

The 'Buzz' is on in Boulder

"Those guys are winners," Nina Bzdelik concluded after she and her husband met with athletic director Mike Bohn and other CU officials to discuss the Buff basketball coaching opening. Hours later, her husband signed on, saying, "I love ultimate challenges."

On April 4, Jeff Bzdelik (buzz-DEL-ik) became CU's 17th men's head basketball coach. He takes over a team that went 7-20 last season under Ricardo Patton, who announced Oct. 25 he would resign at the end of his 11th season when it was obvious his contract would not be renewed.

CU's search committee couldn't negotiate with Bzdelik until his Air Force Academy team completed its 26-9 season in the NIT Final Four. A year earlier the Falcons, who filled the stands for their home games, were 24-7 and earned a berth in the NCAA tournament. This November they defeated the Buffs 84-46, a game Bzdelik is not shy to remind CU players about as the intense perfectionist works to install a hybrid Princeton-NBA style of play.

And the players are listening. Freshman guard Kal Bay said, "It's probably the most I've ever learned in any practice," after his first session with the 29-year coaching veteran. And the Buffs are excited to bring a "totally different team" to the court this fall, according to junior guard Richard Roby.

Bzdelik spent 15 years as a coach and top-ranked scout in the NBA before his two-year stint at Air Force. Placed in a difficult situation for two and a half seasons as head coach of the Denver Nuggets (2002-05), he engineered one of the biggest turnarounds in league history by posting a 26-game improvement and taking the Nuggets to the playoffs in 2003-04. He also spent 10 years as a college coach from 1978 to '88.

He figures his NBA experience is a "huge asset because I can tell players what it takes to make it and help them get to the next level." And he absorbed a great deal while working with renowned coach Pat Riley when he was director of scouting for the Miami Heat for four seasons.

Although the new coach is noncommittal about the talent he's inheriting, he insists, "We can be the hardest-working, best-conditioned, most unselfish, meanest, nastiest basketball team in this country." He demands "desperate energy for 40 minutes."

"This is a perfect fit," says Chancellor Bud Peterson. "He is focused, committed to excellence in academics and athletics, and his integrity is beyond reproach."



Ralphie likes what Jeff Bzdelik, CU's new basketball coach, told the media about his message to his players: "We've got good doctors. If you get hurt, we'll take care of you, so get down and dirty."

LARRY HARWOOD

Buff Sports

Women improve on, off court

While the 7-20 men's basketball team is set to rally under new coach Jeff Bzdelik, the women's team showed signs of improvement under second-year coach Kathy McConnell-Miller.

After a 9-21 record and just three Big 12 wins in 2005-06, the Buffs climbed to 13-17, a tie for seventh in the conference and seven Big 12 victories, including their first Big 12 tournament win in four years — a 71-67 first-round triumph over Texas Tech.

"I've seen so much progress throughout the year," McConnell-Miller said, crediting junior first-team All-Big 12 forward Jackie McFarland for helping the young

team. "I've seen Jackie do incredible things with a great group of young women. She's put them underneath her wing and brought them along."

McFarland is the second Buff named to the Big 12 first team and the first two-time Academic All-American. Among the nation's top field goal shooters, she also made a school record 161 free throws, posted 18 double-doubles and had the third best rebounding average with 10.8 per game.

The Buffs were rebuilding by playing plenty of ranked teams.



CU SPORTS INFORMATION

Not only is she a two-time Academic All-American, but Jackie McFarland, No. 45, received honorable mention to the AP All-American team.

"There has been no letup in our schedule," McConnell-Miller said, making it tough on the newcomers like Whitney Houston, Candace Rucker, Bianca Smith and Aija Putnina. "But there's definitely been progress made."

Milewski, netters serve up NCAA berth

The No. 37 women's tennis team earned a berth in the NCAA tournament for only the second time in history under Big 12 Coach of the Year Nicole Kenneally.

Led by sophomore Monica Milewski, who earned all-conference honors and became just the fourth Buff to qualify for the NCAA singles tournament, the squad posted a 16-8 record and tied for third in the Big 12 at 9-2. Despite being upset in the opening round of the conference tourney, the Buffs had their best season since 1999, when they were second in the league. After winning their five opening Big 12 matches, they stood at No. 20 in the national rankings — the highest for CU women since 1981.

The No. 38 Milewski won 25 singles matches and 16 doubles competitions, including a defeat



CU SPORTS INFORMATION

Monica Milewski won 41 matches this season and earned a berth to the NCAA singles tournament in late May.

of the No. 5-ranked player in the nation to help CU clinch an upset over No. 12 William & Mary.

"The girls have worked hard and they made me look good," Kenneally said.

The team fell 4-2 to No. 23 Michigan in the NCAA opening round on May 12 in Indiana.

Track team sprints to outdoor season

With May and June the big months for collegiate track and field, coach Mark Wetmore rested a number of his athletes for the outdoor season — the Big 12 championships, the NCAA regionals and the June 6-9 NCAA championships.

A low-key indoor season resulted, featuring Brent Vaughn setting a Big 12 5,000-meter record (13:48.74) at the conference indoor championships to claim his sixth league title.

Also at the Big 12 indoors, Anthony Chiulli won his first league title with a victory in the 1,000m, and Zach Hazen set a school record in the weight throw (63 feet, 9 inches) to place fifth. The distance medley relay team of Daniel Kenney, George Pincock, Wil Buchanan and Pete Johnson was second. Stephen Pifer and Jenny Barringer each placed second in the mile, with Barringer third in the 3,000m.

Pifer was the lone Buff to score at the NCAA indoor meet, placing third in the mile in 4:00.93.

Of note, 21 track athletes earned Big 12 academic honors this spring.

