



Quarterback Tyler Hansen and the 2010 Buffs could be playing in CU's final Big 12 season.
Photo Courtesy: Associated Press



08/29/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Brooks: Big 12 Trots Into A Very Different Season

BOULDER - Devotees of high drama and low-level intrigue will love what's about to unfold in Big 12 Conference football in 2010. Let's not waste time: Your top storylines in a season sure to be memorable for most of the right reasons:

- Two teams could be making farewell tours - Nebraska for certain, Colorado hopefully. The Cornhuskers are headed for the Big Ten in 2011, the Buffaloes for the Pac-12 in ... stay tuned. They meet on Nov. 26 in Lincoln; could be the Exit Bowl - for one team at least, maybe both.
- A pair of new coaches - Tommy Tuberville at Texas Tech, Turner Gill at Kansas - will join the fray (or is that a fraying league?).
- Gentlemen, start your search ... for the next gaggle of marquee quarterbacks. Suddenly, the Big 12 is a little light in that department.
- Following a couple of seasons where the conference had a well-armed offense in most stops, is defense staging a league-wide comeback this year?

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- Bulletin: Daddy Mack (Brown) wants to run downhill. Texas will adjust to life without gifted QB Colt McCoy by stretching its legs.
- Is Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy stretching the patience of big-spender T. Boone Pickens?
- Isn't Oklahoma, ah, overdue in the Red River Rivalry against Texas? The 'Horns have hooked 'em in consecutive meetings and in four of the past five games.
- Is the South Division as wide open as it's ever been (which has been not very)?
- What will healthy QB Robert Griffin mean for long-suffering Baylor? Buffs fans will see first hand on Oct. 16 in Boulder.
- Has the North once again become Nebraska's playground? Can Bo Pellini be the resident bully?
- Do the Cornhuskers have anybody - make that any *big* body - to replace defensive tackle Ndamukong Suh?
- Will Kansas State's second season (actually, the 19th) under Bill Snyder convince him that retirement wasn't so bad?
- Is this the season that sees CU reach expectations under fifth-year coach Dan Hawkins? Got to be.
- Can the Big 12 produce another BCS Championship Game contender? If so, can a Big 12 team win it?

Of course, the league's storylines can change dramatically or be edited slightly from week to week, but those are enough to get us underway in the last season of the Big 12 as we know it.

A capsule look at the league, with the teams listed by division in our predicted order of finish:

NORTH DIVISION

1. Nebraska

Coach: Bo Pelini (20-8, 2 years at Nebraska)

Last year: 10-4 overall, 6-2 Big 12; defeated Arizona 33-0 in Holiday Bowl.

Stadium: Memorial Stadium (81,067).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: TB Roy Helu (220-1,147 yards, 10 TDs), QB Zac Lee (177-302, 2,143 yards; 14 TDs, 10 INT), WR Niles Paul (40-796, 4 TDs), DT Jared Crick (73 tackles, 12.5 for loss, 9.5 QB sacks).

Pivotal game: Oct. 16 vs. Texas.

Coach speak: "I always felt like the third year in a system and the third year together, you really have a chance to make a big jump." - Pelini

Bottom line: The Cornhuskers' thorough demolition of Arizona in last season's Holiday Bowl sent a strong signal for 2001 - namely that Pelini believes his culture is in place. The Huskers defense will be minus its monster in the middle - Ndamukong Suh - but they'll still be strong. After last season's Big 12 championship game, Nebraska fans have been counting the days until Texas visits Lincoln. The Huskers' trip to Washington (Sept. 18) is their only real non-conference test.

2. MISSOURI

Coach: Gary Pinkel (67-46, 9 years at Missouri; 140-83-3 overall, 19 years).

Last year: 8-5 overall, 4-4 Big 12; lost to Navy 35-13 in Texas Bowl.

Stadium: Memorial Stadium/Faurot Field (68,349).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: TB Derrick Washington (190-865 yards, 10 TDs), QB Blaine Gabbert (262-445, 3,593 yards, 24 TDs, 9 INT), LB Andrew Gachkar (80 tackles, 3 for loss, 3 QB sacks).

Pivotal game: Oct. 30 at Nebraska.

Coach speak: "There's a consistency of winning that we have . . . there's (still) a lot of things we have to accomplish and I want to win at a higher level on a more consistent basis." - Pinkel

Bottom line: Picking Mizzou second in the North might be a stretch, but the schedule favors the Tigers. Only Nebraska is on the road in divisional play, with the Border War game against Kansas again in Kansas City. If Gabbert can take a liking to his new receivers, the Tigers passing game shouldn't suffer. Pinkel's MU teams have had finished with glitzy regular-season records but never won the Big 12.

3. COLORADO

Coach: Dan Hawkins (16-33, 4 years at CU; 69-44 overall, 9 years).

Last year: 3-9 overall, 2-6 Big 12.

Stadium: Folsom Field (53,750).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: QB Tyler Hansen (129-231, 1,440 yards, 8 TDs, 7 INT), TB Rodney Stewart (198-804 yards, 9 TDs), WR Scotty McKnight (76-893, 6 TDs), S Anthony Perkins (78 tackles, 1 QB sack).

Pivotal game: Sept. 4 vs. Colorado State (Denver).

Coach speak: "The concept is about the team, it's not about the individual . . . that really, really bodes well for us." - Hawkins

Bottom line: The Buffs need a fast start to send them into another demanding non-conference schedule. Last season's loss to Colorado State - it came in Folsom Field, no less - sent CU on a disastrous downward spiral. The players say they remember and won't permit it to happen again. If they're right, the Buffs could be a team to watch. But a fast start is critical for CU, which needs a large dose of confidence on the front end of the season.

4. KANSAS

Coach: Turner Gill (first year at KU; 20-30 overall, 4 years).

Last year: 5-7 overall, 1-7 Big 12.

Stadium: Memorial Stadium (50,071).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: TB Toben Opurum (133-554 yards, 9 TDs), QB Kale Pick (4-5, 22 yards), LB Dudley Drew (88 tackles, 8.5 for loss, 3.5 QB sacks).

Pivotal game: Oct. 2 at Baylor.

Coach speak: "I'm a firm believer . . . in building relationships. That was the first thing I wanted our football program, our football team, to do. Building relationships from players to coaches, coaches to players, coaches to coaches and players to players." - Gill

Bottom line: KU goes into the 2001 season with a new coach and an outgoing athletic director (Lew Perkins). The Jayhawks lost one of the top QBs in the country in Todd Reesing and can't let the position's productivity drop dramatically. Coming out of non-conference play with a 3-1 record isn't impossible, and that kind of momentum is what Gill needs going to Baylor to open league play.

5. IOWA STATE

Coach: Paul Rhoads (7-6, 1 year)

Last year: 7-6 overall, 3-5 Big 12; defeated Minnesota 14-13 in Insight Bowl.

Stadium: Jack Trice Stadium (55,000).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: QB Austen Arnaud (178-303, 2,015 yards, 14 TDs, 13 INT), TB Alexander Robinson (232-1,195 yards, 6 TDs), WR Darius Darks (28-303 yards, 2 TDs), DB David Sims (88 tackles, 3.5 tackles for loss, 5 INT).

Pivotal game: Sept. 18 vs. Kansas State (Kansas City).

Coach speak: "We'll be an improved football team . . . and we'll need to be. We face a very challenging schedule that some rate as the toughest in the country." - Rhoads

Bottom line: Rhoads isn't blowing smoke about his schedule being a killer, particularly in October. After catching Texas Tech and Utah in Ames, the Cyclones make back-to-back trips to Oklahoma and Texas. Kansas comes calling on Oct. 30, and Nebraska visits on the first weekend in November. By the time the Cyclones get to CU (Nov. 13), will they be a breath of fresh air for the Buffs? And will the Buffs need it at that point?

6. KANSAS STATE

Coach: Bill Snyder (142-74-1, 18 years).

Last year: 6-6 overall, 4-4 Big 12.

Stadium: Bill Snyder Family Stadium (50,000).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: TB Daniel Thomas (247-1,265 yards, 11 TDs), QB Carson Coffman (71-117, 860 yards, 2 TDs, 4 INT), DB Emmanuel Lamur (68 tackles, 3 INT).

Pivotal game: Sept. 18 vs. Iowa State (Kansas City).

Coach speak: "We have to be able to spread the ball around. We have to find a variety of different ways to do it, which is ingrained in our offense." - Snyder

Bottom line: Snyder got a shock when he returned last season. These weren't the Wildcats he left, and it's going to take a while before they return to the level he constructed from 1989-2005. Thomas led the conference in rushing last season (105.4 yards a game) and was the focus of a grind-it-out offense. The QB situation is unsettled. Among the competitors is Sammuel Lamur, twin brother of K-State's leading returning tackler.

SOUTH DIVISION

1. OKLAHOMA

Coach: Bob Stoops (11 years, 117-29).

Last year: 8-5 overall, 5-3 Big 12; defeated Stanford 31-27 in Sun Bowl.

Stadium: Gaylord Family-Oklahoma Memorial Stadium (82,112).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: TB DeMarco Murray (171-705 yards, 8 TDs), QB Landry Jones (261-449, 3,198 yards, 26 TDs, 14 INT), WR Ryan Broyles (89-1,120 yards, 15 TDs), LB Travis Lewis (109 tackles, 9.5 for loss).

Pivotal game: Oct. 2 vs. Texas (Dallas).

