



*Christian Powell's debut at tailback produced 147 yards rushing and three TDs.  
Photo Courtesy: Joel Broida*



## Brooks: Powell To TB Moves Past Experimental Stage

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**BOULDER** - No news bulletin here, but freshman Christian Powell's stay at tailback won't be temporary. Colorado offensive coordinator/running backs coach Eric Bieniemy said on Monday that the 235-pound Powell, a surprise starter at tailback last weekend, will remain at that position this week and for the foreseeable future.

"He did a great job," Bieniemy said of Powell's 28-carry, 147-yard, three-touchdown debut at tailback in CU's 30-28 loss to Sacramento State. "He's playing tailback, but he'll get a mixture of fullback plays . . . that was the first time for him to line up seven to eight yards deep (in the backfield) and for him to go out and do what he did says a lot.

"Now just imagine once he starts figuring out how to play the position, how much better he can be. So we're going to give him another opportunity to put it on tape. I love what the kid brings to the table."

With one scoring run of 64 yards and another pair of 1-yarders, Powell, one of three CU signees from Upland, Calif., tied a school freshman record for most TDs in a game. His long scoring jaunt was the fourth longest by a

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freshman in school history.

Powell had never lined up at tailback even during his high school career, and two days after his first game at the position he seemed a little reluctant to say he had found a home there.

"I'm just waiting to see what happens, waiting to see how things are," he said. "But it's been pretty good for me so far."

Pretty good, indeed. Coach Jon Embree said Powell had earned the opportunity to be given a long-term look: "I think there were some things when we saw him on tape that intrigued us about him as a runner. I think he proved Saturday that he's a capable runner. And he left a lot of yards out there, too. He missed some cuts, but he's learning."

The experiment involving Powell's position shift was born last week at mid-week. Wanting to beef up a run game that had produced 58 yards in the opening loss to Colorado State, Bieniemy said the decision was made to position Powell behind 245-pound junior fullback Alex Wood "and see what he could do . . .

"The thing I love about him is there's no hesitation. He puts his foot down and makes a decision (about the direction to run). On top of that, he carries some weight with him; he finds a way to average 4.5 to 5 yards a carry."

Powell's 28 carries were more than he ever had at Upland High School, and after working overtime in his first day on the job he was feeling the effects on Monday.

"Today, I'm still sore," he said. "But I'll get over it."

He also expects to get more adjusted to the position. "It's a different feeling, but you adjust to it," he said. "It's something new and anything that's new to you is going to be difficult until you adjust to it. Once you get comfortable with it, you go for it."

CU's run game production went from 58 yards to 153, with Bieniemy crediting that increase as much to the offensive line as Powell's new spot in the backfield. "The O-line did a great job with holes, those guys moved the pile," Bieniemy said.

CU used three other tailbacks - sophomore Tony Jones, junior Josh Ford and freshman Donta Abron - against Sac State, but only one of that trio had more than one carry. Jones, the No. 1 tailback coming out of August camp, had two carries for two yards. Ford carried once for seven yards, Abron once for one yard.

Asked what Powell's shift to tailback means for the other players at that position, Bieniemy said, "It means you need to pick up your urgency. Understand, there is no position here set in stone. The time is now."

Bieniemy had planned on Abron - Powell's teammate last season at Upland High School along with CU freshman safety Marques Mosley - getting a longer game-day look on Saturday. In addition to his lone rushing attempt, Abron caught one pass for 10 yards.

"That wasn't what I wanted - and it was because of 'The Christian Powell Show,'" Bieniemy said. "Two plays (for Abron) obviously weren't enough to say Donta has arrived. But from his work ethic and everything he accomplished last week in practice, I was happy he came to me and said, 'Coach, I'm ready to do this.' That's a good thing because now I know the kid's confident to go out and display his ability. He's definitely going to get an opportunity."

Jones rushed for 43 yards on 16 carries in the opener and remains in the tailback picture. He exited the CSU game with a slight shoulder injury and also was troubled by an ankle ailment. "We need him to get healthy," Bieniemy said. "He still brings a lot to this team. You know me, I love playing a number of backs. It makes it more

difficult for a team to prepare for."

The Buffs' total offense output of 341 yards (188 passing, 153 rushing) against Sac State was almost 100 more than against CSU (245). Bieniemy said the offense "made tremendous strides" in the second game. "There's a lot of good to take away from this. Three plays stand out in the second half; if we make those nobody's feeling this way. We've come so close . . . we have to finish. At the end of the day we have to finish what we started.

"There is some good. That's what I've been telling them - 'Fellas, turn the tape on. You're going to enjoy watching this game (offensively) with the exception of about three plays.'"

