



Senior Jason Espinoza did a double take when this appeared last weekend on Folsom Field's scoreboard.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: Espinoza Glad For Brief Stay On His Island

Release: 11/18/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER - If Jason Espinoza had an extra second or two to rub his eyes in disbelief, that's what he would have done. But at that precise moment last Saturday afternoon, "Espy" had other things to do.

Safety Terrel Smith alerted Espinoza, who was at right cornerback for Colorado, to take a quick look at the Folsom Field scoreboard and video screen. A picture of "Espy" was superimposed over a tropical island - palms waving against a blue, cloud-dappled sky.

Below the scene . . . "Espinoza Island."

"I looked at the screen, then I looked back down because (Arizona) was about to snap the ball," Espinoza recalled. "I was kind of confused . . . it was like, 'Did I just see that? What was it?' That was like three drives before I got the interception and I was thinking, 'I have to make a play now.'"

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So he did. He smartly picked off Wildcats quarterback Nick Foles - one of CU's three for the afternoon in the Buffs' 48-29 win. Foles obviously hadn't been briefed about venturing too close to "Espinoza Island" . . .

OK, so maybe it's not as perilous for a QB as "Revis Island," and Jason Espinoza is no Darrelle Revis - the New York Jets' superb fifth-year lock-down corner. But "Espy," with all of five games under his belt after returning to defense after a four-year absence, suddenly has a pair of late-season picks and is CU's interception leader.

"What a pleasant surprise - and I shouldn't even say pleasant surprise," CU defensive coordinator/secondary coach Greg Brown said. "He picked up where he left off when he used to be a DB, back when he was a freshman . . . he's smart, tough, has great instincts and ball skills."

Of course, the "Espinoza Island" bit - the creative offspring of BuffVision Internet Marketing Manager Sam Neumann and game-day producer Adam Creapo - has made it to YouTube. And "Espy" might have had an inkling of what was coming last Saturday afternoon when Creapo Tweeted him about the idea.

Still, Espinoza was pleasantly stunned, but not too much to do his job. In a season where CU almost had reached the point of advertising for healthy corners, Espinoza's successful shift from receiver was a bonus, although he also missed a couple of games with concussion symptoms before returning two weeks ago.

In his first game back he intercepted Southern California's Matt Barkley. That was Espinoza's first career interception and, as did his pick of Foles, it came against a quarterback Espinoza will be watching on Sunday afternoons.

"Maybe when I finish playing and look back I'll appreciate those more," he said. "But I'm always hard on myself; I'm not going to settle. I'm going to try and get another one this weekend (at UCLA) and help us win."

Espinoza came to CU as a walk-on defensive back at the urging of Brown, who was a high school teammate of Espinoza's high school coach - Alamosa's Manny Wasinger, now the offensive coordinator at Adams State.

Wasinger told the 5-8, 180-pound Espinoza was a must-see prospect, so an invitation was extended for a CU summer camp in 2007. Espinoza had scholarship offers from Adams State and a couple of other Division II schools, and he did consider Adams State because he was told he also could play basketball - maybe his first love - and football there.

"But I just wanted to get out of Alamosa and go to a bigger place," he said.

At CU, he stayed in the secondary for all of a week, then became a scout team receiver/return specialist. It wasn't until a week into the 2011 season, when Brown's bunch was in the early stages of what would become an incredible shrinking act, that Espinoza was approached by Brown and linebackers coach Brian Cabral about moving back to defense.

After receivers coach Bobby Kennedy gave his blessing, Espinoza switched sides and began trying to catch up on what he'd missed. "We put in a new defense every week and have to learn it within three or four days," he said. "But I've always picked up the offense, and now the defense, pretty easily. It's not that bad."

Easy for him to say . . . ask fellow DBs Travis Sandersfeld, Anthony Perkins and Ray Polk - all targets for Espinoza when he wanted to drag a more experienced teammate into the position meeting room to help him with extra film study. Said "Espy:" "I'd make them go watch film with me downstairs. I always ask a ton of questions . . . I'm probably annoying out on the field."

