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buffaloes' bowl history

Two games, many memories

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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CU running back Bobby Anderson had quite the day against Alabama in the 1969 Liberty Bowl. His 254 yards on 35 carries and three touchdowns all remain as records for that bowl. (Associated Press file photo)

Almost 1,000 miles apart, former Colorado stars Bobby Anderson and Darian Hagan reacted in a similar fashion after learning that Alabama would be the Buffaloes' opponent in Sunday's Independence Bowl.

"I said, 'Hmmm. That's interesting,

" Anderson recalled recently after an afternoon of soaking in the sunshine at his southern California home.

"Wow. Alabama again?" thought Hagan, CU's running backs coach.

It's been awhile, but memories of the two previous bowl meetings between the two schools remain fresh.

Anderson, a tailback completing his college career with an All-American season, rushed for 254 yards and three touchdowns during Colorado's 47-33 victory in the 1969 Liberty Bowl in Memphis. Anderson's Liberty Bowl records for rushing yardage, touchdowns and carries (35) still stand.

And get this: Anderson had a 50-yard gain nullified by a penalty. Fullback Ward Walsh, who was not directly involved in Anderson's run, had flinched slightly before the snap.

"Our offensive line had a great game blocking and the ball came my way most of the day," Anderson said.

Wearing his trademark houndstooth hat, legendary Alabama coach Bear Bryant visited the CU locker room after the game to offer his congratulations. "He shook my hand and said, 'Son, you just made yourself a bunch of money today,'" recalled Anderson, who played six seasons in the NFL.

"(CU players) played the best they ever had,"

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coach Eddie Crowder said of the 1969 Liberty Bowl. "It was as satisfying a game and victory as any of us had during my career. On offense and defense, our men bristled with electricity."

Hagan, a dual-threat quarterback, struggled in his finale as a Buffs player. He completed just 11-of-30 passes (for 210 yards) and netted only 12 yards on 14 rushes in Alabama's 30-25 victory in the 1991 Blockbuster Bowl at Miami.

During the month between the conclusion of the regular season and the bowl game, Colorado coach Bill McCartney had switched from an option offense to a one-back, pass-oriented attack. But during the game, Alabama's defense appeared to anticipate every move.

A friend of Hagan, who played for the Crimson Tide, later told the former Buffs star that Alabama had a spy watch CU's bowl practices in Miami. A freeway overlooked the practice field.

"We'd never shown a one-back formation all year," Hagan explained. "And on our first play, when we broke out of the huddle, Alabama had a defensive back waiting for each of our receivers. Their guys didn't even hesitate or look surprised. That couldn't have been a coincidence."

National championship

A 10-9 final score did not reflect all the excitement in the 1991 Orange Bowl, a Colorado victory over Notre Dame that gave the Buffaloes

a share of the 1990 national championship. Charles S. Johnson, forced to take over at quarterback when starter Darian Hagan injured a



Byron "Whizzer" White carries the ball in the 1938 Cotton Bowl against Rice. The Buffs lost 28-14. (Denver Post file photo)

knee just before halftime, directed a go-ahead drive that All-America tailback Eric Bienenmyer completed on a 1-yard run with 4:26 remaining in the third quarter. CU still had to withstand a couple of late scares.

An apparent 91-yard punt return by Notre

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Dame's Raghib "Rocket" Ismail was called back because of a clipping penalty. Later, the Irish began a drive to get in position for a winning field goal, but All-America cornerback Deon Figures intercepted a Rick Mirer pass at the CU 36 in what turned out to be the game's final play.

Colorado (11-1-1) earned the national championship in the writers' poll; Georgia Tech (11-0-1) got the nod from the coaches.

"It was great to see Charles come in and have success," Hagan recalled recently. "The only thing I was disappointed in was that I was on crutches and couldn't join the guys jumping around and celebrating on the 50-yard line."

Almost

Colorado came close to winning back-to-back national championships. The Buffaloes stood 11-0 and were ranked No. 1 when they faced Notre Dame in the 1990 Orange Bowl, following the 1989 season. But after a scoreless first half, Notre Dame scored three times to win 21-6. CU never led. CU quarterback Darian Hagan had a tough day, managing just 65 yards passing.

The tyler rose

A 21-7 halftime lead wasn't enough for Colorado in the 1975 Bluebonnet Bowl. Texas bruiser Earl Campbell led a second-half charge, finishing with 95 yards on 19 carries in a 38-21 Longhorns victory. Two notable players caught second-quarter touchdown passes for CU.

Dave Logan, the current Mullen High School coach and Broncos' play-by-play announcer, played nine years in the NFL, primarily as a receiver with the Cleveland Browns. Tight end Don Hasselbeck also played nine NFL seasons, mostly with the Patriots, and later watched two sons become NFL quarterbacks after starring at Boston College.

Frequent target

Current Broncos tight end Daniel Graham set a CU bowl record with 10 catches (for 89 yards and a touchdown) in the 2002 Fiesta Bowl, a 38-16 loss to Oregon.

