



Colorado upends No. 21 WVU in OT

Bufs shine blackout

By Kyle Ringo

Thursday, September 18, 2008

They started hot, went arctic cold and needed a little good fortune to smile on them in overtime on Thursday night. But the Colorado Buffaloes remain undefeated this morning after earning a gritty victory over No. 21 West Virginia at Folsom Field.

The teams punched and countered for 60 minutes and it wasn't enough. The Mountaineers had the first possession in overtime and watched as place-kicker Pat McAfee's 23-yard field goal attempt ricocheted off the left upright. Colorado placekicker Aric Goodman's 25-yard attempt moments later snuck just inside the same post to give the Buffs a 17-14 triumph in a stadium filled mostly with fans clad in black.

"Maybe coach Crowder was on our side," CU defensive tackle George Hypolitesaid of the West Virginia miss. Hypolite was referring to former CU coach Eddie Crowder who died last week. The school honored Crowder by painting his name on the field and on players' helmets.

Maybe these Buffs are better than anyone thought.

"Nobody wants to be close, but I think we're a lot closer than people think," coach Dan Hawkins said.

Hawkins' team found a way to win a game eerily similar to one played a year earlier on the same field against Florida State. The Buffs sabotaged themselves offensively most of the night, but the defense kept coming to the rescue, finding ways to tackle speedy WVU quarterback Pat White and tailback Noel Devine most of the time.

The tandem rushed for all but 32 of the Mountaineers' 311 yards on the ground, and it still wasn't good enough on a breezy night beneath the Flatirons.

The Buffs had a decent night on the ground, too, and it came from a somewhat unexpected source.

After all the recruiting hoopla surrounding Darrell Scott, Colorado fans figured to see an historic night from a freshman running back this season. It just happened to come from Rodney Stewart instead. Stewart carried the ball 28 times for 166 yards, becoming the workhorse of the offense for one night at least.

The first meeting between the two programs was played before a crowd of 51,883 and became in instance classic.

Colorado had lost 14 consecutive games against ranked teams before beating Oklahoma in 2007. The Buffs are now 2-2 in their past four meetings with ranked opposition and should be much closer to a

national ranking themselves when the new polls come out Sunday. The Buffs haven't been ranked since November of 2005.

The Buffs confronted a West Virginia team unable to pass down field with any consistency. Mountaineers quarterback Pat White threw mostly screens and short routes and rarely looked down field most of the night.

After playing the first two games of the season almost entirely from the shotgun formation on offense, the Buffs switched things up Thursday. They operated with quarterback Cody Hawkins under center at times and used tailbacks Darrell Scott and Stewart running out of the I-formation.

"I think I like the I a little bit more because you have vision to both sides of the field instead of being in the spread where you have vision to one side," Stewart said.

It was a dramatic departure from the scheme they had shown almost exclusively since the beginning of spring practices. The diversity between schemes seemed to keep the Mountaineers off balance in defending the run game.

West Virginia fared better in the first half when Hawkins dropped back to pass. They intercepted the CU sophomore twice and hit him hard with an unblocked blitz forcing a fumble.

The Buffs started well, converting a pair of third-down situations on their first drive before Cody Hawkins lofted a 38-yard touchdown strike to Josh Smith, who had beaten a pair of defenders.

The Buffs got the ball back less than 2 minutes later when nose tackle Brandon Nicolas separated West Virginia wide receiver Bradley Starks from the ball on a screen pass. CU recovered and Hawkins threw his second touchdown pass five plays later, connecting with tight end Patrick Devenny over the middle.

The Mountaineers responded quickly. After a 36-yard kickoff return, they marched down the field on five consecutive running plays and scored when quarterback Pat White ran up the middle on a draw play for a 5-yard touchdown.

Three touchdowns had been scored and some fans hadn't even found their seats.

Both teams narrowly missed scoring on defensive plays in the second quarter. West Virginia linebacker Reed Williams read Hawkins' eyes on a second-down play and stepped in front of a telegraphed throw to Devenny. Williams was tackled when it first looked like he might return the ball for a touchdown, but West Virginia was called for a personal foul and only took possession at its 36-yard-line instead of deep in CU territory.

Nearly two weeks after making the game-winning interception against Eastern Washington, CU cornerback Cha'pelle Brown stepped in front of an out route and dropped a sure interception for a touchdown in the final minute of the half.

West Virginia tied the game with just under 5 minutes remaining in the third quarter when White ran through the heart of the defense for a 39-yard score. The Mountaineers drove 68 yards in four plays and the game was knotted 14-14.

West Virginia missed a sure touchdown on a botched trick play with under 9 minutes left in the game. White threw back to Starks who threw a wobbling-duck of a pass intended for Jock Sanders, who was

wide open deep down the left side behind the defense. The ball never made it to him.

When the Buffs took possession with 6 minutes remaining in the game, they had gone nine consecutive series without a score. Two of those possessions ended with CU turnovers and two ended on the WVU side of the field.

CU was finding ways to sabotage itself just like a year ago in the "Blackout" game against Florida State. Missed assignments and penalties stalled drives and thwarted momentum.



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Bufs' Stewart puts on show for national TV

'Speedy' rushes for 166 yards on 28 carries

By Ryan Thorburn
Friday, September 19, 2008

Colorado's talented freshman running back saved his breakout game for Thursday night's nationally televised showdown with No. 21 West Virginia.

Darrell Scott?

Well, the blue-chip superhero leaped a tall linebacker in a single bound during the Eastern Washington game but only rushed for 35 yards on 10 carries against the Mountaineers.

It was the diminutive Rodney Stewart who came up big and stole the spotlight. The 5-foot-6, 175-pound ball of fury rushed 166 yards on 28 carries (5.9 per) during the Bufs' 17-14 overtime upset at Folsom Field. The 166 yards effort is the third best by a Colorado freshman.

"It was good to come out and play on ESPN and I know my family and friends were watching me," Stewart said. "At the same time, I had to stay focused and stick with the game plan."

The Bufs came out throwing and stunned West Virginia with an early 14-0 lead. After that the game plan was to grind out a win with No. 43.

"You knew that was coming, that's the stuff we keep talking about," CU head coach Dan Hawkins said when asked about Stewart's performance. "You never know when those freshmen are going to grow up. ... The exciting thing was he ran hard and didn't turn the ball over."

After Cody Hawkins connected with Josh Smith for a 38-yard touchdown and Patrick Devenny for a 13-yard touchdown, Stewart rushed for 98 yards on 16 carries and accounted for six first downs in the first half.

That's more yards than any CU running back had in the first two games.

"We came out really excited and made some plays early on," Stewart said. "But later we had some mental errors on both sides of the ball."

Stewart set up the second score with a 13-yard run and he had the offense in scoring position again in the second quarter after picking up two yards to convert a fourth-and-1 and drawing a 15-yard facemask penalty during an 11-yard rumble.

Then Cody Hawkins was sacked and lost a fumble at the West Virginia 16-yard line. It was the sophomore quarterback's second turnover of the half.

Stewart had 113 yards on 21 carries through the third quarter and broke off a 13-yard run early in the fourth. But after Stewart was tackled in the backfield for a 2-yard loss, Cody Hawkins lost 10 yards on a sack and then hit Stewart for a 3-yard gain on third-and-22 the drive stalled.

Stewart moved the chains 30 yards with a 15-yard reception and another 15-yard facemask penalty against the Mountaineers tacked on during the next failed drive. "Speedy" had 153 yards on 26 carries (5.8 per) during regulation.

