

CU running back Scott recovering for Texas

Touted RB aiming to overcome bruised knee for UT

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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Darrell Scott produced his best week of practice since joining the Colorado football program, running backs coach Darian Hagan said Wednesday.

Maybe it's just coincidence it's Texas week.

It was 20 months ago when Scott sat in front of television cameras on national signing day with two baseball caps on a table in front of him. One displayed the Longhorns' emblem. The other was CU's black and gold.

The No. 1 rated tailback recruit in the nation in 2008 never imagined that he would still be looking for his first 100-yard game at the start of Big 12 play in his sophomore season. But that is where Scott finds himself this week as he prepares to face a lot of friends in burnt orange in Austin, Texas.

"I can't wait to see some of my Texas buddies out there," Scott said. "I'm pretty excited to see those guys, but, at the same time, compete against them.

"It's kind of like an Army All-American game, but you're on the opposite team. I love playing against those guys and I can't wait to see what they got for us."

Scott made plenty of friends with Longhorns players during the recruiting process, and he still keeps in touch with them. This week he hasn't been able to swap text messages or trash talk because his cell phone broke.

He is trading a phone that doesn't work for a knee that does.

Scott is feeling better after nursing a bruised knee he suffered on the opening kickoff of the Toledo game Sept. 11. He continued to play that night, almost earning his first 100-yard game in the first half. In fact, he had it briefly before a holding penalty wiped away a long run. Then his knee tightened up on him and it took several weeks to heal.

Injuries have been the bugaboo for Scott to this point in his career. He fought them throughout his freshman season and often stood on the sidelines on game days, frustrated he was unable to help his team and prove he is worthy of all the hype he received in recruiting.

"It's negative if you don't produce," Scott said of being labeled the best recruit in the nation at his position. "People are going to be like, 'Hey, wasn't he the No. 1 running back but he's not doing anything?' So that's one part of it, but at the same time, you want to show that you were and you have the talent to back up everything that was said about you. So I'm just waiting, patiently waiting. That's all I'm doing right now."

Colorado coaches have received plenty of criticism for not getting Scott more involved in the game even when he has been healthy. Scott's toughness has been questioned and fans seem to be on 24-hour watch for the possibility he might just decide CU isn't the place for him after all and transfer.

Fellow running back and former California high school star Brian Lockridge is one of Scott's closest friends on the team. He said he hasn't seen any hint of negativity come from Scott.

"There was this big anticipation of him being this big Adrian Peterson-type running back, which he potentially is," Lockridge said. "He is that guy, but I think people expected it early, and they wanted it right off the bat. When they didn't get it, they started saying, 'Oh, booo.' I think the whole adversity thing, he's taken it real well. Most people would just break down and lose it, but he's still trying to live up to that potential. He's working on it."

Scott carried the ball just two times against the Longhorns last season, gaining four yards. He also caught two passes for 45 yards in another game in which he was limited by injuries.

He's hoping for significant improvement over those numbers this time around against the Longhorns, and admits it would be just a little sweeter to have his best game yet at the college level against the No. 2 team in the nation and the program he spurned to play in Boulder.

But he also knows it's a tall order. Texas enters the game ranked No. 2 nationally in run defense, allowing a meager 47 yards a game and 1.7 yards per carry.

"This week, I thought, was his best week since he's been here," Hagan said. "His reads, his run style, he's showing his speed, trying to make guys miss. That's something he's never really done, but he did that all week. I was proud as heck for him."

This week he has shown the kind of fortitude and determination Hagan has been hoping he would see at some point.

It's the sort of fight and fire that has earned fellow sophomore Rodney Stewart most of the playing time and carries ahead of Scott to this point in their careers.

"He hasn't been healthy for two straight years, but he's fighting through it," Hagan said. "My thing is, you can't just post it during the week because you're hurt and then on game day think you're going to get in there when that other guy is performing his butt off. That's just how it works."

Notable

Center Mike Iltis is questionable for Saturday's game. He missed last week's game at West Virginia with a concussion. Keenan Stevens played in place of Iltis and would step in again against Texas if needed.

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cu football

Bufs go big red with linebacker Beatty

The linebacker's aggressive play has been a bright spot for CU's defense.

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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The Buffs' B.J. Beatty ranks first on the team with three tackles for losses. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — B.J. Beatty didn't have any choice but to grow up tough. How many Hawaiians of Polynesian descent have red hair?

"Kids would tease me about it when I was young," the Colorado junior linebacker said. "I got it from my grandmother on my mom's side. She has red hair. We said it was a distinction, and to be proud of it."

Beatty also had to answer to his father. Byron Beatty (B.J. stands for Byron Jr.) played a couple of years at Brigham Young as a linebacker before returning to the islands to be a police officer. Byron taught B.J. the game, serving as his head coach or position coach from Pop Warner football until B.J.'s senior year at Kahuku High.

"My dad taught me that tough mentality," Beatty

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said,
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Beatty's aggressive, opportunistic play became one of Colorado's bright spots last week in a 35-24 loss at West Virginia. Beatty forced one

Mountaineers fumble and recovered another. He also recorded two tackles for losses.

It will be crucial again for Colorado's defense to come up with big plays Saturday on the road against heavily favored, No. 2 Texas, Beatty said. "That gets the whole team fired up," he said.

Solidly built at 6-feet-2 and 220 pounds, Beatty may be the best pass rusher on the team. But Buffaloes fans might wonder what took him so long. Beatty redshirted in 2006, and then was in for just eight plays in 2007 as a redshirt freshman.

What happened to all that toughness? Linebackers coach Brian Cabral wondered.