For the next couple of years, before Brown left for one season at Arizona, he and Espinoza frequently joked about "Espy" making the switch back to defense. Both wish now it had gone beyond the joking stage.

"I wish I had . . . I'd know a lot more about the defense and the concepts of it," said Espinoza, whose best season as a receiver came in 2009 (13 catches, 136 yards, one touchdown - with 109 yards and the TD coming against Toledo).

Said Brown: "We think he would have done nothing but progress because he's so smart and tough as nails. But, still, it was good for me to be reunited with him almost five years later."

Espinoza's high school - Alamosa - has one of the better nicknames anywhere, the Mean Moose. As a senior, Espinoza set state all-classification records for receiving yardage (1,507) and TD passes (20) in leading the Mean Moose to an unbeaten season (14-0) and the 2006 3A state title. In a semifinal win against Florence, after catching the game-tying touchdown pass, he kicked the game-winning PAT. And in basketball, he lettered twice and was the South Central League's MVP as a junior.

Football and hoops have been a huge part of Espinoza's life, but that will change. A communication major, he's already got a job waiting in Arizona with Dream Team Empire, a sports management company headed up by a former CU graduate assistant who coached Espinoza at receiver.

"Ever since a child, my whole life has been sports - basketball, football - it's been my life," Espinoza said. "Honestly, it hasn't hit me yet - life without sports. I don't know, I'll have to do something. I can play pickup (basketball), but you can never go play football again. That'll definitely be tough."

But that's an issue for another time. His focus now is on UCLA, fashioning a two-game CU win streak and erasing a 23-game out-of-state losing streak that has accompanied the Buffs for almost five seasons. Ironically, Espinoza is one of five players who were on the roster when CU won its last road game - at Texas Tech in 2007.

Over the last couple of days, Brown has told his players their first priority is to "pick up right where we left off (against Arizona)," Espinoza said. "If we do that we can win. Everyone was playing their hearts out last week. If we do that we've got a great shot at winning this week."

LET RICK STICK WITH THE PISTOL: UCLA coach Rick Neuheisel adopted the "pistol" offense last season, primarily to boost his running game and because he believed it better suited his personnel. The formation's top requirement is a multi-talented quarterback, one who's adept at ball-handling as well as running and passing.

CU senior Tyler Hansen has the athleticism and ball skills to be a pistol QB, but he's glad his coaches at CU never shifted to that scheme - not full-time anyway.

"We did a little last year . . . it's a weird offense," Hansen said. "I like the offense I'm in a lot better. You can do some certain things out of the pistol that confuse a defense, a lot of misdirection stuff . . . on some play-action stuff you're going to turn your back on the defense so they don't really know where the ball is. You can do some unique stuff out of it."

How is it weird?

"It's a different feel," Hansen said. "When you're in the shotgun, the back's next to you. That's natural. Having the back behind you when you're in shotgun (the pistol), that's hard to explain. It's not normal."

Pistol QBs can be asked to run more, therefore increasing their chances of injury. Hansen has been there; he was tackled while executing an option pitch late last season and suffered a spleen injury that cost him the remainder of the season.

"I've learned better than anyone that the more a quarterback runs it's not good for the quarterback or the offense," he said. "You're going to get hurt and beat up. You definitely have to limit the way you use the quarterback in running the ball and you have to be smart with how you run it."

Hansen ran 10 times for 50 yards last weekend, with some of those rushes on designed plays. On other plays, he said he went with his feet "when guys weren't open and I was trying to find the check down and didn't. So it's wide open, let's run. I think it was just more of the way it happened. If I had found the check down and it was open, I'd have thrown it to him."

RUGBY PUNTING TO BE ADDRESSED LATER: Among CU's off-season projects will be working with first-year punter Darragh O'Neill on his rugby punts. With his background in Gaelic-style football, O'Neill can punt with

either foot. He's done that this season, but the results have been mixed.

Coach Jon Embree said while O'Neill has had a good first season (he's eighth in the conference with a 42.5 average), a few of O'Neill's rugby punts have been too low. "We would like it to be executed differently," Embree said. "Unfortunately, we aren't able to do that sometimes. That isn't his fault, that's Jon Embree's fault. That's on me. Two more games and then we'll see if we can get that fixed."

