



Senior QB Tyler Hansen hopes CU can start fast on Friday against USC.
Photo Courtesy: Associated Press



Brooks: Anemic Starts Have Buffs Groping At Finish

Release: 11/04/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER - Coaches emphasize the importance of "finishing," but you can't finish what you don't start. And that's been a huge problem in Pac-12 Conference play for the Colorado Buffaloes.

In five league games, the Buffs have been outscored 91-10 in the first quarters and, not surprisingly, have led only once (13-10 vs. Washington State) at halftime. In contrast, their Friday night foe at Folsom Field - No. 21 Southern California - has outscored its five conference opponents 36-14 in the first quarter (a 63-17 first-quarter edge in eight games).

CU's non-starts have been collaborative. The only way to turn it, said coach Jon Embree, "is to have some (overall) success. We can't give up four, five (scoring) drives in a row . . . we have to slow teams down."

But the Buffs have struggled to do that. Over the past five weeks, some opponents' drives have required fewer than 90

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seconds, others drives fewer than 60, sending CU's offense back on the field for possessions that don't last much longer.

"When we do get a stop, then offensively we have to do something with the ball," Embree continued. "We're not playing well at all as a team. We have to put ourselves in a position where all playing well in the same half . . . let's just start with that and build from there."

The Buffs' offensive numbers in conference play (14.8 points, 304-yard average in total offense) reinforce why they're winless (0-5) in their debut Pac-12 season and have won but once in nine games overall.

Senior quarterback Tyler Hansen said the Buffs' inability to put together a complete game continues to be their undoing: "It's real important . . . we've talked about playing team football. That's everything - all three phases. We get a touchdown, the defense gets a stop next series. It's complementing each other. That's what winning teams do. When we start doing that, figuring that out, then we'll start winning games."

Sophomore linebacker Derrick Webb knows his unit needs to give Hansen and his guys a break.

"If we kick off and force a three-and-out in the first series, that's one of the best things we can do for our offense to get their confidence going and put some points on the board," Webb said. "We don't want to get ourselves in the hole where we're trying to play catch-up all game. We want to go into halftime with a lead. That's the goal for these games."

Making third-down stops, said Webb, has been among the Buffs' biggest shortcomings. When teams are in third-down situations, they convert 50 percent - actually 50.9 percent - of the time.

And that, noted Webb, can't continue: "We've had teams in some third-and-long situations. We've got to convert on those plays; we've got to get off the field as a defense. Knowing we let teams convert on third-and-10, third-and-11 . . . the next play could be a touchdown, whereas we could be receiving a punt. It's our job as a defense to get off the field on third down, point blank."

Embree also mentioned taking advantage of opportunities to make plays, citing a play last weekend when Arizona State quarterback Brock Osweiler made "a Sunday-type throw" and completed a pass when CU safety Ray Polk "was all over" the receiver.

"We were a step away from sacking (Osweiler)," Embree said. "When you have that opportunity you have to do it. You can't be a half step away on the sack and then almost be right there in the coverage. And that's what's happening to us. Teams right now have been having their way with us. It's something we're trying to address . . . but at the same time, you're limited with some of the things you want to do or might be able to do to maybe help it."

Another reason for an effective start - particularly on Friday - is to keep the home crowd engaged. As of early week fewer than 4,000 tickets remained for the school's first Friday night game at Folsom, and Hansen knows the Buffs better take advantage of what could be the season's first sellout (53,613).

"We've got to start early this week, for sure," he said. "With the type of atmosphere we're going to have, it's important to get the crowd into it early . . . when you get a home crowd that's bored and tired, there's nothing worse than that."

"You get a visiting crowd that's into it, yelling and screaming . . . every time you're on the field as an offense, when that visiting crowd is getting after you it's tough. You feel like the world's against you. It's a tough atmosphere. If we can get our crowd into it early, that's real important."

