



CU basketball coaches Tad Boyle (left) and Linda Lappe
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: CU Hoops Set For Opening-Night Doubleheader

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BOULDER - When Colorado opens its men's and women's basketball seasons on Friday, Tad Boyle wants his team to play the way it's been practicing. Linda Lappe is looking for a definite game-day upgrade.

Lappe's squad opens the doubleheader at the Coors Events Center against Northern Arizona at 5:30 p.m., followed by Boyle's team matched against Fort Lewis College at 8 p.m.

Both CU teams are coming off seasons in which they advanced to the NIT/WNIT, respectively, and both lose a hefty portion of the offense responsible for their postseason advancement. Still, both second-year coaches believe they have enough talent, albeit young, to compensate for the absence of last season's top scorers. The key question for both: How long does it take for potential to turn into productivity?

Boyle's team has come to work at 7:30 a.m., an uncomfortable hour he takes into account when he says, "I like the way we've practiced. Our guys have worked hard, especially for going at 7:30 in the morning. They've had good practices.

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"But you just don't know . . . the first time the lights come on you don't know how guys are going to react to it. If we play like we practice, we'll be fine. If we try to be somebody we're not, that's when we may have some issues and struggle a little bit."

Lappe's take on her team's preseason work is a bit different. "We haven't had a lot of great practices lately," she said. "But we have gotten better at some of the things we've emphasized - and that's been encouraging."

Lappe is a hoops fundamentalist - eyebrow-to-eyebrow defense, boxing out on rebounds, rugged screens, etc. - but talk to her long enough (even briefly) and the conversation usually comes back to physical toughness, mental toughness or both. After dwelling on both subjects in her first season, she's reemphasizing them in Year Two because of her team's youth (nine freshmen/sophomores, two juniors, one senior).

"With a new team you have to reemphasize (toughness)," Lappe said. "We're going to play a lot of young players and they have to be on the fast track of learning what it takes to be able to bounce back from adversity. Right now we need to get better at overcoming adversity and not letting things get us down - not quitting and continuing to fight when things aren't going our way. As the season goes along, every coach knows things aren't going to go your way all the time. You've got to have that mental stamina to persevere."

Boyle's team is almost as young (nine freshmen/sophomores, one junior, four seniors), and, as on Lappe's squad, true freshmen will play significant roles in his rotation. In a best-case scenario, his team would be deep enough to rotate 10 players, even though using that many instead of eight makes for more difficult decisions.

Boyle's rotation currently is at nine, but will go to 10 when swingman Jeremy Adams (concussion) returns. But how he uses his bench will be dictated by the opponent "and how guys are playing," he said, adding that his roster is heavy on perimeter players "and that's where it gets a little tricky."

His starting lineup Friday night will be seniors Nate Tomlinson, Austin Dufault and Carlon Brown, sophomore Andre Roberson and freshman Spencer Dinwiddie.

Lappe's starters will be the Wilson twins, sophomores Brittany and Ashley; sophomore Rachel Hargis; junior Meagan Malcolm-Peck, and senior Julie Seabrook.

Ashley Wilson, said Lappe, has been "the most consistent player so far for us; she hasn't had one bad practice. I know exactly what I'm going to get from Ashley every single day, and from a coach's perspective that's really important . . . I love her tenacity, her ability to get to the rim, get offensive rebounds. She's kind of a warrior in there who sets the tempo and tone for us - which you need in a starting lineup. But she can bring a spark off the bench, too."

After losing seniors Cory Higgins and Levi Knutson to graduation and sophomore Alec Burks to the NBA, Boyle opened drills trying to fill not only a scoring void but also trying to determine whose hands he wanted the ball in come crunch time.

He calls Tomlinson and Brown "pretty good decision makers (who) can make plays for themselves and for others, and they can shoot the ball. I think early you'll see it one of those two guys' hands. I think Austin Dufault also is a guy, a senior, and you always look to your seniors. Then, a guy like Andre - he's shooting the ball well. He can get to the rim and he's shooting free throws better. We've got a lot of confidence in him, too.

"But early, I think you'll see Nate and Carlon. A lot of times it's matchups, and where we think we have an advantage is where we'll go with the ball."

A common goal for both young teams is to make weekly improvement during November and December while realizing the importance of those early season games come mid-March. Boyle's team learned a difficult lesson in that regard last season.

"We obviously have talked about what we went through last year and how the games in early November and December have a pretty big impact later in the year," Boyle said. "But our approach is coming out every day in practice and having a good practice. You want an expectation level of every time you step on the floor you're ready to go - mentally, physically and emotionally. If you do that, you don't have to talk a lot about getting off to good starts or peaking too early . . . it's just an expectation level for your guys every day."

Added Tomlinson: "The guys who were around last year definitely know if we had maybe beat San Francisco or Harvard we'd have been in the (NCAA) tournament. It matters from the first game in November to the last game . . . the older guys know how important the early games are."

