



Gold mine: Colorado rolls out the college football recruits

State's population growth has sweetened talent pool

By B.G. Brooks

Thursday, August 28, 2008

The mountains remain prominent, the air is relatively fresh and the streams and lakes comparatively pristine. But look again; Colorado isn't what it used to be.

From 1980 to 2008, according to statistics from the state demography office, the population has swelled from 2,907,526 to 5,013,812, a protracted growth spurt that might be in its infancy.

If that jump crams more cars into the Interstate 70 corridor and deepens the brown cloud, it also helps pack more potential into the state's high school football programs - and Division I head coaches and recruiters along the Front Range have taken notice.

Not that recruiting Colorado ever has been an afterthought for the major in-state universities - Air Force, Colorado, Colorado State, Northern Colorado - and neighboring Wyoming. Current rosters at all five schools feature talent developed in Colorado, as do their respective recruiting coordinators' "wish lists" for the class of 2009 and beyond.

Under third-year coach Dan Hawkins, CU hasn't locked down the borders, but the Big 12 Conference school is on an undeniable two-year roll in making the state's top prospects feel very comfortable beneath the Flatirons.

In 2007, Hawkins' sales pitch struck a chord with massive Columbine offensive lineman Ryan Miller, whose choice of colleges included all of the usual superpowers. In 2008, Hawkins struck another responsive chord with Ponderosa linebacker Jon Major, whose list of adoring suitors was a cut-and-paste copy of Miller's.

If Hawkins and the Buffaloes make it a clean three-for-three, they will land Legacy High School's Nick Kasa, a 6-foot-7, 250- pound defensive end who apparently is weighing, among other academic/football interests, the merits of Colorado sunshine vs. Florida sunshine.

Of course, the other Front Range schools would love to have Kasa on their campuses. Realistically, they abandoned the chase long ago.

But at CSU, where Steve Fairchild is preparing for his debut season as head coach, the goal is to give top-tier national recruits, such as Kasa, good reason to take a second look at Fort Collins.

"Whoever comes into this state is going to recruit the same athletes as Colorado," Rams offensive coordinator/recruiting coordinator Greg Peterson said. "As we continue to build this program and win football games, sometimes recruiting goes hand in hand. We want to get the great players in the state."

All of the coaches find it difficult, or impossible, to turn a recruit bent on attending an out-of-state/region school.

Conference affiliations play a large role; Hawkins concedes that recruiting to a Bowl Championship Series conference, such as the Big 12, has more appeal to prospects than recruiting to the Western Athletic Conference.

Different bird

Air Force is a different bird, with its military requirements putting Falcons recruiters all over the map and carrying a list of prerequisites foreign to the other Front Range schools.

UNC, a Division I newcomer, still carries the "small school" label and, unjustly or not, CSU long has carried the tag of sorting through CU's "leftovers."

Then there's Wyoming, where coach Joe Glenn watches recruiting in Colorado from a unique vantage point. Glenn's resume includes a very successful tour of duty at UNC (11 seasons, two Division II national championships).

"I just think the level of play down there (in Colorado) has been good," Glenn said. "I mean, there were maybe 15, 20 kids at Northern Colorado that we recruited that didn't get Division I offers that went to the league (NFL).

"Did they all stay? No. But is Aaron Smith still playing after a dozen years and making \$27 million or more? Yeah."

Glenn said he and special teams coach Chris Knutsen "heard about this tall basketball player at Sierra High School (and) were the only two guys" actively recruiting Smith, a former UNC defensive end now with the Pittsburgh Steelers.

"So, there are guys out there. You might not get the finished product, but I've always said there are a lot more Division I football players than there are scholarships."

Miller believes

Miller, who moved into CU's starting lineup midway through his freshman season, also is a huge - he's 6-7, 310 - believer in Colorado talent.

"Anywhere you go in Colorado, you see kids to watch out for, kids that if you were a senior and were playing against a freshman, you would say this kid's got potential," he said. "They're all getting bigger, stronger at a younger age."

While an undeniable factor in the improvement of state high school football, Colorado's population boom and the production of Division I talent still is relative to states with already large population bases in metropolitan areas.

During the past five recruiting classes, 2004-2008, Colorado produced 171 Division I signees, according to rivals.com. But even the cumulative total from that five-year span couldn't come close to matching the 2008 Division I signees from Texas (361) and California (249), underscoring the major reason Front Range recruiters must look out of state as well as in.

"You're looking at a geography in Texas that has so many people and so many football programs . . . you take the Mullens of the world and those types of really good programs, they're all over the place down there," said former CU walk-on Jeff Campbell, an in-state receiver/return specialist who spent five seasons in the NFL and now lives a couple of punts from one of the Texas mega-programs, Southlake High School.

Still, establishing an in-state base is paramount for CU, CSU and UNC, but not so much for Air Force. And Wyoming, with fewer prospects to peruse than Colorado, annually looks south for a large number of its recruits.

When Bill McCartney began reshaping Buffaloes football in the early 1980s, his formula relied heavily on keeping homegrown talent at home. Eric McCarty, a Boulder linebacker who was one of the state's top prospects in 1983 and now is CU's director of sports medicine, recalls McCartney urging him and a score of other high-profile Colorado recruits to save their last official campus visit before national signing day for a gathering in Boulder.

McCartney wanted a home-is-where- the-help-is bonding to occur among Coloradans - and he got his wish.

"All of us had played with or against each other, and we looked around and said, 'Hey, this could be something special if we all signed (with CU),' " McCarty said. "And that's how it turned out."