Coach speak: "I really believe, going through it a year ago (and) losing the number of seniors that we did, that we gained experience that you didn't want at the time. That will definitely make us a better and stronger team coming into this year." - Stoops

Bottom line: The Sooners' five losses in 2009 were uncharacteristic, but a strong finish (27-0 over Oklahoma State and the bowl win) eased some of the pain. Stoops doesn't want many more seasons like that, however. Texas has beaten OU in four of their past five meetings - and Stoops needs to snap out of that funk, too. But as usual, the talent is in place to do it. OU is in position to win big - and maybe even win The Big One against Texas.

2. TEXAS

Coach: Mack Brown (12 years, 128-27; 214-101-1 overall, 26 years).

Last year: 13-1 overall, 8-0 Big 12; lost to Alabama 37-21 in BCS Championship game.

Stadium: Darrell K. Royal/Texas Memorial Stadium (94,113).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: TB Tre' Newton (116-552 yards, 6 TDs), QB Garrett Gilbert (30-

66, 310 yards, 2 TDs, 4 INT), DE Sam Acho (59 tackles, 13 tackles for loss, 9 QB sacks).

Pivotal game: Oct. 2 vs. Oklahoma (Dallas).

Coach speak: "We will go back and work harder to get the ball downhill from the tailback spot. We'll have the quarterback under the center more." - Brown

Bottom line: Without QB Colt McCoy for the first time in three years, the Longhorns will return to being a power running team. That should take some of the pressure off of Gilbert, who is a capable passer but not close to being a McCoy-type scrambler. Texas should field a typical Texas-type defense - talented, fast and nasty. In addition to the OU game, here's another must-see: Oct. 16 at Nebraska. Husker fans felt their team was jobbed in last season's championship game loss to the 'Horns.

3. TEXAS A&M

Coach: Mike Sherman (2 years, 10-15)

Last year: 6-7 overall, 3-5 Big 12; lost 44-20 to Georgia in the Independence Bowl.

Stadium: Kyle Field (82,600).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: TB Christine Michael (166-844 yards, 10 TDs), QB Jerrod Johnson (296-497, 3,579 yards, 30 TDs, 8 INT), WR Ryan Tannehill (46-609, 4 TDs), OLB Von Miller (47 tackles, 21.5 for loss, 17 QB sacks).

Pivotal game: Sept. 30 at Oklahoma State.

Coach speak: "This season is about taking that next step, and the next step for us is to be in games in the fourth quarter with two minutes left where you're in position to win the football game." - Sherman

Bottom line: Given that the Aggies allowed 33.5 points and 426.3 yards a game last season, it should surprise no one that four new defensive coaches are on Sherman's staff, including former Air Force defensive coordinator Tim DeRuyter. A&M has two of the top players in the conference in Johnson (QB) and Miller (OLB). The Aggies made a bowl trip last season, but their fans are hardly pacified by a trip to Shreveport, La. They won't wait too much longer for Sherman to show something better.

4. TEXAS TECH

Coach: Tommy Tuberville (first season at Tech, 110-60 overall, 12 years).

Last year: 9-4 overall, 5-3 Big 12; defeated Michigan State 41-31 in Alamo Bowl.

Stadium: Jones AT&T Stadium (52,882).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: TB Baron Batch (168-884 yards, 14 TDs), QB Taylor Potts (309-470, 3,440 yards, 22 TDs, 13 INT), WR Alex Torres (67-806 yards, 6 TDs).

Pivotal game: Sept. 18 vs. Texas.

Coach speak: "You have to get your philosophy over . . . if you don't sell that to your team and your fans, then you're going to have problems. You've got to let them know up front how you're going to handle things." - Tuberville

Bottom line: Not many college football programs bore the mark of their coach as strongly as did Tech for 10 years under Mike Leach. But Tuberville has been battle-tested in the SEC and knows what it takes to win. There should be enough holdover talent from the Leach regime to allow for a successful debut. But what kind of identity will the Red Raiders, who were air-it-out swashbucklers under Leach, have under Tuberville?

5. BAYLOR

Coach: Art Briles (2 years, 8-16; 42-44 overall, 7 years).

Last year: 4-8 overall, 1-7 Big 12.

Stadium: Floyd Casey Stadium (50,000).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: TB Jay Finley (79-370 yards, 1 TD), TB Terrance Ganaway (68-200, 5 TDs), QB Robert Griffin (45-69, 481 yards, 4 TDs), LB Antonio Johnson (77 tackles, 6 for loss, 2 QB sacks).

Pivotal game: Oct. 2 vs. Kansas.

Coach speak: "We're physically the best football team we've been from . . . the talent standpoint. But our guys feel good about each other and good about the direction." - Briles

Bottom line: Briles, the former Houston coach, appeared poised to direct a very non-Baylor type season in 2009 until Griffin went out in the third game with an ACL injury. Griffin is back now and, according to Briles, better than ever. If Griffin stays healthy, those 2009 high hopes will be rekindled in 2010. The Bears' toughest non-conference game is at Texas Christian (Sept. 18). They haven't made a bowl appearance since 1994 (Alamo Bowl), so you know their goal.

6. OKLAHOMA STATE

Coach: Mike Gundy (5 years, 36-27).

Last year: 9-4 overall, 6-2 Big 12; lost to Mississippi 21-7 in the Cotton Bowl.

Stadium: Boone Pickens Stadium (48,000).

Top returnees/2009 statistics: RB Kendall Hunter (89-382 yards, 1 TD), QB Brandon Weeden (15-24, 248 yards, 4 TDs), DE Ugo Chinasa (30 tackles, 9 for loss, 6.5 QB sacks).

Pivotal game: Sept. 30 vs. Texas A&M.

Coach speak: "This upcoming season provides us with an opportunity to develop some new faces,

let some of these young guys in the fold quick, gain a lot of experience." - Gundy

Bottom line: Cowboys bankroller T. Boone Pickens, jokingly called "the best owner in college football," might be losing patience with Gundy, who hasn't delivered the championships Pickens expects. OSU has won nine games in each of the past two seasons and been to four consecutive bowls. But the Cowboys still haven't slain the Big 12 South monsters (Texas, Oklahoma) - and doing it in a rebuilding year isn't likely. This is a pivotal season for Gundy.

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SHOW MENU





Buff's coach Dan Hawkins answers reporters' questions after Saturday's final preseason scrimmage.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



08/28/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Brooks: With Opener Looming, It's All About Details

BOULDER - As always, the countdown to kickoff comes down to taking care of details. Time to sweat the small stuff. After Saturday's final scrimmage at Folsom Field before next weekend's opener against Colorado State, the Colorado Buffaloes pronounced themselves ready - sort of.

But in a very short time, they believe the "sort of" will be scratched.

"We just need to do the mental things, get our calls right - that kind of thing," said junior quarterback Tyler Hansen, who will make his first start against the Rams on Sept. 4 (noon, The Mountain) at Invesco Field at Mile High.

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Dan Hawkins Interview
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"These next couple of days are really big in watching film, get CSU's personnel and tendencies down," Hansen said. "Execution-wise, I think we're good. We just need to clean some things up and we'll be all right."

The Buffs' third preseason scrimmage featured 109 plays - shorter than the previous two because it was conducted as a game, with CU's first offense and defense running against scout teams simulating CSU.

Coach Dan Hawkins said his team had improved through the three scrimmages, but added, "Again, it comes down to a couple of plays a game. We need to just keep working on cleaning it up."

On his side of the ball, offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Eric Kiesau said the final five days before the opener would be spent fine-tuning: "We just need to continue to focus on getting better . . . we've got our game plan in; we're not going to change anything, not going to add any plays. We'll continue to practice what we're doing and get better at it."

A spring and fall camp emphasis on defense has been getting more players to the ball and tackling better. Defensive coordinator Ron Collins said he saw improvement in both areas: "I never felt good in the last couple of years about how we have pursued to the ball as a whole unit. That's been a big emphasis and guys have really bought in. They're doing as well as we've ever done and they know that's necessary to win games."

The Buffs are faster overall on defense, but Collins said any front-line player who wasn't particularly swift "better look like (it). To me it's all an effort thing; give 100 percent effort on every play."

Tackling, he added, has been better, "but when we get into live situations, that's how we'll find out how far we've progressed."

Attending to game-week details on defense, said Collins, will involve "communications, alignments, assignments . . . guys feeling comfortable playing with each other."

GOODMAN TAKES STEP UP: Asked who among his kickers would line up for CU's first PAT in the opener, Hawkins said senior Aric Goodman: "He kicked great (Saturday) and has been kicking good. Kicking is a little different than other positions; it's simple math. He's had a nice camp and has kicked well in scrimmages."

Goodman, who underwent hip surgery the day before the spring game in April, said doctors weren't certain if he would be able to compete this season.

"Fortunately, I'm getting another opportunity," he said. "I hope to make the best of it."

Hawkins said freshman Justin Castor has "a little edge" as Goodman's backup, but did not discount using junior Marcus Kirkwood. Hawkins called Castor and Kirkwood "big tall guys who can reach back and pound it."

SOME DO, MOST DON'T: The only players sporting Buffs logos on their helmets Saturday were the inside linebackers. Linebackers coach Brian Cabral said his interpretation was if a position coach believed his players had "earned their Buffs," they would get them.

