



Hawkins tries to move on

Colorado QB visits 9-year-old diagnosed with brain tumor

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, October 1, 2008

Cody Hawkins can be a bit obsessive when it comes to football and wanting to be good at his craft. He has a lot of his father in him that way.

Coming off Saturday's loss to Florida State, which he blamed on himself, the Colorado quarterback figured to be buried this week in a mountain of DVDs and scouting reports trying to find answers to one of the worst games of his career.

There is plenty of that happening as the Buffs prepare for No. 5 Texas on Saturday. But Hawkins took time Monday evening to drive 30 miles to put a smile on a boy's face while so many followers of the program were busy ripping him on radio talk shows, in emails and phone calls to reporters and on Internet message boards.

Not long ago the family of Zach Canaday emailed the Colorado football program asking for help of any kind for their 9-year-old. Canaday was diagnosed with a brain tumor in August and underwent surgery to have 95 percent of the tumor removed. He is fighting cancer each day with 6 a.m. radiation treatments and chemotherapy several times a week.

The news touched Hawkins, who loves interacting with kids and recently learned he will become an uncle next spring. Hawkins learned that Canaday's teammates on his little league football team had shaved theirheads in a show of support, and the CU signal caller decided to do the same.

In fact, he had Canaday do it for him Monday night.

"It was so awesome just seeing that kid around his friends because you can tell he had a really great bond with those kids before this happened," Hawkins said. "They're really all kind of rallying around him."

Hawkins said he was blown away by meeting Canaday, who has grown up with a passion for sports and competition. Canaday loves to snowboard and play baseball and football. It has been difficult to do any of that lately.

"The kid turned 9 three weeks ago, and he's done absolutely nothing wrong in his life," Hawkins said. "It's just so sad to me to see that all be taken away from him. I know I've had a lot of good times in my life. I loved being that young. All the stuff he's going through, I can't even imagine."

Hawkins is encouraging CU fans to visit Canaday's website and make a donation or words of encouragement for his new friend at www.freewebs.com/zcanaday.

Hawkins was back on the practice field Tuesday evening with his teammates hoping to improve on what might have been the most difficult outing of his young career.

He threw three touchdown passes against the Seminoles but also lost a fumble, threw an interception and missed several wide open receivers.

Offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich and coach Dan Hawkins said immediately after the game that Cody Hawkins needs to play better. Dan Hawkins put some perspective on his quarterback's performance Tuesday during his weekly meeting with reporters.

"I think he has great perspective on it and took ownership of it," Dan Hawkins said. "That being said, the guy got the snot knocked out of him. He was able to hang in there and made some throws later in the game that didn't get caught. When you're the quarterback and you're the head coach, you always take the blunt of the criticism, so I think he's got that well in perspective. It's part of the journey of a quarterback. It's part of the journey of a team. You're not just going to keep climbing the ladder every week out. There's going to be bumps in the road."

Cody Hawkins said putting the Florida State game behind him was actually easier to do than some others in the past because he played poorly. He said he was angry with himself and that made it easy to focus on getting better rather than stewing in the past.

Cody Hawkins said he prides himself on having a short memory and being able to bounce back from a bad outing. He will have to do that this week against another of the toughest defenses in the nation and a Texas defensive front that has sacked the quarterback 12 times in its past two games.

Hawkins admits that he is occasionally confronted with some of the criticism that is so often anonymous. He said he can appreciate the passion fans have for the program and wanting to see the Buffs do well. He turns their frustration into a positive as best he can.

"I always just kind of laugh because I think I'm a real light-hearted guy," he said. "You take it with a grain of salt because there are a lot of people out there and a lot of people who care about the program. It's awesome because even when they are criticizing you that much, there are some cynical people out there, but at least they're invested in the program. Even if it's negative, you know people care and that's good because we need to get a lot of people involved in this program."



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CU's special teams play a Riddle to coaching staff

Personnel changes being considered by Buffaloes

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

Colorado football coaches are considering some personnel adjustments on special teams after the worst day in the kicking game in a long time for the Buffs in Saturday's loss to Florida State.

