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Big men on campus

Two new tailbacks add size to Buffs' backfield

By Brian Howell
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BOULDER — No matter what they do on the field for the University of Colorado, Cordary Allen and J.T. Torres will stand out.

The two true freshmen are among eight tailbacks on the CU roster. They are also the biggest of the eight — by far — and because of their size, one or both of them could have an impact this fall.

“Clearly, there is going to have to be at least one of those guys, maybe two of those guys, that get in the mix,” Buffs head coach Dan Hawkins said. “It certainly helps them, being a larger body. It gives another dimension to it, for sure.”

The Buffaloes are led in the backfield by 5-foot-6, 175-pound Rodney Stewart. The No. 2 back, in terms of experience, is 5-foot-7, 185-pound Brian Lockridge.

Senior Corey Nabors (5-9, 195), redshirt freshman Quentin Hildreth (5-8, 185) and true freshmen Tony Jones (5-7, 180) and Trea' Jones (5-10, 190) all fit the same mold.

Then there are Allen and Torres.

Allen, from Phenix City, Ala., checks in at 6-1, 230. Torres, from La Mirada, Calif., is 6-0, 215.

“We’re bigger than most of the backs that are here, so hopefully that will help us out,” Allen said. “I’m hoping I can just come in and do what I have to do, do what the coach asks. Hopefully, I can play.”

CU running backs coach Darian Hagan has been impressed with Allen to this point.

“The most surprising thing is how he runs behind his pads,” Hagan said. “He’s a downhill runner, but he glides. I don’t want to jinx him or anything, but he runs sort of like (former NFL star) Eddie George. He’ll break a lot of tackles.”

Hagan said Allen and Torres have both proven themselves as being intelligent, in terms of picking up plays and learning the game off the field.

Monday was the first day in which the Buffs practiced with full pads, so it will still take time to tell how the two big backs perform on the field. But Hagan



University of Colorado freshman J.T. Torres (6-foot, 215 pounds), is hoping to use his size advantage to make an impact with the Buffaloes this season. **Courtesy CUBuffs.com**

In the running for CU

A look at who is playing running back at Colorado this fall:

Seniors

Corey Nabors, 5-foot-9, 195 pounds

Juniors

Brian Lockridge, 5-7, 185
Rodney Stewart, 5-6, 175

Redshirt Freshmen

Quentin Hildreth, 5-8, 185

True Freshmen

Cordary Allen, 6-1, 230
Tony Jones, 5-7, 180
Trea' Jones, 5-10, 190
Justin “J.T.” Torres, 6-0, 215

envisions key roles for Allen and Torres.

“Both of those guys are going to be pretty good for us,” Hagan said. “Both of them will give us a dimension that we need this year.”

Stewart agrees. He ran for 804 yards last season but wants more in 2010. Allen or Torres could help him get those yards and improve a CU running game that ranked 113th in the country last season.

Stewart said Allen or Torres playing well this year “will help me a lot, because they can help break down the defense, and I can get out there and be more effective.”

Torres, who was coached in high school by former CU quarterback Mike Moschetti, is excited about the prospect of playing right away, rather than sitting out as a redshirt.

“Just to get a chance already as a true freshman, to come in here and help the little guys out,” he said.

“I like the physical part of running. That could put pressure on the defense and make them tired and more fatigued, and let the little guys do their moves.”

Allen rushed for 817 yards and 14 touchdowns in high school last season, averaging 6.0 yards per carry. He also was a star sprinter in high school.

Torres ran for 900 yards and 15 touchdowns, averaging 8.6 yards per carry. He also caught 24 passes for 315 yards and starred on defense.

Allen and Torres are hoping the success they had in high school will carry over to CU. Depending on how they perform during fall camp this month, Buffs fans could get to know this duo — or at least one of them — very soon.

Brian Howell can be reached at bhowell@times-call.com. Read his Buffs blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/howell.

