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colorado 27, oklahoma 24

Buffaloes shock the nation

It's a great fall in Boulder

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

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Boulder - Feeling as if he were floating in air while bouncing between crazed Buffaloes fans on a Folsom Field filled with joy, Colorado junior defensive tackle George Hypolite didn't want to hear about Saturday's 27-24 homecoming victory over third-ranked Oklahoma becoming a defining moment in the Dan Hawkins' era or signature win for the program.

Hypolite and his teammates were too busy looking for somebody to hug.

"We were tired about hearing about the 1990 national championship team or the 2001 Big 12 championship," Hypolite said. "This is our team. We were ready to make a statement."

Seconds after a 45-yard field goal by Kevin Eberhart with no time remaining in regulation made national headlines

Colorado Football

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for Colorado (3-2, 1-0 Big 12), many of the 50,031 fans leapfrogged the guardrail and rushed the field. For CU players, trying to get to the locker room afterward proved to be as challenging as limiting Oklahoma (4-1, 0-1) to 230 yards in total offense.

Fans took photos of the scoreboard with their cellphones. Players kissed girlfriends and family members - and perhaps people they didn't even know.

"I've been to some crazy concerts, but this was worse than all of them," said CU quarterback Cody Hawkins, who threw for 220 yards and two touchdowns and didn't seem to care that his helmet was swiped by somebody while he accepted pats on the back. "It was very exciting to see the students get into it like they were."

Colorado scored the final 20 points and outplayed Oklahoma in about every facet. The Sooners entered as a 22-point favorite and were thought to be a bona fide national championship contender, but the Buffs dominated after falling behind 24-7 in the third quarter. Colorado had lost its past 14 meetings with top-25 teams.

Who could have predicted this?

"We did," CU offensive guard Wes Palazzi said.

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"When did we think we were going to win the game? It was when we started practicing for this game."

Dan Hawkins told the team that he had a feeling. A good feeling.

"I've been (coaching) for 25 years and you know when your team is ready," Hawkins said. "All week, I told them we were going to win the game. Our guys were where they needed to be."

Except for falling behind by 17 points and Cody Hawkins throwing two interceptions on deflected passes that led to OU touchdowns, Colorado did about everything right - or at least what it takes to knock off a top-three team.

CU's defense swarmed OU's offense, save for a 34-yard touchdown run by Allen Patrick in the second quarter.

Cody Hawkins, a redshirt freshman playing in his first Big 12 game, shook off the interceptions, maintained his composure and converted 6-of-19 third downs. While that may not sound like much, he kept the chains moving in critical situations. (Oklahoma, by comparison, went 1-for-9 on third down). Highlighting CU's 17-point rally in the fourth quarter, Hawkins hit senior tight end Tyson DeVree for a 4-yard touchdown on fourth down, making it 24-17 with 14:50 left. Then, off play-action, Hawkins found senior wideout Dusty Sprague in the right corner of the end zone for a 15-yard touchdown that evened the score at 24-24 with 4:05 to go after Eberhart's extra point.

"I thought (Cody Hawkins) did a great job," OU coach Bob Stoops said. "What you appreciate about him is that we had some interceptions and some big plays on him, and he hung in there and made plays in the second half to help his team win."

Meanwhile, the Colorado defense did its part. Oklahoma had been averaging 61.5 points per game but managed just seven in the second half. Sooners wideout Malcolm Kelly, a preseason all-Big 12 pick who already had seven touchdowns, was double-teamed much of the game and did not catch a pass.

The most amazing stat of the game might have been Oklahoma getting outrushed by Colorado, 161 yards to 118. Sooners tailbacks Patrick (9.0 yards per carry) and DeMarco Murray (6.8) had their way in four games, including a 51-13 frolic over Miami. On Saturday, they looked human.

"I have to give it to our defense," CU senior linebacker Jordon Dizon said. "We played our butts off."

The Grades - By Tom Kensler

OFFENSE

A: Rolling up 381 yards against what had been the nation's fifth-

ranked defense and maintaining possession of the ball for 38 minutes and 54 seconds - we'll overlook two Cody Hawkins interceptions that came off tipped passes.

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DEFENSE

A: To pull off the upset, Colorado absolutely had to limit an Oklahoma offense to less than half its per-game average of 61.5 points. Nobody had come close to slowing down the Sooners - until Saturday.

SPECIAL TEAMS

A: Everybody contributed: Terrence Wheatley on kickoff returns, Chase McBride on punt returns and kicker Kevin Eberhart with the winning field goal. Any questions?

OVERALL

A: Upsets of this magnitude don't happen every afternoon. Heck, they don't happen every decade. CU coach Dan Hawkins looks forward to the day when this will not be called an upset.

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terry frei

Buffs' shocker simply no fluke

By Terry Frei
The Denver Post

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Boulder - The most stunning thing about Colorado's upset of No. 3 Oklahoma on Saturday? There were some breaks involved - including a crucial muffed punt - but there was nothing flukish about it.

The Buffaloes dominated time of possession, outrushed the Sooners, limited Oklahoma to only 230 yards of total offense, rallied from a 24-7 deficit, and ended up hosting a CU homecoming party in the middle of the field when Kevin Eberhart's 45-yard field goal as time ran out sent shock waves around the country.

Amid the hubbub, somebody swiped Cody Hawkins' helmet, but other than that ...

"Unfortunately, everybody's been kind of making fun of us for the 'woulda, coulda, shoulda,' but finally we went out and we 'shoulda' and we 'do-da,'" the freshman quarterback said later, in a summation that perhaps wouldn't pass muster in Prof. Michael Preston's English 3226 course - but made perfect (folksy) sense.

His father's CU program needed to get past

moral victories.

"That's our expectation for this program, to be a national championship-level program, to compete with the best programs in the country and that means beating those programs," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "You can't just keep coming close all the time. You have to be able to seal the deal."

Yet it's a tough hurdle to clear, both mentally and physically, getting past playing a game worthy of pats on the back against quality opponents, but still having a feeling

of foreboding hanging over the bench like the Goodyear blimp. of foreboding hanging over the bench like the Goodyear blimp.

No more.

And Dan Hawkins' son had much to do with it, as part of a bigger picture that included the defense at least neutralizing - and bordering on shutting down - a team that came in averaging 61 points through four games, which would be easy to dismiss had the Sooners not put up 51 against Miami (of Florida, not Ohio).

"I think it's nice, because a lot of people were talking about trying to get a signature win," Cody said. "Although I don't know if this is it yet, I know it was a huge win for the program for people to see where we're going and the potential we have on this football team."

Rather than comparing it to a victory from his

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stint at Boise State, Dan Hawkins brought up a big win that came during his tenure at Willamette University, adjacent to the Oregon State Capitol building in downtown Salem. (These things are all relative.) In 1994, he recalled, the Bearcats beat defending NAIA national champion Pacific Lutheran 10-7, getting major contributions from three freshmen - a quarterback, wide receiver and kicker. "I felt like all those same things were coming together," he said. "We'll see. Hopefully, you guys will let me coach a few more years and we'll have a few more, and I'll be able to see where (this) ranks."

The father-son connection can be overplayed, but it also involves a fascinating overlap of emotions. Finally, after watching his father's teams at Boise State, Cody now has the power to affect his father's professional fate. Most coaches' sons, whether in grade school or in the midst of an insurance career, find themselves - and more than ever in the modern environment of everyone being able to spout off, not just in the stands, but on the air or anonymously online - hypersensitive, often angry and feeling a bit helpless.

In that situation, you're prone to want to climb up four rows and get at the loudmouth. You

Blogs

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can't understand why your father has to be civil

to the media types who know just enough about football to know that the third-and-8 draw is a stupid call if it doesn't work, but genius if it does.

