

Cody Hawkins' only concern: Wins

Bufs QB could leave CU with passing record

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 10/26/2010 11:51:13 PM MDT



Even the most frustrated Colorado football fans and new starting quarterback Cody Hawkins are on the same page in some ways.

They all would like Hawkins' career to end on a high note with a handful of memorable wins down the stretch of his senior season beginning Saturday at No. 11 Oklahoma.

Hawkins stepped back into the limelight in the middle of last week's loss to Texas Tech when junior Tyler Hansen suffered a ruptured spleen, ending his season. Hawkins had spent much of the past year on the sidelines on Saturdays signaling in plays to Hansen and serving as the holder on field goal and extra points. He was the starter for nearly 2½ seasons before giving way to Hansen in the middle of last season.

Hawkins was in front of the microphones as the starting quarterback often is on Tuesday during the program's weekly meeting with the media at the Dal Ward Center. He was asked near the end of his 13-minute session with reporters what it would mean to him to leave CU as its all-time leading passer.

"I would really love to go out with some wins," Hawkins said. "I could care less if I end up having to be just the holder or if they need me to punt. I mean, I don't care what I'm doing, how many yards I'm throwing for I really just want to win football games.

"I mean it would be nice to have your name on a list, but if that list doesn't have any Ws beside it, it doesn't mean as much."

Hawkins could move into second-place on the school's all-time passing yardage list this weekend surpassing Kordell Stewart who threw for 6,481 in his career in the early-1990s. Hawkins is just 212 yards behind Stewart.

Joel Klatt, who quarterbacked the teams in the years immediately preceding the hiring of coach Dan Hawkins, is the only player in Colorado history to pass for more than 7,000 yards, a number Hawkins could easily reach in five full games. Klatt threw for 7,375 yards in his career.

Hawkins already is Colorado's career leader in touchdown passes and interceptions.

But Hawkins isn't worried about any of those numbers.

He's hoping to put together the best five weeks of football the program has produced in the past five seasons to lead his team into the postseason and to give his friend, Hansen, a shot at returning to the field in a bowl game two months from now.

Colorado needs at least three wins to gain bowl eligibility. The Buffs might need four or five wins to save the coaching staff from being fired. The most wins CU has managed in any five-week stretch under coach Dan Hawkins is three.

Cody Hawkins said he has grown a lot in his time at CU and some of that has come since the last time he was the starting quarterback going into the fifth game of last season at Texas. In the weeks and months since then, he has gained new perspective on the sidelines talking with teammates and hearing their thoughts during games. Now he sees the game through more than his eyes.

"You just really learn what everybody else is going through and what they're expecting," he said. "I think situationally it definitely helps you improve. When you have the reads down it's one thing, but when you understand how everybody else is conceiving everything that we're doing, it's an advantage."

Hawkins said he has been "preparing (his) butt off" for the opportunity to play again and now that it is finally here, he believes he can enhance the CU passing game. He readily acknowledges the Buffs won't have the same threat to run at the quarterback position with him in the game instead of Hansen, but he hopes his experience and understanding of where to throw the ball will help compensate.

He's excited to have the opportunity to throw to a group of receivers he said are the best from top to bottom during his time in the program.

"It's definitely better to go out playing," Hawkins said. "Cause you always want to go out swinging regardless of what fight you're in or whether you're winning or losing, you want to give it your all to the very end. Knowing you're going to have a chance to be on the field definitely helps a little bit just because you can see, hopefully, four years of work kind of come to fruition as your career winds



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cu football

CU tweaks offense to fit Hawkins' game

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 10/27/2010 01:00:00 AM MDT

Updated: 10/27/2010 07:02:06 AM MDT

BOULDER — Although Colorado coaches insist the offense won't change dramatically with Cody Hawkins taking the snaps Saturday night at No. 11 Oklahoma, the senior quarterback hinted after practice Tuesday that there is definitely some tweaking going on.

Hawkins, the full-time starter in 2007 and part-time starter the last two years, will make his first start this season. Hawkins will be at the controls for the remainder of the regular season while Tyler Hansen recovers from a ruptured spleen.

"There's a lot of fire amongst the receivers," Hawkins said of Tuesday's workout. "They're competing against each other, knowing that when I'm playing we're going to do stuff a little differently because I'm not quite the runner Tyler is."

"We're going to have a shot to change up things a little bit. Those (receivers) are excited about it. Change always helps those guys a little bit."

Hawkins replaced Hansen in the second quarter of last weekend's 27-24 loss to Texas Tech, and the Buffaloes shifted into a no-huddle, hurry-up tempo.

Senior receiver Scotty Mc-Knight said he is comfortable with either Hansen or Hawkins, although there is a contrast in styles.

"Cody's throws are based more on timing," McKnight explained. "Where Tyler has a strong arm, a big arm. I know what to expect either way. I've been in game situations with both guys."

Colorado (3-4, 0-3 Big 12) needs three victories to become bowl-eligible. Oklahoma (6-1, 2-1) will look to rebound from a 36-27 loss at Missouri that knocked the Sooners off the top spot in the BCS standings. Hawkins said being reinstated as the starting quarterback feels bittersweet.

