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sports

Songwriting a snap for talented CU sophomore

Austin Bisnow dreams of crafting great tunes as he splits time between music and football.

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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Austin Bisnow is a music major and a long snapper in football.

BOULDER — Not much gets past the creative mind of Colorado long snapper Austin Bisnow — certainly not a childhood irony. While leg fractures can derail a football career, his injury, suffered during the summer before seventh grade, turned out to be just the break he needed to get a music career on track.

Bisnow broke his leg days before he was to participate in a youth basketball camp in Washington, D.C., his hometown.

"After that happened, there wasn't much left to sign me up for. Everything was booked," recalled Bisnow, a 6-foot, 210-pound sophomore. "The only thing left was a class on writing music at the computer.

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"I'd been playing the flute since fourth grade and was always singing and dancing, but that's the first time I wrote music. It was like, 'Wow. I can do this!'"

Bisnow aspires to hit it big as a pop musician or songwriter but also remains serious about football. The former high school fullback worked this summer with Ryan Kuehl of the New York Giants and harbors dreams of someday earning an NFL contract as a long snapper. Considering that Bisnow, a 2006 walk-on, might be at least 50 or 60 pounds light for the job and remains a backup at CU, the long-snapper goal may be a longshot.

Bisnow always will have his music. Already he has produced two CDs of his own compositions that can be found on iTunes through bizzybiz.net. He goes by the stage name Austin Paul, using his middle name.

Friends also call him Bizzy Biz. So appropriate, because earning top grades in CU's music department and playing football can be a juggling act, with no time to drop the ball.

"I don't watch TV. I don't play video games. I don't really goof off," Bisnow said. "I like to have fun, but I spend a certain amount of time on music and a certain amount of time on football. And I'm focused on each."

"I've had a bike to get around campus. And I just got a moped. That saves a lot of time."

CU music professor Carter Pann continues to be amazed that Bisnow retains so much energy. Major-college football can feel like a full-time job. So can music. While other music students might be spending extra hours practicing with their instruments, Bisnow is sweating through two or three hours on a practice field.

But once Bisnow takes off his helmet, he transforms instantly and effortlessly into the world of music. It's called being driven, the professor said.

"Austin is probably the most unique music student CU has right now," Pann said. "He's studying at a school that teaches classical music, but he's a pop musician. So he's a little bit of a fish out of water that way. And he's an insanely talented songwriter. He's got the whole package."

Bisnow somehow finds time to sing in an undergraduate choir. Last year he played in a rock band. Twice he has won CU's campuswide "Idol" talent competition as a piano man.

CU football coach Dan Hawkins is all for it.

"I always tell players, 'Football is what you do, it's not who you are,'" Hawkins said. "I never want to box anybody in. You can play football and do a lot of things. With all our guys, I'm trying to get them to think bigger."

Hawkins has listened to Bisnow's songs on the Internet and talks to him about setting his goals high. Ambition has never been an issue for Bisnow.

"He's pretty talented," Hawkins said. "I told him that I don't know enough about music, but if he gets with the right people, which he will eventually, he's going to do something. . . . There are some awesome things that can happen if you blow the lid off the box."

Pann believes Bisnow could become the leader of a "boy band," although time may be running out. Bisnow will be almost 23 when he completes his athletic eligibility in two years.

Bisnow understands.

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"I'm actually focused now on breaking in as a writer for other artists, as opposed to breaking in as the artist," Bisnow said. "Ideally, I'd love to be the performer. I love being in front of an audience. But I've got such great songs. I'd love to get them to another artist."

This summer, Bisnow went to New York and talked to agents who represent songwriters with top-40 hits.

"I definitely think I'm going to make it," he said. "It's just a question of when. It's a matter of keep making connections, keep working hard, tightening it up. It will happen one of these days."

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Out-of-ordinary Buffaloes

Other CU players with nontraditional hobbies or aspirations:

Benjamin Burney, CB, Sr. — Plans to pursue a career in the film industry.

Jameson Davis, PK, Fr. — Majoring in Spanish after serving a two-year LDS mission in Guatemala.

Matt DiLallo, P, Jr. — Someday would like to enter Iron Chef America competition on The Food Network.

Conrad Obi, DE, redshirt Fr. — Georgia native plans to become an international environmentalist.

Josh Smith, WR, So. — Hopes to start his own clothing ("Josh Fly") and shoe ("PF Fly's") lines.

2008 CU football media guide

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cu football

their skill sets are."

