



Big weekend ahead for Buffs

FSU game also a focal point for recruiting

By Kyle Ringo

Friday, September 14, 2007

Colorado football players have spent months talking about their desire to improve and re-establish the program as a dominant force in the Big 12 Conference.

They will get their chance Saturday night to make a big jump in that direction, but should they beat Florida State on ESPN for the entire country to see, one of the rewards of their effort might fly under the radar.

A victory in this game could serve as a huge boost in recruiting talent for the future. But that might not be known for months or even years.

When coaches recently learned one of the top recruits they have targeted for the 2008 class wouldn't be able to make his official recruiting visit to Boulder this weekend because he hadn't taken a required college entrance exam, it took some of the steam out of what will be a big recruiting weekend for the athletic department.

Even without Ventura, Calif., running back Darrell Scott in town, this week remains one of key importance to the future of the department's top teams.

Not only is the football coaching staff expecting between 10 and 15 recruits, but basketball coaches Jeff Bzdelik and Kathy McConnell-Miller also will host recruits this weekend with the Buffs' home opener against a team led by the winningest coach in major college history as the featured attraction.

Coach Bobby Bowden and his Seminoles come to town unranked and not as strong as they have been in the past, but they still represent a monumental challenge for the CU program, which has won three of its first 14 games under coach Dan Hawkins.

Hawkins is a big fan of playing big name opponents and the potential effect it can have in recruiting.

"I think good players want to play against good teams," Hawkins said. "That being said, I think you've got to go beat some of those teams. It's not enough to say, 'Hey, we play those guys.' "

Scott, who is rated as the No. 1 running back recruit in the nation and is the nephew of CU receiver Josh Smith, has rescheduled his visit for later in the season. Hawkins will focus his attention this weekend on prospects such as Ponderosa High School linebacker Jon Major, and Ryan Deehan, a tight end from Poway, Calif. Both are four-star recruits in the eyes of most recruiting analysts.

Others expected to make visits include Ed Tinker, a wide receiver from Pittsburgh; D.L. Moore, a wide

receiver from Bowling Green, Ky.; Harold Bernard, an athlete from Chandler, Ariz.; and Curtis Cunningham, a defensive lineman from Columbine High School who has already committed to play at CU.

Hawkins has had some trouble so far in the 2008 recruiting cycle getting recruits to commit to play in Boulder. He has only six oral commitments at this point and is expected to sign as many as 24 to scholarships in February.

Winning the game against the Seminoles might not be the most important piece of the puzzle for all recruits. Some will be attracted to CU because they can look at future schedules for the time they will be in Boulder and see games against other top-tier teams like West Virginia, Cal, Georgia, LSU and next year's rematch at Florida State.

Knowing the Buffs never shy away from playing the elite team's in the nation was a selling point for current CU linebacker Brad Jones.

"I want to make sure the teams are playing the great teams out there," he said. "I don't want to go against teams you know you're going to run over, I want to play against great guys."

Watching the game and spending time with their potential future coaches and teammates are just part of the visit.

Recruits will tour campus and meet with chancellor Bud Peterson, professors and academic advisers. They see the dorms they will live in and classrooms in which they will study. And they see the Boulder community as well.

The Pearl Street Pep Rally every Friday night before home games is another featured attraction. It's also an opportunity for fans to shake hands with future Buffs.

NCAA rules prohibit coaches and athletic departments from publicizing recruits or asking the public to help sell recruits on their programs when they visit campus. But in the Internet age, many of the most diehard followers know which recruits are expected on campus each week.

CU fans can visit Rivals.com, Scout.com and more traditional media sources such as newspaper Web sites to find out what recruits are paying visits.

Colorado running backs coach Darian Hagan might know more about recruiting than just about anyone. He has been involved in it as a player in the late 1980s when he chose to attend CU over Nebraska.

He's in his third full season as a college coach and knows what it's like to be on the road in a prospect's home trying to sell CU to a player and his parents.

