



Head coach Jon Embree and Tyler Hansen take questions from media members Tuesday  
Photo Courtesy: Pac-12 Conference



## Brooks: Hansen Hopes To Stand Tall Among Pac-12 QBs

Release: 07/26/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

**LOS ANGELES** - The Conference of Champions also is the Conference of QBs, and Colorado's Tyler Hansen is eager to prove he belongs. Buffs Coach Jon Embree believes Hansen already does.

The CU senior was among 12 Pac-12 players appearing here Tuesday with their coaches at the expanded league's inaugural media day, held at the Fox Studios Lot. Among that dozen players, almost half (five) were quarterbacks, with the list topped by Stanford's Andrew Luck and Southern California's Matt Barkley.

Luck, who finished second in last season's Heisman Trophy balloting, generally is regarded as college football's top returning QB and the 2011 Heisman frontrunner. Hansen hung with him briefly Tuesday morning and came away impressed.

"I met Luck for the first time this morning and he was really a down-to-earth guy," Hansen said.

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"He asked about Boulder, about what there was to do . . . it was cool to see and talk to somebody who's going to be a top-tier player in the nation. It was also pretty cool to see that as a team this summer we're doing the same things that (Stanford) has been doing."

Except for maybe his size, the 6-foot-1 Hansen didn't feel misplaced among the group that included the 6-5 Luck; 6-2 Barkley, a Davey O'Brien Award semifinalist last season; Arizona's 6-5 Nick Foles; and Arizona State's Brock Osweiler, who at 6-8 is the league's tallest player at his position. Barkley and Osweiler are juniors, the other three are seniors.

"I'd like to think I can be (competitive among that group)," Hansen said. "I need to have a good beginning and I can be among those mid- or top-tier guys. I'm confident in our offense, and if we start with a good couple of games I think I can be considered to be among them."

But Embree, about to begin his first season at CU, had this to say about his senior QB: "I think Tyler fits and belongs with the groups of guys that you have here, and the quarterbacks that you have in this conference. For Tyler to be effective, I look at touchdown and reception ratio. If he's throwing a lot of touchdowns, not a lot of interceptions, I'm happy with it. My last year at UCLA we had Drew Olson who was overshadowed by everybody in the conference, and I think Drew finished with 37 touchdowns and four interceptions - in that range. I'll take that every year.

"So to look at Tyler, that's what I think he'll be judged by as far as his on the field performance. But off the field he's done everything we need to do. I tell Tyler, the thing that I think will make him a successful person and help him be successful this year is he loves to prepare probably more than he loves to play.

"When you have that within you, that allows you to be successful. You know, he loves watching tape. He gets the guys out there to throw. He understands when we say something to him. He picked up the offense very quickly. He had a spring practice where he went 18 out of 19 for about 250 and three touchdowns. The thing that was really most impressive about that is out of his 19 attempts, only twice did he get downgraded for having a poor decision.

"So that tells me he knows where to go with the ball. He understands progression, he understands how coverage dictates some things to him, and he had a good feel for it. I'm very happy to have Tyler sitting up here next to me. I wish he was a junior (laughing)."

Embree has called Hansen the Buffs' undisputed team leader - a title Embree wanted Hansen to assume shortly after Embree was hired early last December.

"Coach 'Embo' has told me that the team goes as far as I go," Hansen said. "If I perform well, the team performs well. That's a lot responsibility, but I accept it. As a senior quarterback, that's something you have to do.

"He was hired last Dec. 6, and on Dec. 7 we met for half an hour. He told me then he wanted me to be a team leader, and I think I've done everything he's wanted me to do."

That includes taking the reins for the Buffs' voluntary summer conditioning work, which must be organized by players in the NCAA-mandated absence of coaches. Hansen took control early, getting a June jump on game-planning with the partial installation of offensive schemes for Games 1 (at Hawaii, Sept. 3) and 2 (Cal, Sept. 10).

"That's the first time since I've been here that we've got something in this early," Hansen said. "It should be an advantage for us; we're already starting to get it in our brains."

In a preseason media poll, Hansen and the Buffs were picked to finish last in the Pac-12 South Division, trailing (in order) USC, ASU, Utah, Arizona and UCLA. The poll, voted on by media who regularly cover the conference, has correctly identified the eventual conference champ in 10 of the past 11 seasons.

Oregon, the 2010 BCS runner-up, was picked to win the first-ever Pac-12 championship game.

Of being projected as the probable last-place South finisher, Hansen said, "That's OK . . . we all have the same record right now. We've got 27 seniors coming back, 17 starters returning; I think we've got the experience to compete. People aren't expecting a lot from us - and I kind of like that."

Imperative for the Buffs is a good start - and Hansen knows it. "Last year we went out 3-1 (to open the season) but we didn't build on it," he said. "This year, if we do that it's going to help us get through 13 games without a break. That's tough . . . we have to stay focused and develop a routine that's going to work for us."