Bufs roster takes shape

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post
Article Last Updated: 08/22/2008 02:09:38 AM MDT

BOULDER — Colorado released a depth chart for the season opener early Thursday evening, but coach Dan Hawkins again cautioned depth charts do not hold much meaning in his football program.

Several positions listed in the depth chart include a player "grouping" rather than a set pecking order.

Those include x-wide receiver, z-wide receiver, tight end and tailback.

"It's about groupings," Hawkins explained. "On defense, you're going to play four or five different personnel groups. On offense, you're going to play a gazillion.

"My basic promise to these guys is, if they can do something well and do it consistently, we're going to get them in the football game."

"In modern-day football, it's not, 'Who is the starting tailback? Who is the starting fullback?' Other than the quarterback and the offensive line, who are a little more traditional in that sense, for everybody else it's, 'hey, we're going to put them in where they're going to be used best.' We'll slide them around and move them around, depending on what

Colorado Football

- [Watch](#) video of CU coach Dan Hawkins on first day of practice
- [Watch](#) video of CU freshman running back Darrell Scott
- [Watch](#) video of CU beginning fall practice
- [Visit](#) the CU Stats Page
- [Visit](#) Tom Kensler's All Things Bufs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports
- [Play](#) Pick'em for the upcoming CU football game

Among the positions without groupings, there were several notable developments:

True freshman Maxwell Tuoti-Mariner and redshirt freshman Blake Behrens share the top spot at right guard.

"It's going to be fun competing against Max. The O-line is tight," Behrens said.

Redshirt freshman quarterback Matt Ballenger is listed ahead of senior Nick Nelson to back up Cody Hawkins.

Junior Jason Brace apparently has won a battle with sophomore Marquez Herrod for the starting job at right defensive end.

Junior Marcus Burton is listed ahead of junior college transfer Shaun Mohler at "will" (inside) linebacker.

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True freshman Patrick Mahnke from Mountain Vista High School is listed as the first backup to senior starter D.J. Dykes at strong safety.

Redshirt freshman Anthony Wright is cornerback Gardner McKay's top backup at right cornerback and redshirt freshman Anthony Perkins is listed as the top reserve behind senior Ryan Walters at free safety.

In addition to being in the tailback grouping, freshman Darrell Scott is listed as the third option as punter, behind junior starter Matt DiLallo and senior backup Tom Suazo.

Sophomore receiver Josh Smith tops the punt and kickoff return lists. Scott is listed third among kickoff returners, behind Demetrius Sumler.

The two other touted freshman runners — Ray Polk and Rodney Stewart — join Scott in the tailback grouping. The tight end grouping lists seven players, including injured junior Luke Walters. Seven wide receivers made those two groupings.

"We always drive the announcers crazy," Hawkins said. "They'd better know all the guys, because they'll probably all be in there at some point or another."

Captains named. Fullback Maurice Cantrell, center Daniel Sanders, free safety Ryan Walters and wide receiver Patrick Williams were named captains in a vote by the players. All four are fifth-year seniors. "To be a captain of a team I've wanted to play for all my life is definitely an honor," Walters said.

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Transition to TE a long one for Buff Devenny

Former quarterback making progress

By Kyle Ringo

Thursday, August 21, 2008

It has been 2½ years since he played the position every day, but Patrick Devenny still walks to the line of scrimmage thinking like a quarterback.

Sometimes it serves him well. Sometimes it can hurt real bad.

The fourth-year junior from Roseville, Calif., became a tight end in 2006 when coach Dan Hawkins took over in Boulder. Devenny was recruited to play quarterback by former coach Gary Barnett, who was fired following the 2005 regular season.

Devenny had never learned to block, run pass routes or the proper technique to catch the ball prior to his introduction to his new position. There was a long learning curve, sometimes longer than even he expected.

He played in six games last season but caught only one pass. It went for a touchdown. He knew there wouldn't be a lot of playing time with players such as Riar Geer, Tyson Devree and Joe Sanders on the depth chart ahead of him, but it still made for a long season. He's still looking for his first letter.

He admits there have been plenty of times he has wondered if he made the right decision to stick it out at CU instead of transferring elsewhere to remain a quarterback.

He always comes back to the same conclusion.

"Coming out of high school, I had a really good buddy who played at USC," Devenny said. "His main advice to me was, 'No matter where you go, choose a school not based off coaches cause you'll never know how long they'll be there. Choose a place that you love based on the atmosphere because that's where you're going to spend five years of your life, or four.'"

