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## CU's competitive Cha'

**Corner Brown doesn't come out on short end of many confrontations**

**By Patrick Saunders**  
The Denver Post

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Colorado junior cornerback Cha'pelle Brown takes down West Virginia's Jock Sanders in the Buffs' 17-14 overtime victory last Thursday night. The 5-foot-7 Brown has developed into a big-play man this season. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post )

BOULDER — Patrick Williams, an incredulous look on his face, appeared to be on the verge of laughter.

The question that drove the Colorado senior wide receiver to this emotional state went something like this: How can 5-foot-7, 180-pound cornerback Cha'pelle Brown possibly compete against the big boys in college football?

"Have you ever seen Cha'pelle dunk?" the flabbergasted Williams asked. "Man, he can throw it down. And nobody is more competitive than Cha'pelle."

As a senior guard at Los Altos High School, just east of Los Angeles, Brown averaged 25 points per game and owned the court. But football is his sport of choice now, and Saturday brings a tall task as the Buffs (3-0) play Florida State (2-1) in Jacksonville, Fla. The Seminoles' leading receiver is senior Greg Carr (nine catches, 144 yards, one touchdown). At 6-6, Carr will tower over Brown in a one-on-one matchup.

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## Colorado Football

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But then, Brown isn't big on the topic of height, or his lack thereof.

"I don't even think about it, because I can't change it, and it's been that way my whole life," Brown said. "All I can do is go out there and compete, use the right techniques, make tackles and make plays."

The junior already owns one of the biggest plays of the Buffs' season. In the 31-24 victory over Eastern Washington in Week 2, Brown picked off a Matt Nichols pass, returning it 27 yards for the winning touchdown with 1 minute, 44 seconds left. That game-clincher, which helped garner Brown the Big 12 defensive player of the week honors, wasn't as much about athleticism as it was about football

smarts.

"I read the quarterback's eyes," Brown recalled. "He got me earlier in the game with the same play, so this time I tried to bait him into throwing it, and he did. I was at the right place at the right time."

According to CU secondary coach Greg Brown, the cornerback's sense of time and place is one of his most valuable assets.

"He's a vision guy. He sees what's going on and he reacts," Greg Brown said. "Plus, he's so quick and athletic. The ball goes up in the air, and more often than not he goes up and gets it. And he's tough. Boy, will he tackle."

Cha'pelle Brown's breakout game came last year in the Buffs' crazy 65-51 victory over Nebraska. CU coaches voted him defensive player of the game. He had five tackles (three solo) and two third-down stops, broke up two passes and returned an interception 51 yards inside the Huskers' 5-yard line to set up a touchdown.

Williams has gone head-to-head against Cha'pelle Brown in practice for three years. At 6-2 and 205 pounds, Williams would seem to have a big advantage. Not true, he says.

"He's unbelievably quick," Williams said. "He's quicker out of the break than bigger receivers, and because he's a student of the game, he knows where the ball's going."

In CU's 17-14 overtime win against West Virginia last Thursday, Brown had eight solo tackles and seven assists. He also had a possible scoring interception in his hands, but the ball bounced out for a Pat White incompleteness.

"Cha'pelle does not like to lose — ever," Williams

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said. "Whether it's pickup basketball at the rec center or swimming laps at the pool, he does not like to lose. If we had a thousand Cha'pelles on our team, it would be a coach's dream."

Is that true, Coach Brown?

"Absolutely."

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## Hartigan fired up for Sunshine State return

Article Last Updated: 09/24/2008 11:44:41 PM MDT

BOULDER — Six players on the Colorado roster have ties to Florida, but nobody could be more excited about the Buffaloes' trip to Jacksonville this weekend to play Florida State than redshirt freshman Josh Hartigan, a reserve linebacker.

Hartigan's father, Sterling Palmer, starred for FSU as a linebacker/defensive end from 1989-92 and became a fourth-round draft choice of the Washington Redskins, for whom he played four seasons.

