



Travis Sandersfeld (19) stepped in admirably after Parker Orms went down against CSU and will net his first start Saturday at Cal.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



09/10/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Brooks: Buffs View Cal As A Proving Ground

BOULDER - Pretend Saturday is Season Opener No. 2 and you'll get no argument from the Colorado Buffaloes. Probably won't hear a whimper from the California Golden Bears, either. For both schools, Week 2 smacks of Week 1 revisited. It's *déjà vu* all over again, Yogi.

CU officially opened the 2010 football season last Saturday with what quickly turned into a 24-3 rout of Colorado State. Ho-hum. The Buffs won by three touchdowns but left points on the field and questions in many minds - including their own.

Cal, meanwhile, dipped into the next level down, found UC-Davis and buried the Aggies 52-3. Yawn. Lots of points scored, lots of personnel used, lots of high fives traded . . . and lots of unanswered questions in the aftermath.

Same this week in Berkeley as it was in Boulder, which promises to make CU's visit to Cal Saturday

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(1:30 p.m. MDT, FSN) more of an afternoon answer session than the question-fest the Buffs and the Bears produced in Week 1.

Both teams hope to establish who they are and where they're going - information not readily available following their openers.

"This is one that we can prove to everyone that we're not playing around this year . . . I think our team is very hungry for this one," CU senior cornerback Jimmy Smith said.

"No disrespect to CSU, but it's going to be our first challenge of the year," Smith's position coach, Ashley Ambrose, said. "We just have to be prepared - and that's what we've been doing all week. It's going to be a big test."

Added Smith: "We know the offense we went against last week isn't nearly as good as the offense we go up against this week, or is as experienced. I think everybody's really buying into being prepared and working hard for this game - even more than the first game."

Ambrose's group figures to be among the key elements in whatever transpires in Cal's Memorial Stadium. The Buffs secondary - corners Smith and Jalil Brown, safeties Ray Polk and Anthony Perkins, nickelback Travis Sandersfeld - will be matched against a Bears receiving corps that bears no resemblance to the Rams.

Junior Marvin Jones and freshman Keenan Allen combined for nine catches for 201 yards and a touchdown each against UCD. Jones is 6-foot-2, Allen 6-3, offering significant targets for fifth-year senior quarterback Kevin Riley, who passed for 258 yards (14-of-20) and three TDs in the non-competitive opener.

Ambrose feels comfortable enough with his group as a whole to not assign one of them to cover Allen, whose college debut produced four catches for 120 yards, including a 48-yard TD reception. He also ran 18 yards for a score.

"The freshman (Allen) is a 'baller' . . . if he does everything right, he'll be playing on Sundays," Ambrose said. "He's got a great frame, can run and is very elusive. Over the last few years, Cal has had good receivers. And they're solid this year."

But Ambrose says the same about his secondary. If Allen is split left, Brown will cover him. If he lines up on the right side, Smith takes him.

"It's whoever comes to you . . . it's not about a matchup," Ambrose said. "We feel like we've got two guys (Smith and Brown). Whoever comes outside on whatever side, we'll just cover him."

"We're going to play them straight up," Smith said. "We're physical up front and we've got DBs who can stay with their receivers. If (Allen) is on the left side, he'll get pressed on that side; if he's on the right side, he'll get pressed there. We're not going to switch sides or anything like that.

"We've seen receivers like (Allen and Jones) in the Big 12. They definitely have talent, but we're up to the challenge."

It will be the type of challenge that would allow Smith (6-3) and Brown (6-2) to justify their

preseason recognition as possibly the best corner tandem in the Big 12. Ambrose believes they are, but remains mindful that proof must be offered every week.

"We've got outstanding athletes out on the edge . . . two guys who can play football and play man on anybody," Ambrose said.

CU lost promising redshirt freshman Parker Orms in the opener to a season-ending knee injury. Orms was replaced by Sandersfeld, a former walk-on who earned a scholarship in his third year. Saturday will be his first start.

