



## CU Football report

By B.G. Brooks

Wednesday, November 28, 2007

In 2004, the Big 12 Conference's coaches recognized a good young player on first glance, choosing Colorado linebacker **Jordon Dizon** as the league's defensive freshman of the year.

Three years later, Dizon remains even easier to spot. On Tuesday, the coaches honored him with the Big 12 Defensive Player of the Year Award. Also given first-team berths on the coaches' all-conference team were CU's **George Hypolite** (defensive tackle) and **Terrence Wheatley** (cornerback).

CU coach **Dan Hawkins** said Dizon, of Kauai, Hawaii, ranks among the best linebackers he has coached, adding, "Good things happen to good people, and he's one of them. He had a very solid year; he should win the Butkus, too."

Dizon is one of three finalists for the prestigious Butkus Award.

Assessing his season, Dizon said: "I did what I had to do. I had some great coaches behind me and a great D-line in front of me. It was awesome for (league coaches) to show that respect to me. Not that I'm the best player out there, but it just shows they recognize that I'm a good player."

Dizon finished as the Big 12's leading tackler (160, 120 solo) but said he missed another "20 or 30. . . . As a senior leader, I needed to minimize my mistakes."

### Lubbock a blur

Forgive **Cody Hawkins** if he spent a little more time in the film room reviewing CU's 31-26 win at Texas Tech. After a rare scramble and helmet-to-helmet hit in the first quarter, Hawkins' recollection of the game (and weekend) faded.

"He was pretty much knocked out," Dan Hawkins said.

Talking with close friend/receiver **Scotty McKnight** on the sideline, Cody Hawkins said he was thinking about "board games." The fog didn't lift for "a couple of days."

Nonetheless, he completed 16-of-27 passes for 132 yards and two touchdowns. Plus, it was his first CU game without an interception.

Hawkins finished the season without an interception in his last 70 attempts -had he thrown one more, he would have tied the school record with 16 in a season. He said his father used "body language" to make him aware the dubious mark was within reach.

"If I got it, there would be no Christmas presents," Cody Hawkins said.

### Begin the bowl work

The Buffaloes don't know their bowl destination, but they'll begin work for the postseason Saturday, with about half their 17 practices scheduled on campus.

CU's postseason possibilities appear to be the Insight Bowl (Dec. 31, Tempe, Ariz.), Independence Bowl (Dec. 30, Shreveport, La.) or Texas Bowl (Dec. 27, Houston).

With a sizable alumni base in Southern California and the Phoenix area, CU's preferred destination would be Tempe, where about 7,500 Buffs fans attended the September game against Arizona State.

### **Numbers game**

424**passing attempts** by Cody Hawkins set a school record. His 239 completions were the second most in CU history.

### **He said it**

**"I don't think, as a father, he wanted to cut my head off, but as a quarterback, there were a couple of times."**

**Cody Hawkins**, on dad's assessment of his son's redshirt-freshman season

### **Etc.**

\* Dan Hawkins said CU's scholarship total could be "a little more" than the 18 originally mentioned.

\* Asked if he anticipated having all his coaches back for 2008, Hawkins said, "I hope so. . . . We've got a good, respected staff." He said six of his assistants could have left after last season for positions at other schools that paid more.

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# Dizon tabbed Big 12's best on defense

## Conference coaches honor CU linebacker

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, November 28, 2007

His passion for the game runs Pacific-Ocean deep.

No one on the Colorado sideline or in the Buffaloes' locker room would have questioned linebacker Jordon Dizon's heart prior to this season's home game against Missouri. It wasn't like Dizon had much left to prove in the 10th contest of a tenacious senior season.

But what players, coaches and members of the training staff watched Nov. 3 will probably forever define the spirit of the humble young man they have come to admire during his football career in Boulder.

Dizon, a Hawaiian native, had his bell rung at one point against the Tigers and was examined by team trainers on the sideline. They feared he might have suffered a mild concussion and told him he couldn't return to the game. They took his helmet.

Dizon swiped a replacement from walk-on teammate Bret Smith and ran back on the field. He had a job to finish, never mind that the Tigers were far ahead and the game had been decided. The final score was 55-10.

"That's just one small example of the passion that he has for the game," head trainer Miguel Rueda said Tuesday after everyone around the program learned Dizon had been named Big 12 Conference defensive player of the year. "That's the tip of the iceberg."