Hagan also is a father of a highly recruited son, Darian Jr., who ultimately chose to play defensive back at Cal two years ago instead of playing for his father in Boulder. Hagan said CU fans treated his son like a visiting dignitary when he made his official visit to CU two years ago.

One sign in Folsom Field on game day read "Hagan for Heisman."

"Little stuff like that, guys fall for it," Hagan said. "Cause now they're like, 'Wow, they know me.' "

Adam Sinton is a CU senior who grew up in Atlanta but never really became a fan of nearby teams such as Georgia and Georgia Tech. During his time in Boulder, he has become a fan of Buffs and now pays close attention to who is being recruited.

Sinton said he and his friends do whatever they can to make recruits feel welcome and wanted when he sees them on campus or at games. He is helping organize a "Blackout" at Folsom Field on Saturday toward that end.

Students want every fan who attends the game Saturday night to wear black.

"I think that a blackout could make a big statement to the recruits that people in Boulder are in tune with the team and excited about football in Boulder," Sinton said.

Tickets remaining

CU officials said Thursday night that about 1,200 tickets remain for Saturday night's game vs. the Seminoles.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.



Buff LB Smart earning more playing time

Ex-BHS standout has 11 tackles as Dizon's backup

By Ryan Thorburn
Friday, September 14, 2007

Jordon Dizon has dominated the film sessions so far this season.

Colorado coaches have credited the senior linebacker with 39 tackles, including 31 unassisted plays, after studying tape of the Buffs games against Colorado State and Arizona State.

But if you really want to get Dizon to smile after practice all you have to do is ask him about his favorite behind-the-scenes man — backup linebacker Jeff Smart.

"If you think of Jeff Smart, the No. 1 word that comes to mind is reliable," Dizon said. "He does everything he has to do, he does it right, he does it precisely, and his last name says it all.

"Not the most athletic guy, but one of the most precise and smartest guys you'll ever meet. And that's why he's on the field."

The former Boulder High School standout isn't quite as easy to spot as Dizon on Saturdays. At least not to the untrained eye. But Smart, a redshirt sophomore, has earned more playing time this season, making 11 tackles in 75 plays so far.

"I think I've made a lot of progress," said Smart, who forced and recovered a fumble against Arizona State. "I'm just more comfortable in the defense and knowing the defense and the speed and tempo of the game. I feel pretty good out there."

Smart was only on the field for seven defensive snaps last season but saw action in 11 games on special teams. This year he is in the lineup in passing situations and sometimes even with the first-string unit.

Playing behind Dizon and having Brian Cabral as his position coach has helped Smart's improvement.

"You just try to emulate what (Dizon) does out there. You watch him on film, and he's doing it right all the time and making plays all the time. You just try to copy that in a way and translate it for yourself," Smart said. "(Cabral) is obviously one of the best linebacker coaches in the country. It's a great opportunity that we all have for him to be our coach. Playing under him is fun. He knows what he's talking about."

Smart joined the program as an invited walk-on in 2005 after tallying 98 tackles, including 17 for loss, during his senior season at BHS. And from the first day he stepped on campus his mindset was to have more of an impact than just playing on the Buffs' scout team.

"I've always known that I could play at this level," Smart said. "Your expectations coming in are to just try to as best you can, try to find a spot where you can help contribute to the team. Recently, those expectations have been raised for me. But that's what I've expected."

Someone is going to have to replace Dizon next season. And the defensive leader says the coaches could do worse than making Smart the choice.

"Smart is just one of those guys that if I go down or someone else goes down, even it's not his position, he'll jump in," Dizon said. "I love that guy. He's an awesome guy."



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.



WR Williams anxious for redemption

Buff WR had key drops in loss to Arizona State

By Ryan Thorburn
Friday, September 14, 2007

During the latter stages of Wednesday's practice, Patrick Williams jumped up in the air and made a difficult reception look easy.

"Why can he catch them now?" a sideline cynic wondered aloud.

