

Linda Lappe will expect CU freshmen to produce

Only six of 12 athletes on roster played last season

By Joshua Lindenstein Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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The first official Colorado women's basketball practice had just ended last week, and Arielle Roberson was the freshman who'd caught junior point guard Chucky Jeffery's eye that day.

A shot had gone up and Roberson, a 6-foot-1 forward from San Antonio, came flying in and knocked three people out of the way to snag the rebound, as Jeffery recalled it.

"They're not afraid to get after it," Jeffery said of the freshmen that day. "I'm pretty sure it's going to be (Jasmine Sborov) one day, Lexy (Kresl) another day ... so as long as we can get them all coming (into the rotation) then that will be big for us." Much like last year's squad, the 2011-12 Buffaloes don't have much choice but to seek contributions from their freshman class. Of the 12 players on the roster, only six played last season -- three of whom are sophomores. Five of the other six are freshmen and sophomore Brenna Malcolm-Peck redshirted with an injury a year ago.

The only thing that remains to be seen now is how vital of roles the freshmen play. All four of the Buffs' scholarship freshmen -- Roberson, guard Lexy Kresl, wing Jasmine Sborov and power forward Jen Reese -- proved they could score in bunches in high school.

"We would like for them to play right away," second-year CU head coach Linda Lappe said this week. "That's what we recruited them for. The key with all of them is going to be how fast do they understand what we're trying to do defensively? How fast do they understand the defensive intensity? How fast do they understand the positioning and the team defense that we're playing."

As long as she's not building a team around freshmen every year, Lappe said she likes having the youngsters involved from the start of their careers for the energy they bring and for the players' own future development.

The philosophy is one that no doubt helped lure the current freshman group to Boulder, one that includes the Oregon Gatorade Player of the Year (Reese) and the leading scorer in Arizona (Kresl). And CU's coaches have already secured commitments from a pair of top-100 prospects for the 2012 recruiting class who figure to contribute right away when they arrive on campus.

"That's what they brought us in for," the 6-0 Sborov said of playing early. "So we're all excited to do what we can on the floor."

While Jeffery likely has the point, senior Julie Seabrook a forward spot and junior Meagan Malcolm-Peck a wing, there are plenty of roles that need to be filled on this year's team regardless of the age of the player doing so.

Go-to scorer is one after the graduation of all-time leading scorer Brittany Spears. A one-on-one scoring threat on the block is one that has been missing for a few years. And CU's designated defensive stopper from a year ago, Britney Blythe, also graduated.

"We're working hard, seeing improvement," Kresl said of she and her classmates trying to fill some of those spots.

The 5-11 Kresl is a talented scorer who can shoot the 3.

Sborov is strong, rebounds well and could, Lappe said, be one of the Buffs' better defenders.

The 6-2 Reese has inside scoring touch and is a solid passer.

Roberson -- the younger sister of CU men's rebounding machine Andre Roberson -- is a rangy athlete who can wreak

havoc defensively and on the boards in addition to scoring.

Walk-on Esther Lee, meanwhile, was a solid scorer herself in high school for a strong Harvard-Westlake program in California but figures to have a longer road to playing time than her classmates.

"The problem is they don't all bring that stuff every single day," Lappe said. "So we're trying to get them more consistent in terms of that."

Sborov admits there have been some growing pains, most notably adjusting to the speed of the college game.

But she said she and others have been getting more and more comfortable.

"It's all just starting to click," Sborov said.

Notable

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college basketball

CU's women's basketball team picked 11th in preseason Pac-12 poll

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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Pac-12 women's basketball coaches apparently do not expect Colorado to make much noise this season, the Buffaloes' debut in the conference.

The Pac-12 women's basketball coaches poll, released today by the conference office, projects Colorado to finish 11th in the league, ahead of only Oregon State.

Stanford, 33-3 last season and unbeaten in 18 Pac-10 games, was chosen the league's preseason favorite for the 11th consecutive year. Coaches are not allowed to vote for their own team, meaning that Stanford, with 11 first-place votes, is the unanimous preseason pick.

The Cardinal is followed in the preseason Pac-12 coaches poll by Southern Cal (which received the first-place nod of Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer), California, Arizona State and UCLA.

The other newcomer to the conference, Utah, was picked to finish sixth.

Colorado, under second-year coach Linda Lappe,

must return the school's all-time leading scorer, Brittany Spears (19.2 points per game in 2010-11) from last season's (18-16 team that played in the WNIT). But the Buffaloes do return five players that started at least 17 games. They include junior guard Chucky Jeffery (13.5), sophomore guard Brittany Wilson (7.8), junior forward Meagan Malcolm-Peck (7.0) and senior center Julie Seabrook (5.3).

Expected to make an immediate impact is a class of newcomers with size and potential: guards Lexy Kresl (5-feet-11) of Phoenix and Jasmine Sborov (6-0) of Round Rock, Texas, and forwards Jen Reese (6-2) of Clackamas, Ore., and Arielle Roberson (6-1) of San Antonio, Texas.

Roberson is the sister of CU men's basketball player Andre Roberson. In no surprise, Arielle is considered an excellent rebounder.

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Preseason Pac-12 women's basketball poll:

First place votes in parentheses.

1. Stanford (11) - 121
2. USC (1) - 111
3. California - 98



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4. UCLA - 83
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6. Utah - 61
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8. Oregon - 51
9. Arizona - 48
10. Washington - 38
11. Colorado - 36
12. Oregon State - 18



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