



Futility at Faurot Field

Bufs held without point for first time since 1988

By Kyle Ringo
Saturday, October 25, 2008

COLUMBIA, Mo. -- How bad is the Colorado offense and how significant are its struggles?

A Missouri team that came into the day ranked 114th in the nation in pass defense and 100th in total defense did what so many other much better units had failed to do in the past 20 years.

They shut out the Buffs in a 58-0 victory on Saturday at sold-out Faurot Field, sending the Homecoming crowd home happy and the Buffs back to Boulder in disarray.

The loss ended Colorado's 242-game streak without a shutout. It was the third-longest active streak in the nation entering Saturday's action. The Buffs hadn't been shut out since Nov. 12, 1988, at Nebraska, when they lost 7-0.

"We got blistered," coach Dan Hawkins said. "We got outcoached and we got outplayed in a big way."

It was the worst loss since the Buffs fell 70-3 in the 2005 Big 12 Conference championship game against Texas.

The No. 16 Tigers scored on four of their first five possessions and 10 of 13 in the game, picking up right where they left off last season in a 55-10 beating in Boulder. They needed just four plays and 1 minute, 9 seconds to score their first touchdown and essentially win the game.

Colorado quickly gave the ball back when Tom Suazo fumbled a punt snap and the Tigers took over at the CU 5-yard line. Missouri scored three plays later when quarterback Chase Daniel found tight end Chase Coffman in the back of the end zone and the Tigers were up 14-0 less than 5 minutes into the game.

The Buffs hadn't scored more than 14 points in any of their three previous Big 12 games and falling behind so big so quickly deflated an already offensively challenged team. Hawkins said he thought his team was prepared for the Tigers.

"We always do," Hawkins said. "But again, we know we're kind of fragile in a sense, and when they got up big early, that hurt our confidence."

It was the Tigers' first shutout since blanking Ball State in 2004. It was the Tigers' first shutout ever in Big 12 Conference play and their first shutout since beating Kansas 48-0 in 1986 when both teams were playing in the Big Eight.

"I think my football team responded to the challenge of getting refocused, and I'm very pleased with that," Missouri coach Gary Pinkel said. "It's been a tough couple weeks."

Tyler Hansen started at quarterback for the Buffs, becoming just the fifth true freshman to do so in 119 years of CU football. But the season-long struggles of the Colorado offense continued regardless of whether Hansen or sophomore Cody Hawkins was in the game.

Hansen directed nine drives and 45 plays with the offense averaging 2.9 yards per play. Hawkins directed four drives and 24 plays with the offense averaging 2.9 yards per play.

"I think they were just more pumped for this game," Hansen said. "They came out with a fire, and, you know, we didn't, and they just beat up on us tonight."

Missouri (6-2, 2-2) has now beaten the Buffs CU (4-4, 1-3) in the past two seasons by the combined score of 113-10.

The Buffs were inept in the first half, running 25 plays and gaining just 33 yards. The young offensive line had one if its worst outings of the year against a veteran defensive front that stuffed the run and had both Hansen and Hawkins running for their lives nearly every time they dropped back to pass.

Dan Hawkins had referred to Missouri quarterback Chase Daniel as a surgeon prior to the game, and Daniel looked the part.

He completed 24 of 28 passes in the first half for 222 yards and three touchdowns. He had completed 19 consecutive passes at one point, dating back to last week's game, but a throw late in the first quarter was batted into the air and intercepted by Ryan Walters.

The CU offense quickly turned that bit of good fortune into a punt.

CU improved slightly after halftime, driving from its 19-yard line to the Missouri 17 before failing to convert a fourth-and-3 and turning the ball back to the Tigers. It was the Buffs' best opportunity of the night to score, but trailing 34-0 at the time, a field goal would have meant little beyond continuation of the streak.

Daniel and the Tigers continued to pour it on in the third quarter, adding two more touchdown passes. Daniel spent the bulk of the fourth quarter on the bench after completing 31 of 37 passes for 302 yards and five touchdowns.

The 83 percent completion rate set a Missouri school record for completion percentage.

"We're going to go back to the drawing board," CU safety Ryan Walters said. "We as a team have got to dig deep. This is embarrassing."



