



*CU defensive coordinator Greg Brown and his unit were surprised by Hawai'i and its zone read option.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com*



Brooks: Moniz, UH Offense Pulled Fast One On Buffs

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BOULDER - There's not much an offensive coordinator can do to "scheme" Greg Brown. He's coached NFL secondaries for 15 years and spent nearly that long designing defenses in the college game. He's accustomed to answering his telephone and having guys like Oklahoma's Bob Stoops on the other end, craving the specifics of a certain man coverage or blitz package.

"Brownie," Colorado's first-year defensive coordinator after an earlier pair of stints here as secondary coach, isn't often surprised. His eyes don't roll that frequently, his jaw never drops too far.

Not the case Saturday night in Aloha Stadium.

It's early in the second quarter. Hawai'i is cradling a 3-0 lead and Brown's defense is holding up fairly well, although Warriors quarterback Bryant Moniz had a couple of long scrambles (23, 34 yards) that helped position UH for its first-quarter field goal.

Still, Brown and his defensive staff believe if containment is kept and assignments followed, Moniz can be

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neutralized. After all, in CU's eventually lopsided (31-13) win a year ago in Boulder, Moniz ran six times for minus-5 yards. He was a run-and-shoot QB first, a passer by choice.

But on UH's first possession of Saturday night's second quarter, which has the Warriors at their own 43-yard line, Moniz takes the center snap, sticks the ball in the belly of tailback Joey Isofea, reads the Buffs linebackers, then deftly pulls the ball back and runs virtually untouched for a 57-yard touchdown.

Brown blinks . . . and blinks again.

Zone read option?

What?

In watching hours of tape and charting nearly 1,000 Hawai'i offensive snaps from last season, UH had run the zone read three times - with Moniz' backup running it twice. It simply wasn't in the Warriors' 2010 playbook, not to the extent that Brown & Co. figured they would see it on 2011 opening night in the islands.

Run correctly and by the right QB, the zone read tilts the playing field. It might be the biggest difference between offensive play in the college game and the NFL. It can put a quarterback at risk, but defenses have to account for him. Moniz wasn't at risk *that* much because the Buffs couldn't catch him. And as for in-game adjustments to neutralize the zone read, they're easier to recognize than to adjust to on the fly.

"We knew he could run, but in general run-and-shoot teams don't like to run their quarterbacks like that and expose him to the chance of injury," Brown told me as he labored on Labor Day, preparing a defensive game plan for Saturday's home opener against California (1:30 p.m.)

"The one play that you know is coming with the run-and-shoot is the speed option; that was no surprise," Brown continued. "But the thing that was a nice wrinkle - and to their credit - was the zone read play. When you run that, it's a whole different animal . . .

"The bottom line was, for the whole night, we had a very difficult time tackling the quarterback. He was their top player, their top producer on offense. We knew it going into the game and put a premium on stopping him, but to his credit he did it with his legs rather than his arm.

"He's got outstanding ability. We didn't know he had that sort of balance and toughness, the ability to break tackles and change direction. He's a good player. It's unusual you get a run-and-shoot guy who does all that. Usually, they're the big-armed guy who drops back, not the guy who takes off and can run like a jackrabbit. But he did."

Moniz did the bulk of his ground damage in the first half, running nine times for a career-best 120 yards and scoring two touchdowns. He added another running TD in the third quarter and flipped a critical shovel pass to Isofea, who ran 22 yards for a score. Thus, Moniz had a hand in all four UH touchdowns, underscoring his role as clearly the best player on the field in Hawai'i's 34-17 win.

Defending the zone read, said CU nosetackle Conrad Obi, "just comes down to everyone doing their job, playing their gaps. We've just got to correct some things. There's a lot we have to work on, but I think (overall) we were OK on defense. But that's not how we want to be this year - just OK."

Brown agreed with Obi's assessment. Other than being befuddled by the zone read, he believed his unit offered a decent first-night performance: "We competed hard, didn't blow assignments . . . that's encouraging. And we sacked the quarterback. The thing that was discouraging was coming away with the loss, and our inability to tackle the quarterback in the open field."

Brown said his secondary, breaking in a trio of new corners - former safeties Travis Sandersfeld and Parker

Orms, and freshman Greg Henderson - "played well . . . were we perfect? No, not by any means. We've got a long ways to go, but they didn't have a lot of technique errors and they played hard. (Henderson) played well and graded out well; his technique was good. He's got a lot of poise for a young kid and is a nice addition to our defense."

