



Hawkins signs extension

CU coach wants longterm deals for assistants

By Kyle Ringo

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Colorado coach Dan Hawkins signed a contract extension with modest pay increases and will be the coach in Boulder through the end of the 2012 season.

The new contract became effective July 1 this year and was signed last week. Hawkins will earn \$951,720 this season prior to incentives. The new deal includes some changes to his incentive package, including a \$50,000 bonus for winning seven games in a season, and a \$25,000 bonus for winning eight games.

The contract also includes a buyout clause throughout the term of the deal. Hawkins would have to pay CU \$1 million if he left the school for another job before the end of the 2009 season.

If Hawkins was to fulfill every incentive in his contract in the fourth or fifth year of the deal, he would earn approximately \$2.5 million.



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Hawkins wants contracts for CU assistants

Law would have to change to get long-term deals

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins is not one to shy away from a challenge. Now that he's armed with a signed contract extension through 2012, he has an eye set on changing state law.

Hawkins wants to be able to offer his assistant coaches long-term contracts. State law currently allows each college or university only six such deals, and they are generally used for head coaches and high level administrators such as presidents, chancellors and athletic directors.

The state legislature would have to approve any change to the status quo, but Hawkins believes CU should lead the charge toward getting it done because long-term deals for assistants are becoming the norm in major college football.

"I believe as we continue to get better, our guys are going to get preyed upon a lot, and that's going to make it very tough for me," Hawkins said.

Hawkins said in the past two offseasons several of his assistant coaches have been approached by other schools with job offers. The only change made in his staff since he came to Boulder in 2006 was former offensive line coach Chris Strausser returning to Boise State after one season with the Buffs.

CU assistants work as at-will employees now. Keeping assistants in Boulder has been a problem at CU for years. The past offseason was the first since 1989 that the CU football coaching staff remained completely intact from one year to the next without losing at least one member.

"I think everybody is doing what they can," Hawkins said. "I think functionally at the higher level, we need to be able to change things so that these guys can be on multi-year contracts, and then we're able to work toward some equity with the rest of the conference because we did a good job of staving off the wolves."

Athletic director Mike Bohn said he agrees with Hawkins and will work toward building a consensus for the change. Bohn said he believes the law can be changed through the right approach.

Bohn pointed to the top three teams in the Big 12 this year -- Oklahoma, Missouri and Texas, all three of which are ranked in the top five in the nation -- as examples of what continuity and longevity in a coaching staff does for a program.

Mack Brown has been coaching at Texas for 11 years. Bob Stoops has been at OU for 10 years and Gary Pinkel and his entire assistant coaching staff have been at Missouri for eight years.

"What's the constant there?" Bohn asked. "Length of service and keeping their staff. So the key is, when you get a great one and you have a staff that is working well together, you want to keep them together."

In announcing the terms of Hawkins extension, which was approved by the Board of Regents back in June, Bohn praised Hawkins for his work building relationships across the campus.

"Dan has brought respectability and pride back to CU, really at a time when that was much needed," Bohn said.

As previously reported, Hawkins' new contract gives him a modest raise in base pay each year but adds considerable bonus money earned by achieving incentives. It is the contract model the athletic department adopted in the wake of having to shell out nearly \$4 million to part ways with former football coach Gary Barnett in 2005.

Hawkins base compensation package will pay him \$951,720 this year before incentives. He is likely to make closer to \$1.2 million when incentives for student athlete academic performance, student athlete welfare and development and outreach efforts are added in.

Several new incentives were added to Hawkins deal, including a \$50,000 bonus for winning seven games, a \$25,000 bonus for winning eight games, a \$50,000 bonus for being named national coach of the year and a \$25,000 bonus for earning the Big 12 Conference coach of the year award.

Bohn said if Hawkins was to earn every incentive in his deal, which would require winning the Big 12 and national titles, he could earn as much as \$2.5 million in one season.

Some believe coaches such as Hawkins to be overpaid, but the deal keeps him as the ninth-highest paid coach in the Big 12 if his three primary incentives are included and approximately the 50th-highest paid in the nation.

