



Cody Hawkins' QB ability evolving

Making more plays with his feet on the agenda

By Kyle Ringo

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One of Colorado quarterback Cody Hawkins' best friends serves in the Coast Guard and often doles out advice for his buddy to use on the football field.

Sometimes Hawkins listens because what he's hearing makes sense. Other times, not so much.

When it comes to making plays with his feet, Hawkins hears his friend, Roger, who told him, "Never show your moves. You've just got to use them in the big games."

Hawkins made use of that advice in his first victory over Nebraska last week, surprising the Cornhuskers with what amounted to a 5-yard quarterback draw for a first-quarter touchdown.

Hawkins will never remind anyone of fleet-footed signal-callers such as Oregon's Dennis Dixon or West Virginia star Pat White. Heck, when it comes to making plays on the run, Hawkins doesn't even compare with guys his size such as Missouri's Chase Daniel and Kansas' Todd Reesing.

Part of what has made Daniel and Reesing so effective over the past two seasons has been their ability to make on their own plays when a defense has every other option accounted for. Daniel ran 93 times this season for 420 yards and three scores. He is credited with 258 rushing yards after sacks. Reesing ran 82 times for a net of 203 yards.

Hawkins carried the ball 40 times for minus-11.

"I think it's a lot easier to work on throwing the ball than it is running the ball just because you get comfortable with things and kind of get a feel," Hawkins said. "I'm never going to go out and run a 4.4 (40-yard dash). I'm always going to be guy who has to be smart with the ball and do what I can with it. My game is always going to be timing and accuracy and leadership and toughness.

"I've got to work on perfecting those and as I grow and become more physically mature I'll definitely be able to make more plays with my feet."

Colorado offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said offenses with mobile quarterbacks are often the most difficult to defend. He said it's an area in which the Buffs were lacking this season, especially compared with 2006 when Bernard Jackson played quarterback and finished second on the team in rushing. Helfrich said it's definitely an area where Hawkins can improve over time, even though he probably will never be considered the threat some of his peers are when they pull the ball down and choose to run.

As the Buffs continue to grow within their system and coaches recruit more speed around Hawkins, the

field will begin to open up, creating more running room.

Hawkins is much more concerned about becoming a better quarterback in the passing game, and there were signs in the last month of the season that he is becoming more comfortable. He threw 14 interceptions through the first eight games of the year and was threatening to set a new school single-season record in the dubious category. Over the final four games, he threw just one interception and six touchdown passes.

"The last couple games, I mean, it's not like the first couple games when you're having miscommunications and you aren't exactly sure," Hawkins said. "I think when you are on top of your game and you're playing a lot more confident and you're used to the system, it's easier to go out and perform."

Honorable

The Associated Press announced some of its All-Big 12 award winners Wednesday and CU linebacker Jordon Dizon was not among them. Missouri quarterback Chase Daniel was no surprise as the offensive newcomer of the year, but Oklahoma linebacker Curtis Lofton was chosen ahead of Dizon as the defensive player of the year. On Tuesday, Dizon received the coaches' Big 12 defensive honor.

Dizon is a finalist for the Butkus Award given annually to the nation's best linebacker. He also leads the conference in tackles, but the fact that CU gave up 55, 31 and 51 points in their final three games might have hurt Dizon among voters. Kansas cornerback Chris Harris was the defensive newcomer of the year and Texas Tech wide receiver Michael Crabtree is the offensive newcomer of the year.



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