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cu football

One bad quarter snuffs Buffs

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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Rodney Stewart's leg goes at an odd angle as he is brought down on a horse-collar tackle by A&M linebacker Von Miller on Saturday. Stewart broke his leg on the play. (Gabriel Chmielewski, Bryan College Station Eagle)

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Coming off a 58-0 embarrassment a week earlier, Colorado showed some spunk Saturday by outplaying Texas A&M during three quarters. Now, if only the Buffaloes had not fallen asleep in the other.

Coming up empty has become a habit that CU can't seem to shake. It happened again in Texas A&M's 24-17 victory. Colorado held a 10-3 halftime lead but was outscored 21-0 in the third quarter.

A 98-yard touchdown drive engineered by CU freshman quarterback Tyler Hansen late in the game wasn't enough.

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"It's real frustrating," CU running backs coach Darian Hagan said. "It's tough to always play catch-up. There will be brighter days. But right now, I feel frustrated for the kids, more than anything."

Colorado Football

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Colorado (4-5, 1-4 Big 12) has a losing record for the first time this season, and Buffs fans must wonder if bowl chances have gone down the drain. CU must win two of its three remaining regular-season games to become bowl-eligible. Left on the schedule are home games against Iowa State (Saturday) and Oklahoma State (Nov. 15) and a road date against Nebraska (Nov. 28).

CU failed to reach 20 points for the fifth consecutive game.

"We have the responsibility to move the chains and

keep our defense off the field," quarterback Cody Hawkins said.

Colorado remained winless this season in Big 12 road games. And, adding injury to insult, the Buffs lost their leading rusher, Rodney Stewart, for the remainder of the regular season. Stewart suffered a fractured right fibula during a carry with 4:50 remaining in the second quarter on a play in which Texas A&M linebacker Von Miller was flagged for an illegal "horse-collar" tackle. Colorado medical personnel said Stewart will need four to six weeks to heal.

"Playing tailback is a tough business," CU offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said.

CU coach Dan Hawkins said he was proud of the way his players responded following the blowout loss at Missouri.

"At some point, life and football become more about a cause than anything else," he said.

An announced crowd of 78,121 finally got Kyle Field rocking in the third quarter when sophomore quarterback Jarrod Johnson threw three touchdown passes. As it turned out, that's all the Aggies (4-5, 2-3) needed. Colorado was outgained 212 to 55 in total yards during that 15-minute stretch.

"I thought that was the best quarter, offensively, defensively and special teams, we have played all year," said first-year Texas A&M coach Mike Sherman, a former Green Bay Packers boss.

Colorado should have led by more than 10-3 at halftime. The Buffs came up empty on first-half drives that reached the 35-, 26- and 2-yard lines.

The first disappointment occurred on the game's opening possession. Reserve tailback Demetrius

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Sumler took a screen pass up the middle from Cody Hawkins for 40 yards to the Texas A&M 42. But CU moved the ball just 6 yards on the next three plays and punted.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

Sumler's 40-yard reception was surpassed in the second quarter as CU's longest play of the season by Darrell Scott's best run of the year. The freshman tailback broke two tackles and raced 42 yards to the Aggies' 6. But again, Colorado couldn't change the scoreboard.

On third down, Cody Hawkins threw an interception in the end zone, failing to get enough air under the ball and allowing cornerback Jordan Pugh to jump for it in front of wideout Scotty McKnight, who appeared open in the back of the end zone on a crossing pattern.

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Key stat

3-to-0: Colorado quarterbacks Tyler Hansen (two) and Cody Hawkins (one) combined to throw three interceptions, while Texas A&M's Jerrod Johnson was not picked off in 31 pass attempts. CU's turnovers were especially costly. The second-quarter interception off Hawkins came in the end zone. Both of Hansen's picks were in the fourth quarter.

Key play

With his team trailing 10-3 at halftime, Johnson, a sophomore in his first season as a starter, needed only 2 minutes and 58 seconds into the third quarter to even the score with a 32-yard touchdown pass to Ryan Tannehill. Apparently, Johnson was just getting warmed up. He tossed two more TD passes in the quarter.

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Two-quarterback system will remain in CU's plans

By Jack Molitor

Special to The Denver Post

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COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Colorado coach Dan Hawkins again went with a tag team at quarterback in a 24-17 loss to Texas A&M on Saturday at Kyle Field.

