

CU Buffs coach Jon Embree makes it official: Five to join his staff

Two assistant positions remain open: QBs, WRs

Camera staff report
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As expected, Colorado football coach Jon Embree made official on Friday his choices to fill five assistant coaching positions.

There were no surprises.

As already reported, Greg Brown, Steve Marshall, Mike Tuiasosopo, Kanavis McGhee and J.D. Brookhart will be joining Embree's staff.

All but Tuiasosopo have ties to the Buffs or the state of Colorado.

"Most have college and professional experience -- they've coached at the highest level, have been involved in big games and in big situations," Embree said in a CU press release.

"The group as a whole has a great number of relationships both locally and nationally. That helps when coaching the players, in relating to them, in giving some credibility because they've been where the players are trying to get to."

The duties break down this way:

Brown, defensive coordinator and secondary coach.

Marshall, as offensive line coach.

Tuiasosopo and McGhee, defensive line coaches.

Brookhart, offensive passing game coordinator, tight ends coach and special teams coordinator.

For Brown, 53, it will be his third stint with the Buffs.

Brown first worked under head coach Bill McCartney as secondary coach from 1991-93. During that run, he played a vital role in the development of CU's two Jim Thorpe Award winners, Deon Figures and Chris Hudson. He then returned to Boulder as defensive backs coach and defensive passing game coordinator for four seasons (2006-09) under Dan Hawkins before he left for a co-defensive coordinator position this past fall at the University of Arizona.

Marshall, 54, rejoins the CU staff from California, where he coached the offensive line the past two seasons. He was on the Colorado staff for the 2000-01 seasons, also as the OL coach, when he was instrumental in the coaching of All-America guard Andre Gurode and All-Big 12 tackle Victor Rogers. In between, he spent six years in the NFL, four with the Houston Texans (2002-05) and two with the Cleveland Browns (2007-08).

McGhee, 42, could add recruiting connections to the talent-rich Houston area. He graduated from Colorado in 1995 with a degree in business administration. He did not coach this past fall, the first year he was not on the sidelines in 13 years, but instead taught college courses in business at Challenge Early College High School. He'll finish out the semester and then join the CU staff full-time the first week of January.

McGhee lettered four seasons at outside linebacker for the Buffaloes (1987-90), becoming just the fourth player at the time to earn first-team all-league honors three different years; he also was an All-American his junior season. He went on to play 50 games in the NFL with three different teams in five years, the New York Giants (who drafted him in the second round of the '91 draft), Cincinnati and Houston.

McGhee's college coaching resume is limited to one year at Gannon (Pa.) University, where he coached the linebackers in 2008. He spent two seasons in NFL Europe as a defensive assistant with the Amsterdam Admirals (2006-07) and has coached 10 seasons in the Houston-area high school ranks.

Brookhart, 46, was born in Pueblo and graduated from Cherry Creek High School in 1983. He graduated from Colorado State, where he was a three-year starter at wide receiver and a 1987 GTE Academic All-American. His extensive coaching resume includes six seasons (2004-09) as head coach at Akron University, where he was 30-42 overall with a Mid-American Conference East Division title in 2005, which earned the Zips a trip to the Motor City Bowl.

Brookhart began his coaching career with the Denver Broncos as an assistant in 1995 under then first-year head coach Mike Shanahan. In that role, he coordinated the defensive scout team, breaking down opposing offenses while also working with special teams. After two seasons with the Broncos, Brookhart entered the collegiate ranks, joining Walt Harris' staff at Pittsburgh as tight ends coach while assisting with special teams, serving in that capacity for the 1998-99 seasons. He then took over the wide receivers in 1999, the position he would coach the next five seasons, including after he was named offensive coordinator the following year (2000). Among the players he coached were Antonio Bryant and Larry Fitzgerald, both Biletnikoff Award winners who went on to stardom in the NFL.

