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**TIMES-CALL**

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## Buffaloes target corrections

*By Patrick Ridgell*

*Longmont Times-Call*

DENVER — What Colorado unveiled in Sunday's 38-17 defeat of Colorado State was a young team. No one should forget that.

Sixteen freshmen made debuts, including seven true. Sophomores started at both offensive tackle spots, quarterback and wide receiver. The two-deep is filled with Buffs who haven't played much.

That's, of course, an improvement over the past two years, when the two-deep was really just a one-deep in some positions, like linebacker. Still, the mistakes of youth should be expected, and on Sunday, CU had busted plays, five fumbles, eight penalties, dropped snaps and missed assignments.

Fixes are needed. Saturday's home opponent, Eastern Washington (1:30 p.m., no TV), has a new coach in Beau Baldwin. But the Eagles trailed Texas Tech in Lubbock only 35-24 entering the fourth quarter last Saturday. CU coach Dan Hawkins said he expects nothing easy.

"I've said all along these guys are a good football team," Hawkins said. "They went deep into the playoffs last year. These guys are a good football team."

CU might be, too, if improvements come. Hawkins said film study revealed "just a lot of things to clean up." He added the focus is on snap counts, alignments and communication issues.

Quarterback Cody Hawkins' 16th career interception came in the second quarter. Of the 16, eight — including Sunday's — came off a batted pass. The play was designed to be a screen to Rodney Stewart.

"(Stewart) was uncovered," running back coach Darian Hagan said. "He would have walked."

Always optimistic, Cody Hawkins said the offense has improved.

"I think we executed at times and got ourselves out of holes, which was different than last year," he said. "Last year we might have made a couple of mistakes where we had a bad play that put us in a bad situation and we wouldn't have bounced back as well as we did (Sunday)."

"I thought we did OK. I thought we did an awesome job tempo-wise, but we also had miscommunications. It's always tough to simulate the noise of Invesco."

CU's defense succeeded in its plan to keep CSU's receivers in front of them on all but one play. That was Dion Morton's 21-yard touchdown catch. Safety D.J. Dykes blamed "miscommunication" for that.

As for John Mosure's 90-yard kickoff return, CU special teams coach Kent Riddle saw what needs to be fixed.

### First look

A quick glimpse at CU's next opponent:

**Who:** Eastern Washington (0-1)

**Where:** Boulder, Folsom Field

**When:** Saturday, 2:30 p.m., no TV

**Notes:** Eastern Washington is the second Football Championship Subdivision, formerly I-AA, team CU has played. Montana State in 2006 was the first. ... Eagles quarterback Matt Nichols went 36-for-61 Saturday for 335 yards and a touchdown at Texas Tech. Receiver Tony Davis caught 13 passes for 114 yards. ... Tech committed 18 penalties for 169 yards, aiding Eastern Washington's cause. But the Eagles entered the fourth quarter in Lubbock trailing by only 11 points. ... The Eagles lost to Appalachian State in the second round of the playoffs last year.

**-Patrick Ridgell**

“We just had a horrendous kick and we fit the return wrong and a couple of guys missed tackles, and it went out the gate,” Riddle said. “On the positive side, that’s very correctable.”

That sentiment permeated the team.

“It’s OK. You always have some mishaps in your first game and you won’t be as crisp as possible,” Cody Hawkins said.

“We have a long ways to go.”

**EXTRA POINTS:** One small surprise among the true freshmen who played was defensive tackle Curtis Cunningham. Dan Hawkins said he held up well and will be in the rotation. ... Hawkins said redshirt freshman cornerback Anthony Wright, who played on kickoff coverage, has an ankle injury, but the coach hopes he can play again Saturday. Another cornerback, Jimmy Smith, won’t, Hawkins said. Smith said Sunday his back is causing problems again.

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



# Pressure could be on Buffs secondary

## EWU threw 61 times against Texas Tech

By Kyle Ringo

Tuesday, September 2, 2008

No one was happier Sunday night to see the Colorado defensive line register five sacks against Colorado State than veteran secondary coach Greg Brown.

If the Buffs can continue to get pressure on quarterbacks, it might give his secondary some time to grow together and heal up.

Three cornerbacks, Cha'pelle Brown, Jalil Brown and Gardner McKay, are playing more significant roles this year and there isn't a lot of experienced depth behind them.

There isn't much depth at all right now.

