

Kelly Finley officially named to Linda Lappe's staff

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Kelly Finley always admired Linda Lappe as a coach.

When the opportunity came up to work for Lappe, Finley didn't pass it up.

Lappe, Colorado's head women's basketball coach, announced on Friday that Finley has joined the staff as an assistant.

"I'm really excited. It's going to be great," said Finley, who fills the void left by Jennie Baranczyk, who took the head coaching position at Drake last month.

The 27-year-old Finley has spent the past four years as an assistant coach at Harvard. In 2008, she graduated from Colorado State, where she played two seasons for the Rams. During her junior year, Lappe was an assistant coach for CSU and Finley said she gained a lot of respect for Lappe during that season.

"You always want to play for a coach that thinks you're going to be great, no matter if you play 40 minutes or if you don't play at all," she said. "You want to play for somebody who cares for you and wants you to be great as a person and as a player.

"She's always been somebody I've gone to as a mentor in the business. She's someone whose opinion I always really, really valued."

Lappe developed the same appreciation for Finley, who has been a key part of Harvard's program. In four years at Harvard, she helped the Crimson to a 75-41 record. They went 18-12 this season and advanced to the second round of the Women's NIT.

Finley coordinated all aspects of recruiting at Harvard and will handle the same duties for Colorado. Harvard's 2011 recruiting class was ranked 31st in the country by ESPN. That class included Harvard's first-ever McDonald's All-American player.

"She has an enthusiastic mindset to attract and recruit some of the best student-athletes in the nation and has had great success in doing so," Lappe said in a release by the school. "However, what will impress people the most about Kelly is her character, integrity, loyalty and genuine nature in which she carries herself daily. We are happy she is on board."

A high school star in Minnesota, Finley, who was a 6-foot-2 forward, began her college career at Northwestern before transferring to CSU. She will work with CU's forwards.

CU went 21-14 this past season, advancing to the quarterfinals of the WNIT for a second year in a row. The Buffs are 39-30 in Lappe's two seasons as head coach.