"Initially I did kind of think about transferring but I knew the opportunity with coach Hawkins and his staff and just being in Boulder I loved it too much and didn't want to go through the transfer process."

His decision might finally pay off this fall.

Devenny produced what appeared to be a breakout spring in which he led the team in the three main scrimmages with 12 receptions for 244 yards and three touchdowns. He averaged more than 20 yards per catch and seemed to repeatedly get the best of linebackers trying to cover him in the middle of the field.

He received the bulk of the repetitions in spring because of Geer's suspension for involvement in an off-campus fight and other highly recruited freshmen tight ends were still finishing up high school.

Geer was reinstated over the summer and freshmen Ryan Deehan and Ryan Wallace joined the team. When fall camp began more than two weeks ago, Devenny found himself in a dogfight once again for playing time. And once again, he heard coaches criticizing him for not being physical in his blocking and playing with confidence and aggression.

It's difficult to retrain a quarterback's mind.

"I think what it comes down to is my first year in football was freshman year of high school. I play four years at quarterback, and then I come here and get one fall and then get bounced around a little bit, which I was fine with," Devenny said. "But at the same time, when I go to play tight end, I'm going against kids like Mo Lucas and Abe Wright. It's kind of that learning curve. Then I have that quarterback mentality when I'm running my routes. I'm not playing full speed. I'm thinking too much, too. I just need to play fast and play with confidence."

After what he called a tough start to camp, Devenny has come around again over the past week. Tight ends coach Kent Riddle said after the second scrimmage of camp he knows what he can expect from both Geer and Devenny and both will play. It's possible one of the freshmen tight ends will avoid redshirting.

Devenny can be an annoying presence to a defense that is forced to worry about players such as wide receivers Josh Smith, Scotty McKnight and Patrick Williams, as well as running backs Demetrius Sumler, Rodney Stewart or Darrell Scott. When defenders bottle up those options, Devenny seems to find a hole somewhere in the middle of the field.

"I think I'm starting to get there," he said. "I still have a ton of stuff to work on. I know I've got a long way to go, but I'm starting to get more pleased with the way I'm performing."



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Buffs call on captains

Four seniors ready to lead team in own ways

By Kyle Ringo

Originally published 07:17 p.m., August 21, 2008

Updated 11:51 p.m., August 21, 2008

Four fifth-year seniors were voted team captains by their teammates Thursday as the Colorado football team winds down the final few days of training camp with an eye on game week, now just a few days away.

Wide receiver Patrick Williams, center Daniel Sanders, fullback Maurice Cantrell and safety Ryan Walters were selected captains by their teammates. All four were members of the 2004 recruiting class brought to Boulder by former coach Gary Barnett. On the same day he was named a team captain, Sanders was one of 43 centers from across the nation named the Rimington Award watch list. The award is given to the nation's best center each year.

Each captain said he was humbled by the selection.

Walters said he would do his best to live up to the standard set by previous captains during his time in the program. He said former CU quarterback Joel Klatt was the perfect example of what a captain should be. He also pointed to former linebacker Jordon Dizon as a more recent example to most of the team. Dizon was a captain last season.

"You can't be afraid to get in somebody's face and let them know they're doing wrong," Walters said. "On days when you're not totally feeling right, you've got to push through it. You've got to have a smile on your face and do all the things that come with being a captain."

Williams said it is an honor to be selected as a captain especially because his teammates did the voting. Williams is known as a calm, quiet personality, who is deeply spiritual. He kneels to pray every time he leaves the football field following practices and games. He said he will also apply some of what he has learned from previous captains, but he also wants to be himself because doing so earned him the right to serve in the role in the first place.

"I'm going to try my best, continue to do what I do and lead by example, just show the way and know the way," Williams said.

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins said above all else being a captain is about demonstrating leadership under all circumstances. He said he was not surprised by any of the four selections.

"To me, those guys have got to run that team," Hawkins said. "They've got to have enough guts to be able to say, 'Okay, if something is going on and I can't handle it. I've got to go get coach to handle it because that's how important it is.'"

"I'm into that leadership quotient. All the great football teams I've ever had, had great leadership."

Hawkins waited this year to have players vote for captains, but said he prefers having captains named by spring ball because he likes to be able to call them and council them. Hawkins said he doesn't necessarily believe a captain has to be a screamer or a guy with a bold personality. He said he often prefers the alternative.

"He has to be able to look at somebody and command respect," Hawkins said. "And he has to be willing, at times, to say some things. You can't just be silent all the time."

