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colorado 42, miami (ohio) 0

It's all good for Buffaloes

All-around effort spurs easy victory

By Tom Kensler
Denver Post Staff Writer

Article Last Updated: 09/23/2007 12:15:49 AM MDT

Boulder - If Colorado was looking ahead to its Big 12 Conference opener next weekend against fourth-ranked Oklahoma, the Buffaloes sure did a good job Saturday of keeping their feet on the ground at the same time.

Finally getting its running game going, Colorado (2-2) tuned up for the Sooners with a 42-0 laughter over Miami (Ohio) that brought smiles to CU players working on both sides of the ball.

"This was really good for the guys," CU quarterback Cody Hawkins said after throwing for 275 yards and two touchdowns, with two interceptions. "But we know Miami isn't Oklahoma."

Heck, even Miami of Florida isn't Oklahoma. But at least this game served as an almost perfect tuneup. A Folsom Field crowd of 45,243 watched Colorado post its first shutout since a 34-0 win at Oklahoma State in 2005.

The Buffs had combined for a measly 5 yards

rushing (including sacks) in games against Arizona State and Florida State, but netted 359 yards Saturday - the most since getting 372

Colorado Football

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yards rushing at Missouri in 2002.

Senior tailback Hugh Charles (123 yards on 17 carries) reached the century mark for the sixth time in his career and was almost joined by two teammates. Redshirt freshman Demetrius Sumler finished with 91 yards. Brian Lockridge, a 5-foot-7, 180-pound true freshman who bursts through holes without fear, gained 90 yards. Each ran for a touchdown.

"A big part of what we did today was all the criticism we got during the week," Charles said. "We knew what we had to do."

The running backs pumped their knees and ran with more zeal. It's too bad this wasn't a morning game because CU blockers delivered some serious pancakes. CU amassed 634 yards of offense, the most since setting the school record with 767 against San Jose State in 1999.

"We always knew we could run the ball," Cody

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Hawkins said.

Meanwhile, Colorado's defense limited Miami (1-3) to 139 total yards. RedHawks quarterback Daniel Raudabaugh completed just 11-of-32 passes.

"Anytime you make (the opponent) finish with a zero, I think it makes your defense feel complete," CU coach Dan Hawkins said.

The score could have been more lopsided.

Cody Hawkins threw a second-quarter interception from the Miami 26-yard line. CU wide receiver Patrick Williams, running on an end-around, lost a fumble at the Miami 4-yard line early in the third quarter. And an apparent 56-yard touchdown run by Lockridge later in the third quarter was nullified by a holding penalty.

Colorado had to punt away its first possession, but a 16-play, 72-yard march on its second drive offered a glimpse of good things to come.

The Buffs converted four third-down plays in the drive and scored the game's first points on fourth down when Cody Hawkins flipped a 1-yarder to senior tight end Tyson DeVree off a play-action fake.

The drive included a 9-yard pass to 6-foot-8, 270-pound tight end Nate Solder, the first career catch for the redshirt freshman from Buena Vista who has intriguing potential.

This marked only the second time Colorado has

played a current member of the Mid-American Conference. Perhaps the Buffs should try to schedule MAC teams more often. CU blanked Kent State in 1977, also 42-0.

"We knew (Colorado) was a very good defensive team; they might've been a little better than we expected," Miami coach Shane Montgomery said.

CU: THE GRADES | By Tom Kensler

Offense

A: Colorado appeared to actually have a ground game. They made some mistakes that ended scoring threats, but an impressive effort nonetheless.

Defense

A: No, this wasn't the Miami Hurricanes, or even one of those good Miami RedHawks teams. But a shutout is a shutout. CU pass rushers barely gave Dan Raudabaugh enough room to breathe in the pocket.

Special teams

A: No complaints here, either.

Overall

A: The perfect elixir for a CU offense that must have wondered about its ability to score points after struggles against Arizona State and Florida State.

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woody paige

At last, the rush is on at CU

By Woody Paige
Denver Post Staff Columnist

Article Last Updated: 09/23/2007 12:13:16 AM MDT

Boulder - They were outlined against the Flatirons under a cloudless September sky, and they were sort of reminiscent of the Four Horsemen.

The Four Buffaloes rushed for 317 yards. Their names are Charles, Sumler, Ellis and Lockridge.

They ran in muck for three games. They ran amuck in the fourth.

CU's total on the ground Saturday was 359 yards, 386 yards better than the week before - and the most for the Buffs since 2002.

