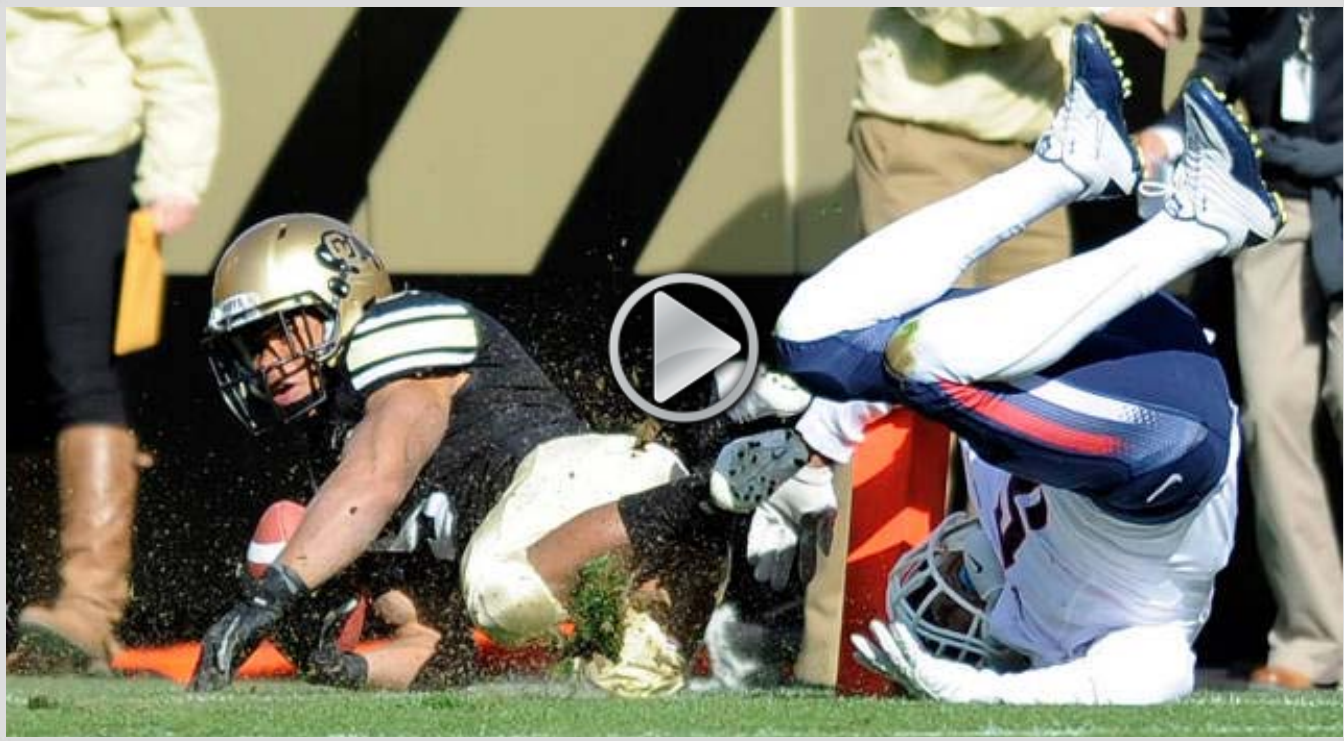




Senior Rodney Stewart dives into the corner of the endzone for the game's first score.
Photo Courtesy: Associated Press



Brooks: Buffs Do What It Takes For Windy Pac-12 'W'

Release: 11/12/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER - With wind gusts nudging 70 mph, Saturday was a treacherous day for high-profile vehicles in the Rocky Mountain foothills. High-profile quarterbacks didn't fare so well either.

The 13 NFL scouts at Folsom Field - a number that included Denver's John Elway - might or might not have seen what they had intended from Arizona QB Nick Foles, the Pac-12's leader in passing yards per game (361.7) and total offense (349.8).

Foles' forte is the long ball, and Saturday was not a good day for that; the longest of his 35 completions was 24 yards. On the other hand, he did throw for 300-plus yards for the 16th time in his career. But, being Senior Day for Colorado and being the seniors' final chance to avoid becoming a horrific historical footnote at Folsom, it was not a good day to oppose the Buffaloes.

BUFFALO EXTRAS



Watch:
UA's Robert Golden
11/13/2011



Watch:
Ray Polk
11/13/2011



Watch:
UA's David Douglas
11/13/2011



Watch:
FB vs. Arizona Postgame
11/12/2011



Watch:
UA's Tra'Mayne Bondurant

When the day was done, the Buffs' 28 seniors had earned a rare right this season and were in fine voice in bellowing the school's fight song for the first time since mid-September. First-year CU coach Jon Embree at first said his team's 48-29 win "wasn't pretty," but he quickly amended himself and added, "But actually I think it *was* pretty."

In mid-November of a one-win season, how could it not be anything but gorgeous? Aesthetically, Embree was right, but aesthetics went by the wayside during the seven-game losing streak that ended on Senior Day, earning the Buffs their first Pac-12 Conference win and a second "brick" on the wall outside their locker room in the Dal Ward Athletic Center.

At a podium with his first CU senior class - all still in uniform - spread behind him, Embree called it "a great win, a great win for our program." It was a different post-game scene and setting, but this was a different day for a Buffs senior class that has been beaten up but was rarely beaten down.

"It's important for these guys; it's their senior year, their last game at home," Embree continued. "It's important for them. They deserve better than what we're going to end up getting, but we're still going to achieve some things. So it's for them."

Because the afternoon belonged to the upperclassmen, Embree brought all of them to the usual post-game press conference. "It's about them," he said. "I'm proud of these guys, I love them. Two more games . . . next for us is that road losing streak, and we're going to end it, we're going to end it."

The Buffs haven't won on the road since 2007, a 23-game out-of-state losing streak the seniors don't want to hand off to the underclassmen. Two chances remain for them to unburden themselves - next Saturday at UCLA and Friday, Nov. 25 at Utah.

And senior quarterback Tyler Hansen went so far as to make a bold prediction: "We were not losing this game (Saturday), no way. And we're not going to lose on the road, I guarantee. We're going to the Rose Bowl and we're going to get it done . . . we're going to send these underclassmen off with a three-game winning streak, that's our goal. We're going to do everything we can to get that done."

Of Saturday's ferocious winds, Embree said, "We weren't going to make it an issue; we were just going to do our stuff. The only place (it affected CU) was in the kicking game, but it caused some issues on both sides."

