

Football: CU Buffs' Paul Richardson backs Connor Wood

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

DailyCamera.com

Colorado football coaches still might be a week away from naming a starting quarterback, but it appears clear that man will be fourth-year junior Connor Wood.

Wood was named a team captain earlier this summer, which put him in the driver's seat for the starting job after a solid spring. And through the first 10 days of fall camp he has done nothing but build on it.

It started with a trickle of positive plays for Wood back in March in the first half of spring ball and has grown in a gusher of momentum behind him being the one to lead the Buffs against the Colorado State Rams in the season opener on Sept. 1.

Some might have their doubts given the lack of success Wood produced in seven games last year, but he has won over the team's best individual talent. Wide receiver Paul Richardson was asked after Wednesday's practice to simply comment on how his chemistry to Wood has continued to grow in camp.

"You know, I think his growth is what is really boosting this whole team, our offense especially, but our whole team," Richardson said. "He has just grown up so much and people are starting to respect him more.

"I keep telling people it's different when you don't feel pressure, people breathing down your neck. Connor is an older guy now. So he kind of feels like he has to lead the pack. Him feeling like that has made him step up. It's helped out chemistry on offense, which has helped our chemistry with him throwing me the ball.

"We score a lot every day. Every day we score a lot."

Contact staff writer Kyle Ringo at ringok@dailycamera.com or twitter.com/kyleringo.

Howell blog: Family matters to CU Buffs football team

By Brian Howell, Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

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BrushNewsTribune.com

During his first several months on the job, Colorado head football coach Mike MacIntyre has brought a lot of new concepts to the Buffaloes.

One unique concept is separating the team into "family" groups. On Wednesday, several players had to stay after the morning practice to do extra work. The reason? One player was late to practice - and that caused his whole "family" to stay after practice with him.

"It's to teach us to not only worry about yourself, but to keep everyone in our group accountable," said senior Chidera Uzo-Diribe, who was one of the players who had to stay after practice. "It teaches us to care. You've got to care about your teammates. At the end of the day, the group is counting on you. If one person messes up, the whole group suffers. It's kind of like that in football. If one player is not accountable for themselves, they could cost the whole team a game."

Uzo-Diribe said he's never had a coach introduce this "family" system into the team. In the past, he said, coaches simply expected each individual to be responsible for themselves.

"Usually it's just, 'Make sure you're doing OK and you won't get in trouble,'" Uzo-Diribe said.

Uzo-Diribe said he's not sure exactly how many family groups there are on the team, but that each coach is a leader of a family group.

While players didn't enjoy the extra work after practice, Uzo-Diribe said he likes the concept, because in the end it could make the whole team better. It should be noted that Uzo-Diribe didn't complain about the extra work, and he didn't throw the offending player under the bus. But, he does hope the lesson got through to everybody.

"Hopefully one of these gets them to understand they don't want to do it again," Uzo-Diribe said.

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CU Buffs likely to go with Connor Wood as starting quarterback

Kyle Ringo, Buffzone.com, and Mike Brohard, Loveland Reporter-Herald The Denver Post

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DenverPost.com

BOULDER — Colorado football coaches still might be a week away from naming a starting quarterback, but it appears clear that man will be fourth-year junior Connor Wood.

Wood was named a team captain this summer, which put him in the driver's seat for the starting job after a solid spring. And so far in fall camp, he has built on it.

It started with a trickle of positive plays for Wood back in March in the first half of spring ball and has grown into a gusher of momentum behind him being the one to lead the Buffs against the Colorado State Rams in the season opener Sept. 1.

Wide receiver Paul Richardson was asked after Wednesday's practice to comment on how his chemistry with Wood has continued to grow in camp.

"You know, I think his growth is what is really boosting this whole team, our offense especially, but our whole team," Richardson said. "He has just grown up so much, and people are starting to respect him more.

"I keep telling people it's different when you don't feel pressure, people breathing down your neck. Connor is an older guy now. So he kind of feels like he has to lead the pack. Feeling like that has made him step up. It's helped out chemistry on offense, which has helped our chemistry with him throwing me the ball.

"We score a lot every day. Every day we score a lot."

Webb ahead of schedule. CU coach Mike MacIntyre said injured senior quarterback Jordan Webb is ahead of schedule in his rehabilitation from a torn ACL he suffered in spring practices. Webb did some light running in one of the end zones during Wednesday's late practice.

MacIntyre said it is also possible that Webb could sit out the fall semester and transfer to a Division II program, where he could play his final season of eligibility next year.

CSU freshman impresses

FORT COLLINS — Nick Stevens, a true freshman quarterback from Murietta, Calif., took a few more snaps with the second-team offense for Colorado State.

Stevens hit 16-of-23 passes for 231 yards and two scores in scrimmage work.

Senior running back hoping to end time at CU with more wins

By Sarah Kuta Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

DailyCamera.com

One of Josh Ford's favorite Bible verses is 2 Corinthians 5:7, "Walk by faith, not by sight."

