

Ringo: Cowboys look to finish off Longhorns

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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The butterflies should be churning in the stomachs of the third-ranked Texas Longhorns all week as they prepare for travel to Stillwater, Okla., for a game against No. 13 Oklahoma State in prime time on Saturday night.

The Cowboys have been a play away from beating the Longhorns the past two years and have the talent and experience for an upset again this year. Plus, they have been tested already this season during a home game against Georgia to start the season.

The past two games have been decided by a combined total of seven points. Texas stormed back from a 21-point deficit in 2007 to win and last season's game in Austin was decided by four points.

If that's not enough to worry Texas, how about all the parallels to the Longhorns only loss last season? It's a safe bet coach Mack Brown's team will make this trip with the 2008 last-second loss at Texas Tech on its mind.

Visions of Michael Crabtree dancing into the end zone with 1 second remaining and costing Texas a shot at Big 12 and national championships could be motivation or cause trepidation.

"I think everything is similar," Brown said. "No. 1, it's a very good team. No. 2, it's national TV. No. 3, it's 7 o'clock at night. It will be an excited crowd. It will be a sellout. It will be a game they've been looking forward to all year. It's the same spot at the end of this four-game stretch with Colorado, Oklahoma, Missouri and Oklahoma State, like last year's four-game stretch.

"We lost the game and didn't play as well as we wanted to last year. We're really lucky that we have this window of opportunity to recapture something that we lost last year."

It's also a huge opportunity for the Cowboys, who have never advanced to the conference championship game since the Big 12 was formed.

A win over Texas wouldn't guarantee that because they still must beat Oklahoma at the end of the year, but it would be a big step toward Dallas in December.

Brown said he believes part of the reason the Cowboys have been so close in recent meetings is the large number of Texas players on the OSU roster. He said more than 50 Texans on the Cowboys' roster -- 12 of which are starters -- want to stick it to the home state school. Brown said his team hasn't always matched the Cowboys' enthusiasm for the game.

Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy said he doesn't know whether he has a better team than his previous two that came close against the Longhorns. He said the reason Texas ultimately won those two games was the Longhorns finishing well.

Gundy said he hopes starting the season with a solid win in nonconference play at home against a team of Georgia's caliber prepared his team for its toughest tests in conference.

"I think that each game is different," Gundy said. "There was a tremendous amount of hype for the first game of the year that lasted for about a month. That was somewhat unusual. I think our players understand playing in big games, and they realize this is a good football team and there will be a lot of attention around it, but ultimately what it comes down to is preparation and going out and playing with great effort on Saturday."

Penalty league

Colorado isn't alone in the Big 12 in committing too many penalties.

Nine programs in the conference are among the 25 most penalized teams in the nation. Texas Tech is the most penalized of the 120 teams ranked in the Football Bowl Subdivision statistics on the NCAA Web site. The Red Raiders are averaging 9.63 penalties per game.

Colorado is tied with Georgia at No. 117 in the nation, averaging 9.29 penalties per game, costing the Buffs an average of 77 yards per

game.

Missouri, Iowa State and Kansas are the only three Big 12 teams not among the 25 most penalized programs.

Assistant Big 12 commissioner Ed Stewart has told several media outlets in the past week that the increase in flags in the conference this season is most likely due to a national emphasis on calling player protection penalties such as horse-collar tackles and helmet-to-helmet hits.

And the conference also chose to emphasize holding calls this season after coaches complained in the offseason that holding wasn't called properly.

Tigers still alive

Missouri coach Gary Pinkel hasn't had to deal with a three-game losing streak since 2006. He's taking the right approach by taking the blame but still pointing out to his players and others that many of the Tigers' goals are still attainable, including winning the mediocre Big 12 North.

They might need to win out to do it.

"There is a sense of urgency that we've got to start playing better," Pinkel said. "That starts with me and it certainly filters down to the rest of our coaches. That's our responsibility and doing a better job of preparation. We think we're doing a good job, but certainly it's not good enough."

Pelini opposes

cost-cutting move

Nebraska coach Bo Pelini said Monday he opposes a proposal from the National Association of College Directors of Athletics for athletic departments stop providing home football teams a hotel in which to stay the night before games.

The move would save departments thousands of dollars over the course of each season, but Pelini feels it would lead to more headaches that he currently doesn't have to deal with when his players are all under one roof.

"I think that's a bad idea," Pelini said. "You're just opening yourself up to problems and to things happening. There are so many things that go on the night before a game.

"... Kids will be kids and all it takes is one guy to go out there and make a bad decision and all of a sudden it reflects on your program and college football in general."