If McCartney wasn't trying to create an obligation among in-staters to believe they should stay/play at home, he at least was planting a seed.

Numbers game

CU's most recent pair of top Colorado signees, Miller and Major, said they haven't been prodded by Hawkins to reach out to top in-state prospects.

And Hawkins said he won't pose that kind of outreach as an obligation for his players: "I don't want to put that on them. What I do is espouse what it's like to be a Colorado guy playing for your hometown school. That's an experience that's very unique to them."

Major, who will miss the 2008 season because of a knee injury, said early in the recruiting process, "It didn't really matter whether I went in or out of state. But through the whole process, when I went on visits, I kind of noticed how most of the students wanted to go home, wanted to be home or were transferring home.

"So I think you kind of take (staying in state) for granted at first. I'm glad that I'm here, especially being able to go home."

Added Miller: "I talked with Brian Daniels (former Buffs guard from Mullen) during my recruiting, and it was nice to hear the calmness in his voice about, 'This is home for me, this is why I stayed here.' That was just a huge relief for me."

At Boise State for five seasons before CU hired him, Hawkins faced recruiting in a similar state (Idaho) that offered fewer prospects on the radar screen.

"A lot of it comes down to population - just numbers of kids to choose from," he said. "But I think the (high school) coaches in this state do a really good job."

Hawkins, hardly a proponent of the recruiting services' "star" rating system, believes there is little difference in a highly regarded prospect from Colorado, Texas, California or wherever.

"If you're a good player, you're a good player," he said. "We're starting to get there, where the best players want to be here, want to come here and have that sense (of in-state pride). But I think that it's also incumbent on us to help develop that and those relationships and make it a special experience."

STATE OF RECRUITING

CU's active roster includes 28 Coloradans, with five projected as starters. The other four Front Range Division I schools and their Colorado connections.

* AIR FORCE

Colorado players on roster: Six.

Projected Colorado starters: Three.

Inside the Falcons' in-state recruiting: "We think Colorado is one of the best places to recruit. Individual coaches have states, but all 13 of our coaches recruit Colorado. . . . One thing about recruiting Colorado kids, they know the academy. . . . You've probably been on campus two or three times as a kid growing up or probably been to our football camp. It makes an easier recruiting job. When I go to Georgia, where I recruit, I'm asked if it's a boot camp." - **Capt. Charlton Warren**, recruiting coordinator/secondary coach.

* COLORADO STATE

Colorado players on roster: 51.

Projected Colorado starters: Eight.

Inside the Rams' in-state recruiting: "The most important thing we can do about the football program is try to keep every high school Colorado player in Fort Collins. We know this state is recruited nationally. If we could get every young man in our program out of the state of Colorado, that would be tremendous. Now, is that realistic? Maybe not, but we have to try and lay the foundation here." - **Greg Peterson**, recruiting coordinator/offensive coordinator.

* NORTHERN COLORADO

Colorado players on roster: 68.

Projected Colorado starters: 17.

Inside the Bears' in-state recruiting: "Every coach on our staff has an area, a zone, in Colorado. He has a good number of schools that he is responsible for staying in touch with and talking with coaches. We try to cover every school in the state. It is a big emphasis for us. When we go into recruiting season, if we have four weeks of recruiting, we always have at least four of our coaches in Colorado." - **Scott Downing**, coach.

* WYOMING

Colorado players on roster: 30.

Projected Colorado starters: 11.

Inside the Cowboys' in-state recruiting: "We've been doing a great job recruiting down there. What happens for us, we might offer 16 scholarships for four positions, and I think just the proximity of the Front Range, and the familiarity with it, those guys seem to commit sooner than guys from somewhere else. It's a good fit, to be honest. They're close to home, they're the kids that stick around a little longer, do better in school - stuff like that." - **Marty English**, linebackers coach/chief Front Range recruiter.

Jim Benton, Pat Rooney and Austin Ward contributed to this report.

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CU's Brad Jones: 'Pretty much the whole package'

By B.G. Brooks

Thursday, August 28, 2008

Talk to enough of Brad Jones' buds on the University of Colorado defense and it becomes apparent why George Hypolite refers to Jones as "The Silver Surfer."

Jones, a senior outside linebacker, hasn't starred (yet) in any big-screen fantasy flicks, but he has shown very well, thank you, in plenty of film-room classics in CU's Dal Ward athletics complex. He's close to developing a cult following among the Buffaloes.

This, from junior inside linebacker Jeff Smart: "He's got tons of speed, he's quick to the ball. He's physical, tough -- pretty much the whole package."

Smart's favorite "wow" moment starring Jones: "It's happened several times in camp this year, where, in one of his 'fits' in our run coverage, he's filling over the top and he goes in there and takes two or three people out -- and still makes the tackle. He knows what he's doing, and he does it well, for sure."

And this from Hypolite, CU's senior All-America candidate at defensive tackle: "It's amazing the things he can do. He's in a hybrid role, where he's not necessarily a D-lineman and not necessarily a linebacker. He brings so much versatility to our defense. He's as athletic as you get. . . . They don't make many guys who are 6-4 and can run like that, or are as strong."

But what kind of guy is Hypolite's "Silver Surfer"?

"A funny guy," Hypolite said. "Somebody hits us for a big play, you look to him, he cracks a joke and everybody laughs -- and then we keep playing."

