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colorado football

Backup QB jobs high on priority list for scrimmage

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 08/29/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — With Colorado coach Dan Hawkins previously saying the battle between Cody Hawkins and Tyler Hansen for the starting quarterback job probably won't be decided before the Sept. 6 opener against Colorado State, this evening's closed scrimmage might be more important to two true freshmen vying to be next in line.

Clark Evans, a 6-foot-4, 225-pound scholarship player from Los Alamitos, Calif., and Seth Lobato (6-5, 205), a preferred walk-on from Eaton, are competing for the No. 3 quarterback spot, CU offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said.

Another preferred, in-state walk-on, Jerry Slota (6-2, 220) of Chaparral, trails Evans and Lobato, Kiesau said.

The team plans to travel with four quarterbacks, but

Kiesau said it would be nice to settle on a third. That makes it easier to distribute repetitions.

Colorado Football

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"But (between Evans and Lobato), No. 3 could be a week-to-week deal," the coach added, "depending on who understands that particular game plan the best."

Evans started slowly during August camp but has come on of late.

"At first, I thought, 'He's going to take a lot of work,' " Kiesau recalled. "But Clark did a lot of studying on his own. He has improved a lot in communication, how he calls the play, how he

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carries himself."

Evans agreed, saying, "It was a matter of learning the playbook and getting comfortable."

Lobato also has made recent strides.

"Seth came in with a really long windup and was really awkward," Kiesau said. "But he has spent a lot of time on his throwing mechanics and getting his body right."

Kiesau said he is spending about as much time trying to decide on a No. 3 quarterback as he is on the No. 1 job.

"(Evans and Lobato) have good days, and they have days where they look like freshmen," Kiesau said. "There's a lot on them right now. But they'll be all right in the long run."

Footnotes.

Today's scrimmage at Folsom Field is closed to the public and media. It will be the final preseason scrimmage. . . .

Dan Hawkins on what he hopes to see this evening: "Just try to be clean. Try to get more in that game comportment of substitution, getting on and off the field, special teams, all that stuff."

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sports

Invesco open to Showdown

Resolution could be at hand

By Natalie Meisler
The Denver Post

Posted: 08/29/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

A resolution in the year-long impasse over the future sites of the Colorado-Colorado State series could be announced as early as Monday at the event's annual luncheon at Invesco Field at Mile High.

Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper, a natural advocate of returning the series to the city, is among speakers lined up for a pre-luncheon news conference. Respective coaches, athletic directors and top university administrators are also on the agenda.

Within a few hours of last year's luncheon, CU issued a release that it was exercising its home-team option and moving the 2009 game to Boulder. Shortly after, CSU announced it would move the 2010 game to Fort Collins.

CU athletic director Mike Bohn and CSU counterpart Paul Kowalczyk didn't return calls

this week. Kowal-czyk said last Saturday an announcement would be forthcoming, but couldn't say when.

The schools are on each other's future schedules through 2014. Denver has hosted the rivalry every year since 1998, except 2004 and 2005, when both games were played in Boulder. The 2005 (54,972) and 2004 (54,954) games at Folsom Field rank as the top two crowds in the stadium's history.

When CU announced the move to Boulder for the upcoming game, Bohn emphasized CU would have only five home games in Boulder without the CSU game. Many Big 12 teams have seven home dates.

CSU officials, including coach Steve Fairchild, prefer the game be played in Denver every year. Both schools have the home or Denver option.

On Friday, Mac Freeman, vice president of stadium operations at Invesco Field, wouldn't confirm or deny negotiations with the respective schools.

Whether the in-state rivalry is the first weekend of the college season or later in September, Freeman said: "We submitted dates to the NFL. We've already looked at dates into the future, and we're absolutely confident we can accommodate those games not in the first weekend of the season."

Freeman pointed to last year's mammoth endeavor when the stadium hosted a Broncos

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preseason game, the closing night of the Democratic National Convention and the Rocky Mountain Showdown within one week.

One of last year's natural cheerleaders for holding the event in Denver, former Denver Metro Chamber CEO Joe Blake, is now the chancellor of the CSU system.