At least Cody Hawkins gets to help his dad out, and in this instance, it came the day after Cody and Dan watched another member of the family, Drew, play quarterback for Regis High School in a loss to Faith Christian.

Dan said he and Cody "both were in pain until this morning, and we said, 'Let's not go through that twice in one weekend. Let's try and erase that a little bit.' There were some things (Cody) missed, and some things he made. I've told you guys before, he is my son, but I love all these guys and I don't go, 'Hey, look at the plays my kid's making.' I don't. I'm looking at, did he make the right read, are we getting rid of the ball, throwing to the right guy? He's been in a lot of big games. He's been around this thing for a long time."

Corner-turning? Perhaps. As Hawkins - Dan Hawkins - noted, those types of things are better judged in retrospect. At least in front of the media, the coach was making a conscious effort to not appear too excited, to project an it's-a-long-season, just-one-win attitude. His son paid some lip service to the same concept, but also conceded: "I'm a little excited. I need to breathe more."

By the time you're reading this, his helmet might be on eBay.

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cu football

Stoops dazed over collapse

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

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Boulder - Any coach who has won one national title and played in two others should expect his team to bury undermanned opponents by the sheer will and aura of its strength and legacy. A No. 3 ranking. A 24-7 lead. A dead crowd. In the grand annals of Oklahoma football, this was another setup for a crushing win in another national title chase.

But rarely in Oklahoma history has a second-half collapse poleaxed a season as the third-ranked Sooners' 27-24 loss to Colorado did Saturday. Rarely under Bud Wilkinson, Barry Switzer or, for that matter, current coach Bob Stoops has an Oklahoma team folded like this.

The loss left a dazed and visibly perturbed Stoops to give his team the ultimate slam.

"We're not a very smart team right now," he said, symbolically standing in the dark shadows under the north bleachers. "We make some poor choices. It's disappointing because we emphasize it and talk about it all the time. Guys got to listen."

The nation's top-scoring team had dumb penalties, dropped a fair catch, didn't throw a single pass to its best receiver, had three turnovers in the second half and couldn't tackle and couldn't run. And if that didn't lay an egg with poll voters today, this will: Oklahoma was flat.

"I think we were, and I think it carried over from last week," receiver Juaquin Iglesias said. "We were flat coming out against Tulsa. They went up on us. We can't do that. We have to be like we were the three

weeks before that, come out firing and keep it going." weeks before that, come out firing and keep it going."

When the Sooners (4-1, 0-1 Big 12) weren't shooting themselves in the foot they were firing blanks, or shooting at the wrong target. Averaging 61.5 points and sporting an all-Big 12 receiver in Malcolm Kelly, Oklahoma threw just as many passes at Ralphie the buffalo as it did Kelly.

"That's inexcusable," Iglesias said. "He's a great player. He made a lot of plays for us. I don't know what was going on but I feel like we've got to get him the ball. He opens up a lot of things for us."

The Sooners gave Colorado (3-2, 1-0) plenty of praise, with Stoops saying, "They outplayed us. They outcoached us in the second half." But where Colorado's underrated defense excelled most was in its double coverage of Kelly.

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The Buffaloes held Oklahoma's rushing attack to only 45 yards in the second half, stuffing the run repeatedly and playing coverage on obvious passing downs. Oklahoma's offense, famed for its trickery on the road, was as bland as its uniforms.

"They did a good job of covering him up," Sooners quarterback Sam Bradford said. "He was pretty well covered all day. Anytime you get one-on-one I'm going to take it, but I didn't get that matchup that often today."

Bradford, Oklahoma's wunderkind freshman, was a very freshmanlike 8-for-19 for 112 yards, with two interceptions and a touchdown. With Oklahoma abandoning the running attack despite the lead, Bradford's first-month hype looked like last month's news.

Ahead 24-10 late in the third quarter at his own 35, Bradford's deep pass to Iglesias went too far. It bounced off his fingers and into the arms of safety Ryan Walters. That, Stoops said, was the turning point.

"We were in scoring position," Stoops said, "and that was when all the momentum and everything switched and we never got it back."

It became even more important after Oklahoma forced Colorado to punt in the fourth quarter and returner Reggie Smith dropped the easy pop fly, setting up Colorado's tying touchdown. Still, it wouldn't have mattered if Oklahoma's inconsistent defense hadn't decided to take the second half off.

A Colorado offense that seemingly couldn't move the ball on anyone but the Mid-American Conference outgained the Sooners 219-56 in the second half. A facemask penalty out of bounds was a nice bonus on Colorado's tying drive, too. Yes, blame goes a long way in Oklahoma this weekend.

"We don't fit things right at times and sometimes we just don't tackle well," defensive coordinator Brent Venables said. "It's pretty simple. It's pretty basic, pretty elementary."

So is this: It's still September and last week's third-ranked team in the nation is out of the national title picture.

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weeks before that, come out firing and keep it going." weeks before that, come out firing and keep it going." weeks before that, come out firing and keep it going."

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cu football notes

Buffs see OU begin to unravel in fourth quarter

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Launched: 09/30/2007 01:00:00 AM MDT

Boulder - When college football teams with national-championship aspirations begin to see their dreams slip away, nerves begin to fray and focus is lost.

Colorado cornerback Terrence Wheatley saw it firsthand Saturday during the fourth quarter of the Buffaloes' 27-24 victory over third-ranked Oklahoma.

"We got them rattled; you could see that in their eyes," Wheatley said. "Their guys weren't finishing their routes. They weren't finishing their blocks.

"When I saw that, I told our guys, 'Let's go. We've got them right where we want them.'"

Wheatley and everybody else on CU's defense put redshirt-freshman quarterback Sam Bradford and his Oklahoma teammates in a position they hadn't experienced this season. OU won its first four games by an average score of 61.5 to 11.8.

"Stopping their running game was the focus of our game plan," CU senior linebacker Jordon Dizon said.

Apart from a 43-yard pass to tight end Joe Jon Finley, Bradford struggled to find open receivers. OU junior wideout Malcolm Kelly, an All-America candidate who already had seven touchdowns, didn't catch a pass on Saturday.

"Our critics really criticize our secondary," Dizon said. "But what now? What now?"

Little big man

Colorado senior Chase McBride, one of the smallest players in the Big 12 at 5-feet-7 and 160 pounds, came up big with four punt returns that totaled 87 yards.

His long

of 31 yards set up Kevin Eberhart's game-winning 45-yard field goal with no time remaining. of 31 yards set up Kevin Eberhart's game-winning 45-yard field goal with no time remaining.

"Fortunately I was able to break a big one and the offense did the rest," McBride said. "I just waited for a hole to open up."

McBride, a former Broomfield High School star who attended Wyoming in 2003 but did not play for the Cowboys, was a Buffs walk-on. Apparently that changed after his performance on Saturday. CU coach Dan Hawkins said McBride

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will be put on scholarship.

Footnotes

Tyson DeVree's touchdown catch in the fourth quarter for the Buffs was his fourth of the year and third on fourth-down calls. ... Colorado beat a team ranked third or higher for the first time since defeating No. 3 Texas in the 2001 Big 12 title game. ... Two true freshmen, offensive guard Kai Maiava and wideout Kendrick Celestine, made their first starts. ... CU's 17-point rally is the biggest of the decade and fourth-largest comeback in school history.

of 31 yards set up Kevin Eberhart's game-winning 45-yard field goal with no time remaining. of 31 yards set up Kevin Eberhart's game-winning 45-yard field goal with no time remaining. of 31 yards set up Kevin Eberhart's game-winning 45-yard field goal with no time remaining.

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Colorado stuns Oklahoma

By B.G. Brooks, Rocky Mountain News
September 29, 2007

BOULDER – A Norman conquest? A Boulder breakthrough might be more appropriate.

With second-year coach Dan Hawkins preaching to anyone within earshot that an autumn day like this was imminent, his Colorado Buffaloes took the message to heart and shocked the college football world on Saturday.

