

Football: CU Buffs face important rematch with Fresno State

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

The lights were still on at Folsom Field, just a couple of hours after Colorado's 38-24 win against Central Arkansas when senior Parker Orms hopped on Twitter.

"2 Words. . . Fresno State #GoBuffs #RevengeTour13"

A 2-0 start has given the Buffaloes a little bit of confidence. Orms' tweet also made it clear that the players who were on the team a year ago still vividly remember what happened to them on Sept. 15, 2012.

That night, at Bulldog Stadium in Fresno, Calif., Derek Carr threw for 300 yards and five touchdowns and Robbie Rouse scored four times -- in the first quarter -- of FSU's 69-14 thumping of the Buffs.

Fresno State led 35-0 after less than 13 minutes. It was 55-7 at the half.

This Saturday, Fresno State (2-0) will visit Boulder, and the Buffs, as Orms indicated, are looking for a bit of redemption.

Mike MacIntyre, in his first year as CU's head coach, said every game is a big one for the Buffs, but he added, "Of course, the game last year got out of hand pretty quick, so I would imagine, being a competitor, the guys want to make sure it doesn't get out of hand fast."

Or at all. The Buffs don't want to simply keep this one close. They'd love to keep their win streak alive.

"We set a good start to the season, 2-0, but it's on to the next one," defensive lineman Nate Bonsu said. "Every game is a season in itself. We're just taking it as the next one."

The fact that Fresno State is on the other side may help CU's motivation.

Two of the most painful losses in CU history have come at the expense of Fresno State -- and the Carr family.

Last year's loss was painful for obvious reasons. In 2001, Carr's older brother, David -- a long-time NFL quarterback -- led the Bulldogs to a 24-22 win at Folsom Field in the season opener. That loss likely kept CU, which finished 10-2 in the regular season, out of the national title game that year.

MacIntyre is used to big games against Fresno State. His previous team, San Jose State, was a major rival of Fresno's. The teams didn't play last year, but MacIntyre's team snapped an 11-game losing streak to the Bulldogs with a 27-24 win in 2011.

"That was our big rival game, so it was important to us," he said.

This one is important to CU, too, but for a different reason all together. The Buffs were simply embarrassed in their trip to Fresno last year.

"It's a really big deal," cornerback Greg Henderson said of this game. "Last year I didn't get to play against them because I was injured, but I watched the game and I was very hurt. It's going to be a big game for us. This is the enemy.

"They put up a lot of points against us. They were running it, throwing it all over the field like we were nothing. Of course we want to get this win and hold their offense to low yards and low points."

That won't be easy. With Derek Carr under center, the Bulldogs have a high-powered offense. They are averaging 46.5 points and 453.5 yards per game. Carr has completed 71.2 percent of his passes (74 of 104) for 661 yards and eight touchdowns.

CU, however, comes into the game with a much different mindset than it did a year ago. Last year, the Buffs were 0-2 and reeling from a humbling loss to Sacramento State. They never stood a chance in the 102-degree heat of Fresno.

This time, the Buffs want to prove they aren't the same team they were a year ago.

"We play for Colorado, there's a lot of pride here," Bonsu said. "We know that how we played last year, that's not representative of what we are and how hard we work and how hard our coaches work."

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CU vs. Fresno State

When/where: Saturday, Noon, at Folsom Field

TV/Radio: Pac-12 Network/850-AM KOA

The Bulldogs at a glance...

2013 record: 2-0

2012 record: 9-4, lost in Hawaii Bowl

Last week: Defeated Cal Poly, 41-25.

Head coach: Tim DeRuyter, 2nd season (11-4)

Key players: WR Davante Adams, 6-2, So.; WR Isaiah Burse, 6-0, Sr.; QB Derek Carr, 6-3, Sr.; DL Tyeler Davison, 6-2, Jr.; WR Josh Harper, 6-1, Jr.; CB LJ Jones, 5-10, Sr.; RB Josh Quezada, 5-11, Jr.; S Derron Smith, 5-11, Jr.; LB Kyrie Wilson, 6-2, So.

Notable: FSU will be playing its first road game of the season. The Bulldogs were 3-4 away from Fresno last year (but 3-0 as a road favorite), and 5-9 the past two seasons. ... Since the

start of the 2012 season, Carr has thrown 45 touchdown passes and only eight interceptions. ... During that time, Adams has 121 catches for 1,491 yards and 17 touchdowns. ... The Bulldogs were the preseason favorite to win the Mountain West Conference's West Division. ... A year ago, FSU had the nation's No. 2 pass defense, allowing just 167.15 yards per game through the air. Through two games this year, the Bulldogs rank 101st, allowing 296.0 yards per game. ... The Bulldogs are 2-4 against CU, but won the last two meetings (in 2001 and 2012).