CSU's Hughes Stadium seats 34,400 and Folsom Field lists a capacity of 53,750. There are a limited number of tickets for the opposing team at on-campus games. Invesco Field seats 76,125. Of the nine games at Invesco Field, there have been crowds of at least 73,000 five times, and the fewest was 65,701 in 2006.

"We believe this game should be in Denver," Freeman said. "This is a celebration of two great universities. We would love to see it back."

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Bufs get one more chance to impress

Team will also prepare for CSU in today`s final scrimmage of fall

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted:

Cody Hawkins or Tyler Hansen?

The Colorado coaching staff is expected to determine which player will be the starting quarterback this season after tonight`s final scrimmage at Folsom Field.

And then Dan Hawkins will try to keep the decision a secret until the Buffs kick off the 2009 campaign against Colorado State on Sept. 6.

Cody Hawkins, a redshirt junior, is clearly the more experienced of the two. Hansen, a true sophomore, is more mobile and dangerous outside of the pocket.

If the battle for the No. 1 spot is extremely close -- as the coaches have maintained since spring drills and throughout fall camp -- does it really make much of a difference who is under center against the Rams?

"Not really," CU head coach Dan Hawkins said. "I don`t think so, really."

First-year offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau plans to lean on his unit`s strengths -- a talented stable of tailbacks running behind an enormous offensive line -- until receivers Andre Simmons (just started practicing on Thursday) and Markques Simas (suspended for the first two games) are ready to make an impact.

"They`re very similar," Kiesau said of his top two signal callers. "They`re both doing a great job, they`re both pushing each other. However it plays out, we`ll have the right guy out there."

Cody Hawkins, who has a 2-0 record against CSU, has to be considered the front-runner. Hansen missed some practice time during the week due to illness and will probably have to really stand out in tonight`s closed scrimmage to move to the top of the depth chart.

"All jobs are open," Kiesau said. "I think once you do (name a starter) guys become complacent and it kind of cuts off the competition. We want competition every day."

On the other side of the ball, the coaching staff will be keeping a close eye on the competition along the defensive line.

Defensive end Marquez Herrod is the most experienced member of a group that lost Maurice Lucas, George Hypolite and Brandon Nicolas to graduation. Lagrone Shields and Conrad Obi are battling for a starting spot on the other end. Freshman Forrest West figures to be in the rotation with classmate Nick Kasa out indefinitely with a knee injury.

Taj Kaynor, Curtis Cunningham, Eugene Goree, Will Pericak and freshman Nate Bonsu are among the names jockeying for position on the interior of the line.

"They`re battling and learning. They`re going to get better as the year goes on," defensive coordinator Ron Collins said. "They`re all about where we thought we`d be and we still have a lot of guys battling to get in there on game day. That`s the great thing about it is there`s a lot of guys in the mix and they`re practicing hard and playing hard."

The Buffs have more experienced depth at linebacker and in the secondary. The defense would have to like its chances tonight if the coaches were going to keep score vs. the offense.

"We`re not going to worry about what our defense is doing. We`re going to work on our stuff and try and get better," Kiesau said. "If we spend time trying to beat our own defense ... we don`t get wins and losses for beating Ron Collins. We get

wins and losses for beating the teams we play."

And that's why the final scrimmage will be a mix of evaluating CU players and preparing for CSU schemes.

"To me, it's about having a polished Saturday," Collins said. "It's going to be very game-like in terms of the transition from sideline to getting on the field. We'll get our substitution groups down and also our communication between the box and the sideline down. We want those parts to run smooth and hopefully it gets us ready for the next phase going into the CSU game."

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Friday, September 04,
2009

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Game day a test for CU O-line

Young Buffaloes hope practice makes perfect

By Patrick Ridgell

© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Say the Colorado State Rams line up Sept. 6 in some defense coaches haven't seen, didn't expect — whatever — and throw a blitz that the Colorado Buffaloes never anticipated. What's going to happen?

Given the inexperience along CU's offensive line in 2009 — it has no seniors and only two juniors — some might wonder. Offensive line coach Denver Johnson crosses his arms and shakes his head at the notion there'll be a problem.

