



# COLORADO BUFFALOES

OFFICIAL ATHLETIC WEBSITE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO



*QBs Connor Wood (5), Nick Hirschman (8) are hyped about Saturday's spring game.*

*Photo Courtesy: Joel Broida*



## Brooks: MacIntyre Eager For Spring Game Competition

Release: 04/12/2013 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

**BOULDER** – In future springs, Colorado coach Mike MacIntyre plans to let his captains or seniors flip coins, choose sides and cap spring drills with a football game.

This spring, his first in Boulder, was different.

With only 10 healthy offensive linemen to disperse between the Black and Gold squads for Saturday's spring game (10:30 a.m., Folsom Field), MacIntyre believed he should play general manager and split his squad.

And according to Saturday's starting quarterbacks – Connor Wood (Gold), Nick Hirschman (Black) – their head coach did a credible job of balancing the Buffaloes roster. Still, competitive juices bubbling, each believes his team has an edge.

Said Hirschman: "I think I'm biased, but I think my team is always going to be better, regardless of who I have. But, yeah, they are split up pretty evenly at every spot."

Wood also said he likes his team, adding, "I think they got the majority of the running backs, but we've got the majority of the receivers. It all kind of balances out."

### BUFFALO EXTRAS



[Spring Game Rosters](#)

Hirschman and Wood, both juniors, enter Saturday's game hoping to further convince MacIntyre and offensive coordinator/QB coach Brian Lindgren of their capabilities in directing CU's new offense. The final week "pencil" depth chart – a spring-ending chart will be issued next week – shows Hirschman, Wood and redshirt freshman Shane Dillon listed as the co-leaders.

Dillon is on the Gold team with Wood, while Hirschman has sophomores Stevie Joe Dorman and John Schrock with him on the Black squad.

MacIntyre has made it clear to all players at all positions that Saturday's game is not to be taken as an April frolic for the benefit of the Pac-12 Network. CU's game is one of five being televised live Saturday. The game's format will feature 12-minute quarters with a running clock except in the last two minutes of each half.

Evaluations by MacIntyre and his position coaches continue, and Saturday's work offers players the chance to make a mark in game-type conditions. A final review/wrap-up practice – the 15th of the spring – is scheduled for Tuesday afternoon.

"The competition is big," MacIntyre said. "I'm looking for guys playing hard and competing on every snap . . . executing the best we can and I'm hoping there's not a lot penalties and turnovers. We'd like to see a couple (of turnovers) defensively but not a lot offensively. I'm hopeful it will be a smooth game."

Wood and Hirschman have gotten the message on competing.

"He's (MacIntyre) really stressed that this game is a big evaluation for everyone," Hirschman said. "It's a football game. You won't have the coaches standing behind you telling you what to do. You're on your own."

"I know coach MacIntyre has really hit it hard," Wood added. "He's told us that this game means something . . . it's going to be exciting to get that same kind of game atmosphere we have in the fall."

Other players have picked up on the competitive atmosphere that MacIntyre hopes will be prevalent. Senior defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe (Gold) said the game should be "fun" for several reasons – one maybe not so obvious.

"It gives a lot of us a chance to talk trash to the other players and finally get in a game-like atmosphere," Uzo-Diribe said, laughing. "My roommate, Terrel Smith (Black safety), ever since teams were broken up I've been in his ear about it, going back and forth. Right now, our house is divided."

Uzo-Diribe agreed that MacIntyre did a nice job of evenly dividing the squads, then added, "with a little advantage on the Gold side."

But that's debatable. In addition to Wood and Dillon, the Gold offense skill-position players include receivers Paul Richardson, Tyler McCulloch and Keenan Canty and tailback Tony Jones. In addition to Hirschman, Dorman and Schrock on the Black offense, skill players include receivers Nelson Spruce, Jeff Thomas and D.D. Goodson, and running backs Christian Powell and Josh Ford. *(Full Black/Gold rosters are linked to this story)*

If MacIntyre hopes to come away with a good read on competition at positions, he's especially keen on seeing it in special teams play. "We'll really be evaluating special teams," he said. "This is where we get to see kids do that . . . and it's all live."

A decision on a starting quarterback likely won't be made until deep into August camp, and Saturday's game, noted MacIntyre, will "shed some light, I don't know if a lot" on that decision. All the QBs, he added, "will get quite a few reps. It's a true game type situation. We try to give them as much game type in practice – over and over and over and hope that accelerates the quarterback. It's the best way a quarterback can learn – 11 on 11. And that's why we do a lot of it."

