



Eric Bieniemy says Buffs must be more efficient.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: 'EB' Admits Learning Curve, Says He's Scaling It

Release: 10/15/2012 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER - Eric Bieniemy has been in his role as Colorado's offensive coordinator for a season and a half, or 19 games. He concedes he's faced a learning curve in his new job, but he won't concede it is steeper than he can handle.

"Has there been a learning curve? Yes. Is it something that's a huge learning curve? No. You know what I mean? It's not a difficult one," Bieniemy said Monday, taking a break for a Q&A session with *CUBuffs.com* as he and his offensive staff continued preparations for Saturday's game at No. 11 Southern California.

Bieniemy contended being an offensive coordinator is "not as scientific as a lot of people would like to make it out to be. It comes down to X's and O's."

But the X's and O's - as well as the W's - have eluded the Buffaloes. In a 1-5 start to Jon Embree's second season, CU is still searching for the strong running game and balanced offense that Bieniemy and Embree said would be their trademark.

This week's Pac-12 Conference statistics show CU at No. 10 in both rushing offense (110.8 yards a game) and

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total offense (327.3 yards). The Buffs are ninth in passing offense (216.5 yards) and last in scoring (20.8 points a game).

The "EB" Q&A:

CUBuffs.com: You're in your second year with this . . . do you feel like when you came into this there was a big learning curve as far as being a coordinator?

Bieniemy: "Yes and no . . . yes there is because first and foremost you're overseeing the entire offense. Secondly, calling plays obviously was something I hadn't done. But other than that, football is football. That's when certain positions and certain titles can become overrated. At the end of the day, we all collectively have to coach our guys and we've all got to be on the same page . . . we've got to make sure we're putting our guys in the right situations to be successful."

CUBuffs.com: Do you feel like every day, every game is still a learning experience for you?

Bieniemy: "It has been, but after doing it - and I haven't done it for years - but after doing it you find your rhythm. The thing is, after doing all the studying and preparation you do during the course of the week that helps you. You have so much time to figure teams out and they're going to do what they do. It's not like they're going to reinvent the wheel; if they're great at it they're going to do what they do. They thing is, we've got to do what we do and be better than how well they execute their scheme."

CUBuffs.com: Jon said following the Arizona State loss (51-14 last Thursday night) that he would have a conversation with you and your coaches on offensive improvement. Has that conversation taken place?

Bieniemy: "Yes . . . at the end of the day, it just comes down to us executing. We play pretty good football for a half. We come out in the second half, we get a good drive going and then all of a sudden we just don't execute. One thing we cannot do is be our own enemy. Like I've said before, I'd like to see a game where we stop shooting ourselves in the foot . . . that's basically what it comes down to. We've got to keep coaching the details more and more. But also, too, we have to make sure our players keep understanding the importance of accountability, understanding that we only have 'X' amount of opportunities to make something happen."

CUBuffs.com: Are you saying this offense practically has to be error-free to be efficient?

Bieniemy: "You hate to say perfect, but the thing is . . . let's just put it this way: If we physically get beat on a play, that's fine. But when we don't do it right, that's an issue. You know what I mean? We're scaling everything down, so we've got to be much better than we are."

CUBuffs.com: Have you scaled back things even further than you did several weeks ago?

Bieniemy: "Oh, yeah."

CUBuffs.com: "What's the percentage of your playbook that you're using now?"

Bieniemy: "It's hard to give a percentage. I'd just say it's simple. We just need to go out and play fast and execute."

CUBuffs.com: Do you feel like your move to the sidelines has been beneficial?

Bieniemy: "It's been since the Washington State game, but that seems like it was years ago . . . but it's been great. You get a great feel for everything. There's nothing like having an opportunity to talk to the kids right after they come off of the field and hearing what they say. Nine out of ten times they're going to be 100 percent correct in what they're seeing and stating. That's the beauty of being down there. And just getting the rhythm and seeing what's going on . . . what's the ebb and flow? How does the defense look? And on top of that, there's nothing like

looking a kid in the eye . . . that goes a long ways as well."

CUBuffs.com: We haven't talked about an obvious need for more skill position players . . .

Bieniemy: "We're not there yet. Obviously we still need some more firepower. That goes without saying. But to our credit, our kids fight every week. They play hard, they fight the fight . . . we haven't had any kick back or anything like that. These kids are all in and that's what makes it so frustrating because you want these kids to have so much success. The thing we need to understand is we have to make sure we overcome self. That's where our struggles have been."

CUBuffs.com: Jordan Webb has started all six games at quarterback. He's done some good things, but has he been as consistent as you would like?

Bieniemy: "Webb is still the starter, but our other guys will get reps. I believe (Webb) has that fight in him and has heart. He does need to be more consistent, and that's the hard part."

CUBuffs.com: Will you get Christian Powell back this week? (The Powell missed the ASU game with a deep thigh bruise.)

Bieniemy: "Yes, and that should help us. He's a different style of runner; he packs a little more oomph."

CUBuffs.com: What's been the most frustrating thing for you during the first half of this season?

Bieniemy: "I just want to see what happens if we play a game where a team physically beats us and can say 'we're better than you.' I just want to see us play assignment-sound football. I know you can't always be perfect, but I just want to see us execute a game plan and give ourselves a chance to have a chance. Then let the chips fall. If we're not good enough, we're not good enough. But let's get it to the fourth quarter and see what happens."

"It's tough, it's very challenging. It makes you find out a lot of things about yourself. For whatever reason, we've been placed in this situation and I've accepted this challenge. What makes it worth the while is our kids. They fight, they fight."

