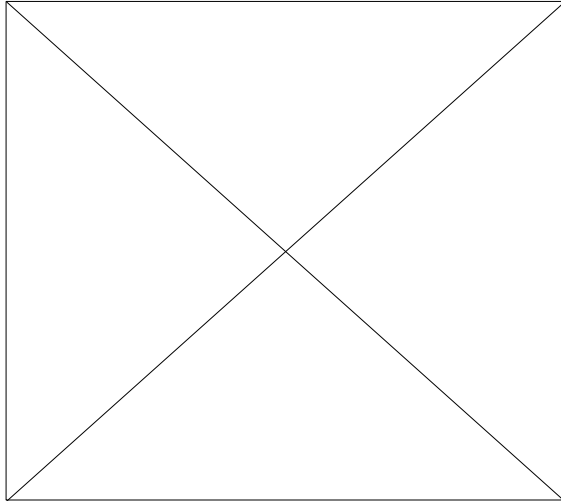


Tyler Hansen, CU Buffs regain winning form against Texas A&M

Kyle Ringo, Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/07/2009 02:52:32 PM MST



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Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen spent another Saturday afternoon running for his life at Folsom Field, and in the process of ducking and dodging Texas A&M tacklers he managed to keep his team's hopes for the postseason alive for at least one more week.

Hansen, whom coach Dan Hawkins called "a man's man" and "a baller," led a late touchdown drive, capped by a scoring pass over the middle to tight end Patrick Devenny to steal a 35-34 victory from the Aggies.

It was the second game-winning drive of the season for Hansen and led to a bitter defeat for a Texas A&M team that had bowl eligibility within its grasp for much of the day.

"They have tremendous resolve," Hawkins said of his team. "They really do."

The Buffs fell behind by double digits in the second quarter and trailed by 10 at one point early in the fourth quarter before

starting their rally.

Devenny's stellar one-handed catch as he crossed the goal line started a celebration among most of the 47,227 in attendance with 2 minutes, 4 seconds to play.

But the Aggies still had two opportunities coming.

Texas A&M quarterback Jerrod Johnson threw his fourth interception of the season as he tried to lead the Aggies down the field and retake the lead. CU safety Anthony Perkins made the play on Johnson's second-down pass over the middle.

The Buffs were unable to run out the clock and punted with less than a minute remaining, but backup punt return man Terrence Frederick fumbled and CU linebacker Marcus Burton recovered the ball and the win.

Several hundred students stormed the field --- a practice that has become cliché in Boulder in recent years because of how frequently it is done. Even some of those who chose to protest the state of the program by wearing powder blue to the game were seen dancing on the field afterward.

"It was really big," Hansen said of the victory. "After a two-game losing streak the team was kind of lost, kind of down. We needed a win to get the confidence back up."

Texas A&M coach Mike Sherman passed up a chance for a possible two-score advantage midway through the fourth quarter.

The Aggies had fourth-and-goal at the CU 3-yard line and elected to kick a 20-yard field goal to make the score 34-28. The decision reminded some that the bulk of Sherman's experience is at the pro level where coaches are generally more conservative in similar positions.

"I thought it was the right decision," Sherman said. "I would probably do it again."

The Buffs improved to 3-6 overall and 2-3 in Big 12 play but must win each of their remaining three games to reach the postseason. Texas A&M dropped to 5-4 overall and 2-3 in the league.

Hansen looked more like the quarterback who led the Buffs to an upset over then-No. 17 Kansas three weeks ago. He threw for 271 yards and a touchdown and rushed for 45 yards.

He actually gained 105 yards on the ground on 20 carries, but losses from eight sacks severely reduced his total rushing yards. It was the second consecutive week he was sacked eight times.

The sophomore quarterback, who took over the starting role at midseason, led four different scoring drives of at least eight plays. He committed only one turnover after consecutive weeks of multiple miscues against Kansas State and Missouri.

"This was probably the first game that Tyler has played where he really looked to me like he was in a groove," coach Dan Hawkins said.

Hansen wasn't the only Buff to have a big day. Tailback Rodney Stewart produced his fourth 100-yard rushing day of the season with 20 carries for 118 yards and two touchdowns. He took a bow after his second touchdown on an option pitch from Hansen in the third quarter.

Third-year sophomore wide receiver Markques Simas enjoyed a career day with seven receptions for 135 yards, including a 45-yard catch on third-and-16 on the game-winning drive. Simas also scored a two-point conversion to tie the game at 21 in the third quarter.

"He's always making plays," Hansen said. "We all knew he was going to be something special. It just took him a little longer than we expected."

Texas A&M came into the game as the third-ranked offense in the nation averaging more than 490 yards a game. The Buffs outgained the Aggies 437 yards to 374 and would have flirted with 500 yards of total offense if not for the eight sacks.

The Buffs spent the entire week working on starting faster on offense, but their first two drives of the day produced four sacks and ended in fourth-down-and-26 and -23 situations, despite using the no-huddle offense. The Buffs have now been outscored 71-24 in the first quarter this season.

Texas A&M scored three first-half touchdowns, including a 99-yard kickoff return for a score by running back Cyrus Gray. But the CU defense stiffened and found a way to make plays in the second half, twice forcing field goals from the Aggies and Perkins' interception.

Johnson completed 20 of 36 passes for 242 yards and one touchdown. Wide receiver Ryan Tannehill caught nine of those ball for 100 yards.

Colorado now must go on the road at Iowa State and Oklahoma State in the next 12 days and earn victories to keep the Buffs' bowl hopes alive. They haven't won on the road since October of 2007 at Texas Tech.

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Woelk: Now, CU Buffs must learn to build on win

By Neill Woelk Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/08/2009 12:26:58 AM MST

Hold those shovels -- at least for another week, anyway.

Good-bye, Blue Saturday.

The increasingly vocal referendum on the future of Colorado coach Dan Hawkins took an unexpected twist Saturday, thanks to an improbable come-from-behind 35-34 Colorado win over a good Texas A&M team. While the win will by no means drop the decibel level from the anti-Hawkins camp, it may give other folks pause for thought.

What we know for sure this morning:

The Buffs are still technically alive in the hunt for bowl eligibility, although the chances are still slim. CU would have to win out -- at Iowa State and Oklahoma State, and at home against Nebraska -- but the possibility does exist.

Tyler Hansen can play quarterback. The kid who a few weeks ago led Colorado to a win over Kansas by virtue of pure athletic ability continues to grow into the position. His play in the fourth quarter on Saturday, when the Buffs overcame a 31-21 deficit, showed a level of maturity that wouldn't have been present even a couple of weeks ago. There's a future there.

The Buffs can't finish 2-10, numbers that were beginning to leave CU administrators with night sweats. Obviously, 3-9 is still possible -- as is 6-6 or anything in between -- but at least 2-10 has been eliminated.

Thus, the temptation today is to point out the good things the Buffs did on Saturday and hope they've turned the corner.

For instance, the Buffs did play good defense. The Aggies came into the game third in the nation in total offense while averaging nearly 500 yards per game. They left with 374 total yards (132 on the ground), and when push came to shove, the Buffs pushed and the Aggies couldn't shove back. Twice in the fourth quarter, the Buffs held A&M to field goals, instances that are no doubt being closely dissected today in College Station.

Then with the game on the line, the Buffs recorded their first takeaway of the day. That's what good defenses do.

CU's offense, meanwhile, played its best game of the year. Not only did the Buffs put 35 points on the board on the strength of 437 yards, they hammered out some impressive, sustained scoring drives. The Buffs had six drives of 50 yards or longer, with each producing points.

And, the Buffs showed some heart. Tight end Patrick Devenny, whose game-winning catch will be an instant CU classic, said it best: "When we were down 21-10 at the half, it would've been real easy to throw in the towel. That's probably what the state of Colorado expected us to do. But we never quit. That shows what type of team we are."

However, we've been through this drill before. After a win over Wyoming. After a win over Kansas. And now ...

Now we'll wait. Wait to see if the Buffs can actually build off of a big victory.

Skeptical, you say? Darned right. Consistency has never been a Buff trademark in the Hawkins era; in fact, it might be the biggest missing component since his arrival.

It's been a maddening trend.

Beat nationally ranked Oklahoma -- then lose four of the next six.

Beat nationally-ranked West Virginia -- then lose three in a row.

And this year, the Buffs beat nationally ranked Kansas -- and proceeded to lose their next two.

Now, they'll have a chance next week to pick up a rare road win.

How rare? In Hawkins' tenure, the Buffs have won exactly two games on opponents' turf while losing 17. Equally important, the Buffs now have a chance to win consecutive games -- again, a rarity. After winning three in a row to start the 2008 season, CU hasn't won two in a row since.

No doubt, CU's players were saying all the right things after Saturday's win. They talked about momentum, confidence -- all the things that go into putting together a string of wins.

But before CU fans even begin to think things have turned, they'll need to see it. They'll need to see hard, clear evidence.

They'll need to see a win next week at Iowa State -- and hope that CU's players heed the wisdom of veteran defensive back Ben Burney.

"Every week, it's a one-game season," Burney said. "Every game's like the playoffs. Our backs are still to the wall -- and we have to play that way."

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By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/08/2009 12:24:53 AM MST

If the conspiracy theorists out there are correct and coach Dan Hawkins does make quarterback decisions for his team based on what is best for his son Cody, it's no wonder father put son on the bench a month ago.

He must have feared for his safety.

The Colorado offense allowed starting quarterback Tyler Hansen to be sacked eight times on Saturday against Texas A&M. It is the second consecutive week CU has surrendered eight sacks and those two performances have put the 2009 team in line for a dubious achievement.

With three games remaining on the schedule, the Buffs already have allowed 36 sacks this season and at the pace they have set the past two weeks, they would flirt with setting the all-time record for opponent sacks in a season. That mark was set at 55 by the 1979 Buffs.

Here is a statistic to chew on. Anyone wondering why the Buffs will be hard-pressed to qualify for a bowl game this season need look no further than the inability of the offensive line, tight ends and running backs to protect the quarterback this fall. The last time the Buffs went bowling in 2007, that team gave up 16 sacks the whole season. These Buffs have done it two weeks.

Colorado began Saturday's game on record pace, allowing four sacks on the first two possessions of the game before settling down to give up four in the remainder of the game.

