



Bufs fire blanks vs. FSU

Running game falters again as CU barely avoids being shut out

By Kyle Ringo

Sunday, September 16, 2007

The Colorado Buffaloes couldn't throw the ball to save their lives a year ago. Now they can't run it.

Boy, what this offense would give for a dose of Eric Bieniemy, Rashaan Salaam or Bobby Purify. What it seems to need even more than a stout runner, however, is the offensive lines that blocked for those famous Buff backs.

One week after losing the hottest game in the program's history at Arizona State, the Buffs dropped their home opener 16-6 to Florida State in a game with the latest start time in Boulder in CU history (8:15 p.m.).

The Buffs' inability to run made them predictable and easy to defend, and they narrowly avoided being shut out for the first time in 225 games, a span of nearly 19 years. The last time the Buffs were shut out was Nov. 12, 1988 at Nebraska (7-0).

Coach Dan Hawkins still has never watched one of his teams go an entire game without scoring, but he now knows what it's like to come awfully close. After place-kicker Kevin Eberhart missed a pair of field goals, the Buffs went deep into the fourth quarter before finally getting on the scoreboard.

For the second week in row the Buffs were completely overmatched in the running game. Nearly each time they tried to send a wide receiver around the end on a reverse or a running back up the middle, they were thrown backwards by the Seminoles.

An offensive line allegedly beefed up from an arduous offseason in the weight room could not muster a push of any kind against a stout and speedy defensive front. CU linemen seemed to sulk back to the huddle at times frustrated with failure.

Hawkins opted not to make any changes, keeping heralded offensive line recruit Ryan Miller on the sidelines yet again. The same five offensive linemen have now played every down this season.

CU ran the ball 25 times for 27 yards. In the past two games combined the Buffs have gained 59 yards on 52 carries and scored 13 offensive points.

"You have to run the ball to win consistently," Hawkins said. "You can't keep dropping back. I thought we did a good job being patient with it and continuing to go to it, but we just have to continue to keep harping on it and keep going.

"You can't drop back and throw it 65 times and win all your games."

The Buffs actually threw 54 times, the second-most in school history. And quarterback Cody Hawkins' 34 completions also were the second-most in school history. Cody Hawkins produced his first 300-yard passing day, but nearly half that came in the fourth quarter when the Seminoles were playing it safe defensively.

The Buffs were so ineffective at times they were booed by the home crowd, which came dressed in black in support of a student-led "blackout" in the stands. It was one of the most vibrant crowds in recent memory at kickoff, but that energy faded throughout the game as it became clear the Buffs couldn't move the ball with consistency.

"It was a good football game," Florida State coach Bobby Bowden said. "Colorado just wouldn't quit."

Florida State opened the scoring early in the second quarter after cornerback Tony Carter intercepted Cody Hawkins setting his team up at midfield. The Seminoles needed just three plays to score, with tailback Antone Smith doing most of the damage with a 36-yard cutback run to the end zone.

Smith took the handoff from quarterback Drew Weatherford and headed left with the entire CU defense following his momentum to that side. He darted back to the right through a hole where CU linebacker R.J. Brown should have been. Safety D.J. Dykes didn't have the speed to catch Smith.

The Seminoles extended the lead on their next possession by driving 50 yards to kick a 31-yard field goal. Colorado place-kicker Kevin Eberhart had missed a 37-yard chance in the first quarter.

Eberhart missed a second field goal from 46 yards out on the Buffs' first possession of the second half, and it was beginning to look like CU's streak of games without being shut out was in jeopardy.

Florida State added another field goal in the middle of the third quarter to extend its lead to 13-0 and place kicker Gary Cismesia completed the Seminoles' scoring with a 37-yard kick in the fourth quarter to push the lead to 16-0.

The Seminoles could have had a much larger lead, but they couldn't convert on third downs against a tough CU defense, which more than held up to the challenge of facing superior athleticism. FSU converted just one time in 13 tries in third down.

The Buffs finally scored with 3 minutes, 39 seconds left in the game when Cody Hawkins hit tight end Tyson Devree in the back of the end zone on fourth-down-and-10 from the 11-yard line. It was the latest the Buffs had gone in a game without scoring during its 225-game streak. CU failed on its two-point conversion try.

The Buffs almost came up with the ensuing onside kick, something they have repeatedly practiced throughout training camp. They got the ball back a final time in the last two minutes of the contest and drove into the redzone with seconds to play, but Cody Hawkins was intercepted in the end zone as he attempted to complete a pass to tight end Riar Geer.

"This was a chance for us to play a really good program and win a football game, and I think our guys discovered that we can play with anybody," Dan Hawkins said. "We need to quit making excuses and go make plays. Do things that we do in practice and you know, have a little bit more assertiveness about it."



Smith, Lockridge burn redshirts

Freshmen struggle in CU debuts

By Ryan Thorburn

Sunday, September 16, 2007

Two talented Colorado freshmen joined the "blackout" party on Saturday night at Folsom Field.

Wide receiver Josh Smith and running back Brian Lockridge both burned their redshirts and saw their first action for the Buffs during the 16-6 loss to Florida State.

Smith, who was very impressive during preseason camp until being hospitalized with a bruised kidney, carried the ball on CU's first offensive snap but was stopped for a 2-yard loss. The coaching staff scripted several plays for Lockridge, but his first carry went for no gain.

