



Interim coach Brian Cabral will confer with his assistant coaches on game-day decisions.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



11/10/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Brooks: Cabral Will Depend on Game-Day Collaboration

BOULDER - Three guesses (and the first two don't count) as to who received Brian Cabral's first telephone call on Monday night when he was named Colorado's interim football coach for the regular season's final three games.

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Here's a hint: Cabral telephoned the same person first in 2004 when the CU program also turned to him as its interim leader. And if there's a third, fourth . . . *ad infinitum* . . . summons to serve on an interim basis, Cabral's first call will go to the same guy.

"Bill McCartney's my mentor," Cabral said Wednesday after finishing his second practice of his second tour as the Buffaloes' interim boss.

There is a significant amount of irony here. Both men have let it be known that they would like to coach CU on a permanent basis, McCartney making a return after being away for 16 seasons and Cabral remaining at his place of employment for the past 21 seasons. McCartney hired Cabral in

1989.

Cabral and McCartney are kinsmen, not quite close enough to complete each other's sentences, but certainly close enough to share thoughts. The mentor's chief advice to his pupil this time around was to inspire the Buffs - sound advice after their woeful weekend in the Heartland - and bring them together after the subsequent firing of Dan Hawkins.

Cabral has had all of two days, two team meetings, two practices, to begin working on that. At the conclusion of Wednesday morning's work in the Buffs' practice bubble, with his players on one knee in front of him, Cabral put his normally calm demeanor on hold.

Other than most of what he witnessed last weekend or some of what he might have seen Wednesday, I'm not quite sure what set him off. But he used - ah, let's see - an equestrian term to describe it.

And rather loudly.

"We need some of that," senior linebacker B.J. Beatty said later, referring to the coach's temperament and not the actual, well, horse droppings.

Beatty and his fellow 'backers have seen the fiery side of Cabral as a position coach. The other Buffs . . . not so much. Cabral has joked for the past couple of days that he's putting in rare quality time on the offensive end of the field for the first time in his career.

"I'm learning," he said. "If we have a drill and I'm mad at the defense, I'm like, 'Oh, I've got to go congratulate the offense.' So I run back to the other side of the field and become an offensive fan; I kind of bounce back and forth.

"I'm trying to spend more time with the offense to just see what they do and how they do it. I want to them - the players - to see me and see that I'm interested, that I care about what they're doing and how they're doing it."

So until now the offensive players haven't interacted much with their interim head coach, except for a "team clap" - a kind of quick reaction, one-heartbeat, unity exercise that Cabral leads. But over the past 48 hours, all the Buffs have seen enough of Cabral to know where he's coming from.

"There's a man with passion," junior right guard Ryan Miller said. "The room goes quiet when he speaks. There's a presence about Cabral."

There's also a humility. With defense prominent on his resume as a player and coach, Cabral is not above conceding that come Saturday against Iowa State (11:30 a.m., Folsom Field, Fox College Sports) he will be depending heavily on his assistant coaches.

"I'll confer," he said when asked about critical sideline decisions. "I don't have all the answers. I don't. And I'm going to have to depend and rely on my guys. I'll confer on all the decisions.

"The offense is going to run the offense, the defense is going to run the defense . . . I'm very confident in our offensive coaches. I've been having on-going discussions with them, just helping me understand what I'm looking for."

Whether it is or not, Cabral doesn't see his current role as an audition for the permanent position. Rather than viewing it as such, he is "looking for these seniors to finish on a good note. I'm looking for us to do what we're capable of doing - and I believe we're very capable of doing a lot. That's what I'm looking for."

When he filled in for former head coach Gary Barnett during spring drills in 2004 (Barnett was on paid administrative leave), Cabral kept on coaching the Buffs linebackers. This time, he's yielded the position duty and has technical defensive intern Bert Watts helping in that capacity.

A former Cal safety and graduate assistant with the Bears, Watts recognizes this opportunity for him, but notes, "I've had great support from the defensive staff all season. My role has been redefined; sometimes things change, as it's done over the last couple of days. With that, we all have to change and with the additional responsibilities, you have to ask, 'What can I do, how can I make this defense better and contribute more?'"

"These (players) are resilient. We've had some adversity this season and with the departure of coach Hawkins it continues. I've been amazed at their ability all season to step back up to the plate, shake it off and get ready for the next one. They've done a great job this week, despite all the distractions. They came (Tuesday) ready to go; we haven't had to address it (Hawkins' firing) any more than in those initial meetings."

Since the historic collapse at Kansas, players and coaches have been asked - and justifiably - if CU has anything left in the tank for Saturday's game and the pair that follows.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, said Miller, "The mental intensity was great. But it's been tough; until you've gone through something like that, I really don't know how you would explain it. There's a feeling in the pit of your stomach that you just want to get rid of. Definitely."

Many coaches latch onto motivation wherever it appears, and rebounding from the embarrassment in Lawrence would seem to qualify as a motivator. Cabral said he wasn't concerned with the team reenergizing itself: "I'm surprised with the way this team is responding - in a positive way ...

"I'm trying to give them some direction and leadership; we'll see if they respond. Their attention's been good; I've been impressed every time I've had the opportunity speak with them ... with the fact they're interested in what I have to say."

Mathematically, the Buffs (3-6 overall, 0-5 Big 12 Conference) haven't been eliminated from bowl eligibility. Six wins are required, but to hit that number they must win their final three games. Winning out would make for a fairytale ending rather than another nightmare season merely slamming shut.

Miller believes bright possibilities remain.

"Nothing is set in stone," he said. "We have the capability to come out and do some great things - still."

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Dan Hawkins asks fans to rally around CU Buffs: 'They deserve to win'

Brian Cabral wants chance at permanent position

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/09/2010 01:47:26 PM MST

Dan Hawkins bid adieu to the University of Colorado today with a heartfelt string of thank yous to just about every group he came into contact with during his five-year tenure in Boulder.

Hawkins was fired Sunday night after his team lost its fifth consecutive game a day earlier by giving up 35 unanswered points in the fourth quarter at Kansas. Hawkins went 19-39 in nearly five full seasons as coach.

Hawkins did not take questions from the media, but he sat in front of microphones in the varsity room at the Dal Ward Center and spoke for nearly 13 minutes, concluding his remarks by quoting author Mark Twain.

"Twenty years from now you'll be more disappointed in the things you did not do than by the things you do do. So throw off the tow lines, sail away from the safe harbor, cast the trade winds in your sails, explore, dream, discover," Hawkins said quoting Twain. "And that's kind of been my mantra. So I appreciate everything, and hopefully there are good times in the future. God bless you. Go Buffs."

Hawkins said he is uncertain of his immediate future but he does intend to coach again. In some ways, Hawkins' farewell press conference was eerily similar to one held for Gary Barnett five years earlier. On that day, Barnett said goodbye to CU and said the school and its football program were a "gold mine" for the right coach.

Hawkins echoed that comment.

"So it brings to close the Hawk chapter, but hopefully it's the opening of the national championship chapter that is right around the corner because there is a lot of great things in Colorado and Boulder and the University of Colorado. And hopefully all those things come to light. And not just for football but for everybody and all the sports here.

