



Senior guard Sione Tau will play in front of family Saturday, including his uncle; Hawai'i's Vili The Warrior
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: Saying 'Uncle' Isn't On Tau's Mind In Hawai'i

Release: 09/01/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER – A handful of Colorado football players will be able to visit with family and friends in their home state for a couple of days before the Buffaloes open on Saturday in Hawai'i.

But on game day, one of the Buffs – senior guard Sione Tau – will be able to spot his uncle prowling the opposite sideline.

This relative is, ah, hard to miss.

Tau's uncle is Vili The Warrior, a rambunctious, bare-chested Tongan who wears ferocious face paint and frequently pounds a drum (and, pay attention Chip, occasionally other mascots) during University of Hawai'i athletic events.

Without benefit of having a family tree to leaf through a couple of days ago when we talked, here's how Tau explained his relationship to Vili The Warrior, as well as some of Vili's other vital stats:

BUFFALO EXTRAS



Watch:
From the Booth
08/31/2011



Watch:
Around the Horn
08/31/2011



Watch:
Buffalo Stampede
09/01/2011

→ Gameday

→ Buy Tickets

"My grandmother on my mom's side and his mother are first cousins. I call him 'Uncle Vili.' I don't know his age (probably late 30s, early 40s), but he looks young; he's kept himself in pretty good shape. My mom talks to his wife, Linda, sometimes. That's how my family keeps in contact with him."

Although he's said to have toned down his act in recent years, Vili Fehoko in the past stirred up nearly as much controversy as enthusiasm. A sideline run-in several seasons ago with Alabama's elephant mascot resulted in Big Al having his trunk abused before the poor pachyderm was body-slammed. (Vili and the mascot later posed for pictures, so we're guessing no harm, no foul.) But UH administrators also received complaints about Vili's "Let's Make War" chant and what opposing fans sometimes considered rude and obnoxious behavior.

Vili told the Honolulu Star-Bulletin in 2004, "All those things will go down the drain. I'm not going to change what I do. I feel like I've been blessed for doing this."

However, Vili apparently has dialed it down a bit, but Tau can't imagine who would want to vilify Vili.

"He's really a tradition there, and it's an inspiring thing – for the UH players – when 'Uncle Vili' is in the stadium," Tau said. "The islands are kind of a melting pot but family is really big. On the islands, it's kind of a 'the closer we are, the stronger we are' type thing."

That strong "us against the mainlanders" mentality is among the factors that visiting teams face annually in picturesque, breezy Aloha Stadium, where the Warriors are 19-16 in home openers and have lost six straight opening games to BCS conference opponents (home or away).

Tau, who attended Damien Memorial High School in Honolulu, is one of five islanders on CU's roster.

Also returning to their home state this weekend are fellow offensive linemen Paulay Asiata and Kaiwi Crabb, defensive end Juda Parker and linebacker K.T. Tu'umalo. Crabb is a redshirt freshman, the other three are true freshmen.

Assistant coaches with Hawai'i ties include veteran linebackers coach Brian Cabral and defensive line coach Mike Tuiasosopo. And there's also newly hired strength and conditioning assistant Steve Englehart, who joined Malcolm Blacken's staff in April. Englehart spent three seasons at UH (2006-08) on the strength and conditioning staff.

Along with Vili The Warrior's antics, Englehart remembers the players' inspiring their crowds with the haka (now the ha'a) war dance, a Maori ritual that has been "borrowed" by numerous college, even high school, programs from the New Zealand national rugby team, the All Blacks.

"When they say those words (in the ha'a), they mean it – and everything from their facial expressions to whatever they do," Englehart said. "It's different when they go to an away game than when they do it in Aloha Stadium. In their stadium, it gets the whole crowd fired up. My first time seeing it was just incredible...really cool, I had goose bumps all over. It's really something to see it on the field."

"It's a good atmosphere for football, especially the years I was there. They're just like any good group of fans – they get after it. But there's a way to dampen their spirits."