"We're always in good shape when Speedy and Darrell have the ball," Cody Hawkins said after the tailbacks put Aric Goodman in position for the 25-yard game-winning field goal in OT.

"I think he's going to set it again next week, personally," CU defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "I told (ESPN's) Chris Fowler at practice, watch out for Rodney Stewart."

A star is born.

Not bad for a Columbus native who was completely ignored by the Ohio State Buckeyes and only received lukewarm interest from MAC programs.

"When I got this scholarship I knew this was the one for me," said Stewart, who was never shy about competing with the more heralded classmate Scott. "I think I could play anywhere, but I don't have a chip on my shoulder."



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Buffaloes not derailed by 7 penalties

Mountaineers also flagged seven times

By Ryan Thorburn
Friday, September 19, 2008

The "Blackout" at Folsom Field on Thursday night was an incredible success for Colorado.

But despite the 17-14 overtime upset over No. 21 West Virginia and glossy 3-0 record, you get the feeling the color head coach Dan Hawkins and his staff will be focusing on next week is yellow.

As in stop drawing so many penalty flags.

"You'd love as time goes on to get that ironed out and be more of a smooth operating machine," Hawkins said. "But I'll take the win. They're a good football team and I'll take the win."

CU escaped with the victory over the Mountaineers despite committing seven penalties for 55 yards. The young Buffs had eight penalties for 58 yards against Colorado State and 10 penalties for 70 yards against Eastern Washington.

"I think we just had a couple stupid penalties and some miscommunication," quarterback Cody Hawkins said when asked what happened to CU's offense after scoring 14 points early in the first quarter. "We have to work on eliminating those mistakes, but you have to credit West Virginia, too. They did a good job rallying around the ball after that."

The Mountaineers also committed seven penalties, including a couple of costly facemasks, for 91 yards.

"They need to have the maturity to look at some of the missed opportunities," Dan Hawkins said of the Buffs. "We'll put this thing to bed tomorrow afternoon, give them Saturday off and then come Sunday it's all about the Seminoles."

CU next plays on Sept. 27 against Florida State.

Crowder honored

CU honored former football head coach and athletic director Eddie Crowder, who passed away on Sept. 9 from complications of leukemia at the age of 77, by painting "Eddie" on the field and also having an "Eddie" sticker on the players' helmets.

Dan Hawkins, who was at Crowder's bedside the night he died, texted his wife earlier in the week and told her to look at the full moon over the Flatirons.

"Eddie's watching us," he said.

Crowder, whose teams in the late 1960s and early 1970s pulled off their share of stunning upsets, would have been proud of this performance. His last words to Hawkins were that he was the right man for the job.

"It's great to get one with (his name) on the field," Hawkins said. "That was special."

Dykes out, Geer in

Starting strong safety D.J. Dykes did not play for the Buffs due to illness. Anthony Perkins started and finished with seven tackles.

Dykes had the game-clinching interception in the end zone against Eastern Washington and tallied 11 tackles in the first two games.

Tight end Riar Geer saw his first action of the season after missing the first two games recovering from arthroscopic surgery. Same story for cornerback Jimmy Smith, who missed the first two games due to back spasms.

Guard rotation

Devin Head returned to the lineup at left guard for the first time since the Colorado State game. The junior, who served a one-game suspension against Eastern Washington, was inserted into the lineup in the second quarter.

Max Tuioti-Mariner, a promising true freshman, started and was in the game for CU's first two touchdowns before being replaced by the more experienced Head. Later in the second quarter, Tuioti-Mariner came in for redshirt freshman Blake Behrens, who has started all three games this season.

Davis delivering

Jameson Davis doesn't touch the football that often but when he does, good things are happening for CU's special teams. The freshman place-kicker had two touchbacks on Thursday night, which gives him five touchbacks on 16 kickoffs this season.

The Buffs had just six touchbacks on 63 kickoffs in all of 2007.

Twelve of Davis' first 14 kickoffs were not returned beyond the 25, including the touchbacks. That figure was 23 of 66 last year.

The one breakdown CU's kickoff coverage had this season was during the opener against Colorado State when the Rams' John Mosure returned a kickoff 90 yards for a touchdown to answer Josh Smith's 93-yard kickoff return for a touchdown.

Scary moment

On the third snap of the game the "Blackout" crowd was silenced after West Virginia's J.T. Thomas lay motionless on the field after a helmet-to-helmet hit on CU fullback Maurice Cantrell.

The stretcher and paramedics rushed to Thomas' side but after a couple minutes the weak side linebacker got up and walked to the sideline under his own power. A relieved Dan Hawkins gave counterpart Bill

Stewart a hug and play resumed.

"I'm fired up that kid's going to be OK," Hawkins said. "That was a scary thing and I'm glad he got up."

Thomas did not return to the game.

Thursday history

This marked the third time CU played a game on a Thursday night. The Buffs defeated Stanford 21-17 on Sept. 6, 1990, in Boulder and Missouri 6-0 on Oct. 8, 1992, in Columbia.

Fort fun

The last time West Virginia visited the Centennial State it defeated Colorado State 52-24 in Fort Collins on Sept. 13, 1980.

The Buffs will make their first trip to West Virginia next season when they face the Mountaineers in Morgantown on Sept. 26, 2009.

Notable, part I

Patrick Devenny has six catches on third or fourth down and five of them have produced first downs. ... CU's two touchdowns in the first 4:50 of the game were the fastest pair by the team since Nov. 23, 2001, when the Buffs took a 14-0 lead on Nebraska just 3:13 into the game en route to a 62-36 victory. ... CU did not score in the first quarter against CSU or Eastern Washington. ... The Buffs extended the nation's fourth longest active scoring streak to 238 games. ... Former Fairview standout Arthur Jaffee saw his first collegiate action on the kickoff return. ... Dan Hawkins' teams are now 8-1 after a bye week. ... CU is 3-0 for the first time since 2004. ... West Virginia's 43 yards passing were the fewest CU has allowed since Baylor had 40 against the Buffs on Nov. 13, 1999 in Waco.

Notable, part II

Former Buff linebacker Ted Johnson, the 1994 runner-up for the Butkus Award, attended the game. ... West Virginia used about 4,400 of its 5,400 allotted tickets, bringing one of the largest nonconference visiting crowds to Boulder in history. ... Fifteen scouts from the National Football League worked the game, setting a new record for a CU home game. Former Buffs Dave McCloughan and Kent Kahl were among them. Both work for San Francisco. ... CU officials said 598 media credentials were issued, the third most for a game in school history. The top two games on the list were both against Nebraska in 1989 and 2001.



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Back in black: CU fans add color to game

By Vanessa Miller

Thursday, September 18, 2008

Thrilled University of Colorado students blared their car horns and shouted the school's fight song late Thursday after the Buffaloes stunned West Virginia by beating the 21st-ranked Mountaineers with an overtime field goal.

"I took my shirt off and kissed the field," CU junior Peter Irving, 20, said about his experience rushing Folsom Field after the surprise win. "It was money."

Unranked CU topped West Virginia with a final score of 17-14. CU junior Zachary Palmer, 20, said among the game's tensest moments was just before the Mountaineers missed their chance to take the lead with a field goal in overtime.

"I think an angel blew the ball right there," Palmer said.

A blacked-out student section rushed the field after the win, jumping and shouting the fight song. CU senior Miles Livermore, 21, called it the "most invigorating, stress-relieving moment of my life."

