



Receiver Paul Richardson was CU's top returning playmaker for 2012.

Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: Buffs React To Richardson's Injury, Absence

Release: 04/10/2012 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER - Doug Rippy's roommate was among those who talked the Colorado linebacker through dark times last fall when a knee injury prematurely ended Rippy's junior season and placed him in a spectator's role this spring.

Late Monday night, it was Rippy's turn to begin talking his roomie and close friend through the same sort of turbulence and grief. That afternoon's practice saw junior receiver Paul Richardson - CU's top returning playmaker - leave the field on a motorized cart with an injury that later would be diagnosed as a torn anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) and cartilage damage.

If Buffaloes coach Jon Embree feels Lady Luck jilted him so close to the end of spring drills, here's why: During a spring in which Embree and his staff already were injury conscious because of an abnormally low number of available players, Richardson's injury came on the third-to-last day of practice on the third-to-last play before a walk-through in the next period. And Richardson already was on a non-participation list for Saturday's spring game (5 p.m., Folsom Field) to ensure he would go into August camp whole and healthy.

So much for planning . . . but until Richardson's left knee gave way, severe injuries hadn't piled up. Sophomore quarterback Nick Hirschman broke a bone in his foot before spring drills started, but he'll return for August camp. Junior defensive back Parker Orms suffered an early hamstring injury that sidelined him for the remainder of the spring, but he's expected back this summer. Then came Richardson . . .

"There's a handful of guys that run what I call a 'pitch count' throughout spring," Embree said. "We've been fortunate throughout spring and a lot of those guys aren't going to play in the spring game . . . in the spring you want to get some key guys better, evaluate people and come out of it healthy. Unfortunately, we weren't able to do the last."

Rippy, who was watching Monday, could feel Richardson's pain then and later that night. "I told him after he gets started with rehab and prehab he'll be fine, but the day after surgery (it will come when the swelling subsides) he'll feel like crap," Rippy said. "He'll make it through; he's a strong person and has a good spirit about him. He'll be all right."

Now, the Buffs must discover how to be all right without him in 2012. Embree said there might be an outside chance that "P-Rich" "could possibly be back" before season's end "if everything's perfect . . . but it would have to be a unique set of circumstances." Very unique; since he played as a true freshman in 2010 and a sophomore in 2011, Richardson has a redshirt season available for 2012.

So CU will finish its final two spring practices - Thursday and Saturday - and point toward August camp and its opener against Colorado State knowing Richardson won't be available. Richardson hurt the same knee last fall, resulting in his absence from four games and reducing his role to little more than a decoy for much of the rest of the season.

Nonetheless, his 39 receptions in nine games for 555 yards and five touchdowns placed him third on the team in receiving. Of that total, however, 11 of the receptions and 284 of the yards came on one record-setting afternoon vs. California in Game 2.

The knee injury reduced Richardson's effectiveness for the latter part of the year, but he had rededicated himself after returning from Christmas break and had reestablished his role as a team leader. In an interview before spring practice began, he said he wanted his coaches and teammates to know he was "100 percent here, I'm all in; there are no question marks and it's going to show. I don't want to be seen in a dark light; I want to be seen in a bright light."

Embree and Malcolm Blacken, CU's director of speed, strength and conditioning, couldn't see him in any other way. Richardson blew away his competition during Coaches' Week, telling staffers, "I feel like I'm a monster; this is what I was made to do. I know how hungry I am and where I want to be in life; it all determines my work ethic. I'm doing it every day with a smile on my face."

Replacing Richardson won't be easy. Embree even indicated it was impossible: "You don't replace him. What we have to do is find out what other people can do and ask them to do those things. Then find a way to as effective as you can be and continue to move the ball. You've got to be creative. There's a lot of different things you have to do. The great thing about football it is a team game at the end of the day. So other people will have to pick up the slack. That's what we'll do."

Asking that of one player would be unfair. Rippy said his roommate was the hardest player on the roster to tackle. Richardson's ability to change directions and speed upon catching the ball made him more elusive than any other offensive player last season - including tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart.

"That's a big role to fill because 'P-Rich' is just a special, special player," sophomore receiver Tyler McCulloch said. "It doesn't necessarily create pressure but there's just a lot more urgency to have everyone step up. Everyone is going to want to step up individually, but as a unit, as a whole, we all need to step up."

Added redshirt freshman receiver Nelson Spruce: "It's going to be a collective thing. We all have different specialties and are different receivers. I think we've been coming together; as long as we continue we should be able to keep producing."