BUFF BITS: Freshman offensive tackle Stephane Nembot will make his first road trip this season, traveling with the Buffs to UCLA. "He deserves it; he's worked hard and is doing a good job," Embree said. "It's like a trip home for him." Nembot was born in Douala, Cameroon, but went to high school in Van Nuys, Calif. (Montclair Prep). He was a defensive tackle in August camp but switched to offense shortly thereafter . . . Other freshmen Embree acknowledged for their scout team duty included receivers Nelson Spruce and Austin Vincent and defensive back Jermane Clark . . . Former CU coach Rick Neuheisel, in his fourth season at UCLA, is hearing the howling of the wolves much louder this fall. His overall coaching record is 86-57, including 33-14 at CU, but he's 20-25 at UCLA (5-5 this season). The Bruins have been to one bowl in his previous three seasons at his alma mater. Embree and Neuheisel coached together at CU, and Embree calls Neuheisel "a survivor, he always has been. I'm not worried about all of that stuff (being said about Neuheisel's future)." . . . Senior tailback Rodney Stewart needs 455 yards to become CU's all-time leading rusher. That's a 227.5 yard average in the Buffs' last two games . . . Embree believes Stewart can play in the NFL "because they didn't think he could play in college. That's what he does - he proves people wrong . . . he'll make somebody's team." . . . All of the Buffs' practices this week have been in Folsom Field with loud music blaring from the PA system. Embree said he doesn't know how loud the Rose Bowl crowd will be Saturday night, but he wanted his team to be able "to concentrate with noise in the background." Plus, he said his players liked the music . . . The Buffs' confidence got an obvious lift after the win against Arizona, but Embree believes his team "gained confidence coming out of the USC game." He said the final score (42-17) wasn't indicative of "how well (CU) moved the ball . . . consistency was an issue in that game. Then against Arizona, being able to answer when Arizona came at us, I think all that kind of plays into it." . . . CU's former staff emphasized keeping an even keel emotionally. Embree calls himself "a peak and valley guy . . . I'm not one of those level guys. I expect the players to play with emotion and passion. It's a game you can't play without emotion and passion - the exception being the quarterback position. You want him to be a little more level. But at the other positions, if you're not passionate, you're not playing with emotion, you're toast."

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SHOW MENU



CU football

Ties that bind CU Buffs, Bruins run deep

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/18/2011 08:44:53 PM MST

PASADENA, Calif. -- Someday the Colorado football team will come to this hallowed venue seeking a victory filled with roses in a Bowl Championship Series game.

Today offers no such drama.

The Buffs lug a 2-9 overall record and a 22-game road losing streak into the Rose Bowl to battle an opponent with numerous intertwined connections to black, silver and gold. Those relationships between players and coaches on opposite sides of the field and a surprising prediction of victory from CU coach Jon Embree and a guarantee of a win by Buffs' quarterback Tyler Hansen are the most compelling story lines from the Colorado perspective.

The 28 seniors on the CU roster won their final home game with a prideful and emotional effort last week at Folsom Field. Those seniors won't get a bowl game to end their careers so today's matchup with UCLA will have to do in what could be called the Family Feud Bowl.

To re-cap, CU coach Jon Embree and his oldest son, Taylor, a UCLA wide receiver, will face each other for the first and only time in their careers on senior day for Taylor.

Embree and CU offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy are returning to face a program they coached for as assistants from 2003 to 2005.

CU wide receiver Paul Richardson will be facing his father's alma mater and the program he originally committed to before an off-field issue led him to leave UCLA for Colorado before his freshman season last year.

Former CU coach Rick Neuheisel, a close friend of Embree's, will coach against the Buffs for the third time since he left Boulder in 1998. He was 2-0 against CU when he was the head coach at Washington. He hopes to be 3-0 at the end of today's game and his job might depend on it.

