



*Arielle Roberson was on the CU bench last season, but that is about to change.*  
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



## Brooks: Roberson (And Buffs) Excited Over Her Return

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**BOULDER** - Arielle Roberson's long wait is nearing the end. It's a good thing, too, because her patience also might be running out. She could be a poster girl for boundless exuberance and perseverance, but even so, she's getting antsy.

Last week, when the Colorado men's and women's programs hosted Buffs Madness, Roberson got a brief, blissfully sweet taste of how it's going to be next month when the regular season begins.

She was blown away.

"I was warming up and asking myself if I was really doing this," she said. "When I actually get to the game, I know I'm going to be asking if I'm really out here. I'm going to be ready, but I know I'll also be like, 'Oh, my God, is this really happening?'"

At long last, yes, it will be.

### BUFFALO EXTRAS



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What Roberson was certain she would be doing last year at this time was delayed by a left hip ailment - a torn labrum - that wasn't diagnosed until well after she arrived at CU to begin her freshman season. After a month or more of specific exercises and physical therapy prescribed to relieve periodic back pain she had experienced at Wagner High School in San Antonio, further testing revealed the hip problem.

Surgery was performed in early December, shelving Roberson for the 2011-12 season. It wasn't crushing, but it was close. The most frustrating part, she said, was "not being able to be with my team the way I thought I would be - on the court. I've never had to sit out in my life. That was probably the biggest shellshock. I think just that whole preseason was a drag, trying to make it day to day in classes, have it carry over through the night . . . that was a big bummer."

On a daily basis, Roberson might be as upbeat as anyone on the CU campus. "Everybody enjoys Arielle," said her coach, Linda Lappe. "She's got a smile on her face all the time."

At times, though the smile required work. "Once I got that (news) and the doctors said I couldn't play anymore, that hit me really deep," Roberson said. "I never expected that. I'm sure I expected some bad news, but I didn't expect it to end my freshman season. It was definitely really tough to swallow."

But Roberson is a battler, and throughout her fight to return she had the support of her teammates and the CU staff. The Buffs knew what she was going through.

"Her teammates really empathized with what she went through last year," Lappe said. "They respect the fact that she's really worked hard in her rehab to get to where she is today. Anytime she does anything well her teammates are really happy for her and proud of her. I think she can feel that from them."

Roberson's first-year ordeal "weighed on us because we knew how bad she wanted to play as a freshman . . . it was hard on her and we knew it," said junior guard Brittany Wilson. "But she was one of us, one of the family. She's like a little sister to me. Now she's back and we're with her."

"That's just the nature of this team," Roberson said. "They're always there to pick somebody up who's having a bad day; they're always there. Now that I'm getting back in, sure I make mistakes - I think that's inevitable - but I kind of pick myself up and coach has been harping on that. But I'm getting positive feedback and I think that really helps because I like to be perfect. And when I'm not, and knowing I'm not yet what I once was, they can see that and the coaches can see that. I think they all do a really good job of trying to keep my spirits up and have me focus on the positive things that I am doing."

Roberson is 6-1, lithe and athletic. It runs in the family. Her brother, Andre, is a 6-7 junior wing for Tad Boyle's CU men's team. They are the only brother-sister tandem in the Pac-12 Conference, and believed to be one of only five in Division I basketball.

Aside from "family tournaments," Arielle and Andre didn't compete much growing up in San Antonio. "He played more with his friends, me with mine," Arielle said. "It wasn't like, 'Hey, Andre, let's go play.' He liked to play with his guy friends and they always went places I couldn't get into."

But they could compete in the backyard tournaments, which might have ranked among San Antonio's top amateur sporting events. Their father, John, played hoops at New Mexico State and professionally overseas for 12 years. Their mother, Lisa, was a New Mexico State volleyball player. Two of their sisters, Ashlee and Amber, played basketball and volleyball at Texas Tech and Texas, respectively. Those guys peering over the fence? They might have been college recruiters.

