



By: CUBuffs.com

Parker Orms (13) won Mike MacIntyre's inaugural 'Sledgehammer Award'

Orms First Recipient Of Buffs 'Sledgehammer Award'

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BOULDER – Coach Mike MacIntyre has decided to carry a tradition over to Colorado from his time at San Jose State. He and the team will hand out a weekly Sledgehammer Award to the player who dishes out the biggest clean hit on an opposing player – and the big-hit winner from the season-opener is Parker Orms.

“The sledgehammer is a thing the kids vote on every week for a big hit,” MacIntyre said. “It has to be a big clean hit. We nominate and show it and the kids vote and the guy gets to carry the hammer around.

This week, Parker Orms won it so he’ll get to carry it around all week and carries it out on the field.”

Orms, a senior strong safety, was lugging the 20-pound instrument around with him when spoke on Wednesday about the excitement surrounding his winning the award.

“It feels good,” said Orms. “It was voted on by the team, so I’m happy my teammates respect me for that. It’s pretty cool.”

The hit that merited the award came in the fourth quarter of Sunday’s 41-27 win over rival Colorado State. The Rams were trailing by nine and had driven deep into Colorado territory. They faced a third down at the Colorado 13 when quarterback Garrett Grayson fired the ball over the middle to tight end Kiv Cartwright. The pass was high and as Cartwright went up to snag it, Orms hit him in the legs, sending him crashing back down to the turf, thus forcing the Rams to settle for a field goal at a crucial time in the game.

MacIntyre has also decided to continue his tradition of having every one of his players write a down an individual goal for each game and place all of them into a “Commitment Toolbox” at the team’s Thursday evening meeting. He also had that ritual at his previous post.

“The toolbox is a commitment box that we make where each kid stands up and commits something that he is going to do in the game for the team,” said MacIntyre. “Usually it’s something specific that they’ve worked on that could happen during the game then they put it in the box and we carry the box out (onto the field on game day).”

NOTABLE: In preparation for Saturday’s matchup, MacIntyre spoke passionately about Central Arkansas’ two starting defensive ends after practice on Wednesday and commented that he believed his two tackles, Stephane Nembot and Jack Harris, would face a big test this week. The two players – 6-6, 271-pound sophomore Johanthan Woodard and 6-0, 265-pound senior Markeith Gaines – combined for 11 sacks and 16.5 tackles for loss last season . . . MacIntyre announced that senior wide receiver

Alex Turbow has been placed on scholarship for his final semester of college The team practiced Wednesday morning for the second time this week in preparation for Saturday's home opener against Central Arkansas (6 p.m., Pac-12 Network). Practice will resume Thursday from 8:30-11 a.m.

Colorado Buffaloes Football

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Football: CU Buffs' offensive line not complacent after strong start

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

Much maligned throughout the 2012 season, the Colorado offensive line received high praise for how well it played Sunday in a 41-27 win against Colorado State.

Officially, the Buffaloes allowed just one sack, although that came on a play where quarterback Connor Wood threw the ball down and was flagged for intentional grounding. Other than that, Wood stayed relatively clean.

"I was pretty impressed with their offensive line," CSU head coach Jim McElwain said. "We did not get home at all. I felt that would be a big part of our game, but give their offensive line credit. They stoned us pretty good at the line of scrimmage and we didn't get much done."

Center Gus Handler said CU's performance can be at least partially attributed to that fact that the group has been on the field together so much in the past few months.

"We took a lot of reps in camp and I think that, along with a lot of film work and the coaches, they really got us in the right spot at the right time," Handler said. "It didn't really surprise me (to see the line play well). It encouraged me, but like I said there are some things that we have to fix and get corrected for this week."

Four linemen -- Handler, Jack Harris, Daniel Munyer and Stephane Nembot -- played all 83 offensive snaps. Guard Kaiwi Crabb played 82 of the 83 snaps.

"I don't think that anyone really can deny us of having really good effort at all times," Handler said. "We ran about (83) plays and no one subbed out and we played pretty hard through those (83) plays."

On Saturday, the Buffs face Central Arkansas, which should provide another challenge for the CU line. A year ago, UCA ranked 26th in the Football Championship Subdivision with 2.5 sacks per game. The Bears got two in their season opening win against Incarnate Word last week.

Ends Jonathan Woodard and Markeith Gaines figure to give the Buffs fits, meaning that Harris and Nembot will have to be at their best at tackle.

"It's a really big test for Stephane and Jack, I think," CU head coach Mike MacIntyre said. "Really big."

"I thought they did really well in the pass protection, but we've got to do it again, because Central Arkansas watched some things that we messed up on that (CSU) didn't take advantage of. When you watch the film, you can see the mistakes you made, so the opponent will take advantage of that."

