

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu football

CU sophomore defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe full of star potential

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/15/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 09/15/2011 07:59:16 AM MDT

BOULDER — When asked about his skill set, Colorado sophomore Chidera Uzo-Diribe said he can help key the defense with his quick first step and, if need be, play physical enough to knock around an opponent.

Uzo-Diribe was talking about basketball. The Buffs' 6-foot-3, 240-pound defensive end focused on hoops until his junior year of high school.

"I was a pretty good defensive player on the boards," recalled Uzo-Diribe, who earned team MVP honors at Corona High in suburban Los Angeles. "I could move around, play strong. I've always had good footwork. I'm trying to use those things in football."

So far, so good. Actually, better than good. Uzo-Diribe already has 2 1/2 sacks through two games.

Apparently the thrill of getting to the quarterback has now surpassed those of a dunk or blocked shot. "Oh, man. I love sacks," he said.

CU defensive line coach Kanavis McGhee earned All-America honors as an outside linebacker and sack specialist during his playing days for the Buffaloes (1987-90). Not one to often spout superlatives about his unit, McGhee didn't hesitate in lavishing praise on Uzo-Diribe. He said Uzo-Diribe can develop into the kind of disruptive force that an entire defense builds around.

"When you're talking about putting pieces together to build a defense, Chidera has shown real promise," McGhee said. "This may be one of those things that fits the kind of athlete he is."

Uzo-Diribe plays right defensive end. For a right-handed quarterback, he attacks the passer's blind side. Colorado State sophomore quarterback Pete Thomas had better be aware of that Saturday.

The son of immigrants from Nigeria, Uzo-Diribe was born in Long Beach, Calif., and grew up with a love for basketball. That's what his father played in Africa, and Uzo-Diribe took to the game. But when it became evident that he hadn't inherited the really tall genes of the family (an uncle is 6-6), Uzo-Diribe realized Division I recruiters

wouldn't come running for a 6-3 post player.



HEARTLAND QUALITY
OMAHA STEAKS
SINCE 1917

SAVE
up to **64%**
to

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

Bright and aware (he's a political science major), Uzo-Diribe stopped and listened when Corona High football coach John Brandon spotted him in a school hallway and broached the idea of trying football. Uzo-Diribe played one game as a junior, then attended summer football camps at Colorado and UCLA. Although raw on the fundamentals, he gave an early glimpse of his potential as a high school senior when he made 7 1/2 sacks on a Corona team that was 2-8.

Fortunately for Colorado, the staff of then-coach Dan Hawkins got in early on Uzo-Diribe. "They saw something in me when I was in their camp," Uzo-Diribe recalled. "And I loved it here."

McGhee said CU's best pass rusher is still a very "raw" player. In McGhee's eyes, that's a plus. How good can his guy be?

"He doesn't have a lot of football background and we talk about that a lot," McGhee said. "The thing is, when you get a kid like that and you broaden his vision and he starts seeing the whole field, he can really improve quickly."

"And what I love is, him not playing much football, he doesn't have any bad habits that I have to change. He absorbs everything that we're throwing at him. His potential is really high."

CU coach Jon Embree, Hawkins' successor, went a step further. Embree suggested that Uzo-Diribe may be on the verge of reaching star status.

Having added 20 pounds of muscle since last season, Uzo-Diribe has improved his run defense and no longer is considered just a situational pass rusher. In 2010, Uzo-Diribe would trot onto the field for third-and-long. Now, he's always in the lineup.

Last year as a true freshman, Uzo-Diribe played in 12 games and made one start, at Kansas.

"To me, Chidera is kind of like (standout receiver) Paul Richardson was last year — he'd be great on some plays and then he'd disappear," Embree said. "Chidera has to get more consistency. You do that by playing."

"When he does, Chidera can be that kind of player on that side of the ball for us — a guy that (an opponent) has to account for."

One of Uzo-Diribe's cousins is New York Giants defensive end Osi Umenyiora, a two-time Pro Bowl selection and sack specialist. Perhaps Uzo-Diribe inherited some football genes after all.

"I'm all football now," he said.