The night-game atmosphere mixed with a CU-overtime victory forced police to do some crowd control during and after the game. Officers ejected some students from the stadium and made some alcohol-related arrests, though police didn't provide the number of arrests Thursday.

CU senior Chris Dea, 21, said he was among the students removed from the game for alcohol-related violations.

"The 'pos' said, 'Get out,'" Dea said, pointing to the ground to show that he lost a shoe in the confrontation. "It most likely was because I had a flask in my pocket that was exposed."

Although CU only was leading by a touchdown at the half, junior Barrett Betz, 20, said he left the game because it was "a frickin' madhouse in there."

No one could move in the student section, he said.

West Virginia fan Steven Sanglandoski — in town from Las Vegas — said CU's young team has a bright future.

"They're probably gonna be the best team in the NCAA in two years," he said. "For freshmen and sophomores, they're unbelievable."

Before the game, John Lawrentz — wearing a camouflage jacket over a Mountaineers shirt and waving a large navy-and-gold West Virginia flag — did his best to stick out on Boulder's campus.

“This is the farthest we’ve traveled to date,” said Lawrentz, 40, a lifelong West Virginia fan who flew to Colorado from Parkersburg, W.V., for the rare mid-week night game in Boulder.

“This is as big as it gets for us,” Lawrentz said about the nationally televised match-up. “We don’t have pro sports, so this is our top level.”

Louisville resident Jesse Anderson said Thursday’s game was all about celebrating his roots. Anderson, 30, graduated as a Mountaineer in 2001 and said that, win or lose, having his alma mater play in his new backyard was “big time.”

With his game tickets burning a hole in his pocket, Anderson on Thursday wore his navy-and-gold Mountaineers jersey to tailgate and was taunted by the CU faithful who passed his West Virginia party.

“They said, ‘West Virginia sucks,’ and other things about my mother,” Anderson said. “But it made me feel warm inside.”

Seven Buffalo fans felt a little chilly during the game, having left their shirts at home. The men painted their bodies black and spelled out V-I-C-T-O-R-Y on their chests.

“That’s what we’re looking for,” screamed CU junior Andrew Erickson, 20, as the crew of painted men charged toward Folsom Field about an hour before the game.

“We want front row,” said CU sophomore Keith Brady, 19. “That’s why we’re going down now. This is national TV, baby!”

Although CU games traditionally are Saturday mornings or afternoons, many game and tailgate regulars said there were just as many fans partying Thursday as there have been at previous games this season.

“But I would rather have it on Saturday — that’s just me,” said Bob Mitchell, 46, of Centennial, who has been driving to Boulder for Buffs games since the 1980s. “It’s tradition, and, if things get out of control, you’ve got Sunday to recover.”



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Woelk: Victory over West Virginia big step for CU

By Neill Woelk
Friday, September 19, 2008

They never blinked. The thought of losing never crossed the Colorado Buffaloes' minds Thursday night.

Honestly. Not when West Virginia got back up off the mat after two early haymakers and tied the score. Not when their own mistakes kept them from rebuilding a lead. Not even when the Mountaineers took possession with the score tied, two minutes left in regulation and a chance to escape a frenzied Folsom Field with a win.

The Buffs never thought about anything else but winning.

"All night long, we had the feeling we were going to win," said Buff O-line coach Jeff Grimes. "There was never that feeling of dread, never that thought of losing, even when we were stopping ourselves. We just kept thinking we were just one or two plays away from winning.

"That feeling never changed."

Weren't these the same Buffaloes who 12 days earlier barely escaped with a narrow win over I-AA Eastern Washington? The same Buffaloes who had fans avoiding tall buildings and loaded firearms?

Yep. One and the same. After the win over Eastern Washington, CU coach Dan Hawkins said the Buffs had beaten a good team. People scoffed.

Thursday night, minutes after his Buffs had beaten No. 21 WVU in overtime, Hawkins said the same thing.

Anyone out there scoffing this morning?

That WAS a good team the Buffaloes beat Thursday night. A very good football team, with maybe the best quarterback the Buffs will see all year -- and when you consider the Buffs still have Texas, Kansas and Missouri on the schedule, that's a strong statement.

Folks around the nation will be calling this one an upset today. They'll compare it to Colorado's win over No. 3 Oklahoma a year ago.

No comparison. The Buffs played out of their minds against Oklahoma, got all kinds of breaks and beat a team that probably would have beaten them nine out of 10 times if they'd played that many times.

Thursday night, the Buffs played on an even keel with the Mountaineers. Play this one 12 times, and

you'd have a dozen games right down to the wire.

This one wasn't an upset. The Buffaloes played West Virginia straight up all night long, and when the opportunity presented itself, they won. They outgained the visitors 366-354, and matched them big play for big play.

No fluke here.

Yes there were mistakes -- and if you're a Colorado fan, that's not all bad. Look at the improvement the Buffs made from one game to the next, and suddenly, the brutal stretch that still awaits the Buffs doesn't look so daunting. Continue to improve at that rate, and it could be a fun stretch.

(That's Florida State, Texas, Kansas, Kansas State and Missouri, in case you've forgotten).

Mistakes? After scoring on their first two possessions, the Buffs failed to score the next 10 times they got the ball. Quarterback Cody Hawkins threw an interception to end one drive, then fumbled when he was blindsided to end another deep in WVU territory. Cha'pelle Brown, the hero of the Eastern Washington game with an interception return for a touchdown, let another possible pick-six bounce to the turf near the end of the second half.

Then came three straight three-and-outs to start the second half. Costly penalties were still a problem.

But the defense never wavered. West Virginia QB Pat White did hit the Buffs with two big scoring runs, but the Buffs aren't the first team -- and won't be the last -- to get hit by White. When push came to shove, the Buffs did the shoving and West Virginia didn't have the necessary push.

(We interrupt this column to notify CU's next opponents that Rodney Stewart is a bona fide stud. If the Buffs had needed a touchdown to win in OT, we would have loved their chances with Stewart.).

Don't underestimate the importance of this win. The Buffs are 3-0 for the first time since 2004 and only the second time since 1995.

"We knew we could win this game," said senior center Daniel Sanders. "We knew this was the type of game that could put us in the spotlight. We just had to prove to everyone else that we're capable."

That being said, the stretch ahead is still a nasty one. After the game, Hawkins said his team would spend today reviewing Thursday night's game, take Saturday off and then begin preparing for Florida State on Sunday.

One week later, it will be Texas, then Kansas. All are ranked in the top 25 today.

"It's a big win for the kids and a big win for the program," Grimes said. "It's a big step up. But there's a lot of work to do out there, and the kids know it. It doesn't get any easier from here on out, no question."

Still, this was one of the games the Buffs needed to win. They needed a win early in this stretch to provide momentum and confidence. They needed a win to take a step forward.

Thursday night, they accomplished that goal.

They didn't blink.

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cu 17, (21) west virginia 14 (ot)

CU stuns No. 21 West Virginia in OT

Goodman's field goal in overtime defeats Mountaineers 17-14

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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Long snapper Austin Bisnow (65) is in the center of an adoring crowd as the Buffs and their fans celebrate the overtime victory over West Virginia. (Reza A. Marvashti, The Denver Post)

The best part was taking the victory bow afterward. Make that a lot of screaming, jumping and hollering — with many of the 51,883 fans at Folsom Field joining in.

The 17-14 overtime victory over No. 21 West Virginia pushed Colorado's record to 3-0 for the first time since 2004, only the second time since winning five straight to open the 1998 season.

