



By: CUBuffs.com

Defensive tackle Nate Bonsu (99) thinks the Buffs match up well with the Rams up front.

## Brooks: Buffs Can't Afford To Be Run Down By Rams

Release: August 30, 2013

By: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

### Related Links

**BOULDER** – For any defense in any football game, three words stand out as the preparations unfold: Stop the run. As Colorado prepares for its 2013 opener against Colorado State and the launch of the Mike MacIntyre Era, those words never have been weightier.

[Fall Football Preview Show](#)[Buy Tickets](#)[Gameday](#)

A brief look back before going forward: In 2012, the line of scrimmage resembled a playground for CU opponents. The Buffs surrendered almost six yards (5.92) per carry and 226.0 a game, with both of those statistics last in the Pac-12 Conference in CU's 1-11 nightmare.

Meanwhile, the Rams averaged 3.9 yards per rush and 128.8 a game in 2012. But CSU found its legs in the final half of the season, averaging 189.3 yards on the ground in the final five games and winning three of those en route to a 4-8 finish.

And Rams fans take heart in this: Of CSU's nine returning offensive starters, five are offensive linemen who opened in the majority of last season's games. Four of the five are seniors, including honors candidate Weston Richburg (center), and the fifth returnee is a junior.

CSU coach Jim McElwain told reporters this week that his O-line's experience and mental makeup has brought it to "the point where they can take over a game if needed. That's a really important thing to have in your mind."

That's the mental challenge for the Buffs on Sunday afternoon in Denver's Sports Authority Field at Mile High. The physical challenge for CU's slimmed D-line is combating a CSU O-line that averages 6-4, 303 pounds.

"They had a good offensive line last year and they've got everybody back," said Buffs defensive coordinator Kent Baer, whose 2012 San Jose State defense limited CSU to 89 rushing yards in a 40-20 Spartans win in the season's third game.

Baer hedged on saying the Rams' running game is the team's 2013 offensive strength: "I don't know if I'd say that . . . obviously we've got to defend the run; we've got to get lined up and do that. But they do a great job of scheming the passing game. (Dave) Baldwin (offensive coordinator) is a good coach. They do a great job."

Since last spring and throughout August camp, Baer and his defensive coaches have emphasized better tackling – a must in slowing a ground game. Baer said he has seen improvement, but added, "We need to tackle somebody else, but I do think we're getting better."

McElwain is playing the "who's my starter?" game at quarterback, saying he'll make a game-day

decision from among junior Garrett Grayson, sophomore Conner Smith or true freshman Nick Stevens. Said Baer: "I wouldn't announce it either."

Not that it matters, he contends, but it's fairly clear that he and his players believe it will be either Grayson or Smith. "Both are good players," Baer said. "We've looked at both, prepared for both and we're not changing our game plan. It doesn't matter."

Added inside linebacker Derrick Webb, a senior captain: "It doesn't make any difference. I feel like we've got a good game plan against either quarterback. No matter who plays, we'll be prepared to play against him – either one."

Grayson opened against CU last season, completing 14 of 21 passes for 173 yards and two touchdowns (no interceptions). He wound up starting four more games in 2012, with Smith starting four. McElwain also used a third quarterback – M.J. McPeck, who started in three games and played in all 12.

No matter the QB, said Webb, has "traditionally been a running team," and last season the Rams ran for 125 of their 298 total yards in a 22-17 win against the Buffs. "They have a lot of different ways to get into their run game. They have a creative running game. We've got to be able to fit up with their different formations and looks they give us."

Senior defensive tackle Nate Bonsu will be playing for the fourth time against the Rams, and in the previous three games Bonsu said CSU always made its running intentions clear. But, Bonsu added, the Buffs' stop-the-run intentions are just as clear.

"As D-linemen we take pride in that, and coach (Jim) Jeffcoat has put that in us," Bonsu said. "If we want to be any kind of team, it starts with stopping the run. And that means it has to start on Sunday. We have to stop the run, be physical and put our best forward as a D-line to have any success on Sunday. That's definitely our top priority."

In watching tape of last season's CU-CSU game and other Rams games, Bonsu said the Buffs realize the importance of being committed to their assignments: "Watching film, we see a lot of time when CSU gashes people it's because somebody's not in the right gap, somebody's not doing their assignment. That's the biggest thing as a D-line we've got to be committed to – doing your job, playing your block right, using the right technique and recognizing things on pass protection. That's what I'm committed to – but it's definitely stopping the run first."

