



Black over Gold in spring game

QB Hansen suffers broken thumb, out until June

By Kyle Ringo
Saturday, April 25, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — Colorado spring football ended Saturday afternoon at Folsom Field under cloudy skies and cool conditions with one of the team's two quarterbacks suffering a broken thumb and absolutely nothing being decided at the position.

Junior Cody Hawkins led the black team to a 17-10 victory over the Gold team, but the reality was Hawkins was at quarterback for both teams for part of the second half after sophomore Tyler Hansen hit his throwing hand on the helmet of defensive end Marquez Herrod, breaking his thumb.

Hansen said he was scheduled to undergo surgery Saturday evening and will be unable to throw with teammates until early June. It's not a huge setback in his battle with Hawkins for the starting job because players generally go home for half of the month of May between spring and summer classes.

Hansen's injury was believed to be the only serious one from the 103-play scrimmage set before the third largest crowd in CU spring game history. Officials estimated a crowd of 11,700, a drop of 6,000 from the all-time record established last spring.

Coach Dan Hawkins and several of his assistants said Saturday's game concluded the most successful and productive spring in the staff's four-year tenure.

"I just think there is a little bit more savvy and little bit more maturity," Dan Hawkins said. "Again, just the leadership and how they are handling things and showing up. I thought it was awesome when we would scrimmage on a Friday and there would be a ton of guys in on Saturday and Sunday watching film.

"All of those things are just little attributes that you have to have down the road."

The offense ran the ball effectively with seven players combining for 50 carries and 310 yards. Tailback Darrell Scott produced 90 yards on 15 carries and also caught three passes for 38 yards.

Coaches had hoped one of three quarterbacks who began the spring vying for the starting job would take control of the position by Saturday. Cody Hawkins and Hansen will continue to slug it out in the fall instead. Matt Ballenger quit the team earlier this month.

While there won't be one clear-cut leader to take control of organizing player-run practices this summer, players and coaches alike see plenty of positives in emerging from spring ball with two competent quarterbacks whom the entire team believes in.

"They both practiced well and improved, which is good," said offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich, who is expected to interview for the same position at Oregon on Monday. "Cody graded out a little bit better, as in one or two percentage points, in both scrimmages."

Both Cody Hawkins and Hansen said they accomplished their individual goals this spring. Hawkins entered spring ball wanting to play at a more consistent level and limit some of the mistakes that have plagued him in the past, such as interceptions and batted balls at the line of scrimmage.

He also earned the Eddie Crowder Award from the coaching staff for outstanding leadership.

"I think I did a much better job this spring," Hawkins said. "You know, a lot less batted balls, which is great for me. That's really important. I was able to move around in the pocket without totally abandoning your reads and stuff."

Hansen entered spring wanting to prove he had improved his grasp of the entire offense and can be as effective in the passing game as he was running the ball as a true freshman last fall.

"I wanted to kind of establish myself as one of the guys. I think I did that," Hansen said. "I think I made enough plays to be in the mix and to earn that starting job. I think me and Cody are right there. I think it's going to be a big summer and big fall."

Hansen said while he has closed the gap considerably on Hawkins, it's difficult to replace the experience Hawkins has under his belt playing in every game for the Buffs over the past two years.

"We both can make plays," Hansen said. "We both can lead our offense and score points, but he's been in the fire more than I have. He knows what the defense does. He knows more on offense. So I think the only way I can catch up to that is watching film over the summer and learning the offense and really getting my head in the playbook."

Cody Hawkins completed 12 of 21 passes for 195 yards and two touchdowns in the game. He connected with wide receiver Jason Espinoza for a 27-yard score and Markques Simas on a 14-yard pass.

Hansen completed 4 of 10 passes before being injured for 66 yards and no touchdowns. Neither quarterback threw an interception, but the defense dropped several potential picks. Hansen also ran five times for 32 yards.