Most recent

Directed by interim coach Mike Hankwitz and missing regular quarterback Joel Klatt (concussion in the Big 12 championship game against Texas), Colorado managed just 124 yards in total offense in the 19-10 loss to Clemson in the 2005 Champs Sports Bowl. Gary Barnett had been forced to step down as Colorado coach 19 days earlier by first-year CU athletic director Mike Bohn. "Bowl games are fun, but I know from experience they're way more fun when you win," said Buffs senior tailback Hugh Charles, who also played as a true freshman in CU's 33-28 win over UTEP in the 2004 Houston Bowl.

Good things come in threes

With the Independence Bowl, Alabama will join Notre Dame and Oregon as having been Colorado's bowl opponent on three

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occasions. No school has played CU in four bowls.

McCartney's swan song

Bill McCartney got a ride off the field on the shoulders of his players following his final appearance as CU coach in the 1995 Fiesta Bowl, a 41-24 win over Notre Dame. McCartney had announced his retirement following the regular-season finale. "It was huge to send Coach Mac off like that," said Donnell Leomiti, a junior safety in that game and current defensive technical intern under Dan Hawkins. "It was definitely a special time to see him go out with a bang."

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colorado notes

'Bama receiver ready for CU corner

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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SHREVEPORT, La. — Never one to be bashful, Alabama wide receiver DJ Hall stopped just short Thursday of issuing a personal challenge to Colorado cornerback Terrence Wheatley. Hall said the play of Wheatley caught his attention during game-film study.

"If they've got one of the best cornerbacks in the nation, we're going to see what he's got," a grinning Hall told reporters.

Wheatley, a 5-foot-10, 175-pounder with sprinter's speed, earned first-team all-Big 12 Conference honors by the league's coaches. Hall (6-2, 195) caught 63 passes for 947 yards and six touchdowns this season. He made the all-Southeastern Conference second team and holds several Alabama career receiving records.

Both are seniors who realize that winning their one-on-one battles in Sunday night's Independence Bowl might impress NFL scouts. It

couldn't hurt, anyway.

"If I know a guy is one of the best secondary players in the country, of course I'm going to get an adrenalin rush; I want to go against the best always," said Hall, a Floridian whose full name is Martinez D. Hall.

Wheatley has compared Hall with the best receivers he has faced. That includes first-team All-Americans Michael Crabtree of Texas Tech and Jordy Nelson of Kansas State.

"He's good," Wheatley said of Hall.
"He's athletic and he knows how to use his size. You can't make a mistake against a guy like that."

Hall said watching film of Crabtree and Nelson work against Wheatley has given him some ideas.

"I'm not going to say it (to the media), but I got a few little hints that I'm going to be watching for," Hall said.

Top form?

Following a two-hour workout Thursday, several Alabama players said Independence Bowl practices have ranked among the best of the year. The Crimson Tide (6-6, 4-4 SEC) finished the regular season with four losses and haven't won since a 41-17 upset of Tennessee on Oct. 20.

"I can't explain it, but this kind of reminds

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me of our first three weeks (all victories)," Hall said. "Guys are buying in. You can tell guys have a different attitude."

Thursday night date in the works.

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn said the school is working with ESPN and West Virginia to move next season's home game with the Mountaineers (currently scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 27) to a Thursday night sometime early in the season. That would give CU a national-televised game while providing some separation during a brutal stretch of games against Florida State, WVU, Texas and Kansas. Bohn said he hopes to have permanent lights installed at Folsom Field by next season. CU is the only member of the Big 12 without permanent lights in its football stadium, he said. The cost (approximately \$400,000) would be recovered by a lighting subsidy from the Big 12 which provides \$100,000 per year for four years. Colorado sold 2,000 Independence Bowl tickets, Bohn said. He expects the total count of Buffs fans to approach 3,000, including students and the official travel party. CU donated the balance of its 12,000-seat allotment to nearby Barksdale Air Force Base, schools and other organizations.

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cu football

Buff enjoy pace for bowl prep

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 12/27/2007 02:34:09 PM MST

SHREVEPORT, LA. — Colorado football players appear to be anything but nervous as they prepare for Sunday night's Independence Bowl game against Alabama.

"We've got that 'relaxed focus' going on," CU senior cornerback Terrence Wheatley said this morning after practice. "This is a lot more fun than last year when we sat around and watched other teams play in bowl games."

Players consider a bowl game to be a reward, Wheatley said.

"This is a game that you worked hard for and ultimately deserved," he explained. "You want to win, but you can also relax."

"It's not like the regular season when you feel each week like you have to win to get to a bowl game. You're already here. You can just play hard and not worry about

anything."

But, Wheatley added, the Buffaloes are taking

Colorado Football

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- Visit [Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog](#) for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports

their preparation seriously.

"Alabama is a great team with a great coach and great athletes," he said. "We have to be ready for them."

Wheatley said the foot injury (hairline fracture) that forced him to miss the final two regular-season games has healed and he feels no pain.

The only thing that is suffering, Wheatley said with a chuckle, is his expectation for playing a bowl game in Louisiana. The temperature was in the low 40s for CU's practice Wednesday and it remains cool again today.

"Coming from Colorado to here, you don't expect that," he said.

The high temperature for Sunday is expected to reach into the upper 50s or low 60s.

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sports

1969 Buffs made their mark on racism

By Woody Paige
The Denver Post

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Legendary Alabama coach Paul "Bear" Bryant, right, congratulates Colorado's Eddie Crowder after the Buffs' 47-33 Liberty Bowl victory in 1969.
(Associated Press file photo)

The University of Colorado football team had never played behind The Cotton Curtainthe deep

South.

