



Senior corner Jalil Brown says the Buffs have been more focused for the past 10 days.
Photo Courtesy: CUBuffs.com



11/18/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Brooks: Buffs See Red Again, But K-State Comes First

BOULDER - Sometimes simplicity is the best route, underscoring the obvious the better path. In Brian Cabral's first 24 hours as Colorado's interim head football coach, he kept it simple and focused on the obvious. They were good opening moves.

Before his first official meeting with the Buffaloes, Cabral made a quick trip to the team's meeting room, where he stripped away the recent past and went about redefining the 2010 goals. He pared a once-promising 12-game schedule into a three-game season and hit the reset button on a number of CU traditions that somehow had been scuttled.

One of them was rounding up enough red letters to spell N-E-B-R-A-S-K-A in can't-miss bold type for one final time on CU's schedule. That change (and others) didn't go unnoticed by cornerbacks Jalil Brown and Jimmy Smith, a pair of fifth-year seniors.

"We had a list of goals starting the season, but Coach Cabral went in and stripped those down," Brown said. "He replaced them with Iowa State, Kansas State and Nebraska . . . Nebraska's back in red letters now; when you see it, you notice it. Everybody is prepared for these next two games. Everybody is ready to give it their all."

Added Smith: "Nobody in my class has seen (Nebraska) in red, they don't know what that's about. He comes in here, he

BUFFALO EXTRAS

- [→ Buy Tickets](#)
- [→ Gameday](#)

puts an emphasis on it. He's an old-school guy. It obviously means a lot to him and he wants it to mean a lot to us. It's been emphasized, but not like that - no red, for real, in his plan, that type of stuff."

Don't get the idea that K-State, CU's final Big 12 Conference home opponent on Saturday (12:10 p.m., no TV), somehow is being whisked away as an afterthought. Cabral's long-term plan in his short-term season hinges on a win against the Wildcats, setting up the post-Thanksgiving game in Lincoln as one with post-season implications. At 4-6 overall, CU must win out to become bowl eligible.

"Coach Cabral has definitely brought a refreshing vibe to the team and he's reaffirmed the fact that this season's not over, that we've definitely got plenty to play for," senior tight end Luke Walters said. "We're looking for the opportunity to win the next two games and have a postseason. I think everyone on this team thinks that's a definite possibility. We win this week and it's going to be a crazy five or six days heading up to Nebraska. It would definitely create a buzz around here. But first things first; we're definitely not looking past (K-State)."

CU's in-season coaching change after the Kansas debacle was contrary to almost everything that had been viewed as administrative conventional wisdom. How the Buffs would react, how Cabral might have them prepared, was among the great unknowns. Something worked. After last weekend's 34-14 rout of Iowa State, the Buffs are 1-0 in their second season and seem to be ready for a second helping of whatever Cabral is serving.

"Something's changed in meetings," freshman receiver Paul Richardson said. "There's more focus . . . we're blind to what's behind us, we're blind to what's ahead of us."

"The big thing was that Coach Cabral went back to scratch; he started from the ground up," Brown added. "He decided that we're not going to continue to do the same things we did (earlier this season). People weren't being focused, and that's the big thing he told us to do. With everybody being focused and not doing their own thing and being in their own world, doing their own plays sometimes, that kind of showed up on the field."

There difference was so vast between the fourth quarter of the Kansas game and the entire Iowa State game that it appeared an entire team had been put on the waiver wire and swapped out in a week. The reason? Brown contended Cabral's "big thing was allowing the position coaches and the 'D-coordinator' to go ahead and do their jobs, let them prepare us for (ISU).

"His big emphasis was to make sure we were focused and ready to go. He actually called us up in a team meeting and let us know what we had to do to prepare to win this game - not necessarily what plays we had to run, what gap you needed to be in. He just let us know what players we had to stop, which players on our offense and defense had to step it up and make plays.

"His big thing was playing together, playing with one heartbeat . . . the result of the game showed it worked."

