



Bufs' O-line must solve WVU's 3-3-5 scheme

Grimes' unit struggled against Eastern Washington

By Kyle Ringo

Monday, September 15, 2008

It's hardly an ideal situation this week for the young Colorado offensive line to be facing the unconventional approach of the West Virginia defense.

The Bufs are coming off an ugly outing against Eastern Washington and could use more time on the field together before attempting to solve all the problems the Mountaineers' 3-3-5 scheme presents.

Fortunately, there are probably few coaches around the nation more familiar with getting the 3-3-5 blocked than CU offensive line coach Jeff Grimes. He came to CU in 2007 after three seasons at Brigham Young where he faced the zany New Mexico version of the defense annually.

Grimes spent his final two seasons in Provo, Utah, working for head coach Bronco Mendenhall, who was hired away from New Mexico where he served as defensive coordinator. Mendenhall tested Grimes' line each day.

"Every day in practice was like a Chinese fire drill," Grimes said. "Those guys were all over the place. West Virginia runs a little bit milder version of it."

That might be true, but the Mountaineers are still no picnic. CU offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said the Bufs have had a difficult time getting the scout team to accurately replicate the West Virginia scheme because it is so much different from what CU players regularly practice.

Helfrich said in the first two games this season, West Virginia has used a variety of blitzes and provided the Bufs with plenty to study.

"So far this season at one time or another they've brought every single guy except the free safety," Helfrich said. "That's where they try to create the havoc."

Grime said he has spent the past week multitasking. He's trying to correct mistakes made against Eastern Washington while spending plenty of time on the Mountaineers. He said the last outing for his group was forgettable.

The Bufs managed only 90 rushing yards and 2.7-yards per carry average. They gave up two sacks, four quarterback hurries and 11 tackles for losses.

Two freshman -- Max Tuioti-Mariner and Blake Behrens -- started at guard and Nate Solder, who is the equivalent of a freshman because he's in a new position this season, made his second start at tackle.

"I really think the problems that we had in the last game weren't due to preparation," Grimes said. "I think they were more due to guys, for whatever reason, getting in that position where they got rattled early, a couple guys did, and kind of lost their technique."

Grimes said more guys are in the mix for playing time this week with junior Devin Head back from a one-game suspension and sophomore Keenan Stevens recovered from a minor shoulder injury that prevented him from playing against Eastern Washington.

The Mountaineers are coming off a 24-3 loss to East Carolina. The 3-3-5 scheme entices offenses to run the ball and requires speed to get players to the ball carrier quickly.

East Carolina managed to run effectively, which is encouraging for CU tailbacks Demetrius Sumler, Darrell Scott and Rodney Stewart, who have been in and out of the CU lineup.

Notable

Hawkins said true freshman running back Rodney Stewart and freshman quarterback Tyler Hansen have both been impersonating West Virginia quarterback Pat White in practices. He said both have done a good job, but it's impossible to get a completely accurate picture of the threat White presents. ...

Hawkins summed up the experienced WVU offensive line this way: "Most of their experience is there in that o-line. They've had a lot of guys who have played a lot of good football and are used to pounding it. They get after you." ...

Hawkins said seven members of the coaching staff went out recruiting Friday night, including himself. ...

Every player who left town Saturday made it back for Sunday's practice.



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Eye on: West Virginia at Colorado

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6:30 p.m. Thursday, ESPN

For the record: The Mountaineers, under first-year coach Bill Stewart, are 1-1 and ranked No. 21 in The Associated Press poll. The Mountaineers lost 24-3 at East Carolina in their last game on Sept. 6.

Streiking: West Virginia has been ranked 45 consecutive weeks in the AP media poll, moving up from No. 25 to No. 21 this week without playing.

Who's hot: Senior QB Pat White has had better games (11-for-18 passing for 72 yards), but with his 97 yards rushing against East Carolina he passed Kareem Wilson (Ohio, 1995-98) and Dee Dowis (Air Force, 1986-89) and moved into fourth place on the NCAA career QB rushing list with 5,666 yards.