That wasn't the same attack the Buffs trotted out (literally) against Arizona State and Florida State. Where did this Rushmore Four come from? They were no longer missing in inaction.

"All we have heard about is execution and playing smart for the full game. We got that message in our heads," Hugh Charles said after CU felt the rush of a 42-0 victory.

One man attended the game at Folsom Field on

Saturday because he "wanted to see CU play against two straight big-time teams from Florida - Florida State and Miami."

Wrong Miami, clown. Not even close.

This was not Miami of Florida, but Miami of Ohio.

Miami of Ohio played like Mutual of Omaha.

But the way the CU Buffs played, they might have beaten Miami of Florida or, in a rematch, Florida State of Florida or Jacksonville of Florida (which will be in Denver today).

The Buffaloes delivered their most lopsided, imposing victory of the Dan Hawkins era.

It should be remembered, however, that the Buffs had only three previous victories in the Dan Hawkins era.

What must be remembered is that Colorado ran the football, and ran it over and over 63 times, and ran it over Miami of O., not to be confused with Miami of FL.

Miami did beat Ball State in the Mid-American Conference opener. So what? On Saturday, Ball State led Nebraska in Lincoln before the Cornhuskers rallied and held on, 41-40.

Be very afraid of the Buffs, Huskers.

Opponents should suddenly become scared of the Buffs' running game. It had been nonexistent.

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In the Buffs' first three games, the average rush per play was 1.7 yards.

That famous fifth down they got in Missouri wouldn't have been enough. At 1.7 per, CU would need six downs (10.2) to pick up a first down.

The Buffs were moaning about their lack of running and lack of an elite running back emerging. Assistant Darian Hagan, an old CU quarterback, did everything last week but put himself in at tailback.

Charles was injured during the first series of the CSU game, but was no factor when he returned last week (four carries, 9 yards). Demetrius Sumler had 85 yards in the first game, but just 34 and 14 the past two weeks.

Senior Byron Ellis has been a ceremonial starter at tailback - 17 yards in four games. And freshman Brian Lockridge was 2-for-4 yards before Saturday.

"You can't be 219th in the country (running the football) going into this conference. You've gotta be able to move the football on the ground. You just can't drop back and throw the football every time," Hawkins said.

"People outside the program said we couldn't run the football, but we knew we could," quarterback Cody Hawkins said.

Hawkins & Son might have had belief in the running game, but it was difficult for anyone else to make that leap of faith after the Florida State

debacle.

Against the RedHawks, the Buffs did the Bolder Boulder, a long run.

Charles finished with 123 yards, one for 28, and a touchdown on 17 carries.

Sumler had 91 yards, including a 30-yarder, and a touchdown on 14 runs.

Ellis carried five times for 13 yards.

And Lockridge - the future as we've now seen it - got 90 yards on 14 attempts and had a nifty 43-yard sprint for a touchdown. He also had another burst for a score called back because of a penalty.

Lockridge, who is from Trabuco Canyon, Calif., has a name that could be a college - University of California at Lockridge. He is the fastest, most elusive of the bunch. He could go all the way at Colorado.

Charles, Sumler and Lockridge averaged 6.8 yards per carry.

"Defensively, we wore down," Miami coach Shane Montgomery said.

Try "wore out."

"We were worried they would line up and pound us, and they did," he said.

Hawkins, the coach, said CU tailbacks "did some

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nice things again."

Again?

"... there are some yards that were left on the table today."

Where was he eating?

The Buffs did run, and the RedHawks couldn't hide.

But Miami of Ohio is one thing, and Oklahoma of Oklahoma is quite another.

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Buffaloes win big in tune-up game

By B.G. Brooks, Rocky Mountain News
September 22, 2007

BOULDER – Better bottle some of that defensive intensity, that newfound leg power, too. Tune-up time is finished, and how the Colorado Buffaloes emerged from it will be determined very quickly.

No. 4 Oklahoma, averaging 61.5 points in its four 2007 wins, visits Folsom Field next Saturday (11:30 a.m., FSN) in the Big 12 Conference opener for both teams.

"We know Oklahoma is not Miami of Ohio . . . we've got to keep moving forward," CU quarterback Cody Hawkins said after the Buffs impressively finished non-conference play Saturday, mauling the RedHawks 42-0 in their first meeting with the Mid-America Conference school.

In winning its first game since defeating Colorado State in overtime in the season-opener, CU (2-2) matched last season's win total. And in accomplishing it, the Buffs displayed a dominant defense and ground game, both components they know will be mandatory in conference play.

