



Bufs pull away for victory

Strong second half sparks CU past CSU

By Kyle Ringo
Sunday, August 31, 2008

DENVER -- If Sunday's college football game in the biggest football stadium in the state was supposed to make the case for keeping the game in the big city, it likely failed.

This one was kind of a yawner as rivalry games go, especially for those who missed the second quarter and back-to-back kickoff returns for touchdowns.

Coach Dan Hawkins and his Colorado football team opened the season by beating the Colorado State Rams in the 80th edition of the Rocky Mountain Show down. The 38-17 final score was the most lopsided outcome in the series since CU won the 2001 game by 27 points.

The Buffs beat the Rams for second consecutive season and the fifth time in the past six years. Officials reported a crowd of 69,619, the second straight year in which the game drew fewer than 70,000 in Denver.

Defensive tackle George Hypolite probably summed up the outcome best for CU when he said, "We're 1-0, so obviously we're still in the national championship picture."

The highlight of the night was actually a 26-second span in the second quarter in which the two teams combined to score three touchdowns with players racing up and down the field.

After CSU scored its first points of the night on a 21-yard touchdown pass from quarterback Billy Farris to wide receiver Dion Morton, the Rams kicked off to CU sophomore Josh Smith, who proved to be the most electric man on the field.

Smith fielded a ground ball delivery and sprinted up the middle of the field like a man with no fear and somewhere to go. He watched himself run the final 30 yards and score his first collegiate touchdown on the stadium video board.

"I got my time on the big screen," he said after producing 189 all-purpose yards.

The play gave the Buffs a 21-7 lead, but the fireworks weren't quite over. As CU players celebrated the first kickoff return for a score since Jeremy Bloom pulled the trick at Kansas State in 2003, the players on the field missed tackles on the ensuing kickoff and John Mosure returned the favor with a 90-yard touchdown for the Rams.

Suddenly the stadium came alive and remained energized until halftime.

"I told our team before the game that I thought we would score on some type of return because he is very dynamic," coach Dan Hawkins said of Smith.

The Bufs won the battle in the second half by wearing the Rams down. They put together an 18-play drive that ended with only three points from the right leg of Aric Goodman.

CU debuted its no-huddle offense to mixed results.

The Bufs produced 367 yards in total offense and Cody Hawkins completed 20 of 29 passes for 214 yards and one score, but the offense also looked sloppy at times.

The Bufs pulled it together when it mattered most scoring all four times they entered the redzone. They also converted five of 11 third downs and both times they went for it on fourth downs.

Running backs Demetrius Sumler, Rodney Stewart and Darrell Scott combined to rush for 133 yards and Scott scored his first career touchdown late in the game diving into the end zone.

The CU defense didn't know what to expect from the Rams led by first year coach Steve Fairchild and new starting quarterback. But the Bufs faired well holding their rivals to 258 total yards of offense and 10 points, without the kickoff return.

Safety Ryan Walters and linebacker Jeff Smart each recorded 11 tackles and Walters made a key interception late in the first half to stop a CSU drive. The Bufs sacked Farris five times, getting off to a solid start in that area after recording just 19 sacks all of last season. They also limited the Rams to just two conversions in 12 third-down attempts.

"Our third down was awful," Fairchild said. "It seemed like we were trying to convert all third and elevens, and based on a sack or a penalty we got ourselves into a rut."



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Smith wanted to do something special

Buff sophomore delivers with touchdown return

By Ryan Thorburn
Monday, September 1, 2008

DENVER -- During a recent practice, Josh Smith called his shot.

In the middle of a kickoff return drill, Colorado's super sophomore announced to anyone within earshot that he would be "taking one to the house" in the opener against Colorado State on Sunday night at Invesco Field.

Michael Sipili, a starting linebacker who is also one of the up-men on the kickoff return team, countered with his own prediction for the Rocky Mountain Showdown.

"Sipili said, 'When they squib it, I'm picking it up and taking it to the house,' " Smith said.

Sure enough, Colorado State kicker Ben DeLine attempted a squib kick in the second quarter after a Billy Farris touchdown pass to Dion Morton had cut the Buffs' lead to 14-7.

Sipili and the rest of the CU kickoff return team resisted temptation and allowed the football to roll all the way back to Smith at the 7-yard line. A few seconds later he was in the end zone celebrating his first collegiate touchdown.

"That was an unbelievable feeling," Smith said after racking up 160 yards on three kickoff returns and 189 total yards during CU's 38-17 victory. "I turned around looking for yellow laundry. I was like, 'Please don't give me no holding, I can't take that on my heart right now.'"

There were no penalties on the perfectly blocked play, but Kent Riddle's heart would skip a beat moments later when CSU's John Mosure answered with a 90-yard touchdown return on the ensuing kickoff.

Three touchdowns on three consecutive plays covering 204 yards in 26 seconds. The special teams practices should be interesting in Boulder and Fort Collins this week.

"It's an unforgivable mistake, and we can't let that happen ever again," Riddle, who is CU's special teams coach, said of following Smith's highlight with a poorly executed kickoff.

Mosure's touchdown gave the Rams some hope by pulling them to within 21-14 at halftime.

"I thought that was big. That made it a game," Smith said. "They're not going to lay down for us and they have athletes, man. They're no run-over team, especially against us."

Smith opened the second half with a 45-yard kickoff return and made a 15-yard catch on third-and-4 moments later to set up a 1-yard touchdown run by Cody Hawkins that made the score 28-14.

This time the Rams didn't have a momentum-changing answer and never seriously threatened CU on the scoreboard again.

"I didn't have this experience against CSU last year, so I wanted to come out and do something special," said Smith, who missed the first two games of the 2007 season with a severe kidney bruise. "I'm glad I could make some big plays today for the team. ...

"You can continue to say you're ready for this game, but you never know just how ready you need to be until you play in it. It's a wonderful environment, and I was glad I was able to make big plays tonight."

Smith's nephew, freshman running back Darrell Scott, capped the victory with a 1-yard touchdown run with 2:14 remaining.

"Definitely a perfect night," Smith said. "I had to score before Darrell and keep the chronological order. He can score more from here on out, but I had to get in first this year."

Solid debut

The first time Darrell Scott touched the ball as a Colorado Buffalo, he slipped -- and still picked up 6 yards.

The highly touted running back may have started slowly, but he finished Sunday night's win over Colorado State as the Buffs' leading rusher with 54 yards on 11 carries.

"I was nervous," Scott admitted. "When I looked up and saw 70,000 people, my thought was don't fumble, don't make Coach Hawk mad and try to do good."

He accomplished all three goals, and threw in a 1-yard scoring run to boot.

After the game, he found his head coach, gave him a hug and flashed the grin that will likely become quite familiar to CU fans.

"We did it," he said to Hawkins. "We did it."

Scott, who played in plenty of big games as a prep star in California, still admitted to a "bad case of the jitterbugs" on Sunday. But on CU's decisive drives down the stretch, he was the back getting the carries.

"The line and Cody (Hawkins) just kept supporting me," Scott said. "With them in my corner, I wasn't worried."

Line rotation

Blake Behrens and Devin Head were the starting guards for the Buffs Sunday night, but freshman Max Tuioti-Mariner also got some substantial time at the position.

The Buffs will likely continue that kind of rotation, at least in the immediate future. CU's no-huddle spread offense can take a toll on linemen, and such a rotation helps keep them fresh.

Breaking in

Six Buffs saw their first action on the opening play of the game as part of the kickoff coverage squad. Redshirt freshmen Anthony Perkins, Travis Sandersfeld, and Anthony Wright made their debuts. True freshmen Jameson Davis

and Patrick Mahnke and junior college transfer Shaun Mohler saw action too.

Offensive guard Blake Behrens was the only CU starter Sunday who had not seen previous action. Nineteen total players saw their play as a Buff, including seven true freshmen. In addition to the seven players above, DT Curtis Cunningham, E Ryan Deehan, PK Aric Goodman,, DT Eugene Goree, ILB Josh Hartigan, OG Maxwell Tuioti-Mariner, DE Conrad Obi, DT Tony Poremba, TB Darrell Scott, TE Devin Shanahan, DT Lagrone Shield and TB Rodney Stewart all saw their initial action as a Buff.

Notable

The Buffs started the season a little sloppy against the Rams by committing eight penalties for 58 yards. Colorado State faired a little better, committing four penalties for 18 yards. ... Kicker Jameson Davis had seven kickoffs and put three of those in the end zone for touchbacks. Aric Goodman was 5-for-5 on extra points and also hit a 23-yard field goal in his debut for the Buffs on Sunday.



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Bufs defense silences Colorado State's stars

Sperry, Bell combine for just 33 yards

By Ryan Thorburn
Monday, September 1, 2008

DENVER -- The always talkative George Hypolite had a relatively quiet night on the field Sunday.

But Colorado's standout defensive tackle -- who was double-teamed throughout the Rocky Mountain Showdown -- was all smiles and ready for the tape-recorders and cameras after the Buffs' 38-17 victory over Colorado State.

That's because the 69,619 fans at Invesco Field didn't hear the names Kory Sperry or Kyle Bell called by the public address announcer very often.

Sperry finished with two catches for 11 yards one year after toasting CU for 103 yards and three touchdowns. Bell only mustered 22 yards rushing after racking up 135 yards and a touchdown on 40 carries against the Buffs last season.