During August camp, he said players went on the field with a single individual goal in mind: "It might be to have lower pad level that practice. When you look at film, did you do better at that? You have to grade yourself with a yes or a no. If it was no, you have to go back out (the next practice) and work on that same goal. If it's yes, then you pick a new goal for the next day and work on that. We've been doing that through camp, now we're doing it in working toward CSU . . . things we have to do correct to win the game."

Starting alongside Bonsu on CU's interior will be sophomore Josh Tupou (6-3, 305), with senior Chidera Uzo-Diribe (6-3, 250) and junior Juda Parker (6-2, 250) at ends in the 4-3 alignment. Jeffcoat plans liberal substitutions, using at least eight linemen and trying to keep his players fresh – a challenge on what is forecast to be a 90-degree afternoon.

The 6-1 Bonsu, who has lost about 30 pounds since last winter and has redistributed his 285 pounds, believes he and his linemates match up well with the Rams' O-line. "I feel like we do, but Sunday will tell the story," he said. "Whatever people predict either way is just what they predict. I think with the game plan we have and because we've been through spring and summer camp now, we'll be ready for it."

Webb expressed confidence in Bonsu & Co. holding their own at the line of scrimmage: "I couldn't be more proud of what our D-line accomplished this camp. I feel like they're prepared for any offensive line now and in the Pac-12."

**Contact: [BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU](mailto:BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU)**

Colorado Buffaloes Football

Show Menu



## Football: Tradition helped lure MacIntyre, staff to CU Buffs

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

When the Colorado Buffaloes storm the field behind Ralphie V in Denver on Sunday to kickoff their 124th season they will be led by the 25th head coach in the program's history and a coaching staff that will break a 34-year-old streak.

Not since Chuck Fairbanks replaced Bill Mallory for the 1979 season has an entire coaching staff turned over in one offseason in Boulder.

In each of the six coaching changes preceding Mike MacIntyre's hiring, at least one assistant coach from the previous staff has been retained. MacIntyre, who was hired away from San Jose State in December, came to Boulder with seven of his San Jose State assistant coaches. He hired two assistants -- wide receivers coach Troy Walters and special teams coordinator Toby Neinas -- from other programs to round out his staff.

All of this has to lead Buffs fans and former players to wonder if they have to worry about traditions being lost in the transition. It has happened before even with Buffs on the coaching staff.

Former CU coach Dan Hawkins didn't endear himself to former players during his tenure because he did away with parts of the program held sacred by men who had worn CU uniforms in recent decades.

One such mistake was painting over a wall outside the CU locker room with bricks painted a different color with the date and score of big victories from the past.

The reality is, part of the reason the school went looking for a former Buff to lead the program when Hawkins was fired was because of the strong sentiment among former players that the program had lost touch with its roots. Ultimately, CU turned to Jon Embree, who didn't enjoy much success on the field, but deserves credit for restoring much of what had been lost and introducing current players to more of the program's history.

MacIntyre has promised not to stray from the past even as he and his staff and players try to write new chapters and add to the history. It remains to be seen how well he is able to stay connected to the program's past without a coach on his staff who has experience at CU.

But he has made a point of inviting former players to practices and to speak with the team and former CU quarterback Darian Hagan remains with the program as director of player development. MacIntyre regularly seeks Hagan's opinion or just information on issues when he needs historical context.

"It means a great deal to me," MacIntyre said. "It's one of the reasons I'm here is the past tradition, understanding what they could be, what they were and what they can be again.

"It wasn't that long ago, I know in football it's almost like dog years as coaches, but it really wasn't

that long ago they were very successful. It means a tremendous amount to me to run out behind Ralphie and be a part of the Colorado tradition and help be part of putting it where it should be. It's not about Mike MacIntyre doing it. It's about all of us doing it together."

That sentiment was echoed by every one of MacIntyre's assistants throughout the past month of preseason practices leading up to Sunday's debut. While they come from different eras, parts of the country and backgrounds, all of the men leading CU have an appreciation for the program's rich history. They're hoping to restore the luster the brand carried throughout the 1990s and early 2000s.