"It's definitely better to finish out by playing because you always want to go out swinging, no matter what fight you're in," he said. "It's also definitely awful because Tyler is a great kid and nobody deserves to have that happen."

Hansen has surgery.

Hansen underwent a procedure Tuesday to repair areas around his spleen. No part of his spleen



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was removed. It will likely extend his stay in the hospital for a couple of days.

Scouting the Sooners.

On film, Oklahoma's defense looks like "a different animal" compared with other Big 12 foes, Hawkins said.

"You can tell they're coached so well because they'll have a certain deal that's dialed up just for that game," Hawkins said. "We have to be very attentive because they're going to throw a lot of stuff at us. We're going to have to adjust on the fly."

Footnotes.

It appears junior Patrick Mahnke will take over for Jon Major (knee) at "will" (inside) linebacker. Redshirt freshman Liloa Nobriga, who replaced Major against Texas Tech, said Tuesday he worked at the nickel in practice. . . . True freshman safety Terrel Smith made his first college start last weekend and responded with 15 tackles (four solo) to tie the school freshman record set by J.J. Billingsley in 2002 against San Diego State. "I was nervous but mostly excited to play," Smith said. . . . As the reinstated starter, Hawkins (6,269 yards) has a chance to leapfrog Kordell Stewart (6,481) and leader Joel Klatt (7,375) on the school's all-time passing list. "I'd rather have thrown for 5 yards in every game and won every game," Hawkins said Tuesday.

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or tkensler@denverpost.com



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college football

Colorado remembering QB Cody Hawkins' positive past vs. Oklahoma

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 10/26/2010 03:13:17 PM MDT

Updated: 10/26/2010 03:20:19 PM MDT

BOULDER — Cody Hawkins, newly reinstated as Colorado's starting quarterback, takes pride in his role of team captain and in motivating his teammates.

He was upstaged Tuesday, however, by game film of CU's 27-24 victory over No. 3 Oklahoma in 2007 at Folsom Field. With Hawkins taking the snaps, Colorado rallied from 17 points down. That tied for the fourth largest comeback in school history.

Colorado (3-4, 0-3 Big 12) plays Saturday night at No. 11 Oklahoma (6-1, 2-1).

"A couple of people have said, 'The last time you played OU it went pretty well,'" Cody said Tuesday. "We watched a couple of highlights this morning of the (2007) game against Oklahoma when I was a freshman, just to fire the guys up a little

bit," Hawkins said.

"(But) the thing that helps me is just being down there in Oklahoma while I was redshirting (in 2006)," he added. "That's going to give me a great perspective that I can share with other people. If you aren't fired up when you're going to play OU, you're playing the wrong sport."

Hawkins will replace Tyler Hansen who suffered a ruptured spleen in the second quarter of last weekend's 27-24 loss to Texas Tech. Hansen has been ruled out for at least the remainder of the regular season.

CU coach Dan Hawkins, Cody's father, reminded reporters that he said before the season that having two comparable quarterbacks with starting experience was a "good news, bad news" situation.

"This is the good news part of it," the coach said Tuesday. "It's not the way you want the other guy to play. But (Cody) has played against these guys before and has been in the trenches."

Coming off the bench, Cody Hawkins threw for 274 yards and two touchdowns against Texas Tech and become the third CU player in history to reach 6,000 passing yards, joining Joel Klatt



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and Kordell Stewart.

"I think my experience helps a lot," Cody said. "If you had to throw (true freshman Nick) Hirschman in against the Sooners, the emotions that kid would be feeling are crazy.

"I've played against the big dogs before and I've been in the fire. I've seen it from all angles, be it as a redshirt, to the starter, to the backup. So I feel comfortable being the starter this week and going on and playing on Saturday."

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

OCTOBER 27, 2010, 1:23 PM

CU's Webb to get an opportunity to flex his strength

By **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER – Thus far, Colorado linebacker Derrick Webb hasn't had many opportunities to showcase the physical play that caused heads to turn during spring drills and August camp. But that is about to change for the redshirt freshman, beginning with Saturday night's game at Oklahoma.

Webb, a 6-foot, 220-pounder from Memphis, Tenn., has moved up on the depth chart. He is expected to be in a rotation with junior Patrick Mahnke at the "will" (inside) linebacker spot, where they will fill in for Jon Major (knee).

Relegated mostly to work on special teams, Webb has only played in two games on defense. He has four tackles, including three unassisted.

"He's coming along, he's a young guy," Hawkins said Wednesday when asked about Webb. "He's probably right where he should be, backing up somebody (Mahnke) that has a little more experience, until he captures some of the nuances.

"But he's very disruptive. When he makes up his mind and goes, he's very disruptive. He's one of the four or five biggest hitters on the team."

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

OCTOBER 26, 2010, 11:22 AM

CU's Mahnke to replace Major at linebackerBy **TOM KENSLE** |  No Comments

BOULDER – It appears Colorado's replacement for injured "will" linebacker Jon Major is a veteran and not redshirt freshman Liloa Nobriga.

Following Tuesday's practice, Nobriga said junior Patrick Mahnke has moved into the starting role at the will, inside-linebacker position. A 6-foot-1, 205 pounder from Mountain Vista High School, Mahnke played safety for two seasons with the Buffs before moving to linebacker during spring drills.

