

Rocky Mountain News

To print this page, select **File** then **Print** from your browser

URL: http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/ncaa/article/0,2777,DRMN_23932_5717255,00.html

Local college football, October 8

By B.G. Brooks, Randy Holtz & Jim Benton, Rocky Mountain News
October 8, 2007

CU

View from the summit

Don't look now, but the Buffaloes (4-2, 2-0) are atop the Big 12 Conference North Division standings and are two wins shy of being bowl eligible.

Hold it right there, coach **Dan Hawkins** cautioned his players in Sunday's team meeting; the season is at its halfway point and looking ahead is foolhardy.

"If grandma asks you, tell her you've got the Wildcat Bowl coming up," Hawkins said, adding prognostication is "great for you guys (media), but not for us."

Still, a glance at the schedule reveals a favorable home scenario for the Buffs if they make the improvement Hawkins believes they can over the next six weeks.

Of CU's five remaining games against North opponents, three are at Folsom Field: Oct. 20, Kansas; Nov. 3, Missouri; Nov. 23, Nebraska. That, of course, doesn't diminish the importance of remaining trips to Kansas State (Saturday), Texas Tech (Oct. 27) and Iowa State (Nov. 10).

But catching the Jayhawks, Tigers and Cornhuskers at home puts the Buffs in position to speak loudly in the North race. A win in Saturday's "Wildcat Bowl" would make their voice even louder.

Bubbling over - finally

Not that Hawkins is yearning for inclement weather, but CU's practice bubble is up and ready for use. He took the Buffs into it for the first time Sunday, but only for a look-see that lasted about 15 minutes.

"It's huge in there," punt return specialist **Chase McBride** said. "It was a long time coming."

Added quarterback **Cody Hawkins**: "It's unbelievable; it brings a lot of excitement to the program."

Dan Hawkins said the appearance of the bubble, which covers the artificially surfaced practice field, "fired up" his staff - "particularly guys like (**Brian**) **Cabral** and (**Darian**) **Hagan**, who've waited about 20 years to see it."

Bigger than Texas

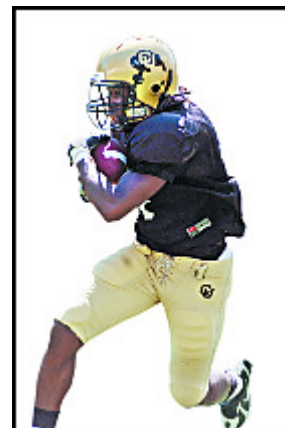
The Wildcats have beaten Texas in consecutive seasons, winning 45-42 last season in Manhattan, Kan., and 42-21 two weeks ago in Austin, Texas. The Longhorns were ranked No. 4 and No. 7, respectively.

Last season's win appeared to be the biggest of Kansas State coach **Ron Prince**'s debut season, but he begged to differ.

To him, the Wildcats' 34-21 road win at CU the previous week was "more significant" because it was his first road victory at Kansas State and helped bolster his team's confidence and underscored "how hard we have to work."

Numbers game

240 of Kansas' **437 total yards** were gained in the second half of its 30-24 win against Kansas State.



Cliff Grassmick ©
The Daily Camera

Josh Smith

Etc.

• Freshman receiver **Josh Smith** missed Saturday night's first half for disciplinary reasons. He was late to a meeting. He played in the second half, catching two passes for 103 yards. . . . Running backs coach Hagan had wanted to use freshman **Brian Lockridge** as his goal-line back, but Lockridge's recent concussion scratched that plan. Instead, Hagan used **Demetrius Sumler**, who scored three touchdowns. But Lockridge isn't out of the picture, Hagan said.

• Cold and flu-like symptoms are running through the team, with Cody Hawkins estimating about 10 to 15 players - including himself - have been hit.

• Serving as captains Saturday night were corner **Terrence Wheatley** and tailback **Hugh Charles**. Whether they continue in that role will be decided "later in the week," Dan Hawkins said.

CSU

Falcons coming

The way CSU's season has gone, players lacking motivation normally would be a concern of the coaching staff. But the Rams have built-in motivation when they host Air Force on Saturday.

"As low as we are right now, it's nice that it's Air Force coming up," senior defensive lineman **Jesse Nading** said. "Hopefully, the fact we have that rivalry will help us practice hard and play sharp and we'll forget about the (losing) streak. We just need to relax and go play and not worry about what happens in the future. Just worry about Air Force."

Toughest to take

Several CSU players said Saturday's home loss against San Diego State was the toughest to take of all the games in the Rams' current 12-game losing streak.

"It's obvious we let one get away," junior running back **Kyle Bell** said. "It's harder to take when you have the lead and the other team has 80 yards to go with 2 minutes left. I thought we had it. I was for sure we had it. But it goes to show you have to play 60 minutes."

Defensive lineman **Erik Sandie** knows the criticism from media and fans will continue to escalate, but he said the players have to ignore it.

"I'm sure people will be bashing us in the papers. I'm sure the fans will be on us," Sandie said. "All we have is each other at this point. Nobody is giving us any respect in this conference, and we have to go out and earn that respect by winning games."

Etc.

