



Buff embrace coach Jon Embree following Saturday's stirring win at Washington State.
Photo Courtesy: Associated Press



Brooks: Video Helped Joyous Buffs Break Into Song

Release: 09/22/2012 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

PULLMAN, Wash. - After a week of Buffs bashing nationally, locally and, some suggested, even internally, the only real antidote was to answer on the field. Colorado football had become Bottom Ten fodder, a sad punchline after maybe as bad an oh-no-and-three start as the school has suffered through.

The suffering stopped Saturday afternoon. Down 17 points in the fourth quarter, CU stormed back with three touchdowns in the final 7:06, tied the score on quarterback [Jordan Webb](#)'s 4-yard middle draw and won on [Will Oliver](#)'s extra point with 9 seconds showing.

It was a savory afternoon for CU, with big-playmakers sprinkled throughout the 66 available players who traveled. Webb, the Kansas transfer, ran for a pair of scores and threw for another pair. Tailback [Tony Jones](#) had a career-best 84-yard TD run and tight end [Nick Kasa](#) a career-best 70-yard

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TD reception. Both were part of the near-miraculous fourth-quarter.

But when it came time to award game balls, a pair went to [Jamie Guy](#) and John Snelson. No, they're not on the roster, but you can find them on the CU staff directory.

Here's their back-story and why coach [Jon Embree](#) believed they were worthy:

Early last week, Guy, CU's director of sports video, woke up with the idea of using former players to tell a roster full of young players "what it means to be a Buff" and "what singing the fight song means to them." Guy approached Embree, who immediately got on board and told Guy and his guys to get to work.

With help from Snelson, his top assistant, and student assistant Connor Cassidy, Guy got in touch with about a dozen former players, explained the project and asked for their help. Needless to say, Guy only had to ask once.

It wasn't meant as an in-house answer to anyone on the outside, not an attempt to silence any critics. What it turned out to be was a meticulously edited, powerfully presented 15-minute video that Embree showed to his team on Friday night. (You'll be able to see it in its entirety at the Parade of Buffs rally on Thursday night at the 1st Bank Center in Broomfield. Snippets will run on CUBuffs.com in the four-day run-up to the event.)

With such a young team and with a recent resume so short on success, Embree and his staff had believed the Buffs' past was being lost. One assistant coach told me early in the week of arriving in Boulder a couple of decades ago and having "the torch" passed on to him and his freshman class by former players such as Mickey Pruitt, David Tate and [Eric McCarty](#).

When the current crop of freshmen arrived, not only was there no one to pass the torch, the flame had all but gone out. Guy sensed that, too. From about 9 a.m. Thursday to 6:30 a.m. Friday - in time for the team's early afternoon departure to Spokane - he had contacted and interviewed former CU players from the 1960s (Estes Banks), the '70s ([Brian Cabral](#)), the '80s (Mike Marquez, Embree) and the '90s ([Eric Bieniemy](#), James Hill, [Kanavis McGhee](#), Alfred Williams, Chad Brown, Charles Johnson, among others).

About three weeks of work was crammed into just over two days. And as Snelson applied the final editing touches early Friday morning after an all-nighter, it turned out that anymore time might have been unnecessary.

An emotional Brown spoke of what the Bill McCartney mantra - "The Pride And Tradition Of The Colorado Buffaloes Will Not Be Entrusted To The Timid Or The Weak" - means to him. Brown said he only needed to say, "The Pride . . ." to his 13-year-old son - and his boy would finish the sentence.

One of Brown's most regretful memories as a Buff was when McCartney covered up the sign in the team's auditorium because of a lackluster Saturday. "It hurt me to my core," he said.

Bieniemy spoke passionately and it turned out, prophetically, of what it means to be a Buff: "You're going to get knocked down. Are you willing to stand up and get knocked down again? It's not what you do in the first and second rounds, it's what happens in rounds 14 and 15."

This came from Marquez: "You'll have fans and family behind you, but nobody will be behind you like former players."

And this from Williams: "It's been three games . . . are you ready to have some fun, ready to get it done? We're

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with you."

The current Buffs watched the video and were moved. "It meant everything . . . I started tearing up," said junior defensive back [Parker Orms](#). "This program means so much to so many people, me and my family. It always has. I'm just glad these guys got an opportunity to sing the fight song (Saturday) and know what that means, know what it feels like. The locker room was the greatest since I've been here."

"It gave me chills, honestly," Webb said of the video. "We don't take that legacy lightly. After seeing that, I think some of the freshmen really got a sense of what this place is about."

Count freshman tailback/fullback [Christian Powell](#) among them. He called the video "personal. Everybody who was interviewed, that came from the heart. It was very inspirational and I think it carried over to today."

Embree had no doubt that it did: "It was huge," he said.

In 10-minute individual meetings with his players on Monday and Tuesday, Embree talked to them about the 1986 CU team, its poor start (0-4) "and what we did as a team to fix it. That video tied in exactly with what we wanted to share with the players. It let them know that former players are behind them. There are a lot of guys who have called in, have heard about the video . . . they wanted to put their two cents in. It's something that's truly special."

That the Buffs' win unfolded as it did was even more special. Behind by 17 points in the fourth quarter, Embree said, "No one blinked," before adding with a chuckle: "And now we've got a two-game road winning streak in the Pac-12. Those are two very good things as we build this program; you've got to win on the road at some point to do the things we want to do as a program. I'm glad we didn't have to wait until the last game to do it this year."

I asked Embree if Saturday provided any vindication after the bashing he, his staff and his team took last week after the 69-14 beat-down at Fresno State sent the Buffs spiraling to 0-3.

"No," he answered, "and that's fine. It's not about vindication. It doesn't affect how I believe, how our team believes in each other. Some of that bashing came about because somebody wants to act like they're on the inside and state their opinion. When you see that video of the real Buffs talking to our team, talking about what it means to be a Buff - that's why it doesn't matter. This program is bigger than one guy."

Here's a hint: He wasn't talking about the Guy who got a game ball.

OK, so it's now one win in four games, with their second Pac-12 game (UCLA Saturday at Folsom Field) looming to close out the month. Are the Buffs finally free of all that ails them? You know the answer to that, as does Embree.

But he's been telling his players (and anyone else who still wanted to listen) that if they kept working, kept playing and kept the faith, something would break their way. It had to and it did Saturday. Whether it happens again soon . . . who knows?

Here's what we do know: When their chartered jet touched down late Saturday night at DIA, the Buffs were singing. Loudly, gloriously. And they knew this, too: Buffs from way, way back were singing with them.

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Photo Courtesy: Associated Press



Brooks: Buffs Conjure Miracle Finish, Stun Cougars

Release: 09/22/2012 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

PULLMAN, Wash. - It might not have been 1994's Miracle in Michigan, but for the 2012 Colorado Buffaloes, it couldn't have been bigger.

On a hazy, smoky Saturday in the Palouse, desperate and determined CU rallied from a 17-point fourth-quarter deficit with three touchdowns in the final 7:06 to stun Washington State 35-34 for the Buffs' first win this season.

With 9 seconds remaining, CU quarterback [Jordan Webb](#) scampered 4 yards on a designed draw to tie the score at 34-34. [Will Oliver](#)'s extra point broke the tie and undoubtedly every WSU heart in Martin Stadium's homecoming crowd.

"It's hard to say I had a lot of confidence it was going to happen, but it's how it works," Webb said of his team's comeback. "When you play football long enough you realize anything can happen. On that last drive, I think everybody

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knew we were going to score the whole time. That was the attitude, definitely."