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Bufs say unity remains strong

By Kyle Ringo
Sunday, October 26, 2008

COLUMBIA, Mo. --- The Colorado Buffaloes have some soul searching to do today as they review film of one of the worst losses in the recent history of the program.

Players said they were embarrassed Saturday by a 58-0 loss at Faurot Field to the No. 16 Missouri Tigers. They said they needed time to look at the film and study what went wrong, but they also remain steadfast in saying the unity among the players is strong.

"We've got to grow up as a team and learn how to battle back when momentum changes," senior captain Ryan Walters said.

Walters said the Bufs came out flat even though they knew they needed a superior effort against one of the elite offensive teams in the nation. He said he had no explanation for why the team was not able to play at a higher level.

Senior defensive tackle George Hypolite said the Bufs have to continue to focus on improving, and that starts on an individual level first.

"It starts with everyone looking at themselves in the mirror," Hypolite said. "I have to look myself in the mirror and ask did I give enough effort personally? Did I prepare personally well enough? And then go on from there."

Hypolite is always one to find something positive in even the most negative situations. Saturday it was that he has been beaten by more than 58 points in a college game before. Hypolite referred to the 70-3 loss in the 2005 Big 12 Conference championship game against Texas.

"We've been beat worse than this and it's not the end of the world," he said. "We've still got four games against four good opponents, and we still have an opportunity to win all four games."

That's about as optimistic as it gets.

Rotating punters

Colorado used punters Matt DiLallo and Tom Suazo in a rotation Saturday because coaches wanted to create competition at the position and because Suazo has been better at directional kicking in practices.

Coaches hoped to keep the ball away from Missouri return man Jeremy Maclin as much as possible in the game, but when they sent Suazo on the field for the first punt of the game, just a few minutes into the first quarter, he fumbled the snap and gave the Tigers possession at the CU 5-yard line.

Both produced very similar results. DiLallo averaged 35.4 yards on five punts and Suazo averaged 35.2 yards on four punts.

Early returns

Colorado sophomore Josh Smith set a school single-season record Saturday with 154 more return yards. He now has 977 return yards this season, surpassing the old single-season record held by Roman Hollowell (2001).

Record day

Missouri tight end Chase Coffman became the NCAA's all-time leading receiver among tight ends in the game. Coffman made seven catches for 50 yards and a touchdown in the game.

Coffman now has 220 receptions for 2,416 yards in his career, scoring 25 touchdowns. He passed former Louisville tight end Ibn Green (1996-1999), who held the record.

First time

for everything

When CU offensive line coach Jeff Grimes grades his players today in film review of the game, the final scores won't be pretty. The line did not perform well after appearing to make improvement the previous two games.

Sophomore tackle Nate Solder had received a 99 percent from Grimes following last week's win over Kansas State. Solder had not allowed a sack all season, but that streak came to an end in the first half when he was beaten badly by Stryker Sulak.

Notable

An official from the Holiday Bowl attended the game, but probably wasn't looking at the Bufs as an option. ... Missouri place-kicker Jeff Wolfert made three field goals in the game and is now the NCAA active leader in kicking accuracy at 95.5 percent.



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CU has no answer for offensive ills

Bufs shut out for first time in 243 games

By Kyle Ringo
Sunday, October 26, 2008

COLUMBIA, Mo. --- A month ago, Cody Hawkins walked out of a downtrodden locker room in Jacksonville, Fla., and took responsibility for a loss to Florida State and ineffective play from the Colorado offense.

It's clear now more than ever that what has ailed the Buffs attack this season is much more about the entire group of players on the field and far less about any one guy.

Saturday night in the heart of the Show-Me State, CU offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich stepped into Hawkins' shoes, pinning the blame for the first shutout in 20 seasons of CU football on himself.

Missouri trounced the Buffs 58-0 and CU really only had two legitimate chances to score all night. Coach Dan Hawkins opted to try to put the ball in the end zone both times instead of trying to extend the nation's third-longest active scoring streak to 243 game with a field goal.

"I take 100 percent responsibility for how things turned out there tonight," Helfrich said. "They're a very talented team that was desperate, and they came out and hit us between the eyes and we just didn't really ever get rolling."