After a couple of drops during Colorado's loss at Arizona State, no one was harder on Williams than the man in the mirror.

It was a long plane ride home for the talented junior wide receiver.

"It almost made me sick to my stomach to just think about the game," Williams said. "Tuesday couldn't get here fast enough. I wanted to be back out here and I know our group was ready to get back out here and just go to work."

Despite all the talk about the upgrade in talent at quarterback and wide receiver, the Buffs are currently ranked 91st in passing offense (186.5 yards per game) through eight quarters and an overtime.

Scotty McKnight leads the team with 14 receptions for 84.5 yards (12.1 per) and two touchdowns. Williams is second with eight receptions for 81 yards (10.1) and no touchdowns.

"I'm still very excited. I know we have a talented group," Williams said. "We have young guys, veterans and in-betweeners. And we're all capable of going out and making plays. Now, that being said, we have to go out and execute and make sure we capitalize on our opportunities."

The Buffs are expected to have Josh Smith in the lineup for the first time on Saturday night against Florida State. The true freshman was the talk of preseason camp before getting injured during a scrimmage.

All of the above have the ability to make big plays, something they will probably have to do for CU to beat the speedy Seminoles.

"It surprised me," Williams said of the offense's performance in Tempe. "We should have bounced back better. We had a few plays that didn't go the right way and we should have just came back and controlled the things that we should have controlled."

"But those plays are over now, let's deal with the ones in front of us."



City getting ready to rumble: CU Buffs take on Florida State in first home game of season

By Ryan Morgan
Friday, September 14, 2007

On Saturday night, the University of Colorado Buffaloes host their first home football game of the season. Here's a quick look at the rules — both on and off the field — that come with a game that brings tens of thousands of reveling fans to town for the 8 p.m. contest against Florida State University.

Off the field

Avoid Broadway and be ready for lots of people out on the streets.

Boulder police spokeswoman Julie Brooks said people who do drive should keep an eye out for more — possibly tottering — pedestrians heading out to the game or to bars.

"We would never advise anybody not to go out," Brooks said. "The reality of it is that there's going to be a lot of people at this game, and there's going to be the usual traffic congestion. We'd just ask people to be patient with other people and to be understanding of the numbers of people who are going to be out."

Be ready for revelers and, police say, celebrate responsibly. Brooks said extra officers are already out on the streets in response to the return of students to CU. She said police aren't specifically preparing for mayhem — but said they'll be ready if it happens.

"We try not to believe there's going to be riots," Brooks said. "We try to be prepared, as we always are. ... If we do happen to beat Florida State, we hope we can show them we have responsible community members and people who know how to behave, and can act like we've won before."

'Batten down the hatches' if you live on University Hill. That's the advice offered by Jane Stoyva of the University Hill Neighborhood Association. She said neighbors adjacent to the campus are preparing for a rough Saturday night. Home football games — particularly night games — tend to bring loud noise, drunken students, and, on a few occasions, riots.

"You might say that Hill residents suffer with football post-traumatic stress disorder," Stoyva said. "Some leave town for the event. All seem to batten down the hatches and prepare for a night of interrupted sleep."

On the field

Leave your beer and missiles at home.

CU police say they'll strictly enforce a ban on alcohol and throwable items — including marshmallows and whole fruit — to keep them from ending up on the field. CU will have 80 officers at the game, plus

330 private security guards inspecting packs and keeping an eye on the crowd.

Fans are allowed only one non-disposable container up to 2 liters in size, or one factory-sealed, 1-liter bottle of water.

Officials say they'll take a zero-tolerance stance toward fans who break those rules.

"Violations of banned substances and materials, or disruptive and unruly behavior, could result in fans being booted from the game," Joe Roy, CU's police chief, said in a news release.

Call for help with hooligans. CU has set up a special hot line — 303-735-BUFF — for fans to call to report unruly behavior.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

mark kizsla

Reward for beating Bowden? Credibility

By Mark Kizsla
Denver Post Staff Columnist

Article Last Updated: 09/13/2007 12:19:08 AM MDT

Boulder - Hasn't CU been stuck with the bumner of being a Joe Schmoe football program long enough?