Neither quarterback threw an interception in any of the three main spring scrimmages this year. Hawkins finished the spring completing 44 of 72 passes for 669 yards and 10 touchdowns. Hansen finished with a slightly better completion percentage but fewer attempts, yards and scores. He completed 26 of 44 passes for 337 yards and four touchdowns.

The Buffs are tentatively schedule to open fall camp on Aug. 5 when the battle between Hawkins and Hansen will resume.

Helfrich said he sees the potential for the fight for the starting job going deep into fall camp, and coaches have talked about the possibility of continuing to use both next season as they did in the second half of last season.



LB Burton enjoys outstanding spring

By Kyle Ringo
Saturday, April 25, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — Colorado defensive coordinator Ron Collins was asked following the spring game Saturday at Folsom Field for the names of a few players who stood out this spring on defense.

The first three names out of his mouth were all Marcus Burton.

The fifth-year senior linebacker led the Buffs in the spring game with eight total tackles, two quarterback sacks and a fumble recovery. It was a nice way to cap his best spring in the program.

Burton credited his resurgence this spring to developing closer relationships with the coaching staff, particularly linebackers coach Brian Cabral. Burton, who got married and became a father in 2008, said it has been beneficial to him to spend time with coaches and their families away from football and campus life.

"I think definitely when you have a kid, it motivates you to be the best person you can be," Burton said. "I think it definitely carries on to the field as well."

Burton played a total of 59 snaps and made eight tackles in 10 games last fall. He led the Buffs with 21 total tackles in the three main spring scrimmages after moving from outside linebacker, where he played and practiced much of last season, to middle linebacker this year.

He will enter fall camp in 3½ months at the top of the depth chart at the position at which he feels most at home.

"I feel a lot more comfortable there just being able to flow around the field," Burton said.

Goodman finishes strong

Place-kicker Aric Goodman finished the spring with a perfect performance Saturday, making three extra point attempts and both field goal attempts, including one from 50 yards out.

The junior struggled last fall, making just five of 14 field-goal attempts and going 0-for-6 from 40 yards or more. This spring he improved after changing from a three-step approach to two steps.

In the three main spring scrimmages, Goodman made nine of 10 extra points and 13 of 17 field goals.

Spring 'Espy'

Colorado walk-on wide receiver Jason Espinoza is nicknamed "Espy" by his teammates and coaches, and he might be close to earning a scholarship.

Espinoza turned in another solid outing in the spring game with three catches for 81 yards and a touchdown. He led the team this spring with 14 catches for 256 yards and four scores.

He also handled punt return duties in the spring game, returning three punts for a total of 10 yards.

Fellow wide receiver Josh Smith continued to return kickoffs in the spring game and caught his first pass Saturday in scrimmage situations. Smith finished with just one catch to his name this spring, but he missed the entire second scrimmage with an ankle injury.

A look ahead

Colorado has not finalized its schedule for the start of fall camp, but preliminary plans have the Buffs reporting Aug. 5 with the first day of practice Aug. 6. The first day in full pads would be Aug. 10. The first day of fall classes will be Aug. 24. ... Big 12 Conference football media days will be in Dallas (July 27-29) with the Buffs scheduled to appear July 29.

Notable

Offensive lineman Sione Tau did not participate in the spring game but was not listed on the injury report. Tau was on the offensive sideline wearing his jersey. ... The only post-spring surgery scheduled is for senior tight end Luke Walters, who will have screws removed from his leg. ... Approximately 25-30 high school recruits in the 2010 class attended the spring game, including seven or eight from out of state.



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Scott leads revitalized run game

Buff ground attack puts up strong finish

By Ryan Thorburn
Saturday, April 25, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — The loudest cheer from the crowd at Folsom Field during Saturday's spring game was for a punter.

The Buffs' second-string punter.

Of course, Darrell Scott -- the nation's No. 1 running back recruit a year ago -- isn't your typical kicker.

"I told Darrell that he's probably the only five-star punter in the history of college football," Cody Hawkins said after leading the Black to a 17-10 victory over the Gold in front of 11,700 diehards.

