



Linebackers coach Brian Cabral hasn't settled on Doug Rippy's replacement.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: Bieniemy, Cabral Must Plug Prominent Holes

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BOULDER - Colorado assistant coaches Eric Bieniemy and Brian Cabral are dealing with the same dilemma after losing a starter each in last weekend's loss at Washington. But Bieniemy's choice of replacements at tailback is clearer cut than Cabral's at linebacker.

To replace leading rusher Rodney "Speedy" Stewart, Bieniemy will plug in redshirt freshman Tony Jones, whose play as Stewart's backup has increased over the past several weeks. In reserve, Bieniemy will have sophomore Josh Ford and true freshman Malcolm Creer.

But Cabral was unsure on Monday who would step in for leading tackler Doug Rippy, who, like Stewart, suffered a knee injury in CU's 52-24 loss to UW. However, while Stewart is expected to be out from two to four weeks, Rippy is finished for the season.

Cabral's options involve shifting junior Jon Major from the "sam" (outside) position into Rippy's middle linebacker spot; elevating true freshman Brady Daigh, Rippy's backup, to a starting role; or possibly shifting sophomore Derrick Webb from the "will" inside position to the middle - a spot Webb has played.

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"I can move Major anywhere I need him," Cabral said. "I just don't know right now what our plan of attack is for Oregon and what I need to do to adjust my guys. I'm going to get the best guys out there . . . I've got to see who my best three are and go from there."

CU (1-6, 0-3) faces No. 9 Oregon (5-1, 3-0) Saturday at 1:30 p.m. (Root Sports) at Folsom Field. The Ducks present another formidable challenge for a Buffs defense that has allowed an average of 557 yards in total offense and 50 points in its past two games.

Cabral said Daigh is "coming along. I like his progress, there's a long, long way to go but there's a reason why he's playing as a freshman."

Head Coach Jon Embree said Daigh, a 6-2, 235-pounder, "has to be real ready . . . just add water and it's instant oatmeal, right? We'll play him and get him going, see how he does. He comes from a good high school program (Mullen), so we know he's been coached. He's been preparing well all year and he picks things up, so there you go."

Cabral was hopeful that his position could stay free of the injury epidemic that has broadsided the Buffs.

"I was hoping I wouldn't have to go through what everyone else is going through," he said. "That was really hard to lose Rippy and then a player like Rippy. He was playing so well, so very well. He was finally coming into his own."

Rippy's spirits, said Cabral, have remained "pretty good initially. (But) I think he's in shock . . . when the reality of surgery and Saturday come, that's probably when it'll hit him the most - not being out there."

Subbing for Stewart, Jones played about 21/2 quarters last Saturday and rushed for 49 yards on 14 carries. He scored on runs of two and one yards, impressing Embree with his hard running at the goal line and "not just sticking the ball out. He's finishing the run and sticking it out late to make sure he broke the plane. A lot of times young guys start sticking it out early and that's when you get turnovers. But I thought he ran well."

Creer - at 5-11, 205 the biggest of CU's current tailbacks - made the trip to Seattle last weekend as a reward for his work on the scout team in preparation for the Huskies. Embree was determined to keep Creer in a redshirt, but that's changed."

"He'll be up practicing with us and be ready to go," Embree said. "He's next in line, him and Josh Ford."

Bieniemy called Creer "a smart kid . . . and he brings a different dimension because of his size. I've told him, 'You have an opportunity to play, to start your clock right now, why not make the most of it?' He's excited, looking forward to the challenge."

Ditto for Jones, said Bieniemy, noting in the 5-7, 175-pound Jones' first career start he needs to be sounder in pass protection: "I've told him to just relax . . . don't panic. The calls haven't changed, be poised under pressure and do the job. He's going to be all right. He's going to make the most of this opportunity. I'm looking forward to watching him play."

"We're going to coach each and every kid the same. I always tell kids when we start camp - I tell the starter I'm coaching him not to allow those guys to take his job. I tell those other guys I'm coaching you to take his job. Now they have an opportunity to go out and prove what they can do."

