



QB Tyler Hansen's game now leans more toward passing -- not running first.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: Hansen Reflects On His Short, Strange Trip

Release: 11/08/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER - A few more wins - no, let's be honest, a bunch more of them - plus a bowl game or three would have sent Tyler Hansen romping toward the exit of his college football career a bit merrier, a bit more fulfilled.

Through no fault of his own, Hansen's career at Colorado was as choppy as the Bering Strait. Forgive him for being confused during his first two seasons, when redshirts were yanked, giving him appearances in 13 total games (five in 2008, eight in 2009). A ruptured spleen cost him five games in 2010, leaving his final year as the last opportunity to play a full season and achieve some measure of closure - although he wouldn't put it like that.

He arrived at CU as a dual threat quarterback from Southern California, but he will play his final game at Folsom Field Saturday with the "dual" tag pretty much scrapped. Oh, he can still run, and will on occasion - as he did last Friday night against Southern California for 45 yards, 35 of them on one

BUFFALO EXTRAS



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Toney Clemons

carry that took Buffs fans back to Hansen's early days against Kansas State in 2008 (19 carries for 86 yards in his first game action) and No. 17 Kansas in 2009 (his scrambling ability and passing keyed a 34-30 CU win).

If college stats were kept like NFL numbers, Hansen would have surpassed 1,000 yards rushing for his CU career. But because lost sack yardage factors into a college QB's rushing total, Hansen is at 425 yards instead of 1,047 for his four seasons.

Nevertheless, he's running less as a senior, mostly because CU's pro-style offense has him concentrating on running the offense and moving the chains as a passer. He's not opposed to that. Then there's the injury factor and the issue of him being the Buffs' only experienced QB ... all good reasons for Hansen to cool his heels.

"I'm going through my progressions and they've asked me to check it down instead of run ... I think that's the NFL mentality you have," he said. "You look at the NFL and there's maybe one or two guys that run the ball, really. The guys that are winning like Aaron Rodgers (Green Bay) and Tom Brady (New England), those guys are staying in the pocket and throwing the ball downfield. I think that's part of what coach (Rip) Scherer and coach (Eric) Bieniemy have brought to this offense. I'm able to use my feet a little bit on some naked stuff and boots, but me running downfield 20 times a game - that's not us."

With three games remaining in his college career, it's been a short, strange trip for Hansen, but an enjoyable one that he wouldn't trade or alter - even the yanked redshirts in '08 and '09. After his redshirt was pulled for the KU game in '09, Hansen made an immediate believer out of then-KU coach Mark Mangino, who lamented, "It's unfortunate they picked this week to take his redshirt off ... I think they found their quarterback, that's for sure."

The Round One had a keen eye for talent, but maybe Hansen's talent was in the eye of the beholder. Waffling over whether he would start at CU continued through that season, the following spring and into the summer. But Hansen traveled the high road then as well as the season before, and he hasn't left it.

On Tuesday, when was asked if he would change those decisions to pull his redshirt, he answered without hesitation, "I would not. I think at the time, my true freshman year, I wanted to get in there, I wanted to play. I was itching to get on the field. I was totally fine with that."

"My second year ... that was the hardest decision I probably had to make. We were 1-3 at the time. It was tough, real tough. I talked to a bunch of people about it before I made the final decision. It pretty much came down to not being guaranteed play ever again; you might get hurt tomorrow and never play football again. That's why I came here - to play football. When you have an opportunity to play, get on the field, you've got to take it. Now, I don't regret that decision at all and my family doesn't regret it."

The lone thing he does regret is not being able to spend another season with head coach Jon Embree, Scherer, Bieniemy and the other CU staffers. "I wish I could spend some more time here with those guys," Hansen said. "They have some great football knowledge and they're some great guys. They're doing all the right things here. That's the only thing - I wish I had more time with them."

In CU's win-challenged fall (1-9 overall, 0-6 Pac-12), Hansen has had a fairly productive season statistically. He's No. 23 nationally in passing (2,279 yards) and No. 31 in total offense (2,341). He's fifth on CU's career passing yardage list and is the seventh player in school history to surpass 2,000 passing yards in a season.

