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Beginning his ascent

QB Evans OK to play support role this season

By Patrick Ridgell
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BOULDER — Of all the mountains in Colorado, the one that made the biggest impact on quarterback Clark Evans might have been that big hill that goes from the practice fields to the Dal Ward Center.

“It was a big shock running those hills over there,” Evans said after a recent CU football practice.

“The altitude killed me that first week (that I was in Boulder). I was dying from those hills. But I had a good summer. I worked hard.”

Evans, a 6-foot-5, 230-pound freshman quarterback from Los Alamitos, Calif., said he spent three weeks in Boulder this summer before returning for camp on Aug. 5. He is one of three freshman quarterbacks vying for the third string spot, a spot that could become very important if Cody Hawkins or Tyler Hansen suffer an injury. The other two are walk-ons Seth Lobato and Jerry Slota.

Evans, who was also recruited by Arizona State, Kansas State, Boise State and San Diego State, said he studies the playbook until 11 or 11:30 p.m. He finds it as challenging at that big hill he ran for conditioning this summer. But he expected that.

“Coach (Dan) Hawkins came and told us if we learn the offense in one day, it wouldn’t be that great of an offense,” Evans said. “I’m kind of getting a lot more comfortable now, after the past few days, just every night, looking through the books and studying real hard. It’s late days, but you just have to study.”

Evans said his high school offense was the “five-wide spread with me running the ball about 20 carries a game.” As a senior, he completed 146-of-254 passes for 25 touchdowns and 10 interceptions. He ran the ball 167 times for 840 yards and 12 touchdowns.

Evans said he doesn’t care whether he redshirts in 2009, which is what a lot of freshman will tell you. It’s a little easier to believe coming from him because, as he pointed out, when he committed to CU in July 2008, not only were Hawkins and Hansen around, but Matt Ballenger had yet to quit the program, and Jordan Wynn, who eventually signed with Utah, was also committed to CU.

“I feel a lot of urgency to get ready to play, but Tyler and Cody are great,” Evans said. “I don’t have to worry about them sucking up because they’re going to do awesome.”

“I’m not planning on anyone getting hurt. I’m just going to try my hardest to do the best to back up everyone, do the best I can in practice and get better.”

EXTRA POINTS: CU reported it will probably have a definitive word today on the plight of Andre Simmons, the junior college receiver who has been waiting to be academically cleared since he arrived in town nearly three weeks ago. CU reported that he would be cleared once his transcripts verify what the school has been told about his grades. ...



Colorado quarterback Clark Evans makes a throw during a scrimmage on Folsom Field on Aug. 13. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**

The Buffs return to practice today after taking Sunday and Monday off. Classes started Monday.

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Simmons cleared to enroll at Colorado

Bufs hope wide receiver can join practice today

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/25/2009 12:30:29 AM MDT

Colorado football coaches hope to see Andre Simmons in his No. 1 jersey on the practice field this afternoon when the team returns from two days off to resume preparation for the season opener now less than two weeks away.

A football program source and Simmons' mother told the Camera the junior college transfer had been cleared to enroll in fall semester classes early Monday morning after a protracted admissions process that was in serious doubt just a week ago.

"He called me at 8 o'clock this morning and said he was enrolling in school," Simmons' mother, Thomasann Elmore, said Monday morning. "I'm so happy. They pulled his grades and now everything is OK. He can start practice today."

The team had the day off for the first day of classes Monday, and school officials were unable to make any substantive comment about Simmons' status as the school re-verified his academic record.

CU sports information director Dave Plati said the school would probably have an announcement on Simmons' status today. Plati said administrators were making sure Is are dotted and Ts are crossed before making any formal announcement about the wide receiver because of the attention his case has attracted in recent weeks.

CU reported on Aug. 6 that Simmons had been cleared academically after spending the spring and summer semesters taking nine different classes at Independence Community College in Kansas and online. That report proved premature as questions arose regarding part of his academic record.

Simmons spent the first few days of fall camp watching practices and waseven given his No. 1 jersey to wear at one point, but as camp wore on, he no longer lingered on the sidelines.

Coach Dan Hawkins has been asked about Simmons after most practice sessions throughout camp. Fans became impatient with the delay in getting a prized prospect on the field and began making harassing phone calls to the junior college and to CU.

Simmons' size, speed and experience are badly needed commodities in a receiving corps featuring one player with any significant experience at the position.

When Simmons joins the team on the practice field, he must spend the first three days without pads and in limited contact.

The Buffs open the season with home game against Colorado State. The Sept. 6 game at Folsom Field begins at 5 p.m. and will be televised on FSN.

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Woelk: No simple solution to CU QB situation

Neill Woelk Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/25/2009 12:35:44 AM MDT

Hawkins or Hansen?

It's a question that has yet to be answered by the Colorado football coaching staff, but one we assume will be resolved by this time next week.

It's hard to imagine CU's coaches going into the week before the season opener without naming either Tyler Hansen or Cody Hawkins as the starting quarterback. But then, that might be just the type of gamesmanship that would add a little more flavor to the Sept. 6 season opener against Colorado State.

