

CU Buffs name Ann Elliott first women's lacrosse coach

Coach has been part of five college national championship teams

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

Posted: 03/26/2012 07:05:51 PM MDT



Enthusiasm certainly wasn't lacking Monday afternoon at the University of Colorado.

Chancellor Philip DiStefano and athletic director Mike Bohn beamed as they introduced women's lacrosse coach Ann Elliott, who couldn't hide her excitement about leading CU's newest team.

"Building a program from the ground up has always been a dream of mine," she said. "To come out here to Colorado, to CU, it's an incredible opportunity for me."

Women's lacrosse will become CU's 17th intercollegiate sport when it begins play in the spring of 2014. It's the first time CU has added a sport in 16 years, DiStefano said.

In Elliott, the Buffaloes believe they've got the ideal coach to help CU capitalize on a rapidly expanding sport.

"You start thinking about passion for the sport," Bohn said about the search for a head coach. "You start thinking about someone who eats, drinks and dreams lacrosse and I think that we've found that coach."

Bohn and his staff brought four candidates to Boulder for interviews. Bohn cited character, poise and competitive spirit, in addition to "shared values with the institution" as reasons why Elliott was hired.

Elliott certainly has a winning pedigree. Just 27, she's already been a part of five national championships at the collegiate level. As a player at Northwestern, from 2004-07, she helped the Wildcats to a 77-5 overall record and three national

championships.

She is currently in her fourth season as an assistant for legendary Wildcats coach Kelly Amonte Hiller. As of today, the Wildcats are 9-0 and ranked No. 1 in the country. They are 73-4 overall with two national championships during Elliott's tenure as an assistant coach.

"I have a lot of confidence coming from that program to know that this is something I can do and understand that it's a process," Elliott said. "It's going to take a lot of work on all ends, but it's going to be exciting and it's fun."

Part of the enthusiasm stems from the fact that the state of Colorado has proven itself to be a lacrosse hotbed.

Nearly 50 high schools sponsor girls lacrosse teams and many of the top prep players wind up with Division I scholarships.

At the college level, Denver University is currently ranked No. 10 in the country in men's lacrosse. DU, Regis and Air Force already field women's teams.

"I think it's a tremendous sport and I think people are just becoming more and more aware of it everywhere," Elliott said.

An existing lacrosse fan base, as well as curiosity about the sport, is sure to benefit CU in the early going. Elliott also relishes the opportunity to take the sport to the Boulder community and increase the fan base before the Buffs even set foot on the field.

"I want to be as involved in the community as possible," she said. "To be able to share it with the community is going to be a huge priority of mine. Whether it's explaining the rules or actually coaching, any bit of it I'm looking forward to doing."

CU is hoping to gain a following on television, as well.

"Given lacrosse's popularity, I believe CU and our four Pac-12 lacrosse counterparts are going to get plenty of air time on the new Pac-12 network," DiStefano said.

Currently, Stanford, California and Oregon are the only Pac-12 schools with women's lacrosse teams. Southern Cal added the sport in 2010 and will begin play next year. CU will join its Pac-12 mates in the Mountain Pacific Sports Federation. In addition to the Pac-12 schools, the MPSF includes DU, Fresno State, San Diego State and St. Mary's (Calif.).

Joining the MPSF and fielding a women's lacrosse team for the first time is something Elliott and the rest of the CU athletic department is eagerly anticipating.

"I think there's something very special about being the first program, the first head coach and really being able to establish that culture, that foundation on which a program can build for several years after," she said.

For Elliott, it's been quite a journey to this point.

Growing up in Shaker Heights, Ohio, just outside of Cleveland, she participated in several sports before discovering lacrosse as an eighth grader. She then flourished in high school before becoming a star defender at Northwestern, which was a young program at the time of her arrival. She's also experienced success as a coach, including helping New Trier High School to a 2008 Illinois state championship.