WORD ON USC'S PITCH-CATCH COMBO: USC quarterback Matt Barkley and receiver Robert Woods are hard to slow, much less stop. Barkley has thrown 22 touchdown passes, nine of them to Woods, who averages a league-

best 123.8 receiving yards a game (fifth nationally).

CU defensive coordinator Greg Brown sees Barkley, who averages 286.2 yards passing, as the latest in a "murderer's row" of quarterbacks the Buffs have faced in the past five weeks. "But that's what this league is - there's always been great quarterbacks. It's similar to what the Big 12 had maybe three or four years ago, with Chase Daniel, Sam Bradford, those guys . . . a murderer's row."

The 6-1, 180-pound Woods, said Brown, "has got it all. He's silky smooth, got good top-end speed, acceleration off the bat, can go get the ball, great hand-eye coordination, ball skills . . . He's a big-time player playing with big-time players in a big-time system. (USC coach) Lane Kiffin does a tremendous job with these guys. It's an NFL-style offense."

"P-RICH" PLAYING IT COY: CU's version of Woods is Paul Richardson, who is of similar size (6-1, 165) and also is a sophomore. The difference: Woods hasn't missed a game, Richardson has missed the last four after suffering a knee injury in practice prior to the Stanford trip.

Richardson, who still leads the Buffs with 29 receptions for 474 yards and five touchdowns, has been practicing but said he is waiting for final medical clearance before making his return.

"I know how I feel, and I'm not 100 percent yet," he said, but adding, "I don't feel rusty . . . I miss it too much to be rusty. I feel anxious to be able to play again. Right now, I just don't know when. Just being out here with the team and having my jersey on, I feel good about that. So I'm just taking it one day at a time."

Richardson called missing and watching the past four games "really tough, especially when you don't know if you're going to be ready to play it's been even tougher. Even when I don't play, don't travel with the team, I'm still watching and encouraging them through the TV screen. It's something you have to deal with; it comes with college sports."

If Richardson is able to play Friday night, Hansen said his return would have a "huge impact. Defenses have to adjust to him and, obviously, our play calling will be a lot different. Just because he's that speed guy on the outside that can blow the top off coverages and we can get those shots downfield."

BUFF BITS: CU has lost seven straight games against ranked teams. The most recent win was 34-30 against Kansas in 2009 . . . USC is CU's third consecutive ranked opponent and fourth in five games . . . USC leads the all-time series with CU 5-0, with the last meeting (2002) producing a 40-3 Trojans win in Boulder. Prior to that one, USC won 17-14 in 2000 in L.A. That game marked the first CU-USC game in 36 years . . . USC's football program is on NCAA probation until June 9, 2014, but Embree contends Kiffin, in his second season at USC, has been successful in "minimizing the distractions from the past, and they're playing very well. They're just a different colored uniform than the teams we've played for the last five games. It's been quite a stretch." . . . Kiffin's defensive coordinator is also his father, Monte, who is regarded among the preeminent defensive coaches in college football. Embree says the Trojans are "not the same defensively as they've been in the past under Monte - with the 'Tampa Two' stuff. They're doing more single safety stuff . . . their defense is physical. I like their D-line, their two guys inside (NT Christian Tupou, DT DaJohn Harris); they get a good push." . . . USC free safety T.J. McDonald will miss Friday's first half as the result of a Pac-12 suspension for a late hit last weekend against Stanford receiver Chris Owusu in the Trojans' 56-48 triple overtime loss. Drew McAllister will start in McDonald's spot, and Hansen said the Buffs need to seize the moment: "We definitely have to take advantage of that . . . obviously they're going to have a backup in there, so we have to go after him." Hansen called McDonald "a good player, one of their leaders. You can tell they feed off his energy; he's real aggressive." . . . In addition to the Pac-12's post-Stanford action against McDonald, Lane Kiffin also was reprimanded and fined \$10,000 for comments made about the officiating . . . While CU has 29 California players on its roster, USC has one Coloradoan - corner Allen Noble (Eaglecrest High School/Colorado School of Mines/Mt. San Antonio JC). Noble, a senior, is not listed on the depth chart.