"I'm playing the nickel," Nobriga said. "Patrick Mahnke and Derrick Webb are rotating with different packages (at will LB)."

Webb is a redshirt freshman who has been listed behind Michael Sipili in the middle at "mike" linebacker.

Nobriga, 6-feet-2 and 215 pounds, filled in at will linebacker last weekend when Major tore a knee ligament against Texas Tech.

An all-stater at Palo Verde High in Summerlin, Nev., Nobriga said he is excited with anticipation at being in the lineup when CU goes to its nickel package and needs an extra pass defender Saturday night at Oklahoma.

"I feel great," Nobriga said. "I'm just happy that we're getting better. Playing time comes with working hard but I feel like everybody is working hard."

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All Things Colorado Sports — Blogs — The Denver Post

OCTOBER 26, 2010, 11:03 AM

CU coordinator contemplates use of ‘emergency’ QB

By **TOM KENSLE** |  5 Comments

BOULDER – “Emergency” quarterbacks for Colorado during the remainder of the season could include receivers Kyle Cefalo and Scotty McKnight, CU offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said Tuesday after practice.

With Tyler Hansen (spen) out for at least the remainder of the season, true freshman Nick Hirschman is second string on the depth chart behind Cody Hawkins.

But coaches hope to preserve Hirschman’s redshirt year and likely won’t use him if, say, Cody Hawkins gets temporarily shaken up and needs to sit out a play.

Cefalo, a junior, played quarterback at Bishop Kelly High School in Boise, Idaho, where he succeeded Cody Hawkins at that position. McKnight played only wide receiver at Coto de Caza High School in Orange Country, Calif. But McKnight understands the system. In any case, an emergency situation, the substitute QB might be asked only to hand the ball off.

Another possibility would be walk-on freshman quarterback Justin Gorman, a 6-foot, 200-pounder from Manheim, Pa. Gorman will make the trip to Oklahoma, CU coach Dan Hawkins said during his weekly media luncheon.

Kiesau was asked about a scenario in which the emergency quarterback would play instead of Hirschman.

“It’s all going to be situational, about how the season is going and the situation in the game,” Kiesau said. “If we are at Nebraska (in the regular-season finale) and we’re up by 27 points and Cody goes down, do you play Hirschman?”

Freshman cornerback Josh Moten earned all-league honors as a quarterback at Narbonne High in Carson, Calif. But Moten is not a candidate for the emergency QB role, Kiesau said. Moten is redshirting this season and also, as a defensive player, does not know the CU offense.

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Longmont, Colorado
Friday, October 29, 2010

Publish Date: 10/27/2010

Hansen recovering after injury

By Brian Howell
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At about noon Tuesday, University of Colorado head football coach Dan Hawkins said quarterback Tyler Hansen might leave the hospital that day.

About the same time, Hansen was at Boulder Community Hospital, Tweeting that he was headed for surgery.

Hansen ruptured his spleen in Saturday's 27-24 loss to Texas Tech. Although hopeful he would leave the hospital on Tuesday, Hansen did have a procedure in the afternoon to help speed up the healing process.

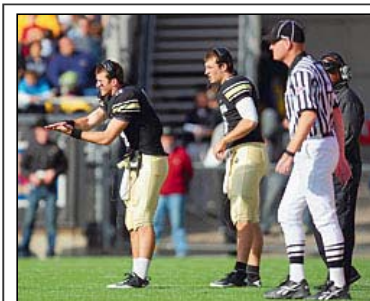
CU released a statement on Tuesday afternoon that said "Hansen had a CAT scan earlier in the day to assess the progression of the healing of the injury, and this procedure was not unexpected. The procedure was not a splenectomy, and none of the spleen was removed. It will likely extend his stay in the hospital for a couple of days."

Hansen was injured after taking a hit on an option play. He missed the rest of the game and was believed to have bruised ribs. It was discovered later that he had ruptured his spleen.

Hansen will likely miss the rest of the regular season for the Buffs (3-4). It is possible that Hansen could return for a bowl game, if the Buffs qualify for one.

The junior was in his first full season at CU's starting quarterback. He had started the last 14 games for the Buffs, going 5-9. He threw for 1,102 yards and six touchdowns this season and ran for four scores.

Senior Cody Hawkins, who has 28 career starts, moves back to the top of the depth chart.



Colorado's Tyler Hansen, left, sends in a play to Cody Hawkins and the offense Saturday against Texas Tech at Folsom Field in Boulder. Hansen is recovering after rupturing his spleen during the game. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

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Longmont, Colorado
Friday, October 29, 2010

Publish Date: 10/27/2010

With Hansen injured, Hawkins is back at starter

By Brian Howell
© 2010 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — For a lot of teams, having to go to the backup quarterback means that an inexperienced player gets thrown into the fire.

For the University of Colorado, the backup is actually more experienced than the starter. So, when the Buffs (3-4, 0-3 in the Big 12) line up Saturday at Oklahoma (6-1, 2-1), don't expect Cody Hawkins to be rattled.

"He's been through so much — personally, athletically, in the media," CU offensive coordinator Eric Kiesau said. "This kid is rock solid. He'll be fine."