Comeback kid

Hansen has led the Buffs to two wins in four starts this season and both have required him to lead fourth-quarter scoring drives to earn the victory in come-from-behind fashion.

The career leader in fourth-quarter comebacks at CU is Joel Klatt, who turned the trick nine times during his career. Both Klatt and John Hessler did it four times in one season to share the single-season record.

Givens returns

While the Buffs struggled to protect the quarterback again Saturday, the offensive line did receive a boost with redshirt freshman Bryce Givens returning from a three-game absence.

Givens has been out for personal reasons. He declined to say what those personal reasons are. He entered the game in the second quarter and was immediately called for a holding penalty, but he played several series before getting his eye poked. He returned to start the second half and played the remainder of the game.

Givens started four games this season, did not dress for three, and dressed but did not play last week.

"It's good to get back out there and good to get back in the mix of things," Givens said.

Penalty parade continues

A week ago, the Buffs began making themselves run for penalties committed in practice. It doesn't seem to be having much of an effect.

Colorado came into the Texas A&M game as one of the most penalized teams in the country. Only four teams had committed more penalties this season than the Buffs prior to Saturday. CU committed 10 more penalties against Texas A&M and has now committed 82 penalties for 683 yards this season.

The Buffs are probably not going to threaten the CU single-season record for penalties, set at 116 in 2005.

Polk hurting

Starting free safety Ray Polk emerged from the locker room with a bad limp and his right foot in a protective boot. Polk was not listed on the postgame injury report and it is unclear if he will miss next week's game at Iowa State.

Weak turnout for blue-out

A small number of fans in the crowd of more than 47,000 wore powder blue to the game Saturday to protest the state of the program. Powder blue was included in CU uniforms briefly in the early 1980s, during one of the worst stretches of CU football in the modern era.

Sports information director Dave Plati said his staff attempted to count the number of powder blue shirts in the crowd and estimated the number at about 200. Plati called the effort by angry fans a "flop" in his postgame notes and coach Dan Hawkins responded to a question about the protest this way: "Like I said before the game, the real Buffs wear black and gold."

Notable

Wide receiver Scotty McKnight has 54 receptions this season, tied for sixth most in a single season in CU history. He moved into seventh place on the CU career receiving yards chart (1,608), passing former tight Daniel Graham. ... Place-kicker Aric Goodman has made five consecutive field goals after some inconsistency earlier this season and missing eight in a row at one point last year. ... Wide receiver Dustin Ebner made his first career start and caught one pass for no gain. ... The Colorado offense had four plays of 30 yards or more against the Aggies. Prior to Saturday, CU has seven such plays through the first eight games. ... Left tackle Nate Solder was named first team Academic All-District by the College Sports Information Directors of America.

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Playmakers put spark in Buff offense

Stewart, Simas, Devenny all come up with big plays

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/08/2009 12:22:44 AM MST

Darrell who?

Colorado's fan base might be upset that Darrell Scott, the most high profile recruit of the Dan Hawkins era, abandoned ship last week and informed the coaching staff that he wanted to transfer to UCLA.

But many of the CU skill players still committed to the program were able to finally jumpstart a struggling offense with some big plays during an entertaining 35-34 victory over Texas A&M on Saturday at Folsom Field.

Rodney Stewart, the running back who beat Scott out for the starting job this season and last, rushed for 118 yards on 20 carries (5.9 per) with two touchdowns.

Markques Simas, the talented wide receiver who had 12 catches for 122 yards and one touchdown in his first six games, made seven catches for 135 yards to spark the passing game.

And tight end Patrick Devenny made a spectacular one-handed touchdown grab with 2:04 remaining to give the Buffs a much-needed comeback win, which keeps their bowl hopes alive for another week.

So, did CU's offensive players want to win to spite Scott?

"Not in spite, because he's a good guy, but just to prove people wrong," quarterback Tyler Hansen said after passing for 271 yards and scrambling for 45 net yards. "All of the fans wearing powder blue are all unhappy because of Darrell leaving. We wanted to kind of prove people wrong. We're OK as a program."

Stewart, still just a sophomore, has put together some big Saturdays before. The diminutive "Speedy" is confident that CU can still have a big finish to the season.

"We're young and now we're getting older and more into the game," Stewart said of the offense's improvement from the Missouri game to Texas A&M and even from the first half of Saturday's game to the impressive fourth quarter. "I think we're going to win next week."

Scotty McKnight has been doing most of the heavy lifting at receiver over the last three years while waiting for someone to spot him. The junior, who added four receptions for 66 yards against the generous Aggies secondary, was happy to see someone else making plays and moving the chains.

"I've been on the practice field with him here for a couple years now and I've seen the potential that Markques has," McKnight said. "He really just stepped up and he was a key factor in how we won that football game today -- both in big plays and sustaining drives with first downs. He's a big-time play-maker and also a possession guy who can keep drives going."

Simas stretched the field and made a brilliant diving catch in the second quarter for a 47-yard gain. On the next snap, Stewart scored on a 13-yard touchdown run to give CU a 10-7 lead.

After Stewart's 11-yard touchdown run in the third quarter, Hansen threw a dart to Simas for a 2-point conversion that tied the score 21-21.

And on the decisive drive of the game, facing a third-and-16 and pressure from the A&M front, Hansen found an uncovered Simas for a 45-yard pass play that led to Devenny's game-winning grab.

"I've been practicing harder and making more plays and getting Tyler confident in my abilities and showing what I can do," Simas said. "It just carried over to the field. ... There's more to come. I like this feeling."

Dan Hawkins said Devenny makes difficult catches look easy in practice all the time. No one on CU's bench was surprised to see his clutch play.

"Pat has good hands. I wasn't excited about the catch, I expect the catch," Simas said. "The touchdown is what got me excited."

Stewart now has seven touchdowns this season. Devenny has three. And even Demetrius Sumler, who rushed for a 7-yard touchdown in the fourth quarter, has now been in the end zone as many times as Scott this season (once).

"We played with some passion and heart, and we believed in ourselves," Sumler said. "We were down but kept fighting."

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Mixed bag for Buffs` special teams

Goodman has perfect day, but Aggies get kick return for touchdown

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/08/2009 12:24:01 AM MST

Kent Riddle knew he had some explaining to do. It comes with the territory as the special teams coach.

On a day when every point mattered, Aric Goodman was actually "Money." The place-kicker made two 37-yard field goals and three extra points, including the decisive PAT in the final minutes, which added up to a 35-34 victory for Colorado over Texas A&M on Saturday at Folsom Field.

Brian Lockridge -- CU's primary kickoff return man now that Darrell Scott has left the program -- returned a kickoff 27 yards out to the 39 to give CU good field position for its game-winning drive. Matt DiLallo averaged 37.8 yards on five punts, which the Aggies returned for a total of 8 yards. And Goodman also had good hang time on his seven kickoffs with three touchbacks.

But Riddle didn't even need prompting to begin explaining the riddle of his coverage on the kickoff that was returned 99 yards by Cyrus Gray for a touchdown that gave A&M a momentum-changing 14-10 lead 14 seconds after CU had taken a three-point lead in the second quarter.

"I'm sure a lot of people are going to say, 'What's wrong with the kickoff team?'" Riddle said. "Well, we've got six new guys out there is what's wrong with the kickoff team. That impacts you a little bit. We have to adjust and get better."

Riddle said reliable veterans such as Benjamin Burney, Anthony Wright and Ray Polk were taken off the kickoff coverage team so they can focus on their respective positions. Due to a lack of depth behind them, the coaching staff is also worried about getting them injured on special teams.

"It's hard to replicate what's actually happens in the game in practice. Game action is a lot different," Riddle said. "I was just talking to a buddy of mine who's a special teams coach in the NFL and he said, 'The game is your practice.' ...

"Our special teams made a few mistakes, but we're battling attrition and we'll clean some stuff up this week."

Typically, extra points are taken for granted by everyone in the stadium except for the snapper, holder and kicker. Goodman, who has a history of hitting posts and missing key kicks, was feeling great after a perfect day of squeezing the football between the pipes.

"I kept my head down and followed through," Goodman said of the extra point with 2:04 remaining that proved to be the difference on the scoreboard. "Justin (Drescher) made a good snap, Scotty (McKnight) did what he was supposed to do and got the ball down. When all that happens, it's pretty easy for me."

Goodman has quietly made five consecutive field goals and is 9-for-13 on the season. During the roller coaster ride in 2008, he was given a scholarship after making the game-winning field goal against West Virginia, only to miss his next eight attempts.

"You have to give that guy credit. I think he's been about as far down as anybody could and he's doing a nice job," Riddle said. "The great thing is he also learned from the tough days."

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cu football

CU Buffs rally late to defeat Texas A&M

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/08/2009 01:00:00 AM MST



Tight end Patrick Devenny, right, enjoys a winning TD with Scotty McKnight. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

scoreboard, they were trailing vastly improved Texas A&M.

Every time they looked up at the crowd of 47,227, they saw the powder blue specks, the disgruntled fans' way of telling the team it reminds them of a day when football here sank lower than Boulder Reservoir.

Toss the T's, folks. Bury the blue. Chuck Fairbanks, CU's three-year train wreck who dressed his 1981 Buffs in powder blue and then went 3-8 in his final CU season, rarely pulled off what Dan Hawkins' clan did on this day.

Tyler Hansen drove the Buffs 61 yards in only four plays, hitting backup tight end Patrick Devenny on a 22-yard TD pass with 2:04 left for a 35-34 comeback win.

BOULDER — Colorado's season on the precipice of collapse had some ugly vistas Saturday afternoon, despite the brilliant weather at Folsom Field.

Nearly every time the Buffaloes looked up at the

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Colorado Football

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The fans' planned Powder Blue Protest went pffft. Colorado's season remains alive. At 3-6 and 2-3 in the Big 12, so do a bowl bid and a winning season, however slim. The hounds nipping at Hawkins' heels can go back in their doghouses.

"We just said, 'Your backs can't get any closer to the wall, particularly if you want to go to a bowl game,' " Hawkins said. " 'You have to win out.'

That's the way it is. It's March Madness. You win or you go home."

