



COLORADO BUFFALOES

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The CU contingent (from left): Chidera Uzo-Diribe, Mike MacIntyre, Paul Richardson

Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



Brooks: Noteworthy (Or Not) From Pac-12 Media Day

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CULVER CITY, Calif. – Bits, bytes, scraps and outtakes from the Pac-12 Conference's 2013 Football Media Day at Sony Studios, where it's easy to lose your way without a map (fortunately the Pac-12 provided them) ...

SO WHAT ELSE IS NEW? In the wake of a 1-11 2012 season and a coaching change, Friday's big surprise would have been Colorado being picked anywhere but sixth (last) in the Pac-12 South Division.

That said, when the media poll was released as a morning prelude to media day there was nothing startling for CU attendees Paul Richardson and Chidera Uzo-Diribe. The Buffs brought up the rear.

"We'll just use that as motivation and prove them wrong," said Uzo-Diribe, a senior defensive end. "You never want to be part of a program that's picked last. It changes my whole mindset and makes me want to work even harder."

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Richardson, a junior receiver who's returning from the knee injury that sidelined him last season, also called the last-place projection a source of "a little motivation, but that's not what I play for . . . of course we want to win and be at the top of their polls, but I play for this program, for this community and what we stand for."

First-year coach Mike MacIntyre was anything but traumatized by the media's dire predictions for the Buffs. He said he and his assistants "hit the field running fast" and "can't wait" until the players report on Aug. 5 and open practice the next day.

"The future is bright no matter what you hear out there," MacIntyre said. "Our future is bright."

STRONG FIRST IMPRESSION:

MacIntyre didn't require most of his freshmen to report until late June. The exception was quarterback Sefo Liufau, who arrived several weeks earlier.

But that's been enough time for Uzo-Diribe to form this opinion of MacIntyre's first recruiting class: "These guys are all willing to work. They don't talk back, they don't complain. They're willing to put in the work. If they keep that attitude in them until they're seniors they'll turn this program around."

THE COMMISH PLAYS

HARDBALL: Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott appears tired of waiting on DirecTV to come to terms with the Pac-12 Network.

In leading off Friday's media day, one of the topics addressed by Scott was the "impasse" between the two networks. "We're no closer (to an agreement) than we were last season," he said.

Scott acknowledged Pac-12 fans' patience but also said he recognized "they have ample opportunities" with other providers already aligned with the Pac-12 Network. He then urged fans "to drop DirecTV and switch to another provider."

The Pac-12 Network televised 550 live events last year, more than any other conference TV network, and is planning 750 live events this year.

SCOTT ON THE NCAA: At recent conference football media days, respective commissioners have weighed in on the future of the NCAA. Scott stepped on the scales Friday, saying college athletics' governing body clearly "is at a crossroads" and there is "eroding trust in the NCAA and its reform agenda."

Scott said the NCAA should "pursue a strategy of evolution rather than overhaul . . . what we heard this week is too radical, too narrow. The discussion should be broader, focusing on future shape of college athletics."

Scott offered four priority items he would like to see addressed:

- Student-athlete welfare. "It should be paramount."
- Governance. "One size does not fit all."
- Enforcement. "Confidence in it is at an all-time low."
- One-and-done in college basketball. "We need to reconsider a system that allows a student-athlete to be on

campus less than 12 months.”

MACINTYRE HAS COMPANY: Besides CU, two other Pac-12 schools – California and Oregon – will break in new head coaches this season. Sonny Dykes takes over at Cal, Mark Helfrich at Oregon.

Of the three new hires, the most is expected from Helfrich – you’ll remember him as Dan Hawkins’ offensive coordinator at CU for one season.

The Ducks are the media’s pick to win the North, getting 15 first-place votes to Stanford’s 11.

Of replacing Chip Kelly (Philadelphia Eagles), Helfrich said, “It’s an honor to follow in Chip’s footsteps.” Aside from “tweaking the margins a little bit,” Helfrich doesn’t plan any kind of overhaul.

But then, why would he even consider it? Once again, the Ducks are loaded, starting with quarterback Marcus Mariota, arguably the best combo QB in college football.

“The most important thing is our guys believe in our program,” Helfrich said. “They’re a bunch of great guys who believe in what we do and that’s the most important part.”

Helfrich said being named to his first head coaching job last winter did not satisfy any personal timeline: “I’ve never been a guy who said he wanted to do this by this age or that title by that stage . . . I’m very fortunate to be in this position now and want to work every day to earn it.”

TARGETING NEW TACKLING RULE: Coaches and players across the board are in favor of reducing head injuries in their sport. But they aren’t on board with a new rule that could lead to more penalty yards and even ejections for defensive players “leading” with their helmets.

Washington State coach Mike Leach predicted enforcement of the rule will “become a guessing game . . . rules have to be enforceable, you have to see it.”

