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In the CU scramble drill, receivers said they are trained to make adjustments based on the route they were assigned at the beginning of the play. The receiver with the deep route generally works back to the ball and those with shorter routes fade from the quarterback. But it's often not as precise as that.

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Hansen said after reviewing film Sunday there were four or five plays in the Kansas game in which he missed reads, "but we still made plays," he said summing up the change he brings to the CU offense. Hansen said he is having fun, too.

"It's like backyard ball," he said. "You're playing out in your front yard and screwing around and making guys miss. It's kind of fun doing that kind of stuff."

Hansen said he is focused on several areas for improvement this week between his first start of the season and his second at Kansas State, where they know a thing or two about unconventional offense.

"I've got to be smarter with some of the audible stuff and notice some things," he said. "And sometimes stay in the pocket and follow my reads. On certain plays, there was like three or four plays I didn't do that."

Big turnaround

Hawkins said he was surprised when he saw the score of the Kansas State-Texas A&M game on Saturday night. One week after being embarrassed 66-14 at Texas Tech, the Wildcats rebounded with a 62-14 win over the Aggies.

It's difficult to know what Kansas State team will show up when the Buffs visit Manhattan, Kan., on Saturday for their first morning start of the season. The game begins at 10:30 a.m. (MDT) and will be televised by Fox College Sports.

"Anything can happen, and I've seen it," Hawkins said. "I've seen most of it. It doesn't amaze me when somebody gets on a tear and somebody falls. That's why you just got to keep stroking and hang in there and not get all hung up on the other stuff."

"He's obviously a good coach and they know what they're doing. Like any other team, you get a little momentum, catch fire and the thing takes off."

Notable

CU center Mike Itlis entered the game Saturday in the second quarter and played the remainder of the game. It is unclear whether Itlis or Keenan Stevens will be the starter against Kansas State. Stevens has started the past three games. ... Right tackle Bryce Givens missed the Kansas game but could return this week for the Wildcats, Hawkins said. Givens has been dealing with personal issues that have kept him out of games and practices during multiple weeks this season. "We're working with him," Hawkins said about Givens' availability this week. "We think he will be."

McKnight said. "He was making people miss back there. He's got one hand in the air with the ball. I mean, some of the stuff he was able to do, I was pretty impressed. And it was fun. He had the crowd involved. He was scrambling. He was running people over."

Playing with Hansen means receivers, tight ends and running backs have to stay alive in running routes and even make them up as they go. Linemen, running backs and tight ends helping in pass protection have to stay on their blocks longer and find someone to block if the fire drill starts.

"Sometimes it looks like it's Helter Skelter, but it's not," coach Dan Hawkins said Sunday after a 30 minute correct and review session. "There is a rhyme and reason to the way they do things."

Hawkins said the team practices a scramble drill on a regular basis. He said the Buffs won't have to spend more practice time on it, but points of emphasis about what to do when a play breaks down will be mentioned more often as they were during film and practice sessions Sunday.

Players said the scramble drill was used in training camp two or three times a week but has been less a part of practice during the season. It was definitely back Sunday.

Wide receiver Markques Simas said players have to be in shape if they're going to play with Hansen. He said there were moments during the Kansas game when he questioned his conditioning because some plays were extended much longer than the Buffs had become accustomed to with Cody Hawkins starting at quarterback during the first five games.

"I guess conditioning," Simas said about adjusting to playing with Hansen. "Just running around, getting open, getting into his lane of vision. When you've got a guy who can move around like that and you don't even know if he's going to pass it or run it. It's not too big of an adjustment, but it's not what I'm used to I should say."

Hansen admitted his conditioning was tested, too. He said he was so tired after the game, he didn't have the energy to celebrate with teammates following a late dinner with his parents. He went home and went to bed instead.

Hansen fumbled the ball during one of his scrambles Saturday violating one of the rules coaches have for him in those situations when plays break down.

"Stay alive, don't get killed and don't fumble the ball like I did on one," Hansen said. "Don't turn the ball over and don't do anything dumb. That's the biggest thing."

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cu football

CU giddy after win over KU

But coach Hawkins says let's not get ahead of ourselves

By Anthony Cotton
The Denver Post

Posted: 10/19/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT



Tyler Hansen, in his first start of the season, led CU to an upset over Kansas. (Garrett W. Ellwood, Getty Images)

Shortly before Saturday's game against Colorado, a group of athletic officials from the University of Kansas chatted amiably at Folsom Field about some of the possibilities out there for the Jayhawks if they could go on a big run in Big 12 play.

Those scenarios, of course, began with a victory over the Buffs. However, several hours — and a 34-30 Colorado upset win — later, it was CU that had started daring to think big thoughts.

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THE DENVER POST

"I think we could win out from here," running back Rodney Stewart said of a squad whose overall record improved to 2-4 with the stirring triumph, a game that wasn't decided until the final play.

