



Junior Tyler Hansen will open for the Buffaloes on Sept. 4 against Colorado State.  
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



08/21/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

## Brooks: It's Official - Hansen Named Starting QB

**BOULDER** - The 2010 Colorado Buffaloes have a starting quarterback - Tyler Hansen. The athletic junior from Murrieta, Calif., was informed of the coaches' decision early Friday afternoon by offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Eric Kiesau.

*(Complete depth chart attached in PDF format; click at right.)*

Shortly thereafter, Kiesau told senior Cody Hawkins - a three-year starter at the position - that he would be Hansen's backup when the Buffs open the season on Sept. 4 against Colorado State in Denver.

Kiesau also met with freshmen quarterbacks Nick Hirschman (No. 3) and Justin Gorman (No. 4). But only Hansen and Hawkins were told who the starter would be; the announcement was to be made

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to the rest of the team during Saturday morning meetings prior to the release of CU's pre-opener depth chart.

"I'm excited . . . it's something I've worked long and hard for," said Hansen, who started the final seven games of 2009 after supplanting Hawkins in early October. Hansen also emerged from spring practice with a slight edge over Hawkins and has directed the No. 1 offense through most of fall camp.

Still, with all those factors seeming to favor Hansen, the competition remained open through two fall camp scrimmages - the last of which was Thursday. The question of who would open against CSU became all-consuming for some CU fans, but Buffs coach Dan Hawkins held to the timeline he established when spring drills concluded in mid-April. At that time, Hawkins said he likely would name a starter two weeks before the opener, giving either Hansen or Cody Hawkins - both experienced players - significant practice time with the first offense.

"Tyler's been getting the majority of the 'reps' with the ones anyway," Dan Hawkins said. "I think people make too much of it; they don't really know what's going on or how it's organized or what's happening. It's not like you've got three quarterbacks and all are getting the same amount of 'reps.'"

Kiesau, about to begin his second season directing CU's offense, said the perceived delay in naming a starter was based on being fair to each player.

"We wanted to give both guys ample opportunity to show what they can do - see if one guy could pull away from the other," Kiesau said. "I think we did that through spring and obviously through fall camp. I've said all along if one guy jumps out over the other, we'll make the decision.

"We met as a staff and I met with Coach Hawkins and we thought this is the best decision for the team - right now, today, to let our team know who our starting quarterback is two weeks prior to the first game. We didn't want this to continue hanging over our heads."

Kiesau and Dan Hawkins said both quarterbacks posted similar statistics through fall camp practices and in the first two scrimmages.

"It was kind of like last year where Cody was ahead by a sliver, and right now Tyler is just ahead by a sliver . . . their numbers are so close (now) it's scary. But that's not everything by any means," Dan Hawkins said.

Said Kiesau: "Both were very efficient and distributed the ball in both of our scrimmages and all through camp."

But, Kiesau added, "I think Tyler gives us a little more of a edge when it comes to the things we can do on offense and being a little more creative. His athleticism, whether it's dropping back to pass and making something happen on his feet, or we can dial up some run plays for him as well. He's athletic and can run. He's going to make defenses defend 11-on-11."

At best, the announcement came as no more than a mild surprise to either player. Hansen had said after the first fall scrimmage he believed the starting job "was his to lose."

Also, his role in organizing summer 7-on-7 drills honed his leadership skills. "And getting the

majority of 'reps' with the ones during spring ball and camp, I think kind of jump-started the thing a little bit and gave me a little more of an advantage," he added. "No, it (being named the starter) wasn't a huge surprise."

Nor was it a shock to Cody Hawkins, who conceded he had "kind of known for a while that was the situation. So I've had a little time to cope with it. You kind of settle into it . . . As a competitor you wish things would have gone in your favor. But just through charting and competing, I think it showed how efficient our offense is a whole and the talent and experience we do have at the quarterback position. We just have to settle in and go out there and play the way we do in practice."

He said he will "learn to accept my role, just as I did when I was a starter or when I was a redshirt. It's all about winning championships for the Buffaloes. I'm going to be ready if my number ever gets called, but until then I'm going to grind it out and try to get the Buffaloes some victories any way I can."

