



CU's Rodney Stewart had a career high 175 yards rushing and scored three touchdowns
Photo Courtesy: Associated Press



11/06/2010 B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

Brooks: Buffs On Short End Of Historic Rally

LAWRENCE, Kan. - After three frustrating seasons, the Colorado Buffaloes finally believed their 15-game regular-season road losing streak had been buried. After all, only eight seconds into the fourth quarter here Saturday, they led by 28 points.

But big leads and prosperity are strangers to this CU team. By the end of a record-setting afternoon that had slipped away - make that yanked away - the Buffs' hideous road streak had reached 16.

The trauma of this one will linger. CU laid an egg for the ages.

Kansas scored 35 unanswered points in the fourth quarter, overtook CU 52-45 and stamped the program with this ugly exclamation point: In 121 years of football, CU had never blown a 28-point lead. Records also fell on the KU side, but jubilantly: Until Saturday, the Jayhawks had never scored 35 points in a quarter and had never overcome a 28-point deficit.

Something else to consider while the numbness wears off: KU had

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averaged 10 points in this season's first four Big 12 Conference games.

"You've just got to finish, just got to learn how to finish," beleaguered CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "You've got to know what it's like to be in the lead (and) you've got to be able to stop 'em."

His team couldn't, and while CU Athletic Director Mike Bohn did not address Hawkins' future, he called the Buffs' collapse "extremely disappointing on many levels. Obviously, these developments do not meet our expectations. That's not to disparage Kansas' accomplishments in any way."

Speaking after CU's chartered jet landed at Denver International Airport, Bohn added, "While we share many of the same frustrations and serious disappointments as our fans, I have confidence in this group of seniors to represent this team and the university with both pride and a competitive spirit for the rest of the season."

"I am cognizant and most appreciative of our fan support of the players all season. Their loyal following will be integral to our immediate and long-term success."

Needing to win their three remaining games to reach six wins and become bowl eligible for only the second time in Dan Hawkins' five-year tenure, the Buffs play back-to-back home games (Nov. 13 vs. Iowa State, Nov. 20 vs. Kansas State) before closing the season on Nov. 26 at Nebraska.

Saturday's loss kept CU winless (0-5) in its final Big 12 season. The Buffs and Jayhawks are both 3-6 overall while KU won its first league game (1-4) under first-year coach Turner Gill.

After taking a 35-10 lead with a solid first half, CU wilted. KU entered the game with a lock on last place in almost all of the league's pertinent statistical categories. But when Gill reflected on a game the Buffs obviously believed was over after two quarters, past stats didn't matter.

"At halftime we talked about being relentless - that was our word of the week," Gill said. "We've got to continue playing the game of football."

Hawkins said he tried to deliver the same message, but several of his players weren't sure it took. Tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart, whose career-best rushing game (175 yards, three touchdowns) now will be remembered for a dark and different reason, said some of his teammates seemed cavalier at intermission.

Senior receiver Scotty McKnight agreed: "I think some of those guys just thought the game was over or something - not everyone, but there had to be something else going wrong because the difference between the first half and the second half was night and day," he said. "We were playing good, basically just operating in the first half and doing that well ... unfortunately, we haven't been in positions where we've been up by a lot."

In building its 25-point halftime cushion, CU got a pair of running touchdowns from Stewart (7, 1 yards) and a pair of receiving TDs from freshman Paul Richardson (62, 4 yards). The other score came courtesy of redshirt freshman tight end DaVaughn Thornton, whose 4-yard TD catch was also his first career reception.

The Buffs' first three drives covered 80, 80 and 71 yards, and on their first scoring march they converted once on third down and twice on fourth. The Jayhawks answered that first TD with a 23-yard Jacob Branstetter field goal, but by the time they scored again on a 19-yard Mecham-to-D.J. Beshears pass, CU was up 28-3, taking advantage of nickel back Travis Sandersfeld's second interception of the season and 16-yard return.

After that touchdown - and aided by 30 yards in penalties - the Buffs sped 62 yards in 41 seconds and scored on the Cody Hawkins-to-Thornton pass.

