

## Offensive tackle sacrificing seeing parents for education

By Ryan Thorburn Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Stephane Nembot made a lonely post-practice walk up the steep hill to the Dal Ward Center on Tuesday night after staying late to pick his new position coach's brain and then granting an interview request from a reporter.

And what an unusual sight it was as the 6-foot-8, 310-pound offensive tackle from Cameroon gracefully disappeared into the thick snowstorm.

This unique gentle giant from Central Africa is making a great sacrifice to play football at Colorado.

"I haven't seen my parents for five years. I left when I was 16, and I'm 21," Nembot said. "It's rough. Every day I'm calling back home. My mom hasn't seen a picture of me for four years, she doesn't know how I look right now. She's probably going to be scared when she sees me."

Nembot is the first player Mike MacIntyre would choose to get off the bus to intimidate an opposing team. CU's first-year head coach is a fan of the redshirt sophomore's Paul Bunyan build and work ethic.

"He is coming along well. He's really working hard, and you see it every day," MacIntyre said. "He has really learned and asked questions and he wants to do good. He's a pleasure to be a round."

Four years ago, American football was a completely foreign concept to Nembot. He came to this country as a high school exchange student hoping his height and skills in the low post would lead to a college basketball scholarship.

At Montclair High School in Van Nuys, Calif., an assistant football coach talked Nembot into becoming an unstoppable force/immovable object on the defensive line.

Soon the athletic Nembot, who lettered in soccer and volleyball in addition to basketball, was receiving scholarship offers from Pac-12 football programs.

Jon Embree and his staff flipped Nembot from a verbal commitment to Washington and then changed his position from defensive end to offensive tackle while redshirting the talented project in 2011.

Nembot saw his first action last season on special teams against Colorado State, played on the offensive line for the first time at Fresno State, and made his first start against Washington State.

The Pac-12 All-Academic second team selection made seven starts and finished with five direct touchdown blocks on an offense that didn't get into the end zone very often.

"I have to work on my footwork and stuff like that because the defensive way of playing and the offensive way of playing are very different," Nembot said of the ongoing adjustment. "This year I'm actually excited because of the improvement. I've just got to get a little more violent with my hands. Last year I would just go hit guys, that's all I knew to do."

Nembot was used primarily in the running game and substituted out for obvious passing situations in 2012.

This spring he is one of only 10 healthy offensive linemen providing the quarterbacks with protection in MacIntyre's pass-happy version of the pistol offense.

"I think he needs reps and just playing football. He didn't grow up playing Pop Warner football, flag football, and all those things," CU offensive line coach Gary Bernardi said. "That's why staying healthy is so important to him because he's getting reps. He's just playing football. ...

"It's interesting when you stop and think about a guy who hasn't played football (growing up). But everybody has a clean slate with me."

Considering his physical attributes and the program's recent history of sending offensive linemen to the NFL (Nate Solder, New England; Ryan Miller, Cleveland; David Bakhtiari, preparing for April's draft), Nembot certainly has a chance to develop into a professional over the next three seasons.

Right?

"I know I have the size, I just don't like talking about it," Nembot said. "Most people play football for the NFL. That wasn't why I played football. I played to get a scholarship and go to school because my mom and my dad were after me like crazy. They don't mess around with education, and I wanted to prove to them that I can do it. That's what I'm doing. I'm getting good grades."

Nembot, an international affairs major, is listed as CU's starting right tackle on MacIntyre's "pencil" depth chart.

During last Friday's scrimmage at Folsom Field, CU's quarterbacks put up video game statistics, completing a combined 39 of 58 passes (67.2 percent) for 517 yards with nine touchdowns and no interceptions.

The offensive line paved the way for 7.5 yards per rush attempt and two more touchdowns, but the struggling defense did get credit for seven sacks.

"Sometimes what you see physically walk through a door is not what happens when the ball is snapped because there is a lot of stuff moving," Bernardi said. "(Nembot) has to continue to develop his physicality in a game-playing mode."

The Buffs roster includes players who arrived in Boulder from Hawaii to New Jersey. Most of them go home during breaks and are followed closely by their families on the Pac-12 Network.

Nembot's journey is a lonely one.

"I'm really homesick, but I can't let it bring me down," he said. "I'm an African warrior and I've got to keep fighting. One day the day will come when I see my family again."

Follow Ryan on Twitter: @RyanThorburn

## Quarterback's career could be over unless NCAA issues waiver for sixth season

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

For the second consecutive year, the Colorado football program has lost a significant contributor to a torn ACL in a non-contact drill. The program announced Wednesday that quarterback Jordan Webb is out for the season after suffering the injury in Tuesday's practice.

Webb will be a fifth-year senior in the fall and the injury might mean his career is over. He can request a waiver from the NCAA for a sixth season if he has missed all or part of at least two seasons in his career because of injury.

That appears to be the case. According to the press release from the school announcing Webb's injury, he was unable to practice through a large part of his true freshman season at Kansas in 2009 because of an abdominal injury. It will likely be months before Webb receives any kind of decision from the NCAA if he decides to pursue a waiver.

"It's another obstacle that I have to overcome," Webb said in the press release "I've rebounded from adversity before so this is just another challenge I have to face."