Tomlinson admits his offensive role must increase in the absence of last season's scorers: "Yeah, I think it has to change. Obviously we lost a lot of scoring from last year; it has to be picked up somewhere. Coach has asked me to be a little bit more aggressive. I'm not a selfish player by any means; I'm not going to go out and shoot every time. I definitely have to look to score a little more, but it's also about getting other people open."

If one of Lappe's chief concerns is finding a scoring replacement for CU career-leader Brittany Spears, Chief Concern 1B is identifying a defensive stopper to replace Britney Blythe. "That's not a glamorous role," Lappe said, "but you've got to have somebody who can do it and wants to do it . . . it might be Ashley Wilson."

"She may not be the best shooter, the best rebounder, the best defensive player - not the best at anything, but she works extremely hard and because of her work ethic she can be the best in any of those areas at any particular time."

Half-price tickets are being offered for both of Friday's games. Prices for reserved seats start at \$7.50 for the men's game while mid-court seats are available for \$10. For the women's game, reserved seats are \$5, with mid-court seats priced at \$7.50. More information: call 303-492-8337 or 800-872-8337, or visit

cutix@colorado.edu.

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

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CU women's basketball

Lappe's CU Buffs aim high as season set to begin

Buffs face Northern Arizona in opener Friday night

By Brian Howell Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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Linda Lappe's first season as Colorado women's basketball coach was considered a success.

Taking over a program that had produced back-to-back losing seasons, Lappe led the Buffaloes to an 18-16 record and a trip to the WNIT quarterfinals in 2010-11.

The second season of Lappe's tenure officially begins Friday night, when the Buffs host Northern Arizona at the Coors Events Center. As the season gets underway, there's a general opinion in the program that, while last year was good, there's no reason this season can't be better.

"We have returners back that know what it takes to get to the postseason, whether its NIT or NCAA," junior Meagan Malcolm-Peck said. "I think everybody knows what it takes and what we need to do to push further to a better level."

Julie Seabrook -- the lone senior on the squad -- said the Buffs know this year can be better because they know last year should have been better.

"Last year, we could have made the NCAA Tournament," she said. "Mostly, our biggest problem was more with how we acted on the floor versus our skill level. I think we knew we had talented people that could score. It was more the mental game that really messed with us in the beginning."

Part of that came from adjusting to a new coach.

"Last year, we were basically all freshmen with coach Lappe -- didn't know what to expect, didn't know her playing style, didn't know anything with how she wanted to coach," Malcolm-Peck said.

Although they went 9-4 in non-conference play, the Buffs lost nine of their first 12 conference games. They finished strong, though, going 6-3 in their last nine games.

This year, there is a newfound level of comfort, which the Buffs can't wait to show off in the early stages of the season, beginning Friday.

"I think we definitely know what coach Lappe's expectations are for us," Seabrook said.

Still, Seabrook said the Buffs are intent on reaching a new level of success, so there's no room to settle in and relax.

"Yes we're comfortable with what we know we have to do, but I think our goal in practice is to really push ourselves out of our comfort zone so that we get better and that we prepare ourselves for the games," Seabrook said.

CU did a lot of good things in Sunday's 78-40 exhibition win against Regis, but that game also gave Lappe plenty of things to work on. Specifically, she said the Buffs are working hard on transition defense, defensive positioning and consistency in the transition offense.

Friday night, she wants to see the Buffs "continue to get better on the things that we focused on and really spent a lot of time in practice on."

The drive to improve seems to have gotten through, at least to some of the leaders on the squad.

"Obviously we weren't as happy as we wanted to be with last year," Malcolm-Peck said. "We have a lot of work to do, for sure. Taking that, we know we have bigger and better goals, and I think we're going to get those this year."

CU women's hoops preview

TONIGHT: The Colorado Buffaloes (0-0) host the Northern Arizona Lumberjacks (0-0) at 5:30 p.m. at the Coors Events Center.

BROADCAST: Radio on KKZN (AM 760) with Mike Rice (play-by-play) and Carol Callan (color). No television.

STORYLINES: Today's game officially kicks off coach Linda Lappe's second season at CU. ... The Buffs are coming off of an 18-16 season and run to the WNIT quarterfinals. ... The Buffs defeated Regis 78-40 in an exhibition game on Sunday. ... CU lost three seniors to graduation, including the program's all-time leading scorer, Brittany Spears. ... Junior guard Chucky Jeffery is the team's returning leading scorer at 13.5 ppg. ... Sophomore wing Brenna Malcolm-Peck (concussion) and freshman forward Arielle Roberson (back) will both miss tonight's game. ... UNA returns 76 percent of its scoring from last season. ... The Lumberjacks have lost 16 straight against Pac-12 competition. ... Junior guard Amy Patton led the Big Sky Conference in scoring last season.

KEY STAT: Colorado is 35-2 all-time in home openers, and 25-0 when the first overall game of the season is at home.

COACHES: Linda Lappe is 18-16 entering her second season at CU and 68-52 overall. Laurie Kelly is 112-138 in eight seasons at Northern Arizona and 216-177 overall.

