



David Bakhtiari is filling some huge shoes at left tackle, but he progressing into a perfect fit.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: O-line Appears Ready To Set Physical Tempo

Release: 08/10/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

(Note: Third in a series previewing the Buffs position-by-position during training camp. Today: Offensive line.)

BOULDER - At 6-foot-9, 300-plus pounds and oozing enough freakish athleticism to make him a first-round NFL draftee, Nate Solder's imprint on the University of Colorado's offensive line last season was as large as his shadow.

This season, David Bakhtiari finds himself slotted as Solder's replacement at left tackle. And as for trying to emerge from that massive Solder shadow, that's not a problem. Truth be known, Bakhtiari never was in it.

As a redshirt freshman in 2010, he started all 11 games at right tackle, by season's end grading out behind only one player - *correct*, Solder. (For the record, Solder was at 94.3 percent, Bakhtiari at 89.8.) When CU's new coaching staff was assembled and Steve Marshall returned as offensive line coach, he met with Bakhtiari about switching sides.

It was essentially the first and last time anyone has spoken with Bakhtiari about the shoes he's expected to fill on

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the vital left side of the line. But Bakhtiari knows something about big shoes - literally: "I'm a size 14, sometimes a 15. Nate wore about a 16," he said with a laugh. "I know what the expectations are."

Former CU defensive line coach Denver Johnson, who now holds the same position at Tulsa, immediately recognized Bakhtiari's potential. By the end of his first spring practice on his second tour in Boulder, Marshall also was a Bakhtiari believer.

A 31-year coaching veteran who directed Dallas All-Pro Andre Gurode at CU in 2000-01, Marshall's resume reads like a Road Atlas (11 Division-I stops, two in the NFL). His credibility is unassailable, and when he says of Bakhtiari, "I think he's a rising star," it carries weight.

"I don't know if he'll stay at tackle the rest of his career," Marshall continued, "but he's an excellent football player. Not to take anything away from some other guys, but as a young kid he's got a chance to be a good player.

"The only thing that maybe David lacks - he's 6-4 (and 295 pounds) and maybe his length is not like a Nate Solder. But if he learns to play with technique he can overcome that. In the run game, I think he can be a force when he learns everything."

Solder occasionally figures in the education process. He and Bakhtiari still stay in touch, and Bakhtiari says the finer points of their position are discussed - such as new techniques Solder picked up at the Senior Bowl.

"He's just a good guy," said Bakhtiari, adding he feels no pressure in being Solder's successor. "It's just like when I was emerging on the right side, I just take it day-by-day and try to stay calm. If anybody asks me, I'm just saying I'm going to play as hard as I can and do the best I can. Wherever the coaches want me, that's where I'll be to help the team."

Right now, that's on the left side of a line that likely will feature senior Ethan Adkins at left guard, senior Ryan Miller at right guard and sophomore Jack Harris at right tackle. Harris could be pushed by Sione Tau, a leaner senior who reported for camp within 5 pounds of his August target weight of 330. He was pushing 380 at one point last winter.

The center spot will be a three-way camp battle involving senior Shawn Daniels, freshman Daniel Munyer and sophomore Gus Handler. Junior college transfer Brad Cotner could enter the fray, depending on how quickly he adjusts, and Marshall stressed that his starting lineup against Hawaii on Sept. 3 could change by the middle of the month.

"I'll know more in the first half of the first game than I did during 27 practices (in camp)," Marshall said. "There's nothing in practice I can do to simulate game speed. I like this group as far as its willingness, and we do have some guys with some ability. But putting it all together is not going to be a process that's going to happen in the first or second game; it's going to be an on-going process. I'm trying to develop a lot of guys early. We play 13 straight weeks; we've got to have a lot of guys ready to go to the dance."

In that context, Miller, an All-Pac-12 candidate, is a "ballroom veteran" and is among the Buffs' acknowledged leaders. Marshall says the 6-8, 310-pound Miller will be "one of the better guys in our league this year. The kid I had last year at Cal, Mitch Schwartz who will be a senior this year, those two guys in my opinion are very similar. Ryan may be a little more athletic in some ways; I think he can be a very good player. He's a well-respected guy who's been through the wars here - good and bad, and he's had injuries."

Harris, a 6-5, 290-pounder who began making strides last season, has "been consistent," Marshall said. "He's a big athletic kid and he's worked extremely hard. He hasn't played much in games, but in his first 15 (spring practices) he's done some nice things. He's got to improve in all aspects, but he's got the capabilities and the right mind set. We'll see how it goes as we approach the game and make another evaluation."