CU junior safety Ray Polk called Foles, who has a school-record 9,573 career passing yards, "a good quarterback, so he's able to adjust to that (wind). But it was hard on both teams with the wind."

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Senior Day Intros

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850 KOA postgame AZ

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Jon Embree post-game AZ

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UA's Nick Foles

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Embree's scouting report on Foles centered on the 6-5

senior's feathery touch in throwing the long ball. But although Foles threw for 352 yards, the Buffs intercepted him three times (Jason Espinoza, Greg Henderson, Travis Sandersfeld) and sacked him twice (Sandersfeld, Josh Hartigan).

A senior from Limon, Sandersfeld's final game in Folsom was a monster. In addition to his interception and sack, he made a game-high 11 tackles (10 solo), with three tackles for losses. It was a fitting conclusion to a home season that saw him play in three of the Buffs' five home games because of a foot injury.

"It's been a rough road and it (was) Senior Day, our last home game," Sandersfeld said. "After the game I was telling everybody it feels so great to get this win. We've had some big highlights in our careers, but this one rates one of the top with all the work we put into it.

"We could have easily quit, but we still have drive and passion to come out and get this three-game winning streak and send the underclassmen off right."

That goal has flipped; last week, it was the underclassmen pushing to send the seniors "off right." Now, it's the upperclassmen looking to the future and the well-being of the younger players in their final two games. There's an undeniable camaraderie on this team that came through loud and clear as the seniors laughed and joked with one another behind Embree at the post-game podium.

Polk, one of four Buffs to finish with six tackles behind Sandersfeld, called Saturday's win "a great building block for this program, and I'm so happy we were able to get the seniors a win like this before they went out . . . If we played like this every game our record could be totally different, I mean, who knows?"

CU's only certainties at the moment are season that shows a pair of wins and a schedule that shows a pair of remaining road games. Embree and everyone else would have liked more than two 'W's with two games left, but that's what's left.

But as unlikely as it seems to outsiders, winning out is not seen as an outside possibility in the CU locker room. If the Buffs can accomplish the improbable, momentum from Embree's first season will be carried into his second.

"The morale on this team feels completely different now," Polk said. "We know we can get a win over a Pac-12 team now . . . we just need to put it on the road."

That's the only proving ground left for the Buffs, but Saturday's win proved to them that they're capable.

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

SHOW MENU





Josh Ford rushes for a 17-yard touchdown
Photo Courtesy: Associated Press



Brooks: Buffs Close Out Home Season With Big Win

Release: 11/12/2011 Courtesy: B.G. Brooks, Contributing Editor

BOULDER - Tossing caution (and most everything else) to the wind on Saturday afternoon, the Colorado Buffaloes made Arizona their first Pac-12 Conference victim and snapped a seven-game losing streak with a 48-29 victory at Folsom Field.

The Buffs celebrated a way-beyond-breezy Senior Day with their highest point total of the season and avoided becoming the first CU team to go winless at Folsom, which opened in 1924. Able to sing their fight song for the first time since Sept. 17 when they defeated Colorado State 28-14, the Buffs are now 2-9 overall and 1-6 in the Pac-12 with a pair of road trips remaining (next Saturday at UCLA; Friday, Nov. 25 at Utah).

CU, which had been outscored 235-64 in its five previous games, punished Arizona with four 80-yard scoring drives. Tailback Rodney “Speedy” Stewart, one of 28 Buffs seniors, recorded the 16th 100-yard rushing game of his career

BUFFALO EXTRAS



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11/12/2011



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Tyler Hansen
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11/12/2011



Watch:
Ray Polk
11/13/2011



Watch:
UA's David Douglas

(second this season) with 24 carries for 181 yards and three touchdowns. For good measure, Stewart also threw a 14-yard TD pass to senior quarterback Tyler Hansen.

Senior receiver Toney Clemons also made his final Folsom appearance count, catching five of Hansen's passes for 115 yards and a touchdown. In his last three games, Clemons has caught 18 passes for 324 yards and three TDs.

No doubt aided by wind gusts that went from 60 mph in the first half to 71 mph in the third quarter, CU's defense did a commendable job on Arizona quarterback Nick Foles, who entered the game leading the Pac-12 in passing yards per game (361.7) and total offense (349.8). He completed 35 of 53 passes Saturday for 352 yards and one score. But he was intercepted three times and sacked twice.

Hansen finished 16-of-26 for 213 yards and two scores, with one interception. He also rushed 10 times for 50 of the Buffs' 274 ground yards and caught the scoring pass from Stewart. CU had 501 in total offense.

Arizona dropped to 2-8 overall, 1-7 in the Pac-12 and left Folsom with a seven-game road losing streak that dates to last season.

The Buffs rolled up a season-high 20 first-half points and led 20-10 at intermission, getting touchdowns on a 5-yard run by Stewart, a 5-yard pass from Hansen to Tony Jones and a 17-yard run by Josh Ford – the first score of his college career. The Hansen-to-Jones pass rewarded CU for converting a critical fourth-and-two at the 5.

Will Oliver was successful on two of his three first-half extra point attempts, the only miss a wind-altered try at Folsom's south end that sailed wide left. It was Oliver's first miss in his last 23 attempts. Still, the freshman's two successful PATs gave him 53 points and broke a freshman school record (52) formerly held by placekicker Mason Crosby.

CU scored on its first possession, but also allowed Arizona three points via John Bonano's 25-yard field goal on its opening series. But the Buffs immediately increased their lead to 13-3, answering with a 12-play, 80-yard drive featuring a pair of Hansen-to-Clemons passes that covered 56 yards.

The Buffs failed to capitalize on a Foles fumbles that was forced by linebacker Patrick Mahnke and recovered by defensive tackle Will Pericak at the CU 38-yard line. But the Wildcats capitalized on that missed opportunity, marching 65 yards in seven plays and getting their lone first-half TD on a 1-yard plunge by tailback Ka'Deem Carey. Bonano's PAT brought Arizona to within three points, 13-10, with 6:28 left in the half.

After the Wildcats forced the Buffs into a three-and-out, CU returned the favor and Arizona's Kyle Dugandzic dropped back to punt. But in fielding a low snap, he was ruled to have touched a knee to the ground, giving CU

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possession at the Arizona 28-yard line.

It was the break the Buffs needed to hit 20 points and take control. On their third play, Ford followed his blocking over the right side and weaved his way into the end zone. Kicking again toward the wobbling south goalposts, Oliver this time appeared to make a wind adjustment and nailed the PAT.

The Buffs went up 20-10 and were halfway home to their second win of the season and their first in the Pac-12.