Stewart, who rushed for 108 yards and two touchdowns, including a game-winning 13-yard

Colorado Football

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- [Visit](#) Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports .

run with 8:36 left in the fourth quarter, insisted the only thing preventing a turnaround has been a win against a quality opponent. The then-17th-ranked Jayhawks, who entered with seven straight wins (5-0 this season) and an offense

that ranked fourth in the NCAA, certainly qualified.

Also impressive was that the Buffs, after squandering a 27-10 third-quarter lead and falling behind 30-27 early in the final quarter, not only came back to score the go-ahead points, but also managed to keep Kansas, which amassed 423 yards total offense, from scoring.

Those were the pluses, factors mitigated by uglier considerations. Kansas was able to come back in part because of a series of turnovers and careless penalties by the Buffs. And things probably wouldn't have gotten so interesting down the stretch if the CU defense hadn't allowed the visitors to complete a 41-yard pass on a third-and-29.

Such concerns may be why Colorado coach Dan Hawkins, after a win that might have sent everyone associated with his recently beleaguered program over the moon, was instead looking like he had barely staggered out of the ring after a 12-round heavyweight fight.

"I'm happy for the guys, but it's about digging in on the process," he said. "You have to learn how to handle victory too. After (today), it's over and you move on to the next one — that's just how it has to be."

Indeed, a team two games under .500 really doesn't have a right to go peeking at the schedule beyond the foe immediately in front of it, but one can see why Stewart might have been so heady about what awaits his team.

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The only current top-25 squad remaining for the Buffs is No. 14 Oklahoma State. And what shapes up as the team's two biggest North Division contests, against Missouri and Nebraska — both of whom lost on Saturday — are at Folsom.

But Hawkins realizes that for a team still trying to gain a foothold on solid ground, every game has to be considered huge. Which is why, not long after the doom and gloom that permeated Boulder entering the Kansas game, the coach was intent on making sure that emotions didn't swing too far the other way.

"For sure," he said. "They say you always want to stay off the top of the mountain and out of the valleys. A lot of teams I've seen beat an undefeated team, and everybody wants to have a parade. What you want to do is try and stay in the middle."

Anthony Cotton: 303-954-1292 or acotton@denverpost.com

EYE ON . . .

The Wildcats

Colorado at Kansas State, 10:30 a.m. Saturday, FCS

For the record: The Wildcats thumped Texas A&M 62-14 on Saturday to improve to 4-3 overall, 2-1 Big 12 and move atop the North Division.

Streiking: It was the Wildcats' most lopsided

conference win since beating Iowa State 58-7 in 2002.

Who's hot: Daniel Thomas became the sixth Kansas State player to run for four touchdowns in a game, and he did it in the first half.

Who's not: The defense is 11th in Big 12 conference games in total defense (470.3 yards allowed per game) and 10th in scoring defense (34.3).

Key stat: KSU lost 66-14 at Texas Tech a week before Saturday's rout of Texas A&M, marking a 100-point turnaround in one week.

FYI: The winner of this game is guaranteed to be no worse than tied for first place in the North Division. . . . Kansas State needs three more victories to become bowl-eligible because it can count only one victory over a Division I-AA (Football Championship Series) program toward qualification.

Coachspeak: "It's meaningful, for obvious reasons, after last week's loss and the way we played last week. Were we going to play that way again or were we going to play better? We did play better." — Kansas State coach Bill Snyder, after his team responded to a 52-point loss with a 48-point victory.

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OCTOBER 19, 2009, 11:10 AM

CU's Dan Hawkins: need to "level out" against Jekyll-and-Hyde KSU

By **TOM KENSLE** |  1 Comment

Colorado's Dan Hawkins was asked Monday on the Big 12 coaches teleconference how crazy it must be to prepare this week for a Kansas State team that lost 66-14 to Texas Tech on Oct. 10 and then turned around the following Saturday and waxed Texas A&M 62-14.

"That's just how it goes," Hawkins said. "You just have to level out, and don't get caught up in all of that.

"You try to look at what they're doing and who they've got, and try to do the best job of matching up your game plan."

Said Snyder of his team allowing 60 points one week and then scoring 60 the next: "It shows we're a little goofy, I guess."

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OCTOBER 19, 2009, 10:00 AM

KSU's Snyder: Buffs' Hansen "scary"

By [TOM KENSLE](#) |  No Comments

Kansas State coach Bill Snyder called new Colorado starting quarterback Tyler Hansen "a little scary" Monday during the Big 12 coaches teleconference.

Hansen threw for 175 yards and a touchdown and also ran for 34 yards and a score last Saturday night in the 34-30 upset victory over then No. 17 Kansas in Boulder. The Buffaloes (2-4, 1-1 Big 12) play this Saturday at Kansas State (4-3, 2-1).

"I'm impressed by the way (Hansen) moves around, everybody is. But not to be overlooked is, he throws the ball quite well," Snyder said on the teleconference. "He's an excellent combination-type quarterback. He's a little scary running around back there.

"He's doing it with great confidence. And I think their coaching staff feels comfortable with him doing it, as well. I think he's an awfully good player."

