



# Hawk's '10 wins' raises eyebrows

## Fellow coaches aren't sure they'd establish specific number

By Kyle Ringo  
Tuesday, July 28, 2009

DALLAS --- It's safe to say when Dan Hawkins challenged his team in December to win 10 games in 2009 with his surprising "10 wins and no excuses" quote, he was once again breaking free from the norms most coaches generally stick to.

In fact, he seemed to be getting far outside the one-game-at-a-time comfort zone.

Hawkins, assistant coach Brian Cabral and three Buffs --- Jeff Smart, Marcus Burton and Riar Geer --- will appear at Big 12 Conference media days today and will likely be asked about the 10-win challenge the coach put on his program.

Hawkins hasn't backed away from the goal an inch in the months since, and during spring ball, his players said they like the fact their coach believes in them.

The Buffs begin their fourth season under Hawkins when fall camp opens Aug. 7 and expectations are for the team to produce its first winning season and play in the second bowl game of Hawkins' tenure. Whether they can race all the way to 10 wins will be answered over the coming months, but the idea of the Buffs going from 5-7 last season to double-digit victories this fall has raised a few skeptical eyebrows.

CU was picked to finish fourth in the Big 12 North by media who cover the league, and preseason magazines generally have them finishing somewhere between second and fourth.

It doesn't appear many outside the program believe this team is capable of achieving the 10-win challenge. An informal poll of coaches around the league indicates Hawkins is either an innovative motivator or a little crazy for putting any win total out there as a goal.

Oklahoma State coach Mike Gundy has spent his life in football. He said he has never experienced a season at any level in which the head coach set a specific number of wins as a goal before the first kickoff.

"To kind of take a chapter from John Wooden's book, you want your guys to go play to the best of their ability every Saturday," he said when asked about the concept in general and not CU or Hawkins specifically. "If we play to the best of our ability and guys give you everything they have and come up short, then we've got to get ready and go play next week.

"I think when you set a standard like that or you try to put that kind of pressure on your team, that's probably not very smart."

Gundy said he is typically not into using quotes or goal boards to motivate his team, but he has used one this offseason asking his players to "be a catalyst."

"I personally believe in show me, don't tell me," he said.

Nebraska coach Bo Pelini said Monday he believes his team has a sense of confidence from its 9-4 season in 2008 and that the pieces are in place for another successful season this year. But he gave a verbal stiff arm to reporters who wanted him to be more specific about how many wins and losses Big Red might have in it.

"I'm not into making predictions and saying we're going to do this or do that," he said.

Texas A&M coach Mike Sherman has more than 30 years of coaching experience, including time served as an NFL head coach and assistant. He said challenging his team to win a certain number of games before the season is putting the cart before the horse and is something he wouldn't do.

"My whole objective of coaching is we've got to have a great locker room of guys," Sherman said. "We've got to get along. We've got to work hard. I think what happens is you bypass the vehicle that is going to get you those nine or 10 wins. You've got to deal with the person in the locker room and make sure the locker room is right. Those wins are a reward for a great locker room."

But Hawkins isn't completely alone in his approach.

Iowa State coach Paul Rhoads is in his first year as a head coach of the Cyclones. He was asked multiple times this week by various reporters for a win total that will define success for his team this season.

He said he won't give his team or the public a number in 2009 because he doesn't know enough about the competition. He said he would have no problem having a target win total in the future when he is more settled in to his job and program.

"I don't want to put a ceiling on our kids," Rhoads said. "At the same time, anything low is shame on me for saying that as well. What would be satisfying to us is if I can look back on everything we've been doing since Dec. 20 and see improvement. That would be a successful first season. I'm more than happy to let the chips fall where they may with that in mind."

## Notable

Colorado announced Tuesday its Sept. 19 home game with Wyoming will be televised by Fox College Sports. All four of the Buffs' nonconference games this season are now slated for TV. It is the seventh time in the program's history all its nonconference games have been televised, with the last time coming in 2005.



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# Big 12 might move title game permanently to Cowboys Stadium

By Kyle Ringo

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DALLAS — Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe said Tuesday the league might consider making Cowboys Stadium in Arlington, Texas, the permanent host site for the Big 12 football championship game.

Beebe took questions from reporters after briefly summarizing the state of the conference in advance of the football season and a new school year. He acknowledged any decision about a permanent location for the championship game would be made by a vote of the league's board of directors and would come only after the conference experiences this season's championship game in the new \$1.15 billion stadium.

The facility, to open this year, is the largest domed structure in the world and home of the Dallas Cowboys. It is a month away from being complete. It will be the site of the 2009 and 2010 Big 12 title games. The league says it plans to make 80,000 tickets available for those games. The stadium is capable of seating more than 100,000.

Beebe said the league will have control over the price of tickets and parking to its games but the Cowboys will also be involved in the discussion. Parking to a single Cowboys game this season will cost \$50. Beebe said he views that as too high a price and the league will do its best to keep ticket prices and other costs for fans more reasonable.