"There are some really great people with some tremendous values and integrity and doing things right. I will take that with me forever. That has been a blessing to meet all those people and work with all those people."

Athletic director Mike Bohn said financial terms of a separation agreement with Hawkins are being negotiated by CU attorneys and Hawkins' representatives. Hawkins is owed approximately \$2.5 million in guaranteed compensation.

Bohn thanked Hawkins for his professionalism and his service to the school, but said the negativity surrounding the program was too much to overcome. Bohn said Hawkins did everything he could to try to be successful.

"Really ending the negativity was what it was all about," Bohn said. "The divisiveness and the disenfranchisement of our fans base. ...We just felt it was time to end that."

Bohn said the department sold 800 tickets to the final two home games overnight Monday after word leaked out that a coaching change was imminent.

Bohn said a search committee will be formed swiftly and the school will conduct a national search for Hawkins' replacement. He said former coach Bill McCartney is a viable candidate for the job. McCartney has said he has interest in returning to CU.

Chancellor Phil DiStefano, speaking on a conference call after the press conference, said he hopes to hire a coach with BCS level experience. He said it would also be wise to hire someone with roots in the Pac-12 or the Big 12.

Bohn introduced interim coach Brian Cabral, who has been linebackers coach at CU since 1990. Cabral became emotional during his comments and while taking questions about how he will handle the rest of the season. It is the second time he has served as interim head coach at CU, also doing so in spring 2004 when Barnett was suspended.

Cabral said he would like to be given consideration to be Hawkins' replacement. Bohn said he would welcome that and looks forward to talking with Cabral about that. Cabral said he does not view the final three games of this season as his audition.

"My role is to stand in the gap," he said. "My role is to calm the storm."

Cabral said he has three goals for the rest of the season: To rally the Buff community, finish well in the classroom and finish the season well for the senior class. He urged Buffs fans to come to Folsom Field this week and next to cheer for the team.

"This community, this university, we need to rally behind these seniors," he said.

The Buffs host Iowa State at 11:30 a.m. Saturday and wrap up the home schedule Nov. 20 at noon against Kansas State. CU's last game is at Nebraska on Nov. 26.

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CU fires Dan Hawkins; Brian Cabral named interim football coach

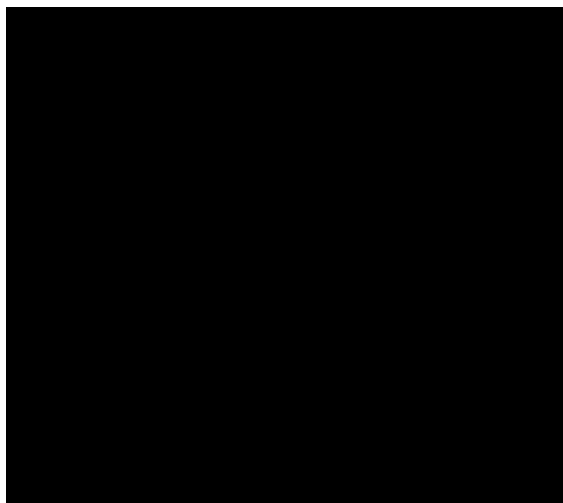
Bufs informed of football coaching change; press conference scheduled for later today

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/09/2010 08:00:54 AM MST

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn officially informed members of the football team this morning that Dan Hawkins will no longer be their coach.

In a statement released by the school Bohn indicated that the five-game losing streak the Buffs are on has taken a toll on the program and influenced the change.



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"We collectively believed that it was important to provide the opportunity for Dan as head coach and his current staff to pull things together, and things looked bright just one month ago after we opened with a 3-1 record," Bohn said.

"However, things have gone downhill from there. While we recognize the progress that we have made in several areas during nearly five years under Dan, the negativity and divisiveness that is associated with the current leadership has become detrimental and is beyond repair to our current enterprise and it's time to make a change."

Bohn told the team longtime linebackers coach Brian Cabral will serve as interim coach until the 24th head coach in CU history is hired. Bohn did not mention any possibilities for who that might be.

It is the second time Cabral has filled the role on an interim basis. He also did so in 2004 when former coach Gary Barnett was suspended following controversial comments made about

former place-kicker Katie Hnida.

Cabral is 54 and has been coaching inside linebackers at CU on a full-time basis since 1990. He joined the coaching staff in 1989 as a graduate assistant. Cabral also played linebacker at Colorado and went on to a successful playing career in the NFL, helping the 1985 Chicago Bears win the Super Bowl.

Bohn said a search committee would be in place by the end of the week, if not sooner to conduct a national search to name a replacement. While there is no established timetable to name a replacement, the school said Bohn is fully aware that coaches can begin making in-home recruiting visits on December 1.

Former coach Bill McCartney has said he is interested in returning to lead the program he coached throughout much of the 1980s and the early 1990s. The Buffs won the national championship under McCartney in 1990.

Meanwhile, Hawkins expressed regret for not producing winning results on the field in the school's release.

"I've met some tremendously special people and had some fantastic experiences during my time here at Colorado," Hawkins said. "Unfortunately, I was not able to bring the wins that so many Buff faithful wish for and deserve. My biggest pain comes from not being able to see the joy and happiness on our players faces on more occasions following a victory.

"CU has a great group of young men running out behind Ralphie every Saturday, those guys have worked very hard in the classroom, off the field, and on the field and have earned the right to win. I want the Buffs to experience that special

feeling.

"I'd like to thank all the great people who surround and support the program, and especially those people on our staff who touch the players on a day-to-day basis; they are special," Hawkins added. "Please come out and support the University of Colorado football program and the players in the last two home games, as well as on the road in Lincoln, they need and deserve your encouragement. In the future I wish nothing but the best for CU as it moves in to the Pac-12, I hope everyone concerned with the program will pitch in and support the program on the path to another national championship."

Players and coaches began heading to the practice fields about 7:30. A press conference is scheduled later this morning.

Hawkins had two seasons remaining on his contract, which runs through Jan. 31, 2013. He is scheduled to make \$1,119,271 in guaranteed compensation this fiscal year, four months of which he has already been paid for. He will be owed about \$2 million in additional guaranteed compensation for the 2011-12 fiscal year and seven months of the 2012-13 fiscal year.

Offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau also has one of six multi-year deals allowed CU by state law, and a separation agreement would also have to be worked out with him if CU opted not to retain him as part of the next coaching staff.

Hawkins had been under fire since early in the 2009 season for a lack of wins from his program. The Buffs have never produced a winning season during his tenure and would need to win their remaining three games this year as well as a bowl game to do so.

The Buffs are 19-39 since Hawkins took over the program prior to the 2006 season. They are 10-27 in Big 12 Conference games and are 2-23 on the road, including 15 consecutive losses in true road games and 17 losses in a row in games played outside the state.

The loss at Kansas on Saturday was the final blow. The Buffs led 45-17 after the first play of the fourth quarter but surrendered 35 unanswered points to lose 52-45.

Hawkins addressed his mindset about the future and his fate on the Big 12 coaches' teleconference on Monday morning when asked if he was concerned about keeping his job.

