



Bufs face MU's high-octane offense

Colorado needs one more win to become bowl eligible

By Kyle Ringo

Saturday, November 3, 2007

The long-term vision Colorado football coach Dan Hawkins has for his offense will appear before him today at Folsom Field in the form of the ninth-ranked Missouri Tigers.

Hawkins pines for the day when he can send a quarterback on to the field with complete confidence the young man could call the plays himself if he needed to. He yearns for a time when that quarterback will be surrounded and protected by veterans in his system at every position, a cohesive group bonded by the time they've dedicated to each other and the bumps in the road they have experienced together.

That day still might be two years away for Hawkins, who is closing in on the end of his second autumn in Boulder with a chance to go to a bowl game within reach.

But the time is now for Missouri.

The 7-1 Tigers bring one of the most explosive offenses in the nation to town for a 4:30 p.m. kickoff (Fox Sports Net) looking to take another step toward winning their first Big 12 Conference North Division title.

While CU redshirt freshman quarterback Cody Hawkins continues to grow and learn with moments of bril-

liance often followed by head-scratch-ers, Missouri signal-caller Chase Daniel has established himself as one of the premier quarterbacks in the college game.

Daniel has the confidence of his teammates and coaches running an offense he has been in since eighth grade. That offense is ranked in the top 10 in the nation in three major categories because it is deep with experience and rich with talent.

Daniel carries the hopes of a long-suffering fans base on his shoulders as he tries to lead the program to its first 8-1 record since 1969. The Tigers' mantra this season has been focusing on one week at a time and leaving the past in the rearview.

But the program is confronted with some ugly history today with the arrival of November. Since coach Gary Pinkel took over at Missouri in 2001, the Tigers often have been frontrunners who fade down the stretch. They are 7-14 in November and have never won in their first game of the month under Pinkel.

Missouri also has come to Boulder with a national ranking to face an unranked CU team on four previous occasions. The Tigers lost three of those four games.

"This is the 2007 team. This isn't last year's team or any of the others that went to Boulder," MU wide receiver Will Franklin said. "This team is totally different across the board. We have something that a lot of teams at Missouri never had and that's a will to win. We want to win at whatever costs. If we win a 10-9 game up there in Boulder, we won that game. That's the mentality we have. Go up there and play as hard as we can and win the game."

Stopping Missouri will be a monumental task today for a CU defense that has played well most of the year and is coming off, perhaps, its most complete outing of the year in a victory at Texas Tech last week. That win moved the Buffs to 5-4 overall and 3-2 in conference play, needing one win to become bowl eligible.

This is a matchup that could come down to some unheralded faces. It might be that All-Big 12 caliber players such as Terrence Wheatley and Franklin or linebacker Jordon Dizon and tight end Martin Rucker play to a stalemate, leaving others such as veteran Missouri receivers Tommy Saunders and Denario Alexander to make plays against Cha'pelle Brown and Gardner McKay, the fifth and sixth defensive backs on the CU depth chart.

"In an offense like that, you can't just hope to stop one guy because the rest of them will get you," Wheatley said this week.

Colorado came up with four interceptions last week, but continues to be in negative territory when it comes to turnovers this season. Forcing the Tigers to make mistakes and limiting their own would go along way toward producing another upset victory.

While the Missouri offense versus the CU defense is the featured matchup, the Buffs' ability to run the ball and score points against the Tigers could decide things. Missouri has one of the worst pass defenses in the nation and it is playing without its best defensive player today. Safety Pig Brown was lost for the season last week when he tore his Achilles tendon.

CU quarterback Cody Hawkins is coming off his first game without an interception. He has thrown at least one touchdown pass in nine consecutive games. He is already the best freshman quarterback in CU history and he can take a big step in his development by taking care of the ball and making big plays that should be there for the taking.



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CU vs. No. 9 Missouri matchups

CU RUN OFFENSE VS. MU RUN DEFENSE — Tailback Hugh Charles has run for more than 100 yards in five of the past six games, but CU continues to be wildly inconsistent from one play to the next. Coaches aren't afraid to use four tailbacks and as many as seven or eight different players to carry the ball in a variety of play calls. That approach should help them continue to build on past successes this week. Missouri played tough against a solid Oklahoma ground game. The Tigers are ranked 31st in the nation against the run, giving up only 121 yards per game. Some of that is a product of an explosive offense taking big leads and forcing opponents away from the run. Losing safety Pig Brown could be a big factor. **Edge: EVEN.**

