



Versatility makes Jones valuable

Bufs linebacker overshadowed by teammates

By Kyle Ringo

Thursday, November 1, 2007

The Colorado football team has no shortage of high-motor, big-personality types. Brad Jones might be the most energetic among them.

Find him with a smile wiped off his face and you've stumbled upon a rare moment.

Jones is among the most intelligent players on the roster as well. Coaches have taken advantage of that by continuing to ask the linebacker from East Lansing, Mich., to take on more and more responsibility in the defense.

The junior rushes the passer in some passing situations and drops into coverage on a tight end or running back in others. He also plays the run tough.

Jones said he doesn't know which he likes best, chasing quarterbacks and tight ends all day as he will be Saturday when No. 9 Missouri visits Folsom Field, or butting heads with power running teams like Colorado State and Oklahoma.

Despite his versatility and the success he has enjoyed this season, he has been overshadowed playing in a defense with players such as fellow linebacker Jordon Di-zon, cornerback Terrence Wheatley and defensive tackle George Hypolite. He couldn't care less.

"He's been very steady for us," defensive coordinator Ron Collins said. "We're asking him to do a lot of different things and he's stepping up into the role were asking from him.

"He may not be getting the publicity those are guys are getting, but the opponents have to account for him because he does so many things for us."

Jones is fourth on the roster in total tackles with 56 and has made the second most third-down stops. He registered his first sack of the season last week.

Jones came to CU three years ago with an ambitious agenda on the football field and in the classroom. Like most young football prodigies, he had visions of learning and growing in the CU system and moving on to the NFL. He also had dreams of working in the space program as an aerospace engineer.

After a year in Boulder and a lot of sleepless nights and weary days, he realized doing both might kill him before his senior season. So he opted to abandon the idea of working for NASA in favor of a degree in economics.

He is able to succeed in the classroom without staying up to 3 or 4 a.m. studying these days, and he uses his extra time to study film and improve in the mental part of the game. Collins said Jones' biggest improvement over the past two seasons has been his dedication to deciphering an opponent's schemes before game day arrives.

Jones had a decidedly different view of film study when he first became a Buff.

"You always think you know what it's going to be like, but I had no idea with the film watching," he said. "It's just so much stuff. You actually really analyze what teams are doing. I had no idea what I was getting into. None. Not even close."

Former CU coach Gary Barnett once pointed to Jones as one of the players on the roster he believed had the best chance of becoming a star and possibly playing at the next level. During Jones' redshirt season in 2004, Barnett would often lament how difficult it was to avoid the temptation to put him on the field as a true freshman.

Barnett's patience is paying off now and will be a big benefit next year when Jones will be take over for Dizon as the heart and soul of the defense.

"His deal is you get guys who have signature plays like interceptions or sacks or fumble strips or big hits and I don't know that he's had a bunch of those," coach Dan Hawkins said. "But I think he's been fairly steady."



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.



Stats: Hawkins biggest risk taker

By Kyle Ringo

Thursday, November 1, 2007

The numbers tell the story and they say no one in college football is more apt to take a risk than Colorado coach Dan Hawkins.

Through the first two-thirds of the 2007 season, no other coach has elected to go for it on fourth down as much as the coach of the Buffaloes. Hawkins hasn't been nearly as successful as he might like, but he keeps opting for a chance at a big play or simply keeping momentum on his side rather than playing it safely.

The Buffs lead the nation with 23 fourth-down conversion attempts. They have converted 11 times — roughly 48 percent of the time. Hawkins has gone for it deep in enemy territory and has been rewarded with four touchdowns.

Hawkins has made it no secret that he is the sort who plays to win and going for it when others might not is one way of doing that. He was asked about leading the nation in fourth-down attempts Wednesday and he said it's not a statistic he pays much attention to.

Hawkins then launched into a passionate defense of the NFL's New England Patriots who have been accused this season of running up scores and never backing off no matter how large their leads become.