For the only time other than the upset of Kansas, Colorado's 113th-ranked offense showed consistent life. Hansen led two fourth-quarter touchdowns drives, hitting 21-of-32 for 271 yards as the Buffs rolled up 437 total. The embattled line, while giving up seven sacks, opened up enough holes for Rodney Stewart to gain 118 yards and score twice.

And Markques Simas, the best Buffs receiver you've never seen do much, had a breakout game with seven receptions for 135 yards, including a 45-yarder that set up the winning score.

The Buffaloes didn't see red. They saw blue. Powder blue.

"We knew they were going to do that all week," Hansen said. "We talked about it. We took it as disrespect for us. We took it personally. We wanted to come out here and show the fans we're still here. We're still a good team. Even though you don't have our back, we're still going to play for each other."

Colorado's gritty defense did its job too. Jerrod Johnson, second nationally in total offense at 328.9 yards a game, had only 251. The Buffs held A&M (5-4, 2-3) to field goals on back-to-back drives in the fourth quarter.

CU answered with a touchdown between those two drives as Demetrius Sumler went untouched

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up the middle 7 yards for a touchdown.

Trailing 34-28 with 3:53 left, Hansen started the game-winning drive from the 39 by getting sacked. It didn't matter. He was morphing into John Elway.

"You've just got to stay positive and have a short-term memory," Hansen said. "It's water under the bridge. Just go onto the next play."

The play of the game came two plays later. A&M's defense, which started six underclassmen, was further hurt when freshman cornerback Dustin Harris hurt his ankle at the end of the first half and sat out the second. Taking advantage of the void, Hansen found Simas, his No. 2 option, wide open in the flat, and he raced down the right sideline to the 22.

On the next play, Devenny, a senior who had only nine catches all season, was alone just across the goal line. He caught the bullet to tie it, and Aric Goodman, who also kicked two 37-yard field goals, nailed the extra point for the eventual winner.

"We've been practicing that play all week," Devenny said. "It was a Cover 2 (zone). I knew I had to get open. It was there, and if it wasn't there, it'd be all my fault."

After safety Anthony Perkins picked off Johnson and Marcus Burton recovered a muffed punt to snuff out the last Aggies chances, much of the crowd stormed the field. In the scrum were the

powder blue speckles, patting the Buffs and themselves on the back.

But as the Buffs got the last laugh on the Aggies, Hawkins got the last laugh on the detractors.

"The real Buffs," he said, "are wearing black and gold."

John Henderson: 303-954-1299 or jhenderson@denverpost.com

Rally time

How CU overcame a 31-21 deficit with 11 minutes left:

* CU goes on eight-play, 73-yard drive, scoring on Demetrius Sumler's 7-yard run with 7:14 left to cut lead to 31-28.

* Texas A&M responds with a 20-yard field goal for a 34-28 lead with 3:59 left.

* CU has a third-and-16 from its own 33. Tyler Hansen hits Markques Simas for a 45-yard completion. Then Hansen connects with Patrick Devenny for a 22-yard TD. The crucial extra point by Aric Goodman is good for a 35-34 lead with 2:04 left.

* CU's Anthony Perkins gets his first career interception, and CU's Marcus Burton recovers a muffed punt to seal the win.

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Three questions

A look at how Colorado answered Tom Kensler's three questions going into the game:

Can Colorado players rally around coach Dan Hawkins with an energized victory, or will another dismal performance suggest that he already has lost this team? Just what the doctor, er, head coach, coaching staff, fans, etc., ordered. As Colorado sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen said afterward, most people — locally and around the country — must have felt that the team would give up after trailing 21-10 at halftime. Instead, the Buffs finally came up with some big plays and scored 25 points after the break. That alone was more points than CU had generated for an entire game in all but two starts, against Toledo and Kansas.

Can the Buffs keep up with the explosive Aggies? As with almost every Big 12 game, it figured to take more than 30 points to win this one. Colorado amassed 437 yards of total offense — a number topped only by the 451 yards gained in the losing effort at Toledo. It sure helps when a big game out of sophomore receiver Markques Simas can take the pressure off junior wideout Scotty McKnight and give the offense more options.

Can CU's offensive line protect like a Brinks truck? Hansen was sacked seven times, making it 15 sacks in the last two games. But at least the offensive line improved, allowing three sacks in the second half. There's more work to be

done. But the return of redshirt freshman tackle Bryce Givens seems to help.

Key stat

8-of-16: Colorado's third-down conversion rate, which kept drives alive and helped produce 25 second-half points.

Key play

Tyler Hansen's 22-yard TD pass to tight end Patrick Devenny to tie the score 34-34 with 2:04 left. Aric Goodman kicked the extra point to win it. *John Henderson, The Denver Post*

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mark kizsla

Kiszla: CU blues start with loyalty

By Mark Kiszla
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/08/2009 01:00:00 AM MST



Colorado running back Rodney Stewart gallops for some of his 118 yards rushing Saturday against Texas A&M. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — Here's the real problem with this state getting behind Colorado football: Almost nobody is from here, not even the starting quarterback for the Buffaloes.

Maybe that's why after leading CU to a 35-34

comeback victory against Texas A&M on Saturday, California native Tyler Hansen seemed more in a mood to pick a fight with local supporters than accept their cheers.

Hawk love has dissolved into us-against-the-world spite.

Has it really come to that for coach Dan Hawkins and his beleaguered CU program?

Disgraced by a football team so embarrassingly bad it brought back the nightmare of the 1980s, hundreds of very noticeable fans in a Folsom Field crowd of 47,227 wore powder blue T-shirts, visually taunting current Colorado players by displaying the school's predominant uniform color from the long-ago era of Chuck Fairbanks and unrelenting blue Saturdays.

The protest made Hansen see red.

"We took it as disrespect to us. We took it personal. We wanted to come out and show the fans that we're still here, we're still a good team. And that even though you guys don't have our back, we're going to still play for each other," said Hansen, a sophomore quarterback who completed 21-of-32 passes against the Aggies, including a 22- yard strike to tight end Patrick Devenny for the winning score with 2 minutes, 4 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter.

So after a rousing rally by CU players who have been mocked by fellow students, left for dead in the Big 12 Conference standings and left for-

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ever in the rearview mirror by homesick running back Darrell Scott, the vibe in the stadium was more nobody-loves-us edgy than we-are-family euphoria.

Guess that is one of the inherent dangers in a state populated by transplants who demand to be entertained by a college football team with its top rusher from Ohio, its coach hired from out of Idaho and its first-string QB from Southern California.

"I just want to say thank you to all the fans that have supported us through all of this. It's not easy being a fan of a team that's not producing on the field," said CU safety Anthony Perkins, who played prep football at Northglenn High School in metro Denver. His late interception of Texas A&M quarterback Jerrod Johnson snuffed any flicker of hope for the visitors.

What is the number of Colorado students, alums or just plain folks with no direct ties to anybody in the football locker room who truly love the Buffs, win or lose? I don't know the exact answer, but at times it seems true CU faithful are less than the No. 9 that Hansen now defiantly wears on his back like a bull's-eye.

It has been trendy to suggest athletic director Mike Bohn start looking to replace Hawkins and his 16-30 record. The frustration is understandable, but from a practical standpoint, how many proven coaches would be gung-ho to take the whistle at a football program that ranks outside of the top 40 in attendance and lacks

top-of-the-line facilities?

Well, guess what: Mike Shanahan isn't walking through that door. Gary Patterson already has a better job at Texas Christian. Or do you really think Paul Johnson is going to give up a sweet gig at Georgia Tech and move to Boulder? Dream on.

"Real Buffs wear black and gold," said Hawkins, after hundreds of disgruntled fans showed up for the game decked out in powder blue.

If he's smart, Hawk just got a clue to the

Share Your Analysis



The Post's Mark Kiszla responds to readers



Post sports columnist Mark Kiszla fields your feedback. Look for it in Kickin' It With Kiz on Sundays.

real challenge to building a winner at Colorado. It's the same problem that Bill McCartney overcame with religious zeal, Rick Neuheisel ditched at the first chance to leave campus and Gary Barnett fought until controversy beat him.

Real Buffs might wear black and gold, but a losing CU coach bleeds alone.

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Love follows victory when it comes to this football program.

This state has the relationship all backwards.

Until true passion proceeds victory, to think that changing the CU coach will make the Buffs a national title contender will only result in more broken hearts and blue Saturdays.

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cu football

Scott's transfer puzzle for CU

Top recruit never met expectations

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/08/2009 01:00:00 AM MST

Updated: 11/08/2009 01:00:39 AM MST



"If he could have gotten healthy, he could have been a dynamic back here. One day, he'll realize his decision was not the right one." - CU running backs coach Darian Hagan, above, with Darrell Scott (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — Tyler Hansen played quarterback about 50 miles away from Darrell Scott's high school, on the other side of the Los Angeles metro area, but he knew. Everyone knew about the 215-pound tailback at Ventura's St. Bonaventure High with sprinter's speed ripping off 200-yard games like clockwork in the fall of 2007.

"We always watched those high school shows on TV and Darrell Scott would be the highlight of the night," said Hansen, Colorado's sophomore starter. "I mean, we all wanted to watch. We wanted to see him run."

Hansen committed to attend Colorado the previous June, and was thrilled when Scott, a five-star recruit, picked the Buffaloes over Texas on signing day in February 2008.

Hansen envisioned big things at CU, calling signals with Scott running behind him in the same backfield. Instead, after 1 1/2 injury-plagued seasons, Scott informed Colorado coaches via a text message Tuesday he was leaving the program.

The departure of coach Dan Hawkins' most high-profile recruit was a watershed moment in a nightmarish season that has Hawkins on the hot seat.

As for why he left, Scott has remained mum, other than saying he wanted to go back home to play at UCLA and join his uncle, former CU wide receiver Josh Smith. He declined numerous

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interview requests from The Post to further explain his decision. His mother, Alexis Smith, refused to talk about her son's decision.

Left to explain were the people most hurt, coaches and teammates, who saw a good-hearted kid who became confused about his role, failed to show a work ethic to win a starting job, became fed up with his inability to stay healthy, and was eventually enticed back home by outsiders equally perplexed at what happened to the nation's most high-profile running back recruit two short years ago.