On the tube

Colorado's next home game Nov. 7 against Texas A&M will be at 11:30 a.m. if it is picked up by Fox College Sports, but at 12:10 p.m. if it is not televised.

Here is a look at the television lineup for this week.

Saturday: Nebraska at Baylor, 10:30 a.m., Versus; Missouri at Colorado, 11:30 a.m., FSN; Kansas at Texas Tech, 1:30 p.m., ABC; Kansas State at Oklahoma, 5 p.m., FSN; Texas at Oklahoma State, 6 p.m., ABC.

Between the hashes

Is this the year of the backup quarterback in the Big 12?

Colorado, Oklahoma, Baylor, Nebraska, Kansas State and Texas Tech have all either made starting quarterback changes or had injuries to starters. Each program has had a backup emerge to play well for at least one game. ...

The Iowa State defense has allowed 17 combined points in its past two games. It is the best stretch for the Cyclone defense in conference games since 1978 in the old Big Eight Conference. ...

Oklahoma hasn't allowed a point in the first quarter in nine consecutive games.

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cu football

shoulder against Texas.

Hansen remains CU's starting QB

Denver Post staff and wire services

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Colorado coach Dan Hawkins said Monday on the Big 12 football coaches teleconference that sophomore Tyler Hansen "is still the guy" at quarterback.

Hansen has started the past two games. But junior Cody Hawkins was in for three series Saturday in the 20-6 loss at Kansas State.

When asked about future plans to also use Cody, Dan Hawkins said: "You just have to kind of see how it goes, got to kind of play it by feel.

"I think Cody has a little better handle on the no-huddle part of it and some of that, but Tyler is still the guy."

Meanwhile, Missouri coach Gary Pinkel says quarterback Blaine Gabbert "tweaked" his sprained right ankle on Saturday against Texas but will start this week at Colorado.

The Tigers will be without starting middle linebacker Luke Lambert, who separated his

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Longmont, Colorado
 Saturday, November 14,
 2009

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Hansen 'still the guy' for Buffs

However, coach says game conditions could dictate role for backup Hawkins

By Patrick Ridgell

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Tyler Hansen is still Colorado's guy.

That's according to Colorado head coach Dan Hawkins on Monday, who had, last Saturday, answered questions about who would be his starting quarterback for CU's next game with "we'll see."

"Tyler is still the guy," Hawkins said during Monday's Big 12 coaches teleconference.

Assuming that means Hansen will start this Saturday when CU hosts Missouri (11:30 a.m., FSN), the Buffs (2-5, 1-2 Big 12) might still have a role for backup Cody Hawkins. Hawkins played in last Saturday's loss at Kansas State when the Buffs were forced to use their 2-minute offense.

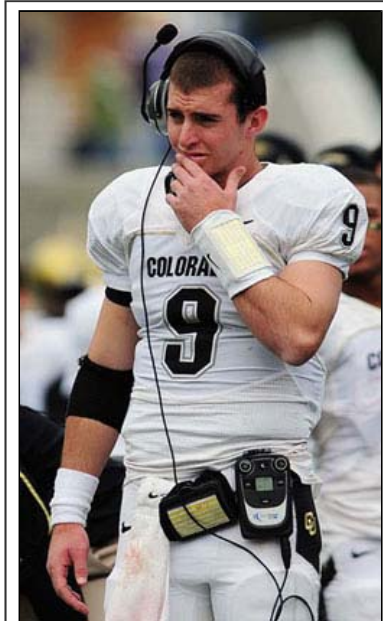
Coaches explained their use Cody Hawkins in those situations by saying his experience gave him a firmer grasp of the 2-minute offense. Dan Hawkins reiterated that belief Monday.

On whether Cody will play Saturday against Missouri, Dan Hawkins said, "we have to see how it goes — we have to play it by feel."

CU is 1-1 in Hansen's two starts. He's 24-for-44 for 281 yards, with one touchdown and one interception in 2009.

EXTRA POINT: The Big 12 on Monday did not announce TV plans for CU's Nov. 7 home game against Texas A&M but did say the game will start at either 11:30 a.m. or noon.

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



While quarterback Tyler Hansen started for Colorado against Kansas State, he found himself on the sidelines later in the game, sending in signals to quarterback Cody Hawkins and the rest of the offense in Manhattan, Kan., on Saturday.

Joshua Buck/Times-Call

QB Gabbert to start for Missouri at Colorado

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Missouri coach Gary Pinkel says quarterback Blaine Gabbert merely "tweaked" his sprained right ankle Saturday and will start this week at Colorado.