Sophomore Cody Hawkins got the start and played most of the first quarter, and freshman Tyler Hansen engineered a late 98-yard drive to bring the Buffaloes to within a touchdown in the fourth quarter.

Hansen led the Buffs in rushing with 86 yards on 16 carries and completed 11-of-23 passes for 89 yards. Hansen played a part in all but 16 yards of the 98-yard drive.

"He was winded, it was really gutsy," Dan Hawkins said. "A lot of that was him running the football, and he made a couple of nice throws as well."

The coach said Hansen's success on the long drive was the reason for giving him the ball with a chance to tie the game with 2:29 remaining.

"We needed some wheels because of the pass protection," Dan Hawkins said. "We needed someone out there that could make something happen with their legs."

But the inability of Hansen to escape from A&M's pass rush and two fourth-quarter interceptions, both by A&M's Trent Hunter, proved costly. Hunter's second interception allowed the Aggies to run out the clock and secure the victory.

"The interception was a dumb mistake," Hansen said.

"It's one of those things. We had a high-low on a guy right there at the line of scrimmage, and he didn't move," CU offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said. "We'll look at it on film and we'll learn from it."

Cody Hawkins said he would have liked to have the ball at the end of the game with a chance to tie. Hawkins completed 7-of-11 passes for 109 yards against the Aggies. But he also had a costly interception, in the end zone late in the first half on a pass that could have given the Buffs a 14-3 lead.

"That was a pivotal point in the game," Cody Hawkins said.

Dan Hawkins, Helfrich and both quarterbacks agreed that going with two quarterbacks is the best thing for the team right now, and they expect to use the two-quarterback system Saturday at home against Iowa State.

"I generally am not a big fan of (the two-quarterback system)," Helfrich said. "But the way that the two guys handle it and the two different styles that they are really makes it OK."

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Scott takes over as Stewart breaks leg

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Colorado's Darrell Scott (2) rushes for a first down during the second quarter Saturday in College Station, Texas.
(David J. Phillip, The Associated Press)

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Colorado freshman Darrell Scott said he is ready to be the featured running back for the Buffaloes. But the promotion did not happen the way he would have wanted.

Coming off his best game at CU, Scott knows that his 10-carry, 66-yard effort Saturday against Texas A&M has to be just a start. The team's top rusher, freshman Rodney "Speedy" Stewart, suffered a fractured fibula in his right leg with 4:50 left in the second quarter — on a play in which Texas A&M

linebacker Von Miller was flagged for an illegal "horse-collar" tackle.

Stewart is out the remainder of the regular season, with a healing time of four to six weeks, according to CU medical personnel. He left the field on crutches and wearing a protective boot.

"It's a big loss," Scott said of Stewart. "Everybody wants the ball. I got the ball a lot in high school, but I realize this is totally different."

Scott, 6-feet-2 and 220 pounds, was ranked last fall as the nation's No. 1 high school running back prospect by Internet recruiting sites. He has been banged up and turned an ankle again Saturday, but he showed his potential with a 42-yard gallop in the second quarter — CU's longest play from scrimmage this season. Scott broke two tackles on the play and then burst to the outside.

"I'll just have to tough it out and try to make plays," Scott said. "I'll do what I can."

Footnotes.

One other injury was reported by Colorado. Freshman place-kicker Jameson Davis is listed as day to day with a concussion suffered during the opening kickoff of the second half. He booted the first field goal of his college career in the second quarter. . . . CU's 98-yard touchdown drive in the fourth quarter was its longest since a 98-yarder against UCLA in Boulder on Sept. 6, 2003. . . . Tyler Hansen already has set a school rushing record by a freshman quarterback. His 86 yards Saturday gives him 216 — in just three games.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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 2008

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Tragedy of errors

Bowl chances threatened as Buffs lose again

*By Patrick Ridgell
 Longmont Times-Call*

COLLEGE STATION, Texas — Come this December, the Colorado Buffaloes might find themselves sitting at home, shaking their heads over several aspects of a 2008 season that turned sour on them. They might wince a bit more when they recollect Saturday's events in Texas.

