

CU Buffs` road woes continue with loss at Kansas State

Colorado 2-17 away from Folsom under Hawkins

Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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MANHATTAN, Kan. -- Last week was too good to be true.

Seven days after an inspired victory at home over a ranked opponent, the Colorado football team was sloppy and lethargic Saturday under a dull, gray sky at Kansas State.

The Buffs battled themselves as much as the Wildcats with a series of mental errors that led to field position trouble and ultimately to a 20-6 loss.

Four turnovers, eight penalties, a handful of dropped or overthrown passes and an inability to get the running game revved up doomed the Buffs on a day when it became even more clear how mediocre and up for grabs the Big 12 North Division is. The Buffs fell to 2-5 overall and 1-2 in conference play and are now entrenched as a long shot to reach the postseason.

"We got to rally," coach Dan Hawkins said. "That's not where you want to be. We got to rally."

The Buffs` road losing streak stretched to 10 games (loss against Florida State in Jacksonville included) with the two-year anniversary of their last road win coming Tuesday. Colorado is now 2-17 on the road under Hawkins, who seemed content to be vague about who will be the starting quarterback next week against Missouri in the annual homecoming game. Cody Hawkins replaced Tyler Hansen at the end of the first half because he is more experienced and adept at running the Buffs' two-minute offense. When it became clear in the second half that CU had to throw the ball to have any chance of winning, Hawkins replaced Hansen once again.

"We'll see," Dan Hawkins said regarding the starter next week. "Guys, I've told you before. We're going to do what it takes to try to win football games. How that all plays out, we'll see."

The Buffs, wearing all-white uniforms, were unable to build on momentum from scoring a touchdown on their 13-play opening drive. Rodney Stewart's two-yard run proved to be their only points of the day. Place-kicker Aric Goodman's extra point attempt clipped the right upright and bounced off in the wrong direction, which was the beginning of an early momentum shift.

CU took possession for the second time on its 4-yard line after punt return man Jason Espinoza made a mistake fielding a punt inside the 10.

Espinoza said afterward that he lost track of where he was on the field and should have let the ball go.

The error marked the beginning of a miserable day in field position. Colorado had 12 offensive possessions in the game with an averaging starting position of its 19-yard line. Kansas State had 14 offensive possessions with its average starting spot being its 47-yard line. That unbalance proved too much for the Buffs to overcome on the road.

"You talk to these guys all the time, and you have to have leadership from your guys who have been around a little bit," Hawkins said. "They just need to know, when you travel you've got to bring a little bit of extra juice and stay locked in there cause you don't have the momentum of your own crowd."

Kansas State took the lead early in the second quarter when running back Daniel Thomas trotted into the end zone through a gaping hole for a four-yard score, capping a six-play, 48-yard drive. Thomas finished the game with 20 carries for 145 yards.

CU had held its previous two opponents to 38 combined rushing yards.

CU gave the ball right back to the Wildcats two plays later when Hansen fumbled the snap from center Keenan Stevens. Kansas State capitalized with the second of two field goals from Josh Cherry.

Espinoza, who is playing with a broken thumb, made another mistake later, fumbling a punt and giving the ball back to the Wildcats on the

CU end of the field. That error led to the final points of the game when KSU quarterback Grant Gregory scored on a five-yard run.

The Buffs might have held the Wildcats to a field goal on the short drive, but defensive linemen Curtis Cunningham and Marquez Herrod both jumped offsides on third-down-and-two to gift wrap a first-and-goal.

It was debatable afterward, which head coach was more disappointed in his team's performance. Despite the Wildcats being in first place in the North Division with their first 3-1 start to conference play since 2000, coach Bill Snyder focused on the ugly performance and the need to get better down the stretch.

"If that was the only deal, I would be a happy camper," Snyder said of his team's place in the standings. "But that is not what we are about and that is not what we are trying to be about. And I do not want them to feel good about playing poorly or coaching poorly."

Colorado continuously found itself in long yardage third-down situations because it never found rhythm in its running game after the first drive. The Buffs converted five of 16 third downs in the game with average distance needed for a first down being nine yards.

Hansen said the offense lost its way after he threw behind tight end Riar Geer on a third-down play that ended the team's second drive.

"We didn't play assignment football after that," he said. "It was really frustrating and disappointing because we should have won that game."

After a strong performance in his first start this season last week, Hansen completed seven of 14 passes for only 89 yards. Cody Hawkins didn't fare much better, going 10-for-23 for 95 yards and two interceptions. Kansas State players dropped several other passes that could have been intercepted.

Kansas State also held Stewart to 49 yards on 16 carries.

"You would love to run the ball more certainly," Dan Hawkins said. "I think had we hit a few more throws and done a few more things that way, it would have opened up a little bit and that would have helped us."

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Woelk: Stubborn streak still big problem for Buffaloes

Neill Woelk Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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From the Dept. of Misery Loves Company, we provide this public service to Colorado Buffalo fans this morning:

Check out the Big 12 standings. You are not alone.

The three teams considered favorites to win the North this year? All three are keeping the Buffs company in the basement, with just two league wins between them. Guaranteed, fans of Missouri (0-3 in conference play), Nebraska (1-2) and Kansas (1-2) aren't feeling any better than Buff fans this morning, and they all have something in common:

They all want to know how in the name of Bill Snyder the Kansas State Wildcats have climbed to the top of the division.

But one team not asking any questions today is Iowa State. ISU may not be leading the division, but the giddy meter is still off the charts in Ames. The Cyclones are enjoying the view from second place, thanks to a rare win at Nebraska, where they forced an incredible eight -- yep, eight -- Husker turnovers. (Anybody want to trade places today with Nebraska O-coordinator Shawn Watson? Didn't think so.)

But back to the Buffs, a team that clearly isn't comfortable with the mere hint of prosperity. On a day when they could have laid claim to being a legitimate contender in the North, they instead laid an egg. Plop. Right there on KSU's artificial turf for the whole world to see.

Fumbles, interceptions, penalties -- pick your favorite mistake and the Buffs committed it. If the "shot themselves in foot" cliché were a reality, the Buffs wouldn't have a toe to stand on today.

Even more frustrating for CU followers is that the defense again played well enough to win. Half of Kansas State's points came on the heels of Buff turnovers, and it could have been much, much worse had CU's defense not held up its end.

The defense gave the Buffs a chance. The offense and special teams threw it away.

Folks, it's inexplicable and inexcusable that a team with so much to gain would play so poorly. Blame it on coaching, blame it on execution, blame it on the game plan -- you just about can't go wrong.

Normally, that would be enough drama for any team. The act of tossing away a chance at the division lead is usually ample to fill the turmoil department.

But not for the Buffs. Nope. CU coach Dan Hawkins managed to add some melo to the drama by resurrecting what we all had hoped was a dead quarterback controversy.

Bad move.

Hawk should know better.

"I've told you before. We're going to do what it takes to try to win football games," Hawkins told reporters after the game. "How that all plays out, we'll see."

But thing is, everybody has seen. They saw Tyler Hansen do things against Kansas a week ago that Cody Hawkins will never be able to do.

And they saw Cody do just enough on Saturday to remind us what he can and can't do.

He can get hot and complete a string of passes, which he did by taking the Buffs deep into Kansas State territory.

But he can also throw interceptions, which he did, twice. While Buff tight end Riar Geer took the blame for the interception that sealed the Buffs' fate, fact is KSU very nearly picked Hawkins off at least twice earlier in the drive.

Understand that quarterback problems were by no means the only worries for the Buffs on Saturday. Special teams, lack of a running game, CU's inability to get its best athletes on the field on offense -- all those things played a role.

But the QB issue is a microcosm of the problems.

Honestly? This was not a game Hansen was going to win down the stretch. His inexperience showed as he struggled for most of the afternoon.

But the only way for him to get experience is to play. The more he sees of those situations, the better he'll be. Meanwhile, Hawkins' argument that the Buffs will do "what it takes to try to win football games" loses steam when the alternative produces no better results.

Two weeks ago, I wrote that Hansen deserves the chance to play out the season, to get the same opportunity that Cody Hawkins received.

But it's more than that. Hawkins owes it to every one of his players to give Hansen that same chance.