"Everybody always seems to worry about that more than I do," Hawkins said of getting the extension done. "The way I was raised, you've got to show up and put your boots on and go to work every day. That's how you put food on the table."

Hawkins has produced a 10-19 record in nearly 2½ seasons on the job, but he has done enough off the field in the eyes of his bosses to merit more time in trying to get the product right between the lines.



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Woelk: CU's faith in Hawkins will pay off

By Neill Woelk

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

In 1984, in the midst of a 1-10 season that only seemed to get worse as the year dragged on, Colorado athletic director Bill Marolt handed a contract extension to coach Bill McCartney.

There were plenty of folks -- including yours truly -- who wondered if Marolt should have worn a helmet in his days as a skier.

Not only was McCartney in the process of finishing 1-10, the program had shown very few outward signs of improvement. The Buffs had gone 2-8-1 and 4-7 in Mac's first two years, leaving him with a 7-25-1 record and a new contract after three seasons.

At the same time fans and media were questioning Marolt's wisdom, they were also questioning McCartney's coaching staff. Mac's assistants were a group of young, relatively untested coaches, a group many thought was in over its head in the rugged Big Eight.

You know the rest of the story.

The Buffs never had another losing season under McCartney. He rewarded Marolt's faith with a 7-5 finish and a bowl game the following season, and by the time he stepped down, CU had its first national championship and a firm spot among national football powers.

Now fast-forward to 2008.

Tuesday afternoon, CU athletic director Mike Bohn announced that Dan Hawkins has signed a contract extension that should keep him in Boulder through at least 2012.

It's a move I favored eight months ago, and absolutely nothing has happened since to cause me to reconsider.

Fact is, Hawk is ahead of schedule -- and certainly ahead of the pace established by McCartney.

Hawkins has recruited well. He has won games against teams with superior talent, and he has upgraded the talent on his team on a steady basis. He took Colorado to a bowl game in his second year, and is still on target to do it again this season.

Equally important has been Hawkins' influence off the field. When Hawk took over, enthusiasm for Colorado football was at a low not seen since the post-Fairbanks, early McCartney years. A stretch of disappointing seasons coupled with the fallout over the recruiting scandal had the program teetering.

Hawkins has since reinvigorated CU's fan base. With the help of such folks as Bohn and CU chancellor

Bud Peterson, he has also restored the public's general faith in CU football in particular and the athletic department in general.

Tuesday, Bohn announced that CU's season ticket sales -- not including student tickets -- hit 22,603 this year, an increase of more than 1,300 from last year and more than 2,100 from two years ago. CU also increased its club seat sales this year, and sold out its luxury suites for the first time this season.

"The spirit and energy he's brought to campus are more important than wins right now," Bohn said. "But we believe the wins will come, and they will come in abundance to match the world class reputation of this institution."

Actually, the wins have come a little quicker than most expected -- and certainly faster than they did under McCartney. After Hawkins' 2-10 debut season, the Buffs rebounded to finish the regular season 6-6 a year ago before losing to Alabama in the bowl game.

This year, the Buffs are 3-2 with a win over Colorado State and then-No. 21 West Virginia. Given the fact that plenty of folks had the Buffs no better than 2-4 after their first six, it's a better start than expected.

But the biggest difference between Hawk's situation and Mac's is that patience doesn't exist in today's society. In an era of cable television explosion, internet chatroom experts and talk radio, instant gratification is the norm.

"We're in the era of PlayStation," Hawkins said Tuesday afternoon. "If you don't like it, just hit reset."

But patience will pay huge dividends for Colorado. Hawkins is building a solid foundation that bodes well for the future, and agree with Bohn. The wins will come.

Meanwhile, Hawk faces another issue that confronted McCartney. There are folks who wonder if Hawkins' staff is in over its head.

We can't guarantee Hawk's staff will turn out like Mac's.

But just in case you were wondering, that 1984 CU staff included guys by the name of Gary Barnett, Gerry DiNardo and Lou Tepper, plus a kid from Michigan named Les Miles.

It turned out to be a pretty good staff, after all.



