

CU Buffs' run defense toughening up

Colorado held KU, UT to combined 38 yards on ground

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

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It's too soon to deem the Colorado run defense repaired from an ugly start this season, but it's definitely making progress against some quality competition.

The Buffs allowed Colorado State to run for 168 yards in the season opener and gave up 305 yards to Toledo in a humbling defeat Sept. 11. They allowed 257 rushing yards to a strong West Virginia running game led by one of the best running backs in the nation in Noel Devine.

But the past two weeks against top-25 opponents Texas and Kansas, the Buffs have allowed a combined total of 38 net rushing yards, once losses from sacks are deducted, and a total of 90 yards before sacks.

Coach Dan Hawkins chalked up the in-season improvement to young defensive linemen gaining confidence and experience and the entire defense gelling. But what he didn't have much of an explanation for Tuesday was why a defense featuring a rotation of four freshmen, a sophomore and a junior up front had much better success this season against Texas and Kansas. A senior-laden defense in 2008 gave up 320 combined rushing yards to the same opponents.

Junior defensive end Marquez Herrod played occasionally last season and has become an anchor this fall. He explained the improvement this way.

"Guys are playing together," he said. "You can have a lot of skilled players who don't know how to play with each other and they're going to go out there and they're not going to make plays because they're relying on themselves. We rely on each other. We might not be old and have all the experience that those guys had, but when you can play together, that solves all the problems."

Getting 11 players on the field with the right mind set has been a key factor, but there are other reasons for leap the Buffs appear to have made.

Defensive coordinator Ron Collins said the decision to move senior Ben Burney to safety after the first two games has been a big part of improving in nearly every area of the defense. He said the entire group has bought in to what coaches have been teaching and defenders learned from the mistakes they made earlier in the year.

"They've been in the battle," he said. "So they just keep getting better every week."

The Buffs will face another stiff test this week at Kansas State, a team that is determined to run and remains patient with its running game throughout all four quarters. Hawkins said KSU also will use its quarterback on designed running plays, something the Buffs saw little of from the Longhorns and Jayhawks.

The Wildcats are averaging 184 rushing yards per game and junior running back Daniel Thomas is the third-leading rusher in the Big 12 Conference with 669 yards and eight touchdowns in seven games.

Thomas has three 100-yard games this season but he hasn't reached triple digits yet against a team from a Bowl Championship Series conference.

"I think his O-line is doing a nice job for him, and they're very patient and continue to hang in there and give it to him," Hawkins said. "He's a big guy, a big back. Can run you over. Run by you."

There is one more school of thought on why CU is improving against the run and becoming more competitive against teams which have had success on the ground against CU in the past. It comes from cornerback Jimmy Smith.

"I think everybody on the defense this year is a lot faster," Smith said. "That's number one. Number two, they're starting to fall into our scheme a lot better. We can run a little bit different defenses this year with a lot more technique. You've got a lot more athletic guys on the D-line and they're starting to get better every game. They're not scared to play full speed and mess up."

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CU Buffs coach Dan Hawkins doesn't lament quarterback choice

Coach fine with way QB situation has played out

By Kyle Ringo, Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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Colorado coach Dan Hawkins says he has no regrets and hasn't second-guessed himself for the decision he and his assistants made two weeks into fall camp to make his son, Cody, the starting quarterback for the third year in a row.

Hawkins benched his son in the fourth quarter at Texas two weeks ago and turned to sophomore Tyler Hansen, who made his first start of the season against then-No. 17 Kansas last week and led the Buffs to a victory.

"Not at all," Hawkins said. "You make decisions based off the material you have at the time. So not at all. I mean, you don't like jockeying your guys around like that. You don't want to do that, but sometimes that's the nature of it. It just happens and you deal with it and both of them handled it well."

Hansen played well against KU, showing more poise and better decision-making than he did when he was called into action in 2008 as a true freshman. He added an element of excitement to the CU offense through his scrambling ability, which allows him to make first downs on his own by running or by keeping plays alive long enough for receivers to get open.

While many in the stadium were surprised by the progress Hansen has obviously made in the past year, Hawkins said he wasn't surprised by the results his new quarterback produced against the Jayhawks.