"We had a hiccup in Fresno (a 69-14 loss to Fresno State), but other than that our kids . . . they've played hard and fought their asses off every game. It's not like they're going out there with the intent to make mistakes. There's nobody slacking off; they're going out there playing every play to win."

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SHOW MENU





Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Kasa Added To Mackey Midseason Watch List

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BOULDER – Senior Nick Kasa is one of 26 players to be named to the 2012 John Mackey Award midseason watch list, an award presented annually to the country's best tight end on December 6 in Orlando at the Home Depot College Football Awards Show.

Off to a solid start to the season, Kasa has 11 catches for 239 yards and three touchdowns over the course of six games. He is averaging a team-best 21.7 yards per reception and has six catches of 20-plus yards. In a tough loss against Arizona State last Thursday, Kasa was one of the bright spots with a season best four receptions for 71 yards and a touchdown.

In the last three weeks, he has 10 catches for 199 yards and three touchdowns.

The former defensive end is in his first season at tight end and is also known for his vicious blocking abilities. On special teams, he is among the team leaders with four knockdown or springing blocks and has also forced two fair catches on the punt unit. At 6-6, 260, he runs in the 40-yard dash in the 4.55 range.

The John Mackey Award is in its 12th season and is managed by the Nassau County Sports Commission, a non-profit organization sponsored by Briarcliffe College. The recipient is selected by vote of the John Mackey Award Selection Committee. The winner will be presented live on December 6, 2012 at The Home Depot College

Football Awards Red Carpet Show airing at 4:30 p.m. MT on ESPNU. Since 2000, the John Mackey award has listed 11 NFL players as alumni.

CU's Daniel Graham won the award in 2001 in its second year of existence. His position coach that year was CU head coach Jon Embree. Embree also coached Mercedes Lewis at UCLA when he won the award in 2005.

Semifinalists for the 2012 John Mackey Award will be named on November 12 and finalists on November 19.

SHOW MENU



Football: CU Buffs hope to turn around fortunes in California

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

One of the biggest reasons the University of Colorado wanted to join the Pac-10 Conference two years ago was to play more frequently in front of large numbers of alumni in California.

But since announcing their new conference affiliation, the Buffs' first four trips into the state have been disasters.

The Buffs have been outscored in California by 180 points (214-34) in four games at California, Stanford, UCLA and Fresno State since the start of the 2010 season.

Those figures are likely to be even a little uglier Saturday evening when the final seconds tick off the clock at the Los Angeles Coliseum where CU will take on Southern Cal in front of a sellout crowd of 93,607. The Buffs are 40-point underdogs.

Colorado attracted more than 9,000 fans to the Sept. 11 game in Berkeley, Calif., against the Bears two years ago, but the numbers of fans clad in black and gold have dwindled in more recent games in California. CU reported selling approximately 1,500 tickets in its allotment for the trip to Fresno State last month. Fresno is just a two-hour drive from Berkeley.

For Saturday's game at USC, CU sold 2,100 of its 2,500 allotted tickets and returned the remaining 400.

We all know fans will come out en masse again when the Buffs become more competitive at some future date on the gridiron, but the school and the athletic department aren't able to reap all the benefits of playing in the Golden State right now because the football program is struggling to badly.

In N Out anyone?

Oregon State coach Mike Riley has taken a page out of the Colorado basketball play book by taking his team to In N Out for hamburgers after wins at UCLA and BYU this season.

CU athletic director Mike Bohn took the entire traveling party, including 50 students, to In N Out in Los Angeles last March after Tad Boyle's men's basketball team won the conference tournament championship.

If the Buffs do pull off a very unlikely upset Saturday over the Trojans, I'm betting CU drops another \$6,000 on burgers. They would be well-deserved.

Kasa rewarded

Buffs fans have to feel good for senior tight end Nick Kasa who was named to the midseason watch list for the John Mackey Award, given annually to the best tight end in college football.

Kasa switched to tight end from defensive line at about this time last season and has obviously come a long way in just one year under the coaching of J.D. Brookhart and Jon Embree. Kasa is one of only 26 tight ends on the list, which speaks to how much improvement he has made.

At the midway point of the season, Kasa has 11 catches for 239 yards and three touchdowns. He has done most of that damage in the past three games. He also saved the day with a key fumble recovery on the game-winning drive at Washington State.

He's playing like he should have been a tight end all along. If he continues to improve, count on him getting a chance to play professionally because he has size coveted at the next level (6-foot-6, 260).

Semifinalists for the award will be named Nov. 12.

Heading for 30,000s?

A few folks sent me questions on Twitter after the Buffs' two most recent home games wondering if the three November home games might be some of the least attended in recent history because of the way the season is going.

Colorado hasn't had a crowd of less than 40,000 since it attracted just 32,617 for a win over Kansas State on Nov. 19, 1988. The closest CU has come to dipping into the the 30,000s for a game came in the 2001 Big 12 Conference championship season when only 40,338 showed up for a Sept. 8 home game against San Jose State.

CU has done remarkably well in terms of attendance in recent years if you consider the team hasn't been to a bowl game since 2007 and hasn't had a winning season since 2005. The lowest attendance for any game in the past six years was 41,147 on Senior Day in 2010.

+ Notable

Colorado's Oct. 27 game at Oregon will kickoff at 1 p.m. (MDT) and will be televised on the Pac-12 Network.

Follow Kyle on Twitter:

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