Injuries hinder his chances

No one was more devastated by Scott's decision than running backs coach Darian Hagan, the man most responsible for getting him to CU. Hagan said he was blindsided. He was furious Scott didn't inform him in person. Late in the week, he was still hurt, and believes Scott made a decision he'll regret.

"He should have stuck it out," Hagan said. "(The lack of playing time) was no fault of his own. The guy just wasn't healthy. If he could have gotten healthy, he could have been a dynamic back here. One day, he'll realize his decision was not the right one."

Asked if he would have changed anything about the way he handled his prized prospect, Hagan said he would have been more stern. "I wasn't hard on him at all," Hagan said. "I gave him a lot of leeway. In retrospect, maybe (stronger

discipline) is something Darrell should have had. But that's not the way I was coached (by Bill McCartney). It's not the way I like to coach."

For CU fans who never saw the *real* Darrell Scott, Hansen insists that player exists.

"He was unbelievable in the spring," Hansen said. "He was like the five-star guy you expected to see. He would have been awesome if he hadn't been hurt."

Instead, the two-year totals on Scott's career look more like that of a scrub: 110 carries, 438 yards and one touchdown, the past few weeks spent sidelined after arthroscopic knee surgery. CU coaches projected he would return to the field this week against Iowa State.

As a Buff, Scott rarely shifted into his highest gear — he ran a 10.5 for 100 meters in high school — because he couldn't seem to get into the open field. He often ran slow, and soft.

"You could see him holding back because he didn't want to get hurt anymore," junior cornerback Jalil Brown said. "He was playing a little tentative. He was afraid of getting hit a certain way."

As a freshman, Scott reported to camp 10-15 pounds overweight, strained a groin and then hyperextended a knee in his second game. Three weeks later, he sprained an ankle against Texas, an injury Hagan said limited Scott's burst and his ability to cut for the rest of his freshman season.

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This season, most of Scott's yards came against Toledo — 85 yards on 12 carries — before he sustained his knee injury returning a kick. He got just 10 more carries.

Unable to play after knee surgery, Scott became withdrawn in recent weeks, at times standing by himself at practice. Sophomore tailback Brian Lockridge, another L.A. product and one of Scott's closest friends, was among those not surprised by his announcement.

"There's a lot that goes through your mind when you're sitting out," said Lockridge, who redshirted in 2008 after hernia surgery. "You start missing people back home. You hear people saying, 'You're Darrell Scott. What's going on?' Your head gets filled with this other stuff that people are trying to put in there.

"Being out is the worst time for an athlete. You overthink yourself. You're thinking, 'Maybe I'm not that good,' or 'Maybe I should go someplace else.' It turns you inside out."

Justifying his reputation

Colorado's signing of Scott created national headlines. The atmosphere in the football offices was electric. Former Buffs coach Eddie Crowder told The Post that Scott might be the most important addition to the program since 1988, when McCartney plucked a blue-chip option quarterback out of Los Angeles by the name of Darian Hagan.

In hindsight, some CU insiders wonder if Scott ever had what it took to be great. Hagan often questioned his toughness, telling the media Scott needed to learn to play hurt.

Former Colorado linebacker Jashon Sykes, now the program's director of football relations, wonders if Scott has the emotional makeup to be a star. Sykes, also from L.A., arrived in Boulder as a nationally recognized blue-chipper expected to make an immediate impact.

"Different people have a different drive and motor, and I don't think Darrell is a go-getter," Sykes said. "Being a player of his stature, you kind of have to take the initiative, like, 'Yeah, this is the reason I've gotten all this pub.' I don't know if necessarily he wanted to do that. He kind of just let things come to him, instead of making things happen.

"When I got here, I made sure I wasn't going to be a bust. With Darrell, he just seemed to be going through life."

Dan Hawkins called Scott "a great kid" and wished him well.

"I like Darrell a lot. We want him to have success," said Hawkins, who otherwise declined to discuss specifics regarding Scott's transfer.

Teammates weren't happy, but Brown said, "He had a tough time here. You can never say you would or wouldn't do what he did. You're not in

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his shoes."

Colorado fans wonder if Scott's departure will hinder recruiting efforts, especially in Southern California.

"I don't know that it will come off as a black eye against Colorado," said Jeremy Crabtree of Rivals.com. "Kids might have some questions about why Darrell Scott transferred, and those are questions that coaches are going to have to answer. But kids transfer all across the country. And Colorado can show recruits, with Rodney Stewart, that they're going to play the best player, regardless of what Rivals or any other recruiting rankings say."

*Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or
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cu football

Great game in Simas' grasp

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/08/2009 01:00:00 AM MST



Colorado receiver Markques Simas gets away from the Aggies' Sean Porter on a 45-yard pass play that set up the Buffs' winning touchdown in the fourth quarter. CU finished off the drive on a 22-yard pass to Patrick Devenny with 2:04 left. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — It's too bad NCAA rules wouldn't allow it. Otherwise, Colorado might want to pick

up the airfare the next time the family of Markques Simas comes from California to watch the sophomore wide receiver play.

With his mother and other supporters cheering him on, Simas finally had a breakout game. He picked a great time to come through. Simas' career-best 135 yards receiving Saturday helped Colorado rally for a 35-34 victory over Texas A&M, snapping a two-game losing streak for the Buffaloes.

"His mom is here, he said, 'I've got to ball,' " CU senior safety Benjamin Burney said, grinning. "All his people were here. But, really, it was just a matter of time before he clicked."

It's been a long journey. After being rated a four-star prospect out of San Diego's Mira Mesa High, the 6-foot-2, 215-pound Simas redshirted in 2007 and also sat out the 2008 season after being ruled academically ineligible. With huge hands and the ability to shield defenders with his body, Simas had been called CU's most talented receiver since he arrived on campus. Trouble was, his first two years were relegated to the practice field.

Finding it more difficult than he expected to knock off the rust after two inactive years, Simas had caught no more than three passes in a game this fall — until Saturday.

He finished the afternoon with seven receptions, including a 45-yarder from Tyler Hansen that set up a 22-yard touchdown catch by tight end

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Patrick Devenny with 2:04 remaining in the fourth quarter for the winning score.

Simas' 135 receiving yards were more than double any of his previous games.

"I feel real good about it," Simas said. "I feel like I've had that in me the whole time, and now I had a chance to show it. I was able to give everyone a taste of what's to come."

It was about time.

"I can't tell you how happy I am for him," junior wideout Scotty McKnight said. "I've been on the practice field with him for a couple of years. I've seen the potential he has. He just stepped up. He was a key factor in how we won that football game."

Simas also made a pivotal catch on a two-point conversion in the third quarter, pulling the Buffaloes even at 21-21. In this game, every point became crucial.

"I've been waiting for a game like this from him," Devenny said. "I knew he could do it. I expected bigger things out of him. Having him come down there and catch that deep ball just gave us all confidence. That's what we needed."

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cu briefs

Buff's' Perkins picks great time for first interception

Posted: 11/08/2009 01:00:00 AM MST

BOULDER — Anthony Perkins said he was simply in the right spot.

But the Colorado sophomore safety still had to catch the interception that sealed the game.

"We were in a 'zero blitz,' and basically I was in the right place at the right time," Perkins said. "Our defensive line got some really great pressure on the quarterback and got to him as he was throwing the ball, and it just kind of floated up in the air. I saw it, and I just thought I had to go up and get it and make a play."

Perkins' first career interception came with 1:31 left in the game.

Perkins also finished with seven tackles, four of them solo.

Not so blue.

A protest of CU's football program organized on Facebook urged fans to wear powder blue (per CU's teams in the Chuck Fairbanks era) to the game to show their disgust at the state of the team. It didn't go unnoticed in CU football camp.

"Real Buffs fans wear black and gold," CU coach Dan Hawkins said.

Kicking game.

Colorado had to patch together its return game, as injuries and a transfer left it in a state of flux. It played to mixed results.

Rodney Stewart was thrust into punt-returning duties with Jason Espinoza out with an injury. However, Stewart fumbled his first chance at the beginning of the second quarter. Scotty McKnight took his place for the next opportunity.

Brian Lockridge returned kickoffs, which running back Darrell Scott did before deciding last week to transfer. Lockridge wasn't new to this. He came into the game fifth in the Big 12 in kickoff returns, averaging 24.3 yards on 16 returns. He averaged 18.8 yards Saturday.

Chris Dempsey, The Denver Post

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Longmont, Colorado
Thursday, December 24,
2009

Publish Date: 11/8/2009

Buffs answer critics

By Patrick Ridgell
© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — To the Colorado Buffaloes, it was just one more indignity.

They beat Texas A&M 35-34 on Saturday, overcoming a 10-point deficit in the final 11 minutes and forcing two turnovers in the last 2 to seal it, and they kept their hopes for success in 2009 flickering. As they celebrated on the field, fans flooded the field to party, too, something they've done to death.

And many of them wore powder blue.

They congratulated Ray Polk, the CU safety who broke his foot Friday moving furniture, yet played through the injury well enough to make five tackles. They slapped the back of Markques Simas, the CU receiver whose career-best seven catches for 135 yards has been long overdue. And they patted quarterback Tyler Hansen on the back, and his was a dirty back because Hansen was sacked eight more times Saturday.

The Buffs said they accepted their congratulations and responded with thank yous. CU's sports information department reported it counted the number of fans who wore powder blue at less than 200. But that number, and the buzz the movement created this week to wear blue like the Buffs of the early 80s and protest their current struggles, was noticed.

"We talked about it and took it as disrespect to us and we took it personally," Hansen said. "We wanted to come out here and show the fans we're still here, we're still a good team and even though you guys don't have our back, we're going to play for each other."

Said coach Dan Hawkins: "The real Buff fans were wearing black and gold."

Said safety Ben Burney: "I think we quieted a lot of people today. Definitely, when we see a lot of outside distractions and stuff, we come together closely as a unit.

"It might have actually helped us in some sense."

That CU feels disrespected shouldn't be alarming. That the Buffs are adopting an us-against-the-world mentality shouldn't be either. That they showed some determination Saturday might be.

