



*Connor Wood will learn CU's system on the scout team this season.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com*



Brooks: Wood's Transfer Offers Solid Upgrade At QB

Release: 09/08/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER – Rip Scherer needed one telephone call to confirm the caliber of quarterback who was about to land on Colorado's doorstep. It was placed to former University of Texas offensive coordinator Greg Davis, a longtime friend of Scherer's, and it concerned Connor Wood.

Davis, a member of Mack Brown's Texas staff since 1998 as well as a Brown staffer at two schools (Tulane, North Carolina) before that, and former Longhorns quarterback Major Applewhite, now a UT assistant, had recruited Wood out of Houston's Second Baptist High School.

It wasn't an easy sell for the Texas twosome; the Horns faced big-time competition. By National Letter of Intent Day 2010, Wood had narrowed an impressive list of suitors (CU wasn't among those recruiting him) to a well-heeled final three: Texas, Oklahoma and Stanford.

At the time, signing with Texas seemed right. A couple of weeks ago, when the 2011 depth chart was released, what had seemed right in the winter of 2010 was reevaluated.

BUFFALO EXTRAS



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Wood, who redshirted in Austin last season, found himself behind junior Garrett Gilbert, the incumbent starter, and sophomore Case McCoy, younger brother of former UT QB Colt McCoy, on the UT three-deep chart. It wasn't the position he envisioned or was willing to accept.

A "lot of different things" factored into his decision to ask Texas for a release from his scholarship with the intent to transfer, Wood said. "But just the fact that how the depth chart came out, I felt like at this point in my career I would look at different places...step back from the situation (at Texas). I just felt like I needed a change and thought this was a better situation for me to play."

Wood not only stepped back from the situation in Austin, he stepped away. He and his parents visited Boulder and CU's practice on Monday night, Aug. 29, as the Buffs were preparing for their Sept. 3rd opener at Hawaii. Later that week, the Woods visited Baton Rouge, La., and LSU, which was preparing for its opener against Oregon in Dallas. CU and LSU were the only finalists in Wood's "second round" of recruitment.

Former CU assistant Les Miles, now the Tigers' head coach, and LSU quarterbacks coach Steve Kragthorpe "couldn't have been nicer and more welcoming to me and my family, letting us come to practice and sitting in their offices," Wood said. "Great, great guys."

But three days earlier, he had gotten the same vibe visiting with new CU coach Jon Embree, offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy and Scherer – the Buffs' QB coach. Another factor in the Buffs' favor: Wood and his family were more familiar with Colorado than Louisiana; his father has Aspen roots and the family frequently returned to the state for both summer and winter vacations.

Then there was the climate...early September in Colorado just might be more agreeable than in Louisiana – or in Texas, for that matter. "Got to love this mountain air... it's a lot different from Austin," Wood said with a laugh late Tuesday afternoon after his first practice in a CU uniform.

But it wasn't the rarefied air and low humidity that wooed Wood. Sure, the environment was a plus, but "coach Embree, coach Scherer and coach Bieniemy are all excellent coaches," Wood said. "They've got a lot of experience in the NFL. I just want to be part of a building program here. It was the right fit for me and my family."

If Wood had a history with the state, he initially knew very little about the CU coaching staff, except for receivers coach Bobby Kennedy and assistant trainer Adam Holliday. Kennedy had been on the Texas staff for seven seasons as receivers coach, and for the past six as assistant recruiting coordinator. Holliday spent three years on the Texas training staff before coming to Boulder last August.

"I contacted (CU) knowing coach Kennedy was here," said Wood, who was born in Wichita, Kan., and moved to Houston with his family at age nine. Wood's father, Jeff, is a former professional race car driver who was the Formula Atlantic Rookie of the Year in 1977. An older brother, Jeff II, was a quarterback at Texas A&M (2006-09).

Shortly after Wood's telephone call to Kennedy, Scherer contacted his old friend Greg Davis for a scouting report. Scherer called Davis "one of the best in the business" and noted that Davis "recommended (Wood) very highly. That was enough said. And coach Kennedy was with him (at Texas) and had a lot of input there. So having those two resources, we had a better picture of what we were getting.

"I think he'll be good. He's got a sharp football mind. He studies the game, knows the game. He handles himself like a quarterback. He's obviously going to be on the scout team (this season), but just watching him throw the ball a little bit, he can grip it and rip it."

Spend a little time with Wood and Scherer's early observation of him "handling himself like a quarterback" becomes apparent. He's well-spoken and poised. And at 6-foot-3 and just over 220 pounds, he looks the part, which Kennedy could vouch for when Wood arrived in Austin.