Neuheisel has been on the hot seat with plenty of UCLA supporters since the end of last season and some already seem to have reached the point that, short of winning the Pac-12 championship, they are ready to move on to the next guy. Going 20-27 through nearly four full seasons can have that effect on a fan base.

And finally, former Colorado players Josh Smith and Kai Maiava will face plenty of their former teammates today as they attempt to secure a victory that would make the Bruins bowl eligible and keep their hopes alive of winning the Pac-12 south division and playing the inaugural conference championship game next month.

Oddly, Smith and Maiava were on the field the last time CU won on the road. But they were wearing Colorado uniforms that day at Texas Tech back in 2007. Since then, the Buffs have lost 23 straight games played outside the state.

While watching his team beat Arizona last week in Boulder, Embree noticed a confidence he hasn't seen before in his players and it made him believe the Buffs will put an end to the streak today.

"I want to see those kids continue to have success and have fun," Embree said when talking about his goals for the final two games. "I think they are having fun. Just finish this thing right, end the streak and see if we can start a road win streak and leave behind -- just like how this road losing streak has been an anchor -- put that on next year's team and, 'Hey, there is a two-game road win streak that you have to uphold,' and try and build it in that manner and get kids to think that way."

The most interesting battle today might come before the opening kickoff.

Back in July at Pac-12 media day, Neuheisel vowed to go to the CU locker room before the game if needed to force Embree to participate in his son's pregame senior day ceremony. Embree has said all along that his wife, Natalyn, will have to represent him.

"We'll see how it turns out," Neuheisel said.

The game features two teams that are at their best when their offenses are having success running the ball.

CU won last week, in large part, thanks to a 181-yard rushing day from senior running back Rodney Stewart, who scored three times and also threw a touchdown pass. The Buffs have had more success of late moving the football with quarterback Tyler Hansen looking more like he did earlier in his career, making plays with his feet as well as his arm.

UCLA quarterback Kevin Prince is a similar player. He rushed for 163 yards in a game earlier this season operating in The Pistol offense, which CU used at times last season with Hansen. Prince has struggled in the passing game, completing just 54 percent of his throws with four touchdowns and six interceptions.

The Bruins run the ball more than 60 percent of the time with twin powers Johnathan Franklin and beefy Derrick Coleman (5-foot-11, 240 pounds). That duo has rolled to exactly 1,200 yards and 12 touchdowns so far this season.

"They have a good one-two punch, and if you don't stop that, then you are in trouble," Embree said.

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THORBURN: CU Buffs will back up guarantee

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico -- When I arrived back at the hotel here Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/18/2011 07:56:32 PM MST

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico - When I arrived back at the hotel here in the wee hours on Thursday, there was a small gathering staring at the television in the lobby.

As soon as it became obvious that the group of employees were watching Broncos-Jets highlights I asked: Who won that game?

"Tebow!" one local responded enthusiastically.

We started talking about the Broncos, a team I used to cover back in the days of the forward pass, and eventually the Puerto Rico Tip-off.

Sports fans here are much more upset about the NBA lockout than most of us because the league is very popular on this island, thanks mostly to the success of Puerto Rican natives Jose Barea and Carlos Arroyo.

To fill the void this winter, hoops junkies in Puerto Rico are planning to watch more NFL games and college basketball.

Based on the lack of Colorado supporters in the seats at the Coliseo de Puerto Rico, I'm guessing Tad Boyle's season doesn't officially get started for most fans back home until Jon Embree's inaugural campaign concludes next week.

The Puerto Rico Tip-off, after two days and nights of action, will give the teams a rest today before wrapping up on Sunday. That will allow me to follow the CU-UCLA game this evening. I've been told there's a terrific sports bar down in Old Town that might even get Versus.

As for the game 6,760 miles west of San Juan, I'll have to admit that I raised an eyebrow last week when Tyler Hansen guaranteed a victory over the Bruins.

"We are not going to lose on the road," Hansen insisted after CU's 48-29 victory over Arizona in the Folsom Field finale. "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."

As the confident first-year head coach has demonstrated since taking the job, Embree had his quarterback's back.

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

It's time for the Buffs to walk the walk.