Outside linebacker B.J. Beatty laughed and said, "That's kind of a mystery to the whole team . . . We kind of joked if Coach Cabral wants it, nobody messes with him. So that's why they got the Buffaloes."

Hawkins has said he won't take his team to Denver with generic helmets.

RAM TOUGH: CSU's strength is expected to be its defense, and Kiesau can see why.

"I have a ton of respect for their defense; they play extremely hard and are very aggressive," Kiesau said. "They do a great job of disguising things. It'll be a big challenge, no doubt about it. I've known Larry Kerr (defensive coordinator) for a long time and they do a great job scheme-wise."

Near the end of last season when the Rams were mired in what would be a nine-game losing streak, Kiesau said Kerr's unit was "still playing very, very hard on defense."

EXPECT TO GET HIT: CU players who haven't competed against CSU need a crash course in expecting hard knocks. Hansen said while he hasn't played in the game (he came on in relief of Cody Hawkins in Big 12 Conference play in each of the last two seasons), he's been on the sidelines and knows what to expect.

"I know it gets wild among the fans, but on the field, it's the same way; guys will get after each other," Hansen said. "It's not a friendly rivalry; it's a hostile rivalry."

Hansen's roommate, tight end Ryan Deehan, has played in the past two CSU games. "He says those CSU guys definitely come out feeling like the underdogs, the little brothers - but they're not that," Hansen noted. "We respect them 100 percent. But they come out with a chip on their shoulders, for sure."

Said Beatty of the rivalry: "I don't think there's anything like it in the first week of college football."

NO RED SHIRTS FOR THEM: Five true freshmen likely will play in the opener. They are: running back Justin Torres, defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe, receiver Paul Richardson, defensive back Jered Bell and long snapper Ryan Iverson.

BUFF BITS: Dan Hawkins said the new players among his team's virtually made-over receiving corps "have done a good job. But you never really know until the live action. You have to make it come to fruition." . . . He reported no new injuries after Saturday's scrimmage but said a further report on anything minor might not come until Sunday . . . Since Hansen was named the starter about a week ago, Kiesau said the biggest difference he's seen in his QB has been "an exhale, you know? He got a little tight during the middle of camp, but once it was announced it was more of an exhale - like now I can continue to grow and move forward and know it's my spot." . . . The Buffs continue to shuffle personnel on defense, but Beatty said strides have been made in "assignments, communication and knowing our responsibilities. We still have a long way to go, but we've made steps." . . . Good news in the penalty department? CU ran 387 snaps from scrimmage in three preseason scrimmages. Eight penalty flags were thrown - six on the offense, two on the defense . . . The Buffs have meetings and a light practice Sunday, then take Monday off. Final preparations for CSU begin Tuesday morning.

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woody paige

Paige: Herrod finds "real" home at CU

By Woody Paige
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — When Marquez Herrod was a youngster in San Diego and spent his days begging for money on the streets and his nights sleeping next to his mother Katherine on a bench in the bus terminal, a short ride from three major universities, he never dreamed of attending college and playing football.

He dreamed of the Wednesday special at McDonald's.

"They had a 50-cent hamburger, and we would scrape together our nickels, buy one and split it. That was our meal for the whole day."

Two years later, when his mother was sent to a psychiatric hospital suffering from schizophrenia, Herrod was ordered to Polinsky Children's (foster care) Center, just north on Interstate 15 from the football stadium where the Broncos recently had won the Super Bowl. But Marquez never thought about playing pro football.

He thought about escaping.

"Polinsky was like a prison. I was there for almost two years. A jail was nearby, and we ate the same food as the inmates and exercised in the same yard. A lot of broken kids were staying there. I just wanted out."

College? Football? NFL? "No. You can't imagine something you don't even know exists."

Marquez is a student, and he is an athlete.

The 21-year-old senior defensive end is a preseason second-team all-Big 12 pick and a returning second-team conference all-Academic selection.

He could be chosen in the NFL draft next year.

More important, he will graduate from the University of Colorado in December with a 3.0-plus grade-point average and a double major in psychology and business management.

If you don't feel good about this story, you have no feelings.

Marquez wants to bring Katherine Herrod (who had a stroke) from her assisted-care housing to his final home game and graduation. "She has never seen my college or seen me play a game. I've done all this to honor my mother."

Sweat dripped from Marquez's forehead on a recent morning. But practice is not difficult. The

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class he's rushing to attend won't be hard. His life now is not tough. "Everything's good," he says.

Difficult, hard, tough was when his father (Marquez has no memory of him) abandoned Marquez and his mother; when they had no money and no place to live; when she was taken away and he was put at Polinsky and in six foster homes (each for less than a year); when he attended two dozen elementary and junior high schools; when he was constantly scared of what would happen to him.

"I just didn't want to go wrong. I just wanted to settle down with a family. I just wanted to graduate from high school."

At San Pasqual High School in Escondido, Herrod also wanted to run. He always could, and had to, run. (He runs a 4.76, one of the top-10 40-yard times for defensive end pro prospects.) He joined the track team. The high school football coach saw him run and told him to try out — and agreed to become his legal guardian. By his junior season, he was among the best California prep players (and rated the 21st defensive end in the country). In his junior season he also decided to become a superior student — and began making the honor roll every semester. He lived in four more foster homes.

Marquez was recruited by a dozen schools — including Boise State (which he didn't believe would be a major power). He chose Oregon State until Boise State's Dan Hawkins and members of

his staff moved to Colorado. "I liked the coaches and the academic atmosphere here."

The sharp, smart, handsome, 6-foot-2 young man has been living in Boulder full-time since 2006 — and has increased his weight from 220 pounds to 285. His scholarship, a stipend for playing football, and a federal Pell Grant, have financed his education and all the McDonald's hamburgers he can eat. "I'm very thankful that I finally found a real home, and everybody at CU is my family."

He redshirted as a freshman, when the Buffs struggled to a 2-10 record. "In the offseason at weight training, I looked around, and 25 players had dropped out (from the CU football program). That was when if you could make a fog on a window with your breath, you could play. I decided then I would stick it out, get my degree, and I would become a good player and I would help this team bring winning back to Colorado.

"I'm close, and we're so close. I'm about to get my degree, and I think I've become a good football player (he led the Buffs in sacks in '09). I think we'll win a lot of games and make Colorado proud again. Maybe I'll get to the NFL (he is rated from 17-30 among defensive ends) but, if not, I've prepared myself to go out in the world.

"I'd really love to finish my career as a Buff in a big bowl," Marquez says.

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(and the BCS Championship also is a possibility).

One of those postseason games is the Holiday Bowl.

In San Diego.

Imagine that, Marquez.

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college football

Mother splits time between CU and UNC football

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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WHEAT RIDGE — The Orms boys, Dylan and Parker, learned at a young age that, while competing in sports, there was no sense trying to find where their mother was seated in the bleachers. She wouldn't be there. Katherine Orms Korosec would always be somewhere in the vicinity at practices and games. Just not in the stands. An acknowledged "Nervous Nellie," she can't sit still.

"She likes to pace back and forth, back and forth," Dylan said. "You look out of the corner of your eye for motion. There's Mom."

Katherine might wear out a pair of shoes Saturday afternoon. Her oldest, Dylan, is a fourth-year junior quarterback at Northern Colorado and will be making his first collegiate start when the Bears open the season in Greeley against Adams State. Meanwhile, at Invesco Field at Mile High, Parker will be playing for Colorado in his first collegiate game. The redshirt

freshman will be CU's starting nickel back on defense against Colorado State.

Having sat out the 2009 season, Parker will be returning to the site of his last football game. He forever etched his name into the folklore of Wheat Ridge High by bolting for a 56-yard touchdown on a fourth-and-2 draw play with 19 seconds remaining to give the Farmers a 35-31 victory over Greeley West in the 2008 Class 4A state championship game.

"For Parker to go back to that stadium, how special is that?" said Katherine, her eyes becoming moist.

Coincidentally, Dylan Orms, a backup at UNC the last two seasons, also made his last start at Invesco. He quarterbacked Wheat Ridge to the 2006 state title on that field as a senior. Parker was as a sophomore safety that day.

Together, the boys later presented their mother with replica of the Wheat Ridge championship ring. On the back of the pendant an inscription reads: "MVP Mom. Love You. Dylan and Parker."

She wears it for good luck to every sporting event involving her boys.

Dylan and Parker have always been known for their football instincts, spontaneity and an ability to adjust on the fly. Saturday, Katherine will have to do some improvising of her own. The Colorado vs. CSU game in Denver begins at noon; Northern Colorado's opener in Greeley has a 1:30 p.m.

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kickoff.

What's a mother to do?

Using her son's family pass, Katherine plans to get into Invesco early and watch Parker and his teammates warm up. She figures she can only stay until 12:15 or before she needs to leave in order to catch the start of UNC's game.

"I know this is going to sound crazy, but I hope CU has to kick off to start the game," Katherine said. "That way, the Buffs will be on defense, and maybe I'll see Parker in a play or two."

In any case, Katherine will start sprinting out of the stadium shortly after the game begins.

"I know Mom will be going as fast as she can to get here without getting a speeding ticket," Dylan said.

Katherine found it difficult to explain to Parker that she might not get to see him get in on a play. But Parker fully supported her decision.

"I want my family to go watch Dylan play," Parker said. "I have four years to play college football, including this year. He has two left. He deserves it. He has battled through a lot."