"Two things can happen there: You can react and go in a negative direction, or you can respond and go in a positive direction," Johnson said. "Hopefully, we'll do a good job from the press box and the sideline if there is something. There's always something in an opening game.

"I tell you, we've seen so much, though, through the spring and even through the fall camp out of our own defense ... I think it'd be hard just to throw something at us that was just completely foreign. It may be not exact, but I think it'd be hard for someone to throw something at us that we haven't been fairly close to in some drill or scrimmage."

Johnson's confidence should comfort CU fans. The Buffs have five offensive linemen who've started at some point, which is way better than in spring 2007, when the Buffs had six offensive linemen on the entire roster.

The Buffs also are counting on improved health up front after injuries were a problem in 2008. Max Tuioti-Mariner earned a starting spot last September but tore an ACL to end his season. Whether he can return this season remains unclear.

There are some other facts that aren't so comforting.

Starting center Mike Iltis and right tackle Bryce Givens will take their first collegiate snaps Sept. 6. Left guard Ethan Adkins has participated in 41 plays over three games.

Right guard Ryan Miller has 11 starts, including the first four of 2008 before a broken fibula ended his season. He received a medical hardship last year and remains a sophomore in eligibility.

The graybeard is left tackle Nate Solder, a fourth-year junior and converted tight end who was in on all 843 offensive snaps in 2008. Miller, Iltis and Adkins are sophomores; Givens is a redshirt freshman.

The last year the Buffs had no seniors starting on the offensive line or in the two-deep was 1998. The last year a senior did not start at least one game on the offensive line for an entire season was 1982, Bill McCartney's first year as coach.



Colorado's Nate Solder plays against Miami-Ohi University at Folsom Field in September 2007. Solder, a fourth-year junior, will be the most experienced player on the Buffaloes' offensive line this season. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call file**

CU has never gone a full season without a least one senior on its offensive line.

Coaches and skill players are quick to laud their linemen for their size and talent. But everyone knows they need some experience.

"It's kind of like credit: You can't ever get any until someone gives you some," Johnson said.

He said you can't compensate for the lack of snaps: "There's just no substitution for time on the job."

Johnson said the line faces simulations of everything coaches can think of in practice, plus it faces the Buffs' regular defense a lot in camp. And, again, he doesn't expect an opponent to throw something at the offense that's a total surprise.

But then there's the crowd, the emotions and adrenaline that accompany a real game.

"They have to learn how to handle that, too," Johnson said.

Givens provided what he believes is the answer.

"Just going out there and being a mauler," he said. "You have to be tougher than the other guy. You have to want it more and get it done."

Givens' mindset represents what the Buffs have wanted to do on the offensive line for years. He physically prepared himself to do so by increasing his weight from the 240s last winter to what he said Thursday was 280. He said he "ate, ate, ate. I hate food now."

Of the five starters, Givens has been in the program for the least amount of time. Does he feel ready?

"I feel as prepared as I can be," he said.

Givens said he knows what the right tackle is supposed to do on every play. He said he knows what the two guys beside him — the tight end and right guard — are supposed to do, too. He said he's still learning to read defenses as a whole, and there are some blitz packages the offensive line continues to master.

Sept. 6, he said, is coming very quickly.

"Spring ball feels like yesterday," Givens said. "Now we're all ready for the first game. ... Can't wait to get out there."

EXTRA POINTS: CU will hold its third, and final, scrimmage of August camp tonight. It's closed to fans and media. It's expected to focus on specific situations. ... No announcement regarding the starting quarterback is expected after coach Dan Hawkins said Thursday that CU probably won't reveal the starter before the Buffs' season opener Sept. 6 against Colorado State.

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.