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Football: Former CU Buffs' standout Greg Thomas' heart will be slightly divided Saturday night

By Kyle Ringo Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

When kickoff arrives Saturday night at Folsom Field and the Buffs knock heads with Central Arkansas, there will be a redshirt freshman linebacker in grey and purple on the visitors' sideline who would have preferred to be in black and gold.

Central Arkansas redshirt freshman linebacker Kamane Thomas is the son of former Colorado free safety Greg Thomas, a key member of the school's 1990 national championship team.

Kamane Thomas grew up in the Houston area and eventually attended high school in Missouri City, Texas. He cheered for the Buffs throughout his childhood and considered former Buffs such as Charles Johnson, Alfred Williams, Kanavis McGhee and Eric Bieniemy to be like uncles.

"He's real excited about coming to Boulder," Greg Thomas said of his son in a phone interview Wednesday. "... He wanted to go to CU. That would have been his dream school."

Thomas said CU didn't recruit his son. His senior season in high school in 2011 was the first year of former coach Jon Embree's brief tenure as coach.

Greg Thomas moved back to Colorado in June of 2012 and watched the Buffs last game in Folsom Field against Utah at the end of last season. So being back in the stadium won't be a novelty for him Saturday, but he will have Kamane's sister, both grandfathers, a grandmother, and numerous other friends sharing the evening.

"He's going to have a lot of eyes on him on Saturday night," Greg Thomas said.

Thomas said he is unsure how much his son will play because he has had a nagging hamstring injury.

The Camera attempted to interview Kamane Thomas, but Central Arkansas coach Clint Conque does not allow freshmen to do interviews with the media, according to a school spokesman.

"I think my son will be excited and nervous about playing in front of that many people and his uncles who he has looked up to for awhile, but all in all I think it will be a really positive experience for him," Greg Thomas said. "Cause he won't get a chance to do this again."

Greg Thomas easily could have been named most valuable player of the Buffs' 1990 Orange Bowl victory over Notre Dame, which earned them a national title. Thomas intercepted two passes in the game and was one of the team leaders in tackles. Ultimately Johnson was named MVP when he came off the bench to replace starting quarterback Darian Hagan, who suffered a knee injury.

Thomas still holds the CU single-season record with four blocked kicks in the 1991 season. His third block that year came against Nebraska as time expired to preserve a 19-19 tie and give

the Buffs a share of the Big Eight Conference title. It was their third straight conference crown.

Thomas' daughter, Kai, is also traveling to Boulder to see her brother play the Buffs. Kai was born in Boulder when her father was still in school and just 20 years old.

"She was kind of a baby of a lot of guys on the team," Greg Thomas said. "They really had a hand in helping raise her. She has a special bond with Charles Johnson, Kanavis McGhee, Alfred Williams and Eric Bieniemy and a bunch of others of my teammates who knew her when she was born and when she was really young."

Thomas said he won't be cheering against the Buffs in their home opener just because his son is on the visitor's side. But he admitted the experience is going to be a strange one for him.

"I want my son to do well," he said. "This is the one that does put me in an awkward position because I'm a Buff at heart, but I want my son and his teammates to do well. I just want to be kind of neutral."

Central Arkansas plays in the Southland Conference in the Football Championship Subdivision, one division below major college football. But eight FCS teams already have upset teams from the Football Bowl Subdivision in the first week of the season.

The Buffs lost to an FCS team, Sacramento State, in Folsom Field last year. So they haven't exactly needed reminders from coach Mike MacIntyre about the need to take the Bears seriously this week.

Central Arkansas is only the fourth FCS team CU has played in the modern era of the program and the Buffs are just 1-2, with a loss in 2006 to Montana State and a last-minute win in 2008 over Eastern Washington to go with last season's game. The Bears and Kamane Thomas come to Boulder ranked No. 5 in the nation at the FCS level. They nearly beat Ole Miss on the road last season.

Greg Thomas said the Buffs will be tested Saturday.

"I know if they don't take this team seriously, they have enough weapons where they could make it tight if not pull one out," Thomas said. "You look at the first week of the season. FCS teams are coming to play each time they go to FBS stadiums. I think it won't be any different with Central Arkansas."

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Football: Central Arkansas excited for chance at CU Buffs

By Brian Howell Buffzone.com Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Buffzone.com

A year ago, UCA faced Mississippi -- it's first game against a Football Bowl Subdivision school since 1926. Although the Bears lost, 49-27, they are eager to get another opportunity this week against CU.

"For a few weeks, the buzz about town, the campus and community has been, 'Colorado, Colorado, Colorado.' It's here," UCA head coach Clint Conque said to the Log Cabin Democrat in Conway, Ark.

Part of UCA's excitement stems from the success that FCS schools have had against FBS schools. Last week, eight FCS schools pulled off upsets of FBS teams. CU is 1-2 all-time against the FCS.