Texas A&M handed the Buffs their fifth loss in their past six games, a 24-17 decision that drops them below .500, to 4-5, for the first time in 2008 and, more notably, seriously jeopardizes their bowl hopes. CU (1-4 Big 12) must win two of its final three to avoid missing the postseason for the second time in coach Dan Hawkins' three seasons in Boulder.

Saturday's loss was different than CU's other four in that the Buffs had a chance late in the fourth quarter, which, considering their sorry performances against Missouri and Kansas in recent weeks, might be cause for encouragement. But Colorado's offense, the Big 12's worst, blew two good, first-half scoring opportunities. And then CU was just plain bad in the third quarter, allowing Texas A&M (4-5, 2-3) to score three touchdowns and out-gain the Buffs, 212 yards to 55, while overcoming a 10-3 deficit.

CU pulled to within a touchdown with 2 minutes, 59 seconds to go on Demetrius Sumler's 10-yard scoring run. The Buffs then regained possession near midfield with 2:29 left when its defense held and forced a punt. On the first play of what the Buffs hoped would be the game-tying drive, Texas A&M safety Trent Hunter intercepted quarterback Tyler Hansen. Three plays later, Aggies running back Jorvorskie Lane carried linebacker Bryan Stengel for six yards on third-and-2, sealing things.

"The interception was a dumb mistake," Hansen said.

It was far from CU's only mistake. Quarterback Cody Hawkins, who started, tossed an interception in the end zone in the first half when he under-threw an open receiver. Aric Goodman missed a field goal, his seventh in a row, prompting coaches to bench him for sore-kneed Jameson Davis. Hansen was also intercepted with 8:18 to go, giving CU three turnovers on a day during which its defense forced one.

"You can't leave too many things like that on the table," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "It's the age-old deal where it becomes a drain for your squad and a momentum deal for the other team.

"Even though we were ahead at halftime, we just left a lot of opportunities there. Then we had a sluggish start in the third quarter."

Texas A&M scored on passes covering 32, 59 and 10 yards in the third quarter. A cornerback was close to the receiver on each play. Not close enough, though.

"They made three really good plays. We didn't," Dan Hawkins said.



Colorado's Darrell Scott rushes for a first down as Texas A&M's Garrick Williams defends during the second quarter Saturday in College Station, Texas. Injuries to tailback Rodney Stewart will force Scott to take on more duties of CU's rushing game. **David J.**

Phillip/AP

TEXAS A&M 24, COLORADO 17

Colorado
 7307—17
 Texas A&M
 03210—24
 First Quarter

Col—Stewart 6 run (Goodman kick), 7:02.

Second Quarter

TAM—FG Bullock 39, 5:43.
 Col—FG Davis 30, :03.

Third Quarter

TAM—Tannehill 32 pass from Johnson (Bullock kick), 12:02.
 TAM—Fuller 59 pass from Johnson (Bullock kick), 3:27.
 TAM—Fuller 10 pass from Johnson (Bullock kick), :00.

Fourth Quarter

Col—Sumler 10 run (Goodman kick), 2:59.
 A—78,121.

It wasn't a mistake, but what might have hurt CU most on Saturday was an injury. Freshman running back Rodney Stewart broke his right fibula while being horse-collared to the ground in the second quarter. He's out for four to six weeks.

Unless the Buffs reach a bowl, Saturday ended Stewart's season. He has 621 rushing yards, which would be the fourth-best in program history for a true freshman.

Darrell Scott, the touted running back CU signed in February, will not be counted upon to carry a larger share of the load. Scott injured his ankle once again Saturday at the end of 42-yard run that saw him leap three Aggies and retain his balance.

Key injuries and, especially Saturday, costly mistakes have become the defining marks of a season that'll end without a bowl unless the Buffs can figure out ways to beat two of their final three opponents, Iowa State, Oklahoma State and Nebraska. For a team that looks snakebit in myriad ways, it won't be easy.

"It's not frustrating; it's football," defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "You're going to make some big plays, and you're not going to make some big plays. Texas A&M did a good job of capitalizing, and we didn't. We should have gone into halftime up, 28-0.

"We're not desperate. We still have three games. ... We want to go to a bowl game; we want to beat Nebraska. Those goals are still in front of us."