Leach, the Pac-12’s most colorful and outspoken coach, said he if lined two of his players up across the room and ordered them to run headlong toward each other – basically a one-on-one tackling drill – “I don’t think you can say who lowered his head first.”

South Carolina defensive end Jadeveon Clowney met Michigan running back Vincent Smith head-on behind the line of scrimmage in last season’s Outback Bowl, delivering a hit that was replayed numerous times then and is drawing even more attention now because of the new rule.

Said Leach: “The Clowney hit is why they have football.”

Several Pac-12 coaches/players reiterated they teach or are taught proper tackling technique. Said Stanford linebacker Shane Skov: “We’ve been trained properly; football is an aggressive sport and I’m going to continue to play the way I play . . . I’ll play aggressive football but do it the right way.”

Added UCLA linebacker Anthony Barr: “As a defensive player it’s going to be difficult to adjust my game for that rule . . . I’m going to play full speed and attacking. If I get penalized, so be it. But I’m going to play football and my game.”

HE GOES BEYOND HUNGRY: Asked if missing last season due to his knee rehab made him hungrier than ever to play, Richardson answered: “That’s the nice way of putting it. I can’t express the hunger and how intense I’m going to be, how intense I am right now. I really can’t wait to play in another game, and what better way to start it than against your in-state rival?”

The Buffs open the season on Sunday, Sept. 1 in Denver against Colorado State.

ZOMBIE APOCALYPSE IN PULLMAN? After a particularly lackluster Saturday last fall, Leach made headlines when he said his players performed like “empty corpses and zombies.” (And no, it wasn’t after CU won its only game of the season, 35-34, with an unlikely fourth-quarter comeback against WSU.)

Asked Friday about that quote and if his second Cougars team had rid itself of those dark tendencies, Leach said, "This day and age, people ask questions, but they don't always want honest answers."

He called himself "the head zombie, the head corpse" and added, "Anything with regard to team effort or coaching, if you don't like the way your players are playing, that's about how well you're coaching, you know?"

WSU finished 3-9 last season.

LOTS TO SAY, LOTS MORE TO DO: The Pac-12 scheduled 15 minutes for each school Friday. Southern California, represented by coach Lane Kiffin and players Marqise Lee (receiver) and Hayes Pullard (linebacker) went at least 10 minutes into OT.

A preseason No. 1 pick last season, the Trojans slumped at mid-season, finished 7-6 and were beaten by UCLA in their crosstown rivalry game. Not a good fall for the beleaguered Kiffin, who was asked what he might have handled differently during USC's tailspin, particularly in the 39-36 loss at Arizona. USC then lost four of its next five, including a Sun Bowl defeat by Georgia Tech.

Kiffin said the 2012 season changed in the Arizona game: "We were 6-1 at that time and we were in command of the game, up 15 with the ball. Their crowd was starting to leave and we were coming back to play Oregon (in L.A.) and we missed a bunch of plays the rest of the game there. As far as handling things differently, I don't know that."

ANYTHING BUT A DRAG: Taylor Kelly had to know this was coming. The Arizona State quarterback and his family spend their summer drag racing in Eagle, Idaho – so it was bound to be brought up at media day.

It was.

The question to Kelly: "Taylor, I've seen videos of you drag racing and I wanted to know if that is something that bothers your coaches, that you're involved in something like that? Do you have another hidden talent that you want to share?"

His answer: "It bothers them a little bit. I only do it once a year, but I'm going to stop doing that and focus on football."

And from Arizona coach Todd Graham, seated next to Kelly: "Bothers me a lot."

2013 Pac-12 Media Poll

NORTH DIVISION: 1. Oregon (15) 145; 2. Stanford (11) 139; 3. Oregon State 95; 4. Washington 84; 5. California 47; 6. Washington State 33

SOUTH DIVISION: 1. UCLA (12) 135; 2. Arizona State (10) 130; 3. USC (4) 117; 4. Arizona 76; 5. Utah 60; 6. Colorado 28

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SHOW MENU



Football: Pac-12 peers say MacIntyre will win with CU Buffs

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

CULVER CITY, Calif. -- Oregon coach Mark Helfrich rode on a bus with his fellow Pac-12 coaches this week and told a story of how one day at Nebraska five years ago changed so much for him and the Colorado football program.

With Helfrich calling the plays as CU's offensive coordinator, the Buffs lost to the Cornhuskers that day thanks in large part to a 57-yard field goal in the final minutes from Nebraska kicker Alex Henery, who had never made such a kick in his career to that point.

The loss dropped the Buffs to 5-7 and kept them from a second consecutive bowl game and who knows what else? Within a year, head coach Dan Hawkins was on the hot seat and his assistants were leaving for more job security, including Helfrich who joined the Ducks.

