



Hawk tells Buffs to put win over OU behind them

Coach says focus now on Baylor

By Kyle Ringo

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The advice coach Dan Hawkins gave his Colorado football team Sunday afternoon when it regrouped for conditioning work and a visit to the campus recreation center swimming pool might surprise people.

Hawkins told the Buffs to wad up thoughts of their victory over then-No. 3 Oklahoma and "throw it in the trash can." Hawkins said he talked about the victory —the biggest of his career — for only five minutes before moving on to this week's opponent — the Baylor Bears.

"You have to learn how to handle adversity and we've pretty much got our Ph.D. in that around here," Hawkins said. "So we just have to be able to handle success the same way."

The Buffs have grown accustomed the their coach's all-business approach and weren't surprised he didn't spend more time talking about the Sooners because the entire program feels it has a score to settle with the Bears.

Baylor came to Folsom Field last year and escaped with a triple-overtime 34-31 victory after former starting quarterback Bernard Jackson threw an interception to linebacker Joe Pawelek to end the game.

"Everybody understands we let one slip away last year that we should have won," cornerback Terrence Wheatley said. "And we understand that we haven't won a road game since Hawk has been here."

"We beat Oklahoma, but we understand that's just one step in the ladder that we need to start climbing to get to where we need to get."

Hawkins called the Baylor loss one of the two most difficult of his career and the game he compared it with actually ended in a tie.

When Hawkins coached at Willamette University in 1995, he watched his team surrender 20 points in the final four minutes of a game against Pacific Lutheran. The contest ended with scoreboard reading 35-35.

"That's like a bad jungle virus. That gets in your blood and never leaves," he said

Hawkins remained in his office in the Dal Ward Center for more than 24 hours after losing to the Bears last season. The game ended late Saturday afternoon and he didn't go home to his wife, Misti, until after Sunday's evening practice.

Hawkins said he spent all that time searching for answers.

"It was just the nature of the way things went down," he said. "I'm one of those guys that, you know, we're the coach and you've got to solve the problem. You can have a thousand excuses but that doesn't matter. Whatever it is that is going on anywhere, you got to find answers."

"You thought you dug down and found an answer and you didn't. So you had to dig a little more."

Hawk tells Buffs to put win over OU behind them

Hawkins and his assistants appear to have finally found some of those answers after beating the Sooners. The victory was the focal point of college football over the weekend and even earned the Buffs votes in polls released Sunday.

Colorado received five votes in the Associated Press poll, and three votes in the USA Today coaches' poll and the Harris poll.

The Buffs haven't been ranked in nearly two years. The last time they were ranked was Nov. 12, 2005. They lost that day at Iowa State and were out of the polls the next week.

The Sooners fell from No. 3 last week to No. 10 in the AP and coaches' polls this week. Hawkins said it didn't surprise him that his 3-2 team received votes because he has been known to vote for teams in the past who produce big wins and have a good track record.

He said voters probably believe the Buffs are "in the same area code" considering they played well against Florida State, which beat Alabama on Saturday, and led Arizona State on the road. The Sun Devils are ranked 18th in the AP poll this week and 19th by the coaches.

Baylor coach Guy Morriss probably wasn't one of those who managed to follow Hawkins' line of thinking.

Morris met with members of the media Sunday to discuss his team's loss to Texas A&M and to look ahead at this week's home game against the Buffs. He said he was as surprised as the next guy when he heard CU had beaten No. 3 Oklahoma. He got the news on the trip home from College Station, Texas, on Saturday.

"It was kind of hard to believe," Morriss said. "All I can remember is watching (Oklahoma) play Miami that second Saturday, and it was a pretty impressive win. All the hype was that they were untouchable, and then you get a score like that and you wonder what's going on."

Recruiting boost

Colorado beat the No. 3 team in the nation, but as of late Sunday night no word had trickled out regarding whether the big victory had led to oral commitments from recruits.

The Buffs still have only six known commitments and one of them is said to be considering de-committing to go to either Florida State or LSU. Hawkins said he believes the victory will help in recruiting because good players want to play on good teams.

"I think for them to get a sniff of that and a sense that, 'Yeah, these guys can do it.' That provides a lot of evidence," Hawkins said.

Notable

Colorado place-kicker Kevin Eberhart will appear live this morning on ESPN2 First Take to discuss the team and his game-winning kick over Oklahoma. Eberhart's kick was No.1 on SportsCenter's Top-10 plays on Saturday. ... Colorado's Oct. 13 game at Kansas State most likely will be televised. An announcement is expected this morning. Four of the team's first six games have been selected for either regional or national television. ... The Buffs are ranked 14th in the nation in total defense. ... Jordon Dizon dropped to third in the nation in total tackles with 64 so far this season, an average of 13 per game.