Essentially, that was identical to Hansen's spring objective. New QB coach Rip Scherer's goal for Hansen was to mold him into a pocket passer in CU's new offense. But Hansen said Scherer's biggest contribution might have been teaching him "how to prepare and study, and he's also shared stories of quarterbacks he's coached and what made them tick. He's been everywhere and he's coached some great ones."

He believes Scherer's influence has been instrumental in tamping down a penchant to run impulsively from the pocket. Hansen said that's mostly been accomplished, sometimes even to the point of Scherer mildly scolding him for not taking advantage of running opportunities.

"But overall, I really grew in the spring," Hansen said. "My comfort level at the position has never been greater. The staff has put a lot of trust in me, naming me the starter after spring ball. That's good to know. I think it's helped me focus for the past three months."

He has completely recovered from the spleen injury that cost him the final month of his junior season. He called the recuperation "easy . . . it was just resting, really, for two months. The biggest thing it cost me was my appetite."

But that has changed. His hunger has returned and he now is up to 215 pounds - a weight he calls "ideal" before venturing into training camp next week and entering that period where weight comes off all players whether planned or not.

**FIRST THINGS FIRST:** From Boulder to Westwood, Rick Neuheisel and Jon Embree have a history. They both coached together at CU and UCLA, where Neuheisel is entering a fourth (and very critical) season. Neuheisel also is coaching Embree's eldest son, Taylor, a wide receiver.

And that, according to Neuheisel, already has planted the seeds for a potential dilemma come Nov. 19 when CU visits UCLA on Senior Day. Embree's looming quandary: Should he be with the Buffs or Taylor when his son is recognized before kickoff of his final home game?

Neuheisel has suggested a solution: "You've got to be there (with Taylor) . . . you just need to run out there on the field, make it quick, then go back to your team. If he doesn't get out there, I'm going to go get him."

Might be an exaggeration, but maybe not.

**DOS AND DON'TS:** Neuheisel's central advice to Embree is to "be yourself. You're not always going to be right, but do it your way, make your own mistakes. That's what you have to do in this job."

He called CU "a great fit for CU and for Jon, and he's very deserving. I'm very excited for him."

Meanwhile, Neuheisel is 15-22 at UCLA, 81-52 in a college career that has seen him also hold head coaching jobs at CU and Washington. His fourth season at UCLA could be of the "get better or get lost" variety - and Neuheisel recognizes it.

"We just haven't turned the corner to the extent that I thought possible," he said. "I thought we were on the verge of it after 2009 with the bowl win and coming back. But last year, unfortunately, we took a step backwards with respect to our progress for a number of reasons not to be gone into again.

"But I think what drives all competitive people are great challenges, and this is certainly that. It's a great challenge. I have a real stake in this. This is not just my job, it's my alma mater. It's kind of my dream to be the head coach at UCLA."

He opened his portion of media day with this: "As a coach on the proverbial hotseat I guess you're excited to be invited to any of these things."

**WHEREVER, WHENEVER:** CU has played on almost every day of the week over the last several years. Cal is about to see what that's like. The Golden Bears have a pair of Thursday games (at Oregon, Oct. 6; vs. USC, Oct. 13) and one Friday contest (at ASU, Nov. 25) this season.

"That's kind of what our season is going to be about," Cal Coach Jeff Tedford said. "We're in transition anyway, playing all our games at AT&T Park (San Francisco)."

That's because their stadium in Berkeley is undergoing major renovation.

**NICE PEDIGREE:** Some eyebrows were raised when David Shaw was tabbed as Jim Harbaugh's replacement at Stanford. Shaw hasn't been a head coach, but he thinks he possesses many of the same characteristics that Harbaugh employed to find success at The Farm.

"I think we're both competitive and the players feel that," Shaw said, listing his father, Jon Gruden, Bill Callahan and the late Bill Walsh as the coaches who have had the most influence on him.

Gruden, said Shaw, "beat me up; he threw me in dark room with mountains of tapes to educate me." Callahan "is a big reason I'm here right now; he taught me protections and running game." And "playing for Bill Walsh was an unbelievable experience - he was a step ahead, always the smartest person in any room."

