



## Woelk: Renovations helping CU compete on level field

When Dan Hawkins took over as Colorado's football coach, he inherited a program with more than its fair share of history and tradition.

At least that's what Hawkins had heard.

The reality was that visible signs of CU's tradition were few and far between. When Hawkins toured CU's facilities, one of the first questions that popped into his mind was, "Where are the trophies? Where's the Heisman? The All-Americans?"

Then Hawk received a tour of the locker rooms.

The tour might have made a less resilient man turn around and beg Boise State to take him back.

CU's Dal Ward Center, once one of the best buildings of its kind in the nation, had fallen behind — way behind — in terms of keeping up with the competition. The locker rooms hadn't undergone any kind of significant improvement since the building was opened in 1991. Academic facilities were woefully inadequate. Recognition of CU's famous alumni was minimal.

And that was just the short list. CU was literally and figuratively stuck in the previous century.

But those issues are starting to be addressed. Now, CU's locker room is comparable to those of the program's Big 12 peers — and it's no longer a place Buff coaches hope a recruit won't ask to see.

"It's a blessing," pronounced CU defensive lineman George Hypolite. "It shows us where the program is headed. We have one of the best facilities in the country — now we have to be one of the best teams."

Hawkins provided the media with an impromptu tour of the refurbished locker rooms Friday afternoon. The improvement is dramatic.

There is now actually room for 100 players to dress. Flat-screen TVs will be installed (the renovation won't be complete until CU's first home game, Sept. 15 vs. Florida State), computer stations are available, and other amenities that have become commonplace across the country are finally in place at CU.

"When you walked around the building, you could see there was potential," Hawkins said. "But it needed to be updated and renovated."

The renovation won't stop with the locker room. Along with renovation of the Varsity Room, used by all athletes, there are plans to make sure CU's recent accomplishments are more clearly visible.

That will include such things as a nameplate for every CU football letterman in program history, an "NFL Room" that will honor the long list of CU players who went on to play professionally (with special recognition for those who have won Super Bowl rings), plus a place for the list of award winners, ranging from the Heisman to Butkus winners to Ray Guy winners to Thorpe recipients.

And, Hawkins wants to make sure former coaches Bill McCartney and Eddie Crowder have their pictures in prominent places.

All are moves that are long overdue. It's one thing to tell recruits about CU's award winners and NFL players. It's something entirely different let them see for themselves — and have them go home dreaming about seeing their name on such a display in the future.

Certainly the current players are appreciative of their improved digs.

"When R.J. (Brown) walked in here the first time, he had tears in his eyes," Hawkins said.

Certainly, athletic director Mike Bohn was happy to see the approximately \$1 million renovation become a reality.

"The real satisfaction has come from the sincere appreciation from the student athletes," Bohn said. "We're happy for them. We're very appreciative to the donors, the people who did the work — everyone who helped on a project of this kind."

Hawkins has plenty of other little details he will implement, including the "Thunder Chute" for game day, when players will enter the field flanked by alumni.

Hawkins' team will also enter the stadium on game days through the upper portion of Folsom Field. The Buffs will walk through the tailgate and fan areas south of Folsom, then walk by the plaza and the bronze buffalo before entering Gate 1 and descending to the field.

"You want it to be fan-friendly," Hawkins said. "If you've got it going on, people will be here."

And, Hawkins is constantly planning for the future.

"Long term ... there's no question you want to expand Dal Ward," Hawkins said. "A place for alumni, improve the academic areas, all those things. You need to have that kind of vision."

He is also well-aware of his role in such an expansion. Facilities improvements require increased revenue, which is directly tied to success on the field.

It's a simple equation.

"You've got to win games," Hawkins said. "You want people to come because they support your values.

"But you have to improve. You want people to say, 'I have to be there.'"

Naturally, there will be detractors, those who wonder why any renovation or expansion is necessary.

The answer is simple. College athletics is a business — and if you're not constantly moving forward, you're falling behind at a dramatic rate.

"I would put the same challenge out to anyone who's trying to run a viable business today," Bohn said. "Would anyone go 17 years without making significant improvement to one of the key areas of their business?"

Of course not.

Now, about those new basketball locker rooms ...



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.



# Nelson says no favoritism evident at CU

## QB believes starting job still up for grabs

By Kyle Ringo  
Saturday, August 18, 2007

No matter what happens in today's scrimmage at Folsom Field — the second of preseason practices for the Colorado Buffaloes — quarterback Nick Nelson will come away feeling as if he has done his very best to earn the starting job.

And Nelson made it clear Friday that he doesn't believe coaches have played favorites in his competition with Cody Hawkins, the head coach's son.

"I don't see any favoritism at all," Nelson said. "It would be really obvious if they were giving him an extra opportunity because he's coach's son. I don't sense that at all and I don't think anyone on the team does.