Defensive line coach Jim Jeffcoat is back in the Pac-12 Conference where he starred as a player at Arizona State when the conference was the Pac-10. Jeffcoat said coaching in the conference he played in is meaningful to him. He said his whole family is eager to experience the feel of a game day at Folsom Field from the home team's perspective and seeing dad running with Ralphie.

"I'm excited to have the opportunity to coach at such a prestigious university and all the things they have and the tradition," Jeffcoat said. "We just want to do the best we can."

Walters played wide receiver at Stanford in the 1990s when the Buffs were a powerhouse program regularly ranked in the top 25 and competing for conference championships and invitations to the best bowl games.

Walters said he always looked at Colorado with respect and admiration as a player. One of his previous coaching stops before being hired in Boulder was coaching at Texas A&M at Kyle Field, one of the best atmospheres the college game has to offer.

Being on the sidelines there during a game watching the swaying crowd and hearing the assorted yells Aggies fans practice on Friday nights can make the hair on the back of your neck stand at attention. Walters believes Folsom Field can once again be a place in that mold.

"It's special," he said. "It's truly a blessing to be a coach at the University of Colorado with all the history, tradition, Ralphie and all the greats that have played here and great coaches. To have a little say in what happens is just an honor and a blessing. I can't wait for Colorado State and to run behind Ralphie and then when we open here against Central Arkansas in Folsom Field, one of the toughest stadiums to play in."

It's hard to believe that defensive coordinator Kent Baer has spent four decades coaching college football, most of it west of the Mississippi River, and he has never coached a game or attended a game at Folsom Field.

Baer grew up in Utah and said he has watched plenty of the Buffs on television over the years whether he was in Utah or coaching somewhere else in the Pac-12. You might say the opportunity to run on to the field behind Ralphie here in Boulder is on his coaching bucket list. He is slated to coach from the box high above the field on the west side of the stadium, but don't be surprised if he tries to sneak in one run this year before hustling up to his seat.

When asked in early August why he chose to follow MacIntyre to Boulder, he answered, in part, "Because over the years this place has been tremendous and it can be again."

*Contact staff writer Kyle Ringo at [ringok@dailycamera.com](mailto:ringok@dailycamera.com) or [twitter.com/kyleringo](https://twitter.com/kyleringo)*

## Howell blog: Leftovers from interview with D.D. Goodson

By Brian Howell, Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

---

On Thursday, I wrote a feature story about Colorado wide receiver D.D. Goodson.

Goodson had a lot of good things to say about his first two years at CU and the potential impact he could have on the Buffs this year.

Because of that I didn't get much into Goodson off the field. So, here's a look into the Goodson fans don't usually see.

**Favorite hobby:** "I'm a big movie watcher. I like listening to music, just chilling and hanging out - something to relax because I'm always on the field, basically."

**Favorite movies:** "American Gangster would be my top one, then The Fighter and Friday Night Lights."

**How would a movie about DD Goodson play out?:** "It would probably start off as a young kid, not getting the things he wanted as a youngin' and then growing. You always see him grinding and growing into a man and accomplishing his goals."

**New pet:** Goodson loves playing the Rottweiler he got earlier this year.

**Family:** Goodson has three brothers and one sister and said they are "a very close family."

**Future plans:** A sociology major, Goodson said he would like to work in law enforcement.

**Giving back:** During high school, Goodson often helped out with the Special Olympics near his hometown of Rosenberg, Texas. Since coming to CU, he said he enjoys the time he and teammates give at The Children's Hospital. "I love giving back to the community, because where I came from there wasn't much," he said. "Giving back just helps me. It's definitely heart-warming because you see these kids going through a lot of things and some of them might not make it. For them to keep pushing and have a smile on their face every day, it makes us feel like we shouldn't worry about anything. It definitely helps me get through my grind."

Contact staff writer Brian Howell at [howellb@dailycamera.com](mailto:howellb@dailycamera.com) or [twitter.com/BrianHowell33](https://twitter.com/BrianHowell33).

# The Washington Post

[Back to previous page](#)

---

## Mike MacIntyre opens his coaching tenure at Colorado against rival Colorado State

**By Associated Press, Published: August 31**

DENVER — Understandably, Mike MacIntyre is a little anxious for his Colorado Buffaloes debut.

Then again, the new CU coach has never lost to Colorado State, going 2-0 against the Rams when he was in charge at San Jose State.