CU played the second quarter without Stewart, who went to the sidelines after 23-yard run in the first quarter and went to the locker room to have an ankle re-taped. Stewart was back for the opening drive of the second half as the Buffs strung together their third 80-yard drive – a season high – and also took their biggest lead of the season, 27-10.

Hansen and Clemons combined for the score, Clemons diving for a 15-yard pass completion in the end zone. Oliver kicked the Buffs up by 17 – but that wasn't enough. Just under 7 minutes later, Hansen and Stewart teamed for the play-of-the-day – a Hansen lateral to Stewart, who threw back to Hansen for a 14-yard TD. It was Hansen's first career reception and Stewart's second career TD pass.

Oliver's PAT pushed CU ahead 34-10, but Hansen was intercepted by linebacker Tra'Mayne Bondurant, who scored on a 29-yard return to bring Arizona to within 34-17 with 11 seconds remaining in the third quarter.

Arizona closed to 34-23 early in the fourth quarter, scoring on an 11-yard Foles-to-David Douglas pass with 10:33 to play. But CU responded with its fourth 80-yard scoring drive, this one capped by Stewart's 11-yard run and Oliver's PAT that gave the Buffs 41 points.

The Wildcats wouldn't roll over. Foles drove them 50 yards, with a 2-yard run by Carey bringing them to 41-29 with 4:14 left. After a failed two-point pass attempt, they recovered an on-sides kick at their own 40-yard line.

However, Foles' first down pass attempt was picked off by senior corner Jason Espinoza – and the Buffs marched 53 yards and let Stewart score again, this time on a 9-yard run. After Oliver's extra point kick, CU led 48-29 with 1:45 to play.

After senior corner Travis Sandersfeld intercepted Foles with 20 seconds remaining, the Buffs could begin warming up to sing their fight song.

Contact: BG.Brooks@Colorado.EDU

SHOW MENU



CU Buffs football

Rodney Stewart, Tyler Hansen lead CU Buffs to win on Senior Day

Colorado earns first home win in last chance at Folsom Field

By Kyle Ringo, Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/12/2011 03:45:29 PM MST



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senior class to the meeting room in the basement of the Dal Ward Center where he usually meets with media members following games.

It was crowded but it added a nice touch to a memorable day.

"Great win for our program, first Pac-12 win," Embree said. "These seniors, they did it. That is why I brought them in here with me because it is for them. It is about them. I'm proud of these guys. I love them."

The Buffs avoided becoming the first CU team ever to go winless during a season at Folsom Field by securing Embree's first career coaching victory over a team from a BCS conference. The Buffs hadn't won since beating Colorado State in Denver on Sept. 18.

CU seniors shined all over the field Saturday.

Senior running back Rodney Stewart ran for 181 yards and three touchdowns. He also threw a touchdown pass to quarterback Tyler Hansen and finished the game with 204 all-purpose yards. Following what might have been the best game of his career, he was awarded the Buffalo Heart Award by fans of the program who sit behind the home bench.

But he was not alone.

Senior wide receiver Toney Clemons produced his second straight 100-yard receiving day, senior quarterback Tyler Hansen caught his first career touchdown pass and looked like the Hansen of old making plays with his feet, rushing for 50 yards. Senior defenders Travis Sandersfeld, Patrick Mahnke, Jason Espinoza and Josh Hartigan led the best defensive effort of the season.

The Buffs had allowed five consecutive opponents to score more than 40 points and rack up more than 500 yards of total

Blowout.

On the most windy game day at Folsom Field since 1995, the Colorado football team finally found itself on the good side of a lopsided score Saturday afternoon, snapping a seven-game losing streak and earning the first Pac-12 Conference victory in the school's history.

Coach Jon Embree and 28 members of the senior class were able to walk off their home field with a smile on their faces for the first time all season after beating Arizona 48-29. It was just what Embree had hoped for on senior day.

And it led to one of the most memorable postgame press conferences in school history.

After spending much of the season talking about playing for the seniors, winning for the seniors and how tough a road the seniors have traveled, Embree brought every member of the

offense. This time it was the Colorado offense boasting those gaudy numbers.

Winds were gusting as high as 35 mph at kickoff and increased to as much as 71 mph in the second half. Throwing and kicking toward the south end of the stadium proved challenging, which helped the Buffs contain the No. 4 passing offense in the nation.

The wind and the fact that the teams had combined for a 3-16 record coming into the game left the stadium at least one-third empty most of the day. The announced attendance was 48,111, but it didn't spoil the moment for the Buffs when the clock finally hit zero.

"It means a lot," said Hansen, who cried before the game. "We have gone through thick and thin, this group behind me has gone through a lot. We have been tested.

"I was a wreck before the game. We all were. To go out with a win is special."

Arizona lost for the seventh consecutive time on the road, a streak that dates back to late last season.

Colorado knows the feeling. The Buffs have the nation's longest road losing streak at 22 consecutive games and 23 games played outside the state. Embree was so energized by seeing his team win and succeed, he essentially guaranteed the streak will come to an end either next week at UCLA or the following week at Utah.

The trip to UCLA will be fascinating because Embree's son, Taylor, is a senior wide receiver there and former Buffs Kai Maiava and Josh Smith play in Westwood. Also noteworthy is that ex-CU coach Rick Neuheisel leads the Bruins.

"Now next for us is the road losing streak and we are going to end it," Embree said. "These guys are going to end it. I couldn't be prouder of these guys."

Saturday's win was the most complete team effort of the season for Colorado.

The CU offense marched 80 yards in six plays on its first possession and Stewart outraced Arizona cornerback Shaquille Richardson around the right end to score from five yards out. And with that, the Buffs never trailed.

Colorado had eight touchdown drives of 80 yards or more all season before Saturday. The Buffs produced three such drives against the Wildcats. CU was ranked last in the nation in red zone offense prior to Saturday, but went 7-for-7 inside the 20, scoring touchdowns each time.

All three CU tailbacks -- Stewart, Tony Jones and Josh Ford -- scored first-half touchdowns as the Buffs grabbed a 20-10 lead. They stretched the lead to 34-10 midway through the third quarter on Clemons touchdown catch and a halfback pass from Stewart to Hansen that covered 14 yards.

It was the second touchdown pass of Stewart's career and the first touchdown catch for Hansen.

"Every time we practiced that play all week it was a duck," Hansen joked about Stewart's throws. In the game, Stewart's pass was a nice, tight spiral.