Hawkins takes over as the starter because Tyler Hansen suffered a ruptured spleen in last week's 27-24 loss to Texas Tech. Hansen, who started the final seven games of 2009 and the first seven this year, will miss the rest of the season.

"I've played against the big dogs before, and I've been in the fire, so I think that definitely helps," Hawkins said. "I've seen it from all angles. I do feel comfortable about the game plan this week and going out and playing on Saturday."

The fifth-year senior has started 28 games in his career. He holds the school record for most touchdown passes (48) and ranks third in passing yards (6,269). He needs 1,107 yards in the last five games to break Joel Klatt's career passing record.

Not that Hawkins cares about that. He's 11-17 as a starter at CU, and with the Buffs sitting at 3-4, he's not worried about personal stats.

"Wins is how they should gauge the great quarterbacks," Hawkins said. "I would really love to go out with some wins. I really just want to win football games. It would be nice to have your name on a list (of records), but if that list doesn't have any W's beside it, it doesn't mean as much."

Hansen was having a solid season in his first season as the Buffs' starter. He completed 68.3 percent of his passes for 1,102 yards, six touchdowns and six interceptions. He also gave the Buffs another threat on the ground, running for four touchdowns.

Hawkins does not offer the same running threat. At 5-foot-11, he's also shorter than the 6-1 Hansen, making it more difficult to see over his linemen. Because of those two factors, CU's offense is sure to look a little different from here on out.

"We'll just do less of that stuff," Kiesau said of calling quarterback runs. "We'll have to move the pocket, and we'll have to move the launch point for him as well."

For the most part, however, CU's offense should have a similar look. But the Buffs hope the results can be better down



Colorado backup quarterback Cody Hawkins, who entered the game after Tyler Hansen's injury in the second quarter against Tech Tech at Folsom Field in Boulder on Saturday, drops back to pass. Hawkins will be the starter on Saturday against Oklahoma because Hansen is recovering from a ruptured spleen. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

the stretch. They are scoring just 20 points per game, which ranks 11th in the Big 12.

Hawkins has played well in the parts of two games he's played this season, throwing for 407 yards and two touchdowns.

"It makes you feel very confident in what we're doing," Kiesau said of Hawkins' experience. "If we had to play a true freshman, you'd definitely alter some things, but in our situation with Cody, he's had so much experience. We'll be fine."

Should something happen to Hawkins, a true freshman is next in line. Nick Hirschman moves from third string to No. 2 on the depth chart.

The Buffs love Hirschman's talent but are glad they don't have to throw him on the field yet.

"I could imagine if you had to throw Hirschman in against the Sooners, the emotions that kid would be feeling are crazy," Hawkins said.

Hawkins said he generally helps Hirschman each week but will do more of that now.

"He's a talented kid who is going to get going as his career furthers," Hawkins said. "He's going to need a lot of help this week. If we do have to call on him, which I hope we don't, I know he'd go out there and give it his best shot."

The Buffs hope to avoid using Hirschman this season so they don't have to burn his redshirt year. Should Hawkins get hurt, however, they would have little choice.

"I talked to (Nick) and talked to his dad, and they know the situation," CU head coach Dan Hawkins said. "You hope you don't have to do it, but you may have to."

Coach Hawkins said that if the Buffs need a quarterback to relieve Cody Hawkins for a snap or two, they could look elsewhere in an effort to preserve Hirschman's redshirt. Receiver Kyle Cefalo played quarterback in high school, and true freshman walk-on Justin Gorman could be an option, too.

EXTRA POINTS: Junior defensive back Travis Sandersfeld is expected to return this week. He broke his leg Sept. 11 at Cal. ... Defensive end Josh Hartigan (ankle) practiced Tuesday, and the Buffs hope to have him on Saturday. ... Asked if Aric Goodman would be the kicker Saturday, Dan Hawkins said, "We'll see." Goodman is 4-for-8 this season on field goal attempts and 19-for-40 for his career. He missed a 35-yarder late in Saturday's loss to Texas Tech.

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



Oklahoma vs. Colorado

Preview

TIME: 09:15 P.M. EST
VENUE: Memorial Stadium

Though Oklahoma's first loss dropped the Sooners from the top of the BCS standings, coach Bob Stoops still believes their season is not lost.

After becoming another national championship front-runner to lose in recent weeks, the 11th-ranked Sooners look to bounce back with a third straight home win over struggling Colorado in the rivals' final matchup as Big 12 members Saturday night.

Oklahoma's stay atop the BCS standings was brief after a 36-27 loss at then-No. 18 Missouri last Saturday. The Sooners (6-1, 2-1) followed Ohio State and Alabama, both No. 1 in the AP poll, to lose over a span of three straight Saturdays. The defeat dropped Oklahoma to ninth in the BCS standings.

Despite the outcome, Stoops cites the unpredictability and parity throughout college football as a reason the Sooners might still have a shot at playing for a national championship.

"It's still a long year," Stoops said. "You look at everyone playing across the country it's pretty balanced everywhere. We have to be ready to play and have to do our work to be as good as we can be."

Stoops admitted to having poll voters in mind when he made the decision to punt deep in his own territory with less than 2 1/2 minutes remaining and the Sooners down nine. He believed attempting an unlikely comeback wasn't worth risking a lopsided loss.

