

RB Malcolm Creer eager to help CU Buffs

Freshman didn't hesitate to pull redshirt

By Joshua Lindenstein Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:10/28/2011 12:09:05 AM MDT

Just in case the Colorado Buffaloes need another tailback to move to defensive back, the coaches can rest easy knowing they've got a guy with a knack for turning interceptions into six points.

True freshman Malcolm Creer set a California state record his junior year of high school by returning a pick 108 yards for a touchdown. He followed that up his senior year with a 99-yard return for a score.

Of course, CU defensive coordinator Greg Brown might have a wrestling match with offensive boss Eric Bieniemy on his hands if he tried to recruit the 5-foot-11, 205-pound Creer to the other side.

"We're not letting everybody move over there," CU head coach Jon Embree joked this week as he noted that Creer was off-limits to move around. "When Eric evaluated him as a running back (in high school), EB really like him and was excited about him."

CU senior Brian Lockridge moved from tailback to cornerback four weeks ago before the Buffs' game against Washington State as injuries and suspensions mounted in the secondary. With the situation even more dire last week against Oregon, true freshman D.D. Goodson made the switch.

Creer made his CU debut against Oregon just like Goodson, but his came on offense instead. He rushed 11 times for 37 yards, including a long of 9 yards, while backing up redshirt freshman Tony Jones.

With the moves by Lockridge and Goodson and the injury to senior starter Rodney Stewart, the Buffs are down to just three tailbacks -- Jones, Creer and sophomore Josh Ford.

"When I got called in for the meeting about pulling my redshirt, I didn't hesitate," Creer said. "I said, 'Yes, I'll play any position you need me to."

"Even though I didn't play half the season it still ... helps me for next year so I won't go in there with wide open eyes like I never played before."

Although he hoped to play right away as a freshman, Creer said he came in with the mindset of simply getting the playbook down and working hard.

Major college programs had largely overlooked Creer during the recruiting process. Part of that, the Los Angeles product said, was the fact that he played for a Palisades High program not well known for football. Part of it was that he didn't start playing until he was a sophomore.

Creer's mother had felt football was too violent, and his first love was basketball anyway. He played hoops in middle school with CU Buffs freshman guard Askia Booker, and he played against CU freshman Spencer Dinwiddie in high school.

"I did have hoop dreams, but then I didn't get any taller," Creer said.

Creer started at tailback as a junior and rushed for 660 yards. He racked up 1,270 yards as a senior, averaging more than 10 yards per carry. But he also performed well on defense, where he played cornerback and some safety.

His 108-yard interception return came on a play where he wasn't even supposed to be in, but the coaches ran him on the field at the last second.

"Caught it in the back of the end zone and just ran it out," Creer said. "Everyone told me to kneel the ball, but I just saw

grass and kept running."

Creer went to several camps to try and catch the attention of college programs. As the recruiting process wound down, Creer's only two major scholarship offers came from Colorado and Washington. Nebraska had been interested but never offered.

"At Colorado I just felt like I was the No. 1 prospect, and they had faith in me and saw something in me to help their program," Creer said.

Asked whether he considered trying to get by with only Jones and Ford at tailback until Stewart could return so as to not burn Creer's redshirt, Embree said he and his assistants were merely trying to get the guys on the field "who give us the best chance to win."

Ford is currently listed second on the depth chart behind Jones, but got no carries against Oregon. The coaches had been impressed with what they'd seen from the physical Creer on the scout team in recent weeks and wanted to see what he could do.

"We were glad to get him in there and pleased with his performance," Embree said.

Creer only figures to see more action in the final five games as Embree noted this week that he wasn't burning freshmen's redshirts at this point of the season if they weren't going to see significant playing time.

While the Buffs' injury situation is more unenviable than chicken pox, the repetitions the Buffs' youngsters at tailback are getting should make for a deep, experienced mix at the position after Stewart graduates.

"All three of us are getting better every week," Jones said. "(Stewart's) out so we've just all been working hard together to make sure we know our blocking assignments and reads."