HEARTLAND QUALITY
OMAHA STEAKS
SINCE 1917

SAVE
up to **64%**
to

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

sports

CU's Will Pericak a homegrown defensive tackle

By **Natalie Meisler**
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/15/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 09/15/2011 07:59:41 AM MDT

BOULDER — On the coldest New Year's Day in memory, then Boulder High School senior Will Pericak joined the brave in the Polar Bear Plunge and ran into the frigid water of Boulder Reservoir.

"Never again," Pericak said this week. "It's the coldest my feet ever have been. (But) it's one of the things you have to experience in Boulder."

Almost equally distressful for a college student on vacation, Pericak got up in the predawn hours on Memorial Day. That was all for a good cause, though, manning Boulder water stations.

If the Colorado Buffaloes' 6-foot-4, 285-pound junior defensive tackle had more Boulder spirit in him, he'd run the Boulder, climb the Flatirons and ride a bike up Boulder Canyon. He only regrets he was born too late for the Halloween Mall Crawl.

Another thing Pericak learned since he arrived at Boulder Community Hospital: It's CU's duty to beat Colorado State.

"I grew up with the tradition of this rivalry," he said. "It means a lot. It's one of those games with bragging rights on the line."

He remembers well the CU-CSU games at Folsom Field in the 1990s. "It was wild. The crowd was into it. It's the kind of environment I love to play in," he said.

Pericak gets his chance again Saturday in the Rocky Mountain Showdown at Sports Authority Field at Mile High. It's also a source of family pride for him; his parents are CSU graduates.

The Rams wanted to sign Pericak, but his heart was at home in Boulder.

A starter in every game of his career, he has taken well to CU's new defensive front. He was credited with five tackles against Cal last week.

Now the CU defense is preparing for CSU sophomore quarterback Pete Thomas, a pure pocket passer.

"He doesn't run as much (as other QBs), but they have a good running game and they know how to get the ball moving," Pericak said.

It was because of Pericak that nearly 50,000 fans lingered on the edge

of their seats at Folsom Field into overtime last weekend. He blocked an extra point early in the game, a point that proved crucial at game's end.

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™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

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

"The guard I went up against, he got the better part of me last year at Cal and I owed him one," he said.

One of the nation's top linebacker recruits coming out of high school, he was briefly ticketed for tight end upon arrival at CU. But he was placed on the defensive line as soon as he reported for a redshirt year in 2008.

"Will is such a good kid," said CU defensive tackles coach Mike Tuiasosopo. "He is smart. He understands the game. He got himself better over the summer just from the physical standpoint. . . . Part of the deal for Will is his understanding what we expect, schematically and technique-wise."

Footnotes.

Who will play offensive tackle for CU on Saturday remains a mystery, with David Bakhtiari and Ryan Dannewitz battling injuries. Both were on the practice field Wednesday. "A lot will depend on how they are feeling (today)," coach Jon Embree said. . . . CU has sold more than 36,000 tickets. CSU has passed 16,000. "We had a great crowd last week (for the Cal game) and they really did a good job of helping us," Embree said.

More TV. Less Money.

Packages start at **\$29.99** /mo. EVERYDAY LOW PRICE.

NO EQUIPMENT TO BUY! NO START-UP COSTS!

Call now 1-888-478-3360

All offers require 2 year agreement. Offers end 12/31/11 and are based on approved credit, credit card required. New customers only (lease required, must maintain programming, DVR and/or HD Access). Prices higher and terms & conditions vary in select markets. \$19.95 Handling & Delivery fee may apply. Call for details. ©2011 DIRECTV and the Cyclone Design Logo are trademarks of DIRECTV, Inc.

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

sports

Fierce rivals friendlier as ex- coaches

By **Natalie Meisler**
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/15/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 09/15/2011 08:00:03 AM MDT

Former football coaches love to tell stories, especially at each other's expense.

The Metro Denver Sports Commission happened upon a sure cure for Rocky Mountain Showdown luncheon tedium when it pulled Gary Barnett (Colorado's coach from 1999-2005) and Sonny Lubick (Colorado State's coach from 1993-2007) out of their forced retirements Wednesday.

