



WR Simas among 'forgotten' group of '07

Top recruit from last year made most of redshirt season

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Thursday, January 10, 2008

Colorado football fans are hanging on every word spoken by a handful of recruits this month holding out hope those players will choose to be Buffs and improve their beloved team.

It's easy to forget at this time of year that reinforcements are on the way and some of them already are on the team, enrolled in classes and familiar with the playbook.

While Buffs fans are giddy over what might be the best crop of linebackers in the country in the 2008 recruiting class, and while they drive themselves nuts over which running backs might ultimately end up with the team, the player who might deserve all the fuss most of all is wide receiver Markques Simas.

Simas was the No. 1 rated wide receiver in California in 2007, according to rivals.com. He earned that position during a strong prep career at Mira Mesa High School in San Diego.

He signed with CU last February, choosing to be a Buff over offers from the likes of Michigan, Oregon and Arizona State. The biggest surprise of all was that with those credentials, he didn't play in 2007. He spent the season redshirting instead, and apparently made the most of it.

"Every week throughout the season, and I'm not exaggerating, I've had one defensive coach or player say, 'That guy tore us up. He did a great job today,' " CU passing game coordinator and wide receivers coach Eric Kiesau said.

Simas is one of 17 members of last year's recruiting class who redshirted this year. The team is expected to re-ceive a boost in spring practices and next fall from six redshirt freshmen offensive linemen, three young and talented defensive linemen and three speedy defensive backs among others.

Simas has gained weight and strength and improved his speed in his first six months in the program. Those gains should continue between now and his first game in September. He wants to improve his blocking and Kiesau wants him to focus on his release from the line of scrimmage and his route running.

No player likes to sit and watch his teammates play, but Simas believes it might have been the best thing for him now that his redshirt season is behind him. Despite his status as a high-profile recruit and his success at the high school level, Simas said he doubted himself when he first stepped on the practice field in August.

"I wasn't sure coming out here because I'm not as fast as the other guys, but I do have good hands and good size," he said. "I used that to my advantage and made some plays and that helped me a lot."

Kiesau said every year he sits down with players who are designated redshirts and encourages them to make the most of the experience. He implores them to work just as hard on scout team and in the film and weightrooms as the rest of the team.

Kiesau said some players take the advice to heart and end up better for doing so in the long run. Plenty don't.

"He is a great practice effort guy all the time," Kiesau said. "To be a great player, you've got to have that practice mentality.

"I'm expecting big things and hoping for big things. We could have a pretty special group when these young guys develop."



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.