



# Advantage, Hawkins: Cody still has inside track as QB battle hits stretch run

By Ryan Thorburn  
Thursday, August 16, 2007

The Colorado football team practiced under the Wednesday night lights.

And which quarterback is more ready for prime time?

Based on consistency and ball security, the coaching staff is still giving the edge to redshirt freshman Cody Hawkins over junior college transfer Nick Nelson.

CU head coach Dan Hawkins might even make an official announcement as to who his starter will be for the Sept. 1 opener against Colorado State after evaluating this Saturday's scheduled scrimmage.

"We probably will just for the ease of everybody, (the media) and us," Dan Hawkins said.

According to offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich, Nelson made some impressive plays during Sunday's scrimmage. But his tendency to press — he had a poor practice on Monday before looking comfortable again on Wednesday — has allowed Cody Hawkins to maintain a lead in the race throughout camp.

"Cody has been very consistent. He has been practicing really well and he's just made a few more plays here and there and taken care of the ball," Helfrich said. "Nick is doing fine. He made a couple of the kind of pressing mistakes of just getting in that battle and trying to do a little too much when it wasn't there. We've just got to kind of work those out of him, take care of the ball a little more and keep this thing competitive."

## **B-Jax is back**

Last year's starting quarterback, Bernard Jackson, participated in his first full-pad workout on Wednesday. He was among the handful of players who missed practice last week to focus on the summer school session that ended last Friday.

"It was awesome, flying around and all that good stuff," Jackson said of his return to the field.

The talented senior figures to get some action at wide receiver, tailback and some quarterback this season. He expects to be academically eligible this fall and says missing practice last week will not set him back in the competition for playing time.

"That's what this game is about is competing. I'm not backing down from any challenges as far as competing. That's what this is about and I'm just taking it day to day," Jackson said. "Those guys at receiver are playing exceptionally well, and Hugh (Charles) and Byron (Ellis) are very good backs. I'm not trying to take anybody's position by any means."

## Down and dirty

Dan Hawkins was refreshed but unshaven on Wednesday after giving the players a day off from practice so the team could do some bonding on the paint-ball gridiron.

The head coach told a story about going out unkempt in Idaho one afternoon when he was the Boise State head coach after doing some dirty work underneath his house and in the yard.

"I went to the gas station and this guy was like, 'Coach Hawk, coach Hawk, are you all right? I mean, you look like heck,'" Hawkins said. "I told my wife, 'OK now I've gotta take a shower to go get some gas at the gas station.'

"So sometimes it's just fun to be down and dirty a little bit."

## The Daily Hawkism

Hawkins on Wednesday morning after giving his team a day off Tuesday: "I definitely told them before practice, 'Guys, let's get it going.' Now, that being said, I thought they did a pretty decent job getting back and getting going. But I definitely wanted to ride herd a little bit and make sure that we got after them in this practice."

## Notable

Two walk-on players, offensive lineman Travis Duffy and place-kicker Jim Parra, have quit the program. ... A number of players with bumps and bruises, including wide receivers Josh Smith and Markques Simas, defensive lineman Lagrone Shields, linebacker Brad Jones, safety D.J. Dykes and tight end Riar Greer, were back at practice Wednesday after letting their bodies heal on Tuesday. ... The Buffs are certainly not overlooking Colorado State, but the team conducted Wednesday's practice from 8 to 10 p.m. because the Sept. 8 game at Arizona State kicks off at 8:15 p.m. and the Folsom Field opener on Sept. 15 against Florida State kicks off at 8 p.m.

*Sports writer Kyle Ringo contributed to this report*



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Hawaii Five-O

By JEFF GRAHAM Colorado Daily Staff Writer  
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The good news for Colorado's flock of Hawaiian athletes is that Hurricane Flossie continues to weaken and should not cause any significant damage to the Pacific Islands. The bad news? They had to get back to work on Wednesday.

After playing paintball on a welcomed day off on Tuesday, the Buffs once again took to the practice fields and picked up where they left off.

Senior linebacker Jordan Dizon, who is from the westernmost island of Kaua'i, said that Flossie was more than 200 miles from his home, yet knows how scary storms of that size can be.

