



FOLSOM FIELD



Folsom Field, named after legendary University of Colorado Coach Frederick Folsom, opened for the 1924 season and has been the football team's home field ever since. The Buffaloes have played 98 seasons on the "hilltop," and own a 324-181-10, a winning percentage of .638 in the 21st oldest stadium and one of the most scenic in college football.

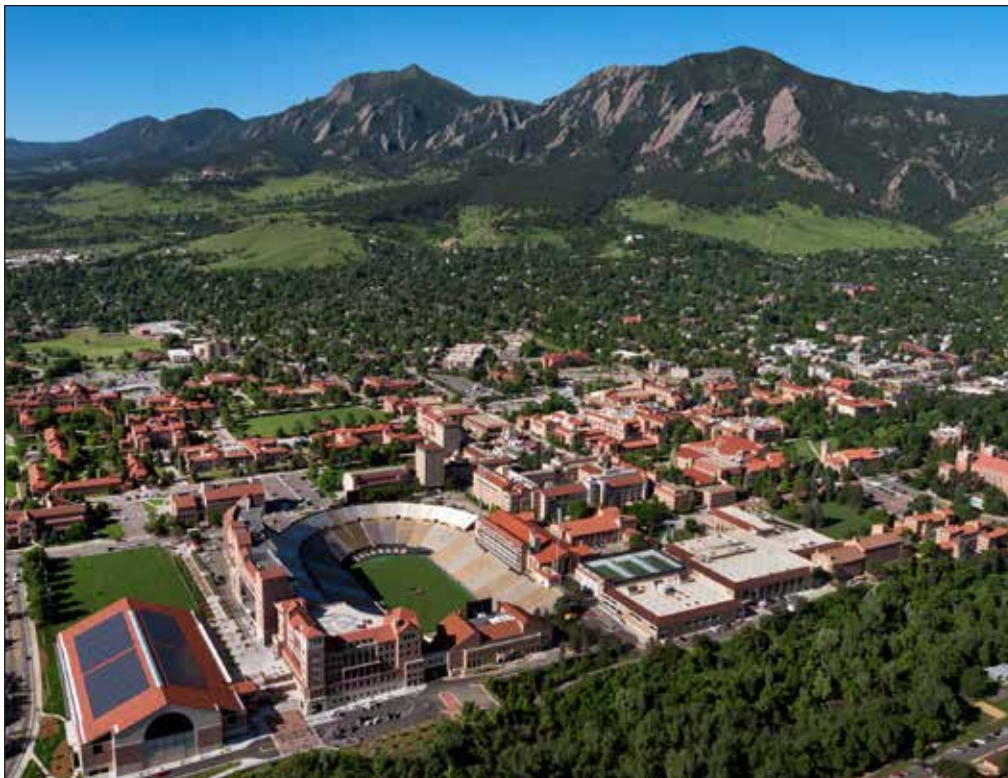
In 2018, the home finale against Utah on November 17 was the 500th regular season game at Folsom.

The stadium was dedicated on October 11, 1924, as Colorado defeated Regis College, 39-0. It actually was the second home game of the season, as CU closed out playing at Gamble Field the week before with a 31-0 win over Western State.

Folsom is tied for the 21st oldest venue among the 130 NCAA Division I-A/FBS stadiums; it is the fifth oldest in the Pac-12 Conference. Through the years many improvements have been made, but the original beauty and intimate feeling has remained making it one of best venues in college football, if not all sports.

It originally was called Colorado Stadium, the name being changed to Folsom Field in 1944 following Folsom's death. In addition, old 24th Street was also changed to Folsom Street to honor the man who coached Colorado teams three different times totaling 15 years between 1895 and 1915. His 76.5 winning percentage (77-23-2) is still tops among all coaches ever at CU.