Snyder was not coaching last year when Hansen made his college debut in CU's 14-13 victory over Kansas State in Boulder. But Snyder attended the game. After viewing tape of Hansen's performance last weekend against Kansas, Snyder said the Californian has grown as a quarterback.

"I think he is playing at a higher comfort level," Snyder said.

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OCTOBER 19, 2009, 9:05 AM

CU's Stewart named Big 12 player of week

By **TOM KENSLER** |  1 Comment

Colorado sophomore tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart was named today as Big 12 Conference co-offensive player of the week.

Stewart, listed at 5-feet-6 and 175 pounds, rushed 24 times for 108 yards and scored two touchdowns Saturday night in CU's 34-30 upset victory over then No. 17 Kansas.

His 13-yard touchdown run with 8:36 remaining in the fourth quarter proved to be the winning points. He accounted for six first downs.

Stewart began slowly against Kansas, netting just 18 yards on seven carries in the first quarter.

"It's like with our team," CU coach Dan Hawkins said Monday on the Big 12 coaches teleconference. "We're going to keep chipping away at it and stay after it. We're not going to abandon it, not give up on it. We know he's capable of going from 0 to 60 in a heartbeat."

Stewart's performance against Kansas marked his third 100-yard game of 2009 and the sixth of his career.

He became the 49th player in CU history to rush for 1,000 career yards. Stewart now has 1,040 yards, including 418 this season.

Stewart shared the offensive player of the week award with Oklahoma State wide receiver Hubert Anyiam, who caught 10 passes for 119 yards against Missouri.

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Hansen shows off his skills against unbeaten Kansas

Quarterback instrumental in big victory

By Richard Londer on October 18, 2009

Tyler Hansen must be taking plays out of Ralphie's playbook because Buffaloes aren't the only thing running wild in Colorado.

The sophomore quarterback showed why he deserved to lead a Buffs team badly in need of a win against No. 17 Kansas. Dipping, dodging and picking apart the Kansas defense, Hansen gave the formerly unbeaten Jayhawks a ride to remember in Colorado's 34-30 triumph Saturday.

The legs came in handy as Hansen seemed to have a knack for creating plays with them. Scrambling through a heavy Kansas pass rush, the slippery Hansen racked up 34 yards rushing and a touchdown.

If Hansen wasn't using his legs to pick up positive yards, he was using them to aid his arm. Buying all the time in the world, Hansen made it happen through the air as he threw a steady 14-of-25 for 175 yards and a touchdown.

"He can run, he has a really good arm and he can buy time with his legs," CU head coach Dan Hawkins said.

Pick your poison with Hansen. For Kansas, they chose both.

At times, it looked as if Hansen was inside the Jayhawks defense. He had a sixth sense of when the pocket was collapsing, which allowed him to make plays by any means necessary – air or ground.

Hansen's sixth sense took 51,146 fans at Folsom Field on a 60-minute roller coaster. The climax came in the fourth quarter when on a crucial third-and-15, Hansen scrambled like a mad man and eventually found tight end Riar Greer for 29 yards as part of a 10-play, 76-yard game-winning drive.

Hansen has shown he can be efficient and can make plays.

Kansas head coach Mark Mangino said Hansen showed the wits to create something out of nothing.

"I think they found their quarterback, that's for sure," Mangino said. "He's a heck of a player. He made the difference tonight in my opinion."

Since arriving at CU, the road has been crazy for Hansen. Initially redshirted his freshman year last season, Hansen was



Quarterback Tyler Hansen waits for the right moment during a play Saturday. Hansen led the Buffs to a surprising victory against No. 17 Kansas with both his legs and arm. (CU Independent/Illana Finer)

expected to gain experience and knowledge backing up then-sophomore Cody Hawkins. Experience came quickly when his redshirt was pulled against Kansas State and he rallied the team to a 14-13 win. He received two more starts against Missouri and Iowa State.

Coming into the 2009 season, Hansen was designated as Hawkins' backup again. However, Hansen was redshirted for the second time in his career following the Buffs 23-17 season-opening loss to Colorado State. The redshirt was removed last week when Hansen relieved Hawkins after Hawkins threw back-to-back interceptions against the Texas Longhorns. After the game, the coaching staff designated Hansen as the starter against the Jayhawks.

"It's been a fun ride going from playing then not playing," Hansen said. "It's been wild but right now, it was the best decision. We just beat Kansas."

The real question lies in whether Hansen can remain consistent after big wins. His consistency was in question last season when he went 4-of-12 with an interception against Iowa State. Hawkins replaced Hansen in the second half and threw four touchdown passes to lead Colorado to a come-from-behind 28-24 win.

There has been much controversy over the quarterback position this season, but with his performance against Kansas, Hansen may have proven he is ready to fill the role as a consistent starter for the foreseeable future.

"I think I played a little smarter than I did last year," Hansen said. "I took my time to go through my progressions. I looked downfield a little more and not just looked to run."