"Since we didn't know exactly what they were going to be running we kind of wanted to take away their big threats," said Hypolite, who finished with only four tackles in the stat sheet but opened up some lanes for his teammates by consistently taking on two blockers.

"Gartrell, Kyle and Kory are their big threats, and we kind of wanted to keep them in check. I think our guys did a great job of being where they were supposed to be and doing what they were supposed to do."

Gartrell Johnson finished with 96 yards rushing (7.9 per attempt) but did not get into the end zone.

And, more importantly, Billy Farris never really got comfortable. The Buffs sacked CSU's starting quarterback five times and intercepted him twice.

"We got to the quarterback a little bit," CU defensive line coach Romeo Brandison said. Last year a lack of pressure up front allowed Caleb Hanie to complete 20 of 27 passes for 229 yards and three touchdowns. "We won. I'm pleased."

CU only totaled 19 sacks for the entire 2007 season. Linebacker Brad Jones tallied the fifth sack of Farris on a fourth-and-10 late in the fourth quarter to seal the Rams' fate.

"We kind of planned for variations of everything," Jones said. "We just made sure we were sound in our techniques and ready for anything. ... I thought our D-line played an excellent game and I was really proud of them."

CU's defense didn't really know what to expect from first-year CSU head coach Steve Fairchild, who spent a few seasons learning offense under Mike Martz in St. Louis before serving as the offensive coordinator of the Buffalo Bills the past two seasons.

But the Buffs did have some great expectations up front with Hypolite anchoring the defense.

Defensive tackle Brandon Nicholas and defensive end Marquez Herrod each had 1.5 sacks with Jason Brace and Taj Kaynor rotating in and producing a half sack each.

"CSU really came after me pretty good. But my guys, the rest of the D-line, they stepped up and we got sacks. They were just constantly after the quarterback, and I think that's great," Hypolite said. "If we can continually put pressure on the quarterback it's going to help the guys in the back half, it's going to help our linebackers, and we may be able to have some fun this year."



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Rams can't keep up in 2nd half

Fairchild likes his team's toughness

By Kyle McDaniel Camera Sports Writer
Monday, September 1, 2008

DENVER-- It wasn't exactly the debut Colorado State coach Steve Fairchild wanted.

In his first game at the helm of the Rams' program, Fairchild and his team could not keep up with the Buffs offensively at Invesco Field in a 38-17 loss.

Colorado State could not find the end zone in the second half, settling for one field goal. The Rams' offense was also forced into many third-and-long situations, converting only two of 12 third-down chances.

"Our third down was awful," Fairchild said. "It seemed like we were trying to convert all third-and-11s."

Despite the Rams' failure to convert on third down, Fairchild said that he thought his team played physical and was able to run the ball well.

Senior running back Gartrell Johnson led the ground attack, rushing for 95 yards on 12 carries. He said the team is still trying to gel and needs to find a way to put scoring drives together.

Besides a new coach, the Rams also have a new quarterback this season, which might be part of the reason the team is still trying to gel.

Quarterback Billy Farris made his starting debut for the Rams against the Buffs on Sunday. It wasn't the best first appearance as a starter as Farris' touchdown pass to junior Dion Morton was his only score of the game.

He also threw two big interceptions that shifted any momentum the Rams had back toward the Buffs.

Still, Farris said that it was good to get a game under his belt and that he thought he handled the jitters of his debut well.

"Surprisingly, I wasn't very nervous at all. I felt good going in," Farris said. "I felt like as the game went on, I just felt even better. I got more and more comfortable."

Last year, Colorado State was able to rely on tight end Kory Sperry for offensive production. Sperry caught a career-high three touchdown passes against the Buffs last year.

Sperry was a non-factor in the game Sunday, however. He caught only two passes for 11 yards and failed to find the end zone.

Farris said Colorado State knew the Buffs were going to focus on keeping Sperry in check.

"We were expecting that going in, and we knew that we were going to have to go to our young receivers," Farris said. "That wasn't unexpected at all."

Even though Colorado State could not find the end zone in the second half, Fairchild said the Rams put together a strong effort.

"Like I told them before the game, I just want them to play, play as hard as you can," Fairchild said. "I thought we did that. I liked our effort, and I liked our toughness."



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Woelk: Poise helps Buffs get off to good start

By Neill Woelk

Monday, September 1, 2008

DENVER -- For a little while, at least, Sunday night's Colorado-Colorado State matchup looked like it would follow the script written for the last six years.

You know the one. Close ballgame right down to the end, with one or two plays making the difference. The winning team goes home breathing a sigh of relief and the losing team heads up the highway thinking about what might have been.

But on this night, the team with better players -- and more of them -- overcame its mistakes and left little doubt. Favored to win by 11, Dan Hawkins' Buffs very nearly doubled that number. Despite a raft of mistakes (try eight penalties and two turnovers), the Buffs opened the season on a solid note by collecting their fifth win in the last six games in the series.

If you're a Colorado fan, you have to like the poise the Buffs showed. Dan Hawkins' Buffs had ample opportunity to tighten up and let the Rams back in the game, but every time the Rams started to pull close, the Buffs had an answer.

If you're a CSU fan ... well, you give the Rams credit for not checking it in early, particularly after Colorado opened up a 21-7 lead on a 93-yard kickoff return. Then you thank your lucky stars you are playing in the Mountain West.

What's quite clear is that momentum in this rivalry has found a home on CU's sidelines. The Buffs won this game with solid play from a sophomore quarterback, some big plays from a sophomore wide receiver and a good all-around defensive effort that included just enough big plays from underclassmen to make the future bright. Colorado's program has the appearance of one headed toward better days.

The Rams, meanwhile, lost a game starting a fifth-year senior quarterback and a pair of senior running backs. New head coach Steve Fairchild said he liked his team's effort, but the rebuilding effort in CSU is clearly not going to be accomplished overnight. The Rams were a step behind all evening, and it will take Fairchild a couple of recruiting classes to even begin to close what has all the looks of a sizable talent gap.

The Buffs were by no means perfect in their opener. They killed two drives with turnovers, and ended a handful more with silly penalties.

A year ago, that might have been enough to send Hawkins' team into a tailspin for the night. One needs only to remember what happened when mistakes derailed them against Iowa State and Kansas, two games in which the Buffs had third-quarter leads, only to let them slip through their fingers.

But when those situations arose Sunday night, the Buffs shrugged their shoulders at their misfortune -- even when self-inflicted -- and regained control. They did it late in the first half by stopping a potential game-tying drive from CSU with an interception, then again with a scoring drive to open the second half.

And, when CSU answered with one more punch -- a field goal to cut the lead to 11 late in the third quarter -- the Buffs

took the air out of the Rams' sails for good with an 18-play, 74-yard march that produced a field goal to bump their lead back up to 14 with just more than 10 minutes left in the game.

"That was a tremendous drive," allowed Fairchild. "We were hanging on, and then they put that long drive together. That kind of sealed it."

What Fairchild didn't mention was that the game-sealing drive gave CU fans their first real glimpse of freshman running back Darrell Scott. The prized recruit from California carried the ball just one time for 6 yards in the first half, but finished as CU's leading rusher with 11 carries for 54 yards. That includes five carries on the decisive drive, one of which was an 8-yard burst on fourth-and-2.

Expect to see more of Scott. On CU's final possession, he hammered out a 14-yard run on second-and-14, then leaped into the end zone from 1 yard out for CU's final score and his first touchdown as a Buff.

"Freshmen are still freshmen, no matter how highly touted they are," Dan Hawkins said. "You want to put them in a position for success if you can."

Other efforts worth noting?

Five sacks from a defensive line that had just 19 all of last season.

A terrific performance from wide receiver-return specialist Josh Smith, who proved he's a threat to score from anywhere on the field.

A brief glimpse of the electricity freshman running back Rodney Stewart can bring to the game (guaranteed you'll see more of Stewart).

A terrific defensive effort in making CSU tight end Kory Sperry a non-factor.

A big-hitting, big-play night from safety Ryan Walters, who has turned into a field general for the defense.

Yes, there were mistakes. But it's hard to be critical of 38 points and a 21-point margin of victory in a season opener against an in-state rival.

It's a start -- and not a bad one at that.



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CU vs. CSU

Bufs win Rocky Mountain Showdown

Rams show ability to bounce back, but can't keep up in Fairchild's debut

By John Henderson
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 09/01/2008 12:29:41 AM MDT



Surrounded by teammates, Colorado's Josh Smith celebrates his long kickoff return - his first career touchdown - against CSU. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)



Colorado freshman tailback Darrell Scott (2) signals for a touchdown as quarterback Cody Hawkins, center, plunges for a 1-yard score in the third quarter. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

Welcome back to the Rocky Mountain Showdown, Steve Fairchild. It's where crazy things always happen, or how often did you see three touchdowns on back-to-back-to-back plays in the NFL?

It's where your in-state rival debuts the top prep running back in the country from last year while you debut a starting quarterback who's a former walk-on.

And, it's also where the rivalry continues to lean toward the Flatirons as Colorado methodically took care of business in its opener by spoiling Fairchild's Colorado State debut Sunday night, 38-17.

In front of 69,619 fans at Invesco Field at Mile High and a national television audience, CU probably didn't put any juice into defensive tackle George Hypolite's claim of, "We're 1-0, so obviously we're still in the national championship picture."