"I look like 95 percent of guys on campus. I, of all people, probably am Joe Schmoe playing quarterback," said talented young Cody Hawkins, making a joke at his own expense, but revealing much about the feisty underdog status now embraced by the CU program.

Standing 5-feet-11 and minus the padded shoulders of his Colorado uniform, Hawkins appears as if he plays intramural football rather than Division I, brother.

But as long as they must stay up late Saturday to play Florida State on television, however, the Buffs might as well look like prime-time players, because hasn't CU football been the source of nationwide ridicule for way too long?

Since getting stomped by Oklahoma for the Big 12 Conference title in 2002, the Buffs have

dropped 30 of 53 games. The truth is: Colorado began losing its credibility as an elite football school long before disgruntled boosters tried to blame the Boulder district attorney for recruiting woes or former coach Gary Barnett kicked Katie Hnida when she was down.

Now, you want to hear the good news? Here is the perfect scenario for CU to begin its football renaissance in earnest. Colorado is a 4-point underdog to the formerly mighty Seminoles, a long-proud dynasty that now smells of moldy decay.

All the Buffs have to do is say: Nighty-night, Bobby Bowden.

And how hard can that be? The 8 p.m. kickoff will be way past the 77-year-old Bowden's self-proclaimed bedtime.

"Oh, my goodness," Bowden said earlier this week. "Let me just say this: I'll be waking up to go to the game."

While the old Florida State legend dozes on the sofa where his coaching mystique and spare change have slipped between the cushions, here is Dan Hawkins' big chance to make folks take the CU football seriously again.

Hawk is father of the CU quarterback and coach of the team, although, at this point, which of those contributions has been more important to the rebuilding project is open to debate.

While the excitable second-

Advertisement

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

year coach stood on the floor of a stadium in Denver less than two weeks ago and shouted "We're back!" upon escaping with a victory against Colorado State, it now sounds suspiciously like a premature declaration, especially given the fact that the Buffaloes are surrendering an average of 30.5 points after two games in 2007.

Somebody asked Daddy Hawk if he had yet to record a breakthrough, signature win that would define what the Buffs would be under his leadership. And the coach responded with the self-deprecating grin that makes it impossible not to root for him.

"Well, considering we have only three (victories) in the past two years," said Hawkins, interrupting his train of thought with a laugh, "do we point to that Iowa State game? Nah."

Finally, here is the opportunity for Hawkins that could erase the frustration that stretched from Montana State to Nebraska and all those growing pains from beginning to end of last season.

Florida State, a team whose lingering fame across the country far outstrips the actual talent remaining on the roster, should be exactly what the Buffaloes need to feel good about themselves, because Deion Sanders, Charlie Ward and Derrick Brooks ain't stepping off that bus parked outside Folsom Field.

While admitting to be an admirer of Bowden's since I was a young boy in West Virginia who marveled as he put that state on the college

football map, the game has not only passed by this Hall of Fame coach, it has given him a plate of milk and cookies and informed Bowden it's time to toddle off. In his last 25 games, the great man's record: 13-12.

There's nothing intimidating about the Seminoles any longer except that decal of an Indian spear on their helmets.

College players do not get as awed by the decals on the helmet as they did a generation ago, when Southern Cal, Notre Dame and Oklahoma monopolized the limited selection of TV games, Hawkins said.

If talent inside the uniform counts more than the decal on the helmets, Colorado will beat Florida State.

Then, when Hawkins shouts the Buffs are back, people will start to believe it.

Staff writer Mark Kiszla can be reached at 303-954-1053 or mkiszla@denverpost.com.

 [Print](#)  [Email](#)  [Return to Top](#)  [Share](#) »

Advertisement

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

COLORADO | vs. Florida State, Saturday, 8 p.m.; TV: ESPN

Moorpark High School and drew interest from Harvard and Columbia for track.

