



## Buffaloes get carried away

**Colorado scores 65 points against Nebraska, becomes eligible for bowl**

By B.G. Brooks

Saturday, November 24, 2007

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When the end came Friday at frigid Folsom Field - and this particular denouement was four minutes shy of four hours and followed a series-record 116 points - Edwin Sanders quickly followed through with an earlier promise made to his son, Joe, a senior tight end at the University of Colorado.

"He's a cigar connoisseur, and he told me if we won the game, the cigars for our guys were on him. . . . It was kind of like our victory lap," a beaming Joe Sanders said.

Thus, the smoking lamp - or in this case, the nod for unlighted stogies to be held between proudly clinched teeth - was lit.

The resilient Buffaloes believed they had earned the right, rallying from a 35-24 halftime deficit to beat archrival Nebraska 65-51, present coach Dan Hawkins with his 100th career win and become bowl eligible in his second season at CU.

The victory was CU's sixth of 2007, pushing the Buffs to the minimum required for postseason play. Whether that happens won't be known at least until after the Big 12 Conference championship game (Dec. 1) and it is determined if one or two Big 12 teams earn Bowl Championship Series bids.

With the league champion earning an automatic BCS bid and the Big 12 being affiliated with seven bowls, eight of its teams are assured postseason berths. An extra BCS bid would push the total to nine - a security blanket for 6-6 finishers such as CU.

That blanket might be needed, because eight Big 12 teams currently are bowl eligible, and Kansas State (5-6) could join the mix with a win today at Fresno State. The Wildcats beat the Buffs 47-20 on Oct. 13, but bowls usually select teams they want, regardless of head-to-head competition.

CU officials believe the Insight Bowl (New Year's Eve, Tempe, Ariz.) might look favorably on the Buffs. The game matches a Big 12 team against a Big Ten Conference opponent.

Whatever transpires, Hawkins and his players believe they fulfilled their end of the arrangement.

"That is up to them (conference and bowl committee) to decide," Hawkins said. "We beat a good Texas Tech team that will go to a bowl game. We also beat a good Oklahoma team that will go to a bowl game.

"We played tough against a lot of teams that are going to bowl games. Given the schedule we played, I think this team deserves (it)."

But not until the second half Friday was in the books. The Buffs (6-6 overall, 4-4 Big 12) parlayed their halftime defensive adjustments - CU made three key interceptions and blocked a punt after intermission - into a 20-point third quarter that completely shifted the momentum and likely signaled the end of embattled coach Bill Callahan's four-year stay at Nebraska (5-7, 2-6).

"It's a real tough way to end a difficult season," said Callahan, who meets with interim athletic director Tom Osborne today to learn his fate. "I'm just really proud of our players and the effort they've shown. . . . It's tough on everybody - fans, players, coaches, family."

Hawkins found Callahan at game's end and "whispered some things to him. I've got a lot of respect for the guy. What he had

to endure and go through this season is tough. . . . He handled it with class and resolve."

Fueled mostly by seniors on Senior Day, the Buffs handled their second-half comeback the same way. Senior tailback Hugh Charles rushed for 169 yards and three touchdowns, noting afterward, "I couldn't be happier than I am today."

Senior receiver Dusty

Sprague caught one pass for 22 yards, setting up Charles' final score. Among Sprague's six carries for 48 yards was a 4-yard touchdown run - the first of his career, and he joked afterward, "I was going for 100 (yards). Maybe I'll get it in the bowl game."

But on the day set aside for honoring its upperclassmen, CU also got stand-up performances from the kids-in-waiting. Quarterback Cody Hawkins completed 17-of-29 passes for 241 yards and two touchdowns, ending his redshirt freshman season with 70 passing attempts without an interception.

Was he surprised by a nearly fuse-blowing afternoon for Folsom Field's scoreboards? Not in the least.

"If you've seen a lot of Nebraska games (this season), somebody's putting up a lot of points, whether it's them or somebody else," he said. "We kind of knew it was going to be a shootout; we didn't necessarily want it to be that, but we said, hey, if it's 10-7, we're going to win.

"If it's 21-0 we're going to win. If it's 58-57 we're going to win. But 65-51 is pretty good for us."

Also stepping up when a strong stride was required was redshirt freshman corner Jimmy Smith, whose 31-yard interception return for a touchdown in the third quarter pushed the Buffs' "ON" button and marked the first of their 34 consecutive points.

"Feels good to do this in a rivalry game," Smith said. "Yeah, I'll remember it."

For Dan Hawkins, the day's memories were found in his team's second-half comeback, earning it a special place among teams he has coached.

"People always think the 13-1 (teams) were the most special, but I'm not sure this team hasn't endeared itself to me more than any other," he said. "The things they went through before I got here, and despite the way it went last year, they have continued to hang in there."

Now, they must hang in there for another week to see if the postseason awaits.

## NUMBERS GAME

65points by CU were the most under second-year coach **Dan Hawkins** and the most scored by a Buffaloes team since a 66-14 win against Northeast Louisiana on Sept. 16, 1995, in Boulder.

## ORDINARY JOE

Nebraska quarterback **Joe Ganz**, below, torched CU in the first half of the game Friday, completing 15-of-26 passes for 274 yards and two touchdowns. He wasn't half bad in the second half either, finishing 31-for-58 for 484 yards and four touchdowns.

But after intermission, CU intercepted him three times, swinging momentum toward the Buffs. Ganz said the picks "were my fault. . . . I feel I let them back in the game."

## HE'S ALL HEART

The Buffalo Heart Award, annually presented to a CU senior by fans seated behind the Buffs bench, went to linebacker **Jordon Dizon**, a finalist for the Butkus Award.

Dizon finished Friday with 18 tackles (14 solo), and if those numbers hold up after coaches review tape, he will be the school's

career leader in solo stops (295).

## INJURY REPORT

CU reported no new injuries Friday, but senior defensive end **Alonzo Barrett** will have minor arthroscopic knee surgery Tuesday. If the Buffs receive a bowl bid, Barrett should be able to play, as should senior corner **Terrence Wheatley** (broken bone in left foot).

## HE SAID IT

"I've got no future there; I'll stick to football."

**George Hypolite**, CU defensive tackle, who climbed into the stands and directed the school's band in celebrating the Buffs' win.