Gabbert suffered the sprain Oct. 8 and was wearing a walking cast Monday. On Saturday, he was helped off the field after being sacked in the third quarter of a 41-7 loss to Texas.

Pinkel says Gabbert could have returned to the game, but that it seemed like a good time to pull him. Gabbert was just 8-for-16 for 84 yards against the Longhorns but

insists his ankle is not a factor.

Missouri (4-3, 0-3 Big 12) will be without starting middle linebacker Luke Lambert for Saturday's game at Colorado (2-5, 1-2). Lambert separated his shoulder against Texas, and the Tigers were waiting for results of an MRI to determine if he'll need season-ending surgery.

The Associated Press

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Longmont, Colorado
Saturday, November 14,
2009

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Hawkins wants Hansen to run 2-minute drill

By Patrick Ridgell

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BOULDER — Does Colorado still want to use back-up quarterback Cody Hawkins to run its 2-minute offense Saturday when the Buffs host Missouri?

“Not really,” head coach Dan Hawkins said Tuesday.

“We want to throw it to Tyler and go, ‘Go.’”

That news should be good for Hansen, whom coaches say they want to see grow and prosper in CU’s offense. He’s scheduled to make his third start of 2009 on Saturday. Last Saturday at Kansas State, coaches inserted Cody Hawkins to run its 2-minute offense late in each half, saying he had a firmer grasp on it.

Dan Hawkins said coaches do not want Hansen to feel like he’s subject to a quick hook, and added they have confidence Hansen can handle the 2-minute drill. When asked how to fix CU’s offense, Hawkins’ first answer was Hansen must have confidence.

“And that comes from him playing and playing through some situations and not looking at me or (offensive coordinator Eric) Kiesau and thinking he’ll get the hook,” Hawkins said.

Hansen said he does not feel like coaches will pull him quickly.

“The ball’s in my court,” Hansen said. “They told me the ball’s in my court. I think it’s all on me.”

While Hansen is only a sophomore whose experience is limited, he did offer one interesting thought on what’s wrong with the program.

“I think right now we have this perception and attitude of this program where we’re not used to winning yet, you know what I mean?” Hansen said. “We’re not accustomed to having that winning attitude. I think we have to get it.”

SCOTT TARGETS ISU: Hawkins said tailback/kick returner Darrell Scott is not expected to return until CU plays at Iowa State on Nov. 14, its 10th game of the season. CU had hoped Scott could play Nov. 7 against Texas A&M.

Scott missed the Kansas State game after having his left knee scoped last Thursday. He hurt the knee at Toledo on Sept. 11. Hawkins said the surgery went well and will benefit Scott in the long run.

GIVENS RETURNING?: Right tackle Bryce Givens is expected “back in the fold” for Saturday’s game against Missouri, Dan Hawkins said, but his return this week is not guaranteed.

“Hopefully we’re getting him leveled out a bit,” Hawkins said.

Offensive line coach Denver Johnson said Givens has lost weight and will be worked back into the rotation slowly. Givens has missed three games, including CU’s past two, due to what’s being called “personal reasons.” Johnson said Ryan Miller and Matt Bahr will start again at right tackle and right guard, respectively.

EXTRA POINTS: Hawkins said CU expects Jason Espinoza to return punts Saturday, but Scotty McKnight could still return some, too. Espinoza fumbled one Saturday at Kansas State and was benched. ... Josh Hartigan has moved from linebacker to defensive end. He played one snap at defensive end last Saturday, Hawkins said. ... Hawkins said freshman safety Ray Polk is playing well and improving. ... CU's Nov. 7 game against Texas A&M will start at 11:30 a.m. and air on FCS-C. ... CU reported 9,000 tickets remain for the Missouri and Texas A&M games.

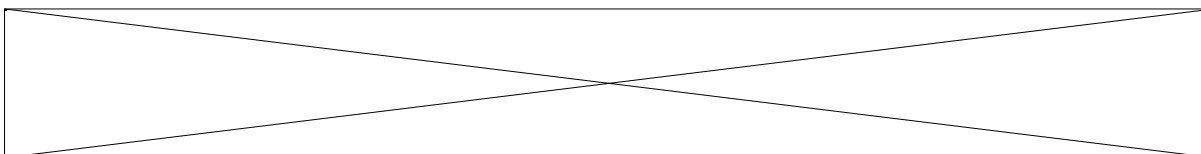
Read Patrick Ridgell's [CU sports blog](#). He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

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'Year of the backup QB' marks Big 12 this season

October, 27, 2009

Oct 27

11:00

AM ET

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By Tim Griffin

Posted by ESPN.com's Tim Griffin

It hasn't been a good season for starting quarterbacks in the Big 12.