Football squad springs into focus

A year under the Dan Hawkins system made for a productive spring for the football team. "Getting out of survivor mode and into driver mode" is how the coach described the goal as the team prepares for the likes of Arizona State, Florida State, Oklahoma and Nebraska this fall.

One thing is certain — there will be a new quarterback. The incumbent, senior Bernard Jackson, will play "Slash" this year, mimicking Kordell Stewart's (A&S ex'95) one-time nickname with the Pittsburgh Steelers when he played multiple positions. Vying for quarterback are transfer Nick Nelson and redshirt freshman Cody Hawkins. The starter won't be named until fall.

The QB will need a better running game from Jackson, senior Hugh Charles and transfer Patrick Gates. And that requires better play from the offensive line. Only six linemen were healthy enough for spring ball, so several of the eight recruits will be expected to play, especially prep All-American Ryan Miller.

The defense, led by senior linebacker Jordon Dizon and junior tackle George Hypolite, was solid against the run last year but needs work on defending the pass. Seven of the team's top tacklers return.

"I like where we're going," coach Hawkins says. "I like the attitude. I like the focus." The season starts Sept. 1 against CSU in Denver.



Junior Michael Baird had an eagle en route to placing eighth and making the all-tournament team at the Big 12 championships.

Golfers' tee up for promising season

More than six straight weeks of snow and cold left CU's golfers anxious for February trips to warmer climes.

The young women's team jumped out to third in Bajar, Mexico, and a sixth in Fresno, Calif., behind the stellar play of sophomore Lindsay Caljouw and freshman Dominique Pytlewski. Freshman Julie Kim led the Buffs to 11th at Catalina, Ariz. Then junior Lindsay Senger paced the team to sixth in St. George, Utah.

The women were tied for second on opening day of the Big 12 championships at Baylor but fell to ninth after a rough second day. Led by Senger they rallied to finish sixth in the final standings. "I'm very pleased with the turnaround,"

coach Anne Kelly said. "We're disappointed we missed fourth by a few shots."

Meanwhile, the men under new coach Roy Edwards began the season in Hawaii with a 12th place highlighted by a five-under-par showing from junior Michael Baird. In Houston senior Blake Moore led the Buffs to sixth place, and then Baird swung the team to fifth place in Lafayette, La. At Stevenson, Calif., sophomore Derek Tolan's sixth place propelled CU to second place overall.

Although they slipped to 11th place at the Big 12 tournament, the Buff men were invited to the NCAA tournament regionals May 17-19. It's CU's 25th NCAA appearance.

Skiers fall short of title defense

The national title defense was not to be for CU's skiers, as a balanced Dartmouth team competing on its home hills in New Hampshire won the 54th NCAA championships to become the first Eastern school to claim the trophy since 1994.

The Buffs placed third behind regional rival Denver.

Junior Maria Grevsgaard placed fourth and sixth in the cross country races to complete a stellar season that included seven victories in 12 races.

Young Matt Gelso was fifth and sixth in the men's races and had 10

top-five finishes in his 12 races. He became just the second CU male to claim first-team All-American honors as a freshman.

In the alpine events, junior Lucie Zikova, the 2006 slalom champ, placed second in the slalom and fourth in the giant slalom. The men's top result was a ninth from freshman Stefan Hughes in the GS.

While disappointed with the finish to his 17th season at CU, coach Richard Rokos has high hopes the school's 18th title will come in 2008. "Our goal never changes," he says. "We're going after the trophy."



With his dad, head coach Dan Hawkins, watching carefully, Cody Hawkins works on his passing game during spring practice.

Bzdelik inks deal

The new men's basketball coach, Jeff Bzdelik, signed a five-year contract with a base salary of \$161,000 (not from state funds), plus \$473,500 in annual income from radio, television, sponsorship and basketball camps. The Big 12 men's basketball average annual salary is about \$1 million; Bzdelik would earn \$3.2 million over five years.

Other perks include a car allowance and country club membership. Incentive clauses include a maximum of \$100,000 for academic progress toward graduation and a variety of bonuses for success on the court, from \$10,000 for 17 wins in a season to \$350,000 for a national championship. The university will also pay the \$270,000 buyout from his Air Force contract. His CU buyout is \$750,000 during the first two years and \$500,000 thereafter.

Significantly, Bzdelik's contract stipulates that he may leave if ground isn't broken for a new practice facility within three years. He also obtained raises for assistant coaches, whose salaries had been at the bottom of the Big 12, and written assurances that basketball offices and training facilities will be constructed in the Events/Conference Center.

Two more Sunday Buffs

Two-time, first-team All-American and CU's all-time leading scorer Mason Crosby was drafted 193rd to kick for the Green Bay Packers. His name and jersey number were added to the press box façade at Folsom Field at the spring game. Miami took defensive end Abraham Wright, the Big 12 sack leader in 2006, with the 238th pick in the draft. Those signing free agent contracts were offensive lineman Brian Daniels with Minnesota, linebacker Thaddeus Washington with Buffalo and center Mark Fenton with Denver.

Academic aces honored

Four top scholar-athletes collected awards this spring: Daniel Kenney, a senior in cross country and track who has a 3.957 GPA in business; Mikaela Raddatz, a senior in track and field with a 3.610 in sociology; junior basketball player Jackie McFarland, a two-time Academic All-American who has a 3.959 in accounting; and sophomore Ben Ryan, of cross country and track with a 3.95 in MCD biology. Fifteen athletes posted a 4.0 during 2006, and 191 out of 335 earned a 3.0 or better.

Also, soccer star Nikki Marshall was honored as CU Athlete of the Year — the only time a freshman has been so honored. Distance runner Stephen Pifer won the male AOY award. Football kicker Mason Crosby won the Male Career Athletic Achievement Award, while volleyball setter Ashley Nu'u earned female career honors.