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cu football

CU Cornerbacks Orms, Vigo are called upon after suspensions

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — Cornerbacks Parker Orms and Paul Vigo don't know which was harder — watching Colorado's secondary getting torched every week or knowing why they were watching from the stands.

If it's not too late — Colorado stands 1-9 and 0-6 in the Pac-12 with three games left — the two sophomores want to make it up to the team. They'll get a chance at 12:30 p.m. Saturday when they return to the field after their four-game suspensions to beef up a battered secondary against Arizona (2-7, 1-6) at Folsom Field.

"We pretty much let our team down," Vigo said. "We weren't there for them."

One of the great secrets on campus is what Orms, Vigo, Ayodeji Olatoye, Josh Moten and Makiri Pugh, all cornerbacks,

and linebacker Liloa Nobriga did to get suspended. The school officially called it "failing to meet the expectations of being a member of the team."

While Olatoye, Nobriga and Pugh won't return this year, Moten, Orms and Vigo did enough, like coming in and working out on their own. Moten

returned Oct. 10 and Orms and Vigo officially returned last week but didn't play against Southern California.

How welcome is Orms? There's a good chance he'll start.

"I just told them that they were back and this is an opportunity," first-year coach Jon Embree said. "Sometimes you don't get second chances. Not being around their teammates affected them some too."

Orms was scheduled to start in August before being slowed by injuries. Then came the Oct. 6 suspension.

"We weren't warned at all," Orms said. "It just came up. We were kind of confused about what happened, but we have to take responsibility for the whole thing. It was fair punishment. Coach made it clear what he wants."

Vigo learned a painful lesson.

He has played mostly on special teams, but looking at the decimation of the secondary, he likely would have played a lot.

"You have to be accountable, responsible and definitely (show) leadership," Vigo said. "That's

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what it came down to. You have to take responsibility for the things that you do and we have to set examples since we're among the older guys on the secondary."

When sophs are the veterans, it explains the secondary's current mess. With suspensions and injuries, Colorado has already given up 28 touchdown passes, a school record. Orms' reward for returning is facing Arizona quarterback Nick Foles, a projected first-round NFL draft choice.

It's a tough assignment after sitting out five games (four of them on suspension).

"I feel pretty good with the plays and all that," Orms said. "I need to get my feet underneath me sometimes and hopefully Saturday it all comes together and we have some fun."

If they sound optimistic, they are. They have no choice.

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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

NOVEMBER 10, 2011, 3:19 PM

Silver lining: at least Buffs holding onto the ball this season

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Rebounding from a four-turnover game at Arizona State, Colorado did not lose a fumble or throw an interception last week against Southern California.

The USC game marked the fourth time in an otherwise bleak 2011 season that the Buffs have not committed a turnover. CU also went turnover-free against California, Colorado State and Washington.

According to the CU sports info department, that ties a school record for a regular season. CU also had four turnover-less games in 1989 (11-0 regular-season record), 1993 (7-3-1) and 2006 (2-10).

Makes one wonder if the turnover stat is a bit overvalued.

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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

NOVEMBER 10, 2011, 11:04 AM

Despite 1-9 record, CU football still draws national TV coverage

By **TOM KENSLE** |  1 Comment

BOULDER — This week's announcement that Versus has picked up the telecast of the Nov. 19 Colorado at UCLA game (5:30 p.m. MST kickoff) assures that all 13 of CU's games will be televised this season — 11 nationally, two regionally.

According to Colorado sports information director David Plati, this marks the first time that every Buffs game will be televised since 1995 — when the Buffs went 10-2 in their first season under Rick Neuheisel.

Saturday's 12:30 p.m. home finale against Arizona will be televised on Fox College Sports (FCS), which is available on some cable and satellite packages.

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<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/11/10/despite-1-9-record-cu-football-still-gets-national-tv-coverage/22069/>

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RINGO: Give Jon Embree three years to rebuild CU Buffs

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/10/2011 12:07:26 AM MST

Since being hired nearly a year ago to turn around the Colorado football program, coach Jon Embree has been reluctant to set any kind of timetable for the Buffs producing a winning record and getting back to the postseason.

Can't really blame him for not wanting to start that clock in this day and age.

Once he does, he can't stop it and most fans certainly would not let him adjust it for circumstances that arise and that might be out of his control.

But I'll do it for him.

Embree has three years to rebuild. He should have the Buffs back firmly on the winning side of the ledger and in the postseason in Year Four (2014) and the program should be in position to compete for conference titles and BCS bowl bids in five or six years, 2015 or 2016.

Most avid CU fans won't be happy with that timeline.

Truth is, I'd bet Embree and most of his coaching staff wouldn't be happy with it either.

Who wants to wait that long after all?

But it's realistic.

