

college football

## Bufs' new captains illustrate grit

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

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**BOULDER** — Perhaps Colorado's newly named team captains should be called, "The Perseverance Boys."

Marcus Burton, Riar Geer and Jeff Smart share another common denominator. Each member of the senior trio overcame adversity to become a team leader.

Burton, a 6-foot, 265-pound linebacker, sat out the 2007 season after being ruled academically ineligible. Geer (6-4, 250), a tight end, said he was suspended for the first two games of the 2008 season for his involvement in an off-campus altercation the previous winter. Smart (6-0, 225) arrived at CU in 2005 as an undersized walk-on linebacker from nearby Boulder High and worked his way into a starting role within two years and an all-Big 12 second-team performer by his junior season.

The players were announced as tri-captains on

Sunday after a vote by their teammates. Voting results were not made public. Players had Sunday and Monday off before resuming practice this afternoon.

"I can't imagine anybody that didn't vote for those three guys," junior cornerback Jalil Brown said earlier today. "When you go to the film room, you constantly see those guys coming out."

The "overcoming adversity" theme did not go unnoticed.

"It says something about our team," Burton said today. "There are definite parallels. We're three guys that had to overcome things. And, as a team, you have to overcome a lot to win games."

"Every player goes through some ups and downs. I had my fair share, more than most. In the end, it brought me back to the player I am now."

Sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen added, "Coaches always talk about getting past adversity, and these three guys are a perfect example of that. They show everybody on the team that you can get through some hard stuff."

Burton called his captaincy "a privilege." He vows to take it seriously.

"We have to help the young guys get better, in addition to becoming the best players that we can be," Burton said. "As a captain, you have to be an example for everybody. You're almost like an assistant coach."

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## FOOTNOTES

Sophomore offensive lineman Matt Bahr said he will try to participate in some drills today. He has been sidelined since suffering a high ankle sprain early in August camp.

...The 2009 CU football media guide (received by the school from the printer on Tuesday) includes CSU as an annual opponent on future schedules, through at least 2014. Sites of the games are not specified, however.

...Colorado apparently was optimistic that junior-college transfer Andre Simmons would eventually join the team because the wide receiver's bio was included in the media guide. Players were hopeful that Simmons would be at practice later today.

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sports

## Simmons gains clearance to play for Buffs

By The Denver Post

Posted: 08/26/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — The precious possessions have been removed from the bubble wrap.

Andre Simmons' hands will be available to Colorado quarterbacks this season, notably for, well, the precious possessions.

The 6-foot-3 wide receiver and junior college transfer has been cleared to enroll at CU and he could practice as soon as today, coach Dan Hawkins said after Tuesday's practice.

"He's got good mitts, he does," Hawkins said. "He's tall and fast and physical. And he can run with the ball after the catch. . . . He's kind of got the whole package."

The addition of Simmons is a boost for the Buffaloes' receiving corps, which lost Josh Smith, who transferred to UCLA.

Simmons, ranked the No. 6 junior college

receiver by [Rivals.com](http://Rivals.com), might not start in CU's season opener Sept. 6 but should be able to make an impact, according to offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau.

"He's been in all the meetings he's allowed to go to and he's been paying attention," Kiesau said. "It depends on what he can pick up. If we get him out here, get him in shape and running around a little bit, we can give him a small package and put him in a situation where he doesn't have to learn the whole game plan, but we can give him 15, 20 plays and see what happens."

Simmons spent the past two seasons at Independence Community College in Kansas, where he became such a weapon that he was routinely double-teamed. Of course, junior college success doesn't automatically translate to NCAA success, but CU is optimistic that a receiver with his credentials and his potential will make a splash in the Big 12.

"(On tape), he made a lot of one-handed catches," junior quarterback Cody Hawkins said. "It will be great to incorporate him into the offense."

Simmons, who wasn't made available to the media Tuesday, attended the Buffaloes' practice sporting his No. 1 jersey.

"He's going to give us another downhill threat," sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen said. "Defenses are going to have to keep an eye on him."

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## Receptive to returning.

Dan Hawkins said it's possible that once Simmons begins practicing, he will also work on returning kickoffs and punts.

## QB battle.

Hawkins said he will "probably" figure out who his starting quarterback is after watching the Buffs' scrimmage Saturday. The coach's son, Cody, has battled Hansen throughout August camp.

## Mind games.

After taking Monday off because of the first day of classes, the Buffs returned to the field Tuesday afternoon. Hawkins said the players, understandably, have a lot on their minds right now. As for practice? "In general, it wasn't bad," the coach said.

## Potent passing.

Kiesau was complimentary of the Buffs' passing game. "We're throwing the ball pretty well down the field in practice," he said, adding that Simmons' arrival will only help.