More important to CU coach Dan Hawkins was what he saw in his team's eyes.

"I think they totally believe in what we're doing," Hawkins said. "The longer the game went on, the more I liked our chances."

In the end, all it took was a chip-shot field goal by sophomore Aric Goodman in the first and only overtime period. This had to feel especially good to Goodman, a former Cherry Creek High School All-Colorado pick who began his college career at Wyoming and had a difficult freshman season in Laramie after missing an overtime extra point in a loss at Virginia.

BOULDER — A young Colorado football team showed a national television audience Thursday night that it belonged on the big stage.

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Colorado Football

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West Virginia (1-2) had the ball first in overtime but failed to get any points when its place-kicker, senior Pat McAfee, hooked a 23-yarder after the Mountaineers stalled at the 4-yard line. With CU taking over at the 25 to start its possession, Goodman probably could have ended it immediately. But redshirt freshman tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart gained 9 yards on the first carry. After a first down and a 6-yard gain to the 13, Hawkins called in Goodman. He split the uprights from 25 yards.

"This is huge for our team," Goodman said. "It was on ESPN. We beat a ranked team. If we can keep winning, it will put us in the mix of things."

Colorado fans might have expected a breakout

game from a true freshman tailback. But who could have guessed Stewart would be the one. On this night, Stewart upstaged his highly touted teammate Darrell Scott. Just 5-feet-6 and 175 pounds, Stewart came up really big. His 166 yards rushing are the third-most in a game by a CU freshman, an impressive performance on a national stage.

Colorado had a chance to take the lead late in the fourth quarter but had to punt the ball away from the WVU 46 with 2:09 remaining when three plays netted only 2 yards.

West Virginia trailed 14-0 before many of those in attendance had taken their seats. The Mountaineers still trailed by a touchdown at halftime but finally caught up when a 39-yard keeper by supersonic quarterback Pat White made it 14-14 with 4:49 remaining in the third quarter.

White broke into the open field on the left side. He blew by middle linebacker Jeff Smart and then made redshirt freshman safety Anthony Perkins look almost helpless with a hip juke before darting for the corner.

White rushed for 148 yards and two touchdowns. But, thanks in large part to CU's gritty defense, the Mountaineers couldn't finish off drives and put the pressure on the home team.

Colorado led 14-7, but two second-quarter turnovers in West Virginia territory prevented the Buffaloes from gaining a cushion. On a second-and-21 from the WVU 48, Mountaineers linebacker Reed Williams stepped in front of tight end Patrick Devenny and intercepted a Cody Hawkins pass with 8:28 remaining before halftime.

Then with 2:30 to go and Colorado driving to the WVU 16, Hawkins lost a fumble after being sacked by linebacker John Holmes. Blitzing from his left side,

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Holmes came untouched around the end.

Fortunately for the home crowd, CU's defense held and forced West Virginia to punt away both opportunities after the takeaways.

"There's a lot of heartache in our locker room," said WVU coach Bill Stewart, a defensive line coach at Air Force in the early 1990s.

Colorado won't be celebrating long. The Buffs are just beginning a difficult stretch which includes four ranked teams in the next five weeks, beginning with Florida State.

"If we play like this, we can beat anybody," said Stewart, the wide-eyed rookie.

"And anybody can beat us," added defensive tackle George Hypolite, the wily senior.

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Play of the day

West Virginia's missed 23-yard field goal in overtime. Mountaineers kicker Pat McAfee pushed a short try into the left upright on West Virginia's possession. McAfee's miss gave the Buffs a chance to win with just a field goal, which they did on Aric Goodman's 25-yard game-winner in overtime.

Key stat

0 — The number of points West Virginia scored off of two Colorado turnovers. West Virginia had good field position in both instances — on either side of the 50-yard line — but was forced to punt each time.

Chris Dempsey, The Denver Post

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CU's Blackout was pure gold

By **Woody Paige**
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — CU cheerleader Dan Hawkins implored the Buffs Backers in Black to be in their seats at the very beginning early Thursday evening. "We're gonna start fast."

Colorado scored 14 points in the first 4:50.

Hawkins didn't have to plead with the 51,883 at Folsom Field to stay on their feet until the very end. The Buffaloes did finish huge.

They kicked a field goal on the last play late Thursday night.

Colorado 17, West Virginia 14 in overtime.

It's been a wild, weird, wacky, weed-whacking time in your local football the past few days.

"You love college football . . . That was an awesome thing to see," Hawkins said.

That it was.

The Buffs didn't score for a 55-minute stretch . . . but won against a ranked team that looked rank at the conclusion. The Mountaineers didn't try to score

in the final few minutes and couldn't score in overtime.

West Virginia had not come West to play in Colorado since 1980, when it played Colorado State. It probably won't want to return here until 2080.

These are real mountains, not those anthills in the East.

"We did start fast," said Hawkins. "And I thought the longer it went, the better the chance we had of winning."

In overtime, West Virginia's Pat McAfee drilled a 23-yard field-goal try into the left upright.

Colorado's Aric Goodman drilled a 25-yard field goal in between the uprights.

It was good, man.

Endgame.

But one had to wonder if the blackout was becoming a power outage again this year. Last year the Buffs lost on this special occasion to Florida State 16-6. And from 1981-2006, Colorado would have nonconference losses at home to top 20 teams BYU, UCLA, Ohio State, Washington, Arizona State and USC.

The 'Eers brought in preseason Heisman Trophy candidate — quarterback Pat White — and a touted team.

And for a while, the Blackout in Boulder was turning into a White-Out from Morgantown.

White ran for two touchdowns and had another 44-yard sprint.

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But with 5:14 left in the third quarter, he had minus passing yardage. So, despite not being able to score, and despite turning over the ball, despite messing up with penalties and weak punt coverage, despite everything, the Buffs were tied after four.

CU quarterback Cody Hawkins outpassed White, 179 yards to 43.

And, surprise, CU rookie running back Rodney Stewart out-rushed White, 166 yards to 148.

"It was like old-school smashmouth football out there," said CU linebacker Jeff Smart, who is not old enough to remember old school.

But Hawkins has the players buying into his style and his enthusiasm, especially youngsters, including Stewart. Speedy set the 166-yard school dash record. The Stewart on the other sideline, Mountaineers coach Bill Stewart, in his first season, will have lots of folks back home selling his future. After all the success White had running around with the football, the coaching staff didn't let him run once during the last possession of regulation. The Buffs said thank you.

Then, when West Virginia got on the Colorado side of the 50 in the final minute, Stewart shut them down. He still had one timeout in his pocket. Sort of reminiscent of Lou Saban's fabled Half-A-Loaf tie when he was coaching the Broncos.

Colorado won the toss for overtime, just as it did before the opening kickoff, and chose to go second from the 25-yard line. West Virginia bogged down at the Colorado 4, and the chip shot hit the upright. CU ran their freshmen four times — Darrell Scott twice for 3 yards, Stewart twice for 15 yards — then Goodman made the chippie.

What looked to be the entire student body charged

the field. Ralphie the mascot was having none of that controlled chaos, and the Mountaineer mascot was out of there.

Hawkins believed that someone up there was taking care of the Buffs.

"As I was driving home the other night, I saw a moon that looked like a silver dollar in the sky, and I thought Eddie was looking over us," the coach said. Eddie Crowder, the longtime coach and athletic director at CU, died last week, and his life was honored on the scoreboard screens Thursday night.