CU PASS OFFENSE VS. MU PASS DEFENSE — The Buffs are nothing better than average in the passing game to this point, but they have shown signs of improvement and they are capable of big plays. Quarterback Cody Hawkins could give his team a big boost if he can avoid throwing an interception for the second week in a row. He is completing about 55 percent of his passes, a number he would like to improve. A young offensive line has faced stiffer tests than this one and should hold up against the Tigers. Missouri's pass defense ranks 107th in the nation. Again, part of that is a product of teams needing to throw a lot to catch up or stay in games, but you don't get to be 107th just because teams throw a lot against you. Something is wrong here for Missouri. **Edge: CU.**

MU RUN OFFENSE VS. CU RUN DEFENSE — The Tigers have missed tailback Tony Temple recently. He has missed time with an ankle injury and hasn't been himself when he has played. He should be healthier this week, but he won't carry the load by himself. Jimmy Jackson and Derrick Washington will see carries, too, and let's not forget about quarterback Chase Daniel. He has multiple games in his career in which he has rushed for more than 50 yards before sack totals are factored in. The Buffs were burned two weeks ago by a quarterback with similar mobility. The Buffs have been pretty good against the run this season. Take away the biggest play of the game on the ground against Arizona State, Florida State, Kansas State and Kansas and CU might be a top-10 defense against the rush. If they prevent those big plays today, they can win. **Edge: EVEN.**

MU PASS OFFENSE VS. KU PASS DEFENSE — There are just too many weapons here for the Tigers. At least four of Daniel's receivers have a legitimate shot at an NFL career. These guys are adept at running their system and they have proven they can make it work against anyone. Daniel is simply one of the best quarterbacks in the country and his line is protecting him well, even though he plays in a scheme that doesn't require him to hold the ball long. The Buffs will have to find a way to pressure Daniel and force him to make bad decisions as they did last week against Texas Tech. But that is a tall order, given the level of experience the Tigers possess and how much time these guys have spent together on the field. If Missouri remains efficient through the air, it will be a ugly evening for the Buffs. **Edge: MU.**

SPECIAL TEAMS — CU coach Dan Hawkins said it himself this week, the Buffs have been 'real average' in the kicking game. CU continues to give up at least one good kickoff return each week. Place-kicker Kevin Eberhart also continues to be inconsistent. Missouri's kicker Jeff Wolfert has become one of the league's best and redshirt freshman Jeremy Maclin is among the most talented young players in the nation. He has already returned two punts for touchdowns this season. Don't be surprised to see a big

play in the kicking game help determine the outcome tonight. **Edge: MU.**

PREDICTION — Missouri 34-24

— **Kyle Ringo**



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Woelk: Tigers just latest big test for Buffs

By Neill Woelk

Saturday, November 3, 2007

Years ago, a man whose job it was to pay close attention to such things told me one simple way to measure the difference between an average football coach and a good one:

Average coaches win only games they're supposed to win.

Good coaches win games they aren't supposed to.

Of course, the second part of that equation is that good coaches always get to the point that they are favored to win most of their games. When that happens, they've built a program that has a solid foundation. Then they reload instead of rebuild.

But Colorado, in the second year of the Dan Hawkins era, is still in the rebuilding phase — and twice this year, the Buffs have won games in which they were heavy underdogs.

Fact is, Hawk's Buffs have done more this year than most objective observers thought they could, particularly in light of the schedule they've played. The Buffs' schedule is currently ranked as the 22nd toughest in the nation (it's been as high as No. 5). They've beaten one team still ranked in the top 10 and two teams with winning records; two of their losses have come to teams that are still unbeaten and ranked in the top 10; and they've already more than doubled their number of wins from a year ago.

The improvement is significant.

The reward is another game against a quality opponent today, the No. 9 Missouri Tigers.

The Tigers are mere four-point favorites, a number that would be at least three times that much if the game were being played in Missouri. The Tigers have a potent offense, an improving defense and play-makers virtually everywhere you look.

It's another game the Buffs aren't supposed to win, meaning another test for Colorado in a season that's been loaded with make-or-break exams.

It's the Tigers' offense that has turned folks' heads. MU quarterback Chase Daniel might be the best the Buffs

see this year. Mizzou has big, fast tight ends, speedy wide receivers and able running backs. The Tigers love to employ a no-huddle attack, and have made life miserable this year for opponents.

It will be yet another challenge for a CU defense that has for the most part more than held its own against top-flight offenses this year. The Tigers are the type of team that can put points up in a hurry.

They've scored at least 30 points in every game this year, they're averaging more than 40 per game and they lead the nation in third-down conversions (66-of-116, 56.9 percent).

But the key for the Buffs today — just as it was a week ago against Texas Tech — will be CU's offense.

