

# CU Buffs' QB Hansen: 'Bring it on'

## Tyler Hansen ready for his chance as starter

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

Posted: 10/11/2009 11:36:24 PM MDT

One week ago tonight, Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen called home to California to talk about his future and football with his father, Rick.

Coaches had presented Hansen with the possibility of pulling his redshirt for the second consecutive season if the offense continued to struggle under junior Cody Hawkins. The younger Hansen was already leaning toward taking advantage of the opportunity to play, but once he spoke with his dad, the decision was basically made.

CU coaches turned to Hansen midway through the second half of a loss at No. 2 Texas on Saturday after Hawkins threw a pair of interceptions. After the game, coaches made it clear Hansen is their man for the rest of the season, barring an injury or something unusual.

Rick Hansen, a former starting quarterback at San Diego State (1978-1982) and longtime high school football coach in Southern California, is the voice Tyler Hansen hears in the back of his head when it comes to making almost every decision with which he is faced, on or off the football field. He told his son to seize the opportunity if coaches gave him the chance to play because the future is always uncertain.

"He's been around football enough to know that when you get an opportunity to play, especially against Texas or some other team like that, you take it," Hansen said. "That was the biggest thing. Once he said that, I was pretty sure I was going to go through with it."

Hansen completed three of five passes against the Longhorns in a game that had become lopsided by the time he entered.

The timing is appropriate for Colorado's change at quarterback. The Buffs play host to Kansas this week. It was three years ago in the second half of a game at Lawrence, Kan., when coach Mark Mangino took the redshirt off Todd Reesing and let him loose on the Buffs.

Reesing led the Jayhawks to a come-from-behind win that day and he has directed two more victories over CU in the past two seasons. CU coach Dan Hawkins hopes Hansen can help him return the favor.

Reesing will be trying to beat Colorado for a fourth consecutive time Saturday at Folsom Field. The Jayhawks never have beaten CU in four consecutive tries. They did have a five game stretch between 1906 and 1948 in which they won four and tied one with CU before the schools began playing annually.

Hansen smiles when asked about the Jayhawks and Reesing. He played the part of Reesing last season on the scout team as the Buffs prepared to face Kansas the week before his redshirt was pulled. He wore No. 5 every day and CU coaches asked him to use his improvisational skills to mimic Reesing as well as possible during practices. It might have been those practices that led coaches to believe Hansen could help them beat Kansas State the following week.

Hansen said Reesing is one of the quarterbacks he enjoys watching most because of his ability to make something happen when the designed play breaks down around him. He said coaches praised him for how well he practiced as Reesing leading up to last year's game. Hansen said that week wasn't the first time he had imagined himself doing the things Reesing does.

"I actually love watching Todd Reesing play," Hansen said. "Whenever he makes a play, I kind of picture myself doing the play, too."

Hansen's mobility will undoubtedly bring another dimension to the Colorado offense, but it won't be by design. Offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said he foresees no changes at all being made to the offense in light of the change at quarterback. He doesn't plan to add wrinkles to take advantage of Hansen's running ability.

"With Tyler, I'm not really going to try to reduce things or change things because he doesn't have as much experience as Cody," Kiesau said. "I'm going to push him as if he were Cody and just expect him to know and do what we do at a very high level. I think he will be fine. He is ready. He has a different look to him."

During the five games in which he did play in 2008, Hansen and the CU offense often became one-dimensional, relying too much on the run.

Hansen's inexperience and limits with the playbook led to missed opportunities in the passing game. Coaches eventually turned back to Cody Hawkins because of those issues.

Kiesau admitted early in fall camp this year that he thought Hansen was still inclined to run before going through his progression and reads. He said Hansen improved dramatically in those areas in the past two months, but now he must do it in games.

"Last year I think he probably didn't have a good feeling or grasp of the offense," Kiesau said. "He would probably drop back, look for one, one-and-a-half and then leave. You know? Like, 'These guys are coming pretty fast.' But now I think he knows where two and three are and if those aren't there, then he can go. That can be an added value to it.

