CU Buff Brian Lockridge runs to own tune

Buff RB taught self to play piano, gives financial advice to Ambrose

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/29/2010 11:47:18 PM MDT

Brian Lockridge has his name in the newspaper today because he is developing into a pretty good college football player.

But that is beside the point.

No matter what his future on the gridiron holds, his burgeoning interest in the world around him and a refusal to be outworked make it a pretty safe bet there are more stories to be written about him.

Lockridge eviscerates all football player stereotypes.

He is a bit of an odd duck in a relatively predictable pond. He projects a different energy than what is typical of those in his position. From the first introduction with a firm handshake, smile and always direct eye contact, the thought is: "This guy is going places."

The junior running back and kick returner on the Colorado football team is coming off his first 100-yard rushing performance. He appears more confident and explosive nearly every time he steps on the football field. Yet, there is a feeling all he's doing here is moonlighting while he figures out where he's going to take this life.

"I take advantage of a lot of opportunities," Lockridge said in grossly understated fashion.

Already during his time at CU he has earned his commercial real estate license and become a certified financial planner, even dispensing advice to secondary coach Ashley Ambrose. He is a communication major and is also studying business.

Lockridge invested the \$5,000 pell grant he received in the 2007-08 school year and turned it into \$7,000, which he used to by himself a nice used car.

"My return on that wasgreat," Lockridge said.

Lockridge is the epitome of a self-made man.

He lived with his mother and three siblings in a two-bedroom apartment in a tough part of Los Angeles until he was 15. He never was one to fritter away time. So he did things like teach himself to play the piano instead. He didn't watch sports or sitcoms or reality television.

"I was more of an animal planet type guy and National Geographic," Lockridge said. "I was the one in the backyard catching bugs. I used to fight Praying Mantises when I was little. ... I really didn't start watching sports until last year. I'm just starting to get the hang of football. I still can't watch the whole game yet."

He used to have to ask his mother for money on occasion and he felt bad doing so because he knew she didn't have any to offer him.

He was the youngest of four siblings. He decided to move out, get a job and pay rent for a room to a family in Orange County. Before long, he was working three jobs -- two clothing stores and a movie theater -- while attending high school.

He never played sports but he decided to take up football in the ninth grade when some of his friends started talking about playing. He received a flyer one day advertising a football camp.

"The only word I saw was camp," he said.

He went to Walmart and purchased camping gear and showed up ready for a trip into the forest.

Friends, camp organizers and other kids laughed at him the entire first day, but invited him back for the second day. They told him he would be a good receiver and to make sure to bring gloves.

"I brought snow mittens," he said. "I didn't know there was a difference. They laughed at me again. I was like a water boy freshman and sophomore year, which was fine with me. Then they said I could play running back and running back is like an easy position. They just hand you the ball and you do wherever. I kind of excelled at that."

He rushed for more than 3,500 yards during his prep career and earned a scholarship to Colorado. During his first two years in Boulder, he earned the nickname "Energizer Bunny" because he constantly sprinted whether it was in drills, during a play or on the way back to the huddle after the play.

"He reminds me of (former CU defensive lineman) Abe Wright a little bit in that he just has that divine spark," coach Dan Hawkins said. "Those guys never have a bad day. I mean, they're just happy all the time and full of life. Yeah, he's pretty unique."

Lockridge began to get his hands on the ball as a third-year sophomore last season. He returned a kickoff 98 yards for a touchdown late in the year at Oklahoma State and averaged 23.3 yards on 30 returns over the course of the season.

He rushed 14 times for 109 yards two weeks ago against Hawaii, producing his first 100-yard game at the college level. While he has been improving on the field, he has continued expanding his repertoire and adding to his resume off it.

He taught himself to play guitar because his dorm room wasn't big enough for a piano when he was a freshman and has started to teach himself to play the violin, despite not being able to read music.

These days he lives with wide receiver Scotty McKnight, who says Lockridge can be much too accommodating to people.

