



Buffs head in new direction against KSU

Hawkins calls on Hansen to share snaps with son in win

By Kyle Ringo

Saturday, October 18, 2008

When the season is going down the drain, preferences go out the window.

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins prefers not to rotate quarterbacks in and out of any game. He would have preferred not to burn the redshirt of true freshman Tyler Hansen midway through this season.

But with his offense struggling to move the ball and his team badly in need of someone who could make plays on the run to soften up defenses, Hawkins turned to Hansen in the first quarter Saturday. The 6-foot-2 product of Temecula, Calif., immediately invigorated the Buffs on designed runs, displaying athleticism Kansas State obviously wasn't ready to defend.

Hansen threw a second-quarter touchdown pass and ran for 88 yards on 19 carries teaming with fellow quarterback Cody Hawkins to lead Colorado to a 14-13 victory over Kansas State.

"As my dad told me when I was a kid, you don't always get what you like," Dan Hawkins said. "I give both of them a lot of credit for sacrificing and just saying, 'Hey, whatever.' "

The victory ended a three-game losing streak and re-ignited hopes for improvement this season and a second-consecutive bowl game for the Buffs. CU improved to 4-3 overall and 1-2 in the Big 12 Conference with a date next week with the reeling Missouri Tigers who have lost two straight.

Who starts at quarterback for the Buffs in that game and how much both Hansen and Hawkins play will be decided during the coming week of practice. At the very least, Colorado has a 2008 version of The H Boys.

The moniker was made famous 20 years ago by a threesome of defenders -- Alfred Williams, Kanavis McGhee and Arthur Walker -- all of whom came to CU from the Houston area and won a national title. This tandem simply shares the same first letter in their last name, and, now, the most important position on the team.

"I'm always going to be a team guy," Cody Hawkins said afterward.

Hansen shares that philosophy and said he had no problem with foregoing his redshirt season when offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich told him he thought he could help the team after a loss at Kansas a week ago.

"Once I heard that I could really help the team out, I was like, 'Yeah, absolutely,' " Hansen said. "I missed playing. I missed being out there in the lights."

Hansen became the first true freshman quarterback to play for CU since Joel Klatt saw minimal action in 2003. It was the most significant action for a true freshman at the position since Craig Ochs played in the 2000 season. Hansen is the 10th freshman to play quarterback since freshmen were first allowed to play in 1973.

But Hansen wasn't on the field when it mattered most late in the game when the Buffs needed to protect a lead.

Coaches put the game in Cody Hawkins' hands along with freshman running back Rodney Stewart, who enjoyed another banner night with 141 yards and his first career touchdown.

Holding their slim lead, the Buffs were able to control the ball for more than 4 minutes and opted against sending place-kicker Aric Goodman on the field to attempt a 47-yard field goal with just more than a minute to play. Goodman has missed or had blocked each of his past six field goal attempts.

"We were probably better off just for the psyche of our whole team just saying, 'Hey, let's put it on the line and go,' " Dan Hawkins said. "That's not to discount Aric by any means."

When the Buffs failed to convert a fourth down, they turned possession back over to KSU at its 30-yard line with 59 seconds remaining. The CU defense came through as it had most of the night and did not allow the Wildcats (4-3, 1-2) to cross midfield, forcing Kansas State quarterback Josh Freeman to heave a desperation pass on the game's final play.

Freeman brought the eighth-highest scoring and 21st-ranked passing offense in the nation into the game, but enjoyed significantly less success than he had before Saturday. He completed 20 of 41 passes for 237 yards and did not throw a touchdown pass for the second week in a row.

Freeman did rush for a score in third quarter, making it a one-point game.

Earlier in the fourth quarter, the CU defense produced a game-saving play in its territory. Freeman threw the ball to tight end Brett Alstatt who was hit by linebacker Brad Jones and cornerback Cha'pelle Brown, forcing a fumble. Safety Ryan Walters recovered.

"That was huge," Dan Hawkins said. "That was big. One of the things that has happened for us down through this stretch is we really hadn't had a bunch of momentum changers and igniters."

The Buffs found several of them Saturday, and they should make the rest of this season and the future of the program even more interesting.



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Wildcats lament missed opportunities against Buffs

By Neill Woelk
Sunday, October 19, 2008

After opening the season with a pair of wins, Kansas State had ridden a loss-win-loss-win see-saw.

The Wildcats came to Boulder on Saturday aiming to end that string. They left Folsom Field bemoaning their missed opportunities, coming up on the short end of a 14-13 loss to Colorado.

"The game played out a lot like coach (Ron) Prince told us it would," said K-State quarterback Josh Freeman. "We knew it would be a dogfight. We just wish we could get some plays back."

Freeman, who might be the best pro prospect in a league full of great quarterbacks, finished with solid numbers: 237 yards in the air on 21 completions in 40 attempts, along with 42 yards rushing. But after putting up 12 touchdown passes in his first six games, he did not have a scoring pass against the Buffs.

"Our defense played good, but Colorado's defense played great," said KSU running back Logan Dold. "They held us to 13 points, which is a lot lower than we are used to."

Indeed, the Wildcats had surpassed 40 points four times this year, and their lowest output was 28, in a 58-28 loss to Texas Tech.

"We'll look back and plenty of what-ifs, plenty of second guessing to do," Prince said. "We were there, close to make a play and we didn't make it. I don't want to take anything away from Colorado's great effort. They ran the ball and tried to keep the game short."

The one play the Wildcats won't forget came late in the fourth quarter. After a 17-yard Freeman completion, the KSU quarterback hit Brett Alstatt with an 8-yard gain that would have put the Wildcats well within field goal range. Alstatt, however, coughed up a fumble on the sidelines, CU recovered, and the Wildcats didn't get the ball back until only 59 second remained in the game.

"Woulda, coulda, shoulda," Prince said. "But the reality is we didn't."

Now 4-3, the Wildcats have no time to relax. Next on the schedule is a home game with Oklahoma.

"I don't know much about Oklahoma, except that it's a Big 12 game and we need it," defensive back Tysyn Hartman said. "I just know we needed to string two wins together tonight and we didn't."



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'Speedy' carries CU to first Big 12 win

By Ryan Thorburn
Sunday, October 19, 2008

Rodney Stewart has a long way to go to match his position coach in Colorado football lore.

But the freshman running back did look like Darian Hagen, the CU legend turned running backs coach, at times while powering his way to 141 yards on 29 carries to lead the Buffs to a 14-13 victory over Kansas State on Saturday night at Folsom Field.

Stewart -- who scored his first career touchdown in the second quarter, a 4-yard run that gave the CU a 7-6 lead -- said the coaching staff's decision to insert true freshman quarterback Tyler Hansen into the game really opened up the run game.

"That helped a lot because he can drop back in the pocket and make people miss. If there's nothing open he can make a play out of nothing," Stewart said of the Hansen factor. "And the option is so crucial because he does so good with the fake that they don't do know who's going to get the ball. I think we could just run that the whole way down the field if you ask me."

Dan Hawkins probably isn't going to change the offense to Bill McCartney's old wishbone. However, the game plan to run over the Wildcats looks like a keeper.

