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cu football - briefs

## CU freshman LBs Major, Rippy show off potential

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — Colorado fans got a glimpse of the future at linebacker during Saturday's 24-0 victory over Wyoming when a pair of eager redshirt freshmen flew around and made plays while giving upperclassmen a breather.

Jon Major, a 2007 Parade All-American at Ponderosa High in Parker, was officially credited with two tackles, including one unassisted. He also recorded a quarterback hurry. Doug Rippy, an Ohioan from Trotwood-Madison High near Dayton, registered one of CU's four quarterback sacks.

Major (6-feet-1, 220 pounds) and Rippy (6-1, 240) have the strength to rush the passer and are nimble enough to slide back into pass coverage. With Major patrolling the inside and Rippy on the outside, their blend of strength and quickness

presents a tough matchup for opposing blockers.

"With those two guys, I definitely feel good about the future of this program," senior linebacker Marcus Burton said.

Although it sounds like a contradiction, Major said he was able to run "100 miles an hour" against the Cowboys because the game is starting to slow down for him.

"Jon has tremendous athletic ability, a lot of talent, a high football IQ," Burton said. "It's just a matter of getting that confidence, coming back from an injury. Rip also is a big, athletic guy. He just needs to keep working on the mental aspect of the game."

Major might have been a contributor in 2008 as a true freshman, but an ACL tear early in August camp and subsequent knee surgery forced him to redshirt. He acknowledged feeling "jittery" when he finally got back in action last Saturday. "Once I settled in, it was easier," Major said Thursday.

"I told Jon that after his first hit, he won't be worrying about his knee anymore," said Rippy, who is good friends with Major. "You could tell that he got into a rhythm."

### Busy tight ends.

Through three games last year, CU tight ends had combined to record just 10 receptions. Already this season, they have double that.

That's 13 catches by senior Riar Geer, four by

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sophomore Ryan Deehan and three by senior Patrick Devenny.

"With our philosophy, to start with the run and then pass, it only makes sense to have the tight ends involved," Devenny said. "We're a pretty solid group. Any of us can go in there and do something."

## Safety first.

Senior Benjamin Burney, a cornerback for most of his CU career, was moved to safety for the Wyoming game and said he expects to remain there for the Oct. 1 game at West Virginia and beyond.

"With me at safety, we don't have to change personnel as much," Burney said. "That's good because (in nickel situations) they don't have to bring in another corner. I can play against receivers and also I can come up and play the run."

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a subdural hematoma complicated by pneumonia.

## Reinhardt talks eloquently or family, healing

Twenty-five years after his near-fatal head injury, the former CU tight end is an inspirational speaker.

By John Henderson  
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/25/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

CENTENNIAL — If you hadn't seen Ed Reinhardt Jr. drag his leg through the Folsom Field press box Saturday and hadn't seen him in 17 years, you would have sworn he had made a medical breakthrough something akin to, well, what he had already previously accomplished.

He walked into his family den here Wednesday and launched into an inspirational speech, nearly morphing into Tony Robbins.

"Many years ago I had an accident. I was a football star at the University of Colorado. I was second in the nation in pass receiving — in the nation! My grade-point average was 3.6. In the second game of my sophomore year, I caught a pass, was tackled, my head hit the ground very hard. I was in a coma for 62 days. The injury was

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"Doctors said it was a miracle I survived. They were sure I'd stay in a VEGETATIVE STATE!"

He finishes with, "At times I have been frustrated and filled with despair. But I am going to tell you one thing: If we stay open to the possibility that God has for our lives, anything can happen, even a miracle."

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He was asked what he gets out of telling people this. Suddenly, his eloquence disappears.

"Fun," he said. "Good time. Great atmosphere."

This month marks the 25th anniversary of the seemingly innocent hit that nearly cost Reinhardt his life at Oregon's Autzen Stadium on Sept. 15, 1984. The Heritage High School graduate didn't speak for three months and was in a wheelchair for a year and a half. His weight dropped from 230 to 163. Crawling along padded mats in this same den was only one part of a brutal rehabilitation that would reduce any NFL player to tears.