Subbing for Orms in the first quarter, Sandersfeld quickly underscored his coaches' daily reminders that all backups must be ready to play. He made four tackles (two solo, one for loss), had a pair of third-down and made an acrobatic sideline interception. And he kept mistakes at a minimum.

"For a guy to step in and not have many mistakes - a couple at the most - he came in and did a great job," Ambrose said. "I want to see him play and do it again this week."

Smith wasn't surprised that Sandersfeld, a junior, responded when called upon.

"There's a little bit of a drop-off between our ones and twos, but not that much," Smith said. "I think him catching on to everything fast when he came into the game just shows that . . . he can make plays."

Early on at CU, Sandersfeld lined up wherever he was needed on the defense, playing linebacker, corner and safety. Learning those positions increased his overall knowledge and understanding of the schemes.

"He's like a backup at every position for us . . . he probably could play noseguard," Ambrose said.

At 6-2, 205, that's unlikely, but if asked he'd try. Emulating another former Limon product, quarterback-turned-safety Tom Hubbard, Sandersfeld recalled when he arrived in Boulder, "I was willing to do anything to be on the team. That's what it was all about - doing what I could do to help."

He was pleased but well short of satisfied with his play after Orms was injured. Ambrose has pinpointed the errors and Sandersfeld has taken note of what needs to be corrected before facing Cal's speedy offense.

"We've got good speed, too," Sandersfeld said. "Jimmy, Jalil, Ray, 'Perk' - we've got some guys out there. And we've got some big guys. I just feel like we have to do what we can do - stop the run, the pass and don't allow big plays. That's what killed us last year - the big, explosive plays."

Neither has the road been friendly to the Buffs; they own a 2-19 road record since 2005, with their most recent win on another campus coming in 2007 at Texas Tech. The losing streak in true road games stands at 12.

Smith, Brown and their fellow seniors contend this team is different, though, citing more experience, focus and a desire to end the streak.

"There's a lot of leaders on this team - guys who create a spark," Brown said. "We're more confident, but we all realize we've got to bring it."

BUFF BITS: CU could have one of its largest fan blocks for a road game in recent years. With the 4,000-ticket allotment taken by mid-August, officials say as many as 7,000 Buffs fans could be in Memorial Stadium . . . CU will have a 44-member pep band in attendance . . . Saturday's weather forecast calls for sunny skies and temperatures in the mid-70s . . . Ambrose interviewed with coach Jeff Tedford for a job at Cal in 2006, but for family reasons instead signed on as a defensive intern with the Atlanta Falcons . . . Ragged/smooth: CU was penalized 10 times for 104 yards in its opener, Cal four times for 30 yards in its first game . . . Short/sweet: The Buffs (60) and Rams (58) combined for 118 plays last weekend, the third-lowest total since 1965. As a result, the game required only 2:49 to play - CU's first sub-3-hour game since 2006 (2:55 vs. Iowa State) . . . The CU-Cal series is tied 2-2, with the Bears winning the most recent meeting 31-17 on Sept. 11, 1982 in Boulder . . . Cal is 15-20-1 against Big 12 competition, CU is 38-34-1 vs. the Pac-10 . . . The Bears are 34-6 at home since 2003. The only teams to defeat Cal at home during that time are Oregon State and Southern California . . . CU's roster includes 25 Californians, Cal's roster includes three Coloradans - senior offensive lineman Chris Guarnero (Mullen), redshirt freshman defensive back Alex Logan (Mullen) and freshman quarterback Austin Hinder (Steamboat Springs) . . . CU's home opener is Sept. 18 vs. Hawaii, which plays at Army Saturday. Rather than returning to the islands before coming to Colorado, the Warriors will spend next week in Las Vegas. The two-game road trip will last 12 days and cover over 11,000 miles. Hawaii lost its opener, 49-36, to USC.

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SHOW MENU



CU Buffs aim to hurdle road woes today at Cal

Optimistic Buffs take on talented Bears

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/11/2010 12:04:10 AM MDT

BERKELEY, Calif. -- Frontier Airlines flight 653 landed at San Francisco International Airport on Friday just after 10 a.m., carrying dozens of Colorado football fans who launched into the school fight song when the wheels hit the pavement.