Arielle's and Andre's games aren't mirror images of one another, but they're very similar. Lappe can see it. "For sure," she said. "They play very much alike in terms of their nose for the ball and getting off their feet quickly, their ability to score over bigger players on the block . . . Arielle gets off her shot fairly well. Just their feel for the game; both have a very good feel for the game. She's blocked numerous, numerous shots where she's come out of nowhere - and that's a lot like Andre."

"She might not block them above the rim quite like Andre, but she gets up and comes out of nowhere a lot of times. So that's exciting . . . just her defensive play in general is. She has quick feet in the post and can guard multiple positions - outside and inside players. She's really good at moving her feet, getting deflections."

Andre led the Pac-12 in rebounding last season (11.1 a game) and was third nationally. He also tied for the conference lead in blocked shots (1.8 a game) and averaged 11.6 points a game. He was the only Pac-12 player to average a double-double.

Arielle can see glimpses of Andre's game in her own, but defers to her big brother in the board work. "He has a better knack for the ball in rebounding," she said. "But I can definitely rebound as well. He might be a tad bit better, but I will get the knack."

She also sees a shared unselfishness in their games: "We kind of look for others before we look for ourselves . . . I think that's a positive. But we're both slashers."

The difference, though, she added with a laugh is Andre "finishes with a dunk, I finish with a layup . . . but for the most part, I guess we like to do the dirty work and then clean it up."

Lappe missed having that cleaning service last season as the Buffs began Pac-12 play. As a high school senior, Arielle averaged 18.2 points, 9.7 rebounds, 2.7 assists, three steals and two blocks per game. North Carolina and South Carolina chased her, but CU caught her - and it wasn't because Andre already was on the Boulder scene. "It was a bonus, though," Arielle said.

Her rehab has gone well, bringing her back to "about 95 percent" of where she needs to be when the Buffs open the season on Sunday afternoon, Nov. 11 against Idaho at the Coors Events Center. "I'm still trying to work on getting some of my quickness back. I lost that."

But she's retained enough of her overall athleticism and feel for the game to impress Lappe, the CU staff and the Buffs. During the first week of practice, said Lappe, "She struggled a little because she hasn't played in over a year . . . it took a while for her to get into flow of drills and five-on-five play. It seemed like everything was going 100 miles an hour in her head. But this week we're already seeing that start to slow down a little. She's starting to get back into the flow. That just shows her athleticism and ability to do that so quickly."

Added Brittany Wilson: "It's excellent to have her back. She's so very versatile. She's going to get a lot of mismatches on whether she's at the 'three' or the 'four.' She can drive, she can shoot. It adds a whole different twist to our game now."

Lappe is eager to work Arielle into the Buffs' lineup to relieve some of her other players from playing out of position. At 6-2, senior Meagan Malcolm-Peck has an inch on Arielle, but she "has played most of her life on the outside," Lappe said. "Putting her on the low post is different for her. But she's had to play some 'four' and she's more of a guard. She's tall, but she doesn't bring the length that Arielle does. And Arielle has played most of her life on the block, so she has a good feel down there."

But Roberson concedes that getting all the way back will take time. "My post moves are not as fast as they used to be," she said. "I'm relearning how to maneuver around bigger players. But the timing is going to come. For the most part, I'm pleased with where I am but I'm not content."

Arielle expects her parents to be in town for the CU women's opener as well as the men's on Friday night, Nov. 9 against Wofford. "I know that's going to be a great experience," she said. "I'm really looking forward to it. I can see it, I can taste it . . . I'm just really ready and excited for it to come. It all feels so good."

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## Women's basketball: CU Buffs hoping to earn Pac-12 more respect

By Brian Howell *Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera*

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Around the country, there isn't a whole lot of respect for the Pac-12 Conference in women's basketball, and Colorado head coach Linda Lappe hopes that changes.

"What you find a lot of times is that the perception of the Pac-12 is it's not very good," Lappe said. "With the Pac-12 Network doing what it's doing, I think it's going to dispel a lot of those perceptions."

