

# CU Buffs motivated for Missouri game

## Football players want to avenge blowouts suffered last two years

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

Posted: 10/25/2009 11:45:40 PM MDT

This isn't how they envisioned Missouri week inside the Colorado football program back in August when the unusual step was taken to make it a team goal to beat the Tigers.

Back then, the Buffs, emboldened by their coach's goal of winning 10 games, viewed Missouri week as a possible meeting of teams vying for the lead in the Big 12 North Division. Now that Tiger week has arrived, it's more about two teams in desperation mode, hoping for a win that might help salvage the season.

Colorado is 2-5 overall and 1-2 in conference play, coming off a forgettable performance at Kansas State.

Missouri is 4-3 overall and reeling from a three-game losing streak that included an ugly outing against Texas.

CU actually gave the No. 3 Longhorns much more of a game than the Tigers did and they did it on the road, while Missouri played Texas at home.

Those facts aside, the Buffs still will be feeling a little extra motivation to at least play well on Saturday when Missouri comes to town for a Halloween matchup in Folsom Field.

Missouri teams led by a slew of players now playing professionally beat up the Buffs in three consecutive wins. The past two games ended 55-10 in Boulder two years ago and 58-0 last season in Columbia, Mo.

Perhaps CU cornerback Jimmy Smith summed up best the general feeling in the CU locker room Sunday evening after film review and an hour of playing Buff Ball inside the practice bubble.

"We've got something to prove in general because we're two-and-five," Smith said. "But they did put it on us last year. We're going to go out and play hard in this game especially because of what they did to us, what, the last three years I've been here?"

It's unusual for any other Big 12 North team to join Nebraska on the Buffs' list of team goals in the preseason.

Quarterback Tyler Hansen said he and his teammates wanted the Tigers on the list because they were embarrassed by their performance last season in a game in which CU's nearly 20-year-old scoring streak ended. The Tigers shut out the Buffs for the first time since the 1988 season.

"We actually talked about it today, 58-0, that's embarrassing," Hansen said Sunday evening. "In college football you see that rarely, especially with two Big 12 teams playing each other.

"That was the most embarrassing moment of football ever, for all of us probably. We're definitely going to come out with a little more fuel this week and we're going to be ready to do because that was one of the lows of everyone's football career."

Hansen said the Buffs have nothing but respect for Missouri and including beating the Tigers on the team's list of preseason goals was a demonstration of that respect. He said the Buffs can handle losing to any team when they play well, especially one as talent-laden as last season's Tigers, with players like Chase Daniel, Jeremy Maclin, Chase Coffman and Ziggy Hood.

The Buffs' embarrassment comes from how they allowed themselves to be beaten before even taking the field.

"The last couple years they've been a contender in the Big 12 North (winning it twice)," Hansen said. "We felt they were going to be good again this year, and they are good again. But if we beat them, we feel like we're up there and we're OK, especially after a 58-0 loss. It's like, you've got to get those guys because that's embarrassing."

**Notable**

Coach Dan Hawkins did not stop for interviews after the Sunday evening session in the bubble. ... CU coaches chose to use Cody Hawkins to run the Buffs 2-minute offense against Kansas State and said he will probably continue to do so in the future.

Hansen said Sunday he would prefer to run the 2-minute offense but he is willing to do whatever the coaches believe is best for the team.

"It's frustrating seeing your team out there playing without you and you're the starting quarterback," Hansen said. "So it's frustrating, and I want to be out there, but the coaches didn't think that's the best. So you've got to go with it. But it is frustrating sometimes."

Hansen said he doesn't feel like coaches have a hook hanging over his shoulder.

"They came up to me today and said, 'Hey, you're still the guy. We still have 100 percent confidence in you.' That shows me that I'm still doing some stuff right and still moving the team. I'm not like that at all. I'm not feeling like I'm looking over my shoulder at all."

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cu football

## Eye on ... The Tigers

**Missouri at Colorado, 11:30 a.m. Saturday, FSN**

Posted: 10/26/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

**For the record:** Missouri is 4-3, 0-3 in the Big 12 after a 41-7 home loss to Texas.

**Streaking:** The Tigers have opened conference play with three consecutive losses for the first time since 2002.

**Who's hot:** Senior wide receiver Jared Perry caught an 11-yard touchdown pass Saturday, giving him seven this season, 13 for his career. He's tied for sixth for his career, and his seven TDs this season tie him with Henry Marshall (1975) and Sean Coffey (2004) for the most in a six-game span to start a season.

**Who's not:** Missouri in conference play is being outscored by an average of 34-12.

**Key stat:** The Tigers rank 11th in turnover margin in Big 12 games at exactly minus-2 per game. They've turned it over nine times in three games.

**FYI:** This was Missouri's most lopsided loss in the

Texas series since 65-0 in 1932 and worst home loss since a 38-0 shutout to Kansas State in 2002. . . . Two current wide receivers rank in Mizzou's all-time list for receiving yards: senior Danario Alexander (ninth) and Perry (10th).

**Coachspeak:** "Just a lot of mistakes. I don't care if it's the New England Patriots, I expect them to play better than that." — Missouri coach Gary Pinkel, after the loss to Texas

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Longmont, Colorado  
Saturday, November 14,  
2009

Publish Date: 10/26/2009

## Buffs hold out hope for season

By Patrick Ridgell

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MANHATTAN, Kan. — The Colorado Buffaloes had just laid yet another egg on the road Saturday against Kansas State, and yet they said they firmly believed they can still win their division this year. You can get away with such things when you play in the Big 12 North.