Hirschman and Wood said the new offense and its simplified terminology has eased the transition and bolstered the confidence of each.

"It's making it a lot easier for me to see things and make checks, better throws," Hirschman said. "I love running the ball, love making contact . . . I joke that we're not football players, we're quarterbacks. But it's fun to go in

there and be a football player again.”

He also credited “the new culture” introduced by MacIntyre and his staff as being beneficial to the entire team. “The fresh faces and the new style of coaching have really helped our team,” Hirschman said. “All these coaches stress family and team as being No. 1. For a team to build chemistry, that’s the way it’s got to be.”

“It’s fun – the coaches make it fun,” Wood said. “I think the tempo of practice, the tempo of the offense, makes things exciting. It gives us an edge.”

Also, added Wood, there are “less things to think about. The verbiage is very much condensed. We can come up there (to the line of scrimmage) have a couple of signals and get going.”

MacIntyre’s player-adaptive “pistol” offense, noted Wood, appears to be a comfortable fit for all. “(Thursday) was an OK day, but we’ve been pretty much on fire for the past two weeks since we came back from spring break,” he said. “I’ve been very encouraged . . . the linemen are picking up a lot of different stuff – blitzes and different looks. And I’m proud of our receivers for adapting so well to the different stuff in the offense.”

His confidence, he added, has spiked: “In the scrimmages, I think I’ve played very well. When were in Folsom, with the refs out there, that’s when I thrive. I’m pretty confident about where I stand . . . give credit to the coaches for really fostering a culture for that.

“It makes the entire team confident, but for the quarterback position it’s good how much more consistent and accurate we have been as a group. Just the way coach (Brian) Lindgren approaches coaching us has been great for me especially. It’ll be fun on Saturday.”

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SHOW MENU



## MacIntyre's Pistol-type offense will be on display today at spring game

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Colorado football players have a bounce in their step and an aura of confidence that has been absent from the Dal Ward Center locker room for a long time.

There still is a long way to go before we will know if what has happened on the practice fields this spring translates to significant improvement in actual games and the Pac-12 Conference standings next fall.

Let's be straight, if the Oregon Ducks were coming to town next week, the Buffs wouldn't be thinking of a possible upset, but they would definitely believe in their ability to move the ball for a change. That's at least a measure of progress for a program coming off the worst season in the modern era.

Credit first-year coach Mike MacIntyre and offensive coordinator Brian Lindgren for bringing the Buffs into the new era of college football by installing a multiple offense that includes plenty of The Pistol formation and keeping things simple this spring to help build that confidence.

The Buffs will showcase what they have learned from their new coaches in the annual spring game Saturday morning (10:30 a.m., Pac-12 Network) at Folsom Field. It's no surprise to one of the men who will be working the game as a television analyst that the Buffs are beginning to feel good about themselves again on offense.

Former CU, Washington and UCLA coach Rick Neuheisel said he discovered The Pistol offense midway through his tenure at UCLA (2008-11) while searching for answers for a struggling running game and wishes he would have switched to that approach earlier. He believes he might still be coaching the Bruins had he done so.

Neuheisel said it's spooky how similar the rebuilding project MacIntyre took over in December is to what he inherited from Karl Dorrell. He believes MacIntyre's decision to use the offense he used at San Jose State will help the Buffs this fall.

"When you're trying to catch up personnel-wise to guys who are bigger, stronger, at least for the time being, it's a great offense because it equalizes things," Neuheisel said of The Pistol "People have to stand still and see where the ball is and so forth. I'd do it again if I went back to coaching, especially if I had a dynamic quarterback."

The Pistol features the quarterback in a short shotgun formation with the running back aligned behind him. It gives the offense the ability to run the ball in any direction and doesn't provide the pre-snap cues defenders are accustomed to looking for that help them decipher what's coming more quickly.

"We've been pretty much on fire the past two weeks since we came back from spring break," junior quarterback Connor Wood said. "I've been very encouraged. The linemen are really picking up a lot of different stuff, blitzes and all the different nuances of the protection. I'm proud of our receivers for adapting to all the different things. I'm confident about where we are."

