



## CU report: Homework on Buffs' plate

By B.G. Brooks

Monday, September 8, 2008

With 10 days before No. 25 West Virginia visits Folsom Field, the Colorado Buffaloes are trying to zero in on the offensive changes wrought by the personnel changes in the Mountaineers' coaching staff.

Where to start?

On a recruiting trip in the spring to Florida, secondary coach **Greg Brown** had a chance meeting with South Florida coach **Jim Leavitt**, whose team beat West Virginia in 2006 and 2007 in Big East Conference play.

But Brown, a longtime friend of Leavitt, says that meeting might not have paid the dividends originally hoped for.

When former Mountaineers coach **Rich Rodriguez** left for Michigan, he took offensive coordinator **Calvin Magee** with him.

Rodriguez's successor, **Bill Stewart**, hired **Jeff Mullen** from Wake Forest as West Virginia's new offensive coordinator, leaving Brown and the Buffs waiting until the 2008 season started to see how Mullen utilized quarterback **Pat White**, tailback **Noel Devine** and the Mountaineers' other skill players.

"Schematically, we don't know how much (of the former offense) applies now," Brown said Monday. "One thing that plays a part in it is how comfortable (White) is in a totally new system. What was his input? Did he say, 'I want to keep this, this and this'? There's no way of knowing."

But Brown is certain of White and Devine's ability, comparing White's athleticism to former Falcons quarterback **Michael Vick** and noting Devine's perimeter speed made his high school highlight reel "look like a video game."

West Virginia's spread frequently uses White in an empty backfield, daring defenses to employ an extra man as a run stopper.

"Then, if you're honoring the run, he'll throw behind you," Brown said, adding the Mountaineers favor "choice routes" - routes that allow White and his receivers to react to the defense.

Mullen, a quarterbacks coach for five seasons at Wake Forest but a first-time offensive coordinator, apparently wants to expand West Virginia's offense enough to prevent defenses such as South Florida's or Pittsburgh's, which stuffed the Mountaineers 13-9 in one of the bigger upsets last season, from rendering it one-dimensional.

CU's defensive coaches will take what they can from East Carolina's 24-3 win against West Virginia on Saturday, as will Stewart, who told *The Charleston (W.Va.) Gazette*, "What I want to get back to is that belly option, where Pat can read it, pull it or pitch it. We need to do more of that, and that's what we're going to work on very, very hard this week. The (zone read for White) has not been too bad, but the belly option is what we're lacking."

Just one more thing for CU to ponder.

### **Brown honored**

Buff's cornerback **Cha'pelle Brown**, whose 27-yard interception for a touchdown with 1:44 to play helped lift CU to its 31-24 win against Eastern Washington, was chosen the Big 12 Conference's co-defensive player of the week.

Brown, a junior from La Puente, Calif., also made six solo tackles, including two third-down stops, and broke up two passes. He is the first CU player to be honored by the Big 12 this season.

Brown shared the weekly honor with Kansas State junior defensive back **Courtney Herndon**, who returned a fumble 43 yards for a touchdown, blocked a punt that was recovered for a touchdown and intercepted a pass that set up another score in the Wildcats' 69-10 rout of Montana State.

CU coach **Dan Hawkins** said Brown, in addition to having "good ball skills," has "always been a tough, smart player - people underestimate him."

### **Back to work**

Given Monday off, the Buffs will resume work today through Friday, take Saturday off and start game-week preparations Sunday. Hawkins said the extended preparation time for the Mountaineers would focus on "cleaning up little things. We're so young, different issues crop up. But they're battling, and their attitude is good."

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**TIMES-CALL**

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## CU offense a work 'in progress'

*By Patrick Ridgell*

*Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — What's tantalizing about running a no-huddle offense on a team with good talent is the excitement it can bring, the potential for big games, lots of points. Just one thing, though. No one ever said putting in a no-huddle offense is easy.

Two games into 2008, that appears to be the lesson the Colorado Buffaloes are learning. When factoring in the variables CU has dealt with while installing a new offense, it's a small wonder the Buffs have scored seven offensive touchdowns and averaged 359 yards in their two games.

Saturday's win included mistakes offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich called "self-inflicted" and fixable. He described the offense as "in progress." Through two games, is this where he thought, in terms of execution and playbook knowledge, it'd be?

"I don't know," Helfrich said. "After the Colorado State game, we're frustrated. After this win (over Eastern Washington), we're frustrated. If we keep getting these lessons in wins, that's great.

"We need to reassess everything in these next couple days of practice. We'll prepare for West Virginia and hone in on what we need to fix. But our guys are battling and there are just some plays we need to make and some plays we need to take advantage of."

Helfrich called turnovers huge. CU has committed four in two games. That figure could be worse — CU has fumbled nine times, but only lost two.

Ball security is probably the top concern. Others abound, though. Consider:

CU entered Saturday missing five offensive linemen it planned in July to have, and playing freshmen guards. Devin Head returns Sept. 18 when the Buffs host West Virginia (6:30 p.m., ESPN). Without Head, Erick Faatagi (academics) and Mike Iltis (torn ACL), CU lacked the three who arguably could be its top guards.

Granted, Faatagi never played, and Iltis is a redshirt freshman. Still, more options at guard wouldn't hurt. Offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said the entire line did not perform well Saturday.

If it's any consolation for the Buffs, Texas Tech coach Mike Leach, whose Red Raiders beat Eastern Washington on Aug. 30, said Monday that Eastern Washington had a defensive line that's as fast as any they'll face in 2008.

One starting tackle, Nate Solder, was a tight end last year and is learning on the fly. CU is without two reserve tackles, Sione Tau (academics) and Ethan Adkins (indefinite suspension).