Brown and Smith, touted as NFL-caliber corners, were among the players that Cabral spoke to individually last week. Cabral simply "felt they needed to be challenged. They have a tremendous responsibility to this team - and they're very capable."

When I asked Brown if last week and this have been an exciting time, for whatever reason, he said, "It really is. The whole demeanor of the team has changed. We feel like we have another fighting chance. Coach Cabral keeps us in tune; there's not as much laughter going on right now. It's a bit more serious - the way we handled ourselves at the parade (Friday night Buff Stampede), at the hotel . . . everything is a little more fine-tuned.

"That might be something we needed. I definitely see a difference in the way we're playing. I don't know if it's necessarily that Coach 'Hawk' is gone and Coach Cabral took his spot, or if he's coaching us a little differently and keeping us a little more disciplined. He's a bit more stern than Coach 'Hawk' was. But it's definitely showing up in the way we practice, the way everyone walks around before and during a game and the way everyone handles themselves on the sideline, too.

"Now, it's not necessarily a game all the time. I mean, it is a game, we're having fun, but we're executing and doing our jobs. There's not as much laughter and play going around."

A major question after Cabral's first week on the job and his first win was whether all that had happened last week had given the Buffs an emotional edge and intensity they might not be able to maintain for Week 2.

"I think it already has carried into this week," Smith said on Tuesday. "The defensive practices, we're coming up to hit. That's a focus every week - to keep the same intensity. Plus, it's going to be Senior Day, so I know I'm carrying it in and I know the other seniors are, too."

Brown agreed: "I think it all carries in to this week and the rest of the season . . . the release of Coach 'Hawk' before the season was over kind of gave us the impression that everyone was counting us down and out, that we were done. That made us want to bond together and play even harder, to show people we are a good team and actually have a lot to fight for - a lot of pride and that we represent a greater thing in ourselves and in this university. That goes for last week, this week and the rest of the season."

Cabral made a point last week of pointing out his offensive deficiencies - he's been CU's linebackers coach for 22 seasons - and reiterating how much he would rely on his assistants. His time on defense precluded spending much time with many senior offensive players, but he said that hasn't been a drawback. During the past 10 days, he has met several times with the seniors.

"I think I know them better than the rest of the team," he said. "I've brought them together a few times and maybe working with them has been a little different, but I think they know who I am and I know who they are. But I am relying on these guys in these last three games; I'm relying on their leadership for this game."

He's also depending on them to trust him, which he called a vital first step for many players whose previous contact with him has been limited.

"In my position coaching I know that I can't do anything, I can't help anyone, until they trust me," he said. "That's hard to come by with kids today. That's what I really try to do with my players. Hopefully, that's what I'm accomplishing with this team."

He did it for one week. Do it twice more and . . . It's the longest of long shots, but who knows where this season and its interim coach might be headed.

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

SHOW MENU



CU Buffs QB Cody Hawkins goes all-in in life

CU senior nears end of eventful college career

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/18/2010 12:00:33 AM MST

Regardless of how the final two regular season games of his career end, what kind of statistics he produces, what records he claims or falls short of and what people say or believe about him, Cody Hawkins will leave the Colorado football program with a win.

Through all of his challenges and successes these past five years, he stayed true to himself.

That is what the men who have walked beside him throughout his career, say when asked to talk about the Buffs' senior starting quarterback, who will play his final home game at Folsom Field on Saturday afternoon against Kansas State.

And it is apparent in talking to him.

Just when reporters and fans are ready to see the finale of his playing career, Hawkins is talking about writing another chapter.

"I definitely think I'm going to try to play football as long as I can," he said.

Hawkins said he plans to chase the opportunity to play and also begin working as a coach overseas in Europe when he leaves CU in the spring. It's no secret he hopes to follow in his father's footsteps and become a coach in the future. His goal in going to Europe is to "get everything out of the tank as far as an athlete goes and also get my feet wet in the coaching deal."

He said he also might consider a move to Oregon one day to work with his sister at Nike, but that is probably a few years down the line at the earliest.

