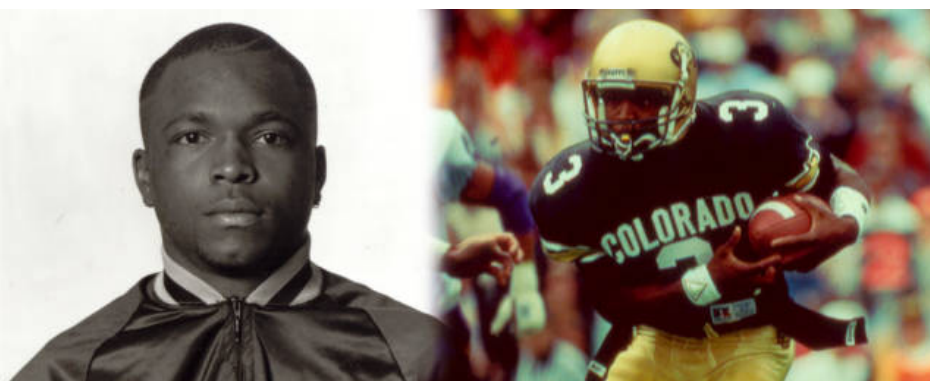




By: CUBuffs.com

Darian Hagan is to be inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame in April.



Brooks: Hagan To Enter Hall Of Fame - With A Smile

Release: October 08, 2013

By: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER – It was the late 1980s, early '90s in college football and a gnat-sized option quarterback named Darian Hagan had a vision. He remembers sharing it with his position coach at Colorado, and he remembers Gary Barnett reacting, well, as if he might be trying to shoo away a cloud of gnats.

Hagan's proposal: "Coach, we can run the option out of the shotgun."

Barnett's response: "Son, you can't do that."

A couple of decades later, Hagan watches on television and in person at Folsom Field as college QBs line up in spread formations, in the shotgun, and run the read option. It's the college game's new normal, and Hagan saw it – a little too much of it, in fact – last Saturday at Folsom when Oregon's Marcus Mariota accounted for seven touchdowns (five passing, two running) as the second-ranked Ducks dazed the Buffs in a 57-16 win.

"I think (Barnett) has been proven wrong," Hagan said Tuesday, flashing the high-wattage smile that always has been as much a trademark as were his option pitches to "Jaay-Jaay Flannigan" during a giddier and grander era of CU football.

Said Hagan: "I watch spread teams come in here and run the option. I was doing it 20 years ago but I was under center and getting hit sooner. That's the only difference."

Even if Barnett had accepted Hagan's proposal, it's hard to imagine Hagan being any more effective in the shotgun than he was lining up under center in Bill McCartney's I-Bone offense. Hagan was a 5-foot-9 (he'll falsely claim another two inches) apparition with the football. On the perimeter, he was smoke without the mirrors, leaving linebackers and safeties clutching for something that was already gone.

Fact is, he did pretty well crouched under center, going 28-5-2 in three seasons as CU's starting quarterback. He directed the Buffs to three consecutive Big Eight Conference championships, a stretch from 1989-91 during which they were 20-0-1. Hagan was an All-America honoree in '89, when he became at the time only the sixth player in NCAA history to run and pass for more than 1,000 yards in the same season.

Very few college players have made an impact like Hagan's at CU, and on Tuesday he received word he is to be inducted into the 2014 Colorado Sports Hall of Fame in April. Also to be inducted posthumously is former CU men's basketball coach (1936-50) Forrest B. "Frosty" Cox. In 13 seasons,

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he guided the Buffs to a 147-89 record, with three NCAA and a pair of NIT postseason berths that included a Final Four appearance in 1942 and two NIT championship game appearances (1938, 1940).

Hagan, who attracted a parade of national recruiters to Los Angeles' Locke High School as a four-sport athlete, spoke to the media Tuesday at the conclusion of Buffs coach Mike MacIntyre's weekly media luncheon. In his ninth season as a CU staffer (now director of player development), Hagan said "elated would be putting it mildly" to describe his Colorado Sports Hall of Fame selection. "It's a privilege, an honor to be elected . . . I would dedicate it all to my former teammates – good guys I played along with. All I had to do was hand it off or pitch it."