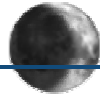
Contact CU Independent Staff Writer Richard Londer at Richard.londer@colorado.edu.

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Surplus of Big 12 surprises in week 7

I find it difficult to believe the Big 12 North is anything more than an average division — at best — after this weekend's slate of football games.

For more on this idea, plus my reaction on Texas beating Oklahoma in the Red River Rivalry, check out the latest edition of ConferenceChatterTV:



Back to the North. Kansas, Nebraska and Missouri all went home with losses on Saturday.

In fact, this division is so messed up that the updated standings look like this:

- Kansas State: 2-1 Big 12, 4-3 overall
- Colorado: 1-1, 2-4

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- Kansas: 1-1, 5-1
- Nebraska: 1-1, 4-2
- Iowa State: 1-2, 4-3
- Missouri: 0-2, 4-2

Kansas State will play host to Colorado next week in a game that will have implications on first place in the North.

Two weeks ago, K-State and Colorado looked like two of the worst teams in any BCS conference.

The Buffaloes and the Wildcats vying for first place in the North is like the Chiefs and Raiders facing each other more than halfway through the NFL season for first place in the AFC West. Just doesn't feel right.

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Week 7 of the college football season was easily the most surprising week in the Big 12. The only question: What was the most surprising development?

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I present to you this week's list of nominees:

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1. Colorado 34, Kansas 30

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Before this weekend, Colorado looked like the worst team in the North, while Kansas was undefeated and looking at 6-0 with Oklahoma coming to town. A quarterback change later and the Buffaloes saved their season and knocked the Jayhawks out of first place.

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2. Kansas State 62, Texas A&M 14

This is my choice. What in the name of Bill Snyder got into K-State? Two weeks ago, the Wildcats lost by 52 points at Texas Tech. A week later, they obliterate A&M by 48? This isn't adding up.

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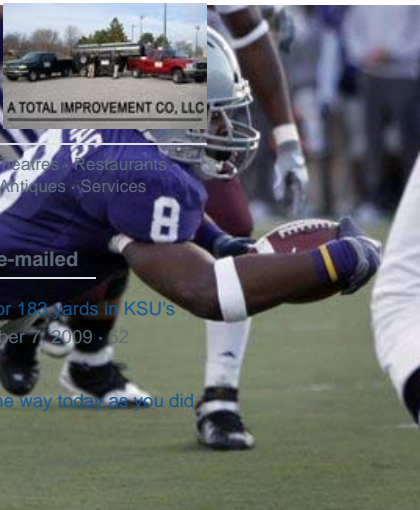
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FINAL: Daniel Thomas runs for 182 yards in KSU's 17-10 victory over KU November 7, 2009 · 62 comments

Post: Would you vote the same way today as you did



K-State running back Daniel Thomas

To put this craziness into perspective, let's break it down. K-State has faced five FBS opponents this season (Louisiana-Lafayette, UCLA, Iowa State, Texas Tech, Texas A&M).

K-State's sack total in four FBS games against Lafayette, UCLA, ISU and Tech: 2

K-State sack total vs. A&M: 6

K-State's rushing TDs in four previous FBS games: 4

K-State's rushing TDs vs. A&M: 6

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K-State's turnovers in four previous FBS games: 8
K-State's turnovers vs. A&M: 0

Interceptions thrown by A&M quarterback Jerrod Johnson all season, before Manhattan: 0
Interceptions thrown by Johnson at K-State: 3

And A&M was favored.

3. Texas Tech 31, Nebraska 10

In their first conference home game of the season, the Huskers looked rather anemic on offense. Their receivers dropped passes and the dreaded two-quarterback system (Zac Lee, Cody Green) was put into effect. The two-quarterback system is a sign of a team that lacks an offensive identity.



Nebraska quarterback Zac Lee throws against Tech

Just a week ago, Nebraska mounted a memorable 27-point, fourth quarter comeback against Missouri. Nebraska coach Bo Pelini awarded the Blackshirts to his defense. After this weekend, the Huskers look about as average as the rest of the North.

Texas Tech's victory put into perspective the superiority of the South division. Yeah, I know, K-State's victory over A&M. But come on. Nebraska, at home, with all the hype back and a No. 15 ranking, losing to Tech, maybe the third-best team in the South? And Nebraska didn't just lose. Anyone who watched that game knew Tech pummeled Nebraska. It makes the North look bad.

4. Sam Bradford injured again in UT's 16-13 win over OU



I had a feeling the Red River rivalry would lack the offensive firepower from last year's 45-35 UT victory. As an observer, though, I was stoked to see Colt McCoy vs. Sam Bradford one more time. A

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week ago, Bradford threw 49 passes against Baylor. I thought he was healthy. He only lasted one possession against Texas before he re-injured his throwing shoulder. I'd be surprised to see Bradford play for Oklahoma the rest of the season.

