

CSU Rams knock off CU Buffs

Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

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If Dan Hawkins wasn't on the hot seat before Sunday night, he is now, at least among fans of the Colorado football program.

Some of those fans gave Hawk the bird as he walked off Folsom Field at the same time Colorado State fans were storming it following the Buffs' 23-17 loss in the season opener for both teams.

The Buffs, who showed up after an offseason filled with talk of redeeming themselves for a 5-7 record in 2008, couldn't have been the same team Hawkins predicted was capable of 10 wins. They were beaten to the punch early and often as the Rams clearly won the battle in the trenches and stung the home team with big plays.

"They did a really good job," Hawkins said. "They ran the ball and they hit their shots."

Boos were heard just about as often as cheers, which is typical for a rivalry game. However, both were intended for the Buffs in most instances as impatience continues to grow for Hawkins' program to finally blossom.

Hawkins quickly dismissed the idea that his program could have overlooked any opponent, but more than one player said that might have been the case. Senior captain Riar Geer said the Buffs need to do a better job of preparing for opponents the rest of the season.

"I think we kind of might have overlooked CSU a little bit," Geer said. "We were pretty confident going into this game and they came out and played great. They came out and hit us in the mouth those first few drives. You've got to take your hat off to them."

Colorado State hasn't had nearly the same problems with its most recent coaching change. Steve Fairchild and the Rams went to a bowl game last season and appeared much closer to going back to the postseason than the Buffs in the final edition of the rivalry on campus for at least the next 10 years.

Cody Hawkins was revealed as the starting quarterback when he trotted out for the first snap of the season. He played the entire game and his father said he never considered replacing him with sophomore Tyler Hansen.

Hawkins' third year as the starting quarterback looked eerily similar to much of the previous two. The offense had its moments, but was often ineffective. The Buffs failed to score 20 points for the 20th time in Dan Hawkins' tenure.

An offensive line featuring three new starters struggled to get the Rams blocked and the Buffs never found a rhythm, Dan Hawkins said. CU gained just 251 total yards and averaged a paltry 4.1 yards per play.

"We just need to realize, after taking this blow, that we are still as good as we thought we were," Cody Hawkins said.

The CU defense played well outside of a handful of big plays that paved the way to victory for the Rams.

The first gasher came on the first drive of the game when CSU quarterback Grant Stucker connected with wide receiver Dion Morton for a 57-yard gain on a third-down play. Tailback John Mosure scored the first touchdown two plays later -- 3 minutes,

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13 seconds into the game.

The Rams took a 14-0 lead late in the first quarter on a 13-yard pass from Stucker to Mosure, capping a 10-play drive. CSU extended its lead to 20-3 at halftime and held a 265-63 advantage in total offense. The Rams walked off the field feeling like they could have had more while the Buffs were thankful it wasn't worse.

"When you go back and look at the tape, I know I am going to feel this way, there was a lot hanging," Fairchild said. "We could have had a better first half than we did."

The Buffs stormed down the field after halftime, using just 1:40 to drive 66 yards. The big play came on a play-action fake with Hawkins finding Andre Simmons down the middle of the field for 44 yards. Tailback Brian Lockridge scored on a nine-yard run on the next play.

CU seemed to be emerging from its funk as it moved the ball again on its next drive. Cody Hawkins connected with wide receiver Scotty McKnight on an 18-yard pass that was originally ruled a completion. The play was reviewed and officials determined McKnight had caught the ball and fumbled it after a jarring hit from Elijah-Blu Smith. McKnight suffered a concussion on the play but returned to the game.

CU turned the ball over on downs in its own territory on its next possession, and punted on its next three. The Buffs finally found the end zone again late in the contest when Cody Hawkins connected with McKnight for a two-yard touchdown pass. CU didn't come close to recovering the ensuing onside kick and the Rams completed their triumph by taking a knee just short of another touchdown after a long run from tailback Leonard Mason.

CU now must deal with a quick turnaround. The Buffs play at Toledo on Friday night and have only three days to practice.

"I don't think too much needs fixing," Cody Hawkins said. "We just need to focus and go out and work on the small



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Hawkins did not consider playing Hansen

Coaches chose Cody Hawkins for efficiency

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/07/2009 12:19:28 AM MDT

The secret is out.

Cody Hawkins has won the starting quarterback job at Colorado for the third consecutive season.

And that leaves Tyler Hansen -- Hawkins' good friend and the only real competition at the position -- in a difficult spot.

The talented and versatile sophomore backup said he felt helpless on Sunday night as the Buffs fell behind 17-0 en route to a 23-17 loss to Colorado State at Folsom Field.

"It was a rough time on the sideline," Hansen told the Camera outside a somber CU locker room. "I wanted to be out there and help my team win and do everything I could. But I support Cody and support all my other teammates. I was trying to be the best teammate I could be.