McKnight said he is teaching Lockridge to say no more often. He said it hasn't been uncommon in the past for his roommate to make multiple trips in one day to Denver International Airport to pick up stranded teammates.

"He is the best roommate ever," McKnight said. "He is super clean. He won't even let me do the dishes.

"He's like, 'You won't do them right. I'm going to do them.' One time I went out of town to New York and he had like mounted my TV on the wall for me and made my bed. He's just the nicest guy ever."

Lockridge said he has a love for the game more now than ever, but the one place he deviates from most of his teammates is admitting to not having an NFL dream.

"I'm passionate about it, but I love keeping it a hobby," Lockridge said. "It's fun. It's a sport. It's fun. If the NFL happens, that could be great, I'll definitely take the opportunity, but if not, it's not the end of life. I'm opening a financial firm in two years."

McKnight said if he ever has a daughter, he hopes she will marry someone just like Lockridge.

"He's going to be successful, he's going to make a difference whatever he does," he said.

Close Window

Send To Printer

Big Bulldog turnout expected at CU-Boulder game

Hotel Boulderado: 'This football game has completely booked us up'

By Vanessa Miller Camera Staff Writer Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/29/2010 09: 39: 49 PM MDT

Even though 1,400 miles separate the University of Georgia and the University of Colorado, hordes of Bulldog fans are expected to show up for Saturday's match-up.

Will Simpson, CU's director of ticket operations, said fans of the Georgia Bulldogs are known for "traveling well," and CU allotted the school 5,000 of the 53,600 tickets to sell to its contingent. A typical team visiting Folsom Field is allotted around 3,850, Simpson said.

"And they could have bought more tickets through other means," he said. "There could be more than that coming."

Georgia originally requested 9,000 tickets for this weekend's game, according to CU Athletic Director Mike Bohn, and CU - to keep Bulldog fans from snagging more tickets online -- sold tickets to the Georgia game as part of a three-pack. For weeks, the only way to get tickets to Saturday's 5 p.m. game was to buy tickets to three CU games.

Single-game tickets now are available, Simpson said, and plenty of people are scalping tickets online.

"It's going to be a good crowd," he said.

Georgia fans were so desperate to get seats that they tried to beat CU's online system in August by fraudulently using a promotion code to secure tickets in a special section set aside for the family members of CU's 1990 national championship team. Nearly 30 people bought a total of 123 tickets using the promotional code, but all those tickets were voided and refunded.

CU police also have been in contact with Georgia officials who warned that a lot of people are planning to come to Boulder for the game, said CU police spokeswoman Molly Bosley.

"We understand their fans do travel in large numbers, and in light of the expected crowd, we expect a packed house and do have law enforcement around for large numbers," Bosley said.

Bosley said night games also tend to result in rowdier fans who've had all day to drink.

"It increases the number of people attending the game already drunk," she said.

The Georgia Alumni Association has contacted CU police to let them know about a tailgate event involving 3,000-plus people planned on the campus before the game.

"We will be providing law enforcement for that event, along with privately hired security," Bosley said. "It's an invitation-only private event, but it is expected to be quite large."

Some locals are dreading the arrival of the Bulldogs fans.

"I view them as the rudest and most hostile fans I have ever witnessed from a football game," said Brad Morrow, who used to live in Atlanta before moving to Colorado.

But while the arriving flood of red and black-clad Georgia fans has CU faithful bracing for the worst, Boulder businesses are thrilled to have the extra foot traffic.

Lynn Brewer, sales and marketing coordinator for the Hotel Boulderado, said the hotel has been booked solid this weekend for five months.

People have been calling to try to make reservations for weddings or unrelated events, Brewer said, "and I have to say, 'I'm sorry, but this football game has completely booked us up.'"

Close Window

Send To Printer

denverpost.com

college football

Buffs defensive tackles Cunningham, Pericak get it done low key

By Tom Kensler The Denver Post

Posted: 09/30/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — There's no secret handshake. Or matching tattoos. Colorado starting defensive tackles Curtis Cunningham and Will Pericak certainly aren't into chest bumps or fist pumps.

