



Bufs aim to shore up run 'D'

CU has allowed 429 yards on ground in last two games

By Kyle Ringo

Tuesday, October 23, 2007

It doesn't figure to be a factor this week against a prolific passing attack and the nation's 117th-ranked rushing game, but the Colorado defense has been gashed on the ground the past two weeks.

The Buffs surrendered 249 yards to Kansas State and 180 yards rushing to Kansas in back-to-back losses. It's a problem the Buffs will have to solve in the final month of the season if they hope to qualify for a bowl game.

"It's just little technique errors, little communication errors," coach Dan Hawkins said. "It's not an effort thing. It gets down to an execution thing and the same thing on offense or special teams with a guy just making a play in there."

The Buffs' biggest problem against Kansas Saturday was not being able to account for a scrambling quarterback. Todd Reesing led the Jayhawks with 84 yards on the ground and has now racked up 174 yards rushing in two outings against the Buffs in his career.

This week the Buffs face a quarterback who rarely runs in Texas Tech's Graham Harrell, but the next two opponents feature signal-callers who could hurt them again making plays on the run.

This week the Buffs face the spread offense for the second time. They fared well against it at Baylor three weeks ago, but Texas Tech sets the standard with the spread. Colorado gave up 410 yards passing to Baylor's spread attack in a blowout victory for CU.

"I think our problem is making plays consistently right now," defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "We're not making plays consistently. Guys will make a lot of plays one game or one series. We're just not doing it consistently like we're capable of, and that's what we need to find in practice."

All systems go

Texas Tech coach Mike Leach bristles at the notion that his pass-happy system inflates his players' statistics and his players are, in turn, overrated.

Leach was asked Monday on the Big 12 Conference teleconference about his system's effect, in that regard, on starting quarterback Graham Harrell.

"I think the teams that don't have systems don't need coaches," Leach said. "So all those schools ought to save all the money that they spend on coaches and just put it back into the program."

"So to answer your question, I think every team has got a system. Anybody that has anybody working together, that's a system. Some systems are better than other systems. If Graham personifies his system better than the other guy, that's why his numbers are better, and the reason his numbers are better has something to do with the fact he's a better player. So it's a complete cop-out just to perpetuate whatever agenda somebody's got."

Harrell leads the nation in passing in an offense that averages 52 pass attempts per game. Texas Tech has led the nation in passing in each of the past four seasons and the Red Raiders has set 115 schools records since Leach took over the program in 2000.

The Buffs limited the Red Raiders to 245 passing yards and one touchdown through the air last season in Boulder in a 30-6 victory. Coach Dan Hawkins said tape of that game will help CU prepare this week.

Hawkins said the Buffs face some elements of spread offense in passing situations almost every week, but he credits Leach for being an innovator in developing an offense that features the approach.

"Just in terms of that genre, he was kind of the first one," Hawkins said. "Everybody you see has similarities with them."

CU television update

The Missouri-Colorado game Nov. 3 at Folsom Field will begin at 4:30 p.m. and will be televised nationally on Fox Sports Net. The game will be the eighth televised this season and the seventh televised to a national audience, setting a new school record. The regular-season finale Nov. 23 at home against Nebraska is already slated for national broadcast and a 10 a.m. start time. CU has played only one game this season at the traditional start time of 1:30 p.m.



© 2006 Daily Camera and Boulder Publishing, LLC.

Rocky Mountain News

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

URL: http://www.rockymountainnews.com/drmn/ncaa/article/0,2777,DRMN_23932_5728971,00.html

Monday's local college football notes

By **B.G. Brooks (CU)**, **Randy Holtz (CSU)**, **Jim Benton (Air Force)** and **wire services (Wyoming)**
October 22, 2007

CU

Long, short of it

During the past several weeks, Colorado offensive coordinator/quarterbacks coach Mark Helfrich believes starter Cody Hawkins has slightly altered his delivery in certain situations to perhaps compensate for a lack of height.

"Because he's short, Cody thinks he's got to tool the ball in there, kind of sidearm it, three-quarter it at times," Helfrich said before the Kansas game.