Unranked, unheralded CU, a 23-point underdog at kickoff to a team many believed would contend for the Bowl Championship Series national title, stunned No. 3 Oklahoma 27-24 at Folsom Field.

"All week long I told (his players) we were going to win this game . . . I've been doing this for 25 years, and you know when your team is ready," Hawkins said after senior placekicker Kevin Eberhart drilled a career-long 45-yard field goal on the raucous afternoon's final play.

It gave CU (3-2 overall, 1-0 Big 12) its first victory over a ranked opponent since 2003 (a 14-game losing streak) and its first win over a top five team since 2001. That six-game losing streak started after the Buffs defeated No. 3 Texas 39-37 in the Big 12 title game.

Eberhart's kick capped a CU comeback from a 24-7 deficit – it was the fourth largest comeback in school history – and was his second game-winner of the 2007 season. His 35-yarder in overtime sank Colorado State 31-28 in the season opener. But Saturday's boot was one for the ages – all ages in a delirious stadium that held its collective breath as Hawkins allowed the clock to run to :02 before calling a timeout and sending Eberhart and his kicking team onto the field.

To that point, Eberhart was one-for-one, having made a 41-yarder in the third quarter and missing a 37-yarder midway through the final quarter. After Hawkins called the timeout to get Eberhart & Co. in position, he neither looked at nor spoke to Eberhart.

"Definitely not," Hawkins. "It would have definitely been bad mojo."

Surprisingly, Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops believed no "mojo" was needed to upset Eberhart; Stoops didn't use a timeout to try and "ice" the CU specialist, who was expecting it.

So Eberhart simply lined up and calmly punched it through.

"I was just hoping for the opportunity," Eberhart said. "But to do it (win a game with a field goal) twice in one season . . . it's just kind of unreal. I feel great. It's an amazing win for our team."

Winning their Big 12 Conference opener and defeating Oklahoma (4-1, 0-1) for the first time in six meetings, the Buffs fought back from a pair of Cody Hawkins interceptions that helped push the Sooners ahead 24-7 and gave CU's homecoming game the appearance of a runaway win for the defending conference champions.

"Who scheduled Oklahoma for homecoming?" Dan Hawkins asked. "Can we find that guy?"

It didn't matter. Even when behind by 17 points to a team that was leading the nation in scoring (61.5 points a game), the Buffs held fast to what their coach instilled in them since a near-miss (a 14-13 loss) last season at No. 9 Georgia.

"I think last year we let the Georgia game slip away from us and that could have helped us in some other situations last year," Dan Hawkins said. "You cannot just keep coming close – you have to be able to seal the deal."

Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops bemoaned the fact his team could not do just that.

"We got up 24-7 and then they outplayed us in a big-time way the rest of the game," he said. "I give my compliments to them; they hung in there and made the plays.

"They executed the last quarter and a half a lot better than we did. They outplayed us and out-coached us in the second half. They fought their way to a heck of a win."

Entering the game averaging 562.2 yards a game in total offense, Oklahoma was held to 230 yards (118 rushing, 112 passing) by a CU defense that believed it played well enough to defeat the Sooners last season in Norman, Okla. That 24-3 loss stuck with the Buffs like a bad meal.

Meanwhile, CU ran for a respectable 161 yards against a defense that was allowing just 44.2 yards a game before Saturday. And the Buffs' 381 total yards (220 passing) was 147 more than the Sooners had yielded in four previous games this season.

"We came in prepared and just went out and did what we needed to do," said Cody Hawkins (22-of-36, 220 yards, two touchdowns, two interceptions). "We knew coming in it was going to be a crazy game . . .

"Every single guy on the team (believed the Buffs could win) . . . Everybody's been kind of making fun of us for the 'coulda, woulda, shoulda,' but finally we did go out and we 'shoulda and we didda.'"

Oklahoma opened lethargically, perhaps thinking of next week's annual trip to Dallas to meet No. 7 Texas, which lost 41-21 at home Saturday to Kansas State.

After a first quarter in which they were limited to one rushing yard and 14 total, the Sooners offense awakened with 10 points in the second quarter to take a 17-7 halftime lead.

Yet despite their early defensive performance, the Buffs trailed 7-0 after one quarter, with a tipped pass/interception providing Oklahoma with prime field position at the CU 11-yard line.

Cody Hawkins' pass sailed off of tight end Tyson DeVree's hands and was caught by Oklahoma strong safety D.J. Wolfe, whose 33-yard return set up his offense.

Three plays thereafter, Sooners quarterback Sam Bradford found Juaquin Iglesias in the back of the end zone for a touchdown. Garrett Hartley's PAT pushed Oklahoma ahead 7-0 with 1:40 left in the first quarter.

Two series later, CU drove 69 yards, with Hugh Charles (24 carries, 110 yards, one TD) covering the last 25, and tied the score at 7-7. But the Sooners' temporary offensive awakening occurred on their next possession.

They answered quickly to dissolve the tie, needing just 49 seconds to travel 80 yards and score on a 34-yard run by Allen Patrick. Oklahoma led 14-7.

And after limiting the Buffs to three-and-out, the Sooners cruised 72 yards to the CU 11-yard line, where Hartley's 28-yard field goal accounted for his team's 10-point lead at intermission.

With nowhere to head but upward, Oklahoma's second-quarter total offense numbers steadily went in that direction. The Sooners rushed for 72 yards, passed for another 88 and went to their locker room mulling how to improve on their 174 yards in first-half total offense.

The Buffs, meanwhile, went to theirs pondering how to prevent, as well as get more productivity out of an offense that accounted for 162 total yards and seven points.

CU's defense did what was required to open the second half, holding Oklahoma to three-and-out on its first possession. But the Buffs' offense promptly did what it couldn't afford to do – turning the ball over on another Cody Hawkins interception (his eighth of the season) that was returned 28 yards to the Buffs' 17-yard line.

Once again, the pass – this one intended for fullback Samson Jagoras – was tipped by the intended receiver and again went to Wolfe. A play later, Patrick scooted 17 yards, scored and helped stake the Sooners to a 24-7 lead before the second half was 3 minutes old.

Was the rout on?

Not in the Buffs' eyes.

A CU drive stalled at the Oklahoma 23-yard line, where Eberhart made a then-career-long 41-yard field goal and closed the deficit to 24-10.

Then it was CU's turn to be the beneficiary of a tipped pass. Or two.

A Bradford toss caromed off Iglesias' hands and was caught by Buffs safety Ryan Walters, initiating a drive that had CU perched at the Oklahoma 4-yard line as the third quarter ended.

Two plays into the last quarter, on fourth down, Cody Hawkins hit DeVree in the end zone, and with Eberhart's PAT, the Buffs suddenly were back in the game, trailing just 24-17.

The drama was only beginning.

Eberhart narrowly missed a 37-yard field goal attempt, pulling it wide left, but a quick pair of Sooners turnovers gave him and his team redemption. Another Bradford pass was tipped by Iglesias and intercepted by safety D.J. Dykes.

Stoops called that play ``the turning point With that, we would've had a big play and it would've put us in scoring position again. But then (CU) gets it. That, to me, was when all the momentum switched and we never got it back."

CU, though, couldn't immediately take advantage of Dykes' pick, and was forced to punt. The ball bounded off of Oklahoma return specialist Reggie Smith's mid-section and was recovered by CU long snapper Justin Drescher at the Sooners' 16-yard line.

Three plays later, Cody Hawkins hit receiver Dusty Sprague with a 15-yard scoring pass. Eberhart's extra point tied the score at 24-24 with 4:05 remaining.

When Oklahoma surrendered the ball downs and punted, CU's Chase McBride returned the ball 31 yards to midfield, where with 2:51 to play, the Buffs began their march to an Eberhart kick heard throughout college football.