OK, an understated low-five might follow after either makes a good play. But usually it's just a smile, maybe a slight nod. Quiet and introspective by nature, Cunningham and Pericak (pronounced "pre-check") leave the animated celebrations to others.

"We might do something subtle, or glance over to the other guy and say, 'Good job,' " Cunningham said. "We're definitely there for each other."

And there for CU, which ranks second among Big

12 teams in rushing defense and No. 7 nationally, thanks in large part to Cunningham, a 6-foot-1, 280-pound junior, and Pericak, a 6foot-4, 280-pound sophomore. Another big effort will be needed Saturday against Georgia's pro-style offense that relies heavily on the running game.

"Curtis and Will clog that middle," CU junior safety Anthony Perkins said. "They do a great job of just eating up blockers. When they eat up blockers, that allows the linebackers and safeties to make all the tackles, make the plays. There's no way our defense would be where it is today if it weren't for those guys."

Personality-wise, Cunningham and Pericak could pass for brothers. They are, in a way. Both are sons of the Front Range. Both played ball in the Denver area — Cunningham at Columbine, Pericak at Boulder High — so there's a bond.

"You've always got that Colorado pride, being a homegrown boy," Pericak said with a grin.

And neither considered leaving home. Cunningham did not take any other official recruiting visits. Pericak made a courtesy recruiting trip to Colorado State, but there was little doubt where he was headed. His mother, Wynn, works in the Denver office of University of Colorado president Bruce Benson, and he has a brother and sister who recently earned CU diplomas.

Is it any wonder they've developed a chemistry?

Advertisement



We focus on automating Marriott® Hotels' global invoice process. So they don't have to.

Learn more at RealBusiness.com





denverpost.com

"Curtis and I play off each other," Pericak said.
"If we slide one direction, the other person's job is to switch responsibilities. If we see something, we might make eye contact and run something."

Defensive line coach Romeo Bandison likes what he has in the middle.

"They work hard. They do everything that I ask," he said. "They're very reliable. They still have a ways to go. But they're on their way."

The same goes for their classwork. Cunningham is an international affairs major on track to graduate in four years. Pericak is following his siblings as a finance major and may graduate in three years. That's right, three years. If that happens, Pericak would play his final two seasons while enrolled in graduate school.

For now, they plan on sticking together, as each is in his second year as a starter.

"We've played together now for quite a while," Cunningham said, "so we're playing fast because we're confident in what we're doing and what the other guy is doing. And we'll need to play fast against Georgia, that's for sure."

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

Advertisement



Print Powered By Format Dynamics

All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

SEPTEMBER 29, 2010, 3:58 PM

CU's Pericak may graduate in three years — and stay

By TOM KENSLER | 3 1 Comment

BOULDER – Who says academics and athletics don't mix?

During an interview with Colorado third-year sophomore defensive tackle Will Pericak for a feature story that will run in Thursday's Denver Post, I was pleased to learn that the Boulder High graduate is a good student.

An extremely good student.

In fact, Pericak (pronounced "pre-check") may graduate in three years — next spring — as a business finance major.

If that happens, Pericak would play his final two seasons at CU while enrolled in graduate school. He carries a GPA of 3.5-plus.

His long-range plans include someday owning a finance company.

It's no wonder that Pericak picked up things quickly enough on the football field to earn a starting job last season as a redshirt-freshman — and that after learning a new position since he played linebacker and tight end in high school.

Hats off to a student-athlete in the truest sense.

By the way, Pericak said he would like to give the NFL a shot. He has a terrific and realistic attitude about that. "I'll work my butt (to get that opportunity) and then the NFL will let me know if I'm good enough," he said.