"But it was frustrating to see them go up 17-0 and I couldn't do anything about it besides help call plays. That was a little frustrating."

Hansen said the team knew Hawkins would be under center throughout its preparations for the Rams.

"We actually knew a while ago," Hansen said. "It's not a secret anymore. We were trying to keep it a secret from Colorado State and stuff, but we knew for a while. Cody did a good job and moved the ball. In the first half, we didn't execute well and we could have done a little better."

CU head coach Dan Hawkins was asked after the game why his son was chosen over Hansen as the starter.

"Just being a little more efficient," Dan Hawkins explained.

CU trailed 7-0 before its first possession. The momentum appeared to shift to the home team a little bit after a 19-yard run by Rodney Stewart in the first quarter.

However, the Buffs decided to force the issue in the passing game. Hawkins was sacked by CSU defensive end Ty Whittier for a 10-yard loss and then intercepted by free safety Elijah-Blu Smith. Jake Behrens was called for a facemask penalty during the return to give the Rams possession at the 50-yard line.

The turnover eventually led to a 14-yard touchdown pass from Rams quarterback Grant Stucker to John Mosure on a third-and-7 to make the score 14-0 with 1:09 remaining in the first quarter.

Hawkins was 4-for-6 passing through the first 15 minutes, but his longest completion was for nine yards.

"Nope," Dan Hawkins said when asked if he thought about replacing Cody Hawkins with Hansen at any point in the game.

The boos from the impatient crowd finally turned to cheers when Hawkins connected with Scotty McKnight for 12 yards on a fourth-and-5 at the CSU 40. The drive stalled moments later, however, when Hawkins was sacked by nose guard Guy Miller for a 10-yard loss on third-and-9.

Aric Goodman's 54-yard field goal cut the deficit to 14 points, but the Rams got those back with a 45-yard field goal by Ben DeLine with five seconds left to make the score 20-3 at halftime.

Hawkins was 7-for-14 passing for 46 yards at the intermission. Stucker was 5-for-10 for 138 yards.

"Cody had a good game," Stewart said after leading CU with 39 yards rushing on only six carries. "We had some dropped passes and some bad reads, but he played well."

Due to the early deficit, the Buffs finished the game with 40 pass attempts and 21 rushing attempts. That wasn't the game plan the coaches talked about all summer as they bragged about the big, athletic offensive line and stable of talented running backs on the roster.

"That's exactly what happened," Stewart said when asked if CSU's 17-0 and 20-3 leads forced the offense to abandon the run. "Our defense didn't hold them in the first half, so we had to throw the ball."

Hawkins was 24-for-40 passing with 222 yards, including a 2-yard touchdown pass to McKnight with 1:57 remaining. He was also sacked four times at key moments in the game.

"I thought (Cody) played well down the stretch and made some nice throws," Dan Hawkins said. "The thing that hurt us was trying to find a rhythm in the first half."

The second half started out very well as Hawkins went 3-for-3 for 57 yards, including a 44-yard completion to Andre Simmons, setting up a 9-yard touchdown run by Brian Lockridge that cut the deficit to 20-10 with 13:20 remaining in the third quarter.

A series of mistakes by the CU offense and a devastating hit on McKnight thwarted the comeback.

With 9:08 remaining in the third quarter, McKnight caught a 20-yard strike from Hawkins but was leveled by Smith. The officials ruled the play a reception and CU appeared to be in position to make it a one-score game.

But Steve Fairchild challenged the ruling on the field and upon further review the officials ruled that McKnight, who sustained a concussion on the play yet returned to the game, had fumbled the ball and CSU was awarded possession.

The Rams got the crowd back into it when Stucker threw an ill-advised pass into the arms of linebacker Jeff Smart. But Hawkins was sacked for a 9-yard loss and the Buffs punted the ball right back.

In the fourth quarter, Hawkins completed a pass to Jason Espinoza for an apparent first down, but senior captain Riar Geer was flagged as an ineligible receiver down field and the drive ended with an incompleteness on the ensuing third-and-9.

Later, after Hawkins completed a 20-yard pass to Geer on third-and-18, the drive ended with him getting sacked on third down for a loss of nine.

And so on.

"I'm never going to rate how I play based on any statistic," Hawkins said. "I take it as a win or a loss, and that one was a loss. That's definitely on me as the leader of the offense."

Dan Hawkins isn't keeping it a secret this week: Cody Hawkins will start again at Toledo on Friday night.

"Yep," he confirmed.

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First action

A dozen Buffs played for the first times in their careers Sunday. Offensive lineman Bryce Givens and Mike Iltis, defensive lineman Will Pericak and safety Ray Polk all started their first games in the program. Polk started at safety because of an ankle injury to sophomore Patrick Mahnke.

Nate Bonsu, Dustin Ebner, Steven Hicks, Will Jefferson, Doug Rippy, Andre Simmons, Paul Vigo and Forrest West all played for the first time, as well.

