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When in doubt, Colorado Buffs schedule up in Pac-12

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Here's what the program that schedules better nonconference games than any other did when the opportunity arose to add an exempt, 13th game this fall.

Colorado scheduled a game at Ohio State. With no return game in the future.



Photo)

Colorado scheduled a game at Ohio State. With no return game in the future. (AP

"From top to bottom," says new Colorado coach Jon Embree, "there aren't going to be any weeks off."

This is how the nation's best program at scheduling nonconference games works: When in doubt, schedule up. Now that CU has moved to the Pac-12, it's a perfect fit.

The conference that annually plays better non-league games than any other, now has the program that set the standard. A breakdown of the Pac-12's nonconference schedules:

First to worst

Colorado: at Hawaii, California, Colorado State (Denver), at Ohio State.

UCLA: at Houston, San Jose State, Texas

USC: Minnesota, Syracuse, at Notre Dame

Arizona State: UC-Davis, Missouri, at Illinois

Oregon: LSU (Dallas), Nevada, Missouri State

Oregon State: Sacramento State, at Wisconsin, BYU

Utah: Montana State, at BYU, at Pittsburgh

Washington: Eastern Washington, Hawaii, at Nebraska.

Stanford: San Jose State, at Duke, Notre Dame

Arizona: Northern Arizona, at Oklahoma State, Louisiana-Lafayette

California: Fresno State, at Colorado, Presbyterian

Washington State: Idaho State, UNLV, at San Diego State

The scoreboard

Games against BCS teams: 15 of 37 possible (41 percent)

Games against non-BCS teams: 14 of 37 possible (38 percent)

Games against FCS teams: 8 of 37 possible (21 percent)

Vs. BCS Conferences (2 of 6 conferences analyzed)

Games against BCS teams: ACC (44 percent); Pac-12 (41 percent); Big 12 (30 percent).

Games against non-BCS teams: Big 12 (50 percent); ACC (48 percent); Pac-12 (38 percent).

Games against FCS teams: ACC (27 percent); Pac-12 (21 percent); Big 12 (20 percent).

Five best games

Sept. 3: Oregon vs. LSU (Dallas)

Sept. 10: Arizona at Oklahoma State

Sept. 17: Washington at Nebraska

Sept. 17: Texas at UCLA

Nov. 26: Stanford at Notre Dame

Five worst games

Sept. 1: UC-Davis at Arizona State

Sept. 3: Sacramento State at Oregon State

Sept. 3: Idaho State at Washington State

Sept. 17: Presbyterian at California

Sept. 17: Missouri State at Oregon

Sept. 1: UC-Davis at Arizona State

Quick hits

— A quick look at how Colorado's 2011 nonconference schedule evolved: Before the Buffs moved from the Big 12 to the Pac-12, they were still owed a home game from California as part of a home-and-home series. Instead of getting rid of that game because of the new conference affiliation, CU asked the Pac-12 if the Cal game could be counted as a non-con game. In other words, a league game that doesn't count against the league record.

The Ohio State game came about because the Buffs scheduled a game at Hawaii, which gave Colorado the ability to add an extra, exempt game. Instead of adding a rent-a-win, the Buffs added a game at Ohio State with no return game. The Buffs will get \$2 million (from Ohio State and television contracts) to play the game.

— The Pac-12 added two teams with a strong history of playing tough nonconference schedules. In the last five years alone, Utah has played UCLA (twice), Oregon State (twice), Michigan, Oregon, Boise State and Notre Dame. This year's schedule — including at Pitt and at BYU — is another strong effort.

— Of the Pac-12's 15 games against BCS teams, eight are road games and one is at a neutral site (Oregon vs. LSU at Dallas) that will play like a road game. All nine games are an opportunity for the new Pac-12 to make an immediate statement. None, however, are bigger than these five: Oregon vs. LSU; Washington at Nebraska; Arizona at Oklahoma State; Oregon State at Wisconsin; Colorado at Ohio State.

— Because of an odd pairing in last year's Holiday Bowl, Washington and Nebraska will play three times in 364 days. They played in Seattle on Sept. 18, 2010, and then a rematch in the Holiday Bowl on Dec. 30, 2010. They'll play this season in Lincoln on Sept. 18.

Comments



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Monday, May 16, 2011

Can Jimmy Smith win DROY?

By James Walker

[Character issues aside](#), the [Baltimore Ravens](#) are getting some praise for drafting former Colorado cornerback [Jimmy Smith](#) at No. 27 overall. On the field Baltimore is getting a potential top-10 talent at an important position late in the first round.

Add Matt Williamson of Scouts Inc. to the list of experts who like the pick. [Williamson recently tweeted](#) Smith has the potential to win Defensive Rookie of the Year in 2011. This week we caught up with Williamson to explain.

Matt, break down your recent prediction that Smith will win Defensive Rookie of the Year honors.



Smith

Williamson: I'm uncharacteristically backtracking a little, but I will tell you why. I think with Jimmy Smith, when you think about the Defensive Rookie of the Year, cornerbacks rarely win that honor. If you're a great corner, people stop throwing at you. So it will probably be difficult for Smith to win that award. But I did say afterward that I think Smith will have the best rookie season of any defensive player, and I mean that. He's not going to get a ton of tackles, he's not going to get many sacks and interceptions are tough to count on. So to say that a corner is going to win Defensive Rookie of Year isn't a real smart thing to say. But I love the fit. I think he will immediately be their No. 1 corner. He's the [Chris McAlister](#)-type they needed. He had no business lasting that long in the draft. I don't worry about the character stuff, especially in his first year when he's trying to impress everybody and get acclimated in that locker room.

The Ravens made an interesting point that Smith will help their pass rush. In what ways can that happen?

Williamson: If the Ravens can trust Smith, they can bring another linebacker or a safety blitz or the opposite corner without a lot of fear. They can put Smith on the No. 1 receiver and he's going to do pretty well. And, by the way, Baltimore also has [Ed Reed](#) roaming around and eliminating any other issues. So, yeah, I don't think Baltimore is loaded with pass-rushers. But Smith will very much help the pass rush.

Finally, what are your thoughts on the [Nnamdi Asomugha](#) comparisons? Fair or too much too soon?

Williamson: Comparisons are rough. In general I'm not a fan of them, because no one compares these players to somebody bad. [Mark Ingram](#) is the next [Emmitt Smith](#). Well, Emmitt Smith has rushed for more yards than anybody ever, and Nnamdi is the second-best corner in the league. Does Jimmy Smith have that kind of ability? I would say yes. I think he is more physically gifted than [Prince Amukamara](#) and he's right there with [Patrick Peterson](#) as the most gifted corners in this draft. He has the size, the speed, the hips -- he really has it all. So in terms of just physical gifts, putting Smith against Nnamdi, they're not that far off.