Webb, who also scored on a QB sneak earlier and tossed a pair of touchdown passes, said his game-tying TD "was actually a pass/run . . . you read the box and see what they're doing. It was just there to run the ball."

He saw it before the snap, called it and the Buffs were within Oliver's PAT of one of their biggest wins.

"Awesome, just awesome," Oliver said. "It was funny . . . your whole life you're seeing yourself kicking game winners and then it just happens. I wasn't nervous at all; same old, same old."

But it was much more than that. CU coach [Jon Embree](#) said he "has never been prouder of any Buffs team, and I was part of the win at Michigan (a last-second Hail Mary from Kordell Stewart to Michael Westbrook) and a lot of other big ones. But this one, this one is special."

The dramatic win pushed CU to 1-0 in Pac-12 Conference play and 1-3 overall after a shockingly bad non-conference season. WSU dropped to 2-2 and 0-1. CU plays UCLA next Saturday at Folsom Field (4 p.m., Pac-12 Network).

Offensive coordinator/running backs coach [Eric Bieniemy](#) worked from the sidelines for the first time this season and only the second time in two years. In the coaches' booth relaying plays through Bieniemy was passing game coordinator/quarterbacks coach [Rip Scherer](#). Whatever works, said the ecstatic Buffs.

There was a significant change on the field, too. Due to center [Gus Handler](#)'s lingering ankle injury, the starting offensive line was shuffled. As expected if Handler couldn't play, [Daniel Munyer](#) opened at center, but on the right side [Jack Harris](#) moved inside to guard and [Stephane Nembot](#) made his first career start at right tackle. He shared time with [Ryan Dannewitz](#).

The Buffs had to overcome the passing of Cougars quarterback Connor Halliday, who threw for 401 yards (32-of-60) and four TDs. He was intercepted twice and sacked three times.

Webb completed 29-of-42 for 345 yards and a pair of scores. He was picked off once and sacked six times.

CU had a 100-yard rusher - [Tony Jones](#) with four carries for 105 yards and a score - and a 100-yard receiver - [Nelson Spruce](#) with eight catches for 103 yards and a TD.

The Buffs rushed for a season-best 186 yards, with freshman [Christian Powell](#) adding 66 yards to Jones' total. CU's 531 yards in total offense also was a season high. WSU totaled 451.

The Buffs trailed 21-7 at halftime, but compared to last week's score at intermission in Fresno - 55-7 - that was progress.

Both teams scored on their first possessions, Wazzu requiring only 1:37 to go 75 yards in six plays for its first touchdown. Halliday, whose passing accounted for 73 (four of five completions) of the march's total yards, hit Gabe Marks for a 32-yard score. Andrew Furney's PAT sent the Cougars ahead 7-0 with 13:18 left in the first quarter.

But CU answered immediately, also going 75 yards and scoring on a 16-yard Webb-to-Spruce pass. Oliver's extra point tied the score at 7-7.

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Then the Buffs got the game's first turnover. After end [Will Pericak](#) sacked Halliday for a 15-yard loss on second down, defensive back [Jered Bell](#)'s first career interception and return gave CU possession at its own 40-yard line.

But the Buffs moved only as far as the Cougars' 13-yard line, where Oliver's 30-yard field attempt drifted wide left. CU's chance to capture the lead was wasted, and WSU quickly capitalized with a six-play, 80-yard drive capped by Halliday's 23-yard pass to Marquess Wilson two plays into the second quarter.

Furney's PAT eased the Coogs ahead 14-7, and less than 2 minutes later it was 21-7. After WSU corner Damante Horton recovered a fumbled reception by CU's [Tyler McCulloch](#) at the Buffs' 39, Halliday hit Isiah Myers eight plays later. With Furney's extra point at the 11:48 mark, WSU had its 21 first-half points and CU had another half to try and recover.

Getting out the first half down by only 14 was an accomplishment for CU, but the Buffs went to their locker room believing they should have been closer. One drive ended with a fourth-and-12 Webb-for-McCulloch incompletion at the Cougars' 28, and the next was finished by a Webb sack-and-fumble at the CU 47 with 56 seconds left in the half.

But the Buffs forced a three-and-out and dodged what might have been a fatal bullet.

Halliday finished the half 19-of-30 for 224 yards and three TDs, with the one pick. Webb was 16-of-21 for 177 yards and a score. Backup [Connor Wood](#) did not play; [Nick Hirschman](#) was in for one fourth-quarter play, handing off to Jones for his long TD run after Webb came out due to "getting his breath knocked out," Hirschman said later.

Despite getting a second set of downs courtesy of a roughing the punter call, CU couldn't move past midfield after receiving the second-half kickoff. But the Buffs defense quickly atoned.

After a Halliday completion to tailback Carl Winston, CU linebackers [Paul Vigo](#) and [Jon Major](#) dislodged the ball and safety [Terrel Smith](#) returned the fumble 11 yards to the WSU half-yard line. Initially, Smith was ruled to have scored, but the play was reviewed and the call reversed.

Didn't matter. Webb sneaked in behind Munyer and left guard [Alex Lewis](#) on the first play, and with Oliver's PAT, the Buffs were back in it at 21-14. And after surviving a WSU march to the CU 30 and a missed 54-yard field goal attempt by Furney, the Buffs appeared to recapture momentum.

It lasted all of one play. Webb's pass on the sideline for [Gerald Thomas](#) was picked off by corner Daniel Simmons. Six plays later, Halliday and Wilson teamed for 49-yard score on a receiver screen and after Furney's extra point kick the Buffs again trailed by 14 points (28-14) with 5:27 left in the third quarter.

The quarter ended that way, but CU did little to help itself in that remaining time. On the Buffs' final possession of the quarter, Webb was flagged 15 yards for a personal foul after a short third-down gain, putting [Darragh O'Neill](#) near his goal line to punt.

His shortest kick of the season - 17 yards - gave WSU possession at the CU 30, but the Cougars managed only a 45-yard Furney field goal on the second play of the final quarter. Still, it put the Buffs further behind (31-14) with time to recover slipping away from them.

Midway through the quarter, a WSU drive was halted by a Major interception at the CU 8-yard line. But the Buffs had only 8:07 remaining to make up their 17-point deficit - and they made the most of it.

With 7:06 to play, they crept to within 10 (31-21) on a 70-yard pass from Webb to tight end [Nick Kasa](#) and Oliver's PAT. It was CU's longest pass play to a tight end during the regular season in school history.

Less than 3 minutes later, CU pulled to 31-28 on Jones' 84-yard run around right end and the extra point kick by Oliver. The clock showed 4:23 remaining - but the Buffs' dreams for a miracle finish took a hit on Teondray Caldwell's 56-yard kickoff return to the CU 23.

All the Cougars could reap from it was a 42-yard Furney field goal, making it 34-28 and leaving the Buffs 3:11 to work their miracle. Starting at their own 30, they moved to the WSU 6-yard line, where a timeout was called with 43 seconds left after a pair of Powell runs

With 20 seconds left, the ball at the Cougars' 2-yard line, Powell was thrown for a 2-yard loss on third down. Another timeout - the Buffs' last - was called with 12 seconds to play.

On fourth down, Webb ran his QB draw for the 4-yard TD - and with 9 seconds left, the Buffs' miracle was nearly complete. WSU had one play left, but Major batted down Halliday's pass and the jubilant Buffs celebrated like they deserved it.

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Washington St. blows lead, loses 35-34 to Colorado

NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS - Associated Press (AP)

Saturday, September 22, 2012

PULLMAN, Wash. (AP) — Washington State quarterback Connor Halliday knew why the Cougars were upset by Colorado on Saturday.

