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cu football

Hawkins hopes CU can be comeback kids

By Chris Dempsey
The Denver Post

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The Buffs' defense has been shredded this season, including 428 yards total offense by Toledo quarterback Aaron Opelt. (J.D. Pooley, The Associated Press)

The CU coach highlights stories such as the 2007 New York Giants, who started 0-2 and came back to win the Super Bowl, and the 1986 Buffaloes, who started 0-4 only to battle Oklahoma for the Big Eight Conference title.

Hawkins believes his team has a sprint to the tape in them, but for his Buffs to go from 0-2 to any kind of a successful season, they are going to have to leap a Grand Canyon-sized chasm between what they are and where they want to be.

The offense has been inconsistent; the defense downright awful. Toledo ran up 624 yards en route to 54 points in its shellacking of the Buffs last Friday.

BOULDER — Dan Hawkins' favorite tales this week are comeback stories, bad starts that became fantastic finishes.

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To fix the defense, Colorado's plan is to scrap its previous plan. Part of it, anyway.

This week, heading into the Wyoming game, CU coaches pared down what they asked players to know scheme-wise, in hopes they will play faster and think less.

"I think it's just a question of trying to put too much in," Hawkins said. "You're trying to do such a great job of getting the guy in the exact right

spot based on formation, down, distance and field position, that maybe you overdo it a little bit. And it becomes paralysis by analysis, to some degree."

Through two games, Colorado's defense allowed 1,000 yards and 77 points. Perhaps even more stunning, CU has allowed 16 plays of 20 yards or more, eight plays of 40 or more yards and 7.8 yards per play.

One of those big plays was Toledo quarterback Aaron Opelt's 61-yard draw play that found the end zone when no one caught him running straight up the middle of the field.

"I got out in the open field and it shocked me a little bit," Opelt said.

Thanks to the CU game, Opelt finds himself as the top offensive player in the nation through two games. He had 428 yards total offense against the Buffs.

Colorado's spin this week is that the big plays can be contained, and are a small percentage of the overall effort. More than 80 percent of opponents' plays have netted just 212 yards.

That's where simplification comes in for the Buffs, who have been burned by players not knowing their responsibilities.

"Last week we had a lot of packages in. I think we had five different personnel (groups) in," linebacker B.J. Beatty said. "At one time we had like six (defensive backs) on the field. We're

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running back and forth. There's a lot of confusion.

"The coach is just trying to put it in one group. Keep it simple. A couple plays here and there so everyone can get on the same page and get the job done."

Linebacker Marcus Burton said: "I just think guys were focused on their assignments, focused on not making a mistake, not getting pulled out. You've got to have fun and just go out and play football."

Hawkins, meanwhile, maintains CU's offense is pretty much where it should be at this point.

"We put a lot of points on the board, we moved the ball, we very seldom punted, we were great in the red zone, our third downs were much improved," Hawkins said. "So I think we're very close."

Overall, CU's offensive stats aren't horrific. The Buffs average 351 yards (78th nationally) and 27.5 points per game (61st). They average 4.74 yards per play, 5.1 yards on first down and 10.7 yards per completion.

But . . .

When those stats are broken down into halves, it is a bit more revealing.

In the first half, the Buffs have struggled to move the ball and subsequently have fallen behind. Through two games, the Buffs have

averaged just 121 yards and three points in the first half.

The Buffs have scored seven touchdowns, all in the second half.

CU has almost as many yards in the two fourth quarters combined (241) as it has in the entire two first halves (242).

Consequently, Colorado trailed 20-3 at the half against Colorado State and 23-3 at Toledo.

Still, Hawkins said he saw marked improvement on offense in Game 1, and expects that trend to continue. Against the Rockets, Colorado had 451 total yards, up from 200 against CSU.

Senior tight end Patrick Devenny said the team knows it is close to turning the corner.

"It's not like we're out there not doing things right," Devenny said. "It's just one little thing every time. In a way, that's motivating. We know we're so close to where we want to be."

Staff writer Tom Kensler contributed to this report. Chris Dempsey: 303-954-1279 or cdempsey@denverpost.com

Starts and stops

Colorado has struggled to find a consistent rhythm this season, particularly early in games. Chris Dempsey takes a look at the result of every drive in the Buffs' first two games:

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OFFENSIVE LETDOWNS

vs. Colorado State

First half (3 points): Punt, interception, punt, punt, field goal.