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cu football

Eye on ... the Bears

Colorado at Baylor, 5:05 p.m., Saturday, no TV

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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For the record: Baylor is 3-2 overall and 0-1 in the Big 12 Conference. The Bears opened league play Saturday with a 34-10 loss at Texas A&M.

Streaking: Since Big 12 competition began in 1996, Baylor has never finished with a winning record in conference play.

Who's hot: Bears free safety Jordan Lake. The sophomore from Houston recorded a personal-best 18 tackles against Texas A&M. Baylor coaches wish the defensive line and linebackers would carry more of the load so Lake wouldn't have to make so many stops.

Who's not: The Bears' receivers. They dropped more than half a dozen passes against the Aggies.

Key stat: Baylor managed just seven first downs against Texas A&M, matching the fewest for a Bears team since getting seven against Oklahoma in 2000.

FYI: Prior to preseason drills, Baylor coach Guy Morriss expected Kent State transfer Michael Machen or freshman John David Weed to be the starting quarterback, but they faltered during camp and sophomore Blake Szymanski won the job. In the spread offense, Szymanski is averaging 281 yards passing per game.

Coachspeak: "I think our kids play better at home and I hope this wakes us up." - Morriss, after the Bears' loss at Texas A&M

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cu football

Sprague's TD sign of maturing "O"

Offensive coordinator pleased by execution and adjustments on pass play against Oklahoma

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/01/2007 03:59:44 AM MDT

Boulder - Sometimes a single play can speak volumes to a college football coach.

Colorado offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich liked what he saw Saturday when Buffaloes quarterback Cody Hawkins threw a 15-yard touchdown pass to Dusty Sprague in the fourth quarter of the 27-24 win over then-No. 3 Oklahoma.

The execution leading up to the pass couldn't have worked better, Helfrich said.

A play-action fake handoff by Hawkins made the safety on the left side believe it was a running play. With the safety out of the picture, it was a matter of Sprague getting by Sooners cornerback Marcus Walker.

Walker has more speed than Sprague. But Walker hesitated for a split second on the play-action fake

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that involved CU wideout Stephone Robinson.

"(Walker) took a false step and flinched enough for Dusty to get behind him," Helfrich said.

So far, so good. Hawkins threw a pretty pass, making sure he got enough air under it. But it was directed a bit inside of where the play was designed.

"Dusty did a nice job of adjusting to the ball," Helfrich said. "I think offensively we took another step in the development of our guys just making plays that aren't perfect. That's a great sign of our guys evolving."

Sprague, ever modest, said he had "the easy part" in his touchdown catch. It evened the score at 24-24 with 4:05 remaining, setting up Kevin Eberhart's 45-yard field goal as time expired.

Sprague had beaten Walker by at least 5 yards. "For me, (Hawkins' pass) couldn't get there fast enough," said Sprague, a senior from Holyoke.

The key is to continue to improve, Cody Hawkins said. Up next for the Buffs (3-2, 1-0 Big 12) is a road game Saturday night against Baylor (3-2, 0-

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1) in Waco, Texas.

"I'm really excited for what we've done and where we're going," Hawkins said after the game. "(But) we have to prepare for the Bears. We have to keep working hard."

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Local college football notes

By B.G. Brooks, Randy Holtz, Jim Benton, Rocky Mountain News
September 30, 2007

CU

Everybody in the pool

In the wake of CU's 27-24 win against then-No. 3 Oklahoma, coach **Dan Hawkins** took his players swimming Sunday afternoon in lieu of their regular conditioning work and short scrimmaging by Saturday's non-participants.

Hawkins called the 45-minute session in CU's recreation center pool "a change of pace" in conditioning that "still gets the blood flowing . . . while easing up on the joints." He conducted similar workouts at Boise State and Willamette.

In reviewing the stunning win over the Sooners, Hawkins told his players to "visualize wadding it up and throwing it in the trash can. . . . That thing is in the vapor trail already."

He said the Buffaloes already were focusing on Saturday's game at Baylor, a team that defeated CU 34-31 in three overtimes last season in Boulder. Hawkins called it one of his two most painful losses as a coach, prompting him to spend the night in his CU office.

"Just the nature of the way things went down" made the Baylor loss so difficult, Hawkins said. He stayed in his office because "a coach has to solve the problems . . . find the answers, dig a little more, do the things that define you as a coach."

Walk the walk

This week, Hawkins' "never too high, never too low" mantra will be tested. Coming off their biggest win in his CU tenure, the Buffs take their first Big 12 Conference trip and will be favored over Baylor.

