



# McConnell-Miller shakes up Buffs' lineup

## Mullaney will start as Buffs host KU

By Chris Shelton

Wednesday, February 18, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — Looking back on the Colorado women's basketball team's three-game losing streak, the production from guards was limited.

Aside from sophomore and leading scorer Brittany Spears consider the following:

Junior Bianca Smith averaged 3.3 points per game during CU's losing streak.

Freshman Alyssa Fressle averaged 5.7.

Sophomore point guard Britney Blythe contributed 3.3.

Sophomore Kelly Jo Mullaney checked in with 5.0.

Those numbers must change if CU wants to end its skid when the Buffs play host to Kansas at 7 p.m. today.

The biggest number that stands out is Smith's production. The last time CU won, Smith scored 21 points. In CU's second-to-last win, Smith scored 25 points.

But it's not just about scoring.

CU has struggled to get into its offense. The Buffs had just four assists in Saturday's 79-50 loss at Texas A&M.

To that end, one change is in motion for the reeling Buffs (10-12 overall, 2-8 Big 12) as they try to avenge a 65-54 loss at Kansas (13-10, 2-8) earlier this year.

For tonight's opening tip at least, Blythe will move back to the bench, Fressle will move from shooting guard to point guard and Mullaney will start at shooting guard.

Mullaney started the first seven games of this season at point guard and hasn't been in the starting lineup since a Dec. 9 game at Seton Hall -- a stretch of 15 games, one of which she didn't even see action on the court.

When she lost her starting job to Blythe, McConnell-Miller moved Mullaney back to shooting guard.

"She wasn't very effective as a point guard," McConnell-Miller said. "She wasn't scoring for us. So we

decided to move her back to the 2. When we moved her back to the 2, she got a little shell-shocked that she was coming off the bench. (Now) she's gotten accustomed to what we're looking for."

After the first three games of the season, Mullaney never took more than four shots as a starter.

But in three of CU's last four games, Mullaney has been looking to score. She had 10 points in CU's last win (a 75-73 victory over Nebraska).

"(McConnell-Miller) has been playing me as a shooting guard more and that helped me gain some confidence, and I know that she wants me to be a scorer, and that is part of my role on this team," Mullaney said. "I needed to realize that so I've been trying to get in the gym and get some shots up."

Mullaney said it took some time to get used to coming off the bench.

"I've never been someone who comes off the bench, my whole basketball career," Mullaney said. "So it was different. It was hard, but I tried to have a good mind-set about it and continued to work really hard in practice, and just prove myself."

McConnell-Miller is also trying to shore up other problems:

Smith has become a one-dimensional player, settling for 3-pointers.

"She has to do more for us if she's not going to score," McConnell-Miller said. "She doesn't get to the free-throw line. She's just settling for 3s. She's not setting screens ... not going back door on people who are overplaying her. She has to add a little bit more to her game."

The Buffs are allowing opponents to go on big runs. Case in point, at Kansas on Feb. 4, the game was tied at 18 early in the game, but by halftime Kansas led 32-18.

Starting center Kara Richards is shooting 56 percent from the floor, but only 57 percent from the free-throw line.

"Teams are fouling her and she's struggling from the line," McConnell-Miller said.

The list doesn't end there.

"It's something different every time," McConnell-Miller said. "Kara is in foul trouble. We're taking shots too early. We're not getting back on transition on defense. We've got a lot of areas that we need to improve in."



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.



## CU women's preview: Feb. 18 vs. Kansas

**TODAY** -- Colorado (10-12, 2-8) hosts Kansas (13-10, 2-8) at 7 p.m. in the Coors Events Center.

**BROADCAST** -- **Radio:** KVCU (1190 AM) with Mike Rice and Carol Callan.

**STORYLINES** -- The Buffs have lost three in a row and four of their last five, a stretch that includes a 65-54 defeat at Kansas on Feb. 4.

**KEY STATS** -- Kansas guard/forward Danielle McCray, the league's second-leading scorer at 19.2 ppg, had 24 points on Feb. 4 against CU, with Brittany Spears as CU's primary defender on her. This time around, look for Alyssa Fressle and Hannah Skildum to defend McCray.

**COACHES** -- Bonnie Henrickson is 228-137 overall and 70-75 in her fifth season at Kansas. Kathy McConnell-Miller is 142-153 overall and 51-65 in her fourth season at CU.

### PROBABLE STARTERS

**Colorado** -- G Alyssa

Fressle, 5-10, freshman, 8.4 ppg, 3.2 apg; G Kelly Jo Mullaney, 5-8, sophomore, 4.4 ppg, 2.2 rpg; G Brittany Spears, 6-1, sophomore, 18 ppg, 8.1 rpg; G Bianca Smith, 5-9, Jr., 10 ppg, 4.5 rpg; C Kara Richards, 6-4, senior, 11.8 ppg, 6.9 rpg.

**Kansas** -- G Ivana Catic, 5-8, senior, 2.4 ppg, 2.9 apg; G Sade Morris, 5-11, junior, 11.8 ppg, 4.2 rpg; G/F Danielle McCray, 5-11, junior, 19.2 ppg, 7.3 rpg; F Nicollette Smith, 6-2, sophomore, 7.2 ppg, 5.2 rpg; C Krysten Boogaard, 6-5, sophomore, 9.4 ppg, 5.6 rpg.

**SERIES** -- Colorado has won its last three home games vs. Kansas and leads 32-30 overall.

**UP NEXT** -- The Buffs play their next two on the road, first at Kansas State on Saturday and then at Iowa State a week from today, before returning home to face Missouri on Feb. 28.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.