The Buffs won at Texas Tech last week because the offense was able to put together long, sustained scoring drives. They kept TTU's potent offense off the field, and kept CU's defense rested at the same time. Not until late in the game, when the Buffs' offense stalled on three straight possessions, did Texas Tech manage to close the gap.

In that same vein, CU must also match the effort it produced against the Red Raiders in the turnover department. Colorado did not give up the ball once in Lubbock, while forcing four TTU turnovers.

It's a formula the Buffs have to follow to stay in games. The Buffs have proven they cannot easily overcome errors and win (Kansas, Kansas State). But when they win the turnover battle (Oklahoma, Texas Tech) and the offense eats clock, they can play with anyone.

Of course, as Hawk says, "Easy to say, hard to do."

But if the Buffs are going to win another game they're not supposed to win, they'll have to replicate the formula again.



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Aggressiveness backed by stats

Success on fourth down has been a boon for Buffs

By Patrick Ridgell

Longmont Times-Call

BOULDER — You never really know what'll get Dan Hawkins going.

But when questions this week turned to Colorado's affection for going for it on fourth down, the Buffs' coach, as you'd expect, let loose.

He told a story about a time at Boise State when the Broncos took field-goal points off the scoreboard late in the first half during a blowout win over Rice when the Owls were guilty of a personal foul. Boise State then drove for a touchdown to make a big lead bigger.

And Hawkins talked about last week in Lubbock, when the Buffs converted a fourth-and-goal play to open a 14-0, second-quarter lead.

It's the same old lesson, different method of teaching it for Hawkins, whose Buffs host No. 9 Missouri today.

"When we went for it on fourth down at Tech, all the guys on the sideline were going, 'That a way, Hawk, that's the way. That's what I'm talking about,'" the coach said.

"Sometimes, yeah, you sputter a little bit. And people go, 'You should punt the ball there,' and I go, 'Yeah, I know. That's why you're in row 107. You're not down here.' In the long haul, it pays dividends on and off the field."

The Buffs (5-4, 3-2 Big 12) lead the nation in fourth-down conversion attempts, at 23. With only 11 successes, CU ranks 64th nationally in conversion percentage. As Hawkins observed, ultimately, it's not how many times you go for it; it's how many times you make it.

But of those 11 successful tries, four were touchdown plays, including the one at Texas Tech last week and another late against Oklahoma, in CU's biggest win of 2007.

A year ago in Columbia, the Buffs were still learning about Hawkins and how he wants them to think. They lost to Missouri, 28-13, and can point to several problems that plagued them. On fourth downs that day, CU went 0-for-5, costing itself several chances on offense.

"It's not about the score; it's about an approach to life and an approach to football," Hawkins said. "And again, the average cat doesn't think that way, doesn't live that way. Over time, you tend to develop that sort of a mentality of how you want to do things."

Gauging Missouri's mood as it enters today isn't easy. The Tigers (7-1, 3-1) will miss safety Pig Brown, their emotional leader, who tore an Achilles' tendon last week and won't play again in 2007. But it's safe to say they're confident, based on quarterback Chase Daniel, who told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, "There are some big plays to be made down the field" on CU's man coverage.

The Tigers are challenging for their first Big 12 North title, and their coach said they relish the opportunity.

"The teams that win championships win on the road, win at home, they win where they have to win, and that's exactly where we're at," Missouri coach Gary Pinkel said.

We know the Buffs do read newspapers and do derive motivation from them. They proved it Oct. 6 in Waco, Texas, when, after a CU win, Buffs captain Tyler Polumbus handed Baylor linebacker Joe Pawelek a copy of a newspaper article in which Pawelek declared the Bears beat CU up in Boulder the previous year.

The Buffs are aware of what Daniel said. And they know their season remains one that can go in myriad directions. Cornerback Ben Burney said the mood is serious.

"You see all the older people and younger people really bearing down," Burney said. "We have school coming and stuff like that, but football is like our savior. We come out here, and we may have problems off the field and stuff, but we come out here and everyone's happy to be out here. Everyone wants to do what's best for CU, to make plays and have fun and live life."

That sounds familiar.

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Rocky Mountain News

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Local college football, November 3

By **B.G. Brooks (CU)**, **Randy Holtz (CSU)**, **Jim Benton (Air Force)**, **Pat Rooney (Northern Colorado)** and wire services (Wyoming).
November 3, 2007

CU

The Chase is on



Chase Daniel

In terms of mobility and posing an overall threat to the defense, Missouri quarterback **Chase Daniel** has been compared to Kansas' **Todd Reesing**, whom the Buffaloes saw two weeks ago in a 19-14 loss.

