

## CU Buffs set to host NCAA golf regional

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

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ERIE -- This week, 23 women's golf teams have been frantically trying to learn all they can about Colorado National Golf Club.

And Colorado?

"We know it like the back of our hand," Buffs sophomore Alex Stewart.

Thursday through Saturday, CU hosts the NCAA West Regional. Nobody knows the course like the Buffs, who practice here throughout the year. Yet, CU isn't taking anything for granted.

"You can't count out the top teams," CU senior Jess Wallace said. "Anyone who is a good golfer will play good golf no matter where they are."

There are plenty of good golfers on hand this week. The region consists of 24 teams and six individuals. Of the 24 teams, eight are ranked in the top 25 of the coaches poll, including No. 1 UCLA (the defending national champ), No. 6 LSU, No. 7 North Carolina and No. 11 Colorado.

"It'll be a competitive week," Buffs head coach Anne Kelly said.

For CU, the opportunity to reach the NCAA championships, May 22-25 in Franklin, Tenn., is within reach. The Buffs, who have never been to nationals, are seeded fourth this week and the top eight teams qualify for nationals.

"It's going to take good play, but I think we can make it," Kelly said.

The Buffs have played good golf all year and this is already the best season in school history.

Stewart (73.77), Emily Talley (74.00) and Wallace (74.96) have all posted scoring averages under 75, while twins Jenny Coleman (75.40) and Kristin Coleman (76.80) have had great seasons, as well. All five have posted rounds of 71 or better at some point this year.

"I feel like everyone is pretty focused right now, everyone is comfortable with their game," Stewart said. "I feel like we can do pretty well out here."

While there's little question that the top teams and top players will figure out the course, CU is hoping its comfort at Colorado National will play a role.

"We've played this course so many times," Wallace said. "This course is a big comfort factor. We know it really well, we know what we're capable of. This course, we're looking to take advantage of it this week."

The Buffs acknowledge there is a bit of danger in being too comfortable with the surroundings. They also know the pressure is on to play well, considering they are at home.

"I think in some ways it's an advantage, and in some ways it maybe places too much expectation on them," Kelly said. "But that's all part of golf and if they want to go on and play big-time amateur golf or professional golf, you've got to learn to handle every situation."

For CU, the situation is simple: play well and get to nationals for the first time ever.

"It would be huge," Stewart said. "I think it would help with future recruitment. It would definitely help our program a ton, just to get our name out there."

For Talley, who is the most decorated player in school history, a trip to nationals is about all that's left for her to accomplish.

"It would be awesome," she said. "It would be the cherry on top. It would be fantastic."

Are the Buffs capable?

"Hell yeah," she said. "Of course."

CU golf preview

WHAT: NCAA West Regional women's golf tournament.

WHERE: Colorado National Golf Club in Erie.

WHEN: Today through Saturday, 7:30 a.m. each day.

AT STAKE: The top eight teams will qualify for the NCAA championships. In addition, the top two individuals not on those eight teams will qualify for the NCAA championships.

STORYLINES: The field consists of 24 teams and six individuals. There are eight teams ranked among the top 25 in the coaches poll: No. 1 UCLA, No. 6 LSU, No. 7 North Carolina, No. 11 Colorado, No. 14 California, No. 17 Baylor, No. 18 Pepperdine and No. 23 UC Davis. ... Colorado is making its third trip to regionals. The Buffs finished 19th in 2009 and 18th in 2011. ... CU senior Emily Talley will be the first Buff to participate in three regional tournaments. ... In its most recent tournament, CU was sixth in the Pac-12 Championships, but finished just seven strokes behind first-place Cal, and just three strokes behind fourth-place (and top-ranked) UCLA.

KEY STAT: CU is 36-10-1 against the field this season. The only two teams the Buffs have not defeated are UCLA (0-4) and TCU (0-1). Of the other 23 teams, CU has faced 20. The Buffs have not seen Jackson State, Missouri State or North Carolina.

COLORADO'S LINEUP (season stats): Jenny Coleman, So. (30 rounds, 75.40 average, 69 best round); Kristin Coleman, So. (30 rounds, 76.80 average, 71 best round); Alex Stewart, So. (30 rounds, 73.77 average, 67 best round); Emily Talley, Sr. (30 rounds, 74.0 average, 66 best round); Jess Wallace, Sr. (27 rounds, 74.96 average, 69 best round).

UP NEXT: NCAA Championships are May 22-25 in Franklin, Tenn.

## Coleman twins eager to help CU women's golf team qualify for nationals

By Tom Kensler The Denver Post The Denver Post  
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ERIE — Colorado women's golf coach Anne Kelly sees double when she thinks about an "X-factor" for her fourth-seeded Buffaloes beginning today in the NCAA West Regional.

The key to her team's success at Colorado National Golf Club could be the performances of twins Jenny and Kristin Coleman, sophomores from greater Los Angeles who rank fourth and fifth, respectively, in CU's five-player lineup.

"If Jenny and Kristin are on their games," Kelly said, "we're really a good team."

In college golf, the top four scores out of five are counted as the team total for each round. That means the score of at least one Coleman sister will count for every round.

And should any of the Buffs' top three players — sophomore Alex Stewart (ranked No. 36 nationally by Golfweek) and seniors Emily Talley (No. 46) and Jess Wallace (No. 74) — have an off day, the team could use a solid round from another Coleman to avoid absorbing a high score.

In each of the three regionals, the top eight teams among a field of 24 teams will advance to the NCAA championships (May 22-25 at Vanderbilt Legends Club in Franklin, Tenn.).

Colorado, now ranked in the national top 10 (No. 10 by the Golf World coaches poll) for the first time in its history, has never made it to nationals. In its 21st year of existence, the CU women's program qualified for a regional for just the third time — all in the past four years.

"That's our team's dream, to make it to nationals," Jenny Coleman said. "That would definitely be awesome."

In late March, Jenny (No. 113 by Golfweek) led the Buffs to a team championship at a tournament in Maui, Hawaii, by placing fourth individually. Colorado struggled to a sixth-place finish last month at the Pac-12 Championships but Kristin (No. 240) provided some closing momentum by finishing with a 1-over-par 73, CU's second-best score of the final round.

Not only could Jenny and Kristin be double trouble for opposing teams this week, sister-sister may cause some confusion and head-scratching in the scorer's tent. Jenny? Kristin?

The Colemans may as well be carbon copies. Both are 5-foot-9. Both major in business. Both list cooking and tennis as favorite hobbies apart from golf.

The look-alikes don't always play or act alike, however. Kristin is a natural putter. Jenny relies more on her tee shots and long irons. Kristin is apt to play an attacking style, while Jenny prefers a more conservative, consistent approach.

Although the Buffs did not host a tournament at Colorado National during the season, this is CU's official home course and includes a newly opened practice facility for the Buffs men's and women's golf teams.

"We have a big comfort factor here," Wallace said.

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Ncaa west regional

Where: Colorado National Golf Club, Erie

When: Today through Saturday, 54 holes total

Area teams entered: No. 4 seed CU (tees off today at 8:36 a.m.), No. 15 Denver (noon), No. 23 Northern Colorado (12:55 p.m.). CSU's Brianna Espinoza (8:25 a.m.) qualified as an individual.

Format: Four of a school's five scores count each day toward the team total. The top eight teams in a field of 24 advance to the national championship tournament.

Admission: Free