The Buffs missed a field goal, allowed a blocked punt for a safety, allowed a kickoff return for a touchdown and nearly had a free kick returned for a score.

Special teams coach Kent Riddle cautioned that he didn't want to seem as if it was all the players' fault by acknowledging there could be some changes in who plays and who doesn't. He said the responsibility for the special teams meltdown is his. He said he hasn't experienced a day like that before.

"I would say surprised, amazed, disappointed, sick, I mean, take your pick," Riddle said. "That's the worst I've ever been associated with, embarrassed. Never a game like that."

Riddle said sophomore wide receiver and return man Josh Smith is battling an "anxiety curve" and might be trying to do too much instead of focusing on securing the ball. Smith has fumbled multiple returns this season, including one in the second quarter against the Seminoles. Smith is new to the return role and coaches are sticking with him because he has demonstrated the ability to make big plays.

But they won't continue to keep him back there if he doesn't hold on to the ball in the future.

"I would say we're kind of down to the wire on that right now, but there are kind of two factors," Riddle said. "A, I think he has learned from those mistakes, and, B, it's not like we've got 20 other guys to put back there."

"He wouldn't be back there if he wasn't doing it better than everybody else in practice."

Riddle said he also is continuing to work with the punters and kickers and the coverage teams on kicking directionally better and trying to hem returners into one section of the field.

Scott so close

to choosing Texas

CU freshman running back Darrell Scott said Tuesday he was silently committed to Texas for about a week last January before changing his mind and deciding to play his college football in Boulder.

Texas and CU fought over Scott in the final few months of the 2008 recruiting cycle with Scott announcing his choice on national television on national signing day in February.

After choosing the Buffs, some around the Texas program and the recruiting coordinator at Scott's old high school in California insinuated that CU had cheated to land the nation's No. 1 running back.

Scott said the only thing that prevented him from being a Longhorn was Texas coach Mack Brown's choice to switch running backs coaches late in the process. Brown hired former Texas quarterback Major Applewhite to coach running backs, and Scott said his lack of knowledge about Applewhite brought him back to Boulder.

Scott said he is looking forward to playing the Longhorns this week and is back to full strength. He is no longer wearing a left knee brace he donned after taking a hard hit in the Eastern Washington game, and his groin is also no longer a problem.

"I was about to go to that school," Scott said. "I think it will be fun and kind of weird because I started to get to know all the players."

CU coach Dan Hawkins said Tuesday that Scott's name never came up during multiple encounters with Texas coach Mack Brown during the offseason. Hawkins said despite the brouhaha surrounding Scott's recruitment, he and Brown have a good relationship.

Some in Texas said CU had offered to get Scott's mother a job in banking in Boulder, despite the fact she has never worked in banking in her life. Scott laughed out loud when asked about the charge Tuesday.

"That's funny," he said. "I guess she would have been an oil company manager in Texas."

Notable

Hawkins said offensive lineman Ethan Adkins is close to returning from an indefinite suspension after being arrested for driving under the influence of alcohol last month. Hawkins said the decision is not entirely his and must be approved by others on campus. ...

Hawkins said walk-on wide receiver and return man Jason Espinoza will be back in practice this week in non-contact work and won't play against the Longhorns. It's likely Espinoza will return against Kansas. Espinoza was the leading candidate to become the Buffs' punt returner before breaking his collarbone in fall camp.



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Woelk: Hawk, Buffs not ready to panic yet

By Neill Woelk

Wednesday, October 1, 2008

No time to panic. Not yet.

Even with a disappointing effort vs. Florida State in the rear view and No. 5 Texas dead ahead, Colorado coach Dan Hawkins said Tuesday that it's business as usual with the Buffs.

Doesn't matter that his quarterback is coming off one his worst performances as a Buff starter. Doesn't matter that in the span of a week, he's lost two offensive linemen and up next is a team with a fearsome pass rush. Doesn't matter that his team is young, doesn't matter that CU's schedule is among the toughest in the nation, doesn't matter that the FSU game exposed a few more chinks in the Buffs' defensive armor.

Hawk knows excuses are about as popular as Wall Street bailouts these days. The reason behind the problems might be up for debate, but what's unanimous is that folks want 'em fixed.

