



Bufs' Beatty has look of starting LB

Sophomore moved to top of depth chart in spring

By Kyle Ringo
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Double-takes are nothing new to B.J. Beatty. He's been getting odd looks from people he meets all his life.

He didn't always immediately fit in growing up in Oahu, Hawaii, with pale skin and long red hair, though he was every bit as Hawaiian as other island kids. Some picked on him for his unusual look. They called him Haole (howl-y), a slang term for a white person in Hawaii, and Carrot Top.

Beatty comes from a family with a rich and diverse heritage including Polynesian, German, Chinese and Irish roots, the latter providing his red locks. He said he sometimes questioned why he was the one born with an unusual look. He wanted to resemble his friends, whom he won over with his easy going nature and fun-loving personality.

His family helped him embrace who he is and brush off the teasing.

"We used to have a joke where we called me an inside-out coconut," Beatty said. "I'm white on the outside but brown on the inside. My dad used to refer to me as that."

In the spring Beatty was getting noticed for his play on the football field for the first time since joining the Colorado program in 2006. When spring practices ended in the third week of April, Beatty had become the surprise story on the team by working his way to the top of the depth chart at outside linebacker ahead of senior Brad Jones, a two-year starter.

He hopes to continue building on that progress when training camp opens for the Bufs on Tuesday.

He said several factors led to his improvement in the spring. It was his second spring in Boulder. He was beginning his third year in the program. He knew what to expect and what was expected from him. He was stronger and faster through his work in the weight room.

"I just felt like I needed to do what the coaches brought me here to do and finally just play," Beatty said.

He suddenly had a little extra burst and a little more sting in his hits. It came from the emotions he lived with each day. He allowed them to come out when he strapped on his helmet.

During the second week of spring practices, Beatty was called home to Hawaii to attend his grandfather's fu-neral. Beatty and Simeon Naeole were close throughout his childhood, but Simeon had been battling throat cancer for more than two years and he lost the good fight in early March without ever getting to see his grandson play a college game in person.

"He never came out here, and when he passed away, it just really hit me," Beatty said. "You know? Now he can watch me. Now I'm going to play for him and show him what I can do."

Beatty has a football pedigree. He is the nephew of former Colorado offensive lineman Chris Naeole, who has spent the past decade playing in the National Football League. Beatty said he talks with his uncle occasionally and updates him on the program's progress. Naeole gives him pointers, at least to the extent that an offensive lineman can aid a linebacker.

Beatty's father, Byron, was the Oahu player of the year in 1986 and played linebacker at Brigham Young in the late 1980s. Beatty was named after his dad (B.J. stands for Byron Jr.) and after equalling his father with an Oahu player of the year award of his own, he is hoping to exceed dad's accomplishments at the college level and maybe even play professionally.

Byron Beatty served as B.J.'s defensive coordinator through three years of high school when B.J. was a defensive end. He has seen his son gain confidence and improve as a player before.

"I'm watching what's happening now and it's like high school repeating itself," Byron Beatty said. "I think he's learning to become a linebacker because he was used to playing with his hand on the ground."

When training camp opens Beatty will be in the middle of one of the toughest position battles this year. The roster is loaded with talent at linebacker, so much so that defensive coaches will tinker with using more schemes requiring four linebackers on the field at one time.

Some of those looks could be unconventional such as using just two defensive linemen with four linebackers and five defensive backs. In many instances Beatty and Jones will be used as pass rushers from an outside linebacker position.

At least seven linebackers will be immediately in the mix for playing time when camp opens. How those players perform throughout August will determine who is on the field most when the season begins Aug. 31 at Invesco Field in Denver against Colorado State.

Jeff Smart and Michael Sipili will compete for playing time at one inside linebacker position. Marcus Burton and junior college transfer Shaun Mohler will enter camp as the favorites to earn the job at the other inside linebacker spot formerly manned by Jordon Dizon.

All of those players figure to see playing time this fall along with Beatty and Jones and it will be interesting to see how talented freshmen linebackers Jon Major and Doug Rippey fair. Another freshman, Lynn Katoa, might be the most talented linebacker on the roster, but is ineligible and will redshirt.



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