

Football: Dave Forman making good impression with CU Buffs

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Dave Forman has been working in the weight room with returning players in the Colorado football program for six weeks and he likes what he has seen.

That doesn't mean he is anywhere near satisfied with the Buffs' capabilities. As long as he has the job, he intends to push the men and women he works with throughout all the athletic department's teams to improve. But it's accurate to say that Forman wasn't disappointed with what he inherited from former strength and conditioning coach Malcolm Blacken who wasn't retained when former football coach Jon Embree was fired in the fall.

"If you got to coach effort, you're really far behind, and we're not there," Forman said. "We're beyond that part and now it's really refining technique and details. These guys are pushing themselves pretty hard. I am impressed with that."

Blacken was popular with CU players some of whom weren't happy to see him go, but they have embraced Forman and already have developed a respect for his approach.

"We do a lot more with this new guy," sophomore cornerback Yuri Wright said. "We do a lot more lifting and different types of running. I think he's doing a really good job so far."

Forman, whose first day on the job was Jan. 14, said he learned through his previous experience at San Jose State that it's best not to push too much change on players too quickly. He felt like he made that mistake in his first year with the Spartans in 2011 after CU coach Mike MacIntyre, then the coach at San Jose State, hired him away from Stanford, where he was an assistant strength coach for three years.

Forman, 33, adjusted his approach in 2012 and began to see the results he wanted with the Spartans, who won a school record 11 games last fall, including a bowl game. He's purposely not making any snap judgments -- or at least not revealing them -- with the Buffs based on the results they produced. He wants to work with them himself first and form his own impressions.

It's the same approach CU's coaches have adopted, which is why they haven't spent a lot of time this winter watching film of the Buffs last season. They're focusing on what they need to teach in the spring and what they expect to see next fall from opponents.

With spring football scheduled to begin at CU on March 7, Forman said his goals for his first winter with the Buffs are simple. He is taking things slowly emphasizing a teaching approach that will show players how to do every lift and exercise the right way.

Forman said just doing that much can significantly help MacIntyre in the fall because training the right way helps build a stronger athletes who are less prone to injuries. For instance, he said if a player is allowed to do squats or other leg lifts with the wrong technique in the weight room it can, and often does, contribute to that player suffering a leg injury at some point in the season.

"I've got to get them ready to practice," he said. "I'm not going to make them better football players. The

coaches are going to make them better football players. I'm not going to make a defensive lineman a better defensive lineman. Coach (Jim) Jeffcoat is. But if they are hurt and dinged up and on the sideline, they're not getting better today. That's my big role is I've got to keep these guys healthy. I have to keep them upright. We got to protect them."

Spring practices will give Forman a better perspective of what he needs to work on team wide and also individually in the late spring and summer months to prepare the Buffs for the start of fall practices in August.

Forman played the game at the college level, which enables him to relate to the players and understand what they're thinking and feeling. He is a former defensive back who played at James Madison 1999-2001.

His experience at Stanford also gives him some instant credibility with CU athletes. In football alone, Forman worked with numerous Stanford players who have gone on to NFL careers such as Toby Gerhart, Andrew Luck and Coby Fleener.

During a 30-minute interview in his office, Forman paid CU student-athletes a compliment.

"They remind me of Stanford kids," Forman said. "This is an academic institution. You have to hit a certain threshold to get in here and I like that. They can process information and we can basically go as fast as they want to go.

"...I think they've done a nice job with what we've given them so far. I'm really interested to see these guys play ball now."

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