



Senior leader Meagan Malcolm-Peck knows better than to look too far ahead.
Photo Courtesy: Joel Broida



Brooks: Buffs Can't Afford To Peek Ahead At Cardinals

Release: 12/10/2012 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER – With No. 8 Louisville set to visit the Coors Events Center on Friday night, might the Colorado women’s basketball team have a tendency to gaze past Tuesday’s trip down I-25 South to the University of Denver?

CU coach [Linda Lappe](#) doesn’t think so, and neither does senior captain [Meagan Malcolm-Peck](#). Their shared feeling is that this Buffs team has a game-to-game focus that won’t allow what could be a costly look ahead to the Cardinals, past the Pioneers. That could be a bad oversight.

“We’d better not be looking ahead because we know DU is a good program with a good team and a lot of returners from last year, the last two years really,” Lappe said. “I think our players are excited to play another rival. We’ve been lucky that our last two games have been big games . . . if you didn’t have those two games, I think it would have been easy for your mind to go past DU and straight to Louisville. But Denver is a formidable opponent and our players understand what it means to play well against the teams on the Front Range.

“Veteran teams understand what every game means. You don’t look past any game, it doesn’t matter who the opponent is. That’s what veteran teams and really good teams do. I think this team is starting to understand

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that each win is really important, each game is really important. It's just like playing the last minute before the first minute; you have to take it each minute at a time no matter what game. And you have to take every opponent as it comes. I think our players are genuinely excited to play at Denver."

In getting to 7-0, CU has beaten Wyoming (68-59) and Colorado State (72-46). So, if Front Range dominance is high on the Buffs' priority list, then there's a ready-made motive for dispatching DU. The Lady Pioneers are 4-4 overall, 2-2 in Magness Arena. They've beaten Northern Colorado (57-46) and Air Force (77-73), but they lost at Wyoming (81-66) – so there's a little of the reigning on Front Range appeal for them as well.

Malcolm-Peck believes the Buffs will be locked in Tuesday night from the time they board their bus in Boulder to stepping off it on the DU campus.

"Everyone thinks that you're going to get really excited for that big game (Louisville) – and everyone is excited about it," she said. "But the way our team is, we understand that we can't just let DU go. It's on the road and everyone understands that . . . we're focused on DU right now. We'll have two days to prepare for Louisville and that's what we have for every game."

Malcolm-Peck, a 6-2 forward whose minutes (13.2 average) have slipped a bit because of this team's balance, embraces the leadership role that she occupies this season. She has evolved into more of a vocal leader since her sophomore year and developed relationships with her teammates that serve her well in her final season.

"Being a senior now and knowing these girls three or four years, I think I know how to motivate and how different people respond," she said. "Leadership is always a developing process, changing yourself and how you relate to people. I have a problem getting easily frustrated, and I've been working on that. I love being in that role."

In truth, the younger Buffs have made the role easier for her; they've been receptive to being directed. But Malcolm-Peck shrugs off the thought that the team's leadership is strictly on her: "I don't think it's like 'Meagan is the leader and she's dominating everything,'" she said. "It's not like 'Listen (only) to Meagan.' There's other people who know they need to step up. It's not like I'm talking for an entire practice; some people are performing really well on the court and know they need to say something.

"Everyone is free to collaborate . . . there's a dialogue between people. They understand and there's good chemistry. Everyone is growing up and that's how it is when you've played together for a couple of years and have experience."

Malcolm-Peck has learned to delegate, and Lappe says her two seniors – senior point guard [Chucky Jeffery](#) is the other – lead in different ways: "Both of them have been a huge asset to our team because they've been in the fire, they've been through a lot of different things. They have a lot of advice and a lot experience to add to our team, but they know they can't do it alone. Whenever you have seniors who understand what it means to be a part of a team and a part of something bigger than yourself, that's a really neat thing and you can win a lot of games because of that."

