

# Rocky Mountain News

## CU report: Band-Aid kind of year

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

Published November 7, 2008 at 10:09 p.m.

**BOULDER** — Saying the Buffaloes' 2008 injury list is a bit lengthy is akin to saying the same of *War and Peace*

Coach **Dan Hawkins** says it has been unlike any he ever has been involved with in nearly three decades of coaching.

Historically, he said, his teams have had "very few in-season injuries, particularly practice injuries. Once in awhile a guy (is injured) in a game, but I can't ever remember anything remotely (approaching this). We maybe lost a guy, maybe two guys - but not the slew that we've had."

That "slew" of out-for-the-season players includes three offensive linemen, a cornerback, a linebacker, a defensive end, a tight end, a receiver and a running back. The list doesn't include academic casualties, of which there is another handful.

### Shaggy dog story

Count running backs coach **Darian Hagan** among the walking wounded.

Hagan, wearing a wrap on his right knee, said he

was lucky to even be upright after tripping over his Saint Bernard puppy at the top of his unlighted stairs - he didn't deem it necessary to switch on a light, therefore not seeing the dog - and taking 17 steps the hard way.

At the bottom of the stairs, Hagan said, he came to rest with "arms and legs in the air," thinking unkind thoughts about his new pet. After collecting himself and cooling off, he acknowledged, "It was my fault."

### Who's No. 3?

Hagan goes into the game Saturday uncertain of his third running back behind sophomore **Demetrius Sumler** and freshman **Darrell Scott**. The candidates: **Kevin Moyd** or **Corey Nabors**

Moyd, a junior, has been used occasionally this season but has been sporadic in making the most of those opportunities. Nabors, a walk-on sophomore, recently spoke with Hawkins about his status, among other things, and could get a look Saturday.

Moyd has seven carries (30 yards) this season, Nabors none.

### Ignoring the Internet

Scott's status and productivity has been roundly discussed in cyberspace. The player said he pays it no mind: "You can't worry about what other people think."

Of things he can control, he said his knowledge

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of the offense and the playbook is "clicking now, (becoming) second nature. And I'm starting to get a relationship with the line where I can tell what they're doing and just cut off it (running). That's working, too."

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## CU targets opportunistic instinct

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

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Christopher Gannon/Des Moines Register

Colorado head coach Dan Hawkins holds his head while watching Iowa State score 21 points in the third quarter last season.

In two-plus laborious seasons of rebuilding at the University of Colorado, football coach Dan Hawkins already has accumulated twice as many losses (22) as he did in five seasons (11) at Boise

State.

So, asking him if the 31-28 loss CU suffered last year at Iowa State torqued his gut perhaps more than any of the others is, well, maybe an apples-

to-oranges inquiry.

This was the Buffaloes' scenario: After opening fast and nearly flawlessly, CU built a 21-0 halftime lead. But on his team's first second-half possession, Hawkins gambled, going for it on fourth-and-1 at the CU 43-yard line.

After tailback Demetrius Sumler was stuffed for no gain, Iowa State responded with 31 consecutive points. CU momentarily regrouped, scored a late touchdown and had an opportunity to tie in the controversial closing seconds.

But the third-quarter damage had undone the Buffs, and in *The Des Moines Register*, Cyclones quarterback Bret Meyer summed up Hawkins' gamble like this: "I don't know what they were going for."

A contrite Hawkins later conceded, "I kind of let the dam break. . . . Maybe I just need to grow up and smarten up and start playing it by the book. Maybe I need to quit being so bullheaded."

CU's startling loss was significant because it marked the largest come-from-behind win in Iowa State history, while CU's 21-point lead equaled its largest ever without producing a win.

A year later, Hawkins appears to be doing his

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best not to remember. On that question about how gut-wrenching a loss it really was, this was his answer: "The three years I've been at (CU), I've had a lot of them stick to my soul. That's part of living. But that was a tough one."

Hawkins, whose third Buffs team is two wins short of becoming bowl eligible for a second time, isn't a fan of using past games as motivation. He said all things external "can all go up in smoke in a hurry. I try not to use a lot of that kind of stuff as motivation."

"You try to use your standards and your process. . . . I've never been into that too much. We need to play a lot better, because we need to win the football game (today) and improve. We've got to keep our hopes alive to get into the postseason. To me, that's the biggest motivation."

His players agree . . . kind of.

While senior defensive tackle George Hypolite called the 2007 game against the Cyclones "a tough one to lose," he added that in the area of botched chances, it might have been a precursor for 2008.

"At the end of the day, you look at the game and say there were a lot of missed opportunities," he said. Now, Hypolite noted, "missed opportunities seems to be the theme of the (2008) season."

"But that's just what happens with a young team. You make the big play sometimes, you miss the big play other times."

Regardless of the Buffs' overall youth, junior cornerback Cha'pelle Brown insists they have retained a "killer instinct" and will take a "playoff" attitude into their final three regular-season games.

"We've got to get two out of three - and we're trying to get three," he said. "To do that, we've got to step our games up . . . we've got to get these wins."

