

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

cu football

## Heralded LB class finally on field

By Natalie Meisler  
The Denver Post

Posted: 04/11/2009 12:30:00 AM MDT

Updated: 04/11/2009 12:35:01 AM MDT



Jon Major returns after missing all of what would have been his freshman season at CU. (Helen H. Richardson, Denver Post)

BOULDER — In the secrecy-cloaked world of Colorado spring football, the wraps are finally coming off most of the banner linebacker class of 2008.

Hailed as one of the best, if not *the* best group of 'backers in the country, CU boasted three four-star prospects, two players classified the best in their states and two who initially committed elsewhere.

If weather permits a scrimmage this morning at Folsom Field, linebacker figures to be one of the

Advertisement


**OFFICE LIQUIDATORS HAS MILES OF FILES**

OVER 700 USED FILES IN GREAT CONDITION ALL PRICED AT A FRACTION OF THE NEW COST.

GO TO [www.OfficeLiquidators.com](http://www.OfficeLiquidators.com) OR VISIT OUR HUGE SHOWROOM AT 6TH & SIMMS.



**Hot Item!**  
**\$139 Steelcase**



**SAVE 25%**

ON USED FILES OR GET A STEELCASE 30" 5 DRAWER LATERAL FOR \$139.

SHOWROOM HOURS M-F 8:30-6:00 SAT 10-5 SUN 12-5

CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH OTHER OFFERS 303.759.3375 EXPIRES 5/17/09

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

most competitive positions.

"You want to just get a look, move 'em around," CU coach Dan Hawkins said on the day he closed down all but scrimmages to the public. "Some guys are playing all three spots, some guys are playing two spots."

Assorted reasons kept everyone

## Colorado Football

**View** slide show of first day of spring practice for CU football team in Boulder .

- **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 .

but junior-college transfer Shaun Mohler off the field last fall. Mohler was the Buffs' second-leading tackler (8.1 a game).

Ponderosa's Jon Major, the top recruit in the state of Colorado, tore up his knee in the second week of practice. Doug Rippy, who first committed to Nebraska, endured a redshirt year. Lynn Katoa, the highest-rated prospect in Utah, ran afoul of legal and academic expectations. Linebackers coach Brian Cabral confirmed Katoa won't return to the team.

Rippy's recruiting help — an offseason win over

Nebraska and gift-wrapping his barely recruited friend from Ohio, tailback Rodney Stewart — didn't get him on the field.

"It was very frustrating. It was a learning process," Rippy said of redshirt purgatory. "Now it's a matter of just being mentally and physically prepared for whatever is coming."

Cabral said Rippy is talented but needed to redshirt.

"We were hoping they were all going to play, but the best thing to happen to him was the redshirt," Cabral said.

Last summer, Stewart and Rippy were shocked to run into each other at a family barbecue and learn they were related. "His mom is my first cousin," Rippy said, explaining he never knew because "I don't really talk to my dad."

Major would have played as a true freshman if not for the knee injury. He is being held out of most contact as a precaution but is able to at least get a partial football fix this spring. He has had two weeks of football in the past 16 months since his last high school game.

"My focus is just getting back, getting comfortable," Major said. "I haven't had a lot of experience in the last year and a half."

When he signed with CU in February 2008, Major followed 2007 recruit Ryan Miller as the top in-state player to become a Buff. Legacy defensive end Nick Kasa made it three in a row this year,

Advertisement



## OFFICE LIQUIDATORS HAS MILES OF FILES

OVER 700 USED FILES IN GREAT CONDITION ALL PRICED AT A FRACTION OF THE NEW COST.

GO TO [www.OfficeLiquidators.com](http://www.OfficeLiquidators.com) OR VISIT OUR HUGE SHOWROOM AT 6TH & SIMMS.



**Hot Item!**  
\$139 Steelcase

# SAVE 25%

ON USED FILES OR GET A STEELCASE 30" 5 DRAWER LATERAL FOR \$139.

SHOWROOM HOURS M-F 8:30-6:00 SAT 10-5 SUN 12-5

CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH OTHER OFFERS 303.759.3375 EXPIRES 5/17/09

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

# denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

albeit after a detour commitment to Florida.

"I was definitely happy," Major said of Kasa's switch to CU. "Coach Hawkins is big on in-state guys, and I know a lot of coaches and fans are too. It's kind of the core of the team."

Natalie Meisler: 303-954-1295 or  
[nmeisler@denverpost.com](mailto:nmeisler@denverpost.com)

Advertisement



**OFFICE LIQUIDATORS HAS MILES OF FILES**

OVER 700 USED FILES IN GREAT CONDITION ALL PRICED AT A FRACTION OF THE NEW COST.  
GO TO [www.OfficeLiquidators.com](http://www.OfficeLiquidators.com) OR VISIT OUR HUGE SHOWROOM AT 6TH & SIMMS.

**SAVE 25%**

ON USED FILES OR GET A STEELCASE 30" 5 DRAWER LATERAL FOR \$139.

**Hot Item!**  
**\$139 Steelcase**

**SHOWROOM HOURS M-F 8:30-6:00 SAT 10-5 SUN 12-5**

**CANNOT BE COMBINED WITH OTHER OFFERS 303.759.3375 EXPIRES 5/17/09**

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

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

Longmont, Colorado  
Saturday, April 11, 2009

Publish Date: 4/11/2009

## CU loses quarterback

*By Patrick Ridgell*  
© 2009 Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — Colorado announced Friday night that sophomore quarterback Matt Ballenger has quit the football team.

