



Bufs want to draw the line

CU faces tough task vs. formidable Arizona State O-line

By Kyle Ringo

Thursday, September 6, 2007

Since Colorado football practices began one month ago today, a defensive lineman has been the last man off the field each day — without fail.

The group has adopted defensive line coach Romeo Bandison's attitude as their new religion. The D-linemen consider themselves the backbone of the program — with apologies to the offensive line — and their saying goes something like this: "As we go, so goes the team."

Bandison's habit of keeping a few players after practice for crab crawls or field rolls is part of the reason a defensive lineman is consistently the last off the practice fields each night. The group also often does extra running together.

They're hoping all the hard work will continue paying dividends as they believe it did in the season opener against Colorado State. When the game went to overtime, CU players have said they believed they had superior conditioning.

The defensive line might not face a greater test this season than what looms Saturday in Tempe, Ariz. The Bufs will clash with a big, smart, veteran group of Arizona State offensive linemen in Sun Devil Stadium.

"They are really good," coach Dan Hawkins said. "They're big. They're physical. They don't make a lot of mistakes."

Offensive coordinator Mark Helfrich, who served for five years as the passing game coordinator at ASU before coming to Boulder prior to last season, knows them well.

"They're very smart as a group," he said. "They don't beat themselves."

CU defensive tackle George Hypolite knows them all by name and jersey number. He remembers them all from last season when the Sun Devils came to Boulder and beat the Bufs 21-3.

All five ASU starters are back this year. Four of the five are seniors who graduated last spring. The other starter is junior Paul Fanaiko, a mere 6-foot-6, 359 pounds. Center Mike Pollack, a possible All-American candidate, is the smallest in the group at 6-4, 292 pounds.

"They do their job very, very well and that's impressive on film," Hypolite said.

Only so much can be taken from last season's game. Players on both sides have a sense of what their

opponents are capable, but ASU is under new management this year with a different set of coaches.

Hypolite said he hasn't seen much evidence of the Sun Devils experiencing a learning curve in coach Dennis Erickson's system, but he has only one game film to study. The Sun Devils beat San Jose State handily last week and Hypolite said they did it with a pretty vanilla game plan.

Hypolite and his friends on the CU defensive line go into every game believing they need to play their best to win. But this week they know even the slightest mistakes — which they might be able to get away with during other weeks of the season — can turn into touchdowns against this offensive line.

"When we play well, the rest of the defense usually plays well," Hypolite said. "And especially in this game — with an offense like theirs when they can score a lot of points fast — we have to have a solid game. We have to make sure we do our job and get to the quarterback so our DBs aren't back there playing defense for six seconds."

Six seconds would be a nightmare for the Buffs, who had trouble all of last year and again in the season opener getting stops on third downs. It figures to be even more difficult this week against a veteran offensive line protecting an experienced and talented quarterback such as Rudy Carpenter.

The Buffs allowed CSU to convert on 11 of 19 third downs last week and they allowed a 48 percent conversion rate all of last year.

"Well, if we just do what coach tells us to do, stay in our gaps and fire off the ball, then there is nothing to worry about," CU defensive end Alonzo Barrett said. "Because if you do your technique right, then no matter who you're playing, you're still going to be able to do your job."



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Big 12 rankings

By Ryan Thorburn

Thursday, September 6, 2007

Team (record) — comment.

Note — All upcoming games are Saturday.

1. Oklahoma (1-0) — Sooners appear to have found a worthy replacement for Adrian Peterson in freshman Demarco Murray. **Up next:** vs. Miami (Fla.).

2. Texas (1-0) — Good thing the 'Horns, who struggled to put Arkansas State away, didn't schedule Appalachian State for the opener. **Up next:** vs. TCU.

3. Texas A&M (1-0) — Thanks to CU, Dennis Franchione didn't let Montana State sneak up on the talented Aggies. **Up next:** vs. Fresno State.

4. Nebraska (1-0) — Notice the Huskers announced Bill Callahan's contract extension after the Nevada game instead of waiting until USC's visit to Lincoln. **Up next:** at Wake Forest.