This will be the first time Palmer has watched his son play in a college game.

"That's pretty cool," said Josh Hartigan, who played high school football at Northeast in Fort Lauderdale. "My mom came out (to Boulder) for a game last year, but my dad wasn't able to make any. But I was redshirting, anyway. Dad played at FSU, but he's going to root for us. He's on my side now."

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Other CU players with ties to the Sunshine State include starting punter Matt DiLallo (Wellington); offensive tackle Mike Ittis (Sarasota), who is out for the season with a knee injury; tailback Kevin Moyd (Miami); and tailback Darrell Scott and Josh Smith, who were born in Tallahassee, not far from the FSU campus, but played high school football in California.

Ittis said the visibility CU will derive from playing in Jacksonville could help the Buffs lure recruits from Florida.

"Getting players from there to take a chance on Colorado and making a visit is the toughest thing," Ittis said. "But once they get out here and see this

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place, I think that will change things. Word will spread and open up more opportunities."

## Footnotes.

Freshman starting offensive guard Max Tuioti-Mariner is out for the season after suffering a torn ACL in Tuesday's practice. . . . This will be Colorado's second trip to Jacksonville. The 1972 Buffaloes lost 24-3 to Auburn in the Gator Bowl.

*Tom Kensler, The Denver Post*

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# Freshman running back Stewart glad Buffs tried him on for size

## Freshman out to prove detractors wrong

By B.G. Brooks

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

The kid showed up nearly every day to watch practice, stood in the same place and peered through the gate.

One afternoon, noticing he had the same audience day after day, the little league football coach approached the kid and introduced himself.

"I'm Marvin Johnson," the coach said. "You want to play football one day?"

"I want to play now," Rodney Stewart replied.

And so "Speedy" Stewart, as fast and elusive for his age then (5) as he is now, launched a relationship with Johnson, who was to become a mentor/father figure.

In turn, Johnson helped launch a lifelong battle against long odds, one that rather incredibly landed Stewart at the University of Colorado as a 5-foot-6, 180-pound running back.

"He's a kid that has been told 'no' constantly," said Johnson, a 40-year-old security officer at the Twin Valley Behavioral Healthcare facility in Columbus, Ohio, Stewart's hometown.

"He's a little guy, so there's always been those questions."

But as he has since childhood, Stewart steadfastly answers them and keeps on running. And running. His 166 yards on 28 carries last week in CU's 17-14 overtime win against West Virginia was the school's third-best rushing performance by a freshman.

Johnson, who watched that game with pride, has two sons (Demetrius, Dominique) and is mentoring another youngster, Cameron Brown, in much the same way he mentored Stewart.

The foursome has a strong brotherly bond: All were members of that little league team Stewart yearned to play on and all now are playing for Stewart's former high school, Brookhaven.

Marvin Johnson also nudged them toward track, shuttling them to AAU meets "as far north as Providence (R.I.), as far south as Miami. There were plenty of long car rides and hotels . . . they became very close."

As they've grown, their focus has broadened. Dominique Johnson has talked of becoming a doctor, Cameron Brown an engineer. Demetrius Johnson and Stewart have eyes for the NFL, Marvin Johnson said.

File away the name Demetrius Johnson; He's a 6-0, 240-pound junior fullback who helped Stewart punch up many of his 2,036 yards and 33 touchdowns last season at Brookhaven. CU, noted Stewart and Marvin Johnson, is recruiting Demetrius.

The Buffaloes' trip to Jacksonville, Fla., to play Florida State on Saturday (1:30 p.m. MDT, KMGH-Channel 7) will be Stewart's second visit to the Sunshine State. Memories of the first remain some of Stewart's best.

Playing for the Midlands Youth Association, a team of 11- and 12-year-olds coached by Marshall University graduate Randy Clarkson and Marvin Johnson, "Speedy" & Co. played three games in Daytona Beach, Fla., and won a national championship.