Webb returned to practice Tuesday after missing most of the past three weeks with a hand injury suffered earlier this spring. He was injured while making a cut while running and fell to the ground.

"This is very sad for Jordan," coach Mike MacIntyre said in the release. "He was doing well in practice, competing again for the starting job, and for this to happen and to lose him for the season is just a shame.

"Jordan is a great young man, one who represents our program well, both on the field and off it as a graduate student in a tough major field of study (Educational Equity and Cultural Diversity)."

One year ago Tuesday, Colorado receiver Paul Richardson tore his ACL. The junior missed the entire 2012 season, but has since returned to spring drills.

Webb underwent two surgeries on his throwing hand during the winter and was able to practice several times early in spring drills last month before he re-injured the hand. He was the Buffs' primary starting quarterback for most of last season before suffering the initial hand injury that led to his offseason surgeries. He led CU to its only win at Washington State last fall during a 1-11 season.

Webb is one of six quarterbacks MacIntyre and his assistants have been evaluating this spring. The coaches trimmed their list of quarterbacks in the mix for the starting job to four a week ago and Webb was one of the four. MacIntyre initially wanted to narrow the list to three but he didn't believe it would be fair to do so because Webb had participated in such a small segment of spring drills.

MacIntyre was asked for his impressions of the other three quarterbacks in the mix for the starting job after having time over the weekend to evaluate film of the third scrimmage of spring ball last Friday.

"I thought Connor Wood was very accurate and made a lot of good reads," MacIntyre said. "Nick Hirschman made a couple really good throws. Shane (Dillon) is getting better. He's still not as comfortable in it as the other guys cause he hasn't played as much, but everything is new to everybody. So hopefully we keep seeing him improving. He did some good things. He just wasn't quite as sharp as the other guys yet."

## Garage sale

The Colorado athletic department will hold a garage sale in Balch Fieldhouse on the west side of Folsom Field on Friday (noon-5 p.m.) and Saturday (9 a.m., until the end of the spring game). The game begins at 10:30 a.m. at Folsom Field.

Fans can purchase unused athletic equipment from CU's inventory from recent years at discounted prices. Some of the equipment features the CU logo. There are no guarantees in regard to specific sizes being available.

There will be a limited number of game-worn jerseys available for the first time this year and on Saturday only, the department will sell a limited number of game-used gold helmets.

## Notable

MacIntyre said the defense improved on Tuesday with some things that were implemented in the scrimmage on Friday. ... Coaches have made some adjustments to their 'pencil' depth chart released last week and will continue to make changes to the depth chart through the remainder of spring. ... The Buffs will play the annual spring game on Saturday with seniors choosing teams Thursday. MacIntyre said part of Thursday's practice will be conducted with the teams pitted against each other as they will be Saturday.

Follow Kyle on Twitter: @KyleRingo

## Colorado Buffs QB Jordan Webb out for 2013 with knee injury

By John Henderson The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

Colorado quarterback Jordan Webb's 2013 season is over.

A magnetic resonance imagery test Tuesday night revealed that the senior suffered a torn anterior cruciate in his right knee during a non-contact drill during that day's spring practice. He will miss the entire 2013 season.

Webb, injured when he collapsed making an ordinary cut, was the primary starter during last year's 1-11 campaign. He led the Buffaloes with 1,434 yards and eight touchdown passes on 144-of-265 passing (.543) with eight interceptions.

"This is very sad for Jordan," first-year coach Mike MacIntyre said in a school statement. "We all feel for him. He was doing well in practice, competing again for the starting job and for this to happen and to lose him for the season is just a shame."

Webb, a fifth-year senior who has already graduated, will seek a sixth year of eligibility from the NCAA. He redshirted his freshman year at Kansas in 2009 after he tore an abdominal muscle, which prevented him from returning to practice until late in the season.

"It's another obstacle that I have to overcome," Webb said in the statement. "I've rebounded from adversity before so this is just another challenge I have to face."

The 6-foot-1, 205-pound Webb led Colorado to its lone win last year. He threw for 345 yards and two touchdowns then ran for the winning 3-yard score on fourth-and-goal with nine seconds left to win at Washington State, 35-34.

Jordan's injury came after returning from a reinjured thumb he broke late last season. He was recovering from two offseason surgeries.

The loss leaves MacIntyre with the three quarterbacks who separated themselves from the pack this spring: juniors Connor Webb and Nick Hirschman, who have the inside track on the starting job, and redshirt freshman Shane Dillon who is running third.

This fall MacIntyre will welcome in true freshman Sefo Liufau from Tacoma, Wash., and perhaps Nelson Fishback, who visited Colorado after leading Butte College in Oroville, Calif., to a 10-1 record, a conference title and a No. 1 junior college ranking in Northern California.

Ironically, Webb's injury occurred exactly one year after star receiver Paul Richardson suffered the same injury. Richardson is back as the No. 1 receiver this spring.

Richardson was able to practice late last season and Webb must make remarkable improvement to play this year if the NCAA doesn't grant him his sixth year.

Colorado's spring game is Saturday at 10:30 a.m and is open to the public.

John Henderson: 303-954-1299, [jhenderson@denverpost.com](mailto:jhenderson@denverpost.com) or [twitter.com/johnhendersondp](https://twitter.com/johnhendersondp)