



**Tony Jones (26) saw his second action of the season Saturday in Columbus.**  
Photo Courtesy: Associated Press



## Brooks: Promising Setup Turns Sour Fast For Buffs

Release: 09/24/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** - Before his fourth game as Colorado's head football coach, Jon Embree had been intrigued by Saturday's rare trip into Big Ten country. The view from half a country away looked promising.

CU's venture was a scheduling anomaly made possible by opening at Hawai'i and being allowed to play a 13th game ... with a nice, above-average (\$1 million plus) payday promised. CU and Ohio State shared open dates in September and were willing to make this a one-day stand - with no return trip to Boulder for the Buckeyes in the foreseeable future.

This single shot had a sweet feel about it. If there ever was a time to spend a fall afternoon in "The Horseshoe" and believe a win was there to be plucked, Sept. 24, 2011 seemed to fit the profile.

Embree's Buffaloes were 1-2, but just as easily could have been 2-1 had a couple of plays in an overtime loss to

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Cal gone his way rather than Jeff Tedford's. And Embree was buoyed by the clock-chewing, fourth-quarter drive in a 28-14 win against rival Colorado State the previous Saturday, believing the Buffs might have discovered a layer of grit they might rely on in Ohio Stadium, a beast of a venue for visitors during good times in Columbus.

But these (allegedly) weren't good times. Ohio State was fresh off what should have been a confidence-eroding loss (24-6) at Miami (Fla.) and still was trying to unburden itself of the off-season scandal that cost the program its head coach, its starting quarterback and resulted in a multitude of suspensions.

There were enough quarterback issues in the loss at Miami for Buckeyes coach Luke Fickell to bench an ineffective fifth-year senior and present a true freshman with his first career start on Saturday. (Don't defensive coordinators usually salivate over such opportunities?)

It was all setting up so nicely for the Buffs . . . until the game started without them. Again. Just a month into his first season, Embree had hoped to use this game as a "measuring stick." It turned out to be a tough lesson administered with an ugly stick.

By halftime Saturday, after another horrendous first quarter, CU was behind 20-7. The four-game cumulative halftime score: 60-27 - with the Buffs on the low and lacking end.

"I don't know . . . I don't have a theory," senior safety Anthony Perkins, one of the defensive co-captains, said of the Buffs' glacial beginnings. "It's something that's been addressed, that we have to keep addressing. All I know is that we have to get it taken care of."

But creeping out of the gate wasn't CU's only shortcoming in the 37-17 loss. The running game generated just 76 yards, while the Buffs' defense allowed the Buckeyes 226 on the ground. The plan to bottle up freshman QB Braxton Miller, pressuring him into bad decisions in the passing game, didn't work. He ran 14 times for 83 yards in the first half, not really being forced to complete more than a couple of first-half passes (but one was for a TD).

Miller ran only three more times in the final two quarters, turning the running game over to tailbacks Jordan Hall (18 carries, 84 yards, 1 TD) and Carlos Hyde (6-40, 1 TD). Miller completed only three more passes, finishing a barely passable 5-of-13 for 83 yards (but with two scores).

All in all, his debut was more effective than flashy - but effective was what it took and the Buffs couldn't do much about it. CU linebacker Jon Major called Miller "a great athlete . . . he didn't surprise us at all" - which was more than he and his teammates could say with any degree of honesty after Hawai'i's Bryant Moniz surprisingly lit up CU with his legs in the opener. Now, the word is officially out: Running QBs present *big* problems for the Buffs.

Miller aside, the Buffs still will review this tape and trudge out of their meeting rooms with heads shaking. "Lots of mistakes . . . lots of self-inflicted wounds," Perkins said, already shaking his as he prepared to leave Columbus. "All we can do now is watch film and learn from the mistakes."

Compounding those self-inflicted wounds were those inflicted by the Buckeyes, who capitalized on a pair of lost Buffs fumbles (they had one turnover in their previous three games). Embree said tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart had a shoulder injury that pained him on almost every touch: "He hurt every time he gets hit . . . he still went out there and tried to play." And cornerback Parker Orms played early then was sidelined by either "a hamstring, calf or knee," Embree said, adding that another three unnamed players battled through their problems. (No word yet on anyone's availability for next Saturday's Pac-12 opener against Washington State.)

Can anyone pinpoint what ails CU's special teams? Will Oliver continues to hit his field goals (he's six-for-six in his first year). But there was another untimely out-of-bounds kickoff. Ohio State's Hall returned two CU kickoffs for 135 yards - including a 90-yarder to the Buffs' 5-yard line. A TD came one play later. CU's return game was barely visible. Darragh O'Neill punted six times, two of them rugby style kicks, and still averaged 38.5 yards, with a long punt of 51 yards.

On both of his rugby kicks, O'Neill said he saw an Ohio State player running downfield with his back to O'Neill -

presenting what the CU punter believed was a target. "I thought I could tag him (with the ball) right there," O'Neill said, "especially on the first one."

And on his first punt, he did. The ball skittered into a Buckeyes player and appeared to be recoverable by the Buffs. But CU's Makiri Pugh apparently didn't see the ball make contact with the Ohio State player and backed away.

The Buckeyes covered it at the CU 43, and an afternoon of mostly bad field position for the Buffs was underway. O'Neill called that missed opportunity "definitely a play that could have turned the game around." Ohio State scored seven plays later, went up 7-0, built on that by halftime and was never caught.