None of the young white and black men on the 1969 team had ever played against a Southeastern Conference school.

The Buffaloes knew about legendary coach Bear Bryant and powerhouse Alabama, an eight-time national champion. But all they knew about Memphis, Tenn., was that Elvis lived there, and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. died there.

Nobody associated with CU knew what to expect in the Dec. 13, 1969, Liberty Bowl, matching the Buffs and the Crimson Tide.

The Buffs were scared and anxious, tense and intense on the bus ride from the Riverfront Hotel, on the bank of the mighty Mississippi. Yet, when they took the field at Memphis Memorial Stadium, they were aggravated and motivated.

"What I remember most about the game was we were so mad, and it was awful that day," says Herb Orvis, an All-America defensive end with the Buffs and later an All-Pro with the Lions and the Colts.

"But you may not want to go there and dig it up. We didn't talk about it back then," Orvis said the other day.

The 61-year-old Orvis, now living north of Denver and renovating old houses, was stationed with the U.S. Army in Germany in the 1960s when he met CU coach Eddie Crowder, who promised him a football scholarship after he finished his

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military commitment.

"Herb was one of the greatest players I ever had," Crowder says, "and he was one of the more mature than our other players, so after what he had been through, I know what happened at the Liberty Bowl really affected him."

Orvis said the Alabama fans at the bowl "spit on us. They treated us like dirt before and during the game. They were screaming racial remarks totally out of line.

"It was all because we had black players on our team."

Alabama had no black players — that season or any season before.

The CU squad included African- Americans Bryan Foster, a defensive back; Cliff Dunham, a linebacker; Bruce R. Smith, a defensive tackle; Eric Harris, a cornerback; Derek Faison, a defensive tackle; Glen Bailey, a quarterback-running back; and Bill Collins, a defensive tackle.

The referee (from the SEC) entered the CU locker room before the game and informed Crowder that only one player would be permitted at midfield for the coin toss.

Collins, one of the tri-captains, was chosen because, tailback Bobby Anderson said at his College Football of Fame induction speech last year, "we wanted Bill to represent us because we wanted to make a point to Alabama. Some of their fans were yelling racial epithets at our

team and that angered us."

"A lot of them had not ever seen a black football player," Collins said. "Others were even more vicious. There was a lot of name-calling. The 'N' word was coming from everywhere. I was 20, and I never heard stuff like that in a stadium.

"I went out to midfield by myself, and suddenly every player on the Alabama team came out to midfield. I've never felt more alone in my life."

Collins retired in 2005 from Xerox after 34 years with the company and as the vice president-general manager. He is now an executive with a ministry in Dallas.

"I remember that '69 game vividly because of the fans and because it was my last game," Collins said, "but I don't remember who won the toss."

He won the toss, and the Buffs, relying on power sweeps and tailback passes by Anderson, drove 70 yards in seven plays for a 7-0 lead.

Faison, who sold the business he owned in Aurora five years ago, said that when the Buffs arrived in Memphis, "I was gung-ho. But our first day of practice for the bowl, I busted my ankle and couldn't suit up. When I stood on the sidelines, it was ugly, just awful what people were saying and doing.

"It was a point of encouragement to our team."

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Colorado led 17-0 early in the second quarter.

"They had Scott Hunter and Johnny Musso (All-Americans at quarterback and tailback), and we wanted to say hello to them," said Collins. "We did. They hadn't played against a defensive line like we had — Orvis, (Bill) Brundige, me and Dave Capra. We were big and fast." (Hunter left the game with a knee injury.)

Alabama a woeful 6-4 Colorado compiled a 7-3 record in the regular season, losing only to top-drawer Penn State, Oklahoma and Nebraska. But Alabama came in at a woeful 6-4, the only reason the Liberty Bowl could attract the Tide. A record crowd of 50,042 was dominated by Alabama supporters not happy that their school was playing a team with black players.

But Bryant had persuaded a black high school fullback, Bo Matthews, to commit to Alabama — and invited him to Memphis. The kid from Huntsville, Ala., hung out that week with the black players from Colorado. "We worked on him hard and told him to forget being the pioneer at Alabama — to come to Colorado," Collins says.

Matthews changed his mind, picked Colorado, became an All-American and was the No. 2 overall pick by the San Diego Chargers in the 1974 draft.

Bryant brought in running back Wilbur Jackson in 1971.

"We played Southern Cal in 1970, and they had a

black running back named Sam Cunningham," Bryant was quoted once by The New York Times as saying. "He came down here and ran all over our skinny white kids. Scored three touchdowns. He did more for integration in Alabama than anything else."

A wild third quarter ended with Colorado behind 33-31.

Anderson scored with 10:57 remaining. The all-Big Eight Conference quarterback had been shifted, in secret, to tailback the week of the season's third game.

"We were thin because of injuries at tailback," Crowder says. "I brought Bobby into my office and said I wasn't ordering or asking him to make the move. I just wanted to describe to him what we were thinking, and it was a big gamble. He said, 'Coach, if you want me to play guard for you, I will.' "

CU got a safety, and Alabama had a last chance for a tie, but on a shovel pass to Musso, Orvis and Brundige sandwiched the running back and forced a fumble. The referee ruled that Colorado had possession.