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Rocky Mountain Showdown

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Colorado's new no-huddle offense occasionally looked like Theta Chi on the intramural fields, and the Buffaloes are still so young, you think half of them will suddenly get up and go pet Ralphie. But as Fairchild takes his first step after seven years as an NFL assistant, Colorado showed signs of taking a giant leap in coach Dan Hawkins' third year.

On paper Sunday, the signs were there. His son Cody completed 20-of-29 passes for 214 yards and a touchdown. Darrell Scott, the aforementioned prep tailback prize, came off the bench for 54 yards and a touchdown on only 11 carries. The defense sacked Billy Farris five times, and CU's inexperienced cornerbacks got burned only once.

"I always have great expectations," Dan Hawkins

said. "I'm a big believer in that. I don't know why you'd have the bar low. There are no excuses."

There should be no excuses for a team with 14 returning starters. But Hawkins' last recruiting class made the top 15, and he's playing a lot of young players. Yet they didn't crumble in the wake of the wackiest 26 seconds in this rivalry's 80-year history.

After Dion Morton burned Buff cornerback Cha'pelle Brown for a 21-yard touchdown



Rams punter Anthony Hartz scrambles for the ball after a high snap. Hartz recovered, but CU scored two plays later. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

to cut the lead to 14-7 in the second quarter, Colorado apparently seized the momentum with Josh Smith's 93-yard kickoff return to make it 21-7. The scoreboard had barely changed before CSU sophomore John Mosure returned the ensuing kickoff 90 yards for a score.

Who had the momentum? Who knew? But the Buffaloes definitely had the poise.

"Luckily for me, I'm a pretty optimistic kid," Cody

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Hawkins said. "To the average fan, that was a crazy game. Life's a roller coaster, and you want to stay off the mountain tops and stay out of the valleys, and I think we did that."

Smith helped. Only Ivory Herd's terrific tackle prevented Scott's overshadowed uncle from a second kickoff return for a TD, but his 46-yarder still set up Hawkins'



Rams linebacker Jeff Horinek loses his footing after intercepting a pass from Cody Hawkins, bottom, at the Colorado 27-yard line in the second quarter, setting up CSU's first score. Hawkins ran for two touchdowns and threw for another. (Hyoung Chang, The Denver Post)

1-yard sneak to make it 28-14 in the third quarter. The clincher, the turning point and the signature difference between these two programs came with Colorado clinging to a 28-17 lead late in the third quarter.

The stronger Buffaloes ground out an 18-play drive, ending in Aric Goodman's 23-yard field goal to make it 31-17 with 10:06 left.

For Fairchild, whose program has lost five of its past six to Colorado, there were some good signs. The Buffs played a conservative zone to protect their young cornerbacks, but Farris still looked poised and smart in hitting 27-of-37 for 187 yards. Running back Gartrell Johnson also looked improved, with a game-high 95 yards.

"We have a chance to be a good football team if we play like we did

Post Poll - Site for Showdown



Should the annual game between Colorado and Colorado State be played at home sites or in Denver?

Home sites

tonight," Fairchild said.

Hey, crazier things have happened.

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Bests

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One TD every 8.67 seconds

Wow factor.

The back-to-back kickoff returns were electrifying. With the CSU touchdown pass to start the scoring flurry, there were three TDs within 26 seconds.

Tribute:

CU quarterback Cody Hawkins had the numbers 64, 87 and 37 on his left biceps. They represent the numbers of teammates who were injured in the preseason drills and did not play — guard Mike Ittis, tight end Riar Geer and wide receiver/kick returner Jason Espinoza.

Pressure:

The Colorado



CSU cornerback Nick Oppenneer breaks up a pass intended for CU receiver Josh Smith in the first quarter Saturday night. (Hyoung Chang, The Denver Post)

defensive line accounted for four sacks, including 1 1/2 each for defensive tackle Brandon Nicolas and right end Marquez Herrod. *David Krause, The Denver Post*

Worsts

Road ragin' trip to Mile High

Traffic:

Nearly four hours before kickoff, CSU fans were cruising down Interstate 25 until the interchange with Highway 36. Traffic crawled with cars going slow enough that fans could relay their favorite obscenities at each other.

Malfunction:

It wasn't anything like Janet Jackson's wardrobe problems in the Super Bowl, but the officials were getting signals crossed on reviewing, which they called for but then didn't happen and were explained away as an "equipment malfunction."

First quarter:

Call it first-game jitters or just trying to get a flow, but there were four false starts, no points and a combined 129 yards of offense. *David Krause, The Denver Post*

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woody paige

Game features triple play

By Woody Paige
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 09/01/2008 12:39:18 AM MDT



CSU's John Mosure races to a touchdown on a 90-yard kickoff return, just after a CU return went the other way. (Hyoung Chang, The Denver Post)

On a Sunday evening of frolicking football fun, Dion, Josh and John, in the tradition of Athos, Porthos and Aramis, became connected for all time as *Les Trois Joueurs* .

Dion Morton and John Mosure of Colorado State, with Josh Smith from Colorado in between, scored back-to-back-to-back touchdowns in 26 seconds of the second quarter in one of the most implausible,

incredible, inconceivable sequences in college football lore.

There were a few anomalies and abnormalities at the stadium on Thursday night, but this thing was historic, too.

"Before I could even celebrate, it happened twice more," said Morton, who caught a 21-yard touchdown pass.

"I couldn't believe what was going on out there," said Smith, who returned a kickoff 93 yards for a touchdown.

"It was kind of like, 'Anything you can do, I can do better,' " said Mosure, who returned a kickoff 90 yards for a touchdown.

A total of 204 yards and 21 points and three changes of momentum in less time than it will take you to read this paragraph. If you went to the refrigerator for a cold one, you missed a game that went from 14-0 to 21-14.

CU beat CSU 38-17 in the Rocky Mountain Showdown Throw Down Hoedown.

But everybody went away singing about the wild half-minute.

Three plays, three touchdowns. That does go on occasionally in the Arena Football League, and once in a Super Bowl, and every Saturday in the peewees, but nobody could find if it was a college football record.

The opening quarter didn't offer an indication of what was to come. The intrastate rivals, playing their last game in Denver for a while, or a long while, were tied at zilch when the second quarter started. CU popped a couple of quick touchdowns as the sky

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spit rain, and looked to be running away.

Then the teams spit, split scores.

After an interception, the Rams were at the Buffaloes' 24. On second down, the new Rams quarterback acted as if he were on a ride at nearby Elitch's. Billy Farris wheeled and threw to Morton for a touchdown.

Morton, a 5-foot-10 junior wide receiver, "set up as the slot receiver, read the coverage — they were doing some different things — and it was supposed to go out and down, but I went up and in, and Billy delivered it perfectly."

CSU was within seven with 6:53 left before halftime.

The kickoff was somewhat like a line drive, and CU's No. 1 playmaker with No. 1 on his uniform, Josh Smith, handled it somewhat like a bad-hands shortstop. "I bobbled it, finally got it, and I could see an opening off to the side. I just took off. When I got to about the 40(-yard line), I thought, 'They're not going to catch me,' " said the 6-foot sophomore.

CU was back up 14 with 6:41 left before halftime.

On the next kickoff, Mosure, a 5-10 sophomore running back and returner, fielded the ball at his 10, took off right, brushed off a couple of Buffs and got in the open and duplicated Smith's deed. "I had totally forgotten that they just scored on a kick return. I knew I had it with about 20 yards to go. The last time I returned a kickoff for a touchdown was in the seventh grade in Pop Warner."

CSU was only seven points away with 6:27 left before halftime.

Smith, a former high school relay runner and long jumper, covered 93 yards in 12 seconds, Mosure 90

yards in 14 seconds.

They were lightning-bolt like, Usain Bolt-like.

On the following kickoff, Smith grabbed the ball at the goal line.

Uh-oh, here we go again. The 69,619 in attendance, as loud as Democrats three nights before, had to be wondering if this game was going to be like the old 1950s electric football games, with TD returns on every kickoff.

CU and CSU was skipping the light fandango, and the crowd was calling out for more. But Smith was held to a mere 21 yards.

The streak was over. But the 26 seconds (on the clock, maybe 10 minutes in real time) was worth, uh, every millisecond.

Super Bowl XXXV between the Giants and the Ravens had an interception return for a touchdown, a kickoff return for a touchdown and another kickoff return for a touchdown.

I saw it then, too, and didn't believe it, either.

This triple play is rarer than baseball's version. "I was more excited after John scored his touchdown than I was on mine," Morton said. "We turned the momentum around twice, just couldn't keep it going. That was something to be a part of."

Morton, Smith and Mosure — who aren't three musketeers, but they will be linked forever in this state of football. They had three successive touchdowns and 235 yards overall in the three R's — rushes, returns and receptions.

3TD.

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CU's youth will be served

By Mark Kiszla
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 09/01/2008 12:34:17 AM MDT



Colorado tailback Demetrius Sumler gives CSU linebacker Ricky Brewer a ride as Sumler lunges for yardage. Sumler gained 41 yards on 10 carries, part of CU's 153 yards rushing that more than doubled the Rams' output of 71. (Kathryn Scott Osler, The Denver Post)

We have seen the future of the CU Buffaloes' football, and it promises much Hawk love, many touchdowns and a Big 12 Conference championship.

After watching the Buffs roll 38-17 against Colorado State on Sunday night, it is time to dream big again.

It does not require genius to figure out why.