**Nebraska 14 21 0 16 - 51**

**Colorado 17 7 20 21 - 65**

### First quarter

**Col** - FG Eberhart 25, 12:49.

**Neb** - Ganz 28 run (Henery kick), 12:13.

**Col** - C.Hawkins 5 run (Eberhart kick), 7:21.

**Col** - Sprague 4 run (Eberhart kick), 2:38.

**Neb** - Lucky 2 run (Henery kick), :16.

### Second quarter

**Neb** - Ganz 8 run (Henery kick), 6:19.

**Neb** - Purify 25 pass from Ganz (Henery kick), 3:04.

**Col** - DeVree 11 pass from C.Hawkins (Eberhart kick), 1:25.

**Neb** - Peterson 16 pass from Ganz (Henery kick), :23.

### Third quarter

**Col** - Ji.Smith 31 interception return (Eberhart kick), 10:26.

**Col** - Charles 9 run (Eberhart kick), 8:10.

**Col** - Charles 1 run (kick failed), 5:19.

### Fourth quarter

**Col** - McKnight 10 pass from C.Hawkins (Eberhart kick), 14:32.

**Col** - Charles 2 run (Eberhart kick), 4:16.

**Neb** - Purify 9 pass from Ganz (Lucky pass from Ganz), 2:08.

**Col** - Ellis 28 run (Eberhart kick), 1:23.

**Neb** - Purify 4 pass from Ganz (S.Hill pass from Ganz), :26.

**A** - 51,403.

#### **Neb Col**

First downs 28 26

Rushes-yards 20-126 52-277

Passing 484 241

Comp-Att-Int 31-58-3 17-29-0

Return Yards 14 165

Punts-Avg. 5-35.2 5-39.6

Fumbles-Lost 3-0 0-0

Penalties-Yards 10-57 7-65

Time of Possession 26:03 33:57

#### **INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS**

**RUSHING** - Nebraska, Lucky 12-69, Ganz 6-37, Hardy 2-20. Colorado, Charles 33-169, Sprague 6- 48, Ellis 4-34, C.Hawkins 5-15, Jo.Smith 3-14, Team 1-(minus 3).

**PASSING** - Nebraska, Ganz 31-58-3-484. Colorado, C.Hawkins 17-29-0-241.

**RECEIVING** - Nebraska, Purify 11-136, Lucky 8- 115, Nunn 4-88, Holt 2-49, Peterson 2-46, Swift 2- 32, Hardy 1-11, Castille 1-7. Colorado, DeVree 4- 51, Celestine 3-34, McKnight 3-34, Jo.Smith 2-20, Robinson 1-35, Charles 1-33, Sprague 1-22, Geer 1-8, Williams 1-4.

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## Charles huge in his finale at Folsom

By By Pat Rooney  
, Special to the Rocky

Saturday, November 24, 2007

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The chants began as the University of Colorado's offense took over the ball at the Nebraska 1-yard line late in the team's 65-51 trouncing of Nebraska on Friday at Folsom Field.

The CU student section, creators of the vocal "Hugh" chants reverberating around the stadium, wanted senior tailback Hugh Charles to get the ball. The Cornhuskers knew Charles would get the ball, too, but it was too late to prevent the storybook, exclamation-point touchdown Charles delivered on the next play.

It was a fitting end to a solid CU career for Charles, who rushed for 169 yards, scored a career-best three touchdowns and also had a key 33-yard reception on the Buffaloes' opening possession in his final game at Folsom Field.

"It couldn't have ended any better, especially putting up as many points as we did," Charles said. "It's such a great feeling. Everybody is sticking together, listening to what the coaches have to say and us taking it and applying it to the field and doing our jobs."

It was the 11th 100-yard game of Charles' career, and he just missed matching the career- best mark of 171 yards he set Oct. 13 at Kansas State. Charles finished his senior campaign with 989 rushing yards and nine touchdowns, both career bests.

He will finish his career ranked sixth on CU's all-time rushing list, with 2,659 yards, a mark that will stand even if the Buffs receive a bowl bid, since CU is one of the few programs that still doesn't include postseason results with the team's regular-season statistics.

It was a satisfying home-field ending for Charles, who took awhile to make an impression on coach Dan Hawkins when he arrived before the 2006 season. While Charles' yards-per-

attempt average went up in his first season with Hawkins, Charles carried the ball 37 fewer times as Hawkins urged the speedy back to run north and south more consistently.

Slowed by a hamstring injury at the beginning of this season, Charles had only 9 yards on four carries through the first three games before getting on track. He gained 123 yards in the fourth game and never looked back, producing six 100-yard games in the Buffs' final nine contests.

"I've had to fight through a lot and overcome a lot and prove myself after every week," Charles said. "It's just something that you learn from. Life is about lessons, you learn from the good and you learn from the bad and I've learned a lot of lessons - to keep fighting and never give up."

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## Woelk: CU's resolve pays big dividends

First things first:

Hats off to a Colorado senior class that deserves a special place in the memories of every Colorado football fan. A group that endured more off- and on-the-field turmoil than perhaps any group in CU history went out in style on a frigid Friday at Folsom Field. There have been bigger wins and more important wins, but this bunch will always have a special place in CU history as the team that slapped 65 on rival Nebraska.

Sixty-five? That's a number worth remembering. In a game that begged for a 35-second clock and a free throw line, Dan Hawkins' Buffaloes erased an 11-point halftime deficit by scoring five consecutive touchdowns, getting a huge boost from a defense that looked defenseless in the first 30 minutes in the process.

The numbers are staggering. Most combined points ever — 116 — in a CU-NU game. A grand total of 1,128 yards total offense, with 16 touchdowns scored and a field goal. The Buffs ran for 277 yards and threw for 241; the Huskers threw for 484 and ran for 126. The Buffs just missed scoring the most points in CU history (66 vs. NE Louisiana in 1995), and they now own the Nos. 3 and 4 spots on the list of most points ever scored against the Huskers.

And, for the first time since 1990, the Buffs beat Oklahoma and Nebraska in the same season. For those of you too young to recall, that was a year worth remembering.

Certainly, there are plenty of positives that come with Friday's win, bowl eligibility among the biggest.

Let's say this much right now: Given Colorado's schedule, the Buffs deserve a postseason spot. Wins over Oklahoma and Texas Tech, a solid effort against No. 2 Kansas and a 65-51 nationally televised win over Nebraska to finish the regular season should be enough to send the Buffs bowling. Throw in the fact that CU refuses to pad its schedule with nonconference rummies to become bowl-eligible (Florida State and Arizona State this season), and it should be a no-brainer for any bowl officials worth their bright-colored blazers.