Second half (14 points): Touchdown, fumble, downs, punt, punt, punt, touchdown.

vs. Toledo

First half (3 points): Punt, punt, field goal, missed field goal, fumble, end of half.

Second half (35 points): Punt, touchdown, touchdown, touchdown, int., int., downs, int., touchdown, touchdown.

DEFENSE SURRENDERS

vs. Colorado State

First half (20 points): Touchdown, punt, touchdown, field goal, interception, field goal.

Second half (3 points): Punt, punt, interception, punt, field goal, punt, end of game.

vs. Toledo

First half (23 points): Touchdown, touchdown, field goal, missed field goal, touchdown.

Second half (31 points): Touchdown, punt, touchdown, fumble, touchdown, punt, touchdown, punt, field goal, end of game.

Three questions for CU

1. Will Colorado's defense prevent the gashers? "Gashers" is what Colorado coach Dan Hawkins calls long gains made by the opponents' offense. They are lethal. The Buffs allowed 11 plays of 20 or more yards against Toledo, including four of 40 or more. In the opener, Colorado State also busted four plays of 40-plus yards. That must stop.

2. Is CU's offense certain about the scheduled time for kickoff? In its first two games, Colorado sleepwalked through the first two quarters and failed to score a first-half touchdown. Hard to believe, but the Buffs trailed Colorado State and Toledo by a combined 43-6 at halftime. Talk about having to play uphill from the get-go.

3. Will the Buffs' revamped offensive line control the line of scrimmage? With Ryan Miller moving from right guard to right tackle, fellow sophomores Matt Bahr and Blake Behrens are expected to share time at right guard. Offensive linemen typically work at several positions, but chemistry can be an issue after a shuffling of personnel.

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cu football - briefs

Stewart adds speedy element to Buffs' attack

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/18/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Regaining one's timing can be an issue for any athlete after being slowed or sidelined for an extended amount of time, but Colorado sophomore tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart said that should not be a concern Saturday when he gets back onto the field for the home game against Wyoming.

"I've been playing football my whole life. Timing comes easy," Stewart said this week. "I'm practicing this week. I'm not worried about my timing not being there."

Stewart finally feels 100 percent recovered from a hamstring pull, which he suffered in an Aug. 13 scrimmage. He played in the season opener against Colorado State, gaining 39 yards on six carries. But the soreness returned, and Stewart was held out of the Toledo game.

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"This is the best I've been feeling since my injury. I'm ready to go," he said.

Colorado (0-2) could use a jolt of Stewart's explosiveness. Stewart was CU's leading rusher in 2008 with 622 yards before suffering a season-ending leg fracture in the ninth game, at Texas A&M.

Stewart said he wasn't close to playing full speed against CSU and probably tried to come

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back too early. He sat out two weeks of August drills.

A native of Columbus, Ohio, Stewart accompanied the team to his home state last week for the game against Toledo and got to visit with his parents. But it was frustrating to watch from the bench as the Buffaloes suffered a 54-38 humiliation.

"I looked at my teammates and saw how down they were," Stewart recalled. "Hopefully, in the next game I can pick them up."

On guard(s).

Switching Ryan Miller from offensive right guard to right tackle this week means sophomores Blake Behrens and Matt Bahr likely will share time at right guard.

Behrens started 11 games at left guard in 2008, and Bahr made eight starts at right tackle. They must adjust to their new positions in a hurry.

"Wyoming's defensive front looks good," Bahr said Thursday. "They've got some older guys who are really talented. We're excited to get out there and see what we can do."

Playing fast.

During the loss at Toledo, ESPN announcers criticized CU for its lack of speed on defense. Senior linebacker Shaun Mohler disagrees, saying the Buffs aren't slow, but that in that game they played slow.

"We've got plenty of speed and stuff," Mohler said. "We just have to communicate. If we're on the same page, we'll play a lot faster. We'll show that against Wyoming."

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Barnett says inexperience, expectations hurting CU

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/18/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

Gary Barnett, whom football coach Dan Hawkins replaced at Colorado three years ago, says the Buffaloes are struggling because of a lack of experience and excessive expectations.

"They're playing like a team that doesn't have a lot of seniors on it and doesn't have a lot of real strong leadership," Barnett said Thursday by phone. "And as a result, it's really hard to overcome things that happen to them."

Hawkins is 13-26 in his fourth year and opened this season with upset losses to Colorado State and Toledo. Barnett, 49-39 from 1999-2005 with four North Division titles and one Big 12 championship, now works as a college football analyst for Sports USA Radio.