Katherine usually is accompanied to games by her mother, Diana Korosec, who, along with other family members riding with Katherine will go directly to a sports bar in Greeley and watch as much of the CU vs. CSU game on television as

they feel they can before heading to UNC's Nottingham Field to catch the rest of the UNC game.

The boys' father, Glenn Orms, plans to do the same. Katherine and Glenn were divorced while their sons were in high school. Dylan and Parker are their only children.

"I'm the oldest, so I get a few perks, I guess," Dylan said of having family members at his game Saturday. "I just wish they could be at both games. It's sad that some of (CU's and UNC's) home games are scheduled at the same time."

"It's going to be a challenge at times seeing both Dylan and Parker play," said Katherine, who is looking into an air card for her laptop so she can follow CU games online while attending UNC games. "But I'm sure there are a lot of parents that would love to have that kind of worry."

Athletics flow in the blood

Dylan and Parker have been called "naturals," and that should come as no surprise. Athletics are in their blood. Their late grandfather, Hubert "Killer" Korosec, starred in football as a two-way lineman at Golden High School. Getting drafted into the Korean War precluded Korosec from accepting a scholarship offer to play football at CU. He returned after the war to earn an economics degree from the university.

Two of Katherine's brothers played college football: Bill Korosec at Eastern Illinois (running

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back) and Joe Korosec at Fort Lewis (linebacker for Gary Barnett, later to become the CU coach). Glenn Orms grew up in the rodeo circuit in Texas.

As for Katherine, she is the oldest of eight children, and all seven siblings are boys. Opportunities in women's athletics were limited in the 1970s, but Katherine played softball for Northern Colorado and Cal State-Hayward. She later completed her degree requirements at Colorado, which did not have softball.

"Mom says if times then were like they are now, she would have been an All-American in softball," Parker said. "I believe her."

Dylan and Parker always wanted to follow in the football footsteps of their grandpa and uncles. During halftime of Broncos games, Dylan and Parker would go to the backyard with uncle Rob Korosec and square off, head-to-head. Rob would throw the passes and either Dylan or Parker would be the receiver or the cornerback.

"When Uncle Rob would throw to us, Dylan, being 2 years older, won most of the battles," Parker recalled. "But I learned. I got better. My brother is my biggest mentor. He's the reason I'm a competitor, because we always competed. He's the reason I'm tough, also."

One time they were roughhousing in the family room and Parker had enough. Breaking from a makeshift wrestling hold, Parker grabbed one of his mother's high-heeled shoes and threw it at

Dylan's head. You guessed it — Dylan ducked and the shoe sailed into the big-screen TV.

Glenn Orms returned from a business trip to find the screen ruined.

"They both looked at me sheepishly," Glenn said. "I was mad, but they didn't get into too much trouble over that. I thought, 'Boys will be boys, and some things you just have to laugh at.'"

"But they had to know there are consequences for their actions. We didn't have another big screen for a while."

Parents give full support

Katherine remembers trying to get young Dylan and younger Parker "interested in everything with a ball, and no batteries." That was an easy sell. They progressed through T-ball, coach pitch, soccer, baseball, basketball and football.

Though the 6-foot-1, 195-pound Dylan and the 5-11, 190-pound Parker are not big for their positions, they have exceptional quickness and throughout their young careers rose to the top of their class.

"As parents, you always see your kids that way," said Glenn Orms, who videotaped more than 2,000 hours of his sons' football games. He has parlayed that into a video company, jamming5280sports.com, that live streams area high school events.

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"We always thought Dylan and Parker would be something special," Glenn Orms added. "But I'd be in the stands and hear other parents say the same things about their kids. So we always encouraged Dylan and Parker. But we also told them that there could be somebody better and not to ever rest on their laurels. I think they both became pretty humble kids because of that."

The Orms' home in Wheat Ridge has become a shrine to the accomplishments of Dylan and Parker. Photos and reprints of newspaper articles cover the walls. High school letter jackets, footballs and helmets are everywhere.

"We see Parker's mom and grandmother at practices, and that's big for him," CU quarterback Tyler Hansen said. "Playing football is rough, rough physically and rough mentally. Sometimes you need somebody to talk to that you really care about. I think it makes you stronger as a person, knowing you have the support of your family."

Watching her sons compete in sports has controlled much of Katherine's life. She wouldn't have it any other way. Once, Katherine was asked if she would like to go to a Mother's Day brunch instead of a ballgame.

"I told them I'm not a 'brunch-type' mom," she said. "I'd rather watch my kids play. That's my thing. I've been blessed."

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or
tkensler@denverpost.com

Road trip

A look at the weekends the Orms family will have to work out a travel plan for the 55-mile trip between Colorado's Folsom Field and UNC's Nottingham Field in Greeley. (It's about the same distance for Saturday's trip from Invesco Field to UNC):

Date CU game UNC game
 Saturday noon vs. CSU 1:30 vs. Adams St.
 Sept. 18 1:30 vs. Hawaii 1:30 vs. Idaho St.
 Oct. 2 5 p.m. vs. Georgia 1:30 vs. Montana
 Oct. 16 TBA vs. Baylor 1:30 vs. Eastern Washington

Letter to mom

Before the Sept. 21, 2006, game between No. 9 Wheat Ridge and sixth-ranked ThunderRidge, Farmers quarterback Dylan Orms wrote this letter to his mother (and a similar letter to his grandmother). Here's an excerpt of his letter to his mom:

Dear Mom,

I'm dedicating this game on Thursday to you. Thank you for always being at practice and being the loudest fan in the stands. . . . Thank you for teaching me how to love my school and honor the many traditions that we hold close to our heart. . . . Beating ThunderRidge will be the win of a lifetime. It will be a defining moment in my life, and I am glad that you will be there to cherish it with me. And I also know you will still

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be there if we lose. You have always been there
for me and I love you.

Love,
Your 1st born son,
No. 5 Dylan Orms
Score: Wheat Ridge 28, ThunderRidge 7, ending
ThunderRidge's 26-game winning streak.

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colorado football

CU Kicker Goodman believes he's on target

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 08/29/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Perhaps Aric Goodman's new outlook on life, an awakening of sorts derived while he recovered from potentially career- ending hip surgery, will enable the fifth-year senior to snap out of a two-year funk and finally give Colorado some consistency on field goals.

Following Saturday's scrimmage, CU coach Dan Hawkins named Goodman the starting place-kicker for the season opener against Colorado State. A former Cherry Creek High School standout and transfer from Wyoming, Goodman has made just 15-for-32 field goals during two seasons as a starter for the Buffaloes.

Meanwhile, CU's opponents went 37-for-48 in those games.

"I feel confident this year is going to be a lot different," Goodman said Saturday.

"Doctors (after the surgery in March) didn't give

me much of a shot to kick this season. They said the hip would be OK, but they didn't think I'd get enough strength in the leg.

Colorado Football

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[Preview CU's 2010 team, broken down by unit, including QBs, RBs and OLs.](#)

[View slide show of CU scrimmage at Folsom Field on Aug. 12.](#)

[Read a preseason Q&A with CU football coach Dan Hawkins.](#)

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"Fortunately, I have an opportunity. I'm treating every day like it's a gift. I have to go out and make the most of it."

Goodman had a labral tear in his right hip repaired just before spring practice. He began kicking again in early July.

The place-kicking position might have been Colorado's last position battle leading to Saturday's game against CSU at Invesco Field at Mile High. Goodman was challenged by true freshman Justin Castor (Arvada West) and walk-

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on junior Marcus Kirkwood (soccer at Faith Christian).

Collins said, "We're happy with where we are, but we have a lot of things to shore up."

Following the scrimmage, junior quarterback Tyler Hansen said Goodman "had better step up. We're tired of driving down the field and you missing the kick. It destroys the morale of the team.

"Last year he missed (two) kicks against Nebraska and it was the first time I actually blew up on him on the sideline," Hansen added. "I got after him a little bit. I felt bad about it later. But those were valuable points."

Hansen added that Goodman "is a great guy and we all love him" and that Hansen and the team is pulling for Goodman to succeed. Goodman was 10-for-18 on field goals in 2009.

When informed of Hansen's comments, Goodman said he was not offended.

"That doesn't put any pressure on me," Goodman said. "I feel like I can make every kick. I think it will all come together this year."

Footnotes. The scrimmage featured the No. 1 offense and defense going against the scout team, which imitated CSU's formations. According to accounts of the closed scrimmage, junior receiver Toney Clemons (from Hansen) and senior wideout Travon Patterson (from Cody Hawkins) each had long touchdown catches. . . . Asked if his unit was ready to play its season opener right now, defensive coordinator Ron

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Longmont, Colorado
Sunday, August 29, 2010

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The view from the top

By Brian Howell
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The Flatirons can be seen from miles outside of Boulder.

Every year, people come from all over just to hike or rock climb in the Flatirons.

Tyler Hansen has lived in Boulder for more than two years and he has yet to hike in those famous mountains.

“I haven’t really been up to the Flatirons at all,” he said. “I have been up once, but I haven’t hiked up there.”

In Hansen’s defense, he didn’t come to Boulder to hike. He came here to play quarterback, and the University of Colorado junior has climbed to the top of the depth chart.

Hansen will take the field on Saturday at Invesco Field at Mile High as the starting quarterback when the Buffaloes take on rival Colorado State.

“I’m just real excited,” he said. “It’s a dream come true. I’ve always wanted to play big-time college football and be the starter.”