An induction such as the one awaiting him next spring "is something every kid who plays sports wants," he said. "I never thought it would come to fruition (and) I'm overwhelmed by this announcement."

Hagan's CU highlight reel wouldn't be out of place among the most entertaining in college football. As he was walking off Folsom Field Saturday night following the loss to Oregon, a fan and his son approached him. The father told Hagan he remembered a Hagan pitch to Flannigan that went for a 70-yard touchdown against Oklahoma "like it was yesterday."

It might have been as fresh as yesterday but CU's opponent, recalled Hagan with that grin, was Nebraska. Whatever, the memory for the fan was indelible. Well, most of it.

The play that Hagan won't forget was a "pitch to Pritch" in the 1990 Pigskin Classic in Anaheim, Calif. against Tennessee. Mike Pritchard, normally a wingback/receiver, opened at tailback in place of the suspended Eric Bieniemy. Pritchard took to his new role rather well, carrying 20 times for 217 yards, which included a pair of long touchdown runs.

One of them was a 78-yarder on a pitch from Hagan, who Tuesday recounted the play like this: "We had the ball on the right hash, (Tennessee) ran a corner blitz from the boundary . . . the guy had me but as I was going down, I switched the ball from my right to my left hand and pitched to 'Pritch' . . . he went 80 yards for a touchdown."

For the record, it *was* 78, but who's going to quibble over 2 yards 24 years later? Hagan's memory is a little better than mine, but I unearthed my game story written for the late *Rocky Mountain News* for verification.

If Hagan remembered this about the '90 Pigskin Classic, which ended in a 31-31 tie, he didn't share it Tuesday. Here's what I wrote about his passing on that scorching afternoon in Anaheim: "Hagan, who completed just five of 19 attempts for 68 yards, was usually high, wide and loathsome whenever he cocked his right arm. Perhaps the kindest thing that can be said about Hagan's first-half passes is that they had good hang time. They were horribly reminiscent of the 1988 Freedom Bowl interception that made Hagan wonder if he was playing the right position."

This is how Hagan explained his inaccuracy back then: "I just don't know what happened. I messed up a lot of reads, and I just didn't throw well."

But those kinds of outings were rare for Hagan, who finished his career with a 50.3 percent completion rate, hitting 313 of his 424 passes for 3,801 yards and 27 TDs (19 interceptions).

Of the "pitch to 'Pritch'" in the Pigskin Classic, this was the *RMN* account: "Within two plays, the Buffs returned to a 14-point lead as Hagan dashed right on the option, appeared to be caught just over the line of scrimmage and shoveled a left-handed lateral to tailback Mike Pritchard. It was one of the ambidextrous Hagan's more accurate tosses, and it resulted in a 78-yard touchdown run for Pritchard."

I also had the good fortune to cover Hagan's CU debut – a 27-6 rout of Texas on Sept. 4, 1989 at Folsom. In a milestone game for CU football, Hagan was nothing short of masterful. Here's my lead paragraph of the game story in the next morning's *RMN*: "The University of Colorado zoomed into its 100th year of football here last night behind one of the most exciting option quarterbacks the Buffs have shown in, oh, about a century."

How's this for a fast start to what would be a storied career? Hagan's first college carry was a 75-yard run to the Texas 1-yard line, setting up a Bieniemy TD that got the Buffs geared up. Hagan's debut night stats: 14 carries, 116 yards and a score. He also completed 7 of 12 passes for 95 yards and a TD, and afterward he said this of his performance: "I just expected us to go out and play hard and win. But no, I didn't expect to do what I did."

Hagan was humble then and is now, but his humility doesn't detract from his confidence or his mischievousness. He has no doubt that he could be a 21st century option quarterback, a Johnny Manziel-type minus the flamboyance, taking shotgun snaps and driving defensive coordinators batty. And I agree; he was ahead of his time.