He believes he's a better quarterback now than when he arrived. In fact, he believes he's better now than he was a year ago - a belief based on the time spent with Embree, Scherer, Bieniemy & Co. This, said Hansen, is "the first

11/08/2011

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year I've kind of played the position of quarterback. My first three years here I've just kind of been more of an athlete playing, kind of gone through my progressions, looked at my first and second reads and then took off (running).

"I think now I'm going through my reads, going through my progressions and playing the position of quarterback. This is the first year I've actually done that."

During his time at CU Hansen likely has learned as much in football as he has in the classroom - at least in those areas sometimes referred to as "life lessons." The adversity he faced during the uncertainty of his freshman and sophomore seasons, followed by his injury last year, have "made me mature quicker and kind of grow up," he said.

"I've learned to not take myself so seriously at times and to stay positive. There's been a lot of negative, a lot of negative. But, hey, you can find a positive in every situation. Every situation has something positive . . . that's the biggest thing I've learned through my experience here - stay positive, be happy, it's OK to laugh every once in a while and smile."

He'll try to do that Saturday at Folsom Field when his parents (Rick, Pamela) greet him on Senior Day, an afternoon Hansen already is describing as "surreal" because of the speed of its arrival.

"It goes by fast, I tell you," Hansen said. "Coach Embree tries to tell the young guys that every day. It's true; it flies by. I think Saturday is going to be emotional for most of us. We've gone through a lot here. It's going to be fun, we're looking forward to it."

Hansen figures on the afternoon being emotional for him and his parents, but he also believes it's nothing they can't handle after the previous three years. Hansen called them "the best anyone could ask for" and said the winding road that has been his CU career likely has been "toughest on them . . . going through what I've gone through. They've struggled at times, but they've stayed positive - especially my dad."

"I think this Saturday is going to be really emotional for those two. It's going to be kind of a tough experience to see them before the game because I bet they'll be crying . . . I can't thank them enough; they're the best."

Leaving CU with a winning record or finishing it out with a postseason trip won't happen, but Hansen is certain a positive legacy can be left by this senior class.

"We want to leave these underclassmen a three-game winning streak . . . we want to show them how to win and leave them on a winning note," he said. "We have that road losing streak (22 straight out-of-state losses). That's a big deal with us. We want to end that for sure. But we want to definitely send Coach Embree and his staff and all the young guys into next year with a three-game winning streak."

After seven consecutive losses, a three-game winning streak to close the season might seem a dream. But Hansen is convinced it can be done, and if he still can dream a little at this point, don't you think he's entitled?

BUFF BITS: With the Buffs playing last Friday night, Embree was able to get in a weekend mostly minus football, saying he "forced myself to try and be a human, be normal." When he reported back to work on Monday, he said he felt "energized and refreshed . . . I can imagine as a player what having two days off was like." . . . CU has had its red zone difficulties; the Buffs settled for three field goal attempts (two were blocked) against USC and are last in the Pac-12 in red zone offense (18-of-26 scores, 69.2 percent). Said Embree of settling for field goals: "All field goal goals is make the cheerleaders do three pushups and the band to play; you're not going to win nothing. We have to get touchdowns so we can win." . . . Embree believes "four or five" CU seniors could get a look in NFL camps, either through being drafted or free agency. He declined to name the seniors . . . Arizona's secondary coach is former Buffs safety Ryan Walters, who worked under current CU defensive coordinator/secondary coach Greg Brown for one season in Tucson before Brown returned to CU. Walters is among the youngest assistant coaches in the nation . . . Arizona's 2-7 overall record (1-6 Pac-12) is deceiving, said Embree, noting the Wildcats have run a similar gantlet to the Buffs. Arizona defeated Northern Arizona 41-10 in its opener, and

its 48-12 rout of UCLA came in the first game after coach Mike Stoops was fired and replaced by interim coach Tim Kish. That was Oct. 20, and since then the Wildcats have lost at Washington (42-31) before returning to Tucson and losing to Utah (34-21) last weekend. Arizona is 0-4 on the road this season.

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SHOW MENU



THORBURN: Letters to seniors show selfless side of Buffs

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/08/2011 11:20:07 PM MST

FWIW i luv u man. #shouldertoshoulder.

These days young people tend to express themselves in 140 characters or less.

Jon Embree recently challenged his underclassmen to think outside of the Twitter box.

The Colorado head coach asked some of his players to write old-fashioned, hand-written letters to the 28 seniors on the team about what they mean to the program.