Saturday's win makes them 3-6, 2-4 in the Big 12, still alive for a bowl and still alive in the Big 12 North. Saturday's win might have merely delayed an inevitable thud that'll fall if the Buffs fail to win out — which they know they



Colorado tight end Patrick Devenny, right, celebrates with teammate Scotty McKnight after Devenny scored a touchdown against Texas A&M on Saturday in Boulder. **Jack Dempsey/AP**

COLORADO 35, TEXAS A&M 34

Texas A&M

7 14 0 13—34

Colorado

0 10 11 14—35

First Quarter

TAM—Fuller 1 pass from J.Johnson (Bullock kick), 2:33.

Second Quarter

Col—FG Goodman 37, 12:33.

Col—Stewart 13 run (Goodman kick), 9:11.

TAM—Gray 99 kickoff return (Bullock kick), 8:57.

TAM—J.Johnson 3 run (Bullock kick), :17.

Third Quarter

Col—FG Goodman 37, 7:54.

must do. Road games Saturday at Iowa State and Nov. 19 at Oklahoma State await.

They had a rough week, what with Darrell Scott quitting, which spurred more cries for a coaching change. Texas A&M led 21-10 at halftime, 31-21 with 11:01 to go and by six with about 3 minutes left. The Aggies were perched to end the Buffs' misery.

"We could've been ready to throw in the towel," tight end Patrick Devenny said about CU's comeback. "That's probably what the whole state of Colorado expected us to do."

But then CU made four plays.

Facing third-and-16 on its 33, Hansen found Simas all alone crossing the secondary, and Simas grabbed the pass and ran for a 45-yard gain. Hansen said Simas was his second read on the play, and he stayed in the pocket as it held up long enough for him to check down to Simas, who crossed over the middle to find so much open space.

Hansen, making his fourth start of 2009, later admitted he probably couldn't have made that read a few weeks ago.

On the next play, Hansen hit Devenny on a post pattern for a 22-yard touchdown to tie the game. The point-after gave CU the 35-34 lead.

Devenny caught the pass with one hand. In true Devenny fashion — he is very hard on himself — his first response to questions about the catch was how it redeemed him for a pass he dropped earlier. Hawkins called the catch, "unbelievable."

Devenny's score came with 2:04 to go, so Texas A&M had ample time to move into field goal position. But on a second-and-10 from the 35, CU blitzed quarterback Jerrod Johnson with Polk and B.J. Beatty, and Johnson fluttered a pass to midfield that Anthony Perkins intercepted.

The fourth and final play CU made came with 34 seconds left, when CU had to punt. Special teams coach Kent Riddle had already seen his group allow a 99-yard kickoff return for a touchdown. The last thing he wanted was another big special teams blunder that might cost CU the game.

So Riddle told punter Matt DiLallo to use a one-step approach, and just get it in the air and take a block out of the equation. Riddle also noted A&M's punt returners had looked a little shaky all day long fielding punts, so just get it in the air, and get it covered.

DiLallo punted it short and Terrence Frederick fumbled it as he ran up and tried to catch it. CU recovered to seal it.

"We had a bunch of guys down there and that probably helps," Riddle said.

While it wasn't pretty, it was a win for a beleaguered program that needs all the positives it can find. CU's defense held A&M to 374 yards — it had topped 500 its past two games. The Buffs gained 437 yards, their most in Big 12 play, despite allowing another eight sacks for minus-60.

Hansen and Simas looked like they evolved as the game passed. CU's start wasn't fast, but it was nothing like the horrible beginnings it has striven to fix.

Col—Stewart 11 run (Simas pass from Hansen), 1:19.

Fourth Quarter

TAM—Michael 6 run (Bullock kick), 14:22.

TAM—FG Bullock 47, 11:01.

Col—Sumler 7 run (Goodman kick), 7:14.

TAM—FG Bullock 20, 3:59.

Col—Devenny 22 pass from Hansen (Goodman kick), 2:04.

A—47,227.

TAMCU

First downs

20 24

Rushes-yards

34-132 43-166

Passing

242 271

Comp-Att-Int

20-36-1 21-32-1

Return Yards

17 0

Punts-Avg.

3-37.7 5-37.8

Fumbles-Lost

2-1 3-0

Penalties-Yards

3-18 10-94

Time of Possession

24:40 35:20

Rodney Stewart ran for 118 yards and two touchdowns. And the young program that's needed to make some big plays finally did.

Next week could douse CU's hopes. But in a 2009 that's been nothing short of strange, Saturday's results were encouraging.

"They have tremendous resolve, they really do," Hawkins said. "I think that's a great thing about them. They continue to believe."

[Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog](#). He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Texas A&M, Michael 16-74, Gray 11-41, J.Johnson 5-9, Nwachukwu 1-6, J.McCoy 1-2. Colorado, Stewart 20-118, Hansen 20-45, Sumler 1-7, Team 2-(minus 4).

PASSING—Texas A&M, J.Johnson 20-36-1-242. Colorado, Hansen 21-32-1-271.

RECEIVING—Texas A&M, Tannehill 9-100, Swope 3-39, Fuller 3-37, Nwachukwu 2-37, McNeal 1-19, J.McCoy 1-8, Gray 1-2. Colorado, Simas 7-135, McKnight 4-66, Sumler 3-10, Geer 2-25, Devenny 1-22, Jefferson 1-7, Simmons 1-3, Stewart 1-3, Ebner 1-0.

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Longmont, Colorado
Thursday, December 24,
2009

Publish Date: 11/8/2009

Buffs offense feasts on Aggies

By Patrick Ridgell
© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Colorado got a glimpse of the future offense it craves during Saturday's 35-34 defeat of Texas A&M. Sometimes, it was something to behold.

Despite allowing eight sacks for the second week in a row, the Buffs gained 437 yards, their most since 451 at Toledo on Sept. 11. Sophomore Rodney Stewart ran for 118 yards and two touchdowns. Sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen was elusive and sophomore receiver Markques Simas had his first big game in a CU uniform.

Remember, Texas A&M entered allowing more points and yards than any other Big 12 defense. But the Buffs showed improvement on offense Saturday.

"It was the first game Tyler played where he really looked to me that he was in a groove, and Markques the same thing," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "We know Markques is a really good player."

Simas' day included seven catches for 135 yards, including a 45-yard reception on third-and-16 during CU's game-winning touchdown drive in the final moments. He also caught a two-point conversion.

Simas' total yards were the most by a Buff since Oct. 4, 2004, when Derek McCoy and D.J. Hackett totaled 171 and 143 against Baylor. It was the sixth highest total for a Buff receiver this decade.

"I feel real good about it," Simas said. "I feel like I've had that in me the whole time, and now I had a chance to show it. I was able to give everyone a taste of what's to come."

The third-year sophomore has played in only seven games in his career. He redshirted in 2007 and was academically ineligible in 2008. He was suspended the first two games of 2009.

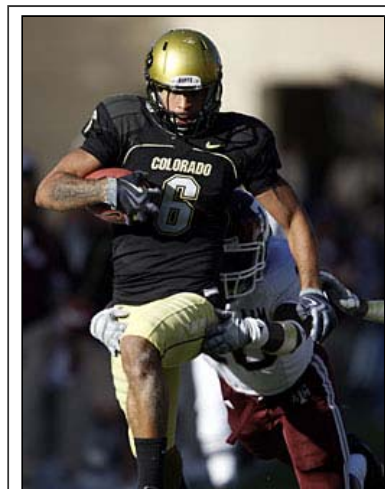
CU receiver Scotty McKnight said Simas runs great routes and has big hands.

"We got playmakers on this team," McKnight said. "If we can get the time and keep developing that chemistry, we're going to be a good offense for what's left of the season and the future."

Said Hansen of Simas: "He's always making plays. We always knew he'd be something special. It's just going to take him a little longer than expected. Now everyone sees that Markques is the guy; Markques is a stud."

Hawkins lauded Hansen's scrambling, which prevented Texas A&M from recording more than just eight sacks. Von Miller, who entered leading the nation with 13 1/2, had two more.

"He's a man's man," Hawkins said about Hansen.



Colorado wide receiver Markques Simas is tackled by Texas A&M linebacker Sean Porter after gaining a first down Saturday. **Jack Dempsey/AP**

“Without Tyler’s ability to run early on in the game, we would have struggled.”

Hansen finished with 271 passing yards and a touchdown on 21-for-32 passing. He finished with 45 net rushing yards, but that includes 60 yards in losses due to the sacks.

“Hopefully they continue to practice and get on the same page and, like I said, just because we had a good game today ... we have to understand it has to be a week-to-week operation,” offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said.

“They have to continue to get better and add some consistency and continue to thrive here and continue the season on an uphill trend.”

[Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog.](#) He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

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Longmont, Colorado
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2009

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Givens returns to CU offensive line

By Patrick Ridgell
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BOULDER — Right tackle Bryce Givens made his first appearance on Colorado's offensive line Saturday since the Big 12 opener Oct. 10 at Texas. It didn't start well, but it ended fine.

Givens entered in the second quarter. He was called for holding, which canceled an 8-yard run by Tyler Hansen. Givens was poked in the eye and cut his face on the same series and left, but he returned and played the entire second half. CU scored 25 points in the second half, more than it has scored in six games this year.

A redshirt freshman, Givens has been out for what CU has called "personal reasons." He declined to expand on that, but he said he thought Saturday might be a return to where he was at the beginning of the season. He started four of the first five games.

"We'll have to evaluate the film and see ... how it goes, but I think there's definitely a possibility," Givens said.

Safety Ray Polk limped off the field after the game and wore a boot on his foot when he left the locker room. Polk said he broke his foot on Friday moving furniture. He played much of the game, recording five tackles.

CU did not list Polk on its post-game injury report.

By playing through the injury, Polk earned some admiration from at least one teammate.

"He was man enough to say, 'Hey I broke my foot, but I'm still going to play, though,'" safety Ben Burney said. "I was proud to see him. He was hobbling around and he looked real distraught and despondent, but then he was like, 'You know what, I'm playing; I'll do whatever I have to do.'"

Burney said adrenaline enabled Polk to last the whole game. He was rushing Texas A&M quarterback Jerrod Johnson when Johnson threw an interception to end the Aggies' final drive.

SPECIAL TEAMS: CU's special teams had an interesting day.

The Buffs allowed Texas A&M's Cryus Gray to return a kick 99 yards for a touchdown. It was their first touchdown allowed on a kickoff return since Florida State's Michael Garvin last September.