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FHS graduate learning ropes of Pac-12 football

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By **DANIEL DULLUM**
Staff Writer

Published: Thursday, November 3, 2011 4:13 AM MST

TEMPE, Growing up in the San Tan Valley area of the Florence Unified School District, Kyle Washington was no stranger to Sun Devil Stadium, occasionally making the trip in on Saturdays to watch Arizona State football and, at the same time, picturing himself playing major college football there someday.

After a stellar career at Florence High, Washington's dream came true — with a twist. On Oct. 29, he stepped onto Frank Kush Field for the first time as a member of the visiting University of Colorado Buffaloes.

"Oh yeah, this is different," Washington said following the Buffs' 48-14 loss to the Sun Devils. "It was fun being in this stadium and actually playing. This was more than I ever dreamed of — playing here in my freshman season."

For Washington, getting to come home, in a matter of speaking, helped take the sting out of the lopsided defeat — Colorado's eighth in nine games. The former 3A All-State wide receiver, defensive back and kick return specialist managed to see some familiar faces during his brief visit to the Valley, including his family.

"It was fun, and I saw Jace (Hulsey, former FHS quarterback) too, so it was cool," he said.

Former coach pleased

George De La Torre, Washington's high school coach at Florence, was at the game and observed, "I was pleased to see Kyle in the position he was put in. Not only is he starting as a freshman, but he seems to be a leader out there. He knew how to direct the secondary to adjust to ASU's passing game."

Wearing No. 4 for the Buffaloes, Washington made two solo tackles, ran one ball carrier out of bounds, and ASU quarterback Brock Osweiler rarely threw in his direction.

"Of course, Kyle was elated when we had a chance to talk this week," De La Torre said. "Kyle said, 'Coach, I'm starting again but I'm going to be a strong safety.' I told him, 'You just do the best job that you can.' And I was really pleased with his play."

No sooner did Washington leave the visitors' locker room there was a group of reporters covering both schools looking for further insights from the freshman safety, who handled the questions like a veteran.

Asked in general about stopping ASU's passing attack, Washington concluded, "We just needed to do our jobs."



University of Colorado, Florence High School graduate Kyle Washington is starting for the University of Colorado Buffaloes as a freshman defensive back.

What jobs weren't you doing? one reporter asked.

"The coaches put a good scheme together, and if we just follow that to a T, I feel like we'll be good out there, every time."

"Was it mental mistakes?"

"Probably a couple of those," Washington said. "We just need to keep our heads down after teams score and just keep pushing along."

"Are you getting down on yourself after an opponent scores?" asked another reporter.

"I'm not getting down," he quickly responded. "I'm just saying that it can be deflating, somewhat."

With that, it was off to the bus area, where there were a few more familiar faces to briefly greet before heading back to Boulder.

New challenges

Washington is learning quickly that there's nothing quite like being thrown into the fire. After battling a nagging hamstring injury early in the season, he's seen action returning kickoffs and in the defensive secondary.

"Kyle's done well so far," Buffaloes coach John Embree said. "He has cemented himself into the defensive backfield rotation. He's playing a bunch, and with Anthony Perkins being out (ankle injury), Kyle will start the rest of the year. So we're proud of him."

And, he added, Washington has been the versatile athlete they thought they were getting.

"We thought Kyle would be a guy that brings some versatility in the secondary, he's real physical, so he does a good job," Embree said.

In seven games, Washington has returned six kickoffs for 89 yards (14.8 yards per return), the longest for 20 yards. As a defensive back, he's made eight solo tackles and assisted on four others. No interceptions — yet.

"This is a lot more work, of course," Washington said of the college game's faster pace. "It's a lot more stressful mentally, because there's so much more to prepare for than at the high school level."

"It's tough, it's a grind every second, but it's fun ... it's still football."

The hamstring injury is still an issue, but Washington says "it's feeling better."

"I get it stretched out and massaged before every game day. Right now, it's good," he added.

