



Wildcats loaded with jucos

Recruiting philosophy differs between CU, Kansas State

By Ryan Thorburn
Friday, October 17, 2008

Patience is the word of the month at the Dal Ward Center.

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn recently extended Dan Hawkins' contract despite an 11-20 record.

The appreciative third-year CU head coach remains steadfast in his belief that there are no short cuts in building, or in this case rebuilding, a great program that will stand the test of time in the Big 12.

Hawkins' counterpart on Saturday, Ron Prince, is not as patient.

Kansas State, like CU, was expected to be a very young team in 2008. That all changed overnight when Prince welcomed 19 junior college transfers on national signing day in February.

Prince's class, which was ranked 27th by rivals.com, is thought to include the most junior college players ever signed by a current Bowl Championship Series program.

"The recruiting philosophy was to really do what Kansas State is best at and what they've always done, which is to really have a unique mix of highschool players and community college players," Prince explained at the Big 12 football media days in July. "And those players that came in with us in that initial class from community colleges are now gone and really we wanted it to not go backwards.

"We really wanted to be able to replace those players with other players who know how to play the game of football, how to get up and go to class on your own, how to do all those things, many of those things are unknown with the high school kids."

Prince, who is 16-15 in his third season at K-State, played at Dodge City Community College in the late '80s. He was an academic all-American at the school and parlayed his junior college experiences into a scholarship and degree from Appalachian State before getting his start in coaching back at Dodge City.

Hawkins, who also played at a junior college, put together the 15th-ranked recruiting class in 2008, according to Rivals.com.

Twenty of the players the Buffs signed were high school seniors.

"Clearly for us the method is to build from the bottom, and I think that suits us and the University of Colorado more favorably," Hawkins said. "That doesn't mean that other people shouldn't. We've recruited junior college guys every year and we will continue to do that. It's just with the NCAA rules and eligibility requirements and things like that we're in a different situation."

You can count the number of junior college recruits in Hawkins' three CU classes on one hand -- Erick Faatagi in 2006; Drew Hudgins, Steve Melton and Nick Nelson in 2007; and Shaun Mohler in 2008.

Overall, these players haven't had much of an impact on the field at CU.

Faatagi was ruled academically ineligible before the season. Hudgins is out for the season with a knee injury. Melton is a third-string wide receiver. Nelson is the backup to Cody Hawkins' backup (Matt Ballenger).

Mohler is the exception as the starting inside linebacker who is currently third on the team with 48 tackles.

"If you're in a different place and a different time, depending on the chemistry, then you might do that," Hawkins said of recruiting junior college players en masse. "But I don't think it suits us here."

The Wildcats' best player, quarterback Josh Freeman, arrived in Manhattan straight out of high school. Same story for freshman running back Logan Dold, the team's second-leading rusher behind Freeman, and cornerback Joshua Moore, the team's leading tackler.

Freeman's top two wide receivers, Brandon Banks and Aubrey Quarles, are both junior college transfers. So is standout linebacker Ulla Pomele. Starting left tackle Edward Prince (no relation to the head coach) and nose tackle Daniel Calvin were among two of the 19 junior college transfers the Wildcats are counting on to make a move in the rugged Big 12 after a 5-7 finish last year.

"That's unique to Kansas State, it's an interesting mix," Prince said. "We really felt like coming into year three we were going to face some of the more veteran teams in the country. And we wanted to make sure when the big fish eat the little fish ... having 22-, 23-year-olds pushing around the 18- and 19-year-olds, we've been through all that.

"We want to move through that stage and into a place where we can be a veteran team. And a big part of that is winning games in the fourth quarter and in November, to have mature players who can win late in the game, late in the season and have enough of them. That's what mature football programs can do, and we want to be a part of that."



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sports

K-State's JC harvest fills needs in a hurry

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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BOULDER — College football coaches must dream about waving a magic wand to fortify their rosters overnight with seasoned players.

Kansas State's Ron Prince did the next-best thing last winter. He signed 19 junior college players, including seven who are expected to be in the starting lineup Saturday night when the Wildcats play Colorado in a Big 12 Conference matchup at Folsom Field.

Who knows where Kansas State would be without them?

"We wanted to move through that (youthful) stage and into a place where we can be a veteran team," Prince has said about the infusion of junior college transfers. "We wanted to make sure when the big fish eat the little fish, 22-, 23-year-olds are pushing around the 18-, 19-year-olds."