Helfrich was named Oregon's head coach in February shortly after Chip Kelly bolted for the NFL. Now he's leading the team picked as the favorite to win the Pac-12 Conference with two Heisman Trophy candidates. Meanwhile, Colorado is coming off a 1-11 season with another new coaching staff and has earned little respect entering its third season in the league.

"If they don't make that field goal, what happens?" Helfrich said, acknowledging he might not have left for Oregon. "It's a pretty amazing progression of events. You get a little momentum. You get to another bowl game and things start to happen. You never know. It's amazing how stuff like that happens, a bounce here, a knock there."

Count Helfrich among those who believe it's "only a matter of time," as he put it, before the Buffs become competitive in the Pac-12 and on a national level once again. He believes this because he is certain the Buffs were on the verge before that kick somehow cleared the crossbar in Lincoln, Neb.

It is now coach Mike MacIntyre's job to boost the Buffs over a few bars and bring the program back to respectability. MacIntyre and two of his players participated in Pac-12 media day Friday at Sony Studios along with representatives of every other program in the conference.

The Buffs have been blown out of a majority of the games they have played since joining the league prior to the 2011 season and that has left them in last place in the preseason media poll and not much of a worry to fans of other Pac-12 teams.

UCLA coach Jim Mora Jr., believes the Buffs will be more difficult to beat in the future than they were last season when the Bruins rolled up 492 yards of total offense in 42-14 win in Boulder. Mora says Colorado hired a coaching staff capable of directing such a turnaround.

"He's a good man and really good football coach," Mora said. "Humble. Confident. I like him a lot. I like him on a personal level and I respect him a lot as a coach. ... I think you will see him do a tremendous job there."

Most of the coaches in the league are doing some guessing when it comes to what they might see from MacIntyre's Buffs this fall and beyond. Stanford coach David Shaw probably knows best of all of them because his team nearly lost to MacIntyre's San Jose State Spartans early last year.

Shaw said he will never forget the looks he received during that postgame press conference. People wondered whether his program was slipping but he knew it had just faced a team on its way to a special season.

"He built that program with good kids, with tough kids and had some great coaches who are great teachers and motivators and the end of that three-year project was something that took them to 10 wins and a bowl game," Shaw said. "So I anticipate the same thing happening in short order at Colorado."

During last season's nightmare, the Buffs often found themselves in games with a chance to win at halftime only to end up losing by double-digit margins with poor second halves. One of those games came against Arizona State and defensive tackle Will Sutton, the 2012 Defensive Player of the Year in the Pac-12.

Sutton said he hasn't spent much time thinking about what is missing in the CU program, but he does remember the Buffs seemed to lack the same spark and stamina in the second half that they had in the first half.

"I think it's just a mental thing and how they condition and work out," Sutton said. "It's a long game and you come out there in the second half and maybe it's mental because they're coming out flat. They get too far behind to where they can't bring it back and it's like, 'Here we go again. We can't do anything about it.' The main thing is they just got to come out with the fight like they come out with in the beginning of the game."

The CU program has been plagued by that kind of inconsistent play for years, and it has happened under both of the past two coaching staffs. But perhaps MacIntyre is the man to fix that problem. Shaw was asked what comes to mind when he thinks of a Mike MacIntyre coached team.

"Consistent," he said. "You're going to see consistent effort. You're going to see consistent playmaking. Of course there is some building there that needs to happen but he is going to put the time in and build a consistent program."

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Football: CU Buffs lose three more players; picked last in Pac-12

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

CULVER CITY, Calif. -- Competitors in the Pac-12 Conference came to football media day at Sony Studios ready to talk about playing for division, conference and national titles and Heisman Trophies, but the news of the day Friday for Colorado was roster attrition and the possibility of even more to come.

CU announced three more scholarship players have left the team with less than two weeks remaining before fall camp opens Aug. 6 and coach Mike MacIntyre said he was unable to rule out further attrition in the coming days.

Wide receiver Gerald Thomas, tight end Vincent Hobbs and defensive lineman John Stuart, all members of the 2012 recruiting class under former coach Jon Embree, are the latest to leave.

MacIntyre made it clear he is still working to institute his culture and rules and it hasn't been easy.

"I don't know yet," MacIntyre told the Daily Camera when asked if he now has the team he expects to take to camp. "We want to make sure all our kids are committed. I've been talking with our captains on and off this summer and we still have got a few kids that are a little resistant.

"You've got to go to class. You got to go to tutoring. You've got to do the right things off the field. You got to listen. You got to care. I've had six months where I have met with a lot of these kids individually a lot. Really invested in them, and if they don't want to get on the train and go, that's the worst thing you can do is have a bunch of guys going the opposite way."

When he made those comments, MacIntyre was not talking specifically about the three most recent departures.

