



Bufs' Miller out for season

Offensive lineman fractured leg vs. FSU

By Kyle Ringo

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins confirmed offensive lineman Ryan Miller will not return this season after fracturing his left leg Saturday in the Buffs' 39-21 loss to Florida State.

Miller, the prized recruit of the 2007 cycle and the starter at right tackle, became the third lineman to suffer a serious injury this season when he was hurt in the third quarter.

"It just kind of went snap, crackle, pop," Miller said after the game in Jacksonville, Fla.

Hawkins said both Miller and Max Tuioti-Mariner are eligible for medical hardship waivers which would allow them to count this fall as a redshirt year even though they have played.

The NCAA changed the rules on Aug. 1 of this year to say that a player in a team sport can qualify for a medical redshirt if he or she hasn't competed in more than 30 percent of their team's games. Miller played in four games, the most allowable under the new rule.

KU game time: 10:30 a.m.

Colorado's game at Kansas on Oct. 11 will kickoff at 10:30 a.m. MDT.

The game will be televised on ESPN2, making it the fourth nationally televised game of the season for CU.

The Buffs' game against Florida State was televised regionally by ABC.



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Ringo: Cowboys up, Aggies down

By Kyle Ringo

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

It's time to review what we've learned about the Big 12 Conference now that we're a month into the season and the nonconference portion is behind us.

Say what you want about the Southeastern Conference being the toughest in the nation. I won't argue it's not, but the Big 12 is right there with the SEC with six top-25 teams this week, including four in the top 10 and three in the top five.

Every Big 12 team finished the nonconference schedule with a winning or .500 record for just the third time in history. The conference combined to go 38-10 with eight of those 10 losses coming against fellow Bowl Championship Series Conference teams. The only two losses against non-BCS competition were Texas A&M's home loss to Arkansas State and Iowa State's overtime loss on the road at Nevada-Las Vegas.

So as we prepare to watch Big 12 members beat each other up over the next nine weeks leading up to the championship game in the first week of December, let's look at developments so far.

Surprises

It's clear now Oklahoma State was underrated by most back in August. The Cowboys are seriously talented on offense, having scored more than 50 points in three games and 39 points in the other. They also have been well over 500 yards of total offense in three of four games.

Baylor freshman quarterback Robert Griffin might be the single biggest surprise in terms of individual performances. Comparisons are never fair, but watching him reminds me of former Texas quarterback Vince Young. Imagine Griffin surrounded by the kind of talent Young had at his disposal.

Colorado freshman running back Rodney Stewart has come out of nowhere to lead the Buffs in rushing and rank fourth in the conference on the ground. Stewart, has back-to-back 100-yard games entering this week's Big 12 opener with Texas. No one saw this coming from a guy who was almost an afterthought in recruiting behind five-star Darrell Scott and four-star Ray Polk.

We knew Big 12 quarterbacks had a chance to be good with 11 returning starters in the league if Nebraska's Joe Ganz is counted, but who saw these numbers coming? Nine of the league's signal-callers are ranked in the top 20 in passing efficiency.

Disappointments

Texas A&M could also fit into the surprises category, but I think the Aggies belong here after a 2-2 start, including a home loss to Arkansas State and a narrow victory over Army. Running back Jorvorskie Lane has been a nonfactor. Let's face it, the Aggies had their problems under former coach Dennis

Franchione, but they were better than this. Mike Sherman gets a pass for a year or so to get it together, but folks in Aggie country won't be patient for long.

Iowa State still can't seem to win a road game. The Cyclones have lost 13 consecutive contests away from Jack Trice Stadium and haven't won on the road since October 2005. In the second year under coach Gene Chizik, the Cyclones figured to have a good shot at Iowa or UNLV.

Nebraska's defense continues to stop opponents only occasionally. The Huskers appear to making improvement over last season's misery, but they haven't faced anything like what they will see when Missouri comes to town this week. Plenty of people just assumed the Huskers would be right back at the top of the North with Missouri this season after hiring Bo Pelini as coach, but it's clear there is work to do.

Status quo

Everyone knew Oklahoma would be good and the Sooners haven't disappointed. They reached No. 1 in the country this week, but that position has been hard to hold on to since the beginning of last season.

Missouri's offense might be better than expected if that is possible. Some thought Chase Daniel wasn't deserving of his invitation to New York as a Heisman finalist last year. He's proving the doubters wrong with absurd numbers so far. He has thrown just 13 incomplete passes in the past three games.

Texas looks well on its way to an eighth consecutive 10-win season and might also have a Heisman candidate in quarterback Colt McCoy. The Longhorns just keep plowing through whoever gets in their way.

