



Sophomore QB Connor Wood (5) could get Saturday's start against Washington.

Photo Courtesy: Asher Vandevort



Brooks: QB Decision Depends On Hirschman's Health

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BOULDER - Sophomore Nick Hirschman won last week's practice competition to determine Colorado's starting quarterback at Arizona, but concussion symptoms could prevent him from making a second consecutive start.

Coach Jon Embree said on Monday that Hirschman will go through the prescribed battery of tests for players with concussion symptoms before a decision is made on Hirschman's availability for Saturday's game against Washington (11:30 a.m., Folsom Field, FX).

Outfitted in sweats, Hirschman watched Monday's short practice but did little else. "We'll see how many reps he can get (over the next three days) and how he's feeling," Embree said.

If Hirschman is not cleared to play or does not get enough practice work to sufficiently prepare him for the Huskies, Embree said sophomore Connor Wood would get Saturday's start. Embree added that junior Jordan

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Webb, who opened in the Buffs' first nine games, also "could be in the mix."

Hirschman and Wood, said Embree, "played well and managed the game well" in last weekend's 56-31 loss at Arizona. Hirschman left the game in the third quarter having completed 12 of 13 passes (one interception) for 123 yards. Wood replaced him and completed four of seven passes for 90 yards and his first collegiate touchdown pass.

"He made some good throws to give us a chance," Embree said of Wood. "It would have been nice to get that one at the end, when he had Gerald (Thomas) open in the end zone."

Webb did not play in Tucson, but walk-on redshirt freshman John Schrock got in for the final snap.

LOCKER ROOM NOT DIVIDED: Embree contended that the Buffs' string of six consecutive lopsided losses has not created turmoil within the team or causing individuals to quit.

"That's not an issue; guys are preparing and working hard," he said. "We just didn't play well on one side of the football (at Arizona). It's not a blame game or anything like that. The offense didn't play well against Stanford and the defense kept us around for a while there.

"So, both sides of the football have had their moments . . . like Fresno State, unfortunately it's not just this or that. Both sides have had their moments. The problem is when both sides play well, it's got to be at the same time - at least in the same game."

That hasn't happened during the last six losses as CU has dropped to 1-9 overall and 1-6 in the Pac-12 Conference.

Embree said he emphasized "moving forward" in Monday's team meeting: "That's the one thing about sports - you're almost forced to start thinking about the next opponent, good and bad. There's times when you win you want to enjoy the win. You can't because there's an obstacle in front of you the next week.

"I talked to them about that, talked to the defense about two games to redeem yourselves and put yourselves in a position you're proud of. Offensively, I talked about humility . . . we haven't arrived; there are a lot of things we can do better."

ABRON GETS AN 'A' FOR ARIZONA EFFORT: Freshman tailback Donta Abron showed up well on Saturday (13 carries, 83 yards, one TD) in his first extended action.

"He's just getting comfortable with the speed of the game," Embree said. "It took a while for him to get going." Embree was particularly pleased with Abron's TD run: "He stayed in bounds, he fought . . . he's a strong kid and has got a good lower center of gravity. He was impressive. We thought when we signed him we were getting a special player. He'll just continue to improve. Same with catching the ball."

Embree said Abron, Christian Powell and Tony Jones "give us a nice combination" at tailback. "We're able to bring different bodies in there and give defenses a different look - and keep guys fresh. You need more than one. It's good to have all three of them."

CU finished with its highest rushing output of the season - 225 yards. The 235-pound Powell carried 32 times for 137 yards and a pair of TDs.

BUFF BITS: With two games remaining, CU likely will finish the season without its practice bubble going up. Embree has admitted in the past that he's a fan of practicing/playing outdoors in the elements, but he said that's not the reason the practice bubble hasn't yet gone up. Word Monday was that some of the off-campus crew responsible for putting up the bubble in seasons past was called away to help with repairs on the East Coast in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. The bubble usually goes up in mid-October. Said Embree: "It wasn't my doing." . . . For a couple of days a week for the past two weeks, the younger Buffs have been getting extra work after practice. Freshmen who are redshirting who have caught Embree's eye include quarterback Shane Dillon, tight ends Sean Irwin and Austin Ray, fullback Clay Norgard and defensive back John Walker. He also

mentioned sophomore transfer Jordan Murphy.

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Football: Just two chances left for CU Buffs to avoid more infamy

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

It has been a forgettable season and a season that won't be forgotten all at once for coaches and players in the Colorado football program.

Just when you think it couldn't get any worse or nothing more could happen to surprise you:

An opponent throws seven touchdown passes in a game

A foe scores 70 and politely takes a foot off the pedal trying to avoid running up the score further.

An opponent shuts out the Buffs at home for the first time in 26 years.

An opposing running back gallops through gaping hole after gaping hole en route to nearly 400 yards rushing.

With two home games remaining before this abysmal season mercifully comes to an end there is another ugly footnote of note just waiting for the Buffs.

A year ago this week, as CU prepared for its home finale and senior day against Arizona, the Buffs were still looking for their first home victory of the season. The only CU win to that point came on a neutral field in Denver over Colorado State.

The Buffs came together and played their best game of the season to that point to avoid becoming the first CU team since 1920 to go winless on its home field for an entire season. No CU team has ever failed to win at least once in a season in Folsom Field. When the 1920 team went winless at home, it played at Gamble Field.

Last season, the Buffs downplayed the infamous possibility leading up to the game only to admit relief at avoiding history after beating Arizona.

A year later, the 2012 Buffs face the same challenge, though they have two opportunities remaining to earn home win. The first comes Saturday when Washington brings its three-game winning streak to Boulder hoping to earn its seventh win of the season. The final opportunity -- assuming CU loses its seventh consecutive game this week -- comes when Utah visits the day after Thanksgiving.

Will these Buffs fight like they did last year or will they shrug at one more feckless achievement?

Coach Jon Embree said Monday he doesn't believe there is division among players on the team and he continues to see satisfactory effort.

"In the locker room, there is not an issue," Embree said. "The guys are preparing and working hard. We just didn't play well on one side of the football."

Embree said the biggest problem is getting an entire team effort with both the offense and defense playing well in the same game. Embree said addressed his team Monday and told defenders they have two opportunities to redeem themselves and the offense still has plenty of issues to improve.

Another QB wait

Sophomore Nick Hirschman started last week's game at quarterback and played well, leading CU on its two longest drives, time-wise, of the season. But Hirschman suffered a concussion and is questionable this week.

Hirschman did not practice Monday. Embree said he still has to pass his concussion test to be cleared to play against Washington. If Hirschman can't play this week, Connor Wood will likely make his first career start with Jordan Webb serving as the backup.

Embree said he thought both Hirschman and Wood played well against Arizona. The Wildcats have one of the nation's worst defenses. Beating Washington's defense is a significant step up for whoever is under center for the Buffs this week.

No bubble yet

CU still hasn't put up its practice bubble this year. CU sports information director Dave Plati said the company that usually does the work has been busy with relief efforts on the East Coast after hurricane Sandy.