Embree appeared more exasperated after this loss than the other pair. "Before the game," he said, "I felt like we'd improved . . . now I feel like we're back at square one." In trying to determine a reason for the step back, he said, "I don't know if it's a case of our guys trying to do too much . . . I want to continue to try and get as much as I can out of these guys and build."

The loss, he added, "doesn't make me feel any further away" from turning the program. "I'm pretty objective, pretty realistic. My staff realizes the hard work that's ahead. We've got Washington State coming in Saturday and we've got to find a way to get it fixed."

They've got six days, more than enough time - according to most Pac-12 observers - to get it all patched up, if not perfected, for Wazzu. The Buffs are a different team, sometimes a better team, at Folsom Field. But Embree's goal is to field a good team no matter where it lines up. Until Saturday in "The Shoe" he thought he was getting there.

**Contact:** [BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU](mailto:BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU)

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*Toney Clemons hauls in a touchdown pass from Tyler Hansen in the second quarter.*  
*Photo Courtesy: Associated Press*



## Brooks: Slow Start, Sloppy Play Doom Buffs

Release: 09/24/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Untitled Document

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** – When the Colorado Buffaloes learn to not let football games begin without them, success might not be far behind. And under lessons-still-to-be-learned, better put checks beside special teams play and field position.

As the Buffs had done on three previous weekends – only one of them not turning out badly – they fell behind early. And on this Saturday in the sunny and mild Heartland, determined Ohio State wouldn't let them up.

Rebounding from a 24-6 loss at Miami (Fla.) that dropped them out of the Top 25 for the first time in seven years, the Buckeyes routed the Buffs 37-17 at Ohio Stadium before 105,096. The victory improved Ohio State's home record to 55-5 since 2002; the loss was CU's 20th straight away from Boulder since 2007.

CU, which begins Pac-12 Conference play next Saturday at home against Washington State, fell to 1-3 while Ohio

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State waltzed out of “The Horseshoe” at 3-1.

For only the third time in modern history, the Buckeyes started a true freshman quarterback – Braxton Miller. The others were Art Schlichter in 1978 and Terrelle Pryor in 2008. Schlichter debuted with five interceptions in a 19-0 loss to Penn State, while Pryor threw four touchdown passes and just one interception in a 28-10 victory against Troy.

Miller was more successful, mostly using his legs to baffle the Buffs. In the first half, when the Buckeyes were opening a 17-0 lead, Miller ran 14 times for 83 yards and finished with that total after only three second-half carries. He went 5-of-13 passing for 83 yards and two touchdowns.

CU quarterback Tyler Hansen completed 22 of his 39 passing attempts for 238 yards and a pair of touchdowns, giving him nine TD passes for the season. The Buffs rushed for just 76 yards, the Buckeyes for 226.

Ohio State has allowed just one 100-yard rusher in its past 25 home games, and CU didn’t have a back that came close. However, tailback Rodney “Speedy” Stewart, one of three Ohioans on the CU roster, gained 55 yards – enough to push him over 3,000 for his career and past Bobby Purify into third place on the school’s career rushing list. Stewart trails Eric Bieniemy and Rashaan Salaam.

CU had committed just one turnover in its first three games, but the Buffs lost a pair of first-half fumbles Saturday and the Buckeyes got points from both. CU also was flagged eight times, now totaling 37 in four games.

The Buffs had targeted a fast start but they were well off that mark. Not close, in fact. They trailed 10-0 after one quarter, and here’s how they came by that zero: No first downs, one yard rushing, 18 yards in total offense.

It was another non-start eventually compounded by a series of special teams nightmares that contributed to Ohio State opening seven of 12 drives in CU territory and three others at its own 40, 40 and 43. The Buckeyes’ average starting field position was the Buffs’ 47-yard line.

After forcing the Buckeyes to punt on the game’s opening series, the Buffs also went three-and-out. Whether called or done impromptu, CU’s Darragh O’Neill attempted a left-footed rugby style punt that traveled only 20 yards.

But in its herky-jerky bouncing up field, it appeared to hit an Ohio State player. O’Neill thought it did, but teammate Makiri Pugh – the nearest Buffs player to the ball – didn’t make a move for it.

The Buckeyes took possession at the Buffs’ 43-yard line and quickly used seven plays to take a 7-0 lead. Tailback Jordan Hall, suspended for the first two games, scored on a 1-yard run and Drew Basil’s extra point pushed the Buckeyes in front 7-0. Hall finished with 84 yards rushing.

On CU’s next series, Hansen and Stewart botched a handoff and Ohio State defensive tackle Adam Bellamy pounced on it at the Buffs’ 22. The Buffs’ defense would be congratulated for letting it only come to this, but six plays later Basil’s 28-yard field goal gave Ohio State a 10-0 lead that held up through the rest of the first quarter.

Midway through the second quarter, the Buckeyes pulled ahead 17-0 after being given prime field position when Stewart signaled for a fair catch at his 5-yard line and put the Buffs offense in another precarious position.

Three plays later, O’Neill had to punt out of his end zone. Hall returned the punt 12 yards to the CU 46, and from there Miller capped a six-play scoring drive with a 32-yard TD pass to freshman receiver Devin Smith, who got behind Buffs corner Ayodeji Olatoye.

