

Roberson's injury shaped her great freshman year

By ARNIE STAPLETON, AP Sports Writer

Updated 5:55 pm, Friday, March 22, 2013

BOULDER, Colo. (AP) — Redshirt freshman Arielle Roberson is living out her very own silver linings playbook.

Shortly after arriving at the University of Colorado last season, she tore her left labrum, requiring season-ending surgery, something she now says made her both a better player and a better person.

"It changed my perspective on things," Roberson said. "Playing is a huge opportunity, it's a blessing. ... I think it opened my eyes to a lot more, just in life, to being grateful for every little thing that you get to do, for waking up in the morning, for being able to go to sleep at night."

That first week after her operation she mostly stayed in bed, homesick and crying herself to sleep. Luckily, her older brother Andre is a star forward on the Colorado men's basketball team. So, he was there for her, bringing dinner by her dorm, helping out with her homework, anything to keep her spirits up.

"He made sure he texted me, he called me, checked up on me like a nice, protective big brother," Roberson said with a wide smile Friday before watching Andre's Buffaloes play Illinois in the men's NCAA field.

Arielle's team, seeded fifth in the Norfolk Regional, faces No. 12 seed Kansas (18-13) in the NCAA women's tournament Saturday in Boulder in the Buffs' first NCAA game in nine years. The other game at the Coors Events Center pits No. 4 seed South Carolina (24-7) and No. 13 seed South Dakota State (25-7).

Reflecting on her not-so-lost season, Roberson said she was able to sit back and absorb so much at practice. Because she couldn't travel with the team, she also got to see plenty of Andre's games.

"I took a lot away from that because I wouldn't have been able to do that if I wasn't injured. So, that's the blessing in disguise," she said. "I get to watch him play and go with him to eat after games and things like that.

"There's always a positive to any negative things that happen."

Andre Roberson, who's 13 months older than Arielle, celebrated the men's second straight NCAA tournament berth on Sunday, then cheered on when his sister's team earned its bid 24 hours later.

"It's great how we both made it," Andre Roberson said. "Both programs are up and rising ... So it's pretty cool to have her in the NCAA, as well."

And especially back on the court.

"With the injury last year she was kind of depressed and upset because she worked so hard in the offseason preparing," Andre Roberson said. "She was disappointed that she couldn't travel with the team as well. I kept her focused to keep working and it's paying off."

After a summer filled with pickup games, H-O-R-S-E and "21" against Andre back in their hometown of San Antonio, Roberson returned to school and worked her way back into playing shape.

She was named the Pac-12 Freshman of the Year after averaging 12.1 points and six rebounds and leading the Buffaloes (25-6) to a No. 19 ranking and a 13-5 mark in the ultra-competitive Pac-12. She set a school record by scoring in double figures in her first 13 games.

Roberson said all those hours on the court last summer facing her brother, who's a half-foot taller at 6-7, paid off.

"Yeah, because I'm prepared for Brittany Griner. Just kidding," Roberson said. "He's a big man, and there's not really any girls that big. Granted, you have Brittany Griner and the girl from Iowa State and I think BYU may have had one. So, you don't really run across that many big people. So, that helped a lot. His length. Shooting over them and getting around them. Granted, it was not easy. But it definitely prepared me."

So did sitting out last year, ironically.

"She was very, very engaged," Buffaloes coach Linda Lappe said. "She did her rehab during practice. She made sure she watched and she understood. She's very perceptive. She understood what our team was lacking last year and something that maybe she could bring this year, part of that is consistency, part of that is competitive fire."

Lappe said Roberson was able to see the game from a coach's perspective last season.

Sitting on the bench, she also worked on her shot. Yes, her shot.

"Even before she could stand she would sit in a chair and she would shoot. And work on her form," Lappe said. "She did anything that she could do basketball-wise before she could even be on the court, so she kept her touch. I think it really helped her shot. She shot it pretty well this year, a lot better than she ever did in high school. She utilized that year to get better at something."

Kansas coach Bonnie Henrickson lost out in recruiting Roberson in large part because Andre was already in Boulder and the siblings figured their parents, John (basketball) and Lisa (volleyball), who were both student-athletes at New Mexico State, could get to more of their games if they were on the same campus.

"Arielle is a phenomenal player," Henrickson said. "We recruited her and thought she'd be a great player in our league. She certainly has done everything we thought she'd be capable of. she plays both

the 3 and the 4, she can shoot the 3. She can put it on the floor. She's a tough kid."

Follow Arnie Melendrez Stapleton on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/arniestapleton>

Women's basketball: CU Buffs ready to take advantage of home court

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

DailyCamera.com

A year ago, the Colorado women's basketball team knew that the Coors Events Center would be one of 16 host sites for the first two rounds of the NCAA Tournament.

The Buffaloes insist they didn't try to focus too much on that fact.