Onto the awards from the bizarre week 7 that was:

Player of the week: Tyler Hansen, Colorado

The Buffaloes needed a spark on offense after benching the ineffective Cody Hawkins. Hansen, who accounted for 209 yards and two scores, gave them the boost of energy they lacked. Hansen is more mobile than Hawkins and can extend plays when pressure arrives in the backfield. He looked a whole lot like an earlier version of Todd Reesing. Hansen saved Colorado's season. Had the Buffs lost, they would have been 0-2 in the conference and 1-5 overall. Being 1-1 and 2-4 is a lot different.

Sleeper alert: Hubert Anyiam, Oklahoma State



Anyiam, filling in the No. 1 wide receiver role for the ineligible Dez Bryant, has caught a touchdown in his last two games. Saturday against Missouri, Anyiam broke out with 10 catches, 119 yards and a score.

Here's the latest Sorrentino Scale to close this entry. The number in parentheses is what the team was ranked last week.

- 1 (1). Texas (6-0, 3-0): If UT survives next two games (at Mizzou, at Oklahoma State), there's a decent chance it goes undefeated.
- 2 (2). Oklahoma State (5-1, 2-0): Cowboys doing a nice job of protecting home field in Big 12 play.
- 3 (7). Texas Tech (5-2, 2-1): How's four spots for a climb? Steven Sheffield may have won the QB job from Taylor Potts.
- 4 (5). Oklahoma (3-3, 1-1): Kind of odd OU rises a spot with a loss, but that speaks to the mediocre level to which many Big 12 teams are playing.
- 5 (4). Kansas (5-1, 1-1): Could have really been in driver's seat in North.
- 6 (3). Nebraska (4-2, 1-1): Next two games (vs. Iowa State, at Baylor) favorable.
- 7 (10). Kansas State (4-3, 2-1): Who knew?
- 8 (6). Missouri (4-2, 0-2): Doesn't get any easier next week (vs. UT).
- 9 (12). Colorado (2-4, 1-1): Was change at QB all the Buffs needed to be decent?
- 10 (11). Iowa State (4-3, 1-2): 'Clones breaking plethora of losing streaks this season.
- 11 (8). Baylor (3-3, 0-2): Amazing how much Robert Griffin means to this squad.
- 12 (9). Texas A&M (3-3, 0-2): Back in the cellar again. I thought 2008 was behind Aggies.

That should be all for now, friends. As always, discuss.

By [Eric Sorrentino](#)

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Opinion: Hansen right move for Hawk, as of now

Tyler shines against Kansas, Cody supports him on sidelines

By Ryan Callahan on October 19, 2009

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He ran, passed, scrambled, and even leapfrogged a bit.

Yes, Buffaloes fans, there is something to be happy about despite the disappointing start to the 2009 season: Sophomore Tyler Hansen is the quarterback for the Colorado football team and thanks to a 34-30 upset over the 17th-ranked Kansas Jayhawks on Saturday night, it is going to stay that way for the foreseeable future.

I'll admit I was a bit nervous about this decision. Sometime during last week's game between the Colorado Buffaloes and the Texas Longhorns, two scary questions occurred: What if junior Cody Hawkins was the best quarterback the Buffs had? What if head coach Dan Hawkins had no choice but to leave his son in the game despite the increasingly loud calls for Hansen to burn his redshirt and step into the starting role? If this was true, then the coach was in a no-win situation. He was being accused of nepotism for refusing to take his son out even though he wasn't getting the job done, and yet he wouldn't be able to put Hansen in if he really wasn't as good as his son.

Saturday's upset quickly changed that assumption and the Buffaloes found what appears to be a genuine starting quarterback capable of giving fans a reason to go to Folsom Field. Perhaps more importantly was Dan Hawkins' gamble to burn Hansen's redshirt midway through the season for the second consecutive year — a choice that may have saved the coach's job.

Hansen didn't light up the stat box, but the things he did can't be put into statistical categories. Numerous times, he was pressured and forced to scramble, leaving Kansas defenders with fistfuls of air and befuddled looks. This was not the offense the Buffaloes showed through their first five games. This offense thrived on Hansen's ability to make plays when it seemed like there wasn't a play to be made. I can't count the amount of times a play started with groans from the crowd only to quickly change to wild cheers as Hansen avoided trouble and made a spectacular play.

Remember this game because it just might be the date CU football turned around the large corner it has been trying to get around since Dan Hawkins came to Boulder. It might be the date that Tyler Hansen wowed 51,146 fans in attendance and became a star.

After he led one of four touchdown drives early in the game, Hansen leapfrogged his counterpart Cody Hawkins on the sidelines. It was both a light-hearted moment for a team that hasn't had much to be happy about and an ironic, albeit unintentional, metaphor.

I guess here is where I should offer some praise to the widely criticized, younger Hawkins. Since Hansen is a year younger, Cody Hawkins may never play in a game again for the Buffaloes. Certainly Dan Hawkins could put his son back in should

Hansen struggle, but that might not happen. In that case, Cody Hawkins' career here in Boulder could be virtually over. Perhaps it's because I'm nostalgic, but I find something bittersweet in this notion.