Adkins (6-4, 290) is a quiet veteran who's played in 20 games, starting all 11 last season. "He's played a lot of football here," Marshall said. "He's worked harder and is a little leaner; I wanted him leaner because we do a lot

of things at that position . . . He's probably down to the 290 range now. This has been a little bit of a transition for him - learning a new, fast-paced offense. But I'm pleased with him; he doesn't say a lot, he just goes out and works hard. You like those older guys who've been through the battles - that's kind of where he is."

Developing depth is always a camp priority, and the need might be doubled at Marshall's position. O-lines dictate tempo, particularly in running games like CU has targeted. And in a 13-game schedule with no bye weeks, assorted injuries are bound to cut into man-hours.

Depth at all of his positions "is huge," Marshall said. "Without an off week, we need to have guys . . . guys are going to get nicked up, they're going to miss practice time and game time. We have to have guys ready to step up. We've really got to develop that depth and know we can replace some guys."

As for the O-line setting a rugged tempo, Bakhtiari said while it was emphasized last season, this season "it's really been ramped up. It's been emphasized by coach Marshall, coach (Eric) Bieniemy and coach (Jon) Embree - all three have been harping on it with us. We've been told how important it's going to be on that first play in the trenches. It's definitely been ramped up."

The need for cohesion in the O-line can't be overstated, and Bakhtiari believes while it's good now among the Buffs it will get better. "We get along well together and we're learning the plays better. (Cohesion) has developed but it needs to continue through this camp into the season," he said.

In a best-case scenario, said Marshall, "You'd always like to have four or five guys who have played two or three years together in college football. But the reality of it is, that's not going to happen. Getting that cohesion, doing things together is something we work on every day - and that's from a physical standpoint, from a mental standpoint, the whole deal.

"Offensive line is a repetition position. The more reps guys get together, the better, the more comfortable they are. It's a hard position to play. It goes fast. It's a specialist position."

Daniels, who he was sidelined by torn ligaments in his right foot last spring, finally was injury-free at the start of preseason camp. He said CU's new coaches "have done pretty well in creating that camaraderie in the whole team. I feel like the O-line has really come together over the summer. I think we're going to produce good numbers this year because we're more of a family oriented offensive line."

If there is a three-way dead heat at the center position entering the final stages of camp, Marshall's tie-breaker will be seniority - which means Daniels would emerge. But Daniels said he isn't counting on his upperclassman status earning him the job: "Coach has told us that everyone is competing and the guy who earns the job will get it - and that's how I'm going to practice."

He's also approaching the season for what it is - his last at CU. "It's my senior year and I haven't seen too much playing time," he said. "So I'll give it my best shot this year and see what happens."

The O-line could feature three senior starters, with another three in reserve roles. Leadership should start there, but because of his starting status last season Bakhtiari says he feels some leadership responsibility. At the same time, though, he notes he's the youngest of three siblings and knows "where my place is, and I've never really liked to take anyone's fire . . . but if I have a problem I feel like I have accessibility to any senior and tell him 'Hey, you're not being vocal enough' or 'You're not leading the right way and I need you to do this.' I don't want to take anyone's fire from his last season."

Marshall's lines carry a label of being technique and fundamentally sound, and he expects this one to be. He said understanding the philosophy of what Bieniemy, the offensive coordinator, wants is paramount to the O-line's success: "They go hand-in-hand; the better the guys feel about what to do, then they hone in how you do it. But we'll always work hard on technique and fundamentals and evaluate what guys can and can't do . . . if you're more familiar with how to do it, it's a lot easier.

"But we also have to work on fundamentals because at the end of the day, when things are going crazy in a game all you've got to go to is your fundamentals. That's a big, big emphasis; it was in the spring and will be in the fall."

Marshall appears overjoyed to be back in the college game, saying it gives him "immense satisfaction seeing guys that are 18 and being around them until they're 23. But I got satisfaction in pro ball, because those guys, if you're show you're going to help them and be there for them, they'll run through the wall for you.

"The NFL is a huge stage. Everything that happens to an offensive lineman . . . if we give up a quarterback sack it's a big, big deal. In college ball there's a lot of different aspects to my job as far as mentoring kids, just a lot to the job."