"When he came in (to Texas) he wasn't ready to be the guy, but you could tell he had talent," Kennedy recalled.

"It helps that I had some background with him...when you don't know what you've got and are going on what people say, that can be dicey.

"But I think he's a talented guy that wants to compete for a job. He's got an arm and can make all the throws. And I know for a fact that he studies and is very bright – a really good student (two-time member of UT's Athletic Director Honor Roll). I think he's a good player; he was recruited by a lot of good people out of high school... he had 'em all after him."

Here's why: A four-year starter in high school, Wood accounted for 3,337 yards (2,669 passing) and 32 touchdowns (19 passing) as a senior. ESPNU rated him the nation's No. 14 quarterback in 2010 and Rivals.com ranked him the sixth-best pro-style QB. He played in the 2010 Army All-American Bowl, but football wasn't his only high school sport. He was a three-year letterman in basketball, a two-time letter winner in golf and also earned a letter in track and field.

Wood will spend this semester as a walk-on, then go on scholarship and have three years of eligibility remaining after he sits out this season per NCAA transfer rules. His time won't be wasted this fall. He'll practice with the scout team, running the offenses of CU's opponents to give the Buffs' defense the best possible "look" of what will be encountered on Saturday.

"That's the best place to learn and stay sharp," he said. "You're actually playing against some good teammates...you see how plays translate to what we do. It makes you think, makes you ad-lib."

By the time spring practice begins, Wood believes he will know CU's West Coast, pro-style offense. "Right now, it's the time constraint," he said. "I'm not going to play, of course, but I'm learning it right now. I was doing Texas' offense a week ago. Now, it's a new offense, new coaches, a new language. That's the tough part – finding your way around, getting your feet on the ground with the offense. You do that in the meeting room and by watching film."

Starting quarterback Tyler Hansen is in his final season, so next spring Wood will be competing against Nick Hirschman, now a redshirt freshman; true freshmen John Schrock and Stevie Joe Dorman; and junior Brent Burnette. CU is expected to sign a QB in the Class of 2012.

Wood said he felt comfortable in his first CU practice, but added because he's sharing scout team "reps" with Dorman and Burnette, "I'm just watching and listening to the calls and the audibles. So I'm sitting back and observing. But overall, football is football, and it translates from one team to the other. I just have to play my game."

His game made him a top national recruit two winters ago, and it's why CU sees him as such an unexpectedly nice addition now. In college football, shifts happen, sometimes for the best.

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SHOW MENU



Paul Richardson emerging as big catch for CU Buffs

Sophomore wide receiver has 8 TD catches in 13 games

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

Posted:09/08/2011 06:37:59 PM MDT

Where is Paul Richardson?

It's a question Cal's defense will have to know the answer to on Saturday when Colorado hosts the Bears in CU's home opener (1:30 p.m. Fox Sports Pacific).

But where was the Buffs' dynamic receiver on the preseason All-Pac-12 lists?

Even Phil Steele, whose research is exhaustive, didn't list Richardson among his top 12 wide receivers in the conference.

Robert Woods (USC), Juron Criner (Arizona) and Jermaine Kearse (Washington) were on Steele's first team. Cal's Keenan Allen was on the second team, along with Marquess Wilson (Washington State) and Markus Wheaton (Oregon State).

Cal's Marvin Jones was on the third team, along with Chris Owusu (Stanford) and DeVonte Christopher (Utah). And the fourth team consisted of converted running back Kenjon Barner (Oregon), James Rodgers (Oregon State) and Dan Buckner (Arizona).

Maybe the best-kept secret in Boulder is finally out after Richardson caught two touchdowns in CU's 34-17 loss to Hawaii to begin his sophomore season. In only 13 college games, the 6-foot-1 receiver from Gardena, Calif., who originally committed to UCLA before becoming a Buff, has eight touchdown catches.

Richardson's production and potential certainly caught Jon Embree's eye not long after he was hired as the new CU head coach last December.

"Paul Richardson could be mentioned with the (Michael) Westbrooks, Charles Johnsons, those guys," Embree said this week. "He could have his name up there in the stadium. He has that talent. Right now he has that work ethic and drive and hunger. As long as he keeps working and grinding, he'll have that opportunity."

Richardson already has three multiple-touchdown reception games (Kansas and Texas Tech in 2010). That ties him for third on CU's all-time list behind Rae Carruth (1992-96) and Derek McCoy (2000-03), who each had five games with at least two touchdown catches.

Over the last seven games, Richardson has 30 receptions for 499 yards and eight touchdowns. He set a CU freshman record for receiving yards (514) and touchdowns (six) last season (Westbrook had five touchdowns during his freshman season).

