



By: Joel Broida

Coach Mike MacIntyre (center) wants November to be a 'month that matters' in Colorado football.

Brooks: CU's Task Now Is 'RTR' – Return To Relevance

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By: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER – If Gary Barnett's master plan for Colorado football in 1999 was RTD, Mike MacIntyre's mission 15 seasons later has become RTR.

Barnett wanted a Return To Dominance, MacIntyre first must settle for a Return To Relevance – and his upwardly mobile first-year CU program can take a step in that direction Saturday at Folsom Field against Arizona (6 p.m., Pac-12 Network).

Defeating the Wildcats would give the Buffs their initial Pac-12 Conference win of the MacIntyre Era and send them into November one game above .500 (4-3) this late in a season for the first time since 2008. CU lost its first three conference games to Oregon State, Oregon and Arizona State by a combined score of 155-46.

MacIntyre is keenly aware of the big-picture importance of the pink-themed, blackout Saturday night at Folsom. Following last weekend's 43-10 rout of FCS plug-in opponent Charleston Southern, he acknowledged that a win this weekend "means November matters in Colorado."

The Buffs haven't had a winning season since 2005 (7-6) and haven't been a postseason participant since 2007 (Independence Bowl). A win against Arizona (4-2, 1-2) on Saturday night would put CU within two 'W's of bowl eligibility for the first time since 2007, with November offering five opportunities to get that pair.

"We all want to go to a bowl," said freshman quarterback Sefo Liufau, who is eager for his first Pac-12 start. "We know how possible it is if we stay consistent and we take the coaching that we learn and put it out on the field. We think it's very possible."

"It's very big," added senior defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe of Saturday's game. "One more win and we're closer to our goal of a bowl game. Every game from here on out is very important to us."

Of equal importance to Uzo-Diribe and CU's defense is getting an early handle (and lots of hands) on Arizona running back Ka'Deem Carey, the nation's leading rusher at 161.0 yards a game. The Buffs don't need much of a refresher course on Carey; he slashed and gashed them for 366 rushing yards and five touchdowns last season in Tucson in a 56-31 Wildcats romp. And he's still motoring: In Arizona's 35-24 win over Utah last weekend, Carey rushed for a 2013 conference-best 236 yards.

MacIntyre calls Carey "a beast of a ball-carrier," but as cognizant as the Buffs must be about Carey defensive coordinator Kent Baer warned, "When you have a running back like that you tend not to stray away from running, but you definitely have to be focused on their passing game. The DBs and linebackers can't get lulled to sleep thinking they're going to hand the ball off to (No.) 25 on every play. They've got capable receivers on the outside who can make plays."

CU's linebackers, said MacIntyre, will play critical roles in containing Wildcats quarterback B.J.

Denker, who debuted against the Buffs last season.

“Your linebackers have to have keys,” MacIntyre said, noting that seeing some option offense from Charleston Southern last week might pay dividends for his linebackers this week in ‘knowing where they’ve got to fit, how you block it, whether you step outside or inside. If you step outside and you’re supposed to step inside (Carey) is to the house. I mean it’s that hard. (Denker) does a good job at it.

Denker has completed 91 of 164 passes for 976 yards and seven TDs (two interceptions). He’s also run 75 times for 327 yards and eight scores – two more than Carey – and is second on the team in rushing behind Carey.

Said MacIntyre: “I think what they ask (Denker) to do, he’s really good at. He can really run. He’s such a good runner he can pump fake and take off. He does a lot of that where other quarterbacks would throw it as a pass for a five-yard gain or a ten-yard gain. He’ll take it and run 30. I think that’s also why he hasn’t had quite as many turnovers. So, I think that might be part of their process. If we don’t turn it over with what we’re doing then hopefully we can make him throw some incompletions and stop Ka’Deem Carey.”

The Buffs showed last week they can run a little, too, but their challenge Saturday night is to do it against a Pac-12 defense. CU rushed for a season-high 218 yards against Charleston Southern, with freshman tailback Michael Adkins II gaining 137 yards and scoring a school freshman-record four touchdowns.

