

Squad ready to tackle more traditional style offense run by Trojans

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

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Call them crazy, but some Colorado defenders are actually looking forward to facing the Southern Cal offense this week.

Yes, it's the same USC offense that is favored to beat them by at least 41 points.

It's not that the Buffs lack respect for the Trojans. In fact, it's just the opposite. Several starters on the defensive side of the ball at CU have been looking forward to this week's game since the summer because they view it as an opportunity to compete against some of the very best players in college football and see how they stack up.

What has the Buffs feeling good about a seeing the Trojans this week is the style of offense coach Lane Kiffin coaches and quarterback Matt Barkley directs. It's a pro-style offense featuring more traditional formations and plays than the plethora of spread attacks around the conference and the rest of the nation.

Sure, the Trojans' offense is loaded with NFL prospects at nearly every position, particularly Barkley and receivers Robert Woods and Marqise Lee, but it's a more straight up style of play the Buffs don't see often these days.

"Personally, I like offenses that play with a fullback, and offenses that have a solid run game," CU linebacker Derrick Webb said. "As linebackers, that's what we like. We like being able to come downhill and make tackles rather than being spread out and having to run all the way to this side just to get to the ball.

"It's just a lot more fun when the game is played pretty much in the middle of the field."

While the Trojans don't run a spread system, they do a decent job of spreading the ball around and mixing run and pass. It's an offense that returned nine starters this season and the Trojans absolutely hammered the Buffs in Boulder a year ago, with Barkley throwing six touchdown passes.

The Buffs started two offensive players in the secondary in that game -- former wide receiver Jason Espinoza, who actually intercepted Barkley, and running back D.D. Goodson. This year, the Buffs are better equipped in the secondary to contend with the Trojans.

CU will have two veterans who didn't play in last season's game back. Junior Parker Orms was suspended for part of last season and senior Ray Polk missed last year's game with a concussion. Polk said he will definitely play this week.

Orms said playing USC allows him to move back to the position at which he feels most comfortable -- safety. He has been playing a lot of nickel back this season because of all the spread offenses the Buffs have faced.

"We can finally be in a base defense with bigger guys and I can go back and play safety, which I'm excited about," Orms said.

The Trojans had a mountain of expectations to live up to coming into this year with Barkley returning for his senior season when he could have turned pro. USC even benefited from the sanctions against Penn State when running back Silas Redd transferred in just before training camp, adding another playmaker to a stacked offense.

Yet, USC has received mild criticism in the first half of the season for producing disappointing numbers

offensively, despite all the talent and experience available. The Trojans are 57th in the nation in total offense and 48th in scoring offense, averaging 32 points a game.

Kiffin acknowledged his offenses struggles this week, but also said the unit might be ready for a surge. He noted Barkley's numbers at the midway point this season aren't drastically different from last season.

CU coach Jon Embree expects to see a USC quarterback worthy of a high first-round draft choice Saturday.

"Him and (Andrew) Luck to me are very similar, from the standpoint of when you say, 'Rank the quarterbacks we've played against in this conference.' " Embree said. "He has some swagger about him that Luck had. It was a quiet confidence, very selfless player from the standpoint that he is always talking about his teammates. He doesn't get down on the guys, he helps lift them up when they make a mistake. He is very encouraging; the right kind of leader you want at that kind of position.

"I am glad this is it. I am glad he is leaving, has to now."

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Colorado QB Webb cites D-line speed and quickness as Pac-12 signature

By **TOM KENSLER** |  No Comments

BOULDER — For an online story, I wrote last week about Pac-12 defenses favoring speed and quickness over size and strength, citing Arizona State having no player taller than 6-2 on its defense, which tops the conference statistically.

But I thought at the time that the Trojans of Southern California might have some really big guys on D. Nope.

Southern California's starting defensive tackles are 275 (George Uko) and 270 (Leonard Williams) pounds. The defensive ends aren't huge, either, with Wes Horton at 255 and Morgan Breslin at 245.

And the Trojans' three starting linebackers go 6-foot-2 (Lamar Dawson), 6-1 (Hayes Pullard) and 6-0 (Dion Bailey), and look for each of them to wear an NFL jersey someday.

"It's just how this conference is," said Colorado junior quarterback Jordan Webb, who played two years in the Big 12 at Kansas. "When I got to the Big 12, defenses were really fast because it was the era of spread offenses in that conference. So the Pac-12 and the Big 12 are similar in that regard.

"In the Pac-12 it's maybe more speed rush, where in the Big 12 there might be a little more girth. It's interesting, the Big 12 has gotten a little bit away from the spread offenses. In the Pac-12 that's what you see, so the Pac-12 defenses may have a little faster athletes, nothing against the Big 12.

"You'd see the really fast defensive ends in the Big 12, like, of course, (current Bronco) Von Miller when he was at Texas A&M. But in the Pac-12 that's the theme."

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<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2012/10/18/colorado-qb-webb-cites-dline-speed-quickness-pac12-signature/25360/>

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