Receivers coach Bobby Kennedy has three freshmen arriving this summer, each having been promised scrutiny that now rises several levels due to Richardson's injury. Kennedy used then-redshirt freshman Keenan Canty as

Richardson's replacement last season, but said Tuesday with his current group this time around, "It's all up in the air . . . there's no clear guy yet that I've decided or coach Embree has decided is going to step into that position. We've got to find the next-best guy, whether it's one of those freshmen . . . those guys have to come in, we have to see what they can do and we'll make that decision in the fall."

Jeffery Thomas (Dallas), Peyton Williams (Southlake, Texas) and Gerald Thomas (New Orleans) will be given ample opportunity to impress, and as Embree has told the receivers currently on his roster, "The tie goes to the youth. So you'd better win it."

Rippy and Embree said Richardson's focus already has shifted to school work and increased work in the weight room. Said Embree: "We talked about a plan we'll put together from a weight room perspective and an academic perspective, just so when he does come back he's ready to go and when he hits his fifth year he's ready to graduate. He's upbeat, in pretty good spirits, but he'll be up and down. It's a natural process to go through that."

Kennedy, who began coaching Texas' receivers in 2004 when Jordan Shipley suffered a season-ending knee injury, found Richardson's mood on Tuesday "pretty good," attributing it to a "maturity level that's beyond what it was last year. Hopefully, he can come out of this thing better on the other end."

The Buffs hope they can, too.

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

SHOW MENU



CU Buffs lose top WR Paul Richardson for season

By Brian Howell, Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Colorado football coach Jon Embree wanted plenty of time to evaluate his young, unproven receivers this spring.

Embree and his staff now have more of that time than they ever wanted.

On Tuesday, CU confirmed that junior receiver Paul Richardson tore an ACL and suffered cartilage damage in his left knee during a non-contact drill on Monday.

"Unfortunately that means, most likely, the year," Embree said after practice on Tuesday.

While running a special teams drill, Richardson planted his foot and tried to turn when his knee gave out. Embree said the Buffs were three plays away from doing a walk-through to end practice.

Initially, CU thought Richardson injured his ankle. The Buffs found out late Monday that it was much more than that.

Typically, it takes at least six months of rehabilitation after surgery to recover from an ACL tear.

Richardson has to wait for the swelling to go down before scheduling surgery. Richardson sprained the same knee last season, limiting him to nine games.

"I'm sure if everything goes perfect he could possibly be back before that," Embree said. "It would have to be a unique set of circumstances (for him to return)."

Most likely, Richardson will miss the entire season. He has yet to use his redshirt year, and it's likely he will use that and have two years of eligibility remaining.

"It's a hit, no matter who that is," receivers coach Bobby Kennedy said. "In this sport, you've got to be ready to move on."

It's going to be tough to replace Richardson, however.

During the past two seasons, Richardson has 73 catches for 1,069 yards and nine touchdowns.

Last year, he caught 39 passes for 555 yards and five scores. That included a game in which he had a school-record 284 receiving yards in a 36-33 overtime loss to Cal.

With Richardson out, CU will go into 2012 without its top three pass catchers from last season: running back Rodney Stewart, Toney Clemons and Richardson. That trio combined for 127 catches for 1,806 yards and 13 touchdowns.

Embree had spent much of the spring looking at other receivers, such as Nelson Spruce, Keenan

Canty and Tyler McCulloch, in an effort to find a No. 2 and to limit Richardson.

"We didn't practice him a lot anyway, just so we could start to evaluate some of the guys behind him," Embree said. "That'll help expedite this process when the young guys (three true freshmen receivers are expected to arrive in the fall) get in."

Just a few weeks ago, Richardson beamed with excitement about the upcoming 2012 football season. He spoke about his renewed energy and maturity.

Injuring his knee last season not only limited him on the field, but it also impacted his mental outlook. But, after several weeks of rehabilitation and mental healing, he figured to come back stronger and more mature this season.

"I'm just striving to be the best I can in every category," he said last month.

Now, his role will be much different than anticipated.

"He's going to be in a situation where he's going to be helping the younger guys," Embree said. "He's a very smart player; he's very instinctive, too. His knowledge will help not just the young guys, but the guys that are in the room currently that are behind him."

Richardson was not available for comment Tuesday, but Embree and Kennedy both said he was upbeat.

