



By: Joel Broida

Sophomore Nelson Spruce and the Buffaloes are looking forward to playing for the first time in three weeks this Saturday.



Brooks: Buffs Glad To Finally Have A Game To Play

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By: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER – After two helter-skelter weeks, settling into a game-week grind sounds very close to being a reward.

That's precisely the way the Colorado Buffaloes see it as they began a week that finally concludes with a football game – and not just any game either. CU opens Pac-12 Conference play on Saturday at Oregon State (1 p.m. MT, Pac-12 Network), but it will have been a while between games.

At kick off in Reser Stadium, the Buffs will be playing for the first time since their 38-24 home victory against Central Arkansas on Sept. 7. The following Saturday's home contest against Fresno State was washed out by the catastrophic flooding that hit Boulder County and the surrounding area, and a regularly scheduled bye was observed on Saturday, Sept. 21.

Still, CU coach Mike MacIntyre believes his team will have made the most of an unprecedented 21-day span since the last time they suited up and played.

"I think we have improved during this time," MacIntyre said Tuesday at his weekly news conference. "But we'll be able to tell in this game and next (Oct. 5 vs. No. 2 Oregon)."

The benefits of unplanned but back-to-back open Saturdays: Time for injured players to heal, time for coaches to address deficiencies from games one and two, lots of extra time for players to study Oregon State.

The drawbacks of unplanned but back-to-back open Saturdays: A disruption in the game-week routines that followed the buildup from August camp to the opener, a possible disruption in the offensive and defensive tempo as well as a stall in the overall momentum the Buffs had established in their first two wins.

Asked how a team goes about maintaining the momentum of a 2-0 start after a three-week layoff, MacIntyre answered: "Go win the next game . . . that's what we need to do. Go play and don't worry about that. Go play the whole 60 minutes."

Sophomore receiver Nelson Spruce called simulating game atmosphere in practice "kind of tough . . . we've tried our best to maintain pace and rhythm. We're prepared, but it's going to be tough to get that

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kind of rhythm that it takes in a game.”

Senior safety Parker Orms compared the Buffs’ long hiatus without playing to “being back in training camp. But I think we’re going to be better for it.”

MacIntyre hopes so. During a 23-year coaching career, none of his teams have had this long of a regular-season break. His chief concern: Keeping the Buffs focused and playing with the speed of the first two games. That’s challenging, MacIntyre conceded, but practices over the last two weeks have featured score being kept in competition during ones vs. ones matchups.

Going “good-on-good” – or first offense vs. first defense – has been done to help simulate game speed. Yet as MacIntyre admitted, “There’s a fine line there; you don’t want to get anybody hurt.”

Oregon State has played four games to CU’s two. “On the other side of that,” MacIntyre said, “I hope we’re fresher.”

So, if the Buffs might fret about their lengthy layoff, the Beavers might bemoan a schedule that saw them open on Aug. 31 with a home loss to Eastern Washington (49-46), then play for the next three weekends. OSU defeated Hawai’i (33-14) in Corvallis, then won close road games against Utah (51-48, OT) and San Diego State (34-30).

After playing host to CU Saturday, Oregon State gets the first weekend in October off. The Buffs, meanwhile, likely have said bye to their byes; CU continues to try and schedule a 12th game, looking first at the open date on Oct. 19 as a replacement Saturday.

MacIntyre said he, his staff and players are “excited about playing a football game and getting back to normalcy” after what he described as an “adventurous, anxious” period that saw 10 of his players displaced by the flooding. On the Saturday they were to have played Fresno State, the Buffs lent a hand in the community by helping serve food at Folsom Field to persons who had been displaced by the flooding.

“I think it taught life lessons, made them refocus,” MacIntyre said of the entire experience. He also said he believed his players now “take nothing for granted. I’ve seen that from the entire team.”

