



Greg Brown's goal for Parker Orms (13): Stay healthy.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: With DB Pool Restocked, Brown Looks To Rebound

Release: 08/20/2012 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

(Note: Seventh in a series previewing the Buffs position-by-position during training camp. Today: Defensive backs.)

BOULDER - Greg Brown can look back at the 2011 football season, but he still can't laugh about it. Not now, maybe not ever. In his Colorado secondary last season, Murphy's Law went to work in early August and was drawing overtime by late November.

In addition to losing both starting corners to graduation (both went to the NFL), injuries took out one starting corner in week two and a pair of promising young corners in training camp. Both starting safeties survived camp but couldn't stay clear of the injury list for the entire season. And four defensive backs were suspended, including the team's leading tackler for four games.

By season's end, Brown's secondary was a plug-in operation. At corner, he was using a running back who had

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never played defense and a converted receiver (remember "Espy Island?") who hadn't played defense in three seasons. To fill one safety spot, he drafted a totally raw true freshman linebacker.

Can you say depleted? Brown could.

At the time, he said he had "never seen this many guys injured or gone for whatever reason. Our big problem has been depletion - big-time . . . it's tough, but we're going to play the hand we're dealt."

Brown wasn't dealt a hand as much he was backhanded, virtually slapped silly. A secondary stricken in August suddenly got worse and never recovered. The Buffs' pass defense felt the flames almost every week, allowing a Pac-12 Conference worst 34 touchdown passes and 255.4 air yards a game (ninth in the league).

Brown believes/hopes/prays the 2011 season's checklist of calamities is behind him. In replenishing his secondary numbers and talent in February, CU recruited as well as it ever has, signing five defensive backs. One - John Walker - already has been lost for the season after undergoing finger surgery and another sophomore, safety Will Harlos, saw his career end after on-going concussion problems.

Brown's reinforcements are of the type that ultimately can stand up to Pac-12 passing games, but they need seasoning. "These freshmen have size, speed and athleticism," he said. "And they've got some confidence . . . we gained a great deal in the fact that we brought in freshmen with ability, but we lost two guys (Anthony Perkins, Travis Sandersfeld) who had been on the field a lot. Especially the versatility that Travis had - he played corner, safety, nickel, dime, whatever you wanted. 'Perk' was a machine, a coach on the field. He had been there a long time and understood everything."

To fill the back end's leadership void, Brown will look to senior safety Ray Polk and junior safeties Parker Orms and Terrel Smith, who remains a ferocious hitter but is fast becoming a think-first DB.

"Terrel has gotten in the books so much that the difference between when he first came in and now is day and night," Brown said. "He's always been a very physical player, a tough kid, but now he's making checks, he's understanding it. He leads and helps teach the young guys. It's great to see guys come through the natural progression and go from a new guy on the team to showing them how to do it."

Orms, one of the players suspended last season for a violation of team rules, makes the Buffs better whenever he's on the field. But staying on the field has been difficult. Said Brown: "We just have one real strict rule for Parker: Stay healthy. He's such a versatile guy; he's played corner, safety, nickel. He's just one of those guys - a ball-player, a winner. He'll do whatever we need him to do."

Starting left corner Greg Henderson took over that position in his first college camp last August and hasn't given it up. But with Orms' injury history, Brown needed another player prepared to play nickel. He looked to Henderson.

"Part of his success," said Brown, "is because of his durability. Three things happened for him last year: There was an opportunity for a corner to come in; he came in, took it and went with it. He was smart enough to figure it out and function and fit in. Then there was his durability. For him to play that many practices and games without a nick, he's just got one of those bodies that just keeps playing - no matter."

Along with his four other touted incoming freshmen - excluding Walker, there are Yuri Wright, Kenneth Crawley, Jeffery Hall and Marques Mosley -- Brown has other returning players who are expected to contribute. Josh Moten has improved, and Jered Bell and Sherrard Harrington - healed after the 2011 camp's knee injuries - have picked it up in this camp.

Brown needs his increased numbers for nickel and dime packages. With his defense routinely facing teams - particularly Fresno State and Washington State early - that use four wide receivers, "We need all the corner-type bodies we can get . . . usually if you're a corner you're on the outside. But we're going to need a lot of DBs on the field, especially ones in the slot who can function there," Brown said.

Through two weeks of camp, Mosley and Hall have shown they can function in that role, but Brown doesn't want them to be the only two. "It's the same old situation," he said. "When you get down to it it's a numbers game of, how many guys do you have to play in the slot? It's one thing to have a fifth DB - a nickel - to play in the slot. But to get a sixth - a dime - it's a mirror position. When (an opponent) has four wides in, a dime and a nickel are the same things. Then you have to learn how deal, how to cover the run and the pass."