"Personally, I think it's awesome because those guys, I think a lot of times people get into sportsmanship and what's classy and all that," Hawkins said. "What's classy to me is those guys have got a standard and they're on it. They don't care who they play and they don't care what the score is, they're going to bring it.

"If you're not defending the onside kick, they're going to onside it. If you're not defending the fake spike, they're going to fake-spike it. ...Sometimes, yeah, you sputter a little bit, and people go, 'Oh you should punt the ball right there.' And I go, 'Yeah, well that's why you're in row 107. You're not down here.'

"In the long haul, it pays dividends on and off the field. I totally believe that."

This week's opponent, the No. 9 Missouri Tigers, rank No. 1 in the nation in fourth-down conversion percentage. They have converted on all their attempts, but coach Gary Pinkel has only elected to take the risk four times.

Snowballing

CU coaches were stuck with just six commitments for what seemed like months, but the 2008 recruiting class finally grew into double digits on Wednesday when offensive line prospect Ryan Dannewitz pledged to attend CU.

Dannewitz, a 6-foot-6, 280-pound prospect from San Jacinto, Calif., is the 10th known commitment of the 2008 class and the first offensive line recruit. The Buffs welcomed eight offensive linemen to the program on national signing day this year and figured to sign only two or three in the 2008 cycle.

Historic day

in the making

If the Buffs can upset Missouri on Saturday, they will earn the 100th victory in Hawkins' coaching career and the 400th victory in the program's history on the same day. Sixty of Hawkins victories have come at the Division I level at Boise State and CU.

Salute to veterans

CU and Missouri will pay tribute to the nation's veterans on Saturday, including an offer of \$5 tickets for any veteran, active or retired. The game will begin after a flyover by Navy fighter jets.

Retired Marine Sgt. Jack Thomas, 82, will serve as an honorary captain at the coin toss. After serving in World War II and taking part in the battle for Iwo Jima, Thomas returned home and became an architect. He helped design several buildings on the CU campus.

Notable

Hawkins said he has been pleased with the first two practices this week and the way his team has approached each new week in general this season. "I think they've gotten progressively better and I think as our standards have risen," Hawkins said. ... Saturday is National College Football Day, celebrating the anniversary of the first game played in 1869 between Rutgers and Princeton. This year college football has teamed with the V Foundation to raise money to fight cancer.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu football

Tigers' tight ends spell trouble

Missouri tandem tough to contain

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 11/01/2007 12:36:36 AM MDT



Martin Rucker (82) and Chase Coffman are big targets in Mizzou's offense.
(AP / Jeff Roberson)

BOULDER — In no particular order, Colorado strong safety Daniel Dykes rates Arizona State's Brent Miller and the Oklahoma duo of Joe Jon Finley and Jermaine Gresham as the best tight ends he has faced.

That will change Saturday when Missouri's

Martin Rucker (6-feet-6 and 255 pounds) and Chase Coffman (6-6, 245) come calling, Dykes said.

Colorado (5-4, 3-2 Big 12) hosts the ninth-ranked Tigers (7-1, 3-1) in a 4:30 p.m. game at Folsom Field.

"The two Missouri guys will be the best we've seen," Dykes said. "They both are good athletes with good hands. They're big bodies who can get open."

Fortunately for the Tigers, Rucker and Coffman eschewed family ties to other Big 12 schools and signed

Colorado Football

- Visit [the CU Stats Page](#) for box scores, Big 12 standings, team leaders and more
- Visit [Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog](#) for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports

with Missouri. They have become favorite targets of quarterback Chase Daniel.

Rucker, a senior from St. Joseph, Mo., is the younger brother of former Nebraska defensive end Mike Rucker, now with the Carolina Panthers. He leads Missouri receivers with 54 receptions and is tied for the team lead in touchdown catches with four.