The public perception is that the issue is about Dan Hawkins' son. It's not.

Rather, it's about Dan Hawkins' stubborn insistence on proving he is right, and doing so at the expense of his team. It's a stubborn streak that is pervasive throughout the offense. It's an insistence upon trying to force players into a system rather than adapting a system to the players. It's an insistence upon not putting the best athletes on the field while apparently trying to make a point by using less-talented players -- and we're not talking about only the quarterback.

That's the problem that needs to be corrected. If Hawkins truly cares about the program -- and not simply about proving himself right -- he will do what all good leaders do.

He will adjust and make the right call.

One week ago, Kansas coach Mark Mangino was effusive with his praise of Hansen.

"The quarterback for Colorado was the difference maker today," Mangino said. "I think they found their quarterback, that's for sure."

What was clear to Mangino also seems to be clear the vast majority of folks who follow Colorado football.

But what isn't clear today is whether Dan Hawkins will shed his stubborn streak and do what is best for his team.

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McKnight: Players must take responsibility

Buff receiver points to lack of discipline, focus

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

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MANHATTAN, Kan. -- Colorado wide receiver Scotty McKnight ripped at his chin strap over and over again Saturday on the field at Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

Frustration boiled out as opportunities were missed and coaches called for the punt team seven times. In the aftermath of a disappointing loss to Kansas State in which CU managed only six points, the fourth-year junior wide receiver might have become the source of what he said his team needs most now -- leadership.

"It's going to come down to leaders on the team," McKnight said outside the somber visitors locker room. "At this point, it's not about the coaches anymore. It's about our team taking pride in this program and this school and saying, 'We're not going to be at the bottom of the conference.' We just need to find out how to win football games."

McKnight provided the most candid and straightforward comments from anyone in black and gold about what went wrong in a winnable game for a team only a week removed from a big win over Kansas. It was the 10th consecutive road loss for CU and the 11th consecutive time the Buffs have lost outside the state of Colorado, including the 2007 Independence Bowl.

McKnight didn't have all the answers, but he didn't have many excuses, either. He called on his teammates on offense to do more to help a defense that limited KSU to 20 points and played pretty well, despite being forced to play with its back against the wall in bad field position all day.

"It's definitely tough," he said. "You got a bit of confidence there, and, I mean it's frustrating. Part of it, I know we have a good football team in terms of talent and players. This is a definite blow coming off a big win against Kansas. We still have a lot of conference play left so we have to find a way to turn it around and just flat out win. That's what it comes down to. We have to find out how to win football games. That's what this game is all about. All the other stuff doesn't matter. It's about wins and losses."

The Buffs committed eight penalties Saturday on a day when mental mistakes seemed to be contagious. They came into the game as one of the most-penalized teams in major college football through the first half of the season. They were averaging 9.5 penalties a game and nearly met the mark against the Wildcats.

"It comes down to discipline and focus and I think there comes times out there where guys get unfocused and maybe get too caught up in the game," McKnight said when asked about the Buffs' eight penalties. "Part of playing at this level is you've just got to stay focused and know your assignment and take care of only what you can do."

"You don't try and do other people's jobs. That starts with the snap count and it carries on to other parts of the game. It comes down to practicing the way you want to play and really focusing. If you're jumping off sides, if you're holding or if that is happening to you, then that is something you have to work on extra at practice."

McKnight caught six passes for 61 yards and once again appeared to be the only real threat for the Buffs as a receiver in the passing game. He moved into sixth place on the Buffs all-time receptions list with 130 catches, surpassing Charles E. Johnson (1990-93, 127), and he is now eighth all-time in receiving yards with 1,436, passing Monte Huber.

He said when the offense drove down the field to score a touchdown on its first possession he thought a big day might have been in store.

The team fell apart instead at the first sign of adversity on the road and couldn't get itself back on track.

"We just got stagnant. That's on us as an offense. We've got to help our defense out," McKnight said. "They played pretty well for the most part. Special teams, we've got to do everything right in all phases of the game. The Big 12 is a tough conference and this is a good football team. So hats off to them, but we've got to come out and execute better. We've got to be smarter. That's got to be one thing we thrive at. We've got to be a smart football team that doesn't make many technique mistakes. We can't make many mistakes. That's just it. That's got to be our deal."

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Hawkins may stay as 2-minute QB

Kyle Ringo
Boulder Daily Camera

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MANHATTAN, Kan. - Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen looked more polished and ready for the college game in leading the Buffs to a win a week ago at home. But in his first road start of the season on Saturday at Kansas State, he resembled the confused true freshman who debuted for the Buffs last season in a win over the Wildcats.

The meeting with the purple people wasn't so happy for him this year. Hansen admitted he missed reads in the passing game and looked to be anxious to run at times, just as he was during intermittent action in five games last season.

Hansen completed seven of 14 passes for 89 yards and surrendered a fumble in the second quarter that led to a field goal before giving way to junior Cody Hawkins just before halftime and again in the second half.

"I think what happened there is Tyler was just waiting too long," offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said of Hansen's troubles in the passing game. "There are small windows there and he's got to understand those windows are going to close very, very fast."

Hansen said he wasn't surprised at all when coaches put Cody Hawkins in late into the game twice. He said the team came into the game and last week's home game against Kansas knowing that Hawkins would play if the Buffs needed to work in the 2-minute drill. Coaches said Hawkins' experience makes him better suited to running the Buffs' "Indy" package.

Cody Hawkins ended up playing the majority of the second half because the Buffs were playing from behind, which led to questions afterward about who would be the starter next week when Missouri comes to Boulder for homecoming weekend.

Coach Dan Hawkins wasn't definitive in answering the question, saying his coaching staff would do whatever needs to be done to help the team win games. Offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said he planned on Hansen starting next week, but Hawkins will continue to run the no-huddle offense when it is needed.

"Cody is going to be our guy when we go no-huddle," Kiesau said. "He's a little older, a little bit more mature. He's been in those situations and done that and been successful at it. So we kind of decided when we do go no-huddle, he'll be our guy. That's why we did it."

Cody Hawkins led one long drive in the second half, but his numbers were on par with Hansen's. And that long drive ended with Hawkins throwing one of his two interceptions into triple coverage in the end zone.

Why not let Hansen run the no-huddle and learn on the fly?

"Well, again, you're saying if he makes mistakes, we're affecting the team, and we've got to do what's best for the team," Kiesau said. "And for that situation, Cody is best."

Cody Hawkins respectfully declined interview requests after the game. Hansen said he didn't have a conversation with coaches about his starting status in the locker room.

"I'm just going to go into it and prepare for Missouri," Hansen said. "We're going to want them pretty bad. Right now, it's disappointing the way I played and the way we played. We're going to go back and we're going to battle back a little bit."

Espinoza takes blame

Walk-on wide receiver and punt return man Jason Espinoza took responsibility for two costly mistakes he made in Saturday's loss.

Espinoza lost track of where he was on the field when he chose to field a first-quarter punt inside his 10-yard line. He later fumbled a punt that led to a Kansas State touchdown. Espinoza has been playing with a broken thumb in a cast, which has kept him out of the rotation at wide receiver on offense.

"I'm not really going to blame it on my hand," Espinoza said. "It's more of me. I've been wanting to make a big play, instead of just using my

technique. I took off before I caught the ball. So that's all on me."

Espinoza was benched after his fumble in favor of wide receiver Scotty McKnight. When asked who would return punts next week, coach Dan Hawkins said, "We'll see."

Road woes

Colorado players and coaches had no answers for why they continue to struggle on the road, following Saturday's loss. Players said they noticed a lack of energy on their sideline that never occurs during games at Folsom Field.

"I definitely think it wasn't as electric of an atmosphere as it was when we play at home," senior captain Marcus Burton said. "So when things do go wrong, it's more imperative that we as a sideline get into it and get everyone more encouraged."

Hungry cats

The Buffs haven't fared well against their next opponent. CU is 0-3 under Hawkins against Missouri and has lost the past two years to the Tigers by the combined scored of 113-10, including a 58-0 shutout last season.