*Benjamin Hochman and Tom Kensler, The Denver Post*

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## QB Hawkins studies up to get leg up on competition

**By Kyle Ringo** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/26/2009 12:10:51 AM MDT

Stumped.

Colorado offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau stood for a moment after practice one day and pondered a question he really didn't have an answer to. He was asked to name quarterback Cody Hawkins' biggest shortcoming.

"I don't know," he said. "Every now and then he will try to take a chance, and he probably shouldn't."

Kiesau took over as coordinator and quarterbacks coach at CU this summer, making him the man with the most to say about who wins the starting job under center. He says the competition between Hawkins and Tyler Hansen is close.

Buff's head coach Dan Hawkins said a decision on the starting signal-caller could be made after Saturday's scrimmage.

Cody Hawkins is trying to win the job for the third straight year. There are several factors that could give him an advantage. He is as competitive as they come. He has a mind for the game and he's a football junkie who sometimes spends as much as 18 hours of his summer days watching film, throwing balls and picking Kiesau's brain.

"I think when you get that guy and he understands what we're doing, he is phenomenal," Kiesau said. "I truly mean that. I'm not just saying it. He is very smart. He knows his reads and if we can put him in a position to do that, we'll be all right."

"The guy is 5-11 and I don't care. I don't, because the guy is so smart, and he can anticipate things and see things happening before guys. He can see coverages. He can see fronts. He can see blitzes. There is a guy, Aaron Rodgers at Cal, who was very similar. I mean wicked smart. And that's Cody's asset. That's what we've got to use. It's what we've got to pull out of him."

Hawkins recently spent part of one of his afternoons talking about himself and the sport he loves and the coming season.

**DC:** Do you think you had a sophomore slump last year?

**CH:** My situation isn't going to be scrambling around, running and making things happen. I've always kind of been more of a field general and a leader. You know, when we've got guys in place, I think Cody Hawkins can be pretty good.

I just got to the point last year, and I think it was because I was so competitive, that with a lot of the injuries we had I was focusing so much more on the end result. Like if we can't block this blitz, how am I going to complete this pass. Rather than, this is my drop, this is what I've got to do and I've got make sure I have good mechanics.

I feel more comfortable than I've ever been. I feel like I'm practicing and I'm playing better than I ever have been just because it's so much about the details. I feel like we have enough talent, and enough experience and enough depth right now that when guys are focused on the little things, the big plays are going to happen.

**DC:** You play in a conference with Heisman trophy candidates at quarterback and when people talk about up-and-coming quarterbacks in the league they mention Blaine Gabbert at Missouri or Robert Griffin at Baylor. Why do you think you get overlooked?

**CH:** If I'm winning ball games, I could care less. If I don't throw a pass this season and we win a Big 12 championship, I'm going to wear that ring and walk around and be proud because that is something we all put a lot of time in for and gave a lot of ourselves to it.

I'm good friends with kids in the conference who have thrown for a ton of yards. I've been places, like camps, and thrown around and they aren't supermen. A lot of it is their situation, the personnel and what they're putting into it. I just try to take that and bring what I can to the table for my team every single day.

I can't do anything more than bust my ass and do everything I can to win a football game. I feel like if I keep working, I'll get put in the right situations, and if I'm doing things the right way, it's going to happen eventually.

**DC:** What's your relationship with Kiesau like and what do you think of changes he has made?

**CH:** I have such a great relationship with him. I think as a person and as a player, he's a guy I respect the heck out of, and I like being around him. I mean, I want to be in there all the time, hanging out with him watching film. It's so much more black and white than it was.

I mean, I feel like I'm a very cerebral quarterback. I'll give you \$20 if you can find a guy on our team who can draw up Xs and Os better than I can and explain stuff out on the field better than me. I feel kind of like last year I knew what was supposed to happen on every play, but when there is so much gray area in your mind like, 'Oh my gosh, this is what is supposed to happen against Cover Two, but I may not have time to hit that if we aren't holding up on the right side.'

Or I'm sprinting out and he's the only X we've got and I know he's supposed to be a winner here, but can I trust that? I've stopped worrying so much about what the result of the play is and I'm just focusing on my job. It's so black and white that I can just go out and play and just be me.

**DC:** Are you a football junkie?

**CH:** I mean, I'm pretty into ball. It's funny. This camp I've had absolutely no social life. I'm here at 7 a.m. and I leave at almost 11 o'clock at night.

I try to watch extra film before the meetings and stuff just so you kind of know what to expect. That's one great thing about Kiesau is I feel like I'm a smart guy and I know what's going on, but I can almost coach myself the more we're going through this stuff just because he has helped us so much and totally put all the cards out on the table.

