



COLORADO BUFFALOES

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Mike MacIntyre likes the pistol offense's flexibility for QBs.

Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: MacIntyre Waits To See How/Who Pistol Fits

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COLORADO SPRINGS – Mike MacIntyre knows this much about what his offense will look like in his debut season at Colorado: In name, it will be the pistol.

Beyond that, most of what the Buffaloes do against Colorado State on Sept. 1 and beyond is TBD. What will determine the Buffs' look (and undoubtedly much of MacIntyre's first-year success) will be the play of his starting quarterback, who is TBD during August camp.

Positioned on the inside track is junior Connor Wood, but MacIntyre and offensive coordinator/QB coach Brian Lindgren won't be ready to turn the offense over to Wood until they chart the progress of new arrivals Sefo Liufau and Jordan Gehrke. That could take a week, 10 days or possibly longer.

When that firing order is established, MacIntyre/Lindgren can go about firing their pistol – depending, of course, on their trigger man.

"It all depends on what the quarterback can do – and we figure that out as we go," MacIntyre said on Wednesday en route to the Colorado Springs Sports Corporation's Annual Kickoff Luncheon. The event was attended by the head coaches from Colorado State, Air Force, Northern Colorado and CSU-Pueblo.

MacIntyre and Lindgren got at least a first impression of Wood's capabilities during 15 spring practices, with Wood showing his biggest advancement during "the last eight or nine" of those workouts, MacIntyre said. But the staff needs more than a spring look at Wood – or whoever emerges as No. 1 – before CU's pistol and its functionality are identifiable.

MacIntyre likes to tell the story of the pistol's flexibility playing to the strengths of his San Jose State quarterbacks. When he was forced to use his backup – a runner – to replace his injured starter – primarily a passer – the offense's productivity didn't suffer.

"That's the beauty of it; you do what your strength is," he said.

Wood showed "some of what he could do in the spring, then in fall we'll try a few other things and see what fits him best," MacIntyre said. "We'll do that with the other quarterbacks when we see who's in the mix. You really don't know until you let them do it in live scrimmages and see things happen in practice."

That process, MacIntyre said, won't be rushed. His QBs "will get a tremendous amount of reps in the first 15 practices . . . then you start narrowing it down to what you're going to do. Then when you get in the games you see how kids are going to react to things, and sometimes we're tweaking after games, too."

Sometime after camp opens – players report on Aug. 5, the first practice is the next day – MacIntyre and Lindgren will identify their top three QBs then eventually settle on a starter.

"If we played today (Wood) would be the starter," MacIntyre said. "But we're always going to have guys prepared to play. We want to make a quick evaluation after the first few days, we want to definitely see Gehrke and Liufau do some things then narrow it down to three guys and run with it."

Besides Wood, Liufau and Gehrke, other QBs in camp will include Shane Dillon, John Schrock and Stevie Joe Dorman.

MacIntyre agreed that having the QB position solidified entering camp is generally viewed as a bonus. But he added, "I've been in all different situations, where it's settled and then in the second game of the year that (No. 1) guy gets hurt and is gone for the year.

"You've got to have two or three, really three quarterbacks, who can play, I think. All of them might do something a little different with their talents. That's the good thing about our offense; I believe we can fit it to the talents of the quarterback and help him be as good as he can be. That's what we'll do."

FAMILIARITY BREEDS . . . SOMETHING: From his San Jose State tenure, MacIntyre has some history with his opening opponent – CSU. Does that offer any benefit?

"I think most staffs think there is because you're accustomed to what they do," he said. "But at the same time, it's two different teams, two different venues, and now you're playing in a rival game. There are other things that go into it rather than just San Jose State coming to Colorado State or Colorado State coming to San Jose State.

"I think we both know a little bit about each other, but I'm also pretty sure they have things they haven't revealed and we have things we haven't revealed. It'll be a fun deal."

Although he hasn't participated in it, MacIntyre called the CU-CSU rivalry "a great game for the state . . . I'm excited about coaching in it and our kids are excited about playing in it."

