



19th Century

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

- Nov. 15, 1890**—First football game ever in the history of the University of Colorado, losing 20-0 to the Denver Athletic Club in Denver.
- Dec. 13, 1890**—George Darley runs 65 yards with a fumbled football for a touchdown, the first in CU history. Colorado Mines won however, 50-4.
- Nov. 26, 1891**—First win in CU history, a 24-4 victory on the road over the Colorado Springs Athletic Association Team.
- Nov. 8, 1892**—First win by Colorado in Boulder, a 46-0 win over the University of Denver.
- Aug. 3, 1894**—Harry Heller named first head coach in Colorado history.
- Oct. 26, 1895**—Fred Folsom debuts as CU head coach with a 32-0 win over the Denver Wheel Club in Boulder. He arrived in Boulder earlier that month and did not coach the first game of the season.
- Nov. 17, 1898**—Colorado plays first opponent from outside the state boundaries, losing to Nebraska in Boulder, 23-10.

The same year Colorado officially became a state, 1876, the University of Colorado was founded and opened with 44 students and a faculty of two, one of whom was the president.

Baseball was the first varsity sport at the U. of C. as it was then called. Football in its earlier form soon followed, though it was more like soccer when the program was born in the 1880s. But it soon evolved into a more popular form of the sport, referred to as rugby football, one which offered more physical contact and much more scoring.

In the fall of 1890, intercollegiate varsity football was born at the U. of C., in concert with the sport spreading west as many programs began that same year. Only 12 schools currently playing Division I-A football (now the Football Bowl Subdivision) started their programs before Colorado.

Football in 1890 was nothing like today's game. It used a rugby-type ball on a 110-yard long field and there were three downs instead of four. A touchdown was worth four points, a placement kick after a TD two and a field goal good for five. The games had two 45-minute halves with a running clock, just like today's soccer.

In the early 1890s, only the U. of C., the Colorado School of Mines and Denver University fielded football programs. The schedule often included Athletic Clubs, Athletic Associations, other local clubs and high schools. While playing opponents from neighboring or distant states was common back east, Colorado did not play a team from outside the state's borders until the ninth year of its existence.

The 1890 team was memorable only for its being the school's first. **Tom Edmundson** was the quarterback and the team captain, and for all intensive purposes, was the coach as well; it wouldn't be until the fifth year of the program a full-time coach was hired to run the program.

The first game was played in the afternoon on Saturday, November 15, 1890, in Denver against the Denver Athletic Club. The DAC scored five touchdowns and won 20-0, but it

was a costly loss for Colorado as Edmundson was injured and lost for the season while four other players were also hurt. CU had used only 12 men in that first game, so by its end, almost half were banged up pretty bad.

It showed the next Saturday in the program's first home game against a veteran Colorado Mines team, considered by many to be the top team in the west. **Pat Carney** took over at quarterback, but he was inexperienced, and with CU practicing more like a soccer team than a rugby team, Mines had its way and won 103-0. The game was played on a campus field, more dirt than grass; only five buildings comprised the university at the time, including two which still stand today, Old Main and Woodbury.

Game three was scheduled the next Saturday (Nov. 29) against the Colorado Springs Athletic Association, but was delayed a week when the train which was to take CU to the Springs was two hours late, forcing its postponement. The delay didn't help CU, as it made it to the game on time the following Saturday but lost, 44-0.

The final game of that first season was a rematch with Colorado Mines, again in Boulder. The Blasters (now called the Orediggers) won this time by a 50-4 margin, but the U. of C. scored its first touchdown. It was by the defense, however, as **George Darley** recovered a Mines fumble and returned it 65 yards for the score. It was still the sixth longest fumble return and eighth longest miscellaneous return in school history through the 2014 season.

Game One: The Starting Lineup

Here were the 11 starters on the field when CU lined up across from the Denver Athletic Club team on November 15, 1890:

End	Ed Ingram, Boulder
End	John Nixon, Greeley
Tackle	George Darley, Alamosa
Tackle	Delos Holden, Boulder
Guard	Howell Givens, Denver
Guard	Harry Layton, New York, N.Y.
Center	Charles McConnell, Unknown
Quarterback	Tom Edmundson, Bisbee, Ariz.
Halfback	Homer James, Estes Park
Halfback	Wesley Putman, Denver
Fullback	Bert Kennedy, Denver

So the first season in the books came to an end. Colorado has never gone winless since, and the 103-point loss to Mines still stands as the worst loss in program history. Two memories no one wants now, as well as most likely then.

Colorado was much more competitive in its second season, but still stood 0-4 and had scored just six points going into the 1891 finale on the road against the Colorado Springs Athletic Association, a club team comprised mostly of Colorado College students. Carney, now seasoned at quarter-



Colorado's First Football Team in 1890



The 1899 team: Fred Folsom pictured upper left.

back, played brilliantly according to accounts of the game and led the way in the school's first-ever win, returning to Boulder with a 24-4 victory and a 1-4 record.

The foundation had been set. Over the next 23 years, the U. of C. would enjoy 20 winning seasons, including the school's first in 1892. Opening with a pair of wins over Denver, either both by 46-0 scores or 26-0 on the road and then 46-0 at home (historical accounts differ), Colorado dropped November games to Colorado Mines and the Denver Athletic Club to finish the "fall" season at 2-2. But there would be one more game.

Colorado A&M challenged the state's flagship university to a game, and two would meet on February 10, 1893, in Fort Collins. It was the birth of a rivalry that has seen 79 games through 2007, but the initial encounter remains one of the most lopsided in the series, as Colorado poured it on in a 70-6 win over the Aggies. The game counted on the 1892 record and officially gave the U. of C. a 3-2 mark.

Prior to the 1893 season, the Colorado Intercollegiate Athletic Association was formed, as the state's first conference included five schools: Colorado, Colorado A&M, Colorado College, Colorado Mines and Denver (it was also referred to as the Colorado Football Association). The team was still primarily coached by the captains, Edmundson and **John Nixon** in 1890 and Carney the next three seasons. But with football becoming more prominent and conference championships now to be competed for, it was time for Colorado to get serious about the sport and hire a coach. Club sports of today are much more organized than were CU's first four football teams.

The first coach in program history was **Harry Heller**, who would be paid by donations from the players themselves and some of the fans. Recommended to the administration by **Harry Gamble**, the '94 captain, Heller did some coaching at Baker University and in fact was a still a student himself.

Heller would coach just one season, but perhaps as memorable as the team's 8-1 overall record and a 5-0 mark in conference play for the school's first title would be what he accomplished off the field. CU made improvements in facilities, mainly a new home field about a mile north of campus

(carved out of an area formerly known as "Lover's Hill" and later as Panorama Heights). In addition to teaching and coaching, Heller also instituted policies on team diet, working with the cooks at the campus dining halls, and encouraged more students to join the team, expanding the roster for the first time have a full second unit.

Heller and Gamble are also credited with keeping football alive as a sport at CU, as a little-known incident almost brought an end to the program in its fifth year. In Colorado's first game of the 1894 season, a 46-0 win against East Denver High School, on the last play of the game a CU player suffered a severe head injury (in a melee, not from scrimmage). He was unconscious for quite some time but was not seriously injured. But at a time when stories across the nation detailed not only serious injury but many deaths in the sport, it spooked many members of the CU team, including most of the new second string.

The Monday following the game, only a dozen players showed up for practice, and Heller and Gamble spent the next few days tracking down the others and convinced them to rejoin the team. Colorado regrouped and in the next game, finally defeated the Denver Athletic Club for the first time in seven meetings. Though the DAC would exact some revenge with a 20-6 win in the next to last week of the season, CU outscored the opponent 198-4 in its five conference games en route to the championship.

Heller had become quite popular, but he stepped down after that one season, opting to concentrate on earning his degree. He remained on as a player, though would participate only minimally.

So the U. of C. found itself in the same situation, looking for a leader of a sport rapidly growing in popularity nationwide. Little did anyone know at the time that the resulting hire would eventually become known as "the father of CU football."

Fred Folsom arrived in Boulder after the 1895 season was underway, as CU had already easily defeated Denver's Manual



TIMEOUT / FRED FOLSOM

Fred Gorham Folsom was a 21-year old pre-law graduate from Dartmouth College, where he was an outstanding football and baseball player. Considered the finest end to play at Dartmouth to that point, he had led the Big Green to two straight league championships as a player-coach, a position which was common prior to the 20th century.

CU's 1895 captain, William Caley, formed a group to find CU's second coach and quickly zeroed in on Folsom. One problem, though, was the fact that Folsom was ticketed for the University of Michigan, where he planned on enrolling in law school. CU assured him that he do both, attend law school and coach the Silver & Gold (one of CU's early nicknames, though the football teams of that era actually wore red jerseys and stockings). His love for the game of football won out and he headed west.

It was one of the first turning points in CU history, as landing Folsom immediately led to the program becoming a regional power. And Folsom would put permanent roots in Colorado, sans a short time when he returned to coach his alma mater, as he became a leader in athletic, university, legal, civic and state affairs until his death in 1944. That same year, Colorado Stadium, which had been built to replace Gamble Field in 1924, was named for him.

Accounts referred to him as being a stern disciplinarian when it came to football, one who could install his schemes quickly and constantly tweaked them with innovative plays from his creative football mind. Away from football, one of his trademarks was possessing a keen sense of humor.

Folsom coached CU for 15 seasons (still a school record), and his 77 wins stood as the most in school history for 78 years, until Bill McCartney surpassed the total in his next to last season (1993). He did earn his law degree from Colorado and eventually taught at the school (earning a chair on CU's faculty), and had a distinguished career as a jurist.

High School 36-0 in its opener. His first two games produced wins over the Denver Wheel Club (32-0) and the University of Denver (28-0); his first loss was considered slightly controversial, as a 22-10 loss to the Denver Athletic Club came in a poorly officiated contest by a former DAC fullback and club member, Frank Spalding. Newspaper stories pointed to most of the calls going against CU. But the team rebounded to soundly defeat Colorado College (38-10) and Mines (14-0) to win a second straight CFA title.

Gamble would again be elected captain for the 1896 season, his sixth on the team (there were few eligibility rules in his day). A fan favorite and perhaps the one person who provided the most continuity in the early years of the program, when the first football field on campus property was built and dedicated in 1898, it was named Gamble Field in his honor.

It was only fitting that the '96 team was the first to go undefeated in school history, going 5-0 and outscoring all opponents by 171-6.

Folsom's tenure at Colorado actually covered three stints; the first was a five year run between 1895 and 1899, in which his teams went 28-8. He had won three conference titles, and oversaw the first intersectional game in school history, a 23-10 loss to Nebraska in 1898. But he had come west for two reasons, and after earning his law degree, he wanted to enter private practice, doing so in Denver. With the new century at hand, he resigned shortly after the 1899 season, not knowing at the time he'd return just a year later.

1900s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

July 27, 1900—T.W. Mortimer named third head coach in Colorado history, as Fred Folsom opens a law practice in Denver. Folsom returned as coach for the 1901 and 1902 seasons.

July 10, 1903—Dave Cropp named fourth head coach in Colorado history.

Oct. 8, 1904—Colorado's 6-0 win over Nebraska is the school's first intersectional win in its history.

June 26, 1905—Willis Keinholtz named fifth head coach in Colorado history.

June 19, 1906—Frank Castleman named sixth head coach in Colorado history.

May 11, 1908—Fred Folsom, who returned to Colorado the previous year, once again named head coach.

T.C. Mortimer coached CU to a 6-4 record in 1900, one of the losses to the Denver Wheel Club, which was coached by Folsom, who could not get it out of his blood. Mortimer, who played at both Simpson College in Iowa and Chicago University, did have a significant contribution in his one year in Boulder. He initiated the establishing of letter sweaters, even though at the time the players had to buy them. The concession was that they could select the colors of their choice, and most opted for maroon with a white "C" instead of using the official school colors, silver and gold.

Mortimer was set to return in 1901, but Folsom found life practically chained to a desk not for him, and he let CU know he'd be interested in returning. Mortimer gracefully stepped aside and Folsom was reunited with many of his former players. His teams went 10-2-1 over the next two seasons, claiming the CFA title both years.



In 1903, he was beckoned by his alma mater to return to the northeast, to serve as Dartmouth's head coach with an appointment on the law faculty. He would go 29-5-4 in four seasons there before returning to Colorado, which would have three different coaches over the next five years.

Dave Cropp took over and coached CU to an 8-2 mark and the conference crown his first season, in which he also served as the school's first athletic director. His second team went 6-2-1, with highlights like a 6-0 win over Nebraska, CU's first inter-sectional win, and a season-ending 33-0 blowout loss at Stanford which didn't sit well with all those associated with the program. He would move on after just two years.

Next up to lead the Silver and Gold was **Willis Kleinholz**, a University of Minnesota man who led CU to an 8-1 record in 1905. But the school had several disputes with the conference (mostly concerning loose academic requirements) and left the organization, reworking the schedule to include two high schools, the alumni and six regional teams. Nebraska avenged its loss to Colorado, but CU picked up wins against Wyoming, Kansas, Utah, Washburn and Haskell, using the opportunity to branch out a bit.

Kleinholz departed after just one season, and in came **Frank Castleman**, who would take over the duties of coaching both the football and basketball teams. The game drastically changed in 1906, as offensive rule changes required a lot of adjustments, which affected many teams. Forward passing was legalized to open up the offense, and while teams still had three downs to earn a first down, the requirement now called for the offense to make 10 yards on those three tries instead of just five. CU did iron out its differences with the CFA and rejoined the conference, but mustered just a 2-3-4 record that year, with all four ties of the scoreless variety.

Castleman's last CU team went 5-3 in 1907, as he was aided by a familiar face as an assistant coach—Folsom. He returned as a member of the law faculty at the school, this time staying on permanent until retiring in 1942. The conference title came down to the last game of the season, but Colorado lost to Mines by the odd score of 5-4.

With Folsom back on board, Castleman stepped aside from his football duties, remaining on as coach of the basketball, baseball and track teams in addition to serving as athletic director. Folsom signed a contract, valued at \$1,000, for a dual coaching position for the teams at the university and the State Prep School (now Boulder High School). That was big money back then.

Folsom coached the next eight seasons, earning five conference titles as CU moved into the Colorado Faculty Athletic Conference for the 1909 season, with the league expanding geographically the following year, becoming the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference, of which it would remain a member through 1937.

1910s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

Oct. 8, 1910—Colorado's 11-0 triumph over the Alumni is the 100th win in CU history.

Spring 1912—The value of a touchdown becomes six points, and the sport now has most of the modern point values: three for a field goal, two for a safety and one for an extra point. The two-point conversion by run or pass won't appear until 1958.

Oct. 5, 1912—Colorado tops Utah State in Boulder, 16-3, extending CU's winning streak to 21 games, the school record to this day. Colorado A&M ended the streak the following week with a 21-0 win in Fort Collins.

Jan. 10, 1916—Bob Evans named seventh head coach in Colorado history.

Jan. 17, 1918—Joe Mills named eighth head coach in Colorado history.

Folsom's 1909, 1910 and 1911 teams all went 6-0, and a 21-game winning streak from the last game of 1908 through the first two of 1912 still stands as the all-time school record. The 1909 squad was not scored on; and all three did not allow a single touchdown; Wyoming scored a field goal for the only points against CU in '10 and CU allowed a field goal and a safety in '11. In the 21-game streak, CU allowed just 11 points.

Rival Colorado A&M ended the winning streak, and the 1912 team finished 6-3 including a season-ending win over Oklahoma. But it did no better than tying for third in the RMAC to end a run of four straight championship years.

The 1913 team posted a 5-1-1 record and earned Folsom his last title, his ninth in 13 seasons, and the 1914 Silver and Gold's only loss in a 5-1 campaign came at the hands of Mines, which used a 6-2 win to steal the crown from CU. Folsom was now 40 years old and those close to him could tell he was a bit worn down physically by his long playing and coaching careers in addition to all his responsibilities outside of football.

Assorted illnesses sidelined Folsom for much of the 1915 campaign, one in which CU would finish 1-6 with all going on his record despite his coaching in less than half the games. At the end of the season, he announced his retirement, thus ending CU's first real golden period in the sport as many at the time referred. He went on to teach law, serve as acting dean of the college of law, and always remained active in athletics. He chaired the drive for a new football stadium on campus and drafted the financial plan which enabled the school to build it; he had worked closely with CU president **George Norlin** to accomplish the project, as Colorado Stadium opened in 1924 (it was also called Norlin Field at times).

The RMAC had many more teams than the old CFA, so winning a title had become a bit harder with more contenders. **Bob Evans** was named head coach, and the 1916 team, now having to deal with many young men in the service preparing to fight in World War I, did little better than the year before with a 1-5-1 record. Evans did a masterful job in 1917 though, as Colorado went 6-2; in fact, he did such a good job that he moved west to become Stanford's head coach.

Joe Mills, who had been hired as basketball coach, took over



in football as well in 1918, when the war really hit home. CU's quarterback in 1915-16, **Eddie Evans**, was killed in France and it cast a pall over the program. Mills coached football just two seasons, his teams going 2-3 and 2-3-1, as he stepped down after 1919 to concentrate on his basketball duties.

The first 30 seasons of Colorado football were now in the books, with Folsom coaching 15 of those teams. But seven men coached a collective 11 of those other squads, not including team captains that had managed the first four. The program was in need of some stability, and with the help of Folsom who was now the chairman of the athletic board, it would find its man for the next decade and more.

1920s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

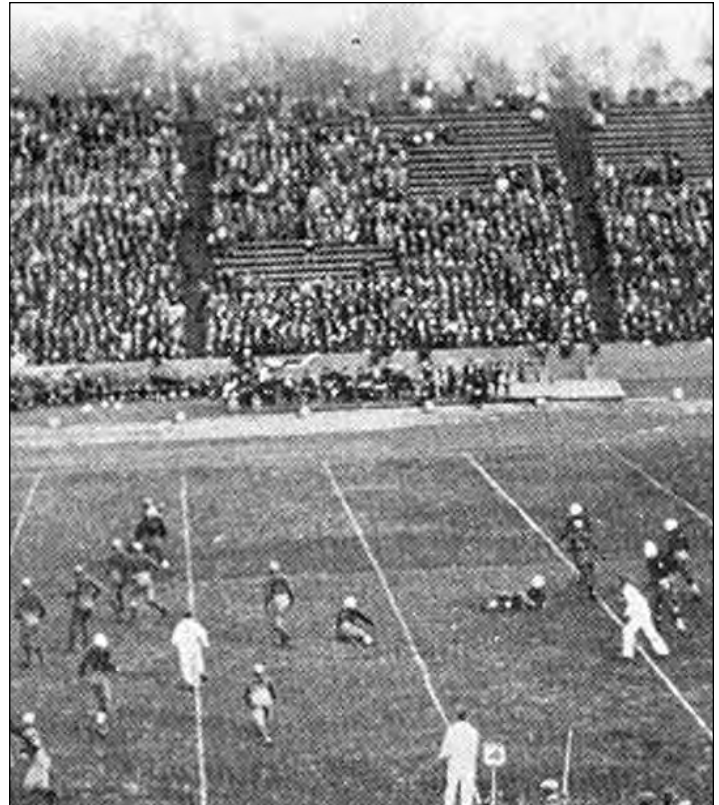
- Feb. 4, 1920**—Myron Witham named ninth head coach in Colorado history.
- Nov. 28, 1923**—Colorado's 6-3 win at Colorado State gives Colorado a 9-0-0 mark for the 1923 season, its best ever at the time.
- Oct. 11, 1924**—Colorado defeated Regis College 39-0 in the first game at Folsom Field (then known as Colorado Stadium).
- Dec. 25, 1924**—The Silver & Gold play the first postseason game in school history, defeating the Hawaii-Navy All-Stars in Honolulu, 43-0.
- Oct. 13, 1928**—Bill Smith records the first known 100-yard rushing game ever by a CU player, running for 132 yards and a touchdown in a 21-6 win at Northern Colorado.

With World War I over and colleges again stocked with young men, football took that next step in the 1920s. The emergence of the National Football League by the end of the decade would eventually lead the sport to become the nation's most popular a few decades later. But closer to home in Boulder, CU was looking to make that next great hire to return its football program to the stability and success it had enjoyed under Fred Folsom.

There was no one more qualified than Folsom to find CU's next coach, and he turned to a former player of his when he coached at Dartmouth. **Myron Witham**, like Folsom his mentor, was quiet, intelligent and intense. Those attributes were effective for Folsom, and they would be for Witham, despite the fact his hiring turned a few heads. He was an All-American performer for Folsom at Dartmouth his senior season in 1904, and was an assistant coach for him the following year before taking over as head coach for a single season at Purdue in 1906. He then went to work in engineering, so when the call came to lead the CU program, he had been out of coaching for 13 years. But Folsom had his man, and any reservations about his abilities would fade quickly.

History paints a very good picture of Witham. In addition to coaching 96 games, a figure that still ranks fifth most all-time through 2007, Witham's 63-26-7 record remains third best for those who coached a minimum three years at the school. But he would make many marks off the field as well.

Witham's first Colorado unit was talented, with junior center **Walt Franklin** the nucleus of the team. The Silver and Gold had an impressive season, rolling up a 4-1-2 record and tied



A Hatfield Chilson pass completion in the 1924 season.

for third in the conference. The lone loss was a 7-0 setback to Utah in Boulder, setting the only negative tone for what would be 12 years at the helm of the CU team for Witham.

After his first season, Witham moved to organize support in several areas. He established the first training table at CU for the varsity players, though the players were themselves responsible for serving and cleaning up. He formed a campus booster club of five dozen underclassmen that helped in areas as high school relations (eventually morphed into today's recruiting), scholarship (academics and tutoring), publicity and ways and means (or anything the first three didn't cover). He would also see it that all CU home games were filmed.

In scheduling CU's biggest intersectional game ever, the 1921 opener at the University of Chicago, he installed the first pre-season training camp for the team. The booster club raised the funds to cover expenses at a facility near Eldora, a mountain community about 25 miles west of Boulder. The team practiced and held meetings there for two weeks before transitioning onto campus. Upon their arrival, they moved into CU's first "athletic dorm," again with the help of the booster club. Raising \$10,500, a 14-room house at 1016 14th Street featured eating, sleeping and study facilities for 30 players.

CU lost that game at Chicago, falling to legendary head coach Amos Alonzo Stagg's team 35-0. A special train brought 300 fans and the school band to the game, easily the longest such trek coordinated by the school at the time (trips by train to Denver and Colorado Springs had been the occasional norm



up to that point). Colorado rebounded from the defeat, did not lose again and improved to second place in the conference, finishing the '21 season with a 4-1-1 mark.

It was in this decade that CU's first true out-of-state rivalry came to bloom, as Utah emerged as the perennial conference favorite between 1922 and 1933, claiming eight RMAC titles in that span. The Salt Lake City school would become the nemesis for Witham and his Silver and Gold squads, as CU would go just 2-9-1 against their rivals to the west during his tenure. Three of those losses and the tie cost Colorado four titles, though Witham's 1923 and 1924 teams did win back-to-back conference crowns.

CU's 1922 team was 4-4 overall and generally had a mediocre season, opening with two wins but then dropped four of its next five, starting with a 3-0 loss to... Utah. But good news was just around the corner, especially with an outstanding freshman team that regularly gave the varsity fits, often outplaying them in practice.

The season of 1923 produced one of the most dominant teams in school history, though the roster included more sophomores than from any other class. Quarterback and team captain **Art Quinlan** was one of the few returning veterans the single-wing offense was built around, along with fullback **Earl Loser**, tackle **Don McLean** and halfback **Fred Hartshorn**. Several underclassmen emerged as key players, including guard **Bill McGlone**, ends **Dick Handy** and **Jack Healy**, fullback **Bill Bohn** and quarterback **Hatfield Chilson**.