"Expectations got built up so high because everyone wants Hawk to succeed and they want a good program

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here and want to win again," said Barnett, fired after losing to Texas 70-3 in the 2005 Big 12 championship game. "You see all the recruits have gotten a lot of publicity. If you follow recruiting, you start creating expectations that may not be sound or objective."

Barnett, who served as offensive coordinator

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when Colorado beat Notre Dame 10-9 to win the 1990 national title, said the Buffaloes were going to struggle after losing the entire defensive line and both safeties and having no seniors on the offensive line.

He does agree that Colorado is a bit slow.

"Just watching both the Toledo and Colorado State games, it looks like they had speed issues, especially in the secondary against Toledo," he said. "Losing a receiver of Josh Smith's speed and playmaking ability, that can't help you."

However, Barnett says they should stick with Hawkins, Colorado's third head coach in 12 years.

"CU has gone through too many (coaches)," he said. "Of course, I'm one of those guys they went through. You look at the strong programs. They don't have nearly that many head coaches. (CU administrators) have never been patient. There's also been a big turnover in the administration. I went through four presidents. It's all interrelated."

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It's California dreamin' for former Buffs wideout Smith

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/18/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT

LOS ANGELES — Maybe it was the bright California sunshine, or the gorgeous campus, or the new coach who knows a thing or two about the passing game. But UCLA receiver Josh Smith, the transfer from Colorado, was smiling too much here recently to join the hatefest piling on struggling Buffaloes coach Dan Hawkins.

"Man, I love it here," said Smith, his dreadlocked hair under a white bandana and red Yankees cap. "It's been a wonderful transition. It got me back home. My family's all excited. It's like a relief."

It's partly a relief that he's 40 miles from where he starred at Moorpark (Calif.) High with nephew Darrell Scott, Colorado's sophomore tailback.

It's also partly a relief that he's in a hot program that's 2-0 and not with 0-2 Colorado.

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He said he "almost shed a tear" watching Colorado lose its opener to Colorado State, with Scott getting only one carry. When Smith left Boulder this past summer, saying he wanted to pursue a music production career, fans questioned his motives. However, they also questioned if the Buffs could make up for the loss of their lone deep threat. Smith's 4.34 speed in the 40-yard dash was the best on the team.

No hard feelings for CU

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Smith maintains UCLA's music production department is the main reason he left. While he said football issues contributed to his decision, he wasn't upset with Hawkins.

"He's a good coach, as far as personality and effort," he said. "He always made sure we played with excellence and class and made sure we knew who we were representing."

Two football issues did bother Smith, namely constant double teaming and the departure of offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich. Due in part to the double teams, his numbers weren't great. He was fourth on the team with 29 catches for 387 yards and three touchdowns last fall after catching 23 passes for 451 yards as a freshman. His routes weren't great, either, but he points out that he didn't start playing football until his junior year at Moorpark. He admitted feeling pressure to carry the load of a struggling passing game.

"I just felt like every single little message was kind of like, 'If Josh Smith would step his game up, the Buffs would be on a roll here,'" Smith said. "That kind of extreme pressure, being so young, I felt like I could do no right."

Still, Helfrich and Smith were tight. When Helfrich left last spring to become offensive coordinator at Oregon, his home state, receivers coach Eric Kiesau replaced him and Hawkins became receivers coach.

"I don't know if it's more money, a better contract," Smith said. "It started to make me feel

like, I've got a bucket list of my own. I've got dreams of my own."

Love of music

His biggest dream is a career in music. The seventh of nine children born to a construction worker and homemaker, Smith saw his older brothers escape the tough part of St. Petersburg, Fla., through music recordings. Smith followed in their footsteps. He said he has recorded about 40 songs, teaming up occasionally with Arizona State backup quarterback Samson Szakacsy, his quarterback at Moorpark.

For a Music Technology class last year, Smith's final project was a song called, "I'm Taking Off." It was complete with beat and lyrics and set to his 93-yard kickoff return last year against Colorado State.

"I got a perfect score," he said. "That let me know that, man, this is what I was meant to do."

Unfortunately, Colorado's music school specializes in performance, not production, and the NCAA wouldn't allow him to take classes at a school that did, CU-Denver. So he took off.

"It's no joke that I'm really doing the music major," Smith said. "I'm the type of man who wants to know what I'm doing with my life."

Per NCAA rules, he's redshirting this year. UCLA coach Rick Neuheisel, who coached CU from 1995-98, believes he'll have a major contributor next year.