"We've got to quit playing stupid in the second half," Halliday said after the Buffaloes scored three fourth-quarter touchdowns to win 35-34.

Washington State took early leads in games against Eastern Washington and UNLV, then had to survive comebacks to pull out the wins. Against Colorado, the trend finally led to a loss.

"We're a pretty darn good football team when we play together," Halliday said. "We've got to pull a full game together."

Jordan Webb ran 4 yards untouched into the end zone, the last of the three scores in the final 7 minutes, to lift the Buffaloes over Washington State in the Pac-12 Conference opener for both teams.

"I knew the offensive line was going to block, like they had all day," said Webb, who ran for two touchdowns and threw for two others in the upset. Washington State was favored by 19 going into the game.

Colorado (1-3) had been all but given up for dead after losing its first three games, including last week's 69-14 loss to Fresno State.

"A week ago they were putting the last shovel of dirt on us," said Colorado coach Jon Embree. "I always felt we were better than we were showing."

Washington State led 31-14 midway through the fourth quarter. Then the Buffaloes scored three touchdowns in the final 7:06 to pull out the win.

Halliday threw four touchdown passes for Washington State (2-2), which was looking for its first three-game winning streak since 2006.

"We're a mentally weak team," WSU coach Mike Leach said. "That's got to change."

"We want to go complacent when we get ahead and panic when something good happens for the other guy," Leach added. "We are afraid to win."

It was the third consecutive game in which WSU led in the first half and let the other team close on them in the second. But they managed to hold on in victories over Eastern Washington and UNLV.

Colorado put up 531 total yards, compared to 451 for Washington State.

Webb completed 29 of 42 passes for 345 yards, and was intercepted once. He was sacked six times.

Washington State was ahead 34-28 when Colorado took over on its 30 and marched to the WSU 4. On fourth down, Webb bootlegged up the middle for a touchdown to tie the score. Will Oliver's extra point gave Colorado its first lead, 35-34, with 9 seconds left.

Colorado had pulled within 31-28 on Webb's 70-yard touchdown pass to Nick Kasa midway through the fourth quarter, followed by Tony Jones' 84-yard scoring run with 4:23 left. On the ensuing kickoff, the Cougars wasted Teondray Caldwell's 56-yard return and had to settle for Andrew Furney's 42-yard field goal. That set up Webb's final drive and touchdown run.

The game was played in air thick with smoke from wildfires 200 miles away in central Washington.

Halliday completed 32 of 60 passes for 401 yards and was intercepted twice. Washington State has so far shown only flashes of Leach's high-flying "Air Raid" offense.

Washington State scored on its first possession, when a scrambling Halliday hit Gabe Marks in the end zone with a 32-yard pass for a 7-0 lead. Colorado replied with a crisp 75-yard drive that ended when Webb connected with Nelson Spruce on a 16-yard touchdown to tie the score. Webb completed all five of his passes on the drive.

Halliday was intercepted near the Colorado goal line by Jered Bell on WSU's next possession. Colorado's drive stalled at WSU's 13 and Will Oliver missed the 30-yard field goal attempt.

Marquess Wilson caught a 23-yard scoring pass from Halliday as WSU took a 14-7 lead early in the second quarter.

Colorado fumbled the ball away at its own 39 on its next possession. Halliday's 15-yard touchdown pass to Isiah Myers put WSU ahead 21-7 with 11:48 left in the first half. The drive was kept alive when Halliday hit Myers on fourth-and-8 for an 11-yard gain.

In the third, Carl Winston fumbled deep in WSU territory on the Cougars' first possession, and Terrel Smith picked the ball up on the 10 and ran it down to the 1. Webb ran the ball over on the next play as Colorado closed to within 21-14.

Furney missed a 53-yard field goal attempt for WSU on their next possession.

Daniel Simmons intercepted Webb on the next series, and Halliday threw a short pass to Wilson, who turned it into a 49-yard touchdown reception and a 28-14 lead for Washington State.

A shanked punt gave WSU possession on Colorado's 30, but the Cougars couldn't move the ball and settled for Furney's 45-yard field goal and a 31-14 lead early in the fourth, setting the stage for the Buffaloes' comeback.



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Football: CU Buffs stun Washington State for first win of season

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

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PULLMAN, Wash. -- While a storm of criticism swirled around his program during the last week with Internet critics calling for his job and media declaring his program dead and irrelevant, Colorado coach Jon Embree did what he was hired to do.

He showed his players and assistant coaches a way through the malaise to a brighter Sunday morning.

Throughout the week, Embree met with every player on his roster to make sure their minds were right following a disastrous loss at Fresno State. He practiced them hard but also reminded them they are supposed to be having the time of their lives.

Finally, on Friday night in a hotel ballroom in Spokane, Wash., about 80 miles from Martin Stadium on the Washington State campus, Embree showed his team a video in which legendary players from the great CU teams of the 1990s delivered a message.

The former players wanted the current players to know they believe in them and expect them to uphold the standard they set. More than a few Buffs had that message on their minds as they fought back to overcome a 17-point fourth-quarter deficit and beat Washington State 35-34 in the final seconds.

"They really kind of picked us up," tight end Nick Kasa said. "We were in a pretty bad place."

Kasa was just one of the heroes Saturday, coming through with a 70-yard touchdown catch to start the rally and a clutch fumble recovery on the final drive. Quarterback Jordan Webb threw him the ball and later scored the game-tying touchdown on a gut-check quarterback draw call on fourth down at the 4-yard line with 11 seconds remaining.

In between those two plays was, perhaps, the play of the game. Webb had the wind knocked out of him on a first-down play deep in CU territory. He was helped off the field and sophomore Nick Hirschman came in. Hirschman handed the ball to tailback Tony Jones, who raced around right end for an 84-yard score, the eighth longest rushing touchdown in program history.

The score cut Washington State's lead to three and completely changed the atmosphere in the stadium from anticipating a victory celebration to trepidation. It's likely more than a few fans had the Cougars' come-from-behind win in Boulder last season in mind while watching the Buffs rally.

"It's a tremendous testament to them," Embree said of his players. "We talked all week about the heart of a Buffalo. In our player meetings that I had with the guys, I just talked to them about what our resolve needs to be and about that I still believe in them. I knew we could do some good things still.

"It was a great team effort."

Colorado has now won two of its past three road games after losing 24 straight from 2007 to the season finale last year.

The air was thick with smoke from nearby wildfires on homecoming and the Cougars were well on their way to adding to the party, but CU just wouldn't go away. The Buffs overcame a 17-point, fourth-quarter deficit and

scored three touchdowns in the final 7 minutes, 6 seconds to earn their first victory in 2012.

Washington State was favored by 20 points. It was only the third time since 2007 the Cougars were favored in a conference game. They lost the previous two to Oregon State.

Webb started once again at quarterback for the Buffs and was not forced to share time as he did last week with sophomore Connor Wood.

Webb played well at times and not so well at others, continuing the story of his first season in black and gold. He threw a touchdown pass in the first quarter to Nelson Spruce and ran one yard for a touchdown in the third quarter, but he struggled to move the offense consistently and once again paid the price for protection breakdowns in front of him.

But all of that seemed to change during the fourth-quarter rally. The Buffs suddenly found their running game and Webb made plays when they were needed but didn't try to do too much.

"I like to sling the ball around and every once in awhile I make a bad play, But I like to think I'll come back and fix it," Webb said.