More from All Things Colorado Sports

- Sipili lone CU holdover from '06 meeting at Georgia
- Mahnke named CU's new starting nickel back [2]
- CU's Boyle may not use all three scholarships [3]
- CU's Burks to start against Missouri [4]
- Abbott settling in [5]

All Things Colorado Sports Recommends

- Nuggets to sign George Karl's son, Coby [6] (All Things Nuggets)
- Tracy's son drafted in 22nd round from Duquesne [7] (All Things Rockies)
- Today's lineups, Fowler in center and more on Matt Daley's beard [8] (All Things Rockies)



All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

SEPTEMBER 29, 2010, 12:14 PM

Sipili Ione CU holdover from '06 meeting at Georgia

By **TOM KENSLER** | Mo Comments

BOULDER – Senior linebacker Michael Sipili is the only remaining member of the Colorado football team that played in CU's heartbreaking 14-13 loss at Georgia in 2006. In football terms, that's a long time ago.

Sipili acknowledged that there isn't much he can apply from that game to what might happen in the rematch on Saturday in Boulder, except that he is well aware of the athleticism Georgia will bring to Folsom Field.

"They have a lot of athletes, being in the South," Sipili told me Wednesday following the Buffs practice.

"Being a true freshman, it was the first time I'd seen a lot of speed. And power. They had a combination of both."

Anything else translate to this game?

"No, except that we need to win," Sipili said. "They're coming in our house now."

There are other fifth-year seniors on the CU roster. But they redshirted in 2006, while Sipili used his redshirt year in 2007 when he was suspended by the university for an off-campus altercation.

Quarterback Cody Hawkins and perhaps other freshman redshirts made the trip to Athens but did not play in the game.

Sipili made four tackles against Georgia in 2006 and went on to earn honorable-mention freshman All-America honors from The Sporting News following the season.

Georgia also has only one player who took the field in the earlier matchup: wide receiver Kris Durham.

More from All Things Colorado Sports

- CU's Pericak may graduate in three years and stay [1]
- Mahnke named CU's new starting nickel back [2]
- Bonsu, Ussery to miss CU spring drills [3]
- No further signing day surprises for CU [4]
- Scott to Boulder Camera: I'm not coming back [5]

All Things Colorado Sports Recommends

- Helton scratched from lineup with injury [6] (All Things Rockies)
- Troubles at plate earn Tulowitzki bench seat [7] (All Things Rockies)

[&]quot;Because of that, everything happened fast.

Print page Close window



Longmont, Colorado Thursday, September 30, 2010

Publish Date: 9/30/2010

Patrick Mahnke is ready for the challenge this week.

By Brian Howell © 2010 Longmont Times-Call

The University of Colorado junior is slated to start at nickel back when the Buffs (2-1) host Georgia (1-3) on Saturday.

The linebacker from Parker will be the Buffs' fourth starting nickel back in four games.

"It's a hybrid position," he said. "It's kind of the best of both worlds. I like it."

Playing nickel is somewhat similar to linebacker, but nickel provides more space in which to work. There's also more man-to-man coverage, he said. "It's not that big of an adjustment," he said.

CU has lost a starting nickel back to injury in each of the first three games, including the original starter, Parker Orms, to a season-ending knee injury. Mahnke isn't worried about what he calls "the curse of the nickels."

"There's nothing I can do (about it)," he said.

WHERE'S HERROD?: Senior defensive end Marquez Herrod led the Buffs with six sacks last season, while playing in 44.5 plays per game.

This season, Herrod has been on the field for just 41 plays in three games. He has no sacks.

"He's rolling in there," head coach Dan Hawkins said. "It's just those other guys have been productive. But (Herrod) has been very steady and you know what he's going to do."

Ends Josh Hartigan (75 plays), Nick Kasa (66) and Forrest West (51) have all played more than Herrod.

West and freshman Chidera Uzo-Diribe are the only ends with a sack this season.

CHANGES: CU and Georgia have met just once in their history, back in 2006. That was Hawkins' first season.

When asked what CU could get out of looking back at that, Hawkins said, "Not a whole lot, really."

Just two players that'll be in uniform on Saturday played in that 2006 game — CU's Michael Sipili and Georgia's Kris Durham.

Brian Howell

Print page





Longmont, Colorado Thursday, September 30, 2010

Publish Date: 9/30/2010

Green hopes to prove himself

By Brian Howell © 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Pick up almost any 2010 college football preview magazine and it'll show that Georgia's A.J. Green is one of the two best receivers in the country.