Nice start

Place-kicker Aric Goodman kicked his season off on a good note with a career-best 54-yard field goal in the second quarter. Goodman made both extra-point attempts and showed distance on his kickoffs, including sending the opening kickoff of the game into the end zone for a touch back.

Notable

Cornerback Jimmy Smith led the Buffs with 10 total tackles. ... Senior linebacker Jeff Smart finished with eight tackles, becoming the 57th player in the program's history to record more than 200 in his career. Smart now has 206 career tackles. The only former walk-on with more in CU history is Ryan Black, who finished his career with 275. Smart also made his first career interception. ... The announced attendance was 53,168 about 170 tickets short of a sellout.

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CU's secondary gives up big plays to Colorado St.

CSU's Stucker passes for 208 yards on 10 completions

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 09/07/2009 12:20:54 AM MDT

Amnesia.

Colorado cornerback Benjamin Burney, a fifth-year senior who has experienced just about everything during his collegiate career, said the secondary needs to come down with a serious case of it this week.

Sunday night's 23-17 loss to Colorado State? Grant Stucker completing all those key passes over their heads? Ram Nation partying like it was 1986 at Folsom Field?

The Buffs, especially the freshly toasted cornerbacks and safeties, must forget about it all.

And fast. CU returns to action on Friday at Toledo.

"I don't think too much needs fixing," Burney said after CU allowed Stucker to pass for 208 yards on only 10 completions. "We just need to focus and work on the small things."

Stucker, making his first career start, torched the beleaguered Buffs early. On the first possession of the game, the fifth-year senior hooked up with Dion Morton -- who had beaten Jalil Brown down the home sideline -- for a 57-yard gain on third-and-8. The play led to a 1-yard touchdown run by running back John Mosure to stake the visitors to a 7-0 lead.

The scary part: The Buffs had Stucker and the Rams' scheme scouted well.

"We kind of figured they would block with an eight-man front and toss the ball long. We just gave up a few big plays, and now it's time to just let it go," Brown said. "They kind of got the best of us and got us to sucker up on the run and beat us with a few deep balls."

Later in the first quarter, on a third-and-7, Stucker stood in the pocket and calmly waited without pressure for Moser to get open for a 13-yard touchdown pass to make the score 14-0. In the second quarter, Stucker completed a 43-yard pass to Ryan Gardner that set up a field goal and a 17-0 cushion.

"One strength of ours is definitely our wide receivers," Stucker said. "We knew we had to put the ball in their hands and let them do what they do."

It could have been worse for the shell-shocked Buffs. With 8:05 remaining in the first half, Stucker stuck a perfect deep ball into the usually sure hands of Greer, who let the sure touchdown and 24-0 lead slip through his fingers.

Burney would intercept Stucker moments later, and the Rams signal caller also tossed a pick to Jeff Smart in the third quarter when CU had a little momentum after scoring on its opening drive of the half.

However, Steve Fairchild's latest pupil atoned for the sins by completing another crowd-silencing deep ball to Greer, who was being chased by safety Ray Polk, to set up a chip shot by place-kicker Ben DeLine to make the score 23-10 with 8:58 remaining.

"We had the No. 1 pass defense in the Big 12 (last season) and we wanted to come out there and show everybody we still had it," Brown said. "To give those plays up is disheartening. We have to come back next week and go from there."

Stucker, maligned publicly by his head coach throughout spring drills and fall camp, finished 10-for-17 with the two interceptions and only one touchdown. But the Rams receivers averaged over 20 yards per catch.

"Not bad for a kid who had never started a game," Fairchild conceded. "I will certainly pat him on the back, because that is not easy to come to a place like this and play like that."

An unforgettable evening for the Rams.

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Rams rule Boulder

[FRANK SCHWAB](#)

2009-09-06 23:01:52

BOULDER • The high hopes for Dan Hawkins' fourth season as Colorado coach were stomped by every Colorado State fan who stormed Folsom Field on Sunday night.

One game might not ruin the Buffaloes' season, but there will be a permanent stain. And the Rams already have a highlight in a season that coach Steve Fairchild admits is part of a rebuilding process.

Colorado State controlled the line of scrimmage and rarely seemed out of control in a 23-17 win. The only times the outcome seemed in doubt were during a brief Colorado rally in the third quarter and again when the Buffaloes lined up for an onside kick after a touchdown with just less than 2 minutes to go. The Rams recovered that kick, and a few minutes later their fans were streaming onto the field.

"That was a special feeling to have our students there, especially when nobody gave us a chance to win this game," safety Klint Kubiak said.

Colorado was oddly calm after its in-state rival won in Boulder for the first time since 1986. The Buffaloes spoke about missing a few plays and how small mistakes cost them.

Coach Dan Hawkins spoke optimistically about how well his team played in the second half. He talked about having to get ready for a game against Toledo on Friday night and only briefly indicated that some issues might have been exposed.