Stewart's 117 first-half rushing yards gave him four 100-yard games this season and 12 for his career. Among Richardson's five first-half receptions (81 yards) were the pair of TD catches that boosted his seasonal total to four - a school seasonal freshman record. He also set single game school records for catches (11) and yards (141) by a freshman and tied his mark for touchdowns in a game (2).

Cody Hawkins was 20-of-24 for 214 yards and three TDs in the opening half, and the Buffs outgained the Jayhawks 316-147 in total offense. It appeared a rout was underway; unfortunately the Buffs believed it.

Getting a 38-yard field goal by Aric Goodman, CU led 38-17 after three quarters. But when the Buffs stretched their advantage to 45-17 on Stewart's third TD run on the fourth quarter's first play, the Jayhawks' surge began.

Richardson couldn't believe it: "They came back and scored five or six touchdowns . . . I mean, that's just not human," he said.

A 66-yard drive capped by James Sims' 13-yard run pulled KU to 45-24. A successful Jayhawks on-sides kick followed - although CU players believed Cameron Ham recovered the ball rather than KU's Bradley McDougald.

Other than saying he believed his team was prepared for the kick, Dan Hawkins wouldn't comment on the call, which was reviewed and upheld.

"It didn't look like (Ham) had it, he *had* it; I was right there," Cody Hawkins said. "I don't know how you reach over somebody's back and take the football away from somebody who has it, but obviously you have to play with the referees. There's a couple of calls they helped us out on, too. There was a roughing-the-passer call that I should have won an Oscar on, and a couple of pass interference calls down the field that played in our favor. You can't blame it on the referees; we never should have been in that situation."

Gill called the on-sides kick recovery the game's turning point: "We were 21 points behind at that time and once we got that, it gave us the momentum and I really, really thought we'd have a great chance to win if we got the opportunity."

It was there and the Buffs were willing to allow it. The Jayhawks quickly scored again as quarterback Quinn Meacham and Jonathan Wilson teamed for a 38-yard touchdown pass.

Make it 45-31. Dan Hawkins gathered his team on the sidelines and "just told them to relax . . . we're still the team that's up by 14. Forget about the momentum and all that. We're still in control here."

Maybe, but not for long. On CU's next series, a receiver reverse backfired when Toney Clemons fumbled and KU cornerback Tyler Patmon recovered and ran 28 yards for a TD.

Make it 45-38 with 7:12 remaining and more grief on the way. CU's next offensive series produced Cody Hawkins' second interception (he finished 29-of-42, 322, 3 TDs, 2 INT). And less than a minute after KU's last TD, Meacham and his offense were back on the field, seeking a game-tying score.

They got it on another run by Sims (20 carries, 123 yards, 4 TDs) and pulled even (45-45). The dazed Buffs went three-and-out. Their historic roll over was almost complete.

"You think you have it in the bag and all of a sudden the bag rips open and everything starts going against you . . . this is probably the worst I've ever felt after a game," Cody Hawkins said. "We put our defense into some tough spots when we turned the ball over down there . . . the back-to-back turnovers hurt us."

"Those guys were playing like they were the best team in the country and we were allowing them to do that."

With a win in its sights, KU got possession at its 37-yard line with 2:49 remaining. Five plays later, Sims weaved 28 yards through the middle of CU's defense for his fourth TD and the Jayhawks' first lead of the afternoon (52-45).

Given 46 seconds to regroup and respond, Cody Hawkins drove CU from its 26-yard line to the KU 7. Eight seconds remained. A first-down pass to Richardson in the end zone was ruled incomplete, although Richardson and several of his teammates disputed the call.

Asked if the catch was a TD, Richardson said, "Yeah, definitely. I really don't know what went wrong. I'm going to watch film on it, because it's eating me alive right now. I'm still shocked."

Said McKnight: "I'm still trying to figure out why it wasn't a touchdown. I don't understand it . . . but I had a pretty good view; I think he caught it."

That play took 6 seconds. With 2 seconds left, Hawkins' final pass - once again for Richardson - was incomplete. The Buffs had accomplished the improbable, blowing a 28-point lead and sinking to the bottom of the Big 12 North Division.