The Buffs fell to 1-2 in conference play, 2-5 overall, with Saturday's 20-6 loss. They are 21/2 games behind Kansas State in the division.

Kansas State? Atop the division? The Big 12 looks like it might be returning to the inglorious days of 2004, when CU started 1-4 in conference play but won the North at 4-4. Kansas State visits Oklahoma on Saturday, so reality might be about to return to Manhattan. After that, the Wildcats finish their schedule with Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

Only Kansas State, at 3-1, owns a winning record in North. Iowa State is 2-2. Kansas State and Iowa State were fashionable picks to finish at the division's bottom. But while all of this mediocrity in the division certainly boosts the Buffs' hopes, reality still tempers things.

"We're definitely in it," CU tailback Rodney Stewart said. "Kansas State has some big games coming up they could easily lose. We could easily lose, as well, as we did (Saturday)."

Said receiver Scotty McKnight: "The Big 12 is a tough conference, and (Kansas State) is a good football team, so hats off to them. But we've got to come out and execute. We've got to be smarter. That's something we've got to thrive on. We've got to be a smart team who doesn't make technique mistakes."

Mistakes abounded Saturday, leaving lots for the Buffs to address this week. One big issue is at quarterback, where head coach Dan Hawkins left the door open to the chance Tyler Hansen could return to the bench this week in exchange for Cody Hawkins.

Assuming that does not happen, Hansen must improve on Saturday, when he went 7-for-14 and did not produce much with his scrambles. Kansas State hounded him endlessly, sacking him four times and containing him with players like defensive end Joseph Kassaravoid, who admitted after the game that his job was to spy Hansen and not let him escape the pocket. The Buffs better get used to such tactics.

Hansen had a nice debut in 2008 and then struggled when defenses adjusted to him, and eventually returned to the bench. Hansen had a nice debut in 2009, and struggled Saturday. It's up to the player and coaches to avoid a repeat of 2008.

Of course, it's not all on the quarterback. CU's offensive line did not block well, and the run game totaled 60 net yards. Receivers dropped passes. Play-making among the receivers and backs is still lacking.



Colorado's Rodney Stewart celebrates after his touchdown over Kansas State in the first quarter with Keenan Stevens, left, in Manhattan, Kan., on Saturday. Stewart is among players who have expressed confidence that CU can rebound from its 20-6 loss Saturday and perhaps even win the Big 12 North. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

### FIRST LOOK

A quick glimpse at CU's next opponent:

**Who:** Missouri (4-3, 0-3)

**Where:** Boulder, Folsom Field

**When:** Saturday, 11:30 a.m., FSN

**Notes:** Missouri leads the series 39-31-3 and has won the past three meetings, and four of the past five. The previous two have come by a combined score of 113-10. Last year's game, in Columbia, Mo., snapped CU's scoring streak at 242 straight games with a 58-0 drubbing. Missouri held CU to 196 yards in 2007 and 199 last year, both season lows. ... Missouri has won the North the past two seasons, but the Tigers have opened conference play with three straight losses for the first time since 2002. All three losses have come from teams that were ranked

“It was just a bad day all around,” Hansen said. “You always have one of those days.”

CU’s special teams were outplayed by Kansas State’s. That’s not too shocking, because the Wildcats under coach Bill Snyder have usually had good special teams.

But the Buffs must iron out their punt returning. Their kick return, without Darrell Scott, was far less potent. And their kick coverage allowed returns of 41 and 30 yards.

when they played. The Tigers have been outscored 95-36 in Big 12 games. ... Missouri quarterback Blaine Gabbert, who’s succeeding Chase Daniel, has completed 57 percent of his passes for 1,704 yards in 2009. He has thrown five interceptions.

CU enters the week last in the Big 12 in scoring, yards gained, punt returns, net punting, pass efficiency and pass efficiency defense. The Buffs are next to last in rushing offense, points allowed and turnover margin.

Statistics can certainly be misleading. But it’s hard to argue that’s the case here.

“It comes down to discipline and focus,” McKnight said. “I think there comes a time out there where guys get unfocused and maybe get too caught up in the game.

“Part of playing at this level is that you’ve got to stay focused and know your assignment — do only what you can do and don’t try to do other people’s jobs. ... You’ve got to practice the way you want to play.”

The Buffs say they’re convinced they can still win the North. Linebacker Marcus Burton went so far as to say he’s “extremely convinced. All we have to do is play. We have to go and do our job, and whatever happens, happens.”

Saturday’s opponent, Missouri (11:30 a.m., FSN) has been outscored 95-36 in its three Big 12 games and does not resemble the team that won the past two division titles.

Nebraska committed eight turnovers Saturday while losing to Iowa State, meaning its fans are probably more angry this week than the Buffs’. Kansas has games with Texas Tech, Nebraska and Texas left. Iowa State still has Oklahoma State to face.

The Buffs have five games left, three at home.

“We never thought we were out of it,” defensive end Marquez Herrod said.

“We have to ... learn from this, watch film, gather what we can and get ready for Missouri.”

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