Polk is mentoring Mosley and calls him "a very versatile" player. "We'll be able to use him in a lot of ways in a lot of positions . . . He said he wanted to play safety this year, but I don't know if he'll end up at safety or nickel. But he can play both, as well as corner. I was just trying to walk him through the coverages and help him out with his reads. He's a great kid. I try to reach out to all these guys and help them."

Mosley, one of three freshman from Upland, Calif. (fullback Christian Powell and tailback Donta Abron are the other two), said he was "pretty prepared" for playing at this level. "But I think what surprised me most was how fast practice goes."

Before he visited CU, Mosley visited Nebraska and initially believed he would sign there. "But there were some issues and I talked to the coaches here and some of the players here and decided this is where I should be," he said.

He called the step up in physical play "fine" as long as he steers clear of the big guys: "Sometimes getting in the line is a problem but other than that it's not that big a deal."

THE INSIDE LOOK AT . . .

Defensive backs

Coach: Greg Brown, third stint at CU (seven seasons), second season under Jon Embree.

Returning starters: S Ray Polk, Sr.; CB Greg Henderson, Soph.

Returnees: S Terrel Smith, Jr.; CB Parker Orms, Jr.; CB Josh Moten, Soph.; DB Richard Yates, Fr.-RS; DB Hunter Harrison, Soph.; CB Jered Bell, Soph.; CB Sherrard Harrington, Fr.-RS; DB Brandan Brisco, Fr.-RS.

Newcomers: Isaac Archuletta, Fr.; Kenneth Crawley, Fr.; Jeffrey Hall, Fr.; Marques Mosley, Fr.; John Walker, Fr.; Yuri Wright, Fr.; Tommy Papilion, Jr. (transfer).

Key losses: S Anthony Perkins, DB Travis Sandersfeld, CB Jonathan Hawkins, CB Jason Espinoza, CB Brian Lockridge, CB Ayodeji Olatoye (left program), DB Jordan Marquez (left program); CB River Thompson (left program), DB Justin Gorman (switched to RB).

Stat line: The Buffs allowed 255.4 air yards a game (ninth in Pac-12, 97th in the NCAA) and a league-worst 34 TD passes.

Bottom line: If you're looking for a position where freshmen are likely to make an immediate impact, the secondary should be near the top of your list. By mid-season in 2011, injuries and suspensions had prompted Brown's bunch to become a patchwork of running backs, receivers and third-stringers - basically anyone who could raise hands above head and run a little bit. The losses of Perkins and Sandersfeld will cost the Buffs on-field expertise and leadership that will be hard to replace, but Polk should be ready to step up in those areas in his final season. Smith and Orms could contribute there, too - provided he stays healthy. The incoming freshmen are talented and Brown is eager to see them show it on the field.

Next: Wide Receivers

BUFF BITS: Monday afternoon's practice featured full-squad, full-pads work after a pair of split-squad morning

sessions. Coach Jon Embree called the afternoon work crisp and energized. It featured more situation work, with 4-minute and 2-minute drills. Embree said the Buffs need to pay more attention to details, but overall he was pleased with his team's intensity and its work The Buffs have four more days of camp, with much of that time to be spent on self-improvement rather than beginning preparation for opening opponent Colorado State (Sept. 1, 2 p.m., Sports Authority Field at Mile High). But the Buffs could take their first look at the Rams late this week Embree addressed about 120 of CU's corporate sponsors following Monday afternoon's work. The event was organized by Buffalo Sports Properties (BSP), with the attendees watching part of practice then eating a dinner catered by Boulder's West End Tavern Tuesday's schedule features a morning practice in full pads and an afternoon walkthrough.

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SHOW MENU



Football: Terrel Smith quietly vying for secondary spot with CU Buffs

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Colorado's young cornerbacks have garnered a lot of attention and senior safety Ray Polk is being looked upon as a leader.

Meanwhile, junior Terrel Smith has quietly gone about his work and could wind up being a huge factor in the Buffs' secondary this season, as well.

"He just continues to do nothing but impress and make progress," CU defensive coordinator Greg Brown said. "He's a good player for us and hopefully we'll look for a big year for him on the field."

Smith, who is from Paterson, N.J., came to CU with little fanfare. Buffs coaches found him while recruiting running back Tony Jones. They liked him enough to offer a scholarship, which most schools didn't do, so Smith accepted.

