

[Print page](#)[Close window](#)

Longmont, Colorado
Sunday, September 28,
2008



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Buffs tossed for lossSmith's 3 TD runs spark Florida St to 39-21 win

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — The Colorado Buffaloes traveled nearly 1,500 miles for a chance at a win that would've made the rest of the country sit up and notice. But unfortunately for them, what could go wrong Saturday did go wrong.

Florida State handed CU its first loss of 2008, 39-21. Missed throws, bad kicks, bobbles, drops and other mistakes cost CU (3-1) whatever hopes it had of beating a very beatable Florida State (3-1). The Buffs' special teams struggled. The run defense gave up big plays. Quarterback Cody Hawkins missed two wide-open receivers who could have scored touchdowns had they been delivered a good pass.

Adding injury to an already rough day, the Buffs lost another offensive lineman. Right tackle Ryan Miller said he cracked a bone in the bottom of his left leg in the third quarter and added that he'll miss four to six weeks even though he hopes to come back sooner. The offensive line is down six players it planned to have in July, but doesn't due to injuries, suspensions and academics.

What might hurt most today is that the lingering frustration from last year's 16-6 loss to Florida State was not removed. The Buffs believed they could turn a corner and position themselves as a force, once again, on the national scene. It didn't happen.

"This is worse than last year," safety Ryan Walters said. "We just didn't play good football (Saturday).

"I feel like we're a lot better team than last year, so it kind of sticks this year a little more. We all want this thing real bad, and we didn't play well enough in all three phases of the game." Added receiver Josh Smith: "I felt like a lot of guys gave it all they had today. It came down to putting in a few scores we didn't make and making a few catches we didn't catch and making a few passes.

"Defensively, they held on for us as long as they could. They continue to hold high-scoring teams to low points."

In the fourth quarter, CU twice pulled within 11 points with ample time to come back. After the first chance, Florida State's Michael Ray Garvin returned a kickoff 94 yards for a touchdown.

Then, after CU's Patrick Devenny caught a 14-yard touchdown pass with 9 minutes, 31 seconds to go, Florida State reeled off a 10-play, 67-yard touchdown drive that put the Seminoles ahead by 18 with 3:37 to go.

Florida State's Antone Smith ran for 154 yards and three touchdowns, including its final score. The Seminoles ran for 259 yards at 5.6 yards a carry.

"We have to get lined up in the right gap and make tackles and have a stronger defense as a

FLORIDA ST. 39, COLORADO 21

Colorado
70014—21

Florida St.
712614—39

First Quarter

FSU — A.Smith 2 run (Gano kick), 12:01.

Col — Jo.Smith 30 pass from C.Hawkins (Goodman kick), 7:27.

Second Quarter

FSU — A.Smith 60 run (Gano kick), 2:29.

FSU — Watson, 1:54.

FSU — FG Gano 36, :34.

Third Quarter

FSU — FG Gano 52, 11:56.

FSU — FG Gano 44, 1:33.

Fourth Quarter

Col — Geer 2 pass from C.Hawkins (Goodman kick), 13:32.

FSU — Garvin 94 kickoff return (Gano kick), 13:20.

Col — Devenny 14 pass from C.Hawkins (Goodman kick), 9:31.

FSU — A.Smith 2 run (Gano kick), 3:37.

A — 46,716.

whole," Walters said.

Said head coach Dan Hawkins: "When you're playing great teams and great players with great speed, it's hard to shut those guys out. There are going to be gaps."

Hawkins said CU's special teams, which also allowed a blocked punt for a safety and oversaw Aric Goodman's missed 27-yard field goal, struggled. Specials teams coach Kent Riddle was more blunt.

"Terrible," he said. "We have to do a better job covering kicks. We have to execute better when we're kicking the ball."

Cody Hawkins finished 17-for-36, for 154 yards and three touchdowns. He missed Kevin Moyd while Moyd ran alone down one sideline in the first quarter. He missed Devenny in the second quarter on another throw when Devenny was alone behind the defense.

"We had a lot of opportunities in the first half, and that's completely my fault," Hawkins said. "No matter what else happens, that all comes back to me."

Hawkins took a late hit in the first half from Florida State's Dekoda Watson, who slammed him to the ground after officials blew a play dead. Watson received a personal foul. Hawkins never left the game.

Asked if the hit might have hampered the quarterback's play, Dan Hawkins said, "That's football." Other coaches did not believe Cody Hawkins suffered any sort of head injury, and he remained in the game, as he did last year at Texas Tech.

"That can happen," offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said of the errant throws. "Quarterback is the greatest position to play sometimes and the worst position to play sometimes."

CU has concluded its non-conference schedule and will open Big 12 play next Saturday against Texas, which beat Arkansas, 52-10, on Saturday. Texas will probably enter next weekend ranked in the top five.