Stewart averaged 4.9 yards per carry, and Hansen added 86 yards rushing on 19 attempts. If Darrell Scott (six carries, 11 yards) can ever get healthy and running down hill CU might not have to worry so much about its weak passing attack.

Hansen was 7-of-14 passing for 71 yards with one touchdown and one interception. Starting quarterback Cody Hawkins was 6-for-11 for only 35 yards.

"The way we were running the ball, it would kind of be foolish to throw it. There is no point in putting it in the air when Rodney is making plays and our offensive line is performing," Cody Hawkins said. "With the guys we have at running back, I think we can move the chains in the ground any time we want."

Stewart's third 100-yard rushing game of the season ties him with Lamont Warren (1991) for the most in CU history as a freshman. "Speedy" earned eight first downs in the physical Big 12 struggle.

"In practice we really thought we had a good game plan and knew we were going to come out here and win," Stewart said.

Goodman's FG

struggles continue

Since being carried off the field as the hero of CU's overtime victory over West Virginia on Sept. 18, place-kicker Aric Goodman is 0-for-6 on field goal attempts.

During Saturday's one-point victory, Goodman had his only attempt in the first half blocked. Ian Campbell blocked the 48-yard attempt and Ray Cheatham recovered it at the K-State 41.

The Wildcats did not cash the gift in, however, with a three-and-out on the ensuing possession.

With a chance to give the Buffs some breathing room during crunch time, Goodman missed a 47-yard attempt with 9:21 remaining in the fourth quarter.

Not surprisingly, CU opted to go for a fourth-and-short late in the contest rather than trotting Goodman out for another 47-yard attempt.

"That's not to discount Aric by any means," Dan Hawkins said of the decision. "We felt like we had a good play (to get the first down) and unfortunately we didn't get it."

CU's defense held off the Wildcats' final chance to win the game. K-State's Brooks Rossman made field goals of 37 and 53 yards before missing a 47-yard attempt late in the first quarter and a 42-yard attempt with 2:16 remaining in the second quarter.

"We try to make field goals at the beginning of the game so it doesn't have to come down to having to make them at the end," Rossman said.

O-line debut

for Goree

Hansen wasn't the only surprise player to come off the bench for CU's offense on Saturday night. Eugene Goree, a nose tackle who has been practicing on the offensive line since Oct. 8 to add some depth to the depleted unit, played at left guard for the first time.

The Buffs lost guard Max Tuioti-Mariner for the season to a knee injury earlier this season. Starting right tackle Ryan Miller (leg) is also out for the balance of the schedule.

Cheap shot on Smith

CU punt return man Josh Smith was shaken up after a K-State player hit him while he was letting a punt sail into the end zone. The play drew a 15-yard unnecessary roughness flag and had Dan Hawkins very upset.

Smith viewed the cheap shot as a sign of respect for his big-play ability on special teams.

"I love the extra attention," Smith said. "That's what I wanted to bring to the table when I took the role. I want to make guys kick the ball away from me. I want them to be scared to kick it to me because they know I'm a threat. It takes a lot of courage to be out there and take on those tasks."

Smith muffed the opening kickoff to the second half but quickly gathered the loose ball before wisely taking a knee for the touchback. He finished with 66 yards on kickoff returns and only nine yards on punt returns.

Cabral honored

Brian Cabral has been an assistant coach at CU for 20 years. But on Thursday the former Buff standout was presented with the inaugural Honorary Buffalo Heart Award during the weekly Boulder Buff Club luncheon at the Omni Interlocken Hotel in Broomfield.

The original Buffalo Heart Award was created in 1998 and handed out annually to a senior who embodies the most heart, grit and determination.

Bzdelik's Buffs

get started

Jeff Bzdelik was back coaching at the Pepsi Center this weekend.

The former Denver Nuggets head coach took the CU men's basketball team down to his old stomping grounds to practice on Friday and Saturday because the Coors Events Center was hosting a volleyball match and women's basketball practice and Balch Fieldhouse was hosting football pregame festivities.

The Buffs, who will also conduct closed-door scrimmages against Utah and Northern Colorado instead of playing exhibition games, will open the season on Nov. 14 against Arkansas-Pine Bluff.

A year ago, Bzdelik -- who was also the Air Force head coach -- took CU down to Colorado Springs to begin practices at the Olympic training center.

By the numbers

CU now owns the nation's third longest active scoring streak at 242 games. Washington State, a 69-0 loser to USC on Saturday, had its scoring streak snapped at 280 games. The Buffs now only trail Michigan (295) and Florida (250). ... Kansas State is now 16-0 when leading at halftime and 0-16 when trailing at halftime under third-year head coach Ron Prince. ... CU is now 20-7-2 in night games at Folsom Field.

Notable

Joshua Moore recovered a fumble and intercepted a pass for K-State in the first half but the visitors only converted the turnovers into a total of three points. ... Representatives from the Sun Bowl watched the game from the Fred Casotti press box. ... Atlanta Falcons general manager Thomas Dimitroff was also in attendance, as were scouts representing the Denver Broncos, Green Bay Packers, Kansas City Chiefs, Pittsburgh Steelers and Seattle Seahawks.



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Hawkins adds Hansen to mix for athleticism

Freshman burns redshirt to play vs. Kansas State

By Ryan Thorburn
Sunday, October 19, 2008

Two years ago Dan Hawkins was very tempted to pull the redshirt off his son's back and make a change at quarterback to spark Colorado's struggling offense.

The new CU head coach didn't make the move, fearing there would be a perception that he was favoring Cody Hawkins.

But asking true freshman quarterback Tyler Hansen to burn his redshirt seven games into the season -- which meant, of course, having Cody Hawkins watching stretches of Saturday's key game against Kansas State from the sideline -- made a lot of sense after a three-game losing skid.

And the move, at least for one night, paid off big as Hansen stunned the Wildcats with 86 yards rushing on 19 carries and 71 yards passing, including a 21-yard touchdown to Scotty McKnight in the second quarter that proved to be the game-winner in the Buffs' 14-13 victory at Folsom Field.

"We just felt like his athleticism at quarterback would give us another dimension," Dan Hawkins said of the decision. "And it did."

Hansen broke the huddle on eight drives and took 49 snaps, generating 219 yards of offense. Cody Hawkins was in the lineup for five drives, 33 plays and generated 134 yards.

Quarterback controversy? The participants say it's simply QB camaraderie.

"We're just striving to put this program first in every way," Cody Hawkins said at a postgame press conference that also included Hansen. "We all have a lot of respect for Tyler as a person."

One week ago, after CU had suffered another loss at Kansas, offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich called Hansen into his office and asked him if he would be willing to give up his redshirt for a chance to play against the Wildcats.

Remember, KU head coach Mark Mangino made a similar move with Todd Reesing two years ago at the Buffs' expense.

"Once I heard I could really help the team I said, 'Yep, absolutely,'" Hansen said. "I was kind of stressing out after the first play."