Another productive rushing game by Adkins & Co. would benefit Liufau in his first conference start, easing the pressure on the passing game. In his first college start last weekend, Liufau was 14-of-20 passing for 198 yards and one TD. With his tailbacks finally in gear, Liufau ran only three times against the Buccaneers (minus-8 yards total, counting one sack).

Liufau recognizes the importance of playing better in conference:

“I think we all just want to play better . . . we just have to come out against Pac-12 opponents and just let loose,” he said. “Coach says ‘Jump in and swim and start playing and just go all out.’ I think if we take what we do in practice and put it into the game I think we’ll do very well.”

Saturday night’s game also matches CU receiver Paul Richardson against his cousin, Arizona cornerback Shaquille Richardson. Paul Richardson is fourth in the nation in receiving yards per game (130.3), having made 43 catches for 782 yards and six TDs in CU’s six games. He said all sides of the Richardson family will be represented in Folsom and he and his cousin, who grew up together in Compton, Calif., have been anticipating this game for a year.

It’s a big night for the Richardson clan, it’s big in the promotion of breast cancer awareness, it’s big for the Buffs defense as a night of redemption against Carey, and it’s very, very large for MacIntyre and his rebuild of the CU program.

“Yeah, it’s big,” said Buffs senior safety Parker Orms. “But it feels like every week’s been huge this year for me. I don’t know if it’s just because I’m a senior or what and counting down the plays I get to be out there. I’m just excited (about Saturday).

“We’re 3-3 right now and have to get three more (wins). I want to win the rest of our games and I think we can beat everybody that’s left. We just have to play like we did last week in all three phases. It’s going to be a great atmosphere; it’s a ‘blackout game’ and it’s going to be huge.”

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Colorado Buffaloes Football

Show Menu



MacIntyre says Buffs need to believe they can win in Pac-12

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

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Buffzone.com

Mike MacIntyre understands he has some ground to make up when it comes to talent and depth on his roster when compared to every other Pac-12 Conference team. But the first-year Colorado coach does not believe those are the only issues preventing the Buffs from winning in the conference.

In the immediate aftermath of last week's victory over Charleston Southern at Folsom Field, MacIntyre said his team must overcome the mental hurdle that is keeping it from being more competitive in Pac-12 play.

The Buffs have lost 11 consecutive Pac-12 games entering Saturday night's homecoming game against Arizona (6:07 p.m., Pac-12 Network). The game will be a blackout in the stands and on the field with the Buffs scheduled to wear all-black uniforms and fans encouraged to do the same with their attire. Players will be wearing pink accents and parts of the field will be painted pink in honor of breast cancer awareness.

CU is 0-3 in conference games this season and the closest of those three games was decided by 27 points. Since joining the conference before the 2011 season, CU has played 21 Pac-12 games, losing 15 of them by 25 or more points and winning just three times.

"There is always going to be talent situations with every team you play, but I really think it's a mental thing with us," MacIntyre said. "I think we're closer to that, of beating it."

Pac-12 commissioner Larry Scott will be at this week's game. Though he is neutral he probably can't help but hope for improvement from the CU program because having a team be so uncompetitive eventually affects what people outside the league think of the overall strength of the conference.

"They've got to keep believing," MacIntyre said of his players. "They've got to do the right things. They've got to do the right things under pressure. When the guy makes a play or the guy is really quick and fast, you can't throw everything out the window. You go to keep doing what you've been coached to do and do it harder and better and it will work out."

CU is 3-3 overall and needs three more victories to become bowl eligible for the first time since 2007. The NCAA has given the program a waiver to count both its wins over Football Championship Subdivision teams toward bowl eligibility after CU was forced to play a second FCS game when September flooding in Boulder forced the cancellation of a home game with Fresno State.