Hawkins and his staff also released the first depth chart since the beginning of camp.

The biggest surprise in the new depth chart might be junior Jason Brace, who is first at right defensive end ahead of sophomore Marquez Herrod. However, defensive line coach Romeo Bandison addressed the battle between those two earlier this week when he said, "Worst case scenario is they both play a lot."

There has been plenty of speculation throughout training camp about who might earn the starting jobs at cornerback a year after Terrence Wheatley and Ben Burney held down those jobs. Junior Cha'pelle Brown, who has served as the nickel back the past two seasons, is the starter at left cornerback and senior Garnder McKay is the starter on the right side.

Redshirt freshman Jalil Brown is now listed as the nickel back and the backup at left cornerback. Anthony Wright and Jimmy Smith are the second and third options at right cornerback. Smith has suffered back spasms much of the past week.

Redshirt freshman quarterback Matt Ballenger is listed second on the depth chart behind Cody Hawkins, but senior Nick Nelson has missed most of the past week of practices with a strained abdominal muscle. Nelson is listed third.

Coaches still have not made a decision about who might start at both guard spots. Junior Devin Head and redshirt freshman Shawn Daniels are co-starters at left guard and redshirt freshman Blake Behrens and true freshman Max Tuioti-Mariner are tied at right guard.

Redshirt freshman Matt Bahr is listed as the backup at right tackle behind sophomore Ryan Miller. True freshman Bryce Givens is the backup at left tackle behind Nate Solder. The reality is that if Solder was injured, Miller would likely switch to left tackle and Bahr would play right tackle.

Junior Kevin Moyd is listed second behind sophomore Demetrius Sumler in the running backs grouping. Freshmen Darrell Scott, Rodney Stewart and Ray Polk also are in the grouping. Scott is also listed as the third string punter.

Ten redshirt freshmen are listed in the two-deep depth chart, including place-kicker Jameson Davis, who will handle kickoffs while sophomore Aric Goodman handles field goals and extra points. Only two true freshmen are listed in the two-deep depth chart. They are safety Patrick Mahnke, who is the backup strong safety, and Tuioti-Mariner.

Sophomore wide receiver Josh Smith looks like he will handle both kickoff returns and punt returns.

True freshman tight end Ryan Deehan is one of six players listed in a "position grouping." The grouping

also includes fullback Maurice Cantrell and Jake Behrens. Fellow true freshman tight end Ryan Wallace is not listed in the grouping and is likely to redshirt.

Notable

The Buffs began work on the game plan for Colorado State on Thursday. True freshman quarterback Tyler Hansen served as the scout team quarterback, Dan Hawkins said. "Any time you play scout team, it's humble pie," said Hawkins, who played scout team as a junior at Cal-Davis. "It's not fun, but you have to do it. And good football teams, guys suck it up and do what it takes to help the team." ... Today is the final day of two-a-day practices this year with sessions scheduled in the morning and the evening.



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4 will lead Buffs

CU chooses 2008 captains

By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The Colorado football team announced its captains Thursday, and coach Dan Hawkins said the names chosen did not surprise him.

By player vote, CU selected fullback Maurice Cantrell, center Daniel Sanders, safety Ryan Walters and receiver Patrick Williams as its 2008 captains. All are fifth-year seniors from the program's 2004 recruiting class.

This is the 11th time in 119 seasons CU has chosen four players as season-long captains. CU won conference titles in three of those years: 1976, 1989 and 2001.

"He has to be a good player, but he has to be a guy that's going to have the respect of everybody else so he can say things to them and they're going to react, that he has enough compassion that he can reach out to somebody that needs it, that he has enough guts to get on somebody that needs it," Hawkins said about what he expects from captains.

Walters' father, Marc, played quarterback for the Buffs from 1986-89.

"Growing up, I wanted to be a Buff my whole life," Walters said. "Now to be a captain on the team I wanted to play for all these years is definitely an honor."

None of the four is known as a big yeller, as Hawkins said, but that is not a concern.

"We don't have a lot of yellors on our team," Hawkins said. "I like that. I'm kind of into the speak-softly-and-carry-a-big-stick mode."

CU released an updated depth chart Thursday that listed 28 freshmen and sophomores on the two-deep chart. No true freshmen are starters, but three are in the two-deep, including Bryce Givens at left tackle, Max Tuioti-Mariner at right guard and Patrick Mahnke at strong safety.