Saturday's shutout was their first since 2005, a 34-0 win at Oklahoma State. And their 359 rushing yards were the most since the 2002 Buffs amassed 372 in a 42-35 overtime win at Missouri.

Senior tailback Hugh Charles rushed 17 times for 123 yards, giving him the sixth 100-yard rushing game of his career. Two other Buffs backs, Demetrius Sumler and Brian Lockridge, flirted with 100-yard games. Each carried 14 times, Sumler gaining 91 yards and Lockridge 90.

All three scored touchdowns, and Lockridge had a second nullified by penalty.

Cody Hawkins took the rare ground pounding for what it was: "It's a building block," he said. "That (359) won't get us any yards against Oklahoma."

But it did provide the Buffs with the right mental outlook as the powerful Sooners loom.

"We definitely know the guys on this team can play with anybody," said Cody Hawkins, who passed for 275 yards and two touchdowns, but also suffered a pair of interceptions that give him six in four games. His TD pass total matches that.

His father, CU coach Dan Hawkins, said his son "got greedy" on the second of his picks, trying to force the ball into the hands of playmaking receiver Josh Smith downfield rather than hitting open tailback Hugh Charles in the flat.

"I've got to know it's more important to get the first down," Cody Hawkins said of that fourth down play in the second half.

Still, Dan Hawkins was pleased to see his team "come out and do what we were supposed to do . . . I totally believed we were going to win. We had a few issues and stubbed our toe. (But) I expected to win."

Realistically, it would have been worse than foreboding for next week and beyond had the Buffs not capitalized on Saturday's opportunity. The RedHawks entered the game yielding an average of 44 points and 507 yards in total offense over their past two games.

While falling just short of that point total, CU surpassed the total offense number, gaining 634 yards and tying for the 11th highest total in school history.

CU fashioned first-half scoring drives of 72, 80, 54 and 84 yards to take a 28-0 halftime lead. By intermission, the Buffs had rushed for 136 yards – 131 more than their combined output of the past two games (32 vs. Arizona State, minus-27 vs. Florida State).

Miami coach Shane Montgomery said his defense "just wore down. We're not very big up front (and) that was one thing we worried about going into this game. We were worried that they would line up and try to pound us, and they did." Montgomery also said CU's defense "might've been a little bit better than we expected. We just couldn't get anything going on offense."

The RedHawks (1-3) suffered their first shutout since 1993 (21-0 at Ball State) and surrendered 600 yards in total offense for the first time since 1986 (647 vs. Cincinnati).

Dan Hawkins said his defense "has been playing great...Anytime you make them finish with a zero on the board, it makes your defense feel complete. That's something we talked about this week . . . we want to be that complete team."

INJURY REPORT: Tight end Tyson DeVree, concussion, day to day; receiver Scotty McKnight, concussion, day to day; linebacker Nate Viaomounga, hamstring, day to day; guard Devin Head, neck stinger, probable.

ETC.: In took four games, but CU finally used a pair of subs in the offensive line. True freshmen Ryan Miller (right tackle) and Kai Maiava (left guard) saw their first college duty. Both had been expected to play if the situation warranted. Prior to Saturday, CU's five starters had taken all 212 offensive snaps in the first three games...Also making their CU debuts were defensive lineman Chris Perri, who was coming off a three-game suspension; center Keenan Stevens; receiver Steve Melton; safety Bret Smith, and Viaomounga...Tight end Patrick Devenny, a converted quarterback, recorded his first career catch and touchdown pass – a 3-yarder from Hawkins that completed the first-half scoring and helped give CU it commanding lead at intermission... Lockridge had a 57-yard touchdown run in the third quarter nullified by a holding call. It would have been CU's longest scoring play of the season... In addition to Cody Hawkins' pair of interceptions, the Buffs lost a Patrick Williams fumble in the third quarter on an end-around inside the RedHawks' 10-yard line... Saturday's attendance was announced as 45,243.

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Frosh O-lineman Miller makes long-awaited debut

By Kyle Ringo
Sunday, September 23, 2007

It might have taken Ryan Miller just a little longer to get on the field than he and most Colorado football fans suspected it would.

But when the prized prospect of the 2007 Colorado football recruiting class made his debut Saturday against Miami (Ohio) at Folsom Field, the results were right on target.