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Bufs' Ballenger may play more

Hawkins still starter, but coaches mulling more action for CU redshirt freshman

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

Cody Hawkins remains the starting quarterback for Colorado and probably will for the remainder of this season at the least, but coaches appear ready to give redshirt freshman Matt Ballenger some opportunities with meaning.

Coach Dan Hawkins and offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said Tuesday they are considering putting Ballenger in games in the future and seeing how he does when the pressure is on and the outcome is still at stake.

The specifics of when, how often and under what circumstances Ballenger will play are still to be determined, and as Helfrich said, "We're not even saying this is something that is going to happen. It's sort of a what-if scenario."

Helfrich said one concern coaches have had all season is the situation they would be in if Cody Hawkins was seriously hurt and unable to play. Neither Ballenger or senior Nick Nelson has any significant Division-I experience. Ballenger played in his first game last week in mop-up duty in a blowout loss to Texas.

The concern for having someone with at least some experience has grown in recent weeks as Cody Hawkins has been battered by bruising defensive lines from Texas and Florida State that had their way with a young and inexperienced CU offensive line.

"Cody has taken a lot of shots," Helfrich said.

But Dan Hawkins and Helfrich said getting Ballenger some experience isn't the only reason they are considering putting him on the field when Cody Hawkins is healthy and available to be out there. Helfrich said Ballenger has been practicing better lately and deserves to be evaluated under the lights and pressure of a game.

"That would be the large part of it is just getting him there and seeing how he does," Hawkins said. "See how he competes and see how he compares. You know, sometimes, you never know, you bring another guy in and things happen and people respond. We'll see how that goes."

Ballenger was a little surprised to be the focus of so much attention from reporters at the noon hour Tuesday, following Dan Hawkins' weekly press conference. Ballenger said coaches hadn't spoken to him about any possible change in his playing status and he was preparing as he always does this week.

Asked if he felt like he had closed the gap on Hawkins that existed during spring and summer practices, Ballenger said he didn't know.

"We'll have to see. Cody's the starter and he's doing a lot better than people are giving him credit for," Ballenger said.

The CU offense has struggled to move the ball and score points in the past two weeks and Hawkins hasn't played his best ball in either game. Dan Hawkins and Helfrich were careful to not put all the blame on their signal-caller. Both said the fact that CU has faced a pair of elite defenses combined with the fact that the Buffs' offensive line is young and injury riddled have been big factors in not allowing Cody Hawkins time to be at his best.

"I think it's a combination of things," Dan Hawkins said. "I don't think we've been real prolific on offense to begin with. So all that stuff is cumulative. I mean, himself, personally, has he played well? No, he hasn't. But you've got to be able to run the ball well and get your play-action game going. You've got to be able to protect well and do all those kinds of things. "I don't think it's a one-man thing. I think it's a whole group thing."

Cody Hawkins approached questions about his health with care and a bit of humor Tuesday, but it is clear he is not feeling his best after the past two weeks.

"The nice thing about being my size is you just kind of bounce off," he said. "It's not like there is a big collision."

Through the first five games of the year, Hawkins is completing 59 percent of his passes with 10 touchdowns and four interceptions. Last week was the first game this season in which he did not throw an interception. He was credited with a fumble when he attempted to handoff to freshman Rodney Stewart who was attempting to block a defender instead of taking the ball.

Hawkins responded to the news that he might be sharing some of his playing time in true Cody Hawkins fashion.

"Both me and Matt need to continue to get better, and we're always going to do what's best for the team," he said. "Matt's totally OK with that and I'm OK with that. I'm going to do nothing short of coming out and busting my butt every day. If I'm on the field, I'm on the field. If Matt's on the field, I'm going to be rooting for him, too."



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DT Goree practicing with offensive line

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, October 8, 2008

Colorado football coaches are always experimenting with using players at different positions. The latest example could become a permanent move if all goes well.

Redshirt freshman defensive tackle Eugene Goree was working with the offense at guard Tuesday, wearing No. 76. Offensive line coach Jeff Grimes and offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich told reporters who noticed the switch that it was just a trial run, in light of the rash of injuries this season to offensive linemen.

