

## CU's Kirkwood gets call to kick

Sophomore playing football for first time

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

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When sophomore Marcus Kirkwood trots on the field to attempt the first field goal or extra point of the day Saturday for the Colorado football team, it will be the first time he has played in a football game in his life.

Kirkwood grew up playing plenty of the other kind of football. It's also known as soccer. He was a midfielder.

He attended Faith Christian High School in Arvada where he earned three letters each in basketball and soccer as a member of two state championship soccer teams. He played one year of college soccer at Concordia College in Portland, Ore., in 2007 before deciding to come home and finish college in Boulder.

Kirkwood is the tallest kicker in CU history at 6-foot-6 and also will be the first left-footed place-kicker in recent memory at the school. Longtime sports information director Dave Plati couldn't identify another lefty who has played the position in the past 20 years and said it might have been as far back as the 1970s since CU had a lefty place-kicker.

In case you're wondering, backup quarterback Cody Hawkins is the holder on field goals and extra points regardless of which foot the kicker uses. Hawkins is adept at holding from both sides.

Kirkwood walked on to the team in the second half of last season when CU held open tryouts because veteran place-kicker Aric Goodman was struggling. Kirkwood has worked on the art of place-kicking in the months since and said he won't be overwhelmed when the moment arrives Saturday.

"Being able to channel those emotions is a huge piece of things," Kirkwood said. "Games are just like practice. It's the

exact same thing, exact same players on the field doing their job. If you can channel that, then things are going to fall just the way they do at practice. I would say that's definitely the biggest piece of things."

Kirkwood is getting his opportunity this week after the Buffs struggled again in the kicking game last week. Goodman missed another field goal and is now 16 of 36 in his career. Coaches burned true freshman Justin Castor's redshirt, despite the fact that Kirkwood made the trip to Missouri. Castor said he succumbed to his nerves a little bit when his first college field goal attempt came unexpectedly and he hit the ball too low. He hopes to get another opportunity.

Kirkwood hopes he does well enough to keep the job from this point on. He said he believes he can fill the consistency void that has been a problem for the Buffs for more than two years now.

"I feel great," Kirkwood said. "I feel incredibly confident. I'm just going to bring it on the field and do what I do every day. You know, don't think about things too much."

The inability to make field goals is a problem that has become an increasing source of frustration to players and coaches and has some fans downright mad. Leaders such as quarterback Tyler Hansen and wide receiver Scotty McKnight called out the place-kickers this week saying they need to raise their level of play.

McKnight said he is hoping Kirkwood is the answer.

"He's a good buffzer. He's consistent, he's done well dating back to August and the scrimmages," McKnight said. "I don't think he has as big a leg as Justin and Aric, but he has been fairly accurate. So hopefully he goes out there and makes them. He's made them in practice."

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## Bufs' Herrod up for courage award

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

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Colorado senior defensive end Marquez Herrod has been nominated for the 2010 Discover Orange Bowl Courage Award given annually to a college football player or team who has displayed courage on or off the field.

The Camera first told Herrod's story in 2006 when he was completing his senior year of high school in Southern California where he grew up in the care of a single mother who was struggling with mental illness.

Herrod and his mother were homeless at times and Herrod spent parts of his childhood living in foster homes and in the state system before eventually finding a football coach and a young married couple who helped him get to college and a better life.

Read the Camera's 2006 story about Herrod [HERE](#).

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## CU Buffs' vertical passing game must be invisible

By John Henderson  
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — Speed may kill, but at Colorado, it doesn't even bruise.

Those speedy new wide receivers you read about all offseason haven't galloped out of town. All of those transfers — Toney Clemons from Michigan, Travon Patterson from Southern California and Paul Richardson from UCLA — are still around.

You just have to pay close attention to them. Don't look for them galloping down the sideline or whisking across the field on a post pattern. Chances are they're catching quick outs, waiting in the flat or running intermediate patterns.

CU's vertical passing game is almost nonexistent. Considering speed at wide receiver is arguably the Buffaloes' biggest improvement this year, it's curious that the three newcomers are almost candidates for the back of a milk carton.

"We're so focused on the running game and controlling the clock, we haven't taken more shots," quarterback Ty-ler Hansen said. "I think we need to change up our tendencies a little bit because defenses are starting to — Missouri, at least — figure us out."

Defenses have outsmarted Colorado (3-2, 0-1 Big 12) to only 18.2 points per game, last in the Big 12 and 107th in the country, right below Ball State. How much is that due to the lack of a vertical passing game can't be quantified, but numbers indicate it's more horizontal than vertical:

- Colorado averages only 9.9 yards per completion, ahead of only Iowa State's 9.8 in the Big 12.
  - Not one Buffalo is in the league's top 10 in receiving yards. Old reliable Scotty McKnight, the school's all-time leading receiver, leads with 50 yards a game, down from 74.4 a year ago.
  - Colorado has only three completions longer than 27 yards: a 73-yarder in which Clemons turned an intermediate route into a long TD run against Hawaii, Will Jefferson's 46-yard catch against Georgia and a 35-yarder to Brian Lockridge, a tailback.
  - Richardson, the undisputed star of August camp, has all of five receptions for 37 yards.
- "I'd love to launch the football as much as the next guy but you've got to play off where your team's at and move from there," coach Dan



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Hawkins said. "We've taken a few shots and we haven't hit them."

The wide receivers are getting antsy. The Buffaloes have tried to establish an identity as a power running team even though tailback Rodney Stewart is 5-feet-6 and 175 pounds.

He's averaging 98.6 yards per game, and the Buffs ran well in wins over Hawaii and Georgia. Yet having to throw after falling behind at California and Missouri, the deep threat wasn't there.

"We're just trying to make our running game a big threat and that will open up the passing game," Richardson said. "But I know even when we do no-huddle, when we speed the game up and keep the ball in the air, the offense flows. We're just waiting for all the pieces to fall in."

That has been a problem.

Hansen had no time against California, which sacked him six times. In the first half of Saturday's 26-0 loss at Missouri, CU's longest completion was 15 yards, not counting the meaningless 23-yarder to McKnight to end the half.

Colorado did try a long pass in the first quarter, but that came from its own 1-yard line and turned into an intentional grounding for a safety.

"The (safety) just sniffed it out," McKnight said. "It's tough, but if you hit it, that's money. It's a 99-yard touchdown. When the play was called,

everyone in the huddle was like, 'Great idea.' If you watch on film, their safeties play super low and they were nose for the run."

Offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said the offense's identity changes week to week. So pigskins may fly, possibly starting Saturday against visiting Baylor (4-2, 1-1).

"We've been trying to get down the field," Kiesau said. "In fact, the last game we threw four or five. We had deeper routes going but we went underneath because it was open."

"There's no conscious effort to not throw deep. We want to. It's just got to be the right timing."

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

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