



Concussions threaten Brown's career

Buff LB has suffered six at CU

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, September 26, 2007

Colorado linebacker R.J. Brown might not be allowed to play football again after suffering the sixth concussion of his college career 10 days ago in a loss to Florida State.

Brown attended the Buffs' practice Tuesday as preparation for No. 3 Oklahoma began. He stood on the sidelines in shorts, his No. 34 jersey and sunglasses still feeling the effects of a blow that kept him cooped up in his house last week in order to avoid sunlight.

"It was like having a migraine," he said. "It was pretty miserable for a week there, but I feel a lot better."

Brown is scheduled to have a magnetic resonance imaging test on Thursday before meeting with specialists Friday to determine his future. He said this is either the sixth or seventh concussion he has sustained since coming to CU in 2004 as a walk-on from Honolulu. He said he also suffered three concussions during his high school career.

Coach Dan Hawkins was asked Tuesday if he is concerned about Brown and his future.

"Obviously you want to err on the side of caution in that case," he said. "I think it's too early to kind of figure out what the plan is."

The long-term effects of multiple concussions have been well publicized in the past year, with former NFL players speaking out about players in the pro ranks being expected to play too soon after their injuries.

One of those players is former CU linebacker Ted Johnson, who retired from the New England Patriots and talked earlier this year about suffering multiple concussions, including two in four days in 2002. Johnson says he now suffers from memory loss and depression.

Brown said he has heard the horror stories and is concerned about his long-term health, but despite those fears he still wants to play. He said watching his teammates beat Miami (Ohio) 42-0 last week was one of the worst days of his life because he wasn't part of it.

He said if it's left up to him, he will continue to play football.

"I know the repercussions of it," Brown said. "I'm obviously concerned. My family is concerned. ... I have no idea what's going to happen until I get to talk to those guys and see what they have to say."

There is no official school or athletic department policy regarding how many concussions a player can

sustain before his career is cut short to protect his future health, CU head trainer Miguel Rueda said. Each case is handled on an individual basis.

Players are not allowed to practice after suffering a concussion until they are able to pass a series of tests. Players take the tests prior to the season when healthy to establish a baseline score they must later meet if they suffer a concussion.

"In general, we no longer grade concussions until all signs and symptoms have been cleared," Rueda said. "We used to evaluate someone on the sideline and then turn around and say they are suffering from a grade I, II, or III concussion.

"The thinking process has changed because it is impossible to know the severity of a concussion without taking into consideration how long the symptoms last — as well as loss of consciousness not being considered in the grading scale.

"That being said ... all athletes suffering multiple concussions are dealt with on an individual basis. Factors taken into consideration include, but are not limited to, number of concussions, severity of concussions, time between each, and position."

Brown toiled on the scout team and as a reserve through his first three seasons in Boulder and slowly built a reputation as a special teams standout who always plays with passion.

His work ethic earned him the honor of being selected by his teammates as special teams captain this year. When fellow linebacker Michael Sipili was suspended for his role in a summertime street brawl, Brown found himself in the starting lineup at middle linebacker when the season started.

In the first two games plus a portion of the Florida State game, Brown played 102 plays and made 12 total tackles. After four games, he still leads the team with 12 special teams points.

As a captain, Brown was asked to appear with fellow captains Jordon Dizon and Bernard Jackson on the cover the team's media guide this season. If Brown's career is cut short, Dizon will be the only eligible player left on the team from the photo.

Jackson was ruled academically ineligible before the season started.

Notable

Dizon continues to lead the nation in tackles, averaging 14 per game. ... Officials said 4,350 tickets remained for Saturday's game on Tuesday morning. ...It won't be a huge recruiting weekend with the third-ranked Sooners in town. Dan Hawkins said he is expecting eight recruits to make official visits but that number could rise slightly by Saturday. ... Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops on the Colorado defense: "I thought last year they were one of the better defenses we played all year and they still are watching them on tape."



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Redshirt freshmen at the reins

Bufs, Sooners led by young QBs

By Kyle Ringo

Wednesday, September 26, 2007

Unless they meet in the Big 12 Conference championship game somewhere along the way, the Colorado and Oklahoma football teams won't play again until 2010 after battling Saturday in Folsom Field.

But it's entirely possible the same two starting quarterbacks will be leading the programs when the 2010 contest rolls around.

Imagine for a moment, a matchup featuring fifth-year seniors Sam Bradford and Cody Hawkins, only with Hawkins surrounded by much more talent than currently populates the CU depth chart. It could be something special.

So far in their redshirt freshman seasons, Bradford has overshadowed Hawkins and most other young signal callers in the conference.

The 6-foot-4 Oklahoma City product has looked like he has the potential to compete for the Heisman Trophy in future seasons playing for the No. 3-ranked Sooners. He is already the second most efficient passer in the country directing the highest scoring offense through the first four weeks of the season.