Eddie would have loved it. Chris Fowler, the ESPN play-by-play announcer, had to love it — quietly. The 1985 graduate of CU hadn't seen a game in Boulder in a dozen years.

And a sellout crowd loved it. But the several thousand who arrived late because of the early kickoff and the heavy traffic might have thought they had missed all the Buffs' scoring.

But CU saved the best for the last.

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john henderson

CU's little back one big talent

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Article Launched: 09/19/2008 12:30:00 AM MDT



Rodney Stewart was the star running back in the open field for the Buffs.
(Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — Colorado's freshman sensation had his breakout game for all the country to see. Ever since the signing period, Colorado's recruiting list has made the radar of every recruitnik in the country.

Thursday night on ESPN prime time, the nation saw Colorado's star freshman and got a glimpse into the

future for the Buffaloes (3-0).

Only one problem. It wasn't Darrell Scott. The highest-rated prep running back in the country last year wasn't even the best freshman running back on his team at Folsom Field. Instead, the Buffaloes' future appears to be getting a boost from the short little legs of 5-foot-6 tailback Rodney Stewart.

All he did was rush for 166 yards, third most in CU history for a freshman behind Billy Waddy's 202 in 1973 and Lamont Warren's 168 in 1991, and set up the winning field goal in overtime of Colorado's 17-14 win over No. 21 West Virginia.

Scott's story is something out of a Gil Thorpe cartoon. He's 6-feet-2, 215 pounds, ran for 2,433 yards and 33 touchdowns as a prep senior, was named to every All-American team and everyone short of the New England Patriots wanted him.

Stewart's story, meanwhile, is something out of Little Orphan Annie. He was first-team all-state in Ohio, which, if you follow prep football, is a little like being one of the best chefs in France. He ran for 2,036 yards and 33 touchdowns for Brookhaven High in Westerville and averaged 10.8 yards a carry. That's a first down every carry, folks.

However, the Big Ten treated him like he wasn't even all-neighborhood. Ohio State, if you saw its pratfall Saturday at USC, could use a cat-quick back who can get through tiny holes. The only stat Buckeyes coach Jim Tressel apparently looked at was Stewart's 5-6 height.

No one else in the Big Ten gave him much of a thought, either. You had to think Minnesota coach Tim Brewster and Indiana's Bill Lynch finished watching the first half Thursday night and were speed-dialing their area scouts for Ohio.

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The Mid-American Conference liked Stewart. Sure, he would look swell in a Bowling Green uniform. Maybe he would get all the way to Muncie, Ind., and Ball State.

But Thursday night, he looked awfully good in black and gold. Granted, this West Virginia defense, not to mention first-year coach Bill Stewart, is going through some growing pains, but this 5-6 bowling ball is what Hawkins has missed the past two years. When Hawkins took over this program, he not only had to reconstruct the sour culture but also instill some badly needed speed.

He got it in Scott. Turns out, Stewart was the better back in a game that can be called a corner-turning win for Hawkins.

"It was great to play on ESPN and have my friends and family watching me," the Buffs' Stewart said. "But at the same time I had to stay focused and stick to the game plan. I was a little more prepared because this was my second or third time playing on TV."

Stewart, who had 76 yards his first two games, never made the black-clad crowd of 51,883, as dark as a Boulder goth concert, go ga-ga as West Virginia quarterback Patrick White did on two TD runs.

What Stewart became was a workhorse. He moved the chains and kept White off the field. Stewart's first two runs produced first downs and he had 98 yards in the first half.

"That's one of the things I keep talking about," Hawkins said. "You never know when freshmen are going to grow up. He has too much talent not to."

How deep is Hawkins' tailback stable? Stewart wasn't even listed in the two-deep roster. Starter Demetrius Sumler, a sophomore, had only one carry, and Scott had 10 for 35 yards. Obviously, Scott is the

program's future, but while Colorado's crowded backfield will never be confused with USC's, this may be a very talented and deep tailback corps.

The tests keep coming, and West Virginia could prove to be the most overrated thing in college football since Charlie Weis. But the upcoming murderer's row of Florida State, Texas, Kansas, K-State and Missouri no longer looks like a firing squad.

As Hawkins said, "We're a lot closer than people realize."

Bustin' the BCS

With top-ranked Southern California apparently ready for the NFC playoffs, there's another race of interest for bowl-minded football fans.

Four schools from non-BCS conferences are ranked and bidding to be this year's Utah, Boise State or Hawaii and make one of the four lucrative BCS bowls. No. 25 Fresno State, which lost to Wisconsin on Saturday, probably has no shot, and No. 20 Utah is a darkhorse.

The real race is between No. 14 Brigham Young and No. 15 East Carolina. East Carolina may have the tougher path with visits to North Carolina State on Saturday and Virginia on Oct. 11. BYU only has the Mountain West schedule, plus a nonleague date at Utah State. The first BCS standings come out Oct. 12.

John Henderson, The Denver Post

Games of the week

LSU at Auburn

Two top-10 teams, with the winner also the probable champion of the SEC West. Both defenses

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are among the best in the nation — Auburn 10th in total defense, LSU 12th — with offenses still trying to prove themselves.

Big 12: Miami at Texas A&M — A make-a- statement game for both programs hoping to reclaim past glory. A victory would be huge for new A&M coach Mike Sherman — especially with starting QB Stephen McGee questionable (shoulder).

Mountain West: Utah at Air Force — A 2-0 start in league play for the winner will be an enviable cushion given how competitive the league is this year. The Utes are loaded in every facet, while the Falcons' Kyle Halderman thus far is a worthy successor to MWC offensive player of the year Chad Hall.

Colorado connections

John Bacon, Oregon

His breakout season cut short after nine games in 2007, the senior middle linebacker is back in fine form running the Ducks' defense. The Lakewood High grad was having a stellar junior season when he injured his knee in the ninth game and had season- ending surgery. In that game against Arizona State, Bacon was having a career day with seven tackles in the win. Bacon has started the first three games this season, and he has a sack. The No. 17 Ducks host Boise State on Saturday.

Andrew George, BYU: The backup tight end from Cherry Creek High has six catches for 52 yards, including a touchdown against Washington.

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sports

White lightning strikes just twice

By Natalie Meisler
The Denver Post

Article Launched: 09/19/2008 12:30:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Colorado came in knowing West Virginia and its quarterback, Pat White, would pile up yards. The Mountaineers left CU on Thursday night without many points.

It's hard to describe yielding 311 yards on the ground as a defensive gem, especially with two 100-plus rushers — but had CU not smothered White on all but two drives, there wouldn't have been a 17-14 overtime celebration on the Folsom Field floor.

"Pat's a great player," CU coach Dan Hawkins said of the Mountaineers senior, who moved into third place on the all-time NCAA career quarterback rushing list with 3,814 yards.

"The guy is good. You're not going to shut down Michael Jordan. Michael Jordan is going to get a few shots."

And White had only two shots at the end zone, a 6-yard run he set up with a 44-yard sideline lightning bolt in the first quarter and a 39-yard burst in the third to tie the game 14-14.

CU never trailed in the game.

"Our defensive staff worked two weeks on having to be so disciplined," Hawkins said. "We didn't get overly complicated."

Linebacker Jeff Smart, who had the final stop in overtime before WVU missed a field goal and who led the Buffs with 12 tackles, said: "It's especially big in overtime. It's do or die. We had third and a yard, and they lined up in a 100 percent run formation. We got a great call from the coaches, and we just played ball from there."

