

## Former Buff Terry Washington leads Ice into IFL playoffs

**By Joshua Linden**stein Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 06/26/2011 11:58:21 PM MDT

WINDSOR -- Terry Washington doesn't view his journey with the Colorado Ice as particularly unique. He always knew in his heart that he was a running back.

It's just that the former Colorado defensive back's days as a ball carrier appeared to end when he became a Buffalo.

A highly-touted two-way player out of St. Louis, Washington arrived in Boulder in 2005 via Garden City (Kan.) Community College and soon found himself playing only DB. Coach Gary Barnett's final team at CU had Hugh Charles locked in at tailback for an offense centered more around quarterback Joel Klatt's right arm. And when coach Dan Hawkins took over the next year, Washington had to stay on D where he became a regular as a senior.

Disappointed but not defeated by the lack of opportunity to run the ball at CU, Washington never stopped trying to sell himself as an offensive threat. Four and a half years later, he is dancing in indoor end zones on a regular basis for the Ice, hoping to parlay his success into a gig with a league where holding down a second job to pay the bills isn't necessary.

"Most definitely I'd rather carry the ball any day," Washington said after practice last week. "That's what I do.

"The Ice gave me the opportunity."

Now in his fourth season with the Ice -- a member of the 22-team Indoor Football League that plays its home games at the Budweiser Events Center in Loveland -- Washington is helping lead the squad into the first home playoff game in franchise history. The 11-3 Ice, which had a first-round bye, hosts the Tri-Cities Fever at 7 p.m. today in the Intense Conference semifinals.

The path from CU to now has been a long one filled with ups and downs for Washington.

After coming up empty in tryouts with the Washington Redskins and St. Louis Rams following his CU career, Washington caught on with his hometown River City Rage before finishing the 2008 IFL season with the Ice.

Catching the eye of scouts in the Canadian Football League and Arena Football League, he was leading the IFL in rushing midway through 2009 when he suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament that kept him sidelined until the final three games of last season.

A groin injury this season hampered him early but hasn't kept him from leading the team in touchdowns while sharing time in the backfield with former Mullen High star and one-time CU commit Maurice Greer. In his first real action of the season in Week 4, Washington rushed for 85 yards and scored four touchdowns to earn IFL Offensive Player of the Week honors, and he's flourished from there.

"I've never been afraid to let a guy show what he can do at another position," Ice head coach Collins Sanders said of bringing in Washington three years ago. "We never really considered anything other than running back for Terry."

Now Washington is hoping a deep playoff run can help him grab the attention of those scouts once again.

"Terry is one of those guys who has a legitimate shot based on what he's done," said Sanders, a Lafayette resident who has led the Ice since it began play in 2007.

Few IFL stars make it directly to the NFL. But the CFL, AFL and upstart United Football League are all viable options.

One advantage someone like Washington has, Sanders said, is the IFL's increased reliance on the running game vs. the pass-happy AFL, where restrictions on the defense make stopping the pass more difficult.

Making it in one of those other leagues is the ultimate goal for many of the IFL's players, who tend to be fresh out of college. As a fourth-year member of the Ice, Washington is one of the team's few veterans.

"These guys have a one or two-year window typically to make something happen," Sanders said. "If it doesn't happen it's time to potentially move on."

For players coming from Division-I college programs, the IFL is without many of the perks they're accustomed to. IFL players make \$225 per game plus housing and some meals. It's not much, but it's enough to give guys the opportunity to keep playing after college.

Still, most hold down other jobs to supplement their income.

Washington, who has been nominated for a league community service award, leaves practice each day and heads to work at Reflections for Youth group home in Loveland where he tries to help troubled teens get their lives back on track.

"I always go home and see kids on the streets and obviously I want to help out and do the best I can to help younger people who didn't have the opportunity I had," Washington said. "I just want to see if I can help them not walk the wrong path."

Washington said he would still like to return to CU at some point to finish his degree. But for the moment he's still running hard, hopeful that he'll get his football shot at the next level, whatever that may be.

"It's a great experience," Washington said of his stay with the Ice. "If it wasn't worth it, I wouldn't be out here bruising my body up."

**Underset=-00002**

Close Window

Send To Printer