When it passed through the uprights, students and fans streamed onto Folsom Field, many with cell phones in hand, snapping pictures or dialing friends to say they should have been there.

"I've been up here (at CU) for a long time and this is the greatest win we've had while I've been here, in my opinion," said Eberhart, a fifth-year senior. ``I also think it's been too long since we've had a win like this."

It might have taken some of the sting out of the long, long wait.

ETC.: Freshman running back Brian Lockridge missed the game with a concussion suffered in Tuesday's practice. Lockridge didn't report his injury to CU's medical staff until Thursday, and the decision to hold him out was made Friday ...Lockridge is the fourth CU player to suffer a concussion this season. The others: tight end Tyson DeVree, receiver Scotty McKnight, and linebacker R.J. Brown, whose career is in jeopardy due to previous concussions... Senior Dusty Sprague first-quarter reception for 15 yards made him the 19th CU player to surpass 1,000 career receiving yards. He finished with two catches for 30 yards and one score ... Oklahoma's top receiver, Malcom Kelly, did not have a catch ...Saturday's attendance was 50,031 ... CU's only reported injury was to reserve tailback Kevin Moyd (hamstring strain, day to day) ...The Buffs play their next two games on the road, traveling next Saturday to Baylor, then playing at Kansas State on Oct. 13.

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CU pulls off one of its most memorable wins, rallying to knock off No. 3 OU

By Kyle Ringo
Sunday, September 30, 2007

Zen.

He was the calmest person on the field.

His players and assistants ran and jumped for joy all around him. Cheerleaders hugged each other. Trainers and ball boys high-fived. Fans bubbled out of stands onto Folsom Field to join the celebration while workers and police stood watch over goalposts with military precision.

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins barely showed emotion. He raised his hands in victory and allowed a smile in the seconds after place-kicker Kevin Eberhart kicked a 45-yard field goal Saturday to beat No. 3 Oklahoma 27-24 in the second-biggest upset of the college football season (behind Appalachian State's victory over Michigan).

Hawkins walked around the field soaking in the chaos before being shepherded to a television interview with Fox Sports Net sideline reporter Jim Knox. A moth landed on his shoulder as he answered each question in measured tones. He revealed he had told his team all week it would beat the Sooners, who were favored by 22½ points.

"It's not cause I'm the Swami," he said. "I knew it last week. I've been doing this a long time. You can tell when your team is ready. ... The Buffs are coming around a little bit."

When the interview ended, Hawkins turned around and headed back into the mob instead of toward the locker room as is customary for coaches. It was all the sign anyone needed to know what the victory meant to a man who has mastered the even-keel.

Fans who screamed insults at him 13 months earlier after an historic loss to Division I-AA Montana State now wanted to hug him, slap him on the shoulder, shake his hand.

"Way to go coach."

"We love you coach."

"Hawk, you're the man."

The Buffs finally found their breakthrough moment because they learned to handle the peaks and the valleys with the personality of their coach. Down 24-7 in the third quarter, they rallied to score 20 unanswered points, making the Sooners pay for every little mistake along the way.

CU scored 17 points in the fourth quarter, capitalizing on interceptions made by safeties D.J. Dykes and Ryan Walters and a fumble recovery from long-snapper Justin Drescher on a muffed punt.

Some teams might have resorted to throwing the ball under the circumstances, but the Buffs ran, despite little history of success on the ground this season.

Using a lead play through the middle of the OU defense on multiple occasions, running backs Hugh Charles, Byron Ellis and Demetrius Sumler did damage to the fourth-ranked rushing defense in the country. The Buffs ran for 161 yards in the game, making it easier to pass.

Quarterback Cody Hawkins overcame two interceptions early on passes that tipped off the fingers of his receivers to throw touchdowns to tight end Tyson Devree and wide receiver Dusty Sprague. The pass to Devree came on fourth-and-goal.

"There wasn't anybody inside the locker room who thought we were going to lose that game," Cody Hawkins said.

The Buffs snapped a 14-game losing streak to ranked opponents and a five-game losing streak to the Sooners. It was the first victory over a top-10 team in Dan Hawkins's career and the first for the Buffs since the team won the Big 12 championship over Texas in 2001.

Oklahoma was the highest-scoring team in the nation before Saturday, averaging 61.5 points per game, but its vaunted offense struggled badly against a blossoming CU defense that has allowed 590 yards to its last three opponents combined.

It is the second-fewest yards allowed over a three-game span in the past 41 seasons.

Two of Oklahoma's three touchdowns came gift-wrapped from CU turnovers that put the Sooners deep in CU territory. Only once in the third quarter — when running back Allen Patrick scored on a 34-yard burst — did the Sooners score a touchdown on a drive that started on their side of the field.

"That No. 3 ranking didn't mean anything to us," CU cornerback Terrence Wheatley said. "You have to have that mind-set. It's not like that ranking gives them superpowers or anything like that. They didn't come out there with capes on."

The CU defense limited the Sooners to 230 total yards of offense and one of nine on third-down conversions. OU quarterback Sam Bradford came into the game rated the second-most-efficient passer in the nation. He completed only eight of 19 passes for 112 yards.

The Sooners had been averaging 562 yards of total offense and had scored at least 51 points in their four previous games.

"They outplayed us and out-coached us in the second half," Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said. "They fought their way to a heck of a win."



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It's deja vu all over again for CU's Broomfield Bandits

Eberhart, McBride played similar roles in overtime win over CSU

By Ryan Thorburn
Sunday, September 30, 2007

The Broomfield Bandits strike again.

The combination of a clutch Chase McBride punt return and game-winning Kevin Eberhart field goal has helped produced another improbable comeback victory for Colorado.

On Sept. 1, McBride set up Eberhart's game-tying field goal at Invesco Field with a 43-yard punt return in the fourth quarter.

The Buffs would beat Colorado State on Eberhart's field goal in overtime after trailing 28-17.

On Saturday, McBride came through again by returning a 45-yard punt 31 yards to set CU up at the 50-yard line with 2:51 remaining.

"I was just praying they were going to kick it to us. I was afraid they might kick it away," McBride said. "We had a middle return on, and they kicked it to the middle of the field. I just couldn't wait for it to come down because I knew we were going to make a big play."

Six snaps later, Eberhart's 45-yard field goal lifted the Buffs to a 27-24 victory over the No. 3 Sooners at Folsom Field after trailing 24-7.

Another special (teams) moment for the former Broomfield High School teammates.

"I've known Kevin for a long time, and I didn't even watch it," McBride said of the buzzer- and OU-beating kick. "I knew he made it. I knew he was money. And I told him right after the return, 'It's your turn now.'"

"Kevin said, 'I've got it.'"

Eberhart, who missed a field goal earlier in the CSU game, also atoned for his 37-yard try earlier in Saturday's fourth quarter that went wide left and kept the Sooners lead at 24-17.

The aerospace engineering graduate thought the official had miscalculated the 3-point launch.

"I really thought I did make it. The wind was kicking up, but I still thought that it was in," Eberhart said. "They called it no good, and you've got to live with it."

Dan Hawkins almost pulled the red flag out of the back of his pocket based on Eberhart's reaction. But CU's head coach wisely saved the challenge for later in the fourth quarter, which allowed the officials to overturn what would have been a key first-down completion for OU just before the fateful punt to McBride.

"I was about ready to call a timeout and get it reviewed," Hawkins said. "And then I saw the replay and I go, 'Ah, no you didn't (make it).'

"But we still believe in the guy and he came through in the clutch."

It has been a wild ride for Eberhart since replacing two-time All-American Mason Crosby this season. In only five games he has made walk-off field goals against CSU and OU, and also missed four field goals, including two in a 16-6 loss to Florida State.