PROBABLE STARTERS (2010-11 stats): **Colorado** - G Chucky Jeffery, 5-10, Jr., 13.5 ppg, 7.9 rpg, 4.3 apg; G Ashley Wilson, 5-8, So., 2.1 ppg, 1.6 rpg; F Meagan Malcolm-Peck, 6-2, Jr., 7.0 ppg, 4.6 rpg; F Julie Seabrook, 6-3, Sr., 5.3 ppg, 5.4 rpg; C Rachel Hargis, 6-4, So., 2.6 ppg, 2.9 rpg. **Northern Arizona** - C Aubrey Davis, 6-2, Jr., 1.1 ppg, 1.4 rpg; PF Katie Pratt, 6-2, Sr., 4.3 ppg, 1.6 rpg; SG Amy Patton, 5-10, Jr., 16.4 ppg, 5.5 rpg, 1.9 apg; PG Paige Haynes, 5-7, Jr., transfer from San Bernardino Valley; SG Amanda Frost, 5-8, So., transfer from Fullerton College.

SERIES: CU leads 13-2, but lost the only meeting between the teams since 1993 - an 84-83 Northern Arizona win on Dec. 19, 2005. The Buffs are 7-0 in Boulder against UNA.

UP NEXT: Colorado hits the road for the first time on Wednesday, visiting Texas A&M-Corpus Christi.

- Have a question for our reporters about any of the CU athletic teams, ask it here in our weekly mailbag.

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Lappe rolls with changes

Former Winfield-Mount Union all-stater enters second year at Colorado.

By MATT LEVINS mlevins@thehawkeye.com

Linda Lappe knows all about change.

The former all-state basketball player for Winfield-Mount Union High School helped the Lady Wolves to an 80-game winning streak and back-to-back state championships.

Lappe went on to the University of Colorado, where she was a two-year captain. She helped the Buffaloes to three straight NCAA Tournament appearances, earning All-Big 12 honorable mention honors.

Lappe then spent three years as an assistant coach at Drake, then one season as an assistant coach at Colorado State before taking over as head coach at Metropolitan State College in Denver, a position she held for three years.

Lappe was hired as head coach at her alma mater, Colorado, in April of 2010 and led the Buffaloes to the quarterfinals of the WNIT last year.

Now, Lappe is ready for yet another change in her life. Lappe, in her second year at the helm, leads Colorado into the Pac-12 Conference this season, a league known for its up-tempo offense and pressure defense.

Lappe, who has always answered the bell, is ready for the latest challenge in her blossoming coaching career.

Colorado opens the 2011-12 season today when it hosts Northern Arizona.

"All we know right now is the Big 12. That's what we have been preparing for up until this year," Lappe said. "The Pac-12 is a very good basketball league, very tough. But five other coaches are in the same scenario right now. We are all new to the conference. It's something nobody knows how it will play out. We just need to work hard and do all the little things right."

The move from the Big 12 to the Pac-12 is not the only significant change Lappe and the Buffaloes face this season. Colorado must find a replacement for graduated Brittany Spears, the team's leading scorer last season.

"We have a lot of points to make up," Lappe said. "The bright side is that we should be a lot more

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Cliff Grassmick/Colorado Sports Information Department
Linda Lappe works her first game as the head coach at Colorado against Western State last season in Boulder, Colo.

balanced this year and hopefully tougher to guard as we go through the season, but it means everybody has to step up. We have to do a better job of executing our offense and being balanced."

The Buffaloes return plenty of talent, including guards Chucky Jeffery, Brittany Wilson and Ashley Wilson and swing player Meagan Malcolm-Peck. Incoming freshmen Lexy Kresl, Jasmine Sborov and Esther Lee will be counted upon heavily to contribute right away.

Forward Julie Seabrook is the team's lone senior.

"We need a lot of different players stepping up for us to make up for the scoring and rebounding we lost," Lappe said. "We are ready to do that. We have already seen some things turning the corner. We just need to put it all together now."

Lappe and the Buffaloes spent much of the summer gearing up for the Pac-12, a league led by Stanford, one of the premier teams in the nation. The change means altering not only the Buffaloes' style of play, but also a new landscape for recruiting.

"The Pac-12 is a very, very good conference. They like to run the floor and they have a lot of very quick and athletic players," Lappe said. "The Big 12 is a straight man or 2-3 zone defense league. There is no in-between. We're trying to be the best team Colorado can be right now. We're not looking ahead.

"It helps us get more players from the west coast. We always get players from California and that will continue to be the same. But what we're going to get now is more players from Arizona and the northwest. Those will continue to be places we will recruit from."

The Buffaloes went 18-16 in Lappe's first season as head coach, including 6-10 in the Big 12. Now, with more of her own players in place, Lappe is looking to continue the upward trend.

"Last year was all about changing a culture, setting the tone for what is to come," Lappe said. "We are pretty inexperienced, but we hope to have a good year. We always aim high. We're not going to turn the program around in one year, so we are focusing on getting better every single day."