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SILENT BUT DEADLY

Coady has moved up ranks from walk-on to starter

By JEFF SCHMIDT
Staff writer

It's easy to overlook Rich Coady. When someone first thinks of the Wrecking Crew, images of blitzing linemen, smothering cornerbacks, and charging defensive linemen come to mind. About the last person you think of is Rich Coady. He's not the biggest, he's not the fastest, not the prettiest, but he's always around the ball. Despite the odds, the junior safety became a starter on one of the most successful defenses in college football. He began his high school playing career as a linebacker but moved to safety in his senior year. Despite being named MVP at Pearce High School in Richardson, Coady was overlooked by big-time programs. Texas A&M-Cottonville and Air Force were some of the schools that showed interest in him. TCU, OU and Rice wanted him to walk-on. However, when Rich came to visit Texas

A&M, he fell in love with the atmosphere and decided to accept an invitation to walk-on. "I wasn't an Aggie fan growing up," Coady said. "But when I came down here, I fell in love with the school and I decided that this is where I wanted to be." Coady admits that walking-on was difficult because not much is expected out of these players. "When you walk-on at a school you're at the bottom of the pile. You have to work as hard, if not harder, than everyone on the team just to get noticed. Then once you get noticed, you have to make the most of the few opportunities that you have," Coady said. In his time here he has prospered, working his way up from anonymity to a starter. Coady tied junior linebacker Dat Nguyen for the team lead in interceptions last season with three and finished fourth on the team in tackles. This season he ranks third in tackles. Accomplishments like these have drawn Coady comparisons to Kip Corrington and

Dennis Allen, two overachieving Aggies known for their toughness. Football is in the Coady family bloodlines. His father, Rich Coady III, was an offensive lineman for the Chicago Bears from 1967-1975. Despite this, the younger Coady never felt pressure to follow in his footsteps. "He's never put any pressure on me to play football. He never gives me advice. He lets the coaches coach me," Coady said. "Football's always been around my house, and I've always enjoyed playing it. I've seen what it's done for my father." Head Football Coach R.C. Slocum feels that Coady is one of the team's leaders. "He lines up every week, works hard and does a good job for us. He's the kind of guy that's the backbone of our team," Slocum said. Coady has had to fight off a strong challenge from true freshman Jason Glenn. The competition has risen Rich's level of play. "Anytime you have a guy that comes in and competes for your job it's going to push you to play harder. He's a good player, he's been pushing me all year long, making me

better," Coady said. Defensive Coordinator Mike Hankwitz agrees with Coady's assessment. Hankwitz believes that Coady's experience helps the defense. "Rich is a veteran. He has confidence in everything we are doing, and he knows where everybody is supposed to be. Jason Glenn is not at the same stage

mentally, but he does some good things and that sometimes brings out the best in the other guy," Hankwitz said. This Saturday Coady returns to the place where he made his first start, Folsom Field, home of the Colorado Buffaloes. Coady had a career high 10 tackles in that game. He's excited about going back to the place where his career started. "It seems like a long time ago, but I remember the excitement and being nervous in my first college game, especially a game of that magnitude," Coady said. "I'm excited to go back up there and play them again." Coady says this team is different than the one that lost in Colorado two years ago. "This team is different than the past two," Coady said. "The chemistry on this team is a lot better, we're jelling better. Everyone on this team is playing for the team and for team goals. I think in the past that it wasn't quite that way."

Big 12 opening weekend marks start of big time football season

XII CONFERENCE

JAMIE BURCH
Staff writer

begin the race for conference supremacy and aspirations of national recognition.

I Am Earl Campbell

Two weeks after being held to 36 yards on 13 carries against UCLA (Sept. 13), Longhorn running back Ricky Williams ran for a career-high 249 yards and five touchdowns as Texas rallied to defeat Rice, 38-31. Williams broke two school records in the victory — most touchdowns and most rushing touchdowns. The previous record of four touchdowns in a game was shared by six players, including Texas' all-time leading rusher Earl Campbell, who did it twice in 1977. Williams moved into fifth place on the Longhorns' all-time rushing list with 2,702 yards. "I knew I had to pick up my game if we were going to win," Williams said. "I knew we were going to run the ball, but I had no idea I would get this many yards." Williams' infantry performance earned him Big 12 Offensive Player of the Week.