Neither Helfrich nor Hawkins seemed to have many answers or immediate solutions to get the offense moving. The Buffs have been outscored 139-42 in their first four Big 12 Conference games and are ranked last in the conference in just about every significant offensive statistical category.

The Buffs finished the night with 199 yards total offense. It is the fewest since having 196 yards against Missouri last season. CU still hasn't amassed 400 yards offense in a game this season.

A young offensive line is struggling to block effectively most weeks, which makes it tough on other players to function competently. Running backs and tight ends are often kept in to help block in pass protection, leaving just three options in pass routes.

It's not much of a challenge for an aggressive and athletic defense such as the Tigers, who had been burned badly this year by more potent attacks.

True freshman Tyler Hansen started at quarterback for the Buffs and struggled under heavy pressure from a Missouri defense that had prepared for his running ability all week. Hansen played about two-thirds of the game and gave way to sophomore Cody Hawkins in certain situations and a total of four drives.

The offense averaged 2.9 yards per play under both quarterbacks. Helfrich wasn't ready to say what will happen with the position next week at Texas A&M.

"I don't think the rotation was any contribution to our lack of success," Helfrich said.

Cody Hawkins defended his offensive coordinator and said the players must play better and take advantage of every opportunity.

"Coaches are always going to try to take the blame because they care about us as players and as people," he said. "I really think as an entire team we didn't play even close to the level we're able to play at today."



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Woelk: Hawk takes full blame for Buffs' pratfall

By Neill Woelk
Sunday, October 26, 2008

Some folks might be tempted to say the Colorado Buffaloes shot themselves in the foot early Saturday at Missouri.

Those folks would be wrong. Such an effort would have required that Colorado's offense actually be able to execute such a play.

Some folks might be tempted to say the Buffs quit.

Not true. You actually have to start something before you quit.

Certainly, Saturday's fiasco at Faurot brings to mind the words of former Tampa Bay Bucs coach John McKay. When asked about his team's execution after a particularly painful loss, McKay dryly replied, "I'm in favor of it."

At least Colorado's coach had no such thoughts on Saturday. Dan Hawkins looked no farther than the mirror when he assessed his team's effort.

"It's all on me," Hawkins said after the game. "I did an awful job of getting them ready. I have to do a better job."

To say the Buffs were out of it early Saturday would be a stretch. They were never in it. They fumbled twice on their first four snaps, losing one of them. They muffed a kickoff. Their pass protection threatened to get two quarterbacks killed.

Even when the Buffs did manage to hold onto the ball, they went backward. By the end of the first quarter, Colorado's offensive production totaled minus-7 yards.

Ouch.

The Tigers, meanwhile, took two weeks of offensive frustration out on the Buffs. With their national title hopes having disappeared, their only hope now is to prove they are the superior team in the Big 12's inferior division.

They appear ready to do that much, at least.

A year ago, the Tigers scored 48 unanswered points against the Buffs. Saturday, they improved on that number, hitting CU with 58 in a row (yep, that's 106 consecutive points against Colorado over a two-year span).

Astounding? Not in the Big 12. If there's any consolation to be found for the Buffs, it's that those kinds of numbers are becoming commonplace around the conference.

A week ago, Texas smacked Missouri silly, 56-31 -- after leading 35-3 at the half. This week, Texas Tech pummeled Kansas, 63-21, putting up 49 unanswered points in the process; and Oklahoma thrashed Kansas State, 58-35, after sticking 55 on the board in the first 30 minutes.

Where in the world did the defense go? For crying out loud, as one coach once said, "It's the Big 12! It's Division I football!"

At least today there will be no finger-pointing in the CU locker room. Nobody has that many fingers.

So what's next?

Start with what becomes a huge test for Hawk and his staff.

No doubt, Saturday's loss will have a demoralizing effect on these Buffs. As Hawkins noted, young teams are highly susceptible to emotional swings, and this was a nasty swing.

But one of Hawkins' strong points at CU has been his ability to get his players to put last week's game behind them -- win or lose -- and concentrate on the next.

It will be imperative that Hawk and his staff be able to do that this week.

Today, we'll take Hawk's word for it and put this one on his doorstep. The Buffs weren't ready and it showed.