But even bigger than a bowl bid — at least in the long run — is that the Buffs practiced what Dan Hawkin has preached since he arrived on campus, a lesson that will serve CU well in the long run.

The Buffs finished. Down by 11 at the half, in the wake of giving up an all-too-easy 66-yard touchdown to complete a 35-point NU first half, the Buffs didn't blink.

"I told this team that all that matters is that you finish well," Hawkins said. "Be a guy that finishes. It's what good football teams are made of and also what good people are made of as well."

Easy to say, hard to do — and this one would've been easy to let get away. Four times this year, the Buffs have taken leads on teams and failed to finish what they started. This one had all the looks of becoming number five, particularly after CU failed to move the ball on its first possession of the second

half.

Enter the defense — yes, the same defense that yielded 35 points and 393 yards offense in the first half.

Redshirt freshman Jimmy Smith returned an interception for a touchdown. Lionel Harris picked off Joe Ganz's very next pass to set up another. Then a blocked punt set up a third, followed by an 84-yard drive for a score and yet one more interception (Cha'pelle Brown) to set up another touchdown.

Game over, and sometime today, Nebraska A.D. Tom Osborne will quite likely make it official: Nebraska is searching for another head coach. The once-proud Husker program is spinning its wheels, and with no bowl game in sight, NU will begin the rebuilding process for the second time in five seasons.

But Nebraska's worries are of little concern to the Buffs.

What's important in Colorado is the future, and today, Colorado's future looks solid. Bowl game or not, CU's second-half finish is the kind that will stretch long beyond December. Those are the kinds of moments that will convince a team to punch adversity in the eye the next time it arises, the kinds of moments that will convince CU's young players that Hawkins' constant reminders about "finishing" are worth listening to.

"You saw that resolve blossom today," said CU freshman lineman Ryan Miller, whose first taste of the CU-NU rivalry will be one he relishes for a long time. "It works. When coach Hawkins talks about driving on, about working through adversity and injuries and bad breaks, you know you can get through it.

"I think we always knew it, but today just proved it."

By no means is Friday's win a guaranteed turning point. Rather, it's just another solid step forward in Hawkins' rebuilding project, one that still has plenty of work remaining. Next year's schedule, which includes Florida State and West Virginia in nonconference play plus Texas taking Oklahoma's place in the Big 12 slate, already has CU fans flinching.

But don't expect the Buffs to do the same — not, at least, if they take the lessons of this year with them.



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# LB Dizon plays home finale in style

## Senior moves into third on CU's all-time tackles list

By Ryan Thorburn

Saturday, November 24, 2007

Brian Cabral had a special sideline surprise for Jordon Dizon before Friday's game at Folsom Field.

The Colorado linebackers coach ignored the sub-freezing temperatures and wore a lavalava (a Polynesian version of a kilt) to pay tribute to the senior linebacker during the Buffs' 65-51 victory over Nebraska.

Dizon's performance — a game-high 18 tackles (14 solo) — was the perfect aloha on a brilliant four-year CU career. He walked off the field unofficially ranked third on the program's all-time list for tackles with 442.

Barry Remington is the Buffs' all-time leader with 493, followed by Matt Russell (446). Greg Biekert (441) is now fourth. Dizon recently passed Ted Johnson (409) on the star-studded list.

"I don't know that I've ever been more proud of a group of linebackers than these guys. And Jordon, in particular," said Cabral, who also had a lei around his neck that Dizon's mother gave him to wear. "We have the same roots and it has kind of been a dream to me to coach a linebacker from Hawaii."

Cabral, who grew up in Kailua, Hawaii, was a captain on CU's 1976 Big Eight title team and finished his college career with 297 tackles before going on to win a Super Bowl with the 1986 Chicago Bears. Dizon, a native of Kauai, Hawaii, passed his coach on the list with a 22-tackle performance in the season-opening victory over Colorado State.

"I couldn't express in words how much I love that guy," Dizon said of Cabral, who also wore a lavalava during CU's 1998 Aloha Bowl victory over Oregon. "He's done everything for me, he's been my father, he's made me the person I am. Everything I am right now I've got to give back to him. He's done everything in his power to make me the best player, the best person, and my hat's off to him because he's the greatest coach I've ever had."

Dizon is a semifinalist for the Butkus Award, along with Penn State's Dan Connor and Ohio State's James Laurinaitis. He will find out on Dec. 7 whether or not he joins Alfred Williams (1990) and Russell (1996) as Buffs who have won the award given out to college football's best linebacker.

"He's everything you want in a young man and he's everything you want in a football player," said CU head coach Dan Hawkins, who suggested to Cabral that he wear the lavalava. "I just hope everybody votes right because I know every scout that comes in here, bar none, says he is the best linebacker in the country. So I hope he does get that award."



Dizon was presented with the "Buffalo Heart Award" after playing his final game at Folsom Field. The award honors the senior on the team who the fans believe has best exemplified heart, grit, determination and desire during their CU career.

"It has been a roller-coaster. A lot of ups, a lot of downs," Dizon said of his career. "We had a lot of bright spots and spots we wish we could take back. In any season, except for the Patriots, you're going to get that. It's the ability to rise up, the ability to rally and get back in the groove of things that shows the strength of a team."

CU's defense gave up 393 yards and 35 points to Nebraska in the first half before Hawkins gave the team an inspirational pep talk and the defensive coaches adjusted with a zone defense.

Jimmy Smith got the Buffs back in the game by taking his first career interception back for a touchdown to pull CU to within 35-31 with 10:26 remaining in the third quarter. Lionel Harris intercepted another Joe Ganz offering moments later to set up a Hugh Charles touchdown that give the home team a 38-35 lead a little over two minutes later.

And Dizon recovered a punt after it was blocked by fellow senior Alonzo Barrett, setting up another short touchdown drive for the offense to cap a 20-0 third quarter for CU.

"I've never seen in my four years a comeback like that. Not only a comeback, but a big margin of victory after being down like that," Dizon said. "Those guys played their hearts out and they've been my brothers and my family for the last four years. It has been my pleasure and my honor playing for them and being a leader with them for the last couple years."

Aloha will not mean goodbye for Dizon quite yet if the Buffs (6-6) are invited to a bowl game.



