

cu football

CU seniors have one more shot to end road losing streak

Posted: 11/21/2011 01:00:00 AM MST **By Tom Kensler**
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PASADENA, Calif. — One more shot.

The eligibility clock is about to run out for 28 Colorado seniors, knowing that Friday's season finale at Utah will, for many, be it.

A handful, if that, may hear their names get called during the NFL draft next spring. A couple of others may be invited to pro camps. But for undersized overachievers such as defensive end David Goldberg and defensive back Travis Sandersfeld, there's one more opportunity to put on a football uniform.

On Friday, Colorado (2-10, 1-7 Pac-12) will close out its first season under coach Jon Embree against Utah (7-4, 4-4) with a 1:30 p.m. national telecast on Root Sports.

"Speaking for the seniors, we aren't going out on a losing note; we're

going to end that (road) losing streak," Goldberg said Saturday.

Didn't we just hear that? Colorado made a similar promise last week before the trip to UCLA and then got roughed up 45-6 in the

Rose Bowl.

What could make anyone believe it will be different on Friday in Salt Lake City?

Senior wide receiver Toney Clemons said he wishes he had an answer or an explanation. UCLA (6-5, 5-3) isn't exactly a juggernaut, and Colorado made the Bruins look like the Green Bay Packers. CU fell behind 21-0 before the game was 11 minutes old.

The Buffs were pushed around and outgained 553-229 in total yards against a UCLA team that had appeared almost inept a week earlier in a 31-6 loss at Utah. Many expected Colorado to make a game of it in the Rose Bowl.

"I honestly thought we had a better week of practice than (prior to the win over) Arizona," Clemons said. "It's frustrating. To know that during the week guys do everything right, then they don't come out and perform. That comes down to a team that just wanted it more than us.

"We were enthusiastic all week, and then we



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came out and we were flat. I don't understand why we come out flat on the road. It's something that's mind-boggling to me."

Clemons is not alone. There's a roster-full of head scratching going on.

"With Utah being our last game, we just have to show the emotion and intensity that we didn't show tonight," Sandersfeld said Saturday.

In yielding 45 points to UCLA, this Colorado team already has the infamous distinction of allowing the most points in a season with 461. The previous record was 451 points allowed by the 1980 Buffs team that went 1-10 under Chuck Fairbanks.

Against Utah, CU almost certainly will establish a record for most passing yards yielded in a season. The current mark is 3,141 set in 2007. The Buffs have allowed 3,135.

Almost all of Colorado's preseason goals are long gone. The notable one that remains is ending the program's 24-game losing streak for games played outside the state of Colorado, including the 2007 Independence Bowl loss to Alabama in Shreveport, La.

Only a scant few members of the team — those fifth-year seniors that were on the trip when CU won at Texas Tech in 2007 — have been able to sing the school fight song on the charter flight home in celebration of a road victory.

"We have to go out in practice (this week) and prepare like there is something riding on it,"

said Colorado senior quarterback Tyler Hansen, a fourth-year player who has never experienced success on a CU road trip.

One more shot.

"We'll be prepared to come out (in practice) and work," Embree said. "We've already, as a staff, started (preparations) for Utah because it's a short week. We'll see what happens in Salt Lake."

Sounds like a coach that, like his players, has no idea of what to expect. That's never a good place to be.

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EYE ON

The Utes

Colorado at Utah, 1:30 p.m., Friday, Root

For the record: Utah (7-4, 4-4 Pac-12) kept alive its hopes to represent the Pac-12 South in the first league championship game by



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getting a 38-yard field goal from Coleman Petersen in overtime Saturday to outlast host Washington State 30-27.

Streaking: After beginning Pac-12 play with four losses, Utah has won four in a row: victories over Oregon State, Arizona, UCLA and Washington State. To reach the Pac-12 title game, Utah needs to beat Colorado and have both UCLA and Arizona State lose — to USC and Cal, respectively.

Who's hot: Junior tailback John White, a junior college transfer, has become the core of Utah's offense. The 5-foot-9, 190-pounder ranks second in the Pac-12 (to Oregon's LaMichael James) and eighth nationally in rushing with 125.2 yards per game. He has rushed for 14 touchdowns.

What's not: Utah has struggled in the passing game since quarterback Jordan Wynn was lost for the season after the fourth game because of shoulder surgery. The Utes rank No. 101 among 120 FBS teams in passing yards at 170.4 per game.

Key stat: Utah is 7-0 when White rushes for 100 or more yards.

FYI: Even if Colorado and Utah hadn't joined the Pac-12, the two programs were set to renew their series in 2012 after a 50-year hiatus.

Injury report: None of note.



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