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Brigade establishes serious rivalry in narrow 55-49 loss to Colorado Crush

04/16/06

KANSAS CITY (April 16, 2006) — In the first battle between rival pro football cities, the Kansas City Brigade offensive duo of Chris Sanders and Aaron Boone accounted for six of the Brigade's seven touchdowns and the defense sacked Colorado quarterback John Dutton three times in a valiant fourth-quarter comeback. The Crush prevailed, though, 55-49 in front of 12,814 at Kemper Arena on Easter Sunday. Kansas City, now 2-10, faces the Nashville Kats next week in the Music City. The game will be played on Friday or Saturday, depending on the NHL playoffs schedule for the Nashville Predators, who share the Gaylord Entertainment Center with the Kats.



The match-up was billed as the reunion of Brigade vice president Neil Smith and Crush CEO John Elway. The two were part of the famed Chiefs and Broncos rivalry in the 1990's before joining forces to win consecutive Super Bowls. Kansas City fans saw it as an opportunity to cheer against another team from Denver and establish a rivalry similar to the Chiefs and Broncos.

The Brigade and Crush traded touchdowns through the first five possessions of the game. Sam Simmons got Kansas City going after Colorado's first touchdown with a 27-yard kickoff return. The offense took three plays to get a first down but only needed one more play to score. Chris Sanders threw downfield for Aaron Boone and let him take the ball away from his defender for a 19-yard touchdown. MacKenzie Hoambrecker missed the extra point to leave the deficit at 7-6 early in the first quarter.

Down by 15 with the first half winding down, Simmons provided another spark with a monster kickoff return. He corralled the kick after it bounced off the bottom crossbar and took it 44 yards to the Crush 13 yard line. Three plays later Sanders rushed for a first down and then took it in from the one yard line for a touchdown. Hoambrecker converted the extra point to shorten Colorado's lead to 28-20 with less than three minutes to play in the half.

Hoambrecker then attempted an onside kick to help the Brigade maximize its first-half possessions. Head coach Kevin Porter's strategy was to give Colorado

a short field so it would not run out the clock and Kansas City would still have time to score again. Unfortunately, the kick was recovered by Crush OS Damian Harrell at the Brigade 10 yard line.

However, Cyron Brown would not let the Crush get an easy score. He got into the backfield on third-and-goal to sack Dutton for a five-yard loss to force a field goal. But Byron Douzart was called for roughing the kicker on Clay Rush's 25-yard attempt and the Crush offense came back onto the field with the ball at four yard line. Colorado scored to take a 35-20 lead at halftime.

The end of the third quarter provided a highlight reel moment for Sanders and the Brigade offense. He completed five of six passes on a six-play, 33-yard drive and finished it off himself in style. Flushed from the pocket, Sanders ran to his left and just bulldozed over a Crush defender as he crossed the goal line to cut Colorado's lead to 49-27.

Kansas City made a game of it with a spirited effort in the fourth quarter. Facing a 52-27 deficit after a Rush field goal with 9:41 left, the Brigade outscored the Crush 22-3 on three Sanders touchdown passes—two to Boone—to close within six points. A quick strike around the four minute mark really made the game close. Sanders went for it all to Rob Johnson, who leaped over his man for a clutch 32-yard touchdown. The subsequent two-point conversion was equally exciting. In the grasp of defender, Sanders was able to lateral it out to Jerel Myers, who stretched out to get the ball across the goal line as he was being tackled.

The sequence brought Kansas City back within two scores at 55-42. The final Kansas City score was another Sanders to Boone improvisation as the Brigade QB flipped an 8-yard pass over two defenders with two seconds left. After the extra point, the ensuing onsides kick was recovered by Colorado ending the game.

Notables

- Today's game marked the first time the Brigade was on NBC, broadcast nationally in every market
- Crush co-owner John Elway and Brigade co-owner Neil Smith, once on-field rivals and then Super Bowl teammates, represented their AFL teams versus one another for the first time
- Colorado clinched a playoff berth yesterday when the Las Vegas Gladiators lost
- Chris Sanders rushed for a touchdown for the fifth straight game and now has a team-high nine
- The offense was a perfect six-for-six on third down
- The Brigade made its first two-point conversion of the season
- The defense recorded a season-high five pass defenses
- Aaron Boone had a third-straight game with at least 10 catches, 100 yards and two touchdowns
- Tomorrow three players will head to the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum for "Reading Around the Bases," a program for school groups

Quotes

Head Coach Kevin Porter

"Our plan was to force them to make plays inside the 15-yard line and play physical football with them. It didn't work in the first half as they had some big plays from outside the 15. In the second half and especially the fourth quarter, we did a great job with this."