For the Buffs, that would be showing up focused, staying that way, taking care of business early and enjoying the long return flight to Colorado.

Not surprisingly, the five CU players returning to the island have been busy for the last several weeks trying to coax teammates into giving them tickets. Tu'umalo, who attended Punahou High School, said he needed "about 30," with Asiata's, Crabb's, Parker's and Tau's ticket requests coming in slightly lower.

"I need about 25, but my family already has about 40," said Crabb, another Punahou product who is practicing

almost as much at center now as guard. "It's exciting to go back home. My dad took me all the time to Aloha Stadium...I know (UH) is really big on defending their home turf."

Asiata and Parker both finished at St. Louis High School and were recruited hard by their in-state university. But both wanted to leave the island, and ultimately chose CU.

"We've known each other since we were about 10 years old," Asiata said. "We met at church and from the sixth grade on up we've been buddies."

All five of CU's islanders could play on Saturday, but for Tau the experience would be particularly meaningful if he reaches the field. He's a senior who is yet to play his first college snap, having redshirted in 2007, then missing the next two seasons due to academic ineligibility (2008) and a suspension (2009). He was eligible last season but backed up All-American left tackle Nate Solder, who played every offensive down. Tau hasn't played in a game since 2006, his senior season at St. Louis.

"It could be my first game to play in and it would be at home and my family could see me...that makes it special," Tau said. "I've been thinking about it since last season when we played Hawai'i here. Yeah, I'm excited for this trip."

BUFF BITS: CU and Hawai'i have another two-game, home-and-home series schedule. The Warriors will visit Boulder on Sept. 20, 2014, the Buffs will return to Honolulu on Sept. 5, 2015...The series is tied 1-1, with Hawai'i's win coming in 1925 (13-0) ...UH is 28-51 against current members of the Pac-12 and has played at least one Pac-12 opponent since 2005 (3-3 record at home)...If you're counting, it's 3,329 miles from Boulder to Honolulu...The Buffs will leave immediately following Saturday night's game and are scheduled to arrive in Denver at 9:35 a.m. Sunday. They will resume practice on Monday afternoon for their 2011 home opener against Cal (Sept. 10, 1:30 p.m.).

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

SHOW MENU



denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

college football

Embree's no-nonsense NFL style of coaching is raising bar at CU

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/02/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Colorado's transformation from "Hawk love" to Jon Embree's no-nonsense tough love comes with consequences. Such as a possible hearing loss that comes with all the yelling at practice.

"That's OK," senior tight end Ryan Deehan said. "The coaches get loud, they get on us. But we know they're trying to help this team get better. And with the NFL background that they have, we respect them."

"The one thing I really like is, 'We don't lose.' That's the feeling you get, that losing is unacceptable. If we lose, all hell is going to break loose around here. Frankly, I love it. I'm sick and tired of losing."

After five seasons and just 19 victories under Dan Hawkins, Colorado was ready for a change. This one is 180 degrees. Taking a more NFL business-like approach to running the program, Embree and his assistants make sure the heat is always on.

Players are ordered to run at all times when moving from one practice field to another. During scrimmage work, running backs and receivers must "finish" plays by racing to the end

zone, even if they were tackled earlier on the play. Arriving late, even seconds late, to an assignment is not tolerated. There are no excuses, no babysitting.

Those that balk at the demands are told to step aside — and are moved down the depth chart.

Nobody should be surprised by the approach. Eight of CU's 10 coaches either played or coached in the NFL, and two — Embree and offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy — did both.

CU quarterbacks coach Rip Scherer spent the 2009 and 2010 seasons with the Carolina Panthers under current Broncos coach John Fox.

"Yes, it is different coaching college kids," Scherer said. "But what I've tried to do with my guys, and I know others on our staff are doing with theirs, is we're holding our players to that higher standard."

"NFL guys are stronger, just because they're older and bigger. But rather than lower your standards to meet younger guys, I try to hold the bar high to try to make them live up to those expectations."

