

CU Buffs feel need for speed

Colorado faces tough matchup in athletic Mountaineers

By **Ryan Thorburn** Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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Dan Hawkins and his staff will have had an extra five days to prepare for West Virginia than for most opponents.

But are the Buffs up to speed?

The last time Colorado played on ESPN, it was Toledo that clearly looked like the more athletic team during an eye-opening 54-38 victory for the Mid-American Conference.

On Thursday night, CU returns to the national spotlight at West Virginia (5:30 p.m., ESPN).

The Mountaineers (2-1), despite losing quarterback Pat White to the NFL, are the most physically gifted team the Buffs (1-2) will face to date.

"They still have a ton of talent, a ton of speed, they spread you out," Hawkins said at his Monday press conference. "I don't know that they're hugely different than they were. They're still multi-dimensional and have a quarterback who can run and hurt you that way as well. They're pretty talented. ...

"They definitely have juice at every spot. All their guys can run."

CU upset West Virginia 17-14 in overtime at Folsom Field last season. Thanks to a 24-0 victory over Wyoming on Sept. 19, Hawkins' defense enters this year's rematch with some much-needed confidence after giving up big play after big play in losses to Colorado State and Toledo.

"We have speed too and we have to go speed against speed," cornerback Cha'pelle Brown said. "We didn't go out and play well against Toledo, so we have to go out there on national TV and go get them. ...

"Last week (against Wyoming) we let it loose."

The Buffs, whose WAC-like schedule began on a Sunday night against CSU, only had three days to prepare for the Friday night game at Toledo. With an extra day to study Wyoming's spread attack, the defense simplified its schemes and took a positive step forward while blanking the Cowboys.

"We have to be on the same page and have everyone running to the ball. That's what we did (against West Virginia) last year," linebacker Shaun Mohler said. "We weren't on same page and communicating like we should have been (against Toledo). That's the big thing, when everyone is on the same page and communicating you play a lot faster."

West Virginia's quarterback, 6-foot-4 senior Jarrett Brown, leads the Big East in total offense (335.3 yards per game), Noel Devine is second in rushing (106.7 ypg) and Jock Sanders is third in receiving (103.0 ypg).

The formidable three-headed monster has combined for 12 touchdowns.

"They have a lot of athletes out there, a lot of speed, so we have to be in the right spot at the right time," Cha'pelle Brown said.

The Buffs must slow down West Virginia and avoid giving up big plays on defense. Otherwise a familiar tune is going to be playing all night in Morgantown.

"(Brown) can run and he's a big guy, too. You have to really tackle him, you can't just arm tackle him or he'll run you over," Hawkins said. "If you give (Devine) just a little bit of a crease, he's going to roll, he's going to find it and he's going to hit it. So you just have to make sure you're very gap-sound and keep him in front of you if you can.

"Because if you don't the band will be playing and it won't be yours."

Texas time set

Colorado will kick off against Texas at 5:15 p.m. on Oct. 10, CU officials announced Monday.

Television officials have yet to determine whether the game will be on ESPN or ESPN2.

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Woelk: Smart says CU confidence still strong

By Neill Woelk Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/28/2009 11:39:12 PM MDT

Colorado linebacker Jeff Smart hasn't wavered. Not a bit.

Not in the wake of a disappointing loss to Colorado State to open the season. Not in the wake of a shocking defeat at Toledo, and not with a schedule ahead that will see the Buffs play high-powered West Virginia, No. 2 Texas and No. 18 Kansas in the next three weeks.

"We've never lost confidence," Smart said Monday afternoon at the Dal Ward Center. "Honestly, there's never been even a doubt.

"We're still a very good team and our attitude is that a lot of our goals are still in front of us. We haven't even started in the Big 12 yet. We had a good game against Wyoming and we're building from that."

Safe to say, Smart's positive outlook isn't being shared by many Buff fans these days. Even the most hard-core of Buff faithful are wondering if 1-5 isn't a foregone conclusion. The upcoming stretch of games is almost certainly the toughest on CU's schedule this year, and even the best of preseason scenarios didn't see CU emerging from this portion unscathed.

Now, a significant part of Buff nation is simply hoping for signs of improvement, beginning with Thursday's matchup in Morgantown.