Orms, whose availability was sketchy early in preseason camp because of a calf strain and swollen knee, and Sandersfeld were among three Buffs to make six solo tackles, with linebacker Josh Hartigan the third. Hartigan also had one of CU's five quarterback sacks and one of the defense's six tackles for loss.

Orms, said Brown, performed as expected: "He's going to find the ball, make plays and be productive . . . I'm excited to have him back."

Orms and Sandersfeld each broke up a pass, but Sandersfeld's break up could have gone into another defensive category. He got a clean jump on a Moniz pass, got his hands on the ball but couldn't control it. At the time - midway through the fourth quarter - the Buffs had pulled to within a touchdown (24-17), and Brown noted that potential interception "could have changed the game.

"(Sandersfeld) is a smart guy. He looked at the formation, knew the beginning steps of the route and knew what the play was. He took off and thought he was going to get it. He came underneath and didn't have quite the angle . . . for whatever reason, he didn't hold on to it."

UH scored a touchdown two plays later, added a field goal just under 2 minutes later and put CU away.

With Cal visiting Folsom Field this weekend, Brown's defense will confront an offense that punched up 52 points on CU last season in Berkley. The Bears have a new quarterback (Kevin Riley graduated) but return most of their receiving corps, now coached by former Buffs assistant Eric Kiesau.

Also, a Brown disciple and ex-CU staffer, Ashley Ambrose, is Cal's secondary coach. Kiesau and Ambrose can offer decent personnel critiques on returning Buffs players, but CU offensive line coach Steve Marshall can do the same on the Bears. He spent the last two seasons at Cal.

"It's a tradeoff," Brown said.

Cal opened with a 36-21 victory against Fresno State, with junior Zach Maynard - a talented 2010 transfer from Buffalo - debuting as the Bears starting quarterback. He completed 16 of 35 passes for 266 yards and two touchdowns (one interception), with receivers Keenan Allen (8 catches, 112 yards) and Marvin Jones (5-118, 2 TDs) his top targets. Allen and Jones combined for 143 receiving yards and a pair of TDs last year against the Buffs.

Said Brown: "The receiving corps steps up significantly this week. These (Cal) kids are better receivers; they're big, physical guys. And it does nothing but escalate every week (in the Pac-12)."

Plus, Cal and a handful of other Pac-12 teams - Oregon runs it ruthlessly - have the zone read option in their playbooks. It's on tape and Brown & Co. have seen it, but that doesn't make defending it any easier. It won't be quite the surprise, though, that it was in Hawai'i.

FOOTBALL FIX AND FEAST: Former CU coach Bill McCartney and Mark McIntosh, who did radio/TV work involving the Buffs during the McCartney Era, will host a weekly program beginning Thursday at Pasta Jay's in Boulder.

The program, called "Coach Mac's Football Fix and Feast," features the ex-Buffs coach, McIntosh and his current Mile High Sports radio partner Jimmy "Doog" Doogan talking CU football. The event goes from 6-8 p.m., beginning Sept. 8 and running through Nov. 10. Dinner will be served, with the total cost for the 10 Thursdays set at \$250. Only 50 season tickets will be sold in Year 1 of the event and are available on-line at

www.macanddoog.com.

McIntosh said the weekly tickets are transferrable from person to person, meaning any number of Buffs fans can collaborate to purchase the package, then attend whatever Thursday night fits their schedules.

McIntosh bills the event as "sharing inside stories, interviewing special guests and supporting one another to embrace the truth: everything rises and falls with leadership - in football and life!"

He said McCartney will offer his coaching insight on the new Buffs staff, players, CU's move into the Pac-12 Conference and more.

"Mac' knows the Buffs tradition and what Jon Embree and his staff are doing to restore it," McIntosh said. "I can't think of anyone better to have dinner with and talk CU football."

Pasta Jay's is located at 1001 Pearl St.