"There comes a point in just about every player's college career that all of a sudden the light goes on and he gets it," Cabral explained. "Once the light went on, he started using his abilities. You recruit guys based on what they do in high school, and you know they possess it. You just wait for them to figure it out."

Beatty, a cousin of former CU great and NFL lineman Chris Naeole's, still can't explain what happened during his first two years, except that he was feeling his way through the college game. His father offered encouragement, but talks with his grandfather Simeon finally gave him focus. Grandpa Simeon battled throat cancer for more than a year before succumbing to the disease in March 2008.

"He was a big inspiration in my whole

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turnaround," B.J. said. "His fight against cancer, being so strong through it — I realized that I can do this. That sparked my playing."

Beatty became a productive backup to senior Brad Jones last fall. Beatty's totals of 18 tackles, including four for losses, would have been greater if a leg fracture hadn't cost him four games during midseason.

"Those first two years, we saw in practice that he could run and hit, and he likes the game of football," senior defensive back Benjamin Burney recalled. "We knew he was going to be a player."

Through four games this season, Beatty ranks first on the team in tackles for losses (three), and is tied for second in sacks (two) and quarterback pressures (two).

"He plays with a lot of passion . . . and pays attention to the little things," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "That's why he makes plays."

Beatty can't wait to get on the field Saturday. Growing up, he heard about the University of Texas from his redheaded grandmother. Grandma Dorothy is Irish and a native of the Lone Star State. You guessed it: She went to UT.

"But she's rooting for the Buffs, definitely," Beatty said with a grin.

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CU's Stevens maximizes opportunity

By Patrick Ridgell and Justin Williams
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BOULDER — Whether Colorado center Mike Iltis plays Saturday at No. 2 Texas remains to be seen. If he doesn't, the Buffs will rely on Keenan Stevens once again.

CU lists Iltis as probable for Saturday's Big 12 opener due to the concussion he suffered the week before CU played West Virginia. Asked Wednesday how Iltis is practicing this week, Hawkins would only say, "He just got going again recently, so we'll see."

Stevens filled in for Iltis against Colorado State when Iltis sprained an ankle in the first quarter. Stevens also filled in for Iltis against West Virginia. Offensive line coach Denver Johnson said Stevens' play has earned his confidence.

Stevens is a junior walk-on from Monument who said he grew up on a ranch, which taught him how to develop a hard-working mentality. He had played in only one game — against Miami (Ohio) in 2007 — prior to 2009. He said the wait has been worth it.

"It means the world to me," Stevens said about the chanced he has received. "It's what I've been working for, ever since I got here."

Hawkins said Stevens has "labored and worked hard and played a subservient role but continues to learn and continues to be tough and work. He's doing a great job that way."

Whether a walk-on carries a different attitude about working hard than a guy on scholarship is something Hawkins said depends on the individual.

"It's just how you're wired," he said. "Some people can hang in there for the long haul and others can't. That's a whole semester's worth of psychology classes, but he's one of those guys that remains very patient and continues to chip away and work hard."

"I always tell the guys, 'In the end, you get your just due.' I really believe that. The problem is the end for some is longer than others and they can't see it through. But he's been very patient and worked hard to help the team, and he's getting his day in the sun."

As all walk-ons, Stevens hopes one day to receive a scholarship, saying it's something he's working for.

FAMILIAR FACE: CU long snapper Justin Drescher, one of six Buffs from Texas, will be reacquainted this weekend with a high school teammate.

Texas redshirt freshman tailback Tre' Newton was a sophomore on Drescher's Carroll High team in Southlake, Texas, when Drescher was a senior.

Newton started Texas' last game, a 64-7 defeat of UTEP on Sept. 26. He's Texas' second-leading rusher with 203 yards and three touchdowns on 41 carries. He's the son of former Dallas Cowboys star Nate Newton.

"It's going to be fun to play against him and see what he has," Drescher said.

"He's a good dude."

INJURY REPORT: In addition to Iltis' status, CU's weekly injury report, which it released Wednesday, lists only one other player — guard Max Tuioti-Mariner.

Tuioti-Mariner is practicing after tearing both ACLs over the past 13 months. CU lists him as day-to-day. He started two games in September 2008, as a true freshman, prior to his injury. But redshirting becomes a stronger possibility in 2009 with every week that passes. CU has not unveiled plans for him yet.

FANCY FACILITIES: Saturday marks CU's first visit to Darrell K. Royal Stadium since Texas completed renovations on it.

It replaced its grass field with FieldTurf and added permanent bleachers at the south end of the stadium. Combined with the previous year's expansion to the north end, the stadium holds 100,119 fans. That's the fifth-highest capacity in college football.

Texas has also installed an \$8 million video display board that is 55 feet high and 134 feet wide.

"It's a big deal," said CU freshman Nate Bonsu, who's from Allen, Texas.

EXTRA POINTS: Hawkins said "we'll see" to questions about how receiver Jason Espinoza will be able to catch passes Saturday. Espinoza, who's not on CU's injury report, broke his thumb last week in practice and could only catch punts at West Virginia. ... Scotty McKnight has caught touchdown passes in all four games of 2009. That's the most to start a season since tailback Chris Brown scored in five straight in 2002. ... CU ranks third nationally in kickoff return defense, holding teams to 15.8 yards per return. Texas is second in kickoff returns, averaging 37.3 per. ... Texas has been ranked for an NCAA-leading 175 weeks in a row. ... Texas is 14-4 in the games following byes during coach Mack Brown's tenure. ... CU secondary coach Greg Brown celebrates his 52nd birthday Saturday.

Read Patrick Ridgell's [CU sports blog](#). He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.