Colorado Football

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The Wildcats (4-2, 1-1 Big 12) had to replace two starting wide receivers, including 2007 All-American Jordy Nelson. Presto! In comes Brandon Banks from Bakersfield (Calif.) College and Aubrey Quarles from Santa Rosa (Calif.) Junior College. Banks has a team-best 29 catches and six touchdowns. Quarles, a former standout at Aurora's Grandview High School (a brother, Clyde Surrell, played defensive back at CU), ranks second on the team with 28 receptions.

Kansas State needed help at left tackle to protect the blind side of standout quarterback Josh Freeman. Presto! Edward Prince, 6-feet-5, 289 pounds and no relation to the head coach, arrived from Copiah-Lincoln (Miss.) College.

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On defense, the Wildcats were looking for a nose tackle, two linebackers and a cornerback. Presto! Each position was filled by a junior-college transfer.

At Colorado (3-3, 0-2), coach Dan Hawkins finds himself trying to force-feed the 24 freshmen or sophomores listed on the Buffaloes' two-deep.

If Hawkins is envious of Prince, he isn't saying. But Colorado coaches in football and basketball have long complained about the difficulty of getting junior-college players accepted into CU. Colorado does not offer a conventional physical education major. A high percentage of junior-college players have P.E. credits that must be replaced by other credit hours in order to enroll at CU. Often, it can be easier to go somewhere else.

"If you're in a different place at a different time ... you might do that," Hawkins said this week when asked about Kansas State signing 19 junior-college players. "I don't think that suits us here. It's not plausible. That doesn't mean that other people shouldn't."

Hawkins always speaks highly of Prince and the way he is building his program. Prince says the same about Hawkins. Both arrived in the Big 12 before the 2006 season.

"(Prince) has a lot of passion, similar to me in that way," Hawkins said. "I think he has a lot of integrity. He tries to do it the right way. I just think he's a good guy, a solid guy."

Hawkins certainly has a soft spot for junior-college players. He played football at that level himself, at the College of Siskiyous in Weed, Calif., before transferring to Cal-Davis. Hawkins returned to Siskiyous as offensive coordinator from 1988-91.

"We've recruited junior-college guys every year (a

total of four have signed to scholarships in his three seasons at CU, including starting linebacker Shaun Mohler), and we will continue to do that," Hawkins said.

Just don't look for an influx of 19. Not here. Not ever.

Check back in a year or so to see which strategy worked best.

Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or
tkensler@denverpost.com

The Lowdown

By Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

KANSAS STATE (4-2, 1-1)

Player to watch: QB Josh Freeman.

The 6-foot-6, 250-pound junior is big enough to carry a team on his shoulders. Last weekend in the win at Texas A&M, Freeman threw for 234 yards and rushed for four TDs. CU coach Dan Hawkins called Freeman "highly underrated" among the Big 12's star-studded array of QBs.

Key for Wildcats: Shore up the defense.

Kansas State has yielded more than 500 yards in each of its past four games, including 544 last weekend to a Texas A&M unit that entered that game ranked No. 95 nationally in total offense. It's especially difficult to win on the road when the opponent is driving up and down the field.

COLORADO (3-3, 0-2)

Player to watch: PK Aric Goodman.

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Since being granted a scholarship by coach Dan Hawkins following the win over West Virginia, the sophomore has missed all four of his field-goal attempts. In a close game, the transfer from Wyoming could be the difference-maker. "I've been practicing really well," Goodman said this week.

Key for Buffaloes: Higher completion percentage.

In the past three games, CU sophomore QB Cody Hawkins has combined for 38-for-91 passing (41.8 percent). That won't move the chains, and it allows opposing defenses to crowd the box and stop the running game. It would help if tight ends and tailbacks could get more involved in the passing game. But with a patchwork offensive line, they are often called upon to block.

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Rocky Mountain News

CU report: Hagan urges Scott to fight through injuries

By **B.G. Brooks**, Rocky Mountain News ([Contact](#))

Published October 16, 2008 at 9:02 p.m.



Scott has rushed 42 times for 156 yards this season.

Running back **Darrell Scott** is frustrated with minor injuries that have plagued the first half of his freshman season at the University of Colorado, but his position coach also believes there's another source of anxiety.

"He's probably more frustrated with me telling him, 'If you're not hurt, you got to go' - and then him not being able to go 100 percent," **Darian Hagan** said. "But like I told him, 'You've got to fight through it. If you think about it, you limp. If you don't think about it, you don't limp.' That's what's going on."

Hagan said he's been "a nagging bug" in Scott's

ear, but he hasn't concluded Scott isn't capable of playing through or with pain.