Who's not: The Mountaineers' defense. Never mind the East Carolina game, West Virginia was outgained 399 yards to 354 by Villanova, an FCS (formerly called Division I-AA) member.

Key stat: In time of possession, West Virginia has controlled the ball 46:57 in two games compared with a combined 73:03 for Villanova and ECU.

FYI: Stewart knows his way around the Front Range. He coached the Air Force defensive line from 1990-

93.

Injury report: Senior middle linebacker Reed Williams (recovering from offseason surgeries on both shoulders) missed the first two games.

Coachspeak: "That (East Carolina) game's behind us. We'll make corrections, press onward and go. We're game-planning Colorado today. They have a fine team. They're hitting on all cylinders." — Stewart, on last Monday's Big East coaches teleconference

Tom Kensler, *The Denver Post*

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colorado

Suspension done, Buffs' Geer ends idleness

An assault charge netted the junior TE a two-game penalty, but he returns Thursday against West Virginia.

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 09/14/2008 11:38:42 PM MDT

BOULDER — Eight-and-a-half months have passed since Colorado junior tight end Riar Geer last played in a game, the Independence Bowl. It seems longer than that, he said Sunday after a 90-minute practice.

On Thursday night, Geer gets back at it. The Buffaloes host No. 21 West Virginia at Folsom Field in a game to be televised nationally by ESPN.

Geer didn't play in the spring game. He was suspended after his March arrest for participating in an off-campus brawl and said the suspension carried over to the first two regular-season games. Geer chose to undergo a knee scope to repair a torn meniscus and has been cleared to play Thursday.

"Having started the past two years and then to sit out was really tough," Geer said. "What a great game to come back to, against West Virginia. Thursday night. 'Blackout' (CU fans have been asked to wear all

black). National TV. It doesn't get much better than that."

In a plea deal last month, a second-degree felony assault charge was dropped in exchange for Geer pleading guilty to third-degree assault, a misdemeanor.

"I feel so bad about it," Geer said. "I put the university, my family and my teammates in a bad spot. I embarrassed a lot of people with my actions on one dumb night."

Tight ends coach Kent Riddle said Geer will be in the rotation Thursday.

"It's great to have his experience," Riddle said.

Being Pat White.

Two true freshmen, quarterback Tyler Hansen and tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart, have been trying to imitate West Virginia senior quarterback Pat White during practices.

"We've got nobody like him," CU coach Dan Hawkins said of White.

Footnote.

Seven CU coaches, including Hawkins, took advantage of the open weekend and fanned out to evaluate potential recruits.

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Buffs brace for first of many mobile QBs

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Page 95 of West Virginia's media guide declares Pat White the "nation's most versatile quarterback."

So there you have it.

Colorado will have a good idea whether that's myth or reality after it hosts No. 21 West Virginia on Thursday night (6:30 p.m., ESPN). Buffs' defensive coordinator Ron Collins said White, who rushed for 1,335 yards and threw for 1,724 in 2007, is "probably the best running quarterback in the country."

He's also not the only running quarterback looming ahead for CU.

Games with Kansas, Missouri, Iowa State, Oklahoma State and Nebraska await, and since every one of them has a quarterback who can scoot pretty well, too, it'd bode well if the Buffs have a good plan not only for Thursday, but in October and November, too.

"You put pressure in his face and you tackle him when he goes to take off," CU defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "It's not rocket science."

Said safety D.J. Dykes: "Thursday is going to be a good measuring stick for how good our defense is this year."

So far, the defense hasn't been bad, though Colorado State and Eastern Washington don't figure to be the stiffest tests CU takes in 2008. It's allowing 304 yards per game, 2.5 per carry and 59 rushing yards a game.

White is 36-for-51 for 280 yards, 208 of which came in West Virginia's season-opening defeat of Villanova. He entered the year sixth all time among quarterbacks in rushing yards with 3,506, ahead of Nebraska's Eric Crouch, who finished with 3,434. A few Buffs described White as "Michael Vick-like."