Hawkins said he never thought about pulling his son, quarterback Cody Hawkins, although fans were booing him during an uneven performance in the first half. Cody Hawkins wasn't completely at fault, considering he was under consistent pressure from the Rams' front seven.

Colorado State took a 14-0 lead in the first quarter, led 20-3 at halftime, and then took away the Buffaloes' momentum with a defensive play in the third quarter. Trailing 20-10, Colorado receiver Scotty McKnight caught a pass inside the Rams' 20-yard line, but a breathtaking hit by safety Elijah-Blu Smith separated McKnight from the ball and Colorado State recovered.

The best sign for Colorado State — and perhaps the most disturbing part of the night for Colorado — was that the Rams came in with a simple plan and just outplayed their rivals.

"It's on us," linebacker Jeff Smart said. "We didn't come out with the intensity we needed to. They wanted to line up and play smash-mouth football, and that's what they did."

Mountain West breaks even

Highlighted by BYU's win against Oklahoma, MWC teams went 2-2 against BCS conference teams over the weekend.

No. 20 BYU 14, No. 3 Oklahoma (Big 12) 13

Colorado State 23, Colorado (Big 12) 17
Texas A&M (Big 12) 41, New Mexico 6
UCLA (Pac 10) 33, San Diego State 14

Next week: Air Force at Minnesota (Big Ten), No. 2 Texas (Big 12) at Wyoming, Oregon State (Pac 10) at UNLV, No. 17 TCU at Virginia (ACC)

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rocky mountain showdown - csu 23, cu 17

Rams upend Buffs in opener

Quarterback on target as CSU marches into Boulder and roughs up Colorado

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/06/2009 04:20:30 PM MDT

Updated: 09/07/2009 08:56:08 AM MDT

BOULDER — No, that was not "CUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUUU" raining down from the packed Folsom Field stands Sunday night. Colorado's booing masses had given way to a green avalanche of Colorado State fans who poured onto Folsom's turf for the first time since 1986.

Two bitter in-state rivals continued to go in opposite directions as upstart Colorado State shocked Colorado 23-17 in the season opener for both teams.

A national TV audience is certainly scratching its collective head. This state sure is. On paper, this result does not compute. CSU, a 10 1/2-point underdog, had nearly all new skill position players and linebackers in what appeared a classic rebuilding year under second-year

wunderkind coach Steve Fairchild.

Maybe

Rocky Mountain Showdown

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- blog.
- **Read** the latest notes and analysis from The Post's Natalie Meisler on the All Things Rams
- blog.

for CSU and Fairchild, the future is now.

"We've got a lot of perseverance," senior receiver Dion Morton said. "We've been in this system a couple years now. You can tell we're buying in."

Colorado, despite three losing seasons under Dan Hawkins, had a veteran secondary, two

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seasoned quarterbacks and a stable of highly regarded running backs, as well as a home crowd of 53,168 fans.

Yet CSU's newbie attack gained 376 yards, scored on its opening drive and never relinquished the lead. Senior Grant Stucker, starting his first game after throwing three passes in three seasons, threw for 208 yards and a touchdown. JC transfer Leonard Mason, a backup, rushed for 107 yards.

Fairchild lifted a downtrodden CSU squad to 7-6 and a New Mexico Bowl win a year ago and picked up where he left off. He had his Rams pound Colorado's inexperienced defensive line for 127 rushing yards in the first half, after which CSU led 20-3.

He limited Stucker's playbook but picked his spots. Stucker's 57-yard bomb to Morton at the 10 set up the game's first score, a 1-yarder by starting tailback John Mosure, the longtime backup, barely three minutes into the game.

Elijah-Blu Smith intercepted a bobbled pass by receiver Scotty Mc-Knight to set up a 50-yard drive, capped by Stucker's 13-yard TD pass to Mosure in the middle of coverage.



It was 14-0 with less than a quarter gone, and boos filled the air.

"I told them we have to change the crowd. The crowd can't change us," Fairchild said. "And we did a great job of taking the crowd out of the game."

CSU's inexperienced linebacker corps looked as if it studied well. The linebackers helped limit the Buffaloes to 29 yards rushing on 21 carries. That included four sacks. Erase those, and the Buffs still rushed for only 59 yards.

The halftime streaker ran better.

"This is not a big problem," Hawkins said. "It just comes down to really little things."

Hawkins stuck with his son, Cody, at quarterback despite a position battle that went right to game time. He finished 24-of-40 for 222 yards and a 2-yard

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TD pass to McKnight, which cut the lead to 23-17 with 1:57 left. CSU recovered the onside kick and ran out the clock.