Even if a number of signs since April pointed in his direction, Hansen admitted the delay in making the announcement made him feel at times as if the No. 1 job was slipping away.

"There were some times when I was pressing a little," he said. "In early camp, I was playing really confident. Then maybe the last couple of days I was pressing, trying to be a little too fine. I just need to relax and play. But that's going to be natural when you're trying to win something you want so bad; you're going to press. But you just have to be confident and go play."

Kiesau also noticed "about a three- or four-day stretch where he did look a little tight and I had to talk and walk him through it," he said. "I told him to take a deep breath; you're going to make mistakes, but it's how you respond to those mistakes (that counts)."

As for game-day mistakes, both Dan Hawkins and Kiesau said Hansen need not fear operating on a "short leash."

"I don't think you want anybody playing with a noose hanging over their necks, you don't want anybody playing that way," Dan Hawkins said.

Added Kiesau: "That's a very uncomfortable way to play and I want Tyler to know that. We told Tyler to run with it. I told him, 'You're the starting quarterback; don't look over your shoulder. Don't play tight. Just go have fun and play. Don't look behind you . . . that's why we named you the starting quarterback.'"

When the Buffs begin on-field preparation for the Rams on Tuesday morning, Hansen will take about 75 percent of the snaps with the No. 1 offense to Cody Hawkins' 25 percent. In camp, said Kiesau, the breakdown has been about 60-40 in Hansen's favor.

"I do want to keep Cody sharp as we progress through the season," Kiesau said. "We'll need two guys."

Recalling his backup duty for the past two seasons, both of which began with him ticketed for a redshirt, Hansen agreed on the need for a pair of QBs. But he took it a step further: "You really have to have three guys . . . rarely do you go through a season with just one," he said. "But that's a benefit to our team; we have two guys with quality experience . . . that's good to have."

In Friday's post-practice huddle, Dan Hawkins asked every returning player who had missed a game due to injury to stand up.

After a large number of Buffs stood, Hawkins made his point: "If you're the fourth-team tailback, you've got to be ready to go. That's the whole concept. They have to buy into that. Cody is good with it; he knows there's going to come a time when his number is called. When the door opens for him or any of our players, they've got to be ready.

"The great thing on our team is we have tremendous competition at a lot of spots and there's a lot of guys who can play. We have to learn to deal with that; it's new for us."

Hansen believes he's more fully prepared now to direct the offense than he was last November against Nebraska or at the conclusion of spring drills. He also knows the improvement that is expected at his position as well as from an offense that sputtered for most of a 3-9 season.

"He's got to play quality, efficient football - and I think he's going to and that's why we named him the starter," Kiesau said. "If we didn't (think that), we'd have gone a different direction. But he's proved he can do it and I can't wait to see it unleashed on Saturday afternoons."

## THE INSIDE LOOK AT . . .

### Quarterbacks

**Coach:** Eric Kiesau, fifth season.

**Returning starters:** Cody Hawkins, Sr.; Tyler Hansen, Jr.

**Returnees:** Players above.

**Newcomers:** Nick Hirschman, Fr.; Justin Gorman, Fr.

**Key losses:** None.

**Stat line:** Hawkins started the 2009 season, but Hansen finished it. Hawkins 50.6 percent of his passes for 1,277 yards (121-of-239) for 10 touchdowns. Hansen hit on 55.8 percent of his throws for 1,440 yards (129-of-231) for eight TDs. Hansen finished the season with an NCAA rating of 113.6, while Hawkins was at 100.1. But between them, they threw 18 interceptions (Hansen seven, Hawkins 11), and no matter if Hansen takes every snap in 2010 or Hawkins subs for him on occasion, that number must drop. Also, CU can't afford to even come close to Hansen's sack yardage (minus-278) from last season.

**Bottom line:** The Buffs went into 2009 knowing they must have more efficiency at the QB position, but they were inconsistent in getting it. A year later, the same goal holds; better efficiency in the offense is a must, and it must start at Hansen's position. Most indicators are good: The running game should be better, the receiving corps has been upgraded and both quarterbacks are experienced. Not many teams make it through a season with one quarterback (most notably, see: CU in 1990). The Buffs have an experienced pair, and if the unit coalesces around them the offensive numbers should improve - the QB stats included.

