



Since spelling Tyler Hansen, Cody Hawkins has thrown for 1,251 yards and 12 TDs. Photo Courtesy: US Press Wire



11/25/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Brooks: Cody Hawkins' Late Stats Among His Best

**BOULDER -** The argument can be made (and backed by statistics) that over the past five weeks Cody Hawkins has played his best football at Colorado. He will argue the point.

Of course, with quarterbacks the stats always are reduced to wins and losses, and the Buffaloes are 2-2 in the four full games that Hawkins has started since Tyler Hansen was lost for the season with a ruptured spleen.

Still, Hawkins' passing numbers in those four games are impressive: 76-for-137, 977 yards, 10 touchdowns, 2 interceptions. Add the half he played against Texas Tech following Hansen's injury and the totals go to 98-for-180, 1,251 yards and 12 TDs.

But the better measure of what he's done in CU's offense comes from the past two weeks when he didn't throw over 25 passes in either game - as opposed to averaging 44 in the previous three - and was not intercepted. Playing from behind tends to push passing attempts w-a-a-a-y up there; playing with a lead in a balanced offense tends to keep most numbers manageable and on the pleasant side.

Against Iowa State, Hawkins hit 16-of-24 passes for 266 yards and three TDs. Against Kansas State, he was 14-of-25 for 202 yards and three TDs. The Buffs also ran for over 100 yards in each game (118 vs. ISU, 251 vs. K-State) and Hawkins is quick to acknowledge what the ground game means to his position.

"When you can run the ball, when you have balance, it sets you up for so much more success than anything else," he said.

But Hawkins, said offensive coordinator/QB coach Eric Kiesau, might be downplaying his contributions of the past two weeks: "He's just being efficient; he's not making mistakes. I just keep telling him if you do these things you'll see results, you'll see success. And he has. It's been very good and I'm very proud of him."

Since Hawkins stepped in for Hansen on Oct. 23, CU's program has been turned upside down before apparently returning to right-side-up. Hawkins' father, Dan, was dismissed the day after the Kansas meltdown. Cody joked the next week that maybe a silver lining would be him not being referred to anymore as "the coach's kid."

Many CU followers/amateur shrinks heard that as more of a revelation than a joke - particularly after watching his numbers go up over the past two weeks. He disagrees.

"That's easy for an outsider to say," he told me. "But I've always played football because I enjoyed it. I've never been somebody who held back; I've been a no-holds guy. I think a lot of the players will tell you that. I was always trying to do my best regardless, my best to compete, to lead and even lighten the mood a little bit.

"I've known that playing college football was about me and my experience and my guys, regardless of the coach . . . all that we can control is what goes on in that locker room. I've always tried to approach that the same way."

Cody's 1,200-plus yards in his past five games have moved him into second place on CU's career passing yardage chart (7,246). He's first in passing attempts (1,188), TD passes (58), TDs responsible for (65), interceptions (39), and second in completions (657).

He agrees with Kiesau that his efficiency and decision making have been good in the past two games, but hesitates - kind of - in affirming that he's currently playing his best football.

"Productivity-wise, there's an argument for that," he said. "But I really feel like I've prepared the same way, I've gone out and competed. Obviously, taking care of the football helps you win games. Like I've said before, I think Cody Hawkins is doing the same things, but having guys around me is making the difference. We have three of the best receivers I've had since I've been here. The offensive line is the most talented experienced group that we've had. I just think when you have all those pieces . . .

"But as far as being a leader and how I've been preparing and what I strive to do every game, that hasn't changed at all. I just think this is a product of what I envisioned and I envisioned it happening a lot earlier. It took time and we finally have the guys in place to have the offensive success that we wanted to have when we showed up here."

Friday's game at No. 16 Nebraska (1:30 p.m. MT, ABC) features a long list of implications, ranging from historic to postseason. The Buffs (5-6, 2-5) need a win to become bowl eligible, the Huskers (9-2, 5-2) can win the Big 12 North. It's the final regular-season Big 12 game for both schools, with CU headed for the Pac-12 Conference in 2011 and Nebraska bound for the Big Ten.