CU Buffs' Bakhtiari makes big leap

Redshirt freshman tops CU depth chart at right tackle

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/09/2010 07:48:19 PM MDT

Former Colorado offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich was in a rental car on a recruiting trip 19 months ago when he received a phone call from David Bakhtiari announcing his intention to commit to the program.

Helfrich reacted by asking Bakhtiari to hold on so he could pull over, get out of the car and do some cartwheels.

Even Bakhtiari, a 17-year-old at the time, recognized the absurdity of Helfrich's over-the-top reaction, but it was something he had grown accustomed to from college coaches trying to sell their programs in recruiting. The truth is, Bakhtiari liked Helfrich a lot and kind of appreciated the enthusiasm.

The thing is, Helfrich's reaction doesn't seem so farcical now.

On a team with 11 veteran offensive linemen who have logged playing time at some point in their careers, the redshirt freshman finds himself atop the depth chart at right tackle for the Buffs six days into training camp. Considering the lack of offensive production from the Buffs in recent years, it might not be farfetched to think Bakhtiari could keep the job for the season opener Sept. 4 against Colorado State and beyond.

"We're just trying to put guys in the right spot to give us the needed depth and provide them with the right opportunities to compete for jobs," offensive line coach Denver Johnson said.

Bakhtiari has his work cut out for him to remain a starter.

Sophomore Bryce Givens, a former four-star recruit from Mullen High School in Denver, earned plenty of playing time as a redshirt freshman last season at right tackle. Givens is very talented but has had personal and academic problems keep him off the field at times. He missed the bulk of spring practices because of those issues but is back fighting for his job again in camp.

When Bakhtiari first joined the program last summer, he was listed two spots behind Givens on the depth chart and weighed 50 pounds less than his pre-camp weight of 285 pounds.

"It would be unreal," Bakhtiari said of the possibility of keeping the job. "I'm going to try as hard as I can, but at the end of the day it's whatever the coach thinks and what's best for the team.

"I'm all about the team really. As long as we win, I really don't care if they put another kid in there."

Bakhtiari has an interesting background CU fans are sure to become more familiar with going forward whether he is a starter this year or not. He has a proud Persian heritage. His paternal grandfather immigrated to the United States from Iran, and he has probably the most interesting middle name on the CU roster -- Afrisiab Asad translates to Alfred.

Bakhtiari, who attended Catholic school growing up, was actually a better lacrosse prospect through most of his high school career than he was a football star. He played a mean long pole defender. In fact, he didn't start his first varsity game until the first game of his senior season at Junipera Serra High School in Burlingame, Calif. He earned a spot on the Cream of the Crop team from the Bay Area News Group that season as the No. 8 overall prospect.

He had grown 3 inches and put on significant weight between his junior and senior seasons, leading to a drastic increase in attention from college football programs.

His growth and development was probably predictable. His uncle, Dan Jackson, played quarterback at Cal. His two older brothers played football at the University of San Diego and his oldest brother, Eric, is in training camp this month with the

Tennessee Titans as a defensive end after spending his rookie season with San Diego, San Francisco and Tampa Bay two years ago.

Bakhtiari says he spends time with Eric talking about the game and getting some perspective on how to block defenders. He said it is a special benefit to have personal access to a pro.

"He helps me work on things that give him a hard time, and I try and emulate that in practice and even in games when I'm going against people," Bakhtiari said.

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Patterson officially a Buff

Pac-10 clears former USC receiver to join CU

By Kyle Ringo and Neill Woelk Camera Sports Writers
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/09/2010 10:09:16 AM MDT

Travon Patterson started the day on the Colorado football practice fields in street clothes Monday, but by morning's end, was in football gear on the field with his new teammates.

Patterson, a wide receiver transfer from Southern Cal, had been waiting for approval from the Pac-10 before he began practice. CU needed permission from Pac-10 coaches and officials for Patterson to begin playing with the Buffs because it joined the league in June and must abide by league rules.

