

Brittany Spears headed to Spain

Former Buff will try to earn way back to WNBA through Europe

By Joshua Lindenstein Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:07/13/2011 11:05:20 PM MDT

The sting of getting cut stayed with Brittany Spears for awhile after the WNBA's Phoenix Mercury released her just prior to the start of the regular season last month.

In her mind, the Colorado Buffaloes' all-time leading scorer on the basketball court felt she had a great shot to make the team, especially when she made it all the way through training camp before being one of the last two players cut.

Looking back now, Spears can see the areas where she needed to improve. And with a gig to play in Spain lined up, she's not wasting any time sulking.

"I feel like it was a good experience because now I know what to expect when I go back," Spears said in an interview with the Camera on Wednesday.

Spears, who commutes to class from Denver each day, returned to Colorado last week for the second session of summer school as she works to finish up the final few credit hours toward her bachelor's degree. The stop is her first back in the Centennial State since she left for Mercury training camp in May, and she won't be here long.

The 6-foot-1 forward from Pasadena, Calif., will leave for Spain in September to play for Mariana Joventut in Soller on the island of Majorca. And while the WNBA was her life dream, Spears will be making more money playing overseas and will have the chance to hone her skills in time to try out with a WNBA club again next year.

"I'm really excited," Spears said. "I'm just looking forward to going over there."

With all of the euphoria surrounding getting drafted in the second round, Spears admits that she got caught up a bit in the fantasy of playing in the WNBA -- sometimes getting star-struck by the players in camp around her and other times trying too hard to out-do the people with whom she was competing for roster spots.

Spears said she feels like she's prepared physically to play at any level. Now she'll take more confidence into her next training camp, along with a different mindset.

"Just going in there not worrying about anyone but myself and going in there focused," said Spears, who finished her CU career with 2,185 points.

In reality, Spears' situation is pretty common. Few rookies, even those who are drafted, make WNBA rosters. Fewer than 20 players in their first summer out of college made one of the league's 12 teams this year.

Spears said Mercury coach Corey Gaines used Phoenix player Alexis Gray-Lawson as an example of what Spears' path could look like if she improves her ball-handling and overall consistency. Gray-Lawson was drafted by the Washington Mystics last year and was cut, but ended up earning a spot with Phoenix this year as a free agent.

"He said, 'You'll play in this league but you just need to get more experience playing overseas,'" Spears said.

But Gaines also told Spears she had too many "rookie moments." So rather than heading home, Spears went straight to San Mateo, Calif., to spend June with former CU teammate Britney Blythe's family, where she got busy working out every day with Blythe's dad, who is a coach.

CU coach Linda Lappe said the need to play at your top level every day is one she and her coaching staff tried to impart on all of their players in their first year leading the Buffs, an up and down 18-16 campaign. The concept is one Lappe said she thinks Spears has a better grasp of now given her training camp experience.

Despite the disappointment of getting cut, Lappe echoed Gaines' sentiments that Spears' first training camp doesn't have to be her last if she doesn't let it.

"That's the best thing I wanted her to realize is that it's not the end-all," said Lappe, who noted the perks of getting to see the world and compete in Europe where there are more playing opportunities. "She's got a great opportunity in Spain and she's going to have a long and great career playing overseas. And hopefully she'll get another shot at the WNBA."

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

- [Home](#)
- [About](#)
 - [Brian Miller](#)
 - [Melinda Banks](#)
 - [Raymond T. Rivard](#)
- [Draft](#)
- [More!](#)
- [Packer Links](#)
- [Schedule](#)
- [Store](#)
- [Log in](#)
- [Register](#)

Lockout News & Updates

Visit CSN Chicago For News & Status Updates On The Football Lockout
www.csnchicago.com

Jul 14th 2011

Packers Super Bowl Gear

Green Bay Packers Super Bowl XLV Merchandise, Apparel, & Souvenirs.

FootballFanatics.com/Super_E AdChoices ▶

Crosby wants the ball in his hands

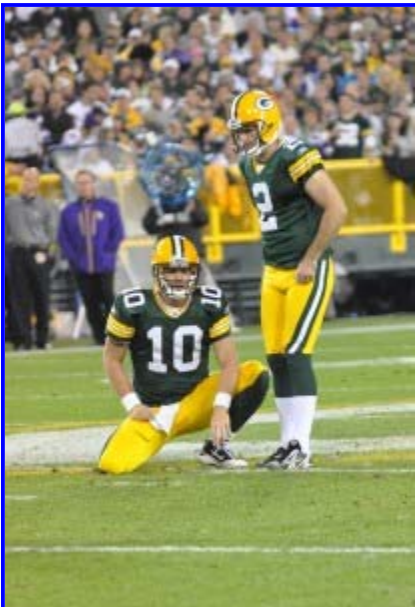
AUTHOR: [apackphan](#) | IN: [Player interview](#) | COMMENTS: [None Yet](#) |

By Douglas Etten

detten@tahoedailytribune.com

6

Like



Mason Crosby lines up for an attempt at a 52-yard field goal against the Minnesota Vikings last season. The Packers surprised everyone when placeholder Matt Flynn took the snap and lofted a pass toward a wide open tight end Andrew Quarless. However,

the rookie tripped on the play and the ball fell incomplete. Raymond T. Rivard photograph

EDGEWOOD TAHOE — Most NFL kickers are going to admit they want the ball and game in their hands in a crucial fourth down.

