

Buffaloes already installing game plans

QB Hansen leading way in summer drills

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Posted:

The Colorado football team will open the season at Hawaii in seven weeks hoping to break a road losing streak spanning three years and 18 games played outside the state. If the Buffs are unsuccessful the first time out of the gate under coach Jon Embree, it won't be because they didn't know the game plan.

Embree and his staff began assembling the game plans for the first three games of the season -- at Hawaii, at home against California and in Denver against Colorado State -- back in April. They are likely to tweak those plans this summer, especially during fall camp next month, but they shared the plans with veteran players such as quarterback Tyler Hansen so the Buffs could work on them during player-organized 7-on-7 drills this summer.

"They gave me some stuff to kind of introduce to them," Hansen said. "We can't have the coaches out there, but I've talked to the coaches and we already have the game plan for Hawaii done. So I already know most of what we're doing.

"There is some stuff we can have certain leaders like Toney Clemons and Ryan Deehan introduce to the younger guys and go, 'Hey, this is what we're going to do at Hawaii. We're going to run this concept against this coverage.' So we've kind of gotten a head start on that."

Hansen said this summer has been pretty similar to past summers during his time in Boulder. He said the Buffs were practicing three times a week during June but veteran players decided to scale back to just two practices a week during July.

Hansen said the team also does its normal strength and conditioning workouts in addition to 7-on-7 and in the past, it has caused some players to burn out prior to the season ever arriving.

Embree named Hansen the starting quarterback in 2011 at the end of spring drills in April. It is the earliest CU has known who its starting quarterback would be since 2005 when Joel Klatt was entering his third consecutive year as the starter.

Coming off a bowl appearance in 2007, most believed former Buff Cody Hawkins was a lock to earn the job heading into the 2008 season, but former coach Dan Hawkins always waited until the middle of August at the earliest to announce his starter.

Hansen said it has been nice not to have a looming competition to worry about all summer, but being named the starter so much earlier also has put some pressure on him that he hasn't experienced before at this time of year.

"There is a lot more responsibility this summer and you've got to think about that all the time," he said. "If you go somewhere, you're the starting quarterback and you've got to understand that. In year's prior, that has never been the case at this time. You never knew who the guy was.

"So there is a lot of responsibility and it's a big weight on your shoulders that you've got to carry around and be smart with it."

Hansen will travel home to the Los Angeles area next weekend and he will meet Embree there July 26 as coach and QB represent the Buffs in their first Pac-12 Conference media day. Hansen said recent interview requests along with that experience on the horizon have created some excitement because it signals the start of fall camp (Aug. 4) is right around the corner.

Hansen could be on the brink of a big season. He should have a veteran offensive line blocking for him and a talented and experienced collection of playmakers to distribute the ball to, including senior wide receivers Clemons and Logan Gray, sophomore wide receiver Paul Richardson, a senior tight end in Deehan and senior running back Rodney Stewart.

There are also several newcomers Hansen expects to see on the field this fall based on what he has seen this summer. He raved about true freshman receiver Nelson Spruce.

"He looks just like Scotty McKnight," Hansen said. "He`s identical the way he runs routes and the way he catches the ball, which is really saying something."

McKnight left the program as its all-time leading receiver last season and was drafted in April by the New York Jets.

Like spring training in baseball, this is the time of year when optimism reigns in college football, and CU fans have grown accustomed in recent years to glowing reports in the summer failing to translate into wins in the fall.

Hansen said he and his teammates are well aware of that track record and honestly believe they can change it.

"I think people are in store for when they play Colorado, it`s going to be a tough game," he said.

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