At the same time, we're confident he can do a better job.

Certainly, there's still plenty of season ahead. With a 4-4 mark and four games remaining, a winning record and a bowl game are still well within reach, as is at least a .500 record in the Big 12.

It's up to Hawk. If he can indeed rally this team and begin moving back in the right direction, it will be the kind of step that these young players will remember long after the 2008 season. They will remember what it takes to face adversity, absorb a crushing defeat -- and rebound.

Yes, Saturday's loss was embarrassing.

But we're still willing to bet that Hawk and this team have something left in the tank.



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cu football - briefs

CU has no interest in field goals just to avoid shutout

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/26/2008 01:34:14 AM MDT

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Colorado had two good chances in the second half to extend what had been the nation's third-longest active scoring streak, but the Buffaloes "did not even think about going for field goals," Colorado quarterback Cody Hawkins said Saturday night.

"We want to go out and play to win," he said after Missouri beat the Buffs 58-0. "If we're going to develop as the team we want to be, we have to expect to score touchdowns."

With Hawkins taking most of the snaps on that particular drive, Colorado drove to the Missouri 17 after taking the second-half kickoff. With nothing to lose, CU went for it on fourth-and-3, but Hawkins could not connect with senior wideout Patrick Williams, and the Buffs came up empty.

"You're down (34-0), you've got to get some things established," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "You're not going for the field goal."

With Tyler Hansen at the controls at the end of the game, Colorado drove to the Missouri 11 as the

clock expired. Tigers coach Gary Pinkel said afterward that he was not surprised Colorado did not attempt a field goal to avoid a shutout because "Dan Hawkins is a competitor." Pinkel added that he is not sure he wouldn't have ordered a 3-pointer in that situation.

Colorado saw the end to claiming the nation's third-longest active scoring streak, at 242 consecutive games, dating to 1988. Michigan (296) and Florida (250) lead.

No hard feelings.

Dan Hawkins was asked by a Missouri-based reporter if he was upset that the Tigers kept their first-team offense in the game until midway through the fourth quarter.

"No, they were just playing," Hawkins said. "They're a high-octane group. I don't blame them for that at all. You've got to play, and the other team has to show up. I'm not like that at all."

Footnotes.

Missouri senior Chase Coffman set an NCAA record for career receptions by a tight end at the Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A) level. He has 220 catches. Louisville's Iln Green (1996-99) caught 217. . . . Missouri posted its first shutout since a win over Ball State in 2004 and its first shutout in conference play since blanking Kansas in 1986. Both were 48-0. . . . Asked what his team needs to work on, Dan Hawkins was succinct: "Block and tackle and get lined up, do what we're supposed to do."

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cu football

Bufs blistered 58-0 by Missouri

By Tom Kensler
Denver Post Staff Writer

Article Last Updated: 10/26/2008 04:54:18 PM MDT



Missouri linebacker Sean Weatherspoon stops Colorado running back Rodney Stewart for a 4-yard loss during the first quarter. (AP | L.G. Patterson)

COLUMBIA, MO. — Making his first college start, Tyler Hansen should remember the date and burn the tape. The Colorado freshman quarterback never had a chance Saturday night, running for cover in a 58-0 massacre by No. 16 Missouri at Faurot Field.

"They're ranked the way they are for a reason," Hansen said of the Tigers afterward. "They came out with a fire, and we didn't."

The float contest in Missouri's homecoming parade had to be more competitive. Down 34-0 at halftime, CU was blanked for the first time since a 7-0 loss at Nebraska on Nov. 12, 1988, in the Big Eight Conference. This was Colorado's most lopsided loss since falling 70-3 to Texas in the 2005 Big 12 championship game, the widest margin of defeat in coach Dan



Missouri tight end Chase Coffman leaps over Colorado defender Jalil Brown (23) on his way to a 17-yard gain during the second quarter Saturday. (AP | L.G. Patterson)

Hawkins' three seasons in Boulder.

"We came out flat from the get-go," Colorado senior safety Ryan Walters said. "We've got to go back to the drawing board."