Perhaps, but the Buffs' margin for error is likely not that big if they harbor NCAA Tournament hopes.

Just two Pac-12 teams (Stanford and California) reached the NCAA Tournament last year, and Cal was a bubble team that was given a No. 8 seed. That's quite a difference from CU's days in the Big 12, when the top half of the league usually got NCAA invites.

In order to get more national respect, Lappe said the teams in the Pac-12 need to schedule tougher opponents and then, of course, beat some of those tougher opponents.

"We've done our part in getting a tougher schedule in the non-conference," said Lappe, whose team is scheduled to face Louisville, a potential top-15 team, on Dec. 14. "We're going to be tested from the start and I believe that most other Pac-12 teams are doing the same thing. There's no reason that the Pac-12 should not get in more than two teams. We've just got to do our work to make sure the committee doesn't overlook the Pac-12 again. There's some things we can do as a conference to help that."

CU, which finished 10th last year, would significantly increase its chances of an NCAA bid with a top three or four finish in the Pac-12, but Lappe said the Buffs shoot for that every year anyway.

### Backing up Chucky

In looking to add some depth at point guard behind starter Chucky Jeffery, Lappe has been pleased with how junior Brittany Wilson has played in that role during practice.

Ultimately, the Buffs are hoping freshman Ky Weston will be ready to back up Jeffery.

"We think that by the middle of the season Kyleesha will be able to give us some good minutes from the point guard position," Lappe said. "Until then, she's still learning the offense."

Lappe said point guard is the toughest position for a freshman, but added that Weston "is going to be one of those players who keeps getting better."

### Reese improving

Sophomore Jen Reese is still working her way back after breaking the orbital bone in her left eye on Feb. 23 at Stanford. Reese is back on the court and practicing with the Buffs, but still has some limitations with her vision.

"She still is not fully able to see when she looks extremely upward," Lappe said. "That's something that is continuing to come back."

Still, Reese, who has been wearing goggles, has looked good in practice.

"She's battling and she's been in the best shape that she's ever been in," Lappe said.

#### Notable

Freshman Arielle Roberson said, "I want to be Pac-12 freshman of the year." ... Sophomore guard Lexy Kresl said she feels much healthier and stronger this year. ... Weston did not participate in practice on Thursday because of a sprained ankle. ... Lappe is 39-30 in two years at CU and 89-66 in her career.

Follow Brian on Twitter: @BrianHowell33.

## Women's basketball: CU Buffs believe depth will eliminate mid-season lull

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

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A year ago, it was clear from the start of camp that if the Colorado women's basketball team was going to succeed, it would need its freshmen to play significant roles.

They did, and the Buffs went 21-14 and reached the Women's NIT quarterfinals.

This year, head coach Linda Lappe may not be so dependent on her youngsters.

"They don't have to play right away and that's the first time we've been able to say that since our staff has been here," Lappe said Thursday at CU's annual basketball media day.

For the first time since she became CU's head coach, the Buffs have depth and appear to be better equipped to put together a great season than they have in recent years.

"We've hit a lull the last two years in January, beginning of February," Lappe said. "We've had good starts and good finishes. The depth is really going to help us be able to sustain the level that we want to play throughout the year."

CU started last season with a 12-0 mark. The Buffs finished with a 5-2 record in their last seven games. In between, they went 4-12 and ultimately coughed up any chance they had at reaching the NCAA Tournament.

This year, the NCAA Tournament is, once again, the goal. For now, the Buffs are trying not to focus too much on the Tournament -- and the fact that CU is hosting the first two rounds -- but they know the goal is realistic.

"We feel like that's going to be a byproduct of everything that we're doing right now," Lappe said. "We don't know where we're going to be at the end of the year, but we do know what we can do today."

"I really believe if we maximize our potential this year, (the Tournament) could be an end result of that."

She feels that way because of CU's depth -- not just in terms of numbers, but the quality of those numbers.

