



# Buffs linebacker Jones relishes versatility

## Senior more involved in pass rushing

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

A furious but friendly and completely hilarious war of words broke out between Colorado defensive tackle George Hypolite and linebacker Brad Jones following an afternoon football practice this week.

A reporter wanted to know about Jones being used more this season in a pass-rushing role. Does he have any goals in that area, such as, perhaps finishing the season with more sacks than the All-America candidate he calls a teammate?

Two young men with big personalities went at each other about getting after the quarterback.

"We already know that's going to happen," Jones said. "That's not like even a challenge to me."

"It's not even close," Hypolite said.

"I know it's going to happen so it's cool. I don't worry about that," Jones said.

"Who had more sacks last year?" Hypolite said.

"What's that have to do with anything?" Jones said. "They didn't even have me rush til the last three games of the season."

"Bull," Hypolite said. "You was rushing from jump."

"You mad. It's cool," Jones said. "Who has more sacks right now?"

"You have one," Hypolite said.

"I've got two," Jones said.

"Oh, you leading the country. Ain't you," Hypolite said.

"How many you got?" Jones said.

"Zero," Hypolite said.

"Zero, that's what I'm talking about," Jones said.

"How many times you beentriple-teamed," Hypolite said.

And on, and on, and on ... all the way up the hill from the practice fields they went. Into the locker room.

If both put half the energy into getting after West Virginia quarterback Pat White on Thursday that they did sparring with each other, White could be in for a long night. Plenty of scrambling awaits at the very least.

The Buffs seem to be getting better pressure on quarterbacks in the early going this season compared with last fall. Jones was credited with five quarterback hurries on his own in the Buffs' win over Eastern Washington in Week 2. The defense sacked Colorado State quarterback Billy Farris five times in the season opener. It registered just 19 sacks all of last season.

Jones said he is lining up as a defensive end in pass-rushing situations more than ever before in his senior season. He has always been a versatile guy since the day he came to CU five years ago from East Lansing, Mich.

Defensive coordinator Ron Collins likes to use Jones in just about every role a defender can have. He lines up in a three-point stance on the line. He lines up as a cover guy in the slot against tight ends and other receivers. And he plays a traditional outside linebacker role in the base defense.

"He's a very smart football player," Collins said. "And the thing is, he's still untapped potential. He's got a lot of room to grow."

Coaches have seen Jones improve in the five months since spring football ended with sophomore B.J. Beatty listed as a co-starter on the depth chart. Jones apparently used Beatty's surge to fuel his own development. He began watching more film of professional pass rushers and linebackers and poured himself into learning more from coaches. Beatty meanwhile suffered a fractured leg in training camp and continues to heal.

Jones has spent a lot of time with defensive graduate assistant Andy Avalos, who played linebacker for Collins and coach Dan Hawkins at Boise State.

"I feel like I'm very knowledgeable in more areas of the game now," Jones said. "I've taken the time to sit and study the different techniques of pass rushers and different linebackers. So I feel like I'm more knowledgeable in all aspects instead of just being good at pass rush or just being good at stopping the run."

If Jones stays healthy this season and the Buffs play in the postseason, he could tie the record set by former teammate Jordon Dizon for most games played by a Buff. Dizon played in 51 games over four seasons, including three bowls.

Jones has already matched his career-best in sacks for a season with two. He leads the team with four total tackles for loss. Coaches have elected to use him at defensive end in some situations instead of players they recruited to play that position.

"He's a speed rusher. That's the bottom line," Collins said. "He's the fastest guy off the edge for us."

Jones will face his toughest test to this point this fall against an experienced West Virginia line and a fleet-footed quarterback in White. He's hoping to earn more ammunition for his next chat with Hypolite.

"It's fun," Jones said. "I mean, who else gets to do everything?"



# Skycam to make Folsom Field debut

By Kyle Ringo

Tuesday, September 16, 2008

College football fans will get a unique look at Folsom Field and Ralphie V leading the Colorado football team on the field Thursday night when the Buffs play host to West Virginia on ESPN.