"I was s-o-o-o little; I had to be a baby. But I've always been fast. . . . Our trophy is sitting at Marvin Johnson's house," said a beaming Stewart, the oldest of five children (two sisters, two brothers) whose last contact with their birth father occurred not long before Johnson introduced himself at the practice field.

Marvin Johnson was/is "a great mentor; I could always come to him and ask him any question," said Stewart, soft-spoken and usually sporting a high-wattage grin. "I still talk to him a lot. If anybody knows everything about me, it's going to be him."

### **Undersized, overlooked**

Because of his size and knee ligaments torn early in his junior year that required reconstructive surgery, Stewart ran under the radar of most Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A) schools.

When top-tier high school junior prospects in his area were proudly and hopefully showing recruiters their highlight tapes, Stewart had nothing to offer.

"That hurt him, and then there was his size. . . . I tried to tell people it wasn't a factor, but they said he was too short and not durable enough," said former Brookhaven coach Tom Blake, who retired last season after 30 years on the sideline but still teaches at the school.

Blake saw Stewart early, recalling that on his first touch as a freshman, Stewart ran 83 yards for a touchdown. On 19 touches as a sophomore, Stewart scored five times. Then came the first scrimmage of his junior year and the season-ending knee injury.

Marvin Johnson recalled the devastation Stewart experienced: "He was frustrated, angry inside and not getting along well with anyone. He was upset at the world."

But Marvin Johnson, who previously had worked in security at Ohio State, still was acquainted with the football team's medical personnel. After knee surgery performed by an Ohio State team doctor, Stewart underwent a rigorous rehabilitation program that included leg-strengthening work on weight equipment Johnson had purchased and put in his garage for his sons, Stewart and Brown to use.

"I told Rodney it was one day at a time, that we weren't going to cry and be upset - we're going to walk

it as far as we can walk it," Marvin Johnson said. "And to make sure at the end that not only can you take out a linebacker, you can carry him on your back. And Rodney was willing to do it."

Stewart's rehabilitation was so complete, so effective, said Blake, that in the first post-rehab 40-yard dash he ran at Brookhaven, in March 2007, he was timed in 4.4 seconds. He's even a couple of ticks faster now.

Recalled Blake: "When other kids were boisterous, talking loud and playing around, Rodney had this grin on his face, not saying much. He's kind of a 'I'll show you' guy, rather than telling you about it."

### **Freshman acclimation**

Stewart is adjusting to campus life at CU. He was over any homesickness before classes began and is wrestling with the time management issues most freshmen face but are exacerbated for a student-athlete.

"Studying for classes, going to class, studying the playbook . . . it leaves us with no time; you're busy all the time," he said.

He wants to succeed for many reasons, a prime one being to set an example for his brothers (ages 11 and 15), both of whom are running backs.

"Hopefully, they see what I'm doing, can get to college and can do the same thing," Stewart said.

If there's anything Stewart misses on game day at Folsom Field, it's Marvin Johnson being on the sideline or in the stands. When Stewart erred at Brookhaven, "I'd look for him and he'd give me this little face. I knew I'd messed up."

Chief among the life lessons taught him by Marvin Johnson was this, said Stewart: "He would ask me the difference between a winner and loser. Nothing. It's what the winner does that makes him a winner, and what the loser doesn't do that makes him a loser. He still reminds me to this day that you have to work to be a winner."

Stewart doesn't watch football in large doses on television - a highlight here and there - and with the exception of a Super Bowl or two, he can't remember the last time he saw a game from start to finish. He has been compared to a bevy of smaller Buffs backs, even to former Kansas State tailback Darren Sproles.

But he seeks to emulate no one he has seen (or hasn't) on TV, and he didn't need TV to reinforce the concept of bigger, stronger, faster - particularly the latter two - and how he might benefit.