Nerd alert.

Maybe to some, but it was a demonstration of the optimism that has infected the program and its supporters in the past week after a cakewalk victory over rival Colorado State to start the season.

It was a scene Tyler Hansen would like to replicate tonight when the team's charter flight leaves Oakland. Hansen even mentioned the scenario earlier this week when talking about today's game at Cal and the program's struggles to win on the road.

But before the Buffs can enjoy any celebration, the junior starting quarterback will have to lead his team to its first road win since October 2007 at Texas Tech. The Buffs have lost 12 straight on the road and have never won a true road game in Hansen's career.

"To go on road games and fall short most every time is really rough," Hansen said. "I tell you what, that plane ride home is no fun. We always want to sing the fight song in the plane coming home and we haven't done that in a while."

Yet, the Buffs are feeling good about themselves and their chances against the high-powered Bears, and so are their fans. More than 7,000 of them are expected to attend today's contest between future conference rivals. Colorado is slated to leave the Big 12 and join the Pac-10 no later than 2012.

"I'm sure you will still have the overwhelming support for them," coach Dan Hawkins said. "But it will be nice for our guys to have a little sliver of support in there."

Maybe a return to California will do the Buffs some good. Today's game at Memorial Stadium is the first the Buffs have played in the state -- home to the school's largest alumni base outside of Colorado - since Sept. 21, 2002, at UCLA. The Buffs beat the Bruins that day, 31-17.

It will be an exciting day for the 27 players on the CU team who grew up in the Golden State and finally get to play in a Pac-10 stadium.

"It's going to be a dream come true pretty much," Hansen said.

The Buffs are 38-34-1 over the years against members of the Pac-10. Whether they add to those winning ways today or go home quietly once again depends largely on how they handle a drastic increase in the team speed of their opponent compared with last week, as well as how they handle their emotions.

The Buffs struggled with "flat" outings and slow starts on the road much of last season and always seemed to find ways of helping opponents beat them. They also can't afford another 10-penalty day.

"I think we'll be prepared this week for Cal," senior cornerback Jalil Brown said. "Guys realize you've got to step it up against a team like that, and we're going to be ready."

Brown and his teammates on defense must stop an offense loaded with playmakers, led by senior quarterback Kevin Riley, who eclipsed the 5,000-yard passing mark in his career during a 52-3 win over UC-Davis in the opener a week ago.

Freshman wide receiver Keenan Allen was the story of Week 1 for the Bears. Allen scored two touchdowns and finished with 158 combined yards rushing and receiving. Cal runs a balanced offense featuring tailback Shane Vereen, who scored three times in the opener as well.

Hansen and the Buffs offense can expect to be attacked by a Cal defense led by first-year defensive coordinator Clancy Pendergast, who is known for blitzing and taking chances. Pendergast spent the past six seasons in the NFL with Arizona and Kansas City.

Defense was the Bears' weakness in 2009. They allowed almost 30 points and 270 yards passing per game.

"They're different defensively than what they did last year," Hawkins said. "So that affects some things as well. They have some talent back there. We've got to just clean up a bunch on our end."

Colorado's 12-game road losing streak:

Date Opponent, Score

Nov. 10, 2007 Iowa State, 31-28

Sept. 27, 2008 Florida State, 39-21

Oct. 11, 2008 Kansas, 30-14

Oct. 25, 2008 Missouri, 58-0

Nov. 1, 2008 Texas A&M, 24-17

Nov. 28, 2008 Nebraska, 40-31

Sept. 11, 2009 Toledo, 54-38

Oct. 1, 2009 West Virginia, 35-24

Oct. 10, 2009 Texas, 38-14

Oct. 24, 2009 Kansas State, 20-6

Nov. 14, 2009 Iowa State, 17-10

Nov. 19, 2009 Oklahoma State, 31-28

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Colorado-Cal matchups

Camera staff
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/11/2010 12:09:18 AM MDT

CU RUN OFFENSE VS. CAL RUN DEFENSE -- The Buffs showed some signs of improvement in the run game against CSU, but these aren't the Rams. UC-Davis managed just 0.7 yards per carry and 14 total yards against Cal last week. **Edge: CAL.**