There will be no alibis emanating from the Dal Ward Center.

"We have to keep on growing and keep on going," Hawk said at his weekly Tuesday press conference. "Just because we lost a game doesn't mean the sky is falling.

"We're definitely going in the right direction."

There are those who might dispute that claim after the loss in Florida State. After winning three in a row to start the season, the Buffs kicked themselves in the teeth.

Now fans want a new quarterback, a new offensive game plan, a better defense and, while we're at it, the special teams coach's head on a platter.

But just like the guy at Little Big Horn who couldn't believe his luck because he finally knew where all the Indians were, Hawkins even sees a bright spot in all the criticism.

"I think it's awesome that we're 3-1, we've beaten one of the best football teams in the country with a HeismanTrophy candidate, and people are going, 'What's wrong with your football team?'

"I think that's great."

Translation: If expectations for the program weren't growing, nobody would have been upset after the FSU loss.

Indeed, expectations for CU's program have expanded a little faster than many anticipated this year.

When the season began, most folks would have been satisfied with a 3-1 start -- which is exactly where the Buffs are.

But now the reality of CU's schedule is kicking in. That is fifth-ranked Texas dead ahead, and a trip to No. 16 Kansas a week later. If that's not enough, don't forget a trip to No. 4 Missouri just three weeks away.

No doubt, CU's 3-1 start could be nothing but a faint memory if the Buffs don't fix a few of their problems soon.

But the reality is some of CU's issues won't -- make that can't -- be fixed overnight. Injuries aren't miraculously healed, and there's absolutely no quick fix for a lack of experience.

There are, however, some places the Buffs can improve, and they need to do it in a hurry if they're going to survive this stretch.

For starters, QB Cody Hawkins has to play smarter football. Nobody's asking young Hawk to win games on his own -- but they are asking that he make plays when they come his way.

We're not ready to give up on the QB after one bad game. He's made enough good plays this season to show the ability is there.

Still, if last weekend's performance turns into a trend over the next couple of weeks, it will be reason to worry.

Every player has the occasional bad game. Same for every team, and last week certainly filled the bill in that category.

But, the Buffs are still 3-1 today, and coaches of 3-1 teams don't change quarterbacks. If the Buffs are 3-5 a month from now -- and quarterback play is the biggest reason -- there will be legitimate cause to wonder whether Dan Hawkins should be considering a change, or at least considering the possibility of getting one of his young QBs some meaningful playing time.

Meanwhile, you can continue to take measure of this team on a game-by-game basis -- and that No. 5 freight train coming to Boulder on Saturday is the kind of measuring stick that will leave precious little room for error.



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cu football

Texas not path walked by Scott

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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Darrell Scott has rushed for 148 yards this season.

BOULDER — The opening third of Darrell Scott's freshman season has not exactly gone as planned. But if the ballyhooed tailback doesn't show more bounce in his step Saturday, Colorado running backs coach Darian Hagan will be the most surprised onlooker at Folsom Field.

Scott hyperextended his knee in the second week against Eastern Washington but is feeling better. And No. 5 Texas is coming to town.

Hagan believes Scott's sore knee, although not serious enough to keep the freshman off the field, affected him mentally as much as physically.

"Darrell was thinking about it, so he wasn't playing fast," Hagan said Tuesday.

Scott wore a knee brace against West Virginia and Florida State, but that came off this week.

Colorado Football

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"I'm feeling good," Scott said after Tuesday's two-hour practice. "I've rehabbed the knee for two weeks.

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I should get more PT (playing time) this week. I just had to fight through it."

Rated the nation's top high school running back for 2007, Scott chose Colorado over the Longhorns. He agonized over the decision for weeks, even to the point of giving Texas an oral commitment, before changing his mind. Scott called Hagan two days before signing day and said he wanted to be a Buffalo.

"You play with a little adrenaline when you're going against the team that you turned down," Hagan said. "You feel like they're thinking, 'He didn't come here, let's get that dude.' So you feel a little more focused. You play a whole lot faster."

