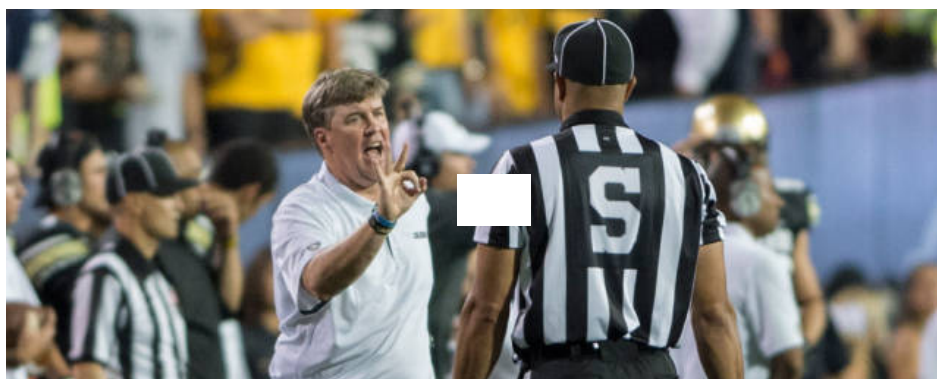




By: Joel Broida
CU coach Mike MacIntyre called changing quarterbacks "real difficult."

Brooks: MacIntyre Makes Difficult Call In Changing QBs

Release: October 13, 2013
By: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

TEMPE, Ariz. – The nature of the position puts it squarely under the microscope, a fact Mike MacIntyre didn't have to be reminded of when he began his postgame press conference late Saturday night in Sun Devil Stadium.

Mid-season changes in starting quarterbacks – though this one comes one game shy of Colorado's midway point – are difficult at best. And MacIntyre didn't have to be reminded of that either.

"Real difficult . . . more than what you usually know," he said. "You're dealing with a young man and a position that's already written and talked about. We're spending the whole time (postgame) talking about this right now. It is a difficult position because it's one that's always going to be in the limelight."

And so it will be for the Buffs' last two games in October and their final five in November. Welcome to the limelight, kid, although this kid appears capable of playing beyond his years.

In the first quarter of CU's 54-13 shelling by Arizona State, MacIntyre switched QBs. It signaled the beginning of the Sefo Liufau Era, with MacIntyre making it clear that ridding the true freshman of his redshirt means he expects Liufau to grow as quickly into a starting role as he did in becoming a backup.

"I'd like to look at the rest of the year (like) we took the redshirt off a young man that we think is very talented, very bright and is an excellent leader," MacIntyre said of Liufau. "So we feel like we'd hopefully play him the rest of the year – if he plays good."

Liufau didn't know the call to arms was coming until it came. "I knew right at the moment it happened," he said. "Coach told me to warm up and I went in. I was excited. It was fast for the first couple of plays then everything slowed down. But there's always room for improvement."

His athleticism and swift grasp of the offense have impressed MacIntyre and offensive coordinator/QB coach Brian Lindgren since August camp. His maturity also has been a cut above that of most freshmen, and that was apparent following his debut.

Liufau led CU's only two scoring drives, but he was intercepted twice, trapped in the end zone for a safety and was charged with a fumble after a bad snap. Memories of those mistakes, he said, won't linger: "I don't really dwell on the mistakes – probably just for a second when it happens, then I flush it. I go talk to coach Lindgren on the phone, see what we can do better and move on to the next play."

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He said he had not spoken with MacIntyre about the next several weeks, but that was before MacIntyre met with the media and said Liufau is his guy – if he performs. “He has not discussed anything with me,” Liufau said. “We’ll just have to wait and see what happens.”

But this much should be clear: Subbing Liufau and not Jordan Webb for Connor Wood was done with the rest of this season and the next several in mind. Had MacIntyre wanted to save Liufau’s redshirt, Webb – the 2012 starter – was one of three other roster QBs available.

If Wood, said MacIntyre, “was lighting it up, playing great” and lost his helmet or suffered a minor injury that cost him one play, Webb would have been used as a one-play stand-in. “That’s what we’d planned all along.”

