



CU's Smith makes most of first start at corner

Sophomore DB overcoming early season back injury

By Kyle Ringo

Monday, November 10, 2008

It took much longer than Jimmy Smith ever imagined it would to make meaningful contributions this season for the Colorado football team. Now he hopes to sustain them.

The sophomore cornerback felt a little more beat up and significantly more fatigued Sunday afternoon while he and his teammates went through their normal routine of running and reviewing film of the previous day's game.

Smith made his first college start Saturday in a thrilling 28-24 win over Iowa State and he now understands how it feels to play nearly every play in a game instead of the 10 or 20 snaps he was playing earlier this year.

He also now knows how it feels to save the day.

Smith was a part of nine tackles against the Cyclones, including the final one on an option play near the goal line when he and safety D.J. Dykes made a stop as time ran out in a four-point game.

"He's kind of like a Praying Mantis," CU secondary coach Greg Brown said. "He's got that long reach. He's able to get a hold of guys and get them down on the ground."

Smith also broke up three passes and walked off the field Saturday kicking himself for not intercepting at least one of them. Brown has no doubt Smith will get his hands on more in the future.

"I didn't know I was going to be starting," Smith said. "I just gave it a shot and tried to do what I know I can do."

It had been a season of frustration for Smith until recent weeks when he began to feel like himself and play at the level he knew was possible. A back injury slowed him throughout training camp and the early part of the season. A leg injury followed.

"It took me awhile to get back in my groove because I wasn't tackling," he said.

He wasn't able to tackle until the week of practices just before the West Virginia game and he played poorly in that contest, eroding coaches' belief in him. Only when he returned to good health was he able to raise his level of play convincing them to put him on the field once again.

"It just came to a point where he deserved a shot," Brown said. "Let's let her rip. You know, Jimmy has always been blessed with a great deal of tools. It's just his time and we were going to see how it turned

out, and it turned out well."

This week Smith and his teammates face what might be the most significant challenge of the season. Oklahoma State boasts an elite offense on par with the Missouri team that has whipped the Buffs 113-10 the past two times it has faced the Buffs combined.

Oklahoma State is led by quarterback Zac Robinson, the nation's third most efficient passer, who played his high school football in Littleton at Chatfield High School and wasn't heavily recruited by CU.

Smith, at times, will be responsible for covering sophomore wide receiver Dez Bryant, who is one of the best players at his position in the nation. He has already caught 64 passes this season for more than 1,100 yards and 15 touchdowns.

"He's all-world," Brown said. "Oklahoma State has so many weapons on offense. The running back, the quarterback, Dez Bryant and the tight end. You're talking about four aces right there."

OSU is the most balanced attack among the elite offenses in the Big 12.

While Texas Tech, Missouri and Oklahoma generally succeed through the quarterback, OSU also features the best running game in the league with tailback Kendall Hunter.

When a defense handles Hunter and covers Bryant, Robinson turns to tight end Brandon Pettigrew or several other options.

The Buffs must have their best week of preparation this season to have any chance of upsetting the Cowboys. It would help if youngsters such as Smith can improve on their best game of the season with an even better performance.



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First look: Oklahoma State

By Kyle Ringo

Monday, November 10, 2008

Game 11

Matchup: Oklahoma State (8-2 overall, 4-2 Big 12) at Colorado (5-5, 2-4).

Game time: 6 p.m. at Folsom Field (53,750).

On the air: KMGH (7). KOA (850 AM).

Web site:

www.okstate.com.

The series

CU leads 26-17-1, including a 13-7 mark in Boulder. The Buffs have won 11 of the past 13 meetings dating back to the late 1980s.

Last time

The Buffs took the lead on the first play of the Oct. 1, 2005 game when Hugh Charles sprinted 74 yards on a touchdown run and CU rolled on to a 34-0 victory in Stillwater, Okla. It was the first home shutout of the Cowboys in 14 seasons. CU went on to win its second consecutive Big 12 North Division title that year but the programs have gone in different directions since.

The coach

Mike Gundy is 26-21 in his fourth season in Stillwater. Gundy is the final Big 12 coach and OSU is the final conference team CU coach Dan Hawkins has not faced. Gundy is now 41.

Numbers game

264.8 -- The number of rushing yards the Cowboys average per game this season. They are easily the best rushing team in the Big 12 and rank sixth nationally in rushing.

The lowdown

OSU averages 42.8 points per game. ... The Cowboys have led the league in rushing for three years, including this season. ...

Tight end Brandon Pettigrew needs two catches to reach 100 in his career. He is the program's eighth leading receiver all-time. ...

The Cowboys are fourth in the nation in net punting with a 41-yard average and second in punt returns, averaging 19 yards per return. ...

The weakness of this team appears to be pass defense where it ranks 104th in sacks and 110th in passing defense. However, most of the Cowboys opponents have been behind and forced to throw. ...