Colorado State running back John Mosure celebrates his second touchdown in the first quarter against Colorado at Folsom Field on Sunday. (John Leyba, The Denver Post)



CSU coach Steve Fairchild, coming off a bowl victory last season, is working hard on the sideline for his first win over CU. (John Leyba, The Denver Post)

Boasting of a healthy and fitter Darrell Scott, Dan Hawkins' offense had the former top-ranked prep tailback carry only once for 1 yard.

"With the score being what it was, it was hard to get into the running game," Hawkins said. "But we have a few things to brush out everywhere."

Colorado's offense could not quiet the boos, which greeted every third-down incomplection, until the third quarter. Two Ben DeLine field goals gave CSU a 20-3 halftime lead before Colorado's passing attack finally clicked. Cody Hawkins' 44-yard bomb to Andre Simmons, the ballyhooed JC transfer, set up Brian Lockridge's 9-yard TD run to cut the deficit to 20-10.

After that it was four-and-out, three-and-out, three-and-out. When Stucker hit Rashaun Greer for 45 yards to the 2, setting up DeLine's 18-yard field goal with 8:58 left, it was too much for Colorado's struggling offense to overcome.

So, where are the two programs headed? Fairchild won't get ahead of himself, but he has made CSU matter in the state again.

"It is a journey, not just a one-year deal," he said. "With our staff and our administration, we are heading in the right direction."

In Boulder, Hawkins, with a 13-25 overall record, appears to still be in rebuilding stages in his fourth year.

"We have to move on no matter what happens in

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the game," said Hawkins, who has only three days before traveling to Toledo (0-1) for a Friday night game. "Even if we had won the football game, we don't have any time."

Besides, this year in this state, it's CSU's time.

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rocky mountain showdown

Hawkins will stay CU's QB

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 09/07/2009 01:00:00 AM MDT



Colorado quarterback Cody Hawkins, right, passes during the first quarter at Folsom Field on Sunday. Hawkins was 24-of-40 passing for 222 yards, one touchdown and one interception. (John Leyba, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — Colorado quarterback controversy?
What quarterback controversy?

Although the choice of CU's starting quarterback

had not been made public until the jumbo screen at Folsom Field showed a picture of Cody Hawkins, the junior QB admitted after Sunday night's 23-17 loss to Colorado State he thought he might take all the snaps in the season opener, as he did.

CU coach Dan Hawkins said after the game that Cody will start Friday night at Toledo.

Case closed.

Cody completed 24-of-40 passes for 222 yards, one touchdown and one interception. Colorado never led.

"It's a tough pill to swallow," he said during postgame interviews. "I'm not mad. I'd say I'm disappointed. Now, we have to focus on what we need to do to get better. There's no point in being mad for no reason. You have to work hard and use it for something."

CSU's defense was extremely active, Cody said.

"One thing that (CSU) did awesome is, they lined up to stop the run," the quarterback said, "and they did an awesome job of rallying around and making our blockers miss. They were going to line up and play their butts off, and they did that.

"They didn't do anything that was unexpected. They just did an awesome job of executing, and we weren't able to do so."

When asked to rate his own performance, Cody said he never considers statistics.

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"I take it as a win or loss, and that one was a loss," he said. "That's definitely on me as a leader on the offense. We have to clean that up. I don't think too much needs fixing. We just need to focus and go out and work on the small things. We just need to realize, after taking this blow, that we are still as good as we thought we were. But luckily for us, we have a really short week. We have to get back on the field pretty soon and flush this one out of our system."

Dan Hawkins said he never considered making a change at QB and putting in sophomore Tyler Hansen.

"That's just the way (the game) materialized," the coach said.

On Cody's performance, Dan Hawkins said: "We missed a couple of throws in there, but I thought (Cody) played well down the stretch and made some nice throws. The thing that hurt us was trying to find a rhythm in the first half."

Hansen was not made available for interviews after the game.

Riar Geer, CU's senior tight end and a team captain, said the Buffs "let our nerves get the best of us" after Colorado State quarterback Grant Stucker completed a 57-yard pass to wide receiver Dion Morton on the game's fourth play, to set up a touchdown.

"That big play really hurt us," Geer said. "Our confidence was way down after that. (CSU) came out and hit us in the mouth those first few drives.

You have to take your hat off to them."

Geer said the Buffs "might have overlooked CSU a little bit. We were pretty confident going into this game."

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September 7, 2009

CSU rules Buffs' turf for first time in 23 years

BY KELLY LYELL

KellyLyell@coloradoan.com

BOULDER - Max Clark, Andrew Ives, Nick Willard and thousands, possibly tens of thousands, CSU students will be gloating about this one for years to come.

On Sunday night, before 53,168 fans at a nearly sold-out Folsom Field and a national Fox Sports Television audience, the Colorado State University football team defeated the University of Colorado 23-17.

Clark, Ives and Willard welcomed the CSU team buses to the stadium with faces and chests painted green and a gold letter on each one, spelling out "Go Rams!"