Fortunately for their high school English teachers, these documents will not be published.

"That was an interesting exercise to say the least. I read all the letters, and you could tell that this is the texting generation," Embree said with a laugh. "Not that I'm Mr. Scripps-Howard Spelling Bee champ, but golly.

"These guys ... I don't know if Wheel of Fortune is going to make it much longer."

Go ahead and add a crate of Strunk & White Elements of Style guides to the long Christmas wish list Embree has for improving the program.

"It was funny reading the letters," Embree continued. "Some of them, it was like you were reading a letter to Santa."

The shaky prose and sloppy penmanship notwithstanding, the letters captured a sentiment that gives Embree hope for the future of CU football.

Even in the worst of times, this generation of Buffs have formed the same unbreakable bond that the great teams from the Bill McCartney era share. In 20 years, this group will remember the friendships more than the road losing streak.

"It was interesting to see how some of the guys felt about their teammates," Embree said. "There's a lot of guys that care deeply about each other and about their teammates. I was surprised at how selfless a lot of these guys were."

Toney Clemons received a letter from Tyler McCulloch. Actually, it was more of a thank-you note to the senior wide receiver for helping the freshman deal with the pressures of playing at this level instead of being upset about being listed as co-starters together.

"It was a good touch. It was something new. I wish I had a chance to say it to the guys I came up with that were above me when I came into college," Clemons said. "Because it makes an impact on the person. I'm glad coach Embree took the time out to have those guys write us letters and show us that they're in it for us as well, and that we're not alone as a class."

Travis Sandersfeld received a letter from Greg Henderson. The senior starting cornerback had his season derailed by injury while the freshman starting cornerback has learned tough Pac-12 lessons against Andrew Luck and Matt Barkley.

"It was good to know they had our backs and wanted to fight with us," Sandersfeld said of the 15 true freshmen who have played for CU this season.

Tyler Hansen received a letter from Doug Rippy. They arrived on campus together as part of the 2008 recruiting class, but the senior quarterback was never allowed to redshirt like the junior linebacker did.

"He wrote me a long letter, about three pages long," Hansen said. "And it was pretty special."

Before the season began, Embree said he wanted to win for this group. So far, they've only belted out the fight song once in the postgame locker room.

"I'll remember them as a group that really wanted to try and get things done and really try to get this program sent on the right path," Embree said.

Despite four consecutive losing seasons, this senior class will not be forgotten by their younger teammates when brighter days arrive for the Buffs.

"It was good to see it. It validated that a lot of the kids we brought in the last class are the kind of kids that we can continue to build around and are about the team," Embree said. "That is important; we have to be about each other if we are going to be successful."

Fans will have a chance to say goodbye to the large senior class on Saturday when the Buffs host Arizona in the Folsom Field finale.

CUL8R.

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Tyler Hansen wishes he had more time with CU Buffs

Quarterback one of 28 seniors to be recognized Saturday

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/08/2011 06:29:26 PM MST



One more year! One more year! One more year?

That was the chant the USC fans at Folsom Field serenaded Matt Barkley with last Friday night after the star quarterback threw a program-record six touchdowns against Colorado.

Barkley, a junior, must decide at the end of the season whether to become a multi-millionaire NFL draftee or return to school to try to win a Heisman Trophy and lead the Trojans to a national championship.

Meanwhile, Tyler Hansen is out of options when it comes to his playing career.

The Buffs' senior quarterback, whose redshirt was burned in 2008 and again in 2009 by the previous coaching staff, only has three games promised to him.

CU hosts Arizona on Saturday in the home finale before finishing the season with road games at UCLA and Utah.

Hansen, despite the team's 1-9 record this season, remains upbeat about his CU experience.

"Everything that has happened to me here has kind of made me mature quicker and kind of grow up," Hansen said before Tuesday's practice. "I've learned to not take myself so seriously at times and to stay positive. There has been a lot of negative, a lot of negative. But every situation has something positive to come from it, and I think that's the biggest thing I've learned from my experience here is to stay positive and be happy."

"It's OK to laugh and smile."

As a true freshman in 2008, Hansen was thrown into the fire by former head coach Dan Hawkins after CU's offense sputtered during consecutive losses to Florida State, Texas and Kansas.

