



# Sumler likely to start at TB for Buffs

## CU coaches still have plenty of decisions to make before opener

By Kyle Ringo  
Monday, August 18, 2008

The final week of Colorado football training camp will be big for dozens of players involved in a handful of position battles throughout the depth chart.

Six offensive linemen continue to vie for two spots. At least six linebackers are fighting to join Jeff Smart in the starting lineup. Defensive ends Marquez Herrod and Jason Brace have emerged as the top two options at right defensive end. The top three wide receivers are Josh Smith, Scotty McKnight and Patrick Williams, but who plays behind them still must be decided, and it's looking like freshman tight end Ryan Deehan will be difficult to keep off the field.

One position is a little more settled but not stamped in stone today following the second scrimmage of camp Sunday afternoon. After almost two full weeks of practices coaches have determined sophomore Demetrius Sumler is their likely starter at tailback when the season opens Aug. 31 in Denver against Colorado State.

It's not much of a surprise considering Sumler came into camp atop the depth chart as the man with the most experience at the position.

Running backs coach Darian Hagan said Sumler knows the playbook best and is a superior blocker in the passing game. But Hagan said all three true freshmen running backs will play this season and Darrell Scott is the best option at this point in short yardage and goal-line situations.

"I feel good about us," Hagan said of his running backs. "I think we're coming along as a group, but we're not there yet where all the backs are running with confidence and know what they're doing out there."

CU officials estimated 1,400 fans stood behind the ropes Sunday on the last day practices were open to the public. The rest of training camp will be conducted behind closed doors with only media and invited guests allowed to see practices. Decisions remain for every position coach on the staff and each talked about his group following the scrimmage:

### Offensive line coach

#### Jeff Grimes

"I think we're in very different stages depending on who you're talking about. A guy like Girthy (Daniel Sanders) has a ton of experience. Devin Head has a ton of experience. So those guys are a long way ahead of other guys. Ryan Miller has some experience but is not as far along as others. Nate Solder has

all the ability in the world but is still not experienced playing the o-line. He still has some questions that freshmen have sometimes.

"The guard position is still totally up in the air. We've got six guys competing for two spots, and we might go into the first game or two without those positions being completely settled. If nobody really steps up and establishes themselves as the clear leader, then we'll do that."

### **Defensive backs coach**

#### **Greg Brown**

"We're making progress, but we didn't have a lot of big plays in the scrimmage today. Jalil Brown caught the ball well and made a couple interceptions, but we did have some missed coverages, missed assignments, missed tackles. We're far from being where we need to be two weeks from now.

"We really feel like we're going to have to go into the first game of two, of course we're going to have to name a couple starters, but at that point it's going to be up to guys to show they belong and deserve to be out there. Really when it comes down to it, you've got five guys going hot and heavy for the two corner jobs, but you're going to play three with the need for nickel defenses on the field. And in the second game you will really need six on the field because they will bring four receivers.

"... At least we're blessed that we do have two veteran safeties back who make the proper calls and get everyone lined up."

### **Tight ends coach**

#### **Kent Riddle**

"In terms of the older guys, we've got a pretty good idea who will play. It's just kind of piecing them into the game plan and figuring out where everybody fits. The younger guys, we're just trying to bring them along and force feed them as much as possible and see what they're ready to do. Ryan Deehan did a nice job today.

"Ryan Wallace made a nice play, but with those guys it's tougher tell. We could probably get by with the older guys, and by get by, I mean do well with them. So if the younger guys aren't going to be impact-type guys, there is no point in playing them. If they can make an impact, we'll let them roll."

### **Wide receivers coach**

#### **Eric Kiesau**

"I think the group overall is progressing very well. I think we're very close to where I want them to be chemistry-wise, guys getting along, working hard, trusting each other. I think the production on the field will show from that. This is third year and coming into it this is the closest we've been as a tight-knit group.

