



Senior guard Ryan Miller
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: CU O-line Seeks Redemption Against Cal

Release: 09/09/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER – When the lights dimmed and the large images began scurrying about on the screen in the Colorado offensive line's meeting room, Ryan Miller's only choice was to watch. Most of what he saw wasn't pretty.

"It was an embarrassing film session; it was high school ball," Miller said after reviewing his and his O-linemates' collective performance during a rerun earlier this week of CU's 34-17 season-opening loss at Hawai'i.

For Buffs quarterback Tyler Hansen, it might have been even worse than "high school ball." He was sacked a career-worst seven times – not all of them allowed by Miller & Co. – and CU's running game, after sack yards and several other negative plays were counted, tripped back to the mainland with 17 yards to its credit.

Those aren't numbers likely to be highlighted on anyone's resume at CU, particularly anyone in the O-line, and Miller is viewing Saturday's home opener against California (1:30 p.m., Folsom Field) as an afternoon aimed at redemption up front.

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"It's definitely that," Miller said. "There's been all this talk about us being a good offensive line . . . we haven't done jack squat."

Line coach Steve Marshall opened the afternoon in Hawai'i having to perform a juggling act. He came out of preseason camp with talented sophomore David Bakhtiari as his left tackle and freshman Alex Lewis as the backup.

But fewer than 24 hours before the Buffs departed for the islands, Lewis came down with what likely was the same intestinal bug that had marched through the team in mid-August. Coach Jon Embree made a pre-flight decision to leave Lewis at home, not wanting to risk Lewis' symptoms revisiting the rest of the team.

Just as no one had counted on Lewis being left behind, no one counted on Bakhtiari going down early – he suffered a sprained left MCL on the first play of CU's second offensive series – and not playing for the rest of the game.

Bakhtiari said he took himself out on CU's eighth play, believing if he went to sidelines, got his knee checked and attended to, he could return. As he contemplated coming back in "my mind was telling me yes, my knee was telling me no," he said. "My heart had to make the final decision and I kind of went with what was the smartest thing to do.

"I feel like even if I did go back in, I wouldn't have been performing at 100 percent and 'Danno' (Ryan Dannewitz) was performing at his 100 percent. He was able to give more than I could give, so I'm not going to try and be selfish about it."

When Bakhtiari didn't return, Marshall turned to Dannewitz, who hadn't played left tackle in a game since high school, as the chief protector on Hansen's blind side. Dannewitz was Nate Solder's backup on the left side last season, but Solder played every offensive snap (847).

In preseason camp last month, Dannewitz, a junior, got most of his work behind right tackle Jack Harris, "but I had taken a few snaps on the left side with the twos," he said.

But "a few snaps on the left side" weren't enough to get "Danno" ready for the Warriors' fourth-quarter pass rush. Said Marshall: "He's great, a tough kid, but he's probably out of position at left tackle. We had no choice; we had to switch him over."

Dannewitz believed he was holding up well until the fourth quarter, when the Buffs found themselves behind by 17 points and turned to the air.

"I think when we got behind and started passing, I was trying to protect the quarterback and saw my technique get away from me at times," he said. "This week I'm definitely working on getting more fundamentally sound."

But that, coupled with better communication, is an across-the-board objective for the O-line Saturday against Cal, which features a pair of senior ends and a junior nosetackle in its 3-4 defensive alignment. Marshall, the Bears' offensive line coach for the past two seasons, believes "five or six" of their defensive players will be drafted and calls Cal "one of the more athletic teams we'll play this year.

"I know their guys from spending two years there, no doubt. Whether that helps us or not, I don't know . . . the players are the ones who have to go out and play."

For whatever reason, neither Bakhtiari nor Miller believes that happened in the O-line against Hawai'i, which, according to Bakhtiari, "actually didn't show as much as we prepared for. We thought we'd see more blitzing; all of what we saw had been covered.

"I don't feel like we played to our highest level; I know we can play harder and better. I know a lot of people,

myself included, didn't play like Colorado football, like a Colorado line, is supposed to be playing.

"None of us had our best game. I know Ryan is mad about what happened. I know he's expecting to bounce back, and I'm excited about being out there Saturday. Hopefully, I can."

