



*Freshman corner Yuri Wright (5) wants to make his mark on the field.  
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com*



## Brooks: Embree, Buffs Trusting Wright To Do Right

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

**BOULDER** - **Yuri Wright** arrived at the University of Colorado in late May with baggage in tow. A couple of months before, **Jon Embree** had characterized Wright as "quiet, almost shy," but given what Wright was dragging behind him, the CU football coach's characterization wasn't roundly believed.

**Parker Orms** was among the non-believers until he spent time around Wright, whose questionable tweets prompted expulsion from his high school (Don Bosco in New Jersey) and created a national firestorm late in the 2012 recruiting cycle.

But once Wright was around Orms, a junior defensive back, and the rest of his Buffs teammates, guess what? Embree was judged to be a pretty fair judge of character. Said Orms of Wright, "He came in and was quiet, really didn't say much . . . it was so different from what you hear with the whole Twitter thing, you know? I was expecting something way different."

As for Wright, he frankly didn't know what to expect or how he

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would be received in Boulder. The common perception of him probably was closer to Orms' than Embree's, and he came in aware that all he could do to change it was be the person/player that Embree believed he had signed in February.

Wright is thankful more than you can imagine for Embree's trust. He contends he's relegated his past to the past. "Talking to the coaches, talking to everybody here, that definitely made me feel a lot more comfortable," he told me Wednesday after lunch in the Dal Ward Athletic Center. "I feel like they trust me not to do something like that again."

The bigger question is, does he trust himself?

"Yeah, I trust myself. I learned my lesson . . . remembering how I felt then, I know it's something I'll never do again."

Embree heard that, too, and he has taken Wright at his word since other schools backed off of the highly recruited corner late last winter. Orms also says he has no reason to doubt Wright's sincerity when Wright says, "When I go back and look at it, I question why I said some of those things. It was something that's definitely not me."

"I kind of see that in myself, too," said Orms, "because I know when I get on Twitter my personality kind of comes out a little bit differently than people are used to. You've got to keep a handle on it, especially at this level. But he came in and was totally different from what you might expect."

"I've put some things on Twitter or Facebook or whatever, and it's just like an in-the-moment thing. Then my dad or my grandma or someone will be like, 'so what were you trying to say there? You'd better take that down.' Then I think about it and take it down . . . whatever they think is right, I do."

Unfortunately, Wright didn't have that kind of monitoring in place, but Embree has addressed that for all of his players. He has established a first line of defense in the social networking world, appointing Recruiting and Operations Assistant **Scott Unrein** to monitor the team's social media activity.

Embree introduced Unrein to the Buffs at Sunday night's first team meeting of camp, telling his players their tweeting and Facebook activity will be accountable to Unrein and ultimately to their head coach. Embree also detailed for the Buffs what were acceptable topics and language, as well as subjects pertaining to the team. Bold-faced in his players' handbook is this directive: 7. **Don't twitter or Facebook any information about teammates or program.**

Don't think Embree's 2012 social media guidelines are the "Wright Rules." All were in place last season, with Unrein's appointment as a monitor being the only significant change in how Embree is dealing with social networking.

So far, said Unrein, all players have been in compliance: "It's not been an issue at all."

Here's what Embree told me about social networking last winter before signing day, after the Wright tweeting story had exploded and prior to conducting a team meeting on being smart with tweets: "I don't want to ban it; it's part of their lives. But there have to be guidelines, an understanding of what's right and wrong. Some kids we get, we have to raise them - and that's just a part of it. Maybe in their world (objectionable tweets) that's normal. But there's a different definition of normal; we have to dialogue and manage it."

Wright would like to push his recent past far enough into the background that it's never mentioned again. He's mature enough (now) to know that's not happening until he proves himself on the field and writes Chapter One

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at CU. He believes he can do it.

"Definitely . . . I think there's a chance that I could be playing really early," Wright said. "My mindset was to come in here and take a starting job . . . it takes some time to learn the defense, but some of the stuff I already knew from studying during the summer and from 7-ons. They definitely helped; I got to see and actually be active on the field while learning things.