Miller entered the game in the second quarter of the Buffs' 42-0 victory when it appeared that senior tackle Edwin Harrison lost his shoe. On Miller's first play from scrimmage, true freshman running back Brian Lockridge took a handoff and ran through a hole on the right side of the line created, in part, by Miller.

Officials originally ruled Lockridge scored on a 10-yard play before deciding he was down at the 1-yard line for a 9-yard run. Redshirt freshman quarterback Cody Hawkins scored the first touchdown of his career on the next play.

"It went really well," Miller said. "I've got to give credit to the coaches and the older guys around me."

Miller was one of the most highly recruited players in the country a year ago at this time as a senior at Columbine High School in Littleton. When he arrived in Boulder this summer, most assumed he would quickly earn a starting job on a team desperate for offensive line depth.

It didn't work quite that fast, but now that his redshirt season has been burned, Miller will likely be on the field more and more often as the season progresses. He and Harrison alternated drives throughout the second half. Miller said he felt like he held his own.

"You can't explain it unless you've been out there," Miller said. "The first game just walking out of that tunnel, that's incredible. But stepping on that field and knowing you're a contributor right now. Its surreal."

Miller wasn't the only true freshman to see his first playing time. In fact, he wasn't even the first freshman offensive lineman. Kai Maiava entered the game seven plays before Miller in place of injured starter Devin Head, who eventually returned to the game.

Coach Dan Hawkins summed up his young linemen this way.

"I thought they did a pretty good job, particularly on stuff where Ryan could just muscle up on a guy," he said. "I think he had some confidence there."

Linebacker Nate Vaiomounga, safety Bret Smith, defensive end Chris Perri, center Keenan Stevens and wide receiver Steve Melton also played for the first time at CU.

Owning third down

After allowing Colorado State to convert 11 of 19 third downs in the season opener the Buffs have given up first downs on nine of 45 attempts in the past three weeks, including holding the RedHawks to three of 14 on Saturday.

"I think we're getting better each week," defensive coordinator Ron Collins said. "The one thing we're lacking right now is just the turnover thing, but we're getting three-and-outs and getting teams in third-and-longs. So that's a step in the right direction."

Spreading the wealth

CU linebacker Jordon Dizon came into the game leading the nation in tackles, averaging 17 per game. He recorded just three solo tackles and three assists against Miami.

Dizon still tied with fellow starting linebacker Jeff Smart for the team-high Saturday with six total tackles. Safety D.J. Dykes had the most solo tackles with five.

Tackle totals are not official until they are reviewed by coaches in film review on Sunday and Monday.

Quotable

CU wide receiver Scotty McKnight on 6-foot-8 redshirt freshman tight end Nate Solder: "He's the new freak. Jevon Kearse get out of the way. He is unbelievable. He's huge, strong and really fast.

"When he gets on the field, people need to watch out."

Solder caught the first three passes of his career Saturday for 50 yards.

Notable

Freshman wide receiver Kendrick Celestine made the first catch of his career. The play went for 37 yards in the second quarter and set up a touchdown. ... The Buffs have played only two opponents from the Mid-American Conference and beat them both by the same 42-0 score. The other game was against Kent State at Folsom Field in the 1977 season. ... The announced attendance was 45,243, more than 8,000 shy of a sellout.



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Defense pitches shutout vs. RedHawks

CU holds Miami to just 139 total yards

By Ryan Thorburn
Sunday, September 23, 2007

The black shirts were dominant on Saturday afternoon.

The Cornhuskers? No, Nebraska's defense didn't really show up against its MAC opponent, giving up 606 net yards (424 passing) in a 41-40 victory over Ball State at Memorial Stadium.

It was the Buffs — wearing their home black jerseys — who took care of business during Colorado's 42-0 win over Miami (Ohio) at Folsom Field.

Not that comparative scores tell the true story, but the RedHawks' only win of the season was over Ball State.

"It's almost like a trap game is the way you can look at it," CU cornerback Terrence Wheatley said of what was only CU's second game ever against a MAC opponent. "After playing Florida State and all the emotion that went into that ... you're hyped up, first home game of the season, and then it's kind of like a letdown when you probably felt deep down inside you should have won. And then you're facing a team that you know that you're typically better than.

"Some teams go out there and just kind of say, 'Oh, well just because we got this decal and they're so and so (it's an) automatic win.' "

The Buffs obviously took care of business in practice after losing back-to-back games against Arizona State and Florida State.

Saturday's visitors mustered only three first downs and 72 yards in the first half and didn't get into CU territory until the first drive of the second half, which included a 41-yard kickoff return.