Cody Hawkins was intercepted by Seminoles cornerback Tony Carter looking for Smith deep down the west sideline on a third-and-9 in the second quarter. Three plays later Florida State took a 7-0 lead on a 36-yard touchdown run by Antone Smith.

With 3:01 remaining in the first half, Smith made his first collegiate catch for a 2-yard gain. In the third quarter, Hawkins found Smith streaking down the east sideline for a 38-yard completion, which is the longest pass play of the season for the Buffs so far.

But defensive end Everette Brown would sack Hawkins for an 11-yard loss moments later. And in a third-and-21 situation, a draw to Lockridge was sniffed out by the Seminoles for a 5-yard loss.

On CU's next possession, Smith was tackled for a 7-yard loss on a reverse at his own 8-yard line. After a timeout, the freshman took another tough hit on third-and-17 as Hawkins' pass to him sailed incomplete.

"Josh, he's a funny guy. He always wants the ball and wants to go 100 percent," Cody Hawkins said. "... Tonight we tried to get him a couple plays and the timing wasn't always right."

The Buffs did not insert any of their promising freshmen offensive linemen into the game. Head coach Dan Hawkins said last week that there was a possibility that some of his young talent up front, including five-star recruit Ryan Miller, would make CU debuts.

Smith (just the one catch) and Lockridge (four carries, 7 yards) had hoped for more spectacular and successful starts to their CU careers, but they should be able to enhance CU's offense in the weeks to come.

And obviously the Buffs could use some help on that side of the ball after scoring 13 offensive points in the last eight quarters.



Buffaloes hold first Roundup

By Kyle Ringo

Sunday, September 16, 2007

Most fans of the oldest college football programs in the nation can't claim to have been there when certain game-day traditions began.

If the newest tradition at Colorado catches on, several hundred fans who were outside Folsom Field on Saturday will have a story to tell for years to come.

When CU coaches and players arrived at the stadium from the team hotel on buses three hours before their meeting with Florida State, they stopped on Colorado Avenue instead of making their way to the Dal Ward Center as was the case in the past.

They got off the buses and walked through a tunnel of fans into the south end of the stadium, stopping first to touch the bronze Buffalo statue in the plaza area. They entered Gate One and walked single file down stadium stairs to the field where they circled the Buffalo logo at midfield clapping in unison.

In the huddle afterward offensive team captain Tyler Polumbus could be heard barking at his teammates.

"There is some energy tonight fellas," Polumbus said. "The fans are bringing it. We've got to do our part."

Coach Dan Hawkins and his staff came up with the idea for what is being called the Buffalo Roundup during the offseason. Hawkins talked openly during the summer about his surprise at finding a lack of such traditions when he took over at CU, one of the 12 oldest college football programs.

"It's fun," linebacker Jordon Dizon said as he walked away from the statue. "It adds a whole bunch more than just walking into the locker room."

Blackout

Folsom Field was as full as it has been in years before the opening kickoff Saturday. CU fans are traditionally a late-arriving bunch, but after having all day to prepare Saturday, much of the crowd of 52,951 was in the stands when the Buffs received the opening kickoff.

Most of the crowd came dressed in black in support of a student-led "blackout" for the game. About 800 tickets went unsold. Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn called the feeling in the building "electric."

"The blackout was a success and not only the students but seemingly everyone answered the call to be in their seat by the time Ralphie took the field," Bohn said.

Third-down magic

Colorado struggled throughout last season stopping opponents on third downs and got off to a shaky start again this season when it had chances to force opponents to punt. But the Buffs turned up their play against the Seminoles, stopping Florida State on its first eight third-down plays.

Florida State managed to keep one of its drives alive during that span because of an interference penalty called against the Buffs on an incomplete pass. By the end of the third quarter, the Buffs had held on eight of the first nine third downs.

"We've locked in on them on third down," cornerback Terrence Wheatley said.

Timeout trouble

Colorado coaches and players had difficulty managing the play clock in the game. CU called consecutive timeouts following the first play of the game, leaving it with one timeout for the rest of the first half.

The Buffs called timeout in the third quarter when it appeared quarterback Cody Hawkins was angry with a wide receiver who lined up incorrectly. CU called another timeout early in the fourth quarter before a second down play.

Snaps shot

CU center Daniel Sanders snapped the ball over the head of his quarterback or wide of him on three different occasions in the game. The Buffs have had trouble with shotgun snaps in all three games this season.

Sanders is in his first season playing center after moving from guard. Prior to this season he hadn't played center in a game since his senior year in high school and he had never shotgun snapped in a game.

Telecast on hold

ESPN's national telecast of the CU-Florida State game may have been scheduled for 8:10 p.m. Saturday, but it didn't go on the air until about 8:45.

Because the preceding game on ESPN — Alabama's 41-38 victory over Arkansas — went long, the cable network didn't join the CU contest until more than 13 minutes of the game had elapsed. The game was still scoreless at the time.

Notable

The Buffs will host Miami (Ohio) next week in the second of three consecutive home games. Miami lost its second straight game Saturday. The Redhawks are 1-2 and have given up more than 40 points in each of their past two games. CU officials estimated about 7,000 tickets remain for the early-afternoon contest.