There isn't a better place for CU to end its burdensome 23-game, out-of-state losing streak than Rick Neuheisel's rental house (also known as the Rose Bowl).

The victory would mean a lot to the seniors and perhaps even more to Embree, who will need to recruit well in Southern California if he hopes to coach in a January game in Pasadena some day.

Much of the pain of a long 13-game season that has included missed opportunities, thick injury reports and blowout Pac-12 losses, could be erased with two more post-game renditions of the fight song.

It says here that Hansen will do his best Tim Tebow impersonation and back up the guarantee like Joe Namath.

Bufs 23, Bruins 21.

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The Washington Post

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No family feud: UCLA WR Taylor Embree takes on Colorado coach Jon Embree with no hard feelings

By Associated Press, Published: November 18

LOS ANGELES — If Taylor Embree's father can't walk with him on Senior Day at the Rose Bowl because he's too busy firing up UCLA's opponents, the Bruins' receiver will understand.

Jon Embree is Colorado's first-year head coach, and his son has been anticipating Saturday's weird reunion ever since he saw the Buffaloes at the bottom of the Bruins' schedule.

"I know my mom is going to be nagging him to walk me out," Taylor Embree said. "But I told him I don't want him to be able to use that as an excuse in the game, that he wasn't there to give the pregame talk. I'm just excited that he's even going to be on the field while I'm playing. I understand more than anyone that he has a job that he needs to do."

Although Taylor Embree is in the final weeks of a solid career at UCLA after spending most of his high school career in the Los Angeles suburbs, he's a Colorado kid at heart.

His father and uncle both went to Colorado, and the 23-year-old Taylor was born in Denver and spent 11 years of his childhood in Boulder until Jon got a job at UCLA in 2003. Taylor grew up dreaming of playing at Folsom Field, not the Rose Bowl.

“In second grade, the teacher asked me to stand up and say the Pledge of Allegiance,” Taylor Embree said. “I said, ‘I don’t know the pledge, but I can sing the CU fight song.’ So I had to lead the whole class in the CU fight song. I’m going to be mad every time I hear that fight song at the game, though. That song is going to be like the Trojans’ fight song. It’s going to be annoying to me by the time the game is over.”

He’s eager to beat his father’s Buffaloes, who stand in the way of a sixth victory and probable bowl eligibility for UCLA (5-5, 4-3 Pac-12), which still controls its destiny atop the Pac-12 South division. Colorado (2-9, 1-6) is simply looking for a solid finish to a rough Pac-12 debut.

Embree is the seventh-leading receiver in UCLA history with 130 career catches, and he ranks 14th with 1,700 yards receiving in his four years in Westwood. He was among the Bruins’ top two receivers in each of his first two seasons, but his production has dropped this year with just 13 catches for 152 yards, fourth-best on the team.

That won’t stop Jon Embree’s defense from keeping an eye on his son. He knows all about Bruins coach Rick Neuheisel’s ideas for getting the ball into the UCLA receivers’ hands — and he can provide a particularly detailed scouting report on No. 82.

“He is a physical receiver,” Jon Embree said. “He likes to go across the middle. He likes to work the inside of the field. Him and Nelson (Rosario), his roommate, they are good on the 50-50 balls, so if you throw it up there, they win most of those battles. He loves to block and get after you. All those traits come from his mother. His temper and all of those things, strictly from Natalyn.”

Jon Embree said he doesn’t think he’ll be particularly aware of his son’s presence on the field, yet Taylor Embree isn’t buying it. He knows he gets his competitive drive from his father — and that spirit got him in trouble last month when he earned a one-game suspension for his involvement in a brawl during the Bruins’ blowout loss at Arizona. Jon reminded his son to keep his feistiness between the whistles.

“I love playing against my dad, whether it’s basketball, pool, PlayStation and now football, so I’m excited to have that opportunity,” Taylor said. “We haven’t played 1-on-1 since one time we went up to the park and I told him I could dunk. Since then, he’s never played me 1-on-1. We can only play H-O-R-S-E. He gets me every once in a while.”