Under different circumstances, a player on either team could find ample material for reflection. Under these circumstances, there is only a focus on Friday. And Cody adds another element to the mix - from a CU perspective.

"I think the bowl implications and the last Big 12 situation, those would be very, very different if it was another opponent," he said. "But when you're playing Nebraska in Lincoln and you're in a three-game playoff like we are, it's really tough to have anything but tunnel vision for the Huskers. They're a great football team and they deserve your respect.

"If it was a lesser opponent, we might be able to think, 'Oh, we're on a hot streak. Look at all these great things we've accomplished in the history of the Big 12.' But we have our backs against the wall; we have for the last three games . . . the Nebraska-Colorado rivalry has a great history and we'd love to add to it."

I asked him about the Buffs rekindling their fire, rediscovering their edge over the past two weeks. Was it the coaching change and new leadership? He might have answered as any football player or as the former coach's son - or maybe some combination of the two.

"There was so much drama, so many people speculating about so many different things as to why you're losing, what should be done about the coaching situation," he said. "But when my dad got let go, guys were kind of so disheartened that everything else just kind of seemed to let go... you focused on getting one foot in front of the other. In doing that, the process kind of becomes all you can invest in.

"There was a less lighthearted mood before game days and I think that just makes guys think about the game a little bit more. Some guys were thinking, 'Oh, my gosh, this just happened to a great guy. Was it my fault? Whose fault was it?' And they kind of take it on themselves to redeem things and show why they came here and what he did here isn't all for naught, even though he's not here with us anymore."

His father appeared Tuesday on ESPN's "The Experts" - a college-football roundtable discussion format featuring sportswriters, TV analysts, former players and ex-coaches. Dan Hawkins got the call after having "ex" on his resume for only a couple of weeks.

Cody and several teammates watched the show in their locker room, hooting and laughing at some of the topics and responses but mostly intrigued by how the man who brought them to CU would fare in what might have been an audition.

It was different for Cody.

"It was the first time I've actually spoken up about my dad being my dad," he said. "Everybody was laughing, having a good time. You could tell the guys around here really miss him. It was funny, he was dropping the sayings that we've heard a lot of and chuckled about.

"He was texting me during commercial breaks and everybody was asking me what he was saying and what they were going to talk about next. I think it's good for him to get out and have a little fun, and it was great for the guys to see him again just because when you're around somebody that often, somebody that genuinely cares about you, then he just kind of vanishes out of the picture . . . a lot of guys have talked to me about how they miss him being around. It was just good to see him again."

I asked Cody if his dad has a future in TV.

"I don't know; he's a great guy, very personable," he said. "I think he does a good job making football fun for everybody. That situation we were going through . . . we wouldn't have wished those adversity-filled couple of years on anybody, but he made sure we had a great time playing college football. He did.

"And whatever he's doing, he's going to make the people around him better, he's going to make them have a great time and enjoy life. If he's doing that in the booth and is able to share it with the rest of the country, that would be awesome. I think he'd do a great job at it - but then again, he's my dad and I think he can do the best at everything. Yeah, I'm biased."

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college football

# Buffs cruise memory lane

By Chris Dempsey
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/25/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

BOULDER — Despite having won just 18 games in the 68-game series with the Nebraska Cornhuskers, there are fond memories for Colorado football players.

### Former QB Darian Hagan

My favorite memory had to be my sophomore year (1989), here, when we were No. 2 in the country and they were No. 3. It was on TV. My entire family came to the game. I want to say it was the sixth play of the game when I busted around the left edge, went about 40 yards and pitched the ball to J.J. (Flannigan). That's probably one of my best memories. As a spectator, it has to be the 62-36 game. We just dismantled those dudes. As a coach, it was the 65-51 game (in 2007) where we won to go to a bowl game, and then it stopped their (bowl game) streak. Those are my three. I'm not sad to see it end, because you know you don't put too much on a sport in my mind. It's an opportunity for us to start something new. It got as far as it was going to get. When coach (Bill) McCartney first said that's

what he was looking for, to be the best you've got to play the best — he was trying to get this program like theirs, to be dominant. People laughed at him. Once he accomplished it and kept on doing those things, this program went to new heights.