By 1992, he had gone from eight hours of daily therapy in which 140 volunteers worked with him every day for two years to running 5K fun runs, however awkwardly.

Since then, his improvement is less marked. Double vision still prevents him from reading. The right side of his body, while improved, remains impaired. He still speaks primarily in one- to three-word sentences.

However, his life has clearly begun to turn. His dream of becoming a football coach is still on hold. He has instead become a life coach. He and his father, Ed Sr., crisscross the country telling their story.

His father has his own story to tell. Ed Sr. reconciled with his father 30 years after Floyd Reinhardt left the family. Ed Sr. was on the verge of leaving his wife, Pat, and their six children.

The next thing he knew, their strapping, 6-foot-5 son lay in a coma in Oregon.

Since then, family love has been the glue that kept Ed alive.

"We had a meeting up in Boulder (in 1994)," Ed Sr. said. "We were just sharing our story and tied Ed and my story together. On the way out, someone said, 'You know, guys need to hear that story.' "

Since then, they have done more than 300 meetings. They have addressed Christian men's groups, civic organizations, "Everybody who has a father," Ed Sr. said. More than 2,400 attended sessions in Albuquerque and Orlando, Fla.

Ed Jr. was asked what response he gets.

"Sad. Crying. Beautiful," he said. He left out standing ovations.

"Our theme is this: the good that comes out of tragedy," his dad said. "We talk about the importance of the influence of fathers in the family."

They both tell their story. They show a five-minute video, narrated by CU broadcaster Larry Zimmer, that shows the tragic hit on which Reinhardt, a tight end, catches a pass, then hits the shoulder pad of a defender, then his thigh pad, then the ground.

Ed Jr. sings a couple of songs. The blood clot was on the left side of his brain, but the lower right

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side affects the singing voice. He sings fine. His intelligence is intact. However, while he thinks like he always could, he can no longer communicate like he has always wanted.

He's a 44-year-old man trapped in the voice box of a toddler.

He still does rehab, but it's not nearly as intense as it once was. Every day he punches a speed bag 1,000 times with his bad right hand and stretches on a table for 36 minutes. Botox helps with the flexibility. He can now lift his right arm to his shoulder. Seventeen years ago, he could barely pull it away from his chest.

"There's more refinement in his movements," Ed Sr. said. "He doesn't trip and fall. Oh, God, when he first started walking, he'd come in and his knuckles and knees were just bloody."

He listens to books on tape and uses voice-activated e-mail. He was asked if he's happy.

"I'm happy," he said. "Why? Good friends. Quality scenery. Expectations. Good siblings."

Expectations are what still motivate him. He still dreams of coaching. He also dreams of something else.

"I'd like a wife," he said, sadly. "Five-four. Five-six."

How tall are you?

"I'm 6-7," he said, before adding with a smile, "I

grew 2 inches in a coma."

His singing ability put him in various theater projects. One of his favorite songs, "Blazing Saddles," finishes with a lyric — using his own personal twist — that sums up his new life better than any inspirational speech.

"I've conquered fear and I've conquered hate. I turned our night into day. I made my blazing saddle a torch to light the way."

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Longmont, Colorado  
 Tuesday, September 29,  
 2009

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## Collegiate rule on helmet hits needs consistent enforcement

*By Patrick Ridgell*  
 © 2009 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — College football's new rule penalizing helmet-to-helmet contact has been difficult to define, and its enforcement early in the season has been sporadic.

Surprised? No one should be. There are myriad problems with it, chiefly the troubles with consistency. What one referee thinks he sees could be completely different from what another sees. And what one referee believes should be enforced differs from others' opinions.

And maybe there are times when officials just plumb forget about it. The crew who worked the Colorado-Colorado State season opener might have fallen under that category.

