

# Most CU players prefer Hawk finish season

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

Posted: 11/07/2010 11:44:19 PM MST

It's fair to assume after suffering an historic fourth-quarter collapse Saturday in Lawrence, Kan., the Colorado football program might experience some finger-pointing, a family squabble or two.

Players said none of that occurred Sunday when the team reunited at the Dal Ward Center to review a game that no one in the program will soon forget because of its historic finish. The Buffs gave up 35 points in the fourth quarter and surrendered a 28-point lead to lose to the Jayhawks, 52-45.

The implosion fueled an eruption of anger from fans who can now almost be accurately described as blood thirsty in their hopes for a coaching change.

Frustration over the school's lack of action is now fueling a growing backlash against athletic director Mike Bohn and chancellor Phil DiStefano, who said last month that he prefers to wait to the end of the season to make judgments about the coaches.

Bohn said there were no further developments in regard to a possible announcement about the future of the coaching staff on Sunday. Bohn and Hawkins met in the football offices late in the afternoon.

No one inside the program is fooling themselves. Everyone appears to know now that any chance has been lost to keep the current staff in place after the season. But multiple players said they are thankful the administration hasn't fired coach Hawkins while there are still games to play.

"I don't know the history, but I would say in most history when a head coach is fired in the middle of the season, those teams generally don't do so well," injured starting quarterback Tyler Hansen said.

Other players seemed indifferent.

"What they do is their decision," injured safety Anthony Perkins said. "As players, we just have to come out every week no matter what the situation is and just play to the best of our ability. It really doesn't matter what they decide. As players, it's our job to go out and play week-in and week-out no matter what."

Hansen said firing the head coach before the end of the season arrives wouldn't accomplish much and it could lead to plenty of confusion, doubt and uncertainty for players in the program. He said it wouldn't be fair to a senior class of players who have given four or five years to the program.

"I think it's only fair to the seniors to ride out this coaching staff," he said.

Tight end Luke Walters is one of those seniors. He is actually in his sixth year because the NCAA granted him an extra season of eligibility after he suffered multiple season-ending injuries earlier in his career.

Walters said if he thought the coaches had given up or weren't doing everything they could do to win, something might need to be done. But he said CU coaches haven't "fallen off at all in that aspect."

"It would be unfortunate to see any coaches have to go at this point in time because it's so much more than putting something on one person," Walters said. "It's way more than that. One change is obviously probably not going to get the results that everyone is looking for. At this point in time, I can't say there would be anything positive coming out of that, as much as people want to see something happen."

The Buffs did change things up a bit Sunday.

The offense and defense met together as units to review film. Normally players review film with their position coaches. The

change was meant to get everyone on the same page and seeing things through the perspective of players and coaches outside of their position groups.

The Buffs must regroup and return to practice this week to prepare for the final two home games against Iowa State and Kansas State.

Colorado could still qualify for a bowl game if it somehow pulled things together enough to win its final three games, but the Buffs probably wouldn't be viewed as an attractive option to many bowl representatives.

"We're going to keep bouncing back until the end of the world," left tackle Nate Solder said after Saturday's game. "We really are. No matter what happens. Really. I mean it. No matter what happens. There is no quit in any one of us. I'm not concerned about that. I'm concerned about winning the next game."

[Close Window](#)[Send To Printer](#)

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

Longmont, Colorado  
Wednesday, February 16,  
2011

Publish Date: 11/8/2010

## Same problems haunt Buffaloes

*By Brian Howell*  
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

Throughout his career, Scotty McKnight has been the ultimate optimist for the University of Colorado football team.

It's probably because, more than anything, he wants to win. Badly.

So, when you see McKnight down in the dumps, you know things are bad.

Everyone involved with the CU football team was upset following Saturday's stunning 52-45 loss at Kansas.

McKnight was as steamed as he's ever been this season. And, with good reason. The Buffs led 45-17 with just over 11 minutes to play and then watched Kansas — which was averaging 16.13 points per game coming into the day — score 35 points in the next 10 minutes and take the win.

"Maybe guys got complacent," McKnight said of the Buffs' seemingly comfy 28-point lead. "I don't understand why we can when we had three wins coming into it. It's just tough.

"There's no way we should have lost that football game."

He's right. Then again, Saturday may have been another dose of reality for the Buffs that not much has changed in the past few years.

Since the start of the season, McKnight and other veteran leaders have talked about this team being different. Not only more talented, this team was supposed to be more mature and more prepared to handle certain situations, such as playing on the road and playing with leads.

Yet with three games to play, the Buffs don't look any different than they did in 2008 or 2009.

They still don't have that killer instinct. CU is just 12-10 under coach Dan Hawkins when leading at halftime.

They are 0-3 with halftime leads in the past four weeks.