The versatile Scott delivered a 48-yard punt on his only attempt while Matthew DiLallo had an average of 36.6 yards on five punts with a long of 44. Scott also had three receptions for 38 yards and had a touchdown pass taken away by an offensive pass-interference call.

But as good as Scott is at special teams and trick plays, the 6-1, 200-pound sophomore's most important role is obviously to run the ball. After a frustrating freshman campaign it appears Scott is ready to run downhill behind what is shaping up to be a very imposing offensive line.

"It was fun and exciting out there today," said Scott, who rushed for 90 yards on 15 carries (6.0 per). "I just made some plays. It was just really fun. It's the culmination of hard work paying off in the weight room during the offseason."

Many fans expected Scott to carry the Buffs back into the national spotlight immediately after he decided to play at CU, but some conditioning issues and nagging injuries limited his production as a true freshman. The explosive Rodney Stewart and more experienced Demetrius Sumler earned most of the carries during the 2008 campaign.

"He's always been such a great kid, and I've been so impressed with how he's handled all the hype and all the glitz and all the glimmer," CU coach Dan Hawkins said of Scott. "Things didn't go exactly like he wanted necessarily last year, but he never threw in the towel, he continued to show up and work hard."

With Scott, Stewart, Sumler and a healthy Brian Lockridge in the stable, all of the backfield horses should be fresh throughout the season. That gives the coaching staff some peace of mind entering the offseason with a starting quarterback decision still pending and a lack of depth at wide receiver.

"I like all four of those guys. I think there's going to be a place for each one of them," Dan Hawkins said. "Those four are pretty dynamic guys."

Two years ago there weren't enough offensive linemen in the program to even conduct a normal spring game, which was limited to special teams work and seven-on-seven play. On Saturday, the coaching staff was able to field two capable units.

"The linemen did a great job and we all had a good day," Scott said. "In the scrimmages, the running game wasn't as effective, so it was good for us as a team to get out there today and make some plays. The last play summed up what we're trying to do."

The last play was a 47-yard run by Sumler, who had just entered the game after Scott had been pounding away at the tiring defense.

"A lot of our big wins, West Virginia here last year and Oklahoma two years ago, we were able to wear teams out by running the ball and they were gassing for air," Sumler said. "Some of our best players are at running back and we definitely want to emphasize running the ball, especially in the Big 12 where everybody throws the ball with these high-powered offenses. We can keep them off the field a little bit."

Sumler had 73 yards rushing and averaged 9.1 yards per carry on Saturday. Lockridge had 55 yards on 10 carries, and Stewart added 52 yards on eight carries.

For the spring, Scott led the Buffs with 35 carries for 154 yards, but he never got into the end zone. Lockridge was second in rushing with 25 carries for 106 yards and two touchdowns

"It's a lot of fun to practice with these guys because you don't know which one is going to come out and just wow you," right guard Ryan Miller said.

On Saturday it was the No. 2 punter.



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Woelk: Improvement with Buffs not hard to see

By Neill Woelk

Sunday, April 26, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — From surviving to thriving.

It's one of Dan Hawkins' favorite expressions when describing how a program must progress, the process a team must endure to become competitive.

Saturday afternoon, Hawk's Colorado Buffaloes offered up solid evidence that they've put survival mode in the rear-view mirror. They have players, they have a plan and there is promise for the future.

But thriving?

Not yet. As Hawkins noted after Saturday's spring fling -- his fourth in Boulder -- the Buffs are inching closer, but there's still work to be done.

"It involves so many things," Hawkins said. "Confidence, competitiveness, maturity, responsibility -- everything that gets you to that next level.

"But you can't just get closer. You've got to knock that door down when the opportunity comes."

Nobody's saying the Buffs are ready to crash through any door. But folks who saw Saturday's final workout of the spring know the Buffs have at least positioned themselves on the threshold and given themselves a chance to be competitive.