"I have a top three and we're working on the four, five, six and seven. Josh, Scotty and Pat we kind of made that move last week and made sure they were all on the field at the same time. At one point we have Josh behind Pat, but for the betterment of the team, we moved Pat over to get those three guys on the field cause we're not doing all those personnel groupings. We have to make sure we have the right

guys on the field for every play."

### **Linebackers coach**

#### **Brian Cabral**

"I think I'm a work in progress. I think (Jeff) Smart is on top of his game and (Michael) Sipili is coming along. After that, there is a lot of work to be done. I've got a lot of work to do still and there is a lot to sort out still.

"I've got a three-deep right now and I've just got to see how that all falls out."

### **Defensive line coach**

#### **Romeo Bandison**

"With the older guys, the seniors, it's probably as I expected. (Maurice Lucas) is probably one of the most improved I think. George (Hypolite) and Brandon (Nicolas) are steady, smart and know their stuff. There are some things we can improve on, but with those guys I'm pleased.

"Jason Brace has made some progress I've thought. Marquez Herrod is solid also. I trust those guys and I feel good about them. I like all the young guys."



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## CU's Sumler gets nod for season opener

### Sophomore will start at running back spot against Colorado State

By B.G. Brooks

Sunday, August 17, 2008

Question marks about starting jobs still hover over a number of positions on the University of Colorado football team, but this might be a surprise: Don't count running back among them.

At the conclusion of Sunday's second scrimmage, running backs coach Darian Hagan named sophomore Demetrius Sumler his starter for CU's opener Aug. 31 against Colorado State (5:30 p.m., Invesco Field at Mile High, FSN Rocky Mountain).

Rather than anything the 5-foot-10, 220- pound Sumler did or didn't do Sunday, Hagan's decision was based on Sumler's cumulative work of last spring and this preseason camp, with the collective inexperience of CU's talented trio of freshmen also a factor.

"I thought the young guys pushed him, but they haven't pushed by him," Hagan said of the pressure tailback recruits Darrell Scott, Ray Polk and Rodney Stewart have exerted on Sumler.

But as he has done in his two seasons directing the running backs/fullbacks, Hagan said spelling Sumler will be done "by committee." That means as many as four or five other tailbacks -- the freshman trio, plus junior Kevin Moyd and sophomore Brian Lockridge (health permitting) -- could work their way into significant playing time.

Scott, CU's biggest tailback (6-2, 220) appears to be Hagan's first choice as a short-yardage back, while Stewart continues to show his speed and versatility. Polk, Hagan said, still "is trying to figure things out" in pass protection and other areas that give Sumler a preseason edge.

Sumler, of San Diego, has managed to maintain his focus and work ethic despite speculation that his days (and carries) in CU's tailback rotation might be numbered. And, he said, when Scott, Polk and Stewart signed their national letters of intent amid voluminous national hype, his commitment to being the starter never wavered.

"My dad and my mom didn't raise no quitter," he said, noting his goal during spring and summer workouts was "to be a leader for the Buffs (and) coach them (the freshmen), get them better."

Mission accomplished, noted quarterback Cody Hawkins (17-for-27 passing for 225 yards, two touchdowns, one interception). He said Sumler has "done an awesome job of leading. . . . We're all happy to have a guy like that. He relates to every guy on this team, and everyone likes him."

Meanwhile, the scrimmage Sunday, which drew a crowd estimated at 1,400 by school officials, did little to settle the starting guards.

Offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said in a "best-case scenario," he could identify two starters by game week, adding, "We could go in (to the CSU game) with the competition still open."

The backup quarterback position might be redshirt freshman Matt Ballenger's to lose. Senior Nick Nelson (strained abdominal muscle) sat out the scrimmage, allowing Ballenger to work exclusively with the No. 2 offense and complete 12-of-22 passes for 142 yards (one interception).

Ballenger called his scrimmage "a good day. . . . I'm not second-guessing things now; I'm just playing instead of trying to make things happen."