"It's something we have to learn from," Moyd said about the loss. "We're going to have better days. We still have a great football team."

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

ColFSU

First downs

2221

Rushes-yards

37-12446-259

Passing

154119

Comp-Att-Int

17-36-110-22-1

Return Yards

253

Punts-Avg.

5-29.24-37.8

Fumbles-Lost

1-11-1

Penalties-Yards

5-2412-110

Time of Possession

26:2433:36

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING — Colorado, Stewart 21-107, Sumler 4-22, Scott 5-20,

Moyd 1-5, C.Hawkins 6-(minus 30). Florida St., A.Smith 25-154,

Ponder 8-43, Thomas 9-37, Parker 3-20, Reed 1-5.

PASSING — Colorado, C.Hawkins 17-36-1-154. Florida St.,

Ponder 10-22-1-119.

RECEIVING — Colorado, Jo.Smith 7-

85, Geer 2-21, Williams 2-16,

Devenny 1-14, Crawford 1-7, Sumler
1-7, J.Behrens 1-2, Stewart 1-2,

McKnight 1-0. Florida St., Piurowski
3-33, G.Carr 3-29, Easterling 1-24,

Fortson 1-17, A.Smith 1-10, Thomas
1-6.

[Print page](#)[Close
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Bufs make no attempt at excuses

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Ryan Miller hobbled out of Colorado's locker room Saturday night, propped himself up on two crutches, and declared he felt great and that he was ready to play.

Miller, of course, was not being serious.

Clearly, CU was due to lose another offensive linemen. It had been a whole four days since the Buffs lost their last one.

That was guard Max Tuioti-Mariner, who on Tuesday tore an ACL in a non-contract injury, just like guard Mike Iltis did on the first day of August camp. Sione Tau and Erick Faatagi didn't make grades. Ethan Adkins is suspended. Devin Head was suspended. Miller has a broken bone in his left leg and said he'll miss four to six weeks.

CU's offensive line has had all the continuity of sand paper in 2008. The third guard combination in four games started in Saturday's 39-21 loss to Florida State. Next Saturday against Texas, Matt Bahr, a redshirt freshman who saw his first work on the offensive line Saturday against the Seminoles, will make his first start, in Miller's place.

"You don't think about it; you just move on," offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said. "You get the next guy in there and get rolling and move forward.

"I'm down for Ryan more than anything. He's a great kid. He does so much for our team as a player and a leader." So does quarterback Cody Hawkins, whose Saturday was forgettable. He overthrew two receivers who were alone in Florida State's secondary and might have scored if a better pass came their way.

He got clocked by a late hit in the first half but stayed in the game. No one said the hit was a problem.

"It's completely my fault, and I have to apologize to my teammates and coaches and fans," Hawkins said. "I didn't play the way I can. That wasn't me today. I can play a lot better than that, and I'm going to play better than that.

"I have to be able to step in and make those plays."

Offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said Hawkins was not the only one to blame.

"Cody is a competitor, and he'll say something like that," Helfrich said. "It's never one guy. We certainly left a few plays out there at a lot of positions."

There are different perspectives to place on what happened to the Buffs on Saturday. One to remember is CU's old veteran on offense is a sophomore quarterback who's telling guys where to go, what to do. He's running things with freshmen and other sophomores manning key spots everywhere. Factor in the offensive line's revolving door, and that's rarely the formula you use to win a lot.

CU made similar mistakes to the ones it did against Eastern Washington and West Virginia but this time could not pull out a win against an athletic and talented team that's as gifted as anyone they see until ... well, until next Saturday, when Texas visits.

The main deal Saturday was that CU had a bad day against a team that had a bad day a week earlier and sought someone to take out its

anger on.

At 3-1 in non-conference play, that's a mark most outside observers would have taken in September — considering the three games were against Colorado State, West Virginia and Florida State — gladly accepted it.

Finally, this is still a young team on offense, and there'll be days like this in 2008. That shouldn't be a surprise. In fact, it should be expected.

CU made no excuses Saturday, which was good.

The Buffs just know they have to get better.

A lot better.

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[Print page](#)[Close window](#)

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CU's Bahr takes his turn

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Colorado coaches told Matt Bahr to be ready to play Saturday at Florida State after Bahr spent the week practicing at guard and tackle.

Bahr will need to be ready to play a lot now.

Right tackle Ryan Miller broke a bone in his left leg during Saturday's 39-21 loss to Florida State. Bahr will move into Miller's spot. Miller said he'll be out four-to-six weeks, but added he hopes he returns sooner.

Bahr, a redshirt freshman, played in CU's previous two games on the field goal unit. Saturday's action was his first on the offensive line.

