

Sports

Former CU Buffs O-lineman Ryan Miller excited to play at next level

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It might be the fact the guy is just big. Huge, really.

And if a person can be all of 6-foot-7 and 326 pounds, if he started more games than any other player in Colorado's long football history, and still be a work in progress with room to grow, it's Ryan Miller.

"I know this," said CU offensive line coach Steve Marshall, whose coaching résumé includes stops with the NFL's Houston Texans and Cleveland Browns. "I wish I had him another year, that's for sure. I think he really has a good, good chance of really having the opportunity for a lot of great things in the NFL. Ryan's got all the right stuff, physically, mentally, everything."

Five years ago, Miller was one of the nation's most heralded prep players, wrapping up his time at Columbine High School as everybody's All-American. He stayed home, went to CU, having committed to the Buffs midway through his senior season.

Now, 48 collegiate starts and 3,320 plays

later as a rare five-year letterman, Miller will be the only CU player at the NFL's scouting combine, which opens today in Indianapolis. Miller played guard and tackle during his time at CU, but most NFL teams see him as a right tackle prospect who could move to guard if needed.

With the Buffs, he played tackle early in his career. But when he fractured a leg four games into the 2008 season, missing the remainder of that year, he moved to guard for the most part after his return. Several scouts have said although they believe Miller is a better fit in the NFL as a strongside tackle, they also have lauded his play against some of the power players he faced on the inside in his career, including current Detroit Lions defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh.

"It's all a little surreal at this point," said Miller, who received his degree in anthropology in December. "I maybe didn't consider it for a long time, but to now be in this position, I kind of get up every day excited about the prospects and excited to be in this position."

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"I am probably a right tackle. At least that's my impression. Maybe I have the body type for right guard as well, but I might be a little tall for that. I even took some snaps at center at the Shrine Game (in January) for the versatility. It was a worst-case-scenario type thing, and after watching me do it, it was really a worst-case scenario, for sure."

Since the end of his senior season with the Buffs, Miller has been training in Irvine, Calif., for the combine. His on-campus pro day is March 8. His greatest challenge on the field may simply be dealing with what people see first when they meet him.

Pro football is a big man's game, but there are challenges for big men who are as tall as Miller.

"He's still got a lot of work to do in terms of anchoring, bending his knees to compete the way he needs to in the NFL," Marshall said. "Learning to bend his knees, to use his leverage to his advantage, will be key. Every NFL defense has a guy who's 6-foot-2, 340 pounds, who can move his feet. You've really got to anchor. You've got to play with leverage."

Miller said he has a quality resource in that regard in Nate Solder, a former CU teammate. Solder, who measured 6-8 at the combine last year, made the transition smoothly to the NFL as one of the tallest players in the draft.

The Patriots selected Solder with the 17th pick of the first round, and he played tackle and lined up as an extra tight end throughout his rookie season.

"I've talked to a lot of players, Nate, (wide

receiver) Scotty (McKnight), about what's to come," Miller said. "Nate's really been great throughout, a great resource about the process, about what to expect, what they're looking for, the whole picture. And the message has really been the same: Just enjoy the ride."

"That's what everybody has said, just enjoy the ride, because not too many people have the opportunity to go through it, so I think that's the view to take. You're just fortunate to be going through it."

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Former CU Buff QB Tyler Hansen working out with Tim Tebow, Brady Quinn

By **Kyle Ringo** Buffzone.com
Boulder Daily Camera

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If there is tension between Denver Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow and his backup last season, Brady Quinn, Tyler Hansen hasn't seen it.

The former Colorado signal caller works out several times a week with the two pros, whom he says have gone out their way to help him prepare for pro day at CU in early March and the NFL Draft in April.

Quinn and Tebow were in the news Tuesday when unflattering comments Quinn made about Tebow in an interview with GQ magazine came to light.

Hansen said he was surprised when he heard about the controversy because nothing he has seen from Tebow and Quinn has led him to believe they might be feuding.

All three quarterbacks throw together several times a week in Denver under the guidance of renowned trainer Loren Landow.

Hansen is hoping to be drafted, Quinn is hoping for a free agent contract and Tim Tebow is hoping to improve as a passer heading into his third season next fall.

"They're really friendly," Hansen said. "They have a professional relationship and they're really nice. Both those guys are great guys. I think every person they meet and talk to they're going to be standup guys. There is no turmoil between them. I think they have a great relationship. That's what it seems like to me."

Hansen first met Quinn last year through CU assistant head coach and quarterbacks coach Rip Scherer, who coached Quinn when they were together with the Cleveland Browns.

Hansen said he met Tebow through Quinn.

Hansen said both of his workout partners have already helped make him a better quarterback with tips they have provided and also from watching how they handle themselves and others in workouts.

"From Brady, I've actually sat and talked with him and I've learned some interesting stuff about how to take this next step, playing in the pros," Hansen said. "You know, 'What did you do? What helped you out?' Stuff like that. I've even talked to him about what should my routine be at pro day."

"With Tim it's been more some footwork stuff and drops and stuff like that. He really is truly a leader. Even when we were throwing with the receivers. He was getting with the receivers and showing them how to run a route and stuff like that. I think that's the biggest thing I've taken from him is just some leadership qualities and how to handle receivers and stuff like that."

Hansen played well last month in the East-West Shrine game, leading the West team to the winning score in the final 2 minutes.

He said he believes the performance might have improved his stock with some NFL franchises and he hopes to convince others in the league that he can play at that level when he works out for them in Boulder on March 8.

The National Football Post rates Hansen the 25th best quarterback in the 2012 draft heading into the combine and a slew of pro days on college campuses over the next six weeks.

Hansen's stock has actually fallen with that site since early January when he was ranked the 22nd best quarterback.

Hansen did not receive an invitation to the NFL Scouting Combine, which begins today in Indianapolis. But he says he will watch it with interest, looking to compare performances from his peers with what he knows he can do.

Hansen said he began the process of preparing for the draft shortly after his senior season ended last fall with uncertainty about how he would stack up.

He said his experience in the shrine game and working out alongside Tebow and Quinn have given him a confidence boost.

"That's the biggest thing I can get from this is watching these guys throw and then watching how I throw," Hansen said. "I'm right there. I can make all those throws that Tim Tebow is making and Brady Quinn is making. I feel like I compare really well to those guys. That reassures me that I can play in that league and that I can be a second- or first-string quarterback in that league and do everything I need to do to have a career out of it."

Hansen said he won't do the bench press at CU's pro day but he will do every other drill for scouts. He said he is working to perfect his techniques and mental approach in the final weeks leading up to pro day.

"It's definitely getting to be crunch time right now," he said.

Former Buffs Evan Harrington, Rodney Stewart, Ethan Adkins, Travis Sandersfeld, Josh Hartigan and David Goldberg are all working out with Landow as well, but they are in a different group earlier in the day and don't work with the three quarterbacks.

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