During 2010-11, just nine players saw the court in Lappe's first season. A year ago, 11 got playing time, but two of them -- Brenna Malcolm-Peck and Esther Lee -- combined to play just 37 minutes, so really the Buffs relied on just nine players again.

Eight of those nine are back, and CU's four scholarship freshmen (Lauren Huggins, Arielle Roberson, Ky Weston and Jamee Swan) will push those eight for playing time.

"We have 12 players that can play and there's not a whole lot of people that can say that," Lappe said.

CU has high expectations for its freshmen, but not quite like last year, when Lexy Kresl, Jen Reese and Jasmine Sborov combined for 30 starts and 1,952 minutes of playing time.

"What that allows (the freshmen) to do and us to do is get them ready and not just throw them into the fire right away when they're not ready," Lappe said. "I do think our freshmen will all play and maybe two or three of them significantly."

Senior point guard Chucky Jeffery said the overall depth will allow CU's veteran players to get more rest early in the season, while also getting the younger players some valuable minutes.

CU has more quality on the roster, too.

For the first time in Lappe's three years, there is a true point guard (Weston) to back up Jeffery. The Buffs also have more talent in the front court, with Reese, Roberson, Swan and an improved Rachel Hargis.

There's firepower in other spots, too, with Meagan Malcolm-Peck, Lexy Kresl, Brittany Wilson and Ashley Wilson all having the ability to score.

A year ago, opponents figured out that stopping Jeffery usually meant stopping CU. That may not be the case this year.

"Everybody worked really hard over the summer and improved on what they needed to improve on," Jeffery said. "You can tell in practice people aren't afraid to shoot and go to the rim and things like that."

With more depth and more talent, there is an increased level of confidence and optimism at CU this year.

"We really feel like this year we have a lot of the components that it takes to put some things together and have a special season," Lappe said. "There's a lot of positive things happening around our basketball program and now we just have to capitalize on it and build on it."

Follow Brian on Twitter: @BrianHowell33.



## **Ringo: CU Buffs basketball squads warrant your attention**

*By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera*

*Posted:*

Buffzone.com

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Linda Lappe and Tad Boyle share many fundamental philosophies when it comes to building winning basketball programs.

But one clear difference between the Colorado coaches has emerged as attention turns away from an awful football season for the Buffs toward high hopes for another fun winter on the hardwood.

Lappe doesn't mind talking in October about her hopes for an NCAA Tournament berth. In fact, she has made it clear it's the goal of her program and one she sees as achievable based on the experience and depth on her roster.

Boyle stays away from that topic with his players and as much as possible with the media. He takes the same approach every preseason, not putting the cart before the horse as he puts it.

Colorado's coaches and players met with reporters Thursday to discuss their teams and the approaching season. It might be the most interesting season of basketball in Boulder in years, which is saying something considering both coaches have led their programs to the postseason in their first two years on the job.

Both of these teams finally have the talent and depth available to be competitive in every game. The men have size and athleticism in the post and the women have more than one point guard and are legitimately at least 10-deep.

Lappe's team also has quite a bit of experience. Both should finish in the upper half of the Pac-12 Conference. And both should make the postseason for a third straight season.

There are a lot of football-loving folks around here who thought the end of the world would come before that would happen. So unless the Mayans were right about this December...

Boyle's team gets most of the attention these days because the men are coming off an inspiring run to the Pac-12 Conference tournament title and a first-round win in the NCAA Tournament. The roster also features six new scholarship players who made up one of the top-25 recruiting classes in the nation.

But fans would save themselves some frustration-filled nights by tempering their expectations for Boyle's Buffs right now.

This is a very young roster. Sure, young teams can still be extremely successful in college hoops, last season's, national title winners at Kentucky being one example. But these Buffs aren't those Wildcats. There will be some growing pains, especially with a more challenging nonconference schedule this year as compared with some in the past.

"There is no fast-forward button to put on youth," Boyle said this week.

That isn't to say Boyle can't get the Buffs back to the postseason. In fact, I expect these Buffs to be playing well into March, but the reality is another NIT season might come before another March Madness run.