And for that reason, he says there is no realistic way to compare coaching in the NFL and college: "The comparison is there is no comparison. They are vastly different jobs . . . the recruiting, the academics, the other things that pull at you (in college). In the NFL, it's all football. The football is a lot the same - you teach some of the same techniques, but the jobs are vastly different."

Marshall, though, has been successful relating to players at both levels, probably because he's been the same person with each group.

"You've got to tell them the truth, you've got to be with them," he said. "There's tough love, there's pats on the back - all that stuff is part of it. But if they know you're out there to help them and you're on their side . . . in the offensive line you've got to make it a little bit fun. There's nobody who looks forward to going out there and running through the chutes and trying to stop a 300-pounder every day in practice. So we've got to be able to make it fun for them."

He's been able to achieve that, said Bakhtiari: "He's a great coach, he's well-rounded. He can be serious, he knows how to goof off at times. He knows how to get what needs to be done, done. And he knows how to make it enjoyable in the process. He can be on your ass and really chew you out and he can also give you a good pat on the back when you do a good job. He's a very good coach. We all enjoy him. I haven't heard anyone say they didn't like him."

It's always nice to be popular, but that's not how jobs are kept - and Marshall doesn't need to be reminded of that. He said the group he's working with can be very good: "Absolutely . . . I like their attitude and intensity. They're willing to do it. I think we're a little thin, but I think this group has the ability. We have to set the tempo for the offense . . . I like this group; we just have to keep going and pressing forward."

BUFF BITS: Sophomore defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe went head-over-heels after being cut block Wednesday morning, landing awkwardly on his neck and shoulders. Trainers attended to him immediately, but he eventually was taken from the field in an ambulance. However, that appeared to be a precautionary measure, and Coach Jon Embree told reporters after practice that Uzo-Diribe "is going to be fine . . . I'm sure he's going to be sore. There was a little bit of tingling (in his extremities), so it was just precautionary. You never want to take a risk with something like that." Trainer Miguel Rueda said all tests on Uzo-Diribe were negative and the player was released from a local hospital before 4 p.m. Wednesday . . . Embree said he feels good about the depth being developed in CU's defensive line: "Inside and outside we've got some guys . . . with our schedule, to play the way we need to play we're going to have get everybody that's traveling, that's up for the game, involved." He said expects both freshmen signees Stephane Nembot and Juda Parker "to be involved somewhere." . . . After a lackluster Tuesday afternoon practice, Embree said the Buffs regained their intensity level. "It was more of what we need . . . I told (athletic director) Mike Bohn this in the interview process: I'm not a want guy, I'm a need guy. We need to practice at a certain level. We're not good enough to just roll our helmets out there." . . . Defensive back Parker Orms (strained calf) continued to watch most of practice from a golf cart with his right leg elevated. Embree said he hopes Orms can do some individual work over the next couple of days and return next Monday or Tuesday . . . Chip Marks, the director of football operations under the former Buffs staff, is scheduled to join Mark Johnson and Larry Zimmer as a spotter in the KOA Radio booth on home game days this season.

THE INSIDE LOOK AT . . .

Offensive line

Coach: Steve Marshall, second stint on CU staff, first under Jon Embree.

Returning starters: LG Ethan Adkins, Sr.; RG Ryan Miller, Sr.; T David Bakhtiari, Soph.

Returnees: RT Jack Harris, Soph.; RT Sione Tau, Sr.; C Shawn Daniels, Sr.; C Daniel Munyer, Fr.-RS; C Gus Handler, Soph.; LG Kaiwi Crabb, Fr.-RS; LG Blake Behrens, Sr.; RG Ryan Dannewitz, Jr.; RG David Clark, Sr.

Newcomers: LT Alex Lewis, Fr.; C Brad Cotner, Fr.-RS.

Key losses: LT Nate Solder, C Mike Iltis, C Keenan Stevens, G Max Tuioti-Mariner.

Stat line: Among the three returning starters from 2010, Bakhtiari's season-ending grade of 89.8 percent was the highest. Next was Adkins at 89.4, then Miller at 88.9. In 847 plays last season, Miller allowed just two sacks and was whistled for two penalties.

Bottom line: O-lines set the offensive tempo, and often the tempo for the entire team. If the Buffs are going to be as physical as they're expected to be and run with the authority that Jon Embree and Eric Bieniemy want, Miller & Co. had best be up to the task. But all indications are that they can be. A huge factor in camp will be developing quality depth from a handful of younger players.