A sellout crowd of 68,349 watched Missouri (6-2, 2-2 Big 12) snap a two-game losing streak, apparently taking it out on a young Buffaloes team that couldn't match Missouri's talent or speed. The visitors were in a two-touchdown hole before anybody could work up a sweat.

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After Missouri needed just four plays to go 56 yards for its first touchdown, Colorado punter Tom Suazo dropped a long snap and was buried at the CU 5. Three plays later, Missouri's savvy senior quarterback, Chase Daniel, flipped a 1-yard touchdown pass to senior tight end Chase Coffman and the rout was on.

While Missouri played a game of Chase, Colorado (4-4, 1-3) looked almost lost at times.

"You always feel you're prepared," Hawkins said. "We're kind of fragile, in a sense. When they got up big early, that kind of hurt our confidence.

"Missouri was good up front (defensively) and got pressure on us. We had a hard time (pass) protecting. We had a hard time running the football."

It has come to this: Colorado must at least split its last four regular-season games to reach six victories and become eligible for a bowl game. The Buffs play next weekend at Texas A&M and then have home games against Iowa State and Oklahoma State before finishing with the annual day-after-Thanksgiving battle against Nebraska, this time in Lincoln.

Considering that Colorado is averaging just 10 1/2 points in four Big 12 games, every week figures to be a challenge. The Buffs have not scored more than 14 points in a game since the league schedule began.

"It starts with everybody looking themselves in the mirror," CU senior defensive tackle George Hypolite said.

Hansen finished 12-for-16 passing, but for just 72 yards. Cody Hawkins threw for 86 yards on 17 attempts. Neither was intercepted, but struggled to move the chains. Only one completion went for more

than 20 yards.

"(Hansen's) mentality was great," Dan Hawkins said of the freshman's first start. "But obviously we weren't moving the ball."

Daniel, considered a top Heisman Trophy candidate before Missouri lost to Oklahoma State and Texas, made things look pitch-and-catch easy. He hit 24-of-28 passes in the first half, converting third-and-long situations as if only a yard was required.

Daniel took a seat on the bench midway through the fourth quarter. He finished 31-of-37 for 302 yards with five touchdowns and one interception. He set a Missouri school record for completion percentage (.838) and tied his school mark for TD passes.

"We wanted to go out there and make a statement," Daniel said of rebounding from two straight losses.

CU cornerbacks gave speedy Missouri wideout Jeremy Maclin (11 catches for 134 yards and two touchdowns) too much cushion on out-patterns. Then again, who wants to get beat on a bomb?

How bad did it get for Colorado? The Buffs' defense was flagged for an illegal-participation penalty in the second quarter for having 12 players on the field — and Missouri running back Derrick Washington still gained 6 yards.

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

Key stat

298 yards to 33 yards: That was Missouri's advantage in total offense — for the first half. Colorado netted those 33 yards on 25 attempts. That included two sacks (one each against Tyler Hansen and Cody Hawkins) for 16 yards in losses.

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Key play

CU senior punter Tom Suazo, getting his first career start, dropped the long snap on his first attempt and was smothered at the CU 5-yard line. Three plays later, Missouri quarterback Chase Daniel tossed a 1-yard touchdown pass to tight end Chase Coffman, and the Tigers took a quick 14-0 lead. CU never recovered.

Colorado's 58-0 loss at Missouri on Saturday ended one of the nation's longest active scoring streaks at 242 games:

Team Streak Last shutout Against
Michigan 296 Oct. 20, 1984 at Iowa (26-0)
Florida 250 Oct. 29, 1988 vs. Auburn (16-0)

Colorado 242 Nov. 12, 1988 at Nebraska (7-0)

TCU 199 Nov. 16, 1991 at Texas (32-0)
Air Force 188 Dec. 31, 1992 vs. Mississippi (13-0)

Lopsided losses

Colorado's 10 worst defeats since the start of the Big Eight Conference in 1960:

Opponent Score Margin Date
vs. Texas 70-3 67 Dec. 3, 2005*
vs. Oklahoma 62-0 62 Nov. 3, 1962
at Nebraska 59-0 59 Oct. 10, 1981
at Missouri 58-0 58 Oct. 25, 2008
at Missouri 57-0 57 Nov. 10, 1962
at Nebraska 69-19 50 Oct. 22, 1983
at Oklahoma 49-0 49 Oct. 31, 1981
at Missouri 55-10 45 Nov. 3, 2007
at Nebraska 52-7 45 Oct. 31, 1992
at Missouri 52-7 45 Oct. 6, 1984 *Big 12
championship game at Houston