Meanwhile, CU kicker Aric Goodman went 2-for-2 on field goals to improve to 9-for-13 in 2009. He's made five field goals in a row. He also hit the go-ahead extra point with 2 minutes, 4 seconds to play.

The Buffs punt unit also forced the game-sealing turnover when Texas A&M's Terrence Frederick fumbled a punt in the final seconds and CU recovered it.

Special teams coach Kent Riddle said CU didn't win some one-on-one matchups it had been winning on kickoff coverage in recent weeks. Riddle said that factor, combined with CU using different players, due to injuries, to cover kicks and A&M's athleticism, led to Gray's return.

“We’ve been battling attrition,” Riddle said.

EXTRA POINTS: CU reported the attendance at 47,227. Athletic director Mike Bohn said 2,500 tickets were sold for the game over the previous week. ... CU linebacker coach Brian Cabral wore his trademark lava lava for the game, his 300th (254th as a coach, 46 as a player) with the program. ... CU had four plays of 30 yards or more; it entered with seven in 2009. ... Rodney Stewart now has 1,210 rushing career yards; good for fifth all-time for a sophomore at CU. ... Scotty McKnight extended his reception streak to 33 straight games with at least one. ... Texas A&M went 6-for-9 on third down conversions in the first half, 0-for-5 in the second.

Read Patrick Ridgell’s CU sports blog. He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

CESSNA: Aggies can't figure out Boulder

By ROBERT CESSNA

robert.cessna@theeagle.com

Published Sunday, November 08, 2009 12:05 AM

BOULDER, Colo. -- Maybe it was the high altitude.

The Texas A&M football team had a chance Saturday to continue building momentum, become bowl-eligible and put itself in position for a pretty nice season. All the Aggies had to do was beat Colorado.

But what A&M never seems to do is win a big game in Colorado, and this was no different, except it was much more painful.

The last time A&M came to Boulder, a very talented CU team en route to the Fiesta Bowl scored the game's first 21 points and the game was never close. This time, until the final minutes, the Aggies trailed only once -- and that was only for the 14 seconds it took Cyrus Gray to return a kickoff for a touchdown.

Gray's electrifying run quieted the crowd of 47,227 who seemed giddy after their 2-6 team took a 14-10 lead.

Nothing went Colorado's way the rest of the first half as the Buffaloes could muster only 11 yards on 10 plays. The Aggies extended their lead to 21-10, but they failed to put the game away. The Buffs hung around and so did their fans -- even those wearing sky blue to protest how poorly their team is being coached.

A&M's last big hiccup was settling for a field goal with 3:07 left that made it 34-28. Naysayers in chat rooms immediately typed "28 + 7 = a 35-34 CU victory".

They were right, but how it came about will take some time to get over.

Colorado was immediately hit with a delay of game. Penalties had killed the Buffs all day, including two fruitless drives that started with flags. A&M's Von Miller then sacked CU quarterback Tyler Hansen -- one of eight sacks for the Aggies. A 9-yard shovel pass left the Buffs facing third-and-16.

Third-and-16. Not only did the Buffs pick it up, they made it look easy.

Colorado's Markques Sims had a 45-yard catch and run. He was so open he could have fair caught it. He covered up the football running down the sideline and absorbed a jarring tackle by hustling freshman Sean Porter.

You talk about a busted play. Sims had caught six passes for 90 yards. If there was one guy A&M needed to cover, it was Sims.

"When you can't get off the field on third-and-16, there's something wrong right there," A&M head coach Mike Sherman said.

You just knew Colorado was going to score, and it did on the next play.

Backup tight end Patrick Devenny made a dandy 22-yard catch, reaching out with one hand to bring in his 10th grab of the season.

A&M had plenty of time to answer -- 2:04 and two timeouts -- and just needed a field goal. A&M had scored 19 times this season in less time than that -- and twice in this game.

But this was different, much different. The game was hanging in the balance.

Colorado's defense sealed the victory on Anthony Perkins' interception. Buffs linebacker B.J. Beatty pressured A&M quarterback Jerrod Johnson into a poor throw. Johnson had looked shaky on the series with two incompletions sandwiched around a clutch 15-yard catch by Tannehill.

Johnson certainly didn't lose the game, but neither did he win it. That also goes for just about everyone else on the team. There was a lot of good, but not enough, so everyone will accent the bad.

"There were numerous things in the game [where] we had a chance," Sherman said. "Instead of kicking the field goal, we might have been able to score a touchdown. On the goal line [early in the game when A&M was stopped at the 1-yard line], we didn't get that. [We] missed a field goal, dropped a punt; there were different things in the ballgame, as well as tackling the quarterback."

Hansen looked like a Heisman Trophy candidate to the Aggies.

He completed 21 of 32 passes for 271 yards and added 45 yards net rushing, which was impressive considering he lost 60 yards in sacks.

"We know that he is a baller," Colorado head coach Dan Hawkins said. "I said this before, he is a man's man."

The hard-nosed sophomore helped put a big hold on A&M's climb up the Big 12 ladder of success.

A&M finished 1-2 against the North with the lone victory over Iowa State, which was missing its starting quarterback. A&M will always have that big victory at Texas Tech, but it will need more for this to be a successful season.

The Aggies (5-4, 2-3) can still become bowl-eligible, but that's probably not going to be next week at Oklahoma. A&M also needs to get that accomplished before playing Texas on Thanksgiving.

So that means the Baylor game Nov. 21 at Kyle Field is just as huge as everyone thought before the season started.

The reeling Bears, like the Buffs, picked themselves up Saturday. Baylor rallied for a 40-32 victory at Missouri behind freshman quarterback Nick Florence, who threw for a school-record 427 yards. Baylor (4-5, 1-4) is back in the bowl picture and only one game back of the Aggies.

The good news is that A&M almost always beats Baylor at Kyle Field, which is about 5,000 feet below where the Aggies played Saturday.

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COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Aggies stunned by Colorado

By [Randy Riggs](#)

AMERICAN-STATESMAN STAFF

Sunday, November 08, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — For the past two weeks and three quarters of Saturday's game, Texas A&M had all the answers.

But the Aggies walked out of Folsom Field after a crushing 35-34 loss to Colorado with nothing but questions — especially on the defensive side of the ball.

A&M's quest for bowl eligibility was thwarted basically because its defense could not contain the worst offense in the Big 12. The Buffaloes executed several Houdini-like escapes on third down, none bigger than on their game-winning drive in the final minutes.

Colorado, which trailed 31-21 in the last eight minutes, began its clinching drive mired in a deep hole.

A delay penalty and Von Miller's second sack burdened quarterback Tyler Hansen with a second-and-25 from his 24-yard line. After a 9-yard shovel pass, CU still needed to convert a third-and-16 monstrosity.

Hansen answered by drilling an equally monstrous 45-yard strike to Markques Simas. On the next play, Hansen found tight end Patrick Devenny for the 22-yard scoring play that puts A&M in the unenviable position of trying for a bowl-qualifying sixth victory this Saturday at Oklahoma.

Free safety Jordan Pugh said the 45-yarder to Simas came against a busted coverage.

"It's something we run all the time, but they made the play," said Pugh. "I'll take the responsibility for that one, me being the senior and knowing the coverages."

But A&M (5-4 overall, 2-3 Big 12) let Colorado off the hook numerous other times. On their various scoring drives, the Buffs converted third downs when they needed 6, 7, 13 and 16 yards. For the day, they converted eight of 16 third-down attempts.

"We've been a better third-down team on defense than we were today," understated A&M coach Mike Sherman. "Certainly when you can't get off the field on third and 16, there's something wrong right there."

What was wrong was that A&M's defense surrendered 35 points to a CU team averaging a Big 12-low 21.8 coming in. The Buffs, also last in the league with 286.1 yards of total offense a game, gouged the Aggies for 437. That was most in a Big 12 game and second-highest total overall for the Buffs (3-6 overall, 2-3 Big 12) this season.

"You can put it on me," said Miller, whose two sacks gives him an NCAA-high 15.5 for the year. "I missed three sacks. If I'd gotten those, the result could have been different."

The Aggies squandered double-digit leads twice in the second half. That, said receiver Ryan Tannehill, made the outcome "definitely frustrating."

Added quarterback Jerrod Johnson: "We never thought we had the game in the bag. That was a tough one. We just didn't make the plays we had to at the end, and they did."

After CU's late go-ahead touchdown, A&M still had two minutes to retake the lead. But Johnson, who completed 20 of 36 passes for 242 yards, underthrew a pass for Jamie McCoy in the face of a heavy rush that was intercepted with 90 seconds left.

"They sent one more guy than we could pick up and I got hit as I was throwing it," Johnson said. "It's just one of those things."

The Aggies has one last gasp after forcing a three-and-out and a CU punt with 34 seconds left. But backup returner Terrence Frederick, filling in for Dustin Harris after Harris sprained his right ankle earlier, muffed the punt on the run and Colorado recovered to kill the clock.

"We could never really put the closer on them," Sherman said. "There were numerous times when we had a chance."

Indeed, A&M led 21-10 at halftime, and it could have been more.

On the Aggies' first possession, they had a first-and-goal at the CU 10. But on third and fourth downs from the 1, Johnson was stopped for no gain.

"You can't leave points on the board and that's what happened," Johnson said.

A&M, though, didn't squander other red-zone forays in building its 11-point lead at the break.

After A&M scored first on a 1-yard pass to Fuller, Colorado wrestled the momentum away with a 37-yard field goal and subsequent 13-yard run by Rodney Stewart to build a 10-7 lead.

But Cyrus Gray's 99-yard return switched the momentum back to A&M.

The Aggies, though, couldn't hold it, and couldn't answer when they absolutely had to. Now the big question: Can they do it at OU, or is their only realistic hope for bowl eligibility at home against Baylor on Nov. 21?