Initially, the move paid off as Hansen led the Buffs to a 14-13 win over Kansas State in his first college start. But CU was trounced 58-0 at Missouri a week later, and the head coach began rotating Hansen and Cody Hawkins under center.

In 2009, Cody Hawkins was the starter for the first five games. CU went 1-4 before Hansen was asked to take off the redshirt again. He led the Buffs' to a 34-30 upset of No. 15 Kansas in his first start of the campaign, but the team finished 3-9.

"I would not change it. At the time my true freshman year I wanted to get in there, I wanted to play. I was totally fine with that," Hansen said. "I think my second year, my sophomore year, that was the hardest decision I've had to make just because we were (1-4) at the time and it was tough. I talked to a bunch of people about it before I made the final decision. It pretty much came down to, you might not get to ever play again. You might get hurt tomorrow and never be able to play football again. ...

"When you have an opportunity to play and get on the field, you have to take it."

Hansen started the first seven games of the 2010 season before suffering a ruptured spleen against Texas Tech.

Cody Hawkins closed out his playing career back under center and was able to walk off the field a winner in his home finale against Kansas State two weeks after his dad was fired as CU's head coach.

This Saturday will be the final time Hansen and 27 other seniors will play at Folsom Field.

"I don't regret that decision at all, my family doesn't regret it at all," Hansen said of not taking a redshirt season. "But the one thing is coach (Jon) Embree and his staff ... I wish I could spend some more time here because they have great football knowledge and they're great guys and they're doing all the right things here. That's the only thing, I wish I had more time with them."

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Colorado football

CU Buffs notebook: Parker Orms, Paul Vigo return to face Arizona's Nick Foles

Buff CBs coming back from suspension

By **Ryan Thorburn** Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:11/08/2011 06:28:16 PM MST



Jon Embree and the Colorado staff have studied Stanford's Andrew Luck and USC's Matt Barkley recently.

The film of Arizona quarterback Nick Foles was just as unsettling.

"One thing that jumps out at me is how accurate he is throwing the deep ball," Embree said. "He throws the deep ball real well."

And the Buffs (1-9), who host the struggling Wildcats (2-7) on Saturday at Folsom Field in a battle for the Pac-12 basement, struggle to defend the deep pass.

"It's a great matchup, right?" Embree said. "We have to be better at mixing coverages and just be better at playing it. Sometimes it's just finding the ball, sometimes it's our technique at the line of scrimmage."

If there is a coach who should know Foles' tendencies it's CU defensive coordinator Greg Brown, who was the secondary coach at Arizona last season.

The Buffs, who have allowed 8.1 yards per pass attempt and 28 passing touchdowns this season, will also benefit from the

return of sophomore cornerbacks Parker Orms and Paul Vigo from suspension.

Orms was a starter early in the season and led the Buffs with 11 tackles and two third-down stops in the team's lone win against Colorado State.

"This probably helped him from the standpoint of he was dinged up with a knee and a hamstring and a calf and all that," Embree said. "(The suspension) may have actually helped him to have this time off to heal."

Vigo and Orms both practiced last week. Without getting into specifics about why they were suspended, the young players said they have learned from the experience.

"I think we deserved what we got and I think it will make me a stronger person and athlete," Orms said.

Orms and Vigo were suspended prior to the Stanford game on Oct. 8.

Penn State connection

The son of first-year CU quarterbacks coach Rip Scherer is a junior wide receiver at Penn State.

Ryan Scherer's position coach, Mike McQueary, is one of the key figures in the shocking case against former Nittany Lions defensive coordinator Jerry Sandusky, who has been indicted on 40 counts of sexual abuse.

Prosecutors allege Penn State administrators ignored a 2002 report from McQueary, a graduate assistant at the time, that he saw Sandusky having sex with a young boy in a locker room shower.

Ryan Scherer has two catches this season for 19 yards.

Injury update

Finally, the Buffs' schedule is getting easier and the injury list is getting shorter.

Wide receiver Kyle Cefalo (knee), out since Oct. 15, and inside linebacker Brady Daigh (wrist), hurt on the second snap against USC, are both probable for Saturday's game.

Senior cornerback Brian Lockridge (ankle) could be available to play in his final home game. He was injured against Washington State after making the switch from running back.

There is also a chance that safeties Anthony Perkins (ankle), Ray Polk (concussion) and Kyle Washington (concussion) could be available.

Wide receiver Logan Gray (leg) is listed as day to day.