As a freshman in 2010, Smith wound up starting the final six games and finished among the team leaders in tackles. He started six games in 2011, as well.

This year, he may land a starting job at strong safety. He is battling with Polk, junior Parker Orms and freshman Marques Mosley for one of the two spots.

"I've been running with the (starters) and I'm feeling good about this year," he said. "I'm so happy this camp and I feel better than ever in any camp I've been in the last two years. When the season kicks off, I'll be out there grinding out every play and making more plays than I did last year."

Always known as a big hitter, Smith is making an impression in other ways during fall camp.

"He's become much more of a complete player," Brown said. "He's always been a good tackler, but his intelligence is what impresses you now about the guy. He's worked hard and it shows."

Smith said he has learned a lot the past two years from Anthony Perkins, who graduated and is currently with the Denver Broncos.

"I learned a lot from him because he was so smart," Smith said. "In the offseason, I got in the playbook, I got in the film room and I know what I'm doing and I'm moving guys around like he was doing here."

If Smith can continue on his current path, he's got a lot more to give the Buffs. Considering where he came from, he's a little amazed at what he's done so far, though.

"No one thought I'd be playing and doing what I'm doing out there," he said. "People thought I might have been home already and messed up and failed school. But I'm doing great in school and great out here most of all."

Camp focus

The Sept. 1 opener against Colorado State is less than two weeks away, but head coach Jon Embree isn't quite ready to focus on the Rams.

"Probably later in the week," he said. "We're still in camp. There's still some stuff I want to get done, some things that I want to look at and evaluate in our systems."

Little things

Embree continues to be pleased with practices and the work the team is getting done. Practice hasn't been perfect, though. On Monday, the Buffs were practicing end-of-game situations when a player picked off a pass and began to

run instead of falling down and protecting the ball.

"There's some little things like that that we have to keep emphasizing and getting on, but it was a real crisp practice and a little more energy," he said.

Notable

Embree said sophomore defensive lineman Juda Parker has done well, thanks to some help from junior Chidera Uzo-Diribe. Embree also said he thinks the emergence of some younger linemen has pushed Parker. ... The Buffs aren't scaling down the hitting in practice, as they remained aggressive on Monday. "You get too cautious that way, then when it's time to hit you don't know how to," Embree said.

Follow Brian on Twitter: @BrianHowell33.

AUGUST 21, 2012, 7:28 AM

CU Position Breakdown: Secondary gets influx of youth, talent

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Considering that Colorado ranked last in pass-efficiency defense among Pac-12 teams in 2011, it came as no surprise that signing defensive backs was a priority during recruiting.

In February, the Buffs landed five high school DBs. Four of the five may help immediately, with John Walker of Washington D.C., having to wait until 2013 because a finger injury early in August camp required surgery and he likely will redshirt this season.

From speaking with coaches (practices are closed to the public, including the media), it appears the two most highly regarded of the signees, Yuri Wright and Kenneth Crawley, are living up to their billing.

Wright, from New Jersey high school power Don Bosco Prep, was regarded as a national top-100 recruit (all positions). Crawley, who was Walker's teammate at H.D. Woodson High in Washington D.C., made some national top-300 lists.

Crawley (6-foot-1) and Wright (6-2) are tall cornerbacks that are in high demand by all the top college programs. Look for them to be in the rotation immediately, and one could earn a starting position opposite returning sophomore corner Greg Henderson, who is expected to retain his starting job on the left side.

Embree also has singled out cornerback Jeffrey Hall (5-11) from LaPlace (La.) St. Charles Catholic HS in suburban New Orleans as another freshman having a good camp.

"They're all Division I corners," senior Ray Polk, the returning starter at free safety.

Marques Mosley (6-1, 175) of Upland (Calif.) HS, is the one signee spending much of his time at safety. Colorado has more depth at safety, with returnees Polk, Parker Orms (projected starter at nickelback) and Terrel Smith.

But Mosley may earn a spot in the safety rotation, especially since returning sophomore Will Harlos was forced to quit the sport last week after sustaining another concussion.

Sophomore Josh Moten entered August drills atop the depth chart at right cornerback. It will be interesting to see if Moten can hold off the blue-chip freshmen.

At the very least, look for Wright, Crawley and Hall to get minutes in the Sept. 1 opener against Colorado State at Sports Authority Field at Mile High. And it would not be surprising if one earns a starting job.

Colorado is younger in the secondary than last season, but more athletic. That's a tradeoff most coaches will accept.