Miami was held to 139 net yards for the game. Hugh Charles alone had 123 rushing yards for the Buffs.

"Miami traditionally is a great football team, and we came in here ready to play," CU defensive coordinator Ron Collins said. "We didn't take these guys lightly at all."

It was the Buffs' first shutout since a 34-0 win at Oklahoma State on Oct. 1, 2005, and the first time they had held the opposition under 200 yards since New Mexico State (181) on Sept. 10, 2005.

CU's defense also played pretty well in the 16-6 loss to the Seminoles and has allowed only 360 combined yards in the last eight quarters.

"I've really been pleased with our defense. They've been playing great," CU head coach Dan Hawkins said on a day in which his offense broke out in a big way with 634 yards and the six touchdowns. "Other than the one drive at the end of the second quarter against Arizona State, they've been playing great. They've been getting a lot of stops."

The performance came about 24 hours after the team learned that projected starting middle linebacker Michael Sipili had been suspended from the university for the semester. Jeff Smart, a former walk-on from Boulder High School, started because R.J. Brown was out with a concussion.

Twenty-three different players made either defensive or special teams tackles for the Buffs as the coaching staff threw a number of younger players into the fray in the second half.

"We came into the game wanting to stop the run and we stopped the run. Then when they threw the ball guys covered who they were supposed to," defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "We were always in our gaps and didn't have any big mental lapses that cost us huge plays. As a defense that's a great, sound day."

The RedHawks' longest run was for 14 yards and their longest pass play was for 35 yards. They finished with 44 yards on the ground and 95 through the air.

"We take every game seriously. Even the calls I was getting last night from friends and family, they didn't think we were going to take this game seriously," linebacker Brad Jones said. "And I was trying to tell them we were a team that was 1-2 and there is no game we're not going to take seriously. Every game is the most serious game of the season. And I just don't think people get that."

But everyone understands that the Buffs will have to play even better next Saturday when Oklahoma comes to town. The Sooners are averaging 61.5 points and 562.2 yards per game against their first four opponents while giving up just 11.8 points and 234.2 yards.



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Buffs run wild; Sooners loom

CU evens record thanks to shutout, 634 yards of offense

By Kyle Ringo

Sunday, September 23, 2007

We interrupt your regularly scheduled 2 yards per carry to bring you an overmatched opponent.

The Colorado football team found some offensive confidence Saturday to go with a dominating defense and routed Miami (Ohio) 42-0 at Folsom Field in the final nonconference game of the season. It was the best day to be a Buff since coach Dan Hawkins took over the program.

The Buffs matched their win total from last season and head into Big 12 Conference play at 2-2 with a homecoming game next week against No. 4 Oklahoma. The CU defense posted its first shutout since Oct. 1, 2005 at Oklahoma State, playing the game in honor of linebacker Michael Sipili, who was suspended from school Friday for violating two articles of CU's student Code of Conduct.

The defense has allowed a meager 16 points in the past two games.

"For our guys to come out and do really what we're supposed to do was a good step for our guys," Hawkins said.

The Buffs' performance against the RedHawks should have them feeling better about themselves, but given Miami's uninspired play Saturday, it's difficult to tell which version of the CU offense is for real. Is it the group that gained 5 rushing yards on 51 carries the previous two weeks combined against Arizona State and Florida State, or is it the team that posted 359 yards and 5.7 yards per carry against the RedHawks?

"It's a building block," CU quarterback Cody Hawkins said. "Running for 300 against these guys, it's not going to get you any yards against Oklahoma. So our guys are going to get back to the drawing board and keep working."

Cody Hawkins completed 19 of 30 passes for 275 yards and two touchdowns, but he also threw a pair of interceptions with tosses into coverage. Coach Dan Hawkins said his son got greedy on one play, throwing deep down the field to wide receiver Josh Smith instead of hitting an open receiver on a shorter route for a first down.

Despite his mistakes, the passing game included receptions by 10 different receivers. The Buffs racked up 634 yards of offense, by far the best day of production since the current coaching staff took over the program.

It was the 11th-best offensive day in CU history and the most total yards since setting the school record at 767 yards in 1999 against San Jose State.

CU produced a 16-play scoring drive and three different 11 play drives. Senior running back Hugh Charles rushed for 123 yards on 17 carries and one touchdown after being publicly criticized by coaches in the week of practice leading up to Saturday.