"Maybe guys got complacent," McKnight said. "But I don't understand that with three wins coming into it. There's no way we should have lost that football game. I hate losing, but if a team's better than us I'll give hats off to that team. But right now . . . we're a way better football team. We basically just shut down."

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Bohn: Decision on CU Buffs coach Dan Hawkins' future looms

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

Posted: 11/06/2010 08:02:39 PM MDT

LAWRENCE, Kan. -- University of Colorado football coach Dan Hawkins has not been fired, but the school could make an announcement in regard to his future later this week, athletic director Mike Bohn confirmed Saturday night.

All indications are that Hawkins will be fired at the end of the season, if not sooner, and sooner is suddenly a real possibility after the Buffs' epic collapse at Kansas. CU led by 28 points in the fourth quarter, but gave up 35 unanswered points to fall 52-45 to the Jayhawks. Kansas, like CU, was winless in Big 12 play heading into the game.

If Hawkins is fired, it is unclear whether he will be relieved of his duties immediately or be allowed to coach the remainder of the season.

Chancellor Phil DiStefano told the Camera last month that he prefers to wait until the end of the football season to make any decision about the future of the coaching staff. DiStefano did not attend Saturday's game because he was in California on CU business. Bohn and DiStefano could meet as soon as today to discuss Hawkins' future.

Bohn would not address specific factors that will play a part in the decision, but it's possible the school could be concerned how assistant coaches and senior quarterback Cody Hawkins respond if Dan Hawkins is fired. Cody Hawkins is the only healthy quarterback on the roster with any experience and if he opted not to complete his senior season because his dad was fired, the Buffs would be forced to ask true freshman Nick Hirschman to burn his redshirt.

Bohn was obviously frustrated after the game and remained so after accompanying the team on a charter flight home.

"It goes without saying that this game was extremely disappointing on many levels and obviously these developments do not meet our expectations," Bohn told the Camera in a phone interview. "That's not to disparage Kansas' accomplishments in any way. While we share many of the same frustrations and serious disappointment as our fans, I have confidence in this group of seniors to represent this team and the university with both pride and a competitive spirit the rest of the season. I am cognizant and most appreciative of our fans' support of the players all season long. Their loyal following will be integral to our immediate and long-term success."

After Saturday's loss, Hawkins is 19-39 in his fifth season at CU. This could end up being his fifth straight losing season at Colorado, with his best record a 6-7 mark in 2007 that included a loss to Alabama in the Independence Bowl. Hawkins' team also has not won a road game since the 2007 season.

There are three games remaining on the Buffs' schedule -- home games against Iowa State and Kansas State and the season finale at Nebraska.

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CU Buffs collapse in Kansas, lose 52-45

Hawkins' squad gives up 28-point lead in fourth quarter; Bohn to discuss program tonight

By Kyle Ringo, Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/06/2010 03:30:57 PM MDT

LAWRENCE, Kan. -- Head down, tie flapping in the breeze of a mild autumn late-afternoon in the Midwest, Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn hurried past a group of reporters Saturday on the concrete sidewalk outside the south end of Memorial Stadium on the University of Kansas campus.

He had that look on his face again. A look seen only once before in his tenure at Colorado. A look that signals history is in the making or has just been made.

The last time Bohn wore the look was a warm evening in Houston back in 2005 after a historic loss in the Big 12 Championship game. The look signaled then that the end of the Gary Barnett era had arrived after the Buffs lost by 67 points to Texas.

Bohn officially fired Barnett a few days later.

Colorado football definitely made history once again Saturday with a mega-meltdown in the fourth quarter against the Jayhawks. CU gagged on a 28-point lead and coughed it up to the delight of the beleaguered Jayhawks and their fans.

Kansas scored 35 unanswered points and won 52-45 snapping its streak of 11 consecutive Big 12 Conference losses. The rally extended the Buffs' misery on the road to 15 consecutive losses in true road games and 17 consecutive losses outside the state of Colorado.