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

AUGUST 20, 2012, 2:27 PM

New Colorado quarterback Jordan Webb feeling “more comfortable”

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — With junior quarterback Jordan Webb having been named Colorado’s starting quarterback just three days earlier, reporters were anxious to ask the Kansas transfer how Saturday’s scrimmage felt, now that he is in charge of the offense.

“I’m definitely more comfortable,” Webb said. “But I’m working even harder now.

“To be named the guy is a big responsibility. It’s time to take leadership of this offense, to make it my own.

“I’m really trying to do that. Guys are rallying around me. I think we’re really excited for (the Sept. 1 season opener against Colorado State at Sports Authority Field at Mile High).”

Webb said he is taking advantage of getting most of the snaps with the No. 1 offense, particularly in regard to the timing with receivers.

“It’s given me a lot better timing with some of the older guys,” Webb said. “We’re going to keep getting better. That’s the great thing about it.”

ARTICLE PRINTED FROM THE FIELD HOUSE

<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2012/08/20/colorado-quarterback-jordan-webb-feeling-comfortable/24324/>

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[ESPN.com: Pac-12](#)[\[Print without images\]](#)

Monday, August 20, 2012

Fresh start for Jordan Webb, Colorado

By Kevin Gemmell

Now, the hard part starts for [Jordan Webb](#).

Colorado's newly minted starting quarterback has won over his coaches. And in doing so, he won the Buffs starting gig. Now, it's time to win some games.

Following a scrimmage Saturday, Webb offered a pretty standard summation: "Overall, I thought it went really well. There were some positives and some negatives I have to work on. But I think that's the case with every player. We moved the ball well. We didn't hit as many big plays as we have in practice. But I think that comes with the defense not wanting to get beat deep. We moved the ball very efficiently. That's what we're going to have to do to win."

From here on out, chemistry will be key. The Buffs have had all of three weeks to get to know their new quarterback. After working pretty much exclusively with [Connor Wood](#) in spring ball, a young receiving corps will have to adjust to what Webb, a Kansas transfer, brings to the position. Though Webb said his teammates have had his back since he arrived on campus and that he hasn't needed to rally people to his cause.

"I never really felt like that was the case," Webb said. "I am who I am. I come out every day with the same mentality to get better and be as perfect as I can. I think those guys see that work ethic and that I want to be the guy to lead this team. I think they really rallied around me when the announcement was made and that was really reassuring to me."

Since arriving at Colorado, Webb has buried himself in the playbook. But there is going to be more to his transition than simply learning the Xs and Os. Webb has been a spread quarterback his entire career and has worked exclusively from the shotgun. Now, as a quarterback in the West Coast offense, he's working under center for the first time.

"It's a lot different, honestly," said Webb. "Some things transfer over, protections or route schemes. But being under center is totally new to me. I've never done that before."

"But I really like it. This West Coast offense is fun to be a part of. It gives quarterbacks a lot of options and responsibilities. But with that, you can protect yourself. You can make things right. As a quarterback, you really want it to be in your hands."

And much of Colorado's success will depend on Webb getting up to speed quickly. While the Buffs showed some spark at the end of last season -- winning two of their final three, including a gutty 17-14 victory at Utah -- Webb himself is riding a 10-game losing streak. After Kansas opened the 2011 season with a pair of wins, the Jayhawks dropped their final 10. Last season Webb threw for 1,884 yards, completing 63.7 percent of his throws with 13 touchdowns and 12 interceptions.

But it's a clean slate for Webb and a fresh start for the Buffs. That was made clear when he was named the starter after such a short amount of time.

"I wasn't shocked," he said. "I've been playing well all camp. The first couple of days I had to get my feet underneath me and then it was going really well. I'd been really consistent. Maybe the timing was a surprise. I thought they'd wait until after (the scrimmage) to narrow it down. But they felt like it was the right time."



After playing out of the shotgun at Kansas, quarterback Jordan Webb will be piloting Colorado's West Coast offense from under center.

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College Football RapidReports

Colorado: Buffaloes health concerns heading into 2012

By Craig Morgan | CBSSports.com

August 20, 2012 6:25 pm ET

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Injuries are the asterisk in every coach's preseason thoughts. *If we can just stay healthy...*

Colorado has a few more worries than health on its plate, but injuries would only hamper the thin and talent-poor Buffaloes in the Pac-12. Here are a few guys to watch with the season opener just 12 days away.