*Next: Linebackers*

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# Depth puts charge into Buffaloes

## More talented players at WR, in secondary gives CU confidence

**By Ryan Thorburn** Camera Sports Writer  
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/20/2010 11:53:28 PM MDT

A year ago, the Buffs appeared to be poised for a breakout season in Dan Hawkins' fourth year.

After a stunning home loss to Colorado State and a humiliating road trip to Toledo, it became obvious that Colorado's offense had looked good during August camp because it was going against Colorado's defense.

And vice-versa.

So what is different this season as glowing report after glowing report emerges from CU's practices? An unmistakable improvement in depth at most positions, especially at wide receiver and in the secondary.

"We're so much deeper and experienced," Dan Hawkins, who admittedly didn't have much to work with during his brief stint as the receivers coach in 2009. "It puts a tremendous onus on practicing great. A dropped ball could mean the difference between playing time or not. A fumble, a missed assignment or whatever ... it just continues to force guys to be at their best." Two promising transfers -- Toney Clemons (Michigan) and Travon Patterson (USC) -- should be able to stretch the field and allow Scotty McKnight to create havoc in the slot. The coaches and quarterbacks also have confidence in Will Jefferson, Kyle Cefalo, Paul Richardson and Jason Espinoza when their numbers are called.

Remember all the hype Andre Simmons received while trying to get admitted to CU last summer? This fall he isn't the possible savior of a bad situation, but just another talented face in the crowded receiver meetings.

"I really think we could probably have a group of about eight guys that are all pretty good and have played and have some speed and some size and experience," Hawkins said. "I don't think in our current system right now, Scotty as a freshman ... he wouldn't be in the top two groupings. But he had to be (in 2007) just based on our numbers and the situation back then."

Another reason hopes are high inside the gates of the CU practice fields is the fact that the team also has plenty of cornerbacks and safeties to cover all of the above.

The starting cornerbacks (Jalil Brown and Jimmy Smith) are billed as one of the top tandems in the Big 12, and Anthony Perkins (strong safety) and Ray Polk (free safety) are also very solid. Freshmen Parker Orms (safety), Terrel Smith (cornerback) and Paul Vigo (cornerback/safety) expect to have their own impact on the Buffs this season.

"We have different aspects of the game and everyone has their own role. Some guys are going to be in there playing most of the time and some guys are going to play on special teams," secondary coach Ashley Ambrose said. "We're all about having roles and everybody has something to do."

After Thursday's scrimmage, defensive coordinator Ron Collins said Vigo, a 6-2, 185-pound redshirt freshman from New Brunswick, N.J., would be the Buffs' third corner/safety.

"The competition is serious," Vigo said. "I was learning safety as a backup, but they pretty much moved me to corner. And I'm a solid corner now. ... I just took it in during my redshirt year and was real coachable. I took all the advice I could get, watched film with the guys, learned technique and just stuck with it."

"I never gave up on the position and developed confidence."

The Buffs are brimming with confidence again. Only two weeks until they get a chance to back it up in the opener against Colorado State at Invesco Field.

**Notable**

The Buffs will practice twice today before taking Sunday and Monday off. "It will great for them to get their legs back underneath them and get ready for school. Then we'll get back after it," Hawkins said. ...

Wendell Barnhouse from [Big12Sports.com](http://Big12Sports.com) attended Friday's practice as part of his virtual skywriters tour of the conference. His preseason look at CU will be featured on the Big 12's web site Aug. 31. ...

Defensive tackle Curtis Cunningham, defensive lineman Dakota Poole, and offensive linemen Jack Harris and Bryce Givens did not practice due to injuries.

**Quotable**

"As long as everyone worships the almighty Benjamin, it will continue to go on," Hawkins said when asked about the ongoing conference shakeups (the Mountain West purged the WAC of Nevada and Fresno State as a reaction to possibly losing BYU). "That's what drives everything. No, it doesn't surprise me. It's the way it goes."