No fury like a player scorned

Freshman WR Josh Smith recovering in time to face team he once coveted

By Tom Kensler
Denver Post Staff Writer

Article Last Updated: 09/13/2007 11:42:35 PM MDT

Boulder - Among the true freshmen expected to make their college football debut for Colorado at home Saturday night, wide receiver Josh Smith is as excited as anyone. He figures fate allowed him to recover from a bruised kidney in time to face Florida State.

Smith played high school football in Moorpark, Calif., but he considers himself a Floridian. He was born in Tallahassee, not far from the FSU campus.

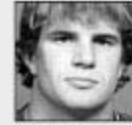
Extra incentive? You bet.

"I'm not going to lie, I always wanted to play for Florida State," Smith said. "I was disappointed when they didn't recruit me."

Seeking stability from a broken home, Smith moved to California as a teenager to live with an older sister who kept him focused on schoolwork. He was an honor student at

The lowdown

FLORIDA STATE (1-1)



Player to watch |
Drew Weatherford

The junior quarterback has always been a hot-and-cold passer. Last weekend he was on, throwing for 332 yards and three TDs against undermanned Alabama-Birmingham.

Key for the Seminoles |

Good biorhythms

The Seminoles aren't used to playing at altitude, and at an 8:15 p.m. Mountain starting time, that will feel like 10:15 to their body clocks. Beyond that, moving the ball on a consistent basis.

COLORADO (1-1)



Player to watch |
Hugh Charles

The senior tailback, who hasn't played since straining a hamstring in the opening series of the first game, is eager to bring much-needed breakaway speed to the backfield.

Key for the Buffaloes |

Takeaways

CU has averaged two per game and probably needs to get at least that many to hold down Florida State's attack and keep it from becoming a shootout.

TOM KENSLE

But Smith wanted to play major-college football, even though he hadn't taken up the sport until

Advertisement

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

his junior year. Following a senior season in which he caught 21 passes for 477 yards and 10 touchdowns, Smith picked Colorado over UCLA and Washington State.

He didn't even receive a form letter from Florida State.

"So the game Saturday night will be like a championship game to me," said Smith, a 6-foot, 190-pounder.

Possessing an explosive combination of sprinter's speed and sure hands, Smith became the talk of fall camp before an Aug. 18 scrimmage. That's when he ran almost full speed into the retaining wall at Folsom Field while looking back at the quarterback while running a pattern. He remained hospitalized for four days while doctors waited for the swelling in his left kidney to subside.

Only a couple of true freshmen - wide receiver Kendrick Celestine and walk-on kicker Tyler Cope - saw action in Colorado's first two games. CU coach Dan Hawkins said more will join them Saturday night, although he has not revealed which ones other than Smith. He prefers to redshirt as many true freshmen as possible, but with CU's needs to get more speed on the field, freshmen such as Smith make attractive options. Hawkins does not want to burn a redshirt year if the player doesn't contribute.

"Freshmen want to play right away," Hawkins said. "But you have to balance it: How much do you need them? How much do they bring to the

table? What's their risk-reward benefit? Being able to give them meaningful plays."

Don't expect a dozen true freshmen to toss away their redshirts Saturday night. But after watching his team wear down last weekend in the 33-14 loss at Arizona State, Hawkins apparently has decided to send in some fuzzy-faced reinforcements.

Ryan Miller (6-7, 320), a Parade All-American last fall at Columbine, and Hawaiian Kai Maiava (6-0, 295) could spell an offensive line that has seen the five starters go the distance in the first two games. Brian Lockridge, a small (5-8, 180) but shifty halfback, might provide a spark. Defensive end Conrad Obi (6-3, 250) and other true freshmen might also get a chance, Hawkins said.

"Those guys have been watching for two weeks, so they know what to expect," said senior linebacker Jordon Dizon, who earned Big 12 defensive newcomer of the year honors in 2004 as a true freshman. "But still, they're going to be nervous."

