



Paris twins pose problems for Buffs

Matching up against OU's stars will be tough

By Chris Shelton
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Colorado center Kara Richards admits to being nervous before every game.

But the nerves will be tugging at her a little more tonight when the struggling Buffs play host to No. 3 Oklahoma and All-American center Courtney Paris.

"You've got to be a little nervous going up against her," Richards said. "But I think nervousness helps prepare you -- makes you be more careful."

Then again, 6-foot-4 Courtney Paris may be the least of CU's problems.

Twin sister Ashley Paris lines up at power forward, checking in at 6-3. Starting at power forward for CU is 5-9 guard Bianca Smith.

Sound fair?

"No," said CU coach Kathy McConnell-Miller, whose team has lost three in a row -- all to ranked teams -- to open Big 12 play. "It's a really tough matchup. Single coverage on the block, she can't do it. There's not many players in the country that can do it, let alone (Smith)."

The 7 p.m. game (FSN) in the Coors Events Center will be the last chance for women's basketball fans to see the Paris twins in Boulder given that they are seniors.

Courtney Paris owns an NCAA record with 113 consecutive double-doubles. Ashley Paris comes into this game having scored 34 points and grabbed 20 rebounds in her last two games combined.

Overall, Oklahoma has outscored its opponents 710-348 in the paint this season.

Reserve forwards Courtney Dunn and Julie Seabrook look to get more playing time for Colorado (8-7 overall, 0-3 Big 12) with the Paris twins in town.

"I've got to go deeper in my bench," McConnell-Miller said. "They're going to go at Kara and I have to have confidence in Courtney and Julie and Bianca."

But the Sooners (14-2, 3-0) are much more than just the Paris twins.

Point guard Danielle Robinson -- who beat out CU's Brittany Spears for last season's Big 12 freshman of the year honors -- is averaging 12.4 points and 6.2 assists per game.

And the player that could carry OU beyond last year's trip to the second round of the NCAA Tournament is freshman shooting guard Whitney Hand.

The downtown threat has made a team-best 31 treys this season.

"She gives them the opportunity to stretch a defense," McConnell-Miller said. "They were a little more limited last year in their 3-point shooting. She's a great complement to them."

Notable

A familiar face will be seated on OU's bench as former Kansas State star Kendra Wecker joined OU's staff in the offseason as a graduate assistant. Wecker was the fourth pick overall in the 2005 WNBA draft, taken by San Antonio. ...

Want more familiar names? Oklahoma junior center Abi Olajuwon is the daughter of NBA great Hakeem Olajuwon and sophomore forward Carlee Roethlisberger NFL quarterback Ben Roethlisberger's younger sister. ...

Spears is the lone player on CU's roster with any history of success against the Sooners. She scored 19 points at OU in last year's 82-66 loss. Richards, meanwhile, has scored six points total in three games against OU.



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CU women's preview: Oklahoma

TODAY -- Colorado (8-7, 0-3) hosts No. 3 Oklahoma (14-2, 3-0) at 7 p.m. in the Coors Events Center.

BROADCAST -- Television on FSN with Marc Stout (play-by-play), Ceal Barry (color) and Alanna Rizzo (sidelines). Radio on KKZN (760 AM) with Mike Rice (play-by-play) and Carol Callan (color).

STORYLINES -- Twin sisters Courtney and Ashley Paris should dominate CU in the paint against a CU team that has only one experienced post player in Kara Richards. The Sooners also have outside scoring threats in Whitney Hand and Nyeshia Stevenson. Colorado looks to snap a three-game losing streak, while Oklahoma looks to extend a 10-game win streak.

KEY STAT -- Forward Ashley Paris (6-foot-3), who averages 14.6 points and 10.1 rebounds for Oklahoma, will be defended by CU's 5-9 guard Bianca Smith.

COACHES -- Kathy McConnell-Miller is 49-60 in her fourth year at CU. Sherri Coale is 268-129 in her 13th season at OU.

PROBABLE STARTERS:

Colorado -- G Britney Blythe, 5-9, So., 2.5 ppg, 1.3 apg; G Alyssa Fressle, 5-10, Fr., 9.3 ppg, 3.8 apg; G Brittany Spears, 6-1, So., 17.5 ppg, 7.7 rpg; G Bianca Smith 5-9, Jr., 9.7 ppg, 5.1 rpg; C Kara Richards, 6-4, Sr., 11.9 ppg, 6.9 rpg.

Oklahoma -- G Danielle Robinson, 5-9, So., 12.4 ppg, 6.2 apg; G Whitney Hand, 6-1, Fr., 9.8 ppg, 31 treys; F Amanda Thompson, 6-0, Jr., 7.3 ppg, 4.8 rpg; F Ashley Paris, 6-3, Sr., 14.6 ppg, 10.1 rpg; C Courtney Paris, 6-4, Sr., 15.4 ppg, 13.3 rpg.

SERIES -- Oklahoma has won six in a row over CU. Overall, the Buffs lead 33-20.

UP NEXT -- Colorado is at Missouri for a 6 p.m. game Saturday.



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