Numbers game

205 -- The number of passing yards Texas Tech quarterback Graham Harrell needs this week at Kansas State to set new school and conference records for career passing yards, surpassing former Tech QB Kliff Kingsbury's 12,429 yards.

Short yardage

Oklahoma's Manual Johnson, Texas A&M's Trent Hunter and Nebraska's Nate Swift were Big 12 players of the week. ... The Texas Tech running game has produced more than 100 yards in each of the first four games and close to 200 yards twice. ... The only Big 12 rushers ranked in the top 40 in the nation are both from Oklahoma State. Kendall Hunter is third with a 155-yard average and Keith Toston is 40th, averaging 92 yards.

Who is hot

Oklahoma quarterback Sam Bradford has thrown for more than 700 yards and nine touchdown passes in the past two games without an interception. It seems like each week in this league one of the 12 quarterbacks could fill this spot.

Who is not

Colorado special teams units. After a hot start this season, the Buffs rank in the bottom half of the conference in all the kicking team statistics. Special teams malfunctions played a big part in a loss to

Florida State.

Funny pages

For a good laugh or just to waste some more time at work visit this address this week to watch Bergwood, star of the Allstate college football commercial campaign. He will be bringing his act to Boulder for tailgating this weekend before the Buffs-Longhorns game:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NoCNoc810u8&feature=related>

Team (previous ranking/overall record/conference record)

- 1. Oklahoma (1/4-0/0-0)** -- Now the nation's No. 1 team after taking apart a good Texas Christian team with relative ease. **Up next:** Saturday at Baylor.
- 2. Missouri (2/4-0/0-0)** -- The second of four major challenges on the Tigers' schedule comes this week on the road against Big Red. **Up next:** Saturday at Nebraska.
- 3. Texas (3/4-0/0-0)** -- This team can't afford to overlook the Buffs on the way to its clash with Oklahoma next week. The Longhorns are looking every bit as good as the two teams above them. **Up next:** Saturday at Colorado.
- 4. Oklahoma State (4/4-0/0-0)** -- The OSU offense is a scoring machine and the reason the Cowboys are back in the top 25. This team has a legitimate chance to make a run in the Big 12. **Up next:** Saturday vs. Texas A&M.
- 5. Texas Tech (5/4-0/0-0)** -- I still believe this offense is too one-dimensional to compete for a conference title, but the Red Raiders are getting the job done so far. We'll know more about this group after this week's game. **Up next:** Saturday at Kansas State.
- 6. Kansas (6/3-1/0-0)** -- Not quite as good as last year, but still a contender for the Big 12 North should Missouri stumble. Mark Mangino needs to solve the running game woes quick. **Up next:** Saturday at Iowa State.
- 7. Colorado (7/3-1/0-0)** -- Injuries are making an already youthful squad younger, particularly on the offensive line. Quarterback Cody Hawkins needs to regroup and rebound. **Up next:** Saturday vs. Texas.
- 8. Nebraska (8/3-1/0-0)** -- The Huskers lost a nonconference home game for the third time since 1991. At least we finally got a look at this team against some real competition. **Up next:** Saturday vs. Missouri.
- 9. Kansas State (9/3-1/0-0)** -- The Wildcats got all they could handle from Louisiana-Lafayette and now begin to face a tougher brand of competition. **Up next:** Saturday vs. Texas Tech.
- 10. Baylor (10/2-2/0-0)** -- The Bears will have had 15 days to prepare for the top-ranked team in the land, and it won't be nearly enough. **Up next:** Saturday vs. Oklahoma.
- 11. Iowa State (11/2-2/0-0)** -- No other Big 12 team gave up more than the 5.3 yards per carry the Cyclones allowed in nonconference play. In a passing league, it looks like teams can run on ISU. **Up next:** Saturday vs. Kansas.

12. Texas A&M (12/2-2/0-0) -- The Aggies barely beat a struggling Army team on their home field. The Army offense actually outscored the A&M offense. This team has issues. **Up next:** Saturday at Oklahoma State.



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colorado

Bufs' Miller done for season

CU's offensive line takes a big hit with the loss of its starting right tackle to a fractured fibula.

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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Sophomore offensive tackle Ryan Miller (73) will be replaced in the Buffs' lineup by a redshirt freshman. (Denver Post file photo)

Colorado's young offensive line become even younger Monday.

Coach Dan Hawkins confirmed that starting right tackle Ryan Miller has been ruled out for the remainder of the season after suffering a fracture of his left fibula Saturday against Florida State.

Hawkins said Miller, a sophomore, and freshman offensive guard Max Tuioti-Mariner (torn ACL last week in practice) should be able to recover a year of eligibility through an NCAA injury hardship ruling. That won't help against No. 5 Texas on Saturday at Folsom Field, however.