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ColTAM
First downs
2220
Rushes-yards
43-19433-94
Passing
198214
Comp-Att-Int
18-34-315-31-0
Return Yards
5941
Punts-Avg.
6-33.27-48.0
Fumbles-Lost
3-02-1
Penalties-Yards
7-617-59
Time of Possession
34:2225:38

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—Colorado, Hansen 16-86, Scott 10-66, Sumler 4-20, Stewart 5-19, Espinoza 1-5, McKnight 2-2, C.Hawkins 2-1, Moyd 1-(minus 2), Jo.Smith 2-(minus 3). Texas A&M, Gray 11-80, K.Smith 12-34, Lane 2-7, Team 1-(minus 2), Johnson 7-(minus 25).
PASSING—Colorado, Hansen 11-23-2-89, C.Hawkins 7-11-1-109. Texas A&M, Johnson 15-31-0-214.
RECEIVING—Colorado, Crawford 5-27, McKnight 4-56, Geer 3-50, Williams 3-18, Sumler 1-40, Jo.Smith 1-8, Moyd 1-(minus 1). Texas A&M, Fuller 6-95, Tannehill 5-80, J.McCoy 3-32, T.McCoy 1-7.

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Offense continues to struggle

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

COLLEGE STATION, Texas – It was only one play from Colorado's loss at Texas A&M. But it might epitomize what's going so wrong for the Buffs' offense in 2008.

CU called a sweep to receiver Scotty McKnight when it had a second-and-goal at Texas A&M's 2 in the second quarter. Demetrius Sumler had bulled his way for four yards on first down. The Buffs led, 7-3, and another touchdown would give them their biggest advantage since Sept. 18 against West Virginia. Things were going well.

Only McKnight was tackled for a three-yard loss by three defenders. On the next play, defensive back Jordan Pugh intercepted quarterback Cody Hawkins when Hawkins under threw McKnight in the end zone on the next play.

Opportunity wasted. Explanation needed.

“What made us think that play might work is exactly what we saw on film and exactly what they did,” offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said about the sweep.

“I don't know if there was a miscommunication at the point of attack or something, but we cut the defensive end loose. It was a situation where we should have two guys on that guy. We'll have to take a look at film and fix it.” Helfrich said CU had no one blocked the defensive end.

“That's our fault,” he said, referring to the coaches.

Coaches promised change after last week's 58-0 loss, and there were signs of progress. The 392 yards were a season high. They had two plays go for 40 yards or more. They had none in 2008 that went that far entering the game. They ended a scoreless streak that lasted 104 minutes and 17 seconds, dating back to the second quarter of the Oct. 18 game against Kansas State.

Helfrich said the changes that worked was “our shifting-motion stuff,” which created more scoring chances. The Buffs huddled some. They debuted a trick play in which Darrell Scott bounced – unintentionally – a backward pass to Hawkins, who then threw to Riar Geer for a 23-yard gain. It set up CU's first touchdown.

Still, it wasn't enough.

“We just have to score touchdowns, we gave them way too many touchdowns,” Helfrich said.

“That's what's so frustrating, we had the chances, they were there to be made. We have to coach them better.”

CU's best big-play threat at receiver is Josh Smith. He caught one pass for eight yards Saturday. He said he missed part of the third quarter with cramps, and added coaches are limiting his playing time due to his work as the kick and punt returner.

“I don't like it,” he admitted after the game.

Smith said CU's offense is scratching and clawing, but its communication must improve in order to be more efficient.

"We have to work on our communication," Smith said. "I feel like we're getting a lot of time before each play. We're just not talking it through with the offense. We're calling plays at the last minute, and then going out there and expecting for everyone to go out there and do a perfect job. "Maybe we should take that time to just spend more time discussing, and let everyone process and visualize their techniques before we go out there and run a play."

SPECIAL CHANGES CU replaced its punter and kicker Saturday.

Aric Goodman missed his seventh field goal in a row, and fell to 3-for-11, when his 46-yarder in the second quarter hit the right upright. Goodman hasn't hit a field goal since the game winner against West Virginia on Sept. 18.

On CU's next field goal try, coaches used Jameson Davis, who hit from 30 yards with 3 seconds left in the first half.

"At some point, you have to do something," Riddle said about replacing Goodman.

Davis suffered a concussion on a kick off in the second half, and Goodman kicked the point after touchdown when CU scored with 2:59 to go. Davis' status is unclear for next week.