Hansen fumbled on his first collegiate touch, but the football rolled harmlessly out of bounds. And the fortunes of the Buffs' struggling offense soon changed with two touchdowns in the second quarter.

Fourteen points probably won't be enough points next Saturday to beat Chase Daniel and Missouri. But using Hansen in the offense will at least give the Tigers more to think about this week.

"I'm glad they established both of them tonight and it went fairly smoothly for our first time," McKnight said. "They were both able to make some plays to help us win. We look forward to figuring this thing out and getting the job done."

Cody Hawkins only completed 6-of-11 passes for 35 yards, but his 22-yard completion to Josh Smith on third-and-15 with 3:48 remaining was a back-breaker for K-State, which didn't get the ball back until there were only 59 seconds left.

"You come to Colorado not necessarily to have a bunch of individual success. When you're putting it on the line against so many great teams, I want to win football games," Cody Hawkins said. "As long as I'm going out and working hard and doing as much as I can for the program then that's my job. ...

"Whether I'm on the field or not, I just have to help the team win however I can."

Matt Ballenger, who saw some action in the previous two games, was reduced to playing the role of K-State starter Josh Freeman on the scout team during practice last week. Nick Nelson, who battled Cody Hawkins for the starting job last season, has now sent in signals to three other quarterbacks from the sideline.

And Hansen's freshman season is more than half over already.

"Tyler laid it on the line for us," Cody Hawkins said. "I know that's a really tough decision, but he's a great player who is helping out our team a lot. ... Everybody gives him a pat on the back for making that sacrifice."



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CU's defense steps up against K-State

Bufs keep Freeman in check for win

By Kyle Ringo
Sunday, October 19, 2008

All the talk today around the Colorado football program will focus on the quarterback position, but without a key defensive play late in Saturday's game against Kansas State, the program might not be celebrating a win.

Senior linebacker Brad Jones and junior cornerback Cha'pelle Brown tackled Kansas State tight end Brett Alstatt in front of the Buffs' bench late in the fourth quarter forcing a fumble.

Safety Ryan Walters was there to pounce on the loose ball.

The play came with 5 minutes 17 seconds remaining in a one-point contest.

It stopped the Wildcats from penetrating even deeper into CU territory where they might have been able to kick a game-winning field goal or score a touchdown.

Coach Dan Hawkins called the play "huge" and said it was the sort of tide-turning moment the Buffs had been looking for throughout their three-game losing streak.

"It felt great, but it didn't feel so great for me," Jones said. "I was really excited that the team was happy. It made me feel really great that everybody was counting on me and counting on the defense and we came up and made the play."

The defense did more than make one big play.

Kansas State brought the eighth-highest scoring offense in the nation to Boulder, led by quarterback Josh Freeman, who appears to have the National Football League in his future.

Freeman and the Wildcats had gone three-and-out on offensive possessions just six times in the entire first half of the season. The Buffs forced them into three-and-outs three times in the second quarter alone and six times in the game.

The Buffs held KSU 30 points below its season average and limited the Wildcats to 5.5 yards per play. The Wildcats ran 23 plays on the CU side of the field and gained just 89 yards.

Colorado came into the game ranked 85th in the nation in rushing defense, but surrendered only 112 yards on the ground.

"I think we did pretty good," Brown said. "We talked about all this week that if we had to hold them to

zero, then that's what we were going to have to do.

"Obviously, they scored some points, but I think we did our job."



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Woelk: Young Hawkins is Hansen's biggest fan

By Neill Woelk
Sunday, October 19, 2008

Now it gets fun.

Anyone out there remember saying Dan Hawkins would never bench his son? Anyone remember saying the Colorado football program would be stuck in neutral for the next three years because of that?

It would appear that Dan Hawkins put the Buffs in gear Saturday night. Hawk took the redshirt off promising young freshman Tyler Hansen, put his son on the bench -- and stirred up what is sure to be a quarterback controversy that will keep the Internet message boards burning at warp speed for weeks to come.

Now, before we go any further with this, understand one thing: while it might be a controversy in cyberspace, it won't be a controversy in the Hawkins household. Here's one thing you can hang your black and gold hat on: the happiest bunch in Folsom Field Saturday night was the Hawkins clan.

Happy?

Dan Hawkins because he made a daring, but solid coaching move, throwing an untested true freshman into the fray with a season still deciding whether to head north or south. He gambled and won. That's what good coaches do.

Cody Hawkins because the Buffs won. Simple as that.

Dan Hawkins again, because he raised his son to put team first. (And, while we're at it, put Misty Hawkins at the top of that list. Dan might be the coach, but mom has made sure her son looks at the world the right way.)

"More than anything else, I want to be part of a winning program," Cody said after the game. "I know who I am. I know what I bring to the table, and I know what I can do. When Coach (Mark) Helfrich came to me earlier this week and said they wanted to put Tyler in because of what he could do, I was all for it. I said, 'You bet.' "

That simple. No problem, no controversy, no issues.

Whatever it takes to win.

If there was any doubt about how all involved felt about the move, you only had to be watching the Colorado sidelines after Hansen hit Scotty McKnight with a picture-perfect 21-yard touchdown pass in the second quarter.

The first person to greet Hansen with a smothering bear hug was Dan Hawkins. Right behind was Cody, whose grin appeared to be every bit as big as the one Hansen wore after his first collegiate touchdown pass.

"I was ecstatic for him," Cody said. "I want whatever is best for this team. When I see someone out there having success, I'm pulling for him."

Such a move by any head coach -- forget the last names for a second -- is a dicey one. For starters, asking a freshman to give up his redshirt season after six games isn't easy. That player has already sat for half a season, and is looking at four more years of eligibility.

Tyler Hansen gave up a year for six games on Saturday.

At the same time, moving a starting quarterback out of the lineup -- a player who has earned his teammates trust for the last 18 months -- can also backfire.

But Dan Hawkins figured the time was right. "We thought (Hansen's) athleticism would give us an added dimension," Hawkins said. "And that's what kind of team we have. Put the egos on the shelf and think about the team."

The people most surprised at Hawkins' decision Saturday night are the people who don't know him, the folks who refused to believe him when he said he would always do what was best for his team. Hawk always said the name on the jersey didn't matter.

He proved it Saturday night.

Understand that the timing of Saturday's move was by no means a coincidence. After watching film, CU coaches saw that Louisiana-Lafayette's quarterback did some damage to Kansas State earlier this year with his legs. That's when they decided to turn to Hansen.

"It catered to his specific skills," Cody Hawkins said. "We could use him right away with a game plan that would work."

Now, of course, the question becomes which quarterback will play from here on out. While Hansen had a huge effect early, his effectiveness lessened as K-State adjusted to his game.

And, it's worth remembering that with the game on the line, it was Cody Hawkins in the game throwing a third-and-15 completion to keep a drive alive.

Our guess is we'll see more of both.

Immediately after the game, Dan Hawkins didn't have an answer. "We'll wing it," he said with a grin.

This, of course, is the same Hawkins who has said repeatedly -- and he repeated it again Saturday night -- that he hates two-quarterback systems. But, as Hawkins also noted, "It is what it is."

