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The Online Edition of the Colorado Daily

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Bowl eligibility within Buffs grasp

By CONNOR DUFFEY Colorado Daily Sports Writer
Tuesday, October 30, 2007 9:18 PM MDT

Outsiders to the University of Colorado Buffaloes football team might think that coach Dan Hawkins would be ecstatic after a signature 31-26 win in Lubbock, Texas against the Red Raiders. It was only Hawkins second road win during his tenure with the Buffaloes and it brought the Buffs within one win of bowl eligibility.

They obviously do not know coach Hawkins.

When asked at his weekly press conference Tuesday if he was happy about his team's performance, he scrunched his face almost painfully, looked to the ceiling, paused and said, "We did a nice jobŠ but with the turnovers we were getting in the fourth quarter you'd like to get some points out of that."

He could have drawn attention to CU dominating time of possession, powered by 217 yards rushing, or his defense creating turnovers and most importantly his offense not committing turnovers. Instead, Hawkins noted CU's special teams miscues and offensive stalls.

Hawkins classifies himself as a perfectionist and is always searching for ways to improve his team.

"I'm never satisfied. I don't know if I'm ever really satisfied as a coach," Hawkins said. "I think as a coach you can look at any game you've ever coached and there is going to be room for improvement in at least some areas of the game."

Hawkins refused to acknowledge the prospect of being bowl eligible with one more win and says he does not use it or intend to use it as a motivating factor for his team.

"We're in the Tiger Bowl this week," Hawkins said, later referring to a potential bowl game as the "B word."

If CU continues to come up big in the turnover margin, as they did against Texas Tech, a "B word" would become a likely possibility.

CU redshirt freshman quarterback Cody Hawkins did not throw an interception this past week for the first time this season. Coach Hawkins credited his underclassmen with good ball control against the Red Raiders, and he believes they are maturing from game to game.

"(Cody) and some of the other guys in earlier games kind of got out of what they are coached and try and say, 'I'm going to make a play and disregard the coaching.' They are realizing that they can't do that. It's obvious they've learned from those experiences," Hawkins said.

Hawkins did admit he raised his eyebrows after the second quarter touchdown pass to sophomore tight-end Riar Geer that was nearly intercepted and run the other way for a Texas Tech touchdown.

"I gave (Cody) a look and he immediately said he knew he was going to get the ball past him to (Geer). Well if you do it your right if you don't your wrong. It's all about confidence," Hawkins said.

Cody Hawkins was not sacked and was given ample time to throw during the win thanks to the offensive line.

Senior Edwin Harrison, a longtime offensive tackle, was switched to guard against Kansas State as freshmen Ryan Miller debuted at right tackle.

"(Harrison) is doing a great job there. He really is. I think it is more of his natural position," Hawkins said.

Harrison is not disappointed with the switch and thinks it is helping the team and specifically their cohesion.

"I'm just trying to grow into the position and break some of my old habits from playing offensive tackle," Harrison said. "I will do anything I can do to help our team win. I think we are growing as a unit. We definitely had one of our best games last week."

Notes: CU's already thin linebacking core got even thinner as the team announced junior linebacker R.J. Brown is now

officially out for the season with a concussion as testing and analysis continue.



Longmont, Colorado
Wednesday, October 31,
2007

DAILY TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 10/30/2007

Missouri will be forced to play without Pig

Surgery ends safety's season, weakens backfield

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

Missouri coach Gary Pinkel reported Monday senior Cornelius "Pig" Brown had successful surgery Sunday on his torn right Achilles' tendon, which should help the Tigers safety next year when he begins his pursuit of a professional career.

The more immediate question regarding Brown is this: How much will Missouri miss him Saturday in Boulder?

Pinkel said Brown will travel with the No. 9 Tigers (7-1, 3-1) for Saturday's game at Colorado (4:30 p.m., FSR). Missouri's second-leading tackler, Brown's average of 8.8 a game placed him eighth in the Big 12. Pinkel normally doesn't travel players who won't play, and Brown is out for the season. But the coach said Missouri needs Brown's leadership on the sideline.

Missouri used Brown all over the field, and he had become popular outside the football program. Pinkel said some fans made T-shirts about him, and that his play "was turning into something very special."

"What people like about Pig is he made a lot of big plays, and his name is unusual," Pinkel said Monday on the Big 12 coaches teleconference.

According to reports, Brown got the nickname as a child from his mother because he was sloppy and ate a lot.

"The other thing about him is whenever you see him interviewed, he's bubbly, upbeat, positive," Pinkel said. "He has lots of energy. He talks that way. He acts that way. He plays that way."

