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## Colorado defense stepping up so far

*By Brian Howell*  
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BOULDER — Through the first three games of the season, the University of Colorado football team has had mixed results.

A 21-point win. A 45-point loss. And, an 18-point win.

While that roller-coaster ride has some wondering just how good the Buffs (2-1) are, there is no denying one thing about this team: They have a pretty good defense.

The Buffaloes have played well on defense in all three of their games. Saturday's 31-13 win against visiting Hawaii may have been their best performance.

"I thought our defense, obviously, was absolutely stellar once again," head coach Dan Hawkins said. "Tremendous stops."

CU held Hawaii 133 yards and 20 points below its season averages. But, that doesn't really tell the story of how well they played on defense.

The most impressive stat may be the fact that Hawaii gained a total of just 7 yards on 11 plays in the red zone against CU. In the first quarter, Hawaii ran seven plays from within 3 yards of the end zone. The Warriors gained a total of zero yards on those plays and came away with no points on those two possessions.

"To be down at the 2- or 3-yard line, for the defense to come through and hold them, it shows (Hawaii) that the defense is ready to play," cornerback Jalil Brown said.

Colorado's defense has been ready in all three games.

It has given up just 54 points this season, and 24 of those came when the opponent started a possession inside CU territory following a turnover by the Buffs' offense.

When CU's opponents have had to actually drive down the field a ways, they haven't been too successful.

CU's opponents have started 29 possessions inside their own territory, and they've scored just three touchdowns on those 29 possessions (all three by Cal). Two of those came in the fourth quarter of the loss to Cal, when the outcome was already decided.

Linebacker B.J. Beatty said the Buffs' defense got some inspiration from former Buff Alfred Williams before the Hawaii game. Williams told the Buffs to be physical and to force their will upon the opponent.

"We looked at that and said, 'That's got to be us,'" Beatty said.

So far, the Buffs have done that, and they have been particularly stingy against the run.

The Buffs rank 11th in the country in rushing defense (allowing just 71.7 yards per game) and 42nd in total defense (312.7). Hawaii managed just 7 yards on 13 carries.

**GROUND GAME:** CU finally had a great game running the ball on Sunday.

Part of that could have been the fact that they played Hawaii, which now ranks 116th (out of 120 teams) in the country in rushing defense.

But part of it was the fact that the Buffs got three different backs heavily involved in the game. Brian Lockridge (109 yards), Rodney Stewart (106) and true freshman Justin Torres (32) all played well.

“It was too much fun,” Torres said. “We finally got a running game going, and we’re just going to keep producing and hopefully we’ll build for next week.”

The next game may not be so easy. Georgia ranks 20th in the country against the run.

“Our run game is a big part to our offense,” Stewart said. “If we can utilize that, we can be effective against every team we play.”

**EXTRA POINTS:** The Buffs have this week off before hosting Georgia on Oct. 2. ... Beatty, who is from Hawaii, said he had 21 guests at Saturday’s game.

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colorado football

## Bufs glad to have a bye before battling Bulldogs

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — After a feel-good victory, most football players and coaches want to tee it up again as soon as possible.

But following its come-from-behind 31-13 victory over Hawaii on Saturday, Colorado suggested that the upcoming bye week could not come at a better time. Next up for CU (2-1, 0-0 Big 12) is an Oct. 2 home game against Georgia (1-2, 0-2 Southeastern Conference).

"It's a perfect time for a bye week," Buffs junior quarterback Tyler Hansen said. "We need to take this momentum into (the) Georgia (game). We have a bye week and we need to use it (wisely) — get people healthy, prepare for Georgia and get a win.

"We need to use this game. It shows we can be explosive. We need to keep it going."

Georgia, a perennial SEC power, is off to a slow

start. The Bulldogs opened their season with a 55-7 laughter over Louisiana-Lafayette. But, in a quirky SEC schedule, Georgia then jumped into league play. It has not gone well. Georgia lost 17-6 at South Carolina and then lost at home Saturday, 31-24 to No. 12 Arkansas.

The Bulldogs are not accustomed to sitting at the bottom of the SEC East standings. Before traveling to Boulder, Georgia has another conference test this weekend — at Mississippi State.

Playing with a redshirt freshman quarterback (Aaron Murray) and a new defensive secondary, Georgia may not be up to its usual standards. But the Bulldogs are not devoid of talent. And junior wide receiver A.J. Green, a potential first-round draft choice with prototypical NFL measurements (6-feet-4, 207 pounds), will be coming off an NCAA suspension in time to play against Colorado.

Georgia will have only one week to prepare for Colorado, while CU will have two weeks to get ready for the Bulldogs.

"Georgia is a great team, a talented team, an SEC team," Hansen said. "They have athletes. It's going to be a tough game. So I think the more time we can prepare for them, the better it will be for us."

CU players will get an extra day off this week — on Saturday. Hansen said the plan is to begin work on the game plan for Georgia this week,

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although most practices may not be in full pads.

"It will be good for us to heal up some guys and also get ready for Georgia," senior receiver Scotty McKnight said.

There will be an additional incentive for Colorado to play well on Oct. 2 against Georgia. The 20th-year anniversary of CU's 1990 national championship will be recognized and honored during the game.

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# Hawkins sees breakout moments

## Coach points to 2 plays that could change season

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

Posted: 09/19/2010 11:55:04 PM MDT

Prepare yourselves, Buffs fans. It's looking like it could be quite a rollercoaster ride this season for your football team.

The Buffs played well at times through their first three games. The first half of the season opener against Colorado State and the second half of Game 3 against Hawaii come to mind.

And they have been sloppy and mistake-prone in other moments, such as the entire game on the road at California in Week 2 and the first half offensive performance of a 31-13 win over the Warriors on Saturday.

Here is the good news. Aside from the way the Buffs lost at Cal, they are just where most believed they would be after three games, 2-1 going into this week's bye week and a big home game Oct. 2 against Georgia.

Consistency has eluded the Buffs throughout coach Dan Hawkins' four-plus years in Boulder. Developing some could be the key between a bowl year and a season that ends with a coaching change, not that both couldn't happen.

Hawkins saw some plays in the second half against Hawaii he referred to as "breakthrough moments."

He was talking about CU getting a safety in the third quarter from the defense, and a scramble-drill 73-yard touchdown pass from Tyler Hansen to Toney Clemons in the fourth quarter.

"They had their backs up against the wall a little bit, and to have that put on them and to have them answer, that is not only season-changing, that is also life-changing and it affects a lot of things," Hawkins said. "I told them earlier in the week that it's interesting of the teams that I have been on before, that it seems like there is one play that really just tips off the whole deal and gets it going. ...[You](#) kind of need some of those breakthrough moments, and we got them."

The Buffs were excited about the success they found in the running game when coaches stuck with it in the second half. They finished with 252 yards on the ground to improve from 103rd in nation in rushing to a tie for 68th.

Perhaps no other area of the game is as important for the Buffs to be more consistent than the running game.

Everyone who has played Hawaii has been able to run the ball. Two Buffs -- Rodney Stewart and Brian Lockridge -- both gained more than 100 yards.

But the Buffs will face the 20th ranked rushing defense in the nation in Georgia the next time out.

Can they produce similar results?

The Buffs at least seem to have the right attitude about it. That's a start.

"I was extremely proud of that," left tackle Nate Solder said. "We can do that every week because we have the guys that can do that because we have great players."

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