As for the quarterback who started Saturday night's game?

"I'll be in Sunday morning watching film trying to get better," Cody Hawkins said. "I still think I bring something to the table. I'll keep on working, and if that means coaching Tyler up and helping him

however I can, that's great.

"I just want to be part of a winning program."

Our guess is that possibility definitely exists.



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First look: No. 16 Missouri

By Kyle Ringo
Sunday, October 19, 2008

Game 8

Matchup: Colorado (4-3, overall 1-2 Big 12) at Missouri (5-2, 1-2)

Game time: 4:30 p.m., at Faurot Field ()

On the air: FSN. KOA Radio (850 AM).

Web site: <http://mutigers.cstv.com/>

The series

Missouri leads 38-31-3, including a 23-11-2 mark in Columbia. The Buffs won 17 of 19 games between 1985 and 2003, but the Tigers have won three of the past four.

Last time

Colorado took an early 10-7 advantage last year in Boulder before completing coming apart. The Tigers reeled off 48 unanswered points beginning early in the second quarter, handing the Buffs their third-worst home loss in history, 55-10. The Buffs turned the ball over three times and committed 12 penalties. The Tigers finished with 598 yards of total offense and tight end Chase Coffman scored three touchdowns.

The coach

Gary Pinkel is 54-39 in his

eighth season at Missouri and is 127-76-3 in his 18th season as a college head coach. Pinkel is 2-0 against CU coach Dan Hawkins.

Numbers game

.906 -- Texas quarterback Colt McCoy's completion percentage against the Tigers last week in Austin, Texas. Missouri ranks 114th in the nation in passing defense and 100th in total defense.

The lowdown

The Tigers were a national title contender just two weeks ago and now are reeling from back-to-back losses to Texas and Oklahoma State. They were 15th in the first Bowl Championship Series rankings

released Sunday. ... Missouri senior tackle Colin Brown missed most of the Texas game with a concussion. ... Wide receiver and kick return man Jeremy Maclin is second in the nation in all-purpose yardage averaging 193 yards a game. He has scored rushing, receiving and return touchdowns this year. ... Place-kicker Jeff Woffert has become one of the more reliable legs in the Big 12 Conference and has made nine of 13 attempts this season and never has missed an extra point in his career. ... The Tigers rank fifth in the nation in total offense, averaging 520 yards a game and fourth in passing offense, averaging 369 yards per game. ... The Mizzou offensive line has allowed only six sacks all season.

Who to know

QB Chase Daniel: His Heisman candidacy is all but over, but Daniel remains one of the best playmakers at his position in college football. He holds most major passing records at the school and is sixth in the nation in total offense with 355 yards a game. He is the nation's fifth-most efficient passer and has thrown for 10,553 yards and 80 touchdowns in his career.

TE Chase Coffman: This senior and future NFL player has caught at least 10 passes in three of the past four games. He has caught 23 passes for 244 yards and a touchdown in just the past two games. He burned the Buffs badly last year and is well-known for hurdling defenders.

LB Sean Weatherspoon: One of the premier defensive talents in the Big 12 Conference. He ranks second in the conference in total tackles. He leads the Tigers in tackles for loss, interceptions and is tied for the team lead in sacks.



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colorado 14, kansas st. 13

Switch of QBs works wonders

Tyler Hansen ignites offense, guides Buffs to Big 12 victory

By Blake Jackson
Special to The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/19/2008 01:13:45 AM MDT



CU QB Cody Hawkins (7) leads the student section in the CU fight song after CU beat Kansas State 14-13.
(Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — Colorado coach Dan Hawkins removed quarterback Tyler Hansen's redshirt with about a minute left in the first quarter Saturday night against Kansas State.

With Hansen at the helm, the Buffaloes (4-3, 1-2 Big 12) ended a three-game losing streak by topping the Wildcats (4-3, 1-2) 14-13 before 52,099 at Folsom Field.

About a minute into his debut, Hansen removed the Colorado offensive logjam, turning three quarterback keepers into 49 yards and leading the Buffaloes to a go-ahead score on Rodney Stewart's 4-yard run with 12:25 left in the second quarter. One series later, he connected with Scotty McKnight on a 21-yard touchdown pass.

"The first couple of plays were a little shocking," said the 18-year-old Hansen, who was not on the pregame depth chart. "I just went in and tried to do my job. Then I settled down."

Hansen finished the night with 98 yards on 19 carries. He completed 7-of-14 passes for 71 yards, with one touchdown and one interception.

"The most important thing is being smart with the football," Hansen said. "We are playing pretty well and we just have to keep going. We need to play consistently."

Sophomore starter Cody Hawkins was pulled after the second series. He returned for one play in the middle of Hansen's first drive and appeared during scattered series in the second half, including Colorado's final possession.

"You have to do what you have to do," Dan Hawkins said of the move. He had planned to give Hansen 10-15 snaps.

Instead it was closer to 40.

Doin' the QB shuffle

Freshman Tyler Hansen, who was not on the Buffs'

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depth chart, is the third CU quarterback to play this season:

Player Comp Att Yds TD Int
 Cody Hawkins 114 202 1,051 11 6
 Matt Ballenger 8 12 118 1 0
 Tyler Hansen 7 14 71 1 1

Sliding statistics

Cody Hawkins has struggled since an

Opponent Cm-Att Yds TD Int Sk
 West Virginia 22-33 179 2 1 2
 Florida State 17-36 154 3 1 4
 Texas 13-33 118 1 0 2
 Kansas 8-22 90 1 2 1
 Kansas State 6-11 35 0 0 0



CU running back Rodney Stewart lets the ball slip out of his hands after a 22-yard gain on the Buffaloes' first possession Saturday night. Kansas State recovered at the Wildcats' 30-yard line. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

overtime win against West Virginia, and was replaced in the first quarter Saturday. A look at the



Tyler Hansen, who went from off the depth chart to on the field, looks to gain a few yards Saturday night. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

sophomore quarterback's numbers vs. the Mountaineers and beyond:

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sports

CU defense protects precarious lead

The Buffaloes give KSU a late possession but shut down Freeman.

By Blake Jackson
Special to The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/19/2008 01:12:58 AM MDT

BOULDER — Dan Hawkins had a decision to make.

Prolong Colorado's drive by going for it on fourth-and-4 at the Kansas State 31-yard line with 1:03 left. Or attempt a long field goal to put the game out of reach.

Ryan Walters and several members of the Buffaloes defense cornered their coach on the sideline.

"We got your back," they said, according to Hawkins. "Whatever you want to do. Kick it. Go for it. Whatever."

Hawkins went for it. And failed.

Cody Hawkins' pass to Josh Smith fell incomplete, and Wildcats quarterback Josh Freeman strode onto the field for one last drive with 59 seconds to go. But Walters and the defense had Hawkins' back.

The senior safety lunged at Kansas State wideout Brandon Banks to bat down a Hail Mary at the Colorado 13-yard line. Time expired, and the Buffaloes closed the book on their best defensive performance of the season.