On September 11, 1992 Dizon was in the eye of Hurricane Iniki, Hawaii's most powerful hurricane in recorded history. The category IV storm rushed directly over Kaua'i and caused 2.6 billion dollars in damage as it leveled homes and left thousands without power for several weeks.

"I was in Hurricane Iniki in '92 and that was a disaster," Dizon said. "I pray for all the guys who are all over there and hope everyone is safe. It's a rough time."

As the storm continued to move along it became apparent that only its outer tails would reach land fall as the majority of the storm stayed east of the islands.

"The good news is, there are a lot of surfers out there and you know they are happy about the waves. But other than that it's just a nice swell for us," Dizon said.

Riding his current wave of success as a first-team preseason All-Big 12 Conference selection, Dizon said he revels in the opportunity he has had at CU to play alongside three other linebackers from his home state.

"It just shows what kind of linebackers we got here," Dizon said.

The other three, junior R.J. Brown, and sophomore Michael Sipili are from the big island of Honolulu and red-shirt freshman B.J. Beatty is from Kaaawa. They all agree there is something special about having connections so close from to a place that is so far away.

"It's been a blast, just being out there and being able to play next to Jordan that's always been a dream," Brown said.

Something must be in Hawaiian water, as both Dizon and Brown comprise two-thirds of this year's tri-captains. Dizon, who was also a captain last year said that it was no surprise that Brown was given the opportunity and feels that he is perfect fit for the job.

"We are two respectful guys out there and we bring our best everyday and the guys see that," Dizon said. "We appreciate the opportunity to be leaders on this team."

Another aspect that keeps it in the linebacker family is of course their coach, Brian Cabral, who hails from Hawaii as well. Cabral could not help but smile when asked how he felt about two of his linebackers from Hawaii serving as captains on this year's team.

"That's a first ever from me," Cabral said. "That's impressive for those guys. Jordan I think you expect that from and R.J. has outworked everybody and has outplayed everybody on special teams"

"And they just happen to be linebackers, and both of those linebackers are from Hawaii. So there are a bunch of firsts there."

Hawkins added that on the way home from the Big 12 media days in July, Brown asked him why he gave him a scholarship this season. Hawkins told Brown that he was the type of guy he wanted in the program and wanted to reward his efforts.

"I love the guy I really do," Hawkins said. "He is one of those guys, I think in a good system, which I think we have that you can compensate sometimes for some physical things by some mental and intangible things."

A lack of depth at the position and a possible suspension to probable starter Michael Sipili, for his involvement in a June altercation on the Hill could pose some interesting questions to this year's group. But for those returning with game experience Cabral said he has little to worry about.

"They are where we want them to be. They are where they need them to be. So much further ahead from last year," Cabral said.

Notes from Tuesday's morning practice:

According to offense coordinator / quarterbacks coach, Mark Helfrich, the quarterback situation is still undecided as red-shirt freshman Cody Hawkins hangs on to a slight advantage over juco transfer Nick Nelson. Helfrich also noted that a starter could be named as early as next week as coaches will strongly evaluate this Saturday's scrimmage.

The Buffs played paintball on Tuesday and neither rain nor shine could stop them. An afternoon rain shower soaked them and they continued to play in the mud.

Grab your sleeping bag. The Buffs took part in a late night practice as well on Wednesday. Under the lights Hawkins and the gang practiced from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. to prepare for two early games at that late time slot.

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## Hawkins running No. 1

CU coach says son Cody leads QB derby

By Tom Kensler  
Denver Post Staff Writer

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Boulder - Colorado coach Dan Hawkins will wait one more scrimmage to make an official announcement, but all indications are his son Cody will be his starting quarterback Sept. 1 when the Buffs open against Colorado State. Cody, a 5-foot-11 redshirt freshman, is running number one in fall camp.

"Cody's in a little bit of a lead," Dan Hawkins said Wednesday. "We'll probably decide officially after the scrimmage (on Saturday) for the ease of everybody."

Cody Hawkins took more repetitions with the No. 1 offense Wednesday and has separated himself from junior college transfer Nick Nelson (6-1, 230).

For those who question Cody's ability to make plays at his relatively short stature, the quarterback said,

"You've just got to get it done however you can. It's all about the release point (in the throwing motion), knowing the offense and finding the lanes. I think if you're a leader it makes up for that stuff, too."