It's how the senior running back has lived most of his life, especially during his college football career, and it's how he kept his spirits up last season when the University of Colorado lost all but one game.

Heading into the 2013 season, Ford says he and his teammates have to trust and believe that their hard work with the new coaching staff will translate to wins.

"Just keep walking," Ford said. "Even this season, people might look down on us, but we're walking by faith. It might look like 'Oh they're not going to be (anything),' but we're walking by faith and we're going to keep working."

Ford has spent the last four years living by that "keep walking" mentality. As a senior at Denver's Mullen High School, Ford rushed for 1,348 yards and 19 touchdowns, and helped his team win the 2008 state 5A title. But not a single Division 1 football program offered him a scholarship.

So Ford tried to walk on at Kansas State, and when that plan fell through, he enrolled at football-less Barton Community College in Fort Riley, Kan., and worked out at a local gym.

In 2010, Ford walked on at CU where he redshirted, put his head down and tried to learn as much as he could. He played in 12 games that next season as a sophomore and finally, all that "walking by faith" paid off. On the first day of fall camp last year, the CU coaching staff placed him on scholarship.

When Ford thinks about this being his last season with the Buffs, he hangs his head and lets out a long sigh. He hasn't even thought about what he'll do after this season, but Ford says being a senior doesn't affect the way he'll play this year. Even last year, he played every down like it was his last, he said. That's just the way he lives.

He keeps in touch with two of the biggest influences in his football life, former Mullen coach Dave Logan and his uncle, Howard Ballage, who both played for CU.

"Growing up it seemed like it was so far away, such a dream basically," Ford said. "Being from the inner city, we would come up here once in a while just to see this is what was possible and that kind of motivated me. But I never would've thought I'd be up here. It's crazy being up here with these guys."

Aside from his strong faith (he goes to church or watches a service online every Sunday), Ford draws encouragement from his grandma Mary, who watches every Buffs game on TV. Ford visits her in Denver when he gets the chance, and in between those visits, she reads whatever she can about the team.

"That's my light right there," Ford said. "(She's always) looking out for me, telling me to keep a positive attitude. Constructive criticism. Just the love. It hasn't been easy. It's been a blessing to be here, but it's not like we've been winning so you definitely need that pick-me-up because you want to win. Nobody comes here just 'Oh yeah I want to be here.' You want to win."

His coaches have picked up on Ford's will to win, and for now he's listed at third on the depth chart, sharing that spot with sophomore Donta Abron. Ford's senior season might be in question, though, after he injured his ankle at Sunday's practice. Coach Mike MacIntyre said he hopes Ford will be back at practice in about a week, though "with ankles you just don't know," he added.

One thing is certain for running backs coach Klayton Adams. When Ford comes back, he'll work even harder than before to make up for lost time.

"He feels like every day he has to prove that he belongs and he has to prove that he should be playing," Adams said. "If every single guy played like that on the team, then we'd be pretty good."

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Howell blog: Cornerbacks stepping up for CU Buffs

By Brian Howell, Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

BrushNewsTribune.com

In today's college football, especially in the pass-happy Pac-12 Conference, a defense needs as many quality cornerbacks as possible.

Colorado struggled throughout the 2012 season in trying to defend the pass, but the Buffaloes feel they're building a solid pool of talented corners.

Junior Greg Henderson has been a starter for most of the past two seasons. Sophomore Kenneth Crawley started 10 of the Buffs' 12 games in 2012. Those two appear to be the front-runners for the starting jobs.

Behind them, several other players have stepped up and done well during the first part of training camp. Yuri Wright keeps getting "better and better," CU cornerbacks coach Andy LaRussa said. True freshman Chidobe Awuzie has turned heads throughout camp. Sophomores Jeffery Hall and Brandan Brisco and junior Harrison Hunter have had good moments, too.

"We're looking at everybody right now," LaRussa said. "Everyone has done something really good to warrant getting an opportunity to play.

"There's some great competition out there and it's really pushing everybody to get better."

LaRussa said that Saturday's scrimmage will be the first big test for his cornerbacks.

Follow Brian on Twitter: @BrianHowell33.

Football: Mike MacIntyre not worried about CU Buffs injuries

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com [Boulder Daily Camera](http://BoulderDailyCamera.com)

Posted:

BrushNewsTribune.com

Tight end Kyle Slavin and wide receiver Tyler McCulloch and cornerback Yuri Wright are the newest editions to the walking wounded at CU.

Slavin broke a bone in his right hand and McCulloch had his right foot in a boot both Tuesday and Wednesday. Wright suffered a neck spasm in Wednesday's afternoon practice but is expected to be OK.

They joined teammates such as Jeff Thomas, John Walker, Markeis Reed and Brad Cotner who have been out.

Coach Mike MacIntyre said the injury numbers he is seeing so far in his first camp at CU are no different from what he experienced at San Jose State. MacIntyre believes the way strength coach Dave Forman trains athletes will cut down on injuries the longer he is able to work with them.

MacIntyre said his team last year at San Jose State made it through preseason practices without suffering a single significant injury.

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