"Anytime the offense is doing well, the defense gets fired up," said Walters, who added two fumble recoveries to his breakup. "Offense is the biggest fan of defense, and defense is the biggest fan of offense."

After giving up 38 and 30 points to a pair of the Big 12's top quarterbacks — Texas' Colt McCoy and Kansas' Todd Reesing — Colorado held Freeman to 13. Kansas State converted just 3-of-15 third-down attempts and managed just 15 first downs overall.

"(Freeman) causes a lot of problems because he is a big guy and he has a really electric arm," defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "As long as you can still contain a guy like that and make tackles, you did a good job."

Behind Freeman's arm — and legs — Kansas State moved down the field with ease on its first three possessions. Each time, Colorado forced field goals to stunt the Wildcat drives.

The third attempt sailed wide right. Then Tyler Hansen and the CU offense woke up.

The Buffaloes took the lead for good on the ensuing series.

"We were at a fork in the road," senior linebacker Brad Jones said. "This game was a pivotal point in our season, where it could go either way, and it seemed like this win was the culmination of all the hard work we have put in."

KSU never really regained offensive momentum.

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They fumbled, punted, missed another field goal and then failed on a fourth-down conversion.

"They were bringing pressure at key moments," Freeman said. "They were rolling coverage and blitzing well. They're not a bad football team. They're just struggling to find an identity."

Freeman struggled to find open space until a 17-yard touchdown scamper early in the third quarter. And even after the score, Colorado's defense snuffed out the Wildcats' comeback attempts time and again.

"You have to give it to both of us, offense and defense," CU cornerback Gardner McKay said. "We just went out there and wanted this win. I think the key thing was to finish this game."

No matter what Coach Hawk decided.

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CU defense protects precarious lead

The Buffaloes give KSU a late possession but shut down Freeman.

By Blake Jackson
Special to The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/19/2008 01:12:58 AM MDT

BOULDER — Dan Hawkins had a decision to make.

Prolong Colorado's drive by going for it on fourth-and-4 at the Kansas State 31-yard line with 1:03 left. Or attempt a long field goal to put the game out of reach.

Ryan Walters and several members of the Buffaloes defense cornered their coach on the sideline.

"We got your back," they said, according to Hawkins. "Whatever you want to do. Kick it. Go for it. Whatever."

Hawkins went for it. And failed.

Cody Hawkins' pass to Josh Smith fell incomplete, and Wildcats quarterback Josh Freeman strode onto the field for one last drive with 59 seconds to go. But Walters and the defense had Hawkins' back.

The senior safety lunged at Kansas State wideout Brandon Banks to bat down a Hail Mary at the Colorado 13-yard line. Time expired, and the Buffaloes closed the book on their best defensive performance of the season.

"Anytime the offense is doing well, the defense gets fired up," said Walters, who added two fumble recoveries to his breakup. "Offense is the biggest fan of defense, and defense is the biggest fan of offense."

After giving up 38 and 30 points to a pair of the Big 12's top quarterbacks — Texas' Colt McCoy and Kansas' Todd Reesing — Colorado held Freeman to 13. Kansas State converted just 3-of-15 third-down attempts and managed just 15 first downs overall.

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cu football - briefs

Stewart nearing freshman mark

Tom Kensler, *The Denver Post*

Article Last Updated: 10/19/2008 01:11:12 AM MDT



Bufs quarterback Cody Hawkins, top, leads the student section in singing the CU fight song after a 14-13 victory over Kansas State on Saturday night at Folsom Field. (Kathryn Scott Osler, *The Denver Post*)

BOULDER — Rodney Stewart's eyes lit up when he learned following Saturday night's 14-13 victory over Kansas State that he needs only one more 100-yard rushing game to have a Colorado freshman record to himself.

"I'm going to get it," Stewart said.

Stewart, lightly recruited out of Columbus, Ohio, because of his size (5-feet-6 and 175 pounds) and a past knee injury, netted 141 yards on 29 carries against the Wildcats. That marked his third game over the century mark. Lamont Warren had three 100-yard games his freshman year in 1991.

Stewart said the running threat of freshman quarterback Tyler Hansen opened up some holes. "I think we could run that option offense the whole way on a drive," Stewart said.

Learning experience.

Hansen did have some missteps. He telegraphed a pass near the end of the second quarter that was easily intercepted when cornerback Joshua Moore, who had been burned earlier on a touchdown to Scotty McKnight, darted in front of McKnight for the pick.

Fortunately for Colorado, the turnover did not lead to any points. After hitting two field goals in the first quarter, Wildcats place-kicker Brooks Rossman missed his second- straight attempt.

CU coach Dan Hawkins had the confidence to put Hansen back in for the next series.

"People always think that the quarterback has got to have my last name," Hawkins said, referring to starter Cody Hawkins. "I said, 'Hey, the kid (Hansen) is playing pretty good.'"

"I didn't hold (that interception) against Tyler. It is hard to tell a quarterback to never throw an interception."

Footnotes.

The most serious injury reported by CU was a sprained ankle to reserve linebacker Josh Hartigan,

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who is listed as day-to-day. . . . CU had season highs in rushing attempts (57) and yards (247). . . . Redshirt freshman guard Eugene Goree saw his first action on offense. He is still listed as both an offensive and defensive lineman. . . . Colorado now has the nation's third-longest active scoring streak, at 242 straight games without being shut out. Washington State was at second with a streak of 280 but was drubbed 69-0 by Southern Cal Saturday. Michigan (295) and Florida (250) lead.

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Audible at QB

Bufs call on untested Tyler Hansen, who leads 14-13 victory

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/19/2008 01:14:31 AM MDT



Tyler Hansen, who went from off the depth chart to on the field, looks to gain a few yards Saturday night. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — The remainder of Colorado's 2008 football season just became a lot more interesting.

Not even listed on Colorado's pregame roster, true freshman quarterback Tyler Hansen tossed away his redshirt Saturday night at Folsom Field and gave fans a reason to cheer. Heck, he just might have

helped salvage the season and keep a bowl game in CU's sights.

At the very least, Hansen helped save the day in a 14-13 squeaker over Kansas State.

"This is huge," senior safety Ryan Walters said. "We had a players meeting (last Sunday). We said this is our Super Bowl."

Who could have guessed Hansen would become the star? A buzz could be heard from the crowd of 52,099 as the 18-year-old came off the bench with 2:01 remaining in the first quarter. His impact was immediate. Eleven plays later, thanks to Hansen's keepers of 13, 24 and 12 yards, a struggling Colorado offense got into the end zone and took its first lead, 7-6.

The Buffaloes (4-3, 1-2 Big 12) never trailed again. A three-game losing streak is gone.

And, who knows? Perhaps a new star was born.

"We thought Tyler could help us because of his legs. He can really run," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "It was a huge sacrifice for him (losing his redshirt). But that speaks of the camaraderie (on the team)."

Was Hansen nervous? Who wouldn't be?

"The first couple of plays were a little shocking," he said. "Then I settled down."

Did he ever. Becoming just the 10th true freshman quarterback to play for CU since 1973, Hansen chalked up his first touchdown pass in the second quarter, a 21-yarder that led sophomore wideout Scotty Mc-Knight, who made the over-the-shoulder catch in full stride in the end zone, heading toward the left corner.

