



By: Joel Broida
CU coach Mike MacIntyre says a hint of last season's hurt might not be bad for the Buffs this week.

Brooks: Gaining Respect – Not Revenge – Fuels Buffs

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By: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER – Mike MacIntyre prefers to face forward, live for the future and not hang onto the past. That's a very good thing, because his Colorado football team's next opponent – Fresno State – laid a beating for the ages on the Buffaloes last season in the blast furnace that was Bulldogs Stadium.

MacIntyre doesn't object to the Buffs briefly flashing back to that 69-14 beat down in 102-degree heat, but he doesn't believe revenge is nearly a solid enough motivator as CU preps for Fresno State's Saturday visit to Folsom Field (12:05 p.m., Pac-12 Network).

Still, MacIntyre is savvy enough to know that even if he and his staff don't dwell on it, their returning players haven't hit the "delete" button on that epic mid-September whipping. Really, how could they forget? The night quickly turned into an unforgettable statistical nightmare for CU:

- Fresno State led 35-0 after one quarter, 55-7 at halftime and 62-7 after three quarters. Give coach Tim DeRuyter props for showing mercy and reeling in his Bulldogs;
- FSU quarterback Derek Carr threw for 300 yards and five touchdowns – in the first half. He was done for the night, but his yardage total was the most ever against CU in a half;
- Fresno State tailback Robbie Rouse entered the game needing 79 yards to become the school's leading rusher. He ran for 144 yards on nine carries and scored twice – in the first quarter. Rouse, too, went to the bench for the final half.

CU's record book was shredded as badly as the Buffs' collective psyche, and MacIntyre believes retaining a hint of the hurt isn't such a bad thing. "In any competitor's mind, it's in the back of your mind," he said at Tuesday's press luncheon. "If it's not, then you're not a competitor. I know it's in the back of our young men's minds and I know they'll use that to help them motivate themselves."

Several players on Tuesday said rather gaining revenge after such a flogging, they were looking more to establish respect. They left Fresno last September having earned virtually none from the Bulldogs.

MacIntyre also downplayed the revenge angle: "I don't look at it as a revenge game or anything like that. When you get into revenge, all you're doing is getting mad. And that's not focusing; it's about executing what we do well rather than what they do and playing with all the heart you've got. What happened last year probably makes you focus a little better because they're really good and you don't

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want to get embarrassed again.”

Fresno State and CU both are 2-0, with the Bulldogs the preseason choice of many to become this season’s “BCS busters.” Carr, the younger brother of former Fresno State QB David Carr, is back. Rouse is gone, but the Bulldogs have enough speed and weapons – returner Isaiah Burse to name one – to have the Buffs’ attention.

How does CU contend with that speed?

“Hopefully they’ll sprain their ankles when they get off the bus,” cracked MacIntyre.

But seriously folks, he believes that last weekend’s 38-24 win against Central Arkansas “gave us a little bit of a feel for it – a little high-tempo offense, a little spread offense. We have to do certain things to be able to negate (the Bulldogs) catching the ball and running. We have to harass the quarterback – the same things you always do – and we have to tackle in open space and know your leverage. That’s going to be one of the keys to the game – don’t let them get in the open field enough times where they can use that speed. We’ve got to get ‘em before they get started.”

He’s also hoping the Buffs’ newly discovered habit of creating turnovers continues. CU didn’t have a defensive return for a score in 12 games last season; in two games this season, the Buffs have three – two interceptions, one fumble – for TDs.

MacIntyre’s practices feature a period called “The Winning Edge,” during which the defense tries to create turnovers and the offense attempts to deny them. Stripping the ball on defense is “stressed daily until it becomes second nature; it just happens,” he said.

If it doesn’t happen that way, he added, a defense’s turnover total will remain as stagnant as CU’s was last season. “In today’s world, other teams have good players and they’re going to make some plays . . . you say we’re going to hold them to 10 points and shut them down to 200 yards offense,” MacIntyre said. “I don’t know if you can really do that anymore all the time.”

Something else that MacIntyre, well-traveled defensive coordinator Kent Baer and his assistants have emphasized is competing until the whistle blows. MacIntyre used sophomore cornerback Kenneth Crawley as his Exhibit A for that.

Beaten last Saturday on a double-move pass route, Crawley kept pursuing the UCA receiver, who caught the pass but was bobbling the ball as he neared the end zone. Crawley finally got close enough to provide a shove, which ended the juggling act with an incompletion and saved a touchdown. The story’s moral: keep playing.