Jones, about to enter his third season as a starter when CU plays Colorado State on Sunday in the Rocky Mountain Showdown, is arguably the most experienced player on the Buffs defense. The strongest arguments might come from Hypolite and senior safety Ryan Walters, each an off-and-on starter the past three seasons.

Factor in his bias, but veteran linebackers coach Brian Cabral might settle the debate. Cabral says Jones, a 6-foot-3, 230-pounder whose forte is in CU's very critical area of pass rushing, "has been in just about every situation there is to be in at that position. . . . He's a seasoned player."

Last season was Jones' busiest: He was in on 704 plays (644 in 2006) and tied his tackles total from the previous season (72). But his sacks total rose from one-half to two and his quarterback pressures went from two to five.

And Cabral wonders how much more effective Jones might have been if more depth was available, giving Jones the occasional breather: "Unfortunately, we really didn't have anybody to back him up the last couple of years. He was forced to live and die on the field. But he's got the benefit of all that experience."

Jones, of East Lansing, Mich., didn't mind the extra work. In fact, he said it was welcome: "It was more fortunate for me than unfortunate. . . . It made me that much stronger as a player."

CU, which managed 20 sacks in 2007 (tied for ninth in the Big 12 Conference), needs Jones to exert himself in that area this season. Jones is up for it: "People say I do it well, so I'm not going to knock them or say I don't. But I like to think I do everything pretty much equally well," he said.

Jones' personal goals are tightly bound to his team's, but he hopes to amp up his intensity and push as close as he can to perfection.

"I don't feel like you ever do everything right," he said. "When you watch film, there's always something you've done wrong. Even when you make a play, you're like, 'Aw, I took a step the wrong way.'"

"Even if I feel like I've had a great game, when I watch the film, I can see if I'd done this, this or this, I would have had six more tackles."

If you're "The Silver Surfer," satisfaction is hard to achieve.

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CU scouting report

By B.G. Brooks

Thursday, August 28, 2008

Three questions for Dan Hawkins

1 What is the strength of your team?

"I think if you're looking for something tangible, it probably would be in the D-line, particularly because of George (Hypolite) and Brandon (Nicolas). The intangible part of it is our chemistry."

2 How would you rate your schedule?

"Very tough, very tough. But you know, also, it's very gratifying. I'm looking forward to playing all those teams. Open with the (Colorado State) Rams, and Eastern Washington had a great playoff run last year, so there'll be a lot of excitement."

3 What would you consider a successful season?

"Wow. I just want to get better. I think I want to get better in the off-field stuff, the eligibility stuff, continue to grow our leadership. . . . Everybody wants more wins than losses, and so do I. But I want to see things that are conducive to winning. We've got to not turn the ball over, we've got to run it better and stop the run - get better in statistical categories like that."

Preseason report card

* **RUSHING OFFENSE:** The Buffaloes have been average in the Big 12 Conference the past two seasons (172.9 yards rushing in 2006, 144.2 in 2007) - numbers not pleasing to third-year coach Dan Hawkins. The climb from the middle of the pack could begin this season with an offensive line taking shape under running game coordinator/line coach Jeff Grimes and the arrival of freshmen tailbacks Darrell Scott, Rodney "Speedy" Stewart and Ray Polk. But sophomore Demetrius Sumler vowed not to be overshadowed by the newcomers and lived up to that. He'll start in the opener. **Grade:** C

* **PASSING OFFENSE:** CU made a dramatic ascent, going from 116th nationally in 2006 to 54th in 2007 under new starting quarterback Cody Hawkins. Still, there's fine-tuning to be done, especially in decreasing turnovers. Hawkins threw 17 interceptions (to 22 touchdown passes) and was ninth in the league in passing efficiency. Three of his top four receivers - Scotty McKnight, Patrick Williams, Josh Smith - are back, and Stewart offers a boost out of the backfield. Knee surgery will sideline tight end Riar Geer for at least two games, lifting Patrick De-venny and freshman Ryan Deehan. **Grade:** B

* **RUSHING DEFENSE:** The Buffs were efficient run stoppers in 2007, allowing only 128.0 yards a game. But a big reason was graduated linebacker Jordon Dizon, among the national leaders in tackles (12.5 a game). Another

playmaker - former walk-on Jeff Smart is highly capable and junior-college transfer Shaun Mohler is highly touted - needs to step up. Quickly. Senior tackles George Hypolite and Brandon Nicolas and senior end Maurice Lucas form a formidable front, and senior safeties Ryan Walters and D.J. Dykes are sure tacklers. Freshman safety Patrick Mahnke will play. **Grade:** B-plus

* **PASSING DEFENSE:** Can you say annually suspect? Since 2003, the Buffs have ranked 114th, 105th, 87th, 94th and 73rd against the pass, so 2007 stands as a relative high-water mark. But CU must break in two new starting cornerbacks (probably Gardner McKay and Cha'pelle Brown), which isn't comforting in a league brimming with bona fide playmakers at quarterback and receiver. Plus, it has been a while since the Buffs generated a consistent pass rush (20 quarterback sacks last season, tied for ninth in the Big 12) without sacrificing coverage. **Grade:** C

* **SPECIAL TEAMS:** Newcomers Aric Goodman (placekicking) and Jameson Davis (kickoffs) will handle the kicking roles, and Matt DiLallo is an experienced, if not entirely consistent, punter (35.8 average). The Buffs made needed strides in the return games, rising from 104th nationally in 2006 to 38th in punt returns and 95th to 29th in kickoff returns. Both areas were points of heavy emphasis in Dan Hawkins' second year and will be again as he counts on the swift Smith, McKnight, Dykes and possibly Scott as returners. Jason Espinoza (broken collarbone) is sidelined. **Grade:** B

Depth chart

OFFENSE

Pos. Starter (Backup) | Comment

QB Cody Hawkins (Matt Ballenger) | Hawkins' mantra: ball security.