"He can be really special. He's a special talent," quarterback Tyler Hansen said. "I think teams are going to have to start taking notice of that and bring a safety over and start trying to take him away."

Woods had 17 catches for 177 yards and two touchdowns during USC's 19-17 victory over Minnesota to set the early standard for Pac-12 receivers this season.

After getting shut out in the first half, Hansen and Richardson connected on two touchdowns in the third quarter to pull the Buffs to within 24-17. However, the Warriors' defensive line spoiled the comeback bid by dominating the line of scrimmage in the fourth quarter.

Hansen was sacked seven times and finished 16-for-30 passing with 188 yards and a late interception. Richardson had a total of three catches for 49 yards. Running back Rodney Stewart, who only rushed for 52 net yards, had four catches for

98 yards.

"We don't have any choice but to bounce back. And we will," Richardson said. "We're going to hit it hard this week and we'll be prepared for Cal."

The Bears (1-0) enter Saturday's game ranked first in the Pac-12 in total defense (218 yards per game) and second in pass defense (150 yards per game) after a strong opening day performance in a 36-21 victory over Fresno State.

Richardson did not have a catch during CU's 52-7 loss in Berkeley a year ago.

"We're going to have to be creative on offense moving him around, shifting and motioning to free him up and give him single coverage," Hansen said. "Paul being such an explosive and electric player, obviously we're going to have to get him the ball. But defenses aren't dumb, they're smart. They're going to try to take him away. That's going to free up other guys like Tyler McCulloch, Toney Clemons and our tight ends. Hopefully other guys get going."

CU offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy will continue his mission of establishing a formidable running game this season. The Buffs' offensive line struggled after starting left tackle David Bakhtiari suffered a sprained knee in the first quarter against Hawaii. He is listed as day to day.

"It affected us a lot, emotionally more than anything," Richardson said of Bakhtiari's injury. "He's a big part of their unit. Between him and Ryan (Miller), they are the leaders of their unit."

Clemons was benched in the opener after a drop and a mental error. The former Michigan transfer met with Embree this week to hash things out, but has been a consistently inconsistent player at CU.

McCulloch is a true freshman who had two catches for 25 yards in his collegiate debut. Senior receiver Kyle Cefalo added two catches for 16 yards.

Since Scotty McKnight's eligibility ran out, Richardson has emerged as Hansen's go-to-guy.

"Paul is a special talent. He is not a finished product. He can get better at technique things and he needs to get stronger," CU wide receivers coach Bobby Kennedy said. "But what I like about him is he is real eager to learn and he is always in my office asking me questions. He's a willing kid. He reminds me of (former Texas receiver) Jordan Shipley that way. He's a gym rat."

Richardson is also one of the best receivers not many people around the country know about. The Buffs just need him to be in the spotlight at Folsom Field when Cal comes calling.

"He's one of those guys where very rarely will he make the same mistake twice. As a coach, you love players like that because that's how you make improvement and improve quickly," Embree said. "So I think Paul Richardson has an opportunity to be a guy that is mentioned with some of the best that have played here."

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college football

CU Buffaloes brace for California's team speed

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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

BOULDER — Because it will not count in the Pac-12 Conference standings, Colorado's game Saturday against California is bound to confuse much of the nation, perhaps even some network analysts.

But that doesn't mean the Cal Bears will look any different or bring any less speed into Folsom Field. Last year in Berkeley, California blew by the Buffaloes 52-7.

"I remember how fast they are," CU safety Ray Polk said this week. "You make one mistake and it can mean seven points."

It feels a bit awkward, but Colorado coaches and players say they are more concerned about Cal's team speed than why the outcome will not impact the league standings, though CU is now a member of the Pac-12.

CU offensive line coach Steve Marshall believes the Pac-12 does not take a back seat to any conference in terms of overall team speed — including the SEC.

Marshall should know. He coached at California the past two seasons. He also spent time in the Big 12 (Colorado), the Southeastern Conference (Tennessee) and Atlantic Coast Conference (North Carolina), in addition to coaching in the NFL for six seasons.

Last Saturday, in California's 36-21 season-opening victory over Fresno State, the Bears broke loose for runs of 43 and 39 yards and for receptions of 31 and 42 yards.

"The Pac-12 is a very athletic league, a very athletic league," Marshall said. "It's been a while since I've been in the SEC and the Big 12, but I know dang sure that when we play Oregon and when we play Arizona, Southern Cal or Cal, those guys can run."

Saturday's meeting is a nonconference game because the Pac-12 league schedule did not include a 2011 CU-Cal matchup. This two-game series was originally set in 2004 as nonconference games. Neither school could find suitable replacements for this date, so the game will go on as scheduled — only not as a Pac-12 game.