"I remember my first game. I was running out there like a chicken with its head cut off. But then it settles down."

Footnotes

The athletic department announced Thursday it is backing the CU student group organizing a "Black Out" in Folsom Field and hopes fans wear black to the game. ... Approximately 1,200

Advertisement

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

tickets remain for the game, according to CU officials. Tickets may be purchased by calling 1-800-87BUFFS.

Staff writer Tom Kensler can be reached at 303-954-1280 or tkensler@denverpost.com.

 [Print](#)  [Email](#)  [Return to Top](#)  [Share](#) »

Advertisement

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

denverpost.com

THE DENVER POST

West Nile sidelines CU, Broncos PA voice

By Monte Whaley
Denver Post Staff Writer

Article Last Updated: 09/13/2007 11:32:29 PM MDT

The public-address announcer for the Colorado Buffaloes and the Broncos is recovering from West Nile virus and will be away from the microphone for several more weeks, his wife said Thursday.

Alan Cass, also known as a leading authority on big-band legend Glenn Miller, likely contracted the virus after being bitten by a mosquito at his south Boulder home in early August, Sue Cass said.

"He ran a 104-degree fever for 12 days and it just laid him out," she said. "Today (Thursday) was the first day in over a month he's felt better."

Another famous voice, Alan Roach, will be a temporary replacement for Cass. Roach, the PA announcer for the Avalanche and formerly the Rockies, is also heard on KOA radio.

Cass, 68, was first diagnosed with pneumonia, but when his fever persisted a test confirmed he had West Nile, Sue Cass said.

The couple was in the midst of a move to Longmont when the mosquito bit him in the garage.

"One bite is all it takes, so I'm asking people, please be careful," said Sue Cass.

There have been 352 confirmed cases of West Nile in Colorado this year and five deaths.

His age and diabetes probably made him more susceptible to the virus, his wife said. But what's helped him is that he has stayed fit and is otherwise healthy.

"His vitals remain good and he's a strong guy," Sue Cass said. "The worst is behind us."

Cass retired in 1998 from CU-Boulder after serving in many capacities, including as director of the Coors Events/Conference Center.

Since 1981 he's been the Buffs' public-address announcer and has done the same for the Broncos since 1982.

He has a trademark style that is entertaining but doesn't take the spotlight from the players or action, said CU sports information director Dave Plati.

"He's just a great, classy guy," Plati said.

Staff writer Monte Whaley can be reached at 720-929-0907 or at mwhaley@denverpost.com.

Advertisement

Print Powered By  FormatDynamics™

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_5697809,00.html

Buffaloes seek running start

By B.G. Brooks, Rocky Mountain News
September 13, 2007

BOULDER — A week into the 2007 football season, the Colorado Buffaloes believed they were up and running once more.

Two weeks in, they're wondering where their running game went.

With a fast and talented Florida State defensive front visiting Folsom Field on Saturday night (8, ESPN), the Buffs can't help but wonder how quickly they can rediscover it. And against Florida State, that won't be an easy task.

CU coach Dan Hawkins said Florida State's front four — ends Neefy Moffett and Alex Boston and tackles Andre Fluellen and Budd Thacker — "can all motor. They've always had great skill guys with speed, and they still have that. But you look at all 11 guys on defense, and they all can run."

Failure afoot Saturday in the stifling heat of Tempe, Ariz., returned CU to a thoroughly uncomfortable position in the NCAA weekly statistics — at least in total offense.

The Buffs' 32 rushing yards and 204 yards overall in a 33-14 loss at Arizona State plummeted them to 96th in rushing offense and 104th in total offense among 119 Division I-A teams.

Last week's rushing total was lower than any in 2006, when CU's ground game provided the only offensive firepower.

"A lot of (the run-game inefficiency) came down to individual technique," senior tackle and offensive captain Tyler Polumbus said. "When each one of us takes care of our own assignment, that'll take care of the big picture. That's what we've really got to work on. We had some big- time breakdowns individually, including myself."

