



Tigers TEs a formidable threat

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Every week college football experts and analysts fawn over the pass-catching abilities of Missouri senior Martin Rucker and junior Chase Coffman.

They are considered by many to be among the best tight ends in the nation, playing side-by-side in the same offense. Colorado coach Dan Hawkins doesn't exactly share that opinion, at least not the part about them being tight ends.

"That's a little bit of a misnomer," he said. "They're big dudes who play receiver."

A year ago when these teams met in Columbia, Mo., the Buffs struggled to cover those big dudes. Rucker and Coffman combined for 10 catches covering 97 yards that day. They also combined to score three touchdowns in the Tigers' 28-13 victory.

Both are considered strong candidates for careers in the NFL, in part, because they have the physical tools for the job. Rucker is 6-foot-6 and 255 pounds. Coffman is the same height and 10 pounds lighter.

They are two of the three leading receivers in Missouri's high-scoring offense this season and have combined to score seven touchdowns in the first eight games.

Hawkins said his smaller defensive backs struggled last season against the tandem and it won't be any easier to keep them contained this time around. He said their height gives them a natural advantage even when a defensive back does a relatively good job in coverage. He compared that advantage to what taller men enjoy in rebounding in basketball.

"Even when you're in great position a lot of times they are going to out-body you and get the ball," Hawkins said.

Not so bad

Colorado fans might point to Missouri's 107th national ranking in pass defense and believe it is a sign of weakness and an area the Buffs can exploit Saturday. Hawkins isn't so sure.

The Missouri offense is the eighth-highest scoring in the land, averaging more than 40 points a game. The Buffs' coach believes that has an effect on the number of passing plays the Tigers face each week.

"To some degree it is because other teams are trying to stay in the game; they don't give up a lot of big plays," he said. "It is more because teams are trying to get back in the game from a scoring end."

Missouri is allowing 278 yards through the air each week, but it has given up only 10 touchdown passes and has made 11 interceptions.

Strength of schedule

When Hawkins came to Boulder from Boise State, he said he made the move because he wanted to test himself against the best in business. This season has more than lived up to that billing.

The Sagarin ratings this week say the Buffs have played the nation's third-toughest schedule this season. The Buffs

have already played three members of the current top-10 and Missouri will be the fourth team in that group Saturday.

Hawkins said playing the best of the best has been about what he expected, and it's probably a good sign that he continues to joke about it. He already knows next season won't be any easier. The Buffs have West Virginia, Florida State and Texas in consecutive weeks early in 2008.

"I've been joking we have the Patriots next week," he said. "Tom Brady coming to Folsom Field."

Cody Hawkins to call plays

While Dan Hawkins believes his son has made plenty of mistakes and has a lot of room to grow after nine games in his freshman season, he also has been impressed with much of his body of work.

Hawkins noted that Cody has been knocked around and thrown to the ground plenty this season and continues to get up. He said he played most of last week's game after suffering a bloody nose on a first- quarter scramble.

The coach raved about a touchdown pass Cody Hawkins threw to tailback Hugh Charles, because the quarterback put it where only Charles could catch it and he made the throw under pressure. Hawkins said he sees signs that make him believe that down the road when his son and other young players on the roster mature, Cody Hawkins could be able to call his own plays in certain situations such as the hurry up offense.

"I think he's capable of those kinds of things," Dan Hawkins said.

Notable

Hawkins was asked again Tuesday about his team's bowl possibilities and whether he talks to his players about earning a bowl berth. "The B-word will be mentioned if the B-word comes up," he said. ... Misti Hawkins, the coach's wife, agreed to be "miked up" last week for the ABC telecast of the Buffs' game at Texas Tech. Coach Hawkins said he doesn't get involved when media approach his wife about doing interviews or similar special requests and he doesn't worry about how anything other than his wife being treated fairly by the media. "She is so saintly that she is never going to say anything bad, so she was at ease with that part of it," he said. ... Terrence Wheatley just keeps winning awards for his three-interception day last week at Texas Tech. Tuesday he was named the Bronco Nagurski national player of the week by the Football Writer's Association of America. ... Missouri officials will keep Mizzou Arena open to the public on Saturday in Columbia and will show the CU-Missouri game on video boards after the men's basketball team completes its exhibition game that afternoon.



