

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu briefs

## Buff's McKnight: Wideouts ready to make big plays

Posted: 09/15/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 09/15/2010 08:05:06 AM MDT

BOULDER — That breakaway offense that Colorado promised with its newfound fleet of fast receivers must have become worn down during August camp and is taking a nap. But CU senior wideout Scotty McKnight believes potential is ready to become reality.

"I think it is one of those things that can pop at any minute," Mc- Knight said Tuesday of the CU offense. "Honestly, it's going to happen this Saturday (in the home game against 1-1 Hawaii). I can feel it. We're going to take some shots (downfield). We're going to make big plays."

Struggling to get out of its way and muster any kind of threat, Colorado (1-1) managed just one offensive play of longer than 20 yards last Saturday in the 52-7 loss to California in Berkeley — a 24-yard pass from Tyler Hansen to Toney Clemons in the second quarter.

CU did not exactly look explosive in the 24-3

victory over Colorado State either. Through two games, the Buffs have broken free for just two pass plays of more than 25 yards — 27-yard receptions by McKnight and tailback Rodney Stewart.

The Buffs' fastest receivers — Southern Cal transfer Travon Patterson (10.4 in 100 meters) and Michigan transfer Clemons (10.2) — are barely averaging enough yards for a first down. And another star of preseason scrimmages, freshman Paul Richardson, has just one reception for 11 yards.

"I'm shocked (at the paucity of big plays)," McKnight said. "That would help the offense as a whole. When you get one over the top for 80 yards, that makes defensive guys back off."

### O-line shuffling.

Colorado yielded six sacks to California, so it came as no surprise when CU coach Dan Hawkins announced changes Tuesday.

Junior Mike Ittis, who was in on every offensive snap at left guard at Berkeley, has been moved to starting center to replace senior Keenan Stevens.

Junior Ethan Adkins is back as the starter at left guard.

### Another lost nickel.

Junior safety Travis Sandersfeld suffered a

Advertisement



We focus on automating Marriott® Hotels' global invoice process. So they don't have to.  
Learn more at [RealBusiness.com](http://RealBusiness.com)

Ready For Real Business **xerox** 

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

"slight" fracture in his lower leg Saturday at Cal and will be out at least a couple of weeks.

Sandersfeld had replaced redshirt freshman Parker Orms, who tore an ACL in the season opener and is done for the season. Paul Vigo, a 6-1, 190-pound redshirt freshman from New Jersey, will be Sandersfeld's replacement.

## Hansen tweets "never again."

Speaking to reporters Tuesday, the CU quarterback stood by his Saturday message on Twitter that "going out there and playing like that will never happen again."

"I just felt like I needed to say something," Hansen said Tuesday. "I knew the fans didn't like it. We are not 45 points worse than Cal. That was not us."

Hansen said he removed the tweet about two hours after he had posted it Saturday.

*Tom Kensler, The Denver Post*

Advertisement

**PROTECT  
YOUR HOME**

**FREE** Home Security  
System!

**\$850 Value!**

CALL NOW and receive a **FREE** wireless  
remote control with **PANIC BUTTON!**

**1-877-246-7519**

Mon-Fri 9am - 10pm - Sat 9am-7pm - Sun 11am - 6pm EST

At no cost to you for parts and activation with only a \$99 installation fee and the purchase of alarm monitoring services. Terms & Conditions apply.



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

# Alfred Williams built legacy at Colorado

## CU will honor Hall of Fame LB on Saturday

**By Ryan Thorburn** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/15/2010 12:00:12 AM MDT

Sorry Buffs fans, Alfred Williams Day at Folsom Field will not include seeing No. 94 putting on the pads, helmet and throwback jersey again.

Instead, the glory days of Colorado football will be a welcome halftime diversion at the next two home games when Williams, a recent College Football Hall of Fame inductee, is honored this Saturday during the Hawaii game. The 1990 national championship team will be celebrated at a 20-year reunion on Oct. 2 during the Georgia game.

Although the preseason optimism surrounding the 2010 season has turned to outrage in the aftermath of CU's lamentable 52-7 loss to Cal, the sanguine and loyal Williams holds out hope that the senior class can turn their on-field misfortunes around and conclude their collegiate careers on a winning note.