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It was the kind of pass coaches and wide receivers love — on target and over the defense, with no chance to be intercepted.

Hansen finished with 7-for-14 passing for 71 yards and a touchdown, with one interception. He also ran 19 times for 86 yards. That almost doubled the leading rusher for K-State, Logan Dold (13-for-47).

"I heard a couple of (Kansas State) guys talking, 'Who is this guy?' " Hansen recalled. "They were trying to get in my head and make me nervous."

"(Hansen's) game, I wasn't familiar with," said Kansas State coach Ron Prince, who had won his previous two meetings with Colorado. "But the idea of the quarterback running the ball . . . a lot of people are doing it these days."

Hansen's running threat helped open up holes for Rodney Stewart, who squirted for 141 yards and a touchdown and helped Colorado keep the ball away from Kansas State junior quarterback Josh Freeman, an NFL prospect. CU finished with a huge advantage in time of possession, 36:21 to 23:39.

"Tyler's first TD pass — he's never ran that play," sophomore quarterback Cody Hawkins said. "That's one of my plays. He goes out there and throws a dime. The guy is going to have an awesome future."

Hansen was asked last Sunday if he would consider discarding his redshirt. Cody Hawkins was told sometime thereafter the fuzzy-cheeked rookie would get some reps.

There may be some quarterback shuffling for the remainder of the season, but Dan Hawkins will be surprised if there is any hint of a quarterback controversy. He has long said that his son is always "team first."

"You come to Colorado not to have so much individual success," Cody said. "I want to win football games."

Cody was not exactly benched. He rotated at times with Hansen. And on Colorado's final drive, when the Buffs needed to at least consume some clock, it was Cody who got the call.

Leading by just a point, the Buffs gave up the ball on downs at the Kansas State 31. But Freeman had only 1:03 to work with, no timeouts. In the end, he threw a "Hail Mary" pass on the final play that was well short. Walters batted it away at the 13, anyway.

Hansen did more than pump up the fans. Following Hansen's second-quarter TD pass, the Colorado defense took over and promptly recorded a sack by senior safety D.J. Dykes.

"I'm proud of the way the defense played," Walters said. "We disguised some things. We didn't want Freeman to just sit back there and pick us apart."

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

KEY STAT

13: Kansas State's lowest total this season — 15 fewer points than its previous low and the fewest since a 23-13 loss at Auburn last season. Game marked second time this season Josh Freeman, the tenth-ranked quarterback in the country, failed to throw a touchdown pass.

Key play

Freshman Tyler Hansen, in his second college series, pump-faked to Scotty McKnight, then hit him over cornerback Joshua Moore for a 21-yard touchdown and a 14-6 second-quarter lead. Hansen

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set up the scoring play with a 13-yard pass to Patrick Williams.

John Henderson, The Denver Post

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Publish Date: 10/19/2008

Bufs stand ground, find spark

By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — The spark the Colorado football team sought finally came Saturday night at Folsom Field when the program's head coach pulled his starting quarterback and son, and inserted a true freshman whose running caught the visitors off guard. Yet for all the buzz Tyler Hansen's debut made, it was CU's defense that shined brightest when it absolutely had to.

CU's 14-13 defeat of Kansas State might signal big changes in the program, most notably the play of Hansen, who burned his redshirt with 2 minutes, 1 second to play in the first quarter and promptly fumbled out of bounds on his first play. Hansen recovered, though, and led CU to two second-quarter touchdowns, including a 21-yard pass to Scotty McKnight on a play he had never run in practice.

CU coach Dan Hawkins wouldn't say what'll happen next Saturday at quarterback when the Buffs visit Missouri (4:30 p.m., FSN).

But after those two touchdowns, CU's scoring ended, rendering its defense with little margin for error, which has become the season's prevalent theme. Speaking of seasons, CU might have saved its Saturday. It snapped a three-game losing streak, revived bowl hopes and found ample reason to feel good about itself after a month of misery.

"I really love the chemistry we've got," Hawkins said. "I had the defensive guys over there going, 'We got your back. No matter what you do, we got your back. We'll stop them. You kick it, go for it, do whatever you want to do, we'll stop them.'"

Kansas State (4-3, 1-2) pulled to within a point in the third quarter when quarterback Josh Freeman scored on a 17-yard draw. The Buffs continued their night-long effort to confuse Freeman with disguised coverages and frequent blitzes, keeping the Wildcats from penetrating inside the CU 30.

Kansas State's last, best chance came with 5:20 left when tight end Brett Alstatt caught a shot pass and turned upfield, but CU's Brad Jones jarred the ball free, and safety Ryan Walters recovered the fumble.

CU put Hawkins in at quarterback for its final drive. He threw a 22-yard pass to Josh Smith on third-and-15 for one key conversion, and Rodney Stewart, who ran for 141 yards on 29 carries, went 4 yards on third-and 2 for another.

The Buffs chose not to try a 48-yard field goal on fourth down with 1:03 left, and Hawkins' pass fell incomplete. Kansas State's final drive came down to time expiring with a Hail Mary, which Walters knocked free from receiver Brandon Banks.

Freeman finished 20-for-41 for 237 yards, plus runs for 42. He was as big and strong and tough to tackle as advertised, but Kansas State totaled 349 yards, far below its average of 418.3, and 30 points below its scoring average.

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Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen runs for a short gain against Kansas State in the third quarter of Colorado's 14-13 victory in Boulder on Saturday. **David Zalubowski/AP**

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"We were disguising everything," CU cornerback Cha'pelle Brown said. "We didn't want the offense to have any idea what we were doing."

Said Freeman: "They were bringing pressure at key moments. They were rolling coverages and blitzing well. They played well. They're not a bad football team. They have good players. I think they're struggling to find an identity."

Whatever that identity might become in the immediate future could depend on what coaches choose to do with its quarterbacks. Hawkins praised both for setting aside their agendas to do what's best for the team. The quarterback plan will be a big story this week. Hansen finished with 86 rushing yards, providing a running threat at quarterback the program needs. He was 7-for-14 passing with an interception, but he also showed a stronger arm, one that stretch defenses.

CU clearly caught Kansas State by surprise with a running quarterback. Wildcats coach Ron Prince said Kansas State should have been ready for it.

"I had a pretty good sense that they could run the ball by whatever means they could," Prince said. "I sense that they could use a couple of different quarterbacks."

Hansen said offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich called him Sunday, the day after the Buffs' offense was bad in a loss at Kansas, and asked if he'd be up for playing, seven games into a season in which he was ticketed to redshirt.

According to Hansen and Dan Hawkins, there was no hesitation.

"I said, 'Yeah absolutely,'" Hansen said. "I missed playing, I missed being out there in the lights. So I wanted to."

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at
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CU NOTES

By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call

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BOULDER – As expected, Kansas State's special teams made some big plays Saturday against Colorado.

It turned out, though, they didn't make enough.