Bowling For Dollars

Kansas State received a lot of criticism for using long passes to set up the last two touchdowns in a 58-0 rout of Bowl-

ing Green. With the Wildcats up 44-0, Kansas State backup quarterback Jon Beasley connected on a 43-yard pass play to set up KSU's fifth touchdown. Then on the 'Cats next drive, Beasley's 19-yard pass play set up the final touchdown adding insult to injury. Bowling Green coach Gary Blackney said he found the final two scores insulting. "They (Kansas State) will find out how good they are next week," Blackney said. Blackney couldn't have said it better. Next week, No. 17 Kansas State plays No. 3 Nebraska in Lincoln. KSU amassed a school record 638 total yards, including 429 on the ground. The 'Cats held Bowling Green to minus nine yards rushing and 56 total yards, outscoring them 7-0 in the first quarter, 13-0 in the second, 17-0 in the third and 21-0 in the fourth.

007 — Golden Foot

The Colorado Buffaloes outlasted Wyoming, 20-19, on the strength of a last-second field goal by kicker Jeremy Aldrich and a little luck. After having cut the deficit to one on a 99-yard kickoff return by Ben Kelly, Aldrich booted an 18-yard field goal with three ticks left on the clock.

"Sometimes you get lucky," Colorado coach Rick Neuheisel said. Lucky is an understatement. Trailing the Cowboys for much of the game, Colorado's failed onside kick following Kelly's dramatic return gave Wyoming the ball at their own 44-yard line, with less than three minutes remaining. All the Cowboys needed to seal the victory was to keep the ball on the ground and pick up a first down. But a minute later, Colorado's Mike Phillips hit Wyoming tailback Marques Brigham on a play up the middle. Colorado's Ron Merkerson recovered the ball in the air and returned it to the Wyoming 25 to set up the game winning kick. Merkerson and Kelly's heroic efforts garnered the tandem Player of the Week honors — Merkerson on defense and Kelly on special teams.

Games of the Week

#17 Kansas State (3-0) at #3 Nebraska (3-0) — Memorial Stadium
The Cornhuskers have a 31-game conference winning streak in the regular season and 28 consecutive wins against the Wildcats. Even though Nebraska trailed for much of the contest against former Division II opponents Akron (Aug. 30)

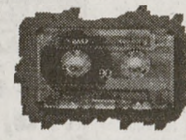
and Central Florida (Sept. 13), don't expect the Cornhuskers to come out shaky against Kansas State. In last weeks win over Washington, the Cornhuskers held the Huskies to 43 net yards rushing. But don't mistake the Wildcats for pushovers. The team has three consecutive wins, all over Mid-American Conference opponents, including last week's 58-0 shutout of Bowling Green. Defense (clap, clap) ... defense (clap, clap) ... defense (clap, clap).

#18 Texas A&M (3-0) at #16 Colorado (2-1) — Folsom Field
Can the Aggies finally beat the Buffaloes?... In the teams' two meetings, the Aggies have been outscored 53-31, despite a close 29-21 loss in 1995. Colorado coach Rick Neuheisel has lost five games in his tenure and is a near-perfect 7-1 in Big 12 play. The Aggies will have to defend against a blitzing defense led by defensive end Ryan Olson (14.5 career sacks) and linebacker Ron Merkerson (12 tackles). Dante Hall and Sirr Parker beware. The Buffaloes have allowed just 118.3 yards rushing per game.

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- MSC Town Hall presents **Clay Walker** Thu, Oct 2, 7 p.m. in G. Rollie White Coliseum.
- MSC OPAS Jr. presents **Little Red Riding Hood** Sat, Oct 4, 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. in Rudder Theater.
- Brazos Valley Symphony Orchestra presents **All Time Favorites** Sun, Oct 5, 4 p.m. in Rudder Theater.
- Order **Graduation Announcements** at <http://graduation.tamu.edu/> and pay before deadline of Fri, Oct 3.
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