



*Derrick Webb (1) is becoming a force at the 'will' linebacker spot.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com*



Brooks: Webb's Snaps, Productivity Going Up At LB

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BOULDER - While Brian Cabral exercises patience with a pair of his veteran linebackers, a trio of their Colorado teammates continue to push for increased playing time - and they're getting it.

Derrick Webb played a career-high number of snaps in last weekend's opener and, not coincidentally, turned in a career-best performance in CU's 22-17 loss against Colorado State.

Brady Daigh and Kyle Washington also have become important fixtures on Cabral's ready list and are challenging for more snaps.

Playing the inside (will) position for 50-plus snaps, Webb "had his best game as a Buff," Cabral said of the junior who made a dozen tackles against CSU (nine solo), including two third-down stops and a quarterback sack. He was named CU's male student athlete-of-the-week and was in contention for the Pac-12 Conference's defensive player-of-the-week.

"He was everywhere, all over the field," Cabral said. "He played the way you want everyone to play every play. And he's a full-time special teams player. He had a great camp; (the opener) was on par with what he was doing in camp."

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Webb's tackle total matched the combined total of Cabral's two senior starters - Doug Ripsey (middle) and Jon Major (outside). Ripsey was credited with three assists, while Major recorded nine (six solo) and had a third-down stop.

Major, said Cabral, "played hard and made some plays. But he wasn't himself in terms of seeing everything . . . CSU gave us a lot to think about (defensively). We played hard but not always smart."

Cabral simply was happy to see Ripsey playing again after the severe knee injury that cost Ripsey the final five games of the 2011 season. "We're still bringing him along (slowly)," Cabral said. "It was just good to see him out there; I think every week we'll see more of him."

Ripsey was devastated by the CSU loss. He told reporters afterward that he botched his coverage responsibility on a CSU's last touchdown - a 32-yard screen pass that pushed the Rams back into the lead (16-14) in the third quarter.

Said Cabral: "He cares; it matters how our team does and he doesn't want to let anybody down."

While Ripsey returns to full speed, Cabral can turn to his backup, Daigh, a sophomore who also made significant strides in August. Against CSU, Daigh made four tackles and forced a fumble. Cabral said he needs "to find a way to get (Daigh) on the field more" - which shouldn't be a problem given Ripsey's status.

A sophomore who spent his first season at safety, Washington backs up Webb at the "will" spot. "He showed up big for us," Cabral said. But in truth, Washington was put in a pressurized position to make every play count because of how well Webb played in his ramped up time on the field.

"That was my first opportunity since I've been here to get that much time," Webb said. "Fortunately, I was able to be productive and let coach Cabral know he can trust me with that many snaps."

In addition to his 50-plus plays from scrimmage, Webb also was a member of all special teams - a role he's had throughout his CU career. His 33 special teams points led the Buffs in 2011 and were the fourth-most since statistics in that category were first kept in 1987.

Webb conceded he had his "hands full" with all he was asked to do last weekend. "But I feel like I was productive," he added. "That's a tribute to our linebackers, our preparation and how well the defensive line played."

His progress in August and his first-game performance were the result of being more experienced and more attuned to what Cabral wants at the "will" position.

"I felt I had a lot more confidence," Webb said. "That's because of this camp and how far I came. I've busted my butt in practice, so I know what I was capable of doing. I knew how much work I was putting in."

"Yeah, I kind of felt like it was 'my time' - that's how I approached it with my work ethic anyway. I know what this year needs to be for me as far as leadership. I'm becoming one of the older guys and we've got a lot of young guys on this team."

A touchdown favorite to win the opener, Webb said the Buffs were "very humbled" by their five-point loss to CSU. "We expected to win that game. The whole experience was very humbling; it lets you know you have work to do still."

"But it's not an end-of-the-world type deal. Nobody can think because we lost a first game against CSU that we're not going to be any good. We've got to get better; we've still got 11 games on the calendar."

BUFF BITS: Embree said the CSU loss "was in the books" and called Wednesday's practice good and physical. "I

just hope it translates on Saturday." He said Sacramento State is different schematically from what the Buffs saw in the opener but his team "was sharp for the most part on assignments." . . . Embree spent Wednesday's practice with the CU defense. Sophomore cornerback Greg Henderson (high ankle sprain) remained in a protective boot, but Embree would not rule him out for Saturday. He said if Henderson is able to play, "I'm playing him." . . . Captains for this week are center Gus Handler, linebackers Paul Vigo and Webb, and defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe.

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SHOW MENU



Football: Details add up to fast start for CU Buffs' Derrick Webb

By Ryan Thorburn *Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera*

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Fans were allowed to participate in Colorado's football media day on Tuesday at Millennium Harvest House.

Chidera Uzo-Diribe was asked: Who is your favorite Buff?

The dynamic junior defensive end didn't hesitate with his answer.

"I'd have to say my favorite player has got to be Derrick Webb," Uzo-Diribe said. "He flies around out there and he's not afraid to hit anybody."