With Basil’s PAT, the Buckeyes were up 17-0 and the Buffs were gasping.

CU showed its only offensive spark of the first half on the following possession, with Hansen driving the Buffs 83

yards and hitting receiver Toney Clemons – he had lost to Ohio State twice while at Michigan – with an 11-yard scoring pass. It was Clemons’ second TD reception in two games.

After Will Oliver’s extra point, CU trailed by 10 (17-7) and appeared to possibly be finding itself. Then came Justin Castor’s kickoff, which sailed out of bounds and gave Ohio State possession at its own 40. The Buffs defense looked like it had worked out of that jam, forcing the Buckeyes to punt.

But Stewart, signaling for a fair catch, was jostled and bobbled the ball. Ohio State recovered at the CU 10-yard line with 15 seconds left before intermission, and 9 seconds later Basil’s 18-yard field goal sent his team to the locker room with a 20-7 halftime lead.

In addition to his 83 rushing yards in the first half, Miller completed two of his six passes for 40 yards – one the 32-yard scoring pass. Hansen’s 91 passing yards (10-of-18) was essentially CU’s only first-half offense; the Buffs rushed only five times and gained 15 ground yards.

CU started the second half as unsteadily as the first, getting whistled for holding on the kickoff and taking possession at its own 9-yard line. That ultimately led to another O’Neill rugby punt – this one right-footed – that traveled 33 yards and set up the Buckeyes at midfield.

Over the next six plays, Hall – Clemons’ cousin – carried five times and moved Ohio State to the CU 17. On Play No. 6, with the Buffs possibly expecting another dose of Hall, Miller and Smith hooked up for their second TD – this one a 17-yarder. Following Basil’s PAT, CU was looking at 27-7 deficit with 9:04 left in the third quarter.

Another holding penalty on the ensuing kickoff put the Buffs at their own 10 to open their second second-half series. Still, Hansen and his offense strung together a 60-yard drive, positioning Oliver for his sixth field goal of his freshman season – this one a 47-yarder that brought the Buffs to within 27-10.

So much for momentum . . .

Hall returned CU’s kickoff 90 yards to the Buffs’ 5-yard line, and on the next play tailback Carlos Hyde scored. After Basil kicked the Buckeyes up 34-10, the visitors had one quarter to either spin a miracle or make the afternoon respectable.

They weren’t up for either. Basil booted a 47-yard field goal with 11:42 to play, increasing the Buckeyes’ advantage to 37-10. The Buffs scored on a 14-yard Hansen-to-Tyler McCulloch pass with 3:31 remaining, and Oliver’s PAT accounted for their final points of the afternoon.

Contact: [BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU](mailto:BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU)

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## **Braxton Miller debuts in Ohio State win**

By RUSTY MILLER

AP Sports Writer

Last Modified: Sep 24, 2011 11:26PM

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Even though he's just a freshman and in his first autumn on a college campus, Braxton Miller played like a grizzled upperclassman.

Miller tossed two touchdown passes to Devin Smith as Ohio State rebounded from a lopsided loss for a 37-17 victory over error-prone Colorado on Saturday, extending the Buffaloes' school-record road losing skid to 19 in a row.

"I slept pretty good," Miller said. "I really didn't have any jitters at all."

Declared the Buckeyes' starter on Thursday after Joe Bauserman's lackluster play failed to energize the offense, Miller's numbers weren't sparkling. But his direction of the offense was.

"Braxton did a good job," said Jordan Hall, who rushed for 84 yards and a TD and also had a 90-yard kickoff return to set up another score for the Buckeyes (3-1). "He was calm. He's going to be special."

The Buckeyes made the switch after one of the worst passing days in school history in a 24-6 loss at Miami last week. Bauserman was 2 of 14 for 13 yards and Miller hit on only 2 of 4 — in the final few seconds of a lost cause — for 22 yards with an interception.

Against Colorado, Miller completed only 5 of 13 passes for 83 yards. But he threw scoring strikes covering 32 and 17 yards to Smith and also ran for 83 yards on 17 carries.

"He gave us a lift," said Ohio State interim coach Luke Fickell. "He gave us some things we needed."

Drew Basil added 13 points, including hitting all three of his field goal attempts, and Carlos Hyde also ran for a score.

Ahead 20-7 at the half, the Buckeyes only had to drive 50 yards before Miller hit Smith with his second scoring pass. After Colorado countered with a field goal, Hall brought the kickoff back 90 yards before he was brought down from behind at the 5. Hyde then scored on a sweep on the next play to make it 34-10.

Colorado (1-3) has not won a road game since Oct. 27, 2007, at Texas Tech.

"We have a long way to go as a program," first-year coach Jon Embree said. "We have a long way to go from the standpoint of getting to where we are competing and not hoping to upset an Ohio State."

Averaging 26 points and almost 394 yards per game, the mistake-prone Buffaloes did amass 314 yards but still were never in the game.

Tyler Hansen, who threw for 474 yards and three touchdowns in an overtime loss at California, had TD passes of 11 yards to Toney Clemons and 14 yards to Tyler McCulloch. Hansen completed 22 of 39 passes for 238 yards with no interceptions.

The Buffaloes, with just one turnover in their first three games, lost two fumbles in the first half while falling behind by two touchdowns. They also had nine penalties and several other mistakes.