Taylor attended the Buffs’ loss to Oregon earlier this season, and he has watched every Colorado game on tape while stoking a newfound interest in coaching for a player who never anticipated getting into that line of work.

Taylor Embree still speaks with his father six times per week, and their talks haven’t ended just because they’re facing each other on Saturday. Jon Embree is still coaching his son, even while he’s coaching the Buffaloes.

“It is the same thing that I tell him every week,” Jon Embree said. “I’ll talk to him on Friday night and I’ll tell him to play fast, play physical, and go have fun.”

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cu football

David Goldberg's all-out style for CU Buffs earns starting spot

Posted: 11/19/2011 01:00:00 AM MST **By Tom Kensler**
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/19/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

Football blood flows throughout the family tree that includes Colorado senior defensive end David Goldberg. But there is one particular strain of genes that David seems to share with a famous uncle.

"Bill (Goldberg) is a wild man," David's father, Michael, said of the former world-champion pro wrestler known simply as "Goldberg" to fans of that sport.

"David has that same desire and drive. But he's more of a controlled wild man."

It's that "motor" that caught the eye of a new Colorado coaching staff last spring. Uncle Bill, now pursuing a career in show biz, could relate to David having become something of an overnight success. After a redshirt year and then toiling mostly on special teams for three seasons, Goldberg,

a former walk-on, finally became a starter midway through his final year.

That must make his father (who played at Minnesota) and uncles Bill (Georgia) and Steve (Minnesota) feel proud.

"They've always been supportive, even when I was going through some tough times, a lot of ups and downs," David said.

Undersized for a major-college defensive lineman at 6-foot-1 and 245 pounds, Goldberg relies on quickness, tenacity and technique to get past blockers who might outweigh him by 60 pounds.

His ability to pressure the passer and also play the run could be instrumental today for visiting Colorado (2-9, 1-6 Pac-12) against UCLA (5-5, 4-3), beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Rose Bowl.

UCLA's offensive line includes one of Goldberg's pals, senior center Kai Maiava, who played as a freshman at Colorado before transferring.

"It's going to be good to go against Kai," Goldberg said. "They've got a big offensive line (averaging 314 pounds per man), and they're good. . . . They bring a powerful offense. If you're not careful and implement your will on them, they'll do it to you."

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THE DENVER POST

Goldberg is scheduled to make his sixth consecutive start today — that compares with getting in for just 17 snaps on defense in 2009 and 2010 combined. His three quarterback pressures this season ties him for third-most on the team.

"David does a lot of things that don't show up in the box score," CU coach Jon Embree said. "I'm really happy for him. He has earned everything he's gotten."

Another reason to feel a sense of pride: David Goldberg and CU reserve offensive lineman David Clark are regarded as the only players from Aspen High School to play major-college football. David's father and uncles played high school ball in Tulsa, Okla.

"It's mostly hockey players that come out of Aspen," said David, who also played that sport through high school.

Goldberg was buried well down the CU depth chart for three years until he caught the eye of defensive line coach Kanavis McGhee in the spring. At the urging of McGhee, Goldberg was placed on athletic scholarship.

"As a new staff, I told players in the spring that this was a fresh slate," McGhee said. "David came in and worked his butt off. He impressed me and all the other coaches. He's a pleasant surprise that we didn't expect — until we saw that he's a workhorse."

That's an understatement, said former CU and NFL linebacker Chad Brown, who works with Goldberg as a personal trainer and coach. "I've had to tell David to be careful to not do too much," Brown said.

During the summer, Goldberg would often get with Brown at about noon after having already worked for two hours on conditioning at CU and then taking lessons in muay thai, a demanding martial-arts discipline that involves kickboxing and other moves.

"David has the work ethic to do whatever it takes," Brown said. "That shows up on the football field. He goes all out on every play. Some people may be surprised by what he's done this year. I'm not."

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or tkensler@denverpost.com

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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

NOVEMBER 18, 2011, 3:13 PM

Buff's wary of UCLA's pistol offense

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Colorado defensive players haven't seen much of the pistol offense, but they will get a heavy dose of it Saturday against UCLA.