Close Window

Send To Printer

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

sports | cu football

Diagnosis of concussions aims for football player safety

By Natalie Meisler
The Denver Post

Posted: 10/28/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 10/28/2011 08:06:18 AM MDT

BOULDER — Watch an injured Colorado athlete on crutches intermingle with the lunchtime rush at the Dal Ward Center and there are sympathetic glances as others rush to open doors for the wounded.

The real sufferers blend in with their peers — no telltale knee braces, walking boots or shoulder harnesses. They are the concussion victims.

Let others ride stationary bikes or sit with ice packs in the training room. The misery for those with a concussion is the ultimate deprivation for a college student — a ban on cellphones, computers, video games, movies and TV. Any such stimulus carries a chance of impeding the healing process.

"It's pretty rough," said Colorado safety Ray Polk, who was cleared Monday

for practice after suffering a concussion. "It's probably the most frustrating injury."

The big question concerning the CU football team this week is whether quarterback Tyler Hansen will play Saturday at Arizona State. Hansen was removed from last Saturday's game

against Oregon after a hit to his helmet resulted in a concussion. He was his usual animated self after practices this week, but he hasn't been cleared to play.

In a role reversal, his backup, freshman Nick Hirschman, said: "When I come off the field, Tyler helps me. He talks me through stuff that I'm fuzzy about."

CU has been hit with a bevy of concussions, with Hansen and three defensive backs, including Polk, sidelined in recent weeks. Team trainers follow strict NCAA protocol before allowing a player back on the field after a concussion.

"The NCAA requires all athletes to sign a document that they will honestly report concussion symptoms," CU trainer Miguel Rueda said.

Student-athletes in contact sports are given baseline exams before the season, and if there's a suspected concussion in a practice or game, an athlete must pass the test for memory and reaction before being allowed to return to the field.

"It's so

different from anything anyone was doing 25



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.

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

Blog: CU Buffs



The Denver Post's sports reporters post analysis, notes and minutiae on this blog dedicated to University of Colorado athletics.

years ago," said Dr. Eric McCarty, the school's director of sports medicine and a former teammate of current CU coach Jon Embree's. "Nobody really recognized what a concussion meant and the lasting effects."

That's just one change for Embree since he played college ball for the Buffs 25 years ago. This week he recalled the only test in the "old days" was smelling salts to revive players.

Now, even computers are off-limits. Rueda said CU faculty members have been very understanding about players who miss class time.

There's no set time limit as to the number of concussions that ends a season, or a career.

"It depends on how a player responds," McCarty said. "Is it

worth it to keep going through this?"



Buffs quarterback Tyler Hansen takes a hard shot to the head while being stopped by Oregon's John Boyett (20) and Brandon Hanna on Saturday at Folsom Field. Hansen underwent tests that determined he suffered a concussion on the play. (Andy Cross, The Denver Post)

That's the question ex-Buff quarterback Craig Ochs asked himself as a junior in 2003. After a third career concussion, he missed the second half of that season.

"I was never told by (CU doctors) to stop playing football," said Ochs, now an executive in a family business in Colorado Springs. "It was my decision that I needed a new start."

SAVE
up to **64%**

Plus, get
3 FREE Gifts

Special Code: **45069ZWN**

To order: www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71
or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

He ended up transferring to Montana, where, to the best of his knowledge, he didn't have any more concussions.

CU is not the only local team losing star players to concussions. Colorado State's fiercest hitter, linebacker Brian Orakpo, had a quick but unpleasant trip back from a concussion against Boise State two weeks.

"I was out of everything," Orakpo said. "They didn't want me to watch a movie or play video games or be out in the sun. They didn't want me to text, use my cellphone."

He's now back in the lineup.

Giving the "no anything" rule to the players is the toughest part of his job, Rueda said.

"Imagine being told you can't study, you shouldn't be on a computer, you shouldn't play video games, you should just be resting," Rueda said. "Kids aren't capable of just sitting."

Natalie Meisler: 303-954-1295 or nmeisler@denverpost.com

Three questions for CU

1. Can Colorado quarterbacks, especially if redshirt freshman Nick Hirschman starts in place of senior Tyler Hansen (concussion), avoid turnovers against an opportunistic Arizona State defense? It might be CU's only chance to stay in the game, but it won't be easy. ASU tops the Pac-12 by a wide margin with 11 interceptions, four more than any other team. The Sun Devils also lead the league with nine fumbles recovered. Colorado has ranked among the league's best in ball security (seven turnovers lost), but the Buffaloes are playing more young players than at any point this season.