With Denver Broncos vice president John Elway on hand, Arizona quarterback Nick Foles rallied his team in the second half. The Wildcats scored on an interception return for a touchdown by Tra-Mayne Bondurant and an 11-yard pass from Foles to David Douglas.

They also executed an onside kick putting the Buffs back on their heels, but senior defensive back Jason Espinoza changed the momentum with CU's third interception of Foles in the game.

Stewart scored twice in the final 8 minutes and the Buffs were finally able to sing the fight song on their home field.

"We have had some big highlights in our careers, but this one rates as one of the top with all the work we put into it," senior defensive back Travis Sandersfeld said.

He and fellow senior Patrick Mahnke combined for 17 tackles, three tackles for loss, two forced fumbles and an interception.

THORBURN: Seniors deserve legacy worth celebrating

By Ryan Thorburn Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/12/2011 07:02:32 PM MST

It would be easy to mock the postgame scene at Folsom Field.

Storming the field after beating a two-win Arizona team? Really?

Absolutely.

As one fan said while watching the Buffs' fete at Folsom Field: "This is as cool as it gets."

Colorado desperately needed something to celebrate. The senior class certainly deserved to walk off the home turf for the final time wearing winning smiles.

Tyler Hansen was asked how long he would soak up Saturday's triumph over the Wildcats before turning the page. Before he could answer the question, an animated Mike Bohn stepped in to finish the interview.

"Forever," CU's athletic director said. "What are you talking about? You're going to have this forever, you senior stud."

Jon Embree had the group's back all season.

After CU's cathartic 48-29 victory, the first-year head coach addressed the media with all 28 seniors flanked behind him.

"I'm proud of these guys," Embree said. "I love them."

There hasn't been a lot of warm and fuzzy feelings for this senior class over the last four seasons.

As freshmen, they suffered through seven losses, including a 58-0 vanquishing at Missouri.

As sophomores, they suffered through a nine-loss disaster that included a 54-38 loss at Toledo.

As juniors, the epic collapse at Kansas (CU coughed up a 28-point lead in the fourth quarter) led to an in-season coaching change.

And as seniors this fall, missed opportunities (Cal, Washington State), missing players (CU had lost 90 games to prominent players due to injury entering Saturday's game) and mismatches (Stanford, Oregon, USC) added up to a 1-9 record before the gale force winds of change finally arrived at Folsom Field.

"We could have easily quit," senior defensive back Travis Sandersfeld said. "But we still have the drive and the passion to end it on a three-game win streak."

No CU team has ever gone winless at Folsom Field. The last time the Buffs did not win at least one home game was during the 1920 season.

"That's a lot of history," Hansen said. "We didn't want to be those guys. We didn't want to be that senior class that didn't do anything for the program. We don't want to be those guys. We wanted to do something. We wanted to have a legacy. ...

"Our legacy was, we haven't had one. We were trying to find something. I think today was real important for that."

The Buffs did not forget the words to the fight song. It could be heard loud and clear as it echoed through the walls of the Dal Ward Center.

Fittingly, the elder statesmen had their fingerprints all over the win.

Hansen ignored the 60 mph gusts and threw for 213 yards and two touchdowns. He also ran for 50 yards and caught a touchdown pass.

Rodney Stewart threw the score to his signal caller and swarmed the defenders from the desert with 181 yards rushing and three touchdowns. Toney Clemons added five catches for 115 yards and a touchdown.

Sandersfeld finished with 11 tackles, including three for loss, with a sack and an interception. Jason Espinoza followed up his interception of USC star Matt Barkley by intercepting Arizona's Nick Foles, another future NFL quarterback. Josh Hartigan added a timely sack.

"It's great to do it with these guys around me," senior right guard Ryan Miller said. "You couldn't ask for anything else."

If nothing else, this close-knit band of Buffs provided Embree with his first career coaching win (Sept. 18 vs. Colorado State) and CU's first Pac-12 win.

Hansen began "Senior Day" in tears and ended it with a guarantee that the 22-game road losing streak is about to be history.

"We are not going to lose on the road. We are going on the road and we are going to get it done," Hansen said. "We are going to send these underclassmen off with a three-game winning streak."

Wins over Rick Neuheisel's up-and-down UCLA squad at the Rose Bowl and fellow conference rookie Utah in Salt Lake City would certainly create some momentum for the coaching staff and the returning players.

It's still going to take some time to rebuild the program. But these seniors deserve to celebrate the fact that they helped provide the first two bricks and are inspiring their teammates to finish the season with some more November masonry.

"It means a lot," Embree said. "I know this is something they'll remember forever."

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CU Buffs: Travis Sandersfeld among defensive standouts

Seniors deliver solid performance against Foles

By **Brian Howell** Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/12/2011 07:30:25 PM MST



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Travis Sandersfeld came to Colorado with the idea of making big plays and helping the Buffaloes win games.

Bad luck with injuries prevented him from doing much of that, but on Saturday, Sandersfeld had a game to remember.

Playing his final home game, the Limon High School product had arguably the best game of his career, registering a team-leading and career-high 11 tackles, with one sack (the second of his career), three tackles for loss and the third interception of his career.

"There's not too many to pick out of, but yeah, this goes probably at the top, especially being senior day, last day on Folsom ever," said Sandersfeld, who has missed 11 games in the past two seasons because of injuries. "It was just incredible."

Sandersfeld's effort was one of many spirited performances by CU defenders -- most notably from the seniors.

Linebacker Patrick Mahnke had six tackles and forced two fumbles. Defensive end Josh Hartigan had two tackles and a sack, his team-high sixth of the season. Cornerback Jason Espinoza, who was a backup receiver until just a few weeks ago, had five tackles and an interception. Like Sandersfeld, those three had games to remember in their Folsom Field finale.

"Emotions were high for senior day," Sandersfeld said.

Led by the seniors, the defense did an admirable job against one of the top quarterbacks in the country, Arizona's Nick Foles. Although Foles threw for 352 yards, he was harassed all day, threw three interceptions and didn't burn the Buffs like other quarterbacks this season. Foles, one of the best deep-ball passers in the country, didn't complete any passes longer than 24 yards.

"We knew that Nick Foles is a great quarterback," Hartigan said. "I personally think he might be getting overlooked a little bit just because of their record."

"Up front, we had to step up as a defensive line. We had to go make plays. We definitely put a lot of pressure on him. We tried to force him to make decisions. They have young offensive linemen, so we tried to force them to make different decisions. It worked out."

CU's game plan clearly frustrated Foles and the Wildcats through much of the day, and Buffs head coach Jon Embree couldn't have been more proud.