For the past two years, Hansen has gone into the season as a backup to Cody Hawkins, who is a senior. Hawkins is No. 2 on the depth chart this season.

Overtaking Hawkins wasn’t easy for Hansen. Hawkins has more experience, has thrown more touchdown passes than anybody in CU history (46) and has led the Buffs to a few big wins in his time.

But, Hansen came to Boulder to play, and he spent the entire offseason making sure he could be on the field.

“In this offseason, he spent a ton of hours just watching film and getting familiar with looks,” CU offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said. “I think he’s brought himself up to speed in terminology and college football in general.”

Being the starter is nothing new to Hansen. After the Buffs started 1-4 under Hawkins last year, Hansen took over as the starter for the final seven games.

But, even while he was the starter, Hawkins was never far behind. In fact, the Buffs, on a few occasions, took Hansen out of the game in favor of Hawkins because Hawkins had a better feel for how to run CU’s 2-minute offense.

“That kind of ticked me off a little bit and made me mad because I was like, ‘Hey, I’m the starter now and this should be my thing,’” Hansen said. “At the end of the season, I re-evaluated my play and took that — I have to learn, watch more film and learn that stuff.”



University of Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen will take the field as starting quarterback against Colorado State on Saturday.

Richard M. Hackett/Times-Call

Hansen's father, Rick, played quarterback at San Diego State and had a brief stint in the NFL. Hansen often talks to his father about football and after the season, his father gave him a bit of advice.

"Everybody has strengths and weaknesses," Rick said. "If you have a weakness somehow, can you work on that and make it into a strength?"

Cody Hawkins clearly had the edge on Hansen in terms of football knowledge. Tyler knew he had to catch up.

"There's some point when you realize how to look at film," Rick said. "I think (Tyler) took that challenge and I think they did some good things with him, letting him grow through that."

After his playing days, Rick became a high school coach. Today, he is the quarterbacks coach at Vista Murrieta High School, where his quarterback, Derrick Brown, is a three-star recruit headed to Utah in 2011.

Rick has worked with quarterbacks for nearly three decades, and he said he saw plenty of talent in his son early on.

Youth soccer gave Tyler a good set of athletic feet. Tyler also displayed a strong arm when he was a ball boy and he and his would play catch before games.

"At that point, I kind of had a feeling," Rick said.

In middle school, Tyler had a desire to sit down with his dad and break down game film.

All the signs were there that Tyler could be a good quarterback.

At California's Chaparral High School, Tyler flourished as a quarterback who could beat teams with arm and legs.

He grew quite a bit over the past few months, however.

"I feel like I changed my mentality," he said. "I took a different approach to camp and to coming and playing football. I just focused on the things that (Hawkins) had an advantage on me.

"He's so good in the mental part of the game. So, I focused in the offseason to learn so much in the mental part of the game. I felt like I had all the physical tools to be the starter, but I was lacking mental stuff — where they bring a blitz from and stuff like that. I took a different approach to learning and I re-taught myself."

Physically, Hansen's ability has never been questioned.

"Tyler's a guy that's progressed well in this program," Buffs defensive coordinator Ron Collins said. "Seeing his progression the last couple of years has been awesome. The thing that Tyler gives you that makes you leery as a defensive coordinator is the ability to run."

The key for Tyler at this point is to put his physical ability and his new-found football knowledge together.

The Buffs believe he can, which is why they have told him to not look over his shoulder and worry about Hawkins sitting behind him.

"They told me to go play," he said. "That makes me 100 percent comfortable. I just have to get out there and play, make plays and just be me."

He is not, however, taking the task at hand lightly.

"Being named the starter is great, but now I really have a job to do," he said. "I have a bigger responsibility than ever before."

Maybe once that job is done he can take that long-awaited hike at the Flatirons.

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Goodman named starting kicker

By Brian Howell
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — It's no secret to Colorado fans that Aric Goodman has had his struggles.

The senior kicker has missed more than half of his field-goal attempts in a CU uniform.

Goodman and the Buffs are well aware of the struggles, too. But on Saturday, following CU's final scrimmage of fall camp, Goodman was named the starting kicker as the Buffs head into Saturday's game against Colorado State.

"It's what I've been shooting for the whole time," said Goodman, who beat out freshman Justin Castor and junior Marcus Kirkwood for the job. "It just comes down to who is making the most kicks, and right now I feel pretty confident with the way I've been kicking the ball."

Quarterback Tyler Hansen said that confidence needs to carry over to the regular season. Hansen, in fact, didn't mince his words about the job Goodman has to do.

"He better step up," Hansen said. "We're tired of it, the drive down the field and you miss a kick. It shoots down the morale of the team, and you kind of lose some confidence."

Goodman has missed 17 of his 32 career attempts. He missed eight of 18 last year, including two in the season finale against Nebraska.

"That was the first time I actually blew up on him on the sideline," Hansen said. "I actually got after him a little bit. I felt bad after the game, but those are valuable points. When we drive down and control the clock, you want to get points at the end of those drives. Preferably, you want a touchdown."

"He better make some kicks, or the team might go crazy on him."

Head coach Dan Hawkins said Goodman won the job because "he's had a nice camp again, and he's kicked well in scrimmages."

Hansen said, "(Goodman) has always been real good in practice; he needs to do it on Saturdays."

"He's a great guy. We all love him. If he makes those first two kicks or makes some kicks early, he'll have a great year. If he misses that first kick, I don't know."

Goodman said Hansen's comments don't add any pressure to his job. He knows he has to perform.

"I expect to make any kick anywhere," he said. "Unfortunately, up until now in some cases, I haven't done that. But I'm just going to go out there each time, keep things the same and stay consistent. I feel confident that this year is going to be a lot different."

Just getting a chance to kick is an opportunity Goodman didn't think he would get. In April, he had surgery on his

right hip to repair a torn labrum.

“(The doctors) told me that structurally my hip would be all right, but they didn’t think that my body and my leg strength would be that of a D-I kicker,” he said. “Chances, I would say, were less than 15 percent.”

He came back, however, and the Buffs spent the fall working on Goodman’s focus. According to Hansen, when Goodman has lined up for kicks, they “yell at him, call him names, throw things at him, tickle him before he kicks” — all part of getting in Goodman’s head.

In addition, the Buffs’ kickers have been aiming at goalposts that are 12 feet, 6 inches apart — 6 feet narrower than normal. Goodman said the smaller target has helped.

After the preparation to get to this point, he hopes to finish his career at CU with his best year.

“For me, post-surgery, to come out and win (the job) back, that means a lot to me personally,” he said. “I’m going to carry that out to the season, hopefully.

“The most important thing for me is making my teammates happy and winning football games.

“Getting off to a hot start, that’s what I need to do, that’s what Tyler’s got to do, that’s what the team’s got to do.”

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CU gearing up for showdown

By Brian Howell
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The University of Colorado players are ready to take on Colorado State.

The coaches? Not yet.

“There’s a tendency to go, ‘OK, let’s get the game here,’ but there’s a lot of amazingly little things that just can’t get ignored and you’ve got to try to continue to clean up,” CU head coach Dan Hawkins said after the Buffs concluded their final scrimmage of fall camp on Saturday at Folsom Field.

The Buffs scrimmaged for about two hours. The session was closed to media and fans, but players left feeling good about what was accomplished.

“We actually didn’t punt, which is something real positive,” quarterback Tyler Hansen said of the offense. “But, it’s against the scout team, so you’re supposed to dominate. You’re supposed to move the ball fairly easy, and we did.”

On defense, cornerback Jalil Brown was pleased with the effort.

“We looked great out there,” he said. “There was numerous three-and-outs. I’m excited to see that. Judging by the way we played today, I’m excited for next week’s game.

“I feel ready. The defense out there, we were clicking and making plays. The offense had a few touchdowns out there going deep and running the ball, so I think we’re well-rounded right now on defense and on offense. I’m excited to see how that looks on Saturday.”

The Buffaloes will play Colorado State on Saturday at noon at Invesco Field at Mile High.

“We need this whole week to get ourselves ready to go,” defensive coordinator Ron Collins said. “We have a lot of little details we’re trying to shore up right now. We feel good about where we’re at, but we still have a long ways to go before Saturday.”

COMMUNICATION: CU’s first scrimmage of the fall, on Aug. 12, was to work on situational plays.

The second scrimmage, on Aug. 19, was more game-like.

Saturday’s was game-like, as well, but Brown said the focus for the Buffs’ defense was communication.

“Really it was having an understanding of what’s going, knowing what the person next to you is doing, instead of having people on different pages like we had last (scrimmage),” he said. “Today, the big thing was tackling and making sure everybody was on the same page.”

DECISIONS: The CU coaching staff is still evaluating the true freshmen to determine which ones will play and which ones will redshirt.

Hawkins said there are several that will “for sure” play: Running back Justin Torres, defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe, receiver Paul Richardson, long snapper Ryan Iverson and cornerback Jared Bell.

FACING THE FRESHMAN: CSU will play true freshman Pete Thomas at quarterback on Saturday.

Brown doesn’t see that as a definite advantage for CU.

“Obviously you prefer to have a freshman quarterback that you’re playing against, but judging by the past, they have an awesome coach in Steve Fairchild and he knows every single defense out there,” Brown said. “No matter what defense we throw out there against him, he knows what he’s doing. It’s kind of good for us (to face a freshman). You hope for that, but is it going to affect the outcome of the game? How much, I can’t tell.”

