



Bufs built foundation in '07

Kyle Ringo

Saturday, January 5, 2008

One of the most memorable seasons in college football history will be completed Monday when Ohio State and Louisiana State meet in the Bowl Championship Series national championship game in New Orleans.

The season was a roller-coaster ride from a national perspective, and also locally, with the Colorado Buffaloes pulling off a big win over Oklahoma as well as victories against rivals Colorado State and Nebraska. But the team also missed opportunities for big wins against Florida State, Kansas and Iowa State and was blown out at home against Missouri.

It was a year of progress for the Buffs, who qualified for a bowl game and nearly pulled off an upset against Alabama in Shreveport, La., in the Independence Bowl. The Buffs found a new starting quarterback and rediscovered the passing game with more than 50 starts being made by freshmen.

As attention turns to wrapping up the 2008 recruiting class and the college basketball season, we take a look back today at the five biggest surprises and biggest disappointments of the 2007 season.

We also look at some significant stepping stones this fall in coach Dan Hawkins' program and look ahead to spring football and next season.

Biggest surprises

1. Win over OU. The Oklahoma Sooners came to Folsom Field on Sept. 29 ranked No. 3 in the nation and considered a two-touchdown favorite to beat the 2-2 Buffs. CU fell behind 24-7 before executing the fourth-biggest comeback in school history to upset the Sooners 27-24 on Kevin Eberhart's 45-yard field goal as time expired. The Buffs broke a 14-game losing streak against ranked teams and beat a top-10 team for the first time since 2001. It was one of the biggest upsets of the season in college football.

2. Maiava a starter. The Buffs figured to get contributions from true freshmen offensive linemen after signing eight to scholarships last spring, but one of the two who played this season was unexpected to everyone outside the program. Kai Maiava saw his first action in the fourth game of the year and became a starter the rest of the season at left guard. He was the final recruit in the 2007 class, added the day before signing day after another lineman chose to commit to another program. Maiava, who hails from Wailuku, Hawaii, was named a freshman All-American by The Sporting News.

3. Smart move. The CU defense began training camp with a shortage of depth and talent at linebacker and those problems were exacerbated when sophomore Michael Sipili was suspended before the season for his role in an offseason, off-campus fistfight. They were further compounded three games into the season when junior R.J. Brown's career came to an end after his sixth concussion. Walk-on linebacker Jeff Smart, a sophomore from Boulder High School, jumped on the opportunity and earned a scholarship through his steady, determined and "smart" play. He finished as the team's third leading tackler.

4. Good McKnight. After several years of struggle at the wide receiver position, the Buffs figured to see increased production with a core of veterans and four talented freshmen. But Scotty McKnight, a redshirt freshman from Coto de Caza, Calif., surprised everyone by leading the team in receptions (43) and receiving yards (488). McKnight's close friendship with quarterback Cody Hawkins paid dividends in chemistry on the field as the two hooked up on four touchdown passes and seven plays of 20 yards or more.

5. Miserable vs. Mizzou. The Buffs entered the month of November at 5-4, having beaten all three Big 12 Conference South Division teams they had faced and losing competitive games to nationally ranked teams such as Kansas and Arizona State. They needed one win to become bowl eligible. Losing 55-10 on their home field to Missouri in the first game of the month was a surprise because the Buffs were not competitive after the first quarter and they had just thoroughly beaten Texas Tech on the road the week before. The Missouri loss was the third worst at home in CU history.

Biggest disappointments

1. Meltdown in Ames. The Buffs lost seven games this fall and all were frustrating to them for different reasons, but a three-point loss at Iowa State on Nov. 10 might bother them most in the offseason. CU jumped to a 21-0 lead and seemed to be well on its way to a victory at halftime. For the second time in as many trips to Ames, Iowa, the Buffs came apart in the second half, giving up 31 points. The game ended in controversial fashion when two consecutive tying field goals from Kevin Eberhart were disallowed by the officiating crew.

2. Loss of Jackson. Colorado fans spent the offseason looking forward to an offense that would feature 2006 starting quarterback Bernard Jackson being used in several different roles as a passer, runner and receiver. It never materialized because Jackson failed to produce the necessary results in the classroom. He was ruled academically ineligible for his senior season just before the season started and his career ended.