Both Wood and fellow junior Nick Hirschman said it has been years since they felt as comfortable running an

offense as they do today entering the spring game. Hirschman said he loves the new offense because it he is seeing things better and feels more at ease making checks and throws.

"The Pistol is an awesome dynamic," Hirschman said. "I love running the ball. I love the contact and getting physical in there. I always make the joke that we're not football players, we're quarterbacks, but it's fun to go in there and be a football player again."

Hirschman and Wood are on different teams and were talking a little trash to each other after Thursday's practice. They are perceived to be the leading candidates to earn the starting role heading into the summer, with redshirt freshman Shane Dillon right behind.

The 2013 spring game will be played like a normal game, which hasn't often been the case in previous spring games at CU. MacIntyre and the seniors chose sides Thursday and will compete with normal scoring rules and even live special teams plays.

MacIntyre is trying to get the best possible evaluation of players in game-like situations to help his assistants establish a depth chart next week that will be the base from which the team begins to build once again when fall camp starts in August.

Hirschman and Wood combined to make the CU defense look like it was playing Oregon or some other Pac-12 power in the most recent scrimmage last week. They threw seven touchdown passes and Wood ran for an eighth.

MacIntyre said he is hoping the defense puts up a better fight today.

Colorado's defense has had its share of success this spring in scrimmage situations, but it is generally hampered somewhat by not being able to hit the quarterback. The quarterbacks will be off limits once again today, a fact to keep in mind if Hirschman and Wood get hot once again.

Neuheisel said the only downside of running The Pistol can be exposing quarterbacks to injuries because they are asked to carry the ball more often. Neuheisel said that becomes less of a problem when you recruit the right player to the system. He believes he did that at UCLA when he landed Brett Hundley, who redshirted during Neuheisel's final season with the Bruins.

"If you've got the right guy, you can recruit a guy that doesn't get hit very often," Neuheisel said. "You end up running around people and when you run around people and get to the sideline, you can get out of bounds before anybody gets a real good shot at you."

Just the facts

KICKOFF: 10:36 a.m. Folsom Field, admission is free

TELEVISION: Pac-12 Network with Mike Yam, Rick Neuheisel and Curtis Conway.

RADIO: KOA (850 AM) will broadcast the game with Mark Johnson (play-by-play), Larry Zimmer (color commentary).

TEAMS: Coach Mike MacIntyre divided his roster into two teams. The Gold team is led by quarterback

Connor Wood and the Black team is led by quarterback Nick Hirschman.

**GARAGE SALE:** CU is conducting a garage sale in Balch Fieldhouse starting at 9 a.m., and running through the end of the game. The sale offers unused athletic equipment inventory, some of which features the official logo. There is also a limited number of game-used jerseys and gold helmets available.

**SOMETHING NEW:** CU painted the end zones for the spring game this year and it chose social media related messages. One end zone features the athletic department's official Twitter handle @CUBuffs and the other end zone features the official hashtag #GOBuffs

Follow Kyle on Twitter: @KyleRingo

## Pac-12 Network televising CU Buffs' spring football game Saturday

By John Henderson The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

BOULDER — Quarterback Nick Hirschman will team with tailback Christian Powell and freshman wide receiver Jeff Thomas while Connor Wood will throw to Tyler McCulloch with Tony Jones carrying the ball during the Colorado Buffaloes' spring game Saturday.

The 10:30 a.m. scrimmage at Folsom Field, open to the public, will be a complete game pitting two teams first-year CU coach Mike MacIntyre split down the middle. The format will be four 12-minute running quarters, except for the last two minutes of each half. The Pac-12 Network will do a live telecast, marking the first TV exposure for a CU spring game.

MacIntyre and his staff will be looking for better execution and tackling than the defense has shown in past scrimmages. But he also will keep his fingers crossed for his offensive linemen's health.

He only has 10 — and they will play the whole way.

"Florida had six," MacIntyre said. "So they didn't have (a spring game). They just practiced. If one guy gets hurt, we've got an emergency deal where a guy just flips jerseys and plays (for both teams).

"And they'll talk about him a lot on television being the ironman."

Much attention will be on the tight quarterback competition between Hirschman and Wood, the juniors who backed up Jordan Webb last season. Webb suffered a knee injury Tuesday and is out for the season.

"It'll shed some light," MacIntyre said. "I don't know if it'll shed a lot. Hopefully they'll get quite a few reps."

Asked what the winning team wins, MacIntyre quipped, "They get to eat."

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