"Bear walked to the middle of the field," Crowder says. "I was so in awe of him. I didn't know what he was doing, but Brundige and Orvis told me later he called the ref by name and said 'Billy Bob' or whatever, 'you know that's a shovel pass and is an incompletion, not a fumble.' "

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"Sure enough, the referee signaled Alabama ball. Bear grabbed the ref's yellow flag and waved it and said, 'Billy Bob, you know you got to call a 15-yard unsportsmanlike penalty on me for being out here.' And the referee did just that."

The Tide gave up the ball on downs at its 11, and Anderson rushed three straight times, the last for a touchdown with 45 seconds remaining.

Running up the score? Colorado had asked for timeouts after each play and was accused of running up the score. There was a reason. The Buffs were outraged by the treatment from the Alabama backers.

"I was far less aware than the players of the disparaging remarks and the actions, but I know they were motivated to beat Alabama. It was one of the best victories we ever had," said Crowder, the Buffs' coach from 1963-73 and the CU athletic director for 20 years.

Collins and the rest of the defense recorded an amazing 13 sacks. Two of the defensive assistants were Don James and Jim Mora, who went on to become outstanding head coaches in college and pro football.

Playing in his final game for the Buffaloes, Anderson rushed 35 times for 254 yards, both records for all bowls, and scored 18 points. He was the No. 1 draft pick of the Broncos and the second vote-getter to Whizzer White on Colorado's all-century team. The 60-year-old Anderson has been a Colorado businessman

and broadcaster for 32 years.

Faison, also a senior in '69, brought together the black players in the locker room after the game and said: "I'll never come back to Memphis or Tennessee."

Colorado returned to the Liberty Bowl in 1970 and lost to Tulane. Years later Faison won a \$20 million business grant from the Tennessee Valley Authority and moved to Chattanooga, Tenn.

"A justice made up for an injustice," he said.

Colorado and Alabama played in the 1991 Blockbuster Bowl, won by the Tide, 30-25. The Buffs accused the Tide of spying on their practices.

Bear Bryant announced his retirement in 1982 and coached his final game at the Liberty Bowl. He died 28 days later. His last team had 54 black players.

Colorado and Alabama play Sunday in Shreveport, La., in the Independence Bowl.

Woody Paige: 303-954-1095 or wpaige@denverpost.com

CU's seven black players on 1969 team

When the Buffs played Alabama in the Liberty Bowl, Colorado had seven African-American players. A look at their positions and the seasons they earned a letter under head coach Eddie Crowder: **Glen Bailey, CB-RB**

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1968-70-71

Bill Collins, DT

1967-69

Cliff Dunham, LB

1970

Derrick Faison, DT

1968-69

Brian Foster, DB

1969-71

Eric Harris, CB

1968-69

Bruce R. Smith, DT

1968-70

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CU to install permanent lighting at Folsom Field

By Kyle Ringo

Friday, December 28, 2007

The Big 12 Conference will help fund permanent lighting for Folsom Field and other football stadiums in the league by paying member schools \$100,000 a year over the next four years, CU athletic director Mike Bohn said.

The league helps pay for temporary lighting costs for night games around the Big 12 now, but it will stop that practice after doling out the new subsidy over the next four years. If schools fail to install proper lighting with the money, they will be responsible for the costs associated with lights at all future night games beginning in 2012.

CU has always used portable lighting for night games in Boulder, costing the school about \$60,000 per game because the lights are trucked to CU from Iowa. Those lights are powered by noisy generators set up near the campus tennis courts just behind the Folsom Field sections where fans of the visiting team usually sit. The generators also use diesel fuel.

CU does have permanent lights on the east side of Folsom, attached to the top of the luxury boxes. CU still must use temporary lights on the west side.

Bohn said having permanent lighting will save the athletic department money over the long haul and he hopes to find lights that can be powered by renewable energy.

CU played two games that required the use of lights this season when it hosted Florida State in a game that began at 8 p.m. and Missouri, a game that began in late-afternoon but finished in the evening.

Colorado is finalizing plans to play West Virginia in a Thursday night game next season. The game could be the third game of the season, with the Florida State game -- likely to be played in Jacksonville -- switching in the order with West Virginia.

Ticket givers, takers

Bohn said CU had sold about 2,000 of its allotment of 12,000 tickets for the game as of Thursday. He said another 1,000 tickets were expected to go to friends and family members of coaches and players.

Bohn said the athletic department has been working with donors to provide tickets for military members, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts and other children's groups to Sunday's game.

CU also has been working with charities that participated in supplying aid to Hurricane Katrina victims to distribute some of CU's tickets to volunteers who helped during the crisis. Bohn said about 4,000 tickets had been donated.

Anyone interested in purchasing tickets for others to attend can contact the CU athletic department

through Jim Senter at 303-492-8828.

