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## **Buffs draft fortunes look better in 2011**

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Things you write about when nasty weather postpones the high school baseball game you were supposed to cover ...

No Colorado Buffalo was selected in the 2010 NFL Draft. Same thing happened in 2005 and 2001. Only one went last year — Brad Jones in the seventh round to Green Bay — and only two were selected in the 2007 and 2008 drafts. CU hasn't had a first-round draft pick since Oakland took Tyler Brayton with the 32nd choice, the last one in the opening round, in 2003.

Things look better for the Buffs in 2011. Nate Solder's size and agility at left tackle intrigue NFL scouts. And Jimmy Smith and Jalil Brown are both pro prospects. That's according to new defensive backs coach Ashley Ambrose, who was a pretty good pro himself.

"They definitely have a shot," Ambrose said. "They have all the intangibles; they have it all. My whole deal with them is making sure they understand the way they help ... leverages, techniques, understanding the defense."

Smith said he's "trying to improve every weakness" he has. What are those? He said he stands up out of his backpedal a lot, and he needs to make quicker breaks.

Brown said his biggest improvements could be made in tackling.

During spring drills, Solder, Smith and Brown said they were not concerned at all about potential NFL labor problems in 2011. To be more accurate, their answers about a possible stoppage were more along what Solder said: "I don't know anything about it. That's interesting."

Solder said that if he can't play football in 2011, he might go to graduate school next fall for biology, a degree he plans to pursue at some point.

Here's some of a conversation I had with sophomore CU receiver Will Jefferson earlier this month:

"My whole goal this year is to become a technical receiver," he said. "I never had like a real receiver coach, and I was never playing real receiver since I got here. I was an athlete but I had never been a receiver, so I wasn't running crisp routes or (had) the best hands."

"Everything I'm doing now, like getting in and out of my breaks, running the routes the same — everything I'm doing now is so I can become a sound receiver."

What's a technical receiver?

"If you're just a fan of football and you don't understand how it works, you just see guys running routes," he said. "But a good DB, especially in the Big 12, he can tell the difference between an average receiver and a good receiver in a second."

“If I’m standing up out of my breaks or I’m slowing down so I’m about to make a cut out of my route, they can see that. Those are your tells. And if you’re doing that, you’re going to get eaten alive in this conference. So I have to work on becoming a technical receiver.”

Most interesting thing new CU hoops coach Tad Boyle said Monday? Easy.

“I told the team that I want to run; I want to take advantage of playing at the altitude,” Boyle said. “I’d like to score in the 70s and 80s, not the 50s and 60s.”

Sounds like a great idea to me.

And with the athletes CU expects back, it just might work in 2010-11.

The Nuggets’ brass sing Adrian Dantley’s praises for the job he’s done in George Karl’s absence.

That’s fine, and certainly well deserved.

It’s just too bad Dantley is facing Utah coach Jerry Sloan.

Utah runs a crisp half-court offense; Denver spends a lot of time standing around in its half-court sets. The Nuggets can’t coax Utah into playing the tempo they’d prefer.

And the Jazz play tough, a lot like Sloan did.

Denver has no chance in this series.

Let me get this straight: Three of the top four NFL Draft picks were from Oklahoma, and the Sooners made it to only the Sun Bowl in 2009?

Conference commissioners are silent on expansion talks right now.

It’s called the calm before the storm.

Let’s do the math: Thirty-five bowls are certified for college football’s 2010 postseason. There are 120 Division I teams. Only 71 were 6-6 or better last year.

Better expect a 5-7 bowl team next winter.

Or two.

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