"I've never done it before, but I thought, 'You know what? There's still a bunch of games to be played,'" Stoops said. "Who knows what can happen? Heck, LSU got in it a few years ago with two losses, right? Some people don't see the game, only look at the score, as they vote. Right or wrong, that's what I did."

Stoops has to live with the decision, but is focused on making sure the Sooners improve after committing a season-high three turnovers. Two of them led to 10 Missouri points.

The Sooners continue to struggle in the fourth quarter after being outscored 16-6 last weekend. Oklahoma has been outscored 67-30 in the final period, struggling to put away wins over Utah State, Cincinnati, Air Force and Texas.

"In the end, it's frustrating because I know we're capable of playing well through the game," Stoops said. "When you play that well through three quarters, there's no reason it should change."

Landry Jones had thrown three interceptions in the previous six games, but had two against the Tigers. Still, he's thrown for 637 yards and six touchdowns in the last two contests.

After rushing for 227 yards his previous two games, DeMarco Murray was held to a season-low 49 yards on 12 carries, but did catch eight passes for 48 yards a touchdown.

Murray has a chance to bounce back against Colorado (3-4, 0-3), which has allowed an average of 190.0 yards on the ground the last four games.

The Buffaloes could face a more difficult challenge without leading tackler Jon Major. The sophomore linebacker suffered a torn medial collateral ligament in a 27-24 loss to Texas Tech last Saturday.

Though Oklahoma yielded season highs for points and total yards (486) against Missouri, its defense could be in for a better effort against a Colorado squad also without injured starting quarterback Tyler Hansen (ruptured spleen).

Senior Cody Hawkins, son of coach Dan Hawkins, will start Saturday. Despite throwing for 6,591 yards with 51 TDs and 39 interceptions during his career, the Buffaloes are 12-22 in games he's played.

Hawkins, who threw for 274 yards and two TDs against the Red Raiders, passed for 220 yards with two touchdowns and two interceptions in a 27-24 home over Oklahoma in the teams' most recent meeting Sept. 29, 2007.

Colorado, headed to what will be the Pac-12 next season, has been outscored 51-14 while losing two straight in Norman. The Buffaloes have not won there since 1998.

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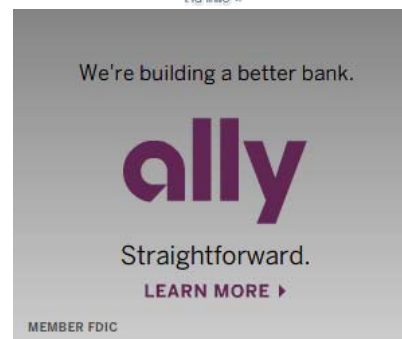
TV Schedule

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Standings

Team	Standings	Conference	Overall
Colorado	5th Big 12 North	0-3	3-4
Oklahoma	2nd Big 12 South	2-1	6-1

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Team Stats

Colorado						Oklahoma					
Passing						Passing					
Player	Pct	Yds	TDs	Int		Player	Pct	Yds	TDs	Int	
Hansen	68.3	1102	6	6		Jones	66.8	2094	17	1	
Rushing						Rushing					
Player	Att	Yds	Avg	TDs		Player	Att	Yds	Avg	TDs	
Stewart	154	652	4.2	5		Murray	162	712	4.4	1	
Lockridge	35	146	4.2	1		Madu	41	164	4.0		
Receiving						Receiving					
Player	Rec	Avg	TDs	Yds		Player	Rec	Avg	TDs	Yds	
McKnight	31	10.9	3	338		Broyles	69	11.7	5	811	
Clemons	26	12.2	1	317		Stills	29	11.9	2	341	

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Bufs headin' to Oklahoma

Colorado football team looks for win as injuries mount

By Michael Krumholtz on October 27, 2010

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A quarterback and leading tackler are lost, unintentionally relegated to the sideline.

Now without two of their leading members, a wounded group of Bufs migrate to Norman, Okla., to meet the Sooners on the day before Halloween.

Head coach Dan Hawkins will look to his bench for players on Saturday to disguise the losses of junior quarterback Tyler Hansen and sophomore inside linebacker Jon Major.

Hansen is gone for the season with a ruptured spleen suffered during the home loss to Texas Tech. Fifth-year senior Cody Hawkins reclaims the offense just in time to face an angry No. 11 Oklahoma, fresh off a road loss against Big 12 foe Missouri.

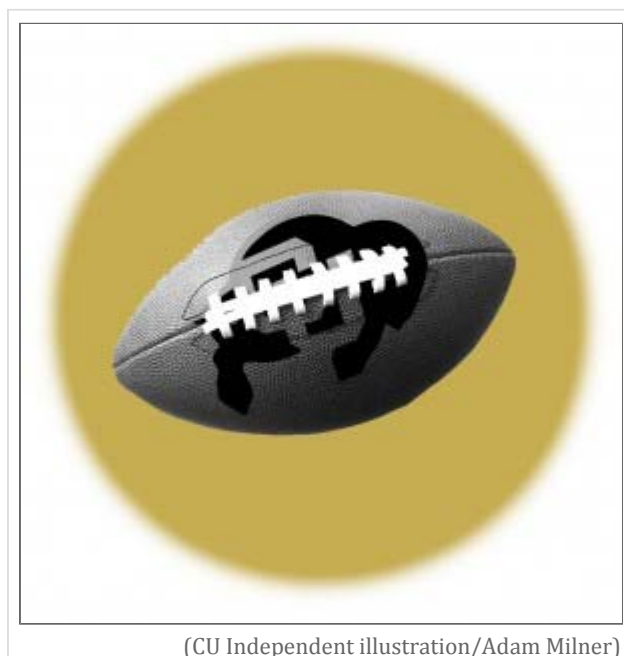
One team is looking for retribution after an unsettling loss, while the other is looking for a reason to stay motivated.

