

Women's basketball: CU Buffs' Jen Reese rebounding from eye injury

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Every once in a while, Jen Reese has to wipe off her goggles, or adjust them a bit.

"I'm tired of cleaning them every five seconds, but they have to protect my eye somehow," the Colorado sophomore said.

The goggles will be a minor annoyance for Reese, but she doesn't plan on letting them ruin her season with the CU women's basketball team.

"I feel way more confidence in myself," she said. "My team has helped a lot through the summer with my injury. I just feel stronger and more confident in myself."

As a freshman last year, Reese averaged 7.8 points and 6.0 rebounds per game. Twelve games into the year, she seized a starting spot because of her solid work on offense and her improving defense. Then came the injury. On Feb. 23, two minutes into the Buffs' game at Stanford, Reese broke the orbital bone below her left eye. Her season was done.

Eight months later, Reese's vision is nearly back, and her game is improved.

"Jen looks better now than she did at any point last year," head coach Linda Lappe said. "She's gotten herself in pretty good shape. She's gotten stronger. Those have been her two focal points as she's gone into year two, because those are her weaknesses."

Reese's mid-range jumper was one of CU's best offensive weapons last year, but at 6-foot-2, the Buffs need her to battle with some of the Pac-12's best in the paint.

"Over the summer that was my goal, to gain muscle and get stronger," she said. "I think I have. I've been doing well in practice and beating up on my teammates more than me getting beat up on."

With an improved game inside, Reese has the potential on any given night to post a double-double. She scored at least 10 points in nine of her 25 games last year and had at least eight points in 15 games. She also had four double-digit rebound games.

"I think it's important to be there for my teammates on the floor and do the best I can to help them," she said.

That's why she puts up with the goggles. They aren't fun to wear, but, for this year at least, they are necessary.

"She would be much happier without goggles on, but you can't see it and she doesn't complain about it," Lappe said. "She knows that's part of what it's going to take to play, so she just takes it the way it is and makes the most of it."

Notable

The Buffs will host Western State on Friday at 7 p.m. in an exhibition game. The game will be broadcast on the Pac-12 Digital network. ... On Friday at 11:30 a.m., there will be a 30-minute Twitterchat with several members of the Associated Press preseason All-America team, including Baylor's Brittney Griner, Notre Dame's Skylar

http://www.buffzone.com/basketball/ci_21892374/womens-basketball-cu-buffs-jen-reese-rebounding-from

Diggins and Stanford's Chiney Ogwumike. For those who want to follow that chat, look for #APhoopchat.

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