"Those seniors are our greatest recruiting tool," Williams said during an interview with the Camera. "I just want to see them do well. Nobody wants to see the university do bad."

Williams has always focused on what CU can be instead of dwelling on the program's darker days. Case in point: Bill McCartney had posted a 20-36-1 record in five seasons before getting the coveted blue chip prospect from Houston's Jesse Jones High School to commit to the Buffs.

That historically good 1987 recruiting class also included Eric Bieniemy, Jon Boman, Russ Heasley, George Hemingway, Jay Leeuwenburg, Kanavis McGhee, Mike Pritchard and Joel Steed. The group formed the backbone of the Buffs' three-year reign as Big Eight champions (1988-90), a run that culminated with a national title in Williams' senior season.

"I remember that the University of Colorado wasn't high on my list," Williams recalled before launching into his famous laugh. "For me it was a topsy-turvy time with all the teams that were looking at me. CU didn't stack up really high with the programs I was looking at. When I finally got a chance to see Coach Mac, it was really good. But what really changed everything was when I came down to Boulder for a visit."

Williams, who grew up in a tough Houston neighborhood, had never been on an airplane until deciding to look outside the Lone Star State and give CU a chance.

"It was just so different than the areas that many of us were raised in," Williams said. "On my flight the smoking section was one row behind me. You forget they used to allow smoking on planes. It was my first time leaving the state of Texas and the smoke gave me a terrible headache. It was pretty driving down (Highway 36), but I was having a bad experience. And then it snowed like crap the first day.

"I thought, 'It may be pretty here, but this was not right for me.'"

Fortunately for McCartney, Williams slept on the decision and woke up to a picture perfect day in Boulder that changed his life.

"The snow was melting and there were little streams running through the university. I remember looking around campus and thinking it was really cool," Williams said. "I decided I just wanted to go somewhere totally different than where I was from. My decision was more about the University of Colorado than football."

### The other 'big dude'

Williams and McGhee first met when they were 14. In high school the talented big men played against each other in football and together on an all-star basketball team. McGhee thought his decision to leave Texas and play for McCartney at CU was unique.

"We didn't know each other were going to CU. It just kind of happened like that," McGhee said. "We played at rival high schools, and I just knew they had a big dude, too. So we knew of each other, but we didn't know we were both going to CU until signing day."

The coaching staff wisely assigned Williams and McGhee as roommates.

"What told me that we had a good team was rooming with Kanavis and we worked out together and I saw what kind of athlete he was," Williams said. "We dominated his team in high school, but individually he was an awesome football player."

Collectively, with Williams and McGhee at the outside linebacker positions, the Buffs were an almost unbeatable defense.

"It was nice to know that when you go into a game with a guy like Al on the opposite side that he was going to do his job. And if you did your job, there was really nothing the opposing offense could do," McGhee said. "It was one of those things where we motivated each other, learned from each other, and grew together."

During the 1990 season, Williams was a unanimous All-American selection and won the Butkus Award given to the nation's top linebacker. He was also a consensus All-American as junior in 1989 and one of four finalists for the Lombardi Award, along with McGhee.

"In my estimation, it was pick your poison," Bob Simmons, CU's linebackers coach under McCartney, said of an opposing offense's approach to blocking the Buffs. "If they doubled Al, then Kanavis or Steed or other great players were free to make plays. Al had the style and type of body where he could play physical or he could play finesse. With that many players around him, Al always found a way to really do something."

### **Everybody's All-American**

Other members of the defense during the era included Greg Biekert, Ron Bradford, Chad Brown and Deon Figures. The offense was also littered with stars such as Bieniemy, Christian Fauria, Darian Hagan, Joe Garten, George Hemingway, Leeuwenburg and Pritchard.

Williams' physical gifts and gregarious nature still stood out on the best team in CU history.

"He was a loud mouth, he had these big old glasses on, and I thought he was the ugliest person I'd ever seen," Hagan, who is currently CU's running backs coach, quipped when asked about his first impression of Williams. "But he was a hell of a player and a good dude. ... My true freshman year I couldn't believe the linebackers were that tall and big and athletic. I was a little afraid of them. I was like, 'This dude is going to hit me?'"

"Al was very loud and vocal and intimidating a little bit. But as you get to know him and start practicing with him, you get the feel of how he plays the game. I just tricked him a lot."

CU practices throughout the week were often more entertaining than the games on Saturday.