Hawkins came to Colorado in 2006 as an undefeated state champion throughout his high school career in Boise, Idaho. The son of a football coach and a nurse, he ended up just like his parents -- loving the gridiron and helping people.

While he has grown physically and mentally over the past five seasons, nothing fundamentally is different about who Cody Hawkins is. He loves music and competition. He is a family man first but also has a thirst to try to change the world around him.

Not many major college football quarterbacks also run for student government positions in college. Hawkins tried to experience it all in Boulder, and he continues to try to squeeze as much from the experience as he can in these final weeks.

"There have been a lot of ups and a lot of downs, but it's been a great time and I wouldn't change it," Hawkins said. "It's really incredible how everybody says time flies by. It feels like we just got here yesterday. But then, at the same time, you have so many great memories that a lot of the guys on the team weren't here for. I think you learn a lot of wisdom to share with the rest of the guys.

"When they say football really gets down tight and you're really trying to make the most of it at the end, it's totally true. I think as a senior, as a leader and as a player, you really try to get the most out of everything. You start harping on the details more than you ever have. Just because you really realize how close you are to the end."

Wide receiver Scotty McKnight has caught 20 touchdown passes from Hawkins on the field, but he has learned many more lessons from him away from football. That started early in their time together in Boulder.

McKnight said he first took note of Hawkins' character and concern for others late at night during the summer before their

freshman year. They were driving in Hawkins' car near 28th Street and Colorado Avenue in Boulder when Hawkins noticed a woman at her car on the side of the road.

Hawkins pulled over and asked if she needed help. She had a flat tire.

"I had never changed a tire so Cody did all the work and changed her tire in like 15 minutes, in the process also teaching me how to do it," McKnight said. "It was just crazy how even at 18, he was so inclined to help other people even if there was nothing for him to gain in exchange."

Hawkins has done his best to tune out the naysayers and negativity that has pecked at him throughout his career. He has beaten Oklahoma and Nebraska in the same season, joining a small fraternity of other Colorado players to do so and an even smaller group of quarterbacks with that on their résumé.

Had junior Tyler Hansen not suffered a ruptured spleen four weeks ago, Hawkins likely would not have had the opportunity to play much down the stretch of his senior season. He certainly wouldn't have the opportunity to break the school's all-time passing yardage mark held by former quarterback Joel Klatt.

Hawkins needs just 332 yards to claim the record and 24 completions to set a new mark for career completions. More importantly, he needs two wins to extend his career and those of his fellow 14 seniors into the postseason. He would love nothing more than a second opportunity to play in a bowl game, and the people who care about him most would love to see him get it.

"Whatever that kid does, I guarantee you, he will be the CEO of a company, the president of a company, he'll have five kids and they will all be an extremely, unbelievable family," offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said. "I mean that, just because everything that kid has been through at 21 years old, I guarantee you there are people who are 50 who have never been through what he's been through. It will make him a better person. Whatever he does, he will be successful, guaranteed."

Hawkins said he doesn't expect to be emotional on Saturday when he is introduced before the game and greeted by his family on the field. He said he doesn't know if his father, former CU coach Dan Hawkins, will decide to be there or if he will choose not to be because of the possibility fans might react negatively.

True to himself, he hopes for the best.

"Even if he doesn't walk me out on the field, I still know he's there for me," Hawkins said. "He's always been there for me and has always put family before football. That's something I really respect him for and love him for. Regardless of what is presented on senior night, I know he loves me to death and he'll be there for me whenever I need him."

Close Window

Send To Printer

[Print page](#)[Close window](#)

Longmont, Colorado
Wednesday, January 05,
2011

Publish Date: 11/18/2010

Richardson makes impression

By Brian Howell
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — With two games left in his college career, Scotty McKnight already owns University of Colorado records for receptions and receiving touchdowns.

He needs just 112 receiving yards to break that career record, too.

Yet, as far as he's concerned, those records are only temporary with the way true freshman Paul Richardson is playing.

