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CU Buffs like versatility of freshman D.D. Goodson

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/17/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

BOULDER — That seemingly seamless move by Colorado freshman D.D. Goodson from running back to defensive back at midseason didn't surprise anyone back in Rosenberg, Texas. After his senior season in high school, Goodson was voted the district's "utility player of the year."

Last fall, at Lamar Consolidated High School, Goodson started the season at wide receiver, moved to running back and played safety the entire time.

"He just wants to play football. It doesn't matter what role he's given," said Ronald Patton, the football coach at Lamar High, which is near Houston. "D.D. is a football player, just like his brothers."

Goodson grew up in a single-parent household, run by his mother. Three older brothers made

sure he kept on the straight and narrow.

There wasn't any doubt that Goodson would follow in their fleet footsteps and play football. D.D. is the second of the brothers to play at the college level. Jeremy Goodson was a receiver and running back at Rice.

"When you get into athletics, you don't do other things, things that can get people in trouble," said Jeremy, who works in the health care industry.

Though small at 5-foot-7 and 165 pounds, D.D. could always rely on his speed. Football becomes easier when you can run past everybody. Playing Pop Warner youth football at age 10, Goodson did just that.

"Back then, they'd toss it to me on a sweep," he said. "I'd just use my quickness."

Goodson played mostly receiver in high school, catching 25 balls as a sophomore and 40 for 700 yards and seven touchdowns as a junior. The latter earned him all-district honors, which means something in Texas. He also played in the defensive secondary during that time but really showed his versatility as a senior. Goodson began the year at wideout but after five games, his team needed a spark in the running game.

"We moved D.D. over and he never complained," Lamar Consolidated's Patton said. "Not only that,

he played like he'd been a running back for years. That's the kind of kid he is."

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Blog: CU Buffs



The Denver Post's sports reporters contribute analysis, notes and minutiae on this blog dedicated to CU athletics.

Goodson did everything as a senior but mow the field. His numbers included 30 catches for 500 yards, 370 yards rushing, a 35-yard average on kickoff returns. And full-time duty at safety.

"He just loves the game, like his brothers," Jeremy Goodson said. "Of course, football is king in Texas. Even if you don't see yourself playing football in the future, you do it because your buddies are playing football. Then you find out you like it and try to get better at it.

"D.D. is a very smart kid (National Honor Society member in high school with a 3.67 grade-point average), so he was able to pick it up quickly, no matter what situation they put him in."

About the only thing that befuddled Goodson was the recruiting process. He was all but left out. Until CU's new coaching staff discovered Goodson late in the recruiting process, the only school that had offered a scholarship was Texas State (formerly Southwest Texas State), which is in the process of stepping up to the FBS major-college level as it prepares to join the Western Athletic Conference.

"There was a lot of frustration, but I just tried to keep positive about it," Goodson said.

Four months after national signing day, Goodson became the final high school recruit in head coach Jon Embree's first class, signing with the

Bufs as a running back June 8.

"Coach (Eric) Bieniemy came down and I guess liked what he saw," Goodson said. "He said he liked my work ethic and that I was a responsible young guy. And (with Bieniemy being 5-8 himself), he doesn't worry about height."

Goodson arrived at CU for August camp and, despite his lack of size, he impressed coaches with his willingness to run between the tackles. The plan was to redshirt Goodson — that is, until the Buffs lost several defensive backs to injury or suspension. Before the eighth game, against Oregon, Goodson was given an "audition" of four snaps on defense during a 7-on-7 drill during Tuesday's practice.

After coaches reviewed the practice film, they moved Goodson to defense full time the next day.

Incredibly, he had only two full practices on that side before being named the starter at nickel back against an Oregon offense that ranks among the nation's most explosive. He responded by making four tackles against the Ducks before getting injured.

Colorado defensive coordinator Greg Brown recalled telling Goodson during the practice

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audition that his redshirt would not be pulled unless he could really help the team.

"And then I told him, 'Not only that, we want to start you against Oregon,' " Brown added.