3. Sipili suspension. Linebacker Michael Sipili also had fans excited before the season, based on his 2006 performance, when he played in 10 games as a true freshman. But Sipili was suspended from the team and from campus by a CU disciplinary committee just before the season opener after he was convicted in Boulder County Court of misdemeanors related to his fistfight during the summer. He was originally charged with a felony because the man with whom he fought suffered severe injuries and required facial surgery. Sipili's speed and ferocity was missed on the field in 2007.

4. Sans sacks. The CU defense boasted the Big 12 sack leader in 2006 in defensive end Abraham Wright, but the team was unable to find anything resembling Wright's production this fall. Wright, who played for the Miami Dolphins in the NFL this season finished his senior year with 11½ sacks. The Buffs produced only 16 sacks as a team this year without Wright. The inability to pressure the quarterback played a part in giving up 3,142 passing yards and 24 touchdown passes.

5. Miss vs. FSU. The Buffs missed a golden opportunity to score a big victory for the program in Week 3 when they hosted a vulnerable Florida State team in a nationally televised night game in Folsom Field. Fans did their part with the majority in the stands participating in a student-led "blackout," in which everyone was encouraged to wear black clothing to the game. The Buffs consistently missed opportunities throughout the contest and lost 16-6. Coach Dan Hawkins later admitted it was the first time he felt like his team missed an opportunity for a big win since he took over the program.

Stepping stones

Building experience. When the Buffs eventually climb their way back into the conference championship hunt and the national rankings, they might look back on the 2007 season as the year when the foundation was poured. Coaches used 34 underclassmen among the 56 players who regularly saw playing time and more than 50 starts were made by members of the freshman class. The experience can only help the program in the future.

Passing fancy. CU revived its passing game in 2007, with freshman quarterback Cody Hawkins throwing for nearly 2,700 yards and 19 touchdowns in the regular season. By comparison, the team threw for 1,400 yards and seven touchdowns in 2006. With promising talent surrounding Hawkins, the numbers figure to get better in the future, even if Hawkins does not retain the starting job under center.

Going bowling. Some might consider playing in a bowl game the surest sign of progress from 2007. It's certainly a solid accomplishment for a program that went 2-10 in 2006. However, there are 32 bowls these days and nearly half the teams in Division I qualify for the postseason. Just any old bowl game won't be good enough in the future.

The year ahead

Replacing the stars. CU faces plenty of challenges and question marks throughout its roster heading into winter conditioning and spring practices, which begin in the third week of March. The biggest challenge of all might be finding others to make all those plays made over the past two years by All-Big 12 defenders Terrence Wheatley and Jordon Dizon.

New RBs. Senior tailbacks Hugh Charles and Byron Ellis combined to rush for more than 1,100 yards and 10 touchdowns and catch 36 passes this season. Finding the next starting tailback and a player to replace Ellis' unique skill set as a third-down back in the passing game will be another challenge high on the list for 2008.

QB challenge. Now that all three quarterbacks on the spring roster have been in the system for a season, 2008 might be the year when Colorado fans find out if Cody Hawkins really is the answer at quarterback or if he becomes a valuable and dependable backup to someone with a stronger arm and better mobility.



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Real work lies ahead for Buffs

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Saturday, January 5, 2008

Dan Hawkins knew he had things headed in the right direction during his five-year tenure at Boise State when the day after returning from one season's bowl trip, 70 of his players got together to play football.

Hawkins began trying to instill that mind-set in Boulder from the moment he took over the program two years ago this week, and Friday he wrapped up his second season on the job by meeting with media members and offering this assessment of the state of the Buffs: "I like the direction we're going, and I like where we're headed."

He then added.

"But you're not in a canoe floating down the river. I'd prefer more that we're a swimmer in the ocean in a Jaws movie and they're yelling at you to get to the boat and you better swim faster. That needs to be the sense of urgency that we have."

Toward that end, Hawkins hopes to intensify an offseason workout program for his players. That won't be welcome news to veteran members of the team most of whom described the program last offseason as "tough" and even "brutal."

Jeff Pitman, Colorado's gruff, no-nonsense strength and conditioning coach who followed Hawkins to Boulder from Boise, leads offseason work. His program last season included heavy weightroom work and early morning sprinting sessions that forced more than a few Buffs to part with their breakfasts.

Hawkins said he believes the entire offseason will be better for the Buffs with the new practice bubble in place. But he makes no bones about wanting to set the bar higher for a team that finished 6-7 this season following a loss to Alabama in the Independence Bowl.

The Buffs have produced consecutive losing seasons for the first time since 1984.

"I hope it's harder. I want it to be harder," Hawkins said. "I want it to be more demanding, more specific, more detailed, and I'll tell them that in our opening meeting."

