



Bufs reaffirm team unity with meeting

CU trying to stay upbeat following third loss in row

By Kyle Ringo

Monday, October 13, 2008

The euphoric celebration after a win over a top-25 West Virginia team seems like a distant memory now for the Colorado Buffaloes, who haven't tasted victory since that blacked out Thursday night in Folsom Field nearly a month ago.

The Buffs went through their normal Sunday routine for the most part following their third consecutive defeat. They lifted weights, ran sprints, reviewed film and received medical treatment for nicks and bruises.

But when they met as a team, they got away from the routine just a little bit. Players talked to each other about the need to stay together while some outside the program react to three losses to Florida State, Texas and Kansas and a 3-3 overall record as if the sky is falling.

"It's just us and the coaches," senior center and team captain Daniel Sanders said. "So we've got to stick with ourselves, stay on the right path and ignore everything else outside of it."

The Buffs were one of the youngest teams in the nation to start the season and injuries have made them even more inexperienced on the offensive line. They have faced three of the top-28 defenses in the country in consecutive weeks and have played the third toughest schedule in the country to this point, according to the NCAA.

"If you would have told somebody that you were going to lose to Florida State, Texas and the Orange Bowl champions from a year ago, how many people would be unbelievably shocked by that?" quarterback Cody Hawkins said.

The Buffs have fallen to 99th in the nation in total offense after the difficult three-game stretch and rank last in the Big 12 in all the major offensive categories. But there wasn't any finger-pointing late Sunday afternoon at the Dal Ward Center.

"I think we had a really good, productive team meeting," Cody Hawkins said. "I think all of our positions did a good job of explaining stuff to people. I think there is just little stuff that we have to take care of."

Coach Dan Hawkins has no plans to change quarterbacks or take his starter out of the lineup at times to give backup Matt Ballenger chances earlier in games. Dan Hawkins is a firm believer that rotating quarterbacks is a bad idea. He believes in sticking with the starter until it is clear the backup has become the better player.

That hasn't happened yet with Ballenger, who struggled just as badly as Hawkins in the Buffs' loss to Kansas, when he came in and played most of the fourth quarter.

"I don't think I've played very well or as well as I would have liked to," Ballenger said Sunday.

The Kansas game marked only the second time this season the Buffs have used the same five starters on the offensive line as they used the previous week. Sanders said the beleaguered unit is trying to find its way but continues to make relatively small errors that good defenses exploit.

"Everyone is trying as hard as they can," Sanders said. "It just comes down to little things I guess. A little thing here with footwork, a little thing there with making the right calls on the offensive line and just going ahead and making sure everyone is on the right page and not shooting ourselves in the foot."

The Buffs couldn't ask for a better opportunity to turn things around this week. They face a Kansas State team with a strong offense, averaging 43 points a game, but the Wildcat defense ranks 111th in the nation and is allowing 30 points a game.

The Buffs came out of their meeting Sunday evening understanding they have to begin to play better offensively to have any chance of getting to the postseason for a second consecutive season. They said the first step in that direction was taken by talking about what has gone right and wrong in the first half of the season and making sure they enter the second half unified and ready for another tough six weeks.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.



First look: Kansas State

Game 7

Matchup: Kansas State (4-2, overall 1-1 Big 12) at Colorado (3-3, 0-2).

Kickoff: 5 p.m., Folsom Field (53,750).

On the air: FSN Rocky Mountain. KOA (850 AM).

Web site:

www.k-statesports.com.

The series

Colorado leads 43-19-1, including a 26-5 record in Boulder. KSU has won two straight and seven of its 19 wins in the series have come in the past 11 years. The series began with a KSU win Nov. 16, 1912 in Manhattan, Kan.

Last time

The Buffs turned the ball over four times and allowed a blocked punt that was returned for a touchdown in a 47-20 loss last season in Manhattan, Kan. The Buffs converted just one of 12 third-down opportunities and wasted 171 rushing yards from tailback Hugh Charles. The Buffs gave up 249 yards on the ground and committed 10 penalties in one their most sloppy performances of the 2007 season.

The coach

Ron Prince is 16-15 in his third year at Kansas State. The Wildcats are 8-10 in Big 12 play under Prince and 3-9 on the road.