The statistic that should occupy the Buffs most is West Virginia's 27-5 record in games he has started.

"It's no secret he's a very elusive guy; he's very fast," Hypolite said. "He makes a lot of plays on his feet with his arm, too. That's the thing he's very underrated for because people don't notice that."

If the Buffs have one thing going for them this week, it might be this.

"He's no Vince (Young)," Hypolite said.

The former Texas quarterback tormented CU with his running and throwing, and the 6-foot-2, 192-pound White is among the best dual threats it has seen since. Freshman quarterback Tyler Hansen and sophomore Rodney Stewart are doing their best White impressions for the Buffs' scout offense in practice, and are doing well, according to coach Dan Hawkins. It's not close to a total duplication, though.

"It's like when we played Colorado State, you guys were going, 'who's playing Kory Sperry?'" Hawkins said. "We got nobody like him. ... You just do the best you can."

Several Buffs said the key will be to keep White as well contained as possible and minimize big plays. The biggest CU has allowed in 2008 was Brynson Brown's 43-yard catch-and-carry of cornerback Jalil Brown in the Eastern Washington game.

"We have to be able to close the net on (White) and not give him too many lanes to run in," Collins said. "Do we have the total answer for that? I don't know. That'll be seen," said linebacker Jeff Smart. "Everyone has to love that opportunity to compete against him. It'll be interesting. It'll be fun."

EXTRA POINTS: West Virginia (1-1) climbed four spots in the Associated Press poll despite not playing last week. ... Collins said sophomore cornerback Jimmy Smith will play Thursday for the first time in 2008. Though Smith won't start, Collins said his return is helpful, saying CU missed Smith in a lot of areas. ... Hawkins said all the players who left town for the weekend returned by Sunday's practice without incident. ... Hawkins said he and seven coaches left town Friday to recruit.

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.



CU report: Guards at game time

By Rocky wire reports

Sunday, September 14, 2008

Offensive line coach **Jeff Grimes** said Sunday he's reverting to his Game 1 procedure on naming a pair of starting guards for the game against No. 21 West Virginia on Thursday at Folsom Field (6:30 p.m., ESPN).

That is, he will make a game-time decision. His field includes junior **Devin Head**, who missed the Eastern Washington game because of a one-game suspension, redshirt freshman **Blake Behrens** and true freshman **Max Tuioti-Mariner**.

Asked how Head has performed in trying to return to the starting lineup, Grimes answered, "OK, and I'll leave it at that."

He also said Tuioti-Mariner is "making progress every day. . . . He's in the same position **Ryan (Miller, tackle)** was last year, but we were able to take our time with him."

Miller moved into the starting lineup about midseason, but Tuioti- Mariner started in Game 2.

Hard to duplicate

If having a scout team player emulate Colorado State tight end **Kory Sperry** was difficult, having someone play West Virginia quarterback **Pat White** might be twice as hard.

Coach **Dan Hawkins** said his pseudo Whites in practice have been freshman quarterback **Tyler Hansen** and freshman tailback **Rodney "Speedy" Stewart** - Han- sen to emulate White's passing and Stewart to emulate White's running ability.

"They've both done a pretty good job, but when you have a great player like (White). . . . you just do the best you can," Hawkins said.

Etc.

* The Mountaineers were ranked No. 8 in The Associated Press preseason and Week 1 polls. Their Week 2 loss to East Carolina dropped them to No. 25, and their Week 3 bye bumped them to No. 21.

* Secondary coach **Greg Brown** said the status of cornerback **Anthony Wright** (ankle) likely will be a game-time decision, but corner **Jimmy Smith** (back) will play.

* All players who left town during the weekend returned safely, Hawkins said. Among those were receivers **Scotty McKnight** and **Josh Smith** and tailback **Darrell Scott**, who went home to California.