"That's one thing he's gotten better at, dealing with disappointment," Kennedy said.

The Buffs were certainly disappointed on Tuesday, but Embree said the team has no choice but to deal with it and look ahead.

"It is a team game at the end of the day," he said. "Other people have to pick up the slack, so that's what we'll do."

Notable

Richardson's injury leaves running back Tony Jones (27 catches) as the leading pass catcher from 2011. Among wide receivers, Canty (14 catches), McCulloch (10) and DaVaughn Thornton (six) are the only healthy players that caught passes in 2011. ... The Buffs are off today. They'll practice again Thursday and then wrap up spring drills with the annual spring game on Saturday.

CU Buffs lose WR Paul Richardson for 2012 after knee injury

By The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

The 2012 college football season is months away, but the Colorado Buffaloes have already lost perhaps their most talented player.

Paul Richardson, a junior wide receiver, suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament in his left knee at practice Monday and will miss the season.

Richardson will have surgery to repair the knee and then will need at least six months of rehabilitation, according to CU. He can use a redshirt option to save a year of eligibility.

"I thought at first he just rolled his ankle, and it turned out to be this," Buffs coach Jon Embree said in a news release.

Richardson ranked third among CU receivers last season despite missing four games because of a sprained knee — the same knee he injured this week. In a noncontact drill, near the end of Monday's practice, Richardson planted his left leg, turned and tore the ligament. CU said there also is cartilage damage in the knee.

"P-Rich is a special player. And it's hard to replace someone like that," CU sophomore wide receiver Tyler McCulloch told reporters Tuesday. "As a unit, everyone just needs to step up."

Bobby Kennedy, the CU wide receivers coach, said: "Anytime a guy gets an injury, it's hard. But you play this game long enough, there's going to be injuries. You have to get the next guy ready."

Embree said Richardson is taking his latest knee injury in stride.

"He was upbeat. He was in pretty good spirits," Embree said. "He'll be up and down (emotionally), that's part of the process. It's just unfortunate."

Richardson had 39 catches for 555 yards and five touchdowns last year.

In a game against California, Richardson set a school record with 284 receiving yards and tied a school record with 11 receptions.

"It's a shame because he's worked real hard and was doing a great job, both on and off the field," Embree said, "leading by example and improving on all the things he needed to work on."

Embree added: "I told him that when I played, a torn ACL was doomsday for a skill-position player. Now, he'll be able to come back stronger and faster. He's obviously disappointed, but he is in great spirits about what happened and will make the most of his redshirt year available to him."

The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

APRIL 11, 2012, 8:15 AM

Three CU Buffs receivers work in Richardson's spot

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Tuesday night after practice, Colorado wideout Keenan Canty told reporters that he was joined by two others in the Z-receiver position formerly held by injured standout Paul Richardson.

Canty (5-foot-9, 160 pounds), a sophomore to be, shared repetitions with redshirt freshman Nelson Spruce (6-2, 195) and senior-to-be Dustin Ebner (6-1, 180), a former walk-on now on scholarship.

Of course, further shuffling is expected, especially when three incoming freshman wide receivers from the Dallas-Fort Worth area arrive this summer: Gerald Thomas (5-11, 175), Jeffrey Thomas (6-3, 190) and Peyton Williams (6-1, 190).

Canty replaced Richardson at the “Z” last fall when Richardson missed four games during his sophomore season with a knee sprain. Richardson tore an ACL and cartilage in the same (left) knee during Monday's practice. He will require surgery and is likely done for the year.

Canty, who finished with 14 catches in 2011 as a redshirt freshman, said he's ready to again assume the role of Richardson's replacement if called upon.

“When someone goes down, that's always bad,” said Canty, a New Orleans native. “But you have to step up and hold your own. It was just a freak accident. He was going back and planted (without contact), and then he went down.

“Paul, I'll have to give it to him, he's very fast. I'm one of the quicker receivers, so I'm able to slip the line. I've been doing a pretty good job of that, and I've been working on my hands.”

Meanwhile, Richardson texted Wednesday morning: “Woke up this morning feeling a lot better knowing I have so much support from my family, friends, and teammates”

Colorado has one more closed practice on Thursday prior to Saturday's 5 p.m. spring game at Folsom Field. The spring game will be preceded by a CU football alumni flag football game at 3:30.

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2012/04/11/cu-buffs-receivers-work-richardsons-spot/23595/>

Click [here](#) to print.

