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Longmont, Colorado
Wednesday, August 13,
2008

TIMES-CALL

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CU's Jones in a rush

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Sometimes it isn't what a guy says that tells you what he's thinking. It's what he does.

So take Brad Jones. He says he'll do a little bit of everything in this, his senior, season as the Colorado Buffaloes' starting outside linebacker because that's what his coaches want. That includes covering running backs out of the backfield, or tight ends leaving the line of scrimmage. He says he's fine with that.

But whenever he can, he has his nose buried in film of Michael Strahan, Dwight Freeney, and Shawne Merriman, watching how those guys rush passers. Those guys are NFL stars known for pressuring quarterbacks from myriad directions. They charge from the edge a lot. Jones plans something similar in 2008.

"I've been just trying to pick up the moves that work for them, and hope the exact same thing works for me," he said Tuesday.

Jones is CU's lone senior linebacker, and given the program's history of churning out great linebackers, it might seem he's next. He was credited with 14 tackles Monday in CU's first August scrimmage. He has a spot on the field in no matter what defensive set CU uses.

B.J. Beatty pushed Jones in spring drills for the starting outside spot. A calf injury slows Beatty these days, and Jones looks like he has stepped things up.

"Brad has improved, especially from the spring," linebackers coach Brian Cabral said. "He did not have a very good spring. There were a lot of things going on with him personally, but he's come back this camp and has made up his mind to improve and get better, and he has."

Still, Cabral is not ready to anoint Jones CU's next star linebacker.

"We have to wait and see," Cabral said. "If he keeps working like he is now, week after week, then he could end up having a pretty good season. But he's had one good week."

CU needs to improve its pass rush. The Buffs tied Iowa State for ninth in the Big 12 last year with only 20 sacks. Jones made two of them. Big 12 offenses are expected to be flinging the football everywhere again in 2008.

Cabral calls Jones one of CU's "better pass rushers," and said Jones will be given "plenty of opportunities" to do so.

Jones' potential has never been something CU coaches doubted. They've been calling for big things for him since he redshirted in 2004. He was CU's fourth-leading tackler in 2007 with 72, and he showed durability by playing 703 snaps.

He has been very solid. Jones hopes for more, not only for him, but for CU in his final year.



Colorado linebacker Brad Jones, left, tackles Colorado State's Kyle Bell on Sept. 1, 2007. Now a senior, Jones said he's "trying to do everything right" for the Buffaloes.

Lewis Geyer/Times-Call file

"I'm trying to do everything right," Jones said. "I'm trying to work hard every day in practice, not take any reps off, just trying to make sure everything is right.

"This is, like, the best feeling I ever had on any team I've been on. I see so much potential on this team. We could be so amazing this year. I have to make sure that happens."

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Buffs' Givens dealing with weighty issue

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Bryce Givens may have found the secret to gaining weight: Room with Max Tuioti-Mariner.

The 6-foot-6 Colorado freshman linemen and former Mullen High star is roommates with fellow-frosh Tuioti-Mariner in camp. Tuioti-Mariner brought with him from his home in Corona, Calif., a hefty supply of Samoan food that he shares with Givens, much to Givens' delight.

Among the choices are, "these burrito-looking things," whose ingredients aren't too clear to Givens. He just knows he likes them. They're part of his six daily meals, a regimen that he said has him eating between 6,500 and 7,000 calories a day.

"It's a lot of food," Givens said.

Givens' weight has been a curious topic for months, ever since last fall when he got sick and dropped 30 pounds. He's struggling to regain the weight.

Doctors thought it might have been a thyroid problem, Givens said, but tests indicated nothing other than an "extremely fast metabolism" that Givens believes is changing. He said he now tops 250 pounds.

"My metabolism is slowing down a little bit," Givens said. "Hopefully in the next month or so, I'll be able to put on a few pounds."

Givens is one of several Buffs vying for two open starting jobs on the offensive line — both guards. Considering his inexperience and weight, he would appear to be a candidate to redshirt and not one to play guard. But he's in the mix, mainly because, as offensive line coach Jeff Grimes says, Givens is "a heck of a player."