CU PASS OFFENSE VS. CAL PASS DEFENSE -- The Bears struggled to defend the pass throughout 2009 and this will be the first big test to see how much progress they have made. The Buffs need some big plays here from quarterback Tyler Hansen. **Edge: CU.**

CAL RUN OFFENSE VS. CU RUN DEFENSE -- The Bears ran for 230 yards in the opener against a overmatched opponent. The Buffs allowed just 49 yards on 25 carries against the Rams. **Edge: EVEN.**

CAL PASS OFFENSE VS. CU PASS DEFENSE -- Quarterback Kevin Riley has some speedy and talented weapons at his disposal and is much more experienced than the freshman the Buffs faced last week with 40 TDs and 5,000 yards in his career. This is a big step up for the Buffs. **Edge: CAL.**

SPECIAL TEAMS -- Both teams performed well in the kicking game in their respective season openers. The Buffs might be making progress here, but it will take more than one week to convince us. **Edge: EVEN.**

COACHING -- Dan Hawkins has won two road games against BCS competition in his career as a head coach. He doesn't predict for success today. Jeff Tedford is already the Dean of current Pac-10 coaches and he is surrounded by veterans in the field. **Edge: CAL.**

PREDICTION -- California 31-27

-- Kyle Ringo

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Woelk: Opportunity awaits confident CU Buffs today at Cal

Neill Woelk
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/11/2010 12:07:35 AM MDT

The opportunities that await the Colorado Buffaloes today at Cal's Memorial Stadium are many.

If you're looking for a parallel, rewind back to 1988, when Bill McCartney took his Buffs to Iowa City for a matchup with No. 19 Iowa in the second game of the season.

The Buffs beat the favored Hawkeyes, 24-21, setting the tone for McCartney's best season to that point. The '88 Buffs finished with an 8-4 record (8-3 regular season) to give McCartney his first eight-win season and firmly establish Colorado as a program with a solid foundation and bright future.

Such an opportunity awaits the Buffaloes today. A chance to end a much-publicized road losing streak against a quality foe, and a chance to boost the confidence that has been growing within their ranks since the beginning of fall camp.

For the first time in far too long, the Buffs aren't talking about salvaging a season, or getting on the right track, or reversing their fortunes.

They are talking about continuing on the path they began a week ago.

This is the type of game that would have given Buff teams of recent years the shakes. A talented, established opponent away from the comforts of home and just a hint of self-doubt lingering in the back of their minds.

But the gut feeling here is that there will be no self-doubt in Buff black and gold today.

"We're older, more experienced," said Buff quarterback Tyler Hansen. "We know what it's like (on the road). It's nothing new to us."

What's clear for both teams involved is that today's game is a step up from their respective openers. The Buffs are coming off a methodical 24-3 win over Colorado State; the Golden Bears drubbed UC-Davis 52-3 in their 2010 debut.

The Buffs were relatively vanilla against the Rams. They threw deep only once (resulting in an interception), and were content to grind out the second half without opening up too much of their playbook.

The guess is that they'll break out a few more pages today -- but don't be surprised if they first try to establish a control ground game.

Only once last week did Colorado attempt to pound the rock with any consistency. Early in the second quarter, the Buffs handed the ball to Rodney Stewart on five straight plays, with Stewart picking up 33 yards. The drive culminated with a 27-yard touchdown pass to Scotty McKnight.

"I don't try to tread on Coach (Eric) Kiesau's territory a whole lot, but I was pretty adamant on the headphones (about the running game)," CU head coach Dan Hawkins said. "I think our backs need an opportunity to feel it and get it going. It's good for those guys to get in a rhythm."

It's the kind of rhythm the Buffs need to establish today, and the kind of rhythm that will open up opportunities in the Cal secondary. If the Buffs can make some headway on the ground with Stewart, it will give Colorado the chance to unleash some of the speed on the outside that's been so painfully absent in past years.