"It's completely even I think."

The Buffs will complete between 100 and 120 plays beginning at 10 a.m. in the stadium, and Nelson said he enters the day believing he still has a good shot at winning the job.

If coaches ultimately decide to go with Cody Hawkins, Nelson said he will prepare each week as if he is the starter. He said he is very aware that quarterbacks rarely get through an entire season in the Big 12 Conference without having to give way to their understudy at some point.

That has been the case in Boulder as well. The last quarterback to start every game for the Buffs in a season was Mike Moschetti in 1998.

"I've given it my best since Day One," Nelson said. "So if that's not good enough, I can only continue to do my best and help Cody push himself to get better."

Offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach Mark Helfrich will make the final decision and he met with both quarterbacks early this week to let each know what he believed they had to do to earn the job.

Helfrich and coach Dan Hawkins have said since spring ball that Cody Hawkins holds a small advantage in the race, and Nelson knows why. The junior college transfer from Saddleback College in California said the same problem he struggled with in spring has crept back into his play this fall.

He's putting too much pressure on himself, trying to be perfect with every snap, every read and every throw. It has led to some mistakes and not moving the team with the same success as Cody Hawkins.

"I just need to stop pressing," Nelson said. "I'm putting too much pressure on myself. I've cut back from

the spring on doing that and they want me to keep getting better at it."

## **Recruits ripe**

CU coaches received an oral commitment this week from Columbine High School defensive lineman Curtis Cunningham. He is the sixth known commitment in the 2008 recruiting class.

Hawkins talked Friday morning about where his program stands in recruiting for the 2008 class. Several programs in the Big 12 Conference are already nearing their limit of players for one year, while CU still has a long way to go.

Hawkins said it's early in the process and he believes some recruits are taking a wait-and-see approach with CU at this point because the Buffs are coming off a 2-10 season.

But Hawkins also said he believes there are plenty of players who are eager to come to Boulder and see what the program has to offer.

"I think there is a lot of guys who are very, very ripe," he said. "They just want to get here and see the place. So those first couple games, we're going to have a lot of people here."

CU can use its full allotment of 61 recruiting visits this year and should have a large number of players in town for the season opener against Colorado State (Sept. 1) and the true home opener against Florida State (Sept. 15).

Hawkins acknowledged there are some drawbacks to bringing prospects in when the CSU game is played at Invesco Field in Denver, but he said they enjoy being able to see that stadium as well.

## **Notable**

It's fan appreciation day and those who arrive by 9 a.m. today should be able to tour the Buffs' new locker room. ... Aric Goodman, a transfer place-kicker from Wyoming, has started practicing with the team. A spot came open when two walk-ons decided to quit the team earlier this week. ... Hawkins said defensive linemen Jason Brace, Maurice Lucas and wide receiver Jarrell Yates will be held out of the scrimmage because of minor injuries.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.

# Rocky Mountain News

To print this page, select **File** then **Print** from your browser

URL: [http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/ncaa/article/0,2777,DRMN\\_23932\\_5676719,00.html](http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/ncaa/article/0,2777,DRMN_23932_5676719,00.html)

## Hawkins looks to Buff up image

Coach says CU's rich history can be a huge asset

By B.G. Brooks, Rocky Mountain News  
August 18, 2007

BOULDER - University of Colorado football has a rich tradition. Second-year coach Dan Hawkins has a suggestion: Show it to him.

Show it to the public. Show it to recruits.

Hawkins believes CU must capitalize on its football history as one step in helping the program right itself. Only 11 Division I schools have played football for more seasons than CU, and Hawkins wants the Buffaloes' tradition, particularly recent tradition, pushed to the forefront.

"The thing that's amazing about this place is . . . where is it (the tradition)?" he said. "Where's the whole marketing thing, the outreach thing, the fans-friendly, ticket-friendly - all that stuff.

"So all that stuff has to continue to happen. . . . People go, 'Colorado is not the mecca of football.' And I go, 'You think Berkeley (Calif.) is the mecca? You think Eugene (Ore.) is the mecca?'

"Trust me, when you're on the Left Coast, man, there's a lot of cool things to do. If your football is not happening, you got things to do. But if you got it going on, they show up."

Hawkins, though, recognizes corrective steps are being taken.

"Simple stuff," he said. "I mean think about it. Mike (Bohn, athletic director) is going to put coach Mac's (Bill McCartney) picture up there by the (1990) national championship trophy.

"I mean, God bless Fred Folsom. Great guy, awesome. He's got his bust up out there (in the Dal Ward Athletics Center lobby), which is awesome.

"But where's coach Mac? Where's coach (Eddie) Crowder? A guy ought to walk in this building and go, 'Yeah, let's worship the shrine. There's coach Mac, right there.' "

Hawkins also said the 1994 Heisman Trophy won by Rashaan Salaam will be showcased, as well as Butkus Awards won by Alfred Williams (1990) and Matt Russell (1996). And all former players will be recognized in some way in a revamped Dal Ward.