"You don't let the outside stuff get to you," Smart said. "You learn to tune that stuff out. Really, it's just someone's opinion. Everyone's entitled, but we're the ones playing the games."

Still, Smart has found himself counseling some of his younger teammates over the last few weeks with those same words.

"It's difficult when you're a younger player," Smart said. "A lot of these guys come from programs where they won all the time. They're not used to what happened to us early. It's difficult for them not to treat it like it's the end of the world."

Smart also admits that the win over Wyoming came at the perfect time.

"You want to know that the work you put in is paying off," Smart said. "Older guys know that. They can deal with the ups and downs. But for the younger guys, it shows that we're still on track."

Even though it's just the fourth game of the season, Thursday's game against the Mountaineers is being looked upon as a barometer of sorts for the Buffs.

If they can give a good account of themselves, it will mean that a measure of respectability can still be carved out of this season. But another debacle along the lines of the Toledo game will reawaken and magnify the cacophony that followed CU's 0-2 start while leaving any prospects for a successful conference campaign growing dimmer by the moment.

Simply, Thursday may go a long way in determining which direction the team goes for the remainder of the season.

"I remember looking at them last year and being amazed at how much team speed they had," Smart said. "It's the same thing this year. They're fast. They've got a lot of guys who can make plays.

"But we did a good job against them last year, and we just have to do that again. We have to stick to our assignments, keep people in front of us and not let them hurt us with the big plays. If we do that, we'll be OK."

Certainly, Smart didn't expect an 0-2 start to the season -- and he certainly didn't expect CU's defense to be such a major contributor to the early season woes.

But he still believes that the program is close to turning the corner. He's been through tough times -- plenty of them -- and he vows that improvement and better days are not far off in the future.

"No question," he said. "You look at the great athletes and great people they've brought into this program, and there's no doubt we're going to get there.

"This thing is going to crack for us. It's going to turn. Nobody on this team believes otherwise. It's going to happen."

In the eyes of Buff fans, Thursday would be a nice place to start.

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THE DENVER POST

colorado football

CU out to avoid more road trouble

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/29/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — With almost two years having passed since Colorado claimed a road victory, Buffaloes coach Dan Hawkins is hoping his young team has gained a better handle on the challenges it will face in Morgantown, W.Va., this week.

Colorado (1-2) plays Thursday night at West Virginia (2-1) in a 5:45 p.m. ESPN game. CU hasn't won on an opponent's home field since the 2007 season, when the Buffs bounced Baylor (43-23) and Texas Tech (31-26).

Those are the only road wins during Hawkins' four-year regime, not including games at Denver's Invesco Field at Mile High. But Hawkins has never had what he considered a "veteran" team. Playing on the road is a learning process, he said.

"One of the things we do try to instill in our guys, in everything, is, 'The worse it gets, the better you get. That's something you have to

work at,' " Hawkins said Monday during his weekly media luncheon.

Colorado Football

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"You're trying to create sort of a conditional response there — that the worse it gets, the more resolve you have. The more experienced team you have, you take that whole mentality with you."

WVU's Milan Puskar Stadium seats 60,000, and it may sell out Thursday night. For West Virginians,

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THE DENVER POST

Mountaineers football creates the passion and carries the importance of, say, the Broncos among sports fans along the Front Range.

"We have to be ready," CU junior receiver Scotty McKnight said.

West Virginia stands 29-5 at home since the start of the 2004 season and has won four of the past six Big East Conference championships.

"When you go into somebody else's arena, it takes a team that's got some savvy and has been around the block a little bit to go in there and handle everything," Hawkins said.

Young players must learn to not be bugged by travel glitches or a restless night's sleep in the team hotel.

"When there are issues, you just have to be that much more locked in and focus on the task at hand," Hawkins said.

Footnotes. Redshirt freshman Bryce Givens has regained the starting job at right offensive tackle. The former Mullen standout missed the Wyoming game because of undisclosed personal issues. Sophomore Ryan Miller will move back inside to right guard. "It's to get the best five (linemen) on the field," Hawkins said. . . . CU's Oct. 10 game at Texas was selected for a national telecast on ESPN or ESPN2 and will have a 5:15 p.m. kickoff.