The 35-point rally is the second-most points scored in the fourth quarter to win a game in NCAA history. BYU holds the record, having scored 36 in the fourth quarter to beat Washington State in 1990.

Bohn did not take questions from reporters immediately following the game, but shared his frustration following the teams' charter flight home.

"It goes without saying that this game was extremely disappointing on many levels and obviously these developments do not meet our expectations," Bohn told the Camera in a phone interview.

Hawkins did address the media briefly but spent only 75 seconds discussing the game before turning his attention to a radio interview he also cut short as he headed to the team bus.

"Just got to finish, you know? Just got to learn how to finish," Hawkins said. "Got to know what it's like to be in the lead and know how to finish."

The Buffs appeared well on their way to finishing off their road woes as they emerged from the locker room after halftime. They had built a 35-10 lead in the first two quarters and only needed to burn the clock by running the football against the 112th ranked rushing defense in the nation and not make mistakes.

They managed to do that through the third quarter trading a 38-yard field goal from Aric Goodman for a 1-yard touchdown run by Kansas running back James Sims to make the score 38-17.

They extended the lead on the first play of the fourth quarter when running back Rodney Stewart scored his third touchdown of the day on an 8-yard scamper. It was a career day for Stewart, who finished with 175 yards on 27 carries.

Little did he know it would become a day he would like to forget.

"Definitely, we thought the game was over," Stewart said. "Really, we thought they was going to give up. They never did."

Freshman quarterback Quinn Mecham led Kansas 66 yards in nine plays and scored on a 13-yard run by Sims. The drive was aided by a personal foul penalty on CU freshman safety Terrel Smith.

The momentum really began to swing on one of two controversial plays that went in Kansas' favor. The Jayhawks attempted an onside kick and officials ruled they recovered. CU players, KOA radio employees and other CU staffers all contended afterward that Cameron Ham recovered the ball and maintained possession the entire time. The play happened on the Colorado side of the field.

"Can't comment on that," Hawkins said afterward when asked if officials got the call right.

Mecham led the Jayhawks to another touchdown, this time needing only five plays to find the end zone on a 38-yard pass to Johnathan Wilson.

Kansas actually kicked the ball to the Buffs and CU began a drive with 9 minutes, 20 seconds left. Colorado made a first down and on the fifth play of the possession ran an end around with wide receiver Toney Clemons. Defensive end Toben Oporum tackled Clemons for a 14-yard loss and Clemons stretched forward and inexplicably lost the football before he was down.

Kansas' Tyler Patmon scooped it up and raced 28 yards for a touchdown to bring the Jayhawks within seven points -- 45-38.

The Buffs took possession once again at their 20-yard line and opted to throw the ball on the first two plays of the drive into the wind. Cody Hawkins completed the first pass for a two-yard gain to wide receiver Paul Richardson, who set a CU freshman record for touchdown catches in a season with his third and fourth scoring catches in the game.

Hawkins dropped back to pass on the next play and threw toward the Kansas sideline. Patmon was there to make the interception and his momentum carried him out of bounds.

A stadium that was lifeless an hour earlier was now bursting with energy. The Colorado sideline was grim and lifeless while Kansas players were like caged dogs being restrained from charging the field by coaches on almost every play.

First-year Kansas coach Turner Gill, who had been taking nearly as much heat as Dan Hawkins coming into the game, calmed his team by going back to what had been working -- Sims on the ground.

After a 22-yard pass from Mecham to Daymond Patterson, Sims ran four times and danced into the end zone on the final carry to tie the score at 45.

"It felt great," Sims said of his four-touchdown, 123-yard performance. "I would just like to thank my offensive line. They blocked for me and they believed in me and I believed in them."

Colorado took possession with 4:30 remaining, but was unable to move the ball with a Stewart run, an incomplete pass and Cody Hawkins being sacked for a 13-yard loss by KU senior Jake Laptad. The Buffs punted hoping to finally stem the tide of momentum and Jayhawk energy.

Nope.

Kansas took over with 2:49 remaining. Mecham, who made the first start of his career a week earlier, completed a pair of passes and then handed off twice to Sims, who scored his final touchdown with 52 seconds left.