In recalling last year's rout in Berkeley, Colorado senior wideout Toney Clemons said he realized almost immediately that his plus speed would not be a significant advantage during that afternoon. Bears cornerbacks were hanging with him stride for stride.

Clemons caught three passes for 36 yards, including a 24-yarder that became CU's longest gain from scrimmage. The Pac-12 is Clemons'

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third conference. He began at Michigan before playing last season in Colorado's Big 12 farewell.

"Those guys in the Big Ten can run too; those guys in the Big 12 can run too," Clemons said. "But, oh man, when I saw Cal, I was amazed at how many of the guys on that field could run. You could break a tackle in the secondary, but there were linebackers that could get you from behind."

Team speed is often associated with skill-position players. But fast teams have speed at every position.

"Cal has done a great job recruiting defensive players that can run and are athletic," Marshall said. "I know in this league you've got to have guys that can run at every position, including mine. (In recruiting) we're looking for offensive linemen that can run."

"It's all relative. If you're going against a rush end that runs 4.7, you've better have an athletic offensive tackle that can move in space, change directions, all those things."

CU coach Jon Embree, who served as an assistant in the Big 12 (Colorado) and Pac-10 (UCLA), said an injection of speed can make special teams really special.

"People may not think about it, but speed even helps with (kick) coverages," Embree said. "We know we have to get faster. We're looking for more speed. That's why we're emphasizing California and Texas so much in recruiting."

Embree is using some of his fastest players, including true freshmen D.D. Goodson and Austin Vincent, on the scout team in an attempt to replicate Cal's team speed.

"I don't even care if scout-team guys catch the ball. I just want them to give the look," Embree said. "We need them to see the speed of the game that they're going to see on Saturday."

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Three questions for CU

1. Can Colorado's offensive line rebound from its ugly performance against Hawaii? CU

senior quarterback Tyler Hansen was sacked seven times by Hawaii, the most since he was dropped eight times against Texas A&M in 2009. The Buffs couldn't run the ball effectively, either. Making matters worse, Cal's defensive line will be more athletic than Hawaii's, and CU could be without starting left tackle David Bakhtiari, who sprained a knee against Hawaii.

2. Will Colorado's defense prevent California speedsters from breaking loose for big gainers? In a 36-21 season-opening victory over Fresno State last Saturday, California busted free for runs of 43 and 39 yards and for receptions of 31 and 42 yards. Cal's wide receiver duo of Keenan Allen (112 yards) and Marvin Jones (118) became the first Bears pair to top the century mark in receiving yards since a 2006 win over Minnesota. Cal junior quarterback Zach Maynard looked comfortable and lethal.

3. Can CU senior running back Rodney Stewart get some help in the backfield? Stewart, sturdily built but just 5-foot-7 and 175

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pounds, and Hansen were the only CU players to carry the ball against Hawaii. Stewart rushed for 52 yards on 18 carries. Hansen finished with minus-35 yards rushing as seven of his 10 "carries" were sacks. If Colorado wants to pound the ball, as planned, somebody must come in and give Stewart a breather.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post



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john henderson

Henderson: If the Pac-12 expands, CU will have little say in what division it lands in

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

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

Widespread panic has engulfed Colorado's fan base at the thought of another road trip to Stillwater, Okla., and Lubbock, Texas. If you've been to Stillwater and Lubbock, you can't blame them.

In the continually shifting sands of conference realignment, Colorado is a bit player just trying to secure its part of the beach, preferably the one in Santa Monica.

The only factor keeping Colorado from getting stuck in the same division as the Oklahoma and Texas schools is the threat of lawsuits that is holding up conference expansion.

So exhale, folks. The threat is real. So is the delay. It may be another year before the Big 12 implodes and the Pac-12 expands. But if it does, this time Colorado likely won't get a break.

For now, everything is on hold. Texas A&M's escape from the Big 12 to the SEC is delayed by Big 12 schools refusing to sign a waiver promising not to sue the SEC for luring away the Aggies.

According to various media reports, schools known to have refused to sign the waiver are Iowa State, Baylor and Kansas. Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Texas and Texas Tech — the Fab Four as far as an expanded Pac-12 is concerned — have said they would waive their right to sue. Kansas State and Missouri haven't said.

Oklahoma would save the Big 12 by recommitting to it. President David Boren said it'll take up to three weeks to decide, but he'll stay only if a viable substitute is found to replace A&M. The Salt Lake Tribune reported that BYU and the Big 12 have talked. BYU would punt its football independence and move the Mormon Tabernacle Choir to West Texas if it received an invitation.