"The defense played great," he said. "They had one bad drive. Other than that, the defense played great."

Sandersfeld was a big part of that. It was the type of game he's waited years to have.

"It was awesome," he said.

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CU Buffs' Tyler Hansen leaves Folsom on high note Senior quarterback delivers in final home game

By **Brian Howell** Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/12/2011 06:27:38 PM MST



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Through ups and downs, Colorado senior quarterback Tyler Hansen has kept his emotions in check for four years.

He couldn't help himself on Saturday, though. An emotional wreck prior to the Buffaloes' 48-29 win over Arizona, Hansen played one of his best games of the season and then savored a sweet victory afterward.

"This is up there with the Kansas game," Hansen said, referring to a 34-30 win over 17th-ranked Kansas on Oct. 17, 2009, in his third career start. "This is one of the greatest memories I'll take from here and it feels so good to go out with a win."

Prior to the game -- the last one at Folsom Field for Hansen and 27 other seniors -- Hansen's tears flowed. That was evident as he hugged head coach Jon Embree during a pregame ceremony and as he embraced his family.

"I was a wreck," he said. "I was trying to pull myself together.

Even when I came back into the locker room (before the game), I was bawling. It was hard.

"Never again will I be running behind Ralphie. The way (my career) has gone, it hasn't been easy. It was a tough road, and I wanted to get this win."

Hansen's career path has been bumpy, to say the least.

He expected to redshirt in 2008, but coaches burned his redshirt midway through the season to replace struggling starter Cody Hawkins.

Hansen also expected to redshirt in 2009, but again the coaching staff burned it and put him into the lineup to replace Hawkins. Hansen started the last seven games that season.

Last year, he battled Hawkins -- once again -- for the starting job and won it in preseason camp. In Week 7, however, he ruptured his spleen against Texas Tech and missed the rest of the year.

He's been healthy this year, but the Buffs' 1-9 record going into Saturday was rough on everyone, including Hansen.

"This season hasn't gone the way we thought it would, and we've gone through a lot," he said.

That's why Saturday was so special to Hansen, who had several family members on hand. It was fitting that he had a vintage Hansen game, using his arm and feet. He threw for 213 yards and a pair of touchdowns, but also ran 10 times for 50 yards -- a season-high and the fifth 50-yard rushing game of his career.

"I was running around a little bit," he said with a smile. "It felt good."

He even caught the first pass of his career, a 14-yard touchdown from running back Rodney Stewart.

"We ran that play every day (this week in practice) and every day that ball was a duck," Hansen said. "It was ugly."

On Saturday, it was a perfect spiral. That's a bit how Hansen's CU career unfolded. It was ugly at times along the way, but in his final game on the home turf, it was perfect.

"I don't have any regrets," he said. "I 100 percent love this program -- this town, everything about it. If I was a senior in high school, I'd come back here in a heartbeat.

"I've grown. The life lessons you learn here, especially these seniors and me, I think you can take that and run off with it and do the best things in the world."

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CU football

Fans honor Rodney Stewart with Buffalo Heart Award

Senior running back delivers in final home game of career

Kyle Ringo, Camera Sports Writer
Boulder Daily Camera

Posted: 11/12/2011 03:38:53 PM MST



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In the history of an award that has gradually become one of the most prestigious a Colorado football player can earn, running back Rodney Stewart might have produced the single best performance of any of its winners on the day he picked up the hardware.

The fans behind the Buffs' bench presented Stewart with the Buffalo Heart Award late Saturday afternoon following a stellar performance from the diminutive tailback from Columbus, Ohio, in the school's first Pac-12 Conference victory in history.

While fans will always remember the windy November afternoon for that achievement, they will also remember it for Stewart's 181 rushing yards, three rushing touchdowns and his 14-yard touchdown pass to quarterback Tyler Hansen.

"I'm amazed to get the vote from the fans," Stewart said. "Just to see the way they feel about me is unbelievable."

The Buffalo Heart Award was founded in 1998 by four friends -- Pat Grimes, Craig Augustin and Ashley and Thaddeus Cernac -- and presented to former wide receiver Darrin Chiaverini that year because the founders admired the way he played the game. It has been presented each year since to the Buff who demonstrates grit, determination and toughness.

In a fitting touch, most of Stewart's performance Saturday came after he had to leave the game to have a sprained ankle re-taped.

"I told myself every day this week, 'I cannot lose today,'" Stewart said. "This is such a special day for us and all of the seniors. I'm really grateful for this win."

Stewart is the third running back to earn the honor and the 14th player overall. Nicknamed "Speedy" during his freshman season, Stewart has been one of the most durable and reliable players in CU history. Aside from quarterbacks, no one has handled the ball more often in a career than Stewart.

He became the program's all-time leader in all-purpose yardage earlier this season and Saturday he became the program's all-time leader in yards from scrimmage, passing offensive coordinator Eric Bieniemy. Stewart now has 4,409 yards. He is closing in on becoming the 27th player in NCAA history to rush for at least 3,000 yards and accumulate at least 1,000 receiving yards as well.

After accepting the award from the fans, Stewart was surrounded on the field by reporters and fans. He did his best to answer questions as long as he could but the fans chanting his name eventually made him pause and soak it in.

He posed for pictures and signed autographs all the way to the doors to the locker room.

"It's unbelievable," Stewart said. "It makes me feel great."

Here is the full list of Buffalo Heart Award winners.

1998 Darrin Chiaverini, WR

1999 Mike Moschetti, QB

2000 Eric McCready, WR

2001 Cortlen Johnson, TB

2002 Tyler Brayton, DT

2003 Medford Moorner, FS

2004 Bobby Purify, TB

2005 Joel Klatt, QB

2006 Thaddaeus Washington, ILB

2007 Jordon Dizon, ILB

2008 Ryan Walters, FS

2009 Cha'pelle Brown, CB

2010 Cody Hawkins, QB

2011 Rodney Stewart TB

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cu buffs

CU Buffs defeat Arizona 48-29 for first Pac-12 victory

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/13/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

Updated: 11/13/2011 09:55:47 AM MST

Fans stormed the field for a 2-9 team Saturday afternoon. To 48,111 fans and 28 seniors on Senior Day, it didn't matter that their first Pac-12 victory came over an Arizona team going nowhere, too.

Students sat on students' shoulders, taking cellphone pictures of the scoreboard reading "COLORADO 48, ARIZONA 29." They serenaded the star tailback, the tiny senior who had a season-high 181 yards and three touchdowns, with a chant right out of the Yankee Stadium bleachers: "ROD-NEY STEW-ART! ROD-NEY STEW-ART!"