The Buffs opened the season with two of their top five cover men sidelined because of injury. Sophomore Jimmy Smith didn't even dress for Sunday's game because of back pain that continues to dog him. Redshirt freshman Anthony Wright suffered a sprained ankle last week in practice and tried to play but was hobbled too badly and also watched from the sidelines. Brown doesn't know if either player will be available Saturday when Eastern Washington visits Folsom Field (1:30 p.m., no television). The Eagles come to town much less of a one-man show than CSU was to start the season with tight end Kory Sperry as its primary weapon in the passing game.

The Buffs held Sperry to two catches for 11 yards.

"I give our guys credit," Brown said. "I think they did a good job against him."

CU allowed CSU quarterback Billy Farris to complete 27 passes, mostly the short variety, in the season opener, but all those passes went for a total of 187 yards. The Buffs also made two interceptions and came away feeling good about themselves.

Although Eastern Washington plays at the Football Championship Subdivision level (formerly Division I-AA), the bar might be raised for the secondary this week. The Eagles threw the ball 61 times in a loss at Texas Tech last week. Quarterback Matt Nichols completed 36 of those passes for 335 yards.

Texas Tech coach Mike Leach raved about the fight he saw in the Eagles.

"Of the teams that I've played in however many years, one of them that I admire the most," Leach said. "They played extremely hard. I think a really well-coached team."

"We provided a lot of adversity to them, and a lot of time when you do that to a team they collapse or

they get discouraged and don't play as hard. That wasn't the case with them."

### **Solder finds his niche**

One of the biggest changes in the CU roster during the offseason was the switch made by sophomore Nate Solder from tight end to left tackle. Solder put on more than 250 pounds and studied feverishly to become the starter.

In his first game of his life as a lineman, Solder managed to avoid being called for a penalty for making any giant mistakes. He's the first to say he has miles to go, but he walked out of the Buffs' locker room wearing wide grin.

"It felt awesome," Solder said. "The first couple plays I was kind of worried, but then I just got right in the groove of things. I felt so comfortable."

### **More from the line**

True freshman Max Tuioti-Mariner alternated throughout the game at right guard with redshirt freshman Blake Behrens, who got the start. Tuioti-Mariner said he was nervous when he went in the game but senior center Daniel Sanders and sophomore tackle Ryan Miller kept talking to him and settled him down.

"They were just telling me, 'It's going to be fine,' " he said. "Come to find out, it was fine."



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college football

## Buffss must deal with hot QB from EWU

By Tom Kensler  
The Denver Post

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In preparing for this Saturday's game in Boulder (1:30 p.m. kickoff, no TV), Colorado coaches will remind the Buffaloes about what happened last weekend in Lubbock, Texas. Eastern Washington showed it isn't your average "I-AA" football team.

The Eagles pulled within 11 points of Texas Tech in the third quarter before falling 49-24 to the 12th-ranked Red Raiders. Eagles quarterback Matt Nichols passed for 335 yards — the most against a Tech defense since Texas-El Paso threw for 375 during the second week of the 2006 season.

Last year, Eastern Washington reached the quarterfinals of the Football Championship Subdivision (formerly I-AA) playoffs before losing 38-35 to eventual champion Appalachian State. The Eagles returned 15 starters.

"I've said all along, (Eastern Washington) is a good football team," CU coach Dan Hawkins said Monday during the Big 12 coaches teleconference. "They've got some firepower."

Nichols, a 6-2, 220-pound junior, has NFL aspirations. He is the reigning Big Sky Conference offensive player of the year, having thrown for 3,744 yards and 34 touchdowns in 2007. Northern Colorado also is a member of the Big Sky.

"(Eastern Washington) came out, had a great scheme, and they made a lot of big plays," Texas Tech safety Darcel McBath told reporters Saturday in Lubbock. "We tried to stop them, but we couldn't."

Of CU's secondary in Sunday night's 38-17 opening-game victory over Colorado State, Hawkins said: "They did a nice job. They gave up the one big play (21-yard touchdown pass from CSU quarterback to Billy Farris to Dion Morton in the second quarter). But other than that they did a good job covering the ball."

**The newbies Among the seven true freshmen who suited up Sunday night for Colorado, the only surprise was defensive tackle Curtis Cunningham. The 6-1, 270-pound former All-Colorado defensive player of the year from Columbine had not been mentioned by CU coaches as a likely participant in the opener.**

"Curtis didn't play a ton of snaps," Hawkins said, "but he did a nice job of holding up in there, getting in his gap. We just want to get him ready to go. He'll rotate in there."