**PAC-12 PIECES:** CU's 13-game schedule with no breaks will test the Buffs' conditioning, as well as

their good fortune - particularly at QB, where Hansen is the only experienced competitor. Cal's Tedford knows the importance of keeping your QB healthy. Directed by a healthy Kevin Riley last season, the Bears averaged 37 points a game. When Riley was sidelined by injury, that number plummeted to 13 . . . . Luck is sporting a Geico caveman-style beard, although he says the growth's future is day-to-day. "I never had a beard; I'm hesitant to call it a beard," he said. "I don't think it's quite there yet. I don't know. I'd never done it before, so why not try? We'll see if it lasts. When I get annoyed with it, I'll shave it." . . . . A question to Oregon State Coach Mike Riley about new celebration and taunting rules was framed like this: "Is it like the Supreme Court's definition of porn - you can't define it, but you know it when you see it?" Riley handed off the question to senior safety Lance Mitchell, who diplomatically said his coach knows taunting and doesn't tolerate it . . . . Arizona Coach Mike Stoops on being picked fourth in the South Division: "I didn't even see it, it doesn't affect me. We're never picked high . . . they must think I'm a bad coach." . . . . How has Utah's fan base reacted to Pac-12 membership? "We've had 98 percent season ticket renewal," said Coach Kyle Whittingham. "Which is unheard of." . . . . Arizona State 60-something coach Dennis Erickson's opening remark: "It's great to be here; it's great to be anywhere at this point."

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## CU's Tyler Hansen hopes to be among Pac-12's elite quarterbacks

**By Kyle Ringo** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 07/27/2011 12:05:48 AM MDT



LOS ANGELES - Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen wants to be included in the conversation about a talented group of signal callers in the Pac-12 Conference this year.

It's a group that includes nine returning starters and six players who threw for more than 2,400 yards in 2010.

Right now Hansen is an afterthought in the discussion following a junior season cut short by a ruptured spleen in his seventh game. The focus is on Heisman Trophy favorite Andrew Luck from Stanford. Others such as USC junior Matt Barkley and Arizona senior Nick Foles are considered dark horse candidates for the college game's highest honor.

Behind them is a group that includes Darron Thomas of Oregon. All he did was lead his team to the conference title and the national championship game last season. Utah's Jordan Wynn, who very nearly was a teammate of Hansen's at CU, hasn't lost much since taking over at Utah.

Oregon State's Ryan Katz and Washington State's Jeff Tuel each threw 18 touchdown passes last fall.

"I think I'm right there," Hansen said. "I want to be in that top tier of quarterbacks where those guys are, but I think I'm close. I think if I perform well and trust my reads and listen to my coaches, I can be there. I feel I have all the talent to get there."

All of those players are trying to live up to the legacy of the league's great quarterbacks of the past. Pac-12 commissioner Larry Scott reminded everyone at the outset of media day at Fox Studios on Tuesday that the Pac-12 is the conference of champions, but it could just as well be known as the conference of quarterbacks.

Some of the greatest to ever play the position were reared in Pac-12 programs including John Elway, Warren Moon, Dan Fouts, Troy Aikman and Aaron Rodgers.

"The Pac-12 brand of football, if I can describe it that way, is as dynamic as any in college sports," Scott said. "Year after

year we seem to produce the best quarterbacks and the most sophisticated offenses in the country, and 2011 promises to be no exception."

Truth be told, Hansen wasn't setting opposing defenses on fire last season before his injury.

After growing up in Southern California watching Pac-10 games, he struggled mightily in his first opportunity to play a Pac-10 team in September when the Buffs lost 52-7 at Cal. By the time he was injured on an option play against Texas Tech, he had thrown for 1,102 yards with six touchdowns and six interceptions. He also rushed for four scores.

Hansen completed 68.3 percent of his passes in 2010, which is, perhaps, the most encouraging part of his game the new coaching staff had to build on during the spring. CU coach Jon Embree believed in Hansen enough after 15 practices in spring ball to name him the Buffs' starting quarterback this fall.

"I think Tyler fits and belongs with the group of guys that you have here, and the quarterbacks that you have in this conference," Embree said. "For Tyler to be effective, I look at touchdown and interception ratio. If he's throwing a lot of touchdowns, not lot of interceptions, I'm happy with it.

"My last year at UCLA we had Drew Olson who was overshadowed by everybody in the conference, and I think Drew finished with 37 touchdowns and four interceptions, in that range. I'll take that every year."

Quarterbacks get a lot of credit and they receive plenty of help. Many of the quarterbacks in the league this season are surrounded by elite talent. Hansen has nothing to complain about in that regard.

Wide receivers Toney Clemons and Paul Richardson stack up nicely against most other tandems in the conference. Hansen's best friend on the team is senior tight end Ryan Deehan, with whom he has great chemistry and running back Rodney Stewart should see more action in the passing game, too.

Hansen said he and CU quarterbacks coach Rip Scherer have discussed what he must do to take a big step forward this fall, win games and earn respect.

"I need to know the offense, focus on my reads and not get caught up in worrying about the score," Hansen said. "I need to play what I'm seeing."

He hasn't been hit hard since the play that ended his season last year. Hansen said he feels confident he is fully recovered from the spleen injury and doesn't expect it to be a problem in the future. But he truly doesn't know how he will react to that first bit of contact until it happens.

"I think that first hit is going to make me feel good because I haven't been hit since that hit. I wear green (in practice). I'm a little sissy, you know? I think getting hit will feel good. It will be like, 'Okay, I'm back to normal.'"

