



# LOGO & UNIFORM EVOLUTION



## Logo & Color Scheme Evolution

**1921**—A student newspaper editorial decries CU's uniform colors of silver and gold as, "unsatisfactory. Our teams always look poorer than the other conference schools." But no changes are made until 1946 (for one game) and then until 1959.

**1934**—The school nickname and mascot is officially designated "Buffaloes." The *Silver & Gold* newspaper sponsored a contest, as the school had no steadfast nickname or symbol; other newspapers at the time picked up the story and entries were coming in from all over the nation. Teams were often called the Silver and Gold, Silver Helmets, Yellow Jackets, Hornets, Arapahoes, Big Horns, Grizzlies and Frontiersmen. Boulder resident Andrew Dickson submitted the winning entry. Golden Buffaloes also emerges as a reference, along with the Thundering Herd.

**1940s**—The logo that appeared more than anything else was quite detailed, and virtually disappeared from most publications by the early 1950s. However, the logo was a popular automobile decal sold by the campus bookstore up until the introduction of a standard campus-wide logo adopted in 1981 (see next column).



**1946**—The football team opens the year with navy blue jerseys; they last one game (a 76-0 loss at Texas) and CU returns to silver and gold uniforms, often sometimes wearing an all-solid gold look.

**1950s**—With no real standard mark, logos often changed annually if not by season depending on the artwork for media guides and game programs. Basketball teams wore white tops with silver or gold shorts at home.

**1959**—Football coach Sonny Grandelius changes the prominent jersey color to black with silver numbers from old gold with black or white numbers that had been prevalent since the 1930s. Silver helmets with black horns completed the look to match the school's official silver and gold colors.

**1962**—Bud Davis, to try and distance the program from NCAA sanctions levied against the previous coaching regime, does away with the black jerseys for those with a silverish hue.

**1963**—Eddie Crowder takes over as coach of the football team and changed the jerseys back to black and the numbers to gold. The helmets remained silver but eventually switched to gold in 1967.



**Mid-1960s**—The most common logo that emerged was that of an artist's conception of a running buffalo, one that resembled a painting and was next-to-impossible to reproduce for clothing. This emblem was the standard for department stationery and note cards and hung around until 1979.

**1966**—Though live buffaloes made appearances on and off through the years, usually calves, CU's fully grown, live buffalo mascot, Ralphie, made its first appearance at all home games during the 1966 season.

**October 28, 1967**—Crowder is approached with the idea of his team taking the field behind a charging buffalo. Thus, this day in the annual homecoming game against Oklahoma State, one of college football's most awesome traditions begins as the team takes the field behind Ralphie and five handlers. All subsequent live buffaloes are also named Ralphie.

**1968**—Horns once again adorn the football helmet, replacing player numbers that had appeared annually since 1962.

**1969**—The first appearance of an interlocking CU on gold helmets (replacing player numbers) with the logo spreading to basketball pants

as well as popping up on other sport uniforms. This particular mark proved to have staying power and would be incorporated into future logo artwork, both for athletics and the university overall. It was a solid block CU, reminiscent of the one that appeared under the logo born in the 1940s.



**1970s**—With women's athletics attaining varsity status, other logos appear for women's teams, including more feminine looking buffaloes. All women's teams are referred to as the Lady Buffs.



**1979**—A futuristic buffalo design is used sparingly in football for the '79 and '80 seasons, commissioned (at a cost of \$1,600) by football coach Chuck Fairbanks who liked the Seattle Seahawks helmet logo. It brings the total to six different logos/symbols, facing in different directions, in use by various departments and sports. The block CU is the most recognizable of the lot.

**May 28, 1981**—Blue officially adopted as the primary uniform color in place of black after a Board of Regents mandate at its January meeting. Originally suggested to be "the deep blue Colorado of Colorado's sky at 9,000 feet" by then-Regent Jack Anderson, jerseys were officially an "Air Force Blue" though different than the blue the Air Force Academy's sports teams wore. Numerals were silver or yellow-gold, depending on the sport, and outlined in white. The football pant remained gold, but with a blue stripe, for both home and road. Football helmets remained gold but with blue logos. Other programs switched to blue, ranging from road basketball jerseys to golf bags. CU's trademark south end zone is painted blue, the first color change since it was created after the track was removed in 1966.