"I definitely feel like I'm competitive now, but some of the things I want to work on are learning the defense better - that's basically it. I feel like once I learn the defense that it'll show I'm getting better; the physical things I think I can do now. And I think (learning the defense) will make me more competitive. The more you know, the better you are."

At 6-2, 175, Wright conceded, "I might look a little skinny and small," but added, "I'm like a tall cornerback." He's not targeting a huge weight gain, eyeing a top weight of 180-185 pounds. He said he's able to "run with everybody so far," and has been playing both corners.

"I think he's going to be a good player for us this year," Orms said. "He's got the ability, he's fast, he's smart and he seems like he can make plays . . . I'm really impressed with how well he knows the game of football."

But, added Orms, freshmen make mistakes and Wright is, after all, a freshman. This isn't high school; responsibilities go beyond what athleticism and superior ability can mask. Said Orms: "He's used to 'cover three' where you can line up and do kind of whatever you want. But when the ball's snapped here, you've got to know where you're at and what you're supposed to do. You've got a responsibility and you've got to know it . . . it's just a lot different."

Orms has known Wright for all of 2 1/2 months and watched him warm up - albeit gradually - to his new teammates. Orms also knows something about personal growth and moving past mistakes; he served a four-game suspension early last season for violating team rules and can relate to Wright's wrong.

"He's just like any other college football player," Orms said. "I think he's better now than he was before. I think he's grown even since he's been up here, for sure. I think if he gets on the field this year, (his baggage) will all go away. If he doesn't get in any trouble, stays off the social media-type things, he'll be fine."

Wright has no plans to be overly social with his phone. In fact, as for overusing Twitter, he claimed, "I get scared even going on. I don't pay that much attention to it anymore. I pretty much know how to handle the situation now. When I did what I did, there were people calling me, asking so many questions . . . I think I know how to deal with it now. I'm like past it now."

The Buffs believe him.

**BUFF BITS:** Embree answered the daily question about quarterbacks after practice, saying "each guy has had maybe 15 plays with the first team, so it's way too early." ... when asked if it's a disadvantage for Jordan Webb to learn a new system, Embree replied "I'll ask you this question, 'How big of a disadvantage is it for those other guys having never played?' It evens out, terminology may be different, but he's done a great job managing it, he has game experience, so he's calm, he doesn't panic." ... To the other long time topic, Paul Richardson, Embree stated that "he's doing a lot of stuff on the side, but nothing with the team. He's catching passes, watching practice and taking mental reps. He's still ahead of the curve, we'll have to see how he continues to progress, see if he can keep at this pace." Embree noted the quick returns of Jerry Rice and Rod Woodson from similar injuries but was quick to note that Rice caught a touchdown but Steve Atwater dinged him up again quickly in his first game back.

**Contact:** [BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU](mailto:BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU)

## Football: CU Buffs' Greg Henderson already a veteran

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Greg Henderson won't turn 20 until after the season, yet Colorado is already counting on him to be a leader this season.

That's how young the Buffaloes are in the secondary.

"They told me I'm a veteran and my leadership is going to help us go far and to a bowl game," said Henderson, a true sophomore cornerback. "I've just got to step up and be a leader on this team."

Henderson started 12 of CU's 13 games at left corner last season. He played 823 snaps on defense -- the most on the team in 2011 and the most of any freshman in program history.

His experience is already showing up as the Buffs completed Day 3 of fall camp on Wednesday.

"I know the plays like the back of my hand," he said. "I just know what to do and to fly around and play fast."

Henderson's vault in confidence has been evident to defensive coordinator Greg Brown.

"We've got some new, young freshmen in here who are very talented kids coming out of high school," Brown said, "but, man, it's a brand-new ball game. They're out there and there's a little bit of doubt, you can see, in their minds, whereas Greg Henderson is saying, 'I've been there, done that at this level. I know what I'm doing.'"

CU's 2012 recruiting class was highlighted by cornerbacks Yuri Wright and Kenneth Crawley. Wright was one of the most sought-after corners in the country last year and Crawley wasn't far behind. Three other defensive backs -- Jeffrey Hall, Marques Mosley and John Walker -- were part of the 2012 class, as well.

Henderson hasn't shied away from the competition.