CU suffered significant attrition last winter with a dozen players either transferring, quitting football altogether or failing in the classroom and becoming academically ineligible.

The first departures this year were announced Friday when Hawkins said scholarship wide receivers Alvin Barnett and Jarrell Yates would not return in 2008. He also confirmed linebacker R.J. Brown will complete his education on a medical retirement, which allows him to keep his scholarship but does not force that scholarship to be counted against the team limit of 85.

Walk-on place-kicker Tyler Cope also is transferring to Oregon State near his home in Portland where

he will be able to pay in-state tuition rates.

Hawkins said spring football practices will begin in the third week of March. The team will practice for one week before taking a week off for spring break. The Buffs will return for three weeks of work in April, culminating in the spring game April 19.

Hawkins said all jobs are open to competition as usual in both spring drills and training camp. Hawkins named a number of players who redshirted this season who will have a chance to make an impact beginning in the spring. He also said every member of the recruiting class he will sign next month should be able to compete for immediate playing time.

Hawkins said he is excited to see the progress made by quarterback Matt Ballenger, defensive linemen Eugene Goree, Conrad Obi and Lagrone Shields, all of his young offensive linemen and wide receiver Markques Simas.

He might be most excited about defensive backs Anthony Perkins, Anthony Wright and Lamont Smith, whom Hawkins expects will be a weapon as a kick returner.

"We'll find out when we start Day One who wants to get it done in the weightroom and go to school and watch film and go out and throw the ball around and take care of business," Hawkins said.



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Woelk: CU staff optimistic, but far from satisfied

By Neill Woelk
Saturday, January 5, 2008

Two years ago, Dan Hawkins took over a program that required rebuilding from the bottom up. The reasons were many, but the bottom line was that the foundation of Colorado football had eroded -- dramatically.

Today, it's safe to say the program is once again on solid footing. A 6-6 regular season followed by a bowl loss to Alabama, improved depth across the board and what appears to be a solid recruiting class on the way are reasons for Hawkins and his staff to be optimistic when they look down the road.

But no reason to be satisfied. Not by a long shot. As Hawkins noted Friday, the Buffs were a handful of plays from being 10-3 -- and the same number of plays from another 2-10 finish.

It will be up to Hawk and his staff to make sure that a few more of those plays turn out in their favor next season.

From a "culture" standpoint -- one of Hawk's favorite phrases -- the Buffs are no doubt turning the corner. The players have embraced the offseason conditioning program, they've bought into Hawkins' philosophy and they've already reaped some of the benefits.

Example: Last season, Colorado beat a top-10 team (Oklahoma) for the first time since 2001.

But the Buffs also let plenty of opportunities slip through their fingers.

Tops on the list? Try a very winnable game against Kansas, a team that capped a 12-1 season Thursday night with an Orange Bowl victory over No. 3 Virginia Tech. Guaranteed, if Hawkins watched the game, he had more than one flashback to that mid-October contest at Folsom Field, when a fumble near the goal line, a missed field goal and two interceptions helped KU escape Boulder with a 19-14 win.

Now throw in a game at Iowa State in which the Buffs blew a 21-0 lead, and it's easy to see why Hawk and his staff are anxious to finish the recruiting season on a high note and get started with spring ball (since you asked, it starts the third week of March).

Points of emphasis on the Buffs' front burner:

Continuing to improve depth -- and quality -- on the offensive and defensive line, on the corners and at quarterback. These are places Hawkins says define a team, and positions that CU must continue to improve if they are to take the next step.

Speed, speed, speed. Did we mention speed? Take a look at the bowl games this year -- in particular the BCS bowls -- and the biggest difference between winners and losers was the one thing folks say you can't coach. West Virginia ran Oklahoma ragged. Southern Cal ran through, around and past Illinois.

Closer to home, the difference between Alabama and Colorado in that department was noticeable.

You can't coach it, but you can recruit it. The Buffs need to close the gap, literally and figuratively.

Running game, both defense and offense. Take a look at the top 25 teams in the nation running the ball and defending the run, and you'll find a strong correlation to the top 25 polls. The Buffs were 61st in rushing offense; 32nd in rush defense. Improve those numbers, and the Buffs could find themselves knocking on the door of the national polls again.