Only Hansen is hoping for a new normal this year, a better normal.

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## CU Buffs picked last in Pac-12 South Division

### Oregon, USC favorites in media

**By Kyle Ringo** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 07/26/2011 10:16:52 AM MDT

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. – The Colorado football team was picked to finish last in the Pac-12 Conference South Division in a preseason media poll released today at the league's media day.

The Buffs' place in the poll was not a surprise. Most preseason magazines released earlier in the summer also picked the Buffs last.

Colorado is in its first year under a rookie head coach in Jon Embree and is coming off five consecutive losing seasons under former coach Dan Hawkins. The Buffs are also making the transition to a new league. All of those factors contribute to a lack of respect for the program around the conference.

Oregon was picked to win the North Division followed by Stanford, and USC was picked to win the south. However, the Trojans are not eligible for postseason play due to NCAA sanctions. If the poll is correct and USC does win the south, the second-place team would advance to the inaugural title game. The media picked Arizona State to finish second in the south.

The media has correctly picked 27 of 50 league champions in the previous history of the Pac-10 Conference, but with just 10 teams in the league in the past, there was no championship game. The media has correctly picked the champion in 10 of the past 11 seasons.

Embree and quarterback Tyler Hansen are scheduled to meet with reporters at media day later this morning.

## Pac-12 Preseason Poll

Parenthesis are first-place votes

### North Division

Oregon (29) 239  
Stanford (13) 220  
Washington 142  
Oregon State 120  
California 110  
Washington St. 51

### South Division

USC (24) 230



|             |     |
|-------------|-----|
| ASU (13)    | 207 |
| Utah (4)    | 170 |
| Arizona (1) | 140 |
| UCLA        | 89  |
| CU          | 46  |

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## Colorado, Utah officially arrive in Pac-12

### Bufs rebuilding while Utes aiming for title

Associated Press  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 07/26/2011 07:12:33 PM MDT



LOS ANGELES -- Utah coach Kyle Whittingham sat down in front of the Hollywood cameras with a comfortable smile. His polo shirt had the familiar feathered "U" on the chest and the brand-new Pac-12 logo on the shoulder.

After all those years of BCS-busting, the Utes are finally on the inside looking out -- and Whittingham loves the view from his big league.

"We're ecstatic," Whittingham said Tuesday at the Pac-12's media day. "It's something that's been talked about in Salt Lake City for a lot of years, even back when it was the Pac-8, going that far back. So it's something that's very exciting for the university, for the community, and big challenges lie ahead."

The tradition-rich football programs at Utah and Colorado unofficially arrived in the Pac-12 at media day on the Fox studio lot in Century City. The coaches and star players for both mountain region-based schools appeared right at home in the cool Pacific vibe, chatting with the league's returning coaches and stars about the season ahead.

While Colorado is rebuilding, the Utes believe they can immediately contend for the South Division title, with Whittingham declaring the Pac-12 title game to be the ultimate goal. The media also thinks they have a good shot, picking Utah third in the South behind Southern California -- which is banned from postseason play, including that league title game -- and unpredictable Arizona State.

Utah left the Mountain West and Colorado split with the Big 12 to join the former Pac-10, which flirted with Texas and the possibility of a 16-team league during its major move to national prominence under new commissioner Larry Scott.

While the Longhorns stuck with the Big 12, the Buffaloes didn't hesitate to head for the West Coast.

"Hands down, this is a better fit for us," rookie Colorado coach Jon Embree said. "With the fans we have out here, the alumni, the recruiting, it's no question. I've said from Day One that the Pac-10 was a better fit for Colorado."

The schools moved for more exposure, better competition and the riches of a new media contract. Colorado was in a league with an automatic bid to the BCS, though the Buffaloes have fallen on hard times with five straight losing seasons, but Utah is relishing its move into the spotlight.

Whittingham already has noticed a large recruiting boost for the Utes, who immediately got several verbal commitments last June when Utah announced its move.

"Many of those players we would not have been able to get in on without a BCS conference affiliation," said Whittingham, who also credits the Utes' recruiting strides to new offensive coordinator Norm Chow, a Beehive State hero for his quarter-century in BYU's high-octane offense.

Whittingham also said 98 percent of Utah fans renewed their season tickets for this fall at Rice-Eccles Stadium.

"Throughout the country, you can go to any university and you'll be hard-pressed to find that type of support," Whittingham said. "It's something that affects our university on a lot of different levels, not only athletically. It's been a big plus all the way around."

The Buffaloes are rebuilding after coach Dan Hawkins was fired in early November. Embree realizes he's facing a rough debut in a 13-game schedule without a bye, but he hopes to make progress with returning quarterback Tyler Hansen.

"I think Tyler fits and belongs with the group of quarterbacks that you have in this conference," said Embree, whose son, Taylor, is a receiver at UCLA. "The thing I'm excited about is our first game is on the road, because we need to address that issue immediately."