Perhaps Embree can make it happen sooner.

He's already received a little help from athletic director Mike Bohn, who has learned just how big an impact the schedules he puts together can have on a coach's success.

Bohn has lightened the load in the next two years at least.

The blueprint for rebuilding the Buffs is out there and Embree has already acknowledged he is following it.

Wise move.

Back in 2006, the Stanford program went 1-11 under coach Walt Harris, who was fired at the end of that season.

Jim Harbaugh, a man with many of the same or similar football philosophies as Embree, was hired and the turnaround began the next season.

But it took time, just as it will here in Boulder. The Cardinal went 4-8 in 2007 and 5-7 in 2008 before finally breaking through for an 8-5 campaign in 2009.

If it can be done at Stanford, it can be done here in Boulder or pretty much anywhere else for that matter.

In fact, it should be easier to turnaround most programs than it was at Stanford simply because of the academic rigor in Palo Alto.

Stanford won the Orange Bowl last year to complete a 12-1 season and is 9-0 this fall heading into the biggest game of the season Saturday at home against Oregon.

Quarterback Andrew Luck is the Heisman Trophy frontrunner and offensive lineman Jonathan Martin is a finalist for the Lombardi Award.

If Luck can lead his teammates to victory over the Ducks, the Cardinal will be in position to represent the North Division in the Pac-12 championship game in December and possibly play for a national title in January.

Remember just six seasons ago the program was 1-11.

So settle in Buffs fans and look forward to 2016 or so. Black and gold should be rolling again by then. Or maybe we'll be writing about a coaching search.

Numbers game

9 -- The total number of kickoffs and punts returned for touchdowns so far this season by Pac-12 teams. In a conference with so much speed and talent , you would think there would be more.

Who's hot?

Utah running back John White became the fourth Ute to rush for 1,000 yards in his first season with the program when he gained 109 yards on 27 carries last week against Arizona. He has five 100-yard rushing games this season.

Who's not?

The Colorado defense has allowed 28 touchdown passes this season. Oregon State is the only other team in the conference to surrender 20 so far.

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Boyle's team's turn to impress football recruits

CU football recruits to attend hoops game Friday

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/09/2011 07:01:22 PM MST

Now it's Tad Boyle's turn to assist the football program.

Colorado's second-year head coach signed a five-man recruiting class on Wednesday which is ranked No. 21 nationally by espn.com and widely considered to be the best in the school's hardwood history.

Several of the recruits committed to Boyle and his staff after experiencing the atmosphere at Folsom Field this fall.

Embree, who said turning around the Buffs' football program starts on the recruiting trail, will be taking some prospects to the Coors Events Center on Friday for the basketball team's season opener.

"There are some kids on our team now that were committed to other programs and they were at the Oklahoma State basketball game last year, and it really helped us a lot," Embree said. "Our fans play an integral role in all sports helping us recruit. That's one of the things kids want to see: Is there support?"

Athletic director Mike Bohn said season ticket sales for men's basketball are up 16 percent entering the first non-conference game. Boyle guided the Buffs to a record 24 wins last season.

Embree, who attended a CU ski team function last Saturday, said the athletic department does a good job of supporting everyone in the family, including his 1-9 team.

"Because a lot of the athletes are from out of state, there's a real nice rapport between all the sports," Embree said. "They all pull for each other. When other athletes are your biggest fan, it makes it kind of special."

Cousin vs. cousin

Paul Richardson doesn't need to watch a lot of film this week on Arizona's No. 1 cornerback. He knows it will be like looking into a mirror on Saturday.

CU's star receiver will likely go head-to-head against his cousin, Shaquille Richardson, on most plays.

"I think it would be great for them because they're almost like brothers," Embree said. "The chance to go against each other and have some bragging rights would be nice."

Shaquille Richardson is trying to make his way back onto the field from an ankle injury. Paul Richardson returned from a knee injury last Friday against USC.

Motivated Wildcats?

Arizona is 2-7 overall and 1-6 in the Pac-12. Head coach Mike Stoops was fired earlier in the season. Things are also tough on the gridiron in Tucson.

Interim head coach Tim Kish is looking forward to seeing how motivated the Wildcats are to play on Saturday now that the group has been officially eliminated from the bowl picture.

"Adversity introduces a man to himself," Kish told the Arizona Republic this week. "We're going to find out where we're at with that situation."

Folsom food drive

Fans are asked to bring non-perishable food items to Saturday's game at Folsom Field between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. CU athletics will be helping collect the items for the Community Food Share organization that helps fight hunger in Boulder and Broomfield Counties.

Personnel update

Embree said free safety Kyle Washington (concussion) will not play on Saturday, but starting free safety Ray Polk (concussion) should be available.