Webb completed 29 of 42 passes for 345 yards and two touchdowns with one interception. He also ended a personal 13-game losing streak that stretched back through his final 10 games at Kansas last season before transferring to CU.

Meanwhile, Connor Halliday started under center for the Cougars and threw for 401 yards and four touchdown passes against a CU defense that showed improvement but still looks lost at times with players out of position.

Put simply, it was another day of tough lessons and growing pains for a slew of young defenders, but the CU defense also made plays down the stretch. The Buffs picked off Halliday twice in the redzone and sacked him three times.

Embree said Saturday's performance was the first by his team on a game day that looked like what he has seen at times in practices.

"I always felt like we were better than what we've been showing in all three games," Embree said. "I never wanted to come out and say it, 'Hey, we're close. We're better than this.' Cause I know as a fan and former player, that's not what you want to hear.

"In my heart I felt like this team could do some things. I felt like this team could play better. ... It was definitely a different team this week."

Follow Kyle on Twitter:

@KyleRingo

Thorburn: Win has potential to be watershed moment for CU Buffs

By Ryan Thorburn *Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera*

Posted:

Buffzone.com

They grow up so fast.

The Buffs were ranked as the nation's No. 1 (worst) team in ESPN's "Bottom 10" after losing to Colorado State, Sacramento State and Fresno State in nonconference play.

After a stunning comeback victory at Washington State on Saturday, Colorado is now tied for No. 1 in the Pac-12 standings.

"We took a step," Jon Embree said on the AM 760 post-game show. "Maybe from infants to toddlers. I'm so happy for these players and the coaches."

If Embree and his coaching staff return the program to prominence in the next few seasons, the fourth-quarter performance at Martin Stadium will be looked at as the turning point.

For about 53 minutes, Jordan Webb was playing a solid but not spectacular game. His wide receivers made some routine plays and let some big plays slip through their fingers. The running game inexplicably disappeared again.

Greg Brown's much-maligned defense was bending and then breaking on key third downs.

Everyone in black and gold was playing extremely hard and trying to have more fun, but the Buffs still trailed 31-14 with just over seven minutes left on the clock.

And then it happened.

Webb hit tight end Nick Kasa, the converted defensive lineman, for a 70-yard touchdown, the first of his career.

CU's defense, which set up a key 1-yard drive touchdown for the offense after a fumble recovery in the third quarter, shut down Mike Leach's spread attack to keep hope alive.

Tony Jones broke off an 84-yard touchdown run. That's right, a run.

Suddenly the Buffs were within a field goal.

"I gave a speech last week and talked about emotion and that we needed to play with more emotion," left tackle David Bakhtiari said. "Guys really took it to heart. We talked about winning on the road and singing that fight song."

The Buffs almost sang the blues again.

CU was flagged for an unsportsmanlike penalty during the celebration following Jones' touchdown, and then the special teams allowed a 56-yard kickoff return.

Instead of here-we-go-again, Brown's defense responded with not-this-time.

The Cougars settled for a field goal and made the mistake of giving CU the ball back with a chance to win the game.

On first-and-goal, freshman Christian Powell fumbled while rumbling through traffic. Kasa recovered.

The football gods finally smiled on the Buffs.

Webb capped a possible program-changing drive with a 4-yard touchdown run with 11 seconds remaining.

"It was originally a pass play," Webb said. "And I had the option to change it to a run play."

A brilliant decision to cap what turned into a memorable day for Webb (29-for-42 pass for 345 yards with two touchdown passes and two touchdown runs).

"I can't think of a better one ever, honestly," Webb, a Kansas transfer, said of the win on a day when Charlie Weis and the Jayhawks lost to Northern Illinois.

Will Oliver's extra point gave CU a 35-34 result worthy of the victory wall in the Dal Ward Center.

"I know the results haven't been exactly what we wanted. But how about that?" offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy said with a raspy voice. "Our kids showed what shoulder-to-shoulder means."

I was as guilty as anyone of thinking that CU was on the dark path to 0-12 after the 69-14 drubbing by Fresno State a week earlier.

"Never underestimate the heart of a Buffalo," Embree said.

Embree's team has won its last two Pac-12 road games. The next step in the rebuilding process is to start defending Folsom Field.

CU, not UCLA (lost 27-20 to Oregon State at the Rose Bowl), will be the team trying to stay on top of the South Division next Saturday.

The baby Buffs are growing up.

"I'd love for our fans to come out and support us. We need you," Embree said. "It would be great to see that house filled."

Follow Ryan on Twitter: @RyanThoburn

Football: Eric Bieniemy energizes CU Buffs' sideline

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

PULLMAN, Wash. -- Player after player credited Colorado offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy with changing the atmosphere on the sideline Saturday and helping the Buffs overcome a big lead and win 35-34 at Washington State.

Bieniemy, a fiery personality who always has preferred coaching from the field, consulted with head coach Jon Embree after a devastating loss last week at Fresno State and decided to come down from the press box against the Cougars. It was his first game on the sideline since coaching there in the 2011 season opener at Hawaii.

Wide receiver Tyler McCulloch said Bieniemy's presence made all the difference early Saturday and players took it from there.

"Having EB on the sidelines helps a lot," McCulloch said. "You know he's not going to take any of that moping stuff. The whole week we've been talking about having fun, playing with a swagger and what it means to be a Buff. This is the most intense I've ever seen our team with the offense up cheering on the defense and the defense cheering on the offense. I think I lost my voice in the first quarter."

Bieniemy received some help with play calling suggestions from quarterbacks coach Rip Scherer in the press box. They pushed all the right buttons down the stretch guiding the Buffs back from 17 points down and capping the comeback with a stellar quarterback draw on fourth-down at the 4-yard line with 11 seconds on the game clock.

Bieniemy credited his players, especially quarterback Jordan Webb, for executing the play and downplayed any effect he might have had on the team's temperament.

"I don't know if that is true," Bieniemy said. "These kids, and I'm sorry, excuse my language, but I've got to say it like this, they played their asses off. They have been working very, very hard. Me being on the sideline, that has nothing to do with what they accomplished."

Big day for Kasa

A year ago at this time, Colorado tight end Nick Kasa was still playing defensive line and struggling to help his team on game days. On Saturday, Kasa came through with his best day since switching to tight end.

Kasa caught three passes for 87 yards, including a 70-yard pass down the middle of the field in the fourth quarter to help the Buffs come back and beat the Cougars.

The 70-yard touchdown was the longest for a CU tight end in regular-season history. The previous best was a 68-yard connection in 2008 at Nebraska from Cody Hawkins to Riar Geer.

Former Buffs Joel Klatt and Joe Klopfenstein connected on a 78-yard score in the 2004 Houston Bowl.

Spruce get loose

Wide receiver Nelson Spruce produced his first 100-yard receiving game against the Cougars with seven of his eight passes recording first downs. Spruce finished with 103 yards receiving and a first-quarter touchdown catch.

Henderson returns

Sophomore cornerback Greg Henderson returned to play Saturday after missing the previous two games with an ankle injury. Henderson did not start but he played much of the second half.

Freshmen cornerbacks Kenneth Crawley and Yuri Wright struggled at times against the Washington State passing game. Crawley gave up two touchdown passes and Wright gave up another in the first half.

Henderson found himself matched up with WSU receiver Marquess Wilson in the second half and allowed Wilson to get away from him for a 49-yard catch-and-run on a screen pass. It is the second year in row, Henderson surrendered a score to Wilson. Last year, the mistake cost the Buffs the game in the final 70 seconds.

Starting assignments

Redshirt freshman tackle Stephane Nembot started his first game at right tackle and split time with senior Ryan Dannewitz.