This is an entirely different situation as MacIntyre begins his bid to turn around a team coming off a program-worst 1-11 campaign. History won't exactly be on MacIntyre's side Sunday against the Rams, considering that since the 1930s, only one CU coach has won in his debut (Rick Neuheisel in 1995).

"You've done all this work and now you want to see them play and they want to play so that's the fun part of it," said MacIntyre, who takes over for Jon Embree. "You get the butterflies and you get the excitement. That's one of the great things about coaching and it's one of the great things about playing. You kind of feel alive for that moment, for sure, and it's always a lot of fun."

Here are five things to watch for when Colorado plays Colorado State in the annual Rocky Mountain Showdown at Mile High:

1. RETURN OF RICHARDSON: Part of the reason for CU's offensive woes last season was the absence of electric receiver Paul Richardson (ACL). The speedy wideout certainly showed his big-game capability in 2011, when he had a school-record 284 yards receiving against California. Richardson is on a lot of the watch lists for national awards this season. Said QB Connor Wood on having Richardson back in camp this summer: "It's like Christmas in August." CSU coach Jim McElwain certainly has a healthy dose of respect for Richardson. "That guy is fast," McElwain said. "That guy is faster than any guy we had at Alabama, I guarantee that. We better know where the guy is."

2. CSU'S QB CONUNDRUM: McElwain will wait until the team is warming up Sunday to announce his starting QB. Junior Garrett Grayson and sophomore Conner Smith appear to be the favorites. The dark horse candidate is freshman Nick Stevens. "I'm excited about the three of them and we'll find out who is ready to

play,” McElwain said.

3. **REBOUNDING:** The Buffaloes carry an eight-game losing streak into the season. However, the players quickly dismissed the skid as a thing of the past. “I think with the new change of scenery with the coaches; I think there’s a new sense of optimism,” Wood said. “You’re trying to find out who you are as a team. First game, you’re going to find out how tough you’re going to be. You’re going to find out who you are as a team as a whole.”

4. **SUNDAY NIGHT SHOWDOWN:** The Buffs and Rams are meeting for only the fourth time on a Sunday. CU has a 2-1 edge on that particular day of the week. This series has visited quite a few days of the week over its history, with four games being played on a Thursday, one on a Wednesday and another on a Monday. Regardless of the day, McElwain believes the rivalry is good for the state. CU holds a commanding 61-21-2 edge in the series. “I think it’s just something that makes college football something special,” McElwain said.

5. **ROTATING RBS:** MacIntyre will go with a running back by committee approach for now. Christian Powell, Tony Jones, Donta Abron, Malcolm Creer and Michael Adkins II could all see time. “We’ll play a few running backs for sure,” MacIntyre said. “We have certain things that certain guys do well. ... The more playmakers you have the better you are on offense — period.”

---

Follow Pat Graham on Twitter: [www.twitter.com/PGraham34](http://www.twitter.com/PGraham34)

Copyright 2013 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed.

### Sponsored Links



#### Credit Company Breach

LifeLock Ultimate™ protects your identity from the effects of data breach.  
[LifeLock.com](http://LifeLock.com)



#### One-A-Day Joint Relief

Find out why these shocking joint ingredients are flying off shelves.  
[www.beneflex.com](http://www.beneflex.com)



#### K12 Online Education

Learn From Home At Your Own Pace with K12 Tuition-Free Online Schools!  
[www.k12.com](http://www.k12.com)

[Buy a link here](#)

© The Washington Post Company


**CONNECT.  
CAPTURE.  
SHARE.**

**UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO STUDENTS SAVE**  
**10%**  
 on select regularly priced  
 Sprint monthly service plans.  
Requires a new two-year Agreement

Mention Corp ID:  
**6510T\_ZST**  
 to claim your discount.


 Samsung  
**GALAXY S III**

**SHOP NOW**  
Restrictions apply.

[ABOUT](#) | [CONTACT US](#) | [APPLY](#) | [CLASSIFIEDS](#) | [ADVERTISING](#) | [APARTMENTS](#) | [COUPONS](#) | [Buffs on Video](#) |


# CUIndependent.com

[NEWS](#) | [ENTERTAINMENT](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [OPINION](#) | [MULTIMEDIA](#) | [CALENDAR](#)

## Rocky Mountain Showdown preview

 By [Grayson O'Roark](#) in [Front Page](#), [Sports](#) on Aug 30, 2013 22:09 / [comments](#)

Football is finally back and is here to save the day for fans looking to break free from the summer doldrums of minimal sporting activity. For Buffs fans that means one thing: The Rocky Mountain Showdown on September 1.

