

Rocky Mountain News

Mizzou, Daniel aren't packing it in after loss to Texas

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

Published October 23, 2008 at 2:33 p.m.



Photo by G. Newman Lowrance / Getty Images

G. Newman Lowrance / Getty Images

Quarterback Chase Daniel and Missouri missed a chance to possibly be ranked No. 1 when they lost to Oklahoma State 28-23 on Oct. 11. Missouri has lost two in a row.

It took a couple of days for Chase Daniel to relearn the company line. But give the Missouri senior props - from Saturday night to Monday afternoon, he began to sound suspiciously like the guy he plays for.

Here's how the transformation went:

After he and the Tigers were slapped silly (56-

31) by top-ranked Texas on Saturday night in Austin, Daniel told reporters, "The story line is still out on the 2008 Missouri Tigers. Yeah, we have two conference losses. But I think Oklahoma beat Kansas (on Saturday).

"So, if we win out, then we're going to be right back in" the Big 12 Conference championship game in Kansas City, Mo.

Winning out? Playing for the conference title?

Hey, Chase, what have you done with college football's hallowed "taking them one at a time" mantra?

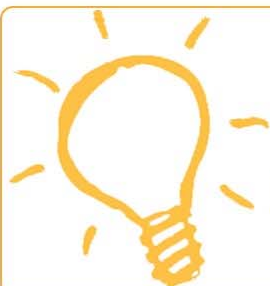
Missouri coach Gary Pinkel, who has no trouble taking stoic to the next level, retorted, "To think about anything beyond Colorado is laughable."

By Monday afternoon, on a national teleconference call arranged by the Missouri athletic department primarily to help promote Daniel's Heisman Trophy chase, Daniel and Pinkel were on the same page, in the same chapter, in the same book.

"Right now," Daniel said, "the only thing on my mind - and on our team's mind - is 5:30 (p.m. CDT) Saturday."

That's the kickoff time (FSN) for Missouri's encounter with CU, the Tigers' chance to break a two-game losing streak and possibly relaunch the quest Pinkel deemed unthinkable and unspeakable - winning the Big 12 in a season that finds the league at perhaps its strongest

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level ever, with the South Division so far reasserting its dominance.

Big 12 is loaded

The regular season's final five weeks in the Big 12 will be a thrilling amusement park ride. Four South schools - No. 1 Texas, No. 4 Oklahoma, No. 7 Oklahoma State and No. 8 Texas Tech - reside in The Associated Press top eight, with the same quartet perched in the top eight of the initial Bowl Championship Series rankings. (The only difference: Oklahoma State is No. 6 in the BCS poll).

Yet even with two losses against South teams (Oklahoma State and Texas), Missouri still has a chance to meet Daniel's goin'-to-Kansas City expectations - winning the North and reaching the league championship game.

And if CU offers a get-well opportunity for the Tigers, it also presents Daniel with a chance to possibly begin working his way back into a Heisman picture currently dominated by another Big 12 quarterback - Texas' Colt McCoy, one of Daniel's closest friends outside his Missouri circle.

In fact, if Daniel had a Heisman vote, it would go to McCoy, with Missouri teammate Jeremy Mac lin next on Daniel's list, followed by Florida quarterback Tim Tebow - the 2007 Heisman winner.

After the Longhorns torched the Tigers, the quarterbacks stayed a while and talked shop.

Daniel, who directed an almost identical offense for Carroll High School in Southlake, Texas, marveled at McCoy's performance: 29-of-32 passing for 337 yards, two passing touchdowns and two rushing scores. He completed a school-record 17 consecutive passes, and his 90.6 completion percentage also set a Texas record.

"Our relationship is a great one," Daniel said. "We stayed and talked a little bit after the game. He's playing at an unbelievably high level right now. Give props to him and credit where credit's due."

The subject of possibly meeting again in Kansas City in the Big 12 title game never was broached, Daniel said: "Not at all. What I asked him was, 'How in the heck did you learn to throw like that?'"