In fact, it could almost be said that it's been "open season" on starting quarterbacks across the conference this season.

Only six teams have had the same starting quarterback in the lineup for all of their games. And it's no coincidence that the conference's best teams -- Texas and Oklahoma State -- have had the same starting quarterback for every game.



AP Photo/David J. Phillip

Zac Robinson has started every game at quarterback for the Cowboys this season.

Baylor and Oklahoma have already lost Robert Griffin and [Sam Bradford](#), ending the Bears' hopes of a bowl game and likely ending the Sooners' chances of defending their unprecedented three-peat of conference titles.

But no team has been as drastically affected as Texas Tech, which had never had a quarterback miss a start before this season under Mike Leach. The Red Raiders have more than made up for it this season as [Taylor Potts](#) and [Steven Sheffield](#) both have been knocked out of the lineup at different times.

Potts returned to the lineup last week and struggled in the Red Raiders' loss to Texas A&M. It led to a heavy chorus of boos and chants of "No More Potts" after his interception in that game as third-stringer [Seth Doege](#) finished the game.

"I ignore that, but I'm going to play whoever I think is the best guy," Leach said of the vociferous fan reaction. "I guess it's free speech."

With Sheffield still a week away as his injured foot heals, Leach could turn to Doege Saturday against Kansas.

But he's not tipping his hand early in the week.

"Game-time decision," he said. "We'll look at practice."

Here's a look at each Big 12 team and their progression of quarterbacks this season.

Baylor: Griffin was idled with a season-ending knee injury against Northwestern State on Sept. 26. Backup [Blake Szymanski](#) had struggled with bruised shoulder. Freshman [Nick Florence](#) started games against Kent State and Oklahoma. Szymanski started against Iowa State. Florence returned to the starting lineup Saturday against Oklahoma State.

Colorado: Starter [Cody Hawkins](#) struggled with on-field performances and was replaced when [Tyler Hansen](#) burned his redshirt against Texas on Oct. 10. Hansen started the Buffaloes' games against Kansas and Kansas State, but was replaced by Hawkins against Kansas State on Saturday.

Iowa State: Starter [Austen Arnaud](#) bruised his hand during the Cyclones' victory over Baylor on Oct. 17. He was replaced in the starting lineup by [Jerome Tiller](#), who directed the Cyclones' upset victory at Nebraska on Saturday.

Kansas: [Todd Reesing](#) has started every game.

Kansas State: [Carson Coffman](#) started the first four games, leading the Wildcats to a 2-2 nonconference record. [Grant Gregory](#) was inserted into the starting lineup when conference play began, leading KSU to a 3-1 record.

Missouri: [Blaine Gabbert](#) has been slowed by a sprained right ankle, but has been the Tigers' starter in every game. Backup [Jimmy Costello](#) replaced him late in the Tigers' loss to Texas last week.

Nebraska: [Zac Lee](#) has been the starter for every game, but the Cornhuskers have sputtered against top opponents. The Cornhuskers have scored 59 points against opponents from BCS conferences, with 27 of those points coming in one quarter. Coach Bo Pelini has hinted at a change to freshman [Cody Green](#), who despite strong early production, has seen action in only four games this season.

Oklahoma: Bradford was knocked out of the starting lineup late in the first half of the Sooners' season-opening loss to BYU. Backup [Landry Jones](#) has played well at times, setting the school's single-game record for touchdowns with six against Tulsa. Jones started three games before he was replaced by Bradford, who started against Baylor and Texas. Bradford was knocked out of the Texas game on the Sooners' second possession, re-injuring his shoulder and forcing season-ending surgery.

Oklahoma State: Despite sustaining a pulled groin muscle in training camp, [Zac Robinson](#) has started every game for the Cowboys.

Texas: [Colt McCoy](#) has started every game for Texas.

Texas A&M: [Jerrod Johnson](#) has started every game for Texas A&M.

Texas Tech: Potts was Texas Tech's starting quarterback for the first five games before he was knocked out of the New Mexico game with a concussion. Sheffield rallied the team with a strong performance in that game and then orchestrated victories in the next two games against Kansas State and Nebraska before injuring his foot against the Cornhuskers. Potts returned to the starting lineup but struggled in the Red Raiders' loss to Texas Tech on Saturday. Now, Leach is hinting that he might start Doege against Kansas this week.

