

July 28, 2010



An Interview With:

COLORADO COACH DAN HAWKINS

PETER IRWIN: We're now joined at the head table by Coach Dan Hawkins of Colorado.

Coach, welcome. Your thoughts about the upcoming season and this summer.

COACH HAWKINS: Good morning, guys. I guess it's still morning. I don't know.

Awesome to be here as always. You know, people here in the warmup period have asked me how do you feel and what's your mood? I was talking to Coach Stoops out in the hallway earlier, and I'm just always fired up to go. I really am. It seems like the older I get too, the sooner I get fired up. It always seems about July time you're ready to go and chomping at the bit. So very, very excited about that.

I have a great bunch of guys I'm excited about being around and coaching, and all that stuff is tremendous.

People have asked a little about the comments about switching conferences. I would just say this: We're very focused on the Big 12, and really, more importantly, we're focused on Colorado State. That for us is kind of in the future, and we're kind of -- you know how coaches are. You've heard enough of them up here, or you've dealt with them. It's always kind of a day-to-day fact.

So we've got some things we've got to get done in training camp and obviously get into Colorado State.

I think our strength coach will tell you we've had a tremendous off-season, again, probably better than we've ever had before, just in terms of our production and what kids have done. And our academic staff, just very fired up about the attitude of our guys and their approach to school. A bunch of new guys in the mix as well. That all has been really, really, really positive.

That following what I thought was a very productive spring for us, really probably the first opportunity for us to hit and play a lot of football and really do things that you want to do in spring football. We had enough guys that we could divide our squads up into two different groups and actually play a game in spring ball. That was great for us.

So we're really chomping to get that going. For us, it's a matter of just chasing the details and chasing the little things. We had the opportunity to go watch the Rangers last night, which was a lot of fun. I told some guys earlier, you kind of look at that game, and the A's got a run when there was kind of a crossed-up signal and catcher threw the ball to second but nobody was there, and that guy eventually scored. Then it took a home run in the 11th inning. So it comes down to the little things.

I think that's our focus is just kind of garnering those little things day to day. I think having a roster this year of a lot of guys that have played, a lot of guys that have competed, and having guys that can step up and play and know that you have to practice well every day, you've got to study film every day, you've got to be at your best every day, and that leads to better Saturdays.

So we're excited for that. I think for us, just the growth and maturity in our defensive line will help us. We're a year older, and that's going to help us.

I think, again, the same thing in the O-line. Little bit of growth and maturity and getting some depth in there. Obviously, having some other players that are going to help Scotty, Scotty McKnight, at wide receiver. All of those things bode well for us.

People have talked a little bit about the quarterback situation. For us, I think we're very blessed. We've got two really good kids. They really want to win, and they understand that concept. Really on any given day, you could probably split them with a razor hair. We'll see how that goes. I think Tyler probably had a little bit of an edge coming out of spring ball. But it's very tough to get through a whole season with one guy



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anyway. Good chance we're going to need both of those players.

But the concept is about the team, and it's not about the individual. So all that stuff really, really bodes well for us. We're fired up to get going.

PETER IRWIN: Coach, thank you. We'll take questions from the floor.

Q. Wondering if you could just give us an idea of the timing for the quarterback position in the camp. How long do you want to give it?

COACH HAWKINS: We'll see. I think we'll probably get through a couple of scrimmages there and give everybody really a chance to kind of compete and get going.

Then as you get two weeks out, typically before you play your first opponent, you kind of want to make sure that you kind of hone in on that.

We always -- as you know, coming to practice, we're not one of those outfits that ever give all the reps to the ones anyway. We're always trying to build some people underneath that. So either way, the other guy will still get some reps as well as the rest of the roster.

Q. Dan, in this league, you've got to score 30 points to win most games, it seems like. Where do you see the improvement in the offense?

COACH HAWKINS: Well, a lot of little things. You know that. I mean, sometimes it can be a catch here, a turnover there, a penalty there. I thought our defense really got better as the season went on and helped us in that era.

And you've got to make a couple of kicks that go into that point total as well. It can be a kick. It can be a turnover, but for us it's just garnering a little momentum that way and understanding that the difference is very thin and understanding, preparing that way, practicing that way, as well as playing that way.