It was Cody Hawkins who the fans originally clamored for in Dan Hawkins' first year when Bernard Jackson was struggling en route to a 2-10 season. It was Cody Hawkins who led the Buffs to one of the biggest upsets in school history against Oklahoma two seasons ago. And it was Cody Hawkins who never quit on this team during the first five games of a season where results have fallen far short of expectations. It might hit a soft spot for Dan Hawkins as a father, but as a coach, the time had come to bench the kid who fans once thought was going to help save the program from despair.

But it's Hansen's team now and it should stay that way. This might mean the coach will have to spend a few nights on the couch, but he might also be able to keep the "for sale" sign out of the front yard for the time being.

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1. We've likely seen the last of [Sam Bradford](#) in an Oklahoma uniform. It was fun while it lasted. He'll go down as one of the best players in the history of the Big 12, a consummate producer on the field and a good citizen during his memorable career with the Sooners. Bradford came back to school for what he thought were good reasons. It's unfortunate his season unraveled because of injuries in such limited playing time. With the Sooners now fighting for second place in the Big 12 South rather than the BCS championship he had hoped, Bradford would receive little benefit by coming back this season. Instead, Bradford can prepare for a multi-million dollar payday that should still be approaching in the NFL draft next April.

2. Oklahoma State is the last team standing in the South that can challenge Texas. And even without [Dez Bryant](#) and [Kendall Hunter](#), the Cowboys have a good chance at springing the upset in what should be a raucous atmosphere at Boone Pickens Stadium on Halloween night. [Zac Robinson](#) has helped the offense cobble together some big efforts with players like [Keith Toston](#) and [Hubert Anyiam](#) picking up the slack. And Bill Young's defense is growing as well, shutting out Missouri over the second half Saturday night.

3. Doesn't anyone want to win the North Division? It doesn't appear so after early favorites Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri all lost on Saturday. Every team has at least a loss and improbably, Kansas State is sitting in first place today only a week after getting blown out by Texas Tech last week. Nebraska and Kansas both still appear to be the favorites, but both teams have noticeable flaws. Nebraska can't run the ball consistently and Kansas can't stop anybody. Those struggles should keep this race hopping deep into November.

4. [Tyler Hansen](#) looked like the second coming of [Todd Reesing](#) Saturday night. Hansen, the Colorado sophomore quarterback, energized the Buffaloes' struggling offense and boosting them to a dramatic victory over Reesing's Jayhawks Saturday night. The Buffaloes look like a different team with the way that Hansen extends plays with his legs and gives them some extra juice that just wasn't there when [Cody Hawkins](#) was playing. And with the Buffaloes hosting Nebraska and Missouri during the rest of the season, look for the Buffaloes to have a big say on who ends up winning the North Division.

5. After Saturday night, Mike Sherman knows how difficult it is to win with young players in the Big 12. If he didn't before, that run of 59 unanswered Kansas State points should have shown him. A&M's roster Saturday night had 17 true freshmen, but it's still no excuse for a team that looked inept in a 62-14 blowout loss to the Wildcats. The Aggies produced only 70 yards in their first 30 plays against a defense that had allowed 370 yards passing last week. Much of the excitement of the Aggies' 3-0 start has been blotted by blowout losses to Arkansas and Kansas State around a close home loss to Oklahoma State. And the heat will get more intense for Sherman as he starts facing the meat of his Big 12 South schedule this week against Texas Tech.

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

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Before the season started, two teams that looked like the biggest potential question marks in the North Division were Colorado and Kansas State.

The Wildcats were picked to struggle, making some wonder why Bill Snyder would ever give up the cushy life of retirement for worries about rebuilding the KSU program again.

And even with Dan Hawkins brazenly proclaiming his team as a likely 10-game winner after last season, few thought the Buffaloes would be good enough to challenge the rest of the North Division.

A quick show of hands from all who thought that after the first three weeks of conference play, the Wildcats would be sitting in first place with a 2-1 record? Or that Colorado would be part of a logjam with Nebraska and Kansas behind them?

Suddenly, it's not looking all that far-fetched to think that the Buffaloes and Wildcats might remain as North contenders longer than some might think.

"Certainly, it looks like it will be a wild race," Kansas coach Mark Mangino said. "We understand that this is a great conference and anyone can win on any day. You can't discount anybody. And a lot of teams in the North can win if they get an opportunity."

The Wildcats and Snyder have been the biggest early story, particularly after their resilience over the last two weeks. Snyder's team responded to a 66-14 loss at Texas Tech last week by rebounding to post a 62-14 victory over Texas A&M. That 100-point two-game swing is the largest in Big 12 history in turning a margin of defeat into a margin of victory.

The Wildcats defense came up with six sacks as it harassed [Jerrod Johnson](#) into three interceptions after having none earlier this season.

"I can't tell you this is anticipated," Snyder said. "I believed we would play better in ballgame than we did against Texas Tech. I thought we would probably respond well after the loss. But I have no particular answer with what you try to do week in and week out. That was in the least 32 or 33 minutes that was best football we've played all year."