Practice is built around hustle, hustle, hustle. And then hustle some more.

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

ADT AUTHORIZED DEALER

*\$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™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

"That's effort," sophomore wide receiver Paul Richardson said. "It's a mind-set that carries over to game day."

Saturday's season opener at Hawaii will provide the first test for how well CU players are adjusting to the new style. The Buffaloes are a touchdown underdog at Hawaii, which CU whacked 31-13 at home a year ago.

Embree isn't afraid to say — even to his players — that this is a team with major talent gaps. He needs more size and speed. But he is not about to give in just because the Buffs might be undermanned. He believes they can still win with attention to detail, consistency and all-out effort. Which is what any NFL coach demands.

"That NFL mentality, it's kind of heartless; it's coldblooded a little bit," senior quarterback Tyler Hansen said. "In the NFL, they get rid of guys like that (snapping his fingers). They'll do that here."

"These coaches treat you like an NFL player. That's good. You want to play at the next level. You want to act like you're at the next level. If we act like professionals, we'll play like professionals."

Embree, a tight end at Colorado under Bill McCartney in the 1980s, returned in December to take over the program after a one-year stint with the Washington Redskins under Mike Shanahan. Prior

to that, Embree coached tight ends for three seasons under Herm Edwards with the Kansas City Chiefs.



New Colorado coach Jon Embree, left, was an assistant in the NFL for four seasons, including a stint under Redskins coach Mike Shanahan. Embree also played two seasons with the Los Angeles Rams. (Denver Post file)

When hiring assistants, Embree said he sought coaches with pro experience for three major reasons: 1) they have instant credibility with players; 2) they can talk pro ball to recruits; and 3) they can make game-day adjustments "on the fly" better than someone who hasn't coached pro ball.

"In the NFL, you go into a game with all these

Send flowers
for any occasion

Bouquets
from **\$19.99**_{+s/h}

ProFlowers[®]

Offer ONLY available at:
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1.877.804.1133

Print Powered By FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

plays," Embree said. "But then you see the opponent do something, and right away you have to say this is the adjustment we need to make."

The two Colorado coaches without NFL experience aren't exactly slouches. Wide receivers coach Bobby Kennedy, 44, served seven seasons (2004-10) as wide receivers coach at Texas under Mack Brown, the last six with the additional duties of assistant recruiting coordinator. Defensive line coach Mike Tuiasosopo, 47, has 15 previous years of coaching experience at the Division I level, including the past seven seasons at Arizona. He served NFL Minority Intern Fellowships with San Francisco (1997) and Green Bay (2002).

"The biggest difference (with the new CU staff) is intensity," Richardson said. "The amount of knowledge that these coaches have, that's just rubbing off on us. We're benefiting from this as players and as young men."

"The coaches have so much wisdom. And we appreciate it. They told us that we need to work on having really good effort and not to take anything for granted. We accept what they say wholeheartedly."

Even as the decibel level rises.

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

Three CU questions

Can Colorado's untested cornerbacks hold up to an expected passing onslaught by Hawaii senior quarterback Bryant Moniz? Last year in Boulder, Moniz attempted 41 passes (completing 27, for 330 yards and one TD), and he might throw 50 or 60 times Saturday night. It doesn't take a football genius to know that Warriors coaches will have Moniz test CU's new corners: senior Travis Sandersfeld, a former walk-on safety from Limon, and Greg Henderson, a true freshman who was playing high school football in

the Los Angeles area at this time a year ago.

Will CU, as coach Jon Embree hopes, be able to set the tempo by running the ball down

Hawaii's throat? Colorado was able to move the ball on the ground last year against the Warriors, with Brian Lockridge (109 yards) and Rodney Stewart (106) becoming the first Buffs duo to reach the century mark in a game since Bobby Purify and Chris Brown against Iowa State in 2002.