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## Grossnickle kickin' it for Colorado

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

Posted: 08/21/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 08/23/2010 07:08:08 AM MDT

BOULDER — While recruiting punter-kicker Zach Grossnickle out of Denver East High during the fall of 2008, Colorado coaches were obviously impressed with the whip of his strong right leg.

And there was something else.

"Growing up, Zach played hockey as a goalie," CU special-teams coach Kent Riddle recalled. "So we knew there was some toughness there."

Grossnickle, 6-feet-2 and 190 pounds, struggled last fall while sitting out but has become the unquestioned favorite to be the Buffaloes' starting punter this season as a redshirt freshman. Although he was a two-way kicker in high school, CU coaches told Grossnickle after spring drills to just work on punting. It clicked.

"It's hard to practice both,"

Grossnickle said. "I always thought I was a better

### Colorado Football

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Grossnickle has come a long way since a 2009 preseason scrimmage when he badly shanked two punts. Sometimes, Riddle said, it just takes time for a freshman.

"Freshmen deal with different things at different paces," Riddle said. "He's from Denver, not far away, but he'd be the first to tell you he was as homesick as could be last year. Some of it is just getting used to your surroundings a little bit."

One hurdle Grossnickle had overcome last August was catching deep snaps with a cast on his lower left arm. He had fractured a bone the previous spring while being undercut by a

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competitor in Ultimate Frisbee.

"I struggled early with the cast, but actually it ended up helping me," Grossnickle said, "because it taught me how to catch with the cast. So when I took it off it was easy."

Using his feet has always come naturally. As a soccer player, Grossnickle helped lead Denver East to the state championship during his senior year. He earned second-team all-state honors.

Riddle said it's an asset to have punters and place-kickers who also have a background in other sports. Overall athletic ability may enable them to avoid a bad situation on the field or perhaps to make an open-field tackle. "For a guy that's never really done anything but kick, it can be tougher," Riddle said. "Competitiveness helps."

Grossnickle is concentrating on hang time. His formula: A 42-yard punt should have a corresponding hang time of 4.2 seconds, a 39-yarder needs to be in the air for 3.9 seconds, and so on.

"We can live with a 35-yard punt if there is no return," Riddle said.

## Footnotes.

A reporter with [Big12sports.com](http://Big12sports.com) visited Friday's practice and asked CU coach Dan Hawkins if this was his best preseason camp. "Yeah, not even close," Hawkins replied. "We're just so much

deeper and experienced." . . . As for the suddenly fortified wide receiver corps, Hawkins said senior standout Scotty McKnight would not have made the two-deep as a freshman if he had to compete with this group. As it was, McKnight led the team as a freshman with 43 catches. . . . No further injuries came out of Thursday's scrimmage, the coach said.

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AUGUST 20, 2010, 11:25 AM

## CU preview: D-line still young but growing

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

[1]

[Marquez Herrod](#) <sup>[2]</sup> anchors CU's defensive line. (Hyoung Chang, The Denver Post)

*In the sixth part of a series of look-aheads at Colorado's 2010 season, broken down by units, we look at the Buffs' defensive trenches...*

### CU's DEFENSIVE LINE:

**Newcomers:** On national signing day in February, CU landed DT Kirk Poston (6-1, 260) from Houston and DE [Chidera Uzo-Diribe](#) <sup>[3]</sup> (6-3, 230) from Corona, Calif. Then in July, Canadian DT [Dakota Poole](#) <sup>[4]</sup> (6-5, 250) of Kelowna, British Columbia was added. Uzo-Diribe probably has the best chance to help this season. One preseason college football publication ranked him as the top sleeper among all recruits in the [Big 12](#) <sup>[5]</sup> Conference. Uzo-Diribe grew up playing basketball and is only in his third year of football. He is gifted athletically and appears to have outstanding potential as a pass rusher.

**Biggest loss:** Big things were expected from former [Cherry Creek](#) <sup>[6]</sup> standout Taj Kaynor, but the defensive tackle completed his eligibility last fall as a spot player for four year.