Colorado similarly bounced back after a disappointing 1-3 start that included humiliating nationally-televised losses to Colorado State and Toledo and a struggling loss at Texas last week. But the Buffaloes rebounded to jump on Kansas early and hang on for a 34-30 victory.

Saturday's games indicate that early North favorites Nebraska and Kansas both have obvious flaws. Mangino is making wholesale changes on defense and his team faces that killer cross-division schedule of Oklahoma, Texas and Texas Tech.

Nebraska's offense looks in disarray after scoring touchdowns in only two of the 12 quarters it has played against FBS teams this season, including a humiliating 31-10 home loss to Texas Tech last week. Quarterback [Zac Lee](#) has struggled and Bo Pelini is openly considering inserting freshman [Cody Green](#) in the lineup to boost production.

Missouri appears unsettled after losses to Nebraska and Oklahoma State in its last two games. Quarterback [Blaine Gabbert](#) has been hobbled with a recurring ankle injury and the Tigers haven't been able to run the ball consistently.

Plucky Iowa State has been another surprise as they were only a late missed extra point against Kansas State from being able to beat the Wildcats at Farmageddon two weeks ago in Kansas City.

Even from the beginning, the North Division figured to be tight without a dominant team. And two new factors that could keep it that way are Colorado's home schedule and Snyder's acumen.

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

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The Buffaloes also have Missouri and Nebraska visiting Folsom Field later in the season.

And Snyder won't be in the College Football Hall of Fame without reason. He'll conjure up a way for the Wildcats to stay in games where some think they don't belong.

It's not beyond the realm of possibility that a team with a 3-5 conference record could win the North. That team would have to beat the right contenders to maintain a tiebreaker over the other teams.

But a more likely record to win will be 4-4 or 5-3. The North has produced only four teams that have gone 6-2 or better in the last six seasons.

Wacky times indeed.

"It's kind of hard to figure," said Missouri coach Gary Pinkel, who is gunning for his third straight championship game appearance. "There are a lot of things left and lots will happen. By the end of October and November it will be interesting to see how it works out. Every week you try to improve. If you can do that and get some wins going, you'll have a chance."

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Posted on Sun, Oct. 18, 2009

Down is up in Big 12 North

BLAIR KERKHOFF COLLEGES

Colorado visits Kansas State on Saturday, and the winner will be no worse than tied for first in the Big 12 North Division. If it's the Wildcats, they'll lead by themselves halfway through their conference season.

Precisely where everybody thought they'd be a week after dropping a game by 52 points.

Ah, life in the Big 12 North, where every weekend is an adventure sometimes in a natural disaster sort of way.

Right, Huskers?

Buffaloes coach Dan Hawkins had it right. In a radio interview after the potentially season-saving triumph over Kansas on Saturday, he said he'd shared with his team the idea that all of their goals were in front of them. OK, Colorado won't win the national championship or the 10 games Hawk promised after last year. But a division title is there in a division that nobody seems to want.

Every North team wears a division blemish. Only Missouri is winless, but by no means are the Tigers out of this hunt.

Three North teams have been ranked this season. The Tigers and Nebraska have left that stage, and Kansas is dangling by a thread at No. 25 in the first BCS standings, as all came up losers over the weekend.

It is with no momentum that the North duo of Missouri and Kansas defend their turf Saturday against South fire-breathers Texas and Oklahoma on ABC. A few weeks ago, these looked like grand opportunities to make a stand. Now, the Tigers and Jayhawks hope post-Red River Shootout syndrome kicks in.

Meanwhile, K-State, Colorado and Iowa State all got off the mat with conference triumphs and widened the circle of division favorites.

Most emphatically by the Wildcats, whose 100-point turnaround in one week must be some kind of record. From a 66-14 embarrassment at Texas Tech to a 62-14 call-off-the-dogs pounding of Texas A&M, Kansas State proved the range of football for itself and in Texas is wider than anybody believed.

At 4-3 overall, Kansas State needs three more victories to become bowl eligible because it can count only one victory over a Division I-AA (Football Championship Series) program toward qualification. After Saturday, who's to say any game isn't there for the taking?

Who knew a blocked extra point, which preserved the victory over Iowa State, could be so important?

Colorado finds itself in a strange position. It could be easier for the Buffaloes to win the North than qualify for the postseason.

Because of a horrendous nonleague run that includes losses to Colorado State and Toledo, Colorado stands 2-4 overall and 1-1 in the Big 12. Four more victories put the Buffaloes at an enviable 5-3 in league play but only break even overall.

If Colorado won the North at 6-6 and lost in the Big 12 championship game, it wouldn't be bowl eligible because of a losing record.

It's all starting to feel like the bad days of not so long ago. After Kansas State's 2003 Big 12 title season, the North went into a three-year slumber. This was the end of Bill Snyder's first term and the program-formative years of Mizzou's Gary Pinkel and Kansas' Mark Mangino.