**July 1, 1981**—What would become the longest running logo in school history (24 years) is officially registered as CU's primary mark. Keystone Resort vice president Jerry Jones helped arrange the design, at a bargain cost of \$1,000, by Terry Heckler Associates in Seattle (Craig Marocco was the artist). Heckler's firm did the Keystone logo, along with many others; because Heckler and Jones are friends, CU gets the \$12,000 project for just one grand. Athletic director Eddie Crowder and associate AD Fred Casotti make the final decision on the logo from several mock-ups; CU insiders dub it the "pigalo" after Fairbanks said publicly, "It looks like a pig." The logo catches on and eventually turns into one of the most recognizable logos in college athletics, if not sports, that incorporated the school/team ID (CU) and the mascot/nickname all in one.



**1984**—The colors are altered slightly, as the blue is enhanced to a darker hue; football goes with gold, borderless numbers and complaints rain in from many, as players can't be identified from stands. Black and white photos and game films appear as if players wore no numbers at all. Bill McCartney had the football team twice wear black jerseys (against Oklahoma and Nebraska) in a similar way that Notre Dame broke out its green jersey for big games.

**April 24, 1985**—"Black is Back" read the release announcing that athletic director Bill Marolt would allow head coaches of all CU sports teams (then 14 in number) the option of returning to black as the primary jersey color. McCartney's throwback efforts the previous season were the impetus for the change; the football jersey had a blue stripe on the arm for the 1985, 1986 and 1987 seasons before it was dropped altogether in 1988.

**December 30, 1985**—A standard in basketball, the football jersey has COLORADO emblazoned across the front for the first time for the Freedom Bowl versus Washington.

**November 28, 1987**—Football wears all black for the first time in a 24-7 loss to Nebraska.

**1988**—Football switches to the black pant for road games. It remains standard for well over a decade, until the 2000 team wears white for a road game at Southern California.



**1993**—All university teams are now known solely as the Buffaloes, as women's teams drop the "Lady" moniker. Use of *Golden Buffaloes* becomes rare though still officially accepted.



**May 10, 2005**—The first change of any kind to the logo in a quarter century is made when the popular buffalo logo with the interlocking CU is tweaked. The buffalo is slightly tilted to the right to give it an "in-motion" appearance, and the interlocked letters are altered a bit for a cleaner look. Also included for the first time is a mark for bilingual use (Spanish). NIKE and CU work together on the changes, as NIKE design director Chris McClure updates the buffalo logo and CU licensing director Bruce Fletcher coordinates accompanying fonts for the first time.

## Uniform Evolution

Here's a chronological look at the evolution of University of Colorado football uniforms:

**1921**—A student newspaper editorial decries CU's uniform colors of silver and gold as, "unsatisfactory. Our teams always look poorer than the other conference schools." CU wears what is tantamount to a gold sweater with black numbers at home and a white with black numerals on the road, as no real changes are made until 1946 (for one game) and then until 1959.

The one game? CU wore navy blue uniforms for a Sept. 28, 1946 game at Texas. The Longhorns won, 76-0, and those uniforms were never seen again.

During this period, number colors often changed, and as uniforms improved, there were naturally several modifications. But the color schemes for home and road remained consistent.

**1959**—The basic look for the next several decades is born, as CU wears black jerseys for the first time in its history, with white numbers and a gold pant at home; white jerseys with a black number are worn on the road. Over the next 10 seasons, the helmets go through changes from silver to gold and with horns to numbers.

**1969**—The first appearance of an interlocking CU on gold helmets (replacing player numbers). This particular mark proved to have staying power and would be incorporated into future logo artwork, both for athletics and the university overall. It was a solid block CU, reminiscent of the one that appeared under the logo born in the 1940s.