5. Texas Tech (1-0) — Graham Harrell isn't just a product of the Red Raiders' system. This kid could play and win almost anywhere. **Up next:** vs. UTEP.

6. Missouri (1-0) — Good start for Chase Daniel, but Tigers still need to prove they are the team to beat in the North Division. **Up next:** at Mississippi.

7. Kansas State (0-1) — Wildcats held their own at Auburn and now have three weeks to fine-tune things before the rematch with Texas. **Up next:** vs. San Jose State.

8. Colorado (1-0) — Good start for Daddy Hawk and Li'l Hawk, but the Sun Devils won't get conservative in the fourth quarter like the Sheep did. **Up next:** at Arizona State.

9. Oklahoma State (0-1) — The talented Cowboys had Georgia on their minds all summer and were still ambushed "between the hedges." **Up next:** vs. Florida Atlantic.

10. Kansas (1-0) — The Fighting Manginos are off to a fast start thanks to their cupcake non-conference schedule. **Up next:** vs. Southeastern Louisiana.

11. Baylor (0-1) — Bad news Bears are rebuilding after an awesome 4-8 season that was highlighted by a 34-31 overtime win at Folsom Field. **Up next:** vs. Rice.

12. Iowa State (0-1) — The Gene Chizik era is off to a rough start after the Cyclones loss to Kent State at home. **Up next:** Northern Iowa.



Bufs start building momentum

By Ryan Thorburn

Thursday, September 6, 2007

It appears the Bufs have been able to let the emotional overtime victory over Colorado State go.

Colorado head coach Dan Hawkins has been very pleased with the way his team has practiced this week in preparation for Saturday's game at Arizona State.

Beating the Rams in comeback fashion has given the Bufs a lot of confidence, especially on offense, that they lacked during last year's 2-10 season.

"It's kind of that winning begets winning, a little bit," Hawkins said after Wednesday's spirited session. "You get a little wind underneath your sails."

The coaching staff has not had to scream at the players very much since practices began a month ago. There are some strong leaders on the roster — like Jordon Dizon and Terrence Wheatley — and a mature crop of freshmen and redshirt freshmen eager to contribute.

"You see guys finishing and guys saying things to other people," Hawkins said. "That's when you know you're getting close to at least the right chemistry."

Possible depth charge

Hawkins has not ruled out Michael Sipili for Saturday's game. The talented middle linebacker, who is suspended indefinitely for his role in a street brawl, will make a court appearance today.

"Still a chance," Hawkins said.

Wide receiver Josh Smith is not practicing this week but there is still a chance the promising true freshman will be able to play against Florida State on Sept. 15. An MRI on his injured kidney, which required a hospital stay last month, did not show any further damage.

"(The MRI) showed up really good. We're kind of right on track," Hawkins said. "Hopefully we'll get him back and get him going and get something out of him next week. But everything looks good."

Quotable

"When I played, I ran like a blind dog in a meat house," Hawkins, describing his days as a fullback at Cal-Davis.

Notable

The Sun Devils have been practicing from about 7 p.m. to 9 p.m., Tempe time, due to the heat in the Phoenix area. Kickoff is scheduled for 8:28 p.m. "I don't know if it's going to be a big deal for us," said Hawkins, whose team practiced in 70-degree temperatures on Wednesday night. ... Many of the Buffs have been carrying gallon jugs filled with Gatorade around campus in an effort to hydrate before the road trip. ... Running back Hugh Charles (hamstring) did not practice on Wednesday and is not expected to play against ASU. ... CU freshman Michael Knorps, who was the victim of a stabbing on the first day of the fall semester, was allowed behind the gates of the football practice fields to watch some of the action on Wednesday. He was also on the sideline and in the locker room at Invesco Field for the win over CSU.



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Local college football, September 6

By B.G. Brooks, Randy Holtz, Jim Benton, Rocky Mountain News and Paul Willis, Special to the Rocky and Rocky Wire Services
September 6, 2007

CU

He has been there

Freshman receiver **Josh Smith** had an unexpected visitor on his recent four-night hospital stay. Early on his last morning in Boulder Community Hospital, Smith awoke to find former CU coach **Eddie Crowder** standing at his bedside.