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Publish Date: 10/26/2008

Rare shutout a blow to Buffs

By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call

COLUMBIA, Mo. — The Missouri Tigers fell flat on their faces at the start of their Oct. 18 game at Texas, prompting their coaches and players to stress all week how their focus Saturday should be on the moment their game with Colorado began.

The Buffaloes, apparently, did not have similar conversations.

It wasn't just that Missouri beat the Buffaloes, 58-0, Saturday night on a crisp night in mid-Missouri, sending the Buffs (4-4, 1-3 Big 12) to their fourth loss in five games and their most lopsided defeat since 70-3 in the 2005 Big 12 championship. It wasn't just the added shame that comes with being shut out, which CU hadn't been in 242 previous games, dating all the way back to Nov. 12, 1988, at Nebraska.

It was the ease with which the No. 16 Tigers (6-2, 2-2) whipped CU.

"This is embarrassing," senior safety Ryan Walters said. "We definitely have to fix a lot of things."

The mistake-prone Buffs helped a superior opponent with mind-numbing, almost-comedic mistakes from the outset.

CU started the night with a bad squib kick that gave the Tigers possession at their 44. Four players later, Missouri touchdown.

Then CU's first drive went minus-17 yards. Punter Tom Suazo, making his second punt of the season, dropped the snap, giving the Tigers possession on CU's five. Three more plays, Missouri touchdown.

There were still 10 minutes, 48 seconds to go in the first quarter. It never got much better.

"Obviously momentum is a big part of college football," Walters said. "They came out and scored in four plays and we

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Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen walks off the field after being sacked for a 6-yard loss by Missouri's Brian Coulter during the third quarter on Saturday, in Columbia, Mo. **L.G. Patterson/AP**

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Call of the day

I may not be the brightest bulb in the fixture, but I finally figured out how to avoid the robo call.

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While walking the Golden Ponds pathways in the park yesterday, I encountered a delightful gentleman, who was also walking the paths and picking up all the cigarette butts he could find.

had the bobbled punt and they scored again. Obviously, the momentum was on their side.

“We have to grow up as a team and learn how to battle back from momentum changes like that.”

If Saturday’s results are an accurate gauge, that might take some time. The Buffs never came close to recovering. Their first 20 plays totaled 16 yards. In the first half, Missouri outgained CU, 222-38.

CU has been outscored 139-42 in four Big 12 games. Missouri entered the day allowing the most passing yards in the Big 12. The Buffs finished with 158, and were outgained by a total of 491-199.

Offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said there are several things wrong with the offense, but the first problem is him.

“I take 100 percent of the responsibility for how things turned out tonight,” Helfrich said.

Tyler Hansen started, becoming CU’s first true freshman quarterback to start since 2000, when Craig Ochs did it at Texas A&M. Helfrich said, “We’ll see,” when asked if the quarterback rotation will continue.

The 242-game scoring streak was the nation’s third-longest active streak entering Saturday. No one had blanked the Buffs since Nov. 12, 1988, when Nebraska did it, 7-0, in Lincoln.

CU had two chances to score in the second half. Trailing 34-0 opening the third quarter, the Buffs drove inside Missouri’s 20. On fourth-and-4 from the 18, Pat Williams dropped Cody Hawkins’ pass.

CU drove to Missouri’s 17 in the closing seconds, but again sought a touchdown rather than try a field goal.

“You’re trying to get some confidence, get some things going and try to establish some things,” CU coach Dan Hawkins said about the fourth-and-4. “At that point, I think it was 38-3, we’re not going to kick the field goal there, you have to try to establish some stuff.

“You’re not going to go, ‘Hey, good for us, we’re not getting shut out. Nobody is ever going to that.”

Hawkins said CU got outcoached and outplayed, and claimed he felt his team was prepared to play, even though the opening moments revealed a jittery team that was in over its head against Missouri’s spread.

