



FSU ties run deep for some Buffs

Smith, Scott among CU players looking forward to homecoming

By Kyle Ringo

Saturday, September 20, 2008

The Colorado football team finished celebrating its win over West Virginia and turned its focus Friday to the final nonconference game of the season against No. 24 Florida State.

The Buffs will play for the second time this season in a National Football League stadium a week from today when they face the Seminoles in Jacksonville on national television once again (1:30 p.m., ABC). Whether the Seminoles continue to be ranked a week from now will depend on how they do today in their matchup with Wake Forest.

Many of the Buffs will be watching that game today and looking forward to next weekend, hoping to earn revenge on the Seminoles, who came to Boulder and won 16-6 last fall.

It will be a homecoming for six Buffs who grew up in Florida. For three of those players, it will be a poignant encounter with their roots.

Wide receiver Josh Smith and his nephew, running back Darrell Scott, spent much of their childhood in Tallahassee. Growing up near the FSU campus off Stuckey Avenue, it was hard to root for any other team besides the Seminoles.

Redshirt freshman linebacker Josh Hartigan grew up even closer to the program. His father, Sterling Palmer, was an outside linebacker and defensive end for the Seminoles from 1989 to 1992 and was a first-round draft pick of the Washington Redskins.

Hartigan didn't play against the Seminoles last season, but he has been participating on special teams units this year and figures to see action next week.

"My dad is going to be there, and he's Florida State, but now that I'm playing for Colorado, he's Colorado all the way," Hartigan said. "It's good to be able to go up against them."

Punter Matt DiLallo, running back Kevin Moyd and offensive lineman Mike Iltis also grew up in the sunshine state.

Smith said he tried early in life to chart his own course by rooting against the Seminoles, but his family, including Scott, gave him such a hard time for cheering for the Florida Gators that he eventually switched allegiances.

"Everyone in the family would just be mad at him because one time Florida beat Florida State," Scott said.

"I liked Alligators. What can I say," Smith said. "I thought that was a tight animal."

Smith and Scott eventually made their way west to California where they were recruited to play at CU by coach Dan Hawkins and his staff. But they have always maintained a place in their hearts for the Tallahassee area where they first began playing football together on dusty schoolyard lot.

They are expecting about 50 family members from Florida and around the country to attend the game. The other Florida Buffs also are expecting sizable turnouts, making tickets tough to come by in the locker room this week.

Friends and family members have already told Smith and Scott they will be rooting for them to do well, but most still will be pulling for the Seminoles to win the game.

"You got to respect that," Smith said.

Smith, Scott and DiLallo have made the biggest impact on this season's team among the Florida contingent. Smith has scored a touchdown in each of the first three games. DiLallo is punting well and Scott has become a bruising ball carrier whom defenses aren't happy to have to tackle in the fourth quarter.

"That's a pretty big deal for me," Smith said. "A lot of guys dream of being in that kind of situation and that environment. I've been watching Florida State growing up my whole life. They've pretty much stayed my favorite team for the longest time. I often wished I had been recruited by them and all that stuff. But everything happens for a reason and I'm grateful to be going up against those guys. It's always an honor for me to play against those guys."



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Little time to celebrate

Bufs turn sights to Fla. State

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The Colorado Buffaloes vowed late Thursday night to quickly get on with correcting mistakes made in their defeat of No. 21 West Virginia and preparing for their Sept. 27 game against Florida State.

Good thinking.

Neck deep in a treacherous stretch that pits CU against five ranked teams in six weeks, the Buffs travel to Jacksonville for next Saturday's game.

CU's big celebration after beating a ranked team in overtime wasn't too surprising. Now the Buffs say they can't dwell on Thursday's victory for long.

"Come Sunday, it's all about the Seminoles," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "They've been pretty good about that so far and so has our staff, so I don't have any problems with that."

Said CU receiver Josh Smith: "We have a couple of days to regroup. We are going to go back at it fast on Sunday."

Florida State hosts No. 18 Wake Forest today in a game that could weigh heavily in the Atlantic Coast Conference race this year.

Florida State may not be the power it once was, but the Seminoles remain formidable. They should be even stronger when several suspended players return the week they play the Buffs.

A department-wide cheating scandal, revealed in February, implicated 61 Florida State athletes, about a third of whom were football players. Eighteen Seminoles were held out of last season's Music City Bowl, and most of them are also suspended for the first three games of 2008. Game No. 4 is next Saturday when CU visits.

That should add an element of surprise. CU, 3-0 for the first time since 2004, ought to be used to that. The Buffs have beaten three programs that each had new head coaches. Nothing has come too easily, and that's fine, Hawkins said.

"These guys are having to scratch and claw, so I think that sense of urgency is still in the back of their mind," Hawkins said. "They know it's not coming easy and that's a good thing, because we're playing too many good football teams."

Thursday's win probably won't place the Buffs in any top 25 poll, but they should merit more consideration. CU has received votes in the USA Today/Coaches poll all season, but never more than three. The Buffs have yet to receive any vote in the Associated Press' top 25.

CU has not been ranked since the first week of November 2005, peaking at No. 21 in the USA Today/Coaches poll. A loss to Iowa State dropped them out. They haven't been close to returning since.



