

First chance to see Embree`s Buffs limited

Public to have access to five spring sessions

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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First-year Colorado football coach Jon Embree is adopting a more restrictive access policy to spring practices than existed through most of former coach Dan Hawkins` tenure.

Sports information director Dave Plati distributed a practice schedule to media members Thursday showing five of the 15 spring practice sessions will be open to the public and the media.

The other 10 sessions will be closed to both, but Plati said some of those sessions could be declared open at a later date.

Spring practices were generally open to the media and often the public as well during the past five years.

Hawkins closed practices after the first week of spring ball two years ago after detailed practice reports began appearing on fan websites.

Plati also said that morning practices adopted by the program under Hawkins last fall are a thing of the past and the program plans to return to late afternoon practices next fall.

Fans who want to make sure to see the Buffs this spring can do so during the first three practices of spring March 11-13.

During two of those three sessions, the team will be in shorts and helmets only. The third day they will be in pads with no tackling.

Fans can return to see how the Buffs have progressed on April 2 when the program will hold its only scrimmage prior to the spring game April 9, which is the final session open to media and the public.

The spring game will be played at night this year, an idea Embree came up with in hopes of attracting more fans and local prep athletes.

Athletic director Mike Bohn said there are some additional plans for enhancements to this year`s spring game that haven`t been finalized.

Two leave team

Freshman running back Trea Jones and defensive tackle Eugene Goree, who would have been a fifth-year senior next fall, have quit the team.

Jones, a product of Wake Forest, N.C., was a member of the 2010 recruiting class and redshirted last fall.

Goree played in 10 games in his redshirt freshman and sophomore seasons but only got into three games as a junior last season for a total of six plays. He made one tackle.

Anniversary celebrations

planned

Colorado will honor the 2001 Big 12 Conference title team during the Sept. 10 home opener against Cal.

The program held a similar weekend dedicated to the 1990 national championship team last fall for the 20th anniversary of

its milestone win.

CU will also honor the 1961 Big Eight Conference championship team three weeks later during its first official Pac-12 home game against Washington State.

The game against Cal is considered a nonconference game because it is the second half of a home-and-home series scheduled before the Buffs switched conferences.

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CU Buffs standardize donation policy for season tickets

Some had been exempt since plan was originally introduced in 2004

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

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LOUISVILLE -- The University of Colorado is standardizing its donor seating program for season tickets to Buffs football games in Folsom Field and will require all season-ticket holders in premium seating areas to participate this year.

However, there will still be some areas of the stadium where fans can purchase season tickets without a required donation, and the cost of tickets in those sections is going down.

Colorado introduced its donor seating program in 2004, requiring season-ticket holders to make donations between \$50 and \$300 per ticket depending on their seat location. The donations were in addition to the regular cost of the tickets.

Some fans complained bitterly and in early 2005 the Board of Regents postponed implementation of the program, despite the fact that more than 60 percent of season-ticket holders had already agreed to it months before the season started.

The school then provided a waiver to approximately 1,200 customers or 20 percent of the season-ticket base, many of whom are its longest tenured accounts, permitting them to keep their season tickets without paying the donation for three years.

The school later extended the waiver two additional years prior to the 2009 season.

Athletic director Mike Bohn mailed letters earlier this week to season-ticket holders outlining season-ticket costs for the 2011 season.

Those 1,200 customers who were benefiting from the waiver will receive an additional letter explaining that donations of between \$25 and \$300 would now be mandatory to retain seats in premium locations.

"It's a little too early to tell," Bohn said when asked today what feedback the department has received from the move. "We anticipate that the fact that we gave them a three-year commitment initially and we extended it to five that they will have an appreciation for that."

Bohn said the department also made calls to some of the most vocal detractors of the program in the past informing them the change was coming.

"We anticipate it not being well received by everybody," Bohn said. "But we anticipate a vast majority to be supportive."

Bohn said the change would result in \$350,000 in new donations to the department if 100 percent of those affected decided to participate.

Tom Lyons, a season-ticket holder since 2000, said he pays for two season tickets each year and has paid the donation of \$200 per seat since its inception.

He used to have six tickets but has cut down in recent years. Lyons is in favor of the change because he believes it is fair to everyone. He said he sits in a section where some fans pay the donation and others don't.