Freshman Tyler Hansen, usually working against a No. 3 defense, ran six times for 72 yards and completed 3-of-4 passes for 54 yards and two touchdowns. Scott called the 6-1, 205-pound Hansen "a Tebow in the making," referring to Florida's Heisman Trophy-winning quarterback, Tim Tebow.

**ETC.:** Cornerback **Jalil Brown** made two athletic interceptions, picking off Hawkins and Ballenger. . . . Sumler (nine carries, 27 yards) and Scott (six, 36) had the most rushing yards among the tailbacks. Scott contributed kickoff returns of 50 and 47 yards, while his uncle, **Josh Smith**, returned a punt 44 yards for a score and added a 62- yard kickoff return. . . . Freshman safety **Patrick Mahnke** and linebackers **Michael Sipili** and **Shaun Mohler** were the leading tacklers, with seven each. . . . Promising freshman tight end **Ryan Deehan** (five catches, 71 yards) said the first scrimmage "was a lot faster, but (Sunday) I knew what to expect. It was a lot easier."

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Longmont, Colorado  
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**TIMES-CALL**

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## Buff's still seeking guards

*By Patrick Ridgell  
Longmont Times-Call*

**BOULDER** — It appears Colorado's search for starting guards won't end soon. In fact, the search might reach into September.

Offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said Sunday he remains "not close at all" to naming the two starting guards. Matt Bahr and Shawn Daniels took several snaps in Sunday's scrimmage along the first-string line, with center Daniel Sanders and tackles Ryan Miller and Nate Solder.

Max Tuioti-Mariner, Devin Head and Blake Behrens also took their turns. Freshman Bryce Givens, the sixth lineman vying for one of the spots, did not dress for Sunday's scrimmage due to an injury CU is describing as minor.

Grimes sounds like he's in no hurry.

"I'd like to know something more in a week, but we could very well go into the first game and let those guys battle it out with some game experience and see who plays their way into that starting job," Grimes said.

"We'll see if anybody establishes themselves in the next week or two. If not, we'll rotate them."

CU will begin game-planning for its Aug. 31 opener against Colorado State in the middle of this week.

Quarterback Cody Hawkins also said there's no need to rush.

"Heck, honestly, it doesn't matter to me because I know every guy in there is going to do a great job," Hawkins said. "If you could see how intense their meetings are. Those guys meet longer than everybody else. They have thorough meetings. They get tested every week. I know those guys know their stuff and are all very capable. Whoever coach Grimes pick will do an awesome job."

**BIG PLAYS:** Sunday's scrimmage did not feature many big numbers. It did feature some big plays, though.

Cornerback Jalil Brown intercepted two passes and tackled fullback Maurice Cantrell on a third-and-short reception for a loss.

"I made a couple of big plays, but at the same time, I did give up some big plays, too," Brown said. "There's a lot of things I need to work on."

Josh Smith returned a punt 44 yards for a touchdown, and a kickoff 62 yards. Darrell Scott returned a kickoff 50 yards.

### Scrimmage statistics

#### Passing:

Cody Hawkins: 17-27, 1 Int., 2 Tds, 225 yards

Tyler Hansen: 3-4, 2 Tds, 54 yards

Matt Ballenger: 12-22, 1 int. 142 yards

#### Receiving:

Scotty McKnight 5-73, 1 TD; Ryan Deehan 5-71; Cody Crawford 4-47; Kevin Celestine: 3-65, 2 TD; Patrick Williams 3-45; Riar Geer 3-18; Ryan Wallace 2-38, 1 TD; Rodney Stewart 2-9; Steve Melton 1-26; Josh Smith 1-22; Devin Shanahan 1-7; Patrick Devenny 1-1; Maurice Cantrell 1-(minus 1).

#### Rushing:

Tyler Hansen 6-72; Corey Nabors 4-53

Darrell Scott 6-36, 1 TD; Kevin Moyd 10-31, 1 TD; Demetrius Sumler 9-27; Matt Ballenger 5-26; Rodney Stewart 4-25, 1 TD; Arthur Jaffee 4-25; Cody Hawkins 5-18, 1 TD; Ray Polk 5-13; Josh Smith 1-(minus 6).

