights period, Sborov said she "just had to find myself and slow the game down a little bit for myself, just to feel more comfortable. But my teammates have definitely helped me with that and have kept encouraging me, so it's nice to have them by my side."

It's also nice for Lappe to have a versatile defender and rebounder who is capable of taking a pounding but controlling the ball. Said Lappe: "She can guard a 2, 3, or 4 (position). She's rebounding well even if people are hanging on and grabbing her. She's big and she can jump."

More performances from Sborov like Thursday's would be welcome as the Buffs head into the regular season's home stretch. Disposing of the Wildcats leaves Arizona State (Saturday, 7 p.m.), Utah (Feb. 18), Oregon (March 1) and Oregon State (March 3) on the home schedule.

After a 50-46 loss Thursday night at Utah, the Pac-12 standings find ASU (6-6) tied with USC for fourth, while CU (5-7) is tied with Washington and Oregon for fifth. The Ducks' visit to the Events Center follows the Buffs' final

road trip of the season to play the Pac-12's top two teams - Stanford (12-0) and California (9-3) on Feb. 23-25.

Both teams won in Boulder, with the No. 4 Cardinal cruising 80-54 and the Bears overcoming a 12-point second-half deficit to win 68-55.

But the way the backend of the schedule breaks should be advantageous for the Buffs if they can protect their home court in the final four games. Winning those four would send CU, now 16-7 overall, to the Pac-12 postseason tournament (March 7-12, Los Angeles) with a 20-win regular season.

Tickets for Saturday's game and all remaining home contests can be purchased on-line at CUBuffs.com/tickets or by calling 303-49-BUFFS.

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SHOW MENU



Linda Lappe's CU Buffs hope to finish season strong

First test comes Saturday vs. Arizona State

By **Brian Howell** Buffzone.com
Boulder Daily Camera

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CU women's basketball preview

SATURDAY: The Colorado Buffaloes (16-7, 5-7 Pac-12) host the Arizona State Sun Devils (15-8, 6-6) in a 7 p.m. game at the Coors Events Center.

BROADCAST: Radio - KKZN-760 AM, with Mike Rice doing play-by-play and Carol Callan providing color commentary.

STORYLINES: CU is seeking its second straight win. ... The Buffs also are looking for their first weekend sweep in Pac-12 play. ... ASU has lost three in a row. ... This game matches up two of the top five scoring defenses in the Pac-12, with ASU leading the league (52.9 per game) and CU fifth (58.2). ... CU's plus-6.6 rebounding margin is third in the conference. ... ASU leads the Pac-12 with 5.96 blocked shots per game and is second with 10.35 steals per game. ... The Sun Devils' Deja Mann is the top free-throw shooter in the league (.814). ... CU's Chucky Jeffery needs seven steals to become the ninth player in CU history with 200 for her career. ... Sophomore Brenna Malcolm-Peck is expected to miss her eighth straight game with a knee injury.

KEY STAT: In conference play, the Buffs are 5-1 when their field-goal percentage is .382 or better, and 0-6 when it dips below that mark.

COACHES: Linda Lappe is 34-23 in her second season at CU and

Opportunity is, once again, knocking on the door of the Colorado women's basketball program.

Following Thursday's 69-59 win against Arizona, the Buffs are tied for seventh place in the Pac-12 Conference, with a chance to make a move up the ladder.

Ten of the league's 12 teams have at least five losses at this point. In the topsy-turvy Pac-12, the Buffs are still very much alive for making a run at the top four and earning a first-round bye for the conference tournament.

Four of the last six conference games are at home and all four of those -- including Saturday against Arizona State -- are winnable contests.

Junior Chucky Jeffery said the Buffs regained some confidence with Thursday's win, which snapped a disappointing three-game losing streak.

The key is keeping their confidence and continuing to win. That's where this week could be a boost for the Buffs. Several great days of practice preceded Thursday's performance.

"We're always here every day working hard, whether it's right after a game or whether it's two days before, preparing for a game," sophomore Brittany Wilson said. "Our practice is really intense.

"The girls are really energized and we have our eyes on a goal that we know we have to go out and get."

CU already has faced each of the six teams remaining on its schedule. While the Buffs are 1-5 in those games, that mark is a bit deceiving.

In two of those games (Cal and Oregon), the Buffs held double-digits leads but failed to close out the wins. In two others (Arizona State and Oregon State), the Buffs were buried by dreadful starts.

On Thursday, they showed the fight they will need down the stretch.

"We came back and we fought and kept our head up and we came here and we won this game like we knew we could," Wilson said.

Looking for more

In Saturday's rematch with Arizona State, the Buffs will look to erase the memory of their trip to Tempe on Feb. 11.

In that game, ASU rolled to a 42-9 halftime lead. The Sun Devils shot 62 percent in the first half -- something they haven't done since. The Buffs, meanwhile, shot

84-59 overall. Joseph Anders is 15-8 in his first season as the ASU interim coach and overall.

PROBABLE STARTERS:

Colorado - G Brittany Wilson, 5-7, So., 9.3 ppg, 3.0 rpg, 2.2 apg; G Chucky Jeffery, 5-10, Jr., 15.4 ppg, 7.1 rpg, 4.2 apg; F Meagan Malcolm-Peck, 6-2, Jr., 4.5 ppg, 4.5 rpg; F Jen Reese, 6-2, Fr., 8.1 ppg, 6.2 rpg; F Julie Seabrook, 6-2, Sr., 7.9 ppg, 5.6 rpg. **Arizona State** - G Deja Mann, 5-7, Jr., 7.5 ppg, 3.2 rpg, 3.7 apg; G Micaela Pickens, 5-8, So., 6.1 ppg, 4.1 rpg, 1.9 spg; G Olivia Major, 5-7, Sr., 3.2 ppg, 1.4 rpg; F Kimberly Brandon, 6-2, Sr., 10.5 ppg, 6.6 rpg, 1.7 spg; F Kali Bennett, 6-5, Sr., 8.2 ppg, 6.7 rpg, 2.7 bpg.

SERIES: Colorado leads 9-1, with the only loss coming on Jan. 19 at Tempe, Ariz., 64-43. ASU is making its first trip to Boulder since Dec. 9, 1987.

UP NEXT: The Buffs will be off for a week before hosting Utah on Feb. 18.

12 percent from the floor. It was a perfect storm that put CU in a huge hole.

Points for Sborov

Freshman Jasmine Sborov showed some scoring punch with a career-high 10 points on Thursday. Could she become a top scorer for the Buffs at some point during her career?

"She's always going to kind of a role player offensively probably," head coach Linda Lappe said. "But she can really set the tone for us because she's so physical and she's so strong and she likes to be physical, so that's a huge help to our team."

Pac-12 women's standings

Team Conference Overall

Stanford.....	12-0.....	21-1
California.....	9-3.....	18-6
Oregon St.....	7-5.....	16-7
UCLA.....	7-5.....	12-11
Arizona St.....	6-6.....	15-8
USC.....	6-6.....	11-11
Colorado.....	5-7.....	16-7
Washington.....	5-7.....	13-9
Oregon.....	5-7.....	13-11
Utah.....	4-8.....	11-12
Washington St.....	4-8.....	10-14
Arizona.....	2-10.....	13-11

Saturday's games

Oregon St. at Wash., 1:30 p.m.
Arizona at Utah, 2 p.m.
Arizona St. at Colorado, 7 p.m.
Oregon at Washington St., 9 p.m.
USC at California, 9 p.m.