"My complaint, if you want to call it that, is that I believe the price is the price," Lyons said in an email. "Everyone should pay the same price for the same ticket."

Even with the changes announced Thursday, there will still be one section in Folsom Field with some inequities.

CU faculty, staff and former letterwinners can purchase season tickets in section 220 without paying a donation, while fans with no such ties to the school who already have seats in that section will have to continue paying the donation.

The Camera erroneously reported in Thursday's edition that no one in section 220 would have to pay a donation.

Faculty, staff and former letterwinners who currently have seats in sections 217, 218 and 219 and don't want to pay donations for their seats can move to section 220 and not have a donation.

Donor seating programs have become the norm in the past decade in college athletics, so much so that Bohn said Colorado is currently the only Big 12 or Pac 12 school that doesn't also have a donor seating program with its men's basketball program at the Coors Events Center.

In addition to the changes to the donor seating program, Bohn announced season-ticket prices for 2011 are being reduced in 60 percent of the areas dedicated to season ticket holders around the stadium.

Ticket cost will rise by \$7 per seat in some of the most popular and most expensive areas, such as the lower bowl at midfield.

CU sold slightly more than 21,000 season tickets in the 2010 season and Bohn said his target for 2011 is no fewer than 25,000. The school record is 30,076.

"I will be extremely disappointed if we don't exceed that," Bohn said. "With the strength of our schedule, with the excitement of a new coach and with a very exciting team coming and lots of marquee players, we anticipate having a strong push past 25,000."

Bohn said excitement for the new coaching staff led by head coach Jon Embree as well as the school joining a new conference has already generated deposits on 500 new season-ticket accounts.

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colorado football

Cal remains on CU's football schedule as nonleague game

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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SUPERIOR — If Colorado doesn't have the nation's most challenging nonconference football schedule in 2011, CU athletic director Mike Bohn said Thursday he would like to see a more demanding one.

During a "roundtable" meeting with reporters, Bohn made it official that California will remain as the opponent for Colorado's Sept. 10 home date. It will be designated a nonconference game, although CU and Cal will be co-members of the new Pac-12 Conference beginning this summer when CU and Utah expand the current Pac-10.

California will join Hawaii (Sept. 3 in Honolulu), Colorado State (Sept. 17 at Denver's Invesco Field at Mile High) and Ohio State (Sept. 24 in Columbus) on Colorado's 2011 nonconference

slate.

"It's going to be exciting for our fans," Bohn said.

Colorado will have only five home games this season instead of the customary six.

CU played at Cal last season, and this year's matchup is the return game of a previously scheduled home-and-home nonconference series. After the Pac-12 was announced in June, both teams attempted to find different opponents for that game but were unsuccessful, Bohn said.

"The good thing is that under the Pac-12 scheduling formula, Cal and Stanford are the teams that Colorado will play less frequently, so facing Cal will be good for our fans," Bohn said.

"Our goal this season is 25,000 season-ticket holders. I'll be extremely disappointed if we don't exceed that number. We have some great games on the schedule and there is a lot of excitement over new coach Jon Embree and the staff he put together."

Approximately 21,000 season tickets were sold in 2010. The school record is 30,000 season tickets for the 1976 season.

Other topics discussed Thursday include:

- Bohn announced new prices for football season tickets. Several seating sections will include increases in the required Buff Club donations (ranging from \$25 to \$300 per seat) that are in

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addition to the price of the tickets. Otherwise, ticket prices will be lower in at least 60 percent of the stadium, Bohn said.

"We anticipate this will not be well received by everybody," Bohn said. "But it's a way to increase donations and have those people feel good about that without raising the prices of all seats. It's the norm across the country."

- Bohn said Colorado has made "significant and aggressive bids" to host NIT and WNIT games this month if the CU men's and women's basketball teams fail to earn bids to the NCAA Tournaments. Either could earn automatic bids by winning the Big 12 Tournament, but that's considered a longshot at best.

- The 7 p.m. CU men's home basketball game Saturday against Nebraska is officially a sellout. That will be the fifth of the season, a record for the Coors Events Center (11,064) that opened in 1979. CU will average about 9,800 fans per conference game this season, a school record surpassing the 9,147 average set in 1984.

- Booster donations to the athletic department are up \$300,000 from this time a year ago. "Our future is bright," Bohn said. "We just need to keep moving forward."

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

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