In compiling a 9-0 record, CU outscored its opponents by a combined 280-27, with four wins of 41 points or greater (all shutouts). In the first 100 years of Colorado football (1890-1989), only the 1971 (10-2) and 1989 (11-1) teams won more games, with only three others attaining nine wins.

Colorado rolled over its first three opponents, BYU, Western State and Colorado Teachers College (now Northern Colorado) by a combined 152-0. Game four was a rematch with Denver, which had won 16-0 the previous year, and it was the first solid test of the '23 campaign. The first three opponents did not have great teams, and CU fans wanted to know if their team was for real. The week leading up to the game was filled with miserable weather, with rain and/or snow falling on a daily basis.

After a scoreless first quarter, CU came to life behind Quinlan, who passed for 206 yards in leading CU to what was termed a "statistical slaughter." Colorado held advantages of 356-41 in total offense and 23-3 in first downs and returned to Boulder with a solid 21-7 win that made CU and Witham the "toast of the Rockies."

The following week, CU toppled Colorado College 17-7 behind the crisp passing of Quinlan (13-of-16, 162 yards). Colorado improved to 5-0, but was faced with the last four games all on the road, the second and last time that happened in school history. CU started the run with a 47-0 win at Colorado Mines, but lost Quinlan's quarterbacking services for the season with a broken right hand; he would handle placekicking and a

few returns. In his place came Chilson, who would make his first career start the following week... at Utah.

Chilson was a 5-8, 130-pound sophomore from Pueblo, and had little game experience at quarterback. Despite his small stature, he had great ability to slip through the smallest of holes and had developed a vertical leap in which he would jump over onrushing defenders. Chilson called a perfect game and directed the Silver and Gold to a 17-7 win over the Red Devils. The following week, CU scored an easy 20-3 win at Wyoming, with reserves playing most of the game against the winless Cowboys.

Only the rival Aggies from Fort Collins stood in-between CU and a perfect season. A&M led 3-0 in the second half before Quinlan tied it with a field goal. He then returned a punt 63 yards to the Aggie 25-yard line with time running down, and CU worked the ball to the 3-yard line with under a minute to play. Witham called for a field goal on third down, and it turned out to save the undefeated season; the Aggies blocked the kick, but Quinlan himself recovered the ball and gave his team another chance to win fourth down. This time he split he uprights and Colorado had perfection.

While 1924 yielded another fine record (8-1-1), its best remembered for two significant firsts in program history. After the perfect '23 campaign, a movement quickly began for the team to have a stadium for its home as opposed to Gamble Field, which had served the team well since 1898. But with the program growing in stature and stadiums being built around the country, it was only logical that CU take that next step.

An attendance record of 42,480 was set in 1923 for the four home games, which was over five times the capacity of the field's bleacher seating. So with the need so obvious for new digs, it was easy to reach a unanimous agreement and the plan took off quickly.

Whitney Huntington, a professor in engineering, surveyed campus lands and came up with a location on the northeast end, a ravine near the site of the new men's gymnasium and home to the basketball team. There was good drainage and the land provided the opportunity for deep bleacher seating on both sides of the field, which would provide for a new stadium to be built both quickly and economically.

Folsom was now a full-time professor in CU's Law School and the chairman of the athletic board, which approved Huntington's location. President **George Norlin** asked Folsom to develop a financing plan, and in eight short months at a cost of \$70,000, Colorado Stadium was completed and was state-of-the-art for its time.

The playing field wasn't quite ready for the first game, but that turned out to be okay as everyone associated with the program said goodbye to Gamble Field with a 31-0 win over Western State. A week later, on Oct. 11, 1924, the stadium was christened against Regis with Colorado easily rolling to a 39-0 win. The structure was officially dedicated Nov. 1, with a 3-0 homecoming win over Utah. Loser's 35-yard field goal was the only scoring in the game.



CU seemed to be in a bit of a slump, but came back in the next game against Colorado Mines to post a 38-0 win, the 16th in a row for the Silver and Gold. But that's where the run ended, as six lost fumbles, all in Denver territory, proved costly in a 0-0 tie with the Pioneers. Colorado was now 4-0-1 in conference play and hosted Colorado A&M (4-1) in the regular season finale, with the winner to claim sole rights to the RMAC title. It wasn't even close, as Loser scored 24 points in a variety of ways to lead CU to an easy 36-0 win.

Colorado's season turned out not to be over; an unexpected addition of two postseason games in "paradise" were added when several enthusiastic fans in Hawai'i raised the funds necessary to send an 18-man squad plus coaches to the islands for Christmas and New Year's. It marked the first postseason play in school history, and was a well-deserved reward for Witham's men, who had a 17-0-1 record over the '23 and '24 seasons.

The group left December 19, practiced a few days and handled the Hawai'i-Navy All-Stars with ease, 43-0. CU had won over several fans on Oahu and was dubbed the "Mountaineers" by a local sportswriter. But Colorado may have basked too long in the glory of the big win, not to mention the tropical sun, as an unheralded Hawai'i University team defeated the Silver and Gold on New Year's Day, 13-0. It was CU's first loss since late in the '22 season.

The 1925 team went 6-3, though opened with an embarrassing 3-0 loss to Chadron State, a small school in the Nebraska panhandle. CU tried a new offense, basically an early version of the "T-formation" and it proved disastrous. Witham returned to the single wing the following week for the remainder of the year and won six of eight games, the losses coming to CU's two main rivals, Utah and Colorado State.

That was the theme the next two years, both losing seasons with setbacks to both rivals, including two of the worst losses in Witham's tenure, a 37-3 homecoming loss at home to Utah in 1926 and a 39-7 loss at Colorado State in '27. The latter came after a 4-2 start to the season and was sandwiched in the middle of the two of the Witham's three biggest margins of defeat, a 46-7 clubbing at Southern California and a 48-0 loss Thanksgiving Day in Denver. Fans were getting restless, after all this was just three years removed from the two most glorious seasons in school history.

Amid the descent, in 1927 the university hired its first full-time director of athletics, **Harry Carlson**, a quiet, reserved yet wise leader who would lead the CU program for the next 38 years. His persona was one that could deliver a cool, calming influence, and he did just that after the tumultuous events that ended the '27 football season.

The '28 team avenged the losses to the Aggies and Pioneers, being on the good side of hard fought 13-7 and 7-0 wins, respectively. The record was 5-1, but the one defeat was again at the hands of Utah, and by a decisive 25-6 margin. The 1929 team would go 5-1-1, which included another close win over A&M (6-0) and a scoreless tie with Denver. The loss was a

crushing 40-0 mauling at Utah, perhaps fitting in history as it was CU's last game before the stock market crash in late October of '29. One bright spot was the brilliant play of sophomore tackle **Paul Sawyer**, who would be selected to CU's honorable mention All-Century team decades later. A season-ending 27-7 romp at Denver on Thanksgiving Day did nothing to quell the fan's thirst for Witham's head.

1930s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

- Dec. 14, 1930**—George Carlson becomes CU's first player to be awarded the Rhodes Scholarship.
- Nov. 21, 1931**—Colorado's 17-7 verdict over Colorado College is the 200th win in CU history.
- Jan. 3, 1932**—William "Navy Bill" Saunders named the 10th head coach in Colorado history.
- Dec. 17, 1933**—Clayton White, older becomes CU's second player to receive a Rhodes Scholarship.
- Nov. 10, 1934**—Colorado officially adopts the nickname "Buffaloes" at annual Homecoming game. The "Buffs" beat Utah 7-6.
- Feb. 7, 1935**—Bernard "Bunnie" Oakes named the 11th head coach in Colorado history.
- Nov. 7, 1936**—Byron "Whizzer" White scores 25 points against Utah in Boulder as CU wins, 31-7. White scored four touchdowns and kicked one extra point to establish a Buff record.
- Nov. 6, 1937**—Byron White single-handedly beats Utah at Salt Lake City, 17-7, in one of his greatest games ever. He returned a punt 95 yards, scored another touchdown on a 57-yard sprint, kicked a 15-yard field goal and kicked both extra points in accounting for all of CU's points.
- Nov. 25, 1937**—Byron White's jersey number "24" retired at the traditional Thanksgiving Day game with Denver. Buffs won, 34-7.
- Dec. 12, 1937**—The Pittsburgh Steelers select Byron White as the fourth pick in the first round of the NFL Draft, making White the first CU player to be drafted into the league.
- Dec. 13, 1937**—Byron White named to the All-America team, becoming the first Colorado player to gain the honor.
- Dec. 18, 1937**—Byron White becomes the third Colorado player to receive a Rhodes Scholarship. He will study at Oxford in 1939.
- Jan. 1, 1938**—Colorado makes its first Bowl game appearance ever, losing to No. 18 Rice, 28-14, in the Cotton Bowl.

The 1930 season opened with a bang, as Colorado went on the road and upset Big Six school Missouri, 9-0. CU then traveled in the other direction a week later and battled Utah State to a scoreless tie, but would then reel off four straight wins to enter a Nov. 15 matchup with Utah that would decide the RMAC title. However, the result was the same, with Utah using a 34-0 whipping to claim its sixth straight league crown. As for Colorado, the Silver and Gold had gone 16-3-2 the last three seasons, 16-0-2 against all others, but 0-3 versus Utah. The sole measuring stick of CU's success had been reduced to what its outcome was against its rivals to the west, and Colorado was on the short end of the score six straight year, the last three by a combined 99-6 count. Yet Witham survived, but not for long.

After the season, the first major national honor was bestowed on the program, when end **George Carlson** was awarded the



prestigious Rhodes Scholarship.

Colorado won three of its first five games in 1931, a roller-coaster ride that featured another upset of Missouri, this time 9-7 in Boulder, and a 25-6 throttling of DU, but included a loss at Colorado A&M. Up next was Utah, and Witham's job was likely riding on the result. A 32-0 loss, a third straight shutout by the Utes in the series, sealed his fate, despite two closing wins over Colorado College and Arizona. In January ('32), the school's Board of Regents opted not to renew his contract.

Paraphrasing what was written at the time, "winning seasons do not necessarily create longevity, they simply raise the standards." Witham's 63-26-7 record couldn't overcome the old coach's desire to not be overly engaged in recruiting, which was becoming more and more a key part of the job, and his record against Utah was the fatal blow.

Carlson was faced with hiring his first football coach, and one of the top requirements included the person being a good recruiter. It was in the late 1920s when coaches started to woo young men to pick their school over others, and a good personality was often the difference. He didn't have to look far to find his man, the popular **William "Navy Bill" Saunders**, who spent six years as line coach at Colorado A&M before taking over as head coach at Colorado Teachers in 1928. Carlson was impressed with how his Greeley teams, despite being winless in three tries against CU, always played tough and from start to finish.

Saunders' first team went 2-4, typical of a transition year where the upperclassmen weren't overly thrilled with the dismissal of their head coach. While the team had some good players, including backs **Al Oviatt**, **George Grosvenor** and **Jim Counter** along with end **Clayton White**, and CU won its first two games, a 7-6 home loss to Colorado A&M triggered four straight losses to end the season. It was followed by another shutout defeat (14-0) at Utah, the first of three straight games CU would record goose eggs on the scoreboard as CC and DU also whitewashed the Silver and Gold.

The 1933 team sprinted to a 5-1 start, including a 6-0 upset victory at Oklahoma State. A small sophomore rookie from Glenrock, Wyo., **William "Kay" Lam** was making a name for himself in the backfield, and CU started to understand the schemes Saunders had installed. Things were looking up for the annual battle with Utah, but alas, while playing the Utes tough for the first time in several years, the result was the same. Colorado finally scored in losing 13-6, and though having advantages in offense (288-200) and first downs (16-9), three fumbled punts in the first half led to all of Utah's points. Wins over Colorado Teachers and Denver closed a very successful 7-2 season, as observers felt CU had turned the corner.

Off the field, good news included White being named a Rhodes Scholar and that the final payment of \$2,491.75 was made on the stadium, completing paying off all obligations in less than 10 years. The bad news was that the season ticket price in '33 was raised to \$5.50 for the five-game schedule, and during the depression years, few had that kind of money for luxuries like sporting events.

TIME OUT / THE "BUFFALOES" ARE BORN

Prior to 1934, CU athletic teams usually were referred to as the "Silver and Gold," but other nicknames teams were sometimes called included Silver Helmets, Yellow Jackets, Hornets, Arapahoes, Big Horns, Grizzlies and Frontiersmen. During the summer of 1934, Colorado's 45th season of intercollegiate athletic competition, the *Silver & Gold*, the student newspaper at the time, decided to sponsor a national contest to select a permanent nickname and mascot. A \$5 prize would go to the author of the winning selection; remember, this was during the Great Depression, and five dollars was a good amount of money to most people. Over 1,000 entries arrived from almost every state in the union. Athletic Director Harry Carlson, graduate manager Walter Franklin and Kenneth Bundy from the newspaper were the judges.

Local articles first reported that Claude Bates of New Madrid, Mo., and James Proffitt of Cincinnati, Ohio, were co-winners for the prize as both submitted "Buffaloes" as their entry. But 10 days later, the newspaper declared Boulder resident Andrew Dickson the winner, after a follow-up revealed his submission of "Buffaloes" had actually arrived several days before those of originally deemed to be the winners. Through the years, synonyms which quickly came into use included "Bisons," "Bufs," "Thundering Herd," "Stampeding Herd," "Golden Avalanche," and "Golden Buffaloes."

The live buffalo mascot also first appeared in 1934, three weeks after the contest that declared Buffaloes the new nickname. For the final game of the season, a group of students paid \$25 to rent a buffalo calf along with a real cowboy as his keeper. The calf was the son of Killer, a famed bison at Trails End Ranch in Fort Collins. It took the cowboy and four students to keep the calf under control on the sidelines during the 7-0 win at the University of Denver on Thanksgiving Day.

Live buffaloes would make appearances at CU games on and off over the next 30 years, usually in a pen on the field or sometimes driven around in a cage. In the 1940s, the school kept a baby buffalo in a special pen at the now-defunct University Riding Academy. The first named buffalo was "Mr. Chips," who appeared for the first time at the 1957 CU Days kickoff rally, as supporter Mahlon White donated him to the school, and it was cared for by a men's honorary. Mr. Chips wasn't around for all that long, and several years would pass before one of college football's most entertaining and thrilling traditions would be born.



CU had opened the year with scoreless ties against Kansas and Missouri, and dropped to 0-1-2 with a 13-7 loss to CTC in Greeley. The latter was the first night game in Colorado history, and accounts of the game mentioned that the Teacher's team had a few tricks up their sleeve, one of which was wearing "dark gold uniforms that perfectly blended with the ball."

The new nickname, "Buffaloes," was officially bestowed on the entire athletic program at a ceremony during Homecoming on Nov. 10, when CU hosted Utah, with the newly named CU team searching for its first win since 1924 over its arch-rivals. The football Gods smiled on Colorado that day, as the "Bufs" made an early 7-0 lead stand up for a 7-6 win, with the Utes missing a point-blank field goal try at the end of the game to preserve the CU victory.

Colorado went on to win its final six games of the season to finish 6-1-2, and tied Teacher's for the league title as both had 6-1 marks. But CTC owned the head-to-head win to lay more claim to the crown.

Soon after the end of the season, Saunders abruptly resigned as head coach. He decided to return to his native Mississippi where his family had numerous land holdings and a management position for him. That's what it appeared publicly; privately, rumors had it he had asked the CU administration for more support, and when none was forthcoming, he pulled up stakes. He returned to coaching just two years after leaving CU, and would do so with bitter rival Denver.

Once again, CU was in the market for a new football coach.

Carlson had success staying in the region for his last hire, so he went to the well again. Now entrenched in his ninth year as athletic director, he had a knack for finding good coaches. Despite staying just one year before moving on to Oklahoma State where he would become a legend, Carlson had hired **Hank Iba** as CU's basketball coach for the 1933-34 season; his next basketball hire, **Forrest "Frosty" Cox**, who was also an assistant football coach, would make Colorado a western basketball power over his 13 seasons in Boulder. In short, Carlson could spot coaching talent.

Enter **Bernard "Bunny" Oakes**, who had been head coach at Montana University for the four previous years after serving a pair of two-year stints as an assistant at Tennessee and Nebraska. An Illinois graduate, he played his college ball with Red Grange under Bob Zuppke, one of the most innovative coaches of his day.

Oakes had the pedigree and flawless credentials, and while he led CU to new heights during his five-year tenure, his approach to coaching, deemed fanatical by many, would be the reason for his eventual demise. He had a one track mind and was totally dedicated to driving his teams to their limit. But that wore thin on his players, and following his third year in Boulder, the players reached the point where the price paid wasn't worth the results. He was fired after five seasons and a 25-15-1 record and four winning seasons, thought it included one that put the Buffaloes on the national map.

In Oakes' first season at Colorado, he inherited one of the most talented backfields in school history, with the senior Lam and a sophomore by the name of **Byron White**. In the '35 opener, CU dominated an Oklahoma team in Norman though losing, 3-0. The Buffs had a chance to win late, taking over at midfield in the final minutes with White and Lam leading the charge down to the 7-yard line, but the Sooner defense stopped CU cold to hang on.

Colorado went on to win the RMAC title with a 5-1 record, suffering three losses to future conference foes (OU, Missouri and Kansas). White was lost for the season with a knee injury early in league play, but Lam rushed for a then-national record 1,043 yards, had over 2,000 all-purpose yards and was the first Buffalo player ever chosen to play in a postseason All-Star game, earning an invitation to the East-West Shrine game in San Francisco.

The 1936 season served as an appetizer for what lay ahead; a modest 4-3 overall record included another tough opening loss to Oklahoma (8-0 in Boulder), but also featured a third straight win over Utah. White, who this season was nicknamed "Whizzer" by *Denver Post* sportswriter Leonard Cahn, accounted for every single point in a 31-7 win over the Utes. CU was 4-0 in league play at that point and appeared headed for another title, but two one-point road defeats derailed the bid: a 14-13 setback at Utah State, the eventual league champ, and then a 7-6 Thanksgiving Day defeat to former CU coach Saunders and DU before a state record crowd of 27,700.

The 1937 season would be Colorado's last in the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference. A gap between the larger and smaller institutions had been widening for some time, from the caliber of play and squad size to home attendance. The RMAC also had grown to 12 schools over the year, and scheduling was way off balance.

The seven biggest schools officially formed the Mountain States Conference, though it was also referred to at times as the Skyline League and even the Big Seven. BYU, CU, Colorado A&M, Denver, Utah, Utah State and Wyoming made the break and would begin league play in 1938; the other five remained in the RMAC which still thrives to this day in the NCAA's Division II.

The "fourth" time proved to be the charm to open the '37 season; from 1934-36, CU opened against a Big Six Conference opponent and was winless with two losses and a tie. This time around, Missouri visited Boulder and the tone was set for the entire year with a 14-6 win over Don Faurot's charges.

The Buffs would not allow a point the next four games, as CU steamrolled Utah State (33-0), Brigham Young (14-0), Colorado A&M (47-0) and Colorado Mines (54-0). Along the way, White was rolling up impressive numbers and garnering national attention, though the Buffaloes were hardly a one-man show. Fullback **Erv Cheney** and halfback **Orville "O.T." Nuttall** were dangerous runners in their own right, and when White dropped back to pass, ends **Leon Lavington** and **Lex Quarnberg** were popular targets. And it was said that center **Gene Moore** could play for any team in the country.



TIMEOUT / BYRON WHITE

Byron Raymond “Whizzer” White first made a name for himself while playing for the University of Colorado’s undefeated 1937 football team.

The first All-American at Colorado in football and the second in any sport, he led the nation in rushing that season with a record-breaking total of 1,121 yards (in eight games) and amassed 122 points. Those marks were erased only after colleges went to 10- and 11-game schedules. He was known as a “60-minute performer,” excelling on defense as well as offense.

White led that 1937 team to Colorado’s first-ever bowl appearance, facing Rice in the ’38 Cotton Bowl on New Year’s Day in Dallas. Though Rice won, 28-14, “Whizzer” left them talking. He threw an 8-yard touchdown pass to Joe Antonio and then returned an interception 47 yards for a touchdown to put Colorado up 14-0 in the first quarter before the Owls battled back. He rushed 23 times for 54 yards in the game, and had 166 all-purpose yards including returns.

Denver sports writer, Leonard Kahn, gave White’s nickname to him. Kahn labeled White with this name because “he seemed to whiz by people.”

White was also a .400 hitter on the baseball team, and a standout on CU’s basketball squad that made the N.I.T. in 1938. His off the field performances were just as impressive as the ones on it. In 186 hours of undergraduate work, White earned 180 hours of A, and 6 hours of B. He was the student body president, a Rhodes Scholar, and Phi Beta Kappa.

After his time at Colorado, the Wellington native went on to play professional football for the Pittsburgh Pirates (now known as the Steelers). White was Pittsburgh’s first pick in the 1938 draft, and would lead the league in rushing with 567 yards that year and was named All-Pro. White left professional football to attend post-graduate school at Oxford College in England. After Oxford, White played one more season of football with Detroit, and again led the league in rushing with 514 yards and was again All-Pro. In the off-season, White attended Yale Law School.

During World War II, White was an officer in naval intelligence, serving most of his duty in the South Pacific. During his time of service, White earned a Bronze Star, and formed a friendship with John F. Kennedy.

Following the war, White returned to Yale Law School where he graduated first in his class in 1946. After a successful career as a corporation lawyer, White entered the political sphere in 1960, heading a pre-convention Kennedy movement that helped the soon-to-be president win the state of Colorado. White later served as deputy attorney general under Kennedy.

On March 30, 1962, White was appointed an associated justice of the U.S. Supreme Court at age 44. He served for 31 years, and retired in March, 1993.

The honorable Byron R. White was the first athlete inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall-Of-Fame in 1965. He was also inducted into the NFL Hall of Fame, the National Football Foundation’s College Football Hall of Fame, the GTE Academic Hall of Fame, the Rocky Mountain Athletic Conference Hall of Fame, and was the inaugural inductee into CU’s Athletic Hall of Fame in 1998. He was selected to CU’s All-Century Team in 1989, marking the school’s first 100 years of football, and his football number, 24, was the first retired by the university.

White left an indelible mark on the field and in the classroom at the University of Colorado. Born June 8, 1917 in Fort Collins, Colo., he died from complications of pneumonia in Denver at the age of 84 on April 15, 2002.

Next loomed the annual test with Utah, the first of two November contests that would determine the league champion. White scored all of CU’s points in a 17-7 win on the road as the Buffs won their sixth in a row. The following week, CU trailed Colorado College 6-0 at halftime in the home finale, but Whizzer scored three times in the first 10 minutes of the second half and the Buffs cruised to a 35-6 win.

The final RMAC game of the season was set for Thanksgiving Day in Denver, pitting CU against DU, with the Buffs 6-0 in league play with the Pioneers 5-1. While CU was guaranteed a share of the title, it wanted it outright, and behind several long plays from White, the Buffs earned it with a 34-7 win.

White was named to every All-America team, becoming the school’s first in football to earn the distinction and just the third CU athlete bestowed the honor in any sport (his good friends **Gil Cruter** and **Claude Walton** were track All-Americans in 1936). He also earned one of two regional Rhodes scholarships the same month, the third CU football player in less than 10 years to do so.