NOTABLE: According to media reports, Hawai’i is no longer a 12th game option for CU. And MacIntyre has unofficially scratched another option – San Jose State, his former school. “I won’t go against the young men I’m close to,” he said. But he quickly added, “Somebody above me might make that decision.” MacIntyre spoke with athletic director Rick George on Monday night and reported, “He’s working hard . . . I keep saying I’m going to find out any hour. Hopefully we can work something out.” . . . Given consecutive open Saturdays, MacIntyre had a chance to watch several Pac-12 teams play. His early thoughts on his new league: “I’ve been very impressed (but) I always have. In watching games, I saw some really, really good quarterbacks and good defensive linemen. Those are two areas that help you win or lose on the upper echelon. There are some really good ones in this league.” . . . Terrence Crowder’s name does not appear on the current roster, and MacIntyre said the redshirt freshman tailback “has a list of things to do before we put him back on the team.” . . . CU’s depth chart for Oregon State still lists freshman quarterback Se’o Liufau as Connor Wood’s backup, with sophomores Jordan Gehrke and Stevie Joe Dorman listed as the co-No. 3 QBs. MacIntyre said Liufau continues to improve: “He hasn’t regressed at all . . . he keeps going forward.” . . . Sophomore tailback Christian Powell “has looked good the last two days,” MacIntyre said. “I’m hoping he doesn’t get dinged up in practice.” Powell has been slowed by a thigh bruise . . . Coaches nationwide are scheduled to wear a patch on Saturday recognizing those persons fighting multiple sclerosis. MacIntyre called that struggle “something very close to my heart.” His father, George, is battling the disease.

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Colorado Buffaloes Football

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CU Buffs raring to start Pac-12 schedule after unusually long layoff

By John Henderson *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*
Posted:

DenverPost.com

BOULDER — For three weeks, they will have remained undefeated. For three weeks, Paul Richardson will have led the nation in receiving yards per game. For three weeks, they'll have received pats on the back, if not chest bumps on campus.

But for three weeks, the Colorado Buffaloes also will not have played a game. How much does the glow of their 2-0 start dim in the wake of potential rustiness as Saturday's 1 p.m. MDT Pac-12 opener at Oregon State (3-1) looms?

"Hopefully, we'll have fresh legs," coach Mike MacIntyre said after Monday's practice. "We're still getting in that game mode, that game thing where you click in and don't get as tired sometimes. We've been trying to practice hard. We've been trying to run to the football. We've been trying to go high tempo, to keep that energy going.

"But there's nothing like simulating a game."

The flood-driven cancellation of the Sept. 14 Fresno State game, combined with last Saturday's scheduled bye, places CU with Navy and Iowa State as the only NCAA Division I teams that have played only two games.

MacIntyre held two scrimmages last week and another scrimmage, sans tackling, Monday. For a team that looks transformed offensively and defensively, it looks to recoup momentum.

"We're getting back to using practice as a time to get better," sophomore receiver Nelson Spruce said. "We've really tried to practice at a fast tempo just to replicate the speed of the game."

At least this year is different. Players are BMOCs again rather than trying not to snap at muffled insults, as in past years.

But 2-0 isn't exactly putting CU on a cloud too high to be distracting.

"In our situation, I think it'll be good," MacIntyre said. "They've gone around for a while not getting that. That has motivated them. I have not seen them slack off, be late for meetings, not show up, not hustling in practice. That's when you notice."

MacIntyre spent Saturday night doing a rarity: watching his next opponent play live. Unfortunately for him, he watched quarterback Sean Mannion lead Oregon State to a 34-30 comeback win at San Diego State. Mannion leads the nation in passing yards.

The Buffaloes started preparing for the Beavers last Wednesday. In his entire coaching career, Mac Intyre has never been with a team that had two consecutive games weeks off in the middle of the season.

"And I don't want to have it again, either," he said. "It kind of reminds you of a bowl. You get going and you get excited. ... I'd rather be playing games. I'd like a week off, but not (more).

"I definitely want to play. I think my wife wants me out of the house."

Added Spruce: "I'm super anxious. The first week was kind of weird, but this week I'm sitting around. Two weeks without playing. Dang. It doesn't feel like a normal season.

"I think everybody's ready to go."

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CU Buffs' Greg Henderson has become a big-play cornerback

By John Henderson The Denver Post The Denver Post

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DenverPost.com

BOULDER — Last year was a lonely season for a Colorado defensive back, particularly if you were Greg Henderson. So superior to the other Buffs' cornerbacks, about the only time he saw the ball was when he watched touchdown passes flying over his teammates' heads.

It's two games into 2013, and we now know why opposing quarterbacks avoided him.

The 5-foot-11, 185-pound junior already has an interception and a fumble return for touchdowns, along with two passes defended and nine tackles. A year ago, he barely got enough action to letter.

"I remember the USC game," Henderson said after practice Tuesday. "I only had the ball thrown at me once. And it was in the flat."