• CSU's loss obscured a remarkable game by defensive tackle **Blake Smith**. Smith, a senior from Tulsa, Okla., had seven tackles, 2 1/2 sacks, three total tackles for loss and a pass breakup.

• CSU put up just 327 yards total offense against the Aztecs. In its previous four games - three of them losses - San Diego State yielded 654 yards to Washington State, 479 to Arizona State, 458 to Portland State and 547 to Cincinnati. SDSU came into the CSU game ranked second-to-last among the 119 major-college teams in total defense.

He said it

"We know we're better than this. We know we're better than an 0-5 team. It's not like we're an inferior team. We're just not making the plays to win games."

Nading, after Saturday's come-from-ahead, 24-20 home loss against San Diego State

Numbers game

4th -longest losing streak in CSU history after the Rams dropped their 12th straight game dating to last season.

The only longer losing streaks at the school came in 1960-62 (26 games); 1980-82 (14) and 1909-11 (13).

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu football

Hawkins wants focus only on KSU

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/07/2007 11:42:44 PM MDT

BOULDER - Colorado's goals for this football season may need some adjusting upward. But nobody was tripping over a crystal ball on Sunday when CU coach Dan Hawkins gave his team a quick tour of the newly inflated practice bubble and then let the players have the evening off after some stretching.

Following a 43-23 victory at Baylor on Saturday night, CU coaches and players remain in a week-to-week mode. Up next: a visit to Kansas State this weekend. The Wildcats (3-2, 1-1 Big 12) figure to be in a foul mood after losing at home to Kansas for the first time since 1989.

Hawkins didn't want to hear any mention of bowl games when he addressed the team Sunday.

"What happens is, you have a little success and

Colorado Football

- [View a slide show of photos from CU's upset of Oklahoma](#)

- [Watch an audio slide show of Colorado's victory over OU](#)
- [Visit the CU Stats Page for box scores, Big 12 standings, team leaders and more](#)
- [Visit Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports](#)

win a few games and everybody starts prognosticating about what's going to happen," Hawkins explained. "That's great for everybody else, but that's not great for us. These guys have been pretty mature about everything, but just reminding them again - it's the 'Wildcat Bowl' this week. We're playing the Wildcats."

The regular season has reached the midway point and the Buffs (4-2, 2-0) stand atop the Big 12 North standings. Missouri (5-0, 1-0) solidified its status as the North favorite after pummeling Nebraska 41-6 Saturday night. But Colorado should at least become part of the conversation.

Missouri must travel on Nov. 3 to CU's Folsom Field, where the Tigers haven't won since 1997. CU also gets Nebraska and suddenly

formidable Kansas at home. formidable Kansas at home.

Anybody care to dream?

"The schedule is definitely laid out in our favor," senior punt-return specialist Chase McBride said. "But we have K-State this week. That's what you worry about first."

Colorado needs just two more victories to become bowl-eligible. Last year, the Buffs were winless after six games.

Advertisement

Visit our 50,000 square foot showroom of New & Used Office Furniture



OfficeLiquidators.com
Save even more by entering promo code 61689 in our online shopping cart

SHOP ONLINE WITH FREE STATEWIDE DELIVERY

OFFICE LIQUIDATORS
Profit From Our Experience
11111 W 6th Ave
Between Kipling & Simms
303-759-3375

SHOWROOM COUPON
\$50 OFF
MARKED PRICE ON ITEMS TOTALING \$300 OR MORE

You must present this while visiting our showroom at time of purchase.
One per customer. Cannot be combined with other offers. Expires 10-31-07

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

"The season is already half over, which is pretty unbelievable," quarterback Cody Hawkins said. "We have to come out strong every week because if you drop one game, it can have a huge effect."

Getting a quick tour of the practice bubble fired up the team, Cody Hawkins said. "It definitely brings some excitement to the program," he said. "To finally have it ... the seniors have been promised this since they got here."

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

formidable Kansas at home. formidable Kansas at home. formidable Kansas at home.

 Print  Email  Return to Top  Share »

Advertisement

Visit our 50,000 square foot showroom of New & Used Office Furniture



OfficeLiquidators.com
Save even more by entering promo code 61689 in our online shopping cart

SHOP ONLINE WITH FREE STATEWIDE DELIVERY

OFFICE LIQUIDATORS
Profit From Our Experience
11111 W 6th Ave
Between Kipling & Simms
303-759-3375

SHOWROOM COUPON
\$50 OFF
MARKED PRICE ON ITEMS TOTALING \$300 OR MORE

You must present this while visiting our showroom at time of purchase.
One per customer. Cannot be combined with other offers. Expires 10-31-07



CU practice bubble 'a breath of fresh air'

By Kyle Ringo

Monday, October 8, 2007

The Colorado Buffaloes returned home from a win at Baylor in the wee hours Sunday morning to a welcome and long-overdue sight.

The \$2.9 million practice bubble is fully inflated and ready for use should the weather turn bad this week or any week the rest of the season.

The Buffs lifted weights Sunday but received a reprieve from their usual conditioning work and did not practice. They did take a peak inside their new covered practice field and liked what they saw.