“In the past, when I first got here – nothing against anybody else – but Kenneth would have stopped,” MacIntyre said. “That’s a big deal. We pointed out it’s a big deal, told him, ‘Kenneth you got beat, but you kept running and kept playing.’ It’s not over until they catch it.

“If he wouldn’t have pushed the guy, the guy would’ve caught a touchdown on him. That was a big, big, big play in the game on a play he didn’t make. I was very proud of him doing that.”

NOTABLE: Last week’s “Sledgehammer Award” went to an offensive player – guard Daniel Munyer – for his knockdown blocks against Central Arkansas . . . Quarterback Connor Wood believes receiver Paul Richardson (21 catches, 417 yards, four TDs) has come back stronger and faster than ever after sitting out last season while rehabbing a knee. “I didn’t see a whole lot of him when he was healthy (two seasons ago),” Wood said. “But those (consecutive) 200-yard games are impressive. Yeah, he’s come back stronger.” . . . Richardson agreed: “I’ve grown up a lot, I’m stronger, faster. And I can read coverages better and find weak spots.” Plus, he added with a grin: “I’m stronger than I look.” . . . Another factor in Richardson’s stellar start is offensive coordinator Brian Lindgren’s and receivers coach Troy Walters’ deployment of “P-Rich.” MacIntyre said Lindgren and Walters “do a great job of moving him around . . . the backfield, the middle, side, underneath. We have to move him around him; we can’t leave him at ‘X’ or ‘Z’ (exclusively).” . . . Fresno State’s top returner, Burse, scored on two punt returns (61, 58 yards) last weekend against Cal Poly. One of Burse’s returns, noted MacIntyre, was a credit to effective blocking, the other was all Burse. “He made eight guys miss . . . he’s really, really good.” . . . The Buffs’ kick/punt coverage has been, well, not so good in two games, which MacIntyre said was impetus enough “to not punt; we need to score every time.” With that probably not a realistic option, he added that work continues on kick and punt coverage.

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WR Paul Richardson leads nation in receiving

By PAT GRAHAM
AP Sports Writer



David Zalubowski / AP Photo

Colorado wide receiver Paul Richardson, front, is dragged down from behind by Central Arkansas defensive back Josh Jones in the third quarter of Colorado's 38-24 victory in a college football game in Boulder, Colo., on Saturday, Sept. 7, 2013.

His knee finally mended, Paul Richardson is baffling and burning defensive backs as he leads the nation in yards receiving.

The speedy Colorado junior wideout believes he's gotten even quicker since his return from a torn left ACL that kept him sidelined all last season.

That's right, quicker.

Hard to argue since Richardson has turned in back-to-back 200-yard performances to help a downtrodden Buffaloes program reel off two straight wins, doubling their total from a year ago.

His 21 catches and 417 yards are gaudy numbers sure to earn him more attention on the

field, beginning Saturday when the Buffaloes host Fresno State.

The electric Richardson insisted he's ready for the extra coverage, maintaining he's better prepared — and definitely quicker — than he was before his injury.

"I've grown up a lot. I've gotten a little bit stronger, gotten faster, and think those things have helped me," said Richardson, who tore his ACL during spring practice in April 2012 and took a redshirt season. "I can read coverages better, too. I can find sweet spots in the coverages."

That's been readily apparent. He erupted for 208 yards against rival Colorado State and followed that up with a 209-yard day in a win over Central Arkansas. Of the five 200-yard receiving games in CU history, Richardson now has three of them, including his record-setting performance in 2011 when he had 284 yards against California.

As Richardson sat out last season, he pictured a return in which he was more explosive and in perfect rhythm with quarterback Connor Wood. Still, this start has been beyond Richardson's imagination.

"I don't think anyone could have envisioned this," the 6-foot-1, 170-pound Richardson said. "I'm very grateful. I wanted to start out fast and wanted us to do well early on, but never expected it to

be this well."

He realizes catches are going to be more difficult to come by with teams focusing on him. The Buffaloes are already moving him all over the place in an effort to get him open, even lining him up in the backfield.

Still, he finds a way to sneak open.

"Yeah, I get surprised sometimes," said Richardson, who wears No. 6 because, well, that's how many points TDs are worth (he already has four this season). "Sometimes, the hardest (passes) to catch are the ones when no one is around you."

He should know since he's been that open.

Asked why Richardson seems to find so much room, Wood shrugged and said, "He just beats them. He's a fast guy. He's a talent."