Crews were busy Tuesday installing cables and the necessary support system for the suspended camera known as Skycam that flies over the field and supplies close-up, overhead views of the action. The camera has been in use since 2001 and has become a customary part of most big games around the nation and at the pro level.

It has never been used before in Boulder.

"It's pretty elaborate," said Tom McGann, CU director of game management and operations. "We just stepped out of the way and let them do their thing."

The system requires four cables suspended from fixed points throughout the stadium to fly above the field and the crowd. At CU, ESPN will use three cranes or skyjacks and a stadium pole to support the system. It usually gets no lower than 35 feet off the ground to stay clear of the action. The camera weighs about 15 pounds.

John Krueger, assistant athletic director for facilities and grounds, is helping ESPN get Skycam ready for its Folsom Field debut. Krueger said he doesn't know for sure if the network plans to film Ralphie's run from its unique vantage point.

"That would be kind of a cool shot," he said.

## **That's the spirit**

CU quarterback Cody Hawkins spent \$6 on hair dye at a Boulder grocery store Monday. He went to classes and practice Tuesday with his hair dyed black as a show of support for the student-led "Blackout" for Thursday night's game. CU officials are encouraging fans to wear black to the game as they did last September when Florida State visited Folsom Field.

"I wanted to be a part of the blackout, too," Hawkins said.

After the game, Hawkins plans to cut his hair short. He said some of his classmates were excited about his new look. Some of his teammates gave him a hard time.

## **Get there early**

Parking figures to be a ma-

jor hassle on campus because of the rare weeknight game. CU officials are encouraging fans and students to get to the stadium early to avoid serious problems that developed last year when a crush of fans arrived for the Florida State game close to kickoff and were delayed getting into the stadium.

Coach Dan Hawkins has been leading the charge trying to get fans and students to come inside the stadium earlier since before last season.

Hawkins introduced a new tradition last year called the "Buffalo Roundup." The team arrives at the south end of the stadium in front of Libby Hall about 2½ hours before game time and enters Folsom Field through Gate 1 after touching the Buffalo in the plaza outside the gate. The band also greets the team there.

The Buffs walk down the stadium steps and gather around the Buffalo logo at midfield before hitting the locker room. Hawkins would like fans to greet the Buffs all along that route, but turnouts have been sparse so far with many fans choosing to continue tailgating or arriving later.

The school began another pregame tradition this year with the Spirit Bell. Each week one person is selected to ring the bell just before the team arrives and again about 10 minutes before Ralphie runs around the field. Former CU regent Pete Steinhauer will ring the bell this week.

The bell was donated to CU by longtime supporter Barb Roberts Quinlan in honor of her late-husband, Dwight Roberts, who was the first president of the CU Foundation in the 1970s.

### **Notable**

Chris Fowler will handle the play-by-play for ESPN. Fowler is a 1985 CU graduate and three-year veteran working in the sports information office under sports information guru Dave Plati. ... West Virginia is the 15th all-time winningest major college football program with 665 wins. Colorado is 16th with 660. ... CU officials said about 1,500 tickets remained at the close of business Tuesday. West Virginia returned about 1,000 tickets late last week. ... The Pearl Street Stampede, held before home games, will be held tonight, beginning in front of the courthouse.



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# Woelk: Big games only half the task for Buffs

By Neill Woelk

Wednesday, September 17, 2008

For those of you not old enough to remember, here's a little history lesson:

Back when dinosaurs roamed the earth and Bill McCartney roamed the CU sidelines, "big games" on CU's non-conference schedule were not only regular occurrences, they came with an expectation:

That being, of course, that Colorado would win.

Not that it always happened that way. Mac -- who firmly believed in playing good teams at every opportunity -- lost a few of those non-conference matchups against ranked opponents.

But once McCartney got the program up and running, he won more than his share.

It's a formidable list. Iowa, Illinois, Washington, Wisconsin, Michigan and Texas are just some of the ranked teams Mac teed it up against and beat in his reign. And in just about every one of those instances, the Buffs were favored to win.

Not that other CU coaches haven't played similar lineups. Both Rick Neuheisel and Gary Barnett followed in Mac's footsteps by playing difficult non-conference schedules.