On paper at least, the Wildcats (4-2, 1-2) appear to be one of few remaining winnable games for the Buffs, in part, because Arizona is one of the teams CU has been able to beat since joining the league, doing so here in Boulder in 2011.

MacIntyre said a win over the Wildcats would put CU in position for a November that matters. That hasn't been the case since 2010 when the Buffs fell one game short of a bowl game at 5-7, finishing that season under interim coach Brian Cabral.

The significance of this week's game is not lost on players who usually try to not make too much of any particular game or opponent. Wide receiver Paul Richardson sent CU students an email this week asking them to support the program by filling the south end of the stadium.

Even if the Buffs are able to clear the mental hurdle that MacIntyre referenced and more fans decide to attend than have shown up to the first three home games, the Buffs still face a major challenge in slowing down the nation's leading rusher.

Arizona running back Ka'Deem Carey set the single-game Pac-12 rushing record against the Buffs last season in Arizona when he ran for 366 yards and five touchdowns. It was the ninth-best single-game rushing performance in NCAA history. Carey is averaging 161 yards per game entering this season's contest.

A win in this one at least gives the Buffs hope entering the final five weeks of the regular season. A loss makes reaching a bowl game that much more daunting with three more wins needed against UCLA, Washington, California, USC and Utah.

It also leaves that mental hurdle still to clear.

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Howell blog: Greer earning more playing time for CU Buffs

By Brian Howell, Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Woodson Greer is starting to emerge as a valuable player for the Colorado defense this season.

A part-time player during the first two years of his career, the 6-foot-3, 225-pound junior linebacker was on the field for a career-high 56 plays against Charleston Southern last Saturday. Known for his speed and hard hits, he recorded a career-high eight tackles in CU's 43-10 win, including one tackle behind the line of scrimmage.

"He's got great speed," CU defensive coordinator Kent Baer said. "He can cover the field and he's pretty tough. He deserves to get a little bit more playing time as we move on and he has, and he will as long as he continues to do those things. He's very talented."

Greer's talent is why former CU coach Jon Embree brought him to Boulder. During the past two years, however, Greer had a tough time seeing the field. He was in on 40 snaps over the course of three games as a freshman in 2011 and 69 snaps over the course of six games in 2012. Including special teams, he was on the field for 14 of CU's games during those two seasons.

Since the spring, however, Greer has been a new player. He received the Greg Biekert Award in the spring - an award given to the most improved linebacker at the end of spring practices.

He began the season as a backup at outside linebacker, but got an opportunity with senior captain Paul Vigo injured. Vigo has since returned, but Greer quickly passed him on the depth chart.

Early in the season, though, Greer was the odd man out when CU went with just two linebackers - and that was often. Against Oregon on Oct. 5, Addison Gillam (86 plays) and Derrick Webb (83) were both on the field for the majority of the game at linebacker, while Greer was in for just 14 plays.

Two weeks later, against Charleston Southern, Greer's 56 snaps actually were the most among CU linebackers. Gillam played 53 plays and Webb just 25.

Greer continues to get more playing time because he's been productive when on the field. He has 26 tackles, two tackles for loss and three quarterback pressures during his limited time on the field. The way he's playing, his time won't be so limited going forward.

More importantly, Baer said, Greer is shining in the classroom, too.

"I'm proud of Woodson because he had some academic stuff that he's really taken care of and become a pretty good student," Baer said. "It's real important to him."

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CU Buffs looking to slow down Arizona's Ka'Deem Carey

By John Henderson The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

BOULDER — Power in pink.

That's the theme at Folsom Field Saturday night as Colorado celebrates breast cancer awareness month with pink touches all over the field. The CU logo at midfield is even lined in pink and the Buffaloes' shoes are pink.

The fans were asked to wear black and pink, an appropriate combination with Halloween parties all over town. A real rough estimate is a crowd of about 45,000 will brave a forecast of 30 degree temperatures to watch the Buffaloes (3-3, 0-3 Pac-12) face Arizona (4-2, 1-2).

