



CU's Givens trying to pack on the pounds

By B.G. Brooks

Friday, September 5, 2008

Bryce Givens is giving gluttony a good shot.

So far, it's not working.

Givens, a strapping freshman offensive lineman at the University of Colorado with a metabolism that might make a hummingbird envious, is on a serious weight-gaining mission, trying to add about 30 pounds to his 6-foot-6 frame.

But that's only a start. On any given day since reporting in August at slightly less than 250 pounds, he weighs anywhere from 239 to 245, and even adding 30 pounds before next season would get him to a weight that most offensive line coaches still believe is on the light side.

So Givens, a Mullen High School product who was among CU's prized 2008 recruits, has become a very conscientious calorie counter - but going in the other direction. Trying to add 1 to 2 pounds a week, he has doubled his daily meals, ingesting nearly 7,000 calories daily.

"I've been talking to a nutritionist and we've been figuring it out - I'm probably somewhere under (7,000), but I need to be around that in order to gain weight," he said.

"I've been just pounding everything I could in sight. I'm trying to eat about six or seven meals a day, keep full of fluids and just keep pounding away."

His position coach, Jeff Grimes, a former offensive lineman at Texas-El Paso, dreamily says, "I wish I could do that."

Despite his push for poundage, Givens has tried to eat healthy. He's big on vegetables, fruits and salads, with meat eaten in large quantities. And, of course, he's carbo-loading at a marathoner's pace, shoveling down potatoes, pasta and bread.

"It's my metabolism . . . and just the grind (of practice)," he said. "I've been busting my butt every day out here to get better. And even with all the eating I'm doing, it's still just not enough calories to get that weight on. So we've just got to find a way to get more calories in me, and then we'll go from there."

Adding weight to large frames isn't new for CU. Starting left tackle Nate Solder, a former 250-pound tight end, is now a 300-pounder. Backup defensive tackle Taj Kaynor embarked on a similar weight-gaining mission two years ago and now is listed at 280.

Time might be on Givens' side - or maybe not. Grimes hopes to redshirt Givens but keep him on the

"ready list" if depth on the offensive line declines. His technique is improving, which Grimes attributes to Givens "simply wanting to succeed. He cares about this."

Said Givens: "I'll be ready to go, if I need to."

If he can't add the desired pounds, Givens says he even has been "threatened" with punitive action from strength/ conditioning coach Jeff Pitman.

" 'Coach Pit' is kind of frustrated with me right now," Givens said, grinning. "He says if I'm not at a certain weight by next week, then he's got a little punishment program that's been proven to work. He said I won't like it too much."

What's a guy to do? Couch potatoes the world over, perhaps even his position coach, would tell him, "Eat up and enjoy it - you're living the dream."

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CU report: Touchback or bust

By B.G. Brooks

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BOULDER — Hard lesson No. 1 learned by Colorado's kickoff coverage team in the opener last weekend: Don't expect **Jameson Davis'** kickoffs to always reach the end zone.

While Davis' first two kickoffs resulted in touchbacks and the next two (one was a do-over after an offsides penalty) weren't returned further than CSU's 23-yard line, his fifth attempt was returned 90 yards for a touchdown by the Rams' **John Mosure**.

CU tight ends/special teams coach **Kent Riddle** said a "series of several things" contributed to Mosure's return, but added, "I think our guys took it for granted it was going to be a touchback. Everything up to that point they'd seen in the game and in practice had been. I think it was a little bit of a wake-up that, 'Hey, we've got to be ready to go (if it's not kicked into the end zone).'"

Riddle pointed to at least one missed tackle on the return, as well as "four guys that didn't fit in their correct gaps. It was a series of things, and a great thing to learn from" before the game against Eastern Washington today (1:30 p.m., Folsom Field, no television).

Quite a catch

Eastern Washington junior receiver **Aaron Boyce** earned postseason All-America honors last season after catching 85 passes for 1,308 yards and 10 touchdowns. His reception total ranked second in school history and his yardage total was fourth.

The 6-foot-3 Boyce played only one season of football at Kentwood (Wash.) High School but was a standout basketball player. With Boyce and current Detroit Pistons guard **Rodney Stuckey**, Kentwood won the 2004 Washington 4A state championship.

Directional scouting

When CU coaches began preparing for Eastern Washington, they took a hard look at Central Washington. That's because new Eastern Washington head coach **Beau Baldwin** left Central Washington last winter and brought four of his assistants with him.

Baldwin, 36, spent four seasons as the Eagles offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach before leaving for Central Washington, his alma mater. He returned to Eastern Washington as head coach Jan. 4.

Etc.

* Eastern Washington's senior punter, **Fritz Brayton**, is the cousin of former CU defensive end **Tyler**

Brayton, an Oakland Raiders draftee six seasons ago who now is with the Carolina Panthers.