"People are asking me about my records," McKnight said. "(Michael) Westbrook held onto them for a while. P-Rich is about to pass me in two years.

"I'm cool with that. I'll take a picture of the record book after this season before he breaks them all."

Richardson has a long way to go to pass McKnight in the record books, but he may not take long to get there. He has 29 catches for 442 yards and four touchdowns this season, doing most of that damage in the the past four games.

"Paul is a guy that is so unbelievably talented and he couples that with work ethic," McKnight said.

Richardson came to Colorado this summer after being dismissed from UCLA's team.

He was attending summer classes at UCLA when he and two teammates were arrested on charges of felony theft. All three players were dismissed from the team by UCLA head coach Rick Neuheisel.

By the time he was cleared to play at CU, the Buffs had already started fall camp, so he was a little behind. It didn't take long for him to make an impression, however.

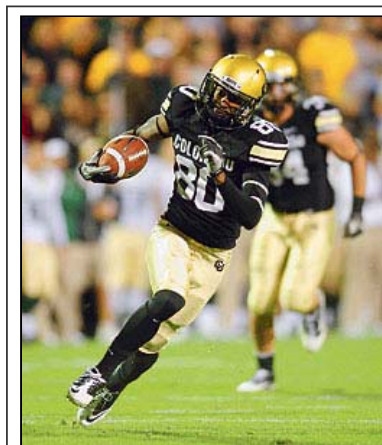
"He's a playmaker," junior quarterback Tyler Hansen said in August. "He'll be in the regular rotation."

Still, Richardson didn't do a whole lot early in the year. Hansen started at QB and played most of the snaps the first 61/2 games. At that point, Richardson had seven catches for 64 yards — and one of those catches, for 17 yards, came from Cody Hawkins.

Hansen ruptured his spleen during the second quarter against Texas Tech on Oct. 23 — ending his season — and since that point, Hawkins has quarterbacked the Buffs, while Richardson has 22 catches for 369 yards and four touchdowns.

That is not a coincidence, Richardson said.

"We have a lot more chemistry," Richardson said of Hawkins. "I take nothing away from Tyler, but Cody and I had a lot more chemistry."



Colorado's Paul Richardson gains yards against Baylor on Oct. 16 at Folsom Field in Boulder. Richardson, a true freshman, is on pace to break records in his future at CU. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call file**

"I could tell in the goal line he (Tyler) would throw me the ball. In the open field I hadn't gained that trust from him yet. Cody saw something that Tyler didn't."

He added that coaches have called more plays for him in recent games and that "Cody brought me out."

It's probably not much of a surprise that Richardson and Hawkins had more chemistry. Because Richardson came in late to camp, he didn't work with the No. 1 offense right away. And, when he stayed after practice, he caught passes from Hawkins.

"I think that's paying off," McKnight said. "Also, his maturation. He's still very very young, but just kind of understanding the game a little bit more, understanding defenses and what our offense is trying to do and where he fits. It really is kind of a big puzzle."

It's a puzzle that now has Richardson as a central piece.

"More than anything, it came from just coaches seeing me with the ball in my hands and making plays," Richardson said. "They started to trust me more and I've just continued making plays."

As with most young players, that took time to develop.

"Getting into things, I was like, 'This is going a little slower than I thought; I'm definitely not in high school anymore,'" he said. "It happens over time. Sometimes it's a little slower and then sometimes over the course of a few weeks, it starts to pick up really fast."

The pace he is setting has McKnight convinced Richardson will shatter his records — provided Richardson stays at CU.

"It's definitely an adjustment," he said of being at CU. "I'm a young kid, just turned 18. Coming out here was new for me, but I've adjusted pretty well. I'm never going to get used to the weather, coming from L.A., where the weather is, to me, perfect. Other than that, it's been pretty cool."

When asked if he would stay at CU, however, Richardson didn't give a firm commitment.

"I want to," Richardson said. "I'm just taking it one day at a time. I'm just worried about finishing with school right now. I need to just finish off the semester in school and finish off this season. Hopefully we can pull out a bowl game. That's all I'm worried about."