Some Colorado fans expected Scott to be leading the Big 12 Conference in rushing by now. He isn't even leading his team. With 148 yards, he has less than half that of another freshman, Rodney Stewart.

Scott, a 6-foot-2, 220-pounder with 10.5-second speed in the 100 meters, was rated a five-star prospect and received more than 70 major-college offers. Stewart (5-6, 175) couldn't get a look from some Mid-American Conference schools. Go figure.

But CU coaches aren't about to call Scott a disappointment. Just wait, they say.

"Everybody wants the rookie, the freshman, to come in and set the place on fire," CU coach Dan Hawkins said Tuesday during his weekly media luncheon. "Sometimes that happens. Sometimes it doesn't happen. I'm more concerned with all the other intangible things, because I know that, at some point, he's going to be a great player."

Having to pass a high school Algebra II class in the summer to become eligible, Scott said he arrived 10 to 15 pounds overweight and was not in tip-top

shape. Not being able to arrive in June with other players put Scott behind in learning the "semantics of the offense," as Hawkins calls it.

Hawkins also said expectations can sometimes wear down a talented young player.

"I think he's been fine with it, he really has," Hawkins said of Scott's adjustment to the college game. "He's a great guy to have on the team. He wants the ball more and wants to play more and wants to play better, just like everybody else."

Scott has spent extra time in Hagan's office this week, and Hagan likes what he hears. Working with a position coach has been an adjustment in itself. Although Scott played for a top high school program (St. Bonaventure) in Southern California, he never had a running backs coach.

"He's a raw football player," Hagan said.

With Texas in the national championship picture and flexing the nation's second-ranked rushing defense (52.5), the Longhorns won't need to point to Scott for any extra incentive Saturday.

When asked about Scott, UT coach Mack Brown told reporters in Austin this week that "it is not an issue. We'll see (Scott) four or five times max, in his college career, if we end up playing in Big 12 championships against them. That's why you don't worry about the ones you don't get. You worry about the ones you have 365 days a year."

"Guys make decisions," Texas senior defensive tackle Roy Miller said of Scott picking CU. "I'm sure I have a lot of people in Oklahoma mad at me (for choosing the Longhorns over OU). It happens."

Scott said it will feel "weird" Saturday because he got to know the Texas players during his recruiting

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visit to Austin.

"I know we're going to be talking a little stuff to each other," he said. "But we're going to have a good time."

Hagan believes Scott is ready for a breakout game and thinks it could come this week.

"We're going to give him a lot of touches in practice," Hagan said. "You'll see a different back on Saturday."

*Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or
tkensler@denverpost.com*

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cu football

A close shave for Buffs' QB

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CU quarterback Cody Hawkins is sporting another new 'do.

Hawkins is going with the "bald is beautiful" look after having his head shaved Monday by a little leaguer in Brighton. Zachary Canaday, a 9-year-old who had his head shaved because of a brain surgery, plays for the Brighton Bulldogs.

Hawkins, who dyed his hair black for the West Virginia game as part of the "Black Out" promotion, received an e-mail about Zachary's plight and made an appearance at the Bulldogs' practice Monday to get the new look.

"It was so great seeing him bust out the clippers and doing a weird mohawk or something," Hawkins said after CU's practice Tuesday. "He really had a lot of fun with his friends. He's going through a tough time. If there is any way I can help, I will."

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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CU tries to move past loss

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The Colorado Buffaloes know they'd better get over their first loss, and in a hurry.

They must move on to a difficult Big 12 schedule that pits them first against No. 5 Texas on Saturday in Boulder, where Folsom Field is already sold out. There's no time to dwell on falling to Florida State last Saturday, but there is perspective to be gained from the defeat, no matter how much it still smarts.

"We know we should be 4-0, but we made mistakes and we can't take it back now, so we have to move on," CU center Daniel Sanders said.

The normally talkative George Hypolite did not meet with reporters Saturday night in Jacksonville. He declared following victories over then-No. 21 West Virginia and Colorado State that CU was unbeaten and therefore still alive for the national championship.

The senior defensive tackle talked Tuesday and didn't mention any titles.