When he arrived at CU, he was able to bench press 225 pounds 22 times, with a maximum press of 380 pounds, and he was squatting up to 500 pounds.

"He doesn't like the term 'scatback,' " Marvin Johnson said. "He thinks that's for little guys."

### **Fighting for notice**

After his stellar senior season, Stewart said, recruiters were asking, "Who is this kid?" But interest from major programs never got past that question.



He was reduced to waiting for prospects who had received early offers not to commit, and for those schools to call on him. It didn't happen.

He didn't receive his first scholarship offer until he participated in the Ted Ginn Bus Tour, a nearly two-week trip to Midwestern college campuses organized by Ginn, the father of former Ohio State standout Ted Ginn Jr.

The tour, Marvin Johnson said, costs each participant about \$300 and stops at up to 15 campuses, where the prospects work out for coaches. Stewart said about 50 prospects toured with him, but none might have been as anxious as Stewart.

At the Big Ten Conference schools they visited, Stewart virtually was ignored. The first interest and offers came from Eastern Michigan, Toledo and Akron. Eastern Michigan then scaled back its interest, wanting him as a "preferred walk-on."

"He was hurt by that," Marvin Johnson said. "It was kind of all or nothing at that point - and nothing was left in the bucket. I told him someone is going to see something in you, and when they do, other (schools) are going to kick themselves in the butt for not seeing it."

"He's hoping (CU) can play a Big Ten school while he's there."

### **Mississippi miss; Ohio hit**

CU didn't know Rodney Stewart from Martha Stewart until Buffs assistant Darian Hagan was in Trotwood, Ohio, last winter recruiting linebacker Doug Rippy.

Asked by Rippy who the Buffs were recruiting at running back, Hagan said the highly touted Darrell Scott still was pondering his decision.

To which Rippy, now redshirting and Stewart's roommate, replied, "You should check out my buddy, 'Speedy.' "

Shortly thereafter, Hagan, CU's running backs coach, and running game coordinator/offensive line coach Jeff Grimes had flown to Jackson, Miss., to visit a running back prospect who didn't pan out.

In their hotel room, Hagan recounted his conversation with Rippy for Grimes. An Internet check of Stewart's senior season ensued, followed later by a perusal of a Stewart highlight tape put together by Marvin Johnson.

"We're watching tape of this little guy going zip, zip, zip," Grimes said. "It was the same thing you saw (against West Virginia) but even more effective at the high school level."

Something else in the tape was very evident to Grimes: "You could tell he was short, but not how big he was. So when we went to see him (in Columbus), I'm just praying when he shows up he's not 5-5 and 150."

"He walks in and he's got that kind of cocky little walk . . . I put my hands on his shoulders, and he's good and thick. And when you look at him without the pads on, he's well put together."

"I wasn't worried about his size but, obviously, a lot of other people were. Height has nothing to do with

a running back; his overall size does - his strength and ability to run through tackles and take a pounding. But height has nothing to do with ability as a running back."

That has been Stewart's lifelong contention, and his breakout performance against the Mountaineers might have been step one in proving it to the schools that passed him over.

"Not bad for a little guy who was too small to play Division I football," a laughing Blake said the morning after watching Stewart on national television. "I tried to tell people that, but they said he was too short and not durable enough. I've seen it happen in the past, but Rodney's a special kid."

The Buffs appear well on the way to discovering it for themselves.

© Rocky Mountain News



## CU report: Tuioti-Mariner out

By B.G. Brooks, Paul Willis

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

The bad luck in the Buffaloes' offensive line continues.

Freshman guard **Max Tuioti-Mariner**, who had started the past two games and played in all three this season, suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament in Tuesday's practice and is out for the season.

Coach **Dan Hawkins** made the announcement at the conclusion of Wednesday's practice, saying Tuioti-Mariner, of Corona, Calif., suffered the injury in a noncontact drill.

He also missed his senior season in high school because of the same injury but not on the same knee.