True freshmen running backs Darrell Scott and Rodney Stewart are getting most of the carries. They are uncertain in some situations, particularly pass blocking. Coaches like Demetrius Sumler's reliability, but he had only two carries



Colorado running back Darrell Scott comes down with a first down against Eastern Washington on Saturday. True freshmen Scott and Rodney Stewart are getting most of the carries for the team.

**Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

against Eastern Washington, and 12 through two games. Scott and Stewart have 24 and 13.

Playbook knowledge appears spotty. The strange example from Saturday came in the second quarter, when sophomore receiver Josh Smith caught a touchdown pass after running the wrong route and ending up half-a-field away from where he should have been.

Finally, quarterback Cody Hawkins is as experienced as a third-year sophomore can be. But he's still a sophomore, running an offense that was put in last spring.

CU, like many teams before, wants to increase the experience level of inexperienced players at an accelerated pace. Solutions are hard to find.

"The funny part about our offense is our wily veterans are Scotty McKnight and Cody Hawkins, that are both sophomores," Helfrich said.

"We know they're going to make mistakes. It's just for them to have the confidence that it's just one mistake and not letting that carry over into the second or the 10th or the 20th player after that. That's the battle for any young guy."

Asked if he intends to streamline the playbook, Helfrich said: "Yes and no. ... As far as all of those correctable things, we need to fix them. Just kind of sharpen the sword the little bit of the stuff we can control.

"Other teams are going to make plays and do some things that are going to cause us issues.

The stuff that we think we're pretty locked in, that's the stuff we need to execute every single time, and we didn't do that (Saturday)."

**EXTRA POINTS:** CU cornerback Cha'pelle Brown was named Big 12 Defensive Co-Player of the Week on Monday. Brown's interception return for a touchdown was Saturday's winning score.

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college football

## CU's Brown nets Big 12 award

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

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CU's Cha'pelle Brown (29) scores on an interception Saturday in a win over Eastern Washington. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

Colorado junior cornerback Cha'pelle Brown, who scored the game-winning points Saturday in the 31-24 victory over Eastern Washington, was selected Monday as Big 12 Conference co-defensive player of the week.

Brown returned an interception 27 yards for a touchdown with 1:44 remaining in the fourth quarter to put Colorado ahead for the first time.

"Cha'pelle has always been a very smart player," CU coach Dan Hawkins said Monday on the Big 12 coaches teleconference. "I think sometimes people underestimate him a little bit (Brown is 5-feet-7, 180 pounds). But he's one of those guys that is very tough, very smart, works very hard. He has really good ball skills. He's one of those guys that always knows what's going on."

Brown recorded six tackles in the game, all solo. Two were third-down stops. He also broke up two passes.

He shared the weekly defensive award with Kansas State defensive back Courtney Herndon, who returned a fumble for a touchdown and blocked a punt against Montana State.

Oklahoma State wide receiver Dez Bryant earned offensive player of the week honors. Wide receiver-kick returner Niles Paul of Nebraska was named special teams player of the week.

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cu notes

## Mountaineers fight early-season woes

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

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West Virginia coach Bill Stewart faces the challenge of recharging his team after an upset loss to East Carolina.  
(Sara D. Davis, The Associated Press)

The honeymoon between first-year West Virginia coach Bill Stewart and Mountaineers fans and media apparently has ended after two games.

The first question posed to Stewart during Monday's Big East teleconference came from a writer with Blue and Gold News, a publication that covers

the program. The reporter went straight to the point.

"What in the world happened?" Stewart was asked, in reference to WVU's 24-3 loss at East Carolina on Saturday.

"This was the second game of the season," Stewart replied. "That's what I don't understand about what's going on with our society. Before we get to Game 13 (a bowl game), we'd better take care of Game 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and so on."

"Next question, please."

West Virginia (1-1), a Fiesta

### Colorado Football

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Bowl winner over Oklahoma last season, dropped this week from No. 8 to No. 25 in The Associated Press poll. The Mountaineers play at Colorado (2-0) on Sept. 18.

Stewart was promoted from associate head coach and quarterbacks coach in January after serving as the Mountaineers' interim head coach for the Fiesta Bowl following the messy departure of Rich Rodriguez to Michigan.

In addressing another question on the teleconference, Stewart acknowledged being "frustrated" by his team's lack of emotion against East Carolina.

"I told the team (Sunday): 'We have a Sugar, a Gator, and a Fiesta Bowl ring. What's our ring going to be this year?' " he said.

As for criticism he has received, Stewart said: "If we have fans worrying about their motel room in December or January (for a bowl game), they have the wrong agenda. They'd better take care of Game 1-2-3-4. If they jump off the bandwagon, well, they jump off. That's OK.

"We're going to fight like heck, do the best we can and go out there to Boulder and try to come away with a win. That's as simple as I can make it."

## Footnotes.

CU coach Dan Hawkins said tight end Riar Geer (suspension, knee scope), guard Devin Head (suspension) and cornerback Jimmy Smith (back problem) will be available for the West Virginia game. . . . CU junior cornerback Cha'pelle Brown was named Big 12 Conference co-defensive player of the week. He scored the winning points Saturday in the 31-24 victory over Eastern Washington by returning an interception 27 yards for a touchdown with 1:44

remaining. . . . Hawkins said he has already talked to his team about the celebration penalty called against Washington quarterback Jake Locker that led to a blocked PAT and a Brigham Young victory. "It's a tough situation," Hawkins said Monday on the Big 12 coaches teleconference. "The kid was excited. But I guess that's the rule, so we've got to follow it."

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