

# CU Buff Tyler Hansen prepares for competition

## QB expects challenge for starting job

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

Posted: 02/11/2011 12:02:10 AM MST

Tyler Hansen's college football career hasn't exactly gone as planned, but there is still time and opportunity left for creating plenty of great memories and leaving Colorado a winner.

He is taking the first steps toward that goal now in the winter conditioning program and in seven-on-seven practices with his teammates.

The next big step, maybe the biggest challenge of all, arrives a month from today when spring football practices begin for the Buffs.

Hansen would normally be considered a heavy favorite to earn the starting quarterback role, entering his senior year against a group of other signal callers who are less experienced than him.

But he is coming off a serious injury last fall and will be learning a brand new offense under a new coaching staff, effectively putting him on equal footing with junior transfer Brent Burnette and redshirt freshman Nick Hirschman.

Even true freshman Stevie Dorman, who is scheduled to arrive this summer, might be a threat, considering Dorman played his entire high school career in a similar system to what CU coaches are designing.

Hansen carries a simple philosophy about facing competition for the starting job.

"It's nothing new," he said.

He has spent the past three years competing with former Buff Cody Hawkins, the son of former head coach Dan Hawkins, for the job each year, and he successfully earned the job for half of two of those years and part of the other.

Hansen became the starter midway through his sophomore season in 2009 when things weren't working for Hawkins.

He retained the job until the midway point of last fall when he suffered a ruptured spleen on an option play against Texas Tech. He didn't play again the rest of the season.

Watching how Hansen reacts to contact will surely be one of the more interesting parts of the first practices in which players are allowed to tackle. Hansen says he is 100 percent healthy and doesn't expect it to be an issue.

He is more concerned with learning the system coach Jon Embree, offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy and passing game coordinator J.D. Brookhart put in place, as well as learning from a third quarterbacks coach, Rip Scherer, during his four years in Boulder.

"I like it actually," Hansen said. "Different opinions will make you better. The more opinions the better. I think the different techniques to coaching help. Coach (Mark) Helfrich was a hands-on guy, and coach (Eric) Kiesau was a lot different than that. I'm looking forward to coach Scherer and seeing what his techniques are to coaching."

Hansen said he has started to learn the offense in recent weeks, but the coaches are still refining the playbook and he and other players won't truly be able to sink their teeth into it until they get on the field in March and April.

He said he has been watching clips of some parts of the offenses used by the Minnesota Vikings, Washington Redskins and Texas Longhorns last year.

The new coaching staff features former staffers from each of those programs and organizations and pieces of what each

offense did will be included in what the Buffs do in 2011 and beyond.

Hansen said while he already knows there will be significant differences to what he was asked to do last year under Hawkins and Kiesau, the differences aren't a big concern.

"I'm not really worried about that," Hansen said. "I've done a lot of things. I've done the zone reads, I've played in a pro-style offense. I've been under center. I've done hard play action. I've done all those things.

"So I think whatever they ask me to do, I can do it. In high school, all of my stuff was under center. In college, most of it is in the gun. So I can do multiple things and I'm looking forward to what they bring and I'm looking forward to the challenge. It's going to be fun."

Hansen will enter his senior season with 2,822 career passing yards, 15 touchdowns and 17 interceptions to his credit.

He hopes to be the starter and add to the yards and touchdowns in a major way.

He understands he will have to earn it, but he says that is nothing new either.

"I've really got to be a leader even more than I already have," Hansen said. "I've got to invest myself in the offense and really learn the offense pretty good because the old offense we had last year, I knew inside and out.

"I've got to be the same way with this offense. If I do that, I think I can have a pretty good shot at being a leader and a playmaker on this team."

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FEBRUARY 11, 2011, 2:06 PM

## CU 2011 recruiting class analysis: Brent Burnett

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

**BRENT BURNETTE**, QB, 6-3, 210, Western Arizona (Junior) College

**COACH JON EMBREE SAYS:** “Brent is a great fit for us. He already has played some (major-college) football (at Middle Tennessee State). He has that quiet confidence about him. He walks into a room like, ‘I’m the guy.’”

**WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW:** Burnette led Maryville (Tenn.) High School to a 60-0 record and four state championships. His 6,408 career passing yards ranks fifth all-time among prep players in Tennessee.