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"I'm thrilled with Josh," Neuheisel said. "He's an electric-type player. He's got a great personality."

Meanwhile, Smith said he'll follow the Buffs. He agrees with Hawkins going with his son, Cody, at quarterback. ("Hawkins just knows how to make the reads that (Tyler) Hansen wouldn't be able to make," he said.)

But the offensive line needs to improve, he said.

"They have to step up a whole lot," he said. "The schedule coming up is going to be a whole lot tougher than CSU. I'm sorry."

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Longmont, Colorado
 Tuesday, September 29,
 2009

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Buffs rev up intensity

By Patrick Ridgell
 © 2009 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — There's a different edge to the Colorado Buffaloes this week.

Through two weeks of 2009, there's plenty to be distressed about. The offense that wanted to be big and physical is battered and bruised. The defense has allowed 1,000 yards, 7.8 per play, 16 plays of 20 yards or more, and eight plays of 40 yards or more.

Guess what? Coaches are mad.

Players note they've had an increased intensity this week in practice. Defensive coordinator Ron Collins acknowledged his intensity is higher than normal. That'll happen when the other team's quarterback goes 61 yards on third-and-4 just when your offense started to rally.

"That's something that should never happen," Collins said.

"I think sometimes players don't realize what it takes, and now these first two games have kind of sent a little shock to their system. They need to pick up the intensity in practice.

"At times, they need some motivation to get going. You know, sometimes they don't know if they're coasting or going hard. If they are coasting, then you have to let them know. Because we have enough guys that we've got competition. If guys are not getting it done, then we have other guys who can step up and do it."

Tight end Patrick Devenny said scuffles between scout-team defenders and the first-team offense on Tuesday were a good thing.

"That's what we need," Devenny said. "We need a spark. We need something at this point.

"I actually thought (Tuesday's) practice was exactly what we needed. It was actually the first time since the first day of camp that everyone came out all excited and ready to play.

Said linebacker Marcus Burton: "We got a lot of aggression going on. Our guys are kind of scrapping a little bit. Guys want to win."

Better defense will help reach that goal. Head coach Dan Hawkins revealed on Tuesday CU's plans to simplify the defense. Collins said that'll entail fewer substitutions and more base coverages. Linebacker B.J. Beatty admitted all the shuffling in and out left some confused.

CU Athletes of the week

Male

Scotty McKnight, Jr., football

McKnight caught 11 passes for 114 yards, both career highs, in CU's loss at Toledo

Female

Rosie Steinhaus, So., volleyball

Steinhaus led CU to a 2-1 mark in last weekend's Colorado Invitational by recording 32 kills and 23 digs.

CSU Athletes of the week

Male

Rashaun Greer, Sr., football

In a 24-23 win over Nevada, he caught six passes for 162 yards, including a 57-yarder.

Female

Melissa Martin, So., golf

She finished sixth at the Ptarmigan Ram Fall Classic, and her 70 during the final round helped the Rams break the school record for a three-round tournament score (863).

But another big problem is more of a fundamental one: tackling. Collins wouldn't say exactly how many tackles the Buffs missed last Friday night in Toledo, but admitted it was "quite a few."

"Big ones, too," he said. "Crucial ones."

Coaches don't want to beat players up in the days before the game. But Collins and players say tackling is something on which the Buffs must work daily. Last Friday's events only added urgency.

"They have to run to the ball and do it at game speed," Collins said. "That's the bottom line."

"We have to get back to the basics, go back to our basic coverages and hopefully play at a level where we're not thinking on the field and we're playing fast."

Is the defense far from reaching that level?

"We're a ways away," Collins said. "Time will tell. Once game time hits, we'll find out whether we're doing the right thing right now or not."

Read Patrick Ridgell's CU sports blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/ridgell.

He can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

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Longmont, Colorado
 Tuesday, September 29,
 2009

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Nothing personal

By Justin Williams
 © 2009 Longmont Times-Call

Gabe Knapton says Colorado barely gave him a second glance when he was a standout defender right down the road at Skyline High School. No matter — he didn't want to wind up in Boulder anyway.

"I knew I was going to Wyoming," said Knapton, a sophomore linebacker for the Cowboys. "(If) they don't want to look at a Colorado football kid, then we'll show them what Wyoming is like."

Knapton will have that chance Saturday as his Cowboys travel into Folsom Field in Boulder (1:30 p.m., FCS-C) for a game both teams are desperate to win — the 0-2 Buffs to save face, and 1-1 Wyoming to show it can compete with the big boys.

