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john henderson

Henderson: Tougher Cowboys get ready for CU fight

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

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LARAMIE — Something happened Saturday at the end of Wyoming's loss to second-ranked Texas that I had never seen here. The Wyoming fans gave their players, fresh off a 41-10 loss, a standing ovation.

The Cowboys lost, but they weren't beaten. In light of Wyoming's game at Colorado on Saturday afternoon, that should be noted.

In as desperate need of a win as any program in the country, 0-2 Colorado will face a 1-1 Wyoming team that's not what anyone expected in August. Under first-year coach Dave Christensen, the Cowboys are playing smart, disciplined football.

The defense under Marty English, the lone

holdover from Joe Glenn's jettisoned staff, gave Texas fits. Longhorns backs had only one gain of at least 10 yards until midway through the third quarter. Without blitzing, Wyoming managed to pressure quarterback and Heisman Trophy contender Colt McCoy, who had one of his worst first halves in memory.

"It's a credit to them," McCoy said. "Their front four, No. 91 (tackle John Fletcher), he played with a high motor the whole game. He's really talented. He was back there all night long."

Has any Colorado player received any compliments from a Heisman Trophy candidate lately? The most disappointing program this side of Charlottesville, Va., is a seven-point favorite Saturday, but Wyoming should not be overlooked.

The offense has improved speed at tailback, and junior college transfer Robert Benjamin is a sound, smart quarterback. He has thrown 52 passes without an interception.

And remember, Christensen, as Missouri's offensive coordinator, put up 58 and 55 points on Colorado the last two years.

Colorado gets help with the return of suspended wide receiver Markques Simas, whom ex-Buffs tell me has better hands than anyone they've seen. Tailback Rodney Stewart should be healthy. But if Wyoming gets an early lead, the Folsom Field crowd will turn on the Buffaloes.

Think they booed in the loss to Colorado State? After what happened at Toledo, Buffs fans would

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turn into Phillies fans circa 1969 if the home team struggled.

CU fans know what lies ahead in the following three games: at West Virginia, at Texas, Kansas. If they don't win Saturday, the Buffs could be looking at 0-6 and would have to go on the road to Kansas State for their first win.

The Cowboys, meanwhile, would return to Laramie to more cheers.

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Bufs face offensive guru

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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LARAMIE, Wyo. -- Mack Brown gave Wyoming a verbal pat on the head outside the visitors locker room at War Memorial Stadium here on Saturday afternoon.

"This was an exciting day for Wyoming with the full house," the Texas coach said after his No. 2 Longhorns scored 35 unanswered points during a 41-10 victory. "I was really proud of them. This was really great for their program, and I'm proud of their coaching staff. They had their players ready."

First-year Wyoming head coach Dave Christensen isn't satisfied with the Cowboys' moral victory.

Competing at a high level for 30 minutes -- Wyoming led 10-6 late in the second quarter and trailed 13-10 at halftime -- simply isn't good enough for the former Missouri offensive coordinator.

Christensen's goal, even in the early stages of this rebuilding process, is to win. And that includes this Saturday when Wyoming plays Colorado at Folsom Field.

"Our kids are starting to figure it out," Christensen said. "That locker room is not jovial, I can guarantee you that. They don't like to lose and they'll have no problems coming back."

Wyoming -- a program that used to win back in the glory days with names like Bowden Wyatt, Phil Dickens, Bob Devaney, Lloyd Eaton, Paul Roach and Joe Tiller -- has suffered through lot of losing this decade.

Under the guidance of nice guys Vic Koenning and Joe Glenn, the Pokes posted a 35-70 record from 2000-08. Meanwhile, Mountain West Conference heavyweights BYU, TCU and Utah built consistent top 20 programs and rivals Colorado State and Air Force found seemingly perfect coaching fits to restore the life to their programs in Steve Fairchild and Troy Calhoun.

Wyoming athletic director Tom Burman knew he had to make a great hire when he let go of the popular Glenn. After flying to Columbia, Mo., to interview Christensen, the choice was clear.

"With Dave leading Cowboy football, I believe our program will make dramatic progress in the coming years and return to a position of prominence in the Mountain West Conference," Burman said.

Christensen's philosophy starts with discipline.