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CU's Brown done for season

Special teams captain suffered concussion vs. FSU

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, October 31, 2007

Colorado linebacker and special teams captain R.J. Brown won't play again this season because of a lengthy history of concussions. The junior could be allowed to return to the field next season, but even that is no sure thing, coach Dan Hawkins said.

Brown has been held out of all practices since suffering what is believed to be at least the sixth concussion of his CU career in the third game of the season against Florida State. Brown also endured three concussions during his high school career in Hawaii and when he was hurt this season, it took him more than a week to begin to feel normal.

Brown suffered that injury despite wearing a special Revolution helmet designed to give players greater protection against concussions.

"He's out this year," Hawkins said. "After that we don't know."

Hawkins said Brown has been seeing specialists and any decision about his future will be based on whether doctors believe it is safe for him to resume his career.

Brown seemed a little surprised to hear he had been definitely ruled out of competition this season when told about the announcement Tuesday, but he reiterated his desire to continue playing, despite his history and the risks involved with sustaining multiple concussions.

At the same time, Brown said he is mindful of the rest of his life and wanting to have something resembling a normal life when football is over. Brown has been emotional about not playing at times this year. He was seen on the field in tears after the Buffs upset then-No. 3 Oklahoma.

When asked about his reaction to that win, he said he was crying tears of joy but also feeling a tinge of sorrow because he wasn't able to play a part in helping his teammates win the game.

Senior Terrence Wheatley has served as special teams captain in Brown's place.

Brown has been sorely missed on special teams this season. For some perspective on just how effective he was for CU, one only needs to know that in 2½ games he led the team with 12 special teams points awarded by coaches. He hasn't played since, and after nine full games he still is tied with Joel Adams with the second-most special teams points.

Brown had set his sights on former Buff special teams standout Ryan Sutter's single-season record of 53 special teams points set in 1996.

"I really wanted that record," he said.

Hawkins called the team's overall performance on special teams to this point "real average." He said he typically expects to block four, five or six kicks in a season and break a handful of returns for touchdowns. CU has come close on both fronts but hasn't gotten the job done.

"I think we've had some moments," he said. "I don't think we've been as consistent as we want to be."

Hawkins said the program will get better in future years as depth and experience continue to grow.

Coaches have used 32 different players on special teams this season, and the Buffs will get a little help with depth this week when running back Kevin Moyd returns after missing several games with an injury.

The Buffs face a stiff test this week against a dangerous return man in Missouri's Jeremy Maclin. The redshirt freshman has returned two punts for touchdowns this season and is ninth in the nation in all- purpose yardage.



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cu football

Buff play third-best schedule in country

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/30/2007 11:48:29 PM MDT



Colorado football coach Dan Hawkins leaves the field with wife Misti in Lubbock after beating Texas Tech. Misti was miked up during the game for ABC-TV. (AP / Joe Don Buckner)

BOULDER — It may not be appropriate for Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn to make a public plea to Big 12 Conference officials and implore them to consider the Buffaloes' demanding schedule when divvying up bowl bids for the Dec. 2 announcement.

But privately, that's what Bohn must be thinking.

According to the updated Sagarin college football ratings that run in USA Today, no team in the Big 12 has played a more difficult schedule than Colorado.

The Buffs (5-4, 3-2 Big 12), one game shy of becoming bowl eligible with three games to play, have faced the nation's third-toughest schedule (behind leader Notre Dame and Washington) thus far, according to the computerized Sagarin ratings.

Colorado Football

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"I don't know (about the bowls)," Bohn said Tuesday. "But I do believe the national flare of our schedule and the number of times we have been on TV, that's got to be a huge asset for us."

Colorado's home game at 4:30 p.m. Saturday against No. 9 Missouri (7-1, 3-1) will be on FSN. Only two CU games have not been televised.

Other Big 12 teams likely to vie with Colorado

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for mid-tier bowls include 5-3 Kansas State (No. 24 ranked schedule by Sagarin), 5-3 Oklahoma State (37), 6-3 Texas A&M (55) and 6-3 Texas Tech (105).