Coaches had said they did not want to use Davis on field goals so they could limit wear on his left, plant, knee, which needs to be scoped in the offseason.

Tom Suazo handled all six punts, averaging 33.2 a try and putting two inside Texas A&M's 20. Special teams coach Kent Riddle said Suazo has been punting better in practice than Matt DiLallo, who's taken most of the punts in 2008, in practice.

ON HANSEN Hawkins started the game at quarterback, but Tyler Hansen led most of the second-half drives. He led a 98-yard scoring drive with less than 7 minutes to play with his scrambling.

Coaches said they used Hansen on CU's final possession, which ended with an interception, because of his success on the previous drive and his scrambling ability.

Hansen set a program record for most single-season rushing yards by a true freshman quarterback. He has 216 in 2008. The previous record was 177 by Marc Walters in 1986.

Hansen led nine drives for 264 yards and 10 points. Hawkins led four drives for 128 drives and seven points. Hansen threw two interceptions; Hawkins one.

EXTRA POINTS Defensive tackle George Hypolite became the first Buff to record four tackles for loss in a game since Abraham Wright against Colorado State in 2006. ... CU's 98-yard scoring drive was its longest since Sept. 6, 2003.

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



Aggies surge past Buffaloes

By Kyle Ringo

Saturday, November 1, 2008

COLLEGE STATION, Texas -- Slumped shoulders, hanging heads, bruised egos, the Colorado Buffaloes made the same sad, slow walk to the locker room Saturday afternoon at Texas A&M.

They fought hard, lost tailback Rodney Stewart to a season-ending injury and actually outgained the Aggies. But three interceptions thrown by two quarterbacks and several big plays surrendered by the defense led to a demoralizing 24-17 defeat.

Colorado has lost five of its past six games after starting the season with a 3-0 record. The 4-5 Buffs are in jeopardy of not qualifying for a bowl game with three regular-season games remaining and two wins needed to make the cut.

The Buffs failed to take advantage of multiple scoring opportunities in the first half of a very winnable game at Kyle Field, where thousands of seats went unused on a sunny afternoon.

"There were just too many missed opportunities in the first half," coach Dan Hawkins said. "When you leave too many things like that on the table, you know, it's the age-old deal. It becomes a drain for your squad and it becomes a momentum deal for the other team."

Much has been made about the youth of the Colorado team this season, but Saturday they faced a similarly young team that found ways to make plays. All three Texas A&M touchdowns were scored by freshmen on throws from a sophomore quarterback. Two key interceptions in the game also were made by an Aggie freshman defender.

The Buffs scored in the first quarter on six-yard run from Stewart. The touchdown provided the first points for the Buffs in 104 minutes, 17 seconds of football dating back to the first half of the Kansas State game on Oct. 18.

After taking a 7-0 lead behind quarterback Cody Hawkins, who was back in the starting role, the first sign of trouble appeared early in the second quarter. Place-kicker Aric Goodman's 46-yard field goal bounced off the right upright as the Buffs tried to extend their lead to double digits. It was the seventh consecutive miss for Goodman dating to the West Virginia game on Sept. 18.

After the Aggies answered with a field goal, Colorado lost Stewart for the season on its next drive when Aggies linebacker Von Miller used an illegal horse-collar tackle to bring him down. Miller was flagged on the play but Stewart's right fibula was broken.

The Buffs used a 42-yard run by tailback Darrell Scott on the drive to set themselves up with a first-and-goal situation. Demetrius Sumler ran up the middle for four yards and coaches called a curious play at the 2-yard line.

Wide receiver Scotty McKnight ran a sweep to the right side and was thrown for three-yard loss and Cody Hawkins threw an interception trying to find McKnight in the back of the end zone on the very next play.

Dan Hawkins explained the sweep call by saying his coaching staff had noticed Texas A&M generally gave away the

edge in goal-line situations. Against the Buffs, the defensive end lined up in a different technique and helped ruin a scoring chance.

"What made us think that play might work was exactly what we saw on film and again what they did. I don't know if there was a miscommunication there at the point of attack but we just cut the defensive end loose, and that's a situation where we should have two guys on that guy."

Coaches called on freshman place-kicker Jameson Davis for a 30-yard field goal at the end of the first half, and Davis came through with the first field goal of his career.

The Buffs gained 219 yards in the first half. It was 20 more yards than they had gained the entire game the previous week at Missouri.