"I really don't think it will be too emotional," Knapton said. "I've been to CU games before, and I always wondered what it would be like to play there, and I'll have a lot of friends and family there."

"But really, I'm just looking to come out of there with a win."

Knapton was the Times-Call Defensive Player of the Year in 2006 while playing for the Falcons. Colorado and Colorado State both gave him looks, but no offers were made — mainly because his mind already was made up.

Knapton redshirted his freshman year at Wyoming, but he made an immediate impact last season, stepping right into the starting lineup at outside linebacker. The 6-foot-4, 240-pounder finished second on the team with 92 tackles.

"He's just a good football player," Wyoming defensive coordinator Marty English said. "He's a good physical player, has good instincts and works hard."

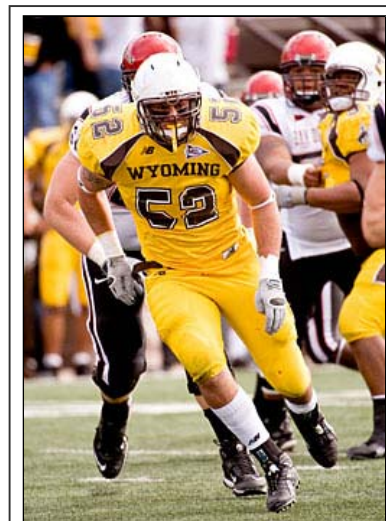
"He's earned the right to be in the position he's in."

Knapton said one of the reasons he chose Wyoming was to be coached by Joe Glenn. But the head coach was fired after a 4-8 season in 2008, and Dave Christensen stepped in. But fortunately, English — who recruited Knapton out of high school — remained with the team.

"At first, you're kind of worried," Knapton said. "I didn't want (Glenn) to go. But I wasn't too worried about my job. I knew if I kept working hard, things would be fine."

Knapton isn't the only player English has taken right out of CU's backyard. Former Niwot linebacker Jeff Rouche is redshirting this season at Wyoming, and Niwot senior Tyler Strong is committed to play with the Cowboys in the fall.

"I don't know what it is about that area, but we find some kids that are good fits for us," said English, who recruits the



Wyoming linebacker Gabe Knapton was second on the team in tackles a year ago. Knapton was the Times-Call defensive player of the year in 2006, when he starred at Skyline High School. **Ted Brummond/University of Wyoming**

state of Colorado for the Cowboys. “These guys have been good for us. I go to every single one of those schools every year.”

This weekend will be a homecoming of sorts for Knapton, although he certainly considers Laramie more home than anything else nowadays. His dad — and former Skyline head coach, Bob Knapton — coaches at nearby Laramie High School, where Gabe Knapton’s younger brother plays football.

“It’s been great having them so close,” Gabe Knapton said.

Saturday won’t be the first time he has come back to Colorado to play collegiate football, either. He suited up for the Border War in Fort Collins last season against Colorado State, so he said his emotions will be in check come game time.

And, he said, the Cowboys aren’t expecting the same under-performing Buffs team we’ve seen the first two weeks to show up at Folsom Field on Saturday. At the same time, they won’t be intimidated — and you don’t have to look much further for proof than last week, when Wyoming hung with second-ranked Texas for two quarters in Laramie.

“This is why you play college football: to play teams like that,” Knapton said. “It’s what you think of as a little kid: ‘I want to play against Texas, and I want to play against CU.’

“It should be fun.”

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Goodman's roller-coaster ride continues in Boulder

Current CU kicker stays mum on time at UW

ERIC SCHMOLDT - Star-Tribune staff writer | Posted: Friday, September 18, 2009 12:00 am

Aric Goodman isn't interested in talking about the past.

He doesn't speak about his transfer from Wyoming to Colorado and has simply learned from a record-setting field goal dry spell from last season.

One year after missing eight kicks in a row, the former Cowboy is back in a groove and could play an important role against his old teammates.

"I've gone out and pretty much done what I've wanted this season so far, which naturally brings confidence," Goodman said. "I just have to keep that mindset that it's all about the next kick.

"Whether I miss four or five, that's irrelevant going into the next one."

As a freshman at UW in 2006, Goodman led the Cowboys with 48 points, going 18-for-20 on extra points and 10-for-16 on field goals, including a 52-yarder that wound up being the game-winner against San Diego State.

But Pokes fans remember him most for a missed extra point in overtime that saddled the Pokes with a 13-12 loss to Virginia.