Givens was the last Buffalo off the practice field Tuesday morning. He stayed late to work on footwork, saying there's a lot to know on every play, and that he's starting to learn it all a little better. He admits playing guard is not what he expected.

"Being recruited, they told me I was athletic enough to play guard, but I never thought I would be," he said. "And then when I got here, I was going back and forth between tackle and guard."

"There are two open spots and six guys are competing for a job. Shoot, I mean, I want to compete to play. If it works out that I redshirt, then that's how it works out and that's fine with me because that'll just give me an extra year."

"But if I'm one of the best guys, I want to play and get it going."

ANOTHER INJURY: Coach Dan Hawkins said punt returner/wide receiver Jason Espinoza broke a collarbone Monday. He'll miss four to six weeks.

Espinoza, a walk-on from Alamosa, played well in spring drills and entered August camp with a good chance of winning the punt-returning job.

Josh Smith, Scotty McKnight and Rodney Stewart, among others, will fill in.

EXTRA POINTS: Walk-on kicker Aric Goodman is starting to be called "Money" by teammates. He went 3-for-3 on field goals Monday and he hit from 50 and 53 yards. ... Former CU receiver Jeff Campbell attended Tuesday morning's practice. ... The Buffs will practice from 10 a.m. to 12:30 today, then take the afternoon off and head to Water World.

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.



It's Smith's time to step forward for Buffs' defense

By Ryan Thorburn
Tuesday, August 12, 2008

Jimmy Smith has the confidence of an experienced and proven starting cornerback.

"I'm looking to be All-Big 12 this year," the sophomore said after Colorado's morning practice on Tuesday when asked about his personal expectations for the 2008 season. "That's my goal."

The CU coaching staff isn't discouraging Smith from dreaming big, even though he hasn't ever started a college game. Coaches believe the 6-foot-2, 195-pound talent has the potential to be one of the better players in the Big 12.

"It's Jimmy's time. It's time for him to step up to the plate," CU secondary coach Greg Brown said. "He has been blessed with a tremendous set of tools. He has a height and an arm span that any corner would envy. Now it's just about getting used to playing and getting on the field and making plays. We feel he's well on his way."

For the time being, Smith is still second on the depth chart at left cornerback behind senior Gardner McKay. Promising redshirt freshman Anthony Wright is also in the mix. And Junior Cha'pelle Brown and sophomore Jalil Brown are competing for the starting job at right cornerback.

Smith saw action on special teams in all 13 games last season and appeared in six on defense (99 snaps). Buffs fans certainly remember No. 3's one shining moment as a freshman when he intercepted a Joe Ganz pass early in the second half and returned it for a touchdown.

CU was trailing Nebraska 35-24 when Ganz released the ball and ended up winning 65-51 after the momentum-shifting turnover.

"You always see highlights of different guys taking one to the house. Then I did it and I was like, 'Oh, it's not as hard as it really looks,'" Smith said. "It gives you confidence knowing you can play in the Big 12."

With the departure of Terrence Wheatley — a first-team All-Big 12 cornerback in 2007 — to the NFL, a lot of media and fans are curious to know which of the young CU cornerbacks will emerge as the starter.

But in the reality of today's Big 12, defenses are going to need more than two cornerbacks on the field to defend the spread offenses they will face.

Chase Daniel (Missouri), Todd Reesing (Kansas) and Josh Freeman (Kansas State) all return this fall.

And those are just the big names under center in the North Division.

“The last time I was in this league it was called the Big Eight and there was much more running than what you’re seeing now. And the quarterbacks didn’t seem to be as talented,” Greg Brown said. “It’s been a big departure from what the old days of the Big Eight were until now. It’s a tough thing to contend with.

“And that’s one of the reasons you have to recruit a lot of DBs and get a fair number of them in there, because you play against so many three- and four-receiver sets.”

Smith obviously wants to start. During halftime of what looked like was going to be a fateful Nebraska game, however, he learned that what’s more important is how you finish (making the second-half pick).

“The competition is fierce this year,” Smith said. “Cha’pelle has been playing since his true freshman year and he knows the defense very well. Anthony Wright is just amazing, really athletic and fighting for a spot. Then there’s also Jalil and me. It’s really good competition and everybody is making plays every day, so everybody’s in the mix right now.”

