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Colorado's Rodney Stewart hoping to make big impression on NFL teams

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There's no getting around it. Rodney Stewart can't change his height. He can only change opinions.

So the 5-foot-6¼ running back from Colorado is working to earn his degree in sociology — he said he's on track to graduate in May — while trying to attract attention from the NFL before the April 26-28 draft.

"I'm not sure what they'll want to see from me," Stewart said. "I'm just trying to put myself in a good position, show how athletic I am. They could put my numbers up against every other running back's numbers in the country. I'm looking forward to that competition."

Stewart is the only player in CU history to lead the Buffaloes in rushing four consecutive seasons. Yet he still has some hills to climb in the eyes of NFL teams, who prefer running backs bigger than Stewart.

There are exceptions at Stewart's position, including the Saints' diminutive Darren Sproles. And the Buffs' offensive

coordinator, former CU star Eric Bieniemy, was listed at 5-7 and 205 pounds in the last year of his nine-year NFL career.

"I asked (Bieniemy) about it, and he said it's about how valuable you are to a team," Stewart said. "Be good as a runner, be good catching the ball out of the backfield, play special teams. I'm pretty sure I can do a lot of special teams. I haven't done it a lot, but I think I can be a good punt returner, a good kick returner. I don't have a lot of experience at it, but I think I can be good at it."

Stewart wasn't invited to the NFL scouting combine, which starts next week in Indianapolis. So his circled date for now is March 8, which is the Buffs' pro workout day. Stewart is training with Loren Landow, the director of performance enhancement at the Steadman Hawkins Clinic.

Stewart said he feels "more explosive and faster than I've ever been."

This isn't the first time he has had to shine among more heralded players. He beat out a five-start recruit, Darrell Scott, to carry the



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for the Buffs early in his college career. Stewart's career school records include most carries (809), most all-purpose yards (4,828) and most receiving yards by a running back (969). He ranks second in CU history in rushing yards (3,598).

"The numbers show I stay on the field, I stay in the lineup. I don't think there are durability questions," Stewart said. "And our offense (installed last year by CU coach Jon Embree) is like a lot of NFL teams, so I hope people think that means I'll catch on quickly if they give me a chance."

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