His teammates and CU fans will remember him for nights like he had against Texas and his free-wheeling, eye-popping option pitches to Flannigan, Pritchard, whoever. But here's what Hagan wants to be remembered for – and it has nothing to do with stats, wins or championships.

He wants his legacy to be “my smile – that's it. I want to be remembered as a good guy, a good teammate. My proudest moment was getting my degree at the University of Colorado. There are two things . . . my passion, I played the game of football not as intense as Bieniemy, but I was intense. But I remained humble; that was my upbringing . . . I was never known as a taker – except for the free Nike gear.”

Of course, he was smiling – warmly but as always a little mischievously – as he said it. Whatever taken was earned, and he's given plenty back.

NOTABLE: Connor Wood ranks seventh in passing and 11th in passing efficiency among Pac-12 quarterbacks. He's completed 81-of-149 for 1,092 yards and eight touchdowns, with six interceptions. MacIntyre said using another quarterback crossed his mind during the Oregon loss: “I thought about it, but I wanted it to be the right situation at the right time.” Asked what would be the perfect situation, MacIntyre said, “There's probably no perfect situation . . . just what I felt like at the time.” He also said Wood, who transferred from Texas two years ago, is still learning and has shown “some good signs.” Wood's stats against Oregon, said MacIntyre, suffered from four dropped passes, but he also “missed a couple of throws . . . but he made some good plays early and stayed alive a few times.” Wood's backup is true freshman Sefo Liufau, with Jordan Gehrke, Stevie Joe Dorman and now Jordan Webb also in reserve. MacIntyre said Webb, the 2012 starter, will dress this week for CU's Saturday night game at Arizona State (8 p.m. MDT, Pac-12 Network). But MacIntyre did not say Webb would play . . . The Buffs were 0-for-15 on third-down conversion attempts against the Ducks. MacIntyre attributed that stat to “a combination of things – we dropped a few (passes), misread a few . . . just the whole process.” For the season, CU is last in the conference in third-down conversions, making just 14 of 60 (23.3 percent). UCLA and Washington are tied for first at 58.3 percent . . . ASU defensive tackle Will Sutton was among the national leaders last season with 13 QB sacks. He's got one through five games this season and is 11th among the Sun Devils in total tackles (16). MacIntyre said teams are running away from Sutton and in the pass rush department, “It's like wrestling; you get worn out . . . there's not the opportunity to make plays.” Still, added MacIntyre, “You know where he is. He's got those tie-dyed ‘dreads’ and you can see him coming from a mile away.” . . . Hagan played for Mac The First and he sees many of the same positive attributes in Mac II. He said MacIntyre's players “have bought into his philosophy. They really, really believe in everything he says . . . give him time, more firepower – and I'm not saying that because I'm (employed) here now. If I was sitting in the stands I would say the same thing.” Of the rebuild that's underway, Hagan said, “I've seen it before and I'm seeing it again.”

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Colorado Buffaloes Football

Show Menu



CU Buffs freshman LB Addison Gillam becomes a big hit on defense

By John Henderson The Denver Post The Denver Post
Posted:

DenverPost.com

BOULDER — Contrary to popular belief, Palo Cedro, Calif., is not in the sticks, but merely a sleepy suburb (pop. 1,270) of Redding, Calif., a vibrant community of 90,000 in upper Northern California.

"But 10 minutes up the hill by Palo Cedro," Colorado star freshman linebacker Addison Gillam said with a smile, "it's the sticks."

Pac-12 coaches might use that description of the whole Redding area. In the gold mine that is California's rich recruiting landscape, Redding is its backwater piggy bank.

That explains how Gillam, at 6-foot-3, 225 pounds, followed his lone scholarship offer to Colorado and is the No. 4 tackler in the country. His 12.3 tackles per game include a school freshman-record 18 tackles (14 solo) against No. 2 Oregon on Saturday. A week earlier, in his Pac-12 debut at Oregon State, he had 13.

