

Embree won't play 'games'

CU coach to name starting QB Tuesday instead of waiting

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 04/11/2011 12:39:59 AM MDT

The Colorado football program completed spring practices Saturday with coach Jon Embree ready to announce a starting quarterback on Tuesday.

All signs point to that quarterback being senior Tyler Hansen because of his consistency and experience and the respect he commands among his teammates in the locker room.

When Embree makes his decision public it will mark yet another major difference in his approach -- one numerous players have called "professional" this spring -- compared with his predecessor.

In recent years in Boulder, the one thing fans could count on between the end of spring ball and the middle of August was not knowing for sure who their starting quarterback would be when the season opened.

Remember 2009, when former coach Dan Hawkins and former offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau insisted on keeping the starter secret all the way up to the first game?

They had informed the players involved two weeks earlier but continued playing games with the decision publicly for several more weeks. All in the name of thwarting the mighty Colorado State Rams.

Last year, the competition between Hansen and former Buff Cody Hawkins was deemed "razor thin" for four months and throughout the early going in fall camp despite the fact that Hansen had earned the vast majority of the practice reps with the first team.

Earlier this spring Embree vowed not "to play games with it" when talking about naming a starter. He said he would do so when he and his assistants are comfortable they have found their man. Apparently that will be Tuesday. That development and others this spring will combine to make fall camp in August one of the most interesting in recent memory.

Perhaps it will be the most interesting fall camp since Hawkins took over the program in 2006 and had a month to choose between three candidates for the starting quarterback job, all of whom had logged little playing time in their careers.

This year CU fans will know who their starting quarterback is going into camp but probably won't know for sure who the starters will be at many other positions.

Embree is excited about numerous members of his first recruiting class and has made no secret of the fact he plans to give them plenty of opportunity in August to beat out veterans.

"No one is getting a job," Embree said. "You have to earn your job."

Fall camp will continue to be a learning experience for coaches and players alike.

Players, particularly those on the offensive side of the ball, learned less than half the offense this spring. They will continue to be pushed because they still have a long way to go.

Coaches will be adding more than 30 players to the roster in the fall when the 2011 recruiting class is combined with invited walk-ons and a group of about 10 players who either were unable to perform at all this spring because of injuries or participated on a limited basis.

CU coaches admit they still don't know the true capabilities of the roster they have because they haven't seen many key contributors at full strength and full speed for a prolonged period.

What they were able to discover this spring is they were able to make progress as a team with players in the regular rotation who normally wouldn't be.

"We go 13 straight weeks where we're going to have days or games where we're not going to have everybody," he said. "I think it's important that the people who got their opportunity this spring that are going to be around that they know they can play, they know the defense, they know the offense. Because they are going to have to do that on a Saturday for us.

"It was good that we were able to be in that situation from the standpoint. Obviously I'd like to have some of those injured guys out there, and they've got their work cut out. They're going to have to come back and compete."

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)