"We have had a lot of quality practices, but we still need to get better. It all starts with practice. We played the world champions today and we showed heart."

"We believe we can beat every team we play. It's still a work in progress. We played five rookie receivers today. We are happy with our line, and as a team we will continue to grow."

QB Chris Sanders

"You can not make mistakes against the defending champs in any sport and today we made three. Earlier in the year we would not have been able to come back like this, but all of the guys showed great character and determination."

OS Aaron Boone

"We showed a lot of character by not going to stay down ever. We've still got fight and that's what it takes to be a champion."

OL/DL BJ Cohen

"Against great teams, you can't make mistakes. We still hold our head up high however. They (Colorado) are the measuring stick as the ArenaBowl champs and we held up well. We still continue to fight and get better."

On playing on national television: "You know about it in the back of your mind, but that's not what you get paid for. These guys have all played in big college games or the NFL of front of cameras, but it is nice to showcase our wonderful fans and city."

WR/LB Rob Johnson

"The touchdown felt good and it came on my fiancée Danielle's birthday. I ran all the way down to the other end of the field to give her the ball."

DB Travis Coleman

"It took us a little too long to calm down and just play. We had a lot of emotion at the beginning and we needed to settle down a bit. The coverage was decent; we just needed to focus more on technique and alignment. We did that as a secondary in the second half and the line stepped up big as well. Now we need to do that for an entire game."

Score by Quarters	1	2	3	4	F
Colorado Crush (9-3)	14	21	14	6	55
Kansas City Brigade (2-10)	14	7	7	22	49

ATTENDANCE: 12,814

Scoring Summary

First Quarter

COL McCollough, Andy 7 yd pass from Dutton, John (Rush, Clay kick), 7-0 at 13:15

KCB Boone, Aaron 19 yd pass from Sanders, Chris (Hoambrecker, MacKenzie kick failed), 7-7 at 10:13

COL Harrell, Damian 25 yd pass from Dutton (Rush kick), 14-7 at 6:36

KCB Boone 4 yd pass from Sanders (Hoambrecker kick), 14-14 at 00:00

Second Quarter

COL Hawkins, Ahmad 16 yd pass from Dutton (Rush kick), 21-14 at 11:52

COL Harrell 17 yd pass from Dutton (Rush kick), 28-14 at 6:15

KCB Sanders 1 yd run (Hoambrecker kick), 28-20 at 2:45

COL Harrell 2 yd pass from Dutton (Rush kick), 35-20 at 00:00

Third Quarter

COL Harrell 17 yd pass from Dutton (Rush kick), 42-20 at 13:29

COL Harrell 14 yd pass from Dutton (Rush kick), 49-20 at 4:45

KCB Sanders 5 yd run (Hoambrecker kick), 49-27 at 00:00

Fourth Quarter

COL Rush 24 yd field goal, 52-27 at 9:41

KCB Boone 5 yd pass from Sanders (Hoambrecker kick), 52-34 at 7:20

COL Rush 26 yd field goal, 55-34 at 4:17

KCB JOHNSON, Rob 32 yd pass from Sanders (Myers, Jerel rush), 55-42 at 3:12

KCB Boone 8 yd pass from Sanders (Hoambrecker kick), 55-49 at 00:02

Brigade Team Stats

First downs: 22

Net yards rushing: 15

Attempts: 8

Average: 1.9

Net yards passing: 244

Com-att-int: 24-36-3

Avg. per com: 10.2

Total offense yards: 259

Total offense plays: 44

Avg. gain per play: 5.9

Fumbles-lost: 0-0

Penalties-yards: 5-38

Kickoffs-yards: 6-258

Average: 43.0

Net: 33.7

Touchbacks: 1

MFG returns-yards: 1-0

Kickoff returns-yards: 5-120

Average: 24.0

Interceptions: 0

Fumble returns-yards: 0-0

Possession time: 33:13

Third down conversions: 6 of 6

Fourth down conversions: 0 of 0

Red zone scores-chances: 5-6

Sacks by-yards: 3-24

PAT kicks: 5-6

Field goals: 0-0

Brigade Individual Stats

PASSING

Sanders: 24-36, 244 yds, 5 TD, 3 Int

RUSHING

Sanders: 5 att, 10 yds, 2 TD

RECEIVING

Boone: 12 rec, 124 yds, 4 TD

Myers: 5 rec, 35 yds, 0 TD

Simmons: 3 rec, 29 yds, 0 TD