Next: Linebackers

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CU Buffs' cornerback needs become critical

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 08/11/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Talk about the continued uncertainty — and concern — over who Colorado will line up at the two cornerback spots: During a 10-minute segment of a practice this week, at least nine candidates took turns against the offense in a passing drill.

College coaches often lament that it's difficult enough to divvy up repetitions among four players at a position. Imagine finding reps for more than double that.

"It's hard with that many of us," sophomore corner Deji Olatoye said. "But they want to take a look at everybody. Nobody has taken the spot, so they keep rotating people in."

No one on the CU roster has ever started a college game at cornerback. So many cornerbacks run on and off the field after a given play, it's a wonder they don't run into one another. Among those who joined Olatoye in the auditions were seniors Travis Sandersfeld, Jonathan Hawkins and Arthur Jaffee, junior Makiri Pugh, sophomores Paul Vigo and Terrel Smith and freshmen Greg Henderson and River Thompson.

And to think the list could have grown. Sophomore Parker Orms has been out with a calf injury and is not expected back until next week. Another sophomore, Jered Bell, tore an ACL in

practice and is done for the season. True freshman Sherrard Harrington, ranked last fall by SuperPrep as the 11th-best high school senior in greater Washington, D.C., is pegged to join Bell on the redshirt roll after it was determined that a pre-existing hip problem would need up to six weeks to heal.

Sandersfeld (five), Hawkins (one), Orms (one) and Vigo (one) have career starts for Colorado at nickel back, and Smith (six) at strong safety.

Cornerback had been a position of strength for the Buffaloes in recent years with the likes of Cha'pelle Brown, Benjamin Burney, Jimmy Smith and Jalil Brown. Smith and Jalil Brown were selected in this year's NFL draft, Smith in the first round.

That pipeline of talent appears to have dried up,

Colorado Football

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at least temporarily.

"We've got a 'Help Wanted' sign out here; anybody want a job?" quipped Greg Brown, CU's defensive coordinator and defensive secondary coach. Brown was at Arizona in 2010 but coached Jimmy Smith, Jalil Brown, et al., during a previous stint in Boulder.

Greg Brown is genuinely worried about the position and said Bell might have helped.

"He looked the part of a corner," the coach said. "He could run."

Among the slew of candidates, there's scant time to separate the contenders from the pretenders. Opening-game opponent Hawaii features a pass-happy offense with senior quarterback Bryant Moniz, who threw for 330 yards (on 41 attempts) last year in a 31-13 loss to the Buffs in Boulder.

CU head coach Jon Embree said the numbers of players getting reps with the first and second teams "will be whittled down" at all positions after the staff analyzes film of Wednesday's practice. Cornerback, he acknowledged, is at the forefront of the staff's concerns.

"We're going to sit down and set a tentative travel group that we're going to take to Hawaii," Embree said. "I told the players, I'm not one of these guys that's going to just sit around for three weeks and figure out who can do it."

Embree said he expected "85, 90 percent" of the travel squad to be set by today.

"I think that will be good for the cornerbacks," Sandersfeld said. "When guys start to get more reps, they'll get more comfortable. That will help."

Uzo-Diribe injury not serious. Sophomore defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe was released from an area hospital Wednesday afternoon

after tests proved negative. Uzo-Diribe landed awkwardly on his neck and shoulder during a morning practice and remained down until an ambulance arrived.

Regarded as perhaps Colorado's best pass rusher, Uzo-Diribe did not lose consciousness or the use of his extremities.

According to a CU news release, Uzo-Diribe "will be sore and will return to practice as soon as possible."

Footnotes.

Two-a-day sessions are scheduled for today, 8:30-11 a.m., and 3:30-5:30 p.m. They are open to the public. . . . CU announced Wednesday that the Sept. 10 California at CU game will be televised by Fox College Sports Atlantic with a 1:30 p.m. kickoff. It was previously scheduled as a nonconference game and will not count in the Pac-12 league standings.

Staff writer John Henderson contributed to this report.

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THE DENVER POST

college football

Colorado DE Uzo-Diribe OK after neck injury

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 08/10/2011 11:58:49 AM MDT

BOULDER — The first injury scare of Colorado's August football camp occurred this morning when sophomore defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe was taken to an area hospital.

CU coach Jon Embree said Uzo-Diribe "landed kind of funny on his neck and shoulder."

Embree added that Uzo-Diribe, who is regarded as the team's top pass rusher, "will be fine." Uzo-Diribe never lost consciousness and was able to move his extremities.