Barnett and Lubick weren't particularly cordial before, during and after their matchups most years. Their relationship warmed toward the end, after their wives befriended each other at a Nike sponsor event.

And they love talking football. Lubick was at his convoluted best Wednesday while Barnett played his straight man routine.

Naturally, the former CSU coach wanted

to discuss the Rams' 1999 rout of the Buffs. He talked about Denver police firing tear gas at "our poor little band." He talked about his halftime speech, leading 28-0.

"The first guy who is smiling is going to get punched in the mouth," Lubick recalled saying to his players.

Barnett interjected, "There were other games (in the series) besides 1999. Like 2003, 2004, 2005." (All CU wins.)

Barnett and Lubick will be featured on the Root pregame show Saturday. The ex-coaches said they were on their best behavior for the TV cameras.

As for luncheon duties, Barnett said, "This is easier than being a head coach."

**Get a FREE ADT-Monitored
Home Security System.***

(With \$99 customer installation and purchase of ADT alarm monitoring services. See important terms and conditions below.)

Call Now! 1-877-835-8373

**SECURITY
CHOICE**
ADT Authorized Company



*\$99.00 Customer Installation Charge. 36-Month Monitoring Agreement required at \$35.99 per month (\$1,295.64). Form of payment must be by credit card or electronic charge to your checking or savings account. Offer applies to homeowners only. Local permit fees may be required. Satisfactory credit history required. Certain restrictions apply. Offer valid for new Security Choice - An ADT Authorized Dealer customers only and not on purchases from ADT Security Services, Inc. Other rate plans available. Cannot be combined with any other offer. ***\$100 VISA® Gift Card Offer: \$100 VISA Gift Card is provided by Security Choice and is not sponsored by ADT Security Services. Requires mail-in redemption. Call 1-888-407-2338 for complete restrictions and redemption requirements.

Print Powered By **FormatDynamics™**

The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

SEPTEMBER 15, 2011, 9:50 AM

Ex-coaches make the best luncheon speakers

By **NATALIE MEISLER** |  4 Comments

The Denver Metro Sports Commission came up with a winning formula Wednesday for the annual Rocky Mountain Showdown luncheon.

It's always been a chance for sponsor recognition, political speeches, institutional (academic and athletic) chest thumping, and former players from both schools _ now wearing business suits _ reliving glory days.

Instead of politicians and CEO's of academia, former players (Colorado's Chad Brown and Colorado State's Nate Kvamme) introducing respective former coaches Gary Barnett and Sonny Lubick.

There were also interesting internal dynamics at work with the two coaches who were bought out of their contracts years ago.

CU athletic director Mike Bohn made a point of thanking Barnett for his participation. The former coach of the 2001 Big 12 champs was honored at halftime Saturday at Folsom Field. In the past year, Barnett has coached an alumni flag team before the Spring Game and was part of last fall's celebration of the 1990 national champs.

There has been no such recognition for Lubick. He has watched games in Hughes Stadium from the box seats belonging to the business school. He serves as an unofficial ambassador to the school. However, he has not officially been brought back for any functions on the field that bears his name.

No one can put a price tag on Lubick's value to the university. Chatting with Lubick prior to lunch, an ex-Ram I had never met (Scott Whitehouse, RB, 1984-88) approached Lubick, who was his offensive coordinator back in the day.

Whitehouse, who had his own table at the event, told Lubick was one of the five most influential persons in his entire life.

Then still at the top of his game in front of microphone and a football loving audience, Lubick showed CSU fans when they missed for nearly four years.

Kvamme, a former overachieving linebacker typical of the Lubick era, summed up Lubick's leagacy: "He cared more about loyalty and unity than wins and losses."

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/09/15/ex-coaches-make-the-best-luncheon-speakers/20527/>

Click [here](#) to print.

All contents [Copyright © 2011 The Denver Post](#) or other copyright holders. All rights reserved. | [Privacy Policy](#) | This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed for any commercial purpose.

Special teams not so special for CU Buffs

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/14/2011 07:48:45 PM MDT

How did Cal's defense have enough oxygen to stop the Buffs in overtime?

During Colorado's 36-33 loss last Saturday at Folsom Field, Tyler Hansen guided the offense on scoring drives of 50, 46, 80, 86, 78 and 70 yards.