"Life makes no promises. It doesn't. Life's an adventure," Hawkins said. "There is always risks to be taken, and that's the nature of this job and that's the nature of this profession. I don't think you walk around with that haunting you. I don't think that's your driving force by any means."

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Cody Hawkins staying true to CU

Quarterback came here to play for Buffs, not just Dan Hawkins

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

Posted: 11/09/2010 10:06:37 PM MST



Dan Hawkins understood that recruiting his son to play quarterback at Colorado for him was a risky move.

"And I thought twice about it. I did," Hawkins admitted a year ago while plopping down on the hot seat with a 3-9 record in his fourth season. "Cody was well aware of it. But again, it's me being glass-half-full. I'm looking at: What's the best possible scenario?"

Instead of competing for a Big 12 championship and/or winning bowl games, the worst possible scenario has happened.

Hawkins was fired by CU athletic director Mike Bohn on Sunday night after compiling a 19-39 record in five seasons. The "home run" hire has struck out looking.

And after Hawkins' disappointing and sometimes surreal five-year run at CU concluded with the head coach making a statement and taking no questions during a farewell press conference, Cody Hawkins sat in the same chair and spoke into the same microphone as both a son and team captain.

"I've got the greatest dad in the world," Cody Hawkins said. "I thought he handled everything very well. He was always a man of integrity, regardless of what was happening on the field. He's a guy a lot of players in general care about."

Despite a five-game losing streak and giving up 35 unanswered points in the fourth quarter of a demoralizing loss at Kansas, the Buffs responded to the coaching change with an enthusiastic practice on Tuesday. Longtime assistant Brian Cabral will be the interim head coach for the final three games of the season.

"Cody, to me, is an impressive young man," Cabral said. "He's a Buff, he's a leader, he's a competitor, and I believe that he will do whatever it is we need to do to win these three games."

Cody Hawkins ranks first in CU history for passing touchdowns (52), career touchdowns responsible for (52), career passing attempts (1,139) and interceptions (39). The fifth-year senior needs 40 completions and 597 yards passing to pass Joel Klatt for those records.

Wins, of course, have been few and far between since Dan Hawkins was hired on Dec. 16, 2005.

"Throughout my career I've learned a whole lot. But I know a lot about college football, too. And I know how it goes," Cody Hawkins said. "I found out before anybody else in my family found out. He called me Sunday night, brought me into his office and told me. I had a little bit of time to deal with it and obviously you're disappointed, but I think my father and I and the rest of the captains were most disappointed in the lack of production.

"It's not the guys on the team or what's going on within the football program, it's the product we're putting out there on Saturdays."

Bohn said the main reason Dan Hawkins was fired now instead of at the end of the season was to put an end to the negativity surrounding the program. Much of the venom over the last two seasons has been spewed at Cody Hawkins, a sore subject his dad addressed a year ago.

"It's not fair to him," Dan Hawkins said on Nov. 23, 2009. "I mean, here is a guy who is trying to do his best to win games and help his team and does everything right and is a good student, and he's getting killed on Facebook and he's getting killed on his cell phone.

"The great thing about this job is you meet some unbelievable people, great people. But then you also see another side of humanity that is not real fun."

Dan Hawkins pleaded with Buffs fans to rally around the seniors, including his son, during the final two home games at Folsom Field. Bohn said about 800 tickets were sold for Saturday's game against Iowa State after the news of Hawkins' firing spread.

"It's extremely tough," wide receiver Scotty McKnight said. "No matter how many times (Dan Hawkins) says for us not to take it as our fault, there is a sense of responsibility here on everyone. It's not just coach Hawk, it's not just the players, it's the entire university.

"And there has to be a change made somewhere collectively as a group."

The Buffs will play their final home game on Nov. 20 against Kansas State. The parents of all the graduating players usually attend the "Senior Day" festivities.

"I think it will be cool," Cody Hawkins said. "We haven't figured out what sort of funky costume my dad should wear. Because I know my mom's going to make him be there. Chewbacca was an option, maybe Inspector Gadget. ...

"He's going to be there, it's going to be great, regardless of who the title of head coach goes to."

Cody Hawkins joked with McKnight about opening his press conference with an announcement that he would no longer be a member of the Colorado Buffaloes program, just to see what the reaction would be from the media. Tyler Hansen, the starter for the first seven games, is out for the remainder of the campaign after suffering a ruptured spleen.

"That couldn't be further from the truth. When I signed that national letter of intent it was to come play football here. Nowhere on the contract did it say I'm going to come play for Dan Hawkins," Cody Hawkins said. "Yes, that's a big reason why I came here because I thought he ran the program the right way.

"And I'm still a part of Colorado. Regardless of who the football coach was, whether it would have happened last year, this year, first game of the season, last game of the season, I'm going to give every single thing that I have to this football team and my guys and my coaches."

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Hawkins owed \$1.8 million

Posted: 11/10/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

The fine print has not been resolved yet, although Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn said Tuesday the university will honor the remaining two years on Dan Hawkins' contract. Bohn did not have the exact figures, but CU could owe him about \$1.8 million.

Bohn would not address the specific numbers of the buyout since it is still being worked out among the lawyers. While it certainly isn't his goal, Bohn pointed to legendary Texas athletic director DeLoss Dodds once paying three football coaches at one time.

Under state law, universities have been limited to a handful of multiyear contracts. CU offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau is in the first year of a two-year contract. Bohn said that will be honored too. It is typically up to a new coach to decide whether to hold over any staff members.

Natalie Meisler, The Denver Post

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Cody a rallying point

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/10/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

BOULDER — Cody Hawkins thought it strange that some fans wondered if he would quit the Colorado football team in the wake of his dad's firing. So the senior quarterback joked Tuesday to a teammate that maybe he should pull a prank in front of all those television cameras.

"I was going to say, 'As of 1:30 p.m. today, I am no longer a member of the Colorado Buffaloes football program,' " he said with a grin.

Turning serious, Cody wanted reporters to know that he never thought about quitting. Yes, his father has been fired, but he wasn't about to leave his teammates or let down his school.

A coach's son who plans someday to follow in his father's footsteps, Cody knows the drill.

His dad went 19-39 in five years. It wasn't exactly a surprise he was fired.

Cody never pictured himself being a Buff longer than his father, but he understands the business.

While growing up, he remembered watching his dad's games and seeing an opposing team return the following year with a different coach. It happened dozens of times.

"It's a lack of production; it's the product you put out there on Saturdays," Cody said. "There are a lot of great guys in this business who get put out on the street.

"When I signed my national letter of intent to come play football here, nowhere in the contract did it say I was going to play for Dan Hawkins. He was a big reason why I came here, because I thought he ran the program the right way and had great people around him. But I wanted to be a part of Colorado. I'm still part of Colorado. Regardless of who the football coach is . . . I'm going to prepare, compete, and I'm going to be there for my guys."

That's not to say that behind closed doors there weren't some hugs, perhaps tears. Dan Hawkins called Cody into his office Sunday evening and told his son that he was being fired.

Players were off Monday, but Tuesday morning felt different. For the first time in Cody's five years at CU, he couldn't glance over at his dad running practice. Cody said he was happy to have a day off before practice to digest all that was happening.