TB Demetrius Sumler (Kevin Moyd) | But keep an eye on Darrell Scott.

FB Maurice Cantrell (Jake Behrens) | Cantrell's capable when called on.

WR Patrick Williams (Scott McKnight) | Williams' mantra: Stop the drops.

WR Josh Smith (Cody Crawford) | Smith, aka "J-Fly," does just that.

TE Patrick Devenny (Ryan Deehan) | Riar Geer out for at least two games.

LT Nate Solder (Ethan Adkins Solder) | is a force in the making.

LG Devin Head or Shawn Daniels) | Competition remains fierce.

C Daniel Sanders (Keenan Stevens) | "Girthy" has become a solid center.

RG Blake Behrens or Max Tuioti-Mariner) | Both guard starters could change.

RT Ryan Miller (Matthew Bahr) | Miller: On the fast track to stardom.

PK Aric Goodman (Jameson Davis) | Goodman was "Money" in camp.

DEFENSE

Pos. Starter Backup Comment

LE Maurice Lucas (Conrad Obi) | Lucas should be a prime-timer.

DT George Hypolite (Taj Kaynor) | "Hypo" plays/talks with best.

NT Brandon Nicolas (Eugene Goree) | Nicolas nice complement to Hypolite.

RE Jason Brace (Marquez Herrod) | Good preseason camp elevated Brace.

MLB Jeff Smart (Michael Sipili) | Smart is that - and extremely tough.

WLB Marcus Burton (Shaun Mohler) | Burton's fast, and a solid 260 pounds.

SLB Brad Jones (B.J. Beatty) | Jones brings athleticism, experience.

LCB Cha'pelle Brown (Jalil Brown) | Jalil also is No. 1 nickel back.

RCB Gardner McKay (Anthony Wright) | McKay's goal: Play the run stronger.

FS Ryan Walters (Anthony Perkins) | Walters' goal: Stay injury-free.

SS Daniel Dykes (Patrick Mahnke) | Dykes made 12 starts in 2007.

P Matt DiLallo (Tom Suazo) | Consistency still eludes DiLallo.

Outlook

7-5 **Season 3 under Dan Hawkins** finds the Buffs ahead of schedule in most areas, particularly on offense. But a typically unforgiving schedule offers a handful of swing games that might mask CU's improvement.

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Converted tight end Solder beefs up for Buffs offensive line

By B.G. Brooks

Thursday, August 28, 2008

By now, this much we know: University of Colorado football coach Dan Hawkins is given to exuberance and the occasional overstatement. So keep that in mind when he crows about one of his sophomore offensive tackles: "I love him. . . . I've got a man- crush on Nate Solder."

In sheer football terms, Solder truly offers a lot to love - and not simply because he's nearly 6-foot-9 and weighs a couple of top sirloins above 300 pounds.

He owns hands that might have belonged to a classical pianist, and feet so dexterous they might have supported a ballerina - albeit a supersize one.

"Unbelievable," CU offensive line coach/running game coordinator Jeff Grimes gushes about Solder's footwork. "His is right up there with the best I've ever coached. He's got unbelievable feet, unbelievable quickness. You just don't find guys who are 6-8 and athletic like that. Most of 'em are playing power forward."

Solder, of Buena Vista, arrived at CU ticketed for tight end, and did so his first two seasons. But in something not quite epiphanic, coaches saw Solder's agility, his Titan-missile-size frame and had visions of him protecting the quarterback.

But could he grow into that slot? Weighing about 270 in midwinter, Solder became a glutton with a purpose, dedicating himself to a high-carbohydrate and protein diet while increasing his weight- room work.

"I've always eaten so much, I said, 'Oh, geez, what am I going to do now (to gain weight)?' " he said. "But I began snacking more, eating larger meals . . . and when summer hit, I was a little more relaxed, not so stressed, and the weight went on easier."

He reached his goal of weighing 300 pounds by the time preseason camp opened, and in coming seasons, he can see playing comfortably at 310.

Still, Solder said, laughing, "Everyone says I'm the skinniest 300-pounder they've ever seen."

Grimes, though, takes exception, saying Solder has the look of an offensive lineman, "not a converted tight end. He's done an unbelievable job, better than anybody I've seen, in putting that good weight on in a short amount of time.

"And that's not easy to do for a young guy with a fast metabolism. He's really been disciplined with his eating, and he's worked his tail off in the weight room."

Solder's biggest challenge has been learning to maintain his balance while "punching" with his hands during pass

blocking. Tight ends usually block with their weight shifted forward, not from a stance that requires weight centered over their feet.

At tight end, Solder caught three passes - all in 2007, all in CU's 42-0 flogging of Miami (Ohio). Leaving that position wasn't so disturbing because, when he glimpsed the future, he saw "more of a ceiling for me at tight end and a lot less of one at tackle."

"The more I thought about it, the more I thought I could take my skills at tight end and transfer them to left tackle," he said. "So it wasn't really a negative for me, as much as a positive. I wanted to be the best I could be."

Best, biggest, brightest. He's well on his way.

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cu vs. csu - sunday, 5:30 p.m.

Rivalry memory stretches half-century

With a promising season gone sour, the 1958 Buffs were ripe to be upset by some highly motivated Rams.