Hansen said he has been approached on campus this week by people he doesn't know who wanted to congratulate him. He said it has been a humbling experience, but he is focused on putting the euphoria of beating the Jayhawks behind him and preparing properly for the Wildcats.

"To get two wins in a row and kind of build some momentum for the rest of our Big 12 games would be awesome," he said.

Hansen started at Missouri last season and played a significant role in the game at Texas A&M. So his first start on the road this season shouldn't be a nerve-racking experience.

"I know what that's going to be like and I can deal with it," he said.

To believe or not believe

Hansen said starting the season 1-4 was difficult at times on the players when it came to following Dan Hawkins mantra of not getting too high or too low based on the results.

"It's actually kind of funny," he said. "Coach Hawk always talks to us every week. He always has these big speeches and funny talks and stuff. Everyone is like, 'No man, that's not true.' But it's kind of true. We were that close in two games. He was like, 'We're going to beat Kansas. We're going to beat Kansas.' And we were like, 'Dude, we're 1-and-4. We're not that good.' And stuff like that. But we've just got to listen to Hawk, and we trust him now."

Improvement in trenches

Hawkins said the CU offensive line played its best game of the year against Kansas, despite shuffling multiple players in and out of the lineup and missing starting right tackle Bryce Givens.

Keenan Stevens started the game at center, but was replaced in the second quarter by Mike Iltis, who started the season as the starter. Blake Behrens played right guard and Ryan Miller moved to tackle to replace Givens, who is expected back this week. Sophomore Matt Bahr also played at guard.

"The great thing is having a little bit of depth and some guys who have played a few snaps and can get in there and manage the game," Hawkins said.

What a rush

Fans rushing the field has become commonplace at CU in recent years with security and police seemingly powerless to prevent it. Athletic director Mike Bohn said upgrades to railings surrounding the field would probably be required to prevent it in the future.

Hawkins said he has no problem with fans storming the field after a big win as long as they do so with the intent to celebrate and not taunt the other team. Hawkins said he and Kansas coach Mark Mangino found themselves in the middle of the celebration last week as they shook hands and spoke briefly.

"All of a sudden I was starting to kind of get squeezed a little bit and kind of looking around, and I was kind of going, 'How exactly do you get out of this deal?'" Hawkins said. "It was a little unsettling at some point. You know, as long as no one gets hurt and everything is fine, that's great."

Scouting report

Hawkins offered this summary when asked about his impressions of Kansas State, which comes into the game at 4-3 overall and 2-1 in Big 12 play.

"They are doing a nice job in areas that you need to be," Hawkins said. "They're running the football really well and doing a nice job in special teams. Doing a great job in turnovers and give you a lot of problems. They will attack you in many different ways on defense. A team that is starting to get better, starting to improve. Really caught fire last week."

One move away

Hawkins said his kickoff return team has been close to breaking several returns for touchdowns this season and needs the player with the ball in his hands to be the difference between a nice field position and a touchdown.

Return men Darrel Scott and Brian Lockridge both have had near misses and the Buffs are ranked 26th in the nation in kickoff returns, averaging 25 yards per return. Scott ranks 24th among individual return men, averaging 27 yards per attempt.

"You've got to have a guy who is carrying the ball that outruns somebody, puts a move on somebody or breaks a tackle," Hawkins said. "I

mean, we're puncturing it. We're penetrating it."

Hawkins said a good return generally follows when three of the five front-line blockers make solid blocks. He said CU has had all five blockers with solid blocks at times this season.

Quotable

Hawkins was asked Tuesday if he had given any thought to the winner of this week's game earning at least a share of the lead in the Big 12 North: "It's just so funny in this thing. You go from, 'Oh my gosh, the season is a disaster.' to 'Holy smokes, you're going to win the North.' I mean, I told you guys a long time ago, there is a lot of football to be played."

Notable

Hawkins said punter Matt DiLallo did not strike the ball well during his kicks in last week's game. He said DiLallo had been sick earlier in the season, but played through it. ... Hawkins said place-kicker Aric Goodman had a great game despite playing with an abdominal strain. Goodman snapped his 0-for-8 string of field goal attempts between 40 and 49 yards by making a 45-yard attempt against the Jayhawks. "We're hoping he strains the other side this week," Hawkins said. surprised by the progress Hansen has obviously made in the past year, Hawkins said he wasn't surprised by the results his new quarterback produced against the Jayhawks.