Tuiasosopo, 47, has spent the last seven seasons as the defensive line coach at Arizona, teaming with Brown this past fall. After graduating from Pacific Lutheran University in 1989, he became the defensive line and special teams coach at Montclair Academy (Van Nuys, Calif.) in 1992, before joining the University of Pacific staff as a graduate assistant the following year.

Tuiasosopo served as head coach the next three seasons (1993-95) at Berkeley High School before joining the Division I-A coaching ranks at Utah State, where he coached the defensive line from 1997-99 before moving on to do the same at the University of Nevada the next three years (2000-02). He coached the defensive tackles for one year ('03) at Utah before moving on to Arizona. He also served two NFL Minority Intern Fellowships, with the San Francisco 49ers (1997) and the Green Bay Packers (2002).

Previously announced, former Buff All-American running back Eric Bieniemy will be the offensive coordinator and running backs coach, and linebackers coach Brian Cabral, who has been on the CU staff since 1989, was retained. Cabral will also serve as the defensive running game coordinator.

Two assistant positions remain vacant, those for the quarterbacks and receivers. Embree stated he had several options for the two, and one or both could go unfilled until January once the college bowl season is finished and the NFL regular season is completed.

In other news also previously reported by the Camera, Embree's first spring practice will begin on March 11 and the annual spring game is set for April 9.

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cu football

Embree's staff has feel for Buffs

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — Following a plan of hiring assistant coaches who know Colorado and also can talk about their NFL experiences to recruits, newly hired CU football coach Jon Embree officially announced five additions to his staff Friday.

"They've coached at the highest level, have been in big games and in big situations," Embree said.

None of the five was a surprise, as each had been confirmed as much as a week earlier in media reports. Greg Brown returns to Colorado as defensive coordinator after one year in Tucson as co-defensive coordinator at Arizona. Brown also will coach the defensive backs. Offensive line coach Steve Marshall comes from the University of California but coached CU's line for two seasons under Gary

Barnett.

J.D. Brookhart, a former University of Akron coach, will coordinate the passing game and special teams and also will coach tight ends. He

played with Embree at Cherry Creek High School before catching passes for Colorado State. Former CU star linebacker Kanavis McGhee has coached in NFL Europe. Mike Tuiasosopo comes from the University of Arizona and will split duties with McGhee in coaching the defensive line. Tuiasosopo is the only one of the five without Colorado ties, but he has known Embree for 15 years.

Including previous hires Eric Bieniemy (offensive coordinator) and staff holdover Brian Cabral (linebackers), Embree will have at least six assistant coaches that either played or coached in the NFL, or did both like Embree.

"That helps when coaching the players, in relating to them, in giving credibility," Embree said, "because they've been where the players are trying to get to."

Embree has not announced a wide receivers coach or a quarterbacks coach. In addition to Cabral, Embree is expected to retain two other Buffs: running backs coach Darian Hagan, possibly as recruiting coordinator; and Jashon Sykes, who would remain in the football operations department.

• **J.D. BROOKHART, 46, tight ends, passing-game coach and special-teams coordinator** — Did Embree really add a former Colorado State receiver to his CU staff? The connection goes back long before their college days. Embree and Brookhart played high school ball together at Cherry Creek. Brookhart has been a major-college head coach, at Akron, where his six

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seasons included a bowl game in 2005. Also coached on Mike Shanahan's Broncos staff. Should be strong in local recruiting — his brother, Mike, is head coach at Cherry Creek.

• **GREG BROWN, 53, defensive coordinator and secondary coach** — Back in Boulder after a one-year hiatus as co-defensive coordinator under Mike Stoops at the University of Arizona. Impressive credentials include two previous stints as Colorado defensive backs coach (1991-93 and 2006-09) and 15 years as an assistant in the NFL, where he coached 15 all-pro performers. At CU, he coached two players — Deon Figures and Chris Hudson — who earned the Jim Thorpe Award as the nation's top defensive back. Son of local radio personality Irv Brown, who was a CU assistant football coach and head baseball coach.