The Big 12 has eight bowl tie-ins for 2007 and could produce nine teams that are bowl eligible with at least six victories. That number could swell to 10 if Nebraska (4-5) wins two of its last three games.

Big 12 teams not selected for the league's eight bowls will be eligible for other bowls with openings. The Big 12 would get nine tie-ins if two league teams are selected for the BCS bowls.

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins said he can't worry whether others have paid attention to CU's schedule.

"I really don't concern myself with what other people think, pro or con," Hawkins said Tuesday during his weekly news conference. "I can't get into that game. We've got to control what we can control. That's all we can do."

Brown out. Hawkins said junior middle linebacker and special-teams captain R.J. Brown has been ruled out for the remainder of the season. Brown has not played since suffering a concussion against Florida State in the third game.

Hawkins said doctors have not determined whether Brown will be cleared for next season. Brown has a history of concussions.

"We'll see what his prognosis (for 2008) will be," Hawkins said.

Footnotes. Hawkins, on his wife, Misti, being miked up by ABC during Colorado's victory at Texas Tech last weekend: "She is so saintly, she is never going to say anything bad." ... Kickoff for the Nov. 10 road game at Iowa State has been set for 10:30 a.m. MST. It will be telecast on Fox College Sports Central (Comcast 414). ... A replay of the ABC telecast of Colorado's win at Texas Tech is available on BuffsTV, part of the subscription service of CUBuffs.com.

2007 BIG 12 BOWL TIE-INS

(Bowl, Date, Site, Matchup)

Holiday Bowl Dec. 27 San Diego Big 12 No. 3 vs. Pac-10

Texas Bowl Dec. 27 Houston Big 12 No. 8 vs. Conference USA

Alamo Bowl Dec. 29 San Antonio Big 12 No. 5 vs. Big Ten

Independence Bowl Dec. 30 Shreveport, La. Big 12 No. 7 vs. SEC

Insight Bowl Dec. 31 Tempe, Ariz. Big 12 No. 6 vs. Big Ten

Cotton Bowl Jan. 1 Dallas Big 12 No. 2 vs. SEC

Gator Bowl Jan. 1 Jacksonville, Fla. Big 12 No. 4

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college football

Head injury ends season for CU's Brown

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/30/2007 03:38:36 PM MDT

Colorado Football

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BOULDER — Colorado must do without its special teams captain for the remainder of the season.

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins announced earlier today during his weekly media luncheon that junior middle linebacker R.J. Brown has been ruled out for 2007. Brown has not played since suffering a concussion against Florida State in the third game of the season.

A former walk-on, Brown was elected special teams captain in the spring by his teammates. In September, he was promoted to starting middle

linebacker when Michael Sipili was suspended for the season by the school's judicial council for participating in a brawling incident in June.

Hawkins said doctors have not yet determined whether Brown will be cleared for spring drills or if his football career has ended. Brown has a history of concussions.

"We'll see what his prognosis (for 2008) will be," Hawkins said. "(Doctors) will sit down at some point and evaluate it further. He's been working with some specialists on that."

Another former walk-on, sophomore Jeff Smart, has become the starter at middle linebacker. He is backed up by sophomore Jake Duren, a transfer from Northern Colorado.

"We're very thin there," Hawkins said. "It's interesting because, sometimes what you lose, you gain (in other ways). (Replacements) become a little more chiseled that way. They know they can't go down."

"Injuries are always part of football. You just have to deal with it, roll with it. I'm always amazed when guys will rise up and shine. Or it forces you to be creative in other ways, with other people or other packages."

Although Brown has missed the past six games, he still is tied for third in a special-teams points system used by Colorado.

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Longmont, Colorado
Wednesday, October 31,
2007

DAILY TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 10/31/2007

Nov. make-or-break month

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — November is here.

For college football teams, this is when good seasons can become great, or take nose dives.

The Colorado Buffaloes' season can still go in myriad directions. They sit at 5-4, 3-2 in the Big 12, one win from bowl eligibility, and await Saturday's visit from the No. 9 Missouri Tigers (4:30 p.m., FSR).