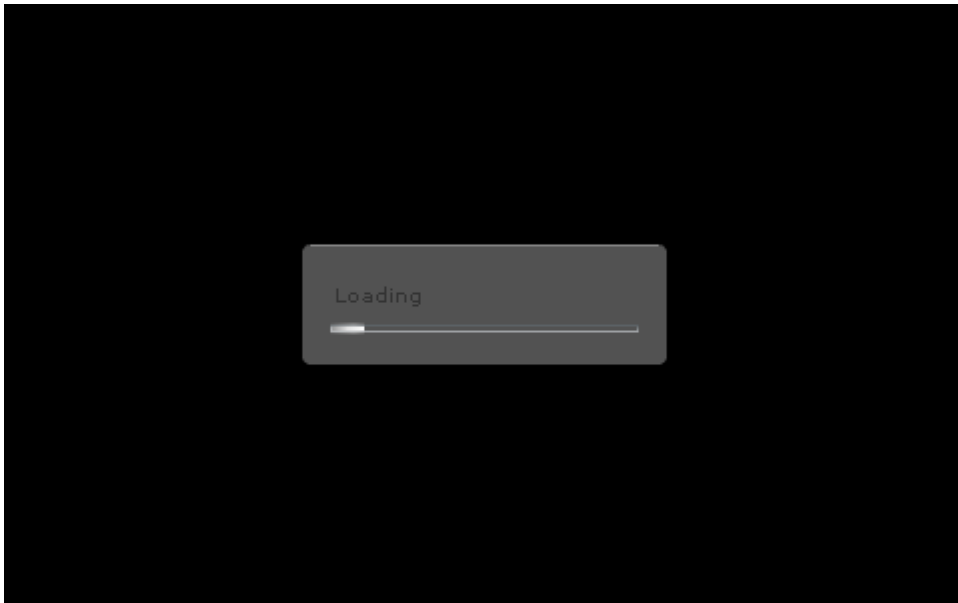
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Following is video of Hawkins full press conference



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Woelk: CU Buffs have chance to build momentum

By Neill Woelk, Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 10/21/2009 12:04:49 AM MDT

The word "momentum" is hovering around the Dal Ward Center this week, tempting and teasing the Colorado Buffaloes.

The team that one week ago seemed desperate for some good news now suddenly finds itself with the chance to grab a share of the Big 12 North lead with a victory Saturday at Kansas State.

No joke -- but the mere mention of such a scenario still drew a chuckle from Buff coach Dan Hawkins on Tuesday.

"It's so funny," Hawkins said. "You go from, 'Oh my gosh, your season is a disaster,' to 'Holy smokes, you're going to win the North.'"

That's what a victory over the 17th-ranked team in the nation and a new quarterback can do for a team. That, and the fact that the Buffs are playing in a division in which no one is a clear favorite to win, has lent an air of rejuvenation around a program that seemed to be on life support just weeks ago.

But division titles should be the last thing the Buffs have on their minds this week.

Rather, the Buffs need to answer a simple question: Was last weekend's win over Kansas a sign of improvement or just an aberration?

Remember, it's not the first time a Hawkins team has defeated a ranked team in Boulder.

Two seasons ago, the Buffs rallied for a win over No. 3 Oklahoma. Last year, Colorado beat No. 21 West Virginia.

But neither of those victories proved to be much of a springboard.

In 2007, the Buffs followed up the win over Oklahoma by beating Baylor, but then proceeded to lose four of the next five. Last year, Colorado followed the win over West Virginia by losing three straight and five of their next six.

With the next four games all winnable affairs -- Kansas State, Missouri, Texas A&M and Iowa State -- it's an opportunity the Buffs can't afford to let slip by again.

"Momentum is a huge, huge deal," Hawkins allowed on Tuesday. "I hope we are very matter-of-fact about things. Just because you lose doesn't mean you will continue to lose and just because you win doesn't mean you will continue to win. It gives you some proof that you can (win), but you have to go back to square one."

CU's players seem to have gotten that message.

