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Former CU Buff Brayton signs with Panthers

By Denver Post staff and wires

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Tyler Brayton signs a three-year deal to return to Carolina. (Getty Images North America | Jim McIsaac)

CHARLOTTE, N.C. — The Carolina Panthers will have at least one starting defensive lineman returning next season after agreeing on a three-year deal with defensive end Tyler Brayton.

Agent Tom Mills says the 30-year-old Brayton visited Seattle and had conversations with Oakland and Jacksonville, but is happy to return

to Carolina.

Brayton signed a two-year contract before the start of the 2008 season and has started 31 games over the past two years. He was eighth on the team with 45 tackles last season and had five sacks.

He'll likely be paired with much younger players next season.

The Panthers let defensive end Julius Peppers leave for Chicago in free agency and cut starting tackle Damione Lewis and



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In 47 games at the University of Colorado, Brayton recorded 152 tackles with 12.5 sacks, 25 stops for losses, 34 quarterback pressures, 17 third-down hits, three fumble recoveries, three

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forced fumbles and six pass deflections.

Brayton was the last NFL draft pick in the first round in 2003, after Oakland acquired the first-round pick from the eventual Super Bowl Champion Tampa Bay Buccaneers in exchange for head coach Jon Gruden at the end of the 2001 season.

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