The Buffs actually came back to life and Cody Hawkins adeptly directed them down the field with a 19-yard completion to Scotty McKnight and 27-yard throw to Richardson. The Buffs had first-and-goal at the Kansas 7-yard line with 8 seconds remaining. Hawkins threw to Richardson in the end zone along the sideline and the freshman appeared to make the catch.

"I'm still trying to figure out why it wasn't a touchdown," said McKnight, who had a good view of the play and was one of the first Buffs there to congratulate Richardson on what black and gold fans thought was a tying play. "I don't understand it. Does anyone have an idea?"

"Are we aloud to talk about referees?"

"No," a CU staffer said.

"Yeah, I had a pretty good view. I think he caught it."

Richardson insisted he did score.

Officials ruled otherwise.

The final play of the game was a pass intended for Richardson again. It wasn't close. The Jayhawks danced onto the field, finally set free by their coaches. Some of the Buffs went to shake their hands. Many did not, slumping into the locker room instead.

"I don't think I've been this upset ever about a game," McKnight said after walking back out on the field to give it one last look about 20 minutes after the game had ended. He was fighting off tears. "... It's just tough. There is no way we should have lost that football game."

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Rodney Stewart's stellar day overshadowed

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

Posted: 11/07/2010 12:08:28 AM MDT

LAWRENCE, Kan. -- The best performance in what is becoming a standout career for Colorado running back Rodney Stewart was somewhat lost amid the rubble of an epic collapse on the football field here Saturday.

Stewart was a big factor in leading the Buffs to a 35-10 halftime lead and a 45-17 advantage early in the fourth quarter, but the junior nicknamed "Speedy" wasn't able to provide the kind of tough yardage a team has to have when the opponent knows what coming.

Stewart finished with a career best 175 rushing yards and three rushing touchdowns in the loss, but only 14 of those yards came in the fourth quarter and eight of them came on the first play of the quarter when he scored his third touchdown.

"We was trying to get a big play," Stewart said when asked why the Buffs didn't stick more with the run when Kansas began to rally. "We needed a momentum shifter. If throwing the ball was going to get it, you know I was fine with that.

"... It's not my decision."

Stewart moved into 10th place on the Colorado career rushing list with 2,338 yards to his credit. He passed former CU rushing stalwarts such as Cortlen Johnson, Lamont Warren and Lee Rouson.

He also had 44 receiving yards in the game, giving him 219 all-purpose yards. It was the first time in his career he has eclipsed 200 yards in that category.

"We're mad, we're pretty upset," Stewart said, describing the mood in the locker room following a historic come-from-behind win by the Jayhawks. "A lot of guys in tears. Nobody likes losing, especially when you should have had the game won."

Hawkins passes

Kordell Stewart

Cody Hawkins completed 29 of 44 passes for 322 yards against the Jayhawks and moved into second place in career passing yardage ahead of Kordell Stewart.

Hawkins also passed Joel Klatt in career passing attempts to become the program's all-time leader in that category. Hawkins is already CU's career leader in touchdown passes and interceptions. He added to those marks Saturday as well.

Klatt is the only player remaining ahead of Hawkins in career passing yards. Hawkins has 6,778 passing yards. Klatt has 7,375.

Statistic of note

Kansas converted 11 of 16 third down attempts becoming the first CU opponent in 22 games to convert more than 50 percent.

Notable

Freshman place-kicker Justin Castor returned to action kicking off several times against the Jayhawks. His only previous action was a blocked field goal attempt a month ago at Missouri. ... Tight end DaVaughn Thornton made his first career reception for a touchdown with 3 seconds remaining in the first half. ... Scotty McKnight extended his streak of consecutive games with at least one reception to 45 consecutive regular season games and 46 games overall.

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Former KU athletics fundraiser Rodney Jones sentenced to 46 months in federal prison posted 1 hour, 6 minutes ago

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Bufs bemoan setback

Jayhawks 'not human' in comeback



Photo by Nick Krug. [Enlarge photo.](#)

Colorado linebacker Liloa Nobriga pushes Kansas running back James Sims out of bounds during the fourth quarter, Saturday, Nov. 6, 2010 at Kivisto Field.