The Wildcats blocked a field goal attempt and pulled a fake punt late in the first quarter that enabled them to convert fourth-and-4 with a 27 yard reverse. That play led to one of Brooks Rossman's two missed field goals Saturday, points that proved pivotal in CU's 14-13 win.

"We try to make field goals at the beginning of the game so it doesn't come down to having to make them at the end," said Rossman, who didn't get a chance on Kansas State's final drive.

Rossman entered Saturday 5-for-5 on field goals in 2008.

CU's Aric Goodman also missed a 47-yarder wide right with 9 minutes, 21 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter. Goodman fell to 3-for-10 in 2008. He's missed six in a row, dating back to Sept. 18, the night his 25-yarder in overtime helped the Buffs beat West Virginia. Coach Dan Hawkins gave him a scholarship in the locker room right after the game.

When CU could have used a field goal late in the fourth quarter Saturday, Hawkins chose not to try what would have been a 48-yarder with 1 minutes, 3 seconds left. Instead, CU tried to converted fourth-and-3, but failed.

"I had confidence in the offense," Hawkins said.

"I thought we had one blocked and had one missed, and we were probably better off just for the psyche of our whole team to say, 'Hey, let's put it on the line and go.'"

STRANGE NUMBERS: Saturday's win marked the first time CU has

>won two games in a season when scoring less than 20 points in each since 1998. The other was Sept. 18's 17-14 defeat of West Virginia. CU's 14 points were its fewest in a win since a 6-0 victory at Missouri on Oct. 8, 1992.

Washington State owned the nation's second-longest scoring streak entering Saturday, at 280 games, before losing, 69-0, to USC. CU's streak, which reached 242 games, is now the third-longest active streak.



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CU set season highs in rushing yards, 247, and attempts, 57.

Tailback Rodney Stewart, who ran 29 times for 141 yards and his first touchdown, has 594 rushing yards, which are fourth-most by a freshman at CU in a single season. He has three 100-yard games, which tie Lamont Warren's freshman season record.

FRESHMAN QB FACTS: Tyler Hansen is the 10th true freshman

>quarterback to play for CU since 1973. His 86 yards rushing were the most by a CU quarterback since Bernard Jackson went for 86 in 2006.

The last freshman quarterback to play was Joel Klatt, who in 2003 saw mop-up action in a game against Baylor. In 2000, Craig Ochs played as a true freshman against Kansas State.

INDUCTEES: CU's Athletic Hall of Fame inducted its seventh

>class Friday.

Among its nine members were the school's first African American varsity athletes Claude Walton, Frank Clarke and Billy Lewis. Walton was the CU's first all-American in any sport.

The others were Kara Grgas-Wheeler Goucher, the school's most-decorated female athlete, sprinter Don Campbell, two-sports starts in Dave Logan and Johns Stearns, Butkus Award-winning linebacker Alfred Williams, and former football coach Dal Ward.

CU athletic director Mike Bohn announced the funding to build a permanent Hall of Fame display at the Coors Events Center has been raised.

INJURY REPORT: Linebacker Jeff Smart suffered a head injury

>in the first quarter, but returned.

Safety Ryan Walters hurt in third quarter hitting Kansas State tight end Jeron Mastrud. He walked off, and returned on the next series.

Linebacker Josh Hartigan sprained an ankle and is listed as day-to-day.

EXTRA POINTS: The announced attendance was 52,099...

>Eugene Goree made his debut at right guard in the second quarter, and late in third, playing for Devin Head. ... CU linebacker coach has been presented with the first Honorary Buffalo Heart Award. The award has gone to a current senior since 1998. Buff Club members have decided to give the award to past players who would have been deserving of it.

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Something new from CU

By Justin Williams
Longmont Times-Call

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BOULDER — Welcome to the Tyler Hansen era of Colorado football — well, sort of.

The true freshman quarterback, who ditched his redshirt Saturday to wow a packed Folsom Field with his athletic ability, appears to be a staple in the Buffs' offense from here on out.

How much he will be used remains to be seen. Although, the fact that he took 49 snaps compared to Cody Hawkins' 33 shows just how much the coaching staff believes in him.

"We had to give them something new," CU receiver Josh Smith said. "It got us ready to know what to expect from Hansen as wide receivers, and I'm glad that we made that decision so we can give guys a new look."

Throughout the season, the common attitude has been that, despite his ineptitudes, Hawkins' is the Buffs' best chance at winning football games. And his contribution was still felt Saturday — particularly on the game-sealing final drive — but it's obvious the offense felt more confident with Hansen under center. Either that, or the Kansas State defense was caught seriously off-guard.

Either way, Hansen has earned some respect.

"We felt like his athleticism at quarterback was going to give us another dimension, and it did," CU coach Dan Hawkins said.

The move to Hansen was just one in what has become a make-shift offense for CU this season. On Saturday, they played a defensive tackle at right guard and a tight end at left tackle, and a running back nobody in the country wanted got most of the carries. Hardly the Darrell Scott show we all expected before the season started.

But the Buffs needed a jolt, and Hansen provided it Saturday — to the offense, the defense and even the crowd.

Coach Dan Hawkins was coy all week about his plans for Hansen, almost saying there was no chance he'd take a snap. As it turns out, the decision was made following the Kansas game a week ago. The coaches asked, and Hansen offered up his redshirt without a second thought.

And now, perhaps, Hansen has grabbed the attention of some of the other schools that snubbed him. According to Rivals.com, Idaho State was the only other Division I program to offer a scholarship. Apparently, Rodney Stewart wasn't the only steal of this recruiting class.

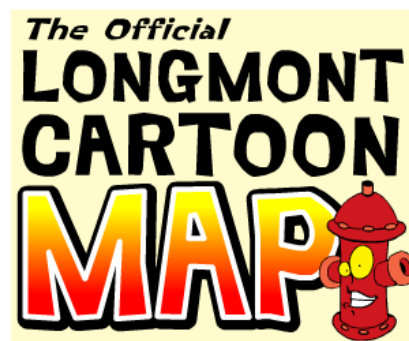


Call of the day

All the California transplants here in Colorado know it's Santa Ana winds. Santana is a band.

10.17.08

I would just like to say Nov. 5 will be a great day, with no more campaigning of either candidate for any elected office.



"Tyler isn't just a running quarterback," Cody Hawkins said. "He's a guy that can do the whole package. It just turns out that he can make a lot plays with his feet, and I think that's what stuck out the most tonight. But the guy's going to have an awesome future."

A mobile quarterback is quickly becoming a recipe for success in the Big 12. Hansen's 86 yards — albeit against a bottom-dwelling Kansas State defense — showed hope that the Buffs have found that.

But a mobile quarterback that can throw, too?

"Oh man, that thing was pretty," CU receiver Scotty McKnight said of his 21-yard touchdown catch from Hansen. "It's like he wrapped it up and threw it in the air for me like it was Christmastime. I got out of my break and was like, 'Oh my God, this thing is nice.'"

Maybe Christmas did arrive early in Boulder.

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By **B.G. Brooks, Rocky Mountain News (Contact)**

Published October 18, 2008 at 8:35 p.m.

