



**For Immediate Release February 5, 2021**

## ***COLORADO HEAD FOOTBALL COACH KARL DORRELL***

### **ZOOM Conference Quotes**

#### **On Tight Ends Coach Bryan Cook**

"We finally finished off our remaining full-time positions on our staff. One hire is already here in house. I wanted to put him in a position where he's one of our 10, and that's Bryan Cook. He's going to be coaching our tight ends. Bryan has a wealth of experience, as you guys have known, in his resume. He's been on both sides of the ball. He's an excellent football coach and an excellent teacher. I watched him quite often this past season, working with linebackers, his coaching style and how he communicates. I think he's a great communicator. He has very good knowledge on both sides of the ball. He's been on offense most of his career. I know recently he's been on defense. We think he's going to be a tremendous asset for us on our offensive staff just because, recently being on defense, he can help with the game planning of really understanding what defenses are trying to do to stop us offensively. I think his recent knowledge of being on the defensive side can really help gain even a better understanding of some of our game planning on how to attack defenses. I'm really excited about Bryan, his efforts and how he's helped our program. Over the past three years, he's been on the defensive side and he'll be with us offensively this year."

#### **On Inside Linebackers Coach Mark Smith**

"We also added Mark Smith, who's an experienced coach as well, for coaching our inside linebackers. Mark started his career coaching at the inside backer position at (Oklahoma) when he first started out on a college level. He's been a high school coach. He's ran programs. He recently was the defensive coordinator at Long Island University. Before there he was at Arkansas helping with the defensive backs on the back end and also being the recruiting coordinator. What Mark brings is a great knowledge base on some different areas of defense. I think that's important. Our back seven, linebackers safeties and corners, that whole coverage group has to be pretty much on the same page and understanding everyone's role and how the coverages work. I think with him, myself, Brett Maxie, Demetrice Martin, Coach (Chris) Wilson, along with Brian Michalowski with the linebackers, all those people being on the same page and in concert are really important. His experience on both the back end and at the linebacker position, it'll be a good chance for a lot of that information to be seamless with putting things in. There's a great understanding of the roles in terms of what the backer plays should look like and what the safety plays and the corner play. I feel like it's two good additions in terms of their assignments. Mark started his career with Chris Wilson at OU. He has some background with Chris Wilson. From Bryan's standpoint, obviously his experience being on offense, and his Georgia Tech years and Georgia Southern when he was the offensive coordinator, I think that helps us offensively because of what he's done from the defensive side."

#### **On What He Was Looking For In A Coach**

"When I did a bunch of interviews with all the positions that we did this year, the biggest thing that I look at as a head coach is how well they communicate. How well they can explain the schematic concepts that we do so that our players can understand it. I feel strongly about those communication skills with these two. You don't have to play the position to coach your position. I've coached quarterbacks and never played. That tells you something right there. I think these guys have such a broad knowledge base and with their communication they're going to continue to learn and get better at what they do from their assignment standpoint of coaching their positions. That's the easy part. They're going to understand their roles and what needs to be coached. It's really how well they communicate. I thought these two have done a tremendous job."

### **On Cook's Recruiting Style**

"(Former CU Tight Ends Coach) Taylor (Embree) is younger and can kind of more identify with the youth. That's his strength because of his youthfulness. Taylor was growing through the recruiting process when he was here. He was really making a lot of strides with improving on recruiting just as with the work that he was putting into it. I just think it is a difference in style. Bryan is a very engaging person himself. In terms of guys that haven't had a lot of extensive experience with a position, I think you could really say the same thing in recruiting. There are times where we put guys in recruiting areas that are different than where they were used to. There's a learning curve from that standpoint. It's the same thing here. I think what these guys can add to the table is that they're very personable. Like I said they're great communicators. I think they're engaging with family, parents and things like that. They have really good interpersonal qualities. I would say that. I don't think it's going to be any drawback or any negativity because of the roles that these two will play for us. I think they'll quickly adapt, learn and get caught up to how we do things here from a philosophical standpoint, And, because of their knowledge, communication skills and intellect, it is going to be fast for those guys to be able to adapt to the things that we do."