By [Gary Bedore](#)
November 7, 2010

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In 121 years, the University of Colorado never had blown a 28-point lead in a football game.

Until Saturday.

Against Kansas.

At Memorial Stadium.

"They came back and scored five straight touchdowns. I mean, that's not human," Buffs' wide receiver Paul Richardson said.

He was admittedly "shocked" after seeing CU's 45-17 fourth-quarter lead disappear in a one-for-the-ages, 52-45 defeat — the Buffs' 16th straight loss on the road, 12th straight in Big 12 Conference play.

"I don't know what went wrong. Of course it's eating me alive. I'm still shocked," added Richardson, who caught 11 passes for 141 yards and scored two touchdowns.

He thought he had a third TD, one that, along with an extra point, would have forced overtime with two seconds left. A pass from Cody



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Hawkins to Richardson in the corner of the end zone on a second-and-goal call from the KU seven was ruled incomplete.

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"I definitely caught it. I made the catch and landed in bounds," Richardson said. "They said I didn't have control of the ball, but I did have control of the ball if I was able to take the hit and land. I let it (ball) go when I got up to celebrate."

There was nothing to celebrate after a final Hawkins pass soared out of the end zone on a third-and-goal play from the same seven.

"I thought he (Richardson) caught it," said Hawkins, who completed 29 of 44 passes with three touchdowns and two interceptions.

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"I am still trying to figure out why it wasn't a touchdown. I don't understand it. Does anyone have an idea?" CU receiver Scotty McKnight asked the media.

The media had no answers.

Coach Dan Hawkins' take?

"No comment," he said.

He also had a "no comment" regarding results of an inside kick recovered by KU's Bradley McDougald with 11:05 left, with CU still up, 45-24.

"It didn't look like it, he had it," coach's son Cody Hawkins said of CU's Cameron Ham, a player the Buffs felt had possession of Jacob Branstetter's squib kick.

"I was right there. I think you could clearly tell Cam had the ball. They didn't touch it. He (McDougald) jumped over the guy's back. I don't know how you are going to reach over behind your back and take the football away from somebody who has it."

Cody said the disputed calls didn't decide the game.

"Obviously you have to play with the referees because they helped us out on a couple calls today, too," the QB said. "There was a roughing the passer that I should have won an Oscar on and a couple pass-interference plays down the field that played in our favor.

"You can't blame it on the referees. They (Jayhawks) were playing like they thought they were the best team in the country, and we were allowing them to do that."

The Buffs (3-6, 0-5) still were in decent shape when coach Hawkins huddled the team after a KU score that cut the gap to 45-31 at 9:26.

"He said, 'Cmon, guys, we are up by 14. We can still win the game.' That's when we knew like, 'Man, there might be a chance we could lose,'" said running back Rodney Stewart, who gained 175 yards off 27 carries and scored three touchdowns.

Coach Hawkins explained his own message as: "Just go relax. We are still up by 14. Let's go. We're the team that's ahead. We're still in control here."

Senior QB Hawkins was hurting emotionally as he iced his right shoulder after the game.

"I mean, shoot, was that 35 unanswered?" Cody asked. "This is by far the worst I've ever felt after a game. When you think you have it in the bag and all of a sudden the bag rips open and everything starts going against you, it's tough."

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Wow. Just ... wow: 'Relentless' rally lifts KU past Buffs



[Nick Krug](#)

The Memorial Stadium crowd rises up as Kansas running back James Sims leaves Colorado linebacker Liloa Nobriga on the ground for a touchdown late in the fourth quarter, Saturday, Nov. 6, 2010 at Kivisto Field. The extra point by Jacob Branstetter tied the game. [Enlarge photo](#)

November 7, 2010

With 26 different buzz words at his disposal, Kansas University football coach Turner Gill flipped through his notebook at the beginning of the week and decided the key term for Week 9 would be "relentless."

Great call.

Trailing by 28 with 14:47 to play, Gill's Jayhawks defined the word as they unleashed a rally of epic proportions and claimed a 52-45 victory over Colorado at Memorial Stadium.