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Road woes to confront Buffs again

CU's travels have been travails under Hawkins

By Patrick Ridgell
© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The Colorado Buffaloes take great pride in the road success that the program has enjoyed in recent decades. It just seems like decades since they've won much away from home.

With a trip to West Virginia looming on Thursday (5:30 p.m., ESPN), the team's inability to win games on the road becomes an issue worth discussing once again. CU has two road wins — not counting neutral-site victories — during coach Dan Hawkins' tenure, which is in its fourth year. The Buffaloes haven't won on the road since late October of 2007, when the Rockies were playing in the World Series.

According to CU's weekly notes, since 1988, the program has won 59 of 104 road games, which is a 57.2 winning percentage — putting the team at 13th-best nationally. The 59 wins are the 11th most in the nation and third among Big 12 programs during that span.

Numbers suggest this isn't the right spot for CU to have a breakthrough. West Virginia is 22-6-2 in night home games, 15-2 since 2000. West Virginia is 6-0 when ESPN televises a Thursday night game from the Mountaineers' home venue in Morgantown, W. Va.

Hawkins has said in recent days that the only change in the program's road routine has been an effort to get more work done at home before the Buffs leave town. That includes a trade-off — staying in Boulder to get more work done means the team probably won't see the host stadium before game day.

"The reality is when you go on the road, you can't really do anything," Hawkins said earlier this month about road preparations.

The team will stay Wednesday night in Washington, Pa., and not make it to Morgantown for a walkthrough, Hawkins said Monday. Hawkins said he has not been to Morgantown before.

CU players offer different explanations for their struggles. Offensive lineman Ryan Miller said winning on the road is a matter of execution. Linebacker Marcus Burton said the key is starting fast.

"Come out on fire and not sit back when we're in somebody else's house and wait for them to do something," Burton said. "We have to get the momentum, so we have to strike first."

"Leadership has to step up — some veteran players have to get going and start that spark. It's contagious when somebody starts it."

Hawkins said to win away from Boulder requires having a team with savvy and resolve.

"You have to be that much more locked in and concentrated and focused on the task at hand," Hawkins said.

EXTRA POINTS: CU's Oct. 10 game at Texas, its Big 12 opener, will start at 5:15 p.m. and air on ESPN or ESPN2.

At least seven of CU's games will be nationally televised in 2009. ... Monday's depth chart listed Ryan Miller and Ethan Adkins as the starters at right and left guard. Ben Burney is listed as the starter at strong safety. ... CU reported that 7,000 tickets remain for Kansas on Oct. 17. ... Defensive end Nick Kasa (knee) and guard Max Tuioti-Mariner (knees) are listed as day-to-day in the injury report. ... Tailback Darrell Scott (knee) is probable. ... The Buffs pushed Monday's practice back to 7:30 p.m. Monday is normally the players' day off. Many had classes and other academic obligations that forced the change.

Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell/. He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

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September 29, 2009

Q&A with Colorado coach Dan Hawkins

Tom Dienhart

Rivals.com College Football Senior Writer

Colorado is off to a rough start, falling to [Colorado State](#) and Toledo before rebounding to beat [Wyoming](#) on Sept. 19.

The Buffs were off last week and play at [West Virginia](#) on Thursday.

Coach [Dan Hawkins](#) talked with Rivals.com senior writer Tom Dienhart about the team's slow start, his "guarantee" of a 10-win season, how he handles his son/quarterback and other topics in this week's Q&A.

Q: Is there one reason you can pinpoint as to why the season has started so roughly?

A: "We just started a little slow. We got behind in both games and had to alter a few things that way, so I think we faced a couple of momentum-changers. I think that was a lot of it. I think we answered in the second half against Colorado State. But in both cases, we just got gashed for some big plays. It was a scoreboard factor and an emotional factor."

Q: Do you regret making that comment about "10 wins, no excuses"?



Colorado coach Dan Hawkins says he never made a 10-win guarantee.

A: "The thing is, I never made that statement. Somebody put something on the Internet and everybody runs with it. When I talked about the expectation of excellence, what I talked about was the expectation of winning 10 games. But what came out was I guaranteed it and promised it. I didn't say '10 wins, no excuses.' But why let the truth get in the way of a good story?"