Through three weeks of the season, sometimes helmet-to-helmet hits are called; sometimes they aren't. Officials aren't on the same page. That doesn't surprise coaches, who acknowledge the rule is there only to protect players.

"I view it as being inconsistent so far," Baylor coach Art Briles said about the rule's enforcement. "It's tough for an official to be real consistent with what they view as helmet-to-helmet."

Said Kansas State's Bill Snyder: "I would be hard-pressed to be in an official's position."

The call that could have been made in the CU-CSU game — for a Rams defender's helmet-to-helmet hit on Scotty McKnight — could have changed that game. Instead, after reviewing it on replay, officials not only ignored the hit that McKnight received but also ruled that he fumbled the ball, giving it to CSU.

CU coach Dan Hawkins submitted the play to Big 12 officials coordinator Walt Anderson for review because, he said, he wanted to make sure his staff was teaching in accordance with the rules.

To be clear, no CU coach publicly said that if that call had been different, things that night could have changed. Good thing — because the Rams were clearly superior.

CU defensive coordinator Ron Collins said in August that he planned to go over the rule with players. He also said it's something he can't control during a game, so why harp on it?

But when asked, in August, if he believed the rule could impact games, Collins was prophetic.

### Athletes of the Week

#### CU Athletes of the Week

##### Male

Rodney Stewart, So., football

Stewart ran for 127 yards and two touchdowns in CU's 24-0 defeat of Wyoming.

##### Female

Kara Linder, Sr., soccer

Linder, the Buffs' goalkeeper, recorded a career-high seven saves in CU's overtime loss to Santa Clara.

#### CSU Athletes of the Week

##### Male

Pete Kontodiakos, Fr., football

He was named the Mountain West Conference special teams player of the week after the Rams' 35-20 win over Nevada. He averaged 47.2 yards on six punts, including boots of 76 and 67 yards.

##### Female

Danielle Minch, Jr., volleyball

During a 3-0 win over UNLV in the MWC opener, she had 15 kills and hit at a .357 clip.

"It depends on how the officials want to (call) it," he said.

Will players stop and think about how they hit someone before they deliver that hit?

"You never want to have your game where you're kind of just thinking about stuff out there," linebacker Marcus Burton said. "You just want to go out and play. You want to run and hit."

Said safety Anthony Perkins: "Football is such a reaction game that you're not going to have time to think about the repercussions of a play. I think that's just how it's going to be.

"It's not a dirty play. But if you're going out there 100 percent, those plays are going to happen."

As time passes and the rule is called with greater frequency, maybe its enforcement will become more consistent. So far, that's not the case.

Quick hits from around the Big 12 ...

Kansas State rarely scheduled challenging non-conference games during Snyder's first tenure, especially any on the West Coast. There was good reason.

The Wildcats' return flight from Saturday night's game at UCLA didn't land in Manhattan, Kan., until 5:45 a.m. Sunday, and Snyder had to tape his weekly TV show at 7:30. Then he went to the offices and "did some things" before finally going home.

"It slowed us down a little bit, but I think everybody is back on track," Snyder said.

Kansas State hosts Tennessee Tech on Saturday.

Fights between Kansas football and basketball players have been commonplace for five years, according to the Kansas City Star. Two brawls this week have publicized the longtime feud.

There's an old question about whether an athletic department can excel in both sports. Few can. But Kansas probably will have the nation's No. 1 hoops team come November, and its football program is ranked, too. Its answer to the question seems pretty clear.

This week's big game is Texas Tech at No. 17 Houston, which won two weeks ago at Oklahoma State.

Tech coach Mike Leach will face Houston offensive coordinator Dana Holgorsen, who was Leach's offensive coordinator in Lubbock from 2005 to 2007. Former Texas Tech quarterback Kliff Kingsbury, whom Leach called the quarterback who lifted Tech's passing game to what it is today, is Houston's offensive quality-control coach.

Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog at [www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell](http://www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell). He can be reached at [pridgell@times-call.com](mailto:pridgell@times-call.com).