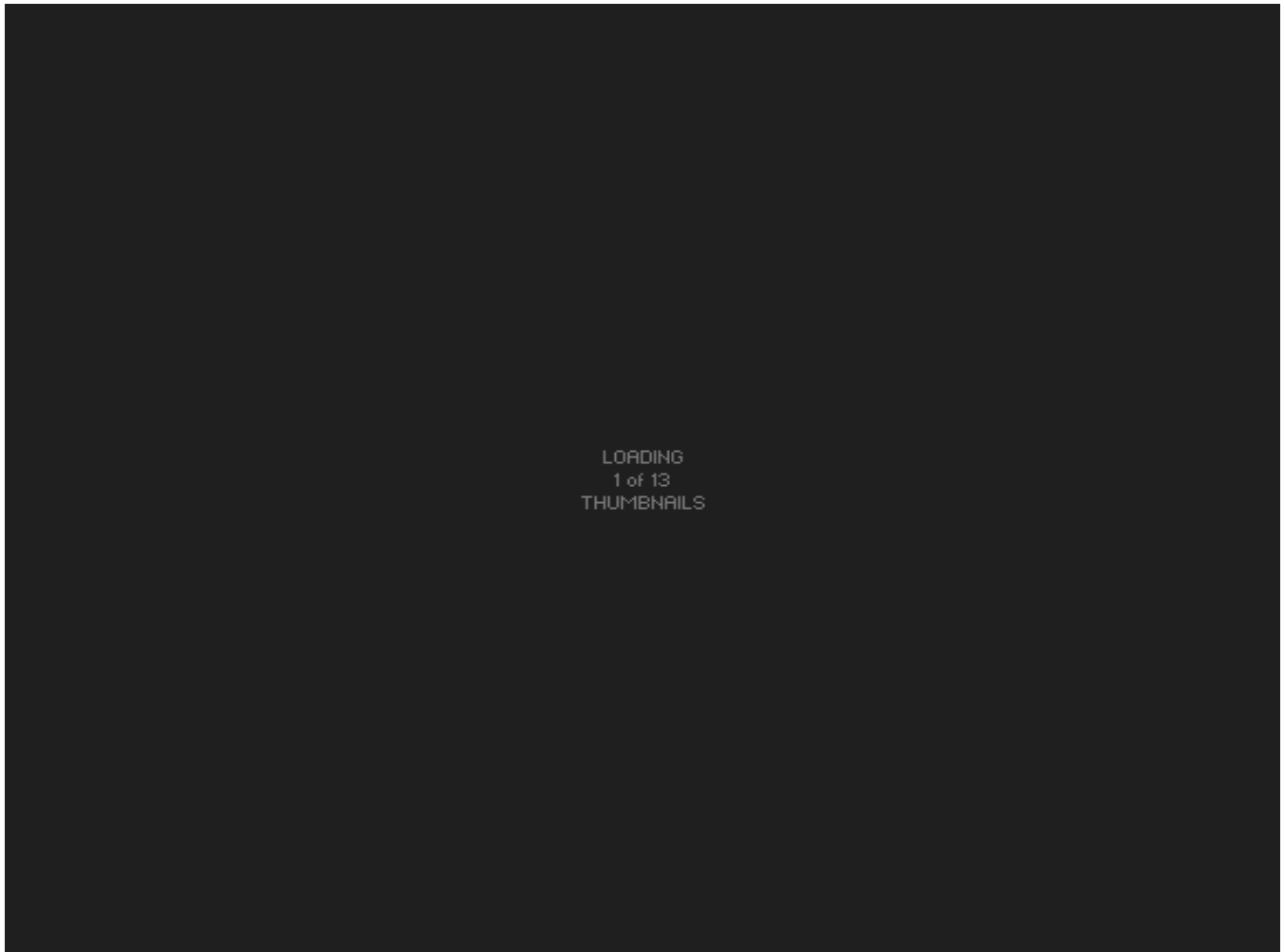
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CU's postseason hopes still alive

Bufs escape with one-point victory over Aggies

By Alex K.W. Schultz on November 7, 2009



The vultures were hovering above the Colorado Buffaloes football team, but thanks to a late scoring drive and a defensive stand, the Buffs shooed the death birds away – at least for now.

CU kept its postseason hopes alive with a dramatic 35-34 victory over the Texas A&M Aggies on Saturday at Folsom Field before a crowd of 47,227.

The Buffs still need to win their last three contests – two of which are on the road – to be bowl-eligible.

"It could have been easy to throw in the towel," senior tight end Patrick Devenny said. "That's probably what the whole state of Colorado expected us to do, but that's not who we are."

Facing a third-and-16 on its own 33-yard line and trailing by six points late in the game, CU (3-6, 2-3 Big 12 Conference) sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen found sophomore wide receiver Markques Simas wide open for a 45-yard gain to TAMU's 22.

"Markques was my second read on that play," Hansen said. "He was wide open, so I just had to get him the ball."

Devenny's one-handed grab from Hansen in the end zone on the next play sent Folsom Field into an uproar. Junior kicker Aric Goodman's extra-point pushed the Buffs ahead 35-34 with two minutes and four seconds remaining in the game.

Four plays later, TAMU (5-4, 2-3) junior quarterback Jerrod Johnson was intercepted by sophomore safety Anthony Perkins.

"We're all fighters," Perkins said. "No matter what anyone says, we're going to keep working, and it paid off today."

The Aggies forced CU into a punting situation with 34 ticks on the clock, but Buffs senior Marcus Burton pounced on sophomore Terrence Frederick's muffed punt to ice the win.

"They have tremendous resolve," Buffs head coach Dan Hawkins said of his players. "They really do. They continue to believe."

One player who might have believed the season wasn't over was Simas. He caught seven passes for 135 yards – both career-highs.

"We know that Markques is a really good player," Hawkins said. "I think that he needed a few games to really find his groove."

Buffs sophomore running back Rodney Stewart carried the ball 20 times for a game-high 118 yards rushing with two touchdowns. Stewart, if he hasn't already, will carry more of the load as the team will be without sophomore running back Darrell Scott for the rest of the season after Scott decided on Tuesday to quit the team. Scott said he plans to transfer to UCLA at the end of the semester.

Hansen said Scott's departure provided additional motivation.

"If a guy is a brother on your team and he leaves, it motivates you more and makes you want to win more," Hansen said.

Hansen was 21-of-32 passing for 271 yards. He netted 45 yards on the ground but like last weekend against the Missouri Tigers, he was sacked eight times.

CU's win was certainly a game of momentum. Every time the Buffs appeared to have seized the momentum, TAMU stole it right back.

Stewart bounced outside and scored from 11 yards out, and Hansen fired a bullet to Simas for the two-point conversion to knot the score at 21-21 with 1:19 remaining in the third quarter.

Aggies freshman running back Christine Michael hushed the crowd with a 6-yard scoring run to cap an 85-yard march and give Texas A&M the seven-point lead. Hansen was picked off by senior safety Jordan Pugh on the Buffs' ensuing drive, and sophomore kicker Randy Bullock booted a 47-yarder to grant TAMU a 31-21 lead with 11:01 to go.

"We just said, 'Your backs are against the wall. You have to win,'" Hawkins said.

CU responded.

On third-and-13 of the next drive, Hansen hooked up with Simas, who managed to lean forward just past the first-down marker.

Two plays later, Sumler plowed up the middle and found the end zone to slash the Aggies' lead to 31-28 with 7:14 to go.

TAMU could've put the Buffs away for good, but its next drive stalled at CU's 3 and the Aggies settled for Bullock's 20-yard field goal.

"We needed a win to get the confidence back up," Hansen said. "It was good coming back in the fourth quarter against a good football team. Texas A&M is no slouch. To get a win is huge right now."

The Buffs dodged an early bullet as TAMU, on its first possession of the game, opted to go for a touchdown on fourth-and-goal from CU's 1 instead of attempting the field goal.

Johnson tucked behind his offensive line, but seniors Ben Burney and Marcus Burton combined to stand-up Johnson and keep him out of the end zone. Later in the first quarter, Johnson hit sophomore wide receiver Jeff Fuller for a 1-yard score to give the Aggies a 7-0 lead.

Trailing 7-3, Stewart polished off a 69-yard drive with a hard-earned 13-yard touchdown run around the right side to give CU a 10-7 lead with 9:11 to play in the second.

The Buffs' momentum was sucked away in 14 seconds as sophomore Cyrus Gray returned Goodman's kickoff 99 yards to the house.

Texas A&M grinded out a 10-play, 56-yard scoring drive in 2:41 to nab a 21-10 lead before the half. Johnson, on a quarterback keeper, weaved through CU's defense and squirted across the plane of the goal line from 3-yards out.

Goodman tacked on a 37-yard field goal to pull the Buffs' within eight midway through the third.

CU travels to Ames, Iowa to take on the Iowa State Cyclones (5-5, 2-4) at noon next Saturday.

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

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Re-Buffered: Colorado denies Aggies, 35-34

06:26 PM CST on Saturday, November 7, 2009

Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. – The fans were protesting by wearing powder blue and booing, the Colorado Buffaloes were reeling and Tyler Hansen's head had to be spinning.

He had just been sacked for the seventh time and was about to go down again when he got off a shovel pass in the nick of time to tailback Demetrius Sumler, bringing up third-and-16 from his own 33 with the Buffs trailing by six and time running out.

It was the start of a frenetic and fantastic finish for the Buffaloes as Hansen overcame his second-straight eight-sack game to lead Colorado to a 35-34 win over the Texas A&M Aggies on Saturday.

On third-and-long, Hansen hit Markques Simas for 45 yards, then threw a strike to tight end Patrick Devenny, whose one-handed grab in the end zone from 22 yards out tied it. Aric Goodman's conversion sailed through to put the Buffaloes ahead by a point with 2:04 left.

After defensive back Anthony Perkins picked off Jerrod Johnson's pass at midfield, the Aggies forced a punt. But backup Terrence Frederick, who replaced regular returner Dustin Harris (ankle), bungled it and Buffs linebacker Marcus Burton recovered with 23 seconds left.

"At first, I'm thinking I'm going to lay him out and then he muffed it. Then there were three guys who (touched) the ball, too, so I'm just like, 'I want to grab it,'" Burton said. "I knew the game was ours, take a knee, get the 'dub,' come into the locker room and sing the fight song."

Simas had a breakout performance, catching seven passes for 135 yards and Rodney Stewart ran 20 times for 118 yards and two touchdowns for Colorado (3-6, 2-3 Big 12), which held twice near the goal line.

The first time came on the Aggies' first drive of the game, when they failed to punch it in twice from inside the 1. That factored into coach Mike Sherman's thinking when he sent out the field goal unit on fourth-and-goal from the 3 in the closing minutes and his team up by three points.