Indeed, Colorado has lost 18 straight road games heading into its opener at Hawaii on Sept. 3.

While Embree retools his alma mater, the Utes already are established as an elite program. Utah has gone unbeaten twice during eight consecutive winning seasons, with Whittingham running coach Urban Meyer's defense in 2004 before taking charge of the program and leading Utah to another perfect year in 2007. The Utes have won the Fiesta and Sugar bowls in that span.

Utah drew a remarkable schedule in its debut season: The Utes don't have to play North powers Oregon and Stanford, which both made BCS bowls last season. Utah also will play the first Pac-12 game when the Utes visit USC at the historic Coliseum on Sept. 10.

"If you base it on last year, (missing Oregon and Stanford) is a big advantage," Whittingham said. "Every year brings new challenges. Every year is its own entity -- who are going to be the overachieving teams this year, and the teams that emerge ... so it remains to be seen, but certainly based on last year, if you had to structure your schedule, that's how you'd like to structure it."

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colorado football

## CU Buffs coach Embree preparing for diverse Pac-12 challenges

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

Posted: 07/27/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

LOS ANGELES — Hopefully, first-year Colorado coach Jon Embree cleared this with his wife, Natalyn, beforehand.

Embree watched movies all summer without her — burying himself in his office to study game film of opposing Pac-12 Conference teams, hours upon hours each day.

Vacation? Let's see. There was that three-day getaway with Natalyn to the mountains.

"But two of those three days were the weekend; so I missed only one day," Embree said with a sheepish grin Tuesday during the Pac-12 football media day at Fox Studios.

There's much work to be done in preparing for Colorado's debut in the conference this fall, as evidenced by the Buffaloes being picked to finish last in the South Division by the media covering the league. Embree assigned his assistant coaches to evaluate game film of CU's future Pac-12 foes, but he also wanted to study film himself. Alone.

"I didn't want everybody to know I was at work, so I didn't park in my regular parking spot," Embree said. "I learned that real quick."

The synopsis of his film critique? The Pac-12 will be quite a challenge.

"There is so much diversity in this league offensively and defensively," Embree said. "You can't go in with a cookie cutter kind of mentality and say, 'If we just do this, we'll be prepared for everybody in our conference.'"

"Because of that, you have to have great flexibility and adaptability. If you play Oregon, you're going to play fast-break football. And next week, if you're playing Stanford, it's power football. You have to have tons of flexibility, and you have to be very creative. That's what's so great about this conference."

In evaluating his roster, Embree knows he needs more size, speed and depth, on both sides of the ball. Colorado will play 13 regular-season games.

The elongated schedule might be fun for Buffs fans, but there will be no bye week for players to heal.

A rash of injuries could force Colorado's lineup to get young real quick.

"You know, that's one of the things about me coming from the NFL. . . . I think last year in

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Washington, we didn't get our bye until I think we played nine or 10 straight," said Embree, who was an NFL assistant with the Kansas City Chiefs and the Redskins. "So, when you factor that in with preseason and all of that, you get used to it. We'll just have to be smart how we practice toward the end of the season.

"But what it really does is it creates a lot of opportunity for our young players because, to give us a chance, we're going to have to play everybody that we can that's not redshirting."

UCLA coach Rick Neuheisel, who was Embree's boss at CU for four seasons in the 1990s, has some advice. Colorado isn't in Kansas anymore.

"The wind is a big factor in the Big 12," Neuheisel said. "You have to be able to run the ball. You have to be able to deal with wind. That's not as much a deal in this conference."

Second, recruit as much speed as possible, because that's what other Pac-12 teams do.

"All you have to look at the state track meet finals," Neuheisel said. "You look to see who won the state 100 (meters) in Wyoming and Kansas. Then you look at the times in California. Usually there's a marked difference. Here, there are just kids that grow up running all the time. And there's a population difference. This is a huge state."

Thirdly, don't expect fans here to panic when their team loses; they can still find a nice restaurant overlooking the beach.

"In the Big 12, there are places where (college football) is part of your life," Neuheisel said. "When you get divorced, you take the kids after you decide who gets the tickets. . . . I don't know that we're as zany about it in the Pac-12."

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pac-12 football briefs

## Colorado football coach, UCLA receiver will be father-son opponents this season

By Tom Kensler and John Henderson  
The Denver Post

Posted: 07/27/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

LOS ANGELES — First-year Colorado coach Jon Embree and his former boss, current UCLA coach Rick Neuheisel, have a running joke that must have caused some good-natured ribbing Tuesday at the Pac-12 football preview.

Embree's son, Taylor Embree, is a senior wide receiver and a starter at UCLA, and he will play his final home game at the Rose Bowl on Nov. 19.

The opponent that day will be his dad's team.

"It's going to be our senior day," Neuheisel said. "So when the players get honored and run down the line before the game to meet with their family, I tell Jon that I want him out there."