Wood, however, was neither lighting it up nor playing great against the Sun Devils, who used Wood’s seventh interception of the season to go up 25-0 in the first quarter and prompted MacIntyre to look at Liufau and into the future.

This was MacIntyre’s early, pre-tape critique of Liufau: “He made a couple of mistakes, but looked pretty calm and made some good third down plays, some good throws. Nothing looked too big for him, to me. To the naked eye I thought it was good, but he had a couple of turnovers that we don’t need to have . . . (but) he made some checks and went to the right guys on some blitzes. He’s done it in practice but hasn’t had to do it in the game yet. I thought it was impressive.”

Wood’s first-quarter interception came after he was pressured and threw a pass across the middle that should have been thrown out of bounds, MacIntyre said. “He was fighting and trying to work at it. Hopefully he’ll keep improving, and hopefully Sefo will keep improving and we’ll keep getting better at that spot.”

MacIntyre was very careful not to lay Saturday night’s loss or the two preceding it on Wood: “This game or the last few games can’t be blamed on Connor – no way,” he said. “It’s the whole team. We’ve made changes at other positions . . . we’ll keep working with him and keep moving forward.”

Wood, said MacIntyre, “has done some good things for us and I really, really like Connor. But he hasn’t had a winning grade for us in the last four games now. It was time to make a little bit of a change there, just like I would at any position. We’ve made changes at other positions, not just the quarterback.

“The quarterback’s always the one that’s obvious . . . Connor is phenomenal young man; he’s done some good things, he has good talent. We’ll give him the opportunity to keep working; there’ll be a time when he’ll have to come back in and do it again. So he’ll have to be ready.”

The plan, said MacIntyre, is to keep Wood engaged, keep a redshirt on junior college transfer Jordan Gehrke, and “see how things evolve” with Webb, who was cleared to play three weeks ago after rehabbing a spring knee injury. “He’s got a great attitude; he’s waiting to see if his chance arrives.”

Yet going with Liufau Saturday night under the most difficult circumstances – he entered his first college game down 25-0 – tells you that MacIntyre is holding out hope for the final seven games by not having Liufau hold onto his redshirt. The hope is that he can provide a late-October spark and fan it through November.

Charleston Southern, unbeaten at 7-0, visits Folsom Field on Saturday, with Arizona coming to Boulder the following weekend. The FCS Buccaneers, said MacIntyre, are “a good team; it’d be nice to beat them and be three and three at the end of October, keep moving and improving and you never know, you never know.”

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

Colorado Buffaloes Football

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By: US Press Wire

True freshman Sefo Liufau debuted Saturday night in CU's loss at Arizona State.



Brooks: Liufau Makes QB Debut In Loss To Sun Devils

Release: October 12, 2013

By: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

TEMPE, Ariz. – The University of Colorado unveiled its quarterback of the present and the future here Saturday night, turning to true freshman Sefo Liufau in hopes he can help the Buffs right themselves over the season's final month and a half.

Liufau, who last fall at this time was playing for Bellarmine Prep in Tacoma, Wash., replaced junior Connor Wood in the first quarter of CU's 54-13 Pac-12 Conference loss to Arizona State.

"I thought it was the right time," Buffs coach Mike MacIntyre said of the change. He said he plans on Liufau being the starter for the rest of the season, "But he's got to play good though."

Wood, who opened with a 400-yard, three-touchdown, no-interception performance against Colorado State in the season-opener, was pulled after throwing his seventh interception of the season.

Liufau, the first true freshman to quarterback the Buffs since Tyler Hansen in 2008, directed a pair of scoring drives Saturday night. But ASU's Taylor Kelly was the most efficient QB in Sun Devil Stadium – and Kelly played only the first half.

Liufau finished his debut 18-of-26 passing for 169 yards, with one touchdown and two interceptions. He also ran four times for 10 yards.

MacIntyre praised ASU and coach Todd Graham: "They made a lot of plays on us. We didn't execute as well as we'd like in the first half and gave them a short field a few times and it kind of got of hand there early."

The loss dropped CU to 2-3 overall and kept the Buffs looking for their first Pac-12 win (0-3) under MacIntyre. The Sun Devils (4-2, 2-1) rebounded from a three-point loss last week to Notre Dame.