Tuioti-Mariner becomes the third guard CU has lost since August and the fourth player overall to suffer a torn ACL. Redshirt freshman guard **Mike Iltis** also suffered a torn ACL and is out for the season. Senior guard **Erich Faatagi** was ruled ineligible.

Listed as starters for Saturday's game against Florida State (1:30 p.m. MDT, KMGH-Channel 7) are junior **Devin Head** (left) and redshirt freshman **Blake Behrens** (right). Behind them are another pair of redshirt freshmen - **Shawn Daniels** and **David Clark**.

### Balancing hang time

When Colorado punter **Matt DiLallo** says he is concerned about his hang time entering Saturday's game against Florida State, he means it in two ways.

One is the hang time on his punts. The other is the amount of time the junior will be able to hang out with his friends and family in his return to his home state.

"My whole family is going to the game, and I have 20 or 30 friends who go to FSU who will be there as well," said DiLallo, who is from Wellington, Fla.

### Won't have to 'fake it'

Senior safety **D.J. Dykes** is back to full speed after missing the West Virginia game because of a stomach ailment, and he won't have to fib his way into the lineup.

Dykes came down with a debilitating stomach virus and fever two days before the game, then visited with team trainers and doctors the morning of the game in hopes of being cleared to play.

"I tried to fake it as much as I could, but they just knew," Dykes said.

Redshirt freshman **Anthony Perkins** started in his place, but Dykes still was in uniform for the game.

"I figured if something drastic happened, they might have sent me in," Dykes said.

### **Remaining steady**

Lost in the shuffle of Florida State's mostly miserable 12-3 loss to Wake Forest on Saturday is the Seminoles defense was more than stout.

Considering the defense oftentimes was forced to jump immediately back onto the field because of an offensive turnover, the unit held up well.

"We talked about rising up and playing to a higher standard, and I think we did that," defensive coordinator **Mickey Andrews** said. "I think (Wake Forest) got the ball on our side of the 50 seven times, and we never gave up a touchdown."

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# Lack of depth still plagues Buffs

## Injuries taking their toll

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

The truth about the Colorado football program is coach Dan Hawkins and his assistants aren't in a much better position this season than they were in their first two years in Boulder when it comes to the depth they have at their disposal.

Part of the problem can be traced to the state of things when they took over. Another aspect is injuries, which are always part of the game, and part is self-inflicted, with players being suspended or becoming academically ineligible.

There are 80 scholarship players on the current roster, with the addition of place-kicker Aric Goodman, who was just rewarded with a scholarship last week. The NCAA allows 85 scholarships for Division I teams.

Eleven of those scholarships are now unable to help the program on game days. Four players have suffered season-ending injuries, six players are academically ineligible and one player is suspended indefinitely. That leaves 69 scholarship players and 12 of them are slated to redshirt this fall.

"We're still building," coach Dan Hawkins said following Wednesday's practice.

Some positions have obviously come a long way. For instance, the roster featured only six offensive linemen in spring 2007. There is much more depth there now, though it seems to be decreasing all the time with players suffering injuries, such as freshman Max Tuoti-Mariner, whose season ended this week when he hurt his knee.

But the roster and depth chart are still far from what Hawkins envisions. He regularly talks about assembling a team with seniors and fourth-year juniors starting and third-year sophomores serving as backups.

Hawkins' dream team would include only the ultra-talented freshman contributors. The team that will travel to Jacksonville this week is severely tilted in the youthful direction.

### Empty seats

Colorado and Florida State could be playing The River City Showdown in front of a smaller-than-expected crowd on Saturday.

Rick Catlett, president of the Gator Bowl Association, told the Orlando Sentinel only 40,000 tickets had been sold as of Tuesday. Catlett said he is hoping to reach 50,000-55,000 by Saturday.



Catlett told the Sentinel FSU had sold about 27,000 tickets and CU had sold about 3,500. Municipal Stadium seats more than 76,000.

