

Simas goes for rare 3-peat

Sophomore trying to be 3rd Buff with three 100-yard games in row

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/17/2009 11:44:02 PM MST

Wide receiver Markques Simas has an opportunity this week to do something that hasn't happened in nearly two decades of Colorado football.

Simas, a third-year sophomore, has recorded back-to-back 100-yard receiving games the past two weeks against Texas A&M and Iowa State. If he can produce another on Thursday night at Oklahoma State, he will be the first CU receiver to do so since Michael Westbrook had three consecutive triple-digit receiving yardage games in the 1993 season.

Westbrook, the program's all-time leading receiver, was one of two receivers in CU history to have three consecutive 100-yard games.

His former teammate, Charles E. Johnson, accomplished it twice in one season in 1992. He had six 100-yard games that year, coming in two blocks of three.

Simas smiled when told he could add his name to a list that includes those two former Buffs.

"I'd like to finish out with two nice little games," Simas said. "I'll get what I can get. If they want to feed me, they will feed me."

Simas joined the Colorado program as a highly recruited talent from Southern California three years ago.

His story is familiar by now to diehard Buffs fans. He redshirted in 2007 and was ineligible in 2008. He started slow this season after being suspended for the first two games, but has come on down the stretch.

He has caught at least two passes in six of the past seven games and is quickly sneaking up on tight end Riar Geer, who is the second leading receiver on the team with 32 catches.

Simas already has overtaken Geer in receiving yards. He has 26 catches for 385 yards. He chalks up his recent success to 'a trust factor' between himself and quarterback Tyler Hansen.

"When he's got no one else to go to, he definitely looks for me to step up and make a play," Simas said. "That works in both our favor because he has somebody to rely on and I have somebody I can actually look forward to have throwing me the ball."

Hansen said he and Simas began to develop a chemistry together last season when they spent the first part of the season together on scout team. They were the two players who most often made plays against the starting defense and they often made them together.

Simas would have preferred to break out earlier in the season and help his team win a few more games and qualify for the postseason. The game just didn't slow down for him in time this fall, but he believes he can build on the success he is having in November and it will feed a better season in 2010.

"It's definitely going to boost the confidence," he said. "It's reassurance, you know? I've still got it in me. It's going to make me want to work harder in the offseason."

Notable

Offensive line coach Denver Johnson will enjoy a homecoming of sorts Thursday when he returns to Stillwater with the Buffs. Johnson was born in Seminole, Okla., in 1958. He attended Tulsa University where he was a two-time All-Missouri Valley Conference offensive lineman. He began his coaching career at Oklahoma State as a graduate assistant in 1985. He became the Cowboys' offensive line coach in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

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CU Buffs looking to snap nation's longest road losing streak

Colorado hasn't won on the road since October 2007

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

Posted: 11/17/2009 11:37:19 AM MST

The Colorado football team owns the nation's longest road losing streak -- sort of.

The Washington Huskies and Washington State Cougars actually have lost more consecutive road games than the Buffs (12 and 11, respectively, to CU's 10), but more time has passed since the Colorado program tasted a win in a true road game.

Road woes

Here's a look at the longest road losing streaks in Division I college football:

Washington: 12 games. Last road win: Nov. 3, 2007, at Stanford, 27-9

Washington State: 11 games. Last road win: Nov. 24, 2007, at Washington, 42-35

Colorado: 10 games. Last road win: Oct. 27, 2007, at Texas Tech, 31-26

Western Kentucky: 10 games. Last road win: Sept. 6, 2008, at Eastern Ky., 37-13

New Mexico: 9 games. Last road win: Sept. 27, 2008, at N.M. State, 35-24

Eastern Michigan: 9 games. Last road win: Oct. 4, 2008, at Bowling Green, 24-21

The Buffs' last victory on the road came on Oct. 27, 2007, at Texas Tech. Washington and Washington State each won road games in November of that season.

Colorado goes on the road for the final time this season this week, playing at Oklahoma State on Thursday night to a national television audience on ESPN.

The Buffs have had to pare their goals since failing to qualify for a bowl game for the third time in four seasons, but one important item remaining on their list is ending the road-losing streak.