The Buffs return to Folsom Field for their next two games, playing Charleston Southern – the makeup game for Fresno State – next Saturday (noon, Pac-12 Network) and Arizona on Saturday, Oct. 26.

CU's three conference losses have been 44-17 to Oregon State, 57-16 to No. 2 Oregon and 54-13 on Saturday night, but MacIntyre said he is "keeping my head up. We're going to keep persevering. I said that in my first press conference. It's about perseverance. Perseverance builds character; character builds hope. And then good things happen. It's going to happen. This was tough tonight, there's no doubt about that.

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"I told the young men in the locker room, we've got to keep battling, keep fighting, keep working. The one thing I told them, and I truly believe this, you've got to give me your effort and you've also got to give me your heart. Sometimes you can give effort but you don't give your heart. It's kind of like you put your heart out there and get it stomped on, it hurts and you don't want to do it again. Well, you've got to put your heart out there . . . I see them doing that.

"I did see progress this week in practice, I promise you I did. I was hoping we'd play a little better and we didn't. But I have seen progress."

On their first possession under their new quarterback, the Buffs marched 80 yards in 11 plays and scored on a 10-yard Liufau-to-Nelson Spruce pass. Nice start, but the talented kid from Tacoma was up against nasty odds when he took his first college snap.

By the time Liufau entered the college game, the Buffs trailed 25-0 – and that was with 4:45 left in the first quarter. Wood was pulled after his pick by corner Lloyd Carrington that set up ASU at the CU 15-yard line and led to a 1-yard run by Marion Grice.

It would only get worse; the Sun Devils kept the heat coming and had pushed their lead to 47-6 by intermission.

Wood went to the bench with four incompletions in three series and the interception, while Liufau finished the half 8-of-13 for 69 yards, one touchdown and one interception on a tipped ball.

ASU, coming off a 37-34 neutral field loss to Notre Dame last weekend and apparently not happy about it, scored on eight of its nine first-half possessions and sacked Liufau in the end zone for a safety. The Sun Devils' 25-0 first quarter points were their most in 139 games, or since Sept. 28, 2002.

Kelly finished the first half with nine completions in 19 attempts for 233 yards and two touchdowns – Nos. 12 and 13 allowed by the Buffs in their first three Pac-12 games. ASU outgained CU 392-94 in the first half (532-268 for the game), with Grice rushing 13 times for 88 yards and his pair of TDs and catching two passes for 46 yards. Like Kelly, he was done for the night as was receiver Jaalen Strong, whose three receptions went for 109 yards and one score. Kelly's other TD pass – a 1-yarder – went to Davon Coleman, who normally plays defensive end.

It was that kind of night for the Buffs.

Kelly was replaced to start the second half by backup Mike Bercovi, who doubles as ASU's holder and hit Strong with a two-point conversion pass after the Sun Devils' second TD.

The Buffs, meanwhile, struggled to find any first-half offense with the exception of the 80-yard Liufau-led drive. Leading receiver Paul Richardson did not have a first-half catch, and didn't get one until CU's opening possession of the second half. Spruce, with three catches for 25 yards, was the Buffs' top receiver in the opening half.

Richardson finished with four catches for 39 yards – both season lows – and MacIntyre said the Sun Devils effectively covered "P-Rich" in the first half: "We tried to throw the ball to (Richardson), but they were doubling him early and often. They had a new scheme they showed, then we started figuring it out as we went along."

The Buffs defense was minus CU senior safety Parker Orms for half the second quarter through the rest of the game. He was flagged for targeting an ASU receiver and ejected, spending the rest of the game in the locker room.

MacIntyre said he watched the hit on replay and called the decision to eject Orms "tough . . . he didn't lead with his head, it was a shoulder hit. The guy was diving, the ball was bobbling. It wasn't like (Orms) launched." He said Orms spending the second half in the locker room "really bothered him . . . he's a good player, a good kid. But that's the rule." Orms will return for next Saturday's first half.

After Liufau suffered his second interception – a pick in the end zone on a pass intended for Richardson – Bercovi engineered a 14-play, 80-yard drive that was capped by senior R.J. Robinson's 1-yard run – the first scoring run of his career. With Gonzalez's PAT, ASU went ahead 54-6 with 3:22 left in the third quarter, and the final quarter started with that score.