"I knew we needed all the help we could get and I was just happy to get some more corners to come in because we're trying to compete this year," he said. "It's going to be a lot of youth, but it's going to pay off in the long run. I've just got to be a leader and make my voice heard on the field."

While Henderson seems secure, the freshmen are just starting to get their feet wet. All of them are learning as much as they can right now, as opposed to focusing on particular starting jobs.

"Right now, the way it is, all corners have to play left and right," Brown said. "Until you become the starter, you have to know both sides and get comfortable with the footwork. Once you're the starter, then you reserve the right to stay on one side."

Brown pointed out that past CU star corners, such as Cha'pelle Brown, Jalil Brown and Jimmy Smith, took two or three years to really become significant players for the Buffs. With a lack of experience and depth, however, Brown acknowledged the Buffs probably need some of the youngsters to be ready quicker.

### Arms race

The Buffs have six quarterbacks in camp and haven't figured out who will start this season. It's likely a three-man race between Nick Hirschman, Jordan Webb and Connor Wood.

"The quarterback competition is starting to come around a little bit, too, so that's good," head coach Jon Embree said Wednesday. "It's starting to take shape. They've been friendly, but now it's, 'I want this job.' They're competing like that, so that's good to see."

Embree said it is way too early for any of them to be separating themselves from the others. He said each quarterback has had only 15-20 plays with the first team offense.

### Versatility

Senior lineman Ryan Dannewitz started 11 games last season, including the final 10 at right tackle. This fall, he's listed as a backup at a variety of positions on the line.

"He's our sixth guy," Embree said. "He's real valuable. He can play all the positions, so he's a key guy that you need to have around as these other guys continue to develop."

### Notable

Wednesday was CU's first practice in shells and Embree said it was a "spirited" practice. "They finally get to hit each other," he said. ... Receiver Paul Richardson, who is recovering from a knee injury, has been doing a lot of work on the side, but nothing with the team. ... Cornerback Sherrard Harrington (ankle) could be back to practice in a few days, Embree said. ... There were no new injuries reported Wednesday. ... Several players are auditioning for punt return duties. Embree listed Henderson, Mosley, Crawley, Keenan Canty, Gerald Thomas, Donta Abron and Terrence Crowder among those competing.

Follow Brian on Twitter:

@BrianHowell33.



## Football: CU Buffs' Will Oliver healthy again after shoulder surgeries

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Will Oliver's high school lacrosse career ended more than a year ago, but he spent much of the past year paying a price for it while starting his new life in college football.

Both of Oliver's shoulders had torn labrums from years of abuse and they would occasionally slip out of socket during his freshman season as Colorado's place-kicker. He says it didn't hinder his performance. He made 11 of his 16 field goal attempts and 29 of 31 extra point tries, but he decided to have both shoulders surgically repaired in the offseason.

Oliver had his right shoulder repaired in December. He recovered in time to participate in the first half of spring ball and then opted to have his left shoulder done at that point in order to give himself enough time to heal and be ready for the season.

Oliver was 100 percent at the start of camp as he tries to keep his job in competition with junior Justin Castor.

Both kickers were able to work with former Buff Mason Crosby again this summer when Crosby came to town for a charity golf tournament. Oliver said the time he has spent with Crosby this year and last has been invaluable toward his development. Crosby has been with the Green Bay Packers since his career ended in Boulder six years ago.

"It's nice to get guidance from someone who has done it, because people can tell you all they want, but if they haven't done it, there is a certain degree of believability or not. Do you buy it or not?" Oliver said. "He's at the top. He's done everything he can. He's still doing it and he's still going strong. He's got incredible insight."

Oliver missed five kicks and two extra points as a freshman but still managed to give the impression he was bringing stability to the position after the place-kicking nightmares during much of the Dan Hawkins era.

Oliver's biggest problem making the transition to the college game was not getting enough height on his kicks quickly. He had four kicks blocked, though coaches say two of those blocks had more to do with missed blocking assignments than Oliver.

Still, Oliver says he could have saved those from being blocks if he had better height on his kicks. He spent the offseason working on that issue when he wasn't rehabilitating his shoulders. Oliver said he feels confident he has made significant improvement.