"I think what will help us is, when things break down, he'll be able to help us in that regard. When defenses don't have to account for a guy who can scramble and run around, it will be easier on them. They can cover everybody. But when they have to account for a guy back there, an extra guy, it makes them maybe go to a zone or drop a d-lineman. It makes defensive coordinators think when you have a guy who can run around back there."

Hansen said he and Hawkins spoke about the change on Sunday and it was no different than many of their past conversations. They remain friends and friendly competitors who both have the best interests of the team in mind. Hansen said Hawkins was excited for him and encouraged him to make plays and have fun.

"We're both coaches' sons," Hansen said. "We both know what's going on."

Now that the change has been made, Hansen knows there will be expectations of him to take the team to a level Hawkins appeared incapable of reaching in 30 career games. But those expectations might not be fair considering the realities of the situation.

CU coaches have essentially made a young offense even younger with Hansen under center. He does have experience, but not much. He directed only 32 drives last season and was on the field for a total of 178 plays, compared with 113 drives and 638 plays for Hawkins.

Hansen has thrown for 297 yards in his career, including his modest totals against the Longhorns. He is a young quarterback with a lot to learn and plenty of bumps in the road waiting.

Hansen's father flew to Austin last week not knowing for sure whether his son would in fact play, but suspecting it. Afterward, he told Tyler to prepare as hard as he can for Kansas and every opponent the rest of the season, being sure to make the most of his opportunity. He also will have to deal with all the extraneous things that come with life as the starting quarterback, such as more attention around campus and more interviews with media.

"I'm up for the challenge," Hansen said. "This has been my dream since I was a little kid. I've always wanted to be the starting quarterback for a Big Division I team.

"Now, I'm doing it. So bring it on."

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cu football

## New CU quarterback Hansen learned of opportunity in midweek

QB was advised of his chance to play again and jumped at it

By Chris Dempsey  
The Denver Post

Posted: 10/12/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT



CU sophomore QB Tyler Hansen is sacked by Texas' Sam Acho on Saturday night. (Brian Bahr, Getty Images )

BOULDER — On a muggy Saturday night in Austin, Texas, Tyler Han-sen's future merged with his present.

But not as suddenly as it might have appeared.

The decision to insert Hansen at quarterback for Colorado had its roots in a meeting midweek before the Texas game. The subject of burning his redshirt again was broached by CU coaches, and Hansen was more than willing to listen.

"They came up to me last week and actually

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gave me a couple of days to decide," said Hansen, who will make his third career start Saturday against No. 17 Kansas. "I thought about it. I talked to the coaches about it. I talked to my high school coaches about it. It came down to . . . when you have an opportunity to play at this

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level, in this atmosphere, you take it. It came down to that, and I'm happy with it. I'm ready to get this thing rolling."

At issue in the Buffs' 1-4 start is offensive

consistency. Former starter Cody Hawkins' numbers explain the story themselves. They are equal parts good and bad.

Hawkins' nine touchdown passes are balanced out by nine interceptions. His 1,113 yards passing are dampened by a 50.7 percent completion percentage.

And there was the unpredictable nature of when scoring drives would occur. Sometimes there was nothing early, yet scoring drives late. Saturday at No. 2 Texas, the scoring drives came early — 14 points in the first two quarters and the lead at halftime — but there was nothing late.

"Our offense was a little bit stagnant," Hawkins said. "We didn't have a spark. When you're down by 10 against the No. 2 team in the country and you're at their place, you're looking for a spark to find a way to win. I put us in a bad spot (with the interception returned for a TD), because it went downhill from there."

An offensive coordinator can watch that for only so long. In this case, it was five games' worth.

"Cody had chances. I'm not blaming him, by any means," CU offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said. "I still stand by the guy. I love him like my own son; I truly mean that. But we've got to produce. And right now, Tyler stepped in and he will be our starting quarterback, and we'll take it from there."

Now, the burden of smoothing out CU's offense falls on the fleet-footed Hansen, who gives

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opposing defenses a run-pass threat but was inconsistent last season.