As for the team, and largely thanks to America’s captivation with White, the Buffaloes were invited to their first bowl game. CU lined up across from No. 18 Rice, its first ever game against a nationally ranked opponent, in the Cotton Bowl on New Year’s Day in Dallas. Oakes would put his team through two practices a day in Dallas, often in heavy rains. The prac-



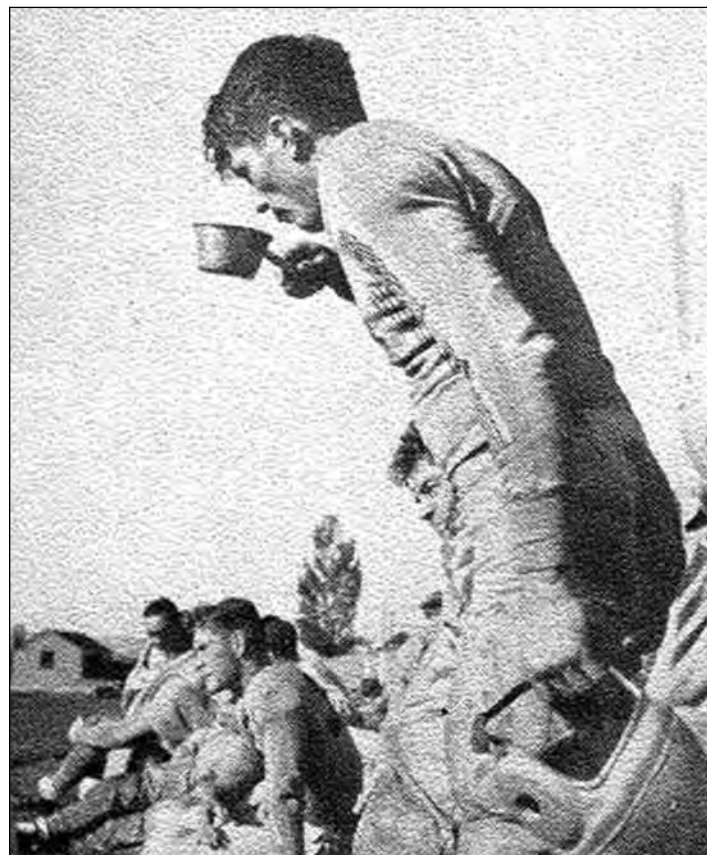
tice gear never had a chance to dry between sessions and the players became disillusioned with the experience.

Still, behind White, CU stormed to a 14-0 lead, but the Owls rallied behind their star, Ernie Lain, for a 28-14 win. To outsiders, the season was still a huge success, but inside the program, seeds of discontent had been planted. The train ride back to Boulder was no fun.

With the '37 team laden with seniors, CU's first season in the new conference was a rebuilding project. The Buffs opened 0-3, including non-league losses to Missouri and George Washington, but after three wins and a tie the over the next month, a winning year could be salvaged with a Thanksgiving win over Denver. But the Pioneers ended that hope with a 19-12 win.

Two key players, Nuttall and **Marty Brill**, quit prior to the 1939 season, and a third, **Lou Liley**, soon joined them. They did not want to play for Oakes. After a second straight 0-3 start, and aware of the players' displeasure and the coaches demeanor, the CU athletic committee recommended he be fired immediately. Oakes was only saved by the Board of Regents, which basically gave him an unenthusiastic vote of confidence.

Sophomores dominated the '39 roster, and they pulled it together to win the last five games of the year. Players like **Paul McClung**, **Leo Stasica** and **Ray Jenkins** put feelings aside and played for the school, and thanks to a 27-17 win



Kayo Lam takes a water break during a 1933 game.

over DU in Boulder, Thanksgiving Day also brought what would be CU's only real legitimate Mountain States title.

Oakes final team posted a 5-3 record, and though he had three years remaining on a five-year contract he signed following the '37 season. Many thought the strong finish would save him, but the players delivered a 13-page complaint and petition for Oakes' removal to the Regents at the board's February meeting. Thirty-five of the 40 players signed it, and as the month neared its end, he was fired and received a severance check believed to be \$10,000.

1940s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

June 11, 1940—Cross Country & Track Coach Frank Potts named the 12th head coach in Colorado history.

Mar. 3, 1941—Jim Yeager named the 13th head coach in Colorado history.

Mar. 11, 1944—Frank Potts takes over once again as head coach while Jim Yeager is serving his country in World War II.

Jan. 10, 1945—Jim Yeager returns to coach Buffs.

Nov. 27, 1947—A 26-20 loss at Denver is significant in several ways: it was CU's final game in the Mountain States Conference; it was the last game in CU-Denver series; it was CU's last on Thanksgiving Day; and it was the first game in 58 seasons of Colorado football where both teams scored at least 20 points.

Feb. 3, 1948—Dallas Ward named the 14th head coach in Colorado history, as it is athletic director Harry Carlson's most important hire as Ward will lead CU into the tough Big Seven Conference.

Oct. 2, 1948—Colorado's first game as a member of the Big Seven. The Buffs lost 40-7 at Kansas.

Oct. 9, 1948—Buffs' dramatic 19-6 upset of Nebraska in Boulder was Dallas Ward's first win as coach, and Colorado's first win in the Big Seven.

Track coach **Frank Potts** took over coaching the gridders, as the payment to Oakes depleted the salary budget for the 1940 staff. Potts had been a football assistant since he arrived at CU in 1927, was popular among the players, and knew the system. It would give Carlson time to search for a successor if Potts didn't take on the role permanently.

The '40 Buffaloes logged a 5-3-1 record, tying for second in the conference, and Carlson offered the job to Potts, who declined. In came **Jim Yeager**, who had been head coach at Iowa State for four years. His first CU team was 3-4-1, though opened league play with three straight wins.

Now familiar with the program and the surroundings, Yeager's 1942 Buffs stormed to a 7-2 mark, sharing the league title with Utah, but the Utes had won the head-to-head battle 13-0. The future seemed bright, but football was soon to take a back seat to the events of the world.

The United States was fully involved in World War II by the end of that season, and athletes from all schools were now members of the various armed services. Those left on campus were players too young to be drafted or were rejected for one reason or another. Yeager remained the head coach for the '43 season, but would rejoin the Navy after the season.



It was common for colleges not to travel far during the war years of 1943 through 1945, often supplementing the schedule with teams from area service bases. Quite often, schools would square off against their former players who were assigned nearby.

The conference schedule was reduced to just two games in 1943 and 1944, with CU defeating Utah twice to claim the '43 title and posted wins over the Utes and Denver to win the '44 crown. But no one really celebrated these fairly undistinguished seasons or titles. Potts took over the team in Yeager's absence for the '44 and '45 seasons, with CU denied a third straight league championship with a season-ending 14-8 loss at Denver to the eventual champ Pioneers.

Yeager returned as did many of the players for the 1946 season, as CU regained the services of such heralded players as tackle **Paul Briggs** and ends **Ed Pudlik** and **John Zisch**. After opening with a 13-7 win over Yeager's old team, Iowa State, CU traveled to Texas where it was dealt a 76-0 thrashing to the Longhorns. Some say the team didn't recover for two full seasons. Inconsistent play marred the last two years of Yeager's reign, often with the Buffs struggling to put two good performances back-to-back. The '46 and '47 teams combined to go 9-9-1, and Yeager had lost his love for coaching. He resigned shortly after the '47 campaign and would become one of Boulder's leading businessmen until his death in 1971.

It also signaled the end of an era on several fronts: the war was fully behind the country, a new breed of younger coaches who embraced recruiting challenges had taken over, and locally, CU's days in the Mountain States Conference had come to an end. Colorado had been accepted into the Missouri Valley Intercollegiate Athletic Association, also known as the Big Six. It was now the Big Seven.

Carlson was now faced with making the most important hire of his two decade career as athletic director. He needed someone to both lead Colorado into its new conference waters as well as to stem the tide of quick coaching regimes; four different men had piloted the football team over the previous 16 seasons, not including the Potts-Yeager multiple terms due to World War II. CU needed consistency.

Carlson had long lobbied for CU to make the move into a tougher conference, with eyes specifically on the Big Six to the east, and the move was met with quite a bit of controversy. While there was eager anticipation of CU's impending move to the highest level of college athletics, many had doubts that the school could pull it off, particularly in football. They pointed to CU's 2-8-2 record against Big Six teams in the years leading up to the move, though all but two of the defeats had been closely contested.

Thus it was a surprise that the search for the Buffs' new football coach didn't generate that much excitement, likely due to CU's nine losses over the '46 and '47 seasons, its most in a two-year span in 20 years. Two candidates for the position were head coaches in the east, Dudley DeRoot at West Virginia and Bill Glassford at New Hampshire. Both eventually headed west, DeRooy to New Mexico and Glassford to Nebraska, but neither was Colorado's man.

Carlson settled on a 42-year old assistant from the University of Minnesota who had an impressive pedigree. **Dallas Ward**, who played end at Oregon State in the 1920s and coached for nine seasons in the Minneapolis high school ranks, had learned under one of the best in Bernie Bierman, and when Minnesota was a national powerhouse. He had a reputation of having a great offensive mind, was extremely well organized, and was considered a great recruiter. Though possessing a gruff exterior, Ward also had one quality Carlson appreciated: those who played for him generated a lasting devotion and loyalty to the man. After nine years as an assistant under Bierman, helping contribute to the Gophers powerful single-wing offense, he was ready to run his own program.

His first game was on Sept. 25, 1948, at home against a New Mexico team coming off a 4-5-1 season with few expectations of doing much, if any better. Backs **Harry Narcisian**, **Malcolm Miller** and **Don Hagin** all showed some promise, but CU never really got untracked in losing 9-6 to a Lobo team that would win just once more the rest of the season.

Colorado had officially become a member of the Big Seven Conference on Dec. 1, 1947, and its winter and spring sports teams would participate in their new league before the football team. The basketball squad had an inauspicious start, losing its first six conference games, and CU's first football game as a league member was no different, as the Buffs traveled to Kansas and returned to Boulder on the wrong side of a 40-7 score.

Two games, two losses. But the Buffaloes were starting to fully understand the intricacies of the single wing offense. Once mastered, ball control would become CU's trait, so much so that in the 10-plus seasons that followed under Ward, the Buffs would lose just four games by a bigger margin than the 33-point setback at KU, two at the hands of mighty Oklahoma.

Fortunately, Colorado fans didn't have to wait any longer for Ward's first win, and it came against a future nemesis and eventual rival in Nebraska. The Cornhuskers came to Boulder a heavy favorite, but Narcisian, also nicknamed "Roaring Twenty" as that was his uniform number, threw two touchdown passes and had 195 yards of total offense to lead CU to a 19-6 win. The Buffaloes had amassed 374 yards on offense, its most in two seasons, while holding Nebraska to just 150.

The following week, the Buffs scored their quickest ever in a game (15 seconds in), a mark that would stand for 22 seasons, when **Ed Pudlik** recovered an Iowa State fumble in the end zone for a 7-0 CU lead. But the Cyclones stormed back for an 18-7 verdict, and the euphoria from the Nebraska win subsided and was replaced by a rollercoaster ride the rest of the year. CU bounced back with an impressive 51-7 win over Kansas State, rushing for 267 yards and six touchdowns, then split two games with old rivals from the Mountain States Conference, losing 14-12 at Utah and besting Utah State, 28-14. CU led No. 20 Missouri 7-0 at halftime in Columbia, but would succumb 27-13, and Ward's first season came to a close with a 29-25 loss to Colorado A&M.



Though CU couldn't string two wins together at any point in what amounted to a 3-6 season, the dominance over Nebraska made the rest of the conference take notice. CU won two of five league games and finished a respectable fourth in the league standings, but due to scheduling issues, CU did not play Oklahoma in its first two years of Big Seven play. That was no doubt likely a good omen at the time.

The 1948 season was a transitory one, and a senior-dominated team at that, with the '49 Buffaloes a mixture of Ward recruits and inexperienced upperclassmen trying more or less to survive the season. CU opened by exacting some revenge against Kansas, toppling the Jayhawks 13-12 in Boulder in what would be the Buffs' lone league win of the year. CU finished 1949 with a 3-7 mark, its two other wins coming against old RMAC and MSC pals Utah and Utah State. CU was in every loss but one until the end, with Colorado A&M once again polishing off the Buffs' year on a sour note with a second straight win in Boulder, this time by a 14-7 score.

Colorado had now suffered three straight losing seasons for the first time in its football history.

1950s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

- Oct. 21, 1950**—Zack Jordan highlights Buffaloes' 28-25 win over Arizona in Boulder by setting an NCAA punting record: six punts for 343 yards, an average of 57.2 a kick.
- Nov. 17, 1951**—Colorado's 36-14 win at Nebraska is the first national television appearance by the Buffaloes.
- Sept. 20, 1952**—Buffaloes beat San Jose State, 20-14, for the 300th win in Colorado history.
- Sept. 27, 1952**—Colorado ties Oklahoma in Boulder, 21-21, to give Oklahoma one of only two blemishes in its 75 conference game unbeaten streak which started in 1946 and ended in 1959.
- Nov. 20, 1954**—Carroll Hardy sets a national record rushing for 238 yards on just 10 attempts in a 38-14 win over Kansas State.
- Jan. 1, 1957**—Colorado wins its first ever bowl game, a 27-21 victory over Clemson in the 1957 Orange Bowl at Miami.
- Oct. 11, 1958**—Howard Cook ties Byron White's record by scoring 25 points against Arizona in Tucson. Cook scored four touchdowns and kicked one extra point to lead the Buffaloes to a 65-12 rout of the **Wildcats**.
- Feb. 9, 1959**—Sonny Grandelius named the 15th head coach in Colorado history.
- Nov. 28, 1959**—CU defeats Air Force in Boulder, 15-7, to close the season; spectators include Byron White and his guest, president candidate John F. Kennedy. To this day, the only game attended in Boulder by a U.S. president, prior to, during or after his term in office.

There was reason for optimism heading into 1950, as the team now spouted several savvy veterans and some ready-to-blossom underclassmen like backs **Merwin Hodel**, **Tom Brookshier** and **Zack Jordan**, the latter also a fine punting specialist, ends **Chuck Mosher** and **Don Branby**, tackle **Dick Punches** and guard **Jack Swigert**. But a season-opening 14-7 loss at Iowa State, in which the Cyclones scored two touchdowns late to steal the win, and a 27-21 setback at Kansas sandwiched a 34-6 triumph in the home opener over Kansas State had CU off to a 1-2 start.

What was alarming to followers is that CU was piling up losses in near-miss fashion, mostly due to the team fading in the second half and down the stretch in particular. The loss at KU epitomized that, as CU led 21-0 midway through the third quarter before watching the Jayhawks score four touchdowns in the game's final 20 minutes, the winning TD coming with 1:30 remaining.

So when Colorado led Nebraska 14-0 at halftime in the fourth game of the year, fans were still holding their breath. This time around, Punches recovered a fumble in the end zone for a touchdown that sealed a 28-19 Buff win. A week later against Arizona, CU again jumped to a 14-0 lead but needed a 77-yard Hodel scoring run in the fourth quarter to ice a 28-25 win. Colorado was now 3-2, the first time it had climbed over .500 more than one game into the season during Ward's brief tenure.

CU remained one game above even with a 20-20 tie on the road at Utah, having rallied to tie the game on a 45-yard interception return by Branby. The Buffs had a chance at winning, but **Lee Venzke's** 32-yard field goal sailed wide and Colorado returned home from Salt Lake City with the task of preparing to face the nation's No. 3 ranked team.

Oklahoma had long been considered one of the nation's top programs, and the Buffs and Sooners had a limited history, playing four times previous to being members of the same conference. OU had won three, but all were hard-fought battles.

The Sooners came riding high into Boulder, not only as the third-ranked team in the land, but also riding a 26-game winning streak. Ward's teams would go 0-8-1 against Oklahoma during his tenure, an era where most teams would do the same (more likely 0-9), with Bud Wilkinson's Sooners the team of the decade. But CU was a thorn in the side to the Sooner almost every one of those games, and the first encounter in 1950 was no exception.

Jordan pinned Oklahoma deep in its own territory in the opening minutes, punting the ball dead on the Sooner 2. That eventually led to CU winning the early field position battle and a Hodel run had CU ahead, 6-0, though Venzke missed the extra point (he'd miss all three on the day). Oklahoma grabbed the halftime lead, 13-6, led 20-12 after three and held off the Buffaloes in winning, 27-18. The Sooners' option game rolled up 351 yards on the ground, one of the highest totals ever against CU at the time. Still, it was the closest league game of the season for the Sooners, which won the 1950 national championship.

Missouri dealt CU a 21-19 setback in the final conference contest of the season, the first of several times in the 1950s the Tigers would face the Buffs the week following the emotional Oklahoma game. And Missouri took full advantage of that fact, going 4-0-2 versus CU on those occasions, three of the wins by eight points or less. In the first of such instances, Colorado had dominated Missouri most of the game, had a 17-2 edge in first downs at one point on the way to a season-high 405 yards of total offense, but a late TD after a questionable pass interference call on Brookshier set Mizzou up for the winning touchdown.



Now 3-4-1, with a 2-4 record in Big Seven play for a second straight sixth place league finish, CU had non-league games Oregon and Colorado A&M left to play. Wins would give Ward his first winning season at Colorado, and the school's first in four years.

Jordan led the nation in punting with a record 48.2 average, bolstered by a 55.0 average on four punts in a 21-7 win over Oregon in Boulder. Jordan, a talented halfback who threw the majority of passes in CU's single-wing offensive attack, was never honored as an All-American for his punting accomplishments, though he would make first-team All-Big Seven as a senior in 1952.

Last up was the rivalry game with the Aggies, and two years of frustration on the Buffaloes' part was obvious as CU thumped A&M, 31-6. The Buffs had 401 yards on offense, 271 on the ground, holding A&M to just 139 yards in the process. **Jim Dalthorp** intercepted a pitch and returned it 30 yards for a touchdown in the second half to put an exclamation point on the win, scoring in one of the more unusual ways that can be done in the sport.

Year three of the Dal Ward era was now in the books as was his first winning campaign. CU was just 11-17-1 at this point under him, but a foundation had been built. The Buffaloes had 1,162 yards on offense including just under 800 rushing yards in the final three weeks of the '50 season, both school all-time highs over a three-game span. The offense was now fully understood by the players, and improvement on defense was evident.

Starting in 1951, Colorado began an eight-year run under Ward where it would post a collective 52-24-5 record. While the Big Seven was often referred to as "Oklahoma and the six dwarfs," the Buffaloes were a tough second banana to the Sooners and were generally considered as the conference's next best team the entire decade.

It is often said that you can't judge a football coach until his fourth season, when his first recruiting class comes into full bloom. The '51 Buffaloes, Ward's fourth team, went 7-3, the most wins in almost a decade, going back to the '42 squad and its 7-2 mark. More important was the second place finish in the Big Seven, the first of seven second or third place conference finishes the remainder of Ward's tenure.

The entire starting offensive backfield returned in 1951, and by season's end, **Hodel** (597 yards), **Ron Johnson** (455), **Carroll Hardy** (423), **Woody Shelton** (417) and **Ralph Curtis** (233) were the main weapons in leading the Buffs to a school record 2,516 rushing yards (a figure that two other Ward teams down the road would obliterate). Players like sophomores **Dick Knowlton** (guard) and **Gary Knafelc** (end) would become entrenched as three-year starters.

But there were still concerns about the defense, and the first two games proved those valid. CU built a 14-0 lead in the opener over Colorado A&M, only to see the Aggies pull to within one in the fourth quarter before two late scores fueled a 28-13 win. Northwestern then used two long pass plays to jump to a quick 14-0 lead in the first four minutes of the next game, cruising to a 35-14 win. CU had split its first two games of the season for third straight year, and the result in all three previous game threes was a loss ... and No. 20 ranked Kansas was headed into town for the first conference game of the year.

It marked just the fifth ranked opponent CU had ever played at the time, but the Buffaloes held their own in the first four, owning leads at one time in all. This time, CU would lead from start to finish. Jordan's 2-yard touchdown run just six minutes in got the Buffs on the scoreboard first, and the lead grew to 14-0 on a nifty 65-yard punt return, one which featured a reverse from Shelton to Brookshier. KU clawed back to 14-13 by halftime, but TD runs from Johnson and Venzke upped the lead to 28-20 with four minutes left in the game. Venke scored again less than minute later following a KU turnover, and CU went on to a 35-27 victory.

TIMEOUT / FRED CASOTTI

In 1952, one of the school's all-time great personalities arrived on the CU scene. Fred "The Count" Casotti was hired as sports information director, and he would begin a five-decade love affair with his alma mater. A '49 graduate in journalism, the SID job opened up in the summer and athletic director Harry Carlson took a chance on the sports editor with CU ties from a small newspaper in Iowa.

Casotti served 16 years as SID, another 20 as associate athletic director, and then 14 more as the school's historian until his death in 2001. As creative as they came, he penned poems and limericks in his weekly news releases that helped garner CU national attention; the press couldn't wait to see what prose he included in his latest mailing. Casotti wrote three books on Colorado football, including the classic Football CU* Style, the asterisk defining CU as "Casotti Uncensored."

He was inducted into the CoSIDA Hall of Fame in 1996 and posthumously into the state of Colorado Sports Hall of Fame in 2002 and CU's Athletic Hall of Fame in 2006.

He passed away the night before a big game against Texas A&M in CU's 2001 Big 12 title run, and a mysterious Aggie fumble and subsequent CU recovery and return for a score saved a 31-21 win. It prompted assistant coach John Wristen to say postgame, "You know that fumble at the end ... (glances upward) ... Thank you, Fred."



The KU win sparked the Buffs in their next two games. Curtis rushed for 121 yards and three touchdowns on just 14 carries, leading CU to a 34-13 romp over Missouri. The defense then played one of its finest games of the season, holding Kansas State to just 41 plays in a 20-7 win in Manhattan, Colorado's first Big Seven conference road win after eight losses.

And with a 3-0 league record, the Buffaloes were atop the standings and squarely in the title picture. An unranked, 2-2 Oklahoma team was next, though the Sooners had won their only Big Seven game.

CU was confident but not cocky heading in, though the fans were optimistic, but what transpired could have set the program back. Sooner quarterback (and future CU coach and athletic director) Eddie Crowder, an option master not known for his throwing prowess, threw three first quarter touchdown passes that covered 27, 67 and 38 yards to build a 27-0 lead. Oklahoma went on to win, 55-14, with Crowder passing for 189 yards and four scores.

A key point in Ward's career, a lesser team could have folded the tent. However, the Buffs reeled off three straight wins, one of which was a 54-0 demolishing of Utah where CU set school records for rushing yards (452) and total offense (627). The seventh win of the year came in the league finale at Nebraska, the first televised game in school history. The Buffs did not disappoint, and with 2,000 fans making the trip from Colorado, Hardy and Hodel both rushed for over 100 yards in a 36-14 win, which gave CU sole possession of second place in the conference, behind Oklahoma.

A season-ending 45-7 loss at No. 2 Michigan State didn't damper the overall optimism. Most of the '51 team was back for 1952, and Colorado had established itself as a legitimate conference contender.

A lackluster 20-14 win over San Jose State opened the '52 campaign, though the Buff ground game was as advertised, piling up 350 yards. But it was hardly the kind of game CU wanted with No. 4 Oklahoma coming to town the following week, with the Sooners riding a 26-game conference winning streak.

Jordan played one of his finest games, as the 5-11, 180-pound senior scored all three CU touchdowns as he went toe-to-toe with OU's Billy Vessels, the 1952 Heisman Trophy winner. But his real weapon was his right leg, as he averaged 56.0 yards on seven punts, including quick-kick boomers of 72, 77 and 78 yards which enabled CU to control field position.