Colorado defenders break up West Virginia's Hail Mary attempt on the final play of regulation Thursday night. The Buffs won, 17-14, in overtime and are now preparing to face Florida State a week from today in Jacksonville.

Joshua Buck/Times-Call

Going back to 1989, the Buffs have been ranked in 185 of the past 314 weeks.

Asked if he'd be disappointed if CU is unranked when Sunday's polls come out, CU defensive tackle George Hypolite said that's not a concern.

"That's not our job," he said. "Our job is to play football ... that's what we're going to do. We're going to prepare for Florida State. It's great to get a win against West Virginia. If we're ranked, we're ranked. If we're not, we're not. It's not going to change our game plan."



CU report: The big dog bites

By B.G. Brooks

Friday, September 19, 2008

BOULDER - West Virginia kicker **Pat McAfee** said in an interview last weekend with the *Charleston Gazette* he was "going to go for 75 (yards)" on a field-goal attempt during his team's day-before walk-through at Folsom Field - hopefully to earn a place in ESPN's daily top 10.

McAfee was referencing Oklahoma specialist **Garrett Hartley**, who made the list by kicking a 70-yarder last season during the Sooners' walk-through. But, McAfee added, he wouldn't try a 75-yarder unless it was OK'd by coach **Bill Stewart**.

"Oh, I kick 70 out here," McAfee told the newspaper, pointing to Mountaineer Field. "Back up and let the big dog eat."

McAfee, a normally reliable senior who was 3-for-3 this season (39-for-55 entering 2008), hit the left upright on a 23-yard attempt in overtime Thursday and opened the door for CU's **Aric Goodman**, who nailed a 25-yarder for the 17-14 victory.

Brown comes up large

Cornerback **Cha'pelle Brown**, at 5-foot-7 the shortest member of the Buffaloes' secondary, continues to play big.

The defensive coaches' film review showed Brown with eight solo tackles and seven assists against the Mountaineers. Brown, a junior, also had a possible scoring interception in his hands before bobbling and dropping the football.

"And the thing is, he's got good hands," said secondary coach **Greg Brown**, adding that the player had looked behind him before the pass was thrown, then looked ahead and found the football was on him.

Against Eastern Washington, Cha'pelle Brown returned an interception 27 yards for CU's winning touchdown.

Greg Brown also said senior safety **Ryan Walters** was credited with seven tackles and four assists, praising both players' tackling ability.

Late illness

On Wednesday, senior safety **D.J. Dykes** came down with what Greg Brown termed a bad cold and overall weakness, and was unable to play. In his place, redshirt freshman **Anthony Perkins** "played pretty well," Greg Brown said, noting the same thing about the entire secondary in the first three games.



Ground game matures for CU

By David Accomazzo

Friday, September 19, 2008

The University of Colorado football team's switches between the shotgun and the "I" formation against West Virginia was considered before the Eastern Washington game on Sept. 6.

But running game coordinator/offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said the move was delayed until Thursday night to give CU's young running backs more time to stabilize and familiarize themselves in the shotgun.

"We just weren't consistent enough with our running backs' footwork and overall understanding of things from the 'gun," Grimes said Friday. "So we decided to give them another week there and see where we were."

Here's where: The Buffaloes mixed both formations and ran for a season-high 213 yards in their 17-14 overtime win against the No. 21 Mountaineers. Having previously moved from the shotgun mostly for goal-line or short-yardage plays, Grimes was reassured the switch could be used anywhere on the field.

"We can run everything from under center that can be run in the 'gun," Grimes said. "There are certain things we'll do more of in the 'gun, but we can do all of it from either. . . . And a lot of things we're doing, we're keeping the same personnel (regardless of the formation). That helps us in terms of being multiple."

But CU's ground game, which had averaged 121.5 yards in two previous games, surged in Week 3 because of improved line play, and much of that centered on a challenge Grimes presented for senior center Daniel "Girthy" Sanders.

Grimes singled out West Virginia nose tackle Chris Neild, a 6-foot-3, 305-pound sophomore, and told Sanders before the game that he "was willing to put my money on him in the run game and not try put a double team on (Neild) all the time. There were a lot of plays in the game where he basically had to handle that guy on his own, and he did a nice job."

But Grimes also said there was across-the-front improvement from the Eastern Washington game, with sophomore tackles Ryan Miller and Nate Solder showing "marked improvement" and the three-

guard rotation of true freshman Max Tuioti-Mariner, redshirt freshman Blake Behrens and junior Devin Head stepping up their play.

Of that threesome, Grimes said Tuioti-Mariner made the most improvement and the rotation in future games "will be left somewhat open-ended. We want competition, but I'm a guy who's going to pretend like there's competition.

"Nobody's competing with Solder or 'Girthy,' but on the inside, all those guys are close enough that the starting lineup could change week to week."

Giving numerous carries to freshman tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart (he ran 28 times for 166 yards) was in the game plan, but also because Stewart had the "hot hand," Grimes said. "When a guy's running for six, eight, 12 yards a pop, you want to keep that rolling."

Stewart averaged 5.9 yards a carry, almost identical to his team-best 5.85 from the first two games.

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