

CU Buffs' Arielle Roberson to assume bigger role in Jeffery's absence

By Terry Frei The Denver Post The Denver Post

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BOULDER — There still is a basketball star named Roberson on the University of Colorado campus.

Yes, Andre Roberson left the Buffaloes' program after his junior season to declare for the NBA draft, and as Oklahoma City's first-round draft choice, he will be suited up for his first regular-season game for the Thunder on Wednesday at Utah.

His younger sister Arielle remains in Boulder and is expected to play an even more prominent role for the Buffaloes' women's team this season than she did a year ago, when the 6-foot-1 forward was the Pac-12's freshman of the year.

First, she has to get used to not having her brother around.

"I do miss Andre," she said. "I've told him that. It's different now. It's a good different and a bad different. He's out there doing what he loves to do, so I can't feel bad about that."

And the "bad" different?

"I guess not being able to say, 'Andre, do you want to go to the movies or hang out?' " Arielle said. "Or sometimes when I passed him on the campus, he'd make a funny sound or face and make me laugh. I'll miss the little things, too."

Arielle redshirted her first season on campus because of a hip injury that required surgery. Last season she averaged 12.1 points and 6.2 rebounds as the Buffs went 25-7 overall, 13-5 in the Pac 12.

With sparkplug point guard Chucky Jeffery, the team's leading scorer, the only major player departing, Roberson likely will be challenged to score more and serve as a leader.

"Chucky was an amazing player," Roberson said. "But I think we're better. We're deep at all positions. Everybody will step up, and I feel in a way it's allowing everyone to show what we can do. We're not going to have Chucky running in while we're boxing everybody out so she can get the ball. We're actually going to have to grab it ourselves."

Offensively, Roberson said she can improve.

"I have to knock down shots. Not overthink, not overdrive, just knock down shots when I have them and if I have a drive, take it."

Roberson, who is from San Antonio, said she didn't offer input when her brother was agonizing over whether to leave or remain for his senior season.

"I didn't want to come in and say, 'No, don't go!' " she said. "I felt it was the right move for him,

and it turned out to be a great move. I was actually hoping he'd go to San Antonio or the Nuggets. But Oklahoma City was my second-favorite team behind the Spurs, so that was perfect."

The realities of the sports marketplace mean that even if Arielle follows Andre to pro basketball — in her case, the WNBA — she won't make nearly as much money.

"We don't get as many fans as the men do," she said. "That's just not how the world works. I've come to terms with that, so I'm not really focusing on the money aspect. If I play, it's because I want to play and it makes me happy."

Roberson and the Buffs open at home against Colorado Mines on Saturday.

Terry Frei: tfrei@denverpost.com