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CU gets kicked around this time

By Ryan Thorburn

Sunday, September 16, 2007

Florida State is the school that is supposed to be haunted by field goals that miss wide right.

But on Saturday night at Folsom Field, the ACC visitors were perfect in the kicking game while Colorado's Kevin Eberhart struggled during the Seminoles' 16-6 victory over the Buffs.

CU did manage to extend its scoring streak to 225 games, but Eberhart didn't have any points in a not-so-special (teams) home opener.

The last time the Buffs were shut out was on Nov. 12, 1988, during a 7-0 loss at Nebraska. Eberhart's legendary predecessor, Mason Crosby, kept the scoring streak alive with field goals in otherwise forgettable losses to Texas (70-3 in 2005), Nebraska (30-3 in 2005) and Oklahoma (42-3 in 2004).

After the Denver Broncos successfully executed their "Toro" drill a week ago to get a victory in the season opener, no one really seemed to care that Jason Elam had missed a couple of field goals earlier in the game at Buffalo.

There was no last-second shot at redemption for Eberhart this time.

The Buffs' senior place-kicker — who was carried off Invesco Field by his teammates two weeks earlier after hitting the game-tying and game-winning field goals against Colorado State — missed field goals of 37 and 46 yards against Florida State.

On fourth-and-10 at the Florida State 11 with 3:45 remaining, the Buffs went for the touchdown instead of a short field goal. Cody Hawkins found tight end Tyson DeVree for the score, but the 2-point conversion failed.

Eberhart has not split the uprights on a field goal since his 35-yard try lifted CU to a 31-28 overtime victory over the Rams on Sept. 1. He did not attempt a field goal against Arizona state and made both extra points in a 33-14 loss.

The fifth-year senior is now 3-for-6 on field goal attempts this season and 4-for-4 on extra points. Eberhart is 0-for-2 on attempts over 40 yards this season.

Meanwhile, Florida State's Gary Cismesia made field goals of 31, 27 and 37 yards.

A week ago Crosby made three field goals, including a 53-yarder and a last-minute game-winner, to lead Green Bay to a victory over Philadelphia.



Woelk: CU simply can't afford such mistakes

By Neill Woelk

Sunday, September 16, 2007

Not ready for prime time.

Not yet. The Colorado Buffaloes are still looking for that signature moment.

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins knows that sooner or later, his squad has to beat someone of note if anyone is going to notice.

Saturday night, Hawk watched as his team let another such opportunity slip away. Decked out all in black (bearing a passing resemblance to either an undertaker or Jerry Glanville), the CU coach couldn't coax that breakthrough moment out of his Buffs. A squad whose margin for error is still razor-thin once again made too many mistakes to make a statement.

This time, two missed field goals, a handful of dropped balls and no running game prevented the Buffs from making a game of it. The visiting Seminoles were by no means the fearsome 'Noles of even a few years ago, but they still had bigger, faster and stronger players in more places than the hosts — and they kept their miscues to a minimum.

That made the biggest difference in the game. If the Buffs are going to beat a team of FSU's caliber, they'll have to play a near-perfect game.

They are nowhere near that point yet.

Defensively, Colorado had nothing to be ashamed of. Colorado trailed by 10 at the half, by 13 at the end of three quarters and by 10 at game's end, despite playing on the losing end of a field-position battle. The defense even came up with what looked like might be a momentum-shifting turnover early in the third period, when linebacker Brad Jones grabbed what replays seemed to show was an interception. The call on the field, though, was simply incomplete pass.

(Memo to Big 12 officials — if you're going to spend hundreds of thousands of dollars on a replay system, you might want to use it when the game is still up for grabs. Just a thought ...)

Still, the defense managed to keep the Buffs within striking range for most of three quarters, which is about all that should be asked of a defense.

But instead of striking, the offense struck out. There were the occasional big plays that momentarily gave hope to the near sellout crowd, but consistency once again evaded Colorado. CU's two best chances to score when it would have mattered ended in missed field goals, words that once seemed to belong to the Seminoles — wide right and wide left.

But even had the kicks gone through, they wouldn't have been enough to make a difference to anyone

but the oddsmakers.

What's become clear is that this is not a team whose progress will be measured in leaps and bounds. The Buffs are not a team that can make mistakes and expect to overcome them — at least not against good teams. The talent level is simply not there. Miscues will be magnified.

And, the Buffs are a team that has yet to figure out how to take advantage of opportunities when they are presented.

Early in the third quarter Saturday, the Buffs drove from their own 27 to the FSU 13. But from a first-and-10 just 13 yards away from the end zone, CU immediately went backwards. Three plays produced losses of 7, 4 and 5 yards — and fourth down yielded a missed field goal.

Missed opportunity.

Not that Hawkins didn't gamble to put the Buffs in position. Late in the first quarter, Hawkins didn't flinch when he left his offense on the field on a fourth-and-3 from the FSU 37. A 13-yard pass to Hugh Charles gave the Buffs a first down — which the Buffs immediately followed with a penalty, soon to be followed by the first missed field goal of the evening.

Missed opportunity.