"We're definitely confident right now and our morale is good," said quarterback Tyler Hansen. "But we've got to get a win this weekend. We need to build some momentum."

There's no doubt the Buffs are carrying an extra bit of confidence this week -- and they deserve that little spring in their step. In terms of overall development, Saturday's win could prove to be a major move forward.

It was the first time under Hawkins that the Buffs had built a commanding edge, allowed the other team to rally -- and then gotten up off the mat to win the game.

It's the kind of resolve coaches love to see, but not something that can be taught.

"Honestly, Kansas played like they were going to win that game," Hawkins said. "Their body language, everything -- they thought they were going to win that game."

The Buffs, though, showed some of that same attitude. They were neither surprised when they went ahead nor panic-stricken when they fell behind.

They simply took care of business.

Hawkins said he's seen a gradual overall transformation in that regard. He liked the maturity they showed in a loss at Texas, and he was certainly pleased with their response against Kansas.

Now they must maintain that same demeanor on the road against a Kansas State team that currently sits atop the Big 12 North.

Momentum? We won't suggest that one victory qualifies in that regard.

But momentum is definitely out there for the taking.

It's an opportunity of which the Buffs need to take advantage.

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colorado football

CU quarterback Hansen aims for fewer turnovers

By Chris Dempsey
The Denver Post

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Sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen gave the Buffs an offensive spark with his excellent performance in last Saturday's victory against Kansas. The Southern California product showed leadership and playmaking ability both running and throwing the football. (Garrett W. Ellwood/Getty Images)

BOULDER — In the two days after a sparkling showing as quarterback of the Colorado Buffaloes, Tyler Hansen's celebrity has risen tenfold.

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"It's been wild," Hansen said Tuesday. "People have come up to me and said, 'Great job.' People that I don't even know come up to me. It's been kind of crazy, but I just try to stay humble."

And it's not just around campus.

"I thought he played an unbelievable game. He played a gutsy game," wide receiver Scotty McKnight said. "He was running people over, diving for yards. Great leadership ability in the huddle, and he kind of sparked us. And the thing with Tyler is it's never been a question of his arm strength. He's getting the ball there. Even the interception he threw, that was partly on me."

"But he's playing well. He played like a veteran the other night. There's going to be growing pains, it's his third or fourth start of his career and he's a true sophomore. . . . It was fun to be a part of that offense with him that night."

Hansen said he needs to take better care of the football in the weeks ahead. In addition to the interception, he also lost a fumble. He would also like to continue to get better throwing the football.

"I've got to be more proficient in the passing game," said Hansen, who had 205 yards of total offense against Kansas, "(and) not turn the ball over. I had two turnovers."

CU coach Dan Hawkins was asked if he regretted not starting Hansen in the first place this season.

"No, not at all," Hawkins said. "You make decisions based off the material that you have at the time. So, not at all. You don't like jockeying your guys around like that, but sometimes that's the nature. Both of them handled it well."

However, Hansen admitted the decision to name Cody Hawkins as starter before the season did sting a bit. Hansen then was going to redshirt, but that plan was scrapped late in the Texas game Oct. 10, when he was inserted into the game.

"Not earning the starting job coming off playing last year, it took a toll on me a little bit," Hansen said. "But now I'm playing. I got a win. I'm playing with a lot of confidence right now. It was a wild ride; there were ups and downs. But I tried to prove people wrong and persevere through it."

Now Hansen has a chance to build on success.

"We just needed a spark, needed someone to make a play. I was that spark," Hansen said. "Hopefully someone else can be that spark this week, and we can keep adding on to it."

The first playing time of his career came last year against Kansas State, and Hansen's 21-yard touchdown pass to McKnight helped Colorado to a 14-13 victory.

Hawkins said he's not worried about Hansen's ability to stay level-headed and handle success well.

"He'll be fine," Hawkins said. "He's been through

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the ups and downs before. Having the benefit of last year serves him well."

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OCTOBER 20, 2009, 2:32 PM

Cody Hawkins had his moments, too

By **TOM KENSLE** |  11 Comments

During the past few weeks, I have received countless emails and phone calls – some particularly nasty and venomous – insisting that Colorado junior quarterback Cody Hawkins is no better than a Division II talent.

Hold on, folks.