"But what I was talking about was having that expectation of excellence, having that expectation. ? I just don't know how you go out and just be mediocre. I don't know how to do that. I would say this - that since the day I came here, they said, 'How long do you think it will take [to win]?' I said, 'Hey, I would be disappointed if we aren't back in the thick of it next year.' I would be. I'm just not a guy who believes in low standards and low expectations. I never have been that way, ever."

Q: Did you get a sense of relief when you beat Wyoming?

A: "I don't know if it was so much that. I liked the way our defense played, and we got our running game going. We

didn't have to play from behind."

Q: Do have anyone you have been talking to as a way of coping with the tough start?

A: "Not really. I just try to hunker down and keep working. We have a lot of people who are very supportive. They know, and they've been through it. You hang in there. It's not so much where I am calling people and asking, 'What do I do?' Because you know what to do."

Q: Are you aware of any of negativity surrounding the team's slow start?

A: "You know that stuff goes on out there. I don't read the paper, I don't get on the Internet and I don't really have an email address. But you know there is some of that stuff on the periphery. And that's part of it. But you aren't living in it, that's for sure."

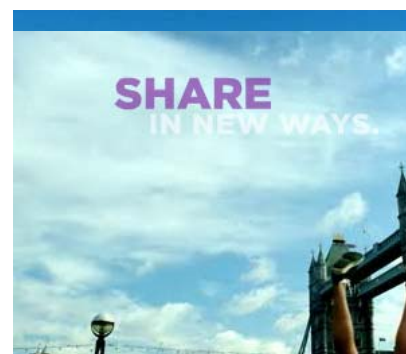
Q: Is everything in place for success at Colorado?

A: "This place has a tremendous amount of potential, and it went through a tremendous cultural situation [since the end of the Gary Barnett era] that probably very few programs in the country ever have gone through. And I think every day there are new pieces put in place and growing. ? I am going on my fourth year here, and I'll bet I have been around here in the athletic department probably

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longer than 75 percent of the people."

Q: There has been that much turnover in the department?

A: "Yes. Every aspect that you talk about needs to be built or rebuilt [since the previous regime], and I think our administration is doing a good job. I think [athletic director] Mike [Bohn] is doing a good job. We just have to keep plugging. You just have to keep trying to improve, no matter what it is ? your practice situation, your weight room, your alumni relations, facilities, whatever it is. When you go through what this place went through ? the best part of any organization is its heart and soul. When that is ripped out, there is no facility that can replace that."

Q: How tough is it when your son, Cody, struggles at quarterback?

A: "He's probably the only guy who can really answer that. I think he handles it pretty good. He has a pretty good perspective on life and football, and understands. He knows when he doesn't play well, and he knows when he plays well and still takes criticism. He has a pretty level head on his shoulders."

Q: Because he's your son, do you think you stay with him too long when he's struggling?

A: "I don't look at it like that. I always talk about handling the quarterbacks - it doesn't matter who the guy is, in the NFL or Pop Warner - that's a unique position. And I think the last thing any quarterback needs is somebody who isn't supportive. He needs someone who will be supportive. I was the same way with Bernard [Jackson] in '06. That doesn't mean you sit down with guys and talk about throws and reads and plays. But that guy better be your guy until he is not your guy and you go with somebody else. Look at in the NFL, when they just even talk about bringing someone else in, what it does to a quarterback's confidence. All of a sudden, he goes, 'Holy smokes.' "

Q: Is there any aspect of team that hasn't developed like you thought?

A: "I don't think that's the case. We know that we are trying to grow up at d-line and wide receiver. We knew that coming in."

Q: Has the offense been impacted by the loss of coordinator [Mark Helfrich](#) to Oregon?

A: "Not at all. Mark is a good coach and a smart guy and all that. But the way we game plan and do things is more of a shared deal than one guy necessarily. It's the same terminology, same formations, all that stuff. It's not really a big change there."

Q: Do you think Colorado's non-conference schedules have been too difficult? In 2006, you played [Arizona State](#) and [Georgia](#). In 2007, CU played [Florida State](#) and [Arizona State](#). Last season, you played West Virginia and Florida State.

A: "I don't know about that. We just play it like it's dealt, you know? It is what it is, so you deal with it and play it."

