

## Ringo: College football is all about business, tradition

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The housecleaning in the Colorado football program continued on the Friday before Christmas.

Jashon Sykes, the former Buff linebacker who was the director of football operations this season and had served in operations for seven years, announced on his Facebook page that he had been fired.

"Buff Nation-Thank u for great memories as a player & as an employee. Unfortunately I wasn't lucky enuff to survive the new coaching change," Sykes wrote.

It's uncertain at this point if Darian Hagan, the quarterback of the 1990 national title team, will remain with the program in some capacity after serving six seasons as an assistant coach and two years as part of the operations staff. If he does stay, he's likely to remain in operations or possibly in a different role in the athletic department.

This is the ugly side of the business of big time college athletics. These aren't just men losing their jobs after a 1-11 season as some choose to simplify it. Families are affected. Lives are changed. Roots will be pulled up.

It seems as if something is dying while something else is breathing in new life all at once.

It's worse when the people losing their jobs are beloved former players or men who have given the majority of their lives to the university such as longtime linebackers coach Brian Cabral. These are sad days at the Dal Ward Center even while there is a renewed optimism around the program.

If former coach Dan Hawkins got anything right during his tenure in Boulder, it might be the truth in his infamous rant when he said, "It ain't intramurals." He also occasionally said, "It's big boy football."

And that is never more true than at times like this. It's difficult not to feel for the coaches, particularly those with such deep CU ties, who are losing their jobs.

Throw in the fact that they were given only two years to turn around something that was rotting when they took over and it's even more difficult to swallow.

But the bottom line is this is what they signed up for. This is the life of coaches in high profile programs competing at the Bowl Championship Series level. Part of the reason coaches are so well compensated at this level is because of the stress and pressure of the job.

That stress and pressure will now shift to a different group of men, and it will likely be even greater given the expectations of a fan base that has been asked for patience for far too long and salaries that have skyrocketed.

New coach Mike MacIntyre is getting closer to finalizing his first coaching staff in Boulder and word is it might include one or two members, at most, of Jon Embree's staff. It's also possible the entire staff from last season will be gone when all the pieces fall in to place.

The most likely coach to remain is Rip Scherer who coached quarterbacks for Embree and served as assistant head coach. If Scherer stays, he might coach a different position next season.

The last time CU went through this two years ago, an emphasis was placed on bringing back Buffs, men who knew the traditions and history of the program. Some believed the program had lost its soul in five years under Hawkins.

It was only after those Buffs were put in place that we learned how far the program had strayed from its roots and some of the things that helped fuel legendary victories, traditions players hold on to throughout their lives long after their college careers are over.

Let's hope no one gets the bright idea to thumb their noses at all those CU traditions again like painting over the Wall of Wins, removing the sign from the team meeting room with the slogan about the pride and tradition of the Colorado Buffaloes not be entrusted to the timid or the weak.

It is thought by some that Embree and his assistants can't possibly leave any kind of meaningful legacy in slightly less than two full years on the job, especially when Embree won only four games and lost 21.

But that isn't true at all.

Embree's legacy just might be that he restored those treasured traditions and passed them on to MacIntyre, who, if he is smart, will respect them and build on them instead of ignoring them or destroying them.

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