But if Hawkins is bullish on acknowledging past traditions, he is equally intent on starting new ones. This season's game-day tradition in the making, he said, is a team campus walk with "all our fans out there, get the whole Buffs stampede thing going, slapping the buffalo statue on the quadrangle" before the players come through the stands and into Folsom Field.

Hawkins, whose first CU team finished 2-10, said the school's shortcomings in those areas have been weighing on him since his hiring.

"I've had it on the front of my brain for a long time," he said. "I'm just kind of into that whole thing. You got a lot of tradition, you got a lot of great things and it needs to be represented.

"That's one of the reasons I came. Are you kidding me? If you're willing to roll up your sleeves and start pumping on that air compressor, man, there's a lot that can be done here. . . . I totally believe that.

"And I'm totally good with that. You roll up your sleeves and go to work. The bad news is, there's a lot of work to be done; the good news is, there's a lot of work to be done. If you can walk away at the end of the day (and say), 'Hey, how about that? I was here when we did that, I was here when they did that.' "

One improvement already under way on his watch is the locker room, which is being used but is not scheduled for completion until the home opener - Sept. 15 vs. Florida State.

The building upgrade currently is in the first of two phases that will cost about \$1 million, all from donations, upon completion.

The first phase, costing \$650,000 to \$700,000, has centered on the locker room, which had not undergone any major improvement since Dal Ward was completed in summer 1991.

Locker room tours will be given from 9-10 a.m. today, followed by the second scrimmage of preseason camp (10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.) at Folsom Field.

[brooks@RockyMountainNews.com](mailto:brooks@RockyMountainNews.com) or 303-954-5466

Copyright 2007, Rocky Mountain News. All Rights Reserved.

[Print page](#)[Close window](#)

Longmont, Colorado  
Saturday, August 18, 2007

DAILY TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 8/18/2007

## Decision time at hand for Buffs

Freshman roles will be determined in scrimmage

*By Patrick Ridgell*  
*The Daily Times-Call*

BOULDER — There are a bunch of freshmen at the University of Colorado who are about to learn whether they're going to play football in 2007.

Ready or not.

Coach Dan Hawkins said he'll have a clearer idea after today's scrimmage of what freshmen will redshirt this season and which ones won't. He already has said up to 25 will be active, and many of them will be true freshmen. That means there'll be some wide-eyed Buffs out there in 2007.

These are decisions every program faces. It's just that this season at CU, who redshirts and who doesn't will factor more heavily into this team's fortunes than it would for most others.

Coaches make the final call. But sometimes what the players think can be telling.

"Right now, I'm not ready," defensive lineman Lagrone Shields said. "But I'm working every day trying to get ready.

"If I don't feel like I'm ready to play, I'm going to redshirt. That's it. If I had to choose today, I'd probably redshirt."

Said defensive back Anthony Wright: "I wouldn't say I'm prepared, because I still feel like I have a long ways to go. Like, I still don't even know all of my assignments. I can still get better in a lot of areas.

"But as far as playing, that's really up to the coaches. I'm just going to go out there and do my job."

Most freshmen take the approach that they'd better be ready, no matter what.

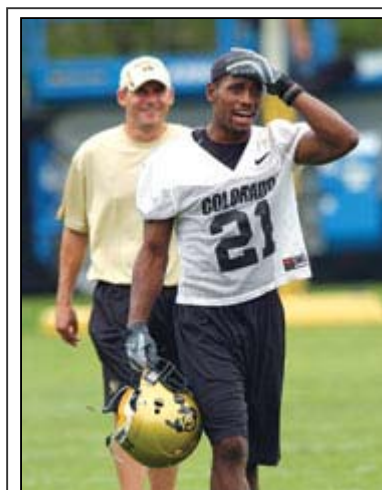
"Coaches keep telling us in an ideal situation, they'd want us to redshirt," defensive back Anthony Perkins said. "But based on the needs of the team, that's not always going to be possible.

"When I signed here, I really didn't have an intention. But my mindset this whole camp has always been to be ready and get on the field as soon as possible."

And there are some Buffs who know their future will wait.

"This year is probably not my year," offensive lineman Shawn Daniels said. "I'll probably redshirt this year. Hopefully, next year I'll be ready to go."

Shields is a 265-pounder who's playing both defensive tackle spots in camp. Hawkins named him and several other freshmen among those who are "in the mix" to play immediately. Shields said he has yet to discuss his thoughts with



Defensive back Anthony Wright is one of many CU freshmen who are looking to catch an eye in today's intrasquad scrimmage. **Times-Call/Bradley Wakoff**



coaches. With the decisions looming, he said he feels urgency to get ready.

