

Football: CU Buffs' season ticket renewals up to 85 percent

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

University of Colorado football fans haven't seen many wins from their beloved Buffs in recent years but that isn't preventing most from renewing their season tickets for the 2013 season.

CU reported more than 19,000 season tickets had been renewed as of late Monday afternoon and approximately 500 new season tickets have been purchased. Associate athletic director David Plati said roughly 85 percent of the 22,991 season-ticket holders from the 2012 season have renewed for 2013.

"To be at 85 percent is pretty good coming off a 1-11 season," Plati said. "It generally starts to pick up later in the month when the Broncos start training camp and then again when we start practicing in August."

The Buffs begin their first season under new coach Mike MacIntyre on Sept. 1 in Denver against Colorado State. CU will also play six home games at Folsom Field, four of which will be against Pac-12 Conference opponents.

CU fans have weathered a turbulent offseason that included a coaching change, the ouster of former athletic director Mike Bohn and losing former starting quarterback Jordan Webb to a knee injury and his primary backup last season, Nick Hirschman, to transfer. Plati, who has worked in the athletic department since the 1970s, said historically CU fans have weathered tough times well when it comes to season-ticket renewals.

He said fans generally seem to take an optimistic view following a coaching change and many seem to be doing so again. Plati said the school is well aware that some fans are waiting to see some positive results before purchasing tickets.

CU had 9,391 student season tickets last season. While students can begin purchasing student season tickets in late spring, many usually wait until August to do so. Plati said the school likely won't know how many student season tickets are sold for this season until late August.

Kevin Fenton, associate athletic director for ticket sales, said the department took a more proactive approach to season-ticket renewals this offseason. Fenton said there were more phone calls, mailings and emails sent this year encouraging fans to continue to support the program while MacIntyre tries to rebuild after what is widely considered the worst season in the modern history of the program in 2012.

Folsom Field capacity is 53,613. CU relies heavily on individual game sales. When the Buffs struggle on the field, it usually hurts the bottom line. CU reported losing \$3.3 million in ticket revenue last season when the Buffs struggled to even put a competitive team on the field in most Pac-12 games. That shortfall was a major factor in Bohn being fired this summer.

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Kyle Ringo Blog: CU Buffs' 2013 schedule among toughest nationally

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When it comes to preseason college football magazines, Phil Steele's 352-page behemoth easily offers the most extensive coverage.

One criticism of Steele's approach is that so much of the content is rehashed material from years gone by, but he also offers statistical breakdowns and comparisons for every Football Bowl Subdivision team that can't be found elsewhere.

One such item is the analysis he puts together each year on how difficult each team's schedule is likely to be. This year, Steele says Colorado has the seventh toughest schedule in the nation, largely because of its Pac-12 opponents.

His breakdown is not based on the records opponents produced the previous season. Steele projects who will play the toughest schedule each year based on number of home and away games and who those games are against as well as nine sets of power ratings for each team.

The Buffs start the season with three seemingly winnable nonconference games in Denver against Colorado State and then at home against Central Arkansas and Fresno State. CU travels to Oregon State, Arizona State, UCLA, Washington and Utah and plays host to Oregon, Arizona, Cal and USC.

California is the only Pac-12 team with a more difficult schedule. Steele says the Bears will play the third toughest schedule in the nation.

If Steele is right about where the Buffs' schedule ranks, it will make rebounding from a 1-11 season that much more difficult for the Buffs and their new coaches.

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