"Without hesitation, he said: 'OK. I'm in.'

"D.D. has body control, and he competes. He likes defense. And we like him."

Goodson also started the Southern California game and could play a significant role Saturday against UCLA at the Rose Bowl, especially if sophomore Parker Orms (hamstring) is out.

"I was just looking for work," Goodson said of moving to defense.

Spoken like a real football player.

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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

NOVEMBER 17, 2011, 7:29 AM

CU's Nick Kasa on move to tight end: "Love it"

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — I saw Colorado junior Nick Kasa at CU's Dal Ward Center after practice Wednesday evening.

In case fans are wondering how the former blue-chip defensive lineman from Legacy High School is adjusting to his mid-season to tight end, he replied "Love it" after being asked how things were going.

"I'll be ready to go next year," Kasa said, presumably in reference to battling for the starting job after the departures of outgoing seniors Ryan Deehan and Matt Bahr.

At 6-feet-6 and 270 pounds and with good feet, Kasa may be a good fit at tight end. I hope he finds success. He's built a lot like New York Jets tight end Jake Ballard, who had a game-winning TD catch a couple of weeks ago.

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/11/17/cus-nick-kasa-on-move-to-tight-end-love-it/22220/>

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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

NOVEMBER 16, 2011, 1:56 PM

CU tailback Rodney Stewart (5-6, 175) will play in NFL, coach predicts

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Colorado coach Jon Embree was an NFL assistant for four seasons (three with Kansas City, one at Washington) prior to returning to his alma mater last December.

During his stint in the pros, Embree said he was directly involved with evaluating former college players at the NFL Combine. So he is a good one to ask about pro potential.

He was asked if CU senior tailback Rodney Stewart can play in the NFL.

“Yep, because they didn’t think he could play in college,” Embree said. “That’s what he does. He just proves people wrong. I think Rodney can. He’d be a heck of a force for us in special-teams coverage if we had a different situation with our depth issue.

“He’ll make somebody’s team. I really believe that. He’s a physical pass blocker. And obviously with him getting out in space and being able to catch the ball.

“I don’t know how much Darren Sproles (of the New Orleans Saints) weighs, but they are similar size-type guys.”

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/11/16/cus-embree-p-rich-getting-his-legs-back/22174/>

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CU football

CU Buffs' Orms still has passion for game

Buffs DB aims to persevere despite injuries

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

Posted: 11/16/2011 11:56:37 PM MST

Three seasons have passed and Parker Orms still hasn't made the impact on the Colorado football program he hoped to when he signed with the Buffs in 2009 after a storybook career at Wheat Ridge High School.

Orms redshirted during his first season in Boulder and suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament in the season opener in 2010. He was feeling great about his comeback entering fall camp back in August and then he suffered a severely strained calf, which forced him to miss most of August practice.

He played in the Buffs' first four games but left a late-September loss at Ohio State when he aggravated the calf injury. He was also dealing with a tight hamstring and swelling in his surgically repaired knee.

It was difficult for him to deal with mentally because he had never missed a game due to injury in high school.

"This offseason I'm definitely going to focus on getting my leg stronger, and hopefully I can be healthy next year and my last year after that," Orms said.

Orms was one of five CU defenders suspended in early October for violating team rules. He hasn't divulged what he did to deserve the suspension but he acknowledged he made a mistake and the punishment was just.

He was reinstated three weeks ago and has played in the Buffs' last two games, but he re-injured his hamstring in a win last week against Arizona and now he doesn't know if he will play again this season.

Should a guy with this kind of luck really have changed his jersey number to 13 before the season?

"After last year, I thought things couldn't get much worse but they did," Orms said. "You've got to learn from it and over these last two years, I've definitely learned a lot about how to be a better athlete and a better person. I think it's going to help me move forward and be stronger in the future."

Coaches always have raved about Orms' physical ability and football acumen. That has shown up this season in Colorado's defensive statistics.