"He did a nice job stepping in there," offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said. "I liked the look in his eye."

"To me, it seemed like he stepped in and battled and did a pretty admirable job for a guy that hadn't been in that position, and to have to roll into this setting and block those kind of guys, I think he did a pretty good job." Grimes said that look was one of confidence.

"For the next couple of weeks, I'll just be watching a lot of film and getting the practice reps in and being a student of the game, being prepared for these guys," Bahr said.

Miller's injury leaves CU missing six offensive linemen it planned in July to have. Max Tuioti-Mariner and Mike Iltis tore ACLs. Erick Faatagi and Sione Tau did not make grades, and Ethan Adkins is indefinitely suspended following his arrest on suspicion of DUI.

"That's the awesome thing about football – it takes a lot of guys," CU coach Dan Hawkins said.

NOT SPECIAL: CU's special teams struggled in Saturday's loss.

Kicker Aric Goodman missed a 27-yard field goal attempt. Matt DiLallo had a punt blocked in the second quarter that went out of the end zone for a safety. When the Buffs pulled to within 11 points with 13 minutes, 32 seconds to play, they allowed Florida State's Michael Ray Garvin to return a kick for a touchdown.

Florida State averaged 39.8 yards on five kickoff returns Saturday. Garvin's score was the second the Buffs have allowed in 2008. Colorado State took one back for a touchdown in the season opener. CU hasn't allowed two returns for scores in the same season since 1980.

Special teams coach Kent Riddle described the unit's work as, "Terrible." Junior running back Kevin Moyd was on the coverage team during Garvin's return.

"A lot of things went wrong (Saturday)," Moyd said. "It looked like it wasn't in our fate to win this game."

500 CLUB: Florida State coach Bobby Bowden coached in his 500th intercollegiate game, making Saturday a historic event. Only Amos Alonzo Stagg and Joe Paterno have coached in 500 games.

Bowden sounded happier to see his team recover from its 12-3 loss the previous weekend to Wake Forest.

“You know one thing happens when you get beat like we did last week, you don't have any trouble getting their attention the next week 'cause you're mad ... and they know you're mad.”

INJURY REPORT: Defensive end Jason Brace did not travel due to a concussion he suffered last Sunday in practice. Sophomore Marquez Herrod played in Brace's absence.

Anthony Perkins started at strong safety, where CU lists D.J. Dykes as the starter. Dykes did not play in the West Virginia game due to an illness. Dykes entered the game in the first quarter and finished with six tackles.

Other than Miller, CU reported no injuries.

EXTRA POINTS: CU quarterback Cody Hawkins moved into 11th place on the program's total offense list with his 154 passing yards. He has 3,477 yards of offense in his career. He threw three touchdown passes to move into sixth place at CU on that all-time list. He has 28 in his career. ... The Buffs failed to go to 4-0 for the first time since 1998. ... Freshman defensive tackle recorded his first career statistic of any kind with an interception of a pass he batted in the second quarter. ... Freshman tailback Rodney Stewart rushed for 107 yards, his second straight 100-yard game. ... Florida State reported 46,716 tickets were distributed for the game.

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Bufs botch upset bid

By Kyle Ringo

Originally published 02:40 p.m., September 27, 2008

Updated 11:37 p.m., September 27, 2008

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. -- Facing one of the most athletic and aggressive defenses in the nation Saturday, the one mistake the Colorado Buffaloes couldn't afford was leaving points on the field.

And that's just what they did.

In a game that won't be remembered among the finer moments in quarterback Cody Hawkins' career, the Buffs misfired against Florida State for the second consecutive year. The Seminoles took full advantage, winning coach Bobby Bowden's 500th game as a college coach 39-21 at half-empty Municipal Stadium.

Hawkins fumbled on the first drive of the game and the Seminoles cashed in with a quick score on a short field. He missed two wide open receivers for sure touchdowns in the first half. One of those plays didn't hurt because the Buffs scored on the drive anyway.

Hawkins also threw an interception in the first half, giving him one in every game this season.

"We had a lot of opportunities in the first half and that's completely my fault," Hawkins said. "No matter what else happens, that all comes back to me. I've got to take care of the football. I've got to make sure guys know where they're going. I've got to communicate and we have to make plays when they're there to be made."

The contest, dubbed theRiver City Showdown, turned decidedly in Florida State's favor during a dismal second quarter for the Buffs, who wore all-white uniforms. Despite the missed opportunities in the passing game, momentum swung when Hawkins wasn't even on the field.

The Seminoles broke a 7-7 tie when tailback Antone Smith broke free around the left end and raced untouched 60 yards to the end zone. Soon after FSU fans began the first of many Tomahawk Chop chants. It was the start of a big day for the senior tailback who rushed for 154 yards and three scores.