Notable

Bohn said CU is paying for the travel expenses for all assistant coaches and their families, but will not pick up the tab for those families in need of more than one extra hotel room. It is a common practice involving bowl trips for most major college football programs. Dan Hawkins' assistants all will be paid an additional four weeks salary as a bowl bonus, Bohn said. ... Hawkins said any player who violates curfew this week will forfeit their bowl gift, a Sony home entertainment system. Curfew was set at 1 a.m. the first two nights and will be moved up beginning tonight. ... CU fans who attend the Buffs Pep Rally and battle of the bands at the Louisiana Boardwalk on Saturday will be given commemorative pennants and pompoms.



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That's droll, Tide, droll

Respect given Buffaloes borders on laughable

By B.G. Brooks

Friday, December 28, 2007

For the most part, they seem to be good soldiers, listening to their coaches and saying what is required of them about the University of Colorado's defense.

Spend a little time listening to some of Alabama's offensive players, though, and how they *really* view their Independence Bowl opponent becomes a bit more difficult to mask.

And why not?

In their final three regular-season games, the Buffaloes yielded 45.2 points a game, 38.1 during the final six weeks in winning two of six games to close the season.

If Alabama's Nick Walker sounds like Missouri's Chase Daniel, well, he should. Daniel and the Tigers punched up 55 points on the Buffs, who scored 10, and although Walker on Thursday didn't predict the Crimson Tide would match that total or outcome, he did pull a page from Daniel's quote sheet.

"There are plays to be made (against CU). . . . The way they play their schemes, we should be able to make a lot of big plays. . . . "If our (tight ends) come open, I'm pretty sure we'll get the ball," said Walker, who made 19 receptions for 166 yards and two touchdowns this season.

Even more productive in Alabama's passing game is senior receiver DJ Hall, whose 63 receptions, 947 yards and six scoring catches were team-highs in 2007. He, too, didn't seem convinced CU's secondary could throw a blanket over an Alabama passing game that totaled 221.9 yards a game and accounted for 16 of the Crimson Tide's 35 touchdowns this season.

The Buffs' best cover corner is senior Terrence Wheatley, who missed the final two games with a broken bone in his left foot. Wheatley has returned and expects to play Sunday, and he should expect to be tested by Hall and quarterback John Parker Wilson.

Said Hall, who owns seven school receiving records, of CU's All-Big 12 Conference corner: "If they got one of the best cornerbacks in the nation, we're going to see what he's got."

Alabama might not have finished the season in the style Tuscaloosans are accustomed - the Crimson Tide dropped four straight games - but that hasn't affected the team's swagger.

Junior offensive lineman Antoine Caldwell opened with sound bites complimentary of CU's front seven - "They're very disciplined (and) do a great job" - but quickly lapsed into this:

"I felt Oklahoma outplayed them a little bit, but (CU) created some turnovers and, at the end . . . they came back and stole that game."

A 27-24 win against the then-No. 3 Sooners was the Buffs' signature victory, but Alabama coach Nick Saban continues to marvel at CU's 65 points in a season-ending win against rival Nebraska.

Asked about anything that could be gleaned from his team's and CU's 6-6 records, Saban said, "I don't make predictions. They've got a good football team. They've done a great job with their offense, in terms of how they outplan people with their

formations. . . . They scored 65 points against Nebraska, and that speaks for itself."

In most years, maybe - but not this one. The 2007 Cornhuskers allowed more points than most Nebraska teams do in a decade.

But they also hung 51 on the Buffs.

If Walker, Hall, Caldwell and the rest of the Alabama offense have a gleam in their eyes, the reason should be obvious.

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Local college football report, December 28

By Staff Reports

Friday, December 28, 2007

CU

Impressive turnout

Athletic director **Mike Bohn** was pleased Thursday by all members of the University of Colorado's football team showing up to aid in the distribution of boxes of chicken for community food banks in the Shreveport, La., area.

"That type of commitment to the bowl community from our coach and players was huge for us," Bohn said of the event organized by Independence Bowl officials.

Alabama, the Buffaloes' opponent Sunday night, also was scheduled to participate, but the number of Crimson Tide players present was on the low side.

"In no way, shape or form am I trying to disparage our opponent. . . . All I know is we had a hundred there and their six representatives left halfway through the event," Bohn said. "Our players stayed until the very end."

Ticket count

CU has sold close to 3,000 tickets for the game, with more than 2,000 of those purchased by the school's fan base and the rest going to players and coaches, Bohn said.

Also, CU will donate about 4,000 additional tickets to local charities involved in aid for Hurricane Katrina victims, as well as military serving at nearby Barksdale Air Force Base, and Boy and Girl Scouts troops in the area.

Numbers game

58 of the 102 players listed on the Crimson Tide's media guide roster are from Alabama.

Schedule tweak

The nonconference portion of the Buffs' 2008 schedule is expected to be adjusted to "provide a greater spacing between the three marquee opponents we play back to back to back," Bohn said, referring to games Sept. 20 at Florida State, Sept. 27 against West Virginia and Oct. 4 against Texas.

ESPN is negotiating with CU and West Virginia to switch their game to a Thursday night, which Bohn said would "give our team more time to prepare and stay healthy for the next game. I believe with the tough schedule we play, our kids and coaches deserve that."

CU's most recent Thursday night appearance on ESPN was in 1992 against Missouri.

Second wave

A second CU chartered aircraft will arrive Saturday, with president **Hank Brown**, chancellor **Bud Peterson** and at least four regents aboard.