• **STEVE MARSHALL, 54, offensive line** — Completed his second season at California this fall, where his line was dominant in a 52-7 pounding of Colorado on Sept. 11 in Berkeley. Coached for two seasons (2000-01) at CU and also in the NFL — two huge pluses in the eyes of Embree. Played for Washington State, so he knows and understands the Pac-12. Well-traveled, his college coaching stops have included Tennessee, Virginia Tech, UCLA, Texas A&M and North Carolina, in addition to CU and Cal.

• **KANAVIS MCGHEE, 42, defensive ends** — One of the standouts on CU's 1990 national championship team. Recently, McGhee has been a high school teacher in Houston but coached

defense for the Amsterdam Admirals of the now-defunct NFL Europe and also coached at the prep level in Houston. Played five seasons in the NFL. Will give CU a recruiting presence in Texas.

• **MIKE TUIASOSOPO, 47, defensive tackles** — After seven years at the University of Arizona, Tuiaosopo said leaving was "a tough decision." But Tuiaosopo has been a close friend of Embree since the mid-1990s when Embree was an assistant at CU and sought a player coached by Tuiaosopo at Berkeley (Calif.) High School. Tuiaosopo is regarded as an outstanding recruiter, particularly in Hawaii or with other athletes of Polynesian descent.

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or tkensler@denverpost.com

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CU announces five staff hires

By Brian Howell
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On Friday, head football coach Jon Embree officially announced the hiring of five assistant coaches.

Embree, who was named head coach earlier this month, named Greg Brown defensive coordinator and secondary coach; Steve Marshall as offensive line coach; Mike Tuiasosopo and Kanavis McGhee as defensive line coaches; and J.D. Brookhart as offensive passing game coordinator, tight ends coach and special teams coordinator.

None of the hires came as a surprise, as all have previously been reported. CU was waiting on paperwork to be able to announce the hires officially.

"I am excited about this staff, and look forward to the players and the public to get to know these guys," Embree said in a statement released by CU. "Most have college and professional experience, they've coached at the highest level, have been involved in big games and in big situations. The group as a whole has a great number of relationships both locally and nationally. That helps when coaching the players, in relating to them, in giving some credibility because they've been where the players are trying to get to."

For Brown, this will be his third stint at CU. He was secondary coach from 1991-93 and was defensive passing game coordinator and defensive backs coach from 2006-09. He was the co-defensive coordinator at Arizona this season.

Marshall is also returning to CU. He was CU's offensive line coach from 2000-01. He has spent the past two seasons coaching the offensive line at California.

McGhee is a former standout linebacker at CU. He has been a high school teacher and coach (but did not coach this past season). McGhee also has one year of college coaching experience, when he instructed linebackers at Gannon (Pa.) University in 2008. He is expected to help in recruiting the Houston area.

Brookhart is not a former Buff, but has strong Colorado ties. He is a graduate of Cherry Creek High School and was a three-year starter at wide receiver at Colorado State. He was the head coach at Akron University from 2004-09.

Tuiasosopo is the only member of the group that doesn't have any CU or Colorado ties. He has spent the past seven years coaching defensive linemen at Arizona.

The group joins Embree, Eric Bieniemy (offensive coordinator/running backs) and Brian Cabral (linebackers). Bieniemy and Cabral were announced as assistants on Dec. 6, the day Embree was announced as head coach.

NOTES: With Friday's hires, two positions remain vacant: quarterbacks coach and receivers coach. Eric Kiesau, who was CU's offensive coordinator the past two seasons and is still under contract for 2011, remains a possibility for one of those positions. ... Former running backs coach Darian Hagan has also been confirmed as staying, although his role for next year has yet to be released. ... Earlier this week, Kent Riddle, who was CU's special teams coordinator the past five years, got a new job. He will coach special teams and tight ends at North Texas. ... Spring practice will begin on March 11. The annual spring game is set for April 9.

Brian Howell can be reached at bhowell@times-call.com