But most of all, the Buffs need to simply improve. Their play last week was good enough to beat an inexperienced Colorado State team; they'll need a better effort today. Put penalties atop the list, but throw in third-down conversions and better pass protection as well.

Meanwhile, the defense must pick up where it left off against CSU in the big-play department. The Rams managed just one play covering 20 yards; if the Buffs can replicate that feat today they will be in position to win.

But confidence should not be an issue.

"We see it as a test," said Buff defensive back Jalil Brown. "We know we're good and we know we can have a great season."

Today would be a good time to confirm those beliefs.

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cu football

Reunion for CU offensive coordinator

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/11/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Every time Colorado offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau hears "it's all in the details," visions of his four years with Jeff Tedford at California must come to mind.

Bar none, Kiesau says the Bears' coach is the most detail-oriented person he has ever met.

"Whatever you think is perfect, it's not good enough," Kiesau recalled with a grin. "Tedford is the 'over-perfectionist,' a great guy to learn from."

Colorado (1-0) faces host California (1-0) today, and the game represents a homecoming of sorts for Kiesau, who served as Cal's wide receivers coach from 2002-05 before joining Dan Hawkins' CU staff in 2006. Kiesau was promoted to offensive coordinator in April 2009.

"I learned a lot of football

in my time in Berkeley — the nuances, how to study defenses, game-planning. The list is endless," Kiesau said.

"From a football standpoint, Tedford would be the most influential person in my career. A lot of the makeup of what I do today revolves around him."

Kiesau, 37, had it good in Berkeley. In his final year, he coached current NFL standout receiver DeSean Jackson, then a Cal freshman.

Why leave?

Kiesau knew Hawkins and thought he would enjoy coaching under him. And Kiesau and his wife, Wendy, thought the Front Range would be a wonderful place to raise their children, daughter Tayler (now 13) and son Blake (7).

"The decision was family-related," Kiesau said. "The quality of life here in Colorado, that was important — being able to live 10 minutes from work, where in Berkeley you'd face 45 minutes to an hour of traffic. And, of course, houses are more affordable here."

"I could have stayed at Cal for 20 years. But with the age of my kids, I needed to be around them and be part of their life. I didn't want to look back and say I missed it because of traffic."

Kiesau said it was news Tedford did not want to hear.

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THE DENVER POST

"In fact, we didn't talk for a while because I think he was so disappointed," Kiesau recalled. "But then he came around and understood. But it's a hard decision to leave Cal. You're in a good spot, and you're winning a lot of games. I was basically Jeff's right-hand man. I'll tell you, it was not an easy decision."

Kiesau and Tedford stay in touch, mostly via text messages. Their wives remain best friends and frequently phone each other. With today's game approaching, any chatting between the couples was probably put on hold for a week.

"Eric . . . we had good times here," Tedford said during a news conference this week.

"Eric did a great job while he was here. Over the last few years, it's obvious that he's grown and has some new ideas about things. But there are some concepts that he took from his time here."

One trait Kiesau hopes to emulate as an offensive coordinator is Tedford's ability to develop a rhythm in his play-calling, a rhythm that Tedford seamlessly adjusts depending on the game situation. It's an art, Kiesau said.

"When we were together on the sideline and he was calling the plays, you definitely got a sense of how he was thinking," Kiesau said. "I would call it brilliant. We were down 21-7 to Virginia Tech at the 2003 Insight Bowl, and watching Tedford kind of maneuver through their defense to win the game (52-49), it was impressive."

So this game must hold a special, personal significance for the Kiesau household, eh?

Not quite, Eric said.

"Everybody keeps asking me that, but, to me, it's just another away game," Kiesau said. "When I worked there, that was half a decade ago. The majority of Tedford's staff is different. I'm just considering it an away game."

One that evokes enough memories to fill a football stadium.

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

SEPTEMBER 10, 2010, 3:00 PM

CU to face Bears big'uns at wide receiverBy **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

Two common traits among Pac-10 football teams: big receivers and fast, athletic defensive backs.

The Cal Bears, who host Colorado on Saturday, are no exception.