"Big, great hands; great ball skills; great speed," Colorado cornerback Jimmy Smith said. "He's a top 10 (NFL Draft) pick. When I watch him on film, that's exactly what I see.

Green hasn't had a chance to prove his talent yet this year, but he will on Saturday when the Bulldogs (1-3) come to Boulder to take on Colorado (2-1) at Folsom Field.

"I'm gonna go get loose out there," Green, a junior, said in a press conference with Georgia media this week. "I worked so hard and I had to miss four games. This offseason was probably one of my best offseasons. Now it's about that time to show people what I was missing. I still have stuff to prove. I'm going to have a lot of catching up to do."

Green was suspended by the NCAA for the first four games of the season after he sold his 2008 Independence Bowl jersey for \$1,000 in the spring of 2009. The NCAA learned of that incident this summer.

Saturday will be Green's first game of the season, and the Buffs are preparing for his arrival.

"I think they need that shot in the arm and I think it'll be good for them," CU head coach Dan Hawkins said of Georgia getting Green back in its lineup. "He's obviously an extremely talented player. It certainly changes the way you do things defensively, because you have to account for him."

Covering Green won't be easy.

"He's a guy who can go up and get it," Hawkins said. "Sometimes, even though you've got him covered, that doesn't mean anything."

The Buffs will do their best, however. Smith and Jalil Brown are two of the best cornerbacks in the Big 12 and they know they've got a challenge ahead of them.

"Typically with a guy his size — a bigger receiver — they're usually a little slower and easier to guard," CU cornerback Jalil Brown said. "But, he's a big guy and he can move, too. You have to be on point every single play. He can do it all."

The 6-foot-4, 212-pound Green caught 53 passes for 808 yards and six touchdowns in 2009. He had 56 catches for 963 yards and eight touchdowns in 2008, when Georgia's offense was led by current Detroit Lions quarterback Matthew Stafford and Denver Broncos running back Knowshon Moreno.

In Green's absence, Georgia has struggled on offense. After putting up 55 points in a non-conference win over Louisiana-Lafayette to start the year, the Bulldogs are averaging just 14 points the past three weeks.

Smith figures that adding Green will make a difference.

"He's the deep threat," Smith said. "I assume he can change (the offense). I would assume they're going to feed him the ball. I think they might look to him for some big plays."

Georgia is quarterbacked by redshirt freshman Aaron Murray. His top targets have been Kris Durham (17 catches for 324 yards) and Tavarres King (nine for 198). Brown said the Buffs can't get too caught up in Green's return and forget about the others.

"We can't really overlook the guys they have that have been playing the last four weeks and have been showing they can make plays," Brown said. "We have to concentrate on them as well."

Green, however, is likely to become a favorite target of Murray's. Brown, who plays left corner, and Smith, who lines up on the right, will both get opportunities to cover Green. And, both can't wait.

"For me, I like to go against the best because that's the reason I'm here: I'm trying to be the best," Smith said. "When that challenge presents itself, it's something I'm looking forward to."

Brown said the Buffs could probably put double-coverage on Green if needed. But, he's hoping the Buffs don't need it.

"Myself and Jimmy, we're going to be confident and we're ready to go out there and man-up against him," he said.

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

Sep 29, 2010 8:26 pm US/Mountain

Buffs Look To Blackout The Bulldogs

MIKE KOMADINA - CBS4 Sports Intern

BOULDER, Colo. (CBS4) — If you've been in Colorado the past two weeks, the temperature would make you think you were living in the South. After spending this time practicing in the scorching Boulder heat, the CU football team returns to the field this weekend against the University of Georgia. The Bulldogs venture to the Mountain Time Zone for only the fifth time ever.

While the heat may make Georgia feel at home, Boulder's elevation could give CU an advantage

Anyone who watched the second half of CU's 31-13 victory over Hawaii could see how the elevation wore down the visitors, especially after the Buffs switched to a no-huddle offense "It's hard for teams to come in here and play a full 60 minutes," said quarterback Tyler Hansen. "We use the elevation to our advantage."