EXTRA POINTS: Hawkins did not report any injuries from Saturday’s scrimmage. “We’ll see tomorrow,” he said. “I don’t think there’s anything serious, but again you never know.” ... Freshman Justin Castor or junior Marcus Kirkwood may be in line to handle kickoff duties for the Buffs on Saturday. Hawkins said they both “big, tall guys that can really reach back and pound it on a kickoff.”

Brian Howell can be reached at bhowell@times-call.com. Read his Buffs blog at www.timescall.com/blogs/howell.

State of a rivalry: CU Buffs won't look past CSU

With improved competition, traditional game becomes more significant

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/28/2010 11:47:49 PM MDT

Will there be anymore red-letter days for Colorado football?

CU athletic director Mike Bohn would like to schedule future non-conference games against Nebraska. It will be interesting to see if Tom Osborne is still interested in sending the Cornhuskers to Boulder.

Whether the programs continue to play from time to time in September or remain at a safe distance in separate conferences, the Nov. 26 game in Lincoln will be the final installment of the end-of-season Big 12 rivalry game.

The Huskers are headed for the Big Ten in 2011 while the Buffs are joining the Pac-12 in either 2011 or 2012.

Despite a history of playing Utah in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference and Mountain States Conference, the sight of the Utes' red uniforms and helmets won't get the blood boiling for contemporary CU fans the way Big Red does.

"It would be good to get Nebraska back on the schedule, but at the same time, we'll have our hands full in the Pac-10," said former CU standout and current assistant Jashon Sykes. "I hope people don't just say, 'We want Utah to be our rival.'"

"I'd rather our rival create itself. It doesn't mean as much if it's not created by the guys who are playing on the field."

The Buffs will have an opportunity to start new rivalries against traditional Pac-10 teams like UCLA (now coached by Rick Neuheisel) and Oregon (CU has played the Ducks in three bowl games, including the Fiesta Bowl after the 2001 season).

However, there is a good chance fellow Pac-12 newcomer Utah will be the Buffs' final conference opponent every fall in football and a travel partner in basketball. CU leads the gridiron series 30-24-3.

"To me, every game is a rival. You have to go into every game thinking this team wants to beat you and you want to beat them just as bad," CU safety Parker Orms said. "I wish we could play Nebraska every year, but we have to win the games that we're playing."

Starting with Colorado State on Saturday at Invesco Field (noon, the mtn.).

The Rams would love nothing more than to be considered CU's No. 1 rival while the Buffs are figuring out how they are going to build a program capable of competing with the Pac-12 powers and perhaps reuniting with Nebraska at the Rose Bowl some day. "We think about the Colorado game a lot. It's always on the back of our minds when we are training in the offseason," CSU linebacker Michael Kawulok, who grew up in Boulder and sold parking before Buffs games at his dad's dentist office just up the street from Folsom Field, said during a recent interview with the Camera. "That game really sets the tone for us for the season. Both teams really want to come in and play the best that they can."

A sheepish start

CU bludgeoned Colorado State (originally called Agricultural College of Colorado and later Colorado A&M) 70-6 in the first football game played between the schools in 1893.

The Buffs won the first eight meetings before a 0-0 tie in 1906. The Aggies didn't record their first victory over CU until 1912.

The series was dormant from 1959-82, but the Buffs picked up where they left off with a 10-1 record against Colorado State from 1983-98.

Historically, CU has dominated the Rams with a 59-20-2 overall lead in the series entering the 2010 "Rocky Mountain Showdown."

The lopsided ledger is one of the reasons many black and gold loyalists view the team from Fort Collins as nothing more than a pesky little brother.

"CSU is like if you're standing on a hill playing king of the hill and you have like these other little kids in fourth grade running up the hill trying to knock you off the hill. And you're just hitting them off with one hand. Just laughing," former CU and current Green Bay Packers linebacker Brad Jones said in an interview with the mtn. television network. "The CU-CSU game is like the warm-up game. You play it the first game of the year ... they call it a rivalry so you can get your blood pumped up for the rest of the season. That's it. I don't even know the names of any of the guys on the CSU side, I couldn't tell you one name except for (Bradlee) Van Pelt.

"You've got to think about it like this: It's Colorado versus Colorado State. The Colorado vs. Colorado State. It's not called Colorado State and the University of Colorado. You come to the game to watch the kings, that's it. You want to come to watch the kings, you don't want to come watch the court jester."

The Rams understand they played the role of Washington Generals to CU's Harlem Globetrotters for over a century.

But the passion for the game in Ram land was buoyed when series took a dramatic turn on Sept. 4, 1999. That was the night when a determined Sonny Lubick team ruined Gary Barnett's CU debut with a 41-14 CSU victory at Mile High Stadium.

CU vs. CSU is now viewed as a true rivalry by coaches and players from both programs with the Buffs holding a 6-5 advantage since that game.

"I remember the spring before the '99 game when people said, 'When are you going to be able to beat them once?' And there were all the articles about the drought," longtime CSU assistant Dan Hammerschmidt said. "And we felt like once wasn't going to be enough. You can slip up and beat somebody once. We said we were going to have to beat them two or three times in a row to really make it a rivalry. And when we did that I think it all got rolling."

The Buffs haven't appeared at Hughes Stadium since a 48-34 victory in 1996. The Rams danced all over Folsom Field with their student body after last season's 23-17 triumph in Boulder.

Moving the series to Denver, where CU has a 5-4 edge, has also helped even the playing field and increased statewide and national interest.

"You hear people say that they look at us as a little brother kind of thing. I think they look at it as just as big a rivalry as we do back to them," said CSU wide receiver Ryan Yemm, who grew up in Fort Collins. "With us beating them last year, I think they probably want to get more into the rivalry aspect of it this year."

Border wars

The existing Pac-10 has five natural rivalries -- The Duel in the Desert (Arizona vs. Arizona State), The Civil War (Oregon vs. Oregon State), The Big Game (Cal vs. Stanford), The Apple Cup (Washington vs. Washington State) and the annual battle for Los Angeles (UCLA vs. USC).

Geographically, the CU-Utah game will be a border war. But you get the feeling there aren't a lot of houses divided in Grand Junction or Green River, Utah.

"I think it takes a little bit of time to create rivalries. There are going to be some teams right off the bat where we're going to love to play there. California is home for me and I'd love for them to find a rival there, maybe the Trojans," CU wide receiver Scotty McKnight said. "We're really worried about just taking care of business our last year in the Big 12 and it's going to be fun seeing this last year out.

"As a fan, I'll miss all the Big 12 games. I've grown to love them as a player. It's funny, growing up in California you don't know any of this. You don't know about Colorado State-CU or Nebraska-CU because you grow up watching USC-UCLA, Cal-Stanford, all those games."

The Utes will certainly miss facing BYU in the "Holy War" at the end of the season, although there is a good chance that

series will continue in non-conference play.

"Utah is a great partner of ours," BYU athletic director Tom Holmoe told the Salt Lake Tribune on the subject of the Holy War after the Pac-10 invited CU and Utah to join. "That's sad that it will change."

In addition to the CU game, the Rams have strong rivalries with Mountain West foes Air Force and Wyoming.

"I told my receivers the other day, 'You know what you've got to do at CSU fellas? You've got to focus on CU, Air Force and Wyoming,'" Hammerschmidt said. "Those are the rivals, those are the beautiful games and if you can win those games -- usually at the beginning, middle and end of the season -- you're probably winning some other games in there, too."

"But those are the games Rams focus on. Don't worry about how many you're going to win or how many BCS teams you're going to beat. College football is about rivalries and fun and playing with passion and beating those guys you're supposed to beat. All the other stuff falls into place if you take care of your those three games."

The Hawk seat

The Buffs enter the 2010 opener against CSU with all of the pressure on their shoulder pads.

CU is the team with a veteran quarterback (Tyler Hansen), NFL prospects on the offensive line (Nate Solder, Ryan Miller), speed and experience at receiver and running back (Travon Patterson, Scotty McKnight, Rodney Stewart) and impressive depth at linebacker and in the secondary.

Dan Hawkins, who has averaged four wins per season at CU, will likely have to coach the program to a winning record and a bowl appearance in order to keep his job after his fifth fall in Boulder.

A loss to the Rams would not bode well with games against Cal, Georgia, Missouri, Oklahoma and Nebraska also on the schedule.

"There always is," Hawkins said when asked if there was a lot riding on the CSU game for the Buffs. "You've got a huge rivalry going on, and it's obviously the opener, so it determines the momentum, I think, for both teams. Then you put the rivalry on top of that. It doubles that."

CU will travel to Pac-10 country on Sept. 11 to face Cal. In order to make the game against the Bears a big one, the Buffs must beat the Rams.

"The Pac-10 right now is the last thing on my mind, we're just excited about this year. It's no secret we haven't done well and we're eager to get some wins going here," CU defensive line coach Romeo Bandison said. "Right now, I'm not looking beyond Colorado State. It's pretty miserable losing to those guys and losing to Nebraska. That sticks you for a long time, and I'm sure they feel the same way."

"It's a fun rivalry game. They don't like us and we don't like them. But there's a lot of great sportsmanship. It's a great deal because we get to play at the Broncos stadium. It's a lot of fun for the kids and they look forward to it the whole year. To me, it's college football at its best."