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Summaries, predictions by staff writer Brice Cherry

Thursday, August 27, 2009

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Date	Opponent	2007 score	Central time
Sep 5	Florida Atlantic	—	6 pm
Sep 12	Arkansas State	—	1 pm
Sep 19	at Virginia Tech	30-35	2:30 pm
Sep 26	La.-Lafayette	—	6 pm
Oct 8	at Missouri	17-52	8 pm
Oct 17	Texas Tech	31-37	TBA
Oct 24	Iowa State	35-7	TBA
Oct 31	at Baylor	32-20	TBA
Nov 7	Oklahoma	28-62	TBA
Nov 14	at Kansas	45-35	TBA
Nov 21	Kansas State	56-28	TBA
Nov 27	at Colorado	40-31	2:30 pm

1 NEBRASKA

Coach: Bo Pelini (Ohio State 1990); 10-4 in just over one year at Nebraska (served as interim coach for 2003 Alamo Bowl)

Last year: 9-4 (5-3, T-1st in Big 12 North); beat Clemson, 26-21, in Gator Bowl

Returning starters: 5 offensive, 7 defensive, 1 specialist

All-Big 12 candidates: DL Ndamukong Suh, S Larry Asante, RB Roy Helu Jr., K Alex Henery, C Jacob Hickman

Save the date: Nov. 14 at Kansas. Two years ago, the Jayhawks throttled the Huskers, 76-39, in Lawrence. No doubt there are Huskers who will use that embarrassment as fuel for this matchup of North title contenders.

Must-win game: Oct. 8 at Missouri. If Nebraska is going to make the jump, it's going to have to win in Columbia against a rebuilding Tiger team.

Big Man on Campus: Opposing offensive linemen will get face-to-face pronunciation lessons from senior DT Ndamukong Suh (6-4, 300), who made 7.5 sacks and 16 tackles for losses in 2008.

Impact rookie: After throwing just two garbage-time passes last year, junior quarterback Zac Lee should prove an able successor to Joe Ganz.

Local flavor: The wait can be long, but Bison Witches is a unique deli that serves up a variety of tasty sandwiches.

Pigskin prophecy: Nebraska's superior defensive speed should be enough to separate the Huskers from Kansas in a tight race for the North crown.



Date	Opponent	2007 score	Central time
Sep 5	Northern Colorado	—	6 pm
Sep 12	at UTEP	—	6:30 pm
Sep 19	Duke	—	11 am
Sep 26	Southern Miss	—	11 am
Oct 10	Iowa State	35-33	TBA
Oct 17	at Colorado	30-14	TBA
Oct 24	Oklahoma	31-45	TBA
Oct 31	at Texas Tech	21-63	TBA
Nov 7	at Kansas State	52-21	TBA
Nov 14	Nebraska	35-45	TBA
Nov 21	at Texas	7-35	TBA
Nov 28	*Missouri	40-37	TBA

*at Kansas City

2 KANSAS

Coach: Mark Mangino (Youngstown State, 1987); 45-41 in seven years at Kansas

Last year: 8-5 (4-4, 3rd in Big 12 North); beat Minnesota, 42-21, in Insight Bowl

Returning starters: 8 offensive, 7 defensive, 3 specialists

All-Big 12 candidates: QB Todd Reesing, S Darrell Stuckey, WR Dezmon Briscoe, WR Kerry Meier, DL Jake Laptad

Save the date: Nov. 28 vs. Missouri. In the last couple of seasons, the Border War has proven to be an entertaining and explosive shootout, including a 40-37 Jayhawk win in 2008.

Must-win game: Nov. 7 at Kansas State. The Jayhawks, looking for their fourth straight win in the in-state series, can't afford to slip up against a Wildcat team that is stuck in neutral.

Big Man on Campus: He doesn't possess the notoriety of some Big 12 QBs, but Todd Reesing is an efficient passer who owns more than 30 school records.

Impact rookie: Juco transfer Quintin Woods (6-5, 230) should emerge as a major pass rushing threat at defensive end.

Local flavor: Early risers will find scrumptious wake-up calls at Wheatfield's bakery, with its expansive spread of breads and pastries.

Pigskin prophecy: The Jayhawks could be 6-0 heading into the Oklahoma game Oct. 24. KU is poised for a run at the North title, but we feel it'll fall just short.