Added Miller: "It was bad losing 'Bak,' but that's what happens in the O-line. You've got to be able to get in there and have the next guy ready to play. O-line is O-line; it's not one guy at one position, it's five guys playing five positions.

"We have to communicate and play our technique – it's as simple as that. We're pretty good when we play within ourselves; when that happens, I think we're a damn good offensive line."

Bakhtiari's status has been "day-to-day" since Monday, so Marshall has been getting Dannewitz ready to possibly open at left tackle, which would be his first college start. Although Lewis has been practicing, he's lost almost 15 pounds since his bout with the intestinal bug and is working to re-condition himself.

Earlier this week, Bakhtiari was holding out hope of playing, saying his knee felt more stable every day and his lateral movement was improving. Marshall, though, stayed in wait-and-see mode, wanting to monitor Bakhtiari's progress on Thursday, then Friday.

"He's got to practice to play," Marshall said. "We want to take it slow and make sure he's healthy. It's full speed or no speed . . . I've been around this a long time; usually when an offensive lineman doesn't practice, it's hard for them to play unless they're veteran guys."

CU's other four starters from the opener are intact – center Daniel Munyer, left guard Ethan Adkins, Miller at right guard, Harris at right tackle. Munyer rotated with Gus Handler.

The 6-8 Miller wants to lower almost everything in Game 2 except his expectations. "I played high (against UH)," he said. "I thought I did well in the pass game, but I played high. I can be a lot more effective, I know I can. Maybe it was first-game jitters, I don't know. But I'm a fifth-year senior; I need to play better than that."

In reality, isn't that a blanket statement for his entire unit?

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cu football

CU linebacker Rippy learns tough lessons on and off field

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/10/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 09/10/2011 01:29:09 AM MDT

BOULDER — For Douglas Rippy, the game of football, and his part in it, finally began to make sense during Colorado's spring practice — just days after the murder of a childhood friend.

Whether there is a correlation, the junior linebacker can't be sure. But about the time Rippy did some soul-searching and decided to dedicate his performance on the football field to his pal, something inside of Rippy clicked.

Damiko Russell was gunned down in a March 28 drive-by shooting in a Columbus, Ohio, alley. Russell was 20.

"Every game, I pray that Damiko is watching over me; I know he's watching over me," Rippy said this week.

Although born in Philadelphia, Rippy grew up in Columbus before moving 70

miles west and transferring to Trotwood-Madison High School in suburban Dayton, Ohio, when his mother bought a house.

Rippy's connections to Columbus remain strong — he alerted CU recruiters about a small-but-

explosive tailback named Rodney Stewart, who is a second cousin. News of Russell's murder was difficult for Rippy to get out of his mind.

"Hearing what happened to Damiko, it was really tough," Rippy said. "We went to preschool together, all the way up to middle school."

Life isn't always fair, said Colorado linebackers coach Brian Cabral, who consoled Rippy. During a recent CU booster luncheon, Rippy became emotional when introducing Cabral as a "father figure to me."

"Personally, Doug has experienced things that normal guys, young guys, should not have to experience," Cabral said. "He's battled through those things."

Rippy believes Damiko would be proud. Somehow, Rippy was able to focus. According to coaches, Rippy is playing the best football of his college career. He faced another hurdle of adversity during his redshirt-freshman season when tearing up a knee.

"That's a real football player," said junior linebacker Jon Major, a team captain. "Stuff happens. But you put it behind you. It's always the next play. (Rippy) knows what he wants to do and he is making sure it gets done. That's huge."

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Stuck behind a succession of seniors early in his college career, Rippy had to wait until this season to earn a starting job — as a fourth-year junior. At 6-foot-3 and 230 pounds, Rippy was already an impressive athlete when he arrived at CU in the summer of 2008. Fast, strong and explosive, he sported a 35-inch vertical jump and looked ready to go.

"It doesn't always work that way," Cabral said. "We moved him around (to inside and outside linebacker spots) to see if he'd latch on to anything. Obviously, he wasn't ready for any of that.