"I was a little angry," Hypolite said about Saturday's loss. "But this is a long season. You can't get caught up in beating the No. 21 team in the country, and you can't get caught up on losing to a Florida State. You have to find even ground, and you have to keep pushing.

"You have to be about more than wins and losses. It's about perfecting a craft. It's not about winning games and selling tickets. At some point, it's deeper than that."

Coach Dan Hawkins said the way his team responded following the defeat and in the early part of this week has been "perfect." He echoed Hypolite, using one of his favorite words — "conflama," a combination of conflict and drama — to make his point.

"We just have to keep going," Hawkins said. "We have a staff in their third year. The veterans on our team are third-year guys. We have true freshmen playing. We just have to keep going. And that's a boring story and nobody wants to hear that and it doesn't make good headlines and it's not conflama, but that's it.

"I don't want anybody to be happy about losing. But I want (the team) to be mature about what happened and why it happened and what has to happen in order for us to move on."

In order to move on, improvements on offense, defense and special teams beckon.

Quarterback Cody Hawkins had his first bad game of 2008 on Saturday, going 17-for-36 for 154 yards, with three touchdowns and an interception. His father said Tuesday that one bad game does not define a career.

"He's not going to be the last quarterback to have a tough day. That's a part of it and part of life. ... I think he has great perspective on it and took ownership of it," the coach said. "That being said, too, the guy got the shot knocked out of him and was able to hang in there, and he made some throws later in the game that didn't get caught."

Defensively, Hawkins admits that Florida State and West Virginia ran for more yards than he's comfortable with. This

week's main challenge lies with Texas' passing: Quarterback Colt McCoy is completing 80 percent of his throws.

Special teams, which already have allowed two kickoff returns for touchdowns, remain a priority. Hawkins said more concentration is needed.

And there's the attrition-plagued offensive line, which will start its fourth combination in five games Saturday.

Of course, Hawkins also said there really is little new with his team. He's just glad people are wondering what's wrong with it as it stands 3-1 and owns a victory over West Virginia.

"The reality is ... we're going through the gauntlet," Hawkins said. "If you want to spend time handing out game balls because you beat West Virginia or having a funeral because you (lost to) Florida State, that's wrong. You just keep retooling."

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

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Buffs' Bahr braces for challenge

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — There's a reason Matt Bahr came to the Colorado football program as a pretty good pass blocker.

He came from a place where they threw the ball around pretty well.

As a senior, he played at California's Mission Viejo High School, whose offensive coordinator, Brett Johnson, played in NFL Europe and briefly with the NFL's Atlanta Falcons. Johnson, the brother of former NFL quarterback Rob Johnson, passes the ball in his offense. His father, Bob, has won seven league and three state titles as Mission Viejo's head coach.

Bahr's quarterback his senior year was Allan Bridgford, who's now a senior committed to Cal. While Bahr played right tackle, the left tackle was Jeff Baca, who's listed as UCLA's starting left tackle this week.

Bahr, a redshirt freshman, will make his first start at right tackle Saturday when CU hosts No. 5 Texas (5 p.m., FSN) in place of Ryan Miller, whose fractured left fibula has ended his season. CU coach Dan Hawkins said Bahr was a good pass blocker at Mission Viejo. Hawkins and Bahr believe coming from such a strong program that threw the ball has helped Bahr adjust to college football.

"I played at a pretty darn good high school at Mission Viejo, and we had a college style of offense," Bahr said. "We didn't run the spread, but we ran out of the I (formation) a lot. A lot of the schemes up front are similar to high school."

Said Hawkins: "Mission throws the ball a bunch. ... He's played both guard and tackle; he's a smart football player. I'm sure once he gets even more reps, he'll get better and better. He has to get better."

Hawkins and CU center Daniel Sanders said Bahr played well Saturday when he relieved Miller. His challenge Saturday is formidable: Texas leads the Big 12 in sacks.

Bahr said it's important to understand what awaits on Saturday.

"I know I have some big shoes to fill with Ryan being gone, but getting better, that's what it's all about," Bahr said. "Obviously, this week, I'm going to watch more film and do everything a little bit more to get better."