Notable

Saturday is "Senior Day" and Embree has asked fans to arrive early to help celebrate the Buffs' seniors. CU said Tuesday that the ceremony to honor the class will begin approximately at 12:10 p.m. ... CU is 16-7 on "Senior Day" dating back to 1988. All seven of those losses were to Nebraska. ... Pac-12 coaches will wear a special patch on their game day shirts this week to honor the 70th anniversary of the Tuskegee Airmen, the first unit of African-American military pilots who flew in World War II. ... This is Arizona's first visit to Boulder since the Wildcats pulled out a 24-21 victory over the Buffs in 1986.

CU Buffs seniors want to finish 3-0

Coach Jon Embree's team could be first since 1920 not to win a home game

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

Posted: 11/08/2011 02:29:28 PM MST



When the 28 seniors on the Colorado football team leave the program in the rear view mirror later this month after their final game, it's already a certainty they will walk away owning some unfortunate school records and unflattering footnotes.

This week in the final home game of their careers they have an opportunity to avoid further scarring.

If the Buffs can find a way to beat high-scoring Arizona led by future NFL quarterback Nick Foles, they will avoid becoming the first CU team to go winless at home in the history of Folsom Field.

Only three previous CU teams have failed to win a home game in a season and it hasn't happened since 1920 when home games were played at Gamble Field. That season the Buffs managed to earn two ties in three home games.

The other two occasions came in the first two years the program existed in 1890 and 1891.

Three CU seniors met with media members Tuesday at the team's weekly media lunch and true their fighting spirit each still had high hopes for doing more than simply avoiding ignominy.

"We want to leave these underclassmen a three-game winning streak," starting quarterback Tyler Hansen said. "That's what we want to do. We want to show them how to win and leave them on a winning note. We kind of have that road losing streak. That's a big deal with us. We want to end that for sure, but we want to definitely send coach Embree, his staff and all the young guys into next year with a three game winning streak."

The Buffs will lug a seven-game losing streak in Saturday's contest, including five straight blowout losses against the top five teams in the Pac-12 Conference. The Buffs have been outmatched and outmaneuvered in each of those games, but the final three weeks don't appear to be as challenging or lopsided on paper. The Buffs final three opponents, Arizona, UCLA and Utah have combined for a 12-15 record this season.

Arizona comes to town with a 2-7 overall record, a six-game road losing streak (seven including a neutral site bowl game loss) and one of the worst passing defenses in the nation. The Wildcats rank 112th in the nation defending the pass and 106th in scoring defense.

Those issues and an inability to step out of the middle of the pack and into the upper echelon of the conference cost former Arizona coach Mike Stoops his job last month. Defensive coordinator Tim Kish is serving as interim coach through the end of the season.

After this week's game, the Buffs will go on the road at UCLA and Utah to end a brutal 13-game schedule without a bye week. They are one of just three teams this season in major college football to play the entire season without a bye.

Senior wide receiver Toney Clemons said he recognizes that the Buffs are facing better odds in the final three games than they were the past five weeks (four ranked opponents), but he also cautioned that too much can be made of appearances.

"I do recognize it, and as a competitor, I know me personally, I won't speak for anybody else, I honestly prepare for each game as if we're going to win and that we are capable of winning," Clemons said. "I like to go out there and dominate. It doesn't matter what type of ranking or type of record those teams have.

"That's just me. That's the caliber of person I am. Looking at UCLA, they just put it on an ASU team that we struggled against, so they're no pushover. Arizona put it UCLA at home. So we know that they are capable of being great and being dominant. And Utah was in all those games. I'm not sure if they won or not, but I'm sure they were in those games fighting. Utah might have even beat Arizona."

It did.

Colorado coach Jon Embree has been an optimist about his teams chances all season while also acknowledging depth and injury problems as major hurdles. He remained hopeful Tuesday that the team can find a way to win down the stretch, end the road losing streak at 22 games and send the seniors off properly.

"The want-to in this group," Embree said when asked what he will remember about this group of seniors, his first as head coach in Boulder. "The adversity that they have faced. They've played hurt. They've played beat up.

"...This a group that there is still some stuff out there for us as far as what they want to do and what they want to accomplish. I'll remember them as a group that really wanted to try to get things done and really help set this program on the right path."