Scheduled for that night is a battle of the school bands on the city's boardwalk area at the Red River, with the Buffs planning to emulate the Pearl Street Stampede that has been successful on Friday nights in Boulder before home games.

He said it

"I know I'm getting a little old, but I hope I've still got a little style and grace left in me."

Nick Saban, Alabama coach, on an impromptu dance performance - he and his wife did The Cupid Shuffle - at the team's Christmas party.

Etc.

* CU's assistant coaches will receive four weeks of additional pay as a reward for the postseason appearance.

* **Drew Hawkins**, the youngest son of CU coach **Dan Hawkins**, is weighing walk-on opportunities at Wyoming and several lower division in-state schools.

* Buffs junior cornerback **Ben Burney** is writing a daily blog about his Independence Bowl experience. It can be found at CUBuffs.com.

* CU is targeting the fall to have permanent lighting in place on Folsom Field's west side. "But it could be a challenge" to meet that goal, Bohn said. Big 12 Conference schools can receive a yearly subsidy of \$100,000 for temporary lighting.

Air Force

Meeting expectations

Chad Hennings, Air Force's 1987 Outland Trophy winner, will be the guest speaker at today's Armed Forces Bowl kickoff luncheon at The Speedway Club inside Texas Motor Speedway.

Hennings, a teammate of first-year coach **Troy Calhoun**, wasn't surprised by the Falcons' 9-3 record that ended a string of three consecutive losing seasons.

"I kind of thought (former coach) **Fisher (DeBerry)** would be there forever, but it's great to have a former teammate, somebody that knows the system, has been through it and has the passion and knows what is expected of the cadets to be the coach," Hennings said. "To have the year they've had is a great testimony to Troy and his staff."

Hennings, who went on to win three Super Bowl rings with the Dallas Cowboys, suspected Calhoun had the makings of being an excellent coach.

"He's one of those guys that remembers everything," Hennings said. "He remembers every statistic, every game and he's almost a prodigy in that aspect. And he's a great student of the game."

"Even as a player, he knew the offense inside and out. Having the pedigree that he's had with the coaching experience he's had coming up through **Jim Grobe** in college and through **Mike Shanahan** and finishing as a coordinator with the Texans . . . he brings a lot of different aspects about football having coached at all levels."

"Wrap that around the package of being a former cadet and having had the experiences of being able to work within that system . . . that's just a recipe for success."

Bearing witness

If there was any doubt California would be motivated heading into the Armed Forces Bowl after losing six of its final seven games, ESPN commentator **Kirk Herbstreit** has fired up the Golden Bears.

Herbstreit said of all the non-BCS bowl games, the most likely blowout would be Air Force over California. The Golden Bears

players didn't welcome his comment.

"Nobody likes to be called out on national television," tackle **Mike Teppar** told San Francisco Bay Area reporters last week. "I can tell you our team wasn't happy about it."

Earlier this season, Herbstreit was talking about the struggles of Notre Dame and pointed out the Fighting Irish had a couple of fluff games at the end of the season, particularly Air Force.

His comments ruffled the Falcons. Air Force beat Notre Dame 41-24.

"He's calling us out that he thinks we're weak and that we play with no heart," California reserve defensive end **Rulon Davis** said. "I don't want him to think we're a bunch of punks."

Robust return

John Rabold, Air Force's All-Mountain West Conference linebacker, looked like his old self Thursday.

Rabold, a 6-foot-3, 235-pound senior, missed three practices before Christmas break, spent two days in the hospital and lost 15 pounds with a viral infection.

"I'm good," Rabold said. "I got all the weight back. It was a good time to go home and get some home cooking from Mom."

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Longmont, Colorado
Friday, December 28, 2007

TIMES-CALL

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Defensive concern

Bufs figure to have their hands full with potent Crimson Tide

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

SHREVEPORT, La. — Statistics are for losers.

That's what Colorado football coach Dan Hawkins believes. And he reiterated the opinion Thursday while discussing his team and its chances Sunday in the Independence Bowl against Alabama.

So it should matter little to him that the Buffs allowed 389.4 yards per game in 2007, which was sixth in the Big 12 and 64th in the nation. Or that the pass defense gave up 261.8 a game, eighth most in the league and 101st most in the nation.

"We played some pretty doggone high-powered offenses," he said.

In this particular version of Alabama, the Buffs face a team with an offense that generated 4,094 yards in 2007 — the second-largest total in the tradition-rich program's history. And quarterback John Parker Wilson is among its top five in career passes, completions, passing yards and touchdowns.

While CU's biggest problem Sunday might be Alabama, the Buffs have one final chance in 2007 to fix statistics that appeared to show major flaws with its defense in November.

CU allowed Missouri and Nebraska to score 55 and 51 points, and Iowa State had 31 — after halftime.

Injuries abounded, but that wasn't the only problem. CU knows it better have things straight Sunday.