Mistakes and turnovers are not accepted or shrugged off in Laramie anymore.

The Cowboys' spring drills were very physical, and even a rash of injuries didn't persuade the old-school coach to back off.

Wyoming's most talented and productive receiver, Greg Bolling, was suspended for the first two games of the season for violating team rules.

The veteran starting quarterback (Karsten Sween) was beaten out by a pair of Division I newcomers (Robert Benjamin and Austyn Carta-Samuels) during fall drills. The best players, including 10 true freshman, play.

"It's his way or no way," said Robert Gagliardi, the sports editor of the Wyoming Tribune-Eagle, who has been covering Wyoming football for almost 20 years. "He is making everyone accountable. One of the first days of spring ball he even got after the managers for not getting to a drill on time."

Glenn, despite the losing, was very popular with the Wyoming fan base, whether he was playing "Ragtime Cowboy Joe" on the piano for boosters or upsetting BCS foes (Mississippi, UCLA, Virginia, Tennessee) on the field.

But Glenn's stated goal in recent years was to just become bowl eligible. Christensen isn't going to turn down an invitation to the New Mexico Bowl or the Poinsettia Bowl, but eventually he wants to win a conference championship.

"The thing that struck me the most about Dave is just how much he is into football," said Dave Walsh, the Cowboys' longtime radio play-by-play voice. "He lives it, breathes it and as we've seen from our football team so far, they're very disciplined and everything is very structured. I think he's just an outstanding coach, I really do."

Christensen was named the national offensive coordinator of the year by [Rivals.com](#) in 2007 and was also runner-up for the Frank Broyles Award, which honors the top assistant coach in the nation each season.

The Tigers won the Big 12's North Division the past two years and ranked near the top of most offensive statistical categories with Chase Daniel under center. During his eight seasons working under Gary Pinkel in Columbia, Missouri was 4-4 against CU.

"He's going to take that program to levels it's never seen," Daniel said on Dec. 1 after the news broke that Christensen had been hired as Wyoming's next coach. "What he's going to bring is an offense that's just insane. It's a player's dream to play under a coach like that. The type of things he does on the offensive side of the football are second to none. He's a genius ... and it's really shown over the last two or three years here."

So far, Wyoming's offense has been the weak link on the team. The defense held its own against Colt McCoy and the Longhorns in the first half of Saturday's game and scored the Cowboys' only touchdown on a blocked punt.

Christensen is confident his offense will be able to move the ball and score points this season against teams without burnt orange uniforms. Entering Saturday's game, CU's defense ranks 111th after yielding an average of 500 yards and 38.5 points in losses to Colorado State and Toledo.

"I don't think it's any secret. Everybody knows how good they are. They're ranked No. 2 for a reason," Christensen said of the Longhorns. "We held them to 13 points in the first half. I played them last year at Missouri and they scored the first six times they had the football. Our defense is playing well. We have to do a better job offensively. We have to find some ways to keep the possession of the football."

Wyoming doesn't have a player like Daniel or Jeremy Maclin or Chase Coffman. But Christensen's offense has put 113 unanswered points on the Buffs the past two seasons.

"We've made commitments to the things in this program that it takes to win and we're starting to get consistent and do those things," Christensen said after the Texas game. "And over time they will have more and more success and continue to get better every week."

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Biggreenboulder.com: Tradition of environmental volunteerism goes back decades in Boulder

By Mark Collins For the Camera
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/15/2009 11:37:11 AM MDT

Long before part of a government stimulus plan aimed some of its sites on boosting green businesses; long before eco-friendly efforts hit the mainstream; long before most every home in Boulder County was outfitted with recycling bins, volunteers have been the backbone of many environmental-awareness efforts.

"Our entire success is absolutely due to the block leader (volunteer) network," said Marti Matsch, communications director for Eco-Cycle.

Eco-Cycle used block-leader volunteers from as far back as 1979, when recycling was a foreign concept in many households.

"They were used to help their neighbors understand the concept of recycling, where to do it and when to do it," Matsch said.

Currently, Eco-Cycle enjoys the help of more than 800 volunteers, who range from six to 92 years old, she added. Eco-Cycle began recruiting volunteers early on after conducting a study to determine what makes people change daily habits.