That doesn't include the opening drive of the game when CU had the ball for 13 plays and was stopped on downs after marching 66 yards.

The good news is the offense showed it is capable of moving the chains against a quality opponent. The bad news is the Buffs have had to cover a lot of ground this season when they get possession of the ball.

Through two games, CU ranks 120th among FBS teams in kickoff returns with a head-scratching average of 12.0 yards per return.

"Our kickoff return has been nowhere close to what I'm used to. That has been really disappointing," special teams coach J.D. Brookhart said. "There has been a multitude of errors that we've got to get right. Everything from the returners dropping balls to the blocking up front. We're going to keep trying to get it right."

Tony Jones (16.0 ypr), Toney Clemons (14.0), Brian Lockridge (12.8), Arthur Jaffe (10.5) and Evan Harrington (6.0) have all handled at least one kickoff this season.

"It's disappointing that we're not better at that, and kickoff coverage," head coach Jon Embree said. "Because those are big field position swings."

CU has only had one punt return in the first two games and ranks 85th nationally (Paul Richardson returned the punt 4.0 yards).

The Buffs' opponent this Saturday, Colorado State, ranks 22nd in kickoff return (27.5 ypr) and 28th in punt return (11.17).

Tackles eligible

There was some good news along CU's injury-ravaged offensive line on Wednesday as starting left tackle David Bakhtiari and backup Ryan Dannewitz practiced.

Both players are recovering from sprained knees. Bakhtiari suffered his injury in the opener at Hawaii, and Dannewitz played through the pain against Cal.

"I guess we'll see how the guys are feeling (today) and kind of make a determination of who's in, who's out, or how close they are to being ready," Embree said after Wednesday's practice. "A lot of it to me will depend on how they're feeling (today)."

If both tackles are healthy there is a good chance Bakhtiari will start on the left side and Dannewitz would move over to the right side where the Buffs have lost starter Jack Harris indefinitely with a broken ankle.

Sione Tau, a fifth-year senior who saw his first action on offense against Cal, is penciled in as the starting right tackle on this week's depth chart.

Stats do lie

The Buffs' loss was tough to swallow considering Hansen and Richardson produced record-setting afternoons.

CU sports information director Dave Plati's exhaustive research notes that a combination of 400 yards passing, 500 yards total offense, not committing a turnover, and not allowing a quarterback sack had always been a winning combination for the program until the Cal game.

The Buffs gained 582 yards, 474 passing, and played turnover-free football while protecting Hansen (no sacks allowed after allowing seven in the opener against Hawaii).

CU still fell to 14-1 all-time when not allowing a sack or committing a turnover.

The Buffs also lost for only the 15th time in 315 games when scoring 30 or more points (299-15-1 when scoring 30 or more, 57-6 since 1985).

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)

Will Oliver gives pressure the boot for CU Buffs

Freshman kicker handling tough situations so far

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

Posted: 09/14/2011 05:39:51 PM MDT



Will Oliver is ready to deliver a walk-off field goal at Sports Authority Field if the Rocky Mountain Showdown requires one.

Entering Colorado's tilt against Colorado State on Saturday in Denver, the Buffs' true freshman place-kicker has already proven that he can handle the late-game pressure.

During the 36-33 loss to Cal at Folsom Field, Oliver:

Calmly waited for Justin Gorman to get a low snap settled before converting a 27-yard field goal to open the scoring.

"The hold was a little bit bobbled, and I kind of stutter-stepped. It was looking like everything was wrong," Oliver said. "I kind of just learned to trust the holder and knew eventually the snap was going to get down. It worked out."

Blasted a 52-yard field goal, the longest ever by a CU freshman, in the second quarter.

"(Special teams coach J.D.) Brookhart just came up to me and said, 'Let me know what your range is going both ways,'" Oliver said. "So I kicked both ways (in warm ups). I was hitting 57, 58 from one way, and 52 or so from the other. Obviously, they took that with a grain of salt and made their own judgements. But I was glad to get an opportunity."

Split the uprights from 32 yards out with 30 seconds left in regulation to tie the score 30-30.