Will Colorado's freshman kickers, punter Darragh O'Neill and place-kicker Will Oliver, overcome any case of the jitters? Will CU special-teams coach J.D. Brookhart even be able to watch when the newbies set up to kick? The fact that they earned starting jobs over sophomore returnees just reinforces Embree's precamp statement that the best players will play, regardless of experience. *Tom Kensler, The Denver Post*

New Buffs' staff puts on its Sunday best

A look at how the Colorado coaching staff's NFL experience compares with others in the FBS:

Total NFL experience (coached/played, years):
Colorado 63, Florida 52, SMU 49, USC 48, New Mexico St. 42, Stanford 37, Syracuse 37, Miami

Send flowers
for any occasion

Bouquets
from **\$19.99**_{+s/h}

ProFlowers[®]

Offer ONLY available at:
proflowers.com/happy
or call 1.877.804.1133



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

36.

Total NFL playing experience (years): Colorado 25, North Carolina 25, Syracuse 25, Miami 17, San Diego State 17, Florida 16, South Carolina 16.

Total NFL coaching experience (years): USC 48, Colorado 38, SMU 37, Stanford 37, Florida 36, New Mexico St. 33, Texas A&M 26, UCLA 25.

Note: CU's Greg Brown ranks fourth in NFL coaching experience with 15 years, trailing Monte Kiffin, USC, 26; Dale Lindsey, NMSU, 20; and Charlie Weis, Florida, 16.

Source: CU media relations department

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™

The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

SEPTEMBER 1, 2011, 11:31 AM

CU-Hawaii mystery: Will Cabral wear a lava-lava?

By **NATALIE MEISLER** |  No Comments

BOULDER — The most popular Colorado coach or player for the Hawaii radio talk show circuit this week was none other than Hawaiian native Brian Cabral.

He grew just a little tired of the biggest question which spread to Boulder: Will he wear a lava-lava (Polynesian men's ceremonial skirtlike wrap)?

He said everyone will have to stay tuned to the game for the answer.

Cabral still has many relatives on the islands. The Buffs linebackers coach, now in his 23rd season with the school, said he paid \$500 for tickets to accommodate his fans.

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/09/01/cu-hawaii-mystery-will-cabral-wear-a-lava-lava/20191/>

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.

CU Buffs' Josh Ford fought way back to football

CU tailback hoping to see action in Buffs' backfield

By **Joshua Linden** Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/02/2011 12:00:25 AM MDT



Josh Ford couldn't help feeling like he'd missed out on something.

You star on a state championship team at a prep football powerhouse like Mullen High School, after all, and you're supposed to end up playing Division-I college ball. Everyone keeps asking you, "What now?" But there Ford sat at Barton Community College in Kansas, a school that didn't even field a team.

Two years later, the 5-foot-9, 195-pound tailback is in Hawaii on the eve of the Colorado Buffaloes' season opener, a determined walk-on who draws praise from the coaching staff every time his name is mentioned.

"It was tough," the redshirt sophomore, listed third on CU's depth chart, said recently of his year away from the game. "But I mean it gave me time to really get my mind right and everything. Now I don't take anything for granted up here because I know how it is to be without football."

Despite rushing for 1,348 yards and 19 touchdowns as a senior at Mullen in 2008, Ford had not a single Division-I scholarship offer. He wanted to play at CU, where his uncle Howard Ballage had played in the late 1970s. But, as Ford said, "At that point in time I wasn't walking by faith. I was looking at sight."

And from what he could see, the Buffs had plenty of tailbacks -- five-star prospect Darrell Scott, four-star recruit Ray Polk, Brian Lockridge and Rodney Stewart, who became a starter as a freshman.

So Ford decided to walk on at Kansas State. But for a variety of reasons, that plan fizzled before 2009 fall camp even

started.

He enrolled at Barton in Great Bend, Kan., in the spring of 2010 and worked out at a local gym, never wavering in his goals of playing college football. He also had former Mullen teammates who'd gone on to play in college offering words of encouragement when they talked on the phone.

"I didn't question it at all because I knew my own work ethic," Ford said. "I had faith, and I knew if I got my grades everything else would fall in place. I knew I'd work hard."