Numbers game

22 -- The number of non-offensive touchdowns scored by the Wildcats since the start of the 2006 season and the beginning of Prince's tenure. The Wildcats lead the nation in this category in that span. KSU has scored four times on special teams and defense so far this season.

The lowdown

Kansas State ranks 111th in the nation in total defense, giving up 181 rushing yards, 260 passing yards and 30 points per game. ...

The Wildcats are the eighth highest scoring team in the nation, averaging 43 points a game. ...

KSU quarterback Josh Freeman has scored 12 rushing touchdowns this season, including four in a road win at Texas A&M on Saturday. Freeman had his streak of 17 games with at least one touchdown pass snapped. ...

Logan Dold is the team's leading rusher but averages just 40 yards per game. ...

The Wildcats are 16-0 when leading at halftime under Prince.

Who to know

QB Josh Freeman: The junior has accounted for 24 touchdowns already, with 12 through the air and 12 on the ground. He ranks 10th in the nation in passing efficiency and 16th in the nation in total offense, averaging 288 yards per game.

WR Brandon Banks: One of the most productive members of the 2008 recruiting class that featured 19 junior college players. The 5-foot-7 junior from North Carolina is averaging 95 yards receiving and has scored six touchdowns.

DB Courtney Herndon: This junior from Dallas is a playmaker. He is the team's third leading tackler with 1½ sacks, an interception, a fumble recovery and two blocked kicks. He returned a blocked punt for a touchdown against the Buffs last season.

-- *Kyle Ringo*



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.

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

Longmont, Colorado
Monday, October 13, 2008



Publish Date: 10/13/2008

Team's third straight loss sparks reflection

Buffaloes seeking answers, confidence

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER – Colorado coaches didn't wait long after Saturday's 30-14 loss at Kansas to start addressing problems. In fact, they probably began within 30 minutes of the final snap.

Offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said that coaches met late Saturday afternoon just outside the team's locker room in Kansas to discuss the game plan for next Saturday, when Kansas State visits Boulder (5 p.m., FSN). They had plenty to talk about.

"We get guys open and we miss them," Helfrich said. "We get guys open and we throw it to them, and we drop it."

"We were meeting about trying to eliminate that mental clutter and just let our guys go and play with confidence."

That might be easier said than done. Confidence could be an elusive thing to grasp after three straight decisive defeats. The Big 12 statistics probably won't boost anyone's spirits, either. That's because CU is last in scoring, rushing offense, passing offense, total offense, pass efficiency and red zone offense.

The Buffs (3-3, 0-2 Big 12) average 22.5 points a game and haven't posted a number more than 21 since Game 2 against Eastern Washington. They're totaling 310.2 yards per game and haven't exceeded 400 in any single game.

Iowa State is 11th in the league in yards, with 335.8 yards per game. CU's average is down from 2007's clip of 377 per game.

Opposing defenses are pressing the line of scrimmage in a similar fashion to 2006, unafraid of CU's ability to stretch the field. They're also substituting, which the no-huddle was supposed to stop, or at least hinder.

"We're still trying to find that niche," receiver Josh Smith said. "We have a lot of new guys and a whole new offense, the hurry up."

"We have to control that clock a little bit more, too, because other teams are setting their own pace by slowing it down and then getting a first down."

CU is 11th in the Big 12 in time of possession, at 27 minutes, 41 seconds per game. Coach Dan Hawkins will say time of possession is an over-rated statistic, and a glance at the league's 12-place team in time of possession backs that. Missouri, second in scoring and yards in the league, is last in time of possession.

But Saturday, when Kansas controlled possession 32 minutes, was one of those days the Buffs needed the ball. They denied being tired in the second half, but their ability to get off the field after halftime suggested something else.

First Look

A quick glimpse at CU's next opponent:

Who: Kansas State (4-2, 1-1)

Where: Boulder, Folsom Field

When: 5 p.m., Saturday, FSN

Notes: Kansas State has defeated CU each of the past two seasons. ... Quarterback Josh Freeman completed 21 of 26 passes and ran for four touchdowns in Saturday's 44-30 win at Texas A&M. ... Texas A&M entered the game last in the Big 12 in yards, but racked up 544 in the loss to the Wildcats. Each of Kansas State's past four opponents, including Louisiana-Lafayette, gained at least 500 yards on the Wildcats. ... Freeman has thrown for 12 touchdowns and ran for 12.

