

**March 11, 2010**



Baylor – 72  
Colorado – 65

An Interview with:

**KATHY McCONNELL-MILLER  
ALYSSA FRESSLE  
BRITTANY SPEARS**

THE MODERATOR: We're now being joined by the Colorado Buffalos, Kathy McConnell-Miller, the coach and her two students athletes, Alyssa Fressle and Brittany Spears. Coach?

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: You know what I was very, very proud of our team's effort tonight. I thought they left it on the floor, every bit of it. Offensively and defensively they understood the game plan and felt good about it, believed in it, and I thought they executed it.

The difference from the first half to the second half, if it had stayed a half-court game probably could have made shots, continued to execute offensively, but as expected the pressure came in the second half to get a higher possession game, try to turn us over and just didn't get the looks in the second half that we needed. We struggled, turned it over a little bit, couple of forced shots and we got stops and did some good things on the defensive end but got on our heels as a result of the defense.

But these two young ladies continuously get better for us and continue to improve our program. I think Alyssa Fressle is playing the best basketball she's played in a Colorado uniform, great floor game, good composure and I think her experience over this past year has really shown in the last couple weeks of play.

Brittany Spears continues to be our enforcer and the offensive threat and I'm just -- I want to see them have success because they work

extremely hard at this game and want Colorado basketball to continue to improve.

As far as the team I know they're disappointed, but they gave their heart and, you know, they're a great group of girls, it's been a tough year and we're going to move forward.

THE MODERATOR: Student athlete questions first, please.

**Q. Alyssa, did their full-court press catch you guys off guard at all late in the second half?**

ALYSSA FRESSLE: Um, I would say a little bit. We actually talked about it right before they were about to -- right before they started pressing, Coach said expect pressure and I just don't think we were really in maybe the right spots initially, like we didn't have flashers and, yeah I would say.

**Q. Brittany, can you talk about the second half, what changed? What was different? There were some shots at the end maybe some good looks, same layups that didn't roll for you guys was that painful at the end?**

BRITTANY SPEARS: Yes, the press changed the whole game, I guess.

**Q. Alyssa and Brittany can you both talk about Bianca and Courtney and what they've meant?**

BRITTANY SPEARS: Of course it's sad to see seniors leave especially on a losing note so it was really sad. That's all I can say.

ALYSSA FRESSLE: I agree. They're both going to be missed, just their personalities off the floor, their leadership and, you know, most of all I would just say their friendships, you know, it's great having them around off the floor and I'm going to miss 'em and definitely on the floor, too, their contributions.

**Q. Brittany talk about in the first half you guys had 10 second-chance points going into halftime what were you thinking?**

BRITTANY SPEARS: At halftime we were saying we've got to stay focused, don't be happy with the lead and come out strong.

**Q. Alyssa, some of the shots didn't fall late, layups were short or just kind of thrown up there. Did their press wear you out to the fact that it affected the offense, also, as far as what you had shots?**

ALYSSA FRESSLE: I don't know if it wore us out, some of those shots we just didn't make. I mean a couple rolled around, my layups, a couple by Chucky, she had a great drive and they just didn't fall. There is not too much else to say.

THE MODERATOR: Any further questions for our student athletes?

**Q. How close do you guys think you are with the young team you have, and what needs to change next year to have a winning season?**

ALYSSA FRESSLE: I think we're close, I think we've got a lot of great young ones, especially with Chucky and Meagan and the experience they're going to have next year, and I think we need a good "big" and I think the experience we have coming back with Spears, Chucky, Meagan, me, Julie, Kelli Jo and Chelsea, that's a good core right there; and bringing along Melissa, too, I think we have a lot of good things in store for the program. We've got a lot of good ones coming in so we're excited we're going to get better in the off-season and look to really improve and get better next year.

THE MODERATOR: Ladies, we're going to let you go back to the locker room. Best of luck to you. Now we'll take coach questions. On the right.

**Q. Whitney Zachariason had her break-out night tonight, how big of a surprise was she?**

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: When we were in the zone the scoring had to come from somewhere and we were committed to not allowing the splits and not allowing the drives and making them shoot over top, that was our focus all week, making sure that everything they got had to come from over top, and we weren't giving them open looks.

