



*Eric Bieniemy makes a point to his offense earlier this season.*  
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



## Brooks: Better View For 'EB' Aids OC's Effectiveness

Release: 11/17/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

**BOULDER** - Calling plays usually is easier when an offensive coordinator can utilize his top playmakers - and that's among the factors that have increased Eric Bieniemy's effectiveness over the last couple of games.

But Colorado coach Jon Embree says as much as the return of tailback Rodney Stewart and receiver Paul Richardson to the Buffaloes' lineup, an increased comfort level in his role and even where he works on Saturdays has helped "EB" settle into his job.

Bieniemy began his first season as an offensive coordinator by attempting to call plays and direct CU's offense from the sidelines in the opener at Hawaii. It kept the energetic Bieniemy in touch with his players, but it didn't give him the big-picture view he needed. A week later, he moved to the coaches' box and has stayed there.

"I think once he decided that that would be the best thing to do . . . he has never looked back," Embree said. "He has never said, 'Hey, I'm going to come down this week or maybe switch.' He has never blinked and I think he enjoys it up there."

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Bieniemy concurs: "The beauty of it is that you can see everything from up top. As much as I hate not being on the field, it's a lot better for me - a calming atmosphere. You can see things and get a better feel for what's going on defensively and schematically and how they're trying to attack."

Embree was complimentary of Bieniemy's play-calling in last weekend's 48-29 rout of Arizona - the Buffs' first Pac-12 Conference win. CU rolled up 500 yards in total offense (second only to the 582 against Cal in Week 2) and registered season highs in points, rushing yards (273) and first downs (27). The Buffs are 11th in the league in scoring offense (21.3 points a game) and total offense (354.5 yards).

Embree says Bieniemy jokingly calls him "Al Davis" because Embree favors taking shots downfield. On the series against Arizona that culminated with Stewart catching a lateral then throwing a 14-yard touchdown pass to quarterback Tyler Hansen, Embree said his offensive coordinator "overruled" him in calling for the trick play.

Three days later, Embree explained that wasn't exactly what transpired.

"What happened on that series is that I told him that I wanted to throw it deep three plays in a row, not throw it, but throw it deep three plays in a row," Embree recalled. "That was kind of the gist of the conversation. We threw it, we got down there, we were doing it and I expected us to throw and take a shot into the end zone . . . I didn't even hear the play call (the Stewart pass) because I was talking to Brownie (defensive coordinator Greg Brown) about something and then I clicked back over and then I saw he threw it.

"Probably if I would have heard it, I would have been like, 'No, let's take a shot with so-and-so.' That was a great call, set up how he wanted, it was on the proper hash, all of those different things that you need to go into some of these plays that you want to run and it was a touchdown."

The Buffs haven't been in trick-play mode much this season because they've usually been playing catch up. But the Embree/Bieniemy trick bag isn't limited to the Hansen-to-Stewart-to-Hansen call.

With Stewart back from a two-game absence, Richardson returning from a four-game absence, receiver Toney Clemons finding himself over the past three games and continuity in the O-line, Embree believes the offense finally is in rhythm. Keeping it going Saturday night at UCLA (5:30 p.m., Versus) is the goal, and Bieniemy said his game plan for the Bruins would match last week's in terms of simplicity.

"I thought our guys did a great job of executing (vs. Arizona)," Bieniemy said. "Going into last week - and it's going to be the same this week - we told our guys we wouldn't do anything complicated. It's going to come down to us executing our scheme better than theirs. I thought the kids did a great job.

"We want them to have that success again. We want to make sure we come up with a nice, tight game plan to get our kids to go out and play with confidence and play fast."

Embree and Bieniemy both were UCLA assistants under former Bruins coach Karl Dorrell, leaving ex-Buffs coach Gary Barnett's staff in 2003. Dorrell was at CU on the staff of Rick Neuheisel, now in his fourth season as the Bruins head coach.

**'P-RICH' EYES HOMECOMING, BREAKOUT GAME:** Paul Richardson is two games into his return from a four-game absence (knee injury), but Embree contends "P-Rich" hasn't yet returned to full speed and might be "pressing" a bit.

Statistics would seem to bear that out: Since his return, Richardson, a sophomore from Gardena, Calif., has caught three passes for 20 yards and rushed once for 15 yards.

"Of course it hasn't turned out how I wanted it to be, but I mean it's worked out for the best," Richardson said. "I've run a lot of routes that have drawn a lot of attention and I've been able to give our other receivers and our running backs in the screen game a chance to make plays. I said earlier this season that we have a lot of

playmakers on offense and they've been showing that the past few weeks."

Richardson initially signed with UCLA but transferred before his freshman season. He calls Saturday night's game in the Rose Bowl "kind of big as far as it being close to LA, but aside from that it's just another game. Every Friday or Saturday night game is like the biggest game of your life at the time. That's pretty much how I'm going into this game - it's the biggest game of my life . . . this week."