In conference games last season, the Buffs allowed 224.1 yards passing per game. That ranked them seventh out of the 12 defenses with Wheatley, who has been performing well in the New England Patriots’ training camp so far this summer.

Despite all of the talent, depth and confidence among the Buffs’ young cornerbacks, the group will have a lot to prove this season.

“We lost some great players. We lost Jordan Dizon, too. But I think our defense as a whole is going to be better,” Smith said. “It’s our third year in the system, everybody knows the system very well, you have people who have played in the games and everybody is reacting a lot faster.

“So I think our defense is going to be better than it was last year or the year before that.”



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Buff catches bad break

Punt returner out 4-6 weeks with broken collar bone

By Ryan Thorburn
Wednesday, August 13, 2008

You get the feeling Jason Espinoza would have been fielding punts using only his left arm if the doctors allowed him to practice.

Instead, the redshirt freshman watched Colorado's two-a-day sessions Tuesday from the sideline with his right arm in a sling.

Espinoza, perhaps the leading candidate to be the punt returner, suffered a broken collar bone during Monday's scrimmage.

The medical staff told the Alamosa native he will be sitting out of the action for the next four to six weeks. That math doesn't work for him with the Colorado State set to kickoff in 18 days.

"I'm so crushed right now," Espinoza said. "I was fine, but after they took x-rays ... I pretty much started to cry when they told me I was out four to six weeks. I still really want to play in the first game."

Espinoza, a backup wide receiver, was injured after catching a short pass when safety Jalil Brown tackled him.

Rubbing dirt on it didn't work.

"I got up right away because I didn't want to be hurt. So I popped right back up, went over to the sideline and kind of moved it around a little bit," Espinoza said. "Then they called for punt return and I tried jogging out there and knew something was wrong because I could feel something moving around in there."

Josh Smith, Scotty McKnight, Daniel Dykes and Rodney Stewart fielded punts during Tuesday's evening practice.

All of the above are very talented players capable of getting the job done, but Espinoza seemed poised to be this year's Chase McBride during the early part of camp.

"That was a bummer," CU head coach Dan Hawkins said of the injury. "He was in the mix, certainly as a punt returner for sure. ... I think there's probably three or four guys that have the capability of returning punts, and he was one of them."

Espinoza isn't going to give up on suiting up at Invesco Field.

"I've been taking vitamin D and chugging glasses of milk like crazy," he said. "I'm going to be begging them to let me practice in two weeks."

Notable

After reviewing the film of Monday's scrimmage, Hawkins was still pretty pleased with how the Buffs performed. "Just a lot of little things to clean up," he said. "In general it was fairly clean." ...

Rick Neuheisel, who reportedly has some quarterback issues at UCLA, would probably love to join the Buffs this afternoon. Hawkins' team is going to take a break from two-a-day practices after today's morning session with a short road trip to Water World. ...

After Tuesday's morning practice, the Buffs cooled down with a water balloon fight.



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colorado football

Goodman kicking his career into gear

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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Aric Goodman, a Cherry Creek alum, transferred to CU from Wyoming and is shining in preseason camp. In the Cowboys' 13-12 loss at Virginia in 2006, he missed an extra point in overtime. (Richmond (Va.) Times-Dispatch)

BOULDER — Place-kicking can be a roller-coaster ride, with highs and lows and not much in between.

Colorado sophomore Aric Goodman can raise his

hand as Exhibit A. His teammates have begun to call him "Money" in practice, based on a streak of 25-for-25 on field-goal attempts through Tuesday's morning workout. But two years ago as a Wyoming freshman, Goodman had to wonder what people were saying behind his back after he missed an extra point in overtime of a 13-12 loss at Virginia.

Goodman wasn't run out of Laramie. In fact, he remained the Cowboys' primary kicker for the rest of the season and earned honorable-mention freshman All-American honors from Sporting News after converting 18-of-20 extra points and 10-of-16 field

Colorado Football

- [Watch](#) video of CU coach Dan Hawkins on first day of practice
- [Watch](#) video of CU freshman running back Darrell Scott
- [Watch](#) video of CU beginning fall practice
- [Visit](#) Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports

goals. But things never felt the same.