"It wasn't our goal this year to get to this tournament," sophomore Jen Reese said. "It was more of focusing on things that would lead us here. I feel like we have done a great job of focusing on things that we need to focus on in the present and that has helped us get where we are today."

Now that the 19th-ranked Buffaloes (25-6) are here, Reese admits it would not have been much fun to come to the arena to watch four other teams play.

"It would have been really sad," she said. "It would probably be very depressing if we were in the WNIT and Boulder was hosting the NCAA. I am just happy that we made it and we don't have to see other teams play on our floor and not us."

Seeded fifth in the Norfolk Region, CU will take on 12th-seeded Kansas (18-13) today. Game time is slated for approximately 4:40 p.m.

This will be CU's first NCAA appearance since 2004, and the Buffs feel fortunate they get to play at home. Athletic director Mike Bohn helped CU bid for the right to host.

"It's a huge advantage," head coach Linda Lappe said. "(Bohn) believed that we would be in the tournament and that's why you want to host. You want to give your home school as much of a chance to get out of the first two rounds as you possibly can."

The other three teams -- South Carolina, Kansas and South Dakota State -- arrived in Boulder on Friday and the NCAA has taken over the building, so the Buffs weren't completely familiar with their surroundings, but they enjoyed it.

"It is fun walking into the building and having to have our credentials and everything," CU's Chucky Jeffery said. "Everything is set up differently and it is just fun to be a part of."

Freshman Jamee Swan said the Coors Events Center had almost a party-like atmosphere to it on Friday.

"There's so many people around and it's so busy, but at the same time it's pretty awesome to see all these people around," she said.

Lappe said that while it's a big deal for CU to host, it doesn't put any more pressure on her team.

"We've got to go out and we've got to have a lot of fun and enjoy this experience," she said. "There's always an interesting balance between making sure that you're not just happy to be in the NCAA Tournament and you expect to win in the NCAA Tournament versus making sure you don't put too much pressure on yourselves and your team."

More than feeling pressure, Jeffery said the Buffs are excited about the opportunity to finally play on this stage -- and to do it at home.

"This was one of our goals to get to the tournament," she said. "I think this is going to be a great experience. It is going to be fun for us to have the games on our home floor. We are going to be in our comfort zone, so it is going to be fun for us to play here."

Senior captain Meagan Malcolm-Peck agrees, adding that she has no doubt the Buffs will be able to brush away any jitters that come their way.

"We've learned to step up tot the plate no matter what the challenge is, so I think we're going to do very well," she said.

Follow Brian on Twitter: [@BrianHowell33](#).

CU Buffs women bring home return to tournament

By Terry Frei The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

BOULDER — After an advance bidding process, the University of Colorado has long been locked in as a host of first- and second-round games in the women's NCAA Tournament. The trick was for the Buffaloes to be included in the tournament, and to make it without requiring charity from the selection committee.

Saturday, the Buffaloes — seeded fifth in the Norfolk (Va.) Regional and clearly "belonging" in the 64-team field — play No. 12 Kansas at 4:30 p.m. in a first-round game in the Coors Events Center. That follows a 2:10 p.m. game matching No. 4 South Carolina against No. 13 South Dakota State.

The Buffs will be facing a former Big 12 Conference rival in the 18-13 Jayhawks, who advanced to the Sweet 16 a year ago but were a bit of a surprise choice for the tournament this year. Kansas beat the Buffs in all three meetings in 2010-11, CU's final season in the Big 12 before moving to the Pac-12. The final meeting was a 71-45 romp by Kansas in the Big 12 Tournament in Kansas City, Mo.

"It means a lot for us to get another shot at them here," senior guard Chucky Jeffery, CU's leading scorer with an average of 13.9 points, said Friday at the Coors Events Center.

In part because CU coach Linda Lappe decided it would be best for her players to remain in their Boulder routine, the Buffs were attending classes this week, when the other three teams were traveling in and many colleges were on spring break.

"I'm just happy that we got this opportunity," Jeffery said. "This was one of our goals, to get to the tournament. It's going to be a great experience. It's going to be fun for us to have the games on our home floor. We're going to be in our comfort zone."

CU's return to the NCAA Tournament comes in Lappe's third season at her alma mater. The Buffs (25-6) are ranked No. 19 nationally. All of their losses have been to ranked teams, including three to powerhouse Stanford, the Pac-12 champion.

Terry Frei: 303-954-1895, tfrei@denverpost.com or twitter.com/TFOlympicAffair

Saturday's games at Coors Events Center, Boulder

No. 4 South Carolina (24-7) vs. No. 13 South Dakota St. (25-7), 2:10 p.m.

No. 5 Colorado (25-6) vs. No. 12 Kansas (18-13), 4:30 p.m.

Monday's game

Winners of second-round games, 7:30 p.m.

Tickets: cubuffs.com; \$25 reserved, \$15 for general admission for Saturday; \$35 reserved and \$25 GA for Monday