I can't see BYU saving the Big 12, though. I can't see any school being added that is viable enough to keep Oklahoma from looking elsewhere, especially after Boren said last week he's eyeing the Pac-12.

If that happens — whenever that happens — CU had better prepare for an uncomfortable landing being grouped again with Big 12 powers. Oklahoma will bring along Oklahoma State, and if Texas doesn't go independent — and its thriving Olympic sports would suffer

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tremendously — you'd have a nice neat East Division with Texas, Texas Tech, Oklahoma, Oklahoma State, Colorado, Utah, Arizona and Arizona State.

Hello again, Big 12. Lubbock got any trees yet?

Colorado president Bruce Benson blasted the idea earlier this week of Pac-12 expansion and bringing in Oklahoma and Texas. He should. So should athletic director Mike Bohn. Colorado's biggest contingency for joining the Pac-12 was inclusion in the same division with the schools in L.A., where they have their most out-of-state alumni.

Talking to Pac-12 schools this week, they have one response to Colorado's expected tirade: Tough.

Remember, when Pac-12 commissioner Larry Scott announced "expansion schools" Colorado and Utah would get prime spots in the South Division with UCLA and USC, the Bay Area and Northwest schools about short-circuited his office phone.

Why, they said, do charter members of the conference get fewer trips to southern California's fertile recruiting grounds than these refugees from the Big 12 and Mountain West? However, the six North Division schools backed down.

It was for the good of the conference.

If the Pac-12 expands by adding Big 12 teams, Colorado's screams will drift into the winds over the Pacific. As a newcomer, Colorado will have little bargaining power. Some power brokers on campus aren't worried.

"It's great for the conference overall, which means it's great for the University of Colorado," university regent Tom Lucero said. "If it makes the conference stronger, it makes the University of Colorado stronger."

I asked Lucero if not playing the L.A. schools as much bothers him.

"We are (playing them)," he said. "I'm assuming we'll develop a similar rotation like what we had in the Big 12. In my mind, we'll be in California every single year; we'll wind up in Arizona and Washington."

In a live online chat with The Seattle Times on Thursday, Scott said he'd prefer to stand pat with 12 teams. However, if the league expands, "we'd carefully look at equal access to all territories."

Scott isn't moving on expansion. He'll wait for the Big 12 to sort out its colossal mess. But the likes of Baylor and Iowa State can't hold realignment hostage very long.

When the next earthquake hits, whenever that is, count on Colorado moving a few steps east.



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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

SEPTEMBER 9, 2011, 8:42 AM

College football videogame has Buffs going 5-8

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

A colleague in the Denver Post sports department, Bryan Moore, simulated the 2011 seasons of our [local major-college teams through the EA Sports College Football](#) ^[1] videogame.

It spit out a 5-8 record for Colorado.

That included a predicted loss at Hawaii, which turned out correct.

EA Sports College Football notched Buffs wins over Colorado State in Denver (14-6), Washington State (29-27), at Arizona State (24-17), Arizona (27-24) and at UCLA (17-14).

I was struck by all the low scores. For example, the videogame had CU losing 10-6 at Ohio State, 13-6 in overtime at Stanford and 13-10 to Southern Cal.

CSU went 7-5 in the videogame, Air Force 6-6.

We'll see.

Here's the link to Bryan Moore's blog:

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/videogames/2011/09/07/simulating-seasons-for-cu-buffs-csu-rams-and-air-force-falcons-on-college-football-12/1012/>

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[1] local major-college teams through the EA Sports College Football :

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SEPTEMBER 8, 2011, 9:38 AM

CU's Embree has heart-to-heart chat with WR Clemons

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — One of the many disappointments for Colorado in the 34-17 loss at Hawaii last weekend had to be Buffs senior wideout Toney Clemons getting shut out.

Clemons was listed in pre-game notes as a starter (although CU opened with two tight ends and just Paul Richardson as a wide receiver) but failed to get a reception and appeared to lose favor as the game progressed.

CU coach Jon Embree said he had a heart-to-heart chat on Wednesday with Clemons.

The former Michigan transfer is well-liked and is regarded as one of the team's top players and best athletes but has been something of an enigma since joining the program.

Regarded as a national top-100 prospect out of Pittsburgh during his high school days, Clemons averaged less than three catches per game and scored just three touchdowns in 2010, Dan Hawkins' final year as head coach.

Embree said the talk was productive. Clemons initiated the meeting, Embree said.

"Toney and I had a great conversation," Embree said. "We were able to get things out, as far as expectations.

"I let him know why I am why I am, regarding things about him. We're definitely on the same page now.

"So I look forward to seeing Toney Clemons be a play-maker for us."

Embree was asked why Clemons has under-achieved relative to his talent.

