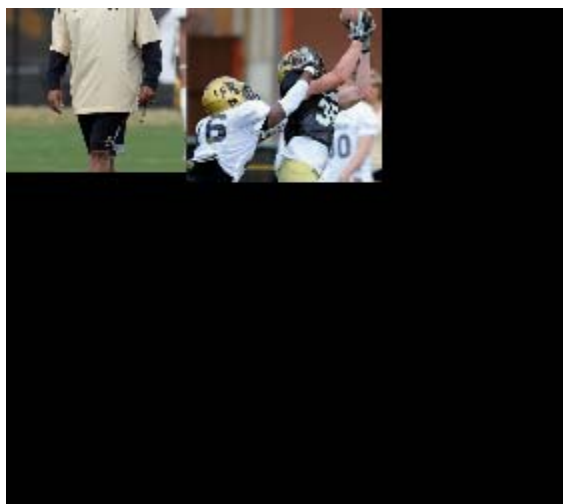


## Tyler Hansen, offense shine in CU Buffs' spring scrimmage

Senior-to-be moving closer to locking up starting spot

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

Posted: 04/02/2011 06:44:24 PM MDT



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There seems to be little doubt who the starting quarterback will be for the University of Colorado next fall based on the results produced through the first 11 practices this spring.

Senior-to-be Tyler Hansen already was the favorite to retain the job coming into the spring and he hasn't disappointed so far. He completed 18 of 19 passes for 246 yards and three touchdowns against a shorthanded defense Saturday in the second scrimmage of spring ball on the CU practice fields. He led a total of six drives that ended in touchdowns.

Hitting wide receiver Paul Richardson in stride with a 58-yard touchdown pass was probably the highlight of the day for Hansen and the team. He also connected with Will Jefferson for a 45-yard touchdown pass that was mostly Jefferson's doing after a defensive back fell down. Hansen's third touchdown pass covered six yards to running back Rodney Stewart.

Coach Jon Embree said Hansen has been consistently good this spring and has had only one subpar practice, which came earlier this week. Embree wasn't ready to name Hansen the starter Saturday, but he said Hansen will be if the remainder of spring ball continues how it has been going.

"I'm going to evaluate this through, but like I said to you guys (Friday) if at the end of this spring it's still like this, then, yeah, we'll go with Tyler."

Embree said there is still time for redshirt freshman Nick Hirschman to close the gap. Hirschman completed four of 11 passes for 27 yards in the scrimmage.

Meanwhile, junior transfer Brent Burnette appears to be struggling to learn the offensive and operate it at a high level. He completed one of five passes for eight yards in the scrimmage. Both backup quarterbacks led one touchdown drive.

While Hansen is operating at a high level, it should be noted that he is doing so running mainly just the base offense. CU coaches have installed only about 30 percent of the playbook this spring. There is still a lot to learn for Hansen and the rest of the Buffs and Embree said the team might not be using the entire offense until next spring.

"I've felt pretty good," Hansen said. "I'm still trying to get the hang of this whole offense but I feel comfortable in it. I keep working. I'm not perfect yet, but I'm trying to get better and I'm trying to make this year real special."

When told of Hansen's statistical performance, a big smile stretched over offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy's face.

"That's a pretty efficient day," he said. "He did a real good job. The thing I love about Tyler is he does a great job managing the offense. He does a great job managing the huddle. What you put into it is what you get out of it and he puts a lot into it."

Tony Jones and Josh Ford each gained 60 yards rushing. Jones did it in 11 carries and Ford needed just five. Rodney Stewart ran 11 times for 48 yards and scored four touchdowns, three rushing.

The offense clearly had the upper hand, in part, because a slew of key defenders were sidelined with injuries. Linebacker Derrick Webb and Liloa Nobriga and defensive linemen Nate Bonsu, Nick Kasa, Curtis Cunningham and Forrest West all sat out.

Defensive coordinator Greg Brown said injuries have been an issue for the defense all spring and he won't use them as an excuse. He said the defense didn't perform well in the scrimmage regardless of injuries.

"Guys are understanding the schemes," Brown said. "There really weren't a lot of blown assignments. It was really more of a case of guys not making plays. For the previous 10 practices we've had our ups and downs and we made our share of plays, but today, in practice No. 11, we went out there and laid an egg and didn't make any plays."