And by the fall of 2010, the tailback situation at CU had changed significantly since Ford's senior year of high school, with Scott having transferred to South Florida and Polk having switched positions to safety.

Ford participated on the CU scout team last fall as a redshirt freshman, but he quickly turned heads with a new coaching staff during spring ball this year. He led the Buffs in rushing in the spring game with 164 yards on 17 carries, including a 56-yard touchdown run. In CU's last major scrimmage of fall camp, he scored one of two offensive touchdowns, on a 36-yard swing pass.

"He's a hard worker, he's smart, he's doing great on special teams," Stewart said. "He works just as hard as me, and I can't say that about a lot of guys."

None of CU's tailbacks is big. The shifty Stewart is 5-6, 175. Second stringer Tony Jones is 5-7, 175. Fourth-string guy Lockridge is 5-7, 180.

Ford doesn't beat them by much but his straight-ahead running style might distinguish him enough from the other guys to get him on the field for a change of pace.

"I just like to get it done, just get the yards and hit it," Ford said.

Both Stewart and Lockridge managed to rush for more than 100 yards in a win over Hawaii last season, but there's no telling how many backs there might be room for in CU's power run game this fall.

CU offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy -- the Buffs' running backs coach in 2001 when CU rotated Chris Brown, Bobby Purify and Cortlen Johnson -- said he has a number in his head about the amount of guys he'd like to use.

"Bottom line, I just want to make sure that we're mentally where we need to be," Bieniemy said. "I want to make sure all of those guys are mentally and physically prepared to be the man."

That said, Bieniemy does like what Ford himself brings to the mix, calling him "a true representation of what Colorado football is about."

"For anybody else, I'd probably be surprised," Bieniemy said of Ford's ability to stay motivated in his year away from the game. "But for him, no, not surprising at all."

"The thing that I love about Josh is he makes the very most of every opportunity that is presented to him. He takes absolutely nothing for granted. He's a great kid."

Close Window

Send To Printer

RINGO: Recipe for a CU Buffs bowl game

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

Posted:09/01/2011 05:43:49 PM MDT



Here we are on the doorstep of a new era in Colorado football and almost nobody expects the Buffs to reach the postseason in their first year in the Pac-12 Conference and the first season under the direction of a coaching staff led by Jon Embree.

Some say the schedule is too tough. Thirteen consecutive weeks, facing Bowl Championship Series schools in 11 of those games.

Some say there isn't enough speed on the roster.

Some say there isn't enough depth.

Some say the change in schemes from whatever it was Dan Hawkins was doing to a West Coast, pro-style system on offense and a 3-4 scheme on defense will be too big of an adjustment.

Some say a program that hasn't won a road game in more than three seasons can't be expected to produce at least seven wins when eight of its games are played away from Folsom Field.

I'm here to tell you a bowl game is possible this year and it's not so crazy to believe it. That shouldn't be taken as a prediction this team will make it happen. It isn't intended as such. But can the Buffs do it? Of course they can.

Consider this for a moment. The black, silver and gold was just a monumental fourth-quarter collapse at Kansas from

winning six games and being bowl eligible last season. Sure, a vitally important core group of players from that team is no longer here, including four NFL draft picks, but a huge chunk of the roster returns.

Embree has added some talented freshmen to the mix and he hired a top-notch coaching staff to guide the players through the journey.

If you haven't been paying attention these past nine months, you've missed players being pretty outspoken at times in how significant the change has been in the coaching they are receiving. It remains to be seen if that translates to wins, but at least the players will believe in the game plan from week to week. That wasn't the case at times over the past five seasons and particularly the past two years.

Believing in who you are and what you're doing is a vital element in achieving success whether you're building a bridge, writing a novel or playing football. The Buffs seem to have that on their side heading into the season opener Saturday night at Hawaii.