Liufau led the Buffs on their second scoring drive of the night, this one 89 yards in 11 plays, with Christian Powell running 8 yards for the score. Will Oliver's PAT made it 54-13. ASU shunned a sure TD on its next possession, driving to the CU 1-yard line but instructing Bercovi to kneel on consecutive downs and let time expire.

MacIntyre said his players and coaches must keep pushing to get better. "I'm not going to blame players

or coaches, I'm just going to say it's a process," he said. "I wouldn't be here if we didn't have a long way to go. We have to keep going, keep going. We've played three really good football teams. And we're going to play a bunch more good ones."

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

Colorado Buffaloes Football

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TEMPE — Taylor Kelly accounted for three touchdowns and Marion Grice ran for two more in a dominating first half, leading Arizona State to a 54-13 rout over listless Colorado on Saturday night.

Arizona State (4-2, 2-1 Pac-12) wanted to make a statement after a tough stretch in the schedule and did just that, overwhelming the Buffaloes with 25 points in the game's first 11 minutes.

Kelly threw for 233 yards and two touchdowns, ran for another score and Grice pushed his nation-leading touchdown total to 15 as the Sun Devils went up 47-6 at halftime.

Colorado (2-3, 0-3) kept it close against Arizona State in Boulder last season before being outscored 31-0 in the second half.

The Sun Devils nearly matched that in the first quarter and never let up on the Buffaloes, forcing four turnovers while sending them to their 11th straight Pac-12 loss.

Colorado replaced quarterback Connor Wood in the first quarter after an interception and freshman Sefo Liufau wasn't much better, throwing two more interceptions. Colorado also lost a fumble and finished with 268 total yards — Arizona State had 531 — in its third straight lopsided Pac-12 loss.

The Sun Devils have one of the nation's toughest schedules and were coming off the most brutal part of it, facing Wisconsin, Stanford, Southern California and Notre Dame in consecutive weeks.

Arizona State went 2-2, closing the run out with a disappointing 37-34 loss to the Fighting Irish in Texas.

Now that the toughest part is over, the Sun Devils were looking forward to chasing their main goal of winning the Pac-12 championship and facing the less power-oriented teams that comprise most of the conference.

The key was to not overlook Colorado.

No problem.

The Sun Devils raced past the Buffaloes from the start, scoring on a 69-yard pass from Kelly to Jaelen Strong in the first 90 seconds. Grice scored on an 8-yard run three minutes later, Zane Gonzalez kicked a 26-yard field goal and Grice scored again on a 1-yard run after a Colorado interception.

That made it 25-0 after one quarter for Arizona State, which scored 24 points in the opening quarter its first five games combined.

It was the Sun Devils' most first-quarter points since 2002, when they had 28 in a rout of Stanford.

Arizona State didn't let up, either, giving a defensive player a chance to score — end Davon Coleman on a 1-yard pass — and getting a 17-yard rushing touchdown by Kelly for a 47-6 halftime lead.

The Buffaloes doubled their win total from last season in their first two games under new coach Mike MacIntyre, but have struggled since the Pac-12 season started, losing to the two Oregon schools by a combined score of 101-33.

Colorado managed to keep it close with Oregon in the first quarter last week, but stood no chance against the fired-up Sun Devils.

The Buffaloes stagnated on offense to start and couldn't keep up with Arizona State's quick-hitting attack to fall into a big early hole.

Wood struggled his previous two games — 25 of 67 with four interceptions and two TDs — and was replaced by Liufau in the first quarter after an ill-advised, across-the-body throw was intercepted by Arizona State's Lloyd Carrington to set up the Sun Devils' third touchdown.

The change didn't make much difference.

Liufau was called for intentional grounding the end zone for a safety and forced a pass into coverage that was knocked into the air and intercepted by Damarious Randall. Gonzalez followed with his third field goal of the half, a 20-yarder that made it 40-6.

Arizona State had a 392-94 advantage in total yards in the first half and Liufau opened the third quarter by throwing an interception in the end zone.