Neuheisel acknowledged that it might be a bit awkward for an opposing coach to join others in the UCLA family. But, hey, the parents of every senior player are expected to be on the field for the celebration.

"I'm still trying to talk Jon into it," Neuheisel said with a chuckle.

A Denver native, Taylor played high school football in the Kansas City, Kan., area while Jon was an NFL assistant coach with the Chiefs.

Taylor has finished no lower than second among the Bruins in receptions during his three seasons at UCLA. His career numbers: 117 catches for 1,548 yards and two touchdowns.

### Embree to Buffs: Let's get physical.

Embree said Tuesday what he told his team all spring. He wants to make the Buffaloes more physical.

"I want to improve the identity of our program," Embree said. "When people see us play, I want them to understand we're a physical program, a physical team and able to run the football. We haven't run the football like we should."

"When Colorado was successful in the past, we were a good running team. To be a good team and run the football, you have to have a physical mind-set."

Other highlights from Embree:

- On recruiting California: "We have to get to where we're recruiting this state effectively. We have four or five kids committed from California

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currently in this cycle. We have to continue to improve on that."

- On senior quarterback Tyler Hansen: "For Tyler to be effective, I look at touchdown-interception ratio. If he's throwing a lot of TDs and not many interceptions, I'll be happy with it. My last year at UCLA, Drew Olson was overshadowed. But he had 37 touchdowns and four interceptions. I'll take that every year.

"I wish (Hansen) was a junior."

## Roster update.

CU announced that two players who signed in February, offensive lineman Alex Kelly and running back Rashad Hall, will not be on the roster this fall. Kelly fractured an ankle in June while playing football on a beach and will "grayshirt" — meaning he will delay enrolling at CU until January to preserve a year of eligibility.

Hall didn't qualify academically and plans to enroll at a junior college. According to CU, Hall still has a goal of playing for the Buffs.

## No byes taking a breather.

Players from other Pac-12 teams shook their heads in amazement when informed that Colorado will play 13 consecutive weeks this season without an open date.

NCAA rules allow teams that play a road game against Hawaii to schedule a 13th game. Revenue generated from the additional game will help defray the expenses of traveling to Hawaii.

"Thirteen games? That is a grind right there, that's rough," Utah offensive lineman Tony Bergstrom said of CU's 2011 schedule. "I mean, the usual 12 games is tough enough. When you're playing week in and week out, your body takes a toll.

"You feel you're about 100 years old by the end of the season."

## Beachwear encouraged.

UCLA's Neuheisel, on the difference between the Big 12 and CU's new conference, the Pac-12:

"I love the cities to visit in the Pac-12, no disrespect to Waco and Ames and Manhattan; those are wonderful spots," Neuheisel said. "But the environments that you visit in the Pac-12 are exciting places. Of course, now I have to make sure that Baylor, Iowa State and Kansas State are never on our future schedules."

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JULY 26, 2011, 10:04 AM

## Preseason Pac-12 poll has Buffs picked to finish last in South

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

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LOS ANGELES — In a preseason media poll released Tuesday during the Pac-12 football media days at Fox Studios, new league member Colorado was picked to finish six among the six teams in the Pac-12's South Division — by a relatively large margin.

Colorado received a total of 46 points from the 42 voters. Fifth-place UCLA received 89 points.

Southern Cal was picked to win the South Division, receiving 24 first-place votes. Arizona State received 13 first-place nods and placed second in the preseason poll.

The league's other new member, Utah, received four first-place votes and was picked to finish third, ahead of Arizona, which received one first-place vote.

Due to NCAA sanctions, Southern Cal is ineligible for the inaugural Pac-12 championship game.

Oregon was picked to win the North Division. The Ducks received 29 first-place votes. Stanford was the only other North team to draw a first-place vote, with 13. Washington was picked to finish third, ahead of Oregon State, California and Washington State, in that order.

The championship game is scheduled for Friday, Dec. 2, with a 6 p.m. kickoff.

The complete poll:

### South Division

1. USC (24) .....230
2. Arizona State (13) .....207
3. Utah (4) .....170
4. Arizona (1) .....140
5. UCLA .....89
6. Colorado .....46

### North Division

1. Oregon (29) .....239
2. Stanford (13) .....220
3. Washington .....142
4. Oregon State .....120
5. California .....110
6. Washington State .....51

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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

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JULY 26, 2011, 12:59 PM

## Jon Embree emphasizes a change in physical mindset

By **JOHN HENDERSON** |  No Comments

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John Leyba, The Denver Post

Jon Embree wants his teams to be more physical.

LOS ANGELES — New Colorado coach Jon Embree re-emphasized what he said all spring. He wants to make the Buffaloes more physical.

“I want to improve the identity of our program,” Embree said at the Pac-12 Media Day Tuesday. “When people see us play, I want them to understand we’re a physical program, a physical team and able to run the football. We haven’t run the football like we should. When Colorado was successful in the past, we were a good running team. To be a good team and run the football you have to have a physical mindset.”