After all, CSU coach Steve Fairchild recently threatened to make his choice a game-day decision. As of Monday, Fairchild still hadn't chosen between Grant Stucker and Jon Eastman. If Fairchild continues to wait, maybe CU coach Dan Hawkins will engage in a game of QB chicken, with each head coach daring the other to wait until the last minute.

That would no doubt make for a great game-day atmosphere. Five minutes before kickoff, and 54,000-plus fans waiting to see who trots onto the field for both teams.

But, common sense and conventional wisdom lean toward having a starter in place when teams begin to install game plans. We're guessing the Buffs won't take a conventional wisdom detour in this instance.

The general consensus has been that the younger Hawkins emerged from spring ball with an edge, and had held the edge through the early part of fall camp. But word filtering out of Dal Ward after the Buffs' last scrimmage -- closed to the public and media -- is that Hansen might have closed the gap.

Now, some folks are saying, the race is again too close to call.

So what's a coaching staff to do?

There are a variety of ways to approach the situation.

The safest solution is to name Hawkins the starter and keep Hansen on the ready as the backup. If Hawkins can shed the problems that caused a sophomore slump a year ago, and make the jump in improvement that lots of players make between their second and third years, it's not a bad solution.

Still, I'd hate to see Hansen languishing on the bench for an entire season, particularly since he burned a redshirt year last season for five games down the stretch. Burn another year of his eligibility for just a few plays here and there, and you might have an unhappy QB on your hands.

Another school of thought says you name Hawkins the starter, but have a specially designed set of series for Hansen and use at least a semblance of a rotation. No matter what happens when Hawkins is in the game -- three touchdowns or three three-and-outs -- you bring Hansen in to keep the defense on its toes.

Such a system would keep both quarterbacks engaged and perhaps give the offense an element of diversity it otherwise wouldn't have. It would no doubt create at least some problems for opposing defensive coordinators.

Of course, such a system also hinders continuity, as well as the development of either quarterback, in games and in practice. Various programs over the years have experimented with rotating quarterbacks with various degrees of success. In the end a set starter who gets the majority of the reps is generally seen as the best solution.

Then there's the line of thought that says Hansen, who is a better runner, has the bigger upside. He poses bigger problems for defenses, and with some substantial playing time, that potential could blossom into production. That line of

thinking says if the two are close right now, the Buffs should lean toward Hansen with an eye on the long-term future -- not only this year, but years to come. Get Hansen his experience now and you have your starter for the next three seasons.

In that same vein, there's the thinking that of the two, Hawkins is the perfect backup. If Hansen starts and struggles, you have the ideal solution -- a solid veteran who has command of the offense and who won't blow up under pressure.

Clearly, there's no perfect solution. Neither has performed well enough in scrimmages and practices to separate himself from the other -- at least, that's the official line from the coaches.

But make me the head coach for a day, and here's what I'd do (after taking the pay cut):

Name Hansen the starter. If they are indeed both equal right now, give the nod to the kid who can use his feet and keep defenses honest. Give the nod to the kid who has the greater long-term potential. Let him take his lumps -- and meanwhile, make sure you can run the ball. Line up Darrell Scott, Rodney Stewart, Brian Lockridge and Demetrius Sumler behind those hogs up front and play a little smashmouth.

In other words, win the old-fashioned way. Get Hansen some confidence, get some complete games under his belt and see where he takes you.

Then, if you do have to turn to a backup, you have the best of both worlds.

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Why announce a starter?

Written by [kyle](#) in Monday, August 24th 2009 under [Uncategorized](#)
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Dan Hawkins told me a few days ago that he might wait until at least game week to name a starting quarterback, but I wouldn't be surprised if he just waits until the Buffs actually get the ball against CSU to reveal his choice between Tyler Hansen and Cody Hawkins.

I mean, why not?

Seems a little silly to give your opponent any extra material with which to prepare. In fact, not saying anything makes the job that much tougher. I wouldn't be surprised if Steve Fairchild returns the favor. Heck, based on what Fairchild has had to say about his quarterback situation, I wouldn't be surprised to see the Rams run the Wishbone.

Actually, yes I would. It would be the Wishbone mixed with the Spread and no-huddle. Don't want to stick out too much.

Of course you have to deal with the question 27 times a day from reporters, but it seems like a small price to pay for some element of surprise.


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cu football

Four-star wide receiver set to catch on with Buffaloes

Simmons caught 91 passes in two seasons of junior college football and is expected to make an immediate impact at CU at a position of need. Simmons was ranked among the Buffs' top signees in their February recruiting class, earning four stars from Rivals.com.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

Posted: 08/25/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

It appears that Andre Simmons has finally overcome eligibility issues and will join the Colorado football team.

According to a Monday report on the Boulder Daily Camera's website, the 6-foot-3, 210-pound wide receiver from Independence (Kan.) Community College has been cleared by CU and can enroll in classes.

CU spokesman David Plati said the athletic department would not confirm the report but said an announcement could come as early as today. Players were off on Monday, the first day of classes. Practices resume today.

"Until he is approved and full go, we cannot say anything," Plati said Monday. "Hopefully, (an announcement) will be sooner than later."

Coach Dan Hawkins said Saturday he was hopeful Simmons would join the Buffaloes soon.

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