Coach Dan Hawkins said the B word, as in bowl, will not be discussed unless someone mentions it, which the coach apparently dreads doing publicly. He used a phrase on Tuesday he's applied to a couple of other opponents in 2007, saying the only bowl the Buffs care about now is the "Tiger Bowl," as in Saturday's game.

Missouri (7-1, 3-1) is CU's fourth opponent in 2007 that's ranked in this week's top 10. Saturday marks the fourth time in 2007 when the Buffs face an opponent whose offense is statistically among the nation's top 10 in yards and points. Such frequent and steep challenges had the coach cracking wise.

"I've been joking we have the Patriots next week," Hawkins said.

Meanwhile, the Buffs are tired, like every other team in the nation. They've gone from winter conditioning to spring drills to summer work, and nothing is decided. A loss Saturday will eliminate them from the Big 12 North race, but a win won't seal anything. Hawkins said when it comes to ensuring success in November, players and coaches needed to realize months ago they were in this for the long haul.

"You have to understand it isn't a marathon, it's a sprint," he said. "If you're able to establish sort of a philosophy of balance, you can make it.

"There's a fine line there. But I think that's where sometimes you either under work or you overwork your guys. You have to be able to hold up, and that's how long you practice, how hard you practice, it's providing a little bit of change up in terms of what you do and providing a little bit of freshness in there.

"Typically our teams have finished pretty well, generally. And I think that's a big reason."

Hawkins' five Boise State teams went 16-2 in November. Of course, at 53-11 overall, the Broncos suffered through few bad months in his tenure.

CU's recent Novembers have been very meaningful. In 2001, 2002 and 2004, when the Buffs seized division titles, they were 3-0, 3-1 and 3-0. In 2005, things began to fall apart at the end of the Gary Barnett era with a 1-2 November.

Asked where his current team lies in relation to that fine line, Hawkins said he believes the players "really are good." He said they ran and lifted well this week. He also checks in with conditioning coach Jeff Pitman and head trainer Miguel Rueda, who say spirits are good.

Players sing a familiar tune when they discuss what will make November successful.

"The key factor is for sure toughness," senior guard Edwin Harrison said. "It's more than us. Everybody in NCAA football right now is hurting. Everybody is sore, everybody is banged up, and it's the teams that can push through that and outlast, or survive, to the end, are the teams that are successful to the end."



CU's Edwin Harrison, left, pats quarterback Cody Hawkins on the back at Invesco Field at Mile High on Sept. 1. The Buffs host Missouri on Saturday. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**

Linebacker Jeff Smart said teams that win in November stay focused.

“They don’t let little nicks and bruises get to them, and they don’t feel sorry for themselves,” he said. “They continue to improve and get better and learn the game plan and focus on their opponents, and keep fighting through it.”

BROWN OUT: Hawkins said linebacker R.J. Brown (concussions) will not play again in 2007, and his status for next season, when he’ll be a senior, will be determined at a later time.

Brown is not eligible for a medical redshirt, Hawkins said.

EXTRA POINTS: Cornerback Terrence Wheatley won another award Tuesday. He was named the national defensive player of the week by the Football Writers Association of America. ... Hawkins said his son, quarterback Cody Hawkins, played most of Saturday with Kleenex up his nose after he suffered a bloody nose on a first quarter draw play he ran, on which he was leveled by Tech defenders. “It was a bad slide,” the coach said of Cody’s effort to avoid the hit.

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Rocky Mountain News

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Tuesday's local college football notes

By B.G. Brooks (CU) and Randy Holtz (CSU), Rocky Mountain News
October 30, 2007

CU

Brown out

R.J. Brown's junior season is over, coach **Dan Hawkins** said Tuesday.

The Buffaloes' special-teams captain and a three-game starter at inside linebacker, Brown has suffered at least six concussions at CU, the most recent coming in the third game of the season against Florida State.

Brown has been practicing (noncontact work) for about a month while awaiting word on his short- and long-term future.

He indicated he expected the news Hawkins delivered to also come from head-injury specialists he continues to see.

"I'll point toward (returning) next season," Brown said, adding he still must receive medical clearance to resume playing.

Despite competing in only three games, Brown remains in a two-way tie for second in special-teams points (12).