Nembot will probably always remember his first start for an unsportsmanlike penalty he received for hitting a player after the whistle in the first half. But he wasn't the only new element on the offensive line Saturday.

Starting center Gus Handler missed the game with an injury, forcing guard Daniel Munyer to move to center and make the line calls. Munyer seemed to handle the assignment well. His biggest mistake of the day was a high shotgun snap that went over the head of quarterback Jordan Webb on a third-and-15.

Notable

Will Oliver missed a first-quarter, 30-yard field goal attempt wide left. Oliver is now 4-for-7 on attempts of 30-39 yards. ... Jered Bell started at safety for freshman Marques Mosley, who still played in the game. ... Colorado limited WSU to one score on three trips into the redzone, with two interceptions by Bell and Jon Major.

Follow Kyle on Twitter: @KyleRingo

Colorado rallies with 3 TDs in final 7 minutes to win 35-34 at WSU

By Tom Kensler The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

PULLMAN, WASH. — Seven days after becoming a national punch line, Colorado dug deep for something inside Saturday and scored three touchdowns in the final 7:06 to overtake Washington State 35-34 in a Pac-12 opener, stunning a crowd of 31,668 at Martin Stadium.

CU (1-3, 1-0 Pac-12) never led in the game until junior quarterback Jordan Webb scored on a 4-yard keeper and Will Oliver kicked the extra point with nine seconds left.

The Buffaloes somehow went from losing 69-14 at Fresno State to winning their second consecutive Pac-12 road game, including last year's season finale at Utah.

"We needed this pretty dang bad," Webb said. "The way it happened, that puts the cherry on the top. The locker room is pretty happy right now."

Washington State (2-2, 0-1) took a 31-14 lead with 14:47 left in the fourth quarter. But Colorado, which had been burned by huge touchdown plays at Fresno State, broke free for two of its own — a 70-yard pass from Webb to senior tight end Nick Kasa and an 84-yard run by sophomore tailback Tony Jones.

Jones swept around right end and raced untouched down the sideline, along the Colorado bench.

"I just thought, 'Don't get caught, don't get caught,' " Jones said. "I looked twice to see where the corner and the safety were. I thought if I got caught, I'd never get to play again."

Those smiles revealed that Colorado had gone through a difficult week.

"They (fans) were putting the last shovel of dirt on us," CU coach Jon Embree said of the criticism that the program had experienced. "It definitely was a different team this week."

"In my heart, I thought this team could play better (than it had shown). It's a tremendous testament to the team. We talked of having 'the heart of a Buffalo.' It's a great team effort."

First-year Washington State coach Mike Leach saw his team get outscored 21-6 in the fourth quarter.

"Colorado deserves a lot of credit," Leach said. "It was important for them to win."

With his trademark spread offense, Leach guided Texas Tech to 10 bowl games in 10 seasons, but he lost for the third consecutive time to Colorado, including Buffs wins over his Red Raiders teams in 2006 (Boulder) and 2007 (Lubbock).

Colorado yielded 401 yards Saturday and could have played better on defense. But CU's Greg Brown coached the Buffs' secondary in all three of those wins. Brown also serves as CU's defensive coordinator.

"There were some tough times tonight, but Brownie finds a way," Embree said.

For much of the game, it appeared CU would waste a terrific opportunity to steal a road win. A 20-point underdog, CU didn't punt in the first half, and four Buffs drives penetrated Washington State territory. Yet Colorado

managed just a lone touchdown and trailed 21-7.

"I go into every game thinking I can win," Webb said. "That's my mentality. And I think we have the guys to do it.

"When we get our backs against the wall, we're the resistant type."

Cougars sophomore quarterback Connor Halliday threw for 401 yards and four touchdowns on 32-of-60 passing. He got good pass protection and had enough time to survey the field and spot an open receiver among the four or five wideouts who flooded the secondary on any given play.

It's a pick-your-poison proposition when playing two freshman cornerbacks and sophomore safety Jered Bell with little playing experience. Rather than leave CU's defensive backs susceptible to getting beaten on deep patterns, Buffs defenders sat back in a soft coverage, often giving WSU receivers a cushion of as much as 10 yards.

Washington State's offense took what it was given, moving the chains with underneath patterns and bubble screens — and then going for the kill by throwing downfield for touchdowns.

At times, Colorado set up with just two pass rushers and had nine players in pass coverage. But that only allowed Halliday even more time, and eventually a Cougars receiver found an open seam.

But Colorado avoided giving up big plays in the second half.

"The freshman cornerbacks we have are going to be good," Embree said. "They're learning."

Colorado hosts UCLA on Saturday.

"This was a step," Embree said.

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280, tkensler@denverpost.com or twitter.com/tomkensler

CU Buffs' passing offense catches fire to beat Washington State

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

Posted:

DenverPost.com

PULLMAN, wash. — Colorado's passing game came alive Saturday. Did it ever.

Celebrating Saturday's come-from-behind 35-34 victory over Washington State is one thing. But the Buffaloes believe they can build upon it throughout the season, even with more talented Pac-12 opponents looming ahead.

The chemistry between CU junior quarterback Jordan Webb and his receivers appeared light years better than in the first three games.

"We've been working real hard together," said Webb, who also ran for two touchdowns.

The transfer from Kansas threw for 345 yards and two touchdowns on 29-of-42 passing, with one interception. He completed passes to eight receivers.

Those included redshirt freshman Nelson Spruce, who caught eight passes for 103 yards and a touchdown; junior tight end DaVaughn Thornton, who had five for 60 yards; sophomore wideout Tyler McCulloch, who caught five for 42; and senior tight end Nick Kasa, a converted defensive end who began Colorado's rally with a 70-yard touchdown reception with 7:06 left.

CU scored two more touchdowns after Kasa's score. The Buffs had never led in the game until Webb scored on a 4-yard keeper with nine seconds left.

"Coach (Jon) Embree has been talking about simplifying things out there and just play ball," McCulloch said. "We felt the timing early. We were just trying to stay ahead of the chains."

Kasa's 70-yard touchdown reception in the fourth quarter was CU's longest ever to a tight end during the regular season. It was his first career TD.

"I've been trying to get a touchdown for a long time," Kasa said. "I kind of lost it in the lights. I told myself, 'I'm not dropping this.' "

Webb was sacked six times. But he was given enough time to come up with timely plays."

"We did a good job of protecting him," Spruce said. "It's just a matter of getting that timing right. He can make the throws."

Webb said it will be easier for the team to prepare for Saturday's home game against UCLA.

"I'm sure on Monday (in practice), guys will have a little more bounce in their step," Webb said.

Key stat

252: Total yards for the Buffaloes in their final three possession, all of which ended with touchdowns. CU scored on an 80-yard pass play to tight end Nick Kasa, Tony Jones' 84-yard run and a 4-yard QB draw by Jordan Webb. The Buffs finished with 531 total yards.

Key play

TJ's trot. Trailing 31-21 with less than 4½ minutes left, CU running back Jones took a sweep to the right side and went 84 yards down the sideline, pulling the Buffs within 31-28 with 4:23 to play.

SEPTEMBER 22, 2012, 6:14 PM

Observations of miraculous Colorado win: Yeah, you all thought they'd come back from 17 down

By **JOHN HENDERSON** |  No Comments

Some knee-jerk observations after Colorado's miracle 35-34 win over Washington State:

* OK, no more tweets about my declaring Colorado had blown its best chance for a win when it trailed 31-14 in the fourth quarter. If you twitterers (sp?) thought the Buffs would win at that point, you knew more about WSU's defensive incompetence than the Cougars did.