Adjusting to college

Off the field, Washington is also adjusting to college life in general, gradually finding balance between the classroom and his football commitment.

"The work load is so different than high school," Washington said. "They do a good job here, getting us tutors that help keep you on track. But you have to go to class and it's always your choice. So I've been dealing with that my own way. But school is going real good."

As part of a rebuilding process under Embree, the Buffaloes are going through the throes of a long debut season in the Pac-12. Washington takes it all in stride, saying, "Losing is tough, but we're capable of winning some games. I feel like we've got the guys here who can play. All we have to do is listen to Coach and go out and play."

With the Gophers, Washington saw plenty of time on the field, playing offense and defense in addition to returning punts and kickoffs. With Colorado, it's defense only for now, and he insists he doesn't miss playing on offense.

"In high school it was a little different, but our running backs and receivers do a heck of a job over here, and the coaches are great, so I'm good with playing safety," Washington said. "That's my job here."

Motivation may be key to CU Buffs-USC matchup

Return of Stewart, Richardson should help CU offense

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

Posted: 11/03/2011 07:31:21 PM MDT

One win.

It's what the season has come down to for the Colorado football program.

No, it's not the win the Buffs already collected way back in mid-September against Colorado State in Denver. It's the one win they're trying to secure before time runs out later this month and 28 seniors are forced to hang up their helmets and shoulder pads never to receive another opportunity. It's one win before coaches and underclassmen are forced to wait out another long nine months before next season and new life arrives.

Sure, it's sad that it has come to this in coach Jon Embree's first season and the school's inaugural year in the Pac-12 Conference. It's November and most programs around the nation still have big dreams. For some, it's a conference title and BCS bowl game. Others are simply harboring hopes they can make a run and get to the postseason.

The Buffs, at 1-8, will settle for one win to end their six-game losing streak and go from there. If they get more, hallelujah, but one win is the goal.

Colorado will take it how it can get it at this point, but it would be a little sweeter to somehow upset the No. 21 Southern Cal Trojans Friday night in Folsom Field in front of a national television audience on ESPN. It would serve notice that while most of the college football world has left the program for dead the players and coaches inside the walls of the Dal Ward Center haven't quit and didn't give up. Put simply, it would be a building block, or brick if you prefer.

"Just being a competitor and being a guy in that locker room, you just have to find a reason why you go out there and compete," Embree said this week, discussing how he motivates players. "Just try and find a way. Don't get discouraged, you have to keep fighting, you have to keep competing. You have to, if you are a competitor and football is really important to you, then you have to have something in you that you are not looking at the scoreboard, but you are playing in a matter that says, 'this play counts. This play means something.' And we don't always do that."

This is the fifth game in a five-game stretch vs. top-notch teams in the Pac-12, but the Buffs had this one circled months before the season started because it's USC on the east sideline. Regardless of their current circumstances regarding NCAA sanctions for rule breaking, they remain the standard-bearer for excellence over time in the conference and they are a new South Division rival, a team CU will play each season for years to come.

CU is hoping USC arrives disinterested after a heartbreaking loss in triple overtime to Stanford last week and a win over Notre Dame the week before. The Trojans are 6-2 and don't have much to play for with a postseason ban in place and only Oregon remaining as an opponent to get their blood pumping.

Colorado's talented senior running back Rodney Stewart plans to return after missing two games because of a sprained knee. It's probably at least one game earlier than he should be back, but he wants to play against the Trojans.

Ditto for sophomore wide receiver Paul Richardson, who counts three former high school teammates on the USC roster, including wide receiver Robert Woods, who partners with quarterback Matt Barkley to form the most dangerous passing connection in the Pac-12.

That duo alone will be a challenge for a CU defense that has collapsed under the weight of the past four opponents it has faced. Stanford, Washington, Oregon and Arizona State have rolled up nearly 200 combined points and more than 2,100 total yards of offense against the beat-up Buffs who have been without numerous injured and suspended players in the past month.