Hobbs and Thomas had family issues occur in their lives that stole their attention and focus away from academics and football in the past year. They both decided they would be better off transferring to schools closer to home in Texas. Both played last season as true freshman. Thomas is expected to transfer to Sam Houston State.

Stuart redshirted last season and decided to transfer to a school closer to home in California.

The Buffs are coming off a 1-11 season and a coaching change and have seen a handful of players decide to leave the program since the end of spring ball, including three of the six quarterbacks on the roster at the beginning of the spring.

Colorado's recent track record and the reality that the program is starting a rebuilding project under a new coaching staff once again, led media members who cover the Pac-12 to vote the Buffs last in the South Division with the fewest overall points in the poll of any team in the league.

"The future is bright, no matter what you hear out there, our future is going to be bright and we're

going to work hard and make the right steps and do it the right way," MacIntyre said during the Buffs' time on Stage 8 in front of hundreds of media members.

MacIntyre said he will not make exceptions when it comes to setting standards for players in his program because doing so won't help the team improve. He said it's unhealthy for the team to allow players to get away with skipping out on responsibilities.

"It can really hurt a program because they are the same guys who would be griping on the sidelines when they're not playing and antagonizing kids who are doing it right," he said. "They are the same types of kids who sometimes get in trouble. I'm not saying they will but they are not invested in the team."

It wasn't all negative for the first-year Buffs coach.

He said he was overcome with a sense of pride and enthusiasm to get the season started during a private moment in the green room with wide receiver Paul Richardson and defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe, who accompanied MacIntyre here.

MacIntyre said the defections from his program also will allow him to reward walk-ons who have done things the right way in the spring and summer and throughout their careers. He said he is planning to inform several players in the coming week that they have earned scholarships.

"I have been honestly very pleased with 95 percent of them," MacIntyre said. "That's my job is to keep working on them. And the captains come and talk to me about them and they're trying to work on them, too, but everyone has got to get on the same page."

The program announced the additions of eight new walk-ons for the start of fall camp Aug. 6. Some had been previously reported. The local walk-ons are defensive back Tanner Harrison and tight end Chris Hill from Mountain Vista High School in Highlands Ranch, running back/defensive back Ryan Moeller from Rifle and tight end Robert Orban from Regis Jesuit High School in Aurora.

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CU Buffs picked last Pac-12 South; coach Mike MacIntyre begs to differ

By John Henderson The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

CULVER CITY, Calif. — The ink had barely dried on the media's preseason Pac-12 poll Friday when new Colorado coach Mike MacIntyre told a room full of media that he remains optimistic.

"The future is bright," MacIntyre said at the Pac-12 football preview. "No matter what you hear out there, our future's going to be bright."

The media didn't buy it, picking CU to finish last in the South Division. On a 6-5-4-3-2-1 points system, CU received only 28 points from the 26 voters. That means only two voters didn't pick CU to finish last.

Among the reasons for MacIntyre's optimism is the return of wide receiver Paul Richardson, the Buffaloes' most dangerous threat in 2011 who missed last season because of a knee injury. Without Richardson, CU finished 1-11.

"It was definitely a humbling experience not being able to compete with my teammates," Richardson said. "You can't help but wonder what I could be doing to help them."

"During the offseason, I took time to gain weight, get stronger, faster, get healthy so I would be able to help my guys during the offseason coming into fall camp."

Trio transferring. MacIntyre lost three players who are transferring: wide receiver Gerald Thomas, defensive tackle John Stuart and tight end Vincent Hobbs. MacIntyre said they failed to meet team expectations and two, whom he wouldn't name, had no choice but to leave the Buffs.

Thomas was CU's fifth-leading receiver as a true freshman last year with 18 catches. A new father, he is transferring to Sam Houston State in Huntsville, Texas, to be closer to his home in New Orleans.

Mulling redshirt for Liufau. Attrition has dropped the number of Colorado quarterbacks to four, including true freshman Sefo Liufau. Junior Connor Wood is the starter, but how well Liufau does in preseason camp will determine if he redshirts this year.

"If he is like the next guy and there's a big separation, I want him ready to play," MacIntyre said of Liufau. "If I feel like another guy could be the second-teamer and I feel there's not a big separation, then it would be smart on my side to redshirt him."

Still no DirecTV for Pac-12 Network. Commissioner Larry Scott said negotiations with DirecTV to carry Pac-12 Network programming remain at an impasse. The prospects don't appear good, either.

"I urge our fans that are intent on not missing their teams' games this fall to drop Direc- TV and switch to one of the many providers that have it," Scott said.

Familiar face. Rip Scherer, the CU quarterbacks coach last year, made an appearance Friday at the Pac-12 event. He is UCLA's associate athletic director in charge of football. Kanavis McGhee, the CU defensive line coach last year, has an internship with the Kansas City Chiefs.