For a senior class whose accomplishments can be summarized on a Post-it note, their joy Saturday can be summarized with the emotion in the voice of first-year coach Jon Embree.

And with the sight of all 28 seniors standing behind him in the postgame news conference.

"These seniors, they did it," Embree said. "That's why I brought them in here with me. Because it's for them. It's about them. I'm proud of these guys."

With one win, the seniors avoided so much infamy. At 2-9 and 1-6 in the Pac-12, they will

not have the worst record since the inaugural 1890 squad went 0-4. It won't be the first team to go winless at Folsom Field since it was built in — gulp! — 1924.

It also made Arizona 2-8 and 1-7, dropping the Wildcats into the South Division cellar and handing them the unofficial collar of the worst team in the Pac-12.

"We've had some big highlights throughout our careers," said senior safety Travis Sandersfeld, who had one of three interceptions of Nick Foles, the second-most prolific passer in the country. "Maybe not a lot, but this one rates among the top. We could've easily quit, but you can see we still have drive and passion."

It seemed like a senior made every key play, from Toney Clemons' 15-yard touchdown catch for a 27-10 third-quarter lead to Stewart tossing senior quarterback Tyler Hansen a 14-yard TD pass to make it 34-10.

In their most balanced game of the year, the Buffaloes rolled up 500 yards on 273 rushing and 227 passing. They had four touchdown drives of 80 yards after having only eight all season. It was the most points they've scored since the 65-51 win over Nebraska four years ago.

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"They just came out and played harder than us," Arizona receiver David Douglas said. "They wanted it more."

True, Colorado picked a good team to close Folsom Field for 2011. Arizona is playing for a lame-duck interim coach with a defense that's even worse than Colorado's.

The theme in the Wildcats' locker room was whether they put out 100 percent. The theme in Colorado's was whether Hansen would curb his pregame emotions enough to throw a spiral.

"When I came back into the locker room (after the pregame ceremony with his family), I was bawling," Hansen said. "It was tough. The last game at Folsom. Never again will I be running behind Ralphie. It's been a long four years. It hasn't been easy. It's been a tough road. I just wanted to get this win."

On paper, it seemed Colorado would move the ball. The question was how it would contain Foles, who averaged 362.2 yards a game. Embree picked the brain of defensive coordinator Greg Brown, who spent last year as Arizona's co-defensive coordinator.

"You know their tendencies," Brown said. "You know their strength. You know their speed."

It also didn't hurt that Foles left the desert to throw in the windiest conditions Folsom Field has seen in 40 years. In gusts reaching 71 mph with an average wind of 45, Foles was limited to short throws, hitting 35-of-53 for 352 yards and a TD.

Meanwhile, Stewart was carving up Arizona for 137 yards in the second half. But after linebacker Tra'Mayne Bondurant returned an interception 29 yards for a TD and Foles hit Douglas for an 11-yard TD to cut the lead to 34-23 with 10:33 left, one thought crossed the fans' minds.

A year ago, Colorado blew a 28-point fourth-quarter lead at Kansas and lost 52-45. But the

players had another thought in mind.

"Not this time," Stewart said. "The players were thinking the same thing."

He took it into his own hands. At the end of an 80-yard drive, Stewart took a handoff left, then cut right past safety Mark Watley and scored to make it a relatively safe 41-23 lead.

Now the seniors, only two of whom ever played in a bowl game, have something left on their plate. With games left at UCLA and Utah, they must end an out-of-state losing streak of 23 games dating back four years.

"We are not going to lose on the road," Hansen said. "We are going on the road and we are going to get it done. We are going to send these underclassmen off with a three-game winning streak. That is our goal."

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cu football

CU Buffs' seniors save best for Senior Day win over Arizona

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/13/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

Updated: 11/13/2011 01:35:02 AM MST

BOULDER — How's this for Senior Day fun? In addition to throwing for two scores, Colorado senior quarterback Tyler Hansen *caught* a 14-yard touchdown pass Saturday in the second half of the Buffaloes' 48-29 victory over Arizona.

For those scoring at home, that was A) Hansen taking the snap, B) Hansen getting the ball to senior tailback Rodney Stewart, and C) Stewart then throwing a tight spiral and leading Hansen perfectly down the left sideline.

Yes, a tight spiral.

"It's funny, because we ran that play every day in practice, and every day (Stewart's pass) was a duck," Hansen said. "So when I saw it I thought, 'Whoa, that's a spiral.' I had to get it (in full stride), so it was pretty good. He can throw it."

Colorado snapped a seven-game losing streak and took "Senior Day" literally. After an emotional, pregame ceremony, it was to also be their day on the field.

Everywhere you looked there was a CU senior making a big play. Hansen threw for 213 yards; Stewart ran for 181 and three touchdowns; Toney

Clemons caught five passes for 115 yards and a TD.

And on defense: Travis Sandersfeld recorded a game-best 11 tackles and had an interception; Patrick Mahnke forced two fumbles; Jason Espinoza had an interception; Josh Hartigan registered a sack.

And on and on.

"This week was real special for all of us, all 28 of us," Hansen said. "We were not going to be denied, I guarantee you. The seniors were all making plays. Rodney was making plays. Clem (Toney Clemons) was making plays.

"It's interesting. Me, Speedy and Clem all scored. That's saying something."

Winning on Senior Day is always fun. But for a Colorado team that hadn't won since mid-September, this meant a little more. Perhaps a lot more.

Sandersfeld recalled a history lesson given to the team by coach Jon Embree earlier in the week. It served as motivation.

"Coach Embree was telling us that since 1920, no Colorado team has ever not won at home (during

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a season)," Sandersfeld said.

Embree was correct. That 1920 squad went 0-1-2. Folsom Field opened in 1924, meaning that no CU team had ever gone winless for a season in this stadium. Thanks to Saturday's inspired performance, that still holds true.

Every Colorado player savored the moment, but especially the seniors, who hugged everyone in sight and gathered around friends and families for pictures after the game, some with the scoreboard in the background.

Hansen said this moment ranks "right up there" with a 2009 home victory over then-No. 17 Kansas.

And who knows? Hansen's touchdown reception might have been the pivotal play. That gave Colorado a 34-10 cushion with 3:50 remaining in the third quarter.

"I told Tyler: 'Come on, man. Make a play. Make a catch,'" Stewart said after the game.

A wide grin never left his face.