Those rules require student-athletes who transfer within the conference to sit out one season, but conference officials made an exception for Patterson, in part, because he is a senior who will only be on the team this fall.

The NCAA decided last month to grant waivers to all USC juniors and seniors to transfer after it hit the Trojans with sanctions for major rules violations regarding former Heisman Trophy winner Reggie Bush.

Approval officially came Monday evening, the university announced in a statement.

"We are most appreciative of the professionalism, timeliness and attention to detail from our new partners with the Pac-10, and that includes the conference office and all the 10 current institutions," athletic director Mike Bohn said. "Our first experience of dealing with an issue of substance could not have been more impressive, and not just because of the clearance that Travon received, but because of the professional commitment and collaboration in the entire process."

Patterson, a 5-foot-9, 165-pounder, missed the first four days of practice but was able to attend team meetings and watch each of those practices. Now that he is officially able to participate, he will have to spend two more practices in shorts and a helmet before he is allowed to don full pads with the rest of his teammates.

NCAA rules mandate that all programs ease their teams into full-contact work with the three days of minimum contact.

Patterson was a highly recruited player four years ago, but didn't produce much in his time as a Trojan. He made 10 catches for 96 yards in his career at USC. He was awarded a medical redshirt season after suffering an injured foot during the 2007 season.

Coaches did not allow reporters to interview Patterson after his first practice because his transfer was not official at that point, but wide receivers coach Robert Prince is happy to have him.

"I know he has great speed," Prince said. "He will bring some speed to our group. Other than that, it's hard to say because I haven't seen him in our offense to see what he can provide. With the speed, he will help our overall group."

Notable

The Buffs practiced in full pads for the first time Monday and produced a rousing redzone session to conclude practice. ... The Buffs have the first full-squad two-a-day practices today. ... Offensive lineman Max Tuoti-Mariner and linebacker B.J. Beatty continued to sit out because of injuries.

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colorado football

Ambrose helping Buffs get defensive

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Posted: 08/10/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — When Colorado's defensive backs get advice from their new secondary coach, imagine how their ears perk up when he says, "When I covered Jerry Rice . . ." or "This reminds me of when I batted down one of Brett Favre's passes."

The promotion of former all-pro cornerback Ashley Ambrose to secondary coach this year has given added optimism to the most optimistic unit on the team. The Buffaloes boast two probable NFL draft picks in senior cornerbacks Jimmy Smith and Jalil Brown plus another returning starter in junior safety Anthony Perkins.

Hoping to take them to the next level, not to mention Colorado to its first winning season in Dan Hawkins' five years, is the best defensive back in the AFC in 1996. When he talks, players listen.

"You know you're learning from one of the best," Perkins said. "He played in the league for 13 years and you just have confidence knowing that

what you're learning, that's what works."

The best part is he didn't have to introduce himself. He spent 2008 as a defensive intern here before spending last year working with the receivers. When secondary coach Greg Brown went to Arizona after last season, Ambrose took over.

"Coach Brown is very intelligent," Smith said. "He knows the ins and outs of the game, but it's different having a player coach because he knows exactly what we're thinking because he's been through it."

Ambrose has been through it all.

He spent 13 years in the NFL with the Colts, Bengals, Saints and Falcons. He had 42 interceptions — three returned for touchdowns — and 178 pass deflections. In his 1996 season with the Bengals, he won the AFC defensive back of the year award.

"I always have to reiterate stuff like the tricks of the trade," Ambrose said, "certain techniques and different things to do: knocking a receiver off without getting called for a (pass interference). Also, I'm just trying to get them to understand the

situations of the game. They go out and just try to play football. But you've got to understand the situations."

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Colorado Football

[Read a preseason Q&A with CU football coach Dan Hawkins.](#)

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[Find analysis, notes and buzz on the All Things Buffs blog.](#)

Ambrose is 39 and still looks young enough to play. The guy could pass for a student at the UMC cafeteria. But he never thought about coaching, even during his last couple of the years with his hometown New Orleans Saints, with whom he retired in 2004.

