

## Injuries beginning to pile up after loss to UCLA

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

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Ray Polk and Doug Rippy stood on the sidelines and watched Saturday's 42-14 loss to UCLA. During the second half, Jon Major and Christian Powell joined them.

After the game, Chidera Uzo-Diribe hobbled around with a bum ankle. Derrick Webb walked gingerly into the locker room.

As a team, the Colorado Buffaloes are limping around campus with a 1-4 record.

The good news for CU? This week's schedule is blank. For the first time since 2010, the Buffs actually have a bye week to look forward to.

"We need it," senior defensive lineman Will Pericak said. "We've got guys who have been out and they're just starting to get ready to get back and going. A week of recovery, a week of practice is going to be good for us. I definitely think it's coming at a right time."

The Buffs had a day off Sunday and will take another one Monday. Without a game until Oct. 11 when Arizona State comes to town, the Buffs are getting their first break since camp began in early August.

"This one week here is going to be huge," said Major, who fought through a 13-game schedule without a bye week in 2011. "It's going to mean a lot for health, it's going to be good for our mental (health) and it's going to be good for the coaches, too."

Physically, the Buffs are a banged up bunch.

Polk hasn't played since suffering a high ankle sprain in the opener against Colorado State on Sept. 1. The senior safety said after Saturday's game that he believes he'll be ready to go against Arizona State.

"I'm losing my mind on the sidelines," he said. "I'm doing everything I can to get back."

Rippy, a senior linebacker, hasn't played since a knee injury knocked him out against Sacramento State on Sept. 8. He was nearly ready to return against UCLA, so another 10 days ought to do him some good.

"We need those guys and we need them healthy," Pericak said of the two senior leaders. "This bye week is going to be helpful getting those guys healthy."

Centers Gus Handler and Brad Cotner have been sidelined in recent weeks, as well. Major, Powell, Uzo-Diribe, Webb and anyone else walking slowly today is welcoming a Saturday off this week, too.

The wounded aren't the only Buffs who figure to benefit from the week off. CU has some time this week to step back, breath and try to figure out what went wrong in the first five weeks and how those things can be fixed during the next seven.

"We need to fix some things on defense and offense," Polk said. "Across the board we need to fix things, special teams, too. It'll be a good week for us to tune things up and we've got some time to figure out what we're going to do and how we're going to respond to this."

Quarterback Jordan Webb isn't thrilled about having a week off after taking a beating like the Buffs did on Saturday. Yet, he understands the important work that can be done this week.

"During a bye week, getting back to the fundamentals is always an important thing," he said. "We're going to focus on that, getting back to the basics of what we were really good at during camp. We'll see what happens."

Whatever happens, the Buffs hope to take advantage of the bye and come back prepared for a tough seven-game stretch to end the year.

"We'll come back stronger and more healthy," Pericak said. "Get a little rest into us, we'll be ready to go."

Notable

CU is 3-0 the last three times it has come out of a bye week with a home game.

## CU Buffs to address fundamentals during bye week

By Tom Kensler The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

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BOULDER — For college football coaches, an open date means open season on trying to improve all the little things that can lead to big improvement.

Fundamentals. Technique. Play calls. Clock management.

Colorado (1-4, 1-1 Pac-12) doesn't play again until Oct. 11, a Thursday night game against Arizona State (4-1, 2-0) at Folsom Field. Considering the Buffaloes are coming off a 42-14 home thumping by UCLA, there is plenty for CU to address during an extra week of practice.

"It would have been nice to go into (the bye week) with a win," Colorado coach Jon Embree said. "It will give us a chance to really focus on the younger kids and work on some fundamental things, some individual stuff that you don't necessarily get during a normal game week."

Tackling, for one. Perhaps those pink gloves worn by Colorado defenders Saturday to acknowledge Breast Cancer Awareness Month needed to be broken in a bit because UCLA running backs and receivers slipped from CU's grasp all day. More likely is that missed tackles resulted from poor technique and faulty execution.

"I thought our kids competed hard, played well in spurts," Embree said. "But we didn't do a good job of tackling."

Improving tackling will be "first and foremost" on the Buffs' laundry list this week, Colorado defensive coordinator Greg Brown said.

"We left a lot on the field just by missed tackles," Brown said, referring to UCLA's 492 yards of offense. "There were a lot of plays that were underneath (in front of linebackers and safeties) that turned into big plays because of missed tackles."

CU has offensive issues to work on too. Other than the breakout game against Washington State, the Buffs' offense has struggled.

"A bye week is good for getting back to the fundamentals — really focusing on the little things and getting back to what we were doing really well in (August) camp," quarterback Jordan Webb said.

Count on third-down execution to top Webb's checklist. On Saturday, Colorado had 15 opportunities to convert third downs. The Buffs succeeded twice.

"Third down is the quarterback down," Webb said. "If you don't have good quarterback play you won't convert a lot of third downs. We will have to look at the film and see where I made mistakes."

Bye weeks also allow time to heal up. Embree said several CU players got "banged up" Saturday.

Two starters, senior linebacker Jon Major (lower leg contusion) and freshman tailback Christian Powell (hip bruise), were knocked out of the game. Senior linebacker Doug Rippey did not play for the third consecutive week, giving his injured knee more time to mend. Rippey said he'll "definitely" be ready for Arizona State. Webb said his third-quarter ankle issue was "just a little tweak."

Psychologically, the team is in good shape, despite its record, Webb said.

"Throughout the week, we work our butts off," Webb said. "We have a lot of young guys learning how to play at this level. But we never come out here expecting to lose. We don't expect to lose to anybody."

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