**Defensive leaders:** Shaun Mohler, Michael Sipili, Patrick Mahnke, Marcus Burton made 7 tackles each. Jalil Brown made two interceptions.

Head coach Dan Hawkins said he has no problem playing Smith, possibly CU's best receiver, on special teams.

"We always say put the best guys out there on special teams," Hawkins said.

"He's obviously very electric."

**INJURY REPORT:** Linebacker Brad Jones was held out with what Hawkins called a "dinged ankle." He is expected to be fine by Aug. 31. Head left with an undisclosed injury, but was walking on the sidelines.

Also out were linebacker B.J. Beatty (calf), cornerback Jimmy Smith (back spasms, leg), quarterback Nick Nelson (abdominal strain) and tailback Brian Lockridge (hernia surgery).

**EXTRA POINTS:** Matt Ballenger was the second-string quarterback. He went 12-of-22 for 142 yards and an interception. He also ran five times for 26 yards. ... Starting quarterback Cody Hawkins went 17-for-27 for 225 yards, with one interception and two touchdowns. ... Dan Hawkins said he believes every player has been cleared by the NCAA Clearinghouse and is academically eligible. He added cornerback Lamont Smith is still waiting on a grade from summer school. He said receiver Kendrick Celestine is "in."

Read Patrick Ridgell's [CU sports blog](#). He can be reached at [pridgell@times-call.com](mailto:pridgell@times-call.com).

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Monday, August 18, 2008

TIMES-CALL

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## It's Sumler time at CU

*By Patrick Ridgell*  
*Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Several position battles continue to rage within the Colorado football program. The one at tailback has, for now, found a starter.

Running backs coach Darian Hagan said Sunday night, following the Buffaloes' second scrimmage of August camp, that sophomore Demetrius Sumler will be their starting tailback when the season opens Aug. 31 against Colorado State.

Winning the job shouldn't be seen as an upset, considering Sumler's experience compared to the rest of the roster and Brian Lockridge's lingering problems from last spring's hernia surgery. But the excitement that accompanied February's signings of Darrell Scott, the nation's highest-rated prep running back, plus Ray Polk and Rodney Stewart, combined with the spotlight they've received in camp makes Sumler's victory notable.

"I thought the young guys were going to come in and push, which they have," Hagan said. "But they haven't pushed by him. We're getting better. But we have to patch it up a little bit and I think we'll be fine."

Sumler carried 100 times for 335 yards and four touchdowns last year. Lockridge had 38 carries in 2007, but he is not playing now.

Sumler said he never considered leaving after CU signed the freshmen last winter.

"My dad didn't raise no quitter, my mom didn't raise any quitter," Sumler said.

"Our coaching staff is going to play the best players. I felt like I can play at this level. I wasn't going to shy away from the competition."

At least one teammate said Hagan is making the right choice.

"(Sumler) should be starting," quarterback Cody Hawkins said. "He's doing an awesome job of being a leader this year, and nothing against those other guys, but Demetrius is doing an awesome job of leading those guys and doing everything asked of him — pass protecting, catching and running and in the classroom."

Hagan continues to say the three freshmen probably won't redshirt. Hagan said behind Sumler is "probably a committee." Junior Kevin Moyd has been "playing his tail off," and Stewart is a little ahead of Scott and Polk.

Scott might be used in short-yardage and goal-line situations, Hagan said, while he refines the way coaches want him to run in CU's offense.

"(Scott) gets his pads down and gets vertical," Hagan said.



Sophomore Demetrius Sumler will get the starting nod at tailback when the University of Colorado football team opens the season Aug. 31 against Colorado State.  
**Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**



"That's the thing, he's not used to really getting his shoulders square, going down by the quarterback and then trying to square up again and get in the hole. He's not good at that, so I have to get more practice with him at that."

Hagan added Polk hasn't been a tailback as long as the others.

"Once he gets it all figured out, he's going to be dangerous," Hagan said.