"I went out there with the same mentality. It was kind of weird actually," Oliver said. "I wasn't expecting to, but I was able to go out there and treat it just like every other kick. When I hit it, I was all smiles. I was enjoying it."

Oliver also gave CU a 33-30 lead on a 22-yard field goal in overtime, but the defense allowed a touchdown on Cal's possession.

Now the 0-2 Buffs must turn the page and focus on delivering Jon Embree's elusive first victory against the Rams.

Recent history may be on Oliver's side in this rivalry game.

In 2004, Mason Crosby's 55-yard field goal in the fourth quarter proved to be the game-winner as the Buffs' defense made a goal-line in the final minute of CU's 27-24 win over CSU at Folsom Field.

In 2005, Crosby's 47-yard field goal with four seconds left completed a dramatic comeback as CU overcame an 11-point deficit in the fourth quarter to pull out a 31-28 win over the Rams in Boulder.

In 2007, Kevin Eberhart's 35-yard field goal in overtime gave the Buffs a 31-28 victory at Invesco Field. CU cornerback Terrence Wheatley intercepted CSU quarterback Caleb Hanie on the first possession to set up the winning kick.

"There was a reason why we picked Will. He is doing a good job and he is going to have to continue," Embree said after Oliver's clutch 4-for-4 effort against Cal. "All that he has to understand is that the expectations ... right now he has been gambling with house money and he is going to have to start gambling with his own money. He has to be ready on take that step."

Oliver's game face is World Series of Poker quality. He seems to trot out onto the field in a state of tranquility, no matter what the situation is.

"I think he treats them all the same," Brookhart said. "We talked about it. If he is kicking a deeper one, we don't need to overdo it. And he didn't try and kill (the 52-yard field goal against Cal) and he hit it well. I think his demeanor is probably what impresses you the most."

The 18-year-old from Los Angeles says he's ready to execute a Hollywood ending at Sports Authority Field of the script calls for one.

"The pressure has sort of been building with each kick. The first one at Hawaii was my first one ever, and it was in the fourth quarter, so there was a little pressure to get us back in the game," Oliver said. "Then to get a few against Cal, including one in overtime, that gave me a little taste of it."

"In the beginning it was like, 'Oh my god, I don't know what I'll do if I have to kick the game-winner.' Now it's like, 'Bring it on.' I'd love it."

Close Window

Send To Printer

RINGO: Pac-12 loaded with top receivers

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/14/2011 11:29:26 PM MDT

There is still a ton of football to be played this fall, but it's already clear choosing the top two or three wide receivers for the All Pac-12 team at the end of the season is going to be a chore.

Ten receivers around the league produced 100-yard games in Week 2 and some far exceeded that, including Colorado sophomore Paul Richardson, who set a school record with 284 yards on 11 catches.

Richardson has become an elite receiver since the middle of last season and will get a lot of consideration for postseason honors at the rate he is going. He leads the nation with 333 receiving yards going into Saturday's game against Colorado State.

USC wide receiver Robert Woods and Arizona wideout Juron Criner are considered the cream of the crop, but Richardson, Stanford's Chris Owusu, Utah's DeVonte Christopher and Cal's Keenan Allen are hot on their heels.

Richardson began to get comfortable in the CU offense in the middle of last season. No other receiver in the nation has caught more touchdown passes than Richardson's 10 since he scored for the first time in his college career in the seventh game of 2010 against Texas Tech.

In the past eight games, Richardson has 41 catches for 783 yards and 10 scores.

Magic number nine

As realignment talk has continued to swirl, several readers have asked over the past week how many votes are required in the Pac-12 to approve any possible expansion in the league.

The league's bylaws say nine of the 12 presidents or chancellors must vote in favor of expansion for any new member to be added.

Some have speculated that CU would vote against expanding the conference.

It's premature to go that far.

CU would probably raise concerns and maybe even voice its displeasure publicly about the idea of being effectively thrown back into the Big 12 if the league chooses to invite Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas and Texas Tech, but it would probably ultimately vote for expansion when push comes to shove.