**1979**—The numbers at home are enlarged and are now in gold with a white border.

**May 28, 1981**—Blue officially adopted as the primary uniform color in place of black after a Board of Regents mandate at its January meeting and subsequent follow-up recommendation by a campus committee. Originally suggested to be "the deep blue Colorado of Colorado's sky at 9,000 feet" by then-Regent Jack Anderson, jerseys were officially an "Air Force Blue" though different than the blue the Air Force Academy's sports teams wore. Numerals are silver and outlined in white, and the pant remained gold, but with a blue stripe, for both home and road. Football helmets remained gold but with blue logos. CU's trademark south end zone is painted blue, the first color change since it was created after the track was removed in 1966. CU's coach at the time, **Chuck Fairbanks**, has been routinely, and falsely, credited for the color switch through the years, which was not overly popular with Buff fans.

**1982**—The numerals switch from silver to gold, with the trim remaining in white.

**1984**—The colors are altered slightly, as the blue is enhanced to a darker hue, with the numbers in a yellow-gold, but borderless; complaints rain in from many, as players can't be identified from stands and in black and white photos and game films it appears as if players wore no numbers at all. The pant remained a similar yellow-gold with a blue

stripe and white trim. **Bill McCartney** had the football team twice don black jerseys (against Oklahoma and Nebraska) in a similar way that Notre Dame broke out its green jersey for big games. There actually had been talk about CU doing it first for its 1983 home game against the Fighting Irish.

**April 24, 1985**—"Black is Back" read the release announcing that athletic director **Bill Marolt** would allow head coaches of all CU sports teams (then 14 in number) the option of returning to black as the primary jersey color. The pant moves toward a metallic gold with no stripes (though in 1991, the road black pant had a gold stripe). McCartney's throwback efforts the previous season were the impetus for the change; the football jersey had a blue stripe on the arm for the 1985, 1986 and 1987 seasons before it was dropped altogether in 1988. The Big 8 logo graced one sleeve. The south area behind the end zone with COLORADO is once again painted black (for '85).

**December 30, 1985**—A standard in basketball, the football jersey has COLORADO emblazoned across the front for the first time for the Freedom Bowl versus Washington. Other than switching to italics in the current machine style font in 1997, it becomes the signature look on the uniform for the next 21 seasons and one that several other schools also replicate.

**November 28, 1987**—Football wears all black (jersey and pant) for the first time in a 24-7 loss to Nebraska.

**1988**—Football switches to the black pant for road games. It remains standard for well over a decade, until the 2000 team wears all white for a road game at Southern California.

**1996**—The first real tweaking of the uniform since the blue stripe came off in 1988 as the font changes for the COLORADO as well as the numerals, with the stripes eliminated from the sleeves. Numbers are white with gold trim at home and black with gold trim on the road. In subsequent years (1997, 1998), some silver is utilized as trim within the number.

**September 26, 1998**—For the Baylor home game, the Buffaloes don a sort of "throw-back" jersey that is gold in color with black numbers (with silver trim), along with black helmets (silver logo) and a black pant. It's the only time any of the components of the look (other than the pant) are used.

**November 1, 2003**—Against Texas Tech, the Buffs don gold pants for a road game for the first time since 1987; the team proceeds to wear all three selections (black, white, gold) through 2006, though white disappeared following 2005.

**September 18, 2004**—A one-time look, thankfully to many, the Buffaloes wear the black jersey but with the white road pant against North Texas. The look is shelved pretty quick and not used again.

**June 2, 2007**—Silver is reintroduced into the color scheme, as both the jersey and pant are overhauled. The black home jersey has silver numbers and gold trim in a new design never before incorporated in CU's look, while the white road top has black numbers with silver trim and additional gold trim elsewhere. Pant colors are black and gold; the black pant has gold trim, the gold pant silver trim. New fabrics also improve issues from heat management and uniform weight to making it increasingly hard for the opponent to grab various points.

**2010**—The uniforms revert back to what the Buffaloes wore from the late 1980s well into the 1990s.

**May 1, 2015**—CU and NIKE debut four new uniform looks: black, white and silver (gray) jerseys; gold, black, silver and white pants; and gold, black, silver and white helmets. The font for the numbers reverts back to what was introduced in 1999 and was standard through 2006.