"It's a tough situation; that's his father," said senior wideout Scotty Mc- Knight, one of Cody's closest friends. "When you grow up, your dad is your role model. Cody loves his dad. His dad

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loves him. It's a tough situation, but we're going to rally around each other."

Almost from the moment Cody took the field as a redshirt freshman, there was criticism directed at his father for playing his son.

Listed at 5-feet-11, 190 pounds, and with below-average arm strength for Division I, Cody's physical limitations were no secret to his dad. But Dan Hawkins needed a quarterback in his first recruiting class, and Cody wanted to become a Buff. So he signed him.

As the losses mounted, so did the anger among Buffs fans, who had no trouble booing father and son. Dan Hawkins admitted last fall he regretted bringing Cody to Boulder "because it isn't fair to him." But the son has never viewed it that way.

"You learn that regardless of the situation, whether we're winning or losing, the position of quarterback is either the greatest guy on the team or the worst guy on the team," Cody said. "So I understood all that."

Dan Hawkins benched his son during the meat of the 2008 and '09 seasons and handed the starting job to Tyler Hansen. This year, Hansen beat out Cody for the job but suffered a ruptured spleen at midseason.

"I think that was harder on Dad than me," Cody said of getting sent to the bench. "I know I can control only what I can control. I really don't care what people say about Cody Hawkins as a football player. But as long as they can say that I

was hardworking, and I was a good leader and I was tough, that's all that really matters to me."

Dan Hawkins did not take questions from the media Tuesday before leaving a news conference. Watching his son take the high road the past few seasons, it's no wonder Dan Hawkins said in his 20-minute farewell address that Cody "has been a great inspiration to me."

Athletic director Mike Bohn pointed out how the coach's son always goes out of his way to greet and extend a firm handshake to CU administrators who walk by. McKnight said Cody, a fellow team captain, gives the most inspirational pregame speeches of anybody on the team.

"Someday I want to coach with Cody because he's going to be so successful," McKnight said.

*Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or
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Dan Hawkins era defined by ups and downs at Colorado

By The Denver Post

Posted: 11/09/2010 10:30:04 AM MST

Updated: 11/09/2010 01:50:17 PM MST

A look at Dan Hawkins' coaching tenure at Colorado, which officially ended today when he was fired after going 19-39, three games short of five seasons:

- Dec. 16, 2005 — Hired as the 23rd head coach at CU after going 53-11 at Boise State.
- Sept. 2, 2006 — In his first game as head coach, Buffs lose to NCAA second-level Montana State 19-10 in the home opener.
- Oct. 14, 2006 — Hawkins earns his first win at CU after starting the season 0-6. Buffs beat Texas Tech at home 30-6 in front of more than 50,000 fans.
- Nov. 11, 2006 — Hawkins wins his only other game of that first season, 33-16 at home against Iowa State. He ends his first season with a 37-14 loss the next week at Nebraska to go 2-10.
- February 2007 — Hawkins gets plenty of

air time around the country with his "It ain't intramurals!" rant. Said Hawkins about one of the player's parents complaining about not have having enough time off for summer vacation: "It's Division I football! It's the Big 12! It ain't intramurals! Go play intramurals, brother.

Go play intramurals."

- Sept. 1, 2007 — CU opens the season with a 31-28 win in overtime against Colorado State at Invesco Field at Mile High.
- Sept. 29, 2007 — The Buffs earn their biggest win of Hawkins' CU career, beating No. 3 Oklahoma 27-24 at home. It's one of only three wins against a top 25 team under Hawkins.
- Nov. 10, 2007 — The Buffs take a 21-0 halftime lead at Iowa State, but the Cyclones rally to win 31-28. It is CU's biggest blown lead of the Hawkins era until the 2010 Kansas game.
- Nov. 23, 2007 — Buffs beat Nebraska 65-51 in Boulder to become bowl-eligible at 6-6.
- Dec. 30, 2007 — At the Independence Bowl, Colorado loses to Alabama 30-24 to finish the season 6-7.
- Feb. 6, 2008 — The Buffs land the nation's top-ranked running back recruit, Darrell Scott, who on national television

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announced his pick of CU over Texas. Added Scott: "Dan Hawkins has a vision, and I want to be part of the vision he has. Hopefully, we can pull off a national

championship."

- Sept. 18, 2008 — With an 17-14 win in overtime against No. 21 West Virginia at home, Colorado opens season 3-0. But CU wins only two more games the rest of the season.
- Oct. 7, 2008 — Hawkins signs a contract extension through the 2012 season. He had three years remaining on an original five-year, \$4.25 million contract effective Jan. 1, 2006. The new deal amounted to a two-year extension, with escalating pay increases, especially if performance incentives were met.
- Oct. 25, 2008 — The Buffs lose 58-0 at No. 15 Missouri, ending Colorado's streak of not being shut out at 242 games, dating to a 7-0 loss at Nebraska in 1988. It was Tyler Hansen's first start, after Cody Hawkins was pulled the previous week in a 14-13 victory over Kansas State.
- Nov. 28, 2008 — Colorado, an 18-point underdog, loses 40-31 at Nebraska to finish the season 5-7. CU appears to have the game won until Nebraska's Alex Henery boots a school-record 57-yard

field goal with 1:43 left to take a 33-31

lead.

- Dec. 15, 2008 — During the postseason team banquet, Hawkins makes a lofty prediction. In his closing statement, Hawkins tells the crowd that in 2009 it will be "10 wins and no excuses."
- May 30, 2009 — Wide receiver Josh Smith, who was the team leader in all-purpose yards in 2008 season, announces he is leaving the program. He transfers to UCLA.
- Sept. 6, 2009 — With the Rocky Mountain Showdown back in Boulder, Colorado State jumps out to a 20-3 halftime lead and hangs on to defeat the Buffs 23-17.
- Sept. 11, 2009 — In a Friday night game, CU falls behind 23-3 at halftime before losing 54-38 at Toledo, which gained 624 yards of offense. Buffs QB Cody Hawkins sets a CU school record with 64 pass attempts (30-of-64 for 356 yards). After the game, Dan Hawkins says: "All I can do is all I can do. I can't control what people think, nor am I willing."
- Oct. 17, 2009 — CU cornerback Cha'pelle Brown knocks down a pass in the end zone on the final play to preserve the Buffs' 34-30 win over No. 17 Kansas in Boulder. CU improves to 2-4.
- Nov. 3, 2009 — Running back Darrell Scott

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announces he is leaving CU after 1-1/2 seasons to return home to Los Angeles. He

eventually transfers to South Florida.