More than 85,000 people watched FSU and Alabama play in the same stadium last year. This will be the fourth time in the past four years the Seminoles have played in Jacksonville.

They have a 9-1-1 lifetime record in Jacksonville, including five Gator Bowl victories and a win in the 2005 ACC championship game.

### **Avoiding cramps**

With temperatures in Jacksonville expected to be in the high 80s or low 90s Saturday, the Buffs are focused on hydration this week. Players are walking around campus carrying gallon jugs of green Gatorade.

The Buffs have done the same thing in the past when traveling to warmer climates, particularly later in the year. Tight end Devin Shanahan said he and his teammates are often asked about the jugs of green fluid.

### **Notable**

Florida State offensive coordinator Jimbo Fisher told the Tallahassee Democrat the Buffs have an advantage leading up to the game because they've had three extra days to prepare after playing a week ago today. "You are darn right it helps," Fisher said. "Because your players not only comprehend what you are trying to teach but it lets you do a more thorough job of studying and trying to get pieces to fit." ... The Buffs have committed six turnovers this season and all of them have come in the second quarter. The second quarter hasn't been a total disaster though. The Buffs have scored more points (28) in the quarter than in any other. ... Cornerback Patrick Robinson, who made six interceptions last season for the Seminoles, is among eight players returning to the FSU roster this week following suspensions for academic cheating.



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# Tuioti-Mariner out for season

## Frosh lineman tears ACL

By Kyle Ringo

Originally published 06:50 p.m., September 24, 2008

Updated 11:36 p.m., September 24, 2008

Colorado freshman guard Max Tuioti-Mariner spent nearly 18 months rehabilitating from a knee injury during his senior year of high school and the summers surrounding it, and earned immediate playing time when he joined the Buffs this fall.

Now he's back in the training room for another extended stay.

Coach Dan Hawkins said Tuioti-Mariner suffered a torn anterior cruciate ligament in non-contact drills in Tuesday's practice and will miss the remainder of the season. He is the fourth Buff to tear an ACL since the beginning of fall camp. Hawkins said Tuioti-Mariner did not hurt the same knee he injured in high school.

Tuioti-Mariner was one of the most highly regarded prep linemen in the nation in his high school class prior to his first injury. Some schools stopped recruiting him, but the Buffs stuck with him and ultimately he joined the program.

Tuioti-Mariner played in each of the first three games this season and recorded 16.5 knockdown blocks, the third most on the team. Some of his teammates described him in training camp as a fierce run blocker. He was not at practice Wednesday and wasn't available for comment.

The Buffs could use Tuioti-Mariner's tenacity this week when they travel to Jacksonville, Fla., to play Florida State, which boasts the fourth-ranked rushing defense in the nation. Colorado managed minus-27 yards rushing against the Seminoles last season with a more experienced line.

"The bad news for Max is he's a guy who came in and was doing well," offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said. "The good news is he's a young guy and has plenty of time in front of him and we've been rotating a lot of guys in there at guard, anyway."

Junior guard Devin Head and redshirt freshman Blake Behrens are likely to start against the Seminoles on Saturday, with redshirt freshman Shawn Daniels as the primary backup for both positions. Head and Behrens have been rotating with Tuioti-Mariner this season.

Grimes said sophomore walk-on Keenan Stevens and redshirt freshman Matt Bahr can also play guard if needed. Grimes cross-trains all of his linemen during practices and most have at least some familiarity at guard and tackle.

The news isn't all bad for the offensive line. Grimes said the entire group played well last week against

West Virginia. Five different linemen received their best grade of the year against the Mountaineers.

Sophomore Nate Solder rebounded from his tough day against Eastern Washington with his best performance so far last week. Solder, who moved from tight end to tackle in the offseason, has three games under his belt at his new position and is beginning to get a feel for what the position requires.

“I think the biggest thing for him is just getting to the point where he has confidence,” Grimes said.