Linebackers Doug Rippey and Jon Major and defensive tackle Conrad Obi have been the standouts on the defensive side of the ball this spring and they continued to play well Saturday. Rippey and Obi led the defense with seven tackles each.

Obi had a forced fumble and three tackles for loss, including a sack. Major had two tackles for loss and a sack. Brown said safety Travis Sandersfeld and defensive end Josh Hartigan have also played well this spring.

Richardson led the Buffs in receiving with four catches for 85 yards and the touchdown reception from Hansen. Senior wide receiver Toney Clemons did not participate because of a nagging hamstring injury.

Colorado has four practices remaining this spring including next Saturday's 6 p.m. spring game at Folsom Field.

#### Notable

With one week left in spring ball, Embree said the defense needs to improve its tackling, especially among the cornerbacks. He said he will provide the defense some looks against spread offense formations over the final week because the Buffs will see plenty of that in the Pac-12 next fall. ... Offensively, coaches plan to install more passing plays and there is plenty of work to be done blocking different blitzes.

#### Scoring summary

**S 1 (TH)** -- Will Jefferson 45 pass from Tyler Hansen (Justin Castor kick) 7-70

**S 2 (TH)** -- Paul Richardson 58 pass from Tyler Hansen (Justin Castor 35 kick) 2-70

**S 7 (TH)** -- Rodney Stewart 6 pass from Tyler Hansen (Justin Castor 39 kick) 8-70

**S 8 (BB)** -- Cordary Allen 1 run (Justin Castor 43 kick) 7-70

**S11 (TH)** -- Rodney Stewart 3 run (Justin Castor 31 kick) 3-20\*

**S12 (NH)** -- Tony Jones 4 run (Justin Castor 38 kick) 6-20\*

**S13 (TH)** -- Rodney Stewart 20 run (Justin Castor 45 kick failed) 2-20\*

**S14 (TH)** -- Rodney Stewart 4 run (Justin Castor 38 kick) 6-20\*

8 touchdowns (5 rush, 3 pass, 0 return; \*--within red zone situational drills)

**Total Plays (including 9 special teams)** -- 82

**Rushing** -- Ford 5-60, Jones 11-60, Stewart 11-48, Allen 4-17, Hansen 2-15, Richardson 1-- minus-6.

**Passing** -- Hansen 18-19-0 246, Hirschman 4-11-0 27, Burnette 1-5-0 8.

**Receiving** -- Stewart 5-6, Richardson 4-85, Thornton 4-33, Cefalo 3-53, Deehan 3-39, Jefferson 1-45, Griffon 1-9, Ahles 1-8, Cauty 1-3.

**Tackles** -- Rippy 7, Obi 7, Poremba 5, Polk 4, Major 4, Olatoye 4, Richter 4, Uzo-Diribe 4, Jaffee 4, Mahnke 3, Sandersfeld 3, Blaha 3, Pericak 3, Hartigan 2, Parker 2, Pugh 2, Smith 2.

**Tackles For Zero (5)** -- Rippy 2, Obi 1, Richter 1, Uzo-Diribe 1.

**Quarterback Hurries (2)** -- Parker, Richter.

**Quarterback Chasedowns (1)** -- Hartigan.

**Passes Broken Up (2)** -- Smith 2.

**Fumble Recoveries (1)** -- Poremba.

**Forced Fumbles (1)** -- Obi.

**Touchdown Saves (1)** -- Pugh.

**Time** -- 1:16. **Attendance** -- 500.

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# CU Buffs' Bobby Kennedy has always bled black and gold

## Assistant coach grew up in Boulder

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

Posted: 04/02/2011 11:50:40 PM MDT

There are eight men who go to work every day in the coaches' offices for the University of Colorado football program who have deep connections to the program. In some cases, those roots are dug in three or four decades, and it would probably surprise many to learn that first-year wide receivers coach Bobby Kennedy has been a Buff in his heart longer than men such as Jon Embree, Eric Bieniemy, Darian Hagan and Kanavis McGhee.

Long before any of those men first came to Boulder from cities such as Denver, Los Angeles and Houston to play football, Kennedy was already here going to practices, attending games, watching Ralphie run on Saturday afternoons and cheering loudly in Folsom Field.