"I don't know," Embree said. "I'm not going to put that on Toney. I'm going to take responsibility for that, communicating better, letting him know what I expect, and how we expect things to be done.

"It's not a lack of 'want to' with him," Embree added. "There are some things I probably misconstrued, misinterpreted. I have to be better at communicating. I'm excited to see what he does.

"We need him. We need everybody."

You should follow me on [Twitter @TomKensler](#) ^[1] And read more at the [CU Buffs blog](#) ^[2]

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<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2011/09/08/cus-embree-has-heart-to-heart-chat-with-wr-clemons/20329/>

The Daily Californian - Don't be sleeping on Buffs in Boulder

By Jonathan Kuperberg | Senior Staff

jkuperberg@dailycal.org

Thursday, September 8, 2011 at 8:39 pm

We all know what happened when Cal played Colorado last year.

The Bears embarrassed the Buffaloes, 52-7. Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen threw three picks. The Buffs coughed up the ball twice.

It was ugly.

But that was last year, and at Memorial Stadium.

And Colorado is a different team at home.

Last season, the Buffaloes lost all of their road games, aside from their season opener against Colorado State in Denver. In the friendly confines of Folsom Field, however, Colorado beat the likes of Georgia, Kansas State and Iowa State. The Buffs crushed Hawaii by 18 last season at home; interestingly enough, they lost to the Warriors by 17 last week in Hawaii.

Colorado's only two home losses in 2010 were to two tough teams, Baylor and Texas Tech, by a combined nine points.

Saturday's meeting between Cal and Colorado will not be a repeat of last year.

The team knows this, or rather, says it knows this.

"Our thoughts aren't really on last year at all, so we're going into this game as ... it is a new team, really," Bears defensive lineman Trevor Guyton said.

"That was last year," defensive lineman Ernest Owusu said. "The win last year was great and all, but this is a completely different team."

Certainly the D-line got the memo, but how can the players not think about last year's wipe-out? There have been games in the past in which the Cal didn't seem to show the necessary fire it takes to win a football game.

Which begs the question, which Bears will show up on Saturday?



It could be the team that destroyed Colorado last year, or the squad that rebounded from a worrisome start to defeat Fresno State in last Saturday's season opener?

It just as likely could be the club that was embarrassed in its first away game of the season last year against a lethal Nevada squad.

Cal needs to show up on Saturday. It can't make the kinds of errors it did last Saturday — throwing an interception on essentially the first play of the game, fumbling in its own end zone, committing 90 yards worth of penalties, missing two extra points.

Fortunately for the Bears, Fresno State was not as good as advertised (and the Bulldogs were not necessarily advertised as being all that good), and Cal was able to cruise to a victory last week. Colorado is by no means a superpower — the program has been down for year — but it's still a home game, the home opener, and surely the squad will be hungry for revenge after last year's embarrassment in Berkeley.

Cal needs to show it is ready for Pac-12 play by playing a sound game with few errors. It is the Bears' last test before conference play. Cal begins conference play at Washington in two weeks, before games against Oregon, USC and Utah, arguably three of the Pac-12's four best teams.

Many of the Cal players were not satisfied with the win over Fresno State; the defense, for instance, really only gave up one true offensive touchdown, and that was near the end of the game, but Owusu was critical.

"The score didn't quite show it, but we were a little sloppy on the defense at times," he said.

The Bears will be able to beat Presbyterian on Sept. 17 despite sloppy play. But not Washington. Not Oregon. Not USC.

And not Colorado.

The Daily Californian - Bears travel, brace for Colorado's revenge bid



Sean Goebel/Staff

Senior wide receiver Marvin Jones opened the season two touchdown grabs. He caught three passes for 77 yards and a touchdown against Colorado last season.

By Jack Wang | Senior Staff

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A year ago, Tyler Hansen entered Memorial Stadium and left with one of his worst statlines as a Colorado quarterback. On the first two drives, he couldn't move past his own 12. His third fizzled with a lost fumble. And after taking six sacks from Cal's defense in that 52-7 loss, his body might still be aching.

This Saturday, the senior will have a shot at redemption in Boulder, Colo., against many of those same Bears, who hit the road for the first time this season.

Like last year, the Buffaloes' home opener at Folsom Field is a nonconference game scheduled while the idea of the Pac-12 was still in its very nascent stages. Chances are good, though, that it's the one they've highlighted on their locker room calendar.

Then senior-wideout Scotty McKnight called the loss “the most embarrassing game of my life.” The program’s all-time leader in touchdown catches and receptions is gone now, drafted by the New York Jets in the seventh round, but the rest of the roster still remembers it well.