Dizon is the first Buff to win the honor voted on by the league's coaches. It would be a surprise if he does not earn the same award today from media members who cover the conference when the Associated Press team is announced.

"It means a lot," Dizon said. "It shows that there is a little respect there between me and them."

Missouri quarterback Chase Daniel was named offensive player of the year and Kansas coach Mark Mangino earned the coach of the year award. Senior cornerback Terrence Wheatley and junior defensive tackle George Hypolite also earned first-team recognition. Offensive lineman Tyler Polumbus earned second-team recognition and Hugh Charles, Kevin Eberhart, Edwin Harrison and Brandon Nicolas were honorable mention selections.

It was the second consecutive year Wheatley has earned the honor and he did so despite missing the final two regular season games with a broken bone in his foot.

Wheatley said he did some rehabilitation work in a campus swimming pool Tuesday and expects to be cleared to play within a week. Hypolite also played hurt last week against Nebraska but the Buffs should be back to full strength for a late-December bowl game.

The bowl game won't be the final contest in Dizon's and Wheatley's college careers. They both have been invited to play together in the 59th Senior Bowl Jan. 26, in Mobile, Ala., and Dizon hopes to play in the Hula Bowl at home in Hawaii on Jan. 12.

CU seniors also could be invited to the East-West Shrine game in Houston on Jan. 19.

As a fearless freshman in 2004, Dizon was once described by former coach Gary Barnett as "drinking from a fire hose" in his effort to learn the game when he came to CU. He earned the conference freshman defensive player of the year that season and is now one of three Big 12 players to win both honors during his college career.

"The guy has a relentless motor," coach Dan Hawkins said. "We always talk about playing hard, playing smart and having fun and he does that."

Dizon is the league's leading tackler with 160 total stops and a finalist for the Butkus Award given annually to the nation's best linebacker. He's a team captain who teammates say fit perfectly into the role this season.

Freshman quarterback Cody Hawkins said he learned how to lead the right way watching Dizon in the locker room this season. Hawkins said Dizon never took advantage of his position. If a teammate needed a pat on the back, Dizon provided it. If one required a kick in the butt, Dizon did that, too.

Dizon said he doesn't believe the honor he received Tuesday will impact whether he wins the Butkus Award. When asked if he exceeded his expectations this season he said he could have performed better.

"I mean, yeah, I got about 160-something tackles, but I missed about 20 or 30 tackles throughout the season," Dizon said. "So I could have had a 190-tackle season."

"So as far as my expectations go, I could have had a lot more success out there."

*Read about CU football on the Buffzone blog at*

*Buffzone.com.*



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# Hawk hopes to retain entire staff

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, November 28, 2007

Colorado football coach Dan Hawkins said as many as six of his assistants could have left the program last winter for better paying jobs around the country and he hopes to retain all of his assistants this offseason.

He might not know if that will happen for several months.

Hawkins hired a new offensive line coach last spring when former assistant Chris Strausser unexpectedly decided to return to Boise State. Hawkins hired Jeff Grimes away from Brigham Young to be his assistant head coach and offensive line coach and it seems to have worked out well.

Hawkins said he believes several of his assistants could be head coaches down the road.

"I will tell you this though, we have a very good staff, a very respected staff and I think we had probably maybe six of those guys who could have left for a lot more money last year," Hawkins said. "Hopefully we will get to return most if not all of those guys because I think that goes a long way to establishing continuity and familiarity with what is going on."

## Hitting the streets

Hawkins left town Tuesday afternoon to recruit and said his entire staff will be on the trail this week and next.

Hawkins said earlier this season that he expected to offer about 18 scholarships in the 2008 class. Tuesday he indicated that number could grow slightly.

Hawkins said he is already identifying possible walk-on candidates among players who might have other offers but really want to play at CU. He is a big proponent of using walk-ons and building a strong walk-on program.

Hawkins has been concerned about large gaps in the depth chart between experienced seniors and inexperienced freshman since he arrived at CU. He said he will be closer to fixing the problem when the 2008 class arrives next summer, but the holes won't be filled to his liking until the 2009 summer.

"You just don't want to have a lot of that on your depth chart where you go from a senior to a freshman or something to that extent," he said.

## Comedy central

Quarterback Cody Hawkins was in rare form Tuesday discussing his performance this season, wanting

to avoid setting the single-season interception mark (which he did) and other topics such as the few times his dad has been truly mad at him.