Now, she's ready to see the birth of the CU program and, hopefully, the success of the CU program.

"I've learned it's really about the small things, building a culture that everyone is kind of buying into the same principles," she said. "I know how special it is to be a part of that first national championship, to see something grow into a national championship contender and to have to pride in all the hard work it takes."

Close Window

Send To Printer

RINGO: Family ties help lure coach to CU

Camera staff
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 03/26/2012 11:49:42 PM MDT

Some days and old memories stick out for Karen Tucker as her first clues that her daughter, Ann Elliott, might be destined for big accomplishments.

Those memories flowed through Tucker's mind Monday afternoon as she sat in the front row at a press conference on the club level at Folsom Field on the University of Colorado campus watching her youngest child introduced as the first head coach of the school's new women's lacrosse program.

"We all are very proud of her," Tucker said.

Perhaps the first time Tucker realized she might have her hands full with little Ann was during a simple mother-daughter trip to the shopping center in Shaker Heights, Ohio, where Ann was raised. Ann was 2 at the time and she and her mother were waiting at a crosswalk.

Karen looked down at her daughter and asked for her to hold hands. Ann refused. Karen told her daughter she had to hold hands to cross the street. Ann looked up at her mother clasped her own hands together and said, "I'll hold my own hands."

"That's when I said, 'This kid is going to be something,'" Tucker said.

A few years later, Tucker received a phone call from Ann's kindergarten teacher who wanted her to come in for a talk. When Karen arrived for the meeting wondering what her daughter might have done wrong, she was surprised to learn the teacher only wanted to inform Ann's parents that their daughter was already showing signs of superior athletic ability and understanding of games compared to her classmates.

"Ever since she was born," her mother said of Elliott's competitive spirit. "No challenge went unmet and there was nothing she couldn't do and she was going to do it by herself. She was very strong-willed and very competitive. She loves games and challenges."

Ann Elliott accepted, perhaps, her biggest challenge so far late last week when she decided to leave her position as associate head coach of the six-time national championship women's lacrosse program at Northwestern in order to start from scratch building a program in Boulder.

"Building a program from the ground up has always been a dream of mine," Elliott said after being introduced by, associate athletic director Julie Manning, chancellor Phil DiStefano and athletic director Mike Bohn.

Elliott said she was attracted to the Colorado job because it is a start-up but also because of the reputation of the school and the Boulder community and the quality of life it all could provide.

What she didn't mention in her press conference was the family tie to the school that also tugged at her heart when she first heard CU was joining the stampede to add a team in the fastest growing NCAA sport.

Elliott's older brother, Mike, attended CU and graduated with a degree in political science and economics in 2004. Ann never was able to visit her brother in Boulder while he was in college because she was so busy with her own endeavors as a goalie for a club ice hockey team that played for a national title one year as well as playing lacrosse.

Ann's parents say her brother would have been thrilled to see his little sister don black and gold in her new role Monday, but two years ago this April he died during a rock climbing accident.

"When I heard CU was starting a lacrosse program, there was definitely a part of me that thought that was something special and there was something that was meant for me to come out this way and try to see what this opportunity was all about," Ann Elliott said. "If I was fortunate enough to get the head coaching job, then it was meant to be and there was something special about it."

The little girl who grew up rooting for the Cleveland Browns and Cleveland Indians and the Detroit Red Wings isn't taking the easy way out either. Instead of resigning from Northwestern to settle into her new role in Boulder, she will begin building the Buffs this spring while also continuing in her role as associate head coach at Northwestern hoping for another national title, what would be her sixth.

Her mother and father, Mike, and step-father, Bob, all are obviously biased in their opinions. But they believe Colorado will be happy to have their daughter. They say she is tough but fair, determined and smart, driven and fun-loving. And she knows how to win.

"She was good at everything she did," her father Mike Elliott said. "Growing up, typical in a girl's world, she had to play with the boys. In baseball she played with the boys. They would bring the outfield in and she'd hit it over their heads. She was always a great athlete."