Two of Cal’s offseason coaching hires — Ashley Ambrose (defensive backs) and Eric Kiesau (wide receivers) — were lifted from Colorado and are familiar with many of the opposing players. Due to the Buffaloes’ staff overhaul, the two won’t know too much beyond that. The wave of new coaches — including former Cal offensive line coach Steve Marshall — mean plenty of new schemes in Boulder on both sides of the ball.

The Bears must rely on what they saw in their opponent’s 34-17 loss to Hawaii last week.

“That’s really the only true film we have,” Kiesau said.

Added head coach Jeff Tedford: “There’s not a lot of history. We really have to prepare for a lot of things.”

Colorado returns tailback Rodney Stewart, who struggled against Cal (80 yards on 29 carries) but rushed for at least 100 yards in six games on his way to second-team All-Big-12 honors. The 5-foot-6 senior won’t surprise many if he earns a similar postseason award in the Pac-12, but he’ll have to do better than his 52 yards last week to keep his team’s hope of a win alive.

Another common concern for opponents is the altitude of Boulder, which causes players accustomed to sea level to run out of breath more quickly. The Bears have worked in more conditioning in preparation, but playing at 5,360 feet is more of a tertiary concern.

“The grass is green just like it is here,” Ambrose said. “Guys gotta know it mentally, that it’s no different than playing on another football field. 100 yards is 100 yards.”

Regardless, the 53,000-person capacity Folsom Field has traditionally been a tough place for visitors.

Colorado has lost 18 consecutive true road games and counting, with last year’s loss to Cal being the 13th. Conversely the Buffs have beaten Oklahoma, Georgia, West Virginia and Texas A&M at home since 2007 — despite not having a winning season over that period.

Cal quarterback Zach Maynard has spent the bulk of his career playing before smaller MAC crowds — University at Buffalo Stadium only held 30,000, and Maynard debuted before a similarly sized crowd at San Francisco’s Candlestick Park last week. The transfer will have to contend with more hostile fans slightly shorthanded: freshman wide receiver Kaelin Clay hasn’t yet dressed this season due to an internal academic issue, and won’t travel to Colorado, while fullback Will Kapp has missed practice all week with a concussion.

“We’re gonna have our hands full,” Ambrose said. “Colorado always plays well against teams that come in that are good ... It’s gonna be a 60-minute war.”



Colorado presenting a new look with much the same cast

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By David Bush, Staff Writer

Posted Sep 8, 2011

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Colorado Head Coach Jon Embree

Photo Cliff Grassnick

Colorado, which hosts Cal on Saturday, fields many of the same players the Bears thrashed 52-7 in Berkeley last year. The quarterback, running back, offensive line, wide receivers and much of the defense are the same. But Cal coach Jeff Tedford feels there have been changes in Boulder and he doesn't really have a handle on the new Buffaloes.

Dan Hawkins was the Colorado coach for last September's drubbing, but he did not last the season, being replaced temporarily by assistant Brian Cabral. In the winter Jon

Embree, a former Colorado tight end, was hired to lead his alma mater, and he is trying to put his own imprint on the team.

"They've changed schematically on both sides of the ball. New defensive coordinator, new offensive coordinator it's much different. It is a little awkward that we don't have a lot of history with them," Tedford said. "There isn't a lot on tape except the one game in Hawaii. Hawaii runs two formations, and you don't have a chance to look at a lot of things with them."

Hawaii ran those two formations well enough to beat the Buffaloes, 35-17, in Embree's debut. But that game was in Honolulu and extended Colorado's road losing streak to 18 games. This game is in Boulder.

"Colorado plays a little different brand of football at home," said Cal assistant Eric Kiesau, who spent the last five years on the Buffaloes staff before returning to Cal this season. "It is their first game, new staff. There will be a lot of buzz in the air. It's a great college football environment. They will use last year's game as a little motivation. We have to make sure that we're prepared, that we're ready."

Tyler Hansen, who was the QB last year in Berkeley's game but had his season cut short by an injury in the

seventh game, is back under center. He was 16-for-30 passing for 233 yards and two touchdowns against Hawaii. He also threw one interception, late in the game, killing any Colorado comeback hopes.

"I think Hansen is a very good quarterback," Tedford said. "He's more mature now. He throws the ball very well and was under some duress (seven sacks) last game. He's got the ability to throw every ball. He's mobile. He can get outside the pocket and throw it."

Embree agrees on Hansen's physical abilities. He is hoping for improvement in other areas. "I think once he settled down he played well," Embree said. "Early on, we missed some opportunities that weren't necessary his fault. We had some drops. We had a little bit of push the pocket that affected him a little bit. But I expect Tyler to play significantly better this week,

"I would like him to be more aggressive as a leader. I thought offensively we came out and just felt around. If you are the quarterback and you are the captain you have to come out and be aggressive and get the guys going."