After their first possession, Darragh O'Neill shanked a punt that covered just 20 yards and put the Buckeyes in control at the Buffaloes 43. Seven plays later, Hall vaulted up the middle for the touchdown.

Tailback Rodney Stewart and Hansen miscommunicated on a handoff with no defender around after the ensuing kickoff, the ball coming free with Ohio State's Adam Bellamy falling on it at the Colorado 22. Basil then converted a 28-yard field goal for a 10-0 lead.

The Buckeyes, who did not complete a pass to a wide receiver in the Miami loss, broke through early in the second quarter when Miller lobbed a 32-yard scoring pass to Smith, who was running a post pattern and had three steps on the defensive back.

More than creating big gainers, Embree was impressed with how Miller avoid big losses.

"He did a good job of getting it back to the line of scrimmage or getting 2 or 3 yards out of something when we should have had him for negative yardage," he said.

Late in the half, with Colorado still within range down by just 10 points, Stewart was interfered with by a teammate on a punt return and fumbled, with Zach Domicone recovering for the Buckeyes at the Colorado 11. Two plays later, Basil converted a field goal to make it 20-7.

The Buckeyes were out of the Miami game early. Seven days later, they played with some fire.

"We had to play with some emotion," said Fickell, whose team had been ranked for the previous 103 weeks before this one. "We wanted to get back home and get that feel of emotion, get those guys on the sideline, get the students into it. That's what we saw out there today, from the beginning of the game really all the way to the end."

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# CU Buffs 'have long way to go' after loss to Ohio State

## Colorado special teams struggle in loss

By Kyle Ringo, Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/24/2011 05:00:05 PM MDT

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- No end in sight.

The Jekyll and Hyde act from the Colorado football team between home and road games continued here Saturday with an error-filled performance reminding fans that while former coach Dan Hawkins is gone, he didn't take the special teams mistakes that dominated his tenure with him.

The local newspaper here, the Columbus Dispatch, described Colorado as "a once proud program" in its Saturday edition and the Buffs played the part falling 37-17 in their 20th consecutive loss in a game played outside Colorado. The Buffs haven't won on the road since Oct. 27, 2007.

Not even the \$1.4 million OSU paid CU for playing the game can make the Buffs feel better about it.

With looming trips to Stanford, Washington and Arizona State in the next month, only the most ardent CU supporter could believe an end to the streak is near.

"We have a long way to go as a program," coach Jon Embree said. "We have a long ways to go from the standpoint of getting to where we are competing and not hoping to upset an Ohio State. To say, 'Hey, you know what? We're going to go in there and we don't have to worry about rugby punting. We don't have to try to do things to manufacture anything. We can come in and play them straight up."

"So we have a long way to go."

Colorado had committed just one turnover in its first three games this season. It fumbled the ball away twice and set up the Buckeyes nicely throughout the day with poor play in the kicking game. Ohio State's average starting field position on 12 drives was the Colorado 47-yard line. Colorado's average start was from its 18.

"We really didn't have field position all day and that's one thing that helps out is to win the field-position battle," quarterback Tyler Hansen said. "It seemed like every series you start backed up. So it's tough. Every series you've got to go 90, 95 yards. That's tough to do against Ohio State. We've got to change that next week."

It started with the opening kickoff when OSU running back Jordan Hall returned it 75 yards. The return was nullified by a holding penalty but it still set the tone.

Ohio State started true freshman Braxton Miller at quarterback a week after its passing game produced just four completions at Miami. Miller struggled early, but the Buckeyes didn't need to throw much (15 times). They ran the ball 47 times for 226 yards with Hall and Miller leading the way with 84 and 83 yards, respectively.

Embree had predicted earlier in the week that both teams would slug it out on the ground.

The Buckeyes followed through, but the Buffs did not. With running back Rodney Stewart nursing a shoulder injury but still playing, CU elected to avoid pounding it at the Buckeyes and tried to stretch them instead. Forcing them to defend the width of the field turned out to be a bad idea. The Buffs' first three plays were incomplete passes, leading to another slow start.

"We have been awful starting games," Embree said. "We script plays and we go through it and we give them the looks and we practice it and we do everything and then for whatever reason when the lights go on, whether it's a drop, whether it's a missed block, whether it's a fumble, we continually struggle starting the game. I have to take a look at what we're doing from a practice standpoint and see if there is something I need to do different to try to get us jump started."

CU's lack of speed sabotaged the plan of attack and played into a strength of the Buckeyes. Embree was asked if speed is a problem lingering over his program at the moment.

"They are my guys and I love 'em. I'll leave it at that," he said. "I don't ever question their effort. I haven't had to question their effort yet. Having said that, we just got to keep trying to find a way."

The Buffs might have some physical limitations, but that doesn't account for the mental errors made Saturday and consistently made on special teams over the course of several years now.

Embree said coaches dedicate at least 35 minutes of practice a day to special teams. Yet it didn't prevent a poor decision by Stewart to field a punt at his 5-yard line, a muffed punt by Stewart, a rugby style punt that hit an OSU player as planned but was recovered by the Buckeyes in CU territory, a second big kickoff return from Hall covering 90 yards and a fumbled handoff from Hansen to Stewart.

Playing in front of a crowd of 105,096, the Buffs were able to sustain several drives and score points. Toney Clemons caught a touchdown pass for the second week in a row, Will Oliver drilled a 47-yard field goal and freshman Tyler McCulloch caught a touchdown pass late.