By Terry Frei
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 08/29/2008 11:16:02 AM MDT



In the last CU-CSU game for 25 years, the Rams planted a 15-14 goodbye kiss on the Buffs.

The series was ending.

University of Colorado athletic department officials decided the Buffaloes would no longer schedule a nonconference game with Colorado State every season.

The 59th and "final" CU-CSU game was set for Nov. 22, 1958, in Boulder.

At Colorado, quarterback Boyd Dowler and guard John Wooten were winding down their senior seasons, playing both ways under coach Dal Ward in the one-platoon era.

Dowler, from Cheyenne, was a last-second CU recruit after his plan to attend the Air Force Academy

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fell through.

"They could only accept one person from the state of Wyoming, and my test didn't measure up to some guy's who was really smart," Dowler recalled Thursday with a laugh.

At CU, he was a wizard in Ward's offense, a mixture of the single wing and the T. Dowler threw the ball sparingly, but caught passes, carried the ball, served as a blocking back and punted.

Wooten, from Carlsbad, N.M., was only the second African-American varsity player at CU, following end Frank Clarke, a Buff in 1955-56.

"We were aware that there were only seven blacks on the campus — five boys and two girls," Wooten said. "We just went about our business."

At CSU in 1958, senior quarterback Fred Glick was the third Glick brother to play for the Rams. His family moved from Lakewood to a dairy farm in tiny LaPorte, outside Fort Collins, when Fred was in the fourth grade.

"Don't even talk to me about dairy cows," Fred said with a laugh.

To Glick, Fort Collins was the big city and CSU was the only place he ever wanted to play.

Star CSU halfback Wayne Schneider, a junior from Oakland, Calif., went to Fort Collins because he had been promised he could play football and baseball.

He knew he would play one more season for the Rams, but never again against the Buffaloes.

"We heard that they were going to drop us because we were not good enough, we were too small for them," Schneider said. "I think that was motivation

for us."

Bufs, Rams went separate ways

The two schools hadn't been in the same league since 1948, when CU left the Mountain States Conference to join the Big Six. Oklahoma State joined the Big Seven in 1958 and would begin playing a Big Eight schedule in 1960. So CU's administration decided the football program had room only for independent Air Force as an annual intrastate opponent.

The Buffaloes went into the 1958 game with a record of 43-13-2 in the series.

CSU, renamed from Colorado A&M in 1957, was 3-3 in the Skyline Conference, 4-4 overall, under Coach Don "Tuffy" Mullison, who was only 10 years removed from playing for the Aggies as a 155-pound guard.

"Tuffy was a true-blue Ram, Fort Collins all the way," Glick recalled.

At CU, in Ward's 11th season as head coach, the Bufs started 5-0 and were ranked ninth nationally, but lost decisively to Oklahoma and Missouri in their final league games. Grumbling about Ward's tenure increased. A 7-0 nonleague victory over Utah didn't quiet the criticism, though both Dowler and Wooten were out with injuries.

CU stars hurting for CSU game

On Nov. 22, the weather was perfect, but attendance at Folsom Field was only 23,000, barely half of what the CU-Air Force game would draw in the same stadium the next week. Dowler was hobbling on a bad ankle after not even making the trip to Utah.

"That was the only game in my whole life I didn't

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play," he recalled. "I probably shouldn't have played the rest of the season, but I did — and not well, by the way."

Wooten also had been less than full strength after suffering a knee injury against Iowa State in mid-October.

CU took a 7-0 lead in the first half after Leroy Clark's 84-yard punt return. CSU countered when Schneider went 83 yards for a score.

"It was a huge hole, I was untouched, and I outran everybody," Schneider said.

Late in the third quarter, CU wingback Eddie Dove gained 57 yards on a double reverse to set up fullback Chuck Weiss' 3-yard scoring run. CSU still trailed, 14-7, midway through the fourth quarter but drove from its 19 to a score, with Glick hitting Schneider on a 24-yard hookup over the middle, making it 14-13 with 4:19 remaining.

Thanks to the NCAA's adoption of a two-point conversion option in January 1958, the Rams had an option of going for the lead. Mullison chose to do so and sent in backup quarterback Joe Crider to replace Glick, who suffered a pinched nerve earlier in the game and missed a series.

"We had worked on a two-point play with him running it, so he came in," Glick said.

Crider passed to Schneider for the 15-14 lead.

"We had scouted them pretty good," Mullison recalled. "We'd worked on that darned play all week. We were pretty sure they wouldn't cover the back on a pass. We just hooked Wayne Schneider about a foot in the end zone and they didn't cover him."

CSU held on for the victory.

"I remember the sadness, how we had battled all game and lost," Wooten recalled. "We had gotten off to such a great start that season, we had some injuries, and we just didn't play with the same focus."

Dowler said: "We just couldn't get anything going. We kind of went flat after the Oklahoma game."

CU's Dove was the leading rusher, with 109 yards on 20 carries. Schneider ran for 99 yards on eight attempts.

"I remember waking up the next morning and seeing the paper," Schneider said. "There was a picture of me kissing the football."

Glick recalled, "That kind of made our season."

Loss to Rams helped coach get fired

Five days later, CSU beat the University of Denver 9-8 in front of 4,130 in Denver. The Rams finished 4-3 in league play, 6-4 overall.

On Nov. 29, CU lost again, 20-14, to unbeaten, Cotton Bowl-bound Air Force, to also finish 6-4. Ward was removed from his coaching position in January 1959. The Buffs were 0-8-1 against Oklahoma in his tenure, and that proved to be his undoing.