"Playing against CSU and having that overtime field goal was great for my motivation and my confidence. It really helped me calm down my nerves for that last kick today," Eberhart said. "But I've got to work on not missing earlier in the game. Two second chances in one season is probably unprecedented."

McBride racked up 87 yards on four punt returns while Terrence Wheatley added 114 yards on four kickoff returns.

The Sooners' Reggie Smith muffed a punt that was recovered by CU long-snapper Justin Drescher and set up the game-tying touchdown in the fourth quarter. And OU kickoff return man DeMarco Murray flirted with a safety before finally downing the ball on a third-quarter chance that was reviewed and ruled a touchback.

"You never want to get outplayed at your position by the opponent," McBride said. "Sometimes you lose concentration. I feel bad for (Smith) as an athlete because we've all been there. But I'm glad he did it for our sake."



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Buff gold rush: Fans celebrate win over No. 3-ranked Oklahoma

By Kyle Ringo
Sunday, September 30, 2007

A sea of students clad in gold T-shirts poured over the railings in Folsom Field on Saturday afternoon in the moments after Colorado place-kicker Kevin Eberhart booted a 45-yard field goal through the uprights to upset No. 3-ranked Oklahoma 27-24 in the annual homecoming game.

The pain of coaching changes and benchmark losses over the past two years seemed to be sucked out of the stadium and replaced with the euphoria of the biggest victory in coach Dan Hawkins' career and the first signature win of his tenure at CU.

The Buffs rallied from a 24-7 deficit at halftime to score 20 unanswered points, including 17 in the pivotal fourth quarter.

Oklahoma came to town as the highest-scoring team in the country, averaging 61.5 points per game, but the Buffs held them to less than half their average and shut out the Sooners for the final 27 minutes.

"All week I told them we were going to win this game," Hawkins said. "I've been doing this for 25 years and you know when your team is ready. You know when your team is poised."

CU snapped a 14-game losing streak against ranked opponents and a five-game losing streak against the Sooners. The Buffs improved to 3-2 and 1-0 in the Big 12 Conference with a game next Saturday in Waco, Texas, against Baylor. Oklahoma, which harbored national championship hopes this season, fell to 4-1, (0-1 Big 12) heading into its annual grudge match with rival Texas.

The Buffs came up with an interception by safety D.J. Dykes, a fumble recovery on a muffed punt from long-snapper Justin Drescher and a 30-yard punt return from Chase McBride to set up their last three scores in the final 6 minutes, 37 seconds.

The game-winner was the longest field goal of Eberhart's career. It was also the second time this season the Broomfield High School product came through in the clutch. He kicked a 35-yard field goal to beat Colorado State in overtime in the season opener.

"We made some really poor penalties and we didn't play very smart," Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said after suffering only the 20th loss in his nine seasons coaching the Sooners. "We turned the ball over there late. You just can't have those things happen.

"The really poor, foolish things we did just killed us. We're not a very smart team right now."



CU rushing attack delivers knockout

Charles leads way with 110 yards, 1 TD on ground

By Ryan Thorburn
Sunday, September 30, 2007

How do you knock out a heavyweight champion?

Well, for starters, you better have a good jab working.

And a lot of patience.

Credit the Colorado coaching staff for sticking with the running game Saturday afternoon after falling behind No. 3 Oklahoma 24-7.

In the game, Hugh Charles had 13 carries that went for 2 yards or less, including six that went for negative yardage. Demetrius Sumler had seven carries that went for 2 yards or less, including three that went for no gain.

And Byron Ellis, despite averaging 5.8 yards a touch, added a 2-yard carry in the cloud of dust that was Folsom Field.

By late in the third quarter, it was all adding up to some big plays for the Buffs on the ground, which paved the way for the 27-24 upset of the Sooners.

"It does serve a purpose," Ellis said of the series of short runs. "We feel they had a good run defense but if you keep going at them, like any other defense, they're going to have to wear down eventually. And then those 1- and 2-yard gains start turning into 5 and 6. Then you start breaking those 5- and 6-yard gains into the 20-plus."

Like Charles' 25-yard touchdown run with 8:26 remaining in the second quarter, which tied the score 7-7.

OU's Allen Patrick responded with a couple of impressive counterpunches — touchdown runs of 34 and 17 yards — to give the visitors a 17-point lead in the third quarter.

But instead of abandoning the script and putting the comeback entirely on Cody Hawkins' shoulder pads, CU head coach Dan Hawkins and offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich marched on with the smashmouth strategy.

"That's just a trust factor between Coach Hawk and the running backs," Charles said. "He trusted us. He knew we were going to get it done and he allowed us the opportunities."

After an interception by safety Ryan Walters, CU found itself back in the game. Ellis ran for 5 yards on first down, then Charles broke a 10-yard run, Ellis a 12-yard run, and Charles a 23-yard run.

The nine-play, 62-yard drive was capped with a 4-yard touchdown pass to Tyson DeVree, which was set up by the play-action and included a sack-saving block by Ellis to cut the deficit to 24-17 with 14:50 remaining.

"I do think we wore on them just a little bit," Dan Hawkins said. "Probably a little bit more than they thought was going to happen, given what we've done up to this point. But you keep chipping away, you've got the right mentality, you don't get disturbed by a no-gain or a 2-yard gain, and you keep coming back."

Charles finished with 110 yards on 24 carries (4.6 per). Sumler had 37 yards on 13 carries (2.8 per). And Ellis added 29 yards on five carries.

The crestfallen Sooners crept off the field in disbelief after Kevin Eberhart's game-winning field goal at the gun.

This one must have felt like a low blow for the OU faithful.

"We just put our pad levels a little lower and started driving," Buffs true freshman left guard Kai Maiava said of his unit's second-half execution.



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McKay's play on last Buff punt proves big

By Kyle Ringo

Sunday, September 30, 2007

Perhaps the most overlooked play in Colorado's big win over No. 3 Oklahoma on Saturday was made by one the most overlooked Buffs so far this season.

Reserve cornerback Gardner McKay sprinted downfield as a gunner on a fourth-quarter punt and reached Oklahoma return man Reggie Smith before Matt DiLallo's punt arrived. Instead of committing a penalty by touching or tackling Smith too soon, McKay did what he was coached to do.

He stopped in front of Smith serving as just enough of a distraction to cause Smith to muff the punt. CU long snapper Justin Drescher recovered. The Buffs took control on the Sooners' 16-yard line and scored the tying touchdown three plays later.

McKay has underachieved in his three years in the program. He has never been able to spend much time on the field with the defense, but this season he has started to build a resume on special teams.

The junior from the Los Angeles area came into the game tied for the third most special teams points for the Buffs.

"It was a great play by Gardner," defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "He gets right to his nose. That's what he was taught to do. And, you know, the guy takes his eye off the ball for a second. That's all you need."

Good reviews

Colorado benefitted twice Saturday in the fourth quarter from instant replay.

Officials reviewed an interception by CU safety D.J. Dykes in which Dykes and OU wide receiver Juaquin Iglesias seemed to catch a pass from quarterback Sam Bradford simultaneously. Officials ruled Dykes made the catch first and Iglesias latched on.

On the Sooners' next drive, officials originally credited Iglesias with a 13-yard catch, but officials overturned the call when replays showed the ball hit the ground. The Sooners were forced to punt and Chase McBride returned it 31 yards helping to set up the game-winning field goal.

Good-luck charm

Buff quarterback Cody Hawkins can't be blamed if he wants his girlfriend, Lindsay Brady, to be at the rest of CU's games.

Brady met Hawkins when he lived in Boise, where she still resides. She's seen two games this year —

Colorado State and Oklahoma, both of which the Buffs won on field goals at the end.

"We're going to fly her to all of the games," Hawkins joked.

But the connection is even deeper than the two sweethearts. Brady's brother, Tim Brady, is the starting linebacker for Boise State. Thus, Lindsay Brady was at the Fiesta Bowl in January, when the Broncos knocked off Oklahoma.