Onside kicks bounced KU's way.

The turnover-challenged Jayhawks picked up two crucial second-half takeaways.

And a couple of long-standing school records fell.

"At halftime, we just talked about being relentless," said Gill, whose team looked sluggish in the first two quarters and trailed, 35-10, at the break. "We've got to keep playing, keep executing and keep bringing intensity. I think that's what happened."

The biggest comeback in school history, which also featured the most points scored in a quarter in school history, unfolded so fast, nobody in the Kansas locker room was able to describe the incredible comeback in the same manner.

"I feel like I lost track of the score," senior offensive lineman Brad Thorson said. "All of a sudden, we look up and we're down seven. Those turnovers at the end were unbelievable. I'm still in shock."

Added Johnathan Wilson: "We were down. We didn't make some of the plays we should have. But somewhere in the second half, I don't know where, I need to go back and watch the film, but we just clicked."

Saturday's victory started off like so many of the losses the Jayhawks (3-6 overall, 1-4 Big 12) had experienced this fall. KU quarterback Quinn Mecham threw two first-half interceptions. The KU defense was torched for 316 yards in the first two quarters. And the Buffs (3-6, 0-5), led by seniors Cody Hawkins and Rodney Stewart, did whatever they wanted on offense in building the commanding halftime lead.

CU struck first in the second half, too, with a third-quarter field goal that made it 38-10.

Then KU's comeback spark began to flicker.

A one-yard run by James Sims cut the lead to 38-17, but CU answered with an eight-yard TD run from Stewart, and it looked as if this would be another embarrassing beating for KU.

One problem. The Jayhawks weren't interested in repeating history. So they made it.

"We just let all the pressure go and went out and played football," Wilson said. "I just told the guys, go play street ball, go play like you're playing two-hand touch or whatever. And that's basically what people were doing. They were just making plays, letting loose."

Added Thorson: "Just to have the pieces start falling into place for us, to have things start going our way, was incredible."

The first thing that sparked the comeback was an onside kick recovered by Kansas with CU leading, 45-24.

"It was discussed," Gill said. "We kind of went back and forth on it. Being behind 21 points, I thought (that) was really the chance for us to do it. Maybe it would be a little bit of a surprise."

Indeed it was, as Bradley McDougald recovered the kick and, four plays later, Wilson cut the lead to 45-31 with a 38-yard touchdown grab.

On the ensuing drive, red-shirt freshman Tyler Patmon made the first of two huge plays that helped decide the game. After defensive end Toben Oporum walloped CU's Toney Clemons on a reverse, the ball came out, Patmon picked it up and rumbled 28 yards for a touchdown.

KU trailed 45-38.

On the next drive, Patmon intercepted Hawkins on the second play from scrimmage to set up an eight-yard TD from Sims that tied the game at 45.

"We have been waiting on that for so long," Patmon said of the turnovers, KU's sixth and seventh on the year.

From there, the KU defense, fueled by an improbable flurry of good fortune, forced Colorado into a three-and-out.

Jake Laptad's sack — for a third consecutive game — sealed it and gave the ball back to KU's offense. Five plays later, Sims put the capper on the day with a 28-yard TD run that proved to be the game-winner. It marked the first four-touchdown day by a KU running back since Jake Sharp did it in 2008 against K-State.

"We've worked on that play at the end of every practice," said Sims, through a university release. "Coach (Reggie Mitchell) just said to hit the A-gap, and the hole will be there. I just listened to what he told me, and it was there."

Sims finished with a career-high 123 yards on 20 carries.

The announced attendance for Saturday's game was 40,851, though it appeared the actual attendance was smaller. By the start of the second half, Memorial Stadium was no more than half full. But those who stayed were loud and were treated to one heck of a finish.

"This is an unbelievable victory," Thorson said. "This is an unbelievable feeling. This is why I play football."

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Incomplete pass seals Buffs' fate

By Brian Howell
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LAWRENCE, Kan. — Paul Richardson was sure he caught the game-tying touchdown in the closing seconds Saturday.

