

Sports

Linda Lappe coaching Colorado women's basketball her way with Ceal Barry's blessing

Posted: 01/19/2012 01:00:00 AM MST

Updated: 01/19/2012 01:33:16 AM MST **By Terry**

Frei

The Denver Post

Posted: 01/19/2012 01:00:00 AM MST

Updated: 01/19/2012 01:33:16 AM MST

BOULDER — At the University of Colorado, associate athletic director Ceal Barry's office is on the second floor of the Dal Ward Center, in the north end zone of Folsom Field.

Women's basketball coach Linda Lappe is headquartered across the campus, in the new office, locker room and practice complex connected to the Coors Events Center.

In reality, Barry's shadow can't stretch that far.

In other, figurative ways, it can.

It's tempting to overstate the relationship between Barry, 56, who in 22 seasons as CU's coach built the program from condescending afterthought to national power before a regression and her move into the athletic department leadership in 2005; and Lappe, 31, a gritty former Buffaloes

standout who after three seasons as Metro State's coach took over for the ousted Kathy McConnell-Miller in 2010.

In fact, Barry and Lappe both emphasize that as mutually respectful as their relationship is, neither one wants or expects this to unfold as a flashback: as Ceal II. This all is slightly complicated by the fact that Barry, working as athletic director Mike Bohn's associate, oversees the men's and women's basketball programs.

"Last year, we didn't talk basketball a whole lot," Lappe said this week in her office. "This year, we haven't talked basketball a whole lot. But what she is good at are all the other little things. I have a whole staff that I talk basketball with. But she knows a lot of the other ins and outs of being successful in this profession and being successful at Colorado. Those are things I draw on a lot of times.

"She had great relationships with the entire university. She knows the people to go to for different things. She's been a huge help in a lot of different ways. I think she's made it a point to say, 'Hey, this is your program; it's



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

not my program anymore.' I look at that as a huge responsibility. I know it's a program she built. I want to make sure that our staff and



Ceal Barry pointed CU women's basketball in the right direction with the help of players such as Linda Lappe (13). (Andy Cross, The Denver Post)

team can maintain and kind of rejuvenate it."

On Monday, Barry gestured at her office window.

"I think it's beneficial that my office is here — beneficial for her and me," Barry said, noting that she hasn't watched an entire practice run by either of the school's second-year basketball coaches, Tad Boyle or Lappe. "But, yeah, I expect her to do well here. I expect her to be our coach for the next 30 years. ... We don't have the sort of relationship where we talk every day. But we have the sort of relationship where if she wants to talk to me, I'm going to be there."

Pingpong for a pledge

Coached by Lappe, the Buffs went 18-16 last season, advancing to the quarterfinals of the Women's National Invitation Tournament. They went 11-0 in nonconference play this

season and are 2-3 in the Pac-12 standings heading into games tonight at Arizona State and Sunday at Arizona. An 80-54 loss to national power Stanford at home last weekend was another reminder that the turnaround is far from complete.

"In coaching, you're only as good as what you did in your last game," Barry said. "Three weeks ago, she was the greatest coach in the world. Now, it was the Stanford game, but that's just the nature of the profession. But as far as her body of work, she's done very well."

Barry went on to praise Lappe's thoroughness in handling all aspects of the job, including such things as becoming an ambassador for the program in the community.

"I think she will get a groundswell of support," Barry said. "We had 4,600 at the Stanford game. That was Stanford, but I think that's support for Linda too."

This all is happening with many in the seats still remembering the new and youthful-



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

looking coach as the fiery and skinny CU player who inspired teammates with her intensity as she fought through serious knee and ankle injuries; refusing to quit, even when doctors suggested it might not be a bad idea.

Barry first scouted Lappe at a summer tournament in Georgia and recruited her as she continued to star for tiny Winfield-Mount Union High School in Winfield, Iowa, near her family home in Morning Sun. This was fewer than 10 years after Iowa finally abandoned its traditional six-on-six game for high school girls, with three members of each team allowed on each side of midcourt.

On a Barry recruiting visit to the Lappe home, she and Linda got into a game of table tennis. Barry said if she won, Linda would have to go to CU. So who won? Well, there is some dispute about that.

"Oh, man, she swears that she (won), but I don't know that that's the case," Lappe said with a smile. "I think she won one game. I think I won two games."

However it came about, Lappe ended up at CU, playing for Barry.

"Passion for the game"

She had a productive four-season career — when she was healthy enough to be on the floor, which was hit-and-miss. After a fearsome knee injury during her sophomore year — her kneecap was broken in half — she rehabilitated by riding a bike up and down Flagstaff Mountain.

Lappe smiles when she looks back at her

naiveté, especially since she didn't look like a "real" Boulder biker. "I had a crappy Schwinn bike that was probably three sizes too small. I didn't have bike shorts. I didn't have bike shoes. I didn't have a helmet," she said.