### **On Setting His Imprint On The Program**

"That's coming along really, really nicely. I feel that I am putting more of my imprint on the program now. I am putting the pieces in place from a coaching standpoint and the right guys that I want that are strong communicators, mentors, and guys that are going to be personally invested in our players. I do feel like the guys on the staff right now are really going to be engaging in that way. I think that's the biggest asset of what I'm trying to do in this program. The coaches have many roles. They're not just their coaches. We're going to be other support mechanisms for all of our student-athletes, because sometimes, as you guys know in recruiting, some of these recruits come from different backgrounds and different family dynamics and dysfunctions. We all have those things. I believe that these guys will adapt and be able to do those things very well. The players that we've added, from the portal, those were key players for us that I think are going to help us and impact our play this year. Every one of them are designed and thoroughly looked through with our due diligence and we've vetted every situation in and around these kids. We feel that they're the type of player that we need, not only for us to play better but also they will be great fits in our program because their core beliefs and everything are really consistent to who we are as a football program. I am making those imprints. I am adding the right people and the right mindset going into what the expectations are. And they're really, really good people that I think our players will gravitate to. We will continue to get better as a program as we move forward."

### **On Changes In The Program**

"Hopefully they're going to add some pieces to what we do from their backgrounds and experience. That's part of the process. I would say right now, there's going to be schematic changes in everything that we do as we look to 2021. We're always going to have football studies about certain teams, whether it's NFL or college, about doing schematics that are probably more conducive to fit our personnel. We're going to have those types of studies. We've studied ourselves already and really digested and dissected, whatever you want to call those things that are the current things that we did this last season. There's a lot of really good things that we've done, but there are some things that need to be corrected and shored up. There's going to be some additional things that will add. We're in that process right now so there will be changes. Our defense will look different at times. Offensively, we're going to incorporate more concepts and schemes to help us on that side. You're definitely going to see a difference in the team and what we looked like last year going into this year."

### **On The Similarity Between The Transfer Portal And Free Agency**

"That's really the perspective I'm looking at this really being for us. We're going to really recruit the freshmen that come in from our normal recruiting standpoint of signing days and stuff like that. I think the portal has to be utilized for those, I say, 'special pieces' that can enhance your program. There might be an area of need because of graduation or just a piece that we might be missing that can help us offensively or defensively. My mindset on how we are going to build the roster each and every year is going to be first at foremost the recruiting aspect and recruiting those freshmen to join our class coming in. Then we supplement those classes with hopefully some key pieces coming from the portal."

### **On Strength And Conditioning Coach Shannon Turley**

“It is coming along nicely. It is a learning curve for them because his core style of training is different than it has been in the past. The past five years, Drew Wilson has been our head strength coach. Now it is a different philosophy on how things are being done. The players have embraced it. They are doing quite well and have been very complimentary of the things we are doing. They understand why we are doing it. I think that is key to anything that we do whether it is talking about schemes or a development standpoint. They understand the ‘why?’ and why we are doing the things we are doing. He has hit the ground running. We just hired him late last week. He got here over the weekend. We had some administrative things where we couldn’t start our program on Monday in terms of working out. We had to wait for Boulder County to help us on that. They gave us the go-ahead to do that on Tuesday. Now it is Friday. They have had a few days under their belt, and I think it is going really well. Shannon is very driven. He knows what he wants to get accomplished. He knows we are not there at that point. He knows we are starting from scratch. There is a process to it. We talked about it extensively. It is a patient process at the start. You want to teach the fundamentals in the lifts and the proper fashion early so that when we are getting going and getting into it hot and heavy, these guys can do it properly and with the right technique that it entails. He is doing really well. I think our players have started that adjustment period in a positive way.”

### **On Scholarship Numbers In The Program**

“From what my understanding of where we are at, we knew the season we played in the fall was a non-eligibility season. Let’s just call it that. They are all starting with the same eligibility terms as if it was 2020 but now it is 2021. We have incoming freshmen here. We have seniors that are going to be seniors again next year. Everyone is really on the same eligibility track. Some have left, as we know, in the portal and went to other places and have graduated. From my understanding, the best way for how we are going to operate moving forward is, with the 2021 year, we are going to probably have more scholarships than 85 (scholarship players). But I think the 2022 class is going to quickly get it to 85. I think that is really how we are proceeding moving forward. The 2021 season, you may have more scholarships than normal. Going into 2022, my assumption is that we are back to 85. That is how we are frame working moving forward with the numbers and the balance of our roster. That is the best way to go about it going forward until the NCAA tells us otherwise. I know we want to quickly get back to our normal numbers as fast as possible knowing this fall is going to be a little more than normal.”