Other points from Embree:

**On recruiting California:** “We have to get to where we’re recruiting this state effectively. We have four or five kids committed from California currently in this cycle. We have to continue to improve on that.”

**On quarterback Tyler Hansen’s status in the Pac-12:** “I think Tyler fits and belongs with the group we have here. For Tyler to be effective, I look at touchdown-interception ratio. If he’s throwing a lot of TDs and not many interceptions I’ll be happy with it. My last year at UCLA, Drew Olson was overshadowed but he had 37 touchdowns and four interceptions. I’ll take that every year.

“I wish (Hansen) was junior.”

**On the Pac-12 failing to become the Pac-16:** “Twelve is better than 16. It’s a better fit, just from the championship game. That was better for the conference.”

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JULY 26, 2011, 12:51 PM

## Road drought sore point for CU coach Jon Embree

By **JOHN HENDERSON** |  No Comments

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Hyoung Chang, The Denver Post

New CU coach Jon Embree is tasked with a  
accomplishing a rarity: winning on the road.

LOS ANGELES — As one of two new kids on the Pac-12 block, first-year Colorado coach Jon Embree addressed the program's biggest problem with a touch of humor. At the Pac-12 Media Day, a journalist asked how he has to improve a team that hasn't won in 18 road games.

"We haven't?" Embree said kiddingly. "How do we change it? That's been a sticking point with me. One, I don't run away from it. I've addressed it with the team. I believe there's no one on our team who has played in a road win. I'm taking it head on. It all starts on how you prepare. It all starts with a mindset. Good teams win on the road and honestly we haven't been a good team or I wouldn't be here.

"So if we want to do things that players want to do — be in bowl games and championships and all that — we have to win on the road. The thing I'm excited about is our first game on the road so we can address that issue immediately."

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**<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/07/26/road-drought-sore-point-for-embree/19046/>**

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## PACIFIC-12 FOOTBALL NOTEBOOK: Unlucky 13 for Colorado?

By Sam Strong Staff Writer

Posted: 07/26/2011 09:40:47 PM PDT

Updated: 07/26/2011 10:54:53 PM PDT

If Jon Embree fails to turn the Colorado Buffaloes into a winner in his first season as a Pac-12 head coach, he has his boss - Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn - to thank.

Colorado will play 13 games with no bye week beginning Sept. 3 at Hawaii.

The Buffs will hit the road seven times with a neutral site game against Colorado State, leaving just five home games. Trips to Ohio State, Washington and Utah figure to make things tough on one of the Pac-12's newest teams.

While speaking at the podium at Pac-12 media day, Embree didn't try to hide the fact that Colorado has lost 18 consecutive games on the road. Not one player on the roster has won a game on the road.

"I believe it all starts from how you prepare," he said. "It all starts with the mindset. Good teams win on the road. Obviously, we haven't been a good team or I wouldn't be here."

The Buffaloes had the second half of a home-and-home schedule with California scheduled before they joined the conference. As such, the Pac-12 allowed the game to be played without counting it as a conference contest.

With the addition of that game, Colorado will be the only school to play 10 Pac-12 teams.

The trip to The Horseshoe was scheduled as an "exempt" game in exchange for the game at Hawaii. Embree welcomes the challenge of playing the Buckeyes as opposed to a home game with an FCS school.

"They should be excited about it," Embree said of his players. "I just told him I was

glad he didn't put the Packers on the schedule."

Depending upon his team's success this season, Embree could be looking at a 14 th engagement: the inaugural Pac-12 championship game to be played Dec. 2 at the site of the school with the best conference record.

Lucky hairdo?

Stanford quarterback Andrew Luck - who finished second in the Heisman voting last year - debuted a scraggly beard at media day.

"I don't know if you'd call it a beard," Luck said.

Luck said he hadn't thought about how long he'll keep it past today, but he hasn't regretted his decision to return to the Cardinal. He plans to turn pro after this year.

"I'm viewing this as my last college football

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season, and I'm approaching it as such," Luck said.

USC quarterback Matt Barkley was asked what he thought of the look.

"I'm going to show up with a mustache next year," Barkley said.

Does that mean Barkley will return for his senior season?

"I might send (safety) T.J. McDonald," Barkley said.

Does that mean McDonald, also a pro prospect, will return for his senior season?

"I don't know guys, c'mon," Barkley said.

### New digs

There are plenty of quirks in Cal's schedule this year. Cal will play its home games at AT&T Park since the Memorial Stadium renovation project is underway. The Bears also bussed to practice every day in the spring.

Cal will play a Thursday game against USC Oct. 13 at AT&T and a Friday game at Arizona State this season.

"That's going to be what our season is all about," Cal coach Jeff Tedford said. "We're in transition. Games at AT&T will be very exciting. We're a little bit disjointed on moving around and doing things like that.