“As a captain and a leader on this football team [I] have to go out when everybody’s drinking that negative kool-aid, [I] have to hydrate them with the right stuff,” Cody Hawkins said following the most recent loss.

CU is now 3-4 (0-3 in Big 12) heading into Memorial Stadium, where Oklahoma (6-1, 2-1 Big 12) has won 34 consecutive games.

After giving up more than 1,300 yards of total offense in all three conference games, the Bufs defense is struggling. It does not help that linebacker Major, the team’s leading tackler with 57, is out for a while with a torn MCL.

Redshirt freshman Liloa Nobriga, second on the depth charts, will most likely take over at the weak-side linebacker spot, joining safety Terrel Smith as one of two freshman starters on the defense.



(CU Independent illustration/Adam Milner)

Coach Hawkins said he plans to give four or five freshmen meaningful playing time come Saturday.

"Ron (Collins) and (the defensive coaches) have done a nice job prepping them and getting them ready so that mentally they can handle what they need to handle," Coach Hawkins said.

Oklahoma's offense, which boasts tailback Demarco Murray and receiver Ryan Broyles, ranks 18th nationally. They have not scored less than 27 points in a game this entire season.

That spells bad news for an offense that averages 20.0 points per game. The Buffs have only eclipsed 27 points twice, both in home wins.

Coach Hawkins said he sees the quarterback situation, injured starter and all in an optimistic light.

"The good news – bad news is that we have two good quarterbacks," he said. "This is the good news part of it. [Cody's] played against these guys before."

Cody Hawkins has played—and won—against Oklahoma once before.

It was his freshman year when a CU upset then No. 3 Oklahoma at Folsom Field. He finished completing 22 of 36 with 220 yards passing and two touchdowns in the 27-24 win.

"We did watch a couple of highlights of the OU game this morning just to fire the guys up," said Cody Hawkins after Tuesday's practice. "If you're not fired up when you're going to play OU then you're playing the wrong sport."

Anybody who gets tackled by Sooner defenders like Jeremy Beal or Travis Lewis probably wishes they played another sport. If Cody Hawkins goes down, the elder Hawkins said they would take the redshirt off freshman Nick Hirschman.

A freshman taking his first ever college snaps against an angry Oklahoma defense would probably be bad.

That is why the Buffs are fortunate to be able to fall back on one of the most experienced quarterbacks in today's college football.

"If you had to throw Hirschman in against the Sooners the emotions that kid would be feeling is crazy," Cody Hawkins said. "I've played against the big dogs before and I've played in the fire so I think that helps."

Saturday will mark Cody Hawkins' 29th career start. The game also signals the last time CU will play a member of the Big 12 South before they move on to the Pac-12.

Kickoff is scheduled for 7:15 p.m. in Norman, Okla., on Saturday. The game will be televised live on ESPN 2.

Contact CU Independent Staff Writer Michael Krumholtz at Michael.krumholtz@colorado.edu.

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Posted on Wed, Oct. 27, 2010

No.11 Sooners seek redemption in Norman

By Sports Network
The Sports Network

After winning their first six games of the season, the Oklahoma Sooners are in unfamiliar territory, as they attempt to bounce back from their first loss with this weekend's home matchup against the Colorado Buffaloes.

Bob Stoops' squad was sitting atop the BCS standings just a week ago, but a 36-27 road loss at nationally-ranked Missouri has the team now 11th in the current top-25 and ninth in the BCS. Despite the loss, Oklahoma still sits in good shape in the Big 12 South Division at 2-1. The team is tied with Oklahoma State and just a game behind Baylor (3-0).

Dan Hawkins' time in Boulder may be coming to a close. Colorado has struggled to remain consistently competitive in the Big 12 and this year is no different. The team is 3-4 overall and has yet to post a league win, sitting in the basement of the Big 12 North with Kansas at 0-3.

Oklahoma holds a 39-17-2 advantage in the all-time series with Colorado. The Sooners had won five straight in the series before the Buffaloes finally broke through with a victory in the last outing in 2007 (27-24).

With starting QB Tyler Hansen going down to injury, coach Hawkins has opened himself up for criticism, as he has anointed his son Cody to the position for the foreseeable future. The younger Hawkins started his career under center in Boulder, but inconsistent play forced a change. He has completed 38-of-68 passes this season in limited duty, for 407 yards and two TDs, but may be in over his head in the frenzied atmosphere in Norman this week.

Cody Hawkins believes he has learned a lot throughout his career in Boulder and has always given great effort.