Here is the rest of the recipe for reaching the postseason in 2011:

- They're going to need some luck. Every good team benefits at some point in the season from a blown call from an official that goes its way, a crucial blunder from an opponent, a ball that bounces its way, gifts from Mother Nature or catching an opponent on a week when it is missing a key player.

The one area in which they need luck on their side most is health. This team won't thrive if it loses many players to significant injuries.

- The Buffs need an identity. They must be able to hang their hats on at least one element of the game on both sides of the ball. Preferably, that would be running the ball well and being able to stop the run. But being able to rely on consistent execution in at least one part of the game regardless of who the opponent is will help this team immensely.

- The defense has to be very opportunistic. These Buffs can't miss many opportunities to sack the quarterback, intercept passes or recover fumbles. They start the season against a Hawaii team that led the nation in turnovers gained in 2010. The Buffs need to be a top-25 team in that statistic this fall.

- The offense must be equally effective at taking care of the football and not allowing quarterback Tyler Hansen to be sacked. Hansen also must improve with his decision making, including knowing when to throw the ball away and start over again instead of trying to make miracles happen.

- Let's face it, special teams haven't been a thing of beauty in Boulder for awhile now. This coaching staff has devoted an enormous amount of practice time to addressing that shortcoming in the spring and fall camp. The Buffs must get more accurate place kicking, better punting and some big plays in the kicking game, whether its returns for touchdowns or blocked kicks or both.

- This team has to be mentally tough. Becoming so should lead to a big reduction in penalties and to more wins on the road. The Buffs have given themselves opportunities to win numerous road games over the past three seasons, but those chances have been lost because of a lack of mental toughness in the form of penalties, missed field goals, other special teams blunders, blown assignments and an inability to rise to the occasion and make a play when one is needed most.

That isn't an overwhelming list. If the Buffs can get the job done in those areas, they should be in every game this fall, and that would make for an entertaining season, regardless of whether it ends in a bowl game.

Close Window

Send To Printer

[Click to Print](#)



Thursday, September 1, 2011

Bufs ready for Hawaii

Team hopes for a victory to bring back the bricks

By Alec Pronk

A new era of CU football officially kicks off this Saturday against the Hawaii Warriors.

A fresh new coaching staff is looking to re-establish the program and build it back up into the powerhouse it once was. This process starts with Jon Embree, who is restoring a tradition implemented by his coach, Bill McCartney. The tradition was carried on until it was discontinued and covered up by former head coach Dan Hawkins' staff.

The tradition is simple yet powerful: Every time the Buffaloes win a big game, they paint a brick in the Dal Ward Center to commemorate their victory. And Hawaii is the game Embree and his staff have targeted to "bring back the bricks."

Not only is it the new regime's first game, but it also holds significance because of the Buffs' recent road woes. The Buffs have not won a single road game since 2007, meaning only five players on the roster have felt the experience of traveling back to Boulder with a road victory under their belts.

Although those statistics belong to the previous staff, they still hold weight with the current team. A win against the Warriors would be priceless for the Buffs. However, getting that win will be much more difficult than restoring old program traditions.

Last year the Buffs beat Hawaii, but the game was played at Folsom Field, giving the Buffs a significant advantage considering Boulder's elevation and the distance the Warriors had to travel. The Buffs also had two three-year starters and future NFL players at cornerback in Jalil Brown and Jimmy Smith.

Hawaii, while a relative unknown to casual football fans, boasts a high-powered offense that makes any defensive coordinator cringe. Known for passing the ball early and often, Hawaii returns their starting quarterback, Bryant Moniz, who threw for more than 4,000 yards and 36 touchdowns last season. That high-powered offensive attack will present problems for defensive coordinator Greg Brown and his players.

"Anytime you go against a team that's that explosive on offense, that's going to be a challenge," said senior safety and co-captain Anthony Perkins in Tuesday's press conference.

To compound this fact, the Buffs lack depth and experience at the cornerback positions, and they will need relatively unproven players to step up against Moniz, who is considered a dark-horse Heisman trophy candidate.