He said he has "lots" of family and friends coming to a game which has the Buffs trying to win on the road for the first time since 2007 (23 consecutive out-of-state losses).

"We do need to break the road streak," said Richardson, whose top performance this season was in Game 2 against Cal (11 catches, 284 yards, two touchdowns). "It's big for us as far as the road streak right now because we're not bowl contenders right now. So, that's our goal - end the streak and finish this season on a streak."

Richardson said CU's success Saturday night hinges on consistency: "That's our biggest thing. We make a lot of plays during the course of the game, but we do it in spurts, at different times. We're not consistent enough. I mean, we had a lot of success this past weekend, but we lacked a little consistency.

"But it was the most consistency we've had all season; we put up almost 50 points. As long as we're being very consistent and are sticking to what the defense is giving us offensively, then we'll be able to make plays."

Richardson's seven-game season totals are 32 receptions for 494 yards and five TDs - the second-most scoring catches on the team behind senior Toney Clemons, who might have benefitted most from Richardson's return in terms of coverage.

**GOOD GET GIVES A GOOD LOOK:** Texas transfer Connor Wood, a 6-3, 220-pounder with a big-time arm, has been turning heads as a scout team QB almost since his late-August arrival in Boulder.

During the Buffs' recent stretch of facing NFL-bound quarterbacks, the guy emulating them in practice was Wood. "He did a good job of giving us a good look, especially getting the ball in some tight windows, tight spaces," Embree said. "He's been a good teammate. I'm excited to see him and Nick (Hirschman) compete this spring and into camp to see who our quarterback will be."

Wood already has invested himself in the Buffs. For several away games that he wasn't rewarded for his scout team play by being on the travel squad, he's made his own travel arrangements just to stay engaged with the team.

**BUFF BITS:** UCLA is playing in the Rose Bowl for the 30th consecutive year, having moved its home games from the LA Coliseum in 1982 . . . UCLA is 4-1 in the Rose Bowl this season, with the lone loss coming against Texas (49-20) in the season's third game . . . Aside from the Embree-Bieniemy-Neuheisel CU/UCLA connections, the Bruins roster features starting center Kai Maiava and receiver/returner Josh Smith - both CU transfers and both seniors. UCLA secondary coach Tim Hundley also coached at CU (1996-98) . . . Hansen remembers Smith from his time in Boulder but the two haven't kept in touch, Hansen said. "He was one of my targets when he was here . . . a good guy, fun guy to be around and a playmaker for us. I'm sure we'll say hello before or after the game." . . . Embree calls UCLA "a special place, a unique place," and says it's similar to CU "in a lot of ways" - including recruiting and administration . . . CU leads the series with UCLA 4-2, with the Bruins holding a 2-1 lead in LA . . . In their past two games, the Buffs have come out of their first-quarter slump. Against USC, they were tied with the Trojans 7-7 after one quarter, and against Arizona, they led 7-3. In the previous five Pac-12 games, CU had been outscored 91-10 in those first quarters . . . That emotion the Buffs played with last Saturday on Senior Day? They can expect to encounter it from their last two opponents. UCLA's stages Senior Day Saturday and Utah celebrates its seniors on Friday, Nov. 25 when CU visits Salt Lake City.

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# CU Buffs taking on Jon Embree's attitude

## Coach also sees players gaining confidence

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

Posted: 11/18/2011 12:07:10 AM MST

Jon Embree doesn't leave the Colorado football practice fields with a hoarse throat nearly as often as he used to.

Nearing the end of his first season at the helm of the program he once played in, Embree doesn't have to do as much yelling anymore.

Players used to frustrate him to no end in spring and summer practices with so many mistakes and too much uncertainty. Embree and some of his assistants could be heard voicing their disapproval halfway across campus.

Embree has seen improvement in slow, steady doses from the Buffs throughout a difficult season filled with more injuries than the program could ever hope to absorb.

The Buffs finally produced a victory over a Pac-12 opponent last week, leaving Embree feeling like his players finally grasped the level of effort and intensity he needs from them every week.

As the Buffs prepare for a trip to UCLA this week, Embree said he believes the Buffs have started to adopt his character and mentality on the field and off of it.

"I do feel like it is starting to do that," Embree said. "I do believe as a position coach and as a player, that your players reflect you and I do see that in our team. They are having fun now."

Embree recalled a moment in last week's win over Arizona when he noticed the difference some of his players on offense.

During a timeout as the Buffs waited for a play call with the ball deep in Arizona territory, offensive lineman Ethan Adkins approached Embree and told his coach when the offense scored on the next play, some of the players planned a brief celebratory dance -- "the 'Bernie' from Weekend at Bernie's."