But Ohio State never felt threatened.

"I felt like before this game we got better every game," Embree said summing up the day. "So now we're back to square one."

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# THORBURN: CU Buffs need to prove they belong in Pac-12

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Staff  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/24/2011 06:09:54 PM MDT

Why did we add Colorado?

That's a question Pac-12 fans from Seattle to Tucson are asking this morning.

The Buffs went a disappointing 1-3 during non-conference play.

They made Hawaii quarterback Bryant Moniz look like the body double for Michigan star Denard Robinson.

They played brilliantly in the Folsom Field opener before folding in overtime against Cal.

They beat the Sheep in front of a select group of diehard fans in Denver. The momentum of the Colorado State win obviously didn't fly with CU to Columbus.

The Buckeyes -- a team that struggled to beat Toledo at home before getting dominated by Miami in the Miscreant Bowl -- showed a national television audience just how much work Jon Embree still has ahead of him with a 37-17 drubbing of the Buffs on Saturday at Ohio Stadium.

There will not be a rematch in the Rose Bowl.

Ohio State could still get to Pasadena if Wisconsin falters or Nebraska proves to be over-rated.

Sadly, the only bowling available to the Buffs this winter will be on the lanes at the UMC.

The CU defense struggled when it mattered most against Hawaii and Cal. The offense, which still can't run the ball, was bad. The special teams -- since when is catching kicks inside the 5 or rugby punting with your left foot acceptable? -- was nauseating during a long afternoon at the Shoe.

It's a good thing Larry Scott isn't allowed to trade CU to Chuck Neinas for Oklahoma and a team to be named later.

Everyone understands Embree has inherited a British Petroleum-sized mess that the first-year head coach is trying to clean up one spoonful at a time. The new staff needs to stack some recruiting classes together before it's truly ready to go on the road and beat an elite program like Ohio State.

This is a honeymoon period. With a lot of the former coach's kids tagging along.

Over the next nine weeks, however, it's very important that the current Buffs -- the seniors who are used to losing and the true freshmen who have been thrown into the fray -- show the Pac-12 some glimpses of why CU football belongs in this conference.

A 1-0 start would help.

The good news is the program's first official Pac-12 game will be played at Folsom Field next Saturday against Washington State. CU is a dramatically different team when it doesn't have to get on an airplane before a game.

If CSU was a must-win, then beating WSU -- the team picked to finish last in the North Division -- is a must-win. Should the Buffs lose then Sports Illustrated's harsh prediction of an 0-9 Pac-12 debut could have some legs.

The scary part about CU's slow start is that it appears the easiest part of the schedule is in the rear-view mirror.

Hawaii was crushed by UNLV. Comparative scores usually don't mean much, but Washington State -- ranked fourth in passing yards (380 per game) and sixth in scoring (49 ppg.) -- ran the Rebels out of Pullman, 59-7.

Cal is 0-1 in conference play after a 31-23 loss at Washington. The Buffs, now losers of 19 consecutive true road games, visit Husky Stadium on Oct. 15 after a trip to No. 5 Stanford on Oct. 8.

CSU, which beat lifeless New Mexico and UNC to open the season, doesn't have skill players good enough to make Boise State's scout team and will struggle for respectability in the Mountain West.

The Buffs dreamed of going to Columbus with three bricks and an unblemished record. Reality bites.

Some day Embree's program will fit perfectly in the Pac-12.

Right now the sobering reality is that CU enters conference play with a 1-3 record and a lot to prove.

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# No happy homecoming for trio of CU Buffs

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

Posted: 09/24/2011 09:29:38 PM MDT

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- The homecoming didn't have the fairy tale ending for the three Ohioans on the Colorado football team.

In fact, it was more of a horror story for tailback Rodney Stewart.

Stewart was commended for playing hurt with a bum shoulder by coach Jon Embree after Saturday's loss at Ohio State in his hometown, but it didn't take the sting away from two key fumbles and a bad decision to fair catch a punt at his 5-yard line that contributed to the loss.

"We come out and we did our best, ya know," Stewart said. "Ain't nothing I can really say. It's over with now and we've just got to look forward to next week."

Stewart remained a focal point for the Buffs despite his injury and he continued to produce, but didn't come up with many big plays or big chunks of yards. He rushed 11 times for 55 yards and led CU in receiving with five catches for 27 yards.

Ohio State was well prepared for the screen passes that have proved so effective with Stewart on the receiving end this season.

Middle linebacker Douglas Rippy and cornerback Ayodeji Olatoye were happy they were able to return home for a game in a CU uniform and play in front of dozens of friends and family members, but they were disappointed with the outcome and their roles in it.

Olatoye, the starting nickel back, was on the field most of the game because of an injury to Parker Orms. He was beaten on Ohio State's second touchdown of the day, a 32-yard pass from Braxton Miller to Devin Smith.

Olatoye, who finished second on the team in tackles with six, said he thought he was in the right position to make a play on the ball but realized the receiver and the ball were behind him at the last second. Olatoye said defending Miller, a dual-threat quarterback, was difficult for the Buffs.

"Even if we had good coverage or held our ground up front, he has the ability to make plays with his legs," he said. "Scramble was our biggest downfall this game."

Rippy managed to sack Miller once and hit him hard at the end of a scramble on another occasion but left The Horseshoe feeling frustrated about another CU road loss, albeit in his hometown.