PATRICK RIDGELL

Darrell Scott's lingering ankle injury and an offensive line seeking continuity are issues that need to be addressed this week. Playmakers in addition to Smith reveal themselves. Freshman running back Rodney Stewart is third in the Big 12 in rushing with 75.5 yards per game. There's just one problem – Stewart has yet to score a touchdown.

Quarterback Cody Hawkins was pulled in the fourth quarter at Kansas, but will start against Kansas State, Dan Hawkins said. Cody Hawkins is last among all Big 12 starting quarterbacks in passing efficiency.

Kansas State (4-2, 1-1) gives up more yards per game than any Big 12 defense, so if the Buffs sought the right opponent to fix things, they got it. Last year in Manhattan, CU's Hugh Charles ran for 171 yards and a touchdown on the Wildcats, whose rush defense remains a problem. Of course, Charles is gone, as are four of the CU offensive linemen that started that night last October. Despite its success running the ball, CU still lost by 27 to Kansas State, which is seeking its third straight win in the series.

Statistics can be misleading. That doesn't appear to be the case with the 2008 Buffs midway through 2008, where immediate improvement must be made if the program wants to qualify for a bowl.

Publicly, they're saying they still believe.

"We're obviously down, but we know what we're totally capable of," receiver Cody Crawford said. "We know we can play well. It's just a click away." Said Cody Hawkins: "We need to get to the point where we're making every routine play and being able to run the ball and throw the ball efficiently when times call for certain plays. We have to be able to keep making big plays and keep momentum going."

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

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu football

Eye on ... The Wildcats

Kansas State at Colorado, Saturday, 5 p.m., FSN

Article Last Updated: 10/13/2008 01:08:48 AM MDT

For the record: Wildcats improved to 4-2 overall and 1-1 in the Big 12 Conference last weekend with a 44-30 victory at Texas A&M. That marked Kansas State's first win in College Station since 1996.

Streiking: Kansas State has won two straight against Colorado, including a 47-20 blasting of the Buffaloes last year in Manhattan, Kan. Prior to this modest Kansas State winning streak, CU had won four of five. Kansas State's 34-21 win in Boulder in 2006 was the first on the road for head coach Ron Prince.

Who's hot: Quarterback Josh Freeman. The 6-foot-6 junior completed 21-of-26 passes for 234 yards with no interceptions against the Aggies. And he ran for four touchdowns.

Who's not: Kansas State's defense. The Wildcats have yielded more than 500 total yards in each of their past four games, going 2-2.

Colorado Football

- [View](#) slide show of CU-Kansas football
- [View](#) slide show of Texas-CU football
- [View](#) slide show of CU-Florida State football
- [View](#) slide show of West Virginia-CU football
- [Visit](#) the CU Stats Page for boxscores, Big 12 standings, team leaders and more
- [Visit](#) Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports
- [Play](#) Pick'em for the upcoming CU football game

Key stat: Entering last weekend's play, Texas A&M ranked last in the Big 12 and 95th nationally in total offense but rang up 544 yards against Kansas State.

FYI: Kansas State has not won consecutive games since defeating undermanned North Texas and Montana State by a combined 114-16 to open the season.

Injury report: None reported.

Coachspeak: "Last year we ran against Kansas State a little bit (188 yards on 36 carries) and had a couple of chances to make plays down the field (the Buffs were 1-for-12 in third-down conversions). There aren't any weeks off. We have to prepare and just take care of us. We have to get our confidence

Advertisement

FACTORY OVERSTOCK BLOWOUT!

Leather High-Back

\$219



Leather Mid-Back

\$199



Bookcases
Various Sizes

\$149-\$259



2-Drawer Lateral File

\$399





OFFICE LIQUIDATORS
Profit From Our Experience

11111 W. 6th Ave/ LAKEWOOD
Between Kipling & Simms

303-759-3375
www.OfficeLiquidators.com

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

back up. I think we will. I think we will respond." —
CU offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

Advertisement



FACTORY OVERSTOCK BLOWOUT!

Leather High-Back \$219		Leather Mid-Back \$199	
Bookcases Various Sizes \$149-\$259		2-Drawer Lateral File \$399	

OFFICE LIQUIDATORS
Profit From Our Experience
11111 W. 6th Ave/ LAKEWOOD
Between Kipling & Simms
303-759-3375
www.OfficeLiquidators.com

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™