The three plays in question were a running call that was sabotaged by confusion in the blocking scheme and a pair of third-down passing plays that were foiled by a dropped ball and an errant pass.

"I'm happy with the output, I'm not satisfied with the outcome," Bieniemy said. "But our kids are playing much better. I know it's hard to sit here and justify that when the end result is that you lost. But we see it. As coaches the only thing you can do is take away the positive and keep building on it."

Bieniemy, CU's all-time leading rusher (3,940 yards), hasn't been immune to the criticism aimed at the Buffs for their 0-2 start. As a former player, he said he understands fans' frustration, adding, "I know nobody wants to hear that."

He also said his wife, Mia, reminded him that he made a choice to leave the NFL "to come back home." She also passed along this advice: "Make sure you uplift these kids and keep bringing them along."

Bieniemy said his wife "has a great football mind; she's been with me forever. She said she can see improvement; it looks like a much better team. But at the end of the day, it's a play here and there. If we make them, hey, we're singing the fight song."

His years as a CU player first taught Bieniemy to turn down the volume on negativity. "I've had my fair share of negative press; I've learned to tune things out," he said. "Whatever's being said does not come to me. We do a great job of shielding it away from home; nothing's stated within these walls (of the Dal Ward Athletic Center) . . . I have tunnel vision. I'm focused on Fresno State."

Making his offensive players understand the improvement he saw on Saturday won't be difficult. "You just look at the tape," Bieniemy said. "The eye in the sky doesn't lie. There's so much good to be shown from that tape. A play here or there, if we make it, (losing) is not an issue."

**WOOD TO GET PLAYING TIME AT QB:** Embree said Monday afternoon that Jordan Webb remains the Buffs starting quarterback, but backup Connor Wood would be used Saturday night at Fresno State.

"We're still going to go with Jordan, but we'll get Connor in there," Embree said. "I don't know if it'll be third series, fourth series or whatever. But we'll get him going in there, give him some reps."

Webb missed the brief afternoon practice because of a class conflict, giving Wood the majority of the reps with the first offense and Nick Hirschman snaps with the second unit.

Wood has played in one of CU's first two games - and that for only one snap after Webb was forced to leave the Sac State game because his helmet came off. On his only play, Wood completed a screen pass to receiver Gerald Thomas for a 28-yard gain.

Embree indicated he had hoped to get Wood, a transfer from Texas who sat out last season, more early playing time. "When your backup hasn't played you still need to find a way to do that, get him going and playing," Embree said. "A couple of times we'd talked about doing it . . . it was just something we've talked about wanting to get done. We'll be able to do it this week."

**CONCLUSIONS FROM POST-GAME STAFF MEETING:** At his post-game media conference Saturday, Embree said immediately afterward he was going into a meeting with his assistants. Bieniemy said there were high levels of disappointment and frustration, but no panic: "I guess more than anything . . . nobody got caught up in the emotions (of the loss). It was, 'How do we fix it?'"

Defensive coordinator/secondary coach Greg Brown added that every staffer was "scratching their head, looking for a way to improve and get a win. We all have to improve in every aspect."

Brown did concede that re-focusing players after such a difficult loss is "always a challenge. But we expect nothing less than 100 percent. We're not going to lie down. Your choices are lay down and die or get up and fight."

Embree said he called the meeting to make certain he and his assistants were "all on the same page" and answer some questions immediately "instead of sleeping on it and having to answer them the next morning."

**INJURY UPDATES:** Senior middle linebacker Doug Rippy (knee) is doubtful for the Fresno State game, while junior center Gus Handler (ankle) and sophomore cornerback Greg Henderson are "probably 50-50." Henderson was injured in the CSU game, Rippy and Handler against Sac State. Senior safety Ray Polk remains sidelined with a high ankle sprain suffered in the first quarter against CSU.

**BUFF BITS:** A 2 p.m. (MDT) kickoff has been set for CU's Pac-12 Conference opener at Washington State on Saturday, Sept. 22. The game was selected for national telecast on FX.

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## Football: Jon Embree interested to see if CU Buffs have left road woes behind

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

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Several months back in the heat of the early summer, Colorado coach Jon Embree said one of the games on the 2012 schedule that most interested him was this week's road trip to Fresno State.

The Buffs ended the nation's longest road losing streak in their final game last year at Utah. In beating the Utes that day 17-14, the Buffs snapped a streak of losing on the road that stretched back to October of 2007. It spanned 24 games played outside the state of Colorado and the entire careers of some players.