He believed he had a good chance to break CU's single-season record for special-teams points (53, **Ryan Sutter**, 1996).

'B' word

A here-and-now kind of guy, Hawkins doesn't want to peer into the postseason or discuss what is required for the Buffs to reach it - even though getting to a bowl game was one of his stated preseason goals.

Three weeks ago, CU played in the "Wildcats Bowl" in Manhattan, Kan.

Last week, it was "Red Raiders Bowl" in Lubbock, Texas.

This week, it's the "Tigers Bowl" at Folsom Field.

All of those are Hawkins' terms.

Asked when he might mention the "B" word to his team in a real postseason context, Hawkins said, "Not until that time (arises)."

With three games to play, CU (5-4, 3-2 Big 12 Conference) is one win short of being bowl eligible.

The conference is affiliated with eight bowl games, plus the Bowl Championship Series.

Bring on Brady

Hawkins should be used to nationally ranked opponents coming to Folsom Field; No. 9 Missouri follows now-No. 4 Oklahoma and now-No. 8 Kansas.

"I've been joking that we have the Patriots next week. . . . **Tom Brady** coming to Folsom," Hawkins said. "It's like anything else: You raise your level of expectations, you raise your level of performance and preparation in a natural way. I think longterm that's healthy."



Jack Dempsey © AP
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Colorado's R.J. Brown, making a tackle against Arizona State in 2006, is done for the season. Brown has suffered six concussions while at CU, the most recent against Florida State.

Numbers game

12.22-**tackle average** drops linebacker Jordon Dizon into third place in the weekly NCAA Division I-A statistics. He trails Alabama-Birmingham's Will Dunbar (12.83) and Maryland's Erin Henderson (12.57). Dizon remains the national leader in solo tackles (8.44 a game).

He said it

"She's so saintly, she'd never say anything bad. . . . That's not a problem with her."

Hawkins, on his wife, Misti, being "miked up" for television during the telecast of last week's game

Etc.

- CU kickoff specialist **Tyler Cope** must seek out contact - he has made seven solo tackles this season on kickoffs. Before this season, CU kickers had three solo tackles this decade.

- The telecast of the Buffs' 31-26 victory at Texas Tech can be seen on CUBuffs.com, but with a video subscription to BuffsTV.

CSU

R-e-s-p-e-c-t

The Brigham Young football team is belting out the **Aretha Franklin** *Respect* tune these days.

All the Cougars are asking is for a little respect.

BYU's sports publicists sent an e-mail to college football writers and other national-poll voters this week, imploring them to put the Cougars in the Top 25. Despite a 5-2 record and a four-game winning streak, CSU's Saturday opponent has not cracked the polls this season.

The reason for the exclusion is BYU, which climbed as high as No. 15 at the end of last season, posted consecutive early season losses at then- No. 13 UCLA and at Tulsa.

The 55-47 loss against an ordinary Tulsa team eliminates the Cougars from poll contention in many minds, but BYU backers point out there are 13 two-loss teams in this week's Associated Press poll.

Coach **Bronco Mendenhall**, who has done an exemplary job cleaning up the mess **Gary Crowton** made from 2002 to 2004 with three straight losing seasons, said the brief lull hurt the program's national reputation.

"I think a severe blow was dealt during those three losing seasons," Mendenhall said.

"I think that damaged credibility to some extent and our reputation. However, I think last year's season relinked some of that and I think with continued success this year, it will help us regain that national prominence."

With a win Saturday against 1-7 CSU, BYU would qualify for its third straight bowl game.

Not special, but OK

CSU coach **Sonny Lubick** said the Rams' special teams have been solid of late, even though the team hasn't made many high-impact plays in the kicking game.

"Our special teams have held their own," he said. "I don't know if we're doing anything spectacular, but they've been good and we haven't made many mistakes.

"I don't know what the stats show, but **Jimmie Kaylor** is punting really well.

He's had a lot of punts coming down inside the 20- and 10-yard line, and he's hitting the ball really well."

Kaylor, a senior from Northglenn considered a preseason candidate for the national Ray Guy Award, didn't get off to a good start and has a decent, but not superb, average of 43.3 yards.