Making matters worse, the Tigers will come to Boulder next week every bit as hungry for a victory as CU. Missouri is on a three-game losing streak and was stomped at home 41-7 Saturday by No. 3 Texas.

Special teams focus

CU came into the game ranked No. 4 nationally in kickoff coverage. Kansas State entered the game ranked No. 7 in kickoff returns.

The Wildcats won the battle with two returns for 71 yards. In the first six games this year, a CU opponent had not started a drive beyond the 40-yard line following a kickoff, but the Wildcats ended that streak with a 41-yard kickoff return on the second half.

Missing in action

One of the most ballyhooed additions to this year's CU team was junior college transfer Andre Simmons at wide receiver.

But Simmons continues to be a non-factor in the CU offense seven games into the season. He was credited with one catch for 44 yards in the season opener against Colorado State and hasn't been heard from again in the offense.

Simmons played in Saturday's game, but did not have a pass thrown his way. He chose during recruiting to continue his college career at Colorado instead of an opportunity to play at Kansas State.

Givens out again

Offensive lineman Bryce Givens practiced all week with his team but didn't even make the trip to Kansas State. Givens has declined to be interviewed for several weeks and the only official word released about what is keeping him off the field is that he is dealing with personal issues. Givens began the season as the Buffs' starting right tackle as a redshirt freshman. Ryan Miller started at right tackle Saturday with Blake Behrens filling Miller's spot at right guard.

Notable

Redshirt freshman safety Ray Polk started the game and nearly doubled his season total in tackles. He came into the game with 13 total tackles to his credit and made 11 total stops against the Wildcats. ... Jeff Smart led the Buffs with 12 total tackles, giving him 70 for the season, or an average of 10 per game. ... CU officials reported about 10,000 tickets remained for the Missouri game earlier in the week.

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cu football

CU Buffaloes' rocky road continues with loss at Kansas State

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

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Buffaloes linebacker Jeff Smart, left, reaches out to recover a fumble by KSU quarterback Grant Gregory to stop a Wildcats drive at the CU 4 during the fourth quarter Saturday. Buffs cornerback Jimmy Smith also closes in on the play. (Charlie Riedel, The Associated Press)

MANHATTAN, Kan. — That buzz circulating around the state last week turned out to be nothing more than a chain saw on temporary idle before continuing to carve up Colorado's football season.

The Buffaloes had it all on their plate Saturday like early Halloween candy. Momentum off beating then-No. 17 Kansas. The return of dynamic quarterback Tyler Hansen. A wide-open Big 12 North Division. A Kansas State program

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still finding its way under an old icon.

Facing a fork in the road, Colorado veered off Turnaround Boulevard and drove straight down Disaster Lane. The Buffaloes continued their road ineptness under Dan Hawkins and returned to general haplessness this season in an ugly 20-6 loss.

No area of the team

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escaped with its pride. The Buffaloes (2-5, 1-2 Big 12) scored on their first drive, then didn't reach Wildcats territory again until their last one.

Special teams bombed. Rodney Stewart looked like just another tailback, with only 49 yards rushing. Cody Hawkins replaced Hansen, creating a potential question mark at that position. The defense, while not a sieve, still gave up 204 yards rushing, 145 to junior Daniel Thomas, a converted juco quarterback.

For goodness' sake, the Buffs even had a delay-of-game penalty on the first play of the second half.

"It's definitely tough," said receiver Scotty McKnight, who had a game-high six catches for 61 yards. "It's frustrating. I know we have a good football team in terms of talent and players. We have to put it together.

"This is definitely a blow."

If you follow the Hawkins era, however, losing here should not be a surprise. In his fourth year, the coach is 2-17 on the road with 10 straight road losses. Kansas State (5-3, 3-1), in first place under returning coach Bill Snyder, picked the right opponent for homecoming.

Then again, Bill Snyder Family Stadium isn't exactly Tiger Stadium. Colorado's special teams played scared as if in a haunted house.

Punt returner Jason Espinoza, playing with a broken thumb, had three returns for zero yards and a fumble. Colorado allowed a 41-yard kickoff return. Matt DiLallo couldn't convert a fake punt from the Buffs 9 and Aric Goodman missed his first extra point in 20 attempts.

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Seven times Colorado started drives inside its 20, although the last came on Kansas State's lone turnover. Espinoza's fumble was big. Down 13-6 in the second quarter, he fumbled a 45-yard punt at the Buffs 20, leading to quarterback Grant Gregory's 5-yard touchdown for the lead that stood the rest of the game.

"I'm not going to blame the hand," said Espinoza, who was replaced by McKnight in the second half. "It's more me. I've been wanting to make a big play instead of using my technique. I took off before I caught the ball."

Bad field position was no friend to an offense that had no spark. Hansen had trouble spotting open receivers in the brief times they were open, finishing 7-of-14 for 89 yards.

"Tyler was waiting too long," offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said. "There were some small windows there, and he has to understand they're going to close really, really fast."

Colorado's window lasted one drive, its first. Hansen drove the team 71 yards on 13 plays with Stewart scoring from the 2 for a 6-3 lead. After that, Kansas State changed its rush pattern and the Buffs' first-half drives ended with punt, fumbled snap, punt, punt, fumbled punt, interception.

"We just couldn't execute," Kiesau said. "It just (came) down to guys catching the ball, throwing the ball and we had a hard time running the ball."

The lone bright spot was a pass defense that held South Florida transfer Gregory to only 80 yards passing. However, the Buffs couldn't stop Thomas, whose 35-yard run led to a field goal to open the scoring and his 21-yarder with a pitch to the 14 set up his 4-yard scoring run for a 10-6 lead.

Colorado's inside rail on the division has turned into a prayer for a .500 season. Athletic director Mike Bohn would not comment afterward. However, McKnight did. Pointedly.

"It's going to come down to leaders on the team," he said. "At this point, it's not about the coaches anymore. It's about our team taking pride in this program and this school and saying, 'We're not going to be at the bottom of the conference.'"

"We need to find out how to win football games. It's that cut and dried."

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Road worriers

CU has 10 straight road losses:

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Kansas State Oct. 24 20-6
Texas Oct. 10 38-14
West Virginia Oct. 1 35-24
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Three questions

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

1. Which team, Colorado or Kansas State, will build on the momentum and confidence it gained from big victories the previous week?

Not only did CU fail to build on any momentum, the Buffaloes might have lost all that they had. After failing to score more than one touchdown Saturday, Colorado players looked stunned and beaten as they headed for the buses. This was a golden opportunity missed.

2. In his second 2009 start, can CU sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen continue his great escapes from pass rushers? Hansen was sacked four times, but avoided four or five others with his quick feet. But unlike against Kansas, Hansen couldn't make anything happen this time when he scrambled. Either receivers didn't get open or Hansen didn't spot them in time. Kansas State didn't let Hansen turn the corner.

3. Can the CU coverage teams keep Kansas

State return specialist deluxe Brandon Banks under wraps? Colorado did a decent job of keeping the ball away from Banks. He took a first-half kickoff 41 yards, but didn't get another opportunity. On punt returns, Banks found almost no room, netting 10 yards on three tries. But the directional punting by Matt DiLallo came at a cost. DiLallo averaged just 37.4 yards on seven boots.

Key stat

60: Colorado's rushing yards on 31 carries. That included four sacks for minus-34 yards.

Key play

Jason Espinoza's fumbled punt at the Colorado 20 in the second quarter. Long snapper Corey Adams, from Lewis-Palmer High, recovered for K-State, and three plays later, Grant Gregory scored from the 5 for the 20-6 lead.

John Henderson, The Denver Post

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cu football

CU coach Hawkins noncommittal about next game's starter at QB

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 10/25/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT



Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen (9) tries to escape a group of Kansas State defenders during the first quarter Saturday in Manhattan, Kan. (Charlie Riedel, The Associated Press)

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Colorado junior quarterback Cody Hawkins played three series Saturday in relief of sophomore starter Tyler Hansen when CU went to its hurry-up, no-huddle offense. Whether that means the quarterback job could be up for grabs this week, Hansen said he has no idea.

Head coach Dan Hawkins was noncommittal after the 20-6 loss to Kansas State when asked if Hansen will be the starter for the upcoming homecoming game against Missouri, saying only, "We'll see, yeah."