CU had played its games at Gamble Field for two decades, where seating was limited to temporary bleachers. In the winter of 1923-24, CU President George Norlin studied the possibility of a new stadium, as the approaching completion of a sparkling new gymnasium (Carlson Gym), the inadequate number of seats at Gamble Field (roughly 9,000) and the growing interest in physical education and intercollegiate athletics demanded that a remedy needed to take place soon.



Investigation of a natural ravine just east of the site of the gymnasium as a site for the new stadium, suggested by professor Whitney Huntington, was not only a convenient location, but by using it a great expense could be avoided. After a financing plan was worked out, CU's own construction department began moving dirt with a steam shovel on January 14, 1924.

The new structure had an original capacity of 26,000, featuring wooden bleacher seating over cement, and quarter-mile running track. A California red wood, dipped in creosote, was selected as the initial material, as estimates at the time put a lifetime of around 13 years for the wood. There were 22 sections divided by radial aisles installed, the same set-up in the lower bowl that still exists today.

Accounts at the time put the cost of the stadium at around \$2.60 per seat, instead of \$10 had concrete been used; the total cost was \$65,000. By comparison, the cost to construct Carlson Gym was \$350,000.

With expansion in mind when originally built, it was by design rather easy to add an upper deck. In 1956, Folsom Field's capacity was upped to 45,000 when a second deck was erected around two-thirds of the stadium. Some 6,000 more seats were added in 1967 when the running track was removed and the team dressing facilities were constructed at the north end of the field.

Improvements continued, as the gigantic six-level press box facility was added on the west side for the start of the 1968 season. It also serves as the home for CU's Flatirons Club, a group of donors who financially support the athletic program.

In the summer of 1976, Folsom Field had another face-lift, as the wooden bleacher seats were removed and replaced with silver and gold aluminum bleachers, expanding the stadium to a capacity of 52,005.

The renovation of CU's team house in the summer of 1979 took away a few seats, changing the capacity to 51,463. The



The beginning of work on the stadium in January, 1924.



construction of the magnificent Dal Ward Center in 1991 added new bleacher seating in the north end zone and increased the capacity to 51,748. In 1992, the addition of a yellow concourse wall on the southeast side took away a few hundred seats, and corporate boxes (in 1995) lowered the capacity to 51,655.

The removal of a set of old rickety bleachers in 2001 and a few other changes placed the stadium capacity at 50,942, but that figure stood for just two seasons. The addition of suites and club seating on the east side (at a cost of \$45.2 million) completed in August 2003 increased the capacity to 53,750, an all-time Folsom Field high.

Prior to the 1971 season, the playing surface at Folsom Field was natural grass. Monsanto of St. Louis, Mo., replaced the natural grass with Astroturf for the 1971 campaign, with the first game being played on the artificial surface against the University of Wyoming on September 18 (the Buffs won 56-13); it was a godsend, as that very morning, Boulder received a rare late summer snowstorm that blanketed the field with more than two feet of snow.

The original Astroturf surface was replaced with a “new rug” for the start of the 1978 season, and in the summer of 1989, “Astroturf-8” was installed, the third artificial surfacing in the school’s history. Folsom was covered with artificial surfaces for 28 seasons (168 games), and it was fairly friendly for the Buffs, which posted a 110-56-2 record in those games.

In the spring of 1999, Folsom Field returned to natural grass, as “SportGrass” was installed on the stadium floor. The project, which included bio-thermal heating, drainage and a sub-air system, cost \$1.2 million. Video display boards, known as “BuffVision” were also added in the summer of 1999 at a cost of \$3.6 million; those were updated with state-of-the-art HD technology in 2012 at a cost of about \$6.5 million.

In 2003, completion of a \$45.2 million east side renovation added 1,903 club seats and 41 suites, increasing Folsom’s capacity to its all-time high of 53,750. The state-of-the art complex remains one of the best in college football, is not nearly as high as many clubs and suites at most stadiums, and offers a great view of the foothills of the Rocky Mountains and when clear, the Continental Divide.