Football's violent nature breeds injuries, but Embree said, "You don't ever think of it being as this magnitude . . . I just look on the bright side. There's going to be a year when we go through unscathed. I guess we're going to get them all out this year. But it's unfortunate; it's a violent game. Stuff happens and the other side of it is that you get an opportunity to develop depth . . . an opportunity to get some young guys going and playing."

ON REIGNING IN THE DUCKS: Oregon leads the Pac-12 in total offense (539.0 yards a game) and scoring offense (48.7 points). CU won't face a faster attack - either in collective speed or in the overall offensive tempo.

How to dial down the Ducks' speed? California created a controversy in last season's 15-13 loss to Oregon by allegedly faking injuries to slow the speed of the game.

In light of his team's injury epidemic, Embree laughed about Cal's alleged tactic Monday. "You don't have to worry about us faking injuries," he said. "We don't have to do that - when somebody's down, they're down. That's for sure."

On slowing the Ducks, Embree said, "You have to ask Chip (Kelly, Oregon coach). Chip knows the secret of slowing them down, you've got to get it out of him."

BUFF BITS: Embree is hopeful of getting top receiver Paul Richardson back at least by USC's visit (Nov. 4) or hopefully for the Arizona State trip (Oct. 29) . . . Cornerback Travis Sandersfeld (fractured fibula) ran on Monday to determine whether he might return this week. A decision is expected later in the week . . . Embree said freshman Stephane Nembot is adjusting well to offensive tackle and will stay at that position . . . Oregon's offensive coordinator is Mark Helfrich, who spent one season at CU in the same capacity on former coach Dan Hawkins' staff . . . Former offensive tackle Jim Hansen, CU's most recent Rhodes Scholar and an All-Big Eight selection and team captain in the early 1990s, addressed the Buffs at the conclusion of Monday's practice.

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SHOW MENU



Cabral: Buffs going in right direction

Linebackers coach knows transition to hard-nosed football isn't easy

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

Posted: 10/17/2011 09:42:08 PM MDT

Brian Cabral has been down transition road before and knows all too well it can be one to perdition.

The longtime linebackers coach -- now in his 23rd year as a member of the Colorado football coaching staff -- has coached the Buffs under Bill McCartney, Rick Neuheisel, Gary Barnett, Dan Hawkins and now Jon Embree.

Cabral said what the Buffs are experiencing this fall reminds him a lot of the transition that took place when Barnett returned to Boulder in 1999 after taking Northwestern to the Rose Bowl during his tenure at the Big Ten school. Barnett was hired by CU after Neuheisel bolted for a larger paycheck at Washington.

Barnett wanted to build a tougher, more physical team after three years under Neuheisel, who valued speed and throwing the football. The circumstances are very similar now.

The Buffs are 1-6 overall and 0-3 in Pac-12 Conference play and preparing to host No. 9 Oregon on Saturday afternoon at Folsom Field. In addition to managing a rash of key injuries, coaches are teaching a roster largely made up of Hawkins' recruits to approach football in a new way.

"Transition is hard and when you're trying to change a culture and trying to change attitudes, it doesn't come easily," Cabral said. "We went through a hard time too when Gary came back."

Cabral actually started the culture shift in the program when he took over as head coach on an interim basis last fall following Hawkins' firing. Cabral reinstated traditions and practices that had been cast aside under Hawkins.

He didn't make massive scheme changes in the middle of the season but he also began to prepare players for a more physical brand of football that he hoped to adopt if hired. Those first steps fit perfectly with Embree's approach, but both men expected some bumps along the way knowing they would need to stock the roster with players better suited to that style.

It has been a very rocky road so far this season, but not only because the personnel doesn't fit the system.

Some of the key developments in the culture change have involved discipline.

Embree first met with players last December and decided a handful of walk-ons who weren't making the grade in the classroom would not be invited back. In the spring, he cut loose several scholarship tight ends who also weren't meeting his expectations. Those moves have definitely affected depth this season.