"I think I've stuck to my guns. I think I've been the same person throughout, but I think, too, that I'm miles and miles from where I was when I first showed up here. I think I've grown since I've been here. If you talk all the time, you have to know when to talk. That's something I've learned. I think I've come into my own as far as being a leader. I do know this: I've given it everything I had and my dad's been the same. I really don't care what's being said about me as long as they don't rip my effort."

The Buffs may be best served to lean heavily on tailback Rodney Stewart, who is averaging just over 4.2 yards per carry and 93 yards per game. When Hawkins does go down the field, Scotty McKnight (31 receptions, 338 yards, three TDs) and Toney Clemons (26 receptions, 317 yards, one TD) will be the likely targets.

The Buffaloes are yielding just over 380 yards of total offense per game, but that number will be taken to task by the hometown Sooners, who want to make someone pay for last week's loss.

To make matters worse, sophomore LB Jon Major, the team's leading tackler (57), is sidelined with a knee injury and will not play in this game. It will be up to players like senior LB Michael Sipili (49 tackles, 5.0 TFLs) and senior CB Jalil Brown (22 tackles, three INTs) to step up.

The Sooners racked up just over 400 yards of offense last weekend in Columbia, but it wasn't enough to remain unbeaten on the season. The OU offense has certainly had its share of success in 2010, averaging 34.7 ppg and 450.3 yards of total offense.

Sophomore QB Landry Jones has played extremely well in leading a passing attack ranked among the nation's best at 303.0 ypg. Jones has completed 66.8 percent of his throws, for 2,094 yards, with 17 TDs and just five INTs.

It certainly helps to have one of the nation's most reliable and big play guys on the outside in Ryan Broyles. The 5-11 junior has hauled in 69 passes already, going for 810 yards and five TDs.

The ground game is effective as well, churning out 147.3 yards per game. Tailback DeMarco Murray is the source of most of that production, averaging 101.7 yards per game. Murray has 712 yards on the ground thus far and is responsible for 11 of the team's 15 rushing scores on the year.

It has not been a typical Oklahoma defense this season and last week's display at Missouri was certainly evidence of that. The Sooners allowed the hometown Tigers to amass 486 yards of offense, including 308 through the air.

The numbers on the season have been mediocre at best, with OU allowing 21.4 ppg, on 389.6 yards of total offense.

There is still star power on that side of the football for Oklahoma, starting with All-American candidate Travis Lewis at the linebacker position. Patrolling the middle of the field, Lewis has notched a team-high 67 tackles this season, with

4.0 TFLs and one INT. Safeties Jonathan Nelson (53 tackles, one INT) and Quinton Carter (44 tackles, two INTs) have performed well in the secondary, while All-American candidate Jeremy Beal (32 tackles, 12.5 TFLs, 6.0 sacks) headlines the play along the defensive line.

Stoops knows that Colorado remains dangerous despite the team's sub par record.

"Even though they're 3-4, it is very obvious when you watch them play that they're a much better football team than that. The last two losses they've had were very tight, close games against Texas Tech and Baylor. Cody Hawkins at quarterback is a guy that, as a freshman four years ago, beat us. We're very aware of what he's capable of and how he plays. They're a team whose offense is good and balanced, good running backs, good schemes. Defensively, very aggressive in how they've played."

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Oklahoma Sooners Sports News and Articles

Sooner defense in need of a quick fix

Oklahoma's defense ranks 80 nationally in total defense and many of their toughest test lie ahead.

By MIKE BALDWIN, mbaldwin@opubco.com  34

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NORMAN — This isn't a typical Oklahoma defense.

The Sooners are ranked 80th nationally in total defense and still haven't faced some of their biggest tests.

Starting with Colorado on Saturday, OU will face four of the conference's top running backs in five weeks. But the toughest challenges will be the final three road games, when the Sooners face three of the nation's top offenses.

Four times OU has allowed more than 420 yards. Missouri compiled 486, including 178 rushing yards.

"It's stuff that plagued us before the Iowa State game — big plays, missed assignments and poor tackling," said defensive end Jeremy Beal. "We've got to get those things fixed. If we get those fixed we'll play pretty good defense."

Colorado's offense has struggled much of the season, but running back Rodney Stewart's 652 yards rushing rank fifth in the league.

"There are a number of things we can be better at, particularly stopping the run," said defensive coordinator Brent Venables. "Those guys inside are fighting like heck and doing everything they can. Other guys around them have to do a better job, too."

It's obvious the Sooners miss defensive tackle Gerald McCoy, the No. 3 pick in last year's NFL Draft. Adrian Taylor hasn't fully recovered from ankle surgery. And with Casey Walker (knee) and Daniel Noble (ankle) out with injuries, the Sooners are playing only three defensive tackles — Jamarkus McFarland, Stacy McGee and Taylor.

"We've forgotten about Gerald a long time ago," Venables said. "He's not making any more plays for us. Guys are working hard, trying their best. We're trying to find the best

combination of guys that can help us. Some of the issues in the run game weren't really necessarily those guys.

"Some of it was we were in some bad calls. That's not on them. The ownership has to go around. The accountability has to go around. Close to half of (Missouri's rushing) yards our guys were at a disadvantage because we were in difficult calls. Sometimes we make bad calls believe it or not."