"Maybe [Wyoming coaches and players] lost a little bit of confidence in me," Goodman told The Denver Post before last season. "Some stuff [was said] here and there, stuff was bouncing the wrong way a little bit."

"That put everything in perspective. It just showed how low things can get."

Goodman declined to discuss his transfer in a phone interview on Wednesday.

His roller-coaster ride continued after leaving Laramie.

After sitting out the 2007 season, the Cherry Creek Village, Colo., native led the Buffaloes in scoring last year but made just five field goals in 14 attempts.

He earned some redemption against No. 21 West Virginia that season, booting a 25-yard game-winning field goal to earn a scholarship. But missed his next eight attempts in a row -- though the Colorado media guide states he missed them by a combined distance of "likely less than 20 feet."

"I knew that I wasn't making major mistakes, so I just tried to refine a little bit," Goodman said. "I just focused on the little things every single time. Kicking is kind of a process, and after going through what I went through, I just started to realize all the small things that go into doing it.

"I dedicated myself to learning and being extremely intricate with those details."

Goodman, now a junior, is off to a solid start.

He's been perfect on extra points and is 2-for-3 on field goals, including a career-best 54-yarder in the Buffaloes' season-opening loss to Colorado State.

He also won the College Football Performance Awards National Kickoff Specialist of the Week by dropping all three of his kickoffs against the Rams into the end zone.

"We all know that Aric has a big leg, and we're excited to see him kicking the ball well," Colorado senior linebacker Jeff Smart said. "It's great to see him kicking field goals for us and putting points on the board."

Goodman could be a factor in what is expected to be a close game between the Buffaloes and Cowboys on Saturday.

But, with the past being exactly that, he hasn't had the date circled on his calendar.

"In my position, snap, kick and hold are the same regardless of who you play," Goodman said. "I'm just looking forward to my next kick."

GAME WILL BE TELEVISED ON FOX COLLEGE SPORTS: Wyoming fans may have to pay a price to see the Pokes on television -- if they can even get the game at all.

Saturday's game will be televised by Fox College Sports, which is not to be confused by Fox Sports-Rocky Mountain -- the station that carried the Buffaloes season opener with Colorado State.

Fox College Sports can be found on channel 617 for those with DIRECTV. The station is part of Bresnan Cable's Sports Entertainment Package. If purchased, the station is found on channel 333.

BUFFALOES TRACKER

THURSDAY: Colorado, still looking for its first victory of the 2009 season, continued its preparation for its first meeting with Wyoming in 12 years.

DELIVERING GOODS: Buffaloes junior kicker Aric Goodman, who transferred from UW following the 2006 season, is off to a solid start after enduring an 0-for-8 dry spell last season.

PLEADING THE FIFTH: Goodman, who was the Pokes' leading scorer as a freshman but missed a crucial extra point in a 13-12 loss to Virginia, declined to discuss his transfer out of Laramie.

HE SAID IT: "In my position, snap, kick and hold are the same regardless of who you play." -- Goodman.

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CU looks to buff up on defense

Bufs seek first win this season versus Wyoming

By Alex K.W. Schultz on September 18, 2009

Colorado Buffaloes head coach Dan Hawkins might be regretting his “10 wins and no excuses” pitch he planted in the minds of CU players and fans nine months ago.

Flash back to December at the team’s senior banquet when Hawkins confidently – and perhaps prematurely – said, “I believe 100 percent, I put it on our team, I am going to tell you right here publicly, I expect to win 10 games next year,” according to an August issue of the Daily Camera.

Flash forward to Saturday when the Buffs, now 0-2 with 10 games remaining, will entertain the 1-1 Wyoming Cowboys at Folsom Field.

“I think every team goes into the season expecting to win every game,” said Buffs senior linebacker Jeff Smart.

Hawkins, who is 13-26 in his fourth season at CU, was unavailable for comment.

CU’s defense has been the team’s Achilles heel this season, with the Buffs allowing 1,000 yards of offense on 128 plays. A mere 16 of those plays have accounted for a whopping 676 yards.

Last week against the Toledo Rockets in Ohio, CU surrendered 54 points and 624 yards in an embarrassing 16-point loss. Rockets senior quarterback, Aaron Opelt, tossed for four touchdowns of 8, 23, 26 and 70 yards, and rushed for two more of 27 and 61 yards.

“We’ve given up a lot of big plays,” said CU defensive coordinator Ron Collins. “We’ve had teams make plays on us. It just seems like things have snowballed on us a little bit in the first two games.”