Probably the most public part of the culture change Cabral referenced came two weeks ago when Embree suspended five players for breaking team rules. All five players are defenders and could certainly be of help to a team struggling to stop anyone these days.

It was a move many coaches would not have made. Others might have doled out punishment in a less public fashion. After all, there were no police reports or embarrassing public incidents that would have forced action from the coach. Some coaches would have kept the players practicing and held them out of games in small doses hoping it would go unnoticed. Embree opted to send a message, despite what it has done to the team's ability to defend on Saturdays.

"This is a whole different situation," Cabral said. "We're changing a culture. We are moving in the right direction. We may just have to take a step back before we go two steps forward. But we are in the process of changing the culture and down the road that is going to affect you more than anything else. So from that standpoint, we're going in the right direction."

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CU Buffs' Rippy out for season, Stewart might miss 4 games

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

Posted:10/17/2011 05:30:41 PM MDT

University of Colorado junior middle linebacker Douglas Rippy is out for the season with torn knee ligaments and his cousin, starting tailback Rodney Stewart could miss as many as four games with a sprained knee.

In addition, the program also announced Monday that senior wide receiver Kyle Cefalo suffered a sprained knee last week against Washington and will not play this week against No. 9 Oregon at Folsom Field.

"It is what it is, but you don't ever think it will be at this magnitude," CU coach Jon Embree said of the injuries this season.

Embree has now lost his best defensive player and two best offensive players to injuries, in addition to a rash of injuries and suspensions that previously made the defensive secondary woefully thin and vulnerable.

Rippy will undergo season-ending surgery "in the near future," according to CU. He was injured in the second half of Saturday's loss at Washington. He is Colorado's leading tackler this season with 62 tackles and three quarterback sacks.

True freshman Brady Daigh is listed as Rippy's backup on the depth chart and he can count on seeing more playing time this season, but with the Buffs facing Oregon's no-huddle, spread attack this week, Daigh might not play as much as he would against an opponent with a more conventional offense.

"He has to be ready," CU coach Jon Embree said. "Just add water like instant oatmeal right? Get them ready like that. We'll get him going and see how he does. He comes from a good high school program so you know he has been coached. He's been preparing well all year."

CU linebackers coach Brian Cabral said Daigh, a product of Mullen High School in Denver, is progressing well and has earned playing time already this season because he had earned it.

"I just don't know yet what our plan of attack is for Oregon and what I need to do with my guys to fit that plan," Cabral said.

Stewart is the Buffs' leading rusher with 473 yards and is the second-leading receiver with 28 catches for 435 yards. His 1,169 all-purpose yards rank 14th in the NCAA this season.

Redshirt freshman Tony Jones will start in his place and Josh Ford also will play. Coaches continue to say true freshman Malcolm Creer could get playing time as soon as this week.

"Malcolm will be up practicing with us and ready to go," Embree said.

Rippy is the fourth Buff to suffer a season-ending injury this fall. Blake Behrens (shoulder), Jered Bell (knee) and Tony Poremba (concussion) are all out for the year. Offensive tackle Jack Harris (broken ankle) is likely out for the season, but a slim chance remains that he could return for games in late November.

Cabral said Rippy was playing the best football of his career when he was injured.

"He was playing very well," Cabral said. "He was finally coming into his own, and I just hated to see that for him."

Wide receiver Paul Richardson, tailback/cornerback Brian Lockridge and cornerback Travis Sandersfeld all remain out for the Oregon game due to injuries they sustained earlier this season. Senior linebacker Josh Hartigan and senior center Shawn Daniels should be available against the Ducks after recovering from their injuries.

Embree said he expects Richardson, the team's leading receiver, to return for the USC game in three weeks. He said it's possible he could play at Arizona State in two weeks.

CU hosts Oregon at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at Folsom Field.