The huge improvement of sophomore Kenneth Crawley on the other side has made quarterbacks this year pick their poison, although the toxic level is still to be determined. Colorado's secondary is a long way from a proven commodity after giving up a national-high 39 TD passes last year.

However, it's off to a great start, and Henderson is a big reason.

Remember, he was the starter the minute he walked on campus from Norco High in Corona, Calif.

"I learned a lot," said Henderson. "I had to gain experience fast. It's evolved my game to get better each and every year. To be able to make plays, react faster, know different formations, different routes, the game has developed in my mind.

"It's easier for me now."

It won't be Saturday. His fledgling star quality will be tested by the most prolific passer in the country. Oregon State junior Sean Mannion leads the nation with 401 yards per game on 72-percent passing with 15 touchdowns and one interception.

With the cancellation of the Sept. 14 Fresno State game, Henderson's had two weeks to study him.

"His mind is probably his greatest asset," CU cornerbacks coach Andy LaRussa said. "He keeps himself on an even keel. He's never too high or too low. He's smart. He studies. That helps him make plays."

He also holds a grudge. Despite ESPN ranking him the No. 10 cornerback in California as a senior, the only other schools offering him scholarships were Nebraska and Air Force.

Nebraska " moved to the Big Ten," he said. "I wanted my family to come to my games.

As for Air Force, "It's nice, but I'm not a military guy," Henderson said.

Henderson's beloved UCLA wouldn't even send a schedule magnet.

"I have a huge chip (on my shoulder)," Henderson said. "I never want to be complacent. I want to keep getting better every day, every year."

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Colorado football: Buffs prepare for first road trip with Mike MacIntyre

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Mike MacIntyre has given his Colorado football team a formula for winning on the road as the Buffs prepare for their first road game of the 2013 season this week at Oregon State and the start of Pac-12 Conference play.

Wide receiver Nelson Spruce told reporters Tuesday during the program's weekly press luncheon about MacIntyre's three-steps to winning on the road, but when asked what the three steps were, Spruce could remember only two of the three areas of emphasis.

"Harassing the quarterback and protecting ours and ball security is huge," Spruce said as he attempted to recall the third.

Fortunately for Spruce and his teammates, MacIntyre still has a few days left this week to make sure his players know the mantra like second nature.

For his part, Spruce believes he and his teammates are prepared to handle the first road game well and continue to build on the momentum they had after a 2-0 start. That momentum might have been dulled somewhat from a three-week layoff created by a postponed game and a bye week.

"I think if we stick to what we've been doing on offense and defense we've been successful the past two weeks so we can continue and build on what we've done," Spruce said. "I think we can be successful on the road."

This is the first meeting with Oregon State since CU joined the Pac-12 Conference and the first meeting ever between the two programs in Corvallis, Ore. The Beavers have a 3-2 edge in the series, the first two games of which were played in Portland in the 1960s. These programs have met since the Buffs beat the Beavers in Boulder in 1988.

The Buffs obviously haven't enjoyed much success away from Folsom Field in recent years. One of the big accomplishments of the Jon Embree coaching era was putting an end to the program's record road losing streak at Utah in 2011, but the program is only 2-25 in true road games since the start of the 2008 season.

The Buffs only victory all season in 2012 came on the road at Washington State coming from behind in the fourth quarter to beat the Cougars. So there are plenty of players on the roster who have experienced a road win.

Perhaps even better is the fact that there also are plenty of players on the roster who have had nothing to do with the Buffs' road woes of the past.

"I think the primary aspect is they have to go into it with a mindset that it's not a trip," MacIntyre said when asked how he approaches road games with his players. "It's a

business. You always hear coaches say it's a business trip. Well, you're going there with one thing in mind and one thing only, win the football game. And you have to understand that. You can enjoy all the stuff and take it all in so to speak, but you have to always have the mindset and perspective you're going to win the football game at all odds.”

It took MacIntyre a season-and-a-half to win his first road game in his first head coaching job at San Jose State. The win came at Colorado State in 2011. After the first domino fell, he his teams were pretty effective on the road, going 6-4 on the road the remainder of his tenure with the Spartans.

MacIntyre actually has a five-game winning streak on the road going into the Oregon State game. CU meanwhile, has a three-game road-losing streak.