"I think players will handle it well, whether it's a Thursday game or playing at AT&T. The key is to focus on the job at hand and not get caught up in whether it's a Thursday game or we're playing at Candlestick."

NFL U.

USC coach Lane Kiffin proudly mentioned that

nine Trojans were taken in April's NFL draft. But he did not appreciate a reporter's follow-up asking why his team went 8-5 with that many pro prospects.

"It's about recruiting," Kiffin said. "It shows the NFL believes in our program."

### Tight squeeze

Despite the hoopla of the inaugural Pac-12 media day, the event was cramped because it was held in a cafeteria at the Fox Studios Lot in Los Angeles that was smaller than the hotel ballrooms usually used for the event.

Montana who?

Utah offensive tackle Tony Bergstrom answered the question so quickly you knew something was up.

"Montana State," he said. "Montana State."

Bergstrom had just been asked if there was a game on the Utah schedule that jumped out at him, an opponent that perked his interest a little more than others.

It was a trick question, off course. And his answer was a little too politically correct to be



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taken seriously.

See, Utah opens its season against Montana State Sept. 3.

But a week later they open Pac-12 play against USC in Los Angeles.

You do the math.

"I've got to make sure (Utah coach Kyle Whittingham) isn't around before I say anything else," Bergstrom said, laughing.

In other words, of course Utah is excited to play USC.

"Obviously that first conference game is huge," Bergstrom said. "To go into the historic Coliseum to play, as far as talent goes, one of the best teams in the country. That's definitely a big one to look forward to."

### Out for the count

UCLA head coach Rick Neuheisel confirmed that redshirt freshman cornerback Anthony Jefferson would be out for the season after impending surgery to

repair a bulging disk in his back.

### Senior day for Dad

Neuheisel joked he was prodding new Colorado head coach Embree to celebrate his son's senior night at UCLA on Nov. 19, before father and son will square off as senior wideout Taylor Embree plays his last regular season game at the Rose Bowl.

Staff writers Jill Painter, Vincent Bonsignore and Scott Wolf contributed.

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## Colorado, meet the Pac-12 media

### Los Angeles Times

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*July 26, 2011*

Hello Colorado. Welcome to your first media event with the likes of USC and Oregon.

"We're very excited to be part of the Pac-12," Colorado Coach Jon Embree said.

Embree hopes the new conference affiliation will reap benefits for Colorado in ways the Big 12 wouldn't.

"From a recruiting standpoint, it helps us a lot to be able to come back [to Los Angeles] every year," he said. "We have to get to where we are recruiting this state effectively."

Facing a whole new slate of conference foes, Embree knows a challenge awaits him whenever he prepares for a previously unseen opponent, but thanks to his son Taylor, Embree is somewhat familiar with Pac-12 defenses. Taylor is a senior receiver at UCLA.

"I do have some familiarity with this conference," the elder Embree said. "I've watched a lot of different games, always with UCLA involved.

"There is so much diversity in this league, offensively and defensively ... You always have to prepare. You can't go in with a cookie-cutter mentality."

- Douglas Farmer

**Tags:** [Colorado](#), [Pac-12 media day](#)



Rodney Stewart highlights a Colorado roster new to the Pac-12 this season. (Ron Cheney/US PRESSWIRE)



#### PAC-12 MEDIA DAY

Check out the first media day of the newly formed Pac-12.

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## Colorado, Utah coaches laud Pac-12 expansion

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LOS ANGELES – The logo changed slightly and the annual media day festivities lasted a bit longer than in the past.

That's because the newly formed Pac-12 added Colorado and Utah into its mix, giving the conference two divisions of six teams and its first conference championship game.



Utah coach Kyle Whittingham said his program has pulled in several recruits it wouldn't have gotten without the Pac-12 affiliation. (AP Photo)

"Today is the dawn of a new day for this storied conference, and we're thrilled with the additions of Colorado and Utah," Pac-12 commissioner Larry Scott said at Tuesday's Pac-12 Media Day.

"This is a new era for the conference as we embrace the future, and the addition of Colorado and Utah very much helped us secure a landmark media agreement that's going to provide for unprecedented exposure nationally for the conference."

Both coaches – Jon Embree of Colorado and Kyle Whittingham of Utah – expressed excitement about the start of new chapters for their programs and benefits of joining a powerful football conference.

"We've had a big spike in recruiting," Whittingham said. "For example, the announcement was made back in June a year ago. Within 10 days after the announcement, we had several verbal commitments, many of which we would not have been able to get in on without BCS conference affiliation."

For Colorado, the chance to skim Southern California for players is a definite plus.

"It helps us a lot being able to come back here every year, whether we're playing USC or UCLA," Embree said. "That helps us a lot. We have to get to where we're recruiting this state again effectively. We have four or five kids committed from California currently in this cycle, and we have to continue to improve on that."

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