The CU defense held the potent Aggies offense to 76 yards of offense in the first half, but Texas A&M coach Mike Sherman and his staff obviously found some answers at intermission.

Texas A&M came out of its locker room looking to attack the best pass defense in the Big 12 in the second half and the plan worked well. Quarterback Jerrod Johnson connected on a 32-yard touchdown pass with Ryan Tannehill and followed it up with a pair of scoring passes to wideout Jeff Fuller.

At the end of the third quarter, the Aggies led 24-10 and had outgained CU 212 yards to 56 in those 15 minutes.

"I thought offensively, defensively and special teams, it was probably the best we've played a quarter of football this year," Texas A&M coach Mike Sherman said.

Freshman quarterback Tyler Hansen played the majority of the second half and led the Buffs on a 98-yard drive capped by a 10-yard run from Sumler with 3 minutes remaining. The CU defense forced a punt from the Aggies and put the ball back in Hansen's hands with 2:29 remaining.

But the youngster locked in on his target as soon as he took the first snap of the Buffs final drive. He threw a short pass toward the sideline and Aggies defensive back Trent Hunter stepped in front of it for his second interception of the day.

"It was a dumb mistake," Hansen said. "In that critical situation, I can't be making those mistakes."

The Buffs hobble back to Boulder with two home games scheduled in the next two weeks against Iowa State and Oklahoma State and many questions still to be answered. The most important one being whether they can rally themselves into the postseason despite all their problems.



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Stewart out for season with broken leg

By Kyle Ringo

Saturday, November 1, 2008

COLLEGE STATION, Texas --- There is an slim chance Colorado freshman tailback Rodney Stewart could play again this season, but his teammates would have to qualify for a bowl game for it to happen.

The Buffs' freshman tailback suffered a broken right leg in a loss Saturday at Texas A&M and is expected to missed four to six weeks.

Stewart is Colorado's leading rusher this season and was in range of becoming the best freshman rusher in CU history prior to suffering the injury. He ran five times for 19 yards and a touchdown against the Aggies, giving him 666 yards this season. Only Lee Rouson, O.C. Oliver and Lamont Warren have had more rushing yards as freshmen at CU.

Demetrius Sumler, Darrell Scott and Kevin Moyd will have to pick up the slack, and it appeared Saturday that Sumler and Scott were ready for the opportunity. Both played well, and Sumler scored a touchdown to cap a late 98-yard touchdown drive.

Stewart did not do interviews after the game Saturday.

"He's a dynamic guy in our offense that we're looking for that element," offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said. "That's going to affect us a lot."

Rotating kickers, too?

Colorado has spent the past three weeks rotating quarterbacks Cody Hawkins and Tyler Hansen, and could be headed for a system in which place-kickers Jameson Davis and Aric Goodman split field goal and extra-point duty.

Coaches sent Davis into Saturday's game at the end of the first half for his first collegiate field goal after Goodman missed an earlier attempt. It was the seventh consecutive miss for Goodman, whose last successful attempt won the West Virginia game in overtime.

Davis made the 30-yard attempt to give the Buffs a 10-3 halftime advantage. "Hopefully that's the sort of thing that helps Aric out, takes a little pressure off him because they know there is another guy," special teams coach Kent Riddle said. "Maybe he can get back in there in the future."

Suazo takes over

Tom Suazo has overtaken Matt DiLallo as the Buffs' starting punter.

Suazo, a senior from Glenwood Springs, handled all six punts for the Buffs against the Aggies averaging 33.2 yards per kick. Coaches believe he is better at directional kicking and he proved his worth there early in the game by kicking the ball out of bounds and pinning the Aggies back at their 6-yard line.

"He did a pretty decent job," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "I think he's been out-punting Matt in practice."

Subtle changes

Helfrich had planned changes to his offense this week in an effort to get it moving and scoring more points. One of the obvious changes was the Buffs huddling at times on the field.

CU spent much of the offseason working on a no-huddle approach, which remains the primary mode of operation.

Helfrich said huddling worked well in settling young players down and allowing everyone to look each other in the eye.

Quarterback record

Freshman Tyler Hansen already has a school record to his credit after just three games. He led the Buffs in rushing Saturday with 16 carries for 86 yards.