Like
 Sign Up to see what your friends like.

Tweet 0

Entering the 85th game of the rivalry, there is much to be excited about, including head coach Mike MacIntyre's debut, Junior WR Paul Richardson's return and a clean slate after the 2012-13 season.

But if the Buffs want to start this year's campaign on a higher note than last year's, a number of things need to be done.

Colorado must stop, or at least contain, CSU's run game. Unfortunately, this is far easier said than done, as CSU brings a potential all-American center anchoring a veteran offensive line, two potential future NFL tight ends and several strong running backs. MacIntyre is aware of all of this, as well as the fact that CU allowed over 200 rushing yards a game last year, but he believes changes in mentality and preparation will make a difference.



Runningback Tony Jones stiff-arms a Colorado State defender during the Rocky Mountain Showdown on Sept. 1, 2012. (Kai Casey/CU Independent File)

"We have to stop the run," senior defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe said. "That's one thing our coaches have been preaching to us. I feel like we've been doing a good job out here."

Another concern is that CSU has yet to name a starting quarterback. Rams coach Jim McElwain's choices are sophomore Conner Smith, junior Garrett Grayson or true freshman Nick Stevens.

There's also preparation, simply making sure the Buffs are ready to go. When it comes to longstanding rivalry games, throwing the stats, records and predictions out of the window and seeing who wants it more is what it's all about.

With that said, the Buffs have to be confident about at least one thing—MacIntyre's knowledge of CSU. While this particular rivalry may be new for the head coach, the Rams certainly are not. MacIntyre faced CSU three times during his stay with San Jose State, including last year's 40-20 thumping of the Rams. This bodes well for a CU team that is looking for a reason to be confident going into the 2013 season.

 SEARCH


### CUI CALENDAR – LIST YOUR EVENT

#### Top 5 Events

MONDAY  
**SEP 2**  
 Rockies vs Dodgers  
 Open Mic  
 Electric Blues Jam  
 The Love Language  
 Trestle Gravity Series

[Add Your Event](#)

### BUFFS ON VID

Colorado will be showcasing its brand-new pistol offense system and has been very positive and open all offseason. The biggest thing that the Buffs will take from camp is organization and crisper practices with more progress made than has been seen for quite some time.

Hopefully a new offense, new coach and return of preseason [Biletnikoff Award](#) candidate Paul Richardson will add up to a more exciting offense and a more competitive Colorado football team.

The speed and ability to spread the ball around and make more big plays on offense for the Buffs has me believing that the Buffs will win this game in a closer-than-expected 31-27 outcome.

Contact CU Independent Staff Writer Grayson O'Roark at [Grayson.oroark@colorado.edu](mailto:Grayson.oroark@colorado.edu).



## About Grayson O'Roark

Tags: [Boulder](#), [CSU](#), [CU](#), [CUI](#), [Independent](#), [Mountain](#), [Preview](#), [rocky](#), [showdown](#)

Share this article



## Post a Comment

Name

E-Mail

Website

SUBMIT

CAPTCHA Image




CAPTCHA Code \*



NEWS SEP 1, 2013 / comments

### \$6 million CU-Boulder instrument to fly on Sept. 6 NASA mission to moon

A \$6 million instrument built by the University of Colorado will fly to the moon this Friday with NASA's Lunar Atmosphere and Dust Environment Explorer, a mission designed to better understand dust patterns within its tenuous atmosphere. The... [read more »](#)

### RECENT POSTS

CU tops CSU in Rocky Mountain Showdown  
 \$6 million CU-Boulder instrument to fly on Sept. 6 NASA mission to moon  
 Broker Inn houses dorm overflow  
 Rocky Mountain Showdown 2013 Photos  
 CU student injured during attempted robbery early Saturday

## Colorado State notes: Rams not sure what to expect from Colorado offense

*Written by Kelly Lyell*  
Aug. 31, 2013 |

coloradoan.com

CSU played coach Mike MacIntyre's San Jose State football team the past two seasons, and they've played the University of Colorado annually since 1995 and 84 times in all.