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It would be a surprise if Hansen did not start against Missouri. Whatever the case, the Californian said his preparation this week would not be affected.

"Missouri got us last year 58-0. We're going to want them pretty bad," Hansen said. "Right now, it's disappointing the way I played and we played. It's just frustrating and disappointing. But we're going back to work."

Cody Hawkins declined postgame interview requests.

Hansen was making his second start of the season and led Colorado to a touchdown on its opening drive, which went 71 yards. The offense had just 173 yards the rest of the game.

"We just weren't making plays. We just weren't making a lot of plays," Dan Hawkins said. "It was a combination of a lot of little things. We're just trying to get continuity."

Hansen finished 7-of-14 passing for 89 yards with no sacks and no TD passes. A week earlier, Hansen threw for 175 yards and become the hero in CU's 34-30 upset of then-No. 17 Kansas.

"We just didn't execute," Hansen said Saturday. "There is always one guy missing an assignment. Kansas State did everything we expected them to do. It's pretty much on us."

Hansen said the plan was for Cody Hawkins to get into the game if the offense went no-huddle. That also had been the plan against Kansas,

Hansen said, but the Buffaloes never went to the hurry-up offense against the Jayhawks.

"He's more comfortable doing that. That's his deal," Hansen said.

"It had nothing to do with (Hansen)," offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said. "Cody's going to be our guy when we go no-huddle."

Kiesau said Hansen needed to "pull the trigger a little quicker" and look for receivers when he starts to scramble away from pass rushers.

"There's a small window there, and he's waiting too long," the coordinator said.

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THE DENVER POST

cu football briefs

CU Buffs "don't get enough energy" on road

Posted: 10/25/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT



Colorado running back Rodney Stewart dives past Kansas State linebacker Ulla Pomele, left, and defensive back Troy Butler to score the Buffs' lone points of the game during the first quarter.
(Charlie Riedel, The Associated Press)

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Sophomore tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart was as disheartened as any Colorado player Saturday after the 20-6 loss to Kansas State. At the college level, Stewart has never celebrated a road victory.

Colorado has now lost 10 straight road games, including the 2008 loss to Florida State at the not-exactly-neutral site of Jacksonville, Fla. Dan Hawkins is 2-17 in road games, with both wins (against Baylor and Texas Tech) coming in 2007.

"I don't think our players like playing on the road as much," Stewart said Saturday before heading home. "It's something to do with (not having home) fans. We just don't get enough energy on the sideline. There's a lot of things going on, on the road. We need to fix that."

Junior defensive end Marquez Herrod also was scratching his head.

"Every guy is different," Herrod said. "I like being away. I like coming into a stadium and being hated. I like playing hard and being hated when I make a sack."

"You know, maybe some guys play differently."

Tough sledding.

After running the ball effectively against Kansas a week earlier, CU netted 60 rushing yards on 31 attempts. That included minus-8 yards by sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen, who was sacked four times.

"It's hard when you're running on first down and then you're stuck in second-and-12," offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said.

Flag fest.

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THE DENVER POST

Colorado was whistled for eight penalties for 69 yards. Two holding penalties in the first half were particularly costly.

"Part of playing at this level is, you have to stay focused and know your assignment," junior wideout Scott McKnight said. "You need to take care of only what you can do. That starts with the snap count and carries over to other parts of the game."

Footnotes.

Kansas State is 3-1 in conference play for the first time since 2000. . . . The only CU injury reported was a bruised knee suffered by junior linebacker B.J. Beatty. He is listed as day to day. . . . With six receptions, McKnight moved past Charles E. Johnson (1990-93, 127) into sixth place on the school's career list with 130 catches.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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Longmont, Colorado
Thursday, November 12,
2009

Publish Date: 10/25/2009

Errors hound CU in ugly loss

Bufs offer few answers in another rough road game

By Patrick Ridgell

© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

MANHATTAN, Kan. — The Colorado Buffaloes traveled to Kansas State believing they could break through on the road, place themselves in the thick of the Big 12 North race and build off last week's revival over Kansas.

Umm. No.

A comedy of CU errors on offense and special teams robbed the Buffs of their chances, making them appear to lack the skill and poise it takes to win on the road, in a 20-6 loss Saturday to an opponent that isn't exactly beating its chest today. More on that in a bit.

When this mess finally, mercifully, concluded, the Buffs' hopes for success in 2009 had taken a hit from which they might not be able to recover. They are 2-5, 1-2 Big 12, and need to win four of their final five to reach bowl eligibility.

Including the 2007 Independence Bowl, they are 2-18 outside the state of Colorado during coach Dan Hawkins' tenure. They have lost 11 straight outside the borders, including the bowl. They are 21/2 games behind Kansas State (5-3, 3-1) in the Big 12 North.

CU's final gasp ended in the arms of Kansas State safety Emmanuel Lamur, who intercepted Cody Hawkins' pass in the end zone with 3 minutes, 9 seconds to play. It was a pass thrown late and into triple coverage for tight end Riar Geer as the Buffs desperately tried to rally. It was also their fourth turnover on a mistake-filled day.

Hawkins relieved starting quarterback Tyler Hansen late in each half because, according to offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau, he has a firmer grasp of CU's 2-minute offense, which the Buffs were forced to run in each instance. Dan Hawkins answered "we'll see" when asked whether Hansen will return to the starting spot next week against Missouri (11:30 a.m., FSN).

For those who might wonder, he added this: "We're going to do what it takes to win football games; how that plays out, we'll see."

Through a member of CU's sports information department, Cody Hawkins "politely" declined interview requests following the loss. Hansen said he had not been apprised of his starting status.

While the Buffs appear to have many problems beyond quarterback, the Wildcats have problems, too. Kansas State coach Bill Snyder said he was "angry" after the loss, and observed that his program was "blessed" that CU committed a "substantial amount of penalties" and dropped a "number of throws."

That ought to make the Buffs feel better, huh?



Colorado's Marques Simas can't come away with a Cody Hawkins pass as he trips on a play while under pressure from Kansas State's Joshua Moore during the fourth quarter in Manhattan, Kan., on Saturday. The Buffs lost 20-6.

Joshua Buck/Times-Call

KANSAS ST. 20, COLORADO 6

Colorado

6000—6

Kansas St.

31700—20

First Quarter

KSt—FG Cherry 25, 10:49.

Col—Stewart 2 run (kick failed), 5:39.

Second Quarter

KSt—Dan.Thomas 4 run (Cherry kick), 13:19.

KSt—FG Cherry 27, 11:24.

KSt—Gregory 5 run (Cherry kick), 1:11.

“That is not what we are about, and that is not what we are trying to be about,” the winning coach said of his team’s performance.

A game that started ugly never improved. Neither team scored a point after halftime. Kansas State was one-dimensional on offense, completing only 9 of 18 passes for 80 yards. Compounding CU’s frustration was the notion that was a game it could’ve won. The Buffs looked numb as they emerged from their locker room. Words to describe their frustration weren’t flowing.

“I can’t really say what happened,” tailback Rodney Stewart said. “They just played a better game than we did.”

Said Hansen: “It’s bad; it’s disappointing. I can’t really explain it much more.”

The Wildcats gained 204 yards on the ground. CU had held its past two opponents to 38. On its first 13 rushes Saturday, Kansas State ran for 111 yards.

CU scored its lone touchdown with a 71-yard drive the first time it had the ball. The rest of the day, the Buffs gained 173 yards. They punted seven times in addition to turning it over four times.

Special teams weren’t much better. Kick returner Jason Espinoza fumbled a punt return late in the second quarter that put the Wildcats at CU’s 20. They scored four plays later, shortly after converting on third-and-2 when CU’s Curtis Cunningham and Marquez Herrod jumped offside.

In 12 possessions, CU’s average starting position was its own 19-yard-line. Kansas State averaged starting on its own 47.

Espinoza also fielded a punt at CU’s 4 and was immediately tackled. He said after the game he thought he was on the 10 when he grabbed it.