The Buffs gave up 259 yards rushing and have now allowed nearly 600 yards on the ground in consecutive weeks.

"I feel very fortunate to win that football game," said Bowden after his 376th victory. "I thought the way we won was very significant in the fact that we actually ran the ball."

The big run was just the start of a rush of points the Seminoles scored in the final 3 minutes of the half.

CU sophomore Josh Smith mishandled the ensuing kickoff, pinning the Buffs at their own 4-yard line and Florida State blocked Matt DiLallo's punt out of the back of the end zone for a safety four plays later. The Buffs then allowed the Seminoles to return the free kick to the CU 23-yard line, and FSU kicked a 36-yard field goal to take a 19-7 lead into the locker room.

"That little exchange there at the end of the first half caused some problems," coach Dan Hawkins said when asked for his opinion of where the game got away.

Despite his troubles and taking numerous hard hits, including two that resulted in personal fouls, Cody Hawkins kept coming back and managed to lead the Buffs to a pair of fourth-quarter touchdowns.

Hawkins completed 17 of 36 passes for 154 yards and three touchdowns in the game. In the fourth game of his sophomore season he already has moved into 10th place on the school's career passing list with 3,507 yards. But none of that means much to him or his head coach today with the CU missing a chance to go 4-0 for the first time since 1998 and step into the nation's top 25.

"He had a tough day, no question about it," Dan Hawkins said of his son.

The Buffs looked as if they might make a game of it early in the fourth quarter when Cody Hawkins connected with Riar Geer on his second touchdown pass of the day from 2 yards out. But Florida State senior Michael Ray Garvin returned the ensuing kick 94 yards for a touchdown. It was the second kickoff return for a touchdown the Buffs have allowed this season and the kicker, so to speak, of a miserable day in the kicking game.

The worst news of the day came in the second half when sophomore offensive lineman Ryan Miller became the second starter on the offensive line to suffer a serious injury. Miller fractured his left lower leg and will miss four to six weeks. Redshirt freshman Matt Bahr stepped in and helped the Buffs score points.

Colorado returns home for Homecoming and the start of Big 12 Conference play against No. 7 Texas next week. The Longhorns throttled Arkansas 52-7 on Saturday and haven't seen the Buffs since that historic day in Houston in 2005 when they whipped CU 70-3 and ended the Gary Barnett era in Boulder.



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CU special teams endure dreadful day

By Kyle Ringo Camera Sports Writer
Saturday, September 27, 2008

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. --- It's safe to describe Saturday's performance in the kicking game by the Colorado Buffaloes as a nightmare.

The Buffs had their struggles in every phase of the game, but the problems on special teams had as much to do with the 39-21 loss to Florida State as any. Sophomore wide receiver Josh Smith has proven to be reliable this season for at least one return in which he brings the crowd out of its seat, but he usually has an adventure or two as well.

The adventure came late in the second quarter against the Seminoles when he fumbled a kickoff return and gave his offense the ball at the 4-yard line.

The Buffs couldn't move the ball and another disaster followed when Matt DiLallo had his punt blocked out of the back of the end zone for a safety. Those two plays turned the momentum in Florida State's favor and CU never recovered.

"They just rushed fast and I guess we didn't have enough get-off time so they came through," DiLallo said.

A week after making the game-winning field goal in overtime to beat West Virginia and earning a scholarship, place-kicker Aric Goodman missed 27-yard field goal in the second quarter that would have given the Buffs a 10-7 lead.

In the fourth quarter, the final act in the freak show came when CU allowed the second kickoff return for a touchdown this season. Michael Ray Garvn blew down the right sideline, showing off his world class speed on a 94-yard blast.

Earlier this year, Colorado State's John Mosure returned a kick 90 yards for a score against Colorado.

The Buffs spend considerable practice time each week and throughout spring and fall camps on special teams units. But all that work didn't help on an ugly day.

"We just have to keep plugging away," Hawkins said. "Our kickers will get better. Our guys will get better. There will be a better fit in things. We'll get there. Obviously, we're putting great emphasis on it."

Big play for

frosh Cunningham

True freshman defensive lineman Curtis Cunningham had played in all three games for CU this season, but hadn't recorded any statistics before Saturday.

Cunningham got his name in the books in a big way when he batted a pass into the air and then grabbed it away from FSU quarterback Christian Ponder for an interception.

Cunningham also registered the first tackle of his career as coaches continue to try to get him experience for next season when seniors Brandon Nicolas and George Hypolite are gone.

Flags down

CU and FSU entered the game tied as the seventh-most penalized teams in the nation, having committed 25 penalties in three games before Saturday.

The Buffs improved in that area while the Seminoles kept going south. CU committed a season-low five penalties for 24 yards. FSU was flagged 12 times for 110 yards, including earning four personal foul calls for the second straight week.