"It takes longer for some guys. It's like all of a sudden last spring, he just starts to blossom. He's always had the ability. He just had to blossom. You want every player to get to that point eventually. With some guys, it happens later. That's OK. Then it's all of a sudden, 'I'm ready.' "

Given the first crack as the starter at inside linebacker during spring ball, Rippy led the defense for the three main scrimmages with 24 tackles, including 18 solo and six for zero or minus yardage.

The coaching staff voted him the Fred Casotti Award winner after the spring game as the top junior-to-be. An equally strong August camp was followed by Rippy becoming one of the few bright spots in last week's 34-17 loss at Hawaii.

At Aloha Stadium, he recorded seven tackles, including a team-best six unassisted stops, and half of a sack.

This afternoon's game against California (1-0) at Folsom Field may be an even bigger challenge, Rippy said, because the Bears have great speed. But he looks forward to showing that Colorado could "fix the problems" that contributed to Cal's 52-7 victory over the Buffs last year in Berkeley.

"It's been fun to watch Doug grow," CU senior

wide receiver Toney Clemons said. "The first couple of years he was trying to figure it out. He always had all the athleticism, all the strength and God-given ability in the world, but this year he's putting it together."

Rippy will be the first to acknowledge that football might not have meant enough to him during his first few years at CU. It can be a challenge for any student to balance priorities.

"At times it was hard," Rippy said. "But at the same time, I gained a lot of maturity. It was just understanding the whole college football thing. In high school, you just go out there and play. In college, you have to know your stuff and see that it all makes sense.

"Now, looking back, I know that you have to keep moving forward. If you don't keep moving forward, you're moving back because everybody else is getting better."

Playing for a fallen friend gives him even more motivation to grow.

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

Rippy by the numbers

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2011 1 6 7 0.5

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**Note: Rippy redshirted in 2008*

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CU-Cal football matchups

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

Posted:09/10/2011 12:06:29 AM MDT

CU RUN OFFENSE VS. CAL RUN DEFENSE -- It was a struggle to run in Week 1 for the Buffs behind an offensive line dealing with injuries and inexperience. Expect some improvement this week with the game at home and the altitude likely playing a factor in the second half. The Bears allowed only 68 yards rushing in a victory over Fresno State to start the season. **Edge: EVEN.**

CU PASS OFFENSE VS. CAL PASS DEFENSE -- CU allowed seven sacks in this game last year with a better offensive line. It also allowed seven sacks last week to a weaker Hawaii defense than this Cal team. If the Buffs can get it blocked up front or get creative by moving the pocket, quarterback Tyler Hansen can be successful, but he needs a lot more help than he received last week. **Edge: CAL.**

CAL RUN OFFENSE VS. CU RUN DEFENSE -- The Buffs surrendered 165 net yards last week with 121 of it provided by the quarterback beating them by scrambling and with a few designed runs. They face another quarterback with the same capabilities this week and he is complemented by a better overall running game. **Edge: CAL.**

CAL PASS OFFENSE VS. CU PASS DEFENSE -- It's tempting to give the Buffs the edge here since they have found ways to get pressure on the quarterback over the past year and Cal QB Zach Maynard is making his first start on the road. But CU has two young players in the secondary in Greg Henderson and Parker Orms who will face a big challenge against Cal wideouts Keenan Allen and Marvin Jones. **Edge: CAL.**

SPECIAL TEAMS -- Colorado had a decent debut to the 2011 season in the kicking game at Hawaii aside from shoddy kickoff coverage, but it's just one game. The Bears have the edge with some explosive return men and more experienced kickers. **Edge: CAL.**

COACHING -- Jon Embree made a solid debut in a losing effort last week. The Buffs lost but it wasn't because they were unprepared or outcoached. The bar is raised this week against Jeff Tedford who is trying to tie the school record for career wins at Cal. **Edge: CAL.**

PREDICTION -- Cal 31-21

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Marked improvement a must for CU Buffs

Jon Embree's squad hopes to avoid another Cal drubbing in home opener

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

Posted:09/09/2011 05:41:35 PM MDT

The smell of the stadium, the faces of the opponents he fought all afternoon, the score of the game and the number of times he touched the ball all faded from memory long ago. When Jon Embree reflects on his first game in Folsom Field as a player back in 1983, the very beginning is still stuck in his mind.