"When you're playing, you think about all the hard work you put in and you say, 'Man, these coaches are still here and I'm tired,' " he said. "Many a day I said, 'No, I'm not going to do that.' But I realized this is what I wanted to do. It's a passion for me."

As a veteran he had worked with young Saints cornerbacks such as Jason Craft, a former Colorado State star. Ambrose started his coaching career as a defensive intern with the Falcons in 2006. When coach Jim Mora got fired, he called Greg Brown, who coached him in Atlanta and New Orleans.

He invited Ambrose to talk to his players. Heck, he had time, he had money and he'd never been

to Boulder. Plus he could hook up again with his old Falcons teammate, Ronnie Bradford, then an assistant with the Broncos.


In 2008, Ambrose came to Boulder again as an intern. His internship is officially over, and he falls in with probably Colorado's best cornerback tandem since Donald Strickland and Phil Jackson in 2002.

"When you look at those guys, they're tall, they can run and they're strong," Ambrose said. "They have great hips. Jalil's a little shorter, and usually the shorter you are the better hips you have, but it's good to see a guy like Jimmy who's 6-2 1/2 who can still move his hips like he can."

Footnote.

Receiver Travon Patterson, the Southern California transfer, was cleared late Monday to play for the Buffs and participated in some drills without pads. He was awaiting official word from the Pac-10 after leaving USC because of its NCAA sanctions.

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

AUGUST 9, 2010, 5:01 PM

With chance to hit live, CU shines, especially the secondary

By **JOHN HENDERSON** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Maybe it was their first chance to hit someone live, but the Buffaloes showed more enthusiasm in Monday's first contact practice than they did in many of their games last year. Much of it had to do with a touted secondary that got the better of a growing talented receiving corps.

** The best run of the day came from [Quentin Hildreth](#)^[1], the redshirt freshman from Denver East. The 5-foot-8, 185-pounder broke up the middle for about a 70-yard TD run. He won the [Fred Casotti](#)^[2] Award, which goes to the most improved offensive player in the spring.

Despite the presence of four true freshmen and the top two returning backs in [Rodney Stewart](#)^[3] and [Brian Lockridge](#)^[4], Hildreth is considered in the tailback mix.

** Another East grad, redshirt freshman [Zach Grossnickle](#)^[5], is concentrating on punting instead of place-kicking. And coach [Dan Hawkins](#)^[6] said he has seen a noticeable difference.

** Redshirt freshman tight end [Clark Evans](#)^[7] still hasn't cleared up his academic situation to practice. Summer school ended Friday.

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- [CSU begins full contact work](#)^[8]
- [Patterson can't start too soon](#)^[9]
- [Free post-practice popsicles at CSU](#)^[10]
- [CSU preview: QB questions abound](#)^[11]
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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

AUGUST 9, 2010, 4:54 PM

USC transfer Travon Patterson cleared to play at Colorado

By **JOHN HENDERSON** |  No Comments

Updates...

BOULDER — [Travon Patterson](#) ^[1] finally practiced Monday but he wasn't officially cleared until late in the afternoon. His paperwork for his transfer from Southern California finally cleared after the fifth practice.

Not that coach [Dan Hawkins](#) ^[2] is anxious to get him in the receiver mix, but he had Patterson get out of his street clothes in the middle of practice and put on a jersey and shorts. It was the first day of contact drills, but Patterson hadn't met the required number of non-contact practice to put on pads.

No wonder Hawkins wanted him out there. Patterson runs a 4.3 40 and clocked 10.44 in the 100 meters at Long Beach Poly.

For what it's worth, he dropped his first pass Monday, then another and fell on another route.

In a statement, Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn said of the transfer procedure: "We are most appreciative of the professionalism, timeliness and attention to detail from our new partners with the pac-10, and that includes the conference office and all the 10 current institutions. Our first experience of dealing with an issue of substance could not have been more impressive and not just because of the clearance that Travon received but because of the professional commitment and collaboration in the entire process."