OU also failed to generate a pass rush against Missouri quarterback Blaine Gabbert. Against spread teams, three guys can get worn out chasing the quarterback play after play.

"Obviously depth is going to help you rush the passer up front if you have it," Venables said. "We don't right now so we have to be creative and find other ways to create that pressure."

The Sooners had some success with a 3-4 package, inserting backup weakside linebacker Corey Nelson. Would the Sooners also consider blitzing more?

"If you start bringing people you have less guys in coverage. You're more vulnerable," Venables said. "There's a delicate balance. We have to find ways to be better at both. But it all starts first and foremost with the run game. If they're able to run the ball you have to put more guys in (the box) and fewer guys in coverage."

Generating a pass rush will be critical when the Sooners face spread offenses like Oklahoma State, Baylor and Texas A&M. All three are balanced, capable of running and throwing.

"The secondary can't cover all day," Beal said. "When the D-line doesn't get any pressure it's harder on them. That's why (Missouri) picked us apart. But we have to put it behind us. You watch the film and you move on."

In the bottom line category, the Sooners rank 44th nationally in scoring defense (21.4). But if the defense doesn't improve it could force the offense to win some shootouts the final month of the season.

"When they spread you out, it's all of us working together," said cornerback Demontre Hurst. "The D-line has to get a pretty good pass rush. The linebackers and DBs have to get a body on receivers, mess up the timing on their routes and not let them run free. It's all of us working together."

Oklahoma Sooners Sports News and Articles

Oklahoma freshman linebacker Corey Nelson making the most of his playing time

OU football notebook: Freshman linebacker Corey Nelson played only 11 plays against Missouri, and made five tackles.

By MIKE BALDWIN, mbaldwin@opubco.com  0

Published: October 27, 2010

Modified: October 28, 2010 at 9:11 am

Freshman linebacker **Corey Nelson** made the most of limited playing time against Missouri. Nelson played just 11 snaps but recorded five tackles.

"What's not to like about that?" said defensive coordinator Brent Venables. "That being said you have to find different ways where he can help because he's at (weakside linebacker) where he plays behind another really good player (Travis Lewis)."

Nelson was inserted when OU went to a 3-4 package, primarily playing a rush end role similar to Ronnell Lewis, who is sidelined with a sprained knee.

"We love his attitude and how quickly he picks things up," Venables said. "He's a playmaker. He's quick, athletic and explosive and has good instincts."

UPON FURTHER REVIEW: REVALUATING LANDRY JONES' INTERCEPTIONS

Quarterback **Landry Jones** threw two interceptions at Missouri. On his first interception, Jones said he should have thrown the ball away instead of trying to lob it over defensive end **Aldon Smith**. His second interception was tipped at the line before being picked off near the sideline.

"Up until that game I took care of the ball pretty well and didn't throw too many interceptions," Jones said. "I feel I made most of my reads right (before Missouri). I

kind of let down the team, not playing the way I'm capable of, putting us in bad situations on some routes and missed some things."

Jones was 0-of-7 passing in the fourth quarter. But offensive coordinator **Kevin Wilson** and coach **Bob Stoops** said it would be unfair to place the offense's late-game struggles on Jones.

"Much of the time success and failure isn't all that guy," Stoops said. "I've been saying all along he's done well when he's supported better. Better protection, running the football, guys making key catches. All of that together is part of it."

OU RANKS LOW IN NCAA FOOTBALL GRADUATION RATES

The NCAA announced Wednesday that graduation success rates for Football Bowl Subdivision players who entered college in 2003 rose three percent, to 69 percent. OU and Arizona were the only two schools in the top 25 poll that finished below 50 percent.

According to the release, the Sooners' four-year measure was 44 percent.

The report said the overall graduation rate for all athletes is 79 percent. Men's basketball rose to 66 percent. The NCAA's formula takes into account transfer students and is different than the federal government's methodology.

SOONER REMINDER: COLORADO QUARTERBACK HAS BEATEN THE SOONERS

Colorado coach **Dan Hawkins**' son, Cody, will start Saturday after **Tyler Hansen** suffered a ruptured spleen last week. Hansen has owned the job since the middle of last season, but Hawkins was the starter when the Buffaloes rallied from a 17-point deficit to upset the No. 3 ranked Sooners 27-24 three years ago in Boulder.

"He beat us as a freshman and we had a pretty good team," Venables said. "Now he's a senior. He's even better. He's experienced. I think he has a lot he's playing for. He's very tough minded. He's a captain. Players respect him. He'll be very well prepared."

STOOPS SAYS HE WON'T MISS TRIPS TO BOULDER

At his weekly press conference Stoops was asked if he'll miss playing Colorado, which will join the Pac 10 next season. He said, "Sure" but then changed his answer.

"I say I do but probably not," Stoops said. "I don't much care... We never liked going up there anyway."

Because of the altitude? "Yeah. And the travel. The different time zone," Stoops said. "You don't like going on the road anywhere. Bottom line is we're still going to play 12 games. And they'll be good games."

Stoops, though, said Nebraska is different. "We have such a tradition with Nebraska. That's where that makes that a little bit different. You think of all the years that game meant so much."

By Mike Baldwin



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