**Strengths:** All four starters return: senior defensive end [Marquez Herrod](#) <sup>[2]</sup> (6-2, 280), junior nose tackle [Curtis Cunningham](#) <sup>[7]</sup> (6-1, 280), sophomore defensive tackle Will Pericak (6-4, 280) and

sophomore defensive end [Forrest West](#) <sup>[8]</sup> (6-1, 260). There's quality depth, too, with sophomore defensive end [Nick Kasa](#) <sup>[9]</sup> hoping to bust out after injuries and illness limited the former national top-100 recruit to four games as a freshman, and junior defensive tackle [Conrad Obi](#) <sup>[10]</sup> playing his best football.

**Weaknesses:** By [Big 12](#) <sup>[5]</sup> standards, this is not a physically imposing group. And it remains one of the team's youngest units despite being force-fed all that experience in 2009.

**What to look for:** Defensive line coach [Romeo Bandison](#) <sup>[11]</sup> loves the effort of his guys and says all are coachable. And there is some foot speed. A big improvement is expected, with all having added size and strength in the offseason and learning from a year in the fire. A key will be a big jump in sacks, with last year's sack total (27) ranking ninth in the conference. A stronger West, healthy Kasa and perhaps energetic freshman Uzo-Diribe, along with senior Herrod, gives hope that a big improvement can be made in that category.

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## All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

AUGUST 20, 2010, 12:42 PM

# CU's Bahr another Kordell? Well, kind of.

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER — Buffs junior lineman [Matt Bahr](#)<sup>[1]</sup>, a 6-4, 290-pounder, is working as a blocking back, along with redshirt-freshman lineman [Scott Fernandez](#)<sup>[2]</sup> (6-3, 275).

Both apparently are doing well in the role popularized by former [NFL](#)<sup>[3]</sup> folk legend “Refrigerator” Perry.

After Thursday's scrimmage, quarterback [Cody Hawkins](#)<sup>[4]</sup> said he kiddingly compared Bahr to former CU and [NFL](#)<sup>[3]</sup> quarterback [Kordell Stewart](#)<sup>[5]</sup>, who was a jack of all trades during his time with the [Pittsburgh Steelers](#)<sup>[6]</sup>.

“I was joking with [Matt Bahr](#)<sup>[1]</sup>,” [Cody Hawkins](#)<sup>[4]</sup> said. “We’re going to have to start calling him ‘Slash’ because today he played tailback, fullback, right tackle and tight end.

“Kordell’s got company.”

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## All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

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AUGUST 20, 2010, 8:42 AM

# Cody Hawkins: winning more important than starting

By **TOM KENSLE** |  1 Comment

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Following Thursday's scrimmage, CU senior quarterback Cody Hawkins was asked how important it is to him to be the starting quarterback in his final college season. Junior Tyler Hansen is expected to be the starter and again said he took the majority of the snaps on Thursday.

Here are Cody's comments:

"It would be big (to start), but more than anything, I want to win games," Cody Hawkins said. "I've started for three years and nobody's been where they want to be, including myself and the guys on the team. As a team, we've got to be more cohesive and get things done.

"That's always been the goal. If it's me on the sidelines coaching Tyler up to the best of my abilities and getting everybody ready to do there job, I'm going to do that. But if I'm on the field, I'm going to be a heck of a field general for the guys and compete my (butt) off.

"Starting would be great, but I'm trying to get everybody to a bowl game."

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Longmont, Colorado  
Monday, August 23, 2010

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## **Grossnickle, Hildreth and Thornton all teamed up at Denver East before being Buffs**

*By Brian Howell*  
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Back in high school, it was clear that Zach Grossnickle, Quentin Hildreth and DaVaughn Thornton had the talent to play in college.

The fact that all three — or any of them, really — landed at the University of Colorado is quite remarkable.

“It’s real exciting,” Thornton said. “We went to high school together, so it’s fun to come together. It’s great.”

Grossnickle, Hildreth and Thornton all graduated from Denver East High School in 2009. Grossnickle and Thornton earned scholarships to CU, while Hildreth is a walk-on. All three redshirted in 2009 and this fall may be in line to make significant contributions.