Q: Can you win the Big 12 North?

A: "Yes, totally. Totally. Teams get hot. Teams get cold. You have some injuries. There are a lot of things that can go on."

Q: Will you be Colorado's coach in 2010?

A: "Yep. I try to keep my feet on the ground and keep plugging."

Tom Dienhart is the national senior writer for Rivals.com. He can be reached at dienhart@yahoo-inc.com.

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WVU FOOTBALL

Tuesday September 29, 2009

WVU fairly healthy after off week

by Mike Casazza
Daily Mail sports writer

MORGANTOWN -- West Virginia Coach Bill Stewart pledged Monday linebacker Reed Williams and quarterback Jarrett Brown will play in Thursday's 7:30 p.m. ESPN game from Mountaineer Field, but said he isn't sure defensive tackle Scooter Berry will go against the Buffaloes.

Berry (shoulder sprain) and Williams (foot sprain) both missed the Auburn game after being injured against East Carolina. Brown's left/non-throwing shoulder was hurt in the fourth quarter against Auburn.

Berry had started 20 consecutive games for the Mountaineers (2-1), but Stewart is not yet sure the junior can defend himself on the field.

"Scooter's still hobbled a little bit," Stewart said. "He did not hit (in practice Sunday), but he was out and running around. The range of motion is coming along. I don't know how many snaps he could get."

Stewart said Brown is practicing without any trouble and seems to be over the physical and emotional pain from his four-interception game.

"He has that big smile back," Stewart said. "He was throwing lasers out there (Sunday)."

* * *

THE BYE week came along at a good time for Colorado (1-2), too. Running backs Rodney "Speedy" Stewart and Darrell Scott have both missed a game with injuries this season.

"They hurt us last year," Bill Stewart said.

Speedy Stewart ran for 166 yards and two scores on 28 carries while Scott added 35 yards on 10 carries and a 15-yard reception against WVU.

The 5-foot-6, 175-pound Stewart broke a leg in the ninth game last season and said he tried to come back too fast from a hamstring injury in August.

He started the season opener against Colorado State, but had 38 yards and was held out of the Toledo loss. He returned in the 24-0 win against Wyoming and had 127 yards and two scores.

"He's very good," Colorado Coach Dan Hawkins said. "He's got speed and elusiveness and he's got power to him. The more times he touches the ball the more successful he's going to be."

The 6-1, 215-pound Scott was one of the top running backs in the 2008 recruiting class and had 343 yards last season. He carried 13 times for 86 yards the first two games this year and averaged 26.3 yards on 13 kickoff returns, but missed the Wyoming game with a knee bruise.

Hawkins said Scott will play against the Mountaineers and both he and Stewart will get the ball.

"For whatever reason it's worked out where one guy's been nicked and the other guy's been good, so it's been a little easier that way," Hawkins said. "Now we've got them both and I'm not going to turn down a talented player. We'll find

ways to get them the ball."

* * *

SINCE LOSING to Colorado, 17-14, in overtime last season, the Mountaineers have played what amounts to an entire season. They went 10-3 and won the Car Care Bowl.

"I've seen last year's game so much I'm sick of it," Stewart said. "We watched it last year, over the summer, 7:30 (Monday) morning with the offensive staff and I've been in a bad mood ever since. But we grew up as a football team then. And I said it then, I said, 'Now we have a foundation.'"

Stewart compared the loss to the one at Miami in 2003 when Quincy Wilson's catch-and-run touchdown gave WVU the late lead, only for the Hurricanes to win 22-20 on a field goal. The Mountaineers won seven in a row before losing the Gator Bowl to Maryland.

"We were 1-4 and we lost, but we had a football program coming together," Stewart said. "That's what I felt that night and that's what I thought last year."

* * *

WVU'S GAME against Syracuse at the Carrier Dome on Oct. 10 will have a noon or 3:30 p.m. kickoff.

ESPN will take one of its six-day selection options to determine which Big East game will be televised as an ABC regional that day.

ABC will air either WVU-Syracuse or Connecticut-Pitt as a 3:30 regional game on that date.

The game that is not selected for ABC distribution will be the Big East Network Game of the Week with a noon kickoff.

The earliest the Oct. 10 Big East selections will be made is this Saturday, with the picks made no later than Sunday at noon.