He has played 239 snaps from scrimmage and has made 37 total tackles. Only nine of his teammates have made more tackles than him and eight of them have played in at least two more games than he has.

There are six players on the CU defense who have played 90 or more snaps than Orms but haven't been in on as many plays.

Orms said the injuries haven't sapped his love for the game. In fact, they have probably made him hungrier to get his chance to make his mark over the course of an entire season. Orms stood on the sideline watching the Buffs practice in Folsom Field on Tuesday and commented to a teammate that he has watched more practices at CU than he has been able to take part in. It's frustrating.

"You definitely have to question why," Orms said. "But you've just got to know that things happen and it has happened to a lot of guys but it's how you come back from it and what you learn from it. I've definitely still got that fire to get out there and play again."

If Orms can't play this week, it will be a big loss to a CU secondary that has missed him for much of the year. The Buffs

have given up 43 passes of 20 yards or more and total of 67 plays of 20 or more yards this season.

Orms said he knows the defense and has spent just as much time in meetings and film sessions as any of his teammates, aside from the time he was suspended. However, there is no substitute for being on the field and learning to play within the schemes over time. He believes he can become a much better player when he eventually beats the injury bug and stays healthy for an extended period.

Unfortunately, that won't happen until next fall at the earliest.

"You've got to keep your focus on learning, even when you're not playing," Orms said. "I've been watching every single game that I haven't played in this year and I've definitely learned a lot by watching other guys play."

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Pac-12 notes**RINGO: South winner could miss bowl game**

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/16/2011 11:59:47 PM MST

When dreaming of expanding his conference to 12 teams and adding a football championship game, Pac-12 commissioner Larry Scott likely never envisioned that title game doubling as a bowl game for any of its participants.

That might have to be how this season's representative from the South Division views the game if the final two weeks of the regular season unfold just right.

It's possible that a team could win the South Division with a 6-6 record this season, play in the championship game, lose that game and not be eligible for a bowl game at 6-7. Whoever does represent the South will certainly be the underdog and the road team, likely against Oregon in Eugene.

Glass is half full: How about that for motivation to pull the upset?

Glass is half empty: How about that as a reward for winning your division?

This is just another way the NCAA sanctions against USC have hurt the league. In a normal year in which the Trojans were eligible for the postseason, this week's marquee matchup in the league -- USC at Oregon -- would likely be a preview of the title game. But the Trojans are serving their final year of a postseason ban leaving Arizona State, UCLA and Utah to vie for the right to play for the title and possibly miss a bowl game in the process.

If it actually turns out this way, it sure would make for a memorable start to the new era in the Pac-12.

Safety dance

Colorado and UCLA both have missed senior safeties in recent weeks and the Bruins believe they will welcome back Tony Dye for senior day against the Buffs on Saturday.

Dye has been out since mid-September with a neck injury but was able to practice this week in full contact situations.

CU senior Anthony Perkins suffered a severely sprained ankle three weeks ago in a loss to Oregon and hasn't played since. He is walking without crutches and on his way into the training room on Wednesday when asked if he will play this week, he said, "We'll see."

Miles from the poorhouse

USA Today published its annual look at college football coaching salaries this week and CU coach Jon Embree comes in at 11th in the Pac-12. Only Washington State coach Paul Wulff makes less than the \$725,000 Embree is paid.

It's important to note that Embree probably could have had a larger salary when he was hired last December, but he agreed to take less so the school could pay his assistants more with a goal of retaining assistant coaches longer.

Turnover in football assistant coaches has been a huge problem for the program for more than two decades because state law limits each school to a maximum of six multiyear contracts.

Here is a look at what Pac-12 coaches are making this year, according to USA Today. These salaries do not account for all possible income. Coaches typically have plenty of incentives in their deals.

Chip Kelly, Oregon, \$2,800,000

Jeff Tedford, California, \$2,300,000

Steve Sarkisian, Washington, \$2,250,000

Kyle Whittingham, Utah, \$1,700,000

Dennis Erickson, Arizona State, \$1,503,000

Mike Stoops, Arizona, \$1,465,000

Mike Riley, Oregon State, \$1,313,471

Rick Neuheisel, UCLA, \$1,285,000

Jon Embree, Colorado, \$725,000

Paul Wulff, Washington State, \$600,050

USC and Stanford are private schools and don't have to release salary information.