That's a far cry from Hawkins' first spring game, that affair three years ago that left folks wondering whether "Hawk love" was the only fuel in CU's tank. (It was.)

First impressions from Saturday's scrimmage?

Love the running game. Darrell Scott (90 yards), Demetrius Sumler (73), Brian Lockridge (55) and Rodney Stewart (52) offer CU the chance for an incredibly potent ground attack. Hawk says there will be room for them all next fall; here's hoping he's right.

Move on to quarterback. A few days after writing that my vote was edging toward Tyler Hansen, I watched incumbent starter Cody Hawkins have a better day. Hansen still offers an option with his legs (32 yards rushing) that Hawkins doesn't, but the veteran's accuracy and decision-making gave him the edge on this day -- and probably for the spring.

Defensively, cornerback Jimmy Smith is getting better and better. By my count, exactly one pass went his way Saturday. Expect opponents to give him the same respect. The incredibly talented Smith may not be a lockdown corner yet, but he's on the verge.

"That's what I want to happen, other teams to know my side is the shutdown side," Smith said. "That's what all corners want."

Then there's linebacker Marcus Burton. He's another gifted athlete who defensive coordinator Ron Collins described as a guy "who's always been on the edge of being a good player. He's one of the most talented guys we've had, and now he's really stepped up his game."

Burton had eight tackles last season. Saturday, he was credited with eight in one afternoon -- including seven unassisted and a pair of quarterback sacks.

Matter of fact, Buff fans should be pleased with all of CU's linebackers. The Buffs officially play a 4-3 defense, but they somehow find a way to get four linebackers on the field quite a bit of the time.

Not that the nomenclature matters. Call it a 6-1 if you'd like, as long as it means getting the best players in position to make plays. That happened Saturday, as CU's six top tacklers were linebackers.

Up front, 295-pound Eugene Goree could be a nice anchor at nose tackle and thus far, safeties Patrick Mahnke and Anthony Perkins look to be ready to fill in nicely for a couple of departed seniors.

One more impressive group? CU's offensive line, which included four sophomores and a junior in the No. 1 lineup Saturday. They don't just block people, they advance and take territory.

Clearly, they're improving. But maybe the most important factor for the Buffs this year is their attitude.

As Hawkins explains it, the Buffs are "getting it."

"Classic example -- coach (Ron) Collins takes Guy Sargent out to explain something today," Hawkins said. "But he has to make a defensive call, and when he finally turns around to talk to Guy, B.J. (Beatty) is already there, coaching him up. Telling him what he did wrong and how to be better the next time.

"That's ownership. That's taking responsibility. It's such a small thing, but it's a huge thing. That's what these guys are doing now. It's 30 guys watching film on Saturday after a scrimmage on their day off. It's a dozen guys coming up the hill from throwing, working out on their own, on their day off.

"We're getting there."

Thriving? Not yet. But today, at least, the Buffs know where the door is.



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colorado football

Hawkins, Scott excel for Buffs "O"

By Natalie Meisler
The Denver Post

Posted: 04/26/2009 12:30:00 AM MDT



Inside linebacker Michael Sipili loses his helmet and gets an elbow in the forehead while tackling running back Rodney Stewart. Stewart had 52 yards on eight carries. Sipili had five solo tackles. CU's spring game was witnessed by about 11,700 fans. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — Everyone here Saturday appeared eager to celebrate the end of Colorado's spring

football practices. Everyone, that is, except for the two quarterbacks fighting for the starting job.

Sophomore Tyler Hansen suffered a broken thumb in the third quarter and made an immediate appointment to have surgery. He was outplayed by junior Cody Hawkins, who was 12-of-21 through the air for 195 yards and two touchdowns. But he wasn't going to let Hansen go to the hospital alone.

"I'm going to go hang out with Tyler," Hawkins said afterward. "I told him I'd bring him some ice cream. I had a lot of fun this spring competing with him, and I think we became closer as teammates."

Hansen broke a bone in the base of his right thumb on his passing hand. Given the choice of putting on a cast or speeding the recovery with surgery, Hansen opted for the latter.