Missouri's defense is ranked eighth in the Big 12, allowing 399.5 yards a game. The Tigers have frequently held big leads this season and given up meaningless yards after the outcome was decided.

Still, their defense isn't the team's strength, and Brown's absence hurts. Missouri is 11th in the Big 12 in pass defense, allowing 278.2 yards per game. Missouri will be down to three experienced safeties, and one, Justin Garrett, missed Saturday's victory over Iowa State with an elbow sprain. Pinkel said Missouri intends to play Garrett on Saturday, but he wasn't clear how the secondary would compensate without Brown against the Buffs.

"We have to make adjustments there and see how it goes," Pinkel said.

Said CU coach Dan Hawkins: "(Brown) is a very good player not only physically on field where he can sack you, cover you, tackle you, but he has an emotional impact on their team. In football, there's always an ebb and flow to injury situations. Guys have to pick up the slack.

"They have a good football team and I'm sure they'll rise to the occasion."

IOWA STATE SET: CU's Nov. 10 game at Iowa State will start at 10:30 a.m., and air on Fox College Sports Central.

According to CU, the television channel is in about 4 million homes, and in Colorado can be found on Comcast channel 414, which requires the proper subscription.

ANOTHER AWARD: CU cornerback Terrence Wheatley was named the Big 12's defensive player of the week on Monday. Wheatley intercepted three passes in Saturday's win at Texas Tech. His five picks lead the Big 12.

HE SAID IT: Linebacker Jordon Dizon went his first three seasons at CU without an interception, and only six pass break ups. Saturday, the former high school running back scored his first touchdown on an interception return. It was his second pick of the year.

“It was amazing. It was one of those deals you have to feel to explain,” he said. “I’ve been waiting four years ... To finally get my hands on the ball during a game is amazing.”

According to Big 12 statistics, Dizon still leads the league in tackles with 110, 12.2 per game. That figure ranks him third nationally.

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Rocky Mountain News

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Monday's local college football notes

By B.G. Brooks (CU), Randy Holtz (CSU), Jim Benton (Air Force) and wire services (Northern Colorado, Wyoming)
October 30, 2007

CU

Change it up

With the Buffaloes trying to end a two-game losing streak, coach **Dan Hawkins** altered his motivational approach last week. He wasn't his usual vociferous self, instead turning fairly low key.

Hawkins said he is a practitioner of "situational leadership," noting a boss "can't keep doing the same things every week. . . . There's an ebb and flow to leadership - if you do too much, you stifle, if you don't do enough, they don't go anywhere."

Part of the approach was to push his players toward assuming leadership, but Hawkins added, "Sometimes, you can overdo it and it becomes redundant."

Bottom line: He pushed the right buttons, and CU won 31-26 at Texas Tech.

Big 12 honors Wheatley

Cornerback **Terrence Wheatley** continues to reap individual awards after his three-interception afternoon at Texas Tech. On Monday, the Big 12 Conference selected him its defensive player of the week, making him the third Buffs player to be honored this season by the league.

Placekicker **Kevin Eberhart** has been chosen twice as the special-teams player of the week, and returner **Chase McBride** once.

Wheatley also was chosen the Walter Camp Football Foundation's national defensive player of the week.

"Every scout that comes in here, I say, 'I'll put my house and mortgage on this guy,' " Hawkins said. "We're very fortunate to have two of the better players in the country at their positions in Wheatley and (linebacker **Jordon**) **Dizon**."

The other Big 12 honorees this week: Texas running back **Jamaal Charles** (offensive player of the week) and Texas placekicker **Ryan Bailey** (special-teams player of the week).

He said it

"I've never agreed with (that). . . . Sometimes it's just timing - who's up, who's down, who's playing with freshmen. I never thought (the Big 12 North) was truly down."

Texas Tech coach Mike Leach, on the alleged disparity between the divisions.

Etc.

- CU's game Nov. 10 at Iowa State will kick off at 10:30 a.m. MST and will be shown on Fox College Sports Central, a fledgling network that reaches about 4 million homes. In Colorado, the station can be found on Comcast Channel 414, but a subscription is required.

- Missouri tailback **Tony Temple** (ankle) returned to the lineup Saturday for the first time since Oct. 6. He was the Tigers' leading rusher against Iowa State with 40 yards and a touchdown. He said Saturday he was "definitely not 100 percent," but coach **Gary Pinkel** said Monday Temple is fully recovered.



Joe Don Buckner © AP

Colorado cornerback Terrence Wheatley was chosen by the Big 12 Conference as defensive player of the week for his efforts in the Buffaloes' 31-26 win against Texas Tech. Wheatley also was selected by the Walter Camp Football Foundation as its national defensive player of the week.