Cal's starting wide receivers are 6-foot-3, 195-pound freshman Keenan Allen and 6-2, 200-pound junior Marvin Jones. A top reserve is Michael Calvin, who goes 6-2, 204.

It's a good thing that Colorado has relative tall cornerbacks in seniors Jimmy Smith 6-2, 205) nad Jalil Brown (6-1, 205).

As for Cal's fast DBs, "Hey, one of their guys is named Darian Hagan (son of the CU running backs coach and former legendary Buffs option quarterback), so you know he's got to be athletic, right?" said Buffs senior wideout Scotty McKnight told me with a grin after a recent CU practice.

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

SEPTEMBER 10, 2010, 11:46 AM

CU's newfound speed at WR won't surprise Cal coach

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

In watching tape of Colorado's opening-game victory over Colorado State, California coach Jeff Tedford noticed the change in CU's offense this year with the infusion of speedsters such as Toney Clemons, Travon Patterson and Paul Richardson.

"That's the difference between their team this year and their team last year," Tedford said during his weekly news conference. "Scotty McKnight was really their only playmaker last year that I saw. Now they have a few others that can really run and stretch the field and do stuff with the ball in their hands once they catch it.

"They're a very good football team (with) plenty of speed and plenty of size and strength, and they can pound you as well."

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Longmont, Colorado
Saturday, September 11,
2010

Publish Date: 9/11/2010

First test for Buffs

By Brian Howell
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — During its season opener last week, the University of Colorado football team did what it was supposed to do.

It beat a young and inexperienced Colorado State team 24-3 and looked decent doing it.

Today's game at California (1-0) is supposed to be CU's first real test, the first real chance we get to see if the Buffs are any good.

Cal rolled past UC-Davis 52-3 in its opener. In the process, the Bears put their blazing speed on display. It's speed that CU didn't see against CSU.

"A lot," CU head coach Dan Hawkins said when asked about the difference in speed between CSU and Cal. "On defense, particularly. Their (defensive) line is very, very explosive and able to attack you. They've got great team speed everywhere on defense.

"Obviously on offense, they've got some weapons. All their skill guys can run. That'll definitely be a step up."

Hawkins is perhaps most interested in seeing how the Buffs respond to a win. CU played well against CSU, but will that carry over to today?

"We're trying to continue to educate these guys about winning and losing and how you handle it and how you manifest it," Hawkins said.

In 2009, CU got a huge win against then-No. 17 Kansas, beating the undefeated Jayhawks 34-30 in Boulder.

The next week, the Buffs went to Kansas State and laid an egg in a 20-6 loss.

"I really was amazed last year," Hawkins said. "It did not seem when we came to Kansas State (that CU) was a team that had won the week before."

The Buffs insist they are a different team this year, though. In the past, road trips may have felt more like mini vacations. This year, the emphasis is on taking care of business.

The difference? Confidence.

"Last year, the confidence wasn't there," senior cornerback Jalil Brown said. "We knew we had to change something. All the leaders on the team got together, and we realized that what we did in the past wasn't going to work."

The confidence certainly seems to be there this fall. While fans may tune in today to find out if CU is any good, Brown said the Buffs already know they are; they just want to prove it.

“We know we’re good; we know we can have a great season this year,” Brown said. “We just have to go out there and show it. I think we already know we can play with anyone, and we’re ready to show that.”

HOW GOOD ARE THE BEARS? While questions about CU’s strength remain, Cal is curious about itself.

Yes, the Bears beat up on UC-Davis, a Championship Subdivision (FCS) team. But this is a team that was picked by some to finish in the lower half of the Pac-10, so the Bears still have something to prove.

Cal quarterback Kevin Riley said this week that the Bears can’t read too much into their win last week.

“Davis is a good FCS team, but in all honesty, they can’t compete with us on the football field, as you saw,” Riley said. “And I think our football team is very aware of that.

“We know Colorado is a much better team.”

READY TO ROLL: Junior Travis Sandersfeld spent this week preparing for a new role as CU’s starting nickel back.

He took over the job when freshman Parker Orms tore his right ACL against CSU. Sandersfeld played well against CSU but now gets the challenge of being a starter.