To think, Richardson wasn't really a receiver at first. Early in high school, he was viewed as more of a cornerback before switching. He quickly learned the art of receiving from his father, Paul Sr., a wideout at UCLA when Hall of Famer Troy Aikman was quarterback for the Bruins.

While in high school, Richardson's primary route was simply to sprint down the field. It worked quite well, too.

Now he relies on preparation, trying to learn his opposition's tendencies in order to exploit them.

"Film work is my TV right now," said Richardson, who is good friends with All-American receiver Marqise Lee of USC. "I do homework, watch film, do homework, watch film and then go to bed."

He's certainly giving opposing coaches a fitful night of sleep.

Locating him and stopping him remain vastly different.

"He's been like that every day in practice," said Buffaloes coach Mike MacIntyre, who's off to a quick start in his first season in charge. "He makes plays in practice and works at it. ... He's gotten open down the middle, down the side, underneath. That's all by design and that's a great job by our offensive staff. You have to move him around."

Richardson remembers full well the pain of last season. Sure, the knee bothered him, but so did standing on the sideline watching the Buffaloes play like they did at Fresno State when they fell behind 35-0 after the first quarter and lost 69-14.

"Pretty tough," said Richardson, who was named a team captain this season. "But that game is behind us. That was last year. Last year wasn't fun to watch.

"Our seniors and captains are leading the team very well. Everybody is falling in line, everyone has bought in. That's why we've been playing so well."

Football: CU Buffs' Paul Richardson stays humble despite big numbers

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Paul Richardson has been a huge part of the resurgent Colorado football team. Both of them.

Yes, the junior wide receiver is making plays at a record rate and leads the nation in receiving yards after just two games, but he probably wouldn't be if not for the man whose name he inherited.

Paul Richardson Jr. says he has no bigger critic and no bigger fan than Paul Richardson Sr., who played wide receiver at UCLA in the early 1990s and had a cup of coffee in the NFL.

Paul Richardson Sr. coached his son at times when he was growing up. He taught him to respect the game and his opponents and to work hard at being the best he could be. When the younger Richardson's high school team needed more fire power on offense, Richardson added receiver to his repertoire after playing mostly cornerback when he was younger.

Richardson chuckled Tuesday when asked if there was ever a point when he had the stereotypical prima donna attitude of some of the more famous players to play wide receiver. He said his dad never would have allowed it.

"He was real aggressive in how he coached me, and I had a way different attitude than most receivers have," Richardson said about his dad Tuesday during the Buffs' weekly media luncheon. "So when I started playing receiver, I already had that work ethic embedded in me."

Richardson leads the nation in receiving yards through two games with 417 and is tied for second in receptions with 21. He already has seven catches for 20 yards or more and he needs only 29 yards this week to equal the Buffs' leader in receiving yards all of last season.

He also is almost halfway to Nelson Spruce's total of 44 receptions in 2012.

"I don't think anyone could have envisioned this," Richardson said. "I'm very grateful. I'm very blessed to have the start that I've had. I wanted to start off fast and I wanted us to do well early, but I never expected it to be this well."

CU hosts Fresno State on Saturday at Folsom Field and the Bulldogs represent a big step up in competition from Colorado State and Central Arkansas. But there are only so many ways to defend against Richardson and already has seen most of them. Yet, he continues to make catches and provide explosive plays for an offense that desperately missed him a year ago when he missed the year with a knee injury.

"I think Brian Lindgren does a great job, him and Troy Walters, of moving him around.," CU coach Mike MacIntyre said. "That's something we have discussed as a staff long and hard,

moving him to all different spots so he could have ways to get open. He's gotten open down the middle. He's gotten open down the side. He's gotten open underneath. So that is all design and that's a great job by our offensive staff."

Richardson started the season with a pair of 200-yard receiving games. He has now produced two of the five such games in CU history and he has a chance to tie an NCAA record this week if he can notch a third.

Only two players in NCAA history have produced three consecutive games with 200 yards receiving. Howard Twilley did it for Tulsa in 1965 and Trevor Insley tied the record in 1999 for Nevada.

Insley actually had six 200-yard receiving performances in the 1999 season but only three of them came in consecutive contests.

There are numerous factors that have played a part in his success, coaching, his work ethic, the performance of his teammates, especially the offensive line and quarterback Connor Wood, and, of course, his father's influence.

Richardson, who said he wasn't really worried about what the defense did in high school and just ran downfield, said he is benefitting now from extra work he learned to put in early in his CU career.

During his freshman season when he realized he could no longer dominate defenses simply through his superior athleticism, he sought help in recognizing and reading coverages from former CU defensive coordinator and secondary coach Greg Brown.