"I'm sure he's going to be sore," Embree said.

The coach said immobilizing Uzo-Diribe and taking him by ambulance was precautionary.

"You never want to take a risk on something like that," the coach said.

CU is expected to release further information on Uzo-Diribe's condition later today.

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CU Buffs coach Embree will emphasize tight ends

Deehan likely to be major part of CU's passing game

By **Joshua Linden** Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/10/2011 05:29:10 PM MDT



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One sure way to get Colorado football coach Jon Embree to smile is to start talking about tight ends.

A former tight end himself for the Buffs and then in the NFL, he wore a wide grin on media day last weekend as he told of the running joke in the offensive meeting room that "Every pass read begins with the tight end."

"That's OK," Embree said with a smirk. "It should."

All jokes aside, the tight end position does figure to be key this fall for the Buffs as they transition to a more smash-mouth, run-oriented style of offense. The shift is one that has made for an added dose of excitement for the guys playing the role.

"The emphasis really is just power football," sophomore DaVaughn Thornton said after Wednesday's practice. "That's what it is and I like it."

It's not that the position was ignored under the former coaching staff. Riar Geer led the team in receiving in 2006, and he and Patrick Devenny were both among the Buffs' top five pass catchers in 2009.

But the increased emphasis on the run game -- and an increase in the number of tight ends on the field at any one time that comes along with it -- should also mean increased opportunities in the passing game for the big men, too.

"Generally, when you're play-actioning, tight ends are in the game, so that gives us better chances to get more guys the ball," said senior tight end Ryan Deehan, who caught a touchdown pass on the final play of practice Wednesday as time expired on the offense.

Deehan caught 25 passes last season, good for fifth on the team. But the only other returning players at the position to catch a pass last season are Matt Bahr (two catches) and DaVaughn Thornton (one catch). Graduate Luke Walters caught 10.

The ratio is one passing game coordinator/tight ends coach J.D. Brookhart expects to change this fall.

"I would think you'd have at least three guys catching a number of balls per game," Brookhart said.

Deehan remains the leader at the position. But Thornton played in 10 games last year and started twice, with his lone catch a 12-yard touchdown against Kansas. Those two, along with redshirt freshman Kyle Slavin, were all among the team's top six pass catchers in the spring.

Then there's converted running back Cordary Allen who also has been seeing a lot of time in practice, while other players like Bahr are in more of a blocking role.

"They all have a little different skill set," Embree said.

One of the big reasons Embree -- who coached Kansas City Chiefs great Tony Gonzalez for three seasons -- is so fond of the position he played is the mismatches that can be created downfield against slower linebackers or smaller safeties. It's an aspect that allows the offense to dictate what it's going to do and opens up all other aspects of the offense.

Quarterback Tyler Hansen has already seen the value of forcing the defense to focus on the big guys in the middle of the field.

"Then that opens up (wide receivers Paul Richardson) and Toney Clemons," Hansen said.

Deehan said his position group has benefited from having a head coach who played the position. Instead of just one coach's perspective, the tight ends are often getting two, from Brookhart and Embree.

Given the added emphasis to the position, Thornton said it's motivating, too, to play at a school where the tradition at tight end includes players like Don Hasselbeck, Christian Fauria, Daniel Graham, Joe Klopfenstein and, oh yeah, Jon Embree -- all of whom were drafted by NFL teams.

"That's what you strive for," Thornton said. "Now that coach is here and that's his expertise, that's great."



CBSSports.com Preseason All-Pac-12 team

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Posted on: August 11, 2011 9:10 am

*Posted by Bryan Fischer*As part of the *CBSSports.com* season preview, here is one writer's choices for the preseason All-**Pac-12** team.

Offense

QUARTERBACK

Andrew Luck, RsJunior, **Stanford**

For those that know him, Luck's decision to return to Palo Alto and pass up millions as the sure-fire first pick in the **NFL Draft** wasn't surprising. Following a season in which he passed for 3,338 yards and tossed 32 touchdowns against just eight interceptions, the native Texan just wanted to complete his degree - in architectural design. The **Heisman** runner-up does a pretty good job on the field of designing plays that end in a completion (71% of the time last year). He's not bad at running the ball either but earns his spot on the first team as the top signal-caller in the Pac-12.