"Honestly, it would be running out there behind Ralphie for the first time," Embree said this week reflecting on his first home game as a player as he prepared for his first home game as head coach Saturday against California.

"There is nothing like it. We have one of the best traditions in college football, and that's what I tell these guys. Enjoy it. It's the first of only five opportunities for these guys to run out there behind Ralphie this year. It's the first time for a lot of these guys and I know it will be special for these seniors."

Saturday is the 28th anniversary of Embree's first game as a Buff, but that contest was played at Michigan State in the season opener in 1983. His first experience running on to Folsom Field didn't come until a week later when the Buffs played host to Colorado State.

The old stadium on the hill will be filled with emotion and excitement Saturday even if it's not filled to capacity. Embree makes his home debut in a contest that is essentially the first Pac-12 Conference game for the program even though it doesn't count in the conference standings. Adding to the drama is the presence of the 2001 Big 12 Conference championship team and former coach Gary Barnett, whom the school welcomed back and will honor during a halftime ceremony marking the 10-year anniversary of that special season.

Veteran stalwarts of the program such as quarterback Tyler Hansen, offensive lineman Ryan Miller and running back Rodney Stewart begin their final series of home games in their senior season looking for revenge against an opponent that drubbed them and injured their pride last season in Berkeley, Calif.

All of them and all of their teammates must play markedly better Saturday than they did a week ago in a season-opening loss at Hawaii if they hope to even their record. The biggest improvement is needed from an offensive line with right tackle Jack Harris and centers Daniel Munyer and Gus Handler playing in front of the home crowd for the first time. It also features junior Ryan Dannewitz who will likely start for the first time in his career in place of injured left tackle David Bakhtiari.

The Buffs gave up seven sacks to Hawaii last week and managed just 17 net yards rushing.

"We need guys to go out there and make plays when they're called upon," senior wide receiver Toney Clemons said this week after being benched in the opener for making several mistakes. "We have to put drives together. If you don't put drives together against a team like Cal, you're not going to do well. You can't have your defense on the field the whole time.

"The offense has to put drives together, long drives, punishing drives and wear those guys down. There has to be an exchange, and that's something we didn't do last year. Too many three-and-outs."

Both teams return many of the same faces that participated in last season's beating. But there are a few new faces sprinkled in, including two members of the Colorado secondary who must play big against Cal wideouts Marvin Jones and Keenan Allen for the Buffs to win.

True freshman cornerback Greg Henderson and redshirt sophomore cornerback Parker Orms fared pretty well in the season opener, but the challenge Saturday is even greater and is the first of many similar challenges they will face against Pac-12 offenses this season.

It's been a long time coming for Orms, a product of Wheat Ridge High School in Denver, who grew up coming to Boulder on Saturday afternoons to root for the black, silver and gold. Orms redshirted in 2009 and suffered a torn ACL in the season opener last year in Denver against Colorado State. So Saturday is a day he has dreamed of for years -- his first game in Folsom Field.

"It means so much to me," Orms said. "I've watched so many games since I was 7. My first two years I've had to watch every home game and it's been tough, but I'm definitely just going to let it all go and play the best game I can."

Cal features a different quarterback this season than the senior who beat them so badly last year. Junior Zach Maynard makes his first start on the road for the Bears Saturday, but it's not his first start on the road as a college quarterback. He played in 12 games as a sophomore at Buffalo before transferring west.

"He's got the ability to run and throw, which is always a scary proposition for a defense," CU defensive coordinator Greg Brown said. "If guys are multiple and can run or throw, it just makes it that much tougher on you as a defense and you've got to be that much more on it as far as your assignments and technique."

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Guest opinion: Standing shoulder to shoulder in the Pac-12

By Philip P. DiStefano and Mike Bohn
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:09/10/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

Today, the University of Colorado launches a new era when we host the California Golden Bears at Folsom Field. This is more than just a football game -- it is the chance to chart a new course with peer universities that share our commitment to academic and athletic excellence, and an opportunity to stand "Shoulder to Shoulder" in a variety of partnerships at one of the most exciting moments in CU history.

