

## Jon Embree ups intensity in 1st CU Buffs practice

Players respond positively to new Buffs coach, staff

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

Posted: 03/11/2011 11:54:22 PM MST



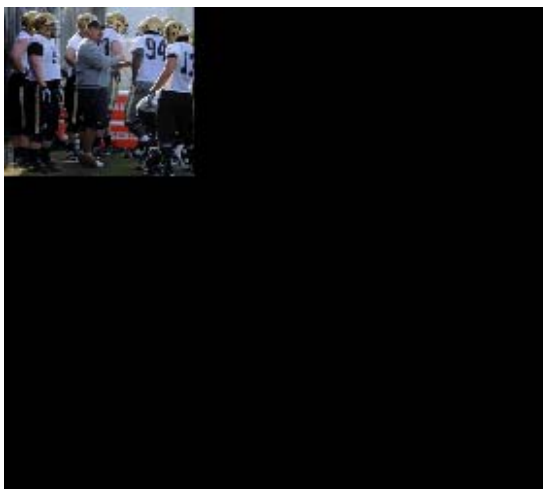
The

first day of Colorado spring football practices and coach Jon Embree's first official practice looked and sounded more like the first day of boot camp.

Picture a drill sergeant yelling at a recruit nose-to-nose, barking instructions and demanding more effort. Just about every coach on the new Colorado staff filled the role at one point or another Friday as the Buffs tried to overcome the nerves and uncertainty of new schemes, terminology, drills, voices and expectations.

Embree snapped his visor off his head a handful of times while yelling in frustration as players repeated mistakes or failed to hustle on and off the field.

When he huddled with reporters afterward, Embree joked that he was going to need some throat lozenges. He said he plans to be a hands-on coach and it showed in his first session leading the program.



Click on any photo to see full gallery

"That's the only way I know," Embree said. "I got to be me. I was like that as a position coach. I'm very demanding. I'm going to be on them. There is a standard and either you do or you don't. We can't bend or compromise it."

"There was times today where they wanted to hit a little lull and rest. That's where, as coaches, we have to keep the pressure on them to keep going."

No one was immune. When starting tailback Rodney Stewart fumbled an exchange with the quarterback, Embree yelled that he would throw the ball every down if Stewart couldn't take care of the ball. When another offensive player made several mistakes over a series of plays, Embree told him to stay on the defensive side of the ball because he didn't know what he was doing.

"For the record, it's intense," senior wide receiver Toney Clemons said. "But it's what we need. It feels good to have everything crisp, everything real militant and everything real professional. They're teaching us how to become young men and young football players and we're getting a feel for what the game is like on the next level. That's what you want. You want that high level coaching and we've got it here."

The yelling and screaming wasn't all negative. In fact, a lot of it was positive. When a player made the right decision, the right read or a nice catch, often one, two or even three coaches were there to congratulate them.

The response from several players in interviews afterward was the same. They didn't mind having a coach in their face, in part, because they know Embree and most of his assistants have coached in the NFL. It gives them the credibility to yell all they want.

"I thought the level of intensity was so much higher," redshirt freshman quarterback Nick Hirschman said. "It was a lot more enthusiastic and that makes it a lot more fun for the players and the coaches."

Whether the same decibel level and animation from these coaches continues remains to be seen. Perhaps they were simply trying to make sure they had players' attention. Maybe this will be the norm.

Linebacker Jon Major said the new CU staff is the most intense group of coaches he has ever been around. Major said the intensity of the first day of practice was nothing new from what players have experienced over the past few months in offseason conditioning and meetings.

"It's really attention to details, maximum effort and if you don't do it right, then you're going to do it again or you're going to get punished," he said. "That's definitely going to carry over I think in the fall."

