



COLORADO BUFFALOES

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Photo Courtesy: Gary Kirchner



MacIntyre, Staff Welcome 101 For Spring Football

Release: 03/07/2013 Courtesy: David Plati, Associate AD/Sports Information

BOULDER - The **Mike MacIntyre** Era at the University of Colorado officially hit the ground Thursday ... well, the practice fields would be more accurate ... as 101 players ushered in the start of spring football drills, the first practice for CU's 25th full-time head football coach.

MacIntyre was named head coach last December 10 and hired a complete new staff, and they put their new players through a productive first session where no doubt they learned a lot from finally seeing the players practice, and in return, the players learned what the coaches expected from them.

"A good first day, we got a lot of good work in," MacIntyre said. "They were running, no, flying around out there. I thought the players had a good grasp, a good understanding of what we wanted them to do."

MacIntyre on many occasions has said what he learned from his four years he spent as an assistant to the legendary **Bill Parcells**, first and foremost how to organize and run a practice. That was evident on paper (*see*

BUFFALO EXTRAS



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Spring Game Central



MacIntyre & Staff First CU Practice
Schedule

attached PDF of the practice schedule) as well as on the field.

Junior wide receiver **Paul Richardson** is almost all the way from a torn ACL he suffered in spring practice almost 11 months to the day. Though he participated on a limited basis toward the end of last season and even flirted with trying to come back at one point, Thursday was the first day he was doing just about everything he could, from running deep routes and making over the shoulder catches to fielding punts.

"It was fun," he said with a big grin on his face. "It was a great practice. Of course we had some issues here and there being the first one, and being the first with all the new coaches, but you work off that rust and get yourself into synch. It was pretty smooth overall."

"It was exciting to get out with the new coaches to see what they were like on the field," senior linebacker **Derrick Webb** said. "We've been working with them for two months in a lot of other ways, but the way you really get to know your coach is to see how they coach you in practice."

"Today went well," he continued. "We were able to start learning some of the new concepts, and also polishing up on some things we already knew." Webb estimated at least half of what they were practicing was all new material and schemes.

NOTES: Several area coaches were in attendance, including the staff from CSU-Pueblo, many of whom are former Buffs: head coach **John Wristen** (one time assistant coach), **Donnell Leomiti**, **Paul Creighton** and **Bernard Jackson**, all former players who are now Wristen assistants ... Former defensive end **Josh Hartigan** (class of '11) also dropped by to introduce himself to MacIntyre; he has designs on trying to play in the Canadian Football League, and has already spoken with former CU head coach **Dan Hawkins**, who last month was named head coach of the Montreal Alouettes ... Redshirt freshman tailback **Davien Payne** has been suspended from all football-related team activities. MacIntyre said the indefinite suspension was for violating team and university policy but did indicate it had nothing to do with law enforcement ... The coaching staff took timeout for a quick dinner but then met as a group Thursday evening to evaluate their first practice ... Spring practice No. 2 will be Friday, roughly 3:45-6:15 at the lower practice fields just north of Boulder Creek; it is open to the public.

SHOW MENU



Five questions for CU Buffs spring practice

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

How well will the Buffs adjust to new offensive and defensive schemes?

The biggest change is on offense where the Buffs move from a West Coast oriented offense to the Pistol, which features the quarterback in the shotgun and the running back behind him. It also features a lot of short passes and elements of spread attacks. The defense is a base 4-3 and the biggest changes will be in pass coverage.

Can Shane Dillon live up to the hype and overtake Jordan Webb, Connor Wood and Nick Hirschman in the race to be the starting quarterback?

CU fans pined for Dillon last year as the three older players struggled, but those veterans might be more effective in a different scheme and with playmakers returning at wide receiver in Paul Richardson and Jeffrey Thomas. Dillon looks the part and had confidence in himself running the scout team last fall, but it's time for him to make his move.

Who steps into the void at left tackle where David Bakhtiari used to be?

Bakhtiari could have been an All-American if he had stayed for his senior year. He was relentless and whoever steps into his shoes won't have much, if any, experience playing left tackle at the college level. Likely candidates are senior Jack Harris, sophomores Marc Mustoe, Stephane Nembot and Jeremy Irwin. Junior Alexander Lewis might be the favorite but he won't be back from shoulder surgery until the fall.

Is there quality depth at linebacker or just a bunch of guys behind the starters?

There is no depth chart going in, but it would be a surprise if Derrick Webb, Brady Daigh and Paul Vigo aren't atop the depth chart coming out of spring. They have the most experience. But injuries happen during the season, especially at a position like linebacker. Who are the next men up?

Can the Buffs get through spring unscathed by major injuries?

Losing Paul Richardson to a torn anterior cruciate ligament last spring had profound impact on the offense coaches could call, quarterback play and the way the season unfolded. The Buffs badly need to avoid losing any of their key personnel this spring.

Wide receiver 99 percent recovered from knee injury with spring ball set to open

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

The best wide receiver on the Colorado football team this spring might be the guy coaching the position. Troy Walters has made quite an impression on the young men he now leads since being hired away from North Carolina State in January.

Junior Paul Richardson said Walters keeps threatening to bring the Biletnikoff Award he won as a wideout at Stanford in 1999 to the Dal Ward Center to show off. Richardson joked that Walters hasn't followed through on the threat because the award is too heavy for Walters to carry.

They already seem to have a good relationship, which should aid Richardson in his journey to reclaim his starring role in the CU offense a year after a torn knee ligament ended his 2012 season in spring drills.