Huh? He had to miss nearly five days of practice.

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- [Random observations of Colorado contact](#) ^[4]
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Colorado hopes to surprise Big 12



Colorado wide receiver Scotty McKnight, right, will face Kansas State one more time before going to the Pac-10.

BY [KEVIN HASKIN](#)

Created August 9, 2010 at 5:16pm

Updated August 9, 2010 at 11:42pm

Pound-for-pound, Scotty McKnight carries the most influence among the seniors on the Colorado football team.

The senior wideout isn't afraid to call out linemen on both sides of the ball, emphasizing the importance of their contributions in any turnaround the Buffaloes manage this season.

"The guys on the outside, tailbacks, cornerbacks, they get all the attention," said McKnight, who is listed at 5 feet 11 inches, 185 pounds, "but it should be given to the guys on the offensive and defensive lines.

"Nate Solder has got to play a monumental part on our team this year, because if they can run block and pass block, we have the skill players who can get the job done. We have so many guys that, if they take care of their jobs up front, we'll be a great team."

As the line's anchor, Solder (6-9, 300) stretches almost as far as the boat. But the mammoth tackle accepts McKnight's challenge and understands the experienced-but-of-injured CU line must provide a consistent push.

"We know it. That's what we want," Solder said. "Hook the train to us, we're ready to pull. Scotty's taken the lead, but as a team, we're all on the same page on that."

COLORADO

Coach: Dan Hawkins, fifth season, 16-33.

Storyline: Dan Hawkins gets another chance to prove himself as coach with a veteran team that could surprise.

Numbers crunch: 11 — Consecutive road defeats under Hawkins, who stands 2-19 on the road while at Colorado.

Schedule: S4 Colorado State (Denver); S11 at California; S18 Hawaii; O2 Georgia; O9 at Missouri; O16 Baylor; O23 Texas Tech; O30 at Oklahoma; N6 at Kansas; N13 Iowa State; N20 Kansas State; N26 at Nebraska.

Quarterbacks Tyler Hansen and Cody Hawkins have rotated each of the past two seasons, with Hansen shredding an intended redshirt each year. While going 3-9 last season, the Buffs started no seniors on the offensive line, committed 31 turnovers and, of their 107 penalties, 65 were committed by the offense.

The problems contributed to the fourth losing record in as many seasons for Dan Hawkins. Consideration was given to his dismissal. But Hawkins was retained for a fifth season after the CU administration considered the effect a buyout could have on its financially strapped athletic department, which is preparing to make the move to the Pac-10.

The Buffs add a potential game-changing threat in Michigan transfer Toney Clemons at receiver. They also return seven starters off a solid defense, and they list 16 seniors or juniors are first-stringers on the two-deep.

So, can they emerge as a contender — or at least an upstart — finally under Hawkins?

"He's doing things right," McKnight said, "and we've got to go out and show people who are doubting his ability that he knows what he's doing and he's got the program in the right direction.

"We just need to clean things up, we need to grow up and we need to start executing the way they're teaching us, and we'll be successful."

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Tuesday, August 10, 2010

Missing starters, stickers and ESPN beef

By David Ubben
ESPN.com

Enjoyed the time off, and I hope you guys enjoyed the quick camp previews that ran while I was gone. No, I'm absolutely not doing away with lunch links, those of you who e-mailed me. But there won't be any when I'm away from the blog.

Thanks for the e-mails. The wedding was fun, but I'm back and 100 percent ready to go for the season, which is more than a few players around the Big 12 can say. Here's a few things we missed on the blog over the long weekend:

This is any fan of football's least favorite thing about the sport, but it happens every year. Always unfortunate, but a few players' 2010 seasons are over before they've begun.