Crowder introduced himself and told Smith he could empathize with his condition - a bruised kidney that's expected to keep Smith out of the lineup for at least one more game.

"I just wanted to let him know it's all going to be all right and he has people in the community pulling for him," said Crowder, who suffered the same injury during his sophomore season at Oklahoma and missed two games.

Smith called Crowder "a legend around here," and he said the visit "meant a lot to me. I was down a little bit and he let me know things aren't as bad as they seem."

Smith said a magnetic resonance imaging exam taken Tuesday showed a little swelling and some inflammation, but he still hopes to play against Florida State on Sept. 15.

Charles takes it slow

Senior tailback **Hugh Charles** wants to play Saturday at Arizona State (8:15 p.m. MDT, FSN Rocky Mountain), but he's not rushing his return. He dealt with a strained hamstring as a high school senior and tried to come back before it was completely healed.

"I couldn't run for three months," he said, adding he is targeting the Florida State game for his return.

Broomfield connection

Kicker **Kevin Eberhart** isn't the only CU football player from Broomfield High School who patiently has waited his turn.

Punt returner **Chase McBride**, who, like Eberhart, graduated from Broomfield in 2003 and is a fifth-year senior, has spent most of his Buffaloes career watching from the sideline.

With the exception of six punt returns (6.8 return average) at the end of last season, McBride had two touches in game action since transferring from Wyoming after redshirting a his freshman year in Laramie.

Saturday, though, McBride's 43-yard punt return in the fourth quarter set up the tying field goal in CU's 31-28 win against Colorado State. Eberhart kicked the winning field goal in overtime.

"We both deserved it because we've worked hard," said McBride, who is fully recovered from offseason shoulder surgery. "It was just a matter of us getting our chances. I knew he was going to come through at the end and I'm glad we could do it



Brian Bahr © Getty Images © 2006

Air Force running back Kip McCarthy, who gained 129 yards in the Falcons' opener against South Carolina State, returned to practice Wednesday after missing the previous two days.

together."

CSU

Practice delayed

Colorado State players were forced off their practice field by lightning but returned after a 20-minute delay and completed the workout.

Among those practicing were starting middle linebacker **Jeff Horinek** and receiver **Damon Morton**.

Horinek tweaked a knee in CSU's loss against Colorado and Morton played despite a bruised shoulder.

Both should be close to 100 percent for Saturday's home opener against California (noon, CSTV).

The Rams will hold another full practice this afternoon, then a short one Friday.

Tickets remain for the game. Information: 1-800-491-7267.

Speed to burn

Coach **Sonny Lubick** said 10th-ranked California will be the fastest team the Rams see this season.

In addition to dangerous receiver/returner **DeSean Jackson**, who is getting attention from Heisman Trophy voters, the Golden Bears also feature receiver **Lavelle Hawkins** and running back **Justin Forsett**.

Hawkins caught seven passes for 90 yards and a touchdown in California's season-opening 45-31 win against Tennessee.

Forsett was nominated for Pacific-10 Conference offensive player of the week after running for 156 yards on 26 carries, including a touchdown, in the win.

The overall team speed, which also is apparent on the defensive side, has Cal fans comparing this year's Bears with the 2004 team that featured speedy running backs **J.J. Arrington** and **Marshawn Lynch** and receiver **Geoff McArthur**.

"I think our '04 team was pretty explosive, and we're pretty similar to that team," Cal coach **Jeff Tedford** said this week. "Our team speed is better than that one."

Award for Sperry

CSU tight end **Kory Sperry** was distraught over his team's loss against Colorado, his last shot at the Rams' in-state rival. But he received a nice consolation prize.

Sperry, a senior from Pueblo, was named the John Mackey tight end of the week for his three-touchdown performance against the Buffaloes.

The award is given to the major college tight end with the best weekly performance by the Nassau County (N.Y.) Sports Commission.

The Nassau group also administers the annual John Mackey Award, which goes to the nation's best tight end for the season and will be announced in December.