Also watch for: The conference of quarterbacks is a pretty appropriate for the Pac-12 considering there are a number of players who can give Luck a run for his money. **USC's Matt Barkley** is a possible first round pick as well and has a talented receiving corps at his disposal. **Oregon's Darron Thomas** will put up big numbers through the air and on the ground and could take the top spot by beating Stanford. **Arizona's Nick Foles** and **Utah's Jordan Wynn** are also in the conversation.



RUNNING BACK

LaMichael James, RsJunior, **Oregon**

The **Doak Walker Award** Winner as the nation's best running back last season, James is a threat to score anytime he touches the ball. He was the **NCAA's** leading rusher last season with 1,731 yards and is in position to break just about every Oregon record left in the books. He's not the biggest back but he does deliver the most production on the field.

Chris Polk, Junior, **Washington**

Polk burst on to the scene with a 1,000 yard season his freshman year and ever since then has been in the conversation for all-conference honors. He can catch the ball out of the backfield (4th leading receiver last year) and it will be tough to stop him from having another big season with the Huskies' offense revolving around him.

Also watch for: Stanford's **Stepfan Taylor** was **Toby Gerhart's** replacement last year and should be able to build on a very good breakout season. Newcomer **Rodney Stewart** from **Colorado** is a bright spot for the Buffaloes and **UCLA's Johnathan Franklin** should put up some good numbers in the school's Pistol offense.



WIDE RECEIVER

Robert Woods, Sophomore, **USC**

Woods wasn't even supposed to be the best receiver at his high school but he nevertheless turned into a Freshman All-American and was the Trojans' most consistent pass catcher. He should surpass his total of 792 receiving yards easily this year as Barkley's favorite target.

Jermaine Kearse, Senior, **Washington**

The speedy Kearse averaged 16 yards a catch last year in route to a 1,000 yard season as the Huskies most consistent receiver. He doesn't get the attention nationally that he deserves but with a talented receiver group around him in 2011, he could be freed up to torch a few secondaries even with a new quarterback.

Also watch for: Arizona's **Juron Criner** is 1c as far as Pac-12 receivers go. **Marquess Wilson** out of **Washington State** is the best receiver no one has

heard of and sophomore **Kennan Allen** is a dynamic playmaker for **Cal**. If healthy, **Stanford's Chris Owusu** is in the mix, as is **Oregon State's James Rodgers**.

TIGHT END

David Paulson, Senior, **Oregon**

Expected to take on a bigger role in the offense, Paulson has a great pair of hands and managed to sneak behind linebackers fairly often last year to average 17.4 yards a catch.

Also watch for: This position is surprisingly deep and even newcomer **Ryan Deehan** from **Colorado** could emerge as the top guy in his new conference. **Oregon State's Joe Halahun** has to stay healthy but is a big target and **Stanford's Coby Fleener** will put up good numbers with Luck throwing to him all season.

The views expressed in this blog are solely those of the author and do not reflect the views of CBS Sports or CBSSports.com

OFFENSIVE LINE

Center **Garth Gerhart**, RsSenior, **Arizona State**

Named to the **Remington Trophy** Watch List, Gerhart is one of only three returning centers in the conference and is looking to step out of his older brother's (Heisman finalist **Toby**) shadow.

Guard **David DeCastro**, RsJunior, **Stanford**

The anchor for a line that only gave up 13 sacks all season, the **Lombardi Award** candidate is excellent in space while pass blocking.

Guard **Ryan Miller**, Senior, **Colorado**

Miller can play either guard or tackle and the mammoth 6-foot-8, 295-pounder is excellent in space and one of the top guards in the country.

Tackle **Matt Kalil**, RsJunior, **USC**

A possible first round draft pick if he chooses to leave early, Kalil has the size and the pedigree (older brother **Ryan** is a starter for the **Carolina Panthers**) to be the next great Trojan left tackle.

Tackle **Tony Bergstrom**, Senior, **Utah**

Bergstrom has started every game the past two seasons and did not allow a sack during the regular season.

Also watch for: **Oregon** guard **Carson York** is a key player for the Ducks and Bay Area tackles **Jonathan Martin** (**Stanford**) and **Mitchell Schwartz** (**Cal**) give defensive ends fits all game long.



Defense

DEFENSIVE LINE



End **Junior Onyeali**, Sophomore, **Arizona State**

Not the biggest end on the field but he's a terror off the edge. With the quickness and speed of a linebacker, he's not someone the offensive tackle enjoys blocking.