“I hate to see (Orms get hurt), but growing up in Colorado, I always dreamed of playing and being a starter out here,” said Sandersfeld, who played at Limon High School. “This is my time, so I just got to do the best I can do and help the team win.”

Brian Howell can be reached at bhowell@times-call.com. Read his Buffs blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/howell.



Cal football team faces much stiffer test today vs. Colorado

By Jonathan Okanes
Oakland Tribune

Posted: 09/10/2010 06:17:19 PM PDT

Updated: 09/11/2010 04:44:31 AM PDT

Although Cal certainly felt good about its 52-3 shellacking of UC Davis in its season opener, there was a sense that the game didn't really provide any early answers about the 2010 Bears. The Aggies are a Football Championship Subdivision team that was clearly outclassed in strength and speed.

Today against Colorado, it's almost as though Cal is playing another season opener. It will be the Bears' first game against an opponent on equal footing and should provide a much more accurate measuring stick.

"Davis is a good FCS team, but in all honesty, they can't compete with us on the football field, as you saw," Cal quarterback Kevin Riley said. "And I think our football team is very aware of that. We know Colorado is a much better team."

In the team's first meeting of the week on Monday, Cal coach Jeff Tedford made it very clear to his players that the level of strength and athleticism they will face today will be entirely different from that of the Aggies. The Bears racked up 517 yards of offense and held UC Davis to just 81 yards of its own.

Cal true freshman wide receiver Keenan Allen caught four passes for 120 yards and a touchdown and

added 38 yards and a touchdown on three carries. But he has a substantial athletic advantage on virtually every Aggies defender. It won't be as easy today.

"It's going to be a different story now," Tedford said.

But Allen's presence is sure to make life easier on junior Marvin Jones, who led

Cal with 43 catches for 651 yards and six touchdowns last season but didn't get much help from the rest of his receiving corps. With Jones and Allen on opposite sides of the field, the Bears' passing game suddenly has the balance it lacked last season.

"Now in our base setup, when you have Marvin Jones and Keenan Allen on each side, those are two very good receivers," Riley said. "So you have to be very aware of where they are at all times. It can open up the offense and it's going to keep the defense more honest."

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Cal football report: Golden Bears vs. Colorado Buffaloes

By Jonathan Okanes
Oakland Tribune

Posted: 09/10/2010 06:41:20 PM PDT

Updated: 09/10/2010 10:06:58 PM PDT

CAL vs. Colorado

RECORDS: Colorado 1-0, Cal 1-0

KICKOFF: 12:30 p.m. at Memorial Stadium

TV/RADIO: CSNBA; 810-AM

SERIES HISTORY: Tied 2-2. Teams haven't met since 1982, when the Bears beat the Buffaloes 31-17 in Boulder.

THE STORY LINES: The Bears will try to prove their 52-3 domination of UC Davis wasn't an aberration as they play their first FBS opponent of the season. . . True freshman WR Keenan Allen will attempt to forge an encore of last week's breathtaking debut. ... Cal CB Darian Hagan will go up against his father, Colorado running backs coach Darian Hagan Sr.

INJURY UPDATE: Colorado -- DB Parker Orms (knee) is out. Cal -- TE Jarrett Sparks (ankle) is questionable.

STATS THAT MATTER: The Buffaloes have two offensive linemen who check in at 315 pounds and one who goes 310. The average weight along the offensive front is 304 pounds.

MATCHUP TO WATCH: Cal wide receivers Marvin Jones and Keenan Allen against Colorado cornerbacks Jimmy Smith and Jalil Brown. Smith (6-foot-2) and Brown (6-foot-1) give the Buffaloes a pair of big corners. Allen (6-3) and Jones (6-2) are used to being bigger than their opponents, but not this time.

QUOTE OF NOTE: "It's a Big 12 opponent that is very competitive all the time. They have a lot of skill and are very well-coached. There's no doubt that this is a much bigger test than last week." -- Cal coach Jeff Tedford.

