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Hawkins: crunch time for bowl hopes

By Tom Kensler The Denver Post

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Colorado Football

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BOULDER — For the first time, Colorado coach Dan Hawkins said he has talked to his football team about the bowl situation.

With two games remaining in the regular season, this is crunch time.

"I talked to them a little bit about it on Sunday," Hawkins said earlier today during his weekly media luncheon. "You try to throw it all into context."

Colorado plays Saturday at Iowa State (2-8, 1-5 Big 12). The Buffaloes (5-5, 3-3) stand one game

shy of becoming bowl-eligible. CU concludes its regular season with a Nov. 23 home game against Nebraska.

Prior to Sunday, Hawkins avoided all bowl talk to the team and to the media by calling the upcoming game "The Wildcats Bowl" or whatever was appropriate for that week.

"The bottom line is that we have to play better," Hawkins said. "We need to coach better and we need to do better."

"If we do have hopes and dreams and aspirations of doing something in a bowl game, we need to do a much better job these next three weeks."

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Tuesday's local college football notes

By Rocky Mountain News
November 6, 2007

CU

Apology accepted?

Coach **Dan Hawkins** said he used this week's blog to apologize for Colorado's 55-10 pasting by No. 7 Missouri because "if you're associated with the program, you walk away from that thing just going, 'Wow, that was a tough day at the ol' ballpark.' "

Here's what Hawkins wrote on CU's athletic Web site:

"Ouch . . . again! To all the Buff faithful, I am sorry for the outcome. . . . Coach (**Gary**) **Pinkel** took me to the woodshed in a big way; it's hard to remember, but that may be the largest loss I have ever been a part of.

"Football, as in life, will always have a way of humbling you the longer you throw yourself into the fire."

The 45-point loss was Hawkins' worst as a Division I-A coach, surpassing a 48-13 defeat hung by No. 13 Georgia on his No. 18 Boise State team in 2005.

Simply the best

The Buffaloes have played three of the teams ranked in the top six of this week's Bowl Championship Series standings. They beat No. 5 Oklahoma (27-24), but lost to No. 4 Kansas (19-14) and No. 6 Missouri.

"To me, Missouri is the best team we've played," Hawkins said. "I think they could be possibly a national championship-type team. How many years ago, they wanted to run Gary out, get him out. He's not good, he can't get it done. Those guys are like the Blue Angels, man - they're flying a pretty significant, coordinated jet group there."

Using the 'B' word

After refraining from discussing the postseason with his team for the past several weeks, Hawkins finally has talked bowl with the Buffaloes.

He said he put it all "into context . . . but the bottom line is, we have to play better and coach better."

Those tasks accomplished, he believes CU (5-5 overall, 3-3 Big 12 Conference) can finish with two victories and assure itself of a postseason berth.

"If we do have some hopes and dreams and aspirations of doing something and getting to a bowl game, then we've got to do a much better job over the next three weeks," Hawkins said.

He said it

"Bottom line, I did a bad job of coaching. . . . Hey, we lost and coach 'Hawk' got his fanny kicked by Missouri. That's the bottom line."

Hawkins, on CU's loss to Missouri

Injury update

Cornerback **Terrence Wheatley** (sprained left), safety **Ryan Walters** (concussion) and outside linebacker **Brad Jones** (concussion) remained out of pads. **Gardner McKay**, **Cha'pelle Brown** and **Jimmy Smith** subbed for Wheatley, while **Lionel Harris** took Walters' place. True

freshman **Nate Vaionmunga** and redshirt freshman **B.J. Beatty** are behind Jones on the depth chart.

CSU

Farris still iffy

Colorado State is expected to learn the results today of a magnetic resonance imaging exam performed on the right elbow of No. 2 quarterback **Billy Farris**. Farris felt a pop in his arm while throwing a long ball at the end of practice Thursday.

A junior from Baton Rouge, La., Farris has been the backup to starter **Caleb Hanie** all season but has played sparingly. He was inserted during CSU's home loss to Utah two weeks ago when the offense was struggling, but Hanie eventually went back in.

Farris said he didn't believe the injury was serious and has felt better in recent days, but he was unable to play in a backup role at Brigham Young on Saturday because his elbow still was sore.

If Farris can't play at New Mexico on Saturday (1 p.m., the mtn.), sophomore **Grant Stucker** will be Hanie's top backup. Stucker, a 6-foot-2, 200-pounder from Ponderosa High School, has excelled on scout teams while impersonating upcoming opposing quarterbacks but has yet to play in a game.

"He's anxious and he would like to play, but it's a different thing on scout team than when you're running No. 2 and getting coached to play (in a game)," CSU coach **Sonny Lubick** said.

Etc.

- CSU's official athletic Web site, CSURams.com, will relaunch with a new look sometime this week. The Web site will have several new features.
- CSU receiver/return man **Dion Morton**, who sprained an ankle during the Rams' loss at Brigham Young, is questionable for Saturday's game at New Mexico.
- Lubick was as surprised as anyone New Mexico was beaten so soundly at Texas Christian last week - the Lobos were outscored 37-0 and outgained 417-119 - but he said he's more concerned with his own team. "It's not so much about them as how we play," Lubick said.

Numbers game

30 career starts for CSU quarterback **Caleb Hanie**, barring injury or illness, when he starts at New Mexico on Saturday. The 30 starts would tie **Moses Moreno** (1994 to 1997) for the most by a quarterback in CSU history.

He said it

"He's done as good a job at New Mexico as anybody's done anywhere."

Lubick, on New Mexico coach Rocky Long

Air Force

Put no stock in odds

Air Force is a three-point favorite against Notre Dame, but Falcons coach **Troy Calhoun** claims the Fighting Irish are too talented to put much stock in the odds.

"That's one of those things, you can pull my right leg and you will automatically get *Here Comes Santa Claus*," he said.

"Talentwise, they are loaded."

Resurgent Armstrong

It has been a rough season for junior **Spencer Armstrong**, the Falcons' second-leading receiver last season.