

Lessons on toughness on tap for Jon Embree's CU Buffs

Practices expected to be physical this fall

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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The Colorado football team hasn't started the first practice of fall camp and coach Jon Embree is already looking ahead to how he might handle practices in September, October and November.

Embree faces a dilemma of sorts.

He wants to build the program into one known for smash-mouth football, as it was in the past. He plans to develop a physical team opponents won't look forward to seeing on Saturdays. Embree's dream team will punch its opponents in the mouth from the first play to the last play of every game.

Embree said the best way -- make that the only way -- to produce those results is to have physical practices.

"You have to make them hit," Embree said when asked how he makes players tougher. "It's how you train. It's a mindset. It's how you see yourself.

"... You have to practice in such a manner that you can't hide. You got to expose guys. You've got to let their teammates see if they're doing what they're supposed to do so that they can't hide. You do those things and that will either make you tough or get you out of there."

But as he looked ahead to his first season leading his alma mater on the gridiron, it became obvious that he and his assistant coaches might have to dial down practices a notch or two to give players a break and provide them the best hope of surviving the season.

The Buffs play 13 consecutive weeks without a bye, with 11 of those games against teams from Bowl Championships Series conferences. Some have dubbed it the nation's toughest schedule at the outset of the season.

And while the Buffs have 27 seniors and some talented backups, they certainly aren't the deepest team in the nation. Avoiding injuries will be a big factor in Colorado's success, especially injuries that occur Monday through Friday.

To avoid as much of that as possible, Embree said he will consider practicing less often in full pads. He said he might have players remove pads after a certain amount of time on days when they are scheduled to be in full pads. He said it's a fine line he will walk this year.

"What this will do is give us an opportunity to learn how to practice some other ways because we can't do like we would do in a normal season if you had a bye, say, in October, you know to recover," Embree said.

The process of building a physical team started from scratch in the spring.

Embree inherited a program that rarely did 9-on-7 inside run drills under former coach Dan Hawkins.

Embree actually cautioned his assistant coaches before spring ball began not to overreact if the first few 15-minute editions of the drill were weak.

He said that's exactly what he saw on those first few days on the field, but by the final four or five practices of spring, "It felt like football."

Embree said he challenges players in practice often to play more physical football. He said if he sees the offense run over the defense on a certain play, he will stop practice and tell the defense the exact same play is coming on the next snap.

"If you what's coming and you know what's about to happen and you know someone is about to hit you in the mouth, and you keep doing this (leaning back in his chair), that's how you expose them," he said.

Embree said he is anxious for the first practice of fall camp next Thursday so he can see if his players pick up where they left off or if they need more lessons in toughness.

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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

JULY 28, 2011, 12:25 PM

CU's Embree feels "very comfortable" with Hansen at QB

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments



Cliff Grassmick, Daily Camera

CU quarterback Tyler Hansen during the spring game.

When talking to first-year Colorado coach Jon Embree, the impression one gets is that there was no doubt in his mind from early during spring drills that Tyler Hansen would be the Buffs starting quarterback.

"He had a great spring," Embree said this week during Pac-12 media-day interviews. "He has a great grasp of the terminology, formations, getting guys lined up.

"I feel very comfortable with him. He's very competitive, and he takes things personally. I like that combination.

"I wish he wasn't a senior."

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/07/28/cus-embree-feels-very-comfortable-with-hansen-at-qb/19171/>

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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

JULY 28, 2011, 10:18 AM

No head-coaching experience not a burden, CU's Embree says

By TOM KENSLEER |  No Comments



Reed Saxon, AP

Colorado coach Jon Embree talks to reporters at the Pac-12 football media day on Tuesday.

Speaking to reporters earlier in Los Angeles this week during Pac-12 football media-day interviews, first-year Colorado coach Jon Embree said it's kind of ironic that people downgrade the Buffaloes because he lacks experience as a head coach.

"One of the things I've found out as a head coach is, I don't get to coach a lot of football," Embree said.

"So I'm trying to figure out why that's a real negative, me being the head coach, why I'm the albatross around this team's neck?

"It's all good. I'm excited for the opportunity. I just wish it was Sept. 1 and we are on that flight to Hawaii (for the Sept. 3 opener)."

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/07/28/no-head-coaching-experience-not-a-burden-cus-embree-says/19168/>

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Thursday, July 28, 2011

3-point stance: Why did Carolina wait?

By Ivan Maisel

1. It's not hard to understand why North Carolina fired Butch Davis. It's hard to understand why North Carolina fired Butch Davis now. Chancellor Holden Thorp said Wednesday he felt the scandal "has begun to chip away" at this university's reputation." Chancellor, that ship sailed when the news first came to light last year. All Thorp has done by waiting until the eve of August practice is throw the Tar Heels' season into chaos.