- Nov. 19, 2009 — The Buffs lead 21-10 midway through the third quarter at No. 12 Oklahoma State but falter against the Cowboys' third-string quarterback and lose 31-28 to fall to 2-20 on the road under Hawkins. "I'm totally thinking about the future. I'm good. Mike's good," Hawkins says, referring to CU athletic director Mike Bohn.
- Nov. 23, 2009 — When asked during his weekly news conference if he would like to continue coaching at CU, Hawkins responds: "Well, totally. Yeah."
- June 9, 2010 — Colorado loses five scholarships in football after the NCAA releases its annual Academic Progress Report, in which it is shown the Buffs were falling short of APR minimum standards.
- Sept. 11, 2010 — After winning the season opener 24-3 against Colorado State, the Buffs get blasted at future Pac-12 foe California, losing 52-7.
- Oct. 16, 2010 — Buffs lose 31-25 to Baylor at Folsom Field, dropping them to 3-3 for the season.
- Nov. 4, 2010 — After holding a 45-17 lead early in the fourth quarter at Kansas,

Colorado falls apart and gives up five touchdowns as the Jayhawks rally for a 52-45 win. Colorado falls to 3-6 with a five-game losing streak. *Sources: Denver Post library, University of Colorado Sports Information*

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Dan Hawkins out as Colorado football coach; Bill McCartney a candidate

By The Denver Post

Posted: 11/09/2010 07:38:52 AM MST

Updated: 11/09/2010 05:01:41 PM MST



Dan Hawkins talks to reporters Tuesday in Boulder. (RJ Sangosti, The Denver Post)

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn announced this morning that Dan Hawkins has been relieved

of his duties as head coach of the football team immediately.

Long-time assistant coach Brian Cabral, 54, will serve as interim head coach the remainder of this season.

Former CU coach Bill McCartney, 70, will be a candidate to succeed Hawkins. But, Bohn told The Denver Post today that he's not interested in hiring a coach who would groom his heir apparent.

"I wouldn't say we wouldn't do it, but it doesn't appear to make a lot of sense for us at this point," Bohn said. "We want to establish one person in charge. It's important that the person is set up in a leadership role."

Hawkins was hired on Dec. 16, 2005. He

finished his career with a 19-39 record.

LIVE FROM NEWS CONFERENCE Unlike last Tuesday when there were perhaps 10 media members at the weekly news conference, at least 10 times that many were at the Dal Ward Center at today's announcement.

Before taking the podium, Bohn and Hawkins shook hands and Hawkins went up to address the media alone.

"I know it's been a tough time for every Buff faithful," Hawkins opened.

He went on to thank a number of CU officials, as

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THE DENVER POST

well as the boosters who helped improve the program, and even the guys who take care of the field.

Hawkins took nearly 10 minutes to thank everyone around the university.

"They, like the rest, of wish we had more wins," Hawkins said.

Hawkins moves onHawkins said he talked with the players before and after practice this morning.

"There is way too much negativity around the program. I respect Mike and his decision. ... And so I think it's important to move on and garner some energy," Hawkins said. "I hope Buff Nation shows up and supports these guys."

Hawk has left the buildingAnd with that, Hawkins was gone. He did not take questions from the media after speaking for nearly 20 minutes, including quoting Mark Twain.

"So, that brings to a close the Hawk chapter but opens the national championship chapter that's right around the corner," Hawkins said.

He left the room as Bohn took the stage.

Bohn talks negativesBohn said he met Sunday night with Hawkins. With the pressure after the Kansas loss, Bohn said it was time for a change.

"Really ending the negativity is really what it's all

about," Bohn said about making the decision now. He did not want to go into the last two home games "with a negative flare in the air."

McCartney comes upWhen asked about McCartney, Bohn said the former CU coach is a possibility as the next coach.

"Bill McCartney is a viable candidate for us to consider, no question," Bohn said.

Bohn said the difference now versus when he hired Hawkins is "pulling together resources to make the coach more successful." He talked about the contract limitations with assistant coaches.

When asked directly about McCartney for the job, Bohn said "I think it would be unfair to get into specifics of any candidate at this time."

Getting the moneyBohn said until he gets more fan support and funding, Colorado is not a school that can spend the large amounts that other schools spend on head-coach salaries.

"We're not a \$4 million institution," Bohn said.

"Would I like to get there? Yes."

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Brian Cabral will take over as interim coach. (RJ Sangosti, The Denver Post)

The cost for a new coach?

"I would be surprised if we're in a \$2 million-plus market place," Bohn said. "I do believe we have a plan to address the assistant coaches' pool."

No timetable setBohn said the timetable is when they get the right coach for the right fit.

"That could be very quick, it could be extended beyond whatever that right date is," Bohn said.

Cabral takes his turnCabral, a longtime

defensive player and coach, said his first practice this morning was interesting.

"For first time in my 22 years I saw the offense practice on the offense field," Cabral said. "My role is to calm the storm."

He has three goals: finish the semester strong (with academics); finish the season strong for the the seniors; rally "the Buff community around our seniors."

Cabral wants shotBefore taking questions, Cabral said he did not want to talk about the past. Cabral was very emotional when talking about the players and the assistant coaches.

"I'm looking forward. I'm not looking back," he said.

When asked if he would like to be the CU coach full-time, his answer was just "Yes, sir."

Cabral talks about caringNumerous times, Cabral had to check his emotions and fight back tears.

"I care about this program. My heart bleeds black and gold. I care about the program, players, coaches and their families. And I know Hawk does too," Cabral said. "I've been through this before and I hate it. I don't like it."

Filling the gapCabral said he will do what he can to make an impression and be a leader. But being an interim coach is "not a good role, but hopefully these guys get something from

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me and we make the best of it."

"There's no question Hawk gave us everything he had. No question. It wasn't for a lack of trying."

Team captains talk Scotty McKnight was the first player to address the media and talked about getting past the change.

"For me, Coach Hawkins was the first person to give me a shot to play Division I football. ... My heart is with Coach Hawk," McKnight said.

As for trying to regroup for Saturday's game against Iowa State, the players said they have to block out the problems.

"You have to roll on with it," offensive lineman Nate Solder said.

Cody Hawkins knows business The coach's son and Buffs quarterback Cody Hawkins stood in the back of the room and listened as his teammates talked about the program without Dan Hawkins. Bohn went up to Cody and escorted him to the front of the room. They talked quietly as the players finished taking questions from the media.

"Through my career at Colorado, I've learned a lot, but I know a lot about college football and I know how it goes," Cody Hawkins said. "He called me in his office Sunday night and told me.

"There are a lot of great guys in the business who get put out on the street. ... I have the greatest dad in the world, I thought he handled it

all very, very will."

Cody is all in for last few games Hawkins said when he signed his letter of intent "nowhere did it say I signed to play with Dan Hawkins. I came to play at Colorado."

Cody went on to say he wants to finish strong and never thought of leaving the program. He said he will be interested to see what disguise his father will wear in two weeks when it is Senior Night.

"Chewbacca is an option. Maybe Inspector Gadget," Hawkins joked.

He also added that it will be interesting to see what it's like to play a college football game and "not be called the coach's son."

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**ESPN.com:** College Football[\[Print without images\]](#)

Tuesday, November 9, 2010

Updated: November 10, 9:18 AM ET

Colorado fires Dan Hawkins

Associated Press

BOULDER, Colo. -- The University of Colorado will pay coach Dan Hawkins around \$2 million to go away. His replacement might not get that much to fix the Buffaloes' broken football program.