Numbers game

6 -- Number of former UCLA quarterbacks who have played that position on Super Bowl teams in the NFL.

Who's hot?

Colorado cornerback Jason Espinoza has picked off two future NFL quarterbacks in his last two games. Considering he played most of his career and the first half of this season at wide receiver, it's an impressive achievement to intercept USC's Matt Barkley and Arizona's Nick Foles in consecutive weeks.

Who's not?

Arizona State place-kicker Alex Garoutte has missed crucial field goal attempts late in consecutive losses to UCLA and Washington State the past two weeks.

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UCLA FOOTBALL

UCLA's Josh Smith, Kai Maiava look forward to seeing old friends

Smith, a receiver, and Maiava, a center, started their careers at Colorado before transferring to Westwood. They both want a victory Saturday over the Buffaloes.

By Chris Foster

November 17, 2011

UCLA wide receiver **Josh Smith** will look at the Colorado players on the other sideline Saturday at the Rose Bowl and see his past.

"I used to wear that uniform; now I wear this one," Smith said.

Center **Kai Maiava** is "excited" about running into — and over — old friends on the field.

"I still keep in contact with those guys," Maiava said. "That's why I want the 'W.' It will be bragging rights."

Smith and Maiava began their college careers at Colorado before transferring to UCLA — Smith in 2009 and Maiava in 2008.

"There are going to be a lot of emotions," Smith said. "It's senior day and my family will be there. They never got to see me play at Colorado and rarely have seen me play at UCLA. Now they get to see both uniforms."

Smith still has close ties to players in the Colorado program. He helped recruit some of the wide receivers, including **Toney Clemons**, who is tied for the team lead with 36 receptions.

And Smith will certainly cross paths with linebacker **Josh Hartigan**, his dorm roommate as a freshman, and defensive back **Travis Sandersfeld**, another friend, on the field.

Smith's plan is to tag-team the Buffaloes with fellow wide receiver **Taylor Embree**, whose father is Colorado Coach **Jon Embree**.

"Taylor and I are going to have each other's back and keep the Buffaloes' [offense] off the field," Smith said.

Maiava was a starting guard at Colorado as a freshman in 2007, playing well enough to be named to a handful of all-freshman teams. He is eager to get re-acquainted with some chums.

"Yeah, I'm friends with a couple guys on defense," Maiava said, adding, "I'm coming for you, **David Goldberg**."

Goldberg is a Colorado linebacker.

"We're friends off the field; on it we're not," Maiava said.

Road Bowl game

The Buffaloes have not won a game outside Colorado since 2007, a 23-game streak that includes a neutral-field loss to

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Alabama in the 2007 Independence Bowl.

"Ending that road losing streak is real important to us, as important as winning on senior day was," Colorado quarterback **Tyler Hansen** told the Denver Post. "We're going to go to the Rose Bowl and get it done."

Jon Embree did damage control during his news conference, saying, "I don't get caught up in that. ... We think we are going to win this week, we thought we were going to win last week and think we are going to win in the future."

As to whether sharing such feelings publicly is wise, Embree said, "Whether it is said in the locker room, whether it is said publicly, to me it doesn't change."

Kicker is off

Kicker **Tyler Gonzalez** struggled Wednesday, missing five consecutive 47-yard field-goal attempts at the end of the two-minute drill.

Gonzalez was one for three from the same distance at the end of practice Tuesday.

"Tyler has been money for us," Coach **Rick Neuheisel** said. "It wasn't a great day for him today. He'll be back tomorrow."

Gonzalez has made five of seven field-goal attempts in games since being plucked away from the men's soccer team, where he was the team manager.