But by the time Barnett took the reins, there was a major difference:

The Buffs usually weren't the favorite in those non-conference affairs. Instead, the Buffs were underdogs more often than not.

By then, games against ranked teams had taken on a different essence. Instead of a chance for CU to maintain or elevate its national status, those games became an opportunity for the Buffs to regain a little national notoriety.

It didn't always work out to Colorado's advantage.

Thursday night, Dan Hawkins' Buffs get another one of those chances when No. 21 West Virginia pays its first-ever visit to Boulder.

The Buffs won't be favored. Even though this matchup lost some luster when WVU was beaten in Week 2 by East Carolina, oddsmakers still say the Mountaineers will come to Boulder and win. West Virginia hasn't lost back-to-back games since the end of the 2004 season.

Thus, it's another chance for CU to turn some heads, to make some noise on a national level.

Call it a measuring stick of the program's progress.

"The nice thing is, as we keep moving forward and get it back to the Coach Mac era, you're going to have those 'watershed' games," Hawkins said. "If you beat one team and then the next one comes up, you're going to ask if this is the biggest game, and I'll say it is. That's how it's going to be as you continue to take those steps.

"To have the university on a national stage is great; it's great exposure for our football team, for our university, for how we do things and how we look. All of that stuff pays dividends."

But Hawk isn't content with just playing these types of games. Rather, CU's coach envisions a day when a big-game loss -- not a win -- turns heads.

"You want to be at a point where people expect you to win these games," Hawkins said. "And when you don't, you guys (the media) are in here grilling me."

Certainly the Buffs aren't at that point today. Thursday's game is the first of four consecutive tilts against teams that are ranked in the top 25 this week: West Virginia (No. 21), Florida State (24), Texas (7) and Kansas (19). The Buffs are likely to be the underdog in every one of them. (Historic note: the Buffs haven't played four consecutive games against ranked teams since 1973).

But neither are the Buffs star-struck by nationally televised games against ranked teams.

"You come to Colorado expecting to play in these games," said linebacker Jeff Smart. "You definitely get excited -- but it's also just business."

That's a start. Hawkins has the Buffs to the point that they shouldn't suffer from stage fright when the lights go on Thursday at Folsom. That's a good sign, particularly when you consider Hawkins will send a starting lineup onto the field that will have at least seven underclassmen on offense.

But it's still another step -- a very big step -- to the point where the Buffs are expected to win such games.

Picking off a couple of these in the next month would go a long way in helping Colorado move forward to that point.



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## WVU playmakers putting Buffs on defensive

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — Colorado coach Dan Hawkins has said "you need another (defensive) guy" to account for West Virginia senior quarterback Pat White, who ranks fourth on the all-time NCAA major-college list in rushing yards (5,666).

But don't look for CU's defense to designate a "spy" to shadow White's every move Thursday night when the No. 21 Mountaineers come to town.

"We haven't put in a spy defense, necessarily," senior safety Ryan Walters said Tuesday. "But our whole front seven (defensive linemen and linebackers) is always going to have an eye on where he is at. He can do amazing things with his feet. And he has a pretty good arm, too."

The problem with putting a spy on White, CU coaches and players say, is that could mean one fewer defender in position to keep WVU sophomore tailback Noel Devine in their sights. Small (5-feet-8, 173 pounds) but explosive, Devine averaged an amazing 8.6 yards per carry in rushing for 627 yards in 2007 as the backup to Steve Slaton.

### Colorado Football

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"Sure tackles is our focus, and not letting those two create big plays," Walters said. "They're two of the best athletes we'll face all year."

### No huffing and puffing.

West Virginia's mascot is the Mountaineers, and it is quite hilly on campus and around town. But the official elevation of Morgantown, W.Va., is 960 feet above sea level, compared to 5,345 for Boulder.

No problem, West Virginia coach Bill Stewart said on this week's Big East coaches teleconference when asked about whether his team might struggle to catch its breath Thursday night.

"I don't spend much time talking about elevation," Stewart said. "I got to Colorado Springs (as Air Force defensive line coach) in 1990. I was 38 years of age

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and ran 20-plus miles a week. Football is, what, 4.2 seconds (per play)? I told our guys to strain for a few seconds, and then they'll catch their wind.

