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CU vs. Alabama: A loss is a loss

By The Denver Post

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In light of the NCAA ruling against Alabama, some Colorado football fans may argue that the Buffaloes do have a winning season under coach Dan Hawkins after all. That's not the policy of the CU sports information department, however.

The NCAA committee on infractions ruled Thursday that Alabama must vacate 21 football victories during the 2005, 2006 and 2007 seasons because athletes in a variety of sports improperly obtained free textbooks for other students.

Although the penalty includes Alabama's 30-24 victory against CU in the 2007 Independence Bowl, Colorado will continue to list the game as a loss, said CU associate athletic director David Plati, who heads the sports information department. The 2007 Buffs finished 6-7, including the bowl game.

"If that's the case, we would put an asterisk by the game, with a reference that Alabama's

victory was vacated because of an NCAA ruling," Plati said Thursday. "But we've never changed records.

"Some schools change the series records between teams when something like that happens. But I agree with the NCAA statistics people that you leave the result that happened on the field."

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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guest columnist

Renew AFA-CU series

Halting the annual football games was necessary, but it's time to resume an old rivalry.

By David Ramsey
The Gazette (Colorado Springs)

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COLORADO SPRINGS — Lt. Gen. Albert Clark remembers the gruesome end of the Air Force-Colorado football series.

I hope he's able to see the renewal of this once-fierce rivalry, which crashed to a halt in 1974.

AFA and CU officials better hurry. Clark, a World War II fighter pilot and German prison camp survivor, turns 96 on Aug. 27.

"And that's a long way off," said Clark, a former AFA superintendent now living in peaceful retirement on the northern edge of Colorado Springs.

No doubt, the Falcons' final trips to Boulder in 1971 and 1973 were filled with mayhem.

Clark, superintendent from 1970-74, remembers cadets being hassled at Boulder's Folsom Field. Uniforms were ripped, hats stolen. Disorder reigned. He remembers a frozen can of beer hitting him in the back of the neck. He remembers eggs thrown at him and his staff. Alcohol fueled the anarchy.

But it was more than sloshed CU supporters. Some of the attacks were inspired by an agenda. The fervor of the anti-war movement carried into the football stadium, and those who opposed the conflict found a tempting stage to showcase their rage.

"A rowdy phase all over the United States," Clark said.

And every other year, the Falcons played at a headquarters of the rowdiness.

"It was very difficult up in Boulder," Clark said in his steady voice. "The college was pretty riotous, and there was a lot of anti-military feeling."

After watching eggs and beer cans and abuse of his cadets, Clark made his decision.

"I was disgusted and determined to take action," he said.

He withdrew AFA from the series, ending what should have become a great tradition.

From 1958 to 1974, the Buffs and Falcons played 16 times. CU won 12, including the last five.

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But it wasn't the state school picking on the military academy. Four of AFA's losses were by 10 points or fewer. Two losses were by one point.

Clark made the right move when he halted the series, but it's time — it's way past time — to renew the rivalry. A marquee opponent beckons 100 minutes from the AFA campus. The games would ignite interest all over Colorado.

Clark sees the obvious. The teams should play, and he's ready to put aside pain from the past.

"I don't hold a bitterness forever," Clark said. "I would not make any protest if the present leaders of the school decided to get a contract again."

It almost happened. CU athletic director Mike Bohn proposed a Falcons trip to Boulder in 2008 with a return game at Air Force in 2013, but AFA athletic director Hans Mueh decided five years was too long to wait.

Still, momentum is multiplying. Bohn, an administrator at AFA from 1984-92, said he wants to play. AFA coach Troy Calhoun yearns to tangle with the Buffs.

"Yes, absolutely," Calhoun said.

Jim Bowman agrees with Calhoun. He hopes the teams play again.

He witnessed the wildness in Boulder. Bowman, 76, worked for AFA's football staff from 1958-74 and later served as associate athletic director.

He spoke by phone from Corvallis, Ore., where he's retired.

"It was college kids being college kids," Bowman said. "And we said, 'Let's just knock it off for a while.' "

Awhile should have ended long ago.

Columnist David Ramsey can be reached at 719-476-4895 or david.ramsey@gazette.com.

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