"Maybe (Wyoming coaches and players) lost a little bit of confidence in me," Goodman recalled Tuesday after a two-hour practice. "Some stuff (was said) here and there, stuff was bouncing the wrong way a little bit."

He added: "That put everything in perspective. It just showed how low things can get. It's never about the kick before; it's always about the next one. You can come in 10-for-10, but you can't think about that. That year really was important in proving that

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to me. And it made me confident that I can come back from adversity."

A two-time All-Colorado pick at Cherry Creek High School, Goodman transferred to CU and sat out the 2007 season to fulfill transfer requirements. Goodman has not yet been named the 2008 starter, but all signs point that way. Things couldn't be working out much better.

"Wyoming just wasn't the place for me," Goodman said. "Coming from Denver, the small-town aspect of Laramie, not to mention it's a little bit chilly there and the wind blows all the time . . . I just felt like this was the place for me. If football wasn't going well, I'd still be happy in Boulder. I love it here."

He has good genes, with his father, Curtis, having been a kicker at Hawaii from 1975-78.

"It doesn't surprise me that Aric is having a great fall camp, and I expect that will continue," CU special-teams coach Kent Riddle said Tuesday. "When you get confidence and are a good technician, the ball goes through. Aric is doing a good job of that."

Footnotes.

Jason Espinoza, a 5-foot-8, 180-pound redshirt freshman from Alamosa, will be out four to six weeks after fracturing his collarbone during Monday's scrimmage, CU coach Dan Hawkins said. A walk-on wide receiver, Espinoza was in the mix for starting duties as a punt returner. . . . After a late-morning practice today, Hawkins plans to take the squad to Water World to promote team unity. Players tossed water-filled balloons at each other after Tuesday's morning workout.

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CU report: Goodman kicks in comfort

By **B.G. Brooks**, *Rocky Mountain News* ([Contact](#))

Tuesday, August 12, 2008

Aric Goodman, a Cherry Creek High graduate who transferred to Colorado from Wyoming, appears to have the kicking duties nailed.

One reason: He has been accurate enough to pick up the nickname "Money" from his teammates. Another: His top competitor, **Jameson Davis**, a Boise State transfer, has been plagued by problems with his plant (left) leg.

Goodman, a sophomore, said he was comfortable upon his arrival at CU last summer and still is: "I'm just comfortable with my stroke and try to kick every ball the same . . . I feel comfortable in the position, and when Aug. 31 (the opener vs. Colorado State) comes, I'll be ready to make kicks - and I'm excited for it."

He's not on scholarship but knows, "if I step up, I'll get one."

Espinoza sidelined

Jason Espinoza, a redshirt freshman walk-on who rode an impressive spring into August camp as a punt returner, broke a collarbone in Monday's scrimmage and will be out 4-6 weeks. Likely replacements include **Rodney Stewart**, **Josh Smith**, **Scotty McKnight** and senior **D.J. Dykes**.

Decision not close

Secondary coach **Greg Brown**'s search for a pair of starting cornerbacks isn't close to ending. He said battles between **Gardner McKay** and **Jimmy Smith** on the right side and **Cha'pelle Brown** and **Jalil Brown** on the left could continue until game week, adding, "We may not know the answer until the season gets going. We've got guys who are all fairly similar in ability, but all bring different things to the table."

Newcomers who drew attention in the first scrimmage included true freshman safety **Patrick Mahnke** and redshirt freshman safety/corner **Anthony Wright**.

Etc.

Former CU walk-on **Jeff Campbell**, now a medical sales representative living in Southlake, Texas, attended Tuesday's first practice. . . . It's that time of preseason camp when a break from the norm is needed. Tuesday morning's workout ended with a planned water-balloon fight, with "weapons" distributed from plastic garbage bags. A team trip to Water World in Federal Heights is planned today. . . . Senior safety **Ryan Walters** (aggravated hamstring) watched Monday's scrimmage but said he could have participated. . . . Sophomore tailback **Brian Lockridge**, who underwent post-spring surgery to repair a sports hernia, will be held out until he's fully recuperated.

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