Fellow Pac-12 writer Jon Wilner of the San Jose Mercury News recently wrote that if the conference expands, Colorado should basically shut up and make the sacrifice of supporting it because other teams in the Pacific Northwest did exactly that when inviting CU and Utah to join the league.

There is some truth to that, but the reality is those schools had no choice in the matter if they wanted to get to 12 teams in order to have a championship game and enhance the league's position in negotiating its media rights deal.

The league is over no such barrel in this case and if the conference ultimately does expand to 16 teams and split into two divisions, those teams in the northwest will get back into California more often and will not have sacrificed much in the end.

Meanwhile, the Buffs will have it much tougher than they did before competitively if they are sharing a division with Texas and Oklahoma.

Pressure on Walters

and Wildcats

Former Colorado safety Ryan Walters is one of the youngest assistant coaches in major college football coaching the secondary at Arizona this season.

Walters and his fellow defensive coaches have their work cut out getting the Wildcats' pass defense tightened up. The Wildcats are allowing 78 percent of opponents' passes to be completed in the early going this season.

"We need to defend the pass better," Arizona head coach Mike Stoops said. "We need to get our hands on some balls and knock some balls down at the line of scrimmage and pressure the quarterback. There is a lot of things we can do better."

Arizona isn't alone in allowing too many passes to be completed. According to NCAA statistics, 26 teams in the Football Bowl Subdivision are allowing a 70-percent completion rate heading into this week's games.

"I think the offensive guys are smarter than the defensive guys," said Stoops, one of the best defensive coaches in the country. "We're a bunch of hard heads."

End this debate

Administrators, coaches and fans of non-BCS programs around the country have been arguing for years now that they can compete with the big boys and deserve to be on equal footing when it comes to postseason opportunities regardless of playing weaker schedules than BCS schools.

These folks often point to wins in bowl games or victories against BCS teams in the one or two games they play against that level of competition each year as evidence that they deserve better.

Utah coach Kyle Whittingham is in the unique position of having been a have-not last year and being in a BCS conference this year. Whittingham's view ought to settle the argument once and for all if you ask me, but it won't.

"It's good football in the Mountain West but this is a different ball game now," he said. "It's essentially a bowl game every week."

Numbers game

2 -- The number of Pac-12 running backs ranked among the top 30 rushers in the nation after two weeks. Chris Polk at Washington is 25th averaging 116 yards a game and UCLA's Johnathan Franklin is 30th with 103 yards per game.

Who's hot?

Utah linebacker Chaz Walker has posted double-digit tackle totals in four consecutive games dating back to last season. He has registered 45 tackles in the past four games.

Who's not?

The Washington defense is allowing opponents to convert 70 percent of the time on third down, which has contributed to the Huskies giving up 59 points in their first two games.

[Close Window](#)
[Send To Printer](#)

CLASSIFIEDS: [JOBS](#) [CARS](#) [HOMES](#) [RENTALS](#) [DEALS](#) [DATING](#) [CLASSIFIEDS](#) [PLACE AN AD](#)

[News](#)

[Photo Galleries](#)

[Sports](#)

[Business](#)

[Entertainment](#)

[Life](#)

[Opinion](#)

[Obituaries](#)

[Help](#)

[Sign up](#)

[Log in](#)

FEATURED: [9/11 Anniversary](#)

[Loveland Connection](#)

[GoFoCo.net](#)

[Xplore](#)

Find what you are looking for ...

SEARCH

ADVERTISEMENT

CSU secondary faces stiff test

Rams have tough task of slowing down Buffs' speedy receiver Paul Richardson

12:28 AM, Sep. 15, 2011 | [Comments](#)

[Recommend](#)

Be the first of your friends to recommend this.

[Recommend](#)

A A

ADVERTISEMENT



CSU senior defensive back Elijah-Blu Smith (22) defends as teammate Lee Clubb hauls in a pass during the Rams' first practice. Smith and CSU's secondary will have the tough task of slowing down CU wide receiver Paul Richardson, who had a record day for the Buffs in last week's loss to California. / RICH ABRAHAMSON THE COLORADOAN



Written by
Kelly Lyell

There's no mistaking No. 6 on the game film the CSU football team is watching this week.