As she walks the hallways back at Northwestern in the coming weeks, her fellow coaches and staff members might hear her humming a tune. She is in the process of learning the CU fight song.

"I was told I wouldn't have to sing it today," Elliott joked Monday.

That moment brought the biggest laugh of the day, but everyone in the room was hoping they will hear Elliott and the players she brings to Boulder sing their tune plenty in the future.

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



Ann Elliott Named Head Coach for New Colorado Program

BOULDER - **Ann Elliott**, who has been a part of five NCAA championships as a player and assistant coach at Northwestern University, has been named the first head coach of the University of Colorado's new program, athletic director Mike Bohn announced Monday.

Elliott, 27, will take the reins of what will become the Buffaloes' 17th intercollegiate sport after the conclusion of the season at Northwestern. She can recruit for the Buffaloes in the meantime. Colorado officially added lacrosse in early February and will begin play in the spring of 2014.

In her fourth year as an assistant, and her first as the associate head coach at Northwestern, she has played a significant role in the Wildcats' current No. 1 national ranking and 9-0 record. That mark includes three wins to open the season over top 10 teams, all on the road. Northwestern was 73-4 with her as a coach, after recording a 77-5 mark when she was a player.

"Our athletic enterprise is enhanced dramatically with the addition of head coach Ann Elliott and the exciting sport of lacrosse," Bohn said. "She embodies the leadership and passion of all the wonderful aspects of being a Buff. Her vision of the program is dynamic and ambitious while consisted with our guiding principles."

A three-time national champion as a player at Northwestern, she was promoted to associate head coach prior to the start of the 2012 season after three years as an assistant to Kelly Amonte Hiller. As a player and aide under Hiller, who is considered to be one of the nation's top coaches and recruiters, Northwestern has appeared in the NCAA title game for seven years running, winning six titles, including the three as a player and two as member of the staff.

Hiller is in her 12th season at Northwestern, and Elliott was the first to ever be promoted to the associate level. She was primarily responsible for coordinating the Northwestern defense, a unit that in 2011 limited opponents to fewer than 10 goals in five of six postseason games en route to the national title. That included holding top-seeded Maryland, the nation's fourth-ranked offense, to just seven goals in an 8-7 NU victory in the national title game. In 2009, Elliott's first season on the staff, Northwestern allowed just 6.87 goals per game for the year, second best in the country, and caused 188 turnovers.

"I'm extremely excited and honored for the opportunity to become Colorado's first head coach," Elliott said. "I'd like to thank Mike, Ceal (Barry) and Julie (Manning) for giving me this opportunity and the staff at Northwestern, Kelly (Amonte Hiller), her husband Scott and athletic director Jim Phillips for allowing me to pursue this opportunity during the season. I can't wait to get out here and get started, I can't think of a better place to start a program than at CU."

After graduating from Northwestern with a B.S. degree in Radio, Television and Film in 2007, Elliott served as the head coach of the Wildcat Elite Club and the Wildcat Developmental Team for Amonte Sports. She also spent one season as an assistant coach for New Trier High School, helping the Trevians to the 2008 state championship.

She was also actively involved in Amonte Sports since her playing days at Northwestern, serving as a camp counselor as well as heading the development of New Wave lacrosse clinics for the organization and WomensLax.com, coordinating youth and high school clinics across the country. She also utilized her major, doing extensive work in video production for Amonte.

As primarily a defender during her collegiate career, she played in 72 games, including starts in 63 of a possible 64 her sophomore through senior years. As a senior and team captain in 2007, she was An Inside Lacrosse third-team All-America selection, when she was a key member of a defensive unit that allowed a NCAA-low 6.1 goals per game, with opponents scoring in double figures only twice. She played an important role on Northwestern's 2005, 2006 and 2007 national championship teams, scoring 14 goals, causing 44 turnovers and scooping up 101 ground balls. She earned four varsity letters and was a three-time Academic All-Big Ten team member.