Athletic director Mike Bohn said the school's financial constraints means he won't be able to pursue just anyone to be the next coach at Colorado because the higher-profile names earn about \$4 million annually, way out of the Buffs' price range.

"It's really not a level playing field of the haves in the Big 12 or the haves in the Pac-12," Bohn said Tuesday at a news conference to announce the dismissal of Hawkins. "We're not a \$4 million institution. Would I like to believe we could get there some day? Sure.

"If we can emerge from not being dead last in the Pac-12 Conference as far as number of donors and amount of money raised -- that's a challenge for us," he said.

Ubben: Legacy of Losses



Dan Hawkins was fired at Colorado after failing to replicate his foundation of success at Boise State, ESPN.com's David Ubben writes. [Blog](#)

Bohn fired Hawkins on Tuesday, three days after the biggest meltdown in school history put a cap on his five failed seasons with the Buffaloes. Longtime assistant Brian Cabral will serve as interim coach for the final three games of the season, beginning Saturday against Iowa State.

Bohn said the search for a new coach would begin immediately.

However, Bohn may not be able to set his sights on the upper echelon, especially given Hawkins' buyout and the prohibitive cost of luring a quality coach.

"It is going to limit our pool," Bohn said.

At 70 years old, former CU coach Bill McCartney has publicly expressed an interest in coaching again and remains a "viable candidate," Bohn said. McCartney led the Buffaloes to their only national title in 1990. But he's been out of football since 1994.

Hawkins was hailed as a "home run" hire by Bohn in 2006 after going 53-11 at Boise State. Yet he never had a winning season in Boulder, going 19-39 and losing his last 17 games outside of Colorado.

The final straw came Saturday when Colorado blew a 28-point lead at Kansas as the Jayhawks scored 35 points over the final 11 minutes for a stunning 52-45 win. It was the biggest collapse in the 121-year-old program's history.

Dressed in Colorado colors Tuesday, Hawkins stepped up to the podium and spoke for nearly 13 minutes, ending his speech with "Go Buffs."

He didn't take any questions from the media.

"I know it's been a tough time for every Buff faithful. Hopefully, we can get those things remedied," Hawkins said. "I really hope the negativity that might surround me doesn't surround them. They don't deserve that."

Quarterback [Cody Hawkins](#), the coach's son, was among the seniors who addressed the media, saying he found out Sunday night.

"I had a little time to deal with it," Cody Hawkins said. "College football is a business. There are a lot of great guys in this business who kind of get put out on the street."

Dan Hawkins By The Numbers



Dan Hawkins' tenure in Boulder got off to a bad start, losing 19-10 to FCS Montana State (Sept. 2, 2006), and it's been downhill ever since.

- 4 straight losing seasons entering 2010
- 12 straight Big 12 road losses (2-17 in conference road games)
- 17 straight losses outside the state of Colorado (2-24 outside the state under Hawkins)
- 20 games under .500 following loss to Kansas (19-39)
- [Historic loss apparently last straw](#)

-- ESPN Stats & Information

Dan Hawkins was one of the hottest coaches in the nation when he was brought to Boulder to replace Gary Barnett, whose tenure was marred by scandal and a 70-3 loss to Texas in the Big 12 title game after the 2005 season.

This season, the Buffs started 3-1 but have lost five in a row in the Big 12, increasing the call for Hawkins' ouster, especially after Saturday's loss.

"The negativity and divisiveness that is associated with the current leadership has become detrimental

and is beyond repair to our current enterprise and it's time to make a change," Bohn said.

As for future plans, Hawkins said those remain unknown.

"Life's an adventure: I've always sort of looked at it like that," he said. "I'm sure I'll coach again -- at some point, at some place. ... I'm going to be a passionate spectator here for the next three, hopefully four games."

Over the weekend, it appeared that Hawkins may retain his job. Bohn issued a statement Saturday night after flying back from Lawrence, Kan., that did not mention Hawkins' job status.

However, Hawkins continued to take heat for having his quarterback son throwing the ball in the fourth quarter instead of running out the clock with a big lead. Some argued Hawkins was more focused about getting his son the school's all-time passing record than he was about securing the win.

Cody Hawkins laughed at that notion.

"That couldn't be further from the truth," said Cody Hawkins, who needs 597 yards passing to eclipse the record held by Joel Klatt (2002-05). "When I signed my national letter of intent to come play football here, nowhere on the contract did it say I'm going to come play for Dan Hawkins. Yes, that's a big reasons why I came here, because I thought he ran the program the right way. But I wanted to be a part of Colorado."

In his speech Tuesday, Dan Hawkins encouraged fans to support the program over the next few weeks and in the move to the Pac-12 next season.

Cabral, 54, who coaches the inside linebackers, is the longest-tenured assistant in school history at 21 seasons. He served as interim coach once before, in the spring of 2004, when Barnett was suspended.

"Here we go again," smiled Cabral, who's hoping to be considered for the opening. "My role again is very much like last time I sat here. My role, without a doubt, is to stand in the gap. ... My role is to calm the storm."

[ESPN.com: Big 12](#)[\[Print without images\]](#)

Tuesday, November 9, 2010

Hawkins leaves behind legacy of losses

By David Ubben

Dan Hawkins came to Colorado after racking up 45 wins and four conference titles in his last four years at Boise State, helping lay the foundation for the unprecedented success the Broncos have enjoyed since his departure.

"I thought he would bring that same level of play to Colorado," said Colorado chancellor Philip P. DiStefano.

There weren't many mile-highs over Dan Hawkins' four-plus years at Colorado. The highest was a win over then-No. 3 Oklahoma in 2007 that keyed off the only season under Hawkins that ended with a bowl.

Any glimmer of hope that win provided was snuffed out by a mountain of 16 losses over the next two seasons.

They hoped he'd at least near the heights former coach Bill McCartney once did as coach in the early '90s. Hawkins never did.

Even that 2007 season ended with three more losses to unranked teams, including an Independence Bowl loss that denied Hawkins his best opportunity to secure a winning season in Boulder.

His one big high was far outweighed by numerous lows, beginning with an embarrassing loss to FCS opponent Montana State in his first game as Buffaloes coach. Last year, his team went on national television and fell behind Toledo by 30 points to begin 0-2 in a season that Hawkins said would feature "10 wins and no excuses." The Buffaloes finished 3-9.



Coach Dan Hawkins was never able to find consistent success at Colorado.

If he didn't regret his "Go play intramurals, brother!" [rant at the 2007 signing day news conference](#), he should have. It did nothing but provide an embarrassing YouTube moment for a coach short on success at the major level. And as another coach in the Big 12 can attest, YouTube fame never dies. For better or worse, that might be his most lasting moment as Colorado coach.

But no low was more spectacular than the one he treated Colorado fans to on Saturday, a loss like no other. He refused to run the ball consistently ("We just didn't want to be one-dimensional," he said) with a four-touchdown lead against a team that previously had a strong case as the worst team in a BCS conference, and the only team in the Big 12 worse than Hawkins' squad.

He provided Kansas with its biggest comeback in school history, and the largest blown lead (28 points) in the 121-year history of Colorado football. Worse, he allowed it to happen in just over 11 minutes.