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# Bufs bowl over Huskers

## Big second half nets win, bowl eligibility for CU

By Kyle Ringo

Saturday, November 24, 2007

When the Colorado Buffaloes scored 62 points to beat Nebraska in 2001, it was the most an opponent ever had managed against the Cornhuskers.

Six seasons after that historic romp, CU dropped a 65-51 loss on the Huskers on Friday in Folsom Field. It ranked as only the third-most points given up by Nebraska and the just second-most this season.

There is no more prominent evidence of how far the once-mighty Big Red has fallen. Although they have been inconsistent all year, the Buffs appear to be headed in the opposite direction.

"This win really boosts the program, it boosts next year and gives the fans and the community something to look forward to," senior running back Hugh Charles said after rushing for 169 yards and three scores in his final game in Boulder.

Colorado fans have bragging rights for a year after watching their team dismantle a defensively challenged rival in the wildest game in the history of the 109-year-old series. It was the highest-scoring game in the series and the second-highest-scoring in CU history, in terms of both the number of combined points (116) and those the Buffs scored.

The game was the longest non-overtime contest in school history at 3 hours, 56 minutes.

CU sent the Huskers home without a bowl game for the second time in four years while earning bowl-eligibility for itself at 6-6 over all 4-4 in the Big 12 Conference. It also might have pounded the final nail in a Nebraska coaching staff's coffin for the second time in the past five seasons. Coach Bill Callahan, rumored to be on the way out for months, is expected to learn his fate today when he meets with interim athletic director Tom Osborne to discuss the 5-7 season.

"Beating Nebraska at home on Senior Day is big and hopefully we will have an opportunity to play another game," CU coach Dan Hawkins said.

The Buffs may not know if they will play in a bowl game and which game that might be until next weekend, when conference championships are decided and bowls begin to finalize their selections.

The Buffs, wearing all-black uniforms, earned Hawkins his 100th coaching victory. They carried a message on T-shirts worn beneath their jerseys and shoulder pads. The shirts read "The Real Black Shirts", a reference to past Nebraska defenses. The Buffs displayed them proudly on the field and in interviews afterward.

It was retaliation by the Buffs for shirts worn by Nebraska players two years earlier during their previous trip to Boulder. The Huskers shirts that day read "Restore the Order."

While the Buffs had the last laugh Friday, neither team's defenders played at a level that would necessitate a nickname, much less one with the history of the Black Shirts.

The Buffs gave up 51 points and 610 total yards of offense. But the defense stiffened in the second half, bucking a season-long trend of poor third quarters. Two weeks after falling apart at Iowa State and relinquishing a 21-0 lead in the third quarter, CU scored 20 points in the third quarter.

The turning point came just after halftime when redshirt freshman cornerback Jimmy Smith intercepted a pass from NU quarterback Joe Ganz and returned it 31 yards for a touchdown. Safety Lionel Harris intercepted Ganz on the next possession and CU scored four plays later.

The Buffs forced the Husker to punt on the ensuing possession and senior Alonzo Barrett blocked the kick, giving the offense the ball at the Nebraska 25-yard line leading to Charles' third touchdown of the day.

By the end of the quarter, the Buffs had turned an 11-point halftime deficit into a nine-point edge. CU defenders said coach Ron Collins asked them what they wanted to change at halftime and they chose to play their base defense with more zone coverages. It worked to confuse the Huskers.

"The most redeeming thing for me was that we were down at halftime and struggling a little bit to stop them, and then coming out in the second half and showing incredible resolve," Hawkins said.

Colorado rolled up 518 yards of total offense behind the best performance of the season from an offensive line led by seniors Edwin Harrison and Tyler Polumbus. Quarterback Cody Hawkins completed 17 of 29 passes for 241 yards and two touchdowns. He also scored on a designed running play in the red zone.

"When you're sitting at home for the holidays watching everybody else play, it's definitely a bummer," Cody Hawkins said after his first victory over NU. "Instead of singing Christmas carols, you're saying 'Coulda, woulda, shoulda.'"

"We want to win the bowl game now because finishing with a winning record is very important to us."



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# Charles in charge: 169 yards, 3 TDs

## Ellis adds 34 yards, 1 TD in seniors' home finale

By Ryan Thorburn

Saturday, November 24, 2007

It wasn't quite Chris Brown vs. Nebraska good.

But the smiles on the faces of Colorado senior running backs Hugh Charles and Byron Ellis after the Buffs' 65-51 victory over the Cornhuskers on Friday at Folsom Field were very similar.

Charles carried the ball 18 times for 169 yards and three touchdowns, and Ellis added four carries for 34 yards, including a 28-yard touchdown with 1:23 remaining to cap their final home game.

"It was fitting for those guys and their careers to have a big game like this against Nebraska," CU running backs coach Darian Hagan said. "For both those guys to get in the end zone like they did, it was special for me to see that."

Brown set a program record with his six touchdowns during CU's 62-36 victory over Nebraska in 2001. The "Blackshirts" allowed 277 net yards rushing and six rushing touchdowns this time, as Dusty Sprague and Cody Hawkins also scored.

"I've had to fight through a lot. I've had to overcome a lot and prove myself after every week," Charles said. "I've learned a lot of lessons. You have to keep fighting and never give up."

The coaching staff wanted Charles to eclipse the 1,000-yard mark rushing for the season, but he was taken out of the game and finished with 989 after running out of bounds a couple of times in the final minutes.

"It was sort of like the girlfriend you get and the first time you kiss her you don't know what to do," Hagan said. "He had 18 yards to get it and he started gassing and running out of bounds instead of doing what he was doing the whole game. He had never been in that situation before."

CU does not count bowl stats in its official records. So Charles finishes his career with 2,659 yards rushing (sixth all-time) and 3,211 yards from scrimmage (fifth all-time).

Brown (2,690) remains fifth on the Buffs' career rushing list.

"It means a lot more to me now that it did then," Charles said of beating the Huskers, something he was also able to experience as a freshman in 2004. "Especially with this new program. It really boosts the program and boosts next year."

Hagan and Charles didn't always see eye-to-eye, but the relationship ended on a very positive note after

the pupil's 11th 100-yard performance.

"He's hard-headed like me," Hagan said with a smile. "I'm going to miss him and his dedication and what him and Byron brought to our meeting room. That calm, veteran savvy ... we're going to miss that."