Communication was difficult, at best, given the crowd noise level. CU linebacker Brad Jones didn't even realize until after the game that WVU had no positive passing yardage until the third quarter. "That's crazy," he said.

Of the overall effort, he added: "I don't think it was any one person. We stayed together all night."

The biggest play after slugging it out for three hours might have been the coin toss to start overtime. The Buffs won the toss, and it was textbook from there: CU chose to defend first, and its defense held. Then, WVU's Pat McAfee put his field-goal attempt off the upright.

"The defense went out there, and we were like, 'Let's stop them,' " Jones said. "We knew we were going to stop them, so all the offense had to do was kick a field goal."

Defensive tackle George Hypolite always has the last word on defense. He and Brandon Nicolas clogged up the middle of the field.

"We're 3-0 and in the national championship hunt," he said, smiling, continuing his now-weekly countdown.

Natalie Meisler: 303-954-1295 or

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Zany Buffs fans make mark on Fiesta Bowl rep

By The Denver Post

Article Launched: 09/19/2008 12:30:00 AM MDT

BOULDER — Colorado isn't known for crazy fans. But they may have taken a step toward changing that perception Thursday night.

Just ask Fiesta Bowl representative Dick Stemple. He was almost caught in the stampede as students and other fans stormed the playing field after CU's 17-14 overtime victory over No. 21 West Virginia.

"I've never seen anything like it," Stemple said. "I was standing next to a student and he told me that if Colorado wins, they were going to rush the playing field. He wasn't kidding.

"The fans did the same thing last year when they beat Oklahoma. It's wonderful."

CU coach Dan Hawkins said he took time out during the game to swivel his head.

"I just wanted to stop and look at the pageantry," he said. "You've got to love college football."

Which team was whistling?

It was pointed out that the game was a battle between states written about by the late singer/songwriter John Denver: "Take Me Home, Country Roads" (Almost Heaven, West Virginia) and "Rocky Mountain High."

The ringer on the cellphone of WVU coach Bill Stewart has the former, of course.

This and that.

A video tribute and a moment of silence honored CU's late coach and athletic director Eddie Crowder before kickoff. This was the first game with a script "Eddie" on both sides of the field, between the 20- and 30-yard lines. . . . Colorado is now 21-14-1 when wearing black uniforms, including 6-2 under Hawkins. . . . Strange flag of the year: CU was assessed a 5-yard penalty for an illegal formation — while quarterback Cody Hawkins took a knee in an attempt to run out the clock at the end of the second quarter.

Footnotes.

Among notable visitors were Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe, College Football Hall of Fame executive director Steve Hatchell (a CU alumnus) and Stemple. . . In a rarity for CU, the Buffs have two regular-season games in NFL stadiums. The Buffs faced Colorado State in Invesco Field at Mile High and will play Sept. 27 against No. 24 Florida State in Jacksonville (Fla.) Municipal Stadium (formerly Alltel Stadium), home of the Jaguars. . . . Colorado's next home game, Oct. 4 against Texas, is nearing a sellout, CU officials said.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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Bufs shock No. 21 West Virginia in OT

Placekicker Goodman wins it with boot, given scholarship

By B.G. Brooks

Thursday, September 18, 2008

Aric Goodman, the *former* walk-on placekicker dubbed "Money" by his teammates, lived up to his nickname Thursday night - and earned a scholarship in the process.

Goodman kicked a 25-yard field goal in overtime, pushing the Colorado Buffaloes past No. 21 West Virginia 17-14 at raucous Folsom Field.

When Goodman's kick sailed through the field's north uprights, several thousand black-clad CU students - they had dubbed it "blackout night" for

ESPN's national audience - in the crowd of 51,883 rushed the field and celebrated wildly.

"That's a great thing to be a part of . . . the longer it went, the better I felt about our guys," Buffaloes coach Dan Hawkins said.

CU remained unbeaten (3-0) while West Virginia (1-2) lost consecutive games for the first time since 2004, when the Mountaineers were beaten in their final two regular-season games and their bowl game.

The Buffs, who took a 14-0 first-quarter lead but blew another couple of scoring opportunities with turnovers, won the overtime coin toss and opted to play defense first.

West Virginia ran the ball six consecutive times to the 6-yard line, where, on fourth down, Pat McAfee's 23-yard field-goal attempt banged into the left upright and bounded away.

Goodman, a Cherry Creek High School graduate and 2007 transfer from Wyoming, said he was tempted not to watch McAfee's attempt because "it would be a little bit easier on my nerves."

But he finally relented, watched the kick go boink and figured CU quarterback Cody Hawkins, freshman tailback Rodney "Speedy" Stewart and the rest of the offense would position him for a game-winning kick.

It took the Buffs four plays to set up Goodman for the kick of his life. At Wyoming, he had missed a point-after attempt in overtime that cost the Cowboys the game, and he undoubtedly remembered.

"I just went out with the mentality that each kick's different," said Goodman, who was told after the game by Dan Hawkins he was going on scholarship. "You just go through your mental checklist and put it through."

But Goodman had help. The diminutive Stewart (5-foot-6, 180 pounds) gained 166 yards on 28 carries, the second most for a freshman in CU history, and the Buffs defense did its best to contain elusive West Virginia quarterback Pat White, who ran 19 times for 149 yards and two touchdowns.

Dan Hawkins said of Stewart, "You never know when those freshmen are going to grow up . . . and the exciting thing was, he didn't turn the ball over."

White, who had long runs of 44 and 39 yards, became the first visiting player in Folsom Field since 2004 to run for more than 100 yards, when Kansas State's Alan Webb, also a QB, ran for 103.

"Pat White made plays," Dan Hawkins said. "You're not going to shut down Michael Jordan; he's going to get some shots off."

West Virginia coach Bill Stewart called White "a lifeblood . . . he's the best we have."

CU's defensive game plan was to try to make White one-dimensional, controlling him on the run and making him pass. He completed 10-of-14 for 43 yards while CU quarterback Cody Hawkins hit on 22-of-33 for 179 yards and two first-quarter touchdowns. He was intercepted once and lost one second-half fumble that ended a drive that had taken the Buffs to the Mountaineers' 16-yard line.

Stewart, the most unheralded member of CU's highly touted 2008 tailback recruits (Darrell Scott and Ray Polk, who is redshirting, are the other two), also caught three passes for 16 yards.

"I just wanted to come out and play," Stewart said, adding, "I was figuring out where the holes were and, luckily, I was getting yards . . . it'll be something I can tell my kids about."

Goodman can, too, but even on a night when he was among CU's heroes, he didn't want to hear of a comparison with former All-American Buffs placekicker Mason Crosby.

"Don't mention my name and Mason's in the same sentence," he said. "He's doing stuff (with the Green Bay Packers) that I dream of."

But Goodman came to CU with his own dreams, and Thursday night, he lived them.

© Rocky Mountain News



Bufs freshman Stewart roars from shadows

Less-heralded recruit gets 166 yards on ground

By Paul Willis

Thursday, September 18, 2008

Darrell Scott was the big recruit. Demetrius Sumler was the opening-game starter.

But when it comes to running the ball for the University of Colorado football team, the main man might end up being true freshman Rodney Stewart.

Such was the case Thursday night when the Buffaloes welcomed No. 21 West Virginia to Folsom Field in a nationally televised showdown. While Stewart might not end up being the best of the bunch, it's easy to see why CU is giving him the bulk of the carries now.

Stewart, a shifty 5-foot-6, 180-pounder whose bulkiness belies his scat-back frame, rushed for 166 yards, second most by a CU freshman, in the Buffs' 17-14 overtime win.