In the first month of his career, Bradford has twice broken the previous school record for consecutive completions, set by former Heisman winner Jason White at 18. Bradford completed 22 in a row over the first two games of the season against North Texas and Miami and he completed 21 straight over another span in the past two games against Utah State and Tulsa.

The national record for consecutive completions is 24 and is held by former Tennessee quarterback Tee Martin.

"He's doing everything well," Oklahoma coach Bob Stoops said. "He's throwing the ball well. He's reading, his progressions are great. He's been great at the line of scrimmage and in and out of the huddle. And he's just getting more and more confident and sure of himself and what he's doing and allowing the players around him to make plays.

"He's just directing the offense like we hoped he would."

Bradford came to Oklahoma from just up the highway at Putnam City North High School in Oklahoma City, where he was a talented high school basketball player and ranked the 17th best quarterback in the country during his senior season by Scout.com.

Just like Hawkins, he sat and watched last season as the OU offense struggled at times with Paul

Thompson at quarterback after being moved back to the position from wide receiver.

Hawkins watched his teammates flounder in his first year in Boulder as Bernard Jackson played quarterback after two years at running back and wideout. The Buffs haven't made the leap the OU offense has — the Sooners are scoring 61.5 points per game — but this won't be the same predictable CU attack Oklahoma faced in Norman, Okla., last year.

With Hawkins at quarterback, the Buffs have made dramatic improvement in the passing game. CU threw for a meager 1,422 yards and seven touchdowns in 12 games last year. In the first four games this season, it has thrown for 954 yards and six touchdowns.

Those aren't numbers that will scare a team like the Sooners, but Stoops said the Buffs are much more versatile now. Cody Hawkins has completed passes to 16 different receivers already. Only 13 caught passes in all of 2006.

Bradford has thrown only two interceptions for the Sooners and 14 touchdown passes. Hawkins has thrown six of each.

"I told him, I said, 'We've got to get over the mulligan thing.' " coach Dan Hawkins said. "He takes a mulli every game, and you can't do that. We've got to be able to have some games where we're not turning the ball over at all, either fumbles or interceptions."

Cody Hawkins is his worst critic. He doesn't judge himself based on touchdown passes, passing yards or completion percentage. Those are just parts of the game.

"We're 2-2 so I've done OK, but probably not as well as I should have done," he said. "I mean, my job is to win football games, and right now we're 2-2, which is definitely not where we want to be.

"But it's a long season and hopefully we'll get rolling."



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cu football

Hawkins: OU beatable

By Tom Kensler
Denver Post Staff Writer

Article Last Updated: 09/26/2007 12:26:47 AM MDT

Boulder - Speaking on Tuesday during his weekly media luncheon, Colorado football coach Dan Hawkins didn't hesitate when asked if the Buffaloes can defeat third-ranked Oklahoma on Saturday at Folsom Field.

"Totally," Hawkins said. "Anybody is beatable, and anyone can beat you."

Colorado (2-2) is a three- touchdown underdog to a Sooners team (4-0) that averages 61.5 points per game and probably could score more than that in a track meet.

"I've been in this too long (to not think CU can pull off an upset)," Hawkins said. "I mean, Montana State can beat you, and you can beat SC (Southern Cal). You have to play efficiently and you have to do things right. You can't leave stones unturned. You have a field

Colorado Football

- [Read detailed pre-game notes for Saturday's Buffs-Sooners game, including printable rosters \(.pdf\)](#)

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goal, you have to make it. You can't turn the ball over. You have to play clean. But Appy (Appalachian) State beat Michigan."

CU redshirt freshman quarterback Cody Hawkins said Oklahoma's defense poses an unusual challenge because it jumps into multiple formations. Most teams with superior talent, he said, play a more basic defense and depend on athleticism, not schemes.

"If you get in third down, (OU's defense) is going to spin the Wheel of Fortune; they can do so many things," the quarterback said.

Footnotes

Junior linebacker R.J. Brown (concussion against Florida State) won't play against Oklahoma, Hawkins said. Others on the injured list, including tight ends Riar Geer (knee) and

Tyson DeVree (concussion) and wideout Scotty McKnight (concussion), are expected to play. ... True freshman offensive linemen Kai Maiava and Ryan Miller, who came off the bench and made their debuts Saturday against Miami (Ohio), should get more playing time against Oklahoma, Hawkins said. ... Hawkins said "I doubt it" when asked if 2006 starting quarterback Bernard Jackson might become academically eligible for this game. Tyson DeVree (concussion) and wideout Scotty McKnight (concussion), are expected to

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

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college football

With Sooners en route, Buffs Smart'ing

By Tom Kensler
Denver Post Staff Writer

Article Last Updated: 09/26/2007 05:19:56 PM MDT



(1)

Boulder — When talking about Saturday's homecoming game against third-ranked Oklahoma, coaches could use Colorado's new starting middle linebacker as an example of, well, playing Smart.