Quarterback Tyler Hansen said the streak has become a source of consternation for the team and something players talk about in the locker room.

"It's so frustrating cause we're always right there," he said. "Against Texas we were right there, against Kansas State we shot ourselves in the foot a bunch. Against Iowa State we were in the red zone four times and only got three points out of it. Stuff like that just kills us cause we're right there."

When asked about the streak during his weekly press luncheon Monday, coach Dan Hawkins said he doesn't believe the Buffs' problems lie in being on the road necessarily. He said it's more about the way in which they start games on the road. It typically takes them awhile to get going and they often find themselves playing from behind on the road.

"I think the mentality of our football team, of kind of getting some air underneath their souls a little bit and getting going, I think that's a lot of it," Hawkins said.

The Buffs have been outscored 78-27 in the first quarter of games this season. They have scored a total of six points in the first quarter in the past five games combined (home and away).

The best efforts on the road this season probably came at West Virginia and at Texas. The Buffs started well in both of those games and finished the first quarter with a lead or tied.

It hasn't shown up in the results to this point, but a growing list of CU players say they actually like playing on the road. Hansen added his name to that list this week.

"It's kind of fun," he said. "It's just everyone is against you. All the fans are against you. It's kind of just you and your teammates and you've got each others' backs. I kind of liked that."

Hansen said when he threw a fourth-quarter touchdown pass to wide receiver Markques Simas last week at Iowa State, he

didn't actually see Simas make the catch and score because he was hit a knocked to the ground.

But Hansen said he knew something good had happened because he didn't hear anything from the crowd. He liked that.

"You want to hear a lot of nothing," he said. "You want to hear silence."

The Buffs obviously don't want to carry the losing streak into next season. They open the 2010 season with a neutral-site game in Denver against Colorado State and then go on the road to Cal on Sept. 11.

Questions about the streak will surely come up again then if they don't end it now.

"We've got to get a win on the road for sure," Hansen said. "Just so we can forget about (how) we haven't won on the road last year or we haven't won on the road in a long time. Just so we can put that behind us and be like, 'Hey, we won on the road. We know we can do it.'"

Simas said winning on the road would do a lot for the team and its supporters at this point. It would build some confidence in players as they approach another long offseason and it would show fans that the team hasn't quit and is actually making progress, even if it is coming slowly.

"For us to go out there and play with a lot of heart and a lot of passion, it would definitely say a lot about this team," he said.

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colorado football

CU Buffs safety Ray Polk ready to play dad's alma mater

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/18/2009 01:00:00 AM MST



Buffs freshman safety Ray Polk, whose dad, Raymond, played at Oklahoma State in the 1980s, has the speed and size to help out the CU secondary. (Garrett W. Ellwood, Getty Images)

BOULDER — Phoenix real estate agent Raymond Polk, the father of Colorado freshman free safety Ray Polk, hopes Oklahoma State football fans will understand when he cheers for the enemy during Thursday night's game in Stillwater, Okla.

Raymond played cornerback for Oklahoma State in the early 1980s and will be sitting in an

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orange-clad OSU section with a friend who resides in Stillwater. And, if his son intercepts a pass or makes a game-changing play, things could get sticky for him.

"I thought about buying a CU shirt and an OSU shirt, tearing them in half and then having them sewn together to make one of those shirts that's half one team and half the other," Raymond Polk said during a phone interview. "But then I said to myself, no, that's not going to happen.

"Yes, I have my heart in both areas. But my son wins if there's a pull between them."

The Polk family's connection to both schools runs deep. Ray Polk also considered his dad's alma mater before being won over by the CU coaching staff. It gets better. Almost three decades ago, Raymond Polk, a two-way star at Sherman (Texas) High, appeared all set to go to Colorado. He even spent part of a summer in Boulder.

But as signing day approached in 1980, Raymond Polk felt a tug to join his Sherman teammate and cousin, Chris Rockins, at Oklahoma State. Southern Methodist was in the picture too, so Raymond consulted his mother to break a three-way tie. After some prodding, she admitted she enjoyed the company of the OSU coaches the best. The lead recruiter was Pat Jones, then an assistant under Jimmy Johnson and later the OSU coach.