### Former LB Jashon Sykes

Obviously the best memory was my senior year in 2001 when we beat them 62-36. Not because of the score, but more so because of what was riding on that game. The winner of that game was going to the Big 12 championship. They were ranked No. 1 in the country. They had a Heisman T rophy winner on that team. So there was a lot riding on that game. . . . It'll be missed a lot because there was a lot of history and tradition behind it. I never thought we got the full respect of Nebraska until our senior year. You have to remember we went a long time without winning (nine years in a row). They've had their way with us over the years. The times that we have won, they

are sweet victories, but look at the record between Nebraska and Colorado — they've had their way with us over time. But we went out with a bang my senior year and beat them pretty well.

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Wide receiver Scotty McKnight (21), now a CU senior, celebrates a touchdown against Nebraska in 2007. The Buffs won that game 65-51 in Boulder. (Helen H. Richardson, The Post)

## Senior WR Scotty McKnight

That first year (a 65-51 win in 2007), just the fashion that we won the game, and we came from behind. I think we were down 14 points at halftime or something (actually 35-24). Our defense started making some plays, and our offense started moving. I scored a touchdown in that game. I think it was like 10 degrees outside, so that was tough for me coming from California to here. I never envisioned playing in a game like that. But just the passes that I caught. That was

cool, to be a part of the game plan, to be a part of beating them in a way to where our offense scored so many points and was such a key part of that game, that was pretty cool. I had no clue about the rivalry before I got to CU. . . . But Nebraska was highlighted on the schedule because they were ranked either No. 1 or 2 in the country every season. It would be a shame if they couldn't find a way to get this as a nonconference game just because there is tradition to this game.

### Sophomore DT Will Pericak

That's the toughest thing about us leaving the Big 12, the Nebraska-Colorado tradition. I've always grown up with that. It's tough to see that go. Maybe we can find something similar. I don't think we'll find anything similar to that in the Pac-12. But we'll see. I was at the game when it was 62-36 (in 2001) when Chris Brown had six touchdowns. That was one of my favorite games. That was awesome.

### **Senior QB Cody Hawkins**

The 2007 game was so much fun, just because I was so close with a lot of those seniors. That was a "senior night" game for us and put us in a bowl game for the first time. That was my first experience playing against Nebraska, so it was just a great game. I thought we battled there and when it was at Folsom. Competing against Nebraska every time is special. Every time you're going to find something special. We feel like there's a lot that goes into this game. We'll be the first to recognize it. They've had a little more

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success this season than we've had, but I don't think there's going to be any love lost on either side of the ball.

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

NOVEMBER 25, 2010, 7:50 AM

# **CU** coach predicts bright future for punter Grossnickle

By **TOM KENSLER** | No Comments

BOULDER – I asked Colorado special teams coach Kent Riddle after practice this week if Buffs redshirt -freshman punter Zach Grossnickle can build on his 44-yarder last weekend that pinned Kansas State on its own 5 yard line with 3:01 remaining.

"Sure he can," Riddle said.

His further comments are what surprised me.

"Zach has struggled with his timing," Riddle said, "but I think he will become one of the best punters to ever come through here. He will be right up there with the ones (Mark Mariscal, Tom Rouen, Barry Helton, Mitch Berger, John Torp, etc.) that people remember."

Grossnickle, from Denver East, has shown a strong leg at times but has struggled with consistency. Colorado ranks 92nd among the 120 FBS teams in net punting. Grossnickle has a net average of 35.3 yards per punt.

Nebraska ranks 40th in team net punting (37.49).

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- get ready for the Jackson junkshow [3]

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- Melo out for today's game vs. Spurs [5] (All Things Nuggets)
- $\bullet \ \underline{Kenyon\ Martin,\ Chris\ Andersen\ still\ hobbled\ for\ Nuggets}^{[6]}\ (All\ Things\ Nuggets)$



[7]

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cu football

# Bohn, ex-players chat about coaching search

### By John Henderson

The Denver Post

Posted: 11/25/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

They came young and old, from near and not so far. More than 60 former Colorado football players gathered Wednesday at the Blake Street Tavern to chat with CU athletic director Mike Bohn about his coaching search.