"You see it all across college football - lower-ranked team beats higher-ranked team, lives it up until they get to a team probably not as good as the team they beat . . . and they have a letdown," CU cornerback **Terrence Wheatley** said.

"You've just got to keep rolling, realizing now we're one step closer to the Big 12 championship. That's our goal. Take one step and leave it behind you. Then take another one."

Added defensive tackle **George Hypolite**: "The game coming up tests us as football players, as men, as everything. . . . We have to stop making it about who we're playing and make it about how we're playing."

Got any Lotto numbers?

Even though Hawkins repeatedly told his players last week everything was aligning for them to defeat Oklahoma, he said he's "no swami." Then again . . . freshman receiver **Josh Smith** said Hawkins "called it that we were going to win on a field goal. He said the same situation happened a while back (at another school). . . . He told us we were going to win because it's the perfect time, the perfect moment.

"He (said) it at least 10 times, and in a way that was so convincing that it made it seem like this was the perfect strike."

Wasted time(out)

Placekicker **Kevin Eberhart**, whose career-long 45-yard field goal provided CU with its winning margin, fully expected OU coach **Bob Stoops** to call a timeout, either immediately after Hawkins called one with 2 seconds to play or just before Eberhart attempted his winning kick.

But there was no "icing" attempted.



Jack Dempsey © AP

Colorado kicker Kevin Eberhart kicks the game-winning field goal as Scotty McKnight holds and Oklahoma defensive back Marcus Walker arrives too late to block the 45-yarder.

"We'd seen it before (a late timeout called)," Eberhart said. "**Mason (Crosby)**, former CU kicker) had the same opportunity against CSU last year, where they either call that timeout or they don't, and you've got to kick it either way. And, hopefully, it goes and, hopefully, it counts."

The "delayed" timeout has become fairly common. Crosby had a 61-yarder nullified by a delayed timeout in CU's 14-10 loss to Colorado State in 2006. And in then-No. 4 Florida's 20-17 loss against Auburn on Saturday night, Gators coach **Urban Meyer** used the tactic before the winning kick on the final play.

Etc.

- Junior linebacker **R.J. Brown**, who has had six concussions while at CU, met with specialists Saturday and is "on hold" for an undetermined period, Hawkins said.
- Freshman tailback **Brian Lockridge**, who missed the Oklahoma game with his first concussion, said he plans to play Saturday.
- Saturday's win should aid recruiting, Hawkins said, noting it is always beneficial for visiting prospects to "get a sniff" of such a victory. About eight recruits visited CU over the weekend.
- Hawkins said freshman guard **Kai Maiava** and freshman tackle **Ryan Miller** played well against the Sooners. He said Miller "dominated" an Oklahoma defender on several plays run to his side.

CSU

Rushing game hurting

With marquee running back **Kyle Bell** struggling, CSU coaches inserted redshirt freshman and Miami native **John Mosure** against Texas Christian.

Mosure wound up running for a team-best 34 yards on 10 carries. Bell, who came in averaging 103 yards a game, was limited to 9 yards on seven carries.

CSU, which had the seventh-worst team rushing numbers among Division I-A teams last season, can't get enough first downs with its running game and has become overly dependent on the passing game. Then that broke down, too, on Saturday night as quarterback **Caleb Hanie** was sacked four times and threw three interceptions in the face of constant pressure from the fast TCU defensive front.

CSU coaches said Bell was not injured, and they pulled him for Mosure because they thought the freshman could hit holes faster.

However, there were precious few holes.

"We put John in there to give us a little spark," coach **Sonny Lubick** said.

Tight end watch

The tight end position virtually has disappeared from CSU's passing game since senior **Kory Sperry** went down with a season-ending injury.

After failing to make a catch in a loss at Houston on Sept. 22, CSU's tight ends had just two catches at TCU.

Chris Kawulok, a junior from Boulder who is known more for his blocking, had one catch for 3 yards. **Eric Peitz** caught one pass for 5 yards, the first collegiate reception for the true freshman from rural Crofton, Neb.

Those are the only two catches by CSU tight ends since Sperry went down with a torn knee ligament in the second quarter of a loss to California.

Aztecs coming

The Rams' most recent memories of San Diego State aren't good ones.

The Aztecs, who face CSU at Hughes Stadium on Saturday (3:30 p.m., the mtn.), ruined CSU's chance to end last fall's bummer of a season on a good note with a 17-6 win at Qualcomm Stadium in San Diego.

The Rams, who talked all week leading up to that game about the importance of finishing their disappointing season on an uptick, came out listless on offense and failed to score a touchdown. And this was against a team that finished the season at 3-9, even worse than CSU.