

CU lacrosse builds initial roster with nationwide talent

By Caitlin Swieca *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

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When the University of Colorado announced the addition of a women's lacrosse team in 2012, it created a new opportunity for Coloradans in one of the area's fastest-growing sports.

But for the team's first roster, coach Ann Elliott recruited players nationwide.

"You can go to any state and find a great lacrosse player that can play at the Division I level," Elliott said. "Our vision is not to limit ourselves, and I think the university attracts people from all over the country."

Among the 20 players on CU's roster, only four are natives of Colorado.

"This first year, we got such a late start that many of the very elite players had already selected where they wanted to go," CU associate athletic director Julie Manning said. "We're really seeing the Colorado players disperse all over the country."

CU coaches hope to stock the roster with in-state talent in the near future. They have been in contact with area club coaches, and expect to sign a much higher number of Colorado players in the next few recruiting classes, Manning said.

Although the team is in its first season, the university is providing it with the full 12 scholarships allowed for equivalency sports.

With the program beginning play next spring, Elliott relied on her personal story to attract players.

"We definitely don't have the history of a lacrosse program to sell, but we'll get there," Elliott said. "We talk a lot about our staff and the experiences we've had."

Elliott and her assistant coaches, Colleen Magarity and Hannah Nielsen, played for the prestigious Northwestern program that has won seven of the past nine NCAA titles. Combined, the three own 13 championship rings.

To prepare for the spring season, CU is making both short- and long-term upgrades to the team's facilities. The Buffs will open their first season with a game at Folsom Field in mid-February before moving to their home at Kittredge Field, a space the team will share with club lacrosse and recreational sports teams.

This summer, the field was resodded in a project that cost \$500,000, Manning said. The scoreboard and lighting also will be upgraded before the season starts.

Elliott, who was an assistant coach at Northwestern when CU hired her, is excited about building a program here.

"Colorado is a phenomenal place to live," she said. "When you envision leaving a place like Northwestern and building something, you want to go to a place that has all the resources to be

successful. I think the last year has proved that CU will provide that."

The team will start practicing when the fall semester begins in August and will scrimmage against other in-state programs this fall.

The addition of women's lacrosse puts CU in full compliance with the Title IX requirement that the ratio of male to female student-athletes is the same as that of the student body, Manning said.