Ellis and Charles have been friends since they met on a recruiting visit to Boulder.

"It feels great to finish like that in front of the home crowd," Ellis said. "We played awesome today, and you can't ask for more as a senior."



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# Now, Buffs forced to play waiting game for bowl bid

By Kyle Ringo  
Saturday, November 24, 2007

Colorado football fans who didn't get to see the Buffs play Arizona State in Tempe, Ariz., back in September might get a second chance to visit Sun Devil Stadium on New Year's Eve at the Insight Bowl.

The Buffs became bowl eligible Friday with a 65-51 win over rival Nebraska at Folsom Field, giving them a 6-6 overall record. An Insight Bowl representative was on hand Friday, the second time this season an Insight representative has watched the Buffs. The bowl has the sixth choice from Big 12 Conference schools and will match that pick against a Big Ten Conference opponent.

Fiesta Bowl vice president of communications Shawn Schoeffler, who also works for the Insight Bowl, said the Buffs would be an attractive choice when the bowl makes its pick next weekend. CU has a large alumni base in Arizona and Southern California, which is within driving distance.

The Buffs had approximately 7,000 fans at Sun Devil Stadium in September when they lost to Arizona State.

"They are definitely a team on our list," Schoeffler said. "We've had them before and we've had them at the Fiesta Bowl.

"We have to wait and see how the rest of the regular season goes. We need to see what works best for our local market and also try to create a compelling national matchup as well."

Schoeffler said the Insight will also be considering teams such as Kansas State, Texas A&M and Oklahoma State for its bowl.

The Buffs are not guaranteed a bowl game with a 6-6 record, but if the Big 12 receives two bids to Bowl Championship Series games, it would have more than enough available bowls. Other potential games for the Buffs are the Dec. 30 Independence Bowl in Shreveport, La., against a team from the Southeastern Conference; or the Dec. 28 Texas Bowl in Houston against a Conference USA team.

CU coach Dan Hawkins said his team deserves a bowl invitation, based on finishing with a .500 record against a strong schedule that features at least six bowl teams.

"We played tough against a lot of teams that are going to go to bowl games," Hawkins said. "Given the schedule we've played, I think this team deserves to go to a bowl game."

**Cartman handles**

## **introductions**

CU alums Trey Parker and Matt Stone, creators of the cartoon series South Park on Comedy Central, agreed to create a short animation for Friday's pregame introductions of CU players aired by ABC.

The animation featured Eric Cartman, a popular character from the show. Here is some of what Cartman has to say while introducing the Buffs.

"Cody Hawkins is the quarterback 'cause he's the coach's son, so he can do whatever he wants. ... The defensive line is led by George 'The Rabid Goldfish' Hypolite. He's not really called the rabid goldfish. I just made that up. ... Colorado has awesome linebackers and Jordon Dizon is the latest. He's sure to win the Butkus Award cause he's the biggest butt kisser I know."

Within several hours of the start of the game, the introductions could be found on Youtube.com.

## **Fine freshman**

Colorado does not include bowl statistics in its official stats. The policy will prevent redshirt freshman quarterback Cody Hawkins from reaching the 3,000-yard mark in passing yards this season. But Hawkins still left his name in the record books in 2007 and managed to avoid the interception record, by throwing just one in his final four games.

Hawkins finished the year with 2,693 yards passing and 19 touchdowns. He completed 239 of 424 passes, setting a school record for attempts. He finished with the second most completions in the program's history and the fourth most touchdowns.

## **Barrett blocked punt**

Senior defensive end Alonzo Barrett blocked his second punt of the season during the Buffs' pivotal third-quarter run. Barrett blocked a punt against Missouri three weeks ago as well. He has the only two blocked kicks this season for CU.

"Some teams just don't play the whole play to the end," Barrett said. "I'm going to come after it. I'm going to make the most of every opportunity I get."

Barrett will undergo minor arthroscopic knee surgery this week to clean up a lingering problem and should be available to play if the Buffs receive a bowl invitation.

## **Attendance jumps**

The announced attendance at Friday's game was 51,403, the fifth crowd of the season numbering more than 50,000 at Folsom Field.

CU increased total attendance at its six home games this season by a total of 26,765 fans, based on attendance numbers reported in the press box during games. The Buffs attracted 303,051 fans to Folsom Field in 2007, up from 276,286 in 2006.

The season opener at Invesco Field also was technically a CU home game, though both teams in that contest are responsible for selling seats.

## Notable

Ralphie IV ran before Friday's game after plenty of speculation that Ralphie V would make her debut. Ralphie IV carried a bib reading "Thanks Hank" a message to outgoing CU President Hank Brown. Ralphie's handlers also wore different shirts representing each version worn during her tenure. ... When Kevin Eberhart missed an extra point attempt in the third quarter, it ended a streak of 92 consecutive made extra points for CU. ... Nebraska's 610 yards of total offense were the most allowed by CU since giving up 639 to Missouri in 1984. ... Scotty McKnight set freshman receiving records with 43 catches for 488 yards. He is the first freshman wide receiver to lead the team in receiving. ... Jimmy Smith became the 14th player in school history to return the first interceptions of his career for a touchdown.



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sports

## Buffaloes walking on air

CU 65, NEBRASKA 51

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

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The Buffs' Hugh Charles makes a statement as he is carried around Folsom Field atop fans' shoulders Friday. (Helen H. Richardson, The Denver Post)

**BOULDER** — Colorado senior running back Hugh Charles didn't walk off Folsom Field for the last time on Friday.

Jubilant Buffaloes fans hoisted Charles on their

shoulders and made sure he felt as special as his performance in Colorado's 65-51 victory over Nebraska. Charles rushed 33 times for 169 yards and scored three second-half touchdowns as the Buffs rallied from an 11-point halftime deficit. Charles took off his shoulder pads, revealing a T-shirt reading: "The Real Black Shirts" — referring to the nickname of the Nebraska defense. Departing from its usual look, Colorado wore black pants to go with its black jerseys.

"I've been waiting for a moment like this," Charles said. "When I came here as a freshman (from

### Colorado Football

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Keller, Texas), I didn't know what this rivalry meant."

A crowd of 51,403 braved 20-degree temperatures and watched Colorado (6-6, 4-4 Big 12) snap a two-game losing streak. The Buffaloes defeated Nebraska for the first time since a 26-20 win in Lincoln in 2004 and gained bowl eligibility with a sixth victory. Bowl bids will be announced Dec. 2.