ESPN will likely determine its pick for the ABC regional based on the outcomes of Thursday night's Colorado-WVU game and the Pitt-Louisville game Friday night. Also, Syracuse hosts USF on Saturday in this week's Big East Network game at noon.

Contact sportswriter Mike Casazza at mi...@dailymail.com or 304-319-1142. His blog is at blogs.dailymail.com/wvu.

COMMENTS (0) ON "WVU FAIRLY HEALTHY AFTER OFF WEEK"

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September 28, 2009

Thomas unburdened by memories of Colorado

By [Dave Hickman](#)

Staff writer

MORGANTOWN - Cleaning out a crowded notebook and a cluttered mind while wondering just what it is J.T. Thomas remembers about West Virginia's loss at Colorado last fall:

In a word, nothing.

It's not that West Virginia's trip wasn't memorable, in most respects for all the wrong reasons. Pick your poison: overtime, a missed chip-shot field goal, failed third-and-shorts, a botched double pass; you name it, it went wrong.

But for Thomas, the game ended before any of that happened.

That was supposed to be the game when West Virginia finally would settle its linebacking problems. Reed Williams was back after missing the first two games of the season, Mortty Ivy could settle back on the outside after a failed try in Williams' spot in the middle and Thomas could finally look over and feel like part of a unit instead of an element of an experiment.

It lasted all of two plays, the second of which was a short pass in the flat from Cody Hawkins to Maurice Cantrell. Thomas was right where he was supposed to be and drilled Cantrell, a 6-foot, 245-pound fullback.

That's when the lights went out, literally, for Thomas. He stayed on the ground for a full five minutes, was helped from the field and remembers nothing after that.

To his credit, Thomas isn't dwelling on the fact that he

was knocked out cold. Hey, stuff happens, right?

"It's not like I'm going to go out right away and look for the guy on the sidelines," Thomas said of Thursday's rematch with the Buffaloes, this time in Morgantown. "I just want to get out there and play a whole game."

That's good, too, because he wouldn't find Cantrell anyway. He's graduated. So now the only motivation left is simply making amends for a West Virginia performance he can't even remember.

"Yeah, it motivates us. But we're always motivated," Thomas said. "It doesn't take a loss for us to want to get better. We're a good football club and we'll use the loss as fuel, but it won't be much different than normal."

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Speaking of memories, Geno Smith now has a pretty conflicting one.

West Virginia's true freshman backup quarterback made his college debut 10 days ago at Auburn. That's good. Who wouldn't want to step out on the field for the first time and have more than 87,000 fans and a national television audience taking note?

Of course, it's not so good that Smith was playing at the end of a loss and after the outcome had pretty much been determined. Oh, and his first play wasn't all that special, either.

Smith took his first snap and almost immediately stepped on the foot of one of his offensive linemen. He went down and his first official play was a sack.

"It was kind of odd," Smith said. "But I tried to keep my composure."

He did, too. His first pass was a 14-yard completion to Jock Sanders. His last was a 20-yarder to Alric Arnett. All told he completed five of eight attempts for 50 yards, although he was intercepted once.

"I watched the film over and over. He made a beautiful read, was ready to stick the ball in there and then he stepped on a lineman's foot and they sacked him," West Virginia coach Bill Stewart said. "But that tells you, it's coming, man. It's coming. It's good to see."

"You're talking about a youngster who was in high school last year. That's good to see. It was very impressive."

Smith took the whole thing in stride. On the interception he said the read was right, but he simply made a bad throw. No real nerves or sense of awe, just a game - the kind he's been preparing for his whole life.

"I just tried to be myself," Smith said. "I mean, that's what I've been preparing for."

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And finally, if you're wondering why Eain Smith keeps starting at free safety in front of Robert Sands, well, there are a couple of reasons. For starters, Smith isn't all that bad.

No, he's not a 6-foot-5 athletic freak of nature like Sands, but he's more than capable. He and Sands are pretty much playing the same number of snaps, often on the field at the same time during passing situations.

But the real reason Smith has started three games and Sands none this season is one Allen Iverson would cringe over - It's practice. We're talking about practice!