It was a see-saw battle from the start, and neither team led by more than a single score. Oklahoma tied it at 21 with 1:51 to play. Colorado drove into OU territory in the waning seconds, but time ran out after **Frank Bernardi's** 22-yard run to the Sooner 21, before the Buffs could run another play or try a game winning field goal.

OU went on to win its next 45 league games, and in the 10-year history of the Big Seven (it became the Big Eight in 1958), the Sooners were 57-0-1 in conference play with just that one blemish, courtesy of Colorado.

CU then hit the road for a game at ninth-ranked Kansas. In a statistically even game it came down to defense, and the Jayhawks not once but twice stopped CU at their 1-yard line in a 21-12 win. The 1-1-1 start could have been so much more, which could have given the Buffs their first-ever national ranking. Despite a 5-1-1 finish for a 6-2-2 overall record, CU had to wait two more years for that milestone to occur.

Frustrated by a 2-2-2 mark and fourth place finish in the Big Seven, CU took out its frustration on Colorado A&M in the season finale. A 61-0 rout of the Aggies saw the Buffs rush for 422 yards and six touchdowns on offense, while the defense intercepted six passes and held A&M to just 86 total yards.

Colorado slipped to 6-4 in 1953, which included a tumble to sixth in the league with a 2-4 record, though it marked the first time under Ward that the Buffs won their first two games. Sitting at 0-3 in the conference prior to its game at ninth-ranked Oklahoma, many expected some serious OU payback for the '52 tie. The Buffs battled and with the single-wing offense producing 277 yards and three touchdowns on the ground, CU tied the game with 90 seconds remaining. But Merrill Green's 51-yard TD run with 36 seconds on the clock rallied the Sooners for a 27-20 win.

Though coming close again against OU, the Buffs became motivated for the remainder of the year, pocketing four straight wins to polish off the season. Included on the back end were road wins at Nebraska (14-10) and Colorado A&M (13-7).

That carried into 1954, as the Buffs opened with five straight wins to extend the win streak to nine, the longest since a 15-game run over the 1923-24 seasons, and opened 5-0 for the first time since 1937. Colorado did not allow a point in its first three wins (61-0 over Drake, 46-0 versus Colorado A&M and 27-0 at Kansas), and following a 40-18 win at Arizona, CU achieved a new pinnacle in program history.

Going into the next game at Iowa State, Colorado was a ranked team, appearing at No. 17, and the Buffs responded with their fourth shutout in five games, blanking the Cyclones, 20-0. CU climbed to No. 11, and had Nebraska and Oklahoma at Folsom Field up next.

But it all derailed the following week, when the Cornhuskers shocked CU, 20-6. Bowl hopes were dashed seven days later when the Sooners scored twice in the fourth quarter in rallying to a 13-6 win. CU salvaged a 19-19 tie at Missouri in the next game, the Buffs saved from a loss when Bernardi blocked a game winning extra point try literally with his face. He suffered a broken nose. Wins at Utah and versus Kansas State produced a 7-2-1 season record, but Nebraska edged the Buffs for second in the league and earned an invitation over the Buffs to the Orange Bowl with Oklahoma ineligible to return (teams could not go two seasons in a row to a bowl in the 1950s).



Behind sophomore **John “The Beast” Bayuk**, CU rushed for a school record 3,160 yards, topping 400 in four games. Bayuk had 824 of the yards, the most by a Buff since Byron White led the nation in 1937. In his final game, Hardy set a national record with 238 yards on just 10 attempts in CU’s 38-14 thumping of Kansas State; CU as a team had 493 on 36 tries, or 13.7 yards per carry, in the rout.

Hardy would go on to the play professional football and baseball, becoming famous when he became the only player to pinch-hit for Ted Williams.

The ’55 season was a near carbon copy. Colorado won its first four games, appeared in the rankings at No. 20 after the third win, and zoomed to No. 14 following the fourth. Next on the calendar, a date at No. 3 Oklahoma. CU stormed to a 14-0 lead, only to see the Sooners rally for a 21-14 halftime lead en route to a 56-21 thrashing. All told, CU lost four of its last six and finished 6-4, and once again placed third in the league.

A 35-0 loss to Oregon in the ’56 season opener, on the heels of a 10-0 setback to Colorado A&M that ended the ’55 campaign had Ward feeling the heat. A five-game winning streak quelled the critics, and CU was poised to enter the rankings again, but was staring No. 1 Oklahoma in the face ... and coming off a 40-0 win at Notre Dame.

CU was ready and sprinted to a 19-6 halftime lead, but as often was the case, Oklahoma rallied. The Sooners scored two third quarter touchdowns, the first aided by a fourth down conversion from their own 28, and then tacked on a clinching score with 5:29 left to win 27-19. The pollsters were still impressed with the Buffaloes and ranked them No. 18. Oklahoma went on to win the national championship.

Also as usual, Missouri was CU’s next foe after Oklahoma and the Tigers seized on the Buffs’ OU hangover and forged a 14-0 lead. With OU ineligible again for the Orange Bowl, the winner of the CU-MU game would earn the invitation.

In 1955, CU had its first black football player make the varsity, a transfer from Trinidad (Colo.) Junior College, end **Frank Clarke**. He made his presence felt, leading CU in receiving in his junior and senior seasons, but especially this day against the Tigers. His 17-yard touchdown reception from **Boyd Dowler** shaved the Mizzou lead to 14-7 in the third quarter. Then aided by a personal foul call against Missouri for punching Bayuk, who had bit the forearm of the player after it drove inside his faceguard, a fourth quarter drive was kept alive and Dowler found Clarke again on an 18-yard TD play, with **Ellwin Indorf’s** PAT kick giving CU a 14-14 tie.

CU earned the league’s Orange Bowl bid by virtue of the tie, as CU finished 4-1-1 and Missouri 3-2-1. The Buffs tuned up for the bowl with wins over Utah and Arizona, an re-entered the polls at No. 20. A see-saw Orange Bowl against Clemson, starting with CU taking a 20-0 lead only to see the “other” CU go ahead 21-20 early in the fourth quarter, did end on a good note for the Buffs as a 1-yard TD run by Bayuk with 7:13 to go paved the way for a 27-21 win and an 8-2-1 record.

Expectations were at an all-time high, but a 6-3-1 record in 1957, with a 14-13 loss at Oklahoma thanks to a blocked PAT, and subsequent 9-6 loss to Missouri put a damper on a season which CU led the nation in rushing with 3,224 yards. Senior **Bob Stransky** was the school’s third thousand yard rusher, finishing with 1,097 and earning All-America honors, while junior **Eddie Dove** was the master of the long play, with a 90-yard run and 80-yard reception for touchdowns.

Different season, same story inasmuch as 1958 was concerned. A 5-0 start, which featured a 65-12 throttling of Arizona in Tucson, had CU ranked No. 9 in the nation. The game six opponent ... No. 7 Oklahoma ... CU took a 7-0 lead ... OU rallied to win, 23-7.

Colorado lost four of its last five games, save for only a 7-0 win at Utah. But it was the last two that sealed Ward’s fate. CU led rival Colorado State (the Aggies were no longer A&M) 14-7 in the fourth quarter, but lost 15-14 when CSU scored a touchdown with 4:29 left, and then used the new two-point PAT to take the lead. Then in the finale against Air Force, in just its third year of varsity football, the Buffs thoroughly dominated the 7-0-1 Falcons. CU outgained them 420-160, but fumbled 12 times, losing seven, and a late AFA score on an intercepted pitch gave the Zoomies a 20-14 victory.

One highlight of the year was guard **John Wooten** earning All-America accolades, the first black CU football player to earn the distinction.

On January 23, 1959 the Regents voted 5-1 to dismiss Ward, saying only that it was “in the best interests of the university.” The anti-Ward people in the minority rejoiced, but the pro-Ward faction was furious.

The Regents refused to reconsider the move and the process set forth to hire the school’s 15th head football coach. The wish list includes a few head coaches and some notable assistants, with Michigan State aide **Everett “Sonny” Grandelius** quickly rising to the top. The 29-year old was officially named the new CU boss on February 9.

There weren’t many expectations for the ’59 season; the ’58 team was peppered with seniors, and while CU had a solid sophomore class, the Buffs were largely inexperienced.

Grandelius brought change, jettisoning the single-wing for the T-Formation, in addition to one of the most distinctive moves in school history: the Buffaloes scrapped their old gold jerseys for black and silver uniforms. The black has remained since, sans a five year period from 1980-84 when the Regents meddled and forced all athletic teams to wear “Colorado sky blue at 9,000 feet.” Whatever that meant; no move before or since had upset the alumni so.

The Buffs lost their first three games under Grandelius, a grueling opening run of Washington, Baylor and Oklahoma. As with any new coach, it takes time to figure out the new schemes and game action is the best way to learn. Colorado broke through in his fourth game with a 20-17 win over Kansas State, but took a step back the next week with a 27-0 loss to Iowa State; the irony being that the Cyclones were one



of the last teams to run the single-wing.

CU won four of its final five, including a 21-20 win over Missouri. The Tigers had gone 15-1-2 against the Buffaloes since 1938 but with a reworked schedule, didn't get CU the week after the Buffs battled Oklahoma (though that format returned one year later for the next seven years). A 15-7 win over Air Force capped the season, with Colorado finishing 5-5. The Buffs finished third in the conference with a 3-3 mark, and also developed a solid quarterback in sophomore **Gale Weidner**, who had made the transition from 6-man football as a high schooler.

1960s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

- Nov. 4, 1961**—Buffs edge Missouri, 7-6. SID Fred Casotti awarded the game ball, in what was the first nationally televised game from Boulder.
- Nov. 18, 1961**—Buffs shut out Nebraska in Lincoln, 7-0, and hold the Huskers to 31 yards total offense and no first downs.
- Jan. 1, 1962**—Colorado makes its second appearance in the Orange Bowl, but falls to LSU, 25-7.
- Mar. 27, 1962**—Bud Davis named the 16th head coach in Buff history, replacing Sonny Grandelius after NCAA violations put CU on probation.
- Dec. 15, 1962**—Joe Romig becomes fourth Colorado player to be awarded a Rhodes Scholarship.
- Jan. 3, 1963**—Eddie Crowder named the 17th head coach in Colorado history.
- Nov. 22, 1963**—CU and Air Force postpone their game for the following day as the country mourns the death of President John F. Kennedy. The game is played two weeks later on December 7 (Air Force won, 17-14).
- July 1, 1965**—Crowder assumes duties as Athletic Director as well as head coach.
- May 7, 1967**—Joe Romig's jersey number "67" retired at annual spring game.
- Dec. 23, 1967**—Colorado topples Miami, 31-21, to capture its first-ever Bluebonnet Bowl in Houston.
- Oct. 4, 1969**—Buffs beat Indiana in raging blizzard, 30-7, in Boulder. Bobby Anderson switched from quarterback to tailback for first time.
- Oct. 11, 1969**—Colorado blanks Iowa State, 14-0, to win its 400th game in history.
- Dec. 13, 1969**—Buffs top Alabama, 47-33, to win the Liberty Bowl at Memphis. Bobby Anderson rushes for 254 yards, and gains 295 in total offense as game's MVP.

The 1960 season started with a 26-0 loss at Baylor, but CU bounced back to win the next five, topped off by a 7-0 win over Oklahoma, finally its' first over the Sooners since becoming a fellow conference member. CU, 5-1 overall and 4-0 in the Big Eight, had set up a showdown at No. 2 ranked Missouri.

Colorado scored first, taking an early 6-0 lead on a 38-yard pass from Weidner to **Gary Henson**, and then drove to the Tiger 4-yard line after a turnover but could not punch it in. From that point on, Missouri showed why it was the second best team in the nation, grinding out a physical 16-6 win. The contest was a defensive battle (neither team gained 200 yards), and CU suffered several injuries in the game, most notably to All-America guard **Joe Romig**. Mizzou won the Big Eight, while CU finished second with a 5-

2 league record, splitting its last two encounters. The banged-up Buffs were outmanned at Kansas, dropping a 34-6 decision, but rallied for a 13-6 win over Oklahoma State, playing a league schedule in football for the first time. The final mark for the year was 6-4, as Air Force bested CU in the finale, also by a 16-6 score.

CU, Missouri and Kansas were the cream of the conference crop in 1961. Colorado had some offensive weapons to contend with, starting with Weidner, ends **Jerry Hillebrand** and **Ken Blair**, and halfbacks Teddy **Woods** and **Bill Harris**.

The Buffs got the first leg up on the other two when they rallied from a 19-0 deficit early in the fourth quarter for a 20-19 win. CU won its next three, climbing to 4-0 in league play and to No. 8 in the nation. Missouri opened 5-0-1, including three league wins, rising to No. 10; the two met in Boulder on Nov. 4, with the league title on the line.

Colorado was hungry and had been playing good defense, and an early score paved the way for a 7-6 win over the Tigers. But any chance of moving substantially higher in the rankings were dashed the following week with a 21-12 loss at old rival Utah, though the Buffs came back and won its final three games and earned a spot opposite Louisiana State in the Orange Bowl. CU had won its first Big Eight title, going undefeated in league play and finishing the year with as the sixth-ranked team in the land. Romig repeated as an All-American and earned a Rhodes Scholarship, with Hillenbrand also garnering All-American accolades.

No. 4 LSU got the best of the Buffaloes in the bowl game, dominating the trenches in a 25-7 win. The New Year's Day loss was just the first in a wave of bad news over a three month stretch. NCAA sanctions rocked the school after the '61 season; the organization had began its probe into Grandelius' program the summer prior to the season, and the school was placed on two years probation and had 21 players declared ineligible.

Grandelius had been dismissed prior to the penalties, on March 17, 1962, in hopes that the NCAA would take some mercy. It did not. In a surprise hire for his replacement, alumni director **William "Bud" Davis** was named the new coach 10 days later. He had been a very good high school coach in South Dakota, and had been a backup quarterback on Dal Ward's first three CU teams. He immediately named Ward, who had remained at the school as a teacher, one of his assistants.

The '62 season was one of the ugliest in school history. With a depleted roster, the Buffs managed only a 2-8 record, six of the losses by 20 or more points that included horrifying defeats at Iowa State (57-19) and Missouri (57-0) and the worst home loss ever, 62-0 to Oklahoma. Only a 6-0 win over Kansas State the second week of the season, and a 34-10 romp over Air Force in the finale had CU on the good side of the scoreboard. In the latter, Davis announced his resignation to his team the night before the game and the players were fired up to send him out a winner.



Eddie Crowder

But CU was left looking to for the fourth man to lead its program over a six-year period. Carlson once again would look east, though a little more to the south this time. It was quite a task in selecting Colorado's new coach, especially with three-ex head coaches still on the payroll, two in non-athletic capacities in Dal Ward and Davis, who had become dean of men, and Grandelius, terminated due to the NCAA violations. All had different-sized factions allegiant to them; had there been such a thing as 'Buff Nation' in the day, it was divided into three.

Carlson was allowed to make the decision on his own without Board of Regents interference, and the choice was easy. **Eddie Crowder**, of Oklahoma pedigree and a candidate for the position in 1959 until he withdrew, was hired on Jan. 2, 1963. There was no way to know at the time that the selection of the 31-year old Crowder would shape CU athletics over the next four decades.

Crowder now had the responsibility of healing the fan base, rebuilding morale and most important, rebuilding the program. Seldom had Colorado ever been in a rebuilding mode, it was fortunate enough to always more or less reload. That was not the case now, with a depleted roster and the Big Eight Conference growing in stature.

Crowder, wise beyond his years, "promised no miracles and delivered none," **SID Fred Casotti** used to say. Rather, he methodically assessed all aspects of the program, and

improved those needing so brick by brick.

Perhaps it was only fitting that his first game as CU's coach was against defending national champion Southern California, which also opened the '63 season ranked as the nation's No. 1 team. A muddy field, one that could not be moved, aided the Buffaloes with the Trojans leaving Boulder with just a 14-0 victory.

After a 41-6 beating by Oregon State in Portland, Crowder's Buffs got him his first win at Kansas State, and then a 25-0 verdict over Oklahoma State in Boulder evened CU's mark at 2-2. But that would be it for victories his rookie season. Colorado dropped its last six, including a season-ending 17-14 loss at Air Force that was delayed two weeks following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

The 1964 season yielded a third straight 2-8 record for Colorado, and the losing streak reached 10 games with an 0-4 start, but winds of change were prevalent. Unlike Crowder's first season, which featured five losses by three or more touchdowns, this time around six of the defeats were by a touchdown or less. Just one was in decisive fashion, a 21-0 loss in the opener at USC, but the Trojans ran away from the Buffs late.

CU was competitive for the first time in three years, and ended '64 on a high note with a 28-23 win over Air Force. Also ending that season was the era of platoon football; starting in 1965, free substitution was permitted, leading to different starters on both offense and defense. Colorado's most notable player to stay on the defensive side of the ball was quarterback **Hale Irwin**, a future professional golfing legend. He became an all-conference safety but golf was his first love. In his last college performance, he won the NCAA championship.

Recruiting had gone well for Crowder, and coupled with CU's return to respectability on the field, things were buzzing again in Boulder. His 1965 Buffaloes featured one of the most talented groups of sophomores in school history, and they proved to be the backbone in a 6-2-2 season, which included a 4-2-1 record in the Big Eight, vaulting Colorado back into the league's first division. In Crowder's third year, CU was third, ending three years of narrowly escaping the conference basement with one sixth and two seventh place finishes.

Carlson, with the football program and the department back on solid footing, announced his retirement in 1965, and Crowder was the popular choice to replace him. Even though AD-football coach dual roles were disappearing, Eddie had learned under one of the best in Bud Wilkinson at Oklahoma, and he eagerly accepted the offer to become just CU's second full-time athletic director.

The '65 team opened at Wisconsin with one of the last scoreless ties in college football history, then won three and tied another in starting the year 3-0-2. The first real test in Crowder's tenure came at Nebraska, but the No. 3 Huskers used a 95-yard pass play to break open a 10-6 game in the first



half en route to a 38-13 win. Irwin had two interceptions and a goal-line tackle the next game as CU rebounded, winning 13-0 over Oklahoma giving Crowder his first win over his alma mater.

No. 9 Missouri toppled the Buffs, which closed the year with wins over KU and Air Force, with only Nebraska and the Tigers ahead of CU in the conference standings. Colorado wasn't all the way back, but was well on the road to creating some memorable moments as well as team history over the next seven seasons.

Thirty lettermen returned in 1966, and Crowder's recruiting had gone so well that only three sophomores would make the starting lineup. The prospects for a banner season all seemed to line up in Colorado's favor, but Miami, Fla., socked the Buffs in the mouth in the opener, coming into Boulder and shutting down the CU offense and exiting with a 24-3 win.

CU righted things in game two, bouncing No. 10 Baylor in Waco 13-7 after the Bears had knocked off seventh-ranked Syracuse in their opener. Reserve linebacker **Steve Graves'** diving interception in the end zone in the final minute of play preserved the win. Several black players on the CU team (Baylor had none) were subject to racist taunts, and insults were even piped into the Colorado lockerroom over a speaker, infuriating the team and making this victory extra special for the Buffaloes.

The conference season produced some great moments and would confirm CU was all the way back as a school to be reck-

oned with. The Buffs posted four decisive wins over Kansas State, Iowa State, Missouri and Kansas, and rallied to beat Oklahoma (24-21), their second straight win over the Sooners. The two losses hurt, as CU wound up on the losing end by a combined three points. After the KSU win, even though Colorado was now 2-1 on the year, it has scored just 26 points in the three games.

Those troubles continued against Oklahoma State, though CU led 10-3 late in the game. The Cowboys drove 69 yards against a prevent defense, scored a touchdown and then won it with a 2-point conversion, 11-10. Crowder's staff decided to tinker with the offense, and the infusion of **Dan Kelly** was the answer. He ran the option to perfection in a 41-21 win at Iowa State, rushing for 156 yards and three scores and passing for 86 more. CU had two confident quarterbacks with distinct differences that caused opponents trouble the rest of the year.

CU returned home and had Nebraska on the ropes and owned a 19-6 lead with 13 minutes remaining, but the "prevent" did the Buffs in again, the Cornhuskers rallying for a 21-19 win. Colorado didn't tank it, however, won the last three league games convincingly to finish 5-2 for second place in the league, and then polished off a 7-3 season with a 10-9 win over Air Force. Junior **Dick Anderson**, who led the Buffs in interceptions (five) and was also the team's punter, aided the win by blocking a Falcon field goal try midway through the fourth quarter, which led to **John Farler's** 34-yard kick for the winning points.

TIMEOUT / RALPHIE

A live buffalo mascot, Ralphie, leads the Colorado football team out on the field both at the start of the game and second half. It is truly one of the special sights that exist anywhere in college or professional sports, and is oft recognized as such. Its beginning is traced to 1966, when John Lowery, the father of a CU freshman from Lubbock, Texas, donated to the school a six-month old buffalo calf.

For a while, she was billed as "Rraalph," but the origin of the name remains in doubt. Some say it was given by the student body after sounds she allegedly made while running and snorting; others say it was named for Ralph Jay Wallace, the junior class president at the time; and the original handlers will tell a third version. Regardless, an astute fan soon discovered that the buffalo was in fact a female, thus the name alteration to Ralphie.

The initial tradition was for CU's five sophomore class officers to run the buffalo around the stadium in a full loop. They would run her for two hours to tire her a bit to help keep her under control by the time the game started. At the conclusion of the run, the fans would break into the "Buffalo Stomp," which would literally shake the stadium in deafening fashion as the team took the field. But CU officials soon had the tradition stopped because of the actual physical damage it was causing.

Around that same time, head coach Eddie Crowder was approached with the idea the charging buffalo running out on the field before the game with the team behind right her. Crowder thought it was a great idea, and the debut of this great tradition took place on October 28, 1967, CU's homecoming game against Oklahoma State. Though OSU won the game, 10-7, the tradition was here to stay, though those who had some training in such an endeavor as working with a wild animal eventually replaced the sophomores.

Ralphie achieved nationally celebrity status, and was even kidnapped in 1970 by some Air Force Academy students as well as being named the school's 1971 Homecoming Queen at the height of the anti-establishment era.

Ralphie II replaced the original Ralphie following the 1978 season, and Ralphies III and IV served the school well; Ralphie V is CU's current live buffalo, debuting in 2008 at the annual spring game.



Colorado had come “oh so close” to returning to the top of the conference mountain, and with all those ’65 sophomores set to be seniors and a great freshman team graduating a new batch of rookies, 1967 shaped up to be a season to remember.

Something always foiled the Buffaloes from getting to the top, though. From 1965 through 1972, CU posted eight straight first division finishes in the Big Eight, finishing second twice, third four times and fourth on two occasions.

Nebraska had established itself as a national power, after a slight lull, Oklahoma returned to prominence, and both Kansas and Missouri ended the decade with good, if not great teams. Colorado was always in the mix, but never won or shared the title between its last in 1961 or its next in 1976. Other than KU and Mizzou sharing one title each, the top rung was owned exclusively by the Sooners or Huskers.

In ’67, CU was so well thought of that it was the only Big Eight school in the *Associated Press* preseason poll, opening the year at No. 10. And the Buffs would live up to the billing, blitzing to a 5-0 start and zooming up to No. 3, trailing only Pacific 8 powers USC and UCLA. Colorado had never sniffed the top five before, so climbing to number three was a feather in Crowder’s cap.