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Colorado football: Arizona State hammers Buffs

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

TEMPE, Ariz. -- Another Pac-12 Conference foe made minced meat out of the Colorado defense Saturday night at Sun Devil Stadium.

Another game got out of hand quickly allowing fans of both Arizona State and the Buffs to yawn their way through the second quarter, let alone the second half.

When it ended, the scoreboard read 54-13.

It's nothing new in this new era for Colorado football. The Buffs have now allowed opponents to score at least 30 points in 19 of their first 21 Pac-12 games. They have lost 16 of those games by 25 or more points.

At this rate, even the faculty members who were so delighted to be joining forces with academic powerhouses out west might start to yearn for the old Big 12.

The Buffs have lost 11 straight Pac-12 games and remain winless in five games against the Sun Devils. All of those games have been played in the past eight years.

"We're going to keep perservering," coach Mike MacIntyre said. "It's about persevering. Perseverance builds character and character builds hope and then eventually it happens. It's going to happen.

"Boy, this was tough tonight. There is no doubt about that and the young men, I told them in the locker room. 'We've got to keep battling. We've got to keep fighting. We've got to keep working.' The one thing I told them, I said, and I truly believe this; They've got to give me their effort, but they also have to give me their heart."

But there was one reason for at least mild interest among the CU faithful.

After watching junior quarterback Connor Wood struggle for a third straight week and throw another interception and nearly lose a fumble, coach Mike MacIntyre pulled the redshirt off freshman quarterback Sefo Liufau late in the first quarter.

The move will likely relegate Wood to backup duty for the foreseeable future. He failed to complete a pass in four attempts and the offense didn't earn a first down with him at the controls.

Liufau directed an 11-play, 80-yard drive on his first series and threw a 10-yard touchdown pass to wide receiver Nelson Spruce for the Buffs' only points of the first half.

Later in the half, Liufau was rudely welcomed to the college game when ASU blitzed as the Buffs were backed up deep in their territory. Liufau was called for intentional grounding in the end zone resulting in a safety.

CU quarterbacks and running backs appeared to be under siege much of the night with another defensive front having its way with the offensive line. The Buffs turned the ball over four times and didn't get a takeaway defensively for the first time this season.

It took the Sun Devils 92 seconds to score the first points of the game. On the fifth play from scrimmage, ASU quarterback Taylor Kelly hit wide receiver Jaelen Strong over the middle and Strong raced 69 yards for a touchdown. Redshirt freshman cornerback John Walker appeared to lose track of Strong on the play.

The CU offense responded with three plays for zero yards and a punt.

Once again the Sun Devils needed only five plays to cover 37 yards with running back Marion Grice, the nation's leading scorer, punching into the end zone. This time the Sun Devils added some salt to the wound by completing a 2-point conversion pass to Strong.

Grice helped the Sun Devils rack up more than 200 rushing yards with his 88 yards in the first half, including two touchdown runs. ASU quarterback Taylor Kelly played only the first half and finished with nine completions in 19 attempts for 233 yards and two touchdowns.

Colorado gets a break from the Pac-12 gauntlet next week when it plays host to Charleston Southern from the Football Championship Subdivision. It is a makeup game for the Sept. 14 home game against Fresno State that was cancelled after historic flooding hit the Boulder area.

"I think kids are trying as hard as they can try," MacIntyre said. "We've got to get them better at what they do and executing and keep pushing and keep getting stronger and keep getting better at what we do. I'm not going to blame players. I'm not going to blame coaches. I'm just going to say it's a process.

"I wouldn't be here if we didn't have a long way to go."

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Arizona St. 54, Colorado 13

Colorado 0 6 0 7--13

Arizona St. 25 22 7 0--54

First Quarter

ASU -- Strong 69 pass from T.Kelly (Gonzalez kick), 13:28.

ASU -- Grice 8 run (Strong pass from Bercovici), 10:26.

ASU -- FG Gonzalez 26, 6:27.

ASU -- Grice 1 run (Gonzalez kick), 4:45.

Second Quarter

Col -- Spruce 10 pass from Liufau (pass failed), 14:54.

ASU -- Coleman 1 pass from T.Kelly (Gonzalez kick), 13:27.

ASU -- Safety, 9:48.