But CU defensive tackle **George Hypolite** claims Daniel is "a lot different; he's got a lot bigger arm, he can throw the ball farther downfield. And I think he's a little more heady."

"He checks a lot at the line, he'll get them in and out of pass protections. And they do some different things with their offense - some option things - that Kansas really didn't do. They run some things that are kind of awkward and will keep you off-balance. . . . But it's the same thing: it's a spread offense and they're going to hit us for some yards in the passing game. Basically, we have to keep them contained and stop the run."

Forget the stats

Missouri ranks 107th nationally in pass defense (278.3 yards a game), but CU quarterback **Cody Hawkins** says that doesn't mean the Tigers are porous. Or worse.

Quite the opposite, he said, noting, "If Missouri is scoring 40 points a game, what offense is going to line up and run it as many times as they can? You've got to throw the ball, and people are playing a two-minute offense all the time trying to catch up to Missouri's offense."

"They have to throw the ball; that's just kind of how the whole deal is. . . . As far as their stats, I don't care what they gave up in the past. They're a good football team."

The Tigers are 31st nationally in run defense (121.3 yards a game) and 73rd in total defense (399.5).

Depth charge

Tooth-and-nail battles every week in the Big 12 Conference aren't the most ideal way to develop large-scale depth, but coach **Dan Hawkins** claims Colorado is managing to bring along its younger players.

"You make sure those guys get reps in practice . . . get coached," he said, noting the Sunday scrimmages for younger, usually non-Saturday participants will resume next week. "We do a good job of engaging them in meetings, giving them the game plan and make sure they have the opportunity to stay mentally engaged," Hawkins said. "But we play a lot of guys, and that helps. If somebody gets hurt or drops off, we have the ability to plug somebody else in."

Etc.

- The honorary captain for the coin toss today will be former U.S. Marine Sgt. **Jack Thurman**, an 82-year-old World War II veteran. Service veterans, active and reserve, can purchase \$5 tickets for the game, which will feature a flyover by Navy

fighter jets.

- CU is 1-1 against ranked teams this season. The Buffs beat then-No. 3 Oklahoma 27-24 and lost to then-No. 15 Kansas 19-14.
- With 62 total points, the fourth quarter has been Missouri's most unproductive period this season. The other quarterly totals: first, 80; second, 93; third, 88.

Numbers game

5 **players** have rushed for 100 yards or more against CU in the past 34 games. Kansas State quarterback **Alan Webb** was the most recent opponent to top 100 yards in Boulder (103, Nov. 13, 2004).

CSU

Strength vs. weakness

Colorado State is last in the Mountain West Conference and ranks 115th in the nation in rushing defense, yielding a whopping 227 ground yards a game.

Brigham Young averages 146 rushing yards a game, with redshirt freshman **Harvey Unga** having surpassed the 100-yard mark four times.

So it doesn't take a football scholar to figure out the Cougars' initial plan of attack when the teams play today at LaVell Edwards Stadium.

Still, BYU coach **Bronco Mendenhall** was a bit coy when asked how he plans to exploit the Rams' glaring defensive weakness.

"I'm not sure we're going to make a specific attempt to exploit it in terms of a game plan," Mendenhall said. "I think the real issue will be to see what Colorado State does to take away the run game and how we need to counter in terms of what we do from there.

"But we think the core plan we already have in terms of the run game gives us a great chance to run the ball on any opponent with some success."

Unga has an excellent opportunity to join the five players who already have passed the century mark against the Rams this season - Texas Christian's **Aaron Brown** (124), Air Force's **Chad Hall** (256), Nevada-Las Vegas' **Omar Clayton** (135), Utah's **Darrell Mack** (151) and Utah's **Ray Stowers** (123).

Mr. and Mrs. U.

BYU always has had more married players than other college teams, because so many are older student-athletes who have served Mormon Church missions.

But this year, the Cougars have cornered the market on college football matrimony even more than usual. Twenty-seven players in the BYU program are married, far more than any other team in the nation.

The nine starters on the list of 27 are quarterback **Max Hall**, fullback **Manase Tonga**, offensive tackles **David Oswald** and **Dallas Reynolds**, offensive guard **Travis Bright**, tight end **Andrew George**, receiver **Matt Allen**, linebacker **Markell Staffieri** and safety **Quinn Gooch**. Of the 105 players on BYU's current roster, 70 have served church missions in 19 countries.

Etc.

- Largely because of an upset loss in an offensive shootout at Tulsa (55-47), BYU has not cracked the national polls this