The Andersons, Dick and younger brother, sophomore quarterback Bobby, were just two of many stellar performers on the team; both would eventually be inducted into the College Football Hall of Fame. **Monte Huber** blossomed at receiver, emerging as the favorite target of Anderson. **William Harris**, **William Cooks** and **Larry Plantz** were able ball carriers. **Mike Montler**, **Bart Bortles**, **Bruce Heath**, **Kirk Tracy**, **Bill Csikos** and **Kile Morgan** formed a great offensive line. **Mike Schnitker**, **Ron Scott**, **Bill Brundige**, **Rocky Martin**, **Frank Bosch**, **Mike Veeder**, **Dave Bartelt** and **Kerry Mottl** formed the defensive front. **Charles Greer**, **Isaac Howard** and **Mike Bynum** teamed with Anderson that produced a secondary that allowed 113 or fewer yards passing seven times.

Riding into Boulder for homecoming was Oklahoma State, essentially the same team that derailed the Buffs in ’66. The Cowboys did it again (and would complete the hat trick in 1972). CU never got untracked, spotted OSU a 10-0 lead, and could only carve out a single score after Boulder’s notorious winds picked up. The ‘Pokes left town with a 10-7 win, and the Buffs dropped to ninth in the polls.

CU still had title aspirations, but those were wiped away in Norman when the Sooners shut down and shut out the Buffs, 23-0. Oklahoma used the win as a springboard to a final No. 3 ranking, while CU regrouped and had to rally to beat heavy underdog Kansas, 12-8. Colorado was 6-2, and this was the “hey day” of bowls extending invitations whenever they pleased after the November came around.

The Buffs accepted a bid to the Bluebonnet Bowl, opposite the same Miami team that upset them in Boulder in the ’66 opener. Colorado steamrolled its final two opponents in the regular season, Kansas State (40-6) and Air Force (33-0), set-

ting out to match the 1923 for the most wins in a single year in school history.

In the bowl, **Bobby Anderson** ignored a painful ankle injury and ignited a 31-21 win over the Hurricanes. He had missed the team bus to the stadium and had to hail a cab, with Crowder inserting him in place of Kelly to start the second half; he rushed for 108 yards and two scores. A see-saw affair with four lead changes, Anderson provided the go-ahead score on a 38-yard run with 6:55 remaining. But the win wasn’t secure until Howard picked off a Miami pass at the UM 43, with Anderson then directing a 34-yard drive that ended with a Cooks 2-yard run with 1:02 left to play.

Despite the graduation of 24 seniors, good things were still expected in 1968. Colorado opened 4-2, capped off by a wild 41-27 win over Oklahoma; CU sprinted to a 34-6 halftime lead then held on for dear life after the Sooners scored three quick touchdowns in 10 minutes to make a game of it.

Unfortunately, the Buffs didn’t grace the win column again the remainder of the season, losing the final four games starting with a 27-14 setback at third-ranked Kansas, the eventual conference champ. The year came to an end with a humiliating 58-35 loss to Air Force, as the Falcons dropped the Buffs to 4-6 for the season in rushing for 381 yards and amassing 530 overall. The two ceased playing following the 1974 season, and this would be the last win by AFA in the series.

CU opened 1969 with a resounding 35-14 win over Tulsa, with Bobby Anderson, now a senior and considered to be the best quarterback in the Big Eight, accounting for four touchdowns. But the Buffs were humbled the next game, falling at No. 2 Penn State, 27-3, though not a total shame since the Nittany Lions went on to have an undefeated season and held the second spot in the polls.

Big changes were in store for game three; with juniors **Paul Arendt** and **Jimmy Bratten** primed to play quarterback, and Anderson also being one of the nation’s top runners, Crowder moved him to tailback. The move was unannounced until game time, and Anderson responded with 161 yards and three touchdowns in a 30-7 drubbing of Indiana. The Buffs then shutout Iowa State, getting great defensive efforts from Brundige and sophomore **Herb Orvis**. The pair combined for 36 tackles for loss with 22 quarterback sacks for the season, and was making a habit of living in opponent backfields.

A tough stretch of games loomed against Oklahoma, Missouri and Nebraska. The 12th-ranked Sooners won a shootout in Norman, 42-30, but the Buffs returned home and got the best of No. 5 Missouri, 31-24. Anderson scored three touchdowns and a timely interception by **Phil Irwin** thwarted the Tigers, but the win was costly with Anderson suffering a hip-pointer. The injury limited him in a 20-7 loss at Nebraska, paving the way for Missouri and Nebraska to be league co-champs.

Colorado won its last three league games to take third, and the Buffs accepted an invitation to play Alabama and its legendary coach, Bear Bryant, in the Liberty Bowl.



Anderson rushed for 954 yards during the regular season, and finished 11th in the Heisman Trophy race. He polished off his career by running for 254 more and three scores in leading CU to a 47-33 win over the Crimson Tide, with the Liberty one of the most exciting bowl games of the decade. Colorado sprinted to a 17-0 lead, but fell behind 33-31 before Anderson scored twice in the fourth quarter, sandwiched around a Brundige and Orvis sack of 'Bama QB Ned Hayden for a safety. CU finished the season 8-3 and ranked No. 16.

1970s

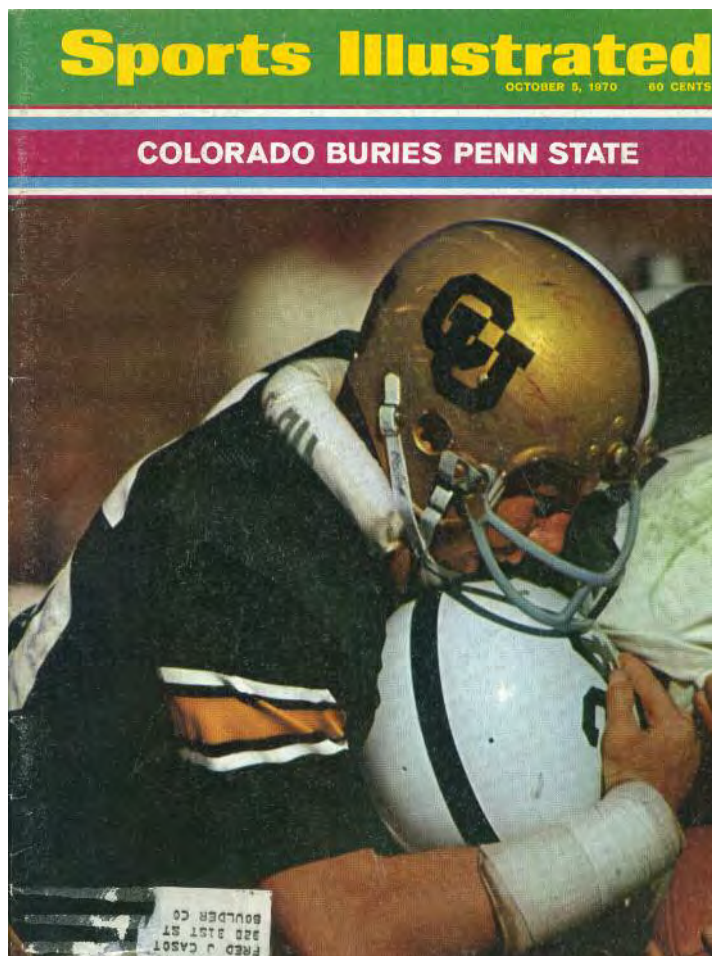
IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

- May 9, 1970**—Bobby Anderson's jersey number "11" is retired at annual spring game.
- Sept. 26, 1970**—Colorado pulls big upset in routing Penn State, 41-13, in Boulder, on national television. The win snapped a 23-game winning streak and 31-game unbeaten streak by the Nittany Lions.
- Dec. 13, 1970**—Buff s make return trip to Liberty Bowl but lose to Tulane, 17-3.
- Sept. 11, 1971**—Colorado opens season with dramatic upset of LSU at Baton Rouge, 31-21.
- Sept. 25, 1971**—Buff s keep rolling in '71, upset Ohio State at Columbus, 20-14.
- Nov. 13, 1971**—Charlie Davis sets a Colorado and Big Eight record by rushing for 342 yards in a 40-6 rout of Oklahoma State in Boulder.
- Dec. 31, 1971**—Colorado completes its best season ever with a 29-17 victory over the University of Houston in the 13th annual Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl. Charlie Davis rushed for 202 yards in helping the Buff s to finish a 10-2-0 for the '71 season.
- Jan. 3, 1972**—Buff s voted the number three team in the country for the '71 season by Associated Press. It was the highest a Colorado team had ever ranked at the end of the season, United Press International tabbed Colorado seventh for the same season.
- Oct. 21, 1972**—Buff s upset No. 2 Oklahoma in Boulder, 20-14, before a national TV audience on ABC.
- Dec. 30, 1972**—Colorado loses to Auburn, 24-3, in its first Gator Bowl appearance.
- Jan. 12, 1974**—Bill Mallory named the 18th head coach in Colorado history.
- Jan. 29, 1974**—San Diego selects fullback Bo Matthews as the second overall pick in the NFL Draft, the highest a CU player has ever been selected.
- Dec. 27, 1975**—Texas rallies to defeat Colorado, 38-21, in the Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl.
- Nov. 20, 1976**—Colorado beats Kansas State at Manhattan, 35-28, to tie for Big Eight championship. Buff s go to Orange Bowl, however, by virtue of their wins over Oklahoma and Oklahoma State.
- Jan. 1, 1977**—Buff s make third trip to Orange Bowl, start strong with a 10-0 lead, but lose to Ohio State, 27-10.
- May 1, 1977**—The largest crowd in Folsom Field history for any event fills the stadium: 61,500 for the "Sun Day (No. 1)" concert series, featuring Fleetwood Mac, Bob Seger, Firefall and John Sebastian.
- Nov. 4, 1978**—Largest crowd at the time in Colorado home history, 53,553, see the Buff s fall short to No. 1 Oklahoma, 28-7.
- Apr. 4, 1979**—After months of legal wrangling, Chuck Fairbanks named the 19th head coach in Colorado history.

With 40 lettermen returning for 1970 plus the addition of one of the nation's top junior college players, **Cliff Branch**, now eligible, optimism was high and CU was a legitimate chal-

lenger for the Big Eight title. The Buff s opened on the road with a 16-9 win at Indiana, setting the stage for a nationally televised rematch on ABC with Penn State.

The Buff s entered the polls after the Indiana win at No. 18; Penn State was a top 10 regular, coming in at No. 4 and riding a 23-game winning streak and a 31-game unbeaten run. **Pat Murphy** made an interception for CU on the first play of the game, and the Buff s were off and running. Branch returned the second half kickoff 97 yards for a touchdown, and when the smoke cleared, Colorado had routed the Nittany Lions, 41-13, and had shocked the football world.



Linebacker Phil Irwin's battered helmet graced the cover of *Sports Illustrated* (above), the first time any Colorado Buffaloes in any sport made the front page. And in a span of three games, Crowder defeated two future Hall of Fame coaches in Alabama's Bear Bryant and Penn State's Joe Paterno.

CU jumped 10 spots in the polls to No. 8, its largest gain in a single week in school history, but the celebration was short lived. Kansas State dealt the Buff s a 21-20 setback, with a solid Wildcat effort combined with some freak plays did the Buff s in, the last coming after CU pulled to within one late in the game only to have its reliable placekicker miss the game-tying PAT. Iowa State paid the price the next week, as Branch returned two punts for touchdowns (and had a third one called back) in a 61-10 rout.



The next three games frustration sank in, as an unranked Oklahoma team came into Boulder and won 23-15, with Missouri then knocking CU out of the top 20 with a 30-16 win. No. 4 Nebraska scored twice late and escaped Folsom with a 29-13 win, leaving CU 3-4 on the year and 1-4 in the league.

The Buffs came back to smack Kansas and Oklahoma State to finish fourth in the league standings, and smashed Air Force 49-19. The Falcons, bound for the Sugar Bowl, took an early 7-0 lead but the Buffaloes answered with the next 35, piling up an astonishing 438 yards ... by halftime.

The finish earned CU a return invitation to the Liberty Bowl, but the Buffs accepted the bid on the assumption the opponent would be Arkansas or Mississippi. Instead, Tulane bartered its way into the game with a promise to buy 10,000 tickets, but the problem was that the Buffs took the Green Wave lightly. When that happens, the result usually isn't good and Tulane came away with a 17-3 win. Colorado ended the season with a 6-5 record, but Crowder had another fine crop of sophomores ready for their debut in '71.

And what a debut it would be. Veterans like Branch, Orvis, **John Stearns**, **Cullen Bryant**, **Billie Drake**, **Carl Taibi** and **John Stavely** were joined by sophomore stars-to-be **Charlie Davis**, **Ken Johnson**, **J.V. Cain**, **Bo Matthews** and **Randy Geist** among others. Nineteen seniors were the nucleus, 49 sophomores filled in the gaps. They had to meld quickly, because in CU's first three games of 1971, road contests lurked at No. 9 Louisiana State and No. 6 Ohio State.

Colorado started the season unranked; but after a 31-21 win at LSU and a 20-14 stunner in Columbus, sandwiched around the first game ever at Folsom Field on AstroTurf, a 56-13 drubbing of Wyoming, the Buffs were 3-0 and ranked No. 6.

The Buffs improved to 5-0, with road games against No. 2 Oklahoma and No. 1 Nebraska ahead, and an always tough Missouri team in-between. The Sooners and Huskers got the best of the Buffs, but CU snared a win against The Tigers. Blowout wins over Kansas, Oklahoma State and Air Force improved the Buffs to 9-2, tying the school's season record for wins, and slotted CU at No. 7 in the polls.

How dominate was Colorado down the stretch? CU had 1,592 yards of offense, including 512 in the first half against Oklahoma State in a game where Davis rushed for a school record 342 yards, and allowed a paltry 637. The finish earned CU a berth in the Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl against hometown and No. 15 Houston.

CU kept rolling, overpowering the Cougars 29-17 to post the school's first 10-win season. When the final votes were tabulated, a first in college football occurred that hasn't come close to being matched: the same conference produced the nation's top three teams: Nebraska, Oklahoma and Colorado. Davis finished seventh in the nation in rushing, Taibi led a defense that made 37 sacks, and Branch electrified all with 11 touchdowns, four via punt return.

All that returning talent had Colorado open the '72 season with its highest ranking ever: No. 2. Boulder was in the throes of a football frenzy. The question was if the old saying would rear its ugly head again, that being, "Colorado is most dangerous when it is underestimated and most likely to fail when rated highly." Unfortunately for CU, over the years it had panned out ... and would again in 1972.

CU opened strong enough, steamrolling its first three opponents before opening Big 8 play at Oklahoma State. The stars were anything but aligned, as CU was without an injured Johnson while fullback **Jon Keyworth** went out early and the Buffs fumbled 10 times in a 31-6 loss. OSU had once again sidetracked Colorado's season, repeating its feat from 1967.

The Buffs went on to an 8-4 record in '72, far below expectations, though defeating second-ranked Oklahoma along the way, the highest rated team CU has ever beaten in its 118-year football history (matched a few times later on). CU was lackluster in a 24-3 Gator Bowl loss to Auburn, and those close to the program felt the overtime put in by Crowder as both football coach and athletic director was taking its toll.

The Buffs still had a deep team in 1973, the sophomore stars of two years prior were now seniors, and with freshman now eligible to play again, current sophs like **Dave Logan** had seen some playing time in '72 and a true freshman star named **Billy Waddy** could excite fans almost to a Cliff Branch like level. Colorado was still respected nationally, opening the year ranked 10th, and would again open the season at No. 15 LSU.

But the magic of '71 wasn't there, as LSU captured this one, 17-6. CU reeled off four straight wins before succumbing at No. 3 Oklahoma, but returned home to beat No. 7 Missouri. Despite coming off two straight third place finishes, the 5-2 Buffaloes were still in position to contend for the league title if OU slipped up as well as a prestigious bowl bid. But four straight losses, including close setbacks to Kansas and Kansas State dropped CU to 5-6.

Crowder had coached the Buffaloes for 11 seasons, and when omitting his first two years with identical 2-8 records when CU was rebuilding after the NCAA decimation, he owned a stellar 63-33-2 record which he had compiled against all-comers. He took time off and went on a quiet mountain retreat, and upon his return, announced his resignation as coach in mid-December. He would remain as athletic director for the next 11 years.

The program was in good shape, well stocked with talent and players like Logan, Williams, **Don Hasselbeck**, **Pete Brock**, **Leon White** and **Emery Moorehead** ready to blossom. The CU job was both a plumb and a concern. Whoever took the job might fear Crowder would be constantly looking over his shoulder, a concern that never materialized. Several names were bandied about, but Crowder settled on a man from the "Cradle of Coaches," Miami of Ohio. **Bill Mallory** had led the Redskins to an undefeated season and a win over Florida in the Tangerine Bowl, and his next destination was Boulder.



Mallory's first team in '74 finished the same as Crowder's last, 5-6, though posted a couple of nice wins over No. 11 Wisconsin and No. 18 Oklahoma State. And in the last game to date played between CU and Air Force, the Buffs escaped with a 28-27 win, its sixth straight over the Falcons.

Mallory's recruiting couldn't match Crowder's, though he did bring in some talented junior college players in **Terry Kunz**, **Troy Archer** and **Tony Reed**. He also landed a talented prep running back in **James Mayberry**.

The 1975 season was another one of those that could have been. After opening with three straight wins, Colorado reappeared in the national rankings (No. 19). The opponent first up with CU back on the national scene was top ranked Oklahoma in Norman. The Buffs went toe-to-toe with the superior Sooners, featuring the Selmon brothers, and a 68-yard march in the game's waning minutes pulled CU to within 21-20. The players wanted to go for two and the win, but Mallory knew a tie could mean the league title and the Orange Bowl berth down the road. CU went for the tie, but **Tom Mackenzie's** kick hooked it far to the left.

To CU's credit, it went on to win five of the next six games, close the regular season at 9-2 with another third place finish in the conference, and enter the Astro-Bluebonnet Bowl ranked No. 10. CU faced No. 9 Texas, which more or less was playing a home game, and the Longhorns used a dominant second half to topple the Buffs, 38-21.

The 1976 season was one of the wackiest ever in Big 8 history, with five schools in the hunt for the title down to the last weekend. CU won three of its four non-conference games, but dropped the league opener to No. 6 Nebraska. Undaunted, the Buffs picked themselves up off the ground, won a wacky one with two late touchdowns at Oklahoma State the next week, a key victory it would turn out later on. Wins over Iowa State and Oklahoma at home, the latter also proving to be important, improved CU to 6-2, 3-1 in the league and to No. 14 in the nation. Colorado was in control of its own destiny at that point, but it was short-lived after losing at No. 16 Missouri in week nine.

A big win over Kansas in the Folsom finale, coupled with other events, had the Buffs facing a must win situation at Kansas State to close the regular season. Colorado won a shootout, 35-28, and was tied atop the standings with OSU at 5-2. But Oklahoma and Nebraska were both 4-2 and played several days later on Thanksgiving; CU would sweat it out, but an OU win gave the Buffs the edge with head-to-head wins over both the Sooners and Cowboys. The share of the league title earned Colorado the Orange Bowl berth.

No one knew at the time it would be CU's last bowl appearance for nine seasons, and after taking a 10-0 lead over Ohio State, the Buckeyes scored the game's final 27 points. The season was still deemed a success.

Mallory didn't know it at the time, but he had two years left in Boulder. Both his '77 and '78 teams opened 5-0, one climbing to No. 3 and the other to No. 13. But poor finishes led to

7-3-1 and 6-5 marks, and he was fired days after the '78 season came to a close.

Crowder wanted a big name this time, and Nebraska's Tom Osborne took a courtesy visit to Boulder, likely to better his own situation back in Lincoln. Names were thrown around, but no one had the inside word on who was Crowder's next man.

On Dec. 18, during the NFL's Monday Night Football game featuring New England at Miami, the legendary Howard Cosell broke in with an announcement that Patriot coach **Chuck Fairbanks**, Oklahoma's old boss from 1967-72, had accepted CU's offer to be its next head coach. Miami went on to rout the Patriots, tying New England for the division crown, and the Pats lost in the first round of the playoffs. The owners were furious, and took Fairbanks and CU to court, claiming breach of contract. After New England won some preliminary hearings, an out of court settlement was reached, with Fairbanks giving up deferred income to the tune of \$100,000, while CU had to pay the Patriots twice that amount.

Fairbanks finally was cleared to take over the program on April 4, 1979, after **Bob Cortese** did a masterful job of coordinating recruiting and keeping things intact while CU awaited the court's ruling. Trying to instill pro schemes on the college kids never clicked, however, and CU lost eight of its first nine en route to a 3-8 season. Somehow, **Mark Haynes** and **Stan Brock** were still able to be recognized as All-Americans, a credit to their talents. And though hardly a big deal at the time, the season opener against Oregon was the first college football game televised on an all sports cable network called ESPN.

The debts were piling up; season ticket sales never came close to what was expected, as CU was in a \$1 million hole after capital improvements were made based on income that never materialized, combined with the new debt from a \$7.7 million basketball arena. Many in CU's constituency were offended, some lost forever, when on June 11, 1980, Crowder was forced by President **Arnold Weber** and the Board of Regents to cut seven sports, including the traditional long-time programs of baseball, swimming and wrestling.

1980s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

Oct. 4, 1980—In one of the wildest games ever played at Folsom Field, Oklahoma defeats CU 82-42. Several NCAA and Big Eight records were smashed.

June 9, 1982—Bill McCartney named the 20th head coach in Colorado history.

Sept. 15, 1984—Tight end Ed Reinhardt undergoes brain surgery to save his life less than two hours after Colorado's 27-20 loss at Oregon. Reinhardt had a blood clot removed from the left side of his brain.

Mar. 25, 1985—Bill McCartney announces that the Buffs have switched to the wishbone, CU's "offense of the future."

Nov. 23, 1985—Colorado's 30-0 win over Kansas State gives CU a 7-4 regular season record, which also enables the Buffs to win the NCAA's most improved team honor for 1985.

Dec. 30, 1985—Colorado loses to Washington, 20-17, in the second annual Freedom Bowl.



- Oct. 25, 1986**—Colorado defeats Nebraska (20-10), the first Buff win over the Huskers since 1967.
- Nov. 22, 1986**—Buffs destroy Kansas State, 49-3, to finish second in the Big Eight. CU's 6-1 league record is its second best ever.
- Dec. 31, 1986**—Baylor defeats Colorado, 21-9, in the 28th annual Bluebonnet Bowl.
- Oct. 17, 1987**—Colorado defeats Kansas, 35-10, for its 200th win at Folsom Field.
- Oct. 31, 1987**—Buffs roll over Iowa State at Ames, 42-10, for CU's 500th win in its history.
- Nov. 28, 1987**—Buffs lose to Nebraska, 24-7, in first game at Folsom Field with lights (mid-afternoon kickoff).
- Oct. 22, 1988**—Oklahoma edges CU, 17-14, in the first night game ever played at Folsom Field.
- Dec. 29, 1988**—Colorado loses to Brigham Young, 20-17, in the fifth annual Freedom Bowl.
- Aug. 23, 1989**—Colorado's No. 14 ranking in both the AP and UPI polls marks the first time the Buffs are ranked in the preseason since 1977.
- Nov. 18, 1989**—The Buffs' 59-11 win at Kansas State gives CU its first undefeated regular season since 1937, and clinches the Big Eight Conference Championship (CU's first outright title since 1961). In the game, sophomore quarterback Darian Hagan goes over the 1,000-yard mark for the season in both rushing and passing, becoming only the sixth player to accomplish that feat in NCAA history.
- Nov. 27, 1989**—Colorado ascends to the nation's No. 1 ranking, the first time in its 100-year history that CU earns the wire service top spot.
- Jan. 1, 1990**—Colorado loses its bid for its first-ever national championship, losing 21-6 to Notre Dame in the Orange Bowl.
- Jan. 2, 1990**—The Buffs finish the year ranked No. 4 in the polls, the second-highest final ranking by any Colorado team.
- Jan. 18, 1990**—Bill McCartney is named the Bear Bryant Coach-of-the-Year, giving him a sweep of the national coach-of-the-year honors.