"I think FCS football built up itself very well last week," Conque told the Log Cabin Democrat. "We have a great opportunity to continue to elevate the identity of our subdivision."

The Bears arrive in Boulder on Thursday and Conque said he wants to make sure his team stays well hydrated in an effort to handle the dry air.

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CU Buffs' offensive linemen block out CSU Rams with versatility

By John Henderson *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

Posted:

DenverPost.com

BOULDER — Colorado has its own version of Abbott and Costello's "Who's on First?" It's "Who's at Guard?" Add "Who's at Center" and you have an act playing at a football stadium near you.

The difference is Colorado's line isn't very funny. Ask Colorado State's defense. It wasn't laughing after Sunday's 41-27 loss at Sports Authority Field at Mile High.

CSU rushed everyone but Greek pledges and didn't get a sack on quarterback Connor Wood. Well, technically, CSU had one sack.

"I don't count intentionally grounding as a sack," Wood said.

It was a remarkable achievement considering, one, the Buffaloes gave up more sacks than any school in the country last year besides Washington State and two, due to injuries and attrition before and during camp, they shuffled bodies in the interior like a physical game of musical chairs.

As it turned out, the multitasking turned the Buffaloes' linemen into workable interchangeable parts.

"It sounds crazy," coach Mike MacIntyre said. "But if I learn how to play tackle, then I go play guard, I know what the tackle's doing. I know what the center's doing. I know what the guard's doing. I know how we all work together, and I think that helps."

With fewer than a dozen offensive linemen healthy in fall camp, Gus Handler, Daniel Munyer, Kaiwi Crabb, Alex Kelley and Marc Mustoe all learned two positions. Against CSU, left tackle Jack Harris, left guard Crabb, center Handler, right guard Munyer and right tackle Stephane Nembot played those positions all but one play.

"It's always good to be versatile, and in practice we get reps at multiple positions, just in case, so someone doesn't go in there cold, not knowing what to do," Handler said. "When game time comes, we each have as many reps as where we each started at."

The makeup of the team also helps. With the return of deep threat Paul Richardson, Colorado can keep defenses honest. CSU blitzed plenty, but nothing like a year ago when opponents could guard Colorado's wideouts man to man.

The pistol formation, putting Wood a couple of steps closer to center, also allowed him to get rid of the ball quicker. You can't get sacked if you don't have the ball.

"My hat's off to them," Wood said of his blockers. "Me not getting on the ground is a big deal. For all the pressure CSU brings, they did a good job of picking it up." **Footnote.** MacIntyre put senior

receiver Alex Turbow, a special-teams specialist, on scholarship. ... Safety Parker Orms received MacIntyre's first sledgehammer award, a weekly award given to the player with the best hit.

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Buffs AD Rick George detects "good energy" at Rocky Mountain Showdown

By John Henderson *The Denver Post* *The Denver Post*

Posted:

DenverPost.com

BOULDER — It certainly didn't have the electricity of a Texas Rangers playoff game. In fact, it probably didn't even have the buzz from the football showdowns in the late 1980s and mid-'90s. But for new Colorado athletic director Rick George, Sunday's Rocky Mountain Showdown showed enough signs of life to consider keeping it in Denver.

Changing the direction of the annual Colorado-Colorado State game, if that's what George wants to do, won't happen for awhile. George will get the numbers back next week from a game that drew 59,601, the third consecutive game in Denver under 60,000.

Aesthetically, however, the Rangers' former president of business operations liked what he saw more than just on the scoreboard.

"I thought there was really good energy in the stadium," George said. "Would I like to see more people there? Yes. But the energy was good."

Sports Authority Field at Mile High (Can someone please cut that inane "Mile High" off the stadium's name? Mile High was leveled.) seats 76,125. Colorado's Folsom Field seats 53,613; CSU's Hughes Stadium seats 32,500.

Many more people can watch the game in Denver. But the swatches of more than 15,000 empty seats did not look good on national cable television. Also, Colorado loses a valuable home game and Folsom Field suite holders must pay extra for suites in Denver.

"We have a lot more seats we can sell," George said. "We'll probably sit down in a week or so and look at the good and bad."

My problem with the game in Denver is the noise of 59,000 still pales in comparison to a packed Folsom or a packed Hughes. One of the most dramatic games I've ever experienced was in 2009 when Steve Fairchild brought his underdog Rams into Folsom and silenced a packed house.

Former Ram Mike Newell said one of his best college experiences was playing Colorado in pulsating Hughes in 1996.

"I've never seen Hughes so electrifying," Newell said, "and I haven't seen it so electrifying since."

And CSU lost.

If George can project the two schools buzzing around the Top 25 in the future, maybe Sports Authority Field will become electric. The numbers will tell the story. My eyes and ears tell another.

Take it back to the campuses.

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