As a freshman, Hansen burned his redshirt for the Oct. 18 game against visiting Kansas State, alternating possessions with Hawkins. Hansen sparked Colorado's 14-13 win, throwing a touchdown pass to Scotty McKnight. But Hansen struggled in the next three games (all losses) and did not play against Oklahoma State or Nebraska. He finished 34-of-65 (52.3 percent) for 280 yards, one touchdown and four interceptions and ran for 261 yards.

On Saturday, Hansen was 3-of-5 for 17 yards and was sacked twice.

"I thought I handled it better than last year," Hansen said. "I thought I was a little more comfortable than I was. I was preparing for it all week."

And an older and wiser Hansen insists he is in a better place than he was in his freshman season, when he was learning the ropes of playing college football.

"So much better prepared," he said. "I have a year of watching film under my belt. I know the offense a lot better. Hopefully, I can move the team better too."

Staff writer Tom Kensler contributed to this report. Chris Dempsey: 303-954-1279 or [cdempsey@denverpost.com](mailto:cdempsey@denverpost.com)

## Hansen's log

*A look at how CU quarterback Tyler Hansen fared last season after pulling off his redshirt:*

Opponent	Cmp	Att	Yds	Int	TD
Kansas State	7	14	71	1	1
at Missouri	12	16	72	0	0
at Texas A&M	11	23	89	2	0
Iowa State	4	12	48	1	0
Okla. State	Did not play				
at Nebraska	Did not play				

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## CU primer: The Kansas Jayhawks

By The Denver Post

Posted: 10/12/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

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### The Jayhawks

Kansas at Colorado, 5 p.m. Saturday, FSN

**For the record:** Despite defeating Iowa State 41-36 on Saturday, the Jayhawks dropped one spot to No. 17 in the Associated Press poll.

**Streaking:** Kansas has been ranked every week by the AP, starting at No. 25 in the preseason poll. KU has been in 26 of the past 32 AP polls.

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**Who's hot:** Todd Reesing and his favorite receivers, Kerry Meier and Dezmon Briscoe, have been moving through defensive backs. They rank 1-2 in KU career receptions, Meier at 167 and Briscoe at 165. Against the Cyclones, Meier reset his school record with 16 catches, while Briscoe set the record for career receiving yards (2,420).

**Who's not:** Against the conference's last-ranked quarterback, Austen Arnaud, KU gave up 293 yards passing, and allowed another 152 yards rushing to RB Alexander Robinson. The Jayhawks are giving up 259.8 yards a game passing (108th nationally) and nearly 11 yards a completion.

**Key stat:** The Reesing show makes its final run through Boulder. Reesing ranks fifth in the country in total offense (336 per game), and getting 442 yards passing against the Cyclones gives him even more confidence coming in.

**Coachspeak:** "I think our defense as a unit really has to toughen up a little bit." — KU coach Mark Mangino, after the Iowa State game

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OCTOBER 12, 2009, 9:53 AM

## Mangino: CU QB switch presents challenge

By **TOM KENSLER** |  1 Comment

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Speaking Monday morning on the Big 12 football coaches' teleconference with the media, Mark Mangino of Kansas said Colorado's permanent change at quarterback from Cody Hawkins to Tyler Hansen presents "a small challenge" for his defense as it prepares for Saturday's 5 p.m. game in Boulder.

"You always like to prepare for a team that has had the same quarterback in there for a while," Mangino said. "(An offense) is always going to play to the strengths of the quarterback.

"I see this as a small challenge. But we can go back and look at last year. We know a little bit about Tyler Hansen, what his really strong suits are. It's a challenge, but it's not anything overwhelming."

Hansen had not yet taken off his redshirt last year when Kansas defeated Colorado 30-14 in Lawrence. But Mangino said he is looking at tapes of subsequent 2008 CU games to study Hansen.