"That was a miscarriage of justice," Dowler said of the firing.

Wooten pointed out how Ward had held the Buffs together when CU went to the Orange Bowl after his sophomore year, standing up to Jim Crow laws and other segregationist traditions. He called Ward's firing "a really hurtful thing for us."

During the week of that 1958 game, Boulder Daily

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Camera sports editor Howard Baxter was one of many who noted it was the final scheduled meeting. He added, "When they'll meet on the gridiron again remains a question for the future — perhaps a good many years away, who knows?"

They didn't play again until 1983.

Whatever happened to . .

Wayne Schneider: Retired, living in Tracy, California, where he was a longtime successful high school football coach.

Fred Glick: Played eight years of pro ball, then had a long career coaching in the NFL and CFL. He returned to Fort Collins to help run the family business, Glick Brothers, which owns and operates a business park. He still lives there.

Tuffy Mullison: CSU was 19-40-1 in his six seasons. He remained in the Fort Collins area after his coaching career ended, was successful in construction and development and now lives in Windsor.

Boyd Dowler: Spent 12 years in the NFL as a receiver, most notably with Green Bay. He is retired and lives near Atlanta.

John Wooten: Had a distinguished NFL career, making the Pro Bowl twice for Cleveland. Stayed in NFL as a player agent and personnel executive, and retired in 2004. He owns a printing company and lives in Dallas.

Dal Ward: Took advantage of his faculty tenure to remain in Boulder as a CU professor. He died in 1983. The Buffs' athletic training/office complex that opened in 1991 is named for him.

Terry Frei, The Denver Post

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college football preview

Bufs on fast break

Colorado preview

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 08/28/2008 08:05:18 PM MDT



CU quarterback Cody Hawkins is coming off a freshman season in which he passed for 3,015 yards and 22 touchdowns. (Hyoung Chang, The Denver Post)

BOULDER — Colorado likes to spread people out but doesn't run a spread offense. CU coaches hope opposing defenses will be as confused as that idea.

A classic spread offense includes a scroll of running plays designed for the quarterback — like that of Colorado's 2008 opponents West Virginia, Kansas and Missouri. And the spread backfield often includes just one running back, sometimes none.

Buffaloes coach Dan Hawkins prefers to have two runners — and the quarterback isn't one of them. Granted, sophomore quarterback Cody Hawkins is just 5-foot-11 and 190 pounds and lacks great speed or quickness. But in listening to Dan Hawkins and offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich, one gets the feeling CU would not become a full-fledged spread team even if it had a quarterback who could run like the wind.

Quarterbacks are too precious to Hawkins. Even those who do not call him Dad.

"We're not a huge fan of the quarterback getting hit a lot," Helfrich said. "You don't want to risk him a ton."

CU's multiple offense certainly can give the appearance of a spread. Cody Hawkins takes the snap from the shotgun formation. Wide receivers often split out wide. Players might shift or go in motion. And this year, the Buffs have adopted a no-huddle, up-tempo system with Cody getting the play call via hand signals from backup quarterbacks on the sideline.

Just don't expect Cody to tuck it and go.

"I've always said, 'We want a quarterback who can run, but we don't want to make him our runner,' " Dan Hawkins said.

That doesn't mean Colorado's offense is old school or stale. Anything but. "Hawk Ball" loves to keep the opponent's defense guessing with gadget plays and other deception. Last year, CU put the *quarterback* in motion, made direct snaps to a variety of running backs and tossed a lateral back to the quarterback for a flea-flicker.

And all that occurred in the season opener against Colorado State. Hawkins had other bags of

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tricks for subsequent games.



CU coach Dan Hawkins (Denver Post file photo)

"Part of the joy of the game is to put on film of the other team and try to be creative," Hawkins has said. "The opponent has players. They have coaches. They have scholarships. They watch film, too. So you'd better do some things that they haven't prepared for."

Hawkins prefers a "multiple" offense because, as the description suggests, it allows for more options, more combinations, more opportunities.

It's like everything else in life, the coach likes to say, "It's best to stay balanced" rather than always try to hang your hat on a certain system that requires a specific skill set of the players executing it.

"You want to ebb and flow toward your personnel," Hawkins explained. "You want to say, 'These are our five best skill guys and how can we use that?'"

"If you have two really good running backs, well, you probably don't want to take them out of the game. You may have two really good tight ends. We're always going to run guys in and out. But as a general rule, you're saying, 'Let's use the best guys

we have.' "

Hawkins agrees with the philosophy that spreading the field creates mismatches and gets athletes (and slower linebackers) in space. But Hawkins also believes championship teams need a power running game to some degree. This year's offense figures to incorporate both concepts. Don't be surprised if two tailbacks line up together in the backfield on occasion. That would give more opportunities to sophomore Demetrius

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Sumler and freshmen Darrell Scott and Rodney Stewart — and Ray Polk, too, if it turns out he doesn't redshirt.

For opponents, facing two tailbacks in the backfield could spell double trouble. For example, one could remain to help with pass protection, while the other may shift into the slot or go in motion for a pass or quick pitch. Defenders would have to guess the decoy. And with the no- huddle offense, they won't have much time.

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"Everything just happens faster," Cody Hawkins said. "It fits our offense."

Although the experienced Sumler is pegged to start in the season opener, speedsters Scott, Polk and Stewart will see playing time and help keep defenses on their heels, CU running backs coach Darian Hagan said.