Sperry is on the watch list for the annual award, which was won by Minnesota's Matt Spaeth last season.

Sperry, a Pueblo County High School graduate who's considered an NFL prospect, caught touchdown passes of 6, 4 and 37 yards in CSU's 31-28 overtime loss against CU at Invesco Field at Mile High.

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big 12 football

Inferno awaits Buffs in triple-figure Tempe

By Tom Kensler
Denver Post Staff Writer

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Boulder -When describing the heat that radiates off Arizona's desert, Phoenix native Jalil Brown could use the old Johnny Carson line on his Colorado teammates.

"They talk about it being a dry heat," Carson liked to say about the Southwest. "Well, my oven is dry and it will burn the heck out of you."

Brown, a redshirt freshman who backs up starting free safety Ryan Walters, has become a popular answer man this week. Hot is hot, Brown said. And it's going to feel uncomfortable at times during Saturday night's game between Colorado (1-0) and host Arizona State (1-0). [Weather.com](#)'s Saturday forecast for Tempe, Ariz., predicted a high of 105 degrees. It will be a bit cooler at kickoff.

"The guys asked me, 'When you play in that kind of heat, do you fall out or anything?'" Brown said Wednesday, shaking his head. "I tell them, 'I'm not going to lie, it's going to be hot. But you have to combat that.'"

"I just tell them to stay hydrated and pretty much stay off their feet as much as they can."

Colorado Football

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Brown said the thermometer reached 115 degrees during one of his afternoon high school games.

"Playing at night will help a lot," Brown said. "The heat won't be, like, direct through your skin. It's more like thick heat."

Although the playing field at Sun Devil Stadium is natural grass, the surface continues to radiate heat into the night, Brown said.

"Once the sun goes down, that's when you can really feel it come off the field," he said.

To make certain that players are properly hydrated beforehand, CU linemen and players at other positions with a history of heat-related problems already have been given a gallon plastic jug filled with a sport drink. They were instructed to finish the jug within a day's time. The jug is refilled for the following day.

"I get a lot of funny looks carrying this thing around on campus," senior wideout Dusty Sprague said, pointing at the yellow-

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colored liquid contained inside the jug.

As a further precaution, players will wear a water-

Post Poll - CU-ASU

How will the non-conference football game between Colorado and Arizona State shake out Saturday?

filled cooling vest under their pads during the game.

"We've had a lot of hot days during fall camp, so I don't think the weather should be a huge deal for us," senior offensive tackle Tyler Polumbus said.

New Big 12 commish

Newly named Big 12 commissioner Dan Beebe said he learned at a young age to face challenges head-on and without fear.

In the early 1980s - at age 25 and just out of law school - Beebe joined the NCAA's enforcement division and immediately was sent to investigate possible infractions by the Southern Methodist

football program. That case led to SMU's "death penalty" and cancellation of its football program.

"I thought the NCAA was trying to run me out," Beebe, 50, said with a chuckle Wednesday during a media teleconference in which he officially took over as commissioner. He signed a five-year contract to succeed Kevin Weiberg.

Weiberg, now with the new Big Ten Network, brought Beebe to the Big 12 in 2003. Beebe spent the previous 14 years as commissioner of the Ohio Valley Conference.

"Dan's leadership has been solid for a long, long time," CU athletic director Mike Bohn said. "He has experience and contacts. ... The neat thing about Dan is he really has a roll-up-the-sleeve mentality. He jumps into the middle of challenges ... and has a real passion for what he does."

Footnotes

Senior tailback Hugh Charles (hamstring) said he won't play against Arizona State. ... CU coach Dan Hawkins was pleased with Wednesday's workout. ... Hawkins confirmed that Polumbus will be the offensive team captain for the rest of the season, a position formerly held by Bernard Jackson. Hawkins previously said it was unclear if Jackson would have academic clearance by the Sept. 15 home game against Florida State. ... The MRI on the left kidney of freshman Josh Smith showed encouraging healing, although there still is some swelling. Hawkins said he hopes the wideout can return to workouts next week.

Staff writer Tom Kensler can be reached at 303-

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