* Tight end **Riar Geer**, who underwent arthroscopic knee surgery before the opener, appears on track to return by the West Virginia game (Sept. 18), Riddle said, adding, "He's jogging around and looking good." Final clearance, though, will come from CU's medical staff.

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Buffs' pass rush off to strong start

CU aims to keep heat on today against Eastern Washington

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — When Colorado linebacker Brad Jones heard the defense's plan entering the Colorado State game, something hit home with him.

There wouldn't be much blitzing, Jones learned. Most of the pass rush was supposed to come from the front four.

Jones knew it was time for a group that mustered little pressure a year ago to put up.

"It took all the guess work out of the game plan; we knew we weren't blitzing," Jones said.

CU's pass rush Sunday — which was a combination of good work in the defensive secondary and steady pressure from the line — totaled five sacks and four quarterback hurries. Obviously, no coach will say how much blitzing CU has in store today for Eastern Washington.

Figuring how the Eagles threw 61 passes at Texas Tech last week, the Buffs better have something. Sunday's effort was CU's best single-game sack total since the six it recorded in the second game of 2006.

Four came on first down Sunday, and CSU finished with a 42 net passing yards on 16 first-down plays, meaning the Rams were frequently in second- and third-and-long.

Pressuring quarterbacks is an area in which CU coaches demand improvement in 2008.

So far, so good. But tough tests remain, like today. And then there's Big 12 play when the Buffs face some of the nation's more creative offenses.

CU defensive coordinator Ron Collins would like to see his front muster sufficient pressure in 2008, as it did Sunday.

Chances are, it won't be asked to.

"Well, that's always a tough issue," Collins said. "It's hard to foresee the future. We have a couple of guys who did a pretty good job with it, but we're going to have to generate pressure in more ways that just a four-man rush. ... That won't be the only way we're able to do it."

If Sunday's performance spurred anything, it was confidence among the defensive linemen and pass rushers. Not that confidence was lacking, said Jones, whom CU used off the edge Sunday and in spring drills. It was just nice to perform like that in the opener against a team with four returning starters on the offensive line.

"I think we knew we had a good defensive line and if we did the things we need to do, we can do it," Jones said. "But it was like, once we did it, 'dang!'"

"It takes away all the questions, you know what I'm saying? We really know we can pressure the quarterback and we can play great. ... I mean, it's always on paper that you can do it, but once you do it, it's like, 'Oh man, it's cool.'"

Said Collins: "It was awesome for our guys ... It's something to build on.

"We got a few sacks in this game last year, and the games will only get tougher as the year goes on. We have to continue to get better."

Collins makes a good point. Three of CU's 19 sacks in 2008 came in the opener against CSU. That second game of 2006, when CU had six, also came against the Rams.

The Buffs had 19 in the other 11 games of 2006, when the defense allowed opponents to complete 67 percent of their throws.

If recent history is a true indicator, expect CU's pass defense to receive a stiffer test today than it did Sunday.

Eastern Washington junior quarterback Matt Nichols has seven career 300-yard passing games. He hit 36-for-61 for 335 yards at Texas Tech.

"The challenge is for us is to be able to hold up in the back half through the whole game, and to generate pressure on the quarterback in a variety of ways, whether it's a four-man rush, a five-man rush, six," Collins said. "We have to give them a lot of different looks."



Bufs don't want to repeat history

Colorado vows not to underestimate Eagles

By Kyle Ringo
Friday, September 5, 2008

The most recent issue of ESPN The Magazine includes a feature on page 152 in which it selected four likely upsets in games between small school college football programs and the big boys this fall.

Guess who made the list?

The Colorado football team was stunned in its season opener and the debut of coach Dan Hawkins in Boulder back in 2006 by a determined team from Montana State that came to Folsom Field, battled into the fourth quarter and prevailed 19-10. It was the start of a miserable 2-10 season.

Apparently, the turnaround that began last season culminating in a bowl appearance wasn't enough to convince the magazine the Buffs once again have a strong program headed in the right direction. It believes Eastern Washington and its pass-happy, spread offense will become the second Football Championship Subdivision team from the Big Sky Conference to beat Hawkins and the Buffs in three years today (1:30 p.m., no television).

This is the first meeting between these two programs and CU will pay Eastern Washington \$450,000 for the game.

CU has a string of heavyweights on the slate in the weeks after today's game, but much of the appeal would be removed from those contests if the Buffs were to lose today. And losing is a very real possibility, considering the Buffs are young and the Eagles come to town ranked No. 10 among FCS schools. Montana State was ranked No. 22 when it won here.

All week the Buffs have vowed not to underestimate their opponent or look beyond the Eagles to West Virginia, Florida State and Texas.

"For us, we don't care. It doesn't matter to us the decal or the name on the back of the jersey," defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "It's about Colorado football, and we're going to put a good product on the field on Saturday."

