

Colorado women's basketball: Buffs' Sborov ready for breakout season

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Posted:

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Jasmine Sborov swings to the corner of the court, takes a pass from assistant coach Kelley Rae Finley and buries a jumper.

Then, she does it again. Swish.

And again. Swish.

Now a junior with the Colorado women's basketball team, Sborov is showing signs of having a breakout season.

"You just watch her play and she's different, in a good way," CU head coach Linda Lappe said. "As of right now, she's the most improved player from last year."

Sborov has played a key role for the Buffaloes since she arrived two years ago. A 6-foot guard from Round Rock, Texas, Sborov has played in 62 of CU's 67 games, making 19 starts.

She has provided the Buffs with a physical presence on the floor, while getting key rebounds and defensive stops. She's never been a flashy player or a dynamic scorer, but she's always been a consistent contributor. She averaged 2.9 points and 3.0 rebounds as a freshman and 2.8 points and 3.2 rebounds as sophomore.

Physically and mentally, however, Sborov has been a different player as the Buffs prepare for the upcoming season.

"This is the first time I've come in 100 percent healthy into a season, and I feel really good," said Sborov, who is noticeably leaner than in the past. "I just think a lot of it has to do with getting older. I understand the system, the program, the coaches, just what it takes to play college basketball. Having a grasp on that has really helped me as a player to come in ready."

Lappe has been impressed with how Sborov attacked workouts during the offseason and transformed herself into a new player.

Now, Sborov needs to take the next step in her game. To do that, Lappe said Sborov needs to be more vocal on the court.

"Starting to understand that we need to hear her voice and feel her presence more is really important," Lappe said. "On the court, she's got to kind of come into her own in having that presence, because she should be confident enough to do that."

Another aspect of Sborov's game that should go to a new level is her offensive production. Her career high is 11 points, but she's never been a particularly sharp shooter and she

generally doesn't score more than a basket or two. She's made just 36.4 percent of her field goals (67-for-184) during her career. From 3-point range, she is 3-for-19.

So, it may come as a surprise to know that Lappe is depending on Sborov to knock down 3-pointers this season.

"If she doesn't take them I'm going to be upset because I've seen her make so many in practice," Lappe said. "She's going to be expected to take them, much like Lexy (Kresl) is expected to take them and Lauren (Huggins) is expected to take them. She has to take 3s for us this year, and she'll knock them down."

Practice sessions, like her recent post-practice workout with Finley, have been vital for Sborov's development and confidence.

"Coach Lappe has been putting me in positions to be in that kind of role offensively more, so I'm getting a lot more practice in that which, in turn, just turns into confidence for me," Sborov said. "I feel a lot more confident offensively this year and I think it can only get better."

Sborov may not ever post a 25-point game, Lappe said, but she is certainly capable of regular double-figure outputs and occasionally flirting with the 20-point mark.

"I'd like to contribute more offensively, but I also don't want to forget my defense and rebounding," she said, referring to the two points of emphasis from the past two years.

If Sborov can continue to be solid on defense, grab her share of rebounds and add some offensive firepower, she could be in for a big year.

"I'm really excited," she said. "I don't know exactly how this year is going to look, but I'm going to work hard every day and do my best to have a great year, and I know my teammates push me every day in practice to make me better. So, I think this is going to be a really fun year."

Notable

Senior point guard Brittany Wilson has not practiced yet with the Buffs this fall because of a sore foot. Lappe expects Wilson to return soon. In the meantime, true freshman Desiree Harris has seen a lot of minutes at point guard during practice. "I think in the long run it'll be really good for her," Lappe said.

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