Four-and-half hours later, they were dancing on the field with hundreds of other CSU fans, who poured out of the stands in the northwest corner of the stadium to celebrate the Rams' first win at Folsom since 1986 and just the second win over the Buffaloes anywhere since 2002.

"This is their house and their stadium," said Nick Petersohn, a CSU sophomore from Boulder who watched the game with three friends, also CSU students, with their faces painted green and white.

"If we win here, we'll have a hold on Folsom for 10 years," Ryan Larscheid, a CSU sophomore from Saratoga, Wyo., said before kickoff.

That's because the next 10 games between the two schools, located just 50 miles away from each other, will be played in Denver, at INVESCO Field at Mile High. The two schools agreed last week to play each other for the next 11 seasons, with the next 10 games in Denver, in exchange for CSU moving next year's game to Denver instead of playing at Hughes Stadium in Fort Collins, as they originally had planned.

"It's going to be a lot more intense here than being at Invesco," Peterson said before the game.

Watching the game with Peterson and Larscheid, in matching green-and-white face paint, were fellow CSU sophomores Caleb Castleberry and Drew Becker.

They had made plans to attend the game for the past year and got up early to purchase them on the first day they could, logging on at 6 a.m. to buy tickets that cost \$65 apiece.

It was well worth it.

The Rams marched 80 yards with the opening kickoff for an early touchdown, led 14-0 after one quarter, 20-3 at halftime and 20-10 after three quarters. They could have added another touchdown at the end, but mercifully had quarterback Grant Stucker kneel down three times inside the CU 10-yard line as time expired.

Although CSU was allotted just 3,000 tickets, hundreds of other Rams fans could be seen sprinkled among the black and gold throughout the stadium. All of them found their way to the ramp leading to the visitors' locker room after the game, joining players, coaches and other fans in a celebration that still was going strong 30 minutes later—long after the last stunned CU fans had left the stadium.

That's when CU athletic director Mike Bohn presented CSU coach Steve Fairchild and several of his assistants with the Centennial Cup, the traveling trophy given each year to the winner of the CSU-CU game.

"We were looking to come here and upset them, because they've been talking down to us all year, so we showed them that we could hang," CSU linebacker Mychal Sisson said.

Additional Facts

Video



[CSU coach interview](#)

9News interview with CSU coach Steve Fairchild. 9/6/09



[Rocky Mountain Showdown](#)

CSU wins Showdown. 9/6/09



[CU reaction](#)

CU players and coaches talk about their loss to CSU in the Rocky Mountain Showdown. 9/6/09



September 6, 2009

Defense helps Rams stay on top of Buffs

BY KELLY LYELL

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BOULDER -- John Mosure scored two early touchdowns, Ben DeLine made two field goals and the CSU defense made three critical plays in the third quarter to preserve the Rams' lead over the University of Colorado.

CSU led 20-10 with 15 minutes remaining tonight in the season-opening game for both schools before a near-sellout crowd of 53,168 at Folsom Field.

The CSU defense picked up a fumble at the CU 18-yard line after coach Steve Fairchild made a successful challenge to the replay booth to stop one drive, stuffed running back Demetrius Sumler for no gain on a fourth-and-1 play near midfield and sacked quarterback Cody Hawkins for a 10-yard loss on a third-and-eight play.

CSU quarterback Grant Stucker completed the first two passes he threw, the second for a 57-yard gain to the CU 10-yard line to set up a 1-yard TD run by Mosure. Stucker, a fifth-year senior from Parker making his first start, later threaded a pass into the end zone to Mosure for a 13-yard TD that put the Rams on top 14-0 with 1:09 remaining in the first quarter.

DeLine added field goals of 28 and 45 yards in the second quarter that were sandwiched around CU's only score, a career-best 54-yard field goal by Aric Goodman.

CU finally found the end zone on a 9-yard run by Brian Lockridge early in the third quarter.

Return to www.coloradoan.com or see Monday's newspaper for details.

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Longmont, Colorado
Thursday, September 24,
2009

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State of shock

Rams force 'tough pill' on stunned Buffs squad

By Justin Williams
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BOULDER — New season. Newfound optimism. New offensive coordinator.

Same ol' Buffs.

Cody Hawkins was still the quarterback, the offense was still unproductive and the University of Colorado was manhandled by Colorado State, 23-17, on Sunday evening in front of a packed house in Boulder.

The Rams didn't mind that the Rocky Mountain Showdown wasn't in Denver for the first time in four years. Their fans celebrated by storming Folsom Field as if they owned it — because on this night, their team did.

"That's a tough pill to swallow," CU senior Benjamin Burney said of the postgame antics, which included CSU fans jumping on the Buffalo at midfield and snapping photos in the end zone. "When you see that, you just take it all in as food.

"But it's a tough pill to swallow, and you kind of just want to forget about it."

It was hardly the season-opening, tone-setting effort the Buffs, coming off a 5-7 2008, were hoping for. Expectations were for this CU team to be much improved, and to handle a CSU squad that was surrounded by question marks and, without question, rebuilding.