CU had a halftime lead against Baylor on Oct. 21, but was outscored 21-10 after the half and lost 31-25.

The next week, the Buffs took a 10-point lead into the fourth quarter against Texas Tech. The Red Raiders outscored the Buffs 13-0 in the final quarter and won 27-24.

The Buffs also continue to struggle on the road. They are now 0-4 away from Colorado this year.



CU head coach Dan Hawkins talks with an official against Texas Tech on Oct. 23. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

In the first three, the Buffs were blown out by a combined score of 121-17.

At least the Buffs didn't get blown out this time.

But the Kansas loss was much worse than any of the previous road losses and much worse than the defeats to Baylor and Texas Tech.

CU was burying Kansas for much of the afternoon and, as McKnight said, had no business losing the game.

But, after 16 straight losses outside of the state, it didn't take much for doubt to creep in.

Kansas scored a couple touchdowns to pull within 14 points and the Buffs folded.

Rather than clamping down and playing to win, the Buffs — the players and coaches — clammed up and tried to survive.

Running back Rodney Stewart admitted that when Kansas cut the deficit to 45-31, "That's when we knew this might be a chance we could lose."

It was an interesting comment, because not many teams would have felt that way.

But, the coaches must have sensed the game slipping away, too, because the play-calling resembled a team trying to rally, not a team protecting a lead.

Even at that point — ahead 45-31 — CU should have felt in control. The Buffs had rushed for 150 yards against one of the worst defensive teams in the country and just minutes before had pounded the ball down the field for a touchdown.

Yet, rather than follow conventional wisdom by keeping the ball on the ground and running down the clock, the Buffs tried a trick play. They gave the ball to receiver Toney Clemons on a reverse. Clemons fumbled and Kansas returned it for a touchdown.

Still, the Buffs were ahead by seven points with 7:12 to play. Feed the ball to Stewart, who was having a career day, get a few first downs and you take several minutes off the clock and maybe even roll down the field for a score that stalls the KU momentum.

Instead, the Buffs — going into the wind — went to the air. Cody Hawkins threw a 2-yard pass to Paul Richardson and then was intercepted on the next play. Kansas scored again to tie the game and then added the game-winner a few minutes later.

It was a remarkable turn of events. And, it was also unfortunate.

McKnight and the rest of the seniors have desperately wanted this season to be different. This was supposed to be their best year in Boulder.

And, with three games to go, it has been painfully similar to the past.

No wonder McKnight was upset.

Brian Howell can be reached at [bhowell@times-call.com](mailto:bhowell@times-call.com).

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

dave kriegler

## Kriegler: Suspicion infects CU football program

By Dave Kriegler  
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/08/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

Before Saturday's epic collapse at Kansas, CU didn't have to fire head football coach Dan Hawkins until season's end. The Buffs weren't going anywhere anyway. They just had to hit the ground running with a new coach the next day.

Since KU's astounding 35-point fourth quarter, a toxic level of suspicion has infected the CU program, and now Hawkins' motives will be questioned with every play call until his pink slip is delivered.

"The negativity has just grown to a point where it's a challenge on many fronts," a CU insider told me Sunday. "The factors are lining up pretty clearly right now."

The Hawk Watch is no longer about which week. It's about which day. It could be today. And it ought to be.

Let me quickly add that the suspicion infecting

the program requires a highly uncharitable interpretation of circumstantial evidence.

Neither Hawkins nor his son, Cody, the team's starting quarterback, has given us any reason to question his integrity over the past five years. In the case of Cody, who has handled a difficult situation with more maturity than many of us would have at his age, the suspicions seem particularly cruel.

Nevertheless, inexplicable play-calling and the elder Hawkins' refusal to explain much of anything have raised two suspicions that could do the program long-term damage:

- In search of a rationale for head-scratching play-calling that kept giving the ball back to Kansas during Saturday's nightmarish fourth quarter, some fans are openly wondering whether Dan Hawkins' top priority is winning or getting his son the CU career passing record on his way out the door.
- In search of a rationale for allowing Hawkins to continue coaching as his program disintegrates around him, it's been suggested that CU can't fire Dan because Cody is the Buffs' only healthy quarterback and might walk out with his dad.

Insiders assure me that Cody's possible reaction to his father's firing is only one of many considerations and not a major one. Personally, I think there is zero chance that Cody quits on his teammates with three games remaining and no other experienced quarterback on the roster, no matter what happens with his father.

