



Hawkins makes his point

CU coach defends decision to go for TDs during blowout loss

By Kyle Ringo

Monday, October 27, 2008

Plenty of Colorado football fans are angry with coach Dan Hawkins today because of his stubborn refusal to take the easy way out and kick a field goal Saturday night in Columbia, Mo., to avoid the embarrassment of a shutout.

Hawkins chose instead to try to score touchdowns. He defended the decision by saying a field goal would have been pointless when his team was down by 34 and 58 points respectively in the two instances in which he could have kicked one.

"You're not going to go, 'Hey, good for us. We didn't get shutout,'" Hawkins said. "I mean, nobody is ever going to do that."

The Buffs had gone 242 consecutive games without being blanked, but the reality is the streak was filled with plenty of blowout losses in which the Buffs were fortunate to have scored.

It's also true that the scoring streak was not an offensive streak at all. The CU offense has been shutout several times in the past 20 years, and it has come close to going scoreless myriad times.

The Buffs only points in a 29-7 loss to Oklahoma in the 2002 Big 12 championship game came from Jeremy Bloom's 80-yard punt return for a touchdown. Earlier that season, the Buffs lost at home to Southern Cal 40-3, with the only points of the day coming from place-kicker Pat Brougham after USC fumbled a punt deep in its territory.

The CU offense was shutout in Folsom Field in 2004 against Texas, but former cornerback Terrence Wheatley intercepted a pass from Vince Young and returned it 37 yards for a score in a 31-7 defeat.

Minor miracles on the field and questionable coaching decisions from the opposite sideline played big parts in the Buffs' streak lasting as long as it did. The Buffs hadn't been shut out since Nov. 12, 1988 at Nebraska prior to Saturday. It was the ninth longest scoring streak in major college history and the longest in Big 12 history.

There were 16 different times throughout the 20-year run without a shutout that only one Buff scored in a game. Many of those scores proved to be hollow, moral victories -- just the sort of scores Hawkins turned up his nose to Saturday.

Trailing 34-0 in the third quarter in Faurot Field, Hawkins could have allowed place-kicker Aric Goodman to trot on the field on fourth down at the Tigers' 17-yard line and kick a field goal.

He held his players to a higher standard instead. He did the same thing in the final seconds of the game when the Buffs had again driven deep into Missouri territory.

Missouri coach Gary Pinkel commended Hawkins for having the will power not to kick the field goal. Pinkel questioned whether he would have had the guts to make the same decision if he was in Hawkins' shoes.

Defensive end Stryker Sulak and other Tigers also appreciated Hawkins' determination to accept nothing less than a touchdown.

Colorado has many offensive problems this season that contributed to the end of the streak. A porous offensive line, lack of speed, inexperience in the backfield, ineffective play from a sophomore quarterback and the addition of a true freshman at quarterback are the primary causes.

Hawkins explained the offensive woes this way Saturday night just outside a gloomy CU locker room.

"Everything always starts up front," Hawkins said. "It starts with a running game and being able to run it and being able to protect, getting guys making throws and catching. It's all those things."



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First look: Texas A&M

By Kyle Ringo
Monday, October 27, 2008

Game 9

Matchup: Colorado (4-4, overall 1-3 Big 12) at Texas A&M (3-5, 1-3).

Game time: Noon at Kyle Field (82,600), College Station, Texas.

On the air: No television. KOA Radio (850 AM).

Web site:

www.aggieathletics.com.

The series

Colorado leads 5-2, including a 2-1 mark in College Station. The last time the Buffs traveled to Kyle Field in 2004, the Buffs battled into overtime but lost on a fumble by former tailback Bobby Purify.

Last time

The Buffs rolled up 559 yards of offense and quarterback Joel Klatt passed for 398 yards in the Buffs' 41-20 victory over the Aggies in 2005 at Folsom Field. Hugh Charles and Lawrence Vickers each scored two touchdowns as CU raced to a 41-6 lead. The Aggies added two scores in the fourth quarter to make the outcome look closer.

The coach

Mike Sherman is 3-5 in his first season at Texas A&M. Sherman is the 28th coach in Texas A&M history and has 30 years of coaching experience, including 11 seasons in the NFL and two previous stints as an assistant coach with the Aggies.

Numbers game

44.5 -- The average number of points scored by the Aggies' first four Big 12 opponents. Texas A&M gave up 56 to Oklahoma State, 44 to Kansas State, 43 to Texas Tech and 35 to Iowa State.