Turnover ratio. The Buffs gave up the ball 25 times last season and took it away 21 times. Even more telling is that seven of CU's turnovers came inside the opponents' 30-yard line. That's seven great scoring opportunities lost. Yes, the numbers are an improvement over last year, but not where Hawk and his staff would like them to be. (Since you asked: two of those turnovers inside the opponent's 20 came against Iowa State and Kansas -- two games the Buffs lost by less than a touchdown).

Continued improvement of program necessities, beginning with facilities. The program received a big boost in the last year with the addition of the practice bubble and the remodeling of the locker rooms. Next up: expanded space for position meeting, plus an improved salary structure for assistant coaches.

Folks, facilities are no different than on-the-field issues in college ball: if you aren't improving, you are falling behind. After years of stagnation, CU has taken big strides recently. The challenge will be to keep moving forward.

This, of course, is just a short list of the things the CU staff will be addressing in the future. For the next month or so, they'll be busy sewing up any loose ends with their recruiting class.

But don't think for a second that anyone at Dal Ward walked away from the just-completed season in any way satisfied. The foundation might be solid, but the rebuilding has just begun.



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THE DENVER POST

Hawkins: It's open competition

By Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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Every position on the Colorado football team will be open to competition in spring drills, with no starting jobs guaranteed, Buffaloes coach Dan Hawkins said earlier today.

That's Hawkins' philosophy entering each new season, he said.

"I'm totally into that," Hawkins said. "I don't care if you are (quarterback) Cody Hawkins, (punter) Matt DiLallo or 'Girthy' (center Daniel Sanders). It's been that way for a long time.

"We'll see who wants to get in the weight room, who takes care of their studies."

The first of 15 spring practices will begin during the week of March 17 and will conclude with an April 19 spring game, Hawkins said. There will be no practices during the week of spring break (March 23-29).

Although Hawkins said there are no immediate plans for any position changes "there will be a ton of tweaking" on offense and defense.

"You always do that," he said. "We have to look at what we were efficient at and what we weren't. You always want to continue to evolve, based on the people you have and based on current trends in college football."

Hawkins mentioned several redshirt freshmen who he expects to be competitive in the spring, including defensive backs Anthony Perkins, Anthony Wright and Lamont Smith; defensive linemen Conrad Obi, Eugene Goree and Lagrone Shields; wide receiver Markques Simas; quarterback Matt Ballenger; and six offensive linemen.

"I like a lot of those guys," Hawkins said.

Also, senior offensive guard Erick Faatagi (6-foot-2, 310 pounds) could vie for a starting job, Hawkins said. Faatagi, a former junior-college recruit from Los Angeles, missed the 2006 season due to knee surgery and 2007 because of academics.

"I like the direction we are in and where we are going," Hawkins said, reflecting on the recently concluded 6-7 season that included an appearance in the Independence Bowl. "But we are not a canoe floating down the river. We are a swimmer in the ocean in a 'Jaws' movie, with people screaming at us to get to shore. There has to be that sense of urgency."

COMINGS AND GOINGS: Hawkins said he expects the 2008 recruiting class to number 22. He also will give scholarships to two former walk-ons, sophomore receiver Scotty McKnight and senior

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THE DENVER POST

safety Daniel Dykes, for the upcoming season. Not returning to the roster, Hawkins said, are wide receivers Alvin Barnett and Jarrell Yates and place-kicker Tyler Cope. A walk-on, Cope was CU's regular kickoff specialist in 2007 as a true freshman but will transfer to Oregon State, where he can pay in-state tuition. Barring a surprise addition, Cope's departure likely leaves the competition for place-kicking duties to Wyoming transfer Aric Goodman and freshman Jameson Davis, a former Idaho prep star who has served on a church mission the past two years.

Hawkins said he does not expect to lose any assistant coaches. However, staffs at several high-profile programs are still being assembled. "The coaching profession is funny — one pebble slides and a whole mountain moves," Hawkins said.

Sophomore middle linebacker Michael Sipili is on track to return from suspension, Hawkins said. Another inside linebacker, senior R.J. Brown, will not play again after suffering a series of concussions.

As for recruiting, Hawkins said he believes each of the upcoming signees can "get in the mix early." That could include three or four early enrollees, the coach said.

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TIMES-CALL

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Hawkins pointing Buffs higher

'07 season unsatisfying but got program headed in the right direction

By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Recapping 2007 on Friday left Colorado football coach Dan Hawkins speaking in unsatisfied terms.

"I like the direction we're going and I like where we're headed, but we're not in a canoe floating down a river," he said. "I would prefer it more if we were a swimmer in the ocean in a 'Jaws' movie and they're yelling at you to get to the boat, and you better swim faster. That needs to be the sense of urgency we have."