2. Will Colorado's defense force Arizona State into enough third-down situations to make a difference? ASU ranks among the top half of the

Pac-12 in most statistical categories, but if it has a chink in its armor, it's third-down conversions. Arizona State has been successful on just 36.8 percent of third-down opportunities. Among conference schools, that ranks ahead of only Colorado (34.7) and Utah (34.0).

3. This question seems to be asked weekly, but can Colorado (a 30-point underdog) stay competitive into the second half? Doubtful, but that's the only way to make a game of it.

Tom Kensler, *The Denver Post*

DONATE YOUR CAR!



The Breast Cancer Research Foundation

100% Tax Deductible
Free Pick-Up Anywhere
We're Available 7 Days a Week

Donating is Fast & Easy!

Call Today 877-821-5493

The Breast Cancer Research Foundation is a classified 501 (c)(3) charity.

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

OCTOBER 27, 2011, 3:10 PM

CU junior LB Doug Rippy made huge improvement this season, coach says

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

Hyoungh Chang, The Denver Post

CU linebacker Doug Rippy talks with Buffs coach Jon Embree at practice.

BOULDER — Colorado junior linebacker Doug Rippy went from being a reserve player in his first two seasons to the team's top tackler this year — before a knee injury versus Washington ended his season after seven games.

CU coach Jon Embree expects even bigger things from Rippy in 2012.

"I think Doug Rippy can be a superstar, I really do," Embree said.

Another junior linebacker, Jon Major, also gives the CU defense a foundation for next year, Embree said.

"The strides Jon Major is making, I think he can be worthy of the linebacker tradition on that (Colorado) wall that's downstairs.

"We have some guys here, they're just not consistent."

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



Colorado scouting report

[Like](#)

[Recommend](#)

[comment\(0\)](#)

[email](#)

[print](#)

[Facebook](#)

[rss](#)


The start of Jon Embree's tenure as head coach at Colorado resembles the start of his playing career with the Buffaloes.

Colorado went 4-7 during Embree's freshman year of 1983, and then it dropped to 1-10 during his sophomore season. The Buffs improved to 7-6 and 6-6 during his final two seasons and went to a bowl game in both years.

Now 1-7 in his debut as head coach, Embree has shared the lessons he learned from his two losing seasons as a player with his current team.

"I've met with the freshmen every week, just trying to share some of those situations with them about what it was like as a freshmen going through something like this," he said. "I challenged the seniors to decide what they want in their final five or six games or whatever we have left. What do they want? I had every one stand up who is going to be here for 2012 so the seniors could see. It is up them because they are the leaders, it is their team, and to continue to create a sense of urgency, a purpose."

Linebacker Jon Major said the Buffs are motivated by Embree's experience as a player.

"I think we all know that story," Major said. "That big turnaround that happened, he did mention that he was pissed when the class right after him went almost undefeated. We want to emulate that. He addressed us after this game and said, 'We're going to get there.' That's how a top-10 team operates, and we'll get there too."

Embree was part of the first recruiting class by coach Bill McCartney, who went on to win a national championship at Colorado. Embree is relying heavily on his first recruiting class, as the 15 true freshmen to play this year ties Colorado for fifth in the country in that category.

"When you are in the middle of something like this, you can lose focus on the bigger picture, and I want these younger guys to understand what the bigger picture is," he said. "I want these young guys to understand about where we are going. Unfortunately, we have some growing pains that you never like to go through, but if they do it right and embrace it, they won't have to go through it again."

Major, a junior, said the veterans and the newcomers continue to work together to get the season turned around.

"I don't think there has been a separation factor at all," he said. "We're all staying together pretty well. It's difficult on guys. Seeing guys get hurt. That's the cards we've been dealt. You've got to move on, and you got to roll."

NOTES, QUOTES

--Colorado has lost 21 straight road games as it prepares to visit Arizona State this weekend. The Buffs have been outscored by an average of 26.5 points in four road losses this season.