"There was one time when I was in second grade I discovered what prank phone calls were," he said. "I kept calling this jewelry store and telling them our house was on fire so they called back and my dad found out and he was not happy. I tried to hide under the bed but I guess parents think to look under there. I thought it was a brilliant place to hide. I can't tell you that (the punishment), I don't want to get in trouble."

Cody said coach Hawkins was only really upset with him on the field a couple times this fall. He mentioned one interception he threw in September against Miami (Ohio).

"That was a time he really looked through the back of my skull and roasted me with his laser-beam vision," Cody Hawkins said.

### **New guy in the room**

Hawkins was asked about Texas A&M hiring former Green Bay Packers coach Mike Sherman this week. The Buffs will play the Aggies in each of the next two seasons under the Big 12 rotation.

"Obviously he has tremendous experience, tremendous credentials and tremendous contacts down there," Hawkins said. "It will be one more barn-burner game, so strap it on. It's kind of a 'Who's Who of coaches,' so it'll be another tough game, a tough road on the Big 12 map."

### **Notable**

CU returns to the practice field Saturday morning and will find out about its bowl matchup Sunday. Hawkins said the team is tentatively scheduled for 17 bowl practices.



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cu football

## Top Big 12 award sacked by Dizon

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — After becoming the first Colorado player to be named Big 12 defensive player of the year by the league's coaches, senior linebacker Jordon Dizon took time Tuesday to reflect on his accomplishments.

"It means a lot," Dizon said. "I played against a lot of those coaches for the last four years. It's awesome that they showed that respect toward me."

Undersized for his position at 6-feet and 220 pounds, Dizon was joined on the coaches' all-Big 12 first team by senior cornerback Terrence Wheatley and junior defensive tackle George Hypolite.

A native Hawaiian, Dizon is also a finalist for the Butkus Award, which honors the nation's top linebacker. Dizon was recruited to CU as a fullback but was switched to linebacker during his first week on campus and quickly moved into the starting lineup. Good move. He

earned 2004 Big 12 defensive freshman of the year honors.

### Colorado Football

- Visit [the CU Stats Page](#) for boxscores, Big 12 standings, team leaders and more
- Visit [Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog](#) for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports

Unlike some schools, CU determines tackles after grading the game film on Sunday. Dizon leads the nation with 160 tackles. He also intercepted two passes and recorded 11 tackles for losses, including four sacks.

"The guy has a relentless motor," CU coach Dan Hawkins said.

Senior offensive tackle Tyler Polumbus was named to the all-Big 12 second team. Running back Hugh Charles, place-kicker Kevin Eberhart, offensive guard Edwin Harrison, defensive tackle Brandon Nicolas and Wheatley (as a returner on special teams) received honorable mention.

**Footnotes.** Colorado plans 17 bowl practices beginning with a workout Saturday. The Buffs might not know where they're headed until Sunday's official announcement, but it will be the Dec. 28 Texas Bowl in Houston; the Dec. 30 Independence Bowl in Shreveport, La.; or the Dec. 31 Insight Bowl in Tempe, Ariz. "Anywhere

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warm, someplace where I can wear my slippers (flip-flops) and not freeze my toes off," said Dizon, when asked his preference. Wheatley, who missed the final two games of the season with a foot injury, said he will return to full-speed workouts early next week. Gary Pinkel of Missouri and Mark Mangino of Kansas were named co-coaches of the year in voting by the media.

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DAILY TIMES-CALL

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## Dizon named Big 12's top defensive player

*By Patrick Ridgell*

*Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — The biggest trophy a linebacker can claim remains for Jordon Dizon to win, if he's so fortunate. But the award he received Tuesday is impressive.

Big 12 football coaches voted Dizon the conference's defensive player of the year in results announced Tuesday morning. Dizon, a senior, is the first Colorado player to win it, and he becomes the third player in Big 12 history to win its defensive player of the year and the defensive freshman of the year, which he won in 2004.

"It means a lot," Dizon said. "I played against a lot of these coaches for the last four years.

"It's awesome for them to show that respect for me. Not that I'm the best player out there, but it shows they recognize I'm a good player."

Said CU head coach Dan Hawkins: "It's very deserving. "It's one thing to sit here and say we all like our own guys. But I've had a lot of guys that see every football player in America come through here, and it's pretty much a unanimous call most of the time — the guy is the best linebacker in the country."