Such is the feeling in a coach who watched his team win four more games than it did a year ago but left believing it could have been better.

"That should always be your mentality. That's the trick," Hawkins said. "In reality, you're never there."

At 6-7 in 2007, CU posted consecutive losing seasons for the first time since the early 1980s. Defeats like those to Kansas, Iowa State, Florida State and Alabama in the Independence Bowl gnaw at the coach. Comeback wins over Colorado State, Oklahoma and Nebraska kept 2007 from being much worse.

But consider what the Buffs overcame. They practiced last spring with six healthy offensive linemen; lost a starting quarterback (Bernard Jackson), starting middle linebacker (Michael Sipili) and potential starting guard (Erick Faatagi) along the way; and broke in a freshman quarterback who played behind a line of scrimmage manned by two true freshmen. Maybe things weren't that bad.

"We had an opportunity to be 10-3; we had an opportunity to be 2-10," Hawkins said. "It could've swung all the way from two wins to 10 wins."

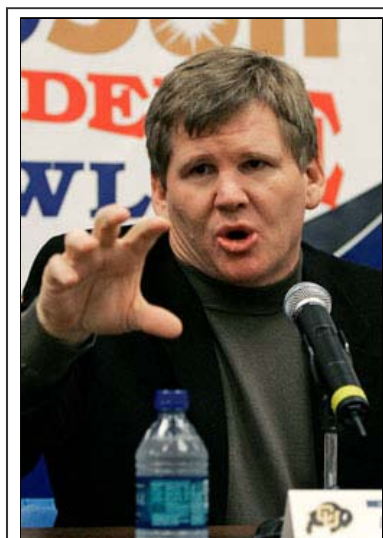
Hawkins declared all jobs open for competition in spring drills, when there'll be "a ton of tweaking" on both sides of the ball. The drills begin the third week of March, stop for spring break, and then conclude with three straight weeks of work. The spring game will be April 19.

Other topics of interest Hawkins discussed Friday included:

There is already some attrition, but nothing major. Receivers Alvin Barnett and Jarrell Yates and kicker Tyler Cope are not expected back.

Barnett, who did not play in 2007 due to academics, had a year of eligibility left that he won't use. Hawkins described the decision as "mutual." Barnett led all CU wide receivers with 21 catches in 2006.

Yates was a touted member of Gary Barnett's final recruiting class in 2005 but never panned out. He did not catch a pass in 2007.



Despite winning four more games this season than he did in his inaugural campaign at the University of Colorado, head coach Dan Hawkins is looking for a sense of urgency as the Buffs seek to improve. **Rogelio V. Solis / AP**

Cope, a walk-on, handled kickoffs in 2007. Asked if he did a good job, Hawkins said nothing. Cope is leaving to attend Oregon State, which is closer to his Portland home.

This recruiting cycle will see CU sign 22 players and place sophomore receiver Scotty McKnight and senior safety Daniel Dykes on scholarship.

Hawkins said there will be three or four mid-year signees. One is expected to be linebacker Lynn Katoa, a high school linebacker from Utah whom recruiting analysts rate among the nation's best. Others could be running backs P.T. Gates and Devan Johnson, 2007 signees who did not academically qualify. The semester begins Jan. 14.

Darrell Scott, the nephew of CU receiver Josh Smith and the nation's highest-rated prep running back, is saying he'll choose between CU and Texas. He told Scout.com that running back Jamaal Charles' decision to bypass his senior season at Texas and go to the NFL is making the Longhorns a more intriguing option. Scott wants to start as a freshman.

Sipili is on track to enroll this month and return to the team.

Faatagi will have one year left to play. He redshirted in 2006 following knee surgery and missed 2007 due to academics. Hawkins said he could win a starting job.

Hawkins cited a long list of redshirt freshmen he wants to see compete this spring. It included safeties Anthony Wright and Anthony Perkins; quarterback Matt Ballenger; defensive linemen Conrad Obi, Lagrone Shields and Eugene Goree; and "all of those offensive linemen." Lamont Smith could be a candidate to return punts.

Hawkins said he did not know if any members of his staff have been contacted about other jobs yet. The NCAA coaching convention is next week. Several programs are seeking assistants.

Jordon Dizon has been invited to the Hula and Senior bowls, Terrence Wheatley will play in the Senior Bowl and Tyler Polumbus will play in the East/West Shrine Game.