Over the years, the championship has been played in Kansas City, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and St. Louis. Beebe said he can see positives to permanently locating the game in the new stadium and in continuing to move it from year to year.

"Last time, if you remember, when we awarded certain cities championships, the board of directors said we're not ready to lock them in yet," Beebe said. "But they haven't seen this."

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins was the only Big 12 coach in attendance and heard Beebe rave about the new stadium and its potential and a permanent home. Hawkins said having the championship game in the new stadium would give South Division schools advantages in the game itself in the future and maybe in recruiting.

But he also said the idea of having the game in Dallas on a permanent basis doesn't bother him.

"I think from a pure coaching standpoint, I think you want to have the game in a place where the elements are not going to affect it," Hawkins said. "You want the best teams to have the opportunity to play in the best possible conditions. I see both sides of that thing."

“You’ve got a quasi-home game and I think there is an advantage. There’s no question about that, but it’s just one of those things you just have to overcome. If you’re playing in a northern city and field conditions aren’t very good, you’ve got to overcome that, too.”

Hawkins and his players — Jeff Smart, Marcus Burton and Riar Geer — were impressed and even overwhelmed at times by the opulence of the stadium. But Hawkins also questioned whether it was too over the top and another step toward driving the common man out. Some seats cost as much as \$30,000 a season and suites go for as much as \$800,000 annually.

Beebe indicated that if the football championship was permanently located in a southern city such as Dallas, the basketball championships could be permanently placed in a northern city such as Kansas City, where they have been contested in multiple years. He also said the league is very happy with the job Oklahoma City has done in the past with the basketball tournaments.



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big 12 media days

## Bring your horse to stadium tour

By John Henderson  
The Denver Post

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ARLINGTON, [Texas](#) — Yes, everything is bigger in [Texas](#). If you don't buy it, stand in [Irving](#) and look at the [Dallas Cowboys](#)' stadium. No, not [Texas Stadium](#). Look at their brand spankin' new, gargantuan \$1.4 billion Cowboys Stadium.

You can see it from [Irving](#), 17 miles away.

Get closer and the world's largest domed stadium doesn't look so much like a stadium as it does a spaceship [George Lucas](#) couldn't create. Its massive white exterior glimmers in the bright Texas sun, and the girder running around the structure just underneath the dome could make it pass for a flying saucer.

Then again, not many UFOs have been known to house 100,000 people. Cowboys Stadium's regular capacity is 80,000 but portable seating can boost the capacity 20 percent for special events such as the 2011 [Super Bowl](#) or temporary housing for the entire city of [Waco](#).

Everything is bigger in Cowboys Stadium. [The Statue of Liberty](#) could stand upright on the 50-yard-line and her torch wouldn't touch the roof 300 feet off the ground. If the quarter-mile-long arches that hold up the stadium were placed on their end, they would fall just 25 feet short of the [Empire State Building](#).

Cowboys Stadium has nine levels. They include three levels of luxury suites, some going for \$5 million over a 20-year period. That's \$25,000 a game. In addition, there's a row of "party rooms" at field level where you can drink your Chardonnay before taking your seat in the first two rows.

"Holy smokes!" said Dan Beebe, commissioner of the Big 12, which conducted a tour Tuesday and will hold its conference championship here the next two years.

If Beebe gasps now, wait until quarterbacks [Todd Rees-ing](#) or [Sam Bradford](#) or [Colt McCoy](#) see their images on the largest HD video screen ever created. It's 160 feet wide by 72 feet high, about half the length of the football field.

A Cowboys practice was being telecast. [Wade Phillips](#) was the size of a seven-story building. The video screen consists of 30 million bulbs and weighs 1.2 million pounds, more than a [Boeing 747](#).

According to tour guide Barry Browning: "When they raised it to the roof, it sunk the stadium in the ground 2 feet."

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The mastermind of this project is Cowboys owner [Jerry Jones](#). He not only has his own private suite on the 50 yard line, if he wants to mix with the "little people," he can go up a few rows into his own private viewing area, sort of like a Roman emperor watching his gladiators.

He won't be the only wealthy man watching Cowboys games. At \$8 for a 16-ounce beer, no fan can be poor. A dentist named James Addison owns six suites.

However, the [Taj Mahal](#) of all suites is the \$5 million number. The 1,000-square-foot space has 42 padded, theater-type seats, two bathrooms, two bars, a computer area and a pantry. Two or three bartenders, depending on the crowd, will serve drinks and dish out catered meals.

The only Big 12 team that ventured over from media days in Irving was [Colorado](#). The Buffaloes last played in the Big 12 title game in 2005.

"I wanted the players to see it," coach Dan Hawkins said. "It's always good to visualize."

He got their attention. It's a good bet the Buffs have all- new incentive to win the Big 12 North.

"I want to get back here," senior tight end Riar Geer said. "I want to play here."