That makes her 2-0 against OU coach Bob Stoops.

And, to carry it one step farther, Tim Brady is married to the former Brittany Hawkins.

Yes, that would be Cody's sister.

Giving up the lead

Senior linebacker Jordon Dizon won't be the leading tackler in the nation today when NCAA statistics are released, but that's just fine with him.

Dizon led the Buffs with nine tackles Saturday, giving him 65 for the season. He also registered his third sack of the season in the fourth quarter. The play came on third down when Dizon blitzed and it forced the Sooners to punt.

"We just did the things we had to do," Dizon said. "There was no one being Superman out there."

OVERRATED

Colorado coach Dan Hawkins says the most overrated statistic in football is time of possession, but the Buffs have won consecutive games while holding a dominant advantage in ball control.

The CU offense had the ball for 38 minutes, 54 seconds against the Sooners, including more than 21 minutes in the second half. The Buffs held a 40:24 to 19:36 advantage in time of possession a week ago in a win over Miami (Ohio).

Big Eight

The feel-good story on the Colorado roster this season might be true freshman Kai Maiava, who made his first start against the Sooners at left guard.

Maiava, from Wailuku, Hawaii, became just the eighth true freshman to start on the offensive line for Colorado since freshmen became eligible to play in 1973. The last to do so was former standout Brian Daniels, who became a four-year starter.

Maiava was the last recruit in the 2007 class, receiving an offer from Colorado coaches on the day before signing day in February after another recruit backed out of his commitment to go to another institution.

Notable

True freshman running back Brian Lockridge did not play Saturday because he suffered a concussion

during Tuesday's practice. Lockridge did not report the injury to the training staff until after Thursday's practice. ... Freshman wide receiver Kendrick Celestine made his first start and caught two passes for 25 yards. ... Fifth-year senior receiver Dusty Sprague became the 19th player in school history to record 1,000 receiving yards in a career. ... Cody Hawkins has thrown at least one touchdown pass in each of his first five games, setting a school record for the beginning of a career. ... Tight end Tyson Devree leads the Buffs with four touchdown catches. Three of the four have come on fourth-down plays. ... Officials announced attendance at 50,031.



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Bufs shock No. 3 Oklahoma

Associated Press

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Just as Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops predicted, the third-ranked Sooners couldn't run it up on Colorado. In fact, the Sooners couldn't even beat the Buffaloes.

Kevin Eberhart kicked a career-long 45-yard field goal as time expired to send Colorado past the stunned Sooners 27-24 Saturday.

It was the Buffaloes' first win over a top-five team since Dec. 1, 2001, when they bested Texas in the Big 12 title game.

After Eberhart's kick cleared the crossbar, the fans stormed the field as the dejected Sooners, who had blown a 24-7 second-half lead, walked off, their hopes of a national championship having taken a major hit.

The Sooners (4-1, 0-1) came in averaging a whopping 61.5 points to lead the nation. But behind a tough defense, the Buffs (3-2, 1-0) earned their biggest win under Dan Hawkins, who went 2-10 in his inaugural season last year.

The Buffaloes trailed 24-7 after Allen Patrick scored from 17 yards out following safety D.J. Wolfe's second interception of Buffs quarterback Cody Hawkins. His first one led to Juaquin Iglesias' 13-yard TD catch in the first half.

But Oklahoma, which had scored 50-plus points in each of their first four games, was stifled after that, and Colorado outgained the Sooners 219 yards to 46 in the second half.

Colorado began its comeback with Eberhart's 41-yarder to make it 24-10 in the third quarter.

After Ryan Walters picked off Sam Bradford, Hawkins hit Tyson DeVree for the score on fourth-and-goal from the 4, pulling Colorado to 24-17 on the first play of the fourth quarter.

Bradford, who was the second rated passer in the nation entering the game, finished 8-for-19 for 112 yards with two interceptions and was outplayed Hawkins, the Colorado coaches' son.

The redshirt freshman was 22-for-36 for 219 yards and two touchdowns.

The Sooners gave the Buffs a huge assist in their comeback when Reggie Smith muffed a fair catch and Colorado's Justin Drescher recovered at the OU 16.

Four plays later, Colorado tied it on Hawkins' 15-yard touchdown strike to Dusty Sprague with 4:05

remaining.

The Buffs forced another punt and Chase McBride's 33-yard return set up Colorado at midfield. Hawkins drove the Buffs to the 27, where Eberhart made the game-winner to give Colorado its biggest upset in years.

Oklahoma led 17-7 at halftime after managing just one long scoring drive, a three-play, 80-yarder that ended with Patrick's 34-yard TD run.

The Sooners went three-and-out on their first two possessions but got great field position on their next drive when Wolfe picked off Hawkins and returned it 33 yards to the Buffaloes 11.

The Sooners lost two yards on their first two runs, then Bradford hit Iglesias for a 13-yard touchdown — and Oklahoma's first first down — with 1:40 left in the first quarter for a 7-0 lead.

The Buffs tied it at 7 when pulling guard Devin Head opened a hole for tailback Hugh Charles, who scampered in from 25 yards out in the second quarter.

The Buffs announced before the game that freshman tailback Brian Lockridge would sit out with a concussion, which he suffered at practice on Tuesday. Lockridge had been the Buffs' primary tailback since they burned the redshirt on him two weeks ago.



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Woelk: Hawk knew breakthrough victory was coming

By Neill Woelk
Sunday, September 30, 2007

All week long, Colorado coach Dan Hawkins told his Buffs they would beat Oklahoma.

"Every day, every meeting," said Buff lineman Devin Head. "It was like he knew it was going to happen."

Knew it and proved it. Colorado 27, Oklahoma 24, and suddenly the Buffs are once again more than just an afterthought in the world of college football — and Hawkins' critics are suddenly very, very quiet.

Simply, the Buffs are once again relevant.

Need a reference point? Try Oct. 25, 1986, when the 2-4 Buffs knocked off then-No. 3 Nebraska, 20-10, at Folsom Field. The game ended a 19-year losing streak to the Huskers and is considered the turning point for Bill McCartney's program.

This has all the signs of being a similar affair. The Buffs ended a nine-game losing streak to top 10 teams — and guaranteed, it was no fluke.

The Buffs outplayed the Sooners. They beat them in virtually every statistical category. They passed better, ran the ball better and played much, much better defense.

And please, don't say the Sooners gave the game away. Colorado made 14 points worth of mistakes early, the Sooners made 14 points worth of mistakes late. The difference came down to who could move the ball in the end.

The Buffs moved it. The Sooners — still looking for a third-down conversion in the second half — are left wondering how that 24-7 lead melted away.

"We got tired of saying we were close," said safety Ryan Walters, whose diving interception late in the third quarter may have been the turning point. "It came down to finishing the game, closing the deal."

"It wasn't a matter of believing anything. It was a matter of knowing."

The Buffs knew it.

"It wasn't in a bragging way," said assistant head coach Jeff Grimes, whose offensive line has come a long, long way in five games. "It wasn't like Coach Hawkins was trying to prove he had some sort of crystal ball."

"He just said he knew the conditions were right for us to get that breakthrough win. He had his reasons, and they all made sense. I've known him a long time, and he's just doesn't say things like that. When he does, you listen."

Guaranteed, every player in the Buff locker room will listen closely from here on out.

The list of players who made the difference Saturday is a long one.

Along with Walters' interception was one by Daniel Dykes. Buff redshirt freshman QB Cody Hawkins outplayed his much-ballyhooed counterpart, Sam Bradford. CU running back Hugh Charles, maligned in some quarters for lacking toughness, ground out 110 yards — nearly matching OU's team total of 118 yards on the ground. Linebacker Jordon Dizon had a team-leading nine tackles, including a huge sack of Bradford late in the game.