CU has lost Ryan Miller, Mike Iltis and Max Tuioti-Mariner to season-ending injuries. Fellow offensive linemen Sione Tau and Erick Faatagi were ruled academically ineligible prior to the season.

Redshirt freshman Blake Behrens has played in every game at guard for the Buffs and junior Devin Head has played in four of the five games. There is very little depth at the position if either of those two players were to get hurt in the seven remaining regular-season games.

The CU media guide lists no history on the offensive line in high school for Goree and Grimes said his newest pupil is "very raw." Goree has played in four games on defense this season on a total of 17 plays, making one tackle.

Redshirt freshmen Ethan Adkins and Shawn Daniels saw the first action of their careers last week. Daniels played 15 snaps against the Longhorns and Adkins played 10 snaps.

Bohn on bubble

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn said the multi-purpose practice bubble will begin to be put up this year on Oct. 20. Bohn said the manufacturer of the bubble put it up and took it down last year and will teach CU employees to do it this year.

Bohn said the process will take about four days and must be done during a week leading up to a road game because employees are too busy during weeks leading up to home games preparing for the game.

"We are really trying to learn how to play with our new toy, if you will," Bohn said.

Ticket sales surge

Bohn said football season-ticket sales grew this year to a total of 22,603, an increase of 1,369 from last season. The suites on the east side of Folsom Field are sold out and club seats sales also have grown to 1,415, up 325 over last year.

Bohn said he couldn't be happier with the support fans have given the program this year, but he hopes it continues to grow in the future. He said he hopes to build a fan base that comes to games no matter the opponent.

"I hope we can get our fans to the point where, 'Hey we're coming to see CU. We're coming to support CU and support our team,' rather than worrying about who we're playing," Bohn said.

CU-KSU on the tube

CU officials announced the Oct. 18 home game with Kansas State will be televised on Fox Sports Rocky Mountain and will begin at 5 p.m.

Officials said they received permission from the Big 12 Conference to negotiate a deal to televise the game outside the normal conference television assignments. More than 50,000 tickets have been sold for the KSU game.

Notable

Ryan Walters said he didn't practice Tuesday but he is planning to play this week at Kansas after injuring his left knee against Texas. Walters said the knee is sore, but there is no significant damage. ... Coach Dan Hawkins said running back Darrell Scott continues to recuperate from a sprained ankle, but team athletic trainers believe he will be OK to play this week.



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CU gives Hawkins two-year contract extension

By B.G. Brooks

Tuesday, October 7, 2008

Dan Hawkins' rebuilding efforts as the University of Colorado's football coach have been fortified with a two-year contract extension that takes him through the 2012 season.

"Dan has brought respectability and pride back to CU when it was needed," athletic director **Mike Bohn** said Tuesday. "We believe the wins will come (and) will match the world-class status of the university. . . We're honored and proud he's our coach."

Hawkins, who takes an 11-19 overall record (3-2 this season) at CU into Saturday's game at No. 16 Kansas, said signing the extension is as vital for his staff and for recruiting as it is for him.

He said his upbringing taught him to "show up, put your boots on and go to work (to) put food on the table." He added he hopes his assistant coaches someday can be afforded the security of multiyear contracts.

State law currently limits assistant coaches to one-year contracts, but Hawkins and Bohn said it was not unrealistic to envision the multiyear pacts for assistants that are becoming commonplace in the Big 12 Conference and elsewhere.

Only six employees in the CU system currently have multiyear deals, including four in the athletic department (Bohn, Hawkins, men's basketball coach **Jeff Bzdelik** and women's basketball coach **Kathy McConnell-Miller**).

"Laws are made by people and can be changed by people," Hawkins said.

Added Bohn: "I think (chancellor) **Bud (Peterson)** understands the importance of continuity . . . when you get a great one, you want to keep that team together."

Hawkins, who came to CU from Boise State in 2006, initially signed a five-year contract worth \$4.25 million. That deal included performance incentives based on his team's academic progress, student citizenship and community outreach, as well as on-field performance by the Buffaloes.