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## Versatile venue

*A look at some of the sports events besides the [Dallas Cowboys](#) ' home games at the new Cowboys Stadium:*

**Sept. 5:** [Oklahoma](#) vs. BYU, football

**Oct. 3:** Texas A&M vs. [Arkansas](#), football

**Nov. 28:** Baylor vs. Texas Tech, football

**Dec. 5:** Big 12 championship game, football

**Dec. 19:** Texas vs. North Texas, men's basketball

**Jan. 2:** Cotton Bowl

**Feb. 14:** NBA All-Star Game

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Dr. Saturday  
 Tue Jul 28, 2009 7:38 pm EDT

# [You Got Two, You Got None: But Colorado QBs may be broken into many pieces](#)

By Matt Hinton

*Inside the fall's most gripping quarterback battles. Part of the Doc's Big 12 Week.*

**The Scheme.** Although it's a "multiple" scheme that employs a little of everything, Colorado joins Kansas State as the only schools in the Big 12 that still use a fullback and two-tight end sets as part of their basic, every-down offense; in this spread-saturated conference, that counts as paleolithic defiance. And it shouldn't change much despite the late-breaking departure of offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich's to Oregon when Chip Kelly ascended to the boss's chair in April, since Helfrich's replacement is Eric Kiesau, receivers coach and "passing game coordinator" since 2006, and the main set of fingerprints on the Buffs' offense still belong to Dan Hawkins.

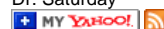
At any rate, personnel should matter more than philosophy: Hawkins has always been heavy on play-action and setting up the pass with the run, and with the conference's lowest-rated passing game two of his three years at the helm, the emphasis will still be heavily on the run, where Rodney Stewart got off to a great start as a true freshman and ludicrously hyped Darrell Scott is rumored to be [in much better shape](#) physically and mentally after a disappointing debut. From the quarterbacks' perspective, their role is to hand off, carry out their fakes and hope they don't find themselves in too many must-throw situations.

**The Incumbent.** Bless Cody Hawkins, who's fought courageously for two years against the notion that he's too short, too slow and doesn't have the arm to keep pace with the other prolific quarterbacks in the Big 12, but he's yet to prove any of the critics wrong: In the most high-flying league in college history, he's finished as the least accurate regular starter in the conference two years in a row and last year was [the least efficient](#), as well. In October, he went four straight games with an efficiency rating below 100 (remember, we're using the college formula, not the NFL's; for some context, [the national median](#) for pass efficiency was around 125, and [in the Big 12](#) it was about 150), games in which CU scored 14, 14, 14 and zero points. At least Li'l Hawk has disproved the notion that he only has the job because his dad's the coach: He either started or finished [on the bench](#) in six straight games at midseason.

Not surprisingly, Hawkins does seem to have a good understanding of the system, delivers some decisive throws out of play fakes and was occasionally competent against lesser defenses, putting in solid efforts against Colorado State and West Virginia and lighting up Eastern Washington and Iowa State, against whom he delivered the game of his life with four touchdown passes and no interceptions in a 28-24 win. When



Dr. Saturday



[Matt Hinton](#)

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the season ended with Hawkins

[flailing futilely at the ankles of end zone-bound Ndamukong Suh](#) after his third interception of CU's loss to Nebraska, the job officially opened up for 2009.

**The Scrambler.** Although he did wind up attempting 65 passes in three-and-a-half games of significant action, true freshman Tyler Hansen was clearly brought in to *avoid* putting the ball in the air to the greatest extent possible: He carried 60 times in those games, almost twice as often as Darrell Scott, to compensate for the broken leg that ended Rodney Stewart's season. He generally ran well, too, piling up 86 yards against both Kansas State and Texas A&M and 48 yards in an abbreviated stint against Iowa State, with a dozen runs of at least 10 yards.

The stint against ISU was abbreviated mainly by Hansen's arm: He opened 4-for-12 with an interception against the Cyclones, a week after throwing two interceptions in the loss to Texas A&M, opening the door for Hawkins' triumphant return. The fact remains, though, that Hansen was thrown out of an apparent redshirt year and into the fire at midseason, took the bulk of the snaps for three full games as a true freshman and brings an entirely different dimension to the offense with his legs.

**The Smart Money.** The conventional wisdom is that there was [no separation between the two](#) in the spring, though Hansen [broke the thumb on his throwing hand](#) in the spring game. There's a chance -- maybe a very good chance -- that CU will [continue to rotate the pair](#) to keep Hansen running, if nothing else. Even at the height of last year's rotation, though, Hawkins only yielded to Hansen as the starter in two games, at Missouri and against Iowa State, and both went disastrously. Once Hawkins took over a harrowing situation against ISU, he took almost every snap for the last two-and-a-half games, leading the Buffs from behind to beat the Cyclones and keeping the score reasonably close against heavily favored Oklahoma State and Nebraska. Unless Hansen shows dramatic improvement as a passer from year one to year two, the odds are that he'll be relegated mainly to the "change of pace" option, and Hawkins will spend as much time as possible handing off with everything he has.

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