It's the talent.

It's back in Boulder.

Big time.

"The sky's the limit," said freshman tailback Darrell Scott, who scored his first college touchdown. "We have a lot of room to grow."

Get this: The five touchdowns scored by the Buffs against CSU, every inch of 153 yards rushing and the 20 pass completions thrown were all the work of Colorado freshmen or sophomores.

So what's the ceiling? No telling.

"Anything's possible," said Scott, who had 70 scholarship offers to play Division I-A football.

"Before we're done, we could be the 1990 CU team all over again."

Considering Scott wore diapers when the Buffaloes of Eric Bieniemy and Greg Biekert beat Notre Dame to win a national championship, the ballyhooed freshman is a fast learner when it comes to the football history of his new school.

"We're 1-0, so obviously we're in the national championship picture," said CU senior defensive lineman George Hypolite, feeling feisty after the most lopsided victory in the Rocky Mountain Showdown since 2001.

Although you have to like the big way the Buffaloes are thinking, they will have some hard lessons to

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learn during a fall semester that includes tests against Texas and Missouri.

So expect to see Southern Cal, Ohio State or maybe Georgia play for the national title at the end of this season, not these young Buffs.

But count on CU to go bowling as a prelude to a return to the glory established by Bill McCartney.

Look to the Colorado offense to find where the program's potential is especially enticing. You cannot miss talent as huge as Ryan Miller, a 6-foot-7, 310-pound sophomore. Anyone who doubts the growth is on a fast track obviously missed the blur that is freshman running back Rodney Stewart busting a move.

In the past four years, the Buffaloes had a total of 10 players drafted by the NFL. Whether you loved or despised Gary Barnett, his failure in recruiting is the reason he lost his job.

For too long, the Buffaloes did not have enough winners wearing their uniform.

And that was an insult to the fine tradition of Alfred Williams, Ted Johnson and Daniel Graham, proud CU alums who went on to win Super Bowl rings.

In 1995 alone, 10 Buffs were selected in the NFL draft.

Maybe all it took was for somebody to believe Colorado could again recruit with success against Oklahoma and LSU. So, give props to Colorado assistant coach Darian Hagan, whose name is synonymous with the Buffs' rise to power in the late 1980s.

It was Hagan's recruiting pitch that struck the right chord with Scott, and made the blue-chipper believe

CU could again be a big player on the national scene.

"I went and did my homework on Hagan, and found out he knew what he was talking about," Scott said. "So I decided: 'Let's go for it.' "

These Buffs will undoubtedly commit the errors of youth, drop some passes and perhaps a game they will regret losing.

As soon as Sept. 18, however, they will also have the first of what should be many chances to crash the top 25 in upcoming seasons, when West Virginia comes for a visit to Folsom Field.

From the weight room to the practice field, there are Buffaloes

Share Your Analysis



The Post's Mark Kizla
responds to readers



Post sports columnist Mark Kizla fields your feedback. Look for it in Kickin' It With Kiz every Saturday.

in a hurry to challenge anyone and everyone.

"It bodes well for us in the future," said CU sophomore quarterback Cody Hawkins, counting all the young talent he sees in the locker room.

It is a long road back to the top for the Buffs, but the rout of CSU felt like the beginning of something big.

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Before they are done, the no-limit dreams of young Colorado players will be as real as the championship rings they wear.

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CU vs. CSU

Scott's CU days off and running

Coming-out party for Buffaloes' star recruit a smash

By Chris Dempsey
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 08/31/2008 11:52:57 PM MDT



CU's Darrell Scott gets his first taste of college paydirt, scoring on a 1-yard plunge in the fourth quarter of Sunday's 38-17 win over CSU.
(Hyoung Chang, The Denver Post)

nervous Darrell Scott sat in front of a full plate of food. If he ate anything, running backs coach Darian Hagan sure didn't see it. Before anyone knew it, Scott was gone.

"I should have known," Hagan said with a chuckle. "The same thing happened with Demetrius (Sumler) last year. Little things like that will let you know what a player is thinking."

But Scott wasn't the only one.

Minutes before the start, sitting in the stands awaiting the first game of her son's college career, Alexis Scott felt the butterflies, too. But these were different.

"I was nervous," she said. "Yet confident."

She had two reasons to be nervous and confident. Darrell is her son, but CU wide receiver Josh Smith is her brother. Sunday, at the end of Colorado's 38-17 win over Colorado State in the Rocky Mountain Showdown, it meant she had double the reasons to smile.

On Sunday afternoon at Colorado's pregame meal, just hours before his first college football game, a

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Rocky Mountain Showdown

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- [Visit](#) Tom Kensler's All Things Buffs blog for a behind-the-scenes look at CU sports
- [Visit](#) Natalie Meisler's All Things Rams blog for a behind-the-scenes look at CSU sports

"I'm proud of both him and Joshua," the soft-spoken Alexis said. "It was a great game."

The family affair had a clear headline act. Darrell Scott has the name, the oft-shown grainy high school footage used to spotlight the brightest of stars, and the expectation of greatness. He was the nation's top high school running back recruit, playing for St. Bonaventure High in Ventura, Calif., where he ran for 2,433 yards and 33 touchdowns as a senior.

But for much of the first half against the Rams, none of that mattered. Scott was a spectator.

The 6-foot-1, 225-pound back made his first appearance in the game with 45 seconds left in the

first quarter. Colorado faked two handoffs to him and completed passes on both plays. He then got the ball and slashed ahead for a 6-yard gain in the second quarter, the Scott Era officially underway. Colorado fans stood and gave him a big ovation.

"It just worked out that way," Hagan said of the little use of Scott in the first half. "We wanted to get him in when we thought they were getting tired."

The second half was Scott's half. He ran for 48 of his team-high 54 yards (on 11 carries) in the third and fourth quarters and scored his first career touchdown on a 1-yard jump with 2:14 left in the game. Scott beamed when asked about the score, but there was a contest with Smith involved, and he lost that. Each wanted to be the first to score for the family. Smith's 93-yard kickoff return for a touchdown in the first half beat Scott to it.

"I gotta get him next season," Scott said. "I gotta score first next season."

Smith talked a million miles a minute when the subject of his nephew came up.

"My nephew was able to make big plays and continue to run hard like I know he can," Smith said. "I had to score first, because nephew's coming out, so I had to lead it off right and let him know that we can do it. That was part of the reason why I didn't want to redshirt last year with (my) kidney injury. I wanted to come out and play as a true freshman. I wanted to let him know that it's possible for him as well, and we're looking forward to him having a huge true freshman year."

Alexis said she knew her son would have an impact. He just needed the carries.

"He just had to get a rhythm," she said. "That's the only way you can get your rhythm going. So, that

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being said, he did well. I'm proud of the whole team, they did awesome."

And for anyone excited about Sunday, Hagan is quick to add that it wasn't even half of what Scott is capable of being.

"I would probably say we saw 40 percent," Hagan said. "I think his confidence grew as the game went. He had a couple of holes that he could have exploded through, but he didn't. If he keeps his feet, he's probably going to break some long runs. But he showed he's a physical back."

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Scott by the quarters

Breaking down the first game of Colorado's star recruit — freshman running back Darrell Scott — who finished Sunday with 54 yards and one touchdown on 11 carries:

Quarter Rushes Yards

First 0 0
Second 1 6
Third 4 10
Fourth 6 38

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CU vs. CSU

Hawkins sneaks into picture

QB scores TDs on 1-yard plays

By Tom Kensler
The Denver Post

Article Last Updated: 09/01/2008 12:40:17 AM MDT



Cody Hawkins had a solid season opener, passing for 214 yards and a touchdown. (Helen H. Richardson, The Denver Post)

With the kind of quick-witted response one might expect from a politician during this election season, Colorado sophomore quarterback Cody Hawkins wanted to make one thing clear following the 38-17 victory over Colorado State.

"I am not a running back," said Hawkins, when

asked about his two touchdowns on 1-yard sneaks.

"Yeah, I really enjoy getting to look unathletic before millions of people."

Both of Hawkins' rushing touchdowns widened CU's lead to two touchdowns — in the second quarter and during the third. But when a quarterback sticks his nose in the pile, the impact is always greater than what the scoreboard may show.

It created a buzz among the other offensive players.

"Cody always works hard and it's obvious he has gotten stronger," CU offensive guard Devin Head said. "Cody will do what needs to be done, no matter what. He always has been willing to throw his body in there."

The no-huddle, up-tempo offense helped Hawkins on those sneaks, offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich said, as CSU's defense didn't have much time to get set.

"Our offense did a good job of getting lined up in that situation," Helfrich said. "It was a good win. There were some mistakes. But guys can learn from them."

Hawkins' TD sneaks also fired up his teammates, senior defensive tackle George Hypolite said.

"Cody has really grabbed the bull by the horn this year," Hypolite said. "It's really great to see him take charge."

No, Hawkins wasn't Pat White (West Virginia) or Todd Reesing (Kansas), two fleet-footed scramblers on CU's upcoming schedule. But Hawkins helped keep the chains moving, carrying the ball eight times and netting 17 yards with a long gain of 8 yards. He was not sacked. Through the air, he was

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20-of-29 for 214 yards, with one touchdown and one interception.

He found wideout Scotty McKnight for a 35-yard touchdown with 14:15 remaining in the second quarter to open the scoring.

