



Ambrose digs into new role at CU

Former NFL player gearing up to take over receivers job

By Kyle Ringo
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BOULDER, Colo. — Sitting on the steps outside the Dal Ward Center two days after he was told he had earned a job as an assistant football coach at Colorado -- even though the promotion is still seven months away -- Ashley Ambrose was already all business.

Colorado's future wide receivers coached eyed a couple players passing by who happen to be assigned to the accountability group he now oversees within the program. He called the players over and delivered a friendly warning.

Ambrose said if any member of his group is late to class or wanders outside team rules in any way this summer, he will make the entire group run until it pukes.

The 38-year-old, who spent 13 seasons in the National Football League, never thought he would become a coach when he was a player.

He used to watch members of the coaching staffs on the four different teams he played for and see the long hours they worked, and spent away from their families.

He admits it is now sort of odd that he is so eager to jump into that life. It's the power and passion he has for the game and for competing that has drawn him in.

"I guess my time is due and the hard work has paid off," he said. "I'm just going to continue learning and getting better and keep moving forward."

Coach Dan Hawkins announced earlier this week that Ambrose will be promoted to full-time wide receivers coach at the end of the 2009 season after completing his internship this fall learning from Hawkins and other members of the coaching staff.

"We all recognize Ashley as a rising star in the profession," Hawkins said. "He has the respect of our players, is extremely intelligent and is a class act. We look forward to mentoring Ashley and eventually having him be a part of our full-time staff."

Ambrose played defensive back in the NFL and has worked in the Colorado program for more than a year as a defensive technical intern.

But the wide receiver position isn't completely foreign to him. Ambrose used to play wide receiver in high school and he began his college career before making the permanent switch to defensive back.

Ambrose said that experience, along with what he learns this fall, will help him coach the Buffs in 2010 and beyond. But his greatest asset will always be the experience from his playing career.

"I was there. I had to defend that," Ambrose said. "I went against a lot of the best. I don't think it will be hard at all. I think it will be an easy transition for me. Those two positions really kind of go together hand-in-hand."

Ambrose has developed strong relationships with some of the defensive backs on the CU roster as well as other players. His ability to communicate a point or a lesson on the field and in the meeting room didn't go unnoticed in his first year with the program.

"Coach Hawkins likes the way I mentor a lot of guys and talk to them, and I think that is one reason why he is choosing me to do this because he knows I relate well to a lot of these guys and the guys look up to me," Ambrose said. "My thing is, I'm all about being a coach. So if coach Hawkins would have told me I have to go to the O-line, that's what I'd do. I'd have to learn it. It's going to make me a better coach in the long run."

When former offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich left CU for Oregon just after spring football, it left Hawkins in need of another man on the recruiting trail. He turned to Ambrose, who had no off-campus recruiting experience.

It was an eye-opener.

Ambrose said he had many learning experiences while on the road that gave him better insight into the competitive nature of college football recruiting. He said one day stands out in his mind as the point when he realized just how much energy and passion is required to succeed in recruiting.

He woke up in a hotel early one morning in Dallas and visited several schools before heading to the airport for a flight to Las Vegas. He made several recruiting stops there in the afternoon and was back at the airport on a plane to Portland, Ore., that night.

"I was in three states in one day," he said. "That was wild to me. I was like, 'Oh, this is what recruiting is all about.' That was a tiring day."

Some college coaches have built reputations on the recruiting trail more than the gridiron. Ambrose hopes to do it all well, but just talking about recruiting gets his competitive juices flowing.

"That is one thing I'm going to challenge myself on, being a really good recruiter," Ambrose said. "I just take it as a challenge. That's how I am. I've always been like that. I'm a competitive person."



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Former BGHS standout Wallace transferring from Colorado

By MICHEAL COMPTON, The Daily News, mcompton@bgdailynews.com/783-3247

Former Bowling Green High School football standout Ryan Wallace has opted to transfer from the University of Colorado.

Wallace, who sat out the 2008 season as a redshirt, said today he's leaving Colorado because he wants to be closer to home.

"Going that far away kind of takes a toll on you," Wallace said.

Wallace said he is the early stages of choosing a new school and declined to name specific schools he is considering.

"I'm talking with a few people and meeting with a few people, but I'm not really sure right now," Wallace said.

Possibly factoring into Wallace's decision is the fact he's already sat out one year. If he transferred to another NCAA Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A) school, he would have to sit out another year - thereby losing a year of collegiate eligibility.

He would be eligible right away if he transferred to a Football Championship Subdivision school.

The 6-foot-5, 230-pound tight end helped lead the Purples to three state runner-up appearances and finished his senior season with 669 yards and seven touchdowns on 48 catches. Wallace was ranked as the No. 29 tight end in the nation in the 2007 class, according to Scout.com.

He originally committed to Louisville, but reopened his recruiting process and ultimately decided on Colorado.

Wallace said he is grateful for his time at the Big 12 school.

"The coaches and the stuff out there were great," Wallace said. "It was a great atmosphere, but it was a totally opposite culture and just not getting to see your family very much takes a toll on you."

Wallace was one of three Purples in the class of 2008 to sign with FBS programs, joining Jared Carpenter (Northwestern) and D.L. Moore (South Carolina).