You also have to like Hawkins' promise to play for the win. Instead of kicking a field goal late in the game, just to get points on the board and keep CU's scoring streak alive (now 225 games since you asked), he went for the touchdown and the long, long, long shot of pulling to within a touchdown and a couple of 2-point conversions of tying the game.

The Buffs did score ... but didn't convert the 2-point try, didn't recover the on-side kick and now find themselves 1-2 with Miami of Ohio on the horizon.

Opportunity finally capitalized upon — but worthwhile only in the moral-victory category.

It's a script the Buffs need to change.

Too little ... too late ... too many mistakes.

The margin for error won't change.

With nine games remaining and a what is still a realistic opportunity to become bowl eligible, the Buffs need to reduce those errors.

They've already used up their moral victory quotient for the season.



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florida state 16, colorado 6

Seminoles subdue Buffs

Florida State defense tough for CU to dent

By Tom Kensler
Denver Post Staff Writer

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Boulder — Colorado's 16-6 loss to Florida State late Saturday night before a packed Folsom Field and a national television audience proved to the Buffaloes that they can play with a marquee team.

It also showed the Buffaloes' offense continues to need work. Colorado (1-2) didn't score until there was just 3:38 left in the game, and the Buffs finished with minus-27 yards rushing.

"(Anybody) can say, 'We should have won,'" CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "But our defense played great. Offensively we were just not able to seize the moment."

Cody Hawkins, a redshirt freshman continuing to gain confidence, completed 34-of-53 passes for 306 yards, including an 11-yard touchdown pass to tight end Tyson DeVree. But he also threw two interception and was sacked three times.

For the second straight game, CU failed to take advantage of scoring opportunities.

"We have to work on that," Cody Hawkins said. "We were moving the chains all right. But we'd get down to their territory and kind of shoot

Colorado Football

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ourselves in the foot."

Florida State (2-1) struggled to move the ball consistently and was outgained by the hosts in total offensive yards, 279-221. But the Seminoles' speed, especially on defense, proved troublesome for Colorado.

"It was a good football game," FSU coach Bobby Bowden said. "Colorado just wouldn't quit, they kept coming back."

The all-time winningest major college football coach, Bowden earned No. 368 and stayed two games against of Penn State's Joe Paterno.

Florida State put the game out of reach early in the fourth quarter when Gary Cismesia connected on his third field goal to make it 16-0.

The Seminoles, accustomed to playing in the limelight, apparently were not intimidated by Colorado's all-black uniforms and the "Black Out" campaign that enticed most spectators to wear black.

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Bowden would be the first to admit this is not one of his vintage teams, certainly not on par with those 1987-2000 powerhouses that finished 14 consecutive years in the top five of the national polls. But while the current Seminoles may lack superstars, they still possess that signature athleticism.

Colorado's offensive woes continued. The fourth-quarter score snapped a streak of six consecutive quarters without a touchdown, including the final three quarters a week earlier in the 33-14 loss at Arizona State.

None of CU's wasted opportunities was more frustrating than coming up empty in the third quarter after a 38-yard pass from Hawkins to freshman wide receiver Josh Smith gave the Buffs first down at the FSU 26.

But after a pass to Hugh Charles gained a first down at the 13, Colorado went backward on three consecutive plays. Hawkins was sacked for a 7-yard loss, Charles lost 4 yards on a draw and a delayed handoff to Brian Lockridge didn't fool Seminole defenders who smothered the freshman tailback for a 5-yard loss.

To make matters worse, CU's Kevin Eberhart missed the field goal attempt, wide left from 46 yards.

"You can't score if you don't take advantage of opportunities," Cody Hawkins said.

Colorado's defense kept FSU off the board in the first quarter by putting pressure on Seminoles

quarterback Drew Weatherford each time he dropped back to pass.

"Colorado's defense was excellent and better than we expected," FSU running back Antone Smith, who scored the Seminole's lone touchdown on a 36-yard run in the second quarter. He finished with 66 yards on 19 carries.

Florida State gained good field position in the second quarter when cornerback Tony Carter intercepted a Hawkins pass and returned it to midfield.

Three plays later, Smith raced untouched to the end zone with 10:45 left before halftime. Bursting off left guard and then cutting right into the open field, Smith blew by CU strong safety Daniel Dykes, who was the only defender playing deep.

Colorado lacked the sharpness it showed in the overtime victory over Colorado State. But the lack of a running attack made it difficult to sustain drives.

"You have to run the football to win consistently," Dan Hawkins said. "You can't drop back and throw it 65 times and win games."

CU's Josh Smith, finally seeing action after missing the first two games with a bruised kidney, was in the starting lineup and immediately put his name in the statistics. But it was not as he would have liked it. Getting a handoff from Hawkins, Smith was stopped for a 2-yard loss on a rushing play.

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Hoping an infusion of speed would spark the offense, CU also used another true freshman, tailback Brian Lockridge, for the first time.

Colorado will complete its nonconference schedule Saturday against Miami (Ohio), a 1:30 p.m. kickoff at Folsom Field. The RedHawks fell to 1-2 after a 47-10 home loss to Cincinnati on Saturday.