Q. I just wanted to know how good is this -- how does this impact your program? This is the third straight year that you kind of go into fall camp not really knowing who your quarterback's going to be.

COACH HAWKINS: It's like the rest of life. The goods and bads. The good is you've got guys. You've got guys you can believe in. You've got guys who can play. The bad thing is you'd rather

have one guy be clear front and center, but it's not that way.

So I think as long as those guys handle it, which they have -- and our team really doesn't care either. Like I said, you could split them with a hair. I don't think our team really goes one way or another with one guy or the other.

So there's two sides to it just like in a whole lot of other things.

Q. Dan, have you thought about what your scheduling philosophy is going to be in the future? Speaking to someone who's going to miss Folsom Field, any chance you can get something going with Oklahoma and Oklahoma State, nonconference?

COACH HAWKINS: Well, I certainly love playing both of those teams and both of those guys. You can talk to Dave Plati. He's more in charge of the scheduling than I am.

I don't think anybody really knows right now what that's going to be. Again, it's one of those speculation deals that we just -- with our team and our staff, we haven't spent a whole lot of time thinking about the what-ifs. I think we've spent more time thinking about the concrete things. And for us, it's the schedule this year, and more importantly, the Rams in our opener.

Q. The three guys you brought were not five-star guys. You know, how do you -- what's your philosophy on finding these diamonds in the rough? I think you've had better luck with those than some of the five-star guys you've recruited.

COACH HAWKINS: Well, it's interesting. You guys have heard me talk about this before. I think -- and I'm not totally down on the star system, but it doesn't mean that that's the end all. I don't think you just open up whatever service and go, okay, let's just go and get those guys.

I think there's a package in total that you have to look at, particularly for us in Colorado, in terms of the kind of student as well as the kind of player. I think this is true, and Pat might be able to validate this, but someone told me there are more three-star guys in the NFL than there are four- and five-star combined. Can anybody validate that?

Anyhow, there's a lot of things that people bring to the table, and I think, when you're looking at evaluating a player, it doesn't matter what level, there's more things than just the tangible parts of it.

Do those matter? Sure, they do.

But then I think you have to look at the other contingency factors as well. There's plenty of guys -- you know, the Indianapolis Colts this year have three former walk-ons on their football team.

So I just don't think you can use that as the end all. That doesn't mean that a guy who's a five-star player is bad. It doesn't mean that at all. I just think you have to look at the total package.

Q. Coach, what has this off-season been like for you in terms of trying to rally everyone and move forward from last year?

COACH HAWKINS: Well, again, with our team, it really hasn't been so much a case of rallying. I think it's really been a case of going, okay, let's objectively look at -- again, it was awesome when we were hanging out with the Rangers a little bit yesterday because their coaches and their staff would talk about things, and then our players would look at me like "that's what we hear from him."

We all know that. I asked them yesterday, I said, What's been the biggest difference between last year and this year? It has been -- it's been just a few little things. They're rolling. Their club's on fire, and they're doing a great job.

For us, that's been the whole concept. Let's look at this thing from an objective standpoint of what's really affected the wins and losses. Can we clean this up? Can we be responsible for this?

So for our team, that's been the whole focus. So it hasn't always been so much a rallying as it has been pointing things out and learning and getting better.

I know we went around and state and did the little tour around the state with our coaching staff. Everybody is generally very fired up and understands and very supportive. I think all that's good.

Q. You talked a little bit about Scotty. Can you just elaborate a little bit more on some of the receivers you expect to kind of amplify that situation this year.

COACH HAWKINS: Yeah. Honestly, Toney Clemons is a kid that's been in our program. He's a Michigan transfer. Toney is one of those guys, very smart, great student, very athletically gifted. Got a chip on his shoulder. I think that's an important part of the equation, and we expect him to be in the mix for us.

Will Jefferson is a young guy that played for us as a true freshman. And we expect him to be in the mix. He can really run. Kyle Cefalo is a kid that had a great spring for us. We look for him. Jarrod Darden is another young guy. We expect to get some pops in there as well.

PETER IRWIN: Coach, best of luck for the season.

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