This is what you missed.

"What I'm impressed about him is mentally he's really tough," defensive coordinator Kent Baer said. "It doesn't seem to faze him no matter who he lines up against. And he's very, very athletic. He can do some things in space for a big man that a lot of people can't."

So, why didn't more schools line up opposite him during recruiting season? After all, he was named PrepStar All-Far West Region.

"In L.A. or the Bay Area, (recruiters) can see 70 schools," said his coach at Foothill High, Bryon Hamilton. "In our area, you see only three."

Gillam shouldn't feel bad. He's not the first great player from that area to get overlooked. How many schools wish they made an offer to Pleasant Valley High's Aaron Rodgers before he had to go to Redding's Shasta College and then to California?

How many of them cursed when Jeff Maehl, from Paradise High, flew by them for one of his 24 touchdown receptions for Oregon before hooking on with the Philadelphia Eagles?

"When (Colorado coach Mike) MacIntyre went to the Buffs, other Pac-12 schools said they were interested," said Hamilton, now Shasta's offensive coordinator. "But they didn't know if he was fast enough on film. What, are you crazy? How can you watch film and not think he's fast enough for the Pac-12?"

"He has so much upside. He could be 250, 255 by his junior year and be faster. He's a freak."

Gillam knew he needed more than honors and statistics to get attention. After his sophomore year, he and his parents visited coaches at Arizona and San Diego State. They basically said, "You're a good athlete and thanks for stopping by."

"You know when you don't sense the genuineness?" Gillam said. "That's the feelings I got."

While MacIntyre was at San Jose State, his staff saw Gillam at a camp in Sacramento. He signed with San Jose State in 2012, then switched to Colorado when MacIntyre took the Buffs' job after last season. Gillam spent the 2012 season at home, taking classes at Shasta, while recovering from shoulder surgery before coming to Boulder in time for spring ball.

That's when he learned Baer's new defense and the value of film study, something he never did at Foothill. In one series against Oregon State, he stopped tailback Terron Ward for a 3-yard loss, caught Ward from behind after a reception short of a first down and broke up a pass to Brandin Cooks, the nation's leading receiver.

"He's probably one of the best players I've seen coming out of high school," senior defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe said. "To come out here, fly around the field and make the plays that he does, he's a really great player. He knows what he's doing out there."

"He doesn't play like a freshman, or think like one."

Webb back. Senior Jordan Webb, last year's starting quarterback, was cleared three weeks ago to play after recovering from a torn ACL. He served a one-game suspension against Oregon for his involvement in an off-campus fight and will travel with the team to Arizona State. MacIntyre said he's "not definitely sure" whether he'd insert Webb if starter Connor Wood got hurt, or take the redshirt off true freshman Sefo Liufau.

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Tackling machine

CU freshman linebacker Addison Gillam is fourth in the nation in tackles per game.

Player, School T/PG

1. Keith Smith, San Jose State, 16.0
2. Yawin Smallwood, Connecticut, 13.8
3. Tyler Matakevich, Temple, 13.4
- 4. Addison Gillam, CU, 12.3**
5. Jonathan Brown, Illinois, 12.0

Source: NCAA

Colorado football: Buffs' Wood looks at himself in search for answers

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera
Posted:

Buffzone.com

Connor Wood's official Colorado bio says he has played in 11 games in his career, but in coach Mike MacIntyre's mind, it's really only four.

MacIntyre discounted whatever experience Wood got in one start and six mop-up appearances in the 2012 season on Tuesday saying his quarterback's experience is really limited to what he has done this season.

That doesn't mean MacIntyre or anyone else in the program is making excuses for Wood's drastic decline in play in the first two Pac-12 games compared with his production against Colorado State and Central Arkansas to start the season.

The CU pass offense was ranked seventh in the nation after the first two games and has fallen to No. 26 with two sub-par performances against Oregon State and Oregon. To his credit, Wood is pointing the finger at himself.

"I think there are a lot of things we need to get fixed," Wood said. "First and foremost, I need to play better as a quarterback. I need to be more consistent in the passing game."