No blueprint

Embree said the only team he has seen that had any success slowing down the Oregon offense - in terms of the pace at which the no-huddle attack operates - was Cal two years ago. Cal coaches and players were heavily criticized after that close loss to the Ducks because they appeared to fake injuries at times to stop the clock and allow substitutions.

Embree joked about that issue when asked how to slow down the Ducks after Monday's practice.

"Don't worry about us," he said. "When we're injured, we're injured. Don't worry about us faking injuries. It ain't happening. We don't have time to do that. When someone is down, they're down. That's for sure."

Glass half full

Embree said if there is anything positive about the injuries to key players it is that younger players are getting a chance to experience meaningful playing time and that will help the program down the line.

"The other side of it is that you get an opportunity to develop depth," he said. "You get an opportunity to get those young guys going and playing."

Notable

Colorado's game Sept. 29 at Arizona State will begin at 4:30 MDT and will not be televised. ... Embree said Stephane Nembot is definitely staying at offensive line and is developing well as a tackle there. CU is expecting a crowd of more than 50,000 for Saturday's game but several thousand tickets still remain.

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college football

CU's Doug Rippy out for the season; Rodney Stewart will miss 2-4 weeks

By Natalie Meisler
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — Colorado added top linebacker Doug Rippy and leading rusher Rodney Stewart to an injury list Monday that already included Paul Richardson, its most productive receiver, who was injured during a practice nearly two weeks ago.

On a defense already hurting with the losses this season of cornerbacks Jared Bell, Travis Sandersfeld and Sherrard Harrington, Rippy, a junior from Columbus, Ohio, is out for the year and will have ACL surgery in the near future. He led the Buffs (1-6) with 62 tackles on a defense ranked 113th nationally in scoring yielding 36 points a game. Also lost in the Washington debacle was Stewart, who is Rippy's cousin.

The running back represents 38 percent of CU's all-purpose yards with

1,169 yards. Stewart, a CU fan favorite, has a severely sprained knee that will sideline him for two to four weeks. His assault on his offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy's 3,940 career yards (Stewart has 3,217) is all but out of reach.

"I look at the bright side," CU coach Jon Embree said. "It's unfortunate that stuff happens. The other side of it is you have an opportunity to develop depth, you get the opportunity to get some young guys going and playing."

True freshman Brady Daigh of Mullen possibly moves up to fill Rippy's starting job, pending shuffling along the linebacker position.

"He will have to be real ready," Embree said. "It's like adding water to instant oatmeal. We'll play him and get him going. He comes from a good high school program. He's been preparing well all year."

Linebackers coach Brian Cabral said of replacing Rippy: "You don't. I'll have to see what our best plan of attack is and who the best guys to be on the field to accomplish that."

With redshirt freshman Tony Jones moving into the starting job in place of Stewart, Embree said: "He played well. He ran hard."

Sophomore Josh Ford moves into the backup position, with true freshman Malcolm Creer joining the mix.

Embree, staring ahead to Oregon's third-leading scoring offense (48.7 points per game) in the



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nation, retained his typical Monday sense of humor. Asked if anyone found the secret of slowing down the Ducks, Embree said: "Ask (Oregon coach Chip Kelly). He knows the secret of slowing them down."

The other injury loss at Washington was reserve wide receiver Kyle Cefalo with a knee sprain. He is expected to be out for one or two weeks.

Outside linebacker Josh Hartigan, who missed Washington with a neck stinger, is expected back this week.

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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

OCTOBER 17, 2011, 7:57 PM

Cabral: No comparison to 2010

By **NATALIE MEISLER** |  No Comments

Despite the treacherous Pac-12 journey to date, linebackers coach Brian Cabral said there's no comparison between this year and the end of 2010 when he took over as interim coach for the last three games.

"This is a whole different situation," Cabral said Monday after practice. "We're changing the culture. We are moving in the right direction. We just might be a step back before we are two steps forward. But we are in the process of changing the culture. Down the road that's going to affect you more than anything else."

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

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