From the onset, that just wasn't the case.

The Rams engineered a game-opening scoring drive that spanned 80 yards, including a 57-yard strike from quarterback Grant Stucker, making his first collegiate start, to Dion Morton. The play set the tone for what would be a tough night for the Buffs on both sides of the ball — particularly in the trenches, where CU's inexperience was exposed and where the injury-bug struck again. Starting center Mike Iltis left the game in the first quarter with an ankle injury and never returned.

Colorado's only highlight of the first half came on Aric Goodman's 54-yard field goal — a good sign that he has bounced back from a dismal 2008, but nowhere near enough to keep CU in the game. Colorado State took a 20-3 lead into halftime, and even though the Buffs came out of the locker room energized, with an impressive 66-yard touchdown drive in four plays, the momentum was short-lived.



Colorado quarterback Cody Hawkins is sacked by Colorado State's James Morehead in the third quarter at Folsom Field in Boulder on Sunday. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

COLORADO ST. 23, COLORADO 17

Colorado St.

14 6 0 3—23

Colorado

0 3 7 7—17

First Quarter

CSU—Mosure 1 run (DeLine kick), 11:47.

CSU—Mosure 13 pass from Stucker (DeLine kick), 1:09.

Second Quarter

CSU—FG DeLine 29, 11:43.

Col—FG Goodman 54, 2:50.

CSU—FG DeLine 45, :05.

Third Quarter

Col—Lockridge 9 run (Goodman kick), 13:20.

By dominating the first two quarters, the Rams had completely taken the crowd out of the game until CU's first touchdown. Prior to that, the loudest noise was in booing Cody Hawkins and the anemic offense.

The boos would return.

Following the TD, Colorado fumbled once — a tide-turning turnover with CU marching deep into Rams territory — it turned the ball over on downs at its own 44, and it managed just 108 yards of offense. The Buffs added a late touchdown — a 2-yard pass from Hawkins to Scotty McKnight with 1:57 left — but they couldn't recover the onside kick after it bounced off a CSU player and rolled around on the ground for a couple of seconds.

"It was a tale of two halves," CU head coach Dan Hawkins said. "I thought we played much better in the second half and made some good adjustments.

"They just hit us on some plays in the first half."

Cody Hawkins, who won the months-long quarterback battle with Tyler Hansen, got the starting nod Sunday. In an offense that was supposed to be run-dominated under new coordinator Eric Kiesau, the fourth-year junior threw 40 passes, completing 22. He was sacked four times, and Hansen never saw the field.

Following the game, Cody wouldn't say when he was told he'd be the starter — but alluded to the fact that it was a decision made a while ago.

"You all would feel really stupid if I tell you," he said when asked. "I'm not saying anything."

Coach Hawkins said after the game that his son will be the starter Friday at Toledo, and he never considered inserting the more-agile Hansen on Sunday night.

It's hard to say if it would have made much of a difference.

The vaunted CU running game, which was supposed to be the savior of the offense this season, didn't help the passing attack. In fact, it was nearly non-existent. Rodney Stewart led the team in rushing with 39 yards, but he had just six carries. Darrell Scott had just one carry and Demetrius Sumler had eight. In all, the Buffs running backs ran just 16 times for 68 yards.

"Those guys are coming back and getting healthy. It's a matter of how we rotate them in there," coach Hawkins said. "In the uncertainty of it, Demetrius has been around here awhile and is a little more savvy and is able to handle everything, no matter what.

"It's a little easier because of his experience."

The Buffs have a short week to fix what went wrong and to prepare for Toledo, which lost 52-31 to Purdue on Saturday. The teams square off Friday night in Ohio.

"That's the beauty of football — you always get a week to redeem yourself," Cody Hawkins said.

Redemption from this loss might take longer than four days.

Fourth Quarter

CSU—FG DeLine 18, 8:58.

Col—McKnight 2 pass from C.Hawkins (Goodman kick), 1:57.

A—53,168.

CSUCU

First downs

14 13

Rushes-yards

45-168 21-29

Passing

208 222

Comp-Att-Int

10-17-2 24-40-1

Return Yards

50 20

Punts-Avg.

5-44.2 6-43.3

Fumbles-Lost

1-0 1-1

Penalties-Yards

6-71 5-60

Time of Possession

32:54 27:06

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Colorado St., Mason 23-107, Mosure 11-44, Morton 2-27, Greer 1-3, Stucker 5-(minus 4), Team 3-(minus 9). Colorado, Stewart 6-38, Sumler 8-20, Lockridge 1-9, Scott 1-1, Team 1-(minus 1), C.Hawkins 4-(minus 38).

Justin Williams can be reached at jwilliams@times-call.

PASSING—Colorado St., Stucker 10-17-2-208. Colorado, C.Hawkins 24-40-1-222.