MacIntyre said teams take their cues from coaches. So first and foremost in his mind is making sure he and his assistants take a consistent and confident approach to playing on the road.

“I think it's just the maturity level of your team to be honest with you,” MacIntyre said. “Where we were before, every plane trip we took, the plane was delayed either an hour to five hours – it was crazy. I've never seen anything like it – and we won every single plane trip. I don't know how much it's the travel. It's the mindset of your kids and mindset of our coaches.

“Us as coaches, always take the mindset, ‘We're not going to get ruffled. We're not going to get upset about being somewhere. We're not going to get upset if the food is cold. We're just going to stay focused at what the main thing at hand is.’ We set the tempo of that as coaches.”

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Howell: Facing San Jose State an attractive option for CU

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

As Colorado athletic director Rick George continues to try to fill the vacancy in the Buffaloes' football schedule, head coach Mike MacIntyre made it very clear there is one opponent he doesn't want to see: San Jose State.

"No," he said sternly when asked if he wanted to play the Spartans, whom he coached from 2010-12. "I will not play San Jose State. I don't want to go up against young men that I care deeply about. I don't think that would be the right thing to do."

So, San Jose State at Colorado on Oct. 19 is off the table?

"It is for me," MacIntyre said. "Unless somebody above me makes a decision on that."

As much as MacIntyre would hate it, those above him ought to keep that door open because facing San Jose State might be the best option for CU.

Colorado has a hole in its schedule because of its Sept. 14 game against Fresno State being postponed after the severe flooding in the Boulder area two weeks ago. It's unlikely the Buffs will be able to reschedule with Fresno State, because their bye weeks do not match up.

Therefore, the Buffs have to explore other options for their Oct. 19 bye week.

Several schools -- including former Big 12 rival Nebraska -- are also off on Oct. 19, but it doesn't make any sense for another school from a BCS conference to give up a bye week and come to Boulder. There's very little, if any, incentive for a team like Nebraska to come here.

Plus, most schools would have to get a waiver from the NCAA to get a 13th game on the schedule. The exception to that rule is that Hawaii, and any team that plays at Hawaii, is allowed to play a 13th game.

Colorado approached Hawaii about coming here, but Hawaii reportedly turned down an offer this week to come to Boulder.

Four teams have road trips to Hawaii this year. One is Fresno State. Another is Colorado State, which CU already beat on Sept. 1. So, forget those two.

That leaves two FBS schools that make the most sense for CU: San Diego State and San Jose State. As luck would have it, both teams are off on Oct. 19.

Of course, the Buffs could also try to schedule any number of Football Championship Subdivision (FCS) schools that are off that week, but that's a less appealing option. FCS teams aren't going to drum up much interest to local fans. And, a second FCS opponent (CU defeated Central Arkansas on Sept. 7) could wind up costing the Buffs a trip to a bowl game,

since NCAA rules state that only one victory against an FCS school can count toward bowl eligibility.

San Diego State would be a decent option, but the Aztecs (currently 0-3) aren't an overly attractive opponent. It is a team the Buffs could beat, though, and that could go a long way to getting them into a bowl game.

San Jose State (1-2), meanwhile, is a solid team with a quarterback -- David Fales -- that could be one of the first passers taken in the 2014 NFL Draft. That alone could draw a few extra fans to Folsom Field on Oct. 19.

Seeing MacIntyre's new team go against his old one is sure to produce more local and national interest, too. Who wouldn't want to see MacIntyre take on his old team? Well, other than MacIntyre, of course.

Because of the potential storylines associated with the matchup, bringing San Jose State to Boulder could be the most financially beneficial option for CU. Considering the state of finances in the CU athletic department, the Buffs have to think of dollar signs. (San Jose State would collect a nice check, too).

San Diego State and San Jose State could follow Hawaii's lead and decline the visit to Boulder, so in the end, it may turn out that scheduling another FCS school is CU's only real option.

That would please MacIntyre if he could avoid that matchup with San Jose State.

However, if CU's options came down to San Jose State and an FCS school, there really shouldn't be a choice.

MacIntyre's feelings are understandable and admirable, but he and those above him need to do what's best for Colorado. He needs to show his loyalty to the school paying him \$2 million a year, not the school he used to coach.

MacIntyre is a Buff now, not a Spartan. And, if lining up against San Jose State is the best thing for Colorado, bring it on.