End **Datone Jones**, RsJunior, **UCLA**

He missed all of last year with a broken foot but seems back and better than ever. He can play the run just as well as the pass and is the anchor for the Bruins' line.

Tackle **Alameda Ta'amu**, Senior **Washington**

The rock of the Huskies defense, he closed out the year strong. He ends up commanding double teams due to his size (6-foot-3, 337 pounds) and ability.

Tackle **Justin Washington**, Sophomore, **Arizona**

Washington has the quickness of an end but he's inside and makes his presence known. He had six sacks and 11.5 tackles for a loss as a true freshman last season.

Also watch for: **Colorado's Will Pericak** and **Josh Hartigan** are a great tandem from Boulder and **Washington State's Travis Long** is

under the radar but excellent as well. **USC's Nick Perry** and **George Uko** are both primed for a break out year.

Linebackers

Vontaze Burfict, Junior, **Arizona State**

There's talk of him being more mature and a better leader which is actually a bit scary for opponents considering he is one of the quickest, most instinctive linebackers in the game and someone you don't want to get hit by.

Shayne Skov, Junior, **Stanford**

Turned in a great sophomore campaign and is relentless with his pursuit of the play. He's an intense tackling machine who always seems to find himself around the football.

Mychal Kendricks, Senior, **Cal**

An experienced outside linebacker, he's sliding inside in the Bears' scheme this year. Athletic enough to be a disruption when dropping into coverage, Kendricks can also be found in the backfield. Often.

Also watch for: **Patrick Larimore** is the Bruins middle backer and their defensive stopper. **Chaz Walker** out of **Utah** and a healthy **Chris Galippo** from **USC** are both solid playmakers at times.

DEFENSIVE BACKS

Corner **Cliff Harris**, Junior, **Oregon**

Though he's suspended for the opener, the ball-hawking corner will immediately give a boost to the Ducks secondary with his ability to cover receivers.

Corner **Trevin Wade**, Senior, **Arizona**

He had an off year last year but is the anchor of the secondary for the Wildcats and has good size and a knack for knocking away the ball.

Safety **Delano Howell**, Senior, **Stanford**

Howell has seen just about everything you can possibly throw at him and reads and reacts like the best of them. He's not just a cover guy either as he's a very good tackler.

Safety, **T.J. McDonald**, Junior, **USC**

One of the bigger players roaming the secondary, McDonald is following in his All-American father **Tim's** shoes. He's more comfortable in year two of Monte Kiffin's system and should see his level of play rise as a result.

Also watch for: **Oregon's John Boyett** is tough to face playing with Harris and **Tony Dye** at **UCLA** is a bright spot for the Bruins' defense last year.



Specialists

Kicker **Erik Folk**, Senior, **Washington**

The strong legged Folk is perfect on his PATs for his career and is seems to always come through despite any pressure in late game situations.

Punter **Bryan Anger**, Senior, **Cal**

Annually in the running for the **Ray Guy Award** for best punter, Anger has a big leg and usually can pin opponents deep in their own territory.

Category: NCAA

Tags: Alameda Ta'amu, Andrew Luck, Arizona, Arizona State, Bryan Anger, Cal, Carolina Panthers, Carson York, Chaz Walker, Chris Galippo, Chris Owusu, Chris Polk, Cliff Harris, Coby Fleener, Colorado, Darron Thomas, Datone Jones, David DeCastro, David Paulson, Delano Howell, Doak Walker Award, Erik Folk, Garth Gerhart, George Uko, Heisman, James Rodgers, Jermaine Kearse, Joe Halahuni, John Boyett, Johnathan Franklin, Jonathan Martin, Jordan Wynn, Josh Hartigan, Junior Onyeali, Juron Criner, Justin Washington, Kennan Allen, LaMichael James, Lombardi Award, Marquess Wilson, Matt Barkley, Matt Kalil, Mitchell Schwartz, Mychal Kendricks, NCAA, NFL Draft, Nick Foles, Nick Perry, Oregon, Oregon State, Pac-12, Pac-12 preview, Patrick Larimore, preseason All-Pac-12, Ray Guy Award, Remington Trophy, Robert Woods, Rodney Stewart, Ryan Deehan, Ryan Kalil, Ryan Miller, Shayne Skov, Stanford, T.J. McDonald, Toby Gerhart, Tony Bergstrom, Tony Dye, Travis Long, Trevin Wade, UCLA, USC, Utah, Vontaze Burfict, Washington, Washington State, Will Pericak

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