Whiteout

A week after the Blackout in Folsom Field, the Buffs wore all white uniforms for the first time this season, presumably to help fight the heat.

It was the first time the team had worn all white since playing at Miami in 2005. There was no overall record available for the Buffs in all white uniforms.

Long interlude

Saturday's game was the second time the Buffs have played in Jacksonville. The first was the 1972 Gator Bowl, when CU lost 24-3 to Auburn.

Longtime CU radio announcer Larry Zimmer did not call the first game in Jacksonville because bowl games held exclusive rights to radio and television broadcasts at the time. It was one of only a handful of CU games Zimmer has missed in 35 years of broadcasting the Buffs.

Homecoming

It wasn't a great day for Buffs who hail from the Sunshine State. Running back Kevin Moyd should have scored a first-quarter touchdown when he was left uncovered down the left sideline, but quarterback Cody Hawkins was unable to get him the ball.

Punter Matt DiLallo had a punt blocked, and linebacker Josh Hartigan didn't record any statistics.

Notable

Officials did not announce an official attendance. They announced 46,716 tickets were distributed. ... Linebacker Shaun Mohler made the first start of his career with the Buffs, opening the game in a nickel defense. ... Marquez Herrod was the first-string right defensive end in place of Jason Brace, who suffered a concussion in practice last Sunday. It was the first start of Herrod's career. ...

Senior D.J. Dykes and redshirt freshman Anthony Perkins rotated at safety. ... Big 12 officials worked the game. ... Several former Buffs visited the team either at the team hotel or at the stadium. Dick Anderson, Rashidi Barnes and Brian Iwuh were among those who reconnected with the program.



Another hit for Buff O-line: Miller out

Sophomore tackle likely to miss at least 6 weeks

By Kyle Ringo

Originally published 11:35 p.m., September 27, 2008

Updated 11:35 p.m., September 27, 2008

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. --- The wisdom of recruiting eight offensive linemen two years ago is now clear for the Colorado football program.

The way the first month of the season has gone, the team might need each of the seven members of that class who remain on the roster.

Ryan Miller, the prized prospect of the 2007 cycle and the starter at right tackle, became the third lineman to suffer a serious injury this season when he fractured his lower left leg in the third quarter of a 39-21 loss to Florida State on Saturday.

"It just kind of went snap, crackle, pop," Miller said of the first injury in his life to keep him from playing.

He is the second starting lineman lost this week. Freshman Max Tuioti-Mariner suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament on Tuesday, the same injury redshirt freshman guard Mike Iltis suffered in fall camp. Miller had played every offensive snap this season before getting hurt.

Team athletic trainer Miguel Rueda said four to six weeks is an optimistic recovery time for the injury. Rueda said the fracture is low in the ankle and could need more time to heal. Miller was already in a cast and standing with crutches after the game.

"I feel fine, I feel great. I'm ready to play next week," Miller quipped. "Unfortunately, my body is not going to let me."

Another member of the 2007 recruiting class, Matt Bahr, stepped into the fray when Miller went down. Based on coaches' initial impressions, he did well. Bahr had played on special teams in two games prior to Saturday, but his work in the second half was the first from scrimmage of his career.

Bahr said he was not caught off guard by the injury because he had practiced at four different positions on the line during the week and offensive line coach Jeff Grimes had told him ahead of time he would get in the game regardless.

What a way to break in. On his first play, a third-down-and-2, and most of the rest of the night, his responsibility was blocking FSU senior Neefy Moffet, who already had a sack, blocked punt and fumble recovery.

"It's part of the game," Bahr said of the injuries, academic casualties and suspensions that have cost CU six offensive linemen since the start of fall camp. "When I was in high school, we had a bunch of guys go down, and you just have to be ready every week."

"I've been preparing the same way every week since the beginning of the season just because I knew if one guy goes down, I'm in."

Grimes said he liked the look he saw in Bahr's eyes when he told him to get in the game. He said he Bahr didn't flinch and he expects to find Bahr did well when he grades film from the game today.

Grimes, who has been coaching for 10 years, said he hasn't experienced the loss of so many players in one season before.

"I've heard about seasons like this, but I don't think I've had one where I've had this many key guys get hurt," Grimes said. "But it's part of the game. It's a physical game, and guys get hurt. I feel really, really bad for Ryan. He's such a great kid."



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Woelk: Colorado squanders golden opportunity

By Neill Woelk

Sunday, September 28, 2008

First, the realistic look: Nobody expected anything better than 3-1 after Colorado's first four games this year.

The general consensus was that CU would win the first two and hope for a split in the West Virginia-Florida State stretch.

That's exactly what happened.