All contents [Copyright © 2011 The Denver Post](#) or other copyright holders. All rights reserved. | [Privacy Policy](#) | This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed for any commercial purpose.

The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

APRIL 10, 2012, 4:33 PM

CU Buffs' Richardson lost for season but Bieniemy likes young talent

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — The loss of star wide receiver Paul Richardson (ACL tear in Monday's practice) for the season is a big blow to the Colorado football program which hopes to improve substantially on last year's 3-10 record.

But offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy told me Tuesday that he is impressed with the young receivers already on the Buffs roster and expects big things from three signees who will arrive in August.

"All of the guys have done a great job this spring," Bieniemy said. "Last year was about like, 'Let's get together for lunch and see who can do what.' This year, if we call a formation, these kids know where to line up. If we call a concept, they know what exactly to do. We're not just talking about splits anymore. We're talking about details."

Among the returning wide receivers, Colorado will be looking to sophomores-to-be Keenan Canty and Tyler McCulloch, redshirt freshman Nelson Spruce and converted tight end DaVaughn Thornton.

Three Texas wideouts from the Dallas-Fort Worth area signed with the Buffs in February and will join the program this summer: Gerald Thomas (5-11, 175 pounds, The Colony HS), Jeffrey Thomas (6-3, 190, Duncanville HS) and Peyton Williams (6-1, 190, Southlake Carroll HS).

"We recruited to needs," Bieniemy said. "All the guys we signed will have a chance to help us as freshmen."

Richardson, CU's fastest receiver and top homerun threat, was hurt Monday. At the time, CU coach Jon Embree thought it was an ankle injury. The school announced the diagnosis of a season-ending ACL tear Tuesday afternoon. He will undergo surgery to repair the torn knee ligament.

A junior-to-be, Richardson played as a true freshman and has an available redshirt year.

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2012/04/10/cu-buffs-richardson-lost-season-bieniemy-likes-young-talent/23592/>

Click [here](#) to print.

All contents [Copyright © 2011 The Denver Post](#) or other copyright holders. All rights reserved. | [Privacy Policy](#) | This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed for any commercial purpose.

**ESPN.com:** Pac-12[\[Print without images\]](#)

Tuesday, April 10, 2012

Questions now loom for Colorado receivers

By Kevin Gemmell

Year one was rough for Jon Embree and Colorado. Year two might be worse.

The Buffaloes learned that wide receiver [Paul Richardson](#) would be lost for the year with a torn knee ligament -- an injury that occurred during a non-contact special teams drill.

Richardson is hands-down Colorado's best offensive weapon. And he will be again if/when he returns for the 2013 season as expected. He has a redshirt year to burn, which helps, but it doesn't change the fact the Buffaloes will be scrambling for playmakers this season.

"I told him that when I played, a torn ACL was doomsday for a skill position player," Embree said in statement. "Now, he'll be able to come back stronger and faster. He's obviously disappointed, but he is in great spirits about what happened and will make the most of his redshirt year available to him."

Last year's leading receiver, running back Rodney Stewart, is gone. The leading receiver who actually played receiver, [Toney Clemens](#) is gone. Richardson was third, he's gone. Tight end [Ryan Deehan](#), gone. Wide receiver [Logan Gray](#), gone.

Starting to get the picture? And hanging over all of this is, of course, a question mark at quarterback. Texas transfer [Connor Wood](#) is getting all of the work with the first team, though that will change when [Nick Hirschman](#) returns from a broken foot in the fall.

So with Richardson out who are these guys going to be throwing to?

[Keenan Canty](#) probably has the most speed of anyone in the group. He caught 14 balls for 161 yards last season. [Tyler McCulloch](#) has pretty good size at 6-5, 210, but he's not as fast as Canty. McCulloch had 10 catches for 96 yards and a score last season. [Nelson Spruce](#) is coming off a redshirt year and there are a handful of walk-ons that could get into the mix.

Maybe that anonymity is a good thing and someone could emerge from that pack as a viable receiving option. But Richardson has the type of speed that defenses have to game-plan for. He could be counted on to draw extra attention which would have opened up more for the rest of the receivers.

Last year he set a school record with 284 receiving yards in Colorado's overtime loss to Cal. In that game he caught 11 balls - matching a school record. In two years, he's climbed to 21st on Colorado's all-time list of receiving yards (1,069), 25th in receptions (73) and tied for ninth in touchdown receptions (9).

His loss is a significant one, and yet another challenge Embree must face in year two.