A serious ankle injury followed, but she made it through her career on guile and grit. A 3.6 GPA student in the business school, she pondered her options.

"After my knee injury, I still wanted to play professionally, overseas, or wherever I could," she said. "But then after my ankle injury, I knew it was never going to happen and I started thinking at that point, 'OK, what am I going to do? Am I going to use my marketing degree or am I going to go into something totally different, or do I want to go into coaching?' "

She also pondered trying to become a physical therapist.

"Linda doesn't wear her heart on her sleeve," Barry said. "She doesn't show a lot of emotions. But when they gave her the news about her ankle and said she might not be



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

able to play again, there were a few tears. ... We had a long talk about her staying with the team and learning what she could learn and maybe in the future think about coaching. She had the passion for the game and the work ethic."

Barry helped her land an assistant coaching job at Drake. A one-season stint at Colorado State as an assistant under former CU assistant Jen Warden followed, and then she got the head coaching job at Metro State.

"There was a great staff camaraderie there," Lappe said. "To tell you the truth, I wasn't looking to leave. I thought I could stay there 10 years. ... I wasn't going to take a Division I job just to take a Division I job. It had to be the right fit."

And that right fit was her alma mater.

"Linda's her own person," said Barry, who was only 28 when she took the CU coaching job. "What we have in common is that she played at Colorado when I was coaching. She's much more serious than I was. We're both stubborn. I think I was mature beyond my years, but she's always been mature. There is no way I would advocate for a 30-year-old to take over at a BCS school unless I thought she had that maturity to handle that intense spotlight that comes with being a head coach at a school like this."

*Terry Frei: 303-954-1895 or
tfrei@denverpost.com*

Line of succession

LINDA LAPPE

Age: 31.

Position: Second season as CU women's basketball coach.

Record: 31-19 overall, 2-3 in Pac-12 this season.

Previous coaching experience: Metro State head coach, 2007-10 (50-36 record); assistant at Drake and Colorado State.

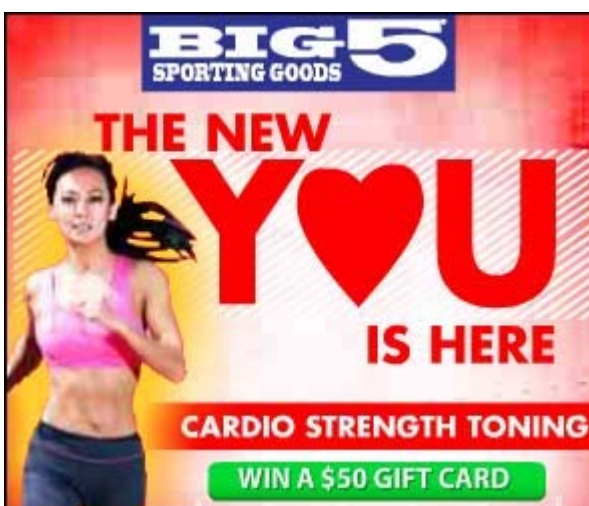
As a CU player for coach Ceal Barry: Two-year captain during injury-plagued career; averaged 7.8 points, 3.7 rebounds and 2.0 assists from 1998-2003.

CEAL BARRY

Age: 56.

Position: CU associate athletic director, senior woman administrator.

Previous coaching experience: CU women's basketball coach from 1983-2005 (427-242 record); coach at Cincinnati 1979-83 (83-42).



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

Current role: Oversees men's and women's basketball, women's golf, women's soccer, sports medicine, strength and conditioning, academics and student wellness.



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

Women's basketball: CU Buffs' Kresl looking for scoring touch

Freshman hopes to find it in home state

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

Posted: 01/18/2012 07:39:58 PM MST



Ever since Pac-12 play began, Colorado's Lexy Kresl has found scoring to be a difficult task.

The freshman from Paradise Valley, Ariz., has averaged just 6.0 points per game, on 24-percent shooting (11-for-45) in five conference games. She's hitting just 19 percent of her 3-pointers (5-for-26) in those games.

For a variety of reasons, Thursday's 11 a.m. game at Arizona State would be a good day for Kresl to find her stroke again.

"I think I just have to be able to read my defenders a little bit better and I have to find other ways to score," she said.

In non-conference play, Kresl averaged 12.3 points per game, while hitting 47 percent of her shots (46-for-97), including 39 percent (25-for-64) beyond the 3-point arc.

"I've definitely been scouted and people are learning how to play me, so I just need to adjust," she said. "They've definitely played to my strengths and tried to make me use my weaknesses.

"It's frustrating, but I just need to focus on the things I'm not doing right and try to improve. If I can't hit my shot then I need to do other things in the game to make an impact."