"It was fun, but it would have been even better with a win," Rippy said. "It was good to come home, but at the same time, I came here to do a job and we weren't able to accomplish getting a win."

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# Sluggish starts continue to plague CU Buffs

## Notes from Saturday's loss at Ohio State

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

Posted: 09/24/2011 09:11:57 PM MDT

COLUMBUS, Ohio -- Spot the opponent a 10-point lead and tell the Colorado Buffaloes there is only 30 minutes of football to be played. That might be what it takes to get them to overcome a plague of slow starts this fall.

The Buffs were outscored 20-7 before halftime Saturday in a loss at Ohio State, adding to already deficient first-half numbers in their first three games. Opponents have outscored the Buffs 60-27 in the first half in 2011 with more than half the Buffs' first-half points coming in their only win last week against Colorado State.

Coach Jon Embree called his team's starts "terrible" on Saturday and said he will continue to try to find ways to fix the problem.

Players had no answer for how they can spend an entire week vowing to start fast, knowing they would be playing in front of a huge crowd in a difficult place to win as a visitor and still come out misfiring.

"It's frustrating to say the least, it's frustrating," wide receiver Toney Clemons said. "But you've got to keep fighting and doing what you're coached to do. That's the main thing. Just climb your way out of a hole. You've got to work your way out of a bad situation and that's what we started doing, picking it up on offense.

"But when you let teams like this with great defenses and great special teams and great offenses get out in front of you, it's hard to catch back up. It's almost too late."

Colorado's first four possessions Saturday ended in three punts and a fumble. The Buffs didn't earn a first down until midway through the second quarter -- the fifth time they had the ball.

### Position change?

Freshman tackle Alex Lewis has been practicing as a tight end at times and saw his first action of the season at the position on Saturday. He had played previously this fall at tackle.

Lewis did not record any statistics at tight end being used to block in the run game primarily. It might not be a permanent position switch but more of a stopgap because of the team's depth problems at tight end. Stay tuned.

### Hansen still streaking

CU quarterback Tyler Hansen came into the game having not thrown an interception in his previous 81 pass attempts. He extended the streak to 120 straight passes without a pick.

Hansen, who had 17 career interceptions before the season has thrown just one in his first 150 passes of the year.

Hansen also is slowly working his way up the CU career passing lists. He moved into seventh place in career passing yards with 3,972 and fifth place in career completions with 357.

### Record watch

Place-kicker Will Oliver already booted the longest field goal by a freshman in CU history -- 52 yards against Cal. Now he has a chance to match another kicking record not halfway into his first season in Boulder.

Oliver has made the first six field goal attempts of his career, including a 47-yard attempt against the Buckeyes. Only Jeremy Flores made more kicks to start his CU career. Flores made his first seven attempts spread out over the 2001 and

2002 seasons.

#### **Notable**

The crowd of 105,096 was the third largest crowd CU ever to see the Buffs play. The Buffs played in front of crowds numbering more than 106,000 in trips to Michigan in 1994 and 1997. ... Colorado is now 7-22 in games played in the Eastern time zone and has a nine-game losing streak in the east with their last win coming on the Hail Mary play against the Wolverines in 1994. ... Colorado is 9-for-10 in the red zone this season with five touchdowns and four field goals. Opponents are 16 of 17 with the only unsuccessful trip coming Saturday when OSU allowed the game to end with the ball at the CU 1-yard line.

- [Buffs no match for Ohio State](#)
- [THORBURN: Buffs need to prove they belong in Pac-12](#)
- [No happy homecoming for trio of Buffs](#)

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## Ohio State handles Colorado in freshman QB Braxton Miller's first start

Published: Saturday, September 24, 2011, 7:00 PM    Updated: Saturday, September 24, 2011, 7:00 PM



**Doug Lesmerises, The Plain Dealer**  
By

COLUMBUS - Ohio State won Braxton Miller's debut as a starting quarterback, handling an overmatched Colorado team 37-17 at Ohio Stadium on Saturday.

The Buckeyes leaned on Miller's legs early, as he carried 14 times for 83 yards in the first half while completing 2 of 6 passes. But that was enough to give Ohio State (3-1) a 20-7 halftime lead, and the Buckeyes added to the lead while limiting Miller's carries in the second half.

It was obvious that Ohio State was trying out some things offensively after a quarterback switch followed last week's 24-6 loss at Miami. The Buckeyes shuffled personnel and offensive formations, including using all of their healthy receivers throughout the win.

Ohio State also won the special teams battle, with a 90-yard Jordan Hall kickoff return setting up a third-quarter touchdown, and a fumbled punt by Colorado (1-3) leading to a field goal at the end of the first half.

The Buckeyes will open Big Ten play against Michigan State next week, and their offense must continue to evolve. A gameplan with so many runs by the quarterback, and so few completions, won't hold up during conference play.

But for this day, in Miller's first start, it was an effective way to ease in the freshman and use his skills. Miller showed his shiftiness as a runner and also made two very nice touchdown throws to fellow true freshman Devin Smith.



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Marvin Fong, The Plain Dealer

Ohio State Buckeyes quarterback Braxton Miller looks to stiff arm Colorado Buffaloes defensive back Ray Polk in the second quarter of the Sept. 24, 2011 game.