ASU -- FG Gonzalez 41, 7:57.

ASU -- FG Gonzalez 20, 5:49.

ASU -- T.Kelly 17 run (Gonzalez kick), :16.

Third Quarter

ASU -- Robinson 1 run (Gonzalez kick), 3:22.

Fourth Quarter

Col -- Powell 8 run (Oliver kick), 11:03.

A -- 50,104.

Col ASU

First downs 17 29

Rushes-yards 35-99 58-276

Passing 169 256

Comp-Att-Int 18-30-3 11-22-0

Return Yards 0 77

Punts-Avg. 4-40.8 2-36.5

Fumbles-Lost 2-1 1-0

Penalties-Yards 8-75 3-25

Time of Possession 26:20 33:40

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING -- Colorado, Adkins 16-62, Powell 7-29, T.Jones 4-12, Liufau 4-10, Team 2-(minus 3), C.Wood 2-(minus 11). Arizona St., Grice 13-88, Robinson 15-69, Bercovici 6-39, T.Kelly 5-36, D.Lewis 9-19, Foster 6-18, R.Smith 1-11, Eubank 1-2, Team 2-(minus 6).

PASSING -- Colorado, Liufau 18-26-2-169, C.Wood 0-4-1-0. Arizona St., T.Kelly 9-19-0-233, Bercovici 2-3-0-23.

RECEIVING -- Colorado, Spruce 5-42, Richardson 4-39, McCulloch 3-41, Goodson 2-20, Powell 1-22, Slavin 1-8, Ross 1-(minus 1), Adkins 1-(minus 2). Arizona St., Strong 3-109, Grice 2-46, Ca.Smith 1-47, R.Smith 1-25, Rogers 1-12, D.Lewis 1-11, Foster 1-5, Coleman 1-1.

Colorado football: Mike MacIntyre turns to Sefo Liufau as new starter

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

TEMPE, Ariz. -- True freshman Sefo Liufau is expected to be the starting quarterback for the Colorado Buffaloes the rest of the season as long as he performs well, coach Mike MacIntyre said Saturday following a 54-13 loss at Arizona State.

Liufau was called into action against the Sun Devils in the first quarter after junior Connor Wood started poorly.

MacIntyre said this week there is probably no perfect time to make a change at quarterback when the starter is struggling and the options behind him lack experience. But MacIntyre was at least satisfied that he had given Wood enough opportunities to finally make a change after Wood went 0-for-4 with an interception as the Buffs failed to gain a yard on their first three possessions.

"Connor has done some good things for us and I really, really like Connor, but he hasn't had a winning grade for us in the last four games," MacIntyre said.

MacIntyre turned to Liufau who probably won't come out of the lineup any time soon.

Coaches could have used senior quarterback Jordan Webb, who has been cleared to play following a spring knee injury. The fact that they chose Liufau instead is an indication they are more interested in getting Liufau some experience and playing for the future.

"The way I'd like to look at the rest of the year is we took a redshirt off of a young man we think is very talented and very bright and we think is an excellent leader," MacIntyre said. "So we feel like that we'd like to hopefully play him the rest of the year if he plays good."

MacIntyre said he would have gone with Webb as the backup if Wood was playing better and needed to come out of the game because of a minor injury or a helmet coming off.

Liufau drove the Buffs 80 yards for a touchdown on his first drive, capping it with a 10-yard touchdown pass to Nelson Spruce. He is the first true freshman to play quarterback for the Buffs since Tyler Hansen made his debut in surprise fashion against Kansas State in 2008.

While Liufau led the Buffs to a touchdown, he produced mixed results in his debut. He was flagged for intentional grounding in the end zone leading to a safety and threw two interceptions. He finished the game 18 of 26 for 169 yards.

"I feel like I left a lot of plays out there," Liufau said. "I didn't really take care of the ball. I threw two picks with a safety and a fumble. That hurt the team a lot, even though coming into the situation and being backed up. That's unacceptable. I let the team down."

Liufau said it took him a few plays to catch up to the speed of the game but he began to feel comfortable from that point forward.

