

Reese looks to stand tall for Lappe`s Buffs

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For a Parade All-American, Jen Reese is about as humble as it gets.

The Colorado women`s basketball team`s freshman post player is reticent to talk about herself. And if she does, she is quick to qualify her remarks with something related to the team or hard work.

That doesn`t mean she`s scared to aim high.

Asked what sort of legacy she and her classmates would like to leave at CU as the first full recruiting class under head coach Linda Lappe, Reese goes into the hard work that needs to be done. Then she sets the bar with a goal she and teammates have talked about this summer: Beat new Pac-12 Conference rival Stanford.

"They`re an amazing team and kudos to them for everything they`ve done," Reese told the Camera recently during a break between an informal team workout and summer school. "... We`re going for them."

The Buffaloes no doubt have a lot of progress to make before they can rival one of the nation`s premier programs.

But after a WNIT quarterfinal run last season, there is at least optimism once again that the program is headed in the right direction.

And if the Buffs are to keep improving, the 6-foot-2 Reese`s services might prove invaluable this year, even in a freshman class full of players who have the potential to make an impact right away.

Think Minnesota Timberwolves center Kevin Love, Lappe suggests. The athleticism and quickness might not jump out at you. But Reese can put the ball in the basket.

The asset is one CU has lacked inside in recent years, and it often cost the Buffs when they played against the formidable front lines in the Big 12 Conference. With no dangerous scoring threat down low, the Buffs were often forced to rely solely on the perimeter game.

"Jen definitely will give us a low block presence, which we didn't really have consistently last year," said Lappe, who won't be able to start working directly with her players until school begins. "She's really solid from 15 feet and in."

The addition of Reese gives the Buffs a pair of true post players alongwith 6-4 sophomore Rachel Hargis -- two more than they had just two years ago.

Hargis' game developed dramatically her freshman year. But known more for her imposing defensive presence in the lane, Hargis' offensive game is still evolving.

That's what could make the combination of her and Reese a nice 1-2 punch in years to come.

A good passer with soft hands who sees the floor well, Reese averaged more than 20 points per game her junior and senior years for Clackamas High School in grabbing Gatorade Oregon Player of the Year honors both seasons. Even with her club team against the best players in the country, Lappe said Reese held her own.

"Her game didn't change much and that's what you like to see as you evaluate players," Lappe said.

All of that said, Reese has some polishing to do. For one thing, Lappe said, she's got to develop into a better defensive player, something the current coaching staff demands of everyone who steps on the floor.

Reese is the first Parade All-American to join the Buffs since Alyssa Fressle did so in 2008 before transferring to Boston College prior to last season.

But Reese also understands that none of her accolades mean much once official workouts begin.

"I wanted to come to a school where I could get playing time," Reese said. "But you have to earn it and I knew that. I want to earn my spot on the team. (The freshmen) know that all four of us have to work hard and earn that."

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