"It was a flat out war," Simmons said. "All of our individual drills, our nine-on-seven inside drills, you can't be faint of heart and watch those collisions. The competition made other guys better. You go through the names on that group and it was big-time. ..."

"I always felt our football team was so good that our games were good but our practices were better. That created a confidence throughout both sides of the ball because both sides knew we just practiced against the best."

Four of CU's six unanimous All-Americans -- Bieniemy, Garten, Leeuwenburg and Williams -- were members of the 1990 team assembled by the legendary McCartney.

"Coach Mac is the most honest man I've ever met in my life. He is a man of his word. If he says something, he does it," Williams said. "I'm just so happy to have played for him and I know he will also be a Hall of Famer. He is by far the best head coach I ever played for."

That's an impressive statement considering Williams went on to win a pair of Super Bowls for Mike Shanahan as a member of the Broncos. "Big Al" still lives in Denver and remains one of the most beloved figures in Colorado sports

history.

"He was the type of guy who played his best games in the big games. When he was physically and emotionally prepared, he was dominant," is how McCartney described Williams to cubuffs.com after his star linebacker joined Byron "Whizzer" White, Joe Romig, Bobby Anderson and Dick Anderson as Buffs greats who are in the College Football Hall of Fame. "When we needed him most, he came up big. Alfred would stand out today, guys like him don't come along very often.

"He's as talented as anyone Colorado has ever had, and I'm proud of him for receiving this recognition."

Williams had a sack in each of the first 10 games of the 1990 season and still holds the school records for sacks (35) and tackles for loss (59). He was the recipient of CU's Dave Jones Award as the team's defensive most valuable player his junior and senior years. He was also the Big Eight defensive Player of the Year during those seasons.

### **Unbreakable bonds**

If the Buffs are able to rebound with a victory over Hawaii and/or upset Georgia, it would certainly improve the vibe at Folsom Field.

Win or lose, Williams and his teammates will party like it's 1990.

"What's great about this group is we've always maintained our friendships and alliances," Williams said. "We'll be the happiest group of 40-year old men you've ever seen in one place. We revert back to 18, even though I have a kid that is 18 now."

Williams also remains close with McCartney and many of the CU assistants. He even gave his Butkus Award to Simmons.

"It's in my office, first thing you see when you walk through the door," Simmons said. "I think it was Al saying: 'You will forever be a part of my life.' Our relationship is beyond the award, he's a member of our family. He calls my wife and says, 'How is mom doing?' She is very touched by that because she treated him like one of our kids."

Coaches always insist that they don't read the newspapers or peek at the blogs and message boards. But they will acknowledge Williams' passion for the Buffs, even though he co-hosts an opinion-driven sports-talk show on 104.3 FM (KKFN).

"All of our guys are loyal to CU because CU gave us our opportunity," Hagan said of his teammates. "We could have gone anywhere else, but we came here because this place was special and Coach Mac is a special person. For Alfred to always say the right things and be positive about CU is awesome."

CU athletic director Mike Bohn -- who made sure Williams was by his side to greet Pac-10 commissioner Larry Scott this summer during the conference realignment frenzy -- made this statement about old No. 94 when he was inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame last December:

"Our hats are off to Alfred for his prominence on the football field beyond CU, but also what he continues to stand for as it relates to our football program, athletic department and the entire university. Many feel that it is more than appropriate that Alfred is the first to go in from the national championship team not only because what he meant to that team, but how he has represented and supported the university through the years."

Despite a messy end to the Gary Barnett era and Dan Hawkins' brutal 17-34 record, Williams is still very much in love with the University of Colorado.

"I'm so grateful because of the incredible friendships we made that have lasted," Williams said. "We've babysat for each other, cried on each shoulders, I've been there for the birth of teammates' kids, been best men in weddings, business partners and fans of each other. I won two Super Bowls, and it's not like that in the NFL ranks. I love my tenure with the Broncos and the Super Bowls were great, but it's nothing like the friendships and family at CU.

"If my football career would have ended with my last college game, I would have been all right with that. Our legacy at CU is intact, and the celebrations planned for these next two games gives us a chance to revisit it."

Close Window

Send To Printer

# Johnson juggles Buffs' O-line

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

Posted: 09/14/2010 11:57:33 PM MDT

Maybe these Colorado Buffaloes aren't as experienced and mature as they were given credit for coming into the season.