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colorado

CU's red zone is a dead zone

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/09/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

BOULDER — Getting the Colorado football program turned around will take some time, but CU coach Jon Embree said one place to target is the red zone.

"Clearly, we need some consistency there," Embree said Tuesday during his weekly media luncheon.

Colorado (1-9, 0-6 Pac-12) enters its home game Saturday against Arizona (2-7, 1-6) ranked last among Pac-12 teams by a wide margin in red-zone offense — that is, when getting inside opponents' 20-yard line.

Through 10 games, the Buffaloes have reached the 20-yard line on 26 occasions. They came away with points on just 18 of those. That success rate of 69.2 percent trails the 11th-worst team, Oregon State (75.8 percent), by a substantial margin.

Six Pac-12 teams have successfully scored points on at least 81 percent of their trips to the red zone. Stanford is a remarkable 52-for-52. CU's rate is tied with Troy for 113th among 120 major-college teams.

Of Colorado's red-zone struggles, Embree said: "It's been different things at different times. We work on the red zone a lot in practice. We try to work on the timing, spacing.

"Down there in the red zone, just a half a second

or half a step (behind) is a huge difference. Whether it's the ball getting out on time, the receiver getting bumped off a route, protection breaking down, whatever it is, it's something that small that affects things.

"We have to keep working at it and trying to get better at it."

Colorado's red-zone woes are even more alarming considering the Buffs have scored a touchdown on only half of their opportunities. That also ranks last among Pac-12 teams. Five of the red-zone scores have been field goals. "All field goals do is get the cheerleaders to do three push-ups and the band to play," Embree said. "We have to get touchdowns."

Support for coordinators.

While acknowledging that the team's record and statistics may not reflect it, Embree praised

the work of offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy and defensive coordinator Greg Brown.

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All Things CU Buffs blog



The Denver Post's sports reporters contribute analysis, notes and minutiae on this blog dedicated to CU athletics.

future NFL players at quarterback (Nick Foles) and wide receiver (Juron Criner and Dan Buckner), can be lethal on long pass plays, while that has been a weakness for CU's defense.

"Great matchup, huh?" Embree said.

"I do think Eric and Greg have done a good job in getting systems installed, getting it taught; I'm happy with both those guys," Embree said. "It's hard sometimes when you want to call plays, but (because of injuries) you don't have guys that you want out there to help you make plays."

Embree said he leaves the majority of the play-calling to Bieniemy and Brown. "Only about four (plays) per game — all touchdowns," Embree joked of his input.

"I try to walk a fine line (in offering a play)," he said. "Because I know as (a coordinator) gets going on some things, there is a flow. And there's gut instinct too."

"I guess the encouraging thing is, (the struggles are) more of us getting beat in a matchup situation than us making a mental mistake."

No gimmes.

Senior quarterback Tyler Hansen said the last three dates on Colorado's schedule — against Arizona, at UCLA and at Utah — "are games we can win."

"We want these underclassmen, the coaches, the staff (to end the season) on a three- game winning streak," he said.

It won't be easy, Embree said. Arizona, featuring

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NOVEMBER 9, 2011, 8:43 AM

CU's Embree: 4-5 Buffs seniors could get shot at NFL

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Colorado coach Jon Embree, an NFL assistant for four years prior to returning to his alma mater in December, was asked how many seniors could hear their names called next spring in the NFL draft or at least be signed as undrafted free agents.

“Four maybe, maybe five,” Embree said. “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Some guys, in the right system, can do it. If it’s not the right system, they’ll be facing an uphill battle.

“That’s what it’s about at that level. It’s getting in where you have the right fit and the right opportunity. We’ll see how it all works out for those guys.”

Embree declined to identify the seniors with pro potential.

My take — If asked to guess at which seniors could at least get a look by an NFL team, I’d say, in no particular order: guard Ryan Miller, wide receiver Toney Clemons, quarterback Tyler Hansen, tailback Rodney Stewart, tight end Ryan Deehan and linebacker Josh Hartigan.

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

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Colorado's senior class left frustrated


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November 9, 2011

After five straight games against teams that have been ranked this season, Colorado's schedule gets a little easier down the stretch.

That's good news for the Buffs, who are the only winless team left in the Pac-12 Conference at 0-6.