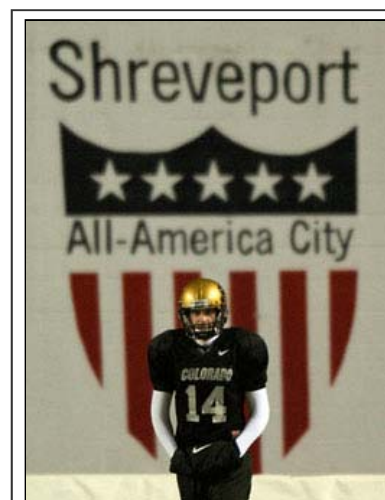
"I wouldn't say we were in a slump," defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "I'd say we played a little more inconsistently. It seemed like we got to a point where we figured out elves out and then we had a few relapses ... where we didn't play our brand of football.

"I think our coaching staff has done a great job of going back to the basics, making sure we're sure on everything, we're ready to go, that we're not throwing too much in there and we're not trying to do too many different things. We just focus on what we do."

It was Hypolite who at halftime against Nebraska asked coaches to simplify things, an adjustment that triggered the Buffs' comeback. CU linebacker Jordon Dizon said coaches called only two or three defenses in the second half of that game. Usually, he added, there are 20 to 25 different calls.

The Cornhuskers rolled to 610 total yards, but in the second half, the Buffs forced turnovers and shut Nebraska down — except for two late scores that came against reserves and after the outcome had been decided.

And it's games like Nebraska that prompt Hawkins' "statistics are for losers" mantra.



Colorado punter Matt DiLallo warms up on a chilly evening at Independence Bowl Stadium in Shreveport, La., on Thursday evening. CU, which arrived in Shreveport on Wednesday, will play Alabama on Sunday night.

Lewis Geyer / Times-Call

Hawkins won't dispute the value of turnovers. The Buffs posted edges in turnover margin in all of their biggest 2007 wins.

"Against Oklahoma, we got turnovers and we got them at opportune times," he said. "That's typically a big deal in any football game."

Said defensive coordinator Ron Collins: "It seems like the games we've been successful in, we've gotten turnovers and eliminated the big plays. That's two big things, and we've tackled well. If we can do those three things good, I think we have a shot."

Collins said CU will continue what it started against Nebraska, and keep things simple. He said he wants his players going fast and has simplified defenses.

That appears to be what the players want, too.

"We're trying to keep it simple," Dizon said.

"To change it up, that would be dumb of us."

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Colorado's Charles silences critics

Running back closes in on 1,000-yard season

December 28, 2007

By Brian Vernellis

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Hugh Charles has faced questions about his offensive productivity since he enrolled at Colorado. Critics pointed to his height (5-foot-8), his inconsistency over three seasons or a lack of passion when it comes to the game.

Charles vowed to make his senior season the year when all doubts were erased. Few question anything about his game now.

"Rushing for 1,000 yards has always been my goal every year," Charles said. "I knew coming into this season that I was going to be a leader with the running game, and I had to focus on that and doing well for my team."

"I have had to answer a lot of questions every season. It's been that way off and on with me. I think I answered a lot of those questions that people had of me."

He nearly reached his goal of a 1,000-yard season, rushing for 989 yards. He was fourth in yards per game (89.9) and sixth in rushing yards in the Big 12.

The potential has been there, and Charles showed flashes of it the previous two seasons.

As a sophomore, he had three 100-yard games followed by two more last season. But, those great performances came in spurts. Coaches wanted to see more consistent efforts from him, especially in his senior season.

Critics doubted his consistency, his production, his size and everything else about him. But they couldn't question his athleticism.

He's regarded as one of the strongest guys on the Buffaloes, not to mention one of the fastest.

He ran a 4.35 time in the 40-yard dash at a NIKE camp and has hardly lost a step at Colorado. He clocked a 4.37 with the Buffaloes.

In the weight room, there are few who can match him pound-for-pound. He bench presses 405 pounds, squats 510 pounds and has a vertical jump of 41 inches.

"Hugh is a guy we really challenged," offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said. "He's one of those guys that is a weight-room numbers guy and a track time guy that just played for football."

"We were trying to get him to translate the confidence he had. He's an off-the-charts lifter, but he didn't really play with that confidence. We put a moratorium on running out-of-bounds and really challenged him to take that next step, and he's done a great job of doing that."

This year, the work and commitment paid off. He had six 100-yard efforts, including a stretch of four straight making him the



Colorado's Hugh Charles (2) talks with teammates prior to the start of practice Thursday at Independence Stadium. (Greg Pearson/The Times)

Colorado's offensive keys

Shield their QB-Protection of Cody Hawkins has improved. Giving him time to set and throw is vital.

Charles in charge-Create opportunities for Charles to make plays. Smart decisions-Hawkins needs to make right choices like he did late in the season.

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first Colorado back to do so since 2002 when Chris Brown reeled off eight straight.

"He definitely toughened up because it's always been a knock on him that he wasn't going to run between the tackles," quarterback Cody Hawkins said.

"It was all the media guys saying that. The guys on this team knew what he was capable of. He's been an awesome back for us. He can catch the ball. He can run it very well inside and outside. And, he's an important presence in the weight room and working out on the field."

Finally, Charles started producing on the consistent basis coaches knew he could, but they and teammates also saw another change in the normally reserved tailback from Keller, Texas.

"Hugh definitely became more of a vocal leader," Hawkins said. "He was always a guy that was pretty quiet, but he stepped up and started calling some guys out."