Redshirt freshman tailback Demetrius Sumler rushed for 91 yards on 14 carries and a score, and true freshman Brian Lockridge added 14 carries for 90 yards. All three tailbacks had runs of at least 28 yards.

"I think the big part of it was the criticism that we had," Charles said. "We knew what we could do and we showed it."

Colorado scored just seven points in the first quarter when Cody Hawkins threw a 1-yard touchdown pass to tight end Tyson Devree on fourth-and-goal.

CU came back with another touchdown on its ensuing drive when Sumler plunged in from a yard out, capping an 11-play drive in which true freshmen offensive linemen Ryan Miller and Kai Maiava saw the first action of their careers.

It was the first of three touchdowns in the decisive second quarter.

Cody Hawkins scored the first touchdown of his career later in the quarter on a 1-yard quarterback sneak, and he connected with tight end Patrick Devenny on a 3-yard scoring pass with 15 seconds remaining in the first half. That play gave the Buffs a 28-0 halftime lead. It was also the first reception and touchdown of Devenny's career.

"It feels good to be on the other end of that," senior Tyler Polumbus said of the Buffs' performance. "To come out and finally dominate is god for the program and hopefully it will be the start of a streak for us."



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Woelk: Respectable won't be good enough vs. OU

That's a start.

Colorado 42, Miami (not Florida) 0.

Good game, great day and everyone wearing black and gold went home feeling good about their Buffaloes.

So is it too soon to talk about Oklahoma? Too soon to look ahead to the No. 4 team in the nation paying a visit to Folsom Field next Saturday?

Not that anyone from this corner would discount the Buffs' effort Saturday against the visiting RedHawks.

The Buffs were desperate to prove they had a running game — so they slapped 359 yards and four touchdowns on the board against Miami.

Not to be outdone, the passing attack dropped 275 yards and two touchdowns on Miami's defense, leaving the Buffs with 634 yards for the game, the 11th-most in program history and the most since piling up 767 against San Jose State in 1999.

Now, before you completely disregard Miami's defense, remember this: That defense held Ball State to a mere 13 points in a 14-13 season-opening win — the same Ball State that rolled up 610 yards and 40 points on Nebraska on Saturday.

Meanwhile, Colorado's defense simply turned it up a notch, playing even better than it did a week ago against Florida State. Along with the shutout, the Buffs limited Miami to a mere 139 total yards (2.8 per play) and allowed just three successful third-down conversions in 14 tries. Since we're on the subject of third downs, figure this: CU's defense has now held its last two opponents to 4-for-27 in that department.

But, as more than one Buff player pointed out Saturday afternoon, Miami is not Oklahoma. Not by any stretch of the imagination. The Sooners are mad (word on the street is that you should not mention "Fiesta Bowl" or "NCAA" within earshot of any OU folks), they are loaded with talent and they seem anxious to take out a year's worth of frustrations on anyone who gets in their way.

Next Saturday, the Buffs are the lucky ones to draw the assignment.

"We definitely know Oklahoma is not Miami of Ohio," said Buff QB Cody Hawkins, who threw for 275 yards and a pair of touchdowns — but also added a pair of interceptions to his totals. "Right now, all we're thinking about is the Sooners."

If that is indeed the case, here are a few things the Buffs might want to think about this morning:

Yes, the running game did show improvement, but there's still lots of work to be done. The Buffs had one long touchdown run called back because of a penalty and struggled at times in short-yardage situations. As CU coach Dan Hawkins noted, "We were not as clean as we wanted to be ... there's definitely room for improvement there."

And, while we already mentioned Cody Hawkins' interceptions, it's worth mentioning again: Those are not the kind of mistakes the Sooners will forgive. Throw a pick against Miami and the damage is minimal. Throw a pick against Oklahoma and it can turn into a seven-point mistake.

Said coach Hawkins about quarterback Hawkins: "He seems to take a mulligan every game. On that fourth down (interception), he had to get a little greedy and throw it downfield."

Word to the wise: Greed will not play well against the Sooners.

But this is mainly picking nits on a day when the Buffs most needed to pick up a win. Already, CU has matched its victory total from a year ago, with eight games remaining on the schedule. Given the state of the rest of the Big 12 (sans the Sooners), there's no reason to think Colorado can't pick up four or five more victories before season's end.

Certainly, Saturday was a solid step forward. While Dan Hawkins said a week ago that nobody starts the season aiming to be 2-2, this is about where most folks expected the Buffs to be after they completed their nonconference schedule. A close win over rival Colorado State, two respectable showings against Florida State and Arizona State, and a blowout win over Miami.