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UCLA receiver Taylor Embree and father, Colorado coach Jon, bonded by football

By Jon Gold, Staff Writer

Posted: 11/16/2011 11:52:40 PM PST

Updated: 11/16/2011 11:52:52 PM PST

At the lowest point of Taylor Embree's senior season - and with the UCLA football team at 5-5, it has indeed been full of ups and downs - he did not need a coach, he needed a father.

He got both.

UCLA was trailing by 35 points when Embree was involved in a brawl near halftime of the Bruins' 48-12 loss at Arizona on Oct. 20. Embree was ejected and suspended for the team's matchup the following Saturday against Cal.

He did not know what to expect when he called his parents, Jon and Natalyn Embree, but he wasn't expecting it to be pretty.

"The phone call was quick; the phone call was just, 'We're flying you home tomorrow and we'll talk about it then,'" Embree said. "Next morning I flew out, got home and we didn't even talk about it at first. Played some pool, watched some TV, and then he told me that he knows I'm smarter than that.

"It was rough, but my dad, one thing he does a really good job of is when he does need to coach me up, he's not too critical of me. He knows I'm going to get criticized and yelled at by the coaches out here, so that's one thing that he never does."

Jon Embree has to do enough of that in his day

job, which will bring him right back into his son's world on Saturday.

The first-year Colorado head coach brings a Buffaloes squad into the Rose Bowl fresh off a 48-29 shellacking of the same Arizona team that so thoroughly embarrassed UCLA.

Don't expect the two to be trading any secrets,

as "family bragging rights" are at stake, as Taylor Embree said.

But even though the two are preparing for each other this week, the lines of communication haven't been broken.

"I actually talked to Taylor last night," Jon Embree said during the Pac-12 conference call on Tuesday. "I plan on just my normal routine with him, talking with him. I'll probably talk to him again Wednesday and Thursday and probably Friday night."

Said Taylor Embree: "The first person I always want to talk to after a game or even after a practice is my dad. He knows what we're going through. He's been there. He's been on teams that have struggled. He's been on teams that have won. It's special in the fact I have someone I can talk to who knows exactly how I feel."



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The non-football stuff? That's where Natalyn Embree comes in.

She's the buffer between football and reality, for her husband and her sons, Taylor and Connor, a freshman wide receiver at Kansas.

Natalyn Embree is more concerned with grades and girlfriends than the gridiron, though the "cook, chauffer and ATM" for three children - the Embrees also have high-schooler Hannah - also knows that she plays an integral role in the football psyche of all three of the men of the household.

"It's not always fun," Natalyn Embree said. "Sometimes neither one of them wants to talk. They internalize it. I do feel like I'm the psychiatrist sometimes. 'Things will get better, honey.' You say all these lines and you hope that one day it's all justified and that what you're saying is real. It's one of those up-and-down rollercoasters for me, too."

This season, with her husband's Colorado team at 2-9 and her son's UCLA team at 5-5, there have been more downs than ups.

The lowest points was after the Arizona debacle. This wasn't a conversation about touchdowns or dropped passes, about a win or a loss. This was going to be about a man's action on the field.

It was brief. It was succinct.

"We'll talk about it tomorrow."

And they did. Even if Jon Embree's response was probably a bit different than a typical father-son discussion after a fight.

"I think Jon in a way respected that Taylor stuck up for his teammates," Natalyn Embree said. "He wants his players to all take care of the others. They're out there as a team - it's not about I or me, it's about us - so I think having Jon in this career, he sees things a lot differently than a

dad who's just a fan or happens to have the game on."

Jon Embree's career path did have some unintended consequences, though.

After an illustrious playing career at Colorado and a two-year stint with the Los Angeles Rams, the former tight end eventually returned to the Buffaloes in 1992, coaching his old position. He remained with Colorado until 2002, when he was hired as UCLA's assistant head coach and receivers coach by Karl Dorrell, but then he received a surprising job offer by the NFL's Kansas City Chiefs in 2006.

That meant two moves at just about the worst time for Taylor Embree, who ranks seventh in UCLA history with 130 receptions and 12th in receiving yards with 1,700.