"The best way I can put it is, this is 'big boy football' now," Hagan said. "With the tailbacks we brought in, we'll be able to do all the (creative) things Coach Hawk did at Boise State."

In meetings, the Colorado coaching staff calls the offensive system "fast-break basketball on grass."

Wide receivers coach Eric Kiesau explains: "What people don't realize about the spread is, when you have two threats at running back, the defense will have to load up in the box to stop the run or it will have to spread out and cover the receivers. We're putting the defense in a big bind. We're making them declare."

That's similar, Kiesau said, to a basketball team forcing the opposition to choose between stopping an inside attack or getting a hand in the face of outside shooters. It's impossible to be in two places at once.

"What we do gives the defense something to think about," Helfrich added. "We've always had a lot of success with creating mismatches. We'll mix it up."

Count on it.

*Tom Kensler: 303-954-1280 or
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About the Buffs

Coach

Dan Hawkins, 8-17 in two seasons at Colorado; 100-40-1 for career, including 61-28 at the major-college level.

What's new

Following a national trend, CU has adopted a no-huddle, up-tempo system. The addition of three fleet freshman tailbacks, including national blue-chipper Darrell Scott, should reduce the pressure on sophomore quarterback Cody Hawkins. Defensively, the Buffs have more depth at linebacker but are breaking in two new cornerbacks.

What to look for

Colorado has more depth, size, speed and athleticism than in Dan Hawkins' first two seasons. And he has a returning starter at quarterback for the first time, with son Cody having passed for 3,015 yards and 22 touchdowns in 2007 as a freshman. But against a demanding schedule, the Buffs may have to pull off some upsets to improve on last year's 6-6 regular-season record.

5 players to watch

QB Cody Hawkins

Looking to reduce his interception total (17 in 2007) substantially.

TB Darrell Scott

Nation's No. 2 overall recruit brings game-breaking explosiveness to the offense.

DT George Hypolite

Vocal leader of the team, he could vie for All-America honors.

FS Ryan Walters

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Big year needed from veteran "center fielder" with new starters at cornerback.

WR Josh Smith

Coaches hope for breakout year from Darrell Scott's equally fleet uncle.

Projected starting lineup

Offense

Pos. Player Ht. Wt. Cl.
WR Josh Smith 6-0 180 So.
WR Patrick Williams 6-2 205 Sr.
LT Nate Solder 6-8 300 So.
LG Devin Head 6-4 305 Jr.
C Daniel Sanders 6-3 315 Sr.
RG Blake Behrens 6-3 300 Fr.
RT Ryan Miller 6-7 305 So.
TE Riar Geer 6-4 250 Jr.
QB Cody Hawkins 5-11 190 So.
TB Demetrius Sumler 5-11 220 So.
FB Maurice Cantrell 6-0 245 Sr.
K Aric Goodman 5-10 180 So.

Defense

Pos. Player Ht. Wt. Cl.
LE Maurice Lucas 6-4 260 Sr.
DT George Hypolite 6-1 290 Sr.
NT Brandon Nicholas 6-3 290 Sr.
RE Jason Brace 6-4 250 Jr.
WLB Marcus Burton 6-0 260 Jr.
MLB Jeff Smart 6-0 215 Jr.
SLB Brad Jones 6-3 230 Sr.
LCB Gardner McKay 5-11 165 Sr.
FS Ryan Walters 6-0 205 Sr.
SS Daniel Dykes 6-2 200 Sr.
RCB Cha'pelle Brown 5-7 180 Jr.
P Matt DiLallo 6-1 190 Jr.

Schedule

Date Game Time TV

Aug. 31 Colo. St. (Denver) 5:30 p.m. FSN
Sept. 6 Eastern Washington 1:30 p.m.
Sept. 18 West Virginia 6:30 p.m. ESPN
Sept. 27 Fla. St. (Jacksonville) TBA
Oct. 4 Texas TBA
Oct. 11 at Kansas TBA
Oct. 18 Kansas State TBA
Oct. 25 at Missouri TBA
Nov. 1 at Texas A&M TBA
Nov. 8 Iowa State TBA
Nov. 15 Oklahoma State TBA
Nov. 28 at Nebraska 1:30 p.m. KMGH-7

Pivotal game: West Virginia

The 6:30 p.m. Thursday kickoff and national telecast by ESPN should make for a wild setting at Folsom Field. This begins a six- game stretch that could be called "murderers' row," with Florida State, Texas, Kansas, Kansas State and Missouri to follow. Getting off to a good start with an upset of the Mountaineers (No. 8 in preseason polls) could be a springboard to a successful season.

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cu football

Short corners aim for great heights

McKay, C. Brown step up as full-time starters

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 08/28/2008 10:27:27 PM MDT



Gardner McKay got his feet wet in 2007 by starting two games.

BOULDER — Now that Colorado's Gardner McKay finally has an opportunity to be a full-time starter, the senior cornerback will let everybody in on a little secret. With "little" being the operative word.

"Truthfully? I weighed 149 pounds when I was a freshman," McKay said with a sheepish grin.

And that's standing 5-feet-11.

"I didn't lift weights before I got here," said McKay, from Los Angeles (Calif.) Crenshaw. "With high schools in L.A., it's all about speed. Nobody worried about lifting."