The lowdown

Tailback Mike Goodson, the Aggies leading rusher with 386 yards, did not play last week against Iowa State because of a sprained knee. ... The A&M defense is among the worst in the nation -- ranking 106th

in rushing defense, 84th in passing defense, 109th in scoring defense and 103rd in total defense. ... Justin Brantly ranks fourth in the nation in punting with a 46.2-yard average. However, the Aggies' punt team ranks only 78th in the nation in net punting with a 33.8-yard average. ... The A&M offensive line is allowing three sacks per game.

Who to know

QB Jerrod Johnson: A threat to run and throw at all times. He has quickly developed into one the Big 12's best playmakers, accounting for 17 touchdowns and just four interceptions this season. He has passed for 1,755 yards despite not starting every game this season at quarterback.

WR Ryan Tannehill: This freshman has become Johnson's favorite target over the past month. He leads the team in receptions and has scored four touchdowns. He has caught 39 passes for 583 yards this season.

LB Matt Featherston: A fourth-year junior from Poughkeepsie, N.Y, who leads the Aggies in tackles and is among the top 10 in the Big 12.



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Rocky Mountain News

CU report: Why change now?

By **B.G. Brooks**, Rocky Mountain News ([Contact](#))

Published October 26, 2008 at 9:02 p.m.

When it fashioned its initial scouting report on Texas A&M, the Buffaloes coaching staff believed 2007 returning starter **Stephen McGee**, a senior, would be the Aggies quarterback.

Instead, CU's defensive plans now center on sophomore backup **Jerrod Johnson**, who completed 31-of-39 passes for 381 yards and four touchdowns in a 49-35 win Saturday at Iowa State.

Before that game, Texas A&M coaches were hopeful that McGee would be nearly 100 percent recovered from an early-season shoulder injury that elevated Johnson into a starting role. McGee was said to be about 80 percent healthy when he was used in the Aggies' Oct. 18 game against Texas Tech, a 43-25 Red Raiders win.

But against the Cyclones, Johnson's productivity kept McGee on the sideline. Johnson, a 6-foot-5, 229-pounder who was a standout high school basketball player at Humble, Texas, also ran for a touchdown in the Aggies' first Big 12 Conference win this season.

High total, low mark

Odd, but Texas A&M's defense allowing the

Cyclones 35 points (and still winning) was a high-water mark: It was the lowest number the Aggies have allowed this season in Big 12 play. They entered the game yielding an average of 47.2 points in three previous conference games.

Texas A&M (3-5, 1-3) and Iowa State (2-6, 0-4) accounted for 1,083 yards in total offense, with the Cyclones outgaining the Aggies 574-509. First-year Aggies coach **Mike Sherman** called the game "very unique. I've never experienced a game like this in my life."

One horrific start

Credit the Buffs' blink-of-an-eye, 14-point deficit Saturday night at Missouri to two decisions - giving the Tigers a short field (56 yards) on their opening possession, then providing an even shorter one (5 yards) after first-time punter **Tom Suazo** bobbled a snap and was overrun by Missouri defenders.

Suazo, a 2005 walk-on transfer from Arizona State who punted once in 2007 (ironically, when CU visited Arizona State), played when coaches last week determined they wanted him to ramp up the punting competition with regular punter **Matt DiLallo**.

Road dogs

Because of the mauling in middle Missouri and Texas A&M's surprising offensive output at Iowa State, CU was established as a 2 1/2-point underdog for the game Saturday.

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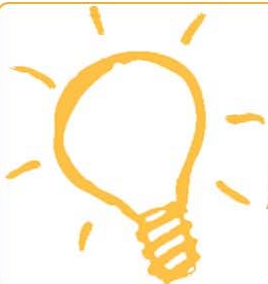
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Rocky Mountain News

That means the Buffs, who need at least two wins for bowl eligibility (six victories), likely will be favored in only one of their remaining four games - Iowa State's Nov. 8 visit.

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cu football

Special-teams snafus bury CU in first quarter

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/26/2008 11:44:47 PM MDT

Special-teams play had not given Colorado coaches much reason for concern entering the season. But, like other areas of the CU program, things have not gone as planned.

"It's obviously very frustrating," CU special-teams coach Kent Riddle said Saturday night after the Buffaloes' 58-0 loss at Missouri. "We just have to get over the hump of trying and get to succeeding."

