



2013-14 OUTLOOK

The first three years of the **Linda Lappe** era could be summed up by the following question...Can you top this?

Since returning to her alma mater in the spring of 2010, Colorado has enjoyed a steady climb, improving its record each year while achieving new heights along the way.

After several years of sub-par performances, the Buffaloes made back-to-back WNIT appearances in 2011 and 2012. Last season, Colorado broke through with a 25-7 record, 13-5 in Pac-12 play, one of its finest seasons in over a decade. In the end, Colorado was rewarded with its 13th NCAA Tournament appearance and first since 2004.

Now the question...what's next for the Buffaloes in 2013-14? While Colorado can use experiences from last year to build on, the Buffaloes and Lappe have the perspective of taking it day-by-day this year and working to get better in the present.

"It's a different season," Lappe said. "Sometimes we can look back and remember how we accomplished something. Every team has its own identity and this team's has yet to be determined. Last year we beat teams we should beat and did some good things. But we have to be able to take care of business this year and then raise that level...how do we build on that and keep going forward?"

"Everything gets harder. It's easier to get to the top when you are not very good than it is to stay at the top. So we have to keep getting better. We're very hungry to reach our goals, understanding how hard we have to work every day."

Colorado's success last year can be attributed in part to taking care of business; beating the teams they were supposed to beat. The Buffaloes were a sparkling 24-1 against unranked opponents, with the lone loss coming in the NCAA Tournament against a Kansas team that had

arguably underachieved during the regular season after a Sweet 16 Appearance in 2012.

While Colorado will strive to maintain that success rate against the majority of the country, the next step is to attack that next tier. Six of Colorado's seven losses came against ranked teams and five of those were ranked in the top seven.



Brittany Wilson

Defensively the Buffaloes should be solid once again, and not surprisingly as aggressiveness on that end of the floor has become a trademark of the program under Lappe. Colorado is coming off of one of the greatest defensive seasons in program history, setting school records for scoring defense (54.5 ppg) and opponent field-goal percentage (.350). Senior guard **Brittany Wilson** emerged as one of the top defenders in the Pac-12, being named to the league's all-defensive team.

On the offensive side, Colorado should be fairly balanced and as good in the low post as it has been in years. **Arielle Roberson**, the reigning Pac-12 Freshman of the Year, is Colorado's top returning scorer (12.1 ppg) and rebounder (6.2 rpg). She also led the Buffaloes in trips to the free-throw line (97-of-142) and hit 41 percent from 3-point range (21-of-51).



Jasmine Sborov

The Buffaloes also return three other starters with loads of experience. Senior center **Rachel Hargis** started 31 games in the low blocks before missing the NCAA game against Kansas with a knee injury. At a solid 6-4, she gives the Buffaloes a strong physical presence down low. Hargis led the team in blocked shots (34) while averaging just over four points per game.

CU's back court duo of Wilson and junior **Lexy Kresl** have the ability to score in bunches. They rank 10th and 11th respectively in career 3-point field goals and individually can light it up at any time.

Senior **Ashley Wilson** and junior **Jasmine Sborov** have experience as a starter and off the bench; both have consistently provided energy throughout their careers regardless of roles.

While neither Ashley Wilson or Sborov have eye-popping statistics, they possess a trait that can be attributed to most of the Buffaloes, versatility. Sborov can play all five positions on the floor, giving Colorado a lot of different looks. Wilson's



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energy off the bench as been contagious over the past three years, and despite her 5-8 frame, crashes the boards as well as some with several inches on her.

The Buffaloes have built themselves up to have plenty of depth from the outside. **Lauren Huggins**, who missed all but five games last year due to an injured leg, regained that year of eligibility through an NCAA medical hardship. Huggins is dangerous 3-point shooter with range well beyond the arc.

Two new faces join the Buffaloes back court in point guard **Desiree Harris** and wing **Haley Smith**. Harris averaged 15 points and six rebounds as a senior for St. Joseph Notre Dame in Alameda, Calif. Smith, from Sammamish, Wash., led her Skyline High School team to the Class 4A state tournament and was the KingCo 4A MVP.