CU cornerback Terrence Wheatley and defensive tackle George Hypolite were voted first team all-league by the coaches, who could not vote for their own players. Offensive tackle Tyler Polumbus was a second-team pick. Running back Hugh Charles, kicker Kevin Eberhart, offensive lineman Edwin Harrison and defensive tackle Brandon Nicolas were honorable mention selections. Wheatley, who said his broken foot is feeling better and that he should be ready for full participation by Monday, was honorable mention as a kick returner.

According to Big 12 statistics, Dizon led the conference and ranked second nationally in tackles with 149. CU lists him at 160.

As he's done all season, Dizon credited Hypolite and Nicholas with occupying opposing blockers, enabling him to run free and make tackles.

"The core of our defense is Brandon Nicholas and George Hypolite," Dizon said. "They get things done out there."

Dizon leaves next week for Orlando, Fla., where college football's major postseason awards will be announced. Dizon is one of three finalists for the Butkus Award, which goes to the nation's best linebacker. The other finalists are Penn State's Dan Connor and Ohio State's James Laurinaitis.

Hawkins said Tuesday that Dizon "should be the Butkus guy." Dizon said winning the Butkus is not that important.

"If this is the end of the road, if this is where it stops, I'm happy where it is," he said.

"Other than that, it'd be nice to (win the Butkus), but I'd rather go out and win a bowl game and I'd rather have a bowl game so I can spend another three or four weeks with these guys I call brothers and family."

Dizon will graduate in May with a degree in economics. He said he'll stay in Boulder this spring to finish his courses.

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DAILY TIMES-CALL

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## Hawkins hopes for better sophomore season

*By Patrick Ridgell  
Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Don't ask Cody Hawkins about the Texas Tech game. He's a little fuzzy on what happened.

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins revealed Tuesday that his son Cody, the starting quarterback, didn't remember the rest of the game following a first-quarter hit he took. It bloodied his nose and left Cody on the sidelines talking about board games and other things that didn't apply to Texas Tech on Oct. 27.

That little bit of information came out while the coach talked about Cody's evolution as a freshman quarterback in 2007. Hawkins finished the regular season with 2,693 passing yards, 19 touchdowns and 15 interceptions. None of his final 70 passes were intercepted, but he finished one shy of tying the school's single-season mark for interceptions.

Cody Hawkins said he knew if he broke the interception mark, he wouldn't receive any Christmas gifts. His father delivered that warning with a glare.

Hawkins was 10th in the Big 12 in passing efficiency, at 117.4. But that episode Oct. 27 at Texas Tech stood out Tuesday when the coach assessed the quarterback's work.

"That's pretty tough right there," Dan Hawkins said.

"I've been really proud of how he's handled being the coach's kid and being under fire at some points, or on the other side of it, people being overly excited about his play. I think he's been very good about being stable the whole time.

"We all have a long ways to go, but I think in general he did a decent job for us."

Cody said he had to read the card on his wrist to follow the plays CU called against Texas Tech.

"I couldn't remember practicing any of those plays during the week," he said.

Hawkins said his command of the offense improved as the season passed, and that's one reason why he managed to go 70 passes without an interception in November. But he wants more next year.

"I had a lot of fun, but my productivity could have been a lot higher," Cody said.

"Hindsight is always 20/20. You're wondering why you didn't make some decisions, but it's only going to help me grow. I have three more years I could be playing if things pan out the way I want them to."

**SCHEDULING WORRIES:** Dan Hawkins wouldn't comment on the 2008 schedule, which includes a four-week stretch in which CU plays at Florida State, then hosts West Virginia and Texas, and then goes to Kansas.

Cody Hawkins joked he was going to pretend to be an agent and call West Virginia's Pat White and Steve Slaton this winter and encourage them to enter the NFL draft.

"That's why you come to Colorado — you want to be the best, and to be the best, you have to beat the best," he said.

CU is in talks with Florida State to move their date up a week, but there is nothing that's close to being set. One possible scenario has the Buffs moving the Florida State date up a week and then moving the West Virginia game to a Thursday night.

**EXTRA POINTS:** Dan Hawkins said there might be a few more than the 18 players he originally said this year's recruiting class will include. It should have three or four junior college transfers. The coaches are out of town recruiting this week. ... Hawkins said he "hoped" his entire staff will return. He added that six of its members had offers to leave last year, in some cases for much more money.

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