

Football: CU Buffs back on the field for spring practice on March 7

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

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Mike MacIntyre's first opportunity to get on the football field with his players at Colorado is less than two months away. Spring practices will begin in Boulder on March 7.

MacIntyre said the Buffs will have eight practices before taking a week off for spring break. The Buffs will return to the practice field for five more practices before the April 13 spring game at Folsom Field, which will begin at noon and will be televised on the Pac-12 Network.

MacIntyre says he is one of relatively few coaches across the country who likes to have one of the 15 allowable spring practices after the spring game. He said the Buffs will meet and review film of the spring game on Monday, April 15 and then head to the field one last time to work on the mistakes they made.

He said he also likes having a practice after the spring game in order to provide players some direction for summer workouts. The NCAA does not allow coaches to work with players from the end of spring ball until fall camp begins in August.

"It is unusual," MacIntyre said. "Only a couple schools do it. I think it's a phenomenal idea the way we do it. In the summer, the kids throw on their own and do all that. So we just take them through a segmented practice kind of like how you'd like to do it."

Still searching

MacIntyre still has two jobs to fill on his coaching staff. He has hired seven of his nine assistant coaches but doesn't yet have a running backs coach or anyone coaching special teams.

He said it's possible he could hire one assistant who would be entirely responsible for coaching special teams and no other position.

"I think the kicking and punting and longsnapping and all that -- all the intricacies of it -- I don't want to have those guys neglected," MacIntyre said.

He said he hopes to have the staff completed in the next week. He said not having a full staff is not having an impact on recruiting because only seven coaches are ever allowed on the road at one time.

"I wish it was an exact science," MacIntyre said. "I will hopefully know here in the next couple days."

Wrapping up recruiting

MacIntyre said he is planning to sign about 17 recruits on national signing day Feb. 6. CU had 13 commitments going into the weekend.

MacIntyre and several members of his staff attended the Buffs' basketball game against UCLA on Saturday with four recruits. He said he likes the recruits who committed to the program under the previous coaching staff and has honored all those scholarship offers. MacIntyre said a lot of those prospects are receiving late attention from various schools.

Open and morning practices

MacIntyre said the Buffs will return to practicing in the morning during the season because he believes it makes it easier on players to keep up with their school work and get the proper amount of sleep at night.

CU practiced in the morning in 2010, the final year of Dan Hawkins' tenure. The Buffs practiced in the late afternoon the past two seasons under Embree.

MacIntyre will have the most liberal policies in recent memory when it comes to who will be able to watch practices. He plans to open every practice to the public and the media, even during the season.

Why isn't MacIntyre as paranoid about open practices as most of his peers? He said there is so much film available on opponents in this day and age, it's more than enough to prepare for the Buffs without also trying to scout CU practices.

"I think it's important for our fans to see things," MacIntyre said. "I love having high school coaches come around, junior high coaches, junior pro coaches. If a guy gets off early and wants to take his son out to practice, I think that's important and it's good for our program."

MacIntyre said there will definitely be times during the season when he will close the final 20 or 30 minutes of practice to work on something he doesn't want revealed to opponents.

Hawkins and Embree both expressed concerns about CU fans coming to practices and the producing detailed practice reports on various websites. MacIntyre said he will ask fans not to do that.

"That's what I told people at San Jose State too, is if I see anything on a blog or I see anything on the Internet, then I will know who you are and I'll ask you not to come back," MacIntyre said. "I think that's fair."

It's not clear how he will identify those people, who generally post on sites under anonymous nicknames.

Wait and see approach

MacIntyre said when he talked with every returning player prior to the winter break, he was left with the impression they would all be back for the spring semester and none were planning to transfer between semesters. MacIntyre acknowledged that a handful of players discussed transferring but agreed to go through spring football first and make a decision after seeing how they fit into the new system.

Notable

MacIntyre said a pair of fourth-year juniors who participated in senior day in November will return to the program in the spring in hopes of playing as fifth-year seniors in the fall. Tight end DaVaughn Thornton and wide receiver Jarrod Darden told MacIntyre they would like to continue their careers. He said punter Zach Grossnickle has opted to move on even though he has one year of eligibility remaining as a fourth-year junior. ...The Buffs will have a team meeting Sunday night at 8 p.m.