With sloppy special-teams play getting much of the blame, Colorado dug itself a 14-0 hole. An intended squib kick by CU on the opening kickoff didn't go far enough, and Missouri took over with advantageous field position at its 44-yard line. Four plays later, the Tigers were in the end zone.

On the ensuing possession, Buffs punter Tom Suazo dropped the snap and was swarmed at the CU 5-yard line. Three plays later, Missouri had another TD.

CU gave Suazo his first career "start" rather than regular Nick DiLallo because Suazo had a good week of practice and is considered the better directional

punter. The intent was to keep the ball away from Missouri's All-America returner, Jeremy Maclin.

"Most of the mistakes we're making are basic-type stuff," Riddle said. "Going into the game, we weren't going to let Maclin beat us. But obviously you've got to catch punt snaps."

Hansen's starting debut.

Colorado offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich's assessment of Tyler Hansen's performance Saturday, the first start for the freshman quarterback: "Everything was a little bit faster, clicked faster, clicked harder for him."

Sharing time with sophomore Cody Hawkins, Hansen finished with 12-of-16 passing, but for just 72 yards with a long completion of 17 yards.

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cu football

Mizzou's offense remains dominant

By Andrew DeWitt
Special to The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/26/2008 01:36:05 AM MDT

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Colorado's defense looked like it was stuck in "Groundhog Day."

For the second consecutive season, the CU defense gave up more than 50 points to Missouri. Last season, the Chase Daniel-led spread attack of the Tigers scored 55 points against the Buffaloes while gaining 596 yards.

Daniel led another assault Saturday on the CU defense to the tune of 58 points and 491 yards.

"We just got blistered," Buffaloes coach Dan Hawkins said.

Coming into the game, the CU pass defense was ranked No. 1 in the Big 12 Conference. But Daniel and the Tigers dissected the Buffs like a high school science project.

"We wanted to go out there and try to make a statement," Daniel said.

"The thing that obviously helped them was that they got back to running the football and running the football well," Hawkins said. "Chase was his usual lights-out self."

A lasting image for CU defensive tackle George Hypolite might be something that happened after the game. As he walked off Faurot Field, a group of teenage boys heckled him. All he could do was hang his head in shame.

"They made a lot of big plays," Hypolite said of the Tigers. "Chase Daniel hit a few coverages when we didn't execute. When they got the ball inside our 40, they scored. That's what offenses are supposed to do."

Hawkins and his staff have faced Daniel and his high-scoring crew for three seasons. Colorado was given a blueprint by Oklahoma State and Texas on how to at least contain the Missouri offense. Yet the Buffs still gave up the most yards this season.

"Everything we watched on film, they did," safety Ryan Walters said. "They just executed, and we didn't."

CU now prepares for a trip to College Station to take on Texas A&M.

"We've been beat worse than this. It's not the end of the world," Hypolite said, referring to a 70-3 loss to Texas in the 2005 Big 12 championship game. "After tomorrow, we'll watch the film, improve, flush it and focus on Texas A&M."

The only shining moment Saturday for CU's defense was Walters intercepting a tipped Daniel pass, but that didn't improve Walters' mood.

"This is embarrassing," Walters said.

True freshman starting QB debuts for Buffs

Date Quarterback Opponent Result

Oct. 18, 1980 Randy Essington at Missouri L, 45-7

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Rushing: 4 carries, minus-19 yards, 0 TD. Passing: 11-of-22, 58 yards, 0 TD, 1 INT.

Nov. 22, 1986 Marc Walters at Kansas State W, 49-3

Rushing: 18 carries, 88 yards, 2 TDs. Passing: 4-of-4, 111 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT.

Oct. 17, 1992 Koy Detmer Oklahoma T, 24-24

Rushing: 9 carries, minus-22 yards, 0 TD. Passing: 33-of-50, 418 yards, 2 TDs, 5 INT.

Oct. 7, 2000 Craig Ochs at Texas A&M W, 26-19

Rushing: 6 carries, 6 yards, 1 TD. Passing: 15-of-25, 239 yards, 1 TD, 0 INT.

Oct. 25, 2008 Tyler Hansen at Missouri L, 58-0

Rushing: 16 carries, 30 yards, 0 TD. Passing: 12-of-16, 72 yards, 0 TD, 0 INT.