Will CU be in the no-huddle this weekend? "We always have it in our back pocket," said coach Dan Hawkins, "We just have to see how the game goes."

Georgia enters the game on a three-game losing streak for the first time in over a decade, desperate for a win. The Bulldogs (1-3) will receive a much-needed boost on Saturday. Wide receiver A.J. Green returns after serving a four-game suspension for selling his game-worn jersey from last season's Independence Bowl. The 6'4" junior is the Bulldogs' biggest threat on offense and has been projected by many experts as a top-10 pick in the 2011 NFL draft, should he decide to turn pro. Facing big, fast wide receivers is nothing new for CU cornerback Jalii Brown, but he is not taking Green lightly. "He's a big guy and he can move too. You have to be on point every single play. I think this week I'm definitely going to have my work cut out for me," said Brown.

Two of the nation's best run defense will also be on display on Saturday. The Buffs boast the seventh best rushing defense in the country, while the Bulldog's are ranked 30th. After gaining 252 yards on the ground against Hawaii, the Buffs hope to continue their success against Georgia.

"Having the run game makes me more comfortable." said Hansen

A comfortable Hansen lead the Buffs to 31 second-half points against Hawaii. This week, however, his focus is on playing a complete game. "The second-half especially helped our confidence out...but we've got to go put a full football game together and move the ball."

Saturday's game is also an opportunity for CU to return to its glory days. The university will honor the 1990 National Championship team and, as of September 27th, 78 players from that team have promised to be in attendance. Current Buffs know that all eyes will be on them when they take the field. "That 1990 team laid the foundation. We have to prove to them that we're upholding the tradition," said running back Brian Lockridge.

One tradition not lost is the popularity of each school's mascot. In a recent survey of "coolest NCAA mascots," Ralphie, CU's 1,300-pound buffalo, and Uga, Georgia's bulldog, were ranked first and second respectively. Both animals will be on the field Saturday.

CU has labeled the game a "blackout," encouraging all fans to wear black in support. The last time the Buffs hosted a "blackout" game at Folsom Field, in 2008, they stunned then-21st ranked West Virginia 17-14 in overtime. "It's a special game," said Brown.

The game is expected to be a sellout. Kickoff is at 5pm and can be seen on Fox Sports Net.

(© MMX CBS Television Stations, Inc. All Rights Reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten, or redistributed.)

2urious & Controversial News

■ Watch Australia's Most Awkward TV Moment

Watch Australia's Most Awkward TV Moment
Brural Sign Theft Solution: Boring Names

Man Says He Thought Officer Was A Zombie

Knife Removed From Head After 3 Years

Man Dumps Paint On Self To Avoid Tase

Comic Breaks Record With 40 Hour Act

Slideshow: Colorado's Weirdest Festival
Slideshow: Colorado's Weirdest Crime

Slideshow: Colorado's Weirdest Crime
Slideshow: Colorado's Weirdest House

Police: Man Stole Flag, Put Up Hippo Toy



Wide receiver Scotty McKnight of the CU Buffaloes celebrates a 27 yard touchdown reception to give the Buffs a 14-0 lead over the CSU Rams in the second quarter of the Rocky Mountain Showdown at INVESCO Field at Mile High on September 4, 2010 in Denver. Doug Pensinger/Getty Images



Showdown

Related Stories

Colorado Authorized To Move To Pac-10 In 2011

Buffs Big Second Half Leads The Way To Victory (9/19/2010)

Buffs Battered In "Pac-12" Preview (9/11/2010)





Back to web version

Thursday, Sep 30, 2010

Posted on Wed, Sep. 29, 2010

Georgia (1-3) at Colorado (2-1)

By Sports Network The Sports Network

FACTS & STATS: Site: Folsom Field (53,613) -- Boulder, Colorado. Television: FSN. Home Record: Georgia 1-1, Colorado 1-0. Away Record: Georgia 0-2, Colorado 0-1. Neutral Record: Georgia 0-0, Colorado 1-0. Conference Record: Georgia 0-3, Colorado 0-0. Series Record: Georgia leads, 1-0.