"Nah, I haven't done that," Hagan said. "I'm not in his body. I can't say if he's capable of going or not."

Scott's latest ailment - earlier he had a hyperextended knee and groin injury - is an ankle sprain he called "frustrating and motivating. . . . I'm just trying to get healthy or close to healthy. I don't feel like I'm in that state right now; I'm just trying to roll with it."

He said Hagan has "been pushing me, you know, trying to push me to the limit . . . just motivating me."

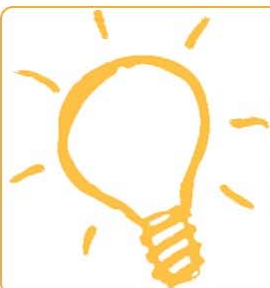
Through six games, Scott has rushed 42 times for 156 yards, but because of his ankle injury, only one of those carries came in last week's loss at Kansas.

The running back's numbers are well below what he and Hagan believe he can produce, but Scott said, "I'm not trying to prove anything to anyone. I'm just trying to be me right now and get back on the field."

"Like coach Hagan said, 'I don't want you on the sidelines. You're not a player that needs to be on the sidelines.' "

Scott said his only injury in high school also was an ankle injury (not the same ankle) in the latter part of his senior season. He played through that one and finished the season with 2,433 rushing

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yards and 33 touchdowns at St. Bonaventure High School in California, earning consensus All-American honors.

Asked how much of Scott's difficulties are because of being a freshman, Hagan said, "All of it. I think he's going through some emotional things - all the write-ups, the accolades, all the things put on his shoulders. Then him getting hurt and not being able to deliver is adding to his frustration.

"Like I told him, 'You didn't come here to be a savior. You came here to get an education and play football. And in the process, people have put some things on you.

"But not one time has this staff put that on you. Obviously, you make us a better team - but it's not on you."

"That's why it's called recruiting. You go out and get guys, and if one gets hurt, another steps up. That's what's going on. That's what you see with **Rodney Stewart**."

Far less heralded than Scott, Stewart is CU's leading rusher (75.5 yards a game).

CU

Words of love

BOULDER - Injuries, ineligibility and inexperience have made the Buffaloes offensive line the football program's version of a swap meet.

What's a starting quarterback to do? Keep on keeping on and loving up your O-linemen - whoever they might be week to week.

"Those guys are working hard and busting their butts. . . . I wouldn't trade those guys for anybody in the world," quarterback **Cody Hawkins** said.

"They bring their 'A' game every day. That group of guys is as tough as any on our team. . . .

"They've got to switch positions and do the nitty-gritty every day. Those guys have the toughest job in football. If you're playing quarterback, man, I've got an easy job. I've just got to take care of my job and trust they'll take care of theirs."

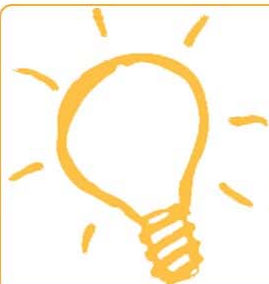
Handle with care?

CU started the season among the youngest teams in the Football Bowl Subdivision (formerly Division I-A), but coach **Dan Hawkins** claims that hasn't made this bunch fragile during a three-game losing streak.

"I don't think these guys are fragile by any means," he said. "I think a lot of that is because the few older guys we have - **Ryan Walters**, **Maurice Cantrell**, **Patrick Williams** - those guys are rock solid, pretty steady guys, (and) I think the staff does a good job with handling all of that."

Dan Hawkins said reaching "the next level of maturity" is crucial in convincing younger players "that those West Virginia and Oklahoma games

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can come along a little more often."

Hall of fame gathering

The seventh class will be inducted into CU's athletic hall of fame tonight at the Omni Interlocken Hotel in Broomfield. The program begins at 7 p.m., preceded by a social hour at 6. The ceremony is free and open to the public.

The nine inductees: **Claude Walton**, track; **Frank Clarke**, football; **Billy Lewis**, basketball; **Don Campbell**, track; **Dave Logan**, football/basketball; **John Stearns**, football/ baseball; **Alfred Williams**, football; **Kara Grgas-Wheeler Goucher**, cross country. **Dal Ward**, football coach/administrator, will be inducted posthumously.

The group will be introduced at halftime of the CU-Kansas State game.

He said it

"I've said this many times before, but that's why most little kids don't want to play quarterback. You're too alone out there."

Dan Hawkins

Numbers game

17 consecutive games with a touchdown pass was a streak that ended last weekend for Kansas State quarterback **Josh Freeman**. But he ran for four scores.

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