A 1-10 record in 1980, the lone win over Iowa State, followed the disastrous '79 campaign but featured a change considered even worse by fans and alumni. The Regents imposed CU's athletic teams to do away with the popular black uniform color and replace it with "Colorado Sky Blue at 9,000 feet." Down through years, people blamed Fairbanks for this, but he had nothing to do with it.

The school also adopted a new logo in the summer of 1981, not overly accepted at first but one that in due time won most everyone over. Some staffers dubbed it the "piggalo" after Fairbanks saw the design, took one of his famous long drags on a cigarette and uttered, "That thing looks like a ----- pig."

A 3-8 season lay ahead in '81, though the Buffs won the games many want most, the season opener (45-27 over Texas Tech), homecoming (11-10 over Oklahoma State) and the finale (24-21 over Kansas State). But the story of the year was a sad one. In late October, tailback **Derek Singleton**, who had caught the 2-point conversion pass the previous Saturday to beat OSU, fell ill in his Ames hotel room. Spinal meningitis was the diagnosis, and on New Year's Day '82, the Buff sophomore passed away.

On June 1, 1982, Fairbanks informed Crowder that he was resigning to take the head coaching job with the New Jersey

Generals of the fledgling United States Football League. His era thus came to an end after just three seasons and a 7-26 record, though CU did escape finishing in the conference cellar all three years.

Things would eventually change, and a novelty t-shirt later would confirm it, but not for several years.

Crowder needed to act quickly to fill the vacant head coaching role; fall camp was only two months away. But the program was deep in debt, after paying off Mallory, settling with the New England Patriots to secure Fairbanks, and the cost of women's sports under Title IX guidelines, programs that provided practically no revenue, among other capital expenses accrued.

Crowder had vowed to get the department financially viable again, so this would be the most important hire of his 20-year career as athletic director. CU had to invigorate the season ticket base, but could not afford a exasperating strung out, or messy, search.

Drake coach Chuck Shelton surfaced as a top candidate; after all, his Bulldogs had beaten the Buffaloes not once but twice, the second time being a good old fashion whooping. He interviewed two days after Fairbanks resigned and was generally well received, though there were doubters because of his lack of big-time football experience, one of those being President Weber.

Long-time BYU head coach LaVelle Edwards was flown to Boulder for a day-long interview, but he generally wasn't interested in leaving Provo, where he would win a national championship two years later.

Legendary Michigan coach Bo Schembechler phoned Crowder and gave a glowing recommendation of his defensive coordinator, **Bill McCartney**. It was June 7 when McCartney came in for his interview, and Crowder assigned **Fred Casotti** to usher him about.

The story on how McCartney surfaced to the top and was named CU's 20th head coach is best told by, well, McCartney.

"There were about 15 people representing all kind of factions on campus and the alumni," McCartney recalled in a 2007 interview for CUBuffs.com. *"About 15 minutes before I was going to go before them for the interview, I said to Fred, 'What do you think my chances are?' He said, 'Coach, it's third and long. You'd better make a big play.'"*

"That was the best thing he could have said, otherwise I might have tip-toed into the interview. After Fred told me that, I threw caution to the wind, decided to get aggressive and put my best foot forward. The format was for them to ask me questions, or that's what they had in mind. But I stood up, and I said before I take any questions, I want to make a statement. I spoke for about 15, 20 minutes and told them who I was, my background, what I had done at the University of Michigan, my philosophies and values, and what I would bring to the



University of Colorado if I was to get the job. I was the only one talking, and after I was done speaking, nobody asked me a question.

"I went from there to meet the president, and he had already gotten a phone call following the first interview. He was energized and anxious to see me, and was warm and welcoming. Later that night, they took me to meet the Board of Regents, as by chance they were having their monthly meeting in Denver. I was waiting with Casotti in the car, waiting for a break in their meeting to be introduced, and I asked Fred again, 'What do you think my chances are?' And Fred said, 'Coach, fourth and short. You just need to make a first down.' So I just needed to move the chains. That Tuesday night, Eddie offered me the job. It all happened so fast."

McCartney was officially named head coach on June 9. In less than eight weeks, he had to assemble a staff and prepare for the season, and do some of the obligatory head coach things around town with the fans and public. And he would not have a chance to meet his team until they reported in August.

In looking back at his first interviews, one would have thought the media was interviewing a prophet. A sampling of Mac's comments:

"I promise you a program based on integrity and honesty, with the top priority on graduating students. That's how we're going to measure success."

"I see Colorado as being a lot like Michigan in being able to attract the superior student-athlete. Our standards are better here than most, but that has to be looked at as an advantage."

"You achieve what you emphasize. Until you set specific goals, you're liable to miss opportunities that come up along the way."

"I can only predict how Colorado will play, with enthusiasm, togetherness and tenacity. Every single squad that I coach here will be team-oriented."

"We need to enhance our reputation here (in Colorado). You make your living at home first. We want the high school players and coaches to develop their loyalties to us, not out of state schools."

"My family and I want to sink roots in this place. We plan on being here as long as you want us."

He said all seven of those statements in the first few days after being hired, and all seven eventually came true: over 80 percent of his seniors graduated; many goals were reached if not surpassed, as evidenced by a national title and three Big 8 crowns; his CU squads were team-first, individuals second; Buff football returned to prominence in the state, largely due to his first recruiting class snaring most of the top local preps; and once the McCartney's arrived in Colorado, they were here for good.

The road was rocky at first, to be expected when one takes over a depleted program 94 days before the season opener. His opening day roster had 77 players total, 73 on scholar-

ship, some 22 under the maximum at the time; Fairbanks' last recruiting class included 15 junior college transfers, but only four who ever made it to campus due to a variety of reasons, though it did at least have 10 state high schoolers, many of which played key roles early in Mac's tenure, most notably linebacker **Barry Remington**.

What most remember about his 1982 season is not the 2-8-1 record, but Mac's designation of Nebraska as Colorado's rival. Now the Huskers had won 14 straight in the series, the last four by an average of 41 points. The Buffs gave Nebraska a brief scare in the first encounter under McCartney, trailing 20-14 entering the fourth quarter before losing by 40-14, but a tone had been set for the future.

There were many ups and downs the next two seasons. There was modest improvement in 1983, with CU finishing with a 4-7 record. The signature win was a 31-3 drubbing of Colorado State in the resumption of the in-state rivalry that had been dormant for 25 years. Off the field, he landed 11 high school players from the state in his first recruiting class, including **Eric McCarty**, the local kid from Boulder High who many considered the prize of the class, and signed 32 players from Colorado high schools in his first three classes.

The 1984 season was filled with anger, sadness and disappointment. Colorado designed a two-tight end scheme on offense and had two stellar players at the position in **Jon Embree** and **Ed Reinhardt**. The new offense was not made public until the *Denver Post* beat writer revealed it days before the season opener against Michigan State, using the typical over-used media line of it was the public's right to know. The disclosure of what CU planned to do infuriated McCartney, saying his team lost its edge for the opener (MSU won, 24-21).

Wins and losses became academic the following week, when Reinhardt, who caught 10 passes for 142 yards in the opener, suffered a life-threatening head injury in a 27-20 loss at Oregon. He spent a month in a coma after having a blood clot removed from the surface of his brain. The burden of a teammate battling against death was a lot for a young Buffalo team to bear, and was a factor in CU's 1-10 record. Redshirt freshmen were also all over the two-deep, and their inexperience showed as they simply were no ready for the grind of the Big 8. Four of the losses were by 10 points or less.

Reinhardt did not fully recover from the injury. He suffered some partial paralysis that also affected his speech and his cranial functions, but has some remarkable accomplishments thanks to the support of his family, particularly his parents, Ed Sr., and Pat.

Regardless, fans were getting restless. To compound the issue, Crowder achieved his goal of making the department financially sound again and retired as athletic director, effective Sept. 1, with former CU ski coach **Bill Marolt**, who had coached the U.S. Ski Team to its best performance ever in the '84 Winter Olympics, taking over. Five games into the season, Marolt had seen enough of how McCartney was running his program and extended his contract, not an overly popular



move at the time, but it was something that stabilized the program. That despite the slightest possible improvement in the schools' record over Mac's first three years, 7-25-1, compared to that of the Fairbanks Era (7-26). The extension allowed him to "work with a net" of sorts.

Mac had won the fans over on one controversial issue. In home games against Nebraska and Oklahoma, CU donned the old, favorite black jerseys in lieu of the blue it had worn since 1980. There was widespread approval, and CU would junk the blue the next season. Besides, the team definitely played better in black, evidenced by leading No. 5 Nebraska 7-3 entering the fourth quarter, the first time CU held a lead that late in a game against the Huskers in 17 years, before losing 24-7. CU was tied with No. 9 Sooners at halftime before succumbing as well.

"A lot of the alums had told me they hated the powder blue ... they wanted the black jerseys back," McCartney said. *"We timed it up so we could get the maximum impact from it. So that really came from guys who had played there who had worn the black and gold. We had warmed up in blue, and then came out in black, and the players were ecstatic. It jacked them up."*

His first three teams had passed for over 6,700 yards, but the running game was non-existent and CU was soft on defense, nowhere near Mac's standards in defending the run.

In March 1985, McCartney announced perhaps the boldest move in Colorado football history: the Buffaloes were switching to the wishbone formation on offense. Reaction was mixed. Was McCartney doing the right thing, or was this a desperate move of a crazed coach out of options?

It was the former. CU was the nation's most improved team in '85, its 7-5 record the first winning mark at the school since 1978, and the Buffs earned their first bowl invitation in nine years. The team produced two of the most staggering statistical turnarounds in NCAA history, going from last to ninth in rushing and from last to first in net punting, the latter largely due to the leg of All-American **Barry Helton**. CU also moved up from 102nd to 37th against the run. CU's 4-3 mark in league play helped McCartney earn Coach of the Year honors in the Big 8.

The wishbone was the reason for the turnaround, but not so much on offense, though quarterback **Mark Hatcher** usually ran it to perfection. As the running game improved, the defense saw it every day in practice and that was the area where CU made its greatest strides.

CU posted big non-league wins over Oregon and Arizona, and beat up everyone but the big three of the day in league play, though CU battled Nebraska, Oklahoma and Oklahoma State as well as anyone. The season ended with a disappointing 20-17 loss to Washington in the Freedom Bowl, though if instant replay was in existence at the time, a **Mike Marquez** fumble near the goal line would have showed he was down and the ground caused it instead of the Huskies gaining possession.

The Buffs were 6-6 in 1986, rebounding after an 0-4 start that

included three losses by a combined 10 points. CU began to roll in league play, gaining momentum with a 20-10 win over No. 3 Nebraska, its first win over the Huskers in 19 years. There were several stars in the game, and CU thoroughly dominated; when Remington made an interception with six seconds remaining, the stands emptied and what many referred to as "The Turning Point" in Mac's tenure, had occurred. School officials did not turn off the scoreboard until Monday afternoon.

"It was our ability to defense them is what won that game," McCartney noted of holding the Huskers to just 123 rushing yards. *"The wishbone toughened up our defense. Guys were pounding off the line of scrimmage because it's an attack offense that creates a new line of scrimmage. The achievement that day was not how prolific on offense we were, but how we controlled the game on defense."*

Lo and behold, in the next to last game of the season, Colorado and Oklahoma, both 5-0 in the conference, played for the title and the Orange Bowl berth that came with it. Now the Sooners were experts at the wishbone, and had dismantled CU in '85 by 31-0; this game was a bit more competitive, but OU never threw a single pass in pulling away for a 28-0 win. The Buffs routed Kansas State in Manhattan in the finale, and earned a bid to the Bluebonnet Bowl, where Baylor got the best of CU, 21-9.

The Buffaloes went 7-4 in 1987, but were surprisingly shutout of the bowls. A new tradition was born this season, the team donning all black uniforms for games the players thought were special; the first time occurred in the season-ending loss to Nebraska.

CU opened 1988 with an easy 45-3 win over Fresno State, a tune-up for one of the first real non-conference road tests in the McCartney Era, No. 19 Iowa in Iowa City. It was a typical hot, humid Midwestern Saturday, but Colorado's offense clicked and after a great defensive stand late, CU rallied for a 24-21 win.

"That Iowa game was key, they had an outstanding team, so for us to go in there and beat them, it was one of those milestone games," Mac recalled. *"It put us in another category, it identified us as a team that could go on the road and beat a great team. I look back on that with great fondness."*

Nail-biters against Oregon State and Colorado State followed, the Buffs rallying in the fourth quarter to win both, completing the four-game non-conference sweep for the first time since 1978. The winning streak came to an end the following Saturday, when eventual Heisman Trophy winner Barry Sanders led Oklahoma State to a 41-21 win in Boulder. The Buff "D" did a decent job containing him at first, but a 65-yard run in the third quarter broke open a 24-14 game and the diminutive back would finish with 174 yards.

Colorado went on to win four of its next six, finish fourth in the conference a second straight year and post an 8-4 record



after dropping a 20-17 decision to BYU in the Freedom Bowl. Wins were coming more frequently for the program, but the Buffs couldn't crack the conference nut, secure a bowl victory or earn a final poll ranking. CU did crack the AP poll once, at No. 19, but fell out after a 7-0 loss at Nebraska (the last time anyone had shut out the Buffs through 2007, as CU started the next week what would grow into the ninth longest scoring streak, and counting, of all-time).

Tragedy struck the program again when it was announced in late March that quarterback **Sal Aunese** was diagnosed with stomach cancer. Aunese battled the disease for six months before succumbing on Sept. 23, 1989. A team player to the end, he passed away on CU's bye date after attending CU's first three games, all at home, with an emotional reception from the Folsom Field crowd for him as he watched from the press box as his Buffs dismantled No. 10 Illinois, 38-7, a week before he died. His replacement/protégé, **Darian Hagan**, led the Buffs in his absence to wins in those first three; in fact, his first play of the season was a 75-yard run to the Texas 2-yard line, igniting a 27-6 win.



The team had dedicated the season to Sal, and it was a very emotional week leading up to the fourth game at Washington. There was a memorial service Monday afternoon at Macky Auditorium on the Boulder campus, and prior to the game in Seattle, the team knelt, pointed skyward, and went on to whip the Huskies. Afterwards, it was revealed that Sal had written a letter to the team, closing with the phrase, "Bring Home The Orange Bowl."

This very talented team was now on a mission, and rolled to easy victories in the first three league games by scores national powerhouses regularly won with, 49-3 (over Missouri), 52-17 (at Iowa State) and 49-17 (versus Kansas). The offense had evolved into the "I-Bone" from its wishbone roots, with over 400 rushing yards in each of the games as CU raised its record to 7-0 with the "Big Reds" up next.

The first test was at Oklahoma on Oct. 28; the Sooners had won 12 straight in the series, and the Buffs had come as close to beating OU in '88 as they had in seven meetings under McCartney. Known for inspiring his team with T-shirt slogans,

Mac's most notable ever was produced for this game, which the players wore on the team plane to Oklahoma. "Things Have Changed," they broadly declared, and the slogan would gain national acclaim after the Buffs left Norman with a 20-3 win.

"That was a milestone victory," McCartney said. "That was a big, big thing to do, to go to Norman and win. That came within a two-year window where we won at Iowa, at Oklahoma, at Washington, at Texas, at Nebraska. Those established us as a national power, because those were hard things to do. From there, we were able to sustain things for a while. Oklahoma wasn't able to beat CU for 11 years; they had put 82 points on the board when Fairbanks was here. So for them not to beat us between 1989 and 1999 was a phenomenal achievement by this program."

The atmosphere in Boulder on Nov. 4, 1989, was like nothing that had preceded it, or has been since. It was that rare confluence where both teams were undefeated (each 8-0), with CU ranked No. 2 and Nebraska No. 3 in the *Associated Press* poll, with the positions reversed on the UPI ballot. Colorado was the national darling, with interest high as people watched how this team was reacting after the death of one of its leaders. Over 600 media credentials were issued for the game, and at halftime, CU honored its "All Century" team, recognizing the top players in the school's first 100 years of football.

The Huskers tried to take the crowd right out of it. After holding CU to a quick three plays and out and returning a punt to its 49-yard line, NU scored on its first offensive play with Gerry Gdowski throwing a 51-yard touchdown pass to Bryan Carpenter for a 7-0 lead just 90 seconds in.

But CU settled down and tied the game on what many consider one of the program's signature plays in the McCartney Era. Running the option to perfection, Hagan sprinted some 30-plus yards downfield, with **J.J. Flannigan** in his sights to his left the entire way. When an NU defender committed to Hagan, he delivered one of his classic pitches to Flannigan who took it the rest of the way, the play covering 70 yards. The crowd was back into it, if they were ever really out of it, and the Buffs worked to an eventual 27-21 win.

A desperation pass by Gdowski to the end zone as time ran out was batted down by **Dave McCloughan**, and the fans rushed the Folsom Field floor for just the second time ever. As with the '86 Nebraska game, the scoreboard remained on all weekend with the final score and "Things Have Changed" scrolled atop it.

The Buffs finished off an 11-0 regular season with blowout wins over Oklahoma State (41-17) and Kansas State (59-11), rushing for 518 yards against the Wildcats. After things shook out nationally, the Buffs entered the Orange Bowl and a date with No. 4 Notre Dame ranked as the No. 1 team in country, playing for its first national championship in the sport (CU had 12 in skiing at the time).

But the dream of an undefeated season ended with a 21-6 loss



to the Fighting Irish. CU had its chances in the first half and could have led by 17-0 or 21-0, but instead were in a scoreless tie. Notre Dame scored twice quick in the third quarter, and salted the game away with a nine-minute, 17-play drive in the fourth.

Guard **Joe Garten**, linebacker **Alfred Williams** (27 tackles for loss, 11 sacks) and punter **Tom Rouen** (43.8 net average) all were named consensus first-team All-Americans, with 10 players All-Big 8 performers.

McCartney, the unanimous choice for national coach of the year honors for 1989, viewed that season as a *"magical year. When we discovered Sal was terminally ill, that brought our team together in a way that nobody could orchestrate or facilitate. It happened in a way that all of us who were a part of that saw a group of players and coaches that put the team before being an individual. It was a team that was together, motivated, bonded together, driven and hitting on all cylinders most of the time. It was just unfortunate we couldn't bookend it with a win over Notre Dame in the Orange Bowl."*

1990s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

July 26, 1990—Bill McCartney signs a 15-year contract to continue as head coach at Colorado, the longest contract extension in CU's athletic history.

Aug. 26, 1990—Colorado and Tennessee battle to a 31-31 tie in the inaugural Disneyland Pigskin Classic at Anaheim, Calif.

Oct. 6, 1990—Eric Bieniemy rushes for 217 yards in a 33-31 win at Missouri, in the process passing Charlie Davis as the school's all-time leading rusher. The game is best remembered for Colorado being awarded five downs at the end, though no fault of CU's.

Nov. 17, 1990—Colorado crushes Kansas State, 64-3, as the Buffs roll to the first back-to-back titles in Big Eight Conference play. The following Monday, CU is ranked No. 1 in the nation, the second straight year the Buffaloes end the regular season as college football's number one team.

Dec. 4, 1990—Senior outside linebacker Alfred Williams is named the recipient of the Butkus Award, the first CU player to win one of college football's big-time trophies.

Dec. 10, 1990—With the announcement of the UPI All-America team, tailback Eric Bieniemy, guard Joe Garten and outside linebacker Alfred Williams become the first three unanimous All-Americans in CU history.

Jan. 1, 1991—A 10-9 win over Notre Dame in the Orange Bowl ends a seven-game CU bowl game losing streak and positions the Buffaloes for the national title.

Jan. 2, 1991—Colorado is named the national champion by both the Associated Press and USA Today/CNN, the first national championship in football in the school's history. United Press International tabbed CU second, one point behind Georgia Tech, in its poll.

Jan. 8, 1991—Quarterback Charles Johnson, the most valuable player in the Orange Bowl, appears on NBC's "Tonight Show," the first CU athlete to ever appear on the program.

Dec. 9, 1991—Jay Leeuwenburg becomes the fourth player in CU history to earn unanimous All-America honors when he is selected to the AP and UPI teams.

Dec. 28, 1991—Alabama defeats Colorado, 30-25, in the second Blockbuster

Bowl. It is later confirmed that the Crimson Tide spied on CU's bowl practices and knew the Buffs were changing offenses.

Dec. 5, 1992—Jim Hansen becomes the fifth CU football player to earn the prestigious Rhodes Scholarship. He was the 19th University of Colorado student to be afforded the honor. The senior offensive tackle became CU's first three-time Academic All-American three days later (and CU's first "Academic All-American-of-the-Year.")

Dec. 6, 1992—Senior cornerback Deon Figures is named the recipient of the Jim Thorpe Award, given to the nation's top defensive back.

Jan. 1, 1993—Syracuse defeats Colorado, 26-22, in the 22nd annual Fiesta Bowl.

Oct. 16, 1993—Colorado defeats Oklahoma, 27-10, as Bill McCartney wins his 78th game as head coach, thus passing Fred Folsom and becoming the all-time winningest coach in school history. In that game, Lamont Warren throws a 34-yard touchdown pass to Charles Johnson; Warren slipped on the turf as he threw it and Johnson was interfered with but still made the catch lying on the ground in a play that was selected as the national play-of-the-year.

Nov. 30, 1993—Charles Johnson is named offensive player-of-the-year in the Big Eight, the first wide receiver to ever win the award.

Dec. 25, 1993—Colorado defeats Fresno State, 41-30, in the 12th annual Aloha Bowl.

Sept. 24, 1994—In what would eventually be selected as the national play-of-the-year and one of the top plays of all-time, Kordell Stewart throws a 64-yard touchdown pass to Michael Westbrook, via a Blake Anderson tip, as Colorado rallies to beat Michigan at Ann Arbor as time expired, 27-26.

Nov. 19, 1994—One of the most eventful days in CU football history: tailback



Jay Leeuwenburg and Darian Hagan, 1990



Rashaan Salaam becomes just the fourth player ever in the NCAA to rush for over 2,000 yards in a season; quarterback Kordell Stewart becomes the Big Eight Conference's all-time total offense leader; and following CU's 41-20 win over Iowa State in Boulder, head coach Bill McCartney announces that he will retire following CU's bowl game.