Date	Opponent	2007 score	Central time
Sep 5	*Illinois	52-42	2:40 pm
Sep 12	Bowling Green	—	6 pm
Sep 19	Furman	—	1 pm
Sep 25	at Nevada	69-17	8 pm
Oct 8	Nebraska	52-17	8 pm
Oct 17	at Oklahoma St.	23-28	TBA
Oct 24	Texas	31-56	TBA
Oct 31	at Colorado	58-0	TBA
Nov 7	Baylor	31-28	TBA
Nov 14	at Kansas State	41-24	TBA
Nov 21	Iowa State	52-20	TBA
Nov 28	#Kansas	37-40	TBA

*at St. Louis # at Kansas City

3 MISSOURI

Coach: Gary Pinkel (Kent State, 1973); 59-41 in eight years at Missouri; 132-78-3 overall

Last year: 10-4 (5-3, T-1st in Big 12 North); beat Northwestern, 30-23, in the Alamo Bowl

Returning starters: 5 offensive, 4 defensive, 1 specialist

All-Big 12 candidates: LB Sean Weatherspoon, RB Derrick Washington, OG Kurtis Gregory, C Tim Barnes, NT Jaron Baston

Save the date: Oct. 8 vs. Nebraska. The Tigers have won three of the last four against the Huskers, and a loss could signal a changing of the guard in the North.

Must-win game: Oct. 31 at Colorado. On the precipice of a fall after 22 wins the last two years, the Tigers need to extend their recent dominance over the Buffs to avoid an even deeper slide.

Big Man on Campus: There are few more dynamic linebackers in the country than senior Sean Weatherspoon, who ranked second in the Big 12 with 10.6 tackles per game in '08.

Impact rookie: Kicker Tanner Mills, a former soccer player at nearby Columbia College, may not replicate the production of former star Jeff Wolfert, but he proved consistent in the spring.

Local flavor: You'll need extra napkins for the greasy-but-good burgers at Booch's, a legendary stop in Columbia.

Pigskin prophecy: Losing cornerstones like Chase Daniel and Jeremy Maclin will cause even the strongest program to crumble. Expect the Tigers to go bowling, but not without a struggle.



Date	Opponent	2007 score	Central time
Sep 6	Colorado State	38-17	6 pm
Sep 11	at Toledo	—	8 pm
Sep 19	Wyoming	—	2:30 pm
Oct 1	at West Virginia	17-14	6:30 pm
Oct 10	at Texas	14-38	TBA
Oct 17	Kansas	14-30	TBA
Oct 24	at Kansas State	14-13	TBA
Oct 31	Missouri	0-58	TBA
Nov 7	Texas A&M	17-24	TBA
Nov 14	at Iowa State	28-24	TBA
Nov 19	at Oklahoma St.	17-30	6:30 pm
Nov 27	Nebraska	31-40	2:30 pm

4 COLORADO

Coach: Dan Hawkins (UC-Davis, 1984); 13-24 in three seasons at Colorado, 66-35 in eight seasons overall

Last year: 5-7 (2-6, T-4th in North)

Returning starters: 9 offensive, 4 defensive, 2 specialists

All-Big 12 candidates: CB Cha'pelle Brown, LB Jeff Smart, LB Shaun Mohler

Save the date: Nov. 7 vs. Texas A&M. If the Buffs don't take care of business against the Aggies at home, the hot seat under Hawkins will start sizzling.

Must-win game: Sep. 6 vs. Colorado State. The Buffs have won four straight games against non-BCS conference schools, and need that trend to continue if a bowl game is in the cards.

Big Man on Campus: Senior cornerback Cha'pelle Brown (5-7, 170) demonstrated his toughness late in the year by playing with a broken hand, and has lock-down stud potential.

Impact rookie: Redshirt freshman Jon Major, the state of Colorado's top recruit in 2008, should further bolster a strong linebacking corps after missing last fall with an ACL tear in his knee.

Local flavor: Locals swear by the Eggs Benedict at Lucile's, a charming Boulder eatery which claims to explore Creole cooking "from around the world."