FIND THE TALENT, USE IT WISELY: MacIntyre says his first CU team has "some players who can make some plays and do some things." But he also noted, "Any coach will say they want to up the talent level and that's what you're supposed to do . . . it's our job to get them in the right place, to utilize their talent to the fullest."

He offered this analogy: "In basketball, if you have a really good shooter, you want him to take a lot of shots. If he's not a good shooter you don't want him taking 25 shots. He needs to take about 10. That's what we need to remember as coaches in football."

In other words, recruit playmakers and put them in position to make plays.

BUFF BITS: MacIntyre said receiver Paul Richardson is “100 percent” recovered from the knee injury that sidelined him for the 2012 season. “He’s doing really good and looked good the last half of the spring . . . I’m excited about getting the ball to Paul any way we can.” . . . Tight end Vincent Hobbs and receiver Gerald Thomas, both sophomores, are in summer school and participating in summer conditioning work . . . MacIntyre on Wood’s leadership qualities: “He’s well-respected by the team on and off the field. The more he’s able to play and do well gives him permission to talk and lead more. The players respect him.” . . . Most of MacIntyre’s assistants currently are working voluntarily at camps at small colleges in California. They’ll also work camps in Texas, Washington and Utah . . . The Buffs have “about a third” of their offense and defense installed from spring drills, but MacIntyre isn’t sure if the other two-thirds will be put in. He doesn’t want overload his players. “I’m a firm believer in knowledge equals confidence equals playing fast . . . if you overload the young men they can’t play as fast. We’ll see what they retained from the spring.”

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

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Howell blog: CU Buffs OC Lindgren has great track record with QBs

By Brian Howell, Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

In six of his eight seasons as a coach, new Colorado offensive coordinator Brian Lindgren has worked closely with quarterbacks.

He's worked with big quarterbacks and small quarterbacks. He's worked with dual-threat quarterbacks and standard pocket passers.

He's worked with quarterbacks he had multiple years to groom, and those he had for just a single season.

While they have come in different packages, the one common thing about all of Lindgren's quarterbacks is that they have enjoyed success under his tutelage. It's no wonder first-year CU head coach Mike MacIntyre hired Lindgren at San Jose State a year ago and then brought him to Boulder.

"We really figure out what the kids can do best and do that," MacIntyre said. "(Lindgren) is very efficient at it, and he's an excellent teacher."

Considering the results CU quarterbacks have had in recent years, Lindgren's track record ought to excite Buff fans.

At three different jobs - Redlands, Northern Arizona and San Jose State - Lindgren has found a way to produce positive results under center.

In his six seasons working with QBs (2005, 2008-2012), Lindgren's primary quarterbacks have combined to throw 109 touchdowns and only 42 interceptions, while completing a remarkable 65.1 percent of their passes (1,247 for 1,916). That's six different quarterbacks (including two at Redlands in 2005) at three different schools. Of the six, only one had a TD-to-interception rate worse than 2-to-1; UNA's Michael Herrick had 15 TD and nine interceptions in 2010.

"Every quarterback he's had has been different," MacIntyre said. "We'll go to the strengths of the quarterback and go from there, but he's always had accurate quarterbacks."

"They've had a very good TD-to-interception ratio and they've had a very good completion percentage."

The question for CU fans is whether Lindgren can work his magic with the crop of quarterbacks the Buffs have now.

A year ago, three CU quarterbacks (Jordan Webb, Nick Hirschman and Connor Wood) combined to complete 55 percent of their throws (220 of 400) for 2,288 yards, 11 touchdowns and 19 interceptions.

CU hasn't had a primary quarterback finish the season with a completion percentage of 60

percent or better since Joel Klatt in 2005 (60.3 percent). Tyler Hansen completed 68.3 percent in 2010, but wasn't CU's leading passer that season.

So, regardless of who winds up starting at quarterback this year at CU - Wood, Jordan Gehrke, Shane Dillon, Sefo Liufau, John Schrock and Steve Joe Dorman will compete for the job in August - there is a decent chance that the Buffs will get some efficient play under center.

"(Lindgren) knows how to coach them and we're a quarterback-friendly offense and I don't expect anything different this year," MacIntyre said.