* I said after the Colorado State loss that quarterback Jordan Webb wouldn't be the problem with this team. It had too many others: painfully young secondary, tackling, no deep threat, no running back. Now it appears he may be a plus. There's something that can be said for experience and he showed it in the fourth quarter.

* Two of the most unlikely skill players got Colorado back. Nick Kasa, the converted defensive end, was in his eighth game as a tight end and he scores on a bomb behind the sleepy Cougar secondary to make it 31-21. Then Tony Jones, the small, middling tailback who got stuffed by CSU, ran 84 yards around WSU's tai-chi defense to make it 31-28.

* I wrote Friday that Embree won't be judged this year by his record. It will be awful. They just don't have the personnel to compete in the Pac-12. But he and his coordinators will be judged on whether this team improves regardless whether it wins. Going from a 69-14 loss to Fresno State to winning its first conference game, on the road, after being down 17 in the fourth quarter, qualifies as improvement.

* WSU coach Mike Leach can be pretty cranky. I'm assuming he'll be cranky all over WSU defensive coordinator Mike Breske. His secondary not only let a tight end get behind it for one score, but couldn't reach the sideline in time to keep little Tony Jones from taking it to the house. Then, with the game on the line, Colorado looked like the New England Patriots in driving for the winning touchdown. Breske, the defensive coordinator for Northern Colorado's Division II championship teams in the 1990s, is in his first year in a power conference. He came this year from Montana where he went after serving as defensive coordinator for the ill-fated Joe Glenn at Wyoming from 2003-08.

* What this means? Dan Hawkins' teams got down and stayed down. Jon Embree's team got down and didn't stay down. It now has the confidence that it can play in this league (it's still doubtful) and it has a bonafide leader in Webb, the seasoned veteran and Kansas transfer. The Buffaloes will still be an underdog in every remaining game but after Saturday, I'm guessing they won't ever quit.

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<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2012/09/22/observations-miraculous-colorado-win-yeah-thought-17/24934/>

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The Field House — Blogs — The Denver Post

SEPTEMBER 22, 2012, 12:35 PM

Colorado to start Stephane Nembot (6-8, 305) at right tackle

By **TOM KENSLER** |  No Comments

PULLMAN, WASH. — Colorado announced Saturday morning prior to its Pac-12 opener against Washington State that Buffs redshirt freshman Stephane Nembot (6-foot-8, 305 pounds) will make his first career start.

Nembot will be the starter at right offensive tackle, with the usual starter at that spot, junior Jack Harris (6-5, 305), moving to right guard. Sophomore Daniel Munyer (6-2, 295), the usual starter at right guard, will shift to center as a replacement for injured starter Gus Handler.

Nembot is a native of the African country of Cameroon and played high school football in the Los Angeles area. He was projected as a defensive end and worked there early during the 2011 August camp but was moved to offensive tackle and redshirted last fall to learn the position.

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<http://blogs.denverpost.com/colleges/2012/09/22/colorado-start-stephane-nembot-68-305-tackle/24929/>

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Saturday, September 22, 2012

Colorado shocks Washington State

By Ted Miller

The reputed worst team in major college football got off the canvas Saturday, set its jaw and smacked Washington State in the nose.

Colorado, widely mocked for a remarkably poor showing in an 0-3 start against bad competition, overcame a 17-point fourth-quarter deficit to win [35-34](#) at Washington State.

The Buffaloes, who met individually this week with coach Jon Embree, celebrated a rare road win while the bloom wilted on the previously flowering Mike Leach Era in Pullman.

Colorado (1-3, 1-0 in the Pac-12) capped a 13-play, 70-yard TD drive with a fourth-and-4 TD run on a QB draw from [Jordan Webb](#) with 11 seconds remaining to earn the victory after converting the tie-breaking PAT. Before that, it used the big play to get back into the game, scoring on a 70-yard pass from Webb to tight end [Nick Kasa](#) and an 84-yard run from RB [Tony Jones](#).



Webb seemed to find a groove in the fourth quarter that had previously eluded the Kansas transfer. He finished with 345 yards passing -- 29-of-42 -- with two touchdowns and an interception. He also ran for a pair of scores, showing some gumption, despite being sacked five times.

Cougars QB [Connor Halliday](#), stepping in for starter [Jeff Tuel](#), who was out with a knee injury, completed 32-of-60 for 401 yards with four touchdowns and two interceptions, including a fourth-quarter pick that started the Buffs comeback.

The Cougars fell to 2-2 overall and 0-1 in the conference.

The Buffaloes entered the game averaging just 289.7 yards per game, which ranked last in the conference. They piled up 531 against the Cougs.

Last year, it was Washington State that shocked the Buffaloes with a late comeback in Boulder. But this one was far more shocking.

Colorado will play host to UCLA on Saturday. Washington State will be in Seattle to play -- yikes -- Oregon.

**ESPN.com:** Pac-12[\[Print without images\]](#)

Sunday, September 23, 2012

Pac-12 helmet stickers: Week 4

By Kevin Gemmell

One fantastic upset, one cool, calm quarterback performance and three defensive standouts highlight this week's helmet stickers.

1. **[Jordan Webb](#), QB, Colorado:** Welcome to the helmet stickers, Buffs. No team has received more grief in the past few weeks than the Buffs. But Webb threw for 345 yards on 29-of-42 passing with two touchdowns and an interception. He also scored the game-winning touchdown -- a 4-yard run with nine seconds left to shock the [Washington State Cougars 35-34](#) and give Colorado its first victory of the season.
2. **[Taylor Kelly](#), QB, Arizona State:** A strong, efficient performance from ASU's first-year starter in guiding the Sun Devils to a [37-7 win](#) over Utah. Kelly finished 19-of-26 for a career-high 326 yards and three touchdown passes. He also rushed seven times for 19 yards.
3. **Oregon's defense:** What the heck. Give 'em all a helmet sticker. The unit forced five turnovers and shut out an Arizona team that was averaging 46.3 points and more than 600 yards per game. [Michael Clay](#) led all Ducks with 13 tackles -- including two for loss -- and he also forced a fumble.
4. **[Scott Crichton](#), DE, Oregon State:** This was another game in which offensive players could have been awarded helmet stickers ([Markus Wheaton](#), [Brandin Cooks](#), [Sean Mannion](#)), but it was the defense that was so impressive in shutting down UCLA running back [Johnathan Franklin](#), the nation's leading rushing heading into this game. Crichton had six tackles, including three tackles for a loss, and he recorded both of Oregon State's sacks.
5. **[Morgan Breslin](#), DE, USC:** Breslin tallied six tackles, 4.5 for loss and three sacks in USC's [27-9 victory](#) over Cal. Breslin became the first Trojan to get three sacks in one game since Rey Mauluga did it in the 2008 Rose Bowl against Illinois.



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Columnists

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Mental mistakes costly as WSU blows big fourth-quarter lead to lose to Colorado

Buffaloes score winner with nine seconds left



Bud Withers

Seattle Times colleges reporter



PULLMAN — During the week leading up to Colorado's visit to Washington State, there was a good deal of dialogue about whether a certain football team could win a game this season.

At the moment, that still seems like a worthy question: Will the Cougars find a way to beat anybody that's left on their schedule?

Against all odds — and they were 20-point favorites against the Buffaloes — WSU somehow found a way to cough up a 17-point lead in the last seven minutes and drop a 35-34 gut-ripper to the visitors.

