

# CU Buffs still have their eyes on prize

## Win today vs. KSU would keep CU in bowl hunt

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Boulder Daily Camera

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Five years later members of the Colorado senior class arrive at their final home game today at Folsom Field with the same goal still lingering in front of them that has been there all along -- leading the program back to respectability.

Since Day One back in 2006, when players such as Cody Hawkins, Nate Solder, Scotty McKnight, Jimmy Smith, Jalil Brown, Michael Sipili and B.J. Beatty signed with the program, the mission has been there.

Back then they were trying to recover from a 70-3 loss in the Big 12 Championship game and all the events that led to the dismissal of former coach Gary Barnett. They thought they had turned the corner in 2007 when they reached a bowl game, but it was only a mirage of success.

Here they are once again in the wake of another coach's firing hoping to slug their way into a bowl game, still scratching for that elusive winning season.

The Buffs (4-6, 1-5) must win today on Senior Day against Kansas State to keep that hope alive. A win today would turn next week's game into more than just another battle, albeit the final battle, against rival Nebraska. But that is next week and there is a rather larger hurdle standing in their way in the form of a Bill Snyder coached football team.

"I know all too well the handiwork of Bill Snyder," interim CU coach Brian Cabral said. "We've got a tall task ahead of us here. It is going to take more than just our best effort."

Today's game could be one of the quickest in recent memory. Kansas State (6-4, 3-4) loves to run the football, averaging nearly 5 yards a carry and 200 yards a game on the back of tailback Daniel Thomas. Kansas State also has recently added a running quarterback to the mix in Collin Klein, a product of Loveland, who has rushed for more than 100 yards

in each of the past two games. His ability compounds the problem of stopping the running game for the Buffs.

But the Wildcats' defense also gives up an alarming number of yards on the ground. Opponents are averaging 220 rushing yards a game against Kansas State a statistic that undoubtedly had CU running back Rodney Stewart tossing and turning with excitement overnight.

If those trends hold up today, the game clock should keep rolling along and fans might get out of the stadium in time for a late afternoon hike beneath the Flatirons.

One tradition that comes with every Senior Day at Folsom Field is the postgame presentation of the Buffalo Heart Award voted on and presented by CU fans honoring the Buff who has displayed heart, grit, determination and desire on and off the field throughout the season.

This is the 13th year for the award and there are plenty of worthy candidates among the small senior class. Wide receiver Scotty McKnight, left tackle Nate Solder and linebacker B.J. Beatty might be favorites, but don't count out quarterback Cody Hawkins as a darkhorse candidate.

Hawkins is coming off one of his finest performances as a Buff last week in a win over Iowa State in the first game following the firing of his father, Dan Hawkins, as head coach.

Cody Hawkins was named Big 12 Conference offensive player of the week after throwing three touchdown passes against the Cyclones and successfully riding big waves of emotion. The entire team fed off its emotions last week. Another challenge this week is not falling flat.

Cabral indicated this week his players have responded well to the change and a revival of spirit has been noticeable around the program. Players agreed with that sentiment.

"I don't think it was environmentally created," Solder said. "I think that a lot of that emotion came from the heart and spirit of who we are. I think that's an eternal well to me. I think that's going to show up every week."

### **Food drive today**

Century Chevy, CU Athletics, and Community Food Share will sponsor at food drive at today's CU-Kansas State game.

Food collection bins will be placed around Folsom Field today, and CU student-athletes will be helping to collect these items prior to the start of the game.

The non-perishable food items most needed are canned fruit, 100 percent fruit juice, cold and hot cereal, tuna, peanut butter, and pasta sauce; however, all non-perishable food will be gladly accepted.

### **Notable**

During the pregame senior recognition ceremony, the seniors will wear homemade Hawaiian leis made by B.J. Beatty's mother, Abby. They are her gift to the senior class.

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## Senior day at Folsom Field

*By Brian Howell*  
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BOULDER — Scotty McKnight remembers being an underclassman when he and the rest of the University of Colorado football team prepared for a game that would be the last at Folsom Field for that year's class of seniors.

He watched as some of his usually calm teammates lost their composure when the reality of playing at the stadium for the final time hit them.