But next week, the Buffs will see the best team they've played in the Hawkins era, and likely the best team Hawkins has ever coached against.

The Sooners have no weaknesses, they have a chip on their shoulder and they are taking no prisoners in their quest to get another shot at a national title.

Respectable won't cut it against the Sooners. As much as the Buffaloes improved from Week 3 to Week 4, it will take another step of similar proportions to stay in the game with Oklahoma.

Saturday proved to be a get-well day for the Buffs, a game in which they could heal some of the ills that had plagued them for the first three weeks of the season. The Buffs made plays, corrected some mistakes and proved that they are moving in the right direction.

But that is by no means any guarantee that those problems won't return next week.



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Longmont, Colorado
Sunday, September 23,
2007

DAILY TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 9/23/2007

Loss fuels win

Angered by Sipili's suspension, Buffs trample RedHawks

*By Patrick Ridgell
The Daily Times-Call*

BOULDER — The day after learning its defense would not have a key player for all of 2007, Colorado's defense took out its anger on a hapless opponent.

The Buffaloes shut out Miami-Ohio, 42-0, on Saturday afternoon before a crowd of 45,243 at Folsom Field.

CU (2-2) has matched its win total from 2006, coach Dan Hawkins' first year. Its offense rolled to 634 yards and 359 on the ground, numbers that'll boost its confidence as Big 12 play opens next weekend against No. 4 Oklahoma.

But the bigger story from Saturday was how dominant the Buffs' defense played, extending a steady stretch of improvement that started the previous week against Florida State. It faces a much stiffer test next week against the Sooners, who are averaging more than 61 points a game, but the Buffs pulled off Saturday's work in the face of adversity after learning Friday night that starting linebacker Michael Sipili won't play in 2007.

Sipili, a sophomore, was suspended Friday afternoon from school by CU's Office of Judicial Affairs for violating two articles of CU's Student Code of Conduct.

CU coaches had planned to use Sipili on Saturday, after he had served a three-game suspension for off-field incidents that led to his pleading guilty earlier this month to a misdemeanor assault charge that stemmed from a June fight in Boulder. The fight left another CU student with facial fractures. Teammate Chris Perri was also involved in the incident. Prosecutors dropped a felony second-degree assault charge against Sipili.

Hawkins admitted he was surprised by Friday's news, which he said came down around 2 p.m. Hawkins never hinted during the week he might be without Sipili's services, and sources said Saturday the suspension left him and athletic director Mike Bohn furious.

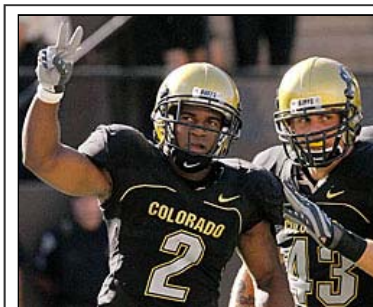
On Saturday, Hawkins had little to say about it.

"It did surprise me, but that's life," Hawkins said.

Bohn held an impromptu news conference in the back of Folsom Field's press box about 20 minutes prior to kickoff. He declined to say what two conduct codes Sipili violated, but the code states that assaulting or physically abusing another person, or being involved in brawling, will result in a minimum sanction of suspension unless specific and significant mitigating factors are present.

Bohn said there is no appeal process Sipili can use to regain his eligibility this season, and he said Sipili has not asked to be released from his scholarship at this time.

Sipili can apply for reinstatement after the semester, and if he returns to CU, he'll have three seasons to play.



Colorado tailback Hugh Charles celebrates his 17-yard touchdown run with fullback Samson Jagoras in the third quarter Saturday at Folsom Field. Charles finished with 125 yards on 17 carries. **Times-Call/Joshua Buck**

Bohn sidestepped questions about the timing of the announcement, saying it's a university issue and not an "athletic department initiative."

He said he, Hawkins, linebacker coach Brian Cabral and chancellor Bud Peterson knew there were more steps coming in Sipili's case, but did not know when any action would be taken.

"I think there are a lot of elements associated with the process that are not widely known or distributed due to the confidentiality associated with the process with the university," Bohn said.

"The timing ... and all of those elements are pieces that we need to get a better handle on understanding how as the university and the athletic program begin to work together collectively on issues like this that we have a better grasp of how they are implemented on our behalf."

Jeff Smart, recently rewarded a scholarship, and walk-on Jake Duren filled Sipili's spot, totaling six and five tackles, respectively.