The 20-yard kick by Randy Bullock made it 34-28 and the Buffs got the ball back with 3:53 remaining.

The Aggies (5-4, 2-3) looked like they were about to become bowl eligible when Cyrus Gray, whose 99-yard touchdown on a kickoff return helped them take a 21-10 halftime lead, returned a kickoff 45 yards to midfield in the fourth quarter. Tack on 15 more for a late hit, and the Aggies started their drive at the Colorado 40-yard line.

But they stalled at the 3 and Bullock's field goal left the Buffaloes within striking distance with four minutes left. That was plenty for Hansen, who threw for 271 yards and ran for 45 more. His running yards would have been higher, but he lost 60 yards in sacks.

"He took some shots out there today and got dinged up and still made some plays," Buffs coach Dan Hawkins said. "Without Tyler's ability to run, especially early on, we would have been in trouble."

And if not for his strong right arm and sudden elusiveness, they would have been in danger late.

"You can see that he's a fighter, the way he kept making things happen," said Aggies safety Jordan Pugh, whose interception led to a field goal that gave Texas A&M a 10-point lead with 11 minutes left. "He willed their team to that win."

Despite being on his backside for much of the afternoon.

"He's a slippery guy," insisted NCAA sacks leader Von Miller, who had two of Texas A&M's season-high eight sacks, giving him 151/2. "He's a pretty good guy, slippery guy that took control of the game and won it for them."

The Buffaloes had been reeling with Hawkins on the cusp of his fourth-straight losing season and the departure during the week of sophomore tailback Darrell Scott, his prized recruit.

"He's a great guy," Hansen said, "but it motivated us to prove people wrong. We're OK as a program."

Some fans in the student sections at Folsom Field wore powder blue instead of gold protest of the program's slide into mediocrity. It was the color the team wore from 1981-84 when they went 10-34 overall during one of the worst stretches in school history.

But those same fans were among those who stormed the field afterward, making the scrum look very much like the ones Scott hopes to see at UCLA down the road.

"Like I said before the game," Hawkins said, "the real Buffs are wearing black and gold."

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Buffaloes win thriller against Aggies, 35-34

By [Kyle Clark](#) on November 7, 2009 · [Comment](#) ·  [Email This](#) · [ShareThis](#)



Colorado's Rodney Stewart (5) maneuvers around Texas A&M's Trent Hunter (1) at Folsom Field on Saturday. (Daily Camera photo)

BOULDER — The Colorado Buffaloes defined resilient today, surviving another eight sacks, a 99-yard kickoff return for a touchdown and an 11-point deficit to win a thrilling game against Texas A&M, 35-34.

“They have tremendous resolve, they really do,” said coach Dan Hawkins of his team. “I think that’s a great thing about them that they continue to believe.”

The final two minutes of the game were about as exciting as you could hope for in football. Down 28-34, Colorado drove 61 yards in four plays to gain the lead, scoring on a 22-yard pass to Patrick Devenny. The tight end caught the ball diving through the air, grabbing it one-handed and tucking it in just in time as he crossed the goal line with a defender draped over his shoulders.

“That was spectacular. We talk to these guys a lot about making their layups, and then somebody along the way has got to make a spectacular play,” Hawkins said. “Obviously, Pat’s catch, I don’t want to say it’s unbelievable. If you’re around him and watch him practice, he made a catch like that the other day.”

“It’s definitely got to be No. 1” in his career, Devenny said. “Whenever I get in there, I’ve got to try and make a play. I know that’s what they’re counting on me to do, and it really hasn’t set in yet, but it’s definitely got to be No. 1.” Immediately after, quarterback Tyler Hansen chimed in, “For me too.”

After the big play, Colorado needed to stop an offense that previously had no problem getting down the field. A&M had driven within CU’s 11-yard line five times throughout the game. This drive, however, would end when Anthony Perkins intercepted Jerrod Johnson’s pass with 1:30 remaining.

The Buffs couldn’t quite run out the clock against two A&M timeouts and had to give the ball back one last time. Fans held their breath but exploded in cheers as Aggies returner Terrence Frederick muffed the punt and CU linebacker Marcus Burton fell on the ball, sealing the victory.

Through the entire game, Colorado looked ready to fall too far behind, but on each occasion it came up with a way to stay in range. The biggest blow to CU’s momentum came after its first lead. The Buffs went up 10-7 in the second quarter when running back Rodney Stewart scored on a 13-yard run, but 14 seconds and a 99-yard kickoff return later, Texas A&M was back on top. The Aggies added to that, scoring another touchdown on a 3-yard keeper from Johnson to lead 21-10 right before the break.

But Colorado made the necessary adjustments on defense and held A&M to only one touchdown in the second half. The Aggies continued moving into CU territory but could muster only three field goal attempts late, two of which they converted.

The biggest changes CU saw came from its offense, with several players having breakout performances. Tyler Hansen looked as confident as he’s been all year in the win. Despite being put on his back nearly every play, the quarterback wriggled his way out of several sure deep losses to rack up 45 net rushing yards. Hansen was also effective through the air, going 21-of-32 for 271 yards, a touchdown and only one interception.

Stewart had fans thinking “Scott who?” with his rushing day. The back gained 118 yards on 20 carries, one of his best per-carry averages. On a third-and-15, Stewart caught A&M looking and ran 30 yards up the middle, his longest of the game. “Speedy” also scored two of Colorado’s three rushing touchdowns.

The most encouraging output for the offense came from Markques Simas, who finally had his coming-out party after two years of hype. The receiver caught seven passes for 135 yards, and most of them came in critical situations. A 47-yard bomb to Simas set up the go-ahead touchdown in the second quarter, and later Simas caught a third-down pass just past the marker on the winning drive.

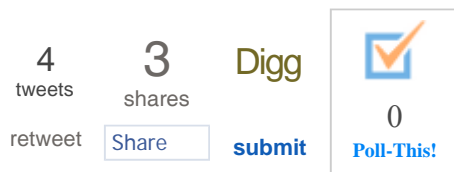
“I feel like I’ve had that in me the whole time,” the wideout said, “and now I’ve had a chance to show it. I was able to give everyone a taste of what’s to come.”

But those weren’t even his best contributions. No, his best was in the end zone to convert a 2-point try and tie the game at 21-21 in the third. “I told Tyler Hansen right before, ‘I got it.’ Then I found the hole and I got it,” Simas said.

With such an emotional win, coaches and players were very confident after the game. Hawkins was as friendly as he’s ever been and was still willing to talk about the big picture. “We just said your backs can’t get any closer to the wall, and if you want to go to a bowl game you have to win out,” Hawkins said. “That’s the way it is. It’s like March Madness.”

Stewart was even more direct, calling out the next opponent, Iowa State. “I think we’re going to win our next game,” he said, very matter-of-factly.

Editor’s note: Comments have been turned off on football stories involving CU to meet the university’s requirement for giving media credentials to Web site reporters and photographers.



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Failed stops haunt Aggies against Colorado

[By Brent Zwerneman](#)- Express-News

BOULDER, Colo. — Texas A&M will play on television in at least two of its final three regular-season games. Based on a recurring theme to a topsy-turvy season, the Aggies should try and pull the plug on the tube.

Simply, they tend to falter at any sign of prosperity — and especially on TV. Take Saturday. On a crystal-clear afternoon, the Aggies blew a 10-point fourth-quarter lead, as Colorado shocked A&M 35-34 before 47,227 fans in Folsom Field.

The Aggies also blew a chance to win three consecutive Big 12 games and the opportunity to become eligible for a bowl. Both would've been firsts under second-year coach Mike Sherman.

“We allowed big plays,” pass rusher Von Miller said, “at the wrong times.”

The Aggies (5-4, 2-3 Big 12), who've lost all of their televised games this season while winning all of their untelevised games, offered the unpredictable Buffaloes (3-6, 2-3) plenty of escape routes. But none wider than on third-and-16 from the Colorado 33-yard line with a little more than two minutes remaining in the game.

CU quarterback Tyler Hansen, whom Miller had sacked two plays earlier, found a wide-open Markques Simas on a crossing pattern that gained 45 yards and stunned the Aggies, who led 34-28 at the time.

A play later, Hansen connected with tight end Patrick Devenny across the middle for a 22-yard touchdown, in lifting CU to its first second-half lead with 2:04 remaining.

“It was just busted coverage,” A&M safety Jordan Pugh said of what went wrong on the third-and-16 play. “I’ll take responsibility for that one.”

Miller, who had two sacks and leads the nation with 151/2, said he was as much to blame for the Aggies' overall collapse.

“What it boils down to is we just couldn't make the big plays to get off the field on third downs,” Miller said. “You can put it on me. I missed on three sacks. I could have had five.”

There was plenty of blame to spread around, however, after the startling defeat. Following CU's final score, an off-balanced A&M quarterback Jerrod Johnson threw an interception to safety Anthony Perkins on a short pass over the middle.

“They just (brought) one more guy than we could pick up,” Johnson said of the Buffaloes' pressure. “I got hit when I was throwing it. I didn't get enough air under the ball, and he made a great play.”

A desperate Aggies defense quickly forced a three-and-out, and A&M had a final chance to pull out a victory. But Terrence Frederick, filling in for an injured Dustin Harris, fumbled the punt, and CU recovered with 23 seconds remaining.

“We really had a lot of confidence we'd have a shot at the end zone or at least a field goal,” Sherman said. “We had our plays ready to go, but we didn't get the opportunity. That's not a good thing.”

Neither was the failed stop on third-and-16.

“Certainly when you can't get off the field on third-and-16, there's something wrong,” Sherman said. “We've really got to look at that and get it fixed.”

The Aggies won't have long to do so. They play at Oklahoma next weekend and close out their regular season at home against Baylor and rival Texas.

“I told them, ‘You've got 24 hours to sulk over this thing and feel bad for yourselves and get mad at the world, but you've got to come back to work on Monday and get ready for the next one,’” Sherman said. “We can't hang on to this.”

Meanwhile, the maligned Buffaloes, who overcame eight sacks by the Aggies, snapped a two-game losing streak.

“We just said, ‘Your backs can't get any closer to the wall,’” CU coach Dan Hawkins said. “That if you want to go to a bowl game, you have to win out.”

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