



Woelk: Easy way out apparently not Scott's way

By Neill Woelk

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Good for Darrell Scott.

Almost as soon as he didn't rush for 250 yards and four touchdowns in his first game as a Buffalo, the whispers began. Anonymous Internet trolls and folks with an axe to grind couldn't wait to hint that the Colorado running back would/should transfer.

Not that there was any reliable information to support the rumors. It was simply new ammunition for the same old crowd, those people who publicly profess to support a certain franchise or program, but privately pray for its failure in a twisted pursuit of false self-esteem.

Wednesday evening, Scott put those rumors to rest. In spite of a freshman season that has been nothing like he envisioned, Scott told the Camera's Kyle Ringo that he had no plans to be anywhere but Boulder next fall.

Take it for what it's worth. Scott was a man of his word throughout the recruiting process, and if he says his intentions are to remain at Colorado, nobody has any reason not to believe him.

Good for Scott -- and not for the reasons you may think.

Good for Scott because for the first time in his athletic career, he's faced adversity and has made the decision to battle it head on.

Certainly, the easy thing for Scott to do would be to leave. The Buffs, currently on life-support in their bid for a bowl game, have not enjoyed the kind of success to which Scott has become accustomed. Neither has it been the type of year Scott is used to having in terms of personal numbers.

He's been injured. He's been criticized. He's been questioned. He's spent time on the bench while a less-celebrated but more productive freshman grabbed the spotlight. It's been enough that any 19-year-old youngster might be ready to question his original commitment.

But apparently, it's not been enough to convince Scott to take the easy way out -- and that's what a transfer would be, the easy way out.

No doubt, there are plenty of other programs that would greet last year's top-rated prep running back with open arms. Promises would be made. Scott could choose to walk away, start anew and hope that he would be able to duck adversity at his next stop.

But Scott has apparently decided that the best way to deal with tough times is the way he deals with linebackers and defensive linemen: head on. Don't duck, don't quit.

It speaks to his character. (It also speaks volumes about his mother, who quite clearly raised her son the right way. Honor your commitments, don't quit, keep your priorities in order and do the right thing. Simple rules, difficult to live by.)

As for the peripherals, it's also good news for CU. No doubt, it would have been damaging for the Buffs to lose a high-profile recruit so soon. Every other coach in the nation would have had recruiting ammunition to use against Colorado, and the loss would likely have been a liability in the chase for every player on CU's list in the foreseeable future.

As for on-the-field results -- the bet here is that Scott will take care of that in the next couple of years. Anyone who saw him play saw enough glimpses, enough flashes of the talent he possesses to know that he will be not just a good player, but a great player.

There will be plenty of fall afternoons when Scott carries the day for the Buffaloes.

But down the road, he will run into more adversity. Maybe in college, maybe in the NFL. Even the greatest of players hit times of self-doubt, those moments when they question their circumstances.

The next time it happens, though, Scott will know he's met troubled times before and battled through them.

He did not take the easy way out.

Good for Darrell Scott.



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CU's Scott: No plans to transfer

Buff RB says this season has been "learning experience"

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Colorado freshman running back Darrell Scott says he expects to play against Nebraska next week in the Buffs' must-win, regular-season finale.

And for those wondering whether a frustrating season has soured him on CU and Boulder, Scott just rolls his eyes. He's planning to play against the Cornhuskers next year, too.

Scott says rumors he might leave CU for another program following the season are bogus.

"I don't know what those people are talking about," Scott said. "Whatever they're talking about, it's bull. If I wasn't going to be here, I wouldn't have decided to come to Colorado. It's as simple as that. I'm here.

"That's what people do. They talk. They haven't had one snap of football and they talk, but what can I do? Just play and ignore all the criticism."

It has been a trying time for a young man who had enormous expectations thrust upon him from the minute he donned a CU cap on national television last February and proclaimed he would be a Buff.

He joined the program in late July with many believing he would simply don his No. 2 jersey, throw on a helmet and be good for 150 yards and two touchdowns a game from Day One. He remained grounded.

When media members picked him as the preseason newcomer of the year in the Big 12 Conference he openly questioned their thinking by saying he hadn't even put on shoulder pads yet.

He has been plagued by injuries and has had to learn to play through pain for the first time in his life. A knee, a groin, a hamstring and an ankle have slowed him at different times this season. The ankle has been most troubling and he will probably spend the next week before game day with his fingers crossed hoping it doesn't get turned or stepped on again.

"I'm kind of glad I got injured really because it helped me in some areas I thought I needed to work on," he said. "It made me sit down and actually do what I needed to do and that was to settle down and look at some film and just get mentally tough."

Scott also acknowledges the college game offered a bit of a wake-up call in terms of what it takes to be successful at levels beyond high school. He has an appreciation for film study now that he didn't quite grasp when he joined the program in late July.

Scott uses two words over and over again when talking about his first season. He calls it a "learning

experience" most often and occasionally a "humbling experience."

Running backs coach Darian Hagan recruited Scott and became somewhat of a father figure to him in the process. Since Scott arrived in school, Hagan has consistently challenged him in every way. He has asked him to become more of a student of the game. He has asked him to play hurt. He has asked him to put aside his ego while fellow freshman Rodney Stewart played in front of him.

Hagan tells Scott, who eventually hopes to play in the NFL, that if he hopes to earn a job there, he has to treat each day of his college career like a job.

"I think he has handled it well," Hagan said. "I think it has humbled him in the fact that he hasn't been able to do what he's done his entire life. He's having to study more. He's having to put in a little more effort than what he's had to do in the past."

Hagan said he has seen the frustration on Scott's face at times this season and he has had a help rebuild his confidence at times. He said every times Scott gets the ball he hopes for good things for him.

Hagan said one of the most difficult times was last week during the Oklahoma State game. Scott wanted to play but hadn't practiced most of the week leading up to the game. So coaches made him watch the entire game from the sideline.

"I don't think it has stunted his growth," Hagan said. "The biggest thing he has to do is concentrate. When you're hurt and especially when you're not practicing, the easiest thing to do is not pay attention fully because, 'It's not me doing the deal.' That's the thing he has to understand is even though you're not participating in practices, you still have to be involved mentally."

Hagan said he also has heard and read speculation about Scott's future in Boulder and even asked him about it at one point. He said he and Scott have a solid relationship and talk to each other and if there was smoke to that fire, he believes he would know about it by now.

"He has never said anything like that to me," Hagan said.

Scott said he has stayed in regular contact with his mother this fall, who is back home in California. He said her advice for handling most situations always leads him back to his faith, which has helped him through the toughest times this season.

It also has allowed him to peak at next season when he hopes to be stronger and healthier and well-versed in what a college football season requires from the athletes involved.

"Our team is close-knit," he said. "We joke around, laugh around. We have a lot of chemistry on this team. We're just young and we need to develop as a team more. I think next year is going to be excellent, but we're trying to scrap right now for a fifth-place spot."



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