The past four games have been over by halftime. CU players and coaches are hoping to keep this one close into the

second half and be able to rely on a crowd dressed for a blackout to push them over the top.

Getting Stewart and Richardson back should at least help the offense move the ball more effectively and score more points. Together they have accounted for 46 percent of the Buffs' total offense this season, despite the games they have missed.

"Both of those guys are playmakers. Both of those guys force defenses to play us differently," Embree said. "Having both of those guys back close to healthy makes a big difference."

Does it make enough of a difference to earn the Buffs one win?

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THORBURN: CU Buffs don't measure up in quarterback-driven Pac-12

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/03/2011 05:25:53 PM MDT

Andrew Luck is 1A.

The Stanford quarterback, after the triple-overtime win at the L.A. Coliseum, remains on pace to win the Heisman Trophy, a national championship and to headline the Occupy NFL Draft movement.

Luck threw for 370 yards, three touchdowns and one interception during a 48-7 win over Colorado last month.

Jon Embree describes USC quarterback Matt Barkley -- who will be on display for the Denver Broncos and other NFL scouts Friday night at Folsom Field -- as "1B" compared to Luck from an NFL perspective and reminiscent of Mark Sanchez "with a bigger arm."

Next week the Buffs' schedule finally gets easier when Arizona comes to town. Except Nick Foles might be 1C.

"Nick Foles? You had to bring him up, too?" Embree said earlier this week when asked about the conveyor belt of pro-ready quarterbacks CU will face during the worst of times for a sickly secondary.

The scenery in the Pac-12 is better, but the new conference feels a lot like the days when Sam Bradford, Colt McCoy and Josh Freeman were breaking Big 12 huddles.

In five Pac-12 games, the Buffs have given up an average of 44.8 points and 523.8 yards.

Clearly, this was not a good season to lose Jimmy Smith and Jalil Brown to the NFL. Crippling attrition (nine cornerbacks and both starting safeties have missed time due to various ailments or circumstances and leading tackler Douglas Rippey is out for the year with a torn up knee) also has taken a cruel toll on CU physically, emotionally and statistically.

In Pac-12 games only, CU ranks 12th in scoring defense (44.8 ppg), 12th in total defense (523.8 ypg), 12th in rushing defense (222.6 ypg) and 11th in passing defense (301.2).

Interestingly, USC is the defense which has allowed more passing yards (302 ypg) than the Buffs in conference games. Luck had 330 yards, three touchdowns and a pick-six during Stanford's dramatic 56-48 victory over the Trojans.

"This a quarterback-driven conference. There is no doubt, you have to have it," Embree said. "This conference is a lot like the league. If you don't have a good quarterback or good play at that position, you're playing uphill from an offensive standpoint."

Tyler Hansen is a good quarterback who needed to have an all-conference season for CU to have a chance. Due to a number of factors, including injuries on the offensive line and to Rodney Stewart and Paul Richardson, the senior signal caller has struggled to keep his offense up to speed.

Even though the Buffs usually fall behind by a large deficit early and are forced to abandon the run, Hansen only ranks ninth amongst his new Pac-12 peers in passing yardage (175.8 ypg) and 10th in passing efficiency (five touchdowns, five interceptions).

CU ranks 12th in scoring offense (14.8 ppg), 11th in total offense (304 ypg), 11th in rushing offense (92.8 ypg), and ninth in passing offense (211.2 ypg) in Pac-12 play.

This team also has struggled against conference opponents in the following categories:

Punt returns (11th), interceptions (12th), kickoff coverage (11th), field goals (tied 11th), sacks (ninth), sacks against (tied 11th), first downs (11th), opponents first downs (11th), third-down conversions (ninth), opponent third-down conversions

(10th), turnover margin (11th), red zone offense (12th) and red zone defense (12th).

Other than that, the Buffs are enjoying the Pac-12.

"We are not playing well at all as a team," Embree said. "What I mean by that is when we do get stops, we're not doing well offensively. When we're doing well offensively, we can't get stops. We have to put ourselves in a position where we're all playing well in the same half. Let's just start with that, and then build it from there."