--Colorado's 45-2 loss against Oregon marked the first time the Buffs failed to score on offense in a home game since 2004. The 43-point loss was CU's worst at home since a 55-10 setback to Missouri in 2007. Terrel Smith's safety helped Colorado avoid its first shutout at home since 1986.

--The 293 rushing yards Colorado gave up to Oregon in the first quarter was the most ever given up in the first quarter by the Buffs and the second-most given up in any quarter. Oklahoma ran for 312 yards in the third quarter in 1980. Oregon's 371 rushing yards were the most given up by Colorado since Iowa State had 377 in 1993.

--Colorado gave up 527 total yards to Oregon, marking the first time the Buffs have given up 500 or more yards in three straight games since 1983. Colorado has given up 30 points or more in five straight games for the first time since 2003.

SERIES HISTORY: Arizona State leads 2-0 (last meeting, 2007, Arizona State, 33-14).

SCOUTING THE OFFENSE: The Buffs are in an offensive slump, and it could get worse, as they may be without their leading passer, rusher and receiver against Arizona State. RB Rodney Stewart is definitely out with an injury, and it is uncertain if WR Paul Richardson will be back from injury to face the Sun Devils. QB Tyler Hansen suffered a concussion against Oregon and is questionable this week. The Buffs have scored seven points or fewer in two of their last three games and rank 107th out of 120 teams with 19.4 points per game.

SCOUTING THE DEFENSE: The offense is struggling, but the defense has been even worse. Colorado has given up 45 points or more in the past three games with a defense that has been depleted by injuries. Colorado ranks 93rd in the country by giving up 423.6 yards per game, and its 37.1 points per game allowed ranks 117th.

QUOTE TO NOTE: "You have to play for more than just yourself. It's important to realize that we are going to be seniors one day, and we need to honor them. The seniors have been here through the ups and downs and some of the struggles, so it is important for us to respect that and play for them." -- Colorado freshman LB Juda Parker.

THIS WEEK'S GAME: Colorado at Arizona State, Oct. 29 -- These two teams played in back-to-back years during 2006-07, but those were the only meetings before the Buffs joined the Pac-12 Conference this season. This game looks like a mismatch, with Arizona State ranked No. 23 in the nation while the Buffs have lost 21 straight road games.

KEYS TO THE GAME: Colorado has gone through more than 10 defensive backs this season due to injuries and suspensions. Pass defense was a strength of the defense early in the season, but now ranks 85th in the country giving up 240.6 passing yards per game. This week brings another challenge through the air, as the Sun Devils are averaging 291.6 yards passing per game.

MLB	TEX 9	F
	STL 10	

suffered a concussion, and he completed 8 of 18 passes for 71 yards while being sacked three times. Hansen's status for ASU is not expected to be determined until game time.

TB Tony Jones -- The 5-foot-7 redshirt freshman moved into the starting lineup against Oregon in place of injured RB Rodrick Stewart. Jones had career-highs with 19 rushes and 71 yards. He also had three catches.

OT/TE Alexander Lewis -- The 6-foot-6, 270-pound freshman showed off his versatility when he played both offensive tackle and tight end against Oregon. He did not catch a pass in the game.

ROSTER REPORT

--Sophomore TE Alex Wood played his first game for the Buffs and caught a pass against Oregon.

--DBs Kyle Washington and D.D. Goodson both made their first career start against Oregon. Eighteen different players have started their first collegiate game for the Buffs this season.

--Goodson and RB Malcolm Creer both gave up their redshirt season to play their first game for Colorado against Oregon. The Buffaloes have played 15 true freshmen this season.

--DBs Ray Polk and Jason Espinoza were not cleared to play against Oregon due to lingering effects from concussions. Those two made it a total of 13 players who missed the game due to injury. QB Tyler Hansen and DB D.D. Goodson both left the game due to a concussion, and S Anthony Perkins left with a sprained ankle.

--FB Evan Harrington gained four yards on his first career rush.

Tags: [Colorado Buffaloes](#), [Jon Embree](#)

[Hide Comments](#) | [Add Comments](#)

Add your comments below

You need to log in to post comments.

Username:

password:

[Create an account](#)