Solder and the rest of the line face the biggest challenge of the season to date on Saturday when they will knock heads with a defensive line featuring size, speed and strength to rival some professional teams.

“They’re well coached and they have real good, athletic guys,” Solder said. “So it will be a great challenge for sure.”

Solder said the constant rotation of guards playing next to him hasn’t lengthened the learning curve for everyone. He said “it works well” regardless of who is in the game.

“It’s been a little bit turbulent, but when the guys are in there, they’re always playing hard,” he said.



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# Focus for FSU turns to Hawkins

## QB carried load against FSU last season

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, September 24, 2008

The Big 12 continues to grab attention for its stellar quarterback play this fall. The Colorado Buffaloes need their signal caller to steal some of those headlines this week.

Cody Hawkins definitely has been overshadowed by some of his peers to this point, despite the fact he's off to a decent start in his sophomore season.

But major college football is a pressure-packed environment and the Buffs might need Hawkins to play the best game of his career this week if they're going to travel to Jacksonville and defeat a Florida State team richly talented on the defensive side of the ball.

Hawkins threw for more than 300 yards against the Seminoles last season and still the Buffs narrowly avoided being shut out in a 16-6 loss at Folsom Field.

In that game, the CU offense was one-dimensional, unable to run the ball. The Buffs ran 25 times for minus-27 yards and the task of getting into the end zone fell on Hawkins. He finally connected with former CU tight end Tyson Devree late in the fourth quarter to save the fourth longest active scoring streak in Division I.

When asked Tuesday to compare his quarterback now to a year ago when the Buffs met the Seminoles, CU coach Dan Hawkins gave a mixed review.

"I think in terms of maturity wise and his assertiveness, he's definitely ahead," Hawkins said of his oldest son. "I think he might be trying to push a little more than he was last year.

"Also, we're not as experienced, to some degree, with everyone else around him -- so it's a little bit of a trade off in each area. Sometimes there is that tendency when you come out and play pretty well, then you think, 'Okay, I'm going to make this play and get this done.' Really, having trust in the process and focus in the process, letting that air itself out is important."

Offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said he doesn't believe Cody Hawkins will have to carry the offense to the same degree he did last year against FSU when he threw 53 times.

"Hopefully we're a little bit better in the run game," Helfrich said. "I think we are. There is no question they're the type of defense where they stack the box with big, physical, talented guys. So you've got to mix it up. You have to be in good down-and-distances. You don't want to get in a second-and-long and third-and-long situations."

The Seminoles are ranked fourth in the nation in total defense, giving up just 205 yards per game, and are second in the nation in scoring defense. They are traditionally tough against the run and good at forcing turnovers. Hawkins threw two interceptions in his first encounter with the team for which he grew up rooting last year.

Cody Hawkins, who has led his team to a 3-0 start, said he expects the Seminoles to have some surprises for him, and he believes the defense he has watched on film will be somewhat different now that five Seminoles defenders are returning from suspensions.

"They are definitely going to have some wrinkles ready for us because they get those vets back, but at the same time, we know we've got to go down there and play our game regardless of who they have on defense.

"Whether Florida State is starting their fifth-year veteran who is a first-stringer or a freshman who happens to be fourth string, they can play."

Hawkins has thrown one interception in each of the first three games this year, including one that was returned for a touchdown. He will be starting his 17th consecutive game for the Buffs on Saturday and hopes to avoid adding to his total of 20 career interceptions.

Hawkins comes into the game completing 70 percent of his throws with six touchdowns, and his teammates need him to match that efficiency sans turnovers.

"We've just got to keep growing and learning and Cody's got to keep making mistakes," Helfrich said. "Unfortunately when that position makes mistakes, sometimes that results in the ball going to the other team."

That can't happen this week.



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## CU freshman guard tears ACL in practice

*By Patrick Ridgell*

*Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Another Colorado Buffalo has suffered a torn ACL, and this time it's a starter.