CU's entry in the Pac-12 Conference is a momentous opportunity on a variety of levels. It is the fulfillment of a partnership between the academic and athletic missions of the university, and which holds that excellence in both areas is not mutually exclusive, but is mutually beneficial and indeed, vitally necessary.

It affords us a dynamic presence on the West Coast and in the Pac-12's footprint, where 30,000 more alumni reside than in the Big 12 footprint, and where long and cherished relationships and networks have been built.

Academically, the move places us among peer universities who share our commitment to academic achievement. CU maintains dozens of research partnerships with Pac-12 schools such as Cal, Stanford, Washington, UCLA and Arizona. We are looking forward to extending those partnerships in other ventures such as the Pac-12 TV Network recently announced by commissioner Larry Scott.

We envision a variety of strategic partnerships with broad benefits for CU and its many stakeholders. For example, in hosting Pac-12 athletic and academic events, the City of Boulder can help to energize its economy and build strategic relationships with cities like Palo Alto and Berkeley, Calif., Pullman, Wash., Tempe, Ariz., and Salt Lake City, Utah.

You will see this vital partnership with the city at work in the banners that we are working together to place at the entrance to Boulder to welcome our visiting Pac-12 teams, and in the hospitality of our merchants and small business owners.

CU's sponsors, season-ticket holders, and donors are long-cherished partners whose faith in the university, and in our athletic programs, has helped deliver us to this historic moment and will propel us toward our future.

Our fans are at the center of our Shoulder to Shoulder efforts. Besides supporting our new coaches and all our teams, they are key to providing a fan experience at Folsom Stadium that is second to none in our new conference. We are counting on them -- especially our student fans -- to provide a welcoming environment of class, excitement, and spirit that echoes what we saw last spring with our record-setting basketball season. Joining the Pac-12 reflects the teamwork of our community, donors, students, and alumni. All we have done to join the Pac-12, and all that we will achieve in the conference, is founded on that teamwork, partnership and shared success. Standing Shoulder to Shoulder isn't just a stance for our offensive line: it's how we do things at CU-Boulder. We are fortunate to have a broader community that stands Shoulder to Shoulder with us.

Philip P. DiStefano is the chancellor, and Mike Bohn is the director of intercollegiate athletics at CU-Boulder.

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The Mercury News

MercuryNews.com

Cal-Colorado football game preview

By Jonathan Okanes
jokanes@bayareanewsgroup.com

Posted: 09/09/2011 06:42:18 PM PDT

Updated: 09/09/2011 06:42:19 PM PDT

CAL AT COLORADO

RECORDS: Cal 1-0, Colorado 0-1

KICKOFF: 12:30 p.m., at Folsom Field, Boulder, Colo.

TV: CSNCA

RADIO: 810

SERIES HISTORY: Cal leads 3-2. The Bears blew out the Buffaloes 52-7 last season at Memorial Stadium.

STORY LINES: The Bears have their first true road game of the season against new Pac-12 member Colorado. Since the game was already scheduled before the Buffaloes joined the conference, it is still considered a nonconference game. ... Cal receivers coach Eric Kiesau and secondary coach Ashley Ambrose came to Cal from Colorado in the offseason. Colorado offensive line coach Steve Marshall spent the past two seasons at Cal. ... A win would move coach Jeff Tedford into a tie with Andy Smith (1916-25) for the most all-time wins at Cal with 74. ... The Bears committed 11 penalties for 90 yards last week and have pledged to clean up things against the Buffaloes. ... WR Marvin Jones needs one catch to reach 100 for his career.

INJURY UPDATE: Cal -- TE Spencer Ladner (knee), WR Kaelin Clay (academics) are out. FB Will Kapp (concussion) is doubtful. S Sean Cattouse (concussion) is probable. Colorado -- none reported.

MATCHUP TO WATCH: Colorado's offensive line against Cal's defensive front. The Buffaloes struggled to protect quarterback Tyler Hansen in their season-opening

loss at Hawaii. The Bears sacked Hansen six times

last year.

STAT THAT MATTERS: Cal has had a winning record on the road just once in the past five seasons.

-- JONATHAN OKANES



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