

Former CU Buffs QB Tyler Hansen still working for one more NFL chance

By Jeff Legwold *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

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There will always be a little what-if swirling around Tyler Hansen, a little question mark hanging in the balance as he continues to chase a spot on an NFL depth chart.

The former University of Colorado quarterback has been back in Boulder recently, working toward another audition for NFL scouts, which came Wednesday on CU's campus. Hansen was not selected in the 2012 draft, was signed by the Bengals as an undrafted free agent and thought he was on track for a roster spot until he injured a hamstring in last summer's training camp.

"I had a great minicamp," Hansen said. "And I thought I had a shot to compete for a No. 2, definitely a No. 3 spot, but then my hamstring really hurt me. I wasn't myself after that.

"I was always worried, 'If I make this throw will my hamstring cave in.' I wasn't really throwing right. It wasn't good."

Hansen was released in late August and has had a smattering of workouts since, including one in recent weeks with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats of the Canadian Football League. This week he wanted just to throw for any and all of the NFL's personnel evaluators who came to Boulder, as a reminder CU's fourth-leading passer all-time would like another chance to hear opportunity knock at least one more time.

"What's good for me is it gets my name back out there," Hansen said. "So if teams are looking at the draft, looking at quarterbacks, maybe they think 'there was a guy who went to Colorado and he was Colorado's pro day and he showed some arm.' And now I'm back on a list somewhere.

"So that's what I wanted to accomplish here. Maybe re-kindle something, get back on someone's board, get back on someone's mind."

And this is right about the time where the what-if comes in. Because in a perfect world, Wednesday's pro day would have been the one that followed Hansen's senior season, the one that followed another year as a starter, that followed another year of gameday experiences for the NFL to decipher.

Instead, he's been out a year, trying to get another swing as a professional quarterback.

For many in the league Hansen will always be more than a little under-sized, at 6-foot and 220 or so pounds. But to the scouts who roam the nation's western states during college football Saturdays he will also be the guy who lost a shot at not one, but two redshirt seasons as Dan Hawkins juggled Cody Hawkins — Dan's son — and Hansen at quarterback.

Hansen also suffered a ruptured spleen in the 2010 season, so his year was over after seven starts, but he likely could have played in a bowl game had the Buffs found a way to earn a berth that year.

But in 2009 Hawkins juggled to two quarterbacks when one of them could have had a redshirt year along the way. And in Hansen's freshman season Hawkins burned a potential redshirt year when he put Hansen into the

lineup in the seventh game of the season.

So, when all was said and done, 2011 was Hansen's only full year as a starter, the only one where he started more than eight games, and had there been a 2012 season for him in Boulder, it may have helped his NFL cause.

These days he works with high school quarterbacks as he tries to earn a living and keep himself prepared for another pro football opportunity. He said he'd certainly consider the CFL if invited — "the field's huge and they throw every down" — and ironically Hamilton plays in the same division as the Montreal Alouettes, now coached by Dan Hawkins.

But Hansen also yearns for at least one more crack at the NFL, one more full healthy training camp to make his case.

"I do honestly think I can play in that league," Hansen said. "I do think I have the right amount of arm strength. That I can move around make plays, move around, work in the pocket. I've said I think I can make a living in the NFL, and I really still believe that. And I believe if I keep myself ready, keep working and do the things I need to, I think that I will get another chance, another shot, at it."

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