Hansen was just 4-of-10 for 66 yards and no touchdowns.

The quarterbacks ended spring ball in a near dead heat, according to CU coaches. Hansen hopes to be able to throw again by June.

Players on both sides of the line were interchangeable, except for quarterbacks. Hawkins' team won 17-10 before a crowd estimated at 11,700. Hawkins threw touchdown passes of 14 and 27 yards while Aric Goodman kicked field goals of 43 and 50 yards, one for each team.

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The offensive highlight, however, was the running game. Sophomore-to-be tailback Darrell Scott led the way with 90 yards on 15 carries and showed better quickness to the perimeter than he did last fall. He also returned a kickoff 37 yards and caught three passes for 38 yards.

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His highlight, however, was booming a 48-yard punt that seemed to hang forever in the drizzly gray sky.

"He's the only five-star punter in the history of college football," coach Dan Hawkins said of Scott's recruiting rating (as a running back.) Scott will be sharing time in the backfield with Demetrius Sumler (who averaged 9.1 yards on eight attempts), Brian Lockridge, and last season's freshman sensation, Rodney Stewart.

"Rodney and Darrell make us all better," Lockridge said.

Footnotes:

Offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich, who has been contacted about a similar position at Oregon, said he hopes to know one way or another about the job within a week. . . . Cody Hawkins was named winner of the spring leadership award. "I'm never going to be the strongest, fastest, most athletic or smartest guy, so I feel that's where I have to do something," he said. Scott was name most improved offensive back.. . LBs Marcus Burton and B.J. Beatty were the top defensive hands, combining on four sacks.

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Buffaloes' black and gold offers quite a dapper look

By Jim Armstrong
The Denver Post

Posted: 04/24/2009 11:00:00 PM MDT

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(Nam Y. Huh, The Associated Press)

The coolest look among Colorado uniforms?

There's no right or wrong answer, just opinions and preferences.

"It's all personal choice," said Dave Plati, CU's longtime director of sports information.

When The Post interviewed several members of the local sports landscape, no uniforms were chosen more than CU's football uniis as the best current look among the state's teams.

The Nuggets' rainbow jerseys of the 1980s and the original hockey Rockies jerseys got the most love for best retro looks. But when it came to today's teams, CU struck gold . . . and black.

"It's kind of like the Raider look," said Bill Vizas, owner of Bill's Sports Collectibles. "It's a great football look. And the helmet adds to it with the buff on the side. That's as good a look as you can have."

"Judging from feedback from our fans, we have one of the most recognizable helmets in the country," said CU athletic director Mike Bohn.

Chris Fuselier, owner of the Blake Street Tavern in LoDo, can't get enough of the gold and black. It's a far cry from the sky blue of his freshman year on the CU campus in the early '80s.

"Those things were hideous," Fuselier said. "What I remember more was the reaction when they came out in black. We thought that was the coolest thing. The black and gold is an awesome

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look. They have the coolest helmet in college football."

But then there's a lot of that going around the state. Plati remembers the Buffs' sky-blue jerseys and CSU's horrific yellow helmets-with-green ram horns of roughly the same era. Never before, he said, have the state's college teams looked as dapper as they do today.

"If you were to do uniforms by state in Division I football, I would seriously think Colorado would make a run for the top spot," Plati said. "Some CU fans might not want to hear it, but I've always thought CSU looked pretty sharp. They give us a run. And you've got to like the lightning bolt at Air Force."

How impressive is the CU buffalo logo? Former Buffs tight end and Broncos offensive tackle Matt Lepsis didn't stop at wearing it on his helmet. He had it tattooed on his calf.

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Longmont, Colorado
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Buffaloes call spring drills a success, but work remains

By Patrick Ridgell
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BOULDER — Fortunately for Tyler Hansen, he writes with his left hand.

