



# Colorado booters to miss Marshall

## Junior to train with U.S. squad during NCAAs

By Ryan Thorburn

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Bill Hempen gave his starters the day off and designed Tuesday's practice for the reserves on the Colorado soccer team.

The plan didn't work.

All but three players on the roster showed up ready to get a jump on preparations for the NCAA tournament, including all of the seniors except Nikki Marshall, who flew to Los Angeles to join the U.S. national team for the FIFA Under-20 World Cup.

"I said, 'What are you guys doing here?' And they said, 'We don't have many left and we want to make sure we're here for all of them,'" Hempen said. "It was kind of neat to see."

The 16th-ranked Buffs are a No. 4 seed and will face South Dakota State in the first round at 2 p.m. on Friday in Minneapolis. Host Minnesota faces Marquette with the winners meeting in the second round at noon on Sunday.

The CU coaching staff doesn't know a lot about the Jackrabbits (14-4-1), who earned an automatic bid by winning the Summit League title.

And that might be a good thing for the Buffs (14-4-4) after surviving the rigors of the Big 12 schedule. The conference sent six teams into the field of 64.

"It's almost a relief," Hempen said. "Not because of who we're playing but who we're not playing. We're not looking at Missouri or anybody that carries the badge of the Big 12. At least for now. Just that alone is almost a relief."

Marshall will not be available for CU's postseason run. The talented junior will obviously be missed, but the team has been preparing for postseason life without her all season.

The Buffs were 2-0 in the two games Marshall missed during the regular season to train with the U.S. team, a 5-0 victory over Oklahoma and a 3-0 victory over Drake.

"It's probably a bad indicator, but the two games that she wasn't we had our biggest scoring games. I don't know if that was our opponent or us knowing we had to be better," Hempen said. "I think it gives those kids the confidence they can score without Nikki being around. ..."

"The good news is we were able to get to where we are without her scoring 17 goals like she did her

freshman year."

Marshall was second on the team with eight goals, one behind Gianna DeSaverio. The Buffs had 10 different players score goals this season.

This will be the program's sixth consecutive appearance in the NCAA Tournament.

### **Spikers host two**

The Buffs are looking to get back on track after losing to Kansas and Baylor last week.

CU hosts No. 14 Kansas State at 6:30 p.m. today and Missouri at 2 p.m. on Saturday at the Coors Events Center.

Pi'i Aiu's team was unable to build on the momentum of its four-set upset of No. 2 Nebraska two weeks ago. The Buffs (12-11, 6-8) are currently tied with Missouri for sixth in the Big 12 standings.

Kansas State enters tonight's match in third place with a record of 21-5 overall 11-4 in the conference.

### **Ready to run**

CU will compete in the NCAA Mountain Region Championships on Saturday in Fort Collins. The spectator-friendly races on the Collindale Golf Course begins at 11 a.m.

The men's race is a 10K and the women's race is a 5K. The top two teams in each race will earn automatic berths to the NCAA Championships on Nov. 24 in Terre Haute, Ind.



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