"I mean, he hit 90 percent of his passes - something ridiculous . . . he's playing at a high level right now, and you've got to love it."

Daniel's level of play isn't so shabby, either, though he and his coach concede he was subpar - throwing three interceptions - in the 28-23 loss against Oklahoma State that cost Missouri a chance to move to No. 1.

"He struggled against Oklahoma State but was good against Texas," Pinkel said. "We struggled early and he was pressured early. But I was pleased with his performance."

That performance included a 75.6 completion rate (31-of-41, 318 yards, two scores and an interception).

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Nonetheless, it was a second consecutive loss, which - fairly or not - can do permanent damage to a Heisman run. Daniel, who last year finished fourth in the voting but was the first Missouri player to be a finalist, claimed that winning the prestigious award this year "doesn't matter to me. It's a great award to be up for, and we still have a long season ahead of us."

Even in August, when the Tigers had the entire season ahead of them, Daniel contended the little bronze statuette didn't dominate his thoughts.

"I had already been to the ceremony (last year), to New York and had been able to experience everything that goes along with it," he said. "So my goal this season was winning ballgames, and we've gotten away from that. We need to get back to that and doing things right."

Until the Cowboys visited Columbia, Mo., on Oct. 11, Daniel and his offense hadn't done much wrong. In a three-game span from Sept. 6-20, Missouri scored on 15 consecutive possessions, and its No. 1-ranked offense wasn't forced into a three-and-out until the Cowboys visited.

Haven't been clicking

"Not necessarily just in that ballgame, but in general we haven't been clicking as well as we want to," Daniel said. "Finally, in the second half, we got things going against Texas, and we're going to try and keep it going."

"We just came across some very good teams. . . .

I wouldn't say it's a preparation thing, it's more execution - we're just not executing. But our guys are putting in the man-hours trying to get better."

Daniel, a stocky 6-foot, 225-pounder, wants an NFL shot, even if it comes initially with "clipboard duty" as someone's backup.

CU coach Dan Hawkins doesn't see Daniel as a quarterback who has unduly profited by playing in a "system" that has helped promote success.

Quite the contrary, noted Hawkins: "I think that's kind of a myth. Everybody's a system quarterback. . . . I don't know why that should be a knock. Joe Montana was a system quarterback, John Elway was a system quarterback. It's not a bad thing. . . .

"But (Missouri) certainly made what they do go well. Every coach is going to cater toward the type of personnel he has."

What would allow Daniel to succeed wherever he played, Hawkins said, is his "confidence, competitiveness, strong arm, accuracy and command of what it is they're trying to do. Plus, he makes very few mistakes, is a great field general and has good weapons around him."

"I have a lot of respect for him because of the system they run . . . everybody runs the spread offense differently, but what they do, they do very well."

Come Saturday, the Tigers hope to do it well

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once again.

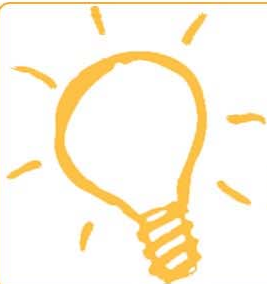
Having been reminded by their coach about short-term goals, Daniel said he and the Tigers have no other objective than beating the Buffaloes: "We're going to prepare as well as we can to meet that goal."

And after that, who knows? Maybe his coach won't quash that talk of visiting Kansas City.

The Chase is on (usually)

Missouri quarterback Chase Daniel's 2008 passing statistics.

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CU report: Getting out the vote

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

Published October 23, 2008 at 7:03 p.m.



Missouri's offense

If they're of age, Colorado football players have been encouraged by coach **Dan Hawkins** to register to vote Nov. 4 - and there's a small incentive if they do.

Hawkins has promised each player/voter a "free pass" within the football program that would allow tardiness for a weightlifting session, for example, to go unpunished.

"We're not talking about a major deal (going unpunished)," Hawkins said. "But if it's a minor thing, they get a 'free pass.'"