"It was a tough stretch in our schedule and we knew that," senior quarterback Tyler Hansen said. "We expect to win every game. We didn't going in thinking, 'Oh this is a tough one.' We go in thinking we can win."

The Buffs play their final regular-season home game Saturday against Arizona, which is 1-6 in conference. That is followed by trips to UCLA and Utah, who are both 5-4 overall.

This week marks the last chance for Colorado to avoid a winless home season and also get its first ever Pac-12 victory.

"It would mean a lot to the kids," Colorado coach Jon Embree said. "We are obviously running out of opportunities for these seniors. This whole year we have talked to them about what their legacy will be as a senior. For us to go the whole year without a Pac-12 win would be disheartening to say the least for those guys. I am glad we have some opportunities left to try and do that."

Colorado is 1-9 overall after a 42-17 loss last week to USC. Colorado has lost seven straight games in the same season for the first time since 1980.

"A lot of guys are frustrated right now, especially the seniors," junior defensive tackle Will Pericak said.

NOTES, QUOTES

--Colorado has been outscored 98-17 in the first quarter of its conference games and has led only once at halftime in those games.

--Colorado ranks last in the Pac-12 in scoring offense (18.8 points), scoring defense (38.7), rushing offense (94.4 yards per game) and rushing defense (191.4).

--Colorado has given up 500 or more yards in five straight games for the first time in school history. Colorado has given up 40 or more points in five straight games for the first time since 1980.

SERIES HISTORY: Colorado leads 12-1 (last meeting, 1986, Arizona 24-21).

SCOUTING THE OFFENSE: Colorado welcomed back WR Paul Richardson, RB Rodney Stewart and QB Tyler Hansen from injury in the loss to USC last week. The Buffs scored only 17 points against the Trojans, but another week of getting healthy for those three should help boost the offense. Playing Arizona should also help, as the Wildcats are giving up 34.8 points per game, which ranks 11th in the conference.

SCOUTING THE DEFENSE: The Buffaloes are in the midst of their worst stretch of defensive performances in school history. Colorado has given up 500 or more yards in five straight games after never having previously done that in more than three straight games. The Buffs have given up at least 30 points in seven straight games and 40 or more in the last five. Opponents have scored in all but one of the past 29 quarters. Colorado's last five games have come against the top five scoring offenses in the conference, so the Buffs should have a more favorable matchup this week against Arizona, which averages 29.3 points per game.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "On the offensive side of the ball we need more consistency. We are moving the ball around and then struggling in the red zone. We need to get better about getting touchdowns and not trying field goals. On defense, our coverage has been our Achilles heel. We have to get better on the back end whether we are in one-one-one or man coverage. If we do those things, it gives us an opportunity to have a chance to win." -- Colorado coach Jon Embree.

STRATEGY AND PERSONNEL

THIS WEEK'S GAME: Arizona at Colorado, Nov. 12 -- It is the first meeting for these two schools in a quarter-century. Colorado won the first 11 meetings between the schools between 1931-85, but the Wildcats won the last meeting in 1986. This is a battle for last place in the Pac-12 South, with Arizona at 1-6 and Colorado at 0-6.

KEYS TO THE GAME: Colorado should have plenty of motivation as it plays its final home game against the Wildcats. This is the last chance for the Buffs to avoid going winless at home this season, and it is the best chance remaining for Colorado to avoid a winless conference season. The seniors should provide plenty of emotion in their final home game, and that could lead to a quick start, which has eluded the Buffs all season. If Colorado gives its crowd reason to cheer early, that could make it tough on the Wildcats.

PLAYERS TO WATCH:

RB Rodney Stewart -- The senior passed his offensive coordinator, Eric Bieniemy, for first place on the school's all-time all-purpose yards list with 4,466. Bieniemy had 4,351, but Stewart moved ahead of him with 88 rushing yards and 67 receiving yards in a loss to USC last week. Stewart has 4,205 yards from scrimmage and is close to catching Bieniemy at 4,320 for the school record. Bieniemy has 82 catches and needs five to set the school record for most catches by a running back in school history, and he needs 100 receiving yards to become the 27th player in NCAA history to run for 3,000 yards and have 1,000 receiving yards.

QB Tyler Hansen -- The senior had 295 yards of total offense against USC to give him 5,476 in his career. He moved past Koy Detmer into fifth place in school

history. Hansen has thrown for 2,279 yards and 16 touchdowns this season.