Scoring helps

CU narrowly kept alive the nation's fifth-longest streak of not getting shut out since losing 7-0 at Nebraska on Nov. 12, 1988:

Michigan 278 games

Washington State 264

Oregon 260

Florida 233

Colorado 225

- Note: BYU holds the record at 361 (1975-2003)

The Grades | By Tom Kensler

Offense

D: For the second straight week, Colorado couldn't convert scoring threats into points and at times looked sloppy. At least the arrival of freshman wideout Josh Smith gave the Buffaloes somebody to stretch the defense.

Defense

B: If CU coach Dan Hawkins had known before the game that his defense would hold FSU to 16 points, he probably would have jumped for joy.

Special teams

D: Matt DiLallo punted well. But Florida State had a 44-yard punt return and two missed field-goal attempts by Kevin Eberhart contributed to the night's frustration.

Overall

C: Colorado still has a way to go before making national headlines. But nobody can say the Buffs didn't belong on the same field with the Seminoles.

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These men in black aren't prime time yet

By Mark Kiszla
Denver Post Staff Columnist

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Boulder - The man in black walked the sideline, with Colorado football coach Dan Hawkins dressed from head to toe like the late, great Johnny Cash.

And he was singing the Folsom Field blues, after his young Buffaloes worked hard but wound up sadder than a country song in a 16-6 loss to Florida State.

"We need to quit making excuses and go make plays," Hawkins said very early Sunday morning, after any hope of the breakthrough victory his CU program so desperately needs was destroyed by botched field-goal attempts, an inability to establish a respectable running attack and the speed of the Seminoles that ultimately left the Buffs breathless.

On a warm summer evening when CU encouraged fans to dress in dark clothing to create a blackout effect in the stands, it was the offense of Hawkins that faded to black.

Only an 11-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Cody Hawkins to Tyson DeVree with 3 minutes, 39 seconds remaining in the fourth quarter avoided a shutout and kept the school's 18-year-old streak of 225 games with points on the scoreboard alive.

In a game full of maddening could-haves and should-haves for the Buffs, two errant field-goal tries by Kevin Eberhart prevented CU from staying within striking distance of an upset. The missed opportunities provoked boos from a large home crowd, which obviously could recall when this program regularly beat big-name foes.

In a sports-crazy but intensely competitive market for the entertainment dollar, Colorado must work hard for your money and pack its schedule with sexy dates to get fannies in the seats.

So that explains why the Buffs stayed up late and took on the storied Seminoles, when it certainly would have been easier and probably far smarter for Hawkins' rebuilding program to pick on a patsy for an easy victory.

Not to diss the yellow-bellies hiding under the shirts of other Big 12 Conference coaches, but check these scores from elsewhere around the league: Oklahoma 54, Utah State 3. Baylor 34, Texas State 27. And, um, Troy 41, Oklahoma State 23.

What, no school for diesel mechanics was available?

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Colorado cannot afford to schedule bye weeks disguised as crummy football teams. What's more, the Buffs would not want to shamelessly pad a bowl résumé. This team takes on anybody, anywhere.

"I wouldn't want it any other way," CU linebacker Brad Jones insisted last week. "I came to this school just because we consistently play one of the hardest schedules in the nation."

When being recruited as a teenager from East Lansing, Mich., Jones demanded college recruiters to tell him "who you are playing. I want to know if you're playing somebody like Appalachian ..."

Oops.

"I mean, Appalachian State is good," Jones said, laughing at the mistake of downgrading the one patsy that has roared the loudest this season.

No worries. We know where you're coming from, Mr. Jones.

If we want to pay good money to see our local heroes whup a lousy team, we'll buy tickets for the Broncos to toy with the silver-and-bleak Oakland Raiders.

Now, Florida State might no longer be the Seminoles that made quarterback Charlie Ward a Heisman Trophy winner and the corny humor of coach Bobby Bowden famous.

But there is enough luster remaining on the

Florida State program to fill CU's home stadium with the highest concentration of folks wearing 'Noles gear anywhere this side of a Sunshine State beach.

Sure, the Buffs were gutsy - one of those polite words used to make losers feel better about themselves.

"I know when I was getting recruited, there was a team that played a lot of those (premier programs), but was getting beat 63-3. And I was going: 'OK. Great. That's awesome.' I wasn't really impressed by that," Hawkins said days before the Seminoles hit town.

Colorado entered this game having lost 14 straight times against ranked foes. Although nowhere to be seen in the current Top 25, the Seminoles were found among the others receiving votes in this week's Associated Press poll.

The Buffs played Florida State not only because they wanted the challenge, but also because CU needed to do it.

For the money.

And to assure the movers and shakers of a football nation, to say nothing of alums down the street in Denver, do not forget the Buffs used to be somebody in this sport.

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cu football notes

Bufs' running game runs in reverse

By Natalie Meisler
Denver Post Staff Writer

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Boulder — Colorado's running game against Florida State was a study in subtraction through addition.

The Buffs added two much-needed running backs to the stable — senior Hugh Charles returning from an injury and true freshman Brian Lockridge making his debut.

However, thanks to 66 lost yards, CU finished the 16-6 defeat by the Seminoles with minus-27 yards rushing. The last time FSU prevented an opponent from finishing in positive yardage came in 2004 against Alabama-Birmingham.

CU came in averaging 80.5 yards (3.0 per carry). Charles, injured on the first series of the season, started the game. On some drives Charles and Lockridge rotated with Demetrius Sumler, who was CU's leading rusher with 14 yards.