After arriving in time for the start of his freshman year at Hart High, Embree was gone before the start of his senior year, after the family packed up to Overland Park, Kan., where he played for Blue Valley West High.

"I was lucky because I only moved twice, but I moved at the worst times - going into high school and into my senior year," said Taylor Embree, who has 13 receptions for 152 yards and



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a touchdown this season. "But it's a sacrifice you have to make. And there are good things - I was excited because it was the first time my dad got to go to every one of my games."

It reminded Embree of when his father would come to his elementary school once every couple of months for lunch, eliciting a roar from Embree's classmates.

Natalyn Embree is not dissuading her son from following the same career path. She sees a lot of Jon in Taylor - Taylor sees a lot of his father in himself, too - and she knows that the passion for the game might just seep in that deep.

She does have one piece of advice, though.

"I'd say if you're gonna do that, make sure you pick a wife who can handle all these moves," Natalyn said. "If (Taylor) wants to do that, I think it's wonderful. I want all my kids to do something they'll be passionate about and that they have a love for. If that's coaching, I'll be there 100 percent.

"And I'll be there to listen to his wife."



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Bufs players have come together after snapping seven-game losing streak



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November 16, 2011

Colorado's seniors have two more chances to try to win a road game during their career.

The Buffs got a boost of confidence with a 48-29 win over Arizona Saturday that gave them their first Pac-12 Conference victory and improved their overall record to 2-9. Colorado finishes up the season with trips to UCLA and Utah as it looks to snap a 22-game road losing streak. The Buffaloes have not won on the road since 2007, and the out-of-state losing streak is at 23, including a bowl game.

"Now next for us is the road losing streak, and we are going to end it," Colorado coach Jon Embree said. "These guys are going to end it."

Some of the 28 seniors on the roster were in their first year on the team when Colorado won its last road game on Oct. 27, 2007 at Texas Tech, but others, including starting quarterback Tyler Hansen did not arrive until later years and are still seeking that elusive first road win of their college career.

"We are not going to lose on the road," Hansen said this week. "We are going on the road and we are going to get it done. We are going to send these underclassmen off with a three-game winning streak. That is our goal. We are going to fight, and we are going to do everything we can to get that done."

Freshman wide receiver Keenan Canty said the excitement surrounding the win over Arizona could carry over against UCLA.

"This win is going to give us some great momentum for next week," he said. "We know that we can get a win over a Pac-12 team now. We just need to commit to film study and work hard this week in practice. Coach Embree has continued to emphasize to us that we just need to win for the seniors, and that's all were going to keep trying to do in order to finish off this season the right way for the seniors."

After some dissension on the team during a seven-game losing streak this season, the players seem to have come together. The seniors talk about leaving the underclassmen with a winning streak heading into next season, while the younger players want to send the seniors out with more wins.

"This is a great building block for this program, and I'm so happy we were able to get the seniors a win like this before they went out," junior defensive back Ray Polk said. "I definitely think this game served as a big momentum builder in order to try to get a win on the road (next week at UCLA). The morale on the team feels completely different, and we now know we can do this, we just need to put it on the road."

NOTES, QUOTES

--Colorado's 48 points against Arizona were its most since a 65-51 win over Nebraska on Nov. 23, 2007, and more than the Buffs had scored in their previous three games combined.

--Colorado had four interceptions in its first 10 games before intercepting three passes against Arizona. The last time the Buffs had three picks in a game was in the 2010 season opener.

--RB Rodney Stewart threw a 14-yard touchdown pass to QB Tyler Hansen against Arizona. Stewart has completed both of his passes in his career, and both went for touchdowns. He threw a 23-yard touchdown pass to Toney Clemons last year against Kansas State.

SERIES HISTORY: UCLA leads 4-2 (last meeting, 2003, Colorado, 16-14).