Give Hawkins credit: He went out with class. Ten minutes of Tuesday's farewell was spent thanking anyone and everyone for the time he'd been given to lead the Buffs.

"They, like the rest of us, wish we had more wins," Hawkins said.

By now, everyone knew those wins weren't coming under Hawkins, who also wished the program well, alluding to the "national championship chapter that's right around the corner."

Hawkins' replacement, interim coach Brian Cabral, emotionally thanked the coach as well.

"There's no question Hawk gave us everything he had," he said. "No question. It wasn't for a lack of trying."

But despite those efforts, Hawkins never even came close to the success everyone in the program hoped. He never reached the heights of former Kansas coach Mark Mangino or the popularity of former Texas Tech coach Mike Leach, but neither went out with the panache of Hawkins' blazing fiasco.

That capped off a string of 17 consecutive losses outside Colorado, and the program's first-ever 0-5 start in Big 12 play, and the loss to the Jayhawks leaves the Buffaloes alone at the bottom of the Big 12 totem pole.

A reporter asked Hawkins on Monday how you come back from a loss like that.

Truth is, you don't.

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Longmont, Colorado
Thursday, January 06,
2011

Publish Date: 11/10/2010

CU QB handling father's firing

By Brian Howell
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — With Colorado firing head football coach Dan Hawkins, there was some concern with how his son, Cody, would take the news.

"I'm good. I'm great," Cody Hawkins said with a smile Tuesday.

Don't worry about Cody.

The CU starting quarterback was in a jovial mood Tuesday afternoon when he held a press conference to discuss his father's dismissal earlier in the day.

He joked that he thought about announcing he would quit. He laughed about how weird it'll be to play college football while not being the coach's kid.

He also joked that his father might come back on senior day, Nov. 20, wearing a costume.

"I think Chewbacca was an option," he said. "Maybe Inspector Gadget."

All joking aside, Cody Hawkins said he is handling his father's firing just fine because he understands the business.

"There are a lot of great guys in this business who are going to be put out on the street," he said. "You understand winning is of the utmost importance. If you can't take the heat, stay out of the kitchen. It's going to happen. He understood the criticism that was going to come his way, especially when the wins weren't being produced. I knew the same thing."

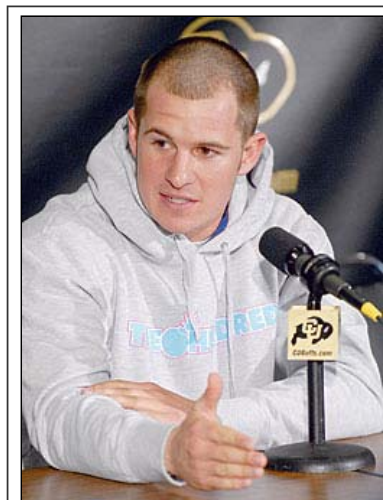
Cody said his father told him of the news on Sunday night.

"Obviously, you're disappointed," Cody said.

The thought of quitting never crossed Cody's mind, he said.

"When I signed my national letter of intent to come play football here, nowhere on the contract did it say I'm going to come play for Dan Hawkins," he said. "Yes, that's a big reason why I came here, because I thought he ran the program the right way and had great people around him, but I wanted to be a part of Colorado. I'm still a part of Colorado. Regardless of who the football coach is here — whether it would have happened last year, this year, first game of the season, last game of the season — I'm going to give every single thing I have to this football team and my guys and my coaches."

His teammates and others involved with the program expected nothing less from Cody, who is poised to become CU's all-time leading passer.



Starting quarterback Cody Hawkins speaks during a news conference Tuesday at the University of Colorado in Boulder.
Richard M. Hackett/Times-Call

"I was concerned about Cody, but I never really was concerned about his competitive spirit and what he stands for and what a great Buff he is," athletic director Mike Bohn said.

Dan praised his son for having maturity "beyond his years."

"Cody has been a great inspiration to me," Dan said.

Cody had nothing but praise for his father.

"I've got the greatest dad in the world," he said. "I thought he handled everything very, very well. He was always a man of integrity regardless of what was happening on the field. He gives everybody his very best every single day.

"My father is such an unbelievable guy. He's really an unbelievable guy. It's really an honor for me to be a part of his family, to be his son. He's taught me a lot about life. Everything he's taught me, from the time I was born until the time I came to the University of Colorado, I needed every ounce of it."

Cody, who already holds the CU record for most career touchdown passes (52), needs 597 passing yards in the next three games to break Joel Klatt's all-time record. Cody currently ranks second, with 6,778 career passing yards.

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Longmont, Colorado
 Sunday, February 20, 2011

Publish Date: 11/10/2010

Hawkins out, Cabral in at CU

Negativity surrounding program was too much, all parties agree

*By Brian Howell
 Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Dan Hawkins said goodbye Tuesday.

Now the University of Colorado turns its focus to the future.

After nearly five years as the head football coach at CU, Hawkins has been fired. Longtime assistant Brian Cabral will take over as interim coach.

“Really, ending the negativity is what it was all about,” athletic director Mike Bohn said of why he made the decision now, with three games left, rather than at the end of the season. “The divisiveness and the disenfranchisement of our fan base, and not necessarily just all of our fans, but everybody connected to the program.

“To enter into the last two home games of this season with really a negative flare in the air, we just felt it was time to end that.”

Bohn met with Hawkins on Sunday and made the decision at that time. Hawkins was 19-39 in his nearly five seasons with the Buffs. CU is 3-6 this year, including losses in its last five games. The final straw came Saturday, when CU had a 45-17 lead at Kansas before losing 52-45.

Bohn said that as he shook hands with players after they got off the bus in Boulder on Saturday night, he knew it was time to make a change.

“The negativity and the pressure was really getting to them,” Bohn said. “I really felt it was time to end that.”

Hawkins knew it, too.

He spoke for about 12 1/2 minutes Tuesday but did not field questions from reporters. He spent several minutes thanking many people associated with the CU program.



Former head coach Dan Hawkins walks out of the University of Colorado's Dal Ward Athletic Center on Tuesday after it was announced that Hawkins was relieved of his duties. **Photo Slideshow: The Hawkins era at CU.** Richard M. Hackett/Times-Call

How Hawkins stacks up

A look back at the five most recent coaches in CU football history:

Dan Hawkins (2006-2010): 19-39 record; 1 bowl appearance

Gary Barnett (1999-2005): 49-39 record; 5 bowl appearances

Rick Neuheisel (1995-1998): 33-14 record; 3 bowl appearances

Bill McCartney (1982-1994): 93-55-5 record; 9 bowl appearances; 1990 national championship

Chuck Fairbanks (1979-1981): 7-26 record; no bowl appearances

Source: CU Sports Information

Photo Slideshow

[The Hawkins era at CU.](#)

He also said he understands CU's decision.

"There's just way too much negativity around the program, and I respect Mike and his decision," he said. "The Buff nation is too proud and too quality to have that any one issue bog it down. Certainly, the players don't deserve that. I think it's important to move on and really to garner some energy and some passion here in the last three games, and hopefully four."