Webb appears to be a gem.

During CU's 22-17 loss to Colorado State in the opener, the junior linebacker led the Buffs with 12 tackles with two tackles for loss and a quarterback sack.

Senior stalwarts Jon Major and Doug Rippy received most of the attention during fall camp. Webb put on a defensive show in the Rocky Mountain Showdown.

"I practiced really hard this camp and did well throughout camp. That just built up my confidence for the season," Webb said. "I was confident that I could go out and do some things."

Webb is not going to be a 12-hit wonder. His teammates believe he will consistently fill up the stat sheet as the season wears on.

As an underclassman, Webb showed off his considerable talents on special teams. He earned an ESPN "helmet sticker" for a hit on USC's Robert Woods during a kickoff return and helped tackle Oregon punt returner Cliff Harris for a safety last season.

Webb has clearly established himself as the starting "Will" linebacker for 2012.

"He's a high-tempo guy and he can make a lot of plays," Major said. "I think he will continue to play hard and with good habits, that's his character. I think we can expect a lot from him."

Physically, Webb had the makings of a star from the moment he stepped on campus. But longtime linebackers coach Brian Cabral doesn't put players on the field who don't know what they're doing.

"My assignments ... that's probably why my time was limited back in the day," said Webb, who had 54 tackles last season. "I could always run around, but it was more the details that I had to work on this offseason."

Major had six tackles and Rippy added three in his first game back since blowing out a knee at Washington last season.

"I know what he's going through," Major said of his "twin" Rippy returning to the field after recovering from a serious injury. "It takes awhile to see that small hole and hit it as fast as you can. He knows that, he's learning, and he's re-sharpening. He'll get there."

If Webb were at the luncheon he would have had a hard time answering the question posed to Uzo-Diribe.

Obviously, he loves playing alongside team leaders Major and Rippy.

"Having them on the field with me makes me more confident and a better player out there, especially when we're all communicating and talking," Webb said. "Those are veteran guys with experience. They know a lot about the game. Playing with them gives me a good comfort level."

On the other hand, Webb credits Uzo-Diribe and the defensive line for any success the linebackers had against the Rams.

"I think the defensive line helps us more than we probably help each other," Webb said. "We've got big guys up front pushing guys back. We love it when those guys are playing like that. It makes our jobs so much easier."

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Football: CU Buffs' offensive line vows better performance

By Ryan Thorburn Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

From the cheap seats it sure looked like little brother was pushing big brother around.

Colorado State's small defensive line clearly got the best of Colorado's large offensive line in the Rocky Mountain Showdown. The Buffs finished with 58 net yards rushing and allowed Jordan Webb to be sacked five times during the humbling 22-17 loss at Sports Authority Field.

Jon Embree said his offensive line's struggles had more to do with "technique issues and assignment" than getting manhandled.

After meeting with the big boys up front on Monday, CU's head coach believes a more agreeable performance is in store when the Buffs return to action on Saturday against Sacramento State.

"They were hurt," Embree said. "I expect them to bounce back and rebound and play like they're capable of playing."

The Buffs will attempt to establish the running game fans have been waiting a year to see against the Hornets from the Big Sky.

During a 49-19 loss at New Mexico State last week, Sacramento State only gave up 101 yards rushing (2.5 per attempt), but yielded 367 yards through the air.

"We've just got to take it upon ourselves to be more physical and more assignments correct," CU center Gus Handler said. "A lot of it is attitude. I know I have to get better at my assignments and identifying the right guy and getting the backs in order and the quarterback in order as well."

CU defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe, who had three sacks against CSU, said the offensive line he went against in fall camp was not the one exposed by the Rams.

"I see those guys work every day and I know that's something that's not going to last all season long," Uzo-Diribe said. "Those guys are the strength of our offense, and I know come Sacramento State those guys are going to be right."

Secondary to be tested

Sacramento State is 1-11 against FBS teams. The lone triumph was a 29-28 overtime win at Oregon State last season.

Garrett Safron completed 23-of-35 passes for 308 yards and two touchdowns against New Mexico State last week.

CU will likely have three true freshmen -- Kenneth Crawley, Marques Mosley and Yuri Wright -- in the secondary with Ray Polk (ankle) ruled out and Greg Henderson (ankle) listed as questionable and seeing limited action in practice.

The Buffs are expecting Safron to see if his receivers can take advantage of a young defensive backfield.

"The quarterback does a good job of getting them in the right place; they do a no-huddle, so he will be communicating the plays," Embree said. "They will push the ball down the field."

Quotable

"I think he has a big-time leg and he has a chance to be a guy that has All-American potential if he will continue to work at it and get better," Embree on sophomore punter Darragh O'Neill, who averaged 47.3 yards on six attempts in the opener.

Notable

Matt Smith (play-by-play) and former CU wide receiver Jeremy Bloom (color) will be on the call for the Pac-12 Network's telecast of Saturday's Folsom Field opener. ... Scouts from the Dallas Cowboys and Arizona Cardinals attended Wednesday's practice.