"Against Oklahoma you can't make mistakes that you might get away with against other

teams," said Jeff Smart, a 5-foot-11, 250-pound sophomore. "The details are going to be even more important than they already are."

A former walk-on from Boulder High School, Smart gets the start for the second straight week out of necessity. One day before last weekend's game against Miami (Ohio), projected starter Michael Sipili was suspended for the entire semester by the school's Office of Judicial Affairs. The penalty was imposed for Sipili's role in an off-campus fight in June that injured another student.

Sipili had been replaced by junior J.R. Brown. But Brown remains sidelined for the second straight game after suffering a concussion against Florida State.

"You never want to lose anyone, especially a guy like Mike," Smart said of Sipili. "He's a good football player. That's going to hurt us.

"We were already thin at linebacker. Now we're thinner. We'll just have to adjust, but we'll be alright."

CU defensive coordinator Ron Collins said he feels fortunate that Smart joined the program without a scholarship prior to the 2005 season. Smart redshirted in 2005.

"Jeff is playing well," Collins said. "He works hard. He's got some speed. He's doing a nice job. We have

confidence in him." confidence in him."

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Smart was awarded a scholarship by CU coach Dan Hawkins following the Florida State game.

"Football-wise that doesn't change anything," Smart said. "It's pretty sweet, though."

Smart has beaten the odds. A late-bloomer who was injured with a hip pointer for much of his senior year at Boulder High, Smart said his best scholarship offers came from San Jose State and Northern Colorado.

He said no thanks and jumped at the chance to join the Buffaloes when then-coach Gary Barnett asked him to be an invited walk-on. Smart was born and raised in Boulder.

"I just really like Boulder," Smart said. "After going to other cities and towns, I wanted to play here. It's pretty nice to be able to see my parents and sister all the time."

"I like the school," he said. "And I looked at it as, if something happened in football, where I broke a leg or something, I wanted to be at a place where I'd be happy."

A Smart move, CU might say.

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

confidence in him." confidence in him." confidence in him."

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Longmont, Colorado
Friday, September 28,
2007

DAILY TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 9/26/2007

Hawkins aims to cut out mulligans

No. 3 Oklahoma to provide challenge for Colorado QB

*By Patrick Ridgell
The Daily Times-Call*

BOULDER — Assessments of Cody Hawkins' play as Colorado's quarterback four games into his redshirt freshman season on Tuesday included mediocre terms like "OK." And then there were a few you normally hear on a golf course.

"I told him we have to get over the mulligan thing," head coach Dan Hawkins said. "He takes a mulligan every game and you can't do that. We have to be able to have some games where we're not turning the ball over at all, on either fumbles or interceptions."

Like Saturday, against No. 3 Oklahoma (11:30 a.m., FSR)? "Yeah," Hawkins said.

To this point, Cody Hawkins has progressed much like his father and other coaches expected. But with the powerful Sooners (4-0) visiting this weekend in the Big 12 opener for both programs, CU needs its quarterback to reach another level, one that features better decision making and more control.

The most recent mulligan coaches saw Saturday was the third-quarter interception he threw trying to convert a fourth-and-4. Hawkins had Josh Smith split wide right and facing single coverage, so he tried to loft a pass deep down the sideline to the receiver. Miami-Ohio defender Jeff Thompson intercepted it.

"The pick he threw the other day on the fourth down was probably a drop in the learning curve," Dan Hawkins said.

Said Cody: "I think me being a freshman, I saw we were up by (28) and I have Josh in single coverage. I have a chance to throw a long touchdown here and bury them. I should have played like it was a tight ball game and gone for the first down, rather than the home run shot. I have to learn to have that control."

Hawkins said Smith was his first read on the play, and that he would have been better served to hit running back Hugh Charles, his second option, with a shorter pass, or Kendrick Celestine, who was his fourth option.

"When you're up by 30, you need first downs, not touchdowns," Cody said.

His father, hoping Cody can learn that control soon, said he took a shot when he really didn't have a shot.

"If he takes that shot on first or second down, you don't like it, but you go, 'Well, OK, you need to learn from that,'" Dan Hawkins said. "To me, taking a shot on a fourth-down play when the route you've designed is there and you can get the first down if you do what you're supposed to do, to me that's ..."

Cody?

"It was a stupid play," the younger Hawkins said.

Hawkins' numbers are, as he said, OK. He's hitting 55.4 percent of his passes for 944 yards, six touchdowns and six interceptions. His 236 average passing yards per game are ninth among Big 12 quarterbacks, many of whom carry bloated statistics thanks to facing inferior competition.