Colorado has an experienced front court. While Hargis has been a mainstay in the post for three years, junior **Jen Reese** and **Jamee Swan** look to continue to provide valuable minutes at one of the forward spots.

"Post play has really started to become a strength, even last year as we went through the season," Lappe said. "Our strength and toughness is much better and you can see that on the floor."

Reese was one of the best bench players in the Pac-12 last year. She ranked third on the team in scoring and earned honorable mention to the All-Pac-12 team. Swan progressed nicely as her freshman season went along, hitting 45 percent from the field and ranking second on the team in blocks (28) and fourth in rebounds at 4.5 per game.

Entering the mix this year are a pair of 6-2 post players. **Zoe Beard-Fails** averaged 17 points and 10 rebounds for Georgetown Day School in Washington, D.C. **Bri Watts**, a

Fresno, Calif., native helped her Clovis West High School team to a sectional title as a senior. Both players add a strong and physical presence to the Buffaloes front court.



Jen Reese

Colorado's incoming freshmen have the unique opportunity of already having played for the Buffaloes. During the tour, which included stops in Lake Como, Venice, Florence and Rome, Colorado played in three competitions, where all four saw significant time on the court. The experience also provided the young Buffs with an extra 10 days of practice prior to the trip as well a chance to bond with their new teammates.

One of Colorado's challenges will be to replace two-time All-Pac-12 and honorable mention AP All-American guard Chucky Jeffery, one of the most dynamic players in team history. Jeffery, who averaged 13.7 points, 8.2 rebounds and 4.0 assists as a senior, finished her career in numerous career top 10 lists at Colorado including points, rebounds, assists and steals.

No one player is expected to replace Jeffery, and Lappe feels the Buffaloes collectively are certainly up to that task, each stepping up to take on different roles.

"We have players that are confident to do that," Lappe said. "They've all worked really hard and realize they may need to play a different role than they did last year."

Colorado once again has a competitive schedule that features games against 12 opponents that advanced to postseason play a year ago. That mix includes a rematch with 2013 NCAA runner-up Louisville on Dec. 21. The Buffaloes also have nonconference home games against Big Ten foes Iowa and Illinois

"We have a really tough nonconference schedule," Lappe said. "We play some quality teams at home and on the road, and visit some neat venues like The Pit (New Mexico) and the Yum Center (Louisville). It should be a great experience for our players."

"With our schedule, are players certainly won't get bored. They will be intrigued about each game; we'll really understand what it means to be ready and prepared each time out."



Jamee Swan



2013 TRIP TO ITALY



Colorado took a 10-day tour of Italy this past summer (Aug. 12-21) as players, coaches and staff took in the opportunity to visit historic destinations including Lake Como, Venice, Florence, and Rome.

Per NCAA rules, the Buffaloes were allowed to have 10 full team practices prior to leaving for Italy. The trip was funded by donors of the basketball program.

Colorado played two full games against a pair of all-star teams made up of professional players from around Italy. The Buffaloes won handily in both contests, 80-47 against the Toscana All-Stars on Aug. 16 near Florence and then 96-22 against the Lazio All-Stars in Rome on Aug. 18.





2013 TRIP TO ITALY



A third game against the Lazio/Latina All-Stars provided a unique twist. The Buffaloes and their Italian counterparts played one normal 10-minute quarter that ended in a 20-7 Colorado advantage. For the remaining three periods, the teams started over on the scoreboard and then shuffled rosters to form a Black and Gold squad. Senior guards Ashley & Brittany Wilson, junior guard Lexy Kresl, sophomore forward Jamee Swan and freshman center Bri Watts, joined the Italian coach and players on the Black team, along with Colorado assistants Jonas Chatterton and LaTonya Watson. Several Italian players joined the rest of the Buffaloes and head coach Linda Lappe and assistant Kelly Rae Finley on the Gold.

The contest proved to be highly spirited and competitive with the Black team, led by Brittany Wilson, staging a last-minute comeback for a 48-46 win. Wilson sank two free throws with under 20 seconds left for the deciding margin.