The Longhorns (4-0) lead the Big 12 Conference with 16 quarterback sacks.

Miller was replaced in the lineup by Matt Bahr, a 6-foot-4, 285-pound redshirt freshman who will be making his first career

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start Saturday.

After the Florida State game, CU offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said Bahr played "pretty well," but Miller's ability and leadership will be missed.

"You've got speed, talent, strength and experience on one side," Hawkins said of the Texas defensive line. "And you've got youth on the other (CU)."

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Texas recorded seven sacks for 58 yards in losses Saturday in a 52-10 blowout of Arkansas. Senior defensive end Brian Orakpo (6-4, 260) tops Big 12 defenders with 5 1/2 sacks. He was defensive MVP in last year's Holiday Bowl.

"Brian is playing with so much more confidence than I've seen him play with since he's been here," Texas coach Mack Brown said Monday on the Big 12 coaches teleconference. "He's a force against the running game, but he's also becoming one of the best pass rushers we've ever had."

Rankings jackpot.

Led by new No. 1 Oklahoma, four Big 12 teams are in the top seven of the Associated Press media poll, and six are in the top 25.

"It's exciting for the Big 12 that we're getting recognition," Brown said. "But those numbers will change in the next three or four weeks because a lot of top 10 teams start playing each other."

Footnotes.

Brown, asked about Colorado, said: "They're playing hard. They're really well-coached. They're running the ball so well. Cody (Hawkins) is in that group of (top Big 12) quarterbacks we're talking about. They're playing really, really hard on defense. And Dan (Hawkins) is always good with the kicking game. . . . It will be a real test for us." . . . CU's game at Kansas on Oct. 11 has been selected for broadcast by ESPN2, with kickoff set for 10:30 a.m. Mountain time. The Texas at Colorado game will be a 5 p.m. start and televised by Fox Sports Network.

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Colorado turns attention to Texas, Big 12 schedule

Longhorns bring No. 5 ranking to Boulder

By Irv Moss
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — It wasn't that Colorado quarterback Cody Hawkins was ignoring what happened Saturday in Jacksonville, Fla., but Sunday, when he returned to work, he had reasons for looking ahead.

"If you worry too much about past losses, with the schedule we have, you're not going to be successful," Hawkins said. "I'm already past yesterday (Saturday). I'm still angry that we lost, but we have to move forward."

Hawkins had already logged away the 39-21 loss to Florida State. He had no choice. The Big 12 season begins this week for the Buffaloes.

Up first? No. 5-ranked Texas, which comes to Boulder with a 4-0 record and has three wins by the same 52-10 score, including Saturday's blowout of Arkansas. The Longhorns' other win was 42-13.

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This Saturday's game is the Big 12 opener for CU and Texas and will be televised nationally at 5 p.m. on FSN.

"We have a great chance to redeem ourselves this week," Hawkins said.

Texas is the beginning of a four-game stretch for the Buffs (3-1) against Big 12 teams that presently have a combined 14-2 record.

After the Longhorns, CU travels to No. 16 Kansas (3-1), hosts Kansas State (3-1) and goes to No. 4 Missouri (4-0).

"We're excited about going out and playing the best every week," Hawkins said.

Hawkins' immediate task was to hit the film room to begin steps needed to improve his team's offensive execution.

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"We had a lot of opportunities we didn't take advantage of, and that's completely my fault," said Hawkins, a sophomore who completed 17-of-36 passes for 154 yards, three touchdowns and one interception against the Seminoles.

Despite a young offense (only three senior starters), Hawkins would not blame inexperience for mistakes.

"We have to bounce back and work on our execution," Hawkins said. "Our coaches are doing an awesome job putting us in position to succeed."

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CU loses another lineman

Hawkins says Miller, Tuioti-Mariner should get lost years back

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Ryan Miller's optimism will not be rewarded.

Colorado reported Monday that the injury Miller suffered Saturday against Florida State is a fractured left fibula, and he'll likely undergo surgery this week. The right tackle is out for the season.

Miller said following Saturday's loss that he'd miss four to six weeks, and added he hoped to return sooner. He said he broke a toe once, but this will be the first injury that's kept him out of a football game.

CU coach Dan Hawkins said he expects Miller and freshman guard Max Tuioti-Mariner, who tore an ACL last week and is also out for the season, will be able to get their lost years back. That would require the NCAA granting each a medical hardship waiver. Miller is scheduled to be a junior in 2009.

Miller was a five-star recruit out of Columbine High School in Littleton whom CU signed in February 2007. He started the final six games last year and the first four of 2008.

Tuioti-Mariner started the second and third games this season.