"I'm sure when they're five minutes late for a lift, I'll get the voter registration slip and the 'I voted today' sticker proving that they voted."

Hawkins believes underscoring social responsibilities to his players is part of his mission.

"We don't just teach football here," he said.

SCRUM, ANYONE?

Missouri's **Jeff Wolfert**, who also is the Tigers' placekicker, was called on two games ago against Oklahoma State to punt in a rollout, rugby style Hawkins says "worked pretty well for them."

Wolfert has rolled out and punted five times (43-yard average), with his kicks usually taking a low trajectory and getting a favorable end-over-end roll.

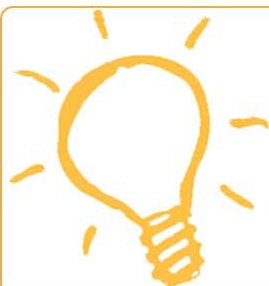
The advantage is, "They're hard to block, hard to catch, hard to set up a return (for)," Hawkins said. "The big thing is to get over there and field it . . . you don't want it just bouncing all the way down the field. But you've got to exercise discretion because if it takes too squirrely a hop, you've got to get out of the way."

Asked if he could adopt such a punting strategy, Hawkins said, "You know me, I could adopt anything."

ON PLAYING A PAIR

CU's use of two quarterbacks - **Cody Hawkins**, **Tyler Hansen** - isn't a foreign concept to Missouri quarterback **Chase Daniel**

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When he was a freshman, Daniel began splitting time with senior **Brad Smith** - even directing a comeback victory against Iowa State.

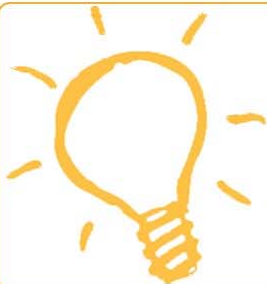
Daniel said being utilized as a freshman prepared him for his sophomore and junior seasons.

"It was nothing but a blessing," he said. "I felt significantly more prepared because of it."

He also said it provided the opportunity to gain the trust of teammates, and "the momentum just carried on."

Missouri coach **Gary Pinkel** made the decision earlier in the season to play highly recruited freshman quarterback **Blaine Gabbert** for many of the same reasons.

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Publish Date: 10/24/2008

O-line finding stride

Injuries caused a few disruptions early in the season

By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call

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BOULDER — The changes that frequented Colorado's offensive line in the first half of 2008 have abated. Does that mean the Buffs are relishing some continuity there? That's not really the right question.

CU will start the same five offensive linemen in the same places Saturday at No. 16 Missouri (4:30 p.m., FSN) whom it has started the previous three weeks. It's not that position coach Jeff Grimes doesn't want continuity, but four straight weeks isn't how he defines his terms.

"I think when a group of guys plays for two or three or four years together, you really get a certain amount of (continuity) going," Grimes said. "I think sometimes a little too much is made of that. Really, if you're doing your job the way you should as a coach, you ought to be working your next guys in enough so if a guy goes down, you can keep going. There shouldn't be this huge disruption that takes place because one guy gets hurt."

Disruptions came last month when starting right guard Max Tuioti-Mariner tore an ACL in practice and starting right tackle Ryan Miller broke his leg at Florida State.

Blake Behrens and Devin Head have settled in at left and right guards. Left tackle Nate Solder and center Daniel Sanders have started every game and have played all 503 offensive snaps. Right tackle Matt Bahr replaced Miller and will make his fourth start Saturday.

What change there is now involves reserves. Eugene Goree has returned to the defensive line after practicing at guard in recent weeks and playing two series there last Saturday against Kansas State. Goree said Sunday that defensive tackle is the position he expects to play next year, after three 2008 starters have graduated.

Recent improvement in redshirt freshman Ethan Adkins accommodates Goree's move. Adkins was suspended for three games in September following his arrest on suspicion of DUI. He returned the week before Big 12 play opened against Texas. Grimes said Adkins would be the first guard or tackle off the bench if a need arises.