Junior safety Andre Sexton leads the team with 76 total tackles. He also has an interception and two forced fumbles.

Who to know

QB Zac Robinson: A product of Chatfield High School in Littleton who ranks third in the nation in passing efficiency. Robinson has thrown 20 touchdowns and six interceptions. He also has rushed for 357 yards and five touchdowns.

RB Kendall Hunter: The Big 12's leading rusher. He has rushed for 100 yards or more eight times this year and has 13 runs of 20 yards or more. The sophomore has scored 12 touchdowns and hasn't been held to fewer than 90 yards this season.

WR Dez Bryant: This sophomore ranks second nationally with an average of 114 receiving yards per game. Bryant has caught 64 passes for 1,140 yards and 15 touchdowns. He also has scored twice on kickoff returns.

-- *Kyle Ringo*



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cu football

Eye on ... The Cowboys

No. 11 Oklahoma State at Colorado, 6 p.m., Saturday, KMGH-7

Article Last Updated: 11/09/2008 11:16:01 PM MST

For the record: Following Saturday's 56-20 loss at No. 2 Texas Tech, the Cowboys (8-2, 4-2 Big 12) dropped three spots in the Associated Press media poll.

Streaking: Oklahoma State already has clinched its highest win total in four seasons under coach Mike Gundy. The Cowboys went 7-6 the past two seasons.

Who's hot: Tight end Brandon Pettigrew was one of the few bright spots against Texas Tech, catching seven passes from former Chatfield star Zac Robinson for 72 yards. The 6-foot-6, 260-pound senior is considered a top NFL prospect.

Who's not: OSU's pass defense. Texas Tech quarterback Graham Harrell completed 40-of-50 passes to 10 different receivers.

Key stat: Since the Big 12 began in 1996, Colorado leads the series 4-2. In the last meeting, CU won 34-0 at Stillwater in 2005 — Gary Barnett's final season as Buffaloes coach.

FYI: Some fans might be unaware that Gundy was a star QB for the Cowboys from 1986-89. He

completed his career as the Big Eight's all-time leader in passing yardage (7,997) and total offense (7,749).

Injury report: None reported.

Coachspeak: "When you play a 12-game season, and play in the league we play in, you can't get too high after a win and you can't get too low after a loss. . . . It's very important (players) keep a good attitude and keep good body language." — Gundy, following the blowout loss at Texas Tech

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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Rocky Mountain News

CU report: On the bounce

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

Published November 9, 2008 at 9:05 p.m.

BOULDER — Book this: Oklahoma State's Cowboys, kicked into a collective foul mood by No. 2 Texas Tech, will be looking to rebound in a large way when they visit Folsom Field on Saturday.

"We got dominated," Oklahoma State coach **Mike Gundy** told reporters after his defense surrendered 629 yards and 38 first downs to the prolific Red Raiders in the 56-20 rout. OSU allowed Texas Tech 718 yards last season, pushing the two-game total to 1,347, but the Cowboys won the 2007 meeting 49-45.

The 36-point loss Saturday night was Oklahoma State's worst since losing by 39 (62-23) at Texas A&M in Gundy's first season as head coach (2005). The visiting Buffaloes blanked the Cowboys 34-0 that season, dealing a Gundy-coached OSU team its only shutout to date.

Gundy said his team, which suffered its second Big 12 Conference loss and dropped from contention in the South Division, now must focus on pushing forward.

"The good news is, it only counts as one loss. This team is mature, they're experienced and they have good chemistry. We got outplayed by a good football team.

"It's very important we go back to work (today). When you play a 12-game season, and play in the league we play in, you can't get too high after a win and you can't get too down after a loss. I'm sure these guys will be down, but it's very important they keep a good attitude and keep good body language."

Take a number

The Buffs take their final regular-season swing at a ranked opponent Saturday; the Cowboys are ranked No. 11 (AP), falling from No. 9 in the poll last week.

CU is 1-3 this season against opponents ranked at the time of their meetings, having beaten then-No. 21 West Virginia, then losing to Texas (No. 5), at Kansas (No. 16) and at Missouri (No. 16). Florida State, unranked before its 39-21 win against the Buffs, has since climbed to No. 20.

Third-year CU coach **Dan Hawkins** is 4-15 overall against ranked opponents (2-5 in five seasons at Boise State, 2-10 at CU).

Large silver lining

Oklahoma State packs as much weaponry as any offense CU has faced this season. But with the exception of Cowboys senior tight end **Brandon Pettigrew**, Texas Tech wasn't bothered.

Sophomore **Dez Bryant** entered the game Saturday night as the league's leading receiver in yards per catch (17.6), yards per game (117.1), touchdowns scored (17) and was sixth in catches

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Rocky Mountain News

per game (6.7). Tech limited him to four receptions for 86 yards and no scores.