Hansen has rushed for more yards than any other freshman quarterback in CU history. He has gained 216 yards, besting the old mark of 177 rushing yards by Marc Walters, the father of CU senior safety Ryan Walters.

Hansen also led the longest scoring drive in five years for the Buffs when he directed a 98-yard march to a touchdown in the fourth quarter. It was the longest drive by the Buffs since they went 98 yards at UCLA on Sept. 6, 2003.

Statistical oddity

Quarterbacks Tyler Hansen and Cody Hawkins both led the Buffs to an average of 5.1 yards per play Saturday. Hansen directed nine drives and 52 total plays. Hawkins led four drives and 25 total plays.

Notable

The Buffs have now committed 11 of their 16 turnovers this season in the second quarter. ... Defensive end Marquez Herrod made his first career start. ... Colorado will pay tribute to veterans next week when it hosts Iowa State. The school is offering four tickets for \$60 to the game at Folsom Field.



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Woelk: Time for CU coaches to make choice at quarterback

By Neill Woelk
Sunday, November 2, 2008

Dan Hawkins told his team after Saturday's loss at Texas A&M -- Colorado's fifth in its last six games -- that the Buffs have to treat the rest of this season like the playoffs.

"Win or go home," defensive back Cha'pelle Brown told KOA radio.

If that is indeed the case, if Hawk and his staff don't want to be home for Christmas, here's a suggestion:

Make a decision. Pick a quarterback and stick with him. Either live with the physical limitations of Cody Hawkins and hope his experience pays a dividend down the stretch; or live with the inexperience of freshman Tyler Hansen and hope his natural abilities make the difference.

We'll give a slight nod to the latter. In the long run, Hansen offers the bigger upside, and the sooner he gets the chance to absorb the ebbs and flows of an entire game, the better. We'd like to see him get his first complete game next week against Iowa State, then see how he does a week later when Okie State rolls into Boulder.

Not that I expect Hawk and offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich to follow any suggestions from this corner. Matter of fact, it would probably be worrisome to just about everyone involved when a coach who's paid a handsome sum to make such decisions bothers to even tune in to the peanut gallery.

But we do know that Hawk hates shuffling quarterbacks. We also know that up to this point, Hawk and Helfrich have done so because they believe it's given them the best chance to win.

Thing is, there is little evidence thus far to support such a strategy, one that has produced exactly 31 points in three games.

I think it was Einstein (Fred Einstein, who used to work on my '65 Ford pickup) who once said that the definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Fred would have recognized the results on Saturday.

Not to put the entire blame on the quarterbacks' shoulders (even though those shoulders did produce three interceptions). Missed field goals, dropped passes and defensive breakdowns also played a role in the loss to the Aggies.

In that regard, it proved to be a total team effort.

But now, Hawk and his staff need to make a decision as they attempt to salvage something from a season that has taken

a firm step into the territory of disappointing.

The Buff coaches can continue to play it safe, play two quarterbacks and expect the same results we've seen the last few weeks. That, of course, would be a team maybe good enough to beat a mediocre opponent if everything goes perfectly. That might -- we emphasize might -- be good enough to win two more games, with Iowa State, OSU and Nebraska still on the schedule.

(Speaking of the Huskers, we interrupt this column for a word from the Misery Loves Company Dept. Are you sure you still want to play Oklahoma every year?)

Or, Colorado's coaches can gamble and take a chance on the kid. It affords the opportunity to get a little better -- and yes, it presents the risk of becoming even less productive (agreed, that's hard to imagine).

Either way, it's how you begin to answer the question that will be present not only this year, but throughout next spring and summer.

Who's your QB?

Certainly there are plenty of other factors involved in CU's offensive woes. Injuries have decimated the offensive line. CU's receiving corps has been reduced by ineligibility and defections. Now the running back group has been hit, with Rodney Stewart out for the year with a broken leg.

As far as the big picture goes, this corner is still a believer in Helfrich and his offensive scheme. We love the possibilities it presents. When the day comes that CU's lineup consists of juniors and seniors instead of wet-behind-the-ears freshmen, the production will be there.

But thinking about next year doesn't help next week.

Here's hoping Hawk lets a little of that riverboat gambler come back to the surface. Take a chance, throw the kid out there for an entire game and see what happens.

Otherwise, my buddy Fred says, it will be more of the same.



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