"He has a lot of potential, but to this point he hasn't done things well enough to get on the field," Grimes said. "That suspension, being out for a few weeks, set him back.

"He's practiced pretty well this week. I've seen him do some things I haven't seen before. Whether that actually turns into him contributing on Saturday or not, we'll have to see."



Call of the day

While walking the Golden Ponds pathways in the park yesterday, I encountered a delightful gentleman, who was also walking the paths and picking up all the cigarette butts he could find.

 10.20.08

Just don't argue with me, buy American. I don't care what it is.



Grimes is rotating Adkins in with the starters to build comfort among all. Sophomore walk-on Keenan Stevens would replace Sanders if necessary.

CU's 247 rushing yards Saturday against Kansas State were a season high. Some of the success stemmed from quarterback Tyler Hansen's 86 yards. The offensive line played well, though. Grimes graded Sanders at 96 percent and Solder 99 for their work.

Solder, the former tight end who move to tackle last spring, "really dominated" Saturday, according to Grimes. The coach said Solder has entered games against Florida State, Texas and Kansas wondering how fast his opponents are and if he'll really be able to block them. Then sometime in the middle of the game, Grimes said, Solder realizes he can, and he plays with confidence the rest of the day.

Grimes wants Solder to have that confidence from the outset.

"The thing I've been trying to get across to him is being a young player, he doesn't even know how good he is or how good he can be," Grimes said. "I told him after the Kansas game, 'Nate, you can block anybody. It's time for you to step out there and play with confidence from the very first snap.'"

ACADEMIC AWARD: The American Football Coaches Association reported Thursday that it will give CU its 2008 Academic Achievement Award for posting a 100 percent graduation rate for members of its 2001 freshman class.

"This is a tremendous honor, one in which many people contributed, that enabled CU to earn this distinction," CU coach Dan Hawkins said in a release.

This year's award marks the first time the NCAA's Graduating Success Rate formula was used to pick a winner. The GSR is based on a six-year graduation window for student athletes. Schools are not penalized for outgoing transfer students who leave in good academic standing, according to the GSR.

EXTRA POINTS: Not everyone was thrilled to move into the practice bubble Wednesday. Defensive tackle George Hypolite said it was good to be inside but added, "I hate the way this thing smells." ... Hawkins continues to defend kicker Aric Goodman, who's missed his past six field goals and is 3-for-10 in 2008. "We don't have a free agent wire," the coach said. "We have to keep hanging in there and staying with him." ... Quarterback Cody Hawkins said Hansen, the freshman who made his debut last Saturday, probably has the best arm of CU's quarterbacks. His closest rival might be a surprise, though. Hawkins said sophomore Kyle Black, the 5-foot-11 transfer from Air Force, "has a hose." ... Dan Hawkins was asked this week if Matt Ballenger will return to the quarterback mix. "I thin Matt will have his day in the sun," Hawkins said. Coaches have credited Ballenger for his willingness to play scout-team quarterback in Hansen's absence.

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com.

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sports

Missouri trip is no vacation

Tigers' image hurt as Buffaloes arrive

By Chris Dempsey
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 10/24/2008 02:05:27 AM MDT

BOULDER — In any normal circumstance, facing the Missouri Tigers is a tall task.

"They're a pretty physical team," Colorado wide receiver Josh Smith said. "Their weight is up to par. Speed. Aggressiveness. A few talkers out there. From what I saw last year, I thought they were one of the more aggressive teams that I had been up against. Oklahoma, they were so-so. But Missouri, they did a lot more of the talking and a lot of stuff to try to get in your head."

And this isn't any normal circumstance.

The No. 16 Tigers come into Saturday's game having lost two games in a row. That hadn't happened to Missouri since 2006. Colorado has the daily double of not having beaten the Tigers since 2005. But it is Missouri's consecutive losses that have the Buffs bracing for an opponent with a huge chip on its shoulder.