Advertisement



Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

Coffman, a junior from Peculiar, Mo., has scored three touchdowns and is tied with wideout Jeremy Maclin for second on the team in receptions with 39. Coffman's father, Paul, played tight end at Kansas State before an 11-year NFL career. Chase's younger brother, Carson, is a backup quarterback at K-State as a redshirt freshman.

Rucker considered turning pro last winter following his junior season.

"My brother told me to not go out unless I'd be at least a second-rounder, and I was projected for something like the fifth round," Rucker said in July during the Big 12 football media days. "I'm glad I stayed. We could have a great year."

Rucker and Coffman sure look like future NFL players to anybody who has watched them make defensive backs look helpless. It's not unusual to see them in the lineup together.

"With the spread offense, we can put

Amazing Finish

- [Watch a YouTube video of Trinity College beating Millsaps with 15 laterals on the final play of the game](#)

them wherever we want," Missouri coach Gary Pinkel said. "That makes us diverse."

CU defensive coordinator Ron Collins said the Buffs must treat Rucker and Coffman like they are wide receivers. They often split out in the offensive formation.

"They put a lot of stress on a defense because they don't play a traditional tight end position," Collins said. "They play outside the core."

Footnotes. CU coach Dan Hawkins stresses special teams play and laments the fact the 2007 Buffaloes have not blocked a punt or returned a kickoff or punt for a touchdown. "We've typically been a team that blocks four or five kicks a year," Hawkins said, referring to his years at Boise State. "You'd like to think we could block one." ... Saturday's game will pay tribute to the armed forces. Special events include a pregame flyover by Navy fighter jets. ... Missouri is the third- least penalized team among major colleges (32.63 yards per game), bettered only by Navy (31.25) and Penn State (31.33). Colorado averages 50.78 yards per game in flags.

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or tkensler@denverpost.com

Advertisement



It's a mind thing

Colorado leads the Big 12 Conference in fourth-down conversion attempts, and coach **Dan Hawkins** expects it to stay that way.

Hawkins believes going for it - provided the circumstances are right - establishes a "play to win" mind-set he said was evident during his five-year tenure with Boise State and is evident now on the New England Patriots' surge in the NFL.

The unbeaten Patriots have "taken heat, but they don't care who they play, they don't care what the score is, they're going to bring it," Hawkins said. "If you're not defending the onside kick, they're going to onside it . . . if you're not defending the fake spike, they're going to fake spike it.

"Hey, to get guys in that kind of a groove, it takes a lot of those little things along the way. . . . I think it's awesome."

CU has attempted 23 fourth-down conversions this season, making 11.

"Sometimes you sputter a little and people go, 'You should punt the ball right there,' " Hawkins said. "And I go, 'Yeah, I know, and that's why you're in Row 107 . . . you're not down here.' In the long haul, it pays dividends on and off the field."

Etc.

- CU has received a commitment from **Ryan Dannewitz**, a 6-foot-7, 280-pound offensive lineman from San Jacinto (Calif.) High School. Rivals.com said Dannewitz, the Buffaloes' ninth known commitment for 2008, visited Oregon and San Diego State but was a two-year attendee at CU's summer camps.

- Third down could be adventurous Saturday. Missouri is ninth in the league in allowing third-down conversions (43.8 percent) while CU is 11th in conversions (34.9 percent). Iowa State converted 11-of-20 third downs and 2-of-3 fourth downs last week against Missouri.

Numbers game

18 of Missouri's starters are from inside the state's borders, including 10 of the projected 11 starters on offense.

Air Force

Changin' hands

Air Force is tied for the fewest turnovers in Division I-A since 2000:

Most Fewest

1. Rutgers 239 1. Air Force 134

2. Baylor 236 Minnesota 134

Hawaii 236 3. Virginia 137

4. Army 230 4. Alabama 142

5. UTEP 227 5. Michigan 143

Army on their minds

In the teams' meeting last season, Air Force forced Army to commit turnovers on four consecutive plays, scored a school-