Those breakdowns could prompt personnel shifting up front. The same five linemen have taken every snap in the first two games, but true freshmen Ryan Miller, Kai Maiaeva and Mike Iltis could see duty Saturday.

Miller, CU's top 2006 signee, practiced mostly at guard during preseason camp, but lately, he has been backing up right tackle Edwin Harrison, creating speculation Harrison might swing back to a guard position.

Slipshod work up front never aids productivity, but Hawkins also pinned some of the slide on the inexperience of redshirt freshman tailback Demetrius Sumler, who accounted for 85 of CU's 129 rushing yards in the opener.

Hawkins believed the Buffs' early struggles on the ground chipped away at Sumler's confidence, and by the time the offensive line was adjusting to Arizona State's front, "Demetrius had kind of convinced himself it was going to be a tough day. That's part of the maturing process he has to go through and we have to go through."

The schedule demands the Buffs mature on the fly. Acknowledging the speed of the Seminoles' front four, Polumbus also said they "rock the front a lot. ... They're just going to move around a lot, and they've got an odd package on third down. They'll try and confuse you and overload one side."

Still, Florida State hasn't been spectacular in stopping the run. In an opening loss to Clemson, the Seminoles yielded 132 yards, then 119 in rallying to beat Alabama-Birmingham last week.

Among Hawkins' hopes is Florida State requires at least one more week to synchronize its staff, schemes and players.

Veteran coach Bobby Bowden gutted his staff, replacing four offensive assistants, one defensive assistant and the strength coach.

Asked if he still sees the Seminoles adjusting to the changes, Hawkins said, "A little bit, yeah. They're a little bit different than they were last year. And I think they're still adjusting and growing into that."

Copyright 2007, Rocky Mountain News. All Rights Reserved.

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_5697820,00.html

Local college football notes

By Rocky Mountain News
September 13, 2007

CU

Finally, 'J-Fly' arrives

The wait seems interminable for freshman receiver Josh Smith, but the first time he hears the traditional war chant from Florida State supporters, he'll smile and know it all was worthwhile.

After a sensational preseason camp, Smith missed CU's first two games because of a bruised kidney. He'll make his debut Saturday against Florida State, and he can't wait.

Born in Tallahassee, Fla., Smith eventually sought a lifestyle change and relocated in Moorpark, Calif., with an older sister (Alexis Scott). But the Seminoles chant remains dear to him — sort of.

While rehabilitating from his injury, Smith tried to keep himself in "game mode" and was "hearing that Florida State chant in my head the whole time ... I want to use it more as a weapon; I try to pretend that whole chant is for me. I'm from Florida, so in my eyes, they're just doing that for me. That way, it can't affect me at all; it's like I'll just go out there and do my job."

Dubbed "J-Fly" by teammates, Smith returned to practice this week and said he "feels like I didn't miss a beat ... I feel as good as new."

Backing the 'Blackout'

CU's athletic department has joined the student-inspired "Blackout" movement, urging fans to wear black shirts Saturday night. On Wednesday, a school spokesman said traditional gold attire was preferred.

But players, who will wear all black uniforms, were energized by the "Blackout" theme, which was born on Facebook and spread quickly.

"A night game, fans all in black ... it could be real intimidating," senior defensive end Alonzo Barrett said.

Added senior offensive tackle Tyler Polumbus: "It should be close to a sellout ... and that stuff with the blackout is pretty exciting."

Late Thursday afternoon, CU athletic director Mike Bohn agreed. He said the school recognizes "the student body is the heartbeat of our program, and if they have expressed a desire to do this, we want to support them."

Take a bow, Branch

Former CU/NFL player Cliff Branch will participate tonight in the Pearl Street Stampede, which features the CU team and Golden Buffalo Marching Band.

The event begins at 7 p.m. in front of the Boulder Courthouse (14th Street and Pearl).