"If we were playing up at Crested Butte or Breckenridge . . . but we're not playing at those places. Guys will be taxed a little bit. But you get tired in every football game."

## Footnotes.

Two young cornerbacks returning from injuries, sophomore Jimmy Smith (back bruise) and redshirt freshman Anthony Wright (high ankle sprain), can't keep from smiling at the thought of making their season debuts Thursday night. "West Virginia has good athletes, but I feel I'm a good athlete, too," Wright said Tuesday. Said Smith: "What a great game to come back for." . . . About 1,600 tickets were available for Thursday's game as of Tuesday.

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## CU's Geer eager to leave behind obstacles

By B.G. Brooks

Tuesday, September 16, 2008

BOULDER — As his University of Colorado teammates sweated through summer conditioning, **Riar Geer** sweated for another reason: He couldn't be sure whether the Nebraska game in November was his last in Folsom Field.

The junior tight end was in a self-created limbo. An off-campus brawl in March brought a spring suspension and a charge of second-degree felony assault, but a plea deal in July reduced the charge to misdemeanor third-degree assault.

Early August brought reinstatement to the university and the football team. Late August brought a judge sentencing him to 50 hours of community service and two years of probation instead of two years in jail.

Believing his troubles were behind him, Geer then underwent arthroscopic knee surgery that sidelined him for CU's first two games. He has been cleared to return for Thursday's game against No. 21 West Virginia at Folsom Field (6:30 p.m., ESPN).

Sometimes life's enduring lessons are the most difficult, and the Fruita Monument High School graduate believes he is proof.

"It was the biggest lesson I've had to learn in my life," he said Tuesday. "It was an embarrassment, everything I put my family through, the university and my teammates.

"I learned that's not the kind of person I want to be. It really made me grow as a person and taught me how to be a bigger, better man. If I get myself in a situation like that again, I just walk away and don't worry about it. I don't have to prove myself."

If Geer - who has 38 career receptions for 389 yards and five touchdowns - is repentant, he's also relieved his side of the story was heard.

"Everybody that knows all the facts wasn't too surprised," he said. "I did make a mistake, put myself in a bad spot and paid the consequences. And the consequences definitely fit the crime."

Now, with that page turned, his focus is on the Mountaineers. He's catching up on the schematic changes implemented during his suspension and reacquainting himself with blocking. He has been practicing with CU's first-team offense, although he predicts it will be another couple of weeks before he physically is 100 percent.

For now, he's close enough to receive medical clearance, and kickoff can't come soon enough.

"Oh, man, I'm so excited," he said. "It's one of the biggest games we have on our schedule - 'black out' night (CU fans are urged to wear black), a packed house, national television. And I get to play in it."

### Hang 'em high

Punter **Matt DiLallo**'s Game 3 priority list is topped by two words: hang time. But consistency isn't far behind.

"I'm working on that and getting (the ball) outside the numbers on every kick," he said. "The less room they have to run, the better."

DiLallo is averaging 38.7 yards a punt, the same as CU's net average. He hopes to increase his average by at least 6 yards and the net by at least 4.

After what he said was a subpar outing against Colorado State (three punts, 31-yard average), he rallied against Eastern Washington (four for a 44.5 average).

"The first game was kind of a rough one for me," he said. "I punted pretty well against Eastern Washington, minus the touchback. I feel like I'm improving every week, getting more confidence."

Mountaineers punter/kicker **Pat McAfee** is averaging 44.3 yards a punt and has made all three of his field-goal attempts this season.

### Lesson learned?

West Virginia quarterback **Pat White** blamed the 24-3 loss against East Carolina two weekends ago on the Mountaineers believing they were superior but not playing like it.

The 21-point loss, White told the *Charleston (W. Va.) Gazette*, "brought a lot of people back down to earth. I don't know how many, but (there were) a few walking around with their nose stuck up in the air. It leveled them out."

But White didn't discredit the Pirates, noting, "They outplayed us. They whipped our butts for four quarters. They were running around and we weren't."

Added guard **Greg Isdaner**: "I don't think it was complacency, I really don't. People will chalk it up to being unprepared, but we just didn't perform."

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