## **Notable**

Junior Eric Richter has moved from offensive line to defensive line. Embree said Richter will provide a big body in the middle of the defense at times and he probably would have struggled to do some of what the offensive linemen will be asked to do because he lacks the athleticism. ... Redshirt freshman Justin Gorman is listed as a quarterback on the spring roster and depth chart, but he is practicing as a defensive back. ... Kyle Cefalo served as holder on field goal attempts by Justin Castor. The Buffs will be trying to identify their holder in spring ball and fall camp. ... Two new names are listed on the roster handed out at practices. They are linebacker Alec Parker and defensive end Andre Nichols. ... Former coach Dan Hawkins used to gripe about the lack of lighting on the CU practice fields. CU had portable lights powered by generators in place Friday, but they weren't tall enough to be very effective when the sun went down. With the clocks moving forward by an hour this weekend, the need for lights should be curtailed the rest of spring.

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu football

## Embree makes hands-on approach clear

By John Henderson  
The Denver Post

Posted: 03/12/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

**BOULDER** — You didn't have to go to Jon Embree's first spring football practice Friday to see the different atmosphere surrounding Colorado football.

You could've heard it.

Embree made it clear he'll be a hands-on coach. Make that loud and clear. Embree could be heard — maybe from the Flatirons — yelling at the defense during 7-on-7 drills, "DON'T LET THEM COMPLETE IT!" and "TASTE THE BALL!"

He laid into redshirt freshman quarterback Nick Hirschman for throwing the ball out of bounds on a second-and-4 when he could've run for the first down. And if you see a junior-college transfer walking around campus today with nostril hairs singed, it's Brent Burnette, who threw two interceptions, fumbled a

snap and fumbled after a run.

"I'm going to have to get some throat lozenges," Embree said.

After five consecutive losing seasons, no CU player questioned Embree's methods. Disposed Dan Hawkins had his moments but it was mostly "here and there," linebacker Jon Major said.

"It's pretty awesome," Major said. "And it's the most minuscule details too. It's not just out here. It was every workout. If he didn't think somebody was running hard enough, he'd start the whole thing over again."

Embree is coming from a totally opposite space than Hawkins did. As an alum, Embree is embarrassed about the last five years. As a former tight end coach for the Washington Redskins, he's a teacher.

He won't sit in a tower watching practice.

"That's the only way I know," Embree said. "I've got to be me. I was like that as a position coach. I'm very demanding. I'm going to be on them. There's going to be a standard. You either do or you don't, and we can't bend or compromise it."

One problem: He has some players who haven't voted more than twice. Some have never played a down of major college football. In Kansas City, he had future Hall of Famer Tony Gonzalez and in Washington he had Donovan McNabb throwing to the tight ends.

How patient can Embree be? How patient can he afford to be with a schedule featuring seven

Advertisement

### Get a **FREE** ADT-Monitored Home Security System.\*

(With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. See important terms and conditions below.)

\*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new SecurityChoice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. \*\*\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by SecurityChoice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-467-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.

**Call Now!**  
**1-877-835-8373**



Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

bowl teams, not counting Southern California?

"I'm taking the same approach because skill has nothing to do with effort," Embree said. "That's what I've hammered on these guys. It's about effort. You're going to make mistakes. You're going to get beat. Yeah, I don't have Tony Gonzalez out here but that has nothing to do with effort."

The Buffs practiced in shorts and helmets, but Embree had the defense try stripping the ball on every play.

Colorado finished 10th in the Big 12 in forced turnovers with 19.

"People don't finish," Embree said. "They assume the play's over. They assume the game's won. Just like they thought Kansas was done. Then you fool around and get beat. You finish."

## Footnote.

Embree announced two position changes. Freshman Justin Gorman was moved from quarterback to defensive back, and junior Eric Richter was moved from offensive line to defensive line.

*John Henderson: 303-954-1299 or  
[jhenderson@denverpost.com](mailto:jhenderson@denverpost.com)*

## Advertisement



**DIRECTV has more of what you want  
to watch!**

**Switch today! 1-888-778-0985**



Offer ends 2/9/11. Credit card required (except in MA & PA). New approved customers only (lease required). \$19.95 Handling & Delivery fee may apply. Applicable use tax adjustment may apply on the retail value of the installation. Call for details.

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™