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Longmont, Colorado  
Monday, November 10,  
2008

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## **Buffs staying upbeat**

*By Patrick Ridgell*

*Longmont Times-Call*

BOULDER — Maybe the Colorado Buffaloes' offense will click today. Maybe they'll get a win over Iowa State. Maybe \$100 bills will fall from the sky. Who knows?

But optimism sure was oozing this week at practice, where one day one player declared, "We were on fire today on offense."

That came from Darrell Scott. Seeing how he's a freshman and his first college offense is one of Division I's least productive, Scott might not be the best judge of what an "on fire" offense really resembles.

That's not the point, though. Scott's vibe wasn't unique among his teammates. The 4-5 Buffs, losers of five of their past six, enter today as 91/2-point favorites against a visitor that's lost seven straight. They're optimistic they can revive fading bowl hopes. They're optimistic they can show progress when progress in recent weeks has been so fleeting.

In short, they're optimistic.

"We just all, as a team, are being upbeat and staying focused," senior safety Ryan Walters said after hearing Scott's comments.

"Nobody's walking around with their head down. We still have a lot to play for this year."

Aside from a bowl, which will require CU win twice in its final three games to reach, confidence and improvement are at stake. Iowa State allows more points, total yards and passing yards than any Big 12 defense. If CU's beleaguered offense is ever going to show the tangible benefits of progress, today is a prime chance.

Of course, the Buffs have helped other struggling defenses look good. And there are other challenges.

They'll be without leading rusher Rodney Stewart, whose broken right fibula benches him all month. Darrell Scott, who rolled his ankle again last week, will be asked to assume some of Stewart's carries. Coaches also want improvement from the offensive line, which has been inconsistent. They'd also like to see more productivity from the receivers, especially Josh Smith, whose plea for more touches last week after a game in which he dropped a sure touchdown pass had them scratching their heads.

Head coach Dan Hawkins, obviously, won't publicly reveal what the plans are with quarterbacks Cody Hawkins and Tyler Hansen, who've been sharing series for three weeks. Today could be different. If the mobile Hansen was the best choice on the final drive last Saturday at Texas A&M, when the desperate Buffs trailed by a touchdown, why wouldn't Hansen be the best choice for more series today?

Dan Hawkins won't go there.

"I think our guys are totally good with whoever's in there," he said. "They don't really care. They just want to win."

They just want to move the football. They want to score points.” CU’s 59 points in five Big 12 games are the league’s fewest by a wide margin. Second-lowest is Iowa State, which has scored 102.

Three interceptions, two thrown by Hansen, at Texas A&M proved costly. The Buffs entered the year, as every team does, hoping to post a positive turnover ratio. The best win of Hawkins’ coaching tenure at CU, which is now 12-22, came over Oklahoma last year when the Buffs forced three turnovers in the second half. In 2008, CU’s turnover ratio is minus-4.

CU is optimistic that can be remedied.

“We’ve had certain things that have not necessarily gone our way, certain things that we left out there that we didn’t capitalize on,” receiver Pat Williams said. “When you add up all of those small things, you can’t expect to win. We just have to play cleaner, basically. We haven’t played as clean as we can.

“We just need to do our assignments. We’re not trying to win the national championship on every play. You do your assignment, you do the things you’ve been coached to do and leave everything else to everybody else doing their job.”

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



# Basement battle: Buffs, ISU meet

## Struggling squads chasing confidence boost today at Folsom

By Kyle Ringo

Saturday, November 8, 2008

Winnable games just keep passing the Colorado football team by this season because the Buffs haven't been able to score much, and in one case, not at all.

They have reached the point where they can't afford to allow another potential victory to slip away if they hope to qualify for a bowl game for the second consecutive season. CU needs two victories in its final three games to become bowl eligible.

Coach Dan Hawkins said he expects to see his team focused and ready today (11:30 a.m., Versus).

"I think you always want to have a certain sense of urgency, that's for sure, but it can border to the other side of being chaos," he said.

The same old set-up greets the team again today as it plays host to Iowa State, a program it should have beaten last year. The defense must set the tone while hoping the offense hits its stride.

These might be the two worst programs in the Big 12 Conference at this point in the season. They are definitely the two most in need of an infusion of confidence.

The Buffs' month-old quarterback rotation with sophomore Cody Hawkins and true freshman Tyler Hansen has produced mixed results with one win and two losses and each showing flashes of potential and head-slapping blunders.

The Buffs are the only team in the league not to gain 400 yards total offense in a game this season, and they are the lowest scoring team in the conference by more than a touchdown.

The Cyclones, meanwhile, come to town losers of seven consecutive games. Their last victory was Sept. 6 at home against Kent State. The ISU program hasn't won on the road in 16 tries, dating back to Oct. 29, 2005, at Texas A&M.

ISU beat the Buffs in Ames, Iowa, last season by overcoming a 21-point deficit and surviving a late-game rally in which the Buffs twice appeared to tie on field goals of 50 and 55 yards that were disallowed.

Second-year coach Gene Chizik is the first to admit his players are dealing with confidence issues, and he's blunt about the state of the program as it enters today's game with a 2-7 overall record and a 0-5 mark in conference play.