## CU Buffs DB Jimmy Smith ready for next test

### Junior defensive back laments two missed picks

**By Kyle Ringo** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/25/2009 12:00:16 AM MDT

Rewind a few months. It's early April after a spring football practice session at Colorado and cornerback Jimmy Smith is talking with a reporter about his goals of being an All-American and an All-Big 12 player this fall.

Smith has all the physical tools to make it happen. He's 6-foot-2, 210 pounds with a wingspan and speed that makes him very difficult to escape and catch passes against.

He also seems to have matured and is starting to appreciate the fact that playing well on Saturdays often is a result of an extra hour of film study on Wednesday or any other day of the week.

Come back now to Thursday evening in the hallway just outside the Buffs' locker room in the Dal Ward Center.

Smith is bending at the waist. The look on his face is definitely a smile, but there is disgust there, too.

The junior from Colton, Calif., has just been asked about the two interceptions he has already let slip through his fingers in the first three games of the year. The topic clearly bothers him.

"One of them I should have definitely had," he says. "The receiver like got it out. The other one I didn't see it at all, or I saw it at the last second. I didn't know if it hit the ground or not. I thought it bounced and rolled up, but then after I touched the ball and the crowd was like 'Ooooh.' I knew it was a live ball." There are several reasons why the near misses hurt Smith.

He wants to make those plays for his team. He wants the Buffs defense to be strong and he wants to be one of the primary reasons behind it. But the missed opportunities also annoy because they seem to be coming less frequently the more he plays and the better he gets.

If there has been a strong point in the CU defense thus far in 2009, Smith is probably it. He and fellow cornerback Chappelle Brown, a senior, have been on the field for 199 snaps each, more than any of their teammates. Opponents often choose to throw away from Smith and attack other parts of the field and other CU defenders.

"I'm not like proven," Smith said. "So I figured they'd come my way a lot more, but it is what it is. I don't really think about it too much. I just don't want to get lulled to sleep. They keep throwing away and throwing away, and then I take a play off and they throw my way."

Smith and the Buffs are entering the meat of the schedule now with a road game at West Virginia next week, followed by the start of Big 12 play with a game at Texas and a home showdown with North Division favorite Kansas.

Those teams feature a wealth of offensive talent and are more likely to test Smith more often. This is also the time Smith has been eyeballing since he began thinking about this season. It's a proving ground for him in his fourth year of playing college football.

Speculation that Smith has the stuff to play on Sundays has been building since he began to emerge late last season as a playmaker for the Buffs. The two men coaching him -- secondary coach Greg Brown and defensive technical intern Ashley Ambrose -- know a thing or two about the highest level of the sport.

Ambrose played 13 seasons in the NFL and says one of the keys to playing well enough at the college level to get there will also help keep a player there longer once they've made it.

Take it personally.

"The thing that Jimmy probably needs to do is just punish himself," Ambrose said about dropped interceptions or missed tackles. "I always tell guys you've got to take it personally. That's food off the table right there."

Smith is the Buffs' third leading tackler through three games with 24, and tackling is an area of the game he is determined to improve. He seems to making progress.

"A corner is supposed to have a short memory, but for some reason, if I miss a tackle or miss a play I should have made, especially an interceptions, it will linger in my head until the next game when I can go and prove myself and make that play," Smith said. "I think I've got progressively better on the run. Coverage-wise, I think I'm doing excellent, but they really haven't thrown at me to test me. I'm sure West Virginia is not going to care. They will throw it, and when they do, I'm going to step up and prove myself."

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September 24, 2009

## Colorado coach on the defensive

By [Dave Hickman](#)

Staff writer

Dan Hawkins seems pretty much locked into a defensive mode these days, which on one hand is a good thing for the Colorado football coach.

On the other hand? Well, not so much.