McKnight, who also came from Southern California, said he'll do what he came to make sure Richardson remains a Buff.

"You always want a guy to do what's best for him, but I think he's in a good situation here," McKnight said.

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



Colorado Springs Independent

COLUMNS » END ZONE

November 18, 2011

Hero for a day, then ... End Zone

by [Ralph Routon](#)

After two months of ignoring the University of Colorado's football program, often with full justification, the Big 12 Conference finally acknowledged its lame-duck member on Monday with its Player of the Week honors.

CU quarterback **Cody Hawkins** was named the Big 12's top offensive player for the games of Nov. 13. And there wasn't a peep of disagreement from anywhere. The only sad part is that Hawkins didn't sweep all the national weekly recognition.

After all, how many times have you heard of a major-college quarterback, whose father is also his head coach, seeing Dad lose his job on Tuesday, late in the kid's senior season — then leading his team to an impressive victory on Saturday? Even to the extreme of making the case (unintentionally, of course) that the school did the right thing in firing his father?

More than a few observers of Colorado's program feared that Cody Hawkins would walk away from the team if CU dumped his father, **Dan**, as head coach before the end of the season. And with early-season starter **Tyler Hansen** already lost for the year to injury, that would have meant chaos, and probably having to use redshirted freshman **Nick Hirschman**, which would have wasted a year of his eligibility.

Instead, Cody delivered the finest performance of his up-and-down college career, hitting 16 of 24 passes for 266 yards and three touchdowns as Colorado laid a 34-14 whipping on Iowa State.

To call it admirable would be a major understatement. Here's a 22-year-old young man, devoted to football and his father, turning such bitter disappointment and, yes, embarrassment into such a satisfying victory. Not once did Cody show any emotion other than complete poise — and joy in celebrating every touchdown. But after the chest-bumps and high-fives, he made sure every time to turn and wave to his dad, watching the game quietly from a balcony.

But just when you began to wonder if the quarterback had taken a massive dose of Valium to get through the game, Cody finally gave in to his feelings at the end. As the final seconds wound down, he grabbed his helmet and sprinted to the dressing room, where he could deal with his feelings and then say all the right things.

Of course, the Buffs' victory wasn't just about Cody Hawkins. The entire offense executed well, the defense was swarming, and the team had a sense of purpose. Perhaps many of them dedicated that game to Coach Hawkins, but they obviously responded to his interim replacement, **Brian Cabral**.

Not that Cabral is full of charisma and rah-rah energy, because he isn't. He's a solid, soft-spoken guy, but he also has plenty of fire inside, as anyone who remembers him as a CU linebacker in the 1970s could testify. You also can judge him positively for surviving several coaching changes at CU, from **Bill McCartney** to **Rick Neuheisel** to **Gary Barnett** and then Hawkins.

So the question becomes, is Cabral worthy of becoming the next head coach? The first impulse would be to say no, if only because of the monumental challenge ahead in moving to the Pacific 12 Conference (as it'll be named) next year. Being able to compete in that league, and provide the kind of personality that helps Colorado raise millions of dollars to give the program a chance, might be more than Cabral could achieve. He could stay as the new coach's No. 2 man, providing the historical perspective that CU still needs.

With athletic director **Mike Bohn**'s job also on the line, most likely he'll go for a proven head coach with that extra polish and pizzazz, unless the choice is to bring back McCartney for a short-term encore. My guess is that Bohn will go after someone like former Oregon coach **Mike Bellotti** or, possibly, ex-CU All-American runner **Eric Bieniemy**, now a top assistant with the Minnesota Vikings.

Of course, if Cody Hawkins leads Colorado to another home victory this week against Kansas State, and especially if the Buffs stand up to Nebraska at Lincoln on Nov. 26, he might force CU to choose Brian Cabral as his dad's successor.

And that would be the height of irony.

— routon@csindy.com

[End Zone archives.](#)

Like

Email

Share

Print

Save

Add to List