

## New: Ex-CU quarterback Cody Hawkins speaks out

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As he watches the Boulder boos thousands of miles away from the beaches of Miami, Fla., he still gets that pit in his stomach. But at least now, he can close his eyes and fall asleep.

It's 4:00 a.m. and former CU quarterback Cody Hawkins isn't waking up to threats anymore.

"I don't wake up to eight or nine voicemails of people just swearing me out, saying 'Go to hell' and telling me they are going to beat me up," the ex-Buffs quarterback told Mile High Sports. "The pressure and negativity are gone for me. I sleep good now."

Hawkins' career at CU (2007-10) was a mixed bag, and on his way out, many Boulderites gave him a shove.

"Five fat bald guys would yell 'You suck' after some games," Hawkins said. "The only thing that festers with me, though, is the obscene stuff that was directed at my family. I have a couple names written down of people, who if I saw today, I'd punch them in the face."



Today, Hawkins is done swinging. Now a Nike brand rep, he spent last year in Stockholm, Sweden, where he played out his football career as the team's quarterback/offensive coordinator.

"It was fun," he says. "But I'm glad to be back."

While his life is constantly changing, his alma mater's football program is not. They're still losing. They're still getting jeered. And Hawkins hopes they both stop.

One will have to come before the other.

"People who just boo at these kids need to wake up. They don't go to your job and boo you when you don't close a sale," Hawkins said. "People forget why they brought (head coach) Jon Embree in. They knew it would be a process, and put it in the hands of someone who loves this university. Man, some fans must've forgot.

"Please, stop the negativity or the wins won't come."

The Friday night after the Buffs' most recent embarrassing loss, a 51-17 dismantling at the hands of Arizona State, Hawkins sat in his former high school's press box in Boise, Idaho, and watched the tape of his old high school team, Bishop Kelly.

"I love doing this," he says.

In fact, many who know Cody think he'll be a much better coach than he was as a player. But still, from a birds-eye view, he can't help but miss playing in the game that has, at times, treated him so poorly.

"I wanted to win at Colorado and I didn't," he says and then pauses a moment. "I did everything I could to try to win. There's definitely a sour taste in my mouth on how it all ended."

On his tippy toes, the 6-foot-nothing quarterback says his dad's firing in 2010 was his fault – at least the timing of it.

Across the field from current CU quarterback Jordan Webb, who was hurt at the time, Hawkins and the Buffs threw away a 28-point fourth quarter lead to give Kansas a 52-45 win in Lawrence.

Dan Hawkins was fired two days later.

“If I didn’t throw that pick against Kansas in the fourth and we would have held on, my dad could at least have finished the season,” Hawkins said, who threw a game-tying touchdown to Paul Richardson in the end zone as time expired, but the refs ruled the wide receiver out of bounds. “That’d been nice. I mean he – we knew he probably was done after the year. We’re not idiots. One bowl game in five years isn’t good enough. But, I wanted him there with me at the end.”

The Hawkins family weren’t the only goats, either. Cody remembers former kicker and roommate Aric Goodman clanking the posts left and right.

“After he made that game-winner against West Virginia, I think he holds the all-time record for most goal post hits,” Hawkins said. “He never missed by much.”

But the media and fans never saw it that way, as the transfer from Wyoming cost the Buffs games, hitting only 25-of-47 field goals over his CU career. At one point, he missed eight-straight field goals in 2009.

“Poor kid was torn apart at time by people,” Hawkins said. “Man, it was tough to see.”

Since Hawkins’ dad was axed, the Buffs are 6-16. Since Cody (and Goodman) graduated, they’re 4-15. But there’s no gratification there for the Hawkins’ clan.

Hawkins still loves “the death out of the” university and people there, and his dad feels the same way – well, to a lesser degree.

“He loves Colorado, but I think it’s easier for him to move on,” he laughs.

Today, Cody still tries to follow every game either by television or gamecast on ESPN (the company his dad currently works for). What he’s taken away is the guy who took his dad’s job is the “right man for the program.”

“They are on the right track and have tremendous coaches,” Cody says. “But it’s hard to hide from the negativity these days. Bill McCartney would not have won a national championship with this kind of negativity circling the program – I mean his first couple of years were not good. But now people can tweet at you and Facebook you; it’s hard to hide from it and stay focused on winning.”

To Hawkins, more than just young players and inexperienced coaches have to build

“Right now, we’re bringing a knife to a gunfight. Oregon gets new uniforms every game. USC is

surrounded by celebrities by the beach,” Hawkins said. “I mean the draw of the mountains won’t cut it anymore with \$50 Southwest flights and Google Earth. Recruits want to be treated like rock stars with all that comes with it.”

So for now, it’s “growing pains,” as practice facilities and success are just blueprints. Truth be told, Hawkins isn’t around the program constantly.

“I’ll try to go to a couple games a year,” he says.

Moving forward with his life, Cody can only hope for change at CU, telling his former team to not forget why they are there.

“You play for the love of the game and the ability to compete, to lay it all on the line with your best friends, no matter what the circumstances are,” Hawkins said. “Regardless for what people think, it is the trust and belief in your team and yourself that matters. The camaraderie of football is unparalleled.”

Now, he hopes the fans will join in.

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