Richardson said he has continued to pick the brains of defensive coaches with the new coaching staff, talking with cornerbacks coach Andy LaRussa and safeties coach Charles Clarke.

"I've grown up a lot," Richardson said. "I've gotten a little bit stronger, gotten faster. So those things have helped me. And I can read coverages better. So I can find sweet spots in the coverages."

Richardson said he does get surprised at times when he finds himself wide open, as he has at least twice already this season, mostly because the toughest balls to catch are those with no one there to challenge them.

While Richardson has been masterly in his first two games this season, MacIntyre didn't hesitate when asked how Richardson can get better. MacIntyre said Richardson needs to get stronger to be able to break more tackles and win balls in the air.

"No doubt he's an excellent player, but that's an area where if he got a little bit bigger and stronger he would have come down with a couple more of those," MacIntyre said.

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Howell: CU Buffs' Connor Wood has shined so far

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Connor Wood can't predict most of what's going to happen in the future, but Colorado's junior quarterback is quite sure of one thing.

"It's not going to go our way every play on Saturday (against Fresno State)," he said. "I can prophesy that."

Throughout the Buffaloes' 2-0 start, a lot of plays have gone their way. Wood is a big reason for that. But, a lot of plays haven't gone their way, and it's the mature manner in which he's handled the imperfections that has been most impressive.

In last Saturday's 38-24 win against Central Arkansas, Wood committed four turnovers. The last of those, an interception early in the fourth quarter, could have been a back-breaker.

CU was down 24-17 at the time, but the defense came through with a game-tying 79-yard interception return for touchdown by safety Jered Bell.

Then, Wood took over and put the game away.

"Whatever he was going through mentally (after the last turnover), he was still trying to keep us encouraged and we knew he would come out and make a play," receiver Paul Richardson said.

Indeed, Wood's next throw was a 30-yard touchdown pass to Richardson to give the Buffs a 31-24 lead. The next time CU got the ball, Wood completed four of six passes for 60 yard and another touchdown, sealing the victory.

"Old Connor might have gotten down on himself when he made mistakes, so it was really good to see the way he responded in the game," receiver Tyler McCulloch said.

New Connor has been a critical part of CU's success to this point, and it'll be important for him to keep it up if the Buffs are to win more games the rest of the way.

"It's going to be huge, because we're going to face some adversity this season; we already have," Wood said.

CU faced a lot of adversity last year and didn't handle it well. Wood was a backup most of the year, but even when he got in there, it didn't go well. He was 21-of-42 for 265 yards with one touchdown and four interceptions. Those numbers are indicative of an uncomfortable player.

"I was thrown in on some of those games where it's hard; you're down and trying to put some points on the board when you're down by a lot of touchdowns," he said. "I didn't get a lot of chance to really find a rhythm in some of those games."

Ever since new head coach Mike MacIntyre and offensive coordinator Brian Lindgren came to town in December Wood's maturity, leadership and poise have been impressive.

Wood proved himself during offseason workouts and has carried that over to this point on game days. He ranks fifth in the country in passing yards (741), while completing 68.2 percent of his passes. He's already thrown six touchdown passes.

"He just has an incredible sense of confidence," said linebacker and fellow captain Paul Vigo.

The new coaching staff has plenty to do with that, but Wood's work ethic and mental attitude have gone to a new level.

"He's always been a leader, but just the way he plays on the field has just changed a lot," McCulloch said. "I don't know if it's different coaching or the different offense or what, but it's been awesome to see."

Even on his turnovers Saturday, Wood wasn't entirely at fault on most of them. One of his interceptions was a tipped pass. Both of his fumbles came after the offensive line broke down and allowed Wood to be sacked.

So far, Wood has brushed aside his bad plays (and there have been few) while moving on from his good plays (and there have been many) just as quickly.

"It's got to be water off your back," he said. "Good or bad, you've got to stay even keel. If you have your quarterback getting really high, then really low, then really high, then really low, you're going to have an unstable person at the position."

For the first time in a while, the Buffs seem to have some stability at quarterback. They are 2-0 with Wood leading the way, and they need him to be just as good in the next 10 games.

"We have to follow that same recipe of the last two games of sticking together," he said. "Through adversity we come together and don't implode."

Old Connor might have imploded. New Connor has blossomed.