She is the second Northwestern product who is a head coach in the Pac-12 Conference; her former teammate, Lindsey Munday, was named head coach last year at Southern California, which will begin play next spring. Munday was one year ahead of Elliott at Northwestern.

Bohn and associate athletic director Ceal Barry initially handled recruiting for the program, which has already received several commitments (though no one can sign a letter of intent until the November signing period. Elliott will now assume those duties.

Ann Elliott Named First Head Coach of Colorado Women's Lacrosse 2007 NU alum will remain on staff at Northwestern through 2012 campaign

March 26, 2012

Watch Elliott's Introductory Press Conference -- CUBuffs.com

EVANSTON, Ill. -- Northwestern associate head coach **Ann Elliott**, a member of the NU coaching staff since 2009 and a former standout defender for the Wildcats, was introduced Monday as the first head coach of the University of Colorado women's lacrosse program. Elliott will remain on staff with Northwestern for the duration of the 2012 campaign.

Colorado officially added women's lacrosse as its 17th varsity sport in February and will begin Division I competition in the spring of 2014.

As a player and coach at NU, Elliott has been a part of five of the Wildcats' six NCAA championship-winning teams. Northwestern head coach **Kelly Amonte Hiller** announced Elliott's promotion to associate head coach prior to the 2012 season.

"Our athletic enterprise is enhanced dramatically with the addition of head coach **Ann Elliott** and the exciting sport of lacrosse," said Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn. "She embodies the leadership and passion of all the wonderful aspects of being a Buff. Her vision of the program is dynamic and ambitious while consisted with our guiding principles."

Elliott is the third former player under Amonte Hiller to join the Division I head coaching ranks, joining **Angela McMahon** of Massachusetts and **Lindsey Munday** of Southern Cal. Both Elliott and Munday also spent time as an assistant to Amonte Hiller.

"I'm extremely excited and honored for the opportunity to become Colorado's first head coach," Elliott said. "I'd like to thank the staff at Colorado for giving me this chance and the staff at Northwestern, Kelly (Amonte Hiller), **Scott Hiller** and athletic director Jim Phillips for allowing me to pursue this opportunity, particularly during the season. I've been fortunate to work with so many unbelievable players, coaches and staff at Northwestern and I'm truly grateful to them for helping me get to today."

"**Kelly Amonte Hiller** has been one of my great mentors over the course of my career, first as a coach to me and then as someone that I worked alongside," Elliott said. "It's been my dream to build a program and I learned from Kelly that it's a process and that to get where you want to go you have to be willing to put in the time. There are a lot of ups and downs along the way but it's really about how you respond to it, taking things head-on with a positive attitude. I've learned a lot recently about the CU athletic department and the values and principles they've established, and it was really neat to see how many of those values are in line with what I've established for myself and what I learned at Northwestern."

In her time on staff at Northwestern, Elliott was primarily responsible for coordinating the Wildcats defense, a unit that in 2011 limited opponents to fewer than 10 goals in five of six postseason games en route to the national title. That included holding top-seeded Maryland, the nation's fourth-ranked offense, to just seven goals in an 8-7 NU victory in the national title game. In 2009, Elliott's first season on the staff, Northwestern allowed just 6.87 goals per game for the year, second best in the country, and caused 188 turnovers.

Off the field, Elliott helped manage all aspects of the program including recruiting, film study, team travel, marketing and youth camps.

A four-time letterwinner at Northwestern, Elliott was a key member of the 2005, 2006 and 2007 national championship teams, earning third-team All-American honors as a senior. The Wildcats' team captain in 2007, Elliott finished her NU career with 44 caused turnovers and scooped up 101 ground balls. She also notched 14 goals and added an assist during her Wildcat career, and was named Academic All-Big Ten three times.