"It's great, man," safety Ryan Walters said. "It's not going to be cold. That's for sure. We're excited about it and coach Hawk has done a great job of generating interest in the program again and getting people to donate."

Interest in the program only figures to grow if the Buffs continue to play as they have during their three-game winning streak. Colorado received 48 votes in the Associated Press top-25 poll this week, the second-most of any unranked team. The Buffs received 15 votes in the USA Today coaches' poll after beating Baylor 43-23 and ending a seven-game losing streak in trueroad games.

The Buffs go back on the road this week against Kansas State, which lost to rival Kansas a week after beating Texas for the second straight year.

The Buffs, who are on top of the Big 12 Conference North Division standings with a 2-0 conference mark, could take a big step toward winning the division and earning a bowl berth with a victory over the Wildcats.

After finishing 2-10 last season, the Buffs are just two wins away from becoming bowl-eligible and three wins from assuring themselves of a bowl game. Every game remaining on the schedule appears winnable based on how the team has performed over the past month.

But the immediate future and the rest of the season took a back seat Sunday to enjoying what was close to a day off and seeing more progress being made around them in terms of infrastructure and support.

Stepping foot inside the bubble and knowing the many long, cold hours he used to spend on the practice fields were behind him was good for veteran linebackers coach Brian Cabral. He has coached at CU for 19 years and played for the Buffs in the 1970s.

No one has spent more time in brutal practice conditions for November games, bowl games or spring drills than Cabral. He joked that practicing under those conditions was part of the mystique of Buffaloes football.

"It's refreshing to see positive change, positive growth," Cabral said. "That is a breath of fresh air."

Cabral said the bubble will have long-term effects on the success of players because it gives them something they have lacked in the past.

"Our guys all year-round can go work out and practice the way we need to," he said. "Being able to practice the way we need to practice and do things the way we need to do things, that will be a very big thing for us."

Returning to health

CU punt return men Chase McBride and Stephone Robinson both said they should be ready to play Saturday against Kansas State.

McBride missed the Baylor game after suffering a separated shoulder during a non-contact drill last week during practice. He continues to experience pain, making him questionable.

Robinson filled in for McBride and nearly returned a punt for a touchdown. His only return against the Bears went for 42 yards. He suffered a minor leg injury when he was tackled after making a catch as a wide receiver.

Safety D.J. Dykes handled punts the rest of the game.

Notable

Freshman wide receiver Josh Smith did not play in the first half against Baylor as punishment for being late to a meeting, Dan Hawkins said. ... Jordon Dizon once again ranks No. 1 in the nation in total tackles with 78, an average of 13 per game. ... After giving up 410 yards passing to Baylor, the Buffs fell from 14th in the nation in passing defense to 42nd. The Buffs are 21st in total defense and 70th in total offense.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.



First look: Kansas State / CU football

By Kyle Ringo

Monday, October 8, 2007

Game 7

Matchup: Colorado (4-2, 2-0 Big 12) at Kansas State (3-2, 1-1)

Game time: Saturday, 7:15 p.m. at Bill Snyder Family Stadium (50,000) Manhattan, Kan.

On the air: ESPN2; KOA radio (850 AM).

Web site: www.k-statesports.com

Last time

Kansas State scored the first 17 points of the game in the second quarter and the Wildcats cruised to a 34-21 victory over the Buffs in Folsom Field last season. Quarterback Josh Freeman made the CU defense look bad by completing 22 of 26 passes for 251 yards and two touchdowns. The Wildcats also ran for 188 yards and CU was one-dimensional with only 145 passing yards.

The series

This is the 63rd meeting in a series that began Nov. 16, 1912, with a Kansas State victory in Manhattan.

The coach

Ron Prince is 10-8 in his second season at Kansas State, including a 5-5 mark in the Big 12 Conference. Last year, Prince became the first coach in Kansas State history to lead the Wildcats to a bowl game in his first season.

The lowdown

The Wildcats fell out of the top-25 polls after losing to Kansas Saturday. They were ranked last week for the first time in three seasons. ... They rank 99th in the nation in rushing but 27th in passing, averaging 274 yards a game. They also rank 27th in scoring offense, averaging 34 points a game. ... KSU ranks 22nd in total defense, giving up just 308 yards per game. ... The Wildcats have allowed only four sacks. ... KSU has outscored opponents 48-7 in the first quarter. ... Punter Tim Reyer is a candidate for the Ray Guy Award. He averaged 47.2 on six punts last week against Kansas.

Who to know

QB Josh Freeman: A big, strong sophomore who has thrown for at least 268 yards in four of the first five games this season. He has thrown for more than 3,000 yards in the equivalent of about one full season as the starter. But he also has thrown 22 interceptions with only 10 touchdown passes in his career.

WR Jordy Nelson: The senior ranks second in the nation in receptions per game with just more than 10. He has 52 catches for 634 yards and three scores. He has also returned a punt for a touchdown and thrown two touchdown passes.

DE Ian Campbell: He finished second in the Big 12 last season with 11 sacks but has underachieved with just 2½ so

far this fall. He's 6-foot-5 and 242 pounds and can physically dominate opponents at times. He is a candidate for four national awards.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.