Forget anyone? Of course. Tight end Tyson Devree, who had a pass bounce off his hands and turn into an interception in the first quarter, came up with a fourth-down touchdown catch in the fourth. Wide receiver Dusty Sprague, part of a much-maligned receiver corps, had the 15-yard game-tying touchdown catch.

Not to leave out kicker Kevin Eberhart, who shook off an earlier miss to calmly boot the game-winning field goal. Not to give short shrift to the entire defense, which sent the nation's highest-scoring team home with tail between legs.

And, let's not forget the punt return of Chase McBride, whose bobbing and weaving put the Buffs in position to drive for the winning field goal.

Oh, there are plenty of others. The entire defense held OU to an astounding 1-for-9 day on third-down tries. The offensive line dominated OU's much-celebrated defensive front.

Then there were CU's coaches, who had an outstanding game plan, starting with defensive coordinator Ron Collins, continuing with O-boss Mark Helfrich and moving right on down the line.

The biggest difference? This week, unlike other close calls of the past, the Buffs made the plays when they were in position to make a difference.

It's what Hawkins has been saying. Eliminate the mistakes and the Buffs could play with anyone. He kept insisting his team was *thisclose* to getting over the hump.

Now *thisclose* is a sealed deal. The 2007 Buffs have added to the list of the biggest wins ever at Folsom Field.

"Long, long overdue," said defensive back Terrence Wheatley. "It wasn't just for the players. It's for the school, the program, the alumni ... it's for the history. This is a proud program. We had to restore that pride."

And Hawkins?

Anyone who expected him to be giddy in post-game interviews, anyone who expected him to gush, doesn't know the man. Just like he has every week since his arrival, he warned of staying off the mountain top and out of the valley. He vowed that his team would come to practice today, study their

mistakes and continue the process of trying to improve.

"You have to stay the course," Hawkins said. "We have to be able to get back in here, look at what we did wrong and what we did right and get better."

Not that the magnitude of Saturday's win was lost on the head coach.

"Clearly, it's good for your fans, your recruits and your alums to see you be able to play like that," Hawkins said. "It gives everybody confidence. You can't just keep coming close. You have to be able to seal the deal. I think that's a little proof in the pudding for everybody."

Of course, Saturday's win doesn't guarantee anything other than CU fans have one wonderful day to remember this season. It doesn't guarantee a North division title; in fact, it doesn't guarantee even one more win.

But today, Colorado football is once again at least relevant.

That's a huge step forward.



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Later, Sooners

CU shocks No. 3 Oklahoma

By Patrick Ridgell

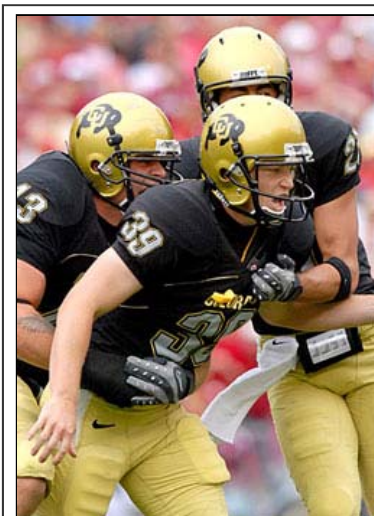
The Daily Times-Call

BOULDER — Seeking respect, craving confidence and searching for a means to instill belief in its fans, the Colorado football program did all of that and a lot more Saturday at Folsom Field.

CU stunned a mistake-prone and overrated Oklahoma team, defeating the No. 3 Sooners, 27-24, when Kevin Eberhart kicked a 45-yard field goal as time expired.

CU overcame a third-quarter 24-7 deficit, making it the fourth-largest comeback in program history. The Buffs snapped a 14-game losing streak against ranked teams and defeated a top-five opponent for the first time since beating No. 3 Texas in the 2001 Big 12 title game.

Fans stormed the field afterward while CU players and coaches went bonkers. Athletic department officials chose to leave the final score posted on Folsom Field's scoreboard all Saturday night, just in case anyone forgot.



CU kicker Kevin Eberhart is mobbed by teammates following his game-winning 45-yard field goal against Oklahoma on Saturday at Folsom Field. **Times-Call/Joshua Buck**

Statistically, the Buffs controlled things. CU outgained Oklahoma 381-230. The Sooners entered averaging 562.2 yards and 61.5 points per game. CU held possession for 38 minutes, 54 seconds, including 21:30 of the second half. Oklahoma committed three second-half turnovers, including a muffed punt deep in its own territory that set up the tying score, Cody Hawkins' 15-yard throw to Dusty Sprague.

TimesCall.com Slide Show

■ **Colorado over Oklahoma 27-24**

Saturday's statistics suggest the rapidly improving Buffs shouldn't have been 23-point underdogs. But they were, and perhaps the main challenge in CU's homecoming game lied in matching Oklahoma's strut and swagger. The Buffs did that, and according to players and

coaches, they knew they would.

"All week I told them we were going to win this game," CU coach Dan Hawkins said. "I've been doing this for 25 years, and you know when your team is ready. You know when your team is poised."

Said defensive tackle George Hypolite: "I think as a team, you could just feel it. Looking around, we knew what we were going to do, we knew what we came to do and there was no doubt in any of our minds, and coach just kept re-emphasizing that, kept our minds there."

While CU's win — combined with Kansas State's at Texas — sent shock waves through the Big 12 and the nation, it also thrust the Buffs (3-2, 1-0) into a Big 12 North race in which few outside the program believed it belonged. CU has sought a so-called signature victory during Dan Hawkins' 17-game tenure, and opportunities eluded it at Georgia last year and against Florida State two weeks ago. As Sprague said, "We were sick of being close."

Two interceptions by Sooners safety D.J. Wolfe set up a pair of short OU TDs, helping the Sooners take control.

But Eberhart kicked a 41-yard field goal late in the third, and Cody Hawkins hit Tyson DeVree for a four-yard, fourth-down score early in the fourth quarter to pull CU within 24-17 and set up the eventful close. Sprague's score came with 4:05 to play, and the Buffs forced Oklahoma to punt on its next possession with the help of an overturned pass completion. CU's Chase McBride returned the punt 31 yards to midfield, and CU ran five plays, including four rushes, to set up Eberhart for the game-winner.

Eberhart, who kicked the game-winner in overtime against Colorado State on Sept. 1, missed a 37-yarder early in the quarter and was grateful for another opportunity.

"Not often do you get a re-do," he said amid celebrating fans after the game. "How can you miss when you have this many people on your side?"

Oklahoma was on the wrong end of two key calls in the second half, the overturned completion and an interception by CU's Daniel Dykes on which Sooners receiver Juaquin Iglesias also had his hands. But coach Bob Stoops, whose Sooners (4-1, 0-1) will be accused this week of looking ahead to next Saturday's annual date with Texas, complimented CU's determination.

"They hung in there and made plays," Stoops said. "They executed the last quarter and a half a lot better than we did. They outplayed us and outcoached us in the second half. They fought their way to a heck of a win."

Gauging Dan Hawkins' progress in Boulder has been a tricky task. Improvement appeared evident at times, but losses still piled up, and some stung. Last year's defeat in Georgia robbed CU of confidence it so badly needed, and the Florida State loss from two weeks ago reeked, to players and coaches, of wasted opportunity.

So the mood in the Dal Ward Center on Saturday afternoon contrasted the euphoria on the field. It was more a mindset of relief, of finally pushing through and of showing everyone this is a good football team, recent struggles aside. A trip to Baylor looms (Saturday, 5 p.m., no TV), and the Buffs will be expected to build on this.

"It's about time that we go out and stop talking about how good we can be and actually do it," cornerback Terrence Wheatley said. "We went out there and just did it. We didn't worry about anything else. We just went out there and made plays and did what we've been doing since we were 10 years old."