Collins called CU’s defense a “work in progress” because the unit is full of youth.

“In the first two games, we probably played eight or so guys, this is their first year playing,” Collins said. “That’s no excuse. The guys have to be ready to go.”

Is the Buffs’ inexperience the source of the problem?



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Cops to maintain status quo

Security won't slack

By Ben Vallier on September 18, 2009

CU Police Department officials say they are planning to stick to standard security procedures for the Colorado Buffaloes' home game against the Wyoming Cowboys.

The game will be held Saturday at 1:30 p.m.

The Buff's most recent home game against the Colorado State Rams saw a high number of ejections. According to the CU Police Department Web site, 81 people were ejected. Of these incidents, 63 involved alcohol issues and a total of 20 people were held in the Addiction Recovery Center, otherwise known as "detox".

CU officials say that security will use the same methods they have in the past.



A CU fan is hauled away by law enforcement officers during the first quarter of the Rocky Mountain Showdown, Sept. 6.
(CU Independent/Lauren Walter)

"We want to continue down the path of repeating things that succeed," said CU Police Department Cmdr. Tim McGraw. "Things will remain pretty much the same. We'll continue to check for things that have caused problems, specifically people that are intoxicated."

CU also sent out a news release before the CSU game indicating that individuals ejected from games may not be allowed back in for time much longer than the remainder of the game.

The news release read in part that "fans ejected from a game may be denied access from subsequent games and their tickets may be confiscated, depending on the severity of the infraction."

"I think what's going to happen here is that the folks who tend to be the problem aren't going to be there anymore. Hopefully the word will be getting around that this really isn't a free-for-all type of environment," McGraw said.

While CSU fans did manage to rush the field upon completion of the last home game, CU officials say they feel that such occurrences can't be stopped.

"For us to prevent that would probably cause a greater issue than someone walking on the grass," McGraw said. "We ask folks not to, but when you have 3,000 to 10,000 people wanting to go somewhere, trying to stop them becomes a pretty significant effort."

Though CU officials say they aren't expecting anything out of the ordinary for the Buff's upcoming game against Wyoming, they still remain cautious.

"Night games typically have more ejections, but that's not always true. We've also had some day games where we've had some pretty hairy ejection numbers," said CU spokesman Bronson Hilliard. "Same rules apply. Be good sports, be classy."

Contact CU Independent Staff Writer Ben Vallier at Benjamin.vallier@colorado.edu.

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KDVR

Critical Mass for Dan Hawkins? Maybe not

Zubin Mehenti

KDVR Denver Sports

September 17, 2009

BOULDER, Colo.

It is the most overused cliché in sports. Yes, the dreaded "must win" game.

Even though that term is passed around more often in locker rooms than steroids, very rarely is it ever an accurate description of a particular event.

On Saturday, it has been said, the reeling [University of Colorado Buffaloes](#) will play a -you guessed it- must win game. For the third straight week, CU faces an opponent that is supposedly inferior but has every reason to think it is superior.

When you play in a "must win" game (did I just accept that term as a fact?) in September, you know, it's not going well.

CU was blasted by Colorado State in their opener and had its defense decimated by Toledo last Friday.

On Saturday, they face a Wyoming team that has every reason to believe it can pull off a "buffalo stampede." After all, the day after the Buffs gave up 54 points to the Rockets, the Cowboys gave Texas, the nation's second-ranked team, all it could handle in the first half. The Longhorns only led 13-10 at the half before easing towards a 41-10 victory.

Would CU -based on what we have seen thus far- even hung with UT for a quarter?




A loss on Saturday and the Buffs will be 0-3 with this schedule staring them in the face:

Thursday, October 1st @ West Virginia.

Saturday, October 10th @ Texas.

Saturday, October 17 vs. Texas

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Safe to say, looking at those three games, in the words of someone familiar with the Buffs.....THIS ISN'T INTRAMURALS, BROTHER....THIS IS DIVISION ONE FOOTBALL!!!!

If the Buffs go 0-3, the idea of "doubling their pleasure" to 0-6 doesn't seem as farfetched as it is cringe-inducing.

Still, despite all of that, a possible 0-6 start in his fourth year -I do not think Saturday is a crossroads game...I won't say "must win" game for the boys from Boulder and their head coach, Dan Hawkins.

For one thing, Bill McCartney went 0-4 in his fourth season at CU. Four years later, they claimed a share of the national title.

The biggest difference between those two teams? Not coaching. Instead, talent.