"I don't get it," said WSU cornerback Daniel Simmons, more than once, as he tried to come to grips with what he had just seen. "In my opinion, we lost to a team we're far better than."

Maybe in some elements. Maybe in skill, but certainly not in smarts, and certainly not in sensing context of the game, and down-and-distance. WSU might have collegians on the field, but in some aspects of the game, they're still in need of training wheels.

"The biggest thing is our mentality," said WSU coach Mike Leach, whose team fell to 2-2. "When we get ahead, we want to relax and enjoy it, which is crazy. As coaches, we've gotta change it."

For all the grueling conditioning Leach has implemented, all the diabolical "Midnight Maneuvers" WSU endured here in the dead of winter, it's clear the Cougars are getting beat above the neck.

Some of that starts with coaching.

Hard as it is to believe, WSU led 31-14 with about eight minutes left, and was at the Colorado 19, fourth-and-three.

Leach has a reliable field-goal kicker in Andrew Furney, and he probably figured three more points would leave it a three-score game.

So he went for it, and Connor Halliday, who played poorly in the fourth quarter, appeared to have plenty of room to run for the first down (again), but threw an interception over the middle.

"We should have converted it," Leach said when I asked about the call. "We had wide-open space underneath."

About a half-hour later, those three points would have looked pretty good for WSU.

Five plays later, Colorado's Nick Kasa had wide-open spaces in the secondary. The Cougars allowed the tight end to get behind them on a 70-yard pass play.

"I didn't realize it was an 'empty' formation," said safety Deone Bucannon. "I was on the wrong guy. It was totally my fault."

A series later, Colorado (1-3) is backed up to its own 16 inside five minutes, and WSU linebacker Darryl Monroe lays a thundering hit on Jordan Webb, the CU quarterback, and Webb is so doubled over he has to leave the game, replaced by Nick Hirschman.

All together now, class, what does a little-used, fresh-off-the-bench quarterback usually do when he enters the game? He hands it off. Hirschman gives it to Tony Jones on a stretch play, linebacker Eric Oertel takes a bad angle and Jones bolts 84 yards down the right sideline, and suddenly it's 31-28.

And as Leach would say, now it was panic time for WSU.

"Physically, we can run, we can hit people," he said in what amounted to an exasperated, 10-minute tirade. "It's gotta look like Tuesday's and Wednesday's practices. We haven't had a game yet that looks like Tuesday's and Wednesday's practices. If we can do it (then), why the hell can't you do it on Saturday?"

Of course, there were the obligatory couple of killer personal-foul penalties (Andrei Lintz, freshman Kache Palacio) and a chaotic defensive substitution by WSU that drew a flag. That made it seven second-half penalties, atop seven in the fourth quarter last week at UNLV.

And eventually, here were the Buffs — the team that was going to go winless this year — at the WSU 4, fourth-and-goal, 12 seconds left. They spread the field, Webb took the snap and sallied easily to his left and into the end zone on a quarterback draw. Will Oliver's extra point completed it.

"They spread us out and made us back our eyes off the quarterback," said Bucannon. "They made each one of us focus on the receiver."

"That was a great call," said Simmons.

A great call that squared the heartbreak the Buffs felt when the Cougars beat them in the final minutes last year in Boulder in the Mile High Miracle.

And so, here are the Cougars at 2-2, and only if you believe they can go 4-4 against their last eight Pac-12 opponents do they get to a bowl game.

That's not happening. In the long, agonizing climb back to respectability here, it's the matters of the mind where the Cougars are coming up a poor second.

Bud Withers: 206-464-8281 or bwithers@seattletimes.com

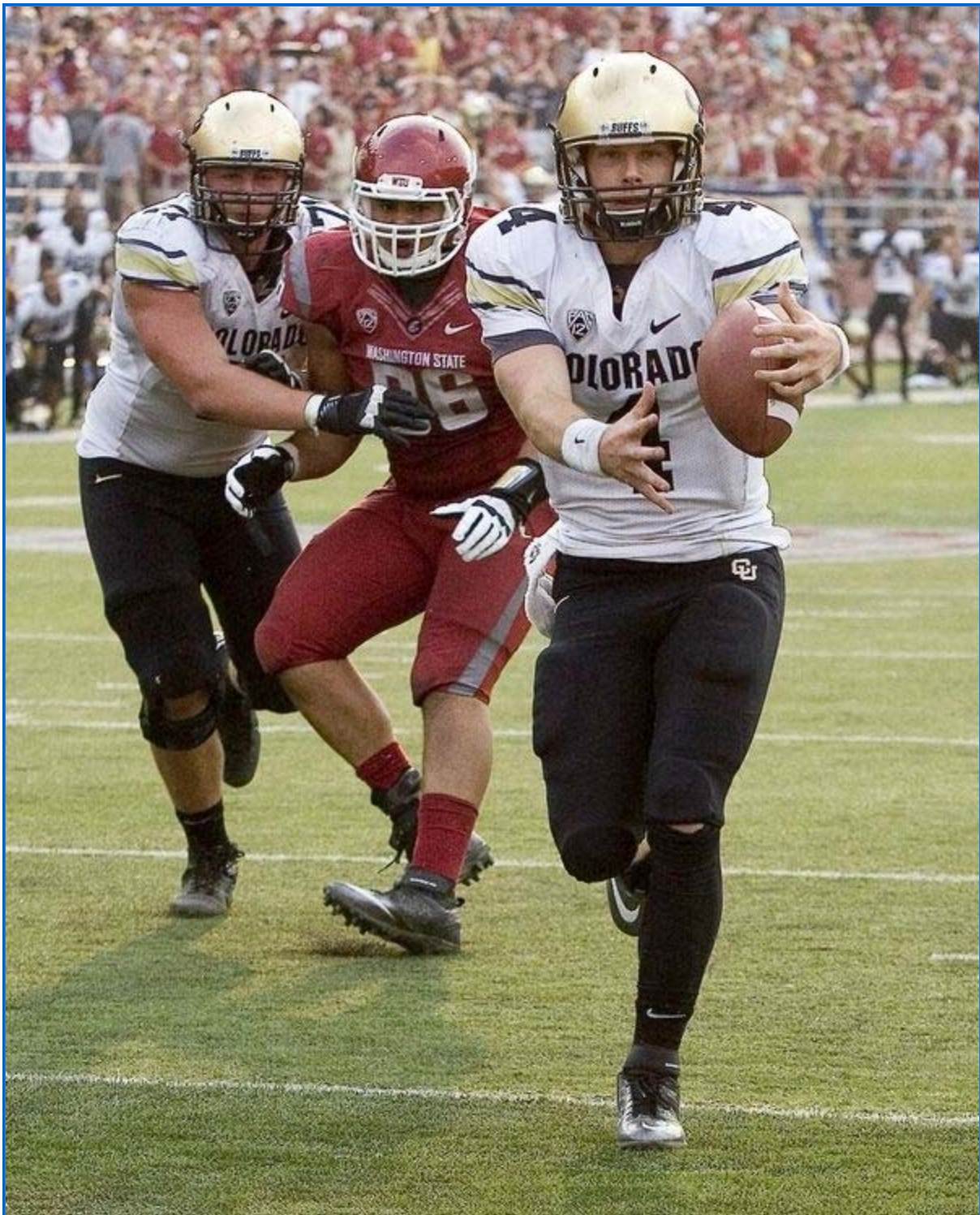
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Washington St. blows lead, loses 35-34 to Colorado



Dean Hare / Associated Press

Colorado quarterback Jordan Webb (4) crosses the goal-line to score the game-winning touchdown with 12 seconds to play as right tackle Stephane Nembot (left) blocks Washington State defensive lineman Xavier Cooper (96) on Saturday. Colorado won 35-34.