Go, fight, win the first quarter!

At this point, the blackout crowd at Folsom Field and ESPN executives would take that.

Sadly, even if the Trojans sleepwalk and shiver their way through this game, the end result will be the same.

USC 42, CU 14.

Hopefully, Connor Wood will be a 1A or 1B type of quarterback in the Pac-12.

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cu football

Buffaloes welcome Richardson back

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/04/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Colorado sophomore receiver Paul Richardson knew he couldn't rush the healing process while missing the past four games with a knee sprain.

But through all the pain and pushing, Richardson told himself he had to at least make it back for tonight's nationally televised home game against No. 21 Southern California.

Fortunately, he made it. Richardson will be ready when he greets Southern Cal receivers Robert Woods and George Farmer. If somebody asks Richardson if he knows anybody on the USC roster, he might break out in laughter.

Richardson, Woods and Farmer played high school football together for Junipero Serra in Gardena, Calif., each as a blue-chip wideout. And just 18 months ago, the trio teamed

with current Arizona State cornerback Devan Spann on Serra's 4x100 meter sprint relay team that recorded a time of 40.66.

That tied Ellison High of Killeen, Texas, for the nation's high school best of 2010.

"It's funny, in high school we had better times than most of the colleges," Richardson said. "I'm looking forward to seeing those guys."

Colorado is looking forward to have Richardson back in the lineup against the visiting Trojans.

CU has been offensively challenged without Richardson and senior tailback Rodney Stewart, who also will play tonight after having missed two full games and most of a third with a knee sprain. They are the Buffs' most explosive and productive offensive players.

Richardson and Stewart last played together Oct. 1 against Washington State. In the four games since, Colorado has failed to rush for 100 yards as a team or have any receiver reach the century mark.

"It's going to be good to have those guys back," offensive coordinator Eric Bienenmy said. "When you're talking about somebody like Paul Richardson, he brings a different dimension to the game."

"To his credit, he's done a great job in the weight room and a great job in the training room to get back. That (work ethic) has translated to practice."

Despite having played in only five games, Richardson leads the team in receptions (29), receiving yards (474) and touchdowns (five).

"It gives us the ability to have some big plays," CU coach Jon Embree said of having Richardson and Stewart back. "We can take some shots



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downfield."

Colorado has scored one offensive touchdown in its past two games.

"It's been difficult sitting out," Richardson said. "When your teammates are out there and feel like you could have helped, it bothers you, especially when you're passionate about the game, and I'm a very passionate football player."

Colorado fans are being encouraged to wear black for tonight's game — the first Friday night home game in school history. Buffs players said they expect to wear all-black uniforms.

"It's going to be a great atmosphere, and we need to get off to a good start to get the crowd into it," CU senior quarterback Tyler Hansen said.

Embree said he has always enjoyed games under the lights. "I like the way fans act at night," he said.

Footnotes. As of Thursday afternoon, about 3,800 tickets remained, according to CU. . . . ESPN will also air tonight's game on ESPN 3D, one of 20 games the network is doing in that format this season. ESPN is setting up 20 3D television sets in Balch Fieldhouse, adjacent to Folsom Field. Fans can drop by during the game and watch the telecast with borrowed 3D glasses.

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

Three questions for Colorado

1. Will the return of tailback Rodney Stewart and wide receiver Paul Richardson from knee injuries provide a spark for the Colorado offense?

The last time Stewart and Richardson were in the lineup together, Colorado scored 27 points against Washington State. In the four games since then, the Buffs have averaged just 11.8 points. Granted, the level of competition

(Stanford, Washington, Oregon and Arizona State) stepped up, but CU quarterback Tyler Hansen didn't have much of a chance with his top two offensive players in street clothes.