- Nov. 28, 1994**—Rick Neuheisel named the 21st head coach in Colorado history (took over program on Jan. 3, 1995).
- Dec. 1, 1994**—Junior tailback Rashaan Salaam wins the Doak Walker Award as the nation's top running back. The previous day, Salaam won the Walter Camp Player-of-the-Year Award.
- Dec. 8, 1994**—Senior cornerback Chris Hudson wins the Jim Thorpe Award as the nation's top defensive back.
- Dec. 10, 1994**—Junior tailback Rashaan Salaam becomes the first player in University of Colorado history to win the Heisman Trophy. The announcement is made at New York's Downtown Athletic Club and televised nationally on ESPN.
- Jan. 2, 1995**—In Bill McCartney's final game as head coach, the Buffs defeat Notre Dame, 41-24, the 24th annual Fiesta Bowl. Quarterback Kordell Stewart and defensive tackle Shannon Clavelle are named the game's most valuable players.
- Apr. 22, 1995**—Seven Buffs are selected among the first 71 picks of the annual NFL draft.
- Sept. 2, 1995**—Rick Neuheisel becomes the first coach at CU since 1932 to win his first game, as the Buffaloes defeat Wisconsin in Madison, 43-7.
- Sept. 30, 1995**—John Hessler sets a school record with five touchdown passes in CU's 38-17 win at Oklahoma, which was his first career start. He duplicated the feat a little more than a month later (Nov. 4) in a 45-32 win at Oklahoma State.
- Jan. 1, 1996**—Colorado defeats Oregon, 38-6, in the 60th annual Cotton Bowl.
- Nov. 29, 1996**—Koy Detmer becomes the first player in school history to pass for over 3,000 yards in a season in CU's 17-12 loss at Nebraska.
- Dec. 14, 1996**—Matt Russell is named the winner of the Butkus Award as the nation's best linebacker, the second CU player to win the trophy.
- Dec. 30, 1996**—CU defeats Washington, 33-21, in the 19th annual Holiday Bowl, securing a third straight 10-win season for the Buffaloes and a four-game bowl winning streak, the first of both in school history.
- Nov. 14, 1998**—CU's 37-8 win over Iowa State is the 600th in the program's history.
- Dec. 25, 1998**—In the 1,000th game in its history, Colorado defeats Oregon, 51-43, in the 17th annual Aloha Bowl. Mike Moschetti throws four touchdown passes and Ben Kelly returned the opening kickoff for a touchdown as the Buffs built a 44-14 third quarter lead.
- Jan. 22, 1999**—Gary Barnett named the 22nd head coach in Colorado history.
- Oct. 9, 1999**—Colorado plays the first overtime game in its history, with Mike Moschetti's 24-yard touchdown pass to Marcus Stiggers paving the way for a 46-39 win over Missouri in Boulder. (The NCAA added overtime in 1996.)
- Nov. 26, 1999**—The Buffs play their second overtime game ever, losing to Nebraska, 33-30 in Boulder. However, CU rallies from its largest deficit ever to tie the game, coming back after trailing 27-3 with a 24-point, 284-yard fourth quarter against the No. 3 Cornhuskers.
- Dec. 31, 1999**—CU defeats Boston College, 62-28, in the 11th annual Insight.com Bowl at Tucson. The Buffs race to a 45-7 halftime lead and set numerous records in their sixth straight bowl win, adding to the nation's longest active streak.

The 1990 team, with 44 lettermen overall and 13 starters returning quite naturally was the favorite to win the Big 8 and

be among the contenders for the national championship. But a 1-1-1 start had knocked CU from No. 5 to No. 20 in the polls, and CU was staring a road trip to Austin right in the face. Texas led 19-14 when the third quarter came to a close, in position to score a touchdown, as the teams switched to the other end of the field. McCartney:

"Eric Bieniemy, this fireball, all five-foot-six of him, had huddled the offense together on the sidelines, and he has these huge lineman around him he's trying to fire up and challenge. We got a break and the quarter ended. Texas took off running to the other end of the field. And then something happened that I had never seen before and never since. Our defensive guys starting walking slowly to the other end, but our offense walked on to the field and intercepted them at our own 20. So there were 22 guys on the field, and the offense, at Bieniemy's urging, was challenging the defense to hold them. The defense then charged down to the other end of the stadium and held them to a field goal. The offense got the ball, marched down and scored right away, and we held them on defense to three plays and out for the first time in the game. We then drove for the go-ahead and winning score. The significance of this is that one guy can make a difference. The morale is to the physical as is four is to one; one guy like that can change things, and our entire season turned around because of this one kid being ignited and sparking and inspiring the others."

The 29-22 win was the first of 10 in a row, but there was some controversy along the way. **Charles S. Johnson**, subbing for an injured Hagan at quarterback, scored from a yard out as time ran out to give CU a 33-31 win at Missouri. However, the officials erred and had given CU five downs. Though no one knew it, not the teams, the scoreboard operators or Missouri's chain crew at Faurot Field, all the ill will was aimed at Colorado, even though Johnson had spiked the ball on fourth down.

If anyone cheated that day, it was Missouri. Faurot had a terrible Omni-Turf field that required a different sort of cleat, and the Tigers made zero effort to tell the opponent about it. CU coaches documented 92 slips in the open field, otherwise Colorado would have won over an inferior Tiger team in a cakewalk. The voters didn't penalized CU until a week later after a win over Iowa State, dropping the Buffs two notches to No. 14.

Missouri fans have never seemed to grasp the fact that if CU had known it was fourth down, which MU didn't either, Johnson never would have spiked the ball to stop the clock; he would have run a play. And in the years since, any borderline calls in Columbia, and on occasion in Boulder, have always gone Missouri's way.

The Buffs used a lot of the frustration building up to whip Kansas (41-10) and Oklahoma (32-23), setting up a rematch with Nebraska for the inside track to the Big 8 title. CU was now No. 9 and the Huskers No. 2; there were a lot of key games in the top 10 that Saturday, Nov. 3, and leading up to



the game, Nebraska AD Bob Devaney issued a plea to the league coaches who voted in the UPI poll to stick together and support the conference in their polls. Of course, he meant just Nebraska.

CU throttled the Huskers, 27-12, on a cold, wet and generally nasty day in Lincoln. Four others in the top 10 lost, and the Buffs zoomed to No. 4. And just as in '89, Colorado demolished Oklahoma State (41-22) and Kansas State (64-3) and after other results Thanksgiving weekend, CU again was headed to the Orange Bowl as the nation's No. 1 team. The opponent would be Notre Dame ... again.

Eric Bieniemy, who the previous year was the only active Buff voted on CU's All-Century team (Williams was honorable mention), finished second in the nation in rushing. Bienemy, Garten and Williams were unanimous All-America selections, while a record 12 Buffaloes garnered first-team All-Big 8 honors. Williams won CU's first postseason individual honor when he received the Butkus Award as the nation's top linebacker, while Garten was the runner-up for the Outland Trophy and Bieniemy third in the Heisman race.

There was no shortage of heroes for Colorado in the Orange Bowl. The No. 1 Buffaloes got the best of No. 5 Notre Dame, 10-9, and CU claimed its first-ever national championship in football. Those included Johnson, who played the entire second half after Hagan suffered a torn ACL late in the first; **Paul Rose**, who subbed for an injured **Kanavis McGhee** (shoulder) at outside linebacker; **Ronnie Bradford**, who charged through the line and blocked the Irish's extra point try, which would turn out to be the margin of victory; **Chad Brown**, who forced the fumble that Rose recovered that led to CU's go-ahead touchdown by Bieniemy; **Jim Harper**, who had a field goal and the game winning PAT kick; and **Deon Figures**, who made an interception in the final seconds, ending any chance for a Notre Dame win as he ran out the clock.

CU, 11-1-1 for the season, was the consensus national champion, but lost to Georgia Tech by a single point. Remember Devaney's pitch? Nebraska coach Tom Osborne voted Georgia Tech first and Colorado second, or as some have said, even as low as fourth.

Colorado repeated as co-champs of the Big 8 in 1991, as the Buffaloes were reloading but it's never easy replacing nine players drafted into the NFL and 14 starters. CU opened the season against Wyoming, dedicating the just-completed Dal Ward Athletic Center at the north end of Folsom Field. A \$14.3 million, 92,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility, it houses primarily the football program and the support departments for all of CU's athletic programs. CU won the game as well, 30-13, adding to the nation's best 11-game winning streak, also the 15th consecutive win at home.

But Baylor ended both streaks the following weekend, and the Buffs would go 2-2 in non-league play ahead of a 6-0-1 record in the conference. The tie came against Nebraska, a 19-19 affair to this day the coldest known game in CU history.

It was 12 degrees at kickoff, down to zero by game's end, with the wind chill minus-8 at the start and well below that by the time **Greg Thomas** blocked a game winning field goal try by the Huskers as time ran out.

Two victories CU did take great satisfaction of this season were against Missouri and Oklahoma. Tired of all the Fifth Down talk perpetuated by a whining Tiger fan base and their homer media, the Buffs donned all black and did their talking on the field, smothering Mizzou 55-7 in a game that just as easily could have been 91-7. CU coaches joked that they should punt on a third down to give the extra down back. And against the Sooners, OU had climbed to No. 12 in the nation, but the Buffs won for a second straight time in Norman, and convincingly, 34-17.

Hagan ended his career undefeated in Big 8 play, leading CU to a 18-0-1 mark in his three years as starting quarterback; the Buffs won the other two games he couldn't start due to injury. Center **Jay Leeuwenburg**, a three-year starter, was a unanimous All-America choice, and was joined by five defensive players on the All-Big 8 team.

Opponents had started to figure out the "I-Bone," and in the Blockbuster Bowl game against Alabama, CU made its initial move to a multiple offense featuring much more passing. 'Bama won, 30-25, but not without controversy: rumors that the Crimson Tide had spied on CU's practices were later confirmed. Still, an 8-3-1 year was considered a success.

The 1992 season was a transitional year of sorts, as CU shifted away from its two- and three-back I-bone on offense to a one-back set. **Kordell Stewart** took over at starting quarterback, and his favorite targets were **Michael Westbrook** (76 catches, 1,060 yards) and **Charles E. Johnson** (57 and 1,149). CU had never had a 1,000-yard receiver in a single season, and now it had two. Stewart also became the first to pass for 2,000 yards.

Colorado opened the year 5-0, though Stewart would suffer an ankle injury in a win at Baylor, and it led to playing freshman **Koy Detmer**, who sparkled in rallying CU to a 21-20 win at Minnesota. Stewart reinjured the ankle and couldn't play against Oklahoma, with Detmer getting the nod. It was an inauspicious start for the lanky lad from Mission, Texas, whose brother, Ty, was the 1990 Heisman Trophy winner. He threw for a school record 418 yards, including a record 92-yard TD pass to Johnson, but was intercepted five times. Only a line drive, 53-yard field goal by **Mitch Berger** as time expired salvaged a 24-24 tie, keeping CU's 24-game unbeaten streak in Big 8 play alive.

That run grew to 23-0-2 with a 54-7 pasting of Kansas State in the next game, but that's where it was halted, as Nebraska ended the streak by dealing CU a 52-7 loss in Lincoln, another game where the young Detmer had to start in place of an injured Stewart. The Huskers took back the league title, though CU won out to finish 5-1-1 in league play and earn a Fiesta Bowl berth opposite No. 6 Syracuse. The Orangemen



were only the second team to beat CU all year with a 26-22 verdict in the bowl, as CU ended '92 with a 9-2-1 mark.

Figures was a consensus All-American cornerback and was the recipient of the Jim Thorpe Award as the nation's top defensive back. CU's talented linebackers, Brown and **Greg Biekert**, probably kept one another from garnered similar honors, though both earned All-Big 8 status. Offensive tackle **Jim Hansen**, another all-conference performer, earned the "academic" Heisman in winning the Draddy Award, in addition to being named a Rhodes Scholar and Academic All-American.

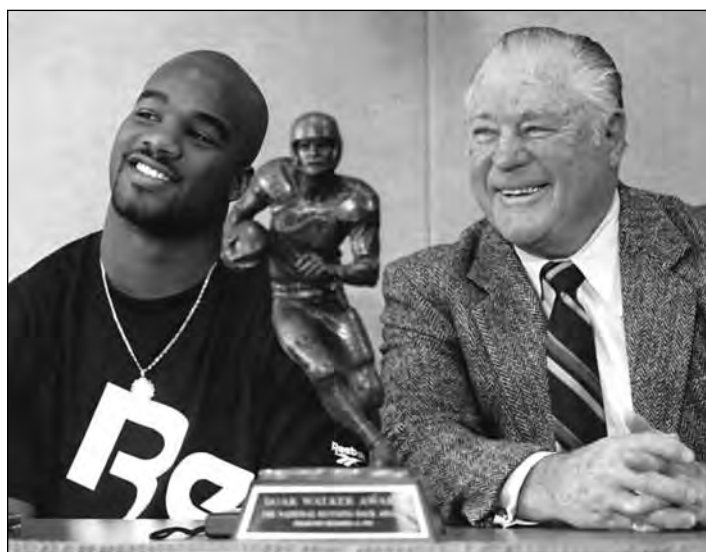
The Buffs went 8-3-1 in 1993, finishing second in the Big 8 again with a 5-1-1 mark, again. While **Lamont Warren** had an outstanding year with 900 rushing yards, another CU tailback was asserting himself. His name was **Rashaan Salaam**.

CU spent the entire 1994 season in the top 10 (actually the top eight to be exact). After warming up with a win over Northeast Louisiana, Colorado plastered the defending Big 10 Conference and Rose Bowl champion Wisconsin Badgers, 55-17. The Buffs were then faced with one the more grueling three-game sequences on the road in school history, as they headed to Michigan, Texas and Missouri.

Quieting the 106,000-plus fans at Michigan Stadium is never easy, but the Buffs drove a stake through the heart of all with a 27-26 victory. "The Miracle in Michigan," one of many names for the game or play, came down to six seconds remaining and CU on its own 36. The Buffs had dominated Michigan all game, sans a third quarter lapse, and it appeared the Wolverines would get off the hook. Stewart took the snap, drifted back and heaved the ball some 72 yards in the air, where **Blake Anderson** tipped it into the waiting grasp of Westbrook. Game over.

"This is another game I point to, because I personally knew how hard I was to go in there and win, and this is easily among the great victories in the history of Colorado," McCartney recalled in 2006. *"There are many things that went into that. Kordell (Stewart) was special. Not that many guys can throw the ball that high or that far, plus you have to have the trajectory on it to buy the receivers time to get under the ball. (Assistant coach) Rick Neuheisel deserves a lot of credit for that play because he had the wherewithal and understanding of the play to make it have a chance. It really came from him more than anybody else. That was another thing about Rick that I liked so much. He coached that game all the way, because he really believed we could win it. He communicated that. Even though the clock was against us, he never gave up. I credit his attitude and perspective as much as anything in keeping us going right to the buzzer."*

The euphoria did not get to the Buffs, who went down to Austin and in searing 100 degree heat, beat the Longhorns, 34-31. Salaam rushed for 317 yards and had a school record 362 all-purpose to lead CU, which won on a 24-yard **Neil Voskeritchian** field goal with one second left on the clock. A 38-23 win followed at Missouri, a relative breather compared to what CU had been through.



Rashaan Salaam and the late Doak Walker, 1994

CU mauled Oklahoma, 45-7, and beat an ever-improving Kansas State team 35-21, setting up a showdown with Nebraska in Lincoln. As was the case in '89, CU was No. 2, NU was No. 3, but the Buffs offensive game plan left a little to be desired that day, with Nebraska snaring a 24-7 win. CU, with all its talented receivers, never threw more than 15 yards downfield, playing into the Huskers' defense strong suit. The Buffs picked themselves up off the floor and beat Oklahoma State, Kansas and Iowa State to finish the regular season at 10-1, accepting a bid to face Notre Dame in the Fiesta Bowl.

But no one could have scripted the events of Nov. 19, though nothing stands out at first glance at the 41-20 win over Iowa State. Salaam went over 2,000 yards for the season, just the fourth player in NCAA history at the time to do so, doing it in style with a 67-yard touchdown run around the right end and down the CU sideline in the fourth quarter. On the next series, Stewart became the all-time total offense leader in the Big 8. And postgame, practically trumping both, McCartney announced to his team and then the world that he was retiring.

"I didn't do that without a lot of forethought, without a lot of prayer and without a lot of counsel," he said later on. *"I did not want or mean to steal Rashaan's or Kordell's thunder, but I had to do it then due to recruiting. If I had waited, it would have compromised the integrity of the recruiting season, of which the whole process was still in front of us."*

Salaam won the Heisman Trophy and the Doak Walker Award and was a unanimous All-American; cornerback **Chris Hudson** earned consensus honors and was the Thorpe Award winner, with linebacker **Ted Johnson** the runner-up for the Butkus Award.

The Buffs sent McCartney out a winner with a resounding 41-24 win over Notre Dame, basically calling off the dogs after building a 31-3 second quarter lead. Mac was carried off the field, and the program was turned over to **Rick Neuheisel**,



who Marolt hired in late November to succeed him.

McCartney cited what his teams did in 1989 and 1990 as the biggest accomplishment during his tenure, if not since. ***"I'll tell you this, to beat Nebraska and Oklahoma in back-to-back weeks, both home and away in consecutive years, established us. That had never happened before ... by anyone."***

Neuheisel was the surprise choice by Marolt to replace McCartney. The search was internal; four candidates emerged from Mac's last staff. In addition to Neuheisel, who coached the quarterbacks and receivers, offensive coordinator **Elliot Uzelac**, defensive coordinator **Mike Hankwitz** and assistant head coach **Bob Simmons** were all interviewed and considered.

When it came down to it, Neuheisel simply interviewed the best and had a great vision for the program, though the others were certainly qualified. Some felt he was too young at 33, but Eddie Crowder had been handed the keys to the program at 31, and Marolt himself took over the CU ski team when he was 26. But Neuheisel had a solid pedigree, serving as an assistant for six years at his alma mater, UCLA, under Terry Donahue, his college coach, and one year under McCartney in Boulder.

The transition was the perfect scenario. McCartney's last game was the Fiesta Bowl, and he worried about most of the game planning without having to be concerned with recruiting; Neuheisel could concentrate on organizing recruiting and help when needed with the game plan as part of his duties as quarterbacks and receivers coach. His first class was ranked anywhere from seventh to 12th by the major prep services.

No one knew what to expect in 1995, the cupboard certainly wasn't bare with 37 lettermen and 12 starters back, but the 10 starters lost were all drafted into the NFL. Seven of those players were selected among the first 71 picks, meaning the Buffs were losing some serious talent. There were but seven seniors on the team.

CU opened on the road for the first time in 12 seasons, traveling to No. 21 Wisconsin. No Colorado coach had won his first game since William Saunders in 1932, but the Buffaloes said to heck with that fact and blitzed the Badgers, 43-7. Detmer had a successful game as the heir apparent to Stewart, the defense had several players shine and all was generally good. CU added two more blowouts over Colorado State and Northeast Louisiana and had the first big test of the Neuheisel Era ahead, No. 3 Texas A&M.

Detmer went down with a torn ACL early in the game with an inexperienced **John Hessler** summoned to rally the Buffs from a 7-0 deficit. Hessler answered the challenge, threw the winning TD pass to **Tennyson McCarty**, and with great support from the defense, CU gave Neuheisel his first signature win. Detmer would try and make a gallant comeback two weeks later against Kansas, but the knee just wouldn't hold up and he underwent surgery to end his season. Hessler, who led CU to a 38-17 win at Oklahoma in his first career start in

the interim, took over for the remainder of the year.

Only Kansas and Nebraska defeated the Buffs on the way to a 9-2 record, with CU tying for second in the Big 8. Colorado drew No. 12 Oregon for the Cotton Bowl, and it was a miserable day weather-wise in Dallas with light-to-heavy rain, gusting winds and temperatures in the 40s. The Buffs weren't phased; Hessler threw two touchdown passes, **Herchell Troutman** rushed for 100 yards and a score and **Marcus Washington** had an NCAA-record 95 yard interception return for a TD in CU's 38-6 rout of the Ducks. Oregon fans were upset at a fake punt CU ran in the fourth quarter ahead by 25, but they had no way of knowing the Buffs had found out the niece of one of the Duck coaches took pictures at a CU practice. Sometimes, payback is sweet.

Safe to say, a 10-2 mark in Neuheisel's first season was quite the accomplishment after what had graduated into the NFL and losing the starting quarterback. Perhaps too good of one as it turned out; it may have raised expectations too high, especially after his second team posted an identical mark.

It was CU's swan song in the Big 8 Conference; all eight schools merged with four from the dying Southwest Conference, Baylor, Texas, Texas A&M and Texas Tech to form the Big 12 Conference. It was considered a brand new league, not an expansion of the old Big 8, and was set up with two divisions. The Buffs were assigned to the North with old rivals Iowa State, Kansas, Kansas State, Missouri and Nebraska; Oklahoma and Oklahoma State joined the four old SWC schools in the South.

CU opened 2-0 in 1996, setting up a rematch of "The Miracle in Michigan" from two years earlier in Boulder. Michigan, ranked No. 11, got the best of the No. 5 Buffs 20-13. Terrible clock management by the Wolverines actually gave the ball back to CU at the Michigan 37 with five seconds left, and a Detmer pass tipped by Darrin Chiaverini fell harmlessly to the ground, about two feet away from a diving **Rae Carruth** ... or just 24 inches from miracle number two.

Colorado bounced back to win the next seven, including the Big 12 opener at Texas A&M. The Buffs dominated most of the games, though the running game was not what it used to be. Against tougher defenses, the Buffs couldn't pound the ball when it needed to. That was evident in the finale at Nebraska, which with the new league was now the signature North match-up and moved to the Friday after Thanksgiving.

ABC was happy with the first match-up, as both were 7-0 in league play and ranked in the top five (CU at No.5, NU No. 4). The Huskers were the better team this rotten day in Lincoln, as freezing rain fell throughout in their 17-12 conquest. The weather exposed CU's inability to run the ball, with the Buffs netting 51 yards on 32 tries; and Detmer was able to complete just 12-of-38 throws. **Jeremy Aldrich** was "activated" for the game and kicked four field goals to account for all of CU's points.

Guard **Chris Naeole** and linebacker **Matt Russell** were consensus All-Americans, with Russell the second Buffalo to win



the Butkus Award. The Buffs led the way on the inaugural All-Big 12 team with six first-team performers.

A come-from-behind 33-21 win over Washington in the Holiday Bowl polished off a 10-2 season, as Detmer went out in style, throwing for 371 yards and three touchdowns. Carruth hauled in seven of those passes for a CU-bowl record 162 yards and two scores, and the pair hooked up on a 76-yard TD play, the longest in school bowl history.

The Colorado program was in uncharted waters, having won 31 games over the three previous seasons, a claim only Florida, Florida State and Nebraska could also make. Neuheisel's first two teams had gone 20-4, the fifth most wins in the first two years by a Division I-A coach. He was also just the fourth to guide his team to a pair of top 10 finishes in his first two seasons (No. 5 in '95, No. 8 in '96).

CU had 53 lettermen, with 13 starters, back for 1997, and there was no reason to think it couldn't continue, especially since Neuheisel landed what many considered to be the fifth best recruiting class in the nation.

But a 5-6 record in '97 brought an end to an incredible eight-season run where the Buffs had posted the fourth best record overall in the nation at 78-15-4. A loss at Michigan in the second game started the downward spiral, and CU had to defeat Wyoming the next week on a late field goal. Two close losses against Texas A&M and Oklahoma State got CU off on the wrong foot in league play, and the 2-3 start also ended CU's consecutive weeks ranked streak at 143, the 10th longest of all time.

The Buffaloes had also been to nine consecutive bowls, but at 5-5, needed a win to become bowl eligible against No. 2 Nebraska. The Huskers stormed to a 27-3 lead and then held off a Hessler-charged comeback to win 27-24, and CU stayed at home for the postseason for the first time since 1987.

No one knew it at the time, but the 1998 season would be Neuheisel's last at Colorado. Marolt had stepped down as AD in the summer of 1996, and was replaced by long-time university counsel **Dick Tharp**, who was *thisclose* at one time to being named commissioner of the Big Ten. While the two got along, Neuheisel never felt he had the same kind of support from his new boss.