The Buffs scored and danced just as Adkins predicted. Embree said it was something the same players never would have been bold enough to do when he first began coaching them last spring even in the summer or the early weeks of the season.

The moment was pure Embree.

The coach first caught players off guard back the spring when he would occasionally tell the defense what play was coming before the snap, challenging them to stop it and the offense to execute perfectly so it couldn't be stopped. Players have gradually become accustomed to those moments as the year as gone on.

"For them to come and say that to me and some of the things like that, that was how I was like as a player and as a person," Embree said. "I'm out there and I want to let you know what we are going to do and then I want to do it. That is just how I am. I believe in reaching success and obtaining things, you have to say it. If you want to win a championship, then you have to say, 'I expect us to win a championship,' and then you have to go and do it."

"I think every team that has done it and has had that success, that is what they have done. You don't just sit there and sneak up and get in after the fact. If you believe in something so strongly that you say it, then all of your actions that you do from that point forward have to be to get success in those goals."

Embree was excited to see his team playing with more confidence. He wishes it would have happened sooner for the members of this year's senior class, but at least he didn't have to wait through another offseason.

The Buffs have two games remaining in Embree's first season and he said his top priority aside from winning both games is making sure that they continue to build on the confidence it took them so long to find.

"I want to see them continue to play with the passion and energy and enthusiasm as they have played with the last couple of weeks," he said. "The USC game, we just couldn't consistently sustain it. I want to see them continue to play that way because that is how we have to be every game next year. I want to see them do that. I want to see those kids continue to have success and have fun."

### **Making history**

Colorado wide receiver Paul Richardson needs six more receiving yards for this season's team to make history. The Buffs have never had a trio of receivers each accumulate 500 or more yards receiving.

Richardson has 494 yards receiving entering Saturday's game. He would join Toney Clemons who has 528 yards and Rodney Stewart, who has 525 yards.

Richardson was the Buffs' leading receiver earlier in the season, but he has been slowed by injury. He posted a message to his Twitter account on Thursday saying he has been slowed after tearing his MCL. He had been listed on the CU injury report as having a sprained knee earlier in the year. He is on the injured list this week with a concussion and is day-to-day.

### **Buffs honored for**

#### **academic prowess**

CU defensive lineman Will Pericak, a product of Boulder High School, and defensive back Travis Sandersfeld were named first team members of the Pac-12 Conference academic All-Conference team on Thursday.

Pericak already has earned a degree from CU and is on schedule to earn a master's degree by the end of his senior year next year.

Defensive linemen Nate Bonsu and Tony Poremba and defensive back and kickoff returnman Justin Gorman were named second team members, and offensive linemen David Clark and Daniel Munyer earned honorable mention status.

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NOVEMBER 18, 2011, 6:59 AM

## Will CU's Embree have more tricks up his sleeve vs. UCLA?

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

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BOULDER — Or perhaps more appropriately, will Colorado offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy have more tricks in store for the Bruins?

Embree acknowledged this week that he was overruled by Bieniemy on the gadget play last weekend — the pass from tailback Rodney Stewart to quarterback Tyler Hansen that went for 14 yards and a touchdown in CU's 48-29 victory over Arizona. Hansen caught the ball near the left sideline on about the 10 and waltzed across the goal line.

Instead of the trick play, Embree wanted three passes into the end zone.

"They call me 'Al Davis' because I always want to throw it deep," Embree said. "I'm all about throwing downfield."

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**<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/11/18/will-cus-embree-have-more-tricks-up-its-sleeve-vs-ucla/22238/>**

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**The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post**

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NOVEMBER 17, 2011, 2:30 PM

## CU's Embree says he learned much about recruiting from Neuheisel

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — On Saturday at the Rose Bowl, Colorado's Jon Embree will coach against one of his closest friends in the profession, UCLA's Rick Neuheisel.

Embree, of course, served as an assistant under Neuheisel at Colorado in the 1990s and said he learned much about recruiting from the current Bruins boss.

"There were some things from a recruiting standpoint that I thought Rick did a good job of here," Embree said. "Look at the players he brought in here, whether it was Dan Graham, Victor Rogers, Tyler Brayton ... I thought Rick did a good job in the home (during recruiting) and identifying players."

Colorado went 33-14 in four seasons under Neuheisel before he left for the University of Washington following the 1998 season.

"We had a good time; there were some good times in this program's history," Embree recalled. "We went to the Holiday Bowl, the Cotton Bowl. We won 10 games a few times.

"For me it was different because I was coaching defense. That was my stretch of defense, I was coaching for four years on the D-line and with (current UCLA assistant) Tim Hundley two of those years. It was a learning experience."

***You should follow me on [Twitter @TomKensler](#)<sup>[1]</sup> And read more at the [CU Buffs blog](#)<sup>[2]</sup>***

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