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An Interview With:

COLORADO COACH DAN HAWKINS

PETER IRWIN: We're now joined by Coach Dan Hawkins from University of Colorado. Your comments about the summer and the upcoming season.

COACH HAWKINS: Well, much like you, I think everybody's very excited to get going. Talked to Tim Brando out there this morning a little bit. I think the longer you do this -- I don't know about you guys -- the more you feel blessed that you have an opportunity to do this and be a part of young people's lives, be a part of college football, be in such a great conference with so many great teams and programs and coaches. That's always a tremendous thrill.

I always tell my wife, I will know when it's time to retire because I always -- every summer I'm itching to go, and you're always excited for so many different reasons.

I think we've had a great summer. The kids have put in a lot of work. I think our strength coach will tell you this is the best summer by far. Every coach will tell you what goes on in June and July has a lot to do with how your season goes.

So we've had every single guy on our football team be there this summer, including our walk-ons, and I think that commitment and dedication has been great. Had the greatest semester in the history of Colorado football academically in the spring. That was great as well. I think trying to establish this culture of excellence with class is really starting to take place.

We're starting to see some of the older guys on our team really develop into some fine leaders.

So I think we have a chance, provided we can avoid some of the injuries we had last year and get a little momentum going. We have a chance to do some really nice things this year.

Really love our guys, really love our culture. It's been an interesting process at Colorado. As I told somebody out in the other room, I'm going on my fourth year, I think, and probably have been in the Colorado athletic department probably more than 90 percent of the people that are there. So it's been a very interesting place.

PETER IRWIN: Coach, we'll take our first question.

Q. You know this is coming. Did you guarantee Colorado for, or express surprise if, you all would fall short of ten?

COACH HAWKINS: I always love the good Internet rumors out there that everybody kind of jumps on as fact.

I think the people that were there -- here's the deal with that. It's like bringing our football players to the stadium yesterday. I think the goal is always excellence. The bar is always high.

I think those of you that are parents of kids, whatever you expect out of your children, whatever it is, they're going to go where you set that bar.

To me, we talk about all the time with our guys excellence with class, and I'm into that. Being able to raise the bar academically, socially, in the weight room, on the football field, that's important to me.

I don't want to -- I think it's awesome this trophy is sitting right here because that's what it's about. To me, if you coach and you play, your goal ought to always be to win the national championship and win your conference. I think that's part of it.

But I'm never going to sell our guys short, and I think I'm a big believer in what your expectations and your vision and what your standard is. I've always said there's two types of class, first and knowing: If you're not a high-standard guy, you're a low-standard guy. I just don't get that.

It's not about the wins. I didn't guarantee anything. I didn't promise anything. I didn't

threaten anything. That was never part of it.

The equation was we should always expect the best. You know, you look at -- in every sport, no matter who it is, there's always some classic example -- I told someone in the other room the Arizona Cardinals. I thought it was awesome that last year they had a road game swing back East, and I think they were playing Washington and Philly maybe, back to back. Well, they stayed there, Arizona stayed there for a week so they could get used to what would happen in the Super Bowl.

Well, if you're somebody covering the Arizona Cardinals and you're a fan of the Arizona Cardinals and you think, what? In preparation for the Super Bowl? Guess what, they were in the Super Bowl.

So I think your coach and your players and everybody else, you want to have that expectation. That's where we're going and that's what we're all about because you're not going to get there if you don't have that expectation. That's really the crux of that whole deal.

Q. Coach, you're going to be coaching wide receivers this year. Can you talk about the challenge that presents and give us your initial evaluation of the position.

COACH HAWKINS: I'm really excited about it. I love coaching, and I love teaching. I coached the tight ends when I was the head coach at Boise State. I think it's always great to be in the trenches. I used to say this, and I still say it to some degree: I think every five years every head coach ought to go back and be an assistant because you figure out what it's like in the trenches.