WR Paul Richardson (ACL surgery): Richardson just began an intense five-week rehab regimen that he hopes will put him back in the lineup before conference play begins. At the end of that regimen -- Sept. 16, which is one day after the Buffaloes play [Fresno State](#) in their final nonconference game -- he will be evaluated. That date also marks five months since his surgery following the spring ball injury. The operation normally requires six to nine months recovery but some players have returned after as little as five months. The Buffs would desperately love to have Richardson. Even though he missed four games as a sophomore in 2011, he still was Colorado's third leading receiver with 39 receptions for 555 yards and five touchdowns. The Buffs top two receivers, Toney Clemons and Rodney Stewart graduated. Richardson was supposed to become the Buffs' No. 1 receiving threat, but there is no guarantee he will play at all in 2012. That would be a big blow.

MLB Doug Rippy (knee ligament surgery): Rippy is back at 100 percent but the Buffaloes have been limiting him in practices to keep him fresh. There is always a concern with a player coming off surgery and it goes double for Rippy. He was leading the team in tackles (62, three sacks) when he was injured against [Washington](#) in game seven. Coach Jon Embree is counting heavily on him this season.

CB Jered Bell (ACL surgery) – Bell was closing in on [Josh Moten](#)'s starting job when he tore his ACL last August. He wasn't listed on the spring depth chart as he rehabbed but he would be at the very least, a valuable backup to Moten and [Greg Henderson](#).

Pac-12 preview: Colorado Buffaloes looking up

Aug 21

mydesert.com

Colorado at a glance

Last year: 3-10 overall, 2-7 in conference (tied for fifth in Pac-12 South)

Coach: Jon Embree (3-10 in one year at Colorado)

Leading lights: OL David Bakhtiari, WR Paul Richardson, S Ray Polk, LB Jon Major, DT Will Pericak

Key stat: After a season in which it had the worst overall record in the Pac-12, Colorado is near the bottom of the conference in returning starters with just 10, which indicates the rebuilding job facing Embree.

The schedule: It's better than a year ago, when Colorado had 13 games without a bye. CU also has just five true road games.

FULL SCHEDULE

Sep. 1: at Colorado St. 1 p.m. (FX)

Sep. 8: Sacramento St. Noon (P12N)

Sep. 15: at Fresno St. 5:15 p.m. (CBSSN)

Sep. 22: at Washington St. TBA

Sep. 29: UCLA TBA

Oct. 11: Arizona St. 6 p.m. (ESPN)

Oct. 20: at USC TBA

Oct. 27: at Oregon TBA

Nov. 3: Stanford TBA

Nov. 10: at Arizona TBA

Nov. 17: Washington TBA

Nov. 23: Utah Noon (FOX or FX)

Jon Embree didn't try to put up a fight. Didn't attempt to pull out the no-respect card.

Instead, when Pac-12 media voted the Colorado Buffaloes last in the South Division last month, Embree shrugged and said he had no quarrel.

“We haven't done anything,” said Embree, entering his second year as Colorado's coach. “We won two games in the conference last year and we graduated a lot of guys. So I understand that.”

Indeed, on paper the Buffs seem to have all the makings of a last-place team — and the conference's only team that seems a stretch to contend for a bowl game.

Colorado was 3-10 last season overall and 2-7 in Pac-12 play, where it was outscored 354-162, by far the most points allowed and the fewest points scored of anyone in the Pac-12 (Washington's much-maligned defense, by contrast, allowed 290 points in its nine conference games).

And as Embree noted, there is little proven talent returning as the Buffs welcome back just 10 position starters — four on offense and six on defense.

Given the team's record, some might figure a lack of returners to be a good thing.

But among the starters lost were tailback Rodney Stewart (854 rushing yards in 2011) and quarterback Tyler Hansen. In fact, Colorado's 28 seniors last year were the most for the school since 1987.

Now Colorado has just eight seniors — its fewest since 1995 and, according to the school, fewer than anyone in the country other than Indiana, with seven.

Embree, though, also notes that Colorado played 15 freshmen last season and ended the year on something of a high, winning at Utah to knock the Utes out of a berth in the Pac-12 Conference title game.

“I understand (the predictions), but yeah, I am optimistic,” he said. “I feel like us winning a couple of games at the end last year, two of the last three (the other was over Arizona), gives ourselves a chance to build on that momentum.”

Embree also said he views what Steve Sarkisian has accomplished with Washington as a template for what the Buffs hope to get done.



- Jim Rogers: It's Going To Get Really "Bad After The Election" (Money Morning)
- A clear choice: How can any American not care? (UnionLeader)