Said Hypolite: "This has been building for two years. ... We were ready finally for us to throw a knockout punch, for us to make that play that wins the football game.

"But it only means as much as our next game. If we go out and get blown out by Baylor, what does it mean?"

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DAILY TIMES-CALL

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Turnovers set table for Buffs

By Patrick Ridgell
The Daily Times-Call

BOULDER — The Colorado Buffaloes finally forced a few turnovers, and they couldn't have come at a better time.

Two interceptions and a fumbled punt, all in the second half, enabled CU to overcome a 17-point deficit and beat No. 3 Oklahoma, 27-24. CU entered Saturday minus-6 in turnovers in 2007, and players and coaches said all week they had to force some against the Sooners.

"We have to figure out this turnover thing, and we were fortunate that our defense got some," CU coach Dan Hawkins said.

CU's defense played well, again, Saturday. It held Oklahoma to 230 yards, which was less than half its average of 562.2. Combined with the 221 yards Florida State totaled on CU two weeks ago and Miami-Ohio's 139 last week, CU has allowed its second-fewest total yards — 590 — over a three-game span in the past 41 seasons.

When Oklahoma scored with 1 minutes, 40 seconds left in the first, it was the first touchdown CU had allowed in nearly seven quarters. Oklahoma entered having punted 10 times in 2007. It punted seven times Saturday.

The Buffs' corners held up well against Oklahoma's vaunted receiving tandem of Juaquin Iglesias and Malcolm Kelly. They combined for two catches, both by Iglesias, for 15 yards. Oklahoma quarterback Sam Bradford went 8-for-19 for 112 yards and a touchdown.

But without the turnovers, CU wouldn't have won.

The first came when CU safety Ryan Walters grabbed a pass Iglesias tipped over the middle late in the third quarter, when the Buffs trailed, 24-10. The offense turned it into a touchdown drive.

The second came late in the fourth when CU safety Daniel Dykes grabbed another deflected pass and then outwrestled Iglesias for it. A replay review confirmed Dykes' interception, but not without some nervous moments.

"I was pretty sure that they'd give me the ball. I knew I had it coming down, but I wasn't sure," Dykes said. "Sometimes they make strange calls."

The third came when Oklahoma's Reggie Smith dropped a punt deep in Sooners territory late in the fourth. CU recovered with 4:44 to play and turned it into the tying touchdown.

"Sometimes it's just the ball rolling your way, and sometimes you have to make the ball roll your way," Dykes said. "If we play good defense, we're going to get breaks."

Cornerback Terrence Wheatley said: "You have to get turnovers in big games. You look at a lot of big games, and a lot of them are decided by turnovers when teams are so evenly matched. It's whoever makes the mistake first and whoever can capitalize on the mistakes first."



CU's Justin Drescher comes up with a punt fumbled by Oklahoma's Reggie Smith during the fourth quarter Saturday at Folsom Field. The Buffs also intercepted two OU passes in the second half, leading to a 27-24 upset win. **Times-Call/Joshua Buck**

Concussions abound: Linebacker R.J. Brown missed his second straight game with a concussion, his sixth since arriving in Boulder. Brown said Saturday he met with doctors earlier in the day, but no definitive prognosis was provided.

“We should know more later this week,” Brown said.

Running back Brian Lockridge missed the game with a concussion he suffered Tuesday in practice. He said he’ll play next Saturday at Baylor (5 p.m., no TV). Receiver Scotty McKnight and tight end Tyson DeVree played after suffering concussions a week earlier.

DeVree scored his fourth touchdown of the season. Three have come on fourth downs.

Heavily recruited: Ponderosa High linebacker Jon Major, the state’s top recruit, was seen on the field amid the celebration after the game, following Kevin Eberhart’s winning field goal. Several CU fans encouraged him to sign with the Buffs.

Run game: CU out-rushed the Sooners, 161-118. CU trailed in rushing yards at halftime, 73-47.

“They executed and played better than we did,” Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said. “We had a lot of missed tackles, and they blocked better than we defended. They made holes, and their running backs found them.”

CU’s Hugh Charles ran 24 times for 110 yards and a 25-yard touchdown.

Lucky Sooner: Iglesias got lucky in the second quarter when he fielded a kickoff in the end zone, ran sideways through the end zone while he considered coming out, and even set his right foot on the goal line before he took a knee to down the ball. Officials reviewed the play and gave Iglesias the touchback.

Hawkins wondered after the game how Iglesias couldn’t have entered the field of play since he had the ball in his right hand, appearing to cross the goal line.

Extra points: Saturday’s attendance was 50,031. ... Dusty Sprague’s 15-yard catch in the first quarter made him the 19th player in program history to top 1,000 career receiving yards. ... CU’s scoring streak reached 227 games. ... Kai Maiava became CU’s first true freshman to start on the offensive line since Brian Daniels in 2003. Since true freshmen became eligible to play in 1973, only seven have started on CU’s offensive line. ... Senior punt returner Chase McBride was awarded a scholarship, Hawkins announced Saturday. ... Eberhart’s 45-yard field goal to win it was his career long. He kicked a 41-yarder in the third quarter that set a short-lived career long. ... The only injury CU reported was the hamstring strain Kevin Moyd suffered.

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Spotlight returns for right reasons

By Justin Williams
The Daily Times-Call

BOULDER — Before the 2-10 season. Before the scandals. Before a black cloud was permanently draped over Folsom Field.

Prior to Saturday, “before” was the only thing the University of Colorado football program had to smile about. Now, the Buffaloes are smiling about now.

With a dramatic 27-24 win Saturday over third-ranked Oklahoma, the Buffs embarked on a new journey. Not one that will focus on how to turn things around or how to keep your chin up — one that will, for the first time in a long time, focus on winning football games.

“This, to me, is long overdue. It’s long overdue to get a big win against a great team, in the national spotlight,” Colorado senior cornerback Terrence Wheatley said. “It’s good for people to realize we are a good team. We’re always the underdog, and me personally, I was just tired of it. Tired of hearing whatever it is, like they don’t have this and they don’t have that.

“We’re good; we have good players here.”

Colorado has spent a good part of this decade as the butt of college football’s jokes. It started with head coach Gary Barnett’s embattled exit, amid sex scandals and cheeky comments about female kickers. The Dan Hawkins era didn’t exactly start off shining, either, as a season-opening loss to Division I-AA Montana State last season led to the school’s worst record in more than 20 years.

Even last week, when CU suspended linebacker Michael Sipili for violating the school’s code of conduct, it appeared that misfortune had just gravitated toward Boulder.

Then suddenly, with a kick of Kevin Eberhart’s leg, CU pride was back.

“It means a lot to me, because I realize we all chose Colorado,” Wheatley said. “I chose to come here, and I could have gone pretty much wherever I wanted, but I chose to come here. I think the guys believe that now. We could have gone somewhere else, but we chose to come here for a reason, and that’s to play in games like this and win games like this.”

Despite an on-the-field celebration that included hugs and high-fives and was “worse than most concerts,” quarterback Cody Hawkins said, the Buffs aren’t ready to say a game in September will define their season. It was just the first game in a long haul through the Big 12 Conference, and it’s important for Colorado to stay grounded.

“You have to stay the course,” Buffs head coach Dan Hawkins said. “We have to be able to get back in here tomorrow and look at what we did wrong and what we did right and get better.”

Saturday’s win doesn’t mean the Buffs are ready to embark on a national title hunt. Even a Big 12 championship still is unlikely at this point. But there’s no doubt Colorado football players will walk with a different swagger this week.

And maybe it’s time for all the bad memories to move on, too.

"I would hope so. It's not so much from our standpoint, because we already moved on, but from everybody else. Maybe they'll just leave us alone now," Wheatley said. "Obviously, it will take more than this one win, but hopefully it's a step in the right direction where people will start to realize the past is essentially in the past."