Cody mentioned smaller stature quarterbacks who had big seasons a year ago, such as Drew Brees of the New Orleans Saints, former Florida Gators quarterback Chris Leak, and Troy Smith, the Heisman Trophy winner from Ohio State. Brees and Smith are listed at 6 feet; Leak at 5-11. CU lists Cody at 5-11 - he said he's actually 5-11 1/2.

Offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said Hawkins' overall consistency has him in the lead.

"He's been practicing really well," Helfrich said. "He's made a few more plays here and there - and has taken care of the ball. Nick has been doing fine. He had a good practice today, after pressing a little bit (on Monday) when he made some very uncharacteristic mistakes, trying to do a little too much.

"We just have to work those things out of him and keep this thing competitive."

Dan Hawkins said the race isn't over. "It's still a healthy, viable, good situation," he said.

Saturday's scrimmage, open only to season-ticket holders, is scheduled for 10 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. at Folsom Field.

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## Change benefits wideout

Mechanics adjustment may cut down drops

*By Patrick Ridgell  
The Daily Times-Call*

BOULDER — There's been a lot of talk at Colorado camp about what's changed in junior receiver Patrick Williams.

The answer is simple.

Receivers coach Eric Kiesau revealed this week Williams' catching mechanics underwent a small adjustment that's now making a big difference.

Williams, a junior who played quarterback in high school, had a habit of moving his body away from the ball while he tried to catch it, Kiesau said. His hands were not where they needed to be. Consequently, dropped passes were an issue during the past two years.

Williams has yet to show his improvement in a game, but early indications suggest he'll drop fewer passes in 2007.

"It was always an awkward catch or an unbelievable catch," Kiesau said of Williams' work last season.

"We just tried to get him to steer his body in front of his eyes, so if the ball's off," Kiesau said "I think that's helping him. And I think it took him this summer to adjust to that. Now in practice, he can do it with a DB in front of his face."

Kiesau said he noticed the problem during film study last year. The coach illustrated the flaw in spring, and by the end of drills, Williams understood.

Williams worked on it over the summer, and now, as Kiesau said, his confidence is "awesome.

"His body language toward the ball is much more positive," Kiesau said. "Last year when the ball was in the air, you almost had to hold your breath.

"Now he's going right at the ball and attacking the ball and being more confident with the ball."

The result?

"He's had quite a bit of improvement over this past year," Kiesau said. "I'm fired up for him for the fact that his hard work is paying off."

There have been a lot of questions about what sparked Williams' improvement. Some wonder if he's matured. Others ask if he's pushed harder now due to the presence of some talented freshmen receivers. Those are part of the deal.

Williams, who caught two touchdowns in Sunday's scrimmage, said he spent the summer catching passes every day from whomever he could get to throw them.



Junior wide receiver Patrick Williams looks to make a move after hauling in a pass last week in practice. Williams has made some adjustments to his game after being plagued by dropped passes the last two seasons. **Times-Call/Joshua Buck**

He'd catch 40 to the front, 40 behind. Forty to one side and then 40 to the other side.

He said he spent the whole summer in Boulder, and he calls this camp his most productive.

"I put forth the work as an individual and as a receiver group to come out here and have confidence," Williams said.

Asked about his confidence, Williams said, "I believe it's higher now."

Head coach Dan Hawkins said it's not that some light bulb suddenly clicked.

"I'd say confidence comes from preparation," Hawkins said. "Coaches can say whatever they want to say. But true confidence comes from your preparation And when you know that, you'll ultimately be prepared, then you'll be ready to go out and make plays.

"He probably more than all of our guys has gone out and put in more time running routes and catching the ball and doing things with all of our quarterbacks. I've talked to (the quarterbacks) and I'll say how was your weekend, and they say, 'I went out and threw with Pat on Sunday.'

"I'll say, 'Was anybody else there?'

'No. Just me and Pat.'

"That's how you do it."

Said Williams: "They stress no position is penned in, there's no starter. Of course I want to start. I'm going to come out and do everything my coach tells me to do. I'm going to give the effort that he needs out of me. I'm going to be as productive as I can be."

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