**MY TAKE:** Coaches do not sign junior college players to sit so I suspect that the Buffs staff believes Burnett will make a strong challenge to take away the starting job from incumbent senior Tyler Hansen. He’s certainly been a winner, including leading Arizona Western to a 10-2 record last fall. Burnett already is enrolled in CU classes and will participate in spring ball. That’s huge. Even if he does not beat out Hansen, CU desperately needed an experienced back-up.

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**<http://blogs.denverpost.com/sports/2011/02/11/cu-2011-recruiting-class-analysis-brent-burnett/15762/>**

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## All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

FEBRUARY 11, 2011, 10:04 AM

# CU 2011 recruiting class analysis: Kyle Washington

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments**KYLE WASHINGTON**, DB, 6-1, 200, Florence (Ariz.) HS

COACH JON EMBREE SAYS: “He’s very well put together, a great athlete. He’s also a very good basketball player. Whether he becomes a cornerback or a safety, we’re going to see where he fits in.”

WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW: Washington earned all-state mention as both a wide receiver and defensive back. He also excelled on kickoff and punt returns.

MY TAKE: Embree did precisely what he needed to do in scrambling for a [recruiting](#)<sup>[1]</sup> class. He sought out athletes. Plus-athleticism betters a player’s chances of making it, especially at the major-college level. We’ll see what happens with most lightly regarded players in this class, but a guy like Washington has put up some impressive numbers at the high school level: 43 career touchdowns, 3,000 career yards of offense, three interceptions as a senior. Perhaps he will become another Jalil Brown, another under-recruited Arizonan who signed with the Buffs. Brown will be drafted into the NFL in April.

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- [CU 2011 recruiting class analysis: Juda Parker](#)<sup>[2]</sup>
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## All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

FEBRUARY 11, 2011, 8:02 AM

# CU 2011 recruiting class analysis: K.T. Tuumalo

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments**K.T. TUUMALO**, LB, 6-2, 200, Honolulu Punahou HS

COACH JON EMBREE SAYS: “Here’s another kid that can run. He has great football instincts. He’s very physical. He’s going to have a great career for us.”

WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW: Punahou High is the alma mater of President Barack Obama.

MY TAKE: Embree likes to tell the story about how he almost tried to talk assistant coach Brian Cabral from going after this prospect because Tuumalo had given an oral commitment to Boise State and there wasn’t much time to change his mind. If Embree and Cabral are excited about this get, that’s good enough for me.

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## All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

FEBRUARY 10, 2011, 5:30 PM

# CU 2011 recruiting class analysis: Nelson Spruce

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

NELSON SPRUCE, WR, 6-2, 190, Westlake Village (Calif.) Westlake HS

COACH JON EMBREE SAYS: “He reminds me of (former Buff) John Minardi – he’s one of those kids that’s bigger than you think and faster than you think. He catches every ball with his hands. That means he plays even taller than he is.”

WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW: Also named all league in baseball as a sophomore (third baseman) and junior (shortstop).

MY TAKE: Receivers from metro Los Angeles always seem to be polished when they arrive. If he’s tough enough (and I have no reason to believe he isn’t), he could become the perfect replacement at slot receiver for departed record holder Scotty McKnight. Embree said several Pac-10 schools came in late on Spruce. That usually speaks volumes.

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## All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

FEBRUARY 10, 2011, 3:57 PM

# CU 2011 recruiting class analysis: Juda Parker

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

JUDA PARKER, DE, 6-2, 245, Honolulu St. Louis HS

COACH JON EMBREE SAYS: “He’s a kid that loves to play and loves to be in the weight room. A lot of Pac-10 schools wanted him.”

WHAT YOU MAY NOT KNOW: An uncle, Brian Norwood, is defensive coordinator at Baylor.

MY TAKE: Parker was ranked as the top prospect in the state of Hawaii by Rivals.com and No. 2 by Scout.com. I’ll take that every year, sight unseen, considering the Hawaiians’ love for the game. The fact that he showed up well in the prestigious Army High School All-American Game with six tackles, a fumble recovery and a blocked field goal tells me that he may have been underrated as a three-star prospect.

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 **[PRINT]** ESPN.com: Big 12

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Friday, February 11, 2011

## Getting to know Colorado

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By Ted Miller and David Ubben

Colorado is new to the Pac-12 but old to the Big 12, so it makes sense to check in with Big 12 blogger David Ubben to get his take on the state of the Buffaloes as they welcome new coach Jon Embree.

Just who are these Buffaloes? What are their strengths and weaknesses and how will they fit into the Pac-12, specifically the Pac-12 South?

We went looking for insights and Ubben obliged.