Source: University of Colorado

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Publish Date: 10/27/2008

Team must win two of final four to keep bowl hopes alive

'Blistered' Buffs dig deep for repairs

By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call

COLUMBIA, Mo. — Now what?

The Colorado Buffaloes, "blistered" Saturday night in Missouri, as coach Dan Hawkins described it, have four games left, starting Saturday at Texas A&M (noon, no TV). The questions following the 58-0 debacle, CU's fourth loss in its past five games, weren't so much about what needs to be fixed. They were more like: What doesn't, and where do you start?

Defensive tackle George Hypolite said each player bears some of the blame.

"It starts with everyone looking themselves in the mirror," Hypolite said. "Did I give enough, personally, and did I prepare myself enough?"

"We as a defense have to look at ourselves in the eye and ask if we did a good enough job, and if not, improve."

As for looking themselves in the mirror, head coach Dan Hawkins challenged the players, according to KOA-Radio, to do that at halftime Saturday, when they trailed, 34-0, and looked lifeless. The result? Missouri outscored the Buffs, 24-0, after the break. CU (4-4, 1-3 Big 12) continued to play like it had little interest in making Saturday a game.

Hawkins and offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich readily accepted blame for what went so wrong. Quarterback Cody Hawkins said they shouldn't shoulder all of it.

"I feel our coaches did a good job," Cody Hawkins said. "Obviously

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Missouri defensive lineman Stryker Sulak sacks Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen for an 8-yard loss during the first quarter on Saturday in Columbia, Mo. **Jeff Roberson/AP**

First Look

A quick glimpse at CU's next opponent:

Who: Texas A&M (3-5, 1-3)

Where: College State, Texas, Kyle Field

When: Saturday, noon, no TV

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Call of the day

I may not be the brightest bulb in the fixture, but I finally figured out how to avoid the robo call.

10.22.08

While walking the Golden Ponds pathways in the park yesterday, I encountered a delightful gentleman, who was also walking the paths and picking up all the cigarette butts he could find.



if you look out there, there were a lot of plays we could've made, and there were breakdowns.

"The coaches are trying to take the blame because they care about us as people. But I really think, as an entire team, we did not play even close to the level that we had to play."

CU is emerging from a stretch in which it faced four ranked opponents in six games. CU won twice during it.

The two that weren't among the top 25 — Florida State and Kansas State — were hardly pushovers, both having handled the Buffs with ease in recent seasons.

As expected, "the gauntlet," as Hawkins called it, exposed most of the weaknesses CU has. The Buffs remain last in the Big 12 in total offense, passing offense and points. They're also last in passing efficiency, kickoff coverage, red zone offense and red zone defense.

Compounding this week's challenge, CU now travels to Kyle Field, one of college football's rowdiest venues. Despite the Aggies' 3-5 start, around 82,000 people are still expected to attend the game. CU has yet to win a road game in three tries in 2008. The Buffs are 2-12 in games played out of state during Hawkins' tenure.

CU did not blitz Missouri senior quarterback Chase Daniel much. It might reconsider that strategy for Saturday against A&M sophomore quarterback Jerrod Johnson, who's nowhere near as experienced. Still, Johnson went 31-for-39 for 381 yards and four touchdowns in Saturday's 49-35 win at Iowa State.

The rest of the schedule pits the Buffs against Iowa State and Oklahoma State at home, before the season finale the day after Thanksgiving in Nebraska. The Buffs must win two to be bowl-eligible.

Oklahoma State remained a top-10 team Sunday despite Saturday's loss to No. 1 Texas, its first of 2008. The remaining three opponents are 10-14. That's hardly a gauntlet. Iowa State is the only winless Big 12 team in conference play.

The Buffs did not schedule a practice for Sunday. They were set to review film and meet. They had plenty to discuss.

"We've just got to keep going," Dan Hawkins said.

"Like I've said, everything starts up front with the running game, and being able to run it, protect guys, being able to throw it and catch it. It's all of those things."

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

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Notes: Tradition-rich Kyle Field has lost some of its magic in 2008. The Aggies are 1-4 at home. ... Sophomore quarterback Jerrod Johnson is another dual threat. He's listed at 6-foot-5 and 229 pounds. ... In Saturday's 49-35 win at Iowa State, Texas A&M's first conference win of 2008, the Aggies allowed their fewest points in a Big 12 game this season. ... CU leads the series, 5-2, and is 2-1 at Kyle Field.

-Patrick Ridgell

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