I'm excited about that. I've been raised as a teacher and raised as a coach, and I'm excited about getting back in there with those guys and having a group of people.

Every head coach will tell you, as you go along in this profession, sometimes you wake up, and sometimes you go I'm not doing as much coaching as I want to. I'm doing this other stuff. It's going to be really fun for me to get back in the trenches.

In terms of the position itself, I really like those guys a lot. I think they've had a great summer. Hearing really great reports about the new receivers we have in our club, and obviously there's going to be a learning curve there.

I do think there's going to be a couple of people hanging in the shadows that will help us out

a lot, and we're going to have to bring the young guys along a little bit.

Q. Coach, what have you learned about the Big 12 in your short time here?

COACH HAWKINS: Well, it's been nothing short of what I thought coming in. It's an unbelievable conference. You've got great coaches and great players. That was part of the reason that I did come. I mean, you want to be a part of that. You want to coach against the great coaches and play against the great players.

Every weekend it's a scrap, and you're playing in some of the greatest stadiums against some of the greatest coaches and players and programs in the history of college football.

That's an awesome challenge, and I think all that does is just pull the bar up for everybody else. You look at kind of what Missouri and Kansas have done the last couple of years, and I think everybody continues to get better, and that pulls everybody else up.

Q. Can you -- you talked about since you've been coaching a position that you had gotten away from coaching and you had all this other stuff you were going to do. Who does all this other stuff now? Does that take away from the head coaching department?

COACH HAWKINS: That would be the director of football operations.

But sometimes you get caught up in a lot of other things too. I just have to budget my time a little bit better.

I've been real gregarious and trying to do as many things as I can outside of -- because we need it, particularly at Colorado. Whether it's talking to faculty or community, students, or whatever. Even extra media time.

So, you know, you just have to limit that and make sure you budget your time accordingly there. I've got a lot of stuff I've got to get done every day.

Q. You had to celebrate the loss of a player at the wide receiver position, and there's a perception outside the program that it's going to be a big loss as far as play-making ability. I just wonder if you can talk about maybe some of the players you've got there and if you feel like you might be a little surprised in people with some of the talent

you've got.

COACH HAWKINS: Like I say, we like the young guys we have in our program right now. We feel those guys are going to be great players. I'm real impressed with their attitude and attention to detail and their selflessness this summer as well as the rest of the group.

At the end of the day, that's the big thing is having everybody on the same page. We look for those guys to make big plays.

Obviously, Scotty McKnight is a guy that's been around and been battle test, and we'll rely on him a lot. But I do think the young guys have a chance to make some plays for us.

Q. Dan, what's the timetable for the quarterback race?

COACH HAWKINS: We'll see, Tom. We'll see how it plays out. Obviously, we want to try to get something done before we get into the final stages of prep for Colorado State, our opener, but it will play out like it plays out.

Might be early, might be late. We'll see.

Q. Dan, a lot of debate the last year or so about Big 12's got all the offense, but SEC has all the defense. What credence do you put in that analysis?

COACH HAWKINS: Well, it's hard. You guys probably have a chance to at least look at the other conferences probably more than we do from a real technical standpoint that way.

I don't know. I know sometimes people pick on the defenses in our league because there's so many offensive numbers, but I just think it's because of the great talent that's in our league and then obviously spreading people out. It's very difficult to defend.

Q. You talked about the quarterback position. How open is that position? Has Cody come in with the advantage?

COACH HAWKINS: He probably has an advantage just from the standpoint he's a little older than Tyler, but, you know, when we get going, we'll divide those guys up, and they'll share reps, and we'll see how it goes.

I've also always been one of those guys -- I don't know how you always just say, well, somebody's the incumbent, and that's the way it is, and there's no challenge to that.

I think no matter who it is or where we are at any position, I think we want guys to show up

every day and compete and play and make plays and play well every week.

PETER IRWIN: All right, Coach. Thank you.

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