Sure, he's spent most of his adult life elsewhere learning the ropes in coaching and paying his dues, but he has been a Buff in spirit virtually all his life. Safe to say, he's thrilled to be helping to forge a better future finally on the inside of the program after so many years cheering from afar.

"This is a place I've always wanted to coach at," Kennedy said. "So for me being able to come back has really been a special thing, not only being around the different coaches and players, but also reconnecting with people that I went to high school with or that I went to kindergarten with."

Kennedy grew up in North Boulder on Elder Street. He attended Whittier Elementary and Casey Middle School which was called Casey Junior High at the time. He eventually moved on to Boulder High School where he became a star quarterback, but not quite good enough to play for the Buffs.

He was one of eight Kennedy kids and many of his siblings and their children still live in the area and are happy to have him back. His father was a professor at Colorado for 30 years and ran the Colorado Alliance for Science.

Kennedy used to ride his bike through downtown Boulder to the CU campus as a kid. He would park outside his father's office and sneak off to shag balls at football practices under former coach Chuck Fairbanks.

He idolized former quarterback Derek Marshall and tight end Dave Hestera and believes he might have gone to every CU home game throughout his junior high and high school years.

Kennedy first met his new boss, head coach Jon Embree, when he was a sophomore at Boulder High School and Embree was a senior tight end at Cherry Creek.

"I don't know if Bobby was there when we scored 28 points in the fourth quarter to beat them in Boulder," Embree said after a recent practice with Kennedy waiting a few feet away. "We're you there Bobby?"

"I was on the bench. They hadn't unleashed me yet," Kennedy said.

Eventually Kennedy left Boulder to play college football at Northern Colorado.

He began a career in coaching in the early 1990s right around the same time Embree was doing the same thing under former CU coach Bill McCartney. The two coaches started talking early in their careers when Kennedy was coaching at Wake Forest under current Indianapolis Colts head coach Jim Caldwell, a one-time CU assistant under McCartney. Embree considered joining Kennedy at Wake Forest but decided to stay in Boulder.

But a bond was formed and the two remained in touch over the years no matter where their careers took them. They often talked about the possibility of one day returning to Boulder to coach together.

"It was always kind of a goal of mine to get back to Colorado," Kennedy said. "So I knew he was a good guy to stay in touch with and over the years we have talked a lot. There was nobody happier than I was when he got the job."

Embree said when he was hired as head coach, bringing Kennedy back home was a no-brainer

"He's always been successful everywhere he's been," Embree said. "I wanted guys who have won championships, played for championships and been around big-time football."

Kennedy is well-traveled in coaching parlance. One of his first jobs as a graduate assistant was working under Joe Paterno at Penn State in 1992. He moved on to Wyoming, Washington, Arizona, Wake Forest and Texas, where he spent the past seven years coaching in the pressure-cooker of high expectations in Austin. He met his wife LaShonda along the way and has been married 13 years.

"I kind of ripped her away from some of the things that she was doing, but she knows it's a great opportunity for me," Kennedy said of returning to Boulder, the next stop in his life in coaching. "She's always been on board. She's always been really supportive. She knows the life of a college football coach. We are well-paid transients."

While Kennedy is happy to be back home and is looking forward to helping build the Buffs into a Pac-12 Conference power and a program that is once again nationally relevant, he also understands he will probably be forced to leave Boulder again to reach his ultimate career goal of being a head coach.

He already has interviewed for head coaching jobs and was a finalist for the Kent State job this offseason.

Kennedy has his work cut out for his first year in Boulder. He has two players in Paul Richardson and Toney Clemons who were highly thought of wide receiver recruits coming out of high school. Every other wide receiver on the roster is considered a project in one way or another.

With 13 consecutive games -- 11 against BCS conference schools -- this fall, it will be important for Richardson and Clemons to stay healthy and for Kennedy to coax as much as possible out of the others.

"We're not a finished product by no means," Kennedy said. "We've got a long ways to go. But the neat thing is that they want to be good and they have a thirst and a hunger to be good. So that's half the battle."

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## Thorburn: CU Buffs' new regime is nothing to scoff at

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

Posted: 04/02/2011 08:05:16 PM MDT



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field wearing smiles.