CU was getting top-notch talent in the 1980s and early 1990s. These days? You could argue they don't have a FCS caliber wide receiver on their roster.

Still, I do not think the result Saturday -win or lose- will have long term implications for Hawkins.

Athletic Director Mike Bohn hired Hawkins and, with his credibility hanging in the balance, he is not likely to admit error easily.

In addition, Bohn, as a vote of confidence, gave Hawkins a two-year contract extension after last season. That means Hawkins is under contract through the 2012 season, even though he had compiled just a 13-24 record to earn that extra two years.

Bohn would not only have a tough time admitting the Hawkins era might have been a mistake, but he'll also have to explain why a coach that had gone to just one bowl game in three years merited a contract extension. These are two questions he doesn't want to face anytime soon.

According to The Denver Post, when all is said and done, paying off Hawkins and relocating a new staff, a buyout could cost the school \$3.4 million.

At that point, you are starting over with a new man in charge that will need a rebuilding period of his own.

The other option? Stick with Hawkins and hope that the patience the school displayed with McCartney will eventually pay dividends with him.

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Print Page

Last modified: Friday, September 18, 2009 12:02 AM MDT

Hey, Aric, good to see you again

Though most Pokes fans probably won't offer up any pleasantries to the former Wyoming kicker when they see him in a Buffs uniform on Saturday in Boulder.

By Robert Gagliardi
rgagliardi@wyomingnews.com

CHEYENNE -- Kickers generally lead a solemn existence on a football team.

They don't say much, and more often than not don't go through the ups and downs of other players - both on and off the field.

Aric Goodman is one of the exceptions.

Many University of Wyoming football fans remember one thing about Goodman's true freshman season with the Cowboys in 2006: his missed extra point in overtime at Virginia, where UW lost 13-12.

Even though that miss ended the game, the Cowboys had several other chances during regulation to win that game.

And if Goodman had made that kick, it would have extended the game, not won it.

Goodman finished the season as the Cowboys' leading scorer with 48 points. He made 10 of 16 field goals with a long of 52, and he made 18 of 20 extra points.

But that one miss, and the scrutiny that went along with it, was tough to deal with.

After the season, Goodman transferred to Colorado for a fresh start. He didn't have a football scholarship and had to sit out a year to satisfy NCAA transfer rules.

When he became eligible, Goodman had to win the job.

He did.

And after a game-winning 25-yard field goal at home against West Virginia in the third game last season, Goodman was awarded a scholarship by coach Dan Hawkins.

After that he missed his next eight field goals, which was a school record.

Goodman missed 9 of 14 field-goal attempts last season.

Goodman remains the Buffs' kicker, and has seen his team get off to a 0-2 start.

He booted a career-long 54 yard field goal in a season-opening 23-17 loss at home to Colorado State. Goodman is 2 of 3 in field goals, made all seven of his extra points and leads CU in scoring with 13 points.

"Even though he missed some last year, he was never far off," Hawkins said. "It wasn't like he was sculling the ball all over the place. It's not fun to go through a slump, but he's kicking the ball pretty well for us right now."

Saturday, Goodman and the Buffs face the University of Wyoming at Folsom Field in Boulder, Colo.

During a phone interview with Goodman this week, and before a question could be asked, he refused to talk about his transfer or time at UW.

But he said facing UW won't be any different than any other team.

"For a kicker, it doesn't matter who is on the other sideline," he said. "I have to go out there and concentrate on my job.

"I can't worry about things I can't control. I have to make sure I am focused, hope we get a good snap from center, hope the hold is good and then do my job."

Colorado's 0-2 start has a lot of its supporters in an uproar. Fans are unhappy, and the players have heard that criticism from all parties.

Senior linebacker Marcus Burton said one of his professors got in his shots this week.

Perhaps the rest of the team could come to Goodman for some advice.

"I really commend Aric Goodman for how he's dealt with everything he's been through here," Burton said.

The oddities in Goodman's experiences at CU haven't been limited to the football field.

During fall camp, he and some teammates were leaving practice and came upon a guy who crashed on his bicycle. He was hurt pretty bad, and if Goodman and his teammates hadn't seen him when they did, his injuries could have been life-threatening.

It was just another day in the life of Aric Goodman.

"I would definitely say it's been a journey," he said with a light chuckle. "I've had a lot of learning experiences in a variety of different ways. You don't certainly wish to have some of these types of things happen to you, but they have made me stronger in a lot of respects.

"Before, I would say I was more of a result-oriented person. Now, I know everything that happens is part of the journey of what life throws at you."