"We're not as good as some of these teams in the league right now," Chizik said.

The Cyclones feature a shaky defense, which provides another opportunity for the Buffs' impotent offense. The Cyclones rank near the bottom of 119 teams in the Bowl Championship Subdivision in most defensive statistical categories. They are allowing more than 450 yards of offense a game.

The Buffs failed to take advantage of a similarly weak defense last week at Texas A&M. Dan Hawkins and his assistants have made personnel changes, reverted to using the huddle and simplified the entire offense. There isn't much left to do but coax better execution from players at this point.

"We've kind of explored as many options as we can; we put defensive lineman on the offensive line, we've switched out quarterbacks," Hawkins said. "I do think overall there is a philosophy, in terms of what it is we're trying to do and what we totally believe in. We've had to adapt and adjust that a little bit, but trying not to get too out of whack."

Colorado will play today without its leading rusher. Freshman Rodney Stewart broke his leg last week, and the rushing duties will fall mostly on the shoulders of Demetrius Sumler and Darrell Scott.

Both players performed well last week. Scott showed glimpses of the dazzling ability that made him the nation's No. 1 tailback recruit last year. Scott is hoping for his best performance of the season today, despite his aching ankle, which has bothered him since the Texas game.

Colorado has been in most of its games this season late in the third quarter and into the fourth because its defense has been solid. The best performances have come at home, including inspired stands against West Virginia and Kansas State. The Buffs held both programs under 15 points.

Iowa State quarterback Austen Arnaud presents a familiar set of challenges with ability to run and throw, but he doesn't have the gaudy stats of some of the Buffs' past opponents. He has completed 60 percent of his passes with just 10 touchdown passes and six interceptions.

"I've got to give the kid a lot of credit," Chizik said. "He's been playing beat up. He's been taking some big shots."



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# Woelk: No more room for error for Buffaloes

By Neill Woelk

Saturday, November 8, 2008

Win or go home.

Well, win or go home for Christmas. No bowl game, no bowl schwag, no bonus practices, no mini-vacation (even if it is Shreveport) -- no nothing.

Just a long, dreary offseason that begins a month sooner than necessary.

That's the message that's been floating through the Colorado football locker room this week. It's playoff time, and if the Buffs want to extend their season past November, they'd better win today.

They should. Plain and simple.

Forget the problems the Buffs have endured thus far. Yes, the injuries are real. So is the inexperience, the accelerated learning curve, the lack of depth -- all the things that have hindered the development of Dan Hawkins' third team.

Anyone who thinks those issues haven't changed the course of this season is in serious denial or simply lost touch with reality long ago.

But fact is, the 4-5 Buffs need to overcome those issues today. Colorado should beat Iowa State. The Buffs are at home, they are healthy favorites (10 points) and they have plenty of incentive.

Certainly Colorado has been a better team at Folsom Field. Two of CU's better performances this year, West Virginia and Kansas State, have come in Folsom's friendly confines.

But if the Buffs have any hope -- any hope at all -- of playing past Nov. 28, they need to do more than just eke out a win today over a team that has lost seven in a row.

The Buffs need to do something they haven't done since the first game of the season: dominate an opponent.

Three of CU's four wins this year have been by a touchdown or less. Only once, a 38-17 win over Colorado State in the season opener, have the Buffs entered the fourth quarter with anything resembling a comfortable lead.

Meanwhile, Colorado's offense has been ... well, offensive. Not since Week 2, when CU beat Eastern Washington 31-24, have the Buffs scored more than 21 points. Over the last five weeks, it's been even worse. Colorado has put a grand total of 59 points on the board in that span, an average of less than 12 per game.

Today would be a great time to change that -- and it's a couple of true freshmen who could lead the way.

Start with running back Darrell Scott. The plum of Colorado's recruiting class, Scott has been hampered all season by an assortment of bumps and bruises. He admits it's been a learning experience.

But with leading rusher Rodney Stewart on the sidelines with a broken leg, the door is open for Scott to get the work he's been craving. If Scott takes advantage of the opportunity, he could easily surpass his career high in rushes (13 vs. Eastern Washington) and yards (66 vs. Texas A&M).

Move on to frosh QB Tyler Hansen. If we had our druthers, we'd see Hansen play the entire game today. That's not likely, as CU coaches have said they'll continue to rotate Hansen with Cody Hawkins.

Even if that's the case, it's still a great chance for Hansen to take a big step in his development.

Hansen had his moments against A&M last week, including an 11-play, 98-yard scoring drive near the end of the game. But he also threw a couple of interceptions, mistakes he later attributed to bad decisions.

The more time he sees on the field, the more that decision-making process will improve.

The bottom line, though, is this: the Buffs need to put together the type of performance that creates momentum.

Technically, Colorado could still lose today and remain alive in the hunt for bowl eligibility. Such a scenario, however, would require that the Buffs finish with wins at home over No. 8 Oklahoma State and on the road at Nebraska.

It's why Colorado needs a win today. Build some confidence, gather some momentum and make it a November to remember.

But lose today, and it will definitely be a month to remember -- only for all the wrong reasons.



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