The capacity of Folsom was 53,613 from 2007-13, following the removal of the fourth rows from three different levels of the Flatirons Club prior to the 2007 season (seats that always had some kind of obstructed view). In 2014, the north end zone bleachers and two northeast corner sections of the stadium were completely renovated into loge and club seating, altering the capacity to its current number of 50,183.





FOLSOM CONCERT HISTORY

Folsom Field was one of the premier venues for stadium concerts at the height of their popularity in the 1970s and 1980s. In fact, the largest crowd in its history was for what was billed as the Folsom Music Festival on May 1, 1977: 61,981 people attended the rain-soaked mega concert featuring Fleetwood Mac, Bob Seger's Silver Bullet Band, Boulder's own Firefall and John Sebastian. Eventually for assorted reasons, Folsom hosted less concerts and a 15-year dormancy in shows ended in the summer of 2016 with the Dead & Company performing two concerts. It all started in 1969 with a show headlined by The Byrds and the Steve Miller Band. And a side note: at CU's 2000 graduation ceremony, with his daughter graduating, Neil Diamond sang the national anthem. Balch Fieldhouse, the CU Events Center and Macky Auditorium have also played host to other concerts on campus. Here's the list of Folsom's stadium shows:

1969
September 7 – The Byrds, Steve Miller Band, Sons of Champlin, Buddy Guy, Country Joe & The Fish, Conal Implosion, Tim Hardin, Lights by Spontaneity.

1971
May – It's A Beautiful Day, Albert King

1972
July 16 – Rolling Stones, Kansas, Eddie Money
September 3 – The Grateful Dead

1974
September 9 – Leon Russell, Little Feat

1975
May 10 – Doobie Brothers

1977
May 1 (Folsom Music Festival) – Fleetwood Mac, Bob Seger, Firefall, John Sebastian (attendance: 61,981)
June 16 – Foreigner

1978
May 13 (Sun Day #1) – The Beach Boys, Journey, Firefall, Bob Welch
July 16 (Sun Day #2) – Rolling Stones, Kansas, Peter Tosh
July 21 (Sun Day #3) – Fleetwood Mac
July 29 (Sun Day #4) – Eagles, Steve Miller Band

1979
May 13 (Sun Day #1) – Doobie Brothers, Boston, Poco, Country Joe MacDonald
July 19 (Sun Day #2) – REO Speedwagon, Cheap Trick, Blackfoot, Sammy Hagar

1980
June 7 & 8 – Grateful Dead
June 28 – Eagles

1981
October 3 & 4 – Rolling Stones, Heart, George Thorogood

1982
August 21 – REO Speedwagon, Ted Nugent, Scorpions
October 17– John Cougar, Jethro Tull, The Who

1983
August 30 – Simon & Garfunkel

1986
July 12 – Van Halen, Dio, Loverboy, B.t.o

1989
August 13 – The Who

1993
May 26 – Paul McCartney

2001
July 11 – Dave Matthews Band, Wyclef Jean

2016
July 2 & 3 – Dead & Company

2017
June 9 & 10 – Dead & Company

2018
July 13 & 14 – Dead & Company

2019
July 5 & 6 – Dead & Company

2022
June 17 & 18 – Dead & Company



The Rolling Stones packed Folsom Field in 1981



Paul McCartney played Folsom in 1993



ATHLETICS COMPLEX EXPANSION



The official groundbreaking took place on May 12, 2014, signifying the start of CU's \$156 million **Athletics Complex Expansion (ACE)**, the most aggressive construction project undertaken by the university in relation to athletics since 1924, when Folsom Field was built. The project had three distinct phases: first was to renovate seating in two areas of Folsom, the north bleachers and the northeast corner (sections 121 and 122), both replaced with high-end club seating (1,876 total). The second was a combination of renovating a good portion of the existing Dal Ward Athletic Center (built in 1991) and building a massive new structure that would be named the Champions Center. The third and final phase was a long-awaited Indoor Practice Facility (IPF) that would also include a state-of-the-art 300-meter track.