If it was just one or two miscues that cost CU on Saturday, maybe a quick-fix to what’s going wrong in 2009 wouldn’t be out of the question. But when the opponent is underwhelming and the Buffs still can’t figure it out, those dazed looks on the players’ faces might provide the only answer that matters. Sometimes the Buffs play well at home, but on the road, things happen that leave them confused. No answers are coming, and the Buffs have two road games left.

“You talk to these guys all the time, and you have to have leadership from the guys that have been around. They have to know when you travel, you have to bring a little extra juice and stay locked in,” Hawkins said.

Said Stewart: “Our players, I don’t think they like playing on the road as much. It’s something with the fans, and we just don’t get as much energy on the sidelines. There’s a lot of things (going wrong) playing on the road, and we need to fix it.”

How?

“I don’t know.”

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

A—42,019.

CUKSU

First downs

15 14

Rushes-yards

31-60 42-204

Passing

184 80

Comp-Att-Int

17-37-2 9-18-0

Return Yards

(-3) 10

Punts-Avg.

7-37.4 7-33.4

Fumbles-Lost

3-2 1-1

Penalties-Yards

8-69 9-69

Time of Possession

25:43 34:17

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Colorado, Stewart 16-49, DiLallo 1-8, Sumler 2-7, C.Hawkins 1-4, Hansen 11-(minus 8). Kansas St., Dan.Thomas 20-145, Gregory 11-27, K.Valentine 6-21, Banks 2-15, Team 3-(minus 4).

PASSING—Colorado, C.Hawkins 10-23-2-95, Hansen 7-14-0-89. Kansas St., Gregory 9-18-0-80.

RECEIVING—Colorado, McKnight 6-61, Geer 3-42, Deehan 3-18, Simas 2-24, Stewart 1-17, Lockridge 1-13, Ebner 1-9. Kansas St., Banks 3-14, Snipes 2-33, Dan.Thomas 2-18,

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Thursday, November 12,
2009

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Buffs' special teams suffer

By Patrick Ridgell
© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Colorado's special teams had a bad game Saturday.

During CU's 20-6 loss at Kansas State, CU returner Jason Espinoza fumbled one punt that set the Wildcats up for their second touchdown of the day. And while the Buffs' offense was unable to muster much most of the day, part of its problem was starting field position. CU averaged its 19; Kansas State its 47.

Two plays especially contributed to that statistic. Espinoza caught one punt at his 4-yard line and said after the game he thought he was at the 10. He was tackled immediately. And punter Matt DiLallo tried to run for a first down on fourth-and-10 from CU's 9 in the middle of the fourth quarter. He gained eight.

"It's rough," quarterback Tyler Hansen said about CU's field position.

"You have to have those long, sustained drives, and that's what (Kansas State) did."

Espinoza said trainers are placing a cast on his broken thumb, and then an extra-large glove over it. He remains out of CU's wide receiver rotation, but he said he will test his hand this week to see if he can catch passes. He hopes to return to the rotation Saturday against Missouri (11:30 a.m., FSN). On the fumble, Espinoza said his broken thumb was not to blame. He said special teams coach Kent Riddle has been stressing that Espinoza just stick to what he can do. He said he did not take the advice on that play.

"It was me," Espinoza said. "I wanted to make a play instead of using my technique. I took off before I caught the ball. That's all on me."

Espinoza said the punt he fielded at the 4 was a mental mistake.

"I thought I was on the 10 when I turned around and caught it," Espinoza said. "I thought my feet were on the 20 (at the start of the play), but they were actually on the 15. "I'm real frustrated."

Receiver Scotty McKnight replaced Espinoza as CU's punt returner after Espinoza's fumble. Head coach Dan Hawkins would not say if that move is permanent or if Espinoza will re-assume the role next week.

"I think Jason just lost confidence after the one," Hawkins said.

Kansas State's two kick returns went for 3 and 41 yards. Saturday marked the first time a CU opponent had started a drive after a kickoff beyond its 40 in 2009. CU entered ranked fourth in the nation in kick return defense, holding teams to 16.6 yards per try. Kansas State entered ranked seventh nationally with an average kick return of 27.9 yards per game.

CU did not try a field goal. Kicker Aric Goodman missed his lone extra point of the day. He had made 26 in a row entering.

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



Kansas State's Daniel Thomas has no trouble eluding Colorado's Cha'pelle Brown en route to a 10-yard gain in the fourth quarter in Manhattan, Kan., on Saturday. Thomas rushed for 145 yards on 20 carries against the Buffaloes' defense. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

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Longmont, Colorado
Thursday, November 12,
2009

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Penalties still a problem for CU

By Patrick Ridgell

© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

MANHATTAN, Kan. — You won't see many football teams do what Colorado did Saturday.

During its 20-6 loss at Kansas State, the Buffs' offense committed a delay of game on the first play from scrimmage in the third quarter. Quarterback Tyler Hansen said the delay resulted from an unsuccessful attempt to draw Kansas State offsides.

Usually, offenses have ample time to get to the line and snap the ball in such situations. This time, it was a symptom of a bigger problem for CU on Saturday.

The Buffs finished with eight penalties for 69 yards. It wasn't near the 20 penalties they had against Texas two weeks earlier, but still enough to be a problem, especially holding calls on offensive linemen that put them in difficult situations.

"It's hard to tell, it really is," head coach Dan Hawkins said. "Some guys are not paying attention to stuff." Asked if the Buffs can expect to run for their mistakes, quarterback Tyler Hansen said, "I think that might happen tomorrow." "It's just a lack of focus, I guess," Hansen continued. "We need to clean that up; that's killing us real bad."

CU entered ninth in the Big 12 with 57 penalties, almost 10 per game, for 79.2 yards per game.

Kansas State committed nine for 69.

QUARTERBACK TALK: CU used Cody Hawkins to run its 2-minute offense at the end of each half Saturday. He was in for three drives and threw two picks; both coming in situations he had to force a pass.

Head coach Dan Hawkins answered only with "we'll see" when asked if Hansen will start Saturday against Missouri (11:30 a.m., FSN).

Offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau made it sound like Hansen will start.

"Cody is our guy when we go no huddle," Kiesau said. "He's older, more mature, been in those situations and been successful at it."

Hansen did not build on the success of his first start of 2009. He went 7-for-14 for 89 yards and ran 11 times for a net of minus-8. Kansas State sacked him four times and put him under pressure most of the day.

Kiesau said Hansen waited too long to make throws Saturday when receivers broke open.

"There were small windows there and he has to understand those windows are going to close very, very fast," Kiesau said.

Receiver Scotty McKnight said the receivers were open, but Hansen was under a lot of pressure. "It was hard on him; we just have to figure it out," McKnight said.



Colorado head coach Dan Hawkins takes a moment as he finds his Buffaloes deep in their own territory and having a difficult time moving the football in the fourth quarter against the Kansas State defense in Manhattan, Kan., on Saturday. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

Said Hansen: "A couple of times I was late on my reads; a couple of times there were issues."

O-LINE ISSUES: Bryce Givens did not make the trip. CU listed him as its starting right tackle for Saturday in this week's press notes.

Givens missed his third game of the season for what CU is calling "personal reasons." Givens has declined the Times-Call's interview requests in recent weeks.

Ryan Miller started at right tackle and Matt Bahr at right guard, where Miller usually starts.

Keenan Stevens started and played center Saturday.

INJURY REPORT: The only injury CU reported following the game was a knee contusion suffered by linebacker B.J. Beatty.

Tailback Darrell Scott (knee scope) is out for next week against Missouri. He is shooting to return Nov. 7 against Texas A&M.

Rodney Stewart (rolled ankle) played but did not start. He finished with 49 yards and a touchdown on 16 carries.

EXTRA POINTS: Attendance was 42,019. ... CU's Michael Sipili and Ray Polk started at linebacker and safety for Marcus Burton and Anthony Perkins. ... Kansas State was 2-for-11 on third down. ... Linebacker Brandon Gouin and tight end Luke Walters made their CU debuts — both on special teams. ... McKnight extended his program record to 31 straight games with a catch. It'd be 32 if CU counted bowl results in program records. He caught six passes for 61 yards. He's in sixth place on the program charts with 130 catches, and in eighth place with 1,437 yards.