You know, this is what needs to happen on every given play. It might seem like a lot on a quarterback's plate, but when you get it down and absorb it, I mean you're banging through stuff and playing with a lot of confidence and you get a little bit of swagger going. I love football more than anybody you will ever meet and I'm really loving it right now.

**DC:** When and where and how did you develop that love for the game?

**CH:** Baseball was my best sport growing up. Not that I didn't see the payoff, but I feel like I am social and I do like to enjoy stuff and the whole atmosphere of baseball and basketball just wasn't the same.

It's fun, but I also like that when you get thrown in the fire and you've got stuff flying at you, you learn a lot about yourself and you learn a lot about your friends. In all athletics, you're expected to put so much trust in other people and when you're on a football team, you really learn a lot about everybody else.

When I hit my sophomore year in high school, I started thinking, 'Hey, I might play college football.' I wasn't a kid who was physically huge the whole time. So I knew I was going to have to make some things happen. When I really started diving into the whole football thing, you kind of learn to love it.

**DC:** Why do you pattern yourself after Joe Montana?

**CH:** He wasn't a guy who was going to drop back and throw it through a wall, but if you watch him on film, he was very poised. He knew what to do in every situation and he was just such a competitor.

**DC:** How much of the team's success do you put on your shoulders this season if you are the starter?

**CH:** I don't care who is playing quarterback. We're going to have a great team this year if we continue to run the football, we stay healthy and we hit the passes we're supposed to hit and hit some that might be close. We're going to be a damned good football team.

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## Colorado WR Simmons may join fray today

### Bufs transfer awaiting final clearance to take part in practice

**By Kyle Ringo** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/26/2009 12:08:29 AM MDT

Colorado wide receiver Andre Simmons was still being held out of practice Tuesday as the athletic department conducted a final review of his academic records and the process followed leading up to his enrollment.

The talented junior college transfer whom coach Dan Hawkins said "has the whole package" should finally be able to participate in his first practice today. The CU registrar confirmed Tuesday that Simmons is enrolled fulltime for the fall semester.

Hawkins said almost as little as possible in discussing Simmons' situation after Tuesday's practice. Hawkins, who is coaching wide receivers this year, said he hasn't been able to work with Simmons in more than two weeks since the product from Blackville, S.C., arrived on campus. Coaching a player who is not enrolled would be an NCAA violation.

Hawkins said "we'll see" when asked if Simmons would be able to play in the season opener against Colorado State on Sept. 6. He gave the same answer when asked when Simmons will be able to practice.

Simmons was wearing a No. 1 black Colorado jersey Tuesday and Hawkins said the player's spirits are good, despite the long wait for permission to begin practicing. Hawkins took a few moments to discuss what makes him a weapon for the offense.

"He's tall and he's fast and he's physical, and he can run with the ball after the catch," Hawkins said. "He's a return guy as well. He's kind of got the whole package."

#### Notable

Hawkins said the first practice back after two days off for the beginning of fall classes went well. ... Hawkins said there are no significant rule changes this year that he and his assistants have had to emphasize with players this month.

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Longmont, Colorado  
Wednesday, August 26,  
2009

Publish Date: 8/26/2009

## **Buffs recruit still on hold**

Long August gets longer for CU receiver Simmons

*By Patrick Ridgell*  
© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The announcement regarding the eligibility of receiver Andre Simmons that Colorado officials said would probably come Tuesday, and the announcement many Buffs fans are dying to hear, did not.

CU officials reported Monday they would probably know Tuesday the outcome of a verification process that's occupying administrators in several places, including the NCAA, CU and Independence Community College in Kansas, where Simmons played the past two years. Instead of the announcement, head coach Dan Hawkins provided short answers following Tuesday's practice about the receiver's prospects.

How much have you worked with Simmons off the field, getting his mind prepared?

"None," answered Hawkins, who's also CU's receivers coach in 2009.

Do you expect he'll play against Colorado State (in the season opener Sept. 6)? "We'll see."

When will he be able to practice?

"We'll see."

Is it possible he could practice as early as (today)?

"Yup."

Are you personally hoping for (today)?

"I hoped it would have been the 6th."

What makes him such a weapon?

"He's tall and he's fast and he's physical, and he can run with the ball after the catch. He's a return guy as well. He's got the whole package."

Do you expect him to return punts and kicks?

"Again, we'll see. We'll see how long it takes him to catch up."

How are his spirits?

"Good. He's been battling."



Simmons was not made available for interviews Tuesday. He did watch practice from the sidelines. Simmons began fall semester classes Monday, and does have a biography in CU's media guide, which was passed out to reporters Tuesday.