The contract extension, agreed to and signed by Hawkins last week, includes additional performance incentives that will pay Hawkins \$25,000 if he is chosen Big 12 Coach of the Year, \$50,000 if he is national Coach of the Year, \$50,000 if the Buffs win seven regular-season games and an additional \$25,000 for eight regular-season wins.

Bohn said if all incentives are met, Hawkins could earn \$2.5 million in the fourth year (2011) of the restructured contract and \$2.6 million in the fifth year (2012).

Excluding performance incentives, Hawkins' contract includes guaranteed compensation in 2008-09 for base salary (\$174,720); radio, television and public appearances (\$514,500); sponsorship support (\$210,000); and football camps (\$52,500). The guaranteed total is \$951,720.

The contract also includes a buyout clause that would cost Hawkins \$1 million "if terminated between July 1, 2008, and the day after the final game of the 2009 football season, including any bowl game . . . "

Hawkins' buyout would be reduced to \$500,000 if he wants to leave after the 2009 season through Aug. 30, 2012.

Other athletic department issues addressed by Bohn:

- * CU's practice bubble likely will be up by the last week of this month. Reason for the delay: Athletic department maintenance workers are being taught by the manufacturer how to install it. "We're learning how to play with our new toy," Bohn said.

- * Football season-ticket sales for 2008 hit 22,603, a 1,369 increase from 2007 and a 2,180 increase from 2006. Bohn said 1,415 of the 1,900 club seats at Folsom Field were sold this season, a total that was up 325 from 2007 and 488 from 2006.

- * Proposed facilities improvements for basketball and volleyball are on track. Locker rooms at the Coors Events Center have been renovated, and weight-room equipment for the events center is to be installed "in the next couple of weeks," Bohn said, adding an "aggressive timeline" has been established for the construction of practice facilities near the Coors complex.

- * Some of the gold T-shirts distributed by the school for last weekend's Texas game were thrown onto the Folsom Field turf. Bohn conceded the behavior didn't play well on national television but noted studies showed ejections were "one of every 1,000 fans. We'd like to have zero . . . we want to get to the point where we're above average."

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CU report: Look for Ballenger?

By B.G. Brooks

Tuesday, October 7, 2008

Coach **Dan Hawkins** left the door open Tuesday to give backup quarterback **Matt Ballenger** meaningful playing time and ramp up the competition for starter **Cody Hawkins** when the Buffaloes play Saturday at No. 16 Kansas.

"You always want to push guys - you always want to have that element in there that, 'Hey, you need to play or you're not going to play,' " Dan Hawkins said. "That's something we're getting better at in our program."

He indicated he was intrigued to "get (Ballenger) in there and see how he competes, see how he compares. Sometimes you never know. You bring another guy in and things happen and people respond. We'll see how that goes."

Dan Hawkins said when Ballenger, a redshirt freshman, replaced Cody Hawkins in the fourth quarter of the Texas game (the Longhorns led 38-7), "We were not doing that much anyway, and we needed to get (Ballenger) in and let him go and get his first-game jitters out of the way. . . ."

Ballenger said after Tuesday's practice he always prepared as if he were going to start but noted Dan Hawkins had told him playing early Saturday was a possibility.

"Playing against Texas, maybe against Kansas, it would be awesome," said Ballenger, who completed 3-of-4 passes for 61 yards and CU's final touchdown against Texas.

Cody Hawkins, who completed 13-of-33 passes for 118 yards and a touchdown against Texas, said he and Ballenger "are totally OK" with however they're used.

"Matt's a great friend, and a very talented guy," he said.

Help from defense

Defensive tackle **Eugene Goree**, a 6-foot-1, 295-pound redshirt freshman, is being given a look at offensive guard. Offensive line coach **Jeff Grimes** said while Goree's offensive experience is limited, "He's a big guy who moves well, and he's in a backup role (on defense). We'll see if he can help us." CU has lost two offensive line starters in the past two weeks, including guard **Max Tuioti-Mariner**.

Etc.

* CU's Oct. 18 home game against Kansas State will kick off at 5 p.m. and be televised by FSN Rocky Mountain. Athletic director **Mike Bohn** said 50,000 tickets have been sold for the Parents Weekend

game.