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

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Kansas State grinds out 20-6 win over Colorado

By JOHN MARSHALL (AP) – Oct 24, 2009



MANHATTAN, Kan. — Daniel Thomas ran for 145 yards and a touchdown, and Emmanuel Lamur had two interceptions to lead Big 12 North-leading Kansas State to a 20-6 win over Colorado on Saturday.

Humbled by an early loss to Louisiana-Lafayette and a 66-14 beatdown by Texas Tech, Kansas State (5-3, 3-1) is alone atop the Big 12 North after impressive wins over Texas A&M and Colorado. The Wildcats forced four turnovers and held Colorado to 244 total yards for their first 3-1 start in the Big 12 since 2000, during coach Bill Snyder's first tenure.

Colorado (2-5, 1-2) looked nothing like the team that traded big plays with Kansas last week, scoring on its first drive and doing little else to lose its 10th-straight road game. The Buffaloes are 2-17 away from Boulder in coach Dan Hawkins' three-plus seasons.

Kansas State's running game has been a big part of its recent success. The Wildcats have been consistent on the ground all season, ranking third in the Big 12, and even better the past two games, getting 204 yards against Colorado after a 232-yard day against Texas A&M.

Defense, though, has been the biggest difference.

Since allowing more than 700 yards and seven touchdowns to Texas Tech, Kansas State has dominated the first half the past two weeks, leading Texas A&M and Colorado by a combined 58-6. The Wildcats have forced 10 turnovers and have had nine sacks the past two games after getting six the first six games.

The last time Kansas State faced Colorado, Tyler Hansen was the surprise starter at quarterback and confounded the Wildcats with his ability for improvisation in the Buffs' 14-13 win.

The Wildcats were ready for Hansen this time, chasing him all over the backfield on nearly every pass play and preventing him from running upfield after numerous escapes. Kansas State sacked Hansen four times and held him to 81 total yards.

Colorado's offense clicked early, moving 71 yards in 13 plays for Rodney Stewart's 2-yard touchdown run.

The Buffaloes floundered after that, managing just 59 more yards and turning it over three times before halftime.

The first turnover, a fumbled snap by Hansen, led to Josh Cherry's second field goal, from 27 yards. Jason Espinoza then muffed a punt, setting up a 5-yard touchdown run by Grant Gregory that put Kansas State up 20-6 at the half.

Cody Hawkins, brought in with 1:06 left in the second quarter, also had a pass intercepted by Lamur, who wrestled the ball away from Colorado tight end Riar Greet.

Hawkins replaced Hansen again in the third quarter and had another pass picked off by Lamur in the closing minutes.

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CU own worst enemy in loss

Cody Hawkins throws two interceptions

By Alex K.W. Schultz on October 24, 2009

Questionable calls and self-inflicted wounds were the Colorado Buffaloes football team's downfall.

CU (2-5, 1-2 Big 12 Conference), which turned the ball over four times and attempted a fake punt from inside its own 10-yard line in the fourth quarter, fell 20-6 to the Kansas State Wildcats (5-3, 3-1) on Saturday in Manhattan, Kan.

Bufs junior quarterback Cody Hawkins, whom many thought lost his job permanently to sophomore Tyler Hansen, entered the game late in the second.

Hawkins threw two interceptions, both of whom went to sophomore defensive back Emmanuel Lamur, and accounted for half of the Bufs' four turnovers. Lamur's second pick came late in the game when CU was on the Wildcats' 2-yard line.

Hawkins completed 10-of-23 passes for 95 yards while Hansen was 7-of-14 for 89 yards.

Trailing 20-6 early in the fourth and facing fourth-and-10 from its own 9-yard line, CU elected to try some trickery. Senior punter Matt DiLallo rushed for 8 yards but stepped out-of-bounds two yards shy of the first down. Luckily for the Bufs, KSU senior quarterback Grant Gregory coughed up the ball three plays later to senior linebacker Jeff Smart.

CU's lone touchdown came on its first possession. With a mix of running and passing plays, the Bufs advanced the ball 71 yards in 13 plays. Sophomore running back Rodney Stewart gave CU its only lead with a 2-yard touchdown run to make it 6-3. Junior kicker Aric Goodman's extra-point hit the right upright, though.

Wildcats kicker Josh Cherry had made a 25-yard field goal moments earlier for a 3-0 KSU advantage.

Wildcats junior running back Daniel Thomas capped a bruising drive with a 4-yard burst to push KSU back ahead 10-6 with 13 minutes, 19 seconds to play in the first half. KSU ran the ball on every play in the drive.

On the first play of the Bufs' next possession, Hansen was sacked and fumbled the ball to senior linebacker Ulla Pomele. The Wildcats settled for a Cherry 27-yard field goal.



During a game this season on Sept. 19, sophomore tailback Rodney Stewart dives for the endzone during the third quarter against Wyoming. Stewart scored twice for the Bufs, leading them to a 24-0 victory. Stewart scored Saturday, giving CU its only lead against Kansas State. The Bufs lost on the road 20-6. (CU Independent file/Molly Maher)

Later, CU forced the Wildcats into a punting situation after holding KSU to a three-and-out. Buffs sophomore punt returner Jason Espinoza put the ball on the turf, though, and it was scooped up by junior Corey Adams. Four plays later, the Wildcats were in the end zone again, complements of a 5-yard rush by Gregory.

CU's rushing attack only netted 60 yards. Stewart accounted for 49.

The Buffs will host the Missouri Tigers for homecoming at 11:30 a.m. on Halloween.

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

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Bufs abysmal on offense, lose 20-6 at Kansas State

By [Kyle Clark](#) on October 24, 2009 · [Comment](#) · [Email This](#) · [ShareThis](#)



Kansas State defensive tackle Jeffrey Fitzgerald and linebacker Josh Berard double up on Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen for a loss Saturday in Manhattan. Hansen was sacked four times as the Buffs lost 20-6. (Kansas City Star photo)

MANHATTAN, Kan. — Late in the first quarter, Rodney Stewart did his best Superman impression, stretching out in midair to get across the goal line. That touchdown play was the most exciting of the day for Colorado fans because, unfortunately, it was the only one.

After missing the point after, Colorado led 6-3 over Kansas State. The Wildcats would answer by scoring 17 points rapidly. KSU then clamped down in the second half to secure a 20-6 victory Saturday afternoon. KSU was out to make a statement, to show that last week's 62-14 thumping of Texas A&M was no fluke.

With a staunch defensive performance from the Wildcats, consider the statement made. After Colorado scored in the first quarter, it would get the ball 11 more times. Kansas State turned those chances into seven punts, two interceptions, a turnover on downs and a fumble. On the ground, the Buffs couldn't do much. Stewart gained 49 yards on 16 carries and a touchdown, while Demitrus Summler, the only other back used, gained 7 yards on two attempts.



Kansas State running back Daniel Thomas rips the helmet off of Colorado safety Ray Polk as he rushed for 35 yards early in first quarter in Manhattanon Saturday. (Kansas City Star photo)

Colorado wasn't much better through the air. While Tyler Hansen had some great runs and throws to convert some third downs on the early scoring drive, he couldn't take over the offense the same way he did against Kansas. Hansen finished the day 7-of-14 for 89 yards, with no interceptions.

So where did CU's two interceptions come from? Was it some new gadget play unveiled? Did the Buffs learn to run the wildcat formation and give Stewart a chance to throw the ball? No, neither of those. Go ahead, open your back door and scream. I can wait. Back? Yes, it was Cody Hawkins.

Young Hawkins came in with just over a minute left in the first half, presumably because he was more familiar with running the offense's two-minute drill. Hawkins ended that drive with his first interception. Hansen returned at the start of the second half but was again pulled in favor of Hawkins early in the fourth quarter. Hawkins led another quick drive in the final minutes, but it, too, ended with an interception, this one in the CU end zone. All together, Hawkins threw for 95 yards, going 10-for-23.

The Kansas State offense moved the ball as advertised behind running back Daniel Thomas. Thomas piled up his highest total of the season, rushing for 145 yards on 20 carries. The back also scored KSU's first touchdown from 4 yards away.

