



*Will Pericak (83) is now on the outside looking in.  
Photo Courtesy: Chip Bromfield, ProMotion Ltd.*



## Brooks: Pericak Adjusting To Life As An 'Outsider'

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**BOULDER** - It might not fall into the category of "taking one for the team," but then ...

A defensive tackle/nose tackle for most of his football career at Colorado, senior Will Pericak now is primarily a defensive end. He's played the position sporadically over the past three years, but now it appears he'll finish out his career on the outside.

"As of right now," Pericak said, "it's permanent ... I've always played some out there, I've just never been featured there."

Of course, things can change by the week, and both of CU's D-line coaches - Mike Tuiasosopo (tackles) and Kanavis McGhee (ends) - said the 6-4, 285-pound Pericak could be an "on demand" tackle once again during the season.

But for now, he's on the outside looking in.

Pericak's shift was made after the opener against Colorado State in an attempt to get the team's best defensive linemen on the field. As of now, those would be junior Chidera Uzo-Diribe and Pericak at ends and freshman Josh

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Tupou or junior Nate Bonsu at nosetackle in the Buffs' 3-4 base defense.

Continued progress from freshmen tackles Justin Solis and Tyler Hennington also factored into Pericak's shift. McGhee said the backups at end remain sophomores Kirk Poston, who started against CSU, and Juda Parker and freshman Samson Kafovalu.

The biggest adjustment in moving outside from inside, said McGhee, "is there's a lot more space. I think to this point Will's handled it pretty well. We've worked on a few things . . . but you've got to understand when you've always played inside, it's different when you've got that kind of space. But the kind of athlete and ball player he is, he's smart, he's strong and he's a veteran player."

"It's different," Pericak admitted. "It's something I've got to get used to, and I'm not used to it yet. But it's something I really think I can do well at. It just takes time."

In two games, Pericak has made 16 tackles - the fourth-highest on the team. Included in that number are two tackles for loss and a pair of third-down stops. Six of his tackles (five solo) and one for loss came last weekend against Sacramento State - his first full game outside.

He believes he can "definitely can make plays out there . . . I think I can do some good things with it."

Double teams are more likely to inside than out, said McGhee, and that's one of the adjustments Pericak must make: "A lot of times you're more used to working in a confined space (inside) so you get bumped a little more. When you're outside, you're expecting it, but it might not come. That's the only thing. It's a weird feeling for him, but that's it, the only thing I can see as the biggest adjustment.

"As far as having the strength and power and the knowledge to play that technique, he's got all those. It's just him saying, 'Wow, I'm expecting something that's not there.'

A preseason All-Pac-12 and All-America candidate (he was honorable mention All-Big 12 in 2010), Pericak already is one of the CU players drawing attention from NFL scouts, who project him playing inside or out. But, like McGhee, their concern is Pericak finding his comfort level literally outside of what has been his comfort zone.

Pericak faces a learning curve, Tuiasosopo said, but added, "He's only going to go up from here . . . experience, toughness, intelligence - all the things Will is, he brings. And he's so dependable and trustworthy."

In August, Tuiasosopo predicted Pericak could be one of the preeminent tackles in the Pac-12 Conference, a player mentioned in the same conversation with Utah's Star Lotulelei. But rather than viewing Pericak's move as a position loss, Tuiasosopo sees it as a defensive gain.

"No . . . I don't look at it that way," he said. "Whatever gives us the best chance. Will and I are good. The thing about Will is, he's so unselfish that he's willing to do it. Other guys might look at it and say with what's ahead (NFL), 'No, I ain't doing that.'

"But that's part of our deal; we've got unselfish guys and Will is as unselfish a guy as there is on our team."

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## Football: CU Buffs' Christian Powell humble, hard working

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

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One of the few conversations about the Colorado football program these days that doesn't quickly turn negative are those involving the potential of Christian Powell.

In a season that started with lamentable losses to Colorado State and Sacramento State, the debut of the 6-foot, 235-pound bruiser in the backfield is definitely a bright spot.

There were a dozen media members leaning forward in their seats earlier this week at the Colorado football press luncheon to hear what Powell had to say when it was his turn at the podium. He was there because he was the star of the game on the black and gold side last week carrying the ball 28 times for 147 yards and three touchdowns.

He plays with a roar, but Powell speaks softly.

"I always tell him to be humble, keep himself humble," said his mother, Tanya Powell. "Even when he was in high school and he played very well, I would stay in his ear, 'Keep yourself humble.'"

Christian Powell said this week has been a lot to manage, but he is doing his best. He's suddenly very popular on campus following his breakout performance at a position he wasn't recruited to play.

He played defense through much of high school and began to work hard at fullback in his senior year when his coach told him he wasn't likely to be highly recruited as a 6-foot defensive end. When he arrived at CU this summer and coaches began to see what he could do in practice, they knew they would be able to use him as a tailback if they needed to.

After CU rushed 29 times for 58 yards against CSU, they needed to.

He tripled that production against Sacramento State on one fewer carry. By midweek, he said his legs were still feeling sore, but he promised to be ready to do whatever coaches ask of him this week at Fresno State.

"It was a good experience, something new, but I had fun doing it," he said. "Everybody likes to get the ball so that was definitely a plus going back there and doing something new."

Coach Jon Embree says Powell will continue to get plenty of opportunities at tailback going forward because the offense needs a back that can earn yards after contact, break tackles and move the pile.

Powell developed a reputation for running with force before he ever arrived in Boulder. He began playing football in the ninth grade and was one of the bigger players on his team from the beginning. He was known as a hard hitter and when he shifted to offense, no one looked forward to tackling him.

CU freshman defensive back Marques Mosley played on the same high school team in Upland, Calif., as Powell and occasionally had to tackle his friend in practice or one-on-one drills.

"In high school, he was like, I think, 30 pounds heavier," Mosley said. "So it was like running into a train."

In fact, Powell has two nicknames from his high school days. His friends call him by his initials C.P., and at times they called him "Freight Train" in high school. They even played the sound of freight train horn sounding over the

public address system in his high school stadium each time he scored a touchdown.

"Whenever he got a chance to hit somebody, he would take them out," Mosley said. "On offense, whenever he got the ball, he would make something happen."

Powell said during this week's press conference his favorite football player is former Tampa Bay fullback Mike Alstott because he likes the aggressive way Alstott played the game. It's how he tries to play.

"He was a straight out beast," Powell said. "He did it all. That's why I can consider him like a role model."

Tanya Powell said her youngest son was never one she had to tell to do his homework or take care of his responsibilities. He was always going out of his way to help her and other people.

"If you didn't do something, he would just do it himself," she said.

All indications are Powell is taking the same approach to learning the offensive playbook. He wants to be the best running back he can be.

"I'm trying to learn everything," Powell said. "Even when I had no idea I'd be playing (tailback) I still tried to learn the whole offense just cause that would make your job that much easier when you know everything that is going on."

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