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DeRuyter Q&A: Breaking down Boise aftermath, looking ahead

Fresno State (2-0) at Colorado (2-0) (ET)

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By Sports Network — The Sports Network

FACTS & STATS: Site: Folsom Field (53,613) -- Boulder, Colorado. Television: Pac-12 Network. Home Record: FSU 2-0, Colorado 1-0. Away Record: FSU 0-0, Colorado 0-0. Neutral Record: FSU 0-0, Colorado 1-0. Conference Record: FSU 0-0, Colorado 0-0. Series Record: Colorado leads, 4-2.

GAME NOTES: A couple of teams that have remained perfect through the first two games of the season get together in Boulder on Saturday afternoon, as the Colorado Buffaloes play host to the Fresno State Bulldogs.

The Bulldogs are on the road for the first time in 2013 after defeating Rutgers in overtime (52-51) to kick off the campaign, and then following that up with a more comfortable 41-25 triumph versus Cal Poly last Saturday night.

The strong start for FSU is not all that surprising, given that the team was 9-4 a season ago and had a Mountain West Conference record of 7-1 as well.

However, the 2-0 ledger for Colorado is a different story, considering the Buffs won a total of just a single game a year ago and that was by just one point versus Washington State (35-34). Colorado began the new season with a 41-27 win over in-state rival Colorado State in Denver on Sept. 1, and then added a 38-24 victory against Central Arkansas just six days later at home.

Colorado has not been 2-0 since 2008 when the team won three straight decisions against Colorado State, Eastern Washington and West Virginia. Unfortunately, the Buffs finished only 5-7 that year.

These two teams met last season in California and FSU devastated the visitors in a lopsided 69-14 final in the third game of the campaign. Despite the crushing win by the Bulldogs, they still trail in the all-time series by a count of 4-2.

This meeting sets up the Bulldogs against Colorado head coach Mike McIntyre who, before taking the reigns in Boulder, was in charge of the San Jose State Spartans whom FSU competed against when both programs were part of the Western Athletic Conference. Like Fresno, SJSU has also made the transition to the Mountain West Conference.

Isaiah Burse starred for Fresno State last Saturday night as he became just the second player in school history to return a pair of punts for touchdowns in one game, finding the end zone on returns of 61 and 58 yards in the first and second quarters, respectively. Burse, who also registered a 15-yard TD catch in the second quarter and was named the Mountain West Conference Special Teams Player of the Week, was a huge reason why the Bulldogs led 34-0 at the break and were able to take their foot off the gas in the second half. Derek Carr didn't finish the game, but he did play long enough to complete 22-of-31 for 205 yards and three touchdowns.

Burse may have been the standout performer this past weekend, but the one to watch on offense for the Bulldogs is Carr who is expected to be one of the top overall performers in the MWC again this season. Already the signal-caller has completed 71.2 percent of his passes for eight touchdowns and just a single interception on 104 attempts.

Burse is second on the unit with 17 catches, leading to 161 yards and a score, but above him in the pecking order is Adams who has turned his 19 receptions into 179 yards and three TDs.

However, as powerful as Carr and the passing attack might be, the fact remains that the Bulldogs need to find a replacement for Robbie Rouse at running back, and that will be no easy task. After two outings the group is averaging under four yards per rushing attempt and has gotten into the end zone only once.

Against Central Arkansas, the defense for the Buffaloes was almost as nearly as productive as the offense, thanks to interceptions returned for touchdowns by Greg Henderson (46 yards) and Jered Bell (79) in the second and fourth quarters, respectively. However, the visitors were still allowed to generate 340 yards of total offense during the meeting.

Quarterback Connor Wood might be ranked fourth in the nation in passing yards with 370.5 ypg, but his performance last weekend was far from overwhelmingly positive. In fact, while completing 23-of-36 passes for 341 yards and three scores, Wood was also sacked four times and had a pair of attempts picked off.

Nevertheless, having an outstanding game for the Buffs was receiver Paul Richardson who turned his 11 receptions into 209 yards and a pair of scores for the hosts. Richardson, who leads the nation with 208.5 ypg in receptions, now has a total of 21 catches on the season, leading four touchdowns. Perhaps most impressive is the fact that he has seven grabs that have led to 20 yards or more and there have been only two other such receptions by a Colorado player through two games.

The Buffs own the 13th-ranked run defense in the country right now, giving up only 77.0 ypg, but that may not even come up in this particular meeting since Fresno State relies so much on Carr and the aerial attack anymore. However, expect Colorado to still put up a good fight since coach MacIntyre has some familiarity with FSU.

Sports Network Predicted Outcome: Fresno State 38, Colorado 23

Game Date and Time

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DeRuyter Q&A: Breaking down Boise aftermath, looking ahead

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