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"After two losses, their coaches are probably pushing them hard right now," CU cornerback Cha'pelle Brown said. "So I think they are probably going to have fire in their eyes, so we have to be ready for it."

Despite the loss to No. 7 Oklahoma State and the blowout at No. 1 Texas, the Tigers are favorites to win the Big 12's North Division, which might set them up with a rematch with one of those teams. The Tigers, who have dropped 13 spots in The Associated Press poll the past two weeks, still boast one of the NCAA's most potent offenses.

Quarterback Chase Daniel was a serious Heisman Trophy candidate until the last two weeks. Wide receiver Jeremy Maclin is one of the fastest players

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in the country and ranks seventh in the Big 12 in receiving yards per game (95.1) He leads the conference in all-purpose yards (193.4 average).

Third on the Big 12 all-purpose yards list is Smith (160.3), who compares himself favorably to Maclin.

"Very talented dude," Smith said. "We're often compared a lot. He's got the speed up to par, nice hands. And we do a lot of the same things, special teams, and just going out and making plays for your team and being depended upon and being able to deliver."

Stopping Maclin is another thing. Texas kept Maclin under control — eight receptions for 66 yards and no touchdowns.

Still, Missouri has gone three-and-out just five times all season. In 72 possessions with Daniel, Missouri has scored 42 times, including 35 touchdowns. MU had a streak this season of 15 consecutive drives that ended in a score.

"They have a lot of weapons on their offense," CU linebacker Jeff Smart said. "We have to change up what we're doing, disguise what we're doing, give the quarterback different looks so that he may not know what we're in all the time. Just things like that. That's really our emphasis."

"We have to be good against the run. They throw the ball a lot, but we can't allow them to get a running game going and making it a two-dimensional game."

Chris Dempsey: 303-954-1279 or cdempsey@denverpost.com

The Lowdown

By Chris Dempsey, The Denver Post

COLORADO (4-3, 1-2)

Player to watch: WR Josh Smith.

Smith started the season on a hot streak, quickly making a name for himself as one of the nation's top all-purpose players. While his kick return effectiveness has stayed the same, he has just one catch in each of the last three games as a wide receiver.

Key for Buffaloes: Keep long-distance plays in check.

Missouri is one of the nation's top quick-strike teams. They have with 29 plays of 25 yards or longer this season, with 10 of those going for touchdowns.

MISSOURI (5-2, 1-2)

Player to watch: QB Chase Daniel.

As well as the senior quarterback has played this season, the last two weeks have been humbling experiences. He has thrown four interceptions against just three touchdowns and has been sacked four times.

Key for Tigers: Regain offensive consistency.

Missouri's high-powered offense has been derailed the last two weeks. If the Tigers can get the offense back on track, CU could be in for a long day.

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CU cited for top grad rate

Camera staff report
Friday, October 24, 2008

WACO, Texas -- Colorado will receive the American Football Coaches Association's 2008 Academic Achievement Award for recording a 100 percent graduation rate for its freshman class of 2001, it was announced Thursday.

It's the first time the Buffs have won the award that has been given out since 1981 and is presented by the Touchdown Club of Memphis.

The list of winners is one that is full of schools like Notre Dame, Northwestern, Duke and Boston College.

"This is a tremendous honor, one in which many people contributed, that enabled CU to earn this distinction," Colorado head coach Dan Hawkins said. "This is a team deal, on and off the field, and we are here to develop great people, graduate students and win championships."

This year's award marks the first time the NCAA's Graduation Success Rate formula has been used to select the winner. The award had previously been based on a formula used by the College Football Association and AFCA. The GSR is based on a six-year graduation window for student-athletes instead of the five-year window previously used by the CFA and AFCA.

Only Cincinnati, Duke, Navy, Notre Dame, Rutgers and Vanderbilt graduated 90 percent or more of its 2001 freshmen class, which was a part of four Big 12 North Division champion teams under coach Gary Barnett.

Only two other Big 12 schools graduated better than 70 percent of its 2001 freshman class -- Baylor and Texas Tech.



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