Texas and Oklahoma were flexing muscles with Heisman Trophy winners and national championship-contending teams, and North teams were drawing straws to see who would play in the Independence Bowl. Only one team from the North finished in the final top 25 during 2004-2006, and that was the No. 24 Cornhuskers in 2005.

Missouri and Kansas broke through with their big 2007 seasons, and the Tigers spent half of last season in the top 10.

It's back to a free-for-all, first to win five conference games takes the division. At least that's the impression left from the season's first two weeks.

If it gets any worse, Texas A&M might apply for admission.

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Longmont, Colorado
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2009

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Buffs stress method to scrambling madness

By Patrick Ridgell

© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Tyler Hansen made an impression Saturday night in his first start of 2009.

Receiver Scotty McKnight remembers watching Colorado's sophomore quarterback scramble around the backfield on many occasions. A few were more memorable than others.

"Yeah, on some of those, I was like, 'This guy's crazy,'" McKnight said.

The Buffs had better get used to it. CU now has a starting quarterback who'll scramble and keep plays alive for several seconds, creating a whole new weapon for the Buffs.

While that means different things for each member of the offense, the receivers might have the biggest adjustment to make. According to head coach Dan Hawkins, where those receiver run to is not as crazy as it looks.

"Sometimes, it looks like it's helter-skelter, but it's not," Hawkins said. "There's a rhyme and a reason to the way to do things."

Hawkins said CU has a scramble drill with certain rules that are being reinforced in practices. McKnight said the receivers have "certain spots we're supposed to take," and they can vary depending on which way Hansen is scrambling. Markques Simas said the receivers must find their way into Hansen's line of vision.

But according to Simas, the biggest adjustment he, McKnight and the others must make involves their conditioning.

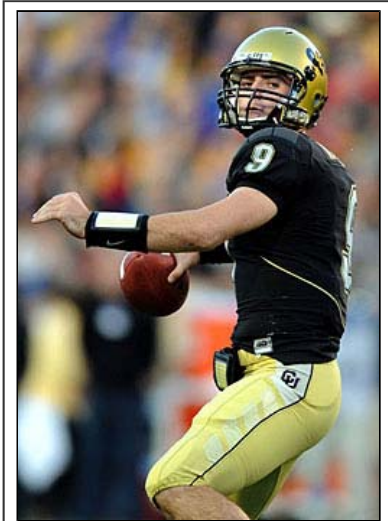
"When you have a guy that can move around like that, you don't know if he's going to pass it or throw it or run it," Simas said. "It's not too big of an adjustment, but it's not what I'm used to, I should say."

Hansen was much more sore Sunday than he's used to feeling the day after games. He said he went out to dinner with his parents following Saturday's 34-30 defeat of Kansas, then went straight to bed.

"I was super tired," Hansen said.

Hansen said his film study revealed four or five plays were he was off his read. He said offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau wasn't mad with his choices, but pointed out his options.

Hansen said two areas in which he needs the most improvement by Saturday, when CU visits Kansas State (10:30 a.m., FCS-C) are being smarter with his audibles and following his reads.



Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen steps back for a pass Saturday against Kansas in Boulder. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**

A quick glimpse at CU's next opponent

Who: Kansas State (4-3, 2-1)

Where: Manhattan, Kansas

When: Saturday, 10:30 a.m., TV: FCS-C

Notes: In Bill Snyder's first season back as coach, Kansas State leads the Big 12 North through the early part of conference play. During non-conference play, it lost 17-15 at Louisiana-Lafayette. ... Quarterback Grant Gregory went 10-for-13 for 147 yards and two touchdowns in Saturday's 62-14 defeat of Texas A&M. Daniel Thomas ran for four touchdowns and Brandon Banks returned the second-half kickoff 97 yards for a score. ... Saturday is homecoming at Kansas State. The Wildcats are 16-3 since 1990 on homecoming. ... The Wildcats trail the series 44-19-1 to CU, but have won two of the past three. In last year's

Hansen said his scrambling and where the receivers go won't always follow a script. He said there will be times it's "totally random."

As long as it yields similar results to Saturday's, the Buffs won't mind.

"It was fun," McKnight said. "He got the crowd involved; he was scrambling, running people over. It was definitely something cool to be a part of."

14-13 loss in Boulder, Kansas State was caught off guard when CU pulled quarterback Tyler Hansen's redshirt.

Patrick ridgell

EXTRA POINTS: Center Mike Iltis returned in the second quarter Saturday after missing the past two games with a concussion. Hawkins said he did not know if Iltis will start at Kansas State. Hawkins said both Iltis and center Keenan Stevens played well against Kansas. ... Hawkins said he thinks right tackle Bryce Givens will be available to play Saturday. Givens missed the Kansas game, the second game he's missed this season, with what CU is calling personal reasons. ... Kansas State defeated Texas A&M 62-14 on Saturday, one week after losing to Texas Tech 66-14. Hawkins said he was not surprised by the Wildcats' turnaround. "Anything can happen," Hawkins said.

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