Ironically, Colorado State coach Steve Fairchild said a drive that didn't produce a CU touchdown was probably the difference-maker. Fairchild said he thought his team hung in well until the Buffs wore the Rams down with an 18-play, 74-yard march that began late in the third quarter and ended with a 23-yard field goal by Aric Goodman that put the Buffs up 31-17 with 10:06 remaining.

"That drive was really 18 plays? That's unbelievable," Hawkins said. "The offensive line was doing an awesome job."

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CU vs. CSU

Victory good omen for Buffs' season

Article Last Updated: 09/01/2008 12:37:24 AM MDT

Even when Colorado doesn't open a season with its instate rival, more often than not the first game sets the tone for the season.

With its win Sunday, Colorado is 75-39-5 in season openers. In previous years, when the Buffs won the first game they went on to compile a winning season 60 times (81.1 percent), according to the CU sports information department.

As for the five openers that ended in a tie, CU finished those seasons with a winning record four times. Interestingly, that included the 1990 national championship season that the Buffs began with a tie against Tennessee in the inaugural Disney Pigskin Classic in Anaheim, Calif.

"That first game, I think you really put a lot of credence in it," third-year CU coach Dan Hawkins said after Sunday's game. "With our schedule, every game is precious."

Colorado Football

[Watch](#) video of CU coach Dan Hawkins on first day of

- practice
- [Watch](#) video of CU freshman running back
- Darrell Scott
- [Watch](#) video of CU beginning fall practice
- [Visit](#) the CU Stats Page for boxscores, Big 12 standings, team leaders and more

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- CU sports
- [Play](#) Pick'em for the upcoming CU football game

The Scott factor.

Although ballyhooed CU freshman tailback Darrell Scott had only one carry (for 6 yards) in the first half, just his presence made an immediate impact.

Scott was used as a decoy on his first two plays, and took several CSU defenders with him as Cody Hawkins found Scotty McKnight for consecutive completions that earned first downs.

By game's end, Scott drew the most carries (11) for CU and led the team in rushing (54). He scored his first career touchdown, a 1-yarder, with 2:14 remaining.

"I'm proud of the whole team. They were behind me the whole time," Scott said. "They said, 'Darrell, we know you are a freshman, but we expect a lot out of you.'"

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Another CU freshman tailback, Rodney "Speedy" Stewart, netted 38 yards on four carries. He had CU's longest run from scrimmage, 17 yards.

Footnotes.

Jameson Davis made an impressive debut as a kickoff specialist. His first two kickoffs were downed by CSU in the end zone. . . . Sophomore Josh Smith fumbled the first punt return of his career. But he made up for it with the 93-yard kickoff return for a touchdown — CU's first for a score since Jeremy Bloom took one back 88 yards against Kansas State in 2003. . . . Blake Behrens, a redshirt freshman, started at right guard — winning a close battle with true freshman Max Tuioti-Mariner. . . . "The young guys made some mistakes, but that's good in a way, because we can show them and learn from it," CU offensive line coach Jeff Grimes said.

Tom Kensler, The Denver Post

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CU vs. CSU

Dems play rough with stadium turf

Article Last Updated: 09/01/2008 12:01:50 AM MDT

Evidence of the staging of Thursday night's gala Democratic National Convention was easy to spot Sunday night at Invesco Field at Mile High.

The turf took a beating, and the stadium crew labored nearly nonstop from Friday morning through Saturday night to repair the grass or spray paint over the worst areas.

"It's not up to our standards for appearance," said Broncos turf manager Ross Kurcab, who added that the field was safe for both teams.

"It looked worse than it really was," Colorado State running back Dion Morton said.

Colorado athletic director Mike Bohn applauded the grounds crew for getting the field to look as good as it did. "You should have seen it Friday," Bohn said.

The stadium crew had to spray paint a circular area where the stage stood for Barack Obama's speech.

The grass has two weeks to heal until the Broncos' home opener.

Natalie Meisler, The Denver Post

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Longmont, Colorado
Monday, September 01,
2008

TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 9/1/2008

Rocky Mountain rout

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

DENVER — George Hypolite is always good for a laugh.

Colorado's senior defensive tackle can bellow with the best of them, and he isn't shy about voicing opinions. It's unclear whether he sought chuckles when asked to put Sunday night's happenings at Invesco Field into some perspective. But he did.

"We're 1-0," Hypolite said. "So we're obviously still in the national championship picture."

CU is 1-0 today, after beating Colorado State, 38-17, on Sunday night before an announced house of 69,619. This version of the in-state rivalry contained its normal surprises, mainly a 26-second stretch of the second quarter that saw the teams combine for 21 points, including two touchdowns on kick returns. Otherwise, its outcome wasn't too shocking, considering CU was an 11-point favorite, and CSU is breaking in a new coach and quarterback.

If there was a key stretch, it came in the second half, when the Buffs used an 18-play drive to pound away at CSU's hopes and drain the clock. It ended with Aric Goodman's 23-yard field goal with 10 minutes, 6 seconds to play.

CSU's ensuing drive ended when CU's Brad Jones sacked first-time starting quarterback Billy Farris on fourth down with 3:59 left.

"We are making a lot of progress," CU receiver Scotty McKnight said.

"But I think we still have a lot that we need to clean up in order to be a good football team. Once we clean everything up, I think we are going to do some great things." Said head coach Dan Hawkins: "I always have great expectations. I don't know why you would ever have the bar low. We have had a lot of young teams in the past, but there are no excuses."

CU, like Hypolite said, is 1-0 with Saturday's home date against Eastern Washington ahead (1:30 p.m., no TV). The Buffs had their moments Sunday, and also a few problems. At the very least, they appeared capable of learning.

A year after CSU tight end Kory Sperry torched them for eight catches, 103 receiving yards and three touchdowns, CU's defense appeared to learn something. The Buffs entered unsure what CSU would do on offense under new head coach Steve Fairchild. They only knew what they didn't want CSU do to.

"We let them throw underneath routes," safety D.J. Dykes said. "We wanted to sit back and not get beat deep. We were pretty successful throughout the whole game."

Sperry was a non-factor Sunday, catching two passes for 11 yards. CU's pass rush totaled five sacks.



Colorado players celebrate a 38-17 win over Colorado State in the Rocky Mountain Showdown at Invesco Field at Mile High on Sunday. **Joshua Buck/Times-Call**

COLORADO 38, COLORADO STATE 17 At Denver

Colorado State
01430—17

Colorado
021710—38

Second Quarter

CU—McKnight 35 pass from Hawkins (Goodman kick), 14:15.

CU—Hawkins 1 run (Goodman kick), 11:50.

CSU—Morton 21 pass from Farris (DeLine kick), 6:53.

CU—Smith 93 kickoff return (Goodman kick), 6:41.

CSU—Mosure 90 kickoff return (DeLine kick), 6:27.

Third Quarter

CU—Hawkins 1 run (Goodman kick), 11:36.

CSU—FG DeLine 26, 2:17.

Fourth Quarter

CU started cornerbacks Gardner McKay and Cha'pelle Brown, and Jalil Brown was the nickel back. Jimmy Smith didn't play because of his recurring back spasms, he said.

The corners got plenty of help. The Buffs were content to drop back in coverage, and it worked. CSU totaled 258 yards, 187 through the air, and only one offensive touchdown, and that came after Cody Hawkins' screen pass was deflected and intercepted deep in CU territory. The 258 yards were the fewest CU has allowed an opening opponent since 1998.

How much will the Buffs protect their corners like this in 2008?

"It's going to be different week to week depending on what teams give us," Hypolite said.

Fairchild called CU's pressure surprising.

"I didn't think we'd struggle in the protection area like we did," Fairchild said.

CU revealed it might have a star on the rise in receiver Josh Smith, whose 93-yard kickoff return in the second quarter was its biggest play. It was Smith's first career touchdown, and the first kickoff for a score by a Buff since Jeremy Bloom did it at Kansas State in 2003.

Smith nearly scored on another kick starting the third quarter when he took it back 46 yards before reserve safety Ivory Herd tackled him.

Smith's work Sunday left special teams coach Kent Riddle wondering what future opponents will do.

"I think he's a real big threat, and they probably don't want to kick him the ball," Riddle said.

Said Smith: "It was beautiful. I always wanted my first touchdown to be running full speed. Trust me, I was at top speed.

"The second one I hit a cut a little bit earlier than I should have. I should have made the kicker run more to the sideline and then cut on him. I didn't want to be tackled by the kicker, that was my whole thing."

Cody Hawkins went 20-for-29 for 214 yards, a touchdown and an interception. Darrell Scott made his debut, running 11 times for 54 yards. All in all, it was not a bad opener for the Buffs, who beat CSU for the fifth time in six years and got to tote the Centennial Cup home again.

The bad? A breakdown on kickoff coverage led to John Mosure's 90-yard kickoff return and touchdown. CU fumbled five times, lost one, and let the Rams hang around with its turnovers, penalties and busted plays.

National championship? CU has a lot of work to do before being mentioned in that sort of company, and that's probably why Hypolite's factual observation prompted laughter.

"That's what we're shooting for," he said.

Patrick Ridgell can be reached at pridgell@times-call.com

CU—FG Goodman 23, 10:06.

CU—Scott 1 run (Goodman kick), 2:14.

A—69,619.

CSUCU

First downs

1819

Rushes-yards

26-7136-153

Passing

187214

Comp-Att-Int

27-38-220-29-1

Return Yards

139164

Punts-Avg.