"That guy has always been showing good speed and quickness, and he has a lot of heart and determination when he's running," CU receiver Josh Smith said.

"He got his chance to get a lot of reps, and he showed us that when the game's on the line, he doesn't fold under pressure."

Stewart had carried only 13 times in the first two games, but he toted the ball 28 times Thursday.

"It was good to play on ESPN, knowing my family and friends were watching," Stewart said. "But at the same time, I tried to stay focused."

Scott, widely considered CU's prize 2008 recruit and one of the most heralded in the nation, gained 35 yards on 10 carries. Sumler, meanwhile, carried the ball only once for 2 yards.

While each might have their sparkling moments, Stewart's came first. With his size and zero-to-full-speed bursts, he brings to mind former Buffs nemesis Darren Sproles, who played at Kansas State from 2001 through 2004.

Local sports fans will be familiar with Sproles, now a San Diego Chargers back, who scored two touchdowns against the Broncos on Sunday.

While Scott's recruiting trail made national news, the Buffs quietly plucked Stewart from Westerville, Ohio, initially on the recommendation of linebacker Doug Rippy, a redshirt this season.

Since Stewart arrived, he has evolved the quickest, and that was on display against the Mountaineers.

"You knew that was coming," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "That's the stuff we've been talking about, and you never know when those freshmen are going to grow up. You know it's going to happen sometime, because there's too much talent for it not to."

It wasn't only the yards and 5.9-yard-per-carry average that had Hawkins raving about Stewart.

"The exciting thing," Hawkins said with a slight laugh, "is that he didn't turn the ball over."

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Longmont, Colorado
Friday, September 19,
2008

[TimesCall.com](#)

Publish Date: 9/19/2008

Kick start

Bufs begin rugged stretch by upending No. 21 W.Va.

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — The Colorado Buffaloes have ample reason to feel good about themselves today.

They defeated No. 21 West Virginia, 17-14, in overtime before 51,883 black-clad fans Thursday night at Folsom Field. They are 3-0 for the first time since 2004. They beat a ranked team for the second time in nine tries under coach Dan Hawkins.

Aric Goodman's 25-yard field goal ended CU's sole possession in overtime, prompting a mass rush onto the field by gleeful fans. Goodman's kick barely crept in past the left upright, moments after West Virginia's Pat McAfee hit that upright from 23 yards out on his try in overtime.

"When he hit that upright, I knew we were going to win," CU safety Ryan Walters said.

The Buffs survived the first test in a difficult schedule that pits them against five ranked teams over a six-week period, starting with West Virginia. They also survived the Mountaineers' potent ground game, which had two 100-yard rushers. CU hadn't allowed one in Folsom Field since November 2004.

Indeed, the Buffs have ample reason to smile today as they begin preparing for No. 24 Florida State in Jacksonville on Sept. 27. Rodney Stewart, who ran for 166 yards, declared that the win "put CU on the map."

His older teammates spoke in a different tone.

"We won't relish this win at all," senior fullback Maurice Cantrell said. "We'll pat each other on the backs and then go about fixing our mistakes."

Said sophomore quarterback Cody Hawkins: "We started fast and finished fast. The middle was a little sketchy."

CU did start well. The Buffs began in a fashion reminiscent of the 2001 Nebraska game. They led 14-0 Thursday before 5 minutes elapsed, marking their fastest beginning since going up on Nebraska, 14-0, in 3:13 seven years ago. They didn't score again until Goodman's boot in overtime. Failing to score hurt, but failing to score when opportunities presented themselves stung a bit worse.

Twice in the second quarter, CU drove into Mountaineer territory, only to turn it over. The first came when West Virginia linebacker Reed Williams



Colorado kicker Aric Goodman celebrates his game-winning, 25-yard field goal in overtime against West Virginia on Thursday night at Folsom Field. The Buffs beat the 21st-ranked Mountaineers, 17-14.

Lewis Geyer/Times-Call

Times-Call Slide Show

[CU beats West Virginia 17-14 in overtime](#)

COLORADO 17, WEST VIRGINIA 14 (OT)

West Virginia

70700—14

Colorado

140003—17

First Quarter

Col—Jo.Smith 38 pass from C.Hawkins (Goodman kick), 12:14.

Col—Devenny 13 pass from C.Hawkins (Goodman kick), 10:10.

WVU—P.White 6 run (McAfee kick), 7:33.

Third Quarter

intercepted Cody Hawkins. The second was when linebacker John Holmes rushed unblocked and clocked the CU quarterback, forcing a fumble that West Virginia recovered.

“Misti’s son had a hand in us not getting those points,” Dan Hawkins joked while his wife stood nearby.

CU committed three turnovers, each one giving West Virginia good field position. The defense responded.

“Our defense rallied,” defensive tackle George Hypolite said. “Three turnovers, no points off of them. That’s what I like.”

CU’s biggest blown chance came when cornerback Cha’pelle Brown, the same guy whose interception return for a touchdown sealed the Sept. 6 win over Eastern Washington, dropped another one when he had nothing but grass to the end zone.

West Virginia tied it in the third quarter when quarterback Pat White scrambled through CU’s defense for a 39-yard score. White scored West Virginia’s other touchdown on a 6-yard draw in the first quarter.

White finished with 148 rushing yards, and Noel Devine had 133. Yet it didn’t seem CU’s run defense was that bad.

“They are a great football team,” Hypolite said. “A lot of teams in the Big East are going to have problems with them.”

The Mountaineers drove to CU’s 48 in the closing seconds but opted to play conservatively, probably believing their running attack, which totaled 311 yards, would overmatch CU’s red-zone defense. That didn’t matter.

“We weren’t going to kick the ball at the end of the game,” West Virginia coach Bill Stewart said. “I don’t second guess.”

Neither does Dan Hawkins, who’s 3-0 for the first time at CU. Normally not someone who enjoys seeing his field rushed after a win, Hawkins this time relished it, jumping up and down on national television while fans around him went bonkers.

He, too, said improvements are necessary. He also savored what the Buffs accomplished Thursday night.

“We’re still building,” Hawkins said. “Nobody wants to be close, but we’re a lot closer than people realize.

“I really believe we’re headed in the right direction. If this group keeps buying in and stays together and does things right, we’ll have things to say by the end of the season.”

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

WVU—P.White 39 run (McAfee kick), 4:49.

Overtime

Col—FG Goodman 25.

A—51,883.

WVUCol

First downs

1624

Rushes-yards

52-31145-187

Passing

43179

Comp-Att-Int

10-15-022-33-1

Return Yards

10084

Punts-Avg.

7-44.37-47.6

Fumbles-Lost

1-12-1

Penalties-Yards

7-917-55

Time of Possession

29:2130:39

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—West Virginia, P.White 19-148, Devine 26-133, Sanders 7-30. Colorado, Stewart 28-166, Scott 10-35, Crawford 1-2, Sumler 1-2, Team 1-0, Jo.Smith 1-(minus 6), C.Hawkins 3-(minus 12).

PASSING—West Virginia, P.White

10-14-0-43, Starks 0-1-0-0. Colorado, C.Hawkins 22-33-1-179.

RECEIVING—West Virginia, Devine 3-11, Jalloh 2-20, Gonzales 1-11, Arnett 1-5, Johnson 1-3, Sanders 1-0, Starks 1-(minus 7). Colorado, Jo.Smith 5-75, McKnight 4-21, Devenny 3-26, Stewart 3-16, Crawford 2-23, Scott 1-15, Cantrell 1-4, J.Behrens 1-1, Williams 1-1, Sumler 1-(minus 3).