Orms, a redshirt freshman from Wheat Ridge, played his last real game at Invesco Field in the 2008 4A state championship game. Now he gets to begin his collegiate career playing in the CU-CSU game, something many in-state recruits dream of doing.

"We want to make it to a bowl game this year. First, we need to beat CSU. That's our main focus right now," Orms said when asked about the Buffs' goals for this critical season. "I've been to almost every CU-CSU game since I've been alive. It's going to be huge to play at Invesco. ..."

"It's probably going to be goose bumps the whole time."

The Rams started the 2009 season 3-0, including the sweet victory in Boulder, but imploded and finished 3-9.

Third-year CSU head coach Steve Fairchild is still in rebuilding mode and not expected to challenge for a Mountain West Conference title for a couple more years. He will start true freshman Pete Thomas at quarterback behind an offensive line

that replaces four quality starters.

"I've watched the CU-CSU game on TV the last four or five years and I always thought it was one of the best rivalries," Thomas, an El Cajon, Calif., export, said. "It's always on national TV, it's always at Invesco, except for last year, and it looked like a great game to play in."

No matter what pressure the coaching staffs are under, the stakes couldn't be higher for members of the senior classes. This is their last chance to sing the fight song after a win at Invesco Field.

"I definitely understand the rivalry a lot more and the tradition. I remember somebody telling me my freshman year about the rivalry and I had no clue about it," McKnight said. "Now that I've played in it going on four years, I understand the tradition and how much emotion is involved. A lot of these guys went to high school together and there is a lot of passion out there between the great players who have been at both schools."

The college football landscape is expected to continue changing as schools scramble for better television contracts and do whatever it takes to get a seat at the BCS table.

Eventually, there could be four super conferences and programs like Colorado State will still be left outside the party with their nose pressed against the window.

The Buffs should know by now to take the CSU rivalry seriously, because the Rams aren't just playing for bragging rights, but also to help state the Mountain West's case for BCS inclusion.

"They can do all the conference mix-ups they want, but to me they need to keep those rivalries. What if someone said CSU is not playing Wyoming? There might really be a Border War. There might be guns flaring," Hammerschmidt said. "To me that would ruin college football. CU-Stanford, who cares? CU-USC, great, you're going to play USC. That's like us going to play Florida. That's fine. It's a cool game for somebody to get a vacation."

"Rivalries are something that have been going on forever, and to me that's college football."

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Woelk: Fond memories, forgettable locales from Colorado's 'Big' days

Neill Woelk Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/28/2010 11:41:02 PM MDT

So this is the swan song.

After 63 years in the Big 7, Big 8 and finally the Big 12, the Colorado Buffaloes will cut ties with friends and foes they've known longer than many of us have been alive.

Of course, nothing is official yet. The Buffs could still be a member of the Big 12 next year, but the bet here is that despite current posturing by both sides, CU will be headed to the Pac-12 next season.

The Big 12 would like a clean split, with Nebraska -- scheduled to join the Big Ten next year -- and Colorado (heading for the Pac-10) leaving in the same season.

The Pac-10, meanwhile, is anxious to bring Colorado into the fold the same season that Utah heads west.

Thus, barring an inordinate bout of stubbornness from all parties involved, Colorado will make its final swing through the Big 12 this season.

It's time. While there's a large measure of sentimentality for the Big Eight -- and rightfully so -- the feeling for the Big 12 isn't the same.

Colorado has a deep history with its old Big Eight opponents. The Big 12? Not so much.

Still, the Big 12 did leave a mark on CU's history, and vice versa. There will be some things we'll miss, and some we'll be glad to see in the rearview mirror.

Things we'll miss:

Iconic stops in Big 12 cities. Eskimo Joe's in Stillwater. The Hickory House in Ames. Aggieville in Manhattan. Harpo's in Columbia. Barry's Bar and Grill in Lincoln. Iron Works in Austin. Places to eat, drink and soak in some atmosphere.

College Station. Maybe the best place to watch a football game in the conference. Courteous, knowledgeable fans, the 12th Man tradition and the Yell Leaders make it a terrific atmosphere. When the stadium starts swaying -- yes, actually swaying -- it's a sensation to behold.

Nebraska's Memorial Stadium on game day. A sea of red so bright you can probably see it from space.

Oklahoma fans. Friendly folks. Watch a game, have an adult beverage, and win or lose, no grudges after it's over.

Things we won't miss:

Drab campuses. If you're accustomed to CU -- one of the prettiest campuses in America -- visits to some of the other Big 12 schools can be a shock. Is that a penal colony or the Oklahoma State dormitories?

Holidome Hotels. Seems like every Big Eight city had one at some time or another. Stay in one and you'll know. They don't charge extra for the mold and mildew.

Long drives from airports. Oklahoma City to Stillwater, Kansas City to Columbia, Kansas City to Manhattan ... pick your poison. Not bad in the fall, but catch one during a Midwest blizzard, and you'll know why the Pac-10 looks so inviting.

Big 12 officiating. Every other conference admits when its officials make a mistake. The Big 12, however, refuses to

acknowledge errors. A hint of arrogance that isn't necessary.

The Kansas chant. Always sounds like something Pepto-Bismol would cure.

Tornadoes. There's nothing like covering a game at Iowa State, where you keep one eye on the field and one eye on the horizon.

Bests and worsts:

Worst weather for a CU football game? Has to be the Buffs' 1991 contest at Iowa State. A blizzard rolled in across the plains in the morning and by game time, the field was a blanket of white. Fans huddled under the stands, and while the crowd was announced as 36,256, there might have been 1,500 folks left by the third quarter. Maybe.

Best weather for a CU football game? Darned near any September afternoon at Folsom Field.

Worst single CU football play on the road? Have to go back to the old Big Eight, when Bill Mallory elected to kick an extra point in the waning minutes at Oklahoma to forge a 21-21 tie in the 1975 game.

Whoops. No good. A 21-20 Buff loss and Mallory didn't even get to kiss his sister.

Best CU play on the road? A tie between Darian Hagan's "moon pitch" to J.J. Flannigan for a touchdown at Oklahoma in 1989, and the Buffs' fake field goal for a touchdown in the final seconds at Oklahoma State in 1991.

Hagan's pitch to Flannigan -- which skied over defenders -- helped the Buffs to a 20-3 win over the Sooners.

The fake field goal in Stillwater helped the Buffs avoid a major upset. With the wind swirling and Colorado down by two, Bill McCartney sent the field goal team onto the field on third down. Holder Robbie James then threw a touchdown pass to Christian Fauria for a 16-12 win.

How bad was the wind? CU's kicker missed the ensuing extra point.

Which leads us to our favorite CU quotes over the years:

From Buff defensive end Ruben Vaughan: "I hate Nebraska more than I hate dog (poop) on my shoes."

From Buff OL Bryan Stoltenberg, after the fake field goal at Oklahoma State: "We're gonna need another bus for Coach Mac's (guts)."

From Buff RB Mike Marquez, after CU's 20-10 win over Nebraska in 1986: "Nebraska lost twice today. They lost the game and now they have to go back to Nebraska."

And finally, picking out the worst home schedule is easy. The Buffs have been hit with this year's lineup every four years since 1998: Baylor, Texas Tech, Iowa State and Kansas State. Nary a marquee matchup in the bunch.

Thankfully, this is quite likely the last year Buff fans will have to endure it.

Did someone say Pac-12?

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Offense will be key to Hawk's revival

Improved speed, depth should help Buffs

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/28/2010 11:41:53 PM MDT

Let's fast forward to Honolulu.

The Colorado football team is scheduled to begin its 2011 season on Sept. 3 with a road game at Hawaii. If coach Dan Hawkins wants to be on the sidelines that day with his Buffs, his team will likely have to be much more effective offensively this season than it has been at any point in his tenure.

No other part of the team has come up short more consistently than the offense during Hawkins' previous four years in Boulder. There have been flashes, even entire games when the Buffs have shown signs of churning out the kind of production and excitement that Hawkins' teams at Boise State were known for between 2001 and 2005.

But there have been 10 times as many moments of frustration and futility.

The pattern played out over and over again last season as the Buffs went 3-9. They scored 34 points to beat a ranked Kansas team one week and managed just six against Kansas State the next. They beat Texas A&M 35-34 and then stumbled to 10 points and a loss at Iowa State.

There were penalties and turnovers and a vexed former five-star running back who quit. The Buffs finished the season ranked 113th in the nation in rushing and 104th in total offense. A year earlier they ranked 86th and 95th in those categories respectively.

Perhaps the most telling statistic showing just how much difference offensive production can make is the Buffs' record under Hawkins on good and bad offensive days. The Buffs are 2-22 when scoring less than 20 points, but they are 11-3 under Hawkins when scoring 30 or more.

Whether it comes on the ground or through the air or plenty of both, the Buffaloes need an offensive renaissance this season. The coach who will be calling the plays along with some of his most experienced players believe the pieces are in place for such a revival.

"I think it's two things," offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said. "It's depth, and with depth, you create competition. So guys can't get comfortable. And the speed helps. When you have competition and it's a really fast guy you are competing with, that opens your eyes up really fast. Depth and speed are both reasons why we'll have a chance to do some things on offense this year."

The Buffs are stocked with 11 offensive linemen who have logged significant playing time at some point previously in their careers. The team also has a corps of receivers with speed and talent unmatched at any other point in Hawkins' tenure. The team also has two experienced quarterbacks in starter Tyler Hansen and backup Cody Hawkins. So an injury there shouldn't be a disaster the way it can be in some programs.