"I really focused on height and getting through the ball more because my distance occasionally wasn't the best," Oliver said. "They were pretty much comfortable with me 50 and in -- I had that 52 against Cal -- but they were not super confident about throwing me back there that far out. I'm hitting the ball much cleaner with better contact and getting it up much faster."

Oliver said if the season started today against Colorado State in Denver in perfect conditions, he is confident he could make field goals consistently from 57 yards or closer. Oliver made five of six attempts from 40 yards or more as a freshman.

Follow Kyle on Twitter: @KyleRingo.

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**The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post**

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AUGUST 9, 2012, 7:26 AM

## Colorado tailback Tony Jones ready for big year, QB Nick Hirschman says

By **TOM KENSLER** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Following Colorado's practice Wednesday evening I spent a few minutes talking to quarterback Nick Hirschman about fellow sophomore Tony Jones, the expected starter at tailback.

Hirschman said he has been impressed by the weight-room work Jones put in during the offseason. Since the 2011 season, the 5-foot-7 Jones said he is up to 12 pounds, to 192.

"Tony has worked his tail off to get ready for the season," Hirschman said, "and it really shows from last year to this year.

"Tony is coming into this season with a lot of confidence, a lot of swagger. That's something we need."

As a redshirt freshman and backup to senior Rodney Stewart, Jones rushed for 297 yards in 2011 and also caught 27 passes out of the backfield.

I'll have a feature story on Jones in Sunday's Denver Post print edition and on denverpost.com.

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**<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2012/08/09/colorado-tailback-tony-jones-ready-big-year-qb-nick-hirschman/24101/>**

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## The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

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AUGUST 8, 2012, 2:25 PM

# Colorado's Jon Embree impressed with defense early in camp

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

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BOULDER — August camp for the Colorado football team is in its first week, but Buffs coach Jon Embree already sounds impressed with the effort of the defense.

Embree appears to be paying particular attention to takeaways. Colorado ranked next-to-last among Pac-12 teams with seven interceptions gained in 2011, ahead of only Stanford (6). By comparison, seven Pac-12 teams recorded 11 or more interceptions, and Utah had 19.

Colorado's eight fumbles gained in 2011 ranked in a tie for eighth in the conference.

"Day 2 (of camp) went well," Embree said Tuesday evening. "We were able to force some turnovers. And not only force them, but scoop up and score with them, so that was good.

"I like what the defense is doing with their tempo and energy. The young guys keep showing up, so that's always a positive. We'll see, once you can be hit (players in shells beginning today, full pads on Sunday). But so far, it's been pretty good."

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<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2012/08/08/colorados-jon-embree-impressed-defense-early-camp/24088/>

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## College Football RapidReport

# Colorado: Wide receiver depth won't be by suspensions

[ColIFB Home](#) [Blog](#) By John Breech | CBSSports.com

August 8, 2012 2:37 pm ET

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Colorado wide receivers [Jeffrey Thomas](#) and [DaVaughn Thornton](#) have each been suspended for the Bu games of the 2012 season following a weekend incident that involved the cops, guns and an air pistol.

In the early morning of Aug. 4, the receivers were apart of a group of eight Colorado football players who two separate cars. One of the cars jokingly aimed an air gun at the other car and when that happened, w called the authorities. You can read the entire story in our [Eye on College Football blog](#).

The result of the incident, which led to no arrests, was the suspension of Thomas and Thornton by coach Freshman linebacker [Jermame Clark](#) left the team following the incident, but that was partially due to fam [Like](#)

The loss of Thornton and Thomas shouldn't have any devastating effects on the Colorado receiving corp recorded six catches for 69 yards last season and was the [Buffaloes](#) fourth string "Z" receiver heading in Thomas, who was a freshman last year, wasn't even listed on the [post-spring depth chart](#), which included receivers.

In other Colorado news, Embree has narrowed the quarterback competition down from four to three. [The](#) reporting that much heralded freshman [Shane Dillon](#) will likely redshirt. That means the competition to re Hansen is now down to sophomore [Nick Hirschman](#) and Big 12 transfers [Jordan Webb](#) ([Kansas](#)) and [Co](#) ([Texas](#)).

Colorado opens the season in Denver on Sept. 1 with a game against rival Colorado State.

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