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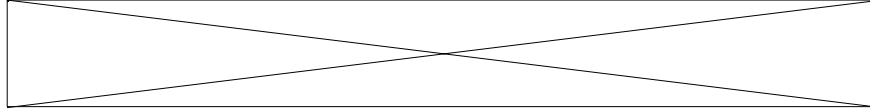
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Updated: October 11, 2009, 5:36 PM ET

## Colorado coach replaces son for season

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Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. -- Unlike last year, when coach Dan Hawkins only temporarily benched his quarterback son, the [Colorado Buffaloes](#) are set to go with [Tyler Hansen](#) for the remainder of the season.

"Tyler is our quarterback," offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said.

[Cody Hawkins](#), who had led the Buffaloes to a surprising 14-3 first-half lead over No. 2 Texas on Saturday night, was replaced by Hansen after throwing two interceptions, the first of which was returned 92 yards for a touchdown that turned the tide in the Longhorns' 38-14 win.

### Big 12 blog



ESPN.com's Tim Griffin writes about all things Big 12 in his conference [blog](#).

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After his deep pass was picked off on the next drive, Cody Hawkins was summoned to the sideline, his starting job yanked after throwing nine interceptions in five games.

"He's got to make that throw," Dan Hawkins said. "You can't turn it over in the red zone like that and you certainly can't give it up for a TD."

Hansen's redshirt was burned at midseason for the second straight year because of poor play by Cody Hawkins, a junior who joined his father in Boulder in 2006.

Only last year, the dueling quarterbacks shared the position over the last half of the season.

Not this time.

"I don't want to get in to this back-and-forth, back-and-forth packages, I want one guy and I want the team to see that," said Kiesau, who replaced Mark Helfrich this season. "And right now, Tyler's our guy."

Fans and alumni began calling for Hansen, a sophomore, during the first half of Colorado's opener when Cody Hawkins fell flat in a home loss to rival Colorado State.

"I feel good, I guess I'm getting kind of used to this happening," said Hansen, who burned his redshirt in the sixth game last year.

Kiesau approached Hansen last week to see if he would consider burning another redshirt.

"I talked to my parents about it, talked to high school coaches about it. It came down to when you have the opportunity to play at a D-I college in this atmosphere, you take it," Hansen said. "It came down to that and I'm happy with it. We need to get this thing rolling."

So, when things started falling apart in Austin on Saturday night, Dan Hawkins took the job away from his son and handed the ball to Hansen.

"He's such a trooper and we're just going to go with him," the coach said. "He's earned it. Paid his dues last year and paid his dues this year. We're going to ride with him. He will start next game."

And the one after that. And the one after that ...

"I don't want to go back-and-forth and be wishy-washy," Kiesau said.

He said the Buffs need to get behind one leader.

"I think some two-quarterback situations work. I think for what we're doing, we're going to give Tyler a chance and see if he can run with it."

That's the other thing: Hansen brings more options to the field than his slow-footed predecessor.

He ran for 261 yards in his five games last season, when he came in against Kansas State and led the Buffaloes to a 14-13 win.

Cody Hawkins said he understood the switch.

He called the 92-yard interception return by Earl Thomas "just a terrible pass," and agreed the Buffs had to do something else to try to spark their stagnant offense Saturday night.

The Buffs insisted that there was a quarterback competition throughout camp this season but in reality it was decided early on that Hawkins would be the starter and Hansen would redshirt, although they kept the pick a secret until the opener.

The choice of Hawkins was lambasted by fans and alumni alike when the Buffaloes lost at home to their in-state rivals and Dan Hawkins acknowledged he never considered benching his ineffective quarterback at halftime.

Five days later, the Buffs were blown out at Toledo. After beating Wyoming, they lost at West Virginia and then Texas, meaning they would have to win the rest of their games plus a Big 12 championship and a bowl to reach their stated goal of 10 wins.

Hansen said he has no regrets about giving up his redshirt and doesn't look back and wonder what might have been had he won the job in August.

"It's always a little frustrating. You can say, 'Well, maybe if I would have played those first couple of games, maybe we would have won some.' Cody had a good camp and performed well, they made a good decision. Their plan to redshirt me was the right decision at that time," Hansen suggested.

He'll get his first start next week at home against No. 17 Kansas.