2. Colorado first-year head coach Jon Embree played for his alma mater in the 1980s. Embree had accepted a job in television journalism in 1991 when his head coach, Bill McCartney, called with a volunteer coaching position. "He didn't ask me. He told me," Embree said. The very first day, Embree fell in love with the work. "At the end of the day," Embree said, "Mac asked me, 'What do you think?' What I didn't say to him is, 'I want your job.'" Twenty years later, he has it.

3. Most of Oregon State's injury news is good. Quarterback [Ryan Katz](#), who suffered a broken wrist last December, has recovered. Tight end [Joe Halahuni](#), who underwent shoulder surgery in May, should be ready by the opener, if not before. However, wide receiver [James Rodgers](#), recovering from a severe knee injury suffered last October, remains a question. Beavers coach Mike Riley said Rodgers will get an update from his doctor next week. Full speed sounds as if it is some time off.



College football countdown: Colorado faces tall task in Pac-12 debut season

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Mark Hester, The Oregonian
By



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The Associated Press

Colorado head coach Jon Embree, left, and quarterback Tyler Hansen talk to reporters at the Pac-12 football media day in Los Angeles Tuesday. This will be Embree's first season as a head coach.

To count down the days until college football practice starts, The Oregonian will take a look at each of the Division I opponents for Oregon and Oregon State.

Today: Colorado (vs. Oregon, Oct. 22 in Boulder)

2010 recap: The Buffaloes finished 5-7 (2-6 Big 12), their sixth consecutive losing season, and **fired coach Dan Hawkins in midseason**. The high point was a win over Georgia of the SEC, but the season not only included lopsided losses to Big 12 powers Nebraska and Oklahoma but also

setbacks to teams that finished the season with losing records such as California and Kansas. Despite finishing near the bottom of the Big 12, Colorado had **two players selected in the first round of the NFL Draft**, offensive lineman Nate Solder and cornerback Jimmy Smith

2011 question: Can Colorado compete in the Pac-12? The Buffaloes have **a rich football history**, but recent years have been filled with disappointment. While the Big 12 has two of the nation's strongest programs – Texas and Oklahoma – at the top, the bottom of the conference typically is weaker than the bottom of the Pac-12. Colorado's **schedule is brutal** and finding victories could be a challenge unless the team improves rapidly under **new coach Jon Embree**. The Buffaloes play 10 Pac-12 teams -- though the California game, scheduled before expansion, will not count in the conference standings. Colorado also has tough non-conference games at Ohio State and Hawaii.

Defense: The Buffaloes return seven starters, but it's a fair question whether

Colorado at a glance

2010 record: 5-7 (2-6 Big 12)

Conference: Pac-12, newcomer this season

Top returning players: Running back Rodney Stewart could be one of the Pac-12's top rushers. Guard Ryan Miller will help open holes for him.

that's a good thing. Colorado gave up 30.8 points per game last season, ranking 91st in the nation. Another bad sign: Colorado lost both starting cornerbacks as it enters the pass-happy Pac-12.

Offense: With nine returning offensive starters, Colorado could put up points.

Rodney Stewart, who rushed for 1,316 yards and scored 10 touchdowns in 2010, could be one of the better running backs in the Pac-12. The key to the season could be the play of senior quarterback **Tyler Hansen**, who split time with Cody Hawkins – the son of the fired coach – last season.

Prognosis: **Oregon** likely will be an overwhelming favorite against the Buffaloes. Colorado was picked to finish last in the Pac-12 South by media who cover the conference, and Athlon ranked them 11th out of the 12 schools in the conference.

The Buffaloes could be underdogs in 10 of their 12 games, with only home games against Colorado State and Washington State projecting as likely wins. The next most winnable game is a home date with Arizona. Unfortunately for Oregon State, they are one of the two Pac-12 teams that don't play Colorado this season.

Key losses:

Offensive lineman Nate Solder, wide receiver Scotty McKnight, and defensive backs Jimmy Smith and Jalil Brown.

Coach: Jon Embree, first season as a head coach.

The game: vs. Oregon in Boulder, Oct. 22

The links

Athlon Sports ranks **Colorado No. 76** in preseason ratings

Team website

Ralphie Report fan blog

Boulder Daily Camera Buffaloes' coverage

CU Independent student newspaper

COLLEGE FOOTBALL COUNTDOWN

July 19: LSU (vs. Oregon, at Arlington, Texas; Sept. 3)

July 20: Wisconsin (Oregon State at Wisconsin, 9 a.m. Sept. 10)

July 21: Nevada (at Oregon, Sept. 10)

July 22: UCLA (at Oregon State, Sept. 24)

July 25: Arizona (vs. Oregon in Tucson on Sept. 24; at Oregon State on Oct. 8)

July 26: Arizona State (vs. Oregon State in Tempe, Oct. 1; at Oregon, Oct. 15)

July 27: California (at Oregon, Oct. 15; vs. Oregon State, Nov. 12)

July 28: Brigham Young (at Oregon State, 15)

Coming Monday: Washington State (vs. Oregon State in Seattle Oct. 22; at Oregon, Oct. 29)

--Mark Hester

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