There are plenty of differences between the current CU team and the 2006 club aside from the maturity in its approach. Two factors top the list.

This team has the unfortunate experience of that team from which to learn.

These Buffs have an experienced quarterback. Sophomore Cody Hawkins makes his 15th consecutive start for CU today. He had a solid showing in the season opener last week against Colorado State,

throwing for more than 200 yards and completing 20 of 29 passes.

When the 2006 season opened, one former quarterback had just quit the team in a huff after failing to earn the starting job, and the remaining signal callers had a total of one collegiate start between them. It showed in the team's inability to move the ball that day.

This CU team also won't be dealing with many of the growing pains and mistakes of a team in its first game under a new coaching staff. In fact, that shoe is more on the other foot today with EWU playing only its second game under coach Beau Baldwin.

Baldwin's team played well in its opener last week at Texas Tech, losing 49-24. He hopes it can recapture the intensity it showed in West Texas.

"The challenge this week for us is we have to find a way to come out with the same attitude, same motor, same heart and desire we played with in Game 1 if we want to have a shot against Colorado," Baldwin said.

The Eagles' strength is its passing game led by quarterback Matt Nichols, a three-year starter who threw for 335 yards last week. It's the primary reason ESPN believes the Buffs, who finished 103rd in the nation against the pass last season, are ripe for an upset. Colorado's most inexperienced defensive backs such as Jalil Brown, Anthony Wright (if he is recovered from a sprained ankle) and Jonathan Hawkins will be tested. Sophomore Jimmy Smith is not expected to play.

The CU defensive line registered five sacks last week and would be a big help to those young cornerbacks if it can muster that pressure once again. A victory today would give the Buffs their first 2-0 start since 2005.

Dan Hawkins will be looking for improvement in many areas today compared with the opener. He is hoping to see fewer than the eight penalties committed against the Rams, fewer turnovers and further development in a young offensive line, that will feature three players making only their second starts.

Hawkins said he was encouraged last week to see his team respond in a calm, confident fashion to mistakes it had made such as a fumble by a freshman running back, a tipped pass for an interception or a kickoff return for a touchdown. During the past two seasons, those mistakes might have derailed the team.

But these Buffs seem to have learned from the past.



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Colorado vs. EWU matchups

By Kyle Ringo
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CU RUN OFFENSE VS. EWU RUN DEFENSE --The CU offensive line is very young with two freshman starters at guard this week after Devin Head's suspension and tackle Nate Solder making just his second start at the position. The Buffs still should win this battle even with some missed assignments and mistakes. Four different running backs are likely to get carries and this could be the time to allow freshman Darrell Scott and Rodney Stewart to develop some more confidence at the college level. CU should run for 200 or more yards in this game. The Eagles run defense wasn't tested much until it had its back to the goal line last week. They allowed five rushing touchdowns and 104 yards to a Texas Tech team that almost ignores the running game most of the season. **Edge: CU.**

CU PASS OFFENSE VS. EWU PASS DEFENSE -- Quarterback Cody Hawkins was efficient in his first outing leading the no-huddle approach. He completed 20 of 29 passes for 214 yards. Hawkins audibled into a play that resulted in the Buffs' first touchdown, a 35-yard passing play. It was an example of his true strength at the position, the mental side of the game. CU is six deep at wide receiver in terms of the number of players coaches have true confidence to play. That's another positive development. Tight ends and running backs also are heavily involved here with screens and passes down the middle of the field. Eagles coach Beau Baldwin said he sees some similarities between what CU is now doing in the passing game and what Texas Tech does. His team won't be overwhelmed with the Buffs passing game, but it did just surrender 536 yards through the air in its first outing of the year without recording a sack. **Edge: CU.**

EWU RUN OFFENSE VS. CU RUN DEFENSE --Run offense? The Eagles threw the ball 61 times last week. They're certainly not concerned with marching down the field four yards at a time in a cloud of dust. The Eagles ran the ball 22 times for a net of 23 yards against the Red Raiders. There is a running pedigree in the backfield. Senior tailback Dale Morris is the younger brother of Seattle Seahawks running back Maurice Morris. Dale Morris has been hampered throughout his career by knee injuries, but can be dangerous. He averaged 71.5 yards a game and scored 12 touchdowns in 2007. The Buffs were strong against a more formidable ground game last week, holding CSU under 100 yards rushing. This should be the second week in row. **Edge: CU.**

EWU PASS OFFENSE VS. CU PASS DEFENSE -- The Buffs started strong in this area last week but the performance also came against a new quarterback in a new offense. They face a bigger challenge in this area this week against an experienced quarterback with three dependable wide receivers. After finishing 103 in the nation last season in pass defense, it's going to take more than one solid outing to convince us the Buffs will make significant improvement in 2008. CU doesn't have all of its best defensive backs available and healthy. The Buffs sacked the quarterback five times a week ago against an experienced offensive line. Keeping that pressure up this week is imperative. CU just has too much experience and depth in its defensive front and should win this battle, particularly in the second half. If not, the Buffs could find themselves in trouble. **Edge: EVEN.**