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Longmont, Colorado
Friday, September 19,
2008



Publish Date: 9/19/2008

Unwanted Stewart puts on a show

*By Justin Williams
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — And nobody wanted this kid?

“I always knew I was great player,” Rodney Stewart said.

Maybe everyone else is in on the secret now.

Under the bright lights of ESPN, during the only Division I football game in the country Thursday night, Stewart showed the nation what it missed out on by not recruiting the 5-foot-6 freshman from Ohio. He rushed for 166 yards against No. 21 West Virginia, totaling the third-biggest day on the ground for a freshman in CU history.

Not bad for someone only Mid-American schools wanted and his home-state Buckeyes of Ohio State never gave a second glance.

Even in the CU backfield, Stewart has been overlooked. Fellow freshman Darrell Scott — tabbed as one of the school’s biggest recruits ever — has been getting all the hype. But when the Buffs needed a big play Thursday night, it was Stewart they trusted with the ball. Scott finished with a third fewer carries and only 35 yards.

“I felt like I had a lot to prove,” Stewart said.

He’s always felt that way.

When Stewart was 5 years old, he somehow got stuck playing with a bunch of 8-year-olds on his youth football team. He quickly showed he was the fastest person on the field, so his teammates dubbed him “Speedy.”

The name has stuck. That’s all his CU teammates know him by.

But now, the entire country knows about this “Speedy” kid from Colorado. Be sure some of those coaches who snubbed him were watching, too.

“This is the best moment of my life,” he said, still relishing the victory amid thousands of CU fans after the game-winning kick. “I’m light-headed right now. I can’t believe it. This is why I came to Boulder.”

Credit Dan Hawkins and the Buffs for finding him. But it’s still a mystery why nobody else could.

All he did as a senior in high school was rush for more than 2,000 yards and score 33 touchdowns. Maybe it was his torn ACL during his junior year, forcing him to miss the whole season, that deterred people. Maybe it was his lack of size.

But he’s always possessed the talent.

“You knew that was coming,” Hawkins said. “That’s the stuff we keep talking about.”

Hawkins benched Stewart after just four carries during the Colorado State game after the freshman fumbled, but Hawkins credited him Thursday for taking extra care of the football.

“You never know when a freshman is going to grow up,” Hawkins said. “You know it’s going to happen at some point, just because he has too much talent not to.”

Stewart went on to say that he still has a lot to prove — but this was a good start.

“Big players do big things in big games,” he said.

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A great night for Goodman

Kicker gets scholarship

By Justin Williams

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Cody Hawkins couldn't wait to tell everyone the good news.

"Aric Goodman is officially on scholarship," the Colorado quarterback proudly announced.

Not a bad reward for providing the game-winning kick in overtime. Goodman's 25-yard field goal, which sailed just inside the left upright, gave CU a 17-14 win over West Virginia on Thursday night — just the thrilling ending in front of a national TV audience that Goodman predicted a year ago.

While Hawkins was visiting the Wyoming transfer last season, the quarterback noticed a newspaper clipping hanging on the wall that depicted Goodman's PAT miss two years ago against Virginia that cost the game for his Cowboys.

"I told him I didn't like seeing that, so I took it," Hawkins said. "But he said, 'When I make the game-winning kick against West Virginia next year, I want that newspaper clipping.'"

"So I guess I owe him."

And coach Dan Hawkins felt he owed the sophomore, too. So in the locker room, he told Goodman of his newly awarded scholarship.

"It means a lot. I gave up a scholarship at Wyoming to come here, because this is the school I've always wanted to be a part of," Goodman said. "I grew up a Buffs fan, so this has just been a dream come true."

The kick in overtime was Goodman's only chance Thursday night, but he said his nerves never really got to him during the biggest moment of his college career.

"I was really calm," he said. "I thought about not watching (West Virginia kicker Pat) McAfee's field goal, just because it's probably a little bit easier emotionally. But I couldn't take it, so I turned around and saw if bounce off."

"So I guess I just felt there wasn't as much pressure, because if I didn't make it, we'd still have another shot."

But the Buffs didn't need one. The kick sailed through, and the celebration at Folsom Field was on.

"I can't even describe how it feels," Goodman said. "This is definitely why I wanted to come here."

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CU tough in clutch

Mountaineers grind out yards but not a victory

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — That rush defense the Colorado Buffaloes have long boasted gave up quite a few yards Thursday night. Don't be misled, though: It played well when it had to.

For the first time since 2004, CU allowed a visiting rusher to exceed 100 yards Thursday in its 17-14 overtime defeat of West Virginia. In fact, the Buffs allowed two: West Virginia's Pat White went for 148, and Noel Devine added 133. West Virginia totaled 311 yards on the ground and averaged 6.0 a carry.

"They tried to establish the run on us," linebacker Jeff Smart said. "They definitely got some plays on us. It's like old-school, smash-mouth football out there.

"We knew they were going to run the ball, and we just had to rally and stop them. We kept them out of the end zone for the most part, and that's what matters."

Said defensive tackle George Hypolite: "There were a couple of times I had Noel Devine down in the backfield, and he'd go for eight yards."

By the end of the night, West Virginia's offense was using only a few plays, mainly on the ground. The Mountaineers' 43 passing yards were the fewest CU has allowed since Nov. 13, 1999, at Baylor.

West Virginia took possession with 2 minutes, 9 seconds to go. It moved to CU's 47, where, on third-and-1, several Buffs stopped Devine for a yard loss. The Mountaineers chose to let time expire.

In overtime, CU stopped Devine on a third-and-1 from the 4. That play preceded a missed 23-yard field goal.

"We were on the sideline saying, 'Defense is going to win this game,'" Linebacker Brad Jones said.

He was right.

INJURY REPORT: CU safety D.J. Dykes did not start due to illness. Anthony Perkins made his first career start in Dykes' place.

Linebacker B.J. Beatty remains sidelined with broken leg. CU lists him out for another one to two weeks.

West Virginia linebacker J.T. Thomas was hurt early in the first quarter when he had a helmet-to-helmet hit with CU fullback Maurice Cantrell. CU coach Dan Hawkins and members of CU's medical staff came over to check on him.

He eventually stood up and walked off on his own.



Colorado defenders swarm West Virginia tailback Noel Devine on the last drive of regulation Thursday night at Folsom Field.

Joshua Buck/Times-Call

IN MEMORY: CU honored former coach and athletic director Eddie Crowder before the game with a video tribute and a moment of silence. “Eddie” is written on both 25-yard lines of Folsom Field.

Crowder died last week.

EXTRA POINTS: CU started Max Tuioti-Mariner and Blake Behrens at the guard spots. Junior Devin Head, who missed the last game due to a suspension, rotated in. ... West Virginia bought 4,400 tickets, making it one of the largest visiting non-conference blocs of fans to visit Folsom. CU’s next home game, Oct. 4 against Texas in its Big 12 opener, is almost sold out. ... Tight end Riar Geer and cornerback Jimmy Smith made their 2008 debuts. ... Kicker Jameson Davis recorded his sixth and seventh touchbacks on kickoffs. CU had six in 2007 on 63 attempts. ... A record 15 scouts from 12 NFL teams attended ... As of Thursday morning, CU had issued 598 press credentials to the game. That’s the third most in program history, behind the 616 for the 2001 Nebraska game and 601 for Nebraska in 1989.

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