Advertisement

 <p><b>Kodak</b></p> <p>Bring in any old printer to Best Buy and save an additional \$50 off any new Kodak Printer.</p>  <p>VISIT <a href="http://WWW.BESTBUY.COM/KODAKSWAPFORSAVINGS">WWW.BESTBUY.COM/KODAKSWAPFORSAVINGS</a> FOR MORE INFORMATION OFFER EXPIRES 2/19/2011</p>	<p><b>BEST BUY</b> LOCATIONS NEAR YOU:</p> <p>4130 Division Street Saint Cloud, 320-259-5208</p> <p>20870 Rogers Drive Rogers, 763-428-7140</p> <p>12905 Elm Creek Boulevard Maple Grove, 763-416-6300</p>
---	--

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

And frankly, even if he did, an inexperienced quarterback playing out the string on a lost season would be better for CU than the perception that Hawkins & Son are holding the university hostage.

The choice is not to keep Dan around for Cody's benefit or burn freshman Nick Hirschman's redshirt. Hirschman isn't ready anyway. If worse comes to worst, the Buffs could go with freshman walk-on Justin Gorman or emergency quarterbacks Scotty McKnight or Kyle Cefalo, receivers who played some quarterback in high school. It wouldn't be pretty, but hey, the Buffs aren't exactly painting a Monet as it is.

Similarly, the only evidence that Dan Hawkins kept calling pass plays in the fourth quarter at Kansas to pad his son's stats is Hawkins' refusal to offer another explanation. Even insiders wondered why Cody Hawkins was taking snaps with 20 seconds left on the play clock and throwing long, dangerous out patterns while frittering away a 28-point lead.

With the younger Hawkins now third on the CU career passing list behind Joel Klatt and Kordell Stewart, some fans jumped to a predictable conclusion. The elder Hawkins can protest that this is unfair, but it's the price he pays for building his program around his son.

In fact, there's another explanation that goes to Hawkins' uneven recruiting and wacky play-calling rather than his integrity. It's not just that he's down to one healthy quarterback. He's also down to one healthy running back. The 5-foot-6,

175-pound Rodney Stewart had a great game Saturday, but after 27 carries for 175 yards and three touchdowns, he was out of gas when the Buffs needed to run clock at the end.

Hawkins could have explained this if he hadn't abandoned his commitment to public accountability weeks ago. He cut off his postgame radio interview with KOA after two questions and two clichés. He cut off his postgame session with reporters after a slightly longer but no more edifying exchange.

It is a measure of the elder Hawkins' current standing that recruiting failures and oblivious play-calling are the more flattering explanation for his team's unraveling. If he is permitted to coach the final three games, every pass thrown by his son will be suspect, and the passing yardage record, should Cody get it, will be tainted.

Better to let the younger Hawkins finish under an interim coach whose motives are above suspicion. Better to end the melodrama now, before it spirals further out of control.

*Dave Krieger: 303-954-5297,  
dkrieger@denverpost.com or twitter.  
com/DaveKrieger*

Advertisement



**SAVE** up to **64%**  
Plus, get  
**3 FREE Gifts**



Special Code: 45069ZWN

To Order: [www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71](http://www.OmahaSteaks.com/print71) or call 1-877-605-0496

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™



# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu football

## CU Buffs eyeing ... The Cyclones

Posted: 11/08/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

**For the record:** Having won at Texas on Oct. 23, Iowa State almost pulled off another marquee victory last weekend, but ninth-ranked Nebraska intercepted a pass on a fake conversion kick in overtime to edge the Cyclones 31-30 in Ames, Iowa. Iowa State (5-5, 3-3 Big 12) needs one victory to become bowl-eligible for the second straight year under coach Paul Rhoads, who obviously is not afraid to gamble.

**Who's hot:** Special teams. Cyclones kicker Grant Mahoney made a career-long 57-yard field goal against Nebraska, and punter Kirby Van Der Kamp ranks third in the Big 12 with a 45.4 average.

**Who's not:** ISU's passing game. The Cyclones rank 11th in the Big 12 in pass efficiency, ahead of only Texas.

Senior QB Austen Arnaud is capable of big games. His 42 career TD passes are the second-most in school history.

**Key stat:** Senior tailback Alexander Robinson has rushed for a total of 366 yards on 82 carries in three games against CU, reaching 100 yards

each time.

**FYI:** Iowa State yielded only seven Nebraska pass completions, the fewest for the Cyclones' defense since Kansas State had six completions on Nov. 20, 2004.

*Tom Kensler, The Denver Post*

Advertisement

 <p><b>Kodak</b> Bring in any old printer to Best Buy and save an additional \$50 off any new Kodak Printer.</p>  <p>VISIT <a href="http://WWW.BESTBUY.COM/KODAKSWAPFORSAVINGS">WWW.BESTBUY.COM/KODAKSWAPFORSAVINGS</a> FOR MORE INFORMATION OFFER EXPIRES 2/19/2011</p>	 <p><b>LOCATIONS NEAR YOU:</b></p> <p>1740 30th Street Boulder, 303-938-2889</p> <p>210 Ken Pratt Boulevard Suite 100 Longmont, 303-485-5939</p> <p>271 E Flatiron Circle Broomfield, 303-410-9715</p>
--	--

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu football

## Record in close games among the problems at CU

By **Tom Kensler**  
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/08/2010 01:00:00 AM MST

Nobody on the Colorado football roster smiles his way along the roller coaster of life more than B.J. Beatty. But after Saturday's historic collapse at Kansas, the senior linebacker couldn't hide his heartache.