It's good in the sense that the Buffaloes - who play at West Virginia Thursday night (7:30 p.m. kickoff, ESPN) - need all the defense they can get. After an embarrassing 0-2 start during which they surrendered 77 points and 1,000 yards to Colorado State and Toledo, a simplification of the Buffs' defensive schemes paid off in a 24-0 win over Wyoming.

But the defense Hawkins seems just as wrapped up in is of himself and his program. That 0-2 start, combined with Hawkins' 13-24 record in his first three seasons in Boulder, prompted the inevitable media speculation about his job security. And while Hawkins has not shied away from addressing it, he generally does so by insisting that it is unwarranted media buzz.

"The only speculation was from you guys," Hawkins said in his postgame press conference following Colorado's first win. "There has been no speculation from my boss, no speculation from our big hitters. That speculation came from you guys."

Still, Hawkins felt the need to defend himself. The first question in that postgame press conference was one regarding his team's defensive performance after Colorado had shut out an opponent for the second time in his tenure. He answered in one short sentence and then, unprompted, went about addressing criticism.

"It's easy to stand outside the arena and point fingers and criticize and say you're not good enough and be negative. But when you're in the arena and you're scrapping, you're never that far away from victory and you're never that far away from defeat," Hawkins said. "Until you are in the arena, until you've gone through it a time or two, until you've done some things in your life, until you've strived and you've succeeded and you've failed, and you've tried and you've failed and you succeeded, people don't get that."

It's not simply the 1-2 start to the season that has Hawkins in defensive mode, however. After posting records of 2-10, 6-7 and 5-7 in his first three seasons, the former Boise State coach boldly said during the winter that the goals for 2009 were "10 wins with no excuses," thus raising expectations even more. And while that would seem far-fetched after losing to Colorado State and Toledo, Hawkins likes to point out exceptions to the rule.

"It's interesting; [CU tight ends coach and special teams coordinator Kent] Riddle has a buddy who coaches with the [New York] Giants. The Giants went 0-2 in 2007, and what did all of you say? Let's fire the coach. They won the Super Bowl," Hawkins said during his mid-week press conference prior to the Wyoming game. "I mean, there are a ton of those stories out there, but nobody likes those stories. Nobody recounts those stories. Nobody publishes those stories because people don't like those stories."

"Every year those things happen and we've already talked about it with Colorado, too. All those stories are out there, but nobody wants those stories, everyone just wants to live in the world of drama and the hype. Every coach has gone through it. Every coach knows. So you just keep hanging in there. You keep doing your deal, keep getting better at what you're doing and eventually the thing cracks. It always does."

In five years as the coach at Boise State, Hawkins never had to deal with anything like this.

His teams there were 53-11, three times finished ranked in the Top 15 and in one three-year span (2002-04) went 36-3. At Colorado, perhaps the only highlight in three-plus years has been a win over No. 3 Oklahoma in 2007.

Still, Hawkins maintains he isn't sweating his job security.

"I'm always secure. You know, whether you approve of me or disapprove of me really doesn't affect my self-esteem," he said. "I know this, my boss is sitting over here, we're doing things right by the kids, we're doing things right by the school, and we're doing things right football wise too. We're doing things the way you're supposed to do them. I know that as a football team, in the weight-room, in academics, discipline wise, and in the structure of where we are and who we are at the University of Colorado, I have 100 percent confidence in that.

"You have to control what you can control, and I know we're doing that."

\*nn

BRIEFLY: West Virginia's injury situation doesn't seem to have changed much from Saturday night's loss at Auburn - Jarrett Brown is apparently fine, while Reed Williams and Scooter Berry are not.

Brown, West Virginia's quarterback, went through Thursday's full scale practice apparently without a hitch. He was quarterbacking the No. 1 offense and throwing the football and afterward said his injured non-throwing shoulder was simply sore.

"It feels a little bit better," Brown said. "I can lift my arm."

Defensive starters Williams (foot) and Berry (shoulder), though, both dressed for Thursday's practice in red jerseys, meaning they were essentially allowed to do nothing. Williams is still wearing a walking boot on his injured right foot.

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