

## Soccer: Barczuk becomes true leader for CU Buffs

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

---

Imagine the Colorado women's basketball team taking the court tonight against Western State with a senior guard tandem of Chucky Jeffery and Amy Barczuk.

That could have been quite a combination.

Luckily, for the Colorado soccer team, Barczuk has other plans today. She will play in her final game on the pitch for the Buffs when they host Utah at 3 p.m. at Prentup Field.

"It's definitely bittersweet, having your last game on the field you've played on for so long," said Barczuk, a defender/midfielder for the Buffs. "I'm just hoping we can have a good team effort and come out with a win and end the season on a high. That would be ideal."

It hasn't been an ideal career for Barczuk, in terms of wins and losses, but after being recruited to play soccer and basketball at CU, she's pleased with the choice she made and the career she has had.

"The experience has just been amazing here, even though the results maybe haven't been what I necessarily wanted them to be in my four years here," she said. "If I had the choice, I would do it all over again."

Barczuk is slated to be in the starting lineup once again today. She has never missed a game in her four-year career and, including today, will have been in the starting lineup for 76 of her 78 games as a Buffalo.

CU has a losing record (29-40-8) during her career and has yet to post a winning season, although that could change if the Buffs (8-8-3, 2-7-1 Pac-12) defeat the Utes (8-8-2, 3-7).

Throughout her career, though, Barczuk has been an asset to the Buffs in the midfield and, particularly this year, on defense. She's also scored 10 goals, including a career-high four this year.

Barczuk's influence on this pivotal season may wind up being her greatest contribution as a Buff, however. With new head coach Danny Sanchez coming in this year, Barczuk and her five fellow seniors did their part to make the transition as smooth as possible. For Barczuk, that meant accepting a move to defender.

"All six seniors (bought in), but especially with Amy because she is the leader, she is the captain, it was vitally important for her to buy into basically being locked into a position that was best for the team," Sanchez said. "She bought in from Day One."

Playing in the center-midfield position is where Barczuk feels most comfortable, she said, but she never complained about a move to the back.

"We've had a lot of success with the back four that they chose, so if the team is having success I'm happy," she said.

In a lot of ways, this season has been a success for CU. No, the Buffs aren't going to the NCAA Tournament, but they've made great strides in their first year under Sanchez. After going 4-13-2 a year ago, including 1-9-1 in the Pac-12 (while being outscored 29-7 in conference play), the Buffs have had a chance to win almost every conference game. They've been outscored, but only by a 14-10 count.

"A break here or there and we're probably playing for a tournament bid," Sanchez said. "We didn't take care of business, so, so be it, but to send the seniors off with a win is very important."

Sanchez was quick to point out, though, that the win-loss record won't determine whether Barczuk hasn't a great season.

"Whatever happens (against Utah) doesn't take away from what she's done," he said. "She's been tremendous."

Barczuk may not be done, either. She's got all the tools -- as well as the desire -- to play professionally.

"I'm hoping this isn't the end for me," she said. "I have goals and aspirations to continue on after this. I either want to go to Europe to play or potentially if the (Women's Professional Soccer league) is going to come back, to play in that. I just want to play as long as I can."

Sanchez has no doubt about Barczuk's ability to compete at the pro level.

"I've coached at those levels, I've coached against those players and she has those qualities and she has the mental piece, which I think is really a lot of it," she said.

But first, she has another objective, and that's to snag one last win for the Buffs.

"This whole experience playing in a Colorado uniform has just been so awesome," she said. "I'm just excited I get to play on Prentup one last time with all of these amazing girls and hopefully go out with a win that this team deserves."

Reminded that there's still time to walk on and play basketball, Barczuk laughed.

"Soccer occupies a lot of time, and a lot of my love," she said.

Notable

Along with Barczuk, the five other seniors who will suit up for the final time today are: Erin Bricker, Quinn Krier, Shaye Marshall, Kayla Millar and Lauren Shaner. ... Today's game will be broadcast on the Pac-12 Network. ... CU is seeking its first-ever Pac-12 win at Prentup Field (0-9-1).

Follow Brian on Twitter: @BrianHowell33.