Now the bottom line: Never has a realistic perspective looked so sour.

What an opportunity the Buffaloes wasted Saturday in falling 39-21 to Florida State.

A year ago, the Buffs walked away believing they could have beaten Florida State.

Saturday, the Buffs walked away knowing they should have beaten Florida State. This was a squandered opportunity that will haunt the Buffaloes for the rest of the season-- if not longer.

Bobby Bowden's Seminoles were ripe for the picking. Even after Colorado handed FSU an early lead on a turnover, the Buffs had plenty of chances to take control. At least three different times, they had wonderful chances to take the lead.

Every time, they politely refused the offer.

A wide-open receiver with nothing but green grass in front of him overthrown. An interception. Another wide-open receiver and a guaranteed six -- overthrown again. A failed fourth-down conversion. A missed field goal.

Need more? How about a fumbled kickoff, a penalty and a blocked punt for a safety. Or, a kickoff return for a touchdown when the Buffs had finally managed to swing a little momentum back in their favor.

Yes, the Buffs gave one away. Meltdown is too strong a word -- but letdown isn't. Too many opportunities tossed aside and too many points left on the field.

What could have been -- make that should have been -- a huge step forward instead turned into a major step back.

Don't let the final score fool you. The 39-21 tally the nation sees this morning won't reveal the whole story.

FSU entered the game as a team waiting to collapse, a once-proud program with shaken confidence looking over its shoulder for the next sucker punch.

The Buffs could have dealt that blow -- but didn't.

As crazy as it sounds, the defense isn't to blame for this one. The Buff defenders did give up a 60-yard touchdown run, but otherwise, played well for most of the game. Good enough, anyway, to keep the Buffs in the contest until it became an impossible task.

The difference? Quarterback play and special teams.

If the Buffaloes are going to beat good teams, they need their quarterback to make plays, not mistakes.

Nobody is asking Cody Hawkins to carry the team. There are enough weapons elsewhere on CU's offense that it's not a requirement for the quarterback to be the difference maker.

But Hawkins also has to make plays when the opportunity arises -- and Saturday, he failed to make those plays.

Truth is, Hawkins has not had a good year. The youngster who showed plenty of promise down the stretch last year has struggled this season. Until Saturday, the Buffs had managed to overcome those struggles.

Their luck ran out Saturday. Three different times, Hawkins missed open receivers on plays that would have either put the Buffs in scoring position or put them in the end zone. Any one of those plays would have given CU the lead, put the Seminoles on their heels and changed the complexion of the entire game.

Instead, the mistakes gave FSU a second breath, and the Seminoles took full advantage.

Give Hawkins credit for this much: he stood up and pointed the finger at himself.

"I played poorly today," Hawkins said. "I think that loss is 110 percent my fault."

We wouldn't go that far. CU's special teams should absorb a decent share of that percentage.

Twice in four games this season, CU has allowed a kickoff return for a touchdown. That's not acceptable. Nothing squashes the momentum of a scoring drive like a kick return to the house.

Throw in the missed field goal that would have given CU a first-half lead, the blocked punt and safety, and CU's special teams were anything but.

Now back to realistic.

A good share of Buff fans will be screaming for a quarterback change this morning.

Not going to happen. It makes no sense. Young Hawkins still gives the Buffs the best chance to win -- but if he continues to play the way he played Saturday, those chances are dramatically diminished.

And, you don't make changes when you are 3-1. You don't panic. Particularly if your only option is turning to a quarterback who has never taken a meaningful snap in a Division I game.

Yes, Saturday's effort is clearly reason for concern. Dead ahead is a Texas team that is quietly establishing itself as one of the best in the nation. Then come dates with Kansas, Kansas State and Missouri.

Technically, that stretch is no different than it was when the season began and folks were dreading it. It's also no different than it was a few days ago, when CU was 3-0 and fans were optimistic.

But unless the Buffs improve their play in several key areas, and do it in a hurry, reality could be quite a comedown over the next month.



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fsu 39, cu 21

Bufs fall to Florida State 39-21

Key missed plays hurt Colorado

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 09/28/2008 12:15:24 AM MDT



CU's Jalil Brown (23) and Jeff Smart try to stop the Seminoles' Antone Smith, which the Buffs didn't do often enough. Smith ran for 154 yards and three TDs. (Mark Wallheiser, Special to The Denver Post)

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Against Florida State's quick and snarling defense, Colorado had to take advantage of every opportunity Saturday. The Buffaloes squandered early scoring chances,

however, and fell from the ranks of the unbeaten.

Sophomore quarterback Cody Hawkins missed two wide-open receivers in the first half, and the Buffs (3-1) failed to get any points from another possession that reached the FSU 10-yard line in the Seminoles' 39-21 victory at Jacksonville Municipal Stadium.