Fifth-year senior and converted safety Travis Sandersfeld and true freshman Greg Henderson will start against the Warriors.

However, the coaching staff and fellow players are confident in the pair's ability.

"I have a lot of confidence in [Sandersfeld and Brown]," Embree said.

On the offensive side of the ball, the Buffs will need repeat performances from quarterback Tyler Hansen and running back Rodney Stewart. Hansen threw for 200 yards and two touchdowns against Hawaii last year, and Stewart ran for two touchdowns.

A win in Hawaii will not immediately resurrect the Buffaloes, but it would be a great positive step forward for this new coaching staff and would go far in restoring the team's confidence.

Embree recognizes the game's importance, but he realizes a lot has to change at CU.

"As far as setting the tone for the program — yes and no — [bringing back the bricks is] big in that manner," he says. "What the guys will find out, every game is a big game if we want to accomplish things we say we want to accomplish as a team and as a program. ... You can't put too much importance on one game."

Respond: letters@boulderweekly.com



Valley News Dispatch

Valley grad Clemons appreciates the journey

By Bill Beckner Jr.
VALLEY NEWS DISPATCH
Friday, September 2, 2011

Toney Clemons' claim to fame could be a trivia question some day: Who was the last player to play a football game in the Big Ten, Big 12 and Pac-12?

The answer will be Clemons on Saturday night when the Valley graduate and senior participates in Colorado's season opener at Hawaii. But the Buffaloes' No. 1 "X" wide receiver would prefer to be remembered more for performance in the last season of what has been a winding college career.

"Huge expectations," said Clemons, a 6-foot-2, 210-pound wideout in his second season at Colorado. "I put those on myself. I came out last year and was a bright spot, but I wasn't content with what I did."

Clemons always has wanted more from the offense, his team and ultimately himself. He knows he has one more shot to shine.

"This year has to be a whole new level," he said. "I expect to do big things to help my team win a lot of games."

Colorado switched conferences this summer, moving from the Big 12 to the Pac-10. Earlier, Clemons made a switch of his own, transferring to Colorado after a stint at Michigan.

He sat out the 2009 season per NCAA transfer rules. He came back strong last season, posting career bests — by a long shot — in receptions (43), yards (482) and touchdowns (three).

Clemons, 22, also has become the wise teacher, showing his younger teammates the ropes.

"I like to be able to give back to the younger guys," he said. "I have learned from the (Mario) Mannings, the Steve Breastons, the Scott McKnights and Greg Mathews. There have been great guys at Michigan and Colorado. I am a product of their advice. Without their tips and hints, I wouldn't have matured now and in the future."

New coach Jon Embree challenged Clemons to be a leader.

"I've been trying to light a fire under Toney and inspire him, and he has responded very well," he said. "He's going to be a great player for us. He will make some plays for us, and he will probably win a game for us."

Clemons, who has dealt with a hamstring ailment since spring, doesn't mind being held to a higher standard.

"I feel that (criticism) is warranted," he said. "I have no excuses in my role. I am expected to perform at a high level all the time, and I am supposed to make every play. My goal is to do better than last year. I want to go out and play every snap and don't take any plays off. Sure, I want more catches and yards and scores, but the only thing I can control is the way I play the game."

A former track standout, Clemons also saw time as a kick and punt returner last season. He

has lacked consistency in his career, but the wideout could finally be ready to shine.

"This is his third BCS conference," Embree said. "I'm his fourth head coach, and Bobby (Kennedy) is his fifth position coach. I'm very pleased with Toney Clemons and how he has responded."

Clemons cherishes the dubious honor of playing in three conferences.

"It's a blessing in disguise," he said. "I played against some of the top programs in the country — Georgia, Florida, Ohio State, Oregon, Oklahoma. I wouldn't trade my career for anything."

Bill Beckner Jr. can be reached at bbeckner@tribweb.com or 724-224-2696.

Images and text copyright © 2011 by Trib Total Media, Inc.
Reproduction or reuse prohibited without written consent.