RECEIVING—Colorado St., Mosure 3-38, Mason 3-20, Greer 2-50, Morton 1-57, Gardner 1-43. Colorado, Geer 6-65, McKnight 4-36, Deehan 3-20, Sumler 3-15, Espinoza 2-9, Devenny 2-7, Simmons 1-44, Scott 1-14, Stewart 1-7, Lockridge 1-5.

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Inexperience at WR glares for Buffaloes

By Patrick Ridgell
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BOULDER — That power run-oriented offense that the Colorado Buffaloes wanted to unveil in 2009 ended up throwing the ball 40 times in their season-opening 23-17 loss to Colorado State on Sunday. Go figure.

While 40 passes might have been out of necessity — CU trailed 17-0 early in the second quarter — the Buffs were not able to play to their strengths Sunday. And when they fell behind, the inexperience, injuries and suspensions they have at wide receiver glared as a big problem.

“We have a couple of guys who are struggling to get a feel for the game,” quarterback Cody Hawkins said. “When you’re out there, it’s very different than when you’re in practice.

“Obviously that’s why having a guy like Scotty (McKnight) helps you; he’s a veteran. Jason (Espinoza) did good job being where he’s supposed to be.

“The other guys will keep coming along and working hard and doing everything we ask of them. They’re really young and new to the position; you can’t expect them to come out and be perfect every time when it’s their first couple of weeks on the job.”

McKnight, CU’s lone experienced receiver, suffered a concussion when he lost a fumble after taking a big hit from CSU safety Elijah-Blu Smith on a third-quarter reception that would have put the Buffs deep in CSU territory when they trailed 20-10. Several Buffs pointed to that play, which was originally ruled a catch but reversed after a replay, as a turning point.

“That really hurt us,” tight end Riar Geer said.

Among CU’s receivers who debuted were freshmen Dustin Ebner and Will Jefferson, plus transfer Andre Simmons. Espinoza played sparingly in 2008. They combined for three catches. CU hit Simmons on one deep pass over the middle, but struggled to stretch the field.

CU was also without Markques Simas, who’s suspended through Friday’s game at Toledo (7 p.m., ESPN). Hawkins said Simas is “dinged” right now and wouldn’t have been able to play anyway. Hawkins still said CU missed Simas.

CSU sent as many as nine defenders to the line of scrimmage to stuff CU’s run game. CU rushed 21 times for 29 yards, including minus-38 yards on four sacks of Hawkins.

“They knew to stop the run,” Hawkins said. “Anytime nine guys are rallying to the ball in the box ... they had everybody but their corners in there.

“I don’t think it was an intensity problem on our part, but execution. We have to make sure we’re going 100 miles per hour in the right direction.”

BITTERSWEET FATHER: Marcus Burton was one Buff that was still smiling after Sunday night’s loss.

The senior linebacker celebrated the birth of his second child Sunday morning — Noah Alanea Christopher Burton was born at 9:59 a.m. at Boulder Community Hospital. He and his wife, Krislen, already have another son, 2-year-old Tysen.

Burton said he got to be at the hospital for the birth and was still able to make it to the field Sunday afternoon in plenty of time for the 5:10 p.m. kickoff.

“It’s a wonderful experience anytime you get to witness the birth of a child — especially your own,” he said. “He comes into the world, and there’s no way to explain it.”

Burton, named a captain last month, was headed back to the hospital following the loss and said his family would be a welcome sight after watching Colorado State celebrate in the middle of Folsom Field.

“It hurts,” said Burton, who finished with four tackles and half a sack. “It hurts a little deeper when it’s on our field.”

INJURY REPORT: McKnight returned from his concussion in the fourth quarter. He’s listed as probable for Friday. He extended his streak to 25 straight games with a reception.

Center Mike Iltis sprained an ankle on CU’s second series and did not return. He’s listed as probable for Friday. Junior walk-on Keenan Stevens filled in for Iltis. He hadn’t played since logging 10 snaps against Miami (Ohio) in 2007.

“Everybody is real comfortable with Mike and hopefully he’ll be OK,” Hawkins said.

“Keenan knew what he was doing. He did a good job, fought like heck.”

Safety Patrick Mahnke missed the game after spraining an ankle Friday. Redshirt freshman Ray Polk played for him.

CU reported no other injuries.

EXTRA POINTS: The attendance was 53,168, not a sellout. ... Other Buffs who made their debuts included freshmen Will Pericak, Nate Bonsu, Steven Hicks, Doug Rippey, Paul Vigo and Forrest West. As expected, only three true freshmen — Bonsu, West and Jefferson — played. Pericak, a redshirt freshman, became the first CU freshman to start at defensive tackle in program history. ... Kicker Aric Goodman hit his only attempt, a career-long 54-yard field goal late in the second quarter. ... CSU recorded its first win in Boulder since 1986.

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