

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu football

Colorado seeks season-ending winning streak for its seniors

By Natalie Meisler
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/06/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

BOULDER — Colorado just finished navigating one of the most treacherous scheduling stretches in team history. Four Top 25 teams, two of them in the top 10, in five weeks.

Those five games became losses — getting outscored 235-64 in those games — and CU is 1-9 overall, 0-6 in the Pac-12, and most likely will remain in the bottom 10 nationally in scoring offense and scoring defense.

Now comes the reward, at least in theory. Senior night rushes up Saturday against an Arizona team that already fired its coach. Beyond that is a trip to the Rose Bowl to play UCLA, where ex-CU coach Rick Neuheisel is on every hot-seat list in the land.

Then, finally, the Pac-12 Newcomer Bowl in Salt Lake City against

also injury-decimated Utah. At least, the Utes have one Pac-12 win to their credit and remain alive for a bowl bid.

"The last three games are definitely winnable games. We just have to try to go out 3-0 so we can leave something here for the players next year," said senior running back Rodney Stewart,

who returned a little spark to the offense against USC on Friday.

If the outcome wasn't really in question after halftime, at least CU held off the inevitable longer before the 42-17 final count.

"We're trying to get them a win before they head out. We're playing for them," said sophomore safety Terrel Smith, who turned in a solid game with seven solo stops and an assist. "When we're seniors, we want the same respect."

The secondary went to school week in and week out against future NFL draft picks. Friday was no exception with youngsters Robert Woods and Marqise Lee, who dominated with 18 catches for 254 yards and four TDs.

Smith is convinced the worst is over for the struggling Buffs.

"I'm pretty sure it will be turned around," he said.

"Coach is behind us. He wants us to leave our own legacy," said wide receiver Toney Clemons, who produced career numbers of 112 yards and two scores.

Speaking of the team's excitement surrounding the surprise black helmets, Clemons said: "We're

FREE

Home Security System!

\$850 Value!

Call Today, Protect Tomorrow!

1-888-472-8414

* With \$99 Customer Installation charge and purchase of alarm monitoring services.



Protect Your Home

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

determined as a class to make a mark on this program. Unfortunately, it's not how it turned out to be on this side of the win-loss column. I think there are a lot of positives around this program."

Embree had imagined a somewhat different script for his seniors.

"They have been through a lot. It's been a difficult four or five years for them," Embree said of losing records and the bottom falling out of the program that prompted his hiring 11 months ago.

"I wanted them to go out with some success. I wanted them to have an opportunity to win some big games and have them mean something."

Yet in a secondary lacking personnel stability playing against a potential future Broncos quarterback (Matt Barkley) and two future NFL fantasy league must-have receivers, CU had its moments. There were third-down stops mixed with the standard blown, mismatched assignments. Safety Kyle Washington broke up one pass only to get a possible concussion.

"We learn every game. It benefits us that we go against some of these receivers for the future. Now we know what it's like to go against big-time receivers," Smith said.

And for Embree, there are only three more game days left in his first season.

"They've done everything I've asked them to do," Embree said of his seniors. "They've turned things around academically from when I first got here. They've turned things around in their habits, and I just wanted them to have an opportunity to see that hard work be rewarded."



Send flowers
for any occasion
Bouquets
from **\$19.99**_{+s/h}

ProFlowers
Offer ONLY available at:
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1.877.804.1133

Print Powered By  **FormatDynamics**