"It's interesting how things work out," Jones said

in a phone interview. "Raymond almost went to Colorado, and his son is at Colorado but almost went to Oklahoma State. When I saw that Raymond's son was playing for Colorado, that's the first thing I thought of."

Rockins became a second-round draft pick of the Cleveland Browns in 1984. Polk, who had redshirted, was drafted in the 12th round of the 1985 draft by the Raiders. Polk was traded to Tampa Bay but tore a hamstring during preseason camp and never got into an NFL game.

Raymond Polk hopes his son becomes a better player than he was. The elder Polk knows one thing. Ray has the requisite size (6-feet-1, 200 pounds) and speed to be special. The younger Polk inherited the genes of sprinters. Decades ago, as a 10th-grader at Sherman High, Raymond ran 100 yards in 9.58 seconds. Ray's mother, Susan Corey (the Polks divorced years ago), was an 800-meter specialist on the Oklahoma State women's track team.

Ray Polk knows there will be a lot of OSU fans that remember his dad.

"It's going to be a little different playing a game there," he said.

Polk's flat-out speed caused Greg Brown's eyes to light up last winter when the CU defensive backfield coach learned that Ray Polk had requested a move from tailback to the secondary after his redshirt season. Although before this season Polk had not played safety since Pop

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Warner, he became a starter by the seventh game, against Kansas State.

Ray Polk sat out last week's game at Iowa State to heal a broken bone near a little toe — a freak injury caused when he was helping a friend move her dresser. He is expected to play Thursday.

"Ray, with his speed, has really helped to solidify us back there," Brown said. "He is still learning, but he catches on quickly. Having been on offense gives him a feel for things."

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

NOVEMBER 18, 2009, 7:51 AM

CU's Polk: No way I'd move back to RB

By **TOM KENSLER** |  No Comments

In my story that ran in Wednesday morning's Denver Post on CU redshirt-freshman safety Ray Polk and his father, Raymond, regarding their ties to Oklahoma State, I did not have enough space to use stuff about Ray's switch from tailback to the defensive secondary.

Polk requested the move last February on national signing day. I don't know the reason for Polk choosing that date, because Polk obviously had signed the previous year and already was on the roster.

I gather it was because he knew all the coaches would be around on signing day. Polk redshirted in 2008 and underwent shoulder surgery.

Some fans may have wondered if the recent defection of tailback Darrell Scott would prompt Polk to ask for a return to offense.

No way, Polk told me.

"There's not a second thought in the world," Polk said. "Honestly, I'm surprised how happy I am at DB. I'm almost surprised that I could make such a great decision at this young stage of my life. I jumped into it and it worked out."

Also, I asked Polk if having grown up playing offense made the transition to defense easier.

"It helps," Polk said. "When you study offense schemes (on film), you have a feel for what they're trying to do. You just kind of use your offensive logic to try to figure out what the receiver is going to do."

Polk became a full-time starter this season by the seventh game, against Kansas State.

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Smash hit

CU preps for Robinson, who's recovering from brutal shot taken last Saturday

By Patrick Ridgell
© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Not every Colorado Buffalo has seen the hit Oklahoma State quarterback Zac Robinson took last week. Those who haven't certainly have heard about it.

CU quarterback Tyler Hansen said his father told him about it last Saturday night when they were discussing the Buffs' next game — Thursday at Oklahoma State (5:45 p.m., ESPN). Patrick Devenny said his girlfriend informed him of it in a text.

It was the kind of hit people talk about.

With 1 minute, 38 seconds left in Oklahoma State's win Saturday, Texas Tech's Jamar Wall slammed into Robinson's helmet with his as Robinson ran toward the goal line. Both had to be helped off the field. Reports from the game said the hit drew gasps from the crowd.

According to the Tulsa World, doctors checked Robinson, one of the Big 12's best quarterbacks and a Chatfield High School graduate, for a concussion on Sunday and Monday. He was limited during Monday's practice, and there may also be a problem with Robinson's throwing shoulder, on which he received treatment Sunday.