No, it did not become a pep rally for former coach Bill McCartney, who would like the job.

"I don't think there is a sentiment for one particular person," said David Clough, head of the search committee, who also attended. "There was sentiment for several."

The players ranged from the classes of the 1950s to this past decade. One feeling they did express in unity was a connection to Colorado.

"There is a sentiment that this is a good time to have strong Buff ties," Clough said. "But in terms of particulars, individuals, no."

On that regard, they have some candidates, although Clough wouldn't give particulars about the search. Besides McCartney, who hasn't coached since retiring in 1994, Minnesota Vikings running backs coach Eric Bieniemy is a former Buffs star and has been contacted. Also, Brian Cabral is a 21-year assistant and is 2-0 as an interim coach entering CU's game Friday at 16th-ranked Nebraska.

Clough said the exchange covered a broad spectrum of topics.

"What are the ingredients for the program to move forward and be successful?" Clough said. "What are the qualities of a new coach? They were good questions."

They also asked what went wrong in the Dan Hawkins era.

"You hire a head coach and for one reason or another things don't work out," he said. "It's not necessarily a mistake you made at the beginning because you're not doing due diligence or not trying. It happens, not only in coaching, but in other endeavors."

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cu briefs

# Cornhuskers' trio presents problems for Buffs' defenders

Posted: 11/25/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

BOULDER — On Oct. 16, did Baylor's explosive zone-read tandem of quarterback Robert Griffin III and tailback Jay Finley give Colorado's defense an early dress rehearsal for what to anticipate Friday at Nebraska?

Griffin rushed for 137 yards and passed for 234, while Finley burst for 143 yards on just 14 carries in Baylor's 31-25 victory at Folsom Field.

"Maybe that will help us," CU senior linebacker B. J. Beatty said this week. "But there's a difference. Baylor had two guys. Nebraska has more of a three-headed monster."

That's Nebraska redshirt freshman quarterback Taylor Martinez, who has rushed for 974 yards and 12 touchdowns while throwing for 1,435 yards and nine touchdowns; starting senior Iback Roy Helu Jr., who has run for 1,043 yards and 10 scores; and the Big 12's top backup runner, sophomore Rex Burkhead, who has 721 yards and six scores.

Burkhead is now listed as a co-starter with Helu at I-back on the Nebraska depth chart. Helu set a school record with a 307-yard rushing performance Oct. 30 against Missouri. But Burkhead (nine carries for 74 yards) outgained Helu (9-52) on Saturday in the 9-6 loss at Texas A&M.

"With Nebraska, you can't key on one guy or even two. You have to key on all three of those guys because they're so talented," Beatty said. "We have to make sure we stick to our assignments and not make mistakes."

### Huskers' top receiver out.

Senior wideout Niles Paul, who leads Nebraska in catches (39) and yards receiving (516), was ruled out for the game against Colorado by Huskers coach Bo Pelini on Wednesday because of an unspecified foot injury that occurred in Tuesday's practice.

Citing sources, the Omaha World-Herald reported that Paul has a broken foot and will be out at least a month.

### Nebraska's Coloradans.

Eight players with Colorado ties are listed on the NU roster, including two starters: senior defensive end Pierre Allen (Thomas Jefferson High School) and redshirt freshman offensive left tackle Jeremiah Sirles (Bear Creek). Others are senior defensive back Adam Watson (Niwot),

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junior fullback Ryan Hill (Arvada West), junior linebacker Austin Jones (Smoky Hill), redshirt freshman linebacker Colby Starkebaum (Sterling), freshman wide receiver Kenny Bell (Boulder) and freshman offensive lineman Mike Moudy (Douglas County).

Allen, 6-feet-5 and 265 pounds, ranks sixth on the team in tackles (47) and is second (10) in tackles for loss. He is completing his third season as a starter.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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## Ex-Buffs talk coach search with A.D. Bohn

Former players say they gain understanding of challenges ahead

**By Kyle Ringo** Camera Sports Writer Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/24/2010 11: 43: 27 PM MST

DENVER -- More than 50 former Colorado football players met with athletic director Mike Bohn and faculty athletic representative David Clough, the head of CU's football coach search committee, Wednesday at the Blake Street Tavern in Lower Downtown Denver to discuss the future of the program.