McKay said he is up to about 175 pounds. Along

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with short, but stout, Cha'pelle Brown (a 5-7, 180-pound junior), the small pair has big shoes to fill. All-Big 12 performer Terrence Wheatley was a second-round draft choice of the

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New England Patriots, and the other 2007 starting cornerback, Benjamin Burney, is redshirting this fall after multiple offseason surgeries.

Identifying its two starting cornerbacks might have been the most critical need of CU's August camp heading into the season opener against Colorado State on Sunday. CU defensive backs coach Greg Brown said McKay and Cha'pelle Brown earned it with solid play. But three others — sophomores Jalil Brown and Jimmy Smith and redshirt freshman Anthony Wright — made it a close battle and will keep pressing for playing time. Jalil Brown begins the season as the starting nickel back.

"Things are not set in stone," Greg Brown said of the depth chart. "You've got to play well. You've got to produce."

McKay and Cha'pelle Brown are excited about the chance.

"I'm ready for the challenge," said Brown, who played the nickel the past two seasons.

McKay drew two starts in 2007 when Wheatley was injured. "It's our time to shine," he said.

"They're both very smart guys," Greg Brown said. "They've been in the system, so this won't be a first-time deal for them."

Ideally, Greg Brown would have his corners go 6-1 or 6-2 and weigh more than 200 pounds. But with McKay and Cha'pelle Brown, at least there is no concern about a lack of athleticism. McKay was a high school sprinter, with a best of 10.8 seconds for 100 meters. In basketball, Cha'pelle Brown averaged 25 points per game as a senior at Los Altos High, just east of L.A.

Footnotes. Among the true freshmen, tailbacks Darrell Scott and Rodney "Speedy" Stewart, offensive guard Max Tuioti-Mariner, tight end Ryan Deehan, kickoff specialist Jameson Davis and safety Patrick Mahnke will play this season rather than redshirt. Offensive tackle Bryce Givens is on the bubble, coach Dan Hawkins said. . . . CSU defensive coordinator Larry Kerr, on CU sophomore quarterback Cody Hawkins: "I watched the latter games (of 2007) when he carved up Nebraska and had a great second half against Alabama. I see a great competitor. He's very accurate. I wish he were a senior."

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Bufs RB Lockridge to redshirt

Sophomore to join fellow running back Polk on sidelines

By Kyle Ringo
Friday, August 29, 2008

When Colorado opened training camp at the beginning of the month, some of the most intriguing questions surrounded a thick stable of running backs.

Who would be the starter? How would coaches find playing time for everyone?

The first question was answered two weeks into camp when sophomore Demetrius Sumler won the starting job. The second answer is becoming more clear. Unless disaster strikes, two players are likely to redshirt.

Freshman Ray Polk asked for a redshirt season a week ago, when he said it became clear to him he needed the extra year to develop physically and mentally. Sophomore Brian Lockridge will redshirt, despite the fact he would rather play.

Lockridge had hernia surgery in the spring after informing coaches and team athletic trainers he had been in pain since last November. He returned to workouts too soon after the surgery and never completely healed. He was held out of much of training camp, but has been practicing lately.

Lockridge said coaches have told him he will redshirt this season in order to make sure he heals completely. He said he wants to play but can see some positives in a redshirt season.

"I'm definitely going to redshirt unless something comes up," Lockridge said Thursday. "I want to play, but they want to make sure I'm completely healed."

Lockridge said he feels close to 100 percent now, but he has a history of underestimating injuries and overestimating his ability to play with pain. He failed to tell coaches and trainers about a concussion late last season as well.

If Lockridge does redshirt this season, the running backs corps will still be six members strong with Sumler, junior Kevin Moyd, freshmen Darrell Scott and Rodney Stewart, sophomore Corey Nabors and redshirt freshman Arthur Jaffee.

More than 1,000

attend low-key lunch

More than 1,000 attended the 20th annual Boulder Buff Club Kickoff Luncheon on campus Thursday in Balch Fieldhouse.

Fans listened to former Bufs such as O.C. Oliver, Darian Hagan and Charles Johnson tell tales from their battles

against the Rams and other opponents during the 90-minute program sponsored by the Boulder Chamber of Commerce. Coach Dan Hawkins also spoke to the crowd and answered questions from Johnson.

Athletic director Mike Bohn introduced Hawkins as "the most dynamic, innovative and industrious coach in the nation."

Hawkins has always taken a low-key approach to such events during his three years in Boulder, unlike his predecessor, former coach Gary Barnett, who would occasionally play to the crowd with promises of victories over the in-state rival.

Hawkins did offer reasons for hope for his first winning season leading the Buffs when he said, "I think we're really on the cusp of some awesome things."

Oliver, who played tailback at CU (1986-1990) and has become a fan favorite, was not as reserved when talking about what he hopes to see when the Buffs take on the Rams in Denver on Sunday night.

"I want to beat 'em, and I want to beat 'em bad," Oliver said. "I want to kick their behinds."

The crowd was given the opportunity to ask Hawkins any question at one point during the luncheon, but no one was brave enough to take advantage of the opportunity. Apparently the adage about public speaking being the biggest fear of most Americans -- outranking even death -- is true.

Notable

The luncheon circuit continues to today in Denver where CU officials are expected at two separate lunch-hour rallies. Both Hawkins and Colorado State coach Steve Fairchild are slated to speak at the Columbine Health Plan Tailgate at Invesco hosted by Metro Denver Sports Commission and Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce. The Denver Buff Club is also hosting a luncheon at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. ...

The first Pearl Street Stampede in downtown Boulder is scheduled for 7 p.m. today. The CU marching band and the football team and coaches will participate.



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