

Hawkins: CU Buffs QB race 'paper thin'

CU coach sees little difference between Hansen, Hawkins

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
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Colorado football coaches listed junior Tyler Hansen atop the depth chart at quarterback 10 days ago when spring practices ended, but it sounds as if coach Dan Hawkins would have been just fine using co-starters instead.

Hawkins spoke with reporters Tuesday during the Big 12 Conference coaches' teleconference, and made it clear he sees no real difference between Hansen and his son, Cody, after having more than a week to review spring ball and the spring game.

"I think those guys have always been paper thin the whole time, whether it has been that you've favored one guy or the other guy," Hawkins said. "I think they've both been pretty close."

Cody Hawkins has been the starter for each of the past three season openers but has been replaced by Hansen in the lineup at points in each of the past two seasons. He gave way to Hansen in Game 5 last year and Hansen remained the starter the rest of the year, though Cody Hawkins was brought back in to play in one game because coaches said he knew the 2-minute offense better than Hansen.

Dan Hawkins said he thought both quarterbacks improved this spring, but the competition between Hansen and Hawkins will continue into fall camp.

"We'll see how it emerges," he said. "We'll just go with it until we feel like we've got a good pulse and see where we're at go from there."

Colorado is not alone in not knowing for sure who its starter will be in the fall. Texas Tech, Kansas, Kansas State and Nebraska also have unsettled quarterback situations. Nebraska is looking at three different signal-callers.

When asked to name some of the players who stood out to him this spring, Hawkins pointed to walk-on running back Quentin Hildreth, redshirt freshman tight end DaVaughn Thornton, sophomore linebacker Jon Major, sophomore defensive end Nick Kasa and redshirt freshman defensive back Parker Orms.

Hawkins said he has not chosen a director of football operations. The position came open in early March when Robert Tucker left to coach at a small college in South Dakota.

Rule change

gets mixed reviews

Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said he is not a fan of a rule change adopted by the NCAA last week that will be put into effect in 2011 changing taunting penalties to spot fouls in some instances.

For example, if a player is running into the end zone and taunts an opponent at the 10-yard line, the ball would be placed at the 10 and the score would be nullified. The current rule enforces the penalty on the extra point or kickoff.

Stoops and several other coaches said they don't agree with the change because it's a subjective call and officials likely won't be consistent with what is and isn't taunting. Baylor coach Art Briles agreed.

"I think it leaves too much subjectivity to an official's call," Briles said. "I don't think it will be called universally across the leagues and across the nation. ... I just hope we don't take too much thrill out of doing something that is pretty hard to do which is scoring a touchdown."

Other coaches, such as Hawkins, said they support the rule regardless of the subjective nature of it.

"There are a lot of rules that fall into that category," Hawkins said.

K-State mourns Meier

Coach Bill Snyder was stunned by news Tuesday that former Wildcats quarterback Dylan Meier had died in a hiking accident. Snyder said he had met with Meier recently and talked about Meier continuing to pursue a career in the game overseas in European football. He said he was reminded that Meier was a young man with many interests and an adventurous spirit.

"He did live an absolutely full and rewarding life," Snyder said.

Fast-paced offenses

Texas Tech and Oklahoma State spent spring ball working on tweaks to their offenses that are designed to produce more plays over the course of a game and limit defensive substitutions.

OSU coach Mike Gundy gave up play calling this spring in order to focus on more of the big picture issues head coaches are asked to do. Dana Holgorsen is now calling the plays in Stillwater, Okla.

New Red Raiders coach Tommy Tuberville said his offense hopes to run 100 or more plays a game next season and will make the defense get set, make reads and catch its breath all within 12 to 14 seconds before the next snap.

"If your defense is not prepared for that, you're going to have problems," Tuberville said.

Texas Tech is back on Colorado's schedule the next two years with a trip to Boulder on tap this season.

Notable

With games at Iowa, Oklahoma and Texas, as well as a nonconference game with Utah, Iowa State will have one of the toughest schedules in the nation next fall. ...

New Kansas coach Turner Gill said his players came together well this spring and are buying into his system and way of doing things. Gill said he will target the area within a 250-mile radius of campus and Texas and Florida in recruiting. He enjoyed some recruiting successes in Florida while he was the head coach at Buffalo. ...

Texas A&M coach Mike Sherman said quarterback Jarrod Johnson should be recovered from a shoulder injury in a few weeks. Sherman said Johnson, who will be a candidate for player of the year honors next fall, has been a pleasure to coach because he thinks like a coach and his father was a coach. "He has developed as well as any player I've ever coached," Sherman said. ...

Briles said Baylor quarterback Robert Griffin participated in drills this spring but was held out of contact situations. He is expected to be fully healed from a torn ACL by the start of fall camp.

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Dan Hawkins: Lot of young CU talent emerging

By **TOM KENSLE** |  2 Comments

The Big 12 Conference conducted its annual spring football coaches teleconference on Tuesday, and Colorado coach Dan Hawkins was asked which young players stood out during the Buffs' drills.

"I think there were a lot of guys that really improved their play. ... They're playing with a lot more confidence," Hawkins said. "I think experience helps them. They just make the plays."

Here's who Hawkins cited as being spring standouts:

"Quentin Hildrith (redshirt-freshman tailback, walkon from Denver East) had a really good spring.

"Kyle Cefalo (junior transfer wide receiver, former baseball player at Oregon State) had a really good spring.

"I thought DaVaughn Thornton (redshirt-freshman tight end from Denver East) did as well.

"Nick Kasa (sophomore defensive end from Legacy) is starting to come into his own a little bit.

"Jon Major (sophomore linebacker from Ponderosa who was slowed in 2009 following 2008 ACL surgery) is starting to run around a little bit like we thought he would be able to.

"Obviously Parker Orms (redshirt-freshman safety/nickel back from Wheat Ridge)."

That's a young group.

"Typically between the first and second year you get a little bit more of a jump, to be sure," Hawkins said. "But even with the (upperclassman) quarterbacks, I thought both Cody (Hawkins) and Tyler (Hansen) played better. So I think it was kind of a cumulative effect across the board."

Later in the teleconference, Hawkins was asked about the quarterback situation.

"We'll see how it emerges; we'll just go with (the competition) until we feel like we've got a good pulse," Hawkins said. "We'll see where we're at and go from there."

Although Hansen was listed atop the depth chart distributed before the April 10 spring game, Dan Hawkins said Cody and Tyler "have always been paper thin the whole time, whether you favor one guy or the other guy. They've both been pretty close."

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