



NU's Ganz has Buffs' attention

Nebraska QB put up huge numbers Saturday vs. KSU

By Kyle Ringo

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Colorado football coaches and defenders don't have a lot of film to study on Nebraska quarterback Joe Ganz. Turns out, they don't need much.

The two games they do have, along with bits and pieces of others, tell them all they need to know about the fourth-year junior.

"He seems like a winner to me," safety D.J. Dykes said, echoing the thoughts of most in the CU program.

Ganz took over as the starter for the Cornhuskers two weeks ago after senior Sam Keller suffered a season-ending injury. Ganz already has been a part of two of the most prolific games in school history.

The Cornhuskers lost 76-39 to Kansas two weeks ago and came back last week with a 73-31 victory over Kansas State. The offense had little trouble moving the ball and scoring points in both outings, with Ganz leading the way.

Ganz set school records for passing yards (510), total offense (528) and touchdown passes (seven) in a remarkable performance against the Wildcats. He is the reigning Big 12 Conference offensive player of the week.

When he visits Folsom Field on Nov. 23 to battle the Buffs for a bowl bid, Ganz will have much more respect from CU than might be given to a typical season-long backup suddenly thrust into the starting job.

While the Nebraska program has featured a pair of transfers under center over the past three seasons, Ganz has been soaking up the system, improving and preparing for his opportunity to prove himself.

Completing 55 of 90 passes for 915 yards and 11 touchdowns in two games pretty much handled that. He did throw four interceptions against Kansas, but several of those mistakes cannot be attributed solely to him.

"The last two weeks he's been very efficient, very good," CU defensive coordinator Ron Collins said. "He's a guy they looked at last spring as their potential starter."

"I don't know if they're looking in hindsight and saying, 'We should have had them in there all the time' or not. But he is definitely making the most of every snap he's got right now."

Nebraska coach Bill Callahan is facing the prospect of losing his job at the end of the season because of defensive deficiencies above all else. When asked about Ganz earlier this week, Callahan gave his quarterback credit but also used the success as an opportunity to defend his program.

"He's a product of the system," he said. "This is a player we've developed, and you could see his development just ooze all over the field on Saturday."

CU is expecting to see a lot of Ganz dropping back to pass. The Buffs have been struggling to defend the passing game over the past month against good passing attacks. They expect to be tested again. Nebraska can be explosive.

"If you look at the last game, they threw the ball pretty much every play," CU cornerback Terrence Wheatley said. "So they definitely have confidence in the guy and I can see why. He makes good decisions and doesn't really make a lot of mistakes. He is legit."

NU coach receives

death threat

University of Nebraska police are investigating threatening voicemail messages left on defensive coordinator Kevin Cosgrove's office phone after the Cornhuskers lost to Kansas two weeks ago, giving up a school record 76 points.

One of the voicemails included a death threat, according to published reports. The threat was quoted in the search warrant being used to examine phone records, the Lincoln Journal Star reported.

"Go back to where you (expletive) came from you (expletive), before I (expletive) kill ya," the caller stated in quotes included in the warrant.

The Nebraska defense has been considered the weak link on a team that is enduring a difficult season. The Cornhuskers have allowed at least 30 points seven times and 40 or more on five occasions. Speculation is that the coaching staff led by Callahan will be fired at the end of the season.

Yet, Nebraska (5-6, 2-5) can become bowl-eligible with a victory over the Buffs. It had been unclear whether the program would accept a bowl invitation if one is extended.

"That decision is not my decision," Callahan said earlier this week. "I think that decision is made by the higher-ups and I would hope they would look upon that favorably. For our players if we get to that 6-6, if we're fortunate enough to get to that point where we are eligible, I would certainly hope they would do that for our players and our team, I think they deserve that."

Nebraska's associate athletic director for communications, Randy York, put an end to any talk of rejecting a bowl bid Tuesday when he told the Journal Star that interim athletic director Tom Osborne is in favor of going to a bowl game.

Further motivation

Both teams should be sufficiently motivated when the Buffs and Huskers meet next week with a bowl game on the line and the loser facing the end of the season. But CU also will be trying to avoid producing the first back-to-back losing seasons in 23 years. The last CU teams to finish below .500 in

consecutive years were the 1983 and 1984 Buffs.

CU ended Nebraska's 35-year string of bowl games in 2004. This is a chance for a small measure of revenge for the boys in red.

"Anything that can add fuel to the fire will definitely be a motivation," CU senior wide receiver Stephone Robinson said, who said he was not aware such a streak existed.

Notable

CU coach Dan Hawkins said sophomore defensive lineman Jason Brace has not been playing and practicing recently but he is expected back for the finale. Hawkins was not specific about what is ailing Brace. ... Hawkins said the first two practices in preparation for Nebraska have been good. He said the length of Saturday's scrimmage hasn't been determined.



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