Wood said after reviewing film of the Oregon loss, he was frustrated with himself for missing several open receivers, including a potential touchdown pass to wide receiver Paul Richardson.

"When you miss those open throws and the protection is good and the receiver runs the right route and you've just got to get him the ball, that's like the easy part. ... When you don't complete those it kind of kills the momentum that you're trying to build.

"The passing game is so vital to how we go as an offense."

Wood started the season throwing for 741 yards and six touchdowns while completing more than 68 percent of his passes (56 of 82). But in the first two conference games, Wood has completed just 25 of 67 attempts (37 percent) for 351 yards with two touchdowns and four interceptions. .

"The numbers are way too low," offensive coordinator Brian Lindgren said. "They should never be that low and I think it's at all positions from the line protecting, to the quarterback making the right decision, to the quarterback making the right throw, catching the ball, running the right route the right way. We've got to get better at all those things."

Lindgren said he has had conversations with Wood about playing better and being more consistent, but he also said Wood has made some very good plays in the past two games that demonstrate improvement and growth in his overall game.

But Lindgren said the offense needs more from Wood on a more consistent basis to improve.

The Buffs have converted on just two of 30 third-down opportunities in the first two Pac-12 games this season. Both came in the Oregon State game. CU set a new school record going 0-for-15 on third downs against the Ducks last week.

CU also has failed to get into the end zone on five possessions in which it has driven into the red zone the past two weeks.

"Connor and I have spent time and we've got to make some plays at quarterback, particularly on third down. That's kind of the mark of a great quarterback is a guy who is able to make plays on third down for you. It starts with us. It's just all on the quarterback. I think at all positions we need to execute the details of the play and go out and make plays and keep our offense on the field."

Wide receiver Paul Richardson has been Wood's favorite target this season. They have connected 31 times for 621 yards and five touchdowns. Richardson was asked Tuesday if he has seen any changes in Wood in the past two outings compared with his hot start.

"I think these defenses have been doing a better job of disguising coverages, and I think that has been a little challenging for our offense, but we've just got to play better all together," Richardson said. "The receivers got to help him make plays on the outside. We've got to make him right and we've got to protect a little better and then we'll be more successful."

Wood echoed that sentiment as he came off the practice field Tuesday. He said despite the two lopsided losses, he remains confident but it comes to execution.

"I feel like we can play with anybody in this country if we just execute," Wood said.

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Colorado football: Former Buff Darian Hagan elected to Colorado Sports Hall of Fame

By Brian Howell, Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Darian Hagan might be the best quarterback to ever put on a uniform at the University of Colorado.

On Tuesday, he was honored for the great memories he provided during his time at CU. Hagan was announced as one of six members of the Class of 2014 for the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame.

"Elated would be putting it mildly," Hagan said with his trademark smile. "It's a privilege, it's an honor to be elected to the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame. I would dedicate it all to my former teammates. I had some good guys that I played along with. Pretty much all I had to do was hand the ball off or pitch it."

Hagan will go into the Hall of Fame with former CU basketball coach Forrest "Frosty" Cox, former Denver Broncos running back Otis Armstrong, former Colorado Rockies slugger Todd Helton, former Colorado College football and hockey great Andy Gambucci and former Denver Post columnist Dorothy Mauk.

The class will be honored at the 50th annual induction banquet on April 17 at the Denver Marriott City Center.

"Every kid and every person ... when you play sports, you want to be recognized for things that you accomplished," Hagan said. "I'm amazed, but when you play with great guys and you do some things that people get excited about, things happen for you."

Hagan, who went to Locke High School in Los Angeles, came to CU in 1988. He quarterbacked the Buffs to their only national championship in 1990.

Hagan went 28-5-2 as a starter for the Buffs, including 20-0-1 in Big Eight Conference play. He finished his career with 3,801 passing yards and 2,007 rushing yards.