"The result of the study was that change came from peers," Matsch said.

At CU, more than 40 volunteers from the student body and community at large did the dirty work for the Ralphie's Green Stampede -- the university's efforts to turn home CU football games into zero-waste events -- during the Sept. 6 Colorado-Colorado State tilt.

"Most of them think it's a valuable way to spend their time. It's definitely something that makes a big impact," said Molly Brown, student volunteer coordinator for Ralphie's Green Stampede. "If they do their job, they're going to save a sizable portion of waste from ever entering the stream.

"It really is dependent on the student volunteers. If they weren't doing their job and helping people recycle and compost correctly, our compost would be filled with a bunch of trash and be totally unusable.

"So the success of the operation is dependent on those guys being at the game at the level of the fans and interacting with them."

Pete Palmer started volunteering through Eco-Cycle more than six years ago, when he and his wife lived in Pine Brook Hills. He would distribute Eco-Cycle's newsletter to 80 friends and neighbors twice a year.

Now he distributes the newsletter to 200 residents at Frasier Meadows, the retirement community where the Palmers currently live. He also chairs the retirement center's recycling committee.

"I thought it was a good idea," Palmer said of what motivated him to get involved as a volunteer. "To me it was just a recognition that we needed to be responsible."

For more information on volunteering with Eco-Cycle, visit ecocycle.org.

Contact Mark Collins at 303-473-1369 or BDCTheater@comcast.net.

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INSIDE THE MATCHUP: Wyoming at Colorado

ERIC SCHMOLDT - Star-Tribune staff writer | **Posted: Tuesday, September 15, 2009 12:00 am**

THE COWBOYS

RECORD: 1-1 overall, 0-0 Mountain West Conference.

LAST WEEK: The Cowboys shocked many by hanging with No. 2 Texas for the entire first half -- even taking a lead late in the second quarter -- but the Longhorns offense exploded in the second half and UW lost 41-10.

The Pokes defense stood up to Texas for the first 30 minutes, but gave up 35 unanswered points and gave up 544 yards of total offense. Heisman Trophy runner-up Colt McCoy threw for three scores and ran for another.

UW's offense, on the other hand, never got rolling. Led for most of the game by junior Robert Benjamin, the Pokes put up just 273 yards and their only touchdown came on a blocked punt.

KEY STAT: The Pokes continue to be bugged by big plays.

One week after allowing nine plays of 15 or more yards to Football Subdivision opponent Weber State, the Pokes gave up 11 such plays to the Longhorns -- including three touchdowns from at least 25 yards out.

UW had just two plays go for at least 15 yards Saturday and have just nine such plays through two games.

WHO TO WATCH: Defensive linemen Mitch Unrein and John Fletcher -- both from Colorado -- only got hungrier when Texas quarterback Colt McCoy eluded them on Saturday.

They should have plenty of motivation against a Buffaloes offensive line that has allowed seven sacks for minus-61 yards in two games.

THE BUFFALOES

RECORD: 0-2 overall, 0-0 Big 12 Conference.

LAST WEEK: Dan Hawkins' hot seat got a little bit warmer.

The Colorado coach is taking heat after the Buffaloes followed up a season-opening loss at home to Colorado State with a 54-38 loss at Toledo on Friday night.

The Rockets were just 3-9 last season, but jumped out to a 23-3 lead by halftime and never looked back.

Colorado quarterback Cody Hawkins -- son of the coach -- threw for more than 350 yards and four touchdowns, but it took him more than 60 attempts to get there. He was picked off three times and suffered a concussion on a rushing touchdown in the fourth quarter.

The Buffaloes gave up 624 yards of total offense.

KEY STAT: Colorado is off to a slow start this season, but has been even slower in first halves.

In their two losses, the Buffaloes have been outscored 43-6 in the first two quarters.

Colorado has outscored its opponent each time in the second half, but that hasn't been enough to claw back from the deep holes dug in the opening 30 minutes.

WHO TO WATCH: Senior linebacker Jeff Smart, a second-team All-Big 12 honoree a year ago, has picked up right where he left off.

Smart leads the team with 22 tackles in the Buffs' two losses.

He also has a sack and an interception while playing all but three defensive snaps thus far.