SPECIAL TEAMS -- We suspect this might be the game in which we see the first blocked kick of the

season. Josh Smith returned one kickoff for a touchdown in the season opener and almost took two to the house. The Buffs return game is going to be fun to watch as long as he is back there. New kickers Aric Goodman and Jameson Davis fared well in their debuts and must strive for consistency now. Matt DiLallo is in his third year punting in Boulder and should be able to come through with some big kicks when they're needed with all that experience behind him. Eagles' place-kicker Felipe Macias kicked a 55-yard field goal in Lubbock, Texas, a week ago. He should be good from there at altitude. EWU only forced two punts in Week 1 so the punt return group is still a bit of a mystery. The Eagles averaged about 19 yards on eight kickoff returns. **Edge: CU.**

COACHING -- Beau Baldwin is unknown to us. All we really have to go by is the way his team performed last week at Texas Tech. The Eagles lost 49-24 but they managed to impress Red Raiders coach Mike Leach to the point that Leach said Baldwin's team was among the opponents he admires most in his career. Sure, it's easy to say stuff like that after a win, but it's clear Baldwin was able to coax maximum effort out of his players, and that's a sign of solid coaching. Still, this is only the second time he's coached against a Division I opponent. Frankly, when it comes to a matchup like this, the coach for the Bowl Championship Series school ought to get the edge every time. Hawkins is making a minimum of \$900,000 a year, in part, because he's supposed to among the top minds in the game. He's coached on the big stage of Division I for a decade now as an assistant or head coach. He should be able to adapt pretty quickly to whatever comes his way. **Edge: CU.**

PREDICTION -- Colorado 45-19

-- **Kyle Ringo**



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Woelk: Last chance for Buffs to work out the kinks

By Neill Woelk
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Enough about the last time Colorado played a I-AA team.

Dan Hawkins' Buffs no doubt remember the past, but they'll be better off concentrating on the present today when Eastern Washington visits Folsom Field.

Nobody in, around or near the Dal Ward Center is underestimating the visitors. Fact is, Eastern Washington likely has as many quality players as Colorado State, CU's foe last weekend.

These days, the difference between upper-level FCS teams (I-AA) and lower-tier D-I teams is minimal. The pool of good players from around the nation gets larger every year, the development of those players continues to improve and parity becomes more and more of a reality every week.

That being said, the Buffs don't need a close game today. Consider this their last tuneup before they hit what might be one of the toughest stretches in recent Buff history: West Virginia, Florida State and Texas.

CU's past seasons are peppered with rugged three-game sets. As recently as 2002, CU played Southern Cal, UCLA and Kansas State -- all ranked teams -- in succession.

But in terms of marquee value, we'll go back to 1994, when Bill McCartney's final team took on Wisconsin (No. 10), Michigan (No. 4) and Texas (No. 16) in a three-week period. Each a memorable game in a very memorable season.

All of which brings us back to today's matchup with Eastern Washington. The Buffs must take the Eagles seriously -- and take care of business in the process.

That means reducing some of the silly mistakes that kept CU's 38-17 opening win over Colorado State from being even more of a rout.

For starters, the Buffs need to eliminate their unforced errors. That would include unnecessary penalties (false starts and personal fouls) and turnovers. The Buffs handed the ball to the Rams twice in the opener, and both were more the result of CU carelessness rather than CSU great plays. At the same time, CU killed a handful of drives with silly penalties, the kind that drive coaches crazy.

The good news is that down the stretch a week ago, CU's offense began to establish a rhythm. The Buffs pounded away with a running game in the fourth quarter, and kept the Rams honest with their passing game. CU coach Dan Hawkins admitted earlier in the week that he would have liked to have slowed the tempo just a bit in the final quarter -- but when his offense began hitting on all cylinders, he became

hesitant to pull in the reins.

Today, the Buffs need to establish that offensive rhythm much earlier and maintain it for 60 minutes.

Defensively, today's game should be a great test for CU's secondary. The Eagles threw 61 passes last week in a loss to Texas Tech, meaning CU's corners will have to be on their toes all game long.

It's the kind of game that should provide some good experience for a team that will see plenty more spread offenses as the season progresses.

Other things we'd like to see include more of freshman running backs Darrell Scott and Rodney Stewart, fewer problems on the snap between center Daniel Sanders and quarterback Cody Hawkins, and no more breakdowns on the kick return team.

But most off all, the Buffs need a clean, crisp performance, the kind that will set the stage for the ensuing three games.

Today's game is one that still has a margin for error.

The next three games, such a luxury won't be available.



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