* Dan Hawkins said CU's medical personnel believe freshman tailback **Darrell Scott** (sprained ankle) "will be fine" for Saturday's game and senior safety **Ryan Walters** (knee) will play.

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cu football

Colorado, Bohn give Hawkins seal of approval

By Tom Kensler
Denver Post Staff Writer

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Dan Hawkins (Denver Post file photo)

BOULDER — The timing of Colorado's announcement that coach Dan Hawkins' contract has been extended through the 2012 season might seem a bit odd to some, considering Hawkins' team is riding a two-game losing streak. That did not go unnoticed by CU athletic director Mike Bohn, however.

"It's apropos today that we talk about an extension after two losses because restoring respect and pride

back to the entire university was obviously more important than to win," Bohn said Tuesday. "We really believe the wins will come, will come in abundance as this program continues to grow.

"We are proud of the contributions Dan brings to our players. . . . His principles, work ethic, dedication, commitment and passion are really

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unparalleled and incredibly contagious."

Hawkins had three years remaining on an original five-year, \$4.25 million contract effective Jan. 1, 2006. The new deal amounts to a two-year extension, with escalating pay increases, especially if performance incentives are met.

The guaranteed compensation package for this school year includes a base salary of \$174,720; \$514,500 for radio, television and public appearances; \$210,000 from donor support and

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\$52,500 from summer football camps. It totals \$951,720 and does not including performance incentives.

Incentive clauses include academic progress of players toward their graduation, reaching the Big 12 championship game, conference and national championships, victories, bowl participation and national and league coach of the year honors.

If all incentives are met, Hawkins could earn about \$2.5 million in 2011 and \$2.6 million in 2012. A buyout clause requires that Hawkins pay the university \$1 million if he terminates his contract before the final day of the 2009 season. The buyout is reduced to \$500,000 after that.

Hawkins said the contract extension becomes an aid in recruiting.

"All that stuff is good," he said. "Parents and kids and even coaches will say, 'So, Hawk, how long is your contract for?' That's always part of the conversation.

"I think it's great for our staff. It's great for me. It's great for recruiting. It provides continuity. It's an awesome statement by Mike (Bohn) and the administration. And I really appreciate their support in standing by us and believing in us. That's a huge deal."

It all adds up to . .

A look at some of the performance incentives in Dan Hawkins' contract extension through 2012 season:

Big 12 championship game: \$150,000

Big 12 champion or BCS participation: \$250,000

Big 12 coach of the year: \$25,000

National coach of the year: \$50,000

Winning seven regular-season games: \$50,000

Winning eight regular-season games: Additional \$25,000

Source: CU sports information

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colorado football

Frosh QB likely to see action

Ballenger, Hawkins' backup, threw for a TD vs. the Longhorns.

By Tom Kensler
Denver Post Staff Writer

Article Last Updated: 10/08/2008 12:59:33 AM MDT



CU freshman quarterback Matt Ballenger, recovering his own fumble, was 3-of-4 passing for 61 yards against Texas. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

Ballenger could get in with the game still competitive and not just for mop-up duty, CU offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said. Making his college debut, Ballenger played in CU's final two series of Saturday's blowout loss to Texas and threw a touchdown pass.

"That's what we'll have to figure out," Helfrich said when asked when Ballenger might get some minutes against Kansas. "If there is something he can provide or do differently that makes sense, we'll do that.

"Matt is practicing better.

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BOULDER — Colorado coaches stopped short Tuesday of saying they want to give sophomore quarterback Cody Hawkins some competition. But it appears redshirt freshman Matt Ballenger will get some playing time Saturday at No. 16 Kansas.

There are some things he can bring to the table. We're just going to kind of do a little more experimentation this week and see where that takes us. But I think it would do everybody good to get Matt in there a little bit more."

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Ballenger, 6-feet-4 and 230 pounds, has been considered a "raw talent" by Helfrich and head coach Dan Hawkins. As a multisport high school star in Nampa, Idaho, Ballenger earned greater honors as a basketball player (two-time Gatorade player of the year) than he did in football (second-team all-conference as a senior).