The year opened with the Colorado State game, except that the contest had been moved to Denver's Mile High Stadium, a popular move for some but not for many of CU's season ticket holders, four times in size to CSU's, and many Buff fans were displaced. That didn't matter come postgame after a 42-14 Colorado rout, led by new quarterback **Mike Moschetti**, a fiery junior college transfer from Mount San Antonio. He passed for 257 yards and three touchdowns as the unranked Buffs used the win over the No. 15 Rams to enter the polls themselves. It was the impetus for a 5-0 start and a No. 14 national ranking.

A 16-9 loss to No. 5 Kansas State was the first of four setbacks in the last six regular season games, sending the Buffs to a

second straight fourth place finish in the North Division. But a wild 51-43 win over No. 21 Oregon in the Aloha Bowl ended the year on a good note.

The afternoon after CU played Oregon in the Aloha Bowl, Washington and Air Force squared off in the Oahu Bowl in the same stadium (the only bowl doubleheader in history). Washington AD Barbara Hedges fired coach Jim Lambright after the game and started to pursue Neuheisel. She liked what she had seen of CU both on and off the field in Honolulu. Despite media reports to the contrary, the two never talked until after she fired Lambright days after the bowl.

Neuheisel at first rebuffed the offer, but told her that the Washington job was a plumb and what kind of package a school of that caliber should offer. She came up with exactly what he designed, including a \$1 million salary, and called to offer him a second time. With Tharp apparently unwilling to give Neuheisel one of three contracts the state of Colorado allowed CU to give its coaches, the move was a no-brainer for Rick and his family.

But the timing outright stunk, and decimated what would have been a fifth straight top 20 recruiting class for the Buffs. After flirting with Denver Bronco offensive coordinator Gary Kubiak, Tharp turned to former CU assistant **Gary Barnett**, who had performed one of the miracle turnarounds of all-time in college football at Northwestern. He led the Wildcats to their first bowl game in 47 years when his '95 team came out of nowhere to win the Big Ten Conference, named the national coach of the year in the process. He had spent eight years as a McCartney assistant (1984-91) and knew the CU program and Boulder inside and out.

His opener was nothing short of a nightmare, as CSU paid back the Buffs for the '98 blowout at Mile High with a 41-14 win. It was a complete reversal, as the Rams were unranked and knocked No. 14 Colorado out of the polls for what would be two seasons. The Buffs never won more than two games in a row all season, but there were memorable moments along the way during the 7-5 campaign. Cornerback **Ben Kelly** electrified the fans with his returns, twice returning kickoffs for touchdowns as well as two fumbles, including a 96-yard jaunt for six against Kansas, the longest in CU history.

A 62-28 blasting of Boston College in the Insight.com Bowl capped the year and the millennium. In one of the most dominant performances in postseason history, CU led 45-7 at half-time, had 523 total yards and 29 first downs, and had three return TDs, including an 88-yard punt return by Kelly, the longest in NCAA bowl annals.

2000s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

Oct. 28, 2000—Craig Ochs joins an elite group in college football history as he becomes the first Buffalo to score touchdowns via rushing and receiving while also throwing one in the same game in CU's 37-21 win over Oklahoma State. In the second quarter, Javon Green had become the first Buff to ever throw and catch a touchdown pass in the same game, and was later joined by Ochs in the fourth



quarter. It was Green who threw the TD pass to Ochs; Ochs threw his to Roman Hollowell, Green caught his from Zac Colvin.

Aug. 26, 2001—Colorado had the honor of hosting and playing in the inaugural Jim Thorpe Association Football Classic, but the Buffaloes fall, 24-22, to Fresno State.

Sept. 13, 2001—Due to the terrorist attacks two days earlier on the east coast, CU's game at Washington State on Sept. 15 is cancelled. It was the first time in school history an out-of-state game is not played as Colorado joined the rest of the nation in honoring those who died doing their every day jobs.

Nov. 23, 2001—Sophomore Chris Brown scores a school record six touchdowns in leading Colorado to a 62-36 win over Nebraska in Boulder, earning CU its first North Division title since the Big 12 started play in 1996. A record setting day on many fronts, it was also the most points ever allowed by a Nebraska team at the time as CU sprinted out to a 35-3 lead over the BCS No. 1-ranked Huskers.

Dec. 1, 2001—The Buffaloes win their first Big 12 Conference title with a 39-37 win over Texas at Irving, basically coming in a road game environment. Despite UT knowing a win would put it into the national title game against Miami, CU spotted the Longhorns a 7-0 lead before scoring 29 points in less than a 15-minute span to take the lead for good. Chris Brown rushed for 198 yards and three touchdowns with the Buffs also coming up big on defense and special teams.

Dec. 12, 2001—Daniel Graham is named the recipient of the second annual John Mackey Award, presented to the nation's best tight end.

Jan. 1, 2002—In only the sixth-ever match-up in the postseason of the Nos. 2 and 3 teams in the country, second-ranked Oregon toppled No. 3 Colorado, 38-16, in the Tostitos Fiesta Bowl. CU led 7-0 early but the Ducks used a late second quarter score to take a 21-7 lead into halftime and held the Buffs at bay the rest of the game.

Dec. 7, 2002—After winning its second straight Big 12 North Division title outright the previous week with a win at Nebraska, CU fell short in its bid to become the first back-to-back champion in Big 12 history when it fell 29-7 to Oklahoma in Houston in the league's title game.

Dec. 12, 2002—Mark Mariscal is named the recipient of the Ray Guy Award as the nation's best punter.

Dec. 28, 2002—Wisconsin rallies to defeat the Buffaloes in overtime, 31-28, in the Alamo Bowl presented by MasterCard.

Oct. 16, 2004—Mason Crosby connects on a school record 60-yard field goal, the first made from that distance in the NCAA in five seasons.

Dec. 4, 2004—CU won its third Big 12 North Division title the previous week when it defeated Nebraska and Iowa State lost to Missouri, but the Buffs lost to Oklahoma 42-3 in the league championship game in Kansas City.

Dec. 29, 2004—Colorado defeated Texas-El Paso, 33-28, in the Houston Bowl behind the passing of Joel Klatt, who was named the offensive MVP in the game with 333 yards passing.

Dec. 3, 2005—After the Buffs win their fourth division title in five seasons, CU drops the Big 12 championship game to Texas, 70-3. Gary Barnett steps down as head coach five days later.

Dec. 16, 2005—Dan Hawkins named the 23rd head coach in Colorado history.

Dec. 27, 2005—Mike Hankwitz, named interim head coach for the bowl game, leads CU into the Champs Sports Bowl in Orlando. The Buffs, nursing several injuries on offense, including quarterback Joel Klatt who missed the game, have a gritty effort but fall to No. 23 Clemson, 19-10.

Dec. 7, 2006—Mason Crosby named first-team All-American, becoming the

fifth Buff to earn the distinction in back-to-back seasons.

Sept. 1, 2007—CU and Colorado State play the first overtime game in series history, with Kevin Eberhart tying the game with a 22-yard field goal with 13 seconds left in regulation and then winning it with a 35-yard effort in OT as CU won, 31-28.

Sept. 29, 2007—Kevin Eberhart makes just the second game winning field goal as time expired in school history, with his 45-yard kick propelling CU to a 27-24 win over No. 3 Oklahoma.

Dec. 30, 2007—Alabama sprinted to a 27-0 lead over Colorado and then held off a furious Buff rally, as the Crimson Tide tops CU, 30-24, in the 32nd Annual PetroSun Independence Bowl.

The Buffs got off to a rough start in the 21st Century, losing their first three games in 2000 by a combined 10 points. The last of the trio was a nail-biting setback to Neuheisel and Washington for a second straight year. The Buffs rallied to win three league games, including a 26-19 win at Texas A&M where **Craig Ochs** became just the second true freshman quarterback in his first start to lead CU to victory and a 28-18 triumph at Missouri, where CU had a school-record 14 quarterback sacks.

CU's 2001 squad was a senior dominated team, led by tight end **Daniel Graham** and center **Andre Gurode**, both All-Americans, with eight first-team All-Big 12 performers, including Thorpe Award semifinalist **Michael Lewis** at safety. Graham also won the Mackey Award as the nation's top tight end. These guys blended perfectly with several others to create the best season in the Barnett Era, notably a "three-headed monster" at tailback in senior **Cortlen Johnson**, junior **Chris Brown** and sophomore **Bobby Purify**.

In short, the team was loaded, all the more reason a 24-22 season opening loss to Fresno State was one of the early season shockers in college football, though FSU would eventually crack the top 10 by midseason. Still, the Buffs were mad, and after a players-only meeting regrouped to take it out on Colorado State in Denver to start a five-game winning streak. In the midst of this run came the events of September 11, which forced the cancellation of a game at Washington State that was never made up.



CU fans storm the Folsom Field floor after the 27-24 win over Oklahoma in 2007



Texas ended the streak in Austin by hammering the Buffs, 41-7, but CU picked itself right up and reeled off five in a row again. It started with a 22-19 come-from-behind triumph at Oklahoma State where **Bobby Pesavento** came off the bench to replace Ochs, who suffered a nasty ankle sprain. Ochs never returned to the lineup and Pesavento led CU to easy wins over Missouri and Iowa State. In the latter, a 40-27 win, Johnson became the first Colorado player to have at least 100 yards both rushing and receiving in the same game.

CU was now 8-2 on the season and was set to host No. 2 Nebraska, with the Huskers actually the top team in the BCS Standings. The Buffs unleashed a running attack that day Nebraska was used to inflicting, not accepting. Brown had 198 yards and six touchdowns, Purify added 154 and a score to pace a 380-yard, eight-touchdown ground assault that helped Colorado build a 35-3 second quarter en route to a 62-36 win, which earned the Buffs their first North Division title and a rematch with Texas in the championship game.

Perhaps it was overconfidence from the earlier rout of CU, or the fact that the game was in the Dallas suburbs and it was essentially a home game, or an early score had them up 7-0, but the No. 2 Longhorns, third in the BCS Standings but guaranteed a spot in the BCS title game with a win after Florida had lost earlier in the day, were in for a long evening. Brown ran for 182 yards and three scores, and three interceptions of UT's Chris Simms paved the way for a 36-10 run over a 22-minute span that put CU in command on its way to a 39-37 win and its first conference title since 1991.

The Buffs missed qualifying for the national championship game by .05 in the BCS Standings, Nebraska still getting the nod over CU and three other schools who could have supplanted the Huskers, including No. 2 Oregon, Colorado's opponent in the Fiesta Bowl. The Ducks played with a bigger chip on their shoulder than CU did, scoring 38 straight points after the Buffs took an early 7-0 lead and walked away with a 38-16 win.

Colorado finished 2001 with a 10-3 record and a No. 9 ranking, so the year was still a success. But a tumultuous four years lied ahead in the Barnett Era, though three of those four teams still captured division titles.

The Buffs were 9-5 in 2002 as after a 1-2 start, CU won eight of the next nine. Ochs quit the team early in the season, and inexperienced **Robert Hodge** stepped in and did an admirable job in taking over the offense. He wasn't flashy, but he made very few mistakes. Brown was in the Heisman hunt until a late season ankle injury forced him to the sidelines, but still finished third in the nation in rushing. **Jeremy Bloom** excited all with his knack for the long play, returning a punt 75 yards for a touchdown against CSU the first time he touched the ball, and **Mark Mariscal** won the Ray Guy Award as the nation's best punter. CU closed the year with losses to Oklahoma in the Big 12 title game and to Wisconsin in overtime in the Alamo Bowl.

Colorado suffered through a 5-7 season in 2003, though opened with two down-to-the-wire wins over Colorado State and UCLA and rose to No. 17 in the rankings. **Joel Klatt**, a walk-on and former minor league baseball infielder, made his debut as starting quarterback, and had a monster game,



Chris Brown breaks free for one of his CU record six touchdowns in the 62-36 win over Nebraska.

throwing for 402 yards and four touchdowns against CSU, earning national player of the week honors. However, the Buffs dropped six of the next seven, any hopes for the post-season seemed lost. But a win over No. 22 Missouri followed by a blowout at Iowa State had CU needing just one more victory to become bowl eligible, and the Buffs had an average Nebraska team at home. The Huskers, just like in '97, ended CU's season, this time with a 31-22 verdict.

There were a lot of off the field distractions in 2004, resulting from an off-campus party that involved a handful of players on the team and some visiting high school recruits in 2001. This ordeal, centered on a lawsuit, perpetuated several untruths about the football program, many manufactured and accelerated by the news-side media and a hired public relations firm by the plaintiffs. At one point, CU president **Betsy Hoffman** suspended Barnett for three months, with assistant head coach **Brian Cabral** taking over the team for spring ball. It also led to audits of the athletic department and the CU Foundation, and another casualty was the forced resignation of AD Tharp in November.

If there ever was an "us versus the world" mentality, the 2004 Colorado Buffaloes epitomized it. An emotional 27-24 win over Colorado State in Boulder led to a 3-0 start, but eight weeks later, the Buffs found themselves at 4-4, 1-4 in league play. The one win would be an important tiebreaker later on, a 19-14 conquest of Iowa State that included **Mason Crosby** making a



school record 60-yard field goal, the first of that distance in college football in six seasons.

If no less than five things happened, first and foremost CU winning out, the Buffs still could win the division. And all did, including a season-ending 26-20 win at Nebraska that ended the Huskers' run of 35 consecutive bowl appearances. The Buffs were back in the Big 12 title game; that was the good news. The not-so-good was that No. 2 Oklahoma lit up the Buffs, 42-3, outgaining CU 498-46 in the game.

Mike Bohn was named the new AD in April 2005, and was open to evaluating the football situation. Recruiting had suffered due to the bad publicity the program had received, but CU opened with seven wins in the first nine games, including five by lopsided margins. Barnett was offered an extension in early November, but declined it at the time. When the Buffs dropped their next four, the last two of which came by a combined score of 100-6 to Nebraska and Texas in the Big 12 title game, Barnett was dismissed in early December.

It took less than 10 days for Bohn to find his man. **Dan Hawkins** had compiled a 53-11 record in five seasons at Boise State, the fourth most wins by a Division I-A coach in his first five years, and had won or shared four Western Athletic Conference titles. Long-time observers of the program likened him part Bill McCartney and part Eddie Crowder, two former coaches he immediately turned to for some counsel and history of the program. Bohn and most others thought him to be the perfect fit for Colorado, as he was the hot national coach at the time of his hire.

His first Buffalo team mustered just a 2-10 record, with four near-misses, the most frustrating when the Buffs squandered a late 13-0 lead at ninth-ranked Georgia in losing 14-13. He got his first win against Texas Tech in convincing fashion (30-6).

The improvement was substantial his second year, with CU posting a 6-6 record in the regular season, becoming bowl-eligible in the finale with a 65-51 win over Nebraska. Along the way, Hawkins earned his first signature win of his Colorado tenure, defeating No. 3 Oklahoma 27-24 on a **Kevin Eberhart** field goal as time ran out. **Jordan Dizon** earned consensus All-America honors and was the Big 12's defensive player of the year in finishing as the runner-up for the Butkus Award. In the Independence Bowl against Alabama, CU couldn't recover from an early 27-0 deficit, but once the Buffs settled down, they pulled to within 30-24 but time ran out before the season could end on a good note.

Unfortunately, things never took off from there as expected; despite some other exciting wins, including a 29-27 win over Georgia in 2010 when the Buffs hosted the 1990 team in a 20th anniversary celebration of their national championship, Hawkins was 19-39 and was let go with three games left in the season. Long-time assistant **Brian Cabral** was named interim head coach, and CU responded with two straight wins, but a loss at Nebraska ended the season and the Buffs would stay home for the holidays a third straight year.

On December 6, 2010, Bohn brought former CU standout **Jon Embree** back to Boulder as the school's 24th full-time head coach. Embree is just the third alum to be named to the

position; the first was **Harry Heller** way back in 1895, with the second **Bud Davis**, who took the position for the 1962 season as CU righted its ship after NCAA issues. Embree was also the school's first African-American head coach for football, and brings an impressive pedigree in addition to his performance as a tight end for the Buffaloes from 1983-86; he also coached as an assistant under three different CU head coaches and then added four years of NFL experience to his resume before returning to his alma mater.

Embree helped to usher in the Pac-12 Conference Era in CU football annals, as after 15 years in the Big 12, the Buffaloes bolted west and joined the 10 members of the old Pac-12, along with former long-time rival Utah. He got his first win over Colorado State in Denver, a 28-14 verdict, but had to wait until November to pick up his first conference win, a 48-29 rout of Arizona in Boulder on Senior Day. The season finale gave the program so long awaited revenge against Utah, as the schools had not met in nearly half a century; not only did the 17-14 win snap a school record 23-game losing streak on the road, it came 50 years after the Utes knocked CU out of the 1961 national championship chase.

Embree was relieved of his duties after just two seasons after the Buffaloes won only four of 25 games. Bohn turned to **Mike MacIntyre** as the school's 25th football coach; MacIntyre resuscitated a down San Jose State program and hopes to work the same magic in Boulder.

MacIntyre's first team in 2012 finished 4-8, improving on the team's 1-11 record the previous year as well as in 29 major statistical categories. Junior **Paul Richardson**, who would declare for the NFL draft following the season, became CU's first first-team all-conference receiver since 1997 and exited holding 44 school records. His second team went 2-10, but was actually much improved from his first season; the squad set 107 records (mostly offensive), and continued its rapid improvement in over two dozen statistical categories. The 2015 Buffaloes improved again to 4-9 and were a much better defensive team, but injuries wreaked havoc on offense and while competitive in most games, a second straight season of numerous close losses kept CU out of the postseason. Senior **Nelson Spruce** completed a record-setting career by becoming the Pac-12's all-time leader in receptions.



WR Nelson Spruce set 41 school records during his career.



An aerial view of CU's Athletic Complex Expansion which was completed in February 2016.

2010s

IMPORTANT DATES & MILESTONES

- June 10, 2010**—Colorado officials announce they are leaving the Big 12 to join the Pac-12 Conference, effective July 1, 2011.
- Nov. 9, 2010**—Dan Hawkins is dismissed as head coach, with long-time assistant coach Brian Cabral named as interim head coach to finish out the 2010 season.
- Dec. 6, 2010**—Jon Embree named the 24th full-time head coach in Colorado history, the first alum to take over the program since Bud Davis in 1962. On the same date, Eric Bieniemy, CU's all-time leading rusher, returns as the school's offensive coordinator.
- Nov. 25, 2011**—Colorado ends its first year in the Pac-12 on a high note, its 17-14 win at Utah ending a school record 23-game road losing streak.
- Dec. 10, 2012**—Mike MacIntyre named the 25th head coach in school history.
- Sept. 1, 2013**—CU's 41-27 win over Colorado State in the season opener enables Mike MacIntyre to become just the second CU head coach since 1932 to win his first game, joining Rick Neuheisel (1995).
- Sept. 14, 2013**—A home game against Fresno State is cancelled due to record rainfall and subsequent flooding in Boulder; it is just the second game postponed or cancelled in school history (the Nov. 23, 1963 game against Air Force was delayed two weeks due to the assassination of JFK).
- May 12, 2014**—The date groundbreaking took place on CU's massive \$156 million Athletics Complex Expansion project, which was completed in February 2016. New state-of-the-art offices, locker rooms, training facilities and a long-awaited indoor practice facility gave the Buffaloes some of, if not the finest facilities in the country.

TIMEOUT / FROM 1 TO 25,000 (Darley to Spruce)

It took exactly 125 seasons for Colorado to go from scoring its first point on the gridiron to its 25,000th ... over the course of 1,190 games.

The first were hard to come by, and came on defense in the fourth game of the school's history. Sophomore tackle **George Darley** recovered a Colorado Mines fumble and returned it 65 yards for a touchdown – worth four points at the time – but Mines prevailed, 50-4 on December 13. They were the only points scored in 1890 by the Silver & Gold, as CU finished its inaugural season with an 0-4 record, outscored 217-4. The first points on offense wouldn't come until the season finale in 1891 (CU's second touchdown also came on a fumble return by **Harry Layton** in the '91 opener against Mines in Boulder). After three straight shutout defeats, CU scored its first points on offense, a touchdown by quarterback **Pat Carney**, in what was also its first win, a 24-4 verdict at the Colorado Springs Athletic Association on November 26.

The Darley name is peppered throughout campus, Boulder and state history. George graduated from CU in 1893, and his nephew, Ward Darley, would eventually serve as CU's president from 1952-56. The tallest residential buildings in Boulder bear the family name, the Darley North and South towers at Williams Village, as does a major side street in south Boulder. George's father, George Marshall Darley, and his uncle Alexander were the first non-Catholic ministers to hold a service on then Pacific Slope of Colorado (now referred to as the Western Slope), and built the Presbyterian Church in Lake City (about 25 miles east of Telluride).

Fast-forward 12-plus decades (or 45,214 days) to September 27, 2014, and scoring wasn't a problem that day. The Buffaloes entered its Pac-12 Conference opener at California with 24,964 points, with the 36th point that day scored by junior wide receiver **Nelson Spruce**, who caught a 6-yard touchdown pass from Sefo Liufau with 3:23 left in the game. It gave CU a 42-35 lead at the time, but the Buffs would succumb in double overtime, 59-56.



MILESTONE GAMES

Game	Season	Game	Opponent	Result
1	1890	first	at Denver A.C.	L 0-20
50	1898	third	at Colorado College	L 0-22
100	1904	third	NEBRASKA	W 6- 0
200	1917	seventh	UTAH	W 18- 9
250	1924	eighth	COLORADO STATE	W 36- 0
300	1930	eighth	at Denver	W 27- 7
400	1943	first	FT. FRANCIS WARREN	W 38- 0
500	1953	tenth	at Colorado State	W 13- 7
600	1963	eighth	MISSOURI	L 7-28
700	1973	first	at Louisiana State	L 6-17
750	1977	fifth	OKLAHOMA STATE	W 29-13
800	1981	eleventh	KANSAS STATE	W 24-21
900	1990	eighth	at Kansas	W 41-10
1,000	1998	twelfth	Oregon (Aloha Bowl)	W 51-43
1,100	2006	twelfth	at Nebraska	L 14-37
1,200	2015	second	Massachusetts	W 48-14

MILESTONE WINS

Game	Season	Game	Opponent	Result
1	1891	fifth	at Colorado College	W 24- 4
50	1901	second	ALUMNI	W 6- 0
100	1910	second	ALUMNI	W 11- 0
200	1931	seventh	COLORADO COLLEGE	W 17- 7
250	1942	first	COLORADO MINES	W 54- 0
300	1952	first	SAN JOSE STATE	W 20-14
400	1969	sixth	MISSOURI	W 31-24
500	1987	eighth	at Iowa State	W 42-10
600	1998	tenth	IOWA STATE	W 37- 8

MILESTONE FIRSTS

(individual season)

First to Rush for 1,000 YardsKayo Lam (1,043) 1935
 First to Rush for 1,500 Yards.....Eric Bieniemy (1,628) 1990
 First to Rush for 2,000 YardsRashaan Salaam (2,055) 1994
 First to Pass for 1,000 YardsGale Weidner (1,200) 1959
 First to Pass for 1,500 YardsDarian Hagan (1,538) 1990
 First to Pass for 2,000 YardsKordell Stewart (2,109) 1992
 First to Pass for 3,000 Yards.....Koy Detmer (3,156) 1996
 First to Catch 50 PassesJon Embree (51) 1984
 First to Catch 75 PassesMichael Westbrook (76) 1992
 First to Catch 100 PassesNelson Spruce (106) 2014
 First to 1,000 Receiving Yards.....Charles Johnson (1,149) 1992
 First to Score 100 Points.....Byron White (122) 1937
 First to Record 100 TacklesDick Anderson (102) 1967



Byron White



Dick Anderson