His teammates and others near the play were sure of it, too. However, the referees didn't see it that way. Colorado wound up losing to Kansas 52-45.

"I'm shocked and I thought I was in," Richardson said. "I really don't know what went wrong. I want to watch film and see what happened. It's eating me alive right now. There was no question in my mind that I was in."

With 8 seconds left in the game, CU quarterback Cody Hawkins tossed the ball to Richardson in the left side of the end zone. Richardson appeared to grab the ball and get a foot down in the end zone.

The play was even reviewed, and still ruled incomplete. Hawkins threw another incomplete pass on the next play and the game was over.

"I'm still trying to figure out why it wasn't a touchdown," CU receiver Scotty McKnight said. "I don't understand it."

That wasn't the only big call to go against the Buffs. After Kansas scored with 11 minutes left to pull within 45-24, the Jayhawks did an onside kick. CU players said Cameron Ham came up with the ball, but KU was awarded possession and went down to score again.

Rather than risk Big 12 discipline, coach Dan Hawkins said he couldn't comment on the referee calls.

Cody Hawkins said he thought Ham recovered the onside kick and Richardson caught the touchdown, but he didn't make excuses.

"Obviously you have to play with the referees because they helped us out on a couple of calls tonight, too," he said. "There was a roughing the passer (penalty against Kansas) where I should have won an Oscar on, another couple of pass interference plays down the field that played in our favor. You can't blame it on the referees. We never should have been in that situation and we've got to get better."

The CU players and coaches that talked after the game all echoed the same sentiment. Regardless of what the referees called, the Buffs didn't close the deal when holding a big lead.

"When you're ahead like that, you need to learn how to finish," head coach Dan Hawkins said. "You've got to be able to stop them and continue to do your deal. When you don't, you give the other team momentum."

As for Richardson, he didn't get the last catch, but still had a huge day, setting freshman records for catches (11) and

receiving yards (141) and tying his mark with two touchdowns.

The 11 catches tied a CU record for one game, and his four touchdowns this season are the most ever for a CU freshman. He also had the Buffs' first 100-yard receiving game of the season.

BIG DAY FOR SPEEDY: For much of the day, it appeared that one of the big stories would be the play of running back Rodney "Speedy" Stewart.

He finished with career-highs of 175 yards rushing and three touchdowns. He now has 2,338 career rushing yards, which ranks 10th in CU history.

Despite his big day, however, CU turned to the passing game late. Although Kansas had scored 21 straight points to pull within 45-38, CU got the ball back with 7:12 to go. Instead of trying to run down the clock with running plays, the Buffs threw two passes, the second of which was intercepted.

"That's not my decision," Stewart said when asked about the Buffs' decision to throw late in the game. "We were trying to get a big play. We needed a momentum shifter, and if throwing the ball was going to get it, I would have been fine with that."

SCORING SPREE: CU's 45 points was the second-most it has scored in coach Hawkins' five seasons. The Buffs had 65 in a 2007 victory over Nebraska.

Ironically, in CU's two-highest scoring games under Hawkins, it gave up more than 50 points in each game.

The Buffs had 35 points by halftime, the first time it has scored that much before halftime since Sept. 18, 2004, against North Texas.

COUGHING IT UP: At the end of the first quarter, CU had tied a school record by going 10 straight quarters without a turnover.

Then Cody Hawkins threw an interception in the second quarter and then the Buffs had two turnovers in the fourth quarter.

Prior to getting three turnovers Saturday, the Kansas defense ranked last in the country in generating just five turnovers all season.

McKNIGHT STREAK CONTINUES: McKnight caught four passes for 59 yards, marking the 46th straight game he has caught a pass.

EXTRA POINTS: True freshman Terrel Smith got his first career interception for the Buffs in the second quarter. ... Redshirt freshman DaVaughn Thornton caught his first career pass late in the second quarter, hauling in a 12-yard touchdown. ... True freshman Justin Castor was used to kickoff several times for the Buffs. ... Defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe made his first start for CU. ... The Buffs have allowed 2,061 yards in the last four games. ... Kansas outgained CU 215-65 in the fourth quarter.

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