Let's be fair, and not forget that Cody:

- ** Threw for 3,000 yards as a redshirt freshman (including the bowl game).
- ** Helped to orchestrate a successful second half comeback against Oklahoma.
- ** Had terrific games against Colorado State during his first two years.
- ** Put the vaunted Alabama defense on its heels (322 yards and three TD passes) with a furious second-half rally in the Independence Bowl that probably would have defeated the Crimson Tide had there been more time.
- ** Helped Colorado win at Texas Tech during his first year and defeat West Virginia in Boulder as a sophomore.
- ** Came within a 57-yard field goal last November of going 2-0 against the Cornhuskers. (CU likely would have run out the clock if Alex Henery had not set a Nebraska school record with the boot, with 1:43 remaining).
- ** Is CU's all-time leader in career TD passes.

No, Cody isn't nearly as athletic at his replacement, sophomore Tyler Hansen. Also, Hansen has a stronger arm. And it was certainly time for a change.

I'm as anxious as anyone to see what Tyler can accomplish for himself and the team during the second half of the season. He was spectacular against Kansas. But Cody Hawkins had some good moments in a CU jersey that should not be forgotten.

PS: Other emails insist that Cody is really only 5-feet-9 at best and that Colorado has been fudging his height. Not so. He's legit 5-11. I'm 6-3, and when I stand next to Cody he even looks a bit taller than 5-11. That goes along what Cody and Dan Hawkins have been saying all along – that Cody is about 5-11 1/2.

It's not as tall as a coach would like in a quarterback, certainly. But Drew Brees has made a nice living in the NFL being about that size.

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<http://blogs.denverpost.com/sports/2009/10/20/cody-hawkins-had-his-moments-too/>

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2009

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Buffs' season on the brink

By Patrick Ridgell

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BOULDER — Colorado coach Dan Hawkins is coming off his program's biggest win of 2009, and the coach wants everyone to know he's not on cloud nine.

So when questions during his Tuesday news conference turned to the momentum beating Kansas generated, and what Saturday's game against Big 12 North-leading Kansas State means, the coach might have had the line of the year.

"It's just so funny in this thing; you go from, 'Oh my gosh the season's a disaster,' to, 'Holy smokes you're going to win the North!'" Hawkins said.

One big win does not mean all is well with the Buffs, who are 2-4, 1-1 in the Big 12. It's been an eventful first half of 2009, one that saw visiting fans from Colorado State stomp on the middle of Folsom Field after the Rams beat CU. It also saw angry CU fans place the athletic department "under attack," according to athletic director Mike Bohn, following an ugly loss at Toledo.

Then there was Saturday, when the Buffs, with a new starting quarterback and a swarming run defense, beat a ranked opponent to revive hope, and CU fans stormed Folsom Field to party.

Halfway home, and this thing could still go a lot of directions.

No midseason report on the Buffs would be complete without mention of their youth and inexperience, two traits that the program can't ever seem to shake. Maybe that inexperience, particularly along both lines and wide receiver, should have been given greater consideration last summer. Then hopes for a 10-win season that included no excuses would have been tempered.

But publicly, at least, they were not. And the Buffs have struggled. They are last in the Big 12 in scoring, yards and yards allowed, despite recent improvements in the run defense. Those aforementioned losses to CSU and Toledo, games the Buffs were supposed to win, might have dug them a hole too deep to escape.

Yet here we are. A pivotal game at Kansas State awaits Saturday, and if CU can finally win on the road, it'll be in first place in the Big 12 North with some winnable games remaining.

"Just because you lose doesn't mean you're going to continue to lose," Hawkins said. "Just because you win doesn't mean you're going to continue to win."

"We have a ton of things to improve on. In (the Kansas) game, we weren't perfect by any means. We won, but we can still do a better job of taking care of the football, we gave up too many big plays, and penalties here and there. There are a lot of places you can clean it up."

CU's run defense stoned Texas and Kansas the past two weeks. Special teams, except for the loss



Colorado's Markques Simas, right, makes a reception during the second quarter Saturday against Kansas. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**

Five key plays in 2009

1. BIG PICK: Quarterback Cody Hawkins threw an interception at Texas that safety Earl Thomas returned 92 yards for a touchdown. Not only did it give Texas a 24-14 lead when CU could have taken a third-quarter lead in Austin; it was the throw that led to Hawkins' benching and Tyler Hansen's insertion.

