



Smith granted release to USC only

By Kyle Ringo
Tuesday, June 2, 2009

BOULDER, Colo. — The Colorado athletic department granted a release to wide receiver Josh Smith, allowing him to communicate with the University of Southern California about a possible transfer there.

Athletic director Mike Bohn, however, has refused to grant Smith a release to any other school. Smith was considering eight to 10 schools.

Smith has appealed Bohn's decision to a committee that oversees such situations, and he should know within two weeks whether the committee will overrule Bohn.

The committee is mandated for all schools under NCAA bylaw 13-1-1-31 and is made up of personnel outside of the athletic department. CU's panel consists of three professors.

Smith informed coach Dan Hawkins of his decision to transfer more than a week ago. He said his motivation for leaving was because CU does not offer the music major or program he wants to study.

Coaches explored numerous options, including allowing Smith to attend classes at CU-Denver, where the music major is offered, and still remain a part of the football team in Boulder. Travel and scheduling issues prevented that from being a realistic solution.

Colorado refused to grant Smith a blanket release, which would allow him to transfer to any school of his choosing.

Instead, Bohn granted the release to USC only because that school met the criteria Smith said he was most interested in — it is close to home (Moorpark, Calif.) and offers the music program.

If Smith does not have a release to a specific school and still chooses to transfer, he must pay his way for a year before becoming eligible for financial aid.

"That is our practice with all of our student-athletes who are in good academic standing and are doing well on campus and within the program," Bohn said. "We don't provide a release initially until we have all the information associated with their decision to transfer and any nuances associated with it.

"It's because of the investment that is already placed in the student-athletes. We have a lot invested in them and just don't allow people to transfer when we feel like we provided a very solid foundation for them to succeed academically and athletically."

While Bohn insists it is standard practice to initially deny most releases, Julie Manning, associate athletic director for compliance, said it is rare for a case to reach the appeals committee, where Smith's case now resides.

“It’s very unusual,” Manning said. “I think it’s a coach’s way or an administrator’s way of making sure that a student athlete knows what they’re getting into and what they’re possibly giving up.”

Manning said that while Smith’s decision to transfer has been reported in the media and acknowledged by coach Dan Hawkins and in official school press releases, it does not mean his relationship with CU has ended.

If Smith does not find what he is looking for in a transfer, he can remain at CU and the school must honor his scholarship, Manning said.

“Just because a young man wants to explore his options doesn’t mean we close the door on him, Manning said.

Manning is in her fifth year as CU’s compliance director, and she previously spent two decades as head women’s golf coach at Iowa State. She said she has seen student-athletes reach the appeals process and reverse their decision to transfer in the past.

“It does happen,” she said.

It is not known if the USC football program has interest in Smith to the point that it would offer him a scholarship.

Smith did finish 10th in the nation last year in all-purpose yards. So he would be an attractive addition to most programs.

However, he would face much more stiff competition for playing time with the Trojans than he currently faces with the Buffs.

He finished spring ball listed atop the depth chart at the x receiver position, as well as being the No. 1 punt and kickoff return man.

Smith has not returned multiple messages left for him over the past week.



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Woelk: No rhyme, reason to Buff exodus

By Neill Woelk

Wednesday, June 3, 2009

A reader called Tuesday and bluntly asked: "What's going on with the fire drill at CU?"

I'm not sure if I'd describe recent events at Colorado in quite those terms. But certainly, happenings on the Hill over the last couple of months have been odd, to say the least.

I can't claim to know what -- if anything in particular -- has sparked the recent rash of transfers from the football program. But I'm guessing it has to be at least a little disconcerting to the folks in charge.

In the last couple of months, at least five Buffs have decided to pull up stakes and jump-start their careers elsewhere. Even when you consider that the number of transfers in Division I football is increasing on an annual basis, five seems to be tad on the high side.

Not that a program losing a couple of players is abnormal. Oregon lost two after spring ball. Ditto with Texas. Michigan has had its fair share of recent departures (including one who has landed at Colorado), and the same goes for most other high-profile schools. In a day and age when instant gratification is the rule rather than the exception, kids seem to be quicker on the transfer trigger than ever before. If you don't like it someplace, you leave.

But five?

I hesitate to call the number alarming, simply because of the wide spectrum of reasons given for the departures.

Homesickness. Lack of playing time. Specific classes not offered in Boulder. And, in at least one case, what appears to simply be a case of advanced stupidity on the part of the player.

(By the way: Examples of starting players leaving for other schools aren't as rare as you might think. Google "college football transfer list" and you'll find plenty.)

Thing is, there's not one common theme, no one underlying reason that fits all five of CU's departures.

One reader e-mailed me and suggested that race is a factor.

But of the five recent departures, two are black, two are white and one is of Samoan descent.

No trend there.

I've had folks suggest that the departure of former offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich to Oregon had something to do with the transfers. Three of the players did announce their plans after Helfrich left, but

another is a defensive player and one player left before Helfrich made the move.

That's an awfully thin common thread.

I've even had some folks suggest that Dan Hawkins' penchant for giving walk-ons playing time had a role in wide receiver Josh Smith's decision to leave.

And here's where I have to draw the line for the sake of common sense and sanity.

Dan Hawkins' job is to win football games. After covering football at all levels for the better part of three decades, I've learned at least this much: No head coach makes a decision on who's playing and who's sitting based on whether the player is a five-star recruit or a walk-on. Whoever makes the plays, whoever gives the team the best chance to succeed (in the eyes of the man whose job it is to win), plays.

It's that simple.

So what's the answer?