"Everything he coaches us to do, he can do it as well," Richardson said. "He shows us things. He still has it. He hasn't lost a step. I respect him as a coach. I feel when you respect your position coach a lot, it makes you compete better as an athlete."

Richardson returns to the field for the start of spring practices Thursday feeling nearly 100 percent recovered from his injury. He estimates he is 99 percent of the way back. Why 99 percent? He believes he will only get that final one percent back when he is on the field making plays against Colorado State in the 2013 season opener.

He insists he doesn't feel any pressure returning to a team that missed him badly last season.

"I'm looking forward to all the expectations. I really don't feel any pressure, ever. I live for big moments. I live to play up to expectations and I live to show everybody that it's not hype. I'm looking forward to it. I'm ready to have fun. I'm all smiles right now."

Richardson has never been one to go easy on himself and he's not about to start now just because he hasn't been involved in full contact football for nearly a year. He has set his hurdles high for 2013. He wants to see what kind of statistics he can produce in a full season on the field after playing two partial seasons in 2010 and 2011.

He didn't become a primary option in the CU offense and begin earning regular playing time in 2010 until nearly halfway through that season and he suffered a knee injury in 2011 that led coaches to use him as a decoy for half the year. He's eager to play in the new pistol offense, which he expects will give him plenty of opportunities to have the ball in his hands in space.

He showed what can happen when that occurs in a 2011 game against Cal when he caught 11 passes for 284 yards and two touchdowns.

"We always worry about: Is the defense going to try to double or triple cover me, safety over the top, press with the corner and drag out the linebacker, but I think I've been fortunate to have seen pretty much every coverage that can be thrown at me," he said. "I can't take all that attention without one of my other receivers

being successful. So if I'm drawing that much attention and my other receivers are being successful, as a group we're winning. I'm not selfish at all. As long as we're being productive as a receiving corps, I'm all for it."

Richardson and other CU receivers have plenty of reason to be excited. The offense coach Mike MacIntyre and offensive coordinator Brian Lindgren will be installing produced 4,325 passing yards and 35 touchdown passes last season at San Jose State.

Safe to say that by the end of next fall, Richardson hopes to be considered the best receiver on the team instead of his position coach. He also wouldn't mind having a Biletnikoff Award of his own. Southern Cal receiver Marqise Lee won the award last season with 112 catches and 14 touchdown receptions.

If Richardson came close to those numbers, he would likely set CU records for receptions, receiving yards and touchdown catches in a single season. But all of that is getting way ahead of the game. Richardson said his first concern above all is helping his team win more games.

Call him crazy, but he says with confidence that the Buffs could be one of the great turnaround stories in college football next fall. He wholeheartedly believes his team is capable of going from 1-11 to a bowl game.

"I just feel like we're a strong group," he said. "We've had a lot of injuries and coaching situations, losing players, being able to get younger players more experience, offensively not being able to do what we wanted to do in the past because we didn't have the personnel to do it due to injuries and guys not being mature enough to handle those roles yet.

"That's why I have so much confidence in our group now. We're going to have guys with experience. We're going to have guys back from injury and I expect nothing less than .500. ... I think us going into fall healthy, we're going to turn heads. People are going to have to respect CU football again."

Of course a big part of Richardson's personal and team goals becoming reality requires better decision making and production from the quarterback position. Six players begin spring ball vying for the right to throw passes to Richardson and fellow wide receivers such as Nelson Spruce, Tyler McCulloch, Gerald Thomas, Jeffrey Thomas and Keenan Canty.

If Richardson views any of the six quarterbacks as a favorite to lock down the job, he isn't saying who that is. He says he believes at least one man in the group will emerge by the end of spring and he will be eager to develop chemistry with the top quarterbacks on the depth chart throughout the summer.

"I believe that we'll have a quarterback soon. I don't think it's going to take much time throughout the spring to see who is going to be the quarterback and then that is going to create more competition."

Richardson's focus this spring will be on learning the system as best he can, developing his skills, some of which are likely to be rusty, and providing leadership. It's not necessarily his goal to become a team captain. He said he can still be a leader regardless, but he would be honored wear the C on his uniform if he is asked.

"I feel like the things that I've done speak for themselves and I just feel like my work ethic, my passion and what I bring to practice, what I bring to workouts and what I bring to games that's definitely captain worthy," he said. "You do have those guys that can yell a lot. You have those guys that can walk around and look mean and you've got guys who can do things here and there, but that doesn't make them a captain.

"If you're teammates can't feed off your energy, if your teammates can't count on you in crunch time, if your teammates don't feel like the way you play sets the bar or sets an example, they're not going to respect you as a captain. I feel like I've earned my team's respect as a captain, but even if I don't become captain, I'll still play hard, I'll still practice hard and I'm still going to compete all day long."

Follow Kyle on Twitter: @KyleRingo

CU spring football practice schedule

Today -- 3:45-6:15 p.m.

Friday -- 3:45-6:15 p.m.

March 12 -- 3:45-6:15 p.m.

March 14 -- 3:45-6:15 p.m.

March 15 -- Scrimmage, 4 p.m.

March 19 -- 3:45-6:15 p.m.

March 21 -- 3:45-6:15 p.m.

March 22 -- Scrimmage, 4 p.m.

April 2 -- 3:45-6:15 p.m.

April 4 -- 3:45-6:15 p.m.

April 5 -- Scrimmage, 4 p.m.

April 9 -- 3:45-6:15 p.m.

April 11 -- 3:45-6:15 p.m.

April 13 -- Spring game, Folsom Field, 10:30 a.m., Pac-12 Network, KOA (850 AM)

April 16 -- Practice 3:30-5 p.m.

All practices are open to the public.