



# Bufs aim for spoiler role

## CU women at Nebraska tonight

By Kyle Ringo  
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BOULDER, Colo. — Coming down the stretch in late February and early March is when college basketball teams want to be playing their best and winning most of their games.

Players and coaches on the Colorado women's team insist they have half the equation right. They say they're playing better now than at any point in the season --- their early effort against Missouri last Saturday argued otherwise --- but the results aren't there. The Buffs have lost six of the past seven games and are in last place in the Big 12 Conference headed into the final road game of the regular season tonight at Nebraska.

Bufs senior center Kara Richards acknowledged the team understands it is a long shot to reach any kind of postseason play at this point, but the Buffs are approaching the end of their season as a chance to play spoiler for teams still trying to make their case for inclusion in the postseason.

Asked Monday if she and her teammates still had a run of wins in them, Richards said, "I know we do. We won't let anyone keep us down."

The Buffs beat the Cornhuskers 75-73 in Boulder a month ago and have won just one game since. CU hasn't won consecutive games since late in the nonconference portion of this year's schedule back in early January. It hasn't beaten consecutive Big 12 Conference teams since mid-February of last year. They haven't won at Nebraska since Mar. 3, 2004.

The Buffs have been too dependent on two players all year and it has made defending them easier on opponents.

If Richards and sophomore Brittany Spears aren't at their best, the Buffs are in trouble. Sometimes even their best isn't enough.

Richards has been playing well down the stretch of her senior season. She is averaging 16.8 points and 9.8 rebounds a game over the past four outings. Three of her five career double-doubles in points and rebounds have come during that stretch.

Richards always has been the quintessential team player during her CU career and when asked about her improved play she credited the players around her.

"I think it's been more about the guards and their ability to thread the needle," she said, referring to teammates such as Bianca Smith, Alyssa Fressle and Kelly Jo Mullaney finding ways to get her the ball in the post despite often being double-teamed.

The Cornhuskers seem to have righted their ship. They began Big 12 Conference play going 1-8 but have won three of the past five games to climb out of the basement into a ninth-place tie with Oklahoma State and Missouri.

Nebraska forward Cory Montgomery authored a 24-point, nine-rebound effort against the Bufs last time and has scored 20 or more in each of her past two games.



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## CU women's preview: March 3, at Nebraska

**TODAY --** Colorado (11-15, 3-11) at Nebraska (13-14, 4-10) at 6 p.m. at Bob Devaney Center.

**BROADCAST --** Live streaming video on CUBuffs.com; Radio: KKZN (760 AM) with Mike Rice and Carol Callan.

**STORYLINE --** The Buffs are chasing their second Big 12 Conference road win of the year. They have lost six of their past seven games. It's senior night for the Cornhuskers.

**KEY STAT --** These teams have struggled with rebounding all season, especially Colorado. Winning the battle on the boards will go a long way toward deciding this game.

**COACHES --** Kathy McConnell-Miller is 52-68 in her fourth season at CU. Connie Yori is 119-95 in her seventh season at Nebraska.

### PROBABLE STARTERS

**Colorado --** G Kelly Jo Mullaney, 5-8, sophomore, 5.4 ppg, 1.5 apg., G Bianca Smith, 5-9, junior, 9.8 ppg, 4.1 rpg, G Alyssa Fressle, 5-10, freshman, 7.7 ppg, 2.7 rpg, F Brittany Spears, 6-1, sophomore, 18.2 ppg, 7.9 rpg, C Kara Richards, 12.5 ppg, 7.3 rpg.

**Nebraska --** G Dominique Kelley, 5-7, sophomore, 9.8 ppg, 3.4 rpg, G Yvonne Turner, 5-8, junior, 11.3 ppg, 3.3 rpg, G Kaitlyn Burke, 5-7, sophomore, 4.1 ppg, 1.3 rpg, F Tay Hester, 5-10, senior, 6.2 ppg, 4.4 rpg, C Catheryn Redmon, 6-3, sophomore, 6.0 ppg, 5.4 rpg.

**SERIES --** CU leads 39-25 but Nebraska has won seven of the past eight. CU beat Nebraska 75-73 in Boulder on Jan. 31.

**UP NEXT --** The Buffs finish the regular season at home on Saturday at 2 p.m. against Kansas State.



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