“It’s a sweet situation, and it’s looking like we’re all going to have a lot of playing time,” said Grossnickle, who is likely to be CU’s starting punter this season.

East is one of the oldest high schools in Denver, and for years it produced great players that went on to play at CU. Yet East had not produced a CU player since Steve Sidwell’s final year in 1968.

In recent years, East had a nice connection to Boulder, however. Dave Sidwell, whose final season at CU was in 1965, was the head coach at East in 2004 and 2005. He was replaced as East’s head coach by Ron Woolfork, who starred at CU from 1991-93.

“I feel like coach Ron Woolfork helped us out a lot,” said Thornton, who figures to be in the top-three rotation at tight end this fall. “He turned that football program around.”

CU head coach Dan Hawkins said Woolfork’s connection to the Buffs helped. But Hawkins also said that CU simply hit the jackpot with the trio of Angels now on the team.

“Just luck of the draw,” Hawkins said. “We just kind of lucked out and hit it right.”

“I think Zach is going to be a great punter. Vaughnie, I think, has a chance to be a great tight end. I think Quentin had a great spring. His toe has been banged up a little bit, but he’s a pretty productive little back.”

All three of them made their presence known during the spring game in April. Hildreth scored the first touchdown, which was followed by Grossnickle booting the extra point. Thornton then scored the second touchdown of the day.

“We were the first three players to score in the spring game — we noticed that,” Thornton said.

All part of the pride the trio takes from representing their high school.

“Being an Angel, you let everyone know you are from East,” said Hildreth, who is hoping to see some time at tailback.

“If one of us scores, I’m going to go crazy, personally, because I support those guys. I’ve known those guys for almost five, six years now. Those are my boys.”

Since Steve Sidwell left in 1968, CU has often mined Denver Public Schools for talent, but that talent usually came from schools such as Montbello or Thomas Jefferson. Now, East is leading the way. In fact, East is the only DPS school with any players on CU’s roster. Grossnickle hopes this is just the beginning of a strong relationship.

“I would love to see that program expand,” Grossnickle said of East. “A lot of good players come from over there.”

He and his former high school mates are proving that — even if it did take CU more than 40 years to notice the Angels again.

“East is back at CU, like it never left,” Thornton said.

**MOVING AROUND:** Over the summer, CU was part of the changing landscape in college sports when it announced a move to the Pac-10 Conference.

Realignment was back in the headlines this week when Fresno State and Nevada left the WAC for the Mountain West, and Brigham Young University announced it was exploring becoming an independent.

Hawkins isn’t surprised to see the movement continue.

“As long as everyone worships the all mighty Benjamin, it’ll continue to go on,” he said. “That’s what drives everything. It doesn’t surprise me.”

**EXTRA POINTS:** Prior to 2009, Denver East had produced 15 Buffaloes. The most famous East alum to play at CU was Jack Swigert. He was one of the three astronauts to fly on the failed Apollo 13 mission in 1970. ... Hawkins said that after reviewing the film of Thursday’s scrimmage, he didn’t have anything that jumped out at him. “Not really,” he said. “Just trying to get from point A to point B and B to C and keep closing those gaps.” ... Hawkins reported no injuries from the scrimmage. ... The Buffs will practice twice today and then will take two days as the players get ready to begin fall classes. ... Wendell Barnhouse of Big12Sports.com was on hand to interview players and coaches on Friday. It was his last stop; he has visited all 12 conference schools in 14 days.

Brian Howell can be reached at [bhowell@times-call.com](mailto:bhowell@times-call.com). Read his Buffs blog at [www.timescall.com/blogs/howell](http://www.timescall.com/blogs/howell).



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## The 12 coolest mascots in college football

By RALPH D. RUSSO (AP) — 2 days ago

Fuzzy or fierce? Sweet or scary? Goofy or graceful?

How do you like your mascot?

As much a part of college football as tailgating and touchdowns, mascots can rev up the home crowd, intimidate an opponent or just provide a few laughs.

With help from the AP's college football poll voters, we've picked the 12 coolest mascots — a dandy dozen if you will — in the country.