Colorado's sophomore quarterback broke his right thumb Saturday during the Buffaloes' spring game before a reported 11,700 people at Folsom Field when he slammed it on the helmet of defensive end Marquez Herrod as he threw a pass. Hansen, who throws with his right arm, said following the game he was set for surgery Saturday night, and he'd be in a cast for at least a couple of weeks.

No big deal, though, Hansen said, because writing won't be a problem, and he planned to return home to California for the rest of May to relax. Throwing wouldn't have been a priority for a few weeks, anyway.

"I should be good by June," Hansen said.

A bigger question lingers though — will the Buffs be good by fall? Saturday's end to spring drills means no more coaching or formal practices until Aug. 6, the day after the entire roster is supposed to convene in Boulder for the first time in 2009. While players and coaches called, as you'd expect, their spring drills a success, there remains to-do items for the fall leftover from the past four weeks, most notably naming a starting quarterback.

With offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich's pending interview at Oregon, there's uncertainty on the coaching staff. Several Buffs have been limited or out this spring with injuries, and 17, including several who might start, were listed on Saturday's injury report. The defense, playing "generic" schemes Saturday that helped the offense, as coach Dan Hawkins said, allowed 6.2 yards per rush and came up with only one turnover. And it remains to be seen how well the Buffs, who used a 3-4 base for much of Saturday, are going to replace the three departed seniors on the defensive line.

"Time will tell," defensive coordinator Ron Collins said.

That's the deal for this program in lots of areas, and Hawkins did little to soften expectations Saturday.

"I think it was by far the best spring we've had," he said. "We need to get those young guys in here and get them going and see if they can contribute, but I really feel like we're starting to get some people that have been around the block a little bit, some competition, some depth in there, and all of those things bode well for those guys."



Tyler Hansen looks for an open receiver Saturday during CU's spring football scrimmage at Folsom Field. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**

Spring Game Statistics

PASSING—Hawkins 12-21 195 yards, 1 TD, 0 Int; Hansen 4-10, 66 yards, 0 TD, 0 Int.

RUSHING—Scott 15-90, Sumler 8-73, Lockridge 10-55 1 TD, Stewart 8-52, Hansen 5-32, Hawkins 2-4, Behrens 2-4.

RECEIVING—Espinoza 3-81 1 TD, Scott 3-38, Sumler 2-39, Simas 2-20 1 TD, Jo. Smith 1-29, Behrens 1-15, Shanahan 1-14, Lockridge 1-10, Wallacd 1-8, Maxwell 1-7.

PUNT RETURNS—Espinoza 3-10, Jo. Smith 1-2

KICKOFF RETURNS—Jo. Smith 2-90, Ebner 3-41, Scott 1-37

TACKLES—Burton 8, Smart 7, Sipili 6, Beatty 5, Farley 5, Mohler 5, Ewing 4, Jaffee 4, Ji. Smith 4, Silipo 3, Goree 3, Perkins 2, Gouin 2, Herrod 2, Kaynor 2, Mahnke 2, Sandersfeld 2, Jo. Hawkins 1, Meyer 1, Pericak 1, Poremba 1, Sale 1, Sergeant 1, Smith 1, Stengel 1, Goldbert 1, Lawson 1.

SACKS—Burton 2-22, Beatty 2-13, Farley 1-1, Stengel 1-1.

Helfrich, who's expected to visit Oregon on Monday, said returning starting quarterback Cody Hawkins graded out "one or two percentage points" higher than Hansen in both of the scrimmages prior to Saturday's game. Hansen broke his thumb in the third quarter, forcing Hawkins to finish. Helfrich said those missed snaps wouldn't have mattered in the race.

CU is nowhere near a conclusion concerning the quarterback battle, Helfrich said. Entering the summer with such uncertainty is not bad, he added.

"I think we're in a good situation," Helfrich said. "If we were sitting here saying, 'My gosh, neither one of them could do this very well, and neither one could do that very well,' that would be a problem.

"But I think they're both at a time in their maturation where they're both leaders and are working and setting examples in the summer. It's not a bad thing, whatsoever."