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cu football

## Ohio State beats Bufs 37-17 to extend CU's road woes

By John Henderson  
*The Denver Post*

Posted: 09/24/2011 01:27:18 PM MDT

Updated: 09/25/2011 01:17:24 AM MDT

COLUMBUS, Ohio — First-year coach Jon Embree wanted to use Saturday's game at Ohio State as a measuring stick. It turned into one very painful paddle.

Looking at Embree after the game, you couldn't tell which hurt worse. Was it getting blown out 37-17 by the first Ohio State team in seven years to fall out of the top 25, a game in which its four best offensive players were still suspended?

Or was it watching special-teams play that made the Buffaloes look like just another Mid-American Conference sacrificial lamb that stumbles in here every September?

You want a measuring stick? How about sticking Colorado in the middle of the MAC? Ohio State blanked Akron here 42-0, and barely escaped Toledo 27-22.

"It's a big stick," Embree said. "We have a long ways to go as a program. We have a long ways to go from the standpoint of getting to where we are competing and not hoping to upset an Ohio State."

Colorado (1-3) was never in a game that

stretched its winless streak outside the state to 20 games. If Toledo could shine, many figured Colorado might. Ohio State (3-1) precariously started true freshman Braxton Miller to solve its woeful quarterback problems, and interim coach Luke Fickell was getting more heat than the suspended players who put him in this position.

While Miller is not ready for Wisconsin, he was certainly ready for Colorado. Last year's first-team all-state quarterback from Huber Heights, Ohio, threw two touchdown passes and ran for 83 as the Buckeyes outrushed Colorado 226-76.

It helped that Fickell moved more on the sidelines than some of Ohio State's drives did up the field. Horrific Buffs special-teams play had the Buckeyes start five of their first nine drives in Colorado territory and two others at their 40.

Here's a dirty laundry list of Colorado's very unspecial-team plays: a 75-yard Ohio State kickoff return (though nullified) to open the game; a 20-yard punt that hit a

Buckeye but Colorado's Makiri Pugh failed to recover (result: touchdown); fair catch at the 5; kickoff out of bounds; fumbled punt return at 10 (result: field goal); a 90-yard Ohio State kickoff return (result: touchdown); 12.6-yard average on eight kickoff returns, including holding penalties

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Ohio State running back Carlos Hyde, right, tries to get away from Colorado defensive back Ray Polk in the first quarter at Ohio Stadium in Columbus, Ohio, Saturday, Sept. 24, 2011. (Neal C. Lauron, Columbus Dispatch/MCT)

on its first two of the second half (result: well, 37-17).

"We spend 35 minutes of practice on special teams," Embree said. "We're playing some young guys. That's no excuse. They're out there. We expect them to execute."

Before 105,096 people in house and a national TV audience, the statement Colorado made was Embree's rebuilding job is bigger than people think.

The lack of speed Embree inherited is the root of the return problems and shows up against a defense that's still very Ohio State-like. Asked about his team's lack of speed, Embree hesitated, then diplomatically said: "They're my guys, and I love them. I'll leave it at that."

Colorado opened as if it played the 2002 Buckeyes, not the 2011 edition. Its first four possessions were three three-and-outs and one of two Rodney Stewart fumbles. By the time the Buffaloes had their initial first down with seven minutes left in the half, they were down 17-0.

Down 20-7 at half, Colorado had 106 total yards.

"We have been awful starting games," Embree said.

Tyler Hansen eventually warmed up, going 22-of-39 for 238 yards and two touchdowns, but he had two major handicaps. Stewart, who had only 55 yards in his homecoming, has a painful shoulder, and Colorado's average field position was its own 18.

"We didn't really have field position all day," Hansen said. "That's one thing that helps out. It seemed like every series we were backed up. It's tough every series going 90, 95 yards."

The Buffaloes can accurately say they're starting over next week with Washington State's visit marking their first Pac-12 game. But talk to Embree and they're starting over in more ways than one.

"I felt like before this game we got better every game," he said. "We did improve. So now we're back at square one."

*John Henderson: 303-954-1299,  
[jhenderson@denverpost.com](mailto:jhenderson@denverpost.com), [twitter.com/johnhendersonDP](#)*

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*A look at Colorado's special-teams miscues Saturday against Ohio State:*

Punts of 20 and 33 yards by Darragh O'Neill; Ohio State scored touchdowns after both.

Rodney Stewart calls for fair catch at CU 5-yard line.

Stewart drops a fair catch at the CU 11 after a teammate hits him 15 seconds before halftime, and Ohio State gets a FG out of it.

After CU pulls within 27-10, OSU's Jordan Hall returns ensuing kickoff 90 yards to CU 5; Buckeyes score TD on next play.

Kickoff out of bounds to give Ohio State the ball at the 40.

## Key stat

12.6: Average yards on eight kickoff returns, which should surely strengthen Colorado's hold on the worst average in the country.

## Key play

Braxton Miller's 32-yard TD pass to Devin Smith (both are true freshmen) for a 17-0 lead in the second quarter. It was Miller's second completion of the game but forced Colorado to respect the pass.

## Three questions for CU

1. Can Colorado's defense put enough pressure on Ohio State's struggling quarterbacks to force mistakes?

Ohio State gave true freshman Braxton Miller his first career start, and Buckeyes' coaches called conservative plays to protect him from getting into harm's way, often rolling him out of the pocket. Miller was sacked three times, but that did not have a big impact on the game.