1) **Ralphie the Buffalo**, Colorado. Her (yes, Ralphie is a female) size (1,300) and speed (25 mph) combination would have Ralphie soaring up Mel Kiper's draft board. Unfortunately for CU fans, many home games in recent seasons have peaked with her entrance.

From the panel: "Nothing says, 'Look out!' like a Buffalo on the run, dragging four or five guys with him." — Mike DeArmond, The Kansas City Star.

2) **Uga**, Georgia. Normally, dogs in sweaters are hard to take seriously. This English Bulldog, however, could make a tutu look tough. And by the way, don't even think about trying to put a tutu on Uga.

From the panel: "Society still mistreats unattractive humans, so it's nice to see this ugly bulldog with the charming personality get showered with so much love between the hedges." — Tom Keegan, Lawrence (Kan.) Journal-World.

3) **Chief Osceola**, Florida State. Many native-American mascots have been fazed out of college sports in a recent years, but with the blessing of the Seminole Tribe the Chief, his Appaloosa horse, Renegade, and his burning spear have endured.

From the panel: "When he puts the flaming spear into the 50-yard line, wow, that can give you some goose bumps." — Gillen Garland, WWL-TV in New Orleans.

4) **Mike the Tiger**, LSU. During warm-ups at Tiger Stadium, Mike's cage is stationed near the visiting team's tunnel so opponents have to walk by him to step on to the field. Welcome to Death Valley. Please don't feed the cat.

From the panel: "Does he smile more than the last two LSU coaches (Nick Saban, Les Miles) combined?" — Jack Bogaczky, Charleston (W. Va.) Daily Mail.

5) **War Eagle**, Auburn. OK, the mascot is actually Aubie, a student in a fuzzy tiger suit. War Eagle is the battle cry. But there is a War Eagle, a golden eagle that swoops down onto the field before games and puts the kid in the costume to shame.

From the panel: "I've seen many things in college football and, in my opinion, few things (if any) produce more chills than Tiger flying around the field before a big night game at Jordan-Hare Stadium." — Wes Rucker, Chattanooga Times Free Press.

6) **Stanford Tree**. You have to respect a mascot this ridiculous — and irreverent. The costume usually looks as if it came straight from a middle school play, but the Tree has had some very adult issues in recent years. It was once busted for being drunk on the job. The replacement tree later that year was banned from the NCAA basketball tournament for scuffling with security guards.

From the panel: "It has been suspended, ejected and vandalized. It is created anew every year. It is a precious gift to college athletics, one never fully appreciated beyond Palo Alto." — Mike Hlas, Cedar Rapids Gazette.

7) **Bevo**, Texas. The burnt orange longhorn doesn't charge like Ralphie or stay in a cage like Mike. But at 1,800 pounds with 72-inch horns, it's best to steer clear of Bevo.

From the panel: "Bevo has to be the toughest, most intimidating mascot in all of sports, even if Earl Campbell once knocked him to the ground." — Kirk Bohls, Austin American-Statesman.

8) **The Mountaineer**, West Virginia. Buckskin suits and coonskin caps never go out of style in Morgantown. The mere sight of the Mountaineer can get you humming John Denver's "Country Roads." Though the rifle can be a bit unsettling.

From the panel: "The guy has a gun. Would you mess with him?" — Eric Hansen, The South Bend Tribune.

9) **The Masked Rider**, Texas Tech. Maybe the only mascot in the country that can be described as swashbuckling. And since 1974, many of the Masked Riders have been women, so points for being progressive.

From the panel: "Overshadowed in the Big 12 by Ralphie the Buffalo and Bevo, the Masked Rider makes a far more dramatic entrance atop the thundering black gelding than either massive

**AP** Associated Press

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FILE - In this April 20, 2010, file photo, handlers called "Ralphie runners" guide Ralphie V, the mascot of the University of Colorado, around the surface of Folsom Field before an spring NCAA college football scrimmage in Boulder, Colo. (AP Photo/David Zalubowski, File)



animal does." — Keegan.

10) Sparty, Michigan State. With his jutting square jaw, the costumed mascot sort of looks like a muscle-bound Jay Leno in a green Greek warrior attire.