Other true freshmen who saw action were place-kicker Jameson Davis, safety Patrick Mahnke, tight end Ryan Deehan, offensive guard Maxwell Tuioti-Mariner and tailbacks Darrell Scott and Rodney Stewart.

Redshirt freshmen playing in their first college game were starting guard Blake Behrens, safety Anthony Perkins, cornerback Anthony Wright, defensive end Tony Poremba, defensive tackle

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Eugene Goree, linebacker Josh Hartigan, defensive end Conrad Obi, defensive tackle Lagrone Shields and safety Travis Sandersfeld.

Also making their CU debuts were junior tight end Devin Cq-mjShanahan, sophomore place-kicker Aric Goodman (a Wyoming transfer) and linebacker Shaun Mohler, a junior college transfer.

Of Scott's one-touchdown, 54-yard rushing effort, Hawkins said: "I thought he did all right. Everybody expects these (blue-chip) guys to just jump on the scene and dominate. They're still freshmen. There are a lot of things to take in, a lot of things to learn.

"We wanted him to be comfortable. I thought as the game wore on, he became more comfortable."

**Footnotes Hawkins said the team had "things to clean up" before Saturday. "You've got snap counts, the linemen's communication ..."**

...Colorado now leads its rivalry with CSU by 59-19-2. The Buffs hold a 16-5 advantage since the series resumed in 1983. CU's 21-point victory margin was the largest in the series since a 41-14 Buffs win in 2001.

...Hawkins on the game moving back to campus sites — Boulder in 2009, Fort Collins in 2010 — the next two years: "I'm good either way. I'm one of those guys that, if they tell you to play out in Fort Hays (Kan.), that's where you play."

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

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## CU report: Eagles impress Leach

By B.G. Brooks

Monday, September 1, 2008

Texas Tech cruised past Eastern Washington 49-24 on Saturday, but Red Raiders coach **Mike Leach** spoke highly of CU's upcoming opponent (1:30 p.m. Saturday, Folsom Field).

Leach said the Eagles, the preseason Big Sky Conference favorite, "play hard at every position and are well-coached," having responded to the adversity Tech's offense created for them.

"A lot of times, a team will collapse or get discouraged - that wasn't the case with them," Leach said, adding that the Eagles' defensive linemen were impressive.

In a rare twist, Eastern Washington attempted more passes (63) than No. 12 Texas Tech (58), but Leach claims he wasn't surprised: "We knew they would throw a lot, and they were good at it."

Eagles junior quarterback **Matt Nichols**, a two-year starter, recorded his seventh 300-yard passing game.

### Hawkins impressed, too

The Eagles finished 9-4 last season, losing to Appalachian State 38-35 in the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision playoffs.

"I've said all along they're a good football team," CU coach **Dan Hawkins** said. "They went deep into the playoffs and lost by three to Appalachian State. They've got a good quarterback and receivers."

Eastern Washington's first-year coach is **Beau Baldwin**.

### Off the table?

Last week, CU submitted a proposal to Colorado State for a 10-game extension of the series, wanting games in Boulder in 2009, 2012 and 2015, with seven scheduled in Denver - but giving CSU the option of playing its home games in Fort Collins.

Obviously, the proposal didn't appease CSU, which wants all games played in Denver. On Friday, CU exercised its option to move the 2009 game to Boulder, and CSU followed by announcing the 2010 game would be played in Fort Collins.

CU athletic director **Mike Bohn** said after Sunday night's game no discussions were scheduled with his CSU counterpart, **Paul Kowalczyk**, but added, "We'll get together." The schools have established an Oct. 1 deadline to decide the series' future.

**Etc.**

\* Hawkins said this week's priority is "cleaning up" in the areas of communication, snap counts and false starts. CU was penalized eight times for 58 yards.

\* Cornerback **Jimmy Smith** (back) remains out this week, but Hawkins hopes corner **Anthony Wright** (ankle) will be available.

\* Freshman defensive tackle **Curtis Cunningham**, thought to be a redshirt candidate, played "and did a nice job of holding up," Hawkins said.

\* Hawkins suspended offensive linemen **Devin Head**, who started Sunday, and **Ethan Adkins**. Adkins, a redshirt freshman, was suspended indefinitely.

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