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No regret for CU's Hansen

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BOULDER — Something funny happened on Tyler Hansen's way to finishing out 2008 as Colorado's starting quarterback. Actually, something didn't happen.

Hansen was set to take all the snaps Nov. 8 when CU hosted Iowa State, but found himself on the bench in the second half when the offense didn't score before halftime. Cody Hawkins threw four touchdown passes in relief.

Hansen didn't play in Saturday's loss to Oklahoma State, and Hawkins has already been named the starter for CU's regular season finale at Nebraska on Nov. 28 (1:30 p.m., ABC). Hansen might play at Nebraska, head coach Dan Hawkins said Tuesday.



Colorado quarterback Tyler Hansen, left, scrambles out of the pocket to avoid the rush from Iowa State defensive end Travis Ferguson in Boulder on Nov. 8.

David Zalubowski/AP

CU is obviously trying, at all costs, to win right now, which is why coaches asked Hansen prior to the season's seventh game if he'd be willing to pull his redshirt and play. All parties involved said Hansen never hesitated.

It's also why they'd bench the freshman who just pulled his redshirt and use Cody Hawkins when the offense wasn't scoring against Iowa State.

If Hansen doesn't play again in 2008, he'll finish the year having appeared in four games, two starts, and on 174 snaps.

Hansen said, regardless of whether he takes another snap in 2008, the decision was worth it.

"I think burning the redshirt was great for me, because it gave me that much more to learn, that much more to look forward to," Hansen said.

"Every game I've played in so far, I've just been, 'There's so much I can learn and so much to be better at.' Instead of redshirting and being on the scout team, where I don't really see much film and there's really no point in telling me what to do, I'm just getting that much more stuff out of it."

Hansen said playing this year will help his efforts in spring drills, when starting quarterback will be wide open and fiercely sought. Hawkins will be back, and redshirt freshman Matt Ballenger said spring football will be "huge" for him as he competes for the starting spot.

"We're sitting talking about Matt, and Matt's a redshirt freshman," offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said. "It's not like he's a fourth-year junior and you're going, 'Yeah, you know, that's a miss.'"

"He's a guy that still has a tremendous amount of upside, and we have to abstract that."

Helfrich said having played and garnered experience will help Hansen. Those qualities are part of why, to Helfrich, burning Hansen's redshirt was worth it. They aren't the only reasons, though.

"That Kansas State game, you need look no further than that of he came in and provided us a much-needed spark," Helfrich said. "Without him in that game, who knows?"

"I think, without question, it was worth it, and again, it was a great team move on his part."

EXTRA POINTS: Asked what he knows about Nebraska's backup quarterback, Patrick Witt, Dan Hawkins replied, "I know a lot about Joe Ganz." There is speculation in Nebraska over the health of Ganz, the Huskers' starting quarterback. ... CU is blaring the speakers at practice again this week in preparation for the Nebraska game. The sounds include the Nebraska fight song. ... Dan Hawkins said this week's practices during the bye are being used exclusively for game-planning purposes.

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