"Against that (Florida State) defense, you have to take some shots, because they don't give you much," CU offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said. "We needed those."

Hawkins had running back Kevin Moyd and tight end Patrick Devenny open

Colorado Football

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well downfield in the first half, so open that Moyd and Devenny likely would have gone untouched for touchdowns. Both passes were overthrown.

"There just wasn't a connection," Moyd said.

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Hawkins said those mistakes were on him. He finished the day with three touchdown passes but failed to complete half his attempts: 17-for-36 for 154 yards, with one interception. That's not going to beat many talented teams.

This isn't the juggernaut FSU of old. But the Seminoles (3-1) still can rank with almost everybody in athleticism. Florida State entered the game leading the Atlantic Coast Conference in scoring defense (6.3 points per game) and total defense. Four starters returned from suspension for academic fraud and were in a nasty mood.

Hawkins was sacked four times.

"It wasn't so much the pressure, but I couldn't get in a rhythm," Hawkins said. "It's completely my fault. I've got to be able to step up and make those plays. I apologize to my teammates and our fans. That wasn't me today."

Florida State also took awhile to get going. But the Seminoles finally broke a 7-7 tie with 12 unanswered points in the final 2 1/2 minutes of the second quarter. It began with a 60-yard touchdown run by senior tailback Antone Smith and was followed by a safety and field goal.

FSU's defense accounted for the safety when linebacker Dekoda Watson blocked a punt by CU's Matt DiLallo out of the end zone.

"That little exchange at the end of the first half caused some problems," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "I know people get on (Florida State) a little bit, but they're still well-coached and have great athletes. It's hard to shut them down."

Colorado scored two touchdowns in the fourth quarter but could not pull closer than 11 points.

If things weren't going bad enough already for the Buffs, starting sophomore offensive right tackle Ryan Miller was helped off the field early in the third quarter with what was later diagnosed as a fracture to his lower left leg. Miller was told to expect to be out four to six weeks.

"It's just part of the sport," said redshirt freshman Matt Bahr, who replaced Miller. "Ryan is a strong kid. I'm sure he'll be back faster than that."

With the score tied at 7-7, Colorado had a chance to take the lead early in the second quarter when freshman defensive tackle Curtis Cunningham deflected a Christian Ponder pass and then intercepted, returning it 10 yards to the FSU 12. But CU moved the ball only 2 yards in three plays, and Aric Goodman missed wide left on a 27-yard field-goal attempt.

"We feel very fortunate to win," said FSU coach Bobby Bowden following his 500th career game as a college head coach. "(But) I thought it was very significant that we actually ran the ball. Momentum is important. It's better to have it than the other team have it."

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Key stat

33 to 0: Florida State recorded four sacks for 33 yards and pressured CU quarterback Cody Hawkins all afternoon. Hawkins completed just 17-of-36 passes for 154 yards, with one interception and three touchdowns. CU's defense did not get to Florida State sophomore quarterback Christian Ponder.

Key play

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FSU senior tailback Antone Smith, whom some Seminoles fans say never has reached his potential, broke a 7-7 tie with a 60-yard touchdown run on a sweep around the left side with 2:29 remaining in the second quarter. FSU added five more points before halftime, on a safety and field goal. The Seminoles were never threatened again.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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woody paige

Bufs show they're not A-OK

By Woody Paige
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 09/28/2008 12:14:24 AM MDT

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — *Ya got trouble, CU,*

Right here in River city!

With a capital "T,"

And that rhymes with "B,"

And that stands for Bufs.

Got trouble, trouble, trouble.

In one of the worst games in the entire two-year history of the River City Showdown, the University of Colorado suffered its worst beatdown since Montana State two years ago.

Florida State is awful.

Nevertheless, the Seminoles thrashed the Buffaloes 39-21 on Saturday afternoon-into- evening in Jacksonville. The gathering was announced by somebody who was lying, and his pants were on fire, as 46,716. (Tarpaulins covered 15 sections of the stadium to hide empty seats, and it might have been a sellout if they had had more canvas. Four tarps got up and left after the boring, dreadfully

played first half.)

Blame the father, the son and the Colorado Bufs for the loss. Blame the (Big 12) officials for lousy calls and noncalls. It was no day at the beach for any of them. It was not the heat; it was the humility.

If CU plays this poorly on offense and this porously on defense and special teams, life will be cruel the next five weeks. Texas, the Bufs' forthcoming opponent, dominated Arkansas 52-10 on Saturday.

Colorado has to junk the spread formation. Colorado has to run the football a majority, not 50 percent, of the time. Colorado has to put Rodney Stewart and Darrell Scott in the backfield together all the time. Colorado has to get better efforts from the quarterback, or he should split time with freshman Matt Ballenger.