By Nicholas K. Geranios

Associated Press

PULLMAN -- Washington State quarterback Connor Halliday knew why the Cougars were upset by Colorado on Saturday.

"We've got to quit playing stupid in the second half," Halliday said after the Buffaloes scored three fourth-quarter touchdowns to win 35-34.

Washington State took early leads in games against Eastern Washington and UNLV, then had to survive comebacks to pull out the wins. Against Colorado, the trend finally led to a loss.

"We're a pretty darn good football team when we play together," Halliday said. "We've got to pull a full game together."

Jordan Webb ran 4 yards untouched into the end zone, the last of the three scores in the final 7 minutes, to lift the Buffaloes over Washington State in the Pac-12 Conference opener for both teams.

"I knew the offensive line was going to block, like they had all day," said Webb, who ran for two touchdowns and threw for two others in the upset. Washington State was favored by 19 going into the game.

Colorado (1-3) had been all but given up for dead after losing its first three games, including last week's 69-14 loss to Fresno State.

"A week ago they were putting the last shovel of dirt on us," said Colorado coach Jon Embree. "I always felt we were better than we were showing."

Washington State led 31-14 midway through the fourth quarter. Then the Buffaloes scored three touchdowns in the final 7:06 to pull out the win.

Halliday threw four touchdown passes for Washington State (2-2), which was looking for its first three-game winning streak since 2006.

"We're a mentally weak team," WSU coach Mike Leach said. "That's got to change."

"We want to go complacent when we get ahead and panic when something good happens for the other guy," Leach added. "We are afraid to win."

It was the third consecutive game in which WSU led in the first half and let the other team close on them in the second. But they managed to hold on in victories over Eastern Washington and UNLV.

Colorado put up 531 total yards, compared to 451 for Washington State.

Webb completed 29 of 42 passes for 345 yards, and was intercepted once. He was sacked six times.

Washington State was ahead 34-28 when Colorado took over on its 30 and marched to the WSU 4. On fourth down, Webb bootlegged up the middle for a touchdown to tie the score. Will Oliver's extra point gave Colorado its first lead, 35-34, with 9 seconds left.

Colorado had pulled within 31-28 on Webb's 70-yard touchdown pass to Nick Kasa midway through the fourth quarter, followed by Tony Jones' 84-yard scoring run with 4:23 left. On the ensuing kickoff, the

Cougars wasted Teondray Caldwell's 56-yard return and had to settle for Andrew Furney's 42-yard field goal. That set up Webb's final drive and touchdown run.

The game was played in air thick with smoke from wildfires 200 miles away in central Washington.

Halliday completed 32 of 60 passes for 401 yards and was intercepted twice. Washington State has so far shown only flashes of Leach's high-flying "Air Raid" offense.

Washington State scored on its first possession, when a scrambling Halliday hit Gabe Marks in the end zone with a 32-yard pass for a 7-0 lead. Colorado replied with a crisp 75-yard drive that ended when Webb connected with Nelson Spruce on a 16-yard touchdown to tie the score. Webb completed all five of his passes on the drive.

Halliday was intercepted near the Colorado goal line by Jered Bell on WSU's next possession. Colorado's drive stalled at WSU's 13 and Will Oliver missed the 30-yard field goal attempt.

Marquess Wilson caught a 23-yard scoring pass from Halliday as WSU took a 14-7 lead early in the second quarter.

Colorado fumbled the ball away at its own 39 on its next possession. Halliday's 15-yard touchdown pass to Isiah Myers put WSU ahead 21-7 with 11:48 left in the first half. The drive was kept alive when Halliday hit Myers on fourth-and-8 for an 11-yard gain.

In the third, Carl Winston fumbled deep in WSU territory on the Cougars' first possession, and Terrel Smith picked the ball up on the 10 and ran it down to the 1. Webb ran the ball over on the next play as Colorado closed to within 21-14.

Furney missed a 53-yard field goal attempt for WSU on their next possession.

Daniel Simmons intercepted Webb on the next series, and Halliday threw a short pass to Wilson, who turned it into a 49-yard touchdown reception and a 28-14 lead for Washington State.

A shanked punt gave WSU possession on Colorado's 30, but the Cougars couldn't move the ball and settled for Furney's 45-yard field goal and a 31-14 lead early in the fourth, setting the stage for the Buffaloes' comeback.

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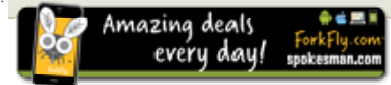
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How does WSU's
defeat at the hands
of Colorado rank?

☐ The Cougars lost?

☐ These things
happen

☐ One of the
toughest losses to
take in recent
Cougar history

☐ Tough, but there
have been worse

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Tale of the tape: Colorado 35, WSU 34

Posted by **Christian Caple**

Sept. 22, 2012 8:47 p.m. • 7 comments

COUGARS

FROM PULLMAN — As usual, we take a capsulated look at Washington State's performance, this time of a 35-34 loss to Colorado at Martin Stadium. Read on.

...

OFFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE GAME — It's Colorado quarterback Jordan Webb, if only for his fourth-quarter heroics. Webb threw for 345 yards on 29-of-42 passing. He threw two touchdown passes, one of them in the fourth quarter, and scored on the quarterback draw that won the game. That was Webb's call, by the way — he said the Buffaloes came out in a run-pass option set, and it was his decision to check into the draw play based on how few players WSU had in the box.

DEFENSIVE PLAYER OF THE GAME — Travis Long had another solid game, recording 2.5 sacks and seven total tackles. He continues to cause matchup problems for opposing linemen and has 6.5 sacks this season. Daniel Simmons had an interception and a nice breakup, too. Colorado's Chid Uzo-Diribe had two sacks.

PLAY OF THE GAME — You can pick any one of Colorado's final three touchdowns. Or maybe it was the interception that set up the 70-yard toss from Jordan Webb to Nick Kasa. We'll go with that one, because of how open



he was, and because of how clearly it showed that WSU simply wasn't ready to put the game away.

STAT OF THE GAME — 255, the number of total offensive yards Colorado had in the fourth quarter. 154 of those came on two plays, the 70-yarder to Kasa and Tony Jones' 84 yard touchdown run.

QUOTABLE — “I don't know how the hell we're not awake. I mean, the wealth of wins that we've enjoyed around here, so we're not awake? We've got this rich tradition of kicking everybody's ass, and so we're not awake? I don't know how the hell you can't be. How can you not be awake? Now I'm not saying you're wrong. The saddest thing of all is I suspect you're right. But it's pretty hard for me to wrap my arms around right now.” — coach Mike Leach, asked if the loss can serve as a wakeup call for WSU

WHAT WE LEARNED — The same thing we learned the last two weeks, only in much more disappointing fashion for the Cougars — they're not a team that knows how to win. Not yet, anyway. Leach said the Cougars are “afraid” of being successful, and that they get too high when they're ahead and too low when they give up a bad play. The highs wind up leading to complacency, and the lows lead to busted plays and poor execution. Leach said he doesn't think WSU is at a physical disadvantage. But mentally, they're still weak, and that keeps showing in these late-game meltdowns. Only this one winds up hurting a lot more.

NEXT UP — Saturday, Sept. 29 against Oregon at CenturyLink Field in Seattle. It's a 7:30 p.m. kickoff. As I type this, the 3-0 Ducks lead Arizona 10-0 late in the first half.

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