Yet the Rams really don't know what to expect from CU and MacIntyre, its first-year coach, when the teams meet up at 4 p.m. Sunday in the Rocky Mountain Showdown in Denver. Will they get the pass-happy, spread offense from the "Pistol" formation that produced an astounding 446.2 yards and 34.7 points a game a year ago for an 11-2 San Jose State team? Or will they see more of the pro-style offense favored by former CU coach Jon Embree, who recruited all but a dozen or so of the players that MacIntyre has to work with this season?

"I think the only way to do it is you prepare for both," CSU linebackers coach Tim Skipper said Wednesday. "By that, I mean schemewise you're kind of looking at San Jose. Playerwise, you're looking at what Colorado has returning."

And CU has a lot of players returning. Eight starters on offense and nine on defense.

The Buffs have their top three rushers and top three receivers back, as well as three starters on the offensive line. But they've got a new quarterback in junior Connor Wood, a transfer from Texas who started one game for CU last season, and a dangerous receiver who sat out last year after knee surgery in junior Paul Richardson.

Odds, are they'll come out as Skipper expects, in the offense that MacIntyre's teams ran at San Jose State, with a twist or two to take advantage of the personnel they're working with at CU. The Rams, though, are preparing for anything and everything, sophomore cornerback DeAndre Elliott said.

"It's something we don't know, but we prepare as if we might know," Elliott said. "We have a lot of possibilities that we're preparing for so that just in case something happens, we already will have been over it, so we won't be too surprised."

**QB QUESTION:** McElwain insisted again on his weekly coach's show Thursday night that he still didn't know who he would start at quarterback — junior Garrett Grayson, sophomore Conner Smith or true freshman Nick Stevens. In his last public comments before the game, the coach said he probably would let the quarterbacks and their teammates know who he had chosen sometime Sunday before pregame warm-ups begin.

## Preview by position: Rocky Mountain Showdown

*Written by Kelly Lyell*

*Aug. 31, 2013 |*

coloradoan.com

### Quarterback

**Advantage: CSU.** Although CSU coach Jim McElwain hasn't named his starter, both Garrett Grayson and Conner Smith started four or more games last year and have the kind of valuable game experience that CU's Connor Wood lacks.

### Running backs

**Advantage: Even.** CSU's Donnell Alexander and Chris Nwoke combined for 1,157 yards and six touchdowns a year ago. CU's top two backs also return. Christian Powell and Tony Jones combined for 1,011 yards and 10 TDs.

### Receivers

**Advantage: CU.** Buffs receiver Paul Richardson, who sat out last year with a knee injury, has 73 career catches for 1,069 yards and 11 TDs. CSU's top returning receiver, Charles Lovett, is questionable with a leg injury.

### Offensive line

**Advantage: CSU.** The Rams have one of the most experienced lines in the country with a combined 94 starts. CU center Gus Handler had troubles in fall camp with the shotgun snaps in the Buffs' new "Pistol" formation.

### Secondary

**Advantage: CSU.** Both teams return all four starters, but the Buffs were dead last among the nation's 120 FBS teams in pass-efficiency defense a year ago. They gave up 262.5 passing yards a game, while CSU allowed 203.2.

### Linebackers

**Advantage: CSU.** The Rams have three starters back, led by leading tackler Aaron Davis and sacks leader Cory James, who had 7½. CU has leading tackler Derrick Webb back at the weak-side spot.

### Defensive line

**Advantage: CU.** Chidera Uzo-Diribe, CU's sacks leader last season with seven, leads an experienced front four. CSU has to replace all three starters, and many of the replacements missed practice time in fall camp with minor injuries.

### Special teams

**Advantage: CU.** The Buffs have kicker Will Oliver and punter Darragh O'Neill back for the third year in a row, while the Rams are breaking in a new punter. Both struggled in kick coverage, with CSU No. 112 nationally on punts and CU No. 120 on kickoffs.

## Coaching

**Advantage: Even.** While CU's Mike MacIntyre is coming off an 11-2 season, it came at a different school with different players. CSU's Jim McElwain has just one season under his belt but knows his personnel better.

## Intangibles

**Advantage: CSU.** This game always means more to CSU's players than it does to CU's, who sometimes still grumble about having to play the Rams every year, as if the squad that went 1-11 and lost to Sacramento State a year ago is somehow above that.

## Final analysis

Both of these programs are at the bottom of long rebuilding processes, but the Rams have a one-year head start and built some momentum late last season by winning three of their final five games, while CU was dropping its final eight.

## My pick