From the panel: "In the annual Big Ten player polls we have done in the past, he always won." — Bob Asmussen, Champaign News-Gazette.

11) The Leprechaun, Notre Dame. Not to be confused with the guy on the Lucky Charms box, ND's Leprechaun pumps out push-ups when the Fighting Irish score, wields a shillelagh and supposedly has magical powers. Apparently, his powers were no match for Charlie Weis.

From the panel: "Still remember how his image used to scare me while watching Irish games as a little kid." — Keith Sargeant, Home News (N.J.) Tribune.

12) The Fighting Duck, Oregon. The story goes Walt Disney himself agreed to let the costumed-mascot resemble the famous cartoon character, Donald. A few years back, when the university tried to nudge Donald aside for a sleek, space-aged duck suit, the students rebelled and the new duck was dropped. Don't mess with Donald.

From the panel: "A duck might be the weakest mascot a football team can have, but I still love it. And seriously, who doesn't like Donald Duck?" Adam Zuvanich, Lubbock Avalanche-Journal.

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Friday, August 20, 2010

# Student Guide 2010: Pigskin preview: Hawk en

By Matt Sparkman and Matt Johnson

**by Matt Sparkman and Matt Johnson**

For Dan Hawkins, it's all about the little things.

The University of Colorado's much-maligned head football coach begins his fifth year at the helm focusing on details.

"For us, it's a matter of just chasing the details and chasing the little things," Hawkins said at Big 12 Media Day.

The Buffs hope to improve on their fifth-place Big 12 North finish last season, which they ended with a 2-6 record in conference play and a 3-9 record overall.

Hawkins is optimistic that experience will lead to more success this season.

"I think having a roster this year of a lot of guys that have played, a lot of guys that have competed, and having guys that can step up and play and know that you have to practice well every day, you've got to study film every day, you've got to be at your best every day, that leads to better Saturdays," Hawkins says.

Asked whether or not he has a timetable for determining the starting quarterback job, Hawkins remains vague.

"We'll see," says Hawkins. "I think we'll probably get through a couple scrimmages there and give everyone really a chance to kind of compete and get going."

The job, which in all likelihood will be awarded to junior Tyler Hansen or the says. "But it's very tough to get through a whole coach's son, senior Cody Hawkins, has switched season with one guy anyway. [There's a] good hands several times since Hansen arrived on cam- chance we're going to need both of those players." pus in 2008. As far as who will be on the receiving end of Hansen split time with the younger Hawkins passes from Cody Hawkins or Tyler Hansen, Dan during most of the 2008 campaign. In 2009, the Hawkins raved about the depth of his corps of job was initially awarded to Hawkins, but Hansen wideouts. and Hawkins ended up splitting time once again. "Toney Clemons ... [has] a chip on his shoul- "I think Tyler probably had a little bit of an der," he says. "Will Jefferson is a young guy that edge coming out of spring ball," Dan Hawkins played for us as a true freshman ... Kyle Cefalo is a kid that had a great spring for us."

The offensive line looks strong, as CU left tackle Nate Solder and right guard Ryan Miller made the All-Big 12 preseason tea

"We have a lot to prove," Solder told Wendell Barnhouse of Big12Sports.com.



"I think we can get a lot done."

On the defensive side of the field, the Buffs return seven starters, including three defensive linemen: Marquez Herrod, Will P cornerback Jimmy Smith are stars of an experienced secondary. Smith is projected by some as a late first-round or early se

The schedule facing the Buffaloes is daunting, as usual. The non-conference schedule includes in-state rival Colorado State

And what is likely the last Big 12 goround before CU joins the Pac-10 features regulars such as Oklahoma, Texas Tech and

Even with such a tough schedule, Dan Hawkins is excited for the season to begin.

"I was talking to Coach Stoops out in the hallway earlier, and I'm just always fired up to go," Hawkins says. "I really am. It se always seems about July time you're ready to go and chomping at the bit. So [I'm] very, very excited about that."

With a new focus on details, the Buffs hope that excitement will turn into success.

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