The Buffs don't have very many players who could start for the Pac-12's best teams, but they do have a coaching staff that will demand that they get most out of their skills.

A year ago it felt like every Colorado spring practice was held on April 1.

The whole situation was a foolish joke.

Dan Hawkins had the look of someone surprised to still be wearing the whistle on the CU practice fields. The lame duck coach's brief post-practice sessions with the media consisted of tired refrains:

"We just need to clean a few things up," or "I thought Tyler had a really good scrimmage. ... Cody played well."

The vibe has changed dramatically. CU football has a pulse again.

Before Saturday's scrimmage, it was difficult to find a parking space. After the session, some very young men walked off the



That means developing players, creating competition in practice, and then making sure the very best players at every position are on the field this fall.

"The thing that has been impressive is they're willing to work and willing to learn. That's all you can ask for," offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy said. "Are we where we want to be? No. But the thing I like is every day we're striving for improvement."

The excitement surrounding first-year head coach Jon Embree and his impressive staff is a lot higher than on-field expectations should be if you take an honest look at the talent on the roster and the opponents on the 2011 schedule.

Restoring the pride and glory to the program is going to be a process. CU appearing in the 2012 Rose Bowl would be as improbable as VCU and Butler meeting in the Final Four.

Several recruiting classes need to be assembled before defensive coordinator Greg Brown realistically has the Buffaloes to match up with Chip Kelly's Oregon Ducks or Andrew Luck's Stanford Cardinal.

At least Hawkins didn't leave the top shelf of the cupboard completely empty.

Tyler Hansen is capable of having a solid senior season now that the competition's last name is Hirschman (Nick) instead of Hawkins (Cody). On Saturday, Hansen looked comfortable running the new offense, completing 18 of 19 passes for 246 yards with three touchdowns and no interceptions.

If that type of production is repeated in the spring game next Saturday night at Folsom Field, there will not be an absurd, never-ending quarterback battle like there was the previous three seasons.

"I'm not going to play those games," Embree said. "If Tyler continues like he has, and Nick doesn't start picking it up a little bit, then Tyler will probably be No. 1."

Rodney Stewart has the ability to cover up a lot of weaknesses and help keep the CU defense off the field more this fall. "Speedy" scored three touchdowns in the scrimmage.

Josh Ford (12.0 yards per carry) and Tony Jones (60 yards, one touchdown) also shredded a depleted defense.

"They're pushing us hard. Guys are getting a little fatigued. It's fun," Stewart said. "They're giving us a chance to show what we're made of."

The coaching staff has been pleased with the overall work ethic of the team but is still looking for more ferocity between the lines.

"It's a learned behavior. We're going to learn how to be intense at all times," Bieniemy said. "I told the group, 'This is what we love to do, so we're going to come out and enjoy it.'"

Spring after spring, Hawkins struggled with a lack of depth on the offensive line. Due to a rash of injuries, Embree is running out of material to work with on the defensive line this spring.

The difference? The new coach understands there are no excuses.

"I'm disappointed in the defense from the standpoint that we didn't have enough energy and enthusiasm," Embree said. "That's 90 percent of defense is just being excited about being out there and having some energy to run around and hit people. Not going through the motions, feeling sorry for ourselves going, 'Man, I gotta go again.'"

"These guys aren't going to get this many reps again. They're going to be wishing they were tired like this."

Spring practice is no joke.

And moving forward with this group of coaches, CU football won't be either.

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cu football

## CU QB Hansen looks sharp in scrimmage

**By John Henderson**  
*The Denver Post*

Posted: 04/03/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Every new coach comes in saying every position is open. Everyone is starting from scratch. Each player has to prove something.

Colorado's Jon Embree is no different — except for one position this spring. He's trying not to commit to a starter, but if returning starter Tyler Hansen had a stronger stranglehold on the position, backups Nick Hirschman and Brent Burnette would need resuscitation.

In Saturday afternoon's 82-play scrimmage, admittedly against a banged-up defense, Hansen was 18-of-19 for 246 yards and three touchdowns. You don't need to know what Hirschman and Burnette did.

Embree tried to hide Hansen's status. He did a lousy job.