FILED UNDER

[Sports](#)

[Colorado State](#)

Paul Richardson, the University of Colorado's speedy receiver, had more receiving yards last Saturday in a 36-33 overtime loss to California than the CSU defense has given up to its first two opponents, combined. The 6-foot-1, 175-pound sophomore caught 11 passes, matching a school record, for a record 284 yards, with 10 of his catches going for first downs, also a school record.

MORE HEADLINES

[Senior quarterback Tyler Hansen thriving in the Buffs' new West Coast offense](#)

[CSU volleyball team isn't taking match with Denver University lightly](#)

[Sandoval, Giants beat Rockies 8-5](#)

MOST POPULAR

1. [Chuck E. Cheese murderer hopes to overturn death penalty](#)
2. [Colorado 402 reopens after tanker crash](#)
3. [Fort Collins police say megaparty response designed to avoid sparking riot](#)
4. [CSU-CU sales lag previous contests](#)
5. [Missing 5 years, Colorado cat is found on NYC street](#)



[Mud Brigade 2011](#)



[9/11 Remembrance Event in Fort Collins](#)



[Missing 5 years, Colo. cat is found on NYC street](#)

MOST COMMENTED

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| Fort Collins planners: Neighbors probably can't stop LDS temple | 43 |
| Bike ride to highlight climate crisis | 18 |
| Larimer County GOP makes fundraiser private | 17 |
| Fort Collins Police: Mega-party planners expected 500, got up to 3,000 | 14 |
| Constitution Day honors living document | 11 |

ADVERTISEMENT

» Next up: CSU vs. Colorado. 11:40 a.m. Saturday,
Sports Authority Field at Mile High, Denver
» TV/radio: Root/KLZ (AM 560), KCOL (AM 600), KOA
(AM 850)

"He's an elite receiver," Colorado State
University coach Steve Fairchild said
Wednesday after leading his team
through a rainy, closed practice on the
fields south of Moby Arena. "He's

probably as good a football player as we're going to face all year."

Trying to stop him will be a daunting task, to say the least, for a
CSU secondary that gave up more than its fair share of big plays in
the passing game during a 3-9 season last fall. Opponents scored
touchdowns 12 times last season on passes of 20 yards or more,
and the Rams allowed two teams to score four passing touchdowns
against them and gave up three passing TDs in a game on three
other occasions.

As a result, CSU was ranked No. 118 among the nation's 120
Football Bowl Subdivision teams in pass-efficiency defense last
season.

Three of the four starters in the secondary that gave up those big
plays are back this season, and they're convinced the experience
they gained last year, along with a few tweaks in the Rams'
defensive package, will minimize those types of plays this fall.

"Experience has a lot to do with it, plus we've moved players to
their strengths," junior cornerback Momo Thomas said. "Everyone's
doing what they do best; I think that's the best thing. It's making us
stronger as a secondary, knowing where each other's going to be
at."

Thomas, a starter in 2008 and 2009 who was injured much of last
season, is lining up as the field cornerback, usually covering the
outside receiver on the wide side of the field. Senior Elijah-Blu
Smith, a starting safety the past two seasons, is the boundary
cornerback on the short side of the field. Senior Ivory Herd, also a
starter the past two years, is back at strong safety, leaving redshirt
freshman free safety Austin Gray as the lone newcomer.

Page **1** **2** [Next](#)

[View Comments](#) | [Share your thoughts »](#)

TOP VIDEO PICKS

YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN

[Son's pregnant girlfriend spurs concern](#) (Coloradoan.com)

[Fossil Ridge High School student dies in car accident](#) (Coloradoan.com)

[Officials encourage bear awareness over long holiday weekend](#) (Coloradoan.com)

[Eagles announce affiliation with NHL's Winnipeg Jets](#) (Coloradoan.com)

SPONSORED LINKS

[Revolutionizing the Way You Ski](#) (Snow.com)

[These 4 Things Happen Right Before A Heart Attack](#) (Newsmax.com)

[Be the Judge: Banning Service Dogs](#) (The Responsibility Project)

[Bulgarian mother of three crowned Super Model of the World](#) (StyleList)

[Most Dangerous Dogs in the World](#) (eHow)