For Mason Crosby of the NFL Super Bowl champion Green Bay Packers, his wanting the ball came in a little different way one October night.

It was fourth-and-seven from the Vikings' 37-yard line.

Inside a heated rivalry game, Green Bay was doing all they could to put the dagger deep in the chest of Brett Favre and the Minnesota Vikings.

Green Bay and head coach Mike McCarthy wanted to put points on the board, and so they called on Crosby for a 52-yard attempt, easily within the range of the booming right-legged kicker.

Matt Flynn was the holder. As the snap came back he rose from his knee and fell back into the pocket. To his left was a wide-open Andrew Quarless — sprinting toward the pylon. Most Packers fans remember watching as the tight-end stumbled to the ground, sucking the air out of Lambeau on a play that could have ended all suspense before the mid-game break.

Good play call; poor execution.

And if Crosby had anything to say about it, he was the better option on the play. And not how most would have expected it.

"It was a called play that we had worked on, and it came in a situation where we felt like it was a great opportunity to take control of the game," Crosby said. "I was a little bummed it didn't work because obviously it would have been a pretty sweet play. I wish I would have gotten the ball. I was on the backside and probably would have been good for a jump ball."

Hindsight is 20-20 and Crosby has a lot of it looking back to the Packers championship run.

"No doubt it was a special year," he said. "Obviously we had a lot of injuries, but everyone just kind of took their roles and ran with it."

Crosby was elected a captain of the team late in the season, and carried the team's "C" on his jersey through the playoffs and into the Super Bowl.

"It was a great honor, but we had so much good leadership on that team that no one was really taking a back seat," he said. "We kind of all had a common goal and worked really hard — both as a group and individually — to get there."

Speaking from the Reno-Tahoe Airport where he and teammates Aaron Rodgers and A.J. Hawk were waiting for a charter to Los Angeles for the Wednesday night ESPY Awards, Crosby talked about how being in Tahoe for the American Century Championship gives him a way of keeping up with the competitive spirit of the off-season during the on-going NFL lockout.

"It's so awesome to be out there," he said. "(Edgewood) is a beautiful course. I got a little practice round in (Tuesday) and it will be fun being out there with guys like Aaron and A.J. Aaron was already trash-talking Monday saying how he's going to be the snot out of me, so that's a little challenge I've got on my radar."

Crosby said he took a little time off after the Super Bowl win, enjoying some time with his family back down in Texas and of course, Colorado, near where he attended college in Boulder City.

"It's always good to spend some time out of the cold," he said. "I started getting back into a little bit of routine and tried my best to follow the off-season the way it would have been up in Green Bay. I've been trying to make the off-season as normal as possible. I have been back in Green Bay for about a month and a half now kicking at a local college and getting as many reps in as possible to get ready for when this thing ends."

Being a cold-weather kicker, Crosby looks forward to when the snow starts flying that he might be able to simulate as many situations as possible. Also on his mind of course is his contract which last year saw a significant increase, drawing criticisms from some who say he was rewarded for mediocrity.

Now in his fourth season, under the terms of his contract he is to become an unrestricted free agent once the lockout ends. Green Bay, however, has indicated that they want to re-sign the kicker and Crosby has heard nothing different.

"My hope is to be in Green Bay. I hope we can get a deal done and obviously win some more championships," he said.

"Now it's just a waiting game though."

Crosby has had contact with some of his teammates this off-season. Heading to the ESPY Awards obviously gave him time to talk with guys like Rodgers and Hawk who all share the same goal coming back to the coming season.

"Obviously [winning the championship] is the goal every year. The biggest key to us is to somewhat forget about that we

won it last year and put our mind into a new season,” he said. “Every year is a bit different. We just have to get our minds right and focus on a new challenge.”



Mason Crosby has a good time with fans in Lake Tahoe Wednesday morning. Douglas Etten photograph

Crosby’s big challenge this week comes at Edgewood Tahoe Golf Course where he, Rodgers and Hawk are representing their team in one of the largest and most well attended celebrity golf outings in the world.

“It’s going to be fun to have that competition because of how the off-season’s been. Not being able to be with the guys and having some of that friendly competition on the practice field is something I think we all miss,” Crosby said. “It will be fun to see who can take it to who out there.”

Both Crosby and Rodgers are 50:1 odds to win the tournament in Tahoe this week. Hawk is listed as 200:1.

Doug Etten is sports editor at the [Tahoe Daily Tribune](#) in South Lake Tahoe, Calif.

« [Previous Post](#)
[Next Post](#) »

- [ShareThis](#)
- [6](#)
- [Like](#)
- [0](#)

[Leave a Comment](#)

More Popular Stories

- [Roddy White: Open mouth, insert foot | \(4\) Comments](#)
- [A look ahead, post-lockout | \(4\) Comments](#)
- [Pass and catch – Packers fourth? | \(3\) Comments](#)
- [Is Ryan Grant a lock as a starter? | \(2\) Comments](#)

Email Subscribe

Enter your email below to join our community.

enter email address

[Subscribe](#)

- [Subscribe by RSS Feed](#)
- [Follow us on Twitter](#)