2. Can CU's patchwork secondary somehow prevent USC sophomore wideout Robert Woods from having a monster game? That's a tall order. Trojans junior quarterback Matt Barkley and Woods are the nation's top pitch-and-catch combination. Barkley ranks among the nation's top 20 in pass efficiency, and Woods' stats are almost off the charts. He is the only player to rank among the national top five in receptions, receiving yards and all-purpose yards. His average receiving game is 10 catches for 124 yards and a touchdown. CU would probably take its chances with that.

3. Can Colorado ride the emotion and energy from a night crowd at Folsom Field and give the national ESPN audience a reason to stay tuned? In recent years, the Buffs have notched some memorable victories under the lights at Folsom Field, beating Georgia (2010), Kansas (2009, when the Jayhawks were ranked 17th) and West Virginia (2008). CU fans are being asked to wear black for a stadium "black out," but that may be difficult to pull off on a cold night. How many fans have black ski jackets?



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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

NOVEMBER 3, 2011, 4:22 PM

CU frosh Daigh gets props for his play last week

By **TOM KENSLER** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Among the CU freshmen that have stood out recently is inside linebacker Brady Daigh, Buffs coach Jon Embree said this week.

Daigh (pronounced “day”) is a 6-foot-2, 230-pound former Mullen standout.

“Brady Daigh played really well last week,” Embree said.

Daigh was credited with three unassisted tackles against Arizona State.

“Brady has been coming along very well during the season,” sophomore linebacker Derrick Webb said this week. “With the loss of Doug Rippy (to a knee injury), Brady has been receiving more opportunities. I feel he has been taking advantage of those opportunities.

“He’s also been playing well on special teams. He’s been working his butt off for us, and that’s helped us because we need him.”

You should follow me on [Twitter @TomKensler](#) ^[1] And read more at the [CU Buffs blog](#) ^[2]

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A look at the Southern California-Colorado game



By The Associated Press – 15 hours ago 0

No. 21 Southern California (6-2, 3-2 Pac-12) at Colorado (1-8, 0-5), Friday, 9 p.m. ET (ESPN)

Line: USC by 21½

Series Record: USC leads 5-0.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

The Trojans are bracing for the cooler conditions when they travel to Boulder, Colo., which received eight inches of thick, wet snow on Wednesday. The last time the Trojans played in snow was a 40-12 loss at Notre Dame on Nov. 30, 1957. USC is attempting to regroup from a 56-48 triple overtime loss to Stanford last weekend. Matt Barkley & Co. will face a banged-up Buffaloes squad that's still searching for its first Pac-12 Conference win. Colorado has been outscored in league play by a 224-74 margin.

KEY MATCHUP

USC WR Robert Woods vs. Colorado's dinged-up defensive backs. Woods ranks among the nation's best in catches (81), yards receiving (991) and touchdowns (9). The Buffaloes are going to have a tough time slowing him down, given their decimated secondary. Josh Moten and Greg Henderson should take turns on Woods and freshman Marqise Lee.

PLAYERS TO WATCH

USC: RB Curtis McNeal. The 5-foot-7 fireplug had a career night against Stanford before fumbling the ball away in the third overtime and sealing the Cardinal win. The talented junior finished with 145 yards against Stanford. That was on the heels of an 118-yard performance the week before at Notre Dame.

Colorado: FS Ray Polk. Once a tailback at Colorado, Polk caught the eye of the defensive coaches early in his career and hasn't gone back. He has 60 tackles this season and one interception.

FACTS & FIGURES

In their five wins over CU, USC has outscored the Buffs 138-24. ... The temperature at Folsom Field on Friday night is expected to be in the upper 30s. ... USC coach Lane Kiffin was fined and reprimanded earlier this week by the conference for his critical comments about the officiating in the Stanford game. ... This will be the fifth November night game at home in CU history. ... DBs Parker Orms and Paul Vigo were two of five CU players suspended indefinitely from the team for failing to meet expectations earlier this season. Both rejoined the Buffs this week but won't play against USC. ... Despite constant pressure, Buffs QB Tyler Hansen has thrown only six interceptions in 282 attempts this season.

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