Malcolm-Peck thinks the makeup of the current Buffs roster is the best of her career. "We've got a good mix of seniors and juniors, and the sophomores were forced to play an extreme amount their freshman years," she said. "They have a lot of experience, too. Arielle (Roberson, redshirt freshman) has watched that and she's doing big things for us. She's been around the program for a year. We really only have a couple of players who don't understand that, but being around all of us I think they do now more than most freshmen would."

The difference in this season's team and others, she said, is obvious: "We've got such a good post presence and overall balance. Last year we relied on Chucky all-around and Lexy (Kresl) to hit big shots. We're winning this year even when that's not happening. Arielle and Jen (Reese) in the post have been great; no one can stop Arielle and that leads to kick outs on the three.

"There's not enough people to guard all of us . . . there's so many people we can put on the floor who can contribute – not just a (Brittany) Spears or Chucky. There's such a balance on our team. It's something we

haven't had before. It's awesome for Chucky to think she doesn't have to score 30 for us to win. It's a relief on her and everybody else. There's no 'I've got to get mine' mentality. Everybody is as excited for Arielle to get 18 a game as they are for me to hit one three-pointer. It's such a different team chemistry than we've before, and it's really exciting."

Another exciting factor is the total buy-in among the Buffs. Their goal this season, said Malcolm-Peck, "is to be uncommon. That's one of things we want to do – things that people don't think we can do, and maybe even some things we haven't thought we could do. It's a stepping stone to get there and we've focused on one step at a time. I think we're finally getting that piece figured out."

One step at a time means one game at a time. And that means tripping South to DU before laying out the welcome mat for Louisville. If the Buffs do indeed have that figured out, something truly uncommon could be in their future.

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

SHOW MENU



Women's basketball: Arielle Roberson making solid first impression

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

DailyCamera.com

Arielle Roberson always hoped she'd experience success on the court for the Colorado women's basketball team.

Actually delivering on her potential has been a source of pride.

Roberson is averaging 17.3 points and 6.1 rebounds for the undefeated Buffaloes (7-0).

"I'm honestly having a lot of fun with it," said Roberson, who has scored at least 10 points in every game. "I'm just playing basketball. I guess it's what's been bottled up inside of me since all of last season, so I'm just trying to let it out right now."

Roberson missed last season with a back injury, delaying the start of her college career. From the start of the season, however, the redshirt freshman has looked like a veteran most of the time.

"She's been a huge addition to our team," head coach Linda Lappe said. "She gives us another post, another inside presence. A lot of our players have a lot of confidence in Arielle on the low block and she's worked hard to make sure that's the case."

So far, Roberson leads the team in field goals attempted and she has taken 33 percent of the team's free throws (47 of 142). No other player on the team has more than 16 free throws attempted. She is also the team leader with six blocks and ranks third with 12 steals.

It's quite a change from last year, when she sat and watched every game from the bench.

"Already last year, I felt like I let everybody down," she said. "This year, I was trying not to focus on that kind of pressure, but it was always going to be there, especially your first game out."

She posted five points and six rebounds in the Buffs' exhibition win against Western State. On Nov. 11 against Idaho, she made her official collegiate debut, posting 16 points, six rebounds and five steals in the Buffs' win.

"Since I started off the way I did, that built my comfortability," she said. "That's why I am so comfortable now playing with my teammates and giving the fans something to be proud of."

Roberson scored a season-high 25 points in the Buffs' 69-62 win at Illinois on Dec. 1.

Last week, she collected Pac-12 freshman of the week honors for the third time in four weeks.

"We're all trying to work towards something greater, so that's what I'm trying to contribute," she said.

Like the rest of the team, Roberson has things she can work on to get better. Her 25 turnovers are a team high, she wants to be more aggressive on the boards, and she said she needs to work on setting screens.

Roberson is already making quite an impression, however, and is looking forward to testing herself this week. The Buffs host No. 8 Louisville on Friday.