BUFF BITS: CU Coach Jon Embree said left tackle David Bakhtiari, sidelined early against UH, is day-to-day with a sprained left MCL. Embree said he wouldn't count Bakhtiari out this week until he was forced to . . . Texas transfer Connor Wood, a highly rated high school QB, was completing enrollment paperwork on Monday and could begin practice as early as Tuesday, Embree said. Wood must sit out the 2010 season under NCAA transfer rules . . . Bakhtiari's absence for about 31/2 quarters in Game 1 compounded the difficulties faced by CU's offensive line. Embree said the problems were "more technique stuff," adding that sacks allowed - QB Tyler Hansen suffered a career-high seven - can't always be placed solely on the O-line . . . Both of CU's new centers - Daniel Munyer and Gus Handler - showed well in their debuts, according to Embree . . . CU will honor its 2001 Big 12 Championship team at Saturday's game against Cal. It also will be a "brick game," said Embree, noting it's one of eight opportunities this season for the Buffs to win what Embree has designated as a game worthy of reestablishing the wall of "big-game bricks" outside the locker room in the Dal Ward Athletic Center. However, Embree expressed disappointment that the wall will remain blank when the 2001 team is honored this weekend . . . The biggest disappointment in Embree's CU debut? Not winning, of course, topped the list, but this was a close second: The offense's shaky start. CU went scoreless in the first half and had totaled a mere 61 yards (seven rushing) by intermission.

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SHOW MENU



CU Buffs' O-line a work in progress

Colorado coaches unsure if David Bakhtiari will play Saturday

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/05/2011 08:32:48 PM MDT

If Mike Ittis and Bryce Givens would have remained eligible members of the Colorado football program, the Buffs would have fielded one of the most experienced offensive lines in college football this fall.

But Ittis chose to focus on academics and Givens couldn't stay out of trouble off the field and CU is once again in rebuilding mode in the trenches.

That much was obvious during a Week 1 loss at Hawaii in which the Buffs surrendered seven sacks and struggled to find any offensive continuity. The problem was exacerbated when sophomore left tackle David Bakhtiari suffered a knee injury in the first half against the Warriors that kept him out of the rest of the game.

"David is our best offensive lineman," offensive line coach Steve Marshall said. "Ryan Dannewitz came in and really did a yeoman's job. ... It's always an issue when your best guy is on the sideline, but it may happen again this week. We've got to get a lot of guys ready to go."

At Monday evening's walk-through, Bakhtiari was still on crutches, but head coach Jon Embree refused to rule him out of Saturday's home opener against the Cal Bears, who registered seven sacks against the Buffs in a 52-7 win last season.

Marshall was inclined to believe Bakhtiari probably won't start and he will plan accordingly in preparation this week. Embree said no major changes are expected to the depth chart and no position changes are in store.

Senior offensive lineman Ryan Miller said the Buffs had problems at times in the opener but he believes they can be worked out. Miller said he didn't want to give the impression that he is making excuses but he said playing with three inexperienced teammates on the offensive front was problematic at times.

"It definitely went parts of good and bad," Miller said. "We had some miscommunication towards the end and we had some lack of experience toward the end. On a scale of one-to-10, I don't think it was a 10, but I don't think it was a one. I thought we did OK."

Marshall said he came away from the first outing feeling like his group still has a long way to go but he gave them a generally favorable review. He said he liked what he saw from both young centers, Daniel Munyer, who made his first start, and Gus Handler, who rotated with Munyer.

He said each week will be a learning experience for them throughout the season, but he believes both can be very good players as they mature.

Miller said the most important area for the Buffs to improve this week against Cal is communicating with each other.

"It needs to happen in the film room first of all and then on the practice field," he said. "We have to understand what looks generally generate more pressure than others and we have to be able to pick up that pressure and talk it out, get everybody on the same page, running backs and the offensive line."

In addressing what led to allowing seven sacks in the opener, Embree and Marshall said there were multiple breakdowns from everyone on offense. They said some of the sacks were quarterback Tyler Hansen's fault because he missed a read or didn't get rid of the ball fast enough. Other sacks were attributed to running backs missing blocks along with the offensive line.

In general, Marshall definitely didn't seem to be in panic mode as the Buffs prepare to play in front of the home crowd for the first time this season.

"I feel great about them," Marshall said. "We can play a lot better, but there were a lot of good things that came out of that game."

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No major changes in store for Jon Embree's CU Buffs

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

Posted:09/05/2011 09:23:01 PM MDT

After reviewing film of the season-opening loss at Hawaii, Colorado coach Jon Embree said his offense made some uncharacteristic mistakes, his defense must tackle better and the kickoff coverage unit has to improve quickly with the next test scheduled for Saturday at home against Cal.

Embree was pleased with how players responded to the loss, but he said they must put it behind them, which they began doing Monday. The first-year coach said he wouldn't change anything about how the Buffs prepared for Hawaii.

Embree said Saturday's home opener will provide the Buffs another opportunity to restore the wall of big wins in the Dal Ward Center.

In the 1990s in a hallway in the lower level of the Dal Ward Center, former coach Bill McCartney began painting bricks with the date, the opponent and the score following big wins. The tradition was cast aside under former coach Dan Hawkins and the bricks were painted over.