I'm not ruling out an NCAA Tournament appearance because Boyle has made a habit of exceeding expectations since taking the job. And if you think Boyle is Mr. Popularity now, imagine how his approval rating will balloon if he does get this team to overachieve.



But the more intriguing story, at least heading into the season, is whether Lappe's team can take the next step.

She has delivered incremental success so far and the next phase of that would be playing NCAA Tournament games at the Coors Events Center in March. The school is one of the host sites for the women's tournament this season, which should add fuel to the fire inside the Buffs.

Lappe said Thursday she believes her program might benefit this season from being able to watch the men's team get to the Big Dance last year and win a game.

"To be able to see that and how that happens and what it took and the dynamics of that team, we talked a lot to our team about that because until you've been there you don't know what it takes," Lappe said. "Nobody on our team has been to the NCAA Tournament. The good part about our team is that our coaching staff has."

There is definitely more pressure on the women and Lappe to get there this season than the men and Boyle because the women's tournament is in town and because there is more experience in Lappe's locker room than in Boyle's.

Lappe and her players said they don't feel that pressure.

"I don't necessarily think it's pressure; it's more so motivational," senior Chucky Jeffery said. "That's what we work hard every day in practice for; it's in the back of all of our minds."

There has been a lot of talk this year about Colorado becoming a basketball school with things trending upward at the Coors Events Center while they're flatlining at Folsom. Unless huge surprises are in store, this season should only add to that vibe.

Follow Kyle on Twitter: @KyleRingo

## Colorado's Roberson brother-sister act in full support

By Tom Kensler *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

Posted:

DenverPost.com

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BOULDER — Because of hip surgery last December, Colorado redshirt freshman Arielle Roberson sat out her first basketball season since she began playing in second grade. It's a good thing older brother Andre was there to help her through it.

Andre Roberson, a 6-foot-7 junior forward, is the top player on the Colorado men's team.

"It was very tough on Arielle; she got down on herself, maybe a little depression," Andre said Thursday during CU men's and women's basketball media-day interviews. "Not being able to travel with the team made it that much worse. Sometimes, she didn't seem like herself.

"I was always there for her. When she couldn't get out of bed, it was nice to have somebody in the family to help her get through her days. I think I helped her a lot."

More than Andre could know, Arielle said.

"Andre would come by and see if there was anything he could do, bring food and give support," she said. "And watching him play was a good distraction for me. That was a blessing in disguise to watch him play because I couldn't do that when I was playing."

CU women's coach Linda Lappe is looking for big things from Arielle, an athletic 6-1 forward.

"Arielle is still knocking off rust (from sitting out a year)," Lappe said. "But we see some amazing things from her every day."

Growing up in San Antonio, Arielle said she learned some moves from Andre while shooting hoops at the goal in their driveway.

"We like to slash and drive, that's what we do," Arielle said of Andre. "We've both played against bigger people in the post and learned to use our agility and skinny build to get by them."

On the run. Third-year Colorado men's coach Tad Boyle said this year's squad will be better in transition. For all of last season's accomplishments, which included 24 victories and the program's first NCAA Tournament win since 1997, the 2011-12 Buffs sometimes struggled offensively.

CU ranked just eighth among Pac-12 teams in scoring last season with 67.3 points per game in conference action.

"We're going to be able to get out and go," Boyle said Thursday. "We want to run on every (opponent's) miss."

Challenging start. While some programs rarely stray from home during the nonconference portion of their schedule, the CU men's team has three true road tests (Wyoming, Kansas and Fresno State) and will play three games at a tournament in Charleston, S.C.

"I'm not sure I'm the smartest guy in the world, (but) sometimes these schedules are made a few years out," Boyle said. "I will say this, the schedule we have this year would really be appropriate for our team next year (when the freshmen have some experience). But it's going to be a great challenge for this year's team."

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All in the family

Brother-sister acts in Division I basketball:

Air Force (MW)