

RINGO: Embree's nature will serve him well

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/17/2011 11:38:12 PM MDT

Jon Embree is still looking forward to his first Saturday afternoon on the sidelines of Folsom Field as head coach of the Colorado football program. He is very much in the honeymoon period of his new job.

And he's not doing anything to ruin that despite confronting some difficult situations already.

Administrators privately wondered back in December whether Embree might hit some bumps in the road as he made the transition to being a head coach for the first time in his career, but they felt good about the man they were hiring.

No one handles every situation perfectly, and Embree is bound to have a bad day here and there, but during his first six months on the job, he has impressed many CU fans, faculty members, staffers and the men who hired him as being just the sort of CEO the program needed.

He has done so while exuding one of his most important characteristics.

He is about as down-to-earth as college football coaches come.

If he is able to retain that quality in the months and years ahead no matter the results his teams produce on the field, it will serve him well.

It is, after all, a big part of where his predecessor went wrong. Dan Hawkins didn't think he had to answer anyone's questions, at least not anyone outside his inner circle. It was five seasons of Father Knows Best.

Embree, to this point, has been willing to discuss any topic and offer his genuine perspective on each issue without a need to go off the record or speak in hushed tones. He can be charming but not in a contrived way. His answers make an impression and provide clues to who the real Jon Embree is and where he is coming from.

Just this week while discussing how he plans to change the schedule and structure of Colorado's summer football camps in the future, he noted that he plans to move camps for younger kids to weekends.

"I know what it's like when you've got one car in the house and both parents work," he said. "They can't get you here. It sucks when you miss out on something just because they can't get you there."

Embree was smart enough to realize there was only so much he could do initially. So he decided not to make major changes to camps this year, but he promises to put his stamp on them in the future. The Buffs are wrapping up camps today with the Saturday Night Lights camp that usually features a handful of the top prospects the program is recruiting.

CU also conducted two camps for youngsters, a big man camp, two skills camps and a kicking camp.

Embree said he hopes to move Colorado's camps back deeper into June next year. He said the Buffs recruit heavily on the West Coast and it only makes sense to give those players more of an opportunity to come to Boulder if they want to for camp.

Under the current system, several of CU's camps come too early for many California prospects to attend because they don't get out of school for the summer until the second or third week of June.

The nature of camps on each college campus around the nation varies widely. Some head coaches are very involved and spend a lot of time interacting with the kids and prospects who attend. Other coaches simply make an appearance, say a few words and pay most of their attention to the four-star defensive tackle they have been recruiting.

Embree said you can expect to see him on the field teaching.

"I want to make kids better," Embree said. "I don't look at just the sheer numbers because at some point you're not coaching them, you're babysitting them. There is that fine line. I want every kid to go away saying they learned something and they had fun."

Embree is facing one of the nation's toughest schedules this fall with 13 consecutive games without a bye week against 11 teams from Bowl Championship Series conferences and two respectable non-BCS opponents on the road and on a neutral field. One of them is rival Colorado State.

Just a guess here, but one or two of those bad days are bound to show up for Embree during those three months. But it's a safe bet Embree won't be decidedly different in the way he goes about doing his business a year from now, even if he struggles.

The man is comfortable with who he is and where he's going, and it shows.

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