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

Mike MacIntyre takes red shirt off Colorado QB Sefo Liufau

By John Henderson The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

TEMPE, Ariz. —Sefo Liufau took off his redshirt here Saturday night. Now all he has to do is put on a red cape.

It became painfully clear that it will take Superman to save this Colorado Buffaloes season. Arizona State became the third straight Pac-12 opponent to ground them into buffalo burger, chewing them up just as the meager crowd did the buffalo burgers served in the Sun Devil Stadium concession stands.

The Sun Devils humiliated Colorado, 54-13, bringing back nightmarish flashbacks of 2012. The only difference is Saturday night revealed a glimpse at possibly a bright future.

Liufau, the true freshman who led Bellarmine Prep in Tacoma to last year's Washington state title game, showed signs of belonging with a lot of peach fuzz thrown in. In his first series, he entered in the first quarter and led the Buffs (2-3, 0-3 Pac-12) on an 11-play, 80-yard scoring drive.

He hit 5-of-6 passes for 64 yards, culminating in a 10-yard slant to Nelson Spruce for a touchdown.

Unfortunately, it only made it ASU, 25-6.

"The way I'd like to look at the rest of the year is we took a redshirt off a young man that we think is very talented, we think is very bright, we think is an excellent leader," first-year coach Mike MacIntyre said. "We'd like to be able to hopefully play him the rest of the year -- if he plays good."

The way the season had gone, Liufau couldn't stay too comfortable on the bench. Junior Connor Wood entered the game having hit only 37 percent of his passes in two Pac-12 blowouts. Saturday he hit rock bottom. He went 0-for-4 and when he threw an interception right to cornerback Lloyd Carrington while running out of bounds, it was time to change the offense's direction.

"Connor's has done some good things for us and I really, really like Connor but he hasn't had a winning grade in four games now," said MacIntyre who said Liufau is the new starter. "I felt it was time to make a little bit of a change there just like I would at any position."

From the start of spring, Colorado's staff loved the 6-foot-4, 210-pound Liufau. They loved his accuracy, poise and speed but they didn't want to use him too soon. Now they're using him before it's too late.

He wound up 18-of-26 for 169 yards but he also threw two interceptions, was called for intentional grounding from the end zone for a safety and lost a fumbled snap.

"I felt like I left a lot of plays out there," Liufau said. "I didn't really take care of the ball. I threw two picks, had a safety and a fumble. That hurts the team a lot.

"Even though coming in as a backup, that's unacceptable. I let the team down."

MacIntyre did have a choice. Senior Jordan Webb, last year's starter, was cleared to play from a torn ACL in the spring. But MacIntyre said Webb would only play if Wood had to sit out a play or two due to injury or getting his helmet knocked off.

Also, for the second time in three weeks, the offense forgot it had the nation's second-leading receiver in yards per game. Paul Richardson didn't catch a pass until the third quarter. It went for one yard. He finished with four for 39 yards but this offense had all the spark of a soggy firecracker.

"We tried to throw the ball to Paul Richardson early and often," MacIntyre said. "They were doubling him early and often."

Defensively, that rebuilding job will take longer than expected. The progress from two opening wins over Colorado State and Central Arkansas has been erased by horses when stepping up in class.

Standing 115th nationally in total defense entering the game, the Buffaloes will be knocking on the door of the national basement. ASU (4-2, 2-1) had 392 yards at halftime before emptying the bench. It finished with 532 yards. It scored four touchdowns and a field goal in its first five possessions.

In three league games, Colorado has been outscored 155-46.

"I think we match up physically pretty well," said linebacker Addison Gillam who had four tackles, almost nine below his average. "It's just not being in the right place."

With the season starting to reel out of control, Colorado may get a break Saturday when it hosts Charleston Southern, an FCS school that's replacing the flooded-out Fresno State game from Sept. 14.

While MacIntyre will use every trick to keep his players' heads up, what's he doing for his own? Even in his inaugural 1-12 season at San Jose State in 2010 he didn't get beat this bad.

"I'm not going to blame players or I'm not going to blame coaches," MacIntyre said. "I'm going to say it's a process. It's truly a process. I wouldn't be here if we didn't have a long way to go."

That process won't necessarily get any easier, regardless of the opponent.

After all, Charleston Southern is 7-0.

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