Pigskin prophecy: Could this be the year for a Buffalo breakthrough? Colorado defeated Colorado State and West Virginia last year, and gets Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska at home. A 7-5 season isn't out of reach.



Date	Opponent	2007 score	Central time
Sep 5	Massachusetts	—	6:10 pm
Sep 12	at La.-Lafayette	45-37	6 pm
Sep 19	at UCLA	—	9:15 pm
Sep 26	Tennessee Tech	—	1:10 pm
Oct 3	*Iowa State	38-30	2 pm
Oct 10	at Texas Tech	28-58	TBA
Oct 17	Texas A&M	44-30	TBA
Oct 24	Colorado	13-14	TBA
Oct 31	at Oklahoma	25-58	TBA
Nov 7	Kansas	21-52	TBA
Nov 14	Missouri	24-41	TBA
Nov 21	at Nebraska	28-56	TBA

* at Kansas City, Mo.

5 KANSAS STATE

Coach: Bill Snyder (William Jewell 1963); 136-68-1 in 17 seasons at Kansas State from 1989-2005

Last year: 5-7 (2-6, T-4th in North)

Returning starters: 5 offensive, 8 defensive, 2 specialists

All-Big 12 candidates: DL Brandon Harold, WR/KR Brandon Banks, CB Joshua Moore, OT Nick Stringer

Save the date: Nov. 7 vs. Kansas. In Snyder's first incarnation with the Wildcats, K-State once ran off 11 straight wins against Kansas. The grizzled coach hopes to restore that level of success.

Must-win game: Oct. 24 vs. Colorado. Edged by a single point last year, the Wildcats will be out for vengeance when the Buffs invade Manhattan.

Big Man on Campus: The Big 12's offensive newcomer of the year in 2008, WR Brandon Banks is a freaky-good talent who ranked fifth in the conference in all-purpose yards.

Impact rookie: Snyder has always been able to mine gems out of the junior college waters, and he may have plucked one in junior RB Daniel Thomas, a versatile talent who may even line up at QB.

Local flavor: Carnivores (and beer drinkers) will rejoice with every trip to the Little Apple Brewing Company, which specializes in steaks and ales.

Pigskin prophecy: Snyder didn't turn around the K-State program overnight in his first tenure, and he won't whip up any magic potions this time, either. The Wildcats are looking squarely at a third straight losing season.



Date	Opponent	2007 score	Central time
Sep 3	North Dakota St.	—	7 pm
Sep 12	Iowa	5-17	11 am
Sep 19	at Kent State	48-28	6 pm
Sep 26	Army	—	6 pm
Oct 3	*Kansas State	30-38	2 pm
Oct 10	at Kansas	33-35	TBA
Oct 17	Baylor	10-38	TBA
Oct 24	at Nebraska	7-35	TBA
Oct 31	at Texas A&M	35-49	TBA
Nov 7	Oklahoma State	17-59	TBA
Nov 14	Colorado	24-28	TBA
Nov 21	at Missouri	20-52	TBA

* at Kansas City, Mo.

6 IOWA STATE

Coach: Paul Rhoads (Missouri Western, 1989); first season at Iowa State

Last year: 2-10 (0-8, 6th in North)

Returning starters: 9 offensive, 6 defensive, 2 specialists

All-Big 12 candidates: OG Reggie Stephens, LB Jesse Smith, DB James Smith

Save the date: Oct. 17 vs. Baylor. The Bears spanked the Cyclones, 38-10, last year and ISU will be aiming for retribution in its most winnable conference tilt.

Must-win game: Sept. 12 vs. Iowa. Times are tight in Ames, but even in a downturn Iowa State fans want to beat Iowa.

Big Man on Campus: Home-grown quarterback Austen Arnaud came into his own last year as a sophomore.

Impact rookie: He has yet to play a college down, but Florida transfer Bo Williams could bring some glory back to the once-vaunted Cyclone running game.

Local flavor: Now in its third Ames location, family-friendly Hickory Park features a vast menu of smoked BBQ.

Pigskin prophecy: Rhoads, a former ISU assistant, has a major rebuilding project on his hands. Expect lots of losses.

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