Florida State's swarming defense had a lot to do with CU's struggles on the ground.

"Their D-line is probably the best part of their defense," CU coach Dan Hawkins said.

Sumler, a redshirt freshman, came into the game Saturday with 32 of the 39 rushes by running backs.

Also getting on the field for the first time was CU freshman wide receiver Josh Smith. Although he earned the starting job from virtually the first day of camp, Smith had been sidelined by a bruised kidney. He had the big offensive play of the night with a 38-yard catch from Cody Hawkins.

Culture shock Half an hour before kickoff, the tennis courts just northwest of the stadium were occupied by students taking advantage of the warm night. The courts were still full at halftime.

"I don't think you'd see anyone playing tennis at a Florida State home game," said one woman in FSU colors. Another visiting fan said: "The football atmosphere is totally different here."

Joined in progress The 8:15 p.m. start was the latest kickoff in Folsom Field history, but it wasn't shown on the ESPN national telecast. By the time Alabama's 41-38 victory over Arkansas concluded, the clock at Folsom showed 1:50 left in the first quarter.

Thin air For all the fuss about kickoffs from the 30-yard line this season, FSU kicker Graham Gano will take it every day if he can kick at altitude. His first two kickoffs sailed

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out of the end zone. The third was caught 2 yards deep and returned to the 19. He also launched a career-best 55-yard punt.

Footnotes Cody Hawkins' third interception of the season was also the first pick by Florida State this fall. He was also picked off in the end zone on the Buffs' final play with 3 seconds left in the game. CU had six scoreless quarters over two weeks before the late score in the fourth quarter, which was the first since the first quarter against Arizona State. The Buffs were shut out in the first quarter against FSU for the second time since 2003.

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CU sputters out

Seminoles, miscues bottle up frustrated Buffs in home debut

*By Patrick Ridgell
 The Daily Times-Call*

bright lights of Folsom Field and before a national television audience on Saturday night, the Colorado Buffaloes used a fierce and valiant defense to keep a game close against a talented opponent.

Unfortunately for CU, it also had an offense that couldn't muster enough points to win.

For anyone who watched CU in 2006, this must have seemed familiar.

Florida State defeated the Buffs, 16-6, before 52,951 fans at Folsom Field.

CU is 1-2 and plays Miami (Ohio) at 1:30 p.m. Saturday at home.

CU's Tyson DeVree caught an 11-yard touchdown pass with 3 minutes, 39 seconds left in the contest, capping a 71-yard drive, to extend CU's scoring streak to 225 straight games and give the Buffs a glimmer of hope.

But quarterback Cody Hawkins' pass on the 2-point conversion missed receiver Patrick Williams, and the Buffs failed to recover the ensuing onside kick.

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■ Florida Defeats Colorado

CU drove to FSU's 20 in the final minute on an exhausted Seminole defense but couldn't score again when Hawkins was intercepted in the end zone.

The tone among players as they left the field was one of defiance, and one of frustration over missed opportunities.

"I felt like they were talented, but they weren't more talented than we are," CU freshman receiver Josh Smith said.

Said defensive tackle George Hypolite: "We had confidence before this game and have confidence still. FSU is a great team, but one play and we lose. That's the way the cookie crumbles sometimes."

The one play to which Hypolite referred was Antone Smith's 36-yard touchdown run in the second quarter, which proved insurmountable. Antone Smith cut back against CU's pursuit and ran through a gaping hole on the defensive line to score with no problem.

CU nose tackle Brandon Nicolas was not in the game on that play, having been replaced by Jason Brace, and coach Dan Hawkins was unclear on why, saying Nicolas was simply rotated out. Antone Smith ran through the hole where Nicolas normally plays.

Otherwise, the Buffs defense held FSU to 221 total yards and 10 first downs.

"I thought our defense played great," Dan Hawkins said.



Colorado tight end Tyson DeVree hauls in a pass in front of Florida State defensive back Michael Ray Garvin during the first half Saturday night at Folsom Field. In the fourth quarter, DeVree scored the Buffs' only points, catching an 11-yard TD pass from Cody Hawkins. **Times-Call/Bradley**

Wakoff

Once CU's offense reached the red zone, it struggled. The Buffs had scoring chances earlier that could have made things more interesting. But kicker Kevin Eberhart missed field goals from 37 and 47 yards.

CU had a great chance early in the third quarter when Cody Hawkins hit Josh Smith, a freshman who made his debut, deep down the east sideline, helping the Buffs reach FSU's 13. But then the Seminoles started attacking and forced CU into a fourth-and-26, and Eberhart missed wide left from 47.

As the night passed, FSU's speed on defense simply overwhelmed CU whenever the Seminoles needed it to. "We moved up and down the field, but we'd get in the end zone and we wouldn't capitalize," Cody Hawkins said. "There was some miscommunication. ... When you play a great team like FSU, you can't do that and expect to win.

"We didn't live up to our own expectations tonight."

For a second straight week, the Buffs abandoned their run game by the third quarter. CU had minus-5 rushing yards through three quarters and finished with minus-27.

That left Cody Hawkins to chuck it 53 times by night's end. He hit 34 and totaled 306 yards.