Kansas State quarterback Grant Gregory had only 80 yards passing, but that was all he needed. Gregory also contributed with his feet, picking up 27 yards and a 4-yard touchdown scramble.

After another dismal day offensively for the Buffs, the big question for next week will be "where does that next spark come from?" With homecoming on Halloween against Missouri next Saturday, maybe the answer will be the fans.

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



Posted on Sat, Oct. 24, 2009

Kansas State-Colorado game report

FIRST QUARTER

Key play: Facing third and long at midfield, Colorado's Tyler Hansen turned a broken play into a first down by scrambling upfield. It led to the Buffaloes' first touchdown.

Key stat: 76. A week after Kansas failed to rush for positive yardage against Colorado, K-State got this many yards in the first quarter.

SECOND QUARTER

Key play: Josh Cherry's 27-yard field goal was a nice sight. His second field goal of the day gave K-State confidence it could score anytime its offense was in range.

Key stat: 38. Colorado's rushing yards in the second quarter.

THIRD QUARTER

Key play: Prizell Brown and Joshua Moore combined for an 11-yard sack of Hansen, squashing any hope of Colorado cutting into K-State's lead.

Key stat: 74. The two teams' combined total offense in the quarter.

FOURTH QUARTER

Key play: Emmanuel Lamur intercepted a pass on Colorado's final drive of the game.

Key stat: 11:06. K-State held the ball for almost 75 percent of the fourth quarter.

Player of the game: Lamur. The junior safety came up to the line of scrimmage when he had to, made impressive open-field tackles that helped shut down Colorado's rushing attack and intercepted two passes.

Reason to hope: Kansas State's defensive letdowns against Texas Tech are starting to look like an aberration. The Wildcats have allowed only 20 points since and are combining good coverage with an effective pass rush.

Reason to mope: Wildcats coach Bill Snyder summed up K-State's passing struggles pretty well when a reporter asked what he thought of **Grant Gregory (below)** completing nine of 18 passes for 80 yards while taking two sacks. His answer: "It stunk. Bad."

Looking ahead: A road trip to Oklahoma. The Wildcats have yet to win away from Bill Snyder Family Stadium this season and will be underdogs in Norman.

REPORT CARD

C+ Offense	It wasn't a pretty effort — seven punts, a fumble and only 80 passing yards — but when the Wildcats had good field position and didn't commit penalties, their running game allowed them to score.
A Defense	Aside from a poor showing on Colorado's opening drive, K-State's defense was on top of its game. It forced seven punts and allowed 244 total yards. Buffaloes quarterback Tyler Hansen did very little.
B+ Special teams	The punting game could have been a bit better, but Josh Cherry made both of his field goals and K-State's return unit remained solid.
A Coaching	Kansas State's defense improved as the game went along, and the Wildcats showed no signs of a hangover after last week's monstrous win over Texas A&M. Everyone on the roster seemed focused.

“

| Kellis Robinett, *The Star*

Serving your need to know **THE MANHATTAN MERCURY**

Bufs offense can't build off win over Jayhawks

Joel Jellison jjellison@themercury.com



Kansas State's Corey Adams recovers a fumble by Colorado's Jason Espinoza, who muffed a punt return on Saturday at Bill Snyder Family Stadium. Staff photo by Michael Schweitzer.

After Tyler Hansen delivered a win over KU 34-30 last week with 175 passing yards and two total touchdowns, the Colorado Buffaloes were feeling the ultimate high of momentum.

After losing 20-6 to Kansas State on Saturday, Colorado head coach Dan Hawkins couldn't even guarantee Hansen would return as the starting quarterback next week against Missouri. All he could provide was a simple "we'll see."

Hawkins said Saturdays performance by his team, losing one week after upsetting an undefeated Top 25-ranked team, was just an example of the way things go in the Big 12 Conference.

"That's the nature of this conference so you just got to pull yourself up every week and get going, and not get caught up in rather you won or lost," Hawkins said.

Hansen finished the game 7-of-14 passing for 89 yards and no interceptions, but was throttled by K-State's pass rush that had him scrambling for his life and getting sacked four times.

When the Buffaloes went to No. 2 option Cody Hawkins in no-huddle situations, it didn't get any better. Hawkins was 10-of-23 for 95 yards and two picks.

Hansen said he felt like the offense lacked some production in a game that should have gone the other

way.

"We didn't execute, we didn't play sound football out there and so it was frustrating and disappointing because we should have won that game," Hansen said.

It wasn't just the pass game that was shut down by K-State, as Colorado leading rusher Rodney Stewart was held to 49 yards on 16 attempts, and the Buffaloes were held to just 1.9 yards per carry as a team.

Colorado offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said they knew K-State was a good defensive team, but they hoped to establish more of a running game and passing game.

"It came down to guys catching the ball, and throwing the ball, and we had a hard time running the ball, and I got to give a lot of credit to Kansas State," Kiesau said. "They did a great job of defending us well, and after that first drive we couldn't get back into a rhythm."

Hansen led the team down the field on the Buffs first drive of the game for a touchdown, a possession that lasted 5 minutes, 10 seconds. Colorado would never hold the ball longer than 3:28, with that coming on its final drive of the game.

Hansen said the K-State defense appeared to make changes after allowing the early score, but nothing they didn't see coming.

"They didn't do anything we haven't seen before and didn't expect them to do, so it was pretty much on us to execute," Hansen said.

Hansen's evaluation after the game was a mix of positives and negatives from his coaches. Kiesau said Hansen was holding on to the ball too much.

"Tyler was waiting too long," Kiesau said. "There are small windows there, but he has to understand those windows are going to close very fast."

Hawkins, meanwhile, attributed most of Hansen's negatives to a broader view of the whole offense being off.

"We just weren't making a lot of plays, and it was combination of some little things in there. We were just trying to get some continuity," Hawkins said.

Both Hawkins and his offensive coordinator had different statements about the Buffs quarterback situation after the game, stating the reasoning for inserting Cody Hawkins into the game was based purely on using the more experienced of the two players in no-huddle situations.

Kiesau didn't expect a change, or an open competition for the spot, but Hawkins wasn't as solid on the

answer, saying his team would make whatever moves necessary to get in a position to win.

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Cats crunch Colorado

Photo 1 of 7



CHARLIE RIEDEL/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Colorado running back Rodney Stewart (5) dives past Kansas State linebacker Ulla Pomele, left, and defensive back Troy Butler (21) to score a touchdown during the first quarter of an NCAA college football game Saturday in Manhattan.

Photo 1 of 7

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football team gets better. That hasn't changed."

Snyder was particularly peeved with K-State's offense, despite a career-high 145 rushing yards from running back Daniel Thomas. K-State finished with 284 yards of offense, and quarterback Grant Gregory completed just 9 of 18 passes for 80 yards.

"Stinks," Snyder said. "Bad."

The second half was particularly irksome, as the Wildcats punted twice in Colorado territory and lost a fumble inside the CU 5-yard line.

"(Snyder) was angry because we didn't progress today offensively," Gregory said. "We progressed last week, but we did not improve today offensively. That's what he was disappointed with."

K-State's defense made it a moot point, smothering the Buffaloes after yielding a touchdown on Colorado's first possession. The Wildcats sacked Colorado quarterbacks four times, and Emmanuel Lamur intercepted two passes, including one that killed Colorado's final drive in the end zone.

Win pads K-State's lead in Big 12 North

BY [AUSTIN MEEK](#)

Created October 24, 2009 at 12:21pm

Updated October 25, 2009 at 1:19am

MANHATTAN -- The signs were subtle at first.

A familiar phrase here, a quarterback draw there -- small indications that Kansas State was Bill Snyder's team again.

But Saturday, you couldn't miss it. The Wildcats beat Colorado 20-6, like they always used to do. They stayed atop the Big 12 North, where they always used to be. And, perhaps most telling, Snyder wasn't happy about any of it.

"I don't want to feel good about playing poorly," he said.

Poor as they were, the Wildcats (5-3, 3-1 Big 12) handled Colorado (2-5, 1-2) with relative ease. The Buffaloes managed 244 yards of offense, committed four turnovers and made only one foray into Wildcat territory after halftime.