SCOUTING THE OFFENSE: Colorado finally found a balance on offense with 273 rushing yards and 227 passing yard against Arizona for a total of 500 yards. That was the second-most this season for Colorado and the most for a game that didn't go into overtime. Colorado's most impressive work came in the red zone, when the Buffs scored a touchdown on all seven drives inside the 20-yard line after converting only 50 percent of its previous red-zone opportunities into touchdowns during the first 10 games of the season.

SCOUTING THE DEFENSE: The Buffaloes finally slowed down an opponent, limiting Arizona to 412 total yards and 60 yards on the ground. That ended a streak of five straight games when Colorado's opponent had at least 500 yards of offense and 40 points. Arizona's rushing total was a season-low for a Colorado opponent. The Buffs will look to build on last week's improvement against UCLA, which ranks ninth in the conference in total offense and 10th in scoring offense.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "It's been a rough road and its senior day, our last home game. After the game I was telling everybody it feels so great to get this win. We have had some big highlights in our careers, but this one rates one of the top with all the work we put into it. We could have easily quit, but we still have drive and passion to come out and get this three-game winning streak to send the underclassmen off right." -- Colorado DB Travis Sandersfeld after Saturday's win over Arizona

STRATEGY AND PERSONNEL

THIS WEEK'S GAME: Colorado at UCLA, Nov. 19 -- Colorado's receivers will have an opportunity to knock their coach out of the school record books. Jon Embree had eight catches for 145 yards against UCLA on Sept. 29, 1984, the most catches and receiving yards by a Buff in the six previous meetings against UCLA. The two teams have played only twice since 1984, with the Buffaloes winning in 2002 and 2003. UCLA won the first four meetings between the schools from 1980-84.

KEYS TO THE GAME: Colorado is riding a wave of emotion after winning its home finale against Arizona to avoid a winless home schedule. Next on their wish list is a road win that the school has not had since 2007, and the win over Arizona seems to have boosted the Buffs' confidence heading into two winnable road games to end the season. Despite having no chance at postseason play, the Buffs feel they have a lot to play for down the stretch. Both the offense and defense

NCAA BK	PURDUE IONA	8 16:21 8 15T	LSU @ NW 3:00 ET	MD @ 16 ALA 5:00 ET	VCU @ SETONH 5:30 ET	ALC @ WVU 7:00 ET	MAINE @ 4 UCONN 7:00 ET	FAIR @ M 7:00 ET
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PLAYERS TO WATCH:

DE Josh Hartigan -- The senior had a sack against Arizona, the 13th of his career, to move into 17th place in school history. He leads the team with six sacks on the season. He has 26 tackles on the season and has been on the field for 460 plays, which is the sixth-highest total on the defense.

QB Tyler Hansen -- The senior threw for 213 yards and two touchdowns, ran for 50 yards, and caught a touchdown pass in the win over Arizona. With 5,314 career passing yards, he is 76 yards behind Koy Detmer for fourth place in school history. His 5,789 yards of total offense rank 19 behind Darian Hagan for fourth in school history. He passed Kordell Stewart to move into third place in school history with 467 completions and 805 passing attempts. His 33 career touchdown passes are tied with Stewart and Mike Moschetti for fifth at the school.

CB Jason Espinoza -- The senior converted from wide receiver to cornerback this year and had his second career interception against Arizona. He has interceptions in back-to-back games against likely future NFL quarterbacks, Matt Barkley of USC and Nick Foles of Arizona. Espinoza caught 14 passes for 149 yards and a touchdown in 25 games during his first three years with the Buffs before moving to defense when the secondary was hit hard by injuries and suspensions.

ROSTER REPORT

--CB Parker Orms suffered a hamstring injury against Arizona, and WR Paul Richardson had a concussion, but both are likely to return against UCLA.

--DE Chidera Uzo-Diribe suffered a shoulder injury against Arizona and is probable for UCLA.

--S Anthony Perkins has a high-ankle sprain and is questionable to return this week against UCLA.

--S Kyle Washington remains day-to-day with a concussion.

--LB Brady Daigh is questionable to play this week with a wrist sprain.