2. Who will earn family bragging rights, Colorado senior wide receiver Toney Clemons or his cousin, Ohio State junior tailback Jordan Hall?

Give Hall the edge, although Clemons also played well. Clemons caught an 11-yard touchdown pass in the second quarter. Hall scored on a 1-yard run and set up a third-quarter score with a 90-yard kickoff return.

3. Will Colorado take the game into the fourth quarter and put all the pressure on Ohio State?

Didn't happen. Colorado fell behind 17-0 midway through the second quarter and never caught up.

*Tom Kensler, The Denver Post*

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cu football

## CU Buffs' failure to recover early break on special teams costly

By John Henderson and Tom Kensler  
*The Denver Post*

Posted: 09/25/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 09/25/2011 01:03:19 AM MDT

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The 20-yard punt looks like a disaster in the play-by-play, but if you know Colorado freshman Darragh O'Neill and his background, you know that was exactly what he tried to do.

If Colorado's awful special teams Saturday had been alert, the Buffaloes might not have fallen into a hole early hole in their 37-17 loss to Ohio State.

After the Buffaloes' first three-and- out, O'Neill rugby punted, with his left (opposite) foot, a line drive that hit a Buckeye at about the CU 44. But Colorado's Makiri Pugh failed to react, and Ohio State got the ball at the 40.

"I saw they had a guy running up the side," said O'Neill, who developed his accurate line-drive punting by playing Gaelic football (he is a native of Ireland). "He turned his back. I took a peek up and saw him and I knew I could tag him right there."

In seven plays, Ohio State scored its first touchdown.

"I guess (Pugh) didn't recognize that it hit him,"

O'Neill said. "It took a lucky bounce and they were able to recover, unfortunately. That might've turned the game around if he recovered that on the first drive."

### Stewart heads injury report.

Besides a painful shoulder that limited Rodney Stewart to 55 yards rushing, cornerback Parker Orms left the game early and didn't return. Coach Jon Embree didn't know if it was his hamstring, calf or knee and said, "I won't guess he'll be back next week."

### Footnotes.

CU freshman wide receiver Tyler McCulloch recorded his first college touchdown with a 14-yarder from Tyler Hansen in the fourth quarter. . . . The 71 yards receiving by senior tight end Ryan Deehan were a career best. . . . Freshman place-kicker Will Oliver remains perfect. He is 6-for-6 on field goals and has made all 11 of his extra-point kicks. . . . The fumbled handoff exchange between Hansen and Stewart was only the second turnover of the season for Colorado.

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cu football

## Columbus native "Speedy" Stewart disappointed in CU Buffs' loss

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/25/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 09/25/2011 01:03:45 AM MDT

COLUMBUS, Ohio — With the start of Colorado's Pac-12 schedule looming this week, the Buffaloes have more pressing problems than just trying to get their offense in rhythm.

The 13-game schedule is just four weeks old and already senior tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart is banged up. Stewart has an injured right shoulder, and coach Jon Embree said, with a pained expression and not meaning for it to sound like joke, that Stewart only hurts "every time he gets hit."

A Columbus native who wanted so much to play well before family and friends, Stewart led the Buffaloes in rushing (11 carries for 55 yards) and receiving (five catches for 27 yards). But he lost two fumbles that resulted in Ohio State field goals.

"Speedy is hurtin'," Embree said. "That's why I said I don't fault the effort of this team. We probably have five key guys that are really hurt."

"You'd maybe not like to play them (and let them heal), but we don't have that luxury."

After the 37-17 Ohio State victory, senior

quarterback Tyler Hansen said Colorado may need to give its backup tailback more carries.

Tony Jones, a redshirt freshman from New Jersey, showed a burst of speed during mop-up work by scooting 18 yards on two carries and catching two passes out of the backfield for 28 yards.

"Speedy is a great player; he's one of our playmakers," Hansen said. "When he's out, it's obviously going to affect us."

"I thought Tony Jones really played well at the end of the game. Hopefully he can step in and do some things."

The 5-foot-6, 175-pound Stewart has been called a "warrior" ever since he arrived in Boulder and beat out five-star recruit Darrell Scott for the starting job. Stewart called his shoulder injury "nothing serious." He said he spotted family members in the crowd and was disappointed he could not give them more reasons to cheer.

"We did our best," Stewart said. "It's over now. We just have to look forward to next week."

On the bright side, Stewart (3,022) passed Bobby Purify (3,016) and moved into third place on Colorado's all-time rushing list. Rashaan Salaam,

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the 1994 Heisman Trophy winner, finished with 3,057 yards. Current CU offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy rushed for 3,940 yards from 1987-90.

Two other CU players also considered this a homecoming. Junior linebacker Douglas Rippy recorded four tackles and one of three sacks. Sophomore cornerback Deji Olatoye led the secondary with six unassisted tackles.

"Ohio State has some good athletes, and they made good plays," said Rippy, who attended a Columbus high school for three years before moving to Dayton. "We have to give our hats off to them."

Olatoye, who played high school ball in the Columbus suburb of Dublin, was kicking himself for getting beaten on the first of two TD passes by Braxton Miller to Devin Smith.

"I thought I was in position and the ball just sailed (over my head)," Olatoye said.

*Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or [tkensler@denverpost.com](mailto:tkensler@denverpost.com)*



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