2. BIG HIT: CU was catching up to Colorado State when Scotty McKnight fumbled deep in Rams territory following a helmet-to-helmet hit from Elijah-Blu Smith. Officials did not call a foul on the play, and CU coaches never griped about it in public, knowing they had been beaten soundly that night. But the ramifications of that big hit are undeniable.

3. WHO HAD THE QB?: CU was on the comeback trail again at Toledo, having pulled to within two scores early in the fourth, when Rockets quarterback Aaron Opelt took off for a 61-yard touchdown run on third down. Toledo beat the Buffs 54-38.

4. MAKING THE PLAY: CU corner Cha'pelle Brown broke up a last-second pass in the end zone intended for Kansas receiver Dezmon Briscoe, sealing the Buffs' second win

at Texas, have been OK. The offense remains an adventure.

Changing quarterbacks from the experienced Cody Hawkins to the more-mobile Tyler Hansen piques interest. Its first game with Hansen produced 34 points. Granted, two CU drives started inside Kansas' 5. But when the Buffs trailed late, they drove the field and scored the winning touchdown.

It was the sort of demeanor with which they scored late, and then held on, to beat Kansas that boosts Hawkins' confidence. Some day this program will grow up. Maybe it's happening right now, before our very eyes.

"You just have to play it out," Hawkins said. "You have to bear yourself down and get into that week-to-week grind and focus that way. And you let it all play out."

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

of the season.

5. BAD BLOCK: CU led in the third quarter at Texas when Marquise Goodwin blocked a Buffs punt. Texas recovered in the end zone. CU never recovered.

Five Buffs to watch in second half

1. QB Tyler Hansen: His scrambling against Kansas scared Kansas State coach Bill Snyder.
2. TB Rodney Stewart: Speedy is proving he's one of the Big 12's best. Now, can he stay healthy?
3. CB Jimmy Smith: Good cornerback could become great with more starts.
4. DE Nick Kasa : Early injury slowed him, but he'll get plenty of time to play now.
5. WR Markques Simas: Finally showing the potential we thought he had.

The rest of the schedule

at Kansas State, Saturday: Buffs must figure out how to win on the road.

vs Missouri, Oct. 31: CU owes Tigers for past two embarrassments.

vs Texas A&M, Nov. 7: Aggies play lots of freshmen.

vs. Iowa State, Nov. 14: TB Alexander Robinson leads the Big 12 in rushing.

at Oklahoma State, Nov. 19: At least both teams will have a short week.

vs Nebraska, Nov. 27: Huskers struggling on offense, considering changes.

If these three things happen, Buffs go bowling

1. Hansen thrives: It's his show now; the early results were tantalizing.
2. The run defense keeps it up: It sure gets easier to rush the passer

when you know they aren't going to run.

3. Speedy stays healthy: Losing TB Rodney Stewart on offense could be a huge problem.

Patrick Ridgell

[Colorado Buffaloes](#)

Record: 2-4, 1-1 in Big 12

So much for Coach Dan Hawkins' grandiose self-imposed benchmark of 10 wins and no excuses. The Buffaloes disqualified themselves from that goal before the first month of the season was over, placing Hawkins on one of the hottest seats in the nation. Nationally televised losses to Colorado State, Toledo, West Virginia and Texas showed the Buffaloes struggling against athletic opponents -- not boding well for the rest of the season against the Big 12. But things seemingly changed when Hawkins benched his son, quarterback [Cody Hawkins](#). Backup [Tyler Hansen](#) engineered an impressive victory over Kansas last week that was clearly Colorado's top offensive performance of the season. The Buffaloes still rank 100th or worse in eight statistical categories including total offense, scoring defense, net punting, rushing and passing efficiency. They won't win their predicted 10 games, but a favorable schedule should keep them in the North Division title hunt longer than most would have expected earlier this season.



Most valuable offensive player, RB [Rodney Stewart](#): The undersized Stewart has been compared to Darren Sproles because of his shifty running style. He's been the most consistent offense weapon for the Buffaloes, rushing for 418 yards and five touchdowns. Since missing the Toledo game, he has responded by rushing for 100 yards or more in three of his next four games to give a spark to Colorado's flagging ground game.