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"Given the schedule that we played, I think that this team deserves to go to a bowl game," said CU coach Dan Hawkins, who inspired his team with an emotional halftime speech.

"He said, 'Get that glazed look out of our eyes; I want to see that steely-eyed look,' " senior linebacker Jordon Dizon said. "We were fired up. We were ready to go. I've never in my four years here saw a comeback like that."

The 116 combined points were the most in the series' 66 games. The teams combined for 1,128 yards.

Nebraska (5-7, 2-6) also needed a victory to gain bowl eligibility. The Huskers may have played under coach Bill Callahan for the final time. Nebraska interim athletic director and coaching legend Tom Osborne is scheduled to meet Saturday with the Nebraska coaching staff.

Down 35-24 at halftime, Colorado got back in the game when redshirt freshman cornerback Jimmy Smith returned an interception 31 yards for a touchdown on a third-down pass by Joe Ganz with 10:26 left in the third quarter.

On the ensuing possession, CU senior safety Lionel Harris returned an interception 32 yards after the ball bounced off the hands of Nebraska wide receiver Nate Swift on a third-and-12 pass from the Huskers' 9. A holding penalty against Colorado returned the ball back to the 33, but the Buffs went the distance in four plays, with Charles getting the last 9 yards on a run off left tackle.

Colorado then forced Nebraska into yet another mistake. Defensive end Alonzo Barrett, one of many CU seniors playing well in his final home game, blocked a Dan Titchener punt with 6:30 left in the third quarter. A 22-yard pass from Cody Hawkins to Dusty Sprague set up a 1-yard touchdown run by Charles.

CU padded its lead to 51-35 with a 10-play, 84-yard march culminating in a 10-yard touchdown pass from Hawkins to Scotty McKnight with 14:32 remaining in the game.

Nebraska's beefy offensive line gave Ganz ample protection in the first half. That put more pressure on a CU secondary that, for the second straight game, was missing its best cover cornerback, senior Terrence Wheatley.

Wheatley is tied for second among Big 12 players in interceptions with five. Without him, Colorado's defense struggled to make stops. That was evident when Nebraska needed just four plays to move 71 yards for a touchdown with 23 seconds left in the first half, seizing back the momentum after Colorado had pulled to within 28-24 on an 11-yard touchdown pass from Cody Hawkins to Tyson DeVree.

"When Nebraska came back and scored, I just thought, we'll have to win, no matter how many points we have to score. 65-51 sounds good to me," Cody Hawkins said.

Hawkins finished with 17-for-29 passing for 241 yards and two touchdowns. He did not throw an interception and was not sacked.

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The coaches didn't waste any time in pulling out a bag of tricks. CU's first play from scrimmage was an end-around by Sprague, and Sprague later ran untouched on a 4-yard TD run, going left-to-right from where he set up as a wide receiver.

Nebraska called a reverse to wideout Frantz Hardy on the first play of its second possession.

A quarterback draw might have been the most surprising call — at least to the Nebraska defense. Hawkins scored on a 5-yard run for CU's first touchdown, catching Husker defenders off guard on third-and-goal with a run between the guards. Hawkins' third rushing touchdown of the season put the Buffs up 10-7 with 7:21 remaining in the first quarter.

In addition to running for two scores, Ganz threw for 484 yards and four touchdowns. But Colorado converted his three interceptions into 21 points — the last a short run by Charles after Cha'pelle Brown returned his pick 51 yards to the 2 with 4:20 remaining in the game.

"It's a real tough way to end a difficult season," Callahan said. "I'm going to wake up tomorrow and deal with whatever I have to deal with."

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or  
[tkensler@denverpost.com](mailto:tkensler@denverpost.com)

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## Down 11 at half? No big worries

The comeback to crush the Huskers is a nice send-off for what coach Hawkins calls "a special team."

By Terry Frei  
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — With many students out of town for Thanksgiving break, and perhaps because of the cold, the on-field celebration Friday was surprisingly restrained after Colorado finished off its wild 65-51 victory over Nebraska at Folsom Field.

But the comeback from a 35-24 halftime deficit was a splashy way to bow out — at least at home — for the 15 seniors listed on the Buffs' roster.

"I've never seen, in my four years, a comeback like that," linebacker Jordon Dizon said. "And not only a comeback, but a big-margin win after being down after the first half."

In the wake of Colorado injuries, five seniors — tackle Tyler Polumbus, guard Edwin Harrison, tailback Hugh Charles, defensive end Alonzo

Barrett and Dizon — were in the starting lineups for the win that made CU bowl-eligible at 6-6 and most

### Colorado Football

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likely extended its season for one more game.

"I kind of told them in the locker room I've had a lot of special teams to me over the years," second-year CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "People always think 13-1 (at Boise State). But I'm not sure that this team here hasn't endeared itself to me as much as anybody I've ever coached. For all the things that they've been through, before I got here, and just despite last year, the way it went. And even some of the highs and lows of this year. Just continuing to kind of hang in there and keep coming.

"I think that's a credit to those guys, for all the change and turmoil that they've gone through, to see it through. I think that's an important message in football, and an important message in life, to keep coming, set your sights high, do the right things, and keep banging away on the sidewalk. You'll get there. It never happens as fast as anybody wants."

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Charles ran for 169 yards on 33 carries in the victory, putting him at 989 for the season. [com](#)  
Because CU is one of the few programs in the country that doesn't count bowl games in its statistics, he will end up 11 yards short — at least in school annals — of 1,000 for the season.

"I got word late there that he was close to the 1,000-yard barrier," Hawkins said.

"Unfortunately, we weren't able to get him there, but he did a nice job, and our offensive line did a nice job in chipping away."

On a day when the Buffaloes allowed 51 points and 610 yards of total offense, Dizon — with a young and injury-depleted cast around him — was listed with 14 solo tackles and four assists.

The catch was that Nebraska's final two scoring drives, accounting for 126 yards, came in the last four minutes, after the game was out of reach.

Dizon said that exiting Folsom Field on a high note "means a bunch. Not only for the seniors, but for themselves and this program, for Coach Hawk."

On the cover of some game-plan information handed out to the players, the CU staff had placed a likeness of Uncle Sam pointing, with the following message: "I WANT YOU, BOWL GAME 2007."

Barring a surprise, the Buffs answered the call.