Linebacker B.J. Beatty and defensive tackle Eugene Goree said the 3-4 base the defense frequently used Saturday will continue to be part of the plan in the fall. Collins said the defense's best accomplishment was the focus and chemistry he saw evolve.

"I think they feel good about themselves right now," Collins said. "I think they feel good about what they're doing and I think they feel confident about what they're doing. It's a good step for us and something we want to build on."

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Four backs help CU's running game excel

By Patrick Ridgell
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BOULDER — Colorado coaches have said this spring they want to establish a strong running game in 2009. Saturday's results suggest the Buffaloes have done so.

Even though coach Dan Hawkins said the defense was "playing pretty generic," CU showed off four talented running backs during Saturday's spring game. Each one averaged at least 5.5 yards a carry, and the foursome combined for 270 yards on 41 carries, led by Darrell Scott's 90 on 15.

Such a performance will make some wonder how the Buffs will keep all four backs happy this season. Quarterback Cody Hawkins answered the question Saturday like this.

"We'll have to tell good jokes on the sidelines," he said.

But seriously.

"I think we have some great guys," Hawkins said. "I think we'll have to package situations where we can have two tailbacks in and get two options on the field. All of our guys have a chance to do some great things."

The offensive line had four probable starters going Saturday in tackles Bryce Givens and Nate Solder, right guard Ryan Miller and center Mike Iltis. Ethan Adkins is listed as the starting left guard. He'll have to beat out Devin Head and Blake Behrens, who was injured and did not play Saturday. The possible return of Max Tuioti-Mariner could also be a factor.

CU likes its depth on the offensive line, and the players say they like the idea of having four good tailbacks to work behind what they believe is its strength.

"I think this spring we've gotten way more aggressive," said Matt Bahr, who added he'll play guard and tackle in the fall. "We're blocking people downhill, which is different. We were going so lateral last year. All of our steps were lateral, and we were blocking people down the line and trying to open up creases. Now we're just going straight at guys, pushing them back and playing on their backs and learning to be more aggressive."

Said tailback Brian Lockridge: "We have a tempo that's way higher than it was the previous year. Instead of just being out there hoping a play goes right, we go out there making the play go right."

Scott's day included a towering 48-yard punt on his only attempt that had the fans cheering. He's listed as the back-up punter. He won the Fred Casotti Award CU gives each spring for its most improved offensive back.

CU reports Scott, the most-touted member of its 2008 recruiting class, is healthy after knee and ankle injuries slowed him a year ago. Hawkins lauded the way Scott handled things.



Running back Darrell Scott is chased by linebacker Michael Sipili during CU's spring football scrimmage Saturday at Folsom Field. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**

"He has always been such a great kid, and I've been so impressed with how he handled all the hype and the glitz and all the glimmer," Hawkins said. "And things didn't go exactly like he wanted them necessarily last year, but he never threw in a towel, he continued to show up."

OTHER SPRING WINNERS: Quarterback Cody Hawkins won the Eddie Crowder Award for outstanding leadership. The most improved offensive lineman was Iltis. The most improved defensive back was Marcus Burton. The most improved defensive lineman was Taj Kaynor. The most improved special teams player was punter Matt DiLallo. Solder won the award for outstanding work ethic. Cornerback Jalil Brown won for outstanding toughness. Linebacker Jeff Smart won for attention to detail. And linebacker Shaun Mohler won for outstanding academics.

EXTRA POINTS: Cody Hawkins quarterbacked eight drives and engineered 17 points. Tyler Hansen led seven drives that totaled 10 points. ... Captains will not be named until fall. ... Kicker Aric Goodman went 2-for-2 on field goals, including a 50-yarder. ... Josh Smith had a 64-yard kickoff return. ... Receiver Scotty McKnight (triceps strain) held on kicks but did not play with the offense. ... Burton's eight tackles led the defense. He also had two sacks and the day's lone turnover recovery, off a fumble.