A long time past, I promised myself I would not severely criticize individual amateur athletes, so here's what coach Dan Hawkins said about quarterback Cody Hawkins: "He had a tough day. He missed some open players in the first half. He had a tough day, there is no question." There are questions, though.

I do criticize professional athletes and paid coaches.

Hawkins the Younger had a tough day. Hawkins the Elder had a horrific day.

Cody Hawkins completed 17-of-36 passes for three touchdowns, which sounds better than it looked. He threw one interception. He fumbled, a la Jay Cutler, on a pass attempt, and that set up Florida State's first touchdown. He overthrew three receivers, open by yards, and ballooned another pass in the first half, when Colorado could have scored three touchdowns, or six, instead of one. He was sacked

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four times (including the first offensive play), which was not his fault. And he was not alone out there. Missed field goal, blocked punt, bad blocking and tacky tackling, kickoff return (again) for touchdown and a 60-yard touchdown run. The two plays turned the game, and during both, the FSU players were not touched once.

So we come to Dan Hawkins, who did not prepare or coach his team, including his quarterback, or adjust well enough to win this game. He has to take the pressure off the quarterback by giving the ball to his rushers — Cody Hawkins is not one — and put more pressure on the other teams' quarterbacks and on his assistant coaches.

Stewart rushed again for 100-plus yards, but Scott got only five carries (20 yards), Demetrius Sumler four (23) and Kevin Moyd one (5). They averaged 5.0 yards a play. The passing game averaged 4.3 yards per attempt. Which was more successful?

Bill McCartney would switch to a wishbone. As everybody (except Hawkins and his staff) has surmised since the second game, the Buffs should run more and throw

and have the snap go to the tailback, which was novel for CU but copied from many teams.)

Colorado managed to get past Eastern Washington and West Virginia with shaky offensive presentations but let Florida State get away in the first half with a touchdown, a safety and a field goal in the final 2 1/2 minutes.

"We lost the momentum," said Dan Hawkins. Florida State coach Bobby Bowden agreed. "We got the momentum going our way. It was probably a game of momentum," he said, then added: "It's better to have it than the other team can have it as you can tell." Yogi will be proud.

"I feel very fortunate to win the game," said Bowden, who seemed surprised. Dan Hawkins shouldn't have been so surprised. The Buffs' first 11 drives ended on four punts, a fumble, a touchdown, an interception, a safety, a failed fourth down, a missed field goal and end of half. Seven points.

The Buffs had trouble, right here in St. Johns River City, trouble with a capital "L."

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less and should be in the I-formation on all downs. (Hawkins did put his QB in motion to wide receiver

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cu football

Miller breaks leg as offensive line takes another hit

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Ryan Miller could miss more than a month after breaking his leg Saturday.

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Offensive line continues to seem like a jinxed position for Colorado.

Four days after losing starting freshman guard Max Tuioti-Mariner for the year to an ACL injury, sophomore starting right tackle Ryan Miller suffered a lower fracture of his left leg with 11:29 remaining in the third quarter of Saturday's 39-21 loss to Florida State.

Miller said he is out for four to six weeks.

"I feel like playing next week, but my body won't let me," Miller said, as he looked down at the cast on his leg. "I don't know how it happened. It just went snap, crackle, pop. I hope to be back earlier than they say."

Miller was replaced by redshirt freshman Matt Bahr.

Before the season, CU lost senior guard Erick Faatagi (academics) and redshirt freshman guard Mike Iltis (ACL) for the season.

"We just have to keep moving guys in there," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "Nobody said life was fair."

Bahr said he is ready to step up. "Right tackle is what I played in high school (Mission Viejo in Orange County, Calif.) so I feel comfortable there," he said.

"Matt wasn't nervous when he went in," offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said. "He's been preparing himself. But Ryan means so much to this team in terms of leadership."

Lots of empty seats.

The upper decks of Jacksonville Municipal Stadium (formerly Alltel Stadium) were blocked off Saturday, including some sections covered by a tarp. Tickets

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distributed was announced at 46,716, but not that many fans showed up.

Last year's FSU vs. Alabama game in Jacksonville drew 85,412. That set a record for this city, exceeding the attendance of the 2004 Super Bowl or any Georgia vs. Florida game. Colorado sold 2,000 tickets for the game.

Footnotes.

Sophomore defensive end Marquez Herrod made the first start of his career, replacing junior Jason Brace. Brace suffered a concussion last Sunday in practice and did not make the trip to Jacksonville. .

. . Presumably to help players handle the heat, Colorado wore all white (jerseys and pants) for the first time since a 23-3 loss at Miami in 2005. Game-time temperatures were in the low to mid-80s under sunny skies, but the humidity was moderate.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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