"I'm just trying to take it all in and get better," Shields said. "I feel like if I'm not ready to play ... I don't want to go out there and hurt the team.

"I was planning on coming in and playing right away, but that's every freshman's goal. Then you get here and you realize it's not high school. Things are competitive, and the guys are much stronger and faster, and you have to adjust. It all depends on how fast you to adjust."

Hawkins said the staff has a good idea who'll do what based on how well the freshmen are faring, mentally and physically. He said there's always a guy who isn't on the same page with what coaches have planned, and those instances require a little more discussion.

But the coaches never want to sparingly use a freshman, which they see as waste.

"I always think it's such a crime to play a guy and not play him enough," Hawkins said. "So we need to make sure."

Sophomore defensive tackle Jason Brace played as a true freshman, but in only 64 snaps from scrimmage. He said he doesn't regret it.

"It was an amazing experience last year," Brace said.

Others see the positives of waiting a year. Wright said he's talked it over with sophomore corner Cha'pelle Brown, who played as a true freshman in 2006, and Demetrius Sumler, a running back who redshirted.

"Cha'pelle said from last year to this year, he's gotten way smarter," Wright said.

"Demetrius redshirted, and he said he feels like he's in a better position now. ... When you redshirt, you get smarter stronger, faster. But if they need me to play, I have to step up and be a man and play."

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at [pridgell@times-call.com](mailto:pridgell@times-call.com).

[Print page](#)[Close  
window](#)

Longmont, Colorado  
Saturday, August 18, 2007

DAILY TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 8/18/2007

## CU punter 'a lot more confident'

*By Patrick Ridgell  
The Daily Times-Call*

BOULDER — Matt DiLallo has changed.

Colorado's sophomore punter enters 2007 with a long list of freshman accolades in his biography. But confidence eluded him last year. That's not the case now, coach Dan Hawkins said.

"He's definitely been a lot more confident," Hawkins said.

"It seemed like last year, because he was new, he put so much pressure on himself that when he'd make a bad punt, it would result in another bad punt and then another bad punt. And he wasn't able to let it go. So I think he's kind of grown and matured that way a little bit."

DiLallo said his confidence is "miles from where I was last year." He admitted to being nervous in 2006, and sometimes those nerves affected how he performed. One example was the Missouri game, in which DiLallo dropped a snap. The play enabled the Tigers to take over on downs deep in CU territory and score a pivotal touchdown.

"I've blocked that out of my mind," he said.

DiLallo's focus is on improving, which he said requires that he stay confident and diligent. He averaged 43.8 yards per punt, with a net average of 38.5. He was fourth in the Big 12 and 16th in the nation in punting. He became the third freshman ever to lead CU that department.

Now, DiLallo said, he's calmer, too. And he expects that'll help.

"I wasn't used to that much pressure," he said. "Now I know how to take it. I've matured."

Renovations: During today's scrimmage, which starts at 10 a.m. at Folsom Field, some fans will get to tour CU's locker room and other parts of the Dal Ward Center.

While new lockers and amenities are in place, CU plans to honor its traditions and past with plaques and other tributes that are still being made.

Many of the renovations are expected to be set by the time CU hosts Florida State in its home opener, on Sept. 15.

Among the new additions will be what Hawkins called a "thunder shoot," which is a long tube through which the team will run as it leaves the locker room and takes Folsom Field.

Getting in line: Today's scrimmage will help offensive line coach Jeff Grimes set his rotation.

Grimes is eager to know who'll start and who'll be his top reserves. He had hoped a week ago to have, by today, a strong idea of who'll be in the mix. He said Friday his depth chart probably won't be set until closer to the season opener, Sept. 1 against Colorado State.

Grimes said his veterans — seniors Tyler Polumbus and Edwin Harrison, junior Daniel Sanders and sophomore Devin Head — are “doing a tremendous job.”

Among his freshmen, “some guys are going great; some are still a long ways off,” Grimes said.

He said there will some freshmen whom he'd prefer to redshirt, but CU's lack of depth will force them to be ready. Ryan Miller, Kai Maiava and Mike Iltis are among the freshmen who get some reps with the first-string offensive line.

Recruiting stuff: On Friday, Hawkins noted how the ban on text messaging recruits has created more of a “lull” in keeping in touch with prospects. He relies on e-mail, which doesn't yield many prompt replies.

CU will host 61 official recruiting visits this year. Many of them will come early.

“A lot of guys are ripe to do something. They just want to get here and see the place,” Hawkins said. “Those first couple of games, we're going to have a lot of people here.”

Extra points: Hawkins said receiver Jarrell Yates and defensive linemen Jason Brace and Maurice Lucas will miss today's scrimmage with what are believed to be minor injuries. ... This morning's scrimmage is the final open practice of camp.