Senior wide receiver Scotty McKnight has been a thorn in the side of opposing defenses for three years now and will likely become the Buffs' all-time leading pass catcher in the season opener against Colorado State or the first road game at California.

Yet, McKnight might be an afterthought at times this season for defensive coordinators who have to contend with bigger, faster playmakers flanking McKnight such as wide receivers Toney Clemons, Travon Patterson, Paul Richardson and Will Jefferson and tight ends Ryan Deehan and DaVaughn Thornton.

"We have so many guys now that every rep in practice is important," McKnight said. "If you take a play off or you drop a ball or miss an assignment, they're saying, 'OK, we can't trust that guy. We're getting another guy in there.' You can't make mistakes any more and play. That is going to help us."

Hansen, who aims to improve on his 56 percent completion rate from 2009, says speed has been the single biggest difference he has seen on the field this month as the Buffs have conducted preseason practices. He said it shows up in film sessions with many of the plays finally looking like they were designed to on paper. That didn't always happen in the past because defenders could cheat, not having to worry about receivers or running backs getting behind them.

"Speed, we have speed this year," Hansen said. "We can finally blow the lid off coverages and connect on some deep balls hopefully. Instead of defenses crowding the box and putting eight guys in the box, they can loosen up and put six guys in the box and be worried about deep balls. That will open lanes up for Speedy (running back Rodney Stewart) and open up our short passing game.

"It's hard to defend speed and you can't coach speed, but we have speed this year. It will be hard to line up against us."

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Goodman earns kicking duties for CU Buffs

Hansen: 'He better step up' and make kicks

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 08/28/2010 04:24:52 PM MDT

Senior Aric Goodman has won the place-kicking job at Colorado for the third year in a row despite a tough track record and offseason hip surgery on a torn labrum.

It was good news for a young man who has been through a lot in his time at Colorado. Goodman said doctors initially gave him a 15 percent chance of recovering fully and being able to kick again.

When he underwent surgery April 9, the day before the spring game, he went into the operating room not knowing if doctors would decide to do a minor arthroscopic procedure or a more serious procedure with a significant recovery time. It ended up being the worst option and Goodman was unable to kick until July.

"For me, post-surgery and whatever to come out and win it back means a lot to me personally," Goodman said. "I'm going to carry that out into the season hopefully."

Goodman said he doesn't think he has anything to prove to his teammates. He said he is more interested in proving to himself he can succeed. While his teammates support him and want him to be consistent and reliable, it appears there won't be much patience this season if Goodman struggles once again.

"He better step up," starting quarterback Tyler Hansen said. "We're tired of it. To drive down the field and you miss a kick, it's not good for the morale of the team and you kind of lose some confidence. I tell you what, last year at the Nebraska game, he missed I think one or two kicks and that was the first time I actually blew up on him on the sideline. I actually got after him a little bit. I felt bad after the game, but, I mean, those are valuable points.

"When you drive down and we control the clock, we want to get points at the end of those drives whether it's a touchdown or a field goal. Preferably you want a touchdown. He better make some kicks or the team might go crazy on him."

Goodman said Hansen's words don't put any extra pressure on him because he puts enough pressure on himself. He said he always goes on the field expecting to make his kicks, but it hasn't worked out as often as he would like.

"I'm just going to go out there each time and keep things the same and stay consistent," Goodman said. "I feel confident that this year is going to be a lot different."

Hansen and coaches have said that Goodman has looked solid in preseason practices, but that is nothing new. Goodman has a track record of making the bulk of his kicks in practices and hitting uprights or missing completely during games.

Goodman initially attended Wyoming out of Cherry Creek High School and is remembered most in his one season there for a missed extra point that cost the Cowboys a road win against Virginia. He transferred to CU and over the past two years has made 15 of 32 field goal attempts.

Coach Dan Hawkins said earlier this month that if Goodman won the starting job, he would not be on a short leash if he was inaccurate to start the season.

"He kicked great today and he's been kicking good," Hawkins said in explaining the choice. "Kicking is a little different than any other position. It's kind of simple math, and he's had a nice camp again and he's kicked well in the scrimmages."

Hawkins said Saturday he also has confidence in junior lefty Marcus Kirkwood and true freshman Justin Castor if they are needed. Hawkins said Castor has a little bit of an edge at this point.

Special teams coach Kent Riddle began having Goodman's teammates apply pressure to practice kicks in a variety of

ways last year. The Buffs have taken a variety of approaches to trying to rattle Goodman in an effort to make him more accustomed to the stress of kicking in games, including yelling at him, calling him names, throwing things at him and tickling him, Hansen said.

"Fans at opposing stadiums or even at our stadium were being a lot worse," Hansen said. "We're just trying to get in his head a little bit. He's kind of a head case a little bit. I'm not trying to put him down, but he kind of lets things get to him a little bit."

Hansen said it would be great to see Goodman have a good season.

"Just for him, he's a great guy. We all love him," Hansen said. "If he makes those first two kicks or makes some kicks early, he'll be great. He'll have a great year. But if he misses that first kick, then I don't know. He's just got to hit that kick early and then we'll have 100 percent confidence in him."

Notable

Hawkins said he wasn't aware of any serious injuries in the final preseason scrimmage. ... Hawkins said he feels his team has progressively improved through each of the three scrimmages this month. ... Hansen said the offense didn't punt against the scout team defense but that is how it should be. ... Hawkins said tailback Justin Torres, defensive end Chidero Uzo-Diribe, cornerback Jered Bell, wide receiver Paul Richardson and longsnapper Ryan Iverson will definitely play as true freshman. Others could play if they are needed.

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Rams still looking for starting center

BY KELLY LYELL • KellyLyell@coloradoan.com •
August 28, 2010

Four of the five starters on CSU's offensive line have been determined, but offensive coordinator and line coach Pat Meyer hasn't yet decided on his center, he said Friday.

Junior Tyler McDermott and redshirt freshman Weston Richburg still are competing for the job, Meyer said, noting that the outcome of that position battle also will determine one of the starting guards.

Senior Mark Starr and junior Paul Madsen, who split time as Colorado State University's strong-side tackle last fall, will be the starters at tackle, Meyer said, and junior Jake Gdowski has nailed down one of the starting spots at guard.

Richburg, Meyer said, also will start at either guard or center, with senior Conner Smith the likely starter at the other guard position if Richburg wins the race for the starting job at center.

"We can all play," Gdowski said. "It's just who's going to play the best together and what line's going to be the best out there is what we're trying to finalize right now."

Either way, Meyer said, all six of those players, along with sophomore Joe Caprioglio and senior Ryan Griffith, will be in the regular rotation on the offensive line for the season-opener next Saturday in Denver against the University of Colorado. Caprioglio and Griffith can both play either guard or tackle, and each took turns at both spots during a 75-minute walk-through session Friday in the team's indoor practice facility.

Caprioglio got extra practice time during fall camp while Starr was sidelined with a foot injury, and Griffith fell behind in the race for a starting because of a hand injury.

> **MUTUAL RESPECT** — Steve Fairchild, CSU's third-year coach, and Dan Hawkins, in his fourth season at CU, know the in-state rivalry is heated and enjoy the hoopla surrounding the game.

But the two coaches, speaking at a Metro Denver Sports Commission kickoff luncheon in Denver, said Friday they've gotten to know each other pretty well the past few years and each tremendous respect for the job the other is doing.

"Steve has been awesome," Hawkins told the crowd of more than 700 sponsors and boosters of the two schools at the Denver Center of the Performing Arts. "It's been great to get to know him. We share a lot of phone calls and texts in the offseason, and he's great."

"I know this is a rivalry and there's always a lot of hate going on, but I have the utmost respect for Steve, his program, what he's doing and how he does it."

Fairchild complimented Hawkins on his understanding that coaching college football goes well beyond just winning and losing games. Coaches, he said, have a big impact on their players' academic success and social lives.

"I have tremendous respect for Dan Hawkins; he's a tremendous football coach," Fairchild said. "In the 2 1/2 years that I've gotten to know him when I've been at events like this and heard him speak, he gets it. He gets it like I do. There's no question in this role winning and losing is very, very paramount, but we're also here to help our kids, make them better prepared for society after they've gone through our program."

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"We're trying to do that at Colorado State as I'm sure Dan Hawkins is at the University of Colorado."

> **RUNNING BACK ROTATION** — Fairchild said he's got a pretty good idea how his running back rotation will work in the opener. Junior Raymond Carter, a transfer from UCLA, is the likely starter, backed up, in order, by senior John Mosure, redshirt freshman Chris Nwoke and, if he's healthy enough to play, senior Leonard Mason.

Mason, the Rams' leading rusher last season, didn't start practicing until this week because of a hamstring injury.

> **NUMBERS GAME** — Some of the program's first-year players switched jersey numbers so that they wouldn't end up on the same special teams unit as another player wearing the same number.

Freshman running back Tony Drake went from No. 5 to No. 12, freshman cornerback Shaq Bell from No. 7 to No. 10, sophomore cornerback Dominique Vinson from No. 17 to No. 16 and freshman defensive end Crockett Gillmore from No. 85 to No. 99.

> **NEXT UP** — The Rams will hold a "mock game" that is closed to the public today at Hughes Stadium and take Sunday off before holding their next public practice at 3:30 p.m. Monday on the practice fields south of Moby Arena.

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 [Rams open with win](#)

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