"Those things are a big contributor to inaccuracy. He's got a good enough arm, a strong enough arm, but not ... with a sidearm, off-balance release."

A handful of Hawkins' passes were tipped by Kansas defenders Saturday.

Hawkins, though, said different situations — straight dropbacks, rollouts, screen passes thrown over or around a lineman — demand different release points.

"At my height, you're going to have those," he said. "You definitely want to be over the top (releasing the ball) whenever you can, but there are some times when you just have to change. ... A lot of it is just trying to find lanes."

Take a deep breath

Texas Tech coach Mike Leach said his team tried to go from zero to 60 too quickly Saturday at Missouri.

A more deliberate approach from the outset would have been better in a game the Red Raiders lost 41-10.

"Missouri played hard and did good things, but I felt like from our standpoint, we tried to make too much happen early, got frustrated and never got on track," Leach said. "We were too frantic ... trying to do too much too quickly."

Leach said the Red Raiders matched the Tigers' intensity but played "out of control. As a team, we wanted to win bad, we wanted to play well, but we didn't play in control. We need to settle down and play together"

Etc.

- CU's home game against Missouri on Nov. 3 will be televised by FSN starting at 4:30 p.m. It will mark the Buffaloes' eighth game this season on national television.
- Texas Tech flanker Mike Crabtree's least productive game of the season (10 catches, 76 yards at Missouri) still enabled him to break the NCAA freshman record for receiving yards (1,265) and a school record (1,300) for single-season receiving yards. Crabtree has made 88 receptions for 1,320 yards and 17 touchdowns in eight games.

- CU ranks 68th in NCAA Division I-A in penalty average (6.75 a game), but the Buffs' number of flags dropped from 21 in the two games before Kansas to four against the Jayhawks.

Numbers game

2 wins needed by the Buffs to become bowl eligible, and with four games to play, the postseason window slowly is closing. CU's final four: Saturday at Texas Tech; Nov. 3 vs. Missouri; Nov.10 at Iowa State; and Nov. 23 vs. Nebraska.

He said it

"A fumble's a fumble; I didn't try to get into it too much with him."

Dan Hawkins, CU coach, on tailback Hugh Charles' costly red-zone miscue against Kansas.

CSU

Johnson sparking Rams

Gartrell Johnson had been the forgotten man in Colorado State's offense.

After struggling last season to live up to the lofty standards of injured starter Kyle Bell, the junior running back found himself behind Bell again this season.

Johnson rushed for only 74 yards on only 20 carries in CSU's first five games. But now the Miami native has become the focal point of CSU's rushing game.

After running 25 times for 143 yards against Air Force two weeks ago, he got the same 25 carries and produced two touchdown runs and a career-high 162 yards in the Rams' losing-streak-snapping 48-23 win at Nevada-Las Vegas on Saturday.

CSU has reaped the benefits of the tough running of Johnson, and so has Johnson. He was chosen the Mountain West Conference's offensive player of the week on Monday for his performance against the Rebels.

"He's attacking the line of scrimmage, going downhill harder than I've ever seen him," said CSU offensive line coach Darrell Funk, whose offensive front has done a better job providing running room the past two games than earlier in the season. "He's a step quicker and a step more explosive than he's ever been."

It's about the players

Coach Sonny Lubick said the happy aftermath of Saturday night's victory, which ended a 13-game losing streak dating to last season, was a wonderful moment for the players.

"Our guys have practiced hard and played hard all along," Lubick said as he began preparations for Saturday's home game against Utah. "They really deserved to be rewarded. I just had that feeling our guys were going to come out and really play well at UNLV."

"You look at a guy like (linebacker) Jeff Horinek. He's been playing like we were 6-0. I'd like to say it's the mark of good coaching, but really, it's the quality of the guys we have. You lose and you lose and you lose and sometimes you wonder if you'll ever win again."

"But they hung in there and never quit, and they'll continue to work hard like they always have. I don't see seven points separating the teams in this league, with BYU maybe being a touch better than the rest of us."