CU still has a chance to qualify for a bowl game if it wins its last three games. Both Bohn and Hawkins said they hope fans will rally around the players and Cabral in helping the Buffs finish strong.

"They need your support," Hawkins said. "There's no greater group of guys to cheer for."



"I really hope the negativity that might surround me doesn't surround (the players), because they don't deserve that. It's my responsibility, and I take full responsibility for that."

Hawkins has two years remaining on his contract, and Bohn said that for the school to buy out Hawkins' contract would be "just a little over \$2 million." He was given a two-year contract extension in 2008.

Hawkins was hired in December 2005 after five seasons as the head coach at Boise State. He led the Broncos to a 53-11 mark from 2001 to 2005.

"You think back to five years when we were all together talking about Dan, he was *the* coach," Bohn said. "He was the hot coach. I was very, very proud of the ability to attract him and to recruit him."

"I'm very, very proud of the fact that we were able to pull that together, but we hit a dry well and it didn't happen for us. We're not thrilled about it."

"We really believe that we gave Dan five full years to get it done. We feel like that's a firm commitment. It didn't work out. In many ways, Dan was successful with (things off the field), but he didn't win enough football games and didn't have the ability to pull that together in the end for us."

That it never worked out on the field was tough for Hawkins, and the players, to swallow. CU never had a winning season under him. The Buffs are 8-22 in their last 30 games and have lost 17 straight games played outside of Colorado.

"It's extremely tough," senior receiver Scotty McKnight said. "No matter how many times he says for us to not take it as our fault, there's a sense of responsibility here on everyone. It wasn't just coach Hawk; it's not just the players. It's the entire university, and there has to be a change made somewhere."

Hawkins said he will continue to support the Buffs and, as he's always said, will take this change in stride.

"Life's an adventure," he said. "I've always sort of looked at it like that. I'm sure I'll coach again at some point and some place. It's always been kind of my passion."

"There's a Mark Twain quote that says, 'Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed in the things that you did not do than by the things you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover.' That's kind of been my mantra."

Then, just before exiting the building, he said, "Go, Buffs."

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

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Longmont, Colorado
 Sunday, February 20, 2011

Publish Date: 11/10/2010

Interim coach Cabral calms the storm

By Brian Howell
 © 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — During his 22 years at the University of Colorado, Brian Cabral has spent a lot of time on the football practice fields.

Tuesday was a little different.

“I’ve had a really interesting first practice,” he said. “For the first time in my 22 years, I saw the offense practice on the offensive fields.”

Cabral, a longtime defensive assistant coach, will take over as the interim head coach for CU’s final three games this season. The Buffs are 3-6, 0-5 in the Big 12, and have lost five games in a row, leading to Tuesday’s firing of head coach Dan Hawkins.

“My role is to calm the storm,” Cabral said.

Cabral, 54, has been a full-time assistant at CU for 21 years, longer than any other assistant coach in school history — including all sports.

Cabral was named interim coach for three months in the spring of 2004, when then-head coach Gary Barnett was on paid administrative leave. This is the first time he’s been the head man during the season.

“My role, without a doubt, is to stand in the gap for the university, to stand in the gap for the athletic department, the football program, to stand in the gap for our coaches, our team, but most importantly our seniors,” he said.

“I’ve got three goals for this team. The first goal is to finish the semester strong. The bottom line without question in college athletics is getting your degree, and that’s our first goal. The second goal is to finish strong with this season for our seniors. My third goal is to rally the Buff community around our seniors.”

Senior linebacker B.J. Beatty said he believes Cabral — known as one of the top linebackers coaches in the country — will be good for the Buffs throughout the rest of this season.

“He never demands nothing but your best,” Beatty said. “If you do good, he’s going to ask for more. If you do more, he’s going to ask you to step it up even more. I think he’s going to do a good job keeping us working.”

Cabral, who hopes to be considered for the full-time head coaching job, said the role of interim coach is “a position that I don’t think a lot of people want to be in.”

He said he wants to be in this position because he wants to help the Buffs finish the season on a positive note. Cabral was emotional during his press conference; when asked why, he said, “I care about this program.”

“My heart bleeds black and gold, without question. I care about this program. I care about these players. I care about these coaches. I care about their families. I care that we had to fire a head coach.”

As with any head coaching change, there is uncertainty surrounding the futures of the current coaching staff. Cabral said he’s not worried about any of the current staff members not giving their best during the last three games.

“They have a lot of pride in what they do,” he said. “I believe they have a lot of pride in how they’re going to finish this.”

As for Cabral himself, the final three games of the year could be a great chance for him to prove himself to CU’s administration as a viable head coaching candidate. But he said he’s not viewing this as an audition.

“No, I look at this time as an opportunity to stand in the gap for these players and these coaches and to make the most out of the rest of this season,” Cabral said.

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Players: Coach Hawkins made an impact, will be missed

By Brian Howell
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BOULDER — Dan Hawkins may not have been a popular figure among Colorado football fans.

Many of the players, on the other hand, were sad to see him go.

“It’s kind of heart-wrenching because coach Hawkins has done so many great things,” left tackle Nate Solder said Tuesday after Hawkins’ firing was announced. “Record aside, he’s been fantastic in my life and fantastic for a lot of these guys.”



Hawkins was fired after compiling a 19-39 record in nearly five years at CU. But for many of the players, his departure was tough to take because he was responsible for bringing them to Boulder.

“For me, coach Hawkins was the first person to really give me a shot to play Division I football, so I have a sense of gratitude and a sense of loyalty to him,” receiver Scotty McKnight said. “My heart is with coach Hawk.”

The players understand that the results on the field didn’t measure up to their standards. But Solder, McKnight and linebacker B.J. Beatty all said they won’t forget Hawkins’ impact on them.

“Obviously, the records haven’t been the greatest, but what he’s taught us and how he’s gone about teaching us about life and things beyond football, he’s taught me so much,” Beatty said. “A lot of those lessons I’m going to carry through the rest of my life. There’s things I’m going to hold on to.”

Despite the players’ appreciation of Hawkins, there was a clear air of negativity surrounding the program. That ultimately led to the decision to fire him, according to athletic director Mike Bohn.

Speculation about Hawkins’ future goes back to the final few games of the 2009 season.

Beatty said the negativity “kind of wears on you.”

Because of that, the players said, it was good to have a decision — even if it meant seeing Hawkins fired.

“The toughest part was the unknowns,” Solder said. “It goes either way: Whether we have our head coach or he’s gone, it’s better to know at some point. There is a lot of negativity, and I guess that’s going to come with a poor record. The best we can do is win this next game to help that.”

At this point, that is the main focus. Hawkins is gone, but the seniors know their job is not done.

They want to win the final three games and get to a bowl game.

“You definitely have to use (the emotion) and take that opportunity we still have with these three games,” Beatty said. “These three games are still winnable. We just have to finish out for (Hawkins).”

The seniors also want to make sure they lead the way for the underclassmen.

“As seniors, one thing we can give to the upcoming group is how to finish this thing right,” Solder said. “This is probably the worst possible situation to be in for us. The character that we show and the leadership that we show will do a lot for these guys in the future. That’s a goal and an obligation for us to this group (of younger players).”