That was enough to keep K-State alone atop the North Division standings for at least another week, though that mattered little to Snyder.

"It's not about being 3-1," he said. "It's about whether the

The Wildcats also recovered a fumbled snap and a muffed punt in the second quarter, both of which gave K-State possession inside the Colorado 20-yard line. K-State cashed those turnovers into 10 points, taking a 20-6 halftime lead on Gregory's 5-yard touchdown run late in the first half.

"Especially if the offense is not scoring, we try to put it on our shoulders, saying we've got to make turnovers and get the ball," Lamur said.

Starting quarterback Tyler Hansen completed 7 of 14 passes for 89 yards. When the Buffaloes needed an interception, they turned to Cody Hawkins, who obliged by throwing picks on the final drive of each half.

The running game wasn't much of an alternative, as the Buffaloes averaged 1.9 yards per rush and finished with 60 yards.

"I thought the defense played extremely well," Snyder said. "Our offense put them in some ridiculous situations."

Snyder's sour mood wasn't entirely unexpected. His players recognized the underlying message -- that he sees potential beyond what many expected.

"He's coached some great teams," left tackle Nick Stringer said. "When he tells us we have the potential to be the kind of football team we want to be, we need to take that to heart."

Cranky as he was, even Snyder allowed a few moments of satisfaction.

"I'm proud of 'em," he said. "I'm proud of fact that, collectively as a team, we won a ball game. I'm proud that they're wherever they are in the conference and have won however many games."

The satisfaction was short-lived.

"But if that was the only deal, then I'd be a happy camper and we'd be all smiles and I'd be saying all sorts of good things," he continued. "That's not what we're about."

Colorado 6000--6

Kansas St. 31700--20

First quarter

KSt --- Cherry 25 field goal, 10:49. Drive: 9 plays-61 yards, 4:11 time of possession.

CU -- Stewart 2 run (kick failed), 5:39. Drive: 13-71, 5:10.

Second quarter

KSt -- Thomas 4 run (Cherry kick), 13:19. Drive: 6-58, 2:51.

KSt -- Cherry 27 field goal, 11:24. Drive: 4-3, 1:24.

KSt -- Gregory 5 run (Cherry kick), 1:11. Drive: 4-20, 2:24.

A--42,019.

GAME IN FIGURES

ColKSt

First downs1514

Rushes-yards31-6042-204

Passing18480

Comp-Att-Int17-37-29-18-0

Return Yards(-3)10

Punts-Avg.7-37.47-33.4

Fumbles-Lost3-21-1

Penalties-Yards8-699-69

Time of Possession25:4334:17

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING--Colorado, Stewart 16-49, DiLallo 1-8, Sumler 2-7, C.Hawkins 1-4, Hansen 11-(minus 8). Kansas St., Dan.Thomas 20-145, Gregory 11-27, K.Valentine 6-21, Banks 2-15, Team 3-(minus 4).

PASSING--Colorado, C.Hawkins 10-23-2-95, Hansen 7-14-0-89. Kansas St., Gregory 9-18-0-80.

RECEIVING--Colorado, McKnight 6-61, Geer 3-42, Deehan 3-18, Simas 2-24, Stewart 1-17, Lockridge 1-13, Ebner 1-9. Kansas St., Banks 3-14, Snipes 2-33, Dan.Thomas 2-18, Mastrud 1-11, Wilson 1-4.

TACKLING LEADERS -- Colorado: Smart 9 solo-3 assisted-12 total, Polk 5-6-11, Burney 4-1-5, Cunningham 2-3-5. K-State: Pomele 5-2-7, Houlik 5-1-6, Moore 4-2-6, Hartman 5-0-5, Lamur 4-1-5.

INTERCEPTIONS -- Colorado: None. K-State: Lamur 2.

SACKS -- Colorado: Cunningham, Herrod. K-State: Fitzgerald 1.5, Pomele 1, Moore .5, Brown .5, Berard .5.

MISSED FIELD GOALS -- None.

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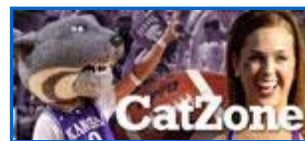
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Posted on Sat, Oct. 24, 2009

K-State stays on top of North with 20-6 win over Colorado

By KELLIS ROBINETT
The Kansas City Star

MANHATTAN, Kan. | As they linked arms at midfield and jogged into the locker room, Kansas State's football players were met with a euphoric reaction from their fans Saturday at Bill Snyder Family Stadium.

Just about everyone who came out for the game was still there cheering, and a dedicated group of purple-clad supporters went especially nuts when the players tossed their wrist bands into the crowd.

Having just watched the Wildcats maintain first place in the Big 12 North by defeating Colorado 20-6, souvenirs definitely seemed in order.

Kansas State is now 5-3 overall and 3-1 in conference play. It's the Wildcats' best league start since 2000. And with Nebraska losing unexpectedly at home to Iowa State, Kansas falling to Oklahoma and Missouri 0-3 after losing to Texas, K-State's division lead feels stronger than ever.

But K-State coach Bill Snyder was in no mood to soak up the festive atmosphere. As soon as the locker room doors closed behind his team and they were all alone, he told them just how far away they are from truly being contenders in the league race.

"It's not about being 3-1," he said. "It's about whether your football team gets better. That hasn't changed, and we didn't get better."

Taking the pessimistic approach is nothing new for Snyder. But there was something different about him after this win. Instead of calmly going over his team's setbacks during his postgame news conference, he angrily addressed questions of being in first place and even slammed his hand on the podium in front of him for emphasis.

He used phrases like "it stunk" to describe K-State's offense, which threw for 80 yards and amassed 284 total. And he answered a question about leading the Big 12 North by saying it meant nothing at all.

"If that was the only deal, I'd be a happy camper in here and we'd be all smiles," he said. "I'd be saying all kinds of nice things, but that's not what we're about. That's not what we're trying to be about. I don't want us to feel good about playing poorly."

To be fair, K-State only played poorly in one phase of the game — offense. Even then, junior running back Daniel Thomas churned out 145 yards and a touchdown in 20 carries. The Wildcats scored 20 points in the first half and took a 14-point lead into the locker room.

They didn't score again, but with K-State's defense playing at a high level — allowing 244 yards and pitching a shutout for the last three quarters — no more points were necessary.

But to Snyder, that's not enough. With a tough road trip to Oklahoma coming up next week and three more difficult games after that, he knows it will take a complete effort for his team to win. It will take a passing game.

Senior quarterback Grant Gregory realizes that, too. He also understands that Snyder is hard on them because he sees potential in this group. So he wasn't surprised by Snyder's anger.

"We owe this one to the defense today," said Gregory, who completed nine of 18 passes for 80 yards. "We came out in the second half and didn't do very much."

Wide receiver Attrail Snipes, who caught two passes for 33 yards, said: "The defense played well, but the offense was embarrassing."

Kansas State's defense was, indeed, top notch.

Colorado struggled so mightily against the Wildcats that in between a 71-yard touchdown drive to start the game and a 94-yard closing drive that ended with no points, it gained just 79 yards on 11 drives. During those 11 drives, the Buffaloes never crossed midfield.

Sophomore quarterback Tyler Hansen and his scrambling ability did nothing. A week after leading Colorado to a win over Kansas,

he threw for 89 yards and rushed for minus-8.

K-State junior safety Emmanuel Lamur, who had five tackles and two interceptions, said the defensive game plan was performed to perfection.

"We executed and we won," he said.

Snyder was complimentary of K-State's defensive effort. In particular he praised Lamur and senior defensive end Jeffrey Fitzgerald, who came up with 1 1/2 sacks despite sitting out practice all week because of the flu.

"I thought our defense played extremely well," Snyder said. "...We had three or four guys out there on the defensive side of the ball that didn't practice all week with all this flu stuff going around. They came back and played lights-out. I'm awful proud of them."

Senior offensive lineman Nick Stringer is proud of them, too. After the game, he was asked if K-State could go on and win the Big 12 North.

His answer was similar to Snyder's, just without the anger.

"If our defense keeps playing the way they've played the last couple of games," Stringer said, "and we clean up a couple of mistakes and penalties on offense, definitely."

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