CU tailback Hugh Charles returned to the lineup after missing most of the opener and all of last week at Arizona State due to a hamstring injury. He, like all of CU's backs, was ineffective out of the backfield, but he caught five passes for 41 yards.

CU corner Terrence Wheatley left the game the fourth quarter. Dan Hawkins didn't elaborate on Wheatley's injury but said he'd be fine.

Early in the second quarter, Cody Hawkins overthrew a deep pass intended for Josh Smith. FSU's Tony Carter made an easy interception and returned it to midfield. Three plays later, FSU tailback Antone Smith went 36 yards for FSU's only TD.

CU went three and out on its next drive, and FSU responded with a nine-play drive that ended in Gary Cismesia's 31-yard field goal, making it 10-0, 4 minutes, 31 seconds before halftime.

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Round-Up a hit with fans

New tradition kicks off with human tunnel greeting Buffs

*By Brad Cohen and Patrick Ridgell
The Daily Times-Call*

BOULDER — Saturday was a night of firsts for the Colorado Buffaloes.

It marked the first time the Florida State Seminoles ever stepped foot onto Folsom Field, the latest kickoff time in CU history and the beginning of a new tradition.

Fans gathered at 5:30 p.m. Saturday to take part in the new tradition, known as the Round-Up, outside Folsom Field. CU players walked through a human tunnel filled with the sound of fans standing shoulder to shoulder and singing the school's fight song.

The tunnel began east of the Duane Physics Building and ended at Folsom Field. Players smiled and slapped hands with excited fans as they walked through the human tunnel.

"I got to high-five Dan Hawkins," CU student Matt Dietz said. "It doesn't get any better than that."

The fans who showed up seemed excited about the start of a new tradition to go along with the beginning of new era in Colorado football.

"It gets the whole city involved," season-ticket holder Andrew Barth said. "It helps the team know we're here to back them no matter what."

Players say they feed off of the fans' energy.

"Anytime you get the fans involved and you get exposure to fans, it's nice," junior free safety Ryan Walters said. "Only positive things can come out of that. (I have) never done something like that before."

Although the Round-Up is new to the Buffs, CU is rich in tradition. On Wednesday, the Orlando Sentinel ranked "Ralphie's Run" — CU's 40-year tradition of the players following their live mascot buffalo onto the field — the sixth best in college football.

Whether or not the Round-Up will last as long or induce as much as excitement as the running of Ralphie is still unclear. But it certainly helps mark the beginning of the Dan Hawkins era.

"Hawkins is brining back tradition," season ticket holder Nick Haas said. "We're definitely coming back for it."

Freshmen debut: Josh Smith and Brian Lockridge make their CU debuts in the first quarter.

Smith started and caught a 38-yard pass early in the third quarter to give CU's offense some life after a scoreless first half.

Hypolite honored: CU defensive tackle George Hypolite was named to the Division I American Football Coaches



Colorado offensive lineman Dan Sanders walks through the Round-Up, a tunnel of cheerleaders and fans along the path to Folsom Field, before the Buffs' game against Florida State on Saturday.

Times-Call/Bradley Wakoff

Association Good Works team. The 11-man team honors players for their dedication to community service.

Hypolite has always been active in such arenas. He has volunteered at the Boulder homeless shelter, participated in a food drive, and took part in an Angel Tree project to provide gifts to children and senior citizens in need during the holidays.

In his home of Los Angeles, Hypolite participates with Project Angel Food, for which he helps prepare food for homebound AIDS and cancer patients.

Nice check: At halftime, George Boedecker — founder and chairman of the Anthony H. Kruse Foundation — presented CU with the check for \$1.5 million it had previously announced to donate. The money goes to CU's development of an indoor athletic facility.

In the house: Saturday's crowd of 52,951 was CU's largest since the 2005 regular-season finale against Nebraska (54,841). It was the 93rd crowd of more than 50,000 in program history and just short of a sellout.

Former CU quarterbacks Kordell Stewart and Koy Detmer addressed the team after Thursday's practice. The two sat in the C-Club suite during the game.

Former CU coach Bill McCartney attended, as well as scouts from seven NFL teams. Shawn Schoeffler from the Fiesta Bowl also was on hand.

Faculty coach: CU coaches are starting a program in which they select a faculty coach of the week.

On Saturday, the honor went to Susan Morley from the Leeds School of Business.

"She's my favorite professor of all time," linebacker R.J. Brown said in a release.

Extra points: Bernard Jackson and Erick Faatagi were not among the 93 players CU dressed. ... KOA's Alan Roach filled in for Alan Cass as Folsom Field's public address announcer. Cass, who's recovering from West Nile virus and pneumonia, missed his first home football game in more than 25 years. ... Defensive tackle Jason Brace (sprained ankle) was listed as questionable but played. ... Saturday's 8:15 p.m. kickoff marked the latest in CU history and the third after 8 p.m. ... Saturday's officials were from the Atlantic Coast Conference, FSU's league. ... Five hundred and forty media credentials were issued for Saturday.

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CU avoids shutout, not loss

By B.G. Brooks, Rocky Mountain News
September 15, 2007

BOULDER – Blackout? How about a black eye?

A matching pair, in fact.

The University of Colorado's student-inspired scheme to have its students and fans wear black shirts for Saturday night's home opener in Folsom Field was well-conceived and well-executed.