4-42.83-31.0

Fumbles-Lost

1-05-1

Penalties-Yards

4-188-58

Time of Possession

32:3727:23

INDIVIDUAL STATISTICS

RUSHING—CSU, Johnson 12-95, Bell 6-20, Mosure 1-2, Morton 1-1, Farris 5-(minus 27). CU, Scott 11-54, Sumler 10-41, Stewart 4-38, Hawkins 8-17, Smith 1-8.

PASSING—CSU, Farris 27-37-2-187.
CU, Hawkins 20-29-1-214.

RECEIVING—CSU, Greer 8-70,
Pauga 5-22, Morton 4-53, Bell 3-13,
Gardner 2-15, Sperry 2-11, Mosure 2-
(minus 1), Johnson 1-4. CU,
McKnight 5-67, Williams 4-28,
Devenny 4-27, Sumler 3-28,
Celestine 1-35, Smith 1-15, Melton 1-
8, Cantrell 1-6.

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Longmont, Colorado
Monday, September 01,
2008

TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 9/1/2008

The Showdown must continue

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

DENVER — They can play in an alley, on a boat, in the middle of a cow pasture — which wasn't far from the case Sunday night — or in my back yard. The bottom line is the football series between Colorado and Colorado State must resume following 2010, the last year the teams are scheduled to play.

It'll be a huge shame if it doesn't.

When the two athletic directors announced Friday the 2009 and 2010 games will return to campus sites, Boulder first, wounds opened on both sides. Lingering anger might cause the two men to miss the Oct. 1 deadline CU's Mike Bohn has targeted to get a new deal set.

Sunday's announced crowd of 69,619 ranked sixth among the nine times this game has been played in Denver. CU's Folsom Field and CSU's Hughes Stadium will be packed when the game goes to those venues the next two years.

In a state where college sports take a very distinct backseat to the pros, this game marks the one time each year the pros won't be the big story. For that reason, alone, both programs need one another, need this series, need to keep playing, need to set aside differences and work it out.

The Buffs have won about 75 percent of the games in this series, and being from a BCS conference, they have more to lose when they drop one to CSU. Still, several Buffs on the field for Sunday's version, a 38-17 CU win, don't want it to stop.

"I feel like that'd be upsetting," CU receiver Josh Smith said about the possible end in 2011, which will probably be Smith's rookie year in the NFL. "This is a very good rivalry. They've got so much intensity and have played well against us in the past."

Said CU senior George Hypolite: "I think it's great for both schools and the state, and I want to see it keep playing because I want to come back and see what it looks like.

"For the guys on the field, it is a great game. We really get after each other, and that's a great test for us. Now we know a lot more about our team, because with the emotion that came out early in this game. You're not going to see that in too many games."

CU had to announce its intentions by this weekend. Why it didn't sooner is unclear. The backlash from Friday's announcements ripple still.

Sunday's game notes contained a page detailing information about why it chose Boulder in 2009.

CU reported the difference between playing six and five home games, the number it'd host without another home date in 2009, would cost the department \$677,000, based on projected ticket revenue.

CU also expects seat donations with a five-game home schedule to drop another \$415,000.

And CU claims its multimedia right holder, Learfield Communications, bases its financial model on six games. The current contract projects a guaranteed right fee of \$2.75 million in 2010. That's based on six games. A five-game home schedule reduces that pay out around \$450,000.

CU reported Sunday it has submitted a proposal to CSU to extend the series with three games in Boulder — 2009, 2012, and 2015 — and seven in Denver. CSU would have the option of playing games in Fort Collins.

This proposal probably won't fly without someone making a concession. CSU wants the contract to state every game in the series is played in Denver.

In 2006, CU was seeking a sixth home game for 2007. Miami-Ohio surfaced as an opponent, and ESPN guaranteed television if CU returned the game. The Buffs hosted Miami last year, and travel there in 2009.

CU was in that boat in 2006 because it couldn't find anybody willing to play in Boulder without a return game. CU SID Dave Plati, who coordinates the football team's scheduling, said he must have called 40 schools seeking an opponent.

Scheduling Miami put off the decision CU had to make for a couple of years.

Now, there's a lot of waiting and wondering. To waste what's happening in this football series would be a ridiculous. That's obvious to anyone who spent time this week listening to sports talk radio, reading a message board, attending a luncheon, talking to football players, or walking around Invesco Field on Sunday afternoon, seeing the massive passion college football can bring in a town where the pros dominate.

There's much to digest in order to truly grasp the financial ramifications here.

This series is about a lot more than money, though.

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Longmont, Colorado
Monday, September 01,
2008

TIMES-CALL

Publish Date: 9/1/2008

Freshman backs debut for Buffs

*By Patrick Ridgell
Longmont Times-Call*

DENVER — Darrell Scott made his much-anticipated debut Sunday night in Colorado's 38-17 defeat of Colorado State. How was it?

"It was big," Scott said. "Seventy-thousand people, and I cannot even tell you how I felt coming out of the tunnel. Everyone was expecting a lot out of me, and I hope there are not a whole of disappointed people out there. I was nervous, but I knew I had to get the job done." Scott, the nation's top running back recruit last year, ran 11 times for 54 yards, leading CU in both categories. He made his first carry on the first play of the second quarter, a 6-yard run. More importantly, he carried five times on CU's 18-play drive in the second half that led to a field goal, sealing the game.

"Darrell did a good job coming off the bench," CU running backs coach Darian Hagan said. "He did a good job with blitz protection and ran hard."

If Hagan means that, it'll bode well for Scott's immediate future. Other talented running backs at CU saw their carries cut short when they did not block well. Hugh Charles was one example.

Scott also scored a touchdown on a 1-yard run with 2 minutes, 14 seconds to go.

"They wanted me to get into a rhythm," Scott said. "And once I found that rhythm, I started to hit the holes faster. I just needed some time to get used to the college speed." CU also played freshman running back Rodney Stewart. He ran four times for 38 yards, but fumbled and did not run the ball after halftime.

Hagan said Stewart's inactivity wasn't solely due to the fumble, but it was a big reason.

"I didn't want him to do it again and lose his confidence," Hagan said.

Scott's 54 yards ranked as the 16th most in program history for a back playing his first game. He and Stewart combined to average 6.1 yards a carry.

INJURY REPORT: CU reported one injury — linebacker B.J. Beatty suffered a lower leg bruise and is day to day. Beatty is also dealing with a hairline fracture in one leg.

Sophomore cornerback Jimmy Smith said he did not play Sunday because of recurring back problems. Smith said his back is 60 percent and he probably won't play Saturday against Eastern Washington. Smith is aiming to return Sept. 18 when CU hosts West Virginia.

Tight end Riar Geer (knee scope) is making progress and is on schedule to return Sept. 18.

MORE DEBUTS: Redshirt freshman guard Blake Behrens made his first appearance. He started at guard with Devin Head. Overall, 18 Buffs made their Division I debuts.

Kicker Aric Goodman, a Wyoming transfer, made his CU debut. He hit his only field goal try, a 23-yarder.



CU's Darrell Scott scores a touchdown in the fourth quarter Sunday. **Lewis Geyer/Times-Call**

Seven true freshmen played for the Buffs.

EXTRA POINTS: CU went 5-for-11 on third down. ... CU leads the series 59-19-2. ... CU's scoring streak reached 236 straight games. ... CU's 21-point win was the series' largest since a 41-14 CU win in 2001.

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Bufs rout Rams 38-17 at Invesco

CU pulls away in second half for easy win

By B.G. Brooks

Sunday, August 31, 2008

Rather than a night of perfection, it was a night of promise for the Colorado Buffaloes. For the Colorado State Rams, even in a 21-point loss, new coach Steve Fairchild came away believing it was a foundational experience.

After Sunday night, the Rocky Mountain Showdown might be in danger of exiting Denver for the final time. But if it was the finale, the Buffs made it memorable (if occasionally ragged), slapping the Rams 38-17 before 69,619 at Invesco Field at Mile High.

CU won for the third time in the past four games and the fifth time in the nine games played in Denver. With the schools' athletic administrators haggling over the series' future and hoping to meet an Oct. 1 deadline to either renew it or bury it, the next two games will be played on campus: in Boulder in 2009 and in Fort Collins in 2010.

But Sunday night, the future was far away for the Buffs, who shifted their no-huddle, spread offense into high gear in the second half, outscored the Rams 17-3 and won their second consecutive opener under third-year coach Dan Hawkins.

"We put a lot of credence on (winning the opener)," Hawkins said, citing someone's theory that, "If you win your first game, you win over 70 percent (of the rest), typically."

CU piled up 367 yards in total offense (153 rushing, 214 passing) to CSU's 258 (71 rushing, 187 passing). Buffs quarterback Cody Hawkins completed 20-of-29 passes to eight receivers for 214 yards and a touchdown, and he ran eight times for 17 yards and two 1-yard touchdowns.

But he made it clear the Buffs have better legs than his: "I'm not a running back. ... Yeah, I really enjoy it — I get to look unathletic in front of millions of people."

CU's primary leg men Sunday night were receiver/return specialist Josh Smith, who fulfilled a prophecy by Dan Hawkins by returning a kickoff 93 yards for a touchdown (160 yards on three kickoff returns), and his nephew, freshman tailback Darrell Scott, who carried 11 times for a team-best 54 yards and scored his first collegiate touchdown.