"That's what you look forward to as a basketball player, to measure your talents," she said. "That's what I want to do."

Lappe is looking forward to it, as well, to see how her star freshman compares to the elite.

"The posts that we're going to go against are going to continue to get bigger, better, stronger, more physical and more talented," Lappe said. "We just have to make sure she continues to get ready for that."

Notable

Freshman wing Lauren Huggins has a stress fracture in her right leg and will be out a while. "It'll probably be at least three to four weeks," Lappe said. ... Before the Buffs host Louisville on Friday, they play the Pioneers in Denver on Tuesday. ... On Saturday, the Buffs, through Boulder County CareConnect, teamed with local nonprofits to deliver holiday fruit baskets to over 900 senior citizens in Boulder County. "Our players are all great people, so they really enjoy doing things in the community, and it was great to see a different side of the community, one they may not get to see everyday," Lappe said. "There are a lot of volunteer opportunities out there and we felt like this was a really important thing for our players to do."

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Women's basketball: Lappe's CU Buffs not taking Pioneers lightly

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

DailyCamera.com

Chucky Jeffery hasn't forgotten her only trip to Magness Arena as a Colorado Buffalo.

On Nov. 16, 2010, Jeffery and the Buffs went to Magness and got upset by Denver, 70-69.

"The last time we went and played DU at their gym, it didn't work out so well for us," she said. "It was pretty bad and they got one from us. I'm pretty excited to go back down there my last year and battle it out one more time with DU. They're a good team, so it'll be fun."

Jeffery and the Buffs will make a return trip tonight, taking on the Pioneers (4-4) in a non-conference match-up.

This is a big week for the Buffaloes, who are off to a 7-0 start for the second year in a row. They even got a Top-25 vote in Monday's Associated Press poll. On Friday, they will host No. 8 Louisville -CU's first non-conference game against a ranked opponent in three years and the first time a top-10 team has visited CU in non-conference play since Nov. 27, 2004.

CU doesn't view tonight's game against Denver as any less important, however.

"We take this game very seriously," head coach Linda Lappe said. "It's another rivalry game and another game we look at as a game that if you don't come in ready, they can get you. We have to make sure we continue to be sharp, that we're focused and that we're not looking ahead. There's no reason to, because we think highly of DU. We know they're a good program."

That game in 2010 was Lappe's second game as CU's head coach, so she remembers it well. Although DU has a new coach this season, Kerry Cremeans, Lappe doesn't believe the Pioneers will be any less difficult to face.

"New coach this year, so a little less familiar with their system, but we're familiar with their players and know they're going to want to beat us as much as anybody we play," Lappe said. "That'll help us be able to come in with a different level of focus and a different mindset."

"Any time you know that a team really wants to beat you and they're going to be ready for you, you better be ready for them."

Jeffery expects her team to be ready.

"We look at them kind of like we look at (Colorado State)," she said. "It's a rivalry and we have to take care of the state."

CU defeated CSU 72-46 on Wednesday, making it look easy from the start. Jeffery said there was plenty the Buffs did wrong in that game, however.

"There were a lot of things we still needed to work on," she said. "The things we didn't do in that game we're going to have to do in this game to win because they've got a great point guard, they have people who can shoot the ball and they've got a new coach and a different system."

A 2-0 road record this season should also be a benefit to the Buffs.

"We know it's a tough place to play, but we've played on the road already this year and we know what it takes to win on the road," she said.

As for Jeffery, she has a different type of season. CU's leading scorer last year, she is averaging just 10.5 points per game, as freshman Arielle Roberson (17.3) has taken that leading spot.

Jeffery said she's not discouraged, though. She's still doing all the great things she's always done, averaging 7.8 rebounds, 3.8 assists and 2.8 steals.

"I'm having fun," she said. "It feels good to not have to feel like everything is on all you all the time. I love distributing the ball to my players and getting a nice assist. I'm out here ready to play in any way I can help the team."

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