The pistol offense, popularized by the University of Nevada, is a spread formation with the quarterback lined up closer to the line of scrimmage than in a shotgun formation. The tailback sets up behind the quarterback rather than beside him in a shotgun.

It's designed to enable the quarterback to read the defense and potentially run with the ball. But unlike in a conventional option formation, the QB is back far enough for a better view of what's happening downfield.

UCLA quarterback Kevin Prince has netted 306 yards rushing out of the pistol.

"You have to be ready for the zone read," CU senior defensive back Travis Sandersfeld said. "And then they pass out of the zone-read option.

"So you can't just have guys at the line of scrimmage, because you have threats outside. You have to go in with a game plan where you have everything figured out about what you're going to do — Who's got the quarterback, who's got the option (pitch to the running back), who's got the guys that can catch the ball.

"It poses some challenges. But we're going to figure out what to do to stop it."

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<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/11/18/buffs-wary-of-uclas-pistol-offense/22245/>

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latimes.com

UCLA vs. Colorado: Bruins' road to Pac-12 title game starts here

UCLA needs two victories to get to the conference championship game. Defeating a Colorado team that is next to last in the South division is the first step.

By Chris Foster

7:15 PM PST, November 18, 2011

UCLA needs two victories to get to the Pac-12 Conference title game. Step one is Saturday against a Colorado team that is next to last in the South division. Staff writer Chris Foster examines the game's issues and matchups:

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Grudge match?

There has been a lot of chatter considering these two universities have played football against each other only six times. The Bruins and Buffaloes have not faced each other since 2003, long before any of the current players were in college.

Still ...

Tyler Hansen, Colorado's quarterback, said, "We're going to go to the Rose Bowl and get it done," referring to the team ending its 23-game losing streak outside Colorado.

Taylor Embree, a UCLA wide receiver, said, "I don't know what he'll be able to talk to me about. I mean, we're going to win," referring to seeing his dad, Colorado Coach Jon Embree, before the game.

Jon Embree said his friend, UCLA Coach Rick Neuheisel, "wants to beat Jon Embree's behind in anything we do."

Kai Maiava, a Colorado transfer who starts at center for UCLA, put a friend on warning, saying, "I'm coming for you, [Buffaloes linebacker] David Goldberg."

Just think if these teams were actually rivals.

In defense

The Buffaloes held Arizona to 29 points last week, ending a five-game streak where they gave up at least 42 points.

This seems a game in which UCLA's pistol offense could have howitzer numbers.

Colorado has given up more than 200 yards rushing in four of its last five games and more than 300 yards passing in five of its last seven.

USC and Arizona State pulled off a daily double, with more than 300 yards passing and 200 yards rushing in victories.

It has been a bad year all around for Colorado's not-so-Buff defense. Embree suspended five defensive players in October.

Bruins barometer

Colorado's defense could be a welcome sight for the Bruins' Jekyll-and-"Hide" offense, which disappeared in a light snow storm against Utah.

The Buffaloes are weakest against the pass, allowing 264.5 yards per game. Throwing the ball has not been UCLA's strength.

Quarterback Kevin Prince had two passes intercepted against Utah. He was also held to 10 yards rushing after running 163 yards against California and 61 against Arizona State (with a 53-yard run called back because of a penalty).

"When Kevin plays well, we're a good football team," Neuheisel said.

Run down

The Bruins have their own defensive woes. They have allowed more than 200 yards rushing six times this season. And they are trending in the wrong direction.

Utah's John White gained 167 yards last week. Arizona State's Cameron Marshall gained 168 two weeks ago.

Enter Colorado's Rodney Stewart, who has 742 yards rushing and ran for 181 and scored three touchdowns in the Buffaloes win over Arizona.

Penalty box

"False start" could be the working title for the UCLA-Utah game tape. The Bruins had 91 yards in penalties. There were six false starts, two substitution infractions and one delay of game — in all, nine penalties that involved mental errors.

Colorado's penalty problems have spanned the season. The Buffaloes rank 117th among 120 major college football teams in the number of penalties and 116th in penalty yards.

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