Oklahoma offers many challenges. It's second in the Big 12 in pass efficiency defense. The Sooners are second in the conference and fifth nationally in total defense, allowing 234.2 yards per game.

But the first stat Hawkins cites is his record as the starter, 2-2. Not bad, not great, and not what he strives for.

"My job is to win football games, and right now 2-2 is not where we want to be," he said. "It's a long season and we have to keep rolling."

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Local college football notes

By B.G. Brooks (CU), Randy Holtz (CSU), Jim Benton (Air Force), Pat Rooney (UNC) and wire services (Wyoming).
September 26, 2007

CU

Shortage of linebackers



Cody Hawkins

The depth situation at linebacker has surpassed severe.

Marcus Burton was declared academically ineligible before the season. Projected preseason starter **Michael Sipili** last week was suspended for the fall semester, and his backup, **R.J. Brown**, is out this week while concussion symptoms linger.

Brown, who will see a specialist later this week, said he had suffered maybe six concussions while at CU and two or three more in high school.

That leaves former walk-on sophomore **Jeff Smart** as the "mike" starter, with walk-on sophomore **Jake Duren** as his backup.

Behind senior **Jordon Dizon** at the "will" spot is walk-on sophomore **Bryan Stengel** and backing up junior **Brad Jones** at the "sam" position is true freshman **Nate Vaiomounga** or redshirt freshman **B.J. Beatty**.

CU coach **Dan Hawkins** quashed the idea of moving any players - specifically tight end **Joe Sanders** or fullback **Maurice Cantrell**, both former linebackers - back to defense.

"There's not a lot you can do," Hawkins said, noting a temporary fix would entail playing more defensive backs in nickel and dime packages if situations allow it.

Stay in that redshirt

Seven true freshmen from a 2006 class of 22 have played, and Hawkins said no more will be used unless necessitated by injury.

The seven who have played are kicker **Tyler Cope**, receivers **Josh Smith** and **Kendrick Celestine**, offensive linemen **Ryan Miller** and **Kai Maiava**, tailback **Brian Lockridge** and Vaiomounga.

Etc.

- Hawkins' response when asked if **Bernard Jackson** will be available Saturday: "I doubt it." Jackson, formerly the offensive captain, has not played because of academic issues.
- Tight end **Tyson DeVree** (concussion) is listed as day to day. Five other players with minor injuries are listed as probable.
- Eight recruits are scheduled to visit this weekend, but that could increase.
- As of Tuesday, about 4,350 tickets remained for the game.

- Oklahoma senior tailback **Allen Patrick** is averaging 9 yards a carry; freshman **DeMarco Murray** is averaging 6.8. Both have surpassed the 300-yard rushing mark in four games.
- Sooners defensive end **John Williams** had surgery to repair a torn Achilles' tendon and will miss the rest of the season. Williams started three of No. 3 Oklahoma's first four games.

Numbers game

50 points by Oklahoma in four consecutive games has happened only twice - in 2003 and this season. The 2003 Sooners advanced to the Bowl Championship Series national title game.

He said it

"Anybody is beatable and anybody can beat you. . . . I mean, Montana State can beat you and you can beat (Southern California). You have to play efficient and you have to do things right."

Dan Hawkins, when asked if he believes his team can beat No. 3 Oklahoma.

Tale of two quarterbacks

Oklahoma's Sam Bradford and Colorado's Cody Hawkins are redshirt freshmen and first-time NCAA Division I-A starters. Bradford has benefited from a rushing attack that has relieved him of being an every-down playmaker in the passing game. Hawkins has sampled that in wins against Colorado State and Miami (Ohio). Their statistical comparisons:

Player Comp. Att. Pct. Yards TD Int. Eff. I-A rank

Sam Bradford 75 96 78.1 1,067 14 2 215.5 2

Cody Hawkins 87 157 55.4 944 6 6 110.9 90

Source: Ncaa

CSU

TCU's Blake won't play

Tommy Blake, Texas Christian's marquee defensive end and a member of several preseason all-America teams, will miss Saturday's game against Colorado State because of an undisclosed injury.

"He's going to have a medical leave of absence for the next two weeks," said TCU coach **Gary Patterson**, who cited confidentiality regulations on why he wouldn't discuss the nature of Blake's injury. "It's been a problem since two-a-days."

Blake, a 6-foot-3, 252-pound senior considered by many to be the top pro prospect in the Mountain West Conference, missed practice time before the season because of personal reasons, then sat out TCU's opener against Baylor because of the injury.

Blake returned against Texas in Game 2 and has played in TCU's past three games but wasn't the disruptive force he was the past few seasons.