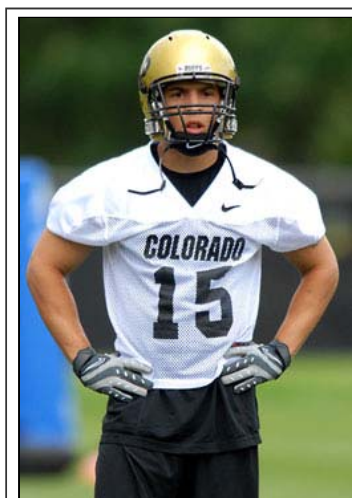
The starting guards are listed as Devin Head and Blake Behrens. The starting cornerbacks are Cha'pelle Brown and Gardner McKay, with Jalil Brown listed as the nickel back. Junior Jason Brace is listed as the starting right defensive end.

Kendrick Celestine is listed fourth at the Z wide receiver grouping, behind walk-on Steve Melton.

Running back Darrel Scott is listed as the third punter and third in the tailback grouping.

EXTRA POINTS: CU started game planning Thursday for its opener against Colorado State (Aug. 31, Invesco Field, 5:30 p.m., FSN). Hawkins said freshman Tyler Hansen is working as the scout-team quarterback. ... Former CU kicker Mason Crosby attended Thursday night's practice. Crosby and the Green Bay Packers play the Broncos tonight in an exhibition game in Denver.

Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog at timescall.com/blogs/ridgell. He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.



CU senior safety Ryan Walters has been voted one of four team captains for the Buffs this season. The others are fullback Maurice Cantrell, center Daniel Sanders and receiver Patrick Williams. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call file**



CU report: Buffs name captains

By B.G. Brooks

Thursday, August 21, 2008

Oh, captain, my captains

Receiver **Patrick Williams** admits he's "not the biggest vocal guy" on the Buffaloes football team. But how Williams conducts himself obviously speaks volumes to his teammates.

He was among four seniors elected by his peers Thursday as CU captains for 2008, joining safety **Ryan Walters**, center **Daniel Sanders** and fullback **Maurice Cantrell**.

"It's a big-time honor to think your teammates and peers think that much of you," said Williams, who learned of the honor when coach **Dan Hawkins** called on all four captains to lead stretching exercises before the evening practice. Hawkins said leadership comes in many forms, noting a team captain "has to be a good player, but he also has to have the guts to get on someone when it's called for." That Williams leads more by example is no drawback, said Hawkins: "The fact that he's not a big yeller . . . I don't care about that. I like that, a guy who's into a speak-softly- and-carry-a-big-stick mode."

Hawkins said other players also received votes.

The redshirt won't fit

Based on the second camp depth chart, the true freshmen with the best chance to play early include: Guard **Max Tuioti-Mariner**; tight end **Ryan Deehan**; tailbacks **Darrell Scott**, **Rodney Stewart** and **Ray Polk**; and safety **Patrick Mahnke**. Tackle **Ryan Dannewitz**, defensive end **Will Pericak** and defensive tackle **Curtis Cunningham** also appear on the depth chart but are No. 3 at their positions. And **Bryce Givens**, who has practiced primarily at left guard but is listed at left tackle, remains a redshirt candidate, although he's in a backup duel with **Ethan Adkins**.

Running backs coach **Darian Hagan** plans to meet with Polk today, noting, "Ray wants to play . . . but nothing's set in stone."

All lined up (almost)

The competition at both guard spots could run well into the season. It's the only position on offense or defense tagged with an "OR" on the depth chart for the starter - designating battles still under way for No. 1.

If one "OR" guy steps up, CU again could have a true freshmen guard - Tuioti-Mariner - starting. He's competing with redshirt freshman **Blake Behrens**, while redshirt freshman **Shawn Daniels** is pushing junior **Devin Head**. The other O-line starters: tackles **Nate Solder** (left), **Ryan Miller** (right), and center

Daniel Sanders.

Depth chart odds and ends

The highly touted Scott is listed behind **Demetrius Sumler** and **Kevin Moyd** and ahead of Stewart and Polk in the tailback grouping. . . . Scott is the No. 3 punter behind **Matt DiLallo** and **Tom Suazo**. . . . **Jimmy Smith**, who has battled back problems in camp, is No. 3 at right cornerback, trailing **Gardner McKay** and **Anthony Wright**. The top pair on the left side: the Browns (**Cha'pelle** and **Jalil**). . . . The top two punt returners: **Josh Smith** and D.J. Dykes. **The top two kick returners: Josh Smith and Sumler.**

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