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cu football

CU's Stewart speeds way to record yardage

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Posted: 11/13/2011 01:00:00 AM MST

Updated: 11/13/2011 01:34:28 AM MST

BOULDER — Senior Rodney Stewart never had a winning record. He never played in a bowl game. But his name will be sprinkled throughout Colorado's record book.

He added another entry in Saturday's 48-29 win over Arizona. His 181 yards rushing and 23 yards receiving give him 4,409 yards from scrimmage, passing the record of his position coach, Eric Bieniemy, who had 4,320 from 1987-90.

Stewart averaged 7.5 yards a carry.

"We found a weak spot in the defense," Stewart said. "We kept calling the play over and over."

Worst winds in 40 years.

Winds averaged 45 mph, with gusts reaching 71 mph. It was the windiest game at Folsom Field since 1971 when CU kept it on the ground in a 40-6 win over Oklahoma State as Charlie Davis rushed for a school-record 342 yards.

Espinoza gets another.

Jason Espinoza has something to tell his grandkids. After moving from receiver to cornerback in September, the 5-foot-8 former walk-on from Alamosa picked off quarterback

Nick Foles, marking the second potential first-round draft pick he has intercepted. Espinoza had the lone pick against Matt Barkley the previous game against Southern California.

Defensive shuffle.

Travis Sandersfeld moved from cornerback to starting safety for the first time this year, making room for Parker Orms, who returned from a four-game suspension to start at cornerback.

Fourth-and-short.

Paul Richardson had a concussion in the fourth quarter and did not return. Orms suffered a hamstring injury in the same period and did not return. They are day to day. Defensive end Chidera Uzo-Diribe had a shoulder injury and is probable for UCLA. . . . Will Oliver's hooked extra point in the second quarter ended a streak of 22 straight makes to open his career. . . . Sophomore walk-on John Ford's 17-yard TD run in the second quarter was his first touchdown since his senior year at Mullen High in 2008.

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latimes.com/sports/la-sp-pac-12-football-20111113,0,4501143.story

latimes.com

PAC-12 ROUNDUP

Colorado rolls over Arizona, 48-29

Buffaloes get their first victory as members of the Pac-12 Conference.

Associated Press

11:16 PM PST, November 12, 2011

Rodney Stewart ran for 181 yards and three touchdowns and threw for another, helping Colorado avoid its first winless season at 87-year-old Folsom Field with a 48-29 win over Arizona Saturday.

Tyler Hansen threw two touchdown passes and hauled in Stewart's scoring toss on a flea-flicker as the Buffaloes (2-9) recorded their first Pac-12 win after six losses in their new league since bolting the Big 12 last year.

The Wildcats (2-8, 1-7) came in as double-digit favorites but fell behind quickly and their comeback attempt wasn't helped by the sustained 45-mph winds that gusted to 71 mph in the fourth quarter at Boulder.

Arizona's Nick Foles completed 35 for 53 passes for 352 yards, but he had three passes intercepted and lost a fumble, in addition to his one touchdown throw.

The Buffaloes benefited from a couple of questionable calls on two touchdown drives as they built a 34-10 lead, their biggest of the season.

Arizona punter Kyle Dugandzic fielded a low snap from Josh Elias and trapped the ball on the grass. The officials ruled that before he recovered and got the punt off, his knee also touched the turf, downing the ball at the Wildcats' 38-yard line. Although television replays showed his knee never touched, the play wasn't overruled.

Three snaps later, tailback Josh Ford burst through the middle for a 29-yard score that put the Buffaloes ahead 20-10 at halftime.

Colorado took the second-half kickoff. Hansen didn't slide after a 19-yard scramble and was hit by cornerback Shaquille Richardson, who was whistled for a personal foul, tacking on 15 yards. That led to Hansen's 15-yard scoring toss to a diving Toney Clemons for a 27-10 lead.

On their next possession, Hansen tossed the ball to Stewart, then flared out into the left flat to haul in a 14-yard flea-flicker touchdown throw from his tailback for his first career catch and a 34-10 lead.

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at California 23, Oregon State 6: Isi Sofele rushed for a career-high 190 yards and one touchdown, quarterback Zach Maynard threw for one score and ran for another, and the Bears (6-4, 3-4) became bowl-eligible by ending a four-game losing streak to the Beavers.

Backup running back C.J. Anderson ran for 96 yards and wide receiver Michael Calvin, a fifth-year senior, caught his first career touchdown pass for the Bears, who overcame a season-high 15 penalties in their final game at AT&T Park.

Sean Mannion passed for 247 yards for Oregon State (2-8, 2-5), but the Beavers turned the ball over twice inside the five-yard line.

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 November 14, 2011, 2:51 pm



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Bufs win on senior day

Written by Andrew McDonnell in Football, Sports on Nov 13, 2011 23:18 / comments

Some adverse elements created a perfect storm for the Buffs and their seniors to earn one last win at Folsom Field. The Buffs topped division rival Arizona, 48-29, to send the seniors off in style.

Winds reached more than 70 miles per hour and caused numerous problems in the kicking game for both teams. The wind also tossed a Ralphie Runner's cowboy hat nearly 20 rows into the stands and set the Buffs right on course in their final home game of the 2011 season.

"Great win for our program. First Pac-12 win. These seniors, they did it," said Coach Jon Embree following the victory. CU now stands at 2-9 overall, and 1-6 in the Pac-12.

Twenty-eight seniors were honored before the game and played in front of the Boulder fans one last time. Most of the players have been through the trials that have shaken the program over the last few years and made a win on senior day at Folsom Field that much sweeter.

"It means a lot, we have gone through thick and thin," said quarterback Tyler Hansen who had his redshirt burned midway through his freshman and sophomore seasons. "This group behind me has gone through a lot, we have been tested. I was a wreck before the game, we all were. To go out with a win is special."

Colorado took a 20-10 lead into halftime following a quirky play late in the first half. Arizona's punter, Kyle Dugandzic, (BEN: Reporter spelled name wrong in first draft) received a low snap from center and was forced to go to one knee to catch the ball. The turnover on downs gave the Buffs the ball at the Wildcat 28-yard-line. CU capitalized with a touchdown run from Josh Ford.

The Buffs received the ball to open the second half. Colorado engineered an 11-play, 80-yard drive that ended in a touchdown reception by Toney Clemons from Hansen.

CU, who has struggled in many areas this year including third-down conversions (90th in the nation by completing just over 35 percent), succeeded on three during the drive to extend the lead to 17 points.

The Wildcats, who are led by interim head coach Tom Kish after the firing of Mike Stoops, took a chance on the very next drive. They failed to convert on fourth down after a fake punt only to give the ball right back to the Buffs.