"We can't go nowhere but up," Beatty said after Colorado blew a 28-point lead in the fourth quarter for what is thought to be the first time in the program's 121 years of football.

Unlike the underclassmen, Beatty won't have to worry about whom athletic director Mike Bohn selects as the new head coach. But Beatty and his veteran teammates can't help but reflect on their college careers as the end nears. So many losses. So many disappointments.

Football players are optimistic by nature. Every Saturday brings another opportunity. But Colorado (3-6, 0-5 Big 12) must win its last three games to at least salvage a potential week of fun at a bowl game. The last of the remaining games is at ninth-ranked Nebraska. That's not to say CU players don't believe they can win in Lincoln. They do. But few teams can.

How in the world could Colorado let a 45-17 lead slip away in the final 11-plus minutes?

"Obviously we can't do anything about this game now," Beatty said. "We go home (for games

against Iowa State and Kansas State). Hopefully that helps us. If we can get two wins at home, then we'll see what happens from there."

An inability to win close games, especially conference games, has buried the Buffs during the five-year Dan Hawkins era. With three league dates remaining, Colorado has won just six of 18 conference games decided by 10 points or fewer. For the past two seasons, when the roster should have come of age, the Buffaloes have dropped their last six closely contested Big 12 games.

That trend will get a coach fired every time.

Here are some issues to watch as the Buffs head into their final three games of the regular season:

### Will Dan Hawkins resign?

Unless he is asked by Bohn to resign, it would come as a surprise if Hawkins does not finish out the season. Coaches preach to their players to never quit and complete the job, so it's not in a coach's DNA to bow out on his own. Also, coaches don't want to lose a bargaining chip in negotiating a severance package.

### What happens within a team during what in

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™



# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

## effect is a lame-duck situation?

In some cases, the ranks become divided, perhaps between upperclassmen peeking ahead to the future and young players confused about the present. Worse, sometimes players quit paying attention, knowing that the head coach and most, if not all, of his assistants won't be back next year. Colorado has a strong core of senior leaders who will try to keep everybody together. The seniors will need to convince the underclassmen that video of their performances and effort in the next three games and during practices will be evaluated in slow motion by the next coaching staff and could determine whether the new regime includes those players in the long-term plans.

## Would it be a good idea for quarterback Cody Hawkins to just go away?

Absolutely not. First, he is one of the team leaders and among the hardest workers. Assuming coaches won't want to burn the redshirt of true freshman Nick Hirschman, replacing Cody would be a walk-on or a player converted from another position. That could result in disastrous scores. It does the program no good to get blown out in the last three games. It's not fair to other players on the team. Potential recruits may cross CU off their list. And destroying team confidence heading into next season would only make it more difficult on the new coaching staff.

## Will it get ugly at Folsom Field for the upcoming two home games?

Boos — and worse — are sure to rain down on Hawkins if CU fails to defeat Iowa State on Saturday and Kansas State the following weekend. But some fans may be concerned that their displeasure not be interpreted as a lack of support for the players and the team.

## Does it really matter in the grand scheme of things whether Hawkins completes the

## season?

No. Rest assured that although there is no official job opening as of yet, Bohn already is working on finding a new coach.

*Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or [tkensler@denverpost.com](mailto:tkensler@denverpost.com)*

## Losing a grip on the tight games

*CU's close Big 12 games under Dan Hawkins:*

### 2006 (0-2)

L Baylor, 34-31

L Kansas, 20-15

### 2007 (2-2)

W Oklahoma, 27-24

L Kansas, 19-14

W Texas Tech, 31-26

L Iowa State, 31-28

### 2008 (2-2)



Send flowers  
for any occasion  
**Bouquets**  
from **\$19.99**<sup>+s/h</sup>

**ProFlowers**  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

W Kansas State, 14-13

L Texas A&M, 24-17

W Iowa State, 28-24

L Nebraska, 40-31

## 2009 (2-3)

W Kansas, 34-30

W Texas A&M, 35-34

L Iowa State, 17-10

L Oklahoma St., 31-28

L Nebraska, 28-20

## 2010 (0-3)

L Baylor, 31-25

L Texas Tech, 27-24

L Kansas, 52-45



Send flowers  
for any occasion  
Bouquets  
from **\$19.99**  
+s/h

ProFlowers<sup>®</sup>  
Offer ONLY available at:  
[proflowers.com/happy](http://proflowers.com/happy)  
or call 1.877.804.1133

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics<sup>™</sup>