When adversity hit for the first time in the 2010 season last week at Cal, the Buffs couldn't overcome it, most noticeably along the offensive line. The group gave up six sacks. Those setbacks heavily affected their final rushing numbers in the game. They went home with a 1.7 yards per carry average.

"I thought we got rattled early in the game," offensive line coach Denver Johnson said. "We didn't handle the circumstances very good."

Johnson went to work trying to fix the problems Tuesday when the Buffs returned to the practice fields to begin preparing for Hawaii this weekend. Johnson decided to move junior Mike Ittis to center, where he started the 2009 season and move fellow junior Ethan Adkins back into the starting lineup at left guard. Senior center Keenan Stevens was the odd man out.

"In weeks to come there may be other rotations," Johnson said. "I don't really look at it as moving people up, moving people down or moving them sideways. We're just kind of rotating different guys in there looking for the most consistent play we can find."

Johnson said tackles Nate Solder, David Bakhtiari and Bryce Givens have played well with a few mistakes here and there. Solder, who leads the team with 23 knockdown blocks in two games, was beaten several times by speed last week and after having a few days to reflect on the outing he remained frustrated with the performance.

"The best groups are going to have down days and that might have just been a down day," Solder said. "I think we gave up some pressures. We gave up some sacks and that's not who we are, and it's something we've got to get better at."

Solder agreed with his coach's assessment that the entire offense didn't react well to several early penalties, poor field position and a fumble by quarterback Tyler Hansen when he was being sacked for the first time.

"It was a wrestling match with us on the bottom of them the whole time," Solder said.

Johnson said he continues to see great potential in his group of players and was happy with the intensity level they brought to the field Tuesday.

"I can't give up on these guys," he said. "I think they've got the right kind of attitude. They're disappointed in it as well. They realize they need to be much better than that and they realize they can be much better than that."

## Brief pause

Coach Dan Hawkins was asked Tuesday if he considered putting his son, senior Cody Hawkins, in the game at quarterback when Hansen was hurt on a touchdown run in the third quarter.

"Yeah, there is always a little bit of thought of that," Hawkins said. "Part of it is I know it was a rough day for Tyler, but part of it was kind of working through that a little bit. As long as he was OK, and our trainers and docs thought he was OK, we wanted him to kind of finish up."

## Notable

Hawkins said defensive back Travis Sandersfeld has a fractured bone in his leg and will miss several weeks at least. It was the second straight week the Buffs have lost their starting nickel back. Redshirt freshman Paul Vigo now moves into the starting role there. ... Hawkins said reserve offensive lineman Shawn Daniel has a torn ligament in his foot and will miss the rest of the season after surgery to repair it. ... CU reported about 10,000 tickets remain for the Hawaii game. The game is the centerpiece of a weekend of celebrating Alfred Williams' induction into the College Football Hall of Fame. ... It will be CU's latest home opener since 1980 when the Buffs' first home game was played on Sept. 27.

Close Window

Send To Printer



## Woelk: Buffs insist one game won't ruin season

**Neill Woelk** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/15/2010 12:01:57 AM MDT

They're not dead yet. There's no white flag waving from the steps of Dal Ward.

Not yet.

That was the message Tuesday from Colorado players and coaches, who are doing their best to make sure one game doesn't destroy their season.

Yes, they know what happened last weekend at Cal. They didn't have to read the newspapers, watch television or check the Internet message boards to know exactly how bad it was.

They needed no reminders. They were there. They experienced firsthand the 52-7 beatdown administered by the Golden Bears. They lived through it, suffered through it and endured yet another long, long plane trip home.

But unlike most of us who saw it on Saturday and wouldn't think of watching it again, the Buffs got to relive it. Painstaking minute by painstaking minute, they watched the whole thing again in the meeting rooms.

It didn't get any better the second time around.

Yet if there's any silver lining -- and believe me, the Buffs will grasp at any straw they can -- it's that a 52-7 loss still counts as just one loss.

Thus, with 10 games left on the schedule and a record that says 1-1, the Buffs say they aren't finished.

"Our confidence isn't down," said Buff wide receiver Scotty McKnight on Tuesday. "There's a little fire. We're upset that we went out and performed the way we did. Getting blown out like that is embarrassing."