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David Zalubowski © AP

Colorado true freshman quarterback Tyler Hansen runs for a long gain past Kansas State linebacker Reggie Walker, back, and defensive end Ian Campbell, front right, during the second quarter of Saturday night's game at Folsom Field in Boulder.

BOULDER — Tyler Hansen began the week as a former scout team quarterback and ended it as perhaps one of the most recognizable football players on the University of Colorado campus.

The athletic Californian helped guide the Buffaloes to a pair of first-half touchdowns Saturday night at Folsom Field, and the CU defense did the rest in a 14-13 victory over Kansas State.

The victory snapped a three-game losing streak for the Buffs (4-3 overall) and gave them their first Big 12 Conference victory after two losses.

Last in the Big 12 in the four major offensive categories, the Buffs entered the game seeking an offensive spark. And they found it — at least for a night — in Hansen, the 6-foot-2, 205-pound true freshman from Chaparral High School in Temecula, Calif.

Hansen accounted for 157 yards in total offense, running 19 times for 86 yards and completing 7-of-14 passes for 71 yards and a touchdown. Freshman tailback Rodney Stewart ran 29 times for a game-best 141 yards and a touchdown.

A scout-team quarterback through preseason camp and for the season's first six weeks, Hansen was said to be a redshirt candidate until he began taking snaps with the No. 1 offense as CU prepared for Kansas State.

Hansen said he didn't hesitate to accept the challenge of forgoing his redshirt season when offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich raised the idea of him playing this year.

"He said I could really help the team out, and once I heard I could really help the team out, I was like, 'Yeah, absolutely,' " Hansen recounted. "I miss playing. I miss being out there in the lights. So, I wanted to."

But as late as Wednesday, coach Dan Hawkins was being purposefully vague about Hansen's changing role, answering reporters' questions about the freshman with one-word answers or evading the queries.

When Hansen entered the game with 2:01 remaining in the first quarter, the Buffs trailed 6-0 on a pair of field goals by Brooks Rossman, who made his first two attempts before missing the next two.

"No. 9? I had no idea. I was shocked," Wildcats defensive back Courtney Herndon said about Hansen who wears No. 9. "We were expecting Cody Hawkins or No. 16 (Matt Ballenger), and when No. 9 (came

in), I was like, who is he? I didn't even know who the kid was. That shocked me big-time."

Hansen passed for more yardage (1,652) and touchdowns (10) than he ran for (570, nine) in high school, but he was most productive with his legs in his college debut.

Sharing a couple of snaps with Cody Hawkins, Hansen engineered an 11-play, 70-yard drive. Hansen ran for 49 yards during the march that was culminated by Stewart's 4-yard touchdown run – the first of Stewart's CU career.

Aric Goodman's extra point pushed the Buffs ahead 7-6, but Hansen's first-half work wasn't finished. Two possessions later, he drove his offense 65 yards in six plays – and this time, he didn't share time with Cody Hawkins.

Hansen completed three of four passes for 47 yards on the march, including a 21-yard scoring pass that receiver Scotty McKnight caught in stride in the end zone. Goodman's point after touchdown put the Buffs ahead 14-6 with 6:19 left before intermission, and that score held until then.

At halftime, Dan Hawkins said of his use of two quarterbacks – something he's repeatedly voted against – was prompted by Hansen's athleticism.

"You have to do what you have to do," the CU coach said. "Tyler is such a doggone athletic player. He's doing a good job running around and making plays with his feet."

Hansen said his first couple of plays "were a little shocking. I just went in and tried to do my job. Then I settled down. The most important thing is being smart with the football."

CU and Hansen took possession to begin the second half, but the offense almost went in reverse due to a personal foul and holding penalty, losing field position and being forced to punt.

Kansas State benefited, taking over at the CU 46-yard line and scoring four plays later on a 17-yard run by quarterback Josh Freeman. Rossman's extra point pulled the Wildcats to one point back at 14-13.

For the Buffs' next two series, Cody Hawkins and Hansen alternated at quarterback, neither with any success. But the Wildcats also were forced to punt on their next possession.

Cody Hawkins said he wasn't jealous or miffed because he's all about teamwork and winning.

"All I want to do every day is work hard and do what's best for the program," he said. "If that means I'm on the field or on the sidelines, it really doesn't matter to me. As long as we're winning and working hard and having fun.

"Tyler is a stud. The guy is very athletic and has a very strong arm, he's going to be an unbelievable quarterback. He's going to make a lot of plays for us. People should be excited about his future."

The third quarter ended with the Buffs clutching their tenuous one-point advantage. The final quarter began with Hansen marching CU to the Kansas State 30-yard line before the drive stalled and Goodman was wide right with a 47-yard field-goal attempt.

The Folsom Field crowd began an anxious game of clock watching. The Wildcats had 9:21 to answer, but they were forced to punt. CU took possession with 7:09 remaining, but went three and out. Kansas State took over with 5:43 left, feeling it might be the last chance to rally.

Freeman completed one pass for 17 yards to the CU 42-yard line, then another to Brett Alstatt, who was hit by Buffs linebacker Brad Jones and fumbled. Safety Ryan Walters recovered for CU, which took over at its 34-yard line with 5:14 to play.

Cody Hawkins spelled Hansen for this drive, but it made no difference until third-and-15. Hawkins hit Josh Smith for a 22-yard gain to keep possession with the clock ticking in the Buffs favor.

Facing another critical third down – but this time it was third-and-two – Stewart squirmed for four yards and a first down at the Kansas State 37. With just under 2 minutes remaining, the Wildcats began using their timeouts.

Another third down – third-and-four – arose, and Stewart's number again was called. This time, he was stopped for no gain. CU went for it on fourth-and-four, but Hawkins threw incomplete, putting Kansas State at its own 30 with 59 seconds to play.

The Wildcats suffered a false start on first down, costing them five yards. Freeman then threw an incomplection, found tight end Jeron Mastrud on the next two plays, setting up fourth-and-one at the KSU 40.

Freeman ran for an apparent first down, but the Wildcats were penalized 10 yards to their 30 for holding. With 16 seconds left, Freeman scrambled and heaved a Hail Mary that was knocked down by Walters as time expired.

"We knew their defense had been playing tough and that was the heart of their team, but we didn't expect to have this dismal of a performance," said Freeman, who was just 20-of-41 for 237 yards.

ETC.: Hansen became the only the 10th true freshman quarterback to see action for CU since 1973 Redshirt freshman Eugene Goree, signed as a defensive tackle but recently switched to offense, saw his first offensive duty at right guard. He had played on defense two games ago at Kansas Kansas State blocked a CU field goal attempt in the first half, giving the Wildcats 48 blocked kicks since the formation of the Big 12 in 1996 Stewart ran for 100-plus yards for the third time this season, tying him with Lamont Warren for a school freshman record Saturday night's Parent's/Hall of Fame Weekend attendance was 52,099 The Buffs now face back-to-back road trips, visiting No. 11 Missouri Saturday, then traveling to Texas A&M on Nov. 1. They return to Folsom Field to play Iowa State on Nov. 8.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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