Simmons needed to complete nine courses at Independence from January to July in order to get into CU. The athletic department reported Aug. 6 that Simmons had been academically cleared to practice with the team and play in 2009. CU has maintained that once his coursework has been verified, he'll be on the team and in school.

Simmons was an all-Jayhawk Conference receiver at Independence. He totaled 91 receptions for 1,196 yards in two years there.

Offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said last April that CU would need Simmons in 2009. The Buffs lost three of their top four receivers from 2008, and they suspended receiver Markques Simas for the first two games of this year for an undisclosed rules violation.

Two Buffs said Tuesday they have seen Simmons' highlight tapes.

"He's pretty athletic," quarterback Cody Hawkins said. "He has his fair share of one-handed grabs on there. So it'll be exciting to see if we can get him involved in the offense."

Said safety Anthony Perkins: "I'm excited to see him actually get in some pads and on the field. He's a great athlete."

CU-CSU ANNOUNCEMENT COMING: The Metro Denver Sports Commission is expected to reveal future plans for the CU-CSU series Monday at a luncheon. The series is expected to be renewed for several seasons.

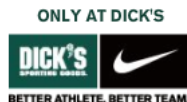
CU's media guide lists the Buffs and Rams playing every year through 2014. Sites are not specified. In each season but 2011, CU and CSU are scheduled to open their seasons against one another. That year, they're scheduled to meet Sept. 17, the third game of CU's season.

EXTRA POINTS: CU reported that sophomore Anthony Wright, a former cornerback, was given a look a receiver last week, and practiced there again Tuesday. ... Running back Rodney Stewart said his first practice back from a hamstring injury Tuesday was good. ... Dan Hawkins said the starting quarterback probably won't be named until after Saturday's final scrimmage of August camp. ... On the cover of CU's media guide is a picture of Jashon Sykes, a former CU linebacker and the program's current coordinator of football relations, wearing a helmet with a dark visor. In the visor's reflection is a scene of players running through the tunnel onto Folsom Field, with the stands and mountains in the background.

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### [Simmons' arrival should boost Colorado's ground-based offense](#)

August 26, 2009 7:42 AM

Posted by ESPN.com's Tim Griffin

Colorado's depleted wide receiving corps received a huge boost Tuesday when heralded junior college transfer [Andre Simmons](#) was back at practice with his new team.

Simmons was unable to take part in practice drills with his new team as school officials conducted a final review of his academic records and the process leading up to his enrollment.

Colorado coaches hope that Simmons will be able to work with his new teammates as soon as Wednesday to provide additional firepower for a wide receiving corps that will be depleted for the start of the season because of a player transfer and suspension.

Simmons reported with the rest of the Buffaloes on Aug. 6 but has not been able to work out with the team because of an eligibility issue.

On Tuesday, the transfer from Independence (Kan.) Community College appeared without pads and talked with his teammates and coaches throughout the Buffaloes' practice as they prepare for their Sept. 6 opener against Colorado State.

He's exactly what the Buffaloes need to fill their biggest positional void. The Buffaloes have already lost prime playmaker [Josh Smith](#), who transferred to UCLA earlier this summer. And sophomore [Markques Simas](#) has been suspended for Colorado's first two games of the upcoming season for an undisclosed violation of team rules.

The 6-foot-3, 210-pound Simmons is counted as the kind of athletic, speedy receiver who will provide a deep threat for a Colorado offense that ranked 81st nationally and 11th among Big 12 teams in passing last season. Colorado returns only one starting wide receiver -- junior Scotty McKnight.

Simmons, a native of Blackville, S.C., was the lone junior college transfer among Colorado's signees after producing 91 receptions during his two seasons at Independence.

"He'll give an instant boost to the wide receiver position, and not to take anything away from the current guys, but he's going to have that vertical speed," Colorado offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau [told cubuffs.com](#).

His talents as a kick returner should immediately help fill the absence for Smith, who set a school record with 1,568 return yards last season.

While it's doubtful that Simmons will be able to have much of an immediate contribution, he should be ingrained in the Buffaloes' offense by the time conference play begins.

He and Simas will provide some balance to an offense that figures initially to be heavily ground-based with [Darrell Scott](#), [Rodney Stewart](#) and [Demetrius Sumler](#).

That balance will be the key if Colorado hopes to be a dark horse contender in a North Division race that figures to be extremely wide open.

#### • Tim Griffin



Tim Griffin joined ESPN.c in Februar

2008. He has covered the Big 12 since its inception, among a variety of beats during a 24-year career at the San Antonio Express-News. Griffin, a Memphis State University graduate, lives in San Antonio with his wife and son.

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The Buffaloes have a favorable schedule with home games against divisional challengers Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri.

And the arrival of Simmons definitely won't hurt their chances.

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