### **On The February Signing Day**

“On the second signing day, there was an option we might be able to sign one or two more of the freshmen from the 2021 class. We felt the bulk of our class was already completed. Those would have been bonus pieces for us. In my mind, I have already completed the 2021 class in the December signing period. Even though those could have been bonus pieces for us, my mindset was more portal and trying to find those extra pieces to fill those scholarship numbers and not necessarily bring in the 2021 class of freshman coming in. We were working on a balancing act so to speak. If we did have one of those pieces that did sign on that Wednesday, it would have taken away from one of the numbers we could have gotten from a portal standpoint. We were playing that game of what is the best available? What do we need to do? How do we focus moving forward? We feel the best available for us were in the portal. Jack (Lamb) is a linebacker who we are excited to have in our program in a position of need for us and a position that can be effective for us right away who was going to help us in 2021. That is with everyone we received in the portal. We are hoping they are all impact players who can be effective, impact players for us this fall. It is kind of a delicate balancing act with the numbers you have on your scholarships. You still are trying to work under a certain number. Whether you are filling it with freshmen who potentially could have signed on Wednesday, we were not high on that happening. We were more high on the other side of it, trying to find those pieces that have experience and can plug and play so to speak. That is how we looked at it going into this week and not putting a big, strong effort on putting pressure on getting two more freshmen to sign.”

**On Using The Transfer Portal**

“We are going to always build this team with freshmen. In a perfect world, I won't have anybody transfer out or who wants to leave, and we just keep building with our young freshman coming in. We would love to live under those circumstances. It just seems to me that college football is changing. These student-athletes are changing their mindset and approach of their experiences in college. It first starts with a player unhappy and decides, 'You know what? I want to play somewhere else.' Sometimes that is not in our control. We had our Pac-12 head coaches call earlier this week and this was a big discussion, to balance your roster every year at 85, knowing that there are three main components of issues. Two of the three are really out of our control. One thing that is in our control at times is, because I was a first-year head coach, there is disenchantment in being in a program. That is going to happen. The whole rule with the signing numbers is so that when coaches come in, they can't try to dump half the roster and try to build it back up with their guys. It kind of guards that. That is why you have 25 initials every year. The other two issues are things that are unpredictable. A player comes into your office and tells you he is leaving and going into the portal. That is one. The other one is leaving for the NFL. Both of those things are really out of the control of the coach. It is a three-headed monster. How do you, year in and year out, get your roster to 85? What if you have five guys that leave? I am hoping we get a great enough program where there might be three, four or five guys who leave to go to the NFL. Then you have another five who leave in the portal. That is ten spots you have to fill up, but you were hoping to sign a class of 22. That class of 22, you were counting on those other tens guys to be part of your 85. All of a sudden you lose those 10. How do you recover and get to 85 by the end of the year? That is the challenge of football in college nowadays. We need to get to 85 every year and not really count the initials as part of the equations anymore because of the portal influence that is out there, and the NFL draft. We have to really go by, and this is my opinion, and I don't want to put the Pac-12 in scrutiny anymore, we have to have the ability to get our roster to 85 after every year. That just seems fair so you can compete. Right now, that legislation is not in place. We need some clarity as we move forward. All of us, including the NCAA, didn't know the portal is going to be as big as it is right now. It is a big thing right now. You obviously can't control the guys that leave early to go to the NFL. Those two mechanisms are making roster management a lot tougher to deal with. We need to have a solution for that.”

**On If RB Alex Fontenot Will Be Healthy For Spring Practice**

“We are hoping that is the case. Right now, he has a clean bill of health. He is full-go. He was late off of his injury last fall. We knew it was going to be a three or four month process of healing on its own. Now he is clear to go. He started the offseason in the program just like everyone else this week. We want to make sure we monitor him and bring him along slowly. We feel he should be ready to go by spring practice in March and April. Alex is a very quiet guy. He is sleek. He is discrete. Sometimes you don't even know he is in the room. He doesn't say much. That is him as a personality. He is a hard-working kid. There is no question in my mind he would miss playing this fall. There is a burning desire for him to get back in and showcase all of the great things he did in 2019. There is a lot on his plate that he wants to get himself to be. He is full-go. We expect him to be involved in everything we do in spring practice. Believe me, he is eager to do it. He has missed playing.”

**On The Super Bowl**

“I think it is going to be a great game. I'm sure there's a lot of sentiment about Kansas City from what they did last week. I am sure people thought the Buffalo game would be a lot closer than it was. I know (Tampa Defensive Coordinator) Todd Bowles because I worked for him at the Jets. He is a great defensive coach. Whenever you give him time to prepare, he usually comes out pretty good. I think it is going to be a heck of a ball game. It is going to come down to the quarterbacks. It really is. Defensively, the way Tampa is playing right now and how they played against Green Bay, they are going to be very confident. Plus, they are playing at home. It is going to be a great game. It isn't going to be a blowout. I know that. It is going to be a really good football game.”