**Ted Miller:** Well, David you -- and the Big 12 -- have to say goodbye to Colorado, with the Buffaloes looking to their future out West in the Pac-12. First of all, give Pac-12 fans a CliffsNotes description of the state of the program. Things haven't gone so well in Boulder lately. Why?

**David Ubben:** Colorado is certainly in rebuilding mode as they kick off a new start under coach Jon Embree after firing Dan Hawkins in the middle of the 2010 season. They bring back two stars in quarterback [Tyler Hansen](#) and running back [Rodney Stewart](#). But fitting those guys into Embree's new system and greatly improving from their 5-7 record seems like asking a lot.

Hawkins came to Boulder promising big things but never delivered. As for why it didn't go well? Any number of reasons. One that angered fans is Hawkins' tendency to play less talented players who knew the system well over more talented players that maybe didn't have as solid of a grasp of what they wanted to do on the field. Embree has said he'll do essentially the opposite, so I guess that's a start in the eyes of fans.

**TM:** OK, let's look forward then. Tell Pac-12 folks about Embree, his new staff and the talent the Buffaloes have returning. What are strengths and what are question marks heading into the 2011 season?

**DU:** He's stocked his coaching staff with quite a few Buffaloes, but most of the names would be more recognizable as players. The biggest name is his offensive coordinator, former Buffs great [Eric Bieniemy](#), who spent the past few years coaching [Adrian Peterson](#) as the running backs coach at the [Minnesota Vikings](#). They also swiped Bobby Kennedy, a Boulder native, from Texas to coach receivers.

Last year, they ran the ball pretty well, and Stewart is back. He's a small, shifty back that seems way, way underrated. He rushed for more than 1,300 yards last year, and the only Big 12 backs who had more were [Daniel Thomas](#) and [Kendall Hunter](#), who should be drafted this year. They lose tackle Nate Solder, another first-round pick, but Ryan Miller is back, and he's an all-conference level guard.

The big question for them next season will be if their defense can stop the pass -- which my sources tell me, is pretty important in the Pac-12. Maybe not as important as in the Big 12, but still necessary for big success. Both corners from last year, Jalil Brown and Jimmy Smith, should be drafted. They weren't great at stopping the pass last year (9th in the Big 12) so it's hard to see them being better at it next year.

**TM:** OK. Good stuff. Let's wind it up. How would you have projected them in the Big 12 next fall? And do you have any feeling for how they might do in the new Pac-12 South?

**DU:** They definitely looked like a team in the bottom third of the Big 12 next year, and it seems like it'll be tough for them to finish in the top half of the Pac-12 South in 2011.

Right now, it's just about being competitive and maybe stealing a game or two that people didn't think they'd win. If that happens enough, a bowl game isn't out of the question. We don't have any idea what to expect out of an Embree-coached team, and that could be a good or a bad thing. We won't know for sure until next year, but if Embree can bottle up whatever Colorado had inside of them the way they played down the stretch last season after Hawkins was fired, it could be a real surprise 2011 for the Buffs.

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[ESPN.com: Big 12](#)[\[Print without images\]](#)

Friday, February 11, 2011

## What I'll miss about Colorado

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By David Ubben

Here's a few things I'll miss about Colorado next year when it begins play in the Pac-12.

**The view.** I live in Dallas, which, if you've ever been, is not the most mountainous of terrains. Colorado's campus, however, sits at the base of a Rocky Mountain peak, and you see plenty more mountains to your west just about everywhere you go in the city. It's easily the most picturesque campus in the Big 12.

**Ralphie.** Give me the big buff in a deathmatch between any Big 12 mascots. Before every game, Ralphie romps around Folsom Field with the help of his trainers, who keep him from getting too out of hand. Bevo down in Austin might get the press these days, but Ralphie's game day run is one of the best pregame traditions in college football.

**Pearl Street Mall.** Good luck finding another spot in the Big 12 that feels like Switzerland. If you've never been, Pac-12 fans, make sure to do it. There's pretty cool shops during the day, and it's the spot to be the night before games. Grab some dinner there when you make your first trek to Boulder.

**The drive from Denver to Boulder.** It's a short hop north, and if you've ever made it, you know what I mean. It's always a little jarring to be around the mountains at first after you fly into DIA, but once you reach the edge of the city, you're coming down the highway at the top of a hill that lets you see the city tucked next to the mountain. I've seen a lot of nothing driving through Texas, but making my way to Boulder is always one of my favorite trips.

So that's my list? What makes yours?

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