WR Toney Clemons -- The senior is coming off his first 100-yard receiving game after catching five passes for 112 yards and two touchdowns against USC. He has 13 catches for 209 yards and three touchdowns in his last two games.

ROSTER REPORT

--S Kyle Washington suffered a concussion against USC and is questionable to play against Arizona.

--LB Brady Daigh is hopeful he can return to play against the Wildcats after suffering a sprained wrist last week.

--WR Logan Gray is probable for Arizona after suffering an ankle injury.

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Posted on Wed, Nov. 09, 2011

Arizona (2-7) at Colorado (1-9) (ET)

By Sports Network
The Sports Network

FACTS & STATS: Site: Folsom Field (53-613) -- Boulder, Colorado. Television: FCS-Pacific. Home Record: Arizona 2-3, Colorado 0-4. Away Record: Arizona 0-4, Colorado 0-5. Neutral Record: Arizona 0-0, Colorado 1-0. Conference Record: Arizona 1-5, Colorado 0-6. Series Record: Colorado leads, 12-1.

GAME NOTES: Still looking for their first Pac-12 Conference victory, the Colorado Buffaloes will take on the Arizona Wildcats this Saturday afternoon at Folsom Field.

The Wildcats have endured a nightmare of a season, and because of the lack of success there has already been a coaching change. Arizona has won just two games and since defeating UCLA, the Wildcats have lost three in a row, including a 34-21 setback to Utah this past weekend.

As for the Buffs, their transition to the Pac-12 has not gone well, as the team is winless in six conference games. However, the entire season has been a disaster as the team has just one victory on the year. Since defeating Colorado State, the Buffs have lost seven in a row, including a 42-17 setback to USC this past weekend.

In terms of the all-time series between the two schools, the Buffaloes own a commanding 12-1 edge over Arizona. However, the lone win for the Wildcats came in the last matchup, as they took down Colorado, 24-21.

The Wildcats might only have two wins on the year, but the offense has played well enough to average nearly 30.0 ppg. However, the unit is terribly lop-sided as most of the damage has been done by QB Nick Foles, who has thrown for 3,260 yards and 22 touchdowns. Juron Criner has missed time on the year, but he is clearly Foles' favorite target and comes into this game with 50 receptions, 607 yards and eight scores.

Unfortunately the team has been lacking in the run game, producing just 94.7 ypg. Against Utah the Wildcats were able to claw out 131 yards on 4.1 yards per tote, but once again the offense was paced by Foles, who threw for 326 yards and two touchdowns. However, the quarterback was sacked twice and intercepted twice.

The offense has not been flawless, but it has at least been productive. The same is not true of the defense, which has been abused to the tune of 34.8 ppg. Opponents have been able to beat the Wildcats through the air and on the ground, rushing for 169.4 ypg and 21 touchdowns, while throwing for 282.8 ypg and another 17 scores.

The Utes were not overpowering against Arizona in the team's last matchup, as the defense only surrendered 332 total yards, which is not a horrendous number. However, the Utes did manage to score twice on the ground, while rushing for 133 yards. The defense did not force a turnover and finished with only one sack, and there has been a problem for this unit all season, its inability to force the big plays.

Just like Foles, Tyler Hansen has tried to carry the offense for Colorado, but the quarterback clearly cannot do it all by himself. The quarterback comes into this weekend with 2,279 yards and 16 touchdowns against only six interceptions.

However, the ground game has been miserable and that has really hindered the progress of this unit. Colorado is currently averaging just 94.4 ypg and that comes on an equally poor 3.1 yards per attempt.

Once again the majority of the offensive success rested on the shoulders of Hansen, and even though he threw for 250 yards and two touchdowns, the Buffs were clobbered by USC.

The Colorado defense was simply overpowered by the Trojans, who did whatever they wanted to do. The Buffs allowed 243 yards on the ground and an additional 318 yards through the air and six touchdowns.

Stopping the pass has been a major problem for this defense, which has surrendered 28 passing touchdowns so far. Over the last six games, four teams have eclipsed the 300-yard mark.

The Wildcats might be on the road, but they are clearly the better team, despite only having one more victory. Colorado will score behind the arm of Hansen, but look for Arizona to keep the Buffs winless in league action.

Sports Network Predicted Outcome: Arizona 34, Colorado 30

Game Date and Time