But she got a couple early on and gained some confidence, but as soon as they realized that we were staying in the zone they brought her off the bench fast, and they knew they needed somebody to spread the offense. They did a great job with the overload. They put her on the wing and somebody strong on the block, and typically we're a bump-back type of 2-3 zone, and we tried to rely on our guards to guard that and the back of the 2-3 to guard the short corner and she got some looks. She got confident, hit a couple in the first half, and the scoring was going to come from somewhere, and they knew in the zone that she was the one they needed to do it.

**Q. Kathy, how close is the program to competing with the good teams in the league?**

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: You know, it's really been cyclical. When I got to the program we had some really, really strong bigs, Jackie McFarland, Kara Richards, the frontline was solid and we had inexperienced back court. To the point where at times we couldn't even get the ball inside and just had to rely on Jackie so much when we did get it in, or Kara.

It's sort of come full circle, the back court is strong and our frontline has virtually no experience. We have spent the entire season playing with four players above the free-throw line to try and spread things out, allow for drives and some perimeter shooting.

We've had very little inside touches, so for us the missing piece is that "big" it's an interior player. If I go back and look at statistics, teams that we've struggled against or in every game, you know, the "bigs" were looking for 8 for 8, 7 for 9, particularly on the defensive end we have not had that strong of an interior presence. As far as getting there, when you need in this league I looked around and it was so important to have a strong back court.

Every team that was having success in this league had a strong back court, but had an interior player with some type of presence. That's the piece that our staff is -- knows that we're missing and that's the piece we need.

**Q. Kathy, obviously you're in a tough business. Do you think that you'll be around to see your program through to the end?**

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: Well, I think it's been asked and answered, but I will

answer that again. I'm confident in my coaching ability and ability to recruit. We feel like we have a solid foundation. Nobody in the program top to bottom feels good about the record, but we feel progress continues to be made. It's a strong foundation, and I can only control what I can control.

**Q. Kathy, how much different of a game was this without Brittney Griner?**

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: It was a very different game, very different game plan at Baylor if you look at the score and the amount of blocked shots they had a triple-double on us, and really changed the mind-set of all of our players as far as any type of drives and really intimidated some of our younger players and was a challenge for us.

But we felt like when she was off the floor we did some good things at Baylor, last 10 minutes of the game we went zone even with her on the floor and knew at that point we had some success in the zone, fronting her, backing her, trying to double team from the weak side, but she's a special player.

She's a difference maker, she's exceptional. There aren't many like her. She's improving. I think her improvement has come over the year with passing out of the double team, she wasn't very good at that. If there was a weakness it was every time she was double teamed she would turn it over or wouldn't find the open player. She's getting good at passing out of the double team, finding the weak side post but very, very effective and she is a difference maker.

**Q. Kathy, talk about the first half when you guys controlled the tempo of the game and what you felt like the flow of the game was in the first half.**

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: I think anytime you hit shots you can stay in games. From an offensive standpoint there was patience, execution, players making the extra pass and that was the difference offensively in the first half from the second half.

Didn't have enough time in the second half to really execute and get into the flow of our offense, but there was a comfort level, they weren't pressing us, we got the ball up, we were able to alternate between our two-guard set and our open offense. They never got comfortable guarding one or the other and just a good feel and a good flow and when they started hitting shots that's our team.

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Our team has played strong on the road. Clearly the record doesn't reflect it, but when we've been on the road this team away from home is focused. I saw that same -- in the first 20 minutes when you saw in the second half at Oklahoma, what you saw at Missouri, what you saw at K State, there is a potential on the road, is this the best road team that I've had since I've been here as far as confidence on the road and playing well on the road.

**Q. Kathy, how many of those missed opportunities, the missed chippies at the end are going to haunt you?**

COACH McCONNELL-MILLER: Haunt me? I feel like they're going to haunt Chucky, they're going to haunt Alyssa, and it's my job as a coach to have them go into the off-season and not have them think about those missed layups, I can grow past that, individually they've had a tough year, Chucky had a strong nonconference and came to conference and sought athleticism and the size and the strength of the players in the league and just the mental toughness of it, that's something that we all need to improve on.

But it's my job as a coach to focus on what we've done well, what we need to improve on in the off-season and how they're going to get better. We've all got to grow, I've got to grow, the staff has to grow, the team's got to grow and we've got to get better as a result of this season. There are some of those layups and shots that went in and out and, you know, could make a difference, but you know what? It didn't. We've got to grow and learn.

THE MODERATOR: Coach, thank you very much.

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**Coach McConnell-Miller - 03.11.10**