Sophomore **Kendall Hunter**, the league's leading rusher (135.6 yards a game), was held below his average (112 yards on 17 carries, two touchdowns). But Pettigrew, a 6-foot-6, 260-pounder who likely is a first-round NFL draft choice, made seven catches for 72 yards.

That total was 4 fewer yards on five more receptions than Iowa State's **Collin Franklin** had on two timely catches, including one on a tight end delay, in CU's 28-24 victory against the Cyclones. CU safety **D.J. Dykes** said Iowa State "caught us in a blitz on both of them . . . give them credit for that."

Etc.

* Senior receiver **Patrick Williams**' four catches for 85 yards (one TD) gives him 102 career receptions for 1,047 career yards. He's the 10th player in school history to catch 100 passes and the 19th player to hit 1,000 yards receiving.

* Kicking specialist **Jameson Davis**' left knee problems, scheduled for arthroscopic surgery at season's end, likely will push **Aric Goodman** back into the placekicking role this week and possibly the rest of the season.

* The Buffs have been forced to come back in three of their five wins this season - Eastern Washington, Kansas State, Iowa State.

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Longmont, Colorado
Monday, November 10,
2008

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For Scott, chance to be go-to guy again

Freshman RB carried day for CU vs. Iowa St.

By Brian Howell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Even on his best run Saturday, University of Colorado freshman Darrell Scott didn't get to show off his full potential.

Still, his performance in the team's 28-24 win against Iowa State at Folsom Field drew praise from his position coach and signaled that he's got the goods to be a productive running back.

Scott, who was one of the top recruits in the country a year ago, got his first collegiate start against the Cyclones and finished with 87 yards on 19 carries.

"I thought he did well," CU running backs coach Darian Hagan said. "All week, we'd been telling him he was going to be the guy, and I think he responded to that."

Injuries to Scott this season allowed fellow freshman Rodney Stewart to steal Scott's thunder.

Although Scott was the hot-shot recruit, Stewart leads the team with 622 rushing yards. Scott has 344.

With Stewart out for the remainder of the regular season with a broken leg, Scott is getting an opportunity to prove he can be the go-to runner. He's still nursing a sore ankle, but fought through it Saturday.

"I'm proud of him, the way he stepped up, knowing he was going to be the guy and he was going to be on center stage," Hagan said. "He did some good things for us."

Scott's 37-yard run on CU's second play of the third quarter set up a touchdown. On that play, however, it was clear the freshman is not healthy.

"He had no burst," Hagan said.

Still, it was Scott's ability — and willingness — to play through the injury that impressed Hagan.

"Last week, the same kind of tackles, he pulled himself out," Hagan said. "This week, he knew we had no option. He just went back in and toughed it out. I am proud of him for understanding that you're never going to be 100 percent."

Injured or not, the Buffs were determined to give Scott a chance. Of the 20



CU tailback Demetrius Sumler rests on the field during a scrimmage in Boulder in August. Sumler had 40 receiving yards in the Buffs' win over Iowa State.

Lewis Geyer/Times-Call file

First Look

A quick glance at CU's next opponent:

Who: Oklahoma State (8-2, 4-2)

Where: Boulder, Folsom Field

When: Saturday, 6 p.m. (Ch. 7)

Notes: Following last Saturday's 56-20 loss to Texas Tech, the Cowboys fell three spots to No. 11 in the AP top 25. ... Oklahoma State's two losses came against No. 4 Texas and the No. 2 Red Raiders. ... Cowboys quarterback Zac Robinson is third in the nation and second in the Big 12 with a 181.01 passer rating. ... Wide receiver Dez Bryant leads the Big 12 and is second in the nation with 114 receiving yards per game. ... CU won the last meeting, 34-0, on Oct. 1, 2005 in Stillwater, Okla.

rushing attempts that went to running backs, Scott had 19.

-Justin Williams

“We were trying to get Darrell going and get some confidence and just build upon that,” Hagan said.

Sophomore Demetrius Sumler got his only carry late in the fourth quarter — one play before the Buffs scored the go-ahead touchdown with 90 seconds to play. Sumler was used in the passing game, however, catching a season-high five passes for 40 yards.

“My job was to be a pass protector and be an outlet in the passing game,” Sumler said.

Hagan said Sumler is the team’s best running back at picking up blitzes — a skill that became important when Iowa State began blitzing Saturday. Hagan also said Scott’s pass blocking needs work.

“I was impressed that he put it upon himself to know that he could have done better in the pass protection,” Hagan said. “I didn’t have to say a word.”

For now, it appears the Buffaloes are happy with Scott and Sumler in the roles they played Saturday.

“I’m proud of both those guys,” Hagan said. “I feel confident in both of those guys.”

The only concern for the Buffs was Scott’s health after carrying the load, but Hagan said Scott seemed to be fine.

Scott was unavailable for comment following the game.

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