This week's trip to Fresno State is not just the first road game of this season. It's also the first opportunity for Embree to judge whether the program truly left the road plague at Rice-Eccles Stadium in November or if remnants still linger.

"I think we have put it to bed to a certain extent," Embree said. "But until you get a few in a row, it won't be completely behind you.

"Then the fact that we're going in still looking for our first win should heighten the urgency about getting a win on the road just cause it's our next game. Our younger players don't know and it will be interesting to see how they do in another stadium and all that. Generally it's your older guys showing you how to do it."

Fresno State has been a tough place to play for most visitors historically. The Bulldogs are 11-5 in home games against Pac-12 Conference teams, and since 2003 only two non-automatic qualifying programs have more wins over teams from Bowl Championship Series conferences. The Bulldogs have won 12 games against BCS opponents in that time. Only Navy (18) and BYU (13) have more such wins.

Fresno State is probably the toughest opponent on paper the Buffs have faced so far this season and CU lost its first two outings, which has the fan base in panic mode.

The Bulldogs are led by junior quarterback Derek Carr, the youngest brother of former Fresno State quarterback David Carr. Derek Carr has completed 68 percent of his passes in the first two games with three touchdown passes and no interceptions. He's thrown for more than 4,000 yards already in his career.

The Buffs will also have to contain a solid Fresno State ground game. Senior running back Robbie Rouse needs 79 rushing yards against the Buffs to pass Ron Rivers and become the Bulldogs' all-time leading rusher. Rouse has 3,395 career yards.

Colorado won't have a new starting quarterback Saturday, however sophomore Connor Wood will play in place of Jordan Webb for a few series, Embree said Monday. The idea is to get Wood some college game experience.

Webb will be making his first start on the road as a Buff. The last CU quarterback to win his first road game was Robert Hodge in 2003 at UCLA.

It might be a good thing that most of the key contributors for CU this season are true freshmen, redshirt freshmen and sophomores who haven't experienced much of the program's pain on the on the road.

Sophomore tight end Kyle Slavin, whose first career reception went for a touchdown last week, said the Buffs know they're capable of playing well on the road.

"We have a lot of confidence," Slavin said. "The season hasn't come out like we wanted it, but we still believe in each other and we feel good about going on the road.

"It's not the monkey on the back. We've got the confidence that we can go out and do it now."

True freshman defensive back Marques Mosley said he was aware of the Buffs' struggles on the road during the recruiting process. He said he's eager to get his first taste of playing in a hostile environment at the college level.

"I feel like we can go out there and play like we've been playing and just improve on some things that we messed up on," Mosley said. "Playing in front of the home crowd or another team's crowd is not too big of a deal as long as we go out there and perform."

Follow Kyle on Twitter: @KyleRingo

## Football: CU Buffs' Doug Rippy 'doubtful' for Fresno State game

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

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Colorado would love to have a healthy Doug Rippy on the field Saturday at Fresno State.

Yet, if the senior does have to miss some time with a knee injury, the Buffs (0-2) feel confident in the players they will send to the field.

Rippy has a history of trouble with his right knee, but injured his left knee in Saturday's loss to Sacramento State. On Monday, Embree said Rippy is "doubtful" for this week.

That likely means sophomore Brady Daigh will be called upon to make his first collegiate start.

"Brady has played very well, special teams and when he's been in the game (on defense)," Embree said. "He's ready. I'm not overly concerned about him being in there. He's played a lot of football for us and he's done well when he's been in there."

Daigh has been in on five tackles in limited action this season. A year ago, Daigh played just 82 snaps on defense, but made 18 tackles for a team-best one tackle for every 4.6 plays.

Because Rippy has been limited throughout the preseason and the first two games because of his knee issues, Daigh has had a lot of first-team work. So, he said his approach to Saturday's game won't change.

"Any time you step on the field, you're looking to go out there and be the starting guy," he said. "If you're approaching it any other way, I think you're doing it wrong. From day one, I've been looking to go take the job."

If Rippy is sidelined, another player expected to get more time is Kyle Washington. The sophomore said he's been ready all season, but said his mindset will be a little different this week.

"It's always great to know that you're going to get a lot of plays, so you can prepare for those types of things," he said. "We're going to try our best to patch it up until (Rippy) gets back."

### Wood to play vs. Bulldogs

On Monday, Embree said that Jordan Webb will continue to be the Buffs' starting quarterback. However, sophomore backup Connor Wood shouldn't get too far away from his helmet.

"We're going to get Connor in there, I don't know if it'll be third or fourth series or whatever," Embree said. "But, we'll get him going in there, too and get him some reps."