Terry Frei: 303-954-1895 or [tfrei@denverpost](mailto:tfrei@denverpost).

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Longmont, Colorado  
Friday, November 30, 2007

DAILY TIMES-CALL

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## Black (& gold) Friday

Bufs break loose for 41 second-half points to rip Cornhuskers

*By Patrick Ridgell*

*Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — The Colorado Buffaloes were reeling Friday at halftime after the Nebraska Cornhuskers had spent most of the first half running roughshod at Folsom Field. But what happened in their quiet locker room during that 20-minute break might have turned 2007 into a memorable season.

CU overcame an 11-point halftime deficit to beat Nebraska, 65-51, before 51,403 people on a cold, gray day. The Buffs, at 6-6, are eligible for postseason play, and at 4-4 in league play, they finish third in the Big 12 North.

They trailed, 35-24, at the break and appeared overmatched against an offense that totaled 610 yards Friday. But in the third quarter, one in which CU struggled for most of 2007, the Buffs turned it around thanks to interceptions by Jimmy Smith and Lionel Harris, plus a blocked punt by Alonzo Barrett. Smith returned his for the quarter's first score. The other two led to touchdowns.

Why the about face? CU coaches, who must have been flustered by Nebraska's first-half track meet, sought advice from the players, asking them the best way to improve on defense. The coaches told them the next 30 minutes would define who they are in 2007.

So defensive tackle George Hypolite said to simplify the defense, which allowed 257 yards in the second quarter. The players wanted more zone coverage and less man-to-man. In a game where just a little bit of defense could change things, it worked well.

"This is the kind of game where we would try anything," Hypolite said. "It wasn't that our calls weren't working; it was that we weren't executing on the field."

"We came in and said, 'Let's run our base stuff.' If they were going to beat us, we were going to go out doing what we do, what we've done all year. It kind of worked out."

Said defensive coordinator Ron Collins: "The bottom line was guys made plays in the second half, and that's what we talked about before the game and what we talked about at halftime: We need to get some turnovers. You look at the games we've won, we've gotten some turnovers at opportunity times. And they did that."

Nebraska quarterback Joe Ganz threw 58 passes, completing 31, for 484 yards and four scores. But his three interceptions stole Nebraska's momentum. CU committed no turnovers.

"It was my fault," Ganz said. "I feel like I let them back in the game."

CU scored the first five touchdowns of the second half to go ahead, 58-35, with 4 minutes, 16 seconds to play. Cha'pelle Brown set up the final one when he picked off Ganz and returned the ball 51 yards to the 2-yard line. Senior Hugh Charles, playing his final game in Boulder, scored his third touchdown on the next play.

Charles ran 33 times for 169 yards.



Colorado tailback Hugh Charles celebrates his 9-yard touchdown run in the third quarter Friday against Nebraska at Folsom Field. Charles ran for 169 yards and three TDs in the Buffs' 65-51 win.

Joshua Buck/Times-Call

“We, in the second half, hit them in the mouth, and those guys started hanging their heads,” CU running back coach Darian Hagan said.

Nebraska played what’s expected to be its final game under coach Bill Callahan. CU coach Dan Hawkins called Callahan’s behavior while virtual vultures circled overhead in recent weeks “classy.” Callahan refused to speculate on his future, but interim athletic director Tom Osborne is expected to make a change.

Three former CU coaches work on Callahan’s staff, including offensive coordinator Shawn Watson, who worked in Boulder from 1999 to 2005. CU linebacker coach Brian Cabral embraced Watson on the field after the game and told him things would be OK.

“It’s hard to see those guys in that tough situation,” Cabral said. “They’re good coaches.”

CU’s immediate future is brighter: On Dec. 2, it should officially receive a bowl bid. It also basks today in the aftermath of a regular season that includes wins over Colorado State, Oklahoma and Nebraska. The Buffs hadn’t beaten Nebraska and Oklahoma in the same year since 1990.

Several CU seniors made key contributions, including Charles’ effort and Barrett’s blocked punt. Charles’ 33 receiving yards and another 125 returning kicks gave him 327 all-purpose yards. Receiver Dusty Sprague rushed six times for 48 yards and kept the Cornhuskers defense off balance with end-arounds and reverses. Tyson DeVree caught four passes for 51 yards and a touchdown.

And Butkus finalist Jordon Dizon, making one last statement for voters before a national television audience, made 18 tackles, 14 solo.

“That was the most dominating half I’ve ever played in,” he said about CU’s play after halftime.

Dizon spoke amid gleeful fans who had rushed the field and swarmed players.

He wasn’t alone. Charles was carried off the field on fans’ shoulders, and Hypolite conducted the band. He did that after the Buffs beat Oklahoma.

“This is awesome,” Sprague said. “You couldn’t have written it up any better.”

Said quarterback Cody Hawkins: “It means a lot — for the seniors, for the program. This team’s been through a lot this year.”

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



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## **Buffs' simple plan works wonders**

*By Justin Williams*

*Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — The Colorado Buffaloes faced more than one daunting task when they came out of the halftime locker room Friday afternoon.

Not only did they trail Nebraska — a team that had just put up nearly 400 yards of offense in two quarters — by 11 points; the Buffs also faced their horrific third-quarter trend.

Entering the game, Colorado had been outscored, 123-59, in third quarters this season. Winnable games against Arizona State, Kansas State and Iowa State all took drastic turns after halftime and ended in losses.

But the Buffs didn't let it happen again.

Coach Dan Hawkins "got after us for a little bit," CU linebacker Jordon Dizon of the locker-room speech.

Thanks in large part to a different defensive mindset, the Buffaloes quickly turned their halftime deficit into a nine-point lead.

"We knew we could do it, and it's about how you want to be remembered with this team," CU receiver Dusty Sprague said.

The Buffs had no answer for Nebraska quarterback Joe Ganz in the first half. The junior did it with his arm and his legs, which forced the Buffs to make most of their adjustments on the defensive side at halftime.

"We just went back to our base defense," freshman cornerback Jimmy Smith said. "Coach said, 'What do you guys want to play?' George Hypolite was like, 'Let's play our base defense.'"

So the Buffs simplified everything, and it paid off.

On Nebraska's first possession of the second half, Smith returned an interception for a touchdown. On the Cornhuskers' next offensive play, safety Lionel Harris picked off another Ganz pass to set up a CU touchdown.