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Article

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WR Allen gives coordinator lots of options

John Crumpacker, Chronicle Staff Writer

Saturday, September 11, 2010

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Although he doesn't admit to drawing up plays on cocktail napkins or bolting upright at 3 in the morning with a burst of inspiration, Cal offensive coordinator Andy Ludwig is nevertheless excited about the creative possibilities freshman wide receiver Keenan Allen has given him.

The kid can play, and it's up to Ludwig to design and call plays that put him in the best position to be productive and help the Bears gain yards, score points and win games.

"That's one of the good parts of the job, watching young men be successful," Ludwig said. "He's got a skill set that's pretty diverse, so we're going to maximize his ability.

"There's always stuff like that that comes up. You see something in a defensive structure that you might have a chance to exploit. Because of Keenan's skill set, it provides more options."

That was apparent in Cal's opening game a week ago against outmanned UC Davis. In his first college game, Allen had four receptions for 120 yards and a 48-yard touchdown, and rushed three times for 38 yards, with an 18-yard touchdown on an improvisation.

"It was real exciting," Allen said. "I made a couple plays, helped out a lot. I just want to help my team win games. We have a lot better competition coming up. We've got to step it up."

Starting today at Memorial Stadium, when the Bears face future conference opponent Colorado, several rungs of football's evolutionary ladder above UC Davis.

Speaking of the Colorado cornerbacks who will be covering Allen and Marvin Jones - Jalil Brown and Jimmy Smith - Cal coach Jeff Tedford noted, "You're not going to big-boy those guys. They can run and they have good size. They can play the ball well."

In other words, what do you have for Allen's encore, coordinator Ludwig?

"He'll get a bigger workload in the second game," Ludwig said. "He's going to get his touches in as many ways as possible. It's about putting players in position to use their skills. With Keenan, it gives you the chance to be real creative as a play-designer."

In turn, Allen is pretty creative on his end. The play on which he scored on an 18-yard run to the left started as an option pass to the right. Lined up on the left side, Allen ran right, took a handoff from quarterback Kevin Riley, and continued in that direction with the intention of passing the ball.

When his receiver was covered, the freshman did not panic. He simply reversed his field and ran through several Davis defenders on the way to the end zone.

"In the Cal playbook, we have a lot of plays, and that gives him a chance to fit in, in a lot of places," Ludwig said. "Those are going to (be) unearthed as the season continues."

Having a 6-foot-3 freshman wide receiver who can run, catch passes and even throw the ball while remaining composed should enable Ludwig to sleep soundly this season.

However, it would not be surprising to discover a notepad and pen on his nightstand, just in case inspiration strikes at 3 in the morning.

Cal today

Who: Colorado (1-0) vs. Cal (1-0)

Where: Memorial Stadium

When: 12:30 p.m.

TV/Radio: CSNBA/810

Story line: It's son vs. father, sort of. Starting at right cornerback for Cal is senior Darian Hagan, the team's active career leader in passes defended. His father, also named Darian Hagan, is the Buffaloes' running backs coach. The elder Hagan was 25-8-2 as Colorado's starting quarterback from 1989 through '91 and led the school to its only national championship in 1990.

Injuries: Colorado - Nickel defensive back Parker Orms (knee) is out. Cal - No significant injuries among the starters.

What to watch for

1. After essentially a walk-over in their opener against UC Davis, how will the Bears handle a legitimate opponent? The players know they have to bring their "A" games today as opposed to their "K" games a week ago.

2. Cal's defensive line vs. Colorado's offensive line. The Buffs average more than 300 pounds per man, with one tackle 6-foot-9 and one guard 6-8. Cal's redshirt freshman DE Deandre Coleman gets his first test against the big boys.

3. Hagan and fellow cornerback Marc Anthony will have to be aware of wide receiver Scotty McKnight, Colorado's career leader in receptions with 171.

Today's games

Who: Colorado

at Cal

When: 12:30 p.m.

TV: CSNBA

Radio: 810

Who: No. 25 Stanford at UCLA

When: 7:30 p.m.

TV: ESPN

Radio: 1050

E-mail John Crumpacker at jcrumpacker@sfchronicle.com.

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This article appeared on page **B - 1** of the San Francisco Chronicle

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