Scott's groin remains sore. He took more snaps with the first string as Sunday's scrimmage passed, and finished with six carries for 36 yards. That included an 18-yarder in which he ran over two tacklers before a third wrestled him down.

Scott said his groin is "not that hurt; I just need to rehab it."

Sumler said he planned to start, and that he wanted to start last year when Hugh Charles was entrenched at tailback. Sumler did, when Charles was hurt.

Sumler said he wants to help coach his younger teammates because he realizes CU needs them.

"Those young guys have a lot of talent, but this is a whole other level," Sumler said. "They're struggling a little bit, but we all do as freshmen. You don't really expect a freshman to come in and know pass blocking and that kind of thing because they don't do it in high school."

Read Patrick Ridgell's [CU sports blog](#). He can be reached at [pridgell@times-call.com](mailto:pridgell@times-call.com).

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## Sumler wins start in CU backfield

The Buffs value experience even with three top freshmen raring to go. Coaches say depth will be key this season.

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

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Quarterback Cody Hawkins tossed two TD passes in the Buffaloes' scrimmage Sunday in Boulder. ( Noah Rabinowitz, The Denver Post )

BOULDER — With the arrival of three touted freshman tailbacks, Colorado sophomore Demetrius Sumler almost became an afterthought to Buffaloes fans. But running backs coach Darian Hagan never forgot about the hardworking 220-pounder and never discounted his contributions.

After a 97-minute, 137-play scrimmage Sunday, Hagan said Sumler will start in the Aug. 31 opener against Colorado State unless something unforeseen occurs.

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Sumler was not the star of the scrimmage. In fact, his rushing statistics were rather pedestrian: nine carries for 27 yards. But it's Sumler's overall game that sets him apart, Hagan said.

And it should be noted that while playing more often with the No. 1 offense, Sumler has drawn more carries in

## Colorado Football

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scrimmages against the No. 1 defense than have former Parade Magazine high school All-American Darrell Scott (six carries for 36 yards Sunday), Rodney Stewart (four for 25) or Ray Polk (five for 13).

"Those young guys have a lot of talent, but this is another level," Sumler said Sunday. "They're struggling a little bit, but you don't expect freshmen to come in and know the pass blocking . . . and reading the defense. You don't do that in high school. There's a process for all of us."

Hagan reiterated that all four tailbacks will be needed this season, and none will redshirt. To open the season, Scott (6-feet-2, 220 pounds) and Polk (6-1, 200) may be used more often in short-yardage situations, Hagan said, although both have breakaway speed. The slippery Stewart (5-6, 170) could begin his career as a situational player.

"It's that value of experience . . . He's kind of the whole package," CU coach Dan Hawkins said when asked about Sumler. "Of course, we always like to run a stable of guys in there, and we'll continue to do that."

A San Diego native, Sumler is CU's top returning rusher. As the backup to Hugh Charles in 2007, he ran 100 times for 335 yards and four touchdowns. Sumler also caught six passes for 41 yards and a score.

"I thought the young guys would come in and push him," Hagan said of Sumler. "But they haven't pushed by him."

Scott, who ran for a team- best 86 yards in the first scrimmage six days earlier, is still learning how to square up his shoulders, Hagan said. Of Polk, Hagan said the Arizonan "is trying to figure it out. But once he does, Ray will be dangerous."

Footnotes. Much more of the offensive playbook had been installed since the last scrimmage, and it showed. Except for some early stops, and two interceptions by sophomore cornerback Jalil Brown, the defense looked a step behind. Sophomore quarterback Cody Hawkins threw for 225 yards and two touchdowns, with one interception. . . . On returns, sophomore receiver Josh Smith (62-yard kickoff return, 44-yard punt return) outdid his nephew, Scott. But not by much. Scott returned kickoffs for 50 and 37 yards. . . . Dan Hawkins confirmed that sophomore wide receiver Kendrick Celestine has regained his academic eligibility. . . . The scrimmage marked the final August practice open to the public. The crowd was estimated at 1,500.

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