Miller's injury leaves the Buffs with 10 offensive linemen, including two walk-ons, who aren't injured, suspended or ineligible. Coaches hope to redshirt true freshmen Bryce Givens and Ryan Dannewitz in 2008.

Redshirt freshman Matt Bahr, who filled in for Miller on Saturday, is expected to make his first start Saturday when CU hosts No. 5 Texas (5 p.m., FSN).

"Matt Bahr did a good job when he was in there," Hawkins said.

Reserve tackle Ethan Adkins is suspended indefinitely after being arrested on suspicion of DUI the night after CU beat Colorado State in the opener.

This week, the offensive line faces an opponent that leads the Big 12 with 16 sacks. Senior defensive end Brian Orakpo already has 51/2, most in the Big 12 by any individual. Junior linebacker Sergio Kindle has 2.5 sacks.

"You got speed, talent, strength, experience on one side, and you've got youth on the other," Hawkins said.

"They have a lot of guys there that are explosive and strong and do a lot with their hands and get up the field. That's why they have so many tackles for loss." CU has allowed eight sacks in 2008.

TV STARS: The Big 12 announced Monday that CU's Oct. 11 game at Kansas will start at 10:30 a.m. ESPN2 will televise it.

Including Saturday, five of the Buffs' first six games in 2008 will air on national television. The Kansas game will make it 153 out of CU's past 227 games that were nationally or regionally televised, dating back to 1990.

TEXAS ROLLING: No. 1 Oklahoma was the clear favorite to win the Big 12 South in 2008. Texas is playing like it wants to prove prognosticators wrong.

The Longhorns own the Big 12's best scoring and rushing defense. They've outscored their four 2008 opponents, 198-36. Quarterback Colt McCoy leads the Big 12 in passing efficiency. He's thrown 14 touchdowns and one interception.

Coach Mack Brown said his Longhorns are playing with a lot of chemistry and having fun. He suggested it started last year at the Holiday Bowl, where Texas beat Arizona State, 52-34.

"Right now, this team is not thinking about who we're playing, or listening to outside distractions," he said. "We're just playing. It's a fun team to coach." Texas faces Oklahoma on Oct. 11 in Dallas.

EXTRA POINTS: Oddsmakers have placed CU as a 14-point underdog Saturday. ... CU freshman running back Rodney Stewart ranks fourth in the Big 12 with 87.2 rushing yards per game. ... Linebacker Jeff Smart and safety Ryan Walters rank fifth and sixth, respectively, in tackles in the league, with averages of 8.8 and 8.0 per. ... CU is one of two teams in the Big 12 averaging fewer than 30 points per game. The Buffs are at 26.8. Texas A&M is scoring 21.5.

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



CU report: Bad timing for offensive line

By B.G. Brooks

Monday, September 29, 2008

Forgive Buffaloes offensive line coach **Jeff Grimes** if he believes he's working under a dark cloud.

He began the season minus two potential contributors - guards **Mike Iltis** (knee) and **Erick Faatagi** (academics). Now, after losing a pair of starters last week for the season - guard **Max Tuioti-Mariner** to a blown knee Sept. 23, tackle **Ryan Miller** to a broken leg on Saturday - Grimes must now prepare his survivors for the Texas sack machine.

The No. 5 Longhorns, who visit Folsom Field on Saturday (5 p.m., FSN Rocky Mountain), lead Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A) in sacks (16 for 144 yards) and feature the Big 12 Conference's sacks leader (end **Brian Orakpo** with 5 1/2).

Texas coach **Mack Brown** said Orakpo, a 6-foot-4, 260-pound senior who battled a knee injury for most of the 2007 season, is "playing with so much confidence. . . . He's a force for us - he's a reason we're leading the country in sacks."

HARD TO HANDLE

CU coach **Dan Hawkins** said Texas' defensive front features "a lot of guys who are strong, explosive, get up the field and are hard to block."

Asked what problems that presents what now is a patchwork Buffs offensive line, Hawkins said, "It is (a problem). . . . You have speed, talent and strength on one side, youth on the other."

CU replaced Miller on Saturday against Florida State with redshirt freshman **Matt Bahr**. The other probable starters: center - senior **Daniel Sanders**; guards - junior **Devin Head**, redshirt freshman **Blake Behrens**; tackles - Bahr and sophomore **Nate Solder**.

ETC.

* CU will petition the NCAA for medical hardships for Tuioti-Mariner, a true freshman, and Miller, a sophomore, and Hawkins believes both players will receive an extra season of eligibility. Both have redshirt seasons available.

* CU's Oct. 11th game at Kansas will kick off at 10:30 a.m. MDT and will be televised by ESPN2.

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