

Agree or disagree with recent decisions, former players want to see success return

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The past few weeks have been an emotional time for Buff Nation.

Colorado's decision to fire head football coach Jon Embree on Nov. 25 was extremely popular with some and extremely unpopular with others.

The hiring of new coach Mike MacIntyre, while widely praised, was another point of debate this week.

Through it all, the job status of athletic director Mike Bohn has been a hot topic. Many want him gone, others don't. President Bruce Benson and chancellor Phil DiStefano haven't been immune to criticism, either.

Several CU alums, including former quarterback Joel Klatt and linebacker Alfred Williams, have certainly made their opinions known on the local sports talk radio shows they host.

Regardless of how the alums feel about Bohn, Embree and MacIntyre, though, they can pretty much all agree on one thing: They want the Buffs to succeed.

"All I want is the program to be solid," said Joe Garten, an offensive lineman from 1987-90. "That starts with the administration, with Benson, with DiStefano and with Bohn. I just want the program to be a winning program because it's a football school. I expect greatness out of them.

"I bleed black and gold."

That black and gold blood runs thick and, ultimately, will be what bonds Buff Nation through this rocky time.

"All these guys that are on the radio have tons of passion for CU," said former CU quarterback Bobby Pesavento, who played for the Buffs from 2000-01. "They love the university, they love the football program. I don't have to agree with everything they're doing, but what they're doing is coming from a good place, because they just want the best for it."

Many of the former Buffs have struggled to watch their team in recent years. This season's 1-11 record was a far cry from past success. Garten helped CU win a national title in 1990. Pesavento quarterbacked CU to a Big 12 title in 2001.

Karl Allis was an offensive lineman on that 2001 team and he believes this an important time for the CU family to come together.

"It's tough because Embo is a Buff, just like me, just like all these other guys," Allis said. "But, it does no good to sort of get in the way of the progress, in terms of supporting. Guys are entitled to what they want to do, but we're all Buffs who just happened to have different coaches. Does it really matter who the coach is? No.

"Your loyalties and support should lie to the football program and athletic department. You should absolutely get behind the new hire and send all the positive vibes that way."

Allis, Garten and Pesavento are all excited about the prospect of MacIntyre coaching the Buffs. They like his credentials and they like the commitment that CU administrators are making to the football program.

"They've made a statement up there and they're committed to the football program and they want results now," Garten said. "That's a tough position for anybody that decided to take that job to come in there. They've got their hands full, but with the right leadership in the program, the sky is the limit."

Time will tell if MacIntyre is the right man for the job, but so far he's certainly made a good impression on many associated with the program.

"I do think next fall will be better than this past fall, but I also think down the road CU can easily get back to where it was in the early 90s for about 10 years," Pesavento said. "It has all the tools."

One of those tools is the strong alumni base. Several former Buffs, like Garten, bleed black and gold and want the best for the current Buffs. Pesavento also believes the former Buffs can be an inspiration to the current players.

"I remember showing up every day and seeing the national championship trophy or the Heisman Trophy and that means a lot to kids who are playing college football," Pesavento said. "I think it's great to be reminded of success in the past and understand it has been done, it can be done again and all those guys they're seeing pictures of or trophies of support them and are in their corner."

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