A meeting that began with legitimate concerns on both sides -- "trust issues" as they were referred to -- ended with a better understanding from players of the task Bohn and the committee face. It also gave Bohn and Clough a clear demonstration of the passion and concern there is for the program from the players who made it great in the past.

Some of the former players drove more than a hundred miles to be at the meeting, such as Donnell Leomiti and Dusty Sprague. Others even flew across country to attend, such as Thaddaeus Washington.

Fittingly, it ended with a hearty rendition of the school fight song.

Some of the most vocal critics of Dan Hawkins era and Bohn were in the room andparticipated in a question and answer session that lasted about 90 minutes, including former CU quarterbacks Joel Klatt and Bobby Pesavento.

All of those former players interviewed by the Camera afterward said it was an educational experience because Bohn and Clough debunked some half-truths about challenges the football program and the athletic department face.

"I think it's good that he wants the support of the Alums and is involving us," Leomiti said. "I think everyone here leaves feeling like he cares and is thinking about the Buff family and is thinking about the former players. He is aware of the tradition. He is aware of everything we've put into this program."

The former players said no promises were made, but Bohn and Clough let them know that they are aware of the sentiment that the next coach should at least have respect for the history and traditions of the program, if not actual roots in it.

Bohn and the search committee managed to leave the meeting with considerably more support than each had from former players before it began.

"I think it was a great thing," Pesavento said. "All these guys, former players gathered in this room that love this program and want to see it successful. The fact that Mike came here and opened the room up to questions, tons of respect for him for doing that because he didn't have to. I think the program is going in the right direction and Mike is going to make the right hire.

"I don't know who it's going to be, but I think he did a good job of conveying that we can trust him and he's doing everything he can."

Clough admitted he was unsure of what to expect before meeting with the players and suspected he and Bohn might be walking into a rally in which the only acceptable outcome would have been for them to say they planned to hire a Buff to replace Hawkins.

He said the group simply needed to know its concerns are important to those making the decision.

"I looked at it as an opportunity to listen to people's opinions, and listen to what kind of questions they would ask and take their input," Clough said. "There is a lot of passion around this decision."

Clough said he has been receiving hundreds of emails of support for different candidates. He said the committee is working hard to identify the best candidates but hasn't been able to talk to everyone it would like to because some

potential candidates are still coaching their teams to the finish of the regular season.

The committee expects to have access to all possible candidates within the next 10 days.

Clough said he walked away from meeting the former players feeling good that so many of them are still so invested. He said their passion and devotion will be an asset to whoever is hired.

Former CU linebacker Matt Russell said he came away feeling better about the search for the next coach and how the school is going about it.

"I think it cleared up a lot of the issues between some of the alumni and the department and the realities versus the myths out there," Russell said. "I think it put a lot guys` minds at ease."

Bohn addressed a variety of issues that don't necessarily involve the coaching search, such as the relationship between the department and the faculty, the future in the Pac-12 and improving funding for the program to help the next coach.

Bohn also told the group that there is no way he and the search committee can make all of them happy because while almost everyone who attended is hoping a former Buff will be hired, there were some who support hiring former coach Bill McCartney, others who support former running back Eric Bieniemy and some who support interim coach Brian Cabral.

"When I said I'm going to leave it up to (Bohn) I totally mean that," former CU tight end Greg Howard said. "I don't think that's a bad thing because I think the points have been brought up well enough that McCartney wasn't a Buff originally, Crowder wasn't a Buff originally.

"So I don't think you can hang everything on that. I don't think that is the beginning and the end of the argument for a coach. You have to look at all the facets. There are so many pillars he has to stand on."

So will former players get behind the next coach even if he's not a former Buff?

"I think if you`re a Buff and you love this program and you have blood, sweat and tears in this program, you`ll get behind him, whoever he is," Leomiti said.

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