--WR Logan Gray is probable for UCLA after suffering an ankle injury.

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Colorado Springs Independent

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November 17, 2011

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Flicker of hope at CU

End Zone

by [Ralph Routon](#)

Just when even the University of Colorado's most faithful loyalists were beginning to wonder about CU's football program, the Buffaloes put together a solid game last Saturday.

That wasn't just a lucky victory against Arizona. That was a convincing 48-29 romp for Colorado, which avoided the embarrassment of what could have been its first-ever winless home record at Folsom Field — it's been around since 1924.

Yes, Arizona is having a down year, and head coach **Mike Stoops** was fired last month. But the Wildcats did hammer UCLA (48-12) and played Southern Cal close in Los Angeles (a 48-41 loss). They also went to the Alamo Bowl last year.

Colorado should feel good about beating Arizona that handily. Finally, the Buffs looked capable of competing respectfully as a member of the Pacific 12 Conference.

CU's first-year head coach **Jon Embree** has not hidden his frustration with this team, questioning older players' fortitude and their willingness to push themselves harder than in the past. In some losses this fall, the Buffs have given the appearance of expecting to lose. But not in the home finale.

Many of Colorado's stars Saturday were seniors: running back **Rodney Stewart**, quarterback **Tyler Hansen**, tight end **Ryan Deehan**, receiver **Toney Clemons**, cornerbacks **Jason Espinoza** and **Travis Sandersfeld**, and linebackers **Josh Hartigan** and **Patrick Mahinke**. And that's not counting seniors already lost to injury, such as receiver **Kyle Cefalo**, safety **Anthony Perkins** and cornerback **Brian Lockridge**.

In all, the Buffs will graduate 28 seniors, 22 of whom are fifth-year players. That's not how to start rebuilding. However, Embree, trying to rebuild the program after **Dan Hawkins** failed, had no choice but to use the seniors as much as possible, even if they wouldn't be around to help in the future.

Now CU is trying to finish on a positive note, led by Stewart and Hansen. But the final two games are on the road (UCLA and Utah), and Colorado has lost its last 22 road games since winning at Texas Tech in 2007. So that would be a helpful hurdle to cross for this team, instead of leaving the road streak for next year's Buffs.

There's also a lot of irony in Colorado's game this Saturday at the Rose Bowl (5:30 p.m., Versus). Embree, a CU tight end in the mid-1980s, was a UCLA assistant before returning to Colorado last winter. His son, **Taylor Embree**, happens to be a receiver for UCLA, a senior playing his final home game, with Dad on the opposite sideline. And the Bruins' head coach, of course, is **Rick Neuheisel**, who led the CU program from 1995 through 1998 before bolting to Washington and leaving many hard feelings behind. Now, with his team 5-5, Neuheisel is fighting to save his job, and his fate appears to rest on the Colorado game and UCLA's traditional season-ender against Southern Cal.

Already, Hansen has "guaranteed" that the Buffs will beat UCLA and Utah. But that doesn't mean much unless they can show the same kind of offensive balance and big-play defense as they did against Arizona.

Looking ahead, Colorado should have a legitimate quarterback competition next year, with sophomore-to-be **Nick Hirschman** pushed by Texas transfer **Connor Wood**, a former blue-chip Longhorn recruit who has spent this season impressively running the scout team in CU practices. They'll be throwing to receiver **Paul Richardson**, who had several injuries this year but still has big-time talent. Soph-to-be runner **Tony Jones** looks like a replica of Stewart, small but sturdy. The defense also should be decent, after so many underclassmen have had to play a lot already.

Will next year bring some kind of major breakthrough at Colorado? Probably not with a schedule that will include trips to Southern Cal and Oregon, plus home games against Stanford, Washington and Arizona State.

But now, even with so many outgoing seniors, the Buffs have a chance in their final two games to lay more groundwork for eventually rising up from the bottom of the Pac-12.

Until last Saturday, that looked like a mission that couldn't begin until next year.

Just one win later, though, next year starts now.

— routon@csindy.com

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