"If I see someone practice well, they'll play," Stewart said. "Guys who don't practice as well as the person at their position, they'll still play, but they won't be the starter."

It's not hard to read between the lines. Shoot, are there even any lines there? Stewart would love to see Sands treat practice a bit more seriously and if it takes a benching - or three, or all season - to accomplish that, so be it.

"But Robert's going to be fine. Robert's playing well," Stewart said. "They're both playing pretty well."

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Brown expected to start against Colorado

By Bob Hertz

For the Times West Virginian

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— While the news on defensive tackle Scooter Berry isn't very encouraging about his chances to play for West Virginia this Thursday night in a nationally televised game against Colorado, the Buffaloes learned that their worst fears have been realized and they will have to face quarterback Jarrett Brown.

Injured late in the fourth quarter of a 41-30 loss to Auburn after having been harassed into throwing four interceptions and losing a fumble on a sack, Brown was pronounced fit Monday by Coach Bill Stewart, who also said that he expected senior middle linebacker Reed Williams to answer the bell.

"Jarrett threw lasers yesterday. He's fine," Stewart said.

Brown had gone out with an injury to his left (non-throwing) shoulder against Auburn and sat out the final few minutes as freshman Geno Smith got his feet wet.

Colorado controlled Patrick White last year in pulling off a 17-14 overtime upset in Boulder, but they know that facing Brown is a totally different challenge.

"If you ask him, he'll probably say he doesn't want to be Pat White," Colorado linebacker Marcus Burton said this week. "He's a whole different animal. White was athletic and they had a whole lot of plays designed for him to run. It's no different now, but Brown is definitely a passer. This guy can use his arm or his feet. He's a football savvy guy when you watch his film."

Brown has used his size and strength — he is 6-4 and 221 — to escape what has been a lot of breakdowns by his offensive line, often throwing on the run. But his exceptional arm strength has allowed him to make good plays out of bad.

"Every scout that comes through here goes 'Wow!'" Stewart said. "He's becoming a polished passer right now. It's all coming together."

Against Auburn there were a number of factors that went into his first really difficult game since he had to start last year against Syracuse with a bad throwing shoulder and had a rough time of it but oversaw a victory.

"He was frustrated because he did not take care of the ball," Stewart said during Monday's Big East coaches' conference call. "He tried to force some passes."

A year ago WVU ran the ball well against Colorado and may lean more toward the run this week than it has in the first three games as they want to control the ball and keep away from what Stewart believes is a tricky passing attack run by a sly quarterback, coach Dan Hawkins' son, Cody.

Running back Noel Devine has been a force on offense for the Mountaineers and Stewart wants to increase his number of touches. Colorado knows what they are up against with Devine.

"He can start one way and can end up on the other side of the field. That guy's an athlete," Burton said.

"He's definitely something to watch," linebacker B.J. Beatty added. "He gets the littlest gap and takes off for 20-30 yards. Get him into open field and he's a deadly person. Hopefully, we contain him and keep him in check . . . and hold down the fort."

Stewart speaks as highly of the Colorado offense as the Buffaloes speak of his.

"I'm very worried about Cody Hawkins," Stewart said. "He's a tough guy. He has the ability to make three and four reads. The guy has winner written all over him. He understands exactly what his dad's offense is all about. He was reared in it back in the Boise State days."

Having Williams around at middle linebacker will help deflect some of the things Colorado does. He did not play last year's game with injured shoulders.

“Reed is our defense. He’s the anchor. He brings a mental toughness every day, every time out on the job. He brings a mental edge,” Stewart said. “It hurt him not to play last year. When he couldn’t defend himself, we had to make a decision. I’ll never send a kid out there who can’t protect himself.”

And, unless Berry makes a quick turnaround in the closing days of this week, he will sit out his second straight game with a shoulder injury that came while executing a sack on Patrick Pinkney in the East Carolina game.

Josh Taylor has done a solid job filling in for Berry.

WVU’s Oct. 10 game against Syracuse will either be at 3:30 p.m. on Saturday and shown by ABC-TV or it will be a noon game that will be shown as the Big East game of the week. The decision between that game and Pitt’s game against UConn will not be announced until Monday ... Wide receiver Wes Lyons is fully recovered from a hamstring problem and could be more of a part of the offense than he has been to date.

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