"There was a guy on our team a couple years ago, and he was all choked up, and it ended up kind of affecting him early on in the game," McKnight said. "I'm very confident that won't happen to me. I'm usually pretty steady, but seeing him like that, he wasn't normally a guy like that either."

McKnight and the rest of this year's seniors aren't exactly sure what to expect today when they host Kansas State. But the reality that this will be their last time playing at Folsom Field sunk in this week.

"I'm very excited," cornerback Jalil Brown said. "It's kind of crazy how it snuck up on me. A lot of people told me all the time that four years are going to go by fast. It's not real until you actually go through it yourself and experience it and realize just how fast it actually goes. I'm sure I'll be overwhelmed during the game when I come out there, but until it actually happens, I won't be able to know the true meaning or experience the true feeling."

Fifteen seniors will play their final home game today. While the group hasn't experienced a ton of winning at CU, it has nevertheless left its mark on the program.

This year's class includes Cody Hawkins, who is likely to leave as the all-time leader passer in school story; McKnight, who has caught more passes than any player in CU annals; and two potential NFL first-round draft picks in cornerback Jimmy Smith and left tackle Nate Solder.

The class also includes Brown, who is a legitimate NFL prospect; starting linebackers B.J. Beatty and Michael Sipili; and kicker Aric Goodman, who has had a roller-coaster ride in Boulder but is on his way to finishing strong.

"I'm very proud of these seniors, and you should be, too," said CU interim head coach Brian Cabral, who finished his college playing career as a Buffalo in 1977. "This is the last time that those seniors will compete out there in Folsom Field. I know how that feels. I know what that means. That's a feeling that you'll never forget. That's why I'm really asking for our fan support. Come out and support these seniors."

**Kansas State Wildcats (6-4, 3-4)  
 at Colorado Buffaloes (4-6, 1-5)**

**When:** Today, 12:10 p.m.

**Where:** Folsom Field in Boulder

**TV/Radio:** No TV/850AM

**The series:** CU leads 44-20-1 all-time, but Kansas State leads 8-6 in the Big 12 era (since 1996). The Wildcats are 1-3 in their last four trips to Boulder.

**Last week:** Colorado knocked off Iowa State 34-14 at home. Kansas State lost 38-28 at Missouri.

**Did you know?** While a lot has been made of CU's road struggles, Kansas State hasn't been very good on the road in Big 12 games, either. The Wildcats are 6-21 in Big 12 road games the past seven seasons, and 1-5 in their last six. They haven't won more than one conference road game in a season since 2003. They are 1-2 this season.

**Keep an eye on:** Buffaloes — Linebackers. For the Buffs to win, they've got to stop the K-State rushing attack. That means the Buffs linebackers — led by B.J. Beatty, Michael Sipili, Liloa Nobriga and Derrick Webb — must step up. Wildcats — RB Daniel Thomas. While QB Collin Klein has changed the K-State offense with his running ability lately, Thomas is still the main cog in the offense. The 6-foot-2, 228-pounder is one of the best running backs in the country. He has six 100-yard games this season and burned the Buffs for 145 yards a year ago.

**Key matchup:** CU quarterback Cody Hawkins vs. K-State's defense. As he did a week ago, when he had one of the best games of his career, Hawkins needs to direct an offensive attack that controls the clock, moves

For many of the seniors, this week was about looking back at their Folsom Field memories. But it also was about trying to slow down and appreciate their final home week.

“As a senior heading into the final game, you obviously take some time to reflect on the past years and all that’s occurred over your career here,” Hawkins said. “There’s been a lot of ups and a lot of downs, but it’s been a great time and I wouldn’t change it. But it’s really incredible how everybody says time flies by. It feels like we just got here yesterday.”

Brown agreed, saying it went fast and that he’s enjoyed all of his time at CU, but he hopes to have one last great moment at Folsom Field.

“Hopefully, I’ll be able to go out there my last time on the field and have a great game and a great time up there,” he said.

Having a great game could be determined by how well Brown and the others control their emotions. That won’t be easy, especially with parents and family members on hand to see the seniors’ final game.