"I had a lot of great moments -- a lot of victories, a lot of big-time games, playing against big-time opponents," he said. "Even though I didn't get an opportunity to finish, I would say (the best moment) was our national championship game the year we won it in 1990. Just the feeling of elation, knowing that we were No. 1 and being able to enjoy that moment with all my teammates, even though I was injured."

Hagan said the play fans remember most when they talk to him is the 70-yard pitch he made to J.J. Flannigan during a 1989 victory against Nebraska at Folsom Field. Hagan was 40 yards down field when he made the pitch.

His favorite play, he said, was a 78-yard option pitch to Mike Pritchard during a 1990 tie against Tennessee in the Pigskin Classic.

In 2002, Hagan was elected to the CU Athletic Hall of Fame. He said he is also a member of the hall of fame at Locke High School.

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Colorado football: Jordan Webb ready to play for Buffs

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Colorado senior quarterback Jordan Webb is ready to go if the Buffs need him. After recovering from a torn ACL in April and serving a one-game suspension, Webb will dress this week for the first time this season.

He will serve as one of the backups for junior Connor Wood. Freshman Sefo Liufau has been No. 2 on the depth chart, but coach Mike MacIntyre said Webb could be his choice if Wood got hurt.

"I'm not definitely sure on that answer, to be honest with you," he said.

Webb, the most experienced quarterback on the roster, was cleared to play a couple of weeks ago.

In the past two weeks, as the Buffs have lost by lopsided scores, MacIntyre said he considered using another quarterback late in the games.

"I thought about it, but I wanted it to be a situation where I felt like everything was in the right situation at the right time," MacIntyre said. "I did think about it, but just decided not to do it."

Notable

CU has been outscored 52-6 in the third quarter, but has outscored the opposition 106-100 during the other three quarters. ... Saturday's opponent, Arizona State, has allowed 182.8 rushing yards per game and 4.9 yards per carry.

Contact staff writer Brian Howell at howellb@dailycamera.com or twitter.com/BrianHowell33.

CU Buffs offense struggling in three key areas

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Winning football games is never as simple as performing well in three statistical categories, but the Colorado football team can take a big step toward being more competitive in the Pac-12 if it improves in three key areas offensively.

The first two Pac-12 games this season have looked a lot like last season because the CU offense hasn't been able to move the ball and score points at the same rate as Oregon State and Oregon.

The Buffs are years away from catching up to the Ducks in that regard but becoming more efficient in the passing game, scoring more touchdowns in the red zone and converting more often on third downs would do wonders for the Buffs against the rest of the league

CU needs some fixes in those areas this week or it could be another long night Saturday in Tempe, Ariz., where the Buffs will take on another prolific offensive team when it faces Arizona State.

Quarterback Connor Wood started the season with two strong performances in wins over Colorado State and Central Arkansas, throwing for 741 yards and six touchdowns while completing more than 68 percent of his passes (56 of 82).

But in the first two conference games, Wood has completed just 25 of 67 attempts for 351 yards with two touchdowns and four interceptions. And the reality is much of that production has come after the games have been decided.

"I think it's a combination," coach Mike MacIntyre said Tuesday during his weekly press conference. "It's not all his fault by any stretch of the imagination. I think it's been a little bit of everything."

The old saying is that quarterbacks get too much credit and too much blame and that is likely the case with what ails the CU passing game of late, but Wood's struggles directly affect the offense's performance in the red zone and on third downs, which is typically a passing down.

The Buffs have converted on just two of 30 third-down opportunities in the first two Pac-12 games this season. Both came in the Oregon State game. CU set a new school record going 0-for-15 on third downs against the Ducks last week.

Unless the Buffs are scoring on a lot of big plays, driving into the red zone only five times in two games isn't going to be enough against the high-powered competition they face in the conference. It's definitely not going to be enough if they continue to settle for field goals when they do get into the red zone.

The Buffs were in the red zone once against Oregon State and came away with a field goal. They were there four times against Oregon and settled for three field goals. Scoring zero touchdowns in five red zone trips isn't going to win many games regardless of the competition.

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