Webb has struggled a bit during the Buffs' first two games, but Wood has taken just one snap as a college player. That came on Saturday when he tossed a 28-yard pass to Gerald Thomas on his only play. He was in the game because Webb's helmet came off during a play and NCAA rules dictate that a player who loses his helmet must leave the field for a play.

Embree said the Buffs will not deviate from the plan to play Wood, even if Webb comes out on fire and leads the Buffs to a pair of early touchdowns.



"No, we're still going to get Connor going," Embree said. "When your backup hasn't played, you still need to find a way to do that and get him going and get him playing. It was something we've been talking about wanting to get done and start doing. We'll be able to do it this week."

Powell is the man

Freshman Christian Powell will continue to be the starting tailback after his 147-yard, three-touchdown performance against Sacramento State.

"Christian has earned it and he's producing, so he'll keep getting his opportunity to produce," Embree said.

Powell is a true freshman who was recruited to play fullback. Yet, Embree said he could see Powell being a tailback for the long haul.

"Yeah, I do. There were some things about that when he was coming out on his tape that intrigued you as a runner," Embree said. "I think he proved Saturday that he's a capable runner. He left a lot yards out there, too. He missed some cuts, but he's learning. As he continues to learn and gets confidence and all of that, he'll be a good back for us."

Powell was noticeably less effective as the game wore on, but Embree said a good reason for that is fatigue. Getting 28 carries in his first collegiate start was quite a workload for Powell, and on many of his carries, he tried to carry a host of defenders before being dragged down.

Embree expects Powell to learn how to handle the burden as time goes on.

"He'll be a guy I expect to get stronger," he said.

Notable

Embree said senior safety Ray Polk is out this week. He said cornerback Greg Henderson and center Gus Handler are "probably 50-50." ... Running back Tony Jones hurt his shoulder against CSU and tweaked an ankle last week. ... The game time for CU's Sept. 22 game at Washington State was set on Monday. The Buffs and Cougars will kick off at 2 p.m. MT and the game will be shown on FX. ... CU is 4-1 against Fresno State, but lost the most recent meeting, 24-22, on Aug. 26, 2001, in Boulder. The Buffs have never faced the Bulldogs in Fresno.

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## CU Buffs to use two quarterbacks against Fresno State

By Tom Kensler *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

Posted:

DenverPost.com

BOULDER — Colorado will use two quarterbacks Saturday in a road game against Fresno State, although CU coaches said junior Jordan Webb will remain as the starter and it is not being called a quarterback rotation.

After the Monday evening practice, Buffaloes coach Jon Embree announced that sophomore Connor Wood will get into the lineup for at least a series — and it will be early in the game.

"We're still going with Jordan (as the starter)," Embree said. "We're going to get Connor in there. I don't know if it will be the third series, fourth series or whatever. We'll get Connor in there for more reps.

"We want to get Connor's feet wet, give him some game action."

Webb, a transfer from Kansas, was named the starter after eight days of August camp, beating out the Texas transfer Wood and sophomore returnee Nick Hirschman.

Webb (6-foot-1, 205 pounds) played well in the opening-game loss to Colorado State but completed just half of his 24 pass attempts Saturday in the 30-28 home loss to Sacramento State, an FCS-level program and a member of the Big Sky Conference.

Wood (6-3, 225) made his Colorado debut for one play against Sacramento State in the third quarter when Webb lost his helmet while being sacked and, in accordance with NCAA rules, had to go out of the game for at least a play. Wood made the most of his opportunity, completing a 28-yard pass to freshman wide receiver Gerald Thomas on third-and-18 from the Hornets' 36-yard-line.

That big play set up a Colorado touchdown, giving the Buffs a 28-24 lead.

"I just looked at the (first-down) sticks," Wood said Saturday after the game. "It was fun being out there and throwing a pass."

As the top backup, Wood has been getting some practice repetitions with the No. 1 offense. Look for him to get more this week.

"This is not a reflection on Jordan," quarterbacks coach Rip Scherer said. "I think it's important in college football to get your backup guys some snaps early in a game potentially, just so if he does have to play down the road because of an injury (to the starter), he's not just thrown in there for the first time, or his duty has not only been 'clean-up' duty."

Scherer said he would like to get Wood in early, but the timing could be dictated by the game situation. "You have to put parameters around it," Scherer said. "You don't want his series to start on your own 2-yard line.

"We're looking for early in the game when we have a normal situation, not when we're backed up."

Scherer called Webb's performance against Sacramento State "nondescript" rather than saying the junior played poorly.

"After you start out 0-2, everybody wants to re-evaluate the quarterback," Scherer said.