Ballenger has shown athleticism and a strong arm since he arrived at CU in 2007 but had much to learn about the checks and reads required of a quarterback.

"I feel like I'm getting the offense a lot better the past couple of weeks," Ballenger said Tuesday. "Getting that touchdown pass against Texas was big for me."

After Tuesday's practice, Cody Hawkins called Ballenger a "great quarterback" and said he has no problem with the freshman getting more time.

"He is just going to get better and better," Cody Hawkins said. "He's a guy that if he continues to progress, he's going to be tough to keep off the field just because he makes plays."

Coach Dan Hawkins cautioned that comparing Ballenger's passing statistics against Texas (3-for-4 for 61 yards and a touchdown) to that of Cody Hawkins (13-of-33 for 118 yards and one TD) "is not apples to apples; it's apples to oranges" because Cody went against the Longhorns' first-stringers.

Of his son's struggles the past two games, Dan Hawkins said: "I think it's a combination of things. I don't think we've been prolific on offense, to begin with. All that stuff is cumulative. Has Cody played well? No, he hasn't. But you've got to run the ball well to get the play-action game going. You have to protect well, do all those kinds of things. I don't think it's a one-man thing; I think it's a group thing."

As for Ballenger drawing playing time against Kansas, Dan Hawkins said: "We want to just get him in there and see how he does — to see how he competes. You never know. You bring another guy in and things happen and people respond. We'll see how that goes."

Footnotes.

Senior safety Ryan Walters (sprained knee) likely will play against Kansas, Dan Hawkins said. . . . Kickoff for Colorado's next home game, Oct. 18 against Kansas State, was set for 5 p.m., with Fox Sports Rocky Mountain televising. . . . Installation of CU's practice bubble is scheduled to begin Oct. 20 and likely will take three or four days.

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CU unveils Hawkins' deal

Contract, signed last month, full of incentives

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — On Tuesday, Colorado unveiled the contract extension to which football coach Dan Hawkins agreed last spring.

The new deal, which he signed Sept. 29, is loaded with incentives and extends his old contract two years, through the 2012 season. It's retroactive to July 1.

Hawkins' first CU contract was a five-year deal with a base pay starting at \$900,000 a year, plus incentives. His base salary starting in 2008-09 is \$951,720.

Hawkins is 11-19 during his CU tenure entering Saturday's game at Kansas. CU hired him after its December 2005 firing of Gary Barnett, whose tenure included four Big 12 North division titles, plus accusations of improper recruiting tactics and other allegations.

Athletic director Mike Bohn said the new contract recognizes what Hawkins has brought in addition to wins and losses.

"Obviously, Dan has brought respectability and pride back to CU really at a time when that was much needed," Bohn said. "Restoring respect and pride back to the entire university was more important at that time than wins. And we really believe the wins are going to come, and the wins will come in an abundance as this program continues to grow."

Senior linebacker Brad Jones won't be around past this season, but he said the extension bodes well.

"I don't expect coach Hawk to be leaving here anytime soon," Jones said. "He's such a good coach, I'm just glad he's going to be here."

Hawkins said others worry more about his contract status than he does. But he admitted the extension will help recruiting, especially when parents and prospects ask about it.

"I think it's great for our staff, great for me, great for recruiting, provides continuity," Hawkins said. "I think it's an awesome statement by Mike and the administration. I really appreciate their support and standing behind us and believing in us."

Hawkins' deal could pay him a maximum of \$2.504 million in its fourth fiscal year, 2011-12, if he reaches all incentives, including the Big 12 and national titles.

Hawkins' new base salary — which includes supplemental pay for radio, television and public appearances, sponsorship support and football camps — will increase each year. In the 2011-12 fiscal year, it'll be \$1.245 million. Bohn said Hawkins received "virtually no" pay raises his first two years at CU.

According to a July report in the Kansas City Star, only two Big 12 coaches earned salaries of less than \$1 million a year. Besides Hawkins, the other was Kansas State coach Ron Prince, at \$755,000.

Hawkins' contract includes more lucrative incentives based on player performance, on and off the field, and program success. New incentives include \$25,000 if he is named Big 12 coach of the year and \$50,000 if he's the national coach of the year, plus \$50,000 if the team wins seven regular-season games, and another \$25,000 if it wins an eighth.