Embree has vowed to bring them all back as soon as this season's team produces a victory worthy of a brick for the wall.

"There is going to be eight opportunities probably this year," Embree said. "The disappointing thing is you have the Big 12 championship team coming back here and they're not going to be up. They understand what's at stake and they understand what they have to do. So we'll see."

Mental mistakes won't be tolerated

Embree went through a laundry list of mental mistakes his team made in the opener, including seven penalties. He said he wasn't overly concerned with the number of penalties the Buffs committed, but he promised he won't allow players to continually repeat their mistakes.

"If we're talking about this next week and the week after, then, yeah, we have a problem," Embree said. "And if it's the same guy, then we have to get a new guy in there. That's coaching."

"If we keep kicking the ball out of bounds, we're going to have a new kicker. If the same guy keeps getting personal fouls, can't play him."

Wood to practice today

Connor Wood, a former high school All-American quarterback who transferred to CU last week from Texas, will be on the field practicing with the team today, barring some unexpected development, Embree said.

Wood transferred from Texas where he faced a logjam for playing time under center this season and in the future. There is no guarantee he will earn a starting job in Boulder next year after redshirting this season, but his chances appear more favorable with starting quarterback Tyler Hansen graduating.

Notable

Cal is one of the most penalized teams in the nation after one week of football. The Bears were flagged 11 times for 90 yards in losses in a win over Fresno State last week. ... California has been a decent team on the road over the past two seasons going 5-6 in true road games.

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cu football

Ryan Miller confident CU will fix what went wrong in opener

By Natalie Meisler
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/06/2011 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Ryan Miller didn't hesitate for a second. The fifth-year Colorado senior has seen firsthand when something on his football team that's broken looks unfixable. One game — make that one loss — into the Buffaloes' 2011 season, the mountain of a guard said this is fixable.

"Definitely, without a doubt," Miller said Monday as the Buffaloes regrouped from their 34-17 loss to Hawaii in Honolulu on Saturday.

"We beat ourselves in that game. We didn't play the football we were preaching about, and that's on us," Miller said. "If we would have played normal football, I think we would have done very well. We kept shooting ourselves in the foot."

The answer isn't quite as apparent, though CU head

coach Jon Embree suggested the Buffs worry about themselves first, the opponent later.

"If everyone had that answer, we'd have the same national championship team every year," Miller said. "There are so many variables, so many unpredictables. You start the first game with a fumble. That's probably not a good way to

start. What's great about this (season-opening) game is that it's happened. It's in the books. We've got to move on."

Regarding talk about team distractions while in Hawaii, Miller said: "It's just a change of scenery. I ate way too much pineapple."

Hawaii's defense finished with seven sacks of CU senior quarterback Tyler Hansen. The loss of left tackle David Bakhtiari, who suffered a sprained medial collateral ligament Saturday, hurt CU's offensive line. Embree has listed him as day to day.

Offensive line coach Steve Marshall didn't sound optimistic about the injured sophomore playing this weekend in the Buffs' home opener against California.

"David's our best offensive lineman," Marshall said. "Ryan Dannewitz came in and did a yeoman's job. 'Danno' is going to play this week. We'll see where Bakhtiari is, but I don't think he's going to be ready."

Marshall remains upbeat about CU's offensive line, saying: "I feel great. We can play a lot better. There's a lot of good things that came out of that game. Sacks, pass protection, is an 11-man operation. There were times we didn't do



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our part, and we have to get better."

Said Embree: "The offensive side was very uncharacteristic with all the mistakes. Defensively, we have to tackle better, have more than one guy to the ball. Special teams, we have to get better."

Embree charged some mistakes to inexperience. If they're repeated, personnel changes are possible.

Embree and his coaching staff led the Buffs through a tough August camp. Embree said he wouldn't change a thing about preparation.

"We just needed to start faster on the offensive side of the ball," he said. "I tell people you can prepare hard, but that doesn't do anything. You still have to perform. We have to know what our standard is and play to it."

CU trailed Hawaii 17-0 at halftime at Aloha Stadium and ended up being outgained 343 yards to 240. The Buffs were penalized seven times for 58 yards and were only 2-of-14 on third- and fourth-down plays.

Marshall was hobbling as much as anyone Monday. The line coach thinks he broke a middle toe when he stubbed it the night before the game.

Also, Embree is hopeful that Connor Wood, the quarterback who transferred to CU from Texas, can start working with the Buffs this week.

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