



Woelk: A mixed bag of gifts for sports folks

Once again, we were provided a list of what area sports personalities found gift-wrapped under their Christmas tree on Tuesday.

From the looks of the list, Santa took that naughty and nice thing quite seriously this year. ...

Bronco coach Mike Shanahan -- A brand new scapegoat to take the rap for another disappointing season. Shanny has now had more losing seasons than playoff wins since No. 7 danced off into the predominantly orange sunset. Sooner or later, he'll have to point that finger at himself. But until then. ...

Buff coach Dan Hawkins -- A top-20 recruiting class, a contract extension, and fourth-and-4 (just to see what he decides to do with it).

Buff hoops coach Jeff Bzdelik -- Patience, patience, patience. Some for him, some for CU's fans and some for the media.

All of the seniors on CU's football team -- A special place in the hearts of Buff fans. These guys endured more than any bunch deserves, and they kept their heads up through everything. A class that lives up to the name in every respect.

CU women's hoops coach Kathy McConnell-Miller -- A continued spot in the AP Top 25 and more fans to witness the resurgence of her program.

Buff athletic director Mike Bohn -- No more visits from the Ghost of Past Administrations. That should finally mean a year without the words "lawsuit," "recruiting scandal" and "NCAA sanctions" in CU's jargon.

Buff QB Cody Hawkins -- He asked Santa for a few tenths of a second clipped off his 40-yard dash time. Sadly, not even the jolly old elf himself has that kind of power.

Former CSU coach Sonny Lubick -- A long, healthy and happy retirement. **New CSU coach Steve Fairchild --** Even half the success that his predecessor enjoyed.

Nugget star Carmelo Anthony -- Melo asked for a playoff series win. Santa's still adding up the naughty vs. nice tally.

Nuggets star Kenyon Martin -- A contract that requires him to actually play rather than getting paid for sitting on the bench with the injury du jour.

Bronco QB Jay Cutler -- A pep talk from John Elway.

Former Bronco QB Jake Plummer -- He always wanted the media to leave him alone. Finally, he's getting his wish.

CU prez Hank Brown -- Recognition for everything he's done for a university that desperately needed strong leadership and someone willing to make the tough call.

CU Board of Regents -- The ability to find someone who can fill Brown's shoes.

Rockies manager Clint Hurdle -- The skipper asked for another dose of that magic dust he sprinkled on his team in September. Santa said that's a once-in-a-lifetime gift. This year, Hurdle has to actually manage.

Rockies outfielder Matt Holliday -- A pair of glasses for the national media, who were apparently blind to what he accomplished last season.

Rockies shortstop Troy Tulowitzki -- See above.

Avalanche coach Joel Quenneville -- A healthy Joe Sakic.

Avalanche star Joe Sakic -- See above.

Former CU coach Rick Neuheisel -- Another head coaching opportunity.

CU fans who still hold a grudge against Neuheisel -- The ability to let it go.

CU sports info guru Dave Plati -- Recognition from CU's administration that reflects what Plato's peers and sports writers around the nation already know: Mainly, that he's one of the best in the biz.

Former Camera sports editor Gary Baines -- Success in his new venture, and plenty of time to spend with his family.

American soldiers everywhere -- Our gratitude for their sacrifice.

And finally ...

Sports fans everywhere -- The realization that sports are just that -- a game, not life or death. Enjoy them, revel in them, have fun with them -- and then focus your real energy on things that truly make a difference in your lives. Say, maybe, family and friends.



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