"For a freshman, it felt great," Scott said. "I said a little prayer before the game and got the jitterbugs out. ... I was sweating bullets — do good, don't fumble, watch out for coach Hawkins."

As inspiring as Smith's kickoff return was for the Buffs — it helped send them up 21-7 — the Rams had an answer.

His name was John Mosure, and his 90-yard touchdown return capped a 26-second sequence in the first half in which

there were three scores, including both the Rams' early touchdowns.

CSU tailback Kyle Bell, who rushed for 135 yards last season against CU, was held to 20 yards on six carries.

But teammate Gartrell John-son (12 carries, 95 yards) provided the Rams with their most consistent offensive punch, as first-time starting quarterback Billy Farris (27-for-37 passing, 187 yards, one touchdown, two interceptions) tried to settle into his role.

"There's a couple of things that he'd like to have back, but he's a good, smart, tough kid," Fairchild said. "He's good enough to win games."

The Buffs, who led 21-14 at halftime, consistently pressured Farris and sacked him five times. Hawkins wasn't sacked and was hurried only twice.

Probably after watching the Buffs record some of their 20 quarterback sacks last season, Fairchild was surprised by CU's newly found pass pressure.

"I didn't think we'd struggle in the protection area like we did," he said. "Those guys are pretty good rushers with speed, and we knew that. But I thought we'd hold up a little bit better. Five sacks ... you're not going to win many football games like that."

Even though it yielded only a 23-yard field goal by first-time kicker Aric Goodman, Fairchild said CU's 18-play, 74-yard drive in the third quarter that consumed 7:11 "kind of sealed it" for the Buffs, who took a 31-17 lead.

"We were hanging on a little bit, but we got outplayed," Fairchild said, noting that his debut wasn't disastrous. "We needed to get one under our belts. If we'd appeared soft, or were pouting on the sidelines — I didn't see any of that. I liked our effort and our toughness."

The Buffs, meanwhile, simply liked the win.

"We're 1-0," senior defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "We're still in the national-championship picture."

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CU's Walters stays a step ahead of CSU offense

Bufs safety holds off Sperry, shines with his defensive plays

By Paul Willis

Sunday, August 31, 2008

In last season's version of the Rocky Mountain Showdown, Colorado State tight end Kory Sperry caught three touchdown passes. On Sunday, Sperry didn't even have three receptions.

The University of Colorado defense, led by free safety Ryan Walters, rendered the NFL prospect a non-factor. Sperry caught two passes for 11 yards - an 8-yarder in the first half and a 3-yard grab in the second - and never factored into the CSU attack.

Walters, who seemed to repeatedly diagnose nearly everything CSU was doing, knew exactly why. "Every time we were singled up on him, we had safety help over the top," Walters said. "And sometimes we just straight out doubled him. We always tried to have someone on top of him to keep the ball out of his hands."

Walters, meanwhile, turned in a monster performance. He made an interception of a Billy Farris pass late in the first half to ensure CU entered the locker room with a 21-14 advantage.

He was credited with two pass breakups and registered 11 tackles (seven solo). Many of those were bone-jarring, including a smash of CSU receiver Rashaun Greer after a 4-yard gain late in the third quarter. "That's kind of my trademark, to catch people when they aren't looking," he said.

Walters said Buffaloes coach Dan Hawkins had lofty praise for him, labeling Walters "smart," a "playmaker" and a "leader."

Despite all the praise, Walters wouldn't label Sunday the standout performance of his career.

"I'd say my Alabama game was better, the bowl game," Walters said, referring to the Independence Bowl last season. "I mean, I missed a tackle here in this one."

One of Walters' chief contributions was something intangible. While the Buffaloes had no blueprint in which to game plan the Rams because coach Steve Fairchild was in his inaugural game at CSU, Walters often appeared to sniff out Rams plays as if he knew what was coming.

An example occurred in the first half, when Walters was lined up on the right side of a Rams formation, reacted quickly to a screen play and made the tackle on the opposite side of the field for a minimal gain.

"We had some idea from watching Buffalo Bills film," said Walters, referring to the NFL team for which Fairchild was the offensive coordinator the past two seasons. "We didn't know exactly what to expect, but we just said, 'Hey, lets shut down 5, 34 and 80.' "

That would be the numbers of Gartrell Johnson, Kyle Bell and Sperry. Of the three, only Johnson (12 carries, 95 yards) had a standout performance, but the Rams largely abandoned him in the second half, when he recorded only three carries.

"As a whole, we came out and attacked," CU defensive tackle George Hypolite said. "It was impressive to see."

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KRIEGER: Hawkins' family tree blossoming for Buffs

By Dave Krieger

Monday, September 1, 2008

Even when the Colorado Buffaloes weren't very good, Dan Hawkins' postgame rants were must-see TV.

When his son, Cody, started playing as a redshirt freshman last year, the Buffs still weren't exactly a juggernaut, but the postgames got even better. If calculation and regimentation are what you expect from football families, this one will throw you a bit.

Which brings us to Sunday night, when the elder Hawkins, carrying a record of 8-17 into his third season with the Buffs, delivered CU's most convincing victory over in-state rival Colorado State since 2001. You might have expected a note of vindication, an "I told you so" or two.

Instead, we got the younger Hawkins making fun of himself, as he often does. Somebody asked if he was now a running back, having rushed for two of CU's five touchdowns.

"Not a running back," Cody Hawkins said. "I think everyone who was watching can tell that."

His inquisitor persisted: But did you enjoy it?

"I really enjoyed it," he said. "I get to look unathletic in front of millions of people."

This might have slightly exaggerated the TV ratings for a rivalry without much appeal outside Colorado's borders, but it was classic Cody Hawkins. The kid's level-headedness at 20 tells you something not only about CU's first football family but also about the Buffs' chances of beginning to fulfill the promise his father brought from a superior program at Boise State.

Anyway, the kid, who is often criticized as a small quarterback for being unable to make plays with his feet, ended up blaming his genes. I asked if that was his father's fault.

He went through his whole family, complementing the athleticism of every member. "It's my fault, it's my fault," he finally confessed, as if breaking down.

"I can tell you one thing," the elder Hawkins said without prompting when he followed his son to the podium. "His old man would not have got stopped that short of the goal line" - he held his hands about eight inches apart - "bad genes and all."

On the first possession of the second half, the younger Hawkins had supervised an eight-play, 45-yard touchdown drive that put CU up 14. When he tried to run it in from the 8-yard line, he was stopped just short of the goal line. He carried it in on the next play.

Beyond the healthy tone set by the head coach and his son, the 5-foot-11 quarterback — 5-11 *and a half*, Cody insists - the Buffs are beginning to show off the sort of talent the elder Hawkins' recruiting record suggested when he first arrived.

Sophomore wideout Josh Smith, returning kickoffs for the first time, delivered a 93-yard touchdown return, watched CSU respond with a 90-yard touchdown return on the next play, then almost took another to the house to start the third quarter.

"I wanted to be electrified on that kick," Smith said on the field afterward. "Once I hit the seam, I wanted to go outside but it sort of seemed like the kicker had a head start on me and I never want to get tackled by the kicker so I went ahead and took an early cut, a lot earlier than I should have. I should have baited him a little bit more to the sideline, but you know, it's my first year playing kickoff return ever in my life and I'm getting a really good handle on how to make a good game of the kickoff return."

Then there was his nephew, the highly-touted tailback recruit Darrell Scott, who carried only once in the first half, but ended up with 11 carries for 54 yards and a touchdown.

"I can't even describe it," he said. "When I first came out here, it was half full for our warm-ups. And then the second time we came out here it was full, they were shouting, 'Darrell, let's go,' this, that and the other. Me and my uncle had a little prayer before the game and just came out here and tried to represent."

For CSU, the opener was not nearly as encouraging. Even when his program was slipping the last several years, Sonny Lubick always managed to keep this one close. For a guy with an NFL offensive coordinator's pedigree, new CSU head coach Steve Fairchild ran a remarkably prosaic offense.

For CU, the question is whether Hawkins' rebuilding program is still too young for great expectations.

"I always have great expectations," he said. "I don't know why you would ever have the bar low. We've had some unbelievable young teams in the past," he added, referring to his career prior to CU.

"I think we can get exponentially better each week . . . If you win your first game, typically you're going to win 70 percent of your games."

Seventy percent of 12 is 8.4, which is at least one more win that most observers expect from CU, and at least two if you round up.

Whether the Buffs are ready for that remains to be seen. But we already know they're likely to keep their heads about them along the way. Somebody asked the younger Hawkins about his lone interception on the evening. He looked shocked.

"I don't know if you guys saw my sweet tackle right after that," he said.

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CU-CSU report: First look at Scott

By B.G. Brooks

Monday, September 1, 2008

Freshman Darrell Scott, above, the headliner of CU's 2008 recruiting class, entered the game in the final minute of the first quarter but didn't touch the ball. Instead, the Buffaloes called two pass plays on which quarterback Cody Hawkins hit receiver Scotty McKnight for back-to-back first downs.

But Scott, a Parade All-America selection from Ventura, Calif., got his first college carry on the first play of the second quarter, gaining six yards. Scott, who ran 11 times for 54 yards and a touchdown, was one of seven true freshmen and one

junior-college transfer to see duty for CU.