Head coach Dan Hawkins said Wednesday that freshman guard Max Tuioti-Mariner tore an ACL in non-contact drills Tuesday. Offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said CU is proceeding like it won't have Tuioti-Mariner for the rest of the season.

"He was really coming on," Grimes said. "The thing that was impressive about him was he played really well in the last game. We pressed him into service really early. At this point last year, (starting tackle) Ryan Miller still hadn't stepped on the field."

Tuioti-Mariner started CU's past two games and had his best against West Virginia, grading out to 78 percent and totaling 61/2 knock-down blocks.

Guard Mike Iltis, linebacker Jon Major and defensive end Drew Hudgins tore ACLs in August camp and are missing the season. Iltis, expected to contend for a starting spot this year, said Tuesday his rehabilitation is going well.

CU is missing several offensive linemen it planned in the summer to have. Two — tackle Sione Tau and guard Erick Faatagi — didn't make grades. Tackle Ethan Adkins is indefinitely suspended following his arrest on suspicion of DUI the night after CU beat Colorado State. Guard Devin Head was suspended for the Eastern Washington game on Sept. 6. He was in the car with Adkins.

Grimes said Head and redshirt freshman Blake Behrens will be CU's starting guards Saturday against Florida State in Jacksonville. Shawn Daniels and Matt Bahr will be the top reserves at the position. Bahr worked at guard in Wednesday's practice, Grimes said.

"Any time you lose a guy, you're concerned for two reasons," Grimes said. "One is what that guy might potentially add to the group. ... And when you get to the point where you have three or four guys not in there, the overall depth is something you worry about. You hope you don't get in a situation where you have to press somebody into play when you'd like to, like Bryce (Givens)." Givens continues to practice at tackle and try to gain weight. CU plans to redshirt him for 2008.

Tuioti-Mariner missed his senior year of high school in Corona, Calif., due to a torn ACL. CU sports information director Dave Plati reported Tuioti-Mariner's new tear is not in the same knee.

**HAWKINS ON CELESTINE:** Hawkins said he saw Kendrick Celestine's decision to quit the team coming. CU announced Celestine's departure Tuesday. Celestine, a sophomore receiver from Mamou, La., told coaches Sunday he was quitting.

"Kids go through so many things these days, and there are so many situations that come up," Hawkins said. "I think that we're doing an awesome job here developing our culture, and what we're about and what we're doing and emphasizing the right things as a person, as a student, as a football player."



Freshman guard Max Tuioti-Mariner tore an ACL in non-contact drills Tuesday. Offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said CU is proceeding like it won't have Tuioti-Mariner for the rest of the season. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

“It’s hard because we’re in a society where a lot of other things cause bumps in the road for some kids, and it is really hard for him. We wish him the best and hope things turn out well for him.”

**SALES LAGGING:** The Orlando Sentinel reported Wednesday that only 40,000 tickets have been sold to Saturday’s game. Rick Catlett, president of the Gator Bowl Association, said he hopes a strong walk-up crowd can boost sales to more than 50,000.

Florida State has sold 27,000 and CU 3,500.

Last year, 85,000 people watched Florida State beat Alabama, 21-14, in Jacksonville.

Florida State is 9-1-1 in Jacksonville, 8-1 under coach Bobby Bowden.

**EXTRA POINTS:** Like the Buffs did last year before going to Arizona State, they’re drinking Gatorade by the gallon this week to prepare for hot weather. Saturday’s temperature is forecast to be 89 degrees. ... CU safety Ryan Walters leads Big 12 defensive backs in tackles with 8.3 a game. CU’s Jeff Smart is fourth among linebacker with 10 per. ... Florida State coach Bobby Bowden said tight end Caz Piurowski is the most important player it gets back from academic suspension this week. “We played the first three games with walk-on tight ends, practically,” Bowden said Wednesday.

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