All three phases took less than two years to complete through the combined efforts of Populous (the designer) and Mortenson Construction, with an official dedication on February 26, 2016 that was hosted by CU graduate and long-time ESPN college football reporter Chris Fowler.



DAL WARD ATHLETIC CENTER

The 1990-91 athletic season was a landmark one for the University of Colorado, CU's first in football and its 14th at the time in skiing, and the men's basketball team reached the NIT Final Four. That was also the year that the magnificent Dal Ward Athletic Center became a reality.

The entire construction process was completed in less than nine months, from ground-breaking in December 1990, to completion

the following August. The \$14 million building was completely funded through private donations. The multi-functional, state-of-the-art structure was one of the top facilities anywhere in college athletics upon its completion. The DWAC boasted 92,000 square feet that included academic, sports medicine and weight training centers, a full-service kitchen and daily dining area, an auditorium, men's and women's locker rooms, a player's lounge and offices for athletic administration and coaches.

Construction on the project actually began in November 1990, with the demolition of the old team house building, which had stood in the north end of Folsom Field since its erection in 1967. The foundation was dug and concrete poured over the next couple of months, with construction of the actual building starting in February 1991. The structure was available for the football team's use by mid-August, with the remainder of the building completed later that fall.

The building is named for Dallas Ward, the football coach who led CU into the Big Seven Conference in 1948. Ward was the head coach for the Buffaloes for 11 seasons (1948-1958), compiling a 63-41-6 record, which made him the third-winningest coach in CU history at the time. His teams, noted for the single wing offense, were a constant threat to Oklahoma's supremacy in the Big Seven Conference.

The tile roof, native stone walls and traditional Italinete architecture were selected to compliment the style of the Boulder campus, and it also established a new sense of entry to the campus coming from the north. The building features a dramatic two story entry and lobby space with a grand staircase. In 1999, a state-of-the-art video replay board, known as "BuffVision," replaced the original scoreboard.

"We have built something that will truly give our athletes a chance to compete with the best," then-athletic director Bill Marolt said. The building was designed by the architectural firm of Sink Combs Dethlefs of Denver, with construction performed by Gerald H. Phipps, Inc.

But over the course of time, as is often the case with many new buildings, the needs of athletics and the football program outgrew what the Dal Ward Center could provide. Sure, there were a few tweaks and minor remodeling through the years, but as part of the ACE, there was a 37,000-square foot renovation that included the addition of men's and women's Olympic sports locker rooms, expansion of the Herbst Academic Center and a new weight room. The former athletic director's offices were converted into a leadership development program suite and a Touchdown Club created overlooking Folsom Field.

UCHEALTH CHAMPIONS CENTER

The jewel of the ACE was no doubt the construction of the state-of-the-art UHealth Champions Center, a 212,000-square foot, six-story structure erected on the northeast corner of Folsom Field. The building houses new football offices, almost all of the athletic administration and Olympic sport coaches, new areas for sports medicine, strength and conditioning and equipment, meeting rooms, a dining facility and a rooftop terrace for game days and year-round special events.

There are five hydrotherapy pools (hot, cold, treadmill and two recovery), the weight room spans 11,285 square feet and massive meeting rooms that are comfortable and not cramped. The second floor also houses a Sports Medicine and Performance Center that is open to the public and provides medical services on game day that few if any other stadiums offer in the nation, college or pro. The



maintained through the years is one of the reasons the CU campus always is at or near the top of the list of the most beautiful in the nation.)

INDOOR PRACTICE FACILITY

When inclement weather hit during the fall or during spring practices, there were two choices prior to 2016: practice inside Balch Fieldhouse, or since 2006, an erected bubble-like complex that stood on the west practice field for six months out of the year. But that all changed with the third phase of the ACE, which added a 108,000-square foot, net zero energy (NZE) indoor practice facility (IPF), easily one of the best-ever constructed in college athletics.