CU's offensive effort against Florida State was anything but.

The speedy Seminoles snuffed the Buffaloes 16-6, dealing CU its second consecutive loss.

CU athletic director Mike Bohn called the blackout ``a success In a word, terrific. Or electric. We salute the student passion and their efforts to bring a great environment to the game, and it's a big part of building success and tradition."

But by midway through the fourth quarter, with the Buffs bungling play after play, students were filing out and boos were prevalent from many who remained.

Florida State (2-1) used a 36-yard touchdown run by junior tailback Antone Smith and three field goals by senior Gary Cismesia to make its first trip to Boulder successful and keep the Buffs winless (0-2) against the Atlantic Coast Conference school.

CU (1-2) finally reached the scoreboard on an 11-yard touchdown pass from redshirt freshman quarterback Cody Hawkins to senior tight end Tyson DeVree with 3:39 left in the game.

The Buffs drove to the Seminoles' 6-yard line with nine seconds to play, but Hawkins was intercepted in the end zone with two seconds left.

CU avoided its first shutout in 225 consecutive games and 119 straight games at home. The last time the Buffs were held scoreless was in a 7-0 loss at Nebraska on Nov. 12, 1988. The last time they didn't score at home was in a 28-0 loss to Oklahoma on Nov. 15, 1986.

CU threatened only twice before DeVree's scoring reception. But both drives dissolved with a pair of missed field goal attempts by senior Kevin Eberhart.

After being held to five yards rushing in a scoreless first quarter, the Seminoles finally sprung Smith on a 36-yard touchdown run and, with Cismesia's PAT, Florida State took a 7-0 lead with 10:45 remaining before halftime.

Smith's scoring run was set up by cornerback Tony Carter's interception of Hawkins and a 20-yard return to midfield. Three plays later, Smith creased the left side of the Buffs defense, cut back right and reached the end zone untouched.

A series later, after CU went three and out, Cismesia added a 31-yard field goal that sent Florida State in front 10-0, a score that held through halftime.

The Buffs' lone first-half scoring opportunity came in the opening quarter when they put together a 16-play drive that fizzled when Eberhart pulled a 37-yard field goal attempt wide right.

CU held the ball for 11:39 in the first quarter but had nothing to show for it. On the bright side, the Buffs' 33 first-half rushing yards were one more than last week's total in a 33-14 loss at Arizona State.

But that was little solace for inept CU as the third quarter began to unfold, make that unravel, just as the first quarter had.

On their first second-half possession, the Buffs fashioned what appeared to be a promising drive, starting at their own 27 and moving to the Seminoles' 12-yard line.

From there, the CU offense found ``reverse'' and stayed stuck in that gear. A missed block by senior left tackle Tyler Polumbus resulted in Hawkins losing seven yards on a sack on first down.

Second down: Tailback Hugh Charles loses four yards.

Third down: Tailback Brian Lockridge, playing in his college debut, loses five yards.

The distasteful numbers: Three plays, minus 16 yards.

On fourth-and-26, Eberhart again trotted onto the field for a salvage job, but his 46-yard field goal attempt sailed wide left this time.

Once again, after setting themselves up for success, the Buffs instead turned into saboteurs. And the Seminoles would make them pay.

After a 44-yard punt return by Preston Parker, setting up the `Noles at the Buffs' 15-yard line, Cismesia hit a 27-yard field goal and Florida State moved in front 13-0 with just over 5 minutes left in the third quarter.

After another self-destructive offensive possession – Hawkins lost 13 yards on an errant center snap in shotgun formation – the Seminoles used a nine-play, 55-yard drive to again position Cismesia for a field goal attempt.

This one was true from 37 yards and sent Florida State ahead 16-0 with 13:37 remaining. The way CU's offense was floundering, it might as well have 160-0.

IT TAKES TIME: Despite one minor glitch, the initial Buffalo Round-up appeared to be a success. Players strolled from their buses through a corridor of fans, made their way into the plaza on Folsom Field's southwest side on Colorado Ave., then walked through the stands to the stadium floor, where they formed a circle around the CU logo at midfield. The only opening-night glitch: The first wave of players onto the plaza made their way past the buffalo statue without touching it.

ETC.: Saturday night's attendance of 52,951 was the largest at Folsom Field since the final game of the 2005 season (54,581 vs. Nebraska) ... CU's next opponent, Miami (Ohio), dropped to 1-2 Saturday after being bludgeoned 47-10 by Cincinnati in its home opener. The Redhawks opened with a 14-13 win at Ball State, then were beaten 41-35 in overtime at Minnesota... ESPN opted to move Saturday night's kickoff to 8:15, making it the latest start ever at Folsom Field... Former Overland High School/Florida State kicker Scott Bentley watched the game from the Seminoles sidelines... CU dressed 93 players for the home opener. Not among them were quarterback Bernard Jackson and guard Erick Faatagi, both for eligibility reasons ... Former Buffs in attendance included coach Bill McCartney and quarterbacks Kordell Stewart and Koy Detmer ... Junior defensive tackle George Hypolite has been named to the American Football Coaches Association's Good Works team. The 11-man team recognizes players for dedication and commitment to community service ... The Buffs' Sunday practice features a short scrimmage among players who did not participate Saturday. The practice is open to the public.

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