Robinson's playing status is not expected to be determined until tonight. Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy's tone wasn't totally optimistic.

"We want to do what's best for him first," Gundy said Sunday. "If he's not ready to play, then we're not going to play him. Just sitting him because of the opponent we're playing, we're not in a position to do that, especially with a guy that means as much as he does to our football team. We want to do what's best for him and his future. Then we'll do what's best for the team next."

The Buffs say they'll be surprised if Robinson sits.

"That guy's a competitor, he's going to be back," linebacker Marcus Burton said.

"It's made a bigger deal than it is because it happens a ton, especially when you're used to running like that."

CU coach Dan Hawkins called Robinson a "tough dude" and expects him to play. If Robinson can't, the Cowboys will choose between inexperienced backups — junior Alex Cate and sophomore Brandon Weeden. They've combined to throw 15 passes in their careers.

Hawkins said there's little CU can do to prepare specifically for them.

"You have to prepare for their offense and adjust on the fly," he said.



Oklahoma State quarterback Zac Robinson lays on the ground, surrounded by his teammates and Texas Tech players, following his collision with a Tech defender Saturday night. Below: Robinson, who suffered a concussion, is tended to by the team's trainer.

Brody Schmidt/AP

To those who wonder why the Buffs don't run Hansen more, or run more option, some Buffs point to Robinson's hit as the best reason why.

"The other day, somebody asked why Tyler Hansen isn't running more and why we don't incorporate more of the option," Burton said. "That's the chance you take.

"(Robinson) pretty much won that game with his feet. Not that he didn't throw a lot or other guys didn't make plays. If it wasn't for his ability to run, Texas Tech might have been able to take it."

Robinson rushed for 99 yards and threw a touchdown pass in Saturday's win.

CU coaches usually don't want Hansen running before he exhausts his other options. He said he's trying to develop the proper feel for when to, and when not to, run. He said there were situations against Iowa State in which he should have slid, so his timing remains a work in progress.

"You just have to know the situation and be smart with the football, know when to get out of bounds and when to slide and know when to take those hits," Hansen said.

Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell/. He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

Status of Robinson remains uncertain

by: BILL HAISTEN World Sports Writer
Wednesday, November 18, 2009
11/18/2009 11:26:12 AM

Oklahoma State senior quarterback Zac Robinson's status remains unclear for his final home game, and it's believed that backup Alex Cate has been taking the majority of the snaps with the first-team offense this week in practice.

Robinson, who has started 34 consecutive games, is still recovering from a helmet-to-helmet collision in the final two minutes against Texas Tech on Saturday.

OSU plays Colorado at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at Boone Pickens Stadium. The 12th-ranked Cowboys close the regular season on Nov. 28 against Oklahoma in Norman.

Robinson is expected to be in uniform for OSU's last home game this season, but it's not clear if he will start or if he will play. Practices are closed to the media.

OSU officials haven't announced the nature of Robinson's injury and if he sustained concussion. He was hurt with 1:38 left as he carried the ball and collided with Texas Tech's Jamar Wall. Both players remained down on the field for several minutes as medical personnel evaluated them.

Robinson wasn't available for postgame interviews and hasn't been available to the media this week.

OSU coach Mike Gundy said Sunday that he expected Robinson to play against Colorado. But Gundy also said that his quarterback would undergo medical tests daily in attempt to determine if it was OK for him to play.

On Sunday, Gundy said: "We want to do what's best for him first. If he's not ready to play, then we're not going to play him. We want to do what's best for him and his future, and then we'll do what's best for the team next."

Robinson is expected to undergo more medical evaluation on Wednesday, according to a source familiar with the situation.

Cate has appeared in four games this season and hasn't attempted a pass. Cate was the first backup quarterback to play in a 56-6 win against Grambling State on Sept. 26. On his first play, Cate was knocked out of the game after taking a blow to the head. In his OSU career, Cate has completed 4-of-5 passes for 56 yards.