- Kansas coach Turner Gill announced on Monday that linebacker Huldson Tharp will miss the entire season with a foot injury. He was ready to join Drew Dudley as the stars of what could have been one of the Jayhawks best units. Now, his encore to his 59-tackle freshman debut will have to wait 12 months.
- Another linebacker, Missouri's Donovan Bonner, will miss the year with a torn ACL. Though [his tweet in response](#) was admirable, his injury could be a big deal for the Tigers. Bonner was likely the top backup to weakside linebacker Andrew Gachkar, but now his absence could give a player like juco transfer and former USC Trojan Josh Tatum a chance to shine. Freshman Michael Brennan is listed behind Bonner on the depth chart.
- Another notable backup won't be on the field this season, but not because of injury. Texas backup QB [Sherrod Harris](#) has left the team to focus on his degree, leaving freshmen Case McCoy and Connor Wood to backup sophomore starter [Garrett Gilbert](#). It's worth noting that Harris says he'll stick around to help the young arms along when he can. Good to see that.

Bufs adding receivers

No receiving corps in the conference has seen more turnover this offseason than Colorado. The Buffaloes lost [Andre Simmons](#) to ineligibility and [Markques Simas](#) left the school after a suspension.

Stepping in: Two new players via California schools in the Buffaloes soon-to-be new conference. Paul Richardson was kicked off the UCLA team in June, but he'll join USC transfer [Travon Patterson](#) as the two newest targets for [Tyler Hansen](#) or [Cody Hawkins](#). Richardson, a 6-foot-2, 185-pound freshman should be a nice addition along with Patterson, a speedy 5-foot-9, 170-pound slot receiver.

Also at Colorado, I enjoyed coach Dan Hawkins [somewhat-gimmicky approach to fall camp](#). He's taken away his team's Buffalo logos on their helmets, forcing them to earn the insignia instead.

"You got to earn your Buff," Hawkins told local reporters last week. "That's part of it. I respect the heck out of this tradition and our guys do too. I just want them to earn it."

Freshmen safeties on display

Ahmad Dixon was the prize of Art Briles' 2010 class as the nation's No. 3 safety. Early in camp, he's impressed, [according to the Waco Tribune-Herald](#):

After moving to the indoor practice facility for the second half of practice, Dixon delivered some turf-shaking tackles on Baylor's receivers. Imagine how Dixon will hit when they get to full pads.

That has to be a good sign for Bears fans. I'd be surprised if Dixon's doesn't log at least a couple starts this season.

Meanwhile, a few hours up I-35, Oklahoma's Tony Jefferson may start early in his freshman season.

"If we started today we would play Tony Jefferson as our starting nickel back," defensive coordinator Brent Venables [told](#)

[The Oklahoman.](#)

That position is somewhat of a hybrid linebacker/safety spot a la former Sooner Roy Williams. He'll have to beat out Joseph Ibiloye, who made 15 tackles as a freshman, in camp to win the job.

Tech's Sheffield has beef with ESPN

Chalk this one up as by far my favorite story of the weekend.

When Texas Tech quarterback [Steven Sheffield](#) showed up to campus, his nickname of "Sticks" was pretty accurate for a 6-foot-4, 160-pounder. But [like he told me at media days last week](#), he's up over 200 now, and he'd like people to take notice. Namely, [his player profile on ESPN](#), which still lists him at 175 pounds.

"It kind of fluctuates, but that's a big difference from what I was playing at last season at 185 – or 180, some people had me 175. I was probably 175 but I didn't want to tell anybody that.

"If y'all can, tell ESPN to change their little thing, it says 175," Sheffield [told the Dallas Morning News](#).

Sheffield's broken the same foot twice, and there's been some concern that his lanky frame could cause him to be injury prone--especially since he's more apt to run than his competition, fellow senior [Taylor Potts](#).

"I'm still fluctuating quite a bit," he told the paper. "If I don't stay on it, I'll drop back to the high 190s, mid 190s. I've got to keep eating and if you keep working out through the weight gaining process you transition pretty well. So I think it's going pretty good."

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