“It’s going to be emotional, and I’ve come to realize that, but at the same time, I know I have a job to accomplish and it’s not going to be the same day if we lose,” McKnight said. “The only way you can cap it off right is with a win.”

Keeping the win in mind is how McKnight hopes to keep the emotional wave, which he has seen hit others, from overcoming him. The last thing he needs, he said, is to be crying on the field.

“My freshman year, I got knocked silly across the middle (against Kansas State),” he said. “That’s just how they play. If I come out there with tears in my eyes because I just got a big hug from my parents, it’ll be a bad day for me.”

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the chains and puts points on the board.

**Extra points:** CU receiver Scotty McKnight takes a streak of 47 straight games with at least one catch into today. ... CU quarterback Cody Hawkins needs 24 completions and 332 passing yards to break Joel Klatt’s school records in those categories. ... Today’s game can be seen online on streaming video at [CUBuffs.com](http://CUBuffs.com).

**Prediction:** The Buffs were emotionally charged and determined to prove people wrong last week after head coach Dan Hawkins was fired four days before the Iowa State game. The good vibrations were evident again this week. This team is a determined bunch. They want to finish strong, and they want to get to a bowl game. The only way to do that is to win today. Buffs 31, Wildcats 27.

— Brian Howell



Posted on Fri, Nov. 19, 2010

## Cody Hawkins leads Colorado into game with K-State

BOULDER, Colo. | Cody Hawkins has always followed his father.

As a high school senior, he was set to play quarterback for Boise State because his dad was the Broncos' coach. But when Dan Hawkins took the same job at Colorado later that year, Cody switched his commitment to the Buffaloes.

The two have always been close and have been one of the most recognizable father-son duos in college football the last four years.

But that all ended two weeks ago, when Colorado fired Dan Hawkins midway through his fifth season.

As he walked away, Cody Hawkins — for once — was unable to follow.

Hawkins, a senior who despite all his ups and downs has thrown for 7,044 yards and 55 touchdowns and is on pace to become Colorado's career passing leader, started last week against Iowa State.

Emotions hit him hard early on, and he later admitted to being on the verge of tears. But he fought through the tough situation and played one of his best games. Hawkins completed 16 of 24 passes for 266 yards and three TDs, helping the Buffaloes win 34-14.

"He went out and he led us the way we needed to be led," Colorado interim coach Brian Cabral said. "He got the job done. So that says a lot for him. That also says a lot for his family."

The win kept Colorado, 4-6 overall and 1-5 in the Big 12, alive for a trip to a bowl game and added greater meaning to its final two games against K-State and Nebraska.

"Cody is a very competitive young guy," K-State coach Bill Snyder said. "He is a (high-) quality leader and is kind of a gym-rat type of guy. He's been around it his entire life. He has the capacity to manage a ballgame quite well because of his knowledge of the system."

Hawkins received the award for Big 12 offensive player of the week. Cabral was overjoyed by the news.

"He went through a lot more than anybody would ever know," Cabral said. "How he handled that was just unbelievable. I couldn't be prouder."

### Kansas State at Colorado

•**WHEN:** 1:10 p.m. today

•**WHERE:** Folsom Field, Boulder, Colo.

•**TV/RADIO:** No TV, webcast at [kstatesports.com](http://kstatesports.com); WHB (810 AM)

### Other story lines

•**A BIG WORKLOAD:** Senior running back Daniel Thomas received an uncharacteristically low 12 carries last week. How big will his workload be today?

•**FAREWELL TO FOLSOM:** This will be the last time K-State plays a Big 12 Conference game at Colorado. The Wildcats are 5-27 in Boulder and 20-44-1 against the Buffaloes overall.

•**MORE TACKLES ON THE WAY:** Freshman linebacker Tre Walker has a combined 23 tackles in his last two games. Can he continue to be a presence in the middle of K-State's defense against Colorado?

### Bieniemy on list

Minnesota Vikings running-back coach Eric Bieniemy is an early candidate for the opening as coach at Colorado, his alma mater.

Vikings coach Brad Childress said Friday that he fielded a preliminary call from the school's search committee about Bieniemy, who also is the assistant head coach for offense with the Vikings.

| Kellis Robinett, *The Star*

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