Brandon Weeden, a 26-year-old sophomore who played professional baseball, is also a backup quarterback. His only action this year came against Grambling. He entered after Cate was hurt and completed 4-of-7 passes for 77 yards, with two touchdowns and an interception.

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Bufs still have reason to play football

Postseason victory is a dream for many, though

By Alex K.W. Schultz on November 18, 2009

When senior cornerback Cha'pelle Brown arrived at the University of Colorado in 2006, he said he had hopes of playing for a Big 12 Conference championship or, at the very least, win a bowl game.

"That's out of the question now," Brown said.

The Colorado Buffaloes, who lost 17-10 to the Iowa State Cyclones last weekend and plummeted to 3-7 overall, have two games remaining on their 2009 schedule.

No matter how bad the Buffs ache to play during the holidays, it's mathematically impossible for CU (2-4 Big 12) to reach the postseason. So instead of a bowl game as the carrot hanging from the proverbial stick, players have other ideas in mind.

"There's nothing you can do," Brown said. "We just have to go out there and finish with heart."

CU's heart—if it hasn't already—may break to the point of irreparable at 5:30 p.m. Thursday when it travels to Stillwater, Okla., to battle a tough No. 12 Oklahoma State Cowboys (8-2, 5-1) squad on ESPN. The Cowboys are currently positioned second in the Big 12 South division behind the third-ranked Texas Longhorns.

"We're going to be ready to go," Brown said. "We're playing for pride. We can't just go out on the field and not play."

Brown, who said he was recruited out of Los Altos High School in La Puente, Calif. by running backs coach Darian Hagan, said he had a chance to play for Division I-AA Southern Utah. Despite CU's woes, Brown said he is "real glad" he chose the Buffs over the Thunderbirds.

Senior tight end Patrick Devenny, a product of Granite Bay High School in Roseville, Calif., said he also arrived in Boulder with aspirations of winning a bowl game.

"I knew that was definitely something I wanted to shoot for," Devenny said.



Senior cornerback Cha'pelle Brown dives to tackle KU wide receiver Jonathan Wilson on Oct. 17. (CU Independent/Lee Pruitt)

With the feat now unattainable, Devenny said he is playing for his teammates.

"I love the guys on this team," Devenny said. "At this point, that's all it's about. We worked so hard this offseason. It's too late to just throw it in now."

Seventeen CU seniors will depart from Boulder without ever obtaining a bowl victory, which head coach Dan Hawkins said is "always hard."

At the same time, though, Hawkins said his troops need to keep plugging away.

"They'll finish, they're fighters," said Hawkins, who is currently 16-31 at CU. "This group of guys, in two weeks, will probably never be together. There will be some guys you'll never see again, so you need to maximize that."

Hawkins said it won't be hard to preach enthusiasm to his players as the season dwindles down.

"I think there's a lot of love within this program, and we're built on philosophies and foundations," Hawkins said. "Those are the things you cling to."

The Buffs' mettle will certainly be tested against the Cowboys, who are riding a two-game winning streak.

Oklahoma State possesses the Big 12's fourth-best scoring offense at 33.1 points per game while CU is second-to-last in the category at 21.9 ppg. OSU also boasts the conference's fourth-best scoring defense at 20.6 ppg while the Buffs sit near the bottom of the cellar at 11th, yielding 28.7 ppg.

CU, if it stands a chance against the Cowboys, will have to make the aerial attack its primary recipe because OSU is third in the Big 12 in rushing defense surrendering 89.6 yards per game. The Cowboys' pass defense is weak, however, as it allows 244.3 ypg, 11th in the conference.

"It looks good when you see their pass defense isn't as good as their rush defense," said sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen, who is coming off a 258-yard passing performance. "It makes a quarterback happy."

Echoing his teammates' sentiments, Hansen said the Buffs still have much to play for and need to close the season with class.

"Any time you can get a win against a ranked team and you're unranked, that's awesome," Hansen said. "Plus, it's on ESPN. You have guys back home texting you, 'Hey, I saw you on TV.' You don't want to embarrass yourself and you don't want to embarrass your teammates."

Contact CU Independent Staff Writer Alex K.W. Schultz at Alexander.schultz@colorado.edu.

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