

Football: CU Buffs' Dave Forman impressed with freshmen

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Posted:

Buffzone.com

Dave Forman isn't naming names but he's willing to predict several freshmen will make a positive impact on the Colorado football team this fall.

Forman has had a few weeks to work with the bulk of the freshman class in summer workouts, and Colorado's director of sports performance likes what he sees in both raw talent and attitude. He said it's a group of 20 that showed up enthusiastic and better prepared than some he has encountered at his previous stops.

In each of the past two seasons, CU has needed a large number of freshmen to play out of necessity because of a lack of depth. While those issues remain for first-year coach Mike MacIntyre, they are less prominent and freshmen will have to earn their time on the field this season more than they might have in the past two years.

"There are some guys who pass the eye test, if you will, but also going through some of these things they look like they're in shape, they move pretty well," Forman said. "I can't speak entirely on their skill set. I don't have the same eyes the coaches do when they're evaluating talent in recruiting, but there are a couple guys who will see the field and make an impact for us."

Forman just offered a wry smile when asked for a specific number of freshmen he believes could make meaningful contributions.

"Obviously you have talent, but then it's like, 'OK, here is the playbook.' If you can't absorb the playbook and know what you're doing, you might be the fastest guy running the wrong way," Forman said.

Colorado fans have seen plenty of their Buffs running the wrong way in recent seasons and news that there are likely more freshmen in line for early playing time might not be greeted with excitement these days as the program tries to right itself from a 1-11 season in 2012.

But that kind of season also shows upgrades are needed and CU apparently has some based on Forman's impressions so far.

Forman, who played linebacker and defensive back at James Madison and has served as strength coach at Stanford and San Jose State, says having a freshmen class join the program in shape and prepared allows him to get more accomplished in the summer before fall camp starts. He said it saves him a lot of time and effort he might otherwise have to devote to just getting them fit for practice in August and that can be big in the overall development of the team.

Forman sent each member of the class a package in the spring with a training program and video to help them prepare for coming to Boulder. It's nothing unusual, but this particular class seems to have followed the plan well.

"I like freshmen," Forman said. "They're a blank slate. You can kind of train them into solid

habits."

Several members of the freshmen class joined the program in January as either grayshirts or early enrollees and they are well ahead of most of the freshmen who arrived this summer. Forman said defensive lineman Derek McCartney and linebackers Addison Gillam and Markeis Reed have been impressive and each has added significant weight and strength since the end of spring practices.

Freshman quarterback Sefo Liufau was one of the first to arrive this summer in early June and has already graduated to more extensive and intense running sessions with his veteran teammates.

"He's killing it," Forman said. "He's running with the older guys. The older guys, we run a lot. The bridge, the freshmen guys, they're not there yet and I don't expect them to be, but he is. He's running really well."

Forman is well aware that some fans will see his comments about Liufau, who will be given a chance to earn the starting job as a true freshman, and think coaches have big plans for the young signal caller this season.

"I can't speak on that," he said. "I can't tell you if he is throwing good or not. I'm not a part of that. All I know is he is in good shape and that is going to be a benefit to him just being here early."

Colorado coach Mike MacIntyre has made all freshmen and newcomers to the program off limits for interviews until after the first game of the season Sept. 1 against Colorado State. The Buffs report for fall camp Aug. 6 and begin practices Aug. 7.

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