Most valuable defensive player, LB [Jeff Smart](#): The heady Smart has been the Buffaloes leading tackler, producing 58 stops in six games. He's also notched five third-down stops, broken up three passes and notched a sack as the most consistent producer on the Buffaloes' defense. Smart will need some help if Colorado has any hopes of contending for a Big 12 title.

[Big 12](#), [Colorado Buffaloes](#), [Kansas Jayhawks](#), [Texas Longhorns](#), [Rodney Stewart](#), [Dan Hawkins](#), [Tyler Hansen](#), [Cody Hawkins](#), [Darren Sproles](#), [Jeff Smart](#), [Big 12 team overview 102009](#)

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Hansen to provide K-State defense with another challenge

By Justin Nutter

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Updated: Wednesday, October 21, 2009

Strong quarterback play has been the theme of the Big 12 Conference for quite some time. From Texas's Colt McCoy to KU's Todd Reesing to Oklahoma State's Zac Robinson, every Big 12 school seems focused on building its program around a solid signal-caller.

After last weekend, it appears Colorado, the next team on K-State's schedule, is no exception to that theory. While the Wildcats (4-3, 2-1 Big 12 Conference) were pounding Texas A&M, the Buffaloes (2-4, 1-1) were in the midst of upsetting then-No. 17 KU under the leadership of sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen. Earlier that week, Colorado head coach Dan Hawkins had announced he would be benching former starter Cody Hawkins — his son — for Hansen.

Needless to say, his plan worked out well.

Hansen exploited the Jayhawk defense, torching the unit for 209 yards of total offense and a pair of touchdowns en route to a 34-30 victory.

"If you watch the KU game, [Hansen] is all over the place," said Wildcat head coach Bill Snyder. "You watch the ballgame and you see big play after big play. They get him trapped and he gets out of it and gets the ball off.

"If you don't stay in coverage, then he's going to find somebody that's scot-free running around, and he can get the ball to them because he can throw it well."

The Wildcat defense held Aggie quarterback Jerrod Johnson — who entered last week's game ranked third nationally in total offense — to a 46.6-completion percentage while sacking him six times and recording three interceptions.

Sophomore safety Tysyn Hartman said the defense will need another strong showing to keep Hansen in check on Saturday.

"[Hansen] is an athletic guy," Hartman said. "He's a mix of different guys. He can run, can throw, can make guys miss in the pocket."

The Wildcats have some experience against Hansen prior to this weekend's meeting. Last season in Boulder, Colo., he replaced Cody Hawkins midway through the contest and led the Buffaloes to a tightly-contested 14-13 win. However, after viewing film, Hartman said Hansen is "considerably better" than he was a year ago.

Hansen, a native of Murrieta, Calif., shares a story similar to that of Wildcat quarterback Grant Gregory. Both were listed as backups at the beginning of the season, and their respective teams struggled. Once they were inserted into the starting lineups, the teams began to enjoy some success. Both are stronger runners than their counterparts, and both are capable of doing damage through the air.

Snyder said Hansen's dual-threat abilities make him harder to plan for from a coaching standpoint.

"That thins you out because you've got to have all your secondary people and your linebackers back in coverage," Snyder said. Sophomore defensive tackle Raphael Guidry echoed his coach's thoughts, saying the Wildcats will have to pay extra attention to the Buffalo signal-caller to leave Snyder Family Stadium with a win.

"[Hansen] is pretty good," Guidry said. "He's real mobile. He can throw and everything. We've got to contain him, keep him in the pocket,



Lisle Alderton

Senior defensive end Jeffrey Fitzgerald gets a hand on Texas A&M quarterback Jerrod Johnson during Saturday's 62-14 rout. Fitzgerald had 2.5 sacks and forced fumble in the game. The Wildcats will face another talented quarterback in Tyler Hansen when they take on Colorado Saturday.

and get to him as many times as we can. You have to put pressure on him."

The Wildcats will get that chance when they take the field against Colorado for the All-University Homecoming this weekend. Kickoff is slated for 11:30 a.m.

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