CU used trickery of their own to get into the end zone this time. Rodney Stewart, who ran for 181 yards and gained 204 total yards, received a pitch only to throw it back to the Hansen who casually strolled into the end zone to put Colorado up comfortably 34-10.

But as Buff fans know all too well, it's certainly not over until it's over.

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Senior Volleyball Star Just Wants to Win
 Senior Buffs keep spirits up for last game at Folsom

Arizona's Tra'Mayne Bondurant returned an interception for a touchdown to give the Wildcats momentum entering the fourth quarter. The tides were turning in favor of Arizona and Embree called a timeout in an odd spot of the game.

"Let's just say that I was trying to get their attention," Embree said.

The team responded to Embree's call for action.

"I was thinking 'not this time,' and the other players were thinking the same thing," Stewart said. "We didn't panic at all, we just came out there and executed each and every play."

Stewart rushed for 101 yards and 2 touchdowns in the fourth quarter alone to move the Buffs out of Arizona's grasp. On his final game in Boulder, Stewart was awarded the Buff Heart Award by fans for his performance.

"It's unbelievable, it makes me feel great," Stewart said.

But wouldn't you know it—seniors propelled a win on 'Senior Day'.

"It is important for these guys. It is their senior year. It is their last game at home. It is important for them," Embree said. "They deserve better than what we are going to end up getting, but we are still going to achieve some things, so this is for them."

The fans were noticeably excited after the game as they rushed onto the field to sing the Colorado fight song.

"It's been a rough road and its senior day, our last home game. After the game I was telling everybody it feels so great to get this win," said senior defensive back Travis Sandersfeld. "We could have easily quit, but we still have drive and passion to come out and get this three game winning streak to send the underclassmen off right."

Contact CU Independent Staff Writer Andy McDonnell at andrew.mcdonnell@colorado.edu.

One of them had to win

The Buffs topple the Rams at Mile High

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SPORTS UPDATE



5:23 AM NOV 14, 2011 / comments

Cross-country shines at regionals

The Buffs cross-country team stampeded to victory at the NCAA Mountain Region Championship on Saturday. At the East Bay Golf Course in Provo, Utah, the No. 3 women's team earned 84 points to



About **Andrew McDonnell**

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On wind-swept day, Cats hit new low in loss to Colorado

Colorado 48 Arizona 29: A breeze for Buffs

Patrick Finley Arizona Daily Star | Posted: Sunday, November 13, 2011 12:00 am

BOULDER, Colo. - Having watched their Pac-12 hopes crushed in September, their coach fired in October and their bowl aspirations extinguished in November, maybe what happened Saturday wasn't all that surprising.

After a season of losses, the heartache of human nature finally caught up to Arizona Wildcats at the foot of the Flatirons.

How else to explain perhaps the most puzzling outcome of a season filled with them: a 48-29 loss to Colorado, a team that hadn't won in eight weeks, in which the UA never led and rarely came within a score.

"I guess when the going gets rough for us, we somewhat fold," safety Robert Golden said. "I feel like some guys on our team competed, and a lot of guys didn't."

That's what UA coach Tim Kish thought, too. The Wildcats "have a tough time fighting through" adversity, he said.

"There was that mental take-a-seat-back mentality that we've had most of the season," Kish said. "That wasn't very pretty."

When the wind-swept game was through, Colorado's students rushed Folsom Field.

Goalposts were quickly disassembled, for fear they would be carried to Pearl Street in celebration of the team's first Pac-12 win.

The Wildcats (2-8, 1-7), meanwhile, questioned whether they had competitive fire.

"I think there's a lot of guys that do," offensive coordinator Seth Littrell said. "But I also think there's some guys - and let's not sugar-coat that - there's some guys that I don't feel like are doing that."

In front of 48,111, the Wildcats failed in strange ways.

Trailing 13-10 in the second quarter, Taimi Tutogi was stuffed for minus-2 yards on third-and-one. Forced to punt, the Wildcats snapped the ball toward Kyle Dugandzic's left, and a bit low.

He reached for the ball and caught it, but his knee touched the ground.

He was ruled down.

Kish wouldn't comment about the play - "I can't say a word," he said - but admitted he'd never before seen such a call.

The Buffaloes (2-9, 1-6) took over at the 28 and scored, three plays later, on a 17-yard Josh Ford run. Ford's first score in three years - dating to his senior year in high school - gave CU a 20-10 lead.

The Wildcats never got so close again.

The third quarter saw the Buffaloes take a 17-point lead, their largest against any opponent this season. Things got only got weirder.

Arizona faked a punt but got stuffed.

It tried a 57-yard field goal, trying to harness an unrelenting wind that reached 71 mph at its peak - but fell 15 yards short.

And then Colorado scored its fifth touchdown on a trick play.

At the 14-yard line, Tyler Hansen handed off to Rodney Stewart, running right. Stewart - who galloped for 181 yards and three scores on 24 carries - took three steps, stopped and threw the ball back to the quarterback, who had sprinted up the left sideline.

Hansen caught the ball and tumbled into the end zone for a 34-10 lead.

"We've played long enough - crazy stuff happens," said wideout David Douglas, who caught a touchdown. "What good teams do is, they respond to those well."

The UA scored three touchdowns in the final 16 minutes to try to rally, the first on Tra'Mayne Bondurant's 29-yard interception return.

Nick Foles, who passed Willie Tuitama's 9,221 career passing yards to set the UA's all-time record, led the Wildcats on two fourth-quarter scoring drives. Both times, Colorado countered with touchdowns.

The Wildcats' last gasp was foiled when Foles - who went 35 of 53 for 352 yards - threw his third interception on the first play after his team recovered an onside kick trailing by 12.

"I was thinking, 'Not this time,' and the other players were thinking the same thing," said Stewart, whose 204 yards from scrimmage vaulted his career totals into first-place all-time at CU. "We didn't panic at all."

The Wildcats are left to wonder what to expect from their final two games, starting Saturday at Arizona State.

"I don't think anybody quit; I don't think that at all," linebacker Paul Vassallo said. "But whether they responded the way we would have liked, or however you want to say it, I'm not sure."

Asked whether his teammates were pulling in the same direction, Bondurant said it was hard to read minds in the locker room,

"Hopefully we are," he said. "If we're not, then we're paying for it."

On StarNet: Read Ryan Finley's blog this week for a report card on the Arizona-Colorado game at azstarnet.com/finley

See more photos from the game at azstarnet.com/gallery

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