

CU Buffs get break from Pac-12 but remain wary of Charleston Southern

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DenverPost.com

BOULDER — After three consecutive weeks of getting slapped around by Pac-12 opponents, the Colorado football team gets a break this week.

Not that the Buffs (2-3, 0-3 Pac-12) view Saturday's date with Charleston Southern (7-0, 1-0 FCS Big South), ranked No. 24 in the Football Championship Subdivision, as an easy one.

"We don't take a break on anything," CU coach Mike MacIntyre said. "We're a program that's trying to climb the mountain. It's going to be a tough game."

Charleston Southern is a lower-division team, but the Buffs aren't at a point where they can take a game like this for granted. As they did last month when they played another FCS team, Central Arkansas, the Buffs will express plenty of respect for the Buccaneers this week.

"They're 7-0, which means they know how to win," CU receiver Paul Richardson said. "We've got to come out, and we've got to fight."

CU has been beaten up the past three weeks, losing by a combined score of 155-46. The 51.7 points per game the Buffs have allowed in Pac-12 play are worse than the 47.9 points they allowed in their conference games a year ago.

To this point, Charleston Southern has not shown the ability to put up those types of numbers.

Although 7-0, the Bucs have averaged only 26.4 points per game, with a season-high 32 in the opener. The Bucs have averaged 381.3 yards per game, though, and MacIntyre said their offense will present some challenges.

"They run an option offense out of the 'gun," he said. "Kind of like a pistol option offense; more veer-related and speed-option-related. The quarterback (Daniel Crogan III) can throw it pretty good, too."

CU defeated Central Arkansas (now No. 20 in FCS) 38-24 on Sept. 7. MacIntyre expects a better test Saturday.

"This team is a really good football team," he said. "They're a better football team than Central Arkansas, and that was a heck of a football game."

After canceling a Sept. 14 date with Fresno State because of flooding in Boulder, the Buffs searched the country to find a replacement opponent for Saturday. Charleston Southern was the only team willing to do it.

"That tells me they've got a little chip, a little fight in them," MacIntyre said.

While CU will heap praise upon Charleston Southern this week, the Buffs know they have to use this game to get back on track.

The goal of getting to a bowl game, while maybe slipping away, is still out there. But, the Buffs' confidence has taken a hit after three consecutive blowout losses.

"It'll be a good game as far as testing our composure and testing our fight to see how much we have in the tank," Richardson said. "Every game is huge, because every game puts us that much further (away from) or that much closer to getting a bowl game. We're running out of chances, so we need to start picking up some W's.

"We need to perform well, desperately. We haven't been performing well the past few weeks, and it has shown."