If it's not two great teams it at least features two great players. Arizona tailback Ka'Deem Carey is leading the nation in rushing at 160.2 yards per game. He'll try to approach the 366-yard, five-touchdown effort in burying the Buffs last year, 56-31.

Colorado's Paul Richardson is fourth nationally in receiving yards per game with 130.3 yards per game. He'll go much of the night against Shaq Richardson, his cousin and one-time teammate at Los Alamitos (Calif.) High.

It's not overstating the situation to say this could mean the season for Colorado. An upset over the Wildcats, 13-point favorites, would put it two wins away from its first bowl game since 2007. Winnable games are left against California (1-6, 0-4) Nov. 16 and two weeks later in the regular-season finale at Utah (4-4, 1-4).

A loss would mean the Buffs must win those two games and pull an upset against either UCLA (5-1, 2-1) or Washington (4-3, 1-3) on the road or Southern California (5-3, 2-2) at home.

Arizona, meanwhile, can become bowl eligible with a win over the Buffs then at California next Saturday.

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CU could make splash in Pac-12 with watershed opportunity

By John Henderson The Denver Post The Denver Post

Posted:

DenverPost.com

BOULDER — So where does Colorado rank in the FCS poll?

After beating two ranked lower-division teams, the Buffaloes (3-3) have established themselves as the scourge of the 63-scholarship set. But Saturday night, they re-enter Pac-12 waters, where they have been drowning for more than two years.

Since leaving the Big 12, the Buffs are 3-18 in Pac-12 games. CU is 0-3 this year, its losses coming by an average score of 52-15. Next comes Arizona (4-2, 1-2 Pac-12), which has the nation's leading rusher and momentum from a 35-24 win over upstart Utah.

"(The Pac-12) is one of the hurdles that we have," said CU freshman quarterback Sefo Liufau. "We haven't been playing especially well in the Pac-12 this year, but I know that we can."

If the Buffs are going to show a pulse in conference play under first-year CU coach Mike MacIntyre, Saturday is the time to start.

Arizona also is rebuilding but making strides under second-year coach Rich Rodriguez. The Wildcats, though, have won only one of their last six league road games.

"We just have to come out against Pac-12 opponents and let loose," Liufau said. "Coach says, 'Jump in and swim and start playing and just go all out.' If we take what we do in practice and put it into the game, I think we'll do very well."

An upset win as a 13-point underdog would make CU's upcoming schedule seem less daunting. The Buffs visit 12th-ranked UCLA (5-1, 2-1) and Washington (4-3, 1-3) after hosting Arizona.

Laugh all you want at CU's victories over Central Arkansas and Charleston Southern, but the NCAA's waiver counts them toward the six wins needed for bowl eligibility. Winnable games remain on the schedule against California (1-6, 0-4) at home Nov. 16 and at Utah (4-3, 1-3) in the regular-season finale Nov. 30.

CU coaches aren't mentioning the B-word, but they don't mind if their players do. They look at schedules. They know if a bowl is a possibility, a victory over Arizona pretty much is a must.

"They're at the first time where maybe they could utter it," MacIntyre said. "We're three away. To me that's good motivation for them to go out and practice."

Beating the Wildcats will require slowing All-America tailback Ka'Deem Carey. The nation's top rusher, with an average of 160.2 yards per game, has nine consecutive 100-yard games.

Arizona runs a spread offense and has a dual-threat quarterback in senior B.J. Denker, who has rushed for eight touchdowns. But the Wildcats go as Carey goes.

"It seems like it would be pretty easy to stop," MacIntyre said. "There's one running back there."

Go tackle him."

It isn't simple. Ask CU's five returning starters who saw him go off last year for a conference-record 366 yards and five touchdowns in Arizona's 56-31 victory in Tucson. That is one tape from 2012 this new coaching staff watched.

"If I would've been out there playing, I would've been embarrassed and want to redeem myself for sure," said MacIntyre, a former college safety. "So hopefully they play that way."

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