The Buffs fell behind 17-0 before staging something of a comeback, cutting the margin to 24-17. Hansen accounted for both scores with passes to Paul Richardson.

"The two touchdown passes were very good throws. He had some pressure, but he did a good job of being accurate with the ball. He was accurate for the most part, except for the one interception and I just don't think he saw the guy."

Richardson, a 6-1, 165-pound sophomore is the Buffs' primary receiver and has scored in three straight games. Over the past seven games (starting with Texas Tech in 2010) he has 30 catches for 499 yards and eight touchdowns. He received the bulk of the defensive attention last week when Toney Clemons, the team's second leading receiver last year, was benched in midgame for lack of performance. But Clemons is back in the coaches' good graces and is expected to start Saturday, which should help Richardson.

"Paul Richardson could be mentioned with the [Michael] Westbrooks, the Charles Johnsons, those guys, he could be," Embree said at his weekly press conference. "He could have his name up in the stadium. He has that talent, right now he has that work ethic, drive, and hunger. So as long as he keeps those and keeps working and grinding, he'll have that opportunity.

"He is really deceptive. He is stronger than he looks, he is faster than people think he is, but he is very competitive."

Wide receivers coach Bobby Kennedy says Richardson is "a special talent. What he's trying to work on and what I'm harping on him about is working on the little things."

Speaking of little things, diminutive Rodney Stewart, who stands all of 5-feet-6, has led the team in rushing the last three years and did so against Hawaii with 52 yards on 18 carries. Of course, it is easy to be the team's leading ball carrier when you are the only one carrying the ball. Hansen was the only other Buffalo with any official carries last Saturday, and his were either quarterback sacks or scrambles.

Colorado went into the game hoping for more production on the ground. Factoring in Hansen's sacks, which college does, the Buffaloes totaled 17 yards rushing. "We just have to keep banging away at it," Embree said. "It was disappointing, our running production, and you will continue to hear me say it, 'We have to run the football, and we have to be effective at that.'"

The offensive line, considered a strength going into the season, has developed some issues. The number of

sacks against Hawaii raises questions of competence and sophomore left tackles David Bahktiari sustained a knee injury in the first half that caused his removal from the game. Embree is not ready to rule him out of Saturday's game, but if he does play it would be probably be on a limited basis.

"David is our best offensive lineman," offensive line coach Steve Marshall told the Boulder Daily Camera. "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."

As for the sacks, Embree said, "When you look back on it, a lot of it was four-man pressure. So we didn't do a good job of protecting. And protection is the quarterback getting rid of the ball, it's not just linemen blocking for five seconds. It's receivers getting open and the quarterback getting rid of the ball. We didn't do a good job of it."

The biggest defensive concern coming into the season was the secondary which lost cornerbacks Jimmy Smith and Jalil Brown, both gone to the NFL. But senior letterman Travis Sandersfeld and true freshman Greg Henderson acquitted themselves nicely. Veteran safeties Ray Polk and Anthony Perkins, back after missing the last five games with a knee injury, provide secondary leadership.

The Buffaloes main alignment up front is a 3-4, although defensive end/linebacker Josh Hartigan seldom lines up at the same spot twice in a row. He had six tackles including a quarterback sack last week. Senior linebacker Jon Major is another important defensive contributor.

Some indifferent tackling by Colorado led to Hawaii pulling off several long plays. Of the Rainbows' 334 yards of total offense, 163 came on just five plays. And Hawaii quarterback Bryant Moniz ran for 121 yards, meaning Cal's Zach Maynard, also dangerous afoot, could present a real problem to the Buffaloes.

The kicking duties have been handed to two true freshmen, an NCAA rarity. The place kicker is Will Oliver and the punter Darragh O'Neill. Their careers started off in fine style. Oliver made both PAT kicks (hear that Giorgio Tavecchio?) and a 34-yard field goal. O'Neill had seven punts for a 44.9 average, which included four inside-the-20 and two more than 50 yards, including a long of 56 he booted from the CU 4-yard line.

Neither Oliver nor O'Neill was in Memorial Stadium a year ago, but a lot of the current Buffaloes were. The fact that Cal was still using front line players and throwing passes late in a one-sided game, has not been forgotten.

"That was one of the first things I heard when I got hired here was the Cal game. From our fans and from our players," Embree said.

Hansen was one of them. "Cal got us real good and we want those guys," the quarterback said. "If you're not motivated for Cal, then there is something wrong with you, because they embarrassed us last year."

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