CU might have also realized it was in over its head on special teams. Part of the reason to use Suazo was because he’s right-footed — unlike the starter, lefty Matt Dilallo — and coaches believed letting Suazo punt from the left hash would help him send the ball out of bounds, away from All-American returner Jeremy Maclin.

That ploy didn’t come close to working.

For whatever it’s worth, Hawkins said the blame for Saturday’s loss lies with one person.

Him.

“We know we’re kind of fragile in a sense, and certainly when they got up big early, that hurt our confidence.

“We were trying to get Tom in there and he’s been punting the ball well, so we’re trying to give him a chances, and all of those things add up. It’s tough. (Missouri is) surgical, and they’re going to get after you. That’s on me.”

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

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Improvement evades Buffaloes

By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call

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COLUMBIA, Mo. — One question is unavoidable.

We came clear out here for this?

Showing last year's 45-point pounding of the Buffaloes in Boulder was no fluke, Missouri posted a similar score in Saturday rematch, embarrassing Colorado, 58-0, before 68,439 people at Faurot Field. Missouri was every bit as merciless as it was a year ago, and every bit as dominant, and has now outscored the Buffaloes 113-10 over the past two seasons.

The Buffs can take solace from the prospect Chase Daniel, Chase Coffman and, probably, Jeremy Maclin, among others, will be gone next year, and the Buffs won't have to deal with those Missouri stars ever again. There's also the talk that the University of Washington will make a run at Missouri coach Gary Pinkel, whose staff seems to have CU figured out. The Buffs should hope he leaves, too.

But that's next year.

Today's perspective on what's happening this year for 4-4 CU, which has four games remaining, is bleak.

Games like Saturday's can be strange. In some ways, there's little to say when one team is so overmatched. In other ways, there's plenty to discuss, because everyone wants to know what's going so wrong, if the Buffs have really fallen this far behind a Big 12 North rival in Missouri.

Answers are difficult to find.

One is unavoidable. CU is not a good football team right now.

Big 12 play, in which the Buffs are 1-3 and are being outscored 139-42, has exposed a team whose issues multiply by the week. Four games remain, meaning there's ample opportunity for more embarrassment, or chances to improve.

"I've been beat worse than this," defensive tackle George Hypolite said, referring to the 2005 Big 12 championship CU lost to Texas, 70-3.

"Mind you, the team that beat us worse than this was probably one of the best college football teams ever to play, but we've been beat worse than this.



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Call of the day

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 10.22.08

While walking the Golden Ponds pathways in the park yesterday, I encountered a delightful gentleman, who was also walking the paths and picking up all the cigarette butts he could find.



"It's not the end of the world. We still have four games against four good opponents, and we still have an opportunity to win all four games."

Coaches talk ad nauseum about making improvement. It's hard to see much improvement in the Buffs since they played Colorado State on the last day of August.

CU looked worn down Saturday. Its inexperience grew worse when Tyler Hansen became the first true freshman quarterback to start for the Buffs since Craig Ochs in 2000. Hansen dropped his first snap.

Playing him against Kansas State worked well last week. CU did not have the advantage of surprise Saturday. Hansen scrambled madly to keep plays alive as the Tigers made themselves at home in CU's backfield. No Buffs offensive lineman will grade out to 99 percent this week.

In short, the Big 12's worst offense digressed Saturday night.

Badly.

"We need to change up a few things we're doing protection-wise and run-wise and give everybody a chance," offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said.

"Part of that is compounded, too, that when we do try to make adjustments and guys are still not confident in what they're doing in the first place, that can lead to a couple of issues."

The defense had little chance Saturday. And CU outsmarted itself on special teams when it used reserve Tom Suazo on its first punt, deep in its territory. He fumbled the snap, a la Hansen.

At 4-4, CU must win two of its final four games to reach bowl eligibility. They go next week to Texas A&M, which is improving. Then they host Iowa State and Oklahoma State before the season finale at Nebraska, which is, yup, improving.

Hypolite, mustering all of his inner optimism, said all four games are winnable.

They're all losable, too, based on what transpired in Columbia, Mo., on Saturday night.

They are. Unless some of that improvement comes.

Immediately.

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

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