After graduating from Northwestern with a B.S. degree in Radio, Television and Film in 2007, Elliott served as the head coach of the Wildcat Elite Club and the Wildcat Developmental Team for Amonte Sports. She also spent one season as an assistant coach for New Trier High School, helping the Trevians to the 2008 state championship.

Information from the University of Colorado website, CUBuffs.com, was used in this release.



Ann Elliott, member of five NCAA championship-winning teams at NU, is the first head coach of the new Colorado women's lacrosse program.

Be the first to know what's going on with the 'Cats -- Follow @NU_Sports on Twitter, become a fan of Northwestern Athletics on Facebook! and subscribe to the NU Sports Express e-newsletter to receive the latest news, schedule updates and video and to interact with NU. For more information on following specific Northwestern teams online, visit our Social Media page!



ADVERTISE

 Search

Lacrosse: Ann Elliott named first coach at Colorado

By Dan Ryan

Published: Thursday, March 29, 2012

Updated: Friday, March 30, 2012 02:03

With the news buzzing around Northwestern and the lacrosse community that associate head coach Ann Elliott will be departing to assume the head coaching position at the University of Colorado Boulder, coach Kelly Amonte Hiller thought she would set the record straight.

“She’s not at Colorado (yet),” Amonte Hiller said in a teleconference ahead of the team’s game with Ohio State on Saturday at Gillette Stadium in Foxborough, Mass. “She’s with us until the end of the season.”

While Elliott is on board as the Wildcats seek their seventh national title, the longtime coach and player will leave the only school she’s called home to help build a program for the Buffaloes at the conclusion of the season.

“I think there’s something very special about being the first program, the first head coach and really being able to establish that culture, that foundation on which a program can build for several years after,” Elliott said at her inductory press conference.

After winning three national championships as a player with the Cats, Elliott served as an assistant on Hiller’s staff before earning the title associate head coach prior to this season. She is the first in Hiller’s tenure to be given the role.

During her time on the coaching staff, Elliott’s primary responsibility was coordinating NU’s defense, and under her guidance, the Cats were the second-best defensive team in the country in 2009. Last season, the team held its opponents to

fewer than 10 goals in five out of its six postseason games, including the national title game against Maryland — the fourth-best attack in the nation.

Given her record, Elliott believes she can handle next season's transition.

"I have a lot of confidence coming from that program to know that this is something I can do and understand that it's a process," Elliott said. "It's going to take a lot of work on all ends, but it's going to be exciting and it's fun."

Colorado's athletic director Mike Bohn said the school admired Elliott's intensity and love for the sport, leading it to select her as the first lacrosse coach in school history.

"You start thinking about passion for the sport," Bohn said. "You start thinking about someone who eats, drinks and dreams lacrosse, and I think that we've found that coach."

As Amonte Hiller goes through the last season she'll spend with Elliott on her staff, the longtime coach had nothing but praise for her star pupil in all areas of the sport.

"She's really dynamic," Amonte Hiller said. "She's matured a ton since she first started with us as a player and now to being a coach and getting a head coaching position. She's really smart with the X's and O's. She really helps come up with our defensive game plan and what strategy we're going to put forth against the other team."

"She's very good with player relations, technology, really cutting edge and smart, and Colorado's very fortunate to get someone like Ann. She cares a lot about the sport and the development of the sport. But for now, she's really invested for the rest of the season and wants to help us win a championship."

The Cats' (9-0, 1-0 ALC) quest for another national title continues on Saturday against No. 14 Ohio State. (7-2, 0-1) The matchup is a part of a showcase of women's lacrosse at Gillette Stadium, home of the NFL's New England Patriots. NU played at Cowboys Stadium, the home of the Dallas Cowboys last season, defeating William & Mary 18-8.

The Buckeyes enter the contest after a close loss to No. 5 Florida and our coached by former NU assistant Alexis Venechanos, who won two titles with the Cats.