Kresl hopes to make a big impact Thursday when the Buffs (13-3, 2-3 Pac-12) look to snap a two-game skid. She grew up in the Phoenix area and knows many of the Arizona State (11-5, 2-3) players well.

"It's always been a goal of mine to beat ASU," she said.

She'll have plenty of fans on hand cheering her on, including family and former high school and club teammates.

"I'm trying to get every ticket I can," she said. "It's important because that was one of the reasons I chose to come here, so I could play in front of some people from Arizona every once in a while."

While Kresl needs to get her offense cranking again, she knows the most important thing today is helping the Buffaloes, as a team, get back on track. After a 12-0 start, the Buffs are 1-3 in their last four. They lost both games last week, at home.

"We know it's definitely a need to win game," Kresl said. "We need to start playing our best again so we can win games. We should be blowing teams out, a few of them. We need to get back to how we play."

In part, that means having Kresl -- or someone else -- pick up some scoring. Chucky Jeffery has been CU's leader all year, but recent games have highlighted the fact that CU doesn't have that second prolific scorer.

"Yeah, it is (important) because we need somebody else that can help with the scoring load with Chucky," Kresl said.

The Buffs also need to return to playing well in their two biggest areas of strength: defense and rebounding. The Buffs did a solid job on the boards last week against California and Stanford, but rebounding and defense were lacking at key points of both games.

"We have to do what we do," said CU assistant LaTonya Watson, who was the Buffs' chief scout for the ASU game. "You can't keep changing your hat every time you see a new opponent. Whatever it is you're known for, whatever it is that is your identity, you've got to do it. You've got to stick to it and you've got to execute it."

Watson said the Sun Devils are a "pretty solid" team. They rely on their post players, but their signature has been defense.

"Defensively, they put a lot of pressure on the ball," Watson said.

It's nothing the Buffs won't be ready for, considering they've faced a lot of defensive pressure to this point in conference play.

"We've had enough games to prep us for similar type of pressure," Watson said. "It's a matter of getting out there and executing the things that we talk about in our game plan. I think our kids are hungry to get back on the winning track. I'm looking for them to have a lot more fight and to battle."

Kresl for sure will be ready to fight and battle.

"I'm excited to go home," she said.

CU women's hoops preview

THURSDAY: The Colorado Buffaloes (13-3, 2-3 Pac-12) visit the Arizona State Sun Devils (11-5, 2-3) in an 11 a.m. game at the Wells Fargo Arena in Tempe, Ariz.

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

STORYLINES: Colorado looks to snap a two-game losing streak. The Buffs are 1-3 in their last four games after a 12-0 start. ... The game is an early start because ASU is holding its sixth annual "Sparky's Kids to College Field Trip Day," so several thousand grade-school kids are expected to be in attendance. ... The Buffs are 6-1 in their last seven road games. ... ASU had lost three straight before knocking off Oregon on Saturday. ... The Sun Devils rank No. 1 in the Pac-12 in scoring defense (allowing 52.8 points per game) and field-goal percentage defense (holding opponents to 33 percent shooting). ... Colorado's Lexy Kresl went to high school in nearby Paradise Valley. ... ASU freshman Eliza Normen is from Monarch High School in Louisville.

KEY STAT: Colorado is 12-0 when out-rebounding its opponents. The Buffs have a plus-9.1 average for the season.

COACHES: Linda Lappe is 31-19 in her second season at CU and 81-55 overall. Joseph Anders is 11-5 in his first season as ASU's interim coach and 11-5 overall.

PROBABLE STARTERS: Colorado -- G Chucky Jeffery, 5-10, Jr., 16.3 ppg, 8.0 rpg, 4.2 apg; G Lexy Kresl, 5-11, Sr., 10.3 ppg, 3.8 rpg; F Meagan Malcolm-Peck, 6-2, Jr., 5.0 ppg, 4.9 rpg; F Julie Seabrook, 6-3, Sr., 8.4 ppg, 5.6 rpg; C Rachel Hargis, 6-4, So., 4.8 ppg, 4.2 rpg. **Arizona St. --** G Deja Mann, 5-7, Jr., 6.6 ppg, 3.7 rpg, 3.9 apg; G Olivia Major, 5-7, Sr., 3.7 ppg, 1.4 rpg; G Alex Earl, 5-10, Sr., 4.4 ppg, 2.3 rpg, 1.9 apg; F Kimberly Brandon, 6-2, Sr., 9.9 ppg, 7.3 rpg, 1.6 spg; C Kali Bennett, 7.7 ppg, 6.7 rpg, 2.5 bpg.

SERIES: CU leads 9-0, including 3-0 in Tempe.

UP NEXT: Colorado returns to the Grand Canyon State to take on Arizona on Sunday.

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)