The facility can serve all sports programs, has a 90-foot maximum clear height to aid the kicking game, and has a six-lane, 300-meter competition-venue track allows CU to host IAFF and NCAA-sanctioned indoor track events. There are 2,604 solar panels on the roof that create approximately 1,200 MWh/year of power generation. A 534-space underground parking garage below the IPF was constructed and will be a boon to the game day experience for CU fans. The final part of this phase was the re-sodding of Franklin Field, a 106,000-square-foot outdoor grass practice field adjacent to the IPF that is the outdoor practice home for the Buffaloes.

Less than one month after it opened, the Bleacher Report came out with its list of the top 15 indoor football practice facilities in the nation, and Colorado's was included among them. The only other Pac-12 school was Oregon, and most of the others were at southern schools, likely built to deal with oppressive heat, hurricanes and tornadoes.

rooftop terrace offers stunning panoramic views of Boulder's signature Flatirons as well as all the way out to the peaks of the Continental Divide.

"Our vision of sustainable excellence is about transforming opportunity," said athletic director Rick George, who spearheaded the project from the very start of his tenure (construction started nine months to the day of his first on the job). "In achieving this vision, each student-athlete that takes the field in black and gold will do so bolstered with the knowledge that we've provided them with every resource necessary to be successful – both in competition and in life beyond graduation."

The Mortenson design/build team completed the fast-paced project without significant disruption to daily campus activity. The facility was also designed with bricks, mortar and masonry work in the familiar CU style of architecture – Tuscan vernacular. That style was adopted for the campus nearly 100 years ago, to be reminiscent of the hill towns around Florence and Siena, Italy. (The consistency





Aerial view of CU's Indoor Practice Facility, with the UCHealth Champions Center to its left.

The following people/families sponsored major areas in the UCHealth Champions Center or upgrades in the Dal Ward Athletic Center (*all in the Champions Center unless noted; as of August 1, 2021*):

- Heidi Rothberg** Sports Medicine Center (*football*)
- Dick Lewis, Dean Pisani & Don DeLuzio** Bill McCartney Football Operations Center (*fourth floor*)
- Crawford Family** Head Coach's Suite (*fourth floor*) and Crawford Club (*third floor dining hall and club room*)
- Nessinger Family Foundation** Team Lounge (*in football locker room*)
- Bruce & Marcy Benson** Hydrotherapy Room (*in Rothberg Sports Medicine Center*)
- Petry & Harrington** Family Auditorium (*large team meeting room*)
- Dave & Deb DeCook** Terrace (*fourth level outdoor terrace*)
- Patrick & Lisa Williams** Staff Conference Room (*fourth floor*)
- Allan R. Goetz** Athletic Director's Suite (*fifth floor*)
- Gary & Terie Roubos** Athletic Director's Office Suite (*fourth level*)
- Eric & Kim Belcher** Rooftop Lounge (*sixth level*)
- Bruce Bocina** Legacy Hall (*outside team locker room*)
- Sklar Family** Indoor Track (*in the Indoor Practice Facility*)
- Bob & Nancy Ariano** Ring Room (*in football locker room*)
- Hoover Family** Leadership & Career Development Suite (*Dal Ward*)
- Clancy A. Herbst** Academic Center (*Dal Ward*)
- Richard Knowlton** Sports Medicine Center (*Dal Ward*)
- Rick & Nancy George** Women's Olympic Sports Locker Suite (*Dal Ward*)
- William G. & Lila J. Stewart** Champions Center Fifth Floor (*administrative offices*)
- Dan, Laurie, Seth & Cole Ivanoff** Champions Center Third Floor (*meeting rooms, dining hall*)
- C.R. "Dick" Stevenson Family** Indoor Practice Field
- Jim & Lin Loftus** Football Recruiting Lounge (*fourth floor*)
- Paul & Brenda Lilly** Cross Country, Track & Field Offices (*fifth floor*)
- UCHealth** Champions Center