Hawkins seeking urgency

Buffaloes coach hopes more goals will be met in 2008

By B.G. Brooks

Saturday, January 5, 2008

It could have been better, could have been worse. Dan Hawkins is living, coaching for the season that will allow him to say it simply was the best. Period.

Finishing 6-7, the Colorado Buffaloes' 2007 football season primarily was another foundational exercise for Hawkins, who realized one goal, reaching a bowl, but left a handful of others unclaimed.

Still, the Buffs' six wins represented a threefold increase from his debut season (2-10) in Boulder and demonstrated to him the program is on the correct course.

"I like the direction we're going," he said Friday. "But you're not in a canoe floating down the river. I prefer more that we're a swimmer in the ocean in a *Jaws* movie and they're yelling at you to get in the boat and you better swim faster.

"That needs to be the sense of urgency we have."

And that likely will be one of the chief areas of emphasis when the Buffs begin winter conditioning work later this month (the spring semester begins Jan. 14) and merge that with spring practice sure to benefit from the school's newly erected practice bubble.

Hawkins doesn't want the upcoming work merely to measure up to last winter's; he wants the bar hoisted.

"I hope it's harder. . . . I want it to be more demanding, more specific, more detailed. And I'll tell 'em that," he said. "Some of the stuff we went through last spring, we've got a whole bunch of freshmen who weren't here for that."

He also wants every returning starter to know this: No starting jobs are assured. When spring drills begin in mid-March, all slates are unmarked. "We'll find out on Day 1 who wants to get it done (and) take care of business," he said.

The Buffs left some business unfinished in 2007, but Hawkins said the oft-used explanation of being "two or three plays" away from winning or losing will "always hold up. We had an opportunity to be 10-3, an opportunity to be 2-10, very easily. It could have swung all the way from two wins to 10 wins. . . .

"Either you have to find a system that allows you to make those plays or change your system to make those plays, or change the personnel to make those plays. That's what it comes down to."

"Picking up where they left off" is not the approach Hawkins wants for his third CU team. While conceding a season's experience "will bode well for all of our young guys, I think you always have to go back to Point A . . . you're at Point D, and let's move on from there.

"Well, you don't. You go back to Point A and start back with what you're all about then, hopefully, you move past that at a faster pace."

He takes satisfaction in his players being dissatisfied with six wins and a Tier 3 bowl appearance: "No matter what it is, that should always be your mentality. . . . The reality is, you're never there."

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CU at a glance

* **Total 2008 signees:** Coach Dan Hawkins' latest projection is 24, a number that includes 2007 squad members Scotty McKnight (WR) and D.J. Dyles (S). Both played as walk-ons last fall. Of his 2008 recruiting, Hawkins said, "We're pretty close to being done."

* **Mid-January enrollees:** Hawkins said he expects "three to four." NCAA rules permit coaches to discuss incoming players only once, and Hawkins will wait until national signing day (Feb. 6) to do that. But linebacker Lynn Katoa (Salt Lake City) said earlier this week he plans on being in Boulder next week. The status of running back P.T. Gates (Saddleback College) remains uncertain.

* **Squad members returning:** OL Erick Faatagi (academics), LB Mi chael Sipili (university suspension). Both could be in the mix to start in 2008.

* **Squad members not returning:** PK Tyler Cope is transferring to Oregon State, WRs Jarrell Yates and Alvin Barnett reached a "mutual decision" with Hawkins to leave the program, and LB R.J. Brown is expected to sit out next season with a medical redshirt because of repeated concussions. There could be further attrition.

* **Redshirt freshmen to watch this spring:** Hawkins mentioned DBs Anthony Perkins and Anthony Wright; returner Lamont Smith; DL Eugene Goree, Lagrone Shields, Conrad Obi; six of the eight O-linemen from the last signing class; QB Matt Ballenger; and WR Marques Simas.

* **Spring practice dates:** The Buffaloes will begin the third week in March, take a week off for spring break, then return for three weeks of practice. The last of their 15 practices will be the annual spring game April 19.

* **Etc.:** No position changes have been discussed thus far, but Hawkins said there will be a "ton of tweaking" in offensive and defensive schemes. "We'll continue to evolve." . . . Seniors invited to the NFL combine include CB Terrence Wheatley, LB Jordon Dizon and OT Tyler Polumbus. . . . Hawkins said none of his staff has received overtures from other schools. But he said in the coaching profession, "One pebble slides and the whole mountain moves."