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Colorado football: Buffs staying fresh during break

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

After two solid performances to start the season, the Colorado football team had spent its last two weekends watching football.

Yet, the Buffaloes (2-0) aren't concerned about rust settling in as they prepare for Saturday's trip to Corvallis, Ore., to take on Oregon State (3-1, 1-0 Pac-12).

"If anything, we've been cranking it up in practice, competing with our first-team defense against the first-team offense and keeping score on first downs and turnovers and touchdowns," quarterback Connor Wood said. "Coaches have not let us get out of sync, get out rhythm since we've been having so much time off."

The Buffs' Sept. 14 game against Fresno State was postponed because of flooding in Boulder, and they had a scheduled bye week on Sept. 21. The Buffs insist they did all they could to stay sharp during the break.

"We've been doing a lot of game-speed stuff, or trying to get game-speed stuff, as close as we can," linebacker Addison Gillam said. "That's going to help a lot."

The break allowed players to heal their bodies, and also gives the Buffs a new-start type of feel to this week.

"It kind of seemed like camp all over again, so it built a lot of anticipation again," receiver Paul Richardson said.

Head coach Mike MacIntyre was pleased with how his team handled the break and said the Buffs are better than they were two weeks ago.

"I definitely think we have improved during this time," MacIntyre said. "We concentrated on different aspects of our game that we were struggling at and we tried to improve on areas we were doing well at. Hopefully we'll show that Saturday."

Colorado football: Oregon State finding it tough to scout Buffs

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

On the weekly Pac-12 coaches teleconference, Oregon State's Mike Riley said it's tough to prepare for Colorado because the Buffs haven't played many games.

"It is a little strange in that there's not really that much information at this time of the year on them," Riley said. "I know we'll see some new stuff. That's probably (the difficulty), the mystery of what they've done since they played their two earlier games."

Notable

OSU running back Storm Woods (concussion) could miss Saturday's game. "He's got a chance to be cleared by the weekend, but I don't know if I'll play him this week," Riley said. Woods had 940 yards last year and has 152 yards this season. ... MacIntyre said running back Christian Powell (hamstring) has looked good in practice this week. "He has looked that way in practice before," he said. "Hopefully in the games he doesn't get it dinged up. We rested him for a couple of days just to make sure, but hopefully it will not get dinged up again."

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Colorado coach Mike MacIntyre: 'It seems like three years ago since we last played'

Connor Wood.JPG

Colorado quarterback Connor Wood and his teammates haven't played a game since Sept. 7. (AP)

Lindsay Schnell | Ischnell@oregonian.com By Lindsay Schnell | Ischnell@oregonian.com

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on September 24, 2013 at 12:13 PM, updated September 24, 2013 at 12:54 PM

Due to some bad weather and a schedule set long ago, it's been almost three weeks since the Colorado football team played a game. But according to coach Mike MacIntyre, "it seems like three years."

Two weeks ago Colorado's game against Fresno State was postponed due to severe flooding in the Boulder area (a makeup date has yet to be scheduled) and then the Buffs (2-0) had a bye. That means Colorado hasn't put on uniforms since Sept. 7, in the Buffs' 38-24 win over Central Arkansas. After the postponement announcement, players took Sunday, Sept. 15 off as many of them moved in and out of apartments that were damaged by flooding.

"It was a mess," MacIntyre said. "We had to give our guys a couple days to get their feet on the ground."

Since returning to practice, it's been a lot of scrimmage work as the Buffs "try to keep the speed of the game."

"Playing (Oregon State), it's kind of like another opening game for us," MacIntyre said.

Mike Riley can probably relate. When a hurricane postponed the Beavers' 2012 opener against Nicholls State, OSU had one more week to prepare for then-No. 13 Wisconsin, which prompted Riley to refer to all the preseason practices as "the longest training camp of all time." Then after **OSU's surprise 10-7 win over the Badgers**, the team had a bye, which gave them an extra week to prepare for UCLA. It was a schedule quirk that worked to OSU's favor, though, as the Beavers' shot out to a 6-0 start.

"We try to worry about what we can control," Riley said, adding that preparing for Colorado is somewhat of a mystery because the Buffs have only played two games. "I know we'll see some new stuff."

MacIntyre acknowledged that there might be an adjustment period on Saturday in Reser Stadium because it's been so long since the Buffs played, but added with a laugh that he hopes there's no adjustment period at all.