Nebraska's next series ended with Alonzo Barrett blocking a punt, and the Buffs quickly turned that mishap into a TD as well.

Colorado never trailed again.

CU quarterback Cody Hawkins said much of the Buffs' third-quarter troubles this season were due to an inexperienced team across the board.

"The third quarter is kind of tough, just because when you are making adjustments and you are coming out and practically starting the game all over again, it might be a little tough for these young guys," he said. "But I think the energy at this halftime was just awesome. I think everyone just believed in what we were doing, and that helped a lot coming out in the second half."



Now, with a bowl bid likely for the 6-6 Buffaloes, the question will be whether they started a new trend or whether their youth will show through again.

"Our guys have done a nice job coming along in this whole deal and continued to battle through all of the injuries and young guys and ups and downs," Dan Hawkins said. "I think they're really learning the things they need to learn to be ... long-term successful people and a football team."

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## Fan recognition special to Dizon

*By Patrick Ridgell*

*Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Jordon Dizon didn't need some award to prove he's got a lot of heart. But the one given him Friday following Colorado's 65-51 defeat of Nebraska is something to behold.

Dizon, a Butkus Award finalist and CU's leading tackler, received the Buffalo Heart Award, which comes from fans. It goes to the senior who fans believe has showed the best heart, grit, determination and desire during his CU career. Dizon is the second linebacker and fourth defender to win it.

"It means a lot to me," he said. "I was brought here to play football, and I've just been doing what they tell me to do for four years."

Dizon made 18 tackles, 14 solo, on Friday. All figures are unofficial until coaches calculate the totals from game tape. If Dizon's numbers stand, he'll finish his career with 295 solo stops, the program's most, and 442 overall, the third most. That's one ahead of former Longmont High star Greg Biekert.

In 2008, CU faces the daunting task of replacing Dizon.

"You don't replace a Butkus Award winner," said defensive tackle George Hypolite, who wishes he had a vote on the Butkus committee.

Linebacker coach Brian Cabral said he wore in tribute to Dizon a lava lava, which is a cloth worn like a kilt or skirt. Head coach Dan Hawkins suggested Cabral do so.

"Once he tossed the idea out there, I jumped on it," he said.

Cabral also wore a Hawaiian lei, which came from Dizon's mother.

The only other time Cabral wore a lava lava was at the 1998 Aloha Bowl in Honolulu, which the Buffs won.

"We'll miss him a lot; you always miss your best players," Cabral said of Dizon. "But it's his senior year, and he moves on, and we'll have to move on."

BOWL TALK: CU's best bowl bets are the Texas (Dec. 28), the Independence (Dec. 30) and the Insight (Dec. 31). The Big 12 has eight bowl-eligible teams. Kansas State could become the ninth today.

With the success of Missouri and Kansas, the league hopes to place two teams in BCS bowls. The Big 12 has deals with seven non-BCS bowls and another deal with the Gator Bowl that states it must select a Big 12 team twice over the next three postseasons, including 2007.

The Insight Bowl, which is in Tempe, Ariz., has the sixth selection of Big 12 programs. The Independence is seventh, and the Texas is eighth. Insight Bowl president John Junker said CU is one team that he and its committee are considering. The other team in the Insight Bowl will come from the Big Ten.



CU linebacker Jordon Dizon scoops up a blocked Nebraska punt in the third quarter at Folsom Field. Dizon returned it to the Huskers' 25-yard line, leading to a touchdown for the Buffs. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

"Coach Hawkins has done a very fine job," Junker said this week. "And if they become bowl eligible this year, it's a great story."

"We are very careful not to judge any teams yet until all the evidence is in. But we have a great relationship with the people there."

The Independence Bowl, in Shreveport, La., will pit a Big 12 team against one from the SEC. Chairman Joe Darwin said this week that Arkansas vs. CU would be an attractive game, but that was before Arkansas beat No. 1 LSU on Friday.

Darwin said his bowl might also look at Kansas State or Oklahoma State, but it had Oklahoma State in its 2006 game. Darwin said matchups are the most important consideration for the Independence Bowl's committee.

"If Colorado wins, the Insight Bowl may take them and they may be available to us," Darwin said.

The Texas Bowl, in Houston, is hopeful it gets to choose a Big 12 program, which would be pitted against a team from Conference USA. Director David Brady said he expects to invite the University of Houston to play in the bowl, barring upsets.

INJURY REPORT: Defensive end Alonzo Barrett will have arthroscopic knee surgery Tuesday to clean up some "chronic stuff," CU reported. He's expected to be available for a bowl.

Cornerback Terrence Wheatley is listed as questionable for the postseason. He missed the game with a broken foot. He said this week he expected to be available for a bowl.

"Another game is great," Wheatley said Friday. "You don't want to end your career No. 1 with a loss and No. 2 not even playing."

Hypolite played Friday on what he said was a hamstring he hurt a little bit in practice.

VERY FUNNY: "South Park" creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone, CU alums, had one of their characters, Eric Cartman, introduce CU's starting lineup for ABC's telecast. It's already a YouTube hit, and it went like this:

"Here's our offensive skill guys ... Cody Hawkins is the quarterback cuz he's the coach's son so he can do whatever he wants. Hugh Charles is our top running back and he weighs 190 pounds, just like me. The offensive line is led by senior tackle Tyler Polumbus. He's really good at being offensive. He offends just about everyone. All the time.

"The defensive front is led by George "The Rabid Goldfish" Hypolite. He's not really called The Rabid Goldfish; I just made that up. Colorado has awesome linebackers, and Jordon Dizon is the latest. ... He's sure to win the Butkus Award ... cuz he's the biggest butt kisser I know. In the secondary, Terrence Wheatley has more interceptions than Boulder has hippies ... and Boulder has a lot of hippies."

EXTRA POINTS: Hugh Charles had 169 rushing yards to finish with 2,659, placing him sixth in program history. CU does not count bowl statistics among season or career numbers. He had his 11th 100-yard rushing game and finished 2007 with 989 yards, his single-season best. ... Quarterback Cody Hawkins went 17-for-29 for 241 yards and two touchdowns. In 2007, he had 2,693 passing yards, 19 touchdowns and 15 interceptions. He finished the season with 70 straight passes that weren't intercepted. He finished one shy of tying the school's single-season mark for interceptions. ... Dan Hawkins recorded his 100th career coaching win. ... Receiver Dusty Sprague had his first rushing touchdown.