McKnight and his teammates know there aren't many folks out there who believe the Buffs can bounce back. The general consensus seems to be that this will be a replay of 2009.

McKnight, though, says no one in a Buff uniform is ready to surrender the season.

"We got stomped on," McKnight said. "We know that. But when that happens, and everybody is down on you, that's when you huddle up and say let's get it together. Let's go out there and show something."

They'll have their chance to do just that Saturday, when they play Hawaii at Folsom Field.

But while the Buffs insist their season is far from over, they also know this weekend's matchup has the dreaded "make-or-break" designation stamped all over it.

"I think we have to come out and win," McKnight said. "We need to get the fans and everybody back on our side. This is one of those things we can use as a positive moment."

One thing McKnight does expect to see this weekend -- and something Buff fans have been waiting to see -- is the Buffs' heralded group of wide receivers go up top for a big play or two.

Headed into the season, CU's speed at wideout was supposed to be a major strength. But thus far, Colorado's longest pass play has been a mere 27 yards.

"I think it's one of those things that can pop at any minute," McKnight said. "It's going to happen this Saturday. I really feel

it."

To be honest, the Buffs could use more than a little pop in their offense. After two weeks of the season, the Buffs are at or near the bottom of virtually every offensive category in the Big 12 -- including the only one that really counts, scoring.

It's why this weekend's game has the air of a crossroads. Play well and get a win, and the Buffs will have two weeks to prepare for a visit from Georgia. They can -- despite dire predictions from a frustrated fan base -- get this season at least headed back in the right direction.

"We need it," McKnight said. "We need to go out and play a good game. We need to go out and win."

No doubt, a solid performance this weekend would heal some of the wounds inflicted last weekend.

"It's like this -- when you have a bad day at work, do you quit?" McKnight asked. "We don't. One bad day doesn't make a season."

And one good day would definitely put some spark back in this one.

Close Window

Send To Printer



[\[PRINT\]](#) ESPN.com: Big 12[\[Print without images\]](#)

Tuesday, September 14, 2010

## Momentum is good and bad for Buffs

By David Ubben  
ESPN.com

Momentum has been an issue for Colorado, helping on a neutral site against its rival in Week 1 and hurting on the road against a future Pac-10 opponent in Week 2.

"I think we're just learning," Buffaloes coach Dan Hawkins said. "We certainly addressed that and talked about that. We talk to our guys about that all the time, that bad things are going to happen and you're going to have to work your way through. And how all that works."

Colorado hosts Hawaii this weekend with hopes of avoiding similar results after last week's loss to California, where the Buffaloes fell behind 14-0 in the first quarter and 31-0 by halftime.

"It's like in any job, you have a bad day, you don't just quit," said senior receiver [Scotty McKnight](#). "You come back the next day and try to have a better day. That's what we're trying to do."

McKnight was pleased with the energy in Tuesday's practice -- the first since the loss -- but both he and Hawkins know the team has to prevent the problems that led to Saturday's blowout loss. Most importantly, it would seem, is preventing those problems from happening early on.

"Drop one ball it just stays in your mind. If it's in your mind, you're probably going to drop another ball," said McKnight, who stretched his streak of games with at least one reception to 39 on Saturday. "You've just got to move on."

Hawkins was pleased with the team's progress in the second half, but facing a 31-0 halftime deficit meant those positive steps did nothing to influence the game's outcome.

One second-quarter drive stretched 17 plays and 36 yards for the Buffaloes but ended with a missed field goal.

Meanwhile, California's first three scoring drives started on Colorado's 19, 31 and 21-yard lines, the final two courtesy of [Tyler Hansen](#) turnovers.

"We always work on those situations. We put them in bad spots, we put them in good situations. Everybody has situational categories that you work on," Hawkins said. "We've just got to continue to rep it."



Colorado coach Dan Hawkins is focusing on keeping momentum.

ESPN.com: [Help](#) | [PR Media Kit](#) | [Sales Media Kit](#) | [Report a Bug](#) | [Corrections](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Site Map](#) | [Mobile](#) | [ESPN Shop](#) | [Jobs at ESPN](#) | [Supplier Information](#)

©2009 ESPN Internet Ventures. [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy and Safety Information/Your California Privacy Rights](#) are applicable to you. All rights reserved.