The buyouts also have changed. Before the final game of 2009, including any bowl, the buyout is \$1 million. After that date, it's \$500,000. Under Hawkins' old deal, the buyout in 2008 was \$750,000, then \$500,000 in 2009 and 2010.

Hawkins said he'd like to see the university continue to work toward salary increases and multi-year contracts for assistant coaches, which he called "the norm in college football."

"Laws are made by people, and they can be changed by people," he said.

State law limits the number of multi-year contracts university employees can hold. CU has access to six. Four are in place in the athletic department: Bohn, Hawkins, men's basketball coach Jeff Bzdelik and women's basketball coach Kathy McConnell-Miller.

"I think as we continue to get better, our guys will get preyed upon a lot, and that's going to make it very tough for me, and ... I think everybody is doing what they can," Hawkins said. "I think functionally at the higher level, we need to be able to change things so that these guys can be on multi-year contracts and then we're able to work toward some equity with the rest of the conference.

"We did a good job last year staving off the wolves. But every year, even in the two-win season, I bet I had four or five of our coaches that got hit on by other places."

Said offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich: "We're absolutely committed to Colorado and absolutely committed to coach Hawk. Otherwise, there's a lot of guys who wouldn't be here."

Bohn said getting more multi-year contracts is "a matter of timing and finding the right place for that to fit, rather than making that the issue."

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Buffs QB Ballenger preparing to play

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Will backup quarterback Matt Ballenger play in the first half Saturday when CU visits No. 16 Kansas (10:30 a.m., ESPN2)?

“We’ll see,” coach Dan Hawkins said Tuesday.

Offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said Ballenger is playing better since his progress “ebbed” after camp. Helfrich also wouldn’t say definitively if Ballenger will relieve starter Cody Hawkins for an early series, but he also said it’s something being considered.

“He’s practicing better,” Helfrich said. “We’re going to do a bit more experimentation this week and see where that takes us.

“We’re not going to get him in to say, ‘Hey, here’s a series.’ If there’s something he can provide to do better or differently, we’ll do that.”

Ballenger, a redshirt freshman, called the chance to play “huge.”

“It’d be awesome,” he said. “I’ve started preparing myself like Cody is, and I feel like I have been doing that the last couple of weeks, and it really paid off against Texas.

“I’ve been making more reads; I have more checks going on. I feel like I’m getting the offense better than I have been.”

BUBBLING UP: Athletic director Mike Bohn said the practice bubble will start going up Oct. 20. He said it’ll take three to four days for the bubble’s manufacturers to complete the project and train CU’s staff how to install it.

Last year, the manufacturer put it up for CU. Bohn said the athletic department is still trying to master the bubble’s nuances, including how to set it up and operate it.

“We’re trying to learn how to play with our new toy, if you will,” Bohn said.

KANSAS STATE GAME: CU’s Oct. 18 game against Kansas State will start at 5 p.m. It wasn’t selected for television by any of the Big 12’s partners, but it will be aired locally on Fox Sports Rocky Mountain.

Bohn said more than 50,000 tickets have been sold for the game, which falls on Family Weekend.

EXTRA POINTS: Head trainer Miguel Rueda expects running back Darrell Scott (ankle) to be fine for Saturday, Dan Hawkins said. The coach also said safety Ryan Walters (knee) is expected to be fine. ... Bohn said CU’s final season ticket sales of 22,603 are an increase of 1,369 from 2007 and up 2,180 from 2006. CU has sold 1,415 club seats, which have a capacity of 1,900. That’s up 325 from last year and 488 from 2006. Bohn said the department is formulating an “aggressive” timeline to build a new basketball operations center just north of the Coors Events Center. It’s still expected to include basketball and volleyball practice gyms. ... While several fans threw yellow T-shirts onto Folsom Field during Saturday’s loss, Bohn said only one of every 1,000 fans are being ejected from CU games, which is about the national average. He said efforts will continue to be made to decrease the number of ejections and improve fan behavior.

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