The others: tailback Rodney Stewart, defensive tackle Curtis Cunningham, tight end Ryan Deehan, guard Max Tuoti-Mariner, kicker Jameson Davis, safety Patrick Mahnke and linebacker Shaun Mohler, a transfer from Orange Coast (Calif.) College.

DeLINE ON THE LINE

CSU freshman Ben DeLine, pressed into duty when returning place-kicker Jason Smith suffered a broken arm in the final week of camp, hit the first two point-after attempts of his college career and a 26-yard field goal. DeLine, a Steamboat Springs native, is the son of former Rams kicker Steve DeLine.

ON GUARD

The "mystery" surrounding CU's two starters at guard was finally answered — but not until the Buffs' first offensive series. Junior Devin Head — he's the only experienced player among four contenders at both spots — opened at left guard, while redshirt freshman Blake Behrens opened on the right side.

Offensive line coach Jeff Grimes refrained from announcing his starters, even to the players involved, until Saturday.

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September 1, 2008

Rams fall to Buffs, show fight in Fairchild's debut

BY KELLY LYELL

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DENVER - CSU's football team fell down early against the University of Colorado on Sunday night, giving up two touchdowns early in the second quarter.

But the Rams, in coach Steve Fairchild's first game, wouldn't go completely away despite losing 38-17.

Time after time, they got the plays they needed to keep themselves within striking distance before 69,619 fans, nearly equally divided in their loyalties to the schools located 45 miles apart.

CSU, however, couldn't keep up in the end. CU, up 28-17 at the time, chewed up 7 minutes, 11 seconds of the game clock from late in the third quarter well into the fourth, taking a 31-17 lead on Aric Goodman's 23-yard field goal with 10:06 remaining in the game.

"We wore down a little bit on that long drive in the third quarter," Fairchild said. "We just couldn't find a way to get off the field."

No play in the drive went for more than 9 yards, but the Buffs picked up six first downs and put the game out of reach with the three points at the end.

"When you can hold onto the ball for that long and put points on the board, it definitely is going to hurt the opposing team because they don't have much time to answer," CU quarterback Cody Hawkins said.

Hawkins, a sophomore and the son of CU coach Dan Hawkins, ran for touchdowns on a pair of 1-yard quarterback sneaks and threw for another, hitting receiver Scotty McKnight for a 35-yard score and 7-0 lead 45 seconds into the second quarter.

Hawkins completed 20 of 29 passes for 214 yards and was intercepted once in a game that had 21 points scored during one 26-second span of the second quarter.

CSU started the mad dash, using an interception by linebacker Jeff Horinek of a pass deflected by defensive tackle Sevaro Johnson to set up a 21-yard TD pass from quarterback Billy Farris to receiver Dion Morton. That cut the CU lead to 14-7.

But CSU freshman Ben DeLine squibbed the ensuing kickoff along the ground, giving Buffs returner Josh Smith time to see his running lane forming as he scooped the ball up at the 7-yard line and raced, untouched, 90 yards for a touchdown.

Game, set, match?

Not so fast.

The Rams' John Mosure answered immediately, taking the kickoff from Jameson Davis at the 10-yard line and sprinting up the middle to the 50, then breaking to the right sideline and outrunning two Buffs to the end zone.

Twenty-six seconds. Twenty-one points.

"Our team just needed an answer, and God chose me to do it, and I accepted the challenge through my teammates," Mosure said of his first kick return for a touchdown since the seventh grade. "I got good blocking, and I got through the seam, and I was like I haven't done this in a while. I was going by the kicker, and I just picked a side and ran, and luckily I made it. I was exhausted. It was the longest I've run since high school."

CSU, down 21-14 at halftime, couldn't keep counter-punching.

Smith took the opening kickoff of the second half 46 yards, with only an ankle tackle by Ivory Herd keeping him from two touchdown returns in the same game. Eight plays later, the Buffs were in the end zone again, with Cody Hawkins surging in from the 1 to put his team on top 28-14 less than 3½ minutes into the second half.

The Rams pinned the Buffs deep in their own territory on their next possession and forced a punt that gave them the ball near midfield. A pass interference call in the end zone against CU's Jalil Brown put the Rams at the CU 17-yard line.

But three short passes later, CSU was facing fourth-and-1 at the 8 and settled for a 26-yard field goal by DeLine.

That's when Cody Hawkins went to work, marching his team 74 yards in 18 plays and 7:11 and taking a 31-17 lead on Goodman's 23-yard field goal. CU added another score on a 1-yard run by true freshman Darrell Scott, Smith's nephew, with 2:14 remaining.

Farris, a fifth-year senior making his first start, completed 27 of 37 passes for 187 yards. But he was intercepted twice, the second time on a desperation drive in the final minute, and sacked five times. And Gartrell Johnson ran for 95 yards on 12 carries.

It wasn't the kind of debut the Rams were hoping for. But it wasn't nearly as bad as it could have been for a team coming off a 3-9 season.

"I'm very disappointed we didn't win this game," Fairchild said. "... We did some good things, we fought hard. I like our kids. We have a chance to be a good football team if we play like we did (Sunday night)."



September 1, 2008

Big returns for CU's Smith

BY HAP FRY

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DENVER - Ever since prize freshman running back Darrell Scott arrived in Boulder, University of Colorado sophomore wide receiver Josh Smith has taken a backseat to his nephew.

Smith turned the tables Sunday at Invesco Field at Mile High, however, with his electrifying play on special teams that ultimately propelled the Buffaloes to a 38-17 win over in-state rival CSU.

The 6-foot, 180-pounder returned a kick 93 yards for a touchdown in the second quarter, then returned a third-quarter kick 46 yards before catching a 15-yard pass six plays later to set up another score that gave CU a 28-14 lead.

"I had to score first because my nephew's coming out," Smith said. "I've got to contain the guy, so I wanted to

lead it off right, and let him know that we can do it."

Smith's kickoff return did a lot more than set a good example for his nephew.

"It fired up the whole team," Scott said.

Smith and Scott prayed together before Sunday's game and then displayed why they could be two of the more exciting players in the Big 12 Conference this year.

"We know that it's God's will that we have the talent," Smith said. "We know that if we continue to keep him first, big things are going to happen for us."

Scott did not record his first carry until the first play of the second quarter. By the end of the game, Scott had carried the ball 11 times for a team-leading 54 yards and one TD.

"I was sweating bullets and didn't want to fumble for (Colorado) coach (Dan) Hawkins," Scott said. "For a freshman, I think I did great."

Smith, meanwhile, appears to be a natural kick-returner. Sunday marked the first time he returned a kick in his young collegiate career.

His 93-yard return marked the first TD the Buffs had scored on a kick return since Oct. 18, 2003 when Fort Collins native Jeremy Bloom returned on against Kansas State.

Smith would have had a second return for a score had CSU's Ivory Herd not made a shoestring tackle on Smith's 46-yard runback in the third quarter.

"I was just telling myself, they better not kick it to me again, they better not kick it to me again," especially after that second one that I almost took to the house," Smith said. "I made that one cut too

early, and they just, just got me."

Smith ended the night with 189 all-purpose yards (160 on kick returns, 15 receiving, eight rushing and six on punt returns) and feels as comfortable as ever with his role on the team.

"I love my role on the team," Smith said. "They've got me everywhere right now. I'm back there for those punts. They continue to get me comfortable in more and more positions. I'm starting now (at receiver), and that's big. A lot of things are opening up."



September 1, 2008

Defense key for CU in convincing win

BY HAP FRY

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DENVER - Brad Jones couldn't resist.

Once the 6-foot-3, 230-pound linebacker got his hands on the Centennial Cup immediately after Colorado's 38-17 win Sunday night over CSU at Invesco Field at Mile High, Jones had no choice but to plant his lips right on the trophy.

"It's like a little baby," Jones said of the cup. "For some reason, it just feels really good to have this trophy in our hands. I know it's two years in a row (we've won), but it feels like there's more significance with winning this year. We are going to be good this year."

Should Jones' prophecy come to fruition this season, the Buffaloes defense will play no small role in their success.

The unit was gritty and relentless Sunday against the Rams, sacking CSU quarterback Billy Farris five times and allowing 258 yards of offense.

"We're a much better defense than we were last year," said CU sophomore defensive end Marquez Herrod, who registered 1½ sacks Sunday. "We play hard, and we conditioned for this. We're playing ball like we need to play ball. I think we just showed everyone that we've on the way up."

A strong performance was particularly important to Jones after CSU tight end Kory Sperry caught eight passes for 103 yards and three touchdowns in last year's game.

Sunday, Sperry managed just two catches for 11 yards.

"I didn't take it personal because it's just a game," Jones said. "But I know I can cover, and that's what I did. I didn't get overexcited. I just went out and played football."

CU was most dominant defensively midway through the fourth quarter when Taj Kaynor, Jason Brace, Herrod and Jones combined to sack Farris three times on one offensive possession.

"That's been our emphasis throughout all of camp, just getting a lot of pressure," Herrod said. "I think (Sunday) just reemphasized that because we were able to get a lot of pressure."

That CU was able to storm into CSU's offensive backfield with such regularity surprised Farris and Rams coach Steve Fairchild.

"I didn't think we'd struggle in the protection area like we did," Fairchild said. "Those guys are pretty good rushers with speed, and we knew that. But I thought we'd hold up a little better. Five sacks, I think. You're not going to win very many football games like that."