"There's always a heightened sense of things when you get out there compared to when you practice. I kind of forgot about that almost, because it's been so long since I played in a game."

HARD FEELINGS: CU's recruitment of running back Darrell Scott made national headlines, and the fact that he signed with the Buffs instead of Texas prompted Internet allegations of misconduct.

Texas harbors no resentment, according to Longhorns coach Mack Brown.

"Recruiting is recruiting," Brown said. "You move on and take the ones you got. It's a lot more important for the ones you get than the ones you don't get."

Hawkins also said he doesn't think there are any hard feelings.

Scott said he was "one coaching staff change" away from signing with Texas instead of Colorado. Ken Rucker, Texas' former running backs coach, became the program's director of high school relations and player development in January. Texas hired former Alabama offensive coordinator to Major Applewhite to replace Rucker.

"I was about to go to that school," Scott said Tuesday. "I think it'll be fun. It'll be kind of weird, because I was getting to know all the players.

"I know we're going to be talking a little ... but we'll have a good time."

Asked if he thought he might be targeted, Scott said, "It's a Big 12 game; it's basically a championship game, if you will. We're both going to play hard, so it wouldn't matter."

ADKINS' STATUS: Offensive lineman Ethan Adkins might be nearing a return.

Hawkins said he's awaiting a "final OK" to let him return to the team. Adkins has been suspended since the night after CU beat Colorado State in the season opener following his arrest for suspicion of DUI.

"He's been out a month, and he's been through a lot of stuff," Hawkins said. "He's completed the first part of what we wanted him to do."

With injuries, academic problems and Adkins' suspension, CU is down to 10 offensive linemen, including two walk-ons.

EXTRA POINTS: Hawkins said Scott — who also punted in high school — is no longer punting in practice, on the advice of CU's medical staff, to rest his legs. Scott injured a groin in camp and bruised his knee against Eastern Washington. He said the knee is not hindering him. Hawkins said Scott's knee is near 100 percent. ... Saturday's game is sold out.

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



CU report: Be patient with Scott

By B.G. Brooks

Tuesday, September 30, 2008

A freshman is the Buffaloes' leading rusher, but he's not celebrated California recruit **Darrell Scott**, who has carried 39 times in four games (3.7-yard average, one touchdown).

Freshman **Rodney "Speedy" Stewart**, meanwhile, is averaging 87.3 yards a game and a team-best 5.6 yards per carry. Not to worry, coach **Dan Hawkins** said, Scott's time is coming.

"Everybody wants the rookie, the freshman, whatever, to come in and just set the place on fire," Hawkins said. "Sometimes, that happens, sometimes, it doesn't. . . . I'm concerned with all the other intangible things because I know (Scott) is going to be a great player."

Hawkins mentioned "a variety of reasons" Scott's productivity has lagged, including a relatively late arrival on campus (Scott was taking an algebra course to gain eligibility), learning CU's offense and a "knee issue" from Game 2.

"He's still going to be fine," Hawkins said, adding Scott's physical status is "close" to 100 percent now. "Again, he's a freshman. He's a great guy to have on the team. He obviously wants the ball more and to play more - just like everybody else."

More Scott

While Scott showed promise as a punter in preseason camp, Hawkins said injuries (groin, knee) have prevented him from punting recently in practice.

Hawkins also indicated there was no rancor between him and Texas coach **Mack Brown** regarding Scott's recruitment, which touched off an Internet firestorm when Scott signed with the Buffs instead of the Longhorns.

Hawkins spoke with Brown about it in the offseason, and Brown said at his weekly news conference he always focuses on players signed instead of the misses.

Mr. Good Bahr

Redshirt freshman right tackle **Matt Bahr**, who will make his first collegiate start Saturday against Texas (5 p.m., Folsom Field, FSN Rocky Mountain), said he has "big shoes to fill" in replacing **Ryan Miller** (fractured fibula).

Bahr played right tackle at Mission Viejo (Calif.) High School but has worked at guard and tackle at CU.

Bahr said his parents had attended CU's first three games but skipped the Florida State game, when he replaced Miller in the second half. His father and two brothers will attend Saturday's game, Bahr said.

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