GAME NOTES: The Colorado Buffaloes will close out the non-conference portion of their schedule when they host the Georgia Bulldogs this Saturday at Folsom Field.

Colorado has not won back-to-back games since opening the 2008 season with three straight wins. The Buffaloes had a bye last week after notching a 31-13 win over Hawaii on September 18th. They'll open their Big 12 schedule next week against Baylor.

Meanwhile, the Bulldogs find themselves in a rare position as they've lost three straight for the first time since 1990. They are also 0-3 in the SEC for the first time since 1993. Last week, Georgia suffered a 24-12 loss at Mississippi State.

In the only prior meeting between these two schools, Georgia rallied for a 14-13 come-from-behind win in Athens during the 2006 season.

Georgia's offense was stifled by Mississippi State in its most recent outing, mustering only a pair of field goals until the final minutes. Those field goals were the end result of the Bulldogs' only two trips to the red zone, as they weren't able to put the ball in the end zone. Aaron Murray completed 18- of-31 passes for Georgia, finishing with 274 yards and a touchdown. The run game was virtually nonexistent, with Washaun Ealey registering a team-high 36 yards on 10 carries. Through three games, Ealey is averaging 66.0 yards per game on the ground and has found the end zone only once. Murray is completing 61 percent of his passes while throwing for 219.8 yards per game, with five touchdowns and two interceptions. His top target has been Kris Durham, who has caught 17 passes for 324 yards and a TD.

Defensively, Georgia's strength is stopping the run, which should present a stark contrast from the Hawaii run defense that Colorado faced in its last outing. The Bulldogs are allowing 108.8 yards per game on the ground, which ranks 30th in the nation. However, they had some trouble containing Mississippi State quarterback Chris Relf, who has the ability to hurt defenses with his legs. In that game, Relf threw for 148 yards and two scores, and he also gashed the Georgia defense for 109 yards (5.4 ypc) on the ground. MSU tailback Vick Ballard added 64 yards and a TD on 13 carries (4.9 ypc). Look for Georgia to refocus on clamping down against the run. That starts with linebacker Akeem Dent and strong safety Bacarri Rambo, the team co-leaders with 30 tackles apiece.

Against Hawaii two weeks ago, the Buffaloes trailed 10-0 at halftime as their offense sputtered along. But in the second half, they relied heavily on the running game, and the momentum quickly tilted in their favor. Colorado went on to accumulate 252 yards and a pair of touchdowns on the ground to seal the victory. The Buffs converted 10-of-14 third downs and held an 11-minute edge in time of possession. Rodney Stewart (106 yds, 4.8 ypc, 2 TD) and Brian Lockridge (109 yds, 7.8 ypc) each went over the century mark rushing for Colorado. Granted, Hawaii's run defense is not indicative of what CU will face against an SEC squad like Georgia. Still, when the Buffaloes have the ball, expect Stewart to get a heavy workload.

Defensively, Colorado's strength has been stopping the run, as the team ranks seventh in the nation in run defense (71.7 ypg). Part of that has to do with the opponents' style of play -- Hawaii dialed up 42 pass plays and only 13 running plays a week ago. And against California in the second week of the season, the Golden Bears focused in on the passing attack with quarterback Kevin Riley tossing four touchdowns. The struggling Bulldogs haven't flashed much of a running game thus far, but look for them to test Colorado in that area. One of the keys for CU will be getting off the field on third-down situations. Opponents have converted only a combined 8-of-39 third and fourth downs against the Buffs, which leads the nation.

Colorado has had a couple of weeks to prepare for this showdown, and the home crowd figures to be buzzing. Georgia can offset the atmosphere with a quick score or two, and look for Murray and company to try and accomplish just that.

Sports Network Predicted Outcome: Georgia 30, Colorado 14

Game Date and Time

© 2010 Kansas City Star and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. http://www.kansascity.com