Miami (1-3) never penetrated inside CU's 38-yard line. The RedHawks finished with 139 yards, punted 10 times, completed 11 out of 32 passes, and converted only 3 of 14 third downs.

The shutout took some of the sting out of what happened, but not much.

"We feel bad for Michael," defensive coordinator Ron Collins said. "We fully expected him to be playing and that's not the case. We feel bad for him as a person. We were thinking about him throughout the game.

"Our guys went out and we did what we're supposed to do today. I think the guys took care of business."

So did the CU offense. It's 634 yards matched its 11th-highest output in program history, and most since setting the team record in 1999.

CU hadn't rushed for more than 300 yards in a game since November, 2002. Three Buffs ran for 90 yards or more, led by Hugh Charles, who had 123 and looked like he's finally recovered from hamstring injury suffered in the season opener against CSU.

Several freshmen got their first action, and CU found the confidence it sought.

Some of the Buffs even admitted Saturday night that they had tuned in to watch some of Oklahoma's performance the previous night at Tulsa, during which the Sooners scored 62 points and looked invincible against a good team.

"Their ranking speaks for itself," Charles said of OU. "They're great on the ground and great in the air, their defense is fast and they're ranked in the top.

"I know what I'm getting into because I played them last year."

Said defensive tackle George Hypolite: "In football, you know you're only as good as your last victory. And we want to keep that going as long as we can."

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Longmont, Colorado
Sunday, September 23,
2007

DAILY TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 9/23/2007

Rushing to redemption

Stung by week of criticism, Charles runs for 123 yards

*By Patrick Ridgell
The Daily Times-Call*

BOULDER — Lots of things are going to motivate Colorado running back Hugh Charles, and the list includes criticism.

Charles heard some this week from coaches and “outside sources” after he played hurt against Florida State last week and didn’t reveal the true extent of the hamstring injury that cost him most of the Colorado State game and all of the Arizona State contest.

That compounded the complaints against CU’s running game, which totaled minus-27 yards against the Seminoles.

The result was a very motivated Hugh Charles during Saturday’s 42-0 defeat of Miami-Ohio. .

“I think the big part of it was the criticism we had,” Charles said. “We knew what we could do and we showed it.”

Charles ran for 123 yards on 17 carries. He posted his sixth 100-yard rushing game of his career, and his first since going for 119 last year against Texas Tech.

He has 1,802 rushing yards for his career, which is 21st all time but closing in on Byron White’s 1,864.

With Big 12 play set to begin next week when CU hosts No. 4 Oklahoma (11:20 a.m., FSR), coaches know having a healthy and productive Charles is vital.

“It’s huge,” running back coach Darian Hagan said. “He was not 100 percent the last two games. The last game he said he was OK, and he wasn’t, so he got criticized. Miraculously, he got better. And at times today, when he needed to, he ran well.”

CU entered Saturday ranked 116th in the nation with 44.7 yards per game. It ran for 359 Saturday.

“You can’t be 219th in the country (in rushing) going into this conference,” head coach Dan Hawkins said.

Still waiting: Bernard Jackson said Saturday he’s still waiting on a grade from a sociology class he took to gain his eligibility.

“I’m still holding out hope ... I’m just waiting,” he said.

He said he could learn the grade “any day” and he said he hopes to play next week. He said he’s enrolled in class, and he participated in some practice last week.

Jackson was expected to man a “slash” role this year after starting 11 games at quarterback in 2006.



Colorado tailback Hugh Charles shrugs off Miami-Ohio defensive back Brandon Stephens as he heads for the end zone in the third quarter Saturday at Folsom Field. **Times-Call/Joshua Buck**

Injury news: CU reported tight end Tyson DeVree and receiver Scotty McKnight suffered concussions and are day-to-day. Guard Devin Head suffered a stinger in the first half, but returned. Linebacker Nate Vaiomounga strained a hamstring and is also day to day.

Extra points: Tight ends Patrick Devenny and Nate Solder made >their first catches. Devenny's was a touchdown. Freshman receiver Kendrick Celestine also made his first catch. ... Long-time public address announcer Alan Cass missed his second game while he recovers from West Nile Virus. KOA's Alan Roach filled in for him. ... CU posted its first shutout since blanking Oklahoma State, 34-0, on Oct. 1, 2005. ... After holding Miami to 3 of 14 third-down conversions, CU has held its past two opponents to a 4-for-27 conversion rate.