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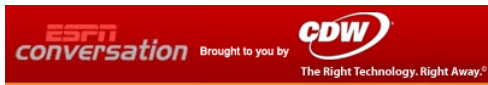
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Longmont, Colorado  
Thursday, October 29,  
2009

Publish Date: 10/12/2009

## Hansen will stay at helm, says CU

Sophomore QB saw limited playing time when called up in '08

*By Patrick Ridgell*

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AUSTIN, Texas — The Tyler Hansen era in Colorado football has begun.

And the coaches really mean it this time.

In 2008, CU pulled Hansen's redshirt in the sixth game of his freshman year. His initial success did not last, and he made only two starts — against Missouri and Iowa State — before finding himself on the bench full time again by season's end.

That won't be the case this time, they're saying.

After starting quarterback Cody Hawkins threw his ninth interception of the season during Saturday's 38-14 loss at Texas, CU benched Hawkins in the second half and inserted Hansen, burning his planned redshirt in the fifth game of his sophomore season. Offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said the leash on which Hansen plays this time will be much longer than it was last year, starting Saturday, when the Buffs host No. 17 Kansas (5 p.m., FSN).

"Tyler is a competitor, and that guy wants to play," Kiesau said.

"The thing you want to make of this is that if and when we do this, like we did (Saturday night), it's worth his while. The quarterback is very delicate. When you pull that guy, you have to make sure it's for the right decision. That's why we did it (Saturday night). We're going to go with it. We're going to go with Tyler, and I don't want to go back and forth. I want to have our guy and have him run the offense."

Hansen's first series Saturday was a three-and-out on which Hansen earned an intentional grounding penalty. On his next, CU gained a first down before a sequence of penalties and bad execution put the Buffs at third-and-36 at their 4-yard line.

On CU's next, and final, drive of the night, it trailed by 24 points with 6 minutes, 7 seconds to play. So Kiesau had Hansen run normal plays rather than have him pass every down in order to help him prepare for the rest of the season.

Kiesau said he's been challenging Hansen every week, just in case. He said Hansen is much better prepared to take control now than a year ago.

"The offense will stay the same," Kiesau said. "Tyler can do it."

Hansen said he felt much more comfortable than a year ago and stressed his year of experience had enabled him to grasp the offense and understand defenses better.

But he said he knows, as Hawkins did when the season started, that he must perform.

### FIRST LOOK

A quick glimpse at CU's next opponent:

**Who:** No. 17 Kansas (5-0, 1-0)

**Where:** Boulder, Folsom Field

**When:** Saturday, 5 p.m., FSN

**Notes:** This will be CU's final chance to beat Kansas senior quarterback Todd Reesing, who owns three wins over the Buffs. His first came in the eighth game of his freshman year, when coaches pulled his redshirt in the second half and he rallied the Jayhawks past the Buffs. ... Kansas is 5-0 for the fourth time since 1921. The Jayhawks started 11-0 in 2007. They have won 15 of their past 19 games against Big 12 North opponents, including the past three with CU. ... Kansas ranks third in the Big 12 in scoring (40.6 points per game) and third in yards (519.4 per game).

Patrick Ridgell

“Whatever is best for the team, I’m OK with,” Hansen said. “I just want to win games.

“I was frustrated losing. I was sitting there on the sidelines frustrated. I want to get this thing going.”

Hansen wanted to redshirt so he could have three full seasons left to play, including two without Hawkins as the competition at quarterback. He was also asked if he’s frustrated this decision did not come sooner.

“You can always say ‘maybe if I played those first couple of games’ and ‘maybe we would have won some games,’” he said. “But (the coaches) made the right decision. Cody had a good camp. ... He worked hard and he performed well in camp, and I feel they made a good decision, and their plan to redshirt me was the right decision at that time.

“But, at this time, where we’re at as a team, the coaches made the right call.”

Read Patrick Ridgell’s CU sports blog at [www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell](http://www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell). He can be reached at [pridgell@times-call.com](mailto:pridgell@times-call.com).