"Kordell (Stewart) did something like that against Baylor (in 1992), and he had Koy (Detmer) breathing down his throat, right?" Embree said. "I won't say it's clear yet. I'm going to evaluate this through, but like I said, if by the end of spring it's still like this then, yeah, we'll go with Tyler."

Embree said Hirschman, the redshirt freshman from Los Gatos (Calif.) High, could close the gap, but Colorado could close the gap on Oregon next fall too. Hansen looked sharp, confident and extremely accurate.

He threw textbook sideline bombs to Will Jefferson for a 45-yard TD and Paul Richardson for a 59-yard score. He threaded the needle over the middle and threw bullets on sideline routes.

"We're still at him about getting in and out of the huddle," Embree said. "But he was good knowing where to go with the ball. He did a good job of placing the ball. I thought his accuracy was pretty good."

This wasn't just a hot Saturday, although it was a perfect 75 degrees. Hansen has been hot all camp.

"You can tell his arm has even gotten stronger and his accuracy is incredible," Richardson said. "It's just up to the receivers, tailbacks and tight ends to make the plays downfield."

This progress report, however, comes with a disclaimer. Saturday's No. 1 defense was missing starters in safety Anthony Perkins (knee), ends Nick Kasa (knee) and Forrest West (shoulder) and tackle Curtis Cunningham (elbow).

Also, Embree has installed only about 30 percent of his pro-set offense. Hansen must learn more than that by Ohio State.

"It's going to take a lot of study and a lot of

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preparation," Hansen said. "Week to week, we'll have different packages in. Our playbook is pretty thick right now."

As for the backups, Hirschman is still playing like a freshman. He threw a balloon ball on a sideline pattern that landed out of bounds. When a flag was thrown for pass interference, Embree yelled, "That's an awful ball! We decline it!"

"Hirschman is doing well," Embree said. "I just want him to be more assertive. I want him to be more aggressive. He needs to trust himself more."

Footnote. Junior offensive lineman Bryce Givens, a part-time starter who was arrested on suspicion of kicking in three car doors in a Denver parking garage Jan. 15, will not play this year, Embree said. Givens' case is in the Office of Judicial Affairs, the university's office of student discipline. He remains in school but will be suspended for the fall semester and eligible to return in 2012.

*John Henderson: 303-954-1299 or [jhenderson@denverpost.com](mailto:jhenderson@denverpost.com)*

## CU scrimmage stats

### PASSING

Player Cp.-Att. Yds. TD  
 Tyler Hansen 18-19 246 3  
 Nick Hirschman 4-11 27 0  
 Brent Burnette 1-5 8 0  
 No interceptions were thrown

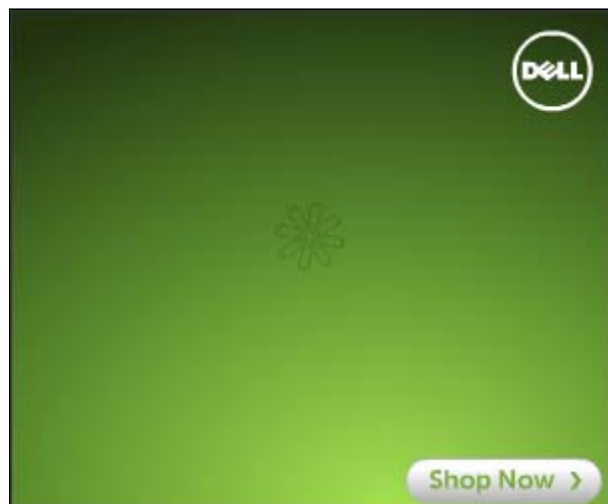
### RUSHING LEADERS

Player Att. Yds. TD  
 Josh Ford 5 60 0  
 Tony Jones 11 60 1  
 Rodney Stewart 11 48 3  
 Cordary Allen 4 17 1

### RECEIVING LEADERS

Player Rec. Yds. TD  
 Rodney Stewart 5 6 1  
 Paul Richardson 4 85 1  
 DaVaughn Thornton 4 33 0  
 Kyle Cefalo 3 53 0  
 Ryan Deehan 3 39 0  
 Will Jefferson 1 45 1  
 KICKING

Justin Castor 6-of-8 FGs



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