CU's secondary will also have cornerbacks Parker Orms and Paul Vigo back from suspension.

"Sometimes you don't get second chances," Embree said. "I expect them to take full advantage of being back."

Notable

Will Oliver is two points away from breaking Mason Crosby's freshman scoring record. The current Green Bay Packer place-kicker had 52 points as a freshman in 2003. ... Arizona quarterback Nick Foles needs 84 yards of offense on Saturday to break the program record for total offense set by Willie Tuitama (8,727 yards, 2005-08). ... CU will host a season-high 13 NFL scouts from 10 different teams on Saturday. Foles, like Pac-12 peers Andrew Luck (Stanford) and Matt Barkley (USC), is a possible first-round pick.

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UCLA FOOTBALL

UCLA has to deal with hungry Utah, Colorado teams

Bruins face the Utes and the Buffaloes, who have a combined two victories in their first Pacific 12 Conference season, with a showdown with USC and a South Division title at stake.

By Baxter Holmes

4:40 PM PST, November 9, 2011

More than a month before Thanksgiving, UCLA's goose already looked cooked. Arizona's football team, with a five-game losing streak and an interim coach, roasted the Bruins by 36 points in Tucson on Oct. 20.

The embarrassing loss prompted calls for Coach Rick Neuheisel's ouster, but UCLA responded with consecutive victories over California and nationally ranked Arizona State to pull into a first-place tie in the Pacific 12 Conference's South Division.

Now the future suddenly looks bright with possibility. The only roadblocks between UCLA and a Nov. 26 showdown at USC with a berth in the inaugural Pac-12 championship game at stake are the conference's newcomers, Utah and Colorado.

The Bruins travel to Salt Lake City to face the Utes on Saturday, then play host to Colorado on Nov. 19.

Both teams have struggled in their inaugural Pac-12 seasons but Utah, liked UCLA, has reversed field by winning its last two games.

"It took far longer to get our first Pac-12 win that we had hoped it would, but we finally got it," Coach Kyle Whittingham said after Utah's 27-8 win against Oregon State on Oct. 29. The Utes improved to 5-4 overall, 2-4 in conference play by defeating Arizona, 34-21, on Saturday.

Unlike Colorado (1-9, 0-6), which has been turn-the-channel bad, Utah, formerly of the Mountain West Conference, was expected to contend in the Pac-12.

The Utes won nine games or more in each of the last four seasons; reached eight consecutive bowl games, winning seven; had unbeaten seasons twice since 2004 and posted wins in the Fiesta and Sugar bowls.

But Utah early on wasn't good enough to overcome its mistakes — four turnovers or more in three of its Pac-12 losses.

"You may be able to get away with that when you're playing a lesser opponent," Whittingham said, "but when you're playing people with the caliber that we're playing, you cannot turn the ball over excessively."

Defensive tackle Dave Kruger surprised some when he told reporters after Utah's 34-10 loss to California last month that, "I guess you could say we underestimated the Pac-12 a little bit."

Whittingham said he didn't tell his players the league would be easy.

"In fact, maybe we went too much the other way and built it up too much," he said. "I don't sense that any of our guys are

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taking this lightly."

Colorado Coach Jon Embree, a former UCLA assistant, said fans of his team might have underestimated "how much speed is in the conference and just the level ... of quarterback play."

The Buffaloes had been struggling in the Big 12 Conference, too, finishing 2-6 in each of its last three seasons. In the Pac-12, things have only gotten worse. Colorado ranks last or next to last in seven team statistical categories and has given up an average of 47 points in its last five conference losses.

Injuries have been a big factor for the Buffaloes. Colorado has lost a total of 90 games to injury to players who figured in either the two-deep roster or prominently on special teams.

That's a 20.5% absentee rate, which projects to be the second-highest figure in the last 25 years at Colorado, associate athletic director David Plati said.

Is the Pac-12 that much more physical than the Big 12?

Eric McCarty, director of sports medicine for Colorado athletics, said it has nothing to do with a new league. It's just a run of bad luck.

"We had one guy hurt in practice — our best receiver," McCarty said. "That's just one of those freak things."

At Utah, several key players have suffered serious or season-ending injuries, including starting quarterback Jordan Wynn, but the overall numbers are down.

"I know what everybody is getting at," said Paul Silvestri, head athletic trainer for Utah's football team, "but it's not showing up for me."

Utah has had 62 time-loss injuries in which a player sat out a practice or a game. Through this point last season, that figure was 75; in 2009, it was 91.

A victory that would shake up the conference standings would be good medicine for both Pac-12 newcomers. They also have plenty to play for beyond just being a spoiler.

Colorado is looking for its first Pac-12 victory and would like to shed a road losing streak that has stretched to 22 games.

Utah needs a victory to become eligible for a bowl game.

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