I'm not sure there is one, at least not one that offers a simple explanation for the departure of five players.

My guess — hope? — is that this spring is an aberration, a one-time exodus that won't be repeated in the years to come. A variety of circumstances that aligned perfectly over the span of a couple of months to produce a rare result.

If that's the case, we won't see anything similar for the next couple of years.

If not, Buff fans better hope Hawkins and Co. have figured it out and plan to address it — preferably sooner rather than later. ...

A quick note on the schedule change that moved the Colorado-Colorado State game to a Sunday, giving CU two stretches next fall in which the Buffs will play two games in a six-day span.

Since both the Colorado State game (Sept. 6) and the Toledo game (Sept. 11) will both be televised, it will add an estimated \$700,000 to CU's coffers.

That's enough to fund a couple other sports at CU for an entire year.

That being said, an additional \$700,000 won't be enough to pay for the embarrassment of a loss at Toledo if the Buffs don't take care of business there.

And finally, the Denver Buff Club still has openings for its fundraising golf tournament June 22 at Glenmoor Country Club in Cherry Hills Village.

The tournament raises funds for CU's scholarship program. It begins with a shotgun start at 12.30 p.m. following a luncheon and practice period. The cost for individual players is \$200 (pre-payment required) and corporate tee and hole sponsorships are still available.

Deadline for registration is June 8. For more information, call (303) 492-5497.

[< Back](#) | [Home](#)



Former Broncos head coach Dan Hawkins leads Colorado into his fourth season in the Big 12.



A former quarterback, Drew Hawkins proved to be quite mobile and is now a wide receiver as a sophomore.



Cody Hawkins is a former Bishop Kelly standout and is preparing for his junior season at quarterback for Colorado.

The 'Hawk' is never too far from the nest: Dan, Cody and Drew Hawkins

By: BY KIRK BELL
Arbiter Journalist

Posted: 6/3/09

Boise State football fans look at the program that spawned a new era of success with Chris Petersen leading the way. Just as many fans were left with jaws dragging on the floor when his predecessor, Dan Hawkins, chose to move forward to bigger and better things at the University of Colorado to take his shot at the Big 12 Conference. Those fans have since lifted their chins and are now praising the move by Hawkins to make way for one of college football's greatest minds.

Following rape scandals that rocked the NCAA, UC needed a fresh face. Someone who could remind them that they are former national champions and a team that won six consecutive bowl appearances from 1993-99.

"Every time I've gone someplace it's been another test and another challenge and things have always worked out good," Dan Hawkins said. "I think we're very close to making some great things happen on the field. I really do. But you have to rebuild the culture of some things because of the things that happened here."

Coach Hawkins knew that a move might leave behind a program that was bound for great things. Little could he have known that just one season after he had left that his former players and colleagues would take another step toward greatness. He attributes it to players who had overcome steep adversity and early experience along with consistency of a staff that works well together.

"You've got a tremendous amount of continuity," Dan Hawkins said. "So when you have that kind of consistency and those kind of players. And obviously Pete's a great coach in of his own right. Yeah you knew things were going to be good."

Many Broncos fans had their eyes on a quarterback who was highly recruited that just so happened to be Dan Hawkins son.

Cody Hawkins, of course, followed his father to Boulder and chose to pursue his collegiate career away from Boise. Cody joined the Buffaloes and redshirted his freshman year through 2006.

Cody earned the starting job 2007 as a freshman which caused a stir compounded by the fact he is the head coach's oldest son. His views on his father's proficient demeanor is nothing short of professional.

"I think the way that my father has handled the entire situation has been perfect especially with the players," Cody said. "They really appreciate how he handles everyone in the program. Everybody looks at him as a father figure. I think he really cares about everybody and treats them like they were his own kid."

An observation that has been seen through Chris Petersen's short tenure that fosters a family first type of mentality. A view that is void of preferential treatment to Cody despite what many feel would be impossible to overlook.

"I cry and I celebrate the same for those guys too," Dan said. "I guess the down side of it is that maybe you don't truly ever get to be that ultimate father figure with him because I don't get to paint my face black and gold or wear his jersey."

This stance shifts a little bit when referring to his youngest son, Drew, who is attending and playing football at BSU. Dan sees his participation as a fan of BSU football and following Drew's progression there might be acceptable and help him fill that father role that he has not been able to display.

"Yeah, that is something that I feel a little bit more comfortable in doing," Dan said. "We kind of joke about that a little bit. It is a little bit easier to be the dad...The down side is that you don't get to be there that much. I might get to see a game this year. I don't know but probably not."

Drew followed the footsteps of Cody as a quarterback until the decision to reconfigure Drew as a wide receiver was announced by Petersen after a good display of athleticism not to mention successful play by Kellen Moore and a strong recruiting class at quarterback. This would allow Drew that opportunity to become a productive member of the Broncos squad.

"I told Pete...'Look. I don't know what Drew is but I know that he can do something. Could he be a quarterback? Yeah, maybe. Could be a wide receiver? Yeah, maybe,'" Dan said. "I always thought he could be a good half field safety."

With Vinny Perretta and Tanyon Bissel vacating the familiar slash position at BSU, the possibility of filling that role could present a good opportunity for him to produce.

"He definitely knows all about what they are trying to do," Dan said. "Whether you're trying to run the ball from the quarterback position or doing something where he might run. He certainly understands all of that. I think he could do some of that."

"I know that if he continues to progress and do what the coaching staff asks of him he will get a chance

to contribute," Cody said.

Until then each of the Hawkins will push further toward success in their own rites.

Drew Hawkins was not available to comment for this article.

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