Ballenger and his father met with head coach Dan Hawkins on Friday evening and agreed Ballenger would be released from his scholarship to pursue football, basketball or both at another school.

“Matt is a great young man, and everyone at Colorado respects him and his family,” Hawkins said in a release. “He’s contemplating his future as a football player or possibly a basketball player. He definitely has potential, especially if he pursues basketball. I saw him in the (Idaho) state tournament, and if he decides to go that route, he could really mature into a good player. We will support him and do whatever we can to ensure his future success.”

Ballenger’s departure leaves CU with two quarterbacks: junior Cody Hawkins and sophomore Tyler Hansen. They were distancing themselves from Ballenger in the competition for the starting spot.

Hansen, a true freshman in 2008, jumped ahead of Ballenger on the depth chart last October and saw extensive action in five games, including two starts.

Ballenger played against Texas and Kansas, last season’s fifth and sixth games. He went 8-for-12 for 118 yards and a touchdown. He signed with CU in 2007 and redshirted that year.

CU expects quarterbacks Clark Evans and Josh Moten, members of the 2009 recruiting class, to arrive this summer. Moten is a dual-threat quarterback CU listed as an athlete on signing day. With its shortage at the position, Moten will likely get a chance under center.

Cameron Wright, a walk-on from Ralston Valley High, moved to wide receiver this spring after redshirting as a quarterback in 2008. Wright had offseason shoulder surgery, and his work this spring has been limited.

Ballenger said last week he needed to be more assertive this spring to win the starting quarterback job. He said he played worried in the past, “like I didn’t want to mess up.” He said the key for him was knowing that if he made a mistake, he would be pulled.

Ballenger said he lost 20 pounds during winter conditioning and weighed 210 this spring.

He was Idaho’s Gatorade basketball player of the year at Skyview High in Nampa as a sophomore and senior.

Ballenger is the second Buff to leave the team this week. Wide receiver Chance Blackmon quit Monday. Ballenger will finish his courses this semester before leaving school.

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at [pridgell@times-call.com](mailto:pridgell@times-call.com).



Quarterback Matt Ballenger runs through drills at the University of Colorado’s practice bubble on March 31. The school announced Friday night that the sophomore has quit the football team. **Morgan Varon/Times-Call**





<b>Today</b> Now: 49°F Mostly Cloudy High: 49°F - Low: 34°F	<b>Tomorrow</b> Cloudy with a few showers High: 50°F - Low: 33°F
---	--

Saturday, April 11, 2009

HOME | NEWS | BUSINESS | SPORTS | A&E | COMMENTARY | FAQ | FACEBOOK | TWITTER | Search...

GO

Posted Today at 8:41 AM [Email This Story](#) [ShareThis](#)

## Buffs' QB derby down to Hawkins, Hansen

By B.G. Brooks  
bbrooksrnm@aol.com



BOULDER — Sophomore quarterback Matt Ballenger is leaving the University of Colorado football program, the school announced late Friday night.

Ballenger's decision, apparently based on his current No. 3 ranking in this spring's three-man competition at his position, leaves the Buffaloes with two scholarship quarterbacks — junior Cody Hawkins and sophomore Tyler Hansen.

After only four practices, offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Mark Helfrich told INDenverTimes last week that Hawkins and Hansen had pushed ahead of Ballenger. Helfrich added that Ballenger "is certainly not out of it by any stretch. But the other guys have created a little separation."

In analyzing the three quarterbacks, Helfrich said Ballenger, a 6-foot-4, 215-pounder who was an all-state basketball player at Skyview High School in Nampa, Idaho, "just needs to make some more routine plays.

"The frustrating part for Matt is that he's making great decisions, he's just not quite closing the deal. That's been frustrating for him."

CU signed two quarterbacks in its 2009 recruiting class — Clark Evans, of Los Alamitos, Calif., and Josh Moten, of Carson, Calif. Moten was signed as an athlete, but Buffs coach Dan Hawkins said the player's first look would be at quarterback.

With Ballenger's departure, Moten, whose dream was to play quarterback at the college level, likely will get that chance.

In a news release, Dan Hawkins called Ballenger "a great young man, and everyone at Colorado respects him and his family. He's contemplating his future as a football player or possibly a basketball player. He definitely has potential, especially if he pursues basketball.

"I saw him in the (Idaho) state tournament, and if he decides to go that route, he could really mature into a good player. We will support him and do whatever we can to ensure his future success."

After redshirting in 2007, Ballenger played in two games (Texas, Kansas) in 2008, completing 8-of-12 passes for 118 yards and a touchdown, and rushing twice for 16 yards. He was sacked five times (minus-23 yards).

CU said Ballenger plans to finish out the semester while considering his transfer options. Hawkins indicated Ballenger was unsure what schools he might consider.



**Tweets about this post:**  
indt at 2009-04-11T15:40:23Z: Buffs' QB derby down to Hawkins, Hansen: Sophomore quarterback Matt Ballenger is leaving the University of.. <http://tinyurl.com/dj7kr3>

CATEGORY: College football, Colleges, Insider, Sports, Top Story - Sports

TAGGED: b.g. brooks, Big 12, buffs, colorado football, cu, Matt Ballenger

### Leave a Reply

<input type="text"/>	Name (required)
<input type="text"/>	Mail (required)