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Scott Ferrell: Colorado's Celestine goes from Mamou to major college ball

December 28, 2007

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Until Wednesday night, Kendrick Celestine had been in Independence Stadium one time in his life.

Celestine participated in a Max Emfinger combine at the stadium as a freshman football player at Mamou High School.

Celestine had no way of knowing, but he would return one day.

He is a freshman wide receiver for the Colorado Buffaloes who will play Alabama on Sunday night in the PetroSun Independence Bowl at Independence Stadium.

He has gone from Mamou to major college football.

Celestine, a 5-foot-11, 180-pound freshman, was one of the state's top recruiting prospects just a year ago.

He was being recruited by Miami, Texas A&M, LSU and Colorado, among others.

One of Celestine's Mamou teammates, linebacker Charles Young, committed early to Texas A&M. The Aggies appeared to be a possible destination for Celestine as well.

"We had kind of like wanted to go to the same school and stay together," Celestine said.

Colorado, though, offered something A&M and the others didn't.

"Coach Eric Kiesau, when he was recruiting me, he basically told me that I could come in as a true freshman and play and get involved in the offense," Celestine said. "That's really what I wanted to do."

Kiesau didn't lie.

Celestine has played in 11 of 12 games for the Buffaloes this season. He has caught 11 passes for 151 yards. He even made a start the Buffs' win over Oklahoma.

His performance this season is made even more impressive by the fact that this is just his second season playing as a receiver.

In high school, Celestine was Mamou's quarterback his sophomore and junior seasons. He moved to wide receiver as a senior.

"My senior year, I started getting recruited as a wide receiver so my coach decided to move me to wide receiver so I could get some experience there," Celestine said.

His experience included 45 catches for 936 yards and 11 touchdowns.

His 20.8 yards per reception as a high school senior only backed up what Colorado coach Dan Hawkins already thought.

On the day he signed Celestine, Hawkins said, "He's a very, very electric guy. He has speed to burn."

Celestine's fast track to success has contained its share of bumps in the road.

When he arrived in Boulder in June, he was 1,252 miles away and in a culture much different than the one he left in Mamou.

"Just being on my own, having to manage my own time, having to wake myself up, do everything on my own," Celestine said. "The first two months were real difficult."

On the field, there was an adjustment as well.

"Toward the middle of the season, the offense, everything started slowing down," he said. "When I first came here, everything was like back-



Colorado's Kendrick Celestine goes through a drill during the Buffaloes' workout Thursday night. (Shane Bevel/The Times)

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to-back, back-to-back. It was a little overwhelming. After a while, I started to get a grip on it.

"It was a great learning experience because in the beginning I was kind of nervous in games but toward the end of the season I found myself being more confident.

"Next season, I'm really expecting to be more confident in the offense and have a better season."

A better season from Celestine could mean no more return trips to Shreveport.

But for now, Celestine is glad to be in a bowl where his family can see him play — as a freshman.

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Colorado Notes: CU balances bowl, business

December 28, 2007

By Scott Ferrell

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If the Colorado Buffaloes didn't know how they would balance the fun part of a bowl trip with the business part, then they found out on Thursday.

Besides team meetings and practice on Thursday night, the Buffs also took part in the FCA breakfast, unloaded food at a Lift Up America function and then toured Barksdale Air Force Base.

"We're a team that lives in the moment," Colorado defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "You can't control football when I'm at the air force base. You can't control football when I'm laying in my hotel room. I can only control football when I'm in meetings, when I'm on the field. That's how you do it.

"You focus on what you're doing at that time and not let other things seep in."

The Buffs certainly have their priorities in order.

"On a bowl trip, we're not coming down here for anything else but winning a football game," Hypolite said. "The No. 1 thing is we want to win this football game.

"Giving food back to the community, going to the air force base, those are all great. But No. 1 is to win this football game."

Hypolite and his teammates did some good at the Lift Up America event.

"I especially love giving back to the community," Hypolite said. "They were saying, 'We feed like 90-something thousand people with just what we did this morning.'

"To have that kind of an impact on a community that none of us are actually from ... is a great boost for morale for me and my teammates."

Turnover talk

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins is hoping his team's clean performance last month against Nebraska in the regular-season finale will carry over into Sunday's Independence Bowl.

The Buffaloes did not have a turnover against Nebraska for only the second time all season.

"Most of the games when we won the turnover battle we've won the game," Hawkins said. "When we've lost the turnover battle, we've lost the game."

Actually, Colorado is 4-1 when winning the turnover battle and 2-4 when losing.

The Buffs are 0-1 when the turnovers are even.

Tickets, who needs tickets

Colorado freshman wide receiver Kendrick Celestine of Mamou has been a human version of Stub Hub since the announcement of the I-Bowl teams earlier this month.

"I've got about 55, maybe 60 people coming," Celestine said. "People have been calling for tickets since the day they found out about the game. I don't believe I'll be able to get that many tickets. Each player gets six tickets and I've been trying to get some."

Celestine has already gotten 15 tickets.

Up next

The Buffaloes and Crimson Tide will participate in the annual Minuteman Luncheon today at the Shreveport Convention Center.

The event is scheduled to begin at 11:45 a.m.

After the Minuteman Luncheon, the team will practice at 4 p.m. at Independence Stadium. It is the first Colorado practice that will be entirely closed to the media.