Tags:

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COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN

Pinkel addresses Missouri's inability to maintain emotional stability against Texas

By [Sam Wilson](#)

October 27, 2009 | 12:01 a.m. CDT

COLUMBIA — Missouri coach Gary Pinkel often talks to his team about “emotional stability.” It is his term for telling his players to never get too excited or too mad, no matter the situation.

“It’s in a game where you’re in control, you have to remain focused regardless of all of the atmosphere, all of the surroundings, everything that’s happened,” Pinkel said. “Whether you just had the worst play you ever had, or you had the greatest play you ever had. Can you get back and emotionally be stable as an athlete? And we use that term, or if you lose control on the sidelines. If you lose control, you’re of no value to our football team.”

Pinkel lists the atmosphere of the stadium and big plays for the opponent as two major hurdles in maintaining emotional stability.

Saturday’s game against Texas provided plenty of both. The Longhorns had 400 yards of total offense and 71,004 fans showed up to Memorial Stadium to watch Texas beat Missouri 41-7.

“When the bullets are firing, it’s just kind of like who can stay calm, who can be poised and stuff like that,” linebacker Sean Weatherspoon said. “We didn’t do a great job of that Saturday night.”

Weatherspoon said frustration Saturday night made problems worse.

“When things were going wrong, we didn’t respond the way we should have,” he said.

Pinkel said his defense had not had communication issues this season before the Texas game. He said there were a few plays where defensive players had a lack of communication Saturday and attributed the problem to a lack of emotional stability, an inability to stay focused and make sure of the play the team is running.

“A lot of things are happening,” he said. “Which ultimately you lose focus, a lot of those things. And they’re all inexcusable.”

Pinkel said communication issues were not the only problem for the defense in the Texas game.

“That’s one or two plays,” Pinkel said. “Obviously they’re all serious. But we just didn’t play very good defense.”

Now, the Missouri defense is preparing for Saturday’s game at Colorado.

“They’ve certainly had their ups and downs, but they’re still a good football team,” Pinkel said of the Buffaloes. “They had a great win against Kansas, which I just got done watching on film again.”

The Buffaloes have used two quarterbacks this season, Cody Hawkins, son of coach Dan Hawkins, and Tyler Hansen. Hawkins was the team’s original starter, Hansen has started the team’s past two games.

“The new quarterback is a good young player that can run,” Pinkel said. “And very athletic, Hansen. So we have our challenges.”

Pinkel said he’s preparing for the possibility facing both quarterbacks Saturday.

“I think they will,” he said. “We’ve seen that before, I think coach Hawkins came out and said that, for certain, if they were in a two-minute situation (needing a quick drive late in the game), they would use his son.”

- Pinkel provided an injury update at his Monday news conference. Linebacker Luke Lambert is doubtful for Saturday’s game at Colorado with a dislocated shoulder. Defensive back Munir Prince is also doubtful with a hamstring injury.

Mizzou Football Heads West

Monday, October 26, 2009 at 1:08 p.m.

It's been rough sledding the past three weeks for the Missouri Tigers (4-3 overall, 0-3 in Big 12 Conference play), as they've dropped their first three league games of the season. They'll look to get on track this Saturday in the Flatirons as they head to Boulder, Colo. to take on the Colorado Buffaloes (2-5, 1-2) in a rare day game, with kickoff set for 12:30 p.m. (central time), 11:30 a.m. Boulder time. The game will be televised live on Fox Sports Net, marking MU's first appearance on FSN this season.

The Tigers are coming off a 41-7 home defeat to 3rd-ranked Texas, in a game that saw the Longhorns jump out to a commanding 21-0 first-quarter lead. The Tigers managed an impressive TD drive early in the 2nd quarter to pull to within 21-7, but two more UT touchdowns before halftime essentially salted the game away. Texas held an edge in total offense of 400-to-173 on the night, as they ran 77 plays to Mizzou's 53, and that led to a time of possession advantage in UT's favor of 35:02-to-24:58.

Colorado is coming off a 20-6 road loss at current Big 12 North leading Kansas State last Saturday. The Buffaloes held a 6-3 lead after one